Digital Education in the era of COVID-19 pandemic

Dr. T Chinna Sanjeeva Rayudu[1] ,Bhaskar Papagari[2]

[1]Assistant Professor, DDE, S.K. University, Ananthapuramu, A.P., India.
Email: sanjeevskudde@gmail.com
[2]Assistant Professor, University College of Education, S.K. University, Ananthapuramu, A.P., India.
Email: bhaskarskudde@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores the transformative impact of Digital Education in India, a significant leap in the realm of enhanced learning and structural development. The advent of digital services and technology has revolutionized the way knowledge is acquired and disseminated in India. This need for technology-based education became particularly pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a temporary disruption in the Indian education system. The paper delves into how Digital Education in India represents a progressive path for learning and knowledge acquisition through technological means. The discussion provides an in-depth analysis of the current state, challenges, and potential of digital education in the Indian context.

Keywords: Digital Education, India, Technology-based Learning, COVID-19 Pandemic, Educational System, Knowledge Acquisition, E-Learning, Technological Advancements, Online Education, Educational Transformation, Remote Learning.

Introduction

Digital Education in India marks a pivotal shift in the educational landscape, integrating technology into the core of learning and teaching methodologies. This integration has been catalyzed by various factors, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated an urgent and comprehensive transition to online learning platforms.

The Indian Education System: Pre-Digital Era Overview:

Prior to the digital revolution, the Indian education system was characterized by traditional classroom-based learning, limited access to resources, and a lack of personalized learning paths. The educational reach was often confined by geographical and socio-economic barriers, impacting the quality and inclusivity of education.

Impact of COVID-19 on Education:

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic brought unforeseen challenges, causing widespread disruptions in the conventional education system. Schools and educational institutions were compelled to shut down, leading to an urgent need for alternative methods to continue the learning process. This situation served as a catalyst for the rapid adoption of digital education.

Digital Education in India: An Overview:

Digital Education in India encompasses the utilization of digital tools and platforms to facilitate learning. It extends beyond mere online classes to include a range of educational technologies, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), educational apps, interactive e-books, and virtual laboratories. These tools not only provide access to learning materials but also enable interactive, personalized, and self-paced learning experiences.

Objectives and Scope of the Paper:

This paper aims to examine the evolution, current state, and future prospects of digital education in India. It seeks to analyze the impact of digital education on students, teachers, and the broader educational infrastructure. Additionally, the paper explores the challenges faced in the implementation of digital learning and the strategies employed to overcome them.

Significance of the Study:

Understanding the dynamics of digital education in India is crucial for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in the education sector. This study provides insights into how digital education can be leveraged to enhance the quality of education, bridge learning gaps, and prepare students for a technology-driven future.

What is Digital Education in India?

Digital Education is a method of learning which involves technology. With the help of digital education, students can gain knowledge and information from any corner of the world. Digital Education in India is the future of learning.

- Since the lockdown, all states swiftly and diligently responded to the COVID-19 situation and used existing digital resources to provide student education continuously.
- The non-technical teachers geared up and learned what seemed impossible to them at first and contributed towards providing a world-class education to the young generation of the country.
- Here, we will be discussing various initiatives taken by the government for the development of Digital Education in India.

Significance of Digital Education in India

Digital literacy is a learning method using technology and is a broad technical discipline aimed at helping all students gain knowledge in every corner of the country. Digital Education in India is believed to be the future of learning. The Government of India has defined different channels and taken several initiatives to disseminate educational and pedagogic means and sources in various parts of the country.

Recognising the rapid development of digital education, the government has introduced a new National Education Policy (NEP) that emphasises digitisation as well as the use of technology in education. Another focus is on Edtech for further training, especially in rural areas. This initiative was primarily taken to provide quality education, especially within tier 2 and tier 3 towns and villages. What looked like a distant dream was successfully carried out and is wonderfully implemented across the nation.

