



The Digital Divide in Online Learning: A Case Study of University Students in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the online teaching-learning experience of university teachers and students during the COVID -19 pandemic in Nepal. The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges of online teaching-learning such as the availability of ICT infrastructure, technological skills and management for online classes by the higher education institutions. The researcher collected and studied some of the related academic and policy documents to understand the procedure of online teaching and learning in and around the country during the pandemic. This study was based on qualitative research utilizing semi-structured interviews with 15 participant students and five teachers from Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, Nepal. Only the students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Management were selected for data collection. This study took the non-participant observation of various online classes and personal involvement and experiences as references to support and strengthen the data collected through interviews. The purpose was to find and discover the situation of online modes of teaching learning. The findings of the study indicated that the digital use in teaching and learning is the best alternative as it creates opportunities in an adverse situation. However, it causes many divisions among students. It is suggested that the government and university authorities should create a strong-learning atmosphere among the students so that the lines of division among students would be erased gradually.

KEYWORDS: Collaborative learning, digital literacy, online culture, ICT infrastructure

INTRODUCTION

Easy access to the internet made online teaching-learning possible, especially during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching learning was a demand of the time. Accordingly, the school and university classes were made ICT-friendly. It was the demand of time to make students competitive and qualified in the world market by creating situations, using technology. Trainings for teachers and students were given so

that they would be able to handle the teaching-learning applications like Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Moodle and many others. Time had already demanded the conversion of the education system from traditional to modern ICT-friendly classrooms and education systems. The COVID-19 pandemic's first and second wave opened a discussion and compelled teachers and students to adopt an online mode of education. As it is a new discourse and was applied without preparation, the administration, teachers and students faced many challenges as well as opportunities akin to the findings of Friesen, Fritsch and Blattner (2006). The study suggested that the challenges were related to e-learning pedagogy in schools and universities. The governments spent less money to develop the e-learning system, which means that online teaching is surrounded by many challenges which require a good preparation. Regarding education pedagogy, Pangen (2016) suggests the shift of the education system from traditional to modern pedagogy with the use of ICT in class rooms, teaching materials and infrastructures. No system is free from advantages, disadvantages and challenges. Similar to this, Huss (2007) opines that online teaching is a great challenge for the administrators, teachers and students who are habituated with the face-to-face classroom teaching. It adds an extra financial burden to the parents and also a problem to educational institutions.

Education helps make the new generation of students smarter. The time period of the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century was a transition in Nepal from the face-to-face to the inclusion of ICT in the classroom because of the expansion of internet connectivity during the decades. In 1992, the government of Nepal adopted the policy which also opened the gate for the use of ICT and distance learning in the country (Carney & Bista, 2009). The university education system was completely centralized in the major cities, including the capital city of Kathmandu. Higher education for the students living in the remote villages is difficult geographically. Thus, with the development of ICT infrastructures, online classes are the best alternative to impart education successfully. The use of ICT makes it possible for students from every corner of the country to meet their teachers online, study online, submit their assignments from home and achieve their degree online. It is indicated that ICT needs to be integrated as an instructional tool for students as the ICT-friendly education is the requirement of the present time (Rana, Greenwood, & Fox-Turnbull, 2019). The importance of online education by means of ICT has increased these days that it has become the only medium to continue and support the whole education system. A pandemic is a situation in which the students are to be kept at home because schools and colleges are highly risky places as these places are mostly crowd places. Physical distancing is almost impossible in these places, which is necessary to control the transmission of the virus. In such conditions, for the continuation of educational activities, the online class is the only alternative way, but requires good infrastructures, training and preparations.

In Nepal's case, the pandemic has created the situation of shutting down physical classes and opened the gate of online classes in schools and universities. To save the lives of people, it is necessary to close down the physical classes and start the online classes. In comparison to schools, higher education providing institutions like colleges and universities are in a better condition to commence the online mode of teaching, especially due to their mature students. In this regard Van, McLaws, Crimmins, MacIntyre and Seale (2010) indicate that in comparison to schools, colleges and universities are the potential institutions to use ICT in teaching-learning situations because they have mature students, good social contact, sound infrastructure and easy geographical location. Most of the countries closed educational institutions to mention the physical distance and save the students from the transmission when the virus spread across the world (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). The COVID-19 appeared at the end of

2019 in Wuhan, China and spread all over the world. Many countries in the world went into the lockdown situations. The pandemic affected many parts of life, including social, economic, educational, medical, developmental and many others. Educationally, millions of school children and university students have to stay at home for many months.

