Philosophical reflections about the virtual world

S Swaminathan¹ · S Balaji¹ · G Sriram¹ · K Venkatramanan¹

Abstract Changes in the operating ambience is normally welcome. But the change world is facing is accompanied by an unacceptable reason called Covid virus spread. However, educational institutions, while observing the norms imposed by various administrations, have managed to do an excellent job of ‘teaching’ against the odds. Moreover, everyone was caught by surprise. Overnight the world changed. We decided to understand the reactions from our faculty to the challenge arising out of Covid, and also use of terminologies such as online, virtual, reality, perception, understanding, and so on. The result is this paper, which is a collection of ‘reactions’.

1 Background

In Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Viswa Mahavidyalaya, we experienced differences in perception of the “virtual”, where the whole world was pushed to in mid-march 2020. We were one of the early birds to adopt virtual classrooms for our outgoing students. While the experience itself was sudden and excruciating on a daily basis, the fact that we were able to tide over the situation successfully gave each one of us immense pleasure. During an informal chat, it was decided to record the perception of faculty about the turn of events and their view of ways and means of handling the ‘new normal’. The views are extremely interesting and insightful because, they are from SCSVMV faculty who teach courses from across a broad spectrum of programs that SCSVMV has. Happy reading.

On further analysis, we found that the views expressed were composed of the following understanding to various degrees:

1. Technology and its superiority
2. Strong focus on ‘virtual’ as a prefix
3. Continued Perception of Limitations of Technology in spite of Advancement
4. Emphasis on the normal system of operation
5. Necessity to embrace new technologies
6. Role of Teachers and Students in Online Learning
7. Online Learning as an opportunity to understand by repeated listening
8. VR with Philosophical underpinning
9. One’s commitment to ancient scriptures
10. State of fact report of adaptive behaviour

Prof. Dr. S. Swaminathan,
Head—Dept. of Samskrita Samhita Siddhant,
Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Ayurveda College and Hospital,
Nazarethpet, Chennai -600123.
It is a boon for the educational system to have the virtual reality of late, as it has made the thinkers to ponder upon the absolute through virtual. The best outcome measure would be counted upon theories of medicine invention, diagnostic realities and their implements even to a level of nucleus in a cell discovery, the future prognostic values and treatment modalities well before say even before four years down the line. This would curtail the advancement of prognosis and man-made machine would surpass the physical brain storming research on to a simple way of great achievements in the years to come.

Dr. S. Sriman Narayanan M.D (Ayu), MSc. (Psy)
Assistant Professor, Department of Kayachikitsa,
Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Ayurveda College and Hospital,
Nazarethpet, Chennai -600123.

The new paradigm shift from traditional learning from college/universities to virtual learning from home will continue in the present era till pandemic comes to an end. The present education system has accepted this transition as there is need for continuous knowledge update for both students and teachers in this new normal.

Online teaching is blessing in disguise to continue learning at ones convenience at being at home and connect with the university/college. Technology has bridged the gap between the knowledge seeker and the provider. Virtual reality is the new normal but if this continues for a longer duration. It may have its advantages, but not to forget the health impact it is going to leave behind with the new generation learners. Virtual learning will be the new education system in the developing countries like India, AI and Machine learning will gradually replace a teacher in the near future which is a threat to the traditional education system. The new generation welcomes the same and it may lead to lay off from jobs of many teachers.

The brain is an extraordinary three pound organ that controls all functions of the body; it interprets analyses and embodies the soul and mind. Cerebrum and cerebellum which performs the higher functions like speech, reasoning, learning and maintaining a particular posture and balance during virtual learning has 86 billion of cells are present. They do this by sensory and motor pathways. Philosophical thoughts are usually interpreted by the frontal, parietal and temporal lobe of the cerebrum. Virtual learning is today’s necessity during this global pandemic SARS-Cov-2/HCov-19. Virtual learning is a typical relationship between the human brain and technology. Virtual reality does not encompass the real philosophical thoughts. Virtual reality have limitations like it does not involve proper psychological interpretation, rather it provides a sub-symbolic representation. Though it is a digital phenomenon, it does not involve a proper distinction between the artefact, environment and the super biological organism i.e. human being.

