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## Post-Traditional Higher Education of 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Strengthening Employment and Sustainable Development

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The goal of this study is to compare and contrast traditional higher education with contemporary 21st-century schooling. The significance of higher education for the current population and the state is also explored in this research study. This study also intends to demonstrate the link between employment and sustainable development and excellence, affordability, and accessibility in higher education.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The design of this study is narrative inquiry, and it is conducted utilizing qualitative methods. The information is gathered through online interviews, document analysis from study books and journal papers, and email correspondence with some professors. This study looks at research on globalization, higher education, 21st-century higher education, the needs of modern learners, UNESCO and OECD papers, as well as Nepalese and Indian education policies.

**Findings:** According to the study's conclusions, higher education in the twenty-first century seeks out various theoretical and practical approaches. Higher education must be skill- and job-oriented in this age of globalization for the students' long-term development and the stability of the state. All things considered, higher education in the twenty-first century has to emphasize creativity, innovation, and excellence. The three main pillars of higher education are excellence, affordability, and accessibility.

**Research Limitation:** This study does not relate to quantitative technique and it does not show any numerical data. Most importantly, this research study is under the boundary of qualitative methods. The population is of some professors. Further inquiry is made through national and international research documents.

**Managerial Implications:** The practical implications of this study are that it shows how 21st-century higher education needs to be developed and what the learners need at present.

**Originality/Value:** This study maintains its originality which makes it a valuable study. It has not been published in any journals or book chapters.

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## Introduction

Every nation in the globe has a unique historical background when it comes to education. Earlier, the local tradition was a concern for educational growth. But for a very long time in the past, the educational traditions between India and Nepal were very similar. However, the way that education is delivered in colleges and universities nowadays is different because of India's technical advancements. Before the development of computer and internet technology, the educational system was generally referred to as the traditional kind of education. Under this arrangement, teachers and students would assemble in a classroom, where the teacher would give a lecture while the students listened in silence.

There can be no more class discussions at this time. Education entailed passing various exams to become educated, with a certificate as the result. Similar to how new trends are emerging as a result of modern technology improvement; this type of educational system is still in use. Similar to how the development of the current computer system is related to post-traditional higher education. The principle of the modern computer was put forth by Alan Turing in his seminal 1936 paper, according to Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. The "universal computing machine" that Turing proposed is now referred to as a "universal Turing machine."

Following the construction of this system, further initiatives were created and adjusted to create the current state of computers. Williamson, (2022) noted that the Acorn, IBM's first personal computer, was introduced in 1981 and sold for a retail price of \$1,565, employing Windows' MS-DOS operating system. After that, computer technology continued to advance and new techniques were always being used. Concerning post-traditional education, Soares, (2013) has noted that this is changing and being driven by the rise of post-traditional learners rather than only technology, such as massive open online courses. Additionally, the learners who are referred to as post-traditional learners are connected to post-traditional higher education. This study demonstrates how higher education is evolving in the current globalized and technologically advanced society.

## Objective

This research study's major goal is to demonstrate how post-traditional higher education must assist sustainable growth and employment. Today, education is not just for academic purposes; it also serves to support sustainable development by giving students jobs.

## Research Question

"How is post-traditional higher education related to employment and sustainable development?" is the key research question posed for this study. The arguments in favor of higher education in the twenty-first century, as well as international universities and higher education in the year 2030, will be the growth of globalization, technological advancement, changes in social structure and belief, human behavior, higher education and employment, and the concept of sustainable development.

## Methodology

The methodologies used to perform this study are qualitative. This study uses a narrative inquiry methodology. The interpretive paradigm is also followed. Analyses and descriptive interpretations are made of the data. Ten academics who have worked in higher education in Nepal for many years are included in the purposive sampling. This study is mainly based on primary data gathered through the use of interviewing process. Document analysis is made to verify the research process through a Literature review.

## Theoretical Concept

The theoretical concept of this study is evolutionary social changes through higher education. The concept of post-traditional higher education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is itself for changing societies and emerging changes appeared in delivery techniques in higher education institutions by the use of modern technology. Regarding this situation, Abodher, (2013) has stated the present changes in higher education in terms of globalization "Globalization is viewed as the primary cause of changes occurring in higher education". In this sense, globalization itself is known as the present position of society and needed skills accordingly.

