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## UPPER PRIMARY STUDENT'S PERCEPTION AND PREFERENCE FOR E – EDUCATION IN INDIA

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# UPPER PRIMARY STUDENT'S PERCEPTION AND PREFERENCE FOR E – EDUCATION IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

Education has now become a basic need of every human being to become a self-developed person. But this the COVID-19 pandemic has forced all education houses around the world to shut down indefinitely and thus has to move their educational activities onto online platforms. The schools were not prepared for such an unbelievable and sudden transition but any how they come up with an alternative of online classes. And thus teaching-learning processes start evolving gradually.

The online classes or e-learning is now in practice of all education houses. Now it is compulsory for all students to become a part of this platform as they have no other choices for their upliftment.

This review paper throws light upon the different aspects related to e-learning in opinion of students and teachers during this ongoing pandemic.

The upper middle students felt that they learn better in physical classrooms rather than virtual classrooms. The students, however, felt that the teachers have shown improvement in their online teaching skills. The students also cherished the online study material being used in providing online education. On the other hand, the students also felt that online education is stressful and affecting their health and social life. This pandemic has led to a prevalent adoption of e-learning system and the lessons learnt now will be accommodated in the future.

This study also provides a summarization about the impacts of e-learning on education and society.

**Keywords:** *E- learning, upper middle class students, Pandemic, preferences for online education*

## INTRODUCTION

In India when most of the schools were winding up their 2019-20 academic session, all the education industries were shut down due to lockdown at the end of March 2020 to discontinue the spread of corona virus. Thus, the only option was to elect the e- education. Thus, COVID-19 pandemic has given online education an unpredicted thrust, and allowed the continuation of study through formal education.

The online classes or e-learning has now become in practice of all education houses. Now it is obligatory for all students to become a part of this platform as they have no other choices for their upliftment. Online education offers improved access, improves the quality of learning, reduces infrastructural costs and provides lifelong learning opportunities [1]. On the contrary, studies have indicated that some developing and under-developed countries are unable to function e-learning systems proficiently [2].

This study is based on the impact of e-learning and digitalization on schools, using the primary and secondary schools

Jaeger and Blaabæk (2020) highlighted that student coming from economically weaker sections of the society face unequal learning opportunities

relative to those who have better socioeconomic status [3]. Poverty and psychosomatic trauma have a significantly strong relationship [4] and students belonging to lower-income families suffer from scarcity of resources required for online learning [5]. Another intensifying concern in the current scenario is the fear of losing an academic year which is building a psychological pressure, indirectly stress on students of India [6].

Similar to other technologies, e-learning also has its own compensation and restrictions, which are discussed here in this short review.

## DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has uprooted the formal education system in India, causing enormous pressure on the online education sector.

Well-established private schools were quick to emphasize on their digital platforms and prepare to conduct classes online. But, State governments schools were not that much equipped to follow such digital platforms [7]. Although provisions were made in government schools to conduct classes online, existing faultiness—"between rural and urban, male and female, rich and poor"—were ignored.[8]

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## Internet in India [9]

As of November 2019:

- 54 percent of the urban population of 12+ years and 32 percent of the same in the rural areas had internet access
- 77 percent of urban and 61 percent of rural internet users aged 12 and above used it every day, while 7 percent of urban and 13 percent of rural users used it less than once a week
- 99 percent of both urban and rural internet users aged 12 yrs. and above used mobile phones to access the internet
- 433 million people aged 12 yrs. and above, and 71 million people aged 5-11 yrs. were active internet users in India

## Mobile penetration in India

- 502.2 million people in India had smartphones as of December 2019[10].
- The number of smartphone users is expected to be 859 million and 504 million respectively by 2022[11].

The provision of an E-Learning system is an important factor in providing a comprehensive Information and Communications Technology solution within schools.

The networking of teachers, students and others produces a active community sharing of information, ideas and strategies (12).

## 1. Impact of e-learning on education

- E-learning makes the class rooms more interactive which convert it into a easy learning environment.
- E-learning Helps in lively participation of students as well teachers.
- E-learning and teaching also provide teachers with a large database of questions.
- Teachers can also upload content online;
  - It also helps in create question paper and thus helps in examining student's performance.
  - A very huge data of knowledge is available there to students in online education.
  - E-learning has different types of contents like animations, videos, self-explanatory diagrams, puzzles, eBooks and past year questions papers, all of which are regularly updated.

