A Study on Female Students' Perception on Online Learning of Higher Education During Covid 19 Pandemic
(With special reference to students residing at Chalakudy)

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Abstract: Covid 19, the novel coronavirus spreading affected each and every sector in our world. It changed the lifestyle of people. The Covid 19 impact was everywhere and also it made drastic changes in the education system. The pandemic situation resulted in the closure of educational institutions. This led to shifting the traditional classrooms to digital platforms. All the educational activities shifted to online education with most focus on virtual education to complete the curriculum. So the online learning continued after the lockdown. Both teachers and students are facing many hurdles during online education. In the academic year 2020-21, most of the classes were conducted online. This paper aims to study the perception of female students of online learning during Covid 10 Pandemic.

A survey was conducted by distributing an online questionnaire to female students pursuing their higher education and residing at Chalakudy. And various statistical tools used for conclusions from the collected data. The results show that the majority of the students use smartphones for their online classes. Flexibility and convenience, easy access to missed classes are the attractive factors of online learning. However, the results show that most of the students suffer from poor network connectivity and lack of technical facilities. The study reveals that shifting to online mode is not cen percent success and the insights in this study can be helpful in designing more effective teaching-learning strategies.

Keywords: Online Learning, Perception of female students.

INTRODUCTION

The corona virus disease (Covid 19) first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan City, China and later spread to many countries. WHO declared Covid 19 as a pandemic disease on 30th January 2020. The first cases of Covid 19 in India were reported on 3oth January 2020 in Kerala. The Government of Kerala announced lockdown on 23rd March 2020 and in the rest of the country on 25th March 2020. India began a vaccination program in the midst of January 2021. However a second wave started in March 2021 with a number of active cases and shortage of vaccine, hospital beds, oxygen cylinders and other medical facilities. Further spread of Covid 19 affected all the sectors in the country including economy, industry, health care, transportation etc. Like all other sectors, the educational system around the world faced an inevitable change. Due to the massive spreading of Covid 19 , many countries were forced to close educational institutions. The pandemic situation resulted in the closure of educational institutions in India in the middle of March 2020. The classroom teaching and learning became impossible and educational institutions had to find alternative solutions in order to continue classes. Different methods like online meeting platforms, classroom applications, YouTube, television etc were used as the alternative methods to continue classes.

Online learning has become a necessary method of learning for students all over the world. Online learning helped the students to stay home and learn at their own pace. Teachers could deliver their lessons by using a number of tools. Teachers could record the lessons, shared and saved for future references. However a sudden change from traditional classrooms to digital platforms proposed certain struggles in the teaching - learning process. Lack of technical knowledge, lack of basic technical facilities, lack of face to face interaction made online learning a challenging task. Even though it had difficulties, it was necessary to make efforts to maximize utilisation of online platforms to complete the syllabus on

time. The higher educational degree courses during the lockdown period were shifted to online mode. Most of the educational institutions in Bachelor of Arts, Commerce, Science, professional and technical education conducted online classes. The aim of this study is to investigate the female students perception on online learning of higher education during Covid 19 Pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

An online based survey conducted through a questionnaire shared among the female students who are residing in Chalakudy and pursuing their higher education. The outbreak of Covid 19 in India was unfired in India in January 2020 and the country forced to lockdown in March 2020. Most of the educational institutions conducted online classes in the academic year of 2020-21. Students are requested to fill the questionnaire based on their online learning experience. The objective of the study is to know the perception of female students on Online learning of higher education during Covid 19 Pandemic.

Table 1

Age Group	18-20	20-22	Above 22
	59.70%	36.30%	4%
Residing Area	Rural	Semi-Urban	Urban
	51.60%	37.10%	11.30%
Type of Course Pursuing.	UG	PG	Professional/Certificate course
	77%	17.70%	5.30%

The study was conducted among female students. Total 248 responses were recorded. Among them 77% Students are undergraduate students. 17.7% are postgraduate students. Remaining 5.3% percentage of them are professional/certificate courses. It is observed that 51.6 of the respondents are from rural areas, 37.1 are from semi urban and 11.3 are from urban areas. 59.7 of the students are cones under the age group of 18-20 years. 36.3 are cones under 20-22 years age group and 4 are from above 22 years age group. Questions are framed to know the perception of Students about online classes and believe that it will help to understand the effectiveness of online classes in comparison to traditional classroom experience. The survey has been carried out through google forms shared by WhatApp. The google form consists of 3 sets of questions; in the first set questions are asked to know students' perception on online classes, second session is about advantages of online learning and third set is about disadvantages of online learning. The questions are framed with two or more specific options to select the answers for the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study gives insights on female students' perception towards online learning of higher education. Results and responses of questionnaire framed are discussed below.

Covid 19 Pandemic situation resulted in closure of educational institutions and traditional classrooms are shifted to online platforms. Google meet, zoom meeting , recorded video classes through Google classrooms are the major tools used for taking online classes. Results show that the female students have more preference towards traditional classroom learning rather than online learning.

