

A SHIFT IN TEACHING & LEARNING METHODS TO ONLINE IN HIGHER EDUCATION POST COVID: OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES AHEAD

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ABSTRACT

When we talk about change, we know it is stressful and not easily adoptable whether it is for individual or organizations. But there are times when it is not an option but a necessity to survive. Due to lockdown because of COVID, it is known that educational institutes cannot conduct their working physically in the premises. As a solution of the situation, online teaching and learning is one of the best solution through which objective can be achieved of teaching and learning. This time majority higher education institute started adoption of online way of teaching with due course of time. Some started at early stage and some started later after sensing situation and demand of time & regulators. UGC too has given guidelines to conduct 25% of the classes online throughout in upcoming academic session too. But how successfully this method of online teaching will work is still a big question in our country. As we all are aware that infrastructure is not prepared to support online mode of teaching in a very successful mode as still some problems like network problem, costly internet services, no secured apps and websites etc. are being faced by both teachers and students & their parents. It is the need of an hour to improve these facilities which will help India to get prepared for future too. The objective of this research paper is to find out the opportunities and challenges in online mode of teaching. Secondary data is used for the research purpose. Findings suggest that within a short span of time majority of we adopted online mode of teaching and also working hard to utilize this method to get adoptable, but further support is needed by the government and other agencies to develop a secured infrastructure so to achieve win-win situation in every aspect.

Keywords: E-Learning, Higher Education, Post COVID, Win-Win Situation.

Introduction

It is easily predicted by the naked eyes that consequences of the Covid-19 Corona virus will bring a lot of diversification in every field in the coming time whether it is education sector, corporate sector, industries, patterns in which countries deal with each other either in respect of goods & services or in case of students enrollment in higher education not only within India but also globally. With respect to Higher education sector it can be said that it is a sector which are treated as a determinant of any country's economic future. The prime focus also should be to train this sector for adoption of digital technology which will further help millions in providing training and educating them that how digital will be the future and a way to perform the task in COVID like situations.

In India, from last many years online teaching & learning was happening across different parts of colleges & universities but still it was not treated as the first priority and assumed to be a platform to get an extra skills for career enhancements. But after this COVID there came a shift which changed the way of thinking and doing. Now days during lockdown and in this pandemic situation throughout the globe, online teaching and learning became the default mode of education. Majority higher education institutes started adoption of online way of teaching by taking the help of various apps and websites which support video and audio conferencing with due course of time. Some started at early stage and some started later after sensing situation and demand of time & regulators. UGC too has given guidelines to conduct 25% of the classes online throughout in upcoming academic session too. Regulators have also issued guidelines that examination can also be conducted through online mode if colleges and university have

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this facility but how successfully this method of online teaching and examination will work is still a big question in our country? As we all are aware the present situation that infrastructure and other facilities is not prepared everywhere to support online mode of teaching & learning in a very successful mode as still many problems like network problem, costly internet services, costly digital devices, no secured apps websites & platforms required for online teaching and other problems too are being faced by both teachers and students & their parents and these problems are not the one which can be very quickly tackled in a short span of time. It requires everyone to come together and contribute in this direction. It is also the need of an hour by government side to improve these facilities and a committee should be framed which will look after these matters and issue guidelines and come out with the requirement for funding which will help India to get prepared not only for today's matters but also for future too so to survive in long run. In this paper researcher discussed about online learning opportunities and challenges faced for students and teachers in present time and also post COVID.

Literature Review

Various research & studies were conducted with the aim to provide a discussion and adoptability of the present e-learning environments including their characteristics, limitations, advantages and the major factors that affect the acceptance of such digital learning. Few of the important are given below:

Several studies (e.g., Bernard et al., 2014; Chigeza and Halbert, 2014; González-Gómez et al., 2016; Israel, 2015; Northey et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2016; Southard, Meddaug and Harris, 2015) have compared face to face teaching to e-learning and/or integration of both type of learning in order to try to define which of the platform provides benefits like, the highest learning outcome, creates the most satisfied students or has the highest rate of course completion.

