PANDEMIC DAYS: PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STUDENT-CENTRIC METHODS

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ABSTRACT

As COVID-19 continues unabated, adversely affecting all aspects of life, education system is being under a paradigm shift from familiar methods to the most modern technologically enhanced online modes. While analysing the pros and cons of the distant, online learning, the most significant factor is lack of powerful and efficient devices. This digital divide leads to psychological stress and dilemma in the younger minds. Student centric learning strategies which were occurring in a full- fledged way, face challenges in the online platforms. In order to identify the possibilities and effectiveness of online teaching and learning, a survey was conducted among students of higher education institutions. This study reveals realities regarding the interests, difficulties, and challenges in the online mode of learning.

Introduction

The entire world has been overwhelmed by the pandemic COVID-19with more than thirty million documented infections and one million deaths. The pandemic has brought the universe to a standstill with emotional, economic, psychological, intellectual, and social depression. Most of the nations implemented urgent lock-down strategies to reduce the blow out of the disease. The shutting down of campuses and educational institutions forced many students to adapt with an unfamiliar learning system. The pandemic has transformed the centuries-old methods, chalk and talk model to the one driven by information and

communication technology. But neither the institutions nor the students were prepared for the prolonged campus closures andthe both faced a variety of challenges as well. While majority of colleges and universities around the world integrate some form of online education into the course work, moving all programmes online may prove challenging. Student centric methods are highly significant as learners are more prominent than the instructors. Role of a teacher has also changed completely. From that of a hard and fast disciplinarian, the teacher has become a friend and facilitator who provides suitable ambience for learning. In the higher education sector, there are a number of student centric methods which can be subdivided as experiential learning, participatory learning, and problem solving methods.

The experiential learning strategies include internships, industry visits, field trips, study tours, peer teaching, laboratory experiments, projects, surveys, quiz, debate, seminars, flipped classes, cell/club/forum/association activities, paper presentations, interviews, job drives, competitions, workshops, group discussions, pair learning, group studies, skit/drama/ role play, interface meetings, exhibitions, question-bank preparation, online courses, students exchange programmes, extension/outreach activities, cultural festivals, ASAP/ WWS/SSP, etc. These learning methodologies provide hands on learning experiences to the aspiring younger mindsand they achieve the goal of learning by doing. Students apply their theoretical knowledge in the practical situations and they have an access to real-time coaching and feedback. Since learning outcomes are obvious, learners gain accomplishments easily.

The following teaching methods come under the category of participatory learning: leadership training sessions, peer teaching, laboratory experiments, projects, surveys, assignments, article/book reviews, quiz, debate, seminars, flipped classes, cell/club/forum/ association activities, invited lectures, paper presentations, discussions, competitions, workshops, group discussions, pair/group learning, skit/drama/role play, question-answer sessions, brain storming sessions, interface meetings, exhibitions, question bank preparation, online courses, student exchange programmes, extension/outreach programmes, cultural festivals, value education, ASAP/WWS/SSP, etc. Some of these methods are categorized as experiential learning strategies as well. These methods are rather affordable and interesting to the learners. They promote self-awareness and self- esteem and help learners to understand different perspectives.

The problem solving strategies encourage students to believe in their ability to think reasonably, evaluate critically, and to suggest effective solutions. Case studies, survey projects, club/cell/forum/association activities, brain storming sessions, extension/outreach activities, and problem based project works promote critical thinking and risk handling. These challenging but innovative strategies are capable of creating hard and soft skills in the learners.

In this analytical review the extent of paradigm shift that took place in the higher education

system during the COVID- 19 days is reviewed and effectiveness of online teaching-learning is assessed. The fruitful strategies adopted by teachers are identified and suggested. This research work show case the level of transition that took place in the current education system, especially regarding the implementing of student centric strategies.

Objectives

The spread of coronavirus pandemic has tested the readiness of centres to deal with the crisis that requires online and remote measures. This research study focuses:

- To identify the effectiveness of online teaching and learning methodologies
- To recognizethe most fruitful strategies for online learning
- To assess how much student centric, the adopted strategies were
- To understand the students' perception of the online system of learning.

This analysis can certainly highlight the essential transitionthat needs to be brought in the education system ahead.

Methodology

This study is based upon a survey with the back- up of a questionnaire having 14 questions. It provides the learners a platform for self -assessment and it's a tool for institutional evaluation. The questionnaire is circulated in the higher education institutions of Idukki district, Kerala. Idukki is selected because of its backwardness regardingtechnological facilities, internet connectivity, and data availability. Ten Arts and Science colleges took part in the survey and there weremore than 600student respondents.

