
Challenges To Online Education: A Review

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Abstract: The Pandemic Corona Virus Disease popularly known as COVID-19 has impacted not only the developing countries but the whole world. It has affected each aspect whether it is Education, Economy, Social life, etc. In every sector we are adopting digital technologies. The education sector has also adopted new paradigms for imparting knowledge and skills. It has shifted itself from traditional medium to virtual classrooms. All educational institutions at primary, secondary and college/ university levels are adopting new pedagogies to cater to this situation and keep continuity in providing knowledge to its students. Many research works have been done by researchers to know the challenges of online education system. The present study summarises the challenges faced by students in this virtual classroom environment. The researcher selected 16 papers and articles published in various Journals, Scholarly Articles with the help of Google Scholar.

Keywords: Online Education, E-Learning, Challenges, COVID-19, Digital Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is considered to be one of the most important part of human life. Parents try there best to provide the best of educational facilities to their children. But in the current scenario, as COVID-19 has affected the education sector at school and other Institutional levels; as a safety measure to prevent the spread of corona virus, it has become the biggest challenge to provide education, UNO (2020, August) report shows that sudden closure of educational institutions has affected the 94% of world student population. It has also been reported that 1.6 Billion learners across all continents has been affected by COVID-19. It has also been found that this pandemic has created the largest obstruction of education systems in the history.[1]

Online education is not a new term/ methodology, even the concept of ICT in education has been adopted for a long time now. Online Education is just a substitute of traditional Classroom learning or we can say it is the need of hour. As we have no other option to adopt virtual learning because we don't want to compromise with studies. That is why online education market is increasing at a very high speed. Technavio's latest report revealed that Indian Education market is expected to grow by USD 14.33 billion during 2020-2024.[2]The use of technology has made things easy and affective in many ways; however, there are a lot of challenges involved while providing/ getting education virtuallyIn the developing country like India, it is a major challenge where only 16 percent households received only one to eight hours of electricity in a day. [3]

Digital divide in education is seen not only in India but all parts of the world. It is the gap between the people who have access to Information and Communication Technology and those who have no access or a very limited access to the basic requirements. It means those who are poor, do not have access to smartphones or laptops are discriminated to get education

and knowledge. Digital Competency is also very essential in online learning and teaching. Both instructor and students should be competent with variety of Applications, Assessment Tools and Aids associated with digital education to make the process of learning effective and interacting. In the study, 'Emergency remote teaching in a time of global crisis due to Corona Virus pandemic', it was said that COVID 19 created a crisis situation for the education system.[4] In another report titled 'Myths of Online Education', revealed a survey report that is conducted to understand the challenges faced by teachers and student in online learning. In the report, it is clearly mentioned that almost 60% children cannot access online learning opportunities because of the lack of gadgets or sharing of technological devices with siblings and lack of knowledge in using different Applications. [5]

While reviewing the research paper, the following challenges were studied:

Communication gap between faculty and students – In the study 'Challenges to Online Medical Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic, it was found that during online education, communication between faculty and students needed to be clear with concise feedback while transforming from traditional to virtual platform of education.[3] Further, the two way communication between teachers and students during COVID-19 may enhance communication in classroom learning as well. The two-way communication is essential in teaching-learning that is difficult to implement in online classroom. In Conventional learning, there is an opportunity to interact with students, engage them in learning, boost their creativity and change their attitudes with the discussions and communication which is lacking in online classes. In another study named 'Students' Perceptions towards the Quality of Online Education: A Qualitative Approach' it was found that sometimes the students do not receive timely feedback related to tasks, assignments and other submitted works due to which they feel less motivated.[6] A teacher can scaffold the students very easily with knowledge, content and delivery of the content. Teaching is effective only when there is interaction between faculty and students. This interaction also helps the students to understand the concepts and acquire the skills and knowledge. The teacher should engage the students with the content and social presence.[7]

Socialization: In conventional classroom, students communicate with their classmates/batchmates physically. They share the ideas, suggestions, knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, feelings and emotions with their friends while in virtual classroom, students cannot even see their fellows. They can only communicate digitally that sometimes take them far away from the real time sharing. The students are deprived of the fun time that they spend with their friends. In the research articles, COVID-19 and E-Learning: The Challenges of Students in Tertiary Institutions, it was found that online learning makes the learners isolated.[8] Ribeiro in the article 'How University Faculty Embraced the Remote Learning Shift' rightly noted that many attitudinal modifications are required for this digital transformation of education.[9]

Technical barriers – The challenges reported in the research papers are the access to devices (Computer hardware and software), internet connectivity, signal issues compatibility issues (with operating systems, browsers or smartphones), Installation issues, issues in downloading the content, Audio-visual problems etc.[10] It was found that students have to leave their classes in between the sessions due to this as they cannot understand the concept. This leads to disinterest. In the study, Impact of lockdown on learning status of undergraduate and postgraduate students during COVID-19 pandemic in West Bengal, India, it was found that the Poor internet connection was the biggest challenge for students especially those living in

rural and remote areas.[11] As many people in a household are on home network at the same time, so students get disconnected multiple times. Due to which they face attendance issues and get detained.

