



Online Teaching in Higher Education: Challenges and Remedies

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Abstract

This paper disclosing the challenges of online teaching faced by students and teachers of higher education with suggested remedies for a successful online teaching outcome. The study was qualitative in nature and purposive sampling technique was used to collect data. 70 student- teachers (session 2019-21) of SOS J. N. Kaul Institute Education, Bhimtal, affiliated to Kumaun University Nainital and 13 assistant professors working in Kumaun University affiliated B.Ed. colleges were constituted sample for the study. Many areas of India still does not exist the basic infrastructure like roads, schools, drinking water facility, health facility etc. Internet connectivity is long way to go in those areas. It is obvious that the educational institutions situated in these areas are struggling for online teaching- learning. Not only the students from the remote areas facing challenges of online teaching - learning but also student as well as teachers from developed rural and urban areas encounter challenges of online teaching -learning.

Key words:

Online teaching, higher education, challenges, remedies.

Introduction:

Education is like a diamond and has power to change the entire life of a man. By seeing this power of education, educationists continuously trying to make education easier, effective and interesting from the ancient time. Educational capabilities are growing and changing everyday but this change was taking place

very slowly. New changes are taking place day by day due to use of technology in education. Technology in the classroom reached new heights with Right from the days when chalkboards and the wooden paddles with the printed lessons were invented till today's online teaching. This sudden pedagogical shift from traditional teaching to online – teaching; effect the whole education system in many ways. While online teaching has many benefits, on the other hand there are many challenges. Many researchers have been conducted to explore its benefits but not much is discussed on the challenges of online teaching. New changes have taken place in India from the Vedic period to the present education system.

Before the outbreak of pandemic called Covid-19, Educational institutions in India were only based on traditional methods of learning and some of the institutions were using blended learning. But the pandemic Covid 19 effected economy and education globally. Governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions. Parents, teachers as well as government started worrying about the one important academic year of the students. Different educational agencies like MHRD (UGC), NCERT etc. advised educational institutions to teach students through online process during the lockdown period. Teachers and students rapidly adapted these transitions.

Online teaching has many advantages with its own challenges like the availability of smart phones, Laptops, computers, tabs and internet connection. Poor connectivity and network issues, poor audio and video quality, frequent power cuts can drive both the teachers and the students away from this. Students residing in remote areas of the country and those who are unable to afford the modern sophisticated gadgets will find it difficult to connect themselves and are certain to miss the live online classes. There is a wide array of concepts in existing literature on online teaching.

Review of Literature:

Many studies have been conducted to check the quality of online teaching. Conaway, Bassoppo - Moyo, 2006; Ko & Rossen, 2010; Limperos, et al., 2015) have identified and examined critical issues affecting quality of online education such as communication, technology, time management, pedagogy, and assessment. Hartman, Dziuban, and Moskal (2000) surveyed 32 online instructors and found that 90% of the instructors believe that due to workloads online teaching were more difficult to teach. J. Cavanaugh (2005) found that each extra student needed 6 hours and 46 minutes of extra instruction time. Just because of that teachers were struggling with time management. Online teaching was over six times bigger than the physical classes.

F. Fernando and et. al.(2020) and Chick et al. (2020) revealed that students as well as teachers were facing physical, mental and other challenges due to online teaching. Zhang et al. (2020), found difficulties associated with poor online teaching infrastructure, inexperience of teachers, the

information gap (i.e., limited information and resources to all students) and the complex environment at home. In addition, lack of mentoring and support (Judd et al. 2020) and issues related to teachers' competencies in the use of digital instructional formats (Huber and Helm 2020) have also been identified.

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the challenges faced by the teachers of higher education in online - teaching.
- To study the challenges faced by the students of higher education in online - teaching.
- To find out the remedies to cope up with the challenges of online – teaching.

Questions:

According to nature of the study, the following research questions were framed:

1. What are the challenges faced by the teachers of higher education in online - teaching.
2. What are the challenges faced by the students of higher education in online – teaching.
3. What remedies were suggested by students and teachers to make online teaching more effective?

Methodology:

The descriptive survey method was used to study the online –teaching challenges in Higher Education, faced by the teachers and students. The study was qualitative in nature. Self made open ended questionnaire of online teaching challenges in Higher Education was used to collect data from the students and unstructured interview was conducted to collect data from the teachers. Study was delimited to Kumaun University. All teachers and students of Kumaun University were the population of the study. Purposive sampling was used to collect data. 13 assistant professors and 70 B.Ed. students participated as a sample. To describe nature of sample quantitative approach such as - percentage analysis and to describe the problems qualitative description was used. For graphical presentation of data column or bar diagram was used.

Result of the study:

Q1. What are the challenges faced by the teachers of higher education in online - teaching.

