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Online Education and its Ramification on Teachers

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Abstract

This research paper aims at emphasizing the obstacles faced by teachers in conducting classes through an online mode. A survey was conducted with the purpose of analysing, reviewing and assessing the impact of online mode of education on teachers. This paper aims to throw a light on the adversity and difficulties of online mode of education from a teacher's perspective considering the socio-economic situation of India.

A detailed analysis was drawn from the responses which included 64 respondents from Delhi who are engaged in teaching. The results received were prickly and striking. It was observed that there exist severe disparities amongst the professionals in the education sector. The paper discusses the affordability of online education elaborating the challenges that the teachers face due to lack of the essential facilities and highlights the current situation in India in the same context.

Keywords: Online Education; Teachers; COVID-19; Learning; Pandemic

1.0 Introduction

Online Education is a mode of imparting knowledge through virtual classes with the help of e-resources over the Internet. A metamorphosis from traditional methods of learning in a brick-and mortar building to virtual classes occurred due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Though the sudden shift has been fruitful in imparting education and maintaining academic continuity, it comes with its own distinct traits, which can jeopardize the efficiency of training. To judge the efficiency of online classes in India, we need to consider the ease by which both the parties i.e. the teachers and the students are able to manage this paradigm shift. Online Education comes with an ample of opportunity and benefits but the inconveniences caused by it cannot be ignored in a developing country like India where basic education for all is still a far-fetched reality. According to the report of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), 32 million Indian children of age up to 13 years have never attended any school, the majority of them belonging to the socially disadvantaged class.¹(32 Million Indian Children Have Never Been to Any School: How Can We Reform Education for the Underprivileged, 2019).

Although e-learning can help us inculcate many potential skills, the lockdown and in particular the online mode of education has divided the Indian society into the privileged and not-so-privileged segments of teachers and students. Not only the students, teachers as well as the parents are also facing impending thrust to tackle the upcoming situation without affecting smooth flow of information. In a developing country like India, relevant infrastructure to support a total overhaul of online education is not feasible. In addition to lack

of proper electricity and internet connectivity; many do not have the financial resources to invest in expensive tablets, laptops or PCs and are eventually left on their own to navigate through complex subjects and topics.²(Why Online Education May Not Be A Sustainable Solution In India Despite Free Courses, 2020).

For the teachers, a drastic move from a physical place consisting of ebullient children to an isolated corner of their house is quite challenging as well as a learning experience. The research paper will focus on a question that is generating a good bit of discussion among thoughtful observers of teaching and learning issues: What impact will this sudden, forced immersion and experimentation with technology-enabled forms of learning have on the status of online learning in higher education? The paper highlights how the explosion of remote learning -- much of which may be primitive and of dubious quality -- could affect attitudes and impressions of a mode of learning that already struggles to gain widespread faculty and student support.³(Inside Higher Ed, 2020).

The idea of thousands of professors and students landing into pedagogical cyberspace for the first time has broached this subject that could change the long terms for online education. The main objective of this research paper is to make people aware about the difficulty faced by teachers in conducting online classes considering the socio-economic background of the country. Lack of resources, difficulty in adapting to technology, abuses and bullying faced by the teachers creates hurdles in smooth conduction of classes. Primary Data collection is the main approach to cater to the results and conclusion of the paper. The miserable condition and the inadequacy of facilities which resulted in inefficient quality of study and the mental pressure on the teachers induced to research further on the topic and discuss the problems associated with it.

By reflecting upon the problems encountered by the people and suggesting solutions to the same can help in bringing about a change in the education status of which will ultimately accelerate the rate of progress in our country.

2.0 Relative Analysis Between Online and Offline Mode of Education

From the conventional methods of teaching that included Gurukuls to the 21st century schools in the pre-corona era where students used to be physically present with their alma mater not only to receive education, but also for their holistic development. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a tremendous change in all the domains including the education sector as well. The scale of the adoption of online teaching in response to the pandemic has truly been unprecedented.

The world has witnessed many technological dawns in the education sector. From classes being held in open spaces to the modern day smart classes and now the advent of virtual classrooms have stirred the real world.