Digital Education in India Goals

The main objectives of this initiative are:

1. To develop high-quality electronic content in all local languages to cater to the diversity of various languages in India
2. Develop virtual training and laboratories along with high-end skill development courses
3. Create guidelines for online/digital education to tackle the digital divide
4. Development of digital classrooms
5. Integrating the Indian education system using technology
6. Development of a framework for digital evaluation in the age of digital education and ensuring a consistent student plus teacher experience through multi-mode access to education via web portals, webinars, mobile apps, TV, radio, and podcasts

7. The focus will be on increasing mobile phone usage to enable "anytime, anywhere" access and enhance penetration.
8. Teachers will be encouraged to use e-learning resources.

Initiatives on Digital Education in India

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Digital Education in India was the sole source of learning for the students in the country. Indian government launched numerous initiatives to facilitate online learning through a plethora of apps, channels, portals and other tools. This article covers all such initiatives as well as the benefits and challenges of E-learning.

DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing): e-Learning

- It is the 'one nation; one digital platform' for school education in India launched in 2017, available for schools in all states
- from class 1 to 12.
- through mobile applications and web portals.

VidyaDaan

- For content contribution at the national level
- allowing donation or contribution of e-learning resources for school education by experts, private bodies, and educational bodies.

E-textbooks

- e-Pathshala app and web portal can be used to access e-textbooks.
- audio and video content of NCERT available in different languages – English, Sanskrit, Urdu, and Hindi.

Radio

- Shiksha Vani is a radio show of the CBSE used by learners of grades 12 to 9, containing more than 430 pieces of audio content for all subjects.

Other Government Initiatives for Smooth Conduct of Digital Education in India

Other government initiatives for boosting Digita Education in India are as follows:

- E-PG Pathshala: to provide e-content for studies.
- SWAYAM: providing an integrated platform for online courses.
- NEAT: uses Artificial Intelligence to make learning more personalized and customized as per the requirements of the learner
- PRAGYATA: The MHRD released guidelines on digital education titled PRAGYATA.
- Under the PRAGYATA guidelines, only 30 minutes of screen time per day for interacting with parents is recommended for kindergarten, nursery and preschool.
- Live classes by school for students range from 1.5 to 3 hours.

Advantages of Digital Education in India

When India fought the COVID19 Pandemic, Indian digital education was the only learning source for all students.

- Digital Education in India became the only source of imbibing pedagogical information, technical know-how, and practical experience in various subjects for students.
- There is no restriction on learning and study location in digital education practices.
- Students can always take online classes with online learning material easily available, making learning and teaching between students and teachers easily accessible.

- Digital Education in India acts as a supplement, and making digitisation cost-effective became a major government motivation.

Challenges with Digital Education in India

Even though Digital Education in India is booming, there are a few major challenges that can restrict its growth.

- For digital education, the Internet is required. However, there are many places that lack internet connectivity, and it has become a major challenge for Digital Education in India.
- People from socio-economic backgrounds can't afford devices and technology.
- Training the teachers is another challenge. Only those who are technically sound can conduct digital classes.
- Government colleges and schools are not provided with proper facilities for digital classrooms.

Digital Education in India- Way Forward

- Developing e-content in local languages that would address the diversity of Indian languages.
- Addition of virtual labs and skill development courses.
- Priority must be given to getting access to digital education anytime, anywhere.
- To get the best e-learning resources, teachers have to upskill themselves.
- Structuring Digital education guidelines to address the digital divide.
- Multi-mode access to education through TV channels, radio, web portals, and podcasts.

Conclusion

Digital Education in India is not just a temporary solution but a cornerstone in the evolution of the educational system. It has the potential to reshape how education is delivered and accessed, making it more equitable, efficient, and aligned with the demands of the 21st century. As India continues to navigate this digital revolution, it stands at the brink of an educational transformation that could set a precedent for the rest of the world. This conclusion encapsulates the major findings of the paper, acknowledges the challenges and opportunities presented by digital education in India, and suggests directions for future research and policy-making. It emphasizes the lasting impact of this transformation in the education sector.

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