Challenges Faced by the Students During Covid-19 Pandemic: A Sociological Study Conducted at Central University of Haryana

Poras Yadav*

Monika**

ABSTRACT

In today's world where everything is determined by the meritocracy. Due to this the role of education is increased and everyone tried to go ahead of another. The constitution provides rights to education in which basic education is compulsory for all. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on several sectors of society, including education. This sociological study, done at the Central University of Haryana, sought to investigate the obstacles that students encountered throughout the pandemic. Data were collected from a broad sample of students enrolled in various academic programs using a quantitative approach, and data was collected through Google Forms (Questionnaire). The outcomes of this study emphasize several important obstacles that students faced during the Covid-19 pandemic. First, the quick switch to online learning platforms presented considerable challenges, such as technology gaps, a lack of consistent internet connectivity,

*Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Central University of Haryana, Mahendergarh, Haryana.
**Independent Researcher, Narnaul, Haryana

and difficulties adjusting to virtual classrooms. Second, the interruption of routine and social isolation contributed to increased stress, anxiety, and mental health problems among students. Third, financial constraints exacerbated by the epidemic imposed extra stress on students, such as issues paying tuition, obtaining study materials, and fulfilling necessities. The sociological study offers attention to the varied obstacles that students at the Central University of Haryana.

Keywords: Challenges, Online Education, COVID-19 Pandemic, Students, Depression.

Introduction

Nelson Mandela said that "Education is the most powerful weapon to change society". The better the education the better we shape our society. It is the source of development and growth in the society. Literacy is also one of the indicators of quality of life. In earlier periods there were Gurukul's which were like the present institution of education where people came and learned. Kerela has the maximum whereas Bihar has the lowest literacy rate in India. The meaning of education is different for different people. Many authors gave different definitions of education according to Kohnstamm & Gunning (1995) "education is a combination of growth and human development with social legacy"; John Dewey (1978) "education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself". Some see education as a classroom training system, while others see it as a life-changing experience. Mainly education is divided into three types – 1) Formal Education, 2) Informal Education 3) Non-Formal Education. The first Formal Education is a system of learning in a specific classroom; teachers teach based on institution-specific. The second is Informal Education that one can get from their family. The primary education that one can get from family members. The last Non-Formal Education is defined as the education that is learning from friends, from a wide range of activities in life, etc. The article in the constitution through the 86th Amendment Act 2002, article 21-A provides free and compulsory education for all children from the age group six to fourteen years, which is their fundamental right. Article 30 where all minorities, irrespective of language and religion, have the right to establish the educational institution of their choice.

According to meritocracy, the jobs and other positions are based

on the individual's merit, not on their family's background. So, from that education is more important where one can get a high position due to their merit. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the education system was based on an offline mode. There are few online platforms, but when the pandemic came into existence, it changed the whole education system. One can easily see the increasing online education by the statistics provided by Coursera; in 2016, there were only 21 million students registered online, but after the pandemic and lockdown, the increase is about three-fold, i.e., 71 million reported in 2020 and 92 million in 2021. When we analyze the most online learners country-wise, the US with more than 17 million, India with 13.6 million, Mexico with 5 million, Brazil and China (Wood, 2022). The pandemic of COVID-19 has not stopped at public borders. It has impacted people regardless of ethnicity or level of education, but something similar has not been valid for the consequences, which have hit the most vulnerable the hardest. Training is no exception; understudies from privileged backgrounds, supported by their families and eager to learn, may find themselves far beyond, but school ways to electric learning open doors. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds frequently kept out when their school closed. This crisis has exposed numerous deficiencies and disparities in our educational framework, ranging from access to the broadband and PCs required for online instruction to the study conditions expected to focus on learning. The lockdowns caused by COVID-19 have hampered regular tutoring, with cross-country school closures in most OCED and partner countries lasting at least ten weeks. During this time, the instructional community has made concerted efforts to keep up with learning progression. Young ester and understudies have had to rely on their assets to keep dancing somewhat through the web, television, and radio. Educators must also adapt to new academic concepts and instruction delivery methods. Students in the most underserved groups, in particular, who lack access to advanced learning assets or the strength and commitment to learn alone, are at risk of falling behind. Hanushek and Workman have used chronically developed to assess the monetary impact of the current understudy accomplice's loss of the equivalent of 33 percent of an extended tutoring time. Because learning misfortune leads to ability misfortune, and the abilities an individual possesses are linked to their efficiency.

