

(Literature Review)

Digital Divide: Alarming Agenda of Marxism on the Digital Education Sector

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ABSTRACT

As this world progresses towards a phase where digital modes of education are no longer considered optional, it has become mandatory and the only means of schooling due to the effects of the pandemic, Covid-19. The education sector is now entirely under the wing of digitalization to accomplish its objectives. Even though education can only be carried out through digital means, the ease of accessibility for digital modes for people from every socioeconomic sector cannot establish the concept of 'Digital Divide.' This term explains the breach between people who do not have the resources to utilize the digital realm. This breach between the people in the Digital Divide universe lurks the agendas of Marxism. The people who are privileged to access digital life are the ones who are from a well-established socioeconomic background/sector, and the underprivileged ones are from a sector where the accessibility of the digital modes of life, even for education, are hectic because of their socioeconomic standards. Thereby, an image of how Marxist agendas is on the Digital Divide's shadows can be seen.

INTRODUCTION

Technological inventions and innovations from the past have enabled humans to do their day-to-day tasks effortlessly. It leads to the establishment of an industry whose sole purpose is to find more technological advancement because of the demands it has created among us. Technological innovations idea in contemporary society often relates to the spectrum of the Internet and the gadgets that are associated with it, such as a computer, smartphones, tabs, and more. It is this Internet that forms the base of all things digital. The inception of the Internet to the context of what we are doing today came back in the late 90s. As years progressed, the Internet reached almost every sector of life, such as education, entertainment, business, and even a cashless society, these days with the advent of digital wallet platforms. With the Internet being used for every means of life, its availability and ease of accessibility arise. The answer to this question is explained with the concept called '[Digital Divide](#),' a term which took its origin in the late 20th century. It tells the breach between the people who have the accessibility to use the digital realm and those who are not convenient enough to access it. The digital divide explains how the division between these two groups of have-nots over the digital realm happens, with factors such as the availability of the Internet, technology, and gadgets over the concepts of infrastructure, social and economic features. The digital realm's impact on the crisis in the educational sector caused by the digital divide began when the whole world met with the plight of the pandemic. [Covid-19](#) is leading to a global lockdown, which made conventional teaching education impossible,

forcing every educational institution such as colleges, schools, academies, and more to proceed with their teaching mode on only digital means. The Educational sector is forced to a phase where education can only be rendered out through digital approaches.

The [digital divide](#) established in the digital education sector is divided mainly on social and economic differentiation of people who have and do not have access to education. It is here where the concept of Marxism is laid. Marxism is generally a social, political, and economic philosophy that scrutinizes capitalism's effects on the sectors of labor, production, and economic development. Marxism sheds light on the struggle and clash between the two social classes, the bourgeoisie (the capitalists) and Proletariat (the working class). This philosophy is named after the German philosopher Karl Marx. The concept of how a Marxist agenda, which moves on a relevant trajectory towards the digital divide of the educational sector, is in the breach of people who have and do not have the socioeconomic background to access the digital modes of education. This breach indicates the social stratification of people, a stratification of who can and cannot have resources to obtain the digital medium—denoting two social classes in the digital divide. These two social classes are simply alarming the Marxist Agenda's existence, which stated that the inequalities that are reflected in society are caused by unequal distribution of material resources.

Literature Review

[Tarman \(2003\)](#) sheds light on how the digital divide plays an unfair game for financially prosperous masses and their children by providing them with a surplus amount of information and opportunities than that of lower-income masses. He explains how digital apertures in education, employment, race, and gender have created rifts globally. The divide in education has gone wider between the binaries of developed countries and developing countries, cities, rural areas rich and poor, and more. [Moore, Vitale, and Stawinoga \(2018\)](#) surveyed the digital divide on education in the U.S.A in which they found out that the usage of technological devices by students who had more than one when compared to the usage of students who had the only device had a considerable impact factor on their success to education. These are the demographic characteristics of a developed nation, which has access to digital technology more than developing nations. However, still, there is a considerable impact factor being played by the digital divide. Imagine the consequences of the digital divide on the education of a third-world nation that struggles for basic requirements, especially in a phase where digital mode is the only way for education. [Green \(2000\)](#) delineates that to achieve excellence in education, and there should be [equity](#) in it. She states that students who do not have access to technologies will be detached from peers who possess them. [Dijk and Hacker \(2005\)](#) state that the digital divide concept is unavoidably linked to features of social inequalities. [Ragnedda and Muschert \(2013\)](#) explain that the Digital Divide can replace all the existing forms of existing social inequalities and create new elements in stratification.

