

Impact Of Covid 19 On Learning Status Of Annamalai University Students, Tamilnadu

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ABSTRACT:

In this paper, it assesses the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on higher education system and identified the challenges of students in the online learning platform in Annamalai University Tamilnadu. The study is an explanatory in nature, both primary and secondary data are used for discussion. Data and information collected from the study conducted among the UG and PG students in Annamalai University through the online structural questionnaire method using the 'Google form, send to students' through Watts App and E-mail. The simple percentage distribution was used to assess the learning status of students. It reveals that most of the students using android phone for e-learning. The Students have been facing various problems such as lack of facilities, gap created among students and teachers, distractions from the family etc. That leads to create the mental pressure among the students. Students from remote areas and marginalized sections commonly faced enormous challenges in accessing the online classes and the study material during this pandemic. The study discussed shortcomings of this newly adapted education system has to be taken on a serious account and need to be modified.

INTRODUCTION

COVID -19 stands for Coronavirus, the virus originated in Wuhan, China, and spread all over the world. Due to the COVID outbreak, this has led to the closure of Education Institutions all over the world. As per the UNESCO report, more than 157 crore students across 191 countries are severely impacted by the closure of educational institutions. In India, nearly 32 crore students are impacted by the COVID-19 and nationwide lockdown from March 25 which forced the government to close contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. It has affected the academic activities at various levels, including cancellation of board exams, college exams and even conducting entrance exams is also postponed for medical and others. As per the instructions of the Union Ministry of HRD (Human Resource Development) has made several arrangements for conducting classes for the students through the online portals and through the educational channels to continue the learning. Even closures of the educational institutions are only temporary, but it is problematic for various reasons. The first main reasons are to fill the learning gap of the students by providing enrichment activities; those are not able to attend the schools and colleges. Secondly in adopting appropriate distance learning practices, considering to safeguard the students and also engaging them in learning. In this pandemic, at least 179 professional colleges, including engineering

colleges and business schools are shut down in India for this academic year 2020-2021, due to falling demand and restrictions on the mobility of students because of the pandemic. It is the highest in nine years and it is doubled in comparison to that of the previous year. As per the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), more than 134 institutions did not seek approval for fresh batches in 2020 due to disruption in the higher education sector. There are multiple challenges in the education sector for these years that are as follows:

- Enrollment of students for the next academic session
- Reduced intake of courses
- To Create new digital infrastructure
- To pay full salary to the teachers
- Not to demand fees from the students
- No stimulus support from the government

Some of the strong educational institutions are able to manage the situation, but other institutions are not able to afford them. When a physical campus cannot be opened because of this pandemic situation, it's an expensive year for the institutions in getting the running capital. A professional education provider association in Tamil Nadu has requested the prime minister office to provide the financial aid of Rs.50,000 crore for the higher education institutions as a relief measure in this pandemic situation. India is facing a tough situation where every sector is facing huge pressure due to this COVID-19 and economic downturn. The business has been shedding jobs or cutting salaries of the employees to get sufficient return from it. Even if the pandemic comes under control it is difficult for several students to continue the education due to poor family background. In some of the rural and urban areas, girls are facing physical and sexual abuse which also results in dropouts from the schools or colleges. In this kind of situation, both central and state governments have granted permission to conduct online classes to the students, but most of the students are not able to afford the basic need for mobile phones to attend the online classes due to the rise in unemployment problem.

DIGITAL LEARNING TO FACE COVID-19

Most of the schools and colleges are remain closed, due to the spread of coronavirus. The ongoing crisis perceived an opportunity in online education. E-Learning overcomes all the geographical barriers and provides equal access to education. En-number of ed-tech firms are providing interesting and interactive teaching to the students. E-learning is the only option to fill the gap in this pandemic situation due to the absence of classroom teaching. The one – Nationone platform facility through the PM E-Vidya platform has provided dedicated channels for the welfare of the students will liberalize distance and online learning platform. The temporary suspensions of academic activities are continued through the E-Learning and teachers also able to assist the student and monitor their learning progression. The Indian government has provided MOOC (Massive Open Online courses) is partnering with several online learning platforms which will provide various facilities like freely accessible video lectures, digital libraries, etc.,. In this pandemic situation distance education or online learning is the only way for the students to continue the learning. It provides an opportunity for the students as well as teachers that "Learning can be done anywhere" when we desire to transform knowledge. Nowadays students are having en-number of facilities for learning like YouTube, Google Classroom, Google Meet & Zoom to conduct free online classes to the students. The student should be provided with necessary course

