

Education System - The New Paradigm

“Look Outside - Inside”

Abstract

The paper titled ‘Education System - The New Paradigm’ is primarily focused in Indian context, though the challenges and need for change globally is not much different. To stay focused and relevant from next steps perspective, the focus is kept on India Education System and potential change requirements. Some of the global references are appropriately referred to create connect India with global developments; however, it would be required to contextualise each of those pointers and observations in India context. In Indian context, it is also about Bharat and India as well. The socio-economic-geo-political scenario and related challenges in India are very different in more than one way, esp when consider change factors.

Technology-led disruptions playing a key role in New Norms, with abrupt disruption caused by CORONA’19.

Fundamentally, an effort is made to look at current challenges and propose future-proof NextGen Education System. The comfort factor of every stakeholders needs to be touched, shakeup the most powerful & currently deeper ecosystem players, and pave path for broadening the Education Ecosystem with new participants with their game-changing roleplay.

We all may like it or not, we need to debate and find answer to “How to Make Teaching a Career by Choice, of Choice”. Another big stigma attached with Education sector being highly commercial. Education is NOT about marks and score to find better paid job with fancy titles. Education is more about learning than teaching, more so in today’s World. Time to look @ larger career options with respect, basis capability-ability-&-interest of the person. Education is NOT about superiority. True Counselling is NOT an affair of 60-90 minutes sitting, it is like tick in the box.

Education System’s all-round transformation alone can significantly add to GDP growth through employment and business opportunities. Further, such a transformation can significantly reduce the burden on subsidies that is currently an expensive burden on the Economy under Government’s socio-economic’ program.

The paper aims at certain fundamentals with some of the solutions proposed with hard-realities and challenges by impressing upon the need for Change on yesteryear basis.

This paper is from an Industry practitioner having deep & actionable interest & engagements with academia for over one-and-a-half decade actively.

“A disclaimer here, there is no intention and/or attempt or effort to make any specific reflection on anyone as Individual and/or Institution and/or System. All in this are certain observations on current scenario and an effort to make some proposals towards change for betterment in larger interest.”

Resume

Sudhir was named as 'IT Industry Leader' in 2010 by eGov (CSDMS).

Advisor Member, "Futureskillsforce", Amity Online.

Sudhir has been named 'RISHI' by Re:Think India in June' 2020.

Sudhir has achieved first Copyright on his new concept 'WANG@*', while few are underway.

For more than 25 years, Sudhir has performed various Leadership roles with Indian MNC and MNC companies in India.

Sudhir is Chief Relationship Officer with Niveshan Technologies India Pvt. Ltd.

Sudhir comes with more than 35 years of experience, having worked in Leadership positions with HCL, IBM, Oracle, Thomson Reuters, and Sify Technologies.

Sudhir was privileged to successfully create Government Business twice in his Professional Career with Sify Technologies and Thomson Reuters.

Sudhir has performed various roles from Software Development through a Business Leader today.

Sudhir is a Thought Leader and SME (Subject Matter Expert) in Government Ecosystem.

Writing, Mentoring, Speaker & Fellow Panelist, Jury, Moderation, ... comes natural to Sudhir.

Sudhir has special interests with Academia for more than 15 years in various roles.

Sudhir believes in certain soft aspects of life like Human Being a product of ecosystem, and one must give its 2cents back to the Society.

Sudhir is Commerce Graduate with one-year Certificate course from NIIT in 1985.

Sudhir is married to Subah, blessed with Son Suvrat and daughter Sweekriti.

* WANG@: What Am Not Good @, doesn't mean weakness. Need to work up on and take care.

Introduction

Education System in India is extremely overdue for change. Not change, Education System require all-round Disruptive Transformational Transformation as no incremental change will work. It is due on yesteryears basis; every day delay puts the Country exponentially back. Education system has not been able to keep pace with changes happening in the society, business, and globally. Research, Innovation, and serious efforts at forward looking scenarios in spirit continues to be missing.

With more than 50% citizens under the age of 25, more than 65% under the age of 35, and expected to add 230M by 2050 - it can prove to be for any Nation either way. Currently, it has been on wrong side of proposition; though there is a great potential to turnaround this in Nation's interest. Education alone holds the power, propensity, and potential to turn this around.

