

Blended Teaching-Learning System, a new option for education system in post-COVID period- A case study of Thane City Colleges

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Abstract –

In the Post-COVID era, the different sectors have undergone massive changes, the education system is not an exception to this. Educationists, students and policy makers and other stakeholders have started giving their opinions and suggestions with respect to new education system. A Blended Teaching-Learning System (BTLS) may prove to be a new normal. Therefore, it is important for the stakeholders to think about various pros and cons of the Blended Teaching-Learning System. The author of this paper aims to understand, analyse the pros and cons of Blended Learning System and to make suggestions. Author of the study hypothesized that Blended Teaching-Learning System is good option in post-COVID period. However, it is imperative that sufficient and affordable internet connectivity and other necessary infrastructure is available for BTLS. Author has taken primary data through a questionnaire method from the stakeholders, i.e., students, parents and teachers of various colleges in Thane city. It is concluded that taking into consideration the post-COVID issues, Blended Teaching-Learning System would be a new normal. However due precautions and sufficient infrastructure would be necessary for best results.

Keywords – Blended Teaching-Learning System (BTLS), Covid-19, education policy, degree college, and teachers

Introduction –

In the Post-COVID era, the different sectors have undergone massive changes, the education system is not an exception to this. Educationists, students and policy makers and other stakeholders have started giving their opinions and suggestions with respect to new education system. A Blended Teaching-Learning System may prove to be a new normal. The quality of teaching plays an important role in the moulding the minds of the youth. It would be helpful for imbibing necessary values in the minds of students at different levels of learning. Therefore, it is important for the stakeholders to think about various pros and cons of the Blended Teaching-Learning System. Internalization of education is speeded up in India, which requires immediate reforms with respect to the present teaching learning system.

Research Methodology:

Researcher has made use of secondary data consisting of books, journals and websites to have an update on the issue. Researcher has also undertaken primary data from degree college students (244), educators/teachers (20) and parents (54). Teachers from various degree colleges of Thane city were given a questionnaire to fill up consisting questions on Blended Teaching-Learning system, such as, use of online platform for teaching, use of E-resources for Teaching, Average attendance at online and offline teaching and students' feedback on BTLS. The researcher has also undertaken an analysis of students' feedback on BTLS. Parents' Feedback on BTLS by their wards was also taken. Statistical technique, percentage method is used to analyse the responses by all stakeholders collected data.

Scope and Limitations:

Researcher has collected feedback from all stakeholders of the degree colleges of Thane city through Google form. Teachers selected for data collection are from aided and unaided sections consisting of Arts, Commerce Management, IT and Science streams. The samples were randomly selected. However, this research has not included certain issues, such as, rising students' strength, overload of activities, working conditions etc. Future research can be conducted on these issues.

Research Questions –

1. Can Blended Teaching-Learning be new option for education system?
2. Will there be end of traditional learning system?
3. Will Blended Teaching-Learning prove to be the best learning option?
4. What precautions needed be taken to get best result from BLTS?

Objectives of the study-

1. To understand the system of Blended Teaching-Learning
2. To analyse the pros and cons of Blended Teaching-Learning
3. To make suggestions for Blended Teaching-Learning

Hypotheses of the study

1. Blended teaching-Learning is good option in post-COVID period
2. Sufficient and affordable internet connectivity are pre-requisitions for Blended Teaching-Learning system

Review of literature:

Blended Learning System-(BLS)

Concept-

“A teaching method to which you integrate technological as well as virtual activities in conjunction with traditional teaching, using planned activities that have a pedagogical

value.”ⁱ Blended Learning System is a combination of Offline and Online modes of Teaching and Learning where both students as well as teachers interact through physical classroom and online platform. Teachers share study material of their subject online and offline. Assignments, project work, and other curricular activities are held in both modes. Evaluation is done and the performance of the students is shared with parents through different networking sites. All the stakeholders in the education system are involved in the process of Teaching, Learning and Evaluation.

