

Impact of Covid-19 on Higher Education Sector Challenges & Solutions to University Level Faculties

Anju Sharma¹, Dr. Pooja Chaturvedi², Dr. Manjusha Bhondekar³

¹Research Scholar, Faculty of Management, Rabindranath Tagore University, Bhopal (M.P.) India.

²Associate Professor, Faculty of Management, Rabindranath Tagore University, Bhopal (M.P.) India.

³Assistant Professor, Faculty of management, Sect College of Professional Education, Bhopal (M.P.) India.

ABSTRACT

The pandemic Covid-19 has had a profound impact on human life in every way. It has completely altered people's lifestyles all across the world. This epidemic has an impact on every sector of the economy. Education is one of the most important sectors that have undergone significant changes. Learning is being used in education for the first time. E-learning systems were used exclusively. As a result, persons who work in the education sector, such as teachers and administrators, are affected. Students are confronted with a variety of obstacles and opportunities. The impact of COVID-19 on higher education is investigated in this study. Assessed. In this epidemic era, instructors face a variety of obstacles, according to the report. For the in-depth research 35, inter teachers at the university level were interviewed, and the results were examined. According to the findings of the study, teachers face obstacles such as maintaining a suitable work-life balance, managing students to attend courses, and handling e-learning platforms, among others; however, based on the challenges and recommendations of faculties, some solutions have been proposed. To address these issues, solutions are offered.

Keywords: Challenges, COVID-19, E-Learning, Work life balance, Faculties, Higher Education, Pandemic, Remote working.

I INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has harmed people's ability to work all across the world. This virus originated in China and subsequently spread over the world. As a result of the negative effects on people, numerous governments have implemented measures such as lockdowns and temporary closures of all sectors. People were called to labor in every service sector. from the comfort of your own home.

In India, the government declared a complete lockdown for a period of time to safeguard citizens from the virus's harmful effects. The World Health Organization designated it a pandemic and issued safety instructions to the public. These principles include avoiding social gatherings, avoiding intimate contact with people, and speaking with people regularly. To lessen the virus's impact, wash your hands with soap.

The administration had also given directives to temporarily close all educational institutions for the protection and security of pupils. The closure of educational institutions has had a significant influence on pupils and their ability to learn. As a result, all educational establishments have begun online study with the purpose of reducing negative impact and education interruption. Students are being taught by educational institutions through a variety of online platforms. This is when the learning takes place. Has completely transformed and adopted a new method of instructing kids. Initially, everyone who is involved in online teaching is a beginner. Many challenges faced the learning process, and some of those challenges are still being experienced by many people.

In the same way that students face numerous problems in learning, teachers face numerous challenges in online teaching. For faculty, online teaching is a novel phenomenon that has taught them how to employ technology in the teaching learning process. The entire teaching process has shifted from traditional classroom to online instruction. The speedy through technology, phase one of online teaching learning builds new skills in teachers and students. In this case, throughout the process, technology played a significant role in facilitating teaching and learning.

The transition from a traditional classroom to a virtual classroom is not simple for those who are not used to working with technology. However, online learning helps to close the large educational divide. Otherwise, because the country has not yet been declared clear of the pandemic, pupils may be forced to suffer significant financial losses .assistance with technology.

II WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is defined as "the proper balance of work and personal activities by scheduling an equal amount of hours for each of your activities according to plan and priority." Work-life balance is the glue that holds an individual's work and personal lives together. Individuals must know themselves in order to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Some of the researchers present their findings on work-life balance in this article. Professional-Life Balance is defined as the degree to which a person is equally engaged and fulfilled in either his or her work and family roles. Commitment, work domains, and work commitment. As a result, people who have a good

work-life balance dedicate the same amount of time and dedication to work and work domains.

In today's environment, finding a work-life balance for teachers has become one of the most difficult tasks. Apart from maintaining student records and adhering to numerous institution-related functional requirements, faculty work demands not only their time in the institution but also their time at home to prepare for the next day. To be effective and productive in their job, faculty must put in extra hours every day in order to reach higher levels and tackle the demanding environment. Furthermore, faculty should not just focus on teaching, but also on soft skills and life skills, so that they not only generate good professionals, but also decent citizens.