Traditional medicine is gaining popularity around the globe but still it is not being accepted as national system of medicine in the country from where it originated. Ayurveda is a billion dollar market which is still marketed as health supplement. This trend has to change and once it is practised as a main stream health care system in the country of glorious past will create more opportunities for high quality research and make new trend in health care service. Technological advances can take the traditional system of medicine even to the advanced country which still believes western system of medicine is the only life saver in Pandemics.

Prof. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Moharana
Department of Kayachikitsa,
Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Ayurveda College and Hospital,
Nazarethpet, Chennai -600123.

The brain is an extraordinary three pound organ that controls all functions of the body; it interprets analyses and embodies the soul and mind. Cerebrum and cerebellum which performs the higher functions like speech, reasoning, learning and maintaining a particular posture and balance during virtual learning has 86 billion of cells are present. They do this by sensory and motor pathways. Philosophical thoughts are usually interpreted by the frontal, parietal and temporal lobe of the cerebrum. Virtual learning is today’s necessity during this global pandemic SARS-Cov-2/HCov-19. Virtual learning is a typical relationship between the human brain and technology. Virtual reality does not encompass the real philosophical thoughts. Virtual reality have limitations like it does not involve proper psychological interpretation, rather it provides a sub-symbolic representation. Though it is a digital phenomenon, it does not involve a proper distinction between the artefact, environment and the super biological organism i.e. human being.
Corona virus disease created a panic situation around the world, as per some media reports it was said that it originated from china and spread across the world. Some versus says it was an accidental spread from Chinese laboratory, some versus says, it is intentional spread by Chinese government in order to bring economic crisis all over the world, whatever may the reason or intention, it is spread all over the world and now we are living with a deadly virus around us. Corona virus disease, in short it is called as COVID-19, named after it was identified in 2019. Not only developing countries, it also affected most developed country like USA. COVID-19, situation taught many lessons to us, by hampering growth in all fields, among all sectors, the most affected sector is education sector.

Due to pandemic situation, people are forced to stay at home to prevent corona infection, as common sayings “health is wealth, Stay healthy, health is most prior than any others.” Due to this students missed their regular schools and colleges. But we humans are adaptive for any situation; we started an alternate option that is conducting online classes to student community, which we can do by staying at our own homes. My opinion regarding education, Mere education is not just getting a certificate or qualification or degree. It is the one which makes our self a perfect person, in order to serve the society.

As an Ayurveda teacher I would like to say, Ayurveda student requires both theoretical and practical knowledge equally in order to serve the society. In this corona situation we are imparting theoretical knowledge to students, but fail to impart practical knowledge. In Sushruta Samhita (ancient classical Ayurvedic book) there is mentionof sloka saying,

“yasthu ubhayagnomathin samaradhanah, aahave karma nirvudam dwichakra hasyandhano yadha”

—means the person who is well versed in both practical and theoretical knowledge (ubhayagno), is capable of accomplishing his work, like a chariot with two wheel, successfully do its job in the battle field. We need to find alternate option to fulfil this gap.

Truly speaking Virtual reality is does not have any proper definition which can be accepted universally. Although there is a common core for definitions and most uses of the term Virtual reality, incarcerating those definitions we can define that a virtual reality is an immersive, interactive and computer generated environment. In outcome, being computer generated make these environments virtual, being immersive and interactive makes our experiences of them at least similar to ordinary reality.

Virtual reality as a noun is generally equivalent with Virtual reality environment, whereas a mass noun it envelop both virtual reality environment and virtual reality technology.

Philosophical reflections are the extraordinary varieties of beliefs and practice that is probable contained by the across human societies related to experiencing of virtual reality. Some philosophers generally express that reality is in the mind, if person have rich enough perceptions as of world around us is real if so the virtual objects looks, sounds and feels real then it is automatically real.

Physical reality will be characterized by its causal structure and the patterns of interaction between physical objects, and their effects on our experience. Exactly the same thing happens for virtual reality, digital objects in general are characterized by their patterns of interaction, which is an eventually a matter of causal structure.