The question to address is: What impact will this emergency immersion into online learning by most institutions might have on faculty in technology-oriented learning? Will the outcome be more professors believing in the quality of online learning and wanting to incorporate the best of what it can do into their teaching, a blurring of the distinction between online and in-person and a closing of the perceived quality gap? Do you think it could produce greater skepticism about the efficacy of technology-enabled learning, either because the experience for instructors and students alike will be substandard, or because institutions will not sufficiently prepare their instructors to teach in these new ways?³ (Inside Higher Ed, 2020)

The following figure puts forward a comparative analysis between online and offline mode of education:



3.0 Significance of Offline Education

Offline methods of teaching are though traditional in nature but not obsolete in terms of efficiency which it provides considering the socio-cultural background of India. A country where more than half of the population relies on government schools and students go to classes for mid-day meals, online teaching is implausible. Classroom teaching that is inclusive of the holistic development of the child along with the academic learning. It inculcates values like discipline, punctuality, obedience and caters to the individual needs of students. Waking up early in the morning, catching the bus, attending classes, chit-chatting with your friends, waiting for lunch time, sharing and caring and all other things that one does and learns in offline mode of education is so essential for one's growth and development that it cannot be replaced with virtual classrooms. Classroom teaching builds conflict resolving skills, presentation skills and communication skills. It develops team spirit

and teaches students to get along with those from varied cultural backgrounds. Furthermore the existence of the digital divide in various regions of the country can't be ignored.

4.0 Challenges faced in Online Education

There are serious challenges to quality and effectiveness in online learning which largely remain unaddressed due to overflowing self-congratulatory and feel-good sentiments. Will the institutional leaders be willing to think out of their box to recognize, understand, and address these critical issues? ⁶(Chari, 2020)

The lack of human connection, loss of teacher's supervision, absence of collaborative learning and infrastructural and basic issues like electricity supply, internet connectivity makes online learning biased. The societal divide on the basis of gender, caste, creed, location and sex heightens the disparities which prevail in the country. Mission Antyodaya, a nationwide survey of villages conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2017-'18, showed that 16% of India's households received one to eight hours of electricity daily, 33% received 9-12 hours, and only 47% received more than 12 hours a day. ⁵(Kundu, 2020)

According to the National Sample Survey (2017-18) report on education, only 24% of Indian households have an internet facility. While 66% of India's population reside in villages, only a little over 15% of rural households have access to internet services. For urban households, the proportion is 42%. Only 8% of all households with members aged between five and 24 have both a computer and an internet connection. Among the poorest 20% households, only 2.7% have access to a computer and 8.9% to internet facilities. In the case of the top 20% households, the proportions are 27.6% and 50.5%. ⁵(Kundu, 2020)

The proportion of households with access to a computer varies from 4.6% in Bihar to 23.5% in Kerala and 35% in Delhi. The difference is starker in case of internet access. In states like Delhi, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Uttarakhand, more than 40% households have access to the internet. The proportion is less than 20% for Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Assam,

Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. As per the Internet and Mobile Association of India report, in 2019, while 67% men had access to the internet, this figure was only at 33% for women. The disparity is more prominent in rural India, where the figures are 72% and 28% for men and women, respectively. While 37% of households in India have one dwelling room, it would be a luxury for many to attend lectures in an undisturbed environment. In 2020-2021, the Ministry of Human Resource Development budget for digital E-learning was reduced to Rs 469 crore from Rs 604 crore in 2019-'20. ⁵(Kundu, 2020)

The above data suggests how disparities exist at every level and inclusion of Online Education would not be feasible as they would target Tier-1 cities market base and not touch upon Tier-2 and 3 cities. The aforementioned data is procured not considering the pandemic situation as there was no relevant data in context to the current crisis and figures and stats may vary this year due to COVID-19 pandemic.

