

TEACHING – LEARNING SYSTEM DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19, as a global pandemic, has called for social distancing. It has dramatically reshaped the way global education is delivered. Millions of learners were affected by closure of educational institutions due to the pandemic, which resulted in the largest online movement in the history of education. It has made people mandatory to sit indoor and sitting idle indoor may lead to mental stress, online learning is the best solution during this pandemic situation. A new model of education is expected to emerge, and given the digital divide. New shifts in education approaches could widen equality gaps. Teachers can use virtual classrooms to teach from home with all necessary tools which makes the online sessions as effective as traditional ones. Pandemics often compel the learners to stay at home for long period of time and obstruct teaching-learning process. This paper emphasizes on how online teaching-learning system is beneficial and become challenge during times of crises. Some emerging approaches of Govt. of India for online learning platform are also discussed. Suggestions regarding online system during lockdown are also discussed [1].

Keywords: Online learning, teaching-learning processes suggestions.

INTRODUCTION:

Over the past weeks, educational institutions have been forced to cancel classes and close the doors to campus across the world in response to the growing corona-virus outbreak. Over 91% of the world's student population is not attending schools/colleges (UNESCO) [2]. "School closures and strict containment measures mean more and more families relying on technology and digital solution to keep children learning, entertained and connected to the outside world, but not all children have the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to keep themselves safe online" (UNICEF) [3]. Informal and non-formal education is tremendously affected. However, it is a well-established assumption that no pedagogical approach can replace the peak position of formal education due to having teacher-taught direct interaction. But the aftermath of covid-19 crisis. Online education became a pedagogical shift from traditional method to modern approach of teaching-learning from classroom to Zoom, from personal to virtual and from seminars to webinars. Previously, E-learning, distance education and correspondence courses were popularly considered as the part of non-formal education, but as of now, it seems that it would replace the formal education system. Online learning is beneficial because it is instantly accessible. In this system, learners use internet technology to communicate virally with their teachers and fellow learners through e-mail, whatsapp, video-conferencing, instant messaging or using other tools [4]

Online learning is encouraged due to following reasons during covid-19

- ✓ One should stay home, and maintain social distancing.
- ✓ Outbreak of covid-19 can be minimized.
- ✓ It offers highly effective learning environments.
- ✓ It is available in any location, with an internet connection and students can attend using their devices (mobiles, tablets, computers etc.)
- ✓ Improves the image of institution by offering technology solution.

Due to this pandemic, several online platforms to support online education were available. Nevertheless, it was a challenge for universities to map their educational activities in an online space. It has merits and demerits both. Professors and students faced a wide range of logistic, technical, financial and social problems. It has affected mental health of people around the world. Many students are suffering from stress and anxiety. Such psychological issues often hinder students from adapting to online education. In the meantime, the universities restructured its teaching-learning

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process and the academic activities were moved onto online platform. The professors now use Google Classroom to dispense course material and information related to their courses and deliver live lectures through Google Meet. The professors typically use presentation programs like power point and presentation and Note-taking programs like One Note to disseminate information.

Online education strategies:

The pandemic forced various organizations to suddenly modify their workflow strategies and adopt new technologies. Researchers have tried to understand the viewpoint of students on online education during the covid-19 pandemic, using empirical studies in India. However, empirical studies have found that students feel that they learn better in physical classrooms than through online education. Students miss the help they receive from their peers in classrooms.

Professors are now delivering course content through various platforms. They are using online educational platforms video conferencing, software and social media to teach their courses.

Online educational platforms, like Google Classrooms and Blackboard, allow professors to share notes and multimedia resources related to their courses with students.

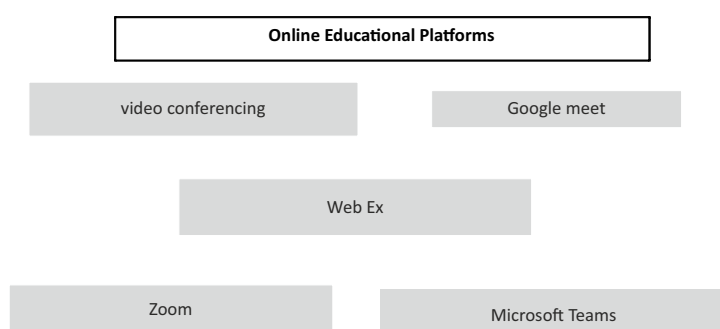


Table -1

These platforms help in organizing online lectures and discussion sessions. Such tools typically support slideshows and a chat box. Most of the teachers started with preparing study e-materials as per the syllabus taking online classes as per time table after taking online classes, study materials being uploaded by them. Few teachers have recorded their video lectures and uploaded to whatsapp group for those who missed the classes due to some unavoidable circumstances as well as providing equal opportunity to access learning. Students found that the videos or lectures uploaded by the teachers were captivating as they can see them again pause and takes notes when needed.

