

Hitches of Online Education: A Descriptive Study in the Ballari District of Karnataka

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted students' learning process, it has led to the suspension of all educational institutions and examinations, and has forced many students to drop out of the education system. Educational institutions have resorted to online education to ensure that children do not abandon their studies. When this epidemic forced the learning process to be moved online, the education sector faced an unprecedented challenge. While many students spend most of their time in front of mobile or computer screens, many others lag in their studies due to the unavailability of the internet, smartphones, or other associated challenges. The present study explores the online education hitches faced by post-graduate students. The study was conducted in the Ballari district of Karnataka by adopting a descriptive research design. The simple stratified random sampling technique has been adopted in the present study. A total of 200 people responded to the survey in total. It is found in the survey that difficulties in learning new technology, choosing the ideal time and location for learning at home, presenting seminar work or exercises online, and the home environment were the vital challenges faced by most of the students. The chi-square test was adopted to see the association between online learning difficulties, locality, and gender. Most of the problems do not have any association with locality, whereas many challenges were found to be associated with gender.

Keywords: COVID-19, education, hitches, online, learning

INTRODUCTION

Corona has set the whole world on one side against itself, has affected every aspect of life, and has relaxed [1]. Children have been out of school since March 2020, and their education has stopped; they do not want to stay home, but their parents are not ready to send them to school. Higher education institutions were also in confusion. Estimates of numbers may vary, but out of the total number of

children enrolled in schools, 15% were unable to attend school. According to an estimate by UNESCO, 1.3 billion children in 186 countries, that is, around India's population, have not gone to school after March 2020. Their mental, psychological, and emotional states and the physical and mental stress from this condition are being assessed everywhere. The most effective and practical method in the global efforts to not keep children away from education and learning has emerged in the form of online education. Efforts are also being made to use the online system as well as possible from elementary schools to higher education institutions in India [1].

The educational system has been rocked to its core by an unprecedented health crisis (i.e., the

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COVID-19 epidemic), which has shattered the status quo. As a result, numerous governments in different parts of the world have begun an emergency response to lessen the pandemic's detrimental effects on education [2]. This reaction includes, but is not limited to, alterations to the curricula, provisions for technical resources and infrastructure, modifications to the academic calendar, and regulations for the delivery of teaching and evaluation of student progress. These advancements have unavoidably caused educational institutions to transition to learning conducted entirely online until they can resume traditional classroom instruction. The current situation is exceptional because it can aggravate the problems associated with online education due to the restrictions on movement and health standards [3].

In light of the current unpredictability, it is necessary to get a comprehensive understanding of the online learning experience that students have amid the COVID-19 epidemic. Numerous studies have been conducted on this topic up to this point, with the majority of them concentrating on students' mental health.

INDIA'S SITUATION OF ONLINE EDUCATION DURING COVID-19

Before being closed on 24 March 2020 because of the corona crisis, all educational institutions in India, including schools and colleges, were able to complete their academic periods. During this lockdown, an effort was made to continue the session via online instruction. There were classes taking place at many educational institutions, and exams were approaching. Online instruction for middle and high school courses was provided through platforms like Zoom. In certain places, Google and Skype were used to hold classes. Other people created YouTube content, and they also produced, published, and shared videos of lectures and classes with student groups via WhatsApp [4].

The majority of institutions, however, were unprepared for the online exam. Knowledgeable individuals believe that universities such as the premier Indian Institutes of Technology can offer final exams to graduating students online. As COVID was being handled, treated, managed, and fretted over in the real world, the virtual world was filled with quite a commotion. Homes, places of work, and institutions were all quarantined, and this continued for about one and a half months [5].

It sheds light on the direct influence of the pandemic on students' difficulties when participating in online educational environments and adjustment with new learning environment. Specifically, addressing these areas in the context of the pandemic will illuminate the magnitude of the obstacles that students confront in a fully online learning arena. In the meantime, if we had a more nuanced understanding of the methods that students use to overcome the obstacles they face, we would be able to provide relevant information to school administrators and teachers, allowing them to meet the requirements of students who are engaged in online learning in a better way. This information would also be essential in reviewing the typology of learning strategies in an online classroom setting [6].

The top auditing and marketing companies KPMG and Google have published a study titled "Online Education in India: 2021" that projects an astonishing eight-fold growth in India's online education sector between 2016 and 2021. In 2016, this business was about \$250 million; in 2021, its value was expected to increase to about two billion dollars. The number of paid education users was estimated to be about 16 lakhs in 2016, likely around one crore in 2021 [7, 8].

There are about 40 million students in higher education in India, and the rate of enrollment of students, that is, the gross enrollment ratio, has increased to 26.3%. More than 31 lakh students were enrolled in classes 10th and 12th for the 2019 examination of the country's premier education board, the Central Board of Secondary Education. Combining other boards, including state school boards, , the number of students is in the range of crores. For the agencies related to internet education, these huge figures meant more profit. Virtual classes and video-audio materials, presentations, courses, and tutorials were being conducted. Online learning, webinars, mock tests, videos, and counseling methods were also being completed online [9].

