

Social media & Online Education in Open and Distance Learning

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During the lockdown when all educational institutions were closed, online education remained the only option to remain connected and keeping the teaching and learning processes running. The government is yet to conduct a national level survey on the impact of online education but some efforts have been made in this direction at different levels. The key findings indicate that there is hardly any difference in access to resources across institutions whether private or government and across states among students and teachers. But a difference is generally seen in the quality of resources and education provided.

India has witnessed a major shift from an elite centric education system to massification with major emphasis on access and equity while maintaining quality and excellence. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) is 26.3 per cent in higher education in the country which is much below the global average. Social media is playing a vital role in online education and providing strong platform for online education. The learners of twenty first century are more techno friendly and eager to use media in learning processes. Online education is effective mode of teaching highlights the need of quality online education in present time of uncertainty and rapid change where new normal in every field are urgent need of society. Media broadens sources of knowledge in any particular and specific topic, media motivates to explore, creates interest & keeps engaged, for effective learning these are essential elements of learning in which online education in Uttarakhand Open University is working continuously. Online services provided by UOU were easily accessible represents that Uttarakhand Open University is marching ahead in online education for inclusion of technology in higher education. Students are ready to accept online education mode of education for better opportunity and quality. UOU effectively and efficiently practicing online education incorporating social media and digital learning system.

Key words-social media,online education, distance education, odl.

Introduction:

ODL institutions are catering to around 10 per cent of GER and are able to massify higher education to some extent but the dependence on learner support centres for catering to distance learners needs restricts

large scale expansion. ICT enabled education offering low cost, flexible anytime, anywhere, individualized and just in-time learning seems to be a viable solution. Appropriate use of ICT can overcome barriers of physical distance and time and lower costs. It also has the potential to increase student enrolments. There were around 687 million internet users in India and around 629 million mobile internet users in January 2020 (Statista, 2020). Though India is the second largest online market, the internet penetration rate in the country was just around 50 per cent of the population at the start of 2020. India's digital environment is increasing rapidly and is expected to reach 1 billion internet users by 2025 (Analytics Insight, 2020). The number of mobile users is also likely to increase to 966 million (68 per cent of the population) by 2023.

The COVID-19 pandemic all over the world revealed new challenges for the ODL system. Steps have to be taken to redesign pedagogy, updating study material, updating the ODL and OER policy, along with improving learner-based co-creation of resources, updating technology for teaching-learning and evaluation, facilitating teaching staff and students with a technology enabled learning environment, and skill enhancement of students. These need to be done for enhancing the ODL system and providing learners with access to quality education during the pandemic (Panigrahi M. 2021).

The COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact on Online Education The COVID-19 pandemic brought major disruptions in higher education, transforming the centuries old chalk and talk model to a technology driven model. It called for a multipronged approach to manage the crisis and build a robust education system in the country. With the lockdown in March 2020 as colleges and universities closed there was a sudden surge in demand for online classes and courses. Faculties were taken unaware and many were unprepared and had to adopt and adapt to the online teaching-learning mode. They were under tremendous stress to address issues like online pedagogy and deliverables.

The Professor Nageshwar Rao Committee looked into issues related to promoting online education. On the aspect of methodology to integrate and enhance various efforts for online education, the committee recommended 'One India One Content,' an integrated e-content portal to be made live at the earliest. On methodology to conduct online examinations ensuring credibility and transparency, the committee recommended that online examinations should not be made mandatory and the universities may devise their own mechanisms for conducting examinations including mode of evaluation keeping in mind the concerns of the learners. The committee further proposed to raise the current limit on online teaching of 20 per cent as stipulated in UGC Regulations, 2016 to 40 percent. It also suggested that universities with either a valid NAAC score equal to or greater

than 3.01 or with a rank in the top-100 in the overall NIRF rankings at least once in the last two cycles, should be allowed to proceed with online learning facilities without UGC's permission. The committee's recommendations were integrated with the Merged Regulations for ODL and Online Education 2020. With the thrust from MoE on using online platforms and regular advertisements for these on different social media platforms, the government was able to generate awareness and interest in online education to some extent. The pandemic has to some extent been able to generate interest in online educational resources and courses and the learner and teacher communities have started adopting the online teaching-learning environment.

Need of study:

During the lockdown when all educational institutions were closed, online education remained the only option to remain connected and keeping the teaching and learning processes running. The government is yet to conduct a national level survey on the impact of online education but some efforts have been made in this direction at different levels. The key findings indicate that there is hardly any difference in access to resources across institutions whether private or government and across states among students and teachers. But a difference is generally seen in the quality of resources and education provided. The deployment of services is also not uniform wherein private institutions seem to have an edge in terms of hours of online classes attended by learners. In the context of modes of content dissemination, it is found that the most common methods used were online classes followed by document sharing through e-mails or WhatsApp.

