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A Study on Perception of Faculties Towards Online Teaching

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Abstract:

From the very beginning of 2020, COVID-19 has created a threatening situation to many countries and thus the strategies like-complete lockdown, social distancing, etc. has been taken to stop the spreading of this fatal disease. So, the Government has ordered to continue education system in online mode. In this sudden shift from offline to online mode, there may be some particular issues that the teachers faced with. Therefore, this study has been conducted to focus on teaching practices, self-efficacy, problems faced by them and overall perception on the online teaching in West Bengal. Descriptive survey method has been followed for the present study. The study has found out that comparatively faculties of colleges and universities are very regular with online classes than school teachers. Younger faculties are very much energetic than older in taking online classes because of being tech-savvy. But they have faced almost -

similar problems like network issues, disinterest of students, lack of technical knowledge, unavailability of devices, lack of interaction, personal issues etc. at the time of conducting online classes. In order to make the online classes effective, the teachers should have adequate training with proper infrastructure. And for some other issues, the Government should approach positively in order to create an interesting educational environment.

Keywords: Online Teaching, Self-efficacy, Teachers' perception

1. Introduction:

It has been said that though technology cannot replace teachers but teachers who know and use technology will definitely replace the teachers who do not know technology. This has become utmost crucial and relevant in this COVID-19 pandemic situation because due to lockdown the education system has been shifted suddenly from face to face to online mode. Previously technology integration in teaching was optional as it was for catering the diverse need of the learners in a better way in an inclusive set-up. But now it has become a compulsion for all the teachers to conduct classes in online mode because at present, due to lockdown, social distancing etc. as a defense against the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has decided to shift the traditional classroom teaching to online teaching. The famous American

businesses magnate, Bill Gates remarked that "Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting, the kids to work together and motivating them, the teacher is the most important"¹

2. Review of Related Literature:

Now-a-days online teaching has many folded benefits. Students can learn subject matter, discuss with issues with peers, solve doubts with instructors, share materials and also get chance to check their academic progress with the help of the Internet-oriented technology (Kulal, 2020).² In order to continue the education system, schools and colleges have offered increased number of online courses in a popular way (Beatty, 2006)³. Online teaching is a system where teachers educate their students or deliver instruction by using different Web-based technologies. It happens without requiring face to face meetings of students and faculty with the help of Internet, or Intranet or Interactive TV or satellite. These courses may be synchronous, asynchronous or both.

There are some basic differences between online teaching i.e., technology based and offline teaching i.e., face to face mode. So, it is obvious there will be some issues related to competency, efficacy and interest level among the teachers(Zaid, 2012)⁴ in their study, revealed that on the basis of gender and age group, there is no particular significance in the teacher's attitudes and self-efficacy towards online teaching. But the familiarity with computer and e-mail has a deep connection with the positive attitude towards e-learning (Panda, 2007)⁵. Many faculties had little experience in online teaching and did not have any idea about how to conduct online courses (Britt, 2006)⁶; (Koehler, 2005)⁷. Throughout the whole world, many researches have been conducted to find out the problems faced by the teachers at the time of leading online classes. The main problems related to online teaching which commonly arise from the areas of course preparation time, faculty training and support and faculty acceptance (Fish,

¹ **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

²Kulal, A. . (2020). A Study on Perception of Teachers and Students toward Online Classes in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi District. *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal*, 15(3), 285-296. doi:10.1108/AAOUJ-07-2020-0047

³Beatty, B. . (2006). Faculty Perspectives on Moving from Blackboard to the Moodle Learning Management System. *TechTrends*, 50(4), 36-45. Retrieved from <http://research.moodle.org/id/eprint/94>

⁴Zaid, B. J. (2012). Investigate the Self-efficacy and attitudes of Teachers towards e-learning in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 3(6). Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://www.ijser.org/viewPaperDetail.aspx%3FI015188&ved=2ahUKEwiUouS9xJ3wAhVHwjGHVa4Bc0QFjABegQIBBAC&usg=AOvVaw34m4SqYZv-mGPadXS4EPso&cshid=1619496808422>

⁵Panda, S. M. (2007). E-learning in a Mega-open University : Faculty attitude, barriers and motivators. *Educational Media International*, 44(4), 323-338. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523980701680854>

