



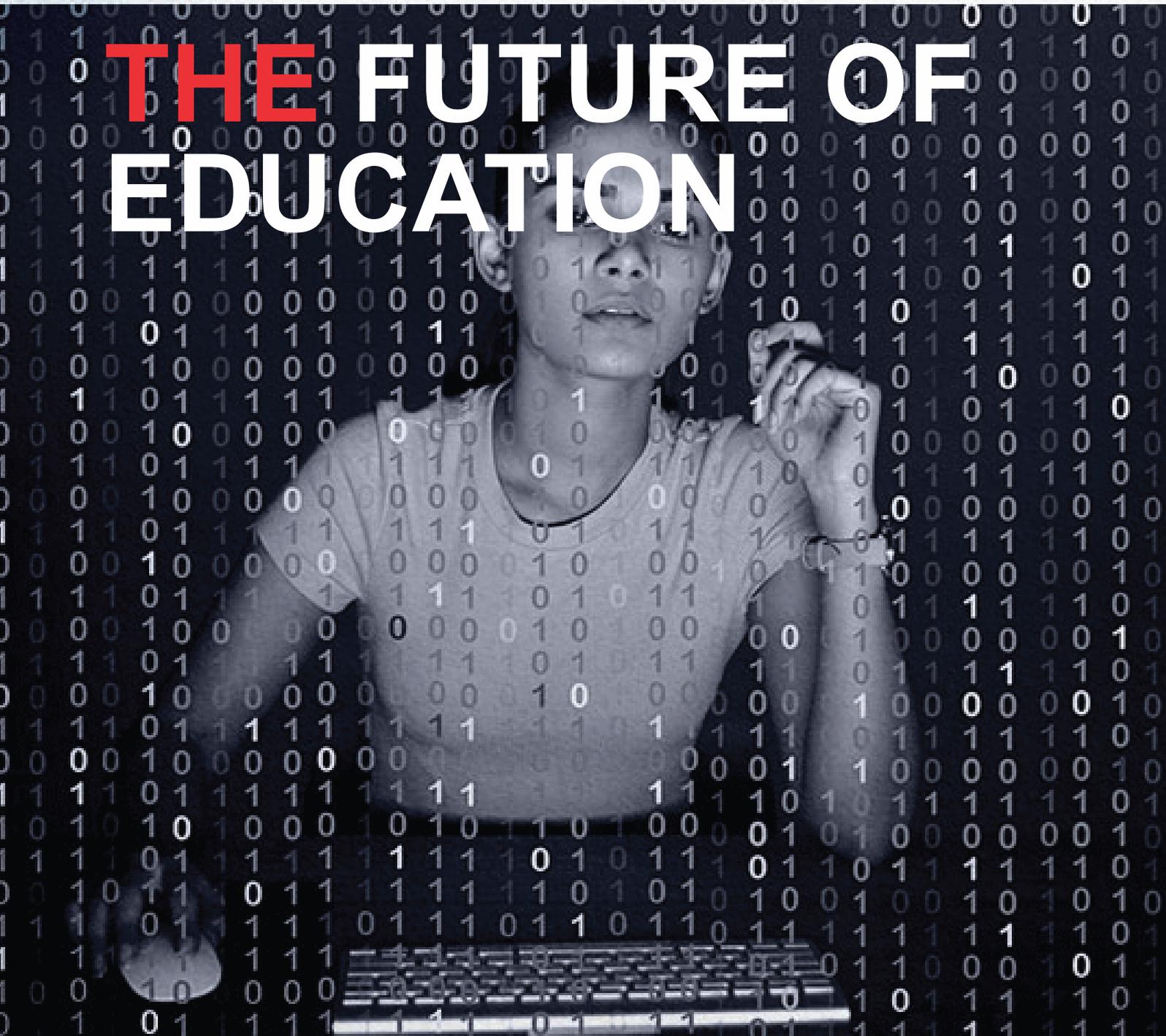
O.P. Jindal Global University
A Private University Promoting Public Service



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH &
CAPACITY BUILDING
Institution Building for Nation Building
O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

EMINENT EDUCATORS ON

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION



INTRODUCTION

The International Institute for Higher Education Research & Capacity Building (IIHEd) of O.P. Jindal Global University has been organising the fortnightly discussions on YouTube titled 'Eminent Educators Colloquium' on The Future of Education. These talks were inspired by the UNESCO Futures of Education initiative launched in September 2019. With the inaugural session held on 5th June 2020, the initiative's aim has been to build a public platform for conversation and discussion with India's leading educators and thought leaders about the role of school education in fostering and nurturing the leaders of tomorrow.

