MANAGING CHANGE AND INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

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Educational institution, like all other organizations require constant monitoring to identify areas for potential development and improvement. However, educational reforms are not often well implemented. This results in massive wastage of finances, resources and lost potential.

Change may be described as an adoption of an innovation, where ultimate goal is to improve outcomes through an alternation of practices. However, the process of change is very complex with many different types of change possible. Further, there are a number of differing strategies for implementing these changes, with the success of implementation being highly variable.

Factors that drive change may be internal or external to the environment. Innovations may be intended at any level in the organizational structure and reforms may be systemic or local in nature.

Commercial enterprises, non-profit organizations, service industries, government instrumentalities and educational institutions all undergo change.

As educational institutions have characteristics in common with each of the preceding level (pre-primary to primary etc), this may be considered as being typical of an organization undergoing change.

The structural framework of education is hierarchical in nature i.e. pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary levels. Each of these strata has individuals with differing goals, interests and perspectives. This results in groups that possess different cultures, structures, practices, policies and goals, which ultimately determine the success or failure of the implementation of innovations.
There are three intersecting sets of core values, underlying organizational culture, organizational group values and individual values. Within each level of educational endeavour, there exists the possibility of improvement to practices and their resultant outcomes.

An individual teacher at classroom level may instigate a new assessment process for the benefit of her students, school head may initiate change by establishing new lab or teaching aid which may be shared by whole school.

Similarly, inter-school network may share the best resources. Policies of accreditation, ISO certification and new parameters of performance indicators for institution and teachers, prove as “change drivers”, globalization of society has produced an imperative for continual reappraisal of policy and practices in order to maintain a competitive edge. In educational terms, this may be interpreted as the need to update practices in keeping with the findings of national and international research, and to continually conform to national trends.

Internal innovations or changes to institutions brought to bear by curricular reforms. Further alterations in staff-student relationships from teacher-centered to student-centered create the need for modification of teaching practices, and policies and procedures to support meaningful educational experience.

Societal changes are responsible for innovations and changes due to the change in student population. With RTE and new evaluation pattern with increased retention rates resulting in students of lesser ability staying in the educational system beyond the mandatory fourteen years of age. Also, cultural diversity has become regular feature of Indian educational institutions.

Further, work-place demands have greatly influenced the education in the last few decades. Theoretical knowledge and skills are no longer sufficient but an ability to adapt to new situations, to continue to learn independently, and to work cooperatively have become necessary. Ability to work in a team and creativity is the most sought after qualities in a work place. This produces a need to develop instructional practices that develop a self-directed, life long learner.