



**PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS TOWARDS ONLINE
EDUCATION DURING THE PANDEMIC SITUATION WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO NILGIRI DISTRICT**

Dr.I. Parvin Banu, Associate Professor & Head, PG & Research Department of International Business, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Nava India, Coimbatore.

Mr.D.Nanee, Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of International Business, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Nava India, Coimbatore.

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on education worldwide, forcing educational institutions to transition to online teaching and learning. This study aims to understand the perception of students towards online education during the pandemic and the problems they faced. The research methodology includes the collection of primary data through a questionnaire and the use of statistical analysis tools such as simple percentage analysis, independent sample t-test, analysis of variance, and regression. The findings of the study reveal that a majority of the respondents were satisfied with online teaching during the pandemic and believed that they have contributed to the prevention of spreading COVID-19. However, there were challenges faced by the students, such as poor education quality, over-dependence on technology, lack of technological support, lack of conversation, inability to learn directly, and difficulty in coping with the changed environment. These problems were ranked based on their severity, with over-dependence on technology and lack of technological support being the most significant challenges. The study also found a significant difference between the perception of students towards online learning and their gender. Moreover, there was a significant impact of students' perception on the problems they faced during the pandemic, indicating that perception influenced the challenges experienced by students. Based on the findings, several suggestions are proposed to address the issues faced by tribal students during the pandemic. These include establishing centralized digital classrooms in tribal areas, recruiting and training volunteers as Tribal Educational Assistants, conducting review meetings between school authorities and parents/students, organizing education sensitization and awareness campaigns, and implementing

schemes and policies to provide digital accessories and internet connectivity to tribal students. In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the digital divide and the challenges faced by students, particularly those from marginalized communities. The shift to online education has brought both benefits and drawbacks, and it is essential to address the issues and ensure equal access to quality education for all students. By implementing the suggested measures and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of online education, the educational system can better support students, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds.

Keywords: Students, Online, Pandemic situation.

INTRODUCTION

Pandemic's disruptive impact in the world was in every way far from imagining and thinking in a way it was unimaginable and education was no exception. Throughout the history the outbreak of different deadly viruses and diseases have caused destructions and chaos in societies. Deadly spread of diseases and their emergence and re-emergence are happening at a very unpredictable rate. According to the article about covid-19, the world has witnessed the emergence of several disease outbreaks and epidemics caused by more than 20 infectious agents over the past decade as World Health Organization (WHO) reports. (A. Balkhair,2020). And the recent addition to these outbreaks is SARS-CoV-2 (the causative agent for corona-virus disease COVID-19) causing the WHO to declare Covid-19 a public health emergency which can be an international concern on 30 January. (A. Balkhair, 2020). Due to rise of confirmed cases of individuals who have contracted and faced the world wide virus, on March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) categorized corona-virus as a pandemic. Countries were compelled to take serious preventive actions against the spread of this deadly virus.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommended washing hands frequently, avoiding to meet at the public places, avoid touching one's face, physical distancing and avoiding mass gathering in any place (WHO,2020, stated in Almuhlaifi, Alaklab.at.el, 2021). The name of corona-virus comes from the crown like projection on the surfaces of something's and in Latin it means "halo" or "crown" (patel, et. al, 2020). Since 2020 the spread of covid-19 has taken the lives of hundreds of thousand people until 11 March it was announced as pandemic 118,000 cases has been reported in 114 countries, and 4291 deaths has been recorded (WHO,202). Its symptoms are cough, fever, headache, loss of taste and smell, and at the same

time its symptoms vary from person to person and many people do not even show all these symptoms. And because of its deadly nature world undergone a quarantine and experienced a shut in gathering, meeting, jobs, and the normal routine in which world was going on before the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 causing lockdown and quarantine had banned all the social activities that used to take place in normal routine. Educational institutions all over the world responded to pandemic by going online in digital interface. The major structural change at that time was setting at home in front of laptop screens and paying attention to classes. The impact of pandemic and going online was also not same for everyone because not everyone comes from same background but this is not the matter of this study, but the impact of pandemic on international student's mobility all over the world in general and in India as well. . From the devastating effects of the covid-19 pandemic we can name lack of practical education, the lack of scientific experiments left students with only guessing about some results which eve we have talked about the positive impacts of covid-19 pandemic on education, the online education can never take the place of offline education and quality which offline education provides. Meantime beside all the challenges that this pandemic brought it also gave a good opportunity to those various stakeholders to re-think and re-design higher education with an efficient plan and policies for the maintenance and sustainability of the higher education sector.

