



Problems faced by University Teachers in Online Teaching-learning Process due to Covid-19

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Abstract : The whole educational system from all school levels to Higher education level has hit a roadblock during the lockdown period not only in India but across the globe. Lockdown was implemented on March 22, 2020 to counteract COVID-19, which had a serious effect on the nation's educational system. The old educational system has been changed, and the teaching and learning process is now conducted online. To better understand "Problems experienced by University Teachers in Online Teaching/Learning Process Due to COVID-19", this research also includes a survey. The survey was conducted among the teachers working in Government and Private Universities of India, data collected to Google form and MS Excel is used to analyse the data. The findings revealed about four different types of barriers faced by the teachers during online teaching/ learning process. They are connectivity issues, external distraction, health issues among teachers and problems in virtual engagement.

Keywords : Online education, virtual engagement, Covid-19, Lockdown.

Introduction - COVID-19 is a severe acute respiratory syndrome which was first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and since then has spread globally. The common symptoms include cough, fatigue, fever, shortening of breath, and loss of smell and taste. With the enormous spread of the pandemic in the second week of March 2020, the central government announced complete lockdown and began shutting down all the public places where there are chances of gathering and possibilities of spreading the diseases. These places include School, colleges, University, Offices, restaurants, cafes, gyms, parks, and other places where there would be any chance or possibilities of spreading of this disease.

Despite of Covid-19 being around for more than one year, it is still influencing our lives, at the time of writing this paper total 11.4 million people of India were affected by Covid at some point of time, out of which 11.1 Million got recovered and 159 thousand died of Covid-19 (as of 21st March 2021)¹. It was a difficult time for all of us and preventing ourselves from Covid-19 is a tough task. It has been a difficult time for all the teachers, wherever in the world. We cannot deny this fact. For creating an effective class along with engaging each student was quite complicated as many learners were unaware of the technology, some students are residing in remote areas where internet connectivity is a far-fetched dream are the major challenges from teachers' perspective. Teachers were left with no option but to adopt to the online mode of teaching as the alternative of traditional teaching. This study focuses on challenges and problems faced by university teachers in online teaching-learning. The major challenges have been:

a) Accessibility to Technology

Not every child is residing in a perfect place where there was a chance of having good internet connectivity, although only 29% of India's total population had mobile internet which was quite less in number. Both students and teachers must have the required equipment and a reliable internet connection in order to study online.

b) External Distraction

As the classes are being conducted in an online mode so maintaining discipline and decorum in the classes are quite tough, sharing screen with students which many of the students used as an opportunity for mischief. At the beginning of Online teaching, the unmuted mics end up creating unwanted background noises which also impact the teaching-learning environment. Hence, taking control of the class were a prominent task for teachers.

c) Health issues in teachers due to online teaching

Salman Khan the founder of the well-known educational website Khan Academy refers to online classes as "quarantine classes." Teachers in virtual modes experience back and shoulder pain as a result of having to sit in one place throughout classes while using mobile devices or PCs to connect with their students online. Their eyes were severely damaged by the brightness of their laptops and mobile devices. During online sessions, the majority of the teachers wear headphones, which causes ear-related issues for them.

Challenges in Virtual engagement - Maintaining a smooth communication between students and teachers is a tough task. Discussion, Question-Answer session don't go as expected. Sometimes even students not reciprocating at all. There are instances when students fail to reciprocate to the queries raised by the teachers. Moreover, many a time multiple student start responding to the questions simultaneously which creates a lot of chaos, and the class ends up deviating from the original point.

Amit Joshi, Muddu Vinay and Preeti Bhaskar (2020) examined a survey on impact of coronavirus pandemic on the Indian education sector, Researcher used the Interpretative Phenomenological analysis (IPA) of qualitative research methodology. In their study, the major finding of the study was to be revealed that four categories of barriers that are faced by teachers during online teaching and assessments such as

¹ Source: Ministry of Health and Human Welfare, India (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>)
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budget for purchasing advanced technologies, lack of technical support, lack of clarity and direction were reported.

Dr. Babita Dubey, Dr. Shivendra Singh (2020) studied the Perception of teachers on online teaching in higher education during COVID-19 Lockdown. The researchers used One-way ANOVA and t-test to analyse the data. The major findings of their study revealed that online education is online diversifying knowledge of the teachers and increasing the technical knowledge, but it also has increased the working hours of teachers.

Chrysi Rapanta et al (2020) examined the Online University Teaching during and after the Covid-19 crisis. The finding of the study was that there is need to adapting assessment to the new learning requirements.

Elske Ammenwerth (2017) studied the changing role of university teacher in online instructional environments. The major finding of their study revealed that online teaching is boon for teachers as well as for the students because it is promoting self-paced, student-centred, cooperative, and social learning. The role of university teachers thus needs to be reconsidered.

Dr Seema Sareen et al (2020) online survey was on the challenges faced by teachers during online teaching. Total number of participants for the study were 3550 from different schools. The finding of the survey revealed that about 82% of the teachers are taking online classes for the first time.