⁶Britt, R. (2006). Online Education: a survey of faculty and students. *Radiologic Technology*, 77(3), 183-190. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16443938/&ved=2ahUKEwIshf2Aj3wAhUNyZgGHbjWDOOQFjAAegQIAxAC&usg=AOvVaw2w98sPvm3U4KxwiffkZGn&cshid=1619497765575>

⁷Koehler, J. M. (2005). Teachers Learning Technology by Design. *Journal of Computing in Teacher Education*, 21(3), 94-102. Retrieved from- <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ882473.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiBJ4DiyZ3wAhWnwTgGHTXmAOAQFjAAegQIGRAC&usg=AOvVaw26DNBUm6Efy5ZJcEjCjblly>

2009)⁸. In the research study, (Bailey, 2009)⁹ revealed that online teachers have to be always ready with some partial technical issues like system delays, software updates, email glitches etc. During online classes, (Todd, 2020)¹⁰ discovered some specific teacher's problems that were like more time consuming, expensive, students' inactivity, technical issues, limited access, less privacy and other problems broadly management and organization problems. So, (Crawford-Ferre, 2012)¹¹ suggested that in order to feel comfortable with the technology, teachers should undergo through a proper development and sufficient professional training related to online design.

Because of cultural background, there may be different perceptions among teachers (Buddhini, 2016)¹². Experience of teaching online greatly influenced the perception of teaching and learning (Fish & Gill, 2009)¹³. According to Tang et.al (2019)¹⁴, online learning is less effective than traditional teaching. But (Hollowman, 2005)¹⁵ remarked that there is no significant difference in student outcomes between these two methods of instruction. Usage of online classes with fruitful thought can be made effective like traditional method. It is depended upon advanced technology, well-made course content, good communication between the instructor and the learners, efficient and skilled instruction (Sun, 2016)¹⁶.

3. Significance of the Study:

The success of online classes is totally depended on the teachers, because by taking different roles they take the main responsibility for developing and maintaining an online learning environment (Bennet, 2004)¹⁷. Self-efficacy plays very significant role in adapting to any new situation. The teachers' ability to use technology effectively for making the class interesting is very crucial. Before COVID-19 pandemic, teachers of schools, colleges and universities were not regularly familiar with technology. In this sudden change from classroom teaching to online

⁸Fish, W. W. (2009). Perceptions of online instruction. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology-TOJET*, 8(1).

⁹Bailey, J. C. (2009). Effective Pedagogical Practices for Online Teaching: Perception of Experienced Instructors. *Internet and Higher Education*, 152-155. doi:10.1016/j.iheduc.2009.08.002

¹⁰Todd, W. R. (2020). Teacher's Perception of the shift from the classroom to online teaching. *International Journal of TESOL Studies*, 2(2), 4-16. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.46451/ijts.2020.09.02>

¹¹Crawford-Ferre, G. H. (2012). Effective Online Instruction in Higher Education. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 13(1), 11-14. Retrieved from https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263620466_Effective_Online_Instruction_in_Higher_Education&ved=2ahUKewjMzbvcOZ3wAhXxlCAHY-eDQMqFjAAegQIAxAC&usq=AOvVaw2L_WWlvhbU5gGNrrkIR8dp&cshid=1619500308731

¹²Buddhini, G. J. (2016). Cultural Perceptions of online learning: transactional faculty perspectives. *Asian Association off Open Universities Journal*, 11(1), 50-63. doi:10.1108/aaouj-07-2016-0019

¹³ Ibid; See Footnote- 9

¹⁴Tang, Hengtao. Xing, Wanli&Pei, Bo. (2019). Time really matters: understanding the temporal dimension of online learning using educational data mining. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*. 57 (5). 1326-1347

¹⁵Hollowman, J. H. (2005). On-line instruction: are the outcomes the same ? *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 32(2), 148-151.

¹⁶Sun, A. C. (2016). Online education and its effective practice : a research review. *Journal of Information Technology Education : Research*, 15, 157-190. Retrieved from <http://www.informingscience.org/Publicatiions/3502>

¹⁷Bennett, S., & Lockyer, L. (2004). Becoming an Online teacher: Adapting to a changed environment for teaching and learning in higher education. *Educational Media International*. 41 (3), 231-248, doi: 10.1080/09523980410001680842

teaching, it is very obvious that they are facing many difficulties. So, the study tries to find out the problems faced by the teachers to conduct online classes at different levels.

