



COVID -19 AND ONLINE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION -WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COLLEGE STUDENTS OF KOCHI

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Abstract: COVID -19 pandemic has posed a modern threat to humanity. This pandemic has successfully enforced global shutdown of several activities, including educational activities. This has given rise to entirely depend on online learning. This study examines the opinion of college students on COVID 19 and online learning in Higher education. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the socio-economic profile of the respondents, to identify the nature of experiences faced by students in online learning, to analyse the problems faced by the students in their learning process due to COVID, to find out the satisfaction level of students in their learning process during COVID. Descriptive research design is used in this study. The universe of this study consists of college students of Kochi city. From the source list collected from different colleges at Kochi, a representative of sample of 100 respondents were taken at random and thus simple random sampling is used in the study. Data was collected through online using Google form. It was found that though there are numerous issues faced by the students in online learning and at the same time majority are satisfied with the current facility. There were majority waiting to resume the physical classroom as early as possible.

Keywords: Online Learning, COVID -19, Passive Learning, Higher Education.

1.0. Introduction

Novel Corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly disrupted every aspect of human life. Large scale outbreaks of pandemic disease, natural disaster, or serious air pollution took place in the global wide, affecting not only humans' health, but also the education sector. As the COVID-19 spread across the globe, alarm bells are sounding in the education sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced schools and colleges to shut down temporarily and is causing havoc in the education system. According to UNESCO report more than 157 crore students across 191 countries severely impacted by closure of educational institutions due to corona virus. The issue of the COVID-19 and its impact on higher education is an emergent focus of debate worldwide. Closing universities and cancelling classes have become a COVID-19 reality in many countries of the world, leading to enormous anxiety and uncertainty.

The situation is particularly worrying for those higher education students who are more vulnerable on account of their more fragile condition. A disruption of their space brought on by a crisis such as this one, can exacerbate their fragile condition and force them to drop out, thereby yet again, perpetuating a situation of exclusion as a result of the inequity which is characteristic of the higher education system in the region. Moreover, it is difficult to have a sense of the multiple and different effects on students with different profiles, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, starting with gender. Personal adjustment to daily life Students has had to rearrange their daily lives to adjust to a situation of confinement. Most of the students, who were displaced far from their families, but within the same country, have returned home. However, in the case of students abroad, the situation remains highly variable, with tens of thousands stranded in destination countries waiting for on-site activities to resume or because they are unable to return to their countries due to closure of airports and borders. Inevitably, the loss of social contact and socialization routines that are part of the daily experience of a higher education student will take its toll. The isolation that is inevitably associated with confinement will have effects in terms of socio- emotional balance that will leave their mark, particularly on those students with pre-existing problems of this nature. The more vulnerable students participating in qualifying and remedial programs will be more hardly hit by isolation.

While higher education sectors are also disrupted that again pave an impact on the country's economic future. Various students from India took admissions in abroad like the US, UK, Australia, China etc. And these countries are badly affected due to **COVID-19**. May be there is a possibility that students will not take admissions there in future and if the situation persists, in the long run then there will be a decline in the demand for international higher education also. Another major concern is employment. Students those have completed their graduation may have fear in their minds of withdrawal of job offers from the corporate sector due to the current situation. We can't ignore that technology plays a crucial role in the educational system and the demand for the current situation is this only.

1.1 Challenges faced by higher education in India

1.1.1 Passive learning by students

The sudden shift to online learning without any planning especially in countries like India where the backbone for online learning was not ready and the curriculum was not designed for such a format has created the risk of most of our students becoming



passive learners and they seem to be losing interest due to low levels of attention span. Added to this is that we may be leaving a large proportion of the student population untouched due to the digital divide that is part of many developing nations including India.

1.1.2 Unprepared teachers for online education

Online learning is a special kind of methodology and not all teachers are good at it or at least not all of them were ready for this sudden transition from face-to-face learning to online learning. Thus, most of the teachers are just conducting lectures on video platforms such as Zoom which may not be real online learning in the absence of a dedicated online platform specifically designed for the purpose. There is a risk that in such a situation, learning outcomes may not be achieved and it may be only resulting in engaging the students.

Any change that is so disruptive is also likely to bring with it some new opportunities that will transform the higher education system worldwide and especially in a country like India which is planning to bring about a planned reform in this sector.

1.1.3 Rise in Blended Learning

Universities and colleges will shift to a model of blended learning where both face-to-face deliveries along with an online model will become a norm. This will require all teachers to become more technology savvy and go through some training to bring themselves to the level that would be required.

1.1.4 Improvement in learning material

There is a great opportunity for universities and colleges to start improving the quality of the learning material that is used in the teaching and learning process.