Everything has beneficial value, but with that, some negative points come side by side; on one side where online education system provides a speed to continue the learning of students in the deadly pandemic so

that they cannot disconnect from their knowledge. The online system needs some equipment and it has some requirements. Although the most skilled trainers during offline education face Challenges during online teaching, it is generally seen. The students faced many issues and challenges. "Prepare content to keep students engaged online, Internet connectivity, basic technical understanding, Resource utilization, help-seeking, technical aptitude enhancement, time management, etc." (Barrot et al., 2021; Kebritchi et al., 2017; Khanna, 2020). These are the challenges that came into existence online. This research was conducted to discover the challenges students in CUH face during online classes during the pandemic.

Review of Literature

Online study has many challenges for students and teachers. Engaging students and teachers in online learning and teaching was a very challenging task for an institution. Shifting from offline to online mode was one of the biggest challenges of online learning. The most problematic thing for teachers was to improve the lecture contents, manage schedules, and handle the new technology (Kebritchi et al., 2017). The government had no clear policy on e-learning programs. This leads to a lack of quality content, better handling, and creation of e-resources and providing of e-content. Government should not just focus on the beauty of online learning but should also focus on the quality of audio-visual content (Cojocariu 2014). It is very time consuming and expensive are involved in e-learning. It has a large amount of investment in tools and equipment, training human resources, and online content. Digital equality and effective and efficient education are essential in this challenging time (Affoneeh et al., 2020). The main problem in e-learning is the unavailability of access to all digital devices, the internet, and wi-fi connectivity. It creates many Challenges for students and teachers. Teachers of various universities have never experienced e-learning. They only teach in traditional teaching methods. It is an opportunity to do better in this challenging situation. Educational institutions should guide teachers and students on accessing and using various learning tools and content. There should be some curriculum in different formals using videos, audio, and text.

Factors that Affected the Education

Arthur (2017), found that the earthquake severely impacted a college study in New Zealand. During his research, he discovered that colleges could withstand online education after the catastrophic event.

In those difficult times, technology assisted them in overcoming obstacles. However, they suggested that a robust IT infrastructure was required for online learning. Infrastructure must be strong enough to provide uninterrupted services during and after a disaster. The World Economic Forum reports that the COVID-19 epidemic has also altered how few people receive and transfer education. We may bring in much-needed new things and change to find new solutions to our Challenges. Teachers have grown accustomed to traditional methods of instruction. **Khana (2020),** found that most people are dealing with the Internet problem. It does not know how to use and solve technology-related issues, too, creating a gap between people. All students and educational institutions must work together to resolve these issues that hinder the development of academic life and get a solid program that helps us try. **Ahmad (2020)**, studied students from the former Fata, Baluchistan, Chitral, and Gilgit-Baltistan do not have access to the Internet. Due to educational institutions' limited resources, only a few institutions could deliver active online classes in the early days of the pandemic. The study also revealed student challenges, such as lack of campus communication and teacher response time. Respondents also reported that online classes might not be viable in Pakistan. As a result, learning online cannot produce effective results in developing countries such as Pakistan, where most students cannot access the Internet due to technical and financial constraints. The need for emotional factors is one of the most discussed aspects of online education as an example of motivation for online learning. Because of their face-to-face contact with teachers and classmates, students in traditional classrooms frequently participate fully in academic activities. Reading in a regular classroom motivated 71.4 percent of students more than distance learning. As demonstrated by most students, they can successfully manage their study time online and complete assignments on time, but full courses cannot be completed online. **Ullah (2021),** revealed that COVID-19 has contributed to the physical education system of all educational institutions worldwide. Higher education authorities have accepted online learning to further their studies. Although online learning appears to be instrumental in protecting the health of students and teachers during the COVID-19 epidemic, however, some researchers have suggested that it may not be as productive as expected. It can even use various digital tools such as a tablet and a smartphone. Online study cannot produce good results in developing countries like Pakistan, where most students cannot access a good internet site due to technical and financial Challenges. This study

hosted the Internet's efficiency and the challenges that students face in conducting online classes. According to the survey, 88% of students did not have proper internet access and faced many online Challenges, 65% of students were dissatisfied with online learning, and 85% of students complained about visual impairment by taking online classes resources, 50% of students could not manage university affairs. All the students had the same Challenges, be it can be the school level or university level. Male and female students faced similar challenges in online classes. Most students have limited access to online/digital learning. Lack of access to internet services, lack of proper interaction and communication with students and teachers, and ineffective technology were among the major challenges facing Pakistani higher education students. Sudden changes in traditional classrooms and face-to-face reading online have resulted in students having a completely different reading experience. Most students do not have access to high-speed or reliable online resources and, as a result, are struggling to study online.

