



# YOUTUBE, A NEW TREND FOR LEARNING: AN ANALYSIS

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## Abstract

We are in an era where opportunities are limitless in every sphere of life. Technology has changed the ways of living to an extent that was beyond imagination a few decades ago. Education is the most important agent to bring about a change in society and evolving technology has immensely impacted the education system worldwide. In a country like India where the resources are limited with uneven distribution across the country, technology integration in education and various online learning platforms has brought about a positive change in the level of access and distribution of educational opportunities and resources across the country with a higher degree of inclusion, which is certainly a positive sign for growth. In this regard, the present paper attempted to analyse the social media platform, YouTube concerning its utility, access, opportunity-created, challenges for the users, and various other important themes. As an evolving platform for teaching and learning, YouTube has a great possibility to become an integral part of formal and informal education systems. It is a learning platform that is cost-effective, user-friendly, and has a wide-spread reach. Its integration as a tool for creating and disseminating educational videos by various Edu-Tech companies has revolutionized the teaching-learning process by creating opportunities for inclusion and sustainability.

**Keywords:** YouTube, Technology used in classrooms, social media learning platform,

## Introduction

We all have seen the exponential growth of technology in India which has impacted and transformed the educational landscape resulting in democratizing the access and availability to information for the masses and enabling new and innovative teaching methodologies. There is a clear shift from the very traditional classroom setting to a more dynamic and interactive students-centric interactive learning environment. In the last couple of years several factors have influenced technology use in education, challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic was one of the greatest factors, which led to the development of digital infrastructure and increased investment in the development of digital tools and learning platforms to support remote learning. Other factors include the government policies towards integrating technology into the curriculum and making provisions like training teachers, improving digital literacy among students and teachers, and providing different digital platforms for learning like DIKSHA, SWAYAM, e-Pathshala, etc. All these factors together with other important factors like ease of use, cost-effectiveness, the flexibility of time and space, etc. have contributed towards more and more use of digital platforms in education and developing a more integrated, inclusive, and formal teaching-learning setup for shaping the future of learning and teaching.

According to Ranieri & Bruni (2013) formal learning occurs inside a learning setting that provides an organized learning environment with the help of skilled teachers, a fixed curriculum, and a defined timetable. Growing technology use in education through ICT integration has enhanced the learning outcomes at different levels. There are also various informal ways of learning through online media platforms, other than the integration of online media platforms into the formal education system for example Facebook, YouTube, NPTEL, Udemy, etc. Learning through social media platforms may effectively facilitate instruction with learners' engagement, and motivation for learning (Rasheed et al., 2020). YouTube which is primarily a social networking site has come up with a wide scope for teaching and learning possibilities.

### **Evolution of YouTube as a learning platform**

YouTube, the American online video-sharing platform, was started in February 2005 by three former PayPal employees named Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim. They envisioned a space where people could easily share and view videos. The motto, "Broadcast Yourself," represents the idea that anybody can manage a personal broadcasting station, which would be similar to television, with the additional benefit of video on demand. Knowing the potential business benefit Google acquired YouTube in November 2006 for US\$1.65 billion, to make it Google's subsidiary. one can upload videos, rate them, make playlists, leave comments, and subscribe to other channels. with more than 2.5 billion monthly users collectively watching videos over one billion hours a day. YouTube's impact on content creation and consumption in the areas of health, entertainment, education, and various other themes makes it the most popular among all other online platforms.

Due to its benefits, particularly in terms of offering a variety of videos tailored to educational needs, the YouTube platform has become more well-known in the learning community as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Izci et al., 2019). In addition to being a useful learning tool for students, YouTube is also a good way to teach common tasks and abilities in both formal and informal contexts.

YouTube as a learning platform is utilized not only by school-going children but by all the people belonging to different learning groups. YouTube has become the first choice for every aspirant for their preparation, be it national level exams or board exams, or even interviews for clerical to administrative jobs. Babu, Rajendra, Buddayya, & Gujjarappa (2019) found that students utilize YouTube to get educational, cultural, and behavioral benefits. As a result, the inclination for using YouTube is rising day by day.

