

Covid-19- Lockdown

Challenges in English Teaching: A Reflection

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Abstract:

The Century's Disaster (Covid-19) has badly affected every field specifically education system. There seems to be a long gap between teacher and student during the pandemic. When there is a gap, one, obviously doubts if the teaching and learning becomes a meaningful one. There appear many challenges in education. Covid-19 has created a situation, when people, in general have been swallowed by fear of life. One can witness a dramatic gloomy atmosphere all around. During these days of The Century's Disaster, the system of teaching and learning has been thrown helter and skelter. Every individual nation, every individual organization, every academic institution and every individual middle class family has suffered a crumble economically. A large number of human lives were mysteriously lost to this sudden and unknown deadly virus. A large number of families lost their bread-winners. Tens and thousands of children have become orphans after losing their parents. Even now, the world has not yet recovered from the wrath of The Century's Disaster. Human being, who is called as the superior species meddled with his inferior species. The chapter of Genesis 1:26 in The Bible says the word 'Dominion'.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26-28 & Environmental Rights).

The word dominion was misconceived by him and hence he has been ruthless towards all other, so called inferior creatures. Thus is a terrible destruction over him. Keeping this as a background literature, this article deals with the trends, changes and challenges faced in the field of education. This article also portrays the drastic changes

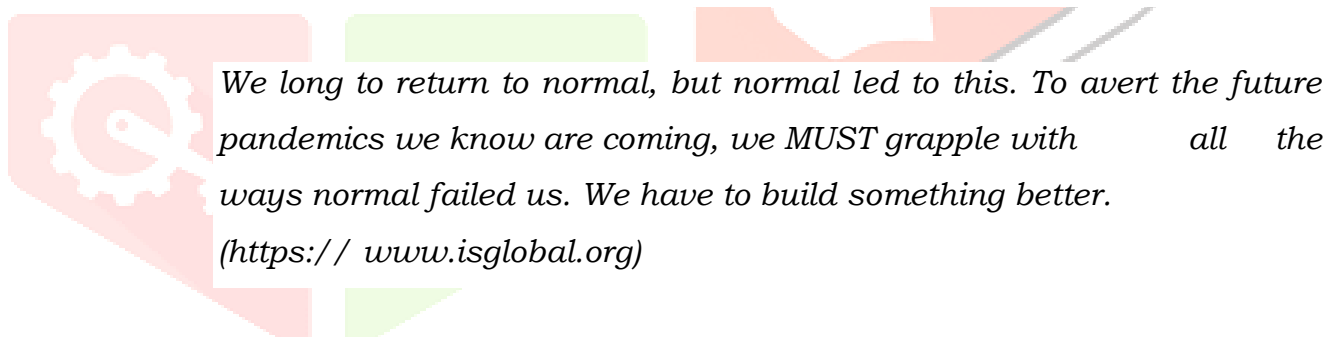
that have evolved during the pandemic in teaching and learning of English. On the positive sides of it, teachers have rather been forced to hone their technical skills.

It is the right time that English teachers become tech-savvy in making their students successful in learning English online.

Key words: The Century Disaster, crisis, trends and challenges, tech-savvy, positivity.

Introduction to epidemics in English Literature

Covid-19 has rapidly grown in a thespian way affecting the complete education system throughout the world. It is not over, the Century's Disaster, like an impersonator changes its forms leaving no hope for a better tomorrow. But literature teaches us hope and positivity about life and in life. Hence we, as the human beings, need to create our own literature of life despite many disasters. It may be apt to remember Ed Yong, a science journalist, for The Atlantic as



In the Bible (e.g., Exodus 9:14, Numbers 11:33, 1 Samuel 4:8, Psalms 89:23, Isaiah 9:13), the plague was viewed as one of God's punishments for sins, so the frightening description of its spread was interpreted as a warning. Medieval writings, such as The Decameron by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) and The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400), emphasized human behaviour: the fear of contagion increased vices such as avarice, greed, and corruption, which paradoxically led to infection and thus to both moral and physical death. Daniel Defoe's A Journal of the Plague Year depicts events, statistics about the Great Plague of London in 1665. However, in modern times people appeared not to be alarmed because they are sure that the bacteriologists would find a way to overcome this new germ, just as they had overcome other germs in the past.

When there is no end to viruses that emerge in every century, as they say, we must adjust ourselves with the only hope of a long of life. Seeking one's daily life is a permanent end. Epidemics are not new to this planet. There have been very dangerous epidemics in the human history such as Black Death (1346-1353), Spanish Flu (1918-1920), Russian Plague (1770-1772) and SARS Outbreak (2002-2004) and particularly in India Bubonic and Pneumonic Plague (1994).

Education during Covid-19 Times

However, as of now today, Covid-19 has left all the human beings of this planet with the greatest lesson in life. The lessons are many, but clarity has crept into the human brain. The only clarity is that one has to learn to live, learn to go ahead in daily life despite the virus, lockdown, curfew and so on. Among all these issues, it is the right time to think about imparting proper education to the young minds. If education is neglected, the future generations would suffer. The quality of learned people will drastically be reduced. So, education during the days of The Century's Disaster has turned technical despite the unpreparedness by teacher and student communities. Here comes the duty of an English teacher to make his lessons become meaningful in spite of a physical gap between teacher-student. Today, all the educational institutions starting from schools, colleges and universities are conducting Digital teaching. Intellectuals and academicians all around the field have skeptical about online learning. In this connection it is to quote an article on the topic *The Covid-19 Pandemic has changed education forever*. This is how

There are, however, challenges to overcome. Some students without reliable internet access and/or technology struggle to participate in digital learning; this gap is seen across countries and between income brackets within countries. For example, whilst 95% of students in Switzerland, Norway, and Austria have a computer to use for their schoolwork, only 34% in Indonesia do. (World Economic Forum).

