

IMPROVING THE STANDARDS OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Bringing about improvements in the standards of education is an important aspect, which needs to be focused upon on a continuous basis. With advancements taking place and with the advent of modernization and globalization, it is indispensable to bring about improvements in standards of education. The educationists, throughout their jobs need to work towards the formulation of measures and strategies that are necessary to improve standards of education. When improvements are made in the standards of education, then it needs to be ensured that they prove to be beneficial to the members of the educational institutions. The members of the educational institutions need to ensure that they adequately plan financial resources and possess the required skills and abilities that are necessary to bring about improvements in the standards of education. The major aspects that are taken into account in this research paper are, strategies for Improving standards of education, improving standards through innovation in education, and planning of financial resources.

Keywords: Education, Financial Resources, Innovation, Standards, Strategies

Education is regarded as a process that aims to inculcate values and traits among the individuals to lead a life that is satisfying to them in accordance with the cherished values and ideals of the society. The main role of education is to bring out the latent potentialities, intrinsic qualities and development of the integrated personality for the well-being of the individuals and the society at large. The individuals belonging to all categories and backgrounds need to recognize the significance of education to promote well-being of the communities and the entire nation. The other factor that highlights the significance of education is imparting knowledge and information to the individuals in such a manner that they will be able to realize their potentialities and render an effective contribution towards promoting well-being of their families and communities. Education contributes in the nurturing of the individuals. As in one's life, when one has to carry out various tasks and activities, they need to possess the required skills and abilities. These skills and abilities are inculcated among individuals through education (Education for Values in Schools, n.d.).

In India, there have been development of programs and policies that have the primary objective of bringing about improvements in the standards of education. These are, The National Policy on Education (1986), advocated making education a tool for the impartment of moral and social values to the individuals. The National Curriculum Framework for Social Education (2000) advanced a plea to integrate value education into the curriculum and instructional systems. The National Curriculum Framework (2005) put emphasis upon the education for peace as a national and global concern. Through the acquisition of education, the individuals are able to acquire an efficient understanding of social and moral values. These values are regarded indispensable to enhance the overall quality of lives. Education helps the individuals to make effective decisions, particularly in the case of occurrence of conflicts and disputes and also in concern with the implementation of various tasks and activities (Education for Values in Schools, n.d.).

It has been comprehensively understood that education renders an effective contribution towards promoting well-being of the individuals and enriching their overall quality of lives. To acquire knowledge and information in an appropriate manner and to achieve one's academic objectives, it is necessary to bring about improvements in the system of education. To bring about improvements in the standards of education, there is a need to formulate certain policies and measures. The main objective of educational institutions is to ensure that growth and development of the students takes place in an effective manner, they are able to augment their skills and abilities, and they get prepared for employment settings. When the policies and measures are formulated, it needs to be ensured that they prove to be beneficial to the individuals in number of ways. When the students are acquiring education, it is vital for them to pay utmost attention and implement the social and moral values, especially to improve the overall quality of lives.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STANDARDS OF EDUCATION

To make improvements in the standards of education, the strategies, which need to be put into operation are stated as follows:

Leadership – The heads, directors and principals of the educational institutions are the ones, who are vested with leadership functions. It is the job of the leaders to ensure that they adequately lead the individuals in the right direction, ensure that they carry out their job duties in an efficient manner, provide solutions to their problems and grievances, create an amiable and pleasant environmental conditions and ensure that infrastructural facilities, amenities, materials, equipment and technologies are available. These individuals are required to have a clear understanding of tasks and functions, which would be beneficial to the members of the educational institutions. Furthermore, they need to possess the skills and abilities that are necessary to guide and direct the individuals in an appropriate manner. Apart from the possession of adequate skills and abilities. The leaders need to possess an approachable and a sociable nature. The leaders need to ensure that other members of the educational institutions feel empowered. When they are making major decisions, particularly concerning all the members and the overall educational institutions, then it needs to be ensured they consult others, particularly educators. Leaders should allow other individuals to express their ideas and suggestions.

