



Editorial

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With a great satisfying feeling, I wish to introduce to our readers the special issue of June 2022. This issue is very special to me for numerous reasons. The first and foremost obviously is that this special issue is linked with the first Conference associated with our journal Decision. The issue focuses on the theme of the conference, i.e. “Dealing with Online and Blended Education in Modern Challenging Times”.

The sudden outbreak of Covid-19 has challenged the education system across the world and forced educators to shift to an online or blended modes of teaching. This throws new challenges to the education system in terms of new pedagogical concepts, and innovative ways of meeting student learning and socio-emotional needs with the help of holistic approaches in education. As a result, educational initiatives are expected to meet the challenges of a changing world and are envisaged to embed technology optimally to maximize student outcomes. These initiatives also warrant adequate training and support to the teachers to shift to online or hybrid models.

Though blended models offer quite a new teaching–learning paradigm to the world, this will require technical advancement to operate. This is the reason why inclusivity and the digital divide become a concern and that is the most crucial aspect in the

policy prescription of the social sector. This is more relevant due to the fact that the loss of skills in students will have a proportionately higher impact on future economic growth. Hence, this June issue becomes very special by discussing aspects of education policy, practice, and management on digital teaching, learning and blended environments, with an aspirational future direction of the use of Education Technology (EdTech).

This issue could not have come into light without our Guest Editor Prof Aditi Bhutoria, Strategic Advisor, EdTech Hub (UK) and Assistant Professor in Public Policy & Management Group of Indian Institute of Management Calcutta. This issue is starting with her introductory note which sets the context appropriately. This special issue also consists of contributions from Dr. Harry A Patrinos (Practice Manager, Education, the World Bank) who gave Keynote speech in the conference on “Learning Loss and Learning Recovery”. In this article, he argued for tutoring, especially online, as a part of national learning recovery programme to mitigate learning loss. The other contributors include Bjoern Hassler from EdTech Hub, UK and Rajnish Kumar from Ministry of Education, India. The article by Hassler summarized research evidences to highlight opportunities for collaboration with technology enabled delivery mechanism to overcome the challenges of learning gap witnessed globally and particularly among low- and middle-income countries. Dr Kumar

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in his article talked about the National Education Policy 2020 of India which could guide a revolutionary change in the educational system in the country. In this paper, he discussed about prioritizing the universal foundational learning and closing of the digital divide with regard to access and usage of technology.

The 5 other articles are selected from an array of several submitted papers for the Conference. The authors include Huma Akram from Northeast Normal University of China, describing different sources of psychological stress factors of students particularly in the post-pandemic era and their plausible solutions; Devi Priya of IIM Calcutta who focuses on the stress factors and low level of job satisfaction of Indian school teachers due to digital labour; Kumari Vibhuti Nayak from Centre for Studies in Social Sciences who discusses the plights faced by girls from the marginalized communities due to this digital division reinforced due to pandemic; Kedarnath Thakur from XLRI School of Management talks about association between the pedagogical changes due to the virtual mode of learning and learning outcome of management students, and finally, the article by Rohit Kumar Nag from IIM Calcutta explores the shortcomings of infrastructural areas in Indian education system to make use of EdTech in an efficient, accessible, affordable and inclusive way.

Finally, I wish to end with few departing words. This is the last issue under my editorship and the final

reason for being very close to the core of my heart. It was a learning experience since I took it over in 2018 and more so due to sudden outbreak of pandemic in 2020. The Pandemic has changed different aspects of our life including the path in academic sphere. Yet, I must say I am lucky and honoured to get full support of my reviewers and contributors who did not stop the wheel of academic chariot and relentlessly supported the Journal. I am thankful to all my editorial board members, to the Guest Editors for all special 4 issues during my tenure. I also should say thank you to Ms Sharmistha DasGupta who had to take the burden of my stress factors. I am also grateful to everyone involved from the Springer team and specially to Ms Sagarika Ghosh. Though I am feeling sad to say Good Bye to the readers, subscribers of our flagship Journal Decision, I am at the same time very happy to welcome our new Editor-in-Chief Prof Priya Seetharaman from Management Information System of IIM Calcutta. Her research interest includes but not limited to the areas of digital strategy, technology adoption, IT Governance, impact of technology, etc. She is an ardent researcher and very passionate about our Journal. I am sure she will take Decision to a new height. Wish her as well as all my reviewers, contributors, readers, editorial board members a great success in near future. Au Revoir.

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