

THE PANDEMIC AND E-LEARNING IN INDIA

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Abstract:

The breakout of the Pandemic COVID 19, directly and indirectly, influences every person in the world. It has changed many prevailing systems in the world forever. The way of doing business, providing services, and even giving and taking education has changed a lot. The markets are closed, the schools and colleges are closed, malls, cinema halls, everything is closed. For every need, people are dependent on online services. This shows that there is a drastic boom in online services in every sector. This pandemic affects the life of every human being on this planet. But above all, it affects the children. Over 1.2 million children are affected globally. The schools are shut down for an unknown duration. This may change the face of school education forever. The pandemic forces educators to change their way of teaching overnight. This research tried to study the impact of the Pandemic on school education in India. The changes that every person has to go through whether good or bad. The struggle of a teacher to change their way of teaching overnight, the student's struggle with gadgets for classes, and the anxiety of schools to provide their best. The research tries to understand the effect of the pandemic on the e-learning market in India. It studies the growing e-learning market share in India. The research studies the triggers of e-learning and the challenges faced in India.

Keywords: Pandemic, COVID, School, education, e-learning, online learning, blended learning, challenges, opportunities, teachers.

Literature review:

E-learning activities are crucial for the progress of any country. In the modern era, everybody is thinking of success through Educational development. If educational development is programmed accurately then sustainable results can be achieved. In this research, an effort has been made to study the development of E-learning at the school level in India.

India is a significant academic center in the global education industry. India has more than 1.4 million schools and more than 35,000 higher education institutes. India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world and there is still a lot of potential for further development in the education system.

Ms. Deepshikha Agarwal in an article titled, Role of e-learning in a developing country like India, had written that there is wide scope for e-learning in India. She examined it at two levels one is education and the other is training. Though India offers a wide scope for e-learning it also poses various Challenges in implementing it. These challenges vary from geographic to demographic to social implications.

Mr. Kaushik Bellani, MD McGraw Hill Education India, says, "Our aim is to use educational technology to help students and teachers learn and teach better. Studies have shown that technologies that enable personalized learning yield better outcomes. Through online learning and multimedia tools,

students of all ages, teachers, and professionals are engaged, stimulated, and empowered to succeed with tools like SmartBooks, Learnsmart, Access Science, and Access Engineering.”

Ms. Meena in an article “Usage of Facebook in Education” as published in NCERT Journal of Indian Education, volume xxxx, number 4, February 2015 had quoted that the conventional set up of four walls with three-dimensional teaching aids or smart classrooms are shaking under the regime of Social Networking Sites (SNS) where students are making connections with the unexplored outer world. The educational relevance of the Facebook in the contemporary educational system is demanding our immediate attention. The undeterred task ahead for teachers, students, policymakers, and administrators is to take this challenge on a priority basis without ignoring the time gap that education and technology will contour for the education of future generations. The present paper explores the possibilities of the usage of Facebook in education for teachers via case studies. The positive results of the cases discussed here in the paper are encouraging and motivating.

Mr. Sanjay Rajpal, Member, IAENG, Sanjay Singh, Awadhesh Bhardwaj, Alok Mittal, Member, IAENG (19-21 March 2008, Hong Kong) In an article titled E-Learning Revolution: Status of Educational Programs in India³, had written that as of now, the teaching-learning process in India is oriented towards the class-room model. The generic approach is transforming into flexible online systems capable of imparting education in a manner that can never be thought of. With the advent of internet technologies in the past decade, it is bringing a turbulent change in the Indian education system. This paper provides a comprehensive insight into the current status of e-learning education in India. We have discussed three case examples and concluded that with the growth of the population interested in education, successful e-learning models can be developed and implemented by various universities across the country.

Introduction:

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.”

—Albert Einstein.

Here Einstein’s words appropriately reflect the fact that effective education is constant and always evolving. The face of education has experienced a turnaround over the decades. Once characterized by the traditional classroom model, education has metamorphosed into learning that is instant, online, self-driven, and on the go.

Jay Cross (2004) has normally been credited with coining the term e-learning in 1998. The journey of education in India, too, has been spotted with incalculable milestones—the most recent among these is e-learning.