Policies and Practices – Within educational institutions, the implementation of policies and practices are regarded to be of utmost significance. The major factors that determine the implementation of policies and practices are, goals and objectives of the educational institutions, academic programs, human resources, infrastructure and equipment, teaching-learning methods, classrooms, students and the overall environmental conditions. When policies and practices are put into operation, it needs to be ensured that they prove to be advantageous to the members and the overall functioning of the educational institutions. In educational institutions, there have been cases of discrimination against girls. Hence, policies and practices need to be formulated to make provision of equal rights and opportunities and not discriminate against any individuals, particularly on the basis of factors, such as, caste, creed, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, educational qualifications or socio-economic background. It is vital to formulate policies and measures that would promote respectability among individuals and eliminate any forms of violent and criminal acts. In educational institutions, research has indicated that there are prevalence of violent and criminal acts, involving educators, staff members

as well as students. Hence, to lead to progression of the system of education, it is necessary to curb these acts and promote morality and ethics.

Activities and Programs – Activities and programs within educational institutions need to be paid adequate attention. As these are the ones, upon which acquisition of educational qualifications and learning of the individuals is based. It is the job duty of the leaders and educators to ensure that activities and programs are put into operation in an appropriate manner. In order to improve the standards of activities and programs, it is essential to put into practice, modern and innovative approaches and methods. Research has indicated that through the use of technology and innovative methods in teaching-learning processes and instructional strategies, students are able to augment their learning in a better way. Before the advent of technologies, the individuals were making use of traditional methods. But with the advent of technologies, individuals are making use of them to prepare their assignments, projects and other documents. Furthermore, internet has been used to a major extent in generating awareness in terms of various aspects. To improve the standards of education, it is necessary to conduct an analysis and promote changes and developments in various activities and programs from time to time.

Amiable Terms and Relationships – In order to achieve the desired goals and objectives and carry out one's job duties in a well-organized manner, it is necessary to form amiable terms and relationships with each other. The students get enrolled into educational institutions to learn, generate information in terms of various concepts and aspects and achieve academic goals. They will be able to accomplish these tasks and functions, only when they interact and form amiable terms and relationships with the other individuals, particularly, educators and fellow students. On the other hand, the educators and staff members too need to form good terms and relationships with each other. These are regarded as indispensable to carry out one's job duties in a well-organized manner, incur job satisfaction and augment the overall system of education. When educators, staff members and students are carrying out their job duties, they may have to work on an assignment or a project on an individual basis. But, it is essential for them to communicate with others efficiently to seek ideas and suggestions. It is vital for the students and educators to form good terms and relationships with each other, particularly to achieve academic goals.

Classroom Practices – The classroom practices differ in educational institutions of all levels. The differences are on the basis of number of factors. These include, grade levels of students, subjects and concepts, and academic goals. The educators are vested with the authority and responsibility to carry out the classroom practices in a well-organized manner. The classroom practices primarily are focused upon the teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies. Apart from teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies, there are number of other aspects as well. For instance, when an event or a function is organised in educational institutions, the teachers direct the tasks and activities of the students, related to production of artworks, charts, pictures, handicrafts and so forth. In order to carry out the classroom practices in a well-organized manner, the educators need to possess certain competencies and generate awareness in terms of various factors. For instance, when they are imparting knowledge to the students regarding a concept, they need to be well-prepared, particularly to provide adequate answers to the questions put forward by the students. Therefore, implementation of

appropriate classroom practices render a significant contribution in achieving academic goals and enhancing the overall system of education.

Counselling and Guidance Services – In educational institutions at all levels, students usually experience problems and challenges in terms of number of aspects. These include, financial problems, learning of academic concepts, completion of assignments, preparation for exams, psychological problems such as, depression and stress, concerns regarding home environmental conditions, strenuous terms and relationships with parents and so forth. In order to seek solutions to these problems, they need to obtain counselling and guidance facilities from professional counsellors and experts. In schools and higher educational institutions, students usually consult their teachers, professors and supervisors to seek solutions to their problems. Whereas, in some cases, when they are not able to consult their teachers and professors, they usually make visits to counselling centres and consult professional counsellors. In the present existence, there are provision of counselling and guidance facilities in educational institutions. When the students are consulting counsellors, it is vital for them to pay appropriate attention to the remedies they are providing. In other words, students need to implement these remedies. Research has indicated that when professional and experienced counsellors are consulted, the students are able to benefit to a major extent.

