A STUDY OF ONLINE TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS DURING LOCKDOWN

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Abstract

To break the spread of the novel corona virus, all the state governments across the country shut down schools and colleges temporarily and declared lockdown in 2020 and again continued in 2021. The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector. For the continuation of teaching process, most of the State government opted online mode of teaching. The purpose of the present study is to examine the experiences of the teachers in higher educational institutions about online mode of teaching during lockdown due to COVID 19 pandemic. The study is limited to the sample frame of 46 faculty members including Principals, HOD's , Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors of Government, Government-Aided colleges and Private institutions. The primary data collected with the help of questionnaire created in Google-form due to the time constraints containing both close-ended and open- ended questions. Respondents belong to Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat and the Haryana state. All the compiled data were analyses as per the responses given by the respondents.

Key Words:- Online Teaching, Institutions , Virtual, Lockdown, Covid-19

INTRODUCTION:

The COVID-19 a highly infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-Cov-2), originated in Wuhan city of China, affecting across all the continents

(Remuzzi & Remuzzi, 2020). During the lockdown period of the novel corona virus disease since 2019 whole India is affected in all aspects of life effects of the lockdown.

To break the spread of the novel corona virus, all the state governments across the country declared shut down of schools and colleges temporarily and declared lockdown in almost

every sector in 2020 . In the year 2021 from the month of March , the second wave of Covid-19 disease again spread at full pelt. Schools all across the country are closed since 2020 and the some of the colleges which were opened for few months are closed again.The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector which is a critical determinant for the learning and it is that sector which prepared the students for career making, competitions and for future journey of their life.

In order to fulfill the gap between students and teachers and for the continuation of teaching process, most of the state government opted online mode of teaching. In our state of Uttarakhand, State government and Directorate of higher education , guided for online mode of teaching. The online teaching in the pandemic has transformed the centuries- old chalk and talk teaching methodology to digital teaching and learning. According to a NitiAyog-- Immediate measures are essential to ensure continuity of learning in government schools and universities. Open –source digital learning solutions and learning management software can be adopted so teachers can conduct teaching online.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads, there has been an increasing move towards teaching online because of shutting down of schools, colleges and universities for an indefinite time as the only option left (Martinez, 2020). Lederman (2020) justly stated that due to the COVID-19 crisis teachers and students both find themselves in the situation where they felt compelled to embrace the digital academic experience as the summon bonum of the online teaching-learning process. Some difficulties felt in the implementation of the change process in the education system that has been arisen after COVID-19 and these difficulties are related with online education and their technological complexities faced by teachers and the students. Bodzin &Park, (2000) assert that, feedback from students and teachers get derailed in many cases in the online mode. Even getting basic knowledge sometimes becomes a problem due to a lack of personal interaction. Higher education for academic institution and students must cope up to online teaching aids still remains a big question in the emergency situation of COVID-19 (Bao, 2020).

So, in this study investigator tried to find out the positive and negative aspects of online teaching during lockdown period on the various higher educational institutes of Uttarakhand State and in some other states through the experiences of the teachers.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

In the pandemic situation, teachers of higher education institutions all across the country were moved from face to face learning to digital learning. Teachers included as Principals ,

Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant professors of government and private institutions were involved in digital teaching, training and learning. Therefore, investigator made an attempt to enquire the online teaching experiences, challenges during the teaching and modifications in their lives.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY :

1- Respondents tried to hide or want to escape some informations.

2. The information given by the respondents might be biased because some of them might not be interested in providing correct information.

3. Due to time constraint and pandemic situation , only limited respondents were surveyed

4. Respondents were selected on the availability of their emails and Whatsapp numbers. So sample of some limited states were selected.

5. One of the difficult tasks in this survey is that, many teachers did not respondents.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The present investigation deals with the 'Online Teaching Experience of Teachers in Higher Educational institutions during lockdown'

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

To find out positive and negative aspects of online teaching during lockdown period on the various higher educational institutes of Uttarakhand State and in some other states.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

In order to find out the results this study formed the following research question:

1- How teaching – learning technology was adapted and engagement of faculty influenced during COVID19- Lockdown?

2- What were the experiences of teachers of higher educational institutions about online teaching during lockdown?

3- How online teaching –learning can be made more effective?

METHODOLOGY:

The topic of the research is very wide with broad aspects of study but due to time constraints, a small study was designed to meet the simple objectives of the study. The following were the methodology bases of the study:--

SAMPLING:

To arrive at the conclusion descriptive research design methods was used. It was adopted by convenience sampling method. The respondents in the study were included Principals, Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors of different Government ,

Government –aided and private colleges of Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat . Respondents were belongs to different disciplinary areas.

TOOLS:

Data was collected by using two main methods**-----**

1-Primary Data :- Data collected from forty six (46) teaching fraternity, teaching in higher education institutions in Uttarakhand and some other states. They have been asked six close-ended and four open ended questions which were created in Google form and sent via Email and Whatsapp. The questions were based on the dimensions such as- Teaching -Learning and technology adaption process, engagement of faculty, Changes in learning behaviour, contribution in education after online teaching and problems faced during online teaching. Different opinions shared by faculty based on their experience of the virtual classroom, teaching and learning and student engagement.

2-Secondary data :- The data was collected from various Newspapers, articles and blogs based on Lockdown and Online Teaching and also by the self experiences ought from different Webinars attended during the lockdown period.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE:

Percentage of the scores based on all the dimensions was collected and used for analysis of data. Detailed description of open-ended question was used for descriptive analysis in conclusion.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

1- THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN ONLINE TEACHING :

Four dimensions were kept to analyze the challenges in front of the faculty as- problems related with Internet connectivity, Students non cooperation, availability of resources and all the problems. It was found that 25.5% of the respondents response that internet connectivity was the biggest challenge , 10.6 % towards students non- cooperation 12.8 % availability of resources and 51.1 % found all the problems were faced in online teaching during lockdown. It was found that most of the respondent teachers were government and government –aided colleges. In these colleges students belongs to from both urban and rural areas. So, there are various technical problems are found in online teaching. Students of the hill regions faces problems of network connectivity issues, data and unavailability of gadgets as- smart phones, laptops , desktop etc. Most of the students of them were using their parents and siblings phone. That might be one of the reason that some students showed non cooperative behaviour in online teaching which was found to be 28.6 % . Teachers found difficulties in all fields.

2- SUPPORT OFFERED TO STUDENTS FROM TEACHERS:

It is found that 6.7 % of the teachers provide technological support , 10 % provide Teacher assistance, 8.3%, provides Psychological support and 75 % teachers provides all type of support to their students during the online teaching process.

The finding shows that, the most of the respondents provides all type of supports to their students. It is proved that teachers helped their students not only technically but in other forms also. In the pandemic situation, a healthy student –teachers relation could make teaching process successful.

PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDANCE OF THE STUDENTS DURING ONLINE CLASSES:

If the question asked based on the percentage of the students during online classes , 27.1 % teachers registered above 80 % of attendance in their classes , 29.2% in between 70-79 % , 20.8 % in between 50 -69 % and 22.9 % found attendance below 50 % during the classes.

The above results shows , teachers dedication towards teaching, which proved by the students attendance in online classes. Most of the teachers recorded above 80% and in between 70-80 % attendance in their classes, which shows the student's interest in teaching. There was no variation observed in the attendance in different four categories. PowerPoint presentations , recorded lectures and lectures through You-Tube prepared by the teachers . Apart from regular virtual class engagement, there are various initiatives taken for student's engagement.

BEST PLATFORM SUITED FOR TEACHING :

The tools used by faculty during lockdown for teaching and learning through online modes are Zoom, Google meet , Google classrooms, Google meet and Whatsapp parallel YouTube, etc. in online classes. About 31.4 % respondents found Google meet as the best platform for teaching . They found this platform more convenient and user-friendly for teachers and students on the basis of data consumption and other features. Very few of them about 13.6 % used Zoom , 23.9% respondents said that online and offline both the mode should use in teaching. 9.2 % favoured only offline and 7.1% respondents were in the favour of Google meet and Whatsapp both. Whatsapp is simplest way for connection.

WHAT THEY MISSED ABOUT FACE TO FACE TEACHING DURING ONLINE TEACHING :

We observed that for many years, maximum of the schools and colleges throughout the world have been following the standard traditional teaching pedagogy. Teachers are of great help to the different levels of students and organization of various co-curricular activities. In our study it was found that 25 %, of teachers missed the student's –teacher interaction in online mode 16.7 %, environment of teaching only 4.1 % teaching schedule and 54.2% teachers missed all the factors during the online mode. It was reflected from the above result , that the respondents were missed the offline teaching styles.

HARDEST PART THEY FIND IN ONLINE CLASSES:

It was found form the result that 70.2 % respondents found Internet connectivity problem the hardest part in online teaching . Only 8.5 %, Time management ,19.1 % Student's non-cooperation and 2.2 % of them found problem in course completion in online teaching process.

Technology adaption was bliss but it cannot going to be so smooth in functioning all the time. Most of the respondents found network related issues, On the other hand very less teachers faced students non- cooperation and management of time and work. Internet connectivity problem was faced during the lockdown because of the heavy work load. Students those residing in rural areas had not digital tools and equipment like computer, mobile, or internet connection. Only 2.2% responses for course incompletion shows

WHAT ARE THE KEY FACTORS FOR MAKING AN ONLINE COURSE EFFECTIVE:

The qustion was asked how can online teaching make more effective. About 16.7 %, of the respondents favoured technological advancement of the teachers , 4.15 % technological advancement of the students , 4.15 % enthusiasm of the teachers and 75 % respondents need to develop technically advanced teachers and students as well the enthusiasm of teachers towards online mode.