The panellists for each session, representing a variety of schools and learning institutions across the country, debate and examine the changing ecosystem of education in a post-COVID world, the responsibilities of stakeholders ranging from teachers and parents to the Ministry of Education. The discussions also revolve around the steps and ideas that have to be implemented, so that students can receive a holistic learning experience in these uncertain times, and beyond. All the sessions were conceptualised and moderated by the faculty of The International Institute for Higher Education Research & Capacity Building (IIHEd).

This report summarises the discussions and suggestions made in the first six sessions of the series. Their themes are listed as follows -

- ▶ **05th June** **ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION**
- ▶ **19th June** **21ST CENTURY SKILLS**
- ▶ **03rd July** **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**
- ▶ **17th July** **HEALTH AND WELLBEING**
- ▶ **31st July** **LIFELONG LEARNING**
- ▶ **14th August** **CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND COMPASSION**

This report has been prepared by student rapporteurs and faculty mentors, who have been documenting the discussions during the Colloquium. After providing an overview of each panel discussion, this report concludes with feedback from the students on the discussions.

SESSION 1 | FUTURE OF EDUCATION: ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The first session of the fortnightly discussions 'Eminent Educators Colloquium' was titled '**The Future of Education: Environment and Education**'. The World is transitioning through a critical period in human history. "Social distancing" and "hand-sanitizing" have suddenly become the 'new normal'. But what does this contemporary global environment mean for education? What kind of educational environment is needed to educate the future citizens within the contemporary contexts? In this session, leaders from some of the most prominent educational institutions in India discussed and analyzed the emerging ideas and needs of the Indian education system, the steps that have to be taken by schools to ensure mental and physical well-being of their students and the ever-changing role played by education institutions in shaping tomorrow's citizens.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

The panel for the session consisted of Dr. Shalini Advani, Director, Pathways School, Noida, Mr. Arun Kapur, Founding Headmaster, Vasant Valley School, New Delhi, and Director of The Royal Academy, Bhutan, Ms. Vanita Uppal, OBE, Director the British School, New Delhi, Mr. Dilip Thakore, Publisher/Editor Education World & Parents World and Prof. (Dr.) Mousumi Mukherjee, Associate Professor & Deputy Director, International Institute for Higher Education Research & Capacity Building (IIHEd), O.P. Jindal Global University. The session was moderated by Professor (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar, Director, IIHEd & Founding-Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University.

DISCUSSION

Education in India during the Pandemic.

- The speakers discussed the heroic way, in which teachers across the country adapted to changing environment and kept their classes fruitful and engaging. They explained how the teacher plays double role now: she tries to instill critical thinking in her students while also playing a 'maintainer of normalcy' for the students.

- Social and emotional learning (SEL) has become increasingly important amidst the virtual education and distant learning modes as it has severely impacted these very components of learning. Today, six months into isolated living, children miss physical human interaction the most. It is essential for schools to train their teachers and organize workshops/activities aiming to promote SEL.
- Platforms like Zoom and MS Teams have allowed teachers to open classrooms in different parts of the world. Schools should also give assignments and homework which go beyond academic learning and promote harmonious interaction between the student and their family, as it will be beneficial for the family's mental health.

Accessibility

- India has a huge digital divide, where majority of the population does not own digital devices or doesn't have access to stable internet connectivity. The pandemic has widened this divide because children, who do not have these resources, subsequently do not have access to virtual learning and are unable to receive any kind of emotional support the educators are trying to offer. The privileges of the privileged have increased, therefore it is imperative that governments address these shortcomings at the earliest.

Outside academics

- The speakers suggested that schools should spend a fair amount of time on both cerebral and physical development. While sports like basketball and soccer cannot take place, it is essential to bring activities like Yoga and dance to the forefront.
- The aim of conducting these activities would be to foster a sense of empathy and inclusion among students. Furthermore, 'focus activities' like Yoga also develop concentration power among students and strengthen the mind as well as the body.

Purpose of schooling

- The purpose of sending children to school for most parents in India is to enable them to 'filter' through the competition and get into higher education institutions. There is a need to change this idea as the sole purpose of schooling. The essence of schooling should be to develop critical thinking skills in students, and post-COVID teacher training programs should be reflective of that.

