
“Teaching with Technology: New Vistas of Education Promoted by NEP 2020”

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Abstract

The National Education Policy 2020 aims to take significant steps towards the inculcation of technology in the field of education. The rapid growth of technological sector has reshaped the modern society. People are becoming more dependent on their smart phones, both for their work and entertainment. In this scenario, there is an opportunity to use the technologies in making teaching easier and innovative.

In the current data driven world, there is an excess of information regarding every field. Knowledge is at the fingertips of anyone with access to internet. NEP 2020 focuses on tapping this reservoir of online learning for both students and teachers. A public digital infrastructure would be beneficial for a systematic management of online learning platforms. SWAYAM and DIKSHA are such examples, currently popular for providing courses on a multitude of subjects. The extension of these programs to aid a two-way audio-visual conversation between the teachers and students is one of the highlights of this development.

NEP 2020 also takes into consideration the need to keep the teachers updated on the new applications available as teaching aids. Promotion of regular Faculty Development Programs is a step towards keeping the teachers updated on the newest changes and innovations in the field of education. Creation of e-content and online libraries is also heavily promoted as it can reach a wide area of learners who were previously dependent on the physical libraries. The presence of e-books and online journals have made research much easier. NEP 2020 sends a strong message for the promotion of all such varying aids to make teaching and learning more enjoyable and effective.

Keywords: NEP 2020, technology, e-content, online libraries, e-learning, teaching aids.

Introduction

Pedagogy is a dynamic field of study and vocation. It deals with the holistic development of individuals, and hence, it is required to keep changing as per the needs of the students. The teachers are required to be updated with the newest trends and changes in the societal level to keep the students updated, which is a continuous act as our understanding of the world deepens every day. Through studies of sociology and psychology, we get a constantly developing understanding of the human condition and the functioning of society. How an individual should behave, what the duties and rights of each person are, keep changing as the society changes. The influence of technology added to this amalgamation further makes the task more difficult. There are no set rules that are never subject to speculation for its future uses. In such a state of constant turmoil, the use of technology itself to the teachers' benefit is an important step.

NEP 2020 aims to act as a stepping stone towards making the education system compatible with the current changing society. As the new generation is heavily dependent on the technologies like computers and phones as mediums of access to social media and internet, these policies take into considerations these aspects of modern student life. It stands for the idea of using technology for educating students from elementary to higher education. This decision is backed by the data that claims that technology can aid in making classes more interactive and appealing. The increase in class engagement would advance the students' grasp of learning. (Nithish P)

The educational landscape of the 21st Century is not limited to merely theoretical knowledge of recommended texts. The idea of a holistic education includes in itself the aspect of enhancing a student's creativity, critical thinking skills, communication and collaboration in and outside classes. In being more student-centric, it provides focused directions according to every individual's inherent capability, area of interest and learning patterns. New education policies also heavily focus on promoting research and innovation. Studies have shown that the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has enhanced the learning experience of students. It has also eased the path of connectivity between the teachers and students as it aids remote learning (Juneja)

The NEP 2020 stands to address the benefits of technology on various levels, such as:

Ease in Interaction:

The need for interaction is a crucial point in the current climate of pedagogy. Courses are no longer bound to classroom lectures and a few practical sessions for specific subjects. Every subject deserves a thorough understanding and research which can be made possible in the best ways when the students have access to expert teachers for their specific courses. This is possible now with the means of remote learning. Methods such as video conferencing and online lectures are a boon to the students who wish to get in touch with their teachers as per the convenience of both parties.

The need for access to remote learning was exacerbated in the year 2020 in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. As the whole world shut down and people were ordered not to leave their homes except when crucial, there was the need for daily lives to keep on going. Offices needed to be run by the means of computers, as were the schools and colleges. In the time of lockdown, teachers were compelled to use technology to reach out to their students to continue regular classes.

