



Virtual and Classroom Learning in Higher Education during Pandemic : A Case Study

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Abstract - The purpose of this paper is to show the impact of technology on education in every sphere. During pandemic people had to change from their work of physical mode to online mode. No doubt as the things gets normal now still many big organizations like Google are promoting two days work from home and three days' work in organization as they realize they really saved a lot by adopting such propaganda. E-Learning has become a necessity in higher educational institutes and is being deployed throughout the world. Rise of E-Learning technology used by the higher education can be attributed to globalization. The Government of India and the University Grants Commission (UGC) has come to a realization that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in higher education would bring the benefits into the current higher education system. Initially faculty faced a lot of dissonance towards the student's engagement during a lockdown. But the students responded way better and the attendance was many times better than regular classes. There were various initiatives from the Ministry of Human resource management (MHRD), an offering of free Swayam Courses. Basically, this is review based paper which is helpful to express the importance of both virtual as well as classroom learning in higher education.

Keywords – Virtual, classroom, ICT, Pandemic, E- Learning.

Introduction : As the Covid pandemic reached India, people had to change from their physical work to online modes of doing works and studying. All the sectors have adapted to online modes of doing works. They either did it voluntarily or they had to adapt to it. The ones who did not, have to close up their works, professions and businesses. As the things are getting back to normal now, still the businesses and large companies like Google are promoting 2 days of working from home and 3 days of working in office because these large businesses have realized that they save a lot on costs. Not just the businesses are benefiting from the online conversions, the educational institutions and their students are also benefiting from it. Many colleges and institutions have started offering distant learning courses apart from the regular classroom courses they were earlier offering. This has expanded the student base for the colleges and universities and the students also benefited from it by choosing the universities from which they would like to study and that also at a lesser price than the regular classroom courses offered.

The students from foreign countries were also benefited from this step. They could easily take admissions in the universities in a different country which could grant them high quality education at affordable cost. This granted them wide options to choose from. E-Learning has become a necessity in higher educational

institutes and is being deployed throughout the world. Rise of E-Learning technology used by the higher education can be attributed to globalization. The internet has become one of the vital ways to make available resources for the research and learning both for teachers and students to acquire information. The Government of India and the University Grants Commission (UGC) has come to a realization that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in higher education would bring the benefits into the current higher education system. The use of ICT in the traditional systems is bound to have a significant impact on the overall education system by enhancing the accessibility of the adverse education opportunities and improving its quality within minimum costs. For maximum benefits of E Learning at minimum costs, proper policies and strategies must be implemented to integrate the available local technologies with the current education system. To meet the increased demand for the flexible learning systems in the local and international market today, UGC in India has resolved to take advantage of ICTs to improve virtual education through E-Learning in most of its institutions of higher learning.

The Covid-19 lockdown brought a challenge for the teaching faculty also. They had to look this from a positive perspective and identify this as an opportunity to go for virtual classroom, virtual learning and teaching. With the crisis there is a wide adaptation of technology in teaching and learning process. Many institutions conducted faculty development programs online to gear up the positivity among the faculty during crisis. Initially faculty faced a lot of dissonance towards the student's engagement during a lockdown. But the students responded way better and the attendance was many times better than regular classes. There were various initiatives from the Ministry of Human resource management (MHRD), an offering of free Swayam Courses. Many institutions subscribed for the free online courses for the students during the lockdown. Though, both teachers and the students adapted to the changes. For some it was not at all a problem and they adapted to it easily but for some it was a difficult task. To understand and adapt to changes like which platforms to use, technical issues and problem faced by the students due to the lack of internet facility in the rural parts of the country were ultimate challenges. Many students and teachers also missed the traditional learning and teaching technique the old chalk and talk method. Some were not able to develop their interest in the new method. The adaptation to new method also took a little more time due to shift to online mode and making of new IDs for students. This all led to a little bit slowdown but ultimately changes were made and finally adapted to.

Review of Literature : The effect of Covid-19 on the Education System was a very heated topic because it affected the performance of the youth, the upcoming generations who will have to prove their capabilities to manage the country. Experts have given their opinions about the positive and negative impacts that took place because of this change, because they were concerned about the future of the country and concerned that whether the online learning system had a bad impact on the performance of the students in academics.(Li et al., 2014) have focused upon behavioral engagements among students by making a comparative analysis of both traditional learning and E- learning. Study revealed that there is no significant difference between the engagements of active learning in both traditional as well as virtual learning. Study further revealed that through online learning students can appraise their innovative as well as critical thinking .(Suleri & Suleri, 2018) their paper aims to show the relationship between virtual Learning, classical classroom learning and blended learning in higher education. Study recommended that educators as well as institutions should use modern technology in a viable manner. They should design their curriculum and method of teaching in such a way that is beneficial for the students at campus as well as distant level. Study further revealed that their should be blended learning in higher education.(Prasad et al., 2013)through their study conclude that due to the ever-growing availability of broadband internet

