ONLINE EDUCATION IN INDIA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

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ABSTRACT

Online education is a form of education where students use their home computers through the internet staying away academic institutions. In present time COVID -19 pandemic has affected the normal lifestyle of people across the globe. In this time many institutions schools have also shifted their base to virtual platforms to conduct classes online. Online learning is catering to the needs of all stages of education from pre-primary to university level, online education has emerged as an alternative to ordinary face to face classes. In this pandemic time various stakeholders such as government and private organizations are trying their best to assist each other by sprucing up their existing online platforms. They provide apps and providing training to teachers to use these apps and platforms to the optimum level. They are also provide up skilling and motivating teachers, organizing counseling sessions for stakeholders such as teachers, parents and students are some of the important measures taken by the administration in the recent past. Online education has also brought to Indian society characterized by social inequalities in terms of availability of resources, essential to access these online classes/platforms. These type of digital platform are perpetuating the hegemony of elite schools over the education system, resulting in the digital divide between rural and urban and rich and poor. This paper consists of Objective of the Study, Research methodology, Concept of online education, Challenges during covid-19 pandemic and finally gives conclusion.

Keywords: *Online Education, Corona Crisis, Challenges, Possibilities.*

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Introduction

Online education is a form of education where students use their home computers through the internet staying away academic institutions. In present time COVID -19 pandemic has affected the normal lifestyle of people across the globe. In this time many institutions schools have also shifted their base to virtual platforms to conduct classes online. Online learning is catering to the needs of all stages of education from pre-primary to university level, online education has emerged as an alternative to ordinary face to face classes. In this pandemic time various stakeholders such as government and private organizations are trying their best to assist each other by sprucing up their existing online platforms. During covid-19 pandemic time many schools have employed online learning tools to enable student-teacher interaction. They are use platform like Microsoft Teams, Zoom and YouTube to upload and view teaching content, conduct live lessons, and give and evaluate assignments.

The outbreak has struck at a critical time when last few classes and examinations were to be held to close in the higher education system, the academic year 2019-20. During lockdown time it was not possible to complete the syllabus with the regular classes in many institutions. There has been a major problem of Indian Education system over how and when to conduct examinations. In this time many institution have resorted to online classes to complete the syllabus. But there have been challenges in the case of students in the rural areas in execution and effectiveness of online classes especially.

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Objective of the Study

- To understand the concept of online education.

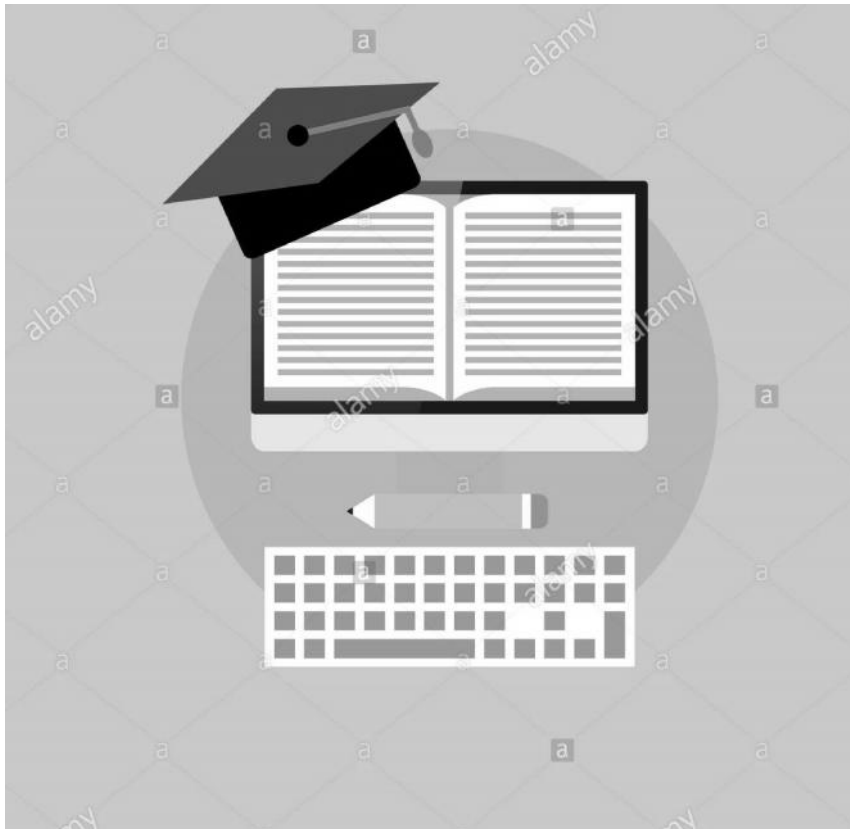- To show challenges and possibilities during covid-19 pandemic.

Research Methodology

This research paper is conceptual and detail 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.

Concept of Online Education

Online learning method is different mode of education that takes place over the Internet. It is often known as "e- learning". Online education is just one type of method of distance learning.

Online learning is a platform of education where students use their personal computers through the internet. Online UG and PG programmes are provided via the online learning portal of the host university, some of which are conducted using digital technologies. Here online education shown by below diagram easily.

