

A study on perception of teachers and students toward online classes in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi District

Teacher and student perceptions on online classes

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Abstract

Purpose – The study aims at analyzing the perception of teachers and students about online classes. The work tries to explain the opinions of students as regards the impact of online courses, their comfortability in its usage, and the support received from teachers in online classes along with teachers' opinions on efficacy, teaching practice followed and training received for an online class.

Design/methodology/approach – The analysis was carried out using the data collected through two separate structured questionnaires for students and teachers in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi District in Karnataka. Data were recorded in SPSS and analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

Findings – The study reveals that students are comfortable with online classes and are getting enough support from teachers but they do not believe that online classes will replace traditional classroom teaching. It also finds that teachers are facing difficulties in conducting online classes due to a lack of proper training and development for doing online classes. Technical issues are the major problem for the effectiveness of the online classes.

Practical implications – Most of the colleges think of implementing online classes in their courses. Hence, it becomes essential to obtain the opinions of participants of online classes before applying for it. This study may help colleges to get a general view of online classes among teachers and students.

Originality/value – Internet and new technologies gained importance in all fields including the education sector which gave scope for online classes. In addition to this, the COVID pandemic worldwide has also added to the relevance of online classes. In this light, it is necessary to understand student-teacher perceptions regarding online classes.

Keywords Online class, Teacher, Student, Perception, Online tools

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Change is constant and inevitable; therefore, anything in this world tends to be obsolete with every new advancement or development, and intelligence lies in the ability to adapt to change. E-learning is primarily referred to as the use of technology and network communication for teaching and learning. It is also referred to as a technology-enabled transfer of skills and knowledge to a large number of recipients (Economic Times, 2020). It is one such fastest growing trend in the educational uses of technology (Means *et al.*, 2013). The advent of the Internet and the world wide web has led educational institutions to change their learning techniques to meet the user demands in providing an ideal learning environment (Xu and



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Ebojoh, 2007). An online class is a system where students can learn subjects, discuss issues with fellow students, clarify doubts with instructor and share material and check academic progress with help from internet-oriented technologies. Today, online classes are becoming so popular that they are likely to be expected in any formal education curriculum.

Moreover, increase in the COVID pandemic worldwide has also added to the importance of online classes. In India, there are more than 370m users are on the Internet and helping online education to grow at a fast pace. At present, more than 3bn users are using the e-learning platform (Arora, 2017). Growing CAGR percentage of online education in India is approximately 19% by 2020 (Technavio's market research analyst prediction). According to the recent report of Coursera, one of the world's largest online education providers, out of 18m registered learners, 1.3m users are from India, making it the third-largest market for online learning after the US and China. Even though we witness rapid progress in e-learning, it remains at an early stage of development. In this scenario, the role played by teachers and students gains due importance as it is their perceptions and attitude, which is critical to motivation and learning (Koohang and Durante, 2003). Ultimately it is the acceptance of students and teachers that helps in reaping the benefits of online classes. With this regard, the study tries to analyze the perceptions of teachers and students on the effectiveness of online courses over traditional classroom learning.

2. Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to analyze the perception of teachers and students about online classes. This research tries to explain the opinions of students on the impact, comfortability and support of teachers in an online course, along with teachers' views on efficacy, teaching practice and training for an online class.

3. Literature review

The popularity of online classes in recent years leads to an increased number of online course offerings by schools and colleges (Beatty and Ulasewicz, 2006; Li and Akins, 2005). In addition to this, technological advancement and student demand in online classes (Bennett and Lockyer, 2004; Britt, 2006) have influenced colleges and universities to implement online classes along with the normal course. Here the noteworthy point is online classes are not compelled to schools to implement it but is considered as a modern tool for handling issues during the learning process (Agustina and Cahyono, 2017).

Most of the universities are planning to invest in internet-based class and on recruiting and training faculty to teach online (Floyd, 2003; Koehler *et al.*, 2004). One of the surveys suggests that online teachings will continue to increase significantly in educational as well as the corporate organization in future coming years (Meyen *et al.*, 2002). Because of all these developments in education it is believed that online-based teaching is interactive (Johnston *et al.*, 2005) and online teaching creates environments where students actively engage with the material and learn by practical activity (Palloff and Pratt, 2013) and also refers to their understanding as they build new knowledge. Moreover, in the past decades, online classes are gaining so much importance all over the world, and it shifts the thought of colleges that "Online class is an Optional" to "Online class is necessary" (Larreamendy-Joems and Leinhardt, 2006).