In this difficult situation, educational institutions are bound to begin online teaching to save the students from the pandemic and to refresh them from their stressful lives. The havoc created by the COVID-19 in the education sector has raised many challenges and opened new opportunities as well to think for the future. Nepal is a developing country and many remote villages lack ICT infrastructure and connectivity. So online classes have many challenges such as geographical difficulties and economic crisis. According to an estimate, only 56% of people in Nepal have internet access and only 13% of schools can run online classes though 35% of schools have access to the Internet (Dawadi, Giri, & Simkhada, 2020). But the situation of universities is different as compared to schools in Nepal although both kinds of students have the similar situations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

During the last decades of the twentieth century, online education started to be practiced in America. Murphy and Terry (1998) reported many problems and difficulties in online education in the early days. The specific problems were the higher network cost, difficulty in administration, increase in cost for students, fear of technology and many more. Huss (2007), in the context of America, again says that online learning has many challenges for students, administration and parents, but it is a revolution in the field of education because it has made distance learning possible. It brought international education and degrees at home and also developed ICT-based collaborative learning. Again, in a similar context, Cross and Polk (2018) argue that different strategies like ICT-based course design, time management, technology and strong connectivity contribute greatly to online learning in being effective and manageable. Online education is certainly different from face-to-face education as it requires different course designs and different pedagogy as well as sound ICT infrastructure for teachers and students. El Mansour and Mupinga (2007) again reported that online education has both positive and negative impacts on students as it fulfils students' expectations of learning at home and awards university degrees. But they face many difficulties with technology, which is related to the communication between teachers and students.

In the context of Australia, Freeman and Capper (2000) reported that online education in colleges and universities increases the reputation of the institution. Online teaching-learning activity enhances the productivity of teachers and students and makes them literate in digital modes and media. Similarly, Tedla (2012) in the context of Africa reviewed that online teaching-learning provides an opportunity for ICT learning, collaborative working among teachers, students and administration, and develops the habit of solving the problems collaboratively. In the context of Sahin (2007) indicates some drawbacks of online teaching, which create more pressure to teach and learn for teachers and students, but less pressure in interaction, correspondence and students that lack responsibilities and enthusiasm. In the context of Bangladesh, Lim, Ra, Chin and Wang (2020) reported that the use of ICT in education opens opportunities and develops the quality of education through many challenges.

In the context of Nepal, online teaching came suddenly and became popular during COVID 19 pandemic when all the physical classes were shut down in fear of virus transmission. Peters et al. (2020) report that all educational institutions were closed due to the pandemic, which opened the opportunity for online classes. Bastola and

Ameen (2017) view in the context of South Asian countries that web-based education in Nepal is quite important when many students are living in the villages at their home, far away from the schools and colleges. COVID -19 created havoc in daily life and the education sector was badly affected. To activate the passive condition of the education sector, online education is the best alternative as well as a way out to engage teachers and students (Poudel & Subedi, 2020). Again, Shakya, Sharma and Thapa (2017) argued that online education is the best alternative in the context of Nepal to reduce the gap between the village and city-dweller students. Nepal is a country having many villages far from cities and if online education can be made effective and practicable, the gap between city and village will certainly be reduced. Laudari and Maher (2019) pointed out that special training is to be given to teachers and students to create an online learning environment in Nepali context. Only training cannot create the environment but effective connectivity should be developed by the government so that every student in the village can connect themselves with their teachers online.