Challenges Faced by the Students

Singh (2021), concluded that students face challenges learning during the closure that causes development- the possibility of depression due to academic uncertainty, the completion of the syllabus, and the understanding of lessons. This stress may lead to increased panic attacks forcing students to make unhealthy and tough decisions to avoid disappointment or failure. Also, the lesson covers how minor exercise activities affect student's psychological learning. **Bibi (2021),** investigated the challenges college students face in online classes. A list of four-query questionnaires was used to collect college information from students. The questionnaire was implemented with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Table 1 introduced equity values for models. Sixteen of the thirty items had been completed for final analysis. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed. The research did not show significant differences between challenges faced by students enrolled in public and private colleges. The reason for the insignificant difference in both industries students may be - the socioeconomic status of parents. Parents enroll their children in reputable colleges, but they cannot afford to pay extra costs for their education. The prevailing challenge was related to infrastructure. Students from both colleges face economic challenges due to the research presented that students could not afford additional online resources and resources for online classes. **Muthuprasad et al. (2021),** found that the tide of novel

coronaviruses, and the educational system's contours are changing, with online education becoming an effective teaching method. Universities and institutions are turning to social media to keep up with the curriculum. It may be too early to predict how students and teachers will deal with online learning because obstacles are encountered and reorganized to deal with them. However, the visibility and readiness of teachers and students are important considerations that we have attempted to document. According to this study's findings, most students had a positive attitude toward online classes behind the corona. Online reading is beneficial because it allows students to be flexible and comfortable. Students select carefully edited content and record videos uploaded to university websites. They also emphasize the importance of interactive sessions and assignments at the end of each class to maximize learning opportunities. However, most students report that online courses are more complicated than traditional classes due to technological obstacles, delayed responses, and teachers' inability to successfully manage Information and Communication Technologies. As a result, all of these factors should be considered when creating an online study to make it more efficient and productive for the reader. Once the COVID-19 epidemic has passed, we may see a continuation of an increase in education programs that use online learning resource forums but in a hybrid mode combined with traditional classes. As a result, this research will help rethink and redesign higher education with Internet-mode components.

Field of Research and Methodology

The study area is the undergraduate students who took admission in sessions 2021-22 at the Central University of Haryana. The population is the students in Electric Engineering, Civil Engineering, Retail B. Voc, Psychology, and Mathematics Integrated courses. Convenience Sampling was used to collect the data. The total number of students in these courses is 342. Out of the entire population, 42 responses from Electric Engineering, Civil Engineering, Retail B. Voc, Psychology, and Mathematics Integrated courses were received. The present study is quantitative. The Google form was prepared, consisting of open and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire is sent through WhatsApp groups, mail, and with personal contact. The analysis is descriptive, and the data analysis was done based on the information received through the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Do You have personal room in house
42 responses

● Yes
● No

52.4%

47.6%
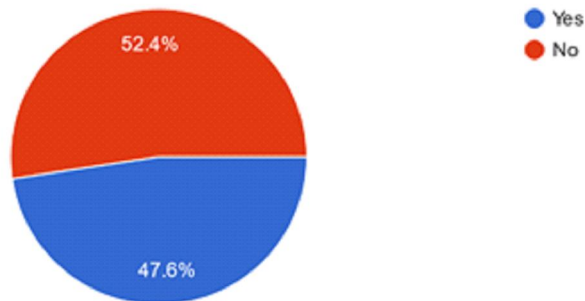
Figure 1

Fig. 1 represents the data regarding whether the respondents have separate house rooms. The data shows that 47.6% of the respondents have a separate room in their house, while more than half of the respondents, 52.4%, do not have a private room in their home. The previous charts show that the majority are from rural and live in a joint family. This impacts that more than half of the respondents do not have private rooms in their families.

