

□ The corona virus pandemic has resulted in the closure of schools and colleges across the country. Education has changed dramatically over the last two or three months, with a considerable rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is executed remotely and on digital platforms.

□ The Ministry of Human Resource Development and its agencies like UGC, CBSE, NCERT, AICTE are coping with lockdown by prescribing online classes, examinations and admission process.

□ The MHRD has initiated an ambitious online learning campaign ‘Bharat Padhe Online’ (India– Study online) recently, and has sought suggestions from stakeholders about this online teaching and examination program. Various stakeholders including teachers’ associations has given suggestions to UGC, explaining problems and possibilities of online teaching and evaluation processes.

□ The Government of Meghalaya has also sought not to compromise with the students' learning and their growth and development. Thus, the Government has started the various initiatives by coordination with the Department of Education to facilitate the online classes and other mechanisms so that they can reach out to every student.

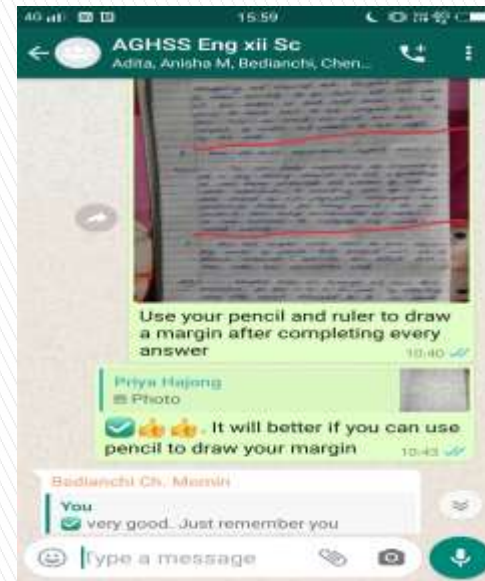
➤ The following are the activities practices in the schools under South West Garo Hills during lockdown period:

➤ The Schools have started digital classroom by creating and using WhatsApp Groups.

- The teachers and the students are in active conversation, sharing study materials and explaining through sending audios, videos, pictures and images via Whatsapp groups.



The picture shows that a teacher instructing the students how to present the answers.



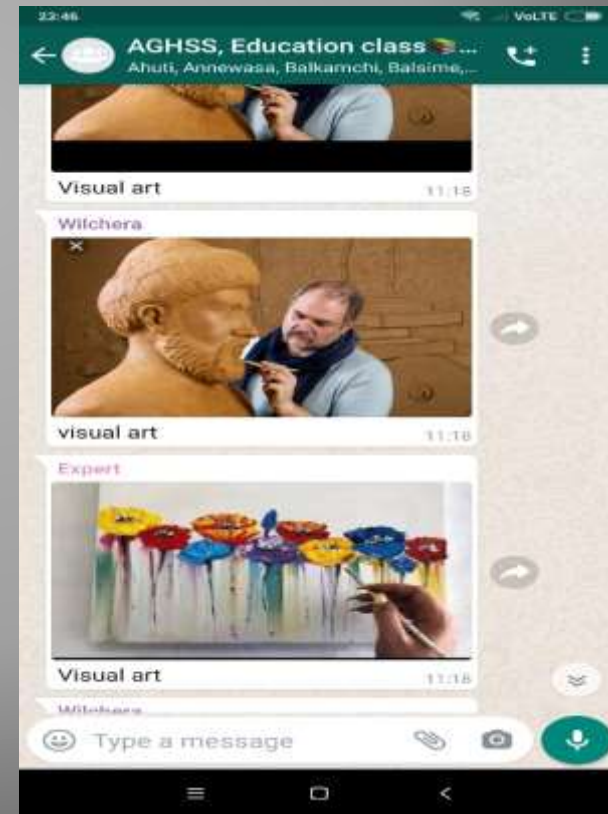
A teacher is giving feedback to use pencil and underline after finishing one answer to write the next.

- In these pictures an English Teacher from Ampati Govt. HSS sends the audio clips in the WhatsApp group and instructs the students to listen to it carefully and assigns a task to them by following the same and send it for teacher's feedback.





- The students are identifying the various fine arts and sending the pictures for teacher's feedback through WhatsApp group.