Many colleges implement online teaching in their course without proper planning, but they first introduced for faculty development program (Abhinandan, 2018). The Internet has enabled the delivery of instruction at a lower cost than in face-to-face classroom teaching; thus, it provides more opportunities for learners to take courses (Murday *et al.*, 2008). Many research was conducted to examine the behavior of teachers and students toward the online

class. It observed that the main reasons for taking an online class by the students were “flexibility” and “self-control” within the learning environment, and they also perceived that online class would be a convenient method of teaching compared to traditional classroom learning. Here convenience based in terms “Price” and “self-directed learning” (Armstrong, 2011) and students from the traditional method of schooling have feelings about the social aspects involved in online courses, but online students have had positive experiences – though the online courses have not always met their expectations in learning aspects and that both the learners perceive online learning as convenient though not necessarily conducive to their learning. Schools and colleges must consider the impact of online classes when online classes play an important role in the learning process (Burns, 2013).

Even though students are the positive side of an online class, but other participants of an online class, i.e. teachers, have mixed opinions about online class. Teachers should analyze what is currently presented and what is the better way to present the way to subject to a complete understanding of course by examining “Faculty perceptions,” “training,” “mentoring,” and “best practices” (Agustina and Cahyono, 2017; Dja’far *et al.*, 2016). Many faculties opined that through faculty development program one can become an effective online instructor and he/she can develop best career journey as mentorship (Billings and Kowalski, 2008), and Conrad and Donaldson (2004) highlighted the importance of building a sense of community in online teaching from teachers’ perspective. There is much research that supports the point of “Training and Development” for an effective conducting of online class (DiPietro *et al.*, 2008). According to Ballew (2017), 74% of the online instructor of K-12 opined that the promotion development program must be added to the school program to enhance the teaching ability of the instructor.

There are many researches explain that the limitations of online classes, which say that online classes are convenient, less costly and easy to access, so these factors made differences between online learning and face-to-face learning many students who are successful in the traditional classroom (Kebritchi *et al.*, 2017) are not equally as successful in an online class (Cheung and Kan, 2002; Tucker, 2001). In fact, students with a GPA score of less than 2.9 succeeded more in an online class than students with GPA scores of more than 2.9 (Sugilar, 2017). Many students believed that degrees obtained through online classes are not valid as much as a traditional method of classroom teaching. This may affect the desire of students to enroll in online courses. So, there is a need for awareness programs regarding the importance of online learning (Allen and Seaman, 2010; Bejerano, 2008).

For the effective conducting of an online class, there is a need of skills that students may need to handle online classes, such as: ability to learn revised learning practices, capacity to develop new vocabulary and ability to discuss with teacher in patience (Eastmond, 1995; Gibbson, 1998; Kearsley, 2000). From all these reviews, it observed that there is a need for the study in the area of perception of teachers and students in online classes. After the outbreak of COVID 19 in the entire world, the online classes became compulsory for education institutions. Therefore, a survey was conducted to collect opinions of both tutor and pupil about online classes.

4. Research methodology

This study investigated the student-teachers’ perception of an online class in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka. This study utilized a descriptive quantitative design to obtain the opinions of the respondents. The respondents of this study consisted of all the postgraduate and graduate students and teachers from different colleges in two districts. It identified that around 10,000 students are pursuing their course in these colleges. Teachers and students were selected for this study on a random basis. These students and teachers are from different academic fields like arts, science, commerce and humanities. The

population also diversified in demographic profiles like age, gender and native place. Yates formula was used to select sample size from the total population. Simple random sampling techniques were used for the selection of the sample. The sample size consists of 68 teachers and 203 students from different colleges in the research area. This research study conducted two surveys; one is to the student population and the other to the teacher population.

Five-point Likert scale was used to collect the opinion of both teachers and students in the online class. Five-point Likert scale indicates with one being strongly disagreed and five being strongly agreed. After constructing a questionnaire, to know the feasibility of the questionnaire, a pilot study conducted and reviewed the questionnaire. A survey instrument with demographic questions for students, demographic questions for instructors, questions for students regarding perceptions of “Impact,” “Comfortability” and “Support from the teacher” and for instructors related to perceptions of “Teaching Practice,” “efficacy” and “Training and Development” was available. Questionnaires were distributed to participants by using Google form, and participants were informed that all opinions provided by them were kept confidential. The data were collected and recorded in a systematic way, later analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Collected data were categorized into demographic information, perception and tools used. Secondary sources are used for reviewing the concept and supporting the findings.

5. Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic details of both teachers and students were collected to know their background like gender, education, number of years of offline and online teaching experience of teachers and gender, course pursuing, number of years in the online class of students. The following table explains the demographic background of the respondents.

Table 1 indicates the demographic profile of the respondents, which shows that females are major in respondents, i.e. teachers = 39(57.4%) and in students = 141(69.5%). Majority of the teachers (63.2%) are conducting online classes, and 73.9% of students are taking online courses. The majority of the teachers (45.7%) have a post graduation degree with NET qualification, and 60.9% of the respondents are young faculty having teaching experience less than five years. 80% of the teachers are conducting an online class for the first time because, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, it made most of the teachers start to take online

Teachers' demographic profile		N (%)	Students' demographic profile		N (%)	
Gender	Male	29 (42.6)	Gender	Male	62 (30.5)	
	Female	39 (57.4)		Female	141 (69.5)	
Age (Years)	Below 29	45 (66.2)	Course pursuing	Commerce	114 (56.16)	
	30-49	21 (30.9)		Science	43 (21.18)	
	50 and above	1 (1.5)		Arts	30 (14.78)	
Teaching experience (Years)	0-5	44 (64.7)	Taking online class	Yes	150 (73.9)	
	6-10	18 (26.5)		No	53 (26.1)	
	11-15	2 (2.9)		Computer knowledge	High	138 (67.9)
	16-20	4 (5.9)			Medium	60 (29.6)
Conducting online class	Yes	43 (63.2)	Low	5 (2.5)		
	No	25 (36.8)				
Online teaching experience (Years)	1	35 (81.4)				
	1-2	7 (16.3)				
	3-5	1 (2.3)				

Table 1.
Demographic profile of the respondents

Source(s): Primary Data

classes. Responses were collected from the students of different fields of study where commerce students (56.6%) participated most in the survey. For making online classes, computer knowledge or Internet knowledge is essential. Therefore the researcher asked the students about the level of expertise in computer handling. The result showed that the majority of the students (67.9%) had a high level of computer knowledge.

6. Tools used for online class

There are enormous numbers of online class tools available in the market. Some of the tools are free, and some of the tools are premium. To know the popular tools used among participants, the researcher were asked to mention the tools they used for their online classes. For this question, participants can specify more than one option. The result of the matter are depicted in the following figure (Figure 1).

From the above chart, we can quickly identify that among the many popular online tools available in India “Google classroom” is the most used ($N = 107$) and preferred tools for an online class in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada District. “Zoom App” is considered the second most popular ($N = 86$) and preferred tool for an online class. Even though Skype is the most popular online tool for communication, but here it is considered least using tools ($N = 3$). Here the interesting fact is that many academicians are using social network tools (WhatsApp) for online classes. This analysis explains that easy and convenient tools are used for online class irrespective of their purpose.

7. Students’ perception of online class

It is students whose opinion matters most in the education system. Online classes may become a chunk of the future education system, but it cannot be carried for the future unless students accept it. Therefore, the survey asked students about comfortability, support from teachers and the impact of online class on their studies. To observe the selected variables, a questionnaire was constructed by asking statements on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to evaluate our survey instrument. We performed EFA separately for “Impact,” “Comfortability,” and “Support.” Using eigenvalues more significant than one as the criterion (Hayton *et al.*, 2004), each of the variables suggests a one-factor solution. After that, we removed items with factor loadings below 0.50.

