



Online Teaching-Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the world hard, and on March 25, 2020, lockdowns were imposed in India, resulting in the shutting down of educational institutions throughout the country. It first appeared in China after and then engulfed the whole World. COVID-19 is a pandemic health crisis that has affected nearly all the country's economic growth. Practically, all the countries have taken various actions to prevent the spread of this Corona virus. To promote social distance, the Indian government had declared a nationwide lockdown. Due to this pandemic in India, educational institutions including schools, colleges, and Universities were marked closed. This disturbed the whole education sector of India. Education sector moved from offline mode to online mode. This change affected every student, teacher and parent and posed many challenges to them. This paper examines the implications of this Pandemic in the Indian education system with challenges and limitations of the same. The paper is descriptive, analytical and data is compiled from the secondary sources like news articles, interviews, blogs, magazines, social media, magazines etc. for this paper.

Keywords: Pandemic, Online Teaching, India, Education, COVID-19

Introduction

Joshi et al., (2020); Gupta et al., (2020) analysed that “the Indian government's decision to impose a total closure on the country to avoid the spread of the infected virus, COVID-19, has affected all sectors of the economy”. The most shocking impact was felt in the education sector. Educational institutions were most hit and are the last sector to start operating. According to a UNESCO report, about sixty-three million teachers in 165 countries were affected. According to (UNESCO, 2020) “approximately 1.3 billion students worldwide were unable to attend schools and Universities due to this pandemic”. To further prevent the negative impact of education, the *Ministry of Human Resources Development* promoted free digital e-learning platforms such as the *NPTEL, SWAYAM* and others (MHRD, 2020). To keep academics involved, the ministry recommends using an online platform to provide education. Online education requires three basic components to succeed.

The first component is "settings". The institution must provide faculty and students with the essential resources for the effective execution of online teaching-learning. Institutions should give clear instructions, technical support, training, institution-based technologies and encourage teachers to provide online education. The second is "faculty". It should be noted that online education cannot do without the support of faculty, as they are the managers in any educational institution. Locking requires them to adopt technology quickly and make every effort. The third element is "students"; they should also be psychologically responsive to an online lecture to teaching-learning. Under the circumstances, Universities need to alter their pedagogy in line with a straightforward philosophy of development or demise. To improve the current situation, HEIs switched to emergency deployment at a distance. *Hodges et al., (2020)* mentioned that "this included the use of full-distance education solutions for education or training that are otherwise provided full-time or blended as hybrid courses and which are then interrupted in the event of an emergency or a crisis". HEIs instructs faculty to teach online through a variety of online platforms. This decision to pursue online distance learning has caused confusion and fear among teachers. Neither the college nor the lecturers had enough time to prepare for the online lessons. In a brief time, with not enough planning, teaching-learning shifted to online on various platforms. They have confronted a lot of problems because only a few teachers had experience with online teaching. Although the University's decision to take online courses needs to be analysed for future planning, social justice and to address teachers' problems in running online courses. This article discusses the methods of providing University education and outlines the challenges that teachers face in online teaching during COVID-19 pandemic in the Indian setting. The research is descriptive and analytical, and data is collected from secondary sources such as news, news articles, blogs, interview videos, magazines, social media, and magazines to accomplish the objective of this article. Based on information from secondary sources, the article also highlights the learning curve of future about how to deal with a crisis like this in the Indian education sector.

How COVID-19 affected schools?

Public policy training is the best tool available to improve skills. School is where children can have fun and develop social knowledge and social skills. The main motive of schooling for a student to improve a child's abilities. A short time at school can increase skills and abilities. On the other hand, lack of school or non-attendance has a negative impact on skills growth. School closures have affected this whole course of learning and school education. First, it affects learning and assessment methods. Online teaching methods have been adopted by the schools, in which several findings have indicated that the students from the Economic weaker section (EWS) have taken no or lesser online lessons. This has further widened the divide of educational services between the sections of society purely on the economic basis and thereby hindered the students' development.

How COVID-19 affected Higher Education?

The closure of universities also affected the students at the universities. For teaching to be resumed, an online teaching method was adopted. Universities had adopted teaching management software and digital open-source learning solutions to conduct online courses.

Higher education is a critical determinant of the country's future economy, and the pandemic has also affected the higher education sector. The most important concern that everyone has in mind is the effect of this pandemic on employment records. The teaching methods of institutes and Universities have also changed due to exclusion in India. It was replaced by an old chalk-talk model with new technology. E-learning solutions in this situation allow for teaching and learning, but interaction is a major problem in e-learning. Policy makers are working to address student engagement and tackle the digital divide. A multilateral long-term strategy is needed to tackle the crisis in the Indian education sector.

In India, effective education and best practices are needed to create the capability of young minds at this moment of crisis. To ensure India's overall prosperity, it will support employment, well-being, health, and productivity through skills development.