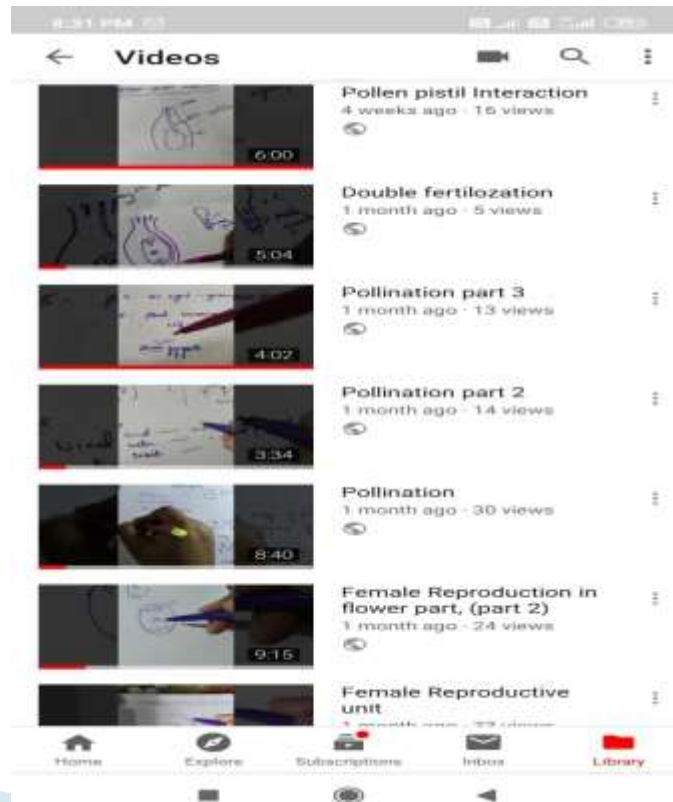
- Teachers are taking classes by sending audio and video clips through WhatsApp groups.

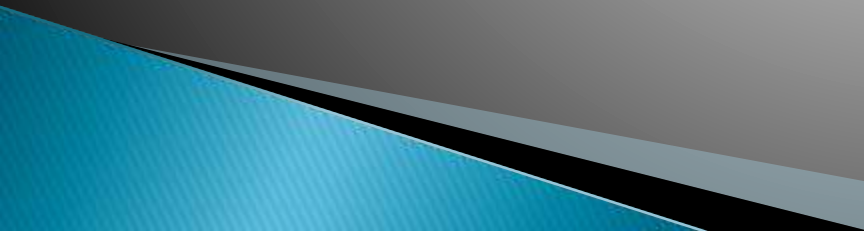


➤ Imparting online classes through Youtube Channel.

- Some enterprising teachers have created YouTube Channel and imparting online classes by uploading videos of particularly Science subjects.

- A Teacher uploading the videos in the YouTube channel so that the students can watch and learn from it.





➤ Distribution of  
Printed Learning  
Materials.

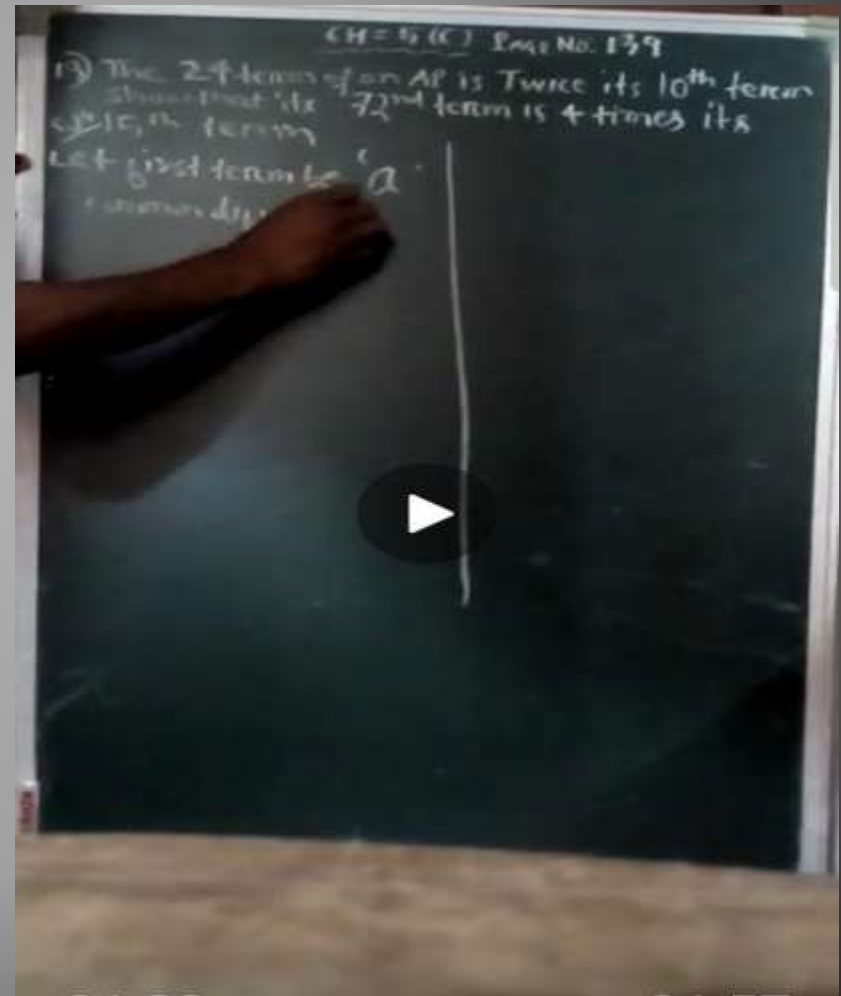
- Many Schools have adopted another novel technique of reaching out to the their students who do not own smart phones. This is a picture of Boldakgre Secondary School distributing study materials or notes to such students.

