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## The Impact of Online Learning on Higher Education during the Covid-19 Period: An Analytical Study

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### ABSTRACT

The education sector is right now in crisis. Due to the lockdown, students are now solely dependent on online resources and remote learning capabilities to finish their schoolwork. There are a variety of sites on which students communicate with their mentors. The current study investigates how online learning has affected graduate students. To offer their lectures and other information, teachers use platforms like Zoom, Go to Meetings, and Hangouts. There are other challenges with accessibility, pricing, and availability for students, though. The students are under stress for a variety of reasons, including the fact that many of them are from far-off regions. Absence of communication with educators and classmates has an impact on learning and could affect the outcome. The main source of concern is with reference to the evaluation and examination. Although it cannot completely replace them, instructors can use technology to further their field. Corona has had a significant and enduring effect on the industry. To ensure that their students are learning, several institutions are switching to digital classes. In the previous few years, technology has undergone significant transformation. Technology does not pose a danger to faculties, so we need to modify their mindset. Technology may be a resource for learning and can create new opportunities for those working in the field of education. Online education has revolutionised the field of study. Technology is only one. This study aims to identify the most significant effect of e-learning during the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic as it continues to be one of the most sustainable methods of education. There is limited literature available on this subject in India, especially factoring in impact of the online learning on higher education.

**KEYWORDS:** *Education, lockdown, technologies, online learning, higher education*

## Introduction:

Online education has gained immense popularity among working professionals and students pursuing higher education. These categories of online learners find immense benefit in the autonomy and flexibility that these courses offer. Online courses can be planned around their schedule which may include full-time employment, internships and caring for family. Online learning can also help them take out some quiet time to study. The traditional classroom setting is no longer appropriate for today's younger generations. The country's educational system heavily relies on the internet and distant learning, or "online education." Schools, colleges, and institutions have been closed as a result of the lockdown for more than a month. While semester exams are approaching and the completion of the curriculum is in motion, universities are working nonstop at this time of year. The government's decision should be commended because schools and other educational institutions serve the younger, more active, and most productive segment of our society and it is the government's responsibility to replace it. The traditional classroom setting is no longer appropriate for today's younger generations. The country's educational system heavily relies

on the internet and distant learning, or "online education." Schools, colleges, and institutions have been closed as a result of the lockdown for more than a month. While semester exams are approaching and the completion of the curriculum is in motion, universities are working nonstop at this time of year. The government's decision should be commended because schools and other educational institutions serve the younger, more active, and most productive segment of our society. As teachers, our main aim is to make students learn effectively and efficiently. For doing so, a teacher has to do several activities such as plan properly, provide effective instruction and evaluate the learning using appropriate methods and techniques. That means, a teacher has to perform a host of activities inside and outside the classroom.

The unprecedented situation of uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 forced the Indian education system to move to digital learning and teaching to fill the gap created by suspending classroom teaching across the country. Technological development and the Internet have changed the lives of people immensely and have also brought a huge change in various fields (Nadikattu, 2020). The majority of countries worldwide temporarily closed

educational institutions to contain the spread of the COVID-19. According to UNESCO (2020), 191 countries have implemented nationwide or localized school closures, resulting in over 91% of enrolled students, or 1.5 billion people, not being able to go to school as of April 20, 2020 (Lamrabat, 2020). UNESCO has supported countries in their efforts to mitigate the immediate impact of school closures, particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning (UNESCO, 2020). The decision of the countries to switch to an online mode of education in light of the outbreak of COVID-19 was needed to contain the spread of the pandemic. Although the Indian government has attempted to control the damage by introducing online teaching through the virtual classroom, uploading and sharing e-study materials, and through virtual interaction, all such tools and techniques have limitations. This damage control mechanism will certainly have long-term consequences on the quality, accessibility, and deliverability of educational content. The effects of the global pandemic on the education system may vary from country to country, depending mainly on infrastructure and quality of content. The outbreak of

COVID-19 has affected all segments of students, but it is particularly damaging to students of the vulnerable groups of the society.

