



Mains Practice Question

Q. How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate your answer. (UPSC GS-1 Mains 2020) (250 words)

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Approach

- Start your answer by briefly discussing the context of the question
- Discuss the Advantages & Disadvantages of Digital Initiatives in the Education system.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

- The covid-19 pandemic has dragged the traditional model of education (school, colleges, classroom model) in the crisis. In this situation, online education has come to the rescue of the cause of education.
- Moreover, even before the pandemic, digital initiatives have helped to promote inclusivity of education. However, there are several challenges of online education and the same needs to be fixed.

Body

Advantages of Digital Initiatives in Education

- **Flexibility:** Digital Initiatives a vast space to learn and tech any number of skills and courses. For example, E- Pathshala provides e-content for studies, and the SWAYAM portal provides an integrated platform for online courses.
 - It also helps to develop a multi-disciplinary approach.
 - Due to this, a growing number of universities and higher education schools are coming forward to offer online versions of their programs for various levels and disciplines.
- **Cost-Effective:** Digital initiatives enable lesser monetary investment as compared to the traditional model of education.
 - With the online mode of learning, the money spent on study materials along with commute charges is considerably less.
- **Inclusivity:** Digital Initiatives help education to reach the rural and one of the remotest areas of the country. Also, online learning allows students to work in the environment that best suits them.

Disadvantages of Digital Initiatives in Education

- **Digital Divide:** e-Learning is a privilege for the students from middle and upper class but it has proved to be a nuisance for students from the lower middle class and people living below the poverty line (BPL).
 - Poor students, who do not have access to e-resources (computers, laptops, internet

connectivity), will not be able to attend classes from home.

◦ Thereby, digital initiatives in education also exacerbate the digital divide.

- **Traditional Classroom, A Social Institution:** Organizations like schools and colleges, are social spaces, whereby a student not just learns academic knowledge but many social skills also) which are necessary for all-round development.
- **Commercialization of Education:** Corporate houses, technology firms and educational institutions will be working closely to achieve the goals of e-learning which may aggravate the commercialization of education and exclude the self-dependent tutors and students from economically weak backgrounds.

Conclusion

Digital education is very useful yet not completely successful in India. Hence, there is still a lot to do in terms of checking if students' entitlements are not being compromised or in providing meaningful academic curriculum alternatives.

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