A Study on Students' Perceptions of Online Learning

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Abstract:

In order to maintain a safe social distance, educational institutions during COVID-19 switched to online ways of educating and assessing students. Through the Indian government's digital efforts, there was a huge shift towards learning online. In the past few years, online classes have become very popular, meeting the needs of almost all educational institutions. A way of teaching in which students learn using computers at home that are connected to the internet is called "online education." The objective of the study is to look at how Indian students feel about online learning. It was much easier for students from cities in India to accept online learning during the COVID-19 lockdown than for students from rural areas. Since the 'National Education Policy' (NEP) 2020 was introduced, online education has gained significant importance. The policy acknowledges that these kinds of steps might be helpful, but it says that the digital divide needs to be fixed before they can be fully used.

Keywords: *Covid-19, Online learning/education, Indian students, NEP, Digital divide*

1. Introduction

Online learning gives students access to an abundance of information and various ways to solve problems, making it an essential part of lifelong education. The findings of this study will reveal students' online learning interests and approaches. Students would be able to maximise their online learning experience if they knew this information (Agarwal, E.S. 2013). "Online education" involves pupils learning at home using internet-connected computers. Online courses and diplomas have become popular over the past decade, addressing the needs of individuals who want to study but must manage work and family. Online education is cheaper than traditional education due to its accessibility, customisation, and outcomes focus. Since all their needs have been met, they can study whenever they want without pressure. The best part about online learning is that it helps students worldwide.

Education through online mode i.e. 'Electronic Media' (EM) is very common in all the age groups and especially the youth who devote much of their time and skills engaged in it thereby opening up channels of change (Hiremath, S.S. 2014). Technology has benefited education faster than any other industry. Online schooling is difficult, despite its appearance. High quality standards apply to online and traditional schools. Virtual schools can now automatically detect and punish plagiarism and other academic dishonesty thanks to online education technologies. Several online colleges have partnered with traditional schools to provide more courses.

Today's education system requires virtual classrooms. As more people use online education and its services, college students are increasingly adopting them. Students and teachers profit from online education since they may access the latest material worldwide. Students have easily adapted to online learning in the 21st century. This tutorial will help you comprehend online learning, its relevance, and its outcomes. Discover how this development is enhancing students' lives and numerous online education applications in the article.

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2. Concept of Online Education

Online education is a learning environment where teaching and grading are conducted exclusively through the internet. Online education can be subdivided based on the proportion of online learning in a certain course. The subgroups range from entirely virtual encounters to a mix of online and in-person learning. It is a versatile approach to providing education that entails studying across various disciplines over the internet. Online courses facilitate teachers reaching students who would otherwise be unable to participate. It is beneficial for students who prefer to set their own speed and schedule for finishing tasks. Online degree programmes and various forms of distant education are widely available and gaining popularity in almost all academic fields. The rise in the probability of geographic mobility has produced an extraordinary multinational influx to living (Sumanth, 2021). Online educational options are increasing, along with the number of schools and institutions providing them. Prospective online degree-seekers are responsible for researching and ensuring they enrol in a credible, accredited school.

Online learning has been linked to numerous favourable results. Educational professionals view their work as a blessing. Access to study resources and video lectures has enhanced students' study habits. It is more dependable and economical than traditional classroom environments, as students may study and hone their skills from any location. Students get easy access to comprehensive knowledge across various disciplines through online education. Following are some advantages to online education:

- Using the resources provided online, students can gain whatever knowledge they want and learn conveniently and comfortably while they are in their preferred settings.
- Online education is significantly less expensive than traditional teaching techniques, and it allows students to learn at their own pace and quickly review lectures based on their own needs.
- Online education offers for a more flexible schedule for academic pursuits and is less expensive than traditional schooling because students do not have to pay for transportation or uniforms.
- Students are more willing to interact with one another in groups, and they fight harder to overcome their fear of appearing ignorant.
- Students benefit from receiving their education online since it exposes them to a range of teaching approaches. As a result, online education has a plentiful supply of both instructors and content.

3. The Significance of Online Education:

Indian education system along with technological innovations is creating 'Learning Community' for the overall progress of India (Hiremath S.S. 2020). The quality of the resources accessible to professors for distant learning would be significantly improved by increased availability of network nodes at the division and building levels. With the widespread availability of the Internet and mobile computing devices, students can now access the same educational content without the necessity of physically attending traditional classrooms. Research indicates that online learning settings are equally successful as traditional ones in transmitting knowledge to students.

Both the teacher and the student can choose their online learning pace. The ability to create a schedule that fits everyone's tasks is also accessible. Therefore, enrolling in programmes online allows students to juggle work and school or college without sacrificing anything in their lives. Another benefit of online education is increased career prospects. Online education lets expert counsellors and educators contact more students. For their education, students get access to the greatest academics and teacher's worldwide (Dallas, A.Z. 2010).

