

Two-day National Webinar

On

Online Education in the Changing Times: Problems and Prospects

July 7-8, 2020



ABSTRACT VOLUME

Organized by

Vidyasagar University Teachers' Association (VUTA)

Vidyasagar University, Midnapore, West Bengal

Thematic Note of the Webinar

The Covid-19 outbreak, which has spread across 191 countries, is continuing to severely disrupt educational activities across the globe. As schools, colleges and universities remain fully or partially closed, it is estimated that 90% of the world's learners, totaling a whopping 1.6 billion people, are being affected by the pandemic. The figure for India alone is 320 million. Leaving aside the myriad challenges for the authorities – of concluding the examinations, declaring results and then delivering curricula in a brutally compressed new academic year – the sheer psychological toll on the students is debilitating too.

Over the past two decades, advances in digital technology have seen a steady rise in the MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) mode of education, even among premiere universities across the world, such as MIT and Harvard University in the US, and in India, by various reputed higher education institutions (HEIs). Both in India and abroad, though, until now, they have been fairly cautious in their offerings of online education.

But the present crisis has now precipitated a three-fold challenge for premiere institutes: to provide online, undisrupted education that is high-quality, scalable and secure. Many HEIs in India have been quick to embrace digital technologies to keep the ball rolling. Although primarily driven by immediate needs, this would help the institutions gain valuable experience. Changes which otherwise take years may now be forced upon the education sector in months. The programmes which have been conducted in campus may now have to be shifted online, partially or completely. What Indian universities and institutes need to do now is to make pedagogical adjustments to adapt the regular courses to online teaching. But this envisaged transition might also lead to the inevitable exclusion of a significant number of learners from the online classroom. Digital divide in Online Education is going to hurt economically disadvantaged students of our country. Students who cannot afford a Wi-Fi connection at home or possess a smartphone or a computer will not benefit from online

education as their peers will and this may further disable them in studies. Further, proper network connectivity is appearing to be a hindrance in this respect particularly for the students belonging to the rural and semi-urban areas of the country.

