



## **A Study on the Changing Face of Education in India**

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### **A b s t r a c t**

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The present pandemic situation due to the novel COVID-19 has created many remarkable and significant changes in many walks of our day to day life. This is not concise to a particular place or a person. The entire world is facing many issues in many ways and in big volumes. Every sector is facing abundant pinch in various arena. Major impact of this situation is felt by many sectors of which the education sector has faced many challenges and changes. This is applicable to all stakeholders. There has been major changes this sector is undergoing. This paper is an attempt to study the various changing faces of this sector. This will include teaching-learning during the covid times, the adaptation of the new trend of online education by the students as well as the teachers and how to achieve excellence in higher education system. As we all know, there will be many challenges in the role of teachers in adapting and imparting the technology driven higher education. In this paper would attempt to understand how best we had been able to cope up with this unexpected new system and the road ahead for success.

### **Introduction**

Higher education in the country has been undergoing remarkable changes in the past two decades. Side along, we can witness the new paradigm shift in the Indian education system as per the new education policy whose main focus is on learner-centric and making education more vocational and skill oriented. The conservative and conventional style of teaching and learning has taken a sudden twist with the new innovative educational apps and digital education system adopted in this sector.

It has become more of a commercial sector as the stakeholders view it is as an investment in education.

Parents invest money on their children's education with an expected return on their investment by way of good job opportunities through campus selections etc in a specific period of time. There are tough competitions among the mushrooming growth and establishments of the higher education institutions. There are various new and innovative methods and techniques adopted by these institutes to be ahead in the competition. Although the education sector is undergoing a major change in itself, our aim would be to study the various changes in the teaching learning techniques and the possible challenges and opportunities the sector experiences. In this paper, our focus will be in lines with the recent trend of online learning and teaching because of the covid pandemic.

## Literature Review:

There had been various learning platforms like Khan Academy, Codecademy, Unacademy, Coursera which has gained popularity in the recent past. They offer knowledge to the student community through online tutorials and prerecorded video lectures, live streamed video lectures, interactive quizzes and screen casting. This has brought about a drastic change in the learning process among the student community. The typical conventional method of learning in a class room for a specific duration is completely changed by this way of innovative technology based learning at the convenience of the students at any time for any number of times, has created a red carpet welcome to such modern learning platforms.

The innovation of virtual classrooms not only is advantageous to the student community that they can learn the subject and seek knowledge at any time or any where from any corner of the world, it is equally helpful to the teachers, who can very easily create virtual classrooms, teaching materials, audio visual tools by making teaching easy for them. Above all these types of virtual platform teaching and learning are highly cost effective. These educational trends changes the face of education in the country today.

This kind of learning actually lets students to attend classes from home virtually. They can attend classes through video and access subject matter & content online. The students of today have wide scope of learning and gaining knowledge through the Massive Open Online Courses which is available on Khan Academy, YouTube, EdX, iTunes, Coursera, Udemy, etc. These platforms give the greatest advantage to the students as they get customised matter to their needs and interest. These trends in the recent past is contributing to a major change in this sector. These transformations has actually impacted the teaching and learning process and has witnessed changed lives of the student community today especially in the covid times.

## Pandemic - The Sudden Game Changer:

When the education system already was making drastic changes by itself since the two decades, there came an uninvited guest by name COVID-19 which has created a great impact on this sector. There had been no warning signals for any of the stakeholders. Suddenly, the whole world has been put to a crisis without any direction and leaving the minds in a panic state. Although it was a panic situation, the scene has been very well managed and has created a "new normal" by the educationalists of the country by their quick response to this pandemic situation while following the restrictions of lockdown which is not an easy task. It cannot be said that this is the perfect alternate of the regular normal routine as this new

system is not free from challenges which is discussed below separately.

## Objectives of Research:

- To study the changing scenario in education sector.
- To study the recent changes in teaching-learning during the pandemic COVID.
- To study the challenges and opportunities of the new trend online education.
- To provide valuable suggestions to overcome the challenges.

## Research Methodology:

Research Methodology is the methodology for collection and analysis of data. Depending upon the objectives of the research, data was collected through both primary source as well as through secondary data followed by analysis and interpretations. A small field survey from the various stakeholders were conducted for the purpose of study.

The sampling plan for collection of primary data were as follows:-

- Respondents were selected from Chennai, Bhilai and Durg cities
- Sample instrument- personal interviews with structured questionnaire.
- Sample size- 50 (includes students, teachers, management representatives and parents)
- Sampling technique- Random sampling.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The sudden wave of education has thrust upon e-learning as part of their lives to parents, teachers and students. Although all of them have taken the change so quickly, still it poses lots of challenges to many teachers and students. For teachers, who have been mastering in talk and chalk all these years, it is a huge transformation without adequate exposure to digital platforms. They have to put in more effort and time to design the delivery. Young minds are always very fast in responding and learning. But still they also sometimes face problems in equipping themselves with technical proficiency to decode the material posted in digital mode.

ICT Technology enabled class rooms have created a remarkable transition from the traditional chalk and talk system to the smart classes. Such types of smart way of learning are good for both fast learners as well as slow learners. The fast learners need not spend more time in listening to topics which they understood immediately and can skip to the next level. At the same time, the slow learners can reap the benefit of learning to their speed and go on for repeated number of times for explanations to completely understand the concept of the matter taught of their learning capacity. This may not be

possible in the traditional class room always as there will be mix of all types of student community.

Students are no more interested in any unproductive learning nowadays. They have started looking at courses which would actually help them in providing knowledge that would help them for their career and future. At this juncture, the need of the hour is the concept of blended learning. This is preferred by many foreign countries as well because of its affordability and easy access across boundaries geographically. According to the recent researches conducted on the trends in digital education, it was found that 81% of the students use hand held and mobile devices to study. 48% of the students said that technology helps them understand subject matter better and save time. 77% students say that progressions in technology has helped them improve their grades. 62% students say that technology helps them better prepare for classes and exams.

