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National education policy-2020: A digital initiative to integrate ICT in higher education

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Abstract

The Union Cabinet of India adopted the New Education Policy (NEP) on 29 July 2020, making it one of the most significant policies of the 21st century. The policy prioritizes a wide range of dimensions of education, including the use of information and communication technologies and is revolutionary in scope. The need for information and communication technologies in the classroom rapidly increased in the 21st century. By facilitating the transition from an economy based on antiquated tools and techniques to one based on cutting-edge digital innovations, information and communication technology is a crucial factor in altering the global economy's prognosis. It is crucial to prioritize establishing universal foundational learning and closing the digital gap in regards to access and use of technology in order to safeguard and utilize the potential that an evidence and technology supported system provides for our nation. This article will concentrate on the policy's technology and execution. Using ICT will not only improve the classroom experience, but also better prepare students for their futures as individuals and as workers. For higher education instruction to effectively convey knowledge and skills and fulfill global education demands, ICT technologies are an unavoidable phenomenon.

Keywords: Education technology, higher education, information and communication technology

Introduction

India is a global leader in information and communication technology and in other cutting-edge domains. Education is the bedrock upon which every nation may build its future prosperity. No nation can progress without providing equal access to education for all of its residents, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, religion, or geographical origin. Education is a necessary tool for making people aware of their rights and capable of carrying out their responsibilities. Education sets the stage for a brighter future and equips the next generation for success (Alam & Zahoor, 2019) [2]. India is unique among nations in that its educational system has a long and storied past; in fact, it formerly served as a hub for learning for people all over the globe. The Indian government places a high priority on information and communications technology (ICT) and has established a national ICT strategy, which is implemented through a number of government agencies. It is being carried out all throughout the country thanks to the hard work of the National Informatics Center (NIC) and the support of the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the Department of Science and Technology (DST). These plans have also been shaped by the National Association of Services and Software Companies (NASSCOM). With the advent of the twenty-first century and its accompanying scientific and technological advancements, every civilization on Earth has morphed into an information-intensive culture. Gifts of this century include the ever-increasing need for information and communication technologies and the use of technological dictionaries, Artificial Intelligence, E-learning, Virtual Classroom, Digital Platform, Digital Libraries and Digital Infrastructure etc. The worldwide spread of COVID-19 energized and bolstered the technological community. Current educational system stakeholders, including students, instructors, and administrators, benefit greatly from ICT integration (Raushan A., 2020) [6].

National Education Policy-2020

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has released the National Education Policy, 2020. The Policy covers a wide range of topics, such as the importance of providing for young children, ensuring that all students have access to quality education, and updating the

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present curriculum, but one theme that is consistent throughout is the relationship between education and technology. The Union Cabinet of India adopted the new education policy on July 29, 2020, making it one of the most significant education programs of the 21st century. The NEP, 2020 stressed the utilization of technology in education. E-courses will be established in regional languages and virtual laboratories will be built and a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) is being founded. The policy's concentration is on a number of different areas, including the use of ICT in classrooms, and it represents a radical departure from previous approaches. With inputs from India's rich and varied historical past and the insights of several experts, the policy comprehensively covered all levels and forms of education, from early childhood to higher learning to professional and technical training. The policies' end goal is to provide every citizen access to a well-rounded, liberal education in a wide range of fields; hence they map out distinct phases of schooling (Aithal & Aithal, 2020) [1]. Policy and technological integration provide obstacles that must be overcome via collaboration between the federal government and the states. In terms of technical development, we still have a long way to go. The New Education Paradigm 2020 is anticipated to be the most far-reaching educational initiative of the century.

ICT in Higher Education

A competitive advantage may be gained via the use of internet and computer technology applications by enhancing services for students and staff, generating more noticeable efficiencies, and creating better learning interactions and experiences. Internet and computer technology (ICT) has several applications, one of which is in the educational sector. The value of a good education cannot be overstated. An individual's chances of succeeding in life, despite inherent disadvantages, may be greatly improved via the pursuit of a quality education. The power of education to combat poverty is so well recognized that it is often cited as a key strategy in this ongoing struggle. So, it is the responsibility of every teacher to provide an excellent education. There are several applications for ICT in the academic world. Some applications might be helpful to either the administration or the pupils. The term "information" is used to describe any type of knowledge representation, including but not limited to words, images, and stories. The ways in which we communicate with one another, share information, and learn new skills are all evolving as a result of advances in information and communication technology, making their use a matter of personal preference. In the near future information and communication technology will play a crucial role because of how deeply they will permeate every facet of human existence.

We find it useful for expanding our minds, expanding our abilities, and growing as people both qualitatively and quantitatively. Information and communication technology refers to any and all forms of electronic means of communication. It's the use of computers and programs to not only convert and store but also process, transfer, and retrieve information, and it's the technical term for all of these activities. Across the world, teaching and learning have experienced tremendous transition from the conventional classroom model to the present online and mixed models, and innovations in ICT hold the key to such

transformation (Mishra and Panda 2020) [3]. The absence of a coherent strategy on digital education, along with poor infrastructure and a plethora of languages, makes the information and communication technology use environment in India's public school system particularly challenging (Pitroda, 2020) [5].

Higher education ICT Benefits

The internet has the potential to inspire many pupils. In today's world, today's youth are totally engrossed in their gadgets. Teachers should use students' natural curiosity, energy, and excitement about the Internet to their advantage. Students who are already invested in their education might find educational opportunities online that supplement what they get in the classroom. Due to the internet, people from all over the world are now able to communicate quickly and easily. It is possible to work on group projects with other students from various nations or even continents. The internet makes for a more interactive and collaborative learning environment, fosters conversation, and benefits student-teacher relationships.

