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Journal Name:	Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies
Manuscript Number:	Ms_AJESS_116900
Title of the Manuscript:	The Effects of Digital Divide on the Educational Rights of Marginalised
Type of the Article	Review Article

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PART 1: Review Comments

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)
<p>Compulsory REVISION comments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the manuscript important for scientific community? (Please write few sentences on this manuscript) 2. Is the title of the article suitable? (If not please suggest an alternative title) 3. Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? 4. Are subsections and structure of the manuscript appropriate? 5. Do you think the manuscript is scientifically correct? 6. Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestion of additional references, please mention in the review form. <p><u>(Apart from above mentioned 6 points, reviewers are free to provide additional suggestions/comments)</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, the manuscript is important for the scientific community, especially for those involved in education technology, social justice, and public policy. Here are a few reasons why: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Relevance to Current Global Challenges: The manuscript addresses the digital divide, a critical issue that has gained prominence, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic which forced a shift towards online learning. Understanding the impact of this divide is crucial for developing strategies to ensure equitable access to education. b. Focus on Marginalized Communities: By focusing on marginalized communities in Kerala, the study adds valuable insights into the challenges faced by specific groups that are often underrepresented in research. This can help in tailoring interventions that are more effective and culturally sensitive. c. Policy Implications: The findings and recommendations provided in the manuscript can inform policymakers at both local and national levels. Effective policy changes could help bridge the digital divide and enhance educational access, thus contributing to social and educational equity. d. Contribution to Academic Discourse: The manuscript contributes to the broader discourse on inequality in education and the role of technology in either perpetuating or alleviating these inequalities. It provides a nuanced view that can enrich academic discussions and future research on the topic. <p>Overall, the manuscript's focus on a significant, timely issue, combined with its detailed examination of localized impacts and policy implications, makes it a valuable contribution to the scientific community.</p> 2. The title of the article, "The Effects of Digital Divide on the Educational Rights of Marginalised," is generally suitable as it clearly reflects the core focus of the manuscript. However, there are a few adjustments that could potentially enhance its effectiveness: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Specificity: Adding geographic specificity to the title could make it more informative. For instance, including "in Kerala, India" would immediately signal to readers the regional focus of the study, which is particularly relevant for those interested in regional case studies or comparative analyses. b. Clarity and Appeal: The current title is somewhat generic and could be more engaging. A more dynamic title might capture the attention of a broader audience. For example, a title like "Bridging or Widening? Exploring the Digital Divide's Impact on Educational Rights in Kerala" could suggest a deeper analysis and a questioning perspective that might draw in readers. c. Inclusion of Key Terms: While the title includes "digital divide" and "educational rights," which are key terms, it could also benefit from including terms like "online learning" or "access to education," if these are significant aspects of the study. This could improve searchability and relevance in academic databases. <p>Overall, while the title is adequate and straightforward, making it more specific, engaging, and inclusive of additional relevant terms could enhance its impact and reach within the academic community.</p> 3. The abstract of the article provides a good overview of the study's aims, scope, and the context in which it is situated. It highlights the issue of the digital divide in the educational system in Kerala, India, and suggests that the study will explore the intersection of spatial locations with digital access to education. Here are a few considerations regarding the comprehensiveness of the abstract: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengths: 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Clear Context and Focus: The abstract sets a clear context of the contemporary education system's shift to online learning, particularly in Kerala, and mentions the integration of technological advancements.ii. Research Aim: It succinctly states the aim of the study, which is to analyze how spatial locations intersect with digital access to education, focusing on marginalized communities.iii. Methodology Mention: The abstract briefly notes the use of a descriptive design and narrative review, which informs the reader about the methodological approach of the study. <p>b. Areas for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Key Findings: While the abstract outlines the aims and context, it could be enhanced by including a brief mention of key findings or insights. This would give readers a snapshot of the results and the contributions of the study.ii. Impact or Implications: It lacks a mention of the potential impact or implications of the findings, which are often crucial in an abstract. Highlighting how the findings could influence policy, educational practice, or further research would provide a stronger rationale for the importance of the study.iii. Specific Challenges Addressed: The abstract could benefit from specifying some of the factors or challenges contributing to the digital divide. Mentioning specific barriers faced by marginalized communities in accessing digital education would add depth and specificity. <p>Overall, the abstract does a good job of setting the stage for the reader but could be enhanced by including results and implications to better convey the article's value and relevance to the scientific community. This would make it more comprehensive and informative.