

Problems Faced by the Teachers during Covid-19: An Exploratory Study

Ms. Gagandeep Kour Awal

Lecturer, Dogra College of Education

Abstract

The surge of Covid-19 pandemic placed the world in lockdown situation. The educational sector was badly affected by it. The schools, colleges and universities were closed the world over. In such situations, the teachers turned to online teaching mode to keep the education of students going. The sudden shift from face-to-face mode of teaching to online mode of teaching had put forth many problems and challenges before the teachers at each level of education. The present study aimed to explore the problems faced by the college teachers in online teaching of Samba district during the pandemic. Survey method was used to conduct the study. Self prepared questionnaire consisting of twelve closed ended questions and one open ended question was used to collect the data. College teachers of Samba district formed the population and forty teachers from five colleges of Samba district were randomly selected as a sample of the study. The data was analyzed using percentage. The paper highlights some of the problems faced by the teachers i.e. unfavorable home environment for online learning, lack of students interaction, lack of knowledge about online teaching technologies, poor network connection, non availability of smart phones with the students, lack of ICT tools with teachers, lack of internet access, power failure, high data cost, inequality issues and increased workload on teachers and technical glitch etc.. The paper also makes certain suggestions to address the issues and to be better prepared for future.

Keywords: Covid-19, online teaching, problems.

INTRODUCTION

The spread of the corona virus epidemic is responsible for the cause of medical emergencies all over the world, due to which millions had suffered. The entire world economy has been crushed by Covid- 19. Its spread has caused panic in almost all the sectors of the world economy. A nationwide lockdown was announced in India on 22nd March, 2020 to prevent the epidemic from spreading in the country. Thousands of schools, colleges and universities have had to be closed due to lockdown in India. Lockdown has affected the education of more than 500 million students in India (Gupta and Tiwari, 2020). Lockdown has forced colleges, universities and schools all over India to take entire education to the digital platform without ant preparation. It has pushed the academic institutions towards online teaching due to the indefinite shutting down of schools, colleges and universities by the governments (Martinez, 2020). The closure of schools has affected more than 290 million students across the globe (UNESCO, 2020). The education industry has witnessed a pedagogical shift in the teaching toward e- learning to cope up with the challenges posed by Covid- 19. The issue of students' safety compelled academic institutions to devise the strategies for educating students with nominal disruptions (Hale et al., 2020).

The education system was obligated to reinvent itself to handle this unparalleled challenge. Earlier the e-learning was majorly used in non-formal education and distance education courses. However, the COVID-19 has compelled the formal institutions to embrace e-learning, as maintaining social distance is of utmost value. Maintaining stringent rules such as maintaining social distancing is improbable in the regular classroom mode of teaching. Post lockdown majority of the educational institutions adopted either synchronous learning or asynchronous learning models. Synchronous learning consists of online or remote training that takes place in real-time in the form of live sessions using various conferencing software's like zoom, Google meet and Cisco WebEx, while online learning is achieved without real-time contact through online networks using WhatsApp, YouTube, and Learning management systems of educational institutes. Both synchronous and asynchronous models require hardware, software, and network supports for both teachers and students. The challenges have become more prominent as the entire education system shifted from offline to online teaching.

Rationale of the Study

Online classes conducted were the only available alternatives for the teachers to continue education right from the primary to the higher education levels. The Government of India as well as the State has made their level best to train the teachers as well as the learners regarding the basic aspects of online classes. Although the level best efforts made by the Government of India as well as the State, the teachers as well as the learners have faced problems and challenges that have been identified by various researchers in various fields. According to Albert and Solomon et al. (2020), the issues which have impacted negatively towards the conformity of the learners towards the online classes conducted during the COVID-19 lockdown includes poor budget allocation towards the education sector, illiteracy of the parents of the learners in schools as well as lack of computers / laptops in the homes of the learners. Deepti and Ayush (2020) have discovered that the majority of the people have faced difficulties in using the internet as well as have not gained skills required for solving the technology problems. Lack of human interactions between the teachers and the learners as well as amongst the learners themselves; lack of space in the homes of the learners as well as cooperation of the parents of the learners are some of the difficulties faced by the teachers while taking the learners through the learning process during the COVID-19 lockdown (Fernando and Patrizia et al. 2020). According to Juliana et al. (2020), lack of competence in technology, additional quota of the online internet, additional work for the parents to help the children learn in the online classes, social interactions amongst the learners as well as the teachers and the parents of the learners, extended working hours for the teachers as well as the learners. Sangeeta and Tandon (2020) have discovered that effort expectancy was not effective in increasing the teachers towards the online classes. The above study has been able to address various difficulties faced by the teachers in the schools in various settings. These demands and challenges may differ in their nature and intensity across the different modes of the learning process. For the aforementioned demands and challenges that have to be met in the learning process across the learners; learning should clearly outline the demands for the different desirable alterations in the learning outcomes across the respective learners at the needed levels that undergo intensive alterations in the near future. This can be achieved with the help of educational research attempting to analyze and acquaint themselves with the different problems in society in predetermined regions from time to time and become an integral part thereof. This can be achieved, and for this purpose, the researcher zeroed in on a region where he can analyze the problems faced by teachers concerning the

