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Blended Learning: A Redefined Learning Strategy in the field of Secondary Education in the light of NEP 2020

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Abstract- Traditional Learning strategy is a learning process of bygone days. It is time to accept new learning strategy in the field of education. This new learning strategy of teaching and evaluation is a blend of traditional learning process which is conducted in the classroom and learning with the help of online mode. Outbreak of Covid-19 shows the pathway of using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the field of education for providing quality education to all. The National Education Policy lays emphasis on technology based digital education. Researchers found that Blended Learning is a fruitful learning process in the field of secondary education. Blended Teaching-Learning strategy faces various prospects as well as challenges to implement in different alma-maters.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Secondary Education, NEP 2020, Covid – 19, ICT

Introduction- With the advent of time, information technology becomes an integral of everyday life. Information technology penetrates its root into the field of education. Nowadays, Blended Learning becomes perfect teaching learning method because an instructor can utilize Learning Management System (LMS) such as Blackboard, WebCT, and Moodle provide opportunities for designing more interactive and enriched learning environments in online learning. Podcast, Screencast also helps the learners to decipher a study material easily. Crowd Sources which denote learning materials developed by others,

instead of taking the responsibility to create all the course content, help the instructor to provide required study materials to the pupil.

Hinterberger, Fassler and Bauer-Messer (2004) stated that “Blended Learning is a method of educating at a distance that uses technology, combined with traditional education, these we call hybrid courses. Blended learning, understood as a mix of old and new best practices in education has to be welcomed with the caveat that just mixing will not yield much of an improvement, unless the right recipe has been found.” (p.6)

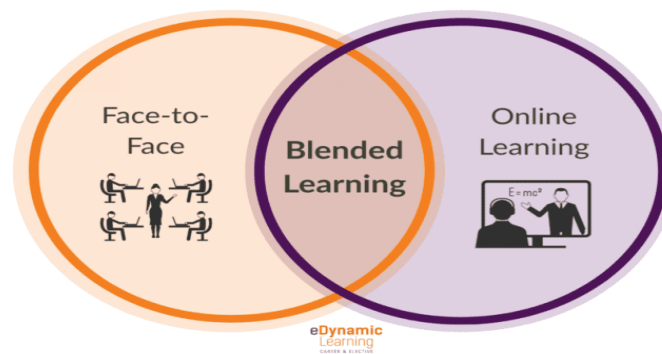


Fig.1 Venn Diagram of Blended Learning (eDynamicLearning,2019)

Graham, Allen and Ure (2003, 2005) observed that people choose Blended Learning because-

- (i) There are increased accessible course e-materials and flexibility in Blended Learning.
- (ii) Blended Learning has improved pedagogy which can be skilfully implemented by the instructor.
- (iii) Blended Learning is an increased cost effectiveness teaching learning strategy. As a result, students from economically weaker section can complete the course easily. Apart from this, students are eager to avail cost effective courses to fill up their gap of knowledge.

Importance of Blended Learning- Blended learning plays a pivotal role in the field of teaching and learning. The quality of the blended course can be enhanced by combining the advantages of both online and in person learning. Blended Learning Strategy is flexible and easy to access. It can help to increase learner’s motivation and pupil’s achievement of the course. Blended Learning strategy is important in the field learning because of the following-

- i) Asynchronous communication is possible in Blended Learning.
- ii) Students can access study materials easily.
- iii) No need for large buildings for conducting the Blended Learning process.
- iv) Blended Learning Strategy always prefers flexible lessons.

Blended Learning defined by NEP 2020-Part I (School Education) of National Education Policy 2020 exposes that The New Education Policy modified the previous 10+2 structure with new pedagogical and curriculum restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3 to 18.

In this article, the author tries to focus on the secondary level students who belong to class 9 and 10 at the age group 14 to 15.

