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 9940 572 462

 6381 907 438

 ijrset@gmail.com

 www.ijrset.com

Online Education in the Wake of Covid19

Dr. Archana Gupta, Dr. A. Babu Rajendra Prasad

Assistant Professor, Amity University Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, India

Associate Professor, Amity University Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, India

ABSTRACT: Online education is the buzzword in the 21st century. Due to the spread of pandemic, online teaching became inevitable. Online education comes with its own challenges and this joint paper explores the pros and cons of online education. Online education has made teaching and learning a happy experience by bringing students and teachers together in the virtual platform. This joint paper also throws light on the prospects of online education.

Twenty first century is the age of globalization and the various technology tools have revolutionized the world such as Computers, Internet, Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Videos etc. With the emergence of science, the multimedia technology has made rapid strides in the life of the common people. The growth and development of technology, undoubtedly, is far-reaching, and nobody remains untouched by its impact. In today's times most of our daily tasks are completed online such as Online Shopping, Ticket Booking, Ordering Food, Watching TV shows etc. Apart from that there are also other online platforms which provide essential household services at our doorstep such as Urban Clap, Grofers, Big Basket etc. Online education is still far behind in terms of its growth and accessibility to maximum number of people. Its pace has been quite slow as compared to other things available online. However, Online Education has come to us as a blessing in the wake of Covid19 when technology has successfully replaced traditional teaching methods. It has very swiftly carved its niche in the academic life of the people and has come to their rescue when everything else is shut down.

Conducting Online Classes, Holding Meetings, Organizing Webinars, Inviting Guest Lectures by Professionals from reputed Institutions are all accomplished in a jiffy. Assignments, Quizzes, Research Papers, Viva Voce and Online Interviews could not get hampered due to the absence of Professionals. There are various academic activities like Translation, Reviving Old Stories, Reading Great Epics, Evaluating Classical texts, and Listening to Folk Tales which are easily available in the current times with the help of Web Sources. Various Online Professional Courses are also being offered by reputed Institutes for the self-improvement of faculty as well as students.

Students have easy access to pursue higher education and prepare for their Competitive Exams. Even during complete lockdown across the country, education is available for the students of both junior and senior classes. They are also attending online classes with the help of their parents, getting assignments and other tasks to be completed in time. Parents are also satisfied as their children are doing some academic activity rather than sitting idle at home during the lockdown which could have affected their education further. With the help of technology, not only students but parents and teachers are also learning new things in return. Technology has become a part and parcel of life to such an extent that even imagining one's life without it is unthinkable.

The Destiny-Makers of tomorrow – teachers have the unenviable task of conducting online classes as effectively as offline classes. They must upgrade their skills time to time to meet the challenges on the way of learning technology and its effective usage. Computers have no longer remained the exclusive domain of elite class, but rather they are accessed by almost all sections of people. In a sense, the role of technology in pedagogy is emphasized to such an extent that even the role of a teacher in the classroom is obliterated. For this reason, it is important for teachers to be conscious of state of craft technology and to have knowledge of what is available so that it can be used in any given situation. Teachers can use Multimedia Technology to give more stimulating lectures in order to make the class more interactive.

Despite these developments and changes taking place in the Academic Sector, there is a large section of our country which is still lagging behind and is unable to receive even the proper means of education. On the one hand we are running towards Globalization and bringing different countries together at Web platform, while on the other hand many of the Indian parents are still unable to give quality education to their children. Their fundamental education

standard is even below the average line. We look forward to the day when this tremendous growth in online education system and other online facilities will soon be accessible to the underprivileged people also.

However, the complete dependency on the application of multimedia technology and multimedia devices to achieve the desired teaching effect may turn teachers merely into slaves to technology. They will merely be puppets in the hands of technology and cannot play the leading role in teaching. Today's students are more tech-savvy than their teachers and they know more about technology than their teachers. It is also observed in practice that many teachers are active in multimedia technology application but not proficient enough to handle it confidently. There is also no proper connect between teachers and students. The frequent use of Information Technology in teaching is not able to create a lasting impact on students which the traditional teaching system used to have.

In traditional teaching system, the teacher student relationship rested on a strong foundation - trust . On the contrary, the rapport between the teacher and the student went for a toss in online teaching. The absence of face to face interaction led to complete breakdown in the relationship between the teacher and the student. As a result, experts in the field of education even questioned the relevance of online teaching. Every coin has two sides. Just like one takes positives, one must accept the flip side also. Despite facing certain stumbling blocks, online education is here to stay.

Online education successfully bridged the widening gulf between the rich and the poor. Everyone has access to technology these days and as a result, a kind of level playing field is reached to a certain extent. Earlier, only a privileged few had access to education because others couldn't have access to education due to factors like economic reasons, social stratification, so on and so forth. Now, technology has brought education to everyone's doorstep. As a result, society is heading into exciting times, as competition has intensified and the race to the top is getting tougher day by day.

Online Education has opened new vistas in almost every field of academics. Nowadays, digital copy checking is done in different academic institutions. During Covid Times, certain changes were introduced in the way examinations were conducted. Open Book Examinations, Regular Proctored Examinations, MCQ Mode Examinations, etc were conducted online. This came as a great challenge to not only students but also teachers, administrators, and policy makers. Despite facing some teething problems in the beginning, online mode of examination was accepted wholeheartedly by everyone. Online mode of examination and digital evaluation expedited the process of result declaration. Earlier, it took months to announce the result but now with the advent of technology, results get declared within a fortnight.

In conventional mode of education, the teacher's word was accepted as the gospel truth. On the other hand, online education made the process of learning truly democratic. Developing e-content gained currency during the Covid Era. By uploading e-content before the commencement of academic session, the faculty members ensured that students had access to material related to the topic of discussion in advance. This in turn made the online discussion truly lively and meaningful for all the participants in the virtual classroom. As English Language Teaching (ELT) Experts opine, the role of a teacher must be that of a facilitator rather than an instructor. The opinion of ELT Experts came to reality during the Covid Times.

The Covid Times also brought to the forefront online meetings which were conducted sporadically during days of normalcy. During the pandemic times, online meetings became a day to day affair and the shortcomings of the day were discussed threadbare. Remedial measures were taken instantly which led to the enhancement of quality to a certain extent. As a result, it was a win win situation for everyone.

The advent of technology ensured that even a traumatic phase like Covid Times passed over smoothly causing less damage than expected. In the work front, though many employees lost their jobs, still the quality of work did not suffer as less hands were able to perform admirably by making optimum use of technology. Another factor that must be analyzed in brief is the effective use of space during covid times. As institutions got shut, teachers and students had to work at home, thereby minimizing congestion on roads, parks, and other public places. Though schools, colleges, institutes and universities wore a deserted look, it gave much needed relief for workers, sweepers, cleaners and others.

Thus, it can be said that online education has become the need of the hour and its importance in current times cannot be ignored. However, still a lot of work needs to be done to enhance its effectiveness and quick accessibility to everyone. There should be innovative ways to make online lectures meaningful to students so that they focus more



during their online classes. The Online Education System is still far away from achieving its objectives. However, half the battle is won, and nothing can stop us from chasing our dreams.

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