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Digital education - Scope and challenges

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Abstract

The underlying purpose of education has always been to liberate people from prison of ignorance and frustration, to assist them in bettering their lives and to provide the talented with opportunities for the fuller use of their abilities. The rapid changes have been taken place in the field of education in India. The traditional education system can no longer fulfills the complex needs of modern day where everything is dynamic and changing at a very faster pace. There is a huge amount of transformation and dissemination of information that takes place in the present world in every second. The development in science and technology which render the previous knowledge obsolete, help man in evolving very effective media of mass communication and digital resources, which can be profitably used in education. So, to resolve the shortcomings of the traditional education system, the world is moving towards digital education which addresses all the issues and challenges of traditional education. Digital Education can be defined as the use of a combination of technology, digital content and instruction in the education system. Such a use makes teaching learning process more effective and efficient than the traditional education system.

Keywords: Digital education, scope and challenges

Introduction

Digital Education means to provide education through any means that is accompanied by technology or by instructional practice that makes effective use of technology in teaching learning process. It encompasses the application of a wide spectrum of practices including: blended and virtual learning. Sometimes it is confused with online learning or e-learning. Digital Education encompasses the aforementioned concepts. A digital learning strategy may include any of or a combination of any of these technologies: adaptive learning, blended learning, e-textbooks, learning analytics, learning objects, mobile learning, personalized learning and open educational resources.

In a digital age, we are surrounded and immersed in technology everywhere. Furthermore, the rate of technological change shows no sign of slowing down because everyday new techniques have been invented by technologists for the better living of human beings. Technology is leading to massive changes in the economy, in communication and information process and increasingly in the way we learn. But our educational institutions were built largely for another age rather than for a digital era. Thus teachers and instructors are facing with a massive challenge of providing education through digital modes. The digital world is increasingly penetrating the education with technology and other digital resources. Technology is used to deliver lectures and to give knowledge and to develop skills in innovative ways. This penetration is coupled with future changes and to the mode and pattern of work and future is always uncertain and dynamic. This penetration is also affected by the current climate of economic uncertainty, political instability and orthodox thinking. There are more than 370 million internet users in the world. Hundreds of local as well as global business tycoons are willing to invest in the future of education. Online and digital education in India has picked up pace. India is now the third largest online market for

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education in the world. This enables people to take better advantage of the resources available online.

More than 1 million schools and 18,000 higher education institutions are registered on internet and have their own websites in India. Data of different surveys showed that 4 percent of children never start school, 58 percent students don't complete primary education, and 90 percent students don't complete secondary school and only 10 percent students' complete higher education. What is going to happen to the 90 percent? That's why different digital platforms like Khan Academy enter the market with meticulously curate content. This content is also available in Indian languages and content is based on NCERT textbooks. In fact, Digital education helps people to get access to a variety of learning experiences.

Scope of Digital Education

Digital education has achieved great heights in providing different online courses of higher education and sometimes higher education through traditional mode is not possible due to financial or personal constraints. Some may also suffer from physical or mental disabilities and for these students, learning in a normal classroom is impossible. For these students, online courses, specializations and degree programs can offer an incredible opportunity to continue their education and build careers for themselves. These days, employers don't look for just the basic skills and education in their employees; they look for know-how of new internet technologies.

Digital technologies are being used in education field and due to this; new skills needs have been emerged. The use of these technologies has contributed a lot in transforming teaching learning process and skills development is transformed into a lifelong process. Indeed, people now have to continue to develop and refresh their skills and knowledge in order to keep abreast with the constant innovations and new developments in the digital world. It is estimated that technology skills have to be updated every three years in order to deal with challenges of digital world. Education sector is one of the significant sectors to witness revolutionary changes in the area of digital technology in recent times. Digital Education is the panacea for this anathema of education all over the world. Primarily Digital Education has 3 components:

1. The content
2. The technology platforms
3. The delivery infrastructure

The Indian Information and technology sector holds enough capacity to provide excellent digital content and supporting digital platforms. With the advent of several corporate and commercial sectors in digital education and due to the subsequent money flow in this sector, quality movement is geared up in this sector. But this innovation has no end and therefore it would always invite different stakeholders like Government, Content experts, Technology firms, Users, Teaching community etc. to come together, to collaborate and to invent new cutting edge digital technologies and methods to facilitate the growth of digital technologies in education. Digital Education showed its face in the 90s in developed economies like the US. Growth in this sector leads to large scale production of different devices in USA and other developed countries started it penetrating in education system gradually. Developed nations have started realizing the cost benefits of going digital and are acting

with an eye on the future. For example, Stanford University has introduced a digital course in masters in electrical engineering. According to research by Harvard University, more professors are selling their lectures and notes to digital campuses. Society, with some challenges related to internet connectivity though, is ready to accept the change in the developed nations. In India online MOOC course are available for higher education and E- Pathshala provides a digital platform for getting knowledge of different subjects.