It requires one disruptive effort of going back to drawing board, look outside-inside, drop all or carry no baggage of legacy, eye @ 2050, 2075, 2100, ... and create a roadmap-led revolutionary disruption. An all-round careful change-over and change management rollover plan for this revolution will be most critical as everyone (I responsibly repeat, everyone) will be impacted without any exception; some may get impacted more, some less, and some may become redundant and/or irrelevant.

Broadly, it may be fair to bring these disruptive transformation interventions under three broad categories:

1. Education System comprising of Education Policy, Course Curriculum, Course Content, Delivery Channel and Delivery System, Assessment and Evaluation, ... with focus on future-proof "Schools & Education Institutions of Future".
2. Today's Supply Side including, not limited to, Schools and Education Institutions, Faculty & Teaching fraternity, Subject Matter Experts (SME), Policy Makers, Investors, ...
3. The demand side like Industry, Students, Parents, ... who practically have NO say in entire system; though some murmuring has started to happen, but only at noise level. This is one of the key concerns and cause of current system and situation.

Lately, with technology intervention and development, some noises have begun to happen; but not really in true sense and effectively as these are driven around business plan of active players. COVID'19 has shaken and pushed everyone on the earth pretty much, all are looking at Technology-led options; again, in most reactive manner without any preparation, understanding, assessment, ... of implementation and impact. Currently, this is a 'tick' in the box to keep so-called continuity. It would be safe to say, pretty much all stakeholders do understand what is happening; somehow everyone feels comfortable to hold the horses and let it happen.

Challenges like Relevance, Affordability, Employability, Adoptability, Manageability, Reach the Un-reach, and other similar reasons are given. In last three to four decades, more so in last two decades, the World has changed as never before; not even as conceptualized and/or thought of by people. Everyone has been talking about obsolesce and related challenges, but hardly anything meaningfully is being done by design in holistic manner.

Key Considerations and Focus for now

1. First and foremost, there is compelling need to bring some of the demand side (point 3 above) stakeholders in the center of everything and action. Some of the other demand side stakeholders have to be brought in the system as critical stakeholders. fundamentally, demand side stakeholders matter more than ever for more than one reasons.
'Taare Zameen Par' and '3 Idiots' conveys and communicates a lot, Worth looking at.
2. Monolith Education Curriculum and System needs revamp, break into manageable pieces from relevance & manageability perspective with roles-responsibilities for respective stakeholders. if point 1 above is done judiciously, this shall become natural and/or significantly easy to build-on and achieve the desired result.
3. If 1 and 2 are done well, largely rest will fall in place. A key requirement and/or one of the most Critical Success Factor (CSF) would be for supply side to 'learn the science and art of Let-Go' in larger and genuine interest of next generations. This is among the most-critical and equally tough to achieve, but no option. Everything can progress or remain status-quo if not achieved by design.

'NextGen Education System' forever and all the times to come be the theme. 'NextGen' has certain unique given characteristics like 360-degree disruptive transformational transformation all the times like an unending journey.

All stakeholders need to come on-board with open mind, constructive-in-nature, and preferably with zero baggage unlike "Hamare Zamane Mein", "I Know everything", ...

Special Attention Please: *It would be critical to flag a very serious concern and preempt a significant caution in current context, i.e. COVID'19. Apparently, no one is really talking, working, and/or acting on the impact of COVID'19 on Toddlers. This is the age of natural evolution and natural growth with their innocence in new world with other kids. This is the time, these kids learn to step out of their home (comfort zone, position of demanding, being served 100% under various considerations) and learn the outside World.*

Currently, these toddlers are packed in their respective home for more than one reasons. Parents don't know what to do and how to respond to current situation, do not to take risk under fear, peer pressure, and other genuine and perceived considerations. Education Institutions are no different, except they are NOT willing to take any exposure. They want to be on the side of 'Safe'. Government is keeping blind to the situation for additionally Political exposure. Unfortunately, no one seems to be thinking out of box by understanding the impact of this on today's toddlers. The impact will be long-term and quite damaging.

