Mains Practice Question

Q. Physical closure of educational institutions due to Covid-19 pandemic has forced us to reimagine the education system and align it with the unprecedented technological transformation. Discuss. (250 Words)

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Approach

- Introduce the answer with the state of the education system during Covid-19 pandemic.
- Discuss the need to reimagine the education system and align it with the unprecedented technological transformation.
- Give a way forward to how technology can be efficiently used in education.

Introduction

India's school education landscape is facing daunting challenges. The pandemic threatens to exacerbate the school education crisis because of the physical closure of 15.5 lakh schools that has affected more than 248 million students for over a year.

Thus, there is a need for reimagining education with the current technological advancement which is usually referred as Ed-tech.

Body

Need For reimagining education through Ed-Tech

- **Intended Benefits of Ed-Tech:** Technology holds promise and has incredible potential in:

    - Enabling greater personalisation of education
    - Enhancing educational productivity by improving rates of learning,
    - Reducing costs of instructional material and service delivery at scale
    - Better utilisation of teacher/instructor time.
- **Need Induced By Pandemic:** Further, as traditional brick-and-mortar service delivery models are being disrupted across sectors, the pandemic offers a critical, yet stark, reminder of the impending need to weave technology into education.
- **National Education Policy 2020:** It gives the clarion call to integrate technology at every level of instruction.

    - It envisions the establishment of an autonomous body, the National Education Technology Forum (NETF), to spearhead efforts towards providing a strategic thrust to the deployment and use of technology.

Way Forward

- **Comprehensive Policy:** A comprehensive Ed-tech policy architecture must focus on four key elements-

- Providing access to learning, especially to disadvantaged groups.
- Enabling processes of teaching, learning, and evaluation.
- Facilitating teacher training and continuous professional development.
- Improving governance systems including planning, management, and monitoring processes.
- **Technology is a Tool, Not a Panacea:** Public educational institutions play an exemplary role in social inclusion and relative equality.

    - Technology cannot substitute schools or replace teachers. Thus, it should not be "teachers versus technology" rather "teachers and technology".
- **Providing Infrastructure for Ed-Tech:** In the immediate term, there must be a mechanism to thoroughly map the ed-tech landscape, especially their scale, reach, and impact.

    - The focus should be on access, equity, infrastructure, governance, and quality-related outcomes and challenges for teachers and students.
- **Cross-Platform Integration:** There is also a need to foster integration of solutions through public-private partnerships, factor in voices of all stakeholders, and bolster cooperative federalism across all levels of government.

Conclusion

India is well-poised to take leap forward with increasing access to tech-based infrastructure, electricity, and affordable internet connectivity, fueled by flagship programmes such as Digital India and DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for School Education).

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