

Improving Learning Decisions in Higher Education through Nudging

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Abstract

As per the definition given by the Cambridge Dictionary, “ To nudge is to push something or someone gently, especially to push someone with your elbow to attract the person's attention.” Nudge is one of the most influential concept on public policy published in recent years. Its ideas are relevant to public policy, academic research, and business. According to Richard Thaler and Cass R Sunstein;

“ In many cases, people make pretty bad decisions- decisions they would not have made if they had paid, full attention and possessed complete information, unlimited cognitive abilities, and complete self-control” (Thaler, Sunstein,2015)

Educators, Governments, and bureaucrats, who draft academic policy, should focus on the growth of knowledge and not mere knowledge in the form of content and information. Academic decision making is for growth of knowledge, in the absence of this, everything is possible but if the growth of knowledge is not occurring, then it is a barren policy. This creates a waste of land, this article is on improving decisions about learning in higher education through nudging is an attempt to make it free from crisis and to make it more sustainable.

Key-Words: Nudging, Higher Education, Crisis in Education, Choice Architecture, Libertarian Paternalism

Introduction

The core focus of decision making is on the growth of knowledge. All stakeholders of higher education are interested in the actual qualitative academic change. This conventional system of higher education is in praise of shadows. It is a challenge because any decisions taken for

knowledge in higher education is imperative for the future. Conventional Higher education has proven to be an irrational base. And in the decision making, irrational cognitive biases, they do affect. They do govern the policy. They do affect the academic decision making. Any policy making, whether it is for education, social welfare, or business, it becomes an irrational exercise, because its rationality is half cooked and possesses irrational cognitive biases which dictate and determine the choice and the function of decision making.

In higher education, we have to accept that there is some kind of irrationality, which governs the educational enterprise. If the government understand these cognitive biases, they can nudge us into making better decisions for ourselves (citizen of the nation). we have to acknowledge irrational decision making and policymakers can nudge it for the betterment of all the stakeholders of higher education. policymakers should anticipate the possibility of nudging, this implies choice as a fact and improvement as a possibility.

Libertarian Paternalism

The concept of libertarian paternalism is to encourage people to act in their own best interest without restricting their freedom of choice. Freedom of choice should not be mortgage by the policymakers and the executors of higher education as it is sacrosanct and it demands tenderness and caring.

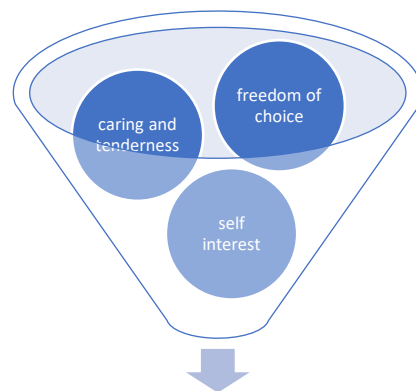


Figure no 1: Libertarian Paternalism

Choice Architecture

Choice architecture is the decision in which choice is ensured. The contextual Situations and references used in taking decisions by the people are known as choice architecture. The purpose of choice architecture, where the choice of the people is ensured, another way in choice architecture decision should be created such a way, where the choice

of the people is protected

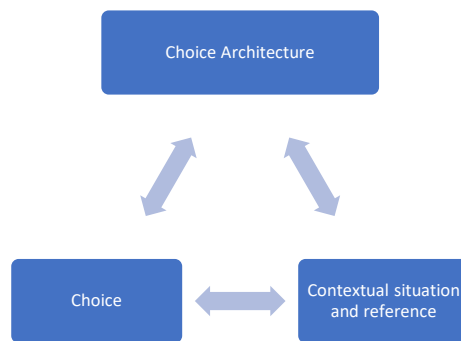


Figure no 2: Choice Architecture

Nudge

Any aspect of choice architecture that predictably changes peoples' behavior is cheap and easy to avoid. Now if we take an example of “ Demonetization of Currency” in any country, if executed without accepting the logic of the “choice architecture” by the government, is necessarily not to be considered as nudging, for it violates the potentiality to choose, which makes demonetization as a context-free choice.

