



PARADIGM SHIFT IN INDIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM POST PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT:

The Indian government announced the nation-wide lockdown on March 24, 2020, bringing thousands of educational institutes' operations to a halt for at least 21 days, and hence preventing India's million of schools and college going population from receiving their education. These sudden changes have brought immense agony to the students who are already burdened with their semester and competitive exams, research and academic activities. COVID-19 pandemic poses a unique medical challenge to the humanity in recent times. With the hour-by-hour changes in response to this global health crisis, universities across the globe are making drastic changes in a very short period of time, shifting traditional face-to-face course content to online content. This is a paradigm shift that will potentially shape the future trajectory of campus life. The spread of COVID-19 has led to the closure of educational institutions all over the world. Such closure accelerated the development of the online learning environments within those institutions so that learning would not be disrupted. There is a paradigm shift in the way professional courses are taught. Here the Digital India vision of the government is emerging as a vital instrument for solving the present crisis due to Covid-19. Due to COVID-19 .This paper discusses about the various initiatives undertaken by ministries like MHRD, Department of Technical Education, NCERT and others to support and benefit students in India. Present paper also focuses on advantages of the online teaching

Key words: Covid-19, Digital technology, Pedagogy, student-centric education, MHRD

INTRODUCTION:

The lockdown has accelerated adoption of digital technology. Business houses, educational institutes, analytics, computer, data management methods and online education solutions have been forced to work in tandem and improve in quality and delivery time to handle such situations. This is an ideal time to experiment and deploy new tools to make education delivery meaningful to students who can't go to campuses. It's a chance to be more efficient and productive while developing new and improved professional skills/knowledge through online learning and assessment.

It is also a fact that use of technology in education is resulting in different concepts in the system, for instance the move from teacher-centric education to student-centric education.

Universities have been making the transition to online learning over the past few decades with some institutions leading the charge. Ohio State University (since 2008), University of Illinois-Chicago (since 2007), and University of Florida (since 2001) are among the universities that have primarily offered their well-known brick-and-mortar campus environments with limited supplemental online courses to often a few thousand students. India is not new to eLearning, for instance, Coursera, an American learning platform founded in 2012 has over 35 million users and India is second only to America when it comes to a number of people who are taking the courses.

Pedagogy in digital education is an important link between course content, educationists, technology and course-takers. Democratization

of technology is now an important issue, comprising internet connectivity, telecom infrastructure, affordability of online system, availability of laptop/desktop, software, educational tools, online assessment tools, etc.

INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

E-learning platforms have emerged as one of the best measures to help the students continue their studies during COVID-19 outbreak. In the wake of this crisis, government of India, as well as state governments and private players have regularly been publishing information on various initiatives undertaken by ministries like MHRD, Department of Technical Education, NCERT and others to support and benefit youth/students.

Some of the excellent digital initiatives launched by Ministry of HRD for school students and even those seeking UG and PG level education.

1) SWAYAM: SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active learning for Young Aspiring Minds) is India's own MOOCs platform offering online courses on all disciplines viz. Engineering, Law, Management, Humanities & Social Sciences and Professional Courses. All the courses are interactive, prepared by reputed teachers in the country and accessible through computers / mobile phones. SWAYAM Courses being offered to African Students in more than 20 African Countries under the e-VBAB Project of Ministry of External Affairs (Govt. of India). SWAYAM (study webs of active learning for young aspiring minds), an online learning platform run by Ministry of Human Resource Development, attracted at least 50,000 new subscribers since the announcement of lockdown period in India, effective March 23, 2020.

2) E-Pathshala: Through this web-portal, students from class 1st to 12th will be able to access no less than 1886 audios, 2000 videos, 696 e-books (e-Pubs) and 504 Flip Books. The digital repository has been made available by

NCERT to make sure that the students do not miss out on any important concept to be taught in the class. E-Pathshala is also available in several language like the other digital platforms.