Economic conditions –The online education system has further created a gap between rich and poor. Those who have resources can get the education and others staring at disruptions in their studies. As a result, the students who belong to poor families, whose parents are busy in earning food and basic necessities are deprived of getting education. Many families cannot afford smartphones, some of them don't know how to use it. The survey was conducted by online portal 'Local Circles', regarding online education and it was found that 43 percent respondents do not have gadgets or resources that support online class room. The survey also highlights problems that students have to share the smartphones/laptops with the parents as the whole family is working online. There are issues related to sharing of devices between siblings. In a country like India where Approximately 88 million people still live below poverty line, how can we talk about resources, computers, laptops, data, Wi-Fi etc.[12] Where too many people daily live on footpath, struggle to earn only basic necessities, the challenges are quite natural. The problem is not only for India, but it is a world problem.[13]

Pandemic related anxiety and depression– COVID-19 not only causes threat to physical life but also many psychological problems. The students are passing through a trauma condition. As educational institutions are closed, they cannot interact with their friends at campus. Many students were not tech savvy. They don't have resources. They think about uncertainty of online classes. Apart from this, the students are worried about their career, growth and placements. In one of the studies under review it was revealed that due to current global pandemic situation, there is an unparalleled growth of depression and anxiety found in the university students of Bangladesh. Staying at home without friends and companions/ family members, low-income status, are also reasons for increase in psychological problems like depression and anxiety.[14][15]

Time management – It has been found during review that students are facing problems related to time management. Many online classes are not set as prescheduled in traditional classroom. The students cannot manage the time as there are many assignments and multi-tasking work. There may be some family pressure for some work. In many of the studies, it was found that female students have to do household activities. Sometimes there is a time clash between the class session and household work. The students also face distraction from the classes because if in a family, there are three children then they may not be able to sit at an appropriate distance and face sound distraction.

Space management – In 90% of the research papers under review, it was found that there is no designated space for them to attend the classes. There is distraction from family members, siblings etc. In this pandemic situation, where everything is going online parents are working from home, children are studying from home. So, it is very difficult to provide space to each and everyone. At the sametime, if there are classes of two children at a given time and parents are also working from home, then how is it possible to manage the space and the sharing of gadgets also becomes a challenge. For this a family need four rooms and 4 gadgets. That is somehow challenging.[16]

Health problems: the students in different studies mentioned that they have to sit before the screen time for a long time. They have to attend the classes, complete the homework and assignments only through electronic gadgets. this causes problems in eye and ear. In the research article, 'Impact of Online Teaching on Students' Education and Health in India during the Pandemic of COVID-19' It was revealed that the addiction with mobile, computer

and laptops in the students below 14 years increases mental sickness and eyes problem. Moreover, Prolonged use of computers or mobile phones, bad posture may arise problems related to headache and backache.[17]

Technophobia – It is a term related to psychology which means ‘fear related to technology’. It has been found that students have a fear of online classes, viva etc. The students complained that earlier they used to read and study through books but all of a sudden, they have to shift to digital classroom. [10]They are worried about the issues related to technology use. This technophobia and computer anxiety is a big challenge for students. It affects the performance of students. Even the teachers are also under the same condition. They have not used technology for imparting knowledge and skills. They have not prepared themselves to go virtually and find themselves in a very different atmosphere.

2. CONCLUSION:

The above challenges whether they are social, economic, technical are described only from students’ point of view. The instructors and parents also faced many problems like this. Everyone is not computer literate, or everyone cannot own a computer or smartphone. The children from low-income group families face difficulties in getting the education and knowledge which is technology dependent nowadays. The technical issues like switching off laptop/ gadget in between the classes, poor connectivity also creating a mess in the mind of students. Due to which they get anxious as a result of this, distraction is quite natural. When there is a problem, solution is also there. We can overcome these challenges by making some changes in teaching learning process. The teacher should Interact with students by his/ her content delivery. The instructor should include quizzes, puzzles, videos, games, presentation to make the class active. The teacher should try to make students active participants. In the same way, the students should also understand the teacher’s perspective. They should keep in mind that the teachers are adopting this new pedagogy only to teach them. The students are deprived of face-to-face interaction, deprived of campus life, technical issues, lack of social interaction, poor time management increased the stress, anxiety and frustration. So the teachers should understand their psychology and should be flexible hours for teaching. He should be polite and understand that the whole world is under a traumatic condition. The institutions should provide proper training to teachers to make the learning more effective, interesting and interactive. We all are bound to adopt this digital environment that is very different from traditional classroom environment. The parents should also give some quality time to their children in this pandemic situation. The government should also provide some aid to schools in getting gadgets.

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