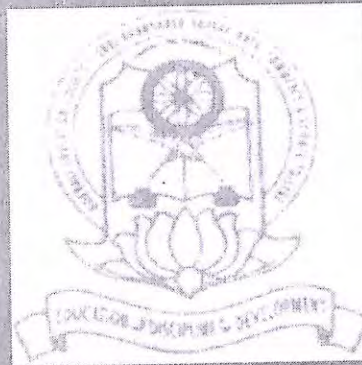


Two-Day International Multidisciplinary Web Conference  
ON

# COVID-19: FUTURE ROADMAP

21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2021



Organised by

GOKHALE EDUCATION SOCIETY'S  
Shri. Bhausaheb Vartak Arts,  
Commerce & Science College  
Borivali (West), Mumbai 400 091

Chief Editor

Dr. (Mrs.) Suhasini V. Sant

Co-Editor

Dr. S.B. Karande

Dr. Mrs. S. A. Yadav



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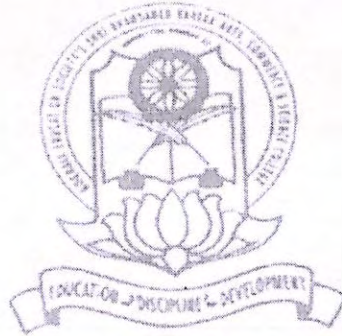
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## **Digitalization of Education and Student's Health during the Pandemic COVID-19**

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### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the closure of educational institutes throughout the globe to break the chain of infection. It has resulted in digitalization of education. The teachers and students have to shift from physical classroom to digital classroom. This constant interaction through digital platform is not apt for the physical and psychological health of students. They are also struggling for survival during pandemic owing to gender discrimination, digital, socio-economic divide, hunger, suicide, death, accidents, loneliness, domestic violence, migration and reverse migration, etc.,. In covid-19 era digital technology is being used excessively for fulfillment of the basic needs, communication and transaction however the increasing cases of cyber crimes are also being experienced. Covid-19 has also proved that equality, healthy immune system and positivity are indispensable with socio-economic, scientific and technological developments in life; individual and collective efforts have its own significance in finding solution for existential crisis. In the light of above observations, through library study, this paper seeks to analyse the impact of digitalization of education on student's health during Covid-19. It also tries to find (i) whether educators are communicating proficiently via digital platforms. (ii) if students are able to communicate in a healthy way through digital platforms (iii) what should be done to overcome the challenges faced during pandemic for appropriate learning outcomes in the teaching-learning process when digitalization is the need of the hour.

A teacher is considered the builder of a nation as the onus is on the teacher for the healthy development of the students who are the future and backbone of a country. Therefore, teacher-taught relationship has been put on high pedestal in our ancient system of education but in contemporary times, the teacher-taught relationship has also come a long way from Gurukul System to digital system. In the former system, the teachers used to play the multiple roles of being parents, mentor, disciplinarian etc., as the students used to be in the care of the teacher for  $24 \times 7$  by the time they complete their education. The relationship existent was Teacher  $\Leftrightarrow$  Student (IQ + EQ+ SQ) and the system used to prepare them in a healthy way for life by developing their intelligent quotient, emotional quotient and spiritual quotient.

But with the introduction of formal education system the relationship took a turn as the teacher and students are staying together for maximum 5-6 hours and the emphasis is on 3 Rs of learning- reading, writing and arithmetic and developing the intelligence quotient only. In this process, the vital essence of life – i.e., emotional quotient and spiritual quotient are not only neglected but lost too. The teachers become facilitators and friends at times yet neither the teachers nor the students get freedom to interact freely due to their constraints, limitations and both of them lose the rapport which was used to be shared between them in Gurukuls. Now, the relation is – Teacher - > Students (IQ  $\pm$  EQ - SQ).



Earlier in joint families, the mothers, being mostly housewives, and other relatives used to pay attention to emotional needs and activities of the children and hence there were less chances of students being astrayed. But nowadays both the parents are working and it's nuclear or even single parent family and therefore students experience loneliness; they are glued to digital devices- television, mobile and internet or spend too much time with their friends to do away with the void in their emotional lives which generally leads to disintegration of personality. Although the traditional system of education does allow teachers and students to share up to some extent, yet they feel lack of love and affection in their lives as their parents can't give them quality time however willing they are to do so.

During COVID-19 pandemic digitalization of education is the need of the hour. The teachers and students are not able to spend even 5-6 hours together as there is an absence of face to face communication most of the time. The relation is like – Teacher [ ] Students (The wall of emotional and spiritual distance between the teacher and students)

Research shows that the young learners' capacity to understand and retain improves as they learn by experience. Technologies such as collaboration, interactivity, modeling, simulations, virtual reality interfaces and gaming help youngsters experience the skill while being taught. Besides, it is used for sending e-mails, chatting, social networking- a platform for creative expression and comment about social, economic and political happenings in the world through tweets and blogs, for playing games, watching movies, T.V. serials and news. Today there are approximately 200 social networking websites like facebook.com, linkedin.com, myspace.com etc. 73% of teens are members of at least one such website. The highest numbers of active users are from the age group 15-24 years and the male-female ratio is an unexpected 8: 2. A study report published by Harvard University states that activities on social networking sites are actually good for physical and psychological well being and inner connect. Looking at one's own profile page is a self-affirming exercise and helps to manage stress better. But there is a dark side of digital education too as internet seems to be an intoxication which has made youngsters Net-addicts. Excess of everything is dangerous for one's well being. It applies to the youngsters too who proudly claim to be 'internet generation'. The so-called netiquettes used by them for their upgradation lead them to a dark and silent danger zone out of ignorance and they become victims of cyber crimes or unhealthy citizens of human society.

