



PICT MUN'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

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# THE INQUISITOR

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Issue 4.0

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## FEATURED ARTICLE

Antitrust Law  
By Anuja Patil (Page - 02)

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## SPECIAL SECTION

Professional Opinions On  
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# *Introduction*

The PICT MUN consists of a group of students who are passionate about social and political aspects of events that have and are taking place throughout the world. Our main goal is to enhance the spread of such awareness and information, which has a direct and imperative relevance, among the general public.

Our organization abides by the motto- ‘Think. Discuss. Prosper.’.

The PICT MUN team has developed Issue 4.0 of ‘The Inquisitor’ from scratch. It consists of In-house articles that have been written by the club’s members after carrying out extensive research in order to serve reports to the readers with the maximum possible factual accuracy. We plan on expanding the outreach of this esteemed newsletter with each edition and would love to accept articles from individuals who would be interested to get their work published. Feel free to communicate with us on - [newsletterpictmun@gmail.com](mailto:newsletterpictmun@gmail.com) regarding the same.

Our authors have ensured that the content is accurate up to the date on which the article was written. The views expressed in the articles reflect the author’s opinions and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the organisation publishing this document.

With this, we invite you to indulge in controversial propagandas, urgent and relevant coverage of events taking place over the globe, and fresh, new perspectives on raging, intriguing topics of today’s day and age. The members of the club have poured their heart and soul into this newsletter and we hope that the readers realise and appreciate these emotions. .

Happy Reading!

The Secretariat  
PICT MUN

# Antitrust Law

Anuja Patil

**D**uring the late 19th century and early 20th century, famous American monopolies like the Andrew Carnegie's Steel Company (now U.S. Steel), John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, the American Tobacco Company and International Harvester were dominating the Market by keeping up solitary authority over the supply of their respective products. These companies kept the price for steel, oil, tobacco, and agriculture products high without any free Market Competition.

This led to the formation of antitrust in the United States and thus the Sherman act was signed in 1890. The Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act followed the Sherman Act. The main purpose of these acts was to check the intensity of centralization that interfered with trade and to reduce economic exploitation of workers in the market.

Over the years, these antitrust acts have been utilized to encourage investments in all sectors of the market. As a result, an end of the Monopoly Era was witnessed in the 1980s.

For the next 30 years, participation and investment concentrations kept on increasing.

But recently, this cycle of Antitrust backlash seems to have repeated as in the summer of 2019, Donald Trump and the Republicans claimed that Facebook and Google have quoted biased and anti-conservative information. From 1996 to 2019, the number of companies listed in the Stock Market have reduced to half.

The President has also criticized Apple for manufacturing its commodities outside the United States and accused Amazon of abusing the US postal services. The Democrats slammed social media for not restricting the spread of

Fake news. Trump warned Amazon, Google, Facebook, and Apple about Antitrust Investigation.

This brings us to the Question that "Are these Big Techs upcoming Monopolies or already existing Monopolies?"

