



MEDIA, ICT AND EDUCATION: INITIATIVES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

In the digital age, Information and communication technology has changed the face of education. Traditional education has been replaced by new methods of teaching and learning. Mass media has played a potent educational force in India. In view of the rapid expansion of new communication technologies, Indian government has taken various initiatives to impart quality through mass media to masses. The paper gives a brief overview of various initiatives taken by government to use media as medium for education. The paper explains the meaning of mass media, ICT and various attempts made by government to educate the masses through print and electronic media. The paper also addresses the challenges faced by society such as infrastructure-related challenges in ICT-enhanced education, 24x7 availability of information, Plagiarism, Digital Divide, Privatization and commercialization of education.

Key Words-Mass Media, ICT, Government Initiatives, Radio and Television Satellite Communication, Digital Divide and Privatization of Education.

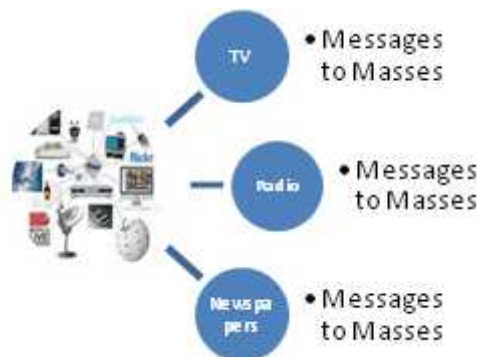
Introduction

Education is the key to the growth and development of the country. It is a well-accepted fact that we are living in the digital society. Over the years traditional education has been replaced by new methods of teaching and learning. Indian government has initiated various programmes to impart quality education through mass media even to the remote areas of the country so as to improve the literacy rate in India. In the light of the developments made in the field of education through mass media over the years, the country is also facing various challenges of Infrastructure-related challenges in ICT-enhanced education, Digital Divide, Privatization and Commercialization of education.

Mass Communication

The communication that involves simultaneous communication with the masses is known as mass communication. Mass Communication is a process that comprises the institution and techniques by which specialized groups imply technological devices (Media) to disseminate symbolic content (Messages) to large heterogeneous and widely dispersed audience. Media thus play a vital role in informing, educating, and entertaining the masses at a supersonic speed.

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Media and Education

John Dewey (1859) stated that education could not be limited within teacher and taught without social environment. So, media is one such potent force in the social environment of education.

Mass media since it employs technological devices i.e. newspaper, TV, radio, magazines, journals, films, etc. is a potent force to impart mass education and is not confined within four walls of the classroom.



Government Initiatives and Programs in Education

There is no doubt that media have great potential to spread education however, the benefits have to reach the rural masses in order to avoid Digital Divide. Therefore, the government has taken various initiatives to impart education in rural areas through mass media.

Print Media and Education

Print media such as Newspapers, Journals and Magazines, books etc being the oldest channels of communication plays a very important role in the process of education.

Newspapers, Journals and Magazines not only imparts information, knowledge, education but it helps in inculcating reading habits in youth. It provides information about educational policies.

Books are the best source of education. A lot of material of formal and informal education is available in the books. Textbooks, Dictionaries, Encyclopedia and thesaurus are significant means of communication used in teaching. Mostly students depend upon this medium to learn the education.

University Grant Commission and Inter University Centre

University Grant Commission of Government of India has an Autonomous Inter –University Centre (IUC). This centre is involved in creating infrastructure to share information of library and information resources among Academic and Research Institutions .The collaborative effort of INFLIBNET with Indian universities provides the growing information environment for the academic users.

Radio and Education

Radio is a powerful mass medium used in education for disseminating, information, imparting instruction and giving entertainment. All India Radio is putting out school broadcast programmes from 73 stations in different languages as per the area where the stations are situated.

National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC)

Department of Science & Technology, Government of India

The National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC): It is compulsory to communicate Science and Technology to masses, so as to encourage scientific and technological knowledge throughout the country. Some of the programmes conducted on radio and television are as follows:

Manav Ka Vikas (1991-93) - a 144 part serial produced jointly with All India Radio in 18 languages

Vigyan Vidhi (1989) - a 13 part serial produced jointly with All India Radio in 16 languages

Bharat Ki Chaap (1989) - a 13 part film telecast by Doordarshan on History of S& T of Indian Subcontinent.

CHEERS (Children's Enrichment Experiment through Radio)

CHEER Programme was meant for pre-school children of socially deprived classes studying in Anganwadis in the age group of 3-6 years. It was carried out in four states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh respectively from Visakhapatnam, Cuttack, Rohtak and Lucknow for a year starting from 2nd October 1992. It was a joint venture of All India Radio, Department of Women and Child Development and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

Interactive Radio Counseling (IRC)

IGNOU has initiated 'live' radio counseling sessions through various stations of AIR in bigger way and the response was found to be very encouraging. Apart from its registered students, many others such as parents, potential future students and the general public listen and interact actively during these broadcasts.

