AVAILABILITY AND USE OF ICT IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The significance of this article is about availability of Information Communication Technology-ICT and usage in schools for the purpose of teaching and learning. ICT can help in enhancing the standards of education through blended learning by supplementing the talk and chalk methodology of teaching.This study investigated 'The Availability and use of Technology in schools'. This provides an insight into various features of ICTs for schools. It also highlights the use of high-end technology to low end one that has been successful over the last few years in our country at K-12 level. This article also examines the challenges experienced in the use of technology and provides suggestions to address these challenges.The Technologies like Computers, Internet, Email, Smart boards, Phone/SMS, websites are available and used for the purpose of teaching learning. Technology is also used for other tasks such as sending circulars, staff attendance, preparing curriculum planners, time tables, question papers, salary and other administrative work. Searching the internet for information, electronic communication with parent and preparing course materials are also other uses of technology in these schools. The study recommends that more and more schools must adopt use of Technology, as use and availability of Technology is pertinent in making schools part of the global world.

Key Words: *Education Technology, Schools, ICT, healthcare,*

Introduction:

The metamorphosis of education in the wake of introduction of ICT has been remarkable. In the global society, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the most rapidly developing technological fields. In the field of education, India has reached a significant position in the development of ICT. The delivery of education and training is changing with the evolution of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs); which are currently being used effectively in education teaching and learning. It clearly looks in to the fact how healthcare and ICT, connect parent teacher doctors and healthcare providers.We can say thatInformation and Communication Technologies comprises of all devices, tools, content, resources, forums, and services, digital and all that which can be converted into digital forms, which can be used to realise the goals of teaching learning, improving access to resources,capacity building, managingday to day academic requirements. Theseinclude computer hardware and software devices, applicationsoftware, digital content, internet,

satellite communication devices, web-based content repositories, interactive forums, learning management systems, and management information systems

The use of ICT in Education has brought changes in the way students learn and teachers teach. The changes are remarkable. Use of digital devices has changed the learning practice and made it very interesting for both – the teacher as well as the learner.Digital Learning, flipped classrooms, MOOC(Massive Open Online Courses) and Google Classroom have had a definitive impact; These not only promote student participation, but results in better learning outcomes. When we discuss Education Technology and Information Communication Technologies, healthcare needs a mention. Healthcare has been affected extraordinarily because of technology.It is said, '*A healthy mind is a healthy body'.* Health is an important aspect of each student. Doctors have been making an effort to use technology to reach out to remote areas of India. The students and professors/lecturers in cities as well as villages have got together to eliminate the need to travel long distances to reach the right doctor at the time of need via technology. It is important that professors/lecturers, students and parents connect with each other to achieve better health standards for a child.The main purpose of ICT in Education and healthcare is to be used as an instructional guide for user, a tool for teaching, or as a tool for learning. Since last many years it has been observed that children have begun using technology from a tender age of about 3 years. This is also mentioned and ascertained by Gutnik et al., 2011; Rideout 2011.It is clear, when these young toddlers begin formal schooling where learning is via modern technology, they are not hesitant in using it.Studies have made it evident that more and more students use modern technology nowadays, as put forward by (Greenhow et al.,2009),and other researchers.

The schools have begun to move from an 'ICT as a tool' approach where we 'use' ICTs in education to a more 'Integrated Approach'. A computer can be used as a 'Health Care Tool'. Teachers can use Technology to their best advantage while in class not only for teaching & learning but also to improvise general health of a child. In cases where a physician is not physically present, technology like mobile phones, emails and video calling play a role. The doctor may prescribe medicines over certain website, video call or over an email. This is called an e-consultation, e-prescription and such websites are called e-hospitals. ICT, if used creatively, can make a big difference in the way teachers teach and students learn. It helps to achieve skills like digital literacy, innovative thinking, creativity, sound reasoning and effective communication. ICT can help in enhancing the quality of education through blended learning by supplementing the traditional talk and chalk method of teaching. ICT-enabled

education can also be a solution to the growing demands for enrolments in higher education in India and thus help increase the gross enrolment ratio. ICT- enabled education can do wonders that no one can imagine and help pave way for the creation of virtual universities connecting healthcare and pedagogy in the long run.

It is seen that most teachers and parents are not adequately educated about health issues like:

- Importance of Proper Nutrition

- Importance of Physical Activity-Games & Sports

- Dental health, Eye care.

- Learning Disabilities – Dyslexia, Phobia, Autism, etc

- Obesity Epidemic.

- Special care for hyperglycaemia or hypoglycaemia commonly known as Juvenile Diabetes.

- Memory improvement.

This may lead to underlying problems remaining undetected and thereby leading to serious complications as the child grows up.My experience with Technology has been interesting at different times over the years. I must elaborate on this. In the span of 20 odd years I have spent in the field of Education and training,Technology seems to have taken various forms. Right from teaching conceptsto Pre School children, Computer Science to formal school children, Windows Programming to MCM final year students at Fergusson Science College, ICT to B.Ed. students at SNDT College, computers have been used constantly to assist in Teaching & Learning purpose. I strongly feel that *A Teacher can utilize Technology not only to teach but also to improve children's health.*

Importance:

So, it is of utmost importance that a teacher is adept at handling technology. For this, he/she has to learn how to use a computer and browse the internet and send an email. A teacher need not be working in a high-profile school and college in order to access the latest technology. Even a teacher teaching in a small village can handle a computer well thanks to technologies like 'Hole in the wall' which is an endeavor between NIIT Ltd. and Central government of India.Teachers increasingly make effective use of presentational software as an aid to teaching. Those teachers having good subject knowledge are able to decide on the appropriate use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning in literacy.

Conclusion:

Teachers can use Technology to their best advantage while in class not only for teaching & learning but also to improvise general health of a child. Just like all fingers in a hand are not equal, all children in one class may not be at the same level intellectually, physically, mentally and emotionally. A child may be suffering from ailments like Juvenile Diabetes, Asthma, borderline mental disorders like Hyper Activity, Speech disorders, mild cases of Autism. There may be undetected cases of Learning Disabilities like Dyslexia, Anxiety disorders etc. A teacher can use Technology by way of computers, internet and email to connect with specialists in the field of Medical Science like doctors, psychiatrists, counselors and help out parents and children to be at their best health wise. Teachers have valued easy access to computers at school and increasingly at home, to practise their skills. Personal access has been crucial for many teachers in giving them the confidence to use ICT to plan their lessons and to look for better ways to meet literacy and numeracy objectives. However, too many teachers either still do not have their own computer or enough time to use school computers to practise their skills and plan for the use of ICT across the curriculum. This is another drawback which can be overcome and use technology successfully.

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