**Emergencies and education**

[**Rubab Meraj**](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/rubab-meraj)

March 09, 2023

It is no secret that climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic have created unstable and unfathomable circumstances globally. Those who took the greatest hit during the pandemic were educational institutions including millions of schools and universities. The inability to successfully conduct schooling during the dreadful lockdowns and social distancing was a wake up call on an international scale that the education sector was completely unprepared for such situations.

Before COVID-19 it was easier to overlook the lack of facilitation of education during regional natural disasters, be it earthquakes or floods. These problems were considered temporary, and provision of consistent education was not exactly a priority for victims. By the mid-20th century gears were shifting as education was declared a human right in Article 26 under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This means education has in fact become a priority without discrimination for all races and socio-economic classes over the past several decades.

[Pakistan welcomes EU's move to remove it from high-risk countries List](https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2023/pakistan-welcomes-eu-s-move-to-remove-it-from-high-risk-countries-list)

However, with the concerning rise of climate change and its unpredictable effects, there is a need for all nations to maintain a preparedness in efforts to provide normalcy in rehabilitation of disaster victims. This is where centuries of technological innovation and advancements post Industrial Revolution come into play.

Although mankind has been able to invent and incorporate technology of great utility to the education sector, there was no framework in place to effectively facilitate education beyond a physical classroom setting. Despite the scattered, unpopular online learning courses, a dynamic, independent structure for a thorough educational environment simply did not exist.

Following COVID-19, academics and relevant education sector stakeholders recognized the potential of fulfilling the basic right of education regardless of physical circumstances. This in turn meant that education would be more inclusive and easily accessible. Not to mention, E-learning, which is fairly recent nomenclature designated to a method of teaching and learning that utilizes digital technologies and tools to deliver educational content and facilitate student-teacher interactions, is cost-effective and even flexible.

[US expects Biden's nominee, Ajay Banga, to be elected World Bank chief](https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2023/us-expects-biden-s-nominee-ajay-banga-to-be-elected-world-bank-chief)

Not everyone is able to afford private education, and often public schools in developing countries lack the resources to provide a quality education to its learners. E-learning helps combat this by saving governments overhead costs such as infrastructure and energy use. Further, the flexibility offered by E-learning means learners can obtain lesson knowledge and complete tasks at their convenience.

It is important to note, however, that the novelty of E-learning does present challenges of its own. Parents and educators alike lack the awareness of not only the resources they can avail but they also lack the required digital literacy so help operate an E-learning mode of education. Parents play a huge role in the facilitation of their children’s schooling. Without their cooperation or support it is easy for a learner to be left behind.

A proactive addition to legislation is necessary to clearly lay out allocated budgets, resources and means of receiving them for the general public. The more we work towards mainstreaming the avenue of E-learning, the more structural improvement this mode of education will achieve. Consequently, it will become easier to implement education provision policies due to adoption of affordable and flexible E-learning. The Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training has already worked on online admission systems in FDE institutions as well as collaborated with Jazz and Smart Learn Pakistan to improve blended learning approaches. These initiatives need to continue if more groundwork is to be done in the revolutionizing of education for greater inclusivity and accessibility in response to challenges created by emergencies. In light of the severe floods in Sindh, which has partially or fully destroyed school infrastructure, E-learning proves an excellent means of continuous education provision to flood-affected learners. It is the responsibility of the government, parents, development sector and teachers alike to ensure that the basic human right of education is not obstructed.

[Top court adjourns hearings on ongoing suo motu notices](https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2023/top-court-adjourns-hearings-on-ongoing-suo-motu-notices)

An emphatic response is undeniably self-fulfilling. If a greater population is guaranteed at least a secondary education by any means, only then can a new generation of skilled, well-rounded and self-motivated individuals be fostered. Only a literate generation can breed a newer well-educated one, where more minds can collaborate in tackling socio-economic, political, and even environmental issues. As a result, we would be gratified as a nation to see more employment, more innovation, more civil engagement and most importantly a snowball effect on a consistently improving economy.