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CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RURAL AREA THROUGH E-TEACHING LEARNING IN POST COVID-19 STAGE

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Abstract

During the past few years, ICT has been integrated in many schools and a variety of new technology tools with internet system have been implemented into teaching learning system and improve the quality of education. Thus ICT opens up new opportunities to teachers and students. Teachers use ICT in different section of teaching learning process like in creating learning design, in giving instruction, in evaluation system etc. Students access new information, extend and transfer it in an effective way. They enhance their critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving skills. Thus ICT is used as a catalyst to transform teacher-centric education system to learner-centric education system. But recently the COVID-19 outbreak has created a terrible situation throughout the world. All classes, examinations has been cancelled in our country due to lockdown. So, to continue the learning process, many schools have started online classes in both rural and urban areas throughout the India. So, in this epidemic situation, only option available to teachers is e-teaching learning process. Students also can attend classes through internet system from their e-gadgets. They can only resolve their doubts by discussion through video chat or messaging through WhatsApp or other systems. There is no opportunity of face to face interaction with teachers and only possibility is e-teaching learning through a long time. This situation is seen in both rural and urban areas. Students and teachers can not go to school. They both are locked in their home. Which school is more ICT integrated and which is less, the whole factor is meaningless here. Here students are totally dependent on internet systems, computers and other e-gadgets. Here it is considered about which challenges are to be faced by students through e-teaching learning in this situation. But challenges are quite different in case of rural areas from urban areas. This study aims to find out various challenges which are mainly faced by rural students in this situation. A qualitative research design adopting interview method was implemented. It analyses the data related to responses of five samples towards

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e-teaching learning in this situation. Findings reveal that students in rural areas face a lot of challenges rather than in urban areas in this pandemic situation. They meet with large hindrance because of internet, use of e-gadgets and environmental condition. It provides a suggestion for teachers and people related to educational institutions to understand the problems faced by rural students and it also lays down a platform to solve these problems in future perspective.

Keywords: e-teaching learning, e-gadgets, epidemic, COVID-19, ICT, Learning- design

INTRODUCTION

ICT has been involved into every section of our society. In past few years it has extended in every aspect of educational work including schools, colleges and other educational institutions. ICT includes any type of information and communication applications that encompasses of television, computer network, satellite system, different types of software, internet system etc. These are applied into different type of services like audio-video conferencing and other purposes. These play a significant role in teaching- learning process. Now COVID-19 pandemic has affected teaching-learning process across the world. So, in this situation, school, colleges, educational institutions has adopted digital platform to continue learning process. Now, e-teaching-learning is transformed into only medium of continuing the education process and this is followed by all educational institutions. Most of the schools including both rural and urban areas has adopted this system. In the Hindu, article "Limitations of online learning" published on 30 April, 2020, the chairman of the UGC told the

news agency ANI: " We are seeing at this time of COVID-19 and even later when all of this (is) over, to give a push to online education. It is important for improvement in the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in the country." But in this digital platform, not only there are some advantages but students face some challenges also in both areas. Here mainly some challenges are elaborated in this study that are faced by school students of rural areas.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this study, some important concepts are taken from some articles, journals related to this topic. Here e-learning challenges, e-learning and its impact on rural area, digital divide in India etc. are different angles which are reflected from these literature reviews.

ICT diffusion and digital divide: Implications for rural development- article was written by Lokeswari, Dr.. K. & Aiswariya, S.S. (2017) in the journal of content, community and communication, vol. 6. This study investigates extent of ICT diffusion and digital divide across the selected Indian states. It also reflects the initiatives of bridging the digital divide in rural development.

E-learning and its impact on rural areas- article was written by Anand, R., Saxena, S. & Saxena, S. in 2012 in vol.4 of International journal of modern education and computer science. This study finds out advantages of e-learning resources and their affect on social and mental development of the individuals belonging to rural areas.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

- To explore the challenges faced by the school students of rural areas through e-teaching learning;
- To analyse the factors which are responsible for students' problem in this epidemic situation.

FOCUS ON STUDENTS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

E-learning means learning through electronic technologies to access education outside of traditional classroom. So, specifically it means learning delivered via internet. It can be said that where traditional classroom is not available then education can be continued through e-teaching learning. Now, India has been under lockdown for approx. 4 months. Most of the states continue their lockdown to handle this situation. The govt. may not allow mass gathering in any space. So, students and teachers both are locked in their home. Hence, e-teaching learning is the need of the hour for students, teachers and for the education system as a whole. If learning continues through this system then some essential factors are necessary for fulfilling this process. If these factors are not available, then some problems must be created in this process. In this situation to analyse the problems faced by the school students through e-teaching learning, rural area is chosen mainly for this study. It can be considered that urban areas are better digitally connected from rural areas. People's standard of living is better than people in rural areas. So, some responses are collected from some students of rural areas. All the students are from class IX of govt. school and they express their opinion

about this system of education.

A student of class IX of govt. School has been learning via WhatsApp ever since. She says that she takes her notes from her teacher through WhatsApp. But that is very problematic because that phone is only one option to her family for all purposes. She can't take this mobile always for her educational purpose. That's why she is very frustrated about it. So, in this case economical factor is a big challenge for students to continue e-learning smoothly.

