

A study on the challenges faced by the Faculties of Media Education during Covid 19 pandemic (With special reference to Pune)

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Abstract:

Media education is a generic term for different forms of education about the media, journalism, mass communication and its allied subjects. It is the process of teaching and learning of the entire areas of communication. The media industry is one of the most thriving sectors in India and therefore media education has become an important area of study in the last two decades in India. In spite of its growing demand, the existing conventional education system has not been successful in meeting these demands. Media education in India is framed in the higher education system, comprising of programs in the universities, both government-supported and media-backed private institutions, as well as in-service and short-term courses offered by press associations and other organizations. Known as Oxford of the east in Pune there are almost 30 media education intuitions and all of them providing different media programmes.

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has affected human lives in the most adverse way. The entire world is engulfed in tragedy as crisis strikes in every sector. Each person in any sector including education, health, economy, agriculture, business, entertainment etc. has been facing serious repercussions due to the outbreak of the pandemic. The media education institutions are also facing various challenges during this period. The faculties, students have faces very difficult times during this time phase. The purpose of the research is to identify the various issues faced by the different media faculties from various universities in Pune. Factors can be identified by conducting a survey based research at various universities located in Pune through in depth interview. The researcher in this research will discuss the different technical challenges faced by the faculties during this covid pandemic. The researcher also will try to find out some possible solution for these.

Key words- Media education, faculties, universities, covid19

Introduction

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has affected human lives in the most adverse way. WHO declares Covid 19 as a pandemic and in India first case of Covid 19 detected on 30th January 2020 in the state of Kerala. Later from March 24th India observed 14 hours Janta Curfew to combat the corona virus pandemic. The entire world is engulfed in tragedy as crisis strikes in every sector. Each person in any sector including education, health, economy, agriculture, business, entertainment etc. has been facing serious repercussions due to the outbreak of the pandemic. To control the effects of the virus, Indian Government has been extending the lockdown period in different phases and the lockdown 5.0 was declared on April 30 which is effective from 1st June to 30th June 2020. In all the phases of lockdown the educational institutions throughout the nation have never got any relaxation to start their educational activities. Thus, education sector is one of the significantly impacted areas during Covid 19. UNESCO report stated that Covid-19 has affected nearly 68% of total world's student population as per the data taken during 1st week of June 2020. 1.2 billion School and college going students and youths across the globe were affected because of the outbreak of Covid-19. Due to the various restrictions and the nationwide lockdown for Covid-19 in India almost around 32 crores of students have affected.

Almost all the Governments around the globe have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to control the spread of the pandemic Covid-19. And this worldwide closure has impacted exceptionally the world's student population. Various governments around the world are making efforts to diminish the immediate impact of closure of educational institutions particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and trying to facilitate the continuity of education for all using different digital modes of learning.

Education plays a very important tool to the human resources development and empowerment in the stages of growth of a nation. It has the power to change the entire world. It develops confidence and helps building personality of a person by upgrading him mentally, spiritually, intellectually. Media education simply means different forms of education about the media, journalism, mass communication and its allied subjects. It is the teaching and learning the process of the entire areas of communication. Media education is the study, learning and teaching of, and about, the modern media of communication and expression as a specific and autonomous area of knowledge within education theory and practice, distinct from their use as aids for the teaching and learning of other areas of knowledge, such as mathematics, science and geography- UNESCO, 1973. In India, media education has become a major areas of study in the last two decades. Media education in India is framed in the higher education system, comprising of programs in the universities, both government-supported and media-backed private institutions, as well as in-service and short- term courses offered by press associations and other organizations. They are offered at different levels from certificate to diploma to both undergraduates and postgraduates. Known as Oxford of the east in Pune there are almost 30 media education intuitions and all of them providing different media programme. All these universities providing different programmes like BAJMC, MAJMC with different specialization. Every year a lots of students from India and across the South East Asia come to Pune for Media Education. These universities are contributing a large amount of skill Media students to the Industry.