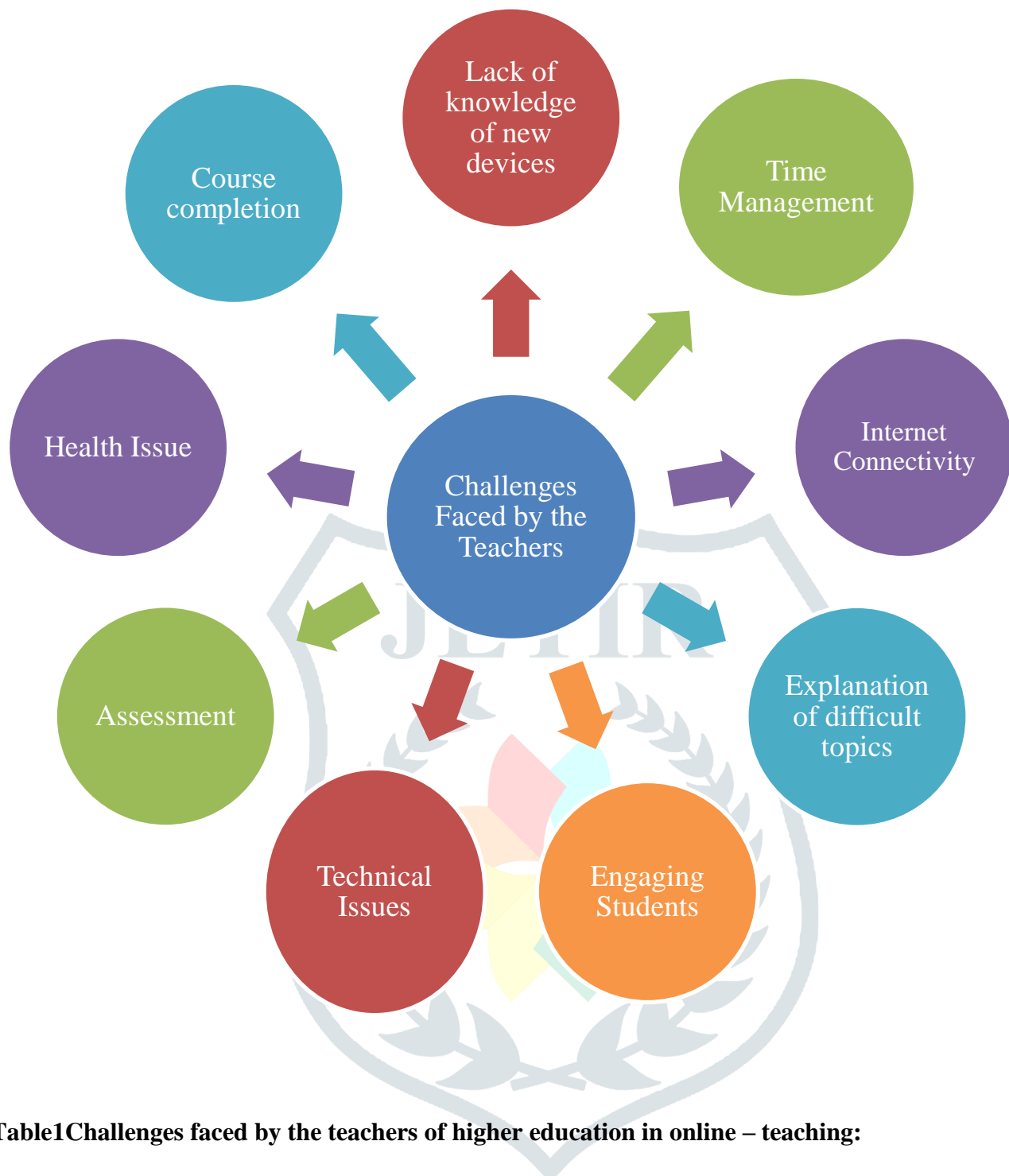
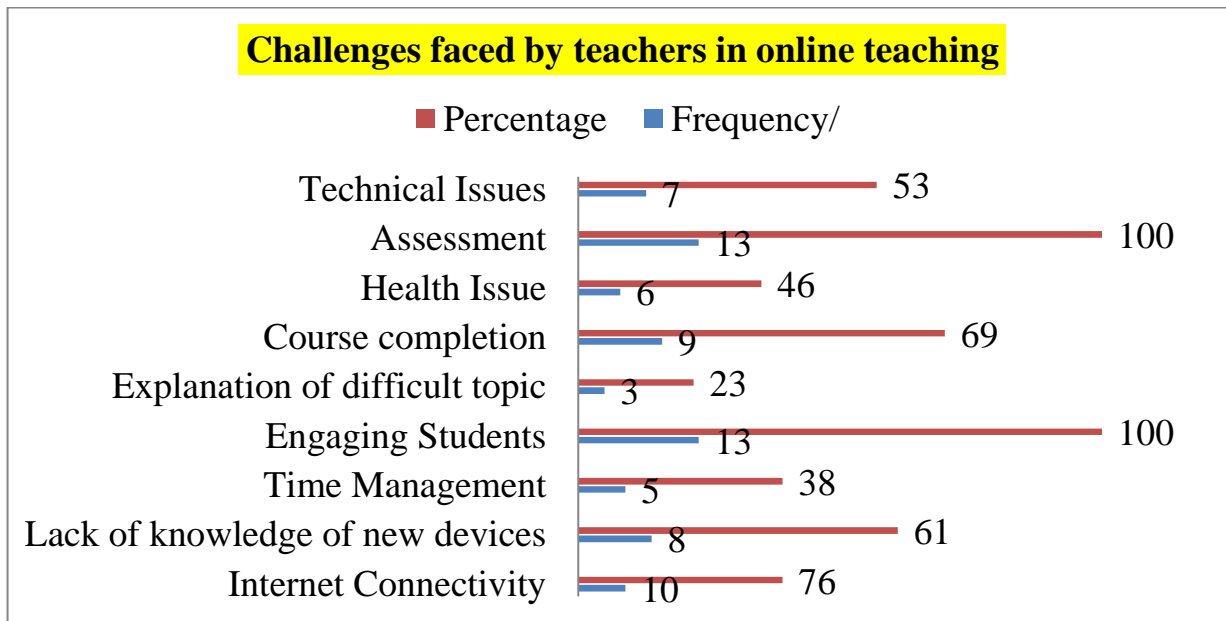