Significance of the Study

This study becomes highly relevant in the present scenario of covid-19 and post covid-19 days. Since there arises a compulsion tohave a shift from the traditional methodologies to the adaptation of modern technological assistance, the findings of the study is crucial. Students' point of view is the key element and this random sample would definitely help the institutions to recognize the real situation.

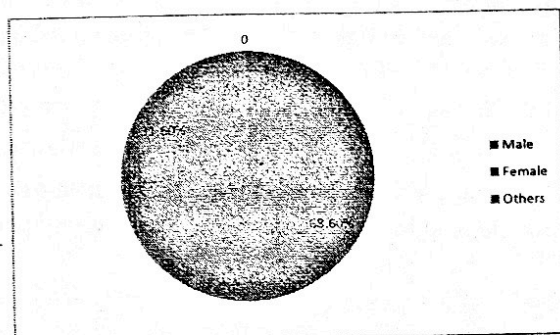INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

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Fig.1 On analysing the gender of the respondents, it is found that 70% of the respondents are male and 30% are female.
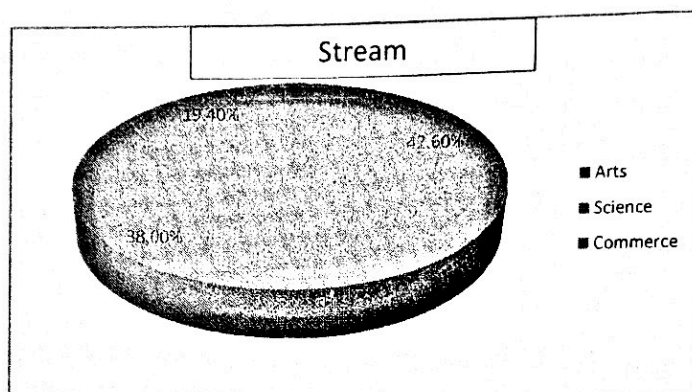
Stream

Stream

Fig. 2 On analysing the stream/course of the respondents, it is found that 42% of the respondents belong to the Arts stream whereas 38% belongs to Science and 20% are from Commerce.

How do you feel overall about online education?

- Poor
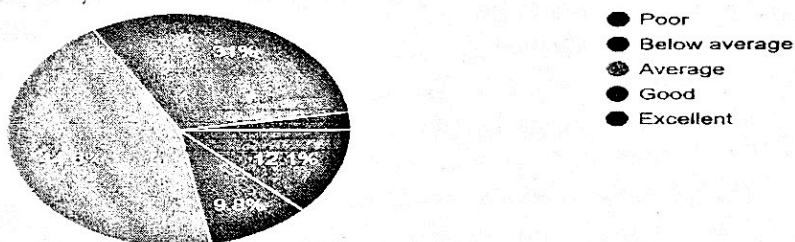- Below average
- Average
- Good
- Excellent

Fig. 3 On analysing the effectiveness of online teaching, only 3% has the opinion that online teaching is excellent; For the 31% it is good; 44% of the respondents assess its quality as average; for 10% it is below average, and for 12%, online teaching is found poor.

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Bar chart (Fig. 10):

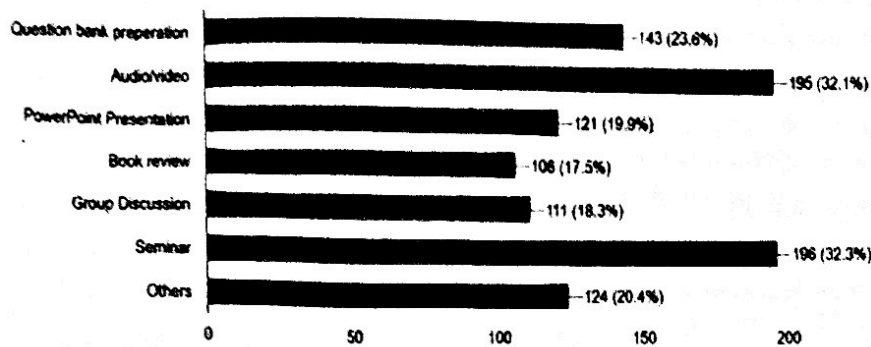| Category	Value
Question bank preparation	143 (23.6%)
Audio/video	195 (32.1%)
PowerPoint Presentation	121 (19.9%)
Book review	106 (17.5%)
Group Discussion	111 (18.3%)
Seminar	196 (32.3%)
Others	124 (20.4%)

Fig. 10 On analysing the preferencein assignment modes, audio/ video preparation is chosen by 32%; 23% likes question bank preparation and seminars; 19% likes power point presentation; 17% prefers book review/ group discussion whereas 20% of the respondents opt for some other strategies.