Importance of Arts

- The speakers suggested that a foundation of humanities is critical to foster a scientific inquisitive temperament as studies of Liberal Arts empower students to ask open-minded questions, challenge assumptions and analyze observations. Even amidst rising STEM enrollments, a basic education of Liberal Arts should be mandated by all higher education institutions.

SESSION 2 | 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

The second session of the fortnightly discussions 'Eminent Educators Colloquium' was titled '**21st Century Skills**'. The world today is developing and moving ahead at a fast pace, with new technologies and inventions being launched every day. In such times, it is critical for educational institutions to impart adaptability and survivorship skills among their students to ensure they don't lose themselves in this fast-paced existence. Furthermore, there is a need to develop 21st century skills that would assist students when they ultimately enter the real world. In this session, the speakers discussed the role that schools can play in nurturing such individuals who are capable of succeeding and accomplishing in the current environment, the changes that are required to revamp the old system, and the measures government must take to usher in this change.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

The panel for the session consisted of Ms. Richa Sharma Agnihotri, Principal, Sanskriti School, New Delhi; Dr. Skand Bali, Principal, The Hyderabad Public School, Hyderabad; Ms. Nooraine Fazal, CEO & Co-founder, Inventure Academy, Bengaluru; Dr. Munmun Nath, Principal, Calcutta International School, Kolkata; Ms. Padmini Sambasivam, Principle, Welham Girls' School, Dehradun; Mr. Dilip Thakore, Publisher / Editor, Education world & Parents world. The session was moderated by Professor (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar, Director, IIHed & Founding-Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University.

DISCUSSION

Change in pedagogy of schools

- The speakers suggested that, in order to impart 21st century skills to the students, the entire outdated 19th century framework should be demolished and a new system needs to be implemented where students take a more central role as 'the problem finder and the problem solver'. In this scenario, teachers would step aside to a more passive role of a supporter and a guide. In addition, students need to gain exposure and experience outside classrooms to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and internships during school years would be an effective way to ensure that.
- Increased importance should also be given to more expressive opportunities like dance, music, drama, artwork and MUNs which help foster creativity, originality, empathy, and compassion in students. Furthermore, initiatives like collaborative interdisciplinary projects would teach them to be an effective member of team and help develop 'out of the box' thinking. The aim should be to build life skills rather than industrial skills that would be redundant in the near future as machines can easily imitate and dominate them.

Organizational structure

- Schools should work in a more democratic system that includes student voices in decision making and student leadership in organising events, thereby improving their decision making capabilities and exposing them to making reasoned judgements based on deciphering rapidly changing situations. At the pace with which the world is progressing today, it is critical that students embrace and develop such skills at a young age.

Teacher's wellbeing

- The speakers suggest that teachers should be respected and rewarded for their successes in the profession, and rewards should be tangible (financial) in nature, rather than being merely symbolic. Extensive performance reviews of teachers should be carried out regularly; they should also feel motivated to perform better. Faculty trips and development programs can also help promote team building, maturity and cooperation between the teaching staff.

Government action

- The speakers suggested that in order to bring about effective change in the current system, the government needs to limit its administrative control and let educationalists and other stakeholders in the field take decisions and run the system. This would be most beneficial for the entire country as these individuals have a lot more insight and knowledge about the field as compared to the administrative government personnel.
- There is an urgent need to improve the ever-degrading condition of public schools which survive on government funding. The government should promote programs that encourage private entities to invest in and promote public schools, thereby helping them alleviate their current condition. Additionally, the speakers suggested exploring a coalition system between public and private schools across the country. Such a venture would capitalize the financial resources of private schools and the student base of public schools, to usher in a new era of inclusive and affordable quality education.

SESSION 3 | GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The third session of the fortnightly discussions 'Eminent Educators Colloquium' was titled 'Global Citizenship'. Global citizenship is an attitude of a common identity and equal rights and duties for all humans, derived from being members of the human race. This identity is a source of inspiration for people to not just fight for their own rights, but also consider it a duty to fight for the rights of the those belonging to a different race, country, religion and gender. However, currently nationalistic attitudes are rising across the globe, both in political and academic circles. In this session, the speakers discussed the duty of leaders of our educational institutions to counter these narratives and promote ideas of global citizenship, and what measures they can implement to achieve the same.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

The speakers for the session consisted of Dr. Gunmeet Bindra, Founding Principal, Delhi Public School Rajpura & Former Principal Welham, Dehradun, Lt. Gen Surendra Kulkarni, PVSM, AVSM, VSM** (RETD), Director, Mayo College Ajmer, Mr. Roshan Gandhi, Director of Strategy, City Montessori, Lucknow, Prof. (Dr.) Mousumi Mukherjee, Associate Professor & Deputy Director, IIHED, OP Jindal Global University and Mr. Dilip Thakore, Publisher/ Editor, Education World & Parents World. The session was moderated by Professor (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar, , Director, IIHed & Founding-Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University.

