



# CONTEMPORARY TIDE IN VIRTUAL EDUCATION

**Mr. Rinkal Gupta**  
Lecturer  
Dogra Degree College

## ABSTRACT

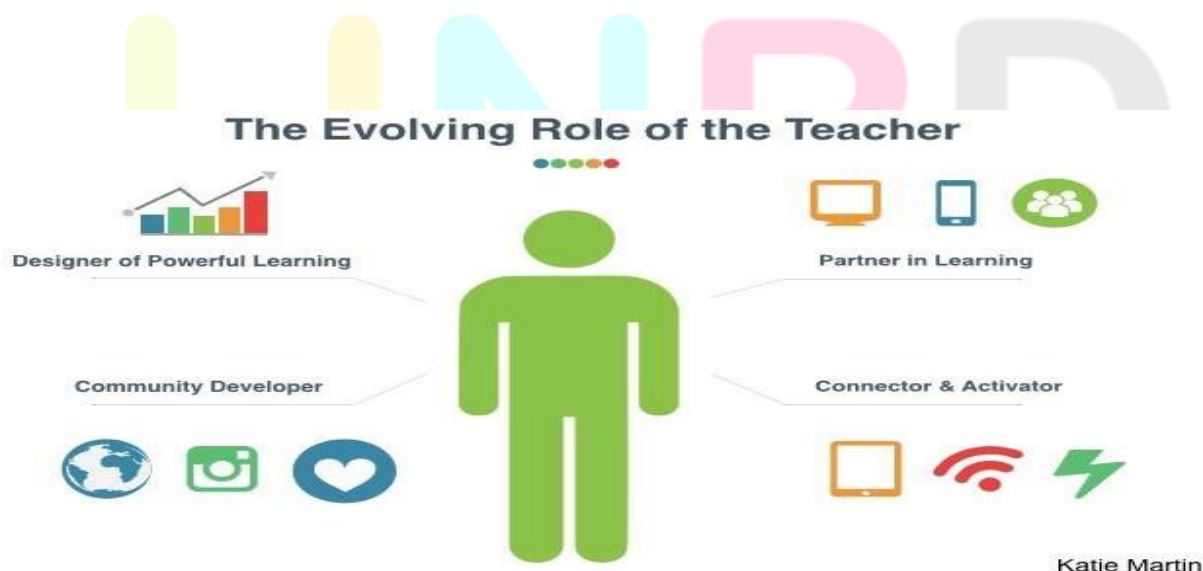
The sudden impact of corona pandemic in our country not only affected the global economy but harshly damaged our physical, social and mental wellbeing. Education is a backbone of any country which is brutally devastated during this pandemic. This pandemic led to the closure of Educational Institutions across the world. The COVID-19 outbreak has opened our eyes towards the shattered healthcare system and it has affected all aspects of life. The whole education system has been suddenly shifted digitally which is a huge challenge for both the students and teachers to cope up with. Since the education system has been turned upside down, is it a challenge, trend, boon or bane for developing countries like India? In this paper, I will deliberate on the challenges faced by the teacher during online education as it has both positive and negative impact on Education. This paper also focuses on the Education which became a matter of concern during the times of COVID-19 pandemic and therefore we can say that digital education system should be geared up and there is a need to strengthen the internet accessibility Pan India.

**Keywords:** *Online Teaching-Learning, Covid-19, Closure of Educational Institutions, Digital Education, Challenges*

## INTRODUCTION

The covid-19 outbreak has forced us to have a look into the education in the country which has come to a standstill, whether it is schools, colleges, placements and entrance exams. Online learning involves courses offered by postsecondary institutions that are 100% virtual, excluding massively open online courses. In the domain of higher education there are two distinct methods in which a learner can engage with an academic