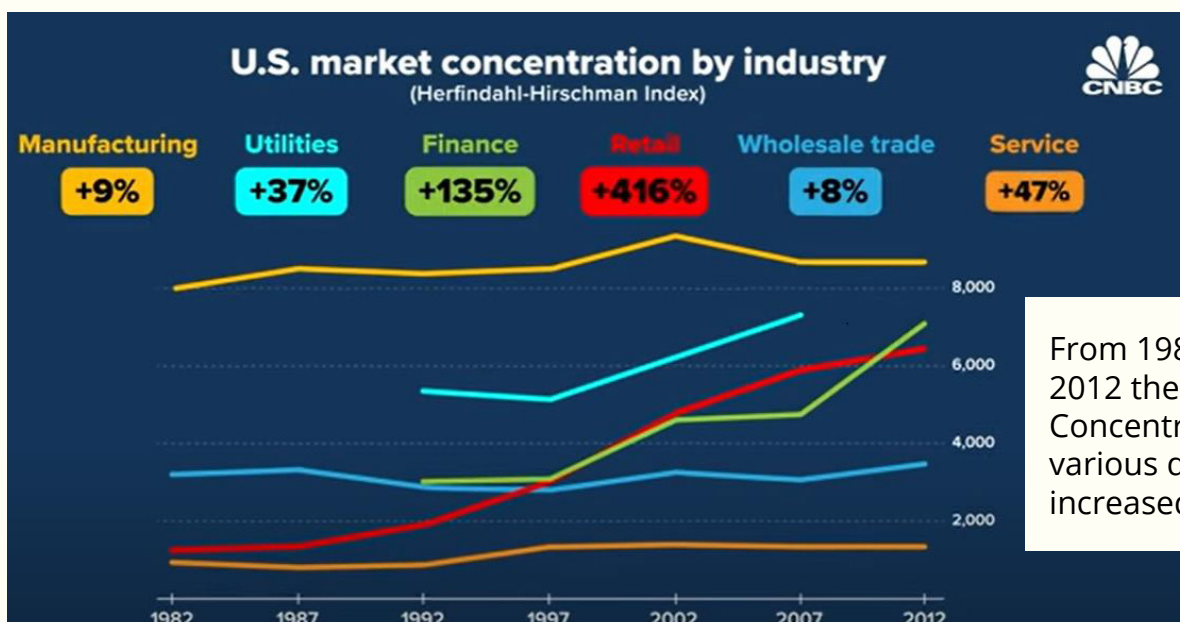
It is claimed by some that Google has become a monopoly in Internet searching as it happens to have predominance in the most worthwhile region of the Internet. But other than this fragment, it is not a Monopoly in true sense. Google has maintained its dominance over internet by providing superior products. As per the record by a news agency, in 2015, Google had 75% market share in searches. Nearly 13 billion times google is used by people per month, which averages to 26 searches per person per year. There are very few products in the world matching to this level of pervasiveness and dominance. Apart from this, it seems to be unfair to call Google a Monopoly as it is not smothering competition.

However, at the same time, we need to consider that on 20 March 2019, the European Commission imposed a fine of 1.49 € billion on Google while accusing them of abusive practices in online advertising.

Similarly, the following claims present the point of Facebook being a monopoly-

1) It has a huge predominant client base and Facebook is the largest social network in the world. It has its hold over WhatsApp and Instagram and thus has largest database as well.

2) Facebook generates most of its revenue by selling targeted advertisements and it throttles the number of available ad slots to boost ad prices. Facebook posted a net income of \$22.1 billion on \$55.8 in total revenue in 2018 for a net profit margin of 39.6%.



3) There's no direct competition in the market for Facebook.

Yet there are proofs which counter the claim of Facebook being a monopoly-

1) It's Market share: As per the records, Facebook's ad revenue rose 49% to \$39.9 billion in 2017, while Google's ad revenues grew 20% to \$95.4 billion. So, this is somewhere convincing that the smaller player i.e. Facebook does not hold a monopoly.

2) Facebook additionally isn't the best with regards to ad effectiveness.