PROBLEM DISCUSSION

The infection source of corona-virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is mainly patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection. Asymptomatic infected patients may also become the source of infection, mainly via aerosols from the respiratory tract, but also through direct contact. For this, mostly all the governments across the globe went for a lock down for at least 21 days and it got extended in many countries. Like the indigenous population in other parts of the world, the tribal population in India is also facing a crisis in different regions due to the pandemic. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has estimated severe consequences to the worlds over 476 million indigenous and tribal people. Seventy percent of this population reside in Asia and the Pacific, 16% in Africa, 11.5% in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the remaining in Europe and North America. In India, the majority of the tribal population reside in the hilly and forest regions, which are mostly isolated from the cities. Most of the tribal population depends on Minor Forest Produce (MFP) and Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), which are major

sources of economic sustenance and livelihood. The report has also pointed out that tribal people have become completely detached from the range of accessibility because most of them have moved to interior forest zones. Tribes like Kadars in The Nilgiris district and Paliyar and Muduvar in Tamil Nadu have already moved to the interiors. The mobility of healthcare workers has also completely stopped as a result of the announcement of lockdown. This has led tribal people to return to their nomadic lifestyle of eating forest food and relying on herbal medicine without having much awareness about the disease and its spread (The Federal, 2020) and also the student's education was questionable and thus the study is to analyse the impact of pandemic on Education in indigenous group in The Nilgiris District.

1. What is the perception of students towards online education?
2. What are the problems faced by the students during the pandemic?
3. Does the perception has the impact on the problem sfaced by the students during the pandemic?

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₀: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of different gender about online education during the covid-19 pandemic.

H₀: The difference between the problems and the socio-economic background of the respondents is insignificant.

H₀: There is no significant impact of perception of students towards online learning on their problems faced during pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Source of data

The research combines analytical methods with descriptive ones. This analysis relies heavily on first-hand evidence. First-time information gathered by the researcher is called primary data. This study's primary data comes from a carefully designed questionnaire. The secondary information for this study is gathered from a variety of sources, including journals, magazines the websites, and a selection of scholarly publications and newspapers.

Sample design

The population targeted for this study consisted of arts and science college students who from the district. The students irrespective of their domain and discipline in the arts and science

colleges are being selected for the study. The sample size adopted for the research is 385 respondents by adopting simple random sampling technique, where the arts and science college students are the universe and the students are the population from which the samples are drawn for the study using the table of random numbers.

Tools used for the study: Simple Percentage Analysis, Independent Sample t test, Analysis of Variance, Regression.

Pilot Study: The pilot study is being conducted among 30 respondents to test the reliability of the interview schedule. The Cronbach alpha value attained is 0.814 is better than the accepted criterion of 0.700 and hence the consistency is attained and the interview schedule is modified slightly according to the needs of the study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study was restricted to The Nilgiris district in the Tamil Nadu state and as a result, the outcomes of this study might not be applicable to other parts of the country.
2. The study has considered only the students of colleges and not the erstwhile students from the select area of the study.
3. The study used simple random sampling, which is one method of probability sampling. Because of this, the drawbacks of the method are important.
4. The study has all of the subjectivity and personal bias drawbacks associated with qualitative research.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic variables of the respondents

Demographic variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	201	52
	Female	184	48
	Total	385	100
Age	Less than 18	100	26
	Above 18 -21	227	59
	Above 21	58	15
	Total	385	100
Education Undergoing	Under graduation	243	63

	Post-graduation	142	37
	Total	385	100
Type of family	Nuclear family	316	82
	Joint family	69	18
	Total	385	100
Number of members in the family	Two	81	21
	Three	208	54
	Four	50	13
	More than four	46	12
	Total	385	100
Monthly income (INR)	Less than 30,000	150	39
	30,001 to 50,000	135	35
	More than 50,000	100	26
	Total	385	100

Gender:

Out of the total 385 respondents, 52% (201) identified as male, while 48% (184) identified as female.