Infrastructural Facilities and Amenities – The provision of infrastructural facilities and amenities are regarded to be of utmost significance in improving the standards of education and formation of a satisfactory learning environment. The infrastructural facilities are primarily referred to the aspects that help in enhancing the overall environmental conditions of the educational institutions. These include, furniture, equipment, library facilities, laboratory facilities, playgrounds, computer centres, technologies, restrooms, clean drinking water, and so forth. In India, the infrastructural facilities and amenities are well-developed in urban schools. But in rural schools, they are still in an undeveloped state. Due to this, there has been a decline in the retention rate and the enrolment rate of students. Within the classrooms, there is lack of proper furniture, due to which students are made to sit on the floor. In government schools, the Mid-day Meal Scheme has been implemented. The main objective of this scheme is to provide nutritious meals to the students to boost their energy levels. Under this scheme, students are provided with mid-day meals. When implementing this scheme, it is vital to ensure that meals are prepared in a clean and hygienic environment, and clean utensils and proper ingredients should be utilized.

Constructive Feedback – Academic learning is not easy. The individuals are required to experience number of problems and challenges in learning of various subjects and concepts. Usually, when the students are working on assignments or taking tests, they may at some point experience setbacks. Setbacks are primarily experienced by students with learning disabilities. Hence, when the students experience setbacks or are unable to implement their tasks or assignments in accordance to the desired expectations, then it is the job duty of the educators to provide them constructive feedback. Constructive feedback is a gentle way of criticising. The educators normally are making an attempt to tell the students that their performance has not been up to the expected standards. Providing feedback is an integral part of teaching. When the educators are providing information to the students regarding lesson plans, it is vital for them to give an assignment or a test. When the students do not score good grades in an assignment, the educators are required to give them feedback and explain them the

consequences in a constructive manner. Constructive feedback helps the students to develop motivation towards studies and work diligently and conscientiously in providing solutions to problems and difficulties.

Acknowledging Viewpoints and Perspectives – In educational institutions at all levels, it is essential to make provision of equal rights and opportunities to all individuals. When the individuals are provided with equal rights and opportunities and not discriminated against, they feel motivated towards the performance of their job duties. When all the members of the educational institutions are given equal rights and opportunities, it is vital to allow them to express their ideas and viewpoints. When decision making processes are implemented, then the heads or principals should arrange discussion meetings and allow the other individuals too to express their viewpoints. Within the classroom settings, when the educators are implementing lesson plans or putting into practice, teaching-learning methods, it is vital for them to obtain ideas and suggestions from students as well. They need to ensure that teaching-learning methods should be beneficial to students. When the individuals are expressing their viewpoints or perspectives, others need to listen to them in an appropriate manner. If they agree, then the viewpoints would be implemented. But when the superiors do not agree, then too they are required to communicate in a polite manner. In other words, communication should take place between the individuals in respectful and courteous manner.

Increasing Motivation – Increasing motivation among students, particularly towards academic learning is vital to improve the standards of education. Research has indicated that in some cases, students do not depict interest and enthusiasm in learning and understanding of academic concepts. When they do not achieve good academic outcomes as a result of learning disabilities and problems, then it is the job duty of the teachers to put into operation the measures that would increase motivation among them. To increase motivation, there are number of measures that are adopted by the educators. These include, offering rewards, certificates, stationary items, or opportunities for participation in other activities. For instance, when a teacher is explaining an English lesson plan and students have not performed well in the assignments and have not acquired an efficient understanding of the academic concepts, then the teachers may explain the lesson plans again by implementing different methods. One of the methods that is primarily agreeable to the students is role playing. In this method, the students are required to assume the roles of characters and act out the play. Therefore, offering various kinds of rewards and putting into practice pleasurable teaching-learning methods are important ways of increasing motivation among students.

