

# Digital leadership in 21<sup>st</sup>-century education

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**Abstract-** The impact of covid-19 is observed in every sphere of our life. The education sector is no exception to that. The outbreak of covid-19 has forced to enforce lockdowns that brought everything to a standstill including the teaching and learning process. During that time, traditional offline schools, colleges, universities, training centers, and Coaching institutes were trying to shift their mode of delivery from offline to online to serve their students. During that time, due to lack of technical knowledge, many institutes were facing challenges to serve their students properly. As online education has become new trend teachers must need to be tech-savvy apart from their academic skillsets. As of now, covid-19 is still a problem in many parts of the world. The digitalization of education became a necessity in order to provide seamless education. In this regard, digital leadership is a new skillset. This article would be discussing the good & bad faced by the students in India who are pursuing higher education during this pandemic. This paper also tries to find out the positive & negative impact it had on the teaching, learning, and evaluation methodologies as well as the need for a digital leader. Some suggestions & research questions have also been pointed out in this article to revolutionize the teaching & learning process.

**Keywords:** covid-19, lockdown, online education, digital leadership

**Introduction:** In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, education needs to be manifested by some special themes like student's needs, national policy, economic development as well as effective structurization so it gives an opportunity for all citizens to develop their lifelong learning potency as well as it contributes to society, nation & state. In this digital era, global challenges must be included in any form of educational practice. The main thing is that higher education must produce human resources who have competency & highly competitive at the national & global level. In the image below, a group of 21st-century skills is listed that represent the practice of lifelong learning.

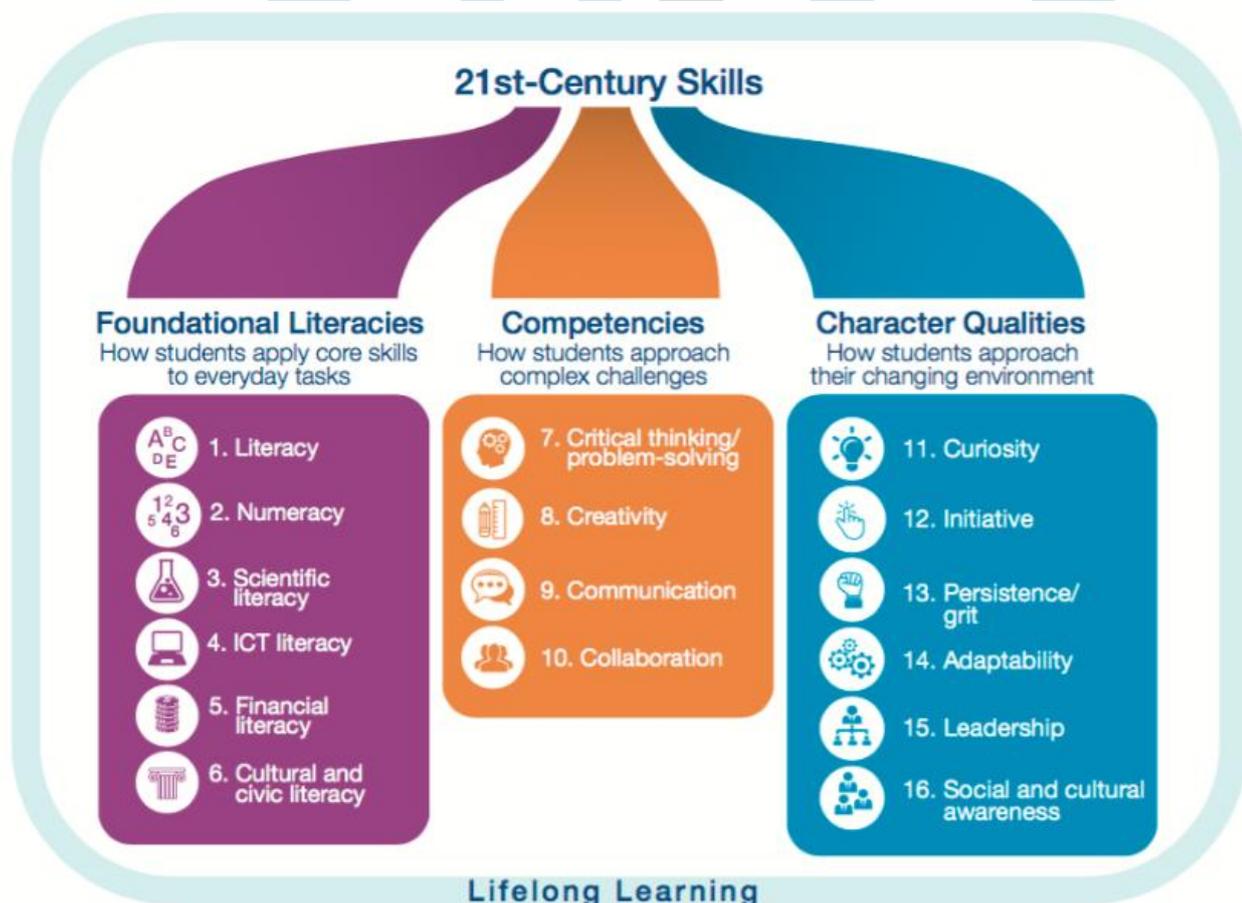
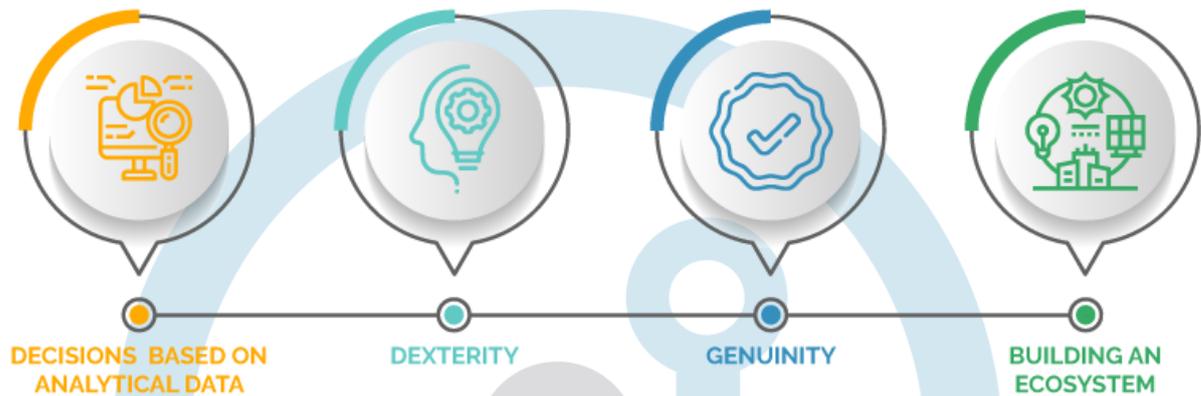