Community Radio

Community Radio became operational since 1st February 2004 at Anna University, Chennai. The term community radio signifies radio broadcasting with the objectives of serving the community by involving members of the community. It will help the students to hone their public speaking skill.

The number of broadcasting organizations has moved forward to introduce community radio in schools and colleges. With the introduction of this technology, quite a few civil society organizations have come forward to broadcast their educative



radio programming. Moreover, this kind of radio will help students to revise their classroom teaching, which they may forget. The impact of community radio is massive and its impact felt on every section of the society.

Maan Ki Baat

The programme was started on October 3rd 2014. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi choose radio as a medium to educate the masses on various issues and government initiatives .Till date 14 episodes have been broadcasted.

Television and Education

In India, since the inception of TV (1959) network, television has been perceived as an efficient force of education and development. With its large audience it has attracted educators as being an efficient tool for imparting education to primary, secondary and university level students. Some of the major educational television projects are discussed as hereunder: Secondary School television project (1961) was designed for the secondary school students of Delhi, with an aim to improve the standard of teaching in view of shortage of laboratories, space, equipment and dearth of qualified teachers in Delhi.

Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) (1975)

This project, one of the largest techno-social experiments in human communication, was commissioned for the villagers and their Primary School going children of selected 2330 villages in six states of India. It started on August 1, 1975 for a period of one year in six states Rajasthan, Karnataka, Orissa, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The main objectives of this experiment were to study the process of existing rural communications, the role of television as new medium of education.

SITE experiment showed that the new technology made it possible to reach number of people in the remotest areas. The role of television was appreciated and it was accepted in rural primary schools as an educational force (IGNOU, 2000).

Indian National Satellite Project (INSAT) (1982)

The prime objective of the INSAT project was aimed at making the rural masses aware of the latest developments in the areas of agricultural productivity, health and hygiene.

As a part of INSAT of Education project, ETV broadcasts were inaugurated and continued through terrestrial transmission from 15 August 1982 in Orissa and Andhra.

As of today, these ETV programmes are offered in five languages- Oriya, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati and Hindi- for a large population of primary school children. Programmes telecast in Hindi are being received in all Hindi-speaking states in the northern belt (IGNOU, 2000).

UGC-Higher Education Television Project (HETV) (1984)

University students were the beneficiaries of this project. The University Grants Commission in collaboration with INSAT started educational television project, popularly known as ‘Country wide Classroom’ on August 15, 1984 with the aim to update, upgrade and enrich the quality of education while extending their reach.

IGNOU-Doordarshan Telecast (1991)

The IGNOU-Doordarshan telecast programmes, designed mainly for Distance learners started in May 1991 with an aim to provide tele-counselling to students of open universities in remote areas.

Inter University Centres (IUC) Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC) (1993)

The Consortium for Educational Communication popularly known as CEC is one of the Inter University Centre’s set up by the University Grants Commission in the year 1993. The needs of Higher education have been addressed by television and ICT by producing educational programmes. These programmes are telecast on Doordarshan and Gyandarshan Channels. Media Research Centres Initially Media Centres were set up at 6 Universities. Today 22 Media Centres now known as Educational Multimedia Research Centres (EMRCs) are working towards achieving this goal under the umbrella of CEC.

Gyan-Darshan Educational Channel (2000) and Gyan Vani

Ministry of Human Resource Development, Information & Broadcasting, the Prasar Bharti and IGNOU launched Gyan Darshan (GD) jointly on 26th January 2000 as the exclusive Educational TV Channel of India and Gyan Darshan I (A satellite based round the clock TV channel, devoted to educational and developmental needs of the society), and Gyan



Darshan II (An educational satellite offering distance education through Virtual Class Room mode). An educational FM Radio network providing programmes covering different aspects and levels of education including Primary and Secondary Education, Adult Education, Technical and vocational Education, Higher Education and Extension Education.

SAKSHAT – An Education Portal on Internet (2006)

SAKSHAT is envisaged as one stop education portal to facilitate lifelong learning of the students and teachers free of cost. It is connecting over 400 Universities and 22,000 Colleges all over India through high speed data networks.

National Mission on Education through ICT (NMEICT)

NMEICT is the landmark initiative by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to address all the education and learning related needs of the students, teachers and lifelong learners. The main features of NMEIT are Interface multimedia content, high speed connectivity, low cost access devices, utilization of DTH and educational Satellite.

National Programs on Technology Enhanced Learning (2007) for Engineering Colleges

National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning or NPTEL has produced video recorded lectures of full course length for courses to the engineering colleges. These lectures systematically cover typical course content.