How many hours you used your device during online classes
42 responses


● 0-3
● 4-6
● more than 6

31%

38.1%

31%
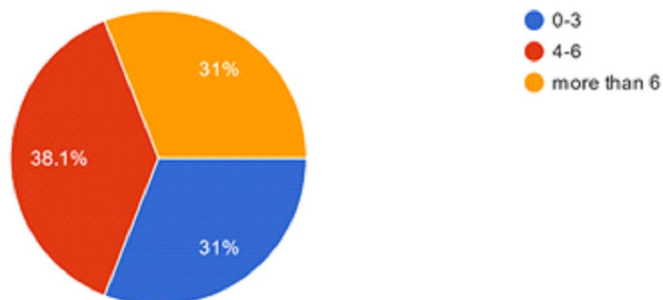
Figure 2

Fig. 2 represents the information regarding device use during online classes. The chart shows that the majority, i.e., 38.1% of the

respondents, use the device for 4-6 hours daily for online courses, 31% of the respondents use up to 3 hours daily, and 31% of the respondents use more than 6 hours daily for the online classes. So, from this information, it is concluded that the minimum hours spent on the device is 3 hours, and the maximum is more than 8 hours a day.
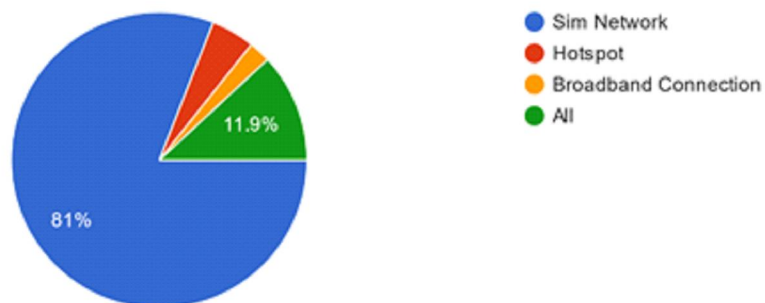
Type of challenges faced
42 responses
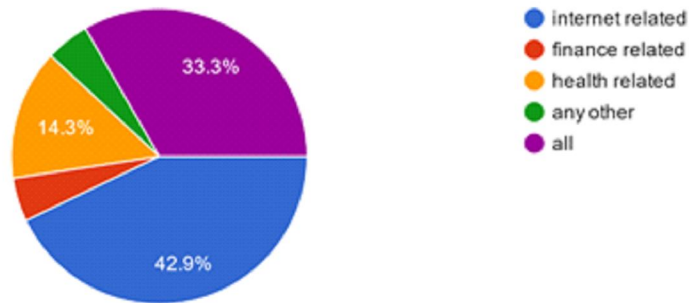
Figure 3

Fig. 3 provides information about respondents' challenges during the online classes. The majority of the respondents faced challenges regarding the Internet, 14.3% of the respondents faced challenges regarding their health,4.75% of the respondents had financial challenges, 4.75% of the respondents had other challenges, and 33.3% of the respondents marked several challenges including health, finance, Internet and other.

Network Connection used for classes
42 responses

Figure 4

Fig. 4 represents the information regarding network connectivity during the online classes. 81% of the respondents use their sim network for joining the online classes, 4.5 % use the hotspot for joining the class, and 2.5% of the respondents use a broadband connection for joining the online class.

What is your opinion about the quality of the education in online classes
41 responses
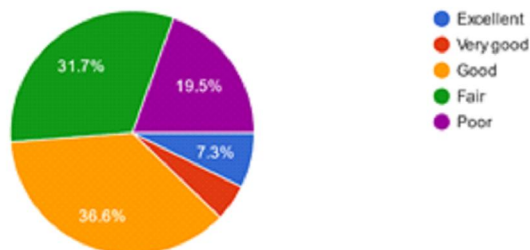
Figure 5

Fig. 5 represents opinions about the education quality during classes. 7.3% of the respondents said that the quality of the education in online classes was excellent, and 4.9% of the respondents agreed that the quality of education during the online classes was outstanding. 36.6% of the respondents agreed that the quality is good, 31.7% said that the quality of education was fair, and 19.5% of the respondents agreed that the quality of online education is poor.

