

A New Paradigm in Education: A Study on Global and National Scenario with Special Reference to West Bengal

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Abstract: *Digital Learning or e-Learning is “New Normal” today. Around the world over 1.2 billion youngsters are out of the class rooms. Consequently, teaching has modified enormously with the typical emergence of e-learning in accordance with which teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. Studies recommended that online learning has been manifested to grow further and will take less time to grow further, owing to the coronavirus pandemic worldwide.*

In reply to appreciable demand a large number of online teaching platforms are presenting free access to their systems. Some think that the haphazard and quick shift to online learning without proper instructions, inadequate bandwidth, hardly any ground work, will ensure in a poor user incident that is unfavorable to assist growth, others think that a new blended system of education will appear with remarkable advantages. These are however, questions to overcome. A substantial number of students, without dependable internet access or technology find it difficult to take part in digital learning. This fundamental issue is observed over countries and between income brackets within countries.

For those who do have access to the right technology, there is proof that teaching and learning online can be more successful in many ways. However, the success of online education differs amidst age groups. The simple agreement on children, mainly younger ones is that an organized environment is needed because kids are diverted. It is obvious that this pandemic has completely upset an education system although many asserts has already futile its materiality. In this present study, effort have been made to understand the advantages, disadvantages and impact of digital learning on students as well as their parents and teachers in India.

Key Words: *COVID-19 Pandemic, Lockdown, E-learning platforms, digital learning, virtual classrooms, opportunities, crisis.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

E-education is not a new paradigm in education. It was being used before and the ultimatum of E-education is not restricted to only COVID-19 pandemic. But since the start of this pandemic, the scenario of E-education has gone changed a lot. Now our education learners are required to acquire more technological progress in the curriculum. The idea of leaping educational institutions and learning from home has always been thrilling and stimulating until one consider the logistic. How practicable it is to take a class at home while spending time with the family, instead of travelling far to attend college or school, is the question?

Online education is not a new idea but the situation like COVID-19 and lockdown in the country forced the present situation into a virtual mode. Due to eruption of COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO disclosed that about 1.37 billion students in 138 countries have been impacted because of shutdown of schools, colleges and Universities. Under such circumstances, online education is the best bet. In response to the present demand many online platforms are being developed and were already there but never became so famous before. Use of online platforms for video conferencing like Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook Live, YouTube Live, Jio-Meet, Microsoft Teams etc. are becoming famous as they are helping teachers to interact with their students face to face. Number of participants who can join a single video conference are adding to the popularity of these sites.

This new system of e-communication process holds out the probability of demand entrance or approach to content anytime, anywhere on any digital instrument but this spontaneous virtualization-based education is transpired to be challenging one for both the administration/teacher and students.

Digital learning nowadays is a combination of already present cultural conventions like existing reading materials and Course books and conventions of software media like PDF.

Throughout the country COVID-19 pandemic forced the educational institution shutdown, as a consequence education system have been changed dramatically during the COVID age with a considerable rise of e-learning in accordance with which teaching is accomplished slightly and on digital platforms.

Though e-learning displays a reservation to both students and teachers over technology and ingress, it is keeping everybody busy with lectures, worksheets and assignments. So as teachers and students, tens of thousands of learners are joined to computers and smartphone screens and enter into a new world of virtual lectures, tutorial and assessment. So, let us reset education and learning to meet 21st century's needs, shaping a path from education to employability and economic independence.

Let's commit to collectively helping to break a link in the shackles holding education back. Let's blend the lessons of the past with the technology of the present and future to truly transform education giving students the ability to think, learn and evolve no matter what the challenges that await them tomorrow and unleash their potential and benefit to the world.

Therefore, it will be engrossing to see, if the changes coronavirus has caused in the education system remain permanently or not. Only future will have an answer for this.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

T.S. Russo, S Benson: 2005 - Tending the worry of Teachers, administrators and students regarding the effectiveness of online learning. It is suitable to impact result unstable, in specific effective and considerable learning in view of the needs and characteristics of the asynchronous online.

Stefen Hrestinoksi: 2008 - In computer and educational journal vol. 51, issue 4, the attention is focused in a crucial test for E-learning to inspire learner involvement. It also appreciates that learners involvement is additional complicated feature i.e. doing, communicating, thinking, feeling and belonging is suggested.

C. Hart: 2012 - Through journal of interactive online learning examined elements related with students perseverance in online learning and its outcome of damaging is a recognized problem.

S. Palvia, P. Gupta, D. Mahapatra & R. Paria: 2018 - Highlighted low internet insight, low public respect for online teaching and absence of online educational archives and principal barrier to the development of online learning.

Mayleen Dorcas, B. Castro & Gilbert: 2019 - "Efficacy of online education courses for higher education institution using Meta-analysis" discloses that the internet has compel online education feasible and many teachers and schools are attentive online education streams to increase and upgrade the student teaching consequences while combating the scarcity in resources, amenities and equipment especially in higher education institution.

Edu Pert School Management System: 2020 - In the article "Online education in India" it is revealed that online education in India has make a great amount of progress with the evolution of Technology. India is one of the nation that is emerging at an aggressive rate in terms of technology.

Leena Chandran Wadia: 2020 - It is understandable that the pandemic state is expected to push the next academic year to resume online. Teachers are sensibly making use of the autonomy they have been given and the abridged communication time to escort students through the activity based teaching whereas parents have a propensity to bother about permitting too excessive screen time to their children.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS:

While preparing this paper we looked for the information on Internet. We communicated via internet and done all the discussions through Chat & Tweet. These practices also influence the teaching and learning environment. We have gone through different newspapers, journals and magazines during the lockdown period to understand the mind of the learner.

Through the fieldwork in the rural areas we came to understand the difficulties of the rural students and teachers. The students in the urban areas where internet is accessible acknowledge short tutorial videos as learning materials and also as a procedure for giving and receiving individual response. In collecting information during the lockdown time we used computers and gadgets like mobile phones, tablets, etc. in same way to provide training or learning materials.

4. REASONS OF ONLINE CLASSES:

Online teaching which appeared as a remedy for the crisis is rapidly noticeable as a new paradigm in education. Major world transforming incidents are frequently pointing for rapid change such as the rise of e-commerce post SARS. While it may be too early to forecast, it is foreseeable that e-learning is going to majorly impact education and indicate the arrival of a new normal.