online learning process, resulting from COVID-19, in the Jammu and Kashmir state, and accordingly, the topic for this study is “Problems faced by teachers during Covid- 19”.

Objective of the study

To study the problems faced by college teachers of Samba district in online teaching during the pandemic.

Methodology

Survey method was used to conduct the study. Self-prepared questionnaire consisting of twelve closed ended questions and two open ended questions were used to collect the data. College teachers of Samba district formed the population and thirty teachers from five colleges of Samba district were randomly selected as a sample of the study. The data was analyzed using percentage.

Problems faced by the college teachers during pandemic:

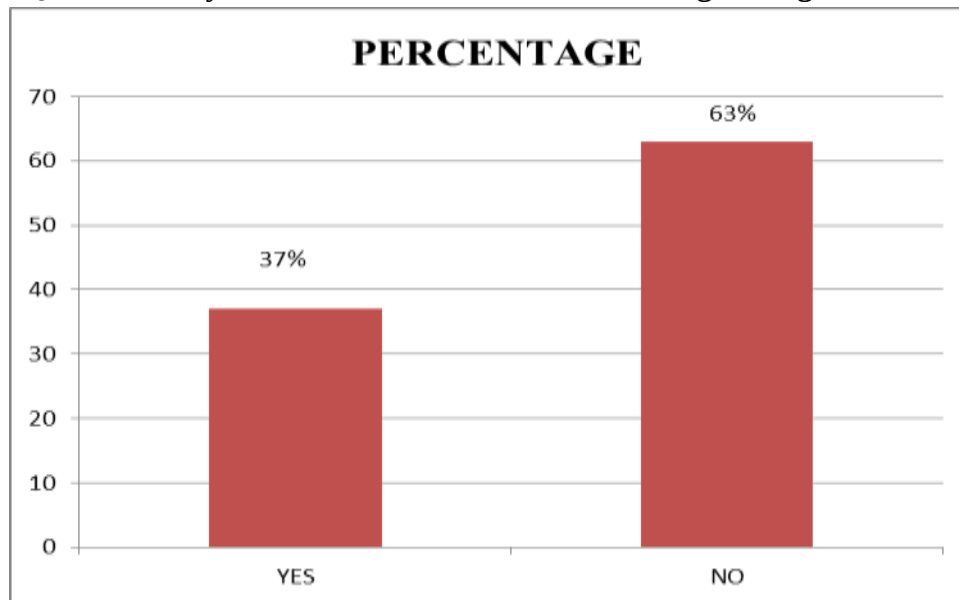
S.No.	Items	Response	
		YES	NO
1.	Were you comfortable with online teaching during Covid-19?		
2.	Could you teach effectively without blackboard during Covid-19?		
3.	Could you easily arrange for online teaching during Covid-19?		
4.	Home environment was suitable for online teaching		
5.	Not much teacher- student interaction could happen during online teaching		
6.	Certain concepts could not be explained by online teaching		
7.	Lack of knowledge of online teaching technologies were handcuffs in online teaching		
8.	Lack of smart phone was a problem in online teaching		
9.	There were signal issues resulting in poor connectivity		
10.	High data cost was problem in managing online teaching		
11.	There was an issue of interrupted power supply		
12.	Lack of support from educational institutions		
13.	Felt stressful due to long use of mobile phones		
14.	Any other problems faced by you		
	a) Accessibility issues with students of border areas		
	b) Poor attendance of the students		
	c) Lack of seriousness on the part of the students		
	d) Practical concepts could not be taught effectively through online teaching		
	e) Heavy files of students’ assignments could not be downloaded		
15.	Give your suggestions to improve the situations/ better handling in online teaching		

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data collected to conduct the study was analyzed appropriately, using statistical techniques to identify the impact of technology-enabled learning on students' performance. In this regard, the research findings show that students enabled with technology learning modes have better engagement, conceptual understanding, and motivation levels pertaining to learning. Technology learning tools, including multimedia interactive learning and assessments, have significantly helped in active learning with self-paced study patterns.

