



BLENDDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF INDIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Sabita Borah ¹

Research Scholar,

Department of Education,

Gauhati University, Guwahati, Kamrup(M), Assam

Ahmed Mortuza Hussain Tapadar ²

Research Scholar,

Department of Education,

Gauhati University, Guwahati, Kamrup(M), Assam

ABSTRACT: In today's world, technology plays a significant role in transforming the education system. Due to its advancement, pedagogical practices have been redefined. Blended learning is the new emerging pedagogical approach for all higher educational institutions of India. It maintains a harmonious relationship between the traditional approach and online education. In the Indian context, the most recent educational policy, NEP 2020, also highlights the importance of blended learning in higher educational institutions of India. This study aimed to understand the opportunities and challenges faced by higher educational institutions of India. To conduct this study, a review of literature technique has been chosen as a research methodology. The study was purely based on secondary data, collected from the databases, namely Google Scholar and ResearchGate. The findings of the study revealed that despite various opportunities, adopting blended learning in Indian higher educational institutions face various challenges like lack of proper infrastructure facilities, lack of digital competency of teachers, lack of adequate training and support etc. The study suggested that the government, policy-makers, administrators and course developers must work together for the successful implementation of blended learning in the Indian higher education system.

KEYWORDS: Blended Learning, Higher Education, NEP 2020, COVID-19

I. INTRODUCTION:

In the context of a rapidly growing landscape of education, technology has emerged as a pivotal force of transition. Technological innovations have reshaped teaching-learning practices beyond the limitations of traditional classrooms. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation by creating an urgent need to adopt online education. During this time, all educational institutions at different levels across the world provide education in online mode with the help of various digital learning tools and platforms. The Indian higher education system is not an exception in this regard. Even after the pandemic, most colleges and universities in India use various digital learning platforms like Google Meet, Google Classroom, Zoom and Microsoft Teams to expand their teaching-learning beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom. Additionally, the government of India and HRD ministry also took some initiatives by launching SWAYAM, NPTEL, Diksha, e-PG Pathshala etc., after realising the need of the hour. However, despite of growing demands of online education, it is seen that because of various benefits of traditional teaching like direct interaction, immediate feedback, both teachers and learners do not want to leave the traditional teaching approach completely. Therefore, in order to fulfill the demands of traditional teaching and online education, and to maintain a harmonious relationship between them, a new pedagogical approach has emerged which is known as blended learning.

Blended learning is an approach that combines both traditional and digital education. Traditional education defines the education system that requires face-to-face interaction between teachers and learners in a physical classroom setting. Again, in the online education system, the teaching-learning process happens through various technological tools or digital platforms. When components of both types of education combine, then it is called blended learning. It offers flexibility, accessibility and personalised learning and making education more inclusive (Vudoagiri & Rajan, 2025). The primary goal of blended learning is not to weaken the traditional classroom teaching methods but it refines the teaching-learning process by integrating technological tools. When course materials are provided through digital learning platforms, classroom time becomes more valuable as it gives space to the classroom for reasoning, discussion, interpretation, application and judgment. Research has shown that blended learning improves students' engagement. With the help of various features of digital learning platforms, blended learning provides learning resources available at any-time and from anywhere, making the assessment and feedback process easier and faster.

Blended learning can be considered as new normal in current scenario. Various policymakers and government also give importance to it. The most recent education policy launched in India i.e. New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes on integrating technology with conventional methods of teaching for greater quality and accessibility. The policy urges higher educational institutions to adopt online and blended learning methods. By noticing the current trends in Indian education system, NEP2020 prioritized blended learning to foster the learning ecosystem in higher educational institutions. In response to the policy recommendation, UGC has also recommended that all higher educational institutions of India will teach 40% of a course in online mode and the other 60% in traditional mode. Additionally, according to official guidelines from Ministry of Education 2025, higher educational institutions are encouraged to adopt online and Open Distance Learning (ODL) programs, leverage platforms such as SWAYAM and promote digital infrastructure, including digital libraries, virtual labs and learning management systems. Again, the National Educational Technology forum (NETF) also recognizes the needs of adopting alternative teaching methods after the situations like Covid-19 pandemic.