institution; the traditional method of brick-and-mortar facilities and the virtual method through online learning. We all have being wrenched out of our comfort zones from 2020 and in crisis management mode. The status of online learning quickly changed from optional to essential during the global pandemic. However, it comes with a set of unique challenges and benefits. The first task at hand is to create a two-way communication channel between us and students. It can avoid the out-of-sight and out-of- mind syndrome. This article will focus on the virtual platform of online Teaching-learning, Closure of Educational Institutions, Digital Education, and Challenges. Today's online learning is the newest development in distance education that began in the mid-1990s with the spread of the internet. Learner experience is typically asynchronous, but may also incorporate synchronous elements. The vast majority of institutions utilize a Learning Management System for the administration of online courses. This type of learning is especially beneficial to students who live far away from campus, have busy work schedules, family demands, and other commitments. Online courses are also an excellent option for students who prefer to work independently at any time of day. Students taking online courses will utilize the ELearning Platform. Online courses are taught using a combination of instructional technologies which will vary for each course: PowerPoint presentations, video tutorials, learning activities on the Web, discussion board, and research using the Library or the Web. Virtual classes will never be a perfect replacement for in-person learning, but there's room for replacement. In a recent Harvard business school webinar on crisis management, Professor Dutch has pointed out correctly, "In very difficult circumstances-which I think is fair to say what we face right now - leaders and teachers have to do two things. You have to be brutally honest and you have to offer hope." When everything is uncertain, all rules go out the window. You cannot expect things to go on as planned. Hence during this pandemic it becomes important for teachers to start thinking in a more agile, innovation-first way. I suggest you to follow these tools that help you to indicate the chances of having a successful online learning experience.



## Online Teaching-Learning:-

As we all know that the computer and internet were introduced in late 20th century, e-learning tools and delivery methods expanded. The first MAC in the 1980's enabled individuals to have computers in their homes, making it easier for them to learn about particular subjects and develop certain skill sets. Then, in the following decade, virtual learning environments began to truly thrive, with people gaining access to a wealth of online information and e-learning opportunities.

Education is the process of transferring knowledge, values, methods, skills, and beliefs from one individual to another. Distance education originated in the United States in the 1800's when teachers and learners at the University of Chicago were at different locations and tried to connect through correspondence courses. In the mid-1980s, the first online college courses were initiated by several universities and schools.

1. The advent of the Internet was a catalyst for moving distance online education to the next level
2. The Internet is now playing a bigger role in our lives and dictating how we live, socialize, teach, and learn. As the Internet is developing into a main educational tool, online education offers the educator and the learner access to numerous resources. During the last decade online education of various kinds, often called distance education or web-based education, has become a normal part of many university programs. Online teaching and learning is designed to reach and engage the modern learner on one-to-one basis anywhere, anytime. A popular one involves Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), which have grown involving many researchers and research institutions.
3. The reasons for offering online course include easy and convenient access for students, higher degree completion rates, and the appeal of such courses to nontraditional students. In a similar vein, barriers to the adoption of online courses include lack of faculty commitment and high costs of implementation and delivery of the courses.
4. The key to a successful implementation of online teaching and learning is taking student characteristics into account. Strategies that work for conventional fulltime students may not be effective for adult learners with full-time jobs and family responsibilities. These students are mostly practically-oriented with keen interest in tools and technologies.

Online teaching offers exciting opportunities to expand the learning environment for diverse student populations. As the demand for online teaching increases, college professors may be asked to consider teaching their classes' online. Online teaching shares much with face-to-face teaching, but it also has unique set of skills and requirements. Both approaches are similar in content, except in pace and delivery. Rather than developing the courses from scratch, a company has emerged to take care of the courses. Professors just need to use Course Management System (CMS) software to prepare and deliver their courses. Using the software allows instructors to get it right from the beginning.

For online teaching to be successful, it is recommended that the instructor should follow the following seven principles:

- (1) Encourage student participation
- (2) Encourage student cooperation
- (3) Encourage active learning
- (4) Give prompt feedback
- (5) Emphasize time on task
- (6) Communicate high expectations
- (7) Respect diverse talents and ways of learning.

The process of learning is complex and it involves the auditory, visual, and tactile senses. The traditional way of learning at a campus university is not for everyone. Online learning is for those who wish to study for a degree alongside work or other commitments. Online learning has been referred to as a form of distance education and as web-based learning, e-learning, and digital learning. Online learning at your own pace is beneficial for a high-quality college degree. Whether offered on campus or delivered online, each course offering must meet the same rigorous criteria and the strict academic standards. The only difference is in the way the course is delivered. Generally, students are required to have access to a computer system with high-speed Internet connections. They may also expect electronic academic support services such as registration, financial aid, libraries, tutoring, and advisement.

