

OUTCOME BASED EDUCATION

and the National Education Policy 2020

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Outcome Based Education and the Scope of Inclusive Curriculum: A Study

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Introduction

Outcome Based Education (OBE) is a pedagogical model that focuses more on the skills and competencies achieved by the learner through an instructional method rooted in high order thinking than possessing the mere credits through the education. Hence, unlike traditional educational model, the insistence of OBE is on outcome of the learner than the objectives of the educational practice, pedagogy and curricula. Thus, OBE entails more scope for an inclusive curriculum by which focus is given for an educational system that is beneficial for diverse communities. As the emphasis is given on the outcome achieved by the learner at the end of the course/programme, through varied learning activities with respect to various courses, there is an increased scope and prospects for an inclusive curriculum in all university programmes. This chapter examines the scope of an inclusive curriculum in the outcome-based education in the higher education scenario.

Inclusive curriculum is emerged as an educational formula that gives ample importance to diverse learning communities. It is based on the difference in capacities, potentials, needs and necessities of various learners within a learning community. In a university education system, the diversities of the learner are high and catering to the diversities of various learners is an essential goal of any higher education system. An inclusive curriculum is a pedagogical practice that gives prominence to equity, equality and diversity of education with respect to the learner. Hence, by making the system of education inclusive one, it envisions the inclusive aspects in teaching, learning and evaluation.

Outcome based education, unlike traditional educational methods, is a pedagogical model based on instructional methods and learning methods that focus more on the competencies achieved by the learner than stating the objectives of the syllabus. "Outcome-based education (OBE) has been the effective framework of teaching, learning and evaluation for the UGC and NAAC for the past five years", states Rajan Gurukkal et. al. in their article on OBE. In the case of objectives of a curriculum and syllabus, there are no insistence on the achievement of the desirable skills. They are more theoretical in nature. They state the potential changes expected by the transactions of the curriculum among the learners from the viewpoint of the educator or the

facilitator. But in OBE, what do the learner achieve by doing the particular course/ programme will be mentioned and they will be in the measurable form. Hence, course outcome, programme outcome, course learning outcome, programme learning outcome, course specific outcome etc., are clearly stated in the syllabus itself.

As the OBE is centred more on learners and their outcomes that they achieve by undergoing through various courses, the nature and diversity of learners, instructional models and pedagogical practices, learning methods, co-curricular activities, various skills achieved through different campus activities and outside the campus events etc are counted as important in outcome-based education while drafting the outcomes achieved by the learners. More precisely speaking, the total experience of the learner is counted while consolidating the outcomes of the learner. Total experience of the learner in any learning programme is to be assessed, hence in outcome-based education, emphasis is given to quality based and learner-oriented assessment.

At any educational level, diversity of students or learners is a common phenomenon. In an education system centred in OBE and inclusive curriculum, the equity and accessibility are very much important. In the NEP 2020 also these two are considered as prime factors. By equity and

accessibility, NEP aims to foreground an educational method through which the transferable skills and competencies are to be achieved by all the learners in its own way. Hence while stating the outcomes of courses and programmes, it is made mandatory that specific learning outcomes have to be clearly stated addressing the diversity of learners and also the diversity of learning experiences.

The University's student body is increasingly diverse, with significant numbers of students with disabilities; of international students from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds, and of other students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds, such as mature students. These students face particular challenges in adapting to study at the University. An inclusive curriculum can help address those challenges at the outset, supporting the University's objective of helping all students to realise their potential. Whilst different students will face specific challenges, the issues set out below are general ones (Inclusive curriculum 1).

As per OBE, it is envisioned that, along with the diversity of students, course design, curricular statements, and assessment and evaluation are also to be framed based on inclusive approach. It helps the educator to look into a system where there

must be correlation between demand and supply of the programme/ courses.

OBE is envisaging a student centric curriculum. In such a curricular approach, the student diversity is taken into consideration while stating the philosophy of learning, curricular statements, learning methods, instructional strategy, classroom experience, total campus experience, specific outcomes of each course, specific outcome of all other in campus and out campus experiences, framing the evaluation system, rubrics, assessment methods, career mapping and career planning, qualitative outcomes of the learner etc.

