Impact of online Learning during Covid-19 - a Study of Rural Area in Bangladesh

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Abstract: Maintaining continuity with the education system in Corona is now a big challenge. One of the main aim of this study is to uncover the challenging aspects of online learning during covid-19 in rural areas of Bangladesh. The study used qualitative approaches to deepen the online learning experience and challenging aspects of secondary school students. Result shows that they have all expressed their dissatisfaction, feeling helpless and frustrated, and no well-planned action has been taken at the beginning of the online education program. How to ensure that the quality of online education is maintained and that the scope of education can be extended to rural areas through far-reaching planning.

Keywords: Covid-19, Online Learning, Rural Area.

Introduction: The worst time of the 21st century is 2020. At the beginning of the year, a virus called corona hit the world. This deadly virus has completely paralyzed our lives. We have fallen a threat to such virus before many times, facing the epidemic. But for the new infection or seasonal disease, everything in the world could not stop this way. According to WHO (2021), A total of 120 million people have been infected worldwide so far, of which 68.1 million have recovered and 2.8 million have died at the time this paper was being written. At the Same time Corona virus has been around in Bangladesh since its inception in March 2020. As a result, all educational institutions have been declared closed. In this context, the Ministry of Education of Bangladesh has issued a directive to stop the students from going to school and continue the educational activities online. Following the directive of the Ministry of Education, various educational institutions started their online classes, but due to the lack of improvement in the living standards of the people in rural areas, those students are left behind. Urban educational institutions started their education programs through Facebook or Zoom while rural schools lag behind in digital technology. According to Bangladesh Government (2020), there are 84,000 primary schools in the country and on the other hand, there are about seventeen thousand more government and private secondary schools. And there are about two and a half thousand colleges. In all, the number of students is about five crore. However, only a small part of them are getting the opportunity to study online in this corona situation and 50 percent of the students have the opportunity to watch TV.

In other words, a large number of students are still out of the scope of digital education activities.

About 80 percent of the students in government educational institution are from low-income families and their permanent home is in the village. They need continuous supply of electricity, easy expansion of broadband activities, laptops, headphones in the hands of instructors and students.

In the current situation, even if online classes are run as an alternative, it can never be an alternative to traditional education in the classroom. Because internet connection is very weak in large areas of rural area of Bangladesh, poor rural students do not have online system is inadequate in a large number of schools in rural backward areas. Uninterrupted power supply and high speed internet are essential for digital education.

Google, Yahoo and AOL national technologists in the United States in the 90's started talking about online education in the last century, since the early 2000s, a number of UK universities have introduced online education as well as traditional education. Although the Commonwealth of Learning has completed theoretical knowledge-based learning activities online without interruption, it has been pursuing a combination of theoretical and practical education in science and technology. This means that this educational activity is time and space neutral so students can use this complete freedom to join this online class at any time of the day. In our reality, it is possible to be a regular student online even with strikes, disruptive corona, traffic jams, hostel capacity, and library capacity, part-time or full-time jobs. Hopefully, the obvious barriers to online learning will be removed.

Research Problem: In the 21st century, Bangladesh has not been able to move forward in a way that developed countries have made online education easier. During the epidemic, online learning activities without infrastructure have created a huge communication gap between teachers and students and have severely damaged students' learning.

Research Purpose: The main purpose of this study is to address the problems of online learning in rural areas during the time of pandemic situation and to take appropriate action to further develop the digital education system.

Research Question:

    a)   What are the experiences of online learning during covid-19?

    b)   How to improve online learning perspective of rural areas of Bangladesh?

Literature Review: December 2019 was an initial specified Coronavirus Disease in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, as an unidentified source of pneumonia (Zhu N, Zhang D, Wang W, Li X, Yang B, Song J, et al., 2019). Subsequently, the International Committee on the Technology of Viruses (ICTV) specified the causative tool of COVID-19 as a novel coronavirus, a serious acute respiratory disorder coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) ICTV (2020). The COVID-19 outbreak has unraveled promptly not only in China but also the entire, so the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it an epidemic on March 12, 2020 (WHO, 2020). The unlimited quantity of actual cases and deaths was 23,991,520 and 809,970, respectively, in 216 regions as of August 25, 2020 (WHO, 2019).

Various government estimates have been obtained to handle the hazard of the disease spreading. These incorporate trip embargoes, necessary segregation for travelers, public entertainments, social meetings vetoes, school and college closures, business closures, self-isolation, people being asked to work from home, curfews, and lockdowns (Bedford JP, Gerry S, Hatch RA, Rechner I, Young JD, Watkinson P, Gostin LO, Wiley LF, 2020). Administrations in many countries around the earth have declared a lockdown or curfew as a way to break the rapid spread of the virus (Paital B, Das K, Parida SK, 2020). These measures harm business, education, health, and tourism worldwide (Pragholapati A, 2020).

