IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN ON TEACHERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Around the world even the developed countries are stunned by this pandemic causing rampant pain. India is no exception and Government has imposed a nation-wide lockdown to help contain the virus. This has disrupted the whole economy including the education sector. For a developing country like India where poor and marginalized outnumber the rest, this is a crisis situation. In such a situation, where educational institutions across the country have been closed, both teaching and learning have affected millions of students. As per the order of the Government, universities along with affiliated colleges have started offering online classes to students. The objective of these online classes is to ensure that students do not lose out on any teaching and learning activities during the lockdown. This paper examines the impact of lockdown on teachers in higher education institutions, the challenges they are facing due to lock down and the general pros and cons of online teaching. The secondary data is used for the study.

Keywords: Lockdown, Teachers, Education Institutions, Covid-19, Online Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

To contain the spread of the novel corona virus, the state governments across the country began shutting down schools and colleges temporarily. This is a crucial time for the education sector because this is the period where all most all examinations are conducted. There is no immediate solution to stop the outbreak of the pandemic, the educational institutions closure will not only have a short – term impact on the continuity of learning for more than 285 million young learners in India but also produce far reaching economic and societal consequences.

The structure of teaching and assessment methodologies, was the first to get affected by the closure. Only few universities and private colleges could adopt online teaching methods. Their low income private and government colleges had no idea of how to get access to e-learning solutions. The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector which is a critical determinant of a country's economic future. The pandemic has transformed the centuries-old, chalk and talk teaching methodology to digital teaching and learning. Multiple strategies are required to manage the crisis and build a resilient Indian education system in the long term. There are some personal views quoted by few individuals with regard to this. According to a young professional (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.

METHODOLOGY

Sources of Data: For the existing study secondary data was used. The data was collected from various Newspapers, Articles on Lockdown and Online Teaching

E-learning applications and its Connectivity

Online education depends on various factors and strong connectivity is the ultimate one. Learning app firms could work together with technology providers and telecom service providers to develop tools that make learning truly enjoyable. They could also explore providing students with real-time experience. All this is only possible with optimum utilization of network capacity. To ensure that learning never stops teachers are preparing chapters using distance learning tools and taking classes using YouTube videos, Zoom app etc.,

Entrepreneurs are also offering online learning apps like BYJU'S, Adda24x7, Duolingo, Khan Academy, Witkali and various others providing aid at the time of lockdown. Post COVID-19, following the lockdown, there has been an increase in the online education by colleges across the country. Telecom industry have taken appropriate measures to meet the surge in traffic due to online education and other online activities.

Online classes via Skype, Zoom, Microsoft, YouTube etc are really helpful for everyone in the society especially students as they are benefitted with same purpose of learning that they were initially were before the lockdown started. This helps the teachers too, as they get

communicate with their students and share knowledge. The resources needed are just a wi-fi connection, an invite or an account in one of the online platforms and a digital device such as a mobile or a laptop/ desktop. However, there are few cons too, there would be students who are from economically backward classes who are not in a position to indulge in online classes as they lack in technology (not having mobiles). Sometimes network problem arises where it is difficult for students to understand what is been explained by teachers. On the other hand, it is difficult to teach practical papers like accounts, taxation, mathematics, computer science, and make sure if students are able to understand the topic taught.

To explain it more clearly the pros and cons of online classes are further explained below;

Pros/ Advantages

Flexibility

Online teaching offer great flexibility that one doesn't get with offline teaching. It gives students the opportunity to study at their convenience and balance work and private commitments with their language studies by planning their teaching times around the rest of their day.

It gives teachers the opportunity to plan the schedule of classes more efficiently, which is especially convenient in cases where teachers need intensive language study, e.g. more than twice a week. Student and teacher can agree flexibly on the specific teaching times and then meet online.

Diversity

It makes chapters more diverse and effective as it enables the teacher to use a variety of multimedia, such as videos, news articles and podcasts to create an efficient and interactive class. Worksheets or notes and other useful documents can be easily sent to the student before or during the lesson. Unknown vocabulary can be typed in the dialogue box. The Skype function for example "Demonstration screen" replaces a real whiteboard in the offline classroom.

Time-saving

It saves precious time compared to offline classes. Notes or problems in accounts/ taxation subjects can be given one day before the class, thus the student has a full explanation of the subject at the end of the chapter without spending time in copying the problems from the board. Also, one doesn't have to spend one's time in travelling to the course anymore. This not only saves precious time that one can better invest in learning, but also money, which can be much better spend in other things than commuting.

Most Comfortable learning Environment

An online class allows teachers to develop new teaching skills in the most comfortable environment. A virtual class just needs a working internet connection; thus, students can attend classes wherever they feel most comfortable. Students can learn the subjects in a cosy environment, where they feel at ease and where they can best concentrate on subject learning.

Teachers even meet for just one Chapter

As teachers don't have to drive to the classroom and are able to arrange classes flexibly, they can even meet several times for just one chapter, switching between online classes and self-study to have time to internalize the taught topics and get a perfect command of the subject.

No waiting anymore

No waiting for the teacher orother students to arrive, chapters are instant the moment you are connected.

Multisensory

An online class is multisensory as teachers train audio, reading and typing as well as sight at the same time. This helps you to faster reach your subject goal.

Additional digital instructional tools

The teacher can send students any time a great variety of documents to support the learning process like text documents, spreadsheets, audio files, links, videos or presentations on the topic being studied. Audio and video recordings, made with the teacher, can benefit many students. In addition, students can always quickly find the information on the Internet. Thus, students will be able to use study-related websites while having classes, - a flexibility that is not always easy to arrange with offline classes. At the end of the class a student has not only

understood the topic but is also equipped with a great variety of material to support learning process.

Cons/ Disadvantages

Inevitable disconnection

Anywhere in the world, the internet connection can be blotchy depending on the day. Due to lapse of connection there can be missing of information. It can also dampen the mood of the teacher taking the class in a swing and the teacher had to stop to reconnect to get the chapter back on track.

Low Class Participation

There are always ways to cheat online. In online classes sometimes students just move off telling undesirable reasons. There is lack of attention and interest from them. Participation is the key to success. Hence, it is responsibility of teachers to make the class more interesting and make students participate.

Limit on Interaction

When teachers are in front of classroom, they can better know what the mood of their students are. If they are coming from a long day and are tired teachers can adjust the plan to better match what they need at that time. This is much more difficult to do when we are seeing someone through a video call. Facial expressions aren't as noticeable and the call may lag.

Economically Weaker Sections

Online learning is routine for students in private colleges, while their counterparts in government colleges are fast catching up. Few lecturers are of the opinion that many of their students are from economically weaker families. Their parentswork as labourers, drivers, housemaids etc. With the lockdown, they are left with no livelihood. Yet, they are willing to pay for the internet and attend classes. Since many of them cannot afford more than 1GB data as it cost above five hundred rupees, they switch off the video in the app and they just listen to the teachers. Many lecturers in Government colleges waited for the lockdown to resume

classes. But few teachers realized that the lockdown could extend and they resorted to online classes.

Inconvenience

Teachers find it very difficult to engage in taking online classes because due to lockdown even their family members are at home. If there are small kids who needs their attention, it is even more difficult for them.

CONCLUSION

Online classes register better attendance than that of physical classes. The attendance is high as 98% to 100%. Many teachers admit that they would not have ventured into online learning had Covid-19 not happened and its an experience to most teachers. The closure of colleges and universities not only interrupts the teaching for students but the closure also coincides with many exams getting postponed. Some universities are having an idea of replacing traditional exams with online assessment tools. This is a new area for both teachers and students.

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