

# **A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW: ON MODERN TECHNOLOGY AS THE FUTURE MODE OF EDUCATION**

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Thinkers around the different corners of the world are now claiming that the impact of technology upon the life and society of human beings is immense. Possibly technological revolution exceeds the horizon of earlier Industrial revolution. Unlike the Industrial revolution, it not only brings change into the human outer world but also into the inner psychical world. Yuval Noah Harari in his book, *21 Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, writes “Even more importantly twin revolution in info-tech and bio-tech could restructure not just economics and societies but our very bodies and minds.”<sup>1</sup> Alvin Toffler provides us a very comprehensive narrative about the impacts of technology on human life. He writes in his book *‘Future Shock’* thus: “It is vital to understand, moreover, that technological innovation does not merely combine and re-combine machine and techniques. Important new machines do more that suggest or control changes in other machines- they suggest novel solutions to social, philosophical, even personal problems. They alter man’s intellectual environment the way he thinks and look at the world”<sup>2</sup>

Modern technology now claims to have a universal authority over every single aspect of human activity; weather it is social or private. It also claims to have a better ability than human beings in doing an action. In contemporary times, ‘a claim of modern technology’, of whatever nature, turns the focus of many intellectual people across the globe. Now it claims that it can provide a better scope of quality education to the students than the traditional mode of teaching. It offers people to learn what they want in a better way by sitting in any corner of the world. In present days, technology offers us a unique and innovative type of classroom known as virtual classroom which is quite different from our traditional conception of classroom. Immanuel Vinikas, a techno industry

writer provides a very illusive definition of virtual classroom. He writes “A virtual classroom is a video conferencing tool where instructors and participants engage with each-other and with the learning material. A virtual classroom platform helps to make the learning experience interactive and engaging while providing a controlled environment...participants can connect to virtual classroom platforms from any device that can connect to the internet. This type of flexibility enables participants to consume content, regardless of their location across the globe.”<sup>3</sup> The virtual classroom contains many features and facilities like charts, diagram, digital board, emoji, etc. Many teachers claim that such features and facilities make the teaching-learning process more interesting, interactive and dynamic. It seems that modern technology brings education to their door steps.

Now different techno-companies run different campaigns in different platforms to circulate among the people about the superiority, benefits modern technology in the fields of education. One sees how the techno-companies tries to inject superiority of technology based education system through different advertisement. Often they try to gain people’s trust by influencing their minds by casting a T.V star for their advertisement. They are trying to showcase that how learning most complicated things just by simply sitting before our computers or smartphones at our home is possible. It seems that the classrooms certainly come into home more precisely the classroom comes into our computer/smartphones itself. Simply we can feel a change or transformation in the field of teaching, into the mode of teaching. It is no doubt that technology brings much advancement into the field of education. It helps many ways to circulate message of education from one place to another at a glance. During the pandemic we realised the importance and benefits of modern technology in the field of education. It helps to run the education system when the doors of different academic institutions remain closed due to the novel corona virus. It seems that it helps to continue the rotation of the earth. Many people are calling that situation a new-normal situation. For them this is going to be future mode of exchanging knowledge. Thus, according to them modern technology is going to change, replace the age old traditional mode of education. However, such

changing aspects/dimensions in the domain of education are likely to create certain space for new controversies concerning the future mode of education. Can a virtual class room fulfil purpose of education? Does a virtual classroom have the potential/ability to take the place of on-going/traditional institutional education system? This article tries to find a possible solution to such question.