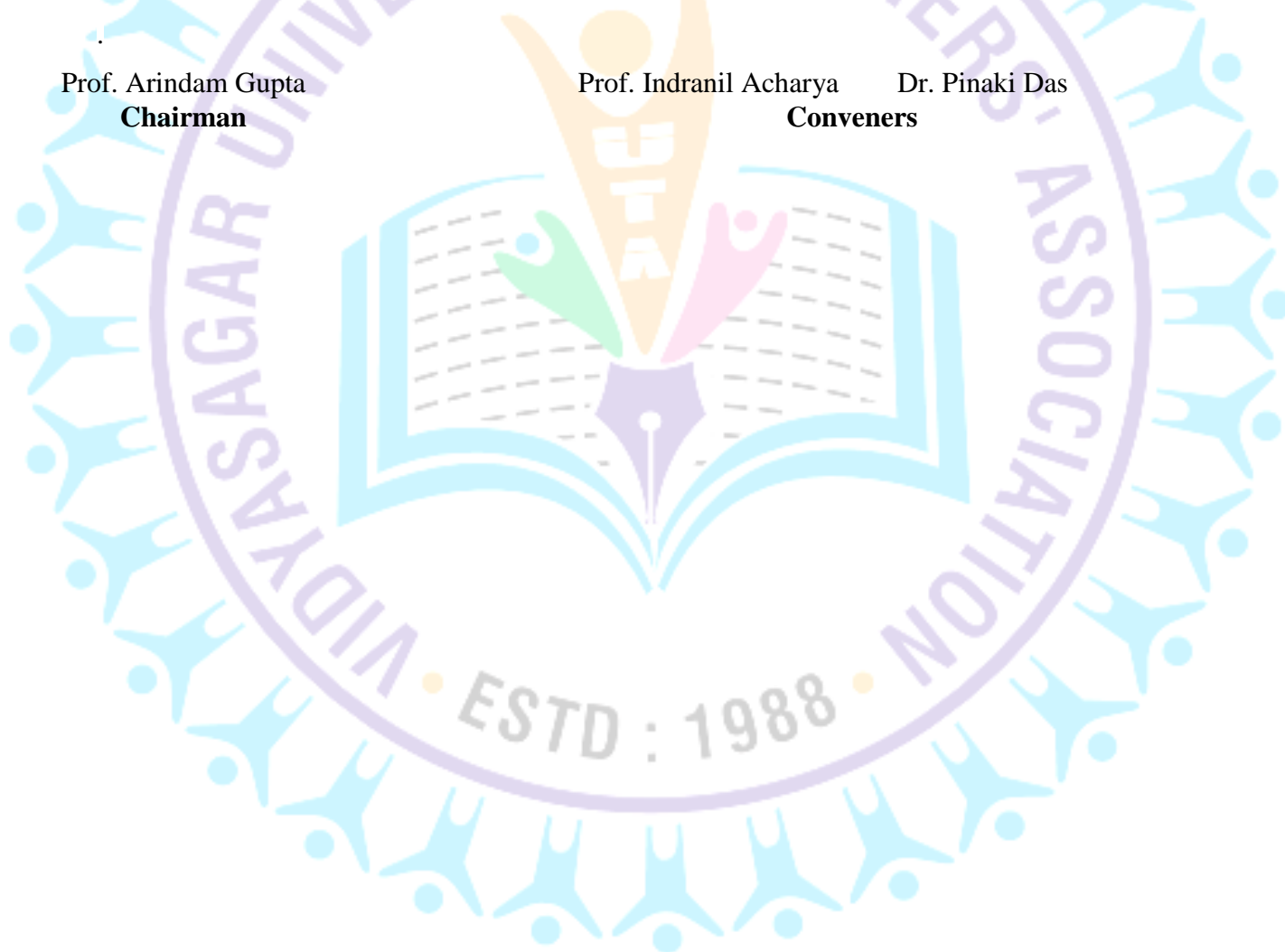
This webinar aims to address all these concerns in an inclusive manner and attempts to point out the potentials of the 'new normal' teaching-learning system in the post-Covid world. There will also be detailed discussions on the diverse innovative digital methods for compensating the actual physical classroom experiences

Prof. Arindam Gupta
Chairman

Prof. Indranil Acharya

Dr. Pinaki Das

Conveners



Bridging the Digital Divide in the Changing Times: Application of A5 Solutions

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ABSTRACT

Disasters, either natural and man-made, adversely affect humanity including human lives and, the knowledge creation, as a standard of the progress of civilization. The development of education of a country depends upon the present economics, academic structure, research facilities, health issues and involvement of government ministry. The outbreak of present pandemic Coronavirus (official designation COVID-19 or 2019-nCov) has a clear negative impact on academic and research activities. It creates a global threat and people keep themselves at home to maintain social distancing for reducing the outbreak of community transmission. This COVID-19 epidemic is neither the first and confidently nor the last epidemic that will pose a threat to the conventional education system. Both the effects of education i.e. direct and indirect effects are a subject risk to such pandemic and other disaster vulnerability. Instead, efforts should be made to find measures which can ensure the continuation of the education system for posterity. This requirement of an alternate way of learning proves us for the transformation of the learning process from conventional to digital. The primary requirement of this transformation is the availability of a sophisticated and multitasking platform for online learning, which conforms A5 solutions. This A5 implies the 5A's of access, i.e. Availability, Adequacy, Accessibility, Affordability and Appropriateness; which bridges the digital divide by ensuring the equal access of web for all. In this paper, the authors have discussed the tool FCC (Free Conference Call), after evaluation and comparison which can use by learners and educators as an alternative solution of the physical classroom. This is a dissemination or sharing platform and most versatile and comprehensive free web-conferencing solution which can be used by academic institutions and educators for online classes. In addition, this paper also go through the comparative study of FCC and other known web conferencing tools to clarify the judgement of its acceptance.



