



Impact of Online Education on College Students during Covid-19 Pandemic in Brahmaputra Valley of Rural Assam, India

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Abstract: *The Covid-19 Pandemic changes the life of every household's economically almost all parts of the World. Similarly this pandemic also changes the education style of the students too. Now there is a shift to online learning from offline learning that has been seen at education sector in rural India too. Inspite of positive impacts of online education, it does not reach fully among the students living in the rural areas particularly in rural Assam that has been observed in recent times. Factors like lack of electricity, lack of laptops/mobile phones with internet connectivity, poor network in rural areas, people from BPL families etc. are some of the issues where online education has not covered the poor students in rural Assam. In this background a study has been conducted to find the impact of online education among the college students in rural and flood affected areas of Assam during the period of Covid-19 Pandemic situation. For the purpose, a random sampling method was used to collect the primary information from 500 students at Lakhimpur district of Assam. The findings of the study concluded that there was a positive impact of online education on college students during this Coronavirus Pandemic situation. The study also concludes with the findings that due to poor family backgrounds the online education did not facilitated fully among the students living in the rural areas under study.*

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, College Students, Online Education and Rural Assam

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 Pandemic changes the life of every household's economically almost all parts of the World. Similarly this pandemic also changes the education style of the students too. Now there is a shift to online learning from offline learning that has been seen at education sector in rural India too. Due to closure of schools, colleges and Universities Worldwide, around 1.2 billion students in 186 countries are affected during the pandemic situation (Li & Lalani, 2020). It is also seen that this closure will not only have a short-term impact on continuous learning among the young learners in India but also effect far-reaching economic and societal morals (Choudhary, 2020). According to the report of UNESCO, over 290 million students across 22 countries in the World will be adversely affected by the coronavirus pandemic. In India it will be about 32 crores of students in schools and colleges are affected during this pandemic (Kasrekar & Wadhavane, 2020). Suddenly the education system is shifted to online learning from offline learning. A lot of in different parts of the sphere are wondering about the taking up of online learning belief that it will continue at post-pandemic period and how it will impact the education system in the World (Li & Lalani, 2020). Due to Coronavirus Pandemic and lockdown many of the low-income private and government school in many parts of the World including India have completely shut down. This is because of not having access to e-learning facilities except a few private schools (Choudhary, 2020). This gap is seen across countries because of income barriers within countries. This significant gap pertains to those from privileged and disadvantaged group of households. Study said that all 15-year-olds from a privileged background had a computer to work on, whereas some of those from disadvantaged backgrounds did not (Li & Lalani, 2020). On the other hand, the decision to temporarily close of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) was driven by the belief that large gatherings of persons create a demanding risk to safeguarding the public health during this pandemic situation (UNESCO, 2020). The educational institutions from schools to universities



in India, now use the present adversity as a dedication in disguise and make digital education as a foremost part of the e-learning process for all learners (Kasrekar & Wadhavane, 2020). Although the teaching-learning are shifted from face to face interaction to the digital mode of education. Students have gained their digital platform during this pandemic period. Few stakeholders and the academicians perceived this Coronavirus pandemic as opportunity but some perceive it as loss (Sharda & Tuteja, 2020). Inspite of positive impacts of online education, it does not reach fully among the students living in the rural areas particularly in rural Assam that has been observed in recent times. Factors like lack of electricity, lack of laptops/mobile phones with internet connectivity, poor network in rural areas, people from BPL families etc. are some of the issues where online education has not covered the poor students in rural Assam. In this background a study has been conducted to find the impact of online education among the college students in rural and flood affected areas of Assam during the period of Covid-19 Pandemic situation.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Choudhary & et . al. (2014) revealed that the College Students were opened their saving account in nationalized bank and they were have also aware about the e-banking services. They also opined that students were used net banking as they have trust on net banking.