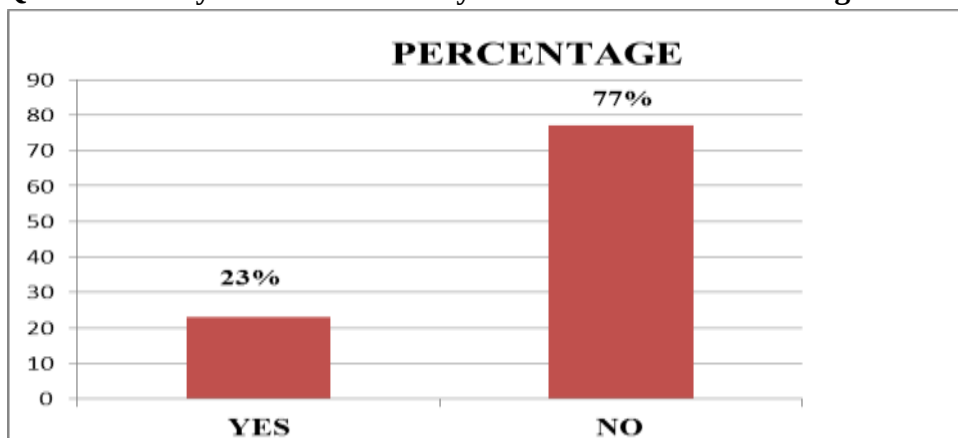
However, the findings also reveal some drawbacks: inequality in the use of technological resources, poor digital literacy skills of particular learning groups, and sometimes disruptions on the part of technology. Such elements have been found to hamper the outcomes of student performances. Interpreting the findings, it suggests that though technology-mediated learning may offer certain advantages at the learning levels, the success of execution can be taken care of majorly by effective implementation, teacher preparedness, and appropriate technological infrastructure.

Qno.1: Were you comfortable with online teaching during Covid-19?



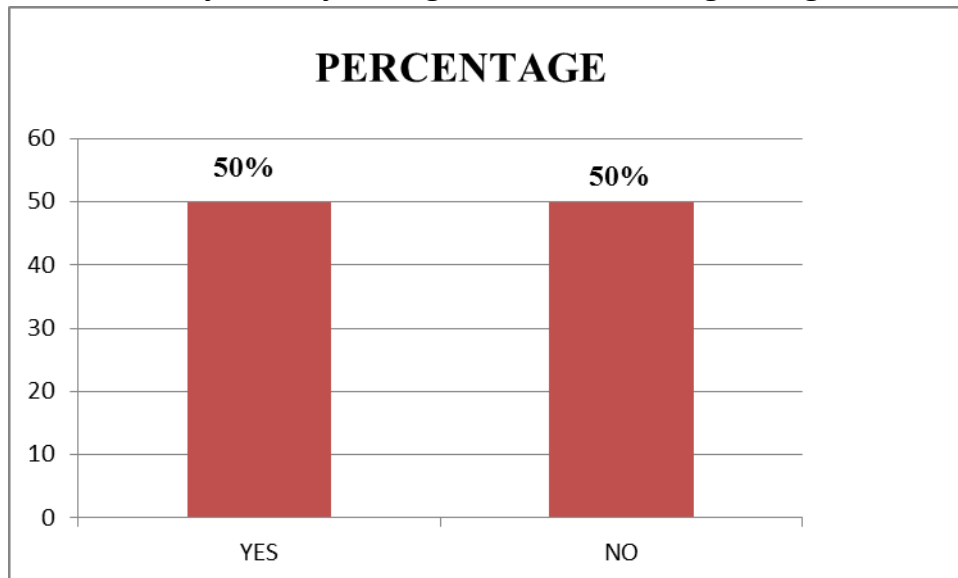
The above graph represents that 37% of teachers were comfortable with online mode of teaching while 63% of teachers found difficulties in online teaching during Covid-19.

Qno.2: Could you teach effectively without blackboard during Covid-19?