(a) E-learning - E-learning is a type of electronic learning that takes place over the internet. It necessitates the use of electronic devices such as computers, tablets, and cell phones by students—usually their own, though institutional devices are frequently used as well. Students can theoretically learn at any time or place with e-learning as long as they have access to a device and a Wi-Fi or data connection. Learning management systems, which may contain students' courses, assessments, and grades, are an excellent way to facilitate e-learning. Students can digitally "raise their hands" to engage in e-learning courses that are given live. Pre-recorded modules, on the other hand, can lead pupils through the material. Gamification, online polling, and conversations are all examples of e-learning components that can help create a positive interactive learning environment.

(b) Remote Working - In the guise of the Covid19 pandemic, the world has witnessed, and continues to witness, a once-in-a-century calamity. It has caused unprecedented deaths and infections among people of practically all nationalities, as well as devastation in all aspects of life, including business. Due to the lack of a vaccine and the extremely contagious nature of Covid-19's virus, The World Health Organization's rigorous recommendations had prompted states to take action. Some of the worst tactics, such as countrywide lockdowns to arrest as many people as feasible the virus's spread in order to preserve as many lives as possible.

Because of the restrictions on movement and the need to maintain a safe physical distance between people to prevent the virus from spreading, businesses were closed during the lockdown and will remain closed until the infection has been eradicated. Almost every company has been snagged unprepared to deal with such a huge problem. Many, if not all, employers are making an effort to investigate Work From Home (WFH) as a possible replacement for current work Arrangements will be made in the near future. As a result, the Employers' Federation of India (EFI), which has been representing the cause of

employers since 1933, has decided to produce a document on WFH to assist its members, clients, and partners in responding to the current issue. Or for others who regard the same as an opportunity to replace or co-opt WFH as a hybrid model, using the present working pattern.

III LITERATURE REVIEW

Pandemic COVID-19 has revolutionized the planet and altered people's perceptions around the globe (Kramer and Kramer, 2020). COVID-19 has had a profound impact on the entire world, not just one sector or one country. Education is one of the most important areas in the economy. Due to the virus and the country's lockdown, they have been the hardest hit. The most important safeguard is social separation. In the event of a pandemic, schools and institutions must be closed for the safety of students and staff. Li, Rajamohan, Acharya, and colleagues (Li, Rajamohan, Acharya, and colleagues, 2020). However, because learning cannot be stopped due to the closure of educational institutes, virtual learning has been implemented by schools and universities all over the world to continue their studies.

The pandemic has two effects on people: one is that it spreads the virus through intimate contact with infected people, and the other is that it causes anxiety, sadness, and tension among people as a result of the country's stressful position (Roy, Tripathy, Kar, Sharma, Verma and Kaushal, 2020). In order to keep pupils safe, teachers and educators Learning is greatly aided by technology. It looks after people's health as if it were its own. When technology is not present in society, it causes a significant educational gap (Chick, Clifton, et. al, 2020). COVID-19 caused a slew of problems for society in terms of online learning, technology, cyber security, and social interaction. Due to a lack of technological understanding, people confront numerous problems when it comes to e-learning. Social and cultural issues there are impediments to remote learning, and consumers have concerns about e-learning security (Dwivedi, Hughes et al, 2020). In other words, teachers and students encountered numerous obstacles in using technology, such as fear of failure. In online teaching and learning, technology is used to operate, as well as consciousness and anxiety. Many faculties are adamant about not using it. Technology in education, but there was no other option (Shenoy, Mahendra and Vijay, 2020)

Many face-to-face meetings have been cancelled as a result of the epidemic, and virtual meetings are being held in the education profession. Virtual learning is beneficial in other disciplines of education to some level, but it faces numerous problems in the medical field. The experience of a face-to-face meeting is vastly different from that of a virtual meeting (Shah, Divan, et al, Educational institutions generate teaching and learning content as a result of e-learning or virtual learning (by 2020). Students' needs are

taken into account when teaching (Crawford, Henderson et. al, 2020).