OBE is out-and-out learner-centric, in the sense that it helps learners conduct concurrent self-assessment for knowing their progress in attaining the postulated outcome. In case of difficulties in reaching the intended level in learning, the scheme empowers the learners to demand learning experiences appropriate for resolution. Teachers in turn ascertain the effectiveness of their teaching and make sure that they legitimately enjoy the right to administer tests for assessing the learners' capability in the attainment of the outcome (Gurukkal et al 1).

In an inclusive curriculum, based on the principles of OBE, considering the diversity of learning

communities, students' background, their needs, interests, potentials, demands etc., are taken into account.

A significant number of students entering the university now come from academic backgrounds that may have left them unfamiliar with, and unprepared for, the teaching and assessment methods used at the university. Such students face a cultural and academic shock in adapting to learning in a university setting, and supporting their transition is vital (Inclusive curriculum 1).

As stated above, the shift to university system is difficult for many students from diverse backgrounds. An inclusive approach in teaching, learning and evaluation can only satisfy the needs of diverse students in an education system based in outcomes. It can be observed that OBE also visualizes a flexible curriculum where all the students will have some specific skill-based outcomes at the end of the course/ programme. Accommodating all students into a system of education, through own curriculum and pedagogical practice suitable for all students is very difficult one to practice but not impossible.

Diverse courses, matching with the local and global needs, demand and job potential of socially educationally and culturally different learning communities are to be designed and implemented.

In OBE the scope for such a pedagogical practice, is high. OBE based course design, OBE based learning activities, OBE based question papers, evaluation etc. are very important aspects of learning to practice in a higher education institution. In the case of learning activities, considering the diversity of learners, different instructional methods for advanced and slow learners can be framed. Activities for diverse learners include competent activities for advance learners, student blogs, student websites, student led content creation, innovative activities for advanced learners, specific learning materials for slow learners, recorded sessions for weaker students, additional mentoring, tutorial sessions, remedial classes, ppt banks for slow learners, re-examination for needy students etc. As the learning strategy of various students are different, a free and fearless learner support system is to be generated in the classroom and in the campus. Timely feedback, revision of teaching learning activities and strategies and timely integration of needy changes are very significant. For an inclusive pedagogy, treating students as small groups and reaching out to them to satisfy their needs, is to be done by the facilitator.

To reduce the anxiety of learners, if any, proper and scientific mentoring and caring are to be given too. Addressing needs of students with different abilities, students from cultural diversities, students with weaker pre requisites etc., strategic

changes are essential in teaching and evaluation. Along with flexibility in curriculum and pedagogy, the timely revision of curriculum is also necessary. To ensure holistic learning, the implementation of outcome-based education is a proper educational model. Equity in access and participation, catering the individual needs and achievement of specific outcomes by all learners are major aspects of inclusive education. By the proper implementation of OBE, there is an increased scope for inclusivity. It can ensure quality education for students from diverse backgrounds.

In OBE, rather than the homogenising of learning objectives as in the traditional way, the different and specific outcomes are stated individually and the same can be measured through the evaluation system. More over students and facilitators are aware of the outcome well in advance too. “Fool proof internal features appropriate to make the system democratic, student-centric and innovative would be inevitable to resist the move towards homogenization of outcomes and their unilateral imposition” (Gurukkal et al 2). As mentioned here, diversity of the learner group is taken into account right from the drafting and designing of each course up to the evaluation of the achievement of the outcome by the learners. Thus, in every sense, OBE is giving way for proper accommodation of student centric system aiming to integrate technology and advanced instructional models as

pedagogical practices for a learner-based learner-oriented education.

Traditional education focuses too much on what the teachers teach as input rather than what the students are learning as outcome. On the other hand, OBE emphasizes a learner-centric self-learning approach. It focuses on the real-world application and experience of education which the student grosses at the end of a Programme, Session, or Course is more important than what or how something is taught. OBE is a progressive model that involves the reform of curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation, and assessment practices to reflect the achievement of high-order learning, thinking and applied knowledge rather than a mere accumulation of percentage of marks and course credits (DGT 2).

If the proper significance is given for inclusiveness in education, it will also result in creating an inclusive civic culture among the learners. OBE also aims in achieving the diverse skills by diverse learners. Hence, it can be observed that, OBE gives sufficient importance for inclusiveness in education. In the current higher educational scenario of our nation such a policy of inclusiveness is quite necessary too.

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