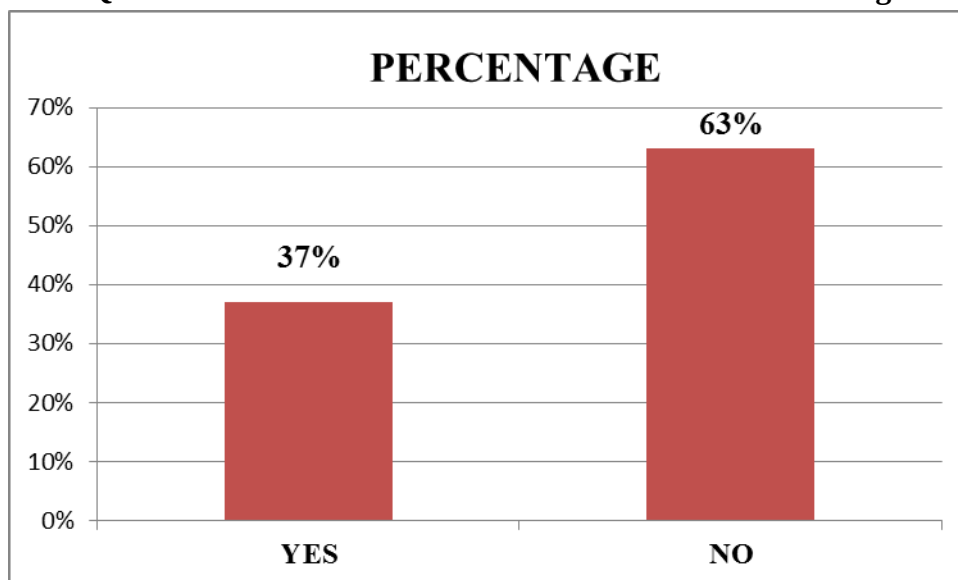
The above graph represents that 23% of teachers taught effectively without using blackboard while 77% of teachers found it difficult to teach without blackboard during Covid-19.

Qno.3: Could you easily arrange for online teaching during Covid-19?



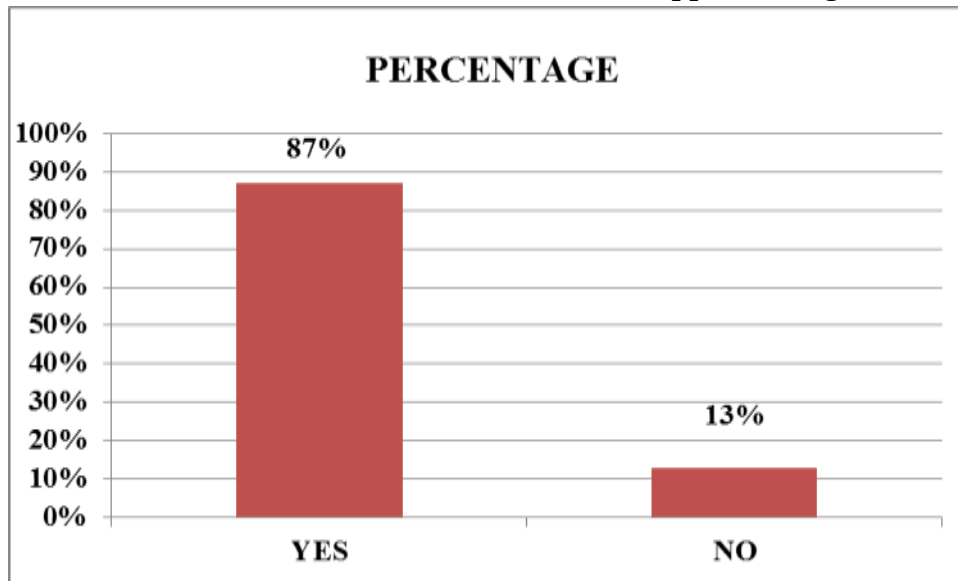
The above graph depicts that 50% of the teachers easily arranged for online teaching and 50% could not arranged for the same.

Qno.4: Home environment was suitable for online teaching



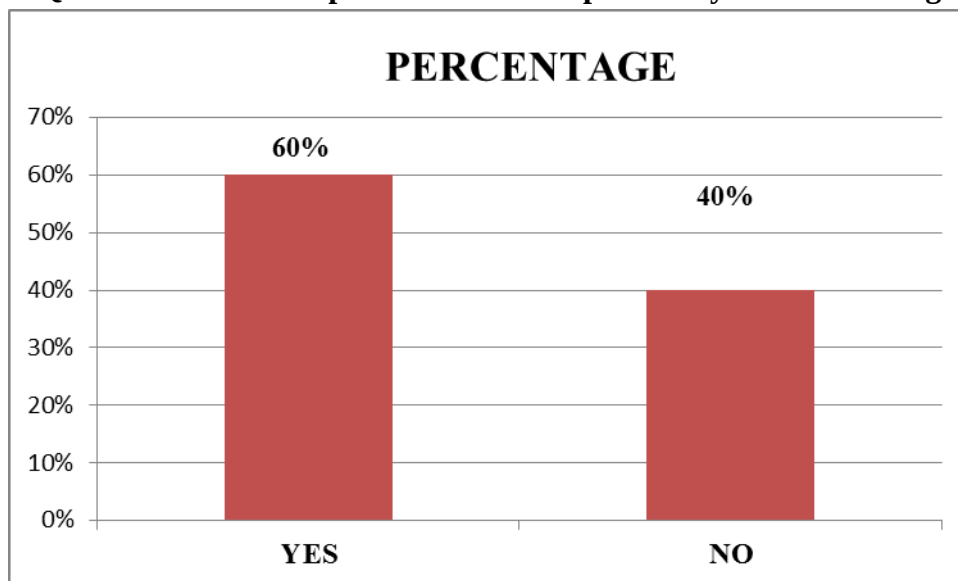
The graph reveals that 37% of teachers were comfortable in home environment for online teaching while 63% of teachers found it difficult.