instruction and other services in the online portal for academic continuation. Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education Higher education and economic development have a positive relationship, higher education is a dynamic concept; it is essential for the economic growth of a nation that is universally recognized. A health and an economic crisis could affect higher education institutions in several ways, mainly in the mode of teaching, evaluation, and financing. The lockdown has forced educational institutions to evolve their teaching methodologies from in-person lectures to eLearning platforms almost overnight (Dhoot, 2020).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To study the impact of COVID-19 on Annamalai University Students enlightens various challenges, and the status of virtual learning among the students pursuing higher education in Tamilnadu.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In this paper, it assesses the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on higher education system and analyse students opinion about online class during the lockdown. It identified the challenges of UG and PG students in the online learning platform from Annamalai University, Tamilnadu. For this study, data and information have been gathered from both primary and secondary sources for analysing impact of COVID-19 on higher education students learning in Tamilnadu. But in this study we have taken only general higher education categories – science, commerce and humanities. Primary data have been collected through online structured questionnaire by Google form of UG and PG students of the Annamalai University, Cuddalore district of Tamilnadu. Total 186 students have responded positively and provided complete information of survey. The secondary data have been brought together from various resources such as documents prepared by higher education department of Tamilnadu government, world bank report, website of Ministry of education, various journals and research papers. In this study, descriptive analysis was also used; besides, simple percentage distribution was used to assess the learning status of students (World Bank, 1998).

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Boys	46	24.7
Girls	140	75.3
Age of Students		
21 Years	26	13.97
Below 21 years	92	49.46
Above 21 years	68	36.57
Social Groups		
SC and ST	10	5.4
OBC	164	89.2
General	10	5.4
Stream of Study		
Arts and Humanities	80	43
Science	76	40.9
Commerce	30	16.1

With regard to gender, the mostly (75.3%) of the respondents are girls and the remaining 24.7 per cent are boys. As far as age of the students, majority (49.46) of the respondents belong to the age group of below 21 years, 36.57 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of above 21 years and 13.97 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 21 years. Further, 89.2 per cent of the respondents belong to OBC, 5.4 per cent of the respondents belong to the respondents SC and ST and the remaining 5.4 per cent of the respondents belong to General. With regard to stream of study, majority (43%) per cent of the respondents who are Arts and Humanities students, 40.9 per cent of the respondents are science students and 16.1 per cent of the respondents are commerce students.

Table 2: COVID-19 impact on Family's economy

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think, that the economic condition of your family affected by COVID-19		
Difficulties faced during the lockdown		
Financial	120	64.5
Food	16	8.7
Health	10	5.3
Others	40	21.5
Did the economic crisis during the lockdown affect Your education?		
Yes	116	62.3
No	70	37.7

The above table revealed that majority (64.5%) of the respondents faced financial problem during the lockdown, 21.5 per cent of the respondents were stated that they faced other types of problems, 8.7 per cent of the respondents faced food related problems and the remaining 5.3 per cent of the respondents were faced health problems.

Besides, majority (62.3%) of the respondents informed that due to economic crisis in the lockdown affect their education and 37.7 per cents were not affected educationally due to economic crisis during the lockdown.

E-learning during lockdown

Table 3: Were you familiar with online platforms of learning before the lockdown?

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	74	39.8
No	112	60.2

Table 4: Were you aware of government e-learning facilities (SWAYAM, DIKSHA, etc)?

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	56	30.1

No	130	69.9
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We have analyzed e-learning details of students in lockdown. The study found that online learning has been used to substitute physical classrooms and around 60 percent of students were not familiar with online platforms before lockdown (Table 3). Ministry of Education introduces a number of online platforms and tools for learning such as SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) DIKSHA, e-PG Pathshala, Swayam Prabha, E-Shodh Sindhu, National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), Virtual Labs, etc. Nevertheless, more than half of the participants in this study are unaware of the abovementioned platforms and tools (Table 4). Many students availed smart phones to attend online classes and grab knowledge during the lockdown. Around two-third of the participants attended their online classes through their own mobile phones (Table 5). India is the second-largest country in the number of mobile users in the world. Most of the learning activities took place in the platform of Google Meet (60.7%) and one fourth of the students used Watts App as a platform of learning (Table 6).