DISCUSSION

Global vs National citizenship clash

- The speakers suggested the educational institutions have a duty to teach students that nationalism is an outdated concept, and, in today's interconnected global world, isolationists attitudes would be detrimental to a nation's well-being. This knowledge is especially critical to subdue the rising nationalistic sentiments. Attitudes of unity and acceptance need to be inculcated by promoting group activities like projects and debates among students from diverse backgrounds as it would enable them to form cross-cultural bonds.

Teaching global citizenship in the digital era

- The speakers suggested that, albeit today the technological advances ensure instant access to school and higher education, for effective implementation educators need to inculcate local contexts and understanding within the teaching framework to ensure students are able to relate to the curriculum. This methodology also enabled teachers, during the pandemic, to develop imaginative low-cost training aids and innovations which helped smoothen the transition to distance learning.
- In the current scenario of ever-changing geographic and national identities, it is difficult for students to converse with and relate to ideas of citizenship and identity. Therefore, it would be more prudent to make a curriculum that helps them resonate with citizenship in the form of a cultural, rather geographic or political identity. Inculcation of this attitude can be supplemented by exposing students to people or peers from different cultural backgrounds: it would not only enable them to trace the boundaries and contrasts of cultural identities but, even more importantly, make them realize that the core human values are common across cultures and religions.

Social media and its influence.

- The speakers expressed acute concern about the poor ill-informed debates, misleading news and veiled propaganda that students consume on social media platforms. However, it is impossible for schools or parents to constantly shield the impressionable minds of young learners. Therefore, educational institutions must empower students to be responsible consumers of information by making them aware of the perils of fake news and primary motivations behind its circulation. Rather than attempting to make a 'safe digital space' schools should imbibe in their students an attitude of 'discernment' while accessing information.

Faculty measures

- Children often look at their teachers as role models and their attitudes play a highly influential role in shaping the student's attitudes. Therefore, to prioritize global citizenship attitudes, schools need to reflect these values in the teachers they hire, their training programs and most importantly in the organizational structure of the institution. Practicing values of global citizenship with a conscious effort would have a 'cascading ripple effect' from educators to their students, which would be more effective than any curriculum taught on the same.

SESSION 4 | HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

INTRODUCTION

The fourth session of the fortnightly discussions 'Eminent Educators Colloquium' was titled '**Health and Well-Being**'. During the current pandemic, it is necessary to recognize the role of parents, schools, educators and even the government, in ensuring a healthy and holistic learning environment for the students. Educational institutions have a responsibility to develop not only the academic skill of their students, but also nurture their physical and mental strength. In this session, the speakers discussed the various steps institutions can take to promote and prioritize the physical and mental health of their students, and how they must balance their curriculums with the digital aids available to ensure the same.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

The speakers for the session consisted of Ms. Ameeta Mulla Wattal, Former Chairperson, National Progressive Schools' Conference, and Principal, Springdales School, New Delhi, Ms Sarojini Rao, Principal, Indus International School, and Managing Trustee, Indus International Community School, Dr Bijaya Kumar Sahoo, Founder and Chief Mentor, SAI International Educational Group and Minister of State, Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha, Ms Seema Sapru, Principal, The Heritage School, New Delhi and Mr Dilip Thakore, Publisher & Editor, Education World, India. The session was moderated by Professor (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar, Director, IIHed & Founding-Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University.

DISCUSSION

Student nutrition and physical health

- The speakers suggested that schools should regularly conduct workshops to raise awareness about the healthcare needs of students, especially at the time of the pandemic. Online classes substantially increase the already excessive amount of time students spend in front of screens. Schools therefore have a duty to educate children and their parents about the dietary needs of children, the importance of physical exercise and its impact on the child's mental health and self-esteem.
- Once schools reopen, students would face various health problems that were caused by changes in usual lifestyle during the lockdown period. Therefore, to ensure that a well-rounded diet is served to students, all educational institutions should set up food committees consisting of parents, teachers, and dietitians. These committees can also hold virtual sessions during the pandemic advising parents on their child's nutrition.
- Universities and other higher education institutions should also be encouraged to not only consider academics as a criterion for admission but also give substantial weightage to sports and other co-curricular activities.