In order to have a possible solution of such question we need to know first the purpose of education in human life. Generally, by education we try to mean gathering information. But education does not only mean to provide mere 'collection of information' to the learners. The goal and purpose of education is greater than that. If we try to look back into the primitive societies then we can see that primitive mind tried to know/explore the meaning of different natural phenomena in order to make their life more stable in the uncanny situation. The growing knowledge about the environment into the minds of human beings makes them interpret meaning of different natural phenomena which ultimately helps them to sustain their lives into the uncanny environment. When people find themselves in a stable situation, they possibly feel a different sort of crisis into their inner/psychic world. People somehow feel at certain growing stage of human consciousness that the external conditions are not sufficient to live a good life. They feel the need of something more. The growing crisis of human consciousness forced human mind to concentrate upon his/her inner world in order to realise it. Thus human's quest for knowledge can be defined as a spontaneous activity of human mind to make to encounter inner and outer crisis in order to make their life a stable one, perfect one. The growing human consciousness feels the importance to gather such experiences and secure it for the next generation in the form of knowledge. The education system is the unique system of human civilisation which passes this knowledge from generation to generation. Every human society across the globe realises the importance of education in forming the life of their civilians. An ideal type of education process helps human beings to encounter their different growing spontaneous quests concerning life and reality to make their more perfect. Thus knowledge cannot be defined only as mere gathering information about the external world. Knowledge is more

than that. P. Gisbert in his book *Fundamentals of sociology* tries to provide a comprehensive summary about the purpose and goal of education. He writes, “Education (from *educare*) means the bringing up or developing in the pupil those habits and attitudes with which he may successfully face the future, though it does not exclude the idea of leading the student in the acquisition of knowledge and experience in accordance with the values cherished in a society. Education in one way or another is a necessary and universal feature of society by which every generation transmits to the next its social heritage. It is basically an agency of social control both in conservative and in its innovating aspects. It is itself one of the most faithful expressions of the ideals and ends of society”<sup>4</sup>. According to Radhakrishnan, “The purpose of education, it is admitted by thinkers of East and West, to provide a coherent picture of the universe and an integrated way of life , and this cannot be a collection of distribution but should be a harmony of pattern”<sup>5</sup>

From the above discussion we can draw an understanding about the role/purpose of knowledge and education. Now let try to us concentrate upon the central question of the article.

The busy schedule of our life gives us reason to choose an online education system for sharing knowledge from one person to another. In today’s world, the life of the human beings is moving too fast. People hardly get any chance to spend their time in creative thinking. Today individuals want to achieve many things at a single point of time. As for example, they want to study or learn something by taking rest in their easy chair. The modern technology gives us the space and power to use our time and energy in attaining various things at a single point of time. Such overwhelming power and potentiality of modern technology inspires the minds of many learned persons to see online/virtual mode of education system as the future ideal system of sharing knowledge. For them modern technology provides certain helping tools to clear many critical and logical concepts to a person who is living in a far place from his/her institution. Earlier often it happened that a student had to go to miles away to attend the class. And sometimes it becomes very difficult for a student to attend their class in time. The modern technology

now can bring education at the door of the student. In that sense modern technology can be seen as beneficial. The claims of modern technology seem very pertinent if consider the on-going life and social structure as an obvious and normal one. But if question this on-going fast structure of life and society then the situation could be otherwise. Thinkers from different corner of the world find certain flaws in online teaching methods. Certain draw backs of the on-line mode of education can be easily be realised if we consider the wider aspect/role of education in human life. As we have mentioned in the earlier section of this article is that the role of education is not to provide only information about matters. The role of education is much more than that. If we look back in to the past then we can realise that how each and every civilisation preferred to provide the knowledge of the culture, heritage, language, etc., through their educational institutions. The academic institutions have always been considered as an apparatus by the human civilisation to inject the social values into minds of the students, which help to guide the moral, social, political behaviour of a person in order to make a develop civilisation. In present days, the goal of every civilisation is more or less the same. The only difference tobe seen in today's world is that education becomes a commodity, which is alarming. The growing capitalist companies are now investing the money in education sectors with an intention to earnmore profit. The intention of profit often makes a barrier in the teaching-learning process. The growing sense of more profit often provides the idea to the investors in education sector to promote online education system because the online education system seems to be profitable than running an academic institution. In online education mode the authority has to provide a very less amount of money to develop the academic institutions in order to provide a sound academic environment. And if an authority wishes then they can circulate the same information of a virtual classroom to the maximum number of people across the globe. It is not only the investing agencies but also this virtual mode of education system that is a profitable one. At an initial stage it seems very sound to have such virtual classrooms because it saves our time as well as money. But we never question the effectiveness of such teaching method. We also hardly try to understand the greater goal of education in human life and society. We are only