Figure 1. 21st-century education skills

**Need for digital leadership in education:** As society becomes more & more dependent on technology, leaders need to be tech-friendly besides their academic & managerial skills. Digital leadership is a tool that can make a sustainable change in programs, instructions, and learner behaviors. Moreover, it is also necessary to be an effective leader to become an effective trainer. Here, we may focus on classroom management. A good teacher must be a good leader in his/her classroom.

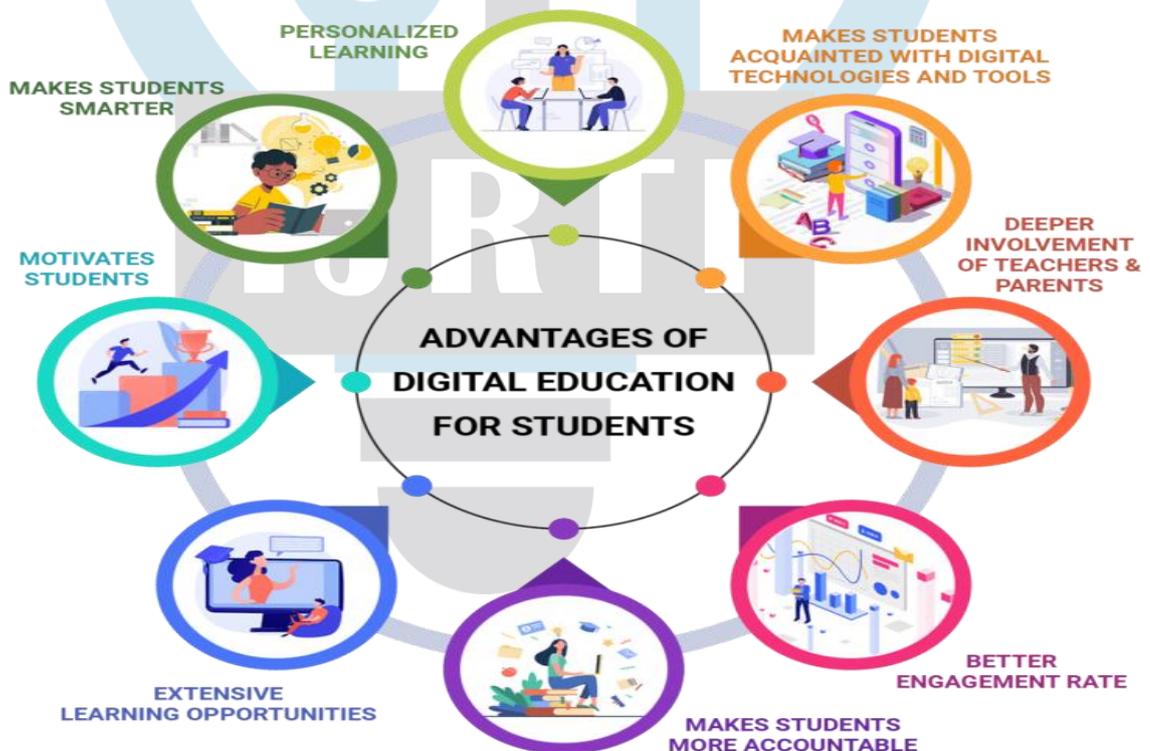
Online education is practiced in various countries for a long time ago. But global pandemic has shown us the way how online education can make a change & develop connections between learners & educators at all levels. Whether online education is good or not is a constant dilemma but nowadays one of the most important things is climate change and we are hoping for a sustainable world through sustainable practice. As trees are considered the most important source of paper, we may reduce the usage of paper by adopting an online education system. Here, besides the common administrative leadership, we must know the practice of digital leadership to make the online system more & more people-friendly. Thus, digital leadership is a matter of concern.



