



National Mission on Info & Communication Tech coming up: Official tells Amritavarsham60

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Amritapuri: The Union Government is framing a National Mission on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that will link all the schools in the country through an IT-enabled platform so as to provide an opportunity for students and teachers to share knowledge and hone their skills using Learner Centric Methodology.

The aim is to create an IT-enabled network by facilitating internet connection of minimum 10 mbps to all the schools, a top official said today.

"Latest technological innovations will be put in use to share multimedia and web content through the platform," said Radha Chauhan, Joint Secretary, Secondary Education, Government of India.

"Apart from creating a better governance system for the schools, we are aiming to deliver quality education to all students in the country through the National Mission," she said at a panel discussion that was organised as part of the ongoing 60th birthday celebrations of humanitarian leader Mata Amritanandamayi Devi.

The discussion on 'Schools in Villages: Learner Centric Methodologies, Blending Skill Development: Existing Infrastructure and other challenges in schools in villages; Blended Learning: Combining Methodologies, Innovative Solutions with/without ICT, Broad plan for India, Proposed Pilots' was organised on the opening day of the three-day Amritavarsham60 being organised by the Mata Amritanandamayi Math.

Ms Chauhan, addressing the seminar through a video conferencing, said the National Mission would also aim at bringing transparency in governance of the country's schools. "The Mission will help us deliver better, monitor and regulate the day to day activities of the schools," she added.

The government was also considering a proposal to provide a tablet or a similar device to all students in the higher secondary education level. "We are focusing on delivering quality education by equipping the students and the teachers with technology. The government is working on a model to improve the skills of the students so as to equip them for employability," the official said.

Ms Chauhan noted that the government was facing a major challenge in retaining the students at the schools as the dropout rate in the higher secondary level was around 70 per cent.

"We have managed to bring in maximum number of children to the schools in the elementary level, but the dropout rate is still high in higher secondary level. We have been not able to retain the students when they reach the higher secondary level," she added.

The discussion assumes significance as Amrita University has developed a unique tablet-based multimedia learning programme for the education in villages. "It takes into account the learning needs of multi-grade rural students and is exclusively designed for the tablet format, taking into considering its screen size and low processing power" explained Raghu Raman, the director of Amrita University's Centre for Research in Advanced Technologies for Education (CREATE).

Dr Raman said that the learning programme is designed to work where there is little or no Internet connectivity, and that, in the first phase, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam languages will be supported.

AMRITA RITE – Rural India Tablet Education for After-School Tutoring and Adult Literacy to be used in the 101 adopted villages project of Mata Amritanandamayi Math (MAM) figures among the launch of new humanitarian programmes on the occasion of Mata Amritanandamayi Devi's birthday on September 27.

Amrita has also developed a unique E-Learning system, A-VIEW (Amrita Virtual Interactive e-Learning World), which is cutting-edge video conferencing software, customized explicitly for Universities. AVIEW uses a network of four high-resolution displays to provide an immersive learning experience that almost equals being in an actual classroom. The Government of India has decided to deploy this platform in the thousands of colleges all over the country, thus attempting to overcome the shortage of highly qualified teachers.

The others dignitaries who spoke at the discussion were Dr Vijay Bhatkar, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIT-Delhi, Dr Rajaram Sharma, Joint Director, NCERT, Dr Mary Jane Parmentier, Global Technology and Development Program, School of Sustainability, Arizona State University, Professor Kamal Bijlani of E-learning, Amrita University, Dr Shiffon Chatterjee, E-learning, Amrita University and Professor Prema Nedungadi of E-learning, Amrita University.