Online learning has made our lives easier and comfort. Online services are available for nearly every domain of our life. During covid-19 pandemic time one of the industries that have proliferated its online services is the education industry. In this time, the key reasons behind the boom in e-learning are enhanced productivity with convenient access.

- **Flexibility in Online Learning**

Flexibility is the hallmark of e-learning mode. This provides students feel more at ease. Online learning decreased the student's burden is considerably as online materials and courses are accessible at any hour of the day.

- **Online Education is Cost Efficient**

Online teaching mode is more cost-efficient as the costs of transportation, buying physical copies of textbooks are eliminated. Online learning has enabled teachers to provide various online quizzes, puzzles, games, and perform different kinds of experiments which are more helpful for learner.

- **Tending To The Unique**

Online learning fits perfectly and adds icing to the cake! In this case, it helps them put their energy into learning whenever they wish to so they can do other chores or activities during the day.

- **The Scope of Education Leveraging**

A Science major can now do a course on literature studies at the same time! The limitations of traditional learning are now diminishing day by day. In Online learning student is free to choose the subjects according to the areas of his interests. Online assessments come in handy with the power of digital tools.

- **Wrapping Up Online Learning**

In online learning educators may use different images, videos, and audios to keep the class engaged. As we know that virtual learning is more fun and innovative. In this mode educators can give quick and transparent feedback to the students as the manual evaluation is replaced by digital.

During Covid-19 Pandemic Challenges

- **Barriers of Access and Connectivity**

Many area where children have homes where television and internet facilities are not default features of a household but luxuries that they aspire to have some day. In Online mode it is important to note the background and situation of children for whom having the pre-requisites of digital learning is not a given. Basis of online mode are supply of electricity, availability of a device with stable internet connectivity, basic digital literacy among students are some.

- **To Use Technology Lack of Teacher Preparedness**

In order to make ICT interventions in education effective the importance of knowledge among teachers on how to use technology in the teaching-learning process. The capacities of teachers to conduct classes online ensure that existing online learning modules are being completed by students. Without adequate training and support expecting teachers to seamlessly move to online platforms would be unreasonable, the feasibility of which under current circumstances is questionable.

Parent-Teacher Gap

In online mode there is a question of how to ensure that children get an environment conducive to learning. There would need a certain understanding between parents and teachers so that they give an effective learning space for children. This was a major challenge even during pre-lockdown times. Most parents, on one occasion or the other, had said that they wanted a better life for their child than the one they were living and had requested teachers to guide their children. During lockdown period, parents did not see much of their role except in enrolling their children in school, and registering them for external tuitions. Very few parents attending parent-teacher meetings most principals and teachers shared concerns about. As most parents were part of the unorganized sector where not going to work on time meant sacrificing the day's earnings, and the lack of interest in knowing about their child's academic progress. Parents seldom asked any questions and wanted to "quickly sign on the attendance sheet and go back". These insights from teachers shows to a disconnect between them and the parents. This disconnects between parents and a teacher is likely to act as an impediment in using homes as primary sites of the schooling process.

- **Online Teaching Shows Socio-Economic Disadvantage**

The lockdown has led to half a million migrant population to leave cities and go back to their native towns and villages to add to the inequalities of access, connectivity and relationship with the school. The Covid -19 pandemic crisis has left no semblance of normalcy for them, as daily sustenance is a major cause of concern for many. They should find ways to make their children digitally connect with school or teachers and participate in online classes would be arrogant. In case of the Economically Weaker Section quota are struggling to attend online classes due to the lack of devices and high-speed Internet. They have been unable to take their exams as well. Families with 2 or more child also had their own share of struggles. There is just one phone in the house and they have three children. They have all received tons of homework and they face many problem.

- **Gender Gap**

During lockdown period, girls face a compounded predicament. Due to socio-economic disadvantage their families have been exposed to, the lives of girls have been affected in more ways. The lockdown has meant an increase in domestic responsibilities. More than half the girls interviewed cooked meals for their families before coming to school in the morning. Some of them also got delayed in reaching school on a regular basis because they had household chores to complete before leaving home. The hours they spent in school ended up being the only time they had to themselves and for studying. The current situation of covid 19 pandemic responsibilities and taken them further away from the learning process. Self-learning activities like reading textbooks or practicing writing would thus be more tuff for them to take out time for as would be online classes, compared to their male counterparts.

Conclusion

The covid-19 pandemic situation has thrown up unprecedented and complex issues for us all. It has led to school closures and a disruption of the teaching learning process in the area of education. It has also revealed glaring challenges that stem from economic, social, digital, and educational inequalities while this has opened up possibilities for distance learning. Online learning is also affecting the work and role of the government as well as non-government organizations across states as they are facing challenges due to the recent migration of millions of laborers to their native places. Both the governments like central as well as state will have to make a road map not only for laborers' employment but for the education of their children too. It appears to be a huge task given the great difference in the infrastructure across states in terms of internet and allied facilities. In this time the non-government organizations that support the marginalized sections of the society in terms of health, education and livelihood and also collaborate with governments are facing financial crunch as most of the funds are being diverted to tackle the pandemic. The challenges would not only widen the learning gap on a socio-economic basis but may also make it more difficult for them to catch-up and for us all to realize the promise of education- at the heart of which lies equity and inclusion.

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