



**EXTENDING THE PLATFORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION DURING COVID PANDEMIC: INGENUE OF E-LEARNING**

**Nishat Mehaboob and Samsujjaman\***

Dept of Education, University of Kalyani

**ARTICLE INFO**

**Article History:**

Received 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

Received in revised form 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2020

Accepted 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2020

Published online 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2021

**Key words:**

E-learning, Higher Education, Principle, Impact.

**ABSTRACT**

The corona virus COVID 19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War Two. The virus has spread to every continent except Antarctica. We are locked down. But stopping education system for a long time is not possible. We know, Man has become omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient by dint of success of modern technology. E-learning is the child of modern technology and it has become a modern and matured platform in the field of teaching. It has become a reliable and broad path for continuing teaching learning process in this epidemic situation. Globally, the higher educational institutions are accepting E-learning whole heartedly. In this study, researcher tries to present the concept of e-learning. For this study, researcher has used documentaries and online interviews. This study shows how E-learning plays the role of effective medium of instruction in higher education system in the present context. This study also shows the principles and the different types of e learning system and also focuses on the merits and demerits of that system. Researcher has also investigated the impact of COVID 19 on education and explains expected changes on education post COVID 19.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The world today is facing the biggest public health risk which is leading to one of the largest and quickest reorganization of the world order. By the end of March 2020, the pandemic had spread across the globe. Despite Governments around the world imposing extended periods of lockdown in a bid to contain the spread of COVID 19, every sector is affected. World Economy has collapsed. Many people have already lost their jobs. Education is no exception. One of the worst hit by COVID 19 has been the education sector. All academic institutions are closed. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the COVID 19 pandemic has led to the closure of schools in 188 countries, affecting more than 1.5 billion students and 63 million primary and secondary teachers worldwide. But we are blessed with our Science and Technology. E learning is a blessing in our education system. E-Learning is learning, utilizing electronic technologies to access educational curriculum outside of a traditional classroom. ” According to Ellis, Ginns, & Piggott (2009) “E-learning is defined as information and communication technologies used to support students to improve their learning” Through this E learning system, students and teachers are connected intensely. Mr. Atanu Biswas, Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata said to the

news agency INDIAN EXPRESS “In the meantime, digital education has emerged as a clear winner during this pandemic around the world. We, at different universities and institutions in India, are also trying to teach our students by various online modes.” During this pandemic, E learning is the only bridge between the teachers and the students. Maintaining lockdown and social distancing, it helps to study through Internet. But such online teaching creates a digital divide among students as many have limited or no internet access and many students are not able to afford a desktop computer or laptop at home. That’s why the E learning during epidemic of COVID 19 has also a negative impact on education. Researcher has investigated on the positive and negative impacts of E Learning during COVID 19 on higher education.

**Objectives:** The objectives of the study are as follows-

- Explaining the concept of E learning.
- Illustrating the types of E-learning.
- Investigating the positive and negative impacts of E learning on higher education during epidemic of COVID 19.
- Investigating expected positive changes in education post COVID 19.

**Research Question**

- What is the concept of E learning?
- What are the types of E learning?

\*Corresponding author: **Samsujjaman**  
Dept of Education, University of Kalyani

- What are the positive and negative impacts of E learning on higher education during epidemic of COVID 19?
- What will be the expected positive changes in education post COVID 19?

## METHODOLOGY

This is an empirical study. Researcher has used documentaries like articles, online journals, research papers, news papers as secondary data and took online interviews as primary data.

### Concept of E-Learning

E-Learning is learning utilizing electronic technologies to access educational curriculum outside of a traditional classroom. In most cases, it refers to a course, program or degree delivered completely online. In simple language, E-learning is defined as learning that is enabled electronically. E learning is conducted on the internet where the students can access their learning materials online at any place and time. E learning also takes place in the form of online courses, online degrees or online programs.

