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E Learning: A New Normal for Education Sector

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ABSTRACT

One of the major shifts that has been shifted during the time Covid 19 crisis and subsequent lockdown is the move of education institutions to go online for their interactions, classes, lectures and mentoring the students in all areas. Online education has made the possibility of on demand classes at anywhere or anytime, on any digital device, but it has turned the education into a new challenging face for the teachers, administration and students. Certainly, e learning is not so new to education community, but at this point of time it became the only possible mean that has been the key to ensure that students continue their learning and engaged with the studies. The point to be duly noted is that we live in dynamic world that is ripe with new possibilities. During this unexpected crisis of fight against Covid 19, there need not be a compromise on health or future of students. As a result, education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e learning, where by teaching is undertaken remotely. While the world may return to a semblance of its former state, this rapid change in education system highlighted the value of technology and online learning in education adds to teaching. Today, online classes are ongoing but it does not mean that it has reached to a state of perfection. There are several challenges which have been seen due to the sudden shift of education to virtual mode as it would difficult not only for students but for whole education fraternity to adapt this mode of learning so easily and fast. Therefore, without doubt the implementation of this new normal in education sector is not an easy task in the country like India but at the same time, only this remedy is available in the hand of education community.

Keywords: Digital education, Education, Teachers, Students.

The education system has closed its door since March, 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the education sector globally. The deadly virus touched almost every sector of the world including education sector. The COVID-19 crisis has forced education systems worldwide to find alternative and as a result, Digital Education or E Learning came up on an

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unprecedented scale, and it is not wrong to say that Digital education was the only possible mean to overcome from the situation.

All the stakeholders in the education system like teachers, students, staffs etc. are left with one solution that is E learning. But the concerned is, how far online education is helpful and how far it is possible to implement the digital education system in the country like India.

The challenges of online education are multifaceted. Definitely, it could not be easy for the education fraternity to cope with this new pattern of education, as digital education require certain things like - Internet, Android phone/laptop and some technical knowledge. We cannot deny the fact that there are students who don't have internet connectivity, a laptop/ Android phone or any other means required for digital education. On the other hand, all teachers are also not so trained and updated with the new technologies. However, every coin has two sides; similarly Digital Education has some positive and negative impact on the Education System.

Digital education is convenient and flexible. It brings education right to your home. At this time, where the Covid 19 cases surges at its peak the only possible mean through which a student can be in touch with book is digital education. The online option is a need in this pandemic situation. It has brought education to students without going anywhere. Probably, students are finding it a welcome change from strict schedules and long-distance commutes to attend classes. For some others, who find learning in large classes intimidating, this may be a less stressful option. Many teachers are making the best of this situation by exploring new methods of teaching and assessment.

However, the moment digital education moves from an option to the only means of learning and that too for long term, the bad and ugly things slowly become evident. And it is not wrong to say that India is beginning to get a taste of this now.

One of the common hurdles for the digital education is that all teachers may not be well versed with the latest technology and sudden expectation from them to upgrade and from students to adapt it is quite unfair. Body language and eye contact, which are important cues for the teacher, are difficult to perceive in an online classes. How many students have paid attention in a class? Of those, how many understood the lesson? Is the teaching pace alright? Are some students getting left behind? These questions arise even in traditional classrooms, but they are harder to address in online classes. Apart from this, interrupted power supply, weak or non-existent internet connectivity, and unaffordability to buy necessary devices are major concerns. Due to this, India has witnessed many unfortunate incidents like young students committing suicides for not getting laptop/ phone for their online classes.

On the other hand, another hurdle that digital education is witnessed, the nuisance that has been created mostly by students during the session. There are various digital platform which had been used by the teachers to conduct their online classes, where the students join to listen the session. It is not wrong to say that the teachers give their best to conduct the online classes so that the session will be productive. However, there are few students who create nuisance in multi variety way by playing music during the session, using another apps, joining the session with fake Id, obscene photo etc. This standpoint of the students not only disturbs the session but also effect the sanctity of the class and teachers. And it would be very difficult for the teachers to manage such circumstances and conduct the classes in proper manner. As students, they should maintain certain curtsey and act in a proper manner whether the classes will be conducted in physical or online mode. Because, we should not forget that teacher is a nation builder and their dignity is the utmost importance. But, at the same time there are teachers and some students who put extra efforts to conduct the classes in proper manner and that are only the need of hour.

Definitely, without doubt traditional way of teaching cannot be replicated by digital education but it is also true that today, digital learning has emerged as a necessary resource for students and education sector across the world. Now, digital education is new normal for this sector. Even though there are hurdles to fully implement this new normal but we don't left with any other option at this time of crisis. Both, teachers and students need to understand the graveness of the situation and join their hands together for this new era of education. It is pertinent to note here that this new era of education would certainly be prove very beneficial in near future because its open the door for many new developments that might occur, once everything will sort out.

At last, I want to conclude that even though e learning has some drawbacks but at the same time, at this point of time where every sector is suffering in one or other way, education community came up with a new dimension which not only help the students to keep up with their books but also trained them with new way of education. However, to make online education more effective accessible and safer, various online resource, training programs and schemes has to adopted by the Government of India for teachers, students and education institution. Online education opens up a lot of possibilities for teachers and students alike. Yet, it may widen the inequalities in the socio-economic fabric of India due to the hurdles, it is facing. Good vision, sincere efforts and time would definitely show India the way ahead.