Satellite Communication and Education

Satellites can establish the connectivity between urban educational institutions with adequate infrastructure imparting quality education and the large number of rural and semi-urban educational institutions that lack the necessary infrastructure. Besides supporting formal education, a satellite system can facilitate the dissemination of knowledge to the rural and remote population about important aspects like health, hygiene and personality development and allow professionals to update their knowledge base as well. Thus, in spite of limited trained and skilled teachers, the aspirations of the growing student population at all levels can be met through the concept of tele-education.

Satellite communication is playing a major role in educational institutions and to the learning process.

EDUSAT is launched on September 20, 2004, is the first Indian satellite built exclusively for serving the educational sector. It is mainly intended to meet the demand for an interactive satellite based distance education system for the country. It strongly reflects India's commitment to use space technology for national development, especially for educating the population in remote and rural locations.

ERNET is largest nationwide terrestrial and satellite network with point of presence located at the premiere educational and research institutions in major cities of the country. Focus of ERNET is not limited to just providing connectivity, but to meet the entire needs of the educational and research institutions by hosting and providing relevant information to their users.

Mobile Apps as Part of Digital India Initiative

Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry launched a number of mobile apps and web-based platforms allowing students to access study material online, and parents to keep a track of the performance and attendance of their children.

Challenges

With new communication technologies such as internet, laptops, aneroid phones student and teachers access information, store and use it at their ease. One of the greatest challenges in ICT use in education is lack of trained staff. Implementation of ICT in education has also lead to the digital divide and plagiarism. ICTs in education programs also requires infrastructure with large capital investments.

Lack of Trained Staff

One of the challenges of developing nations to adopt ICT in education systems is a lack of trained teachers (Gulati 2008; Kozma 1999). When it comes to practically applying ICT, which is new to traditional teachers, many may not know how to deal with it and sometimes they are reluctant to accept new technologies in their classrooms. Thus, tutors who can train these teachers about new technology and IT professionals who can technically install and maintain the system are needed.

Digital Divide

'The digital divide' is another challenge for implementing ICT in the education sector. The term 'digital divide' describes the fact that the world can be divided into people who do and people who don't have access to - and the capability to use - modern information technology. The digital divide exists between those in cities and those in rural areas.



The expression “digital divide” refers to the existing gap between those who can use new digital technologies and those who cannot. This is a key issue of today’s society, since digital divide it also provokes a distinction between those who can access certain information and those who are unable to do so, divides between rich and poor, rural, and urban.

ICT is perceived as a prerequisite for imparting quality education. However, when it comes to comparing the developing world with the developed world, there is also a huge gap in the usage of ICT between these two groups. This gap is referred to as ‘the Digital Divide’ (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology 2006) and can be seen within a country and between countries.

It is very important to impart quality education for children in rural areas in order to create equal opportunities for all. The universalisation of education has become the top priority, especially for the developing countries. But the extension of quality education to remote and rural regions becomes a herculean task for a large country like India with multi-lingual and multi-cultural population separated by vast geographical distances, and, in many instances, inaccessible terrain.

24x7 Information and Plagiarism

The mushroom growth of new communication technologies has led to many cyber crimes and treats which is becoming a cause of public concern. We are overloaded with information 24x7 and now it has become very important to check the authenticity of information.

New media have made it easy for students to access information relevant to their assignments, copy and store it and incorporate it into their answers at the ease, without giving acknowledgement to the owner. Plagiarism is considered as one of the focused issues especially in educational institutions.

Plagiarism is the wrongful publication of any idea, expression, thought, and language of someone’s original work as one’s own work. Increase use of internet and overflow of information has lead to more cases of plagiarism. Therefore, it has become important cause of public concern. In order to deal with the plagiarism laws such as Copyright Act, 1957 is being enforced so as to put a check to plagiarism. Fair use of intellectual property should be an important module of ICT-based programs that would definitely restrain people from stealing others hard work.

Large Capital Investment and Privatization

ICTs in education programs also requires infrastructure with large capital investments which is also leading to privatization of education. The private institutions have been more responsive to the demands of the industry and the changing scenario. With privatization, there is the risk of commercialization of education.

Conclusion

It is a accepted fact, that we are living in the digital age. In order to bring phenomenal change in the education in India and to remain responsive to the trends and challenges of ICT, various initiatives have been taken by the government to impart education through mass media. The electronic and print media had played a significant role in imparting a higher quality of education over the years and would further play in the new millennium.

No, doubt, teaching with ICT has become imperative in the 21st century, but there is also a pressing need to equip, the young people to meet the challenges of ICT by taking several measures so that we are able to impart and lift up education from quantity to quality education.

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