The above concept is a game-changer through which the government can operate better decisions, and can make policies. The government can execute policies through nudging where freedom of choice and can manage libertarian paternalism with caring and tenderness. Policies become more viable through nudging. Nudging can make the policy more acceptable to all the stakeholders of higher education, through nudging higher education policy can become non-authoritative as it enriches the choices of the people without enforcing. through nudging decisions are never imposed and make it cohesive to accept. (e.g. In restaurant cafeteria manager encourages to eat nutritious food as it has been placed first and subsequent arrangement of healthy food, vegetarian food, and junk food. This arrangement provides a nudging effect by sequential arrangement).

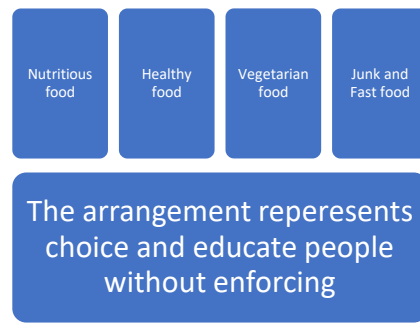


Figure no 3: Example of Nudging

Higher education needs Nudging, it is obligatory to address two questions.

1. Why Nudging is necessary for Higher education?
2. Which are the areas, where nudging is required in higher education?

1. Why Nudging is needed in Higher Education?

Higher education has an emancipatory thrust. Without true knowledge, emancipation cannot be achieved. The quest for higher education is a qualitative progression of knowledge from ignorance. Wherein, self-search is the only cardinal virtue for higher education. self-search potentiality is the hardcore of higher education. why it has not been achieved why self-search potentiality has not been achieved because educational institutions are suffering from institutional and policy crisis. Present higher education institutions and policies are suffering from a rationality crisis, motivational crisis, and Legitimacy crisis.

Rationality Crisis

All activities done in higher education must have rational ground. Teaching, Learning, and evaluation are the primary activity of higher education institutions and the result of this activity is self-searching potential.

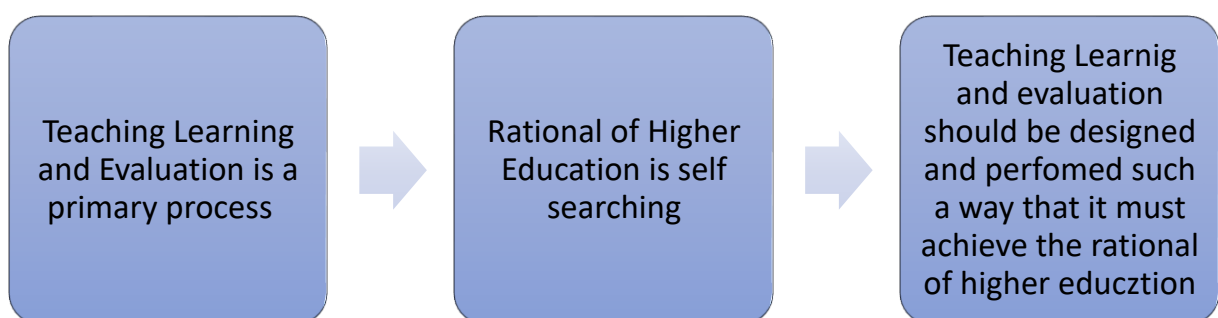


Figure no 4: Why of Higher Education

The question that comes here is that Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation lead to the goal. Institutional practices damage the very goal that needs to be addressed. The following must be kept away from higher education institutions from the primary goal. Imparting or receiving knowledge has not been achieved.

- ❖ Monotonous Classroom Teaching
- ❖ Marks oriented system
- ❖ Rut learning
- ❖ Imparting information
- ❖ Creating foiba
- ❖ Outdated and information-based curriculum
- ❖ Schizophrenic activities
- ❖ MCQ based evaluation system

These are the ground for the non-substantiality of higher education. curriculum construction is nonconductive to the goal and governance of higher education institutions. Exhibitory performance connected to capitalism which creates institution egocentrism. The result of this is that academic fat would flourish and efficiency will go down. The very purpose of higher education is noneducative and non-academic and the reason is, it is all pseudo learning. It creates a close mind instead of an open mind. It creates a more irrational frame rather than a rational frame.