Teachers' working styles were also influenced by virtual learning. The nature of work has evolved, and the work-life balance has become more disrupted (Brammer and Clark, 2020). Many people missed out on opportunities before the pandemic, and students' personal development through traditional or classroom learning has been disrupted. Ferrel and Ryan (Ferrel and Ryan, 2020). Pandemic has completely transformed pupils' learning and emotional health. Teachers are severely impacted. Faculty members face issues such as a lack of virtual platform training and the student's evaluation (Sahu, 2020). The epidemic has spawned a slew of new learning models and trends. In the teaching and learning process, new approaches are emerging (Jena, 2020).

As a result, virtual learning is clearly the only choice in a pandemic situation to bridge the gap in education or students' studies. In terms of curriculum and instructional methods, educational institutions must improve their procedures (Naciri, Baba, Achbani and Kharbach, 2020). There's no denying that children and teachers are up against obstacles when it comes to online teaching. However, by implementing solid procedures and training, these issues can be mitigated. Teachers for making technology adoption simple (Toquero, 2020). There should be a voice in the teaching process to strengthen the teaching process and allow students to engage in better learning. The policies of educational institutions should be strengthened, and teachers should be prepared with emergency plans for unexpected events (Bao, 2020).

IV OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

- (a) **Research Gaps** - The current study focuses on COVID-19's impact on higher education. It focuses on the difficulties that higher education institution professors confront during pandemics or lockdown periods when colleges and universities are shuttered. Many researches have been conducted on the difficulties students encounter when studying through virtual environments. However, few studies address the difficulties that teachers encounter. There is a requirement to investigate the difficulties. During the pandemic, instructors faced numerous challenges. Only a few research dipped their toes in the water when it came to this topic. Teachers, but in this study, the specific issues are investigated.
- (b) **Research Objectives** - The present study fulfill following objectives:
- (i) To look into the existing literature to see what work has been done on this topic.

- (ii) During COVID-19, to investigate in depth the difficulties encountered by faculty members in higher education institutions.
- (iii) To investigate the causes of stress among professors and to take efforts to alleviate stress among faculty in order to achieve the institution's goals.
- (iv) To examine the perceptions and attitudes of faculty who promote a pleasant working environment for teachers in Bhopal.

- (c) **Research Methodology** - An empirical study was conducted to achieve the objectives. As the impact of work life balance on working Faculties' personal and professional life was analyzed. The research design is descriptive and causal in nature. As the objective is to study and describe the prevailing level of work life balance of working Faculties in educational sector from faculty point of view and to demonstrate the impact of work life balance on personal and professional life by applying parametric statistics (correlation and regression). This study concerns the causal relationships between work life balance, personal life and professional life in educational sector.

The main techniques used in this study for data collection were Questionnaire and secondary source analysis. Research Questionnaire has three sections. Section A having 5 statements of work life balance and Section B is having 5 statements of personal life and Section C having 5 statements of professional life on a Five point scale ranging from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree).

The information of all the questionnaires was coded and entered in the computer by using MS-Excel and SPSS Software.

V RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Based on the opinions and answers collected by higher education faculties following challenges are highlighted by the study:

- (a) **Fear of using Technology**: Faculty members were first hesitant to use the technology. Some faculties are reluctant to appear in front of the camera. This is mostly a concern for camera-shy people who do not wish to teach in a virtual environment. While employing technology, several experienced faculties were afraid. They didn't know how to use technology when they first started. "I had a tremendously big day," one of the professors commented. "I'm afraid I won't be able to speak in front of a camera during online classes."
- (b) **Lack of Technical Knowledge**: Some of the professors had trouble figuring out how to use an online platform. They didn't truly understand how to exchange content in online classes. They have issues with operating apps, such as not

knowing how to mute and share the screen. They have difficulties in the beginning. Generating meeting IDs, and when students run into problems with the link, they don't know what to do. Take care of it. One of the more experienced professors described the situation as follows: "When I first learned that we would have to conduct student classes via the internet, I was a little perplexed as to how I would operate and handle all of this. If I make a mistake when operating, I won't be able to provide, and I won't be able to deliver in this lockdown. Who will assist me in this situation?"