Qno.5: Not much teacher- student interaction could happen during online teaching



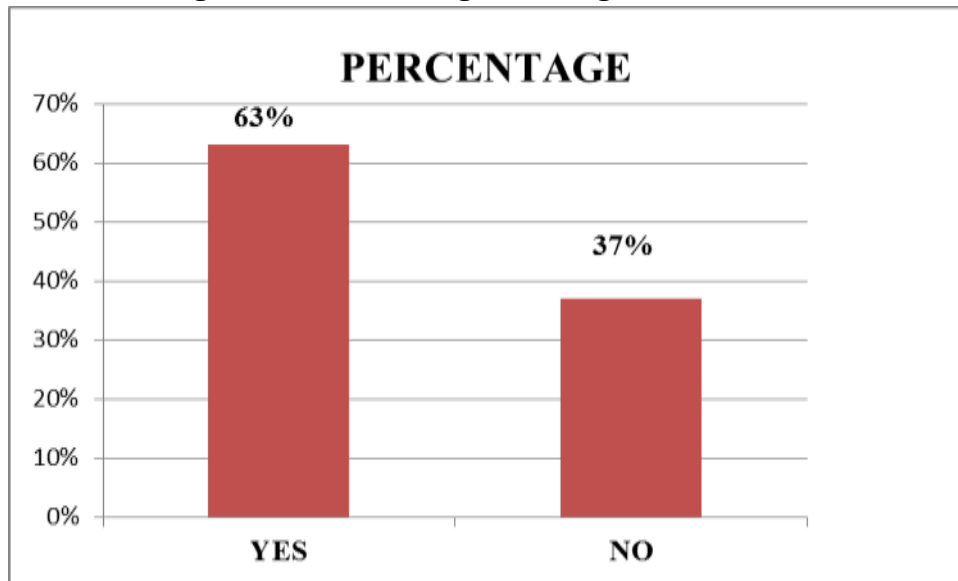
The graph represents that 87% of the teachers agreed that there was less interaction between teacher-student during online classes whereas, 13% of the teachers were satisfied with the interaction.

Qno.6: Certain concepts could not be explained by online teaching



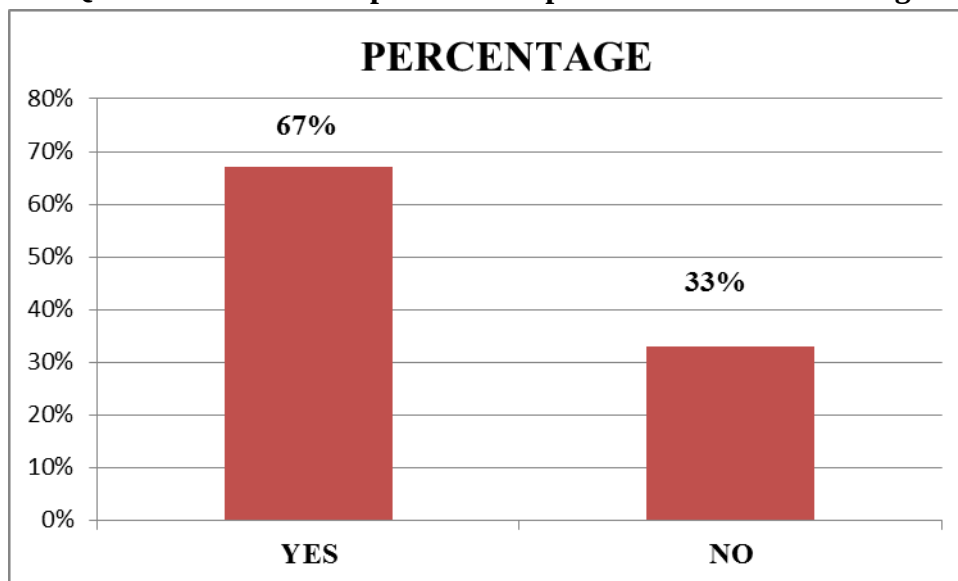
60% of teachers were in favour that certain concepts could not be explained properly while 40% of the teachers found no difficulties in explaining the concepts during online teaching.

