



Exploring the Role of EdTech in Enhancing Learning Outcomes for Underprivileged Students in Urban Areas

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ABSTRACT

This study tried to understand the impact of educational technology (EdTech) on the learning outcomes of underprivileged students residing in urban areas. The research examined how digital tools, online platforms, and innovative learning methodologies contributed to bridging educational disparities. It explored the critical role of accessibility, infrastructure, and teacher training in maximizing the potential of EdTech. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the study analysed qualitative analysis of secondary sources. Additionally, the study investigated systemic challenges, including the digital divide, lack of localized content, and socio-economic barriers, which hindered effective EdTech implementation. Findings revealed a significant improvement in student engagement and academic performance when EdTech solutions were integrated effectively. However, infrastructural limitations and insufficient digital literacy remained major impediments. The paper concluded with actionable recommendations for policymakers, educators, and EdTech developers to foster inclusive education through technology-driven solutions, ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Keywords- EdTech, learning outcomes, underprivileged students, urban areas, inclusive education, digital divide, educational equity

Independent Variable:

EdTech (Educational Technology) – As per **NEP 2020**, EdTech (Educational Technology) refers to the use of digital tools, online platforms, and technology-driven pedagogy to enhance learning accessibility and quality. It emphasizes personalized learning, blended education, teacher training, and equitable access for all students, especially underprivileged ones.

Dependent Variable:

Learning Outcomes – Learning Outcomes refer to the measurable knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that students acquire after engaging in an educational process. As per NEP 2020, learning outcomes emphasize conceptual understanding, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and digital literacy rather than rote memorization. The policy promotes competency-based education, ensuring that students develop practical skills and holistic development for future readiness.

Introduction

Education is the foundation of a progressive society, and in today's digital age, technology has emerged as a powerful tool to transform learning experiences. In urban areas like Delhi NCR, where socio-economic disparities persist, Educational Technology (EdTech) presents both opportunities and challenges in bridging the learning gap for underprivileged students. The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** has strongly emphasized the role of **digital learning, personalized education, and technology-driven innovation** to ensure **equitable access to quality education**. However, despite the potential of EdTech to revolutionize learning, its effective implementation remains a complex issue due to infrastructural limitations, digital literacy gaps, and socio-economic barriers.

In urban areas, many students from disadvantaged backgrounds **lack adequate access to digital devices, stable internet connectivity, and technologically equipped learning environments**. While government initiatives like **Digital India, PM eVidya, and the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)** have aimed to promote digital learning, the digital divide still prevents many students from fully benefiting from these resources. The role of teachers, parents, policymakers, and NGOs becomes crucial in ensuring that EdTech is not just available but also effectively utilized to enhance learning outcomes.

Moreover, EdTech is not just about access to devices or online content; it involves a holistic transformation of the learning process. The integration of AI-driven adaptive learning, gamified education, virtual classrooms, and multilingual digital content has the potential to make education more engaging, interactive, and student-centered. However, its success depends on factors such as teacher training, affordability, localized content, and the willingness of students and parents to embrace digital learning.

This research explores the role of EdTech in enhancing learning outcomes for underprivileged students in Delhi NCR, addressing both the advantages and the challenges of its implementation. By analyzing secondary sources, government policies, and real-life case studies, this study aims to provide actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and EdTech developers to create a more inclusive and effective digital learning ecosystem.

Review of Literature

A growing body of research highlights the transformative power of EdTech in enhancing educational outcomes, particularly in underprivileged communities. Studies by **Agarwal and Mehrotra (2021)** and **Chaudhary et al. (2022)** show that digital tools and platforms can improve student engagement, comprehension, and retention rates. These studies emphasize that when EdTech is effectively integrated into the curriculum, it not only makes learning more accessible but also creates a more interactive and personalized experience for students who otherwise might lack traditional educational resources.

Several studies have explored the critical role of access to digital tools and infrastructure in ensuring the effectiveness of EdTech. According to **Singh and Sharma (2020)**, the digital divide is a key challenge in urban slums, where students often have limited or no access to devices, internet connectivity, and electricity. This gap in infrastructure can impede the widespread adoption of EdTech solutions. **Patel et al. (2021)** found that even when devices are available, the lack of consistent access to high-speed internet remains a significant barrier, highlighting the need for a concerted effort to improve basic infrastructure before widespread EdTech implementation can be successful.