Another class IX student of same school says that she has no mobile. Her father has a phone but that is not a smartphone. She can't take her class through it. She has no idea how these classes are going. Here also economical factor is a big challenge to continue her e-learning.

Another student of class IX of same school tells that his father and his uncle has their own android mobile. He takes their phone for playing game but he has no interest in e-teaching learning. He has no knowledge about this. When he is asked about their parent's opinion then he says that his parent has no interest about that learning and they can't help him in this aspect. Here problem is lack of knowledge, lack of interest, lack of adjustment in this learning system. It is a major problem because in spite of sufficient e-gadgets, students have no interest about it. Behind this the fact is lack of parents' support. This is observed in urban area too but it is a major problem in rural area especially because parents' education is an important factor by which their mental setup is not ready to accept it.

Another student of class IX of same school tells that her father has a smartphone but he stays outside of her house for work. Her

mother has an ordinary phone. In past two months she used her father's phone but nowadays when her father comes home, stays separately for this situation. So, she can't continue her study through phone. Hence the problem is economic condition, authority of male and effect of situation.

Another student of class IX of some schools says that she has only two rooms in her house. She takes her father's phone sometimes. She has no ideas about online classes. She only takes her notes through WhatsApp. But when she uses that phone, her brother comes and starts to disturb her because her brother has an interesting game. So, the problem is lack of environment to continue e-teaching learning. That is a problem in urban area too but there parents are more concerned. They give one room for study to their child. But in rural area generally all rooms are used for all purposes. There is no concept of study room.

FINDINGS

There are too many challenges exist in this learning. Some challenges are common for all students including rural and urban areas. Some challenges are especially for rural areas. After analysing these responses, all the factors are summarized below:

- Lack of PC/smartphone: In general students do not get any smartphone in this level. Almost no student has any PC or laptop in rural areas. But to continue e-learning, which family has sufficient money they can provide smartphone to their children. Most of the family do not have sufficient money for buying extra smartphone. Students feel lack of e-gadgets to continue their study.

- Lack of high speed internet system: The people who use internet feel lack of high internet speed due to insufficient mobile tower. Hence, e-learning is disturbed several time for this problem.
- Economic problem: it may be said that the percentage of population below poverty line is greater in rural areas than urban areas. Regarding this statistical report of poverty estimation is presented below. This is taken from INDIA IN FIGURES 2018 by govt. of India, Ministry of statistics and programme implementation (table 3.1).

Table 1: National poverty estimates (% below poverty line) during 1993-94 to 2011-12

Year	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Total (%)
1993-94	50.1	31.8	45.3
2004-05	41.8	25.7	37.2
2009-10	33.8	20.9	29.8
2011-12	25.7	13.7	21.9

Source: Poverty Estimates, 2011 – 12, Planning Commission; Report of the Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Estimation of Poverty (2009) Planning Commission; PRS

This statistical data presents that Poverty level in rural area is gradually decreasing year by year but still greater than urban areas. So, economic factor is a major problem.

- Phone shared by many members: due to economic condition, some family have only one smartphone. This is shared by whole members for all purposes. Now in this epidemic situation, students get a very little chance to use that phone. Sometimes

they are not permitted to use that phone. Hence, they face problem fore-learning.

- Lack of knowledge for e-learning: some students have no knowledge of e-learning. Their parents also can't help them because most of the people have no knowledge about this. This is a big challenge to students in this pandemic situation. This problem is often observed in rural areas. Here people have no interest about this. A very little person show their interest to this process.
- Lack of adjustment: In many cases it is observed that students get sufficient e-gadgets, know the knowledge of e-learning but they are not mentally adjusted to this process. Generally this problem is common for all the students irrespective of rural and urban areas in this COVID-19 pandemic but it can be considered that it happens more in rural areas. Most of the students are not bounded here by strict routine, are not restricted to go anywhere. Students spend their most of the time with playing their friends. In this situation, they can't go to school, can't play with their friends. Hence, they feel lack of interest in e-learning.
- Lack of internet connection: although no. of internet subscriber in rural areas are gradually increased now but this no. is relatively lower than urban areas. Still now there exists several families in rural areas who do not need any internet system. Again some families have internet but at a low package. So, this can't be used for too much time. In this situation students face this problem in their study. Statistical data of internet subscribers in rural

areas of India is presented below. Data is taken from TELECOM STATISTICS INDIA-2019(table10).

Table: 2: Internet Density (Internet subscribers per 100 inhabitants)

At the end of march	Total	Urban	Rural
2013	13.45	-	-
2014	20.29	-	-
2015	24.09	49.07	12.89
2016	26.98	58.28	12.80
2017	32.86	70.83	15.49
2018	38.02	84.74	16.41
2019	48.48	97.94	25.36

Source-TRAI

- Lack of proper environment: in rural areas, most of the students have one room or two room in their house. They can't get any private room for their study. In this situation, they can't go outside of their room. They often feel disturbance. So, lack of proper environment is a big challenge for students for e-education especially in this COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

several challenges are summarized from this study. Students face a lot of problems for their e-learning especially in rural areas. In this COVID-19 pandemic only option remains e-teaching learning. Students have to adopt this and must overcome this situation with full confidence and courage. Government and all people must take several initiatives and help these students of remote areas and should encourage them for continuing their study through e-teaching learning in this epidemic.

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