From the above discussion, it is seen that in contemporary education, blended learning reshaped the pedagogical approach, especially after COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the NEP 2020 and the UGC also push a strong emphasis on adopting blended learning in higher education. However, the adoption and integration of blended learning in higher educational institutions, especially in Indian context face numerous challenges due to its geographical location, institutional infrastructure, digital competency skills of teachers and students etc. In such situations, it is very important to understand the condition of higher educational institutions of India in adopting blended learning. Following the paradigm shift emerged after technology-enabled education; blended learning has gained scholarly interest. Several researches have been conducted to investigate its effectiveness, students' engagement and perceptions of both teachers and students.

Therefore, in this study, the researcher tries to understand the opportunities and challenges of Indian higher education in adopting blended learning with the help of existing literature. Further, the researcher provides some suggestions to prevent the challenges faced in adopting blended learning.

I.I. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The primary objectives of this paper are:

1. To identify the opportunities of adopting blended learning in Indian higher educational institutions
2. To analyze the major challenges of adopting blended learning in Indian higher educational institutions
3. To suggest some recommendations to prevent challenges in adopting blended learning in Indian higher educational institutions

II. METHODOLOGY:

This paper is primarily based on secondary data. The researcher used a literature-based technique to give insight into the selected objectives of the study. Relevant research articles and scholarly publications published between 2020 to 2026 were selected for gathering data. The researcher selected only open-access and peer-reviewed research articles written in the English language from the databases namely, Google Scholar and ResearchGate. The materials were analyzed thematically to understand the opportunities and challenges of adopting blended learning in Indian higher educational institutions.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

Opportunities of Adopting Blended Learning in Indian Higher Educational Institutions:

1. **Personalised learning:** Through blended learning, personalised learning is possible. As personalised learning helps learners to learn according to their needs and interests, they get motivated to learn. Overall, it increases the academic outcome of learners.
2. **Increase students' productivity:** Students' productivity includes the ability to manage their time and resources and also achieve better academic performance. Several studies revealed that blended learning enhanced students' productivity as it gives a chance of active participation.
3. **Increased flexibility and accessibility:** Blended learning provides an opportunity to learn without any restrictions in time and location. Due to its flexibility and accessibility, learners from diverse backgrounds and needs get the chance of learning (Das & Barman, 2024).
4. **Collaborative learning opportunities:** By providing different facilities like discussion forum, team assignments, online discussions among the peers etc., blended learning works as a collaborative learning platform (Das & Barman, 2024).
5. **Preparation for the future of work:** To tackle the situation of blended learning, students must learn how to use digital platforms and tools, online interaction skills, self-directed learning skills etc. This helps students to develop their digital literacy skills which are mandatory for surviving in the modern workforce (Sethi & Singh, 2025).
6. **Effective use of technology:** To cope with the 21st century technology-enabled educational landscape, blended learning encourages both teachers and students to effectively integrate digital tools and learning platforms, multi-media resources etc (N,2025).

Challenges of Adopting Blended Learning in Indian Higher Educational Institutions:

1. **Lack of proper infrastructure facility:** One of the key challenges of adopting blended learning in higher educational institutions of India is lack of proper infrastructure facility. For adopting blended learning, there must be a high-speed internet connection facility in all the universities that should be accessible to all the educators and learners. (Alam, et.al.,2022)
2. **Financial constraints:** For implementing blended learning in India, financial resources are the serious problem. To increase the number of digital devices and adequate internet facility, institutions needs financial help. That creates challenge for the country like India. (Vudoagiri & Rajan, 2022; Pandit,2020)
3. **Pedagogical design and integration:** Pedagogical design involves systematic and structured planning of the whole process of teaching and learning. It includes instructional methods, learning materials, assessment methods and providing feedback etc. For the successful implementation of blended learning, it requires proper pedagogical design where technology has been integrated into each

process of teaching and learning (N, 2025). Several research studies revealed that in the Indian higher education system, proper pedagogical design is one of the major challenges in adopting blended learning.