Pros or Merits of the Blended Teaching-Learning System-

1. **Improvement in Learning system-** Teachers who want to start exploring the potential of online teaching can choose as a starting point mixed course, using online classes to reinforce the content taught in the classroom.ⁱⁱ
2. **Use of Innovative Teaching Models-** The Pandemic has changed the education sector; it has pushed optimization in delivery methods. Schools and education institutions have been forced to move online. A new normal has been created and it is teaching online.ⁱⁱⁱ As technology has advanced, workplaces have adopted the culture of video conferencing, collaborating, and aggregating information at one place. Whether working from home with people across the state or across the globe, becoming familiar and adept with this technology is more of a mandatory requirement these days.^{iv}
3. **Meet the needs of new generation-** The goal is to meet the needs of new generations of students for a more efficient, interesting, personalized education and connected with this reality in which technology is part of everyday life.^v Nowadays, new technologies being so easily accessible to everyone and with young generations used to use the internet and the virtual world every day, having more visual and interactive study materials is becoming way more engaging than sticking to the old fashioned school book.^{vi}
4. **More Time Flexibility-** With online learning, students and teachers benefit from a more casual, flexible approach^{vii} With online learning, on the other hand, the training can be conducted from practically anywhere in the world.^{viii}

5. Cost Benefits- When compared to in-person tuitions or classroom teaching, online education tends to be more affordable. One gets to save money from the commute and class material which is made available digitally free of cost.^{ix}

6. Better and speedy evaluation process because of ICT tools and software development.

Cons or demerits of the Blended Teaching-Learning System-

1. Isolating nature of online mode of learning will lose face to face communication of teacher and students.

2. Would be successful if learners have self-discipline- If you are motivated, well-organised and have self-discipline, would prefer to study at more flexible times and at your chosen location, then Online learning would be a perfect fit for you and as efficient as offline learning.^x

3. More use of electronic medium of study than physical books and other reading material.

4. Less personal touch due to online assessment rather than classroom tests and discussions directly with the students.

5. Technical or network issues may cause distraction and loss of concentration among students.

6. Less access to the educational institutions in rural and backward regions.

7. Teacher's struggle with both online and offline modes leading to adverse effect on Quality of teaching

8. Requirement of good knowledge of ICT tools for both teachers and students, otherwise BTLS may lead to confusion.

Findings of the Study-

A. Responses from Teachers-

I. PRESENT MODE OF TEACHING

MODE OF TEACHING	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
ONLY ONLINE	0	2	2	10
ONLY OFFLINE	0	0	0	0
BOTH/BLTS	4	14	18	90
TOTAL	4	16	20	100

The above table shows that 90% or the teachers are using Blended mode of teaching.

II. BETTER MODE OF TEACHING

BETTER MODE OF TEACHING	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
ONLY ONLINE	0	1	1	5
ONLY OFFLINE	3	8	11	55
BLTS	1	7	8	40
TOTAL	4	16	20	100

The above table shows that 55% of teachers feel traditional or offline mode of teaching is better, 40% think BLTS is better and only 5% think that only online mode is better.

III. HAS POST-COVID PERIOD MADE YOU MORE TECHNO-SAVVY?

TECHNO-SAVVY	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
YES	3	16	19	95
NO	0	0	0	0

MAY BE	1	0	1	5
TOTAL	4	16	20	100

The above table shows that 95% of teachers accept that post-COVID period has made them more techno-savvy.

IV. MODE OF EXAMINATION -

MODE OF EXAM	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Online	1	3	4	20
Offline	2	8	10	50
Mixed pattern	1	5	6	30
TOTAL	4	16	20	100

The above table shows that 50% of teachers prefer offline or classroom examination, 30% showed preference for mixed pattern and remaining for online examination.

B. Responses from Students- I. PRESENT MODE OF LEARNING-

QUESTION	ONLINE	OFFLINE/ TRADITIONAL	BLENDED	Total
PRESENT MODE OF LEARNING	143 (58.6%)	31 (12.7)	70 (28.7%)	244 (100%)

Above table shows that 58.6% are learning in online mode however only 12.7% learn in offline mode and 28.7% learn in BTLs.