According to Choudhary (2020) the low-income private schools and the government schools have completely shut down for not having access to e-learning facilities in India during the Covid-19 pandemic situation. This was not in case of private schools, They revealed about the nastiest effect of a large number of students abroad and they have now been barred from leaving the foreign countries which reduced the demand for international higher education in future.

Konwar (2017) revealed that the attitude of college students towards e- learning is independent with regard to gender and locality in Lakhimpur district. The study also revealed about the use of e-learning as learning strategy as the students have got high marks or percentage than the less user of e-learning strategy.

There was a dramatic change of education system due to Covid-19 pandemic that has been studied by Li & Lalani (2020). There study opined that with the distinct rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms.

Mohammad (2012) in Saudi Arabia revealed about the uncertainty of avoidance has a positive and significant impact on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. The study perceived risk has a stronger influence on the approach of the clients, which lead the clients for intent to use the electronic banking services.

Reddy and Karim (2014) revealed that in Andhra Pradesh there were a service quality gaps between the students' expectations and their perceptions in six dimensions and further having a normal fulfillment level under the study area.

According to Sharda & Tuteja (2020) there were seven factors namely Engagement and Appreciation, Optimization, Comprehensive Learning, Online Learning Constraints, Traditional Pedagogy, Hindrance and Technical Glitch that influence the online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic among the college students.

The different study results a mixed impact of the attitude of adoption of e-learning by the students. As far as the Covid-19 pandemic situation was concerned, studies covered only on the system of education and e-learning but did not reflect on the students' attitude, observations and awareness on different tools of e-learning. Hardly a few studies that were done among the students of rural areas particularly the flood affected areas in respect to impact of covid-19 on online education. Thus, the present study has been carried out to fulfill the research gap.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are-

1. To study the level of perceived level of college students towards online education;
2. To study the awareness level of college student's towards use of different modes of online tools; and
3. To study the problems and issues among the college students towards online learning.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The Covid-19 pandemic effects all the stakeholders like teachers, administrators, guardians and the students adversely. Similarly, due to economic backwardness of the students living in the rural areas, most of the students were not able to cop up with the present digital learning techniques. As a backward region of Brahmaputra Valley of upper Assam, Lakhimpur district was selected by the researcher for the purpose of the present study. Both these secondary and primary data were used for carried out the study. Secondary data were collected from different articles from online news, journals, magazines and by google search. For collecting the primary information, 500 students from North Lakhimpur Sub-Division were randomly selected. The sample students were equally selected from XI, XII, Degree 1st year, Degree 2nd year and Degree 3rd year classes. Information were collected by preparing a questionnaire through Google form and by conducting Telephonic Interview methods. For analyzing the data statistical tools like simple average method have been applied.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A) Locality wise Distribution of Respondents

The locality wise distribution of the respondents were presented in Table 1 as below:

Table 1: Locality wise Distribution of Respondents

Sr. No.	Locality	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Semi-Urban	200	40.00
2	Rural	300	60.00
		500	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 1 revealed that majority of the respondents i.e. 60 percent were live in the rural areas, while 40 percent were from semi-urban areas. The respondents belong to the rural areas were particularly from the flood affected areas in the district under study.

B) Respondents According to use of Online Tools for Learning

An effort has been also been made by the researcher to find out the different tools and the perception of respondents on use of these online tools in the area under study. The relevant data in this regard has been presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Respondents according to use of Online Tools for Learning (Multiple Responses)

Sr. No.	Variables	Frequencies	Percentage
1	I am able to use online tools	400	80.00
2	I have know about the tools	450	90.00
3	I have used online tools already	380	76.00
4	I am not able to use online tools	100	20.00
5	I have never hear about the online tools	50	10.00
6	I know but not enough scope to use it	79	15.80

Source: Field Survey

The analysis of the study has been found that majority of the respondents i.e. 90 percent were opined about knowledge of different online tools while 10 percent were never heard about the different online tools available for teaching-learning in the area under study. 80 percent of the respondents were able to use the online tools and 76.00 percent were already have used those online tools for learning. Unfortunately, 20 percent respondents have not able to use the online tools whereas 15.80 percent have not got the opportunity to use the online tools during the lockdown period. This was because of their low economic background of their households. It was a serious problem that has been observed during the course of the study.

