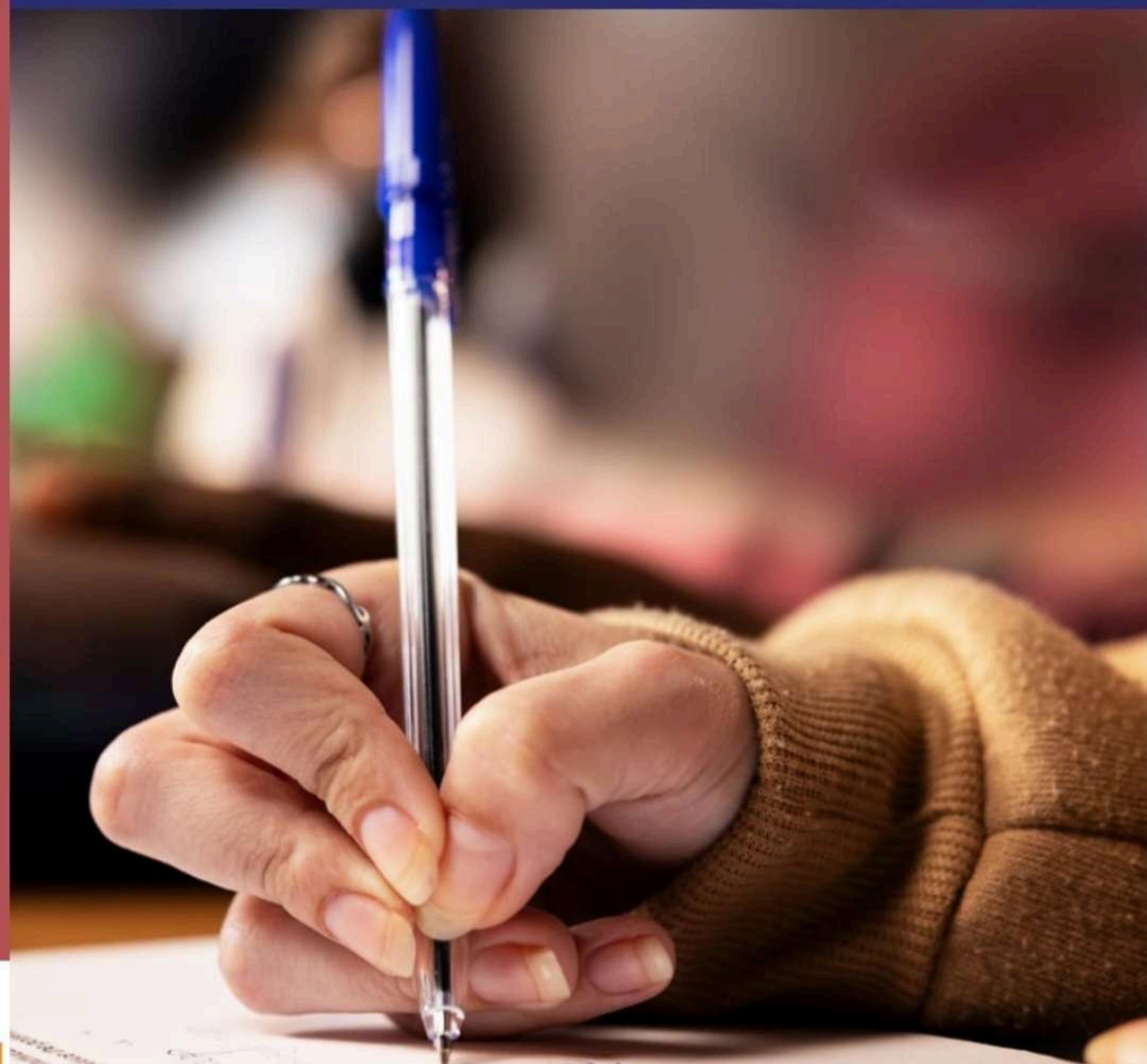


NEP 2020: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO TRANSFORM THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

(राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020: शिक्षा प्रणाली के रूपांतरण हेतु प्रभावी रणनीतियाँ)



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Dr. Lata

Dr. Vandana Singh

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(Editors)

Dr. Lata

Assistant Professor - B.Ed.