Video conferencing platforms like Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Zoom gained much popularity as they became the only way of conducting the classes as required. Since the end of the havoc created by the pandemic, these video conferencing tools have become a part of the daily life. Currently, these are still in use to teach extra classes when needed in hybrid mode, where students get an option of attending in person or from another place. This technology is much in use during conferences which has allowed experts in every field to attend these gatherings at their own convenience from home.

Promotion of Online Courses

With the advent of online lectures and remote classes, new vistas for online courses have been laid open. MOOC or Massive Open Online Course, are educational courses provided to students through the means of internet. It was initiated in 2008 by the University of Manitoba. Coursera is another popular platform for giving access to lectures to students who seek courses of their interest through non-traditional degree programs. (Muir)

MOOCs have become a major component of higher education in the current state of globalization and access easy access to the internet. MOOCs are becoming a method of bridging the gap of education for people not able to afford higher education through established institutions. This method of distance education has allowed highly reputed institutions like Harvard University and

Massachusetts Institute of Technology to provide quality lectures by their highly skilled educators. However, the demographic that opts for these courses remain majorly of affluent backgrounds.

While many benefits of online courses like MOOC and Coursera are praised, their drawbacks can not be disregarded. The importance of a physical classroom is an ever-present topic in the discussion of remote learning. The absence of a physical presence of a teacher and fellow classmates creates an environment that is not always conducive to learning. Loneliness monotony and lack of motivation are common complaints in the long-term effects of internet dependency. The aspect of distribution of study material differs in many courses. While some give open access to the course texts, some provide them on a schedule basis. The insistence of many Universities to create these online courses for the students adds additional burden upon the teachers. While MOOCs began as non-profit project, their presence has made the institutes ponder over their revenue systems and how these online courses will support themselves independent of the universities. (Muir)

SWAYAM, abbreviated for Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds, is a MOOC initiative by India. Access, equity and quality are the three principles that SWAYAM is based on. The four quadrants of SWAYAM courses are e-tutorial, e-text, assessment and discussion forum. While the initial interest for these online courses were palpable, the consecutive issues of valid certification, method of delivering lectures and lack of physical classroom remain persistent. Since its advent, MOOCs have been of great interest for its advantages and disadvantages. Many prominent educators have presented their concerns regarding the ability of educators to provide quality education to students in these virtual classrooms. NEP 2020 mentions SWAYAM as a viable platform for students interested in distance education. SWAYAM inculcates the popular sources of distance education like IGNOU (for school students), IIMB (for management students), NPTEL (for engineering students) and NCERT (for school students) under its folds as well. (SINGH)

FDPs for Faculty Members

FDP or Faculty Development Programs are an initiative to keep the educators updated with the new technological advancements and methods of teaching. FDPs have been put forward as mandatory to attend by the institutes as a means to ensure the teachers' active involvement in this initiative for the betterment of both teachers and students. These programs act as occasionally mandatory refresher courses. NEP 2020 focuses on the FDPs based on their value to the teachers in implementing new

curriculars and assessment strategies as the new policies focus on a continuous assessment system throughout the semesters. The FDPs are often free of charge, provided by the institute. They last for 3 to 14 days, depending on the topic and the lecturer.

Areas of focus of these sessions are: foundations of policies, curriculum updating, reforming assessment methods, integration of technology like virtual labs and modes of blended learning and multidisciplinary learning. Since these FDPs are provided through online platforms like Zoom and Google Meet, experts from specific fields are able to provide guidance to the attendees. On the completion of these sessions, the participants are provided certificates and occasionally there are evaluations organized to judge the learning progress. (Singh)

Conclusion

NEP 2020 focuses on varying spectrums of changes in the field of education and the needs of students based on the social and technological changes. The redesigning of the curriculums and methods of teaching is brought into light by this policy. Initiatives like indigenous online learning platform like SWAYAM is ambitious in its aim of curtailing the issues of distance education. While not perfect, these steps have gained much traction through active participation of millions of students and teachers alike. Furthermore, FDPs are another important move to keep the teachers actively involved in the changing technical climate. Despite many drawbacks, NEP 2020 stands as a beacon for the increasingly changing education sector.

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