

CONGESTION IN THE CURRICULUM: CAUSES AND THE IMPACTS ON STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

Rapid societal and technological advancements have led to new topics being added to the curriculum without updating or removing outdated content, resulting in high levels of physical and mental stress for students. Due to this overcrowded curriculum, students often only memorize key points rather than achieving a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Overload creates a mismatch between capacity and load. Due to excessive content, projects and extra curricular activities, the curriculum is becoming increasingly congested. Consequently, some students study merely to pass, while others focus only on key points to secure high marks.

Key words : Curriculum congestion, academic burnout, limited time frame, conventional pedagogical approach, curriculum modification.

INTRODUCTION:

Curriculum overload refers to an excessive academic load on students. Due to the advancement of society and technology, students need to learn wide aspects of education. Vast content is included in their syllabus but provided within a limited time frame. Students are not able to focus on other activities because of academic pressure. Sometimes students do not properly learn their subject matter; they only learn key points essential for passing examinations, which makes hurdles in their holistic improvement.

According to National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2010) overload is a mismatch between capacity and load. Prevalence of curriculum overload been reported in many countries both developing and developed countries. Curriculum expansion can result in curriculum overload. Curriculum overload has become a growing concern in education systems worldwide. It is a challenge within the education system. This pressure contributes to reduce motivation, disengagement, burnout. It is the result of practice of a student packing too many classes, subjects, projects and extra curricular activities into their academic calendar. Students may be cognitively competent in finishing assignments but have so much on their plate that they feel stuffed, get trapped and end up finishing nothing.

Causes of Curriculum congestion:

Here is a breakdown of the commonly recognized causes of curriculum congestion-

Insufficient time

Limiting the time to complete the entire syllabus is a major cause of curriculum overload, placing significant burden on students and negatively affecting their general health.

Technological advancement:

Rapid advancement of the technology requires students to learn diverse technical content, which create significant pressure.

Social needs:

New subjects, topics and learning materials are constantly added to the curriculum to meet evolving societal needs.

Conventional curriculum:

Some outdated curricula are not modified and removed according to modern society; when new content is included, the curriculum becomes narrow and overcrowded.

Emphasis on rote learning:

Rather than focusing on deep understanding, priority is given to completing the syllabus, which hinders the development of critical thinking in students.

Over emphasis on examination:

An emphasis on achieving high marks through rote memorization has superseded the importance of deep knowledge and mastery of learning.

Consequences of curriculum overload:

Curriculum congestion, driven by excessive content volume, time constraints, and rapid technological shifts, poses a major challenge. The sheer breadth of subjects often forces a superficial approach to learning rather than deep understanding, with students and teachers feeling overwhelmed.

Here are the impacts on students in different words:

Negative attitude towards learning

Young students who are overburdened with coursework may suffer from academic burnout, attention problems, and other detrimental consequences.

Academic pressure

Students now frequently experience academic stress, particularly in the fiercely competitive academic climate of today. The pressure to perform well in academics, meet parental and social expectations, and secure a good future has led to an increase in academic stress among students at all levels of education.

Hinders motivation

Motivation arouses interest and is essential for fruitful learning. However, today's students are frustrated by the vast curriculum and syllabus, which negatively impacts their intrinsic motivation.

Time consuming

Academic burnout in young students can result from an overwhelming amount of homework and a lack of time for extracurricular activities.

Insufficient understanding

Instead of deep learning, students rely on rote memorization of facts to pass the exams, failing to increase their actual knowledge.

Negative impact on health

Due to the overcrowded curriculum content students may experience increased nervousness, anxiety, tension and upset which could have a detrimental effect on their general health.

Poor academic performance

Students may experience a decline in their academic performance due to the pressure of assimilating excessive content within a limited timeframe.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In India, we follow a very conventional pedagogical approach that burdens students with an overly ambitious curriculum which exceeds what students can really learn and accomplish in the allotted period that obstructs their natural learning process and contributes to expanding learning disparities. Review reveals that overambitious curriculum hindering students' natural learning process and leaving them less innovative and more practical. The study reveals that excessive academic pressure results in stress among students, which negatively affects their academic performance.

Historical, political, and economic considerations are the main causes of curriculum overload. Excessive content requirements, more testing, and irrational performance expectations are some of its manifestations. As a result, one of the biggest issues facing the educational system is curriculum overload.

Solutions lie in streamlining the curriculum; education should promote holistic development, including social, emotional, and physical wellbeing instead of an over-reliance on academic content. To prevent student burnout, educational stakeholders must collaborate on simplifying the curriculum, fostering a learning environment that is both intellectually rigorous and supportive of emotional resilience.

Educators and administrators can collaborate to develop more balanced curricula by adopting a "less is more" approach, aggressively seeking out student input. In the end, this will not only boost academic achievement but also reignite children's enthusiasm for learning, setting them on a path toward lifelong educational success. Curriculum modification is one of the primary solutions to curriculum overload. Change in curriculum entails implementing a new instructional system. Changes in the classroom have the potential to improve students' social skills.

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