COVID-19 expedited the adoption of digital technologies to delivery of teaching learning process. All the Education institutions moved toward blended learning and encouraged teachers and students to acquire technology savvy. The various technologies like Soft technology, online, webinars, virtual class rooms, teleconferencing, digital exams and assessments became common phenomenon. Which we can in normal circumstances might have come into practical use a decade or later.

Also educational activities are hampered to a great extent, and there was a great amount of confusion, the postponement or delay in exams, academic sessions or the like. The teachers who were experts in book, talk, chalk and classroom methods are now in digital world dilemma. To meet the challenges of the present situation the educators had to be trained enough so that they can easily conduct the online teaching. To cope up with this new teaching learning world many students struggled to obtain the gadgets needed for digital learning. Even though the country has been adapting to the new-age learning, but there still lies an obstacle in achieving entire success as only 45 crore people of our total population of the country have access to the internet/e-learning. The resident of rural India areas are still very much deprived of the technologies and therefore hampering the cause of online education. The pandemic taught the entire world on how necessity is the mother of invention by allowing educational institutions to adopt online learning and introduce a virtual learning culture. This pandemic has been force the entire education sector forward with technological innovation and advancements. The pandemic has hugely disrupted the higher education sector of India.

Pune was one of the most worst affected cities during Covid 19 pandemic. Like the all other educational institutes, media education institutions are also facing various challenges during this period. The faculties, students have faces very difficult times during this time phase. Specifically if we check with Pune till January 2021 all the media educational institutions were closed. The faculties and the educators conducting their lectures through online modes. During this many faculties are facing different challenges. The purpose of the research is to identify the various issues faced by the different media faculties from different universities in Pune. Factors can be identified by conducting a survey based research at various universities located in Pune through in depth interview. The researcher in this research will discuss the different technical challenges faced by the faculties during this Covid pandemic. The researcher also will try to find out some possible solution for these.

Review of literature-

1.1 Toquero, Cathy Mae. (2020). Challenges and Opportunities for Higher Education amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Philippine Context. Pedagogical Research. 5. 10.29333/pr/7947.

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Through this paper the researcher tried to elaborate that Covid 19 affected the higher educational institutions only in Wuhan(China)but all the 188 countries till 2020.Various Educational aids are taken to continue educating the students despite the COVID-19 predicaments. Based on the author's experiences, research, observations in the academe, COVID-19 guidelines, and the need for alternative solutions, this article tries to introduces how higher education is affected and how it can respond to future challenges. The author in this article recommends to educational institutions to produce studies to proliferate and document the impact of the pandemic to the educational system. Also the finding suggested that there is also a greater need for educational institutions to strengthen the practices in the curriculum and make it more responsive to the learning needs of the students even beyond the conventional classrooms.

1.2 Ali, Wahab. (2020). Online and Remote Learning in Higher Education Institutes: A Necessity in light of COVID-19 Pandemic. Higher Education Studies. 10. 16. 10.5539/hes.v10n3p16.

All the tertiary institutions around the globe have shut down in regards to face-to-face classes in light of the rising concerns about the spread of COVID-19. The Corona virus has revealed emerging vulnerabilities in education systems around the world. It is now clear that society needs flexible and resilient education systems as we face unpredictable futures. The researcher adopted a meta-analysis methodology for this study and pertinent literature was visited to capture the essence of continued learning during these unprecedented times. Findings of the study reveal that universities worldwide are moving more and more towards online learning or E- Learning. Apart from resources, staff readiness, confidence, student accessibility and motivation play important function in ICT integrated learning. This paper proposes that staff members should use technology and technological gadgets to enhance learning especially during these exceptional times. Researcher also proposed online and remote learning as a necessity in times of lock downs and social distancing due to COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3 Aristovnik, Aleksander & Keržič, Damijana & Ravšelj, Dejan & Tomažević, Nina & Umek, Lan. (2020). Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Life of Higher Education Students: A Global Perspective. 10.20944/preprints202008.0246.v2.