In a country as diverse as India, along with overcoming the infrastructure barrier, there needs to be a focus on overcoming the barriers of language and content (Saini, 2018). The migration to online learning has been looked at as a good solution for the future by experts while overcoming the infrastructural barriers in gradual progression to maintain quality and accessibility to meet the learning needs of the growing population of the country. There may be numerous pros and cons of online education with respect to the students of different classes, castes, genders, and economic conditions. Despite all odds, the government and stakeholders of educational institutions have been working hard to strengthen the knowledge of the individual, larger community, and society for any normal and future crisis situations. The review of literature suggests that online learning has both positive and negative aspects in terms of delivery of content, current environment, and availability of infrastructure. The trend of learning via online mode is not new for the students belonging to privileged classes in India. There are a section of

people opting for online learning via various platforms like edX and Coursera for better learning and international exposure. The present crisis of the pandemic forced some students to not be able to carry out their studies in the online mode due to several to social, economic, and infrastructure related issues. These issues include no or poor Internet facilities, no mobile phone, laptop or computer, no conducive environment for learning, etc. The sample for the current study mainly represents only those higher education students who were forced to go to an online mode of learning. This paper concentrates on the impact of the introduction of online learning process in higher education on students of different classes, castes, genders, urban, and rural areas in higher education.

### **Impact of Online Learning Programme on Higher Education**

From the viewpoint of the learner, online learning enables the possibility of discovering more adaptable learning methods. Interactions, opportunities, and opportunities with teachers and other students on an anytime, anywhere basis have now supplanted the learning through text. As a result, it develops pupils' competence and learning abilities. Also, it

provides a variety of opportunities for students to keep learning and improve their knowledge, abilities, and beliefs by understanding and interpreting at a time and location of their choosing. Studying with the aid of ICT skills makes it possible to draw in students and enhance their educational experience.

### **Learning beyond Boundaries**

Online learning gives the student the flexibility of choosing the location and time of information delivery or receipt. In an e-learning environment, a variety of tools and technologies are used, including web-based education, TV and radio broadcasts, the Virtual Classroom, distributed learning, audio chatting, video conferencing, and online discussions. These are the main tools that enable students to access the most recent information from anywhere in the world. Online content has taken the role of the in-person classroom discussions that occurred in a hybrid course.

### **Cost-effectiveness and Time Saving**

Online learning resources, increased information availability, improved communication, and cost-effectiveness, online learning delivers remarkable educational gains. Because today's students are accustomed to utilising smart

phones, texting, and the internet, managing an online course has become straightforward in and of itself. The cost is also decreased because everyone now carries a Smartphone and ICT has put knowledge at our fingertips. Generally, traditional education is expensive since it takes a while and has unpredictable outcomes. E-learning is now a substitute that is quicker, less expensive, and possibly superior.

### **Simplicity and variation in Learning**

Learning resources and delivery strategies increased with the development of computers and the internet in the latter half of the 20th century. Those who wouldn't have been able to attend school, college, or further education because of time or geographic restrictions have benefited from the content that is delivered online. Yet, e-learning has shown to be the most effective medium for delivering education right to their door. It contributes to knowledge acquisition, skill development, and life enrichment through increased knowledge. Sometimes it is hard to participate in and attend online lectures; in these cases, people who missed the lecture might review the tape at a later time to deepen their understanding. Language barriers can again

### **Learning Is Being Transformed From Conventional To Modern:**

The modern system of education and training requires continual self-improvement through e-learning. Globalization's growing influence and the emergence of ICT tools meet the new standards for all spheres of social life. Flexibility in scheduling is provided by student-centered, student-centered e-learning in the digital age. Without a doubt, the use of e-learning

Systems in higher education have allowed for a significant change in the methods used for teaching and learning. Changes in cultural expectations and the ongoing development of technology abilities, which are boosted via the appropriate use of technological blend, have been brought about through transformation through e-learning.