METHODOLOGY

The present research is a study about the challenges and impact of online class running for the masters' level students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Management at Prithivi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, Nepal. Many students remained absent from online classes; so a study was carried out to find out the reasons behind their absence. As a qualitative research, semi-structured interview as suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013) was used and online interviews along with class observations were conducted for data collection. After the identification of the problems, the data were collected from various sources such as electronic and print sources. Fifteen students from the master's level were interviewed, 5 teachers conducting online classes were interviewed and many online classes were observed in different times to collect and strengthen the data as suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2008). This study includes the author's personal experiences, difficulties and challenges during the online class as well. The data were collected through media chats also with the absent students, who could not participate in online classes. In addition, a few online classes were recorded for evidence. The data used in the study were based on the primary sources. For secrecy, this study used the pseudo names of the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Collaborative Learning

Teachers and students from Prithivi Narayan Campus were the participants for this study. The majority of students reported that collaborative learning helped them to solve the confusions that they had regarding online classes in the initial phase. The participants also shared that their campus gave them instructional webinars and learned from these platforms. For example, Baburam, a student from the first semester said: "The campus provided the email ID and password to join Microsoft Teams. First, I was in confusion, but I learned it with my friends' help." This remark of the student indicates that students learned themselves collaboratively and resolved their confusion gradually. Most students prepared themselves with the help of their friends, learned from easily available YouTube video instructions and developed their skills and confidence to use and handle the online applications. Laxman, a student participant from the first semester, shared his experience as:

I saw a video instruction on YouTube about Microsoft Teams and other teaching-learning apps and learned myself. I found it easy to handle. Our college

also helped us organise virtual seminars, and I helped my friends too to handle technology.

This remark of the student further indicates that they learned from the YouTube video instruction and shared each other's experiences and resolved their problems.

Some of the participant students also responded that the campus administration has run a training webinar about online classes and instructed them to handle the online applications. Ram Babu, one of the student participants from the same semester, opined:

The college organized some online webinars to assist students to work on Microsoft teams to download it, to enter into the class, and to do other activities to learn. I took part in the orientation and learned there. The department head and program coordinator too assisted us. With all this assistance I prepared myself for the online class.

This response of Ram Babu was different from others in that he participated in a college webinar for students, but most of the others missed that. Almost everyone's experience was found similar. In the initial days, they were highly confused and felt difficulty, but with the help of college webinar, YouTube video instruction, their collaborative learning and their eagerness, they prepared themselves for online classes during the pandemic.

The students' experience to prepare themselves for online classes was found different according to the geographical location where they were living. Students who were living in the city areas faced fewer problems for preparation, which were solved with less efforts. But students living in the village faced more problems preparing and attending classes. They also shared their experience that they did not have the proper electronic device to support online classes in the village. They did not have a good Internet speed and the data package for the internet was also expensive and ineffective. To attend online classes only, they came to the city and many of them were still in the villages unable to attend their online classes. They shared and exposed their problems in personal conversations. Ramhari, one of the students from the third semester, stated:

I am from a distant village called 'Gurjaa' and I did not have a laptop, computer, smartphone and internet facility in the village. Sometimes the data connection is too poor, so I could not attend the class and I came to the city hoping to join the classes. I had various household problems in the village and so, online class is almost impossible for me.

His comment indicates that attending online classes in the village was really more difficult than in the city. He argued that if there were good technological developments in the village, he could have thought about online classes, but his household problems were still there. Manju, one of the student participants from the third semester, noted, "I felt little difficulties in technology and at home in the beginning but I solved my problems myself." Similarly, Radha, another student participant from the same semester, expressed her opinion: "I took help on the telephone from my friends to download Microsoft Teams and did other activities myself." So there were many challenges during the pandemic, but they were addressed collaboratively; as a result, they could attend the online classes.

However, the teachers' experience was found to be different as they resolved most of the technical problems with the help of instructional webinars and IT technicians provided by the campus. The campus organized some tutorial webinar sessions as part of their preparation for online classes. Teachers responded that they practiced and learned from their instructional webinars provided by the campus. After some learning, they shared their experiences, saying ~~and said~~ that it was not as difficult as they thought, and could prepare themselves in their own way. One of the teacher participants Lal Dev stated:

The campus administration had organized webinar sessions to make its teachers digitally literate and to create an online teaching-learning environment. But I had prior knowledge and experience about the online mode of teaching and learning. I took a few classes in an online mode previously in India. So, online teaching was not a new experience for me.'

This remark of the teacher shows that some of the teachers had prior skills and knowledge about online classes. Similar to the students' experience of collaborative learning, teachers also shared each other's experiences on the use of technology for online classes.