Through this paper the researchers tried the most comprehensive and large-scale study to date on how students understand the impacts of the first wave of COVID-19 crisis in early 2020 on various aspects of their lives on a global level. The paper tried to cover a sample of 30,383 students from 62 countries, which reveals that amid the worldwide lockdown and transition to online learning students were most satisfied with the support provided by teaching staff and their universities' public relations. Still less computer skills and the perception of a higher workload restrain them from perceiving their own improved performance in the new teaching environment. The study reflected that students were mainly concerned about issues to do with their future professional career and studies, and experienced boredom, anxiety, and frustration. The findings of this paper reflected that students with certain socio-demographic characteristics (male, part-time, first-level, applied sciences, a lower living standard, from Africa or Asia) were undoubtedly less satisfied with their academic work/life during the crisis, also female, full-time, first-level students and students faced with financial problems were generally affected more by the pandemic in terms of their emotional life and personal circumstances. Researchers tried to identify the key factors that influencing students' satisfaction.

1.4 Gonzalez T, de la Rubia MA, Hincz KP, Comas-Lopez M, Subirats L, Fort S, et al. (2020) Influence of COVID-19 confinement on students' performance in higher education. PLoS ONE 15(10): e0239490. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0239490T. Gonzalez,

This paper tried to analyzes the effects of COVID-19 confinement on the autonomous learning performance of students in higher education. They authors used a field experiment with 458 students from three different subjects at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain). They studied the differences in assessments by dividing students into two groups. The researchers selected the first group (control) corresponds to academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 and the second group (experimental) corresponds to students from 2019/2020. The results show that the COVID-19 internment has a significant positive effect on students' performance. This effect is also remarkable in activities that did not change their format when performed after the confinement. The researchers found that this effect is notable both in subjects that increased the number of assessment activities and subjects that did not change the student workload. Based on the collected data the authors conclude that COVID-19 confinement changed students' learning strategies to a more continuous habit, improving their efficiency. These are the expected reasons for which better scores in students' assessment are possible due to COVID-19 confinement that can be explained by an improvement in their learning performance.

Objectives

The objectives of this research are-

- a) To identify the different challenges faced by the Media faculties in Pune
- b) To identify the impact of adopting online media practices in providing and disseminating normal academic knowledge
- c) To identify the difficulties while conducting online practical's.

Research Questions

This paper tries a deliberate approach to identify the difficulties faced by the Media faculties in teaching learning process during covid 19 situations. To answer the question associated with this, the following research questions were considered:

RQ1. What are the popular online tools used by different higher education institutes for teaching learning process during the COVID-19 crisis?

RQ2. Do the online media tools have an impact on maintaining efficiency and interactivity among the students and the teachers?

RQ3. What are the challenges of using online media as learning approach in academic knowledge dissemination?

Significance of the study

An understanding of the challenges faced by the academicians in teaching learning process during covid 19 and how it influences students' learning environment would be of great relevance to improve the online learning approach during a crisis. The outcome of the study will definitely draw some structure to strategize and reconstruct a new learning environment during crises and risks.

Research Methodology

The researcher has implied quantitative approach for the research. Therefore, the researcher applied in-depth interview method to study the difficulties faced by the faculties of Journalism & mass communication department of various universities of Pune. Due to time constraints, the researcher has selected only Pune city. Through the interview the researcher tries to find out what are various difficulties faced by these faculties of journalism & mass communication.

Qualitative research methodology was used as it is appropriate to collect data in a natural setting rather than a contrived situation (Creswell, 2007), in this study, telephonic interviews between the researchers and participants were employed to avoid human bias whenever possible. The researcher will analyze each of these interviews and try to find out how these faculties cope up with the changing scenario of the present education system. A sum of total of 30 interviews were conducted. The data of this study were analyzed inductively, starting with the raw data consisting of multiple sources of information and then broadening to several specific themes.

