

EDTECH AND EDUSOMEDIA INTERVENTION FOR CLASSROOM EXPANSION

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ABSTRACT: *The age of bots and robots is here. When we see Sophia getting the citizenship of a country (Forbes, 2017), EdTech and EduSoMedia cannot be kept much far from the classroom. With Artificial Intelligence (AI) being able to predict deaths in advance, with Design Thinking brining a new approach to problem solving in the world, Virtual Reality handing over the wonders of the world to your eyes and Google Earth's virtual tour making you marvel at tech-wonders, the classroom and teachers do deserve the right to be equipped and empowered with the advanced and simple resources.*

If we agree that we are developing the technology for a better future, then the children in the classroom have the right to use these. It is they, who are going to be the future actually. All these things have already been introduced to the modern age students in the leading countries of the world, we cannot afford to neglect the role of actual Educational Technology and Education through Social Media around us. CBSE's instructive circular about introducing AI in the schools is an acceptance of the crisis, rather than the importance of technology and social media smartness. It is conspicuous to everyone that technology is important and has to be there in education. It can be anticipated that by delivering Education through Social Media, we can also accomplish the Social Media Education. To keep one away from the precarious practice of something, we better give them a handful of better usage skills of that resource.

This paper is an attempt to list out the assertions that advocate an urgent intervention in and empowerment of the classroom, by expanding it beyond those four walls. As the agents remain the teachers and the institutional decision makers, detailed deliberations are presented to them for a thoughtful introduction of the two pertinent facets of sustainable learning.

Key Words: *EdTech, EduSoMedia, Pedagogy, ICT, Personal Learning Network (PLN), AI*

Education is an important social activity planned to make the humans sustain their life with quality living and collaboration. Innovations, research, documentation, cultural interactions and linguistic development are the objective of this comprehensive exercise called Education. This organised structure is planned and shared by the society which is made of parents, teachers, policy makers and adjacent stakeholders. All the resources that these agents or counterparts have been using their lives and work, are aptly related to the classroom where the future of learning and civilization is being made.

Rejecting or even attempting to delay the technological intervention in education will cause the same loss that we had when we were not having wheels and engines. If technology is denied an entry into the classroom, it will not only hurt the students and just the parents, but the teachers as well. In the absence of self-development and up-skilling, the existence of a teacher will come under threat. It has long been said that technology will not replace teachers; but the teachers who have been using technology, will replace the ones who don't. Hence, the whole discourse of expanding the classroom using EdTech and EduSoMedia, is delivered to the teachers and teaching-related policy makers.

"The current education system is failing our students. (Abigail Cox, 2018) The Future Generation shall not be able to know what purpose they exist for into the world of jobs and business. If they do not participate in the development and usage of things in the present, they will hurt their future actually.

Can we afford this to happen? If yes, we may still manage to keep the eyes closed. But we should mind one thing that the ears do remain open and we can see the whole world talking not of educational reforms anymore. There is educational advancements happening. When bots and AI have taken the charge and Virtual Reality is a much in thing in the educational system, doubting the impact or competence of technology is like refuting the light.

We can get a rational support from various thinkers and experts when they defined the process and purpose of education, teaching, learning and technology as well.

Vivekananda asks, “What is education? Is it book learning? No, is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.” (Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. IV, p. 490)

Swami Vivekananda, who is one of the founders of Indian educational philosophy wanted to make education self-supporting and self-sufficient. Economic independence was a primary objective of the educational philosophy he thought of. He favoured agriculture, technical education and even physical education for the sake of making learners self-empowered. What happens when we teach a social science graduate to code? It certainly leads to the choice of taking an alternative career. Education has never been supposed to tag youngsters with degrees for a fixed kind of job. It has always been to make them do things that add worth and value to life. Technology has been doing the good when it gets integrated with the educational instruction. EdTech and EduSoMedia do give this fulfilment when used with a sense of concern and concreteness.

“Both Dewey and Vivekananda believe that education must be imparted according to the individual needs, interests and impulses of the children.” (Dr. D VijayaBharathy & Dr. DigumartiBhaskara Rao)

Mahatma Gandhi did say that education has to move beyond mere literacy of some scripts and calculations. “By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning.”

“Education is evolving due to the impact of the Internet. We cannot teach our students in the same manner in which we were taught. Change is necessary to engage students not in the curriculum we are responsible for teaching, but in school. Period.” said April Chamberlain

Dr. Nathan Rang-Laad (2019), of the leading educational interventionists on twitter, declares: “The time has come for all teachers to embrace that the 21st century has brought needed change, created new ways of thinking & learning, & in a sense has created ‘new students.’ No road should ever lead educators back to the industrial way of teaching. We’re all ‘new teachers.’”

Indeed, education hasn’t merely changed with its tools and ways, it has got a fundamental shift in what we teach. This shift is towards a learner-centered classroom. This does not advocate ease for them rather demands maximum participation, beyond the classroom-throughout life. In fact, the intellectual aim of education, according to Rabindranath, is the development of the intellectual faculties which should be developed through education these are the power of thinking and the power of imagination. (T. Pushpanathan, 2013)

EdTech, which used to be considered an outsider, is no more a commodity to be sold in the Parent-Teacher Meetings or in the Prospectus of colleges and universities. The learners are themselves aware of what is happening in the tech-world. They also know where their interest or alignments are moving. It is tough to make them buy something without seeing the relativity of it. The Curricular Expectations of National Council of Educational Research and Training has given these three objectives for the secondary school curriculum (NCERT, 2014):

- Write coherently and with a sense of audience (formal and informal)
- Creative writing
- Understands and uses technology for writing

The last but not the least is what we can state as the realisation of the significance of EdTech and EduSoMedia. The study on Learning Indicators and Learning Outcomes at the Elementary Stage has lot to say what should remain in each classroom, irrespective of the age of the learners or the designations of the teachers.

We can understand what Educational Technology is through a comprehensive definition:

Education Technology is a complex integrated process involving people, procedures, ideas, devices and organisation, for analysing problems and devising, implementing, evaluating and managing solutions to those problems involved in all aspects of human learning. (Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1977 Washington DC, AECT)

Whereas, EduSoMedia “stands for Education through Social Media. Making optimum use of Social Media Platforms/Networks by integrating them to teaching-learning methodology. (EklavyaParv, 2014)

Social Media Smartness and Internet Maturity are the major concerns of schools and colleges now. The internet-boom has given a destruction wand to children and young, who in their ignorance, have buried the real worth of these resources, deep enough to be missed.

Normally we don't see that our exceptions are affecting the nature of our observations. But the assumptions affect the way we see things, the way we experience them, and, consequently, the things that we want to do. (David Bohm, 1996)

Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical Thinking are widely acknowledged as the 21st century skills. These skills guide us to the bundle called Educational Technology. In the Gurukul System, the four skills were imparted and made the smart learners. Now, the schools, publicizing the Book Learning and Scores, have actually killed the possibility of making real learned human! The cultivation of individual excellence, collaborative and cooperative learning, and skill development can be achieved when the institution works on "Learning by Doing" idea. However, this does not recommend or even suggests that we have to throw away the organised system of education. But a serious amount of intervention and empowerment of the classroom is unescapable.

UNESCO celebrated Mobile Learning Week 2019 from 4 to 8 March and this time it was celebrated as "Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Development and a global conference was organised. One of the objective stated as: "Leverage AI to enhance education and learning – improve education management systems, AI-boosted learning management systems (LMS) or other AI in education applications, and identify new forms of personalized learning that can support teachers and tackle education challenges." (UNESCO, 2019)

In this age of digital globe, the teachers have moved beyond being the owners of the classroom. They are not just the curriculum agents, but learning facilitators as well. Educational Technology principles are applicable to all topics and subjects and hence are basic to all curriculum development. (Dorling Kindersley, 2012) If we see a teacher who isn't on social networks and does not use the internet as well; considers it a taboo and unethical thing; discourages students by telling them a stereotyped rhetoric on ill-effects of social media, are we going to appreciate that individual as a modern teacher? Certainly not.

In India, teachers are not at liberty to teach the way they like. The limitation is caused by two factors. First and much-obvious is the control of the institutional heads, their whims-fancies. The second and more significant is the 'skill-gap' and ignorance that teachers have been suffering from. Their apathy towards their own learning is causing a lot of wreckage. Our educational policies do mention that technology has to be there, but the digital illiteracy among the hired individuals is the leakage point, the pain-area.

Inclusive Education Possible using EdTech and EduSoMedia

Have nots are not just those who have a physical disability. Any kind of learning disorder can be a change for the teacher as well as the institution. It can be a need for outreach when for some reason the institution cannot open. In this age of wars and conflicts, it is very much possible that some siege may happen and the classroom dies. The expansion, that has happened in advance, with the establishment of participation culture can rescue learning from the clutches of that death of the walled classroom. This siege can be of weather or sickness for some students or can be for any reason. The availability of learning is the fundamental right of humans and by expanding the classroom using technology, we will just vouch for the same fundamental right. The expansion through Google Classroom, A-view, Skype or WizIQ can do wonders. The most important thing will be to engage them beyond the walls in learning only. They will look up to the teachers and the institution to have more of skill-development and Life-Skills.

Recognizing the potential of technology in teaching-learning, various innovative curricular materials have been developed by the NCERT. National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER), an online repository (<http://nroer.gov.in>) of digital resources viz., audios, videos, interactive, images, e-books, charts, maps, etc., for all stages of school education and teacher-education. (NCERT Annual Report, 2018)

Known as ICT in the educational world, technology and social media should be a part of Teaching Strategy than the Teaching Method. The Connected Educators who believe in create Experiential Learning with Communicative Intentions and Persuasive Strategy clubbed with its talented Execution, are the ones who do the magic to the life of learners.

Recommendations:

- Teachers should first develop themselves into EdTech empowered and social media smart individuals possessing an expert global networking with educators online.
- Students should be enterprising and participative in learning through EdTech and EduSoMedia strategy and resources as it brings good and sustainable learning of career making skills.
- Policy Makers should be seriously concerned about making curriculum and policies as dynamic as the life itself. And do remember, life is moving at the speed of light now!

- Parents are to look at learning, not at loss of their authority over children. They have to see beyond generation gap; there is a skill-gap which has to be bridged as soon as possible.

Conclusion:

The take-away of this type of Teaching-Learning will be Learning by Doing in EdTech and EduSoMedia, Social Media Smartness and Internet Maturity, Family Participation, Positive Utilisation of Creative Potential. When it is impossible to create the Gandhi-Tagore philosophy based real-world, natural learning, we can keep their ideas alive and leverage from them through EdTech and EduSoMedia.

Using the online-virtual classrooms, collaboration tools for Personal Learning Networks (PLNs), Project Based Learning and Simulations, Visual Presentations, Webinars and MOOCs, Digital Profiles and Social Media Connectivity, Peer to Peer Learning, Creativity based Online Assignments and all that comes our way today or tomorrow in the EdTech and EduSoMedia world, deserves to be integrated to classroom. We do not need to think out of the box now; actually there is NO BOX at all!

Once taken as integral and transformed into a change-movement, this EdTech and EduSoMedia intervention can expand the classroom, per se, education itself.

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