E-Learning refers to imparting education and training through some electronic medium or device. E-Learning is learning by resorting to electronic technologies to use educational modules outside of a traditional classroom. E-learning specifies the usage of electronic media and information and communication technologies in education. It depicts and supplements the process of classroom tutoring in electronic form. In a study room, knowledge is conveyed by a teacher who manages the content or the portion of the content to be taught and the assessment to be taken and delivers an approved curriculum to a group of students. Similarly, e-learning involves efficiently and effectively managing and delivering appropriate content to consumers/customers.

Various important advancements and developments in education have taken place since the launch of

the internet. These days students or learners are well versed in the use of smartphones, text messaging, and using the internet, therefore to be a participant in and executing an online course has become a common and simple affair. Message boards, social media, and various other means of online communication allow learners to keep the information handy and discuss course-related matters, at the same time providing a sense of commonality.

The schools are using the traditional face-to-face way of teaching till now. For a few years, many schools have started using blended learning. Blended learning means along with the traditional method of teaching they are using smart boards in the classes and using other kinds of e-learning tools for imparting education. But most schools are following the traditional way of teaching and imparting education. But due to this pandemic, they have to shift forcibly to online education.

A sudden shift in education happens with the announcement of the lockdown. Everyone associated with the education industry has to work on a different medium, they have to find out alternative routes to execute things. Every organization, teacher, student, and even parent has to switch over to a different model.

Online education means using the internet for imparting education. This includes using the study material available online, using already-made animations to using online platforms for imparting education through live sessions. For successful implementation and usage of online learning, a lot of understanding is required. One needs to learn about the various sources and resources of online education. The NCERT and CBSE have also issued many guidelines on this sudden shift of education pedagogy from offline to online. NCERT issues the Alternative Academic Calendar for the session in 2020. NCERT also issues digital editions of textbooks, videos on online teaching, and various links to such material.

The lives of children are topsy-turvy. They are the ones who are stopped from doing everything they loved. They were not allowed to go to school. The kids are detained in the four walls of the house. They can't go out to play. Their physical activities are widely affected. They can't meet their friends. They are not even studying in the way they have always learned to.

The mobile phones, laptops, and tablets which are always been snatched from their hands are now handed over to them. No.no...not to play games but to use them for studying, for taking their school classes. Their lives are taking a big turn. This big turn changes the way of teaching too. Now the children and their teachers are on electronic media for running their classes. For interacting with each other.

Not only kids but the lives of teachers are changed now. Earlier some teachers have never used a computer or online resources for their teaching. Some teachers are imparting knowledge in the same way for the last 20 to 40 years and of a sudden everything is changed. They have never incorporated online resources or internet services in their teaching but suddenly they are completely dependent on it. They have to learn a lot about those systems before imparting knowledge to them.

The teachers need to learn everything from using a smartphone to a laptop, from using an online platform, to conducting the class, to developing the content for the same, from making internet- friendly assessments to checking them online.

The whole school is running on a computer system or a mobile phone or a tablet. So it won't be wrong to say that only the school building is closed during the pandemic, the school is running as usual.

During these times, the actual need and worth of e-learning come into existence. Everyone i.e., the parents and the schools realize and accept the importance of e-learning. It means that the worth of learning through electronic tools or mediums is accepted.

With the need and demand in this sector, a lot of platforms emerge in the market. Some are providing

content like animations, assessments, etc. for the online sessions. Some are busy developing a platform for taking live online sessions or classes. The platforms which were earlier used as meeting platforms for the organizations are now being used to run online live classes. Many more platforms for live classes are being developed every other day.

The tuition teachers are using such platforms only for taking their tuition classes. They are also taking help or utilizing services from companies that are providing ready-to-use materials for teaching online. So it has been noticed that there is a sudden boom in the business or area of companies or people working on e-learning tools and e-learning content development.

A very big change that is noticed during this period is that earlier the companies are providing services to schools or coaching centers to run or use their content for teaching. But now they are offering their services directly to the parents and the students. They are offering tuition classes through their platform. They are offering other services or features like coding classes, music classes, etc. to their customers i.e., the parents and the students. The companies are offering class-wise content to parents and students. They are also providing live classes to the kids. Open online tuition classes are being promoted on national channels.

Online learning or e-learning emerges as a necessary tool for education

During this pandemic, almost the whole world is facing lockdown, everyone is locked in their homes. The kids are enclosed in the homes. Their schools are shut. At that time e-learning or online

learning emerges as a boon for every school and its students. This virus attack develops another side of the technology. The schools which were earlier hesitant of using electronic tools or mediums and the internet as an education medium are now accepting it openly. Online learning becomes the need of the hour.

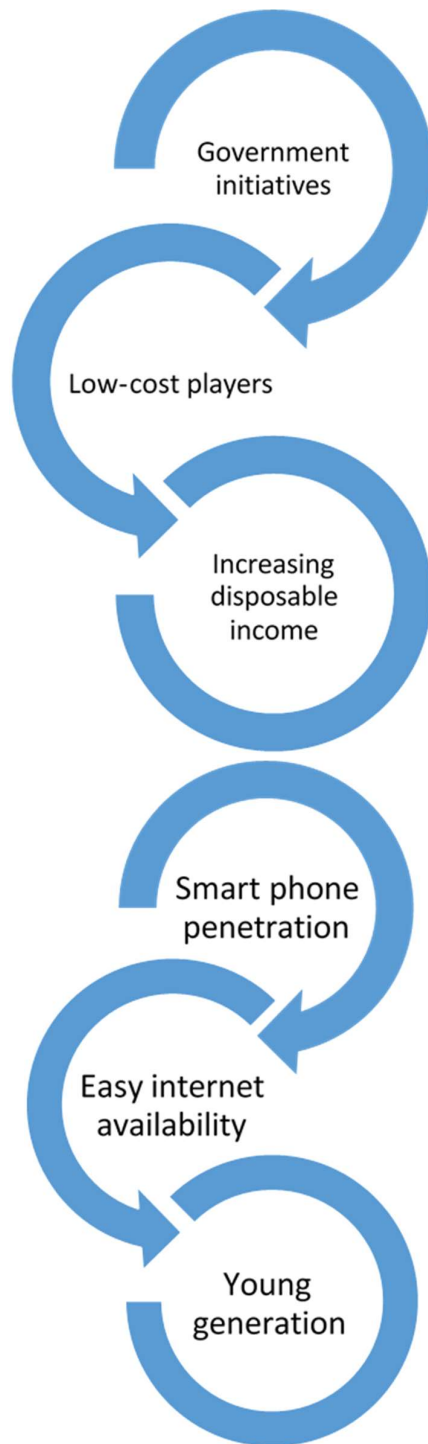
The schools have to develop an online pedagogy. In our country, CBSE and NCERT have also worked hard to fight unexpected situations. Various steps were taken by these organizations to cope with the situation. New guidelines are issued to the schools, and course for the year is reduced. The government has also taken up a lot of initiatives for the education sector. Teachers are also trained for the same.

Teachers also had to change the way of their teaching suddenly. From traditional teaching, they had to shift to online teaching. The teachers have to explore and learn online teaching methods. This whole system upgrades them as a teacher. The teachers have worked hard to develop relevant teaching material. They made videos, worksheets, and audio to deliver their best to the students.

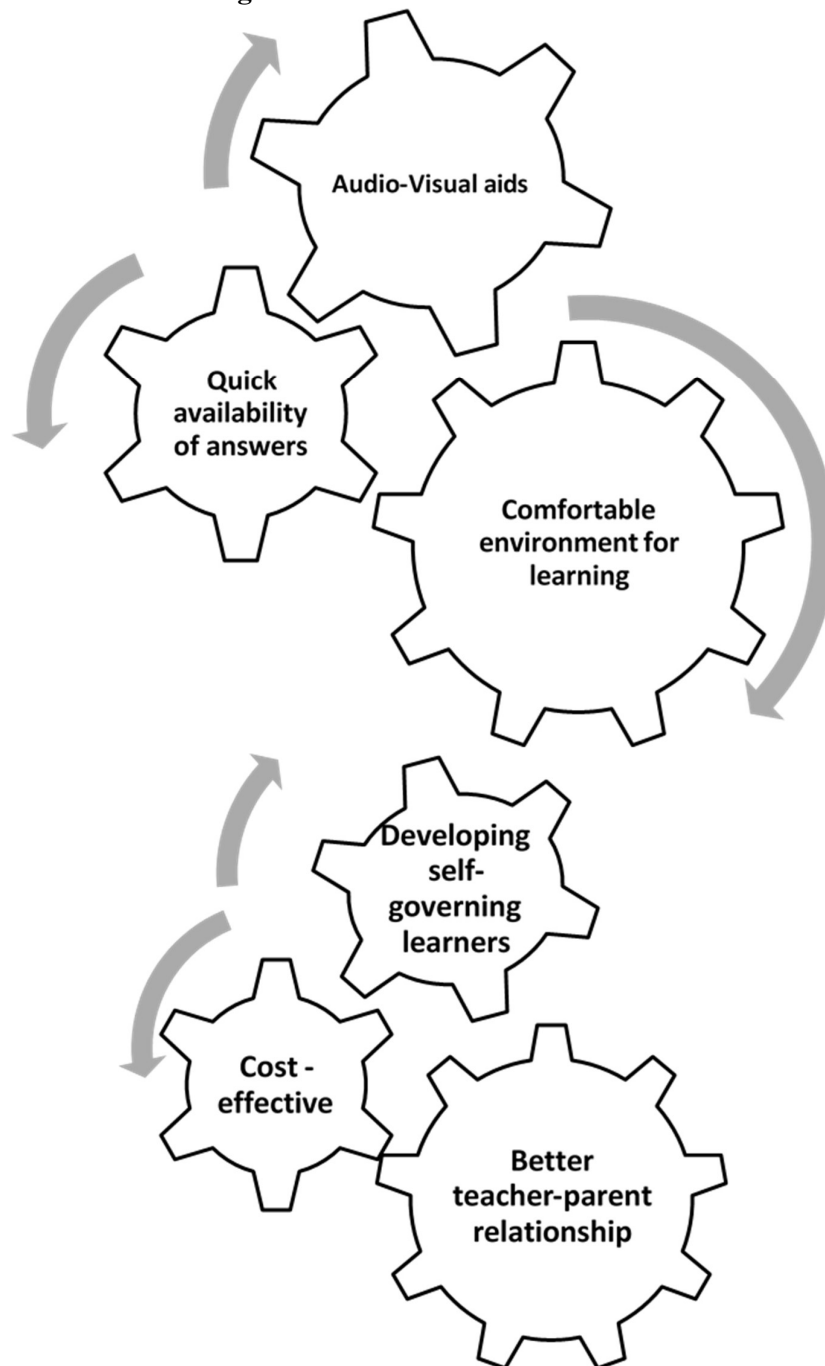
Vishnu Karthik, CEO, Xperiential Learning Systems, has quoted “COVID-19 has ushered in a time of change and forced paradigm shifts in many areas. It has forced us to rethink the traditional school model and question the way we teach.”

E-learning is an innovative and interactive way of teaching and learning. Teachers can use online tools or can blend them with their regular teaching methods. Similarly, watching videos, animations, and pictures develops an interest in the kids for learning.

Key drivers for e-learning



Benefits or usefulness of e-learning or online education:



The benefits or usefulness of online learning or e-learning are explained as:

1. Online education has opened new gateways for students. As they are at home they have time to explore things even after class. This helps them to develop individually and it improves their domain of thinking about the world and things. They are developing as self-governing learners.
2. Online education or virtual education has opened up possibilities of reexamining and revising the way teaching and learning were done. The use of e-learning tools can change the way a class is being conducted. The teacher can now use a lot of video tools available online to support his/her teaching.
3. As tuitions are going the digital or the online way, they are proving to be cost-effective. A lot of companies have entered the market of tuition, which in turn is leading to cost reduction.

4. Due to the use of the internet, instant answers to various problems are available.
5. Online education helps in developing a better teacher-parent relationship as both are working simultaneously for the child's growth.
6. A very unique advantage of online learning is that it provides a comfortable environment for both students and teachers. Different children have different paces of learning. This education system provides everybody with the time they need to understand things. Online education offers flexibility in learning systems.

Challenges faced by India and Indians

In India, we need to go a long way for digital education or e-learning. India is the second biggest market for online learning. But the lack of proper infrastructure for the same is the biggest hurdle. The present government under its 'Digital India' campaign is working hard for this. Programs are launched to increase the reach of the internet. The government has planned to make the internet facility available in the villages and the remote areas too. But India is a very diverse country in all terms. It is a diverse nation in terms of language, demography, literacy rate, sex ratio, physical divisions, etc. All these features of India make it a difficult place to provide services. It requires a different set of skills and time. Ribeiro (2020) rightly noted that this digital transformation of instructional delivery came with several logistical challenges and attitudinal modifications.

In India, the psychological dimensions of people are quite different or diverse. It is very difficult to convince people to adopt something new, even if it is useful and fruitful.

The government is putting in efforts to develop online learning systems in the country. But after the development of the system, a major problem that is occurring is trained teachers. The teachers are also comfortable with the traditional methods of teaching, these are testing times for them too. The teachers are also going through tough times as they have to learn a completely new way to deliver education. They are putting their best foot forward for learning and applying the new tools for imparting education. The teachers develop whole new material for online systems. The assessment systems are changed completely.

The teachers are facing one more problem, i.e., the availability of teaching material for online education. They are struggling hard for it. They have to develop a whole new way and teaching material for imparting education. This includes making videos, audio, worksheets, etc. the teachers are also facing a challenge in dealing with online teaching companies in the education sector like Vedantu, BYJU, etc. They are offering a physical teacher-free service to the child.

The students are also getting anxious about the pandemic. They are locked in homes. All this affects them a lot as a student. The online learning system is very new for them, they also need time to adapt and understand it. They are not meeting their teachers physically. The way of teaching is changed completely of a sudden, with which they may or may not be comfortable. Lack of physical activity is there. They are spending time in front of screens. They are attending classes online and their work or assignment is also coming online. This leads to a sky-high rise in their screen time, which is putting them at another health hazard.

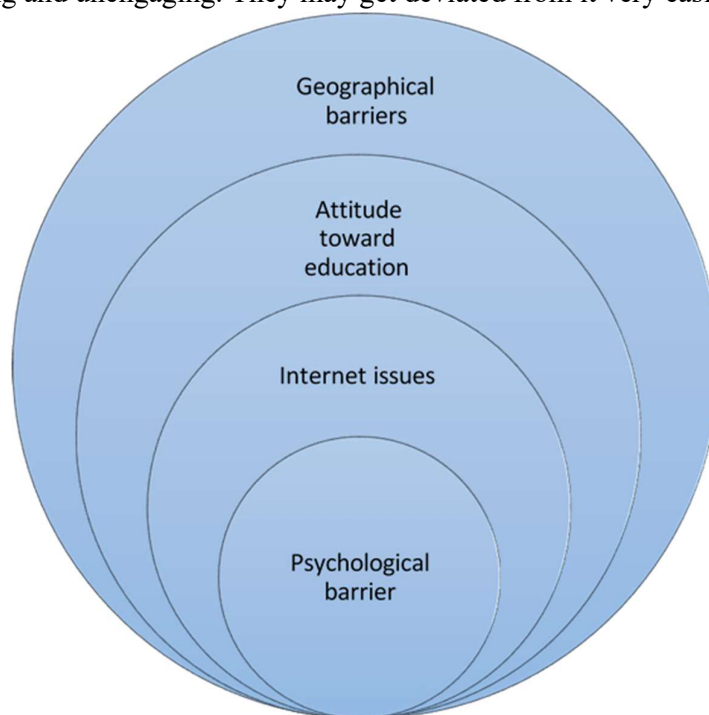
The academic performance of students is highly affected. There establishes an imbalance too. This is because of the digital divide. Some students are having high-speed internet data and equipment like laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc. some may be struggling with it. Their academic performance is also affected by the change in delivery systems and assessment systems.

One issue that is being noticed during this pandemic is an increase in the dropout rate. There can be

many reasons for it. But among many, one reason is the lack of internet services and tools required for e-learning or online learning. Another one is the lack of atmosphere for studying at home. The kids are at home and they may not feel like studying at home or there can be a lack of awareness about education in the family. Another reason is the distraction of the mind from gaming apps and online gaming systems. The students are having a device and internet with them, which is distracting them from their studies.

There is a big difference between rural and urban India. The requirements for online education cannot be fulfilled completely in rural India. Mostly classes on the applications like Zoom, Google meet, etc. Rural India is not much aware of such features. Schools in urban areas can easily use such features. This is again creating a divide in the education systems of rural and urban India.

These difficulties and problems associated with modern technology go from downloading errors, installation issues, login problems, problems with audio and video, and many more. Students may find online teaching boring and unengaging. They may get deviated from it very easily.



Discussions and Conclusion: Today is the age of the internet. Everything and every service are at your doorstep, just a click away. The education sector is also not untouched by it. Today everything, every topic, and every competition paper preparation is just a click away. Youtube is offering videos for everything, every class from pre-school to senior secondary to college. Many new ventures are there in the education sector. They are offering virtual classes to tuition to doubt clarification sessions. The market has expanded widely. Many big and small players are there in the education market, who are offering their services other than schools. Some are offering services in collaboration with schools. This e-learning market is offering endless opportunities.

During the pandemic, the whole education system was working online. Whether schools, colleges, competition exams, means anything and everything. In the past 2 years, the online education sector has seen an unforeseen boon. The schools and teachers who were previously maintaining a distance from e-learning have to learn it and use it. The e-learning market in India is very raw, due to the lack of proper government regulations. There are no set of regulations for entering the market, and as such many firms

have been developed declaring themselves e-learning firms. It is observed that anybody having some knowledge and experience in basic hardware and software declares themselves as an e-learning company. The market is uneven and non-reliable.

After the launch of the Digital India program by the Indian government, the internet speed and quality have improved.

India is the country with the largest education system in the world with more than 1 million schools and 18,000 higher education systems. Almost half of the country's population falls in the secondary and primary education market and related services. The education sector presents huge opportunities for private participation.

According to Census figures, over 32% of the 1.1 billion population are between the age group of 0-14. India is fast emerging as a knowledge-based economy, and human capital has now become its major strength. (source: <http://www.iamwire.com/2014/01/e-learning-practices-shaping-face-indian-education-system/24090>).

According to KPMG, India has also become the second-largest market for E-learning after the US. The sector is expected to reach US\$ 1.96 billion by 2021, with about 9.6 million users from US\$ 247 million and around 1.6 users in 2016.(source: <https://www.ibef.org/industry/education-sector-india.aspx>).

The Indian e-learning market is expected to exhibit strong growth during 2021-2026. Keeping in mind the uncertainties of COVID-19, we are continuously tracking and evaluating the direct as well as the indirect influence of the pandemic on different end-use sectors. These insights are included in the report as a major market contributor.

The Indian Online Education Market is forecast to be worth U S\$ 8.6 Billion by 2026. (According to "India Online Education Market, by Segments (Primary and Secondary Supplement, Test preparation, Reskilling, and online certifications, Language and Casual Learning), Company Analysis" report). The easy availability of the internet is the primary reason for the growth of online education in India. Between 2019 and 2020 the number of internet users in India increased by 128 million. For the first time, rural India has more internet users compared to urban India.

Today Indian youth are technology-driven and find e-learning exciting and appealing. For students in schools, it is exciting to watch the digestive system working on screen. Little kids can learn and memorize stories better when they see visuals of them. Many basic concepts of science and mathematics are becoming easier with e-learning introduction in schools.

Along with the traditional textbooks, blogs, tweets, discussion boards, and virtual study rooms ensure that learning becomes multi-dimensional. Online courses are helping all those who are already in jobs but want to refine them and remain competitive without taking time off from their jobs.

Despite various works done in the field of e-learning in India, the market is not fully utilized. E-learning has started getting popularity in India. Today mostly everyone knows about smart boards, online materials available, online worksheets, etc. Online education in India has vouched for augmented recognition over a few years. It is becoming an elemental part of schools, colleges, and even offices across India. One of the advantages of online education is that this kind of education model is easily expandable.

Slowly the word e-learning is gaining popularity in the Indian market. Today many Indian companies are developing e-learning content and selling it both in India and abroad. Various test series are available online, and students are using them enthusiastically.

This horrific time of pandemic has taught us that life is unpredictable and everyone needs to be ready to face any kind of situation thrown at us by destiny. Although the pandemic COVID 19 did not give us

much time to plan, everyone must understand and learn that planning is the key to tackling any kind of situation. Everyone, whether government or institutions or parents, must be ready for handling any situation or circumstance. Now once all of us have gone through such a terrible thing, we all are mentally prepared and strong enough for tackling or handling tough times. There is a need to compute and prearrange all the cavillous and cynical situations which may occur and plan accordingly. This pandemic has also schooled us that students must acquire and learn certain skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and most importantly pliancy to face any kind of event or incident. Such kinds of skills must be added to the curriculum in schools and educational institutions.

With the increasing adoption of the Internet and rising consciousness about e-learning, the online education industry is expected to witness auspicious growth during the forecast period. The online education market in India was valued at INR 39 billion in 2018 and is expected to reach INR 360.3 billion by 2024, expanding at a CAGR of ~43.85% during the 2019-2024 period. Ease of learning, flexibility, and a wide range of study materials have influenced the overall growth of the industry. As per ("Online Education Market in India 2019").

India is still an untapped market in e-learning. One of the reasons behind this is India is geographically and demographically very vast. Economic and social factors are also putting an impact on learning patterns. But with time the scenario has changed. Today the Indian online education market is highly crippled with around 3,500 educational technology start-ups operating in the country. Many foreign players are finding a place in the Indian online education industry. BYJU's, Udemy, Doubtnut, UpGrad, Toppr, Vedantu, etc. are a few prominent players in the industry, furnishing the requirements of different target audiences.

Technavio estimates the online education market size in India to grow by USD 2.28 bn during 2021-2025. The report offers a detailed analysis of the COVID-19 impact on the market and the new opportunities that market players can expect. In addition, the report projects the market to progress at a CAGR of almost 20%.

"Popularity of big data and learning analytics and continuous rise in the growth of gamification in India will have a significant impact on the growth of the online education market value in India during the forecast period," says a senior analyst at Technavio.

According to Technavio, the high penetration of the internet and the availability of low-cost smartphones has increased the number of online users in India over the years. This has created a surge in the demand for online content including education from users and institutions in rural and urban areas. Besides, the government in India is undertaking various digital initiatives such as e Pathshala, which provides educational web resources for teachers, students, parents, researchers, and educators. These initiatives are helping users even in rural areas to get familiar with online education. Such efforts along with the increasing adoption of the internet and smartphones are expected to fuel the growth of the online education market in India during the forecast period.

E-learning proves to be a savior during this COVID-19 pandemic. It saves a year of the students. Whether good or bad, effective or less effective but the classes were going on. It is always said something is better than nothing. E-learning proves it right in the educational scenario. At least, kids and students are not deprived of education. They have learned something or another through e-learning. The schools were conducting sports, arts, and activity classes on the e-learning platform. Schools have conducted online inter-house competitions and inter-class competitions on these platforms. Children have done well in the competitions. Their teachers guided them online only and it shows results also. Nothing was able to stop the spirit of teachers and students. So it can be rightly said that e-learning

proves itself a boon for schools and students and society as a whole.

In the end, it can be concluded that India is spreading its feathers now. During the research, the researcher found that the number of internet connections and mobile users has increased in India in the past two years, which is a positive sign for the growth of the e-learning market in India. The Indian market is full of potential and possibilities. This is good both for the learning of the education sector and the job sector. With new entrants in the market, new job opportunities are always created. In all, it is beneficial for the overall growth of our country.

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