“Google Classroom is the simplest and appropriate way to chat with teachers.”

Merits of Online teaching learning during lockdown:

- Online learning encourages more productive use of time which individuals safe from pandemic situation like spread of covid-19.
- It is cost-effective technology in which one educator can teach various virtual classes simultaneously which reduces travelling to various places.
- Online class/conference session can be saved in website for future reference.
- Useful to women and physically handicapped learners as they can learn at home.

Demerits or Challenges of Online teaching learning during lockdown:

- The major challenge while teaching online was the unstable network connection. The economically backward children are unable to afford online learning devices.
- There is a lack of parental guidance as both parents are working.
- Lack of consultation with teachers, when facing difficulties in learning/understanding.
- Students assessments are carried out online, with lot of trial and error, uncertainty and confusion among the teachers, students and parents.

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- Various entrance examination have also been postponed/rescheduled.
- Many students have now taken online classes, spending additional time on virtual platforms, which have left children vulnerable to online exploitation.
- Increased and unstructured time spent on online learning has exposed children to potentially harmful.
- Majority of the learners are from rural areas where parents are mostly illiterate farmers. Students are engaged in assisting parents in farm activities and some students even requested to postpone exam time towards the afternoon since they had to work on the fields during morning hours [5].
- Majority of students do not have access to smart phones or T.V at home due to poor internet connectivity.
- Most of the families have more than two or three children. Economically backward can't afford two or three smart phones to their children. They students have to face that problem. They miss their classes, due to only one smart phone in family.

So, it is difficult to design a proper system to fit the learning needs and convenience of all students.

Opportunities for Teaching and Learning during lockdown:

Although these have been challenges for educators, schools, institutes and the govt. regarding online education from a different angle, there are several opportunities created by covid-19 pandemic for implementing e-learning system.

- The use of online platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, Virtual learning environment and social media and various group forums like Telegram, Messenger, Whatsapp and Wechat are explored and tried for teaching and learning for first time ever to continue education. These platforms can provide additional resources and coaching to the learners.
- Teachers are obliged to develop creative initiatives that assist to overcome the limitations of virtual teaching. Many educational organizations are offering their tools and solutions for free to help and support teachers. Online learning has provided the opportunity to teach and learn in innovative ways [6].

Programmes and Policy of the Govt. of India on online teaching-learning in HET's.

- The Govt. of India started thinking on this matter with emphasizing on ICT and use of online education as the part of compulsory teaching-learning process.
- Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) is a programme initiated by the Indian Govt.
- e-PG Pathshala run by the University Grants Commission (UGC) that provide high-quality curriculum- based and interactive e-content in 70 subjects.
- The DIKSHA portal contains online learning content for students, teachers and parents , including video lessons worksheets [7].

Suggestions:

- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on teaching and learning across the world concludes or suggests that although various studies have been carried out, in the case of developing countries, suitable platform for different class levels of education needs to be explored further.
- Data packages are costly in comparison to the income of the people, thus making accessibility and affordability inadequate. Internet is relatively low with lesser access points. Policy-level intervention is required to improve this situation,
- Education system needs to invest on the professional development of teachers, especially on ICT and effective pedagogy.
- Making online teaching creative, innovative and interactive through user friendly tools would assist and prepare the education system for such uncertainties in future.

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- After covid-19 pandemic, teachers and learners should be encouraged tools to enhance teaching and learning [8].

Conclusion:

During the lockdown period for covid-19, online teaching-learning is the best platform to keep learning / educators engaged and safe by social distancing. Various online platforms helped students and teachers to continue their classes. Everyone must learn to live and survive with present crisis. In the long run, none can afford the negligence towards digital transformation in HEIs. The Govt. should also ensure the availability of reliable communication tools, high quality digital academic experience and promote technology-enabled learning for students.

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