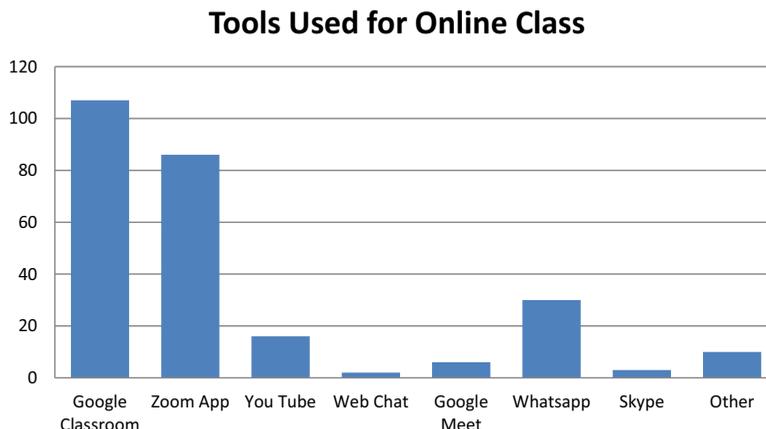


Figure 1. Tools used for online class

Next, internal reliability tests were conducted for each variable based on the final items retained (Table 3). EFA explains what items represent selected factors, and it suggests the removal of non-representation items for the factor. Table 2 explains the percentage of variance defined by each item and communality value.

Initially, in the questionnaire, we asked five statements related to “Impact of Online Class,” Seven statements related to “Comfortability,” and six statements that represent “Support.” EFA was conducted to reduce the number of items that less explains the respective factors. While doing the analysis, it finds that in the “Impact” factor, three statements describe 90.062% of the factor; therefore, the researcher removed other items. Here the value of communality, which explains us the extent of variance is considered for extracted factor (If the communality value less than 0.5 it would be removed from the factor). In the case of “Comfortability” out of seven items, three items explain 72.679% of the factor with communality value more than 0.5, and in “Support from the teacher” out of seven items, three statements describe 88.184% of the element, after conducting an EFA researcher conducted to reliability test for selected items of factor. Reliability analysis was undertaken to know the consistency in opinions among scale data. If the Cronbach’s alpha values more than 0.6, then it is considered as reliable data; otherwise, there is a need for improvisation of data either by transformation or collecting more data. Table 3 shows the result of the reliability test.

This table explains that the internal reliability of each selected item is more than the standard alpha value (0.6); therefore, it can say that the opinions from the respondents are reliable. Table 4 explains students’ perception of the impact of an online class, comfortability and support from eachers for an online class. According to Eastmond (1995), students’ comprehension, mindset and attitude toward online classes are essential aspects for the

Factor	Statements retained	% Of variance explained	Communality
Impact	I have a positive impact on my studies due to online class	73.349	0.843
	Online classes have increased my technological literacy	9.152	0.829
Comfortability	I feel online classes help me to gain more knowledge	7.561	0.877
	I feel comfortable using online learning tools	39.520	0.662
	I feel learning is same in class and at home on the Internet	24.963	0.721
Support from Teacher	I find it hard to stick to a study schedule of the online course	8.196	0.725
	I receive enough support and resources from my teacher	71.616	0.530
	My teacher encourages discussion in an online class	9.444	0.690
	My teacher sets guidelines for effective communication and interaction in an online class	7.124	0.760

Table 2.
Exploratory factor analysis

Items	Initial number of items	Number of items retained	Cronbach’s alpha
Impact of online class	5	3	0.858
Comfortability of online class	7	3	0.607
Support from teacher	6	3	0.822

Table 3.
Reliability analysis

success of online teaching. It is crucial to create an opportunity for outside interaction between faculty and students (Levine, 2005) to increase the motivation of students to learn. On this behalf, the researcher identifies the perception of students on three critical questions like impact of online class on students, is online class comfortable to students and whether students get enough support from teachers.

From the results of the descriptive statistics, it explains that students opined that an online class has a significant impact on their learning style ($M = 3.53$), and they also agreed that they get support from the teacher in online class like getting good reading material and also clarifying their doubt through online tools ($M = 3.65$). But students do not believe that an online class replaces the traditional face-to-face classroom teaching, and they feel that online courses are not comfortable when compared to the conventional method of teaching ($M = 2.93$). This is because online classes are in its infancy in an educational institution, especially in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada District. While analyzing each item of the students' perception, it is observed that it can be divided into two aspects, i.e. (1) positive perception and (2) negative perception. A positive attitude is based on all positive beliefs of students towards online class, and negative perception is based on all negative feelings or demerits of an online course. These classifications are explained below,

(1) Positive perception:

The positive statements like "I have a positive impact on my studies due to online classes, "I feel comfortable using online learning tools" and "I receive enough support and resources from my teacher" make one aspect, i.e. positive perception. Here we considered all positive statements in one group and calculated combined mean for that group and result showed in Table 5, which says that online classes increase technological literacy ($M = 3.23$). Teachers encourage students to complete their homework ($M = 3.55$).

