

Chapter 8

Scholarship of Trans Disciplinary Learning (TDL) as an Innovative Pedagogy in University System: Learning from the Experience

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ABSTRACT

Pedagogy in higher education is evolving by adopting and testing multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary pedagogy to make their students more knowledgeable and also more employable in industry. The pedagogy of Trans disciplinary is established as a project based and research oriented approach which is adopted by a private university in Haryana by the name of Star University which was established in 2012 as per UGC guidelines. The Star University management is dedicated to providing an advanced quality of education and so with the above ideology in mind they have incorporated Transdisciplinary learning as part of their basic curriculum. It is done in the form of a project wherein students are asked to take a project each semester from a pool of courses that have been designed and defined for every semester. The result makes the author believe that Trans disciplinary pedagogy is successful.

The Vedic Indian philosophy gives us rich philosophical and practical insight into the teaching learning and knowledge domain and declares “Vidya Ya Vimuktaye”¹, (Knowledge is that which liberates us), from ancient times and modern academics also do not doubt this philosophy world over. India has played stellar role in pedagogy and dissemination of knowledge in harmony with nature supreme and helped in creating a vision to empower the society at large. Its tenet was built around universality of

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knowledge in a boundary less ambience “envisioning a more holistic future for humanity with more Synergies in healing to harness the wealth of nature without being in conflict with creation.” Pedagogy was integral part of societal evolution and knowledge was considered equivalent to “God” as one of the major scripture from ancient times Katha Upanishad² says “he, who is possessed of supreme knowledge by concentration of mind, must have his senses under control, like spirited steeds controlled by a charioteer”. It means that armed with right knowledge, you will be in control of your mind body and soul. Pedagogy today stands at a point of inflexion when knowledge has become sole orbiter of human wellbeing. Pedagogy in higher education has evolved to current stage with modern understanding that human mind has different compartments for functioning vizaviz memory, imagination and perception. Attention and inquisitiveness comes natural to human from inception but so is distraction. If we sit down to read a book, we may suddenly find that our attention has moved to a pain in the back to some itch to some sound outside or our memory flashing a bitter sweet memory in our mind as visual cortex of brain is creating some old memories from our sub conscious mind. In ancient times, learning for the pupil was mostly based on the pedagogy of chanting and reciting Vedic texts which is arguably one of the most powerful tools to achieve a state of full attention where mind, body and actions become one. It also helps us in listening to our own voice and offers a strong sense of self-empowerment. Ancient Indian wisdom contained information on every conceivable subject from the relationship between a teacher and student to the structure of the human system, from the relevance of nature and the elements in our lives to the technical know-how necessary to build weapons, from the origin of the universe to simple social etiquette. All this was based in Gurukul³ systems where learning entailed round the clock engagement in pursuance of knowledge and wisdom and the tool of “teacher-pupil continued contact” has the ability to bring the highest level of learning and up gradation in quality of life that helps us in serving the society in a better way. From these ancient times tested grounded approaches to learning and dissemination of knowledge, we have moved from modern class room to virtual class room and online education and video chatting with teachers. Today the satellite assisted classes and new innovations in teaching have started replacing the old traditional pattern of providing education. In order to bring more changes in the overall education system, the AICTE was constituted as early as in 1945 as an advisory body in all matters relating to technical education. Even though it had no statutory powers, it played a very important role in the development of technical education in the country. Kothari commission made recommendation that “To ensure the pursuit of the highest standards at the first degree and post-graduate levels, and to provide on adequate machinery with the national and professional concern with the future development at these levels, we have recommended the setting up of a UGC-type organization, industry and concerned Ministries. This body should have a full-time chairman, and funds should be allotted to it on a block basis”. These led to the empowerment of AICTE and UGC both and were successful in upgrading higher education.

REGULATORY BODIES OF TECHNICAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The above two main higher education (Post 12th) regulatory bodies in India who are responsible for bringing in new phase in the education sector and to establish norms for continuous reforms were All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) and University Grants Commission (UGC). While AICTE looks after inspection and giving approval to technical institutes, UGC establishes norms to run a university which are entrusted with the power to set their own curricula and also to award degrees and diplomas.

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