

## Online Education a New Perspective of Students in Kerala

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### ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has set a change in the education system now it is at the disposal of students. The study focus on understanding student's perspective of online education and future of education at college and school level. The population of students was randomly selected from Ernakulum district of Kerala. The study was conducted in 2 levels. Level 1: The survey included 108 school and 66 college students. A self-prepared questionnaire with 10 questions was circulated using Google forms. The result shows that most of the students had connectivity problems, they were not happy with the type of education as they could not have a good interaction with teachers as well as friends. Most of the students reported that it was difficult to understand the concepts that were discussed online. So, their academic, social as well as psychological life was affected. Level 2: A set of students were selected after pandemic, and were asked to draw a picture on future of education system in India. This was subjected to content analysis. Majority of them preferred a Hybrid form of education system, use of technologies with conventional system of education.

**Keywords:** *Online education, conventional classroom, Hybrid classroom, COVID pandemic*

COVID 19 has a big impact on all societies and one of the most affected and vulnerable population is the children in each society. As the future of any societies, all are concerned about how education of these children is affected by this pandemic. There has been a lot of advances in educational technology in the last few decades and the same proved to be immensely useful during this pandemic (Chatterjee & Chakraborty, 2020, Axia & Wang, 2011, Kumar, Prakash & Srivastava, 2021, Singh, V & Riza, 2022). Online learning has helped students to become independent learners before they make their way into the real world. Students got opportunities to explore new learning applications and platforms during the class, which helped them to develop new skills and capabilities accelerating their growth trajectory (Bhatia, PR, 2011, Times of India., Dec 2021, Gaur, Mudgal, Kaur & Sharma, 2020). Now there are many online platforms to support this system of education. Teachers also had to face so many issues because of lack of technical education. Lack of gadgets to lack of network also affected the new method of learning. Additionally, professors and students faced a wide range of logistic, technical, financial, and social problems (UNESCO, 2006, Peters et al., 2020). During lockdown period, educational institutions were closed and it hampered the education system and the teaching-learning process. This rapid change within

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few days in the system of academics has perplexed both teachers and students. Increase in cases of COVID, lockdown and isolation has affected the children. Their social life where play, school or college activities which has a direct connection with their psychological wellbeing also must have been affected. In addition to this the expenses for buying electronic gadgets, timely renewal of network connectivity, lack of job or reduced income all has affected the society and has negatively affected the education of children in Kerala. During this period, it was noted that instead of going to school, children from remote places had to go to areas where network connectivity was available. It included tree tops to areas in the forest to highest points of the house like terrace etc. The pandemic posed several challenges in public and private schools which included an expected rise in dropouts, learning losses, and increase in digital divide. Schools reopening in many states, it is important that a careful strategy is built in to smoothen the transition of children back to school after more than 15 months of home-based learning. This transition has to consider the learning losses which had happened over the previous year as well take a futuristic approach to build a resilient system which can withstand any future shocks (KPMG Assurance and consulting service, 2022). COVID-19 severely impacted the public. In particular, students were mentally affected by the lockdown and the shift from physical classrooms to virtual learning (online classes). This increased the prevalence of psychological stress, anxiety, and depression among university students (Fatima M Azmi et al., 2022). Understanding the teaching-learning process in this crisis period is very important and exploring this aspect is essential for the smooth running of teaching and learning process. If we can identify the flaws in this area we can identify, plan and execute new methods so as to enhance our society. Education is provided to students based on the planning done by adults for them. In a student centric approach, we have to plan the curriculum according to student's interest and their perspective. In this study we have attempted to explore the issues faced by students during pandemic and also whether the perspective of students to education has changed due to their online educational experience.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in 2 levels.

- 1. Level 1:** The attitude of students towards online mode of education was conducted using a survey. Google forms was used, as the data was collected during COVID pandemic (15/07/2021-08/11/2021). The survey schedule was prepared by consulting teachers in the field of psychology and by interviewing psychology students to understand their personal experiences so as to make the statements. The self-prepared survey schedule consisted of 10 items. A total of 174 students participated in this survey from different educational institutions including schools, colleges of Ernakulum district of which 108 were from schools and 66 were college students.
- 2. Level 2:** In the second phase a group of students within the age group 18-22yrs were randomly selected and were asked to draw a picture that depicts the future of education system. The data was collected after the normal daily life style was reinstated in the state of Kerala. This method was chosen to get a real understanding of the youth as drawing have the ability to project their inner thoughts. The pictures were then subjected to content analysis.

The data was qualitatively analyzed.