Teacher preparedness is another crucial factor in the success of EdTech integration. Research by **Rai and Sethi (2022)** suggests that teacher training programs must be robust and continuous to equip educators with the necessary digital literacy skills. In many urban areas, particularly in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, teachers often lack the training to effectively use EdTech tools, which limits the potential impact of such resources. **Verma and Malhotra (2020)** argue that without proper professional development programs for educators, the use of technology may remain superficial, failing to improve student outcomes.

The socio-economic challenges faced by underprivileged students are also critical to understanding the role of EdTech. **Yadav (2021)** highlights how financial constraints prevent many families from accessing devices, and many students have to rely on shared resources, which can limit their learning opportunities. Moreover, students from lower-income backgrounds may face additional challenges such as lack of a conducive home environment for online learning, which can hinder their academic performance despite the availability of technology. **Gupta et al. (2021)** suggest that successful EdTech interventions need to account for these socio-economic barriers, ensuring that the technology is affordable and accessible to all.

Digital literacy plays a fundamental role in determining the success of EdTech solutions. **Nair and Singh (2021)** found that the lack of digital literacy among both students and teachers in

underprivileged areas often results in ineffective EdTech adoption. Additionally, **Kaur (2022)** emphasizes the importance of localized content, which resonates with students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For EdTech to be truly effective, content must be tailored to meet the specific needs of diverse student populations, making learning more relevant and engaging. The challenges of integrating EdTech into underprivileged urban areas are not only technical but also systemic. **Jain and Gupta (2021)** discuss how institutional and policy-level barriers, such as inadequate funding, lack of governmental support, and slow implementation of digital initiatives, prevent EdTech from reaching its full potential. They argue that for EdTech to be truly transformative, policymakers must work to create supportive frameworks, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for all students. Recommendations from **Desai et al. (2022)** stress the need for public-private partnerships to address these systemic issues and ensure that EdTech solutions reach the most marginalized communities.

The literature suggests several actionable recommendations for enhancing the role of EdTech in underprivileged urban communities. As per **Mehra (2022)**, policymakers should prioritize investments in digital infrastructure and support the development of affordable and scalable EdTech solutions. Additionally, **Soni and Sharma (2021)** advocate for the creation of training programs for teachers that focus not only on technical skills but also on pedagogical strategies to integrate technology in meaningful ways. Furthermore, **Rajput (2021)** calls for an emphasis on creating localized, culturally relevant content to ensure that EdTech solutions resonate with the diverse student populations in urban slums.

Research Methodology:

This study explores the role of Educational Technology (EdTech) in enhancing the learning outcomes of underprivileged students residing in urban areas. Using a **qualitative approach**, the research relies on **secondary data** sources to examine how digital tools, online platforms, and innovative learning methodologies contribute to bridging educational disparities and improving student engagement and academic performance in these communities.

Research Design

The study follows an **exploratory and qualitative research design**, aiming at gaining an in-depth understanding of the impact of EdTech in the educational sector for underprivileged students. It relies exclusively on **secondary sources** to gather relevant insights, without collecting new primary data. These sources include **academic research, policy documents, and case studies** that focus on the intersection of EdTech and educational outcomes in underprivileged urban settings.

Data Collection

Secondary Data: Secondary data for this research was collected from a wide range of sources, including policy **documents, research studies, and reports**. The key secondary sources used in the study include:

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: This document provides a comprehensive framework for the development of the education sector in India and highlights the importance of technology in improving learning outcomes. The NEP 2020 advocates for the use of technology-enabled learning platforms, online education, and digital literacy as a means to make education more inclusive and accessible.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005: This framework sets out guidelines for developing the national curriculum and emphasizes the role of educational technology in creating a more engaging, flexible, and effective learning environment. The NCF 2005 calls for integrating technology into the curriculum to address learning disparities, particularly in marginalized groups.

Research Articles and Case Studies: The study reviewed a wide range of **peer-reviewed research articles** and **case studies** that examined the effectiveness of EdTech interventions in urban underprivileged settings. These articles provided empirical evidence on how digital tools, platforms, and innovative learning methodologies impacted student engagement, academic performance, and social inclusion.