Mental health

- Isolation from friends and elimination of meaningful social events makes it imperative for educators to assist their students in taking care of their mental health. Such skills cannot be inculcated in a curriculum; rather schools should train their teachers and counsellors to advise and help students cope with these issues while teaching their regular curricula. It is equally essential for educators to help students realize the importance of mental health. Only when students understand value of mental well-being, would they put in an effort to maintain it.
- The value of sports and exercises as a means to deal with mental health issues should be emphasized by educators. This would further motivate students to stay active, especially during the pandemic, ensuring mental as well as physical well-being.

Digital learning and well-being

- The speakers suggested that schools should follow an extensively planned teaching structure combining synchronous and asynchronous teaching while promoting group activity and social interaction. The aim should be to keep students emotionally stable, the classroom a joyful space to interact and ensure that emotional and social quotients of the students are not burdened by academic requirements.
- Students who stay within stressed domestic environment might be tempted to indulge in self-destructive activities on the internet. Therefore, educators should instead encourage them to use the Net as a safe space to create and share art works, videos and writing samples. The rationale is to sell this as a creative escape where children can test the limits of their imagination and let their creativity run wild, thereby developing self-confidence and creative thinking.
- Privileged educational institutions should take initiatives to spread awareness about the various features and practices they follow to construct a healthy teaching environment, share online resources with lesser-privileged institutions to ensure no one gets left behind.
- Artificial intelligence should be looked into as a means to revolutionize the education sector, and it must be ensured that its access is not limited to the elite few.

SESSION 5 | LIFELONG LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

The fifth session of the discussions 'Eminent Educators Colloquium' was titled '**Lifelong Learning**'. Henry Ford once said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty". The attitudes nurtured in individuals during their formative years stay with them throughout their life. Schools, therefore, must take conscious measures to nurture ideas of lifelong learning among their students and enable them to enjoy the process of learning and understanding. In this session, the speakers discussed the various measures schools can take inside and outside the classroom, to promote a belief of lifelong learning, its benefits, and the importance of reforms in the teaching sector to produce self-motivated and content teachers.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

The speakers for the session consisted of Ms Meera Isaacs, Dean, Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai, Ms Rekha Krishan, Principal, Vasant Valley School, New Delhi, Mr Deepak Madhok, Chairman, Sunbeam group of Educational Institutions, Uttar Pradesh, Ms Ranjoo Mann, Pro Vice Chairperson, Delhi Public School, Sonipat and Mr Dilip Thakore, Publisher & Editor, Education World and Parents World. The session was moderated by Professor (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar, , Director, IIEd & Founding-Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University.

DISCUSSION

Student centric measures inside schools

- The speakers suggested encouraging students to self-learn, which will be the key to lifelong learning, by teaching through a mix of independent research projects, team based practical projects and rigorous debates. The driving ideology should be to help students experience the joy of learning by exploring, experimenting, failing and learning from their failures. This process will solidify the vision of lifelong learning in students and make them adopt a 'joyous' method of learning.
- The guiding principle for schools should be to 'help students learn to learn'. School learning sets the foundation of individual's learning process, and if it isn't set right, regardless of measures taken later, it will still falter. Frequent 'Bubble sessions' or 'Circle Times' should be held which help students learn skills outside academics (e.g. social and networking skills) that will help them be confident and successful citizens.
- As school learning builds the foundation of an individual's learning process for life, teachers must take steps to develop a good work ethic and a highly beneficial reading habit. Schools must have good libraries, where students are motivated to enquire, discover and solve problems using their own ideas.
- The speakers also suggested that schools have a responsibility to teach students 'basic concepts of life' that explain their social responsibility, like paying taxes, not littering etc. They must be taught to learn from their surroundings, understand the importance of their actions and think of the public interest of the society around them.

Student measures outside schools

- Students should be taken on day trips to interact with and experience a working day of different professionals such as doctors, lawyers, judges etc. Observational learning is an essential quality to teach and develop, and these incursions would also give them a glimpse of the real world outside their classrooms.
- The speakers suggested schools should implement more exchange programs and study trips. Exposure to students from different social, political and economic backgrounds would enable students to shed their biases, realize how vast the world is, and ignite in them the urge to learn more through conversations and observations outside the classroom. This attitude, if developed sustainably in the early years, would ensure students remain learners for life, learning not through just books, but also through people, experiences and situations.