By the time people will realise, it would be too late. Damage would have happened. These toddlers are growing within four walls of the house with all possible restrictions. They are under extreme influence of family, certainly not natural growth.

A Critical Analysis of current situation

What is and/or can be single most reason for this current continued situation!

It is still being persuaded and totally executed 360-degree by supply-side, i.e. Academia with little checks & balances through Government interventions and Political tinkering. With all due respect to Academia, for two reasons (a) Academia is and continues to be supply side (b) there is a massive requirement of transformational transformation on Academia end in current times and context.

It shall be read and understood in right spirit that demand side will come under heavy pressure to accept and act upon New Norms beyond expectations. It would be a shock like 'COVID'19' to supply side, when everything came to standstill and unlocking happening in batches and bits & pieces. People are still not able to cope up with it under FUD (Fear Uncertainty and Doubt).

The demand side is missing in entire proposition, esp. from meaningful interventions & active participation perspective as seamless integral stakeholder. The demand side has two-fold stakeholders (a) Industry and (b) students. As of today, these two stakeholders are grossly missing in any & all efforts of any change in Education System in India. Industry needs to ask for its positioning and play more active role with full responsibility, commitment, and appropriate investments. Students are most simple, absolutely adaptable, and significantly critical stakeholders.

It is all about the need of the hour than anything else. India has already crossed the threshold and running far-far behind. The gap is widening so much that any recovery and/or catch up seems out of sight.

Very interesting observations on current Education System globally by World Economic Forum, highlighting Education relevance, future jobs, financial burden of Education system on Students,

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/our-education-system-is-losing-relevance-heres-how-to-update-it/>

"In the report, ***Micro-credentialing as a sustainable way forward for universities in Australia: Perceptions of the landscape***, authors Dr Ratna Selvaratnam from Edith Cowan University and Professor Michael Sankey from Griffith University argue the rapidly evolving landscape is an opportunity for universities to reconsider how they offer education. Dealing with some of the same challenges with longer courses the VET (Vocational Education and Training) sector faces, they allude to a future where degrees may not be fit-for-purpose: "In a time where knowledge and skills need to be updated constantly, a three or four-year degree may not suit the currency required in many jobs and other work," the report says."

Need for Transformation

In one sentence; in last two decades esp., Education System has called for change so significantly in terms of requirements, expectations, and delivery that it requires surgical strike and rebuild.

“These outdated systems limit access to the skills needed to drive prosperous economies and pose risks for global productivity. According to one recent estimate, as much as US\$11.5 trillion could be added to global GDP by 2028 if countries succeed in better preparing learners for the needs of the future economy.”

The report has very interesting observation and interventions, while talking of Education 4.0 aligned with New Models of Education for the Industrial Evolution 4.0.

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Schools_of_the_Future_Report_2019.pdf

