



# Perspective of Students and Teachers of Higher Education Level About Online Teaching During Pandemic Period

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**Received:** 23 Apr., 2021

**Revised:** 30 May, 2021

**Accepted:** 17 June, 2021

## ABSTRACT

Change is the law of nature. In the rapidly changing world, the pandemic brought everything to halt. But in every negative situation, there is always something new to learn. Online teaching was the safest mode to continue the teaching- learning process at all levels. The paper is an attempt to explore the extent to which online teaching is able to fulfill its purpose in the Covid scenario. The major objective is to find out merits and demerits of this teaching from both students' and teachers' perspective. The paper will also try to explore the major barriers in such teaching and how these can be overcome. The data is collected through an online questionnaire having yes/no questions as well as some open ended questions for students and teachers separately. It was found that majority of the sample found that internet related issues are a major drawback of such teaching. Apart from that, both the groups expressed mixed opinions about its pros and cons. The paper certainly would be throwing some light about the general success or failure of this mode.

**Keywords:** Online teaching, Higher education, Student and teacher perspective

In the history of Mankind, the world is passing through one of its challenging and turbulent times. The pandemic has brought many major changes in the lifestyle of human beings

**How to cite this article:** Sahae, P.J. and Prince, A.M. (2021). Perspective of Students and Teachers of Higher Education Level About Online Teaching During Pandemic Period. *TechnoLearn: An International Journal of Educational Technology*, 11(1): 45-52.

**Source of Support:** None; **Conflict of Interest:** None



throughout the world. Education is an attempt to ensure all round development of individuals in a society. Therefore, its obvious that the Covid Scenario which has influenced the total lifestyle of individuals, has totally changed the Education systems of the entire world. When the world was going through a very adverse phase, the Education being imparted at various educational levels in offline mode suffered a setback too. But with every problem, there is a solution also. Therefore, Online teaching emerged as a safest and quickest mode to impart education to each and every individual in the changing society.

Since, the students at higher education level are more mature and are more exposed to online mode, the paper is an attempt to study the online teaching process taking place at higher education level. The two most important individuals in the online teaching and learning are the Students and the Teachers. The paper tries to find out the perspectives of students and teachers community about this mode. An attempt has also been made to assess the pros and cons of this learning from both viewpoints. Finally, the paper also explores the possible barriers in this mode and suggestions provided by the respondents are analysed.

## **Methodology**

The data is collected through self-made online questionnaires for students and teachers separately having 10-12 questions each. It consisted of Yes/No type questions and some open-ended questions too. The data was collected through online Google Forms. The sample included about 150 Students belonging to B.A., B.Sc., M.A. and B.Ed classes and about 30 Teaching Faculty members of Ewing Christian College, an Autonomous and Constituent P.G. College of University of Allahabad. The respondents included 70% female students and 30% male students. About 73% students were residing in urban areas and 27% in rural areas. Among the Teachers, 56% were male respondents and 44% were female ones. Their teaching experience varied from 4 years to 20 years.

## **Observations**

Students' Responses:—

1. In their first response, 70% of the students feel that online classes are proving to be beneficial for them. The remaining 30% do not agree.
2. 55% of the respondents are able to concentrate on the content being taught through the online mode. 27% are finding it difficult to concentrate and 18% are not very sure about this matter.
3. 64% students agree to the fact that their doubts are easily cleared by the teachers while teaching through the online mode. 36% disagree to the statement.
4. 88% students say that they attend these classes regularly and remaining 11% say that they are not regular.

5. 58% students regularly face network issues while attending these classes while 17% face these problems sometimes. Remaining 25% do not face network issues.
6. 95% students attend these classes through their mobiles. 3% through laptops and 2% attend through desktops.
7. 64% students feel confident while using different software and applications, 22% are almost confident and remaining 14% are not confident.
8. 47% students feel tired or uneasy while attending these classes and 53% feel comfortable.
9. 29% students agree that their learning has improved after attending online classes. 19% disagree to it but 52 % are neutral on this view.
10. 23% feel that their communication skills have improved but 25% disagree, 10% strongly disagree and 35% are neutral.
11. The merits of Online classes listed by the students are as follows:—
  - (i) It helps in successful and secure Learning in Pandemic times.
  - (ii) It saves time, efforts, money and travel expenses.
  - (iii) It can be arranged regularly without any break.
  - (iv) If Library facility is not available now-a-days, students can ask for summary of class lecture notes, which can be easily provided by the teachers.
  - (v) Syllabus can be easily completed.
  - (vi) Concepts can be easily explained and clarified.
  - (vii) It can be attended from anywhere, anyplace, anytime.(viii) Lectures can also be recorded, archived and shared too.
  - (ix) It also provides ample time for self-study.
  - (x) It involves learning of use of tools and techniques.(xi) Attending classes in home environment is motivating.
  - (xii) Compulsion of proper attire and formality is not required.
  - (xiii) Helps in Learning the use of different Software and Applications.
  - (xiv) During Emergency, one can leave the class without disturbing others.