C) Awareness Level of Students on Online Tools for Learning

The researcher has also made an attempt to study the different tools that has been used by the respondents during the course of the study. The relevant data in this regard has been presented in Table 3 as below:

Table 3: Awareness Level of Students on Online Tools for Learning (Multiple Responses)

Sr. No.	Online Tools	Frequencies	Percentage
1	I am able to use Google Meet	400	80.00
2	I am able to use Zoom App	200	40.00
3	I am able to use Go ToMeeting	50	10.00
4	I am able to use Webex Meet	10	2.00
5	I am able to use Jitsi Meet	30	6.00
6	I am able to use Kahoot	7	1.40
7	I am able to use Google Class Room	320	64.00
8	I am able to use Go ToWebinar	54	10.80
9	I am able to use Edmodo	70	14.00
10	I am able to use YouTube Live	350	70.00

Source: Field Survey

It was observed that Google Meet, Zoom App, Go To Meeting, Webex Meet, Jitsi Meet, Kahoot, Google Class Room, Go To Webinar, Edmodo, YouTube Live were the major tools that has been used by the respondents. It was observed that 80 percent of the respondents were used the Google Meet for online education during the Covid-19 Pandemic situation in the area under study. It was followed by YouTube Live (70 percent), Google Class Room (64.00 percent), Zoom App (40 percent), Edmodo (14 percent), Go to Webinar (10.80 percent), Go To Meeting (10 percent), Jitsi Meet (6 percent), Webex Meet (2 percent) and Kahoot (1.40 percent). It was revealed that Google Meet, YouTube Live and Google Class room played an important role for online teaching-learning among the teachers and the students in the area under study.

D) Impact of Online Education on Respondents during Pandemic

An effort has been made by the researcher to find out the impact of online education and the behavioural change during covid-19 pandemic in the area under study and the relevant data in this regard is presented in Table 4 as below:

Table 4: Impact of Online Education on Respondents' Educational Skill (Multiple Responses)

Sr. No.	Variables	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Improvement in digital learning	350	70.00
2	Improve knowledge of handling online learning	450	90.00
3	Improved in confidence to interact with others	283	56.60
4	Better control over different online teaching tools	450	90.00
5	Gain knowledge of different sources of e-learning	366	73.20
6	Able to sign digitally through Acrobat Reader DC	46	9.20
7	Improvement in English by attending Webinars	241	48.20
8	Knowledge of Digital Library, E-Pathshala, etc.	350	70.00
9	Enroll myself at Swayam and join certificate courses	16	3.20
10	No Scope for online education	50	10.00

Source: Field Survey

It was observed from the study that 90 percent of the respondents opined about improvement in handling the online tools and thereby learning through online mode. Respondents were also digitally sound as 70 percent were opined about their improvement in digital learning. An equal percentage of students were able to know about the features of Digital Library, E-Pathshala etc. in the area under study. 73.20 percent were able to enhance their knowledge of various sources of e-learning and education while 9.20 percent were able to sign digitally by using the Acrobat Reader DC

online. Students having 56.60 percent were improved in their confidence to interact with teacher and others at online platform. Of the students 48.20 percent were able to enhance speaking habits of English by attending numbers of e-conferences and webinars at state and national levels. These positive impacts encourage the students to make enrollment at Swayam to undergo certificate courses as per their choice. Inspite of these positive impacts 10 percent students were never having an ample scope to use the online tools and thereby deprived from the online classes living in the rural flood affected areas of north bank corner of the upper Assam.