</p> <p>4. The structure of the manuscript, as outlined in the overview you provided, appears well-organized and logically structured for addressing the topic of the digital divide in education among marginalized communities in Kerala.</p> <p>a. Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Clear Flow and Logical Progression: The paper starts with an introduction that sets the context, followed by the methodology, which is crucial for understanding how the research was conducted. Subsequent sections delve deeper into the specific issues, implications, and possible solutions, which is a logical way to structure an argument.ii. Focused Subsections: Each section seems dedicated to a specific aspect of the issue. For example, the detailed discussion on "Marginalisation and Digital Divide: A Social Reality" helps ground the study in theoretical and social contexts, while "Government Initiatives and Effects" evaluates policy responses.iii. Depth and Detail: The subsections such as "Social Justice in the Digital Age" and "The Pitfalls in the System" suggest a comprehensive approach to discussing both the theoretical implications of digital education and the practical barriers faced by marginalized groups.iv. Forward-Looking Final Sections: "Possibilities Ahead" and the "Conclusion" offer a forward-looking perspective, which is essential for a manuscript aiming to influence policy and practice. <p>b. Areas for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Integration of Results: It would be beneficial if the structure included a distinct section summarizing key findings before delving into the discussion and implications. This helps readers clearly distinguish between the data collected or synthesized and the author's interpretation or analysis.ii. Enhanced Specificity in Methodology: While the "Methods" section is crucial, ensuring that it details the analytical methods (e.g., how themes were derived in thematic analysis) would strengthen the reader's confidence in the robustness of the study.	
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	<p>iii. Discussion of Limitations: A dedicated section discussing the limitations of the study could enhance the credibility of the research by acknowledging potential biases or constraints in the study's design or execution.</p> <p>Overall, the manuscript's structure is robust and well-suited to exploring the complex issues surrounding the digital divide in education among marginalized populations. However, slight enhancements, such as more distinct reporting of findings and a limitations discussion, could further strengthen the manuscript.</p> <p>5. Based on the provided overview and excerpts from the manuscript, it appears scientifically correct in terms of its approach and the issues it addresses. Here's an evaluation based on key scientific criteria:</p> <p>a. Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Well-grounded Theoretical Framework: The manuscript is anchored in well-established theories and models of marginalization and digital divide, which are crucial for examining the socio-economic impacts of digital exclusion in education. References to seminal works and current studies add credibility.ii. Appropriate Methodology: The use of a descriptive design and narrative review is appropriate for the study's aims. This methodology is suitable for synthesizing a wide range of existing literature and secondary data to explore complex social issues like digital exclusion.iii. Relevant and Timely Data: The manuscript references recent studies and data, including governmental reports and academic research, ensuring that the discussion is both relevant and timely, especially in the context of the rapid changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. <p>b. Areas for Caution or Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Primary Data Inclusion: While the narrative review method is valid, inclusion of primary data through surveys or interviews could strengthen the manuscript by providing first-hand insights into the experiences of those directly affected by the digital divide in Kerala.ii. Analysis Depth: From the summary, it is unclear how deeply the manuscript engages with the data analysis beyond thematic synthesis. More detailed analysis, possibly quantifying some aspects or comparing different sub-groups, could provide a richer understanding.iii. Bias and Objectivity: The manuscript seems to rely heavily on government sources and initiatives. While these are important, there should be a critical evaluation of these sources to avoid potential bias. Including independent studies or critiques could provide a more balanced view.iv. Discussion of Limitations: Any scientific manuscript should clearly discuss its limitations. This includes the limitations inherent in the methods used, potential biases in source selection, and the generalizability of the findings. Acknowledging these elements enhances scientific rigor. <p>Overall, the manuscript appears scientifically sound in its approach and context. However, enhancing the manuscript with primary research data, deepening the analysis, critically evaluating all sources, and discussing limitations would further solidify its scientific correctness and contribute to its impact within the academic community and beyond.</p> <p>6. Based on the information provided, the manuscript uses a variety of sources including peer-reviewed journals, government reports, and data from reputable organizations, which suggests a robust reference base. However, the actual sufficiency and recency of the references depend on several factors:</p> <p>a. Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Diversity of Sources: The manuscript references a mix of academic articles, government documents, and reports from NGOs, providing a comprehensive view of the issue. This diversity helps capture various perspectives and data points relevant to the digital divide in education.ii. Inclusion of Relevant and Authoritative Data: References to studies by institutions like the Azim Premji University and reports from the OECD	
