



Research Article

Transformational & Innovative Productivity Management in Digital Education: Devising SOP as a Mitigation Strategy for COVID 2.0

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- The purpose of this paper is to emphasize on the need as well as the requirement for immediate transformational and innovative practices in the management of productive digital education/online classes in all educational institutions specifically. Being the second wave of CORONA is at upswing and total uncertainty exists regarding the opening up of educational institutions, therefore digital education must be leveraged in a better way as compared to last year. The author devised the 'SOP – Standard Operating Procedure' for Teachers/Faculty members and Students as well as a code of ethics for online classes.

Design/Methodology/Approach- The paper employs exploratory research design with qualitative as well as the quantitative approach. The Primary data has been collected just on the basis of open ended discussion from the twenty (20) Coordinators/Hods/Principals Five (5) private CBSE/ISCE Schools and HEI's of Meerut city (UP).

Findings- The findings exhibits that educational fraternity is really vulnerable to CORONA impact badly, especially in second phase as uncertainty exists in everyone's mind, However for mitigation purpose, they innovate the progressive teaching practices which have been adopted by them this time so as to make their classes more efficient and productive.

Practical Implication-The findings of the study are critically significant as education in the pandemic situation is in transformation phase and not just confined to physical boundaries of institution premises. Students now have many choices and online options to pursue the courses of their interest level. So the educational institutions need to implement transformational and innovative practices for 360 degree effectiveness.

Originality/Value-This paper adds value to all the educational institutions taken all together for the sustainability through the best possible reach and delivery of digital education in COVID scenario. Furthermore, this paper acts as a catalyst or an eye-opener for Government owned educational institutions for the upliftment of their digital education methodologies.

Keywords-*Digital Education, Online Classes, Transformation, Innovative, Productivity, Educational Institution.*

JEL Classification- *I23 and I21*

1. Introduction:

Digital education or the online mode of delivery of lectures has been showcased the tremendous increment in a COVID-19 times as their was no other option available for learners and well as the educators. Various E-learning applications and modules have been developed for the accomplishment of the same in the last one and a half year. However, in 2020 it had been the initial development phase of online learning and gradually the entire education system accustomed to it all across. In the year 2021 as well, noticing the second drastic wave of CORONA, again the online mode of learning is a talk of town and the only method to survive for educational institutions and fraternity. Their is an utmost requirement of complete innovative transformation in the mode and reach of delivery of digital education for the enhanced productivity management of the same. Especially the private owned institutions (CBSE/ICSE Schools, Universities, Affiliated and Autonomous Colleges) are more oriented for the quality assurance and formation of SOP for online classes which serve as a part of mitigation strategies against pandemic situation.

2. Literature Review:

Keval Padia(2018) indicated the five ways in which digital education is changing the face of education like personalization, diversity, flexibility, digital textbooks & use of multimedia.

Saurabh Kulkarni (2019) in his article concluded that the 'Digital Education' is the future of learning in India.

Indian Express (2020), emphasized in "Digital Education in India" that Indian Institutions are still not ready for Digital Education and facing severe problems currently like internet penetration, network issues, societal causes, parenting issues etc.

Martin, (2020) suggested various dimensions, qualities and characteristics related to the instructors so that students can achieve success in higher education.

All these studies along with many others generally elaborated the digital education as an aggregate and studied it at a macro level. However there is an intense requirement to study the impact and issues at a very minute level being in pandemic like COVID the only survival mode of teaching is online.

3. Rationale and Need of the Present Study:

All the studies conducted till date presents the importance, significance, nature, study, characteristics, advantages etc of online classes/digital classes. Specifically all these studies generally conducted prior to the COVID-19. But post-covid situation had been transformed drastically as the future being quite uncertain and educational institutions are highly vulnerable for CORONA, therefore in these institutions the survival is only through the online class conduction. Last year it was accepted as a challenge with so many distractions and difficulties but in continuation, now the processes need to be transformed, more aligned, productive and innovative in every aspect. Hence this study is based on the same and tried to explore some new dimensions and practices in the field of digital education.

4. Objectives of the Study:

- To assess the productivity of online classes through better reach and delivery of content.
- To implement the transformational, innovative and productive teaching learning environment in online classes.
- To ensure the placement of "Attendance Monitoring Mechanism" and access to every individual student in online classes.
- To formulate the SOP – Standard Operating Procedure for the students taking online classes.
- To formulate the SOP – Standard Operating Procedure for teachers/faculty members conducting online classes.

