

IMPACT OF ONLINE EDUCATION ON COLLEGE STUDENTS IN INDIA

* MS Janvi Sethi Pre-service Teacher,

Amity Institute of Education, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

** Dr. Priyanka Niranjan Singh, Assistant Professor,

Amity Institute of Education, Amity University, Uttar Pradesh.

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has spread all over the world and compelled the human society to maintain social distancing. Different sectors have been badly affected by this pandemic situation including the education sector. Even before the imposition of lockdown many schools and universities have shut down their institutions due to the steady increase in the number of cases. Initially many schools and universities suspended the examination and classes for a while but, soon our educationist realized that education is not something which could be put on hold even for a long time. With the announcement of lockdown education, institutions also promoted the concept of online classes and the learning process to ensure the education of the students is not compromised. The education sector found out the way to survive the crisis with the virtual approach and fighting the challenges to wash away the threat of pandemics. There have been many debates and studies to find out which approach is the better way of teaching, this however is not the focus of our study. The goal here is to see the perspective of college students towards online education and to find out the positive and negative impacts of online education. A survey method was used in order to meet the objectives. Our educational institutions need to work on the flaws of online mode. This will provide a platform for other researchers to study the lags in online education and discuss the possible alternative solutions for the drawbacks

Keywords: pandemic, online learning, impact, face-to-face mode, educationalists.

INTRODUCTION

In late December 2019, the first case of Covid-19 was identified in Wuhan City, China. Soon, a steady increase in cases has been noticed all over the world. In India, the first case was identified on 30 January 2020. There was no idea of how severe the virus can affect the human body. So, it has imposed the worldwide lockdown and compelled the human society to maintain social distancing due to lack of proper medicine and vaccine for the treatment of Covid-19. The Government of India had imposed country lockdown from 25 March 2020 to prevent the community transmission of coronavirus. Every sector has been adversely affected by this pandemic, as no one has ever thought and prepared for this kind of situation. Everyone were moving with a particular pace in life many of us had never thought of pausing life for a while. So, we can say that pandemic has put a lot of things in perspective. But the point here is it's really hard to deal with the ambiguity that lies in the future. Many institutions of different sectors have shut down even before the announcement of lockdown.

This could not be the solution in the long run. Initially, many institutions have suffered a lot, including the education sector. Many schools and universities had suspended the classes and canceled the examination at a primary, secondary, and higher level. As education is not something that could be put on hold, our education system found out the way to survive the crisis with the virtual approach and fighting the challenges to wash away the threat of a pandemic. The whole new system of online classes has come into practice. Initially, it has been found quite challenging for students as well as for teachers. Online teaching is different from traditional teaching. Many e- mediums and platforms like zoom, microsoft teams, google meet, etc came forward to play the role of a bridge between students and teachers. In India, this was the first time when we have selected online education as a way out. On the other hand, due to the decrease in funding in education at the time of the economic crisis of 2008, the United States has shown increasing interest in online education. Sun, A., & Chen, X. (2016) in their research highlighted the statistics done by the Pew Research Center (2001) show that in 2010-11 academic year, 89 percent of four-year colleges and universities offered courses taught fully online or hybrid/blended, or other forms of distance/non-face to face instruction(Parker, Lenhart, & Moore, 2011).

The Government of India has also taken many steps to survive the crisis with the best efforts. The MHRD has taken digital initiatives for secondary as well as higher education such as Diksha, E- Pathshala, Swayam, Swayam Prabha, etc.(Pravat, 2020). It is visible that the

education system has evolved completely. But has it been successful completely? Are learners liking this new approach more than the traditional way of learning? Does it have more positive impacts than negative ones? Can we ignore the negative impacts for a longer duration? These are certain questions that motivated me to study this area.

There have been many debates and studies to find out which approach is the better way of teaching, this however is not the focus of my study. The goal here is to see the perspective of college students towards online education and to find out the positive and negative impact of online education. In doing this, it is hoped that this will provide a platform for other researchers to study the lags in online education and discuss the possible alternative solutions for the drawbacks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Shivani Dhawan (2020) conducted research on Online Learning: A Panacea in the Times of COVID-19 Crisis and highlighted how teachers were habitual of the traditional way of teaching, as they were quite hesitant to accept the change initially. But they were left with no other alternative except just to accept the change. She also highlighted that despite lots of benefits and surprising innovations online education has brought up, we cannot deny the fact that there are few students lagging behind due to the heavy cost of digital devices and limited access to other facilities.

