

# **Outcome Based Education (OBE): A Transition from Traditional Education System**

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## **Abstract**

*In today's fast changing modern world, the traditional educational system is gradually becoming irrelevant. In our time the change is only constant and this is much more rapid as compared to the changes of the past. We human beings need to keep pace with these rapid changes. This in turn demands more skills so as to cope with the ever-changing technological developments. Considering this fact, it has become imperative that today's educational institutes produce such products who are fully capable of coping with technological developments. In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary that our traditional education system gets shifted to Outcome Based Education (OBE).*

**Keywords:** *Outcome Based Education, Traditional Education System, Deficiencies, Principles.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, we often come across complaints that the existing education system is not able to adequately prepare students for life in general and challenges related to the workplace in particular. This leads us to a quest for exploring ways of formulating a new education system. Consequently, not only primary and secondary education, tertiary education should also move from traditional teaching approach to student centered approach. Contrary to this requirement, most often teachers deliver their lessons in a manner which is more teacher-centric rather than student-centric. This leads to a classroom situation wherein the focus is on teaching process rather than on the learning process of students. To overcome this issue, the concept of Outcome Based Education (OBE) was developed, wherein the emphasis is on course end objectives, i.e., what is expected from the students after completion of their course rather than how they achieved it. Outcome Based Education has been defined as an approach to education in which curriculum is framed according to the outcomes the students should display at the end of the course - professional knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and attitudes rather than on the educational process. In other words, the final destination is predetermined before the

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journey and the focus is reaching the destination rather than on the journey. Accordingly, the curriculum in OBE is designed in the form of competency-based learning standards and outcome-based quality assurance monitoring. OBE has been recognised as an important component of education in societies with knowledge-based economies.

### **Traditional Education System**

Traditional education system, also known as conventional education or customary education, refers to the long-established teaching customs that our society traditionally has been using in schools. This traditional education system mostly consists of lectures or lessons which are teacher-centric and curriculum centric wherein the classes are conducted in a formal setting. The focus of this system is on transmission of information from the teacher to the student. Also, there is very limited use of science and technology in this system. The lessons in traditional education are not linked or designed around a specific context, rather the system only provides the learner with knowledge or skills. The learning takes place in a vacuum and cannot be regarded as outcome-based learning. The level of knowledge attained depends on the memorising ability of the learner. The learning process is thus teacher-driven.

### **Deficiencies of Traditional Education System**

- The traditional education system is of a generalised nature. As such, this system fails to address the specific and unique learning needs of students who have unique interests and talents.
- The students in this system are mostly passive listeners and they have very low active participation.
- In traditional education system, the learning environment is rigid and formal. This makes the learning difficult and the students often fail to cope with it.
- Traditional education system is teacher-centric, whereas the learning needs of the students demand a learning-centric approach. Thus, the main sources of information are teachers and books with almost no scope for exploration of other possible sources of information.
- There is hardly any group-learning/ peer-learning. This results in limited collaboration between the students.
- Achievement is measured in terms of symbols or marks. These marks or symbols are not the true measurement of a learner's actual performance.
- The curriculum is content based wherein the teacher instructs and the students memorise. Creative thinking takes a back seat in this system.

- Life skills like communication skills, soft skills, and analytical thinking, which are actually required in both social and professional life, are not developed in the students.

### **Outcome Based Education (OBE)**

In order to participate in the modern global economy, every country needs a workforce which is skilled and trained to overcome the various challenges in a highly techno-intensive global environment. Apart from the requisite technical skills, the workforce needs to possess soft skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills besides having a good business acumen and analytical bend of mind. All these skills and knowledge are enablers for developing cooperation not just in the national arena but internationally. However, the traditional education system does not equip our students with these skills and knowledge as discussed above. Therefore, the answer lies in shifting towards outcome based education. Trucker in 2004 concluded that OBE is a process that involves the restructuring of curriculum assessment and reporting practices in education to reflect the achievement of high order learning and mastery rather than the accumulation of course credits.

From our discussion, it emerges that the aim of Outcome Based Education is to provide those skills and knowledge to learners which they can utilize in life after they leave the institution. This education aims at making the students competitive, knowledgeable, job oriented, and overall a competent citizen.