Challenges confronted by the teachers and HEIs

COVID-19 transforms the education from a traditional model to a model of educational technologies, where the faculty and students are subjected to new educational technologies. *Abel Jr, A. (2020)* stated that “higher education institutions and teachers face many challenges during the need for online distance learning”. *Mishra (2020)* raises concerns about “the digital divide and aspects of the teaching infrastructure through online learning platforms”. A survey conducted by *QS I-GAUGE* found out that “the technology infrastructure did not meet a quality standard that would ensure the effective provision of online courses to students across the country” (*QS-ERA, 2020*). Several institutes use *Moodle, Blackboard (learn), Microsoft Teams* and *Google* meet for lessons, but most rely on popular free platforms such as *WhatsApp, YouTube, Skype, Google Hangout, Zoom* and so on for the online tutoring. *Verma and Campbell (2020)* point out that “many institutions do not have trained teachers and resources who can work remotely through online platforms and strive for transition”. Higher education institutions require their teachers to take lectures from their residences through a range of online learning platforms. Many teachers reported problems associated with their institutions, technologies, and students were impacted by the implementation of online lectures in their home setting. It is crucial to note that faculty are acclimatized to the standard teaching method of whiteboard, marker, and PowerPoint presentations. It is unfair for faculty to expect them to become technocrats in a very brief time span. *Joshi et al., (2020a)* identified “several barriers affecting online learning in the home environment, such as technical difficulties, lack of training, lack of institutional support, lack of technical support, ambiguity and distractions are some few problems that teachers face in online education and assessment”. Many institutions do not even provide clear guidelines for the implementation and maintenance of the online classes. *Sharma (2020)* mentioned that “the institutes expected every teacher to move to online lectures without proper training and resources”. *Arora and Srinivasan (2020)* stated that “teachers face many challenges during the online learning process, such as network problems, lack of training, lack of knowledge,

lack of interest, low attendance, lack of personal touch of offline lectures and distractions at home". *Sudevan, (2020); Almaiah et al., (2020)* stated that "due to the lack of training, teachers have many problems with the use of teaching technologies". *Kaup et al., (2020)* recounted "the challenges associated with the technology, training, and student involvement in academic sustainability during the COVID-19 pandemic". Teachers lack the infrastructure such as laptops, internet connections, microphones, etc. to provide effective education. Many teachers have connectivity, system errors, and bandwidth issues when conducting online lectures and were unable to resolve the issues owing to a lack of technical assistance. *Punit, (2020) & Qz.com, (2020)* mentioned that "the faculty also find it difficult to guide students when they teach online. Students are often intentionally undisciplined by playing music, making noise, posting bad comments through fake users, eating, and playing games in various windows during online sessions". The teachers said that teaching seemed like a tired and exhausting experience. A typical classroom consists of a chair, desk, board, markers, and projectors. None of these devices were available in the home environment, which reduced the efficacy and efficiency of teaching-learning. *Press Trust of India, (2020)* stated that "persistent outside disturbances due to noise from the neighbourhood or disturbance of family members during the lecture also had a negative impact on the continuity of the session". Teachers were compelled to use the online teaching method, which has led to a negative attitude among teachers in online education and towards institutions. *Shenoy, et al., (2020)* reported that "teachers felt uncomfortable in courses that involved numerical, experimental, and personal interaction". *Mahajan, (2020)* studied that "during full-time teaching, language factors are reduced because teachers use bilingual communication to answer students' doubts and questions". They additionally had difficulty in examining the student's body-language on a small, limited screen and lost emotional connections. *(Sahni, 2020)* mentioned that "there is a huge digital divide and Universities were supposed to achieve social justice in education through online teaching and learning". *Mahesh, (2020); Azevedo et al., (2020)* emphasised about "the importance of classroom learning cannot be denied, and this pandemic proves that Universities and educators are not prepared to master this approach to online learning".

Challenge in Assessment and Evaluation

Students were not only hindered by the closure of schools, colleges, and Universities. Lockdown also affected the assessment and evaluation of students all around the World. Many examinations and assessments have been revoked or suspended due to the shutting-down of educational organisations. This is a new age of education for students and the teachers. Many colleges and Universities have moved their traditional classroom system to online courses, just as the exam system has moved from offline to online. They use online evaluation tools for evaluation. Online assessment tools have many limitations. Compared to conventional measurement, there are several errors and flaws in the online evaluation tools. *Piopiunik et al. (2020)* showed in their research that "employers used testimony of their education to evaluate candidates, such as averages of marks and grades for counting candidates". The exclusion therefore also affected the placement of new graduates. According to *Fredriksson and Ihlen (2018)*, "it is damaging for both individuals and society".

Conclusion

The Government has carried out effective actions to prevent the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education system. According to, *Govindarajan and Srivastava, (2020); Abdulrahim & Mabrouk, (2020)* “the COVID-19 pandemic had taken the education system on a techno-savvy path”. While it has now been cleared that online courses and assessment cannot replace traditional teaching methods, the role of technology and its widespread use in teaching cannot be ignored. The *Ministry of Human Resources Development* has taken various initiatives such as *e-PG Pathshala, SWAYAM* and *NEAT*. *Olcott, (2020)* mentioned that “although the methods implemented are centred on trial and error, it should be noted that sustained efforts are being implemented”. Teachers also faced challenges such as lack of technical equipment, lack of training, lack of technical knowledge, and tried their contribution from their end by shifting from traditional approach to the new Educational Technologies. Governments, institutes, educators came up with tutorials, pedagogies, and methods for conducting online lectures. However, due to practical limitations with the technology, the teaching-learning has taken a dip during this period. Online teaching and learning will not be successful unless challenges faced by the institutes and teachers are addressed. The government need to understand these limitations and learn from this experience while designing a course for future online teaching and learning. *Zhao, (2020); Daniel, (2020)* emphasised that “higher education institutions need to review the final curriculum and design a new curriculum that can also be taught online”. This will help institutions cope with such a crisis. *Mishra, (2020); Rapanta et al., (2020)* stated that “the UGC has established regulations for minimum teaching quality standards by forcing teachers to teach 25% of the curriculum online with inverted class and blended learning”. Each University and college must have a devoted technical unit that can assist and prepare faculty to solve technical problems.

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