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	<p>indicate the manuscript's reliance on authoritative and relevant sources which are critical for substantiating its claims.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">iii. Areas for Improvement:iv. Recency: Given the rapid evolution of technology and policy, especially highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial that all referenced studies and data are the most current available. Updating some references, if they are older, would ensure the study reflects the latest research and developments. <p>b. Suggestions for Additional References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Technical and Infrastructure Studies: References to studies examining the specific technical barriers to digital education (such as internet bandwidth and accessibility, device availability, etc.) could deepen the understanding of the practical challenges faced.ii. Interdisciplinary Approaches: Given the complex nature of the digital divide, referencing works from fields such as sociology, technology, and education policy that discuss interdisciplinary approaches to addressing inequalities in digital access could enrich the analysis.iii. Theoretical Works on Social Justice and Technology: Incorporating more theoretical frameworks around social justice and technology, such as works by scholars like Nancy Fraser or Manuel Castells, could provide deeper theoretical grounding to the discussion of digital divides. <p>Overall, while the manuscript seems to have a solid base of references, updating and broadening this list would enhance its depth, relevance, and robustness, ensuring it adequately supports the arguments made and reflects the latest research and discussions in the field.</p>	
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<p>Minor REVISION comments</p> <p>1. Is language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications?</p>	<p>Based on the excerpts and descriptions of the manuscript provided, it appears that the language and English quality are largely suitable for scholarly communication, adhering to the formal and precise style typical of academic writing. Here are some aspects to consider regarding the language quality:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formality and Precision: The language used in the manuscript is formal and precise, which is appropriate for scholarly communication. This includes the use of specific academic and technical terms relevant to the study of the digital divide and education. • Clarity and Structure: The manuscript seems to be well-structured with clearly defined sections and subsections, which helps in maintaining a logical flow and making the arguments easy to follow. • Areas for Improvement: • Consistency: Ensuring consistency in terminology and style throughout the document is crucial. This includes consistent use of terms like "digital divide" and maintaining a uniform narrative voice and tense. • Proofreading for Minor Errors: As with any scholarly manuscript, thorough proofreading is essential to catch any grammatical errors, typos, or awkward phrasings. Even minor errors can detract from the credibility of the paper. <p>Suggestions for Language Enhancement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Use of Active Voice: Where appropriate, using the active voice can make statements more direct and dynamic. For example, instead of saying "A study was conducted by researchers," it might be more engaging to say, "Researchers conducted a study." 8. Transitional Phrases: Enhancing the manuscript with transitional phrases that better link sentences and paragraphs could improve the flow of information and help guide the reader through complex arguments. 9. Avoiding Jargon Overuse: While technical terms are necessary, overusing jargon can alienate readers who are not specialists. Explaining or defining key terms upon first use can make the manuscript more inclusive. 10. Balancing Sentence Structure: Varying sentence structure can make the text more engaging. Balancing longer, more complex sentences with shorter, more impactful ones can help maintain reader interest and clarity. <p>In conclusion, while the manuscript's language is generally suitable for scholarly communication, focusing on readability, consistency, and proofreading can further enhance its suitability and ensure it meets the high standards expected in academic publishing.</p>	
<p>Optional/General comments</p>	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough Research and Comprehensive Coverage: The paper extensively covers the digital divide's impact on education in Kerala, India, particularly among marginalized communities. It uses a wide range of sources and includes government reports, academic studies, and statistical data to support its findings, ensuring a well-rounded analysis. • Focus on a Timely Issue: Addressing the digital divide, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, is highly relevant. The paper's focus on this issue is timely and contributes to an important discussion on how to ensure educational equity in the digital age. • In-depth Analysis of Spatial Marginalization: The paper successfully highlights how geographical locations intersect with access to digital education tools, providing a nuanced understanding of the digital divide's multiple dimensions. • Policy Recommendations: It offers concrete suggestions for policymakers, such as the need for community learning centers and continued support for digital literacy, which are practical and can be directly applied to address the issues discussed. <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Primary Data: The study relies heavily on secondary data sources. Including 	

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	<p>primary research, such as surveys or interviews with affected communities, could provide deeper insight into the personal experiences of those directly impacted by the digital divide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential Bias in Source Selection: The paper extensively cites government sources and initiatives, which might introduce a bias by potentially overemphasizing the effectiveness of governmental interventions. <p>Overall, the paper provides a valuable contribution to the discussion of digital equity in education, particularly in the context of marginalized communities in Kerala. Enhancing the study with primary data and exploring a wider range of solutions could further strengthen its impact.</p>	
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PART 2:

	Reviewer's comment	Author's comment (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)
Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?	<i>(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)</i>	

Reviewer Details:

Name:	Everton Gomedé
Department, University & Country	University of British Columbia, Canada