### Definitions of e learning

- According to Koochang & Harman( 2005) :“E-learning is the delivery of education (all activities relevant to instructing, teaching, and learning) through various electronic media”
- E-learning portal (2009) states: “E-learning is the use of technology to deliver learning and training programs”.
- According to González-Videgaray (2007): “E-learning is learning based on information and communication technologies with pedagogical interaction between students and the content, students and the instructors or among students through the web”
- Ministry of Communication and Technology of New Zealand (2008):“E-learning is defined as learning facilitated by the use of digital tools and content that involves some form of interactivity, which may include online interaction between the learner and their teacher or peers”
- Ellis, Ginns, & Piggott( 2009):“E-learning is defined as information and communication technologies used to support students to improve their learning”

### Types of E-Learning

E learning can be classified on the basis of these followings-

#### On the basis of Means of Communication

There are several different means for the individuals to communicate with each other and with their instructor.

1. **Fully online** -E-learning can be conducted solely through online applications.
2. **Blended learning** -Blended learning is a combination of offline (face-to-face, traditional learning) and online learning. It provides individuals with the opportunity to enjoy the best of both worlds. Blended learning is also referred to as hybrid learning.

#### On the basis of Schedule

E learning either be synchronous and asynchronous.

**Synchronous:** Synchronous eLearning is real-time learning. In synchronous learning, the learners and the teacher are online and interact at the same time from different locations. They deliver and receive the learning resources via mobile, video conference, Internet or chat. In this type of learning the participants can share their ideas during the session and interact with each other and they get detailed queries and solutions. Synchronous eLearning is gaining popularity because of improved technology and Internet bandwidth capabilities. Examples – Virtual classroom, chat, webinar etc.

**Asynchronous E-learning-**Asynchronous eLearning is pause-and-resume kind of learning. In this type of eLearning the learner and the teacher cannot be online at same time. Asynchronous eLearning may use technologies such as email, blogs, discussion forums, E-book’s CDs, DVDs, etc. Learners may learn at any time, download documents, and chat with teachers & also with co-learners. In fact, many learners prefer asynchronous instead of synchronous learning because learners can take online courses to learn at their preferable time by not affecting their daily Examples- Self-paced online courses, discussion forum and group, message board.

#### On the basis of E learning class structure

E learning class structure refers to how the instructions are administered.

1. **Self paced e learning** – Here instructions or learning materials are given to the learner, she herself complete the instruction or training.
2. **Instruction-led e-learning**-Instruction-led learning system provides the learner a guide to implement the instruction.
3. **Self study with an expert**-Self study with expert e learning is a combination of

#### Role of E-Learning in Higher Education During Epidemic Covid 19

Covid 19 is impacting on almost every sector of our society, Education is not the exception. By the end of March, 2020, the epidemic had spread to over 185 countries and resulted in the closure of over 90 percent of all schools, colleges and universities impacting close to 1.38 billion students. Exams, Students’ admission process are postponed. Though many higher educational institutions have already started to giving instructions through online. This online system of education or E learning during this pandemic has a major impact on the education system as well as on the students. Those are discussed below-

#### Positive Impacts of COVID 19 on Education

There are positive impacts on education. Those are following-

- **Maintaining social distancing**-E Learning helps to maintain social distancing and lock down during this pandemic situation .It helps too much in this situation.
- **Use of Technology**- This situation is helping us to get in touch of technology which is very much effective for students and teachers also.
- **Availability of E books**-For availability of the E books, our requirement for books also fulfilling.
- **Helps in maintaining good mental health**-This pandemic situation, everyone is suffering from anxiety

and stress. For the blessings of E learning, students are engaged in their study work. Hence E learning helps them to get free from all those anxiety, tensions and make them mentally stable.

- **Faster delivery-** The study materials reach to students very fast.
- **Learn with own pace-**Every student is individually different. Here students learn with own pace. You can even build different learning paths into your course, providing learners with a more personalized experience.
- **Flexible time table-** Students can access E learning materials in their flexible time.

