



## YOUTUBE AS A TOOL OF SELF-LEARNING IN THE ERA OF DIGITALIZATION

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### ABSTRACT :

*This paper is an attempt to analyse and evaluate the role of YouTube as a tool of self-learning in the present era of digitalization. Technology has penetrated each and every aspect of life including education and entertainment. Social media is the product of technological advancement. YouTube as a social media has emerged as a significant platform to exchange views, ideas, imagination, knowledge, skills and experiences amongst the people throughout the world. YouTube is no longer a place for entertainment alone. Now it has become a house of learning as well. It is playing a noteworthy role in building learning societies, evolving learning cultures and creating learning ecosystems. The platform of YouTube can be used in accordance with the needs, interests and desires of a learner anytime and anywhere. It is breaking borders, barriers and boundaries connecting people and giving them opportunities to learn together freely, fruitfully and fearlessly.*



**KEYWORDS :** Social media, self-learning, learning society, YouTube, digitalization, creativity.

### INTRODUCTION

Nothing is permanent except change. The world is changing rapidly. What we learnt today is being changed tomorrow. Continuous and lifelong learning has become the demand of daily life to withstand in this ever changing digital world of today. In these circumstances the importance of self-learning has increased so many times. Further, social media like Facebook, What's App, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter etc. is playing a dominant role in the life of an individual (Mastrodicasa & Metellus, 2013). It is linking people irrespective of caste, creed, and colour. It has evolved as an instrument in the hands of the users to express himself or herself effectively and creatively. It has created a platform to exchange ideas, information and imagination with each other freely and fearlessly. In this way social media is playing a remarkable role in self-learning of a learner (Rodriguez, 2011). Therefore, the need of the hour is to include the social media specially YouTube as an integral part in the curriculum of learning programmes to make these programmes more effective, creative and productive.

We have arrived in the era of digitalization which is redesigning the dimensions of learning through connecting more and more people on common platforms of social media. YouTube as a significant platform of social media has changed the way of learning and getting updated. It is acting as an equalizing force to learning opportunities for the learners. Every learner is getting empowered and allowed to explore the unexplored on YouTube. The role of YouTube in self-learning is noteworthy and deserves to be further discovered. YouTube enhances the idea of self-learning which makes the learner to discover, diagnose and

make choices spontaneously (Guglielmino, 2013). It helps in the development of critical thinking and understanding towards different issues of daily life. It also allows the learner more autonomy to connect and collaborate with others beyond the physical borders and barriers. It makes the user active self-learner rather than passive absorber of information. Moreover, it shapes and represents ideas, information and imagination in such a way that excites, ignites and stimulates the learners in an effective, productive and creative manner (Knowles, 1975).

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SELF-LEARNING

Self-learning is a deliberate, self-motivated and never ending process of attaining knowledge and skills either for personal or professional motives. The future is looking forward to those proactive individuals, who can take the responsibility for their own ability to learn, unlearn and relearn in the ever changing world (Stoller, 2013). Self-learning can be understood as the learning where individuals take the initiative, with or without the assistance of others, in diagnosing their learning needs and formulating learning goals; and identify human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning ways and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975). The purpose of self-learning is concerned with enhancing one's ability to be self-directed and nurturing transformational learning.

Self-learning is concerned with learners' consciousness, awareness and acceptance of personal responsibility for their own learning. It helps in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills along with enrichment of learning experiences. It specifies what learning methods, procedures and techniques maximize learning output, how to prepare for the best way of knowledge acquisition, and how to learn effectively outside the formal classrooms (Bolhuis, 2003). The idea of self-learning indicates that a learner can certainly learn on their own without instructional interventions while discovering, analyzing and evaluating their own learning process and outcomes. It is a process of deliberately monitoring one's own thinking and reflecting on one's own thinking patterns, plans, strategies, decisions and actions. Self-learners need to be capable of self-assessing their own learning needs. They themselves set their goals for learning and they try to direct, monitor and control their motivation, cognition and behaviour.

### PLATFORM OF YOUTUBE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

A video can change the life of an individual. It can inspire millions. It has emerged as a significant and powerful tool of learning. YouTube is one of the most popular video sharing platforms. It is a free to use service. It is a website where users can watch, like, share, comment and upload videos in accordance to their own needs, desires and interests. It is a web based communication tool that facilitates sharing of views, news, ideas, imagination and information with others in audio-visual format and helps in building virtual communities and global networks (Ahn, 2011). By design, YouTube is internet based and offers users easy electronic communication of information and other content specially videos. It has evolved as a significant source of information. Even what is not covered by mainstream media is extensively being explored on the platform YouTube. This way YouTube is playing a significant role in critical thinking and understanding of an individual.

