

TECHNOLOGY BASED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION: A BANE OR BOON

Dr. Pradip Kumar Sen Gupta*

ABSTRACT

Today is the era of technology. Technology plays a pivotal role in our day to day life. We cannot deny the presence of technology in our practical work. Use of electronic gadget and many other modern digital devices changed the scenario of education in today's world. ICT based education system was introduced nearly after recommendations of NPE-1986 and its follow-up programmes in the year 1991 by the Government of India. But digital content for teaching-learning was not so solid and effectively powerful since it was introduced nearly more than three decades ago. Union Government of India also introduced the idea of "Digital India" (2015) and the digitized education system creates a new impact in the field of education also. The advancements of technology have changed the world greatly. There is no denying of the fact that they make lives better and easier, especially in the fields of science, medicine and education etc. During the critical circulation of pandemic COVID – 19, the livelihood of the people totally collapsed. It changes the scenario of our society. Like other field of educations, its effects the teacher education system also. From the time of lockdown the face to face contact education system totally stopped and also collapsed. So an alternative option of digital platform enhancing day by day. In some near recent times this types of teaching-learning platforms (Banglar Siksha Portal, Swayam, Swayam-prabha, E-Pathshala, Bharta Digital class, Mooc etc.) will become convenient through time-being tests also. Various E-Content may be used for digital classroom learning. Though it introduces many opportunities, but it also has its drawbacks. In this article the presenter tries to analyse the Challenges and Possibilities on technology based teacher education. The article also concludes that the perfect amalgamation of technology and education can create a new era in the field of teacher education.

Keywords: Digital Technology, Teacher Education, Challenges, Possibilities.

Introduction

"Technology will never replace great teachers, but in the hands of great teachers, it's transformational."

– George Couros

A Canadian leadership trainer and teacher told that aforementioned line in this pandemic situation. Today is the modern age of education. In this age so many advancement are observed in the field of education. The use of technology has become part of our daily routine. Every day we use cellphones when we talk, take selfies, video chat, play with apps, send emails etc. Technology has been embedded in us and has come a long way from when it first started. It has evolved into something that students are becoming more familiar with by using it as school and at home. Today, we see students using their tablets, laptops and in some cases phones to help understand material better. Technology has made a positive contribution to the learning of students in our school system, by allowing them to use apps to become more creative, enable them to learn to collaborate with each other, and permitting them to use technology to enrich their knowledge. Technology has contributed a great impact to the educational system as well as in our society.

* Associate Professor, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, (An Autonomous Post-Graduate College under the University of Calcutta under section 22 of the UGC Act and duly recognised by the NCTE), Swami Vivekananda Centre for Multidisciplinary Research in Educational Studies (SVCRES), Belur Math, Howrah, West Bengal, India.

But in the time of COVID – 19 pandemic situations we are now facing a critical time which we never thought or face before. To defend ourselves we are under completely lockdown for more than two months. After that partially unlocking system is still continued as per the guidelines mentioned by the central and state Government. Though lockdown system is still continues in the containment zone of the highly affected areas in different parts of the country. We don't know when the normalcy will be returned. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be remarkable effect on health, education and economy all over the world. If we consider the education sector of our country from school stage to university stage, from school education to university education or higher education including teacher education, the effect would be inestimable. This situation affects all the students of different classes of schools, colleges and universities especially for the students like continuing board examinations at class 10, class 12 standard and also the students of final semester/ year students of different degree colleges, teacher education colleges and post graduate or university level. The normal activities of all the educational sectors including the teacher educational field are in big problem due to this unexpected pandemic situation. IITS, IIMS, or other technical or medical or para-medical institutes also facing a new type of problems.

