A CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING OF ONLINE CLASSES IN PAKISTANI CONTEXT

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Abstract

The researcher is a teacher at post graduate level and has been in touch with his students / colleagues during the days of lockdown due to COVID-19. To save the academic year and academic loss of students, on line classes have been started worldwide. In the third world countries like Pakistan, it is entirely a novel experience and the teachers and students have been in stress because of this novel experience. In Pakistani context, it has been very disturbing for both the teachers and students at different levels. To find out the shortcomings of online classes, the researcher uploaded a question on face book and gathered the data regarding online classes. The question put forward was, "*What is your opinion/response about online classes?*" As it is a pure qualitative study, therefore, numbers are not involved. The suggestions are; to arrange training sessions /demonstrations for both the teachers and students and furthermore to bring an end to the issues regarding online/video classes, infrastructural changes are needed.

Key Words: Online classes, Third world, Pakistan, Training session, Infrastructural change

INTRODUCTION

Since 2000, internet has brought revolutionary changes in all disciplines of knowledge and now internet is called the gold mine of knowledge [1]. Furthermore, it has completely modified the very flow and movement of life in every field of interest. It has also completely changed the mode and mood of education. In online classes the students use their personal gadgets and get help from internet. During 2010 to 2020, it has become a very inevitable tool and source of teaching and learning throughout the world. Online education is provided with the help of the online portal of the institutes concerned [2].

Online education embodies in itself all the webs for learning and teaching i.e. internet, e-learning, m-learning, and distance education fully supported by computer technology [3].In online classes, there is no physical proximity among the students and teachers and they depend upon

internet and computer technology for interaction and sharing materials etc. in online classes students are freely and easily engaged with their teachers through text messages , and virtual contacts .The students can easily go for live chat with their teachers[4] . These online classes can be more fruitful and result oriented if used with their full and real potentialities. It may be far better than in-person teaching and learning [5].

DIFFERENT ONLINE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- **Fully Online Education:** In such types of education degrees, diplomas and certificates are achieved without visiting the concerned campuses and institutes [6]

- **Hybrid Education**: In this type of educational pursuits, students pursue a variety of educational programs and on campuses courses like degrees, diplomas etc.

- **Online Courses**: It is for specific courses to master in and for a particular skill [7]

- **MOOCs**: It means massive open online courses. In this type of online classes, the courses and lectures are delivered to online "class rooms "especially in goggle class rooms. The traditional educational institutes have been turned into brick-and-mortar institutes[8]. With the growth of the online education, the institutes of education have developed a new mechanism and automated process to curb and stop cheating and plagiarism etc.[9].

THOSE WHO WANT TO JOIN ONLINE CLASSES

The joiners of the online classes must be;

- Self-motivated
- Disciplined
- Access to right type of technology
- Capable of using technology
- Good communicator
- Having learning capacity through online classes
- The quality of learning without visiting campuses[10].

BENEFITS OF ONLINE CLASSES

- One can learn from anywhere without any difficulty
- Revival of lecture is very easy
- Less deterring
- Ample time before sharing the materials

- Specific about issue

- Result oriented communication

- Easy learning atmosphere

- Cheap

- Presence of the difference of opinions

- Instructors availability[11]

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology of the study is stated below.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the short comings of the online/video classes in Pakistan.

2. To find out the problems faced by students and teachers in these online classes.

RESAERCH DESIGN

This study is purely qualitative in nature.

The data were collected with the help of social media i.e. face book

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The sample was randomly selected as the question regarding online classes was posted on face book. So, everyone could have an easy access to the question in the friend list of the researcher.

RESEARCH TOOL

An open ended question was the research tool of the study. The question was, "What is your opinion /response about on line/video classes?"

DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected by the researcher himself with the help of online contact with the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed in the light of the stated objectives of the study. The respondents were students, teachers, and other professionals from different walks of life.

The respondents 'responses were closely viewed and analyzed qualitatively one by one.

- A student of business administration responded, "These classes suit only to the students of upper class".

