

# Distance Learning: Challenges and opportunities

## Outline:

### I Introduction

1. Hook
2. Thesis statement

### II Main body

1. What is Distance Learning
2. Challenges to Distance Learning
  - 2.1. Technical Challenges
    - 2.1.1. Absence of internet in remote areas
    - 2.1.2. Relatively low no. of gadget friendly people.
    - 2.1.3. Lack of devices
  - 2.2. Economic Challenges
    - 2.2.1. Cost of devices or affordability issue.
    - 2.2.2. Cost of internet
    - 2.2.3. Government's inability to provide cheap devices
  - 2.3. Social Issues
    - 2.3.1. Less no. of girls as compared to boys will be benefited (Gender disparity)

2.3.2. Non-Serious behaviour of students.

### 3. Opportunities offered by Distance Learning

3.1. More Exposure to outer world through internet

3.2. Skill development by more experience

3.3. People living in remote areas can easily access education

3.4. Cost of transportation and residence can be saved.

3.5. Girls living in patriarchal societies can access it easily.

3.6. Novel methods of learning owing to the innovations i.e., AI and Chatbot.

## 4. Conclusion.

Recently, Education Emergency has been announced in Pakistan keeping in view the dilapidated condition of education in Pakistan. The country where almost 26 million children are regarded as out of school children. Learning, whether educational or non-educational, has become an absolute necessity in this rapidly evolving world of technology and science. Furthermore, the techniques of Yestears have also been redundant. Novel methods of teaching and

pedagogy has been introduced. In developing countries, like Pakistan, it seems a distant dream to avail proper efficacy of these methods. Developed countries have effectively overcome the hurdles coming in the way of education, but developing countries are still grappling these issues. Third world countries like Pakistan are still combating with the issues like exorbitant rates of mobile phones and other devices, lack of knowledge about operating these devices, high rates of internet packages, patriarchal societies and gender disparity still it has more benefits and opportunities to offer like skill development, more exposure to outer world and AI-based assistance. Amidst these challenges, it is vividly clear that Pakistan will soon overcome these challenges and herald the country towards brighter future.

Where many countries in the world have travelled miles away in innovations and learning by the help of modern methods of learning and technology, Pakistan is still facing the issues in encountering them. Many countries in the world have been using technology to have prolific results.

These countries have provided free internet, cheap devices and professional trainers to guide teachers, so that they could skillfully disseminate the knowledge and sharpen the wits of students. They have also provided students with the choice whether they want online classes or on-campus classes. Furthermore, their infrastructure in this domain has also been efficient.

Where Pakistan is grappling with many economic issues, it is not only affecting the society, but also government's ability to facilitate students with Distance Learning. Crumbling situation of economy is the major hurdle in the success of online or Distance Learning. One of the reasons in this regard is cost of devices and internet. The extortionate prices of these devices make learners almost helpless and unfortunate to buy those devices. A person from even middle class family finds it difficult to buy a cell phone or laptop. In this regard, learners from lower middle class and poor class are out of race. Furthermore, lack of proper and adequate infrastructure

due to inadequate economic resources has also made government unable to provide these facilities to students. In developed countries, students are provided with these devices at the lowest possible prices, so that maximum benefit could be extracted.

Moreover, there are certain technical challenges in realizing the dream of Distance Learning. A survey of 2019-2020 by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics found that 30.66% of the population in urban areas had internet access, compared to 11.65% in rural areas. It showed the problem of rural-urban divide in domain of internet provision. It is the major hurdle to the people living in the remote areas of Pakistan. Contrary to the need that, it should be made easier for the people abiding the remote areas to access learning platforms because <sup>they</sup> couldn't travel far off places for learning purposes, further problem has been worsened by depriving them of internet facility. Moreover, many people especially in remote areas can't operate or effectively use the innovative tools and devices. They lack technical

abilities to operationalize the devices.  
Proper training should be given to these  
learners so that myriad of people could  
reap the fruits of Distance Learning.