**Figure 2. Principles of digital leadership**

**Advantages of online education:**

Online education has its own advantages. The learner can study anywhere at any time with a stable internet connection & can work at own pace. He/she can accommodate different learning styles according to flexibility. It is cheaper & cost-effective.



**Figure 3. Advantages of digital education**

**Disadvantages of online education:**

Like all other fields, digital education has its own challenges like poor internet connectivity, absence of a real human, lack of engagement & finally the learning outcome. In this state, a teacher, as well as an educator, must know about the loopholes & run his class accordingly.

**Model of a tech-savvy teacher leader:**

In business, digital leaders basically use the organization’s assets in an effective way to meet business goals. Similarly, in the case of education, an educator must be strategic to share his/her contents to make any session impactful. Following should be habit/practice followed by a well tech-savvy & smart teacher.

1. A smart teacher must be engaging his/her students in virtual space
2. A smart teacher must be flexible with technology change, issues that occur during lectures. He/ she always has a “Plan B” and even a “Plan C” when things don’t go quite the way they’d hoped.
3. He/She embrace change
4. A smart teacher must be collaborating in nature
5. A smart teacher must be skilled in digital assessment tools/apps to understand the learning outcomes of the students

**The scenario of digital education in India:**

As per the report of the World economic forum, due to the pandemic, a number of 320 million learners have been adversely affected. India has the World’s second-largest school system after China and the socioeconomic structure of India is not well balanced. In a survey, the Ministry of Rural Development has found that 7% of Indian households receive more than 12 hours of electricity and more than 36% of schools in India operate without electricity. Not all parents have the ability to buy a smart device and provide proper internet services to their students. Due to this, many of the students in the country become deprived of their educational needs. On the other hand, the coaching industry is a big industry in India. A huge number of students are preparing in those institutions for various kinds of entrance examinations related to jobs or academics. Due to the pandemic, various online test preparation center has grown up to provide service to these kinds of students. But, lack of proper leadership styles and skills various government, private, autonomous, semi-autonomous schools, colleges as well as universities located throughout this country are still now not performing well and they are not able to provide a good service to their students.