Alenezi and Shahi (2015) in his research found that the online learning needs high speed internet connection and compatible computer devices to get successful outcome. Researcher also discovered that some poor countries maybe faced many difficulties to use online learning as resources available are not enough and infrastructure is not upto mark there for successful conduction of e learning.

Judith B. Strother (2002) In his study suggest that e-learning has been used extensively not just for academic purposes by the universities & Colleges for students but also for businesses and corporate employees to impart training on various upcoming industrial revisions so to make them skillfull and more employable

R. Safiyeh, Tehran Alzahra University in his research tried to investigate the relation between the e-learning and motivation for the students. Questionnaire is used to find the results and the university students was the respondents, quantitative techniques like person correlation was used in the study to understand the findings from survey and form a relationship between the dependent and independent variables for the research. The findings suggest that motivation of the students is affected by e-learning significantly.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the present situation & future need of online learning due to COVID.
- To explore the opportunities of online learning compare to face to face instructions.
- To study the challenges ahead in online mode of learning compare to face to face instructions.
- To suggest some insights that what measures should be focused to make online learning effective in India.

Research Methodology

This research paper is conceptual in nature. In order to meet such objective secondary method is adopted. The secondary data was collected through books, periodicals, and journal and published material related digital learning for the study.

Analysis & Interpretation

The pandemic has changed the way of thinking of centuries-old, face to face or chalk-talk teaching model to e-learning driven by technology. This shift in the pattern of education is insisting to various policymakers to find out how to create engagement at every levels while ensuring lower cost with maximum benefits and desirable results. Not only private players but our government was also working hard from last many years on a continuous basis to promote e-learning which suddenly start helping in many ways during this COVID pandemic situation. Students from every corner of the country is benefiting from these high courses and also utilizing their time during this lockdown and gaining skills to the best. Some of the programs are listed below:

Types of Educational Content Available

- **MOOC:** Massive open online courses are a new trend in higher education from last few years. The availability of such courses from the best in the world like Harvard, MIT, and Stanford is making a significant change in the higher education sector. The students after completing these courses are becoming more skillful & potential to perform the job in a better way as earlier.
- **NPTEL:** National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning is an initiative of seven IIT's (Indian Institute of Technology- Bombay, Delhi, Guwahati, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Madras and Roorkee) and Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. The programme is funded by ministry of human resource development. The initiative is aimed at students of undergraduate engineering studying in different affiliated universities and colleges. The site provides good quality learning resources and also provides certification of different categories on successfully completion of the courses at minimum cost.
- **EDX:** The world's renowned universities Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have jointly started offering online courses by the name of EDX. It will also allow institutions to use edX to research how students learn and how technology can transform learning—both on-campus and worldwide (EDX, 2012).
- **Coursera:** It is a social entrepreneurship company that partners with the top universities in the world to offer courses online for anyone to take, for free. (coursera.org, 2012). The initiative is supported by 33 participating universities.

Online Video & Audio Conferencing Apps & software which can be used by Teachers and Learners

With remote learning & working now became a common trend especially during this locktime because of COVID, all students not only in India but all over the world, getting connected with teachers through various video & audio conferencing apps and software for conduction of their regular classes. Some of the most frequently used apps and websites are listed below:

- ZOOM
- Microsoft Teams
- GoToMeeting
- Google Meet
- Cisco Webex
- SKYPE
- Bluejeans Meetings