Age:

The majority of respondents (59%) fell in the age range of above 18 to 21 years, followed by 26% who were less than 18 years old, and 15% who were above 21 years old.

Education Undergoing:

Among the respondents, 63% were undergoing undergraduate education, while 37% were pursuing post-graduation.

Type of Family:

82% of the respondents belonged to nuclear families, while 18% belonged to joint families.

Number of Members in the Family:

Among the respondents, the highest proportion (54%) had three members in their families, followed by 21% with two members, 13% with four members, and 12% with more than four members.

Monthly Income (INR):

The income distribution of the respondents shows that 39% had a monthly income less than 30,000 INR, 35% had an income between 30,001 and 50,000 INR, and 26% had more than 50,000 INR as their monthly income.

Perception of respondents towards online education during Pandemic

Constructs	Yes	No	Can't Say	Total
Are you satisfied with "online teaching" concept in this covid-19 situations?	243	123	19	385
Do you feel that you have to study more in online teaching?	108	235	42	385
Do you find peaceful environment at home to study?	89	173	123	385
Do you think that you have contributed towards prevention of spreading covid-19	354	12	19	385
Do you think that online teaching concept will continue after this crisis?	212	162	12	386
Do you feel that you need physical document or equipment to study from home?	239	142	4	385
Do you feel like isolated during online learning?	312	50	23	385
Are you feeling comfortable while studying at home in comparison to school?	177	173	35	385
Do you feel that all ICT'S tools those you are using are sufficient to study online?	254	116	15	385
Do you realize that most of the students do not have access to online education?	277	73	35	385
Do you agree that online learning concept is suitable for all kinds of students?	100	281	4	385
Do you feel that monitoring of students is difficult in online teaching?	304	81	0	385
Do you realize that you are facing some health issue while studying at home?	65	308	12	385

Do you feel that family responsibilities are increased while studying from home?	239	116	31	386
--	-----	-----	----	-----

The table presents the frequency distribution of perception of respondents towards online education during Pandemic. It confers that 243 respondents stated yes to the construct Are you satisfied with “online teaching” concept in this covid-19 situations?, 235 respondents stated no to the construct Do you feel that you have to study more in online teaching?, 173 respondents stated no to the construct Do you find peaceful environment at home to study?, 354 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you think that you have contributed towards prevention of spreading covid-19, 212 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you think that online teaching concept will continue after this crisis?, 239 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel that you need physical document or equipment to study from home?, 312 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel like isolated during online learning?, 177 respondents stated yes to the construct Are you feeling comfortable while studying at home in comparison to school?, 254 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel that all ICT’S tools those you are using are sufficient to study online?, 277 254 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you realize that most of the students do not have access to online education?, 281 respondents stated no to the construct Do you agree that online learning concept is suitable for all kinds of students?, 304 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel that monitoring of students is difficult in online teaching?, 308 respondents stated no to the construct Do you realize that you are facing some health issue while studying at home? and 239 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel that family responsibilities are increased while studying from home?.

Problems faced by the tribal students during the pandemic

Problems faced by tribal students

Sl. No.	Constructs	SP	N	MP	Total
1	Poor education quality	243	81	62	385
2	Over dependence on technology	312	8	65	385
3	Lack of technological support	354	0	31	385
4	Lack of conversation	196	27	162	385
5	Inability to learn directly	177	123	85	385

6	Unable to cope with the changed environment	254	42	89	385
7	Change in learning behaviour	193	89	104	385
8	Lack of education/training on cognitive skills	189	100	96	385
9	No group discussion and understanding	296	69	19	385
10	Overall situation	266	54	65	385

The table 4.10 presents the frequency distribution of the problems faced by tribal students. It infers that 243 respondents stated the construct poor education quality as a serious problem, 312 respondents stated the construct over dependence on technology as a serious problem, 354 respondents stated the construct lack of technological support as a serious problem, 196 respondents stated the construct lack of conversation as a serious problem, 177 respondents stated the construct inability to learn directly as a serious problem, 254 respondents stated the construct unable to cope with the changed environment as a serious problem, 193 respondents stated the construct change in learning behaviour as a serious problem, 189 respondents stated the construct lack of education/training on cognitive skills as a serious problem, 296 respondents stated the construct no group discussion and understanding as a serious problem and 266 respondents stated the construct overall situation as a serious problem.