connectivity, minimum hardware cost and evolution of Internet and its web technologies, online education is a reusable resource that has potential to overcome the difficulties of traditional education system to include every student in the education process. It can be established to enable higher education institutions in rural and remote areas.(Saxena, 2017)explained that while there is a positive trend regarding the adoption of digital learning in India, poor internet connectivity in smaller towns and semi-urban areas form the primary impediment towards widespread adoption of this technology driven learning. According to her, this massive potential of learning tools such as gamification, video-based learning, competency training etc. can only be realized once the issues are circumvented. (Tiruwa et al., 2018) focused on the impact of various internet-based sites like Facebook, twitter on higher education. These social network sites also provide two way communication between educator and learner.Study further suggested that Facebook provide such type of environment which is similar to small study groups where people can easily share their knowledge as well as material.(Singh & Pegu, 2014)focused on their research to examine the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the higher education in India. The ICT has brought a tremendous change in the higher education, but India still has to achieve a higher level of IT adaptation in education sector. (Ali Biswas & Nandi, 2020) discuss the problems that teachers and students have to face in a virtual classroom and how they can overcome them. They say about the effect of globalization on the technology and how it led to its positive improvements.(Chatterjee & Nath, 2015) explain how Massive Open Online Courses have evolved as a new paradigm of digitized open education which could be implemented in massive domain of India. In developing country like India where significantly large number of people live in rural areas and cannot afford quality education, MOOCs can definitely be considered as game changers. So, all these researchers have given invaluable information regarding how Virtual Learning can reform the education system. They made us aware about what the traditional education system lacked how E-Learning can eliminate those limitations. They were resourceful pieces of information because they gave ideas of how to implement the new E-Learning system successfully, what were the hindrances in its implementation and how they can be easily and successfully removed.

Research Methodology : This is a review-based paper, secondary data will be used, where different articles taken from the internet and studied in detail and close as per the research goals. All articles have been read then make a comparative study of both virtual as well as classroom learning.

Comparing the Physical Classroom and E-Learning : The effectiveness of classroom and e learning often becomes the issue of debate. Following are the few points that can help us see both classroom and e-learning so that we can have a choice in context to our requirements.

1. Nature: The classroom training allows the learners to personally interact with the instructor and other learners in the live environment. There is always somebody in the classroom to motivate and assess the performance of learners in the classroom. E-Learning on the other hand depends on the electronic media to interact with the fellow classmates and teachers. The E-learners have to be self-disciplined to gain benefit from the e-learning course.

2. Training Requirements: Presenting huge piles of information in the classroom to teach the basics of any subject in today's fast paced working environments cannot be a preferable choice. E-Learning is definitely

a better choice in comparison to classroom learning when it comes to providing information with respect to many learners understanding the concept. Teachers can benefit from e-learning in the form of e-books, online manuals, online handbooks, audio and videos to transmit huge information. It can ensure consistent learning experience for the learners.

3. Learner's Requirements: The main aim of classroom training is to focus on presentation of a lot of information, including basics and least allows for the interacting course. E Learning course is developed on the basis of sound instructional designing strategies and adhere to adult learning principles as well, they can be highly beneficial and engaging for the adult learners. They are more likely to go after this course because it allows them to experiment, practice, perform and acquire required skill. But still some learners may lose interest in the self-paced, self-driven e-learning course

4. Cost Benefits: Classroom training requires the presence trainer or teacher each and every time a course is supposed to be delivered which increase the travel costs. Researches show that e-learning is more cost effective than the classroom training. Corporates can easily save with the range of 50% to 70% on training, when they replace the instructor led training with e-learning. E-learning course can be developed once and used multiple time for training requirements.

5. Tracking of Learner's Process: The tracking of the learner's progress is usually done manually in classroom learning which sometimes result in the incorrect recording of data. This process of recording also consumes huge cost, efforts and manpower. E-Learning courses are given on the Learning Management Systems (LMSs), a software platform, for tracking or monitoring of learner's progress automatically and in an efficient manner.

6. 24/7 Access to Learning Materials: In Classroom Learning students and university course students have to visit the location physically to speak with tutor's face to face during assigned hours which can be limiting for working professions neither the recording of the lectures is available afterwards so that they can take notes. With E

Learning, students can always access learning materials as per his requirement through various sources such as module contents, assignments, lecture materials, podcasts and recorded sessions anytime during their course of studies. Module tutors are always there to assist them through calls, emails, messages etc.

7. Practice while you Study: In Classroom learning students have to leave their jobs and social commitments to complete their degree programme, they will only be able to practice new knowledge once they have joined the workforce. Online Learners can fit studies around their working schedules, and can immediately practice new concepts learned by applying them in the current scope of work.

8. Instructor Focused vs. Learner Focused: The instructor led course or classroom learning course have far more chances of human error. The instructor may be presenting same information many times in a day in different sequences formats and with different examples and also forgetting certain information or adding something extra. The way he or she gives lecture also depends on the personal mood.

In E-Learning the learner has freedom to go back and listen to the information he missed upon to. The information will be presented to him in the same manner and he can learn and retain it better.

9. Level of Personalization: The problem with the traditional methods of teaching is that often a lot of information is presented in a very short period which makes it harder to pay attention or retain for the students. The time constraint problem can be easily detected and covered up in E- Learning by presenting the material as per the requirement of the learner. Moreover, E-Learning tends to be structured in different segments that are easier to digest and easier to work into a busy schedule.

10. Learning Time: In traditional learning the teachers can compress an hour of course into a half hour lecture with their skills and deliver it to the student's which students can write down in their notes which

will further help them to revise those compressed notes faster. Though an E-Learning course has fewer minutes, but the course itself typically span over a longer period because learners are taking smaller amounts of time over more days.

11. Media to Use: The instructor in the traditional classroom scenario can't directly transfer to the virtual environment without the use of other tools that can be used to adapt. E Learning provides a greater range of media use like simulations, interactions, scenarios, and visual storytelling, moving graphics, colors, fonts etc.

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