

Chapter 7

Higher Education in the Post–COVID Era: An Approach Towards Developing a New Blended Learning Model

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ABSTRACT

With the changing time, the innovative technologies and communication systems have given a new vision to the education sector. The growing number of young people has brought attention to the higher education system to build a new form of learning. The new perspectives towards education systems have brought a blend of virtual as well as traditional modes of learning, known as “blended learning.” The purpose of this chapter is to understand the impact of COVID-19 on teaching learning practices of higher education institutes (HEI) and to understand the influence of a blended learning approach on attitude and behavioral aspects of the learners and teaching professionals.

INTRODUCTION

With the changing time, the innovative technologies and communication systems have gave a new vision to the education sector. The growing number of young people has brought an attention to the higher education system to build a new form of learning. The conventional mode of learning has no more its major existence in most of the universities but, it cannot be vanished at all. The new perspectives towards education system have brought a blend of virtual as well as traditional mode of learning, known

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as “Blended Learning”. The concept of Blended Learning is not new. Blended Learning (BL) was first introduced in the late 1990’s by numerous universities in Canada and United States as a hybrid method where the teaching and learning process is carried out through face to face and online learning (Ghazali et al. 2018).

Blended learning plays an important role in students’ learning as it equips them with the skills and knowledge required for their industry employment (Wong et al. 2018). BL mixes concept understanding and enquiry-based learning which retains the flavor of human interaction in education and allows combining traditional classroom methods with online-digital mediums. It is significant to note that BL is not equivalent to technology - rich teaching; the whole purpose of BL is to give the student an edge in his or her education growth path, using technology as an enabler.

It will be a win - win situation for educators and learners if made “Queen Sacrifices”! It simply means universities letting go off their traditional teaching methods and adopt BL. Technology, Instructors and students will blend according to the context and the content. It is pertinent to note that the gap between academic instruction and industry expectation from the students is growing every day. The rate of change in technology will continue to surpass the change in university curriculum. It is not very overwhelming to see students spending more than 20 years in the education system with unattractive job prospects. The solution is in ‘BL’. It’s a specialized learning science that combines content delivery, understanding the psychology and behavioral analytics of the learner and asses to gauge and measure individual’s journey and progress.

This chapter has focused on the broader perspective of learning where distance education and virtual technologies have a major role to play. With this respect, the concept of Blended Learning has been the major focus area which has been successful to increase the learners’ interest in the process of own learning, and also further prepare students for future (Owston et al. 2019). Blended learning provides access to global course resources and syllabus that help instructors to improve teaching quality (Al-shami et al. 2019). It provides instructors with more prospects for collaboration for professional development and also improves teaching learning efficiency (Baragash and Al-Samarraie 2018). This chapter offers an insight into how blended learning can be reshaped, considering the new normal post - COVID -19 era.

Hence the role of Blended Learning in the higher education system will bring a transformation post pandemic. This will bring a revolution in the Indian education system as well. This chapter majorly focuses on the changing attitude and behavior of the students as well as the teaching professionals towards the new mode of learning in pre and post pandemic. Also the challenges faced by the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) towards implementation of blended learning during COVID19 and the possible recommendations for post COVID19. Many HEIs also have adopted new teaching pedagogy, new practices in virtual learning. Therefore, this chapter throws light on the new methodologies or practices of blended learning in Pre and Post COVID19 adopted by Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). Following are the major objectives:

- To broaden the horizon of readers towards the new teaching pedagogy and new methodologies/practices of blended learning Pre and Post COVID19
- To understand the impact of COVID19 on teaching learning practices of Higher education institutes (HEI)
- To understand the benefits and hurdles of applying blended learning approach and suggest methods and strategies to make blended learning process more effective and efficient

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