

# Online Teaching: A Pleasure or Pressure for Higher Secondary School Teachers: A Case Study

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## Abstract

*The shutting down of educational institutions not only in India, but all over the world has forced them to adapt to a new normal of online teaching through digital platforms. The sudden transition has caused a chaos in the education sector in India. Many studies have been conducted on the issues faced by the students in online classes but not teachers. The higher secondary school teachers are a group who has to adapt immediately to the digital classrooms and resources since their students are at a stage of their prospective career choosing. The present study analyses the issues of teachers during online teaching who are suddenly pushed in to the digital environment. The case study method was adopted for the study with the support of a structured interview schedule. The sample of the study consisted of 50 higher secondary teachers in different disciplines and different schools across Kerala, India. Due to the pandemic restrictions the sample size has to be kept a minimum number. The study mainly focused on the problems faced by the higher secondary teachers during the online teaching. The findings of the study showed that the online teaching is a pressure for them rather than a pleasure experience. Major issues faced by the teachers are the lack of computer competency, technical issues such as lack of internet connectivity, students' access to the digital devices and the occupational stress due to the disruption of work- life balance. Based on the findings, practical and social implications are analyzed and discussed.*

**Keywords:** Digital Environment, Digital Platforms, Online Teaching, Computer Competency

## Introduction

The entire country on being lockdown is not a new thing nowadays! People learned to live with the pandemic and the related lockdown restrictions to curb the spreading of Corona Virus. This has brought a tremendous change in all the sectors of the world including the educational sector. The most acknowledged change was the implementation of online classes in all the levels of education. Even though online teaching was not a new aspect in the developed countries, this was a new normal for Indian classrooms. Students find it attractive to get a change from the rigid timetables and the long distance commute. Online education has changed the learning from the way old normal classrooms.

The online teaching and learning is a significant innovation in education due to the many advantages it possesses. Al-Dosari pointed out that out of the many benefits of the online teaching learning process such as flexibility of time, accessibility, and collaboration etc., accessibility is the significant benefit. The accessibility of online learning is quite easy which can be accessed even in rural remote areas and offers flexibility of time. Different studies prove that when online learning was implemented, information assimilation was more compared to the traditional classrooms. The online teaching offers enriching experiences to the teacher since they can reach to more students compared to the regular classrooms.

Interacting with many students enhances the professional development of teachers. Teaching online made the documentation easier. Teachers can safely store the teaching materials, mails evaluation reports, cumulative records etc. This may also research act as a database for educational research.

The online teaching also offers increased opportunity to communicate with the parents. Technology helps time-efficient interaction between the teachers and parents and even teachers and community. The appropriate teacher-parent communication helps in the learner development.

The present study has greater relevance since online learning is not only a solution for the pandemic time but, it provides wider scope to the education sector profoundly. The online learning methods will encourage many to embrace the digital devices for learning and rose over the traditional methods of teaching and learning. Online learning is a method for future where learning can be accessed from anywhere without the constraints of four walls of a classroom.

Even though there are several benefits of online teaching learning it has some problems too. Many experts pointed out the advantages of online classes. Most of the discussions were based on students who are confined to the four walls of their homes. All the government around the world have implemented online classes for their young citizens and focused on arranging facilities for the students who lacked the accessibility of the online classes.

Among this chaos, there was a group of persons who were neglected – ‘the teachers’! May be the issues of teachers are not so prominent in developed countries; the scenario was different in the developing countries or underdeveloped countries.

The major issues faced by the teachers are their lack of knowledge on technology, the accessibility of net work, the lack of technical knowledge of their students, increased hours of working etc. The study analyses each factor – one by one. According to Bane et al[5] their study revealed that 61.6 % of teachers are having issues related with musculo skeletal pain, especially neck and lower back pain. Teachers are in immense stress due to the cognitive demands of the online teaching which require a lot of planning, preparing and using appropriate audio-

visual technology and administrative duties along with these. Another issue teachers face are the poor time management that are caused by the distractions, lack of a schedule, the work space etc. The work-life balance has affected female teachers more due to the long working hours including the household works and mostly by the less recognition of their work.

The study focuses on the issues faced by the higher secondary teachers in India to check whether the online teaching is a pleasure or pressure for them.

### **Need and Significance of the Study**

The student community were most affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, since their schools and colleges were closed and all outdoor activities were stopped. In such a situation their academic and co-curricular difficulties were compensated through the virtual learning. The online learning also was a boon to teachers in some aspect. The most attractive aspect of the online teaching was the flexibility of time. It was a change from the rigid class times. The online education helped to overcome language impediments since the classes can be conducted and accessible in vernacular languages which stopped the language barriers.

As the other side of the coin, teachers started facing different issues related to the online teaching after the initial interest extinguished. Teachers were forced to teach online with their limited resources where teachers did not have any idea on students’ behaviour or their individual needs. Moreover, handling the student’s distractions was a herculean task. During the online teaching, teachers are facing the unnecessary scrutiny by the parents for checking their accent, pronunciation, grammar and even their knowledge. All these are putting too much strain on teachers along with the curricular pressure.

In this scenario, it is significant to check whether teachers enjoy the online teaching or they feel pressure.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Online teaching breaks the barrier of geographical boundaries and the notion of traditional classroom timings. Due to the same factors, the online teaching mode brings about a lot of work loads too. In this study, investigator tries to analyse the present

scenario of online teaching in India. Hence the study is titled as “Online Teaching: A Pleasure or Pressure for Higher Secondary School Teachers”

### Objectives of the Study

1. To assess whether the higher secondary teachers approve online teaching mode.
2. To identify the issues that teachers face regarding online teaching.
3. To analyze the problems that are created by online teaching.

### Definition of Key Term

#### Online Teaching

Online teaching is the process of educating others on virtual platforms. These types of classes include live classes, video conferencing, webinars and other online tools. Online applications are developed and designed to facilitate easy learning and better understanding.

#### Population and Sample

Population means the total individuals occupying an area or making up a whole. A sample is the small portion of the population that is selected for observation and analysis. The population for the study was selected by using purposive sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method. The sample consists of 100 higher secondary school teachers across the State Kerala, in India. The sample contains the teachers, teaching different subjects at higher secondary level. The sample consisted mostly of female teachers from urban areas.

#### Research Questions

The present case study is a result of some research questions such as:

1. Do the online teaching methods create pressure in teachers?
2. What are the factors that create issues for teachers in online classes?
3. Do the teachers consider online teaching an easy job?

#### Method of Study

The investigator used case study method for the present study. This case study method is qualitative in nature.

#### Tool Used

The tool used by the investigator is a structured interview schedule.

#### Case Focus

The educational scenario in India has changed when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Although the situation affected all level of education, this case study focuses on the higher secondary teachers concerns over online teaching. According to India Today Daily, 84% of teachers face challenges during online classes in India. As per the report the online teaching is a stumbling block for the teachers as well as the students. Teachers are accustomed with teaching students in a live physical classrooms where a teacher requires communication, transactional and classroom management skills at a time. But in online teaching, teaching is altogether a new experience in a new environment for the teachers. At the same time the new normal brought about a set of challenges too. The study focus on these challenges faced by the higher secondary teachers, since higher secondary level is a transition period between school and college education and deciding level for the student’s future career.

#### Methodology

In the present study, the investigator has utilized case study method according to the nature of the study.

Case studies are in-depth investigation of a single person, group, event or community. Data are gathered from a variety of sources and by using several different methods such as observations, interviews, etc. But in the present study investigator has utilized structured interview as the source of data.

#### Participants

100 higher secondary school teachers in various subjects participated in the interview and their responses were collected and analysed by the investigator qualitatively.

**Table 1 Sociometric Characteristics of the Participants Selected**

Variables	Category	Number of Participants	%
Subject	Science	25	25%
	Mathematics	20	20%
	Social Sciences	25	25%
	Languages	30	30%
Gender	Female	70	70%
	Male	30	30%
Age	Below 30	9	9%
	30-40	68	68%
	40-56	23	23%
School Location	Urban	69	69%
	Rural	31	31%

### Data Collection Method

The investigator conducted an interview which was structured in nature through telephone since the teachers are availing the work from home facility due to the lock down restrictions imposed by the government in the state. The average time for each interview was around 10 minutes.

### Analysis and Interpretation

Investigator analyzed the interview responses in detail. Analysis of a qualitative data means studying the organised material in order to discover its inherent facts. The collected data are studied from different perspectives as possible either to explore the new facts or to reinterpret already existing facts. The content analysis and logical analysis are mostly used in analysis of qualitative material. Analysis is among the first of the method which a researcher will call upon in his way to reduce a large data to a manageable form.

The analysis of the data revealed that the Higher Secondary School teachers face multiple hurdles at a time during the online teaching. The investigator compiled the interpretations in different headings. They are:

### Computer Competency

Many of the teachers face the issue of computer competency. Most of the teachers may have computer knowledge but at the practical level, they may not use the computers with ease. Utilizing computers

in education was very few even after the several initiatives during the pre-corona period.

### Technical Issues

One of the major issues met by teachers in online teaching is the students' lack of familiarity with the required technologies or applications. Due to this fact, many of the students show discomfort towards online classes.

Another hurdle arises when there is an issue of accessibility of the reliable communication software like Zoom, Skype, and Google etc. These issues become double when there is a lack of internet connectivity. This problem is very serious in the rural areas where internet services are poor.

Students' access to the digital device is also a concern. Even though mobile phones are nowadays common even in remote areas of India, the accessibility to the mobiles and computers or laptops with the facility to access internet application is very few. Many of the students do not have the situation to afford such expensive devices. All these together make the online teaching a pressure rather than a pleasure.

### Occupational Stress

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the world to adopt a new normal 'work from home' method. This poured over a number of problems in employees especially teachers who are only familiar and trained for regular face to face classroom teaching. Many teachers are having issues related with musculoskeletal pain, especially neck and lower back pain. Teachers opinioned that they are in immense stress due to the heavy workload of the online teaching that require a lot of planning, preparing and using appropriate audio-visual technology and doing the administrative duties along with these.

Another stress causing factor is the lack of classroom resources. This creates extremely high stress to the teachers. In online classes time management issue arises often which is a stressful factor due to clash between the load of portions to be covered and the available time.

Another stress crop up by the work – life balance of teachers while in online teaching. Online teaching has merged the lines between class and home for teachers.

### Adaption to Online Course Design

The change from the traditional notion of teaching to the online teaching was very drastic and this didn't give teachers adequate time to adapt with the new scenario. This created anxiety in teachers especially who personally preferred face to face teaching. Teachers feel that they cannot connect with their students due to the lack of in-person contact. In this type of teaching, activity or the practical based lessons transaction is difficult. Another issue pinpointed by the teachers is the continuous assessment of their students. In the regular classes, teachers have the accessibility of students written assignments, practical records, formative assessment papers etc., through which teachers can assess the students' progress in writing, reading, comprehension and application abilities. But in online mode the assignments were submitted through e-mails, Google classroom etc., where they have the facility of auto correction and copying from other sites. This has reduced the correctness of assessment.

### Limitations

The study offers relevant information regarding the issues and benefits of online learning and teaching from the higher secondary teachers perspectives. The findings of the study may help in the improvement of online teaching both in the pandemic scenario and in the future educational endeavors. The limitation of the study was the sample size, since the accessibility the teachers was less due to the COVID – 19 restrictions imposed by the Government and the sample was drawn only from the schools of Kerala, India. It would be more useful if the sample size is increased and broaden to the teachers from other states of India to generalize the results. Furthermore, it would be useful if a research was carried out in the area of development of instructional materials for online teaching.

### Educational Implications

The findings of the study have practical implications since it throws light on the issues to be resolved. The findings also generate possibility for research in educational issues.

The findings of the study also possess significant social implication as it recommends the efficient blended learning and put forwards the need for developing more accessible digital platforms and the suitable instructional materials.

### Conclusion

The online learning provides the scope for accessing the learning resources without any constraints. Online learning will ensure the equality in education since it can be accessed by anybody from anywhere. The methods facilitate the access to high quality teachers to supplement lectures in a flexible way. Even though the online learning has many benefits, it has certain shortcomings too. Students and teachers have reported anxiety and higher stress level with the change from traditional classrooms to the online teaching. The teachers are in a chaos due to the over load of work, low internet connectivity, low digital competence, data privacy and security. This triggers more stress due the students' lack of motivation in attending the online classes where they are mostly passive listeners. All these make the online teaching a pressure rather than a pleasure.

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