1.1.5 Rise in collaborative work

The teaching community to a large extent has been well protected and more so in a country like India. There is a new opportunity where collaborative teaching and learning can take on new forms and can even be monetized.

1.1.6 Possible alternatives or solutions for interrupted education during COVID-19

With the help of power supply, digital skills of teachers and students, internet connectivity it is necessary to explore digital learning, high and low technology solutions, etc. Students those are coming from low-income groups or presence of disability, etc.

2.0 Review of Literature

Michael P. A. Murphy (2020) in his study on 'COVID-19 and emergency eLearning: Consequences of the securitization of higher education for post-pandemic pedagogy' discusses the COVID-19 pandemic how quickly led to the closure of universities and colleges around the world, in hopes that public health officials' advice of social distancing could help to flatten the infection curve and reduce total fatalities from the disease. Sir John Daniel (2020) 'Education and the COVID pandemic' depicts COVID-19 pandemic as a huge challenge to education systems. This Viewpoint offers guidance to teachers, institutional heads, and officials on addressing the crisis. Reassuring students and parents is a vital element of institutional response. In ramping up capacity to teach remotely, schools and colleges should take advantage of asynchronous learning, which works best in digital formats. Pradeep Sahu (2020) in his study on 'Closure of Universities Due to Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Impact on Education and Mental Health of Students and Academic Staff' discusses that, the corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19), originated in Wuhan city of China, has spread rapidly around the world, sending billions of people into lockdown. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the corona virus epidemic a pandemic. In light of rising concern about the current COVID-19 pandemic, a growing number of universities across the world have either postponed or canceled all campus events such as workshops, conferences, sports, and other activities. In this review, the author will highlight the potential impact of the terrible COVID-19 outbreak on the education and mental health of students and academic staff. Wawa Brenda (2020) 'COVID-19 and Higher Education: Learning to Unlearn to Create Education for the Future'. The article discusses the notable shift in higher education following the corona virus pandemic that demands these institutions to focus on quality, relevance and agility of education to ensure adequate response to the emerging challenges. Amit Kumar Arora R. Srinivasan (2020) in the study on 'Impact of Pandemic COVID-19 on the Teaching – Learning Process: A Study of Higher Education Teachers' explains that the world is battling COVID-19 and economies across the globe have declared a lockdown. Less attendance, lack of personal touch, and lack of interaction due to connectivity issues were found to be the significant drawbacks of virtual classes. The study also suggested the ways to overcome the above challenges, drawbacks, and reasons behind non - adoption of virtual classes.

3.0 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to find out the Opinion of College Students on COVID -19 and online learning in Higher education.

The specific objectives of the study are the following:



- To understand the socio economic profile of the respondents
- To identify the nature of experiences faced by students in online learning
- To analyse the problems faced by the students in their learning process due to COVID
- To find out the satisfaction level of students in their learning process during COVID

4.0 Methodology

COVID -19 pandemic has disrupted the normal lifestyle of people across the globe, the virtual world has come to the rescue. Amongst these many institutions, have also shifted their base to virtual platforms to conduct classes online. Consequently, catering to the needs of all stages of education from pre-primary to university level, online education has emerged as an alternative to ordinary face to face classes. Accordingly, various stakeholders such as government and private organizations are trying their best to assist each other by encouraging their existing online platforms, apps and providing training to teachers to use these apps and platforms to the optimum level. Making a continuous effort to provide customized teaching-learning material suitable for online classes is another way of facilitating the students. In these testing circumstances due to unplanned closure, the biggest benefactors and the blessings in disguise are the online learning platforms. This study focuses on the impact of COVID 19 on the online learning as a blessing and also difficulties faced by the students in online learning.

4.1 Materials and Methods

The research design used in this study is Descriptive research design. The universe of this study is consisting of college students of Kochi city. From the source list collected from different colleges at Kochi, a representative of sample of 100 respondents were taken at random using lottery method and thus simple random sampling is used in the study. Questionnaire was used as the tool for the data collection. Data collection was done through online using Google form.

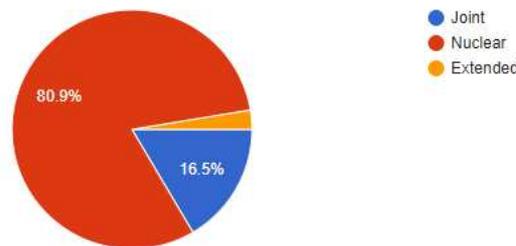
5.0 Data analysis and Findings

The primary data collected using questionnaire. It was daily edited coded, analyzed and interpreted using Google form and charts and diagrams were also prepared using goggle form to make it more attractive.