- An electrical engineer responded, "These classes are a failure because of the non-availability of resources on gross root level."

- An English language student responded," connectivity to online class is a great issue and main hurdle z.

- A medical student responded, "During these classes the learners cannot fully concentrate as living in small and congested   houses."

- A commerce student responded that in these online classes the learning ratio is only 10% and the passing ratio is 90% and further more cheating is very easy during test/exam etc.

- A student responded ," the public servants involved in the provision of these facilities are thoroughly corrupt and dishonest and due to their corruption and dishonesty the problems are on the rise in these online classes as these online classes are not their priority" .

- A teacher responded, "this is luxury for the haves and the cause of inferiority complex for the have-nots because of the resources not availability and the vice versa."

- A commerce student responded, "We are left with no other option but to go for online classes."

- A student settled in foreign country responded, "These classes are not applicable/ useful as no one takes it seriously in Pakistan."

- A principal of a post graduate college responded, "Something is better than nothing."

- An English language student responded, "It is not easy to be benefitted from these online classes."

- A higher secondary school principal responded, "These classes not only destroy also the energies of students but also waste their precious and prime time."

- A student of management declared these classes useless and joke.

- An English language student considered these classes unsuitable for Pakistani environment of teaching and learning.

- A teacher responded that both the students and teachers faced hurdles in using this technology because of their unfamiliarity with these gadgets used for online classes.

- A lawyer took these classes 'JOKE'.

- A professor of a local university considered these online classes very tough for the teachers.

- A BS (MATH) student of a local university considered these classes easy for teachers and disturbing for students as in case of some issue related to connectivity, the students are automatically marked absent and if the same happened to the teachers, they do not bother.

- A student that in his village, "70% students and population do not have access to internet etc."

- Most of the respondents considered these classes nonsense, chit chat, idle type of exercise, use less and fruitless.

FINDINGS

- Most of the students have no access to internet.

- Not the alternative of face to face and in-person teaching and learning.

- Lack of computer etc knowledge.

- No seriousness on the part of both the teachers and students.

- The poor students have no required facilities for these classes.

- The students and teachers are generally not aware of the online technology.

- The engineers of the online system are corrupt.

- Teachers don't take and accept their responsibilities regarding the connectivity problems.

- The infrastructure regarding online classes is very poor.

RESULTS

The responses of the respondents were obtained with the help of social media, and then the responses were interpreted in the light of the stated objectives of the study. The results are not in favor of the online classes and the responses showed that the respondents did not like these online classes. Furthermore, there was no proper infrastructure and training for both the learners and teachers.

DISCUSSION

The responses were analyzed thoroughly and the findings were presented in the proper order in the light of the asked question. The respondents were objective and they did not hide the truth and the exact situation on ground and they spoke straight from their hearts. Furthermore,

the respondents were not happy with the authorities in the conduction of the online classes. The respondents were also hopeful for the betterment of online classes in the near future.

CONCLUSION

These online classes, have, to some extent played a very important role for keeping the students busy in their academic pursuits. These online classes have also brought the shortcomings and weaknesses of the poor infrastructure of Pakistani online education to the surface. These online classes would be a great success if they could be started after a quick, speedy and reliable survey and research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher after through survey has suggested the following recommendations.

1. Online classes have changed the very shape and flow of education, therefore, the government and all other stakeholder depts. may arrange refresher course and trainings for both the teachers and learners.

2. The govt. may take the issue of online classes seriously and may work for the permanent infrastructure in this regard .so that in future these shortcomings may not thwart the smooth flow of learning and teaching.

3. A separate curriculum may be devised by the ministry of education for online classes on emergency grounds.

4. The facilities of online classes may be spread over to all those who are in far flung areas and for this purpose, the installation of all the gadgets and other necessary appliances and equipments may be provided to all the concerned and needy by the government of Pakistan.

5. For online classes, the education department must arrange awareness sessions for the parents of the students, too.

6. Some special and specific chapters regarding pandemics, lock downs, online classes may also be included in different curricula at different levels of schools, colleges and varsities.

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