The COVID-19 epidemic has affected all classes of education (Nicola M, Alsafi Z, Sohrabi C, Kerwan A, Al-Jabir A, Iosifidis C. et al., 2020). Academic institutions around the earth (in 192 countries) have either temporarily closed or enforced localization closures, affecting a population of approximately 1.7 billion students worldwide. Many schools around the world suspend or cancel all campus workouts to reduce congestion and therefore reduce virus communication (UNESCO, 2020). However, these measures could have secondary, & higher economic studies, and social implications for both schools urban and rural communities students (Nicola M, Alsafi Z, Sohrabi C, Kerwan A, Al-Jabir A, Iosifidis C. et al.,2020; Esposito S, Principi N, 2019).

The switch to online tutoring for junior, senior and graduate students is effective due to the suspension of classroom teaching in many schools and colleges (Sahu P, 2019; Yamin M, 2020). Learning this form gives an alternative path to reduce communication between students or between students and lecturers (Pragholapati A, 2020). However, many students do not have access to online education due to a lack of means or tools due to economic and digital divisions (UNESCO, 2020).

Bangladesh presently has 21.6 million students in primary and elementary schools, another 13 million in secondary education, and 4 million in universities and colleges. According to the Ministry of Education, 76% of secondary schools in Bangladesh are located in rural areas. It states that about 60% of primary school children attend government-run schools, mostly in rural areas.

Some studies have highlighted COVID-19 in academic studies. COVID-19 has a profound effect on students as well as rural students. Recently (UNESCO, 2020) has shown that COVID-19 adversely affects rural based on a large survey with nearly 2,000 responses. However, there is no research to investigate the effects of COVID-19 on students in rural schools in Bangladesh.

Methodology:

Nature of the Study:

This study is organized in a qualitative approach and focuses on the impact of online learning in rural areas. Only secondary school has been selected for the study and this is what maintain the validity of the findings.

Instruments:

Interview:

The opinions and experiences of secondary school students have been taken through the use of semi-structured interviews. Attempts are being made by students to find out the problems & way to accelerate online learning in rural areas of Bangladesh.

Questionnaires:

Open-ended questionnaires have been used to unearth the impact of online learning during Covid and whether students' thinking has been affected. These questionnaires have been developed according to Blooms taxonomy, that particular practical work was deeply observed (Anderson, L., Krathwohl, D., & Bloom, B. (2001).

Sample & Sampling:

The sample of this research was formation of 8 students from 4 different secondary schools of Cumilla & they have been selected through convenient sampling process (Lavrakas, 2008).

Data Analysis & Techniques:

Qualitative approach has been adopted to conduct the study, so the explanatory technique has been used for data analysis (Creswell, 2012). The qualitative data was analyzed in narrative method to illustrate patterns and themes that arose in practice and context. Finally, data were compared to identify the results of this study.

Findings: Today's world is in the same situation a hundred years ago. The state of the education system in the wake of the deadly Covid. How can students avoid the risk of infection and go to school? The vaccine is still intact. So, online learning programs are emphasized so that the valuable learning time of the students is not wasted.

One of the objectives of this study is to uncover a detailed discussion of how rural students' experiences and online activities have impacted on them. There has been an investigation of how educational institutions conducted online education during the epidemic and whether appropriate facilities were provided to students' or not.

Lack of teacher experience in online teaching:

Online classes are now the mainstay due to the epidemic coronavirus. But teachers in rural areas are still not comfortable teaching online. Most students believe that online teaching is different from physical teaching in the classroom, because they have never created courseware for online learning or had exposure to courseware for online learning. The main problem is that teachers are facing in the subject of online teaching is the skill gap. Most of the teachers did not get any training on online learning tools and techniques. Government need to provide advanced technology training to teachers to continuously enhance their skills.

Obstacles & inadequacy of online learning materials & resources:

Educational institutions in Bangladesh are using the Internet as a medium of instruction. However, students of all levels are not getting equal benefits. Although urban students get adequate speed of internet, rural students are lagging behind in this regard. Again, due to the high cost of internet and lack of smartphones, there is a gap between rich and poor students. Based on the socio-economic condition of Bangladesh, online classes have become a blessing for the students. At the time of corona, everyone is feeling various mental problems including instability and frustration. Among them, online classes have emerged as a poison. Due to the deplorable state of the internet in remote areas of the country, students in rural areas are not able to participate in online classes. They don't have enough electricity, they don't have modern smartphones & even proper guidelines. Continuing education at this time of stagnant global epidemic is a big challenge. Even if you have to buy extra data, internet speed, Wi-Fi, you have to take online classes for the sake of moving forward despite the problem of load shedding. However, the pace of study is gradually losing. Even though the typing speed of mobile or laptop has increased, the students are going to forget to write in the notebook.