[Nielsen \(2006\)](#) elucidates the digital divide into three classifications based on the divisions that cause economics, usability, and empowerment. He states that the digital divide's economic factor is irrelevant since most developed nations can afford the digital modes. The divide's usability factor is more dangerous since most people are illiterate about using the digital domain. He states that people will always be indifferent to the digital medium's advantages with the empowerment factor. [Helbig, Garcia, and Ferro \(2009\)](#) stated that from the theoretical and practical perspectives, the E-Government sector and the digital divide are relevant since both cause a gap in their digital objectives.

Marxist Agenda

[Marxism](#), a philosophy or a system of philosophy (due to its association with various socialist movements throughout the epochs of history) which exposed the exploits of the relationship between the capitalist society (Bourgeois) and the working class (Proletariat). It was developed on the German philosopher Karl Marx's doctrine and by another German philosopher, Friedrich Engels, who extended Marx's works. Marxism believed in the concept of how the working class would ultimately overthrow the capitalist rule, establishing a revolution and gain control of the economy. It is the main objective of what Marxism tends to accomplish in society. However, the Marxist Agenda used in this paper is not entirely based on this objective. The social inequality that arose due to the improper distribution of

material resources, as explained by Marxism, is the [Agenda](#). Karl Marx describes the development of society (western) through four main "periods," that is

1. Primitive communism.
2. Ancient society
3. Feudal society
4. Capitalist society

Over these periods, Marx argues that the first period, i.e., Primitive communism, which comprised society with different kinds of the hunter-gatherer, was somewhat free of any social stratification based on class divisions. The social stratification based on class division only came into existence when the concept of production of goods (which exceeded the requirement for a healthy life) took place. This concept was absent in the first period because their society was a substance society, i.e., People gathered or hunted materials only for their day-to-day needs. The production of goods that surpassed the demands of essential requirements became the prime evil of class-based conflicts.

Marx states that as ages passed, goods that labeled people to different classes based on who had more of these goods and dominated in the capital of its production. In ancient and feudal societies, the class division was clustered due to different kinds of antagonisms. As culture diverged towards capitalism's age, the class groups' hostility was minimized into two partitions: the Bourgeois (ruling class) and the Proletariat (working class). The antagonisms between these two groups were on the factors of social, political, and economic standards, i.e., The production of goods was in the hands of the ruling class which owns and controls the sectors of production: the working class, the ones who do not own or control the manufacturing of such goods. The capitalist society that had access to every product and its production became the upper hand of society. The working class was under them, manufacturing products for their capitalist masters. This system of life over the stratification of two classes of people, which Marxism elucidates because it arises a social inequality over the unequal distribution of material sources of production—thereby leading to a flaw in society. With this Marxist Agenda of social inequality over the unequal distribution of substantial production sources, the bridge between Marxism and the Digital Divide is laid.

Marxist Agenda alarming over Digital Divide in Digital Education sector:

Digital Divide is a term that took its origin back in the late 90s. It started as a concept that stated the divide between people who have and do not have access to telephone, television, Internet, and other digital mediums. As technology progressed over the years, leading to the invention of computers, tabs, smartphones, and more. Most importantly, the internet-connected every technology-based gadget to the digital realm. Digitalization became an integral part of every sector. Every field starting from education, medical, transport, entertainment, banking, and more., had a parallel digital industry that was accessed by people who had the resources such as the Internet and other technological gadgets. The world in which we all live progressed with so many digital inventions and innovations. The subject of accessibility for everyone is where the equilibrium does not exist, leading to [the Digital Divide concept](#).

The educational sector's digitalization progressed towards many advantages, such as online articles, applications and software for teaching, online databases, and more. The advent of digital means over education balanced with the conventional norms of educational objectives because the digital world of learning was considered optional. The status of this phase have changed, now causing the world to engulf the plight of the pandemic, Covid-19. The conventional modes of teaching have become hazardous to human life, making digital learning mode not only to be mandatory but being the only solution for education. Educational institutions are entirely under the wing of digitalization to render its objectives cause it is the only way prevalent in the pandemic crisis to move forward. There arises a question, will this digital model of the education sector be accessible for everyone? The answer to this question will be 'no.' because of the digital divide around us.

