E-Mentoring: A New Perspective in Virtual Learning in India

Dr Preeti Singh, Manipal University Jaipur, preeti.singh@jaipur.manipal.edu
AmitVerma, Manipal University, Jaipur, amitve4@gmail.com
Dr. Anju Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, IIS (deemed to be University), Jaipur
anjusinghchoudhary@gmail.com

ABSTRACT- Online learning is become a global phenomenon that has been adopted by everyone, regardless of age, resources, and socio-economic background. This change was expected to settle down in academics especially in the Asian countries a bit later however the situation of global lockdown during pandemic Covid-19, all learners, teachers and institutions have accepted, exercised and responded well to the unprecedented shift inentire education system, from in-person learning to online leaning. E-mentoring which is a one-to-one teaching-leaning online practice also facilitated students during the lockdown. In India, where traditional method of teaching and learning believed to be more effective way of education, accepted this new perspective of virtual learning.

The paper brings the historical background of the concept 'electronic mentoring' and how e-mentoring worked in favor of students/learners during the lockdown (March 2019 to January 2021).

KEYWORDS: Online Learning, E-Mentoring, Virtual Connections, COVID-19, India

I. INTRODUCTION

The new educational technologies facilitate learning and improving performance with the use of both physical hardware, software, and educational theoretic by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources[1]. On the lines, Electronic mentoring (e-mentoring) has become a part of academic curriculum which includes, 'computer-mediated mentoring', 'e-mail mentoring', 'internet mentoring', 'online mentoring' and 'virtual mentoring' and 'electronic mentoring' used to specifically referred the programs of mentoring using internet.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

E-Mentoring was first introduced in 1990s with the objectives of associating young minds with business people in countries including US, UK, and other European Countries. E-mail based mentoring was one of the early e-mentoring methods introduced wherein undergraduates were associated with industry experts to learn/improve competences.

In 1995, Hewlett-Packard (HP) Pvt. Lt. lunched an e-mailbased mentor program for students to develop career planning. Even today the company's employees were associated with school students through this program called '**International Telementor Center'**[2]formerly referred to as, **HP's Mentor Connection.** In 1996,O'Neill, K & Wagner, R conducted an experimental study to explore online mentoring i.e. workplace scientists' relationship with science students. The computer-mediated interaction popularized with 21st century, Single and Muller (2001) [3], Casico and Gasker (2001).[4]

The methodology made teaching and learning process flawless and revealed that electronic mentoring has made a substantial difference to the ability to achieve amongst recipients. A number of studies mentioned about the allied advantages including 'academic support', 'access to information', 'knowledge

---

[1]**Richey, R. C., Silber, K. H., & Ely, D. P. (2008)**. Reflections on the 2008 AECT Definitions of the Field. TechTrends, 52(1), 24-25.

[2]**Robert Bellinger, (1998).** "*HP's mentoring project grows international in size.*" Published on EE Times
[3]**Single & Muller, (2001).** "*When e-mail and mentoring unite: The implementation of a nationwide electronic mentoring program.*" Creating Mentoring and Coaching Programs.

[4]**Gasker, J., & Cascio, T. (2001).** "*Everyone has a shining side: Computer-mediated mentoring in social work education.*" Journal of Social Work Education. Vol. 37, No.2

enhancement', 'career-oriented', 'aptitude development', 'cost-effective', etc. Industry people were more pleased to receive graduates that are industry-ready and specialized in individual skills.

In 2003, websites like '**icouldbe.org**' and '**mentoring.org**' offered a virtual platform to professional employees (mentors) willing to volunteer their time to share their experience with mentees. 'Cyber-sisters.org', was a popular platform for middle-school girls and professional women to collaborate on science and technology projects.

An article published in ***Business WeekOnline*** [5]more than 70 e-mentoring platforms available for professionals to participate by 2003. To mention the programs that provided digital platforms to employee to employee, companies to companies, and/or companies to employee includes '**National Mentoring Partnership**' and '**Electronic Emissary Project**' wherein a protégé was free to ask questions about mentor's expertise and other detailing before participating in the program.

Buchana A. E, Myers S. E. and Hardin S. L (2005)[6]examined the opinion of the impact online learning by distance education graduates, highlighted issues and concerns with the emergence of online education faced by remote students and concluded student-to-student mentoring association would also help with feeling of isolation.

Gayle et al., (2005),[7]explained the usefulness of e-mentoring for women's career development in their project, funded by European union. The project entitled 'empathy-edge' demonstrated importance of psychological profiling for matching mentoring 122 participants. The findings present that women have improved Information Communication and Technology (ICT) skills.