Virtual reality and non-Virtual reality are two dissimilar implementations of closely related structures, there might
be little dissimilarity but that is not enough to make one valuable and genuine while the other one is not. Virtual reality may be a next level reality, it is contained within physical reality and understand by process in the physical world however this need not to make Virtual reality as less real or less valuable or insignificant. Present pandemic situation virtual reality can be used to enhance student learning and engagement. Virtual reality can transform way of education, but concern Ayurveda system education given to students using virtual reality technologies are really significant or not, discussions are required to conclude this point.

Prof. Dr. K. Vasudeva Reddy
M.D (Ay)
Head, Dept. of Shalya Tantra
Sri Jayendra Saraswathi
Ayurveda College and
Hospital,
Nazarathpet, Chennai-600123.

The dangerous infection Covid 19 started spreading around Nov 2019. In India this infection started spreading in the month of March 2020. The Govt. of India announced complete lockdown from April month 2020. Usually for most of the courses academic year will end after examination in the month of April. When we come to the Ayurveda courses all the three professional exams will be conducted in the same month, except final profession where the exams will be conducted in the month of December.

After knowing all these and also how long this infection continuing no one knows. Then started little bit tension how to complete the syllabus within November 2020. By April all most of the students left the campus. Then higher authorities instructed to take class online to complete the syllabus.

Technologically I am poor in taking classes online. First the postgraduate students called me to take classes online through phone meeting. Then I started taking classes 1 or 2 only. Here the numbers of students are only 3. That’s why we managed classes via phone conference. When come to the UG classes the number of the students are more than the PG where we can’t take classes via phone conference. Then the students called me to take the classes via Go to meeting app. Here we know the No. of the students but actually how many of them are hearing the classes we can’t find out and it became difficult to take attendance. And also limited time will be available; we can’t answer the students’ doubts during class hours.

The students switch on phones as if they are online even though they are absent. After few days started taking classes via ZOOM app. But here we can see the students are online or not. And here also taking attendance became little bit difficult. Because of limited time I speedup portions to complete the syllabus. Examination days and summer vacation (April and May) mentally without going to native place to enjoy with my parents and family and I covered the almost entire syllabus.

I felt very sad to miss that enjoyment. The other side I attended medical camps and OPDS in these days and also I attended medical emergencies in old age home in these days. In the month of September the university developed friendly software to take classes online classes and their attendance. Now classes are going very smoothly. But always direct classes are better than online classes where we can directly interact with students. Personally I felt little bit difficult to take online classes sitting in the home and also due to frequent interruption in network.

Prof. Dr. KPV Ramanakumar
Dean (FMS), SCSVMV

The way a forward looking person’s first response on virtual reality, more so, to a proactive educator, is to accept the change, challenge, and experience it firsthand. Such an educator takes experience of challenges with virtual world he faces as an experience in itself, neither unfavourable, or favourable. Every experience matures him and thus prepares him for a greater challenge as learning is continuous and change is constant.
Current challenges faced by an educator includes

1. Online teaching where teacher and taught are novices in many aspects
2. Unless online learning happens, teaching will not be effective. Online learning for many teachers is a challenge
3. Remote teaching capacity, digital dexterity, adaptability to change becomes a necessary challenge for many
4. E-labs, E-skills, E-recruitment E-exams will be the challenging task for many institutions
5. Continuous process learning by faculty from experiential wisdom of digitally experienced professionals will become the order of the day and as on the day of this write up it is a very big challenge.
6. Social networking for collective learning, using artificial intelligence, game-based learning, simulations, analytics for decision making in education will be today's challenge for creating space for next generation.
7. Are we ready to accept the change, are we evolving, are we feeling the need to change our approach, attitude, and are we ready to accept the goal before us and remember this goal post is never constant and ever changing? This is the real challenge.

Finally a proactive person ready to face challenges with a responsive attitude, visualizes, no matter what he has in his domain knowledge as on date, but what matters to such an individual is what he does with what he already has coupled with whatever he learns in the newer domain and actualizing and maximizing the organizational objective he is serving and passing the wisdom of his experiential learning to the next generation virtually. The highest education not only does give information, but makes life of an individual in harmony with other individuals and environment in general.