### **COVID-19 AND DIGITAL EDUCATION:-**

Since the COVID -19 pandemic has disrupted the normal lifestyle of people across the globe, the virtual world has come to the rescue. Online education has emerged as an alternative to ordinary face to face classes. There has been a huge surge in search phrases like “how to teach online”, “best online teaching platforms”, “online teaching tools”, and “online teaching techniques”. Finding the right online teaching platform was the first step. Learning how to use the various features correctly is important. But using a platform and its features to teach effectively and ensure that all students are indeed learning is paramount.

Teaching staff had to prepare and deliver their classes from home, with all the practical and technical challenges this entails, and often without proper technical support .Various video conferencing apps like Zoom, Google Classrooms, and Go to Meeting are providing the right platforms to conduct live online classes.

Teachers have been engaging the students with technology-aided teaching. Home assignments are being sent over Whatsapp, in the form of PDF's, online tests are being conducted and the responses are being assessed virtually. Concepts are being taught in the form of PowerPoint presentations, recorded video and audio lectures. Doubts are being cleared by being available to the students all the time by being a part of student-teacher Whatsapp groups.

Online teaching is slowly making inroads as it offers an opportunity to conduct virtual classrooms and provides a learning platform, by being in the confines of our homes.

Though online teaching comes with its own advantages, the possibility of this replacing regular and conventional teaching is debatable. Online teaching can never replace the real face to face interactive teaching.

The crisis is exacerbating pre-existing education disparities by reducing the opportunities for many of the most vulnerable children, youth, and adults – those living in poor or rural areas, girls, refugees, persons with disabilities and forcibly displaced persons – to continue their learning. Learning losses also threaten to extend beyond this generation and erase decades of progress, not least in support of girls and young women’s educational access and retention.

But these changes have also highlighted that the promising future of learning, and the accelerated changes in modes of delivering quality education, cannot be separated from the imperative of leaving no one behind. This is true for children and youth affected by a lack of resources or enabling environment to access learning. It is true for the teaching profession and their need for better training in new methods of education delivery, as well as support. It is true for the education community at large, including local communities, upon whom education continuity depends during crisis and who are key to building back better.

### **Bombshell and after bombshells of the pandemic:-**

#### **THE WORLD OF EDUCATION BEFORE COVID-19**

Before the pandemic, the world was already facing formidable challenges in fulfilling the promise of education as a basic human right. Despite the near universal enrolment at early grades in most countries, an extraordinary number of children –more than 250 million – were out of school, and nearly 800 million adults were illiterate.

Moreover, even for those in institutions, learning was far from guaranteed. Some 387 million or 56 per cent of primary school age children worldwide were estimated to lack basic reading skills.

#### **CLOSURE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the largest disruption of education in history, having already had a near universal impact on learners and teachers around the world, from pre-primary to secondary schools, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, universities, adult learning, and skills development establishments. By midApril 2020, 94 per cent of learners worldwide were affected by the pandemic, representing 1.58 billion children and youth, from pre-primary to higher education, in 200 countries.

The ability to respond to school closures changes dramatically with level of development: for instance, during the second quarter 2020, 86 per cent of children in primary education have been effectively out of school in

countries with low human development –compared with just 20 per cent in countries with very high human development.

### **Learning to learn during COVID-19:-**

As the health crisis unfolded, causing massive socio-economic disruptions, education systems around the world were swift to react and adapt. Governments responded quickly to ensure education continuity and protect the safety of learners and education actors by closing institutions and other learning spaces. However, the unequal provision of learning modalities during closures will likely create inequities in the longer term.

### **SUPPORTS FOR TEACHERS' NEEDS:-**

From the onset of the pandemic, teachers were immediately tasked with implementing distance learning modalities, often without sufficient guidance, training, or resources. In many contexts, teacher professional development has moved online or been disseminated via telephone and video applications, but marginalized teachers may have missed out on such support. Web-based class meetings and messaging applications have become useful tools and new ways of communicating with their learners and the education community.

Teachers across the globe were largely unprepared to support continuity of learning and adapt to new teaching methodologies. Even in contexts with adequate infrastructure and connectivity, many educators lack the most basic ICT skills, meaning they will likely struggle with their own ongoing professional development, let alone with facilitating quality distance learning. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted that both initial and in-service teacher education are in need of reform to better train teachers in new methods of education delivery.

Teachers' physical health was put at risk when required to provide face-to-face education for the children of essential workers and vulnerable children. Adding to the fear of being exposed to the virus was a fear of losing salaries and benefits, all while coping with increased workloads and family responsibilities. This is especially true of female teachers who had to continue teaching and bore a disproportionate share of family responsibilities.

Education support personnel Part-time teachers on temporary contracts other (includes higher education, ECE workers, substitute teachers and others)

Non-payment of teacher salaries not only poses a problem for individual, family, and community well-being, but also hinders the delivery of quality education. In the short term, many teachers may need to turn to alternative sources of income and will be unable to support pupils in distance learning. In the long term, schools may face teacher shortages due to attrition. The crisis has been a reminder of the essential role of teachers and that government and other key partners have an ongoing duty of care to education personnel.

### **Opportunities**

The students get so many opportunities through online learning. The retention power is also increased as the students do not feel tired due to travelling. The learning from home also provides a comfortable zone to focus as students are flexible to choose the right environment for themselves. Online teaching helps in exploring new apps for delivering lecture. Online teaching is more flexible in nature in terms of time and location.

### **Challenges**

- One of the biggest challenges we teachers are facing is how to keep students on board and also difficult to avoid their distraction from other social networking sites during learning period.
- Turning teaching material into digital format at short notice has been a challenge as few teachers have strong digital and IT skills.
- Both teachers and students are facing internet connectivity issues.
- Students are from different social background and not every student has access to laptop or internet connection. So due to this every student cannot attend the online classes.
- Conferencing apps like Google Meet, Google Classroom, Zoom and WebEx are the popular apps used for conducting interactive classes.... Though very popular, these systems need to handle video content they require high bandwidth for smooth flow of classes.
- Many channels already webcasting popular classes on various subjects. This is one of the cheapest ways of online classes. The drawback is that this medium does not have video contents.

### **Suggestions**

- Firstly teachers as well as students should understand online teaching practices and expectation. We should fully commit ourselves and participate in the virtual classroom as required. We should complete our learning task and assignments on time moreover students and teachers should be self-disciplined.
- To stay on track with our online course we should identify our learning objectives and goals. The learning objectives and goals of e-learning can be an excellent roadmap during online learning. We should focus on our goals.
- The teachers should build a proper plan. The teacher should have a proper Calendar system, some important dates like exams date, deadlines for submitting assignments, etc.
- Through online classes the teacher should set time limits.
- In spite of sharing study material on whatsapp groups we can take these classes through Google Meet app which is more effective in teaching and learning process.

- Regular classes according to time table made students very tired and frustrating therefore study breaks are necessary.
- It is very necessary to participate in online classes. Connecting with students virtually will enhance tremendously learning experience so the teachers as well as students should participate actively in online discussions and group activities.
- The teachers should motivate the students to understand the need and ease of digitalization and modern forms of teach which the only way to prevent the spread of this pandemic situation. Online learning can be made more engaging only with the help of online teaching strategies. Face to face interaction is very necessary even in online classes. We can interact with the students only video conferencing tools like Zoom, Google Meet, etc.
- Frequent changes in teaching style and online mode of deliverance of lectures should be minimized as that may lead to confusion among students and can prove to be challenging.

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## Conclusion

The shock of the COVID-19 crisis on education has been unprecedented. It has set the clock back on the attainment of international education goals, and disproportionately affected the poorer and most vulnerable. And yet, the education community has proved resilient, laying a groundwork for the rebound. There remains a risk of a downward spiral, in a negative feedback loop of learning loss and exclusion. Yet every negative spiral of aggravating socio-economic circumstances suggests its reverse image of a positive spiral, one which would lead to the future of education we want: one of inclusive change in education delivery, of unleashing the potential of individuals, and of collective fulfillment, in all areas of life, through education investment.

There is unlimited drive, and untapped resources, we can count on for the restoration, not only of education's essential services, but of its fundamental aspirations. It is the responsibility of governments and the international community to stay true to principles and conduct reforms, so that, not only will the children and youth regain their promised future, but all education stakeholders find their role in making it happen.

Online teaching and learning process is immensely helpful in today's situation of pandemic. Rest every system has loopholes. The objective is not to provide a full-proof system immediately that seems more comfortable

saying than doing. The efforts must be in place to reduce the leakages to the maximum extent and that has to be done on a war footing basis. We have a reactive system that needs to be changed to an active and proactive system. There are many glitches of the online teaching-learning process but we will have to look into the specific needs, challenges, opportunities and accordingly bring the best out of the situation that is healthy and productive in the long run for all the stakeholders. New challenges and new solutions only will make our educational system effective and more competitive.



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