Technical problems while using device
42 responses
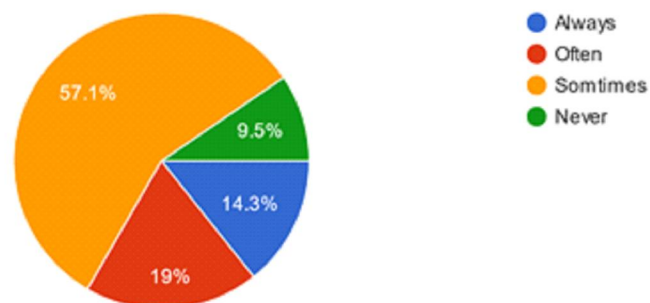
Figure 6

Fig. 6 represents the respondents who faced technical challenges while handling the device for online classes. The majority of the

respondents, 57.1% of the respondents, sometimes faced technical challenges while using the device during their online classes, 19% of the respondents often met, 14.3% of the respondents always faced technical challenges, and 9.5% of the respondents never faced any technical challenges while using the device for online classes.

Lack of Interaction with the teachers
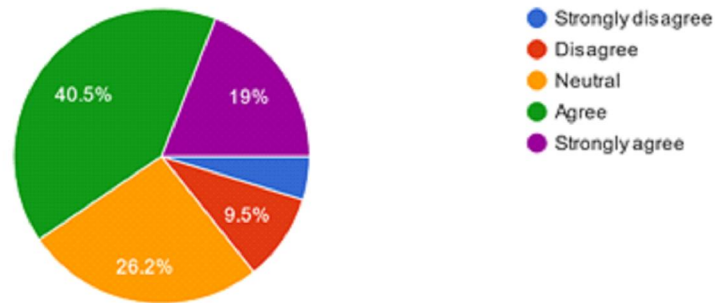
42 responses

Figure 7

Fig. 7 represents the lack of interaction with teachers. 40.5% of the respondents agree that there is a lack of interaction between students and teachers during online classes. 26.2% were neutral regarding the lack of interaction. 9.5% of the respondents disagreed that there was a lack of interaction, 19% strongly agreed that there was a lack of interaction during the online classes, and 4.8% strongly disagreed.

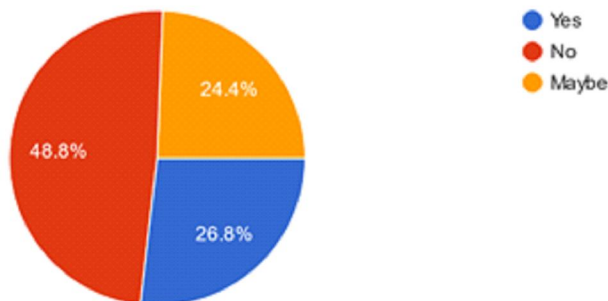Whether you faced any depression symptoms during pandemic

41 responses

Figure 8

Fig. 8 shows whether the respondents had faced depression symptoms during the online classes. 48.8% of the respondents said they did not face any symptoms of depression, 26.8% of the respondents agreed and accepted that they faced depression during the online classes, and 24.4% of the respondents were unsure whether they faced depression or not during the online course.

Difficulty in managing time for classes
42 responses
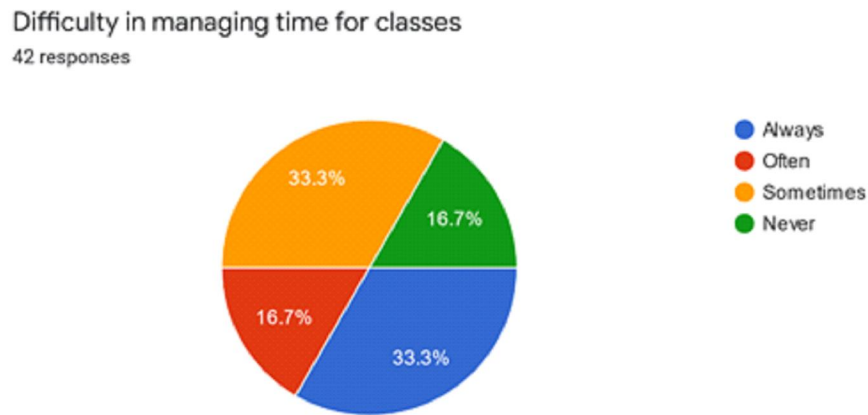
Figure 9

Fig. 9 represents the difficulty faced by the respondents in managing time for the classes. 33.3% of the respondents always faced Challenges managing time for classes, 16.7% of the respondents often faced difficulty, 33.3% of the respondents sometimes faced difficulty, and 16.7% never faced any problem managing time for classes.

