

IMPACT OF CORONA PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN ON LEARNING AND TEACHING

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Abstract

Online education was one of the consequence of Corona Lockdown. Work from home concept was imposed by lockdown. The education system was not prepared for online education. They didn't had infrastructure and skilled personnel. There was no time for training and preparation. Online education raised as an alternative for formal education in the lockdown period. It was no choice situation, so accepted. It makes great impact on whole education system. The gap between reality and expectation was much more than expected. Still online education was started with possible technology. Teacher learned e-skills and parents with students, prepared themselves for new mode of education. The paper describes the nature of learning and teaching in online mode.

Keywords– online teaching, new normal in education, post pandemic education, education in lockdown, work from home, e-skills, e-content, corona, covid-19



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1. Background:

Corona virus which leads to Covid-19 disease which has no vaccine or proper medicine appeared in 2020 to shake the world. To stop its infection spread many countries form the world declared lockdown to keep people in their houses. Nationwide lockdown was declared by Central Govt. of India from 24th of March 2020, for 21 days to prevent Corona pandemic. On 14th of April, central govt. extended the nationwide lockdown till 3 May, which was followed by two-week extensions starting of lockdown 3rd and 17th of May 2020 with substantial relaxations. From 1st June 2020, the government started unlocking the country.

During the period of Corona lockdown i.e. 24th of March 2020 to 31st of May 2020 'Work from Home' principle was accepted in all business and professions. In Education field online education was promoted. Schools and colleges were closed but education was going on due to online education. Synchronous and asynchronous modes of online interaction were used for online education.

There were lots of issues regarding availability of devices, gadgets and internet for online education and the lack of training was on the other hand. Most of schools in India were not having facility of online education. Many teachers were not having the facility at home.

Students were facing same issues at their end. Still online education was the only alternative for education so online education was practiced.

Google classroom, Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft team, Webex, YouTube etc. were mostly used platforms for education. Smart phone was the best possible device for interaction.

2. Impact of Corona Pandemic Lockdown on Learning

The impact of online education can be observed at the greatest level on learning process. Because of lockdown, face to face education was not possible. Online learning mode was adopted. Students and teachers were not psychologically and technically prepared for it.

Humans are social animals and teaching learning is a social interaction. Students are familiar for face to face learning, not able to get connected with teachers in online mode. Face to face interaction is full of aliveness. Students and teachers like the face to face interaction with each other. Due to online education, learning becomes more technical rather human. Because of medium of technology, students and teachers were not feeling to get connected with each other. Because this social interaction was missing, traditional learners were not able to learn properly in online mode.

Corona pandemic lockdown forced to learn in distance mode. Even they receive learning experiences from teachers; they do not get connected as impressively as face to face mode. There were many technical limitations for two way interaction hence interaction is not so effective in online mode. Technical limitations force teachers not to ask questions and not to involve students in the classroom. Even if students want to ask the queries, technical barriers disallow it. Unless the doubts in understanding not are being cleared, learning is not effective. Hence teachers did not get proper feedback from the students regarding learning. Because of the gap of teacher's expectations and students learning the new element of the knowledge do not properly connected with the old element of the knowledge.

This creates a gap between the understandings about the students learning. Teacher has to understand the right status of the students learning and she has to ask the question to the students to evaluate the learning. Because of time consent and technical barriers it was not possible properly.

Learning material was provided in the form of Power Point Presentations, PDF file, video links etc. Learners required good connectivity to watch the videos which was generally missing. Either students have to see PowerPoint presentation or PDF file on screen or they

have to take the print out. If they want to watch on the screen; mobile screen size is not big enough or suitable to read. If they want to take print, printer is not available in every family. Taking print of each and every learning material is not affordable for the families. In the absence of proper learning material, learners face difficulties.

Corona pandemic lockdown situation offered opportunities to the teachers to explore new learning experiences. Teacher explored different learning experiences like animations, videos, interactive software etc. and used for learning. Students more curious in technology and show interest for the learning. In this journey students also were exposed to different ICT tools to learn something new.