There are several instances where students from very poor socio-economic backgrounds succeeded with the help of YouTube educational content. Among all the available online platforms for learning, YouTube is one of the most popular digital platforms which is receiving global recognition as a digital tool for learning by the teaching-learning community. It is not only the ease of use but the significant impact of YouTube on learning that makes it a useful tool (Maziriri, Gapa, & Chuchu 2020). According to Caldeiro-Pedreira et al. (2022) YouTube provides an informal learning environment that fosters children's creativity and develops age-appropriate skills, abilities, and knowledge. Nethravathi, Arokiaraj & Muralidhar (2023) described YouTube as an important tool for students because it provides free access to high-quality videos that improve learning experiences for diverse learning needs and helps in learners' thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork abilities. Caldeiro-Pedreira et al. (2022) explored different kinds of content consumed by young children on YouTube and its influence on informal learning and skill development and different possibilities, issues, and concerns discussed under different themes reflected overall a positive impact on learning, by giving an ample opportunity to learn through exposure to different audio-visual and verbal learning materials, they also provided insight into how appropriate filters are required to ensure children's exposure to appropriate content. Nethravathi, Arokiaraj & Muralidhar (2023) studied the perceptions of students towards YouTube as a learning tool, focusing on its usefulness, methods of utilization, and negative effects among student groups and found that YouTube is a great platform for teaching-learning purpose which allows students to download videos for future reference and submit feedback for development.

## Benefits of YouTube as a learning platform

Belonging to the teaching-learning community, it is not difficult to understand how important it is to use technology and online learning platforms for teaching-learning purposes. Preferences for learning approaches are evolving and youths advocate that YouTube videos on the internet are their favourite learning resource rather than Group projects, educational apps, interactive games, and textbooks (Bordignon, 2021; Pearson, 2018). As it is a fact that Students' learning and involvement are supported and enhanced by the involvement of their multiple sense organs, audio-visual and verbal content available on YouTube, may serve as a great tool for learning for the same reason. Students' learning is greatly aided and supplemented by YouTube videos as it is a fun way to learn which helps them grasp the information faster and in a better way that may be reflected in their performances. Khan et al. (2023) advocated that students actively use YouTube videos as teaching resources by taking notes and exhibiting a great desire to use them in the classroom. Yusuf (2020) emphasized that YouTube has grown into one of the most popular websites in internet history and the same was advocated by (Stockwell et al., 2015; Abdullah et al., 2023). YouTube as a learning platform serves not only as a place to upload, share, and comment on different entertainment channels, but it also gives access to huge educational resources to educators and learners. Pratama et al. (2020) found that students use this platform to keep up with current events and advance their knowledge in their particular field. Usaini et al. (2019) highlighted that students utilize YouTube platform extensively for a variety of reasons, such as studying and learning through tutorials and watching videos on subjects and topics that inspire them or have a positive impact on them. YouTube instructional material may have different benefits for learning like engaging different sense organs, involvement of different domains of learning, enhancing critical and creative thinking, and retaining the learned material for a longer period (Aldon & Tragalova, 2019).

## Learning benefits for different subjects/discipline

Every learning area is different and different skill sets are needed to teach different subjects/ disciplines. So, it becomes important to analyse the effectiveness of YouTube as a learning platform for different subjects. Going through different research helped the researchers to analyse the potential benefits of learning different subjects through YouTube videos. Several studies have suggested that YouTube has a potential benefit for language learning and acquisition. According to Poramathikul et al. (2020) it plays an important role in children's language acquisition. YouTube learning contents help in improving students' vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Kabooaha & Elyas, 2018; Kadwa, & Alshenqeeti, 2020). Chien et al. (2020) verified that students' English listening comprehension skills are enhanced by YouTube, it helps students learn English by improving their speaking abilities in terms of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency (Rusgandi & Ali Ashari, 2019; Saud Albahlal, 2019; Balbay & Kilis, 2017).

YouTube has learning material for almost every discipline, YouTube videos may help students prepare for science classrooms as interesting videos help in grasping abstract concepts easily which are otherwise difficult to visualize (Stockwell et al., 2015). Multimedia promotes brain function and students learn more effectively and meaningfully through the combination of audio-visual material. YouTube videos might be an effective tool for educators and students in architectural studies (Mayer, 2019). YouTube videos have a beneficial effect on teaching and learning in medical disciplines, particularly anatomy. YouTube videos can be used efficiently in medical education (Jaffar, 2012; Burke et al., 2009). Duffy (2008) studied the use of YouTube Videos for medical students in the area of surgery and found that students are more used to watching videos on YouTube than reading books related to surgery. Chtouki et al. (2012) advocated that watching videos with visual explanations enhances comprehension and memory.