Table1 Challenges faced by the teachers of higher education in online – teaching:

S. No.	Area of the Problems	Frequency/Percentage
1.	Internet Connectivity	10 (76)
2	Lack of knowledge of new devices	8 (61)
3	Time Management	5 (38)
4	Engaging Students	13 (100)
5	Explanation of difficult topic	3(23)
6	Course completion	9(69)
7	Health Issue	6(46)
8	Assessment	13 (100)
9	Technical Issues	7(53)

Figure 1 Challenges faced by the teachers of higher education in online – teaching:

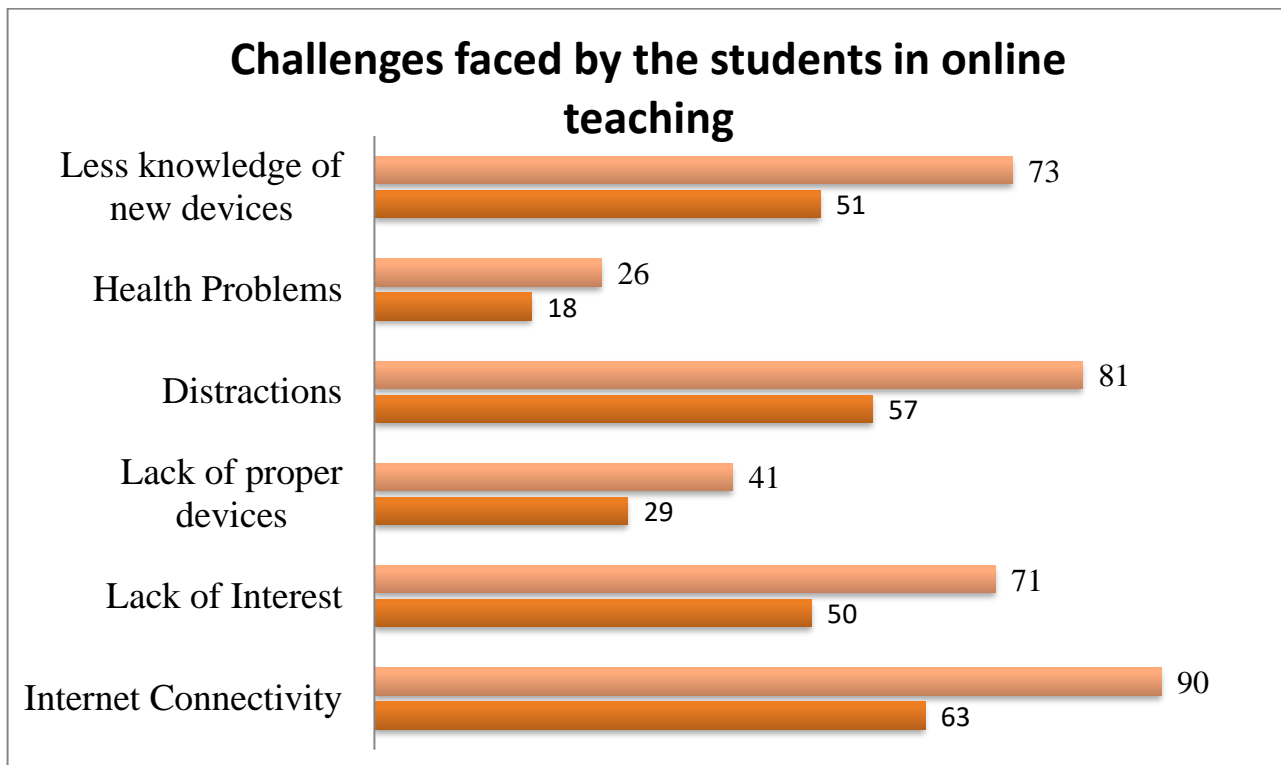
As depicted in table and figure 4.1 a number of challenges identified by the teachers which hampered the smooth flow of online teaching. An overwhelming majority of teachers indicated that assessment and engagement of students were very difficult in online teaching (100%). 61% of the respondents said that they were not aware of technology, mobile, laptop, other devices and applications. Health issues and time management were reported by 46% and 38% of the respondents respectively. A Small fraction (23%) of the respondents indicated that the explanation of difficult topic was the major challenge for them in online teaching. Course completion 69%, internet connectivity 76% and technical issue 53% teachers mentioned as a burning challenges of online teaching.

