Title:
The impact of “Digital India” on Educational System
by Café Dissensus on February 1, 2018

Introduction

Pradip Ninan Thomas (2012) writes: “In 1995, when private operators launched their services, the number of mobile subscribers in India was 77,000. In 2000, that count stood at 3.6 million; at the end of 2010, India had 653 million mobile connections with 10-15 million subscribers being added every month” (Qtd. in Goyal 2014).

“Digital India” is an idea for the development of Indian education with digital technology, particularly for students, professionals, and the general public. Some of the technological progresses in our times are “electronic signature”, “adhar card”, “e-business”, “e-banking”, “e-education”, “cyber culture”, and so on. As Baran writes: “Over the past two decades, technology devices have become mobile – portable and networked – to the point...
that they have become pervasive in everyday life. The use of mobile devices has become common among a wide range of age groups due to affordability and availability” (17). Because of lack of critical attention paid to the benefits of digital India, it took more time to implement digitization in every sector of the society. Among these, one of the greatest changes can be seen in the field of education, which is a means of empowerment by becoming aware of one’s rights. The use of digital mobile devices (tablets and smartphones) in the higher education field has improved the quality of education in India. However, there are certain limitations to digitization in a country like India, where some people are still unaware of new technologies and the penetration of internet is limited.

What is education?

Education is a lifelong learning process. In other words, learning begins from the birth and ends with the death of the person. Among other things, education entails the ability to read and write. Also, education inculcates desirable human traits like honesty, sincerity, hard-work, punctuality, productivity, innovation, patriotism, selflessness, etc. Furthermore, education empowers people by inculcating lifelong skills and know-how, thereby giving an individual the capacity to liberate oneself from poverty and want. Education, when well imparted and utilized, has the potency of promoting national security. This is because national security covers the socioeconomic, political, military, cultural, familial, industrial, diplomatic, and artistic spheres of a nation.[1]

Twenty-first century teaching methods: Digital India

Most scholars explain that traditional teaching methods are more effective than new teaching methods. However, digital technical education offers new advantages to students, depending on their ability and interest. In “Defining Mobile Learning in the Higher Education Landscape” (2010), Mohamed Osman M. El-Hussein and Johannes C. Cronje write that the “smart” cellular telephones are popular because they are (i) wireless, and (ii) portable. The easy mobility, functionality of multiple ways, and its configurations attract the users. The intense competitiveness in the mobile device industry is forcing manufacturers to be very innovative and introduce new features that can help students learn with more entertainment. Through digital technology, they can learn foreign languages (Japanese, Chinese, German, and many others) by means of audio-video devices and apps. El-Hussein and Cronje write, “Mobile learning as an educational activity makes sense only when the technology in use is fully mobile, when the users of the technology are also mobile while they learn. These observations emphasize the mobility of learning and the significance of the term “mobile learning” (14).
The existing limitations have compelled users to design new modes of interaction that utilize text rather than face-to-face encounters. According to Huang and Hsieh (2008), the environments in which the study of mobile learning has been conducted have the following features:

- Enhancing availability and access of information networks
- Engaging students in learning-related activities in diverse physical locations
- Supporting project-based group work
- Improving communication and collaborative learning in the classroom, and
- Enabling quick content delivery (El-Hussein, and Cronje 16).

Mobile learning opens our minds to the possibility of a radically new paradigm and encourages us to abandon the constraints of our habitual ways of thinking, learning, communicating, designing, and reacting (El-Hussein, and Cronje 14).

Since mobile learning is spreading rapidly and likely to become one of the most efficient ways of delivering higher education instruction in the future, it becomes necessary to examine its implication for the design of teaching and learning. The uses and applications of mobile learning have multiplied in different contexts. Although, the eventual consequences of the proliferation of this medium are not yet entirely clear to designers, practitioners, and researchers themselves. It is important to learn the effects and modes of mobile learning as well as to explore the practice of this particular medium in terms of the instructional design theories of the past. There is also a need to adapt such theories so that they can account for the extraordinary number of changes in education and in the society at large (El-Hussein, and Cronje 20). There are particular applications such as E-Pathshala, English Grammar, Math Tricks, Dictionary, and many others. Apps like Facebook and WhatsApp help to collect as well as spread any message or information on our fingertip.

Traxler (2007) notes that there are perceptions of mobile education, which focus only on the technologies and hardware, whether it is a handheld and mobile device such as personal digital assistants (PDAs), smartphones or wireless. These definitions undermine a proper understanding of the uses of mobile technology by confining their explanations and descriptions to the actual physical way in which the technology operates. Other definitions place more emphasis on what learners experience, when they use mobile technologies in education, while some others inquire how mobile learning can be used to make a unique contribution to the advancement of education and other forms of e-learning (El-Hussein and Cronje 14). It demonstrates that advancing education with mobile learning technologies plays a significant role in the development of the student by enhancing knowledge from anywhere and everywhere. This is one of the reasons why the Indian government is promoting
digital ideas for an enhanced literacy level through mobile teaching. In addition, there are some online learning courses for students, who are not willing to attend the classes physically. They can continue online courses from their home. Some rural student can join online courses such as NPTEL or other distance learning courses. In addition, other books and articles are available in the form of e-book, google books, online journals, etc.

Various categories and verticals of digital enterprise have created new markers and have irreversibly changed the way we connect, shop, and create. We no longer need to remember any kind of data as Google gives us all the updates, albeit in a generic form. However, there are some challenges faced by digital companies such as limited Internet penetration in the country, even more limited credit penetration, and the limiting broadband speed. We look at these challenges and the solutions that some entrepreneurs have come up with to meet these challenges (Goyal 2014).

What is digital mobile education?

In The Mouse Charmers: Digital Pioneers of India (2014), Anuradha Goyal charts the journey of twelve inspiring tech entrepreneurs in India. The rise of the tech entrepreneurs are due to creative use of internet: an email takes only an instant to be delivered to a recipient, applications can be made anywhere sitting at home, saving time and energy. It has become extremely easy to communicate with the world. While the new technologies make access to information extremely easy through search engines such as Google, there are some limitations as well. There is a divergence between the educational purpose and what students actually do. This divergence occurs because students utilize mobiles for their own entertainment, instead of the main purpose of learning. However, some studies of ‘Digital India’ have indicated that there are more benefits than drawbacks. As El-Hussein, and Cronje write, “The limitations of mobile technology such as the small screen size of most of the devices, and the exponential increase in the number of messages sent as SMSs (Short Message Services), have resulted in the unforeseen consequence of creating new signs (signifiers) for new meanings (the signified). However, while these ways of communications have subverted all the forms and conventions of formal language, they are nevertheless widely accepted and understood and therefore considered to be normal in the context of mobile cellular devices. In fact, one of the limitations of mobile cellular hardware (the very limited size of its screen) provided the impetus to design a personal instruction and learning, and utilize a new format for text communication as well as imbue traditional forms with and different meanings” (14).

The impact of digitisation
The economy of India has grown to 7.3 per cent in 2015 as against 6.9 per cent in 2014. The initiatives taken by
the government of India have yielded results as India’s gross local product (GDP) at factor cost at constant
(2011-12) prices 2014-15 is Rs 106.4 trillion (US$ 1.596 trillion), as against Rs 99.21 trillion (US$ 1.488 trillion) in 2013-14, registering a growth rate of 7.3 per cent. The ‘Digital India’ initiative has contributed a
great deal to this positive growth. It has the potential of creating employment opportunities for 17 million people
directly or indirectly, which will assist in countering joblessness in India. The government is scheduled to give
IT training to 100 million people in smaller towns and villages because employment opportunity in the IT sector
is very high in India. In the next 5 years, India will emerge as a leader in using IT in sectors like health, defense,
education, agriculture, and banking. Moreover, the services sectors will be digitally empowered. In the field of
education, the government also assures broadband connectivity in all panchayats, schools, libraries, and other
public places. Apart from broadband connectivity, every village is provided with universal phone connectivity
across the country. Mobile and internet banking can improve the financial inclusion in the country and create a
win-win situation for all parties in the value-chain through an interoperable ecosystem and revenue-sharing
business model. Telecom operators get additional revenue streams, while the banks can reach new customer
groups incurring lowest possible costs. The digital inclusion in the country promises the revival of the
manufacturing sector in India. With the campaign of “Make in India” and “Digital India,” the nation is planning
to achieve net zero imports by 2020. This ensures that the exports will be equal to the imports, helping in the
economic development of the nation. With the introduction of mobile connectivity in all villages, unique single
portal can be maintained for all government related services. This can be done by ensuring that all databases and
information are in electronic form and not manual. Next to crude oil, electronics hardware comprises form a
major part of imports in India. Since India is a service-based country and till now it has focused only on
software development, the stress of “Digital India” on making India a manufacturing hub is bound to change the
trend.

Conclusion
If the students actively take to the use of mobile technology, then there is hope for appropriate use of
digitalisation. The government must take some initial steps such as the improvement of internet speed and
increase in online courses for the students. Also, there is a need for other language translations available for
surfing the internet. Though, English is the lingua franca, we should have our own indigenous languages for
dissemination of knowledge through translation. Thus, the government should invest some money in the
“Digital India” initiative to promote indigenous languages. “Digital India” must become the mascot by taking
cyber culture equally to every school and every educational institution in India.
The connections between education and national security was observed in a paper presented at the FAAN Conference, held in November 2013 at Ahmadu Bello University, Samru, Zaria, by Prof. Sadiq Isah Radda, a Criminologist with the Department of Sociology, Bayero University, Kano. His area of specialization is Criminology with specific interest in Human Rights, Criminal Justice Agencies, Corporate Crimes/Scandals, and youth delinquent behaviors.

Works Cited


**Bios:**

**Morve Roshan K.** was awarded an M. Phil degree and in October, 2017 has submitted her PhD thesis at the Centre for Comparative Literature and Translation Studies, Central University of Gujarat, India. She has taught in Gujarat Government School (English, Primary and Secondary Schools) as a volunteer for three years. She is a poet, novelist, editor, translator, and writer. As a chief editor and translator, she has edited and translated 74 books from English to Marathi language (Children’s Literature books). She has presented in many countries: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, and Maldives. She has published 13 articles in international indexed journals (with high impact factors). Email: morve_roshan@rediffmail.com

**Mustafa Majid Abbas** is an Assistant instructor, teaching at the College of the Imam Alaadhm University in Baghdad, Iraq. He has worked in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Diyala University, College of Arts Department of English Language and open education college. He was awarded an M.A. Degree from Dr. B.A.M. University, India. He is a Senior Research Scholar (English Literature) at the University of Al-Jazirah, Sudan. Email: mostafamajid786@gmail.com.