Indian students have a great desire to pursue careers in business and information technology. One of the best things about learning online is that there are no real-world limitations. All backgrounds of students are welcome to enrol in online courses. Increasing numbers of students are opting to pursue their education through online programmes. The exponential growth of digital resources including software, the internet, and data access tools could be a driving factor behind this expansion.

4. Purpose of Online Education

Online learning is the wave of the future, and every student is itching to get in on the action. Online learning is the future, and students are eager to participate (Volery, T. and Lord, D. 2000). Online classes can help many people, not just students. New technologies allow artists to showcase their skills and grow.

- Online education enhances learning and teaching.
- Time- and resource-efficient online education improves teaching and learning.
- Online education gives you access and time to interact with students.
- Investigate and provide the School of Education with more advanced internet technology to improve its web presence, attract more prospective students, and meet community needs.
- Increase online participation between School of Education members.
- Develop new technologies, upgrade existing ones, and support tools to meet School of Education needs.
- Ask users how satisfied they are with the old and new services, then make adjustments. Maintain the hardware, software, and network infrastructure to provide reliable online education.
- Increase students' awareness of security in all online education teaching methods.

5. Apps for Online Education- Ways to Learn

In the realm of online education, there are a plethora of useful and easily accessible apps. It makes no difference if a student is at home or elsewhere; they can still benefit from these apps in their studies. The layout and functionality of mobile applications are extremely user-friendly.

The following mobile applications offer free courses, while some require a subscription charge to access their library of premium courses tailored to the user's specific interests: My CBSC Guide, Byju's, Meritnation, Vedantu, Vidyakul, Toppr, Doubtnut, Drmentors Medical PG App, CAclubindia, Indigolearn, Testbook, Unacademy, Adda 247, Grade Up, Coursera, Simplilearn, Udemy, Sololearn, Coding Ninjas, Khan Academy, Jigsaw Academy, Duolingo, Master Class, Datacamp, Skillshare, Pluralsight, Codecademy, Study.com

6. Here are a few ways to explore online education

- Reading electronic books helps with analysing the materials that are now available.
- Journals are useful for supplying crucial information and videos are useful tools for learning as well.
- Recordings of prior lectures that can be accessed at any time
- Discussion forums in which everyone can share their thoughts and opinions.
- Live question-and-answer sessions to promote thorough comprehension
- Tests are conducted in order to determine and gather feedback.
- Providing an abundance of resources while also making e-learning content mobile responsive.

7. National Education Policy (NEP) and Online Education

At present, digital media combines digital software with traditional and classical learning resources, such as books and notebooks. India is engaged in the use of higher education as a powerful tool to build a knowledge-based information society (Hiremath, S.S. & Albal, D.R. 2016). The NEP-2020 is an advanced and revolutionary proposal with varied new aspects. It is framed with the goal to provide quality education at all levels with convenient options to students (Sumanth S.H.; D. Jayarajam et al. 2022). An increasingly prominent feature of the Indian educational system is online learning.

The education system has undergone numerous changes, including the introduction of online learning, since the New Education Policy (NEP) was introduced in 2020.

MOOCs are a type of open education that are provided via online platforms at no cost. MOOCs now offer learners of all levels flexible and reasonably priced educational options. The purpose of MOOCs is

to provide higher education of a higher calibre to more people. Because of this, it's a useful tool for reaching the goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For the very first time ever, learners were able to earn college credit for MOOCs that were offered through edX in the year 2015. Since then, edX and our partner universities have expanded the number of global curricula that acknowledge MOOC participants' achievements and provide credit paths into degree programmes.

Many MOOCs offer interactive courses with user forums or social media conversations in addition to standard course materials like readings, problem sets, and filmed lectures to promote community interactions between students, instructors, and teaching assistants.

Many people view MOOCs as a crucial instrument for expanding millions of people's access to higher education (HE) and as helping to democratise HE on a local, regional, and international level. MOOCs have the potential to democratise content and provide accessibility to information for all. All of the courses that are given by institutions worldwide are accessible to students. A remarkable number of courses given by eminent organisations and instructors around the globe are now more accessible thanks to MOOCs.

8. Conclusion

COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns significantly disrupted the education system. Due to the prolonged shutdown of educational institutions, students were required to adapt onto digital learning platforms. In 2020, the Indian government established new regulations that have made digital learning and education the prevailing method, although facing numerous hurdles. Online learning enhanced students' comfort and proficiency with technology, boosting their confidence and skills in computer usage. Educational institutions thought that online courses' convenience could swiftly meet their information and communication needs. Teachers who employed ICT often highlighted its importance in promoting collaborative problem-solving among students, engaging them in knowledge-building, developing their cognitive skills, and nurturing an investigative culture akin to that of researchers. Online education has boundless potential to enhance contemporary society. They have the flexibility to learn at their utmost convenience, regardless of time or location.

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