

Impact of Digital Education on Delhi University Students: Post Covid-19 Era

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Abstract

With the spread of pandemic, life of everyone has been affected in one way or the other and created complications. The educational system was the first to be effected by these crises as all educational institutions got shutdown. To deal with it digital education concept emerged as an indispensable resource for education. This new technology provided all types of learning opportunities for students and enabled teachers to create virtual experiences for them. All educational institutes are using platforms like Google classroom, Microsoft teams, and apps like Zoom to carry on with the teaching process. However, it did not prove to be of great success because of the various issues and challenges attached to this new system of education leading to struggle of both teachers and students in their own way to cope up with this situation. A survey was conducted on 110 students, studying at undergraduate level in Delhi University College to find out how online teaching has impacted them and how they perceive in terms of benefits and challenges associated with digital education system. A predesigned questionnaire was employed for collection of data and group discussion was conducted on the issue which gave various insights into this new concept and suggestions from a student's perspective which can be quite helpful in designing the way online teaching can be made effective.

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1. Introduction

Covid-19 has brought a sudden change which has disturbed the complete system. First initiative taken by government to control this critical situation was to shutdown educational institutes. This caused lot of confusion and created new challenges for institutions to deal with the situation. Then the concept of digital

education came into picture which had the ability to make learning possible keeping social distancing into consideration. Since no one had imagined such a situation so no backup was available. All was new for both teaching faculty and students. Teachers who were not tech friendly found it difficult to adjust to this new system of education. Since March, 2020 when this

pandemic came into existence teaching methodology has evolved a lot. Different people have different views regarding the introduction of digital education. 40% are of the view that this sudden introduction of new system of education without the proper backing of training will not have sustainability while other 60% are of the opinion that it has created a base for a new system which will be beneficial for education to become better and give new horizons to coming generation in the field of education.

The big question which arises when digital education is talked about is whether there is sufficient infrastructure to go for online education and provide the same to all students falling into different categories. According to a survey 90 lakh students from government schools don't have the facility of digital education. It has also been reported that only 24% of the households have internet facility and use smartphones to access it and another 11% use computers. Now, it can be easily imagined the scenario in which digital education is being introduced. Government will have to take lot of measures to resolve these issues. Education has never been the right of rich. Each one of us have equal right to get education but if digital education is going to be the mode of education lot of students will have to drop out because of lack of resources.

Post covid-19 era has put a great impact on the student life where they used to have social interactions, which helped in developing their personality. This pandemic has changed everything. The emergence of digital education has helped in resolving the education aspect to some extent but that is not all that is important in

a student life. They learn a lot through observations, interactions, exposure, participation in different events organized in colleges and universities which give them an opportunity to explore their talents. But this Covid-19 has taken away all this from them and made their life monotonous and bored.

This situation has highly impacted the students both physically and psychologically. The long sitting to attend classes makes them lethargic and by remaining at home without any social interaction makes them depressed. To deal with this situation cautiously is the responsibility of both parents and teachers. Therefore, the online teaching should be designed in such a way that it is interesting, involves student engagement and interactive giving opportunity to the students to come out with their ideas.

2. Digital Education

Digital education relates to online teaching methodology through which teachers can interact with students on visual platforms. This use of technology is very useful as it saves time and provides a wider platform to learn. It gives convenience to the students as well as teachers to access resources with ease. With little practice it will help the teachers to develop digital skills which will be helpful for not only delivering better lectures but for their self-growth. The concept of digital education has been in existence but was not used due to the comfort zone which was created by traditional teaching. Digital teaching provides lot of usefulness to teaching like there is no restriction of place. People can join the sessions irrespective of where they are or through the medium of making good

interactive sessions engagement of students can be done which will be a good learning experience.

Digital education is a big challenge in a country like India where a large segment of students don't have computer and access to internet at home. Hence, the online teaching creates a problem for them to attend classes and fulfill the attendance criteria. Moreover, at home the issue of space to attend classes without distractions is not possible and if there is more than one child or other members who also need the gadget at home, it becomes an affordability issue.

3. Covid-19 and Digital Education

Though the benefits of digital education are vast but its sudden entry due to covid-19 has created a situation of unrest in the educational sector. The system has not been able to cope up as none was prepared for it. In March, 2020 when the pandemic came there was lot of chaos in the education system but eventually digital education was adapted. Over a period of around 6 months lot of learning has been done and lot of solutions cropped up but still online teaching is facing lot of challenges. Different apps for e-learning like zoom, Google Meet are very helpful in delivering lectures. There are platforms like e-Pathshala which provide learning content to the students during this critical time. Digital education is providing good learning experience and helping the education system to continue learning process but students and teachers both face lot of challenges in using it because of lack of training and some loopholes of this new system.

From the time Covid-19 have come, teaching faculty has gone for taking number of measures to make the education online effective and convenient. Many colleges in Delhi University have created google classrooms to make it convenient to faculty and students to join classes, take attendance and also keep a record of assignments at one place. It has reduced the confusion and systematized the system. Apps like SmartProf help in communicating with students regarding important information and keeping them updated about their attendance and assignment marks.

