

Public education system has traditionally been in a reactive mode to ICTs. While educationists have largely kept away from this medium, techno-centric thinking has focused on reaching computers/hardware to classrooms, leaving out the critical teacher education structures and processes and relying instead on para teachers.

Nevertheless, we have now reached a state of maturity where we now need to look forward based both on current contexts and needs and also on new requirements.

Society is rapidly becoming more and more digital in its information and communication processes. Our learning processes also would incorporate greater and greater digital element, since learning has a large component of I&C. Already schools are boasting about electronic white/learning boards, internet connectivity.

How would the government address these needs for the public school system as well

TLM

Now, even with the caveats that the more fundamental issues of electricity etc need to be addressed and also that pedagogical appropriateness needs to be assessed, nevertheless it would be a safe bet that larger chunks of learning materials would be digital – audio-videos, material created including using educational software, articles, texts in digital media on wide and local networks. Digital readers would become more adapted for that task, and simpler forms (e readers like Kindle or the XO kind of custom notebooks) would become available, at reducing costs and greater ruggedness and reduced electricity needs. The amount of digital material would become enormous (since digital material is more amenable to sharing, customizing and sharing etc)

Currently the public system relies largely on single texts for each class/subject and the possibilities for variety of information resources in each area becomes realized

There are two issues for the public system with respect to learning resources

Ownership over the learning resources

Content vs learning resources (role of the learner)

Teacher

Teachers would use more and more digital tools for sharing information, triggering discussions. The issues for public policy with respect to teachers and ICTs include

- greater autonomy to teachers in their learning processes and structures
- greater availability of ICTs to teachers and teacher educators and letting them experiment
- avoid compulsion and directives (centralized models will fail – edusat and keli kali should not compel teachers and schools to tune in)
- setup and encouraging teachers networks
- work with teacher educators first before teachers and teachers before students, else ICTs will fail.
- Children by themselves can definitely learn through ICTs, but mediation by teacher can significantly enhance the learning experiences and outcomes