

SOUTH WEST DELHI SANKALP SAHODAYA WEBINAR

DATE: 31 MAY 2020

TOPIC: THE FUTURE SCHOOL- BUILDING RESILIENCE & BRIDGING LEARNING GAP

The meeting started at 4 pm.

Ms Archana Narain, Secretary Sankalp Sahodaya welcomed all the participants and introduced Dr Joseph Emmanuel, Director Academics, CBSE. Dr Emmanuel is credited with introduction of technology in examination, operationalizing the Center of Excellences and also starting the prestigious NEET examination

Ms Sudha Acharya started the webinar by introducing the topic of the day and thanked all the eminent participants that included principals of schools in not only Delhi but also from other places such as Oman.

She stressed on the importance of building resilience in this uncertain times, home lockdown period of pandemic along with informed decision making, problem solving etc.

She requested Dr Emmanuel to guide in reimagining the landscape of education.

Dr Joseph Emmanuel began his speech by thanking all the principals for starting the blended model of teaching to continue the formal education of students. It all happened due to the willingness to go the extra mile to bridge the learning gap.

He said that teachers too are taking all the steps to stay connected with their students through telephonic calls, whatsapp or the online mode. Through all this they are turning resilient to and bridge the gap that has come in education.

Resilience means knowing how to cope in spite of setbacks or barriers.

Right now, there are two targets-

First the learners are facing the problem and their inability to take up the virtual platform of education.

Secondly the loss of real time face to face interaction between students and teachers.

For meeting all these challenges, the learning outcomes have been defined for each level and that has to be achieved and if there is any gap it needs to be bridged.

What are the abilities to be acquired by the system to overcome the challenges? The government has the Swayam Prabha and the Diksha platform that needs to be strengthened. Schools are contributing to the Diksha platform with learning resources. Through this the students will have access to free resource anytime-on demand. This should be the new norm.

The focus should be on competency-based learning, integration of art with education. This will help the child to find his ability and competency and should be able to contribute to the society, demonstrate skills and be successful. The reality of today is multi-cultural environment so the students should be trained accordingly so that they are able to move ahead.

As of today, all the stake holders- students, parents and schools are focused on marks attained in exams. It may not be very out of place as most of the higher education and jobs are based on marks scored.

However, competency is an asset for the country and it comes from the ability to understand the challenges of the changing times.

In the Indian education system, there is a gap between the degree we gain and the work we do. So, the skill formation should start from the school itself. As the popular quote goes “it takes a village to raise a child” so this change cannot happen overnight. It is a long-drawn process. The schools in India have varying resources from being well equipped to lacking even the basic infrastructure. So, it is a big challenge. The Education Act is a big milestone towards it. However, there are various limitation in achieving it and we need to mitigate these.

The schools should work towards achieving personalized learning that is tailor made for students. The students should feel welcome. There should be a strong two-way communication between student teachers and parents. The teachers are using various platforms to reach out to the students. There should be individual attention to every child. But the big classroom size is a challenge in achieving it. The teachers should try to find solutions and overcome them.

Autonomy of the schools is very important. The schools should find ways to provide individualized learning. Digital education must supplement the learning process. The present situation is a blessing in disguise. Teachers have tried to train themselves to reach out to the students and continue with the learning process. This will continue for sometime so go ahead with this blended model of teaching learning and education. Without students the schools are vacant spaces.

The effect of the pandemic will be there on some students for various reasons. In many parts of the world the opening of the schools is leading to a rise in the cases as the small children are not able to understand the social distancing norms etc. schools should devise mechanism for the safety of students. Right now, instructions are awaited from the government and ministries that will provide guidelines which will be adapted depending on the condition of the area and its surroundings. Schools will have to implement the plans so they should start preparing safety mechanism, precautions, action plans, health and hygiene and listing out duties and responsibility. Schools will also need to follow the guidelines of the local governments. The instructions will come when the government feels that the time is appropriate to reopen schools.

Schools in South India are reopening on 1 June, and it's the same situation like April in north India. As they were already apprised of the challenges, they have also developed hardware and software to deal with the situation.

He once again stressed on the importance of blended model of learning and achieving age appropriate learning outcomes. We also have to develop an assessment strategy in the classroom so that the students are not stressed. Project Based learning should be tried that will help develop various skill sets of the students. Such projects and art integrated work should be selected that can be done from home. Art integrated teaching should lead to learning outcome of the specific subject area and not art. It should be able to strengthen their skill set and knowledge.

Students should be guided to reach their life goals based on their skill set. Every child should be assisted individually and given personalized guidance. He again outlined the importance of competency-based teaching.

The house was then opened for questions from esteemed principals and guests.

Ms Asha Prabhakar, Principal Bal Bharti Public School NOIDA agreed that competency-based education was good and also the importance of learning outcomes. She sought guidance on assessment modality for the blended model of learning.

Dr Joseph Emmanuel agreed that assessing the children's learning outcome in this pandemic is difficult. In the classroom various methods can be adopted to assess the child such as role play, quiz etc. In the distant mode questions can be framed in such a way that it can assess to see if the learning outcomes are achieved. For this framing quality questions are very important. AI based assessment is a challenge at present but we have to keep moving. Assessment strategy should be strengthened. Internal assessment can play an important role. Year end examination is a necessity due to the nature of the society. Steps should be taken to reduce the impact of the board exam.

Ms Sanchita From Oman wanted to know how to maintain high standards of hygiene, sterilization and sanitization during practicals given the large number of students and the fact that they come in batches one after another for their practicals.

Dr Joseph Emmanuel said the practicals are part of internal assessment. Schools should decide their own strategy such as wearing gloves when handling apparatuses. The government will also come out with guidelines.

Sanjay Mullick from Jharkhand said that there are various media reports about reduction of syllabus. He requested if the Pre Board exams could be conducted by the Board so that the students have a better understanding of the type of questions to expect in the examinations.

Dr Joseph Emmanuel said that the Board will come out with the rationalized curriculum shortly based on the loss of instructional time due to the pandemic. The aim is to reduce the stress of

the students in exams. He said, that it was not easy as there are the entrance exams also which may or may not reduce the syllabus. He assured that the rationalized curriculum and the sample paper for 2021 exams will be shared shortly.

Sister Shirin Truthel highlighted that in pan India when some students do not have access to even books then how to include them in the blended model of learning?

Dr Joseph Emmanuel said that we will need to work towards connecting all students digitally. He said that many state governments provide with books to students so in future they may give gadget instead of books. This will however take time as the number of students in our country is larger than the population of many European countries. So at present the Diksha and Swayam Prabha resources can be used.

Nita Arora Principal, Venkateshwara School put across queries-

1. When will the link to change the subject/ stream be activated?
2. When will the rationalized curriculum be released?
3. Do not remove IT as subject from the board exams.
4. When will the link for center change for board exams 2020 be activated?

Dr Joseph Emmanuel said he will look into the matter of the IT as a subject for exams.

Rationalized Curriculum will be released shortly.

Students will be given enough time to change the center of board exams.

Subject or stream change in class 10 or 12 is a violation of the exam bye laws as per the norms of the board as 9&10 and 11&12 are integrated. Special permissions are given only in extra ordinary situations.

Sumana Dutta wanted to know if the students with the subject of Applied maths will be eligible for B. Com Honours.

Dr Joseph Emmanuel said that it is a big question and CBSE is taking up the matter with the UGC. The importance of the course is being highlighted. It is up to the universities to accept it.

In the end he asked the schools to follow the concept-based learning given by NCERT. They can tweak the syllabus but the rationalized academic calendar should be followed.

Ms Sheelu Mathews proposed the vote of thanks.