The demerits of online classes listed by the students are as follows:—

- (i) Connectivity issue is a major demerit.
- (ii) Time for clearing of doubts is less.
- (iii) It involves very less social interaction.

- (iv) It causes lot of adverse effect on Eyes.
- (v) Its very difficult to concentrate on the content being taught while attending the class in an informal and distractive environment.
- (vi) Online class becomes Exhaustive many times.
- (vii) Communication and Conversational skills are not developed
- (viii) Indiscipline is also one of the major drawback.
- (ix) Smart phones and Internet connectivity is not available with many students.
- (x) Sometimes it becomes Monotonous and boring too if done in resting or odd hours.
- (xi) It also becomes Frustrating and Irritating sometimes.
- (xii) Learning by doing is less possible.
- (xiii) Effect on Mental Health of students may also be one demerit.
- (xiv) Outdoor Activities and Practical work is also suffering a lot during these classes.

Teachers' Responses:—

1. 88% of teachers feel that online teaching is not beneficial for students as compared to the conventional offline one. 12% are of the opposite view and prefer online teaching.
2. 100% teachers agree that in the pandemic situation, online teaching is the best option to impart higher education.
3. 80% of the teachers feel that each and every topic can't be taught through online mode. Only 20% feel that all topics can be taught through online mode.
4. 80% teachers face network issues during online teaching.
5. 80% teachers feel that they are competent in dealing with different softwares.
6. 52% teachers often use Slide presentation as technique of teaching, 36% use simple lecture method and 8% share videos.
7. 56% teachers feel that they can easily clear students' doubts in online mode. 44% feel the opposite.
8. 28% teachers face Discipline related issues regularly during teaching, 32% face it sometimes and 40% don't face it at all.
9. 48% teachers use Zoom Application and 52% use the Google Meet application.
10. 56% teachers feel that online classes reduce syllabus load and 44% feel the opposite.
11. 56% teachers feel that online classes are able to achieve educational objectives.
12. The merits of Online teaching listed by the teachers are as follows:—

- (i) It helps in enhancing technical expertise of teachers.
- (ii) It also helps in clearing doubts of students individually.
- (iii) Reference material can be provided on a uniform platform so that it becomes accessible to all.
- (iv) Large number of students can be taught at a time, which saves time and labour.
- (v) Syllabus can be easily completed.
- (vi) It can be conducted from anywhere, anyplace, anytime.
- (vii) Students feel free to ask questions and clear their doubts and there is no Hesitation among them.

The demerits of online teaching listed by the teachers are as follows:—

- (i) Connectivity issue is a major demerit.
- (ii) Power failure can also be a barrier.
- (iii) It involves very less social interaction.
- (iv) Teacher-student relations become very mechanical and formal.
- (v) Many times students don't take these classes seriously.
- (vi) Not all topics can be taught through online mode.
- (vii) Outdoor Activities and Practical work is also suffering a lot during these classes.
- (viii) Indiscipline is also one of the major drawback.
- (ix) Smart phones and Internet connectivity is not available with many students, which means that many students cannot attend it regularly.
- (x) Teaching of large content is not very smooth and students may feel exhausted.
- (xi) Students take lot of time in giving response and hence feedback is very slow too.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

After analysing the responses of Students and Teachers, the following points can be listed out:—

#### **(A) Students' Responses:—**

1. Majority of students find Online Teaching beneficial for them. This proves the awareness and consciousness of higher education students towards their career.
2. Nearly half of the students are unable to concentrate on online classes. It may be due to net issues or environmental reasons.