Qno.7: Lack of knowledge of online teaching technologies were handcuffs in online teaching



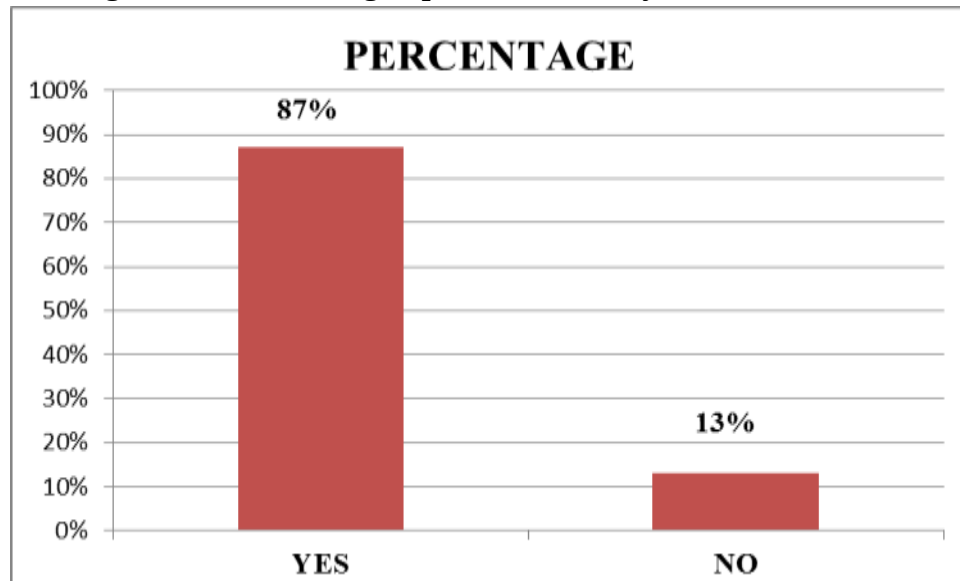
The above graph depicts that 63% of the teachers were not aware of online teaching technologies while 37% of teachers handled online teaching with great ease.

Qno.8: Lack of smart phone was a problem in online teaching



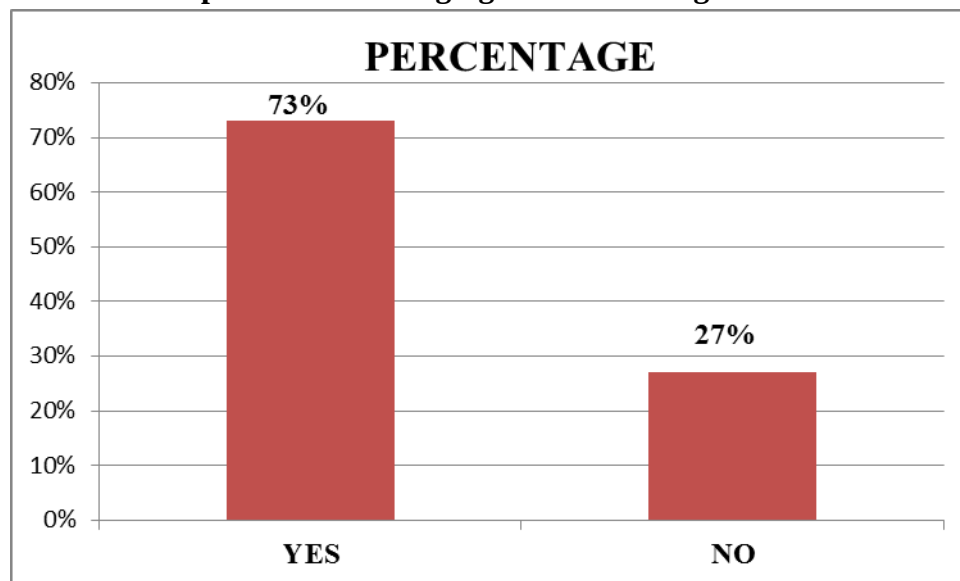
67% of teachers found lack of smartphones was a big barrier in online teaching whereas, 33% of teachers were satisfied.