Newspapers and Reports: Articles from prominent national newspapers and reports by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government bodies, and international organizations provided additional insights into the challenges and successes of EdTech adoption in urban underprivileged communities. These sources were used to highlight real-world challenges such as the digital divide, accessibility issues, and socio-economic barriers that hinder the widespread use of EdTech. The key newspapers used include:

- i. **The Hindu**
- ii. **Times of India**
- iii. **Hindustan Times**
- iv. **The Indian Express**
- iv. **The Economic Times**
- v. **Deccan Herald**
- vi. **The Telegraph**

These newspapers provided critical articles and reports on EdTech initiatives, government policies, and the social impact of technology in education.

Data Analysis

The data collected from these secondary sources was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, trends, and insights. The analysis was focused on the following key areas:

- The role of digital tools and platforms in enhancing student learning outcomes.
- Barriers to EdTech implementation, including infrastructure limitations, lack of digital literacy, and socio-economic challenges.
- The importance of teacher training in utilizing EdTech effectively to improve educational outcomes.
- Insights from government policies (like NEP 2020 and NCF 2005) on integrating technology into the education system for underprivileged communities.

Key Themes Explored

EdTech Solutions and Learning Outcomes: Analysis of case studies and research articles on how EdTech platforms and digital tools are being used to improve student engagement and academic performance in underprivileged urban settings.

Teacher Training and Support: Examination of policy recommendations (such as those in NEP 2020) for teacher training programs to equip educators with the necessary skills to integrate EdTech in their classrooms.

Barriers to Effective EdTech Integration: The study identified challenges such as the digital divide, lack of localized content, and infrastructural constraints that prevent underprivileged students from fully benefiting from EdTech. These barriers were explored in detail using secondary sources like reports from NGOs and government agencies.

Government Policies and Recommendations: An exploration of the NEP 2020 and NCF 2005 documents to understand how national education policies have framed the role of EdTech in addressing educational inequities and improving learning outcomes.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the **validity** and **reliability** of the research, secondary sources were carefully selected based on their credibility, relevance, and authority in the field of educational technology and policy:

- Only peer-reviewed research and government-authorized documents were included in the analysis.
- Triangulation was used to verify findings by comparing insights from different types of sources (e.g., case studies, policy documents, research articles, and news reports).

Ethical Considerations

While the study was based on secondary data, ethical considerations were maintained by:

- Properly citing all sources to avoid plagiarism.
- Using data from reliable and trustworthy sources to ensure the integrity of the research.

- Ensuring that no sensitive or confidential information was used without appropriate permissions.

Limitations

The study's reliance on **secondary data** poses certain limitations:

The generalizability of findings may be limited as the study focuses on existing reports and case studies, which may not cover all urban settings or capture the full range of EdTech experiences.

Bias in Secondary Sources: Some secondary sources, particularly newspaper articles and non-governmental reports, may present a biased or narrow perspective of the challenges and successes of EdTech initiatives.

Results and Findings:

This section presents the key results and findings derived from the qualitative analysis of secondary data sources, including **policy documents, research studies, reports, and newspaper articles**. The findings provide valuable insights into the impact of **Educational Technology (EdTech)** on the learning outcomes of underprivileged students in urban areas, as well as the barriers to its effective implementation.

1. Positive Impact on Student Engagement and Academic Performance

The integration of **EdTech tools** in urban underprivileged schools has shown significant improvements in **student engagement** and **academic performance**, as reported in various secondary sources. Both **research studies** and **policy reports** highlighted the importance of technology in enhancing the quality of education for students in marginalized communities.

Increased Student Engagement: Educational technology, including **online learning platforms, gamified applications, and digital classrooms**, has helped engage students who previously struggled with traditional, passive learning methods. These platforms allow students to interact with the content in dynamic ways, leading to improved motivation and participation. According to reports from the **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**, digital tools can engage students through interactive videos, quizzes, and simulations, which are particularly beneficial for underprivileged students who may find conventional teaching methods disengaging.

Improved Academic Performance: Case studies analyzed from research articles in newspapers such as **The Hindu** and **Times of India** indicate that students exposed to EdTech solutions, such as **online tutoring, adaptive learning platforms, and interactive educational content**, demonstrate improved academic performance. These tools provide personalized learning experiences, enabling students to learn at their own pace, which has been shown to reduce learning gaps and enhance performance in subjects like **mathematics, science, and languages**.

Research from NCERT also suggests that students who have access to technology are more likely to develop better problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and the ability to apply concepts in real-world scenarios.