A study on the use of YouTube videos in teaching and studying sociology courses by (Tan & Pearce, 2011) suggested that students consider YouTube videos as a reliable resource that supports their education by providing more explanations about a particular concept.

## Social responsibility and sustainability

There are a huge number of research articles that suggest that there is a positive effect of the growing use of technology in education, particularly various social media platforms. But benefits always come with a risk. Technology and social media use in education has its limitations. Exposure to the freely accessible huge content poses a serious threat to its responsible and sustainable use. Freely available content is also posing a threat to the traditional ways of reading through quality books, gaining knowledge for the sake of knowledge

not merely for qualifying exams. Nowadays people are in blind competition to grab success but unguided and irresponsible use of social media may pose serious risks to healthy and sustainable consumption of online content (Caldeiro-Pedreira et al., 2022).

## **Opportunities created by YouTube**

### **1. Widespread reach**

YouTube, which was originally designed as an entertainment and social networking platform, over time, with an increasing number of audio-visual resources for education created, stored, and shared has gained popularity as a great learning platform. This platform provides tutorials for every other carrier option. This facilitates the learners from every field to connect and learn. There is no barrier of time and space and it supports ubiquitous learning. The widespread reach of YouTube as a learning platform has provided opportunities of learning to people at every stage, belonging to different socio-economic backgrounds and people belonging to different corners of the world.

### **2. Teaching Learning Support for Teachers and Students**

In the teaching-learning process integrating various kinds of teaching-learning material is important as it supports not only learning but also teachers through their teaching. Videos are a great tool to teach because it helps in engaging multiple senses of learners. A study done by Barbour, (2018) also suggested that videos can be quite successful teaching tools. So, it may help both the teachers and the learners in achieving academic goals. According to Moghavvemi et al. (2018), YouTube videos serve as useful and supplemental resources for students and teachers in the teaching-learning process. Younger, et al. (2013). found YouTube videos effective for instructional inputs and emphasized that teachers are utilizing the same for building learners' communities, ensuring their active involvement in learning and problem-solving, and increasing their analytical skills. It is a struggle to provide students with hands on experience that YouTube videos enable teachers to do so and display simulated laboratory experiments in a way that is more engaging to pupils than just glancing at photographs, charts, and models in a textbook.

**3. Inclusion to a great extent** - YouTube is the most widely used platform for learning purposes. It provides a greater degree of inclusion as students belonging to diverse physical, socio-cultural, and economic backgrounds and having diverse learning needs can contribute and learn on a single platform. The audio visual contents provide learning support to every student and a child with any kind of special, physical or learning needs get assistance to a great extent.

### **4. Cost Effectiveness**

Physical classroom tutoring for any exam preparation or regular studies is so costly that it is out of reach for a huge Indian population, but most of the channels on YouTube provide free access to every individual which might be the reason for its unstoppable and increasing popularity and which is resulting in learners autonomy and motivation for learning. Hanim, (2021) said that YouTube may be one of the substitute media for self-directed learning. YouTube provides free tutorials for different courses, entrance/competitive exams such as NET, SET, GATE, CTET, STET, CGL, IIT PRE-MAINS, NEET, and UPSC with various other state and national level exams, and for every level of school education.

### **5. Employment Benefits**

YouTube is creating great employment opportunities for people. People belonging to different interest areas are not only earning by popularity of their channels worldwide but they are also motivating others to join the YouTube community. Demand for educational videos has expanded dramatically and 'Edu-tubers', YouTubers who create educational content with their great efforts are contributing towards creating a culture of learning and earning through knowledge creation and dissemination. YouTube is motivating the young generation towards success by generating self-employment possibilities

