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Challenges of Online Education in Education during the Crisis of Covid-19 in rural areas of West Bengal

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE	**NAME OF THE AUTHOR(s)**
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ABSTRACT

At present, Covid-19 has caused a stir in the whole world. This has disrupted normal public life in the economic, political social and educational spheres. Most academic heads are now promoting online education as a solution to this crisis. The structure is essential for reading online, excluding the traditional environment in the classroom. The pandemic has been steering the education sector forward with technological innovation and advancements. The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector. With the consideration to the fact the present study tries to illustrate the challenges of the state which are not as advanced in technology as the state blessed with high tech technology. The objective of the study was challenges of online Education in Higher Education level during the Crisis of Covid-19 in West Bengal. The study was qualitative in approach and data were collected from secondary sources like books, Articles, Journals, Thesis, University News, websites and e-contents relating to impact of Covid-19 on higher educational system of West Bengal. Findings of the study show that though online education has a number of challenges faced by higher students. Challenges of online Education in Higher Education level during the Crisis of COVID-19 in West Bengal are reduced face-to-face support, Students encounter technical difficulties, Lack of effective Communication, Students' lack of self-motivation, Slow internet speed, Costly etc. But many universities and the government of West Bengal are relentlessly trying to come up with a solution to resolve this problem.

KEYWORDS: challenges, online education, education system, corona crisis.

CITATION OF THE ARTICLE

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I. INTRODUCTION

At present, Covid-19 has caused a stir in the whole world. This has disrupted normal public life in the economic, political, social and educational spheres. Most academic heads are now promoting online education as a solution to this crisis (UNESCO, 2020). ''Never before have we witnessed educational disruption on such a large scale'' said UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay (2020). Higher education providers are become increasingly aware of the diversity of their current and potential learners. It is necessary to acknowledge the fact that online education is not solution like traditional education systems. It has created difficulties for millions of students in the world. So India, like the rest of the world, is trying to continue the education process online. But in developing countries like India, there are many problems in running the education process in the way. The state of West Bengal in India has a similar problem with students. The structure is essential for reading online, excluding the traditional environment in the classroom. The pandemic has been steering the education sector forward with technological innovation and advancements. The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector. Different countries worldwide have introduced various solutions during the pandemic to continue the education process. With the consideration to the fact the present study tries to illustrate the challenges of the state which are not as advanced in technology as the state blessed with high tech technology. Challenges of online education are reduced face-to-face support and   students encounter technical difficulties etc.

- **Objectives of the study**

The basic objectives of the study was-

1. To find out challenges of online Education during of Covid-19 in rural areas of West Bengal.

2. To find out challenges of Higher Education level during of Covid-19 in rural areas of West Bengal.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of related literature is an important aspect of any research report. Review of related literature for any research is important because it helps in locating the research gaps and provides outstanding information about the strategies to be used for carrying out the study. It renders valuable clues to investigator. The investigator needs to acquire up-to-date information about what has been thought and done in a particular area.

Salceanu (June 2020) have conducted a study on "Higher education challenges during covid-19 pandemic. a case study." The objectives of their study are to examine higher education challenges during covid-19 pandemic. The study was conducted online, with the aid of Google forms. The sample comprised 152 students, from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, from Ovidius University of Constanta. The students were all female, aged between 18 and 52 years old, from all levels of study. The ethics of the research were ensured by obtaining the consent of all the respondents to participate to this research. Results are discussed in relationship with educational outcomes and future directions of the educational activity during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic isolation period.

Jena (June 2020) have conducted a study on "Impact of Covid-19 on higher education in India." The objectives of their study are highlighting the impact of Covid-19 on higher education sector and enlighten various emerging approaches of India for higher education. Various reports of national and international agencies on Covid-19 pandemic are searched to collect data for current Study. This article highlights on major impacts of Covid-19 on HEIs in India. Some measures taken by HEIs and educational authorities of India to provide seamless educational services during the crisis are discussed. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, many new modes of learning, new perspectives, new trends are emerged and the same may continue as we go ahead to a new tomorrow. So, some of the post Covid-19 trends which may allow imagining new ways of teaching learning of higher education in India are outlined.

Alam (June 2020) have conducted a study on "Challenges and Possibilities of Online Education during Covid-19." The objectives of their study to find out alternatives to online class in these unprecedented days caused by corona pandemic across the globe. The study was qualitative in approach and data were collected from secondary sources i.e. different newspapers and journals in the recent times along with a mini interview with students of private universities studying in different subjects over mobile phone by the researcher. Findings of the study show that though online education has a number of challenges faced by two main stakeholders; students and teachers, handling all these challenges carefully can have the chance to create a positive atmosphere in the field of education as an alternative teaching learning resulting in positive outcomes in all regards.