Nudging demands political will and that to non-rhetoric. Governments, Education departments, Universities, Colleges, Administrators, Teachers, and students should become agents of nudging for that essential quality is required, which is openness. Here communicative rationality is very much necessary. Where communicative rationality is possible or functional, it can generate a sharable life world. Because of nudging mode of education can be run smoothly. Institutions have to create an alternative for creating a paternal choice.

The Crisis is due to a lack of choices which leads to a lack of freedom which creates choice less high education. it is education without choices. Reason cannot be spelled out because of the choice of the lacuna. Choices are not given to teachers and students. Willingness is an important requirement of choices. It is rather never asked. What is institutional willingness, administrative willingness, Teachers' willingness, students' willingness? There have never been asked nor negotiated and apparatus to know willingness are also not available.

It is a situation similar to a blind man taking part in shooting competition, without choice and willingness measurement, rationality crisis imbibed in the system. Another biggest issue for students is knowability. It is a kind of ignorance that creates dialectical materialism. Policymakers don't understand the grassroots reality. Either they are suspending inquiring mind or conniving at it, and all these needs nudging to push rationality. Whosoever is the authority, they are to be nudged and they should nudge others and it is required to all agents who make our thought process and thinking capacity a toothless bowl.

Growth in higher education is defined by the number of colleges, the number of universities, the number of graduates, etc. quantity has become the mindset of all stakeholders of higher education. Quality is bypassed by them.

Rationality crisis such as

- Cast hierarchy
- Cultural hierarchy
- Gender Equality
- Quantity is considered superior to quality

What do we need from students? Their Presence in the classroom, but we never insist on the quality of presence, it is a mental construction. Where in all agents entered in the formalism? Quality is not in the pathology of academics, teachers, and students, they suffer from a genealogical deficiency. How many students are in class represents quantity, while what type of students are present in class represents quality? It is deliberately suspending the touch of the earth.

The choice of students, teachers, administration, and others has no insight except capitalism. They all measure outcomes in capital generation only. The university does not spoil due to the raw roads but it spoils due to raw departments. Speaking everyone is not clear about the structure of higher education. the behavioral apology is colonized. This is not less than a beret. What should be the architect of college or university, it speaks the mind where is open space, the discourse between teachers and students are deliberately suspended by this type of structure we all are poor insensitivity. The only way to remove the rationality crisis by creating quality openness. Archeology should be designed in such a way that there is enough space and openness available between teachers and students.

The following table represents how agents of higher education can work through nudging.