One UNESCO report estimates that the coronavirus pandemic will adversely impact over 290 million students across the globe. As every cloud has a silver lining, this is the golden time to realize the potential of online learning.

Remote learning seems a viable solution to students during this time as they offer convenient, on-the-go and affordable access to lessons. E-learning also comes as an interesting and interactive alternative as compared to classroom teaching. Digital education appears to be a viable solution to fill in the void for classroom education for a time span of few months while minimizing the chances of any infection to students until classes resume. In future, Digital education is likely to be integrated into mainstream education. This will enable inclusive education by facilitating learning across diverse geographies in India. Moreover, it will provide an opportunity for educators to come up with customized learning solutions for every student. Teacher centered education is now getting shifted towards learner centered education.

However, in the long run, remote learning has a long way to go before it can be seen as a potential alternative to school/college education. Face-to-face interaction is usually perceived as the best form of communication as compared to the rather impersonalized nature of remote learning. Globally, online education has met with some success. But in India, we still have a long way to go before digital learning is seen as mainstream education. Remote learning increasingly relies on Internet connectivity which might be a far-fetched thing for students from rural areas. E-learning is likely to witness a high dropout rate due to lack of atmosphere for studying (Source: Article in India today by Rohit Manglik, CEO, Edu Gorilla). Students might tend to get distracted by gaming consoles, social media at home and might not feel a sense of community while taking online classes.

Online learning appears to be no substitute for field trips, academic exchanges and the social and cultural attractions of a vibrant campus life.

As most of my students are from rural location, access to good bandwidth is the main problem faced by the students. As a result, continuous attentive learning is not taking place. Students lack physical exercise and they are forced to sit in front of a system/mobile phone for a minimum for 3–4 h per day due to which they develop mental stress. So we need to spend time to counsel and prepare the students for class.

In my opinion, even though self paced learning is possible through digital learning process, machines cannot replace a teacher as machines cannot understand the psychology of the students. Here teachers get less control over the students and unless students are self disciplined, it is going to be a tough time for both of them. During class room teaching, teachers can easily read the mindset of the...
students and can start discussion from their topic of interest and gradually motivate and divert their attention towards the subject of study.

A teacher is also facing lot of stress during digital teaching process and he/she finds it difficult to know whether all students have really understood the concept. On the whole, a real charm is there only in conventional classroom teaching. Teaching is an art with full of activity where a student gains overall development in knowledge with tightly packed information on various topics including mainstream academics. By reading the eye of the student, an effective teacher can easily analyse his/her satisfactory level and all these things are missing in digital learning. The destiny of a student is in the hands of a teacher. So finally let me conclude that digital learning can enhance the teaching learning process but cannot replace a teacher. Teacher and Technology are two sides of a coin in guiding the students towards creating better society.

The shift from customary in-person to virtual teaching was particularly vital as societal lockdowns were implemented. Basic University courses, such as science and engineering majors, usually contain abstract concepts and theories, and a large number of mathematical formulae and complex derivation processes. Therefore, online learning can be a real challenge to many students as they try to master the content of these courses. Even in the traditional classroom teaching, because of the perceived difficulty of such courses and the consequent perceived dullness of the content, the learning effect of students is generally poor. Therefore, online learning can be a real challenge for many students as they try to master the content of these courses.

However, going online is an opportunity to ‘set the teaching machinery’ in order by preparing sufficient online learning material. Besides, in online learning, learners can review the learning resources and improve activities multiple times compared to the face-to-face model. Overall, teachers were only moderately satisfied with having to teach virtually, indicating that virtual voice teaching is not a sufficient replacement for in-person teaching.

Virtual reality (VR) is a computer program that forms the virtual world for interacting users with objects and other users. The reality has been proved in the areas of prototype and testing. The concepts of technological ideas have been described to human philosophically. These interactions are enhanced using the simulations and internets which forms links between the philosophical group and virtual reality. This cooperation is not matured in many application areas like training, education, etc. Especially, the students are stuck in the learning process due to the complexity in concepts and lack of thinking of the core ideas.