As online teaching and learning was a new discourse in the context of study area, some of the teachers were against online teaching, too. Some of the students also complained about teachers who were never ready to give their online-based classes during the pandemic. Indraman, one of the students from the first semester, complained:

I found some of my teachers are incompetent in technology and they are learning, too. I am not getting a chance to study every subject because the teachers are never ready to teach in a virtual mode. So I'm worried about my exam, thinking that I could not do any better. A training for teachers and students is necessary to make the classes effective.

His complaint indicates that he was not getting a chance to study every subject online. He argued that teachers who were teaching online also were not competent technically and some others were not conducting classes. So he was worried about exams because he was not getting a chance to study every subject.

Similar to Indraman's experience, some teachers' response also indicates that every subject's class was not affected because of the teacher's unpreparedness. Their remark about other teachers indicates that lack of readiness about learning digital skills was problematic among the teachers. In response to the question of not being ready for online classes, one of their colleagues opined that it was "because of computer illiteracy."

Overall, teachers and students were in confusion in the initial phase, but they were ready for online classes when they started learning from each other collaboratively. Manju, another student participant from the third semester, expressed her opinion: "I felt little difficulties in the beginning but I solved my problems myself." In the same way, Radha who was also from the same semester had the same expression: "I took help of my friends through a telephone conversation to download Microsoft Teams. It really worked." Thus, during the pandemic, many problems arose, but they were solved gradually by the participants themselves. Ultimately, they were ready to attend online classes.

Challenges for Virtual Classes

Every new expedition has its own pros and cons. Online teaching came as a new expedition in Nepal during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is found that online classes at the campus-level created divisions among students like city and village dwellers, digital haves and haves-nots, male and female students, and working and non-working students. In the city, there are facilities for good electronic devices like laptops, IPods and good internet connection. The devices and internet facilities made it easier for students to prepare and attend online classes. Students in the city were found less stressed to manage all their problems. They only mentioned their problems such as frequent power cuts and internet cuts. Except these common problems, they were in a good position. But the students living in the villages reported more problems. They did not have proper electronic devices in the village. There was no internet connection and the data package

for the internet also did not work well. To attend online classes only, some of them came to their rented rooms in the city, but there were many who were absent for online classes, which indicated that many students were deprived of their virtual classes during the pandemic lockdown. Some of the participating students had also the anxiety to survive because they were not getting any salary from their schools who were also working as school teachers. They had the anxiety that they needed to return to the village again where they could not join the virtual class. Ramahari, a student of MA third semester, had such a story:

I need to give online classes for my school students in the same morning, but I have requested my principal to arrange my class time at a late hour so that I can attend my online classes in the campus. My next problem is that I might return to my village again if my school does not give me the salary during this lockdown. I cannot survive here in the city without a salary. So I need to return to my village but I cannot attend my campus online classes because if I go to the village I would miss the campus online classes.

This story indicates that many students had problems like Ramahari's – they were teachers in some schools and needed to teach online at the same time when they had their own classes; they could not be a student and a teacher at the same time. Their another anxiety was about their difficulty of surviving because they were not getting their salary from their schools in the lockdown period.

My own experience and observation of different virtual classes also indicated that only fifty to sixty percent of students attended the class. The attendance of students at some level was found very low as well. Various factors were responsible for this low attendance. But unlike my observation, a university teacher who was teaching sociology and whose observation was like this:

Almost 90 percent of students came to the class, which is higher than in the physical class. Only 60 to 65 percent of students used to come to a physical class. So, it is a very good presence. 10 percent absence maybe because of a lack of devices.

His explanation indicates that the online class for the master's level was more effective than the physical class. The students' participation in his class was found more exciting but it was not the situation everywhere.

There were more problems for the female students. Along with the above-mentioned problems of power-cut and internet disconnection, their classes generally happened in the morning when they did not go to their campus when they had to be busy with their household chores and problems. They reported that they were frequently disturbed by their children; they needed to cook, feed and take care of them as well. Manju from the third semester of MA program reported: "Yes. I have little problems with kids and family members. Due to the lack of different rooms for study, I get more disturbances but I solve them with the cooperation of my family members."

