



MARUMEGH

Kisaan E- Patrika

Available online at www.marumegh.com

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ISSN: 2456-2904



ICT IN EDUCATION: AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR DEVELOPING SOCIETY

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Information and communication technologies education is basically our society's efforts to teach its current and emerging citizens valuable knowledge and skills around computing and communication devices, software that operates them, applications that run on them and systems that are built with them. ICT is complex and quickly changing, and it is confusing for many people. It is so pervasive in the modern world that everyone has some understanding are often wildly divergent.

"ICT" is the Information and Communication Technologies. "ICT in Education" means "Teaching and Learning with ICT".

Although, India scored well in improving from mere 12% literacy at the time of independence to 74% as per 2011 census, it still lags behind the world average of 84%. Targeted programs at primary and secondary education like SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) have definitely proved beneficial to some extent but a lot needs to be done to truly educate India. Data figures and enrollment ratios might have presented a rosy picture but one needs to invigilate the dark corners of Indian education. Apart from the basic twin ills of access & affordability which keeps a significant child population at bay from school doors, we need to enquire about the level and quality of education one gets imparted with. Quality of education in government run schools with a skewed teacher-student ratio is not appropriate. The lack of basic amenities like library, clean toilets, and playgrounds further add to the drop out ratio. Private schools in a rat-race to raise margins commercialize education and display a pathetic apathy towards admitting children from the weaker sections as specified by the RTE act. In the present ambience of poor teacher-student value connect and stress on conventional rote-learning the student is actually immune to the passion, zeal and excitement that must be part of their learning.

The Way Ahead: Challenges and Measures:

The majority of the Indian population still does not have the required internet bandwidth and many are illiterate in digital terminologies and devices. Less than predicted results are achieved through ventures like e-chaupals because of audience ignorance of the technology. Government of India initiatives like NOFN (National Optical Fiber Network) connecting 5 lac villages via broadband till 2017, 25 cities by Wi-Fi by the end of 2015, is a significant step in this direction. But a lot needs to be done in mobile wireless internet and setting up skill centers especially in rural areas.

Kumar (2015) argues that the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education system. ICT is a global phenomenon, and children who are computer literate at an early stage of their lives might deal better with the modern 21st century. A sound knowledge of ICT makes it much easier for children to find and organize information. Many schools have dynamic and vibrant virtual learning methods which gives students access to study materials, skill questions, sample papers and assignments. Some schools even have smart interactive white boards for teaching. Children find it more interesting and become more adept in multimedia presentations when engaging with them in their assignments. Nowadays, the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), especially internet in the education sector plays an important role, especially in the process of empowering the technology into the educational activities. Education sector can be the most effective sector to anticipate and eliminate the negative impact of ICT in the 21st century. Technology (internet) in another side can be the most effective way to increase the student's knowledge. Being aware of the significant role of ICT (internet) in our life, especially in the educational activities, education authorities should be wise enough in implementing the strategies to empower ICT in supporting the teaching and learning process in the classroom. ICT is not just the bloom of the educational activities, but also it will be the secondary option to improve the effective and meaningful educational process.

ICT in Education System of India:

Information and Communication Technology has permeated in every walk of life affecting the technology fields such as launching satellites, managing businesses across the globe and also enabling social networking. The convergence of computer, communication and content technologies, being known as ICT, has attracted attention of academia, business, government and communities to use it for innovative profitable propositions. Year by year it is becoming simpler to use devices such as desktop palm top, iPod etc. 21st century is characterized with the emergence of knowledge based society wherein ICT plays a pivotal role. The National curriculum framework, 2005 (NCF, 2005) has also highlighted the importance of ICT in school education. With this backdrop, major paradigm shift is imperative in education characterized by imparting instructions, collaborative learning, and multidisciplinary problem-solving and promoting critical thinking skills. Government of India has announced 2010- 2020 as the decade of innovation (Survey of Information and Communications Technology). Reasoning and Critical thinking skills are necessary for innovation. Foundation of these skills is laid at school level. It is desirable that affordable ICT tools and techniques should be integrated into classroom instructions right from primary stage so as to enable students develop their requisite skills. Most of the tools, techniques and tutorials are available in Open domain and accessible on web.

Aspects of ICT in education:

According to George (2012), five aspects of the educational use of ICT –

- supporting new pedagogical methods
- accessing remote resources
- enabling collaboration
- extending educational programs and developing skills for the workplace

Importance of ICT in School Education System:

ICT in school education system is important. Information and communication technology (ICT) has quickly become one of the basic building blocks of modern 21st century. ICT supports learners but more importantly, it extends the reach of the population in ways we have yet to imagine. Gaining in importance are the following competencies:

Critical thinking	Generalist (broad) competencies
ICT competencies enabling expert work	Decision-making
Handling of dynamic situations	Working as a member of a team
Communicating effectively	

The following points clearly indicate the importance of ICT in school education:

Expanding educational opportunities	Increasing efficiency
Enhancing quality of learning	Enriching quality of teaching
Facilitating skill formation	Establishing and sustaining lifelong learning
Improving policy planning and management	Advancing community linkages

The importance of using ICT for improving education has been emphasized in the policy framework for over a decade now in India. Numerous initiatives have been started by both public and private entities. Since education basically is a main motor of social change and reform we need to embrace all we have and find more innovative and better ways for information and technology-enabled learning.

Main advantages of ICT tools for education:

1. Through ICT, images can easily be used in teaching and improving the retentive memory of students.
2. Through ICT, teachers can easily explain complex instructions and ensure students comprehension.
3. Through ICT, teachers are able to create interactive classes and make the lessons more enjoyable, which could improve student attendance and concentration.

Main disadvantages of ICT tools for education:

1. Setting up the devices can be very troublesome.
2. Too expensive to afford.
3. Hard for teachers to use with a lack of experience using ICT tools.

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