Objectives of study:

- To find out opinion on influence of social media.
- To know about the preference towards social media and online education.
- To know about preference for future classes.
- To find out view on online education is effective mode of teaching.
- To explore view on content and presentation quality of online sessions attended.

Hypotheses:

- There is significant difference in opinion on influence of social media between male and female respondents.
- There is significant difference in preference towards role of media in learning process male and female counterparts.
- There is significant difference in preference on future classes between male and female respondents.
- There is significant difference in opinion on online education is effective mode of teaching between male and female respondents.
- There is significant difference in preference towards content and presentation quality of online sessions attained by male and female counterparts.

Review of studies:

Pandey J.(2021);find out in his study, Experimenting with Online Learning at Uttarakhand Open University that the learners were satisfied with the support provided by the counsellors and the sessions were interactive and useful. Any changes in schedules were communicated on time and they also received timely response on their queries. Their experience with support staff was also satisfactory. The learners agreed that the infrastructure and other facilities provided by the university were good.

Kulal,Nayak(2020);opined in their study on perception of teachers and students toward online classes in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi District that e-learning has a more significant role to play in the future, but it cannot be a replacement to traditional face-to-face classroom learning. A complete transition to online learning is quite tricky. However, we cannot ignore the benefits derived from e-learning. As such, there is a need to understand the obstacles that come in the way of accepting online learning and take corrective measures to overcome it.

Wagdi S.(2020);find out in his study on response to COVID-19 in higher education social media usage for sustaining formal academic communication in developing countries,that social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp have been used effectively to sustain formal teaching and learning in institutions which lacked technological platforms and formal online learning management system

Ansari(2020);revealed in their study on exploring the role of social media in collaborative learning that there is a significant positive association between online knowledge sharing behaviour and student's behaviour indicates that more engaged students in collaborative learning via social media leads to better academic performance.

Research Methodology:

The study investigated the student's perception of online classes & social media in open and distance learning. The study utilized a descriptive Quantitative design to obtain opinion of respondents. The respondents of study all the students enrolled in B.Ed.&B.Ed.(spl). Around 1340 students are pursuing teacher education programme in Uttarakhand Open University. Students were selected for this study in random basis. Simple random selection techniques were used for selection of sample. The sample size consists 60 male & 60 female students. Five point Likert scale was used to collect the opinion of students in online classes, social media, open and distance learning. Five point Likert scale indicates with 1 being strongly disagreed & 5 being strongly agreed. Questionnaires were distributed to participants by using Google form and participants were informed that all opinion provided by them were kept confidential. The data were collected and recorded in systematic way analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Secondary

sources were used for review the concept and supporting the findings.A questionnaire was developed by investigator for collection of data from students enrolled in B.Ed.&B.Ed.(spl).

Analysis of Data,Interpretation and Discussion of results

Analysis of social media influences

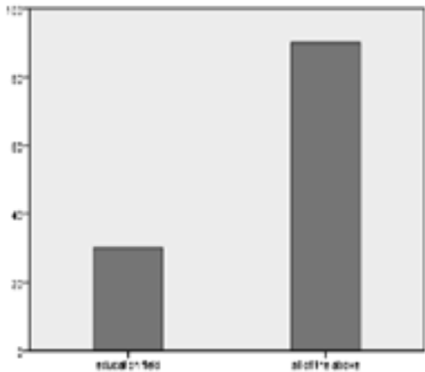


Fig.1

Fig.1 reveals that 8.3%(10)respondents that social media influences education field while 91.7%(110) represented that social media influences all fields including education field, professional field, personal field now a days. Social media influence is growing rapidly in every sphere of life. By using social media intelligently, it will be helpful in making teaching learning process more interesting and motivating as social media is playing an integral role in our daily lives. The respondents were student who are working as teacher in elementary education in remote areas of different states of India.Hence results are very interesting and reflecting grassroot situation in our society.

Table. 1

Group Statistics										
		gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
social media influences	male		60	3.40	1.210	.156				
	female		60	3.10	1.386	.179				

Independent Samples Test										
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
social media influences	Equal variances assumed	6.469	.012	1.263	118	.105	.209	.300	.238	-.170 .770
	Equal variances not assumed			1.263	115.884	.105	.209	.300	.238	-.171 .771

On independent sample test it was found that the mean of both gender lies in same range .The mean difference is greater than .05 hence inference can be drawn that there is no significant difference between male and female counterparts on social media influences in education ,professional, personal fields of individuals at present time. Both groups by at par in social media influences.Hence hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Analysis of media’s role in learning process