Student comes to know about different aspects of content because they were exposed to different learning materials. It went beyond the books and notebooks. They found lot information on the Internet and they got different in-depth points of the same content. In this way learning becomes more versatile well supported by technology, teachers and parents supported. Have-nots students were left behind in the online education and digital divide was widened.

In some families, only one smart phone is there and it has to be with the parents. If parents want to go on the work, their children do not able to join online classes and hence they are away from the learning. In some families more than two siblings having the classes at the same time but they do not have separate learning devices like smart phone, laptop, and desktop computers for the learning, hence someone has to absent for the online classes. In spite of desire to join online classes, this technical difficulty disallow learner to learn. So COVID19 created a digital divide among students. Haves and Have-nots are having different learning attainment.

Most of family don't have separate rooms for study. A student seating in the common room in a house, would be disturbed by different activities carried out by family members e.g. cooking, cleaning, eating etc. Learning is surrounded by many obstacles in this online mode of education. In educational institutions, in face to face mode; learning environment is created for students and their comfort is taken care. They can feel the mental preparedness for the learning and it is the dedicated place for the teaching and learning. Such a dedicated arrangement is missing in the online education.

Technology really helped in the COVID-19 lockdown situation. It helped to continue the education process by keeping physical distancing. On the other hand because of non-

availability of the technology resources it becomes obstacle in learning for some learners. Non availability of smart phone, computers, laptops, internet connectivity, and electricity etc. are proven learning obstacles. Because of the poor internet connectivity students and teachers disconnected frequently and the continuity of the content is broken. Hence learning does not occur.

Due to the use of technological means, some physical problems possible to be occurred for students. Continuous watching the screen causes to create eye sight problems. Improper seating arrangements created back pain issues among students. Because of lack of proper sitting arrangement for the online learning, back pain is possible.

In this pandemic, students became more independent for learning in the absence of direct live interaction with the teachers. They started taking help of internet, started exploring different study materials other than provided by the teachers. Teachers also encouraged students for self-learning by providing links of different learning material. Though students had some queries they used to find answers, because asking questions online was not so easier due to technical limitations.

Students showed their mischievous behaviour by using some features of app to disturb a class like e.g. mute-unmute, annotations, chatting, entering other class, funny profile names, sharing links of meeting to other class students etc. This act also created hindrances in learning.

Parents were also involved in learning process because students were learning from home. Parents were observing lessons and sometimes making comments and unnecessary critique. This act could also affects student's perspective about teachers. Somewhere learning can be affected.

3. Impact of Corona Pandemic Lockdown on Teaching

Online education that is 'working from home' makes teachers more techno- savvy. Most of the teachers were not technically enabled for online teaching. After declaration of lockdown, schools started online. Teachers were encouraged to teach online. To deliver best teachers started learning online skills.

Initially, teachers started preparing content in the form of PDF, Image file, Power Points, videos etc. Most of the teachers were enabled to prepare Power Point Presentations so they started making it full with content. To make these presentations more effective, teachers

learned to search various educational resources online. They also learned to find out a use free learning resources for students. They became smarter explorer of the knowledge.

There are two modes of online education for teaching i.e. synchronous and asynchronous mode. In a synchronous mode teachers learned to make use of various online conferencing apps e.g. Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft team etc. for teaching. Most of teachers learned these online conferencing tools by their own. Some schools provided formal training online. In spite of lots of technical difficulties and non-availability of technical resources; teachers learned lots of ICT tools during the lockdown to cop up with online mode.

Teaching became more challenging to handle online classes. Some students were smarter and more techno savvy than a teacher. Classroom management, answering students' queries, motivating for better learning, mischievous behaviour by using various online features by students etc. were the obstacles in synchronous online teaching.

An asynchronous mode of teaching was used to share resources which can be accessed by anytime i.e. Google classroom, WhatsApp and Telegram groups etc. Teachers learned to share various learning resources with the students. WhatsApp and Telegram groups were created to communicate instructions and learning resources. Google Classroom was one of the most used all asynchronous mode tool in the lockdown. These classrooms were playing important role to share learning material, instructions, meeting links etc.

