



AN EMERGING PARADIGM SHIFT IN SOCIAL SCIENCE



“Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the character, calibre and future of an individual”.
~ APJ Abdul Kalam.

Education is necessary for exploring human potential, developing an equitable society and promoting the universal development of mankind. The Global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG 4) of 2030, adopted by India in 2015 – seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.

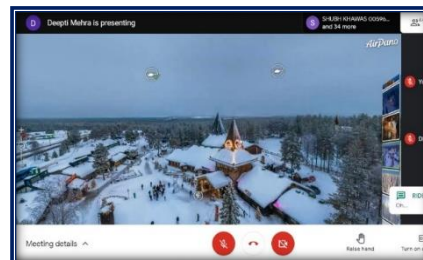
This soaring goal and pandemic paved the way for educators to be the innovators themselves. The world is undergoing rapid changes and so is the education sector. NEP 2020 and the Pandemic have motivated the facilitators to look for various alternatives to foster competency based education among students. The teaching methodology had a gradual shift from teacher centred to student centred learning. It develops problem solving and critical thinking skills in the students and encourages them to be more creative and multitasking. As Rabindranath Tagore once said- *“The mind of the child is always on alert, restless and eager to receive first-hand knowledge from their surroundings. Don’t limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time.”*

Today teaching is not a one-way communication but a blended one where the teacher motivates students to ask questions, familiarize them with best learning methodologies, sensitise towards student’s problems, inspire and instil the feeling of empathy and resilience among them. My journey from an educator to facilitator is quite engrossing. Being a Social Science teacher, my biggest challenge was to develop the interest of students in the subject which they regard as boring during normal schooling. My first challenge was to break this stereotype and let the students realise the significance of Social Science as it is a discipline that makes us familiar with our glorious past, acts as a bridge between past and present and enables learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate and inquisitive, to become responsible and sane citizens of the country. Another challenge was to create an inclusive classroom where all children should participate and speak out their ideas and thoughts. Simultaneously I needed to equip children with 21st century skills- to be able to think critically, develop team spirit (collaboration), showcase their creativity and exhibit their communication adroitness.

“We need technology in every classroom and in every student and teacher’s hand because it is the pen and paper of our time and it is the lens through which we experience much of our world.”
~ David Warlick

To meet the challenges, technical advancements like using of smart class modules, power point presentations, documentaries & movies, online teaching- learning apps and a gradual shift in teaching methodologies like using project based learning, real life examples, case studies, storytelling, puzzles, quizzes, virtual tours, role plays proved to be of great help. At the same time it made the classroom lively, full of curiosity and excitement.

Pandemic confined students to their homes and acted as a barrier in the field of exploration. Virtual tours provide aid to overcome the barriers of exploration and engage students in a realistic experience. Whether it is Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh or Red Fort in New Delhi or Unakoti in Tripura or Santa Claus village Rovaniemi, Lapland, Finland or Palace of Versailles in France etc., Virtual Tour developed the keen interest of students in this discipline. At the same time, it has helped in fostering problem solving and analytical thinking among



students. For example while traveling through Santa Claus village in Finland students not only showed their enthusiasm about the place but they identified the natural vegetation and climatic condition of the region. Similarly, while learning about Bhimbetka, learners inspected its history of rock paintings, its mythological connections, its flora fauna and archaeological findings. The follow-up activity of making stone tools from the scraps available at their homes helped them to point out the differences between the stone ages – Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic ages. Simultaneously it enabled students to learn to reuse, recycle the waste and showcase their creative minds. Virtual tours are also helpful in fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal no. 4 i.e. ‘Providing Quality Education To All’. It created a framework for me to explain the complex concept in less time, it is economically feasible as parents need not to worry about the travel allowance and other expenses and it involves less safety concern as students being at their homes can quench thirst for knowledge. On the other hand virtual tours had given me the platform to attract students' attendance and active participation in the online sessions.



Moreover the positive feedback from the parents and satisfactory performances of the students had empowered me to inculcate virtual tours as an integral part of my lesson plan.

“Studies show that project based learning can increase retention of content and improve student’s attitudes towards learning”.

- Strobel

In present times, students are inquisitive and want to learn on their own. Rather than Rote Memorization they want to Traverse, Research and Invent. Project based learning is a method where students team up to “learn by doing”. A learning which enables teachers to build strong relationships with the students by acting as their first-hand facilitators. It also develops scientific temperament by promoting the spirit of inquiry and following a rational and objective approach in analysing and evaluating data and information as well as views and interpretations.



Recognizing the significance of PBL, CBSE in their curriculum has incorporated the project work for students on the themes like consumer awareness, disaster management, sustainable development etc.



While working on disaster management projects students learned about the various disasters, causes of origin, their consequences and how to face such situations. They also carried out the mock mitigation plan drills at school level. The compilation and presentation of

the project develops perseverance, curiosity and empower the learners. Similarly the project on consumer awareness enabled the students to become the aware citizens of the country. It made them aware of their consumer rights, at the same time it helped them to deal with various swindles and diddles. It promotes an understanding of the issues and challenges of contemporary India and prepares them to become global citizens and benevolent human beings. Moreover these projects help in accelerating progress towards the SDGs through education. For example, students of class VIII worked on the project- *Know India and explored the state of West Bengal*. Working on the project students researched about the topography, climatic condition, flora and fauna, architecture and monuments, cultural norms and traditions, costumes, cuisines, language, festivals, well known artists, poets and many more things. The project enabled students to highlight many problems and their solutions keeping the objectives of SDGs in mind like- reducing inequalities, climate action, life on land etc.



“Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids to work together and motivating them, the teacher is the most important.”
~ Bill Gates

There are various pedagogies and technologies to mentor students but the one who is using those pedagogies and technologies plays a pivotal role. Each and every child is unique and so is their response to the problems. Creating an inclusive classroom, ensuring the participation of each and every child in the teaching - learning process is my aim and dream. With a little bit of love, patience, attention and sensitivity to the needs of differentially abled (gifted & slow learners) and appreciating their initiatives, acknowledging their small gestures, including them in research work, giving them responsibilities have done wonders in classroom. Similarly counselling and narrow band therapy help in maintaining their dignity and showcase exemplary results. On the contrary, exploring the potentials of high intellectual students in carrying out extensive research, analysing & interpreting the data, encouraging them to participate in debate and discussions and channelizing their energy in positive and constructive social work enables them to become the high achievers and in future the responsible citizens of the country.

With the passage of time the relationship between teacher and her students is also changing. Today we act as mentors, philosophers, guide and a friend who inspires, motivates, and encourages them to take up the responsibilities, overcome the barriers and enable them to distinguish between right and wrong. Success is not a lottery but a long drawn result of hard work and dedication. *APJ Abdul Kalam once said “If a country wants to develop, become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother and the teacher. Role of an educationist is to build the capacities of the spirit of inquiry, creativity, entrepreneurial and moral leadership among students”.*

Bibliography:

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- *NCERT text books in Social Sciences classes VIII - X.*
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