5.0 Impact of Online Education on Teachers

Surely some of the professors who will be venturing into virtual education for the first time because of COVID-19 will be going online with the sort of high-quality immersive courses that the best online learning providers offer. But much of the remote instruction that many professors experimenting outside the physical classroom for the first time will be offering to their students will be nothing more than videoconference lectures supplemented by emailed assessments. ³(Inside Higher Ed, 2020)

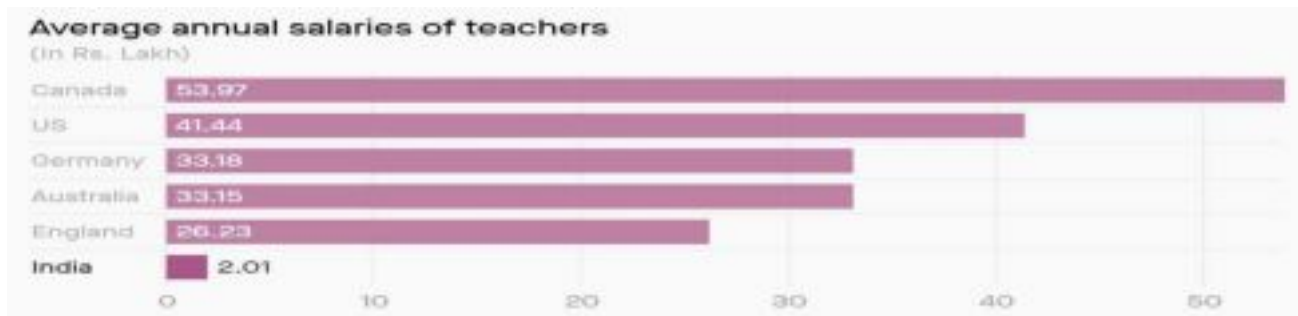
5.1 Criticism from Parents and Constant Vigilance

Teachers brainstorm ideas and plans for their online classes to make them inclusive and interesting. Gathering information and planning the prerequisites for taking an online class becomes a must. After hosting dozens of boisterous toddlers for over an hour in a virtual classroom, teachers feel drained out of energy and fatigue takes over. A Delhi-based nursery teacher in conversation with Quartz states that “Much of the hour-long class involves parents dragging the toddlers back to the computer screens and trying to get them interested in what’s happening. These kids don’t understand half our activities even in the real classroom. A teacher on a computer screen would hardly make sense to them. For one, the kids are joined by their ‘quick-to-judge’ parents who want ‘value for the fees paid’. If I mispronounce one word, she (Vice-Principal) stops the class to correct me.” ⁵(Itika Sharma Punit, qz.com, 2020)

Another event where an English teacher at a school in Gurugram says, “During the classes, I have no way of knowing who is paying attention and who is not. I am going to have a nervous breakdown if this continues. My body and brain are tired.” ⁵(Itika Sharma Punit, qz.com, 2020). These are just a few examples which describe the plight of thousands of teachers across the country who have been abruptly pushed into the uncharted “online classes’ ’ since India went into lockdown on March 25 in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. These are the instances of teachers’ sufferings that are heavily overworked and terribly underpaid

in India. This has caused distress among teachers who pointed that a lot of preparation goes before conduction of classes which needs to be taken into account.

5.2 Financial burden on Teachers



⁸(Average Annual Salary of Teachers, 2020)

As the above data suggests, the work done and the problems suffered by teachers do not commensurate with their salary. In Spite of this, institutions are adamant to pay teachers on an hourly basis not considering the difficulties that come in their way. The Hindu states the conversation of a principal in Bangalore who says, “We have decided to pay teachers based on their salary from the previous year. The amount will be divided by the number of working days, and then multiplying it by the number of hours they are teaching. So by this formula, a teacher whose monthly salary is Rs. 30,000 will get Rs. 250 per hour. If they take online classes for two hours per day, they will be paid Rs. 500 per day.”⁴(Kulkarni, 2020) Many teachers have also taken up small side businesses to make ends meet. “As the salaries of teachers are low when compared to other professions, they do not have savings. So many of my colleagues have started catering services, while some of them have started small online businesses such as selling masks,” said a teacher, who is a single parent of two children.⁴(Kulkarni, 2020)

In a situation where COVID-19 has heralded the whole education scenario, teachers inspite of the efforts put in, are forced to take up a side business to make the ends meet.