Bar chart (Fig. 11):

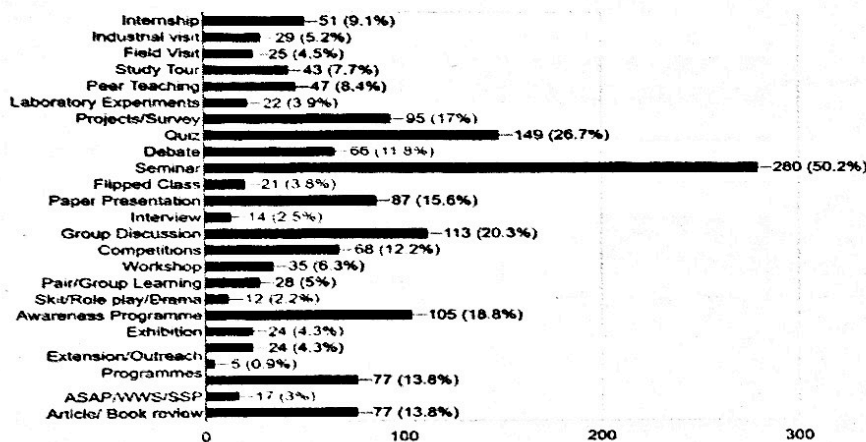| Category	Value
Internship	51 (9.1%)
Industrial visit	29 (5.2%)
Field Visit	25 (4.5%)
Study Tour	43 (7.7%)
Peer Teaching	47 (8.4%)
Laboratory Experiments	22 (3.9%)
Projects/Survey	95 (17%)
Quiz	149 (26.7%)
Debate	66 (11.8%)
Seminar	280 (50.2%)
Flipped Class	21 (3.8%)
Paper Presentation	87 (15.6%)
Interview	14 (2.5%)
Group Discussion	113 (20.3%)
Competitions	68 (12.2%)
Workshop	35 (6.3%)
Pair/Group Learning	28 (5%)
Skit/Role play/Drama	12 (2.2%)
Awareness Programme	105 (18.8%)
Exhibition	24 (4.3%)
Extension/Outreach	24 (4.3%)
Programmes	5 (0.9%)
	77 (13.8%)
ASAP/WWS/SSP	17 (3%)
Article/ Book review	77 (13.8%)

Fig. 11 this data indicates the experiential learning strategies adopted in the institutions: Seminar is the most frequent option (50%); group discussion, awareness programmes, paper presentation, and project/survey are conducted by 18%. Quiz is conducted for 26%; Extension/outreach programmes/ article/book review are organized for 14%; a small percentage, ie., less than 10% is found that internship/industry/field visit, study tour, peer teaching, exhibition/ASAP/WWS/SSP, skit/role play/ drama, pair/group learning, workshops, etc. are conducted.

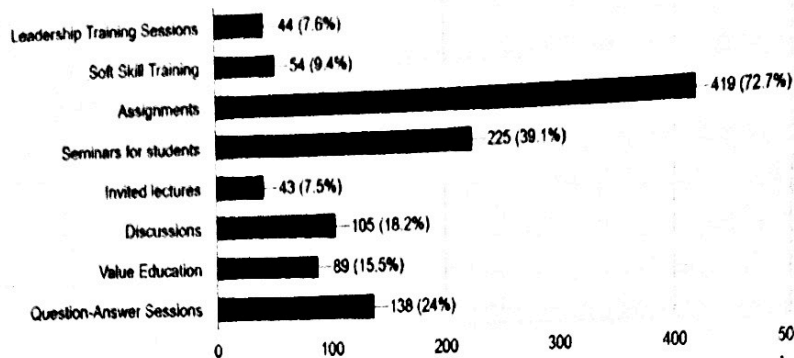|	
Leadership Training Sessions	44 (7.6%)
Soft Skill Training	54 (9.4%)
Assignments	419 (72.7%)
Seminars for students	225 (39.1%)
Invited lectures	43 (7.5%)
Discussions	105 (18.2%)
Value Education	89 (15.5%)
Question-Answer Sessions	138 (24%)

Fig. 12 This data indicates the participatory learning strategies implemented in the institutions: Assignment is the most frequent option (72%); Seminars (39%), question-answer sessions (24%), discussions (18%), value education (15%), soft skill training (9%), invited lectures (7%), and leadership training (7%).