Rapanta et.al. (July 2020) have conducted a study on "Online university teaching during and after the Covid-19 crisis: refocusing teacher presence and learning activity." The objectives of their study are to describing and find out online university teaching

during and after the Covid-19 crisis. Various reports of national and international agencies on Covid-19 pandemic are searched to collect data for current Study. Our findings point at the design of learning activities with certain characteristics, the combination of three types of presence and the need for adapting assessment to the new learning requirements. We end with a reflection on how responding to a crisis may precipitate enhanced teaching and learning practices in the post digital era.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was qualitative in approach and data were collected from secondary sources like books, Articles, Journals, thesis, University news, websites and e-contents relating to impact of Covid-19 on higher educational system of West Bengal. As it is shall not possible to go outside for data collection due to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown situation.

There are a many of challenges faced by students in online education in rural areas of West Bengal. Some of these challenges are:

Reduced face-to-face support: It is necessary to acknowledge the fact that online education is not solution like traditional education systems. It has created difficulties for millions of students in the world. So India, like the rest of the world, is trying to continue the education process online technology based learning. But in developing countries like India, there are many problems in running the education process in the way. The state of West Bengal in India has a similar problem with students. It is reduced face to face teaching learning systems.

Students encounter technical difficulties: Lack of computer education is a major concern. There are many students who still cannot operate basic computers with Ms Word, PowerPoint email, videos conferences etc. They become helpless if something technical errors come in the middle of the live classes or communicating with students, And whenever some technical difficulties, they find it difficult to solve the problem in such a scenario.

Lack of effective Communication: There are some students who feel shy to communicate with their teachers and friends due to the new model of online learning. Students lack effective communication skills during online learning. It might happen due to lack of interest, week technological skills with apps and via live chats etc.

Slow internet speed: In West Bengal internet speed is very slow. Slow internet connection plays an importance role many students cannot attend the class

and they miss any live sessions. There is a possibility of poor connectivity if you find difficulties in downloading some information related to the subjects, class related videos etc.

Costly: Online learning in its entirety is dependent on technological devices and internet but all are very costly. In West Bengal many more students' families who cannot afford to buy electronic devices. In this conditions many students not able to attend the online classes.

Students' lack of self-motivation: students start losing hope once they find difficulty in online learning. It requires motivation to complete tasks and engage students with their learning. Lack of self motivation is a common challenge for all students. They were not interested continue online classes like traditional classes.

Lack of group interaction: There many more students' are limited direct interaction with the teacher and other people doing the course. According to Dhirendra Kumar (2010), especially those courses which are self paced, there is very less discussion among the peers. Most of the discussion takes place through e mail, chat room or discussion groups. So, there are not able to develop any social links which do help in the career growth.

Assessment and supervision: After learning delivery here comes assessment where instructors measure learning activities to ascertain the instructional objectives through test, quiz and examination. Osterlind (2002), there exist numerous literatures on test and measurement theory and analysis with little details on planning, development and test items writing by instructors. In online learning, assessments are often carried online whereby instructors are limited to proxy supervision of learners making it impossible to regulate and control cheating (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015).

Suggestions:
Teachers and students should be trained to utilize online teaching-learning process using technology devices. Government or educational institutions should be providing free internet and free digital gadgets to all learners in order to encourage online learning systems. Students also need to be supported with better access to internet and technology as most students are unable to afford the facilities. During this pandemic, the Higher Education institutions should focus more on virtual educational activities including television, radio, web-based education and web lecture etc. Academic assessment of the students may be done through online mode. This paper has not covered any statistical analysis on impact of Covid-19 on higher education however further in-depth study with statistical research may also be undertaken.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study has outlined various challenges of online education in higher education level during the crisis of Covid-19 in West Bengal. Though it has created many challenges, various opportunities are also evolved. The West Bengal Govt. and different stakeholders of education have explored the possibility of online learning by adopting different digital technologies to cope up with the present crisis of Covid-19. West Bengal is not fully equipped to make education reach all corners of the nation via digital platforms. The students who aren't privileged like the others will suffer due to the present choice of digital platforms. But many universities and the government of West Bengal are relentlessly trying to come up with a solution to resolve this problem. The priority should be to utilize digital technology to create an advantageous position of young students in West Bengal. The recent pandemic created an opportunity for change in education approaches and introduction of online education in all levels of education. Online education is the most preferred mode of education at this time of crisis due to the outbreak of Covid-19. The post Covid-19 education seems to be an education with widely accepted online education which may perhaps be a parallel system of higher education level and overcome the barriers of online education.

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