

1. Blended learning – a new normal

Theme:

- Blended learning combines classroom learning and e-learning methods. Even though blended learning methods came a few years ago, now many educational institutions are adopting them after the pandemic.

Advantages:

- E-learning offers many advantages such as flexibility, increased outreach etc. But it cannot completely replace classroom learning because classroom learning is necessary for the overall development of students. So, blended learning is a great opportunity to utilize both e-learning and offline learning to the benefit of students.
- Every student's way of learning is different. So, blended learning is a great tool to customize learning methods to suit the needs of the student, which is called 'hybrid learning'.
- The blended learning methods allow students to learn at their own pace, and also with the help of a teacher. So, it is quite beneficial for slow learners.

Challenges:

- Blended learning methods are not available to all. There is still a digital divide. Lack of technological infrastructure is a big challenge.
- Increased dependence on technology may strain students.
- It can become an extra burden on teachers. And hence, teachers may not concentrate on all children.
- It may weaken the student-teacher relationship.
- Not all the content on the internet is genuine and original. Guiding students to follow only authentic resources is also a challenge.

Conclusion:

Blended learning is a great opportunity to utilize both e-learning and classroom learning to the benefit of students. But the necessary steps should be taken to make the option available to all.

Source:

<https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/blended-learning-the-new-normal/>

2. Pros and cons of work from home

Theme:

- Due to COVID-19 pandemic, many companies allowed their employees to work from home (WFH). Some employees are happy with WFH option, but some are not comfortable with it. There are pros & cons with WFH option for both employees and companies.

Advantages for Employees:

- Travel time to and from the office will be saved.
- They can spend more time with family. This is beneficial for many especially for parents of young children.
- Even in modern times, women are expected to take care of home and children. With this responsibility, several women are forced to leave their jobs. The rise in WFH culture is a boon for them. With this more women can join in jobs again.
- The location will not be a barrier. Employees can get a job, even if the office is located in another city.
- If they want to get to know their office and colleagues better, they can attend the office at regular intervals like once a week.

Disadvantages for Employees:

- The line between work and home will be blurred. In general, employees leave work tensions at office and come home to relax. But this opportunity will be lost and it may cause anxiety. If work and personal life are not balanced well, work will extend to longer hours. This can create WFH burnout.
- Employees have to set up a work environment at home, which will incur extra expense. Even then, some people may not focus on work due to the lack of a professional atmosphere.
- Some companies are giving so much work just because their employees are working from home.
- Teamwork is a bit difficult while working from home.
- Working from home from a long periods of time can hamper social and interpersonal skills.
- Continuously staying at home may make some people feel isolated.
- Some jobs may require employees to be online during work hours and the continuous power supply may not be available to many.
- It can be difficult to establish connections with new colleagues because the opportunity to meet and talk with them during coffee breaks will be lost.

Advantages for Companies:

- Less expense for office maintenance.

- Can hire talented people, even if they reside in another city.
- Employees may not ask for much leaves.

Disadvantages for Companies:

- Training new staff can be tough with all the employees working from home.
- Have to deal with WFH specific challenges like information security and hacking of video calls difficult to monitor work from home employees.
- It's hard to establish connections among employees.

Conclusion:

Even though work from home culture is on the rise due to COVID-19 situation, work from home opportunities will increase in number to adapt to the changing times. With time, companies and employees will take steps to reduce the disadvantages.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/work-from-home-pros-cons/>

3. Russia – Ukraine conflicts

Theme:

- On 24th February 2022, Russia launched a “special military operation” in its neighbouring country Ukraine. After the announcement from Russia's President Vladimir Putin, powerful explosions were reported in several cities of Ukraine.

Russia-Ukraine crisis:

- Ukraine wants to join NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), which is strongly opposed by Russia. Russia is against NATO's eastward expansion stating that the expansion is a threat to its security. Russia's President Vladimir Putin demanded a legally binding guarantee that Ukraine will not join NATO and also NATO should not conduct any military activity in Eastern Europe.
- Since November 2021, Russia has started amassing tens of thousands of soldiers and military equipment near Ukraine's border. As of February 2022, approximately 1,50,000 Russian soldiers are there near Ukraine's border.
- France and Germany took the role of mediators to reduce the tensions. They communicated with both presidents to exercise restraint.
- On 21st February 2022, Russia recognized Donetsk, Luhansk as separate countries. They are internationally recognized as part of Ukraine. After recognising them as separate countries, Russia announced that its troops will enter the separatist republics as

peacekeeping forces, which further increased the tensions between Russia and Ukraine. Earlier, in March 2014, Russia invaded Crimea (a part of Ukraine) and declared it as a part of Russia by stating that it took the move to protect the ethnic Russians in the region. This has started the Russia-Ukraine conflict. At that time, an armed conflict took place in the Donbas region of Ukraine too, which is a part of the broader Russo-Ukrainian War. Minsk agreement 1 (September 2014), an international agreement aimed at implementing a ceasefire was drafted, but it couldn't solve the crisis. So, the Minsk agreement 2 (February 2015), was drafted and both countries agreed to implement a ceasefire.