3) Swayam Prabha: Swayam Prabhais a collection of 32 DTH channels which run 24x7 for the students. Everyday new content of atleast 4 hours duration is floated on the website which runs 5 times in a day. Top education bodies of the nation such as NPTEL, IITs, UGC, CEC, IGNOU, NCERT and NIOS provide content to INFLIBNET Centre which runs these channels. Students from class 1st to 12th and UG and PG level aspirants can get access the interactive learning through this medium. The programme schedule and other details are available at the portal.

4) FOSSEE: FOSSEE promotes the use of open source software in educational institutions (<http://fossee.in>). It does through instructional material, such as spoken tutorials, documentation, such as textbook companions, awareness programmes, such as conferences, training workshops, and Internships. Textbook Companion (TBC) is a collection of code for solved examples of standard textbooks.

5) National Digital Library (NDL) of India run by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) under its National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) to provide content to not just school students but also students pursuing higher education and Ph.D. level education.

6) E-Yantra: e-Yantra is a project for enabling effective education across engineering colleges in India on embedded systems and Robotics. The objective is to provide hands-on learning to engineering students who have limited access to labs and mentors.

There are several other platforms such as:

National Academic Depository (NAD) run by UGC that has tie up with approximately 55

school boards, 359 state universities, 123 deemed universities, 47 central universities and 260 private universities.

Virtual Labs is another key initiative of MHRD and Government of India under the mentorship of NMEICT. It is a consortium of 12 IITs which aim to disburse online classes and study resource through Virtual labs wherein 700+ virtual experiments are designed and promoted for the aspirants to study and understand.

Vidwan – It is the premier database of profiles of scientists / researchers and other faculty members working in leading academic institutions and other R & D organisations involved in teaching and research in India. It provides important information about expert's background, contact address, skills and accomplishments. Its aim is to establish communication directly with the experts who possess the expertise needed by users.

NEAT(National Educational Alliance for Technology : NEAT – an initiative by AICTE based on the PPP model to enhance the employability skill among students, in collaboration with Education Technology Companies and National Digital Library (NDL), a repository of learning resources with single window facility.

At the university level, UGC has also stepped up its operations to efficiently handle the stress created amongst the students about the postponed examinations and their prospects after education. UGC had constituted two committees, one to look after the examinations and academic calendar, and the other to promote online learning.

The online assessment agencies/private business houses are also improving the product, considering the limited bandwidth and social distancing, by managing remotely proctored examinations/skilling assessments. Basic requirements like sturdy education delivery platforms, IT infrastructure, PC/Desktop/Mobile

for end-delivery and assessment tools have been planned and more improvement is underway.

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION :

The national institutions of UGC and MHRD are at the forefront of providing technology-enabled learning through audio-video mode or through e-books and journals. A few of the initiatives are SWAYAM online courses for teachers, UG/PG MOOCs for non-technology courses, e-PG Pathshala or e-content containing modules on social science, arts, fine arts, natural and mathematical science, CEC-UGC YouTube channel, Vidwan – a database of experts who provide information to peers and prospective collaborators, NEAT – an initiative by AICTE based on the PPP model to enhance the employability skill among students, in collaboration with Education Technology Companies and National Digital Library (NDL), a repository of learning resources with single window facility. Many noteworthy initiatives have been taken up like Spoken Tutorial, Free and Open Source Software for Education (FOSSEE), e-Yantra, National Academic Depository (NAD) and so on.

Universities have moved their courses to online delivery very rapidly. Students are coping with the biggest crisis in their history. And, again, the challenge for universities, once they've overcome the initial burst of innovation, excitement and adrenaline, becomes how they sustain that and actually get a resilient, high-quality service up and running. If this is going to go on a lot longer, leaders desperately need to figure out the long-term implications for their business.

For the real vision of the new education policy, a drastic change in thought process is required in the mind- set of policy makers, authorities, students and specially educationists. It is possible that in times to come, a student may be allowed to carry out

courses from any College/ University based on quality of teacher and fees for the course irrespective of his location and finally will get degree from the home university where he / she got registered or from the university where he has taken maximum courses, resulting in a balance of economics of good education

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