It is no doubt about that the system of Lock-down positively slows down the increase of disease of novel corona virus but it has badly affected the entire system of education all over the world. The schools, colleges, teacher education colleges and universities are totally closed down. This closure of the educational sector has shed light on various issues like social crisis, economic crisis, and deficiencies in student debt, threats of students' drop-outs, true promotion of digital learning, food insecurity and homelessness, distresses of migrant laborers, etc. Due to this critical crisis of Covid-19 the face to face mode of classes are totally stopped till today. So an unexpected interruption is causing in the process of teaching-learning procedure. We heard of lock-outs, but rarely known about lock-down or shut-down of various social systems and social lives also.

Keeping mind these various issues and also in this situation a parallel system is trying to develop in the teaching-learning process of our all types education system including teacher education also. Various digital platforms like Banglar Siksha Portal, Swayam, Swayam-prabha, E-Pathshala, Bharta Digital, MOOC, Zoom, Google Meet, Telegram Group, Whatsapp Group, Moodle-cloud etc. is trying to include in our educational system also. Many teachers' education institutions try to continue their educational process by using various digital platform as mentioned before. However, the above mentioned digital platforms are often used in various purposes in our system before this pandemic situation. Many advanced countries have already developed their digital educational platforms and online mode system besides their offline face to face or personal contact programme system also. In 2015, Government of India also introduced the idea of "Digital India" and they emphasized the digitized system in every sector of our country including the field of education also. Very recently in the National Education Policy 2020 framed by Ministry of Human Resource Development department of Government of India also highlighted the technology-based comprehensive teacher-requirement planning programme in next two decades. From now Ministry of human Resource Department changed as previous nomenclature of Education Department of India. As we all know that this is a very tough time for us. We don't clearly know that when and how we overcome this situation. Many front-line workers like doctors, nurses, medical staffs, scientists, police, saffai-staffs and all other persons are every moment trying to fight against these unknown enemies ordinarily a little but dangerous pathogen, named after Covid-19. Teacher education is very much crucial in this juncture of time now. Because teachers are the backbone of the society. They are future king makers of our society. So teachers are also the part of this noble job. Trainee teachers should be given such type of education so that in future time they are trying to motivate their students through new type of transactions. They can also try to minimize the gaps of face to face mode teaching-learning with the help of various digital platforms. Technology in education has changed the scenario of previous educational conditions. From Gurukul to modern education we had travelled a very long journey, but in the process of evolution it was inevitable for the society and for the individual. It is no doubt about that every system has a positive and negative impact. In long run and time tested factors proved and set every new step for its necessity. It is depend on us how smoothly we introduced this system and how the stakeholders can physically and mentally adjusted with this system. In this point of light, we analyze the challenges and possibilities of introducing digital technology in our teacher education system in the time of crucial pandemic COVID-19 situation. Technology generally help the scientific progress and make conditions favourable to use it. But advancement of digital technology must expand scopes for future generations in educational fields also. In covid-19 pandemic more than 1,000 universities, 40,000 colleges and 3.75 crores students lost their normalcy in higher education in the country, but in school education nearly 8 crores students lost normal classes.

Glitches of using Technology in Teacher Education

It is a very much challenging work for all of us to use technology appropriately for the sake of students. Because there are some factors that affect the technology also. There are many negative effects of technology in education. This portion will discuss briefly the negative side of technology toward educational growth as symmetrically in the country. The points are mentioned below:

- Face to face contact mode teaching is very much popular in our education system. But due to this unavoidable circumstances now online education system are trying to promote to continue the process and minimize the gap. But in our country it very much challenging works because most of the students have no mobile phones, laptops or computers etc due to their poor economic condition. So they cannot access the system of online education. In India, it is not an absurd idea but it is a time consuming matter.
- The harmful effect of technology has already come to light in today's world. People are attached to their screens almost 24/7; this causes various health problems also. It also causes very much mental tension to the learners. It affects their soft mind for various social, personal or other issues. This much screen time affects their cognitive development and sense of reality. Government of India also mentioned the time frame work for various classes during this time.
- Online Education has so many problems also. Especially for the students who have lack of skills need to maximize a device's functionalities. Technical problems and malfunctions can cause loss of assignments and other documents, resulting in high levels of stress to students. The speed of the internet and the capacity of the devices may create some problem in different times. Due to poor network problem they cannot hear clearly or understand the matter clearly.
- Various digital devices offer many advanced features to the user which is much more helpful than using pen and paper, but the maintenance of these devices costs a fortune to the owner. The maintenance requires a huge amount of money and the update of the outdated software also takes a fair amount of money. Every student has not such capacities to bear the costs. So the use of technology has made education expensive.
- It is very much important matter that teachers who taught online mode needs to handle it more carefully and capably. With the advancement of technology, many teachers are incapable of teaching students with modern techniques. The teachers know the primitive way of teaching the students by interacting with them. Research has proved that interactive teaching is the best way for students to learn. With the use of technology and advanced devices, the interaction part is totally omitted. The students only study the topics and do not discuss any topic. This has a bad impact on the students.
- E-books or E-materials are trying to take place of the normal books or material. Students can easily store the material or book and they does not have to buy this book from the store. They can easily download it from the internet. The problem is that these books or materials are not compatible with all the devices and also constantly looking towards the screen of the laptop or a Smartphone can cause eye problems to the user. It is one of the concerning area also.

Prospects of Promoting Technology in Teacher Education

There not only have negative outcomes, but also it has many positive outcomes that help all. It is no doubt about that technology is a blessing in the present time in our education system. The appropriate practice of technology can enhance the excellence of education system also. Here various possibilities of using the digital technology in education are mentioned below:

- Technology prepares the students for the future. Technology is ongoing, and its evolution has come a long way. Since technology has become a major aspect in our lives, we can guarantee that it will continue to evolve. Education is also a continuing process. In our system students present physically in classroom. But during this critical time framework all procedure are totally collapsed. So it is an opportunity to continue this educational process with the help of technology.
- Another important feature is that technology helps the students to give them a better understanding to acquire knowledge and prepare them for the future. Technology helps us to gather concrete knowledge regarding various matters. Students can enjoy learning with this process.
- Technology exposes children to different learning experiences. While using technology, children can be exposed to videos, chats, blogs, images, presentations, web cams etc. All of these things can be access thanks to technology. Technology allows children to interact with different methods of learning and find it more interesting, than just tailoring learning to one size fits all method.

- Students are totally confined into their houses during this pandemic situation. This time period technology can help them to learn liberally and to know liberally. By the use of internet they also have to accomplish their quest of information. Students can also take pleasure in the teaching-learning process without any pressure of formal classroom situation, text books etc. Technology also helps the student's to know the updated knowledge in their particular area of interest.
- A good relationship between the teachers and the students can help both to overcome the barriers of education. In this critical juncture of time it is very much necessary from both the stakeholders. Technology helps to minimize the gap between the teachers and students and ensures a good relationship between them. Use of technology for learning is student-centred and provides useful feedback through various interactive features. Technology permit students to find out and learn through new ways of teaching and learning which are sustained by constructivist theories of learning rather than students do memorization and rote learning.

Conclusion

From the overall discussion we can conclude that technology has many positive impacts on education as well as some negative effect also. But it is undeniable that technology also has made the education system simple and flexible. During this critical time of pandemic with the help of technology they can easily contact with their teachers, access various e-materials, communicates with them and try to build up their concrete knowledge regarding various subjects. The efforts of implementation of smart classes in every educational institution is very good result of the technology. It eliminates all the educational limitations and boundaries faced by a learner. Students can access their work and assignments with the help of these advanced devices whenever and from wherever they want. So these are some ways in which technology has greatly benefited the education system. Beside the offline education system online education method should be developed more scientifically and specifically so that it must be a preferable alternative to all the stakeholders in the upcoming days. With the good bonding and earnest efforts of all concerned technology can help education to reach its highest level. Teacher education has a great impact on society also. so it is important to all teachers to develop himself and their learners by utilizing the blessing of technology. It is clearly indicated digital divide and digital fortune can create great crack to the country.

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