- Several countries including the US, UK and the European Union opposed the recognition of Donetsk, Luhansk as republics and imposed limited sanctions on Russia.
- On 24th February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine by land, air and sea. Explosions were reported in several cities of Ukraine on the same day.
- Many countries including France and Germany are condemning Russia for declaring war. European Union is preparing to launch new sanctions on Russia for attacking Ukraine.
- Ukrainian president Zelensky said that they will defend themselves against the attack. Even though Ukraine's armed forces are heavily outnumbered by Russia's armed forces, they are fighting really hard. Even civilians of Ukraine joined the fight to defend their country.
- On 8th March 2022, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the president of Ukraine said that since NATO does not want confrontation with Russia, it is not prepared to accept Ukraine into NATO and hence he is no longer asking for NATO membership for his country.

Conclusion:

Russia has declared a 'special military operation' in Ukraine, which was followed by explosions in several cities. Several countries are condemning the move and are preparing to launch harsh sanctions on Russia. The world leaders must unite to restore peace.

Source:

<https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/russia-ukraine-war/>

4. Global warming – Causes, Effects & Solutions

Theme:

- The latest report from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which was released on 4th April 2022 mentioned that extreme steps are needed to prevent climate disaster.

What is Global warming:

- Global warming is heating up of earth due to the presence of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions in the air. The greenhouse gases trap the sun's heat.

Causes of Global warming:

- Earth's temperature changes naturally over time. But due to man-made sources of greenhouse gas emissions, the earth's temperature is increasing continuously.
- Deforestation results in less availability of trees to absorb CO₂, and hence more CO₂ in the atmosphere resulting in more trapping of the sun's heat.
- The burning of fossil fuels for several needs such as transportation, and power is increasing the share of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Rising materialism is resulting in more production, which releases greenhouse gases.
- Ever-increasing vehicles usage is increasing fossil fuels usage.

Effects of Global warming:

- Global warming is causing extreme weather. Winters are now colder and summers are hotter. It is also resulting in more natural disasters such as droughts, floods etc.
- Millions of people and birds are forced to migrate to other areas.
- The melting of ice is increasing the sea level. Moreover, more CO₂ in seawater is affecting marine life.
- More pollutants in the air are causing several diseases in people.

Solutions to Global warming:

- Using renewable energy sources such as solar energy, and wind energy as alternatives to burning fossil fuels can prevent further increases of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Planting more trees can result in the balance of CO₂ in the atmosphere.
Conclusion:

Global warming is heating up of earth due to the presence of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions in the air. The greenhouse gases trap the sun's heat. Using renewable energy sources such as solar energy, and wind energy as alternatives to burning fossil fuels can prevent further increases of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Moreover, Sustainable and eco-friendly living can reverse global warming.

Source:

<https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/global-warming-causes-effects-solutions/>

5. Are influencers really influencing?

Theme:

- Influencers are those who can influence the decisions of common people. Until recently, only celebrities such as film actors, singers, sportspersons are considered influencers. But now anyone can become an influencer through social media by creating content that users find helpful. Using Instagram or YouTube or any other social media platforms, influencers are promoting products and have the scope of affecting the purchase behaviour of their followers.

Are influencers really influencing:

- Social media influencers have an advantage over traditional advertisements because people are more likely to buy things if they are reviewed by a real person than when they see the product in an advertisement. Many social media influencers are able to make it a full-time job because they can get paid through brand collaborations. More and more companies are now using influencer marketing to promote their products. So, that means influencers are able to influence the decisions of common people.
- But people are now more aware of the brand collaborations and the fact that influencers get paid for promoting the products. So, many people do not buy products depending solely on the reviews by social media influencers. But influencers do give exposure to the products.
- Even now, some people are not aware of the brand collaborations or the concept of sponsored content. So, they are more likely to be influenced by social media influencers.
- These days, people are vexed by repetitive influencer content. Many influencers have similar ways of promoting products and moreover, many promote the same products due to the aggressive influencer marketing campaigns by a few companies. This may make a negative impression on the products promoted by the influencers who have lost the trust of their followers.
- People will more likely trust the influencers who genuinely refer products that they really used and do not promote so many products. Moreover, the subject expertise of the influencers also plays a role.