5. Research Methodology:

Research Methodology applied in this research paper is quite simple and easy to understand and can be depicted as follows:

- 5.1 Research Design is **Exploratory & Descriptive** being the author has explored the various dimensions of online classes and devised the descriptive SOP for need of radical changes and innovative practices required for the same especially in second wave of CORONA.
- 5.2 Research Approach is **Quantitative and Qualitative** in nature as the open ended responses received by teachers/faculty members were codified and analysis was done further. Qualitative data has been used for the formulation of SOP's.
- 5.3 Data Collection method is "**Primary**" which after necessary editing and coding has been analyzed to portray the outcome of the research.
- 5.4 Sampling frame is Private CBSE/ISCE/University/Affiliated schools/institutions of Meerut City (UP) being Meerut is one of the educational hubs in western UP.
- 5.5 Sample Unit & Sample size - It consists of the following five (05) Private institutions. Five (04) Coordinators/Hod's/ Principals & Directors members from each institution have been considered.
 - Shobhit University, Meerut (Private University)
 - Dayawati Modi Academy, Modipuram, Meerut (CBSE School).
 - Dewan VSGI, Meerut (Self managed affiliated HEI).
 - St. Thomas English Medium School, Meerut (ICSE School).
 - Vidya Knowledge Park, Meerut (Self managed affiliated HEI).
- 5.6 Sampling Method is "Convenience Sampling Method" observing the easy availability of concerned persons.
- 5.7 Survey Instrument is a minor questionnaire cum schedule merely with open ended 8-10 questions pertaining to online classes. All dignitaries were personally contacted over phone/whatsapp and the responses have been collected. Questions were generally as follows:
 - 1) Which is the best online class conduction application till date?
 - 2) What is the average attendance (in percentage) in your online classes on a daily basis? How do you monitor the attendance and

what are the measures have been adopted for the same?

- 3) How do you measure the overall quality of online classes in your institution on regular basis?
- 4) Is there any regular mechanism so that the online classes can be monitored for any deficiencies without hindering the reliability and trustworthiness issues of concerned teachers/faculty members?
- 5) Are you overall satisfied with process of online classes in your institution?
- 6) What the innovative and transformational practices adopted by your teachers/faculty members for conduction of online classes?
- 7) What measures have been adopted for the non attending students?
- 8) What remedial actions must be taken by your teachers/faculty members if there are any grievance/problems/issues regarding online classes from the viewpoint of students and teachers?
- 9) What immediate parallel solution your teachers/faculty members are equipped with in case of any hindrance (network glitches especially) while conducting online classes?
- 10) Any other suggestions or recommendations for online class conduction.

1.8 Time frame of the study is fifteen days – 7th April 2021 to 21st April 2021.

1.9 Data Analysis Technique – After collecting responses data has been edited, coded and modified, presented graphically to obtain the results both from quantitative and qualitative perspective.

6. Data Analysis and Findings:

Data Analysis, interpretation and findings aspects have been categorized in two parts as Quantitative Analysis of Survey Instrument (6.1) and the Qualitative assessment as SOP – Standard Operating Procedures (6.2).

7. Quantitative Assessment of Data:

7.1 The findings based on the quantitative assessment of data are stated as follows:

- Microsoft Teams application has been the best rated application for taking online classes and all the respondents are satisfied with the procedure of online classes. However teachers are used whatsapp group of students simultaneously for posting relevant study material to reach out every student.
- Average daily attendance is around 60-70% in schools while in HEI's is around 50-60%. It has been increased as compared to last year.
- Daily reports have been prepared for monitoring the quality of online classes by specific class monitors administered by higher authorities related to various parameters.
- Teachers are designing innovative and case studies based syllabus and making it more interesting and valuable to the students.
- Non attending students have been daily contacted for their issues/grievances /problems and are resolved with the concerned authorities, however major issue is regarding bandwidth and network glitches.
- Immediate options are to reschedule the classes or immediately posting the required material at whatsapp group.

7.2 SOP – Standard Operating Procedures:

School managers and administrators are responsible to provide comprehensive SOP's to the teachers and students of their concerned institutions well in advance for streamlining the process of online classes for enhancing the productivity management of the same.

7.2.1 SOP for Teachers/Faculty Members:

- Teachers must adhere to the time table and schedule of their lectures. One week planner or schedule must be arranged in a digital application in which online classes have to be taken. Mostly all institutions are using 'Microsoft Teams Application'. Lecture must start and end at right time – compliance with time duration of the lecture is mandatory from the part of teachers.
- Teachers must be well groomed, in proper professional attire with I-cards, having a right background, posture, body language and physical appearance with dignified environment is mandatory.
- Teachers must manage the online classes strictly on wider screen especially on laptops, desktops and I-pads. Mobile phones must be strictly prohibited.
- All devices (Camera, Earphone etc), hardware, Network issues and infrastructure (White boards, markers, erase) must be checked and controlled prior to the delivery of lectures.
- The video of faculty members must be 'on' throughout the class and teachers must ensure regular interaction with the students during the class by making the students video on from time to time and asking them to un mute sequentially.

