

Pros and Cons of online education at Secondary School level during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The goal of the study was to look into the benefits and drawbacks of online learning during the COVID -19 pandemic. It looked into the various difficulties that students confront while online learning. A sample of 10 students was chosen from several secondary schools of Kashmir for this study, and data was acquired through interviews. Content analysis was used to examine the data. The study highlighted several advantages of online education while also mentioned the challenges that students confront when receiving online education.

Keywords: Online education, COVID-19 and Internet literacy

Introduction

The whole world combats with coronavirus initially started in China (2019) and have spread over every corner of the world. It influenced people without seeing their sex, education, income, religion, and identity. To control its spread, many nations implemented lockdown a preventive measure that leads an adverse effect on all parts of our lives. In India, the first COVID -19 case was detected on January 27 in Kerala. As a result, the country went into lockdown on March 24. From then, people are keeping themselves at home and leaving home only in case of emergencies. A growing number of COVID-19 cases also

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forced schools, universities, and other educational institutions to put a seal on their institutions and move to online education. Online education or digital education is an alterable educational method that provides learning via the internet. No doubt, it gives opportunities to learners to learn according to their pace and helps those students who may not admit themselves in a formal or traditional classroom. The increasing use of online education has replaced the traditional asses in a faster mode. In times of Pandemic, online education is considered a second teacher for the learners. It is used as a replica for the regular classes and the people who are engaged with other busy networking (Sunil K., 2015). Online teaching and learning refer to courses that are delivered electronically through the help of the internet. It means there is no physical contact or face-to-face contact classroom session. Online classroom sessions can be in the form of videos and transcripts (*Joshua s. 2008*). The spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic has created depression, anxiety, and other numerous concerns among the population. It has disturbed every aspect, and education has no privilege. As per the report made by UNO (2020 August) in which it mentioned that Pandemic had created the largest disruption of the education system in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion educators in more than 190 countries and continents of the world. While the learners have made constant efforts to maintain continuity in their education but still there are numerous challenges they face while receiving this digital learning. The researchers underwent through various studies to get an understanding of the research topic. **Adnan & Anwar (2020)** conducted a study on online

learning amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Students perspective. The study checked the attitude of Pakistani higher education students towards compulsory online and distance education. For this purpose under graduate and post graduate students were selected. The results of the study revealed that despite so much effort, online education does not bring desired results in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan. **Hermanto & Srimulyani (2021)** conducted a study on the challenges of online education during COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected from 494 educators and students. The findings of the study revealed that for successful implementation of online learning several components are required like human resource and technological resources. The study also founded numerous drawbacks of digital learning like indiscipline, lack of resources and social interaction. **Mukhtar et al. (2020)** explored advantages, limitations and recommendations for online learning during COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the study indicated that online education is comfortable and is easily accessible but it has disadvantages also like inefficiency and difficult in maintaining academic integrity. **Muthuprasad et al. (2021)** studied students' perception and preference for online education in India during COVID-19 Pandemic. The study explored that 70% of the students are ready to go for online education while the subjects that need practical courses are somehow complex for the students. **Olugbenga (2020)** studied Prospects and Challenges of Online Education in Secondary Schools in Northern Nigeria. A survey method was used for this study, and a sample of 100 students was selected through a simple sampling technique. The results of the study revealed that

most of the schools in Nigeria face a shortage of things necessary for online education. It was also revealed that most of the students complained that they lack concentration and to retain is a problem.

Statement of the Problem

No doubt, online education is one of the best alternative of formal education, having millions of benefits and is globally recognized but there are various disadvantages of it also. The present study aimed to study the *Pros and Cons of online education at Secondary School level during the covid-19 Pandemic (A qualitative research from Kashmir)*.

Methodology

For the present study, a qualitative approach was adopted, and an interview was used as a technique for data collection. The sample for this study consisted of 10 secondary school students. Sampling technique was purely purposive in nature. The said data was analyzed with the help of content analyses.

Research Questions

How accessible is online education to secondary school students of Kashmir?

What are the benefits and challenges of online education?