Government's ICT Commitment

The dedication of the government is crucial to the effective delivery of Information and communication technology which necessitates an annual budget allocated to the ICT infrastructure. Information communicated online must be handled securely, and the Internet must be readily available and reliable as a service provider. Indian officials are putting in long hours on projects like "digital India" to upgrade the country's information technology (IT) infrastructure. The goal of the Government of India's Digital India program is to bring together the various branches of the Indian government and the people of India. Its stated goal is the elimination of paper processes associated with obtaining government services, which includes making such services accessible electronically to the public. A strategy to provide high-speed internet to rural regions is also part of the project. What makes up Digital India are its three main parts.

Over 70 million people are now enrolled in higher education in India, making it the biggest in the world. Lacking the widespread use of ICT technologies, such growth is inconceivable. The 11th Five-Year Plan calls for expanding access to information and communication technologies in schools, with a goal of equipping all 378 universities and 18064 colleges with them by the end of the plan's timeframe. The Mission is to digitize and network all educational institutions, provide low-cost access devices that use little power, and make bandwidth accessible for educational uses.

Why NEP needs Technology

The goal of National Education Policy 2020 is to prepare students to help transform India into a digitally empowered society and a global knowledge economy via Technology Usage and Integration. Radio, television, cellular phones, computers, and network hardware and software, satellite systems, and so on are all part of the ICT, which also includes the services and applications that use these technologies, such as videoconferencing and distance learning. In this context, ICT may be seen of as a subsection of Educational Technology, which focuses on the use of technology in schools to aid and enhance students' education

and provide conducive learning environments. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are used in higher education for a wide variety of purposes, including curriculum design, content delivery, communication between students, faculty, and the outside world, lecture and presentation preparation and delivery, academic research, administrative support, student enrollment, and more. Improvements in student achievement and learning outcomes may be achieved via strategic use of technological supports.

The National Education Policy calls for the establishment of an independent group called the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to facilitate open discussion on how to best use technological tools in higher education institutions to improve teaching, grading, and management. The NETF will provide the newest information and research to the leadership of educational institutions, State and Central governments, and other stakeholders, opening the door for consultation and the exchange of best practices to improve technological induction, deployment, and usage. Successful implementation of the new NEP depends on technology providers taking a comprehensive strategy to accelerating the digital adoption of campuses for technology integration across teaching, learning, and assessment. Increased enrollment on par with other developing economies, enhanced teaching and learning quality through student-centered initiatives like credit recognition, and the establishment of early nurturing systems and infrastructure for entrepreneurship (like incubation centers within institutions) to promote innovation, technology transfer, mentoring, and support will all benefit greatly from this strategy.

Addressing the issue of equitable use of technology for greater reach requires that online teaching techniques be taken into account. Using the internet at the same time will be an efficient and cost-saving addition. Lessons may be improved by including recorded lectures, supplementary materials, chat sessions, and tutorials. We should promote the use of massive open online courses (MOOCs), the support of exceptional educators, and collaborative efforts. It's also possible to explore the potential of taking graduate-level courses online as an undergraduate. Learning by doing and learning from others should be given some thought. Offering courses online makes it possible to make advantage of resources like laboratories, workshops, and assessment centers/providers located throughout the nation to serve students located all over the globe. This need for network connection may be met with the quick. Teaching, learning, and research are all benefited by the introduction and integration of ICTs in education. Additionally, it enhances adaptability; offers a stimulating atmosphere and incentive for the teaching-learning process, all of which have a significant influence on the learning process by opening up new opportunities for both students and instructors. The performance and accomplishment of students may be impacted by these factors.

Conclusion

Many developing countries rely heavily on online education to improve their educational institutions. There are several built-in benefits. Once India's new education policy is implemented, technology will be used in a number of ways to enhance processes and the student experience as a whole. A potential answer to the problem of how to get ICT into

schools is for businesses and universities to work together. The integration of ICT may benefit from faculty with expertise in both business and academic research. Without a doubt, NEP 2020 has developed forward-thinking proposals. Technology's extraordinary significance in supporting teaching and learning has been recognized, and the report claims that this will help advance education. Several states have already begun enforcing the new policy, and many more are in the works, but there is still much ground to cover. If the federal government and individual governments work together, the New Education Policy's emphasis on acquiring marketable skills and technological literacy will pave the way for preparing students for success in the modern world. There is a pressing need to focus on improving educational standards at this time of rapid expansion. The use of ICT is widely seen as crucial in today's knowledge-based society. ICT refers to the modern methods through which individuals may interact with one another, get information, make choices, and address issues. In light of the above, it seems clear that ICT is the superior platform upon which to pursue higher education. The sector's capacity to help students and instructors has also benefited from the rapid development of ICT. With the advent of "anywhere learning" and other technology advances allowing for real-time and predictive governance, India may realize its potential as a digital education powerhouse on a global scale.

Recommendations

If stakeholders believe that different educational programs are satisfying their needs and expectations, then the quality of the programs as assessed by fitness for purpose should continue to rise. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) can unlock latent human resource potential. Institutions in India should be required to follow uniform guidelines on the legitimacy and recognition of online degree programs. Workshops and other training programs should be held often for the teaching and non-teaching staff of universities and colleges so that they may become proficient in managing and operating the institution's ICT infrastructure and services.

In order to advance both higher education and information and communication technology, sufficient finance is required. In order to achieve this goal, government spending for education as a whole must be increased. Even if the economy is showing signs of improvement, the sky-high cost of information and communication technology components is here to stay. The educational community has an obligation to lobby for funding from corporations, governments, philanthropic groups, and the general public in order to ensure that schools have the resources they need to provide students with access to information and communication technologies and to build out state-of-the-art computer classrooms.

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