

### **A Lockdown Perspective of Online Education: Its Pros and Cons.**

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Education at large is a process of give and take of instruction, information resulting into applied knowledge. In short, education is propagation of knowledge. Since times immemorial, there emerged several methods of education. Education was imparted via several methods. In olden days, there used to be a *Gurukul* method of education where students were kept in an asylum, preferably remote from social disturbances. This was supposed to be the best method of education as it followed a trio formula of Dedication-Devotion and Dynamism. As the time passed away, there came still more new methods of education. The prime purpose of education was the all side development of the cognitive abilities of a child. Considering this, many experiments were done and many and many new methods of education were implemented. Recently, before independence, Italian educationist Marium Montessori came to India and gave her unique method of education called as Montessori Method. Then the Maculey method of education came into its effect.

Every new method has its own pros and cons. When we apply the same law to the new methods, it is an undeniable fact that these new methods have some flaws of its own kind. The newly emerged online method of education is the one that is a buzzword of the modern times. There is a wide criticism on this method among educationists and intellectuals. After all what is online education? It is a virtual mode of instruction assisted with the electronic technology-Internet. In this method online teaching learning, notes, examinations, quizzes etc. can be conducted without any kind of difficulty. Students and teachers get connected through the apps like zoom, teiegram, whatsapp, face book, YouTube etc. Any number of people can come together with the help of internet and share their ideas through oral delivery or power point presentations, VDOs etc.

What come many people seem to prefer this method as a fine one? The reason for this is the unprecedented situation developed because of the corona outbreak. The Lockdown situations made the intellectuals to think to their wit's ends as to how this situation can be tackled? How education can be imparted without any social gathering or maintaining social distancing? The only answer to this question was ...Virtual classroom...online education. It does not mean that this is a new birth.

Yes, it was already there but it was badly wanted in the times like this. So, it became a buzzword. What is a virtual classroom? A virtual classroom is a classroom where there is no actual presence or appearance (bodily) of an individual together. This was found to be the best alternative in the situation like this. Now-a-days many conferences, seminars, workshops, classes are being conducted by using this method. This induced several questions in the mind of the researcher like me. Whether this online or virtual education can satisfy the students? Or in what way it is beneficial to the students? Can we take this method as a substitute for the traditional education method? Can this be a complete thing in itself? And so on. The purpose of this research paper is to find out the pros and cons of the online education or virtual classroom method especially in the time of lock down.

In order to lead us to better conclusions, we must first think the basic difference between classroom teachings and online teachings. In classroom teaching we find a teacher teaching in the class before a crowd of students. The class can be continued without any technical assistance..No need of internet, apps like zoom, YouTube, face book etc. There is a direct interaction between the students and the teachers. This method involves a teacher's impressionistic techniques like effective use of eye contact, movements, facial expressions, body language etc. This is a traditional method of teaching. In this method quizzes, group discussions, seminars and other methods of imparting knowledge are very active. In this method a teacher can use the ICT tools but not very frequently. Mostly this is a lecture method or an interactive method.

On the other hand, the online education or a virtual classroom, though beneficial in such a time of lockdown, it has its own limitations. Virtual classroom is more formal and arbitrary hence have no any attachment with the learners. There is no any kind of class control. While in classroom teaching if a student is dozing off in the class, a teacher can notice and can have a direct control on him or her. But in a virtual classroom, there is no class control as such. Because in this method one cannot keep an eye on everybody. If in any case such thing is noticed in a virtual classroom, the student may attribute his lack of attention to any technical fault. In an online class we see a teacher only in the role of a speaker on a small screen. Whereas in the classroom teaching we find a teacher dramatizing his text with his facial expressions, effective eye contact, movements etc. Classroom teaching has its own benefits. In this method a teacher appears before the students in a multiple role sometimes a moral preacher, practical demonstrator, discipline giver, an object of inspiration, a real motivation and after all a good guide. There develops a kind of emotional attachment between students and teachers which is needed for creating trust. Many students follow their teachers

not only for their quest for knowledge but their teaching, dressing, speaking, living, walking styles.

But still the classroom teaching seems to be handicapped in regards to the use of technology. In the times when the technology is at the finger tips of the students, it would not be better if a teacher doesn't make effective use of technology. A teacher should make use of it whenever is necessary. But at the same time we cannot ignore the positive side of the classroom teaching. Everything can be fully well explained with the help of graphs or Pie -charts or other graphical representations. It is said that the audio-visual aids are ten times effective a tool for developing the students' cognitive abilities than an ordinary classroom situation. In an online classroom the audio visuals and other tools are ample and handy which can be used with a greater skill. You can connect yourself with the world Wikipedia and open the store of knowledge. But what about the teaching via work experience? Or the connection with the bounty and abundance of nature? What about the field works or practicals for engineering and science streams. These questions remain to be answered.

Apart from this, it seems to me that classroom teaching is an all pervasive method. It has a human face and is more convincing than any other method. The most important thing is that online education needs greater investments on internet facilities, computer networks etc. This seems to be impossible in rural colleges because the UGC or the Govt. now-a-days is not extending their financial help to the colleges. The financial assistance is based upon the grade, the institution achieves in NAAC accreditation. Many rural colleges fail to qualify for the criterion required for the financial assistance. In such a scenario, the online education seems me to be a mirage. In online education students get more flexibility. The students have their freedom to go for the career of their choice as they are not tied to any one fixed. Online education is not costly. It also saves labor and time as well. The online education provides an open access to the expertise. But the most important drawback of the online class room is that there is no face to face contact or interaction. There is more work and less output. There seems a terrible lack of standards for this method. We cannot make a process of accreditation this kind of education.

**Conclusion:** whatever kind of education it may be, the prime purpose of it is to satisfy its stakeholders. In the online education mode no stakeholders can be fully satisfied. Neither teachers nor students nor parents are satisfied. So my view is that online education lacks the most part of the soul of classroom education. Many firms and institutions quickly dismiss the online education. There is greater accessibility in online education but still but this mode lacks the student teacher interaction as it happens in classroom situations. Online education must

be praised for its affordability. But at the same time there are only a few courses available online. Ultimately it is observed that online education has less positive sides than faults executing it up to the satisfaction level of the stakeholders.

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