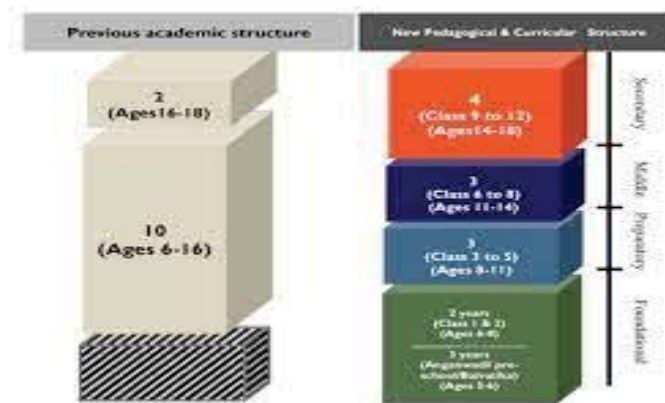


Fig.2 represents Previous academic structure and New Pedagogical and Curricular Structure

In part - III (Other Key Areas of Focus) Chapter 23, NEP 2020 lays emphasis on use of technology in the field of Education and its proper integration. The Digital India Campaign is helping the education sector to transform the nation into digitally empowered knowledge. Digitally empowered India shows the pathway to Online education beside traditional teaching-learning methods. Technology will impact the education sector in multiple ways. New technological inventions like artificial intelligence, machine learning, blackboard, Moodle, WebCT, software is helping the instructor to teach the students in online mode. The National Educational Forum (NETF), will be created to help for free exchange of ideas about the management, planning for school education.



All states will develop e-content related to teaching-learning methods in all regional languages. NCERT, CIET, CBSE, NIOS and other bodies or institutions will develop teaching-learning e-content and these institutions will upload these materials onto the DIKSHA platform.

Technology based educational platforms, such as DIKSHA and SHAYAM will be reviewed by the users. In this way, the content creator can develop user friendly and qualitative content.

Chapter-24 lays emphasis on utilization of ICT for arranging online based teaching-learning processes by using existing digital platforms for providing education for all.

Outbreak of pandemic Covid-19 hinders the traditional teaching-learning process. So an online / digital platform helps the education sector to continue the teaching-learning process. NEP 2020 focuses on the teachers required training which can enable teachers to be effective online educators. It is assumed that a good teacher in a traditional classroom will also be a good teacher in online class. Not only teaching but also online assessment plays a vital role in Blended Learning strategy because if a skilled teacher wants to assess a student, the teacher can provide questions online and also evaluate the answers with the help of tools in a digital platform.

NEP 2020 focuses on investment for digital infrastructure because without an adequate platform with a cluster of tools, an online teaching- learning program cannot be an effective platform.

SWAYAM, DIKSHA will be used to provide teachers with a rich set of assistive tools for monitoring progress of the students. Educational tools such as two- way video and two-way audio interfaces are useful for online classes as a part of Blended Learning.

NEP 2020 also lays emphasis on reducing Digital Divide by extensively using telecast and broadcast. These telecasts and broadcasts will be made available for 24/7 in different languages for the needs of learners. Online assessment will be conducted by appropriate bodies such as the National Assessment Centre or PARAKH, School Boards, NTA, with the help of portfolio, rubrics, standardized assessments and so on assessment related tools. Different effective models of Blended Learning will be used



Studies on Blended Learning- Several researchers had studied on Blended Learning in different stages of educational institutions. Their findings are as follows:

Sharma, A (2022) Found that blended learning-based instructions are effective in increasing students "achievement as compared to traditional teaching strategy. Blended learning proved helpful in reducing academic anxiety among students. There are some important educational implications for enhancing the quality and standard of instruction in English, managing academic anxiety and improving self-efficacy among students.

Neekita (2022) Found that the parents should also be well informed/orient about the use of Blended learning strategy in classroom through Parents-Teacher meeting. So that parents can also have a favourable attitude about the use of this strategy and contribute their part in providing the same flexible and convenient environment to students at home.

Chaudhari, H. S. (2021) Found that technology can play not only a vital role but also a revolutionary role which will replace the traditional or an orthodox method of teaching with the modern and innovative method. It can create stimulating environment of learning experience which will enhance the overall quality of learning process. Online discussions made possible by various chat lines create a new environment for teaching that we might call as virtual teaching. This digitalization will empower both instructor and learners with multiple opportunities which will become a source of constant inspiration.