## Review of Literature

This section shows the review of related literature relevant to this study. It is necessary to have prior

knowledge of suitable views of the research study for directing the study to the right path. The review is as follows:

### **Globalization**

Global forces that are supported by globalization are in charge of the world today. Today, we are unable to escape globalization. [Rey & Ritzer, \(2010\)](#) asserted that “Globalization is more prevalent” regarding it. We are living in a - or maybe the global age, as [Albrow, \(1996\)](#) stated. The opinions on globalization that were discussed above demonstrate that we cannot avoid the situation of globalization since it is pervasive and has caused us to live in a global age. In the field of higher education, our conventional structures and values have also had to adapt as a result of the global age.

### **Development of Technology**

Today’s technology has an impact on people’s lifestyles all around the world. It indicates that modern humans employ technology in some capacity. People’s lifestyles and information and communication technology are intertwined. Technology has facilitated open, interactive processes whereby societal actors and innovators become mutually responsive to each other with a view to the accessibility, sustainability, and societal desirability of the innovation process and its marketable products by integrating scientific and technological advancements into our society, according to [\(Kerr et al., 2018\)](#). As was already noted, technology has increased the transparency of our job and made us more reactive to societal developments. In response to our online book reading, Google displays a message that says, “Thank You for reading/watching or being a member.” In the past, however, this was not the case; nonetheless, technology has significantly altered our beliefs, moving us from pure speculation to concrete evidence of cosmic happenings.

Similar to how [\(Rey & Ritzer 2010\)](#) argued that technical advancements of all kinds had a significant impact on globalization and had an impact on global processes, the researcher concentrated on the emergence of personal computers in the mid-70s and the growth of the Internet in the 1990s). Similarly, today’s society has entered the post-traditional era due

to the influence of computers and the Internet, and higher education is going through the same transition. Additionally, today’s pupils are referred to as post-traditional learners.

### **Sustainability**

According to conventional wisdom, education was meant to foster a person’s identity as an educated individual whom people would respect in their communities. But with changing social conditions, simple degrees in education no longer sustain degree holders. Additionally, for society to view someone as a great human being, they need to work and earn more money. Therefore, higher education needs to support graduates’ sustainability.

[UNESCO, \(2015a, 2015b\)](#) stated the following regarding this circumstance: “In updating the goal of education, our vision is guided by a primary concern for sustainable human and societal development. Sustainability is regarded as responsible behavior on the part of people and societies in the direction of a brighter future for all. Similarly, post-traditional higher education needs to be altered to make it more career-oriented so that people can improve their futures by supporting themselves financially and living contemporary lives in today’s complex world.

### **Discussion and Analysis**

A discussion of the participant data is presented in this section. It has covered topics like post-traditional higher education related to employment and sustainable development, globalization, technological advancements, changing social structures and beliefs, shifting human behavior, higher education and employment, sustainable development, global universities of the twenty-first century, and higher education in 2030. These ideas are regarded as having a connection to non-traditional higher education. The following is a discussion and analysis of this research study. The study’s participants responded to line with the researcher’s questions, and they are mentioned comprehensively. Following are the questions and answers:

What is meant by “post-traditional higher education,” a question? The participants gave identical responses, and they are now exposed to a holistic ideology.

*There are various models of post-traditional higher education, they said. Classes used to be restricted to the designated classrooms exclusively. The importance of extracurricular activities was discontinued. But nowadays, education is open to anyone. Additionally, a lifetime learning process has been designed. Caste and gender are not factors that are taken into consideration. The growth of personal computers and the Internet has also brought about significant changes in the field of education, converting it from a classroom-based system to an online one that is referred to as a post-traditional education system.*

As was already stated, education today is not restricted or terminated. Education is now conducted both indoors and outside. Similar to how today's higher education has undergone significant development, Biggs & Tang, (2011) discussed the major changes in higher education since 2000 and concentrated on the increased diversity of the students. They also noted changes to the forms of education delivery, with a focus on professional and vocational education. Similarly, the delivery of higher education has shifted from classroom to online mode as a result of the advancement of contemporary Internet technologies and computers and laptops. This situational change relates to evolutionary and social change theories.

A similar question, "How is post-traditional higher education related to employment and sustainable development?" was posed to the attendees. The responses of the participants are:

*Learning used to be associated with a small number of people who wanted to be regarded as scholarly in their community. But attitudes toward higher education have altered recently. Nowadays, higher education refers to more than just degrees; practical knowledge and abilities are also required. The knowledge and skills taught in schools today must be extremely productive. It is more obvious that firms require individuals with talents that will boost their market and production. The learners can experience sustainable development after they get employment.*

Participants in this study have noted that their perspectives on higher education have shifted from those of the learned to those of the employed. Earlier, educated individuals did not need to work

to be great; but, if educated people do not work, they produce low-quality goods. Similarly, the World Bank, (2002) found that tertiary education institutions play a crucial role in fostering knowledge-driven economic growth strategies and the creation of democratic and socially cohesive societies by preparing professionals who are competent and responsible for managing the macro economy and the public sector. In this way, human evolution has made social change and this trend is going on for many centuries and is supposed to be the same in the days to come ahead.

Similarly, higher education must be linked to industries, their production, and their marketing expertise. Similar to this, the vice chancellor and other professors concentrated on the industry-based higher education they are providing right now at the international conference hosted by OP Jindal University, Raigarh, India, on November 27-28, 2021. Universities must be ready for this significant demand from post-traditional students to support their development of skills and useful knowledge. Skills are also necessary for sustainable growth.

Furthermore, the participants were enquired about, "How has globalization influenced higher education and changed societies?" They made responses:

*Access to knowledge and information has risen as a result of globalization. Additionally, it has boosted inclusivity in both society and higher education. Higher education institutions were few earlier, but currently, there are several private universities and colleges. Additionally, they are connected to institutions in other nations. The spread of ICT, a trend brought about by globalization, has made colleges and communities global today. Now that meritocracy has been attained through a distance and open learning system, societies have also altered in line with these trends as a result of technological advancements.*

Similarly, globalization governs our life and our employment. Higher education is involved in all of the changes associated with globalization, according to a 2009 study by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, [OECD] (2009). Since they lay the groundwork for knowledge, the adoption of technologies, cross-



border association, and the maintenance of complex societies, education, and research are important factors in the development of the global environment. On the other hand, globalization has increased access to higher education in a global context and has changed technological trends as evolution and made people follow the trends of globalization as social change.

Students from Nepal can enroll in online courses or distance learning programs being offered in India, the United States, or anywhere else in the world. In a similar vein, anyone anywhere in the world can check the caliber of higher education and the output. Individuals can use online communication to order the items they need. Therefore, higher education and societies have been impacted by globalization.

What are the effects of technology on higher education and society was the following question posed to the participants? They gave reactions:

*Globalization has expanded the flow of technology today, and people's behavior has altered as a result. People throughout the world are made aware of a location's production through media and advertising. It has expanded the pool of potential candidates. People who reside in a particular region of the world are aware of the superiority of certain products, educational institutions, and rationales. People's working habits have altered as a result of increased human contact; this phenomenon is known as learning to learn.*

Technology today has a big impact on higher education. Technology is now more accessible thanks to globalization, which has also encouraged openness. With the use of technology, students can choose from a variety of colleges, institutions, businesses, and reading materials while they are seated in their reading area. The [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development \[OECD\], \(2017\)](#) wrote about current higher education, "Higher education is becoming increasingly global". Technology has also contributed to this circumstance. The idea of higher education going global is being debated and put into reality by individuals and nations.

"What are the requirements for higher education in the twenty-first century?" was another

significant question posed to the attendees. What factors define universities as global universities? Following are the participants' responses:

*In reality, we are living in the 21st century, where concerns about the economy and employment are at the forefront. People today are rushing to amass large sums of money for themselves. They need jobs in the market to do this, but it is impossible to gain work by only getting degrees; they also need skills. The standards of higher education in the twenty-first century might therefore be viewed as career-oriented for sustainable growth. Global universities are those in our world that are reputed to have been offering high-quality education with adequate funding and that have been successful in luring students to enroll in them from numerous nations; they have embraced globalization and technology advancements.*

In actuality, the 21st century is dependent on contemporary technology. Four-year-olds are capable of searching for games on desktops and mobile devices. These kids are challenging for individuals who don't know much about technology to instruct in various ways. [Agarwal, \(2010\)](#) stated that "Issues of access and equity are essential to the higher education debates in countries all over the world" about today's education. There was a negative impact on access and equity due to the growth of higher education and the private sector. In this approach, the goal of higher education in the twenty-first century is to enroll as many students as possible. Financial aid must be made available to those groups of people who require it to enroll in higher education.

Additionally, [Agarwal, \(2010\)](#) has concentrated on higher education to support its growth and its ability to supply a workforce for a technologically advanced knowledge economy; it must overcome the difficulties associated with unemployment. According to this point of view, higher education in the twenty-first century must educate students about the knowledge economy. To create sustainable development, higher education in the twenty-first century must establish a focus on equity, access, financing, and market orientation. Additionally, colleges today offer a quality education that is worldwide in scope, assisting students in finding work and fostering sustainable development.

The participants gave the following answers to the question, “What do post-traditional learners want?”

*Post-traditional students differ from conventional students in several ways. It is due to the current era of globalization’s technological prowess and globalization. They require flexibility in their higher education so they can keep learning and working at the same time. The current generations of students’ lifestyles have been impacted by economic globalization. In the capacity for financial accumulation and consumption, they have also seen the future. They desire job-oriented courses with higher quality and need access to hundreds of disciplines from which to choose. Additionally, they require distance learning and online courses that meet the standards of excellence, affordability, and accessibility.*

The current generation of learners has more distinct goals and convictions than the older ones. Although they had a traditional way of life based on agriculture, the traditional learners aspired to become educated members of their families and communities. Traditional students used to have direct communication with their teachers and classrooms through the usage of prescribed books that they would memorize. However, today’s students desire flexibility in their education; they want to forgo strong disciplinary measures, and they want to pursue online and distant learning options.

The [Strategy Group Report, \(2011\)](#) which is about to address this type of situation, states that “this expansion of higher education opportunities has been critical in generating the supply of skilled graduates that underpinned the significant increases in productivity, employment, and export-oriented growth being more commercialized and knowledge transfer”. Today’s students must work and finish their education at the same time.

In addition to previous perspectives on post-traditional learners, the [Government of India, \(2020\)](#) has emphasized issues like holistic learner development, curricula content reduction to improve essential learning and critical thinking, experiential learning, and student empowerment through course flexibility. Similar to how the [Government of Nepal, \(2019\)](#) has prioritized

collaboration and independent study over rigid forms of old education systems. In addition, [Butcher & Hoosen, \(2013\)](#) have discussed the benefits of open access, open data, open educational resources, and massive open online courses (MOOCs) concerning post-traditional higher education. Post-traditional learners, as was already noted, are looking for the simplest ways to learn and find employment right away using their creativity, critical thinking, and new ideas. As mentioned above, from the judgments of the participants and the supporting literature, this study shows evolutionary social change theory as a suitable point for further study.

## Findings

The following are the study’s findings following the data analysis:

1. Post-traditional higher education started after the introduction of personal computers and Internet technology.
2. An outdoor approach is being created for higher education delivery.
3. Higher education is becoming more widely available.
4. Higher education should primarily be connected to job markets under regional needs.
5. If learners find employment, they can have sustainable development.
6. Instead of the academic approach of passing tests, higher education requires practical skills and knowledge.
7. Businesses require talents in addition to academic credentials. Industry-based education is now both necessary and desirable.
8. Globalization has expanded society’s and the education sector’s openness. Education and society have been revolutionized by it.
9. With the idea of global universities based on their educational excellence, universities are regarded to be worldwide.
10. ICT has had a significant impact on both higher education and society at large.
11. The global population may now travel the

world in a matter of seconds thanks to technology.

12. Economic worry permeates higher education in the twenty-first century, and job-focused education is one way to mitigate this risk.
13. Post-traditional students seek flexible options in their higher education. They wish to continue working while pursuing online education.
14. The students must choose their courses based on their experiences and requirements, not the restricted ones that are centrally dictated.

## Conclusion

It should be understood that changes occur every second of the clock. Time has been changing in this manner as the enormous pitcher is filled with water drops that are falling one by one. Humanity may not have been created here during the specific period when human beings first appeared in this nature because time has since changed significantly and the present humanity may not have survived. It's also worth recalling the proverb "Welcome the new Age" from the Mahabharata. Similarly, the current system needs to embrace the current global period of economic globalization. In addition, economic globalization, according to [Jenny Ozga & Lingard \(2007\)](#) international integration of economies and communication systems; globalization is the erasing of distinctions between the universal and the local, and as result, has an impact on the latest developments. As a result, to alter people's views and behaviors, higher education must now undergo modifications; that is the use of ICT has changed traditional higher education towards post-traditional higher education.

Additionally, today's students want education that is delivered using evidence. High technology is supposed to have also been used to run the Mahabharat Age, but it was destroyed by battle. If technology is used against human power, the human species as a whole will likewise be in danger.

[UNESCO \(2015a, 2015b\)](#) has concentrated on the idea that it is necessary to re-contextualize fundamental concepts for the governance of education, in particular the right to education and the idea

that education is a public good. Furthermore, humanistic and holistic education systems are needed in post-traditional higher education to safeguard the earthly system of obtaining employment and sustainable development.

Furthermore, sustainable growth is impossible if people lose their jobs. Education must be adaptable and a lifelong process of learning, just as the system designed by our ancient sages. Let us examine a quote from Mahatma Gandhi in support of post-traditional education: "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Study as though you were going to live forever". On the other hand, according to Academic Partnership [AP] post-traditional higher education always comprises online learning through the use of the internet. The majority of post-traditional educational models are based on the idea that learning can happen at any time and anywhere, and since students spend a lot of time online learning and exchanging new information through social networks, post-traditional higher education typically uses online education. As a whole, let's encourage the changes and desires of today's post-traditional learners, but we also need to learn how to safeguard our cultural heritage in the process. As a whole, evolutionary social change theory has got a wide area on the globalization process and technological advances emerging at present.

## Implications

This research study has got theoretical, educational, and social implications as follows:

**Theoretical Implications:** People will be inspired by this brief research paper to realize that ideas are a constant part of their lives. People nowadays are experiencing social changes and changes in human behavior due to the notion of evolution. In this case, Academic Partnership [AP] noted that "increased openness is a common aim in post-traditional innovations." It demonstrates how accessibility allows students to find practically all materials online and almost anywhere else.

**Educational Implication:** People might learn from this little study that a person's attainment of knowledge and skill is a lifelong endeavor. Concerning this, lifelong learning is a reality today. According to [UNESCO, \(2015a\)](#), the country has a high rate of illiteracy among socially excluded groups like women, ethnic minorities, and low-

caste individuals; access to high-quality education for the majority of the country's poor people is hampered by a lack of educational resources, shoddy infrastructure, and qualified teachers. So, people have to know that they do not have to wait back for education because they have open access to education at present through the use of the internet. Moreover, people should know about life-long learning and education through the use of this journal article.

**Social Implication:** People need to understand how the definition of “post-traditional” connects to the social change process. People are aware that social changes are inevitable processes thanks to the hints in this essay. People's earning habits have changed as a result of globalization and technology; they are no longer engaged in the traditional work of farming and have become more industry-focused, which is necessary for sustainable growth. Similarly, according to UNESCO (2015b), societies “may learn a great deal from each other by being more open to the discovery and understanding of various worldviews” (p. 30). In this way, post-traditional higher education is also the production of social change- education from chalk dust to computers and the internet.

**Implication for Further Research:** This one is a very small and brief study that cannot occupy so many aspects of post-traditional higher education. Other large-scale research is needed on the assigned topic involving a larger population along with many reviews of literature.

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