Conclusion:

So, yes. Influencers can influence their followers. But not all influencers can. Now, people are unfollowing those who promote too many products and are not genuine in their reviews. Social media influencers who are relatable and who can blend the brand campaigns into the rest of the content without making them look like advertisements can gain the trust of the people and hence can influence the purchasing behaviour of their followers.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/are-influencers-really-influencing/>

6. Android vs iOS – which is better?

Theme:

- The majority of smartphone users use either android phones or iPhones. Android and iOS are operating systems used in smartphones and tablets. The android operating system is used by many smartphone manufacturers including Samsung, Redmi, whereas iOS is used exclusively in iPhones. In general, people choose either one of these based on their requirements and preferences.
- Many android phones are affordable and can be bought by middle-class people and also students. iPhones are expensive and not everyone can afford them.
- iPhones are more secure when compared to an average android phone. iPhones do not allow third-party apps to install. We can install apps that are available in the AppStore only, whereas Android phones allow installing third-party apps through APK files and also through third-party app stores. Moreover, the AppStore of apple phones is very strict and do not allow apps that contain malware. That's why the app stores in iPhones contain fewer apps compared to Android phones. Google play store in Android phones contains several apps with malware. Moreover, programming-based hacking is very difficult to carry out in iPhones compared to Android phones, which means hackers cannot hack iPhones just by calling.
- For normal people, iPhones give complete control. In iPhones, we can remove even default apps and can make our phones less cluttered. In Android phones, we cannot remove default apps without rooting.
- Android phones can be customized heavily to personalize, whereas iPhones have limited customization options.
- There is no back button on iPhones for easy navigation.

Transfer of files to laptops or other phones is much easier for Android phones. Data from iPhones can be transferred easily to other iPhones or Macbooks, but for other phones and laptop

Conclusion:

Android and iOS both are good platforms. Based on our requirements and preferences, we can choose either of those. If you want a more secure phone, you can go for iPhone. If you want an affordable phone with the ability to personalize it, you can go for an android phone.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/android-vs-ios-which-is-better/>

7. How to improve the standard of sports in India

There should be adequate infrastructure, equipment and human resources in schools and colleges to guide and train students in sports.

- School students should have a facility to guide them on which sport suits best for them based on their physical characteristics and also abilities.
- There should be a mechanism to trace the talented kids so that they can be trained well. When they are given proper training from a young age, the path to the top will become much easier for them.
- Regular competitions in sports for all ages encourage them to excel in the sport of their choice.
- In India, there is so much support and financial incentives for the top sportspersons, but the same is not true for those who are struggling to rise to the top. Private companies such as Tata, Reliance foundation & JSW are investing at the grassroots level. Moreover, the Khel India scheme was started to do the same. But this is not sufficient. There is a need for more investments at the ground level. Public-Private partnership also works well in improving the sports infrastructure.
- Coaches are the backbone of the sports system. More coaches should be hired and they should be paid well. The job of coaches should be made more lucrative to attract the best talent. Along with that, there is a need for more investments in training coaches.
- Along with the training, the sportspersons that are aiming to rise to the top should be provided with adequate nutrition.
- The athletes who are being trained should be continuously monitored and feedback from them need to be taken so that the government can fix the loopholes and thus can improve the sports ecosystem.
- Sportspersons should be provided with advanced equipment so that when they compete with the sportspersons of other countries, they will not be at a disadvantage.
- There is a need to recruit more sports specialist doctors, and the jobs should be made more lucrative and thus we can make the life of sportspersons much easier.
- More medals and cash rewards will inspire sportspersons and also encourage others to take up sports as a career.
- The media should cover all the sports and not just cricket. This will motivate children and youngsters to try many sports.

Conclusion:

There is a need to improve the infrastructure of the sports industry. When guided and trained well, many youngsters who are interested in sports can excel in the sport of their choice. The government need to invest at the ground level to trace and encourage talent. Even though sports are not just for winning awards, medals in international competitions will uplift the status of the country in the international community. So, by fixing the loopholes and by improving the sports culture in the country, India can win many medals in the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympics.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/how-to-improve-the-standard-of-sports-in-india/>

8. Books vs Movies

- When we read a story in a book, we imagine the characters, backgrounds and all the scenes. We can interpret them in our own way. Hence books help us in thinking creatively and spur the imagination, whereas movies do all the work of showing characters and scenes etc. So, mostly we just consume content.
- When we are reading a book, we get involved in the story completely. But when we are watching the movie, we may get diverted by the appearances of characters or any other extra details.
- In movies, characters speak normal daily usage sentences. But in general, in books, writers use rich vocabulary. So, by reading books, our vocabulary will be improved.
- Books have the power to calm our minds. They can stop racing thoughts, reduce our stress and can give us peace of mind.
- Some books are not that easy to understand. Whereas in movies, we can easily understand the story. Because we can watch the scenes and listen to the conversations, instead of just reading them.
- We can multitask while watching movies. We can do house chores or any other works that don't demand our concentration. But the same is not true for books. Books demand our complete attention.
- We can watch movies along with friends and family, and it can turn out to spending a wonderful time with our loved ones. Books cannot give such experiences.
- Books demand so much time. Some books take days to finish. But that story can be easily watched in a few hours in a movie.