### **Definitions of Outcome Based Education**

An analysis of the existing literature shows that there are various definitions of Outcome based Education, all of which arrive at a basic commonality that in OBE the focus is on clearer standards with observable and the measurable outcomes which fulfill the demands of the society. OBE provides a platform of making teaching and learning process more explicit and transparent to both teacher and students (D'Andrea, 2003). Geysler (1999) says when learners do important things with what they know they have taken a significant step beyond knowing itself. Vella, Berardinelli & Burrow (1998) remind us of the importance of accountability mechanism (learner assessment) that directly reflects student performance and help learner “know what they know”. Thus, outcomes describe the results of learning over a period of time – the results of what is learned versus what is taught. Spady (1994) defined OBE as a “comprehensive approach to organising and operating an education system that is focused on and defined by successful demonstration of learning sought from each student”.

Outcome Based Education (OBE) is a student-centered teaching and learning process in which the course delivery and assessment are planned to achieve stated objectives and outcomes. It focuses on measuring student performance i.e., outcomes at different levels.

### **OBE principles**

OBE has three basic premises as mentioned below: -

- All students have the capability to learn and succeed, but every student is unique with his/ her own learning style with own pace of learning.
- Successful learning promotes even more successful learning i.e., success breeds success.
- Teachers have an important role to play in the success of their students in that they control the conditions that determine the chances of success.

From these three premises, Spady developed four essential principles of OBE as given below: -

1. **Clarity of Focus:** According to this principle, the teachers teaching programme should be clearly focused on whatever they want their students to ultimately be able to do successfully after completion of the course. In other words, the course should have well defined and specific goals/ objectives. This principle emphasizes that teachers should help learners to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable them, ultimately, to achieve significant and measurable outcomes.
2. **Designing Back:** This principle means that the course curriculum should be designed by keeping in view the course and objectives or outcomes which are intended to be achieved by the students by the end of the course. Once course objectives are defined and curriculum is designed, then all the available resources must be aligned and utilized to achieve the desired outcome/objectives.
3. **High Expectation:** As per this principle, teachers should establish high, challenging standards of performance in order to encourage students to engage deeply in what they are learning. This also demands that the teachers themselves must be competent in their subject so that they can be able to demonstrate high performance and thereby encourage their students. Helping students to achieve high standards is linked very closely with the idea that successful learning promotes more successful learning.
4. **Expanded Opportunities:** Teachers must take all possible efforts to develop a broad horizon of opportunities for all their students. They must encourage

their students to explore their hidden talents and also develop and try to customize their teaching strategies towards the unique learning needs of their students. Once the talents of the students are explored and developed fully, the opportunities for them get expanded. However, most students can achieve high standards if they are given appropriate opportunities.

### **Advantages of OBE**

- **Transparency:** OBE makes the expectations of the teaching learning process transparent in that the students understand what is top performance. Both students and teachers can understand what they expect and what they need to demonstrate throughout the course, respectively.
- **Flexibility:** There is a lot of flexibility in the teaching learning process under this system. Teachers can customize their teaching strategies towards the learning needs of their students. They can structure their classes according to the wishes of their students so that maximum learning happens wherein the students are actively participating. Therefore, teachers are free to teach by use any teaching methodology which is appropriate for achievement of course end objectives as OBE specifies no particular instructional methodology.
- **Comparison:** OBE can be compared at an individual as well as at institutional level. The institution can compare outcomes to determine what credits to award the students. The outcomes should facilitate institutions to assess the students' achievements rapidly.
- **Involvement:** Increased and active participation of the students in the classroom is an important objective and component of OBE. It facilitates student autonomy and develops a sense of responsibility within them wherein they feel that they are responsible for their own learning. This in turn makes them more independent learners who are capable of undertaking future learning endeavours successfully.

### **CONCLUSION**

The field of education has undergone a sea change in the last few decades. Even though the focus of education has shifted from the teacher to student, this shift requires change within the educational system in order to facilitate learning. After thorough deliberation and research, OBE system has emerged as the best way forward to ensure that the teaching process is able to achieve the desired outcome in the learners. Though OBE is being increasingly used in our country to meet the demands of education, this approach needs to be promoted further at all levels of education.

Researchers have concluded that that the everchanging demands of the present techn-intensive economy can be suitably met by shifting to OBE. It helps the students to set clear targets and achieve the desired outcomes, increases the involvement of education community and also provides a platform to shift ownership from administrators to student and teachers. If implemented effectively, OBE has the potential of gradually transforming our present society into a modern, skilled, responsible, and educated society.

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