Parvat Kumar Jena conducted research on the Impact of Pandemic COVID-19 on Education in India and concluded that there are underprivileged students who are suffering as India is not fully equipped to make education easily accessible to all the corners of the students.

D. Xu and S.S Jaggars conducted research on the impact of online learning on students' course outcomes and concluded that students are valuing the flexibility and convenience of online learning despite all the negative impacts. It seems to be a boon for the adults with multiple responsibilities and highly schedule lives and also they are able to contribute their time to self-study. However, learners of higher education still feel that college needs to take steps to ensure that students perform as well as they used to perform in traditional or face to face approach.

Blackmon & Major (2012) conducted research on the Student Experience in Online Courses where they highlighted that according to the survey of 2500 institutions, online learning has

been increased in higher education over time. One of the major impetus of the increase in enrollment in online learning is the positive experience of students.

Jindal & Chahal (2018) conducted research on Challenges and Opportunity for Online Learning in India and concluded that there is a requirement for drastic changes in the course curriculum by making it more practical in order to bridge the gap so that the students must be ready for the industry after passing out.

OBJECTIVES

The present research paper focuses on the following objectives:-

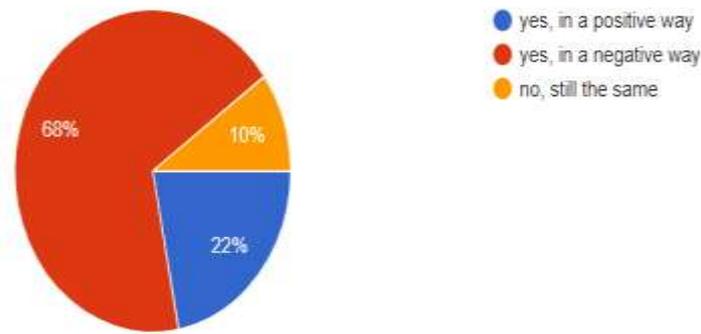
- ❖ To highlight the perspective of college students on online students.
- ❖ To enlist the various positive impacts of online education on college students.
- ❖ To identify and critically analyze the various negative impacts of online education on college students.
- ❖ To give some suggestions to overcome the negative impacts of online education on college students.

METHODOLOGY

A survey method was used in order to meet the objectives. The survey was designed which aims to describe various questions associated with the study. It includes both objective and subjective questions which provide a scope to understand the research through the perspective and opinions of students presented in data. The sample was obtained from 50 students of different colleges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Throughout the study, we got to know about the positive and negative side of online learning from the student's perspective, covering different aspects. Data shows that 78% of students prefer to attend classes in the face to face mode while 22% of the students prefer to learn in online mode.



68% of students feel that online learning has impacted them in a negative way while 22% of students feel the positive change through online learning, on the other hand, 10% of students believe that it doesn't make any change. Let's see the rationale covering various themes:-

Positive Impact

Time Management

Many students believe that they are able to manage their time in a better way now. Virtual mode is redeeming their time and energy that brings out a positive change in their schedule. A student during survey stated

Online education has made me feel about the importance of time management. A lot can be done in 24 hours. With e-learning, we are able to access a lot more resources in minimum time which deepens our knowledge. Overall it's a good experience with however some of its own limitations.

Few students also feel that e-learning has saved their commute time which they can contribute to their self-study.

Opportunity for updating skills

Due to the change in the teaching style in online learning, students have become more technologically advanced. They are able to explore and develop their skills. 68% of students feel that the quality of education has been degraded in virtual mode. So, those who have a sense of responsibility for their own learning, tend to seek the opportunity to learn autonomically. A student from Private University stated that

I am able to devote time to my self-study because in the online mode we are given case studies, every alternative day we have a presentation, we have to work on our PSDAs (Professional Skill Development Activity).

Student - technology interaction

Different resources have been designed to help students with virtual learning and other learning activities like Kahoot, word wall, quizzes, LMS, etc. A student stated in the survey:-

With e-learning, we are able to access a lot more resources in minimum time which deepens our knowledge. Overall it's a good experience with however some of its own limitations.

