

# Importance and Challenges of Online Education: A Review

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## **ABSTRACT**

COVID- 19 pandemic affected the education system globally which led to shut down of the conventional educational activities. This compelled the academic experts worldwide to shift their focus to online learning methods and consider it as a substitute for the traditional learning methods. In this article we have tried to analyze the importance and challenges of online education during COVID-19 and in present scenario.

**Keywords:** Online Education, COVID-19

## **INTRODUCTION**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) identified the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. It affected almost every aspect of one's life. The precautionary measures such as physical distancing caused lockdowns in many sectors such as in transportation, tourism, production, sports, education training, and entertainment (Bandyopadhyay, S., 2020). It compelled all organizations to move to the online platforms. The conventional education sector was badly affected as it was based upon the one to one interaction between teacher and student. In this scenario, internet and other critical technologies were utilized to produce educational materials, guidelines, program management etc. and is known as online learning. At that time it became an effective means to run educational activities and prevent the possible loss of academic session created due to lock downs. The Government of India also initiated the projects such as SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds), which was considered as major initiative at the times of pandemic in India. The teachers and educational institutions must understand the importance and challenges of online learning. It is also critical that they should understand its effectiveness and efficiency. In this article we have reviewed the research conducted on online education and tried to understand its importance and challenges

## **METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this study is to identify the importance and challenges of online education during the COVID-19 lockdown in India. For this the relevant data from the peer reviewed journals was analyzed.

## **RESULTS**

Shivangi et. al. (2020) has conducted a research study about online learning during COVID – 19 pandemic and found that time flexibility was the main advantage of online learning while technical difficulties was the major drawback of online learning . Agarwal et. al. (2021) have found that it has beneficial impact on environment but the mental health of the students is adversely affected due to

isolation and reduction in academic achievements. Kapilan et. al. have reported that the participants have expressed that their learning process is improved with virtual laboratory experiments and it has minimized the operating cost. Muthuprasad et. al. (2021) have observed that students like the flexibility of online learning system, however internet connectivity is a major issue in rural areas. They suggested a hybrid model of learning. Shakeel et. al. (2021) have observed that the biggest challenge in online education is academic dishonesty and misconduct in the form of cheating, fabrication, facilitation and plagiarism. Alvi et. al. (2020) have pointed out at the socioeconomic impact of online education as it will adversely affect the children who depend on school feeding and supplementary nutrition programs. In a survey conducted by Gallani et. al. (2020), it was found that majority of the students agreed that online teaching cannot be considered as a substitute of offline teaching.

## DISCUSSION

On the basis of these surveys conducted in India we can analyze the importance and challenges of online education.

### **Advantages and Importance of Online Education:**

- The online system is more flexible and accessible. The students and teachers both liked the flexibility of the online system as reference material could be accessed anytime and from anywhere. (Muthuprasad et. al., 2021)
- The students developed new skills with the help of online education which helped them improve their academic performance and also grooming them. It also helped them to deal with the pressure and stress of the pandemic (Chandra, 2020).
- The educational institutions (schools, colleges and universities) put their efforts to become more technology friendly. Even after the lockdown was removed they are trying to include some additional courses in online mode. Harsha & Bai (2020) stated that Online Education is not a substitute but an appendage to classroom teaching and other methodologies.
- Online Education is a cost effective technology. An educator can take various virtual classes simultaneously without the need to travel to different places. Also the virtual labs are proved to be more cost effective (Kapilan et. al., 2021).
- Online Education has a good impact on environment as it has potential to reduce carbon emissions. (Agarwal et. al., 2021)

### **Challenges of Online Education**

- Poor network connectivity issue in rural areas is a major challenge for students and teachers. The students with poor economic background faced enormous challenges during pandemic.
- Online education adversely affected the physical health of the students. Due to the continuous use of electronic devices for long period of time, there may be strain in eyes and neck.
- With online education the mental health of the students is adversely affected due to isolation and reduction in academic achievements (Agarwal et. al., 2021). They also observed that a significant increase in the screen times of school children while learning online causes several anxiety issues and mental health problems amongst them. The students are also found to be facing depression. (Kapasia et. al.)
- There is socioeconomic impact of online education as it will adversely affect the children who depend on school feeding and supplementary nutrition programs (Alvi et. al., 2020).

- Some educationists have suggested that the biggest challenge in online education is academic dishonesty and misconduct in the form of cheating, fabrication, facilitation and plagiarism. (Shakeel et. al., 2021).
- Some surveys suggest that both teachers and students find traditional teaching as a better way as compared to online teaching. (Gallani et. al. 2020)

## CONCLUSION

The online education has emerged as a revolutionary way of teaching/learning especially in the time of pandemic. However, still there are many serious challenges in it as compared to traditional teaching/learning. Due to this the teaching/learning cannot be purely online. Some researchers have suggested the use the 'hybrid model' which involves both traditional as well as online teaching/learning. Further, different ways can be investigated to overcome the challenges in the online education.

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