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The role of Online Teaching-Learning at Undergraduate level during COVID-19 Pandemic in India

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ABSTRACT

The scope of online learning in India is much wider. Many online learning portals are conducting mock test for competitive examination of engineering, medical and management .The scope of virtual learning has undergone sea changes due to qualitative improvement and development of Information and communication technology. It has become indispensable to consider online teaching-learning in light of global pandemic to keep the flow of education process continuous. The pandemic disrupted the entire education system throughout the world. In India, government has initiated many efforts towards online learning. In this article, the term online learning is used to refer to distance learning via online mode. To regularize and supplement regular classroom teaching-learning, government initiated Massive Open Online Courses for flipped classroom or blended learning. During pandemic, there has been paradigm shift towards online teaching-learning via internet. In this article, author attempts to study digital transformation from students' perspective during pandemic. The main purpose of this shift is to retain student's motivation in effective teaching-learning.

Keywords: online learning, teaching-learning, digital transformation.

Introduction

The goal of education is learning undoubtedly in any society. Learning effectiveness is the first measure to evaluate any mode of learning, whether physical or virtual/online. The main function of education is to bring integrated individual development capable of dealing with life. The education system as a whole came to standstill at global level due to outbreak of COVID 19

Objective _

aim is to assess the importance of online teaching for undergraduate students during ongoing corona pandemic. This article is an attempt to learn the best practices in online teaching for the future with given digital tools and resources.

Method of study-

Questionnaire was prepared for 100 respondents at undergraduate level including teacher and students

Data collection-

the respondents who were willing to participate were requested to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted two parts-personal details like age, gender, type of programme studying and specific information like mode of online teaching-learning, frequency of usage, primary electronic device, and technology-reception, educational institution. The aim was to find the ways to increase student's retention by identifying the obstacles that impede learning.

Research gap-

there had been scanty study in India during pandemic period to identify and study students' perspective towards transformation of learning. This paper is an attempt to address this lacuna by including in form of questionnaire for analysis.

Limitations-

the study did not address the choice of primary device students' use for online learning to contribute to their perception towards online learning. Study mainly takes into account students perspective and not teachers or facilitators.

Evolution of online learning in India

Online learning started in 1960 with intranet facilities, where computer terminals were linked to provide academic material to students. In 1994, with advent of internet, online learning speeded in formal courses. In India, All India Radio and Doordarshan use to telecast recorded educational programmes for school going children and higher education long back before pandemic also, besides UGC, IGNOU and NCERT. In 1994, paradigm shift in teaching was witnessed with provision o teleconferencing facility at IGNU, New Delhi by ISROU.

In 2020 lockdown due to pandemic, due to advancement in information technology many apps are available and accessible to teachers and learners. At present, the challenge is how to use the available technology and resources for the benefit of students. Following are the teaching tools for teachers

1. Audio recording editing tool-**Vocaroo** tools are an online tool for recording and sharing audio messages. **Audacity** is software for recording and editing audio.
2. Photo editing tool- **Pixlr** is an online tool for editing photos.
3. Multimedia projects-**Rich** Internet applications is a list of alternatives to CLEAR"s for creating multimedia enhanced language learning materials, activities and assessment. **Lingt** is a tool for creating online spoken assignment and even providing feedback to students
4. Collaborative working and writing tool- **GoogleDocs** is a set of applications for creating sharing and collaborating online documents, spreadsheets, presentations etc. **wiki spaces** is an online wiki platform for collaborative writing and discussions.
5. Presentation tool- **Voicethread** is an online collaborative presentation tool that allows for creating multimedia slideshow and commenting using voice, audio file or video. **Prezi** is an online tool for creating zooming and multimedia rich presentations.
6. Video conferencing tool- Skype is software for text chatting, instant messaging and video calling. Zoom is popular web and video conferencing service.
7. Dictionaries and vocabulary learning tool- **Wordreferenc**e is online dictionaries for various languages'. **Lingro** is online tool for converting any website into interactive audio-dictionary. It allows for creating flash card.
8. Video production and editing tool –**Amara** is an online toolf for captioning and translation videos. **Animoto** is tool for creating videos.
9. Websites and e-portfolios- **CampusPress** is available for making professional blogs or website, class publications, newsletters, student organization websites. **Weebly** is platform for creating websites, blogs and e-portfolios using drag and drop method.
10. Classroom delivery-Microsoft systems or Office 365 or Google classroom freely available for educational institutions.

