



## Online Education in India during Covid 19: A SWOT Analysis.

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### Abstract:

The major objective of this paper is to recognize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of online learning in the education system based on current analysis and literature available. In order to maintain the social distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, all the educational centers have been suspended nationwide. As a result, the trend toward online education system intensifies and has been growing speedily with the confluence of new technologies, and intensifying demand for the need of an hour. In contrast, the support by phone or online classes can be challenging for some young people due to lack of access to the resources, along with mental health support provided by face-to-face services offered by offline classes. This article documents the SWOT analysis with respect to the impact of both quantity and quality of online education due to this pandemic situation in India.

**Keywords:** E-Learning, COVID 19, SWOT, Educational System, Innovation.

### Introduction:

Online education system takes place over the internet which is catalyzing by a blend of pedagogical shifts and changing the way our approach towards teaching and learning [1]. The online education system is riddled with technology which offers the learner a flexible online delivery module that can be excess anytime, anywhere and brings the ability of performance possibilities during the course work [2]. To maintain the social distancing under the pandemic situation caused by COVID 19, all the institutes nationwide adopt online or e-education model for regular courses like distance learning. These changes in the education the delivery system has been very rapid and transformational that immense interest among all stakeholders. Moreover, the advent of the internet and the World Wide Web (www) has already been popularized online or blended learning among individuals at remote locations. In addition, e-education facilitates both asynchronous and synchronous educational delivery tools with access to online discussion boards, chat rooms, and video conferencing [3].

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With the advancement of technology-based information and communication tools (ICT), online learning becomes more economical, feasible and operational [4]. The rich and diverse history of online education has produced a substantial body for research, by examining different aspects of online education. In addition, to fulfill today's educational need the trend toward online learning intensifies, however, the overall efficiency of these online classes to attain the course outcomes has also been evaluated. The present paper describes the strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of the online education system.

### **Background:**

Today's "online" education started from the 1990s with the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web. Due to the confluence of new technologies, online education in its various modes has been growing steadily worldwide. E-education becomes one of the vital ways to make available resources for research and learning for both teachers and students to share and acquire information [5]. However, the comparison of online versus offline learning is no doubt of substantial interest to educators and the focus of numerous studies. As a preference for online learning increases, mostly due to the convenience and flexibility it offers students, universities find themselves increasing the number of online format courses to meet the growing demand. However, the question remains whether the delivery format of a course, *i.e.* online versus offline, impacts student performance, satisfaction, and learning.

The development of multimedia and information technologies has made radical changes in the traditional process of teaching [6] which generated more choices for today's education [7]. Many educational institutes have been recognized as the e-Learning for transforming people's knowledge, skills and performance. In addition, most of the reputed universities, and other educational institutes of higher education are working to develop advance online courses speedily manner [8]. Literature survey reveals that there is no significant difference in online versus offline student performance based on student demographic characteristics [9]. However, some research found lower student performance in online classes [10], while some even found higher learning in an online format [11]. Despite an increasing amount of research on technology and teaching, questions remain unanswered with regard to the overall efficiency of online courses versus their in-class counterparts.

### **Strength:**

Literature survey reveals several benefits or advantages of e-learning on the basis of its ability to focus on the needs of individual learners [12-30]. These advantages of e-learning represent its strength which makes it one of the important tools for education. The strengths of e-learning are depicted below:

- Designing of course work with the use of innovative ICT, pedagogy, psychology, and technology found to be more flexible and useful.
- The online education provides unprecedented opportunities for an individual of the remote areas or who would otherwise have limited access to education. It allows students to participate in classes from anywhere in the world provided they have a computer and internet connection.
- Online format also provides more freedom to the physically challenged individual to participate through their computers on virtual classroom instead of attending the class physically.
- The virtual classroom is accessible to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week therefore the students can access their courses at any time of day or night.
- Continuous access to video lectures, study materials, and class discussions is very convenient for those students who may need to repeat the lecture or take more time to reflect the understanding of some topics before moving on.
- E-learning enhances the efficacy of knowledge and qualifications via ease of access to a huge amount of information.
- The popularity and adoption of massive open online courses (MOOCs) include motivation among students for self-learning.

- Online learning offers greater chances for acceptance of online certificates from different regulatory bodies.
- It provides the possibility of cross acceptance of offline and online learning credits bringing formal and informal learning both as the norms of education.
- It is easy to include distinguished guest experts or students from other institutions in an online class. Further, today's students have access to resources and materials that may be physically located anywhere in the world.
- Incentives form universities to offer online programs include financial constraints and rewards (e.g. API).
- It is also cost-effective in the sense that it offers opportunities for learning for maximum number of learners with no need for many buildings.

