

From Blackboard to Artificial Intelligence: Technology in the service of Education

Technology whether as an end in the pursuit of human happiness or a tool to achieve a human purpose has come to play a seminal role in the field of education. Just as the modern world today is unthinkable bereft of technology, education too would fall short of an “enlightening experience” without the use of technology. In order to understand the full impacts of technology on learning, it is of great consequence to understand the nature of technology itself. Technology is perhaps as diverse as the life forms on the planet Earth. The way evolution helps to explain the diversity of life forms, technology as a system can best be understood in terms of the way it has evolved through the march of human civilization. For the sake of convenience, one can distinguish three distinct stages of technological development in the human history. They are (i) tools, (ii) machines and (iii) automation. Tools were the earlier stage of artifacts used by human beings to gather/ hunt food. They primarily used mechanical properties of materials to achieve the desired functionalities. By combining several tools, machines were invented, thereby increasing the efficiency of the work done. It took less time to do a work using a machine. While enhancing the efficiency, it reduced the human involvement further. Period of industrial revolution can be described as an example of machine phase. The modern world belongs to an era of automation driven by the digital technology. While efficiency of doing a work has increased manifold, the involvement of human being is primarily in the development of technology and not in the operations of technology as such. In the most systematic way, technology can be portrayed as a system having several sub-systems/ components with the capacity to harness one or the more natural phenomenon to achieve a human purpose. The Oxford dictionary tells us that the technology is “the collection of mechanical arts that are available to a culture to make its economy and society function.” In the simplest way, technology can also be described as the projection of human body. What a human body cannot do due to its sheer limitations as ordained by nature can be achieved by the use of technology.

Quite clearly technology, which has contributed significantly in enriching the material culture of the human civilizations, has also moved in tandem with other efforts in achieving educational outcomes of the human beings. Blackboards were perhaps the first instance of the technological use in the classroom. Digital technology is now defining the contours of technological interventions in the field of education. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is on the cusp of revolutions in learning. Given the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) or more broadly Educational Technology (ET) in education and its burgeoning integration in school education and teacher education in recent times, the need for a Journal of Educational Technology has been necessitated which would provide a platform for sharing of ideas on different themes in the area of Educational Technology (ET). This would not only create more avenues for researches in ET but may foster innovations as well in ET. By initiating a journal of educational technology, Central Institute of

Educational technology (CIET), a constituent unit of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) with a mandate to create and disseminate audio, video and multimedia contents in school and teacher education along with research, training and extension in the area of educational technology, proposes to promote research work and facilitate effective usage of ET in educational systems. This journal is being conceived as online, biannual journal in English providing theoretical perspectives and methodological developments through quality empirical researches that validate the applications of educational technology leading to improvements in the learning at all levels of education from early years to senior secondary level including vocational education and teacher education comprising in-service professional development of teachers.

We are happy to bring out the first issue of Indian Journal of Educational Technology. We did receive ten manuscripts in different categories. Since the journal is a peer reviewed one, out of these, five manuscripts have been selected for publication after three rounds of review i.e. one at the editor's level and two rounds at the reviewer's level. A double-blind methodology was adopted for review of these manuscripts for final selection. After going through review process the five manuscripts selected for publication were: "Documentation of Sign Languages of North East India", "Faculty @ Facebook - Students' Perspective for Educational Scaffold", "Professional Development of Teachers with ICT", "ICT initiatives in School Education of India" and "New Technology and Education: Contemporary Issues in Education Studies". The first two articles are research articles whereas, next two are general articles followed by the last one which is a book review.

We hope to receive an enthusiastic support from the academic fraternity working in the area of educational technology. We express our sincere thanks to the reviewers who took time out from their busy schedule to do the reviewing. We are also thankful to the authors who responded to our call for submitting the articles. Last but not the least, we also thank a very small team of dedicated members of the editorial board for agreeing to be part of this venture.

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