3. A good number of students' problems are being dealt effectively and it means the objectives of online teaching are realised to some extent.
4. As per the sample, most of the students say that they attend the classes regularly which show their activeness in their studies.
5. Nearly half of the students face connectivity issues and it seems it is one of the major barriers in both online learning as well as teaching.
6. Majority students attend their classes through their mobiles which further strengthens its necessity for the online class.
7. Maximum students are confident in using different software. It shows their awareness and also confirms their digital literacy.
8. Nearly half of the students feel tired while attending their classes. It's obvious that a person gets exhausted while listening to these classes.
9. A majority of students are not very sure that their learning has improved due to lack of proper evaluation in this mode.
10. Majority of the students also feel that they don't get enough opportunities to speak/communicate in online classes which is unavoidable due to time constraint.
11. Among the major merits listed by the students, it is clear that online classes save time and efforts. Moreover, it is the safest mode in the Covid scenario. In the absence of availing Library facilities, online classes can provide reading material and the students can take its benefit. It can also be deduced that these classes have made many students more technologically sound. They are able to use many tools and software. In a nut shell, Learning is successful and continuing in such crisis too.

Among the major demerits, Connectivity is a major issue. Many audio and video problems are due to internet related. Another important drawback is that Social interactions are minimum in online mode. Two-way communication process is lacking in it. Another drawback which students feel is health related issues. Continuous sitting leads to eye irritation, fatigue, boredom etc. It is also difficult to concentrate due to many distractions such as internet issue, surroundings, lack of interest etc. Indiscipline in the class is another demerit which sometimes is discouraging both for the teacher as well as the fellow learners. Accessibility to online classes is another important issue which is the reality of our society. Students in many areas find it difficult to have smart phones and connectivity to attend online classes. Finally, practical work related to all subject cannot be properly conducted in online mode.

**(B) Teachers' Responses:—**

1. Majority of the teachers feel that online teaching is not much beneficial as compared to offline system.
2. In spite of the above response, all of them agree that in the present circumstances online teaching is the best and safest method.
3. Majority of them also agree them agree that all topics can't be taught through this mode.
4. Majority of them also face connectivity issue.
5. Majority of them feel that they have become more competent in teaching through various software and applications.
6. Many of them are using different techniques like Slide Presentation, Lecture Method, and Live Videos etc.
7. Half of the teachers feel that students' doubts and problems can be solved through these classes.
8. A good number of teachers face discipline related issues during online classes.
9. Both Zoom and Google Meet are being used as software to take the classes.
10. Nearly 50% teachers also feel that syllabus load can be decreased through online classes.
11. Similarly, half of the teacher respondents feel that Educational objectives can be achieved through these classes.
12. Among the major merits listed by the teachers, online classes prove to be very useful in terms of saving time, efforts, and travel expenses and safest in the present scenario. Secondly, these classes have really helped in providing knowledge and skills to teachers about the use of different software and applications. Thirdly, if reference material is provided at a common platform, it is beneficial to all. Moreover, they also feel that much syllabus load is decreased in online mode. Finally, students are more confident to ask their doubts without any hesitation.

Among the major demerits listed by the teachers, Connectivity is no doubt a major drawback. Many of the problems are related to it. Secondly, Lack of a two way teaching-learning process leads to monotony and lack of concentration among students. Another problem is that Practical work is the most neglected and the students suffer a lot. Indiscipline among the students is another drawback which disturbs the quality of online teaching. Moreover, Teacher-Student relations have become more mechanical and finally, Lack of Accessibility to smart phones and internet issues in rural and distant areas is also a major demerit.

## SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the above analysis and interpretation, the following suggestions can be made:—

1. Connectivity is a major issue related to online classes. Many of the students fail to attend the online classes at higher education level due to this reason. The institutions and policy-makers need to think about some alternatives like providing video recordings, notes and class pdf to the students who face difficulty in attending the classes.
2. Accessibility to smart phones and internet availability is also a barrier in online teaching. Needy students can be given some additional privilege if they are not able to attend the classes regularly due to these reasons.
3. To Accommodate Practical work, some innovative projects can be given and online resources can be made available from where, live videos can be viewed to understand the practical part.
4. Indiscipline problem can be tackled if videos are always in ON condition during live classes. Moreover, students should be allowed to interact one at a time and writing in chatbox and giving extra time for clearance of doubts can be given.
5. Subject-based co-curricular activities which can be conducted online can be organized for better student-teacher rapport establishment.

To conclude, it can be said that online classes are indeed the only safest measure to continue the teaching-learning process in such Covid situation. The suggestions provided in the paper are an attempt to find a way out in removing the demerits of this mode. Online teaching in Pandemic period is much different than it was being conducted in normal situation. An attempt has been made through this paper to find out students' and teachers' perspective about the online teaching being done at higher education level. It has certainly thrown some light on the major pros and cons. It is hoped that the quality of online classes can be better reviewed and understood through this paper and implemented wherever possible.

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