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the hitches of online education encountered by students.
2. To study the relationship of online education difficulties with gender and locality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs a descriptive research design. The universe of the study is made up of all the post-graduate students from Ballari district in Karnataka. The study had a sample size of 200 and used a snowball and simple random sampling technique. Google Forms were employed to collect the data. The data was processed and examined using the SPSS (Version 26) for Windows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is crucial to have an understanding of the challenges that students confront when participating in online education. A total of 200 people filled out the survey, and to get a more accurate representation of both genders; there were 100 men and 100 females among the respondents. All respondents were post-graduate students who were either in their first or second year of their degree at the time of the survey.

Table 1 examines students' challenges when participating in online education. It should be emphasized that roughly seven-eighths of the students surveyed expressed that learning new technologies has been challenging. Moreover, four-fifths of the students said that they had experienced difficulties in presenting seminar work or exercises, being in distractive situations, and having trouble finding times that were perfect for online learning. The opinions of around 79% of those who participated in the survey indicated difficulty completing tasks. More than five-sevenths of the students gave responses to such questions. They found it challenging to manage their time effectively to attend online classes because they are distracted by online temptations such as social media, which prevented them from paying attention to online lectures and being intimidated by learning technology. During their time in an online class, almost seven-tenths of the students have experienced one or both of the following challenges: a lack of engagement with the professors and difficulty comprehending the requirements and guidelines for the course. Because they have so little time to prepare for their online classes, about 68% of the students said they experience uneasy feelings when using headphones. The opinion of nearly half of the students was that they do not have enough time to make use of the resources that are available to them.

Table 2 attempted to comprehend the relationship between the students' locations and difficulty levels. The chi-square test was carried out to determine whether there is a correlation between the two variables. The results showed that there is, in fact, a correlation between the two variables. Among all of the challenges, it was discovered that challenges such as being unable to use resources because of a lack of time and delays in completing assignments had a significant association with students' locations. Most of the challenges students encounter when attending an online education are unrelated to the student's geographic location; students from both urban and rural settings encounter the same obstacles regardless of where they live.

The statistics in Table 3 are an attempt to comprehend the relationship between gender and the challenges of online education. It is vital to remember that gender and challenges have been significantly correlated. The following are some of the challenges that were related to gender: unable to use resources because of a lack of time, not having the necessary knowledge or abilities to use various applications and software, learning new technologies is challenging, excessively complex technology drawing focus away, finding it difficult to understand new technologies, unable to adequately assist learning with technology, while enrolled in online programs, felt a sense of emotional isolation or separation, taking an online course does not spark interest, having difficulties completing work because to technological problems, social media temptations online prevent us from paying attention to lectures, and the home environment creates learning distractions.

Table 1. Difficulties of online education faced by the students (N=200).

S. N.	Particulars	Percentage
1	Challenging to learn new technology.	86.5
2	Presentation of seminar work or exercises online is difficult	83.5
3	The home environment presents distractions for learning.	84
4	Finding it difficult to choose the ideal time and location for learning at home.	80.5
5	Delay in completion of assignments	78.5
6	Online temptations like social media keep us from paying attention to online lectures.	73.5
7	The learning technologies frighten	72.5
8	Facing trouble in managing time to attend online classes.	72
9	Not having the knowledge or skills to operate different apps and software	71.5
10	Not getting enough help during online classes	71
11	It is challenging to fulfill some requirements for a few subjects at home (e.g., laboratory and physical activities).	70.5
12	Absence of interaction with instructors	70.5
13	Overly intricate technology diverting attention away	70
14	I struggled to understand the instructions and standards while attending the online class.	70.0
15	While using headphones, I feel pretty anxious.	68.0
16	Less time to prepare for online class	66
17	Unable to use technology to support learning effectively.	63.5
18	Faced trouble utilizing sophisticated technology	60
19	Fluctuations in thoughts, feelings, and behavior during online classes	57.5
20	Faced lack of sufficient access to additional educational technologies	57.5
21	Unable to access the internet continuously during online classes	56
22	Experienced emotional isolation or disconnection while taking online classes.	56.5
23	Attending the online class does not create interest.	56
24	Experiencing challenges in learning new technology.	55.5
25	Not able to utilize resources due to lack of time	49

Table 2. Association of students' locality with online education difficulties (N = 200).

S. N.	Particulars	χ^2	DF	LS	Result
1	Delay in completion of assignments	8.562 ^a	1	0.003	S
2	Not getting enough help during online classes	0.000 ^a	1	1.000	NS
3	Less time to prepare for online class	3.209 ^a	1	0.73	NS
4	Facing trouble in managing time to attend online classes.	0.000 ^a	1	1.000	NS
5	Not able to utilize resources due to lack of time	6.483 ^a	1	0.11	S
6	Not having the knowledge or skills to operate different apps and software	0.025 ^a	1	0.876	NS
7	Difficult to learn new technology.	0.043 ^a	1	0.836	NS
8	Overly intricate technology diverts attention away.	2.909 ^a	1	0.88	NS
9	Experiencing challenges in learning new technology.	0.020 ^a	1	0.887	NS
10	Unable to use technology to support learning effectively.	0.194 ^a	1	0.659	NS
11	The learning technologies frighten	0.226 ^a	1	0.635	NS
12	Struggled to understand the instructions and standards while attending the online class.	0.095 ^a	1	0.758	NS
13	Experienced emotional isolation or disconnection while taking online classes.	0.020 ^a	1	0.887	NS
14	Attending the online class does not create interest.	0.325 ^a	1	0.569	NS
15	While using headphones, I feel quite anxious.	0.092 ^a	1	0.762	NS

