# Exploring the challenges faced by Teacher Educators and B. Ed Students in the implementation of Online Teaching Learning amid the Covid-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic influenced nations all around the world and has had a significant impact on the education sector, with schools and universities closing down to prevent the spread of the virus. As a result, many institutions have shifted to online teaching and learning as a response to the pandemic. The abrupt switch from in-person instruction to entirely online learning activities had both advantages and disadvantages for the educational system. However, this transition has not been without challenges, particularly for teacher educators and B.Ed. students. The present paper aimed to examine the challenges faced by teacher educators and B.Ed. students while engaging in online teaching and learning activities. The present study is descriptive in nature. The data was collected through questionnaire for which Google Forms were circulated. A sample of 202 students and 30 teachers responded to the questionnaire. The results showed that students found the network issues and lack of peer interaction to be major challenges for them in online teaching learning activities, teachers found that in-person interactions, technical skills, monitoring and evaluating students, maintaining classroom discipline, and grabbing students' attention in class were the main challenges during online teaching learning activities.**

**Keywords: Online Teaching and Learning, Covid-19, Teacher Educators, Pandemic**

## INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of Covid pandemic had led to the school closures in almost all countries. The countries-imposed lockdowns to take necessary precautions and safeguard their citizens from widely spreading coronavirus disease. To reduce the spread of coronavirus in young population, the concerned authorities took decisions to close the educational institutions. The online teaching learning became very prominent during this time. The education sector turned the teaching learning activities to online mode. These activities helped in engaging both the teachers and learners into the teaching- learning activities. Pandey, A

(2021) in his blog also wrote about the various challenges that were suffered by both teachers and students during online teaching-learning activities such as online teaching requires lot of electronic gadgets and the scarcity of such resources affected the large population in the country also the limited availability of internet facilities in remote areas of the country which also affected the learning among children.

Ahmad et.al. (2021) identified several challenges, such as a lack of technology, training, and resources, which made it difficult for educators to adjust from a physical classroom to web based one, exposing them to an entirely new environment. The results showed that most respondents were struggling with online teaching, leading to decreased motivation and productivity, ultimately resulting in unsatisfactory performance and outcomes in delivering lectures. Subba, R. (2021) analysed the perceptions and struggles experienced by nursing instructors in regards to virtual teaching. More than half (56.2%) of the teachers displayed a positive outlook towards online teaching and learning during the pandemic era; however, they faced several obstacles in the implementation of these methods, such as poor internet connection, power outages, difficulty gathering all students together for classes, difficulty in classroom interaction, and lack of information technology skills. Akhter, T., (2020) in his paper aimed to investigate the difficulties experienced by a group of Saudi EFL students in listening comprehension, and explores the problems and obstacles they are facing. An online survey, the Listening Comprehension Processing Problems Questionnaire, was conducted to gain insight into this matter. The findings of this study suggested that these students faced moderate to high levels of difficulty in all the skills, particularly in 'Listening', due to limited resources. These findings are expected to provide useful insights to teachers looking to address the issues that EFL learners experience. An analysis of the results revealed that most

students had difficulty with listening, whether it was because of physical barriers or other reasons, during online classes. Farah P. et.al. (2020) in their paper offered an insightful mapping of the experiences of teachers in Indonesia. Although WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and Google Forms were the most widely used platforms, 58.1% of the teacher's reported difficulty with online instruction, and 64.2% reported difficulty with online tests. Numerous difficulties were encountered in the online learning environment, including a shaky internet connection (64.2%), a lack of funding for internet quota requirements (50.6%), and restricted access to appropriate electronic devices (47%). On the other side, it also presented some uncommon opportunities, including increased teacher commitment, increased empathy for students, a variety of fresh online media experiences, and enhanced time management abilities.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to explore the challenges faced by teacher educators and B.Ed. students in the implementation of online teaching and learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present paper is based on descriptive research design. Keeping in view the objective of the study, two Self-Developed Questionnaire were used by the researcher to examine the challenges faced by teacher educators and B. Ed students in adapting online teaching -learning activities during the pandemic. These questionnaires were sent through Google forms in B. Ed Colleges of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University in which 202 students and 30 teacher educators had responded.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The responses of teacher educators and B. Ed Students were collected through open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was analysed using content analysis of the responses. The number of similar responses were converted into percentage form to analyse the answer trend of the respondents. These answer trends were further analysed to understand a generalize idea of the challenges faced by the students and teachers.

