


# How education changed in the last few months

**Classrooms are not the same anymore and it will not be till we walk out of the pandemic. Learning will be through screen for a long time now, reports *Education Times***

Until March, no one knew that India would have to make a dramatic transition towards digital learning. But with the COVID-19 pandemic leading us to re-imagine new ways of learning, virtual learning has become the new normal along with a sudden spike in e-learning platforms. "The adoption of online models has been highest in the K12 segment with India having over 15 lakh schools which cater to 40 crore plus students. Since the digital adoption in this segment was extremely low in the pre-pandemic phase, the challenge provided a big opportunity to school administrators to swiftly switch to online mode," says Antarpreet Singh, director - Digital Learning, Indian School of Business (ISB). HEIs too had low digital adoption initially even though the UGC and AICTE had set 20% target for online learning, which was not being complied to. "Within a few weeks of the lockdown, UGC gave approval to enhance online learning component to 40% for 950 plus universities. The real evolution of our education ecosystem will take place in the post-pandemic phase, wherein every educational institution will have to craft its own 'blended digital recipe'," Singh adds.

 **Schooling via blended learning format**  
While many schools struggle to impart online education dur-

ing the lockdown, others have seamlessly adopted with blended learning models already in place. Studies have shown that blended learning methods and traditional teaching in the classroom with online learning tools are more effective than simple face to face lessons in the classroom, says Stanley Anthony, principal, St Xavier's School, Sector 49, Gurugram.

 **Why coaching moved online**  
Post-lockdown, several coaching institutes converted their regular offline classes to online mode for both new and old batches to help students prepare for various entrance examinations such as JEE Main, Advanced and NEET-UG. "Live classes and video tutorials, soft copies of the study materials were given to students to continue their study schedule," says Partha Halder, centre-head, FIIT JEE, Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi. However, he says that this is not at par with classroom coaching as there is no face-to-face interaction. Additionally, edtech platforms such as GuruQ, BasicFirst are increasingly meeting the demand for personal online tutoring during COVID-19 crisis.

 **Proctored exams for fair assessments**  
Online remote proctoring, which


### Challenges of online learning post COVID-19

**27** percent students in India do not have smartphones and laptops

**28** percent of students are not able to study properly due to frequent power outages

**33** percent of students admitted that they are not able to focus on studies during online classes

permits students to take exams from home, is picking up the pace. "The student in this mode is checked continuously through the webcam and screen capture by means of AI. Reports are produced for the evaluator as test logs alongside screen captures of the student and his screen," says Manoj K Arora, vice chancellor, BML Munjal University that decided on AI-driven remote administered mode for the selection test of engineering students.

 **Virtual lab experience**  
To provide lab training in times of the pandemic, several institutes are resorting to virtual labs. "They enable students to undergo lab experience on their desktop and mobile. The feature is created with the help of ICT tools. Since January, over 26,000 users opted for virtual labs at IIT Guwahati," says TG Sitharam, director of the institute. While IIIT Hyderabad has recorded over 1,00,000 users of virtual labs since January, over 69,000 users have resorted to remote experimentation in NITK Surathkal. "When using these labs, students can make mistakes without worrying about the equipment getting damaged," says Maneeq Kumar, dean, School of Engineering and Technology, BML Munjal University.