5.3 Incurring additional expenses due to Online Teaching

From tackling Internet connectivity issues to managing India’s unreliable power supply the list of problems remain innumerable and unsolved. Inadequate equipment to take classes like Laptops, Computers, Tripods, White Board, Wi-Fi and unlimited Internet packs for taking classes consistently has added to the complexities. The plight of teachers wherein taking classes constantly for a couple of hours does not only become

problematic but a matter of botheration in terms of money that they need to spend to acquire and access those facilities.

5.4 Bullying and Hatred Comments

If all this is not demotivating, teachers have also been subjected to bullying and hatred comments which become so intolerable with the unruly, disobedient students that this whole new experience becomes a nightmare. An 11th-grade math teacher at a Bengaluru-based school said her students kept on “kicking her out” of the call every 10 minutes during the first few classes. “One day someone simply blocked my ID so I could not join back at all”.

A middle-school teacher in Dombivili near Mumbai says “The kids are savvy enough to handle gizmos, yet not mature enough to understand the situation. They double down on their usual classroom naughtiness online. After the first few days, I disabled Zoom’s screen-sharing option for them.”⁵(Itika Sharma Punit, qz.com, 2020). This is inversely proportional to the quality of education, which does not only depend on qualifications of the teacher but also the working conditions.

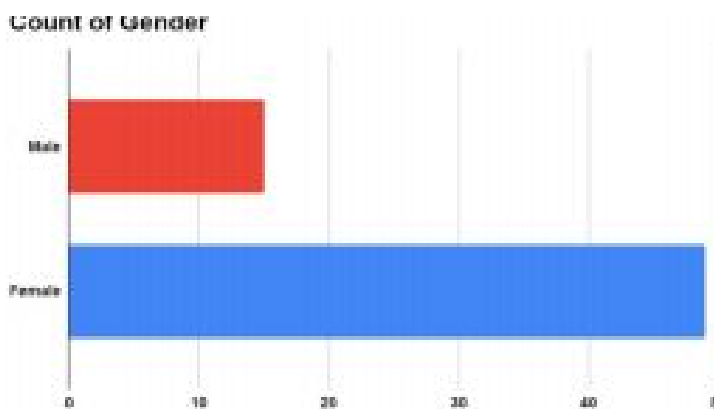
In a situation where the most mild anxiety disorders are not manageable and seem suspicious. The faculties who have been on the brink of financial as well as mental and emotional breakdown are expected to take online classes, which is taking a toll on their mental health adversely. It's hard to concentrate on anything other than the rapid pace of news. Mostly, the female teachers have become all time caretakers of their family and inclusion of domestic chores along with professional work seem difficult to manage.

Considering the problems faced by the urban institutions and dwellers, deducing the rural educational scenario would be horrific. In India, where the majority of students depend on government schools for their primary education, they are distanced from the luxury of e classrooms.

6.0 Primary Data Analysis

To make the research more real time, authentic and data driven, a survey was conducted in which 65 respondents from Delhi who belonged to the teaching background were questioned and the responses were recorded. The responses were then analysed which seem to be striking as it highlights the grave impact of online education on teachers. The respondents were analysed based on following criteria and inferences were drawn accordingly.

6.1 Based on Gender:



The respondents belonged to both the genders as the disparities prevail due to gender differences also. Out of 64 respondents, 49 teachers are female and 15 of them are male. Gender differences were kept in mind because the female teachers are burdened with additional domestic chores of the household. They are expected to manage both the domestic as well as professional lives simultaneously without getting either of them affected.