In modern days, electronic gadgets have replaced textbooks by cell phones, tablets, etc. However, this does not solve the student’s needs for understanding the philosophical ideas. The VR platform has been used for distance and personalized learning to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills with sufficient virtualization. However, the development of the VR platform has to go some more distance towards the student’s progress and evaluations for today’s scenario because this does not consider the factors like ethical and human factors and physical side effects beyond the automation of test. Thus, a good balance has to
be made in human interaction, digitization, virtualization and teacher-student relations.

Virtual reality has tremendous practical value for soldiers, pilots, and doctors and is the bedrock of their training simulators. Recently it is mentioned in a medical article, that VR is used in the physiotherapy related to children. As children who take physiotherapy are completely immersed in this world of virtual reality, their focus and immersion on VR relieves them from the sense of pain. Besides, it reduces painkiller medication by as high as thirty percent.

Let me recapitulate an incident from India’s past. Nayanmars are the 63 Saints of Saivism who lived between sixth and eighth century CE in Tamil Nadu. Poosalar, the fifty-eighth Nayanmar was an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva. Poosalar was from a small town named Thiruninravur, Chennai. Poosalar was passionate in his desire to build a temple for his lord Siva, but he was a poor in reality. But his passion to build temple grew stronger every day. Poosalar was so committed to his thought and out of curiosity he learnt every small aspect of making a temple.

He consulted the spiritual texts to understand the subtle rules of building a temple. Soon he started constructing the temple in his mind. First, he chose an auspicious date to begin the construction and then on that date he laid foundation of Temple. Soon in his dreams, he went far to get the best sandstones and marbles.

Besides, he explored every possible place to get valuable gems and stones to make idols. He hired the best sculptors to make the idol of Shiva. He spent hours and days to get perfection in everything. He spent most time in the interiors of the temple. He referred holy books and inscriptions to find the right place to set up deities and scriptures in the temple. He consulted calendars to choose the most auspicious date for “Kumbhabhishekam”, the inauguration ceremony of the temple.

All this he did in his mind only. In the sixth century itself Poosalar constructed a temple in the virtual reality aka imagination in modern parlance. So VR is also an opportunity to redefine ‘what we believer what we wish in our subconscious mind’, when cast in visual form, is called virtual reality.

The relationship between Virtual and Real suggests that there are physical elements and their relationships that exist to create a virtual equivalent. This is normally done for the purposes of learning, mostly the art of controlling such as the one in flight simulators. The virtual world is created using a headset or and a few haptic sensors to work with. Though the relationship between the two worlds, virtual and real are simulated, they really are two different planes of existence. The distinction between us, our devices and the limits of our existence in both the virtual and the real world, is something we can answer by simply asking the fundamental question, ‘where do we as humans end and where do our tools begin?’

Virtual Reality (VR) based learning has gained significant attention in various apprenticeship programmes over the past few years. VR platforms provide a safe, affordable, and effective environment in which learners can navigate through, and interact with, their jobsites and become exposed to various types of hazards and safety risks that are otherwise difficult to experience in field-based training. VR-based training has evolved tremendously in the past few years from simple graphical interfaces for assessing trainees decision-making ability to complex multi-player scenarios augmented with artificial intelligence and

---

1 A function to consecrate a temple after construction.
immersive technologies. Currently, after many evolutionary phases, VR-based training appears to have reached a level of maturity that renders it applicable in many industries.

Dr. D. Matha Kumaran,
Assistant Professor, ECE,
SCSVMV

Generally Virtual reality is a three dimensional environment. It can be accessed by various devices. Best example will be online gaming, in that one can interact with other gamers also. In last few years autonomous virtual humans have been found in the environment, like Personal assistants, sales Person. A lot of applications are there that use sensors used by humans. One common example is the ‘eye tracking sensors’ that are used for user identification. Eye movement sensors are able to identify how many times a user seesa particular advertisement. In a department store, the same device is used to determine ‘what the user saw and did not see’. In augmented and virtual reality applications, headsets quality is the important parameter as is the graphics quality in the simulated or gaming applications. Eye tracking sensor applications can assist about the position of headset. Whether it is correct or to be adjusted. Lots of applications such as near to eye projection, eye tracking, proximity sensing, position tracking and room scanning are maturing for common use. All of them will help build the Virtual Laboratory experience of Tomorrow.