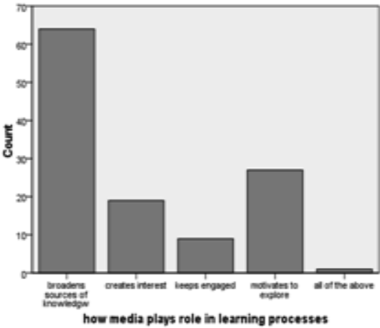


Fig. 2

Fig. 2 reveals that 55% (66)respondents shows that media broadens sources of knowledge,20% (24)opines that use of media motivates to explore,16.7%(9)shows that media creates interest,7.5%(9) shows that media keeps engaged,0.8%(1) shows that media broadens sources of knowledge, creates interest in learning, keeps engaged & motivates to explore .student’s engagement consequently affects students learning.This supports to bring changes in traditional education system and inclusion of media in our education system to make it more productive and innovative.

Table. 2

Group Statistics										
	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
how media plays role in learning processes	male	60	1.80	1.162	.150					
	female	60	2.23	1.332	.172					

Independent Samples Test										
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Significance Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
how media plays role in learning processes	3.846	.052	-1.899	118	.030	.060	-.433	.228	-.885	.019
			-1.899	115.846	.030	.060	-.433	.228	-.885	.019

The table 3.0 shows that the mean difference is greater than .05 reveals that the difference is not significant .shows that male and female counterparts are at par in opinion about role of social media in learning process. Respondents support that at present time social media is entering rapidly in every sphere of human life due to better internet connectivity and availability of various platforms. Use of social media in education process broadens source of knowledge, creates interest, keeps engaged, motivates to learn .Social media communication devices facilitates students to be more enthusiastic and dynamic. Hence hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Analysis of Preference for future classes

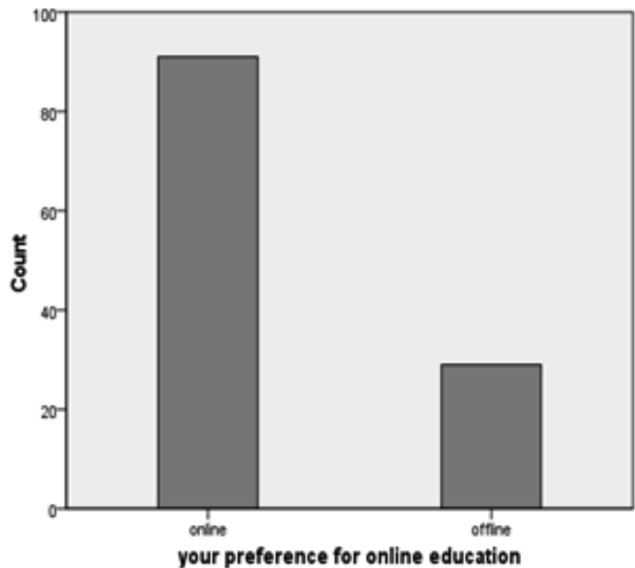


Fig. 3

Fig. 3 On opinion on preference for future classes 57.8%(91)respondents preferred online classes ,gives very interesting resultit may be due to that enrolled almost respondents are working and engaged in teaching professions while 24.2%(29) were in favor of offline classes .as students can attend classes from anywhere and both class and learning content becomes easily accessible hence respondents prefer online classes.Online classes necessitate a learner centred environment required for self-motivated and self -directed learning. This reveals that pandemic has to some extent been able to generate interest in online educational resources and courses and the learner and teacher communities have started adopting the online teaching-learning environment. A very significant and sustainable innovation in the form of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) was necessary for making education accessible to everyone.

Table. 3

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
your preference for online education	male	60	1.13	.343	.044
	female	60	1.35	.481	.062

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t Test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
your preference for online education	Equal variances assumed	35.797	<.001	-2.841	118	.003	.005	-.217	.076	-.368	-.066
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.841	106.644	.003	.005	-.217	.076	-.368	-.066

Table 5.0 shows that the mean of male students and female students were similar shows that they are at par on online education is effective mode of teaching. Mean difference greater than .05 reveals that male and female counterparts are at par on online education is effective mode of teaching .Shows that pandemic has to some extent been able to generate interest in online educational resources and courses and the learner and teacher communities have started adopting the online teaching-learning environment. A very significant and sustainable innovation in the form of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) was necessary for making education accessible to everyone. This supports practices done by Uttarakhand Open University for massification of quality higher education in India. Hypothesis 3 is rejected,

Online education is effective mode of teaching

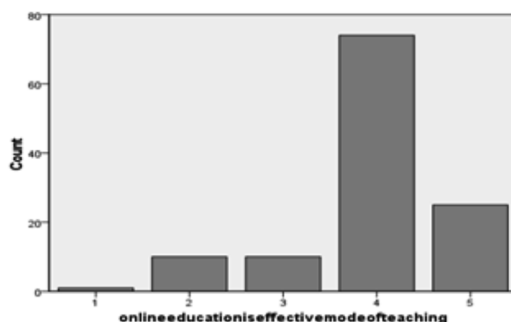


Fig. 4

fig.4 shows 61.7%(74) respondents were agreed that online education is effective mode of teaching, shows that learners are positive towards accepting changes required .20.8%(25)were strongly agree that online education is effective mode of teaching gives very encouraging results towards online

education.8.5%(10)were disagree that online education is effective mode of teaching. Online learning has helped students to become independent learner .Student got opportunities to explore new learning applications and platforms for development new skills and capabilities.

