

Design Education in India

Impact of COVID 19

Team ADI Jaipur

Design Education FOR India

Formal design education in India is like an offset of engineering or humanities education which found its validity and acceptance during the late 20th century. With the institution like National Institute of Design setting up the premise for design education in India, few other private and public institutions came forward to impart a formal training of design. With the ever changing society and lightning fast changes in technology, Design education, which has already been struggling to find its reputation, faces increased challenges to keep up with the pace.

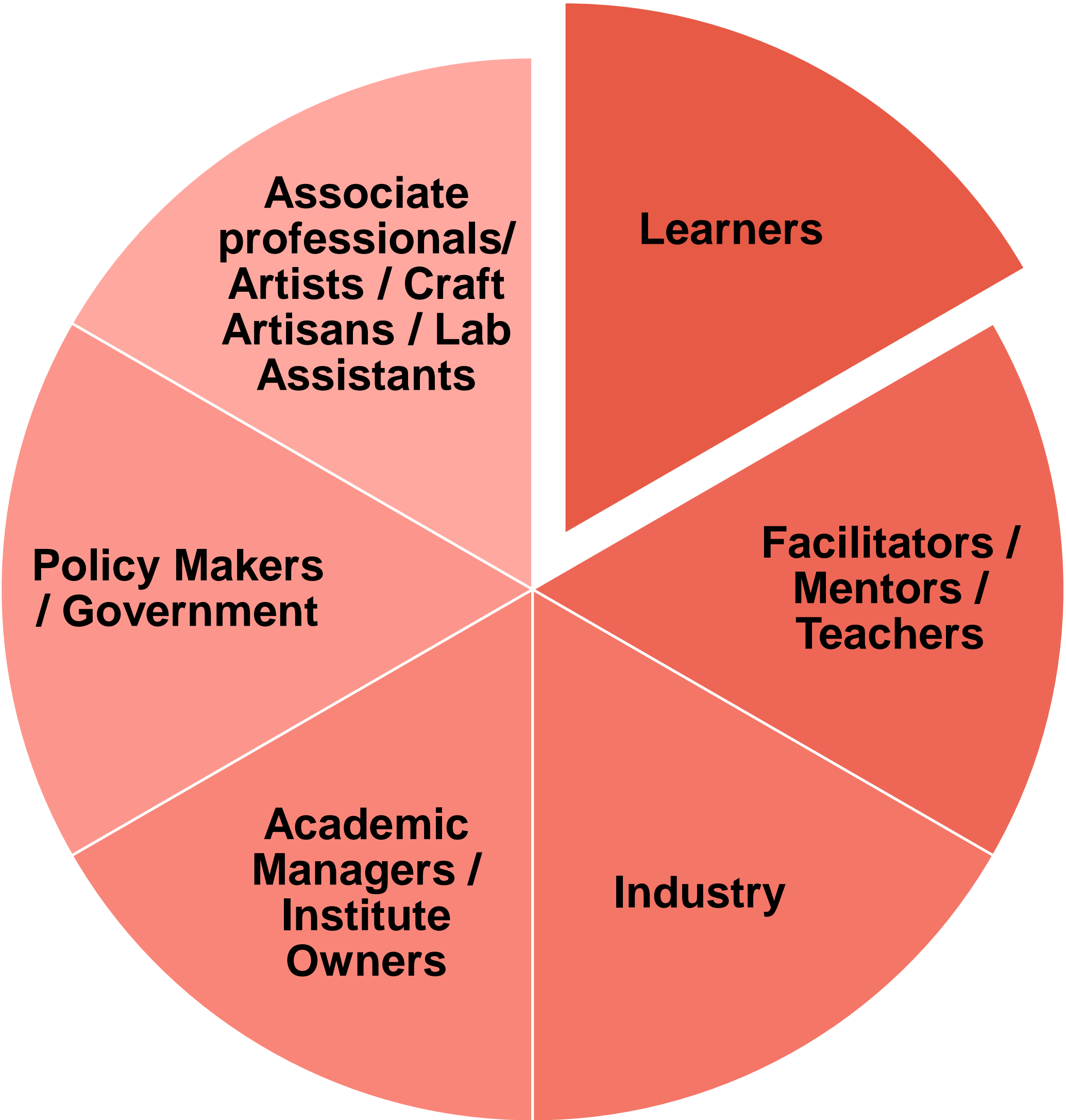
60 years back, when Charles and Ray Eames penned down the need and feasibility of Design Education in India, they emphasized on an education and training which is specific to Indian Context.

During these years, have we forgotten the premise ?

Do we still look at design education as an aid to industrial growth and development ?

When will we write another India Report to assess the status ?

Stakeholders in Design Education



Challenges During COVID 19

Learner Centric concerns

Challenges

- Sudden shift to Online Interaction and classroom environment.
- Reduced quality of engagement.
- Decline in peer discussion and learning.
- Unable to access high power computer systems and workshops.
- Family constraints and lack of personal spaces to concentrate on work.
- Fear of economic crisis and availability of jobs/internships.
- Health concerns: Low body activity along with stress on sight and mental exhaustion from over exposure to screen time.
- Monotonous daily activities and limited environment space affects EQ.
- Changing expectations of Industry.
- Higher education might seem to be a preferred plan for near future.
- Will there be online classes/sessions even after the campuses open?
- Fee for online vs face-to-face education system.
- Possible decline in the number of students opting for design fields (due to financial constraints).
- Decline in parents intending to send their wards to new towns/cities (away from home)

Opportunities

- Opportunity of interaction with facilitators and experts across the globe through online systems.
- Expected increase in numbers of individuals opting for PG/specialization courses due to economic depression.
- Expected shift of focus on skill based education and technology based professional fields.
- Increasing opportunity to open up a medium or small scale start up after completing the formal training in design.

External Agencies

- Community at large needs to be included and made aware of the opportunities in Design discipline.
- Guidelines, self help readings need to be shared with student body to help them sustain the accept the change. (ADI can facilitate that)
- Various professional bodies like FDCI, Jewelry association. IIID, etc. should organize internal discussions to help the students get internships/jobs.

Challenges

- Difficulty to adapt to the sudden shift to Online Interaction and classroom environment.
- Failed attempts to recreate the face-to-face classroom session, online.
- Unable to assess the quality of student engagement & learning.
- Coordination between faculty and managers has become difficult.
- Family constraints and lack of personal spaces to concentrate on work/teaching.
- Increased stress due to lockdown and negative stories/news around future of employment and salary cuts.
- Work-Life balance is affected as work continues beyond work hours in online mode of teaching.
- Increase in the teaching load on existing faculty as most of the colleges and institutes will stop hiring new faculty.
- Need to adapt and learn the set of skills required to teach in the hybrid learning systems.
- Fear of colleges and Institutes excluding faculty from the decision making system for efficient and quick execution of decisions.
- Suspension of vacation or prolonged working hours post COVID to make up for the time lost.

Opportunities

- Opportunity to interact and facilitate students across the globe.
- Expected improvement in work-life balance.
- Blended/Hybrid learning can ease out the process and teaching load from the facilitators.
- Flexibility in scheduling teaching/mentoring sessions.
- Shift of focus to create design thinkers/design innovators.

External Agencies

- Faculty development programs will have to be taken up by government organizations or professional bodies to help teachers prepare for the future.
- Various professional bodies like FDCI, Jewelry association, IIID, etc. should incorporate educational representatives to bridge the gap between industry expectations and classroom learning.

Challenges

- Primary issues to be solved is the economic sustenance during the lockdown.
- On going internships have been effected. Even if other subjects/modules go online, learning outcomes of internships can not be mapped through online engagement.
- Unable to assess the quality of student engagement & learning.
- On-going industry live projects have been effected. Due to the temporal nature of such modules, it is very difficult to postpone or re-schedule.
- Uncertainty of future conditions leads to frozen hiring and suspending any new plans.
- High expectations from the designers and design community.
- Will there be job/salary cuts for the existing/empanelled designers.
- Will the focus shift to research & innovation rather than pure production.
- Should industry come to design classrooms to reduce the gap between theory and practice.

Opportunities

- Increased opportunity to collaborate with academic institutes in the domain of research and development.
- Design education can provide of skill enhancement courses and programs for the existing workforce.
- Design education can focus on domestic market and prepare students to work in the domain of production for masses rather than luxury.
- R&D and incubation cells can be introduced in educational institutes in partnership with industry experts.

External Agencies

- ADI can act as a facilitator to increase coordination between design institutes and the industry. Professionals can discuss what they expect from the academic institutions and institutions can discuss what they expect from industry and ADI can be the bridge.

Challenges

- Difficulty to adapt and train employees to the Online Interaction and classroom environment.
- Failed attempts to recreate the face-to-face classroom session, online.
- Coordination between faculty and managers has become difficult.
- Increased pressure due to queries from students and parents.
- Difficult to maintain the accountability, documentation and other administrative functions.
- Need of financial assistance to sustain during or post COVID.
- Uncertainty on the impact on new admissions.
- Some student may need financial assistance for some time, do we have a plan?
- Expected job/salary cuts for the existing/empanelled design faculty/staff.
- Lack of infrastructure for shifting focus to research & innovation with small and medium scale design institutions.
- Reluctance amongst outstation students/parents to travel far away affects college admissions.
- Change in the admission processes has raised a number of challenges for institutions and colleges as the face to face interview and situation tests were common practices and used to hold a high weightage.

Opportunities

- Increased opportunity to collaborate with large industrial organizations in the domain of research and development.
- Opportunity to increase the offered courses to include short term skill enhancement programs.
- Design education can focus on domestic market and join the industry in the manufacturing aspects as well.
- R&D and incubation cells can be introduced in educational institutes in partnership with industry experts.
- Increasing opportunities to introduce short term online courses.

External Agencies

- ADI can act as a facilitator to increase coordination between design institutes and the industry. Professional can discuss what they expect from the academic institutions and institutions can discuss what they expect from industry and ADI can be the bridge.

Challenges

- Education not at a priority as there are graver issues to be tackled.
- Lack of a regularization body for Design Education.
- Existing structures of academic quality compliance are unable to understand the challenges of design education.

Opportunities

- Design institutes who focus on domestic market and join the industry may be provided with financial assistance.
- R&D and incubation cells can be by the government authorities.
- Government universities coming forward to support and provide assistance to colleges and institutes to continue imparting knowledge by using online systems of education

Agencies

- Ministry of Human Resource Development
- Minister of Finance
- Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
- Minister of Textiles
- Minister of Commerce and Industry
- Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Associate professionals / Artists / Craft Artisans / Lab Assistants

Challenges

- Suddenly become irrelevant to design education due to lack of attempts to include them in the new “online system”.
- Lack of preparedness and training for newer mediums of education.
- Many craftsmen have sustenance but no material therefore they cannot utilize this time to create craft for future fairs, expo and exhibitions.
- Fear of losing job in the near future.
- Increased load on existing staff and assistants as most institutes will stop hiring new resources.
- Lack of preparation and resources for future.

Opportunities

- The new short term courses that focus on skill development will need more active support of artisans and workshop professionals.
- Design education can focus on domestic market and join the industry in the manufacturing aspects as well where employment opportunities can be developed.
- R&D and incubation cells can be introduced in educational institutes in partnership with industry experts can increase the possibility of association for artisans and lab assistants.

Pertaining Questions

- What is online education for Indian Students ?
- Can a classroom be replicated in a virtual world ?
- What is the impact on quality of education ?
- Is there a race/competition to conduct online classes or host webinars amongst colleges and institutes ?
- How many design colleges understand the difference of Face to Face / Online / Hybrid education systems ?
- What are the means of imparting the most crucial Industry exposure and training to the current batches ?
- Can institutes and colleges save money by choosing online education ? What will be the impact ?
- Online mode doesn't support or cater to hands on learning courses like material and tools skills, industrial processes. How many colleges have taken a feedback on student experience of online sessions?
- There will most likely be a lack of suitable job openings, and the few that are there will have high levels of competition. Can these elements of dealing with uncertainty, and becoming entrepreneurs feature in the existing (and possibly) future design courses ?
- Do we expect governments or policy makers to intervene and set some rules and regulations of the new game ?
- Is it a chance to understand the soul of The India Report and write a version 2.0 for the future of Design Education in India ?
- How do we ensure the addition/iterating of the concepts of sustainability in the curriculums and make sure that the students and the design professionals of future are sensitive to our environment and society ?
- What are the possibilities of sharing infrastructure between industry and academic institutions ?
- Can some institutions take the lead and provide assistance and training to others for developing hybrid/blended teaching pedagogies ?

Proposed Process

Initial discussions and writing the broad aspects of challenges and opportunities through observation and selective interviews with Students, Teachers, Managers and Industry experts.

Sharing of the draft document with focussed group of educational representatives for their feedback and suggestions.

Conversation with group of educational representatives to discuss their challenges and some good practices that they came up with.

Updating the document with points of concerns, opportunities and identifies external bodies for further discussion.

We are here !

Sharing the document with the design education representatives across the country for their feedback and suggestions.

Conversation with group of educational representatives at national level to discuss their challenges and some good practices that they came up with.

Updating the document based on the discussion and feedback and taking up the concerns to respective agencies/organisations.

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