The videos on YouTube can be a potential instrument of self-learning in the digital age. This is because they add a dynamic element to learning, improve the transfer of knowledge and skills, demonstrate complex procedures and help in explaining difficult concepts and topics. These videos can be re-watched also as many times a learner wishes. YouTube provides unlimited opportunities to enhance the idea of self-learning. It helps in creating an e-learning community where online discussion and exchange of ideas, information and imagination amongst the learners may take place in a fruitful manner. The platform of YouTube has the potential to change the dream, destiny and destination of entire teaching learning process in an education system. It has the potential to motivate the learners for self-learning, lifelong learning and collaborative learning. It has the potential to create a global learning ecosystem with the idea of learning society, learning culture and learning environment.

### YOUTUBE AS A FACILITATOR OF SELF-LEARNING

Technology and learning have come closer in the last few years. YouTube as the product of digital technology is a great platform to discover the undiscovered, to explore the unexplored and to learn the unlearned. It has opened new paths, plans and patterns of learning and brought revolutionary changes in the lives of its users (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010). It has evolved as one of the most versatile platform for video content inside and outside the classroom. It gives opportunities to a learner to learn according to his or her interests, needs, pace, convenience and aspirations. Through the creative and productive use of YouTube learning cultures are being developed, learning societies are being evolved and learning ecosystems are being created. The role of YouTube in self-learning is remarkable and needs to be explored further. YouTube not only helps in learning, relearning and self-learning, but also in getting updated, exploring the unexplored and seeing the unseen.

YouTube facilitates participatory culture of learning (Chau, 2010). Through the use of YouTube the young, ignited and aspiring minds can interact with the experts, express himself or herself globally and share their ideas and imagination with like-minded people. Therefore, it can be said that the tool of YouTube in the hands of self-learner is a blessing, if used properly, creatively and carefully. YouTube makes an uploaded video available throughout the YouTube network around the world. A learner can access and watch the videos through his or her smartphones, tablets, laptops etc. according to their needs, interests and convenience. A learner can watch the videos whenever and wherever he or she likes and take his or her own time to absorb the information. YouTube has emerged as a potential and powerful tool in the hands of learners for the purpose of self-learning. YouTube has changed the lives of people drastically. It is influencing all the aspects and dimensions of life and learning.

### YOUTUBE AS AN EQUALIZING FORCE FOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Digital technology has given birth to the idea of social media which has become the integral part of modern lifestyle globally. There are different networking sites of social media like Facebook, What's App, YouTube, Instagram, Google+, Twitter etc. which are very popular and connecting people beyond physical borders, barriers and boundaries (Brandtzaeg, 2012). Gradually, this social media is influencing education system, teaching models and learning designs in a significant manner. Learning is no longer restricted within the four walls of the classrooms. Technological advancement has given learners the opportunities to learn anywhere anytime. The platform of YouTube has brought revolutionary changes in the world of education throughout the world. It gives chance to each and every learner to learn according to his or her own pace, path and place. Technology provides equal opportunities to its users without any differentiation (Gemmill & Peterson, 2006).

YouTube has evolved as a dominant platform of social media where diffusion of ideas, sharing of experiences and exchange of thoughts takes place. It has created abundant learning scopes for the self-learners irrespective of caste, creed and colour. Furthermore, population is increasing exponentially throughout the world. And the state or government is not able to take care of education of all its citizens. But the basic education and equal learning opportunities are essential for the all-round development of personality of an individual. In such circumstances YouTube can act as an equalizing and democratizing force in providing learning opportunities to one and all irrespective of race, region and religion through the platform of self-directed learning. The platform of YouTube provides unlimited opportunities to express and exchange ideas, imagination and innovation with others in accordance with his or her own interests, desires and aspirations. YouTube can act as an alternative or option to provide massive learning opportunities to those who are deprived of these opportunities (Saeed, Yang, & Sinnappan, 2009).

### CONCLUSION

The platform of YouTube is influencing the way we learn and interact with others. It has developed as a powerful tool in the hands of a learner to exchange views, ideas, imagination, knowledge, skills and

experiences. It has evolved as a significant tool of self-learning in the present era of digitalization. And interestingly, it is not confined to any physical border, barrier or boundary. The role of YouTube in the life of a self-learner is significant and noteworthy. This YouTube has evolved as a dominant source of self-learning for the technology driven learners. It is fulfilling the learning needs, desires and aspirations of the young and ignited minds of the new generation. It has become a tool in the hands of a self-learner to accomplish his or her learning goals within a time frame. The destiny, direction and destination of learning is changing gradually with the idea of YouTube

A self-learner can use YouTube in accordance with his or her own interests, pace and convenience. Moreover, YouTube has evolved as an equalizing and democratizing force regarding the learning opportunities to one and all without any biasness. The platform of YouTube may prove as a blessing for self-learners, lifelong learners or collaborative learners, if it is used creatively and carefully. It influences significantly and positively the way an individual learns and absorbs ideas and information. Incorporating the idea of YouTube as an integral part of self-learning can expand the users' creativity, innovation and freedom and inspire them to involve more, work harder and think critically. YouTube helps in widening the perspective of a learner and developing a critical approach towards different significant issues of personal and professional life.

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