

SPEECH OF  
SMT.D.PURANDESWARI, HON'BLE MOS-HRD(HE)  
ON THE OCCASION OF LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MISSION  
ON EDUCATION THROUGH INFORMATION  
AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY  
AT TIRUPATHI ON 03-02-2009

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Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development, Hon'ble Chief Guest, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, other dignitaries and guests, on behalf of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, it is my pleasure to launch the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology at Tirupati. It is a centrally sponsored Scheme to leverage the potential of ICT in providing high-quality personalized and interactive knowledge modules over the internet / intranet in the 'anytime, anywhere' more for all learners in higher education institutions.

The Mission has two major components viz. (a) content generation, and (b) connectivity, along with provision for access devices for institutions and learners. It seeks to bridge digital and knowledge divide, narrowing the gap between those urban and rural teachers / learners who can and cannot use computing devices for the purpose of teaching and learning in the domain of higher education. This Scheme aims to empower those who have hitherto remained untouched by the digital revolution, and therefore, have

not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy. It plans to focus also on virtual labs, on-line testing and certification, on-line availability of teachers to guide mentor learners, empower teachers with ICT.

In order to provide unfettered access to the various platforms and content generated in this Mission, we propose to use various different media and technologies for dissemination. These will include, content delivery through EduSAT and narrow casting of TV signals, providing a large number of DTH channels so that a separate DTH channel is available for every subject, over the internet and IP-TV.

The Mission will create high quality e-content in the form of videos, DVDs, e-books and Bharatpedia, which would be a peer-group assisted content development platform under the supervision of a content advisory group. The Mission will also emphasize on developing language conversion tools for all Indian languages.

It shall be the endeavor of the Mission to continuously work for enriching the repository of e-contents for the nation. For the purpose it shall encourage academicians, scholars and institutions to contribute to the world of knowledge in cyber space by creating e-knowledge content.

The Mission also evolve a mechanism to rate the quality of the e-content generated before admitting it to the national repository. As a

custodian of the national repository of e-content, the Mission shall undertake an exercise for indexing the available e-content, for its easier retrieval and access by the learners.

The Mission shall work on the philosophy of encouraging all the scholars and academicians to generate e-content. This may even result in generation of more than one set of e-content on one topic in any given discipline. This philosophy has been adopted because of pedagogical considerations and the fact that different kinds of learners have different learning aptitude; therefore, one kind of e-content can be appreciated in a better way by one set of learners and the other kind of e-content by other sets of learners.

Benchmarking learning content would ensure quality which is central to the philosophy of the Mission. As content generation shall take place of various places, by different sets of experts, the development of quality assurance procedures and testing mechanisms is essential. These tools shall be deployed on the Mission website so that anybody developing content can routinely use these to get proper feedback.

A large quantity of e-learning material, in digital form, is already available. Therefore, the Mission shall undertake an exercise to evaluate the already available e-learning material, as well as the one which is being or is to be generated, and grade them for the benefit of learners. The Mission

shall also attempt to provide guidance to them in order to facilitate their search for quality material.

There are a number of specializations for the Masters programs offered in the university system. However, very few universities offer state of art and relevant courses. Hence, it is important to develop courses which would add value to individuals and assist them in getting integrated knowledge and in expanding their horizons. For this purpose we need courses like project management, case studies, policy level debates, and economics for non-art students etc. It is also proposed to create quality content that will help disadvantaged students to compete on an equal footing for various national and state level competitions.

This Mission proposes that e-content be generated for not only PG courses, but also UG and vocational courses.

The proposed Virtual Technical University (VTU) shall serve as a nodal agency for imparting training to the undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as the newly recruited teachers in the fields of science, technology, management, architecture, pharmacy and other applied areas. The University will provide flexible, credit based courses to all registered participants using modern technology. The modern technology will involve (i) Video courses (ii) Web-based learning material and (iii) live lectures using satellite and internet based technologies. The aim of eth VTU is to

serve as an agency to impart training to a large section of students who are keen to receive instruction in an ambience close to the IITs and IISc. VTU will help them in updating their knowledge and advancing their career objectives.

VTU will endeavor to be a world class institution for providing undergraduate and postgraduate technological education, in distance learning mode, to a large number of regular students, young teachers at various engineering colleges and professionals in an industry. Needless to say, it would offer a modular approach to education, permit horizontal transition and provide honourable exits at appropriate stages for the students.

Enlistment of support and co-operation of States / Union Territories, institutions and individual experts is an integral part of the mission.

I would request the faculties of the various universities, institutions and colleges (public and private) to convey us their ideas and suggestions so as to provide suitable inputs for making necessary alterations and improvements in the Scheme.

We are all aware of the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (14CCEM) Halifax wherein the principle of access was highlighted as the core area of all educational developments in the following words : I Quote:

**“All persons have a right of access to lifelong learning by every appropriate means with full opportunity regardless of gender, race, colour, age, socio-economic status, physical and other disabilities or geographic location”.**

Unquote:

I am happy to be in a position to state that the National Mission we are about to launch today would boost up the access as it would free the students from the necessity of travelling to a **“fixed place, at a fixed time to meet a fixed person in order to be trained”**. It is expected that the Scheme would increase the gross enrolment ratio in higher education by about 5% at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

Before end, I would like to state that the site at Tirupati has been selected primarily as it is a centrally located place vis-à-vis the neighboring States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. Additionally the proposed polytechnic and the existing girls hostel are expected to provide the benefits of infrastructure to the Mission.

With these words, I have great pleasure in launching the Mission in this hallowed land of the “Lord of Seven Hills” whose blessings and benediction I earnestly pray for.

JAI HIND