

## POST PANDEMIC WORLD, PROGRESS IN/OF/BY ONLINE MODE?

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### **Abstract:**

The Year, 2020 with its all hazards, caused this paper to be written and this paper will be focused on mainly historicization of pandemic situations and measures taken by humanity over time and specially this time, where among all online sectors, how specially in education sector, abrupt shift towards Online curriculum, actually creates some large and generally unnoticed gaps and divide in certain population and how these gaps inevitably causes the issues of deprivations and discriminations regarding the basic rights of being heard and getting solutions. Keeping the online mode as the tool of deprivation, it will also be discussed that to what extent this particular choice (truly only one choice) has been fruitful to distribute knowledge capsules to its desired population and also will be tried to make out whether by online mode there is progress or only progress in online sector industry (Capitalist conspiracy can't be ignored) or just progress in knowing about online mediums.

**Keywords:** Pandemic measures, Online mode, Internet, Education, Deprivations, Deprived Voices, Government, Solutions.

### **Introduction**

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It is necessary to counter the grand narratives and grand constructions that have somehow demeaned its negative realistic sides which are argued. So there are popular narratives going on that digitalization in India has been one of the targets to be fulfilled near future and as a result of the pandemic, the opportunity that came to India to shift from offline to online mode, should not be missed. There are urgency and necessity and the pushing force of pandemic measures which can result in good in near future. But one thing that should be in mind that it is a continuous and deep process and there are chances that many loopholes and gaps will be there, so it is necessary to address those invisible complications properly and it should also be noted that everything that is being done in this world is for the maximum benefit for maximum

number of people, so every process is people centered, so, our paper will focus on this issues of who are those who suffering in this whole process and who are heard not enough and it is time to locate them and discussing about giving voice to them. But, the most important thing is not only giving an identity to them, but addressing those measures which will give them to take self-initiation and self-action.

Besides, Online mode among other pandemic measures become relevant because it has facilitate to those basics of life like Health, Education and Finance which can't be avoided at any situation. So, Education cannot be ignored at any cost, it's a continuous and random process which is now connected to an academic schedule. Besides, education was the backbone of middle class people and medium of survival also, because earning bread is that much relevant. Still, Education has that capacity to emancipate anybody from any form of captivity. So, it was very much urgent to run it without any interruption.

### **Main Body**

It was 2020, till this time the world had seen many catastrophic epidemics and other disasters. The time when the active journey of human being had begun its progress in lifestyle, it had crossed different stages towards new developments which are obviously keeping the idea of betterment in view. As much as possible, historical elements available, based on that, it is understood that in those very processes of progresses, when, human beings becomes permanent settlers and then live collectively and then interact with each other and in a more broader context, when these interactions were extended to a larger extent, any disease that had originated somewhere began to be transmitted and it is that level of transmission of diseases that makes that disease epidemic or pandemic.

So what is the history of pandemic and what changes generally such pandemics bring to the post pandemic world generally?

There are cloudy assumptions or estimations of the origin of any particular disease. It is also understood that animals or insects were sometime responsible in transmission because of their connection with human beings. But, what was the very first origin of any disease or now it is known with the bliss of scientific research that in most of the cases any virus is responsible and how that virus evolved, it is still foggy. It is known how that virus can evolve the nature of its life and action, but the first origins are not confirmed yet. The human beings always had a thinking mind and when, the earliest origin of any disease can't be traced, there comes beyond this physical world or metaphysical or supernatural powers, so, before the massive dominance of scientific traditions, and still in many discussions, there are understandings that these are God's punishment to transgressor population or to be little more scientifically religious, epidemics are addressed as the Nature's punishment to its transgressor population. So, there are millions of explanations and perspectives and it depends on the individual thinking minds that who will live with what. (LePan)

By the way, it is not of that much concern regarding its first origin, that might be nature's own process and other undiscovered movements of nature which might be, but the duty of concern and the response of human being comes the moment when that disease or that virus comes out to any agency or vehicle and that vehicle can be any animal or any moveable entity and this is

where human being should take the lead. So, this was the general and brief overview of the beginning of any journey of epidemic. (LePan)

Now, what is to note that when an epidemic has gone beyond its original traced place and spread almost all over the known world, it becomes Pandemic. Pandemics are mostly caused by beyond border human interactions and trade activities are the most common reason of that.