Pedagogy – Pedagogy is referred to the art of teaching. It is the art and science of being a teacher. The term generally refers to the strategies of instruction or the style in accordance to which the instructional strategies are put into practice. The educators are able to acquire an appropriate understanding regarding the teaching-learning methods that would augment student learning. The educators normally put into practice various teaching methods. In implementing lesson plans, they not only use one but number of teaching methods. The various strategies used in different combinations are required to promote student learning. The teaching strategies usually depend upon the grade levels of students, subjects and concepts, learning styles and abilities. Effective pedagogical practice renders a significant contribution in promoting well-being and goodwill of the educators, students and the overall system of education (Final Report on Quality in School Education, n.d.). As when the students

give a desirable academic performance, then the educators feel contented and pleasurable. They form the viewpoint that their efforts have proved to be worthwhile and meaningful to the students. The educators are required to pay adequate attention towards bringing about improvements in the pedagogical practices. As these practices are crucial in helping them in achievement of personal and professional goals.

Evaluation Methods – Evaluation methods are regarded as the methods that are used to evaluate the performance of students. When the educators are putting into operation the teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies in imparting understanding among students regarding the concepts and lesson plans, then it is vital for them to find out how much the students have learned. In other words, the educators need to identify the academic positions of the students. The different evaluation methods that are put into practice are, class assignments, home-work assignments, tests, competitions, speeches, debates, presentations, quizzes and so forth. The students are provided with sufficient time, so they can provide solutions to any kinds of problems and difficulties and prepare themselves well. Examination is one of the important evaluation methods. It is referred to as the detailed inspection or analysis of the object or individuals (Final Report on Quality in School Education, n.d.). The aim of examinations is to determine the ability of the students in terms of how much they have learned and understood. Within the course of time, improvements are required to take place in the evaluation methods. It is usually recommended that apart from conducting tests and giving assignments, students should be encouraged towards participation in speeches, debates, competitions and so forth.

IMPROVING STANDARDS THROUGH INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

Innovation has rendered a significant contribution in bringing about improvements in the standards of education. Technology-based innovations in education can help in restructuring of the environments of the educational institutions. The learning environments are formed, which tend to promote the use of digital technologies. The major aspects that are improved as a result of use of innovative methods and digital technologies have been stated as follows: (Innovating Education and Educating for Innovation, 2016).

Development of Regulatory, Institutional and Organizational Frameworks – In the development of regulatory, institutional and organizational frameworks, normally the first and foremost step involves conducting an analysis of the areas, which need to be improved. In educational institutions of all levels, apart from teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies, there are number of other aspects as well, which need to be improved through the use of innovative methods. These are, extra-curricular and creative activities, sports, physical activities, competitions, events, seminars, workshops and so forth. When measures are formulated or frameworks are developed, then it is vital to take into account the availability of financial resources and human resources. The human resources are required to make appropriate decisions regarding the use of modern and innovative methods in various areas of the educational institutions.

Innovative Pedagogic Models - Innovative pedagogic models can help in improving high order thinking skills among individuals. Within the course of acquisition of education, it is vital for the individuals to develop rational and logical thinking. The implementation of innovative pedagogic models helps students to develop problem solving skills, creativity and imagination. When the students are making use of these models, they also would get involved in international collaborations.

International collaborations are referred to collaborations with educators and students in international universities. International collaborations would help the individuals in augmenting their understanding and generating adequate awareness. Through these, individuals are also able to generate awareness in terms of other cultures, experience multi-cultural communication and promote professionalism. E-learning, open educational resources and open online courses are regarded as vital aspects in the enrichment of innovative pedagogic models.