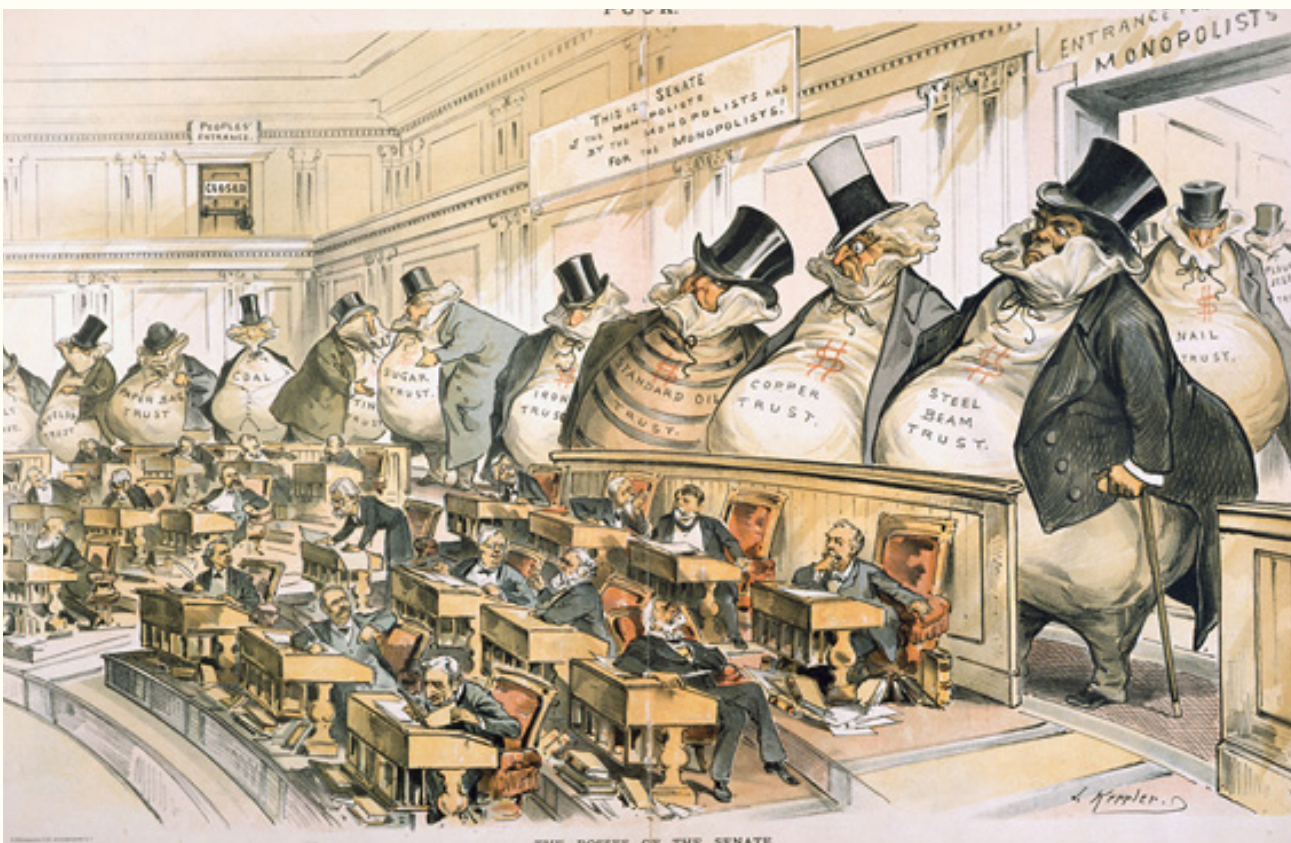
3) It's shifting demographics: Facebook doesn't have an iron grasp on the entirety of its clients. According to e-Marketer, Facebook users in the U.S. fell 10% in 2016 and another 11% in 2017. But, Facebook is trying to restore those users through Instagram.

Amazon is the leading e-commerce Company, but is it an emerging Monopoly? Let us consider a simple example: Amazon has given a boost to the book industry. Sellers have experienced more than 40 percent of new book sales.

Sales by self-published e-book authors have risen by 85 percent. But this somewhere forces the publishers to deal with the retailer and its bullying tactics. This has harmed smaller publications and small start-ups. Thus, Amazon is suppressing its competitors. The Antitrust Investigation is hence being led by the FTC over this issue.

In a major Congressional Antitrust hearing last month, Jeff Bezos including other CEOs were questioned about how tech giants use their market power.

There have been arguments against Apple citing that they have created a Monopoly in their App Store. The developers have to pay Apple a 30% commission. It seems that Apple is urging you to pay 30% more for applications than you otherwise would get at lower rates directly from the users if allowed. Apple is facing these allegations for over past 9 years now, but the company claims to serve as a middleman between the developers and consumers. At the end, we come to a conclusion that fair competition needs to be maintained in the international market and there should be strict prevention of monopolization. The Antitrust Investigations against these big techs need to come with fair results in the favour of the Market and the Consumers.



# The Turkey Situation

Soham Naik



**T**urkey has often been in the news since it is often regarded as the crossroads of the world, the land where the East meets the West and home to many marvelous structures. Currently it has been in the news for all the wrong reasons due to its government and mainly its President -Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In October 2004, the European Commission offered Turkey a formal invitation to begin negotiations for membership in the exclusive club of democracies- the European Union. Within a matter of a few years, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who had been the Prime Minister for 11 years before becoming president in 2014, began to steer away from the political reforms that were a condition of the EU's offer. Turkey slowly transformed from being a parliamentary system, in a liberal European setting, to being like an authoritarian one founded in the Middle East.