Following websites available for teachers-

1. Scholastic teachable for best teacher resources
2. Book wizard- best for finding books
3. Crayola for educators- for craft projects
4. Daily starters-best way to start the day
5. Common sense media-best reviews for educational tools and apps
6. Scholastic book clubs-best source for books
7. Google earth- tool for map generating capabilities
8. Scholastic news
9. Glogster for making interactive poster or glogs
10. Flocabular
11. Teaching tolerance

Role of Online Teaching-Learning during pandemic in India

Online teaching learning is appreciated during difficult times like war, natural calamities, and pandemic. At present the world is suffering with one such pandemic, the COVID-19. Many schools, colleges and universities had to discontinue face to face teaching-learning to be on safer mode to curtail the spread of virus. The appropriate use of technology can produce better results. The pandemic has completely halted educational practices with social distancing and restrictive movement for unprecedented time period.

During COVID-19 lockdown, the digital learning played pivotal role in schools and universities facilitating learners/students even during closure of institutions to continue with their learning process. Use of relevant pedagogy depends on exposure to Information and Communications technology Due to fixed mindset on part of teachers and students, adaptability of new learning environment is not so easy to adjust and adapt. Many have undergone psychological and emotional distress.

Issues and challenges in online learning in Indian education system

Majority of the respondents of this study reported that online classes were facing many technical constraints, incompetency or lack of skilled training of teachers, learner's inefficacy. The major technical constraints include digital divided society, data limit, poor/uninterrupted internet supply, incompatible devices, non recordable videos. The students faced lots of distraction in learning environment. Majority of students were irresponsible and displayed undisciplined or unorganized behavior. They lack motivation to attend classes and missed the classes' without any logical or genuine reason. Due to online classes continuously, many faced deterioration in their health status like headaches, backache and migration.

Results and discussion

The respondents were both teachers and students. The questionnaire was collected from 100 respondents. There were 40 males and 60 female respondents between the ages of 20- 45 years. Majority of students (80%) viewed that classroom or face to face learning is the best means of learning. 76% of students agreed that online teaching is the best method of teaching. Majority of respondents, both students and teachers, agreed that online teaching-learning is only the way in such pandemic situation. But even this best mode faces certain challenges of network issues.

 An interesting result was found that 65% students were against online exam pattern of exam involving subjective questions than objective pattern in online exam. Students performed better in exams conducted online mode than in physical examination pattern. 57% of students were very satisfied from online learning as they belong to urban areas comparatively to students of rural or semi urban. Synchronized learning increased through lectures via videoconferencing through zoom, Zitsi, Google meet, Skype, Microsoft teams. Students preferred recorded lecture to suit their convenience. They also favored release the recording via You-tube for students to use innumerable times in future.

Another significant finding of the study is relation between technical knowledge or receptiveness on part of both educator and learners and learning process. E-mail was the main tool for the communication towards online learning. Youngsters are more receptive to use of e-mail in their mobile devices for social media like face book, snap chat, instagram, whatsapp etc. on the other hand, the teachers/facilitators were found digitally skeptical toward use of e-mail as regular mode of communication. Study also revealed that users were comfortable with desktop/laptop for online learning device than mobile devices. Digital adoption also proved digital divide of society. Usage of technical device was significantly higher among male students from sophisticated economic background.

At undergraduate level, video or online quizzes do not appear to lure the students. It was also found that entire success and satisfaction of online learning depends on net bandwidth and connectivity and indigenous infrastructural facilities. In the initial phase of online learning, the mode of delivery being absolutely new, many students missed the class room environment and face to face interaction with their faculty. Similarly, the teaching fraternity has to improve e-teaching skills and use more of digital platform efficiently and effectively. There are also issues of attendance and participation in online education of learning community. This article takes into consideration of only student's perception towards online learning during pandemic.

Scope of study-

the study is more relevant in Indian education system where online learning has never been tried at such scale. All the educational institutions had to shift to e-teaching-learning mode of education during pandemic. Thus, it provides ample scope for further research.

Conclusion

Online mode of teaching is new concept in teaching-learning field in India. Knowing the drawbacks and advantages of this new form of teaching, solutions should facilitate to adopt it more in near future at institutional and individual level. In view of the fact of losing academic year/years in future, the need of the hour is o adapt to innovative alternative educational system. The pandemic has provided an opportunity to be flexible and adapt online/digital learning. The problems encountered and experienced by students and teachers and expectation of both will help to plan effected strategies for taking online classes.

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