Qno.9: There were signal issues resulting in poor connectivity



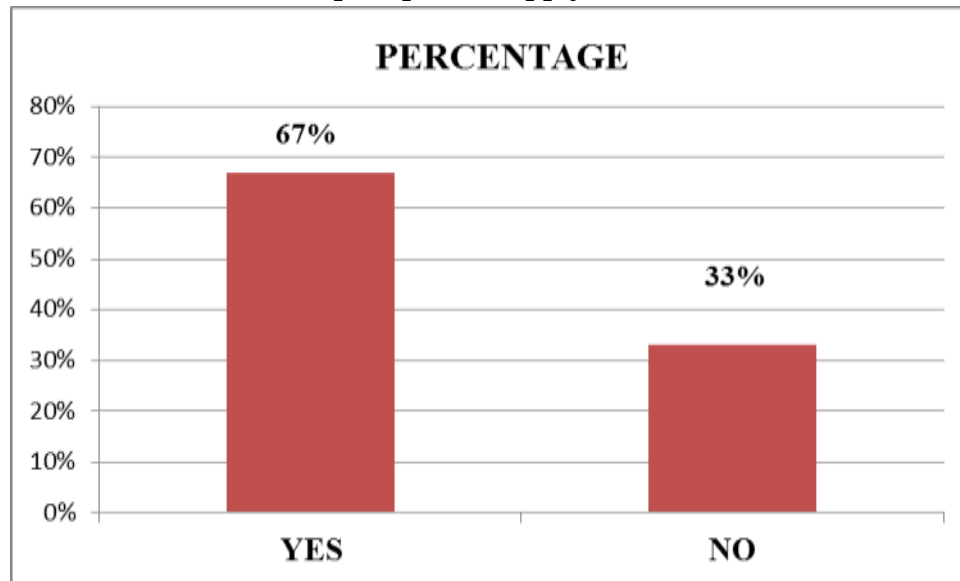
87% of the teachers found that there were signal issues due to poor connectivity while 13% of teachers had no issues.

Qno.10: High data cost was problem in managing online teaching



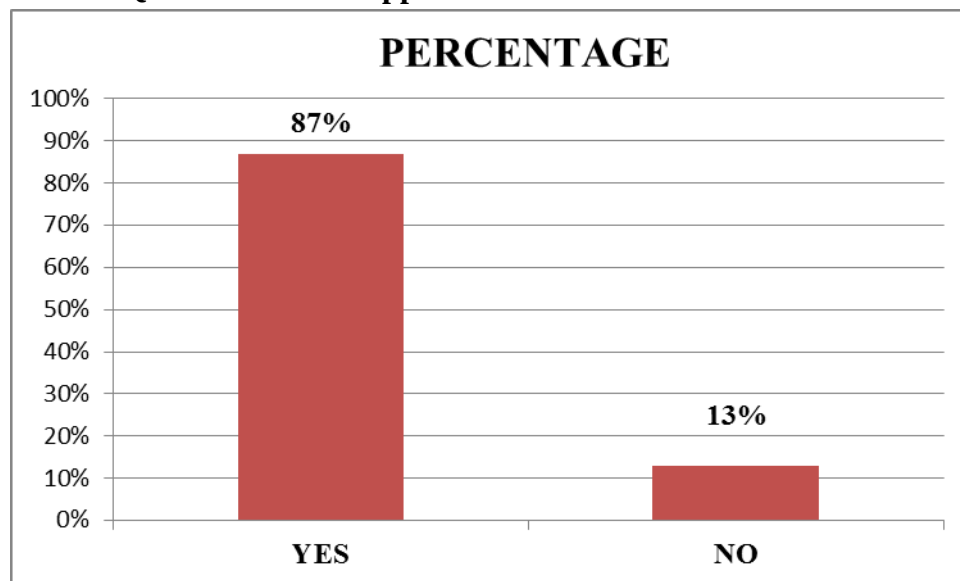
The above graph depicts that 73% of the teachers found high data cost was a problem in online teaching whereas 27% of teachers did not find any problem.