(2) Negative perception:

Negative statements like, "I cannot concentrate longer time for online classes" ($M = 3.13$), "I feel puzzled and frustrated with the content delivered in online classes" ($M = 3.27$) and "Teachers are facing difficulty in the retention of students" ($M = 3.41$) make negative perception. A combined mean of positive perception and negative perception (Table 5) tells us students perceived online classes as positive with a mean value of 3.9017, which is higher than negative perception mean value ($M = 2.7907$). Therefore, overall, students have definite opinions about online classes. Still, when we consider individually, students have a great

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Impact	150	1.00	5.00	3.5333	0.86828
Comfortability	150	1.00	5.00	2.9300	0.95191
Support from teacher	150	1.00	5.00	3.6533	0.82930
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	150				

Table 4.
Descriptive statistics of students' perception

Descriptive statistics	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive perception	150	1.25	5.63	3.9017	0.81391
Negative perception	150	1.40	4.50	2.7907	0.51778
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	150				

Table 5.
Combined mean of positive and negative perception

precise idea about “Impact” and “Support from the teacher” than “Comfortability” (See [Table 4](#)).

8. Teachers’ perception of online class

The other important pillar of online teaching is teacher. Their interest and skills in handling online classes are essential aspects. How did teachers perceive online classes, whether teachers are capable of handling online classes, these are the questions that arise before implementing it because some of the faculty members may not always have the competency to teach courses online ([Sims et al., 2002](#)). A cultural background constructs a different perception among teachers ([Buddhini and Charlotte, 2016](#)). Therefore, the researcher felt that it is not unfair to collect opinions of both the participants, i.e. students and teachers. In addition to demographic information, the survey asked about the teachers’ perception of their teaching practices, their general self-efficacy in teaching and technology and the professional development they received and expected to win. The items like “Teaching Practice” “Training and Development” and “Efficacy” are collected through five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. These items analyzed with detailed description are given by [Lin and Zheng \(2015\)](#). After collecting data, the researcher conducted an internal reliability test that was done for seven items of “Teaching Practice,” 5 items of “Efficacy,” and six items of “Training and Support” variables, and elements of each variable showed Cronbach’s value more than 0.6. As this questionnaire was well-constructed and verified in the previous research, [Lin and Zheng \(2015\)](#), the researcher directly did the descriptive analysis. The result of the descriptive study is depicted in [Table 6](#).

From the results of the descriptive statistics, it appeared to us that teachers agree with the teaching practices they follow with a mean score of 3.6085, and they also believed that they have very much confidence in the effectiveness of online classes they conducted ($M = 3.4093$). But they are not satisfied with the training and support given by the institution. This result shows that teachers attended online classes without training or less training, and they are satisfied with their performance. Teachers communicating with their students regularly to engage them ($M = 3.81$) is the frequently used teaching practice along with “*I help students make connections between content and their lives,*” which has a mean score of 3.63 ($N = 43$). For the effectiveness of an online class, most of the teachers set guidelines for communication and interaction ($M = 4.07$) so that no student misuse the online platform. Teachers rated average for professional development on organizing and structuring instructional content ($M = 2.79$) and professional development on online classroom management. By considering all statements for analysis, it was found that it can divide into positive perception and negative perception. The result of the combined mean of positive perception and negative perception are shown in [Table 7](#).

When considering the overall opinions of teachers about online class, it indicates that teachers have mixed opinions. The combined mean of negative perception ($M = 3.3953$) is more than the combined way of negative perception (3.2767). Even though the difference between the two is not significant, teachers have their reasons for disliking online classes. Some of the respondents expressed their opinion in the open-ended question, stating that they

Descriptive statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teaching practice	43	3.17	4.33	3.6085	0.33705
Efficacy	43	1.80	5.00	3.4093	0.78310
Training and support	43	1.00	4.17	2.8605	0.72185
Valid N (listwise)	43				

Table 6.