- It provides effective teaching and learning means in classroom for teachers and students with User friendly GUI.( 13).

One of the best examples of impact of e-learning on education in India is the National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), which is being funded and Initiated by Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry.

## 2. Students perspectives on E. learning / online education

The perspectives on e- learning varies students to student, age to age, place to place, society to society, conditions to conditions etc which can't be expressed so the summary of all the thoughts are put together and presented herein. The students had a mixed opinion about online education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- A majority of the students approved or strongly approved, that learning takes place better in physical classrooms than through online education and only a minority of the students felt that online education is better than attending MOOCs
- On the other hand, the students felt that teachers have improved their online teaching skills since the beginning of the pandemic 2020
- Online education is also a practical and alternative option of study in the current scenario. The students also appreciated the online study materials and tools being provided by the teachers to propagate their knowledge.
- The students also accepted that ample study material is now available online. The slideshows (in power point), and you tube channels, live classes are an effective source in gaining knowledge (14).
- The students revealed that online tools sometimes facilitate them in problem solving. Programming, and even designing.
- They uttered that how their lectures can be made more interactive using devices like a digital pen.
- Students showed their preference for e-learning due to many reasons. But, the consideration of future opportunities was very much talked about. Directly or indirectly their major concern for gaining knowledge was attached with future prospects or building a good career. The students

- discussed those e-learning acts as a support for carving their career (15).
- Some students felt that they can interact better with teachers in a physical classroom rather than virtual classrooms. Amusingly, very few students felt that the learning can be improved better if teachers and students show their faces during classes (16). Some students also suggested that interaction can be more effective if teachers and students convey their short and important messages through WhatsApp, chat box and many other social platforms.
  - Most of the students also have opinion that regular assessments and assignments can help them in improving their online study. Less than fifty percent students agreed that online assessments and assignments can properly evaluate their knowledge and more than fifty percent students felt that weekly tests also facilitate the learning process.
  - Almost all students, agreed that online education is adversely affecting their health. Many students are suffering from phobia of losing Internet connectivity during the live class (17).
  - The bulk of the students accepted that online education is leading to the overuse of digital technologies
  - Many students have opinion that extreme sitting in front of screen time is causing stress and affecting their sleep (18).
  - Fifty percent students also agreed that online tests cause more anxiety than traditional forms of test.
  - Some students also said that e learning also has some societal implications.
  - Many students accepted that online education is affecting their daily life routine.
  - Students shared that there is lack of motivation to study alone. They are tempted away from studying when they connect to the internet, hence may not be able to perform as well as they would do it in a traditional class.
  - Almost everyone has a smart phone and a laptop along with internet connection. If left alone, they would be more prone to engagement in other activities like gaming, watching movies or series
  - Students felt that one of the major causes of disinterest in e-learning is data security. The student's creativity is also at stake as it encourages plagiarism (19).
  - Students were of the opinion that they are not motivated to study alone.
  - They are being tempted away from studying when they have an access to internet. They lose interest when given a chance to surf net.
  - Almost everyone has a smart phone and a laptop along with internet connection. If left alone, they would be more prone to engagement in other activities like gaming, watching movies or series which may also give rise to potential health risks associated with excessive usage.
  - Students were of the opinion that even though learning is interactive, but still they feel that face-to-face interaction and the knowledge sharing is a must for education which is missed on virtual platform (20).
  - Students shared that there is lack of motivation to study alone. They are tempted away from studying when they connect to the internet, hence may not be able to perform as well as they would do it in a traditional class.
  - Challenges pertaining to excessive use of internet as well as screen time, ultimately affecting the pocket and health of student. Some time economic condition of a family also affects the study (21). A family with two children and one handset is also a very important factor effecting the study of the child. To overcome this situation one child attends class at a time, then other will attend his /her study when the mobile is free from the first one.
  - Another but also a very important view from the low economic family back ground students is that they have to purchase the smart mobile only which is costing high. If they purchased the hand set then sometime even they can't afford the data expense.
  - This age student is growing in an atmosphere consisting of learning, playing and interacting. Although, virtual classrooms lack the social and physical interaction aspect making it socially challenging (22). Children with pre-existing psychological problems such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, behavior or mood disorders, depression and anxiety could be adversely affected by the disruption in their

routine owing to switch to online classes and closing of schools [23]. Council on Communications in Media (2011) reported that sleep anxiety, aggressive behavior and attention issues are the side-effects of excessive online media use among young children and youth [24].