- (c) **Problem in student Engagement:** Many faculties are still dealing with this issue. Student participation is critical, but online education faculties have no way of knowing whether or not students are paying attention. Engaging students in topic all of the time is a difficult task for teachers. Measuring response in person It's impossible to catch kids' expressions whether they're meticulously listing or not. Sometimes Students join the virtual classroom, although they are not physically there at the time. According to one professor: "At one point, a virtual student was present, but when faculty asked that student to answer a specific question at random, that student was not present." Sometimes students merely show up to class for the sake of showing up.
- (d) **Non availability of Licensing Software:** Some software is available for free and can be used by anyone. Faculty members teach classes using these software's, however they have a time limit for use and a maximum number of participants who can join at any given moment. When courses are in session, these applications or apps are used. Stop functioning and start inquiring if your time limit has been exceeded and if you need to login again. This can be purchased as a licensed version. Faculty members are unable to perform successfully in such situations. Among the faculties remarked: "As a result of this issue, our entire concentration has been lost, and we have to recall where we were on the topic, which is really inconvenient." For the smooth conduct of teaching, educational institutions must develop licensed software.
- (e) **Lack of Material benefits by Educational Institutions:** College/university faculty members believe they are not supplied with perks such as stationary costs, internet costs, mobile phone costs, and other expenses that are necessary for virtual teaching. Their materials costs have decreased as a result of online teaching. They believe that these benefits should be granted to them. In this pandemic, where wages are stagnant, cater for them to the best extent possible, where they should be granted these expenses that are required to teach in platforms available on the internet." In this situation, where we are getting lower income from

colleges/universities, we also have to face significant amounts of extra fees for internet, etc.," one faculty member remarked.

- (f) **Family Disturbance in Work from Home:** When someone works from home, there is a chance that their family will be disrupted. This is a particular issue for female professors, who must balance both family and work obligations. Managing both family and career at the same time is quite difficult for them. Because all of the family members are at home, females must meet their needs and care for them everyone. "One of the female faculty members described her experience, saying, "I typically finish all domestic duties before starting online teaching, but when I start working, my child starts weeping and asks to sit with you, and every now and then he asks to provide food, etc." All of this is really tough for them to handle.
- (g) **Work Life Imbalance:** Almost everyone in the service industry works from home. As a result, managing a complete show on one's own is quite challenging, especially for females. They have no domestic assistant for work in these epidemic days; therefore ladies must manage all of the work on their own. Almost every woman believes that they are the center of the universe. During a pandemic, responsibilities are multiplied by two. They don't even have time to manage their own affairs. Every day, female faculties are engaged in some form of job since if domestic work is completed, they will have nothing to do. When job labor begins, people must devote their focus to their families and other responsibilities. One of the faculties for women said: "Work-life balance has been a major struggle for me during this pandemic and lockdown period. My entire day is heading somewhere I'm not even aware of. At the end of the day, I'm sometimes really frustrated."
- (h) **Daily online schedules are Hectic:** Faculty members report that their daily online schedules are hectic as a result of demand from educational institutions. It's difficult to stay in one location for the entire day. Normally, in traditional classroom teaching, faculties would meet and share their perspectives with other faculties, but in virtual classroom teaching, this is not the case. A person can become bored if they spend all of their time in front of a computer or laptop. It also has a physical impact. People's health suffers as a result of their lack of physical activity, which exacerbates health problems. "It's quite tough for me to stay in one spot all the time." When I educate students in the classroom, I go around the room several times so that I can interact with them more closely and the class becomes more exciting and participatory. In addition, it has a negative impact on my physical health"