A similar situation was also with Pratikshya and Asmita. They also reported that their family members complained about their hanging only on mobile phones and laptops instead of doing household works and caring for children, but they tried to manage their problems themselves. All these narratives indicate that most of students reported online classes to be good during this pandemic, but they were not found fully satisfied with online classes. Thus, they demanded for the face-to-face classes when the situation would go normal.

Benefits of Virtual Classes

All the participant teachers and students reported that the virtual classes during the pandemic was the only alternative for all. It relieved their stress and lifestyle created by the pandemic. They could be involved in constructive, creative and academic work in a difficult situation, too. It opened a new discourse in pedagogy and established it as the best alternative to face-to-face teaching-learning. The virtual class was effective because they could study at home, caring for their family. Asmita, one of the participating students from the MA third semester, argued: “There are many advantages of online class for me. I can give my time to the family and study at home. In this pandemic, I got a chance to continue my study.” Similar was the case with Pratikshya from the third semester who responded in this way:

The online class is good for me because I am able to interact with teachers and friends without hesitation; it has increased my confidence to speak. I can record the class and listen at my convenient time although the physical class is better.

The online class removed students’ hesitation to speak and participate in the discussion. It would help increase participation in a physical class. The recording facility of online class also was best for her because she could listen to the recording at her convenient time.

Teachers were benefited to be introduced to and literate in the ICT use in the education system. Most of them were found enjoying the virtual class though there was much confusion and difficulty with technology. Kunja, a Lecturer, responded to an interview question: “Yes, it is fine for me, especially for the master’s level students.” But some of the teachers were never ready to take a class online; so, students are deprived of studying some subjects because of computer illiteracy of the teachers.

Discussion

Teachers and students at Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara who conducted online classes through Microsoft Teams were the participants in the observation and interview for this study. The online class was not a familiar concept for students on the initial days, but some teachers had an exposure to this discourse. In general, it was a new context for most of the participants as it suddenly came and was practiced because of the cancellation of formal classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal. Despite the unfavourable conditions caused by the pandemic, teachers and students had to prepare for online classes as reported by Peters et al. (2020). During the pandemic, all the formal classes were closed, teachers and students were forced to remain at home and prepare for online classes. Tribhuvan University planned to run online classes through the Microsoft Teams application for its students. Both teachers and students had to prepare for online classes when they all were new and unknown in this matter. Considering the report of Bennet, Priest and Macpherson (1999) that teachers and students had little knowledge and experience about online teaching though the university ran special training for the teachers, students and administrative staff. Accordingly, Prithvi Narayan Campus organized online orientation sessions for teachers and students in different phases. Many of them were found to be benefitted from the webinar training. Teachers shared each other’s experiences and learned collaboratively. A similar concept of collaborative learning, effective communication and problem-solving methods for ICT teaching were suggested by Tedla (2012). The campus webinars, personal assistance from IT technicians, and collaborative learning helped the teachers and students to prepare for online classes. As reported by El Mansour and Mupinga, (2007), both the challenges and opportunities were created by the computer technology and internet service for teachers and students, but the challenges were addressed through collaboration.

As for students, they learned from the instructional webinar organized by the campus, but most of them missed that orientation due to the lack of proper communication. However, many students learned their technical knowhow through easily available YouTube video instructions as they were already literate digitally. Both teachers and students can learn a lot from online platforms such as YouTube in the education field (Alobaid, 2020). They shared each other's knowledge, skill and experience, and became able to prepare for online classes. Confusions and excitement were mixed in the initial days when technology came in-between teachers and students, which was different from the conventional physical classrooms. The pandemic had created this difficult situation of stopping the classroom teaching, but it also had opened the new opportunity to shift the conventional pedagogy to online classes (Rana et al., 2019). It became a time to shift conventional teacher-centred methods to student-centred methods, using the modern technology. Both teachers and students converted their confusions into excitement and became ready to start virtual classes. Learning by doing was the best methodology for all with technology. The interviews and observations discovered the evidence that the shortcomings were gradually solved collaboratively.