- Boldakgre Secondary School distributing the study materials for the students during lockdown by maintaining the COVID-19 protocols.





Screenshots of Good Shepherd Secondary School Maths teacher teaching Mathematics to Class-X students through WhatsApp video and audio clips.



➤ Registration on  
NICE e-scholar

- The schools or the students have registered themselves in the NICE e-scholar and using it as one of the tools of learning.

# ❖ ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE CLASSES

- The following points are the advantages of E-learning or online classes:

- **It's cheaper:** Students can learn with any device that is connected to the Internet. The students can learn from their own place or house, thus, there is no need to pay daily bus or auto fares. Students and teachers no longer commute to class, thereby saving them money as well.

- **It takes less time:** Not only does eliminating the need to commute save money, but it also saves everyone time. Moreover, the teacher does not need to give the same class repeatedly to different groups of students. He or she only needs to prepare the content once and then share it with different groups at anytime necessary.

➤ It allows for self-paced learning: Students can participate in the class from their own devices anytime and anywhere when they have time.

➤ **It's modern:** Most people today prefer to consume content using the Internet. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, people usually use the Internet to read the news, watch the favorite TV shows, chat with friends, book appointments, shop, and so much more. Considering all of the convenience the Internet has added to our daily lives. Thus, learning through online is modern.



▪ The following are the disadvantages of E-learning or online classes:

- **Lack of ICT skills:** In the context of South West Garo Hills, it could learn that, most of the people are not well equipped with the electronic devices. For many people, both in urban and rural area, e-learning is very new. It is difficult for them to equip with the electronic media without having ICT (Information and Communication Technology) skills. Many of them do not know how to operate electronic devices and connect with one another using multimedia. Thus, this becomes hindrance in taking online classes.

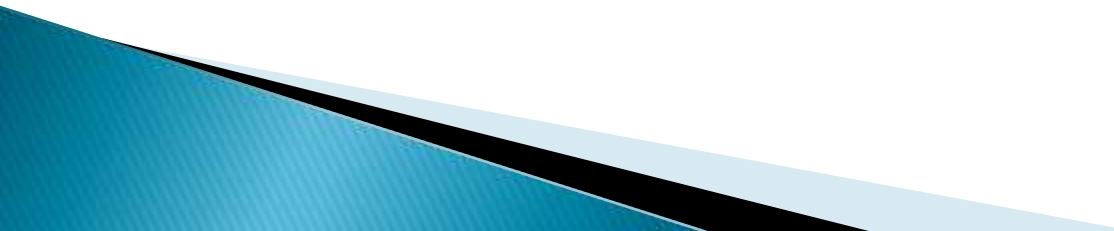
➤ **Poor connectivity of Internet:** In Meghalaya, 70 to 80 percent of the total population lives in rural area where the connectivity of network is very low. In the case of our district, the main town itself is like a rural area where the network coverage is very poor, as a result, most of the teachers and the schools could not cover or reach out every students. Therefore, it poses as the most barriers while trying to take online classes or connect with the students.

➤ **It takes self-discipline:** While experience has shown that online students are forced to become more self-disciplined, those that remain unengaged could be a challenge as their activities cannot be monitored in class.

➤ **Plagiarism:** Keeping in mind that the students are using a computer and not being monitored at all times, they could potentially plagiarize the assignments given by the concerned teachers.

➤ **Isolation:** Since students do not have to be physically present in a classroom, it might be more difficult or nearly impossible for them to get in touch with other learners.

# TEACHERS' FEEDBACK



- The students enjoy online classes because they got a chance to talk freely and frankly and share their problems with the teachers unlike normal classroom.

- Faces difficulties because of lack of understanding how to use electronic devices and multiple media.



- Feel uncomfortable to be in front of camera due to not having ICT skills and had never done this before.

- Difficult to convince the students to do other means of online classes but online classes through “WhatsApp” gives the students immense help during this lockdown period.

- Poor coverage of network poses a big hindrance while doing online classes.

- Most of the students uses mobile phones of their parents which makes irregularity.

- Online learning, which came as a panacea for the crisis, is increasingly seen as a new paradigm in education. Major world-changing events are often an inflection point for rapid innovation such as the rise of e-commerce post-SARS. While it may be too early to predict, it is very likely that e-learning is going to majorly impact education and herald the arrival of a new normal.