Socio economic profile

In this objective, the socio-economic profile of the respondents it was found that while 51.7 percent of the respondents were from rural area on other hand 48.3 percent from urban area. Majority of the respondents (80.9%) belong to nuclear family and 16.5 percent belong to joint family and 2.6 percent belong to extended family. With regard to the income, it was found that 42.3 percent of the respondents were belong to the income group 10000 and below 10000, 40.5 percent were between 10000 - 50000, 12.6 percent belong to the the category of 50000 -100000 and 4.6 percent comes under the category of above 100000.

Figure No.1 Type of Family



With regard to the type family of the respondents it was found that, majority of the respondents (80.9%) belong to nuclear family and 16.5 percent belong to joint family and 2.6 percent belong to extended family.

Table No.1 Locality

Locality	Percentage
Rural	51.7%
Urban	48.3%
Total	100



With regard to the locality of the respondents it was found that, while 51.7 percent of the respondents were from rural area on other hand 48.3 percent from urban area.

The nature of experiences faced by students in teaching learning

With regard to the nature of experience it was found that majority of the respondents (92.4%) often used gadget for online class was mobile phones and 6.8 percent laptop and 0.8 percent desktop. The connectivity that majority (33.9%) used was jio net connection, 27.1 percent airtel, 16.1 percent various other type of net connection is availed, 15.3 percent use vodafone and 7.6 percent BSNL. It was also found that majority of the respondents (61.9%) were engaged in studies, while 19.5 percent in entertainment and 18.6 percent in social media. Regarding the frequency of time spend for online classes, it was found that Majority of the respondents (79.7%) spend time daily on online classes while 11 percent thrice in a week, 8.5 percent 4 times in a week and 0.8 percent twice in a week. 69.6 percent of the respondents have the opinion that online facility is sufficient for them to grasp subject well while 30.4 percent are not able. It was found that 68.6 percent of the respondents are familiar with the online classes and 31.4 percent are not familiar with the online class. 51.7 percent of the respondents were not able to grasp subject from the teachers through online classes as that of their direct class room experience while 48.3 percent were able to grasp. It was also found that Majority of the respondents (79.7%) had the opinion that the time schedule is consistent with direct class room working hours and 20.3 percent had the opinion as not consistent. With regard to the possibility to communicate with teacher in the online class it was found that while 51.7 percent had opinion that they were not able to communicate with teacher and on other hand 48.3 percent were able to communicate with their teacher. Majority of the respondents (74.6%) had the opinion that they get enough attention from teacher during online class and 25.4 percent were not. Majority of the respondents (88.1%) were using the google meet as the online platform while 4.2 percent google classroom and moodle platform, 3.4 percent zoom. It was found that majority of respondents (73.3%) are comfortable with google meet online platform on the other hand 22.9 percent are comfortable with moodle, 16.9 percent google classroom, 6.8 percent and 2.5 percent comfortable with other online platform.

**Table No. 2
Gadget used often for online class**

Particulars	Percentage
Mobile	92.4%
Laptop	6.8%
Tablet	0
Desktop	0.8%
Any other	0
Total	100

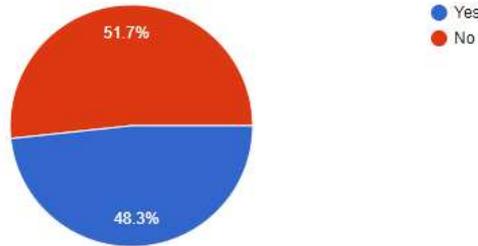
With regard to the nature of experience it was found that majority of the respondents (92.4%) often used gadget for online class was mobile phones and 6.8 percent laptop and 0.8 percent desktop.

Problems faced by the students in their learning process due to COVID-19

The third objective deals with the problem faced by the students in their learning process due to COVID 19 it was found that while 67.8 percent of the respondents face difficulties with the absence of direct classroom communication with teacher on the other hand 32.2 percent of them do not. It was also found that Majority of the respondents (83.9%) face difficulties with the absence of direct class room communication with their friends, only 16.1 percent do not face difficulties. Majority of the respondents (79.7%) are able to concentrate on online classes from their home environment and 22.3 percent are not able to concentrate. The main reasons for it were lack of space at home without any distraction, connectivity issues, power supply issues, not able to access mobile, privacy issues and health issues. Another problem faced by the respondents was net connectivity issue majority of the respondents (88.1%) face this problem and only 11.9 percent do not have this issue. It was found that that 55.1 percent of the respondents are able to concentrate on their study as earlier due to COVID 19 and 44.9 percent of the respondents are able to concentrate on their study as earlier due to COVID 19. It was found that majority of the respondents (67.8%) had the reasons for the extent of missing their educational environment were direct contact with teachers, friends, academic and nonacademic activities, 16.9 percent were missing direct contact with friends, 10.2 percent were missing direct contact with teachers, 2.6 percent were missing the academic activities and 2.5 percent were missing the nonacademic activities.