Berry A. Barr et al (2013) examined the Higher Education: The Online Teaching and Learning Experience and finding of their study was used as an assessment tool for improving teaching and evaluation pattern.

Mansureh Kebritchi, Angie Lipschuetz and Lilia Santiago (2017) studied the Issues and Challenges for Teaching successful Online courses in Higher Education: A Literature Review. The Researchers used qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approach to collect the data, Content analysis approach was used to analyse the data. The major findings were issues related to online learners, instructors and content development.

Objectives of the Study- Following are the main objectives of the Survey-

1. To study the methodology adopted by University teachers via online mode
2. To analyse the issues faced by faculty when teaching online

Research questions

- I. What are the methodologies adopted by the University teachers via online mode?
- II. What are the major challenges faced by university teachers in online teaching?

Methodology- A descriptive survey design was used in the current study. The objective of the online survey was to examine the difficulties or issues encountered by educators when providing online teaching. Due of the difficulties involved associated with this pandemic scenario, respondents freely engaged in this poll through the use of the internet.

Sample - Total 51 teachers from Central Universities, recognized private and government aided college of India participated in this survey. Out of which 14 participants were female and 37 were male participants.

Tool used- A questionnaire about the difficulties university professors have with online instruction was used to gather the data.

Statistical analysis- The data was analysed by computing mean-scores and converting it into percentage.

Data analysis and Interpretation - In total 51 participants took part in the questionnaire survey, out of which 14 were female respondents and 37 were male. The sample population came from the different Universities to maintain the authenticity of the results as much as possible.

Results and Discussion- The major problem faced by university teachers is the virtual engagement with the students. Teachers conducting online teaching are facing difficulty as they get distracted due to unwanted noises. This can be authenticated by the responses of question number 3.

Further, respondents are also facing problems in teaching-learning processes such as two-way interaction and Laboratory works is also difficult here which is reflected from responses from question number 8 and 10.

Online teaching-learning has impact on health of the respondents as they are facing back-pain and eye-sight issues due to prolong sitting which is showcased in responses of question no. 13 and 14.

The detailed analysis of all the question can be found in the below table.

S. No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Students in the class are not well-equipped with the high-speed internet connection required for online video conference/classes.	27.5%	51.0%	11.8%	9.8%	—
2	Students lack knowledge of technology and computer applications required for their online classes.	9.8%	19.6%	29.4%	33.3%	7.8%
3	There is distraction during live sessions due to technical issues such as unwanted noise, echo.	33.3%	54.9%	—	5.9%	—
4	The issue of ghost joining is very common among students.	13.7%	31.4%	31.4%	15.7%	7.8%
5	There are problems in interacting with students during online classes.	27.5%	52.9%	—	11.8%	—
6	Completing full syllabus of the courses in time is a big challenge.	17.6%	33.3%	19.6%	23.4%	5.9%
7	Virtual engagement of students during online teaching/learning is tough.	25.5%	51.0%	15.7%	7.8%	—
8	Communication with the new students (I semester) is a big challenge during the virtual classes.	37.3%	31.4%	7.8%	23.5%	—

9	There are problems in searching contents for the class:	5.9%	13.7%	23.5%	49.0%	7.8%
10	There are problems in Laboratory work in online mode of teaching/learning.	51.0%	23.5%	21.6%	—	—
11	Supervision during exams are comparatively easier for the teachers in virtual mode.	5.9%	19.6%	29.4%	29.4%	15.7%
12	Evaluation in the online exams is fair for the students.	9.8%	31.4%	25.5%	25.5%	7.8%
13	. With prolong sitting hours back-pain is a major issue.	35.3%	41.2%	19.6%	—	—
14	Facing eye-sight issues due to prolong screen time is common.	49.0%	35.3%	13.7%	—	—
15	. There is a problem in reconciling work time and home time during work from home.	37.3%	43.1%	11.8%	5.9%	—

Online teaching-learning has impact on health of the respondents as they are facing back-pain and eye-sight issues due to prolong sitting which is showcased in responses of question no. 13 and 14.

Conclusion- It can be concluded from data analysis that the major problems faced by the teachers were related to connectivity, communication, physical well-being while adapting to online mode of teaching/learning processes due to Covid-19. Online teaching can be considered as a stop gap arrangement to ensure the students do not end up losing a precious academic year because of this Pandemic. Though this arrangement has been a boon for the students and has its own benefits as it allows students to connect with the teachers and mentors who are located far away geographically. However, in a developing nation, such as India, which ranks 131 in terms of mobile internet speed and 63 for broadband speed² across the globe, equity in accessibility to technology is still a teething issue for the masses. Moreover, for teachers who have been accustomed to the traditional mode of teaching switching to the online mode is like an Everest to climb. Until and unless the aforementioned challenges are dealt with and we are ready with proper countermeasures, in all likelihood, given the opportunity both teachers and students are bound to return to the conventional mode of learning, as soon as everything gets normal.

²Source: Speedtest Global Index by Ookla (<https://www.speedtest.net/global-index>)
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