Qno.11: There was an issue of interrupted power supply



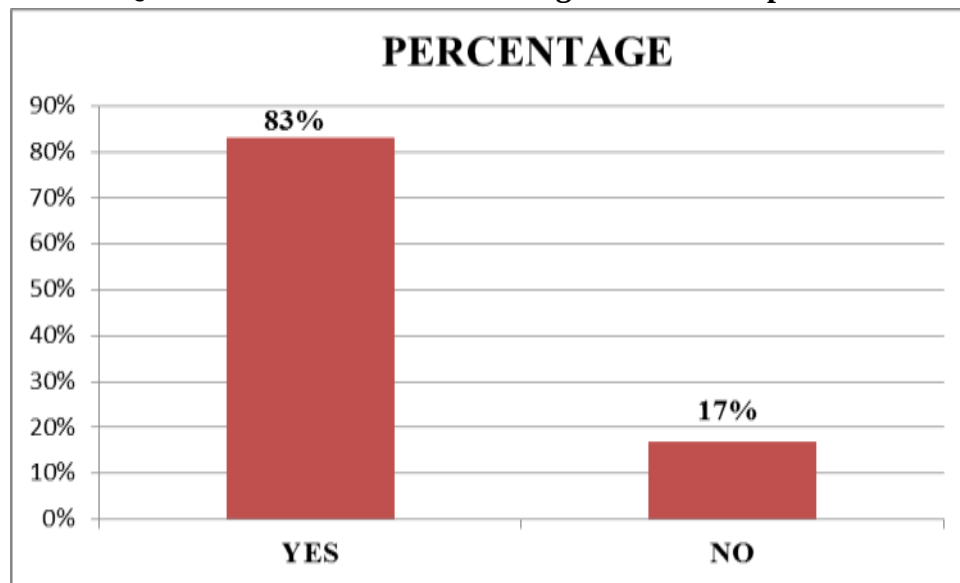
67% of teachers found interrupted power supply as a serious issue during online classes whereas 33% of teachers did not find any problem.

Qno.12: Lack of support from educational institutions



The above graph represents that 87% of teachers found lack of support from educational institutions during online teaching while 13% of teachers had no issues.

Qno.13: Felt stressful due to long use of mobile phones



83% of teachers felt stressful due to long use of mobile phones during online classes while 17% of teachers had no such issues.

Qno.14: Any other problem faced by you?

On an open ended question (any other problem faced by you) most of the respondents communicated accessibility to ICT, lack of seriousness on the part of the students, ineffective clarity of the practical concepts, poor attendance of the students in online class and difficulty in downloading heavy assignment files of students work as typical problems faced by the teachers.

Qno.15: Give your suggestions to improve the situations/ better handling in online teaching

A study is incomplete if it fails to suggest new dimensions and proposal for the further study to be carried on in the light of the conclusions drawn in it. Following are some suggestions which will help us in understanding the further study.

1. The present study cannot be called as final or comprehensive. More work can be done on different sample with different categories.
2. The present study was conducted on sample of thirty teachers from five colleges. Similar study can be conducted on a larger sample to study the problems faced by teachers in online teaching during Covid-19.
3. Availability of ICT facilities should be present in every educational institution.
4. Proper training of using ICT with latest technologies should be given to the teachers.
5. There should be provision for uninterrupted power supply.

Conclusion:

The conclusion made in this research is that technology-based learning positively helps in improving the performance level of the students if it is effectively implemented within the teaching-learning paradigm. The findings have also revealed that technology has become a supplement to teaching as it helps in creating a positive environment of interactive learning with a significantly enhanced level of student participation and also caters to different learning modalities. Along with this, it is also important to work upon the issues

of technological disadvantages to reap maximum benefits out of technology. Developing and training the teaching force and equal technological facilities should become the core area of attention in such institutions.

References:

1. Albert, Solomon and Felix, 2020. COVID-19 and E-learning in secondary schools in Nigeria, JEAPP, 1.
2. Deepti and Ayush, 2020. Problems Faced by Students and Teachers During Online Education Due to COVID-19 and How to Resolve Them. 2020 6th International Conference on Education and Technology (ICET).
3. Fernando, Patrizia and Tiziana, 2020. Online learning and emergency remote teaching: Opportunities and challenges in emergency situations, Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies, Italy; www.mdpi.com/journal/societies
4. Gupta, A. , & Tiwari, R. (2020, June 5). Post COVID-19: Indian online education industry - Boon or bane for students . <http://bweducation.businessworld.in/article/Post-COVID-19-Indian-Online-Education-Industry-Boon-Or-Bane-For-Students/05-06-2020-194412/>
5. Hale, T. , Webster, S. , Petherick, A. , Phillips, T. , & Kira, B. (2020). Oxford COVID-19 340 government response tracker. Blavatnik School of Government. <https://covidtracker.bsg.ox.ac.uk/> [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
6. Martinez, J. (2020). Take this pandemic moment to improve education . EduSource. <https://edsources.org/2020/take-this-pandemic-moment-to-improve-education/633500>
7. Sangeeta and Tandon, 2020. Factors influencing adoption of online teaching by schoolteachers: A study during COVID-19 pandemic, J. Public Affairs. 2020, www.wileyonlinelibrary.com
8. UNESCO . (2020). 290 million students out of school due to COVID-19: UNESCO releases first global numbers and mobilizes response. <https://en.unesco.org/news/290-million-students-out-school-due-covid-19-unesco-releases-first-global-numbers-and-mobilizes>.