Conclusion:

Books and movies both are different and entertains us in their own ways. Some prefer to watch movies over reading books. And some like to read the story. It all depends on personal preferences. Both mediums of storytelling give us knowledge, entertainment and sometimes just shows us reality.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/books-vs-movies/>

9. Impact of COVID-19 on mental health

Theme:

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are experiencing stress, anxiety and other psychological issues.

Impact of covid-19 on mental health:

- As many people are dying due to COVID-19, there is an intense fear in almost everyone about the health of themselves and their family members. This is causing anxiety disorders, stress and depression in several people.
- Many people lost one or more family members due to the pandemic. Some of them couldn't even see & touch their deceased family member. So, many are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Due to the pandemic, several people had to grieve alone. This is causing even more trauma.
- Frontline workers and their families are at an increased risk of getting affected by the virus. This coupled with too much work caused burnouts and depressive disorders for many healthcare professionals around the world.
- Lockdowns and the voluntary social distancing rules made many people feel isolated. This too caused anxiety issues.
- Loss of jobs and other income sources caused panic attacks for many and created intense stress. Poor people are the worst sufferers.
- Some of the domestic violence victims had to stay with abusers as there is no chance of going out for work like before. This worsened their mental health.
- Students have no option of offline classes. Online classes caused isolation and anxiety issues for many students.
- As schools are closed, young couples had to take care of kids while working from home. This caused burnout and intense stress for many. In many families, the burden fell totally on women.
- People with underlying health problems and their family members are facing anxiety problems and sleeping problems due to a higher risk of getting affected by covid-19.

Fear of getting affected by the virus is stopping many from contacting psychologists. This is worsening the issue. Still, many people do not have access to telemedicine fact

Conclusion:

COVID-19 affected the mental health of many. There is a need to increase the availability of mental health professionals. All schools and colleges should recruit psychologists for the benefit of their students. Widespread awareness of mental health issues and the importance of taking help from professionals is needed.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/impact-of-covid-19-on-mental-health/>

10. Impact of COVID-19 on the education sector

Theme:

- COVID-19 pandemic affected almost every aspect of our lives including the way we learn. It reshaped the education sector and some changes are that were brought during the pandemic are going to stay.

Changes in the education sector due to COVID-19:

- Schools had to close down fearing the further spread of the virus. So, to continue the education of students, many schools and colleges shifted to an online mode of education. Even though e-learning was there before pandemic too, the pandemic accelerated the usage of e-learning.
- Even though e-learning is a boon for the education sector, especially in the pandemic time, it increased stress in students as they had to sit in front of screens for a long time with no physical interaction with teachers and other students. Some students faced eye problems and headaches too. So, that slowed down some students and they lagged behind in studies.
- As children had to stay at home, some children felt isolated and that affected their mental health.
- The gender divide was deepened in education in the pandemic time. As many lower-income groups were affected by the pandemic negatively, they had to opt for budget cuts. And as there was low priority on girls' education in many lower-income groups, their education was stopped. And some girl children are forced into child marriages.
- As the internet and smartphones are not available to all, the education gap widened between the haves and have nots. Several children had to stop education and had to go to work because they do not have access to other benefits of school such as the midday meal scheme. People and the government had to struggle hard to bring several children into schools. And now, this pandemic reversed all these changes.
- Teachers too were stressed as they had to teach children online and that comes with its own challenges. Teachers couldn't concentrate on all students and couldn't understand whether they understood the concepts or not. Moreover, they had to learn many new things while opting to teach in online mode.
- As schools and colleges are now reopening, many educational institutions are opting for hybrid learning methods to include both e-learning and offline mode of teaching.

Conclusion:

COVID-19 pandemic forced many changes in the education sector, and some changes will not go even after the pandemic. Some changes like blended learning are helping to make education more accessible, and some other changes affected students negatively. There is a need to bridge the digital divide and to make e-learning accessible for all. And we must immediately take steps to bring back the children, who had to quit education into schools.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/impact-of-covid-19-on-the-education-sector/>

11. Abrogation of article 370

Theme:-

- On 7th August 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind declared abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution after the resolution to revoke the article was passed by both the houses of the parliament (Rajya Sabha & Lok Sabha).