Problems faced by tribal students – Garrett Ranking

Sl. No.	Constructs	Garrett Score	Mean Score	Rank
1	Poor education quality	1551	4.02	8
2	Over dependence on technology	2031	5.27	1
3	Lack of technological support	1965	5.10	2
4	Lack of conversation	1463	3.80	9
5	Inability to learn directly	1654	4.29	5
6	Unable to cope with the changed environment	1899	4.93	3
7	Change in learning behaviour	1613	4.19	6
8	Lack of education/training on cognitive skills	1597	4.15	7

9	No group discussion and understanding	1350	3.51	10
10	Overall situation	1734	4.53	4

The table presents the frequency distribution of the problems faced by tribal students. Based the Garrett score the ranks are being given and it states that the problem Over dependence on technology is ranked first, followed by Lack of technological support, Unable to cope with the changed environment, Overall situation, Inability to learn directly, change in learning behaviour, Lack of education/training on cognitive skills, Poor education quality, Lack of conversation and No group discussion and understanding in the respective ranks.

Analysis of difference between the problems and the socio-economic background of the respondents

H₀: The difference between the problems and the socio-economic background of the respondents is insignificant

ANOVA: Problem * Gender					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.494	2	.247	.341	.011*
Within Groups	551.412	761	.725		
Total	551.906	763			

Source: Primary data

The table 4.12 presents the analysis of variance to check the difference between the problems and the gender. It is clear from the table that the gender is significant with the problem at 5 percent level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is a significant difference between the problems and the gender of respondents.

Analysis of impact of perception of students towards online learning on their problems faced during pandemic

H₀: There is no significant impact of perception of students towards online learning on their problems faced during pandemic

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.005 ^a	.072	.063	.9257	1.458

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perception								
b. Dependent Variable: Problem								
ANOVA^a								
Model		Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	.017		1	.017	16.019	.030 ^{b*}	
	Residual	691.438		762	.907			
	Total	691.455		763				
a. Dependent Variable: Problem								
b. Predictors: (Constant), Perception								
Coefficients^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.780	.085		32.624	.000		
	Perception	-.006	.040	.005	.139	.047	1.000	1.000
a. Dependent Variable: Problem								

The regression analysis to check the impact of perception of students towards online learning on their problems faced during pandemic is presented in the table 4.18. The table shows that the R^2 value is .072, that denotes the fact that 72 per cent of changes in problem is caused by the perception. The Durbin Watson value 1.458 shows that the variables are not suffering from multi collinearity. Further the F value 16.019 ($p=0.030$) is significant at 1 per cent level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is a significant impact of perception of students towards online learning on their problems faced during pandemic.

FINDINGS

Socio-economic Profile

Out of 385 respondents

1. 201 respondents are male
2. 227 respondents are between 18-21 years of age
3. 243 respondents are doing under-graduation
4. 316 respondents are from Nuclear family

5. 208 respondents have three members in their family
6. 150 respondents earn Less than Rs 30000

5.1.3 Perception of respondents towards online teaching during Pandemic

1. 243 respondents stated yes to the construct Are you satisfied with “online teaching” concept in this covid-19 situations?
2. 235 respondents stated no to the construct Do you feel that you have to study more in online teaching?
3. 173 respondents stated no to the construct Do you find peaceful environment at home to study?
4. 354 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you think that you have contributed towards prevention of spreading covid-19?
5. 212 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you think that online teaching concept will continue after this crisis?
6. 239 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel that you need physical document or equipment to study from home?
7. 312 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel like isolated during online learning?
8. 177 respondents stated yes to the construct Are you feeling comfortable while studying at home in comparison to school?
9. 254 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel that all ICT’S tools those you are using are sufficient to study online?
10. 277 254 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you realize that most of the students do not have access to online education?
11. 281 respondents stated no to the construct Do you agree that online learning concept is suitable for all kinds of students?
12. 304 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel that monitoring of students is difficult in online teaching?
13. 308 respondents stated no to the construct Do you realize that you are facing some health issue while studying at home?
14. 239 respondents stated yes to the construct Do you feel that family responsibilities are increased while studying from home?