GASS[8] (2010)presented competency-based education (CBE) program for student with disabilities.**Bernard Luskin (2010**)[9], described 'e' in e-leaning as "exciting, empirical, empathetic, extra, emerging, energetic, exceptional, early, eloquent, everywhere, ephemeral, extended, effortless, epic, evangelistic, eclectic, engaging, extended" learning — and more."

Online mentoring became a web matching service for mentors and mentees to associate and work on similar interest projects. **In 2013, Britto & Rush** in project entitled 'Lone Star College System- Providing Online Student Support Services' incubated online faculty and online students. "Educational technology is an inclusive term for both the material tools and the theoretical foundations for supporting learning and teaching. Educational technology is not restricted to high technology but is anything that enhances classroom learning in the utilization of blended, face to face, or online learning", explains Benjamin Herold (2016).[10]

E. Ayub, W. Goh, Y. Wong (2018) explains the importance of virtual learning and changing educational technologies, "Massive open online course (MOOCs) are transforming the era of distance learning education in a ground-breaking way that it has attracted a huge amount of attention from the media, education institutions, and education professionals."

The terminologies to signify the use of technology in teaching-learning process included e-learning- a. virtual learning environments (VLE) and personal learning environments, b. multimedia learning, c. computer-aided instruction (CAI), d. web- based and internet-based training (IBT), e. technology-enhanced learning (TEL), f. digital educational collaboration (DEC), etc.

---

[5]**Field, A (2003).***"Business Week Online. No time to mentor? Do it online."* Published by McGraw-Hill Companies Inc.

[6] **Buchanan, E. A., Myers, S. E., & Hardin, S. L, (2005).** Holding your and from a distance: Online mentoring and the graduates' library and information science students. Journal of Educators Online, Vol. 2 No. 2

[77] **Gayle et al., (2005**).*"There's magic in the web: e-mentoring for women's career development",* Career Development International, Vol. 10 No. 6/7, pp. 444-459

[8]**The Georgia STEM Accessibility Alliance (2010)**.A research project of the US National Science Foundation's Research in Disabilities Education (RDE) program.

[9]**Bernard J. Luskin (2010).** "Think "Exciting": E-Learning and the Big "E" Article published in Educause Review on March 03, Wednesday.

[10]**Benjamin Herold (2016).** 'Technology in Education: An overview' published on February 05, 2016 in Education Week (e-magazine)

Significant recognition has been experienced as the traditional classroom teaching methodologies changed through digitalization in education sector. Th new terminologies have emerged to signifies the process of e-learning, classified in four ajor areas, including a. Information and communications technology (ICT), b. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), c. Learning Management Systems (LMS) and d. Education Management Information Systems (EMIS).

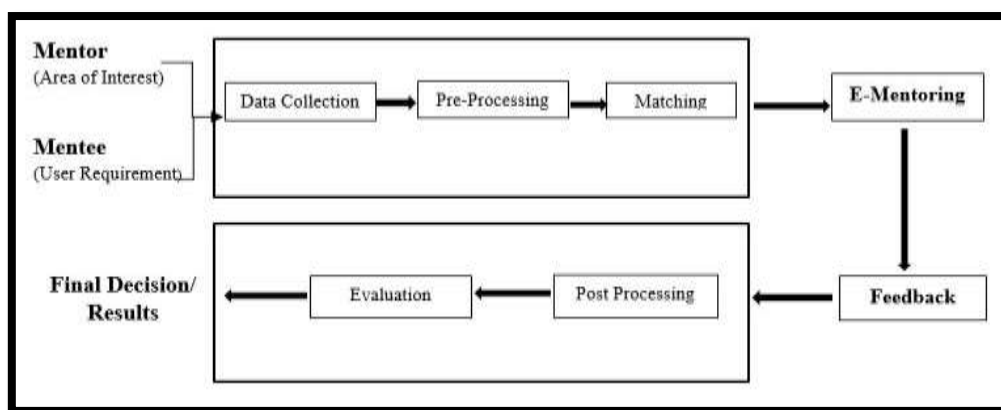New media and communication environment of electronic mentoring explained below-

Fig: Framework of Electronic mentoring

Today, the role of teacher is multiplied with a facilitator and supporter's action. Smart Phone Learning (SPL)[11] and Web-based Learning (WBL[12]) has been used by students that suits their learning style.[13]

III. E-MENTORING DURING LOCKDOWN

Latest research on the topic suggests positive impact of e-mentoring facilities especially during the lockdown period. A recent study conducted by M. MacDonald (2020) [14]finds that "E-mentoring can provide an effective means to maintaining the essential elements of a well-established mentoring programme for young people in care and care leavers under government enforced 'lock-down'."