Teacher centric measures

- The speakers suggested that schools must ensure regular upscaling of teachers through professional development workshops, webinars and meetings with industry and market leaders to determine and consequently develop the necessary qualities in their students.
- There are multiple reports from across the country of teachers struggling to make ends meet due to extremely low salaries, even forcing some of them to take part-time jobs. Educational institutions, in collaboration with the government, should develop a minimum pay policy for teachers to ensure they are intrinsically motivated to develop their teaching methods and imbibe qualities, other than academic ability, in their students. It is essential for stakeholders to incentivise teaching positions in order to ensure a holistic grooming of students, which would promote the idea of lifelong learning.

SESSION 6 | CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND COMPASSION

INTRODUCTION

The sixth session of the fortnightly discussions 'Eminent Educators Colloquium' was titled '**Critical Consciousness and Compassion**'. Rising levels of chronic depression and suicide among students are concerns among stakeholders in education across the globe. Reasons range from ever-increasing peer-peer competition, outdated grading systems, and the social requirements of 'fitting in'. In this context, it is essential for educational institutions to take active measures promoting an environment of compassion, empathy and tolerance in their organisations. In this session, the speakers discussed the various steps the entire education and higher education system needs to take, ranging from changing assessment and grading parameters, training teachers to deal with students in a more empathetic manner and giving up outdated models of disciplinarian conduct, to instil a sense of compassion and consciousness among their students.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

The speakers consisted of Ms. Seetha Murthy, Director, Silverworks International School, Mr. Rashid Sharfuddin, Headmaster Selaqui International School, Ms. Suvina Shunglu, Founder Principal, Srisi Academy, Mr. Vidhukesh Vimel, Headmaster, Assam Valley School and Mr. Dilip Thakur, Publisher/Editor Education World & Parents World. The session was moderated by Professor (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar, Director, IIHED & Founding-Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University.

DISCUSSION

Modifying the vision of education

- The speakers suggested schools need to focus more on character building and developing empathy and leadership skills among their students rather than solely looking at quantitative analysis. This would help produce content and happy students who, not being weighed down by one dimensional expectations of performance, would extend compassion and acceptance to those around them.
- Ancient techniques of mindfulness like yoga and meditation should be promoted as an everyday routine, thereby helping students be at peace and harmony with themselves. Activities, apart from classroom learning, should be undertaken to nurture creativity, communication and social collaboration; skills that may be absent from current systems of online teaching.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on early-education curricula of our education system, as ideas developed and nurtured during the formative years of a student play a major part in who they grow up to be. Properly researched and tested pedagogies need to be formulated and implemented on a large scale to ensure an impactful change.

Changing the way assessments are conducted

- There is an essential need to shift from the current summative assessment system in schools to a more formative assessment structure. These assessments should aim to promote skill development, critical thinking and practical learning. They should also move away from the current practice of keeping the final test in mind, and reverse engineering the entire academic structure based on its requirements.
- This move cannot be done in isolation and needs to be implemented in collaboration with higher education institutions of the country. It was suggested that a universal model like the SATs be adopted by the higher education institutions as this would decrease the pressure the current system places on Grade 10 and 12 results. This decrease would give schools more freedom to focus on imparting other qualities and strengths in students, rather than only ensuring excellent on-paper performance.

Creating safe spaces

- The speakers suggested schools need to take conscious steps to develop an attitude of compassion and create a safe space for their students. Earlier models of strict, by-the-book disciplinarian conducts need to be forgotten. Safety nets such as suggestion boxes and special safety teams need to be developed to make students feel listened to and be able to approach their teachers without the fear of reprimand.
- Often, one or two teachers in every institution practice arbitrarily strict codes of conduct and punish those who disobey, thereby constructing a 'hostile' attitude among the entire student body towards their teachers. Institutions must introspect on their own practices and hold such members accountable for their actions. The training programs for teachers should emphasis on developing an attitude that makes students feel free and confident to approach their teachers with their troubles.