What is article 370?

- Article 370 is a temporary provision of the Indian constitution which grants special status to the state of Jammu & Kashmir, under part XXI of the Constitution of India which deals with 'Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions'. Article 370 is the only constitutional link between India and Jammu & Kashmir.

Some major provisions of Article 370:-

- According to this article, except for foreign affairs, defence, finance and communication, Indian Parliament needs the approval of State Legislature for applying all other laws.
- The Union government cannot declare emergency in Jammu & Kashmir unless there is a case of war or external aggression. In case of any internal disturbance or imminent danger, an emergency can be applied only by the request of state government or by its approval.
- Citizens of J & K follow their own constitution and Indians of other states cannot buy property in J&K.
- In India, the residuary powers are vested with the Union Government but in case of Jammu & Kashmir, the residuary powers are vested with the state government.

Benefits of removing Article 370:-

- As per Article 370, people of other regions cannot buy land or settle in Jammu & Kashmir. This is acting against the development of the region. By abolishing article 370, teachers, doctors and other professionals can settle there bringing better facilities. And also industries can be set up in the region and hence Jammu & Kashmir can be economically developed.
- By abolishing this article, the government can act tough against the terrorism present in the region.
- Many laws such as The prohibition of Child Marriage Act, women's reservation were not applicable to Jammu & Kashmir, because of the provisions of Article 370. Now, all laws of India will be applicable to J&K also.

Disadvantages of removing Article 370:-

- Citizens of Jammu & Kashmir are facing so much struggle because of many reasons such as the fight between India and Pakistan, the constant presence of troops, unemployment

crisis etc. So if the special status is also removed, they may feel like their voice is suppressed.

- People of J&K have a feeling that settlers from other regions will change the demography of the region. So, due to the abolition of article 370, they may protest against the central government.

Timeline:-

- With 1954 Presidential Orders almost the entire constitution was extended to Jammu & Kashmir including most of the Constitutional Amendments.
Nehru said in Lok Sabha in 1963 that Article 370 has eroded.
- 94 of 97 entries in the Union List are applicable to J&K; 26 out of 47 entries of the Concurrent List have been extended. 260 of 395 Articles have been extended to the state, besides 7 of 12 Schedules.
- There is a provision in Article 370 that it can only be revoked by the consultation of the constituent assembly of Jammu & Kashmir, but the constituent assembly dissolved itself in 1957. And since then it has been a major issue in revoking Article 370.

Conclusion:-

Repealing Article 370 to develop the region is a good and bold step by the government. This step will help in integrating the Jammu & Kashmir region with the rest of India. But the way it was done is against the democratic principles because the public or the state leaders are not consulted before passing this bill. To prevent the negative consequences, the government should take effective steps for the development of the region on a war footing. There is a need to improve employment opportunities as promised. It is the responsibility of the government to make the people of Jammu & Kashmir feel safe and secured.

Source:

<https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/abrogation-of-article-370/>

12. Artificial intelligence (AI) – Pros & Cons

What is Artificial Intelligence (AI):

- The ability of a computer system or a machine to behave intelligently with some human traits is known as artificial intelligence (AI).
- Driverless cars, interpretation of human speech, high-level gaming strategies, decoding complex data etc are all possible because of adding artificial intelligence to machines.

Pros of AI:

- Artificial intelligence is evolving with every passing day. New inventions by using AI are making our lives simpler. For example, the use of voice assistants such as Google Assistant, Alexa, Siri is increasing. They work through voice recognition technology, which uses AI. Voice assistants can place online orders, answers questions and do plenty of other actions with just commands or through scheduling tasks beforehand. With the use of features of AI like logical reasoning, perception of human behaviour, massive statistical records, planning, machine learning, these avatars or the assistants can do wonders. This type of technologies using AI is making our lives easier and also saving us a lot of time.
- AI can be used for security purposes of confidential belongings. Features like face recognition and voice recognition are used which requires artificial intelligence of computer machines.
- Doctors and specialists rely a lot on AI for proper treatments. Be it radiosurgery, or neurological disorder, or depression, artificial intelligence is required in several fields for medical assistance.
- The field of robotics is very closely related to AI, which is logically training machines to understand human behaviour and psychology well and can be used in multiple fields like industrial laborious work, or engineering of machines minutely, or in operation theatres. Artificial intelligence is bedded into robots so deep, that robots are beating humans in intelligence games or competitions.
- Also, a lot of video games uses AI as games require human interaction and intelligence the most.
- AI is helping us in making our society more inclusive. Through AI inventions, the quality of life of people with special needs is improving. Elderly people are able to live independently through the help of new AI inventions. AI has so much potential to make everyone in society live independently and with dignity.
- AI is helping companies by saving so much money. So, AI can make products cheaper. For example, utilizing AI could save \$1 billion for IBM by the year 2020.
- AI helps in analysing massive amounts of data and thus helps in taking better decisions and that too in much less time. In this way, AI augments human intelligence. For example, now many companies are utilizing predictive analytics, which analyses data and lets company know which customers are most likely to buy the item, and why some customers are not ready to buy the item. Using that information, companies will show ads to the potential customers and that results in maximum returns with low investment. Moreover, they can take better decisions to modify the products by knowing what their potential customers actually want.
- By replacing humans with AI for tasks that do not afford human error, we can prevent mishaps. Humans are prone to making mistakes. Human errors, especially in some fields such as cybersecurity can cause great damage. So, AI is a boon in preventing these consequences.
- By leveraging AI, companies can improve efficiency. For example, many companies are now using automation to increase productivity, accuracy and efficiency.