Table 1: Nudging to overcome rationality crisis

Agent of Higher Education	How nudge can overcome rationality crisis
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The government can nudge through policymaking in higher education. Policymaking is not a fantasy it is determining hardcore. It should be ❖ Non-Authoritative ❖ Equalitarian Base ❖ Openness- there must be a system in which openness to change is possible because knowledge is looking worm exercise. ❖ Non-hierarchical- To create a sharable lifeworld for qualitative education where the base is self-searching ❖ The possibilities of an alternative way of thinking must be in the structure. ❖ Possibility to debate ❖ Negotiability ❖ Compassion and tolerance for its function ❖ Falsifiability- Policy can become wrong and it should be accepted in its framework. Each policy must endorse to falsifiability than only progress would have been possible. ❖ No policy is Sacrosanct therefore it is open to rejection. ❖ Continuous evaluation and assessment must be done on the policy and function. ❖ The policy should not be non-contextual.
Bureaucrats	<p>Bureaucrats can nudge by organizing and executing policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ They must have the practice of alternative thinking and openness of mind and non-authoritative outlook. This is rather required by all agents of higher education portfolios.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ They are not formal machines of ordering and disordering things. ❖ They must have the potential to put things or the policy in a most communicative way.
Institutions (Universities and Colleges)	<p>Institutions can nudge by implementing policy more effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Every institution has its own goal, over and above the primary goal of higher education. ❖ They should develop question raising potential. ❖ They must be questioning institutions ❖ Institutions need free and fair voyagers – in most of the institutions we have blind voyagers, free voyagers of thinking is possible only when we have questioning potential. ❖ Insight and openness to think above are required can be nudged by our institutions. ❖ The structure of the curriculum should be changed. ❖ Multidisciplinarity can be introduced which will expand the horizon of knowledge. ❖ An alternative way of thinking can become possible and above all ❖ Knowledge must be treated as a conjecture by the institutions. ❖ Disciplinary egocentricity should be deduced and the concept of equity must be accepted for this equity nudging is required. ❖ Academic arrogance should be nullified and for this also nudging is important. ❖ Knowledge should be treated as a sharable commodity and therefore nudging is necessary for expanding horizons.
Teachers	<p>For the expansion of horizon, nudging is necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The sincerity of pursuit is expected from teachers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Nudging can also be helped in academic planning ❖ Academic rhetoric must be set aside ❖ Reciprocation must be avoided ❖ Nonacademic activities performed by teachers must also be non-rhetoric ❖ Nudge is not only insight nudge demands functional creativity ❖ Use and dependence of google and other IT tools for academic activities should be limited because of its use potentiality to think is becoming zero, it subjugates creativity. It may give speed but it will reduce the potentiality of knowledge.
Administrators	<p>They also need nudging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ They must also be open to counter-argument or counter factuality. ❖ They should also administer the potential for quality education. ❖ The primary aim of education must be protected. ❖ They also need to be educated. ❖ The puncture should be made to their omniscience ❖ Sermons of knowledge is not an outcome of the position for the authority one possesses. ❖ Ignorance is infinite and knowledge is limited they have to be the seller of ignorance rather than knowledge.
Students	<p>Inquisitiveness to know is the fundamental job of students</p> <p>To increase inquisitiveness nudging is required</p>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Library, Teaching, reading, hardcore learning and communication, and thinking ability also nudging is required. ❖ The library is a sit of learning, sit of research tool is also in the library and one should make special

	<p>provisions through nudging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The library building, library facilities, choice of books, choice of journals, and timing of library are important aspects of the library to be nudged. ❖ Sluggishness is the only issue which is to be addressed by all agent of higher education at all levels.
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Motivational Crisis

It is developed because of rut learning, here the question comes how to eradicate rut learning. It brings sluggishness or non-progressive education. because of rut learning, education becomes a game of structuring and formalizing and the basic hurdle of this is the hunger of knowledge is killed. It creates systematic negation of updating and expanding the horizon of knowledge. Mode of knowledge limited to reproduction and knowledge becomes an exercise of mimesis.

Institutional upliftment one has to adopt a framework that is possible through nudging. We need such nudging where the system works on auto dynamism. It is not related to individual pursuit; it is related to all the stakeholders of higher education. how to implement nudging to prevent from the motivational crisis is a matter of question.

Policy constructor needs to be motivated, the primary reason to change the policy is the contextuality. The policy should not be content-free (but when the maker or the constructor of the policy work on whims of any political party then it may lead to a crisis) it should also not be formal, it should also be such, where enhancement of vision is apparent just to maintain the status quo the chart is the mode. Qualitative growth for knowledge potential insight has been debarred here. The whole education enterprise must vibrate after the nudging is being done. (System believes that after accreditation and ranking quality enhance but it doesn't become an exercise for nudging)

Nudging is not for making a comfort zone. Quality is improved because of the comfort zone is mere. There is no logical connection between these two because learning potential is important and not comfort level. Because of new buildings, new construction, new furniture, the quality will increase is mere illusion and delusion. There is no implication relationship between them. If it is true that doesn't imply that quality will necessarily be true. Such non-

vibrating criteria would have been possible without nudging or wrong nudging and to establish this logical relation we need nudging. In the center of an idea of policy constructor how nudging is to be done is the core area of policy and this skill also be promoted by them. E.g. how to study we never teach any students except lexicography which is never a skill. What are ideas, what are concepts that should be part of the policy framework, and it should be properly communicable and evaluated? This will not work just by passing a resolution. The entire fraternity is working on a set form of information. The entire system is working on information exchange and we keep on adding gas to the balloon of information. These practices will create information fat. It comes under the preview of policy constructors which generally avoid it. It is not the job of policymakers to exhibit scholars but to work on outcome-based learning.