Now, historically there are many traced cases of epidemics and some renowned of those are shared here. One case is of a plague that happened in Byzantine Empire in around 541-542 CE and it is well-known that Byzantine Empire was almost at the centre of Eastern and Western world and it has long trade routes and the dissent amount of scientific knowledge and experience it had and its historian, Procopius had traced the origin of the disease in a Chinese province and someone infected might have carried the disease to the empire and caused it further spread. But, as that time, religions had its stronghold in people's ultimate imagination, Justinian, the emperor was blamed and such things still happens today. (Huremović)

Another example is of Black Death in London in 1347-1351 and again in 1665. There are many such examples throughout the world and in India, there was a case of plague during Delhi sultanate and Sultan had fled out of his capital. (Mohammad Bin Tughlaq) One of the famous plague was of 1896 or 1897 in Bombay presidency and also in other provinces of India during British colonial rule and its connection was very clear that it had come from Chinese territory and which was carried by British global Trade networks and history of most plagues of modern times are rooted with colonial activities too. (Chandavarkar)

But Our main concern which is the main focus of this paper is what was the immediate and long term consequences of those plagues and what are those measures that were taken then at those times of plague and epidemics and how institutions of government has managed those situation. What was the condition of common people and who enjoys more facilities and who less and who were entirely left. It is all about past events of epidemic.

So, picking the case of 1896 plague, which was spread in basically Mumbai which was then an important colonial trade center and it is a matter to discuss that what some numerous instances of measures are taken by that times colonial government. Though, it was very clear that the notable cases had symptoms of bubonic plague and even if it was clear that the source of such diseases was from outside India and most possibly might have come through trade with china, colonial government kept its international trade activities functional and in results of that rats and fleas came with generally commodities and entered into daily life of city. There were some amount of reality regarding the sanitation of the city. In a typical Indian city, it was natural that overcrowding is common and such disease easily travels. But still, government had taken caution lately and imposed 'epidemic disease act of 1897'. (Chandavarkar)

Like 2020 Covid-pandemic, Lessing of overcrowding and keeping distance had been emphasized and in most affected areas, divisions are made comprising some villages and a deputy commissioner had been appointed and other assisting posts were to help including

nurses, midwives and other volunteers. Travel passes and passes for movements from one village to another were created and in worst cases villages were evaluated and coolies, chamars are told to soak walls with phenyl solution. Thinking open spaces are good for health, wholes were made in roofs, even many houses are demolished. Streets are made and kept wider and empty. This was general overview of measures. (Malhotra)

Now, what was the condition of people with ground level of social status that is what needs to identify here. As the probable solution was found in lessening crowd and maintaining distance person to person, isolation and quarantine process has been introduced. Such one example found in a newspaper of that time. From the newspaper The Tribune, in 1901, the report was such that--“people with means could manage somehow, the rural poor, uprooted from their homes and hearths were left exposed to harsh conditions”(Malhotra),

A situation which is largely similar with the case of covid-19 times migration of people from cities to their villages. Lack of infrastructure, lack of management from administration level, economic instabilities, etc. haunted them like always. Some glimpses of deep rooted discriminatory classification of society can be found in the treatment of people with moderate economic and lower caste background. Like today's, upper class privileged people, Europeans were free from all restrictions. As there were chances that Brahmins would come in touch with other considerably lower castes and religions and as Caste was reality which cannot be ignored, so, Caste based hospitals had to be built. So, some of Brahmins who had good political and economic capabilities got their voice heard and those Brahmins with less influential power were forced to mix with others and suffered. It's not about casteism or racism of Brahmins towards other classes, it is about different people in society who remains unheard and their assertions were given less value. Besides, sufferers also included those who could not understand the whole situation of isolation, inhabitation, relocation and people's religious and cultural sentiments were given less importance in front scientific measures. Women in patriarchal social structure got less opportunity for treatment as treated by male physicians were still considered taboo. So they were in one of the most vulnerable positions. (Chandavarkar)

Such one of the changes because of pandemic is this online mode

So, towards the way of our important subject to discuss here that after learning and knowing about our past conditions, what have been implemented in this recent pandemic of 2020-21 and what are the measures that have been taken now and the most immediate subject of discussion in this paper is the Online mode in daily life which was the greatest and newest initiative taken by the world during and after the Pandemics.

It is a subject of hot discussion. Because online mode was always a welcome decision even before pandemic which was reflected in digitalization in India and which was obviously inspired by the online methods of developed countries. Only as a developing country, China has good online education sector, still it lacks ideal distribution among all its masses unlike other developed countries. It is well known that on ground of the ethics of development, online mode is a new milestone that is to be taken by human civilization and countries with good

internetconnection and online mode are thought to be successful. But what is problematic is when those countries are analyzed and it is seen that most of these countries like Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark, first of all, generally ranks at top of all kind of necessary indexes that is economically, on ground of human development index, corruption free index, crime free index, on ground of wealth distribution among its citizens etc. Geographically these countries are small and not greatly diverse that requires lot of management and demographically well-managed with its per capita income, culturally not that much diverse which doesn't create extra emotional distance among its population, educational quality and nature of population is extremely well-balanced with countries requirement, even the import of knowledge and intellectuals are highly focused according to the requirements of countries development goals. All these factors collectively creates positive atmosphere where Online mode is performing good.( Babu; Reddy)

Present Condition of Online studies in India

So, looking those above discussions, it is imaginable that to what extent online mode in India will succeed. Still the central point in this paper is the implementation of education through online mode. It has a detailed discussion which includes economic, environmental, emotional, and practical factors. Now we will take a moment to look at some of the government and non-government reports on use of online mode in India.

According to the report of NSO survey of 2017-2018, it is identified that in India only 23.4% of its urban households have internet devices including computer, mobile, tab and in rural areas, it is only 4.4%. But this is about devices and internet connection report is different where rural houses are 14.9% and urban households are 42%. But this is not the end of the data. India is a socially, culturally and economically a diverse nation and conditions may vary for so many other factors. Even different states have different conditions and different adverse factors like regional disparities, economic disparities and huge gap in terms of per capita income, which may still be unrecognizable and untraceable. This is very much shocking to know that having internet devices does not ensure its utility and a big number of its population even does not know how to operate devices for education, though they possess a device with internet connection. Apart from these apparent complexities, there are many adverse factors and none of these are ignorable. (National Statistical Organization Survey on Digital Education Divide)

1. Having devices does not create any difference if there is no Electricity and apart from some urban areas, in most of the rural areas, the scenario is not good. Though, according to government report of Saubhagya Scheme, there is claim that 99.9% household comes under electrification, but actually, the claim has gaps that if there is only one house is electrified, then the whole village is considered as electrified. Besides, another survey unfolds that only 16% of India's households receive just 1-8 hours of electricity and 33% get 9-12 hours and 47% more than 12 hours.

2. For a video conference the average Internet speed is required around 1.5 to 2.5Mbps which is very poorly realized from popular mobile service providers. Internet speed definitely has some role in continuous and attentive learning and teaching. Otherwise, it can't be

effective. Even if students are present in class, their mood can't be in the class if continuous buffering happens.

3. Number of devices in a family according to students' number is another determining factor. More than one student requires more than one device which may not be in harmony with the economic capacity of a lower middle class family. Besides, between two male and female children, most often female child is discriminated.

**Now those problems at the core of online studies are--**

Education has been tending to become mostly content-based and not concept-based. Education is turning towards a package-system short-cut process and relies more on tricks than general methods. (Dhankar)

Distraction must be a negative factor. Because, a Smartphone is sum total of every kind of entertainment and for a school student, it is very easy to shift attention towards gaming, messaging etc. A schoolboy of 7th or 8th class generally can't be that much self-disciplined and self-motivated. (Singh)

Screen time is really hard for more than one hour attentive learning. Many students face problems of eye straining, dry, watery and itchy eyes, problems of headache and nausea, back pain, neck pain etc. While doing study, these things actually spoil the environment for gaining something. (Singh)

Face to face real life interactions which are the classics of learning process are absent here. It is said that a successful teaching and learning process is the result of the amalgamation of facial expressions, eye to eye contact, proper interaction of body language, real life voice interactions among members of a classroom etc. (Iyenger)

Problems are actually beyond technical also. Getting an ideal environment within an informal place like home is not easy for everyone. The situation of a village student who is part of a joint family is definitely of a like a true voiceless.

The whole statistics of the condition of infrastructure is not suitable for online education. In rural areas, education has almost stopped for 5-15 age group students and only those who have financial capacity go to any big city then continue their education. Even the cost of running a device is getting high and after pandemic almost all service providers had increased 10-20% data charges. In such condition, even if someone get more than one devices, maintaining data charges may not be easy. One more disturbing factor is the lack of initiative by any local government institutions like panchayat or municipality. Even if in some state governments, there is no lack of fund, such institutions generally show no positive attitude towards improvement of online education program through government run schools.

Pandemic measures have given birth to new subaltern positions in different spheres of life Or, It has brought subalternity to some people who were not subaltern or such voiceless before.

In this whole process, obviously there are sufferer and enjoyer, deprived and facilitated and it is now a subject to discuss that how to mark them, who they are, are they heard by any institution or in this run and run world no one is caring about them etc. Though it might seem

distracting that politics of the new digital world is another threat that had greatly affected the lower middle class and this is a reality in most village areas. Like if one carrying Android 6 version then he should change it before 4 or 5 years because, new versions are coming and it is indirectly ordered that now you should change your device, lest, apps stops working and all those tasks you were performing are going to stop and your crisis begins there.

Now a question will come in our mind that Political or capitalist conspiracy theories are to be considered or not in the whole gadget market. Because, Gadgets are the key factors in virtual world and the nature of gadgets are such that for every two or three years an amount has to be kept for buying a new gadget, because old ones are becoming outdated.

Now, what prompts the concept of conspiracy theories is definitely has some historical or fragmentary historical bases and if that history is revisited some sort of unfaithfulness towards conventional history begins to pop up in mind. Those histories are obviously connected to those colonial expansions of Africa, Latin America and Australian Islands where epidemics might have planned and spread by humans and at the same time the power and greed of capitalism was also reflected there for gaining raw materials. Capitalism was benefited in this way that epidemic depopulated long areas wherefrom local resistance came from and also another possibility that may be relevant here that it will create a market of those products which will help to prevent epidemic and also to those which were going to be used after post epidemic period. Now, this is a possibility, but it can't be ignored, because in this movements of capitals, there will be and are some sections of society which will surely make day and night one to continue with this marathon process that unless you shift to online, your service or education is going to be off or You must learn or you must buy a pretty agile gadget that will do your job. The necessary money to buy a gadget, if you can't manage, loaning agencies are there for you, you should not be hopeless; we are there for you always. There is assurance, but always, in that assurance, there is a new trap or this loan thing. So, within these triangles of pressure, most of the common people in a crowd are indeed lonely and that doesn't have an immediate solution and he randomly can't go to police station or court to lodge a complaint file, even if there could be taken some actions, we all know how effective in its results. So, simply, this is a new modern time problem and it is not still codified in law and order and here many people are sufferer and within this imaginary collective, all are individually alone before the situation. This was the picture of those who are sufferers in this process because of their economic unevenness.(El-Darwiche; Singh;Ganediwalla)

Taking the example of an online classroom, it is seen that those teachers who belong to agegroup 50-60 years, had to literally struggle a lot to handle gadget features. Even Screen time is not suitable for their health. Problems of eye straining, headaches are generally more frequent than other younger teachers. Yet, in Covid situation, this is the only platform left for them for actively participating in teaching curriculum. There is generally no ground for relief for them. These problems can't be addressed in term of social or economic ground but in terms of individual's health issues which have generally no formal provision of solution in pandemic context. (Express News Service) So, these voices are relevant now, in this day, because, there

is process ongoing now, and in this process, there are recently deprived people or those who were not that much deprived or unheard or counted in subaltern level before, but they are now here just recently, so that's extremely relevant.

In an online platform, it is little difficult to create a proper communication with students. It is often noticeable that in a class of large number of students, students are not responding properly or because of poor network, proper communication does not happen. In this way, entire year passes, semester passes, and still many students remain unnoticed. This would not be there before, but now this online thing has separated them making them out from assertion. Even the teacher is morally bounded to ignore these things.( Mukherjee)

In online process, many meritorious students are not happy with their assessment process and recently the results of secondary and higher secondary examination in West Bengal disappointed many meritorious students. But they had nothing to do, but to obey what has been given to them.( West Bengal)

Obviously there is no particular class or groups that are deprived, but somehow, those who are economically weak, belongs to any rural and village area and couldn't manage to get any devices, those students remained in darkness. Many of them are found in many workshops and other professions. Many of them has become child labors and entered in a new world wherefrom they don't see any return.

These are just the glimpses of many undiscovered deprived faces who are there in many critical situation wherefrom they can't assert or address their problems.

What are the already taken initiatives by Government of India?

The government of India has already had launched some e-learning platforms and for the new Covid situations, the central government had authorized all the state governments to launch their own platforms also if needed.

According to National Statistical Organization Survey on Digital Education Divide –

- Under National Education Policy of 2020, it is aimed to make “India a global knowledge superpower” where special emphasis on digital education has been given.
- There was a national platform for school education named DIKSHA that was launched in 2017 and was available for all states and central governments.
- As part of PM e-Vidya announced under the Atmanirbhar Bharat programme, DIKSHA is the ‘one nation; one digital platform’ for school education in India.
- There is Swayam Prabha TV Channel for those who do not have access to the internet.
- Online MOOC courses- Online Massive Open Online Course MOOC courses relating to NIOS (grades 9 to 12 of open schooling) are uploaded on SWAYAM portal; around 92 courses have started and 1.5 crore students are enrolled. (Free Internet Gadget and package to poor students)



□ On Air – Shiksha Vani, DAISY by NIOS for differently-abled, e-PathShala- Radio broadcasting is being used for children in remote areas who are not online (especially for grades 1 to 5). (Free Internet Gadget and package to poor students).

### **Probable Solutions**

□ One of the main points is this whole online mode in India is still unorganized and there is no central authority or in a sense ministry or council of online educational affairs which will supervise the whole process time by time so that it keeps a live record of who is left and who is gone.

□ In the growing capitalist tendencies in every sphere of life, first of all to make all the accesses cheap, Central Government along with state governments should actively intervene and continuously supervise. If there is any NGO or other private player, they should follow the public friendly government policies. Besides, in the constitution of India, it has made government of India responsible for fulfilling the right of Education for every single child of India.

□ Among all kind of help, only financial support always remained effective throughout the history and here also, on event of expansion of online education in India, at least subsidy for instruments and student reservations for data pack charges should be there.

□ One good initiative has been noted by Government of Delhi and West Bengal. To promote digital education, it has subsidized for buying a Smartphone for students. But this was not enough as other factors still matter.

□ Especially in online medium, if there is easy availability of gadgets and internet, it can achieve the maximum democratization of education. But, there needs some extra flexible and beyond formal initiatives where teachers may include new methods to teach more effectively.

□ To be efficient with online gadgets, inclusion of e-Skilling, virtual vocational training, virtual labs & other skill development courses need to encourage by active government run campaign.

□ International online platforms like Coursera, SkillShare, Linda.com, Udacity can be encouraged.

□ In the discussion of relocating the marginalized voices, priority should be given on Vernacular or local languages which will decrease the distance from teacher and student and also emphasis should be given on developing quality e-content in local languages.

As Education is the backbone of any civilization or country, it should be continuous and effective and digital literacy should be given priority and another wave of cheap internet revolution like once Reliance Jio had brought, can be expected from government sectors which will definitely boost digital literacy to next level.

### **Conclusions**

Now, if the above discussion is about problems, then how solution factors need to point out need to know. For every problem there are some common factors like recognizing the problems(Discussed above), which factors are causing this problem, which institutions are responsible for addressing and solving and what are the most effective ways to solve. So, now it is very much clear that the largest responsible authority in a land is the institution of

government which has the largest networks, ultimate authority and power and in this process; NGOs can help for data management, but it is the government which is solely responsible.

Now, in India problems are always deep rooted and foggy. Though Governments have good and workable schemes, but still, in reality, the benefits do not penetrate to the bottom of society. So, for especially such sensitive issues, implementations need to have control of hard-handed central authority, where corrupt local administration and bureaucracy should have less authoritarian provisions. This was all about the apparent problematic things.

But, not only in India, but also in the whole world, and mainly in the process of regular teaching and learning (not for distance learning fields), online mode should not be a permanent solution. The reasons of this objection are connected to the very natural and physical essence of human beings which may be destabilized.

It is also okay that if we stick to online mode of education, there will come a time when we will develop immunity and adaptation and we may feel no physical issues. But in this process, the amount of new economic gap for some people for treatment of their health and for some people economic bloom in health industry it will bring which will create a new plot of deprivation. Its okay that it will bring some new employment also, but it is certain, again it will bring new complexity too.

So even if almost all categories of society get those facilities of online mode of educational activities, it is almost certain that other complications will arise and the prominent among them will be health issues. It is okay that now we have some good healthcare facilities but again not everywhere and growing industrialization of health sector may bring no good and so new deprived classes will emerge.

Though, this assumption may seem funny, but the natural essence of human physic and also human psychology cannot cope with the whole set-up of artificial intelligence things. For regular learning process, physical interactions are still the best method and to some extent, the artificial intelligence and technical instruments can cooperate with living human beings, but definitely not entirely. Actually, the natural spontaneity of expressions, liveliness of class interactions creates a social and psychological consciousness in a child or in any individual and if these remain absent then, as result of this many other undesirable complications may arise.

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