Erdogan's policies conflict largely with the policies of the founding father of the country- Kemal Ataturk. Ataturk was a visionary and after becoming the first President of

the Republic of Turkey, set in motion a rigorous program of economic, social and political reforms. He believed in secularism and wanted to create a modern and secular state. He gave women equal civil and political rights and also banned the use of Muslim headscarves and put mosques under state control. People regarded him as "The dictator so that Turkey may never again have a dictator". In contrast to this, Erdogan wishes the country to be more openly religious, as is proved by the recent conversion of 'Hagia Sophia' from a UNESCO World Heritage site to a mosque. He was quoted saying that he did not believe men and women to be equal and that women are only meant to be mothers. He also started arresting journalists and protesters under the guise of anti-terrorism laws and started controlling the social media. His relations with the West are already frail due to disagreement over the issue of Syria and these reforms are not helping his cause.

One might wonder how Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) has managed to be in power for

overtwo decades. The answer to this lies in the capitalisation of the public sentiment. 99.8% of the population of Turkey is Muslim. Most of them in the rural areas are uneducated and follow orthodox methods. Ataturk's liberal and progressive policies were not received very well by them. They felt that in doing so, Ataturk has destroyed the culture and identity of the Turkish people. After the death of Ataturk, the country was lacking a stable leadership and in over five decades, the country saw four military coups. This void was filled by Erdogan. He became the Prime Minister in 2003 and introduced several economic policies that led to a steady growth of economy and job creation, all the while making minor modifications to Ataturk's secular reforms and hence garnering popularity among

the non-secular Muslims. In a bid to throw Erdogan out of power, the military staged a coup in 2016 but failed. After this coup, he decided to introduce a referendum giving him almost complete control over the state and military affairs. The referendum took place in April 2017 and the results were 51.4% to 48.6% in his favour. He won the referendum but by a very narrow margin, which he had not expected.

So, this became the silver lining that has kept the secular Muslims and modernists hoping that this authoritarian rule of Erdogan has finally started to crumble and the democracy which was promised to them by Ataturk would finally come home.



# Are You Using Your Resources Enough?

Maahi Singh

**O**ur maturity is always one step below every new experience we encounter in life. The very purpose of life's experiences is to give us the required level of maturity. With every experience, it isn't just the bar of our maturity raises a little but even the bar of the challenges we face gets raised. Thus goes the upward growth spiral of life.

It is immaterial how knowledgeable we are or if we are the very best in what we do. Even if we are an encyclopedia on life, a fall, a trip, a slump is always round the corner. Life always intrudes to disturb the flow, the rhythm. But on the totem pole of growth, a failure in the tenth grade is still higher than a pass in the eighth grade. A just miss is an attempt to scale. Mt. Everest is still a step higher than making it to the top of a local hill.

The higher the maturity, the higher the challenge. That's how life molds a man.

This is what the pandemic Covid-19 has taught us all. The crisis affected the entire globe. Every class, every age, every section got affected adversely and we all are still struggling against uncertainty which is the new normal these days. What is expected from each of us is to behave more maturely and the importance of being one step ahead than during the usual days is emphasized.

Japan decided to venture into steel manufacturing in the early 1960's. The two fundamental raw materials required for manufacturing steel are iron - ore and coal, neither of which is available in Japan naturally. But, Japan knew where it could import these raw material from; it also knew where to export the finishes steel - where the demand was great. As a result, by the late 1960s Japan became the largest exporter of steel in the world. In less than a decade, an industrial revolution happened. How? Better resource management is the answer.

In most start-ups and medium sized business units, the cost of their money, that is the interest paid on borrowings, eats into their profits. When you audit their functioning, you realize that the problem isn't the lack of funds, but the inefficient fund management. Inefficiency in generation of cash flow and recklessness in managing cost outflow lead them into crisis borrowing at higher rates of interest, thus eroding their profits.

Year after year, there is an increase in turnover, but inexplicably it doesn't translate as increase in profits. At the same time, if we observe the well managed and efficiently led giants of organizations, we can clearly point clearly point that every year they show growth in both turnover as well as profits. How? The question rises again and better resource management is the answer again.

Indians crib and cry that population is their major problem. But, we must realize what has the world done about it? It has seen the same population as a source of efficient manpower at a lesser cost. The world has out sourced so much of their operations in India and improved their profitability. By luring multinationals to set up their operations in and around Dubai, it has turned deserts into an economic hub. The answer to all these is nothing but better resource management. It is not about time but about managing the resource called time efficiently. The present time of pandemic is a time of severe crisis in all the aspects round the world. This is the time that one must act maturely and use this time in a productive way. Some people are still not at loss during pandemic because they used their resources efficiently and took the time not as a challenge but as an opportunity.