II. BETTER MODE OF LEARNING-

QUESTION	ONLINE	OFFLINE/ TRADITIONAL	BLENDED	Total
BETTER MODE OF LEARNING	72 (29.5%)	122 (50%)	50 (20.5%)	244 (100%)

Above table shows that 58.6% are learning in online mode however only 29.5% of them think that online mode is better. 50% of the students have preferred offline or traditional mode of

learning. Regarding BTLs, only 20.5% students feel that it is better mode of learning.

III. EXAMINATION PREFERENCE

QUESTION	ONLINE	OFFLINE/ TRADITIONAL	BLENDED	Total
EXAM PREFERENCE	138 (58.6%)	40 (16.4%)	66 (27%)	244 (100%)

Above table shows that with respect to examination, 58.6% of the students prefer online mode of examination while 27% prefer blended

mode of examination and only 16.4% prefer offline or traditional mode of examination.

IV. USE OF COLLEGE LIBRARY

QUESTION	YES	NO	Total
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USE OF LIBRARY	83 (34%)	161 (66%)	244 (100%)
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The above table shows that only 83 (34%) use library for reading while 161 (66%) do not use library for study purpose.

C. Responses from Parents-

I. OPINION ON BLENDED LEARNING

QUESTION	Yes	No	Can't say
Do you think classroom teaching method is better than Blended Learning System?	33 (61.1%)	5 (9.3%)	16 (29.6%)

As shown in above table, 61.1% of parents think that classroom teaching or traditional mode of teaching is better than BLTS, only 9.3% parents deny it and 29.6% cannot understand which mode of learning is better.

II. PREFERENCE FOR BTLS IN FUTURE CONSIDERING PANDEMIC

QUESTION	Yes	No	Can't say
Would you suggest BTLS in future considering Pandemic situation?	28 (51.9%)	8 (14.8%)	18 (33.3%)

As shown in above table, 51.9% parents think that BTLS is better considering pandemic situation for their wards.

III. EFFECT ON POCKET MONEY TO THEIR WARD

QUESTION	Yes	No	Can't say
Do you think that your expenditure on your ward's education (pocket money) has been dropped down?	15 (27.8%)	24 (44.4%)	15 (27.8%)

Above table shows that 44.4% of the parents think that there is no dropping down of expenditure on account of online mode of learning, 27.8% think that their expenditure is

dropped down and 27.8 % cannot say anything whether their expenditure has dropped or not.

IV. AVAILABILITY OF INTERNET OR WIFI AT HOME

QUESTION	Yes	No
Do you have internet connectivity or Wi-Fi facility at you home?	40 (74.1%)	14 (25.9%)

Above table shows that 74.1% parents responded that they have internet or WIFI facility at home, but 25.9% parents do not have internet facility at home.

students to understand the subject better although present mode of teaching is either online or blended/hybrid. Regarding examination also teachers think that offline or traditional mode is better. Almost all teachers agreed that pandemic situation has made them more techno-savvy.

Findings Analysis -

1. On Teachers' feedback-

It is found that majority of the teachers think that Online mode of teaching is better for the

2. On Students' feedback-

It is found that, most of the students think offline learning is better but examination should be

online. It is also realised that students do not make use of college library for reading, which implies that they make more use of online reading or E-material for study.

3. On Parents feedback-

It is found that parents think that traditional or classroom learning is better for their ward than online learning. However, parents suggest blended learning for their ward in future. Regarding effect of online learning on pocket money given to their ward, most of them denied that their expenditure is dropped down. All parents responded positively about internet facility at home.

Suggestions-

1. It is suggested that sufficient infrastructure facilities should be made accessible to the teachers as well as students.
2. Development of e-resources by libraries
3. Post-pandemic the syllabi of the various courses need to be reformed.
4. Blended Teaching-Learning models to be created.

Conclusions

It is concluded that offline or traditional mode of teaching-learning is better than online mode of teaching-learning, however, considering pandemic situation BTLs will be new normal in future. It is also true that traditional mode of teaching will not go away.

It is also concluded that the required infrastructure is available and accessible to the teachers and students for teaching-learning and evaluation.

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