Benefits of Digital Education

- Classroom teaching has become more interactive with the use of digital technologies. Children tend to be more attentive in such a classroom. They are not only listening but at the same time they are also viewing it on the screen which makes teaching-learning process more effective.
- The best part of digital education is that it is user-friendly. We can access our curriculum wherever and whenever we need it. Even any student miss certain classes, he/ she can access the class notes and download files from the school website.
- Interactive online courses and programmes help students to develop language skills. By reading e-Books or accessing study materials through different online mode, they can learn new words and expand their vocabulary
- Online presentations, virtual classroom, video conferences through Skype or practical sessions in educational content through interactive screen helps the students to pay more attention to details of content and it enables them to complete their activities on their own.
- Many a times, a student hesitates to ask a question to his teacher in real classroom setting. But with digital education, even if he does not understand anything at one time, he can listen the recorded sessions to clear his doubts. It enables a student to learn at his own pace.
- Nowadays, online study materials are easily available. Even if the entire education system is not digitalized, yet students can leverage the power of digital content depending upon their capabilities.
- Using computers, tabs, laptops or notepads, instead of pens and pencils motivates children to complete their tasks quickly and efficiently.
- With Digital Education, students can even further connect with distant counselors and faculty to resolve queries and can take personal, social, vocational guidance from counselors.
- Students can access exclusive online study modules of various subjects, which help them to enhance their knowledge even without a teacher. In India, Students can use e-pathshala for this purpose.

Challenges of Digital Education

Digital Learning has become very popular with passage of time in India and all over the world because it is user friendly and a student can learn at his own pace. But it imposes certain challenges which need to be overcome. It is rightly said about Digital learning that it should be more about the human touch than just mechanical support. Digital technologies have permeated more than just the workplace, one must have knowledge of digital skills for performing day-to-day activities, such as booking a doctor's appointment or personal banking and to use online and

digital platform for getting knowledge. To use technology is a very normal matter for some members of society. But this is not necessarily the case for all. The following are the challenges of digital Education:

Resistance on the part of teachers: It is but obvious that every aspect and change has two sides of coin, with one leading to advancement and development and other relates to certain challenges associated with the implementation of this advancement. Unfamiliarity of teachers towards technology is one of the biggest challenges of Digital education. People commonly resist change, even if the changes are superior to the previously established system. They might not trust that a technology-based learning program will be as effective as teaching of an instructor.

Requires technology based Infrastructure: A school needs proper infrastructure facilities for providing digital education. It particularly requires affordable broadband and wi-fi internet facilities all over the campus.

Requires Expertise: use of new innovative techniques of Digital education like Flipped classroom, blended learning, online learning and Virtual classroom etc. needs expertise on the part of teacher. Lack of efficiency on the part of teacher may spoil the spirit of digital education.

No fixed schedule: Online learning requires much better management and rigid schedules, whereas in traditional classroom training, everything is as per a fixed schedule. Sometimes, low internet speed also creates hindrance in learning process.

Expensive in nature: Digital education is more expensive. That is why in most International schools and schools, where education is provided through digital mode are more expensive than the regular schools. A heavy amount of fee is taken from the parents in the name of Smart classes and interactive whiteboard classes.

Easy approach to studies: This may develop poor study habits and can develop in children a lazy attitude. Digital education can also make children forget the basic way of studying. Even for simple problems and homework, they are used to seeking help from the internet and instead of writing from notes; they just click the picture of notes. It also suppresses the creative ability of the students.

Security: online courses and use of digital platforms do not provide any kind of security of child. While studying and looking for study materials from the internet he may come across to different harmful sites across that are not good for him.

Digital education has its pros and cons. So, students need to be properly guided by their parents and teachers every time they are going to use the online technology.

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