Innovative Pedagogy to Promote Enjoyable and Engaging Learning

Background Note

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Introduction

Innovation and diffusion of knowledge are at the heart of the growth process, be it in the area of education or industry. Continuous innovation is, therefore, crucial for all the educational systems. The skill to think and to innovate is a desirable 21st century skill from the students. Innovation in education encourages students and demands teachers to be proactive to research, explore, and use multiple strategies to come out with novel ideas or a strategy to uncover something new.

Innovation involves a different way of looking at problems and solving them.. It also contributes to improve overall quality of education because it catalyses students to think out of the box, and helps to solve complex problems. The school environment must focus on giving space and encouragement for teachers to innovate. Increasingly, innovation in education at school is more than just a buzzword. It is fast becoming a way of learning and teaching for both students and teachers respectively. It is commendable that India is moving forward on innovations, as the Global Innovation Index Report 2020 (World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)) has ranked India as the 48th most innovative nation in the world amongst 131 countries.

Nurturing Innovation in Classrooms

To make children innovative they have to be nurtured in such a way that it becomes their second nature. For this, the teachers have to be geared up for facing the upcoming challenges in the rigid classroom settings. Walking on a new and uncharted path, one has to overcome fears,take risks and be ready to face failures too.

However, if the teachers think out of the box, there are many ways that teachers can gradually attempt to introduce innovation in the classroom. Some of them are:

- Giving problem-solving activities to the students, providing opportunities to think differently and work independently.
- Continuously providing challenges and problems to coax children to think differently.
- Accommodate and accept multiple perspectives and diverse opinions.
- Using varied pedagogies like collaborative learning, story-telling, integrating art and music to interact and teach the studentsand not merely stick to the traditional process of teaching.
- Creating an elementof curiosity and encouragingstudents to ask questions and search for the answers collaboratively.
- Providing ample time to the students to think, act, repeat and innovate.
- Starting from what the students already know and make the entire teaching learning process enjoyable.
- Motivating the students continuously.

With NEP -2020 in place now and the new curriculum framework for teacher educators in the making, it is imperative that it should be framed in a way that there are enough opportunities and sufficient time for the prospective teachers to think, reflect and innovate.

Recommendations in NEP-2020 on the Theme

1. The fundamental principles of the National Education Policy 2020 are to identify and foster the unique capabilities of each student by promoting creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation.
2. It also facilitates extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers and educational planning and management. It encourages innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment. It promotes outstanding research as a requisite for outstanding education and deployment.
3. NEP-2020 envisions nurturing innovation in all domains of education and recommends the need to innovate in all fields of education. It emphasises on promoting creativity and critical thinking, which contribute to innovation.

4. The vision of the policy is to improve the quality of education by giving an equal space to creativity and innovation and transform India into a vibrant knowledge society.

The Education Policy focuses on innovation and creativity in the following ways-

- It talks about creating a national repository of high-quality resources on foundational literacy and numeracy to be made available on the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA). Technological interventions to serve as aids to teachers and to help bridge any language barriers that may exist between teachers and students, will be piloted and implemented.

- Enjoyable and inspirational books for students at all levels to be developed, by using high-quality translation (technology assisted as needed) in all local and Indian languages, and will be made available extensively in both school and local public libraries in order to improve the quality of education.

- With the help of technology and innovation, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and State Open Schools will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young students who are not able to attend school physically.

- Shifting classroom processes towards competency-based learning to close the gap in achievement of learning outcomes.

- To facilitate the teaching of all languages, and to promote multi lingualisim, enhanced and better ways through innovative and experiential methods including through gamification and apps, by weaving in the cultural aspects of the languages - such as films, theatre, storytelling, poetry, and music

- With an objective to improve innovation and increase the number and types of courses, high performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and selected universities from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India

- Increased emphasis on mathematics and computational thinking will be given throughout the school years, starting with the foundational stage, through a variety of innovative methods for being well versed with tools using artificial intelligence

- For a more productive, innovative, progressive, and prosperous nation,the policy emphasises on the fact that higher education must form the basis for knowledge creation and innovation thereby contributing to a growing national economy.

- Higher Education Institutions will focus on research and innovation by setting up start-up incubation centres; technology development centres; centres in frontier areas of research. HEIs will develop specific hand holding mechanisms and competitions for promoting innovation among student communities.

- It talks of enabling strong and innovative government initiatives for adult education to expedite the all-important aim of achieving 100% literacy.

- The policy empowers the faculty of HEIs to conduct innovative teaching, research, and service as they see best. This will be a key motivator and enabler for nurturing innovative spirit and perform outstanding, creative work.

- In order to promote creativity, institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within a broad framework of higher education qualifications.

- Research in the arts and humanities, history, art, language, and culture. along with innovations in the sciences and social sciences, are equally important for the progress and enlightened nature of a nation. For this, the policy envisions the establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) which will recognise and support outstanding research in academic institutions and competitively fund research in all disciplines

- Professional Technical education and innovation in diverse fields like engineering, technology, management, architecture, town planning, pharmacy, hotel management, catering technology etc., will be promoted

- A platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration, both for school and higher education. The National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) will be created.

Way Forward

In the classrooms today:-

- Barriers to creativity and innovation must be overcome.
- Innovating new ways to nurture the creativity of children must be a regular practice at all levels of school education.

- Students must be provided opportunities to experiment and reflect in all the subject areas, not only in science or mathematics.
- Respect the diversity of ideas and nurture them, creating an enabling atmosphere in the classroom to innovate
- Develop the capacity of teachers in this area, to various resources for supporting students and help in creating an enabling environment.
- Encourage flexibility in the classroom process
- Provision of incentives and awards to motivate the teacher to do continuously better

Conclusion

Creating a conducing and enabling environment for innovation and not merely sticking to the traditional method of teaching and testing is the need of the hour. Combining various disciplines, moving beyond the basics, reaching out of the classroom and achieving altogether a new and different outcome will help in developing a streak of innovation in students right from the start. While knowing the basics is an initiating point, it has to be further leveraged to apply and find solutions by exploring until students find the best answers.

This quote from poet William Butler Yeats is a fitting parallel for the role of innovation in education: "*Education should not be the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.*"