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But the present crisis has now precipitated a three-fold challenge for premiere institutes: to provide online, uninterrupted education that is high-quality, scalable and secure. Many HEIs in India have been quick to embrace digital technologies to keep the ball rolling. Although primarily driven by immediate needs, this would help the institutions gain valuable experience. Changes which otherwise take years may now be forced upon the education sector in months. The programmes which have been conducted in campus may now have to be shifted online, partially or completely. What Indian universities and institutes need to do now is to make pedagogical adjustments to adapt the regular courses to online teaching. But this envisaged transition might also lead to the inevitable exclusion of a significant number of learners from the online classroom. Digital divide in Online Education is going to hurt economically disadvantaged students of our country. Students who cannot afford a Wi-Fi connection at home or possess a smartphone or a computer will not benefit from online education as their peers will and this may further disable them in studies. Further, proper network connectivity is appearing to be a hindrance in this respect particularly for the students belonging to the rural and semi-urban areas of the country.

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Apart from this broad introductory thematic note, the following sub-themes may also be considered closely during the deliberations in the two days of the webinar:-

- i) Transformative Online Pedagogies
- ii) Expanding Access, Openness and Flexibility
- iii) Promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- iv) Innovative Learning Designs for Student Success
- v) Global Challenges and Glocal Solutions
- vi) E-Content Development
- vii) Digital Initiatives in Education like SWAYAM, MOOC etc.
- viii) ICT for Online Education and NDL of India
- ix) Virtual versus Traditional Classroom for Cognitive Development of Students
- x) Effectiveness and Feasibility of Online Education in India

Programme (List of Resource Persons)

Day 1:07.07.2020

Inaugural Session (10-30 am – 12 noon)

Padmashri Prof. Ajoy Kumar Ray, Former Director, IEST, Shibpur

Prof. Nageshwar Rao, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, IGNOU, New Delhi

Prof. K. Srinivas, ICT & Project Management Unit, NIEPPA, Govt. of India

Technical Track-I (1:00 pm – 3: 00 pm)

Prof. P. S. Mukhopadhyaya, Library & Information Science, University of Kalyani

Technical Track-II (4 pm – 6 pm)

Prof. Partha Pratim Das, Dept. of Computer Science & Engineering, IIT-Khargpur

Day 2:08.07.2020

Technical Track-III (10 am – 12 noon)

Dr. Dimple Patel, Library & Information Science, Central University of Himachal Pradesh

Technical Track-IV (1 pm – 3 pm)

Dr. Rama K. Patnaik, Librarian, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore

Valedictory Session (4 pm – 5.30 pm)

Prof. Ashok K. Bakhshi, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, PDM University, Bahadurgarh,
NCR and Hon'ble Chairman, GAD-TLC, Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India

Dr. Ganesh Hegde, Hon'ble Adviser, NAAC, Bengaluru

5/6 Selected Papers for Presentation in Each Technical Track

Call for Papers

Interested persons willing to contribute theoretical or empirical paper in the above webinar are requested to submit full paper on any of the above sub themes or related areas with an abstract of 250 words through the following e-mail id of the Conveners in MS Word format. However, the decision of the Advisers will be final for selection of papers to be presented in the webinar. The selected paper will be published in an edited volume (with ISBN).

- **No Registration Fee**
- **E-certificate for both Paper Presenters and Participants**

Important Dates

- Submission of Abstract: 02.07.2020
- Confirmation of Abstract: 03.07.2020
- Submission of Full Paper: 05.07.2020
- Last Date of Registration: 05.07.2020

Online Registration through following Link

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScel89KLdwMuVMp26fwKF_7Ot5JvVMif7qcFb6lPdLN_MzujA/viewform

Prof. Arindam Gupta
Chairman

Prof. Indranil Acharya
Conveners

Dr. Pinaki Das

E-mail: webinarvidyasagaruniversity@gmail.com