Somewhere in our life, some resource is either being wasted or being inefficiently managed. The need is to find out what it is and improvise on it.

The most precious resource is yourself. It is well said,

**"There is no saturation in life, only saturated minds. There is no stagnation in life... only stagnant people."**

Your own value is determined not by what you are but what you are able to make of yourself.





# U.S. Elections 2020

Karthik Panicker

The United States of America is undergoing one of the most turbulent times in their recent history, being one of the worst affected nations by COVID-19. Official CDC reports indicate the number of total cases being close to 5.5 million which accounts for approximately a quarter of the world's cases with the death toll slowly approaching the dreaded 200,000 mark (as of 19 August 2020). Given the highly unpredictable nature of the Corona virus, it would be preposterous to forecast when the world would return to its pre-pandemic self but until then, the general populous will constantly live under the trepidation of contracting the virus, inhibiting them of performing their day-to-day activities to their usual extent.

The timing of the Presidential elections couldn't have been worse considering the present situation, where it's safe to say that most people would be unwilling to engage in the more common and time-tested method of voting like standing in prolonged queues, or for that matter, being part of massive crowds. In conclusion, this election cycle could be unlike any we have previously seen, being heavily reliant upon the marginally used provisions such as Absentee ballots and Mail-In voting. Although infrequently heard of, these amenities aren't as new as one would imagine, as 5 states (Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Utah and Washington) have already completed their primaries this year completely by mail. Also, every state already has a system in place that allows people to vote by mail called the 'Absentee Ba0llot'. A clear distinction to be made is that the Absentee voting and voting by mail, although similar in functionality are not exactly the same. Under normal circumstances, Absentee ballots must be requested for, according to the inconvenience faced by the person to attend the official polling to which they are allocated. Methods include postal and online voting which would find relevance now more than ever, considering nuisances don't come greater than having worldwide pandemics. On the flip-side, a vote-by-mail system automatically sends every voter a ballot in mail, no request required.



Taking a closer look at the Wisconsin Supreme court elections held on April 7th, where the turnout topped 1.5 million, the second highest total for a state Supreme Court election in Wisconsin in two decades which can be partly attributed to the staggering 1.1 million votes mailed in by Absentee ballots. This Presidential cycle can be a great opportunity for the United States to expand its voter turnout which has trailed most developed nations by significant margins in the previous years and Absentee voting system seems to be the right way to go about it.

Although the mail voting system has worked just fine under its limited use in the past, experts estimate that as many as 70% of all ballots cast in November's general elections could be through mail. This would lead to the uphill task of preparing for the resources like more printing, more postage, increase in experienced manpower, more storage space for the ballots, to name a few. These factors can easily account for anything north of \$25 billion in additional Federal funds, the piece of legislation for which would have to be passed in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. The bill is bound to face delays as some Republicans including President Trump have made it abundantly clear regarding their disapproval for the wide expansion of the practice. The reasons cited have significantly been the mail delays across the country in recent weeks, which come election time, might potentially lead to many ballots being uncouncted once they are received after the deadline and also the rejection of ballots if mistakes are made during the filling process. Substantial evidence can be found supporting the claim, as National Public Radio (NPR)- a non-profit media organization found in its analysis that in the Primary elections held so far this year, 65000 Mail-In ballots have been rejected due to arrival past deadlines, often through no fault of the voter. Although these numbers aren't very significant, they could end up being critical to the outcomes of close elections. Large scale Mail-In voting is also statistically discriminatory towards young African American and Latino voters, as they are more likely to have their ballots rejected due to errors, according to Charles Stewart, a political

scientist at MIT who also studies election administration. As for the provision of online voting under the Absentee system, endangerment of voter's privacy and glaring security flaws that can be exploited by hackers raise major red flags regarding the implementation of the method. The last thing that USA needs right now is political groups trying to delegitimize the election results, similar to what was done after the 2016 elections.