Besides, perception plays very important role as it defines the psychological health of the classroom. If the teacher has negative perception regarding online teaching, nothing can make the teacher learn the technology and adapt to the new situation. That is why the present study also focuses on analyzing the teachers' teaching practices and overall perception on the effectiveness of online courses.

After reviewing the related literatures, the researchers have found out that all these studies were conducted either among the school teachers or among the Professors of Colleges and Universities. But there was no such study which has been conducted to find out the perception of the faculties of schools, colleges or universities in together and drew a remarkable difference among their perceptions. Therefore, another study is required to analyze the perception of teachers from school to university level about online classes in respect to West Bengal, India.

4. Objectives:

Main objectives behind this present study are-

- 1) To know teachers' views on their self-efficacy, comfortability and teaching practices for online classes.
- 2) To analyze the problems faced by the teachers at the time of taking online classes.
- 3) To study the overall perception of the teachers about online teaching.
- 4) To find out the possible ways for improving those problems related to online teaching.

5. Research Questions:

- i) What are the teachers' views on their self-efficacy, comfortability and teaching practices for online classes?
- ii) What kind of problems do the teachers face at the time of taking online classes?
- iii) How do the teachers perceive about online teaching?
- iv) How the problems related to on-line teaching can be solved and thus on-line teaching can be improved?

6. Methodology:

6.1 Method:

Descriptive survey method has been followed for the present study.

6.2 Sample and Sampling:

For the present study 200 samples from four districts of West Bengal like- North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Howrah and Kolkata have been selected by using random sampling technique. The samples were selected on a random basis from several academic fields like arts, science, commerce and humanities from different schools, colleges and universities of West

Bengal. Though 200 faculties were selected to collect the necessary data, 115 gave responses as the rest 85 teachers responded that they do not take online classes.

6.3 Tools for data collection:

An online questionnaire was presented through Google form in order to capture teacher's opinion about online teaching. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections i.e., general information of the faculties, self-efficacy of the teachers and overall perception of the teachers towards online classes.

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The results of this study are explained in several sections by following the objectives-

7.1 Objective- 1: Online Teachers’ Views on their Self efficacy, Comfortability and Teaching Practices:

To create an effective online environment for teaching purposes, teachers should have enough technological knowledge. That’s why analyzing the self-efficacy and comfortability of the teachers is very significant. The data shows that majority of the respondents, mainly youngsters had more self-efficacy than elders in conducting online classes as the young teachers are more techno savvy. Here 50.4% faculties asserted that they felt comfortable during online classes, whereas, 16.5% teachers acknowledged that they didn't feel comfortable and 33% teachers viewed that they sometimes felt comfortable at the time of online teaching. Thus 13% respondents had 0-2 months online experience, 18.3% had 3-5 months experience, 30.4% had 6-8 months online experience, 30.4% experienced 9-11 months and only 7.8% had above 12 months online experience. Among them majority (45.2%) of the respondents took 4-5 days in a week regularly very few (15.7%) took 0-1 day and 6-7 days in a week. Faculties used different types of tools like Zoom, Google meet, WhatsApp, Google Classroom, YouTube, Cisco Webex, Skype etc. for online teaching, where Google Meet is mostly used and wen chat is less used by the respondents.

