Knowledge Management for Quality Open Education

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In the age of information and communication revolution, leaders in education can come from anywhere. The best quality education will dominate, regardless of its national origins, ushering a globally competitive regime, making the globalisation of education inevitable. Education today, is being seen as a marketable commodity, which can be imported and exported. The developed nations are already in the market with their educational courses as a commodity. Similarly, the Government of India is serious to enter and capture the world market of education to market its educational programmes/courses as a commodity by adopting three modes. One, by setting up educational campuses abroad. Two, by offering educational programmes in the foreign countries through tie-up or collaborations with the educational institutions. And three, by admitting foreign and NRI students in our educational institutions. In this connection, a few Indian institutions have been given the freedom to take the global way using any of the modes. Unfortunately, the results so far have not been found encouraging because of the only reason — poor quality of education.

The quality of education is an important measure of productivity and prosperity of a nation. Social, political and economic changes and reforms are possible only through education. Organisation and management of resources, their utilisation up to the optimum level, and the techniques of utilising those resources, all these measures depend upon the sufficiency and efficiency of the people of the country. The development of quality resource persons depends on the quality of education. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the system of education, which produce efficient manpower to inculcate quality in education.

To infuse quality in education planned and purposeful efforts are required to be put in. For this purpose, we need to develop a built-in mechanism, which may keep a constant watch on the international developments, quality of students learning, market of educational courses to arrive at an appropriate benchmark for quality education both in terms of theory and practice. In order to generate built-in conventional systems of education, we need to infuse quality in education systems by encouraging students and the teaching community in the following domains:

- Personal Domain,
- Social Domain,
- Earning to live Domain, and
- Continuing Learning Domain.

To develop quality in education, the system of education needs to recognise strategic resources, and ensure their long-term supply. Studies by Narayana Murty and others reveal that to improve quality of education requires the system of education, human intellect, technology and process as per the customers preferences, technology change, educational models, paradigms and rules quickly become obsolete. The success of the Indian system of education will depend on the ability to recognise and assimilate these changes to bring market values to our students by leveraging the assimilated knowledge by providing:

- Quality Experience,
- Quality Internal Process,
- Efficient Instructional Design,
- Curriculum Planning, and
- Institutional Planning.

Processing Knowledge for Quality Education

Effective management of Knowledge to develop quality skills and healthy attitudes are essential in processing educational courses is a sort of challenge to move from information to insight. For the purpose, the future winners will be those nations that will escape from the gravitational pull of the part and will work on the fuel of innovations both in the conventional and the open/distance systems of education. This implies that every nation aspiring for quality education has to create incentives for the people to be innovative at all times and at all stages to enrich educational programmes to encourage:

- Human Resource Development,
- Information System Design,
- Physical Resource Development,
- Financial Management, and;
- Project Management.

In brief, processing knowledge for quality management demands promotion of specialities and super specialities.

Super specialised Knowledge for Quality Education

Quality education is imperative in knowledge society as it inspires the knowledge workers to be innovative, viz., think globally and design locally. Quality education speeds up a trend of a shift from general education to specialised education from micro specialisations to super specialisations. Adoption of super specialised approach to quality education programme embraces theory and practices by working on the principles of Predictability-Sustainability-Profitability-De-risking (i.e. PSPDModel, Kulkarni, 2001) in developing PSPD Model of Education we need to innovate new knowledge practices in three paradigms:

- Theories of human learning,
- Systems thinking, and;
- Theories of knowledge formation.

Theories of Human Learning for Quality Education

The application of learning theories concerns to improve quality of education to make the system of education to be learner centred. (Naik, 2001) Theories of human learning enables a knowledge worker to understand cognition and meta-cognition, impact of motivation on learning and behaviour to improve quality of instruction in a system of education. Because, cognition deals with the use of memory structures to mentally grasp the environmental situations, acquire knowledge in different forms, codify it and store it in an organised way for future use. Similarly, meta-cognition gives insight into knowing about internal cognitive process and its links with emotions and overt behaviour. The knowledge of learning theories enables the learner to work as a self-regulated learner. To equip and maintain him/her as an active learner the teacher has to know the factors that keep a learner motivated to learn continuously to maintain quality in education. The knowledge of the principles of learning theories influence the learner to improve the quality of learning in a system of education by motivating the learner:

- Whatever a student learns, he must learn for himself — no one can learn for him.
- Each student learns at his own rate and at any age group, the variations in the rate of learning are considerable.