Table. 4
Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
online education is effective mode of teaching	male	60	3.98	.854	.110
	female	60	3.90	.796	.103

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t Test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
online education is effective mode of teaching	Equal variances assumed	.072	.788	.553	118	.291	.581	.083	.161	-.215 .382
	Equal variances not assumed			.553	117.433	.291	.581	.083	.161	-.215 .382

Table 6.0 shows means of male and female counterparts in online education is effective mode of education. Mean difference is greater than .05reveals that there is no significant difference in opinion. Male and female counterparts are at par in opinion that online education is effective mode of education.online education enriches learning based on collective exploration and interaction which encourages students towards online education.

Analysis of content/presentation quality of online sessions

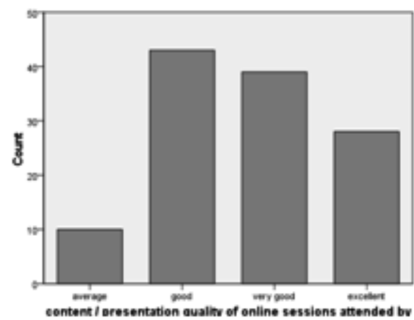


Fig. 5

Fig.5 shows that 55%(66) their experience is excellent & very good on content and presentation quality of online sessions attended indicates that University is marching towards online education successfully while 36.7%(44) were good ,8.3%(10) were on average. The mode of learning used during online sessions by Uttarakhand Open University was simpler encouraging and engaging which are required for education at present.

Table. 5
Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
content / presentation quality of online sessions attended by you	male	60	3.77	.890	.115
	female	60	3.65	.954	.123

Independent Samples Test											
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
content / presentation quality of online sessions attended by you	Equal variances assumed	.916	.340	.693	118	.245	.490	.117	.168	-.217	.450
	Equal variances not assumed			.693	117.442	.245	.490	.117	.168	-.217	.450

Table 7.0 shows that mean of male and female counterparts were in same range. The mean difference is greater than .05 reveals that male and females do not differ significantly on content /presentation quality of session attended by them. They are at par on content and presentation quality of online sessions in School of Education. Hence hypothesis 5 is rejected.

Findings and Conclusion:

Social media is playing a vital role in online education in open and distance learning.96% respondents were in favor that social media is providing strong platform for online education shows that the learners of twenty first century are more techno friendly and eager to use media in learning processes. Online education is effective mode of teaching was favored by more than 86% respondents highlights the need of quality online education in present time of uncertaintyand rapid change where new normal in every field are urgent need of society. On role of media in learning 52.2%respondents opined that media broadens sources of knowledge in any particular and specific topic,22,2%represents that media motivates to explore,18.9% shows that it creates interest &6.1%shows that it keeps engaged, for effective learning these are essential elements of learning in which online education in Uttarakhand Open University is working continuously. In content and presentation quality of online sessions attended by them 55%(66) shows that their experience is excellent & very good on content and presentation quality of online sessions attended indicates that University is marching towards online education successfully while 36.7%(44) were good ,8.3%(10) were on average. The mode of learning used during online sessions by Uttarakhand Open University was simpler encouraging and engaging which are required for education at present. Shows that students are ready to accept changes in conventional mode of education for better opportunity and quality.The learners enrolled in teacher training programs belong to different states of India like Delhi,Rajasthan,Haryana,Uttar Pradesh &Uttarakhand most of them are in-service teacher in Primary level in different remote areas of India.

The findings of study are really interesting that twenty first century learners are digital natives they ready to accept changes in conventional education system with interest and enthusiasm. it is time that a concerted effort is made at all levels to gradually start adopting online tools and platforms for both online and classroom-based education. In the long term this will help in achieving GER targets and providing quality education. NEP 2020 provides a clear-cut framework for implementing online education in the country and with Online Education Regulations in place a major shift towards online education is expected in the coming years. A very significant and sustainable innovation in the form of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) was necessary for making education accessible to everyone. Proper use of social media could promote new era of social learning social presence and alternative platform to foster online learning in developing countries. Online meeting platforms like google classroom, Zoom strengthened online education in Open and Distance learning.

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