To evaluate the origin in favour of online learning the following points are to be taken into consideration: -

- (a) Online capabilities-based teaching
- (b) Generating high quality teaching Pathways for future
- (c) Better Attendance
- (d) Attributable Learning
- (e) High Commitment
- (f) Reduced Interruptions
- (g) Rapid Judgement

(a) Online Capabilities-Based Teaching: - Competency or ability-based learning acknowledge a student to attain movable and negotiable skills and competencies. Such teaching basically is a learner-centered of attention and not reliant on any other component. The salient features that every student has a different learning system and level of engagement usually go unaddressed and without any direction in systematically offline classes, where many students feel shy in interacting with the teacher due to peer competition with bossing and autocratic students in the class. The online classes after resilient and the ability for students to obtain the teaching of a capacity and proficiency. The major focus here is on skills, knowledge and behaviour, bind with deliberate objectives.

(b) Generating High Quality Teaching: - Skill, improvement and expansion is key to career growth in competitive times we live in. Numerous online education programs made it simple for students to improve new skills while carry on with the regular course at a college or university level. Online education is a perfect solution and maybe the best path to train and teach. It is usual to comprehend on MBA student with a specialisation of HR to do online course in Data Analytics to enlarge his skills and likewise accommodating with an online environment will make students intimate with the nature of work and requisite capabilities required with changing times.

(c) Better Attendance: - Due to outbreak of COVID-19 virus the educational institutes were forced to execute online classes. There is a significant development in the presence of students in online classes. As long distance travelling for classes is not required, therefore, tech savvy and pro-digital generation are devoting the idea of an online classes. We don't need to travel long distances and can be attended from anywhere; results in saving of commuting time which can be utilized to extra learning. There is also a remarkable development in involvement and interaction.

(d) Attributable Teaching: - The execution, presentation and learning potentiality of students are comfortably identifiable in online classes. In online system, particulars of each student are separately stored and digitally accountable while digital tools allow teachers to comfortably mark students with teaching, the same is difficult with face to face education.

The scientific devices supply comprehensive reports about every student's achievement and development. This assists the teachers to generate online classes according to the learning patterns and marking of students.

(e) High Commitment: - Online education information is naturally motivating, concise, extra collective, integrated with characteristics like surveys, polls, quizzes, etc. As a consequence, online teaching enhances student's commitment. The classes with multimedia content are quickly and simply approachable on any Gadgets and gives more authority to students over how they want to take the information & learning.

(f) Reduced Interruptions: - Next the most important thing about online teaching is that evaluation of a student is a continuing procedure. There is a large number of student's involvement but there is no peer diversion. Isolated from the opposition and commanding students in raising doubts and commencing an interaction is sure benefit here. Further some notions are excellent and better taught in online class. For example, there are different devices and means in Engineering which, with the help of visual results are being instruct efficiently than earlier.

(g) Rapid Judgement: - Online classes have authorised the educators to speedily evaluate the learning of students at the same time they are teaching.

Unlike in the conventional classroom, tech-enabled classes permit the teachers to display a quiz of 2-3 questions after every 10 minutes or after each Idea or manage a fact-finding pole. Students, those are bashful may actively take part in answering "Question Answer" classes which remove their fear.

It is to be noted that modifying and regulating learning into the standing time table is one of the finest grounds of online mode of education. The resilient assists in maintaining a job while working on education. Students of online mode of learning are given the freedom to complete lesson within the stipulated time as they like. This permits students to finish their coursework without foregoing hours at their present job or valuable time spent with family.

Online teaching is frequently more attainable and reasonable. The cost of going to college is one of the significant grounds desiring students hold back from registering in a plan of action to campus, the resilient of the online teaching although permits them to resume earning money along with their online classes, that does not convey it has attained conditions of excellence.

5. NEW OPPORTUNITIES :

As all the schools, colleges and Universities are shut down due to COVID-19 pandemic, this sudden closure of educational institutes and shifting to digital or remote platform of learning has opened a new opportunity for digital learning marketers. Earlier before COVID-19 pandemic, a significant rise in the use of technology and digital platforms in schools and colleges as they were adopting new and innovative methods of teaching and learning, could be seen. Few digital platforms specifically for Educational purpose at school level like EduComp, ExtraMarks, MeritNation, Byju's, etc. and at university level like LMS, YouTube live, Facebook Live, etc. were already in the market and have taken extended education to the level where anybody can learn from anywhere.

COVID-19 pandemic has created a huge demand of online learning platforms due to which many providers are offering free services to access their content. Providing free live classes to the students has increased the demand of such platforms. According to CEO of BYJU's Mr. Mrinal Mohit, after announcement of free live classes on its App, number of students using the app has increased 200%. Many new online learning companies have started giving lucrative offers and innovative method of teaching and learning for both teachers and students. Coaching institutes who were using purely conventional method of teaching have shifted to online teaching and have adopted methods which can add innovation to their teaching process and attract more and more students. These institutes or even individual teachers are creating whole setup with camera, microphones, laptop, desktop and whiteboards, etc. to create recorded classes which will make students feel that they are sitting in their classroom and having class in front of them.

Undoubtedly these on-going lockdowns and the spread of coronavirus have created a situation where the future of education can't be predicted. The pressure is on Human Resource and Development ministry as well as UGC to come up with some concrete plans for the future of youth of the country. The present crisis has changed the educational scenario altogether and digital learning has emerged as an only resort to continue education without any hindrances. Technology is being upgraded to provide students as well as teachers with all sorts of online learning opportunities on a regular basis.

Earlier, teaching was limited to the capacity of the class, time bound and within the city only but with the increasing demand of online classes, teachers can now reach out to hundreds of students simultaneously and at multiple places. Students who were not able to attend classes of their choice due to distance and money can now sit at the comfort of their home and attend such sessions online.

One big name in the field of Remote working is Google. With its series of online services like Google classrooms, Google Meet, YouTube, Google Docs, various Google office apps, etc., Google has made teaching, learning and conducting official Meetings or seminars remotely much easier. Since last six months it has upgraded all its facilities to match the market demand. With its all new features of GSuite, Google has made online or remote working worthy for many organisations/ institutions.