Data analysis-

Researcher had interviewed almost 30 faculties from different university's Media departments of Pune. The entire education system has been disturbed due to covid19 and is not yet back to normal. Various educational institutions opted various techniques and tool to cope up with this crisis situation. The faculties have been using different online teaching tools & techniques to make the education more interactive and interesting. While using these they have faced many difficulties in different stages. Here based on the data collected through the in depth interviews of the Media Faculties from Pune, the researcher categorized the finding in following ways-

A) Conduction of Online classes-

With the global outbreak of has affected human lives in the most adverse way. The entire world is engulfed in tragedy as crisis strikes in every sector. Like rest of the world, India has also been struggling to control the spread of corona virus since detection of its first case in January 2020. However, the numbers are increasing manifold everyday. With the closure of all the educational institutions in India since March2020, almost all them

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exploring alternative ways to provide continuous education using various technologies. During initial stage in India, to break the chain of corona virus the government issued 21 days lockdown and later it was extended to another 19 days until 3rd May 2020. All this sudden crisis and uncertainty totally handicapped the higher education system of India. But to cope up with this situation various educational institutions took various initiatives to start online classes in place of face to face traditional class.

The researcher interacted with the Media faculties of different universities of Pune and they all have mentioned that almost around from the month April they have started taking online lectures for various batches. Basically online learning is defined as learning facilitated by the use of digital tools and content that involves some form of interactivity, which may include online interaction between the learner and their teacher or peers.

The academicians mentioned that during this period they were almost bound to design their pedagogy to engage the students. Some of the pedagogies were not based on any theory, but they were innovative. Many of their colloquies who were literally facing difficulties in using ICT for education also became experts in providing online teaching or using different online media platforms to engage their students academically and mentally.

While discussing informally with a few university professors, the researcher found that providing meaningful teachings, creating an academic environment during quarantine by adopting new technologies is their accountability to the profession and responsibility towards their students. Even they denied receiving any instructions from their authority to conduct the classes except an advisory; they initiated the online classes only to help their students. The following is an alternative arrangement of face to face classroom teaching adopted by an academic department of an Indian public university. They are using various online video communication services like zoom, google meet, webx, microsoft teams, Volp etc. Here Zoom app is the most comfortable tool for most of the faculties. And Google meet scored second in this. Almost 54.5% professors are saying that zoom can make their teaching more effective as compared with the other video communication services. 22.7% professor were using Google meet as it is free of cost, one no need to purchase it and the most important part is that no time limitation.

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B) Tools used for assignments submission and providing references - Teaching and learning is a process that includes many variables. These variables interact as learners work toward their goals and incorporate new knowledge, behaviours, and skills that add to their range of learning experiences. Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate, Extend, and Standards lesson plan format was developed by teachers in consultation with faculty from schools of education and is based on a constructivist model of teaching. The lesson plans are based on constructivist instructional models with activities and sections of the plan designed to have the students continually add (or construct) new knowledge on top of existing knowledge.

To evaluate the students properly for all the subjects related to Media education the faculties were giving assignments to the students on regular basis and for some subjects they provides practical too. During this pandemic it was quite difficult for the faculty to conduct the assignments and practical like before. They mentioned that during this period they have used various tools to collect assignments and practical from the students. At first it was difficult for the students to understand the process of assignment submission in various tools like padlet, google classroom, college or university software etc. But with proper instructions and demo from the faculty the students have understood the process and they can easily able to use submit their assignments and practical through the various online tools. Here the researcher found that there is not an uniform platform for the universities for students submissions. Almost every interviewed said different tools in this case. Also another important finding of this some universities have developed their own software or system for the teaching learning process. Apart from these some of the widely used tools for assignments and practical submissions are- Google classrom, Ms office, Google drive etc.

C) Challenges faced by the faculties while conducting lectures online-

For any approaches, if there are some benefits or advantages, a few limitations will be there too. The students

are accustomed to the face to face classroom learning and hence, some of them couldn't adjust themselves with the new academic environment while staying at home. There are pros of classroom teaching that digital or online education will find hard to replace, such as collaborative learning, enhancement of critical thinking skills, improvement of social skills, building organizational skills, keeping students stimulated, development of important personality and career building skills (Singhal, 2017). According to the students, it was really struggling with online classes, many of them find it difficult to cope up with online teaching. Lots of advantages are missing in the online classes. However, in this research, it was found that these issues are not vital for the students. The basic limitation is the poor internet connectivity and mobile data. The final semester students of the universities are more emotional since they have only a couple of months to complete their programme and hence, they are terribly missing the last days of a classroom environment. Also, another issue of mobile data was highlighted, that after the online classes are over, there is no Internet data remaining for completing other assignments or for even Google search. Many students also opines that due to network issues they are not able to attend a single lecture. Which was very difficult for them to understand the concept and its affect their performance very badly. Also the absence of normal classroom environment leads to no brainstorming.