Kashi Naresh Government Degree College
Gyanpur Bhadohi, U.P.

Dr. Vandana Singh

Assistant Professor - Education
Hindu Kanya Mahavidyalaya
Sitapur, U.P.



SAMDARSHI PRAKASHAN

Plot No. 152, 1st Floor, Shalimar Garden, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad. U.P.-201005
E-mail : samdarshi.prakashan@gmail.com | Mob. : 9599323508

WEBSITE: SAMDARSHIPRAKASHAN.IN

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Chapter 06

Online and Digital Education: NEP 2020 Perspectives

DR. VANDANA SINGH

Assistant Professor

Dept. of Education

Hindu Kanya Mahavidyalay, Sitapur
(University of Lucknow)

DR. SUNIL KUMAR BHAGAT

Assistant Professor

Dept. of B.Ed.

Unity P.G. College, Lucknow
(University of Lucknow)

ABSTRACT

Education is such a process which develops the personality of the person and makes him a productive and useful member of society. There are many forms of education in which the scope of formal education is narrow, and it lasts for a certain time only but sometimes a person is unable to complete his formal education due to some circumstances of his life or wants to increase his professional skills with his job and responsibilities in adulthood. In such a condition, he can continue his learning and do his professional development through online education. Online learning platforms not only provide opportunities to learn at any age but also support us in continuing our education during pandemic like COVID-19. In the era of technology, this is demand of society to use technology in the field of education and enables aspiring learners to learn beyond the geographical boundaries at any stage or age. Keeping in mind the future demand for educational opportunities and importance of online and digital education, NEP 2020 has laid emphasis on it and suggested some initiatives to promote online education. Through the present article the author has tried to explore the importance and need of online and digital education and also discussed the NEP 2020 perspectives on online education.

Key Words: Online Education, Digital Learning, NEP 2020, Digital Infrastructure, E-Content

Introduction

Education is a process which brings desirable changes in human personality. It is a continuous and lifelong process. But formal education has its own limits such as face-to-face interaction, regular presence of learner and teacher in a classroom, previously determined curriculum, syllabus, timetable etc. Sometimes learner wants to continue his learning, but due to some limitations with formal education he couldn't continue his learning

through formal agencies of education. By the period of a time which is generally adulthood, everyone becomes busy in earning their livelihood and bearing their family responsibilities. Therefore, they don't have enough time to continue their learning through formal education system. In this situation online and digital learning platform provides opportunities to these learners to continue their education along with their professions and responsibilities. Anyone can enhance their professional skills at any time through online learning platforms.

Online and digital learning platforms not only provides opportunity to these overaged learners but also it gives opportunities to remote learners too. Aspiring learners who have not facilities of education in their surroundings, they can also educate themselves through digital learning platforms. Sometimes pandemic like COVID-19 forces us to close formal educational institution and to make distance among people to avoid spread of pandemic. In this situation online learning platforms provide us opportunities to continue our learning and education.

Now we are leaving in the era of digitalization. Every sector of economy has managed digitally. Digitalisation of education is also demand of time and situation. It is necessary to develop online and digital learning platforms to cope with unfavourable situations such as pandemic, disaster or remote areas.

Why We Need Online and Digital Education?

Here some reasons are mentioned that are responsible for increasing demand of online education-

- **Flexibility in Program:** Online programmes provide lots of flexibility to learners. Learners can study at their own pace and on their own schedule. They can continue their study with their other responsibilities and jobs.
- **Easily Accessible:** Online courses are easily accessible to learners. Learners can study from anywhere, removing geographical boundaries.
- **Less Expensive:** Online programs are less expensive as compared to on campus learning. These are cost saving as students are not required to stay on campus or go there every day.
- **Individualized Learning:** Digital learning programmes provide opportunities to learners to learn at their own speed. They can review material repeatedly or proceeds swiftly.
- **Professional Development:** Online and digital learning programs provide opportunities to develop professional skills in any phase of life as these programs do not require the physical presence of learners nor are these programs age limited.
- **Wider Range of Courses:** Online education provides a wide range of courses. Learner can select any course according to their interest and needs. They can complete the selected course with their own comfort.