Increased Access and Participation in the Digital Economy – Digital technologies make provision of great amount of potential for promoting innovation, growth and digital well-being. When the individuals are able to acquire an efficient understanding of digital technologies, they are not only able to achieve the desired academic outcomes in an appropriate manner, but also are able to form effective communication terms with others and carry out other tasks and activities. However, policy action is needed to preserve the open internet and address privacy and security concerns and ensure access and competition. In other words, when the individuals are making use of digital technologies, they need to put into practice the traits of morality and ethics. Increased access and participation in the digital economy require improvements to be made in infrastructural facilities within the classrooms and the entire educational institutions.

Use of Digital Technologies within Classroom Settings – The use of digital technologies within classroom settings have proven to be beneficial to the individuals to a major extent. Normally in schools and higher educational institutions, limited time periods are available. In these time periods, the educators need to impart information to the students regarding particular lesson plans and concepts. When teaching-learning methods are put into operation and students or educators need to search the meaning of the concept, they make use of digital technologies. Through the use of digital technologies, educators are able to provide answers to questions put forward by students.

Complete Governance and Management – The impact of policies on innovation depends upon their governance and implementation. When one is making use of technologies, it is vital for them to possess adequate skills and abilities. Research has indicated that during the initial stage, in some cases, individuals may feel apprehensive. But, they need to get engaged into thorough practice to be well-equipped with technologies. In educational institutions, the individuals need to spend adequate amount of financial resources in promoting governance and management of innovative methods. The implementation of modern and innovative methods primarily depends upon the financial resources of the educational institutions. When the educational institutions possess adequate financial resources, they can bring about technologies and modern and innovative methods in the teaching-learning processes and in the implementation of other tasks and activities.

Fostering and Assessing Creative and Critical Thinking Skills – When the individuals make use of innovative methods in the acquisition of knowledge and in the implementation of job duties, they are able to foster and assess creative and critical thinking skills. It is vital for the individuals to be creative in the implementation of tasks and activities. The use of technologies and innovative methods help in fostering and assessing creative and critical thinking skills. Creativity is primarily depicted in the preparation of assignments, reports and projects. For instance, when individuals are making use of computers in the preparation of articles, reports, projects and assignments, they are able to make corrections and editing. In other words, the individuals are able to bring about changes in the implementation of tasks and activities.

Promotion of Entrepreneurship Education – Entrepreneurship is regarded as the critical way for the augmentation of innovative methods. Not only in India, but in other countries of the world as well, the system of education is putting emphasis upon the promotion of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education is referred to the popular policy tool to bring about developments in the entrepreneurial skills and encourage a more favourable culture and attitude towards innovation. The entrepreneurship education at the school level tries to promote entrepreneurial skills through problem-solving activities and contextual learning, based on interactive projects and games. In secondary schools, entrepreneurship education renders a significant contribution in generating awareness in terms of practical knowledge and skills that are required to operate a business.

Improving Knowledge Management – When the individuals are acquiring knowledge regarding modern and innovative methods, it is vital for them to manage the knowledge acquired in an efficient manner. In the management of knowledge, it is vital for the individuals to promote effective communication among individuals. The students at all levels of education are required to interact with not only their educators, but also among themselves to improve knowledge management. The individuals are required to work in collaboration and integration with each other. The collaboration and integration needs to be promoted among educators and students and among students themselves. In normally higher educational institutions, group projects are encouraged, in which the students are required to collaborate and integrate with each other. In improving knowledge management, the educators and students support the exchange and dissemination of knowledge and share good practices.

Implementing Effective Teaching Methods – When the educators are making use of innovative methods, they need to ensure that they implement effective teaching methods, which may prove to be beneficial to the students in achievement of desired academic outcomes. The teaching methods can be made effective by making use of innovations, which may include, technologies, models, charts, posters, diagrams, various types of reading materials and so forth. When the educators are making use of effective teaching methods, it is vital for them to possess adequate skills and knowledge. The teaching methods are normally implemented in accordance to grade levels of students, subjects and concepts and learning abilities. Research has indicated that with advancements taking place in the teaching-learning methods, there have been improvements made in the overall system of education.

