Communication

Coping with COVID-19: Teaching- Learning with Technology

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The global pandemic of COVID-19 outbreak has brought a halt to the education of millions of students worldwide. Cutting across the globe all Schools, colleges and universities had cancelled the classes. As of 18th June 2020, an estimated 1.725 billion learners have directly impacted because of closures of schools in response to the pandemic. The closures impacts have far reaching social and economic consequences apart from impacts on students, teachers and families. According to UNICEF monitoring, so far 134 countries have instigated nationwide closures of schools and 38 colleges have implemented local closures, impacting around 98.5% of the student population worldwide.

The impact has a drastic effect on children and their families, causing continuous interruption of the learning system, healthcare problems, compromised nutrition, and ensuing economic cost to families who has nothing to do as daily labourers because of complete lockdown. The pandemic is an opportunity to explore and to get ready for this unpredictable world such as adaptability and resilience into our education system as well. It should be an attempt to understand the impacts on the education sector in the form of closures of schools and also impacts on formal education. It also highlights how COVID-19 is a golden opportunity in the education sector. However, several measures have been suggested by UNESCO to revamp the education system. With efforts to thwart the blowout of COVID-19, education is swiftly moving digitally through online means. The major challenges would be the implementation of a new education system in such a way that it would reach out to every section of societies.

During this challenging situation of Corona pandemic, it is responsibility of teachers to impart excellent education services to the students. Also, students' are more liable to comprehend simple concepts of online education and distance education and should work with the constructive approach in the teaching- learning process in the field of education and should work in the positive direction of achieving academic excellence.

Critically analyzing online education, it made me realize that as Teaching-Learning with technology has its own pros and cons.

- It has led to advancements in the education sector.

- It has opened up new horizons during this novel Corona pandemic situation.

- It has resulted in major

advancements in the field of Educational Technology (ET).

- It has led the government to explore new methods and ways and to release different platforms for digital education.

- Increased use of online resources and access to online materials resulted in higher retention power of students and lifelong learning.

- It is a fun loving and highly interactive mode of communication.

- It largely attracts most number of students to engage themselves in the teaching- learning process respectively.

- It is more convenient for both teacher and student to attend lectures online.

- It offers flexibility and brings education at your doorstep.

- It helped in making linkages, meeting and connecting with new people from different fields.

- It offers us real world skills by interacting with different people.

- It engages us in the process of globalization by reaching to the masses globally.

- It involves direct feedback from the teachers.

- It results in real time monitoring of the students.

- It is more affordable by a major chunk of the population.

- In depth concentration on one child at a time and individualized learning.

Further, there are certain drawbacks or overcoming with it also.

- It has resulted in increased stress and mental stress between teachers as well as students in the country.

- It has resulted in sleep disorders, discipline problems in children at home.

- It requires more time than offline classes thus is time consuming.

- Procrastination is very easy due to online education.

- It has created a sense of isolation amidst Covid-19 situation.

- It requires good management skills.

- It requires active participation.

- Sometimes, it gives us more freedom than required or expected.

- It results in lack of social life and social interaction.

- It requires a higher degree of self-discipline.

- It requires higher computer literacy.

- It depends upon the competency of teachers and the knowledge of latest approaches in online education.

As a research scholar, I got an opportunity to learn, gain knowledge and experience from my teachers, mentors in online mode and also to share the thoughts, idea, ideologies of the related academic content via different apps and technology. I used different apps for online classes and regular discourse as part of our curriculum like- Zoom meetings, Cisco WebEx, Gotowebinar, etc. Google Classrooms, Microsoft Teams, Teach

Online, BYJU's- The Learning App, Virtual Classroom, Canvas Teacher, Visible Classroom, The TeacherApp, etc. to attend various online sessions. Apart from attending online classroom sessions with my teachers and mentors, I used these apps for attending various different online conference, webinars, symposium, and workshops during this novel Corona pandemic, COVID-19. It was an add-on to my previous existing knowledge with the usage of such apps.

The number of Zoom daily meetings has increased to 300 million + in April 2020 as compared to roughly around 10 million in December 2019. The total number of downloads have also increased to about 2.13 million in the month of March 2020 as compared to the 56000 downloads in January 2020. Its usage has increased to about 67% between Jan and March 2020 during the Covid-19 crisis.

Microsoft Teams is another platform for provision of online education and imparting knowledge. It is part of Microsoft 365. The number of daily users reached to 44 million on 19th March 2020 from around 32 million daily active users in just one week. It has gone through a major crest wherein a drastic hike has been observed in its usage. A daily record of 2.7 billion meeting minutes have been observed and recorded in a single day, which is up to 200% from 900 million minutes in mid-March.

I personally feel that it is a technical drift, which is going to stay for longer period of time. Digitalization is a new trend in the economy. Feedback from learners at different levels of education, that is,

primary, secondary and higher levels of education depicts that students are adapting to the changing need of the society and are very much efficient in learning via new learning modes respectively.

COVID-19 crisis seems like a major driving force for revamping the Indian economy and the rest of the world. New horizons of Online Education can be seen with a pinch of salt and can be further worked upon and improved again. It is a new trend, which is here to stay for decades now and will strengthen the dream of Digital India. It is a challenge for the policy makers, skilled and unskilled labour force, human resources of the country as well as for nature to uphold its strength again and bring drastic but useful, operative and efficient changes, which will result in rejuvenation and revival of the economy.