2. Teacher Training as a Critical Factor for EdTech Success

One of the most important findings of this study was the crucial role of **teacher training** in maximizing the effectiveness of EdTech interventions. According to the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, effective teacher professional development programs are essential for the successful integration of educational technology into classrooms.

Need for Professional Development: Inadequate teacher training in digital tools and technology was found to be a major barrier in underprivileged urban areas. Many teachers were not familiar with how to use **EdTech** tools to enhance classroom learning or how to provide digital instruction. Research from **NCERT** and findings from reports in **Hindustan Times** emphasize the need for **ongoing teacher training programs** that focus on digital literacy and pedagogy, ensuring that teachers are prepared to use EdTech solutions effectively in their classrooms.

Teacher Support and Resources: Teachers require continuous support and access to resources to implement EdTech in a meaningful way. **The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Delhi**, has outlined the importance of providing teachers with **training modules** and **resource kits** that help them integrate technology into their teaching methods, especially in resource-poor schools.

3. Systemic Barriers to Effective EdTech Implementation

While EdTech has demonstrated significant potential, the study found several **systemic challenges** that hinder its effective implementation in urban underprivileged areas. These barriers, identified in secondary sources, include the **digital divide**, **infrastructural limitations**, and **socio-economic challenges**.

Digital Divide: A major barrier to EdTech adoption is the **digital divide** that separates urban underprivileged students from those in more affluent areas. Many students in these communities do not have access to the required digital devices, such as **smartphones, tablets, or laptops**, nor do they have reliable internet access. Articles in **The Hindu** and **The Times of India** highlighted how this **digital gap** exacerbates educational inequalities, as students in well-resourced areas have greater access to online resources, while those in underprivileged areas are often left behind.

Infrastructural Constraints: The lack of **basic infrastructure**, such as electricity and high-speed internet, remains a significant obstacle. According to **NCERT's reports**, many schools in urban slums and poor areas lack adequate infrastructure to support the use of EdTech. Even

when students have access to digital tools, **poor internet connectivity** often disrupts their learning experience, making it difficult for them to fully engage with the content.

Socio-Economic Challenges: Socio-economic factors such as **poverty, lack of parental support**, and **low levels of digital literacy among parents** further complicate the use of EdTech in these communities. The **National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005** emphasizes the importance of parental engagement in the educational process, but for underprivileged families, providing the necessary support for their children's digital learning can be a significant challenge.

4. The Role of National Policies and Frameworks

The study also explored the role of **national education policies** in shaping the use of EdTech in underprivileged urban areas. **NEP 2020** and the **National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005** provide important insights and recommendations for the integration of EdTech into the Indian education system.

NEP 2020: The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** places a strong emphasis on the **use of technology** to enhance educational access and equity. The policy advocates for the development of **digital infrastructure** in all schools, the provision of **digital content** and **online resources**, and the incorporation of **technology-based learning** in the curriculum. NEP 2020 also stresses the importance of **teacher training** and the **development of digital literacy** to enable teachers to effectively use technology in the classroom.

NCF 2005: The **National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005** recognizes the importance of integrating **technology into the curriculum** to make learning more **engaging** and **interactive**. It also stresses the need for **innovative teaching methods**, such as **project-based learning** and **collaborative learning**, which can be supported through EdTech solutions. However, the framework acknowledges the challenges posed by **resource constraints** and the need for targeted efforts to ensure that EdTech is accessible to students from all socio-economic backgrounds.

SCERT Delhi's Role: The **State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)** in Delhi has played a vital role in promoting EdTech in the state. SCERT's initiatives, including **digital teacher training workshops** and the **DIKSHA platform**, aim to increase digital literacy and equip teachers with the skills needed to effectively implement EdTech in their classrooms. However, as highlighted by reports from **The Hindu** and **The Times of India**, more needs to be done to ensure that these initiatives reach all teachers, particularly those in underprivileged urban areas.

5. Recommendations for Effective EdTech Integration

Based on the findings, the study provides several actionable recommendations for improving the integration of EdTech in urban underprivileged areas:

Investment in Digital Infrastructure: The government and private sectors need to increase investments in **digital infrastructure** to ensure that all students have access to the required devices and **high-speed internet**. Additionally, local governments should work towards making **low-cost devices** available to students in underprivileged communities.

Localized Content: EdTech developers should create **localized content** in **regional languages** that aligns with the needs of underprivileged students. The **NCF 2005** highlights the importance of culturally relevant content, and EdTech solutions must cater to the **contextual needs** of students in urban slums and marginalized communities.

