



Challenges, Benefits and Future Opportunities of Online education in India

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ABSTRACT

Due to deathly Covid-19, educational institutions were shutdown, the education was provided online with the help of technology on various online. The shift from traditional classroom to virtual classroom was sudden and unexpected and from teachers, students to institutions at large find it difficult to adapt to this change. On one hand online education has brought several challenges but on the other hand it has opened the door of endless opportunities for various stakeholders of education sector. This paper tries to identify various challenges and opportunities for teachers, students, educational institutions in online education. It has also provided the overview of future prospects of online education in India. An outline on online education appropriate behavior has been given which can be considered in order to ensure behaviour suitable for online education system.

Keywords: Covid-19, Online Education, Problems, Opportunities.

Introduction:

In the last two decades, technology has made its presence in various sectors of development in India. A few important sectors like defence and space, transportation, communication and information technology have also incorporated the use of modern technology for their development and functioning. And, the education sector is no exception. It is necessary in recent years because of Covid-19.

It is a constantly evolving sector that comes with its own set of challenges. But, there's always room for improvement and innovation here. In fact, education is one of the few sectors that have experienced a sea of changes over the years. But, this has helped it grow better and become more accessible to students around the world.

Today, with the help technology, we have noticed a shift in the learning paradigm. This has dissolved several blockades. Plus, it has given rise to one of the most popular forms of schooling: online education.

What is online education?

Online education is an electronically supported learning that relies on the internet. Here, the tutor interacts with the students and assists them in understanding the subject they've enrolled for. It offers an infinite number of ways to teach and learn outside of traditional classrooms or college campuses.

Typically, such classes include audios, videos, text, animation and more, which makes learning more interesting and exciting. Plus, it creates a rich learning environment that offers enough flexibility.

Challenges in Online education:

There are a lot of challenges faced by people in online education in India. Some of these challenges which need to be overcome are:

1. Insufficient digital infrastructure

Although Government of India is taking initiative to develop digital infrastructure but a lot need to be done in this direction. High speed internet and stable power supply are the biggest problem. India stands 89th worldwide on internet speed and stability. 5G networks technology is the requirement of today's which will increase the speed of downloading the data.

2. Limited Social interaction

It is one of the major challenges in India. Since online education can be accessed at home or any other convenient place, there is very limited direct interaction with the teacher and other people doing the course. Most of the discussion takes place through e mail, chat room or discussion groups. There isn't any campus atmosphere to improve social interaction.

So you are not able to develop any social links which do help in the career growth.

3. Unrecognised degrees

Although industry has started recognizing online degrees, there are still a lot of fraudulent and non-accredited degrees being offered by several un-recognised institutions through online. The number of scam operators is rising who are offering fake certificated which does not have any recognition. These scams not only losses the credibility of the online certificates but also the faith of prospective employer in online programs.

4. Self-motivation

Some students need the push to get to the class. In case of self-paced online programmes, student may procrastinate. The dropout rate in online education is very high. Self-motivation and discipline is required to complete the assignments and up load them timely. If you have difficulty working independently, staying organized and meeting deadlines, you might struggle in an online program.

5. Language of the Course

India is a multi-linguistic country, and a vast majority of the population comes from rural areas. The content offered by most of the online courses is in English. Hence, those students who are not able to speak English struggle with the availability of language content. Hence, it is the duty of computer professionals, educators, administrators, language content creators, and content disseminators, to sit together and give a viable framework and standard solution to the learners knowing only Indian languages.

Benefits of online education:

1. Cost-effective and saves time

Online courses do not demand students to be present in a classroom. Students can attend these classes from anywhere in the world. Provided, they have a stable internet connection. This cuts a lot of time and money spent on the commute and gives students a chance to learn better.

2. Offers higher knowledge retention

To make education interesting and interactive, educators online employ methods like gamification, blended learning approach and more. This increases knowledge of the learners and the time spent on learning becomes productive.

3. Track progress:

One of the best things about online education is that it allows us to track our course progress, easily and efficiently. This is possible as online learning includes an LMS or learning management system that opens a window for students to track their growth.

4. Besides this, online learning provides a step-by-step explanation procedure for students to understand. This makes room for everyone to manage their tasks, as and when they find it convenient. All of this and more has made online learning immensely successful in India.

Opportunities in Online Education:

Change in technology is offering many opportunities for all stakeholders in the online education sector which includes entrepreneurs, education providers and learners. Some of the factors offering different opportunities in this domain include:

1. Mobile Learning

The surge in users is credited to availability of 4G internet and smart phones at very low price. Going forward, IAMAI hopes that the National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2018, which is focusing on new technologies like 5G, will promote better quality data services at more affordable prices and help address the digital divides that will promote internet penetration in the rural areas through mobile internet. The vast majority of students in future will have access to e-learning through mobile phones.

2. Investor's Interest

A large number of entrepreneurs are venturing into online education as this is expected to see an uptrend in the next 5 years thanks to the Digital India campaign, the cultural importance given to education and falling mobile data prices. So, the online education sector will continue to spark more interest among entrepreneurs, investors and attract more funding.

3. Blended Model

There will be convergence of the offline education and online education in future. This concept of blended learning combines online digital media with traditional classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, but student has some control over time, place, path, or pace. This model will take advantage of both face-to-face classroom practices combined with computer-mediated activities. In future, there will be virtual classrooms where face to face offline pedagogy will be aided by digital courses on practical knowledge and soft skills.

4. New Courses

Today the most popular courses in online education are related to IT which includes subjects like big data, cloud computing, and digital marketing. But in future demand for different types of courses in unexpected subjects such as culinary management, photography, personality development, forensic science, cyber law, etc. may increase.

Conclusion:

Though online education can change the whole future scenario in education, there are several changes are ahead. Drastic changes in course curriculum are required to bridge the gap so that students are industry ready after passing out. Education process needs to be changed by making it more practical rather than traditional courses with the use of technology. Also course should be designed in different language to increase their reach and more opportunities for youth of rural India. Innovations are required to design ways to increase the social skills of online learners.

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