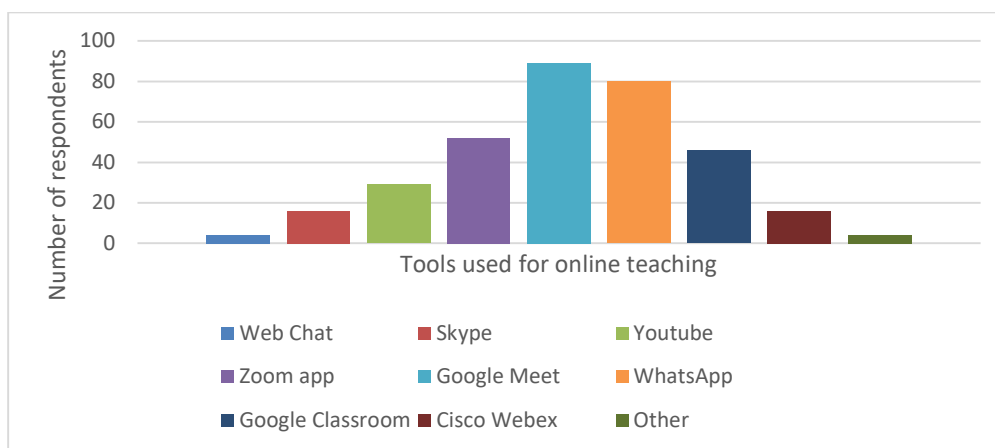


Figure 1: Used Tools for Online Teaching

7.2 Objectives- 2: Teachers' problems faced while online teaching:

In online education, teachers face many barriers from different perspectives. In order to get this data, respondents were given a question with multiple options, among which they can choose more than one option. The collected result is given here (Figure 2)

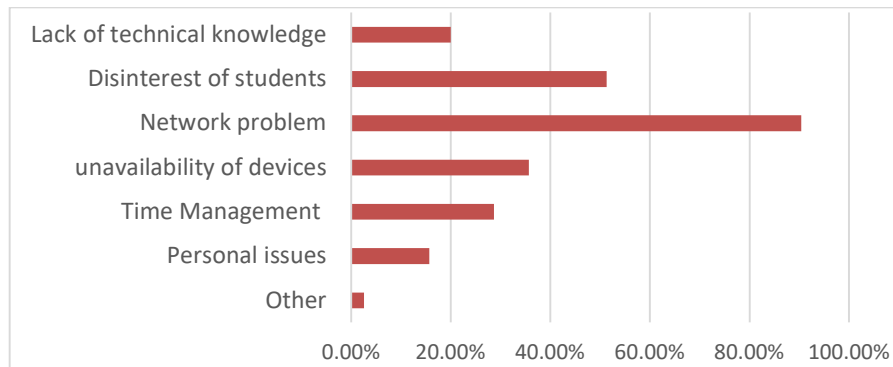


Figure 2: Problems faced while online teaching

This figure indicates that the major problem, the teachers faced at the time of taking online classes is network problem (90.4%) that can be from teachers' sides as well as students' sides. Because of many problems students are not interested (51.3%) in taking online classes. That is why, teachers lose their interests. The third main barrier that hamper online classes is unavailability of devices (35.7%). Because of this sudden change, many teachers cannot be ready to have computer, laptop, smartphone etc. So, they are not able to take online classes. In some application, there is time limit. Sometimes time is up before completing the teacher's content materials. 20% teachers do not have proper technical knowledge. They are not in a position to operate a computer or laptop or even smartphone. 15.7% acknowledged that they had personal issues behind the reasons of not taking online classes. Some respondents also arose other problems like lack of interaction etc.

7.3 Objectives -3: Teachers' perceptions about Online Teaching:

From the collected data, it was found that some teachers, mainly young generation felt comfortable in conducting online classes, while aged faculties had comfortability. But among them, many gave responses that students were less prepared than the previous semester (offline classes). There was a chance to know whether the teachers were interested in continuing online classes even after pandemic if possible. They gave positive and negative feedback -Yes, No and Sometimes.

- i) **Positive Perception:** Many faculties (70.4%) had positive views in this new set up teaching method. They asserted that online teaching is such a platform, which diversifies teacher's knowledge because through this method teachers can explore everywhere and not bounded only in the book. It reduces communication gap between teachers and

students, where they (52.4%) can easily contact with each other in spite of sitting any corner of the world. That is why it needs less labour and transportation cost.

- ii) **Negative Perception:** 74.5% teachers acknowledged that face to face lectures cannot be replaced with online classes. 63.6% asserted that there is less chance of student-teacher interaction in online classes. 60% teachers said that they do not know whether students are attentive or not because they switch off their audio and video during online classes. 54.5% teachers asserted that in online classes, there can be more academic dishonesty because students are not under proper surveillance. Overall, 43.6% commented that students learn less comparatively than the traditional classes.

