EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND ITS RELEVANCE

Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience and is more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing."

Any learning that supports students in applying their knowledge and conceptual understanding to real world problems or situations, where the teacher directs and facilitates learning helping students learn from real life experience is experiential learning

The classroom, laboratory or studio can serve as a setting for experiential learning through embedded activities such as case and problem-based studies, guided inquiry, simulations, experiments or art projects.

Relevancy of Experiential Learning in Contemporary Indian Education:

1. An Old Concept in India: Though the concept of experiential learning looks new, in fact, it was embedded way back in the Indian education system. Gurukul is the quintessential experiential learning format a learning initiated by an interaction between the learner and his environment. In the olden days, the Gurukul System imparted key aspects of education to students in the form of various activities undertaken in an open environment under the supervision of guru.

2. New Digital Concept: Experiential learning, in the digital world, is a blended form of learning which essentially has rich content including field trips, experiments, simple videos, robotics and much more Not a newbie to the world, experiential learning has been in vogue since the 1930s and was popularised by education philosopher David A. Kolb, who along with John Fry, developed the experiential learning theory in 1984.

3. Essential for Permanent Learning: *Albert Einstein* once said, "Learning is experience, everything else is information."

Experiential learning is a way of educating based on experience. Not only for Indian education purpose, it is required for education in the whole world. In experiential learning skills, awareness and understanding are acquired outside the traditional classrooms. The activities may include internships, lectures abroad, excursion trips, field study and service-learning jobs**.**

4.Beneficial to Students: Experiential learning is very beneficial to learners. The process of experiential learning involved both self-initiative and self-assessment. The act of doing makes learning extremely personal. As Richard Branson said, "You don't learn to walk by following rules. You learn by doing and by falling over"

i) Experiential learning takes data and concepts and makes them 'real' by applying them to hands on tasks with real results. As students interact with the information, it becomes real to them.

ii) Experiential beings based on 'trial and error' thus learner learns from mistakes.

iii) Most experiential learning activities require students work in teams. These team projects foster leadership and team building skills.

5**. Integral Part of Contemporary Learning**: The Indian School Boards, especially the CBSE Board, have been making attempts to move away from dependency on rote learning and inculcating more application-based learning .The introduction of Open Text Book Assessment (OTBA) for classes IX and XI has been received well. IGCSE and IB programmes are known to be application-based, and have a broader spectrum of subjects, involving experiential learning in the form of activity -based modules and grasping sessions without books. This has resulted in more challenging situations and put students ' knowledge ' to test, rather than their memory and speed.

Such type of education is required in our schools because, experiential learning is said to play a crucial role in understanding the future of learning and the generations to come.

Recently (2018), a book on experiential learning based on Mahatma Gandhi's "NaiTalim" was released by Human Resource Development Minister. It contains basic principles of Gandhi's "NaiTalim", also with the work and education curriculum for schools, D.Ed., B.Ed. and faculty development programmes for teachers. It has been brought out simultaneously in 13 languages including English and Punjabi.

 This has showed clearly the need and relevancy of experiential learning in the education system of contemporary India.