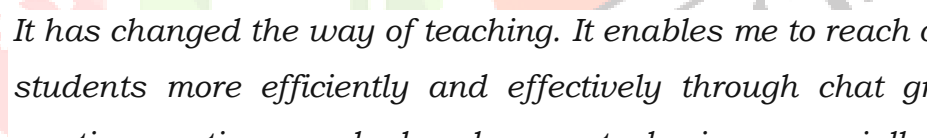
Despite clear-cut criticism from the stakeholders of the education sector, because of technical nuances, English, as a subject has to be taught using the most sought - after Technology. Teaching of English in a successful manner, is dealt herewith. There is an obvious demand from the present situations that the English teacher uses the latest technology that appeals to the young minds. In this connection,

I remember Malathy Krishnan, who in her article titled Reflective Teaching: Techniques for Classroom Investigation in ELT writes in a big positive note as

All human action involves three aspects: planning or setting out with a purpose, executing the plan, and then looking at the results to see if the purpose was achieved. This is a cyclic process where the effects of action feed back into goal-setting and implementation. (Malathy. 62).

As the studies have shown that students generally use their senses to mobiles phones, TVs, computers, pads, tabs and so on, it is strongly suggested that the teachers attract their senses to the learning content through various online platforms. Microsoft Teams, zooms, Cisco Webex, Google Meet, Slack, GoToMeet, Google Hangouts, Facetime, skype, FreeConferenceCall, ezTalks Cloud Meeting and so on are some of the online teaching platforms used by various educational institutes around the world during the pandemic time.

As we read the positive sides of the use of technology in teaching, one can come across a teacher Dr. Amjad, a professor at The University of Jordan who has been using Lark Meetings for his online classes says



It has changed the way of teaching. It enables me to reach out to my students more efficiently and effectively through chat groups, video meetings, voting and also document sharing, especially during this pandemic. My students also find it is easier to communicate on Lark. I will stick to Lark even after corona virus, I believe traditional offline learning and e-learning can go hand by hand. (www.Weforum.com/agenda/2020/4.)

Online English teaching can yield very good results provided it is used in a meaningful way. English teaching fraternity is already well-acquainted with CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning in their language labs. There are many other sources of teaching language and literature through video-conferencing, Interactive CDs/books, Electronic dictionaries/translators, power points, e-books, videos, pictures and many more. Through all these online teaching-aids can be of very help for the teachers to bring all the students on a single platform. Literature in the form of stories and poems can be well explained by using the appropriate pictures or videos. Teachers

can further create their own e-content for grammar with the help of some caricatures, related videos or even video clips from some movies too. To develop speaking skills, teachers can conduct online activities such as role-plays, JAM sessions, Debates, Group Discussions and any other activity given to the creative mind of the teacher or trainer. There are a few reasons that Jacqui Murray (2015) cites why Technology is to be used in English Language Teaching as below:

- 1) *Technology allows students to demonstrate independence.*
- 2) *Technology differentiates the needs of students.*
- 3) *Technology deepens learning by using resources that students are interested in.*
- 4) *Students actively want to use technology.*
- 5) *Technology gives students an equal voice.*
- 6) *Technology enables students to build strong content knowledge wherever they find it. (<http://www.teachhub.com/13-reasons-using-technology>)*

The Century's Disaster has prompted or forced the educational institutions to take up the online teaching and learning. Parents of students whether poor or rich are forced to buy these electronic gadgets. This technology can become the source of language learning and lead to the achievement of the desire goals. In the world of pandemic the use of modern technology in English language teaching has become indispensable. We also need to keep pace with the fast growing globalisation and technological revolutions by adopting modern technological means such as all the above mentioned online platforms. We can't escape by showing the causes of pandemic's impediments.

Merits of Technology in English Teaching.

1. Students are highly implicated in and motivated by the use of technology like radio, TV, PCs, Electronic dictionaries with pictures, emails, blogs, audio- visual aids.
2. Student reacts with the subject when initiated by a technological aid.
3. Teachers can perform more effectively with the use of technology as teachers themselves create the e-content for their students.

4. Unlike traditional offline teaching methods modern technology teaching and learning aids incentivize both teacher and student.
5. online teaching is easy to get the related videos, audios, pictures and content immediately with a click on the button for the teachers to refer.

Drawbacks of Using Technology in English Language Teaching

1. Many teachers are not tech-savvy.
2. Most rural areas in India and AP have no network.
3. Most students and their parents can't afford a latest gadget.
4. Even there is network, there may not be continuous power supply.
5. While teaching English online, language of the teacher may not sound clear.
6. Group activity may not be organized as effectively as offline.

Summation:

As the Indian government and state government of AP, BharatNet Optical fibre net to create digital villages and AP FibreNet in the state of Andhra Pradesh respectively will boost up the digitalisation of the country soon in the years to come. Then learning and teaching through online or digital platforms will not be a problems. While these technical affordances are widely available across the country like India, it's turn of the teachers to play a key role in operating the different tools and teaching methods. There are already certain online teaching organisations like Byju's, WhitehatJr, and like are in full swing in making the online teaching effective. The offline teaching community has to turn to the latest technological innovations and make use them in their regular classes hence making the students keep pace with the rest of the world. Covid-19 teaches the teachers to keep themselves abreast of the modern trends and technological advancements.

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