Ghafoor, Y.A. Z. A. (2020) Found that the flipped method, if implemented in teaching English language skills at the tertiary level, has the potential to revolutionize the language learning scenario in the country. The post results clearly show that the flipped method is useful in imparting comprehension of such lessons as poetry and prose.

Senthil, B (2019) Found that this method infuses interest, and enthusiasm among them. As the present teaching learning process at the higher secondary level is rigid, time bound and outmoded, it was proposed to device learning tasks in the form of multimedia courseware, so that the learner could spend their time with the computer and feel motivated through personal involvement in the process of learning

Manavalan, I (2019) Found that the Gender, optional subject, computer knowledge and possession of Email Id has significant difference in the Learning style, Attitude and



Perception about The Information and Communication Technology. Obviously, computer knowledge and Use of Internet need to be enhanced among the student teachers. Attitudinal change has to be affected among the student teachers, as the Attitude towards ICT contributes the most toward Student teachers' Perception about ICT and the Learning styles with ICT.

Deivam, M (2020) Found that Blended Learning is very effective for teaching Educational Psychology among B.Ed trainees. The overall outcome of the study shows that effectiveness of Blended Learning has larger effect to get greater achievement in Educational Psychology. The study reveals that B.Ed Trainees "have positive attitude towards Blended Learning".

Parmar, A (2018) Found that mobile technology is accepted by language learners to great extent and can be effectively used to complement classroom Face-to-Face English language teaching and learning. Teachers can play a critical role to help students by analyzing students' learning goals and plan the classroom interaction accordingly so that students can take maximum benefit of mobile technology for their language learning.

SabnaE, A (2016) Found that Technology Enriched Task Based Language Teaching is very effective on Achievement in English and Self-Regulation of standard VIII students. Technology can be utilized for adopting modern styles which satisfies both visual and auditory senses of the students. It allows teachers to guide more and teach less. Task Based Language Teaching with technology enrichment helps students to practice English in an anxiety free classroom setting through learning by doing.

Naidu, C. S. (2015) Found that teachers are slowly realizing that traditional method of teaching are no longer capable of providing foundation that is strong enough to withstand the pressure of present scenario. The teachers need to be motivated for the use of multimedia whenever available in their respective subjects and the capable teachers also need to be empowered to develop such multimedia packages.

Advantages of Blended Learning- There are various advantages of Blended Learning. Advantages are-

- (i) Students can improve their reading skill by accessing a cluster of information online.
- (ii) Students can access e-materials anytime from anywhere.



- (iii) Students can post a comment online. In this way, students can develop their writing skill.
- (iv) Student can watch video related to their study. As a result, their listening skill can be developed.
- (v) Students can also communicate with the instructor as well as with other students synchronously. Students can develop their communication skill in this way.
- (vi) An instructor can provide study materials as well as study related instruction from anywhere.
- (vii) Blended Learning is a cost-effective teaching learning process. A student need not to go to educational institutions regularly.
- (viii) If a student cannot understand a video or an audio, the student can rewind the video or audio to understand properly.

Disadvantages of Blended Learning- Blended Learning is a fruitful teaching learning process but there are few major issues or challenges related to this teaching learning strategy. Major issues or challenges are:

- (i) Students have to watch mobile, laptop, desktop, tablet or any other electronic gadgets for a long time, it may cause problems with eyesight.
- (ii) Digital Divide is another barrier for implementing Blended Learning strategy for the students of back warded children who are from economically disadvantaged communities.
- (iii) Some students are unwilling to learn online.
- (iv) Learners may cheat at the time of online mode assessment.

Conclusion- To sum up, it can be said that Blended Learning Strategy helps students to gain knowledge and complete a course from anywhere. Irrespective of urban and rural areas, anyone can access study materials and they can participate online classes from anywhere. Students can also clear their doubts regarding study materials by attending the classroom teaching learning process.

Last but not the least, Blended Learning is a fruitful model for the future generation who prefers online mode of learning by utilizing mobile, internet, games and so on electronic



gadgets. Digital Divide should be decreased in this age of digital platform. At the time of online evaluation students should not cheat because there is a scope of cheat from the students end. Although there are some disadvantages of Blended Learning in teaching-learning process, various models of BL strategy are fruitful method for the ensuing days.

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