Not only private educational sectors but also Government of India is taking lots of initiatives to promote digital learning platforms like Diksha, e-Pathshala, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, SWAYAM, and many more. It has also started many educational channels especially for students of 10th and 12th and competitive exams aspirants to provide free education to socio-economically backward category. Government's effort to provide digitised education and easy internet access across the country including the rural areas, have transformed the learning methodology with the use of virtual classes, free access to educational contents and advanced learning tools.

Although the biggest limitation of digital technology in India is providing high speed internet access to rural or semi-urban areas and the network coverage in the areas where there's no electricity even today, but the efforts of our Government and the immediate need of the hour has changed the conventional method of Education forever. It has given birth to new opportunities and ideas and new career path for many Educators and Students.

6. Impact of Digital Learning on Students

When the Lockdown, as an only instrument to contain the Covid-19, was declared on 25th March, 2020, it was the period when board and university exams were going on. This sudden closure disrupted the education sector with an unpredictable situation. These last 4 months have left class 12th and final year (final year UG & PG) students with a dilemma and confusion in their minds regarding what should be their next step now. This was the period when all

university entrance exams, competitive exams and admission process were conducted. With the passing days and the community spread of coronavirus, government is forced to postpone all exams including JEE where nearly 934 thousands students are registered and NEET where approx. 1593 thousands students enrolled this year. Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate final year students are still facing the issue of whether their pending exams will be conducted or not. This has jeopardised their future career prospects. In fact, many companies have either cancelled or delayed their interviews due to the outbreak.

COVID-19 have changed many things like people are more cautious for their hygiene now, big gatherings are discouraged and it has also changed the conventional mode of education. Digital Learning is the only tool being embraced by all the private and Government schools and colleges to continue imparting education from home. Private schools were very prompt to adopt digital learning system as they were better equipped and had all the required infrastructure for e-learning. But within a span of 2-3 months Government has also made all the efforts to develop E-learning materials and provide infrastructure which can enable Government school teachers to provide remote learning. With viable solutions and easy affordable access to E-learning contents, education has now reached to rural areas too.

Digital learning has brought a complete revolution in Education sector. Students can now easily get in touch with content which is stored in the Data warehouse of internet. Many things or concepts which are not taught in classroom using chalk and board can be downloaded through internet and students can have insight of the content from the educators. This new learning is more innovative and helps student to retain the contents for a longer period as students learn what they see and do practically. With huge collection of videos and online courses provided by Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and unlimited access via web has made learning easier. India is considered to be the biggest market for MOOCs in the world after the USA. MOOC have enabled many students to avail high-quality contents sitting at their home and at their ease.

7. Impact of Digital Learning on Educators:

Educators are the back-bone of any educational organisation including our society. Their knowledge and expertise when exploited properly creates brilliant minds. In this difficult time too, teachers migrated to all together a new system and environment which they have never used. Their efficiency to adopt the new technology and striving hard to learn the techniques and methods to teach students in an innovative manner which will make these virtual classes fun-filled, is something to be admired and respected. Teachers have connected with their students through virtual classrooms, video conferencing, Learning Management System (LMS), and other digital tools and methods of learning.

However this new challenge has made Educators to work for long hours, learn new technologies and presentation methods in a very short span of time, much more that they were devoting earlier. Many of them have to purchase new laptops or desktops, whiteboards, webcams or other digital equipment to conduct the classes. They are not even paid anything extra for the efforts being put by them.

8. Online Learning: A Crisis:

The unexpected move of teaching to virtual occurs with multiple testing and arduous consequences. In a report furnished by UNESCO on April 21, 2020 draw attention to another worry about the online move. Giving a world view point, UNESCO noted as follows:

“Half of the total number of learners around 826 million i.e. 826 million students, kept out of the class room by the COVID-19 pandemic. They do not have access to a personal computer and 43% i.e. 706 million or 706 million, have no internet at home, when digital based distance learning is used to ensure educational continuity in the vast majority of countries.”

The principal constraints are in the demand for teachers to embrace their teaching methods to the device. The institution with distance education initiatives and e-Course hitherto have gateway to the e-Learning aid system, the curriculum is also outlined suitable with online recorded lectures and study materials in the shape of PDF and docs. Full-time students and teachers do not have any online e-mail account. Before lockdown and pandemic period whole time teachers and students never felt it necessary to create accounts on digital platforms and as a result, they never used computers as a mode of teaching.

In a physical classroom, framing communication is highly energetic, spirited and active and coarse demonstrator can also encourage reaction from students more comfortably but with online classes teachers required to be aware and concentrate more on innovative ways to make the convention more engaging and fascinating.

In India where internet usage is still low, this new teaching system may break down sorrowfully, consequently, the internet developed to be the significant provocation of e-education. In the preceding two decades there has been a

long deliberate and sensible endeavour on the part of the government to upgrade ingress to the internet in every sector. But in spite of these, India has to accept the internet provocation.

The Niti Aayog, in its master plan for new India @ 75 report, draws attention towards the standard and trustworthiness of the internet as a considerable constraint. It also reminds us that 55000 villages in the country are without mobile network coverage. Arranging classes for those students who have returned home during the emergency is very difficult. Students having attach to urban households are better to have internet access while students having closeness to rural households have difficulty to have an internet link.

Among students from rural households, maximum 28% are expected to have internet access at home. In India differentiating with other states, it is perceived that Kashmir is highly disturbed state during the lockdown phase.

Kashmir is lacking 4G internet, students are staggering under a double unpleasant situation of slower internet and its strong for them to make progress at the same speed with their equivalents in other states. Colleges, institution are detecting and discovering it (out of the way) difficult to contact to the students with 2G internet.

From managing with primary matter like internet connectivity and India's arrantly unreliable power supply to more issues like e-tests and e-exams, students have come under huge stress.

In the year 2020 final year students are worst impacted because due to outbreak of pandemic they have not passed out. Argument after argument with the UGC is going, both the parties are correct on their own argument but the ball is in the supreme court for judgement. Therefore, preparation for placement and application to universities for higher education have all gradually come to a standstill.

Some of the universities in India carried out an in-house assessment with students in some states on issue connected with on-line learning. It is observed that about 90% of the respondents have a mobile phone, about 60% of them could only entire online classes sporadically or not at all. Fascinatingly among the anxiety lifted about online direction 40% described undependable connectivity as being a great obstacle, while 30% set forth the cost data. Remarkably 10 % reported unknown electricity supply as a worry.