The easy availability of course content is misused by the young students. It kills their thinking power and creativity. They are intellectually degenerated whether it is matter of creative composition for their institutional magazine, its cover page design, essay and poetry writing, elocution or debate competition because they directly use the inbuilt mechanism to auto correct spelling and grammar. They even ignore whatever correction takes place. Then they expect teachers to encourage them to submit neatly typed assignments and project reports even if it is a complete violation of copyright act or plagiarism. It leads to their ethical downfall unconsciously. subsequently, the uncontrolled use of internet has affected language and communication skills of youngster as they use informal shorter expressions, abbreviations, emoticons, numerals for words even in official correspondence and examination, for example, they use 'ppl' instead of people, '4' instead of for/four, and 'hand' for have a nice day. They send e-mail/SMS/ MMS any time informally and formally also. They consider it good manners of the digital world. They prove them to be multi-tasker using internet during formal



communication, social get together or meals. So the line of demarcation has been blurred between what is formal and informal. The notions of privacy and shame appear old fashioned to the young tech savvy generation.

Public Relation Executive Li Jiayi, 29 says, "I know a friend who will log on to Facebook the minute he wakes up and posts, 'Good morning, Facebookers!' and a minute or so after that, ' I'm having my breakfast now.' I mean who cares?" (R.D., 105)

Assistant professor Michael Netzley, Singapore Management University says: Much of this behavior is due to "increased transparency and narcissism." Further he says "Everything we do could be on display and the web experience thus increasingly becomes more about 'me'." (R.D., 105)

While these social networking websites are designed to share photos (holiday snaps) and updates, the lack of etiquette extends to sending lovers' quarrels too and the barrier to exit is very extremely low.

According to an EU survey conducted last year, 49% of the 9-16 years old questioned revealed that they use the internet in their bedrooms where it is difficult for parents to vigil; 59% have their own social network profile, more than a quarter of it can be viewed by the public at large. Nearly 1/3 of them admit to have communicated with someone they have never seen; 9% actually go on to meet that person in real life.

The parents have recently reported that most social networking sites provide members with an option to block certain people from viewing their activities and children use it to keep themselves away from their parent's vigil.

Medical concerns regarding the use of social networking sites have been raised alarmingly due to adverse physical and psycho-social impacts. According to a study conducted at the Maryland University when students were suddenly prohibited from using social networking sites, they showed symptoms similar to those shown by drug addicts and alcoholics. The study claims that it could ruin some parts of brain, shorten attention span, weaken the immune system and isolate one from physical and social interaction.

This generation of young internet users is not necessarily as astute when it comes to business etiquette, says Mark Sparrow, Managing Director of recruiters Kelly Services, Singapore.

This is leading to chaos as students are becoming more and more mechanical in their relations and emotions are finding no place in their lives throughout which will pave way to greater number of incidences of drug addiction, domestic, social and psychological violence-murder, suicide including terrorism too.

Due to the digitalization of education, many students may drop out and less likely to return. They may be victim of child labour, early marriage, gender discrimination and the other unfair social practices. These factors also affect their healthy development.

"A study by UNICEF (2020) shows that '...prolonged closures disrupt essential school-based services such as immunization, school feeding, mental health, and psychosocial support, and can cause stress and anxiety due to the loss of peer interaction and disrupted routines.'" (Padhi)

Data and statistics have highlighted that post lockdown, the internet has amplified the risk of cyber-bullying, including online discrimination for children and young people. 'It is important to note that, while providing online learning to learners, providing them safe access to the internet



is imperative as they may come across risks, such as online sexual abuse, cyber-bullying and potentially harmful content and children's privacy may also be at greater risk.' (UNICEF, 2020) (Padhi)

The students need to be very active online when the concept of digital India and digital education is talk of the town in the academic world, but their being glued to the digital devices excessively loosens the connection between body and mind and connecting to others as human beings. Digital divide is also causing stress among them and hence some students have taken extreme steps like committing suicides.

The parents and teachers need to be vigilant. They must talk, make them feel comfortable so that the youngsters can share their uneasiness and make them understand that people lie online too. So they need not share personal information unnecessarily. The internet users must be made aware of the dangers and taught to identify the risks. The parents need to install Net nanny, an internet software programme which automatically filters the websites visited by the users. The parents need to visit websites like Ceop.police.uk or NetSmartz.org which teaches youngsters of age 5-17 how to be safe online. They contain useful advice for parents as well. Parents and / or teachers need to channelize their energy in the right direction by engaging them in constructive activities.


The government need to reform cyber laws as required. The police must attend to the victims and their parents immediately to avoid accidents. Workshops need to be organized to guide parents and the youth. The internet companies /site owners need to take more progressive steps like looking for patterns, certain words to avoid red flags; they must also use software that sifts through chat logs more efficiently.

To conclude, undoubtedly digital platform is a new channel and students are still learning to use it in a balanced and reasonable way. At the same time, it is a social learning process which takes time though it is unlikely to find hard and fast rules. Still it is genuinely needed to take these precautionary steps to stop the physical and psychological degeneration of students.

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