Analysis

Online education is indeed the best alternative for formal education, having its numerous benefits, but at the same time, we cannot deny its disadvantages. After interviewing students, various pros and cons of online education have

been found, which were analyzed with the help of content analyses.

Firstly, advantages of online education have been discussed.

- **The best alternative for formal education**

Online education is one of the best alternatives for formal education, particularly in times of natural disasters. It provides opportunities to learners to learn at times of turmoil etc.

A student said:

"During pandemic online education was the only hope for us otherwise we would not be able to complete our syllabus which later would affect our results" (student class 10th male).

Learner friendly

Online education is learner-friendly, which means learners learn according to their own pace and capabilities. It reaches the doorsteps of a learner, and the learner receives it at their convenience.

A student said, *"The benefits of online education are that we don't have to move out of our homes, and we can also record the lectures and listen to them when we want to."* (Student 9th male).

Pick up new skills

Digital or online education mostly depends on smart instruments which requires a good mastery how to use these instruments. Online education helps general people to

use different applications like zoom, google meet, telegram which were very less known to people before pandemic.

A student said:

*“I was not fond of technology and I don't have the phone as my parents told me that they will provide me a cell phone when I complete my secondary stage. But the insurgency of pandemic forced my parents to give me a smart phone as every educational activity was done through online. First, I did not know how to operate this gadget and zoom, telegram was another level for me. The student in a funny way said that I thank pandemic through which I receive my phone and I become technically sound and learn many uses of smart phone and also learn how to use social media applications”.
(Student female class 10th).*

Challenges of Online Education

Having a number of benefits, there are several challenges of online education. After interacting with students, various problems were identified.

Internet Instability

Digital education mostly depends on the internet. Not having proper internet accessibility sometimes creates a problem for students.

A student narrated:

"Undoubtedly, online education is one of the best means to receive education, but it requires 24/7 internet access which is otherwise impossible in Kashmir." (Class 10th female students).

Costly

Digital education nowadays has become very expensive. It requires android phones and other gadgets, which every one cannot afford.

A student said:

*"Moving from offline to online education is good in times of COVID-19, but everyone cannot afford it. My father is a farmer, and it becomes challenging for him to feed the family. So how come he can buy a smartphone or laptop for me."
(Student 10th class female).*

Computer Literacy

Computer education means knowing how to operate different gadgets effectively. Some teachers have electronic equipment, but they do not know how to use them. These teachers are, in turn, handicapped when it comes to technology.

A student said:

While giving lectures via zoom, google some of our teachers cannot handle these applications properly. They always complain about these and sometimes delay their lectures. (Male student class 9th).

Retention Problem

To remain in a class till the end is known as retention. Retention becomes a big hurdle during online education. Mostly students loss their interest in online classes. It became a challenge for a teacher to gain attention of students throughout the class.

A student narrated:

“I know that online education is necessary and I don’t have any other option rather to attend classes via online mode but the problem is that I am not able to give my 100% as I fedup easily. I enjoyed a lot when physical classes were organized and I was a very quick and bright students but during online classes I am not able to get all the things which teacher teach me as I become very lazy.” (Student class 10th female).

Not good for Science Subjects

Indeed, online education is best during the times of crises but it is most suitable for those subjects that does not require the practical portion like science subjects where it becomes a big hurdle.

A student said:

“We are very thankful that our education shifted from offline to online mode through which we did not suffer much but the problem is we learn only the theory aspect of science subjects. I am the student of class 9th I was very excited when I reach this class as I was thinking of doing things practically in a lab or outside the classroom, but pandemic has ruined everything. We learn only the theory aspect of many things which rather needed the field work”. (Student class 9th male).

Discussion

The present study discussed the pros and cons of online education during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Online education is the best alternative for traditional classroom teaching. There are various benefits and problems of providing online education, particularly in our country, where we have the second largest education system in the world. **Olugbenga (2020)** also highlighted such benefits and challenges. The study also highlighted that online

education is best option for formal education but when it comes on science subjects it becomes a big issue for students as they were not able to do things practically in a lab such issues were also highlighted by *Muthuprasad et al. (2021)*. The study also highlighted some other advantages and disadvantages of digital education.

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