Descriptive statistics for teaching practice, efficacy and training and support

believe that “online class will increase unemployment or reduce the demand of teachers,” “Online class failed to fill the emotional attachment between teacher and student,” “Without providing proper infrastructure facility it is challenging to conduct online class” and they also opined that “It is challenging to conduct an online class for practical subjects.” Conclusively we can say that teachers are not supporting for implementing online classes without proper training and proper infrastructure facilities like network and computers.

9. Reasons for not conducting/preferring online class

However, online classes are value-added techniques for the modern education system and which has future prospectus. Many teachers and students do not believe in this aspect or not comfortable in an online class. Therefore, the survey asked reasons to teachers ($N = 25$) and students ($N = 53$) who were not conducting or preferring online classes.

Table 8 shows that the main reasons for teachers not conducting online classes are “Due to technical issues” and “Teacher believed that the Traditional Method of Teaching is a better method for effective teaching. In addition to this, some teachers also opined that they do not feel secure in private online tools like the Zoom app. They also believe that in an online class it is challenging to have an emotional attachment with students and vice versa.

Students’ participation is an essential aspect of the successful implementation of online classes in the current education system. Many students believe that an online class has great transformation for the education system, and they prefer it because of its time and location flexibility and broad knowledge base. But some more students believe that online class cannot reach them, and they also stated reasons for rejection of online class. Table 9 explains the reasons for not taking online classes from the students’ perspective.

Descriptive statistics	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive perception	43	2.50	4.10	3.2767	0.36242
Negative perception	43	2.13	4.25	3.3953	0.39522
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	43				

Table 7.
Combined mean of positive and negative perception (teachers’ perception)

Reasons	<i>N</i> (%)
I have never come across the need of online class	6 (35.3)
Institution not ordered to do online class	5 (29.4)
I do not know how to conduct online class (no proper Training)	3 (17.6)
I believe the traditional method of teaching is a better method for effective teaching	7 (41.2)
Due to technical issues (like network, power, not having smartphone/computer)	8 (47.1)
It is highly impossible to conduct an online class for my subject	2 (11.8)

Table 8.
Reasons for not conducting online class (Teachers’ Perception)

Reasons	<i>N</i> (%)
I do not feel online class as effective as classroom learning	28 (82.4)
I am not comfortable using online tools	7 (20.6)
I have never come across the need for an online class	1 (2.9)
It is difficult for me to grasp the online learning system	13 (38.2)
I lack infrastructure (smartphone, laptops, Internet connection, etc.) required to access online classes	13 (38.2)

Table 9.
Reasons for not preferring online class (students’ perception)

Students opined that online class is not an effective method as classroom learning (82.4%), and they also have the opinion that it is complicated for them to grasp the online learning system. It observed from both teacher and students' views that lack of infrastructure for an online class like availability of smartphone or laptop and network issues are the major problem or reasons for the insignificance of online class among respondents.

10. Conclusion and recommendation

Online learning is an exciting new way to learn about almost anything. It has bought a positive impact on the lives of students as well as teachers. The increasing use of technology in the field of learning has improved the quality of education. Both students and teachers have optimistic views about online classes. However, there is always much room for improvement as far as online learning goes.

It is evident that online learning has more significant benefits like it fills the gap of literacy rate by reaching to the rural areas (Ritimoni, 2018). Still, to effectively implement in a country like India, certain things have to be taken note of. This includes strengthening infrastructure facilities, improvement in Internet connectivity, development of rural areas, bringing changes in the attitude of students and teachers, etc. Colleges and other educational institutions are required to provide excellent training and support to both student and teachers regarding the usage of online classes that helps in increasing their comfortability. "No Smartphones or Laptop" is one of the major problems of rural students, and Network issues also add to the problem for rural teachers and students. One of the major problems faced by students from a rural area is teachers need to observe the transition in their roles, i.e. from merely being a transmitter of knowledge to the designer of the educational process. In traditional classroom learning, students are always said to be spoon-fed, but online classes necessitate a learner-centered environment that requires students to be self-motivated and self-directed. Colleges and teachers need to put any effort into changing the mindset of students. To achieve this goal, colleges or government has to take training and development programs to teachers as well as students regularly.

The study also proved that e-learning has a more significant role to play in the future, but it cannot be a replacement to traditional face-to-face classroom learning. A complete transition to online learning is quite tricky. However, we cannot ignore the benefits derived from e-learning. As such, there is a need to understand the obstacles that come in the way of accepting online learning and take corrective measures to overcome it.

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