

A REVIEW ON EFFICACY OF E-LEARNING DURING PANDEMIC CRISIS

Heena L. Makhija

Ph.D. Research Scholar,
University School of Law,
Gujarat university, Ahmedabad.
hinamakhija25@gmail.com

&

Dr. Bhavesh H. Bharad

Assistant Professor,
University School of Law,
Gujarat university, Ahmedabad.
dr.bharad@gmail.com

Abstract

The severe impact of Covid-19 has shaken the world to its core. Education institution were temporarily closed in an attempt to contain the spread of covid-19 pandemic, as the consequence of which learners ranging from school going children to post graduate students were affected. Educational institution in India is currently based on traditional methods of learning that is face to face learning in classroom. Few have started moving towards the blended system of learning. This pandemic challenged the education sector and is forced to move towards the e-learning. There has been a significant surge in usage of Technology such as audio, video, computer, tablets, mobile devices, blogging, webcams, whiteboards, screen casting etc in learning since Covid-19. The paper focuses on will this e-learning mean for the future, will it make part of new-normal. It studies the advantages such as cost reduction, increase convenience and flexibility, improves employee knowledge, ease of content update and disadvantages such as requirement of self-discipline and time management skills, diminished social interaction, not suitable for every topic, lack of practice based learning, reliance on technology etc of e-learning. Further it studies the challenges ranging from learner's issues, educators issue and content issues, challenges for institution to engage students and make them participate in teaching-learning process, challenges by teacher to move from offline mode to online mode, the lack of standard for quality, quality control, development of e-resource and e-content delivery, it highlights the stipulations by government regulating e-learning, barriers in its implementation, ensuring the digital equity. Finally it ends with the conclusions and suggestions, how e-learning can be made best efficient in this time of corona era.

Keywords: Covid-19, e-learning, e-learning guidelines, Technology, India

INTRODUCTION :

COVID-19 is impacting almost every sector of the economy. Coronavirus pandemic has significantly disrupted various sectors in India including oil and gas, automobiles, aviation, agriculture, retail, etc and the education sector is no exception. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the closure of schools in 188 countries, affecting more than 1.5 billion students and 63 million primary and secondary teachers worldwide. The immediate solution of coronavirus is necessary or if like these days pass then closure of schools and colleges does not even have short term impact in India but can even cause far-reaching economic and societal consequences. As per the assessment of the researchers, it is uncertain to get back to normal teaching anytime soon. As social distancing is preminent at this stage, this will have negative effects on learning opportunities. Educational units are struggling to find options to deal with this challenging situation. These circumstances make us realize that scenario planning is an urgent need for academic institutions. There is an urgent need to protect and save our students, faculty, academic staff, communities, societies, and the nation as a whole. A multi-pronged strategy is necessary to manage the crisis and build a resilient Indian education system in the long term. The pandemic has transformed the centuries-old, chalk-talk teaching model to one driven by technology. This disruption in the delivery of education is pushing policymakers to figure out how to drive engagement at scale while ensuring inclusive e-learning. E-Learning can be defined as the use of computer and internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solution to enable learning and improve performance.

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ADVANTAGES:

E-learning provides with Accessibility, affordability, flexibility, learning pedagogy, life-long. The online mode of learning is easily accessible and can even reach to rural and remote areas. It is considered to be a relatively cheaper mode of education in terms of the lower cost of transportation, accommodation, and the overall cost of institution-based learning. Flexibility is another interesting aspect of online learning. A learner can schedule or plan their time for completion of courses available online. It serves as a panacea in the time of crisis. It is student-centered and offers a great deal of flexibility in terms of time and location. The e-learning methods enable us to customize our procedures and processes based on the needs of the learners. There are plenty of online tools available which is important for an effective and efficient learning environment. Educators can use a combo of audio, videos, and text to reach out to their students in this time of crisis to maintain a human touch to their lectures. This can help in creating a collaborative and interactive learning environment where students can give their immediate feedback, ask queries, and learn interestingly. The Anywhere-Anytime feature of e-learning is beneficial in the times of crisis such as Covid-19. The closure of places and unsafe traveling by roads can create a lot of troubles but e-learning will at least not keep us deprived of getting an education at our homes or workplaces. There are fewer chances of students missing out on classes, as they can access easily anytime from the comfort of their home.

DISADVANTAGES:

There is number of technologies available for online education but sometimes they create a lot of difficulties. These difficulties and problems associated with modern technology range from downloading errors, issues with installation, login problems, problems with audio and video, and so on. Sometimes student finds online teaching to be boring and unengaging. Personal attention is also a huge issue facing online learning. Students want two-way interaction which sometimes gets difficult to implement. The learning process cannot reach its full potential until students practice what they learn. Sometimes, online content is all theoretical and does not let students practice and learn effectively. Mediocre course content is also a major issue. Students feel that lack of community, technical problems, and difficulties in understanding instructional goals are the major barriers for online learning. E-learning hamper the communication between the learner and the educator, that is, direct communication and human touch are lost. Time and location flexibility, though it is the strength of online learning these aspects are fragile and create problems. Student's nonserious behavior in terms of time and flexibility can cause a lot of problems. All students and learners are not the same, they vary in degrees of their capabilities and confidence level. Some do not feel comfortable while learning online, leading to increased frustration and confusion. Inadequate compatibility between the design of the technology and component of psychology required by the learning process; and inadequate customization of learning processes can obstruct the teaching process and creates an imbalance.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Online learning generally has a lot of opportunities available but this time of crisis will allow online learning to boom as most academic institutions have switched to this model. Online Learning, Remote Working, and e-collaborations exploded during the outbreak of Corona Virus crisis. Academic institutions can grab this opportunity by making their teachers teach and students learn via online methodology. The people have always been complacent and never tried some new modes of learning. This is the time when there is a lot of scope in bringing out surprising innovations and digital developments. EdTech companies are doing their bit by helping us fighting the pandemic and not letting learning to be put at a halt. Teachers can practice technology and can design various flexible programs for students' better understanding. The usage of online learning will test both the educator and learners. It will enhance problem-solving skills, critical thinking abilities, and adaptability among the students. In this critical situation, users of any age can access the online tools and reap the benefits of time and location flexibility associated with online learning. Teachers can develop innovative pedagogical approaches in this panicky situation, now also termed as Panicgogy. EdTech Start-ups have plenty of opportunities to bring about radical transformations in nearly all the aspects associated with education ranging from, teaching, learning, evaluation, assessment, results, certification, degrees, and so on. Also, increasing market demand for e-learning is an amazing opportunity for EdTech start-ups to bring technological disruption in the education sector.

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CHALLENGES:

Most of students and teachers across various universities have never really practiced e-learning they are stuck with traditional modes of teaching. Online learning faces many challenges ranging from learners' issues, educators' issues, and content issues. Not all the teachers and students have access to all digital devices, internet, and Wi-Fi. Unavailability of proper digital tools, no internet connections, or iffy Wi-Fi connections can cause a lot of trouble due to which many students might lose out learning opportunities. Parents are more worried about the physical and mental health condition than the Covid-19 outbreak. Because of lack of physical interaction students are missing out the opportunity to raise their queries with teachers. It has a limited time framework which results in failing to concentrate on what is being taught or not getting the chance to clear their doubts. It is a challenge for institutions to engage students and make them participate in the teaching-learning process. It is a challenge for teachers to move from offline mode to online mode, changing their teaching methodologies, and managing their time. It is challenging to develop content which not only covers the curriculum but also engage the students. The quality of e-learning programs is a real challenge. There is no clear stipulation by the government in their educational policies about e-learning programs. There is a lack of standards for quality, quality control, development of e-resources, and e-content delivery. This problem needs to be tackled immediately so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of quality education via e-learning. One should not merely focus on the pros attached to the adoption of online learning during the crises but should also take account of developing and enhancing the quality of virtual courses delivered in such emergencies. A lot of time and cost is involved in e-learning. It is not as easy as it seems, a considerable amount of investment is needed for getting the devices and equipment, maintaining the equipment, training the human resources, and developing the online content. Therefore, an effective and efficient educational system needs to be developed to impart education via online mode. Ensuring digital equity is crucial in this tough time. Steps must be taken to reduce the digital divide. Poor internet connectivity is also the issue for consen. Continuously staring at the screen for long time may lead to eye related issue health issues.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Even if a smaller number of students are allowed to attend classes on rotations, schools should reopen. Teaching has to be normal. And every subject has a lot of practical aspects which cannot be taught virtually. A lot of issues are attached to online education but we cannot ignore the perks of it in times of such crisis. Technical difficulties can be solved through prerecording video lectures, testing the content, and always keeping Plan B ready so that the teaching-learning process cannot be hampered. Teachers should set time limits and reminders for students to make them alert and attentive. Efforts should be made to humanize the learning process to the best extent possible. Personal attention should be provided to students so that they can easily adapt to this learning environment. Social media and various group forums can be used to communicate with students. Communication is the key when it gets difficult to try reaching out to students via texts, various messaging apps, video calls, and so on—content should be such that enable students for practice and also hone their skills. The quality of the courses should be improved continuously and teachers must try to give their best. Online programs should be designed in such a way that they are creative, interactive, relevant, student-centered, and group-based. Educators must spend a lot of time in making effective strategies for giving online instructions. Effective online instructions facilitate feedback from learners, make learners ask questions, and broaden the learner horizon for the course content. Institutions must focus on pedagogical issues and emphasize collaborative learning, case learning, and project-based learning through online instructions. The challenge to educational institutions is not only finding new technology and using it but also reimagining its education, thereby helping students and academic staff who are seeking guidance for digital literacy. A step-by-step guide can be prepared by academic institutions that can guide the teachers and students on how to access and use various e-learning tools and how to cover major curriculum content via these technologies thereby reducing the digital illiteracy. Teachers can present the curriculum in various formats, that is, they can use videos, audios, and texts. It is beneficial if educators complement their lectures with video chats, virtual meetings, and so on to get immediate feedback and maintain a personal connection with the students. The 'Pragyatas' guidelines for digital education, released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to assist school heads, teachers, parents & students in e-learning. These guidelines, prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) are only advisories, and state governments have been asked to build on them

and formulate their own rules, based on local needs. The PRAGYATA guidelines include eight steps of digital learning that is, Plan- Review- Arrange- Guide- Yak (talk)- Assign- Track- Appreciate. These steps guide the planning and implementation of digital education step by step with examples. The Guidelines also emphasize the need to unify all efforts related to digital, online education, benefitting school going children across the country.

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