4. Methodology

The present study adopted online cross-sectional study using Google sheet and WhatsApp social media to collect data from students of a reputed college in Delhi University. The sample comprised of 110 students who were randomly selected from different disciplines studying at undergraduate level. Later some of them were contacted to have a group discussion on this situation and their views were recorded. Secondary data were collected through internet, newspapers, article in various journals to get into further facts on the issue of Covid-19 pandemic and how students were impacted through digital education. The survey and group discussion was conducted to know the perception of students towards the use of new technology in teaching and understand the issues faced by them.

5. Impact of digital education on college students

The various issues which students generally face while using the digital platform of learning include:

- a. **Lack of internet access-** Students are facing lot of issue in accessing internet as it is seen that around 2 to 3 people in the family are using internet at the same time which slows down the connectivity.
- b. **Distractions-** The students face problem of distractions during their online classes because of WhatsApp, movement in the house, etc
- c. **Expensive-** Students need laptops or Smartphone which many of them don't have. This involves an additional financial burden on their family to purchase these gadgets.
- d. **Lack of societal interaction-** The students also have an issue that through digital mode of education they are not able to interact with their social groups which affects personality development.
- e. **Not useful for all subjects-** Students face lot of difficulty in learning practical subjects online as it requires detailed learning.
- f. **Lack personal interaction-** Though sessions can be made interactive still the personal touch and eye-contact which exists in offline teaching is missing.
- g. **Health issues-** Due to long sitting hours before computers, students develop back problems and their eyes are highly effected which causes lot of health issues and stress to them.
- h. **Access to books-** In online education the books are either not available and if available they are to be purchased which may not be affordable by many students.
- i. **Impact on placements-** Final year students aspiring of being placed are finding it difficult to get placements because of the pandemic.

Table 1 Perception of students as to how digital education impacts them in the Post Covid-19 era through a sample survey conducted on 110 college going students

Perception of students as to how digital education impacts them	In Favor (%)	Against (%)
Prefer Digital education over traditional mode of teaching	51	49
Online teaching is quite interactive and effective	65	35
Technical issues exist	100	0
There are lot of distractions for students in digital education	82	18
Access to technology is easy	41	59
Learning on digital platform is difficult	65	35
Access to books and learning material is easy	48	52
It is a good medium to explore new things and come out of traditional learning methods	62	38

It is expensive method of learning	98	2
It is causing health issues	100	0
Digital education lacks societal interaction	95	5
It is convenient to teach all papers in online mode	2	98
The schedule of teaching is quite stressful	98	2
Students get proper time for preparing assignments and clear their doubts	98	2

Table 1 show that college students were taking digital mode of teaching but encounter lot of difficulties. It was observed that 48% of the students faced difficulties in accessing study material, all faced internet issues at sometime or the other, 82% of them faced the problem of distraction due to the technology they were using as well as the home environment distracted them. 41% of the students said that they had difficulty in accessing technology because of lack of availability of gadgets to use it. Only 65% believed that this mode of teaching was interactive while 35% found it non interactive. 98% students found it expensive because to learn they need to buy the gadgets and online learning material which was a big financial burden on their family. All the students under study felt that it was causing health issues to them. Sitting before computers for long hours for classes and preparation of assignments gave lot of strain to their eyes. Since they sat at their leisure pose while attending classes it lead to back and cervical problems. 95% of the students felt that their social life had come to a standstill. They felt that learning which they got out of classrooms by interaction with social groups had all together missed out in

online mode created by COVID-19. For practical papers like maths, accounts, income tax, ecommerce online teaching was not preferred by students as they found difficulty in understanding. Only 2% responded in favor of effectiveness of this mode for practical papers. 98% students found it to be quite stressful as they had continuous lectures for 4 to 5 hours which was quite tiring.

The survey gave some positive responses also from students regarding certain beneficial aspects of digital education. Around 51% of the student's preferred online mode as it saved their time, especially those who were outstation students or who lived at distant places. 65% of the students found this new technology of teaching quite effective because of the fact that their horizon to think and scope to build creativity widens. A group discussion was conducted with the selected group of students which gave different suggestions to overcome these challenges. It was observed that students were highly impacted by this sudden change in the educational system and they faced lot of issues some of which were controllable while some were beyond their control. The students were found to be very responsive and took this new mode in

a positive way and suggested some ways to make their learning more effective.

6. Conclusion

It is observed that neither traditional nor digital method of teaching is perfect. A proper integration of the two will be the best one to give maximum benefit to students. Because of sudden transformation of the educational system due to the advent of Covid-19 has impacted the students adversely and they are facing lot of issues.

Certain aspects need to be focused upon to overcome these challenges. It is recommended that making more interactive discussion by introducing presentations, quiz, discussions, etc so that students get involved and their attention can be gathered as, otherwise in online teaching to monitor the presence of students is difficult. Students should be given proper rest intervals in between lectures so that they can stretch and relax themselves which will reduce their stress and monotonous work which leads to boredom. Proper time to prepare assignments and multiple assignments can also lead to more interaction. Teachers should go for discussions with students on topics other than subject which will help in building bond with them and helping students to come up and discuss their issues which can be resolved. Teachers should share teaching material, e-books and video recordings of lectures to resolve the issue of reading material and internet if it persists. Though the challenges exist, solutions can be found. Only thing is we need time and patience. The concept of digital education is good

but it will take time before teachers and students adapt it in their lifestyle.

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