- A student learns more when each step is immediately strengthened or reinforced.
- Full, rather partial, mastery of each step makes the total learning meaningful.
- When given responsibility for his own learning, the student is more highly motivated; he/she learns and retains more.

The study of human learning theories provide opportunity to improve the quality of instruction, level of retention and application of knowledge facilitating the systematic thinking for evolution of quality education.

Systems Thinking for Quality Education

Systems thinking is a rational method of analysing the problem in relation to its related situations. For analysing problem in a system, the whole system is divided in three parts, i.e., Input, Process and Output. Similarly, systems thinking encourage the use of knowledge to improve quality of education in terms of multiple interactions between phenomena and link between problems. Systems thinking encounter the problems in relation to global and local situations. Research in managements sciences reveals that no professional educator dreams of solving any educational problems without systems thinking. Systems thinking helps to approach to solve problems of quality education at two levels, viz., a.) Structural Level, b.) Functional Level.

Structural Level

Systems thinking at structural level works to improve quality of education in terms of eight structures such as:

- Boundary,
- Supra system,
- Interface,
- Proposed output,
- Input,
- Conversation process,
- Actual output, and;
- Feedback.

Functional Level

Functional level of systems thinking enables to improve quality of education by adopting four functions:

- Goal attainment,
- Adoption,
- Integration, and
- Pattern maintenance.

Knowledge Theories for Quality Educaiton

Knowledge theories advocates that knowledge is formed in three ways:

- Proportional knowledge/Public knowledge,
- Personal knowledge, and
- Process knowledge.

All types of knowledge is useful to improve in the current quality of education scenario of our education system in India. Managers of education use only their personal knowledge (which is tacit and incommunicable) as a result, despite of concentrated efforts, our quality of education is not improving swiftly and up to the expected levels. Secondly, there are no concerted efforts to acquire scientific and professional knowledge base already available and there is no organised way of using the process knowledge. The use of process knowledge can prove useful to facilitate the system of education for quality improvement. In processing knowledge to uplift quality in the educational practices, the learner and the teacher need to devise interactive strategies:

- Acquisitum of knowledge,
- Skill development,
- Deliberative process,
- Giving information to the client, and
- Controlling behaviour.

Management of Knowledge for Quality Education

Processing of knowledge and its efficient management are important ingredients to make change in the quality of education both in conventional and non-formal systems. Improvement in the quality of education also needs to have a mind set for change. For instance, there are lecturers and administrators who do not want to change. They want to do things they had been doing in the past. They usually represent old people/old minds. There are others who enjoy change. They are progressive in nature. There are yet others who want to bring the change faster. They are the leaders who like to think as if tomorrow has arrived today and what they have to do for quality improvement in the system of education by encouraging:

- Leadership,
- Bench making,
- Statistical method of analysis,
- Employees involvement,
- Customer approach,
- Develop quality centred culture,
- Plan-do-check-act,
- Integration of manpower and physical resources, and
- Constant Revision of Syllabus and Methods of Interaction.

Lifelong Learning Culture for Quality Education

Above all, quality education programme can be made successful by efficient working to achieve genuine ambitions in maintaining global standards. Studies reveal that Indian conventional as well as non-conventional systems of education are lagging today not because we lack the capacity and resources, but we lack dreams. Besides, we underestimate overselves. What we need now are high visions and missions for knowledge management to develop human resource. For instance (Sandhu. S., 2002) says that we need to create a culture of continuous learning. With the help of technology, learning has to be made available innovatively and virtually at their place with an ease of access. As education and business cycles are now subject to the scrutiny of quarterly results, people will have a difficult time balancing short term imperatives against long-term goals. They may no longer be available for intensive training. We will have to create shorter training modules preferably through distance learning.

Knowledge management will be the focus for harnessing individual talent and building competence. People now look beyond the monetary rewards to acquiring of knowledge. People with knowledge and competence will hold the power to shape the future. Success will be in achieving excellence through retention of such people. In fact it is a fundamental challenge for human resource leaders to identify and nurture talent. Leaders must accord top priority to management and development of talent at all levels. Human resource leaders must spearhead the movement to transform managers into effective coaches. While investing in nurturing the talent and harnessing the individual's brilliance within the the organisation framework, human resource leaders will need to create an environment of openness. They have to build a culture of listening that will facilitate and encourage people to suggest and execute ideas. Human resource in the new millennium will play an important role to improve the quality of people in an organisation that will share equal responsibility for accountability of results and contribution to the bottom-line.

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