Cons of AI:

AI can be used for the betterment of humanity, but it can also be a reason for human degradation. Automated destructive machines and weapons can be invented using AI and can lead to mass destruction if it falls into wrong hands.

- Artificial intelligence hypothetically means a more intelligent machine than human beings. Too much intelligence may lead to loss of humanity, because humans would start to rely on those machines too much and may eventually lose their own judgmental, thinking or sentimental qualities.
- Bringing machines with artificial intelligence would mean a reduction in human labour, which in turn leads to unemployment. AI machines would definitely mean better work performances, but they can also lead to economic instability.
- Some are of the opinion that AI can cause the extinction of the human race. Great personalities like Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk and Bill Gates had shown their concerns about the negative influences of artificial intelligence and the fear that AI may go beyond the control of humans. For example, in 2017 Facebook has shut down one of its AI systems as chatbots started talking among themselves in their own language.

Conclusion:

Artificial Intelligence developments are transforming the world for good. It is making our lives simpler and also making our society inclusive. But machines with AI must have some limitations. The ethics of artificial intelligence has to be formulated well and need to be implemented strictly. International policies on AI are very important to tackle security issues posed by artificial intelligence.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/artificial-intelligence-pros-cons/>

13. Social Media – Impact on human behavior and society

The positive impact of Social media on society:

- Traditional media (Print media, Television etc.) was the only medium until recently to reach people. Not everyone could share their views and information with people. Most of the traditional media channels are in the hands of big businesses. Social media enriched democracy and equality by enabling everyone to send out their content to a larger audience.
- Social media gives voice to minorities and vulnerable sections. For example, more and more women are voicing their opinions through social media, who were otherwise not

encouraged to speak up due to cultural norms. Another example is that differently-abled people are sharing content to encourage people who have the same problems, and are voicing their thoughts to government and society.

The negative impact of Social media on society:

- It is also promoting gossiping and causing damage to the reputation of people.
- Social media is the major reason for making content viral. However, not all viral content is trustworthy. There are many incidents of fake news going viral. Recently a few people are lynched by a mob in separate incidents. This happened because they believed fake news that said child traffickers are roaming in their area. Innocent people were murdered as the villagers thought they came to their area to kidnap children.
- Powerful people are using social media as a tool to impose their ideologies on people. For example, now political parties are creating lots of content on social media to influence and manipulate the views of people on governments and political parties.
- Trolling is one of the major negative consequences of social media. This politically motivated trolling is also very common.
- Militant groups are also using social media to influence and manipulate youngsters to join their groups.

Conclusion:

Though there are some negative effects, social media can be considered a boon to society. However serious steps should be taken to mitigate the negative influences of social media like fake news, trolling etc. Cyber protection cells and Artificial intelligence together can solve these problems to a great extent. Along with that, ethical values should be imbibed in schools and colleges. Awareness programs help people to know about the good and bad sides of social media.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/social-media-impact-on-human-behavior-and-society/>

14. ‘ Digital India’ – How far is it a success?

What is ‘Digital India’:-

- ‘Digital India’ was launched in July 2015 by Government of India. This is started with the aim to achieve three interconnected goals. They are
 - Availability of high speed internet to each and every citizen.
 - To make all government services accessible to the common man through E-governance.
 - Digital empowerment of citizens.