### **Web Seminars**

When this is the case, the students' education can suffer. But thanks to technology, students can use the Internet to virtually attend Web seminars put on by educational institutions. NASA, for instance, offers a program that allows students to talk to astronauts in space.

### **Negative Impact of Online learning**

While online programs have significant strengths and offer unprecedented accessibility to quality education, there are weaknesses inherent in the use of this medium that can pose potential threats to the success of any online program. These problems fall into main categories.

### **Computer Literacy**

Both students and facilitators must possess a minimum level of computer knowledge in order to function successfully in an online environment. For example, they must be able to use a variety of search engines and be comfortable navigating on the World Wide Web, as well as be familiar with Newsgroups, FTP procedures and email. If they do not possess these technology tools, they will not succeed in an online program; a student or faculty member who cannot function on the system will drag the entire program down.

### **Limitations of Technology**

User friendly and reliable technology is critical to a successful online program. However, even the most sophisticated technology is not 100% reliable. Unfortunately, it is not a question of if the equipment used in an online program will fail, but when. When everything is running smoothly, technology is intended to be low

profile and is used as a tool in the learning process. However,

### **The Impact on Students**

While an online method of education can be a highly effective alternative medium of education for the mature, self-disciplined student, it is an inappropriate learning environment for more dependent learners. Online asynchronous education gives students control over their learning experience, and allows for flexibility of study schedules for non traditional students; however, this places a greater responsibility on the student. In order to successfully Participate in an online program, student must be well organized, self-motivated, and possess a high degree of time management skills in order to keep up with the pace of the course. For these reasons, online Education is not appropriate for younger students (i.e. elementary or secondary school age), and other students who are dependent learners and have difficulty assuming responsibilities required by the online paradigm.

### **Levels of Integration**

Online learning has its most promising potential in the high synergy represented by active dialog among the participants, one of the most important sources of

learning in a Virtual Classroom. However, in larger classes (20 or more students), the synergy level starts to shift on the learning continuum until it eventually becomes independent study to accommodate the large class. At this point, dialog is limited as well as interaction among participants and the facilitator. The medium is not being used to its greatest potential.

### **What Should Not Be Taught Online**

In the excitement and enthusiasm for online programs that has been generated recently, it is important to recognize that some subjects should not be taught online because the electronic medium in its current state of development does not permit the best method on instruction. Some subjects are probably best taught in a face-to-face traditional learning environment. On line teaching cannot satisfy all educational needs and goals. Just because it may be technologically possible to simulate a physical learning experience, this does not necessarily mean that it is the best way to teach it.

### **The Curriculum and Online Pedagogy:**

The curriculum of any online program must be carefully considered and developed in order to be successful. Many times, in an institution's haste to develop distance education programs, the

importance of the curriculum and the need for qualified professionals to develop it is overlooked. Curriculum and teaching methodology that are successful in on ground instruction will not always translate to a successful online program where learning and instructional paradigms are quite different. Online curriculum must reflect the use of dialog among students (in the form of written communication), and group interaction and participation. Traditional classroom lectures have no place in a successful online program. Education of the highest quality can and will occur in an online program provided that the curriculum has been developed or converted to meet the needs of the online medium.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the study suggest that there is a serious need to invest a sizeable amount of money in the development of infrastructure and to frame national policy to overcome challenges faced during the stop-gap arrangement of the teaching-learning process and continue it as an additional mode of teaching and learning even after the pandemic ends. With the current experience of online education, advancement in technologies, proliferation of education, and ample opportunities of learning from experts, the modes and ease



of learning have been significantly changing over a period of time. Hence, there is a need to develop new theories that deal with effectiveness, opportunities, and necessity for online learning. Institutions of higher education have found that online programs are essential in providing access to education for the populations they wish to serve. In order to make online program to be successful, the curriculum, the facilitator, the technology and the students must be carefully considered and balanced in order to take full advantage of the strengths of this format and at the same time, avoid pitfalls that could result from its weaknesses.

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