6.2 Based on Age:

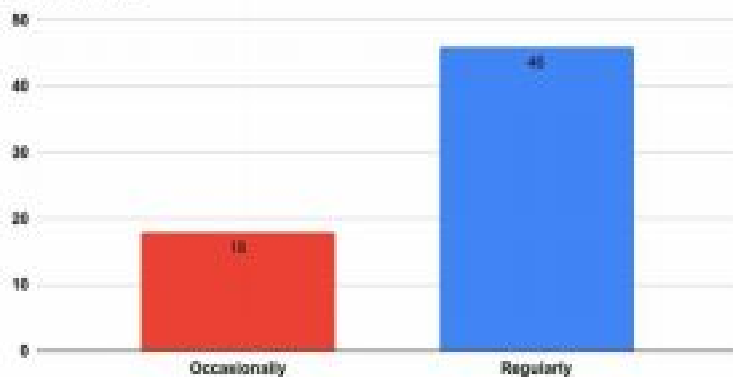
Count of Age Group



The respondents belonged to all the age groups varying from teachers of less than 30 years of age to more than 45 years. Out of 64 respondents, 19 of them are less than 30 years of age, 29 of them lie between 30-45 years and the remaining 16 respondents are of more than 45 years of age. Age differences were considered because it is difficult for the senior teachers to be adaptive to a sudden change in technology whereas it might be easy for others. Considering a lack of digital literacy and health issues due to increased screen timing among senior teachers the problems have heightened.

6.3. Based on the frequency of online classes being taken:

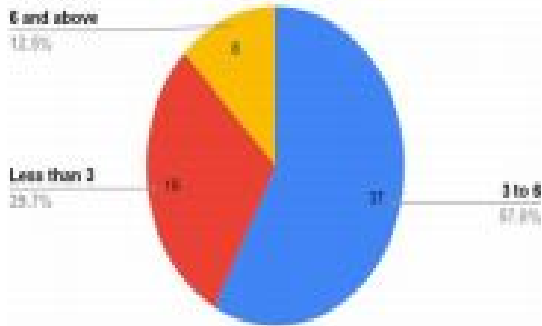
How often have you been taking online classes during the lockdown?



The respondents were categorized on the basis of frequency of online classes taken during the pandemic. Out of 64 respondents, 46 teachers are taking classes regularly and 18 teachers are taking classes occasionally. Such categorization has been made to highlight the frequency of online classes being taken. Regular classes for prolonged hours with no breaks lead to headache, hypertension and weak eyesight.

6.4 Based on hours spent in a day for taking online classes:

How many hours do you dedicate in a day for online classes?

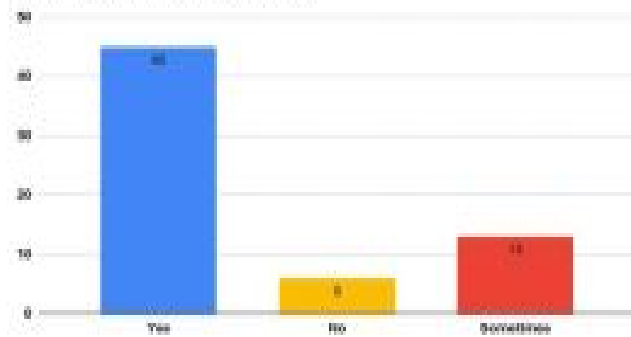


The respondents were categorized on the basis of hours spent in a day for taking online classes taken during the pandemic. Out of 64 respondents, 37 teachers are taking classes for 3-6 hours a day, 19 teachers are taking classes less than 3 hours a day and the remaining 8 respondents are taking classes for more than 6 hours a day. Such categorization has been made to highlight the frequency of online classes being taken. A regular class for prolonged hours with no

breaks leads to headache, hypertension and weak eyesight. It also leads to incurring additional costs like unlimited, uninterrupted internet connection for taking classes for long hours.

6.5 Based on holidays on weekends

Do you get a weekly holiday?



The respondents were inquired about the holidays they get during weekends. Out of 64 respondents, 45 teachers are getting holidays, 6 of them are not and 13 teachers are getting holidays occasionally. The categorization was done as the teachers with no, or somewhat less holidays are under mental pressure and are overburdened with work which reduces the efficiency and quality of teaching.