Improving Human Conditions – When it is stated improving human conditions, then it primarily is referred to bringing about improvements in infrastructure and amenities within the educational institutions. Within the classroom environment, it is necessary for the educators to make sure that proper facilities and equipment are available. Within the classroom settings, to promote innovative methods and for learning to take place in an adequate manner, the main aspects that need to be taken into account are, making provision of proper furniture, heating and cooling equipment in accordance to the weather conditions, electricity, proper teaching-learning materials and technologies. To bring about improvements in human conditions, it is vital to explore human resources, which may assist in reinforcement of innovation. The administrators in educational institutions are required to establish contacts with professionals and experts, who would assist in the development of modern and innovative strategies and approaches.

PLANNING OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Planning of financial resources is regarded to be of utmost significance, especially when improvements or changes in any aspects need to be initiated, when programs, policies and schemes need to be formulated or when modern, scientific or innovative methods need to be introduced. In other words, for the overall functioning of the educational institutions, planning of financial resources is regarded to be of utmost significance. The financial resources usually differ between educational institutions. When the educational institutions possess adequate financial resources, they are able to bring about changes and developments in an appropriate manner. On the other hand, when educational institutions do not possess adequate financial resources, they experience issues in promoting changes and developments. Therefore, it is vital for the educational institutions at all levels to adequately plan financial resources. The skills and abilities are referred to as the engines of economic growth and social development of the country (Goel, n.d.). Insufficient financial resources are regarded as barriers within the course of progression of the overall system of education. In the present existence, to achieve academic goals and objectives, it is necessary to make use of modern, scientific and innovative methods in the teaching-learning processes and instructional strategies.

Elementary education forms the largest proportion of expenditures on education. In 2012-2013, 1631.04 billion was spent by the central and state governments of education on elementary education. The amount that was spent on elementary education was more as compared to other levels of education. Within the elementary education sector, allocations are made by the Ministry of Human Resource Development for a number of schemes, the largest schemes were the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid-day Meal Scheme (Bapna, & Sharma, 2015). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in 2001. It has the primary objectives of bringing about improvements in the infrastructural facilities, training and aptitudes of the teachers, filling vacancies and so forth. Whereas, Mid-day Meal Scheme was launched in 1995, it has the primary objective of making provision of nutritious meals to the students to augment their energy levels, so they are able to concentrate well on their studies. The financial resources are spent on the organization of workshops, and seminars.

CONCLUSION

In India, improvements need to be initiated within the standards of education. In particularly rural communities, schools are not in a well-developed state and improvements need to be brought about within the overall environmental conditions within schools. The main strategies which need to be identified to improve standards of education are, leadership, policies and practices, activities and programs, amiable terms and relationships, classroom practices, counselling and guidance services, infrastructural facilities and amenities, constructive feedback, acknowledging viewpoints and perspectives, increasing motivation, pedagogy and evaluation methods. Apart from these strategies, the standards of education can be improved by providing spacious classrooms, furniture, equipment, tools, teaching-learning methods and materials, playgrounds, creative and extra-curricular activities and so forth. The school authorities, educators, and the staff members need to pay adequate attention towards the areas that need to be improved. When they feel that improvements need to be made, they should implement the programs, methods and approaches in an appropriate manner.

Innovation has rendered a significant contribution in bringing about improvements in the standards of education. The major aspects that are improved as a result of use of innovative methods and digital technologies are, development of regulatory, institutional and organizational frameworks, innovative pedagogic models, increased access and participation in the digital economy, use of digital technologies within classroom settings, complete governance and management, fostering and assessing creative and critical thinking skills, promotion of entrepreneurship education, improving knowledge management, implementing effective teaching methods and improving human conditions. When strategies, programs and measures need to be formulated or when innovative methods need to be brought about in the implementation of teaching-learning methods, instructional strategies or in other tasks and activities, then it is vital for the educational institutions to possess sufficient financial resources. Organization of seminars and workshops are an integral part of education. They have the primary objective of generating awareness and augmenting skills and abilities of the individuals. Hence, they also require financial resources. Finally, it can be stated that making improvements in the standards of education augments the knowledge and skills of the individuals in promoting better livelihoods opportunities and becoming productive citizens of the country.

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