Teachers and how they can contribute

- Teacher training programs that focus on churning out self-motivated individuals who go beyond their academic duties are a necessity. These programs must focus on helping new teachers unlearn their existing patterns and biases, promote capacity building, and must help teachers build on the ability to be proactive listeners and take a personal interest in their students that goes beyond just the classroom and academics.
- Teachers can make lasting impact even while working within the restraints of the academic learning outcomes that are provided to them. The teacher who is free to explore her own methodology, would incorporate experience-based, practical and empathetic learning techniques and methods.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

“The views and inputs of the panellists were very thoughtful and powerful and need to be implemented on a larger scale for development of the current system. It's good that different initiatives are being taken by the educators to contribute towards bringing a change like organizing activities and providing opportunities to bring interdisciplinary courses into the field. The choice of interdisciplinary courses would enable the individual's mind to grow and discover their own identity, take their skills to another level and might even lead the world to discover careers or opportunities that one could never imagine.”

“The Covid-19 pandemic has taken huge toll on education and learning across the world. The symbiotic relationship between educators and students has adapted to new ways of learning in a heroic manner. It's important that the universities and schools instil a sense of hope in students as the most glaring issue they face is the uncertainty about their own education, lives and careers. The educators and universities are not only seen as a community of education but as a community that gives security and safe place to students.”

“Schools are much more than just the establishments of pedagogical learning. They are the nation builders. Hence, it is absolutely essential to acknowledge their role through the multidimensional lens of ensuring a holistic development of children. The session on 'Health and Wellbeing' was the congregation of some of the leading educationalists in India, with the purpose to discuss and emphasize the overall physical and mental wellbeing of students, especially in the context of current pandemic. Devoid of the fundamental way of learning i.e. physical classes, schools, teachers and students suddenly find themselves in an uncharted territory, where the challenge is to quickly transition and adapt to the remote way of teaching and learning. These developments exert extra pressure on students to rebalance academics with physical and emotional wellbeing. One of the important discussions was on the impact of excessive time spent on the internet. Whether it is for online classes, games or any other activity, students are now constantly stuck in a digital world, cut away from the physical realities. This has an impact not only on their physical health but also on their mental wellbeing.

Given the current prevailing uncertainties, the focus should be on making the best out of the situation by adopting innovating and engaging ways of teaching and learning. Furthermore, as it was underscored in the session, virtual learning is essential to all school and cannot just be limited to elite institutions. Hence, this requires active participation of the government, regulatory bodies, schools, and teachers.”

“The global pandemic has shaken many spheres of life, particularly the education sector, in the most destructive manner. The colloquium on 'Lifelong Learning' discussed whether India 's schools were prepared to develop lifelong learning imperatives as well as student and teacher skills. One of the most important points of the discussion was on lifelong learning being not a subject that can be taught at school, college, or university, but can be imbibed only if these institutions educate individuals to experience the joy of learning through discovery.

The current situation has compelled us to learn and adapt to the changing realities. The need of the hour is to encourage individuals to self-learn. Children must be inquisitive and able to express themselves in class without any reluctances. Teachers should help students get to the roots of problems.

Teaching must not be based solely on a textbook; they must learn through experiences. Curriculum and pedagogy must be interlinked and intersectoral, built in a holistic way that can address the expectation of each child. Learning should not be seen as time-bound or confined to certain cellulos.

To move towards lifelong learning, relevance towards early childhood care and education must be given utmost importance. Students in young age required more support and guidance. If we can get our basics right, our children will be able to overcome any challenges. Evaluation is a critical tool that helps us evaluate the students' efficacy and determine the students' perceptions and intellect, but our evaluation system has not been very successful to date. We have to concentrate on competency-based assessment and remove rote memorization.”

Concluding Remarks

The Report provides a summary of the discussions held within the framework of 'Eminent Educator's Colloquium' initiative. It gives a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis of the challenges brought by the ongoing health crises to the educational sector. The conducted series of discussions created an important platform for the education practitioners to share their perspectives, experiences, innovative solutions on how to deal with the current pandemic. One of the most important aspects is the ability of education institutions to adapt to the changing realities and implement solutions that ensure a smooth transition to the new circumstances. There is no doubt, that schools, colleges, and universities have been facing multiple challenges due to the pandemic, including the ones relating to the mental health and anxieties of their students. The 'Eminent Educator's Colloquium' also provided a vision for the future of education system in India, by discussing the most relevant topics within this context. They are, for example, related to the changing role of a teacher, helping the child to enhance his/her natural talents and abilities, focusing on lifelong learning, encouraging students to become global citizens, creating a sense of community and instilling tolerance and compassion in students.

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