2. What are the challenges faced by the students of higher education in online – teaching?

Table 2.0 Challenges faced by Students in online teaching:

S. No.	Area of Challenges	Frequency / Percentage
1	Internet Connectivity	63(90)
2	Lack of Interest	50 (71)
3	Lack of proper devices	29 (41)
4	Distractions	57 (81)
5	Health Problems	18 (26)
6	Less knowledge of new devices	51(73)

Figure 2.0 Challenges faced by Students in online teaching:



It may be observed from Table and Figure 2.0 that overwhelming majority of the respondent indicated internet connectivity (90%), distractions (81%), less knowledge of new devices (73%) and lack of interest (71%) as major challenges of online teaching. Percentage of respondents who stated lack of proper devices and health issue as challenge were found to be 41%, and 26% respectively.

Discussion:

As we all know that online teaching – learning process has become an important element of teaching – learning process. Not only in India but in the world –wide online process is being used extensively for different tasks. Talking about teaching –learning process, as smooth and simple as the online learning process appears its reality on the ground is different. In the online teaching – learning process, not only students but also the teachers have to face many problems. These problems are as widespread in rural areas as are in urban areas. The analysis of the above study shows that assessment and engagement of students were the biggest problem of the majority of teachers (100%), explanation of difficult topic, Course completion, time management and explanation of difficult topics also hindered their teaching.,poor internet connectivity,technical and health issues,and less knowledge of new devices were commonly reported by the teachers and students.Distracton, Lack of interest and new devices was also the major problems for the students.

The result of the present study coincide with the results of the studies conducted by Sutherland & Oldfield, 2016), Eston, & Schmit, 2005; Bassoppo - Moyo, 2006; Ko & Rossen, 2010; Limperos, et al., 2015),(Jandri, 2020; Toquero, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020), (Wang, Cheng et al., 2020),(Bakker & Wagner, 2020; Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020),Chick et al. (2020), e (Timmis, Broadfooth (2020) etc..

3. What remedies were suggested by students and teachers to make online teaching more effective?

Suggestions:

- ❖ Government should provide high – speed internet connections in low cost.
- ❖ Teachers and students should have access to support devices to solve the technical problems.
- ❖ Preparation of list of activities and adhere to it for better time management.
- ❖ Should practice Yoga and meditation daily. These two practices can help in reducing the health issues.
- ❖ Students should approach their teachers to clear their doubts.
- ❖ There should be a positive attitude towards online teaching –learning.
- ❖ Should organize online competitions like debate, discussion and other co curricular activities to keep teachers and students motivated.
- ❖ Conduction of online tests in regular interval can keep students in touch with their studies.
- ❖ Teachers of all levels should be given periodic training about technology, new devices and changing scenario of education.
- ❖ New methods should be worked out for assessing online learning.
- ❖ Idea exchange programs should be organized to discover innovative and interesting methods of online teaching.

Conclusion:

This study has discussed challenges of online teaching in higher education. The online teaching is new method of teaching in some ways different than traditional classroom teaching. Online teaching can provide top quality education through a variety of formats and modalities. It is easily accessible, time saver, low cost consuming and flexible system of education. Online teaching is the need of the hour and is proving to be a blessing for a student in this time of infectious disease. As this is the new system of learning and having many challenges. Needs solutions from the access front, pedagogy angle, the teacher-training front and the collaboration angle to effectively tackle the challenges and to make online teaching more effective and efficient.

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