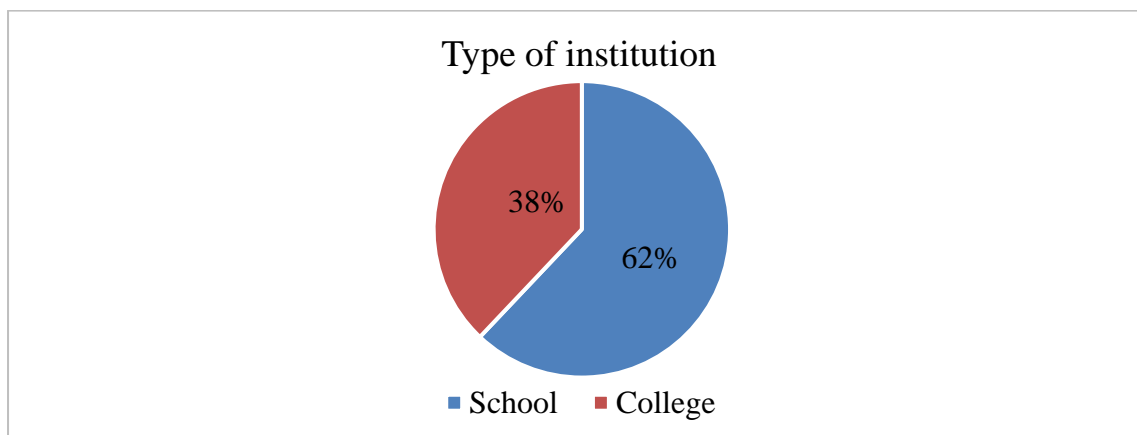
### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### *Level 1*

The level 1 study explores the trends of online classes found among students of Ernakulum

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District of Kerala. The participants included in the study are 108 students were from school while 66 were from colleges.



**Figure 1: Type of institution**

### *To the question:*

**Online education is cheaper than offline education:** both school children and college students agreed that online education is cheaper. The researcher expected the other way around and the explanation given for this by the few who were interviewed was that daily expenditure that they have while going to college and school is more (snacks, mobile phone recharge with network, friends, and travel). Here most of the students reported that the network connectivity mostly arranged at home is hotspot as they have siblings who are doing classes online and few reported that parents are also working online and the payments are done by the parents and so they need not take care of such financial matters related to online education. More over the parents try to support them with all possible ways as they are at home.

**Table 1: Statements, frequency and percentage of responses by participants.**

Statements	School			College		
	Agree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Agree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Agree F (%)	Neutral F (%)
Online education is cheaper than offline education	45 (41.7)	32 (29.6)	31 (28.7)	30 (45.5)	15 (22.7)	21 (31.8)
Students can attend classes regularly	48 (44.4)	23 (21.3)	37 (34.3)	7 (10.6)	14 (21.2)	45 (68.2)
Online education gives the same feel as offline education	7 (6.5)	4 (3.7)	97 (89.8)	4 (6.1)	3 (4.5)	59 (89.4)
Online education affects teacher student relationship	94 (87)	5 (4.6)	9 (8.3)	53 (80.3)	7 (10.6)	6 (9.1)
Online classes are affordable to all students	22 (20.4)	34 (31.5)	52 (48.1)	13 (19.7)	21 (31.8)	32 (48.5)
Understanding of the content taught	55 (50.9)	24 (22.2)	29 (26.9)	41 (62.1)	16 (24.2)	9 (13.6)
Online education induces boredom and tiredness among students	68 (63)	21 (19.4)	19 (17.6)	49 (74.2)	9 (13.6)	8 (12.1)
Can you attend the classes in scheduled time	62 (57.4)	29 (26.9)	17 (15.7)	15 (22.7)	33 (50)	18 (27.3)
Technical issues are a big problem in online class	87 (80.6)	13 (12.0)	8 (7.4)	58 (87.9)	7 (10.6)	1 (1.5)
Online accessibility regarding gadgets is adequate	37 (34.3)	29 (26.8)	42 (38.9)	13 (19.7)	23 (34.8)	30 (45.5)

*Note: Table 1 shows the responses given by the participants and the pie chart shows the percentage of school children and college students participated in the survey.*

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**Students can attend classes regularly:** the question addressed how far these students attended online classes regularly. To this the school group and the college group drastically differed. College students disagreed to it while school students agreed to it. The difference in this is due to the approach taken by teachers in school is different from colleges. In schools the teachers insist parents to accompany students and the classes are arranged according to the convenience of parents. So, parents are present to monitor the classes. The teachers insist to keep the video/ cams on. The students adhere to the teacher. When it comes to college students, they don't follow the instructions and teachers don't insist as they are given the privilege of being adults. (Strielkowski, 2020, Kumar, 2020)

**Online classes give the same feel as offline classes:** This question addressed the teacher student interface. Both college students and school children (89%) reported that they disagree to this statement. The warmth of the conventional class room is clearly expressed by the students while answering this question. The importance of social and psychological wellbeing of the students is really affected by the online mode. Basically, human beings are social beings and during this pandemic situation all their possibilities of socialization was curbed. (Manzoor, 2020)

**Online education affected teacher student relationship:** Here, specific teacher student relationship (personal) is focused. School students were a bit more affected than college students. Still, both showed agreement to this statement. This may have a cultural impact too, as Indians we have a tradition of respecting teachers and considering them as gurus.

More than academic work the interactions with teachers help in molding their life. Teachers as mentors really help in motivating and organizing their life. The association developed between the teacher and the students help them in enhancing professional as well as personal growth.

**Online class is affordable to all students:** This question was included to understand how far students know about their friend's problems and their affordability while they are studying and how far they help. In schools they report that affordability is poor. This study included students from government schools too and this problem was reported by such students. During this period government and non-governmental bodies and philanthropists contributed in enhancing students by providing gadgets including laptops, mobiles etc.

**Understanding of the content taught:** Both the group has reported that the concepts taught through the online platform are difficult to understand, 62% of the college students and 50% of the school students had reported this response. There may be several reasons for this issue on which this particular study has focused its attention that is sudden change in the atmosphere that is from a real class room to a virtual one, reduced teacher student interaction, increased boredom and tiredness and also the network connectivity had become an important reason which makes the students to feel difficulties in understanding the concepts or contents.

**Online education induces boredom and tiredness among students:**

In online classes the activity for students is very less when compared to offline classes. The mode of teaching is less interactive and because of this the students can easily get bored. As the students are exposed to screen for a long duration, they get easily tired. As the students are at their home, they have a tendency to lie down while the teachers are taking classes and when the postures are not requiring alertness, they perceive it as tiredness. Thus, almost all the students report that they get bored. (School students- 63% and College students-74%) but

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a study conducted by Goswami, M.P and et.al (2021) lead to an finding that majority of the university students were satisfied with the online mode.

**Can you attend the classes in the scheduled time:** School students report that 57% of them could attend the class as per schedule but the college students did not respond to the question appropriately and there for 50% gave a neutral response.

**Technical issues are a big problem in online class:** Both the groups strongly reported they have connectivity issues and because of that they have many problems in the class. As a result of this increase in absenteeism, poor performance, inability to write/ submit the answer script on time etc. was found.

**Online accessibility regarding gadgets is adequate:** Both the college and school students have showed disagreement to the statement but when we closely observe the data of school students, we can see that the percentage level of agreement and disagreement are approximately equal. This may be because of the level of consideration given by the education policy makers and government to the school students are more than the college students, like there were free daily lectures for school students in television, many philanthropists along with government provided electronic gadgets like mobile phones for free to the school students specially for those who are coming from economically weaker sections of the society.

### *Level 2:*

In the second part of the study which was done after COVID, the students had experienced fulltime online classes and now again are back to conventional classes. With this new experience what is their new thinking about education, if we get to know that, will it be possible to have an enhanced education system based on student's needs. With this intention this part was of the study was conducted. 30 randomly selected college students were asked to draw picture on the title "Future of education in India" this was done to know the youths understanding and expectation of education in future. A total of 24 drawings were analyzed and it was found that only one (4%) participant represented the conventional class room system. 9 represented (37.5%) completely modern education system where only electronic gadgets were represented. 14 of them that is 58% of the participant preferred a *hybrid mode* of education, a similar result was also found in a study conducted by Goswami, M.P and et.al (2021) that majority of the population believed future of learning will be in a "blended mode". Some participants in the study depicted drawings in such a way that money is more important than books and education that they receive are of poor quality.

**Table 2: The total number of pictures depicting modes of education**

<b>Mode of class room</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Conventional class	1
Hybrid class	14
Modern class	9

The data was further processed based on the figural representations in each picture. In a single picture, multiple components were included. The following table gives a description of the same.

**Table 3: The different Indicators in representing educational tools in the drawing**

Indicators of educational tools	Frequency
Teacher	4
Books	12
Building	4
Robot	9
Projector	11
Laptop or PC	12
Mobile	9
Online classes	6

Of the 24 pictures only 4 represented teachers, 12 of them represented book as a tool in education, and 4 represented the structure of a school /college (institution). All the 3 represented more or less the conventional system of education. While 9 represented Robots replacing conventional teachers, which is a future possibility in the area of education. Gadgets like projectors (11), Computer (12) and mobile (9) were also depicted. Some pictures represented knowledge is at the finger tips some represented the poor-quality education. Few participant had depicted that the current education system focuses on money than the quality of education. 6 of the participant's depicted online class mode.

It is generally believed that online classes were less effective based on the academic outcome of the students based on marks, but from the student's perspective it is understood that they were happy with online classes. There may be multiple reasons for such a choice which is a scope for future researchers. The survey and the content analysis result suggest that students usually like to have the warmth of the conventional classroom along with help of modern technologies in their learning.

## CONCLUSION

All students have problems with connectivity, availability of gadgets and affordability. While students reported that teacher student relationship is affected and the limitation of peer interactions has affected their social and psychological wellbeing. The content analysis shows that most students prefer a hybrid form of education which promote quality education with the help of technology and provide chance for the students to learn important social skills while they are in offline mode.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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