It is discovered that online classes fragmented the students and created divisions among students. Geography, economy, connectivity and gender are the factors that created divisions. In this regard, Shakya, Sharma and Thapa (2017) state that online education reduces the gap between rural and urban places and creates equal opportunity for all in education. Contrary to this, the reality here is different: online classes created the gap and fragmentation between city dwellers and villagers and identified students as digital haves and have-nots. It was easy to practice for the students living in cities whereas students living in the village could not join and faced many challenges. The city dwellers enjoyed good internet facilities, electronic equipment and various effective communication tools. Collaborative learning was somehow easy in cities. Actually, digital divides between people having and not having digital tools created a problem of equity (Rose, 2007). Students living in the villages were found to be in stress with various problems. Attending an online class for them was really difficult. They did not have good electronic equipment like laptops, smart mobile sets and iPods. There is no internet facility in the villages; so they had to buy expensive but unreliable data packages which had poor network quality in the villages. So, digital haves and have-nots' division is clearly visible. Cross and Pollk (2018) focused on effective internet links, digital tools and time management, which were important factors for online classes, but they were not available in the villages. Many students from the villages shared their problems during the interviews and in informal conversations. Many teachers' reports and my own observation of various online classes show that almost half of the total registered number of students in the class attended online classes. This indicates that many students were in the villages either unknown about online classes or could not join due to the geographical location, lack of digital tools and connectivity problems. Thus, online classes have created a level of hierarchy and division among students. Along with this, teacher and student participants complained about the untimely power cut-off and poor internet connections during their classes.

However, wherever internet facilities were available, both teachers and students enjoyed online classes, with their new pedagogy of PowerPoint presentation, screen sharing, video sharing and many other online activities. Online classes made students more confident to speak and interact with their teachers and friends, too. Online teaching provided an opportunity for teachers and students to be techno-friendly, increased confidence and so on (Nilsson & Karlsson, 2019). Most of the participant students reported that their online classes were more productive and fruitful. The participant

teachers and students also shared their experience that they forcefully became ICT literate, which was so good for them. This experience is similar to Segrist's (2013) finding that online class makes teachers and students ICT literate forcefully. They learned ICT-related teaching-learning activities, which made them more confident and equipped them with ICT literacy. Certainly, this pandemic raised the value of online and distance education for all stakeholders like parents, teachers, students and administrators.

The study also revealed another reality that female students had to face more problems than male students. Though Amro, Mundy and Kupczynski (2015) suggested that there is no relationship between gender and online class, the performance of female students is much better than the male student's performance. The participating students were mostly married and mothers, too. The morning time classes were much disturbed because female students had to care for their babies, work in the kitchen, clean the house and face domestic problems. Thus, their performance was poor. Such domestic problems are not faced much by male students. For both male and female students, it is the reality that they had to give time to their job rather than to their study. Some of them could not join in their classes due to their job as a teacher. They could not be the teacher and student at the same time because the schools where they worked as a teacher were also running online classes in the same morning time. Therefore, they preferred being teachers rather than being students because they had to survive during the pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Online teaching developed a new culture for teachers and students. The culture of collaborative learning, digital literacy and self-exploring skills were developed among them. Online class preparation, webinar training sessions, YouTube videos, co-sharing the problems and IT experts' assistance have an important contribution. Teachers and students were motivated to use for the new model of online teaching and learning; so they were self-motivated to prepare and work with ICT applications. Problems were solved by teachers and students through collaborative learning. Many IT-related tools were managed by sharing with each other. Students learned to manage their time, dealing with geographical and connectivity problems as well as domestic, family and financial difficulties. Students who could not manage ICT tools could not attend classes; so a large number of students were out of online classes. Digital classes divided students into many fragments like digital haves and have-nots, village and city dwellers, working and nonworking students, and male and female students because of online classes. Due to lack of ICT infrastructure, weak preparation of the institution, lack of digital tools and poor internet connectivity, many students from rural areas were unable to attend their online classes. Teachers were to be highly motivated and extensive training should be given to them. The government and higher education institutions have to develop ICT infrastructure and policies to transform traditional teaching to ICT-based pedagogy to produce ICT skilled graduates. This study has found a huge division among students that was caused by digital technology. The findings of the study suggested that the government and universities have to form new policies, develop basic ICT infrastructures and strong connectivity, creating conducive online teaching environment, and developing ICT-based curriculum to meet the present demand of time. This study opens a new avenue to reduce the division in online learning among students.

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