DIGITAL DIVIDE: A PROBLEM IN EDUCATION

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Since we are now in the Information Age, enjoying the luxuries of the industrial and technological revolution, everything seems to have changed at a fast pace.

Almost everything that influences our way of life has been changed by technology—from the simple handwashing of clothes to automatic washing machines; from the tiring polishing of floors with coconut shells to the floor cleaning robots; from the time-consuming typewriter to the fast-updating laptops—life has been made easier, more convenient, and less tiresome.

Even in the educational landscape, the technological revolution has also been very evident. This was especially so after the COVID-19 pandemic, where or when education shifted from the traditional four-walled classroom setup to a hybrid teaching and learning environment.

Hybrid education, according to OTSIMO - an online platform, is an approach to education that allows the use of the combination of classroom face-to-face learning and online learning – which has become the most convenient and safe after the pandemic.

Nowadays, whenever typhoons attack the country, teaching and learning will shift to online – just to make sure that teaching and learning will continue at home despite extreme weather disturbances. Teachers send tasks, assignments, and worksheets that learners will accomplish in the comforts of their homes while classes are suspended. This has become a natural thing in the educational field.

However, though we cannot deny the fact that technology has been very helpful in education, somehow, we also experience a digital divide in the process.

What is the digital divide? In the article entitled, "Educate to Elevate: The Power of Transformative Power of Quality Education" (2023), it was noted that since kids in underprivileged communities have less access to technology and online resources, the digital divide worsens educational inequalities.

Digital divide separates the rich and the poor. Students from affluent families have the luxury of using gadgets like laptops and tablets with the fastest wi-fi connections possible. On the other hand, less privileged students and those whose families only work hand-to-mouth cannot afford even a simple smartphone that can be used for online learning. Even if they can afford to buy a smartphone (whether bought cash or installment) the next problem is internet connectivity.

Another problem that results in the digital divide is location. Even if students have the gadgets, internet connectivity in far-flung areas still poses problems and issues that lead to problems in hybrid learning.

While we enjoy the industrial and technological revolution in this information age, we still cannot deny the fact that digital divide happens and affects education as a whole.

In the future, we hope to find answers and solutions that can remedy the digital divide among our students and learners. We all need to work together to ensure that no one will be left behind as we deliver education for all.

References:

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