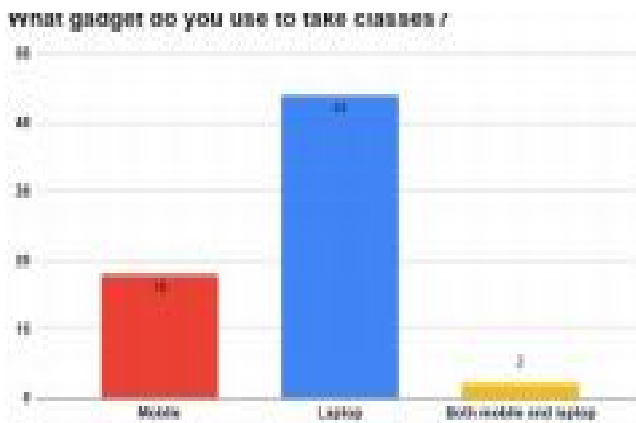
6.6 Based on Internet connectivity

Do you have an uninterrupted and good speed of internet connection while taking online classes?



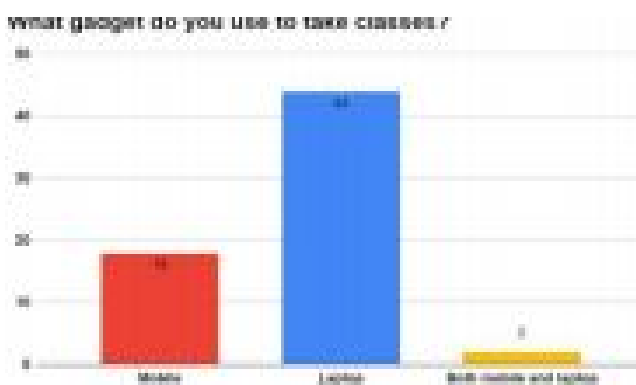
The respondents were inquired about the efficiency of Internet connection. Out of 64 respondents, 42 respondents have uninterrupted Internet but 22 teachers do not have access to it. Taking online classes smoothly requires seamless data and Internet which demands both recurring costs as well as consideration of demography i.e. rural and urban areas.

6.7 Based on the availability of equipments:



The respondents were inquired about the gadgets used during online classes. Out of 64 respondents, 44 teachers use Laptop, 18 of them use mobile phones and the remaining 2 use both of them. The categorization is made because non-availability of equipment possesses serious repercussions. Financial burden, strain on eyes and being technologies averse are the factors which affect the efficiency of online classes.

6.8 Based on the availability of equipments:



The respondents were inquired about the gadgets used during online classes. Out of 64 respondents, 44 teachers use Laptop, 18 of them use mobile phones and the remaining 2 use both of them. The categorization is made because non-availability of equipment possesses serious repercussions. Financial burden, strain on eyes and being technology averse is the factors which affect the efficiency of online classes.

6.9 Based on electricity supply:

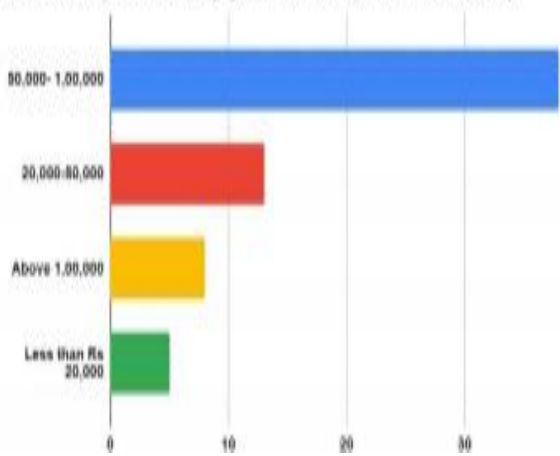
Do you have stable electricity supply at your place?



The respondents were inquired about the stability of electricity supply. Out of 64 respondents, 54 teachers have stable electricity supply, 6 teachers do not have and 4 respondents have stability occasionally. Considering the socio-economic background of India, unreliable electricity supply continues to be a problem which hinders the conduction of smooth online classes.

6.10 Based on Income:

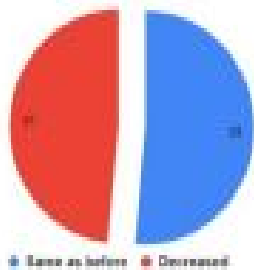
How would you classify your monthly income? (INR)



To keep in mind inclusivity of all income groups, the respondents belonged to varying income categories. Out of 64 respondents, 38 respondents' income lies between 50,000-100,000, 13 respondents income lies between 20,000-50,000, 8 respondents income is above 100,000 and the remaining 5 respondents earn less than 20,000 per month. Considering the financial costs they have to incur for conducting online classes, it is difficult for the lower income group to afford it.