As we fast approach the month of election, a valid question must come across one's mind that in dire times like these, can't the general elections be cancelled or at the very least

be postponed for a few months. The answer simply being possible but highly unlikely. Possible because of Article 2 of the Constitution which empowers Congress to indirectly choose the timing of the elections but unlikely as it would require a Bipartisan decision which would be improbable due to the lack of support by the Democratic Party-run House of Representatives on the issue.

All said and done, the onus of protecting the fundamental right to vote of every American citizen alongside upholding the dignity of the elections now lies completely on the political higher-ups in Washington, D.C.





# Professional Opinions on ONLINE EDUCATION SYSTEM

SPECIAL SECTION



# Exclusive: Professional Opinions on Online Education

**W**e, at PICT commenced the academic year 2020-2021 from 9th July 2020, not in our classrooms or laboratories but through virtual platform- Microsoft Teams. Thousands of students turned to online education to take qualifying courses or improve their level of education. It has drastically influenced our society today. It has helped a lot of people who cannot come to the seat of education and has its pros and cons.

It is highly important to say that learning is no longer confined within the four walls of a classroom. The teacher, armed with a textbook, is no longer the sole source of educational experience. Online Education is the process of connecting learners with remote resources. Some people agree that Online Education has come a long way and has opened new vistas in the field of education while some researchers are still questioning the value of learning through these modern means. No one can thus deny that this type of education has merits and demerits which are true in their own right.

For this month's issue, we consulted a few professors from our college and requested them to share their opinions on Online Education.

We thank them sincerely for their views on the same.



## Professor Zakee Ahmed S. Mohammed

**Q1) Can you list a few experiences and observations related to online teaching?**

Online teaching is giving opportunities to student to use their maximum potential, but not all are using it constructively. Few students are busy doing other activities (Chatting/Playing/Eating) during lectures. Unfortunately, we cannot have a complete watch on them. On the other hand, students living in some areas are facing network issues and some do not have gadgets available readily.

**Q2) How did you go about researching / discovering the infrastructure required to make online teaching efficient?**

It is really challenging, lots of brainstorming is required for this.

**Q3) Do you agree with the fact that virtual learning has hampered student - teacher interaction? Have you faced difficulties in interacting with the students in your class?**

Yes, some students are reluctant to answer the questions asked during lectures.

**Q4) What is your take on blended classes after the pandemic is over? Can we implement a system where both offline and online lectures are taken?**

Yes, a few minor changes in existing classrooms are required which include setting up of a camera, microphone and good network connectivity.



## Professor Deepak Shinde

**Q1) What is your take on blended classes after the pandemic is over? Can we implement a system where both offline and online lectures are taken?**

No, we should think of offline classes till Covid-19 vaccine is not available as human resource has to be the highest priority. Hence, education must continue through online modes itself.

**Q2) How have other college related activities like placement and training been affected by the pandemic and how is it working online?**

This is a challenge, but students with diversified technological skills are getting better opportunities.

**Q3) How much knowledge is being actually received by the receivers? Since there is limited or no personal interaction in these online classes, what's your say on this?**

Teachers are trying their best to inculcate students in the process. However, at the end of the day, it is students' responsibility to make the best and excel.



## Professor Rishikesh Sutar

**Q1) Can you list a few experiences and observations related to online teaching?**

Teachers can teach and students can learn from places convenient to them in times where leaving your homes is dangerous.

**Q2) How did you go about researching / discovering the infrastructure required to make online teaching efficient?**

Until now, resources required for online teaching were not available easily. So, you have to search and place orders online for the required resources. We cannot trust every online purchase, unless it is tried and tested by someone you know.

**Q3) Do you agree with the fact that virtual learning has hampered student - teacher interaction? Have you faced difficulties in interacting with the students in your class?**

Yes definitely.

**Q4) What is your take on blended classes after the pandemic is over? Can we implement a system where both offline and online lectures are taken?**

I think, for good knowledge sharing, offline teaching is a better option. But considering the situation, online education should continue.



## Professor Amol Ingole

**Q1) What are the benefits of online teaching?**

a) I can use different means of teaching like videos (my own videos or others'), power point presentations, pen tab, online quizzes and assignments for the benefit of students.

b) I can keep track of student assessments easily as paperwork takes more time for evaluation.

c) I get flexibility in Time and Place for teaching.

d) Teaching- learning becomes more effective though offline teaching has its own benefits.