7.4 Objectives 4: Suggestions of the teachers to improve Online Teaching:

Teachers gave suggestions about the improvement of Online Teaching in order to get the best outcome. Majority of the teachers suggested that proper infrastructure is very important for effective online courses. This is a common view about the issues related to network problems which should be removed from everywhere especially in rural areas. Teachers should have proper and systematic training with ample scope of technological support and devices. Training to use diverse learning tools for securing the learners' attention, delivering the content, for effective evaluation is a must to improve the on-line teaching. So, training should be starting from preparing ppt to incorporating audio and video content into it, using Menti, Google form, Kahoot, Hot Potatoes, etc. for effective evaluation is very necessary to achieve the objectives of on-line teaching because some teachers opined that as they use diverse online tools for teaching, it is easier for them to grasp the attention of the learners as well as the students enjoy the class to a great extent.

8. Findings of the Study:

- There is a significant difference found among school and college or university teachers regarding on-line teaching as mostly school teachers mentioned that they did not take online classes because of improper infrastructure, lack of technical knowledge, unavailability of devices, and disinterest of students.
- Youngsters are very much interested to take online classes. The reason behind this is that they are comparatively more habituated with technology than elders.
- Faculties of different levels face almost similar problems like network issues, software problems, unavailability of devices, disinterest of students, personal issues etc.
- Though the teachers of college or university use online teaching, the online teaching is only for the online platform i.e., the same lecture method is followed by most of the teachers. Only very a smaller number of teachers use power point presentation, diverse

learning tools like- Kahoot, Menti, Hot Potatoes, Freecam, Screencastomatic, etc. for developing online content and online evaluation.

- The teachers suggested that adequate training with proper infrastructure is strongly needed in order to improve quality of online classes.
- Instead of choosing any particular mode between online and offline, many respondents suggested a blending method as the best method of teaching.

9. Discussion:

After analyzing teacher's perception from different fields schools, colleges and universities, it has been found that the number of the school teachers are very few who took on-line classes regularly. Because of unavailability of devices and lack of technological knowledge, students of lower class are unable to attend online classes. So, in West Bengal, presently maximum government school teachers do not take online classes and even a very few, private school teachers who takes online classes, arrange even 2-3 days in a week. But faculties of colleges and universities are very regular with their classes, they arrange maximum 5-6 days in a week. Among them compared to the older faculties, younger faculties are very eager to take online classes because they are easily habituated with it.

It was found that in West Bengal, the process of online teaching has just been introduced to the teachers and the students. So, initially teachers face many problems like, but gradually they have accustomed with it. In the first week of working online the teachers faced various serious problems, but among them, many problems were almost solved within a few weeks. But there are some specific problems like network problem, proper infrastructure etc. which cannot be resolved fully only by the teachers themselves (Moralista, 2020)¹⁸. In order to erase these problems, teachers, students, administration authority should come forward and take necessary steps in this regard.

When teachers were given chance to choose a perfect method between online and offline mode. Both online and offline mode have its own advantages and disadvantages. Maximum teachers suggested for blended teaching, where online and offline mode can be used. This idea is strongly supported by (Todd, 2020)¹⁹ in his research work. In his survey, he had found that after pandemic situation, online teaching or blended teaching would be helpful for next semesters.

¹⁸Moralista, Rome & Oducado, Michael, Ryan. (2020). Faculty perception toward online edu in a state college in the Philippines during the Coronavirus Disease19 (Covid-19) Pandemic. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*. Horizon Research Publishing Corporation (HRPUB). 8(10). 4736-4742

¹⁹ Ibid; footnote 10

10. Conclusion:

Online teaching is really a remarkable initiative to continue the education process, where face to face mode cannot be possible in this pandemic situation. According to the faculties, in spite of having some demerits like- time consuming, difficult to manage, academic dishonesty, less interaction etc. it has also some important merits like- less labor and transportation cost, easily accessible, enough flexibility etc. If these problems are treated in proper care, online teaching can be an effective and interesting way of instruction to the teachers as well as the students. So, the Government should set up a design where proper infrastructure, teacher's training, enough devices, advanced materials all will be available so that it can be continued even post covid period.

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