While discussing with a couple of teachers, it was their opinion that if the 80% students are taking the benefits, they shouldn't stop the initiatives for the rest of 20%. Once, everything becomes normal, teachers need to give extra tutorials for the rest of 20% students. A few students have also mentioned in their feedback that although they have mobile internet connectivity, they always get in touch with the rest of the students and collect the recorded discussion of the online classes and submit their assignments on time. The faculties have faced various challenges during online teachings. Some of them are mentioned below-

1. Most of the professor opined that it was hard to explain practical part as delivering demo was not effective.
2. Also it is difficult to conduct sound and voice excesses as equipments are not available with students
3. There is no physical demonstration for the subject, limiting the capacity of a facilitator to correct student if there's any mistake or confusion. Facilitators cannot have direct engagement with learners thus understanding of a subject is superficial and assumed.

A major challenged is lack of control over Student's attentiveness and presence.

Zero Interaction, limitations while delivering practicals, cannot focus on peer to peer basis, lectures are more like monologs. Most of the times the faculty tries to make lectures interactive but many students do not turn their cameras on. Which resulted the faculties are not sure how many are actually attending the lecture.

4. Many times there will be connectivity issues while conducting class discussions.
5. Absence of the classroom environment the Students loses interest after some time.
6. Subjects like photography, editing, broadcast journalism are practically oriented subjects. Through online teaching it is very difficult to understand whether the student has understood or not
7. Network issues, bandwidth issues are always there in online teaching. Apart from these less attention spam of students, some subjects need body language communication which doesnt happen. Individual attention to students missing
Student's retention.

D) Teaching online vs Offline-

Here the researcher received different opinions. Though almost all the faculties suggested that offline teaching is

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more helpful for media education, but there were some who opined that it is not very difficult to conduct the Media teaching learning through online. According to them with the help of new technologies eventually it will be helpful for all the media faculties to conducting all normal classroom teaching through online. Here one of the faculty mentioned her point in following ways-" Theories and soft skills practical are possible but for paid applications, like sound editing software's cost is important challenge. So I prefer physical classes" Another one suggest "It is not preferable to have journalism and mass communication online as there is constant need for practical practices." From the collected d information it is reflected that 77.3% faculties believe that teaching practical is easier in normal classroom.

E) Conduction of practical session during lockdown period-

The faculties faced different difficulties while conducting the practical during lockdown period. As mentioned earlier, Indian higher education faced an over night change because of this pandemic. Unlike science practical the practical are very important for media education. It will basically help the students to understand the actual working of media and also they have learned different tools and techniques. Without practical when a faculty only mentioned the details in lecture it will not clear many doubts and also unable to make the clear understanding among the students. During this crisis period the Media faculties have mixed opinion towards conduction of the practical. Among 35.5% faculties have not conducted any practicals whereas 63% faculties conducted various practicals using different online media tools. Some of them have shoot the entire practical and then share it with students during parcticals, some are using various YouTube channels to give proper demonstrations, for various software also the faculties uses various available sites and video with the students. Although these processes help the students to at least understand the in depth concept associated with the subject matter but it also has some limitations. According to most of the faculties conducting practicals will not fully helpful for those students who have connectivity issues or network issues. Most of the software related with media education are quite expensive and paid and because of that many students are not able complete their practical related with this.

F) Online teaching and its impact on maintaining efficiency and interactivity among the students and the teachers

This is one of the biggest challenges among all the Media education faculties.

Almost all the faculty faced this issue more or less during their teaching. During lecture many students off their videos & audio. Even when a faculty asks anything or tries to discuss anything there were no replies from the student's side. Sometimes it happens because of the poor network issue also. It leads teaching towards radio jockeying where the Announcer only delivers his or her speech. There is no conversation among students and teachers. These again lead teaching learning less effective and less interactive.

