

## **Learner focused education**

India is probably the only country in the world, which celebrates 'teachers' day' as a day of national importance. (Teachers' day commemorates the birth anniversary of Dr. Radhakrishnan, the former president of India who was a great teacher and an administrator). This is an indicator of the highest order of respect and reverence a teacher commands in the Indian system of education. In our ancient scriptures, we find 'Guru' or teacher placed much above the parents and even equated to the God. The larger than life' image of Guru' in the ancient 'Gurukula' system rendered Indian education essentially teacher centric. That doesn't mean education was a one-sided affair. Ample opportunities were provided for the students to express themselves and interact with one another and the teacher.

We are continuing with the same teacher centric system even today, but unfortunately, without the other ingredients of interactivity and flexibility, which were so much a part of the ancient system. This is proving detrimental to the realization of the ultimate objective of education- that of creating useful citizens for the society--under the present circumstances.

A learner centric system, which lays more emphasis on the requirements of a learner, is the need of the hour. Once again, it is the technology that has come to the rescue of educators in making education more mass based and learner friendly.

The advanced countries of the world have realized this and have been successful in creating socially relevant manpower. While making education more objective-oriented, technology offers a realistic option for the educators in the developing countries to make education broad-based and enhance the literacy level. The advent of information technology has made a big difference to the way we learn and understand things. Apart from the more familiar audio and video systems and the mass media, which constitutes a major portion of technology in education, the proliferation of computers has given rise to a host of technologies like CD-ROMs, multimedia, videoconferencing, Internet and DVD-ROMs.

The last of these is the greatest development of the century, which surpasses all other technologies developed in the recent past and definitely those to be developed in the near future. It is probably a celebration of the glory of information technology. More importantly, it is one of the best things to have happened to education. Coupled with other contemporary technologies like multimedia and video conferencing, Internet is offering the best means of global education and interactive learning. Let us hope that the Indian Government takes immediate steps to make Internet an all-encompassing media.

As is the case with any other technological development, even technology in education is being viewed with skepticism by the teaching clan-They believe technology could prove their nemesis in the long run and would ultimately eliminate them from the education scene. This is an imaginary and a wrong interpretation of the role of technology. The teacher, in fact, would have to play a dual role of guiding students and also managing technologies in the emerging scenario. This fact is aptly elaborated in the article, 'Technology Assisted Teaching'. This is one of the many articles in this issue talking about the emerging trends in the educational scene. We hope this will enable all concerned to take a fresh look at our education system and make it learner focused.

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