Responses of the Teacher Educators — A total of 30 teacher educators responded to a questionnaire comprising 13 questions. The themes of the responses are discussed as below:

- Problems faced by teacher educators during online teaching learning activities- 70% of the teachers mentioned the network issues a big problem and other teachers had mentioned about technical skills; Lack of interaction; lack of physical presence, discipline, monitoring of students and evaluation as significant problems in online teaching learning process.

- Accessibility to technology required for online teaching learning-79% of the teachers have said that they have access to technology required for online teaching learning while other 21% have said that they do not have access to advanced tools which can help them to connect with online classroom.

- Support from the institution—45% of teachers refused of getting any support from their institution and they had to use their own personal resources whereas 55% teacher have said that their institute supported them by providing access to e-library, necessary internet and google connection setup, by arranging proper time table, and by giving flexibility to work from home and enough time to get acquaint with online teaching methods.

- Major challenges that were faced by students during online teaching learning activities—93% Teachers have mentioned that students had come across various challenges such as network connectivity, lack of in-person interaction and face-to- face engagements etc. Some students did not have access to the devices and internet connection and they also lagged with digital skills, some did not have personal computers and they could not afford mobile phones also which became a major challenge for them.

- Delivery of content in online setup -65% of teachers had responded positively to this question as they had made use of multimedia in their lesson plans which enabled them to deliver content effectively.  Other 35% teachers negatively responded to this question because they find it difficult to grab the attention of students and also manage network issues at the end of the students.

- Comfortability in delivering online lectures—45% of teachers had faced no issues in delivering their lesson plans. Remaining 55% of teachers responded that they had faced issues related to retaining student's attention and problems in replacing written instructions with videos and emailing documents which was very time consuming.
- Pedagogical practices adopted during online teaching learning -70% of the teachers had mentioned about using various pedagogical practices such as collaborative learning, activities-based learning, constructivism, and discussions, peer evaluation, group presentations, online games, and quizzes, etc. 30% of teachers did not mention of using any innovative approach in classroom.
- Online teaching learning as new dimension for teaching learning activities -All the teachers responded positively to this question as online teaching can provide opportunities to the remote learners and differently abled learners.
- Technological tools used by teachers- 70% teachers had identified various softwares such as ZOOM, Webex, Google meet, Microsoft 365 etc. and found them helpful during online teaching learning practices. 30% of the teachers found other softwares such as Kahoot, Socrative, Padlet and found them interesting in making classroom more engaging.
- Preferred mode of teaching- 50% of teachers supported traditional ways of learning as it ensures one on one interaction and creates proper study environment for learning. Other 50 % supported the hybrid mode where they can take advantage of both the modes of teaching.
- Online teaching is an integral part of future classrooms- 45 % of teachers favoured the online teaching method as it can be helpful for distant learners, and can provide an opportunity for bagless education and this mode is helpful in crisis time and prepare us to handle unpredictable situations. Whereas 55% of the teachers had supported the hybrid mode of learning.

Responses of B.Ed. Students -A total of 202 B.Ed. students responded to a questionnaire comprising 13 questions. The themes of the responses are discussed below:

- Problems faced by B.Ed. students during online-teaching learning activities- Almost 91% of students identified network issues a major problem while connecting with online classes. 06% mentioned that they think lack of interaction in online classroom is a major problem. Students also mentioned that due to the network issues they could not ask their doubts in the class which created a problem in their academic growth as well. Students also mentioned that due to long sitting hours and concentrating on screens there have been lot of physical problems such as back pain, eye issues etc.
- Accessibility of technological tools/digital devices- 68% of students responded that they have required technology to access online classroom. 32% of students mentioned that they have access to only one device i.e., mobile phone for accessing online classroom.
- Support received from institution- 78.7% of the students responded that they had received good support from the college as the meetings were getting scheduled and the links were provided to them as well as teachers shared pdf reports, ppts and teachers patiently solved their problems. Remaining 21.3 % mentioned about the organisation of various workshops and seminars by institutions to engage students in learning.
- Major challenges found during online teaching learning - 45% of the students mentioned various challenges such as lack of confidence on speaking through online mode, distractions at home, time limit of classrooms, less interaction, miscommunication, voice distortion etc. 55% of the students mentioned that the lack of required technical skills hampered their learning environment.
- Comfortability while using digital devices during online learning- 77% of students mentioned that they are now comfortable while using digital equipment during the online classroom. Whereas 23 % mentioned that they had still not got comfortable with digital devices for online teaching learning.
- Challenges faced during peer interaction- 60% of the students agreed upon major challenges during online peer interactions were informal conversations, lack of one-on-one discussions etc. 20% of the students revealed that they do not know their peers properly

and the don't recognize their peers by their faces. 20% of the students also mentioned that in online mode peer interaction started late but in face-to-face it happens on the first day. They found it a demotivating factor as well as they could not feel joy in classroom activities.

- Challenges faced during online examination- The 70% students mentioned that due to lack of network issues they could not upload their answer sheets which led to failure in one or more subjects. Whereas30% students also found a challenge in giving subjective examinations during online mode due to time constraints. The students found it difficult to submit their examination on time due to electric power cuts.

- Online teaching learning as new dimensions for teaching learning activities -Around 70% students responded positively and agreed that online teaching learning can open new dimensions to classroom activities. Other 30 % emphasised more on building strong learning attitudes that can assist students in overcoming some of the possible difficulties presented by online learning, such as, for example, staying focused throughout online sessions or keeping enough motivation.

- Pedagogical practices adopted by teachers- 78% of the students mentioned that teachers had made use of PPTs, videos, discussion in group activities, e-whiteboard, asking questions, online quizzes etc. in online teaching mode. 22% mentioned that the extensive use of ICT tools was also displayed by the teachers in the classroom.

- Problems faced in accessing online study material - 52% Students found it hard to access online material as they do not have good knowledge of accessing right material. They relied mostly on teacher provided notes. The online material searching was a time-consuming task for them. 48% students mentioned that they face difficulties while online searching and reading study material and mostly rely on hard printed materials. The students also faced storage issues while downloading and saving various pdf materials.

- Requirement of training during online teaching learning activities- 82% of students had agreed that they require proper training in order to get acquaint with latest technological tools as it is the future of learning. Remaining 18% mentioned that they require only basic level of training as they have learned about lot of tools through self-study in pandemic time.

INTERPRETATION & DISCUSSIONS

Both the responses from teacher educators and B.Ed. students were found to be aligned with each other. The students mentioned -network issues and lack of peer interaction as major challenges they faced during online teaching learning activities. These challenges demotivated them to perform in classroom activities as they are more used to the traditional classroom settings. These challenges created a negative impact over their learning activities. The major challenges reported by teacher educators included in-person interactions, technical skills, monitoring and evaluating students, maintaining classroom discipline, and grabbing students' attention in classroom. Sometimes students turned off their cameras and it make difficult for teachers to understand that how many students are paying attention in classroom (Sahito et.al. 2022). The teachers have mentioned over the use of hybrid mode of teaching (Farah P. et.al. 2020) which can help them in using good elements of online teaching such as online quiz; assessment; assignment submission etc can be used in their classrooms

CONCLUSION

The paper highlights eleven themes after collecting responses form teachers and another eleven themes after collecting responses from students which suggested the important issues during online teaching learning activities. However, teacher faced issues such as face-to-face interactions, lack of technical skills, monitoring and evaluating students, maintaining classroom discipline, and grabbing students' attention in classrooms and students also felt that lack of peer interaction and classroom experience creates demotivation among them to participate in online teaching learning activities. This study adds to the important difficulties and deciding elements for online-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this study are supported by empirical information that outlines the difficulties that the teacher educators and student teachers experienced when teaching online. However, the results, which

give a true image of the existing educational system in the COVID-19 era, can be found useful to the universities, policymakers, curriculum designers of universities. It can be used as a manual to help teachers better administer online-learning programmes.

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