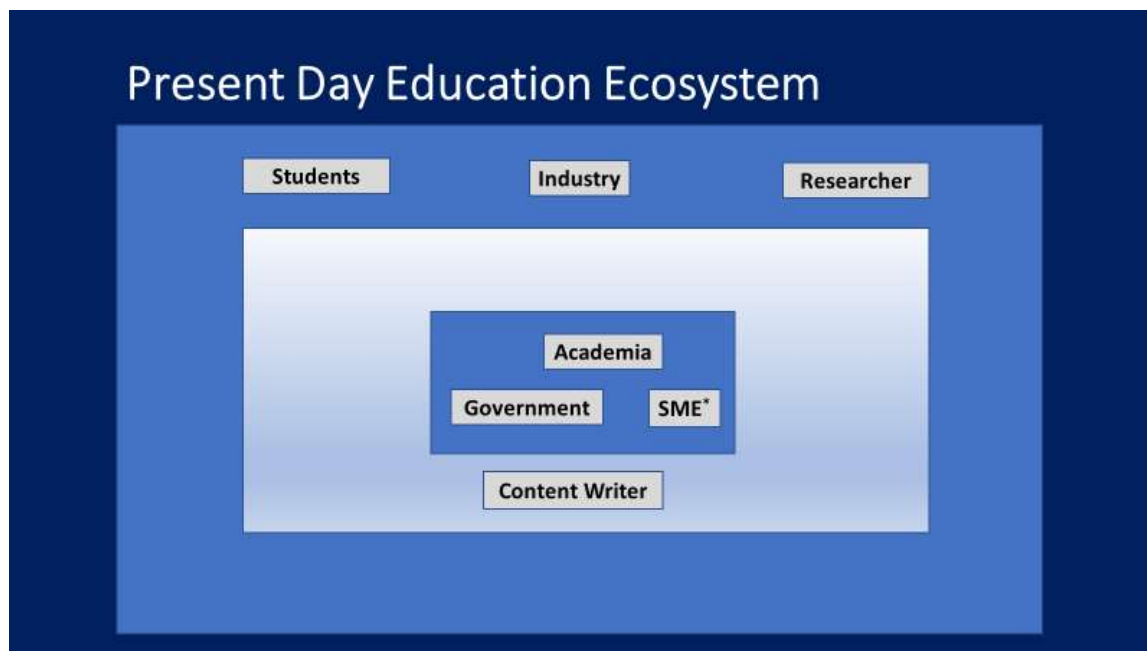
The ACODE research concludes by saying the AQF (Australian Qualifications Framework) review will spur action for higher educators. “The review of the AQF recommends the recognition of micro-credentials. This provides the additional impetus for institutions to consider micro-credentialing. The low-hanging fruits would be short courses and postgraduate programs. An area for higher education institutions to work on would be to have policies to govern this work in their institutions and to formalise micro-credentialing.”

<https://www.vettrak.com.au/vettrak-blog/microcredentials-2020/>

It is time to holistically acknowledge and act strategically with BIG picture in mind. Revolutionary Transformation in Evolutionary manner (even evolutionary would need to be @ the pace of revolutionary) over 5 to 10 years is possibly only the way forward, over next one decade. Among the key reasons:

- To reiterate, current Education System in entirety has become irrelevant, more so in current context that is defined below through some of the pointers.
- Digital disruptions have caused 360⁰ impact on every aspect & element of Education.
- New Businesses and New Business Model.
- Need for all-round 360⁰ Reskilling as never before, the single most critical success factors.
- Society need to understand, relate, acknowledge, accept, and respect New Job roles as around 48% current jobs may not exist or be relevant by 2030.
- Current teaching system continues to be Supply → Demand. In today’s times, the gap between the need of the hour and current availability is widening by the day at a pace that people have stopped tracking.
- Education fundamentals like admission criteria and process, evaluation and assessment, ... continues to be age-old of 20th and earlier centuries. Some may claim having acted upon over year, that is purely incremental in larger context, insufficient and nowhere close to reality.
- Currently, focus in on marks and grading than ensure learning, hence the system calls for shift from teaching to learning.

- Our Education system produces employees, entrepreneurship through innovation during education is kind of missing.
- Skill gap and insufficient Industry readiness of fresh(ers) YoY, Industry invests minimum 6 months +/- to make freshers be productive. Majority of pass-outs are not even employable. This is one of the reasons, Universities and Colleges with good track record of 'Campus Selections' are preferred over others.
- Education Content, need for Content revision constantly & consistently, form of Content, and Content delivery, ... are among the weakest link. One of the key reasons for this has been 'supply side'-led. Supply side has NOT exerted the system with ownership and realization.
- Education for All, Reach the Un-reach, and Affordable Education.
- Current focus on select streams and courses under multiple influence, both positive and negative has restricted the education options, and created a huge ever-widening gap among available courses and courses of choice.
- Superiority of Education Institutions in terms of premier and/or prestigious has been on both sides' mindset, i.e. demand and supply side. This has created an artificial layer in the Society like poison.
- Students and Parents are mostly on receiving end like no one in the system, with almost zero say or influence in entire Education system.
- Insufficient and inadequate Government policy alignment & interventions with fast changing times. Over years, in a way, government has allowed developments in education system under the pressure of ever-growing 'demand-supply' gap.
- Research and Innovation needs to be encouraged more than ever, be closer to real-life scenarios and integral to our Education system. In India, we have faired quite low on this effectively.



