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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME (AAWAZ) FOR DOMESTIC MIGRANT LABOURERS IN KERALA OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES <i>UMA.K & Dr. E. K. SATHEESH</i>	1
2.	FINANCIAL LITERACY: A STEP FORWARD TOWARDS SUCCESS <i>V.VIJAYA & Dr. V.MANICKAVASAGAM</i>	4
3.	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES: A CASE OF PUNJAB <i>Dr. JASDEEP KAUR DHAMI, Dr. MANISH GUPTA & SANGRAM SINGH</i>	8
4.	EQUIPPING EVERY LEARNER FOR 21ST CENTURY <i>Dr. AMARDEEP KAUR</i>	13
5.	A STUDY ON THE PROMOTION AND REWARD POLICY WITH REFERENCE TO RELIANCE DYEING WORKS TIRUPUR <i>Dr. S. KALAIYARASI</i>	15
6.	A STATISTICAL STUDY ON CUSTOMERS LOYALTY OF MOBILE PHONE SERVICES <i>LENIN JOHN & Dr. D. RANJITHAM</i>	20
7.	A STUDY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS IN COIMBATORE CITY <i>S. AMUDHA & Dr. M. KANAGARATHINAM</i>	24
8.	FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER LOYALTY: A STUDY ON ORGANISED FOOD & GROCERY OUTLETS <i>Dr. D. PADMA & A. SHANTHI</i>	27
9.	DYNAMIC CONGESTION CONTROL IN NETWORK LAYER FOR ADVANCED CLOUD COMPUTING <i>G. RAMASUBBAREDDY, K. RANGASWAMY & Dr. C. RAJABHUSANAM</i>	33
10.	ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN VARIOUS BUSINESS SECTORS IN TAMILNADU <i>Dr. G. YOGANANDAN & T. VIGNESH</i>	36
11.	GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF TELECOM SECTOR IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW <i>Dr. N. VIJAYAKUMAR</i>	40
12.	FUTURE CLOSING PRICE, TRADING VOLUME AND OPEN INTEREST: EVIDENCE FROM STOCK FUTURES & INDEX FUTURES OF NIFTY 50 ON NSE IN INDIA <i>KERKAR PUJA PARESH & Dr. P. SRI RAM</i>	45
13.	FUTURE TRACK OF STRATEGIC GROWTH OF M-COMMERCE MARKET IN GLOBAL SCENARIO <i>Dr. VAIBHAV SHARMA</i>	55
14.	AN ANALYSIS OF CSR SPENDING IN INDIAN COMPANIES <i>NEHA PUSHPAK</i>	58
15.	REMITTANCES AND HOUSEHOLD SAVINGS AND INVESTMENT <i>SULTANA B. A. MAZUMDER</i>	62
16.	THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS IS DIGITAL MARKETING: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY <i>BAJRANG LAL & Dr. AJMER SINGH</i>	67
17.	AN ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING BY ZIMBABWEAN MEDICAL LABORATORIES IN HARARE <i>CHEZA ALEXANDER, MATAMANDE WILSON & KAPESA TONDERAI</i>	74
18.	GROWTH AND PROGRESS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY IN INDIA - A STUDY <i>VINAY KUMAR BOLLOJU & A. SREENIVAS</i>	79
19.	GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN IT-BPM SECTOR <i>SUMI.KV</i>	81
20.	E-COMMERCE IN INDIAN CONTEXT: A SWOT ANALYSIS <i>SALIM KHAN</i>	85
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	88

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EQUIPPING EVERY LEARNER FOR 21ST CENTURY

Dr. AMARDEEP KAUR
PRINCIPAL
ASRA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
SANGRUR

ABSTRACT

Education has been a fundamental component of human well-being and national productivity. Only high quality education helps for well-being and national development. There is need to transform the education system so as to achieve the target of universalization of elementary education along with the quality in education. With a great deal of investment being put into outfitting schools with technology, the question of whether or not it is worth the investment is a valid one. However, this paper strives to address the holistic transformation of education systems and to offer a foundation on which quality education and system leadership can be achieved. We believe the core of an excellent education system is based on talented teachers, strong system leadership, solid curriculum, and accountability for outcomes. However, another key component is the integration of technologies that can fuel new forms of teaching and learning, nurture 21st century skills and prepare learners for participation in the global economy of this century.

KEYWORDS

leadership, curriculum, integration of technologies, global economy.