## Challenges of Using YouTube as a Platform for Learning

1. The educational sector now faces some challenges as a result of online learning like Health problems, Concentration issues, and Lack of interactions. Consuming online content may lead to unfavorable impacts that students perceive, distractions, and false information. Nethravathi, Arokiaraj & Muralidhar, (2023) addresses several problems associated with YouTube as a teaching and learning resource.
2. The comments section, liked or irrelevant videos, and advertisements on YouTube can draw users' attention away from instructional videos so they can get distracted easily, and eliminating irrelevant content can be difficult. YouTube advertising disrupts instruction and makes it difficult for students to focus (Furrakh & Qureshi, 2021). It can be difficult to maintain concentration on a single instructional material as there is a huge number of contents related to a single topic that may confuse the users to choose from and stick to relevant content. Because of offensive content or distractions, some libraries or schools may completely block access to YouTube and students may find it difficult to use YouTube as a learning resource if access is restricted.
3. YouTube doesn't offer in-person interactions with peers or teachers like physical classrooms or online classrooms.
4. YouTube does not have enough filters, which makes it difficult to remove offensive or inappropriate content for young children. Children may be exposed to content that is inappropriate for their age or developmental stage due to the absence of strong filtering mechanisms.
5. Learners may feel overwhelmed by the volume of content, which makes it challenging to choose the most pertinent videos. Social issues related to the use of digital devices by kids, problems like redundant content, and inadequate filters are also a challenge in categorizing YouTube videos. It is crucial to teach media literacy and social media etiquette to young learners and new users (Nethravathi, Arokiaraj & Muralidhar, 2023).
6. Watching or listening to videos for longer hours may lead to health problems like visual and auditory impairments.
7. Spending too much time in front of a screen can cause sedentary behavior, which in turn can aggravate health conditions like obesity, eye strain, and bad posture. Because screens emit blue light, prolonged screen use can interfere with sleep cycles it may also lead to screen addiction.
8. Continuous exposure to videos on YouTube and other social media sites can exacerbate depressive, anxious, and lonely feelings. Constant notifications and life comparisons with others can have negative effects on one's mental health.
9. Students may develop a YouTube addiction i.e. watching irrelevant videos for hours with no end rather than studying. It becomes essential to balance screen time between learning and other activities.
10. Not all information is trustworthy or accurate. There is false information and skewed viewpoints also present on YouTube. So, Students need to check information and evaluate sources critically. Many incorrect information are presented and propagated on YouTube and sometimes students fall for them as well. For instance, the promotion of alcohol to minors, various beauty, and health tips, and wrong knowledge related to different disciplines can have an impact on the minds of children because they cannot determine the authenticity of the information as some of the videos are produced by unqualified individuals.

## Recommendations for Safe and efficient consumption of Youtube educational content

1. It is need of the time to develop remote learning skills for every learner to get the maximum benefit out of available online resources.
2. It is needed to add efficient filters to make sure that learners are exposed to age-appropriate educational content.
3. There is a need to increase media literacy and awareness about social media usage in a responsible manner.
4. Attention should be drawn to social concerns regarding prolonged and inappropriate digital media consumption and its effect on physical and mental health.
5. While using YouTube videos in the formal education setup, it is important that the videos are supplemented with teachers' inputs in the classroom and proper time is allotted to the students for taking notes, so videos should be shown in small chunks (Shika, 2020; Faizi, 2018).

6. Live YouTube sessions should be preferred over recorded videos as they support two-way communication among learners and educators which is an important aspect of learning (Sari et al., 2020).
7. YouTube videos are a very rich source in the education paradigm and future studies should look into ways to make YouTube learning more user-friendly, safe, and authentic.

## Conclusion

Utilizing YouTube as a learning media resource in formal as well as informal ways has a tremendous benefit over learning and its ease of availability and cost benefits are the added benefits for the Teaching Learning community. It is not difficult for the user to calculate the popularity and effectiveness of the learning content through the like, share, and subscription to the particular channel and take the learning benefit out of it. It becomes the responsibility of the users to focus on the learning tasks and not get distracted by irrelevant available videos and shorts uploaded for entertainment purposes. YouTube is continuously working towards updating its features to make it user-friendly and safe. Launching 'YouTube Kids' was one of such initiatives by YouTube which is a video app for children below 13 years of age. It filters the inappropriate content and has an added parental control feature. Another feature that was recently introduced is 'YouTube Player for Education' which broadcasts videos without advertisements, links, and suggestions, keeping viewers anonymous on YouTube and providing a new non-ad source of revenue for educators and educational video creators, even various ed-tech companies are integrating YouTube players in their classroom throughout the world. We can conclude by saying that YouTube is revolutionizing the process of teaching and learning, and there is a need to understand its potential through reasoning about its popularity.

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