Ms. R. Janani,
Assistant Professor, EIE,
SCSVMV

The Vedas take into account all aspects of human nature. The initial portions describe prayers and rituals. The end portion are Upanishads which constitute the core philosophy of Hinduism. It is necessary to communicate the philosophy of Upanishads to the common man through an understandable medium.

Bhagavad Gita has one philosophical passage. Sri Arjuna is a warrior in the battle field but faces a dilemma about his duty. Sri Krishna gives a comprehensive picture of the human situation. Makes Arjuna see past, present, and future in one go. He then shows Arjuna the Supreme Reality as ‘real’ manifestation in front of him, perhaps by manipulating his sensory organs remotely to be able to see ‘larger than life size’ view of Lord Krishna himself. The nature of Supreme Reality and the direct vision reminds him of his dharma to fight. Sri Krishna, it can be said, used Virtual Reality to impart the knowledge of Brahman (the name of Supreme Reality), which is pure consciousness. Sri Arjuna, having understood (perceived) the existence of the infinite, fights the war and establishes dharma.
Gita is therefore called Brahma Vidya which is philosophically explained by Sri Krishna to Sri Arjuna and to the people in the Universe. Gita is therefore considered the textual form of Virtual Reality.

Dr. R. Jayalakshmi
Assistant Professor, ECE, SCSVMV

The Concept of relationship between philosophy and Virtual reality is an interest for the Interdisciplinary audience with profound scope in future Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Spectrum. The major highlight of this area of research emphasize the connectivity between the inner consciousness and the Virtual Reality which does not exists actually. The Perception of the material things which are not available in the environment has to be sensed and the subsequent knowledge to be absorbed for the successive Processing of things which can in meta theoretical state. This article explores the nature of virtual Reality from the Philosophical Perspective.

Philosophers says that the entire conscious experience by the humans is actually a virtual internal simulation of the biological nervous System. In the Cosmic model, with time as dimension, the events which are occurring throughout the Universe is an example by itself of Virtual Reality. From the Hindu Mythology, there are numerous examples of virtual reality experiences. One such is, Lord Krishna giving a near virtual reality of showing the entire universe inside His mouth to his mother Yashoda. The experience of Yashoda is the near User experience of Virtual Reality in modern days. To be Precise, Virtual experience does not always account from the software or hardware designed, rather I believe it’s the innate capability of a human being to create things and experience from what he sees, from the available consciousness with which he has acquired over the Time. This may also be termed as Predictive Processing.

In the COVID-19 pandemic period every individual has got an opportunity to learn, feel and live the technology and its advancements irrespective of their age. In a developing country like India, everyone carries their own thoughts and perspectives of living life. The Virtual world brought us all together, connected everyone, and everything. The real existence through roaming in the outer world is provided by virtual reality. The immense pleasure of watching a dream world close by, makes one feel like flying in it. SMART life includes virtual reality gadgets for the best entertainment purpose as well. The delight of the virtual world can give instant satisfaction, but it cannot last a long time.

Riding a virtual roller coaster, though it cannot replace the actual experience, creates, at marginal cost, the fear and illusory effect of riding. Virtual shopping is common place. VR will definitely be part of lifestyle in the coming years.

VR can be a best teaching tool as it enables rich personal experience of concepts leading to understanding of the complete functioning of an object in motion. VR can simulate anything and help visualize the dimensions of the world around us, enabling us with rich perceptual experience.

Dr. G. Padmanabha Sivakumar,
Assistant Professor, EIE, SCSVMV
Due to Covid, all the teaching organizations faced unprecedented closure and struggled for coping with the new normal. Notwithstanding the discomfort hitherto, it is the appropriate time to devise a new paradigm to mitigate the discomfort due to pandemic situation. It is our responsibility to train ourselves first to transform into new virtual reality for the betterment of student education.