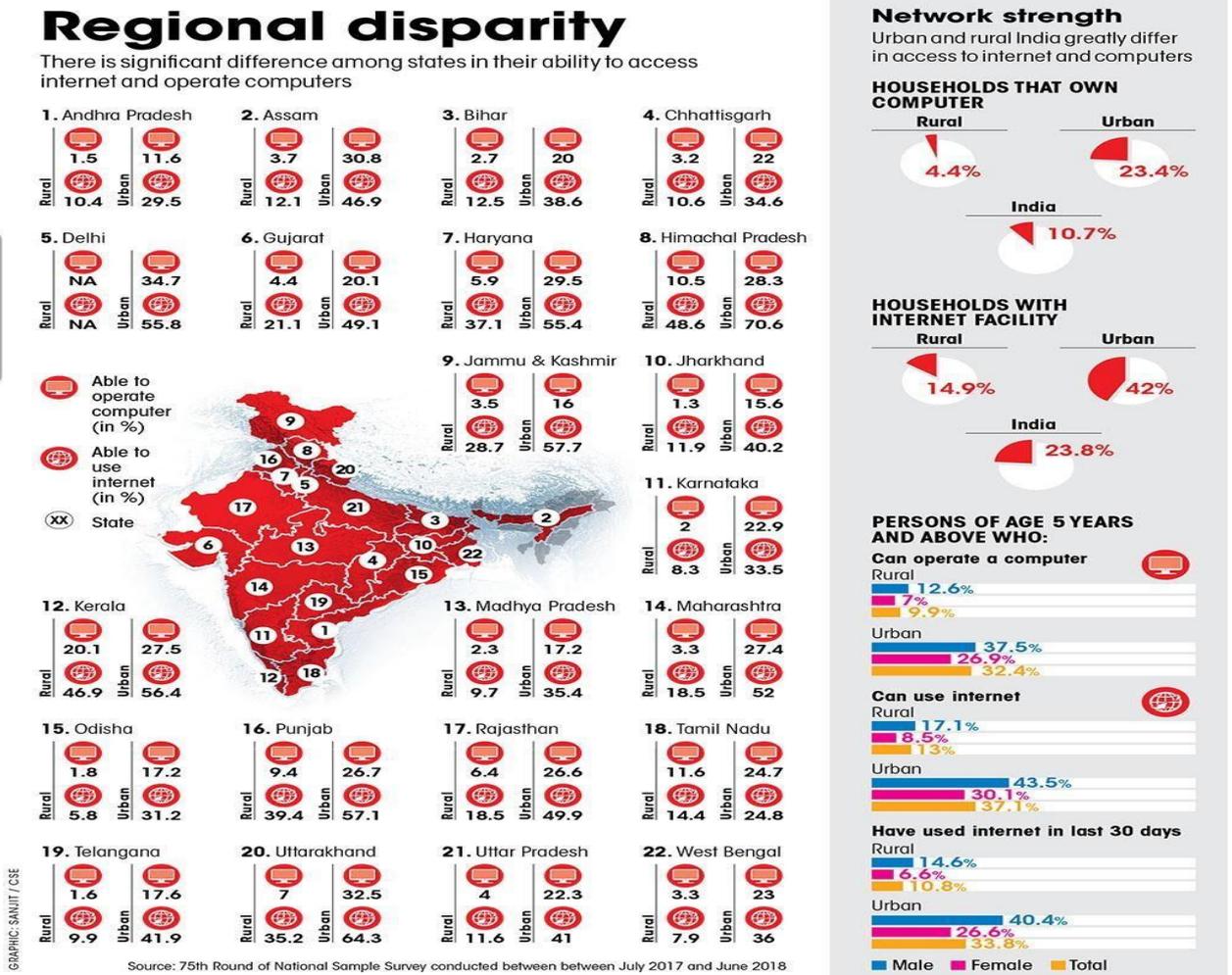


Figure 4. Internet issue in various states during online classes (Source: World economic forum)

**Role of digital leadership:**

Digital leaders will set proper vision & influence their people, define processes, look for continual improvement, and track impact. Although it is essential that a particular educational organization must have the proper infrastructure to provide online support to their students. Leaders must understand how their team members relate to and interact with that technology or platform. Here, effective leaders should create proper training methods for their team members. This is how leaders make a smart move, a smart change for their organization. With proper leadership, the problems can be fixed & an effective social message will be created.

## DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

### 6 Characteristics of Digital Leadership



Figure 5. Role of digital leadership

#### Research question

I am working in an education institute that is completely traditional and provided offline service to its students. But due to the global pandemic, the traditional offline method has changed and now the organization is focusing on online/digital mode apart from their traditional method. Here, many of my colleagues are not too tech-savvy and they are facing problems during different learning sessions. As a result, the ecosystem of the class & organizational reputation is affected. I think proper leadership in this situation will make a positive change. In this regard, I want to deal with the following research questions.

1. How blended learning can enhance the critical thinking process?
2. How does leadership practice influence the success of the organization (School/college/University/Institute)?
3. How does a proper leadership style earn revenue like the old system in a new method for the organization?
4. What changes are required in the leader as per the market demand?
5. How to deal with various conflicts that are created in a change system between team members & stakeholders.

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