**Q2) Is there an obstruction in developing ideas amongst students due to online platforms?**

There is no obstruction in developing ideas amongst student due to online platform as long as students are serious in studies.

**Q3) Can you list a few experiences and observations related to online teaching?**

a) Observations: Being in this profession for around 16 years, it is hard to feel the classroom experience. But looking at the benefits, I am sure, everyone will get used to it soon.

b) Due to a few attentive students, teaching through online platforms is interactive, otherwise it is virtual. You need to keep pushing, forcing students to respond as very few are active. Students don't answer even after calling their names and are least bothered.

c) The amount of efforts teachers are putting in online teaching is worth praising.

**Q4) How did you go about researching/discovering the infrastructure required to make online teaching efficient?**

I spent more than one month's salary for the infrastructure (Laptop, Pentab, FTTH, etc). I am happy with it as my students are benefited. PICT is way ahead in online teaching. The management provided us MS Teams online platform which is really very useful. The more I use it, the better I am accustomed to its features. It is a new and nice experience indeed.



## Professor Rushikesh Khatri

**Q1) What are the benefits of online teaching?**

In my opinion, one of the greatest benefits of online teaching is its flexibility to incorporate various teaching aids and tools to cater different learning styles of the learner. During the lecture, it is possible to take the learner to websites with relevant content.

For example, the superposition of the waves can be demonstrated by selecting a number of constituent waves. Its effect on the shape of resultant could be shown. Also, working of sophisticated equipments can be explained in great details with the help of videos.

Augmented reality can be used to facilitate learning of the concept.

**Q2) Is there an obstruction in developing ideas amongst students due to online platforms?**

I think, there isn't any obstruction in developing ideas amongst students. In fact, online platforms expose students to diverse ideas used by people across the globe. This makes them more creative to find better and efficient ways of solving problems.

It also throws light on various dimensions of a problem that are difficult to cater in the classroom.

But it can also mislead learners if the information is not authentic. A learner may get confused by coming across controversial opinions. It becomes difficult to extract the required information.

It could hamper creative thinking of students if they rely on online resources for ready-made project ideas.

**Q3) Can you list a few experiences and observations related to online teaching?**

It has provided instructors variety of tools to make topics interesting.

However, it is difficult to keep students engaged for an hour. In online mode, learners get distracted easily.

It is also very difficult to gauge their attentiveness during a lecture.

**4) How did you go about researching/discovering the infrastructure required to make online teaching efficient?**

I explored MS teams and its features for the conduction of online classes and assessment of assignments.

Besides teams, I learnt video recording and editing softwares to make video lectures interesting. Also, explored whiteboard application and online quizzes and polls that could be used during an online lecture. But I experienced difficulty in finding a quiet place for recording video lectures.



**U.S. marks 100 years since women given the right to vote after decades of struggle by suffragettes.**

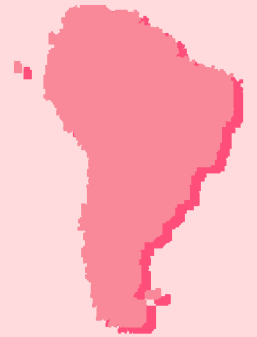
**Top U.S. officials told C.D.C. to soften coronavirus testing guidelines as it now recommends people without COVID-19 symptoms to not get tested.**

NORTH AMERICA

**Scientists discover dozens of new invertebrate species in Galapagos depths.**

**Raging wildfires burn out of control in central and northern Argentina.**

SOUTH AMERICA



**Cancer diagnostic test wait times to be halved in Budapest.**

**NATO allies Greece and Turkey face off in the Eastern Mediterranean over drilling rights.**

EUROPE

**Israel and UAE reach historic deal to normalize relations.**

**Lebanon's Cabinet resigns amid anti-government protests ensuing from Beirut blast.**

ASIA



**A 'Momentous Milestone' as Africa finally eradicates the wild poliovirus from its continent after decades of work.**

**South Africa has slipped into its third recession since 1994; economy expected to plunge to -5.8% due to COVID-19.**

AFRICA

**Australia touts vaccine deal with AstraZeneca, promises free dose to all citizens.**

**Australia and New Zealand suspend extradition treaty with Hong Kong following China's passing of National Security Law over the territory.**

AUSTRALIA