E) Respondents according to Problems Associated towards Online Learning

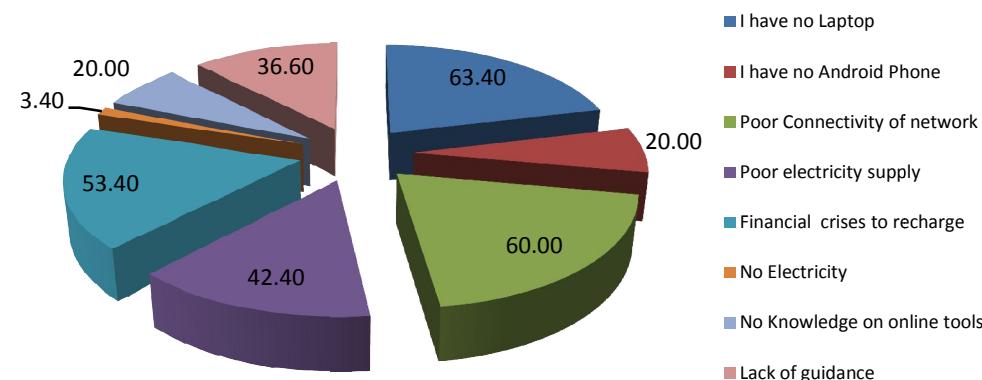
Another effort made by the researcher to find out the problems and issues that has been allied with students towards online learning during the pandemic situation and the relevant data in this regard has been presented in Table 5 and Fig. 1 as below:

Table 5: Problems and Issues interconnected with Students towards Online Learning (Multiple Responses)

Sr. No.	Variables	Frequencies	Percentage
1	I have no Laptop	317	63.40
2	I have no Android Phone	100	20.00
3	Poor Connectivity of network	300	60.00
4	Poor electricity supply	212	42.40
5	Financial crises to recharge	267	53.40
6	No Electricity	17	3.40
7	No Knowledge on online tools	100	20.00
8	Lack of guidance	183	36.67

Source: Field Survey

Fig. 1
Respondents according to their Problem on Online Education



Source: Field Survey

It was observed from the study that 63.40 percent of the respondents opined about not having laptops for learning the online classes taught by their respective teachers. 60 percent opined about poor connectivity of network at their locality for getting the benefit of online education. 53.40 percent of the respondents have faced the problem of financial crises to recharge their device. The other problems that has been faced by the respondents in the area under study were poor electricity supply (42.40 percent), lack of guidance (36.67 percent), no android phones and No Knowledge on online tools (20 percent each) and not having the electricity supply (3.40 percent). Due to the different issues and problems as revealed from the study, the teaching-learning process effects mostly the poor students during the period of Covid-19



pandemic and as a result these frustrated students were way from equal teaching-learning process particularly live in the flood effected rural areas of Assam.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings the following suggestions were given by the researcher:

1. Every student should be guided properly by the technically sound teachers so that they will be able to use the online tools effectively.
2. A sufficient amount of fund should be created by the colleges to help the poor students during Coronavirus Pandemic thereby relieving the financial crisis to those needy students for online learning.
3. Initiatives like providing android phones/laptops by the Government should take place for those students living in the rural areas not having any device to take part in online education.

VII. CONCLUSION

The work culture of work from home has been created by the lockdown due to Covid-19 Pandemic around all parts of the World. Online tools like as Zoom App, Google Meet, Go To Webinar etc. plays an important role by connecting the employees as well as the students in a one platform to interact. But as regards to educational institution is concerned, institutions located at urban areas can only provide such facilities to their students in India. The online system has not yet reached every learners living in the rural areas. Different studies in different parts of the World said that learning is a continuous and ever-evolving process. The educational institutions in India, schools, college and universities, can use this present adversity as a blessing to take the digital education a major part of the learning process for all learners in the future (Kasrekar & Wadhavane, 2020). Thus, the analysis and findings of the present study concluded that there was a positive impact of online education on college students during this Coronavirus Pandemic situation. The study also concludes with the findings that due to poor family backgrounds the online education did not facilitated fully among the students living in the rural areas under study.

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