### 3. Preferences for E-learning/ online education

On the basis of opinions of many researches on online education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The above result was concluded. Other than these, many perspectives or opinions from students on the e-education, it also plays a vital role in nowadays education during this pandemic if we see another part of it. It is some time advantageous also. With the perspectives of students on online education, we must also have a look on its advantages or preferences over the traditional education.

- The utmost and positive attitude for the e-education its availability which is making it a popular form of distance learning platform today. It can be made available anywhere, at any time.
- The discussions and collaborative activities that occur in a physical classroom are more easy and comprehensive comparing to virtual classes held through online platform. (25). However, online education can be better adapted because of smaller class size and harmonized environment of the students.
- E-learning is trying to prevail over the challenges faced by students in rural areas in receiving proper education in traditional classrooms. (26).
- Lone emphasizes that 'direct to device' technology will enable them to access educational facilities from anywhere [27].
- Additionally, the virtual classroom will facilitate them to save money which might have been or else spent on transportation and books for attending traditional classroom teaching. Although, setting up of an e-learning class needs one-time investment like mobile hand set, hearing aids etc. along with monthly internet data charges.
- The elasticity of online education offers students to learn and improve their professional skills instead of acquiring theoretical knowledge on

traditional subjects which might not interest them.

- Another exclusive characteristic of the online classroom is "critical thinking and feedback sharing Student-student interactions as well student teacher interactions in virtual classes are very helpful in providing a platform where they can share their critique and feedback on each other. The teacher can also analyze assignments critically and give them productive feedbacks and thus, having ample scope for discussion.
- E-learning is an innovation, which has drastically impacted the way of learning and teaching as well. While analyzing the responses, the researchers analyzed that there are certain factors which motivate the students to adopt e-learning while there are certain inhibitors which restrict the adoption of e-learning amongst students (28).
- It helps in grooming their skills and enhancing their knowledge which ultimately provides employment opportunities.
- E-learning is a very convenient and flexible option of training oneself not only on a day-to-day basis, but whenever one has free time to. It enables just-in time learning (29).
- Students are eager to adopt courses through elearning because they find it affordable. There are many online education portals that are providing quality education free of cost, which is a major attraction for the students
- Many students adopt e-learning of some specialized courses parallel with their education (degree course) as it is cost-effective with not much of a financial burden
- The students highlighted that they adopted learning because of its captive nature. The elearning content can capture the interest of participants because of the use of multimedia and in some cases its interactive nature (30).
- Students were highly motivated to adopt e-learning due to interactivity it creates and hence engage the audience for longer time duration.
- The students also shared that it adds value to their on-going courses or education and hence increase the chance of employability. The courses can be selected as per one's choice and

thereby knowledge can be enhanced without even setting the limit

## CONCLUSION

These days undoubtedly, education sector is turning into an e-learning sector. Many schools and colleges have also started teaching e-learning programs. Surely, the education sector will develop majorly in coming years with this hi-tech progression. The ease of user-friendliness, wide reach of internet, coverage and opportunities are the unique characteristics which makes the e-learning to be significant and thus will be fading the socio-economic differences among learners of various age groups in India.

In this paper, we discussed the impact of e-learning on education, perspectives of upper middle students on online education and above all the

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preferences of e-learning over traditional system of education. We found that e-learning have positive impacts on children academic performance, social, critical and cognitive thinking.

With the above given preferences of e- learning, online education also have adverse effects on the mental, emotional, social and physical health of students. By adopting certain measures of self-care and self-motivation these ill effects caused due to excessive use of virtual classrooms can be overruled. Moreover, policy makers in association with counselors can also help in organizing such challenges by making predetermined guidelines for students and teachers.

This pandemic has led to a widespread adoption of online education and the lessons we learn now will be helpful in the future.

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