Adverse environment in home during online learning

There is a big difference between getting education in school and getting education at home. Because the school environment is suitable for education only where the surrounding environment with teaching materials is conducive to learning but on the other hand there is always activity at home, movement of different people, various chores including housework which are totally unsuitable for education.

Discussion: In addition, there are doubts among the students about the post-Corona education system. What will be their curriculum? It is their question as how much their education will change. On the other hand, the fear in the minds of the students about the session jam has increased in this epidemic situation. The families are worried. All parents hope that their children will be educated and established, but at present this hope is pushing them towards despair.

The new style of education is having some effect on the students. According to government estimates, adding 64,000 primary schools, 16,000 secondary schools, 2,500 colleges and a large number of students from government and private universities to online classes is a big challenge.

Besides, in a developing country like Bangladesh, the spread of information technology has not been equal among all. Device problems have become one of the problems in online classes. Most of the students come from middle class, lower middle class and lower class families. Considering that many marginalized families do not have TV sets, the majority of primary and secondary level students are being deprived in rural areas. Also, if we look at the higher level students, we see that many students are not able to come under the class because they do not have a smartphone or laptop.

Many people can't even afford it. If there is a question of students buying devices through lending, then the realization is that the burden of repaying the loan is being borne by them and as a result many are not interested. Considering the current socio-economic situation, it is seen that many students are moving away from education to help their families who are busy in the war of life. As a result, it has become a matter of great concern for primary and secondary level students. In rural areas.

Due to the scarcity of facilities, the benefits of online education are largely not visible. None of us know how long this epidemic will last. In such a situation, everyone is worried about when they will return to the full education system. Considering this aspect,

one of the advantages of online classes is that students who have been under house arrest for a long time can be involved in their studies. If we wait for the traditional education system, the students will fall behind.

Considering these aspects, online education should be continued. However, the success of the online class cannot be claimed unless the obstacles identified in the online class are addressed. In this case, the existing problems should be gradually overcome and the online class should be made education and student friendly very fast. Despite the limitations, we need to be interested in online learning activities because it is wise to adapt to changing circumstances.

Recommendation: Corona is a global problem. The whole world suffers from corona. Many developed countries have also been forced to show helplessness in the medical system. With that in mind, the situation of a middle-income country like Bangladesh is easy to guess. As the developed world has long practiced online education as a regular or alternative to the normal education process, I believe that ensuring online education as well as finding solutions to the Corona problem will play a positive role in building a sustainable education system in the future. A new learning process will be created outside the conventional learning process. In other words, online education activities should be started without wasting time thinking that the educational institution will be opened after solving the problem. Maybe online education will one day become more integrated with our regular education. Another new medium of teacher-student friendly learning will be created outside the traditional classroom oriented education system. The online class system is for all students to ensure that the issues can be considered-

➢ Every district and sub district of the country can be brought under strong mobile network on the basis of mutual discussion with mobile operators as soon as possible.

➢ Appropriate measures can be taken to ensure strong mobile internet at each district and sub district level. Free student data packs can be guaranteed in a special process to ensure online classes for students.

➢ For those who do not have a device suitable for online classes, the device can be arranged on student friendly terms.

➢ Students cannot receive proper education in virtual classrooms due to lack of necessary training of teachers on online teaching methods. In this case, teachers need to arrange the necessary practical training.

➢ Special initiatives need to be taken by the state for students from rural and marginalized communities. To create mobile app and own software for education in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information Technology to expedite technical communication and expand education activities across the country.

➢ Involve and motivate students, teachers and parents to further expand online learning activities as well as make online learning activities accessible and accessible. To work together with the government, ministries, various agencies, educational institutions, students and parents on how to make online education dynamic, realistic and expanding, and to take online education forward by tackling the challenges.

Conclusion: This study found that the COVID-19 epidemic lockdown affected the academic performance of different grades in various participants. Online learning helps students to continue and continue with the opportunity for self-study. However, the crucial challenge secondary school of facing online education in Bangladesh's rural area is how to give practical lessons. Since most subjects are practical; so, it is not easy to learn online. Students feel that it is difficult to acquire practical skills only through online education. Improvements can be made by making online learning more accessible, provide internet, develop technology, ensure strong mobile internet, providing brief information, involve and motive students, train to the teacher, ensure every student has a device, take some initiative to more attractive on online learning and so on in the rural area.

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