Digitisation of Learning Material for Training during COVID-19

The Pandemic which hit India during the first month of 2020 has disrupted lives across the nation. The global catastrophe has impacted every sphere such as healthcare, industries, and transport. Schools and universities were called off in the second week of March. Since then, the education system has suffered and the learning process has been profoundly affected. A solution to this can be the digitisation of learning material and modification in the contemporary pedagogy of teaching. As digitisation is surely the best way available in this pandemic environment, we have to take into account the holistic approach to understand the facets attached to it.

While going digital and conducting online classes seems an easy affair for private schools, it becomes a huge problem with government and other local schools. Therefore, thinking of taking digitisation to every nook and corner of the country demands invoking resolutions to challenges like no internet accessibility, low bandwidth, and lack of required devices to attend the classes.

Development Alternatives, by understanding the need of the hour has taken initiatives to strengthen the process of learning for every student. Recently, the organisation used WhatsApp as a learning platform to give students training on skill development and livelihood awareness as part of Skills to Livelihood Project supported by WPP India CSR Foundation. The strategy helped students to learn even with low bandwidth and network. The process of sharing information was divided into three steps; the first step was to share the information, the second step was to share the activity and wait for student´s response, the third step involved taking their queries under "Sawaal Shukrawaar". Sawaal Shukrawaar is a specific day that was dedicated to solving queries and sharing feedbacks. Through pre and post-assessment forms, a stark difference was observed in the perspectives of students about career and skills.

Development Alternatives Group

While issues like low bandwidth were resolved by training students over WhatsApp, the question remained was- how to calculate the duration of training on WhatsApp. To understand the duration of training on WhatsApp, the organisation conducted a small study with students on how much time they take to "Read-an infographic, Do-an activity, Watch- a video". The study involved a two-level analysis- a telephonic interview where students were asked about the approximate time they might take to perform all these steps, and WhatsApp training where one infographic, one video, and one activity were given to students for completing all three steps. After that, the time estimated and the actual time taken by students were matched to calculate the time an adolescent takes to do all three steps i.e, Read, Watch and Do on WhatsApp.

While keeping the grasping capacity of an adolescent in mind, the material disseminated has been made clearer to convey the message. To complete all the training through WhatsApp, various infotainment modes are being used for teaching and learning, though the time will vary based on two factors, the length and gravity of information shared, and an adolescent´s speed of processing the given information The students have been responding to the activities and information which are shared with them daily. The information shared has been curated keeping in mind digitisation and ease of learning through WhatsApp.