Achievements :-

- Mobile internet played an excellent role in achieving vision of digital India. India became second largest market of smartphones in the world. No. of internet users increased to 50 crore as of May 2017. In June 2014, no. of internet users were 24.3 crore.
- Indian government is promoting content in local languages in internet.
- India improved its rank in 'United Nations eGovernance Index' by 11 positions compared to 2014. In 2016, India's rank is 107. In 2014, it was 118.
- No. of e-governance transactions per day was increased.
- 'DigiLocker', launched in 2015 enables citizens to securely store and share documents electronically has 72.66 lakh registered users as of 2017.
- All central ministers are present in social media and are utilizing social media to receive complaints and feedback from citizens.
- Now, people can share their views, ideas and suggestion directly to the government electronically through Narendra Modi app.
- Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) app, a simple UPI based mobile app for digital payments was launched in december 2016. UPI-based transactions grew more than 20 times since then. However this growth can be attributed to demonetization move.
- 'BHIM Aadhar' was started for digital payments at merchant outlets. With this, payer need not have mobile phone to make digital payment.
- Digital payments training and awareness campaigns were conducted. 2.04 crore people registered for this and were trained as of 2017.
- 'UMANG' app was launched to drive mobile governance in India.
- 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) was started with the aim of making 6 crore persons digitally literate. 82.7 lakh people are trained under this scheme as of 2016.
- Efforts were taken by government of India to make government apps available in regional languages as well.
- Indian government has installed free public wifi hotspots at many public places.
- eNAM was setup to connect agriculture produce markets. 36.4 lakh farmers registered for this as of 2017.

Criticism :-

- Despite taking effort to improve e-governance, India stood at 107th place in the world in e-governance according to UN e-governance Index. That means there is so much to be done to be at par with the best.
- Still there is digital divide between rural and urban areas, between poor and rich, and between young and old people. Government of India is yet to close this gap.
- All these developments of digital connectivity is a result of global trends. Increased internet penetration is due to competition among telecom companies and the internet pack offers they provided. All this success cannot be attributed to 'Digital India' program alone.
- E-governance was started long before the launch of 'Digital India'.
- Still some people in India have no basic education. Digital literacy is difficult to achieve without primary education.

- Still there are many remote rural areas in India that do not have access to electricity, and some other rural areas have limited access. This is an obstacle for 'Digital India'.

Conclusion :-

- India has come a long way in digitalization and has a long way to go to achieve the vision of Digital India. We can clearly see the difference in no. of internet users and improved e-governance. But there is still digital illiteracy in many parts of India. 'Digital India' will be a success, when its benefits are available to each and every citizen of India.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/digital-india-how-far-was-it-a-success/>

15. Status of women in India

History :-

1. From the Vedic period till Islamic invasion of India women enjoyed equality. They were free to choose their partner (Swayamvar) and what type of relation she wants to have (marriage or Gandharva Vivah i.e. live in relationship), along with polygamy and polyandry coexisted, women had shares in their father's property, gods and goddesses were treated with equal respect and they were free to move around.
2. With the Muslim conquest, there were certain changes in the society, as the Muslim rulers followed the Sharia Law. Status of women deteriorated in society. Purdah and Jauhar system are attributed to the Muslim rulers. Rajputs also started the system of Jauhar after a century of Muslim rule as the Muslim rulers would take the wives and daughters of the lost Rajput rulers as sex slaves. According to Sharia law, women were supposed to stay in certain boundaries of their homes, they would have to wear burqah outside, whenever they moved out a man would always accompany them and they didn't get a share in their father's property.
3. Still, some women commanded equality because of their supreme abilities like Razia Sultan was the first woman ruler of Delhi, Chandbibí of Ahmednagar fought against the Mughals, Jijabai mother of Shivaji was the queen regent etc.
4. Apart from Jauhar, Hindus started other regressive practices as 'Sati' and Child Marriages. In Sati, the widow was burned alive in the pyre of her husband. The education level of women started declining exponentially.
5. During the British Rule, several women reformers like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Raja Rammohun Roy, Jyoti Rao Phule, Pandita Ramabai etc. came out against the ill practices and due to their efforts, Sati was banned, Widow Remarriage Act was passed, several schools and colleges were opened for girls.

6. Rani Laxmibai, Begum Hazrat Mahal led the armies against Britishers in the revolt of 1857. Kittur Chennamma fought against the British after the Doctrine of Lapse. There were many more women who broke social boundaries and performed exceptionally well.

