



# Online Education

## Why in News

Recently, the Central government has proposed long-term measures to address social inequities in **online education**, as highlighted by the [Covid-19 pandemic](#).

- The measures include plans to **distribute laptops or tablets** to 40% of all college and university students over the next five years and to **equip all government schools with Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**.
- Earlier in April 2020, the Centre had announced to [start the 2020-21 academic year virtually](#).

## Key Points

### ▪ Facilitation of Online Education:

#### ◦ Providing Laptops and Tablets:

- Providing these **devices to 4.06 crore students** (40% of the projected student population) **by 2026**, at a total cost of Rs. 60,900 crore.
- The **Centre and States** will share the cost in a **60:40 ratio**.

#### ◦ Installing ICT Facilities:

- The **Ministry of Human Resource Development** proposes to spend Rs. 2,306 crore on **developing and translating digital course content and resources** over the next five years.
- Different **e-learning** techniques will be used like YouTube, Google Classroom, [SWAYAM Prabha portal](#), [direct-to-home](#) (DTH), etc.

### ▪ Sanitisation and Quarantine Measures before School Reopenings:

- The measures would include ensuring basic [water, sanitation and hygiene \(WASH\) facilities](#), safe drinking water, availability of sanitiser, disinfectant, cleaning material and equipment for temperature checking.

### ▪ Financial Support:

- Under the **composite grant for schools**, ranging between **Rs. 25,000 for small schools with less than 100 students** and **Rs. 1 lakh for schools with over a thousand students** for awareness and community mobilisation to sensitise parents, students and local leaders about pandemics, social distancing and other preventive measures.
- **Rs. 1,000 per teacher to encourage** them to function as first-level counsellors, disseminate basic information about Covid-19 and provide digital/online/mobile education.
- **Rs. 1 lakh per school for sanitisation and quarantine measures** in preparation for the safe reopening of schools.
- A proposed **budget of Rs. 55,840 crore to equip government schools** above the upper primary level, with ICT facilities.

# Factors Affecting Online Education In India



## Challenges

- **Social Inequity:**
  - e-Learning is a privilege for the students from middle and upper class but it has proved to be a nuisance for students from the lower middle class and people living **below the poverty line** (BPL).
- **Marketing of Education:**
  - Corporate houses, technology firms and educational institutions will be working closely to achieve the goals of e-learning which may aggravate the commercialisation of education and exclude the self-dependent tutors and students from economically weak backgrounds.
- **Technological Constraints:**
  - Poor students, who do not have access to e-resources (computers, laptops, internet connectivity), will not be able to attend classes from home.
  - Teachers too might have technical constraints and if teachers are equipped but the same might not be the case for the institutions.
- **Lack of Practical Learning:**
  - Most of the subjects like beauty culture, fashion design and tailoring, office management, travel and tourism, web design etc need practical learning so it is difficult to teach them from a distance.
- **Traditional classroom organisations** like schools and colleges, as social space (whereby a student not just learns the academic knowledge but many social skills also), **are indispensable.**

## Way Forward

- The government should start making **access to technology universal** in the public education system. Private players can make e-resources accessible and available to students under the **Corporate Social Responsibility** (CSR).

- The **definition of the [right to education](#) needs to expand and promote online education** so that it addresses the importance of connectivity and access to knowledge and information.
- **Traditional classroom organisations should give way to online education.**
- Further, there is a need for **deep reflection on curriculum and to ensure scientific literacy** within it as the society still struggles against superstitions and hardly fights misinformation actively.

**[Source: TH](#)**

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