#### **Negative Impacts of COVID 19 on Education**

- **Sluggish cross-border movement of students:** Universities in many countries such as Australia, UK, New Zealand, and Canada are highly dependent on the movement of students from China and India. It is becoming clear that this cross-border movement of students will take a beating at least for the next two to three years and will lead to a major financial risk for universities in these countries who are already under financial pressure. Many parents will avoid sending students abroad for higher education due to high risk from the pandemic.
- **Passive learning by students:** The sudden shift to online learning without any planning -- especially in countries like India where the backbone for online learning was not ready and the curriculum was not designed for such a format -- has created the risk of most of our students becoming passive learners and they seem to be losing interest due to low levels of attention span.
- **Changing format of student admission:** Universities and colleges worldwide are facing a major risk in the area of student admission .The risk of losing students is so high that they will need to re-look at their admission practices, admission criteria and the overall recruitment process itself which will include, new methods of outreach and application process itself.
- **Digital Divide:** In India, many people are losing their jobs. Migrate labors are suffering. India's economy is collapsing day by day. Hence, the families also suffering from poor economy. Added to this is that we may be leaving a large proportion of the student population untouched due to the digital divide that is part of many developing nations including India.
- **Technological and Networking Problems:** Sometimes the problem of Technology's equipments makes barriers to that E learning. Not only that many students who live in villages, their Phones' network connection is not good. That's why they cannot enjoy the opportunities of E learning.
- **Private institutions making business:** According to Atanu Biswas, Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata "several schools and even private coaching centers and music schools have entered into the business of online teaching."
- **Health-Related Concerns:** E-learning requires the use of a computer and other such devices; this means that eyestrain, bad posture, and other physical problems may affect the learner.

- **Problem in online assessments:** Compared to on-campus students, online students can cheat on assessments more easily as they take assessments in their own environment and while using their personal computer.
- **E-Learning is limited to certain disciplines:** All educational disciplines are not created equal and not all study fields can be effectively used in e-learning. For now, at least. E-Learning tends to be more suitable for social science and humanities, rather than scientific fields such as medical science and engineering which require a certain degree of hands-on practical experience.

#### **Expected positive changes in education post covid-19**

We can assume that the impact of COVID 19 will stay for a long time. We have to make changes among everything to adopt with the new world, especially in Education .We have to switch over to good digitalized world. We have to prepare ourselves to bring the best of online education into the classrooms and give the students a powerful learning experience.

- **Rise in Blended Learning:** The higher education institutions will follow the system of Blended learning. Teachers and students will have to trained in technology .New system will open immense opportunities for a major transformation in the area of curriculum development and pedagogy.
- **Learning management systems to be the new norm:** A great opportunity will open up for those companies that have been developing and strengthening learning management systems for use by universities and colleges.
- **Improvement in learning material:** There is a great opportunity for universities and colleges to start improving the quality of the learning material that is used in the teaching and learning process. And the learning materials will be on hardcopy and softcopy also.
- **Rise in collaborative work:** There is a new opportunity where collaborative teaching and learning can take on new forms. Collaborations can also happen among faculty/teachers across the nation to benefit from each other.
- **Training of teachers will be qualitatively different:** All the teachers should have to be trained for online teaching as well. They should have equal potential in online and offline teaching-learning process.
- **Learning programs to keep students engaged:** Physical classrooms give a high degree of interactivity with the teacher and also among students. Educators will have to bring in a lot of innovations to bring in the element of interactivity and collaboration in their E learning modules.

#### **CONCLUSION**

There is a huge scope of E-learning in India, especially in higher education. E-learning has opened new avenues to education in India. Many of the universities and colleges are conducting their course online and also provide certificate in online. The e-learning scenario in India is still growing and at an experimental stage. We were not ready for this pandemic

situation of COVID 19. Hence, when academic institutions were shut down, E learning was the only key to continue teaching-learning process. A complete revolution in the way we learn today has been brought about by technology. Each student gets in contact with a world-class education, which is not easy to impart by the traditional white chalk and blackboard method of teaching. This new learning is more interesting, personalized and enjoyable. E-learning is so much effective. But there are huge digital divides which need to be bridged on an urgent basis. Not only that, our poor economic condition is a barrier to get e learning successfully all over the State. For removing this situation in future we provide proper hardware, improved software, internet connection, proper guidance etc. We know man is the most developed life on earth. When human being comes in front of challenges, we always win. We must win from this pandemic also. From this battle of existence, we must learn so many things and get many experiences which will be our resource of life.

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### How to cite this article:

Nishat Mehaboob and Samsujjaman (2021) 'Extending the Platform of Higher Education during COVID Pandemic: Ingenu of E-Learning', *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*, 10(01), pp. 23621-23624.  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijcar.2021.23624.4683>

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