Initially, teachers took help of readymade YouTube videos for teaching. Later Teachers learned to create videos by using mobile, laptop, screen recorder, editing video and audio etc. during these days. They attended webinar, training session and saw video tutorials to learn various skills to create e-content. Non availability of desktop or laptop computers, poor internet connectivity, lack of formal training etc. were major technical obstacles in online mode faced by teachers.

In Corona lockdown, online education was the only safe way of learning. Students started depending more on Internet rather teachers. Teachers became facilitator because they were providing various learning resources and learning opportunities for students; instead of merely sharing the information prepared by teachers. Student-explored content had more importance than teacher-made content.

The impact of teacher's teaching on learning decreases. Because teacher's teaching was not the only process that facilitating learning in online education. Students can explore the information on the Internet and they can learn many things on their own. They were less

depend on teaching process. The overall impact of teaching on learning was reduced in online education.

Teaching becomes suggestive rather compulsive. Due to the technical difficulties teachers do not get 100% time allotted for the period. So the overall time of actual teaching was reduced. By considering the less time; teachers became more suggestive. They came to know the difference between online and offline availability of time. They try to make students less dependent on teaching. So the obstacles like poor Internet connectivity lack of devices, lack of human interaction etc. should not affect learning.

Teaching becomes more controlled, precise and formal in online education. Because of limited time available and the technical threats, teachers made their teaching more precise and to the point. Instead of giving more illustrations they tend to give web links, PDF files, YouTube links etc. additional learning resources for more understanding.

Teaching is a live interaction with the students on the basis of content. Since live interaction with the students was not so smooth, teaching became a technical activity because due to poor Internet connectivity. During the online interaction teachers do not able to see the students and so students, hence interaction was not proper. They could see each other's profile photos rather live individual. Teaching became more technical and less interesting thing.

Because of less interaction with the students teachers not are not able to understand the status of students understanding hence they're not able to build new knowledge on old knowledge. This gap between the previous knowledge and new knowledge then through the failure of the teaching. What teachers are expecting and want students are expecting was two different points that causes the effectiveness of teaching negatively.

This era created and exposed the digital divide amongst the teachers on the basis of e-skills and availability of resources. Teachers who were able to use ICT tools were got more importance. Teachers having good financial conditions afford to purchase laptop or smart phone but rest do not. This created digital divide. Many schools not provided resources to teachers for online education. Teachers have to use their own resources like own data and own mobile/laptop. Some teachers faced internet connectivity issue because of their location. These non-academic factors played role to increase the digital divide.

Teaching became one way interaction due to the technical barriers; two way communication was a failure. "Am I audible?", "Am I visible", "Is screen is visible to you?"

became the mostly used phrases in online teaching. Teacher's questions and students answering these activities were having lots of problems e.g. breaking of the voice, non-audibility of the speakers, mute-unmute issues, fake attendance of the students etc.

Interference of parents in teaching was one raising issues in online education. Parents' objection on teaching style, communication, language, nature of examples, use of variety of media, quality of technology etc. Some of them started giving suggestions to teachers for improvement, some started making complaints to principals, some making fun and laugh on teachers in front of the students and making negative comments leaving negative impact on teachers' confidence and self-esteem.

In spite of better teaching skills, teachers were not able to deliver at their best because of technical issues that causes the loss of confidence in self ability. They started judging themselves and their teaching skills and teaching ability; not on the basis of overall teaching skills but merely on technical skills which affected the quality of overall teaching.

4. Conclusion:

'Work from Home' and 'Online Education' were new practices in education. This practice enhanced understanding of all stakeholders regarding learning, teaching and evaluation which created new normal in education. Teachers have become more techno savvy. They acquired various skills required for synchronous and asynchronous mode of online education. COVID-19 lockdown provided opportunity for teachers to learn and use various ICT tools. In this process teachers become more confident about using ICT tools for learning, teaching and evaluation. Teachers also understood how to do classroom management in online mode. They got the experience of students' behaviour in online mode.

Experience of online education enriched all stakeholders' knowledge. It helped to reduce the gap between reality and imagination of use of ICT in education.

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