Even some of the organization have awarded people to do online mentoring during this period. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation (2020) awarded youth for mentoring online during the pandemic, "To support the remarkable adults who mentor young people worldwide, especially those who are adapting to working in a virtual environment."

Causeway education (2021) in continuation of long-running e-mentoring programme while maintaining high-quality processes and outcomes, all during an unprecedented pandemic.

The online mode of mentoring reached to the new hights in the wake ofthe COVID-19 pandemic. People who were locked alone or with family used one or other form of online platform for the exchange of information. In a recent study, 'Mentors Shifting to Text Based Communication' it is stated that text-only communication platforms were popular way of communication during the pandemic. Similar study claim that online encouraging the development ofa more personal relationship.

In India, rapid growth seen in the launch of e-mentoring programs and the importance of mentors is anticipated. Following are the companies to mention here-

---

[11] To access digital content, smart phones are used, and this process is known as M-Learning. Education systems is changing with the advent mobile learning.

[12] Information available on internet in form of courses, videos, live lectures are parts of web-based learning. It allows user to interact with students and mentors.

[13]Singh, P. Chaturvedi, R. & Kumar, K. (2020), Role of e-mentoring in development of entrepreneurial aptitude amongst young adults- an experimental study.

[14] MacDonald M, et. La, (2020) Implementing E-mentoring with Care-Experienced Youth Under 'Lock-Down' – A South African Experience

The Climber - The Climber pivoted to a full-fledged online mentoring platform, where students could take lessons from professionals on specialised topics of their interest.

MentorKart - The company believes that everyone needs a mentors at every stage of life to achieve success. The company helps in nurturing personal and professional growth.

Procademia – An initiative to accelerate significant empowerment in India. The best choice for career guidance and enlighten the next generation. Procademia platform unites students, fresh graduates, professionals, academicians, corporate companies and Educational institutions.

Mentor Me India - The Mentorship Project focuses on one to one mentorship for children from low income families in India

Mentor Yes - One stop destination for personalized advice on MBA preparation, Exam strategy, Interview / GD preparation, Application / essay review, Decision support and more.

The above-mentioned companies/startups are incubated by other companies such as VIRIDIAN Ventures which is currently helping more than 300 hundred startups including e-mentoring based startups.

IV.   CONCLUSION

In India, the mode of online education and online learning is booming at this point of time. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a positive change towards the acceptance of digital learning and distance education. Parents have accepted that online mentorship and knowledge support through activity-based learning is beneficial for students/ learners.

While many industries across the globe have been facing diverse negative effects of COVID-19 pandemic, certain sectors have emerged winner and one of them is education. This is due the positive response of students and swift growth in technology.

The current academic year will see a new style of learning after this world medical emergency. The students are more techno-savvy and a good proportion of teaching faculty is more accustomed to digital platforms. The virtual mentoring sessions have shown better digital relationship among mentees and mentors.

V.   REFERENCES

1. **Bernard J. Luskin (2010).** "Think "Exciting": E-Learning and the Big "E" Article published in Educause Review on March 03, Wednesday.
2. **Benjamin Herold (2016).** 'Technology in Education: An overview' published on February 05, 2016 in Education Week (e-magazine)
3. **Buchanan, E. A., Myers, S. E., & Hardin, S. L, (2005).** Holding your and from a distance: Online mentoring and the graduates' library and information science students. Journal of Educators Online, Vol. 2 No. 2
4. **Field, A (2003).** *"Business Week Online. No time to mentor? Do it online."* Published by McGraw-Hill Companies Inc.
5. **Gasker, J., & Cascio, T. (2001).** "*Everyone has a shining side: Computer-mediated mentoring in social work education.*" Journal of Social Work Education. Vol. 37, No.2
6. **Gayle et al., (2005**). *"There's magic in the web: e-mentoring for women's career development",* Career Development International, Vol. 10 No. 6/7, pp. 444-459
7. **The Georgia STEM Accessibility Alliance (2010)**. A research project of the US National Science Foundation's Research in Disabilities Education (RDE) program.
8. **Richey, R. C., Silber, K. H., & Ely, D. P. (2008)**. Reflections on the 2008 AECT Definitions of the Field. TechTrends, 52(1), 24-25.
9. **Robert Bellinger, (1998).** "*HP's mentoring project grows international in size."* Published on EE Times
10. **Single & Muller, (2001).** *"When e-mail and mentoring unite: The implementation of a nationwide electronic mentoring program."* Creating Mentoring and Coaching Programs.