INTRODUCTION

We know that education has been the passport to opportunity and prosperity. It has enabled individuals, whether in developing or developed countries, to become academics, entrepreneurs, and business and government leaders. We recognize the challenges facing education systems have a direct impact on our future as a corporation. Sustainability for us depends on the innovation and expertise of our employees. Our priority will always be the recruitment and retention of top talent. It depends on the solid foundation taught during primary, secondary, and tertiary education. We know that although today's global, Internet-based economy provides numerous opportunities not available before, there is still a critical need for universal access to quality education and visionary leadership. Significant barriers remain to achieve this, from gender inequality to a lack of basic capacity, and we are involved in many initiatives to counter precisely these problems. However, this paper strives to address the holistic transformation of education systems and to offer a foundation on which quality education and system leadership can be achieved. We believe the core of an excellent education system is based on talented teachers, strong system leadership, solid curriculum, and accountability for outcomes. However, another key component is the integration of technologies that can fuel new forms of teaching and learning, nurture 21st century skills, and prepare learners for participation in the global economy of this century. Technology had the potential to increase access to education as well as improve teacher training and student learning; Sustainability of quality education and access to it needed a multi-stakeholder approach that included government officials, education leaders, teachers, private sector investments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address many of the basic needs and barriers to education.

SYSTEM REFORM MOVEMENT

There is now an emerging consensus on the resources needed to build a well-functioning education system. These are exceptional teachers and teaching methods, relevant and stretching curricular content, accountability for outcomes, and outstanding system leadership.

1. Attract and develop very high quality teachers.
2. Develop well defined and holistic curricula.
3. Develop high quality system leadership.
4. Create practices and regimes that can improve processes and outcomes.

CHANGING LEARNERS

How can traditional modes of classroom instruction engage and inspire students when life outside the classroom has changed so dramatically? For many learners, class is the only time in their day when they completely "disconnect." Now everyone can be a creator—a film maker on YouTube, a recording artist on Second Life, or an opinion leader on blogs and a multitude of gossip and comment sites. The new paradigm requires a broader reform agenda; one that responds to socioeconomic realities and enhances learning opportunities through collaborative technologies. It presents a global destination with many different local paths.

PATH TO 21ST CENTURY**HOLISTIC TRANSFORMATION**

The paradigm shift to a world of 21st century learning is rooted in a set of goals for all learners:

- ❖ Acquire a range of skills needed to succeed in a modern, globalized world
- ❖ Receive tailored instruction that enables them to reach their full potential
- ❖ Connect to their communities in person and digitally, and interact with people from different cultures
- ❖ Continue learning throughout their lives.

Achieving this vision requires transformation in four interconnected core area.

1. 21st century skills that complement the core curriculum.
2. 21st century pedagogy to teach these skills effectively alongside basic literacy and numeracy skills.
3. Crucial enabler of both the new pedagogy and skills, is technology, harnessed in a much more fundamental and effective way than traditional applications in education.
4. 21st century system reform that integrates and adapts the pillars of high performing systems outlined earlier—great teachers, curricular excellence, accountability for outcomes, and outstanding System leadership.

Progress will only occur when all four areas are leveraged and deployed to work together in an integrated way. Leading technologies, for instance, cannot replace teachers, but can support them in accomplishing much higher levels of student engagement and achievement. Similarly, great teachers cannot effectively reach young learners without adopting new pedagogies and few education systems can prepare their learners for prosperity without supporting the development of 21st century skills.

SKILLS IN 21ST CENTURY

- ❖ Problem solving and decision making
- ❖ Creative and critical thinking
- ❖ Collaboration, communication, and negotiation

- ❖ Intellectual curiosity and the ability to find, select, structure, and evaluate information and the motivation to be:
- ❖ An independent self-starter who is responsible, persevering, self-regulating, reflective, self-evaluating, and self-correcting
- ❖ A lifelong learner who is flexible and able to adapt to change

PEDAGOGY

- ❖ **THE LEARNER AT THE CENTER:** This approach caters to multiple learning styles and adapts education to reflect the learning needs of each individual.
- ❖ **THE TEACHER DRAWS FROM A REPERTOIRE OF STRATEGIES AND SKILLS:** Education must nurture creative and collaborative skills. Knowledge is available at the click of a mouse, but learning to apply it requires a teacher who can instruct, facilitate, guide, and support as needed.
- ❖ **INTERDISCIPLINARY AND PROJECT-BASED WORK:** Interdisciplinary and project-based teaching is also particularly conducive to working in teams, and hence provides another example of the link between 21st century skills and the pedagogy used to impart them.
- ❖ **AUTHENTICITY:** Delivering learning that is authentic is another way to engage students by appealing to their existing passions and interests. It is equally important to integrate real-life experiences into lessons.

CONCLUSION

Education has been a fundamental component of human well-being and national productivity. Only high quality education helps for well-being and national development. There is need to transform the education system so as to achieve the target of universalization of elementary education along with the quality in education. With a great deal of investment being put into outfitting schools with technology, the question of whether or not it is worth the investment is a valid one. However, this paper strives to address the holistic transformation of education systems and to offer a foundation on which quality education and system leadership can be achieved. We believe the core of an excellent education system is based on talented teachers, strong system leadership, solid curriculum, and accountability for outcomes. However, another key component is the integration of technologies that can fuel new forms of teaching and learning, nurture 21st century skills and prepare learners for participation in the global economy of this century.

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