### Challenges of Digital Learning:

In off line classes personal interaction of Teacher vs Students takes place. Teachers have the ability to understand the mood of the students, perception of the students and related absorption of the subject by them which is not possible in the online methods. Its more of one way as interactive sessions might not be possible to the present technology set up.

There is a possibility that Teachers may think that they had imparted the lessons but the absorption ratio of a class may not be full as many of the students listening skills vary in comparison with off line classes.

In class room teaching many possibilities of analysis happen if the students raise doubts and some times teachers get new ideas to clarify the subjects which is absent in the online classes.

The digital learning although sounds so simple, easy and convenient is not free from challenges.

- The first and foremost challenge to this sort of learning is the adaptability struggle. Transformation from traditional classroom to computer based virtual class room. Here, the learning is totally different as the environment is absolutely different. Many traditional mind set students find such virtual classrooms difficult while those adaptive and flexible students find it as an opportunity to explore the new environment.
- The next challenge that is faced by many students as well as teachers is the problem of technical issues. Many of them are not having the facility of good data support in their handsets or wifi connections. Poor internet connections is a major obstacle in such learning mode. Also many students

or teachers may not be financially strong to afford a own desktop or a laptop.

- Lack of computer literacy from both the students as well as teachers is another challenge. Technological knowledge is a must for online learning, as it has become need of the hour to not only learn online but to give their exams and assignments in online.
- Another major challenge is lack of self-motivation which is an essential requirement for any learner.

The management and heads would find difficulty in knowing the effectiveness of online learning and to monitor teachers' performances also in this system of learning.

### Findings:

- It has been found that for many students, mobile phone options are not comfortable.
- Most of the students do not have the facility of mobile phones especially the government schools and college students and students who come from remote villages.
- Many students do not understand properly the subject taught in online mode and complaint for lack of effectiveness in teaching online.
- While talking about school education in the pandemic, most of the schools in the cities have started their online classes from May 2<sup>nd</sup> week. This is mainly for commercial purposes as opined by few parent respondents.
- To pay off the salary to its teachers, few educational institutions started online classes so early to collect tuition fees.
- There had been no scientific study made for online education (too much of pressure to students, staff and parents).
- Not proper care was taken about the norms for online classes.
- There has been no stipulations made by the schools or colleges running online classes for the screen time .
- None has actually thought about the possible pros and cons of continuous online learning by students. No pilot study has been carried out.
- Some students and parents also say that there had been no inquiries to them as to whether online mechanism is acceptable by them or not, by the institutes ?
- There are certain questions which were unanswered by the respondents related to whether teachers were trained by any institution to teach online ?

- Some questions from the parents side while in interviews and phone talks were: Whether teachers did any innovative way to teach online or doing the same old method in new platforms?
- Some teachers say that they had difficulty in teaching subjects like Maths, physics where formulas and diagrams are frequently made.
- Both students and teachers accept that activity based teaching-learning is totally zero in this mode.
- For many students as well as teachers, Mobile data issues and social problems are persisting.
- Few of the respondents were such families with two children one in college and the other one in high school, having a single smart phone for the whole family.
- Interpersonal learning has become very difficult.
- Most of the teachers says that they feel that there is no connect with the student.
- It is the general and common opinion of both teachers and students that the assessment techniques need to be changed.
- Students and parents wants some new method of teaching should be thought about by teachers.
- Digital classroom is a must for such teaching and learning.
- As how the Mid day meal program became effective in schools, like wise the online teaching would also become effective in due course.
- Many parents and teachers are worried about the possible health issues that this system of learning would bring in to both the learner and the taught as there is more screen timing witnessed by parents.
- Students comment that sometimes, as there is no physical connect with the students, the teachers tend to rush through the lessons without giving any pause or break which makes the students feel very bored and make them passive listeners.

## Conclusion:

To put in a nutshell, although there has been many problems and challenges in adapting to the new trending online system of learning and teaching, it will be managed with the due course of time. It is very much at its infant stage in our country. It will definitely take time to resolve the threats and issues associated with it. One should find a solution to overcome these challenges by creating opportunities for collaborative learning and providing hands-on learning activities in online mode itself for numerical and practical based subjects. Certain amount of attitudinal changes and technological literacy will help in providing and developing confidence to succeed. But as per the words of many professors who

have several years of experience, no technology or automation can replace human interface in a class room.

## Recommendations:

- If proper technological support is provided for the teachers and students depending upon the courses taught and learnt the problems in online classes can be easily overcome.
- We can bring the best out of the teachers in the sense that this is the best possible opportunity for a teacher to prove his/her credential and creativity in their area as they will take extra effort due to the digital learning platform as we find both students as well as parents are attending lectures of the class.
- Proper care has to be taken for the possible computer vision syndrome.
- Also due care has to be taken for the possible radiation risks, neck pain, impact on eyes and brain by the continuous use of the mobile phones for online learning, etc.
- Through online classes, the teacher can induce learner motivation, interest and involvement by making them decide what to learn, how to learn, and when to learn etc.
- Immediate measures has to be taken to curtail the education gap by having proper connection with the student community in these hard times.
- For the purpose of active engagement in the virtual class, the teacher should have a well-planned sequence of activities for the class.
- Teachers in the system should not over burden the students by giving many tasks for a very short period of time. They should try to conduct the classes as they do in the normal regular physical classes only. They are over burdening students with more evaluative practices which will definitely cause lack of interest to both student as well as parents whose children need their guidance frequently making the online learning a bitter experience.

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