Another student mentioned that

Online education basically helped me to be more good at using net stuff which I never used to do and got to know that almost everything is available on the net also which helpful. It has definitely made learning comfortable and at ease, in the sense that I can learn at my own pace. Also, it has definitely made learning more vast than usual

Concentration level

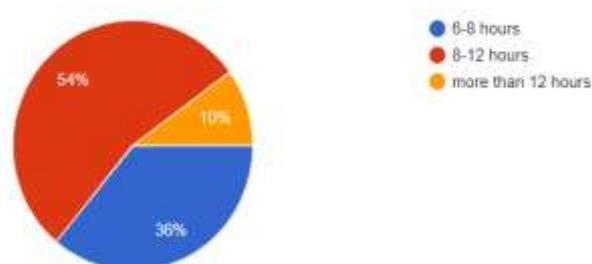
Few students feel like virtual mode has increased their concentration level and also boost up their confidence. They are less conscious about their personality in online mode.

A student in the survey stated

It has helped in gaining more confidence and learning with ease. E-learning has enabled me to learn and understand in a more comprehensive manner using audio-visuals so it is a relaxing and good way of learning.

Negative Impact

Screen Time



It has been found that 36% of students devote 6-8 hours to online learning while 54% to 8-12 hours and only 10% to more than 12 hours. Due to the continuous exposure to screen, many students reported health issues like eye problems, back pain, obesity, etc.

A student from Private University said

Besides all the pros, one con that the online mode of learning has for me personally is the negative impact on my body as a whole as it requires minimum physical engagement especially eyes initially.

Problem in doing self-study

Few students believe that due to the screen time, they are not devoting their time to self-study. They find it difficult to look at the screen to study after college hours. A student indicated

No. Not at all! It's because spending 8-12 hours a day on screen continuously makes me reluctant to go for my self-study which is again on screen. My eyes feel so worked up that I cannot sit on screen again!

Mental health

Many students feel that their mental health is suffering more in online learning. They get frustrated with the burden of work like regular discussions, presentations, quizzes then home assignments also.

Few students get anxious as it seems hard to get the teacher's attention in online mode. And many students reported that it is very stressful for them to stay at home only and listen to classes for continuous long hours. While few students feel that somehow due to the online classes, they have lost their self-esteem. A student reported in the survey that

The tendency to make qualitative decisions has decreased as it makes me feel exhausted and exasperated to use online devices for hours which in turn hinders my brain's ability to function effectively.

Social Isolation

As humans are social beings, they like to interact with each other. But due to virtual learning, they lost the opportunity to interact and meet. Students feel lonely, anxious and depressed

sometimes. They miss studying with their mates. In online learning, they believe that the enjoyment of the classes is missing somewhere. Also, they miss their friends and teacher as they make them excited and motivated to learn.

Internet Issues

India, being a developing country has risen up in many domains. But, the fact is that these facilities or advancements are restricted to few areas only. Proper access to the internet is not available to each and every part of the country. Even the major internet providers having connectivity issues someday or the other, that's quite problematic for the students as well as for teachers.

RECOMMENDATION

66% of the students voted that they don't want to continue their classes in virtual mode. As the result clearly shows despite all the positives, the negatives are so overruling that the students can't bear it. So, it's comprehensible to say that system needs to work upon the flaws in it. Few suggestions are given below in order to remove or minimize the negative impact of it on college students:-

- A lot of problems have been reported for screen time. There should be a short break of 15-20 minutes between the classes. There should be a system to make sure that teachers are not exceeding the class duration.
- There should be an online library of each institution where students can access study material even with a minimum internet range. So, those who face connectivity issues can go through the material.
- Proper training should be given to the teachers to use the technology and e- tools in the appropriate manner, so that students could participate maximum.
- The teacher should try to give group projects more, so that students could overcome undesirable feelings like loneliness, anxiety and sadness.
- Teachers may try to give assignments or homework in the same way they used to give in traditional mode (using pen, paper and books). As students don't have the energy to sit in front of the laptops to do self-study or homework.

The goal of the research was to uncover the perspective of college students towards online learning. There are various reasons which influence the experience of the learners in online mode. But the negative factors are more than the positives. We can conclude that we don't have any clue how long this pandemic will go. Our educational institutions need to work on the flaws of online mode. Doing so will help to overcome the drawbacks and build a satisfactory environment for the students.

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