- (i) **Lots of Communication and Coordination Issues:** It is quite tough to contact and coordinate with other faculties due to virtual platforms. Face-to-face communication is more effective than any other method. There are instances when understanding the discourse is difficult owing to network challenges. Virtually coordinating with another person is tough since at the moment of certain joint work, another person is present. It's possible that the second person doesn't comprehend how the first wishes to deliver.
- (j) **Disturbance after Working Hours:** When faculty members are required to work outside of normal business hours, it is extremely difficult for them. Working hours were fixed in the past, and no one bothered them after hours, but now faculties believe that there are no working hours for them. They work all hours of the day and night. One "I can't even feel any relaxation after working hours," a professor related his experience. Right now, I'm my phone receives multiple phone calls daily from morning to night as a class counsellor for one of the classes."
- (k) **Unable to measure students' understanding of concept:** Faculty must map whether or not the student gets the subject in a virtual classroom. It is quite tough for the instructors to teach each and every student. Faculty in traditional classrooms can deduce from a student's facial expressions. That student requires additional explanation, yet virtual platforms present a difficulty for them. Students are engaging, and I know when they understand what I'm teaching them, but in a virtual classroom, I can't be sure. According to one staff member, "it is impossible for me to figure out each and every kid in the classroom."
- (l) **Practical Subjects are difficult to teach:** It is quite challenging to teach practical courses to pupils in an online classroom setting. Students are unable to comprehend disciplines such as mathematics, statistics, and financial modelling despite the provision of study materials and video lectures. Until or unless the student is able to complete the course. He is unable to perform in subject since he is not attempting to do it himself. It's also challenging for students to talk about it. Virtual platforms are used to address their practical subject's doubts.
- (m) **Cheating in daily classroom assessment cannot be prevented:** Assessment sheets are created to help students improve their performance and to ensure that they understand what they are learning in class. Students, on the other hand, can readily cheat. They duplicate the answers and submit the test sheets. A book or the internet "One of my pupils who was not good in studies but now he score," one of the professors commented. In his evaluation, he received high scores. When I look at her assessment sheet, I can see that she is a good student. "I'm not capable of performing at this level."
- (n) **Sometimes students feel boring in online classes:** It is not simple to sit in front of a computer or laptop for the entire day. Students may become bored if they are unable to find a companion with whom they may share gossips and other activities. They are energized in the beginning of sessions, but not so much in the afternoon classes. In this situation, instructors also put in a lot of effort to make lectures more fascinating and informative. However, it is extremely common for layman would certainly become bored if they sat in the same position for the entire day.
- (o) **Challenges in Redeveloping Content:** Redeveloping curriculum for virtual classroom systems is a difficulty for professors. The entire structure of the course and material is altered based on student input. The entire content is then posted on virtual platforms after it has been redeveloped. "Among the Faculty stated that this effort is so difficult that I had to enlist the assistance of my husband to compile the materials. Finally, upload it to the university's internet site."

VI SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES FACED BY FACULTIES

Based on the suggestions received from faculties during taking their interviews and past literature study

following are some ways to overcome the challenges faced by faculties during online teaching:

- All faculty members must be trained to use online platforms to instruct students at educational institutions.
- Faculty must provide study content in such a way that students love learning in order to engage students in study. Colleges and universities must supply the faculty with the necessary resources for this project.
- Every education institute should have some licensed software on hand to ensure that online teaching runs well and that students' studies are not disrupted.
- Faculty should be provided with some fundamental benefits that are required for use in online classes, such as internet expenditures, so that they can instruct students without interruption.
- Faculty members must develop a timetable for each activity, which should be conveyed to all family members in order to avoid family disruption to some level.
- To optimize the work-life balance, each task should be prioritized in accordance with its importance. Faculty members must recognize that they must not bear the brunt of the workload.

- (g) Faculty must take breaks in between classes to improve their everyday hectic schedules.
- (h) Effective team bonding can help teams communicate and coordinate more effectively. Everyone must be aware of the problem and work together with other faculty members.
- (i) Faculty should not check their emails or phones as frequently after hours as they do during the day to reduce disruption. This places an undue weight on them.
- (j) Faculty must provide some tight rules and guidelines for the class in order for students to fully engage.
- (k) Faculty should design content in such a way that students love studying in order to reduce the boredom of online classes.
- (l) Using a communication forum, where teachers can communicate with a student individually, either during the teaching session or after the session. This will reduce the apparent gap between teachers and their students.
- (m) Teachers must allow the students to have a discussion regarding the subject as a part of their online session.
- (n) Using apps that allow the students to learn interactively will help them stay motivated

VII CONCLUSION

Teachers in higher education institutions have numerous obstacles when it comes to online teaching. Initially, these tasks were primarily aimed at faculty, although some of them have since been reduced. However, many faculties continue to face these difficulties. This form of teaching and learning is new to the school industry, so it will be interesting to see how it develops. It is typical to face difficulties. Faculty members have never had to deal with this type of instruction before, so this is a whole new experience for them. Some of the obstacles are quite true, such as work-life balance, dual obligations, managing students and teaching them through an internet platform, which no one has ever considered before. Some obstacles can be mitigated to some extent, but others are extremely tough to overcome.

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