Access to the internet as a matter of compulsion does not essentially means that a family has internet at home as less than half of the household that have any ingress to the internet possess a computing tool.

Some have access to mobile phones which may be having very basic features but students and teachers possess a computer and laptops are precious few. Learning as well as teaching on a mobile phone is very frantic, for example regulating lectures for 50 students on a mobile phone is a strain in itself. Teachers even won't be good enough to force the circumstances.

In spite of the fact that 78% of India's 1.3 billion population has mobile phones, in rural areas it is about 57% as stated by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. About 68% of the students in higher classes have enter to a smartphone a further lurch and online presentation has been endorsed for them. Once as a child enter in class 12, action for the board exams or competitive exams start.

During the lockdown time, teleconference software like zoom, Google, duo, etc. has seen volatile extension, its uncomplicated and suitable in an application. But the advantageousness has also go along with augmented examination and unrestricted to exposed safety screw ups. The present circumstances is, of course an unheralded one. In spite of that we should all the time make ready for such circumstances. The subject is not of hardly 1 or 2 weeks of online learning and online exams. The actual query is why our teaching in such a digital age is straggle so behind. The necessity of e-Learning is not cramped to only such crisis, our education designer requires to embrace additional technological evolution in the syllabuses.

9. Global Scenario:

Absence of connectivity is a vast issue worldwide but the children who have taken entry to the internet but do not aware about its use in a cautious, answerable and ethical manner is a matter of concern. In global perspectives, 60% of children have undergone at the minimum in one cyber hazard i.e. cyber bullying, gaming disorder, online sexual behaviour or recognition hazard, forgery news and others. Hazard does not mean injury or pain but it is a vast number of children having a pessimistic experience in online.

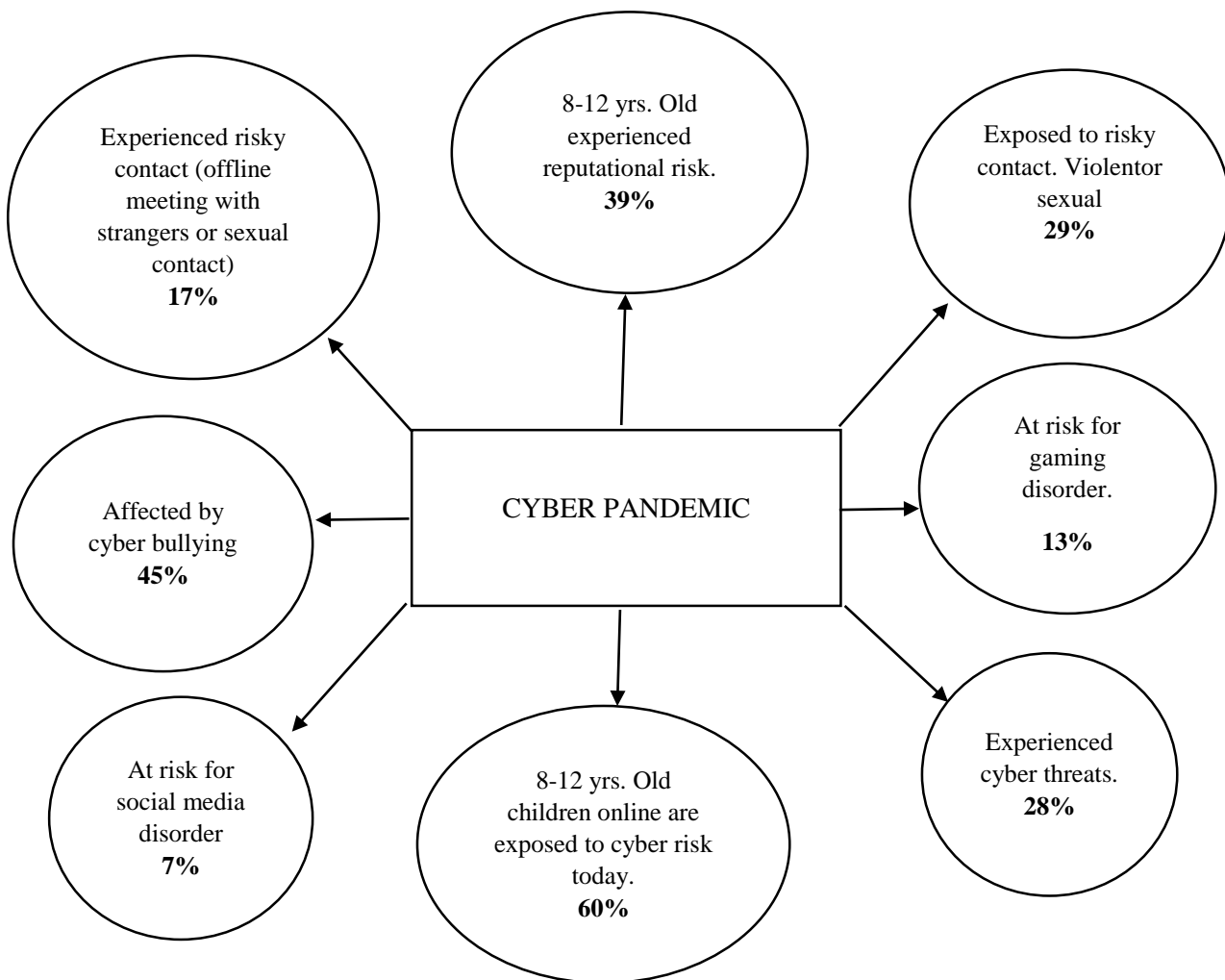
According to UNESCO 50% of children throughout the globe whose schools have shutdown do not have access to a computer, so undoubtedly there is an immense digital split. But those who have access to computer, recorded a tremendous spike or disorderly screen time among children and there is a dearth of help from the teachers as well as the parents.

Restricting screen hours is hard for present abnormally attached families. Since children are online for a lowest six hours at school in a day. Therefore, in terms of assessment practice, these children's habitual amusement exercise is also about six hours. So, these children are fundamentally exhibited to screen round the clock. Investigation reveals restricted screen hour and the subject matter being observed is connected to stronger and physical health and upgraded school grades and pro-social conduct.

In cyber intelligence world, a scientific attitude has been taken where children are not directed not to play online but educating children, what signifies by screen time assisting them to compute it and allowing them to realise about after effect. Therefore, cyber intelligence world is nearly mental workout practicing device for the parents to assist children self-control their screen hours. Child online protraction index all over the world classify under three heads in 2020 as follows:

- 1) Above-average (score 60 – 100)
- 2) Average (score 30 - 59.9)
- 3) Below average (score 0 - 29.9)

A CONCERN OVER THE CHILDREN



According to the classification it is noticed that Spain, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Italy has been noted as above average score. Whereas, under the average score group Japan, India, China, New Zealand, USA, Peru, etc. countries are taken into consideration. Countries like Philippines, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia are considered below average. It is interesting to reveal that score of India and China are 55.6 and 54.6 severally.

10. Indian Scenario:

Right from literacy, accessibility to schools and household expenditure on education, the rural urban gap remains significant in India. There is a digital divide, too, with just 4% of the rural households having access to computers as compared to 23% in urban areas. These and other trends on rural-urban gap in education are revealed in a survey done by the National Statistical Office (NSO). The report on “Household Social Consumption Education” released surveyed 113 thousands households across over 8,000 villages and 6,000 urban blocks between July 2017 and June 2018. The study involved 152 thousands students across different levels of study.

On accessibility, while 92.7% of the rural households have a primary school within 1 km. as compared to 87.2% in urban areas. The situation gets skewed as only 38% of the rural households have access to Secondary School as compared to 70% in the urban areas on similar parameters.

RURAL URBAN COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLD IN EDUCATION

	Rural %	Urban %
1. Access to Secondary Schools	38	70
2. Literacy Rate among those aged 7 and above	73.5	87.7
3. Having access to Computers	4	23
4. Annual Average Expenditure/ Students (₹):-		
(a) Secondary Level	5,856	17,518
(b) Senior Secondary Level	9,148	23,832

[Source: NSO]

While accessibility to a neighbourhood school at primary level is not an issue in rural areas, the gross attendance ratio is also satisfactory with nearly 100% boys and girls in rural as well as urban areas attending classes. However, in sync with reduced accessibility, there is a gap at secondary level between rural and urban settings.

The all India Literacy Rate among persons aged 7 years and above is 77.7%. However, for the same age group, the rural literacy is 73.5% and in urban areas it is 87.7%. The digital divide between rural and urban household is stark with just 4% of the rural population having access to computers. The report highlighted that while 15% surveyed population in rural cluster has internet access 42% of the surveyed students in the urban areas have access to the internet. Only 24% of the persons between age 15 to 29 years in rural areas are able to operate a computer as compared to 56% of the urban counterparts.

There is also big gap in expenditure in education especially at school level. Annual average expenditure per student at secondary and senior secondary level in rural households stands at ₹ 5,856 and ₹ 9,148 respectively. An urban household for the same classes spends ₹17,518 and ₹23,832 respectively. As per the report, the average expenditure per student incurred during an academic session for basic courses was nearly ₹ 8,331 for general courses and ₹ 50,307 for technical and professional courses.

From the above analysis it may be said that Digital Learning is the buzz word in India today. For millions, it opens doors where none existed. The survey indicate the limitations of such an approach. After all disparity, both social and economic, too is a fundamental feature of Indian society. The rural-urban divide is huge and heavily skewed in favour of the latter. We must embrace digital learning but also take steps to ensure that the technology divide does not become a learning divide.

11. Private Schools under Online Learning: A Survey

Private schools grooming about 50% students in country which is at present the world's third largest School system. Nearly 50% students (120 millions) in India today are enrolled in private schools, making it the third largest system in the world behind China's education system and India's Public-School System.

While the growth of enrolment in Government schools dropped from a little over 74% in 1978 to 52% in 2018, in private schools it grew from just above 3% to nearly 35% in the same period. Even as it contributes nearly ₹ 20,00,000 million to the economy, the private school growth story is also inhibited by low learning levels, lack of transparency and regulatory issues.

“The state of the sector report: Private schools in India”, a comprehensive study by central square Foundation based on government data calls for transparency from private school to improve their quality and for the government to play a role in regulating their fees. Contrary to the perception being elite, the report highlighted that 45% of students in private schools pay less than ₹ 500 per month as fees and 70% pay less than ₹ 1,000 a month as fees.

According to the report enrolment grew by 9% point between 1998 and 2007 and even more rapidly by 16.6% points in the next decade between 2007 and 2017.

However, the issue of low learning outcomes plagued private schools as well with 60% of rural private school students in class 5th, unable to do a three digit division, 35% failing to read a basic class 2 level paragraphs and average score for class 10th students in private schools dipping below 50% in 4 out of 5 subjects. Releasing the report CEO of Niti Aayog said:

“There is an information asymmetry that exist through enrolment has increased exponentially in private school, the learning outcomes have stagnated for a decade now. They have to really focus on learning outcomes as that is

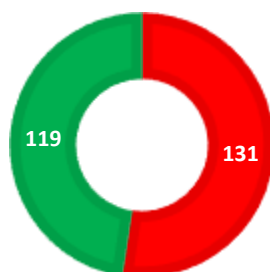
critical. Various state government also need to think on a regulatory framework for private schools and focus on learning outcomes rather than on any other inputs.”

As per the report, factors driving low learning levels are lack of information around school quality with the only Independent markers being the board examinations. And with 60% of the private unaided schools ending before the Board Exam testing. It becomes difficult for parents to judge the quality of their schooling options. Also, a far greater number (42%) of private unaided schools offer English as a language of instruction as opposed to 10% of Government schools. But schools which are English medium on paper may not be so in practice. Under such situation online learning how far will be effective is a thousand-dollar question. From the above discussion a summarise picture may be drawn as follows:

1. India’s schooling system is the second largest in the world with 250 million students.

NO. OF STUDENTS IN MILLION

■ Govt. Schools ■ Private Schools

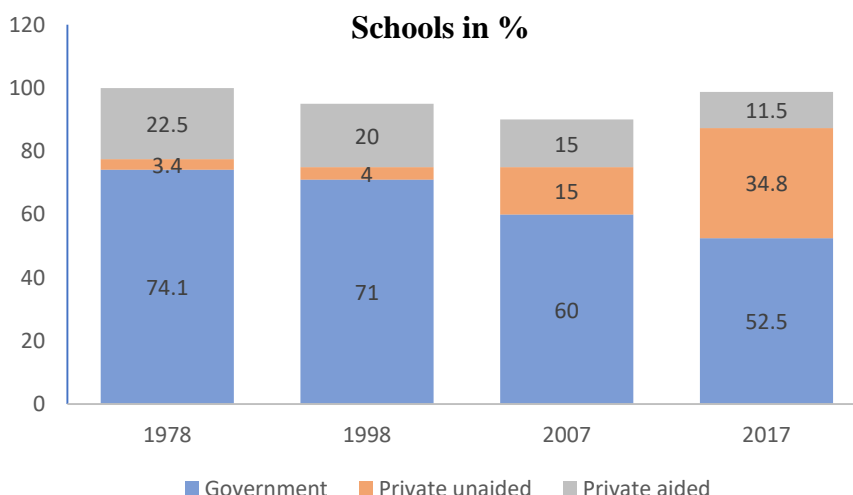


Note: In 1.09 million Govt. Schools there are 131 million students and in 0.46 million Private schools there are 119 million students.

[Source: NSSO, U-DISE, ASER, IHDS, NAS]

2. (a) The sector contributes approximately 17,000,00 million to the economy.
 (b) 70% of the private school students pay less than ₹1000 per month fees.
 (c) 45.5% students in private schools pay less than ₹500 a month as fees.
 (d) 73% of parents report that they prefer private schools because they want better learning for their children.
 (e) In 16 Indian states over 50% of students attend private schools.

3. Growth of school enrolment over the years.



[Source: NSSO; U-DISE; ASER; IHDS; NAS]

Outcomes:

- 60% of the rural private school students in Class V cannot do a three-digit division.
- 35% of the rural private school students in Class V cannot read a basic class 2 Level paragraph.
- Average score for class X students in private schools was below 50% in 4 out of 5 subjects.
- Even among students from richest 20% households attending private schools, only 56% of children between 8 and 11 years can read a basic class 2 Level paragraph.

So, even in private schools, actual learning outcomes requires attention. Under such circumstances, online education will be only a “Show” to all.

12. West Bengal View Point:

(a) Private Schools in Kolkata

The pressure of attending online classes and getting used to a new life style and study pattern has been taking a toll on both students and parents to help them cope with such situations. Several schools have started counselling and interactive sessions for stressed parents helping them tide over the pandemic induced challenges. Many have benefited from the sessions that provide guidance on a range of issues from adapting to the new teaching learning methods to tackling adolescent problems.

Birla Bharati School had a session on online examinations and handling the stress of online coaching. The school called the meeting: “Mapping the Future”. Parents interacted with the teachers. The session aimed to strengthen kids’ bonds with parents, offer academic queries, help them tide over uncharted path and address anxiety.

Parenting is a daunting task that has turned more complicated in COVID-19 times. Adolescence throws up many challenges for parents as well as youngsters. There may be conflict. The situation can be best handled by the parents themselves if they equip themselves. While pandemic made things more difficult for adults, it has also been hard on the students.

The Heritage School had a similar session- “A Virtual Coffee Meet” with parents. In the session it was concluded that the parents concern about the danger of internet access as well as availability of devices. The parents were also worried about leaving home while their kids attended online classes.

Children tend to get bored and lose focus while attending multiple online classes at a stretch. They have been attending online classes for a long period, with very little outdoor activity which can be stressful. It can lead to erratic behaviour and lack of concentration. So, it is the duty of the teachers and parents to listen them and help them ease into this new normal.

Our research reveals the following:

- Allow the children time to settle down and get used to the online classes.
- Ensure they take breaks between classes and study.
- Space out the time for online tuition classes.
- Seek Counselling in case the child struggles to adjust to the new methods.

A Play School of Lake Town in Kolkata continuing online classes to the age group 2 to 3 years for the last few months. Duration of the class 40 to 45 minutes. According to the opinion of the Principal through the online classes, the parents should follow the school guidelines and accordingly they should teach their kids. It is very difficult for the age group of 2 to 3 years to stay on online classes for 45 minutes.

The education department revealed that in a right to education act the children will be admitted in class I at the age of 6 and the age group below 6 previously it was nursery class. Now at present it is pre-primary. As pre-primary is not included in right to education act, therefore, there is no facility of online classes.

Due to unforeseen situation of pandemic, probably online classes becoming a part and parcel in the life of the students. But question arising for the utility of it. This question arose not only in respect of pre-primary and Play Schools but also V to XII standards as well as in higher education too. As soon as new session started at the end of March School were closed due to lockdown, as a result before introducing with the teachers in new classes, online classes started. But the students are very much aware now that there is a huge gap of learning between online classes and learning in the classroom, from making the subject clear to completion of home assignment directly from the teachers. There is huge deficiency. Observing the students mind it become a question to all, “Is online learning a substitute of classroom teaching?”

Above all, all the students are not getting facilities of online classes. There is fear to all that the education year will lapse in this way. Of course, everybody was not prepared for such a situation and there is no alternative in COVID-

19 era, as a result online education becoming essential. But in order to spread online education facilities to all, the infrastructure of online classes should be improved and, in this respect, government must come forward.

A survey conducted by Pratichi Trust on the basis of National Sample Survey:2019 on the people of different states and union territories who are using internet and computer, revealed the following facts (Few states and West Bengal) noted below:

Name of the State	State (%)		Rural Area (%)		Urban Area (%)	
	Computer	Internet	Computer	Internet	Computer	Internet
1. West Bengal	9	16.52	3.33	7.85	23.01	36
2. Kerala	23.47	51.25	-	-	-	-
3. Maharashtra	14.27	33.71	-	-	-	-
4. Gujarat	11.20	33.21	-	-	-	-

[Source: Pratichi Trust]

Except Himachal Pradesh and Assam in North eastern region other states are more advanced in using computer and internet. Again, on the basis of age, children above 14 years in West Bengal living in rural areas it is expected using internet 9.78% and in urban areas using internet 32.52% only. Under such circumstances continuation of learning online basis is raising multiple questions.

According to some heads of some reputed schools in Kolkata, “All the students are not getting equal facilities through online. Financial conditions of all the students are not equal, as a result, students are losing fundamental rights of their education. In this respect, the government must come forward and provide internet at a lower rate and prepare the infrastructure of online teaching throughout the country”.

But how far the facility of digital learning will reach to all equally is a great debate. A survey made by NCERT taking the CBSE schools, Kendriya Vidyalaya, students of Jawar Nabodaya school and the parents which revealed the following:

Particulars	%
1. Laptop/Smartphone not available	27
2. Problem in Internet Connection	28
3. Shortage of Electricity Supply	28
4. Residence of School Students	Urban Areas
5. Financial Conditions of the Students	Good

[Source: NCERT]

The other related problems came out from the above survey are:

1. Students are not comfortable as they can't raise questions face to face to the teachers.
2. Parents and guardians are not so equipped to use computers comfortably.
3. Subject having mathematical aptitude, through computer screen not comfortable for understanding to the children.
4. Teachers are not very accustomed in using technological devices.

The above survey was made based on school situated in the urban areas where families are comparatively financially sound. Then what will be the situation to the students living in the remote areas and also financially weaker.

13. Study on Special Needy Group Students:

A survey on special needy group students reveals that this type of students becoming very unrest, showing extra ordinary behaviours like leaving home alone with the attitude of going to school, their unrest after one month of lockdown are such that even after hearing any high volume sound they are loudly shouting or bleeding himself or herself with their own nails.

Some wears schools dress at the time when they used to go to school or striking their own heads on the wall. Due to shutdown of schools for such a long period during the pandemic, varieties of symptoms being observed among the special needy group of students. According to special educator long period home quarantine created a lot of problems among the introvert who likes to move in a special rule. This is due to “Autism syndrome and mental retardation”. They feel normal, if anything earlier is known to them but last few months everything changed all of a sudden. Swimming, cycling, playing in the park all are stopped. It is not enough efforts to give online therapy, special education or vocational training for such students. Generally, special needy group students have much distance from the society, during the shutdown period. This has created a lot of problems in their mind. Now they are locked within a very narrow space. Parents cannot make it clear why the school is closed. Now their kids are very unrest, they are forgetting everything what they have learned. So their problems of introversion may increase if they concentrate their mind in screen time.

14. West Bengal view point: School in Rural Bengal:

Gowal toar, Jungle Mahal covered with dense forest once upon a time it was a place of theft, snatching and robbery in the day light. During the maoist time only the people of Ban party used this area along with the jungle animals. But where is the time to think of these obstacles to Kiran Kesharbani, a girl of class XII, Arts section of Khaer Pahari village, Panchayat- Bikrampur, Block – Sarenga, Dist- Bankura. Having no internet connection and smartphone. She comes everyday by cycling about 8 Km. through the jungle of Gowal toar to her coaching teacher. Her father left away them in their childhood, Mother Seema Kesharbani is daily wage labour, managing their family where her brother, grandmother and she also living. In such a poverty-stricken home fighting for education is how much troublesome that can understand by Kiran in her life time.

According to Kiran's mother, due to poverty she is unable to buy a phone, as a result, finding no alternative Kiran is forced to go for learning in such a long-distance bearing in mind all sorts of danger in life – during the time when schools are closed.

Not only the lack of smartphone, Kiran's village is facing the low internet bandwidth problem, even no internet availability. Due to the problem online class is not possible in the school. So, during long distance journey through cycle many students coming to the coaching centre where internet is available, collecting notes then returning home through the troublesome dense jungle. Therefore, when metropolis English Medium School are thinking for continuation of online learning, then education split will create a clear class education, right to education is there a remote dream.

Seema, a girl student of class VII of local Ranibala Girls School just returned from "Mandal Relief Camp" of Hingal Ganj north 24 Pgs. The house of the girl has not yet constructed, which was damaged by Amphan Cyclone. Classes are in progress through smartphone but Seema has no Smartphone.

S.K. Sohel, a student of class 10th of Baliwari High School of Mousuni Island at Namkhana, south 24 Pgs., will give Madhyamik examination. Virtual classes are in progress in the school but he is least bothered of it, working with his father in 100 days work scheme due to acute poverty.

Another one Bratati Biswas, is also an examinee of Madhyamik of Binara village, Hingal Ganj, North 24 Pgs. Amphan cyclone stolen their everything, living on the River Dam just returned home. Online classes is a dream to her, studying at night in front of lamp of kerosene oil where is electricity? Double strike of lockdown and Amphan Cyclone in the coastal belt area particularly in the Sundarbans Region School goes seem them as if "the residents of no state". In the Sundarbans region strike after strike (Aiyla, Amphan, Corona) they had to go for work due to meet their poverty. Now after Corona, if school opens, whether students will be back or not that question is hanging before the school authorities. According to a headmaster in the remote area of Hingal Ganj, "With few number of students our whatsapp group was on. After Cyclone Amphan, there is no response on the part of the students and after quarries it was revealed that Amphan cyclone has stolen their everything resulting all the students stopped their studies".

The same situation has been reported from the teachers of Ranibala Girls School, Hingal Ganj, Radharani High School, Sandeshkhali, Sundarban Santosh Ghorui Girls High School Mathurapur Block II. They have informed that in the year 2021, those who will appear in Madhyamik exam, about 90% household having no smartphones. How it is possible to continue online classes?

According to Education Department East Medinipore 60% residents of the district if possible, to join online classes, rest cannot do that owing to non-availability of Smartphones.

The problem will not come to end very quickly understood by maximum number of school authority. Learning through online is really a dream to many students residing outside the Metropolitan cities. Poverty-stricken learners surrounded by forest and hills; their condition is very miserable. The remote areas like Belpahari in Jhargram, Dumurdiha village of Gowal toar in West Medinipore, locality of Jaipur in Shalboni, forest area of Medinipore, Purulia, Bankura, Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, Balurghat all are in shadow zone of mobile network.

There are problems like teachers are inexperienced in online education. Practical oriented subjects are based on in hand learning process, how these subjects are to be taught through online? Many efforts are taken but all are limited efforts. Under such situation, in the midst of proposal and planning mental pressure are gradually increasing day by day in the mind of home locked examinees. In the forefront of big exam in their life they are giving their test of patience every moment.

15. Findings and Recommendations:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable influence on students learning as well as teaching methods across the globe.

Now Education is not just confined to the classrooms with designated places & time bound. It has expended the horizon of ways of imparting teaching and learning. E- Learning or online education is the way forward and booming in India. Let us call it as "E-Education" and it is becoming one of the most preferred ways of learning among Indian youth as well as gaining popularity with teachers as well.

Certainly, there are positive as well as negative with penetration of E-education in our society.

E-education is helping us to learn from anywhere, at any point of time. There is no boundary and time restriction. The best thing is that this mode of learning can be imparted across the globe at the same time even though there might be time zone differences between different countries.

With E-education, students or learners have the option to manoeuvre their careers in the field of their interest because they aren't tied down to a fixed schedule or fixed stream.

E-education is certainly much more cost effective than attending a regular on-campus teaching programme. It helps us to save the most important thing which is "Time" and saves money too. Since one can study at his/her own time and convenience, it certainly helps to save time. There are many students who cannot afford to attend a regular school or college degree to accomplish their dream without spending a fortune on regular classes. One might have work part-time or full-time to earn livelihood. E-education helps them to accomplish and pursue their dream without leaving their jobs. It definitely saves a student's energy and commutation time spent in going school or college for their regular classes. This may also help in reduction of pollution and better utilization of transport resources.

E-education coursework can be self-paced. Every student's learning ability and adaptation or grasping speed is different. With E-education coursework, students can revisit course content many times and for better understanding of the subject, they can pre-study the content before going to live online class.

Need of the hour is that E-education courses are needs to be accepted by the Indian and Multi-national companies and employers in India. Along with these E-education courses needs more acceptance in our society and also needs attention by Distance Education Council (DEC) of India. Companies/ Institutions needs to encourage their employees or students to get online E-education.

It is not like that E-education has only positive side. We must also introspect the other side of it also carefully.

If schools, colleges and other Educational Institute do not be attentive on accommodating teaching materials that can arrive at the last child, then the result could be a formation of Juvenile illiterates. This will be damaging for the society at large.

The accelerating strength of digitization has generated a trouble making online circumstances through schools and colleges and learning curves around the world. It is fact that new testing and chances have arrived for educators, parents and students but we have also come into areas of many unreliability. Will educational institutes working with old Paradigms invite the braveness to move their operation to hold up the individual expansion of the next generation of learners impartially whether they are the privileged, marginalized or the disabled.

The teaching propagation has transformed from the idea of a singular path, with regard to a lot of flexible awareness of how we have to walk the tight rope between online and offline teaching complete instantly. Teachers in the classrooms are learning to share out advantage and liberate learners through Technology.

At online activity, online classes will link students and on other hand, generate constraint. This has made us reasoning on the disparity not only in bandwidth, gadgets and devices but also in reality that most parents do not have the time or capacity to keep up their children in this journey.

If school or college do not concentrate on accommodating teaching materials that can arrive at the last child, then the result could be breeding of young illiterates and ignorant. This will be damaging for the society on the whole. The definition of what is meant by 'Quality Education' will have to be always corrected because too much importance on technology could also keep out many children from teaching learning process. Consider this Waldorf concept of education:-

"The danger lies in thinking that new technologies can substitute old realities or replace them without consequences, when basic experience in nature, in everyday life activities, social interaction and creative play are replaced with too much screen time, a child's development is compromised. There is a great need to experience learning through all the senses when children are surrounded by authenticity in the environment and in human interactions, a sense of self is supported in a positive way".

Schools, colleges are greater ecologies that are both human and cultural. Classrooms are visible living extension which are different in many ways. Grouping them into one homogenous online model will pull down diversity, inclusivity and dissent which is the basis of education.

In many private schools and colleges in spite of the right to education equality and Justice are not integral into a system. Apparently, we only have 12% of children from the economically fragile sections attending private school or colleges throughout the country instead of 25%. A handful of these students in Metropolitan cities have gave out because of the absence of provisions or they have gone back to their villages as their parents have lost their employment. These children will be left behind because of their socio-economic disorders.

The considerable destitution normally takes place in nations where education is not placed in order through investment in its financing by the state and the central government.

The central and state government must invest in continuous and undisturbed free broadband and create apps like Microsoft teams, zoom or google platforms to which teachers and students would have entrance. This will reduce

the financial limitations. This apps should coincide initiatives like Vidyadan and e-Pathshala and 24/7 support system should be obtainable for seamless functioning.

Regrettably, millions of children are at acute learning hazard now. They may lose weeks, months or even a year or more of education. Its effect will only be noticed after a decade when a huge number of young generations who are neither in school nor employed. Some states have recognised not to manage online classes for primary students because it would be discriminatory. Their insight is that if teaching as well as learning is not be accessible to all, then it should not be accessible to one. Are we then speaking that everybody should stay illiterate at the same time?

Method should come into position that can assure a heterogeneity of methods to fit out all students- privileged, poor, middle class and disabled. A child should always be a top importance not an after thought. It must be recalled that calamitous influence each person. However, children from weak and flimsy families are more likely to be distressed. Teachers must have the liberty to share resources, communities of practice and improve blue print thinking as there are no monopoly to education. This new alliance will generate a custom of commitment towards staff, students and their families.

The pandemic has infact put straight forward some of the deep rooted issues in education. It has carried exceptional challenges for teachers, one of which is to acknowledge the extremely eliminated class of children with learning difficulties. The whole centre of attention is online learning, but no declaration has been made about the learning that should be given to children with learning difficulties. None of the open education resources i.e. e-Pathshala, SWAYAM, etc. have any advantageous platforms for children with special requirements. Some advance schools are working out the comprehensive learning space separately. However, there are no facilities or services to assure any kind of space, open or home-based learning for the children. Therefore, we require to improve a logical and complete national attention towards technology which also integrates a civilized attitude.

Online and offline learning have to be ingrained with passionate and friendly teaching. This will help to produce mutual and intellectual protection net, enhance deliberate discussion, reduce community dispute and motivate manifold views and questioning minds. Children are educated so that they can apprehend further basic values, way of life and learning and put them living and active.

This can only take place if there is a comprehensive, compassionate and flexible audit of online learning which incorporates with prejudice every child in the society with sympathy, supervision and care.

Whatever the views we may have about E-education, like some may find it extremely beneficial but the other may not like it at all, E-education is certainly going to have a strong future ahead. Our Government / policy makers needs to be careful and watchful while developing, implementing and enforcing the laws and policies for betterment E-educational in India.

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