Figure 1.   Figure 2   Figure 3

From figure 1 it is clear that 24.2% of the respondents have a preference on online classes and 75.8% of them prefer classroom learning. Most of the students are new to online learning. Figure 2 shows that 62.9% of the students have no prior experience in online learning before Covid 19 Pandemic situation. Only 30.2% have prior online learning

experience. From figure 3 it is clear that, after one year's online learning experience 33.46% of students were satisfied and 24.2% of them were dissatisfied and 42.34% of them were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

FEMALE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON ONLINE LEARNING

The survey results show that, majority of female students agree that they could develop independent learning habits after lockdown. 61.3% of the respondents began individual learning after the shifting of traditional classroom learning into online platforms. And most of them have an opinion that they can easily contact teachers for clearing doubts after online classes. However, they are not satisfied with the speed of learning. Most of the students agreed that online learning is not much faster to catch up with classes. Also they are not much comfortable with the online learning experience. Most of the students believe that online techniques are highly effective in completing and submitting their assignments and homeworks. Even though they are not very happy with the fact that online learning reduces the interaction with teachers. While the students agreed that the online classes are very helpful in catching up on the missed classes. And they agree that online learning is more convenient and flexible. The study shows that most of the students have the opinion that online learning helps to get precise course content.
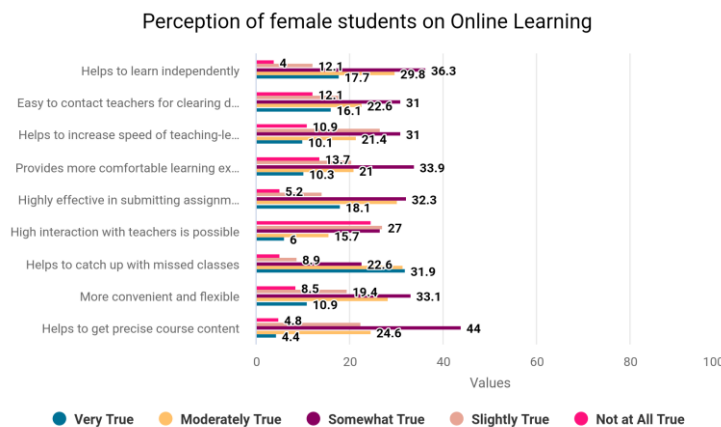

Figure 4

Table 2 shows the results of a 5 point likert scale. It can be noted that the students do not have a better feeling on the speed of online learning (mean score 2.93). And also the mean score shows that they are not much comfortable with online learning experience and they disagree with the opinion that online learning provides more interaction with teachers. Students are more satisfied in catching up with the missed classes and possibility of developing independent learning habits and they agree that they can effectively complete their assignments on time.

Table 2

Sl. No.	Variables used to measure Perception	Mean Score
1	Online learning helps to get precise course content	3.01
2	Online learning is more convenient and flexible	3.14
3	Online learning helps to catch up the missed classes	3.76
4	There is high interaction between teachers and students	2.52
5	It is highly effective in submitting assignments and works	3.42
6	Online learning provides more comfortable learning experience	2.94
7	Online learning helps to spead of learning	2.93
8	It is easy to contact teachers for clearing doubts	3.12
9	It is possible to learn independently with online learning techniques	3.45

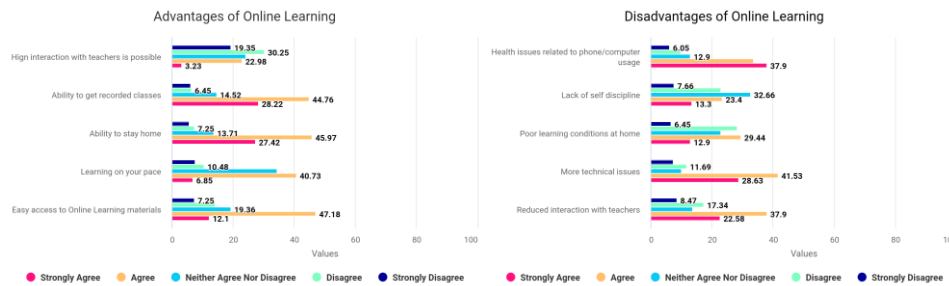## ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE LEARNING

Figure 5

The study results reveal that, from the view of female students, easy access to online learning materials, ability to stay home, learning at their own pace and ability to get recorded classes are the major advantages of online learning. Recorded classes help them to catch up missed classes as well as save the classes for future references and for preparation of examinations. The major disadvantages noted by students are online classes, reduced interaction with teachers and there are more technical problems like poor network and poor learning conditions at home. Most of them are unhappy with health issues caused by continuous usage of smartphones and computers. Also the majority of them agree that they failed to maintain self discipline in attending online classes.

CONCLUSION

The Covid 19 Pandemic severely affected the educational systems in India. Its impact was everywhere and also it made drastic changes in higher education during the lockdown period. Both teachers and students are facing many hurdles during online education. Lack of technical knowledge and lack of basic technical facilities made online learning a challenging task. The results show that the majority of the students use smartphones for their online learning. Flexibility and convenience, easy access to missed classes are the key attractions of online learning, however the results show that most of the students suffer from poor network connectivity problems and lack of technical facilities. The study reveals that shifting to online mode is not completely successful and the insights in this study can be helpful in designing more effective teaching- learning strategies.

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