concentrating upon the initial benefits/monetary benefits and not the long term benefits/inner- psychic benefits. Often we fail to understand the ineffectiveness of online teaching methods. The sort of effective communication we can have in in-person class is hardly present in online class/virtual class rooms. The effective communication is very important to make our teaching-learning process a successful one. The effective communication in academic environment can only be possible by direct interactions between the teacher and students. In a direct interaction/communication a teacher and student not only share their words but also their emotions. The emotional conversations/non-linguistic conversation leaves a great impact upon the conscious of both the teacher and students. It helps to build a strong emotional attachment between the teacher and student. That short of emotional/non-linguistic elements can hardly be found in online/virtual communications. It is true that modern technology provides many suitable elements in education sector which change the dimension of education. But still many things left behind the radar of modern technology.

One of the major functions of an academic institution is to provide value system to the students. The institution makes this process possible by providing students a sound and just academic environment. The ambience of the institutions itself inject the idea of just and equal society in the minds to students on the one hand. The students, on the other hand, gradually adopt certain values and ideas, not always consciously. They simply learn those things only by living into that environment. It is difficult to learn such things only by sitting in an isolated place or in a virtual space by turning our face in to the screen of our laptop. The virtual reality can successfully pass the information to the learner but such information seems very lifeless without human expression and emotions. When we converse with others in our ordinary life we are not only exchanging the words. We also exchange emotions, gesture, expressions with those words. And often it happens that the emotions and expression of a person speaks more than the word. Similarly, in a classroom a teacher not only share the information but also shares his/her emotions related to that information. The emotions, gestures often touch the heart and mind of the students which remain untouched the preview of words. Often the silence in

a class room speaks many things to both the teachers and students. Often the innocent smile of a student tells us the story of his/her hardship. The silent smile of a learner often tells us the challenges that she/he faced in the way of his/her education. It not only speaks so; it also reveals the socio-economic structure of our society. Thus a physical academic environment gives us the space to make ourselves aware about so many aspects of life and society apart from the information about the world; which can hardly be attaining in a virtual classroom. It seems that the online mode of education is designed only to provide the information to the learners through certain verbal communications. But the non-verbal traits which a learner learns through the expression, body language, gesture, etc., of a teacher in in-person classes are hardly present in the virtual classrooms. Thus many thinkers think that the virtual classrooms can never provide the essence of education.

Thus it can be said at the end of this article that in a physical classroom, a student not only gathers the information about (subject) matters, but also learns so many life governing primary factors by sharing the classroom with their class mates. There is a peer learning possibility with the domain of physical classroom. The concept of sharing is one of the fundamental elements in human life which helps to build sound character of a student. This sense of sharing helps to develop a sense of unity into the conscious of the students which is one of the most essential conditions to build harmonious society. Such sense of sharing, unity, etc., students acquire just by participating and sharing the classroom experiences or just by playing in the institution's playground.

Moreover, if we analyse the structure of technology laded education system carefully then it would not be so difficult for us to realise that how many capitalist techno companies' and many educational state bodies tries to make education a manufacturing content, marketable product through their advertisements. Even the teacher-student duo is getting compelled under the hegemonic state control that envisages education a saleable product. A profound content is being manufactured through changes in education policy and by barrage of constant advisement to that end. By way of doing

that it subjugates the accessibility to buy that product for students healing from lower economic strata and emphasizing upon an elitist as well as expensive mode of education.

<sup>1</sup> *Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Yuval NohaHarrie, Vintage, London, page,15

<sup>2</sup> Future Shock, Alvin Toffler, Bantam Books, New York,1971, page,29

<sup>3</sup> ‘*Virtual Classroom: What it is and How it Works*’, Immanuel Vinikas, <https://corp.kaltura.com/blog/what-is-a-virtual-classroom/> visited at 1.16 on 3.04.2022.

<sup>4</sup> *Fundamentals of Sociology*, P. Gisbert, Orient BlackshawPvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2010. p.33.

<sup>5</sup> Government of India, The Report of the University Education Commision (December 1948-August 1949), Vol.I, p.34.

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