Opportunities

- Change requires a lot of time and it is also sometimes painful. In India, online education was not in much trend but after COVID it started a culture of adoption of E learning mode in a fast pace.
- It is easy to attend the global programs & learn from global leaders without having the restrictions of country boundaries.
- Online mode of Webinars & Conferences will help students in two fold- one will help in reduction of cost by saving travelling expenses & second it will save time.
- MOOC course will be promoted once the culture of online mode of learning is adopted.
- Much more widely understanding of digital tools are supplements which will help to achieve the dream of Digital India.
- As it is a norm by UGC to conduct minimum 25 percent classes online. Online classes can be used for concept building while classroom time will be more productively utilized for discussion, debate and guided practice.
- As no physical presence needed for online learning. It will help those learners who have health problem and who was not able to participate earlier because of the issue.
- The courses on Indian traditional knowledge in the fields of yoga, Indian medicines etc will be able to get integrated with university education as it is having its importance which can be spread at large and thus serve the larger cause of humanity.

- More number of students, especially from tier 2 and 3 cities are expected to adopt different online channels to prepare for competitive exams.
- Government's initiatives such as **SWAYAM**, NPTEL, e-Basta, Digital and others is expected to strengthen, demand of more such courses will be seen and also these initiatives will start providing better results in terms of learning & employability.

Challenges

- In India, infrastructure to run online classes at every place is not ready especially in rural and remote areas where still students face many challenges.
- Still Online platforms which are in trend and are adopted by many teachers and students for conducting online classes are not safe as there are many news that your personal data is stolen by these platforms.
- If we want to develop quality online learning programs that are high input oriented, it requires both time & investment to develop.
- It requires training for many teachers to develop a learning to become familiar with these digital technology.
- One aspect of learning can be achieved through this online mode but still another fold on the part of students to get prepare themselves to be presentable which is must to get job can not only be achieved through online way of learning
- Online learning is not only a collection of video lectures and e-books in the form of word file & pdf but it requires that skills should be developed within learner so to achieve the end result.
- Another measures are timely continuity of learning in government schools and universities.
- As there is no scope of face-to-face interactions most of the times, the learners are bound to feel the absence of direct interactions which sometimes can create distraction for some students to be learned in a disciplined manner.

Findings

- Covid-19 created a new beginning in almost every sector e-learning in higher education sector all across the globe is one of the best example
- Academicians will now be more focused to rethink and reframe the course content along with academic calendar that which portion or part of their educational delivery will be delivered in physical presence and what part will be offered through online mode.
- University and colleges will start more new programs that will be taught through online mode only.
- There will be shift in student movement as some research suggest that students now will opt to study closer to their home in upcoming time upto the time things will not become normal.
- In few coming years, majority of university & colleges will likely to see declines in revenue and increases in costs.
- New ways will come out to judge students learning through online mode and further to evaluate them and giving grades.
- Employers will definitely be looking to recruit those candidates who are very skillful and are adoptable to technology.

Recommendations

- Big universities and government should firstly provide free online courses of various streams to education providers and students so to get the idea and feel of online learning.
- Students get enrolled themselves in free courses easily which make them confident and they won't be hesitate to pay for more once they will go through the online mode of learning
- There should be a mix of Audio & visual aids, interactive, educational simulations, examples using images while designing the online courses which help students to understand and they will also interested to continue the courses.
- Social media platforms can be used by colleges and universities to make students aware about their online courses which will help in getting appropriate revenues.

- Students in rural areas should provide training by trained colleges & universities by visiting villages to make them learn about these digital platforms so to use them efficiently and achieve the objective of benefit of online learning.
- E-learning can be more effective when interaction between the teachers & students is not limited to monologue but additional ways for discussion like the use of emails, discussion boards and chat room is also combined.

Conclusion

In this current crisis, a multi-lateral strategy will help to overcome and manage the situation which will help to build strong and robust education system in the long run and will result in win-win situation for students, teachers and all stakeholders of the society. For this it's a responsibility of every student, teacher to learn the new technology with a full zeal that will help in providing better quality in online mode of education and assured to provide the same benchmark which we thought through physical mode too. Online education should be focused to develop skills that will help students in developing their employability, productivity, health, and well-being in the long run, and ensure the overall progress of India.

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