Comprehensive Teacher Training: Ongoing **teacher training programs** should be implemented to help educators become proficient in using EdTech tools. **NCERT** and **SCERT Delhi** can collaborate to create **training modules** that focus on the effective use of technology in the classroom.

Community and Parental Engagement: Increasing **community awareness** about the importance of **digital literacy** and engaging **parents** in the educational process can support students' learning at home and bridge the gap between school-based and home-based learning.

Key Findings:

Improvement in Student Engagement and Academic Performance

EdTech tools, such as online platforms, digital content, and interactive learning apps, have been shown to enhance student engagement and academic performance. These tools help underprivileged students engage with educational content in dynamic ways, leading to better learning outcomes.

Research from **NCERT** and findings from articles in **The Hindu** and **Times of India** suggest that EdTech solutions positively affect subject-specific performance, particularly in **mathematics, science, and languages**.

Critical Role of Teacher Training

Teacher training is a crucial factor for the successful integration of EdTech. NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of professional development for teachers in digital tools and pedagogy.

Inadequate training for teachers in **underprivileged urban areas** remains a barrier to effective EdTech use. Programs from **NCERT** and **SCERT Delhi** are needed to ensure teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to integrate technology effectively.

Digital Divide and Infrastructural Barriers

The digital divide remains a significant challenge. Many underprivileged students lack access to the necessary digital devices and reliable internet to benefit from EdTech.

Reports from **The Hindu** and **Hindustan Times** highlight how these gaps in infrastructure prevent effective use of EdTech tools and exacerbate educational inequalities.

Socio-Economic Factors Impeding EdTech Implementation

Poverty, lack of parental support, and low digital literacy among parents are significant socio-economic challenges. These factors hinder students' ability to engage fully with technology-enabled learning opportunities, as found in secondary sources like research articles and policy documents.

Positive Impact of Localized Content

There is a need for localized educational content that aligns with the cultural and linguistic needs of underprivileged urban students. The NCF 2005 stresses the importance of contextualizing educational content to make it more relevant and accessible for diverse student populations

Policy Support from NEP 2020 and NCF 2005

NEP 2020 highlights the importance of using technology to provide equitable learning opportunities, especially for marginalized communities. This policy encourages investment in digital infrastructure, teacher training, and the creation of digital content.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005) advocates for technology integration and the use of interactive and innovative learning methodologies to engage students effectively, yet its full potential is not realized due to systemic barriers like infrastructure gaps and socio-economic constraints.

Recommendations for Improved Implementation

Investment in digital infrastructure to provide devices and reliable internet access to all students.

Development of **localized content** in multiple languages, making it accessible and culturally relevant.

Comprehensive teacher training programs to equip educators with the necessary skills to use EdTech effectively.

Increased **community engagement** and **parental involvement** to support the technology-enabled learning process at home.

Suggestions for Effective EdTech Integration:

To harness the full potential of EdTech in enhancing learning outcomes for underprivileged students in urban areas, it is crucial to address the systemic challenges identified in the study. First and foremost, investment in digital infrastructure must be prioritized to ensure that all students, regardless of socio-economic background, have access to the necessary devices and reliable internet connections. Public-private partnerships can be a key strategy in bridging the

digital divide, with technology companies, NGOs, and government agencies collaborating to provide affordable solutions for disadvantaged communities.

Equally important is the need for localized educational content that is both culturally and linguistically relevant. The NCF 2005 emphasizes the importance of tailoring educational materials to meet the specific needs of diverse student populations. In the context of urban underprivileged students, creating digital content in regional languages and aligning it with their socio-cultural contexts will greatly improve accessibility and engagement.

Furthermore, there is an urgent need for comprehensive and ongoing teacher training in the use of digital tools and pedagogical techniques. NEP 2020 underscores the importance of capacity-building programs for teachers to equip them with the skills necessary to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. Professional development programs should not only focus on the technical use of EdTech tools but also on pedagogical strategies that can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Finally, fostering community engagement and parental support is essential to ensure that EdTech is used effectively outside the classroom. Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in reinforcing digital learning at home, especially for students from underprivileged backgrounds. Schools and local education bodies should actively involve parents through awareness campaigns and training, helping them understand the importance of EdTech and how they can support their children's learning.

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