G) Future of Media education-

With the recent development in the higher education it is almost clear that the future of Media education is online. When the researcher asked this question to the Media faculties, almost around 68% suggested that the future of Media education is online. They opined that with the help new technological developments it will be become very effective mode of teaching learning in future. Other 31% media faculties opined that the future of media education will be in dual mode which means both online and traditional classroom teaching. They suggest that only online teaching will not received the accepted results therefore the Media education institutions should opt both online and traditional teaching learning process. One the faculty here mentioned that- Offline of traditional classroom teaching will be very beneficial for various practicals.

h) Copping up with this new digital teaching in media education-

When the researcher asks this question among the faculties she received different remedies and

suggestion in this context. Though it was not very easy to cope up with the sudden change in education system but now almost after one year we can say this will be the future of education and all the education system needs to follow this digital or online teaching for the betterment

Also few modules can be taught online but entire education cannot be provided online, for online education course should be different which includes only those modules which can be taught online such as communication skills, writing, voice modulation etc... Mix of online classes and physical classes will be effective. Offline classes are very important for teaching subjects like mass communication but online are our future. We have to adopt blending of both modes.

Some suggested that one has to undergo training to understand the basics as well as how to use it effectively on conducting the classes through online Blended teaching would be the best option at this stage. Also with the use of creative audio visual exercises for students. Also recording video lectures of practicals with demonstrations would be a better substitute to the online practicals .

It has been a year now where we have adapted the system. Challenges are with infrastructure of software's and internet connectivity. In future media institute needs to have collaboration with software companies like Adobe, Avid etc so that application are available for students. Youtube is best available free option. YouTube tutorials should be considered in IQSC parameters of NAAC and Universities and UGC should recognize and promote it Web Camera, Microphone and PC are indispensable part of education.

Conclusion.

In a world where digital media has taken a significant role in teaching and learning, any modern pedagogy much accounts for students' findings, analyzing, and applying knowledge from a growing number of constantly changing sources. This requires higher-order skills like critical thinking and the ability to learn more independently, as well as in larger groups, both in person and online (Persaud, 2019). This study focused on the challenges faced by the media faculties during the Novel Corona virus (COVID19) pandemic crisis. The study explains the various challenges faced by the media faculties while conducting online teaching learning process due to the pandemic. After studying the phenomena that are of interest to the study, and transcribing the various responses of the participants, even though some of the responses were not transcribed because they were all communicating the same idea; the results reveal that online media is widely used by the media faculties in higher institution. Opportunities and benefits of digital social media for academic purposes incurred by the students became visible only after the crisis took place. Although digital education based online learning was not systematically implemented in India, even in the open and distance learning as a whole, because it was not an essential pedagogy until the pandemic struck the world and the Indian state in particular. The present Coronavirus crisis has revolutionized the entire higher education architecture of the country through e-tools for teaching and learning, since there's no other option for continuation of the academic activities. There are some limitations of this study, considering the number of participants involved and the methodology adopted due to the COVID-19 lockdown in India. Nevertheless, the success of the use of online media as an alternative of the face to face classroom teaching depends on the commitment of the faculty members of higher educational institutes and how they consider their role in such a situation when individuals engaged in other occupations like doctors, other health workers, police, administrators, journalists are waging a war against the virus, the teaching fraternity is required to equip the new age students with knowledge and teach them the value of time. It is only responsibility and accountability to the service that can enable teachers to engage their students by providing quality instructions to utilise this lockdown period because nobody knows for how long the lockdown extends in the country and how socially and economically it could impact the lives of many. Though the teaching fraternity faces many challenges while conducting online classes but to deal with these challenges there should be some universal guidelines for all the students and teachers. Also there should be some timely skill development programme arrange for the teachers This article concludes quoting feedback of a student, "The phrase 'hope for the best and prepare for the teachers, which will help them to equip themselves with latest technologies. Also the higher educational authorities should try to propose some tools and techniques through which the students can easily connected with the online lectures. Some grassroot level development is required from government side so that there will be better internet connectivity in the rural parts of India. Though there are many challenges faced by the Media faculties during this pandemic period with the help systematic and planned procedure help them to cope up with the situation.

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