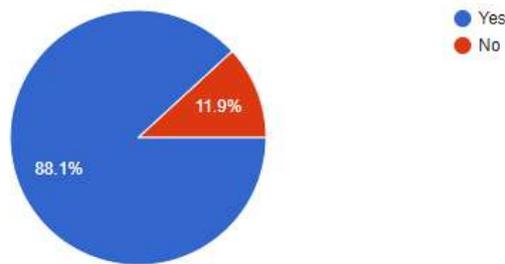


Figure No.2
Possibility to communicate with the teacher in the online class



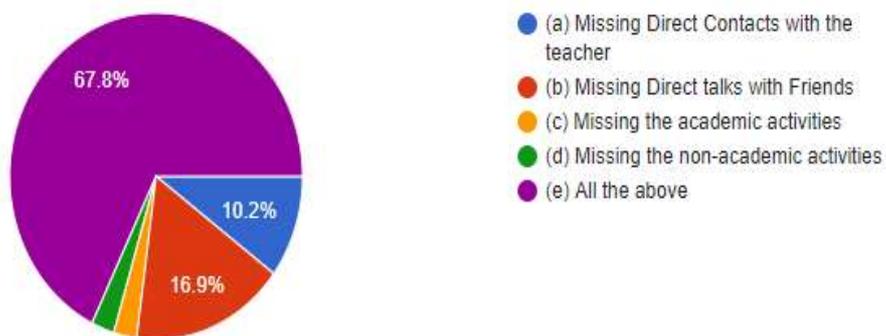
With regard to the possibility to communicate with teacher in the online class it was found that while 51.7 percent had opinion that they were not able to communicate with teacher and on other hand 48.3 percent were able to communicate with their teacher.

Figure No. 3
Net connectivity issues



Another problem faced by the respondents was net connectivity issue majority of the respondents (88.1%) face this problem and only 11.9 percent do not have this issue.

Figure No. 4
Extent the respondents miss their educational environment



It was found that majority of the respondents (67.8%) had the reasons for the extent of missing their educational environment were direct contact with teachers, friends, academic and nonacademic activities, 16.9 percent were missing direct contact with friends, 10.2 percent were missing direct contact with teachers, 2.6 percent were missing the academic activities and 2.5 percent were missing the nonacademic activities.



Table No. 3
Need to resume the physical classroom

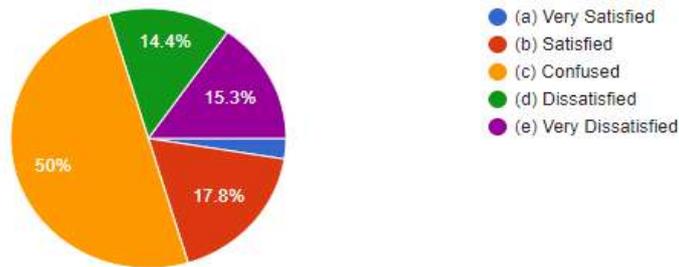
Table with 2 columns: Response, Percentage. Rows: Yes (88.1%), No (11.9%), Total (100)

Majority of respondents (88.1%) want to resume the physical classroom as early as possible and 11.9 percent do not want resume.

The satisfaction level of students in their learning process during Covid19

With regard to satisfaction level of the respondents it was found that 86.4 percent were satisfied with the current facility of online class provided by the institution and 13.6 percent were not satisfied. Majority of respondents (88.1%) want to resume the physical classroom as early as possible and 11.9 percent do not want resume. With regard to the respondents satisfaction level about this academic year it was found that 50 percent of the respondents were confused, 17.8 percent were satisfied, 15.3 percent were very dissatisfied, 14.4 percent were dissatisfied and only 2.5 percent were very satisfied.

Figure No. 5
Satisfaction level about this academic year



With regard to the respondents satisfaction level about this academic year it was found that 50 percent of the respondents were confused, 17.8 percent were satisfied, 15.3 percent were very dissatisfied, 14.4 percent were dissatisfied and only 2.5 percent were very satisfied.

6.0 Conclusion

Distance learning programs can be included. To provide support for digitalization to teachers and students, the necessity to explore digital learning platforms, Measures should be taken to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on job offers, internship programs, and research projects, education technology reform at the national level that is an integration of technology in the present Indian education system.

We can't ignore that at this time of crisis effective educational practice is needed for the capacity-building of young minds. Central Government and State need to take some measures to ensure the overall progress in the country. Time never waits, this tough time will also pass. Till then stay safe, stay at home!

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