Some teachers may not be used to handle gadgets and camera. They might not have the experience because of the remote teaching area jobs but teachers have the ability to change and face hard situations. Many faculties had accepted the changes to take virtual classes for students.

CHANGES THEY OBSERVED IN THEIRSELF AFTER ONLINE TEACHING DURING LOCKDOWN:

Situation created due to Covid-19, changes the mindset of every people for survival. This situation also occurred in the area of teaching. They changed their mindset towards the virtual classroom and adopted technology for the betterment of students. The following changes the respondents found after connecting with the world of virtual classroom:-

- They found themselves more aware and skillful in technology and found to be more capable in the use of technology in a better way.

- They found technological advancement in their pedagogical approaches in teaching and teachers started the use of various multimedia.

- They started to handling of resources more proficiently.Some of the respondents observed technological advancement in teachers as well as in the students also.

- The negative factors were also observed in the study that, respondents missed the real classroom situations and environment .They found lack of co-curricular activities . They found that health issues as one of the basic problem in online teaching . It was because of the continue use of mobiles and computers.

WHAT KIND OF DIGITAL LEARNING NEED FOR THE TEACHERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

An online class is multisensory task where teachers are connected with UG, PG, Ph.D. and with many professional classes. Respondents gave very innovative suggestions and their views for the innovations in digital learning as:-

- Organizations of digital lectures presentations and Teachers should be ICT equipped

- Command on software for making videos

- Onlne learning/ E- learning , mobile learning should be promoted as well as the E-textbook should be promoted. Use of digital black board should be a new trend in teaching

- Educational channels should be developed for students

- There should be arrangement of training for teachers for effective use of technology and online classes

- Initiation should be taken by government to development E- content and e- platform. As well as development of the e- resources, e- content and indigenous software for government colleges.

CONTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION DURING LOCKDOWN :

The above study proved that, about 95% of teachers accepted online teaching as a challenge. In this scenario the respondent's contribution in their subject areas and in the field of higher education was found in different way as:-

- Organization of classes with educational programmes, tutorial videos , notes , lectures Preparation of PowerPoint and creation of their own You-Tube channel and online activities ,programmes , quizzes and competitions for students

- Organization of meetings on the virtual platform , online paper presentations , participation in talks ,in gust lectures and in training programmes

- Field survey by Google earth and conduction of brain storming session

Some of the respondents in the study were Principals HOD's , Professors , and Associate Professors of Government colleges and Universities with long term experience. They used their experience and reformed online process in innovative genre as:-

- Writing of the textbook and edited books, Use of skill to teach two colleges simultaneously

    Conduction of International and National Webinars , Workshops ,Panel Discussions and Research work in E- learning, conducted Faculty development programs online, Conducted online projects and counseling to needy students.

In the Uttarakhand state, Uttarakhand Education Department initiated the efforts of teachers. Uttarakhand Tele Education Network (EDUSAT) way the key step to compile the tutorial videos prepared by of teachers in every discipline.

DISCUSSIONS:

It was a challenge for faculty related to the higher educational institutes but they accepted it as an opportunity to enter in virtual classrooms, virtual learning and virtual teaching. They adapted technology in teaching-learning process. The tools used by faculty during lockdown for teaching and learning through online modes are Zoom, Google meets, Google classrooms, Whatsapp, YouTube, etc. Many teachers took the initiation and conducted faculty development programs online to gear up the positivity among faculty during the crisis. Online classes register better attendance than that of physical classes. The closure of colleges and universities not only interrupts the teaching for students but the closure also coincides with many exams getting postponed. All these positive impact are observed during online classes.

Most respondents agreed that online classes have contributed a lot in maintaining mental and emotional balance .

Excessive use of anything is bad and so is the case with technology too. Many teachers had the opinion that online classes in the long-run may lead to many diseases and health issues due to the excessive use of mobile and computers.

CONCLUSIONS:

In the situation of Covid-19, online classes created new platform for the teachers. The pandemic situation is continue since 2020 to 2021 with more complications. In India colleges were opened for few months and again classes reverted in online mode. Online classes are the only way to continue teaching-learning process forward. Though it is not a substitute for face to face teaching student-teacher interaction but this platform of virtual education system emerged as a great tool to deliver education in the current scenario. The present study revealed that, the teachers of the higher educational institutes in all subjects proved themselves with the attainment of balance between work and life. The teachers had to cope up with Some major issues as poor internet connectivity, health issues , technological scarcity for teachers and students , unavailability of resources were with them but they tackle the situation and continue the learning process. The face-to-face interaction seems missing in online education but communication between teachers and students made strong bridge between them. The achievement in the education system was praiseworthy and they also acted as the guiding lamp for their students.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

The present study is very useful for the teachers of primary to higher education ,teacher educators, research scholars and for the project work in PG classes. The present study can explore the research field from Primary to secondary level. The study could be conducted on the major challenging issues in medical and technical courses. During the lockdown situation because of Covid-19 various field of education are affected. This study may be conducted on problems based on practical work, Practice teaching of the pupil teachers and project work etc.

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