An excellent example of the digital divide in the educational sector can be seen in India's private and government-run schools. The Private schools have already started their classes via online apps such as Google meet, Zoom, WhatsApp, and more. They are dating back to mid-June. Some of them were even able to conduct a monthly exam. However, if we look over the case of schools run by the government, Students could not have the privileges accessible by private school students. These government school

students do not have the material resource to obtain a digital learning model. Social and economic stratification is the reason behind this digital divide in education. A reasoning of the breach between public and government school students arises on social and economic living standards. [The Digital divide in education](#) is thereby heralding a generation of students. One with the knowledge obtained from digital means through his social and economic standard becomes the Oppressor, and the one who could not afford it becomes oppressed. This phase explains a Marxist binary module. One who possesses a wealthy socioeconomic background can have the accessibility to every means of digital education, and the other has a socioeconomic background that makes him unable to access it. Hence Digital Divide in Education is a social issue stating the discrepancy of information between those who have the privilege to access the digital realm and those who do not have access to it. It is here where the concept of Marxism comes in. The Marxist Agenda of Social Inequality stated that the unequal distribution of material resources causes inequalities in society. Here, it is the education distributed in unequal proportions leading to the disintegration of our society. It is education that is distributed in unequal proportions leading to the decay of our society. Thereby drawing the delicate image of the Digital Divide's impact in the digital education sector through Marxism.

The effect of Marxism on society is a decaying effect. The capitalists of the society take all they want of material goods and resources. Letting the working class be making a fortune with what the upper caste wants them to do. This module of Marxism, when it takes its evolution in the digital education sector, the plight of it is a generation of kids and teens who get left behind in academics—thereby forming an academic hegemony. The term academic hegemony, when looked at in context, it is just history all over again. Like how upper caste people were allowed to study in ancient India, the digital following the same construct with technology.

An [Indian newspaper](#) published a news thread online, "Indians fear pandemic will deepen inequalities among students: survey," it is found in this survey that three out of four Indians found that the pandemic will class a huge rift the education. A global education firm Pearson calculated that almost 80 % of the educational sector would be under pressure till a vaccine is found. This survey was conducted in a market research firm, with results weighted for age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status so that proportions represent national demographics. Over a thousand Indians were included. The main concern here is how primary and secondary education will forever change this pandemic. Still, another part of people says that the online education model is the next innovation in the educational sector. The data in this survey maps out the problem lucidly; it states that About 45% of the masses felt the need to equip schools to switch to online learning, while 33% felt the top priority is to increase access to technology for underserved learners.

Regarding Higher Education, about two-thirds of the respondents felt that Indian colleges and universities were prepared for the pandemic. The survey revealed mixed opinions concerning the physical reopening of campuses. Only 51% think that a university degree is essential, and 62% said their higher education experience did not help them in their careers. Only 46% say that if given a choice again, they would still go to college. Most respondents called for more soft skills and hands-on training in higher education, with more than 80% saying that while colleges and universities are the right places to make professional connections, work-based experience outweighs what is being taught.

CONCLUSION

India is one of the most hit nations by the virus. Covid-19 With approximately 2.4 million cases and a death toll of 47,000 deaths to date, the pandemic's fatigue in every sector is critical, with the educational industry taking a giant bow. As education started online globally, it is to understand that only 8 percent of the Indian population have a computer in their households and an internet connection. While some elite schools, the private ones, have moved classes online, millions of children do not have access to computers, phones, the Internet, televisions, or even electricity.

"When online classes began, the scenario was many students did not have online accessories like laptops, tablets, phones, and even if they had these things, they could not charge them. Internet outreach has reached the maximum percentage among the people of Delhi, Kerala, and Haryana. However, it is still away from most people in the northeastern states, except Assam.

When applied to the education sector, the digital divide has a whole new implication, Shedding light upon how social stratification plays a massive role in it through Marxism. The inequalities over

the proportion of education shared by the binaries in the digital divide lurking [Marxism's Agenda](#). It is establishing the concept of Social inequality in the digital mode of education. The digital divide that exists in the educational sector tends to lay new dogmas of social inequalities. The future is indefinite with the digital divide. We can already see a major disaster it is building, i.e., the private schools and colleges have begun with their classes and exam while the government students from schools and colleges are still wondering what to do—leaving behind almost an academic year with nothing to do the cause of the crippled digital resources.

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