Transformational Strategy

The Education System needs Surgical Strike, re-write the storyline, go back to the drawing board. The Education System cannot continue to be Supply-side driven; Demand-side needs to be brought in middle of everything and Demand-side needs to play much more active role responsibly with commitment. Demand-side needs to make right interventions and investments to make Education System better conducive to current & future needs of Industry and Students.

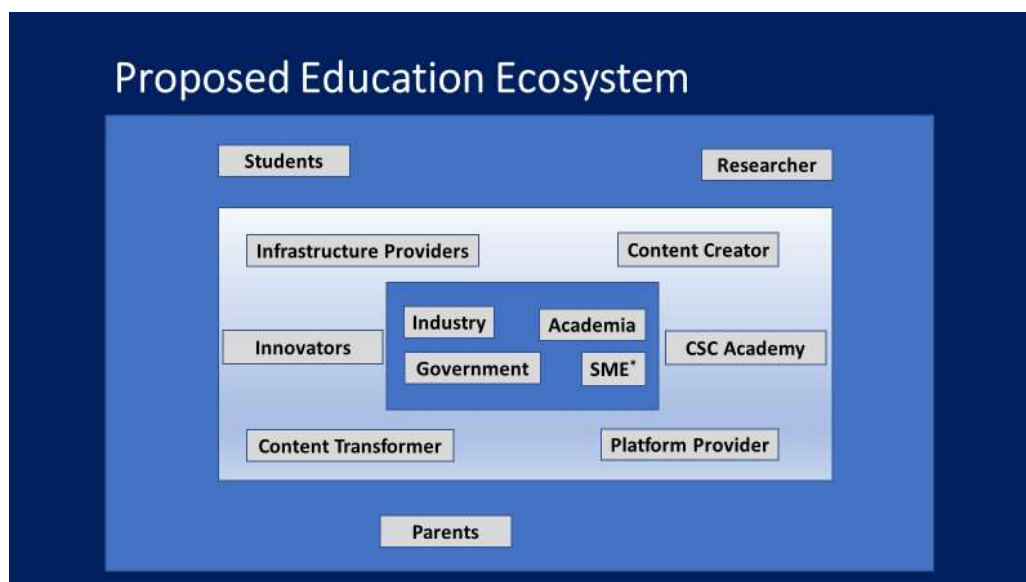
The task-in-hand is marathon, possibly unimaginable, beyond visualization & comprehension for now, if Education System has to be set right. It may not be wrong to say, it would be found beyond reach if any serious attempt is made to even think about it. Among the key reasons, legacy is massive, transformers and change agents may mostly emerge from current supply side, who will lead & execute change management, will people be willing to 'Let Go', ... are among the serious Qs.

Do we have a choice, not to do so under such a situation? No, it has to be done. A rock solid actionable-measurable-agile-nimble-inclusive-... strategy is needed. Any such strategy has to be led @ highest level in India (may be PMO, Prime Minister Office) with mental preparation for the concept of 'Redundancy' as prevailing in the Industry. 360-degree Reskilling and Upskilling have to be in the center of entire strategy of all stakeholders.

It will evolve, possibly over a decade or may be two decades; however, there has to be holistic start with right intent, honest willingness, absolute commitment, and the most important of all - led by Leadership in institutionalised manner. The entire movement has to be measurable in absolute terms with provision for self-course correction and appropriate interventions.

Each and every stakeholders, including new & emerging ones needs to get out of comfort zone, be ready to challenge objectively anything & everything in Education System, be prepared to be challenged, acknowledge the role of new entrants and share the good old day's position of power or strength, everyone needs to unlearn, understand-define-implement-rollout New Norms.

Education System needs attention to shift focus from 'Teaching' to 'Learning'.



Broadly, the education system can be considered under three categories from transformation timeline perspective:

1	Primary and Secondary Education	3 to 5 years
2	Higher Education	2 to 3 years
3	Vocational and Professional Courses including Tuition, ...	1 to 2 years

Some of the other disruptive, transformational, and critical factors to Re-write Education System can be:

- Digital Transformation (DT): DT has touched, impacted & influenced every aspect of Society, Education System is no exception. The role, influence, and impact of DT needs to be understood in wholistic manner and comprehend as ZERO-based start. It is practical, viable, and do(able); rather the only answer. DT is the best platform and opportunity to achieve future-generation and future-proof Education System. New concepts like Live Streaming will be a reality.