Summary

Covid-19 had an explosive effect on all of us: students, parents, teachers, and leaders. Overnight, homes were converted into classrooms, and schools were thrust into a virtual space. The repercussions of that eruption are forcing us to embrace a virtually real education world fraught with difficulties but brimming with opportunities. Students and families became accustomed to online learning within a few days. The challenge for teachers after implementing emergency remote learning to ensure school continuity was to create a rich learning environment. Fortunately, some schools have already implemented a blended learning strategy. Along with our investment in technology, this meant that before the outbreak of COVID, we were running a learning management system that provided students and teachers with a centralized location for learning. The number of

challenges the students encountered in the period of online education. Their adaptability and grit in how to use this online platform is remarkable. The face-to-face school and social environment allowed our children to engage with their classmates and maintain friendships outside of school, contributing to their welfare and well-being had missed in the online education system. Most students found it challenging to maintain social interactions via the virtual model as they were not interacting face to face. When we compared the offline mode the students, teachers, and family members interacted and had a physical presence but the online system had changed the whole system. The students and teacher had never met. They had to find a silent place for their classes, however, it taught them how to be self-disciplined during the online classes. The majority of the respondents were from the rural area. They lived in a joint family so the majority of the respondents did not have separate personal rooms. Hence, they manage their classes within the family set; in rural, electricity cuts are more prominent. Therefore, the power cut is also a significant challenge among the respondents; the Internet in rural areas is not so good. Most respondents faced challenges regarding Internet connectivity; using the device for more hours made their eyesight weak, and the online classes vanished from the physical mode to meet with friends and teachers. It put mental pressure on the minds of respondents. They faced depression, and the majority agreed on the point that the doubts were not very clear during the online classes, so this is a challenge for students as well as teachers. The Technical-related challenges were also an issue during the online courses. The changes the respondents felt due to online classes in their habits. They became lazy, more addicted to mobile, used WhatsApp, changed in behavior, and less interactive in physical interaction, and the device became their primary need. Eleven respondents said that the online mode does not affect their eyes or eye-related issues while using the device. In comparison, the 28 respondents (3 did not respond) said yes; they faced challenges related to eyesight, pain, weakness, etc., while using the device for long hours. 12 respondents faced a financial issue while purchasing the new device for online classes, while 27 had no such challenges in their family. The majority of the respondents shared that they cope with depression symptoms by going outside for some time, talking with friends, interacting with other people in society, meditating, exercising, etc. When we tried to distinguish which model is better, online or offline, 9 respondents said yes, the online classes are better. They can access it from anywhere, the cheap mode of education, they

do not need to travel to campus, better learning, etc., and 31 of the respondents (2 did not respond) said the online classes were not suitable. The quality of the teaching and the study material is not good, and they cannot interact with teachers, become addicted to devices, have health Challenges, etc. The majority is in favor of the offline mode of education being better than the online, but in some manner, the online is better as people who did not access the offline can go through the online mode. The majority of the respondents were in favor of the quality of education in the online mode decreasing or going down compared to the offline mode. The reason behind the decrease in quality of education was poor Internet, lack of interaction with teachers, readymade notes on the topic, less activity, limited resources, etc. are the main reasons. Virtual distraction temptations - the prompting to different websites during the ongoing class distracts the students. The more time spent on 'screen time,' the more students spend time during and after the 'classroom,' engaging with their friends in virtual games online platform, and spending more time on social media. Excessive screen time can cause various physical and mental health-related challenges including frequent headaches, poor posture, and eye strain.

Conclusion

The data collection last concluded that there are several challenges faced by the students during their online classes. There is another point: after so much technology and advanced featured devices, there are still loopholes. The challenges faced by the students are financial, electricity, mental health-related challenges, and impact on eyesight. Challenges in interaction with teachers doubt clearing and internet connectivity challenges; the managing devices and applications during online classes are some challenges we found in this research study. Fewer respondents were in favor of online classes as the quality of education decreased. The challenges faced by the science students were more as science students have work based on labs, but the other issues like network, finance, and health were the same for both. They missed their friends; they became addicted to phones and they wanted offline education so that they could meet their friends.

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