6.11 Based on Effect on Income:

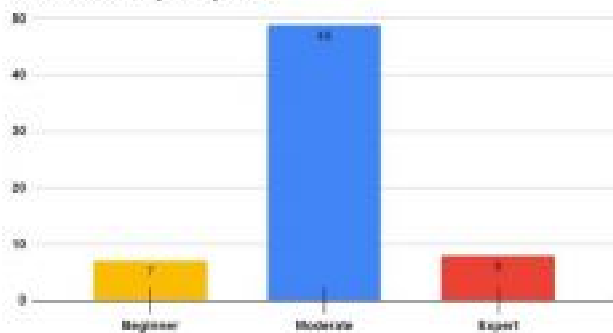
How has your salary been affected due to COVID-19 pandemic?



The respondents were asked whether the pandemic had an effect on their salary. The results were striking as out of 64 respondents, 31 respondents' salary has been decreased and 33 respondents' salary remained constant. The decrease in salary of the teachers in spite of tremendous efforts is disheartening. Financial and emotional breakdown affects the mental health of the teachers which affects the quality of teaching.

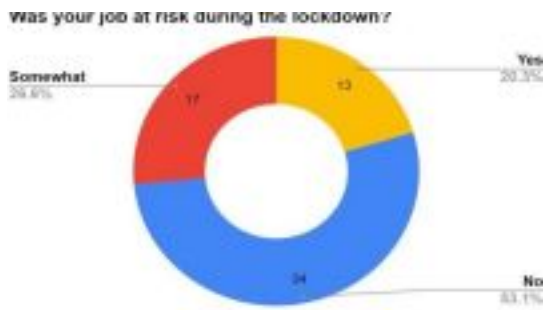
6.12 Based on Technology friendliness:

How tech savvy are you?



The respondents were categorized on the basis of how technology friendly one is. Out of 64 respondents, 49 respondents are moderate, 8 respondents are expert and 7 respondents are still a beginner. Considering the technological aspect, teachers with beginner or moderate levels of technological understanding find it difficult to take online classes smoothly.

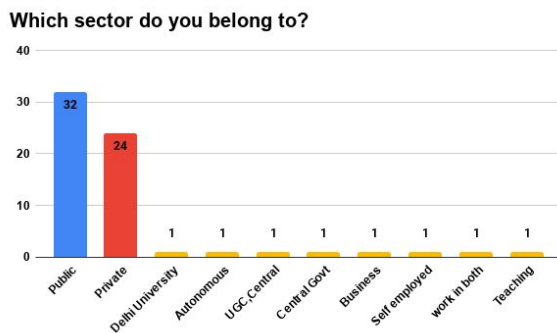
6.13 Based on threat to Job Security:



The respondents were inquired about the level of risk to their Jobs during lockdown. Out of 64 respondents, 34 respondents' job is at no risk, 17 respondents' job is somewhat risky and 13 respondents' faced threat to Job Security. Threat to job security compels the teachers to take online classes despite the difficulty that comes in

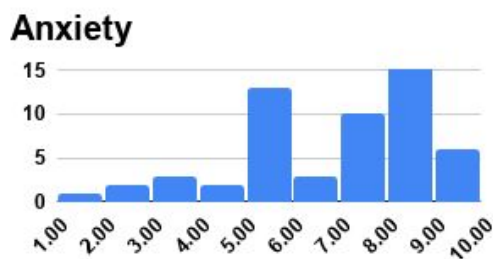
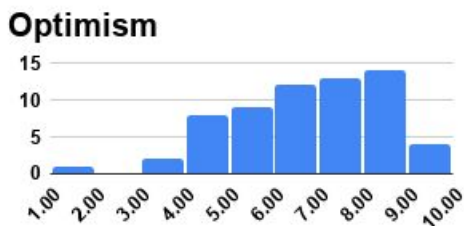
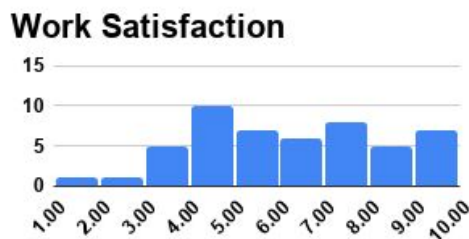
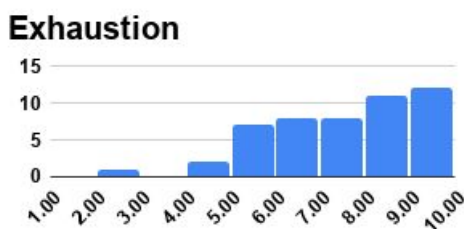
their way. It also leads to mental and financial instability because of the risk that is associated with the job.