16	Fluctuations in thoughts, feelings, and behavior during online classes	0.512 ^a	1	0.474	NS
17	Faced lack of sufficient access to additional educational technologies	0.020 ^a	1	0.886	NS
18	unable to access the Internet continuously during online classes	0.183 ^a	1	0.669	NS
19	Having trouble finishing tasks due to technical issues.	0.025 ^a	1	0.874	NS
20	Faced trouble utilizing sophisticated technology	0.750 ^a	1	0.386	NS
21	Online temptations like social media keep us from paying attention to online lectures.	3.106 ^a	1	0.078	NS
22	The home environment presents distractions for learning.	0.000 ^a	1	1.000	NS
23	Finding it difficult to choose the ideal time and location for learning at home.	0.043 ^a	1	0.836	NS
24	It is challenging to fulfill some requirements for a few subjects at home (e.g., laboratory and physical activities).	2.909 ^a	1	0.088	NS
25	Presentation of seminar work or exercises online is difficult	0.043 ^a	1	0.836	NS
26	Absence of interaction with instructors or classmates	2.909 ^a	1	0.088	NS

DF, degrees of freedom; LS, least square; NS, non-significant.

Table 3. Association of gender with difficulties of online education (N = 200).

S. N.	Particulars	χ^2	LS	Result
1	Delay in completion of assignments	0.267 ^a	0.606	NS
2	Not getting enough help during online classes	3.429 ^a	0.064	NS
3	Less time to prepare for online class	0.089 ^a	0.765	NS
4	Facing trouble in managing time to attend online classes.	0.099 ^a	0.753	NS
5	Not able to utilize resources due to lack of time	6.483 ^a	0.11	S
6	Not having the knowledge or skills to operate different apps and software	5.409 ^a	0.020	S
7	Challenging to learn new technology.	11.321 ^a	0.001	S
8	Overly intricate technology diverts attention away.	5.409 ^a	0.020	S
9	Experiencing challenges in learning new technology.	8.357 ^a	0.004	S
10	Unable to use technology to support learning effectively.	8.357 ^a	0.003	S
11	The learning technologies frighten	0.182 ^a	0.669	NS
12	Struggled to understand the instructions and standards while attending the online class.	0.750 ^a	0.386	NS
13	Experienced emotional isolation or disconnection while taking online classes.	4.279 ^a	0.039	S
14	Attending the online class does not create interest.	10.278 ^a	0.001	S
15	While using headphones, I feel quite anxious.	0.043 ^a	0.836	NS
16	Fluctuations in thoughts, feelings, and behavior during online classes	6.099 ^a	0.047	S
17	Faced lack of sufficient access to additional educational technologies	2.909 ^a	0.088	NS
18	unable to access the Internet continuously during online classes	3.106 ^a	0.078	NS
19	Having trouble finishing tasks due to technical issues.	5.223 ^a	0.22	S
20	Faced trouble utilizing sophisticated technology	0.183 ^a	0.669	NS
21	Online temptations like social media keep us from paying attention to online lectures.	2.426 ^a	0.297	S
22	The home environment presents distractions for learning.	6.473 ^a	0.10	S
23	Finding it difficult to choose the ideal time and location for learning at home.	0.020 ^a	0.887	NS
24	It is challenging to fulfill some requirements for a few subjects at home (e.g., laboratory and physical activities).	3.209 ^a	0.73	NS
25	Presentation of seminar work or exercises online is difficult	0.226 ^a	0.635	NS
26	Absence of interaction with instructors or classmates	0.512 ^a	0.474	NS

LS, least square; NS, non-significant; S, significant.

These are the challenges that most females experience due to gender discrimination and home responsibilities. During COVID-19, the majority of females from both rural and urban areas were refused access to equitable educational opportunities. Many parents believe that their financial difficulties prevented them from paying for the internet, cell phones, and other accessories.

CONCLUSION

The shape of the education system is shifting as a result of measures being made to stop the propagation of the coronavirus, and online education is rapidly becoming the primary mode of teaching. Students find it challenging to manage their time effectively to attend online classes because they are distracted by online temptations such as social media, which prevents them from paying attention to online lectures and intimidates them from learning technology. Students have experienced one or both of the following challenges: a lack of engagement with the faculties; difficulty comprehending the course's requirements and guidelines. Most of the challenges students encounter when attending an online education are unrelated to their geographic location. Challenges such as being unable to use resources because of a lack of time and delays in completing assignments are significantly associated with students' locations. During COVID-19, most females were refused access to equitable educational opportunities.

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