Table 5: Information about Gadget for online class

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gadget used for accessing online class		
Android mobile	182	97.8
Computer or Laptop	4	2.2
Availability of gadget		
Self	133	71.5
Family	51	27.4
Friends	2	1.1
Pandemic?		
Yes	154	82.8
No	32	17.2

Table 6: Platform used for online class

Various platforms	Frequency	Percentage
Google meet	113	60.7
Whatsapp	52	28
Zoom	8	4.3
Youtube	7	3.8
Others	6	3.2

Table 7: Frequency attending the online class

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Regular	123	66.1

Occasionally	50	26.9
Rarely	13	7

Table 8: Time studying during Lockdown

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Less than normal situation	146	78.4
Same as normal situation	33	17.8
More than normal situation	7	3.8

Out of 186 students in the study, 123 students regularly attended online classes (Table7). However, during this period, two third of the students utilized their time for studying and allied activities less than the normal situation (Table 8). They have been facing a lot of challenges and difficulties. According to this study, around 90 percent of students were not satisfied with the online classroom system, they faced problems like feeling stress, depression, lack of digital infrastructure facilities such as poor interconnectivity, lack of good digital devices etc. (Table 9). Apart from that, students missed their friends circle, academic atmosphere and campus life. Their collective opinion is to reopen the campus at all level of higher education, aided by proper preventive measures.

Table 9: Satisfaction with E-learning

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	10.2
No	167	89.8

Table 10: Problem faced studying during lockdown

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Feelings stress, Depression	97	52.1
Related with internet connectivity	49	26.3
Don't have favorable environment to study at home	27	14.6
Teachers are not interested to teaching	13	7

The table 10 showed that more than fifty (52.1%) per cent of the respondents facing stress, depression, 26.3 per cent of the respondents facing internet connectivity, 14.6 per cent of the respondents have not favorable environment for the study and 7 per cent of the respondents claimed that teachers are not interested to teaching during the lockdown.

FINDINGS

- With regard to gender, the mostly (75.3%) of the respondents are girls and majority (49.46) of the respondents found belong to the age group of below 21 years,

- The study also showed that great majority (89.2%) of the respondents belongs to OBC and majority (43%) of the respondents who are Arts and Humanities students.
- The above study revealed that majority (64.5%) of the respondents faced financial problem during the lockdown
- Majority (62.3%) of the respondents informed that due to economic crisis in the lockdown affected educationally.
- Around 60 percent of students were not familiar with online platforms before lockdown.
- Ministry of Education introduces a number of online platforms and tools for learning such as SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) DIKSHA, e-PG Pathshala, Swayam Prabha, E-Shodh Sindhu, National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), Virtual Labs, etc. Nevertheless, near 70% of the participants in this study are unaware of the abovementioned platforms and tools.
- Most (97.8%) of the students availed smart phones to attend online classes
- Most of the learning activities took place in the platform of Google Meet (60.7%) and 66.1 per cent of the respondents were attended regular online classes.
- Majority (78.4%) of the students studying during Lockdown less than normal situation.
- Most (89.8%) of the students are not satisfied with E-learning.
- More than fifty (52.1%) per cent of the respondents face stress and depression problems while studying during lockdown

CONCLUSION

The study outlined different kind of impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown on higher education sector, it has made significant disruption in academic activities. Also the study assessed online learning status of students in higher education sector of Tamilnadu. Majority of learners have been seen dissatisfied with online learning and facing digital infrastructure challenges.

In the higher education sector, initial steps were made to online learning, and the lockdown accelerated the rapid trend. And also government should address the problems of digital divide and make better IT infrastructure facilities and make serious consideration to improve the conditions of marginalised communities and ghettoised regions. Substituting physical classrooms with virtual spaces is not a proper way in a society where digital divide pre-eminently exists, rather, online classes should work in tandem with traditional methods. Human beings in general are faced by economic constraints, so the governments must assure adequate funds, enrolment and employment opportunities. Universities and institutions should focus on satisfaction level, psychological matters and academic purpose of students, if this is not the case academic programmes and years would become of zero utility.

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