SUGGESTIONS

- The pandemic has introduced to the students the accessibility to digital education. For soliciting progress and development for the students in the tribal community, the following suggestions can be implemented:
- Emergency establishment of centralized digital classrooms in tribal areas with adequate digital peripherals like televisions, computers and internet connectivity.
- Recruiting and training volunteers for facilitating as Tribal Educational Assistants. These volunteers shall be responsible for ensuring access to digital education to tribal students, addressing their queries and concerns, coordinating activities at ground level and reporting back to the government.
- Periodic review meetings to be hosted between school authorities and parents/children through digital and physical mode. During these sessions, teachers should communicate about the student's academic performances to the parents and mentor and guide them towards improvement.
- Education sensitization and awareness campaigns for parents and students to analyze and understand the importance of education, government schemes and programs.
- Scientific review and revision on the improvement of education among tribal students, sketching the efficiency and effectiveness of government schemes and action plans, and introduction of new measures to curb illiteracy, dropout rates and inaccessibility to education.
- All state, government institutions, national and international agencies also societies should give top priorities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this act.
- Government should initiate schemes and policy frameworks to provide digital accessories and internet connectivity to the tribal students. This can be implemented with the assistance of NGOs and civic groups by organizing fundraising campaigns.

CONCLUSION

The concept of digital education was popularized on a global scale with the advent of the COVID 19 outbreak. This was done to achieve continuity in education, despite the pandemic. However, this paradigm shift towards digital education has not reaped the desired benefits. It has actually paved the way to causing a digital divide in the society with the less privileged classes

like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes being discriminated against based on financial capacity. The universal rule of accessible education is no longer put into practice. With the lack of technical access, poor internet infrastructure and allied costs of digital education, it became a nightmare for the students belonging to the underprivileged classes to keep up with their studies. This coupled with rising unemployment and the unavailability of disposable income further worsened the situation. The fundamental objectives of digital education were to provide accessibility and convenience to a broader spectrum of students by providing study from home features; audio-video embedded classes, technical expertise, 24x7 accessibility and convenience. All of these features, however, are tagged to digital technology mediums, internet connectivity and technical expertise. These are areas beyond the reach and accessibility of the tribal community. This digital divide has caused significant repercussions among the students of tribal communities. They are living in constant fear of exclusion and thoughts of being discriminated against and left out from the mainstream educational spectrum. This divide is further deep and pervasive between various gender groups, with male students enjoying the privilege of technical expertise and enhanced access to digital devices.

This growing concern is not restricted to The Nilgiris alone; it has overshadowed the dreams and aspirations of billions of students worldwide, mostly belonging to the marginalized strata of the society. Even with accessibility to the digital media, the question of whether online learning is effective for the students is a matter of utmost introspection. The ensuring of uninterrupted access to education and the deliverance of awareness programs are essential for the progress of online learning among communities. Rather than emphasizing financial benefits alone, proper guidance, mentoring and sensitization programs are to be conducted among the students for their total integration into society.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad Ade Sujatmikanto¹, E. F. (2021) School Marketing Strategy during the COVID- 19 Pandemic. ICIGR,1-8.
- Alsayed, E. M. (2020) Impact of Corona virus Pandemic on Education, Education and Practice, 2-15.
- Amit Joshi, M. V. (2020) Online Teaching amidst COVID-19 in India: An Outlook. Asian Journal of Distance Education, 1-7.

- Balkhair, A. A. (2020). Covid-19 pandemic: A new chapter in the history of Infectious Diseases . Oman Medical Journal, 1-2.
- E.Thangasamy. (2014) Marketing of Higher Education Services in India: A Critical Study, Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM), 35 -39.
- Husne Mehtap Suti, B. Ö. (2021) Effects of COVID-19 period on educational systems and institutions. International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction, 2-15.
- James, C. (1995). See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication The Practice of Educational Marketing in Schools. Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 1-16.
- Ka Ho Mok, W. X. (2021) Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on international higher education and student mobility: Student perspectives from mainland China and Hong Kong. International Journal of Educational Research, 1-11.
- Leonardo Villani¹, R. P. (2021) Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on psychological well-being of students in an Italian university: a web-based cross-sectional survey, Globalization and Health, 1-14.
- Mithun S. Ullal, R. T. (2020). See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this public Marketing of Right to Education in India. Research gate, 1-7.
- Rana, S. (2017). International Marketing Education in India: An Assessment and Looking Forward, Journal of International Business Education, 1-4.