

## Commercialization of Online Education Platforms During the Corona Period in India vs. Other Asian Countries

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### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant shift in how education was delivered, thus prompting the use of online education platforms. This paper looks into the development and growth of online education platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic and considers Indian and other Asian countries such as China, Korea and Indonesia. It also investigates how these platforms responded to increasing market opportunities, the difficulties encountered in different socio-economic circumstances, and the consequences for the overall picture of education in Asia.

**Keywords:** *Online Education Platforms, Corona Period in India, Other Asian Countries*

The Covid-19 pandemic fundamentally altered the education scene the world over, bringing over 1.5 billion children out of physical school settings. Online education platforms became the most important means to ensure 'learning continues.' This paper focuses on how these platforms operated commercially during the pandemic by comparing India with other important Asian countries in terms of strategies and results achieved.

### METHODOLOGY

This study employs the framework of comparative analysis. The data was collected from reliable sources like journals, government publications, and other market research activities published before 2022. Metrics that were used comprise of enhancing the number of users, income opportunities, government policies, and socio economic constraints.

### COMMERCIALIZATION OF ONLINE EDUCATION PLATFORMS IN INDIA

#### *Growth of the EdTech Industry*

India witnessed a surge in the EdTech sector, with platforms like BYJU'S, Unacademy, and Vedantu leading the market. Key drivers included:

- **Increased Investment:** BYJU'S raised over \$1 billion in 2020 alone, becoming a decacorn.
- **Expanding User Base:** Rural adoption rose due to affordable smartphones and low-cost internet.

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- **Government Initiatives:** Programs like DIKSHA provided free digital resources to students.

Challenges

- **Digital Divide:** Despite growth, over 70% of students in rural areas lacked consistent internet access.
- **High Costs:** Premium platforms often priced out lower-income families.
- **Quality Concerns:** Unregulated content led to varying educational standards.

COMMERCIALIZATION IN OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES

China

- China’s online education market, already robust, grew exponentially during the pandemic:
- **Massive Government Support:** The Ministry of Education facilitated live-streamed lessons for millions of students.
  - **Market Leaders:** Platforms like TAL Education and New Oriental dominated, with significant venture capital funding.
  - **Policy Impact:** The "Double Reduction" policy introduced in 2021 aimed to curb excessive commercialization, limiting after-school tutoring.

South Korea

- South Korea leveraged its advanced digital infrastructure:
- **Technology Integration:** Platforms like Megastudy and EBS capitalized on widespread internet penetration and tech-savvy users.
  - **Government Support:** Subsidies ensured equitable access for students from low-income families.

Indonesia

- Indonesia faced unique challenges:
- **Infrastructure Deficits:** Low internet penetration hindered rural adoption.
  - **Localized Solutions:** Startups like Ruangguru adapted content to regional languages and curriculum.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Comparative analysis that clearly contrasts the commercialization of online education platforms during the pandemic across India, China, South Korea, and Indonesia:

Aspect	India	China	South Korea	Indonesia
Market Growth	Explosive growth driven by private firms like BYJU’S and Unacademy. Raised significant venture capital.	Massive expansion but under strict government scrutiny post-2021 with the “Double Reduction” policy.	Stable growth supported by existing strong infrastructure and established players like EBS.	Moderate growth with a focus on local startups such as Ruangguru. Limited foreign investment.
Government Role	Limited government intervention. Programs like	Strong government involvement both in promotion and regulation, ensuring	Extensive support, including subsidies for	Minimal involvement; efforts mostly localized to

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Aspect	India	China	South Korea	Indonesia
	DIKSHA aimed at free digital learning but lacked large-scale implementation.	inclusivity but restricting commercialization.	low-income students and integration with public education.	private initiatives with some public sector collaboration.
<b>Digital Infrastructure</b>	Rapidly expanding but heavily urban-focused. Rural areas still struggle with poor connectivity.	Highly advanced, providing access even in remote regions. Supported by a strong digital ecosystem.	Top-tier digital infrastructure ensures nationwide connectivity. High smartphone and internet penetration.	Limited in rural areas, with significant gaps in internet and device access. Urban areas fared better.
<b>Barriers</b>	Digital divide, high costs of premium platforms, and unregulated content quality.	Over-commercialization followed by stringent government restrictions, limiting platform flexibility.	High competition among platforms and potential oversaturation in urban markets.	Poor infrastructure, low digital literacy in rural areas, and affordability issues.
<b>Adoption Drivers</b>	Affordability of mobile data, rise in smartphone usage, and private-sector innovation.	Integration of online education into the public education system and strong venture capital funding pre-2021.	Technological readiness and pre-existing online education culture.	Regional language support and customization by platforms like Ruangguru helped overcome linguistic barriers.
<b>Revenue Models</b>	Freemium and subscription models dominated; free resources provided by NGOs and government underutilized.	Premium pricing initially; post-regulation, a shift to non-profit or minimally commercial models for K-12.	Mixed revenue models, including government-funded programs and paid premium content.	Focused on affordable pricing, with some reliance on government and donor funding for underserved areas.
<b>Equity in Access</b>	Low: Significant gaps for rural and marginalized communities. Urban areas benefited more.	Medium: Widespread access but inequalities persisted in rural regions.	High: Subsidized education ensured equitable access across socio-economic groups.	Low: Rural populations struggled, but regional efforts provided some relief.

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### Key highlights from Comparative Analysis

- **India** prioritized private-sector-led innovation but faced equity challenges due to a lack of robust government intervention and poor infrastructure in rural areas.
- **China** showed early success with its expansive market but later saw constrained growth due to strict regulatory policies.
- **South Korea** stood out as a balanced model, leveraging existing infrastructure and government backing for sustainable and equitable online education.
- **Indonesia** lagged in infrastructure but made strides with localized solutions tailored to its diverse population and regional languages.
- This comparative view underscores the need for tailored strategies that combine robust infrastructure development, inclusive policies, and innovative business models to ensure equitable access to online education.

### DISCUSSION

The commercialization of online education platforms during the pandemic revealed stark disparities among Asian countries. While India and China capitalized on their massive user bases, regulatory challenges in China and infrastructural issues in India highlighted the need for balanced growth strategies. South Korea demonstrated a mature model with robust government support, while Indonesia showed potential through localized innovations.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The pandemic accelerated the adoption of online education across Asia, with varying degrees of success. For sustainable growth:

- **India:** Address the digital divide and ensure affordable access.
- **China:** Balance market growth with quality control and equitable access.
- **South Korea:** Maintain government-backed initiatives to support underprivileged students.
- **Indonesia:** Invest in digital infrastructure to bridge the urban-rural gap.

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### Conflict of Interest

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