During online teaching, two challenges arise; one, ‘who are all there?’ and two, ‘how attentive are the students?’ For one who is used to eye-to-eye contact with students in the normal classroom, it suddenly becomes difficult to facilitate free discussions, debates and mentoring. Besides, due to social distancing and governmental advisories, accessing and using University library resources are rendered impossible. We need to redefine the following: ‘How do we prepare for the online classes?’, ‘How do we teach?’, ‘How do we design assignments and exams?’, and so on. Answers to these questions are perhaps the best way to encourage the students’ learning, besides receiving continuous feedback from them on their learning.

The use of new spectacles for the first time will make to feel temporarily uncomfortable, but after some time called the ‘adjustment period’, it will become (new) normal. The present situation will also move away, perhaps after making us better in our profession (teaching) as we are better prepared than before Covid.

Virtual learning poses a different set of challenges for educators and students, but collaboration and communication make it easier to stay connected and engaged. Online instruction sometimes can turn students into passive observers rather than active participants. Main challenge is to stay connected with students. In an online classroom, students often feel disconnected from the teacher, as well as their peers. Interaction among students is vital for successful online education. Collaborative engagement motivates learning and promotes a deeper approach. Unfortunately, collaboration is one of the most difficult things to achieve when students are not physically present together.

Usually after discussing a problem in the conventional class, for better understanding an additional problem will be given to students and there will be a competitive spirit among students to solve and show the answer first. While going around the class, some students who hesitate to ask questions openly, may clear their doubts comfortably when the teacher is near their seat. But in online class, it is difficult to judge whether the students have really understood the concept as they are attending class at different environment.

So, we teachers have to keep flexibility and empathy in the forefront because some students may not have ideal learning or internet environment, may lack privacy or quiet space, may have unreliable internet access or they may be online at some public space. As there are more difficulties for rural students in the teaching learning process (virtual mode), teachers have to counsel the students to accommodate them to the new normal. Personally, I am eagerly waiting to meet the students in the classroom.
The technology savvy present generation learnt from history, that the world has been through pandemics in the past. However, one wonders as to why the world perceives the current COVID-19 pandemic, with the same feeling of ‘life-threatening’ situation, in spite of scientific advancements and Medicare. But as is characteristic of humans they adapt very quickly to face, react and survive, from metros to small villages; even well prepared to execute their day-to-day jobs with commitments.

The use of ICT in education field came to the rescue and helped us a lot in executing the needs of everyday life in education sector in terms of teaching and learning, conducting examinations, placement processes, student services such as the issue of grade statements, campus interviews and selection processes etc. Altogether all of the office works in an educational institution has been managed well so far and also poised to take up further till the ‘new normal’ ceases to exist, hopefully with the help of a vaccine shot for safeguarding valuable human lives.

But it has been felt by many faculty members that they are missing largely the live student interactions in classroom lectures, vibrant meetings and group discussions, working lunch, coffee hours, jokes and hilarious moments. Similarly, students feel that they heavily miss their friends and roommates, happy chats, outdoor trips on weekends, birthday celebrations, face to face project discussions, group preparation for interviews etc.

So, now all of us are praying for healthy life of near and dear ones, fearless living atmosphere, happy moments on everyday life which are expected in a short while with new drug discoveries for making all the people around the world to go around as usual for their routine without any hindrance. It can be easily understood that everyone in this world needs not just food for existence, but Life with Fun and Joy, no matter what they choose to do.

2 The learning outcome for SCSVMV

There are 19 reactions from the faculty of SCSVMV, 6 from Ayurveda department, 1 from Management, 4 from Sciences, and 8 from Engineering. Teachers are teachers; they have strong views on many issues and rightfully so. As each one has a distinctly different background (and the perception arising out of it), it is but natural that one gets divergent reactions to a situation in the same institution. But that is exactly the beauty of a university such as SCSVMV that spans Languages, Arts, Indian Tradition and Culture, Science, Commerce, Engineering, and Medicine. As the variety in subject matter that our university deals with, so is the divergence in viewpoints. However, one thing was clear. All of them want a structured approach to handle the cyber space based classrooms and are dedicating themselves to preparing lessons following the principles laid out by the great Preceptor Adi Shankaracharya.