- Teachers must ensure that all the students Ids must be added to their respective classes. Teachers are required to maintain daily online and the physical record of attendance of the students (physical registers) and ensure to maintain the sustainable level of attendance of the students on daily basis by calling the non attending students on regular basis and solving their issues.
- Their will no indiscipline or intolerance of any kind in the online class.
- Teachers must ensure the preparation of course files of their subjects well in advance. Especially the 'E-Content - the presentations in .pdf format' of the concerned class must be prepared in advance.
- Teachers are required to make their classes more and more interesting by infusing the latest case studies, examples and motivating sessions for the students.
- Teachers are required to be in regular touch with their students and parents and try to be bit flexible in terms of their teaching approach.
- Teachers must ensure the daily recordings of their lectures of online classes.
- Teachers are strictly instructed to add the concerned online class monitor in their class and get their class routinely monitored.
- Teachers are required to make a pre arrangement of their lectures in case of any leave or emergency with the prior information to students. Even in case of substitution students must be well informed.

7.2.2 SOP for the Students/Parents:

- Students must adhere to the time table and schedule of their classes. They must be ready with at least one week advance planner or schedule of their classes. They are supposed to attend the lecture on time and finish at right times.
- Students have their digital platforms Id's ready well in advance and are expected to conduct a pilot testing beforehand.
- Students must be well groomed, in proper professional attire with I-cards, having a right background, posture, body language and physical appearance with dignified environment.
- Students are supposed to manage their online classes strictly on wider screen especially on laptops, desktops and I-pads. Mobile phones must be strictly prohibited however in any genuine cases counseling of the parents can be conducted to make them convinced about the issues regarding the same.
- All devices (Camera, Earphone etc), hardware, Network issues and infrastructure (notebooks, pens, geometry box, graph papers etc) must be checked and controlled prior to the entering of the classes.
- Students are expected to have a more meaningful class by interacting and solving their queries in the online classes as well as in the physical classes. Throughout attentiveness and inquisitiveness is deeply required.
- Students are expected to resolve their queries related to Network issues, Ids Generation, Password mismatch etc with their respective coordinators. Parents must ensure that their child's Ids must be added to their respective classes.
- Their will no indiscipline or intolerance of any kind in the online class.
- Students must ensure the receiving of 'E-Content - the presentations in .pdf format' of the concerned class properly on regular basis.
- Students must attend their class seriously in all aspects and keep in regular touch with their teachers.
- Students must take the notes of their classes on regular basis and reconcile their work with the prescribed syllabus on regular basis.

8. Suggestions and Recommendations:

Some of the suggestions related to the conduction of online classes will be as follows:

- 1) Academic priorities must be at the frontier of educational institutions overall in the pandemic situation as in India online class delivery is not given that much significance as compared to physical classes.
- 2) The delivery of online lectures must be as per the "Expected Output Level" taken all the teachers altogether.
- 3) Consistent and regular interaction with the students and their parents especially the non attending ones are highly important. Teachers must try to solve their issues and make them on board of online platform however in critical circumstances regular sending them study material and taking feedback is essential.
- 4) Teachers are expected to adopt flexible approach towards teaching in this situation and have a different psychological approach towards every student individually.
- 5) It is the utmost responsibility of every teacher for the attainment of academic goals and outcomes through the delivery of most effective online teaching methodology.
- 6) It has been globally proved that teaching learning process is not just confined to physical boundaries of the premises of the institutions, rather a differential and a transformation approach in online classes, Therefore every stakeholder must be confined to valuable research and innovative thought process throughout for a better reach and output.
- 7) In case of monitoring the classes, the procedure must not harm the teachers/faculty member dignity and respect in any ways up to a threshold limit. In case if its crossing the limit than the strict action is truly justified.
- 8) Weekly or bimonthly online interaction with parents for evaluating their satisfaction is highly required for smooth conduction of online classes.
- 9) One parallel online platform and network issues backup is necessarily required for uninterrupted conduction of online delivery of lectures.
- 10) Undoubtedly it is true that academic priority is at the topmost but teachers must ensure the fulfillment of other parameters as well like fees recovery from the students, assessment and evaluation, conduction of extra curricular and co curricular activities etc.

9. Conclusion:

It can be truly stated that future is highly uncertain due to pandemic situation once again and in the educational sector and for the attainment of teaching learning outcomes from the viewpoint of teachers and students, only the digital education is the mode to survive. It had been noticed that even after the opening up of institutions physically higher number of parents were not willing to send their children to schools due to COVID risk. Eventually the overall transformation and deployment of innovative practices for overall productivity management in digital education is a need of an hour to be considered as a best possible mitigation strategy in tough times.

10. Limitations of the Present Study:

The major limitations with present study are limited time frame and a very small convenient sample size. Secondly, respondents have been bit hesitant and reluctant to provide the exact picture happening in their institution regarding online classes. Last but not the least, everyone is worried about the current pandemic situation and especially the salary and admissions part once again therefore lacking overall interest in responding.

11. Scope for Future Research:

Being future is highly uncertain due to second wave of CORONA this year even after so much precautions and remedial measures therefore further research can be conducted by increasing the sample size to mire wide geographical area. Even more comprehensive research can be conducted including more demographical variables, parameters and factories extending the same topic. Primary research can be conducted among the students of various institutions so as to asses their perception, satisfaction and overall outcome of online classes.

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