We should not compromise on the creativity and freedom of teachers and students. One has to come out of dogmatic learning. The first need for students and teachers enthusiasm to learn and think, we have to motivate them through nudging. Freedom to think, freedom to speak, and freedom to ----. Nudging should not be done to create and traditional culture. Allow the counter opinion to exists academic liberalizing is needed for it.

Legitimacy Crisis:

Jürgen Habermas, in his book ‘ *Legitimation Crisis*; explains the concept of Legitimacy Crisis in general. In this book, Jurgen Habermas examines the deep tensions and crisis tendencies that underlie the development of contemporary Western societies and develops a powerful analysis of the legitimation problems faced by modern states. Habermas argues that Western societies have succeeded to some extent in stabilizing the economic fluctuations associated with capitalism, but this has created a new range of crisis tendencies that are expressed in other spheres. States intervene in economic life and plan to regulate markets, but they find themselves confronted by increasing and sometimes conflicting demands. As individuals become increasingly disillusioned, the state is faced with the possibility of a mass withdrawal of loyalty or support - a 'legitimation crisis'. Widely recognized as a classic of up to date social and political analysis, *Legitimation Crisis* sheds light on a variety of issues that are central to current debates, from the decline of class conflict and therefore the disillusionment with established political institutions to the crisis of the state. It remains essential reading for

college kids of sociology, politics, and therefore the social sciences generally. (Hebarmas, 1982)

In the field of higher education, the legitimacy crisis is highly prevailing and visible. It amounts to the state where the universities no longer have the means to secure the identification of those stakeholders whom they presume to exert authority. It starts from a very high level of the appointments of the Vice-Chancellors and other authorities and they invariably get connected to the political lineage or a high level of nepotism. The ever-changing policies of the higher education sector by the government to fit it into the economic viability and popular vote culture has led to a disaster and created a very high level of legitimacy crisis in the system. The autonomy and integrity of research and innovation in the universities and colleges are at the altar of 'innovation' and 'regional growth' and 'impact' and 'global challenges'. For an entire culture of higher education senior management and leadership to have been so thoroughly delegitimized in the eyes of those who, remember, do all the teaching and deliver all that research excellence, is in this wider context a far from the unambiguous process. There is, after all, nothing about 'crisis' situations that tends naturally to encourage progressive outcomes.

Nudging in the Higher Education – Some Ethical Issues

All over the world governments are using nudges as experimental regulatory tools . is this ethical? Is nudging unethical? Is the choice- architecture a problem for a free society? There are seven prepositions discussed by Cass Sunstein in his essay "The ethics of nudging.". Let us discuss each from the point of higher education regulations and its implications in the current policy-making process.

As Sunstein puts it, It is pointless to object to choice architecture or nudging as such. Choice architecture cannot be avoided. Nature itself nudges; so does the weather; so do customs and traditions; so do spontaneous orders and invisible hands. The private sector inevitably nudges, as does the government. It is reasonable to worry about nudges by government and to object to particular nudges, but not to nudging in general. This preposition applies well to higher education as to date we have used and experienced the forced implementation of policy decisions.

In this context, ethical abstractions (for example, about autonomy, dignity, manipulation, and democratic self-government) can create serious confusion. To make progress, those abstractions must be brought into contact with concrete practices. Nudging and choice

architecture take highly diverse forms, and the force of an ethical objection depends on the specific form. For example, the recently added RUSA (Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan) in India is a welcome move in the field of higher education regulation with specific reference of funding. But the same RUSA has failed to improve upon the quality of learning in learners.

If welfare is our guide, much nudging is required on ethical grounds, even if it comes from the government. For example, equity and equality in education are not measured as per the overall welfare goals of the nation many times. The governments of the developing and under-developed countries have not been very successful in attracting philanthropic support either from the industry or from the alumni.