DT will create an altogether new challenge & opportunity of 'Reskilling'. Reskilling challenge from two perspective (a) every stakeholder in Education Ecosystem would need to undergo and reorient oneself to connect & engage with New Norms. This alone can be among key weak-chain (b) all in employment would need to stay tuned and aligned.

In DT journey, care shall be take of 'What Not to Do', like 'Hybrid model, Not alone either', 'Not just Digitisation', 'Education Platform, Not BAU Business Platform', 'Content Transformation, Not alone Content Digitisation', 'All-round Education Platform to serve specific needs to Education System', 'Re-orientation of Faculty', 'Student re-orientation', 'Digital Admission, On-boarding, Examination, Assessment, Coaching, Mentorship, Internship, Project work incl labs, ...".

- Education System needs to unblock the current Education System from two perspective (a) breaking down each of the current monolithic course capsules/ semester-trimester/ ... into smaller logical blocks (b) make more, varied, and logical blocks available to students to chose aligned with larger student interest.

The new Courses and its blocks shall be better aligned with New Businesses, New Roles, New Norms, ...

Unblocking, embedded with appropriate technology and tools shall make each block easy to learn and more interesting to learn.


This shall certainly help re-energize students with new Education System made available interesting as never before.

- Content Lifecycle Management will be among the crucial ones in New Education System. First & foremost, content re-creation aligned with micro education blocks with simplicity, more learner-centric than teaching-led, loosely coupled-tightly integrated architecture to implement continuous changes consistently & constantly, the new World Content - significantly different & beyond just digitization, Content delivery wrt. Faculty-Content-Content Channel-Content Receiver-...

This has to be Transformational and Disruptive with appropriate exploitation of Emerging Technologies (ET) comprehensively. ET offers wide-range and disruptive technology options to conceive new all-round options. Most times, new business models, delivery channel, learning path, ... can be envisaged by exploiting the power of ET meaningfully.

Crowdsource any element of Education System, including not limited to, content, faculty, student-groups, students, ...

Traditionally, teaching any subject (esp. complex subjects) and chapter in complex way is not about superiority on demand/ supply side, it is more about contextualize to student profile. ET embedded DT based Education System shall address this well, make Education interesting, create PULL factor, help reduce dropout rate, ...

- DT with ET shall help rebuild Assessment System with focus on learning, getting best out of people through offering right options to them, enhanced objectivity, and other relevant factors.
- Digital has a unique power that matches one of the major objectives of Education System, i.e. Education for All through 'Reach the Unreach' and 'Affordable Education'.
- Counselling in current system is like a  in system. With Digital platform and Emerging Technologies, Counselling shall become a continuous process.

Such a process shall help identify the capability, ability, capacity, interests, ... of every person individually. With extended access to Social platforms & so on, it can be an opportunity to develop guided counselling for each & every person.

This shall help explore and map more career options available at any point of time.

Optimal embedding of DT strategy with ET can help create roadmap-led evolution of New Education System that shall serve all the stakeholders by addressing the current challenges. There will be new challenges, hence a roadmap-led Education System will always be in evolution mode like never ending journey.

- This may look quite bold, but no offence, to moderate the superiority concept of prestigious Education Institutions. New Education System shall allow appropriate access to such institutions to people @ large.

New Education System shall try bring enhanced collaboration and better access across the board.

- Last but NOT the least, parents need to be made better integral to entire system. Meaningfully engagement platform would need to be created to continually make the New Education System rich and value-adding. Parents would need to re-orient themselves, get out of good old day's Education understanding, aligned with New Norms.

Some of the above-mentioned measures, if planned-designed-&-executed even close to well, shall address some of the larger challenges like 'Freshers will be better Industry-ready', 'Demand-Supply in skill requirement Vs availability', ...

No rocket science, ET-embedded DT platform will bring new multi-fold challenges; hence, it has to be Revolutionary in nature and Evolutionary in nature with provision to course correction.

Nothing comes easy, but COST of NOT doing NOW is very HIGH.