Independent India :-

2. Through various laws and acts, the Indian Parliament and the Supreme Court have tried to empower women like banning triple talaq, striking down the adultery law, [Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace \(Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal\) Act, 2013](#), SC lifted the ban on Sabarimala Temple, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme etc.
3. **Politics:** India has one of the highest numbers of female politicians in the world. Women have held all important posts like that of President, Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Governor, Chief Minister etc.
4. **Military and Law Enforcement:** From 1992, Indian Armed Forces began recruiting women in non-medical roles. The Indian Army began recruiting female officers in 1992, though women officers in the army are still not allowed to take up combat roles. BSF began in 2013. IAF began recruiting women as fighter pilots in 2015, prior to 2015 women were allowed only for ground duty and flying transport aircraft. In 1972 Kiran Bedi became the first IPS officer of India. In 2018 Delhi Police announced that it would begin inducting women in SWAT teams.
5. **Education:** Women are lagging far behind than men in education. Fewer girls attend school as compared to boys and also their dropout rate is high. According to the 2011 census data literacy rate of women is 65.46% as compared to 82.14% of men. This difference is alarming.
6. **Economic Development:** There is lower workforce participation of women as compared to men. The gender pay gap is of about 20% and it narrows with experience. Also, almost 50% of the Indian population consists of women, yet fewer than 5% of businesses are owned by women

Conclusion :-

Though the government and courts are trying to bring equality in the society, it has to be the people's mindset which needs a change. And in big and developed cities of India this positive change is quite visible but in villages and small towns there is a lot of gender inequality to be dealt w

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/status-of-women-in-india/>

16. Aatmanirbhar Bharat

Theme:

- In May 2020, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced 20 lakh crore rupees economic stimulus package named 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan', with the slogan 'Vocal for Local'.
- It was announced with the aim to make India self-reliant and also to provide a stimulus for the economy that was hit badly by COVID-19. This package is estimated to be 10% of GDP.
- While announcing this package, Prime Minister said that this package focuses on land, labour, liquidity & laws. He also mentioned that this will benefit labourers, farmers, honest taxpayers, MSMEs & cottage industry.

Benefits:

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package aimed to make local products global and thereby helps Indian companies in competing in the global supply chains.

- This package allowed collateral-free loans to Medium, Small, Micro Enterprises (MSME) with a turnover of up to 100 crore rupees. In general, banks do not prefer giving loans to MSMEs due to fear of non-repayment. COVID-19 pandemic affected this sector badly. So, this package will help MSMEs very much. They can pay wages, buy raw goods with the money and so can run their businesses. Around 45 lakh companies will be benefited by these loans. Approximately 11 crore people are employed through MSMEs in India. So, their jobs can be saved.
- Structural reforms and marketing reforms in agriculture are promised. 30,000 crore rupees to small farmers through Kisan credit cards, 20,000 crore rupees to the welfare of fishermen, 13,000 crore rupees for vaccination to livestock, 1 lakh crore rupees for Agriculture co-operative societies & Farmer producer organisations, funding to post-harvest management is also mentioned – agriculture and allied sectors will be benefited.
- Space exploration to be opened for the private sector. This will benefit the Indian space industry.
- Rs. 30,000 crores special liquidity facility is announced for stressed Non-banking Finance Companies (NBFCs).
- Rs. 90,000 crores liquidity plan is announced to provide loans for power discoms.
- Migrants workers are the worst hit during COVID-19 lockdown in India. So, free food supply to migrants is promised. 'One Nation – One Card' was launched, which allows people to take ration from anywhere in India.

Criticism:

- The main criticism for Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package is – it is very similar to 'Make in India'. Critics argue that a different name is given to the same scheme.
- Most of these fundings are allotted just like a normal budget. So, including them in a special package has attracted criticism.
- Many sectors are opened to private players.
- There is no mention of research & development, which is very important to take important steps in revival of the economy.

- Companies of other countries may perceive this as a protectionist policy. They may feel apprehensive to invest in India.
- This package may not be sufficient in reviving the economy.
- Urban employment is ignored.

Conclusion:

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, trade of goods and migration of people got disrupted and as a result, many countries started preparing for the future pandemics by diversifying supply chains and making themselves self-sufficient. So, Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is very much needed for India to transform itself into a self-reliant country. But this may not be sufficient to revive the economy and to rebuild livelihoods that are affected by the pandemic.

Source: <https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/atmanirbhar-bharat-abhiyan/>

Common GD Topics:-

- Youth Empowerment Is Necessary For Any Country's Development. According To You What Should India Focus On, For Youth Empowerment?
- Raising the age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years – Pros & Cons
- Sri Lanka's economic crisis – Impact on India
- Who is the blame for drugs usage among youngsters?
- Time poverty
- Technology addiction
- Deep Tech startups
- Green economy
- Women in Armed Forces
- Future of the Internet
- Cloud Computing
- Impact of 5G in Global Warming
- Importance of recycling
- Noise pollution
- Covid third wave in india
- Covid-19

- Digital privacy
- Higher Education in India

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