

TYPES OF INNOVATIONS AND KEY INDICATORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM: AN ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Change is the very basic rule of nature. Everything keeps on changing and evolving. Education sector too is not an exception to this rule. There have been tremendous changes in higher education sector since Covid-19 Pandemic. Education has being progressed from Gurukul to Google and virtual platforms now. Today the world has becomes one place. Hence now the traditional approach of chalk and talk method of teaching and learning in higher education must evolve to meet the today's needs of the global learner. But many of the teachers and education institutions are facing the challenges of keeping itself updated with the changing needs and expectations of the learners. Through this paper the author wants to depict the various types of innovation that are implemented in the higher education institutions, their importance and the main key indicators that allow measuring the effectiveness of these innovative initiatives.

Why we need innovation in Higher Education system?

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." - Charles Darwin

Innovations in all sectors are going to continue and accelerate in the coming decades. Innovation helps a person to stay relevant, updated and sustainable in this unpredictable global world. If any university want to remain a sustainable identity and maintain its glory then, it must adopt innovation in the field of education else it will perish soon. This may includes resetting of curriculum, cross disciplinary learning etc. Research Projects, Apprentice, internship must also be taken into consideration to enhance the overall educational experience of the learner.

The traditional approach of teaching and learning in higher education institutions is centered on the concept of transmission of knowledge from the instructor to the learner. This approach strongly emphasis on lectures, textbooks, and traditional exams methods. This may prove to be can be passive and disengaging for the students. In today's digital world, where information is readily available at our fingertips within a second of moment, this approach is becoming increasingly outdated one.

In order to prepare students/learners for the challenges of the coming technological era, we need to shift our approach of teaching and learning method by bring out innovation in it. Education must help learner in developing their skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration, rather than simply memorizing and reproducing information in the exams. We need to create more engaging and interactive learning experiences that allow students to apply their knowledge in real-world situations. By doing so, we can better prepare students for success in their future careers.

Types of Innovation in Higher Education Sector:

There are various forms of innovations which can be incorporated by the higher education institutes so as to make teaching learning process more interesting and enhancing the quality of education. Following are the major innovations which are commonly observed in higher education sector.

1) Technological Innovation:

Technological innovations are impacting all higher education institutes. It means integrating and adopting new technologies to enhance the teaching- learning, assessment, evaluation and research process. Technological innovation promotes greater accessibility, interactivity, and customization of academic content. One of the advantages of it is that, it facilitates communication and collaboration among learner and the teacher. Examples (LMS), MOOCS, online course delivery platforms, Google Classrooms, virtual reality simulations, educational apps (Zoom, Google Meet), and data analytics tools.

2) Pedagogical Innovations:

It means exploring and following novel teaching learning methods, instructional strategies, and evaluation and assessment techniques. This in turn will enhance learner's engagement in the process, retention of interest, and learning outcomes. Apart from the traditional approaches, new approaches to teaching learning, such as flipped classrooms, project-based learning, gamification learning, problem-solving activities, experiential learning and hybrid learning, service learning method comes under Pedagogical innovation.

3) Organizational Innovations:

Organizational innovation involves restructuring, reengineering, or introducing new processes, policies, and practices. This is done so as to improve higher education institutions' efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness. This may include initiatives such as strategic planning, quality assurance mechanisms, leadership development programs, decentralized decision-making structures, and cross-functional collaboration initiatives. It aims to foster a culture of continuous improvement, adaptability, and innovation within academic institutions, enabling them to more effectively meet the changing requirements of their students, faculty, and other stakeholders. Changes in the institutional structure are made so as to match the modern requirement. Creation of innovation centres, Placement cells, Student Exchange Cell, can come under this head.

4) Social Innovations:

Various initiatives that provide and foster inclusion and equitable access to quality education to all segments of the society are called social innovation.

5) Curriculum Innovation:

It aims at restructuring the syllabi in such a way that it suffices the evolving educational goals, meet industry needs, and enhances student interests in the course. This can be done by adding new courses or interdisciplinary programs or updating existing curriculum to bridge the gap between achieved skills and industry needed skills

Key Indicators to measure the Effectiveness of Innovation in Higher Education sector:

Introducing innovation in higher education is one part but evaluating them so as to understand how effective they are, is another important aspect in the field of education. Following are the Key indicators:

- **Technology adoption rate of student and teachers in the institution:**

The percentage of students and teachers who effectively use new technologies implemented in teaching learning process has to be calculated. If number of users is increasing day by day we can say that the outcome is meeting the objectives of the curriculum.

- **Quality of teaching ,learning, assessment and evaluation:**

This can be done through Periodic evaluations of Students performance in the institution. Survey method can be used for it. Various surveys must be carried out to measure whether the new innovative methods are achieving the desired goals as set forth.

- **Professional development of teachers/Instructors:**

If the institution continuously undertakes various types of Professional development education programmes for teachers/instructors then it clearly reflects the institution's commitment to innovation.

- **Research projects undertaken in the institution:**

Collaborative research work by the intuition on the campus and research undertaken by joint venture between different universities, companies and research centres for addressing complex and burning issues, also depicts the trend of the institution. Interdisciplinary Research, Data-Driven Research, Technology-Driven Research etc. must be carried out intensely. The institution must promote research culture in undergraduate programmes itself.

- **Sustainability and Social Responsibility practices on and off the campus.**

Nowadays the incorporation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability is of vital importance for higher education institution future development. Higher education institution's key role in solving economic, social and environmental problems is also taken into consideration while assessing the performance of the said institutions. Universities all over the world have a moral obligation to contribute for achieving the sustainable development goal. It can be achieved by

1. Conducting scientific research at three tier level. (Regional, national and global levels).
2. Increasing the quality of education at all levels (primary elementary and higher education).
3. Creating fair and inclusive educational environment in the institutions.
4. Developing and bringing out digital transformation in higher education.

- **Academic Results of the Institutions:**

Last but not least, finally the academic outcomes (results), such as graduation rates and employability rates, are direct indicators of the success of educational innovation. How many students have been awarded the degree? What is the drop out ratio? How many students have come in merit list? What is student passing ratio? All these things clearly reflect to what extent innovative approaches and techniques have made impact on our teaching, learning, assessments and evaluation process.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

Innovation in higher education is not only a trend, but the very necessary requisite to face the educational challenges posed by this digital, virtual world. Institutions that adopt and fosters integrate emerging technologies such as Digital Credentials, innovative pedagogical methods and flexible organizational structures are better equipped to deliver quality education that responds to changing market demands. However, it is not enough to innovate for the sake of innovation only. It is equally important to measure the impact of these innovative initiatives through various key indicators. This will help us to assess and know whether they are really generating improvements in the student's experience in education, teacher training methods and academic results outcome. Universities that achieve this are not only responding to global changes effectively and positively, but are also maintaining their leading position and glory despite so many changes taking place in education sector. So now innovation in education method is the real key for surviving of any institution may it be any school, college or any university.

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