6.14 Based on sector associated with:



To ensure the primary data contains information of the respondents from all sectors, the respondents were classified on the basis of the sector they belong to. Out of 64 respondents, 32 belong to the public sector, 24 belong to the private sector and the rest are scattered from different fields.

6.15 Based on how strongly have you felt the following emotions:



The respondents were asked to describe how strongly they felt the following emotions. The positive emotions are optimism and work satisfaction and the negative emotions are anxiety and exhaustion, where 1 was the least experienced and 10 being the most. As it can be witnessed, from the graph above that the majority of respondents have experienced mild to medium positive emotions whereas there has been stark increase in emotions like anxiety and exhaustion. The pandemic has affected the respondents greatly as it can be noticed and maintaining the academic continuity with an equal or existing pace becomes almost unachievable.

6.16 Comments/ Suggestions

The respondent's comments are analysed and it is inferred that the work satisfaction received from teaching is the least. Teaching of practical papers like statistics and mathematics has become problematic. The online teaching approach lacks in standardization in procedure to be followed. Teachers remain frustrated and dissatisfied as it remains unacknowledged and mysterious as to how far the students are able to comprehend what is being taught. Online classes are considered just making use of time in the best possible way but it is not the replacement for online teaching. The inability to reach students living in remote areas makes the work less satisfactory. The digital divide in the country cannot be ignored. Conclusively, online teaching comes with its own set of problems which cannot be ignored.

7.0 Conclusion

Today, the potential of education technology has only been unlocked for India, which is possibly 10 million households across the country. This is a tiny part of the estimated 250 million children that we have in our school systems. ⁵(Itika Sharma Punit, qz.com, 2020)

Given the rapid upsurge of the COVID-19 crisis, the lack of existing institutional resources, rural schools, rapid shift in methods of teaching and technology averse faculty, especially faculty in under resourced and rural schools, it is likely most of the online teaching would lead to decreased learning and increased mental pressure. Online Education is going to expose the vast inequalities that plague our educational institutions. It's important to recognize right now that technology is not going to rectify this situation. Indeed, expecting technology to do so might make things worse. Not all faculties have access to a laptop or to broadband at home and no, one can't do everything on a mobile phone.³(Inside Higher Ed, 2020d)

Though education-tech is one of the flourishing domains in India, the full spectrum of ecosystem around digital content creation, delivery and consumptions still need to be matured in India. Instead of considering this as an opportunity for educational institutions to restructure around more technology, this is their chance to

lead with greater humanity. The pandemic will end for sure but these scars will remain embedded in India's school teachers for a long time.

This isn't just an experiment in education. It's a test of our democracy, too.

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⁵(*Itika Sharma Punit*, qz.com, 2020) <https://scroll.in/article/961738/for-many-of-indias-teachers-online-classes-amid-lockdown-have-been-an-awful-experience>

⁶(*Chari*, 2020) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/edutrends-india/challenges-of-quality-in-online-learning/>

⁷(*Kundu*, 2020) <https://scroll.in/article/960939/indian-education-cant-go-online-only-8-of-h%20o%20mes-with-school-children-have-computer-with-net-link>

⁸(*Average Annual Salary of Teachers*, 2020) <https://scroll.in/article/961738/for-many-of-indias-teachers-online-classes-amid-lockdown-have-been-an-awful-experience>