4. Lack of adequate skills: Blended learning requires creation of digital content, interaction and assessment process in online mode. Lack of e-skills and competencies of both teachers and students are important components for successful implementation of blended learning. Lack of proper skills leads student confusion with the ample information available. Most of the students do not know how to manage online classes and have internet connectivity issues (Alom,et.al,2022). Again, teachers cannot properly use digital devices and prepare e-content.

5. Lack of teacher training: In this 21st century, teachers should be a facilitator. The teachers must reflect three pillars of blended learning i.e. social presence, teaching presence and cognitive presence in the content of their teaching (Bordoloi, et.al.,2021). For proper integration of technology into teaching practices teachers need professional development training (N, 2025). Again, inexperienced or inadequate teachers need training support. Shortage of the same creates challenges in implementing blended learning in Indian higher educational institutions.

6. Psychological factors: psychological factors like teachers' and students' attitudes, perceptions and readiness directly create barriers in proper implementation of blended learning.

7. Student engagement: Blended learning reduces the time of physical interaction mode between the teachers and students. Lack of in-person teaching leads to students' isolation and disengagement in learning process. Additionally, students also face challenges in time management and self-motivation. Maintaining student engagement and motivation is also a major challenge in adopting blended learning in Indian higher education (Das & Barman, 2024).

8. Socio-cultural barriers: As India is the place of diverse cultures and languages, so tailoring the content for each language is a difficult job (Vudoagiri & Rajan, 2022; Pandit,2020).

Suggestions to Prevent Challenges in Adopting Blended Learning in Indian Higher Educational Institutions:

Based on the above discussion, some recommendations are provided to prevent challenges in adopting blended learning in higher educational institutions of India. Firstly, administrators and policy-makers should take steps to provide proper infrastructure facilities like updated software, internet connections etc. The government should provide financial assistance to all the higher educational institutions of India for strengthening digital infrastructure.

Secondly, teacher training programs like workshops, hands-on training programs, professional development program etc should be conducted on a continuous basis for proper implementation of blended learning approach. It should focus on content and instructional methods of how a teacher should use instruction in the classroom while using blended learning approach. The government, administrators should organize appropriate training programs to remove techno-phobia from the teachers.

Thirdly, as many research studies have found that due to diverse cultural background India faces a huge challenge in implementing blended learning in all higher educational institutions. So, to prevent this challenge the curriculum/content developer should maintain uniformity in developing the content so that all can easily access it. They should integrate suitable technology into each content while preparing the course material so that teachers can implement it effectively. The policymakers should provide clear guidelines for adopting it.

At last, there should be a collaborative bond among all the government bodies, higher educational institutions, course designers and policy-makers. Strengthening the bond among them increases the ability to adopt blended learning effectively.

IV. CONCLUSION

Higher educational institutions in India are growing drastically due to technological evolution. However, providing education only through online mode delimit the benefits associated with traditional approach. Therefore, to take advantage of both the system the concept of blended learning approach has emerged. It is seen that, India's new educational policy, NEP 2020, highlights the importance of using blended learning in higher education. The policy majorly focuses on promoting a holistic, flexible and multi-disciplinary education system which leads to technology-enabled education. It improves equal accessibility and academic outcomes. By integrating technology into traditional teaching-learning process, NEP 2020 recommends to adopt blended learning.

In conclusion, it can be said that blended learning is very important to fulfill the current educational needs of India. It has various benefits, like; combining conventional teaching process with online education increases the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching-learning process. Additionally, teachers can creatively plan how they deliver the course. It also increases students' productivity. Blended learning provides opportunities by creating more accessible and flexible learning for all types of learners. In short, it fulfils all the demands of 21st century education. Therefore, both teachers and students must adopt blended learning.

While adopting blended learning, a variety of aspects like infrastructural facilities, inadequate e-skills among teachers and students, lack of training and support etc hampers higher educational institutions in India. NEP 2020 suggests the use of blended learning. Therefore, the government, policy-makers, administrators, course developers must work together for the successful implementation of blended learning in Indian higher education system.

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