

**NEW WAVES OF DIGITALIZATION AND EDUCATION IN SOUTH POINT
SCHOOL AND COLLEGE**

Naima Akhter Lina

BUP (Bangladesh University of Professionals)

naimalina321@gmail.com

Abstract

Even before COVID-19, online education is already experiencing high growth and adoption. Whether it is language application, virtual tutoring, video conferencing tool, or online learning software, there has been a significant surge in usage since COVID-19. In this unprecedented and uncertain time, most people are encouraged to study at home and work from home. On one hand, there are many challenges to online education, especially with the sudden transition. Many instructors and students have little or no training in online education. Other issues such as insufficient bandwidth and missing hardware and software are common. On the other hand, this presents an unforeseen and golden opportunity for a wider student population to experience online education. This will likely change the perception of students on online education and may trigger a wider online education adoption after the pandemic. Educational research is a key factor in the transformation of how we teach, as societies evolve. According to a recent survey, almost 40 million students in the country are facing academic recession despite the ongoing online and pre-recorded classes to avert the great blow already upon them. It is no denial that this online learning paradigm should be addressed following the outcome-based education approach in no time. More action researches are needed to see the real scenario of e-education in Bangladesh.

ii. Problem statement:

The prolonged countrywide shutdown measures following the Covid-19

Pandemic has left students and other stakeholders affiliated with the education sector facing severe consequences. As a damage control

policy, online education was introduced in emergency response. To help the students continue their education, educational institutions are trying

their best to reach out to students through different mediums, including Television, radio, and social media platforms like Facebook, Zoom, Google classroom, Google meet etc. Online education provides a healthy routine in a comfortable environment, but not everyone in Bangladesh can afford it. This rises question about how well students and teachers of a developing

country like Bangladesh can adapt to this new method.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, in his budget speech, pointed out that 40 million students are not being able to continue regular academic curriculums across Bangladesh. To take part in online education students need at least a smartphone and a stable internet connection.

The latest 2020 data of HIES (Household Income and Expenditure Survey) showed that around 12.70 percent of the poor families do not have a single mobile phone. Rural and underprivileged urban areas are at a disadvantage while accessing ICT platforms, compared to the more privileged urban areas. Due to the prolonged shutdowns, families are facing a severe financial crisis and are unable of supporting their children's education. On top, the online education pedagogy and traditional education pedagogy have their own pros and cons, which would serve as determinants to find out an optimum option for education in light of changing global scenario.

iii. Purpose statement:

To make the educational platform digitalize as it is a demand of the present situation. That also includes a necessity to help figure out some solutions to make online teaching and learning flexible. That also includes enrichment of students and teachers with new technology and mode of teaching, especially through online approach.

iv. Research Question:

1. How to best digitise the present education pedagogy and peripheral components of education.
2. How to make online teaching compatible and impactful for students and teachers.

v. Significance of Study:

Until now students were taught traditionally in classrooms. But due to pandemic situation the teaching need had to be switched to online mode so that students' education can go on without interruption. It will support learning and academic success, will satisfy learning, and will improve

communication skill. It will help teachers and students express ideas and discuss. Through this research, identification of the possible shortcomings and the obstructions that the students and teachers are facing will receive some appropriate solutions. For example, teachers have to be trained and be innovative in the class performances. And again, internet disruption and unavailability of 3G WiFi or electricity would require the teachers to behave with extra patience and handle the students with great care and extra tutoring service. It will help the teachers to be vigilant and the students responsive for the new online mode of teaching, delivery and assessment. South Point School and College will be benefitted as well as other government and non -government institutions will be benefitted too. Researchers may get new ideas in this field to conduct new researches to enrich this field.

vi. Literary Review:

SANEM estimated that 43.90 percent of the students' families could fall victim to poverty (for primary: 51.70 percent, secondary: 42.40 percent; SSC/HSC: 30.20 per cent; and university: 19.0 percent); forcing 7.70 million additional students' families to enter poverty. A survey conducted by BioTED, a novel training and research initiative, revealed that 55 percent students do not have proper internet connections. In order to attend classes regularly, a student needs to spend at least 300 MB to 1 GB data per day. This being a costly procedure, many students are being deprived of learning opportunities. Furthermