

Challenges and Opportunities for Online Education in India

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Abstract:

There are numerous challenges and opportunities for online education in India. The internet penetration has been identified as a key factor that will boost online education in India. Online education is affordable, courses are easy to take, and government initiatives are involved. The growth of online education is largely due to the recognition and bridging gaps of employers. The students' teaching and learning activities were disrupted by the prolonged lockdown. To maintain continuity in learning, most academic institutes have switched to online. The sudden and abrupt tectonic shift caused a series of issues and challenges for every stake-holder involved.

Keywords: Challenges; opportunities; Online education; importance; advantages and Disadvantages

INTRODUCTION:

The government is promoting online education to ensure academic continuity as educational institutes are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Online platforms such as Zoom, Google Classrooms, Microsoft Teams, and e. have been successfully used by most high-end private and public institutions to make the switch. Indians need to understand the world of online education as a society. Online education is becoming increasingly popular among those with time constraints due to its great scope. The online education system is being accepted by numerous high-ranking universities, organizations, and colleges. Online education is both affordable and flexible for students, as they are able to learn from their comfort zone. A recent survey after the United States found that online education has no age barrier and anyone can take the course from anywhere, India is the second most popular country for online courses worldwide. Enhancing the quality of education in Indian schools can be achieved through online education. Online education is now available to secondary schools in the United States and it appears to be effective. Online degrees are available at many foreign universities, which means there is no need to go abroad for further education. Top Indian universities including Sikkim Manipal, Symbiosis, IIM, IGNOU, Annamalai University, and many other institutions are providing online distance education. The courses offered are MCA, MBA, MSc, BA (Hons), Retail and Digital Marketing, BBA, and more.

Online courses cost less than traditional courses and save students money on lectures and conferences. Online exams are conducted on a regular basis by them. Classroom education is not suitable for every student. There are students who are highly skilled in the classroom, while

others are always struggling. Classroom education may not be able to provide enough detailed information for certain students. Online education provides students with more detailed information and the ability to concentrate. Personal attention cannot be given to every student by teachers in classroom education. Active students are not all present in classroom education. Some students are energetic and some just sit back. The number of students in classroom education is limited, but online education allows thousands to enroll in a course. Online education eliminates the need to stand in line to get admitted. Professional courses are available for working or business professionals who want to take them or wants to study further to improve their skills can enroll for the online education. Online education is becoming more popular among working professionals as they don't have enough time to attend regular classes. It's best option for them. They can enroll for online course for any time of the day.

The government is promoting online education in India Due to its capacity to enhance the quality and reach of education through the Digital India initiative. A program called SWAYAM has been initiated by the Government of India and the Ministry of HRD that is designed to achieve the three fundamental objectives of Education Policy i.e., access, equity and quality. The primary objective of this effort is to provide quality teaching and learning resources to everyone, including those who are unable to afford them. This program SWAYAM seeks to provide education to those students who are not yet aware of the digital revolution taking place and are still not able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy.

Swayam offers nearly 2000 online courses, and approximately 150 million students worldwide are enrolled in various courses.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Dr. Ramesh PokhriyalNishank, Minister for Human Resources Development tweeted on 10 April 2020 that e-learning platforms launched by MHRD received a footfall of 1.4 crore during the first lockdown (Ministry of HRD, 2020).

Richa Choudhary, a young professional at Niti Aayog has outlined suggestions to embed technology in curriculum (2020).

Harjiv Singh has predicted several advantages which online classes are likely to have in years to come: 1) improvement in access to learning, 2) democratization of information and knowledge, 3) inclusiveness of learning to grow and 4)the parents' contribution in bettering the course and content to begin (2020).

Bulbul Dhawan has very happily noted that even a number of government schools have gone online to ensure continuity in learning (2020).

Google and KPMG reported that the online education market in India was growing at the end of December 2016 was \$247 million and it will reach \$1.96 billion by 2021. The online education market in India is the second largest market after the US.

The report's conclusion also predict that by 2021, the number of paying users for online education services will have increased by at least six times, or to about 9.6 million users.

According to a report by Google and KPMG, the online education market in India was expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27.49% from 2024 to 2029.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ONLINE LEARNING:

1. Adjustable Timetable
2. Education Is Accessible to All
3. Adapt to Changing Trends
4. Widest Selection of Syllabus
5. Learn Anything You Desire
6. Cheaper
7. Acquire Knowledge at Your Own Speed
8. Develop Technical Proficiency
9. India's internet penetration rate
10. Online learning saves time and money.
11. How simple it is for working professionals to complete courses
12. The Indian government's initiative
13. Getting respect from bosses
14. Close the gap between industry expectations and educational attainment.

BENEFITS OF ONLINE LEARNING INCLUDE:

1. Efficiency;
2. Time and location accessibility
3. Cost-effectiveness
4. Higher Attendance of Students
5. Accommodates Diverse Learning Styles
6. Teachers employ cutting-edge teaching methods
7. Convenient
8. Reasonably priced costs
9. You can select the class time that works best for you.
10. Additional Editing.
11. Saves Time & Money [No Travel]
12. Greater focus and fewer distractions
13. Students can easily grasp concepts through video presentations.
14. Webinar
15. Mock examinations
16. Videos
17. Counseling;
18. Internet usage;
19. Smartphone usage
20. Time flexibility
21. High-quality instruction
22. Prompt outcomes

23. Government programs
24. Study resources
25. Cost-effectiveness

DEMERITS OF ONLINE EDUCATION:

1. Unable to Concentrate on Screens
2. Technical Problems
3. A Feeling of Separation
4. Training for Teachers
5. Control Your Screen Time
6. Missing in-person interactions with the teacher and other students
7. They might choose to take regular lessons taught by a teacher who helps them understand the material.
8. It is difficult to obtain the required technology, and there is little technical help available. Additionally, some teachers and administrators may have a bad attitude about online learning since they are unaware of the workload.

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING ONLINE LEARNING:

It would be impossible to discuss online education trends without mentioning the various ways that technology is advancing virtual learning. Big data is transforming education in a variety of innovative ways. For example, video-learning platforms are getting better, while gamification, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence are creating fascinating new learning opportunities.

1. Methods of Video-Based Learning Are Growing

Online education is roughly as ancient as video-based learning. Video content and recorded lectures have long been used by virtual learning platforms to aid in learning. To assess their retention, students watched films and completed tests. Additionally, it seems that younger generations still prefer this kind of education, especially while using YouTube. According to a 2018 Pearson Education study, 82% of Gen Zers and 67% of Millennials chose YouTube above other learning platforms.

2. Micro learning is Big

Typically, when we think of online learning, we see a student spending hours in front of a laptop. This method of instruction could no longer be appropriate, though, as cell phones and ubiquitous wireless access have altered how students engage with the material in their courses. Social media has conditioned modern learners to prefer a more self-serve approach that enables them to learn in short bursts and to be more distracted. Indeed, when asked what they desired from their content, 56% of online learners stated that they wanted the option to learn at their own pace, and 0% of them stated that they wanted timely, personalized content.

3. Gamification Is Increasing

Students' lives revolve around playing video games. The Pew Research Group reports that 65% of college students say they regularly play video games, with women slightly more likely to do so than males. 70% of students say they play video games occasionally. According to the study, college male gamers played almost four times as much as adolescent pupils, who on average played for four hours every week.

4. The Game Is Being Changed by AI

The combination of online learning with artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the most significant and fascinating technological developments. AI has endless potential to revolutionize education. It has the ability to customize instruction in ways that are beyond our current comprehension. It could significantly increase accessibility, drastically reduce the cost of college, and create a more intimate learning environment for online courses. Even while its full potential is still a ways off, some universities are already incorporating AI into their online curricula.

4. Everything Will Change Due to Big Data

Many contend that data—a result of technology in the online classroom—is what will transform education more than anything else. As educational institutions embrace digital textbooks, mobile applications, and online learning platforms, data—also known as big data due to its ever-increasing volume—is being produced at an alarming rate.

Online Learning Platforms – Worldwide

- Revenue in the Online Learning Platforms market is projected to reach US\$60.25bn in 2025.
- Revenue is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2025-2029) of 5.81%, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$75.52bn by 2029.
- In the Online Learning Platforms market, the number of users is expected to amount to 1.0bn users by 2029.
- User penetration will be 14.3% in 2025 and is expected to hit 16.7% by 2029.
- The average revenue per user (ARPU) is expected to amount to US\$71.90.
- In global comparison, most revenue will be generated in China (US\$40.43bn in 2025).
- With a projected rate of 21.8%, the user penetration in the Online Learning Platforms market is highest in China.

FIVE REASONS ONLINE LEARNING IS THE FUTURE EDUCATION IN 2025:

Let's examine the benefits of online learning and why it might be a viable choice for students in 2025, given its explosive growth in recent years. Learning is no longer limited to being physically present in a classroom. As long as you have access to the internet, you can now acquire a good education whenever and wherever you choose.

The online education market has expanded by an astounding 900% since 2000, and by 2028, it is expected to have 958.4 million students enrolled. For what specific reasons are students

choosing online learning over traditional classroom instruction, Let's examine the five benefits of taking lessons online and why you might be interested in doing so!

1. It is adaptable.

Together with the added flexibility of creating a schedule that works for everyone's schedule, online education allows both the teacher and the student to determine their own learning speed. There is no need to sacrifice anything because using an online learning platform makes it possible to better balance work and studies.

2. It provides a large range of programs.

There are countless subjects and abilities to teach and study on the internet. Following suit, an increasing number of colleges and universities are providing online versions of their courses for different levels and subjects.

3. You can go to it from practically any place.

Another excellent way to earn an official degree without ever having to step foot on a university campus is to study your program online. These online programs can be helpful in situations when it is not feasible to relocate in order to attend the ideal college.

4. It's less expensive than conventional schooling.

Online learning is typically less expensive than traditional classroom instruction. On average, attending a four-year university in person costs \$30,545 more than earning the same degree online.

Staying at home for school can be a cost-effective option, as the average cost of commuting for students in the United States is \$1,290. Avoiding campus food plans, which cost students an additional \$2,670 annually, is another smart approach to save money.

5. It makes professional development and lifetime learning possible.

Earning practical micro-credentials to assist launch your career is another benefit of online learning. By using these digital badges, you may inform potential employers that you have developed particular abilities that will help you stand out from the competition.

97% of higher education officials believe that micro-credentials can improve students' long-term employment success, per a recent survey.

CHALLENGES IN ONLINE EDUCATION

People in India who are enrolled in online courses confront numerous difficulties. Among the obstacles that must be surmounted are:

1. A lack of enough digital infrastructures

Even if the Indian government is taking the effort to build digital infrastructure, much more work has to be done in this area. The main issues are a reliable power source and fast internet. India ranks 89th in the world for internet stability and speed. There are only 15% of households with Internet connection, and just 5.5 out of every 100 people have mobile broadband subscriptions, according to a World Economic Forum survey. Additionally, there are now just 600 broadband corridors, mostly in and around the top 50 to 100 Indian cities, leaving rural areas with

inadequate connectivity. The technology needed now is 5G networks, which will speed up data downloads.

2. Insufficient social engagement

There is virtually little face-to-face interaction with the instructor and other students taking the course because online learning may be done from home or any other convenient location. Dhirendra Kumar (2010) claims that there is very little peer conversation, particularly in self-paced courses. Email, chat rooms, or discussion groups are used for the majority of the discussions. The campus environment isn't conducive to fostering social connection. As a result, you are unable to form any social connections that would aid in your professional development.

3. The dubious legitimacy of degrees

Even though the market has begun to accept online degrees, many fake and unaccredited degrees are still available online. The number of con artists issuing phony certificates that lack credentials is increasing. These frauds undermine the trust that potential employers have in online programs in addition to the legitimacy of online certifications.

4. Inspiration

To get to class, some pupils require encouragement. Students who are enrolled in self-paced online courses may put things off. Online schooling has a relatively high dropout rate. To finish the assignments and submit them on time, self-motivation and self-control are necessary. You may struggle in an online program if you have trouble staying organized, working independently, and making deadlines.

5. The Course Language

The vast majority of people in India, a multilingual nation, hail from rural areas. The majority of online courses feature English-language content. Thus, the availability of language content is a challenge for pupils who cannot speak English. Therefore, it is the responsibility of computer specialists, teachers, administrators, language content producers, and content distributors to collaborate and provide a workable framework and standardized solution for students who are solely proficient in Indian languages.

THE TOP ONLINE LEARNING STATISTICS IN 2025:

- Worldwide, 49% of students have completed some sort of online learning
- Online learning is the fastest-growing market in the education industry – it has grown 900% since its creation in 2000
- 70% of students say online learning is better than traditional classroom learning
- The number of online learning users is expected to increase to 57 million by 2027
- 80% of businesses now offer online learning or training solutions
- 63% of students in the US engage in online learning activities daily
- Online learning can increase student and employee retention to as much as 50%

- Online learning can reduce the time needed to learn a subject by 40% to 60%
- The online learning industry is projected to be worth more than \$370 billion by 2026
- Online learning and training can improve employee performance by 15% to 25%

GROWTH OF ONLINE LEARNING:

- Online learning has grown 900%+ since its inception
- Online learning will have a 9.1% compound annual growth rate by 2026
- America's online learning industry will be worth \$687 billion by 2030
- Online learning is poised to grow by more than 200% between 2020 and 2025
- The online learning sector grew to be a \$240 billion dollar industry by 2022
- The number of online learners is expected to grow to nearly 60 million people in the near future

CONCLUSION:

Online learning has significantly improved the quality of education during the past two to three years. There are a few online education service providers available that offer free instruction. Many rivals are joining this market as a result of the growing demand for online education. However, those who offer high-quality education will only endure in the future. Additionally, online education may still offer a wide range of courses with many options. Future job opportunities for professors will increase due to the need for online education. Online education is still not seen by Indian parents as being more significant than traditional classroom instruction. To reverse the trend, the government should raise awareness. To say that online courses should replace traditional teaching-learning methods would be premature. Unless a system is developed to address the problems and difficulties raised by the researchers, online sessions can be used to supplement classroom instruction but cannot entirely replace it, as technology enthusiasts hope will become the new normal after the COVID-19 pandemic. The educational process must be modified by using technology to make it more useful. In order to reach a wider audience and provide more possibilities for young people in rural India, the course should also be prepared in other languages. To develop strategies for improving online learners' social skills, innovation is needed.

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