### **Weakness:**

However, e-Learning claims an improvement in the education quality but it results only for specific forms of collective assessment [18]. Literature survey reveals various weakness of e-education when adopted for education [18-30]. The various weakness of e-learning that has been given by studies is depicted below:

- Online educations lack of dynamic interaction between the instructor and students which reduced the continuous synergy on resources and ideas are shared among learner and educator.
- E-learning method might be less effective with respect to clarifications, explanations, and interpretations of doubt as compare to the traditional method of learning. Since, the learning process is much easier with the use of the face to face encounter with the instructors or teachers.
- Online education is not suitable for the hand on subjects such as public speaking, surgery, dental hygiene, and sports where physical movement and practice contribute to the achievement of the learning objectives.
- However, even if a virtual professor is competent enough to create a comfortable virtual environment in which the class can operate, still the lack of physical presence at an institution can be a limitation for an online program. For the faculty as well as the participants, such things as being left out of meetings and other events that require on-site interaction could present a limiting factor in an online program.
- However the tests for assessments of e-learning are possible to be done with the use of proxy, therefore it will be difficult to control or regulate bad activities like cheating.
- E-learning may also lead to congestion or heavy use of some websites. This may bring about unanticipated costs both in time and money.

### **Opportunities:**

E-learning is simply a support device for existing methods of learning. Regardless of many weakness of e-learning, there are a lot of benefits which inspire its use and also encourage the search for ways to reduce weakness [18-30]. The various opportunities for the betterment of e-learning are described below:

- Online education offers a new paradigm for educators or instructor to design dynamic courses of the highest quality.
- Online education fulfills the need for lifelong learning in this fast-changing macro economy.
- An instructor can compile a resource section online with links to scholarly articles, and other materials relevant to the course topic for students to access for research, extension, or in-depth analysis of course content material.
- The nature of the semi-autonomous and self-directed world of the virtual classroom makes innovative and creative approaches to instruction even more important.
- An online instructor must be able to compensate for lack of physical presence by creating a supportive environment in the virtual classroom where all students feel comfortable participating and especially where students know that their instructor is accessible.

## Threats:

E-learning involves the use of digital tools for teaching and learning. However, utilization of e-learning is also associated with several challenges [18-30]. The major threats in the implementation of e-learning are given below:

- Computer ill literacy is one of the major threats in order to develop virtual classroom. If the user as a student or faculty member is not familiar with computer programs results in dragging the entire program down.
- An instructor must be able to communicate well in writing and in the language in which the course is offered. An online program will be weakened if its facilitators are not adequately prepared to function in the virtual classroom.
- In order to successfully participate in an online program, the student must be well organized, self-motivated, and possess a high degree of time management skills in order to keep up with the pace of the course.
- Limitations of technology is very common among the rural and lower socioeconomic populations because of economical or logistics reasons. As a result, lacking online access will exclude otherwise eligible students from the course.
- Internet or broadband connectivity problems make online learning worst among remote locations. In addition, internet access also possesses a significant cost to the user which results in less participation of students in the online program during the course.
- In larger virtual classes (20 or more students), the synergy level starts decreased. At this point, the dialog as well as the interaction among participants and the facilitator is limited and therefore the medium is not being used to its greatest potential.
- User friendly and reliable technology is critical for a successful online program. However, breakdowns can occur at any point along with the system, for example, the server which hosts the program could crash and cut all participants off from the class. In situations like these, the technology is neither seamless nor reliable and it can detract from the learning experience.
- E-learning may also probably be misled to piracy and plagiarism, predisposed by inadequate selection skills, as well as the ease of copy and paste.

## Conclusion:

The present study concludes that the online programs offer technology-based instructional environments that expand learning opportunities and can provide a top quality education through a variety of formats and modalities. While online programs have significant strengths and offer unprecedented accessibility to quality education, there are weaknesses inherent in the use of this medium that can pose potential threats to the success of any online program. However, the special needs of adult learners who need or want to continue their education, online programs offer a convenient solution to conflicts with work, family and study schedules. Institutions of higher education have also found that online programs are essential in providing access to education in this pandemic situation of COVID-19.

In order for an online program to be successful, the curriculum, the facilitator, the technology and the students must be carefully considered and balanced in order to take full advantage of the strengths of this format and at the same time, avoid pitfalls that could result from its weaknesses. The purpose of this SWOT analysis is to make aware the readers about the threats of e-education along with the opportunity to work there off. Despite some challenges discussed, the literature has also sought to explain the role and impact of e-education in teaching and learning.

E-learning is not suitable for practical courses like, medical, engineering, agriculture, etc. Therefore the education of the highest quality can and will occur in an online program provided that the curriculum has been developed or converted to meet the needs of the online medium. However, the adoption and implementation of e-learning to maintain social distancing among faculty, administrators and students are necessary. This research represents only the conceptual part where empirical studies need to conduct for better outcomes that pave the way for future generations.

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