If autonomy is our guide, much nudging is also required on ethical grounds, in part because some nudges promote autonomy, in part because some nudges enable people to devote their limited time and attention to their most important concerns. For example, the autonomy of the higher education institutions was a welcome move to nudge the progressive management and academicians to chart a development path for the institutions by getting the support of all the stake-holders.

Choice architecture should not, and need not, compromise either dignity or self-government, but it is important to see that imaginable forms could do both. It follows that when they come from government, choice architecture and nudges should not be immune from a burden of justification, which they might not be able to overcome. Indian universities and colleges have not been using the "choice architecture" —the design of situations in which individuals have to make choices, very effectively. A more open approach towards the teaching-learning-pedagogy could make a more deliberate effort to "nudge" people toward choices that will increase their happiness. In determining how and why to do that, the authors favor a doctrine they call "libertarian paternalism." (Lang,2009)

Some nudges are objectionable because the choice architect has illicit ends. When the ends are legitimate, and when nudges are fully transparent and subject to public scrutiny, a convincing ethical objection is less likely to be available. This can be explained by the example of the fresher in the college classroom. There are default options to help people make better choices. "Many people," they argue, "will take whatever option requires the least effort, or the path of least resistance." That is especially true if people are making choices in complex arenas in which they don't have as much information as an expert might. In other

words, "if, for a given choice, there is a default option—an option that will obtain if the chooser does nothing—then we can expect a large number of people to end up with that option, whether or not it is good for them." (Lang, 2009)

There is ample room for ethical objections in the case of well-motivated but manipulative interventions, certainly if people have not consented to them; such nudges can undermine autonomy and dignity. It follows that both the concept and the practice of manipulation deserve careful attention. The concept of manipulation has a core and a periphery; some interventions fit within the core, others within the periphery, and others outside of both. (Sunstein, 2015)

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we would like to highlight some practical aspects of Three Case Studies to perorate three crises in higher education and how nudging can help to lessen it or better it.

- **Rationality Crisis-**

Many institutions are following the canonical educational practices without considering the real-life challenges which the students are going to follow. Here comes into picture a little but peep into the history of higher education in the world. A variety of ancient Higher Learning institutions developed in many cultures to provide the institutional framework for scholarly activities. Dissension centers were supported, sponsored and overseen by courts, by religious institutions which sponsored Cathedral schools, Monastic schools, and Madrasas. In the past, there were very few higher education institutions since only a small fraction of the population could read or write. During this early period, centers of education mostly had a religious focus and trained clergy. In Western Europe, these centers were monasteries, while in the Islamic world these were madrasas. Scientific Institutions such as museums, hospitals, and observatories were supported, individual scholars. They are to be distinguished from the western style University, an autonomous organization of Scholars that originated in medieval Europe and has been adopted in other regions in modern times. (Oza, Japee, 2019). To date, we have not yet framed any other similar dynamic model which can take care of the socio-political-economic needs of the nation by educating youngsters. Here the role of nudging becomes very important to make the policymakers realize that we are raising a generation for the jobs that are not existing today. That is the biggest challenge.

- **Motivation crisis-**

The psychology of human motivation has proved that the need to do a job or work is a reward in itself. Usually, we all approach our work with consistent motivation, passion, and commitment because of the reward comes to us in the form of job satisfaction. But when this doesn't happen, a vicious cycle of negativity sets in. there are three factors which are directly connected to the sense of being motivated:

1. Competence
2. Autonomy
3. Relatedness

When any one of these three is compromised, the whole motivation cycle breaks down. Nudging in higher education can help a great extent to keep all three factors in check.

- **Legitimacy Crisis-**

This is a crisis when there is a consistent decline in the trust or confidence of the authorities like the administration, or leadership. Legitimacy crisis finally leads to a complete breakdown of the institution. Nudging can help to keep a periodic check on the level of confidence and can also measure the change in the general attitude towards the leadership of the institution. Great leaders have used nudging very effectively to create great institutions.

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