- Increasing Technological Comfort: Using online platforms for learning will increase technological comfort of learners and enables them to use modern technology easily.
- Bridging Educational Gaps: Online learning platforms will bridge the educational gaps as these will provide equal opportunities to all learners despite their caste, community, geographical area, age etc.

National Education Policy 2020 and Online Education

NEP 2020 has provided us roadmap for each sector of education. It has also given recommendations to enhance facilities of digital and online learning platforms through various means. Considering the importance of online teaching learning from school education to higher education, NEP 2020 has suggested the following key initiatives to fulfill the requirement of current and future challenges of alternative mode of quality education to all where face to face education is not possible.

- Pilot Studies for Online Education: Pilot studies will be done by agencies such as NETF, CIET, NIOS, IGNOU, IITs, NITs etc to evaluate the benefits of integrating education with online education. These agencies will also conduct studies to reveal the preferred format of e-content and the facts of device addiction in students.
- Digital Infrastructure: Policy recommended the need for investment to develop digital infrastructure in the field of education that can be used by multiple digital platforms across the nation. A well developed and continuously improving digital infrastructure will ensure that the technology-based solutions do not become outdated with the rapid advancement in technology.
- Online Teaching Platforms and Tools: Online teaching and tools will be provided to popularize digital learning. Various e-learning platforms such as SWAYAM and DIKSHA will be extended to provide teachers with a structured, user friendly, rich set of assistive tools. Two-way videos and two-way audio are real necessity for effective online classes.
- Content Creation, Digital Repository and Dissemination: Course work, learning games and stimulation, augmented reality, virtual reality will be developed. All these contents will be included in a digital repository system. This will be developed in such a way that user can rate content on its effectiveness and quality. Fun based learning tools including apps, gratification of Indian art and culture with clear operating instructions will also be developed. E-content will be circulated to students with a reliable backup mechanism.
- Addressing the Digital Divide: A large population of India still have very limited digital access. Educational programs will be made available 24/7 in various instructional languages to serve the needs of students.

Existing mass media such as television and radio will be used for telecasting and broadcast. E-content and online learning programs will be made available in all Indian languages to fulfill the needs of teachers and students across the nation.

- **Virtual Labs:** Virtual labs will be developed with the help of existing e-learning platforms such as DIKSHA, SWAYAM, SWAYAMPRABHA. It will be assured through these virtual labs that all students have equal access to quality practical and hands on experiment-based learning experiences. Digital devices such as tablets with pre-loaded content will be provided to students and teachers of socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDG).
- **Training and Incentives for Teachers:** Teachers will be trained in learner centric pedagogy and in developing high quality content by using various online teaching learning platforms and tools. Teachers' role will be recognized in active engagement of students with the content and with each other.
- **Online Assessment and Examinations:** National assessment centers or PARAKH, School Boards, NTA etc. will design and implement assessment framework for online learning programs using various design of competencies, portfolio, rubrics, standardized assessments and assessment analytics. Pilot studies will be done on new ways of assessment by using various innovative educational technologies. 21st century skills will be focused in developing new assessment techniques.
- **Blended Mode of Learning:** While promoting e-learning, face-to-face teaching learning will also be recognized. Effective models of blended learning will be used for effective teaching-learning in various subjects.
- **Laying Down Standards:** Appropriate apex bodies will set up standards of conduct. Content, technology and pedagogy for online teaching learning. State board, school, and higher education institutions shall establish guidelines for e-learning with the help of these standards.
- **A dedicated unit to facilitate digital teaching-learning:** A dedicated unit will be established for creating world class digital infrastructure, educational e-content and capacity. As technologies are rapidly evolving and need specialists to deliver high quality e-learning. This center will therefore consist of experts from administration, educational technology, digital pedagogy, assessment and e-governance etc.

Conclusion:

As a conclusion, it can be said that the importance of online and digital education is increasing with a view to providing equal opportunity of quality education to all. In this regard, important initiatives have been suggested for online education in NEP 2020. Along with developing online and digital learning

platforms as an alternative mode of learning, people will have to increase digital access and technological comfort so that maximum number of learners can benefit from it.

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