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Which of the following Problem solving learning methods were adopted during the Covid-19 days?
485 responses

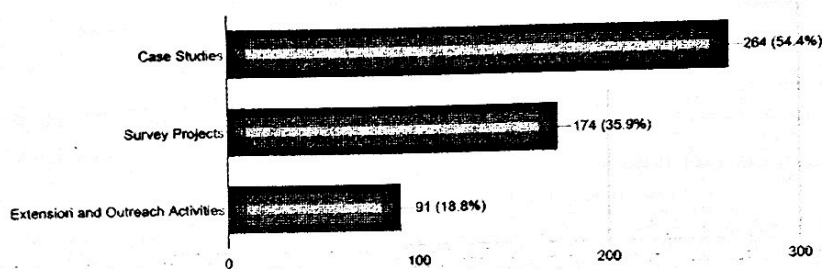|	
Case Studies	264 (54.4%)
Survey Projects	174 (35.9%)
Extension and Outreach Activities	91 (18.8%)

Fig. 13 On analysing the implemented problem solving methods, case studies are conducted by 54%; survey projects are done by 35%; while extension and outreach activities are organized by 18%.

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Which of the following Innovative learning methods were adopted during the Covid-19 days?
542 responses
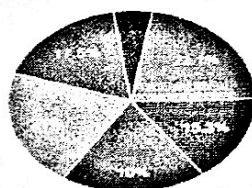
- Question bank preparation
- Video Preparation
- Audio Preparation
- Online Courses(MOOC/Coursera)
- Survey Projects
- Certificate Courses

Fig. 14 On analysing the innovative learning methods adopted during the Covid-19 days, certificate courses were done by 22%; survey projects were conducted by 6%; 17% of the respondents did

courses; audio preparation was done by 21% and 19% of the respondents prepared video 15% of them prepared question banks.

What are the challenges you face during online mode of exams?
593 responses

- ● Increased stress
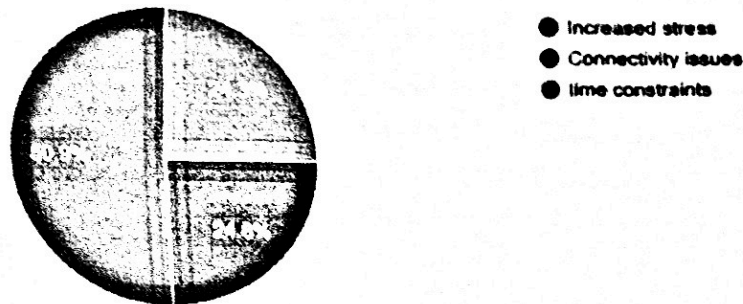- ● Connectivity issues
- ● time constraints

Fig. 15 On analysing the challenges that the learners confront with during the online mode of exams, 24% has time constraints; 51% has connectivity issues whereas 25% has stress.

What type of exams you prefer in Online mode?
585 responses

- ● Surprise exams
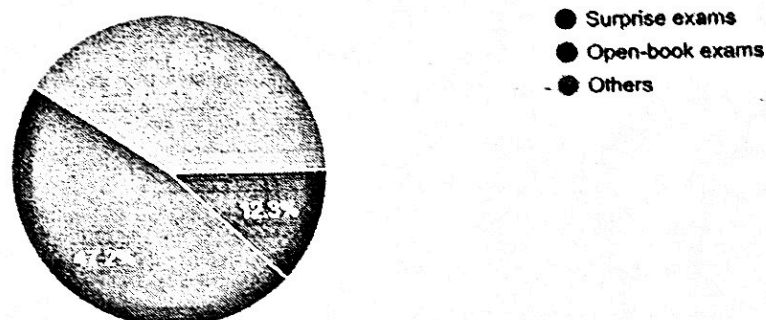- ● Open-book exams
- ● Others

Fig. 16 On analysing the type of exams that the learners prefer, for 12% surprise exams seems better; 47% prefers open book exams and 41% likes to have some other strategy of testing and evaluation.

Findings of the Study

Thestudy throws light mainly into the challenges faced by the students as well as teachers. Though social platforms and web-based information broadcasting are the fastest ways to get the appropriate knowledge at the finger tips, the changeover is not an easy task. A massive surge in stress and anxiety is distinct among students. The forced migration from in-person to online learning has deepened the digital divide-the gap between those who have access to the internet and technology and those who do not. Following findings of the study demands immediate attention and necessary action: