

## DISTANCE LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

Distance learning and its connection to new computer technology have provided many promises for the education sector. Generally, distance learning programs are designed to serve an off campus population. Mainly this programs provide access to higher education for students who cannot attend traditional courses due to employment, marital status, family responsibilities, distance, and expenses incurred with traditional education. In recent years' research conducted by Berge and Mrozowski (2010) found that overall satisfaction across the traditional learning environment was low. As a result of these low satisfactions this gave rise to new way of learning called distance learning.

Mainly this research paper aims to achieve an understanding the differences between distance education and class education. And this research paper also lists the problems faced by students from distance education in the best possible way, as well as presenting the solutions to this problem. And also shows how the traditional education institutions have been forced to shift to online education because of the problems caused by covid-19 pandemic across the globe and also by addressing how students characterize these conditions and how versatile or Flexible learning can be executed in the distance learning process.

**KEYWORDS:** Distance learning, Traditional learning, Online learning.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Since the Internet got started and was being developed further as a means of educational institutions in the 1970's, academics have known about its potential as a learning device. In recent years, both developed and developing countries have been looking forward to the advantages the distance education will provide in the educational sector like cost effective, accessible to all ages and social backgrounds, regardless of the time and place. From there onwards the learning or the instruction framework has changed. With the evolution of systems and data innovation, some training strategies moved from classrooms to the network. This teaching techniques over the internet is basically defined as Distance learning, the following provides a small introduction on:

### II. DISTANCE LEARNING

#### **Distance learning.**

Distance learning framework is where the educators and students need not be available or be present at the same place and same time and they are further categorized into two types:

#### **Synchronous learning**

In synchronous adapting, all members are "available" in the meantime. In such manner, it takes after conventional classroom instructing techniques regardless of the members being found remotely.

#### **Asynchronous learning**

In asynchronous learning, students will be provided with the required course materials in adaptable timetables. Learners and mentors need not be at the same place or same time. The materials are delivered through email, voice message, video and sound conference and fax.

The insight of in this paper are:

1. The problems faced by the student's community in traditional learning is mentioned in the section 3 of this paper.
2. Advantages of distance education is in section 4.
3. Different kinds of technology used in distance learning is in section 5.
4. Section 6 defines the problems associated with distance education.
5. Section 7 will suggest solutions for these problems.

### III. PROBLEMS FACED BY THE STUDENT'S COMMUNITY IN TRADITIONAL LEARNING [1]

Problems faced by students in traditional education weren't much popular some time ago. Students search for online classes because traditional education is very expensive. Below are some of problems faced in traditional education.

**3.1 Participation** - The students are largely dependent on teachers in the conventional classroom. But not every student receives equal attention. This learning can be a problem for the introverts because they do not participate in classroom activities, and hence they find it difficult to handle their assignments. But in distance education classes, they can have one to one interaction with their mentor and can actively participate.

**3.2 Inequality** - Traditional classes are designed in such a way that one mentor teaches n number of students in a class. Every students would have different approach in learning the subject. So the mentor has to teach in the way that every student should understand otherwise it will destroy student's self-confidence. As a result, mentor lacks the balance in handling every student equally. In this case online classes will be an option for every student.

**3.3 Fast Lecture** – The mentors will be given a specific time for completion of their course. In the allotted time the mentor has to teach the subject with providing proper study material. Every course will have a duration of time fixed so within this allotted time they have complete the syllabus and also conduct exams within this time and should declare the results.

**3.4 Expensive** – This is one of the main problem of traditional courses. The educational institutions charge very high tuition fees and also the students have to pay for books, uniform, transport facility along with students have to pay for additional expenses. But when it comes to online learning students just have to pay for the course other than that there is no additional expense.

### IV. ADVANTAGES OF DISTANCE EDUCATION [2]

According to authors Hassenburg and Amy in their research paper called traditional education vs distance education has suggested some of the major advantages in distance learning which has led to the growth of distance education in which some of them are mentioned below.

**4.1 Comfort Level** – Students opt for distance learning when compared to traditional learning because of its comfort level. Because learners mean time for completion of their other work. But in traditional learning classrooms don't have good seating arrangements and some basic necessities but in their home the learners would be very comfortable.

**4.2 Cost Factor** – Cost factor is the main reason most of the learners choose distance learning because they cannot afford the price the educational institutions charge. When it comes to online education students must only pay course fees which is also very less when compared with traditional learning.

**4.3 Beneficial for Slow Learners** – Every learners will have their own method in learning and would not have the same capacity in grasping everything what the mentor teaches. Every student takes their own time in learning something. The online education would be very beneficial for slow learners because they have a lot of time to understand the course at their own speed.

**4.4 Time Saving** - Distance learning is time saving because the learners don't have to travel from their location to another location to take the course they can take the course in their home. And in traditional learning students will have to spend hours of time in this traffic to go to schools and colleges. In distance learning it not only saves lot of time and also travelling charges.

**4.5 Studying from anywhere** - In Distance Education one does not need to live in the same city or the same country to take courses provided by the institution that is located in other city. They can take up the course from anywhere. So this provides an opportunity for learners to educate in prestigious institutions.

Even though there are so many advantages in distance education over traditional education there are also some problems which the faced by the students or learners of distance education.

## V. LATEST TECHNOLOGIES USED IN DISTANCE EDUCATION [5]

The kinds of technology or techniques used in distance education is changing all the time. The following are some of the technologies that are used for the communication between the students and instructors.

**5.1 Google Classroom** - Google Classroom is a collaborative app, available free of charge for mentors and learners. Mentors, teachers and more can create an online classroom and invite students to create and distribute assignments at the class. Students and teachers can hold conversations about the assignments with Google Classroom, and mentors can also track the progress of the learners.

**5.2 Edmodo** - Edmodo is an educational resource that brings teachers and students together and is built into a social network. In this one, teachers can create community groups online, manage and provide instructional materials, assess student success, and, among other functions, interact with parents.

**5.3 Projeqt** - Projeqt is a platform that enables you to construct multimedia presentations with dynamic slides, including interactive charts, connections, online quizzes, and timelines for Facebook, and images. Mentors will exchange instructional presentations with learners during a class session which are visually suited to various devices.

**5.4 TED-Ed** - Ted-ed is an interactive forum that enables instructors, students, animators — generally people who want to broaden awareness and good ideas — to build interactive lessons. This website allows the mentors and learners to democratize access to information. Here, people will take an active role in others' learning process.

**5.5 kahoot** - kahoot Is games and questions-based educational platform. Teachers may use this method to create questionnaires, discussions, or surveys that supplement instructional lessons. The material is projected in the classroom and the students answer questions while simultaneously playing and learning.

## VI. PROBLEM STATEMENT [3]

In the research conducted by Ashish Pant student of (ACSIT) Bareilly, U.P in his research paper has mentioned number of popular issues which arise in distance education and also providing solutions for each of these specific problems. These problems can either be due to many reason, but they are the real problem in the classroom curriculum, in this type of education.

Following are some of the issues in distance learning:

**6.1 Nature of Study Material:** Every new student faces this problem in distance education. The learner's history is important in planning the learning materials. It's hard to schedule lessons according to the learners' individual differences.

**6.2 Lack of support by the faculty:** it is easy to assume that the faculty would not respond to the large number of students at the same time and some students may not get reply from mentor, and the single teacher can only respond to small number of students.

**6.3 Insecurities about learning:** In fact, distance learners tend to be more nervous about learning than traditional students such insecurities are found in personal and school related issues such as financial study costs, disruption of family life and perceived irrelevance of their studies and lack of support from employers. Often, these stresses lead to higher dropout rates than typical students.

**6.4 Lack of feedback from the teacher:** If there is no proper meeting with teachers on a regular or weekly basis, students will have difficulties in self-assessment and therefore these students may be more likely to drop out.

**6.5 Low Status of Distance Education Institutes:** Today, there are 'n' number of institutes opened for distance education. It is very difficult for a new applicant to know which educational institution is better, whether it offers better education for the students and what the recruiter feels about that institution this may create a doubt in the student's mind.

**6.6 Regulations imposed by university:** Distance education must operate within the universities' rules and regulations, thereby leaving no room for innovation, and some of the faculty in traditional departments may attempt to place barriers in the work of these departments.

## VII. SOLUTION TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED PROBLEMS [3]

**7.1 Nature of Study Material:** In distance education, the main thing is study content, provided according to the student's need and results. The student always needs to be aware of his / her future in this matter.

**7.2 Lack of support by the faculty:** To solve this issue, team of volunteers should be formed by the educational institution other than the teaching faculty so this would be very helpful for the students to answer all their queries or questions related to the subject when the faculty is unavailable.

**7.3 Insecurities about learning:** The institutes that have their own campus are stronger according to the study and the employer easily takes the students read from these colleges providing them the required knowledge regarding the courses. And they can tackle this issues by building confidence in the learners by being flexible in the cost and adjusting to their timings and providing required notes for studies.

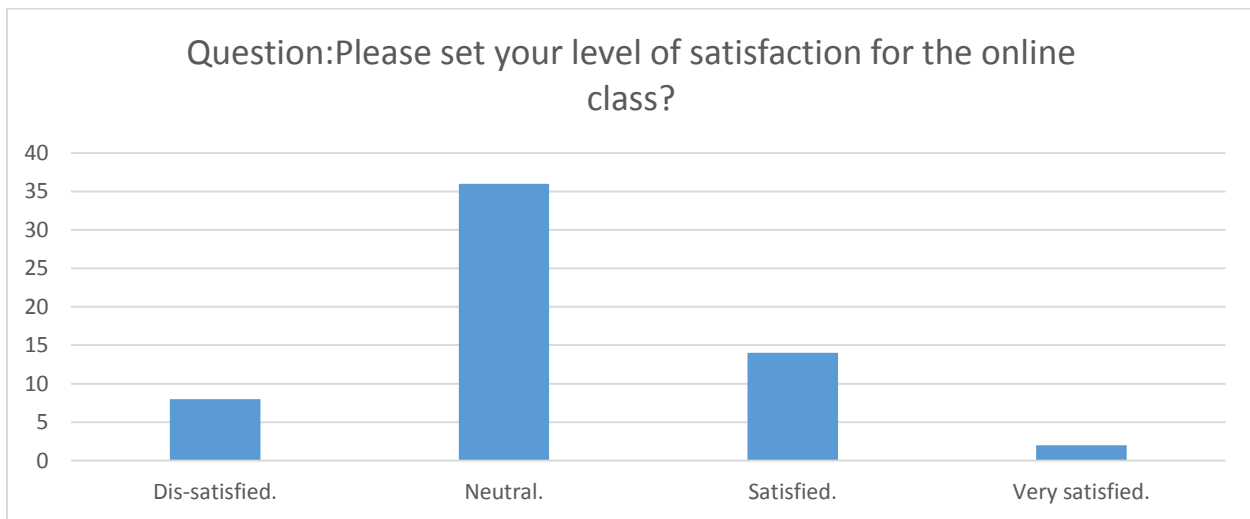
**7.4 Lack of feedback from the teacher:** A single mentor cannot reply to lot of students. This may lead the instructor or the mentor to make a team of volunteer from his student's team who may be willing to help the fellow students in solving their problems and clearing all their doubts or queries related to their courses.

**7.5 Low Status of Distance Education Institutes:** This is one of main problems in distance learning because there are some institutes who are willing to sell degrees in the name of distance education. And are mainly focused on extracting money from the learners and the solution to this problem is government should provide guidelines and some rules and regulations to be followed by institutions.

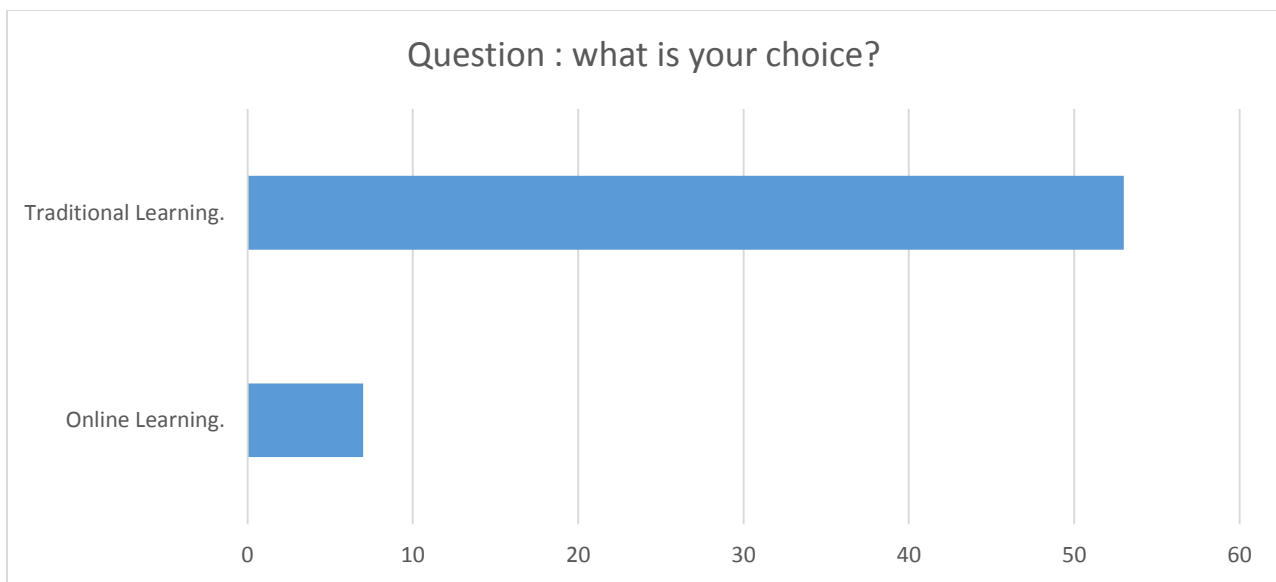
**7.6 Regulations imposed by university:** The institutions providing the distance education courses for the students with a set of rules and a syllabus to be followed while teaching. But the institutions must provide some flexibility to the mentors to make experiments in their teaching and helping the students by providing all the required knowledge regardless of the course duration.

## VIII. SURVEY CONDUCTED ON TRADITIONAL LEARNING VERSUS ONLINE LEARNING [4]

A small survey was conducted using Google forms on second year MCA students of DSCE who had an experienced both traditional and online education where roughly 60 students feedback was collected. In this survey students received instructions that specified the purpose of the study and explained the procedures to be followed while responding to the questions. In particular, the students were told that there were no right or wrong responses. And had to answer twelve questions in which they have to say how their online learning was different from traditional learning. In some of the questions which had comparison between online learning and traditional learning most of the students chose traditional learning was best even though online learning gave students more advantage.



There were number of questions asked in which one question was to specify the satisfaction obtained in the online learning in which 59% of the students felt neutral and 14.8% of the students were dissatisfied which means they did not have pleasure experience in online learning. And only 25% were satisfied with distance learning.



And when they were asked to choose between traditional learning and online learning 88.5% of the students chose traditional learning even though online learning provided more advantage than traditional learning.

So finally according to the survey even though most of the students chose traditional learning over online learning but in this covid-19 pandemic, which has led to the closures of schools, universities and colleges across the world the online learning became a boon for the students and mentors across the world by helping them take their classes and tests online which is been helpful in finishing their course within the time period.

### IX. IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON EDUCATION

According to Cambridge International Review (CIR) Even before COVID-19, there was already high growth and adoption in education technology, with global investment reaching US\$ 18.66 billion in 2019 and an overall online education market expected to reach US\$ 350 billion by 2025 [6]. On top of this COVID-19 pandemic, the education

system has changed forever. Students, their parents, and educators worldwide are felling the novel coronavirus' remarkable ripple effect as schools shut down and quarantine measures are being directed to cope with the global pandemic. The covid-19 pandemic has impacted educational systems around the world, contributing to the closing of schools, universities and colleges around the world, and in most counties has given rise to online learning for students While governments and health officials are doing their utmost to stop the epidemic, using online learning methods, global education networks are working together to respond together and provide quality education to everyone in these challenging times.

According to UNICEF reporting, 186 countries are currently introducing national closures and 8 are introducing local closures, affecting around 98.5% of the world's student population, which means that more than 1.2 billion children are out of the classroom worldwide [6]. As a result, education has dramatically changed, with the distinctive rise of e-learning, where teaching is done remotely and on digital platforms such as Google classroom and other video conferencing apps.

## X. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE OF DISTANCE LEARNING

Although the structure of information and communication technology in the developing or the least developed countries is very poor and so, concentrated use of e-learning in Distance Education is still a possibility for their higher education universities Educational institutions around the world are improving their educational techniques and considering online education as an essential element in the learning environment of teaching. Distance learning is commonly used to support education and subsequent learning in developing countries.

In countries where education is most neglected field, distance education and technology-based education is given least precedence. This strategy will continue and will be followed by those countries as which are still in developing stage. Distance learning is increasingly becoming a leading approach to study particularly in the office and workplace sector. In the future, distance learning will remain distinctive, as well as an innovative approach to electronically deliver, well-designed, learner-oriented anywhere, at any time, through internet use.

## XI. CONCLUSION

Finally, the conclusion is that there is no final answer to the ongoing debate between the effectiveness of distance learning versus the traditional mode of teaching. While some people accept that distance learning has come a long way and opened up new ideas in the field of education, some scholars tend to challenge the importance of learning through traditional means. Whatever the case, various views need to be taken into account and they are all important in their own way.

Some of the Guidelines which the distance education must follow are given below:

1. All the low profile institutes who are not following the guidelines must be closed [3].
2. There needs to be a personal meeting held between learner and instructor once a month.
3. Distance education must only provide correspondence courses and no degrees must be granted in the course of distance education [3].
4. Every student must be aware of their college standard where they are attending course.
5. Mentors must distribute all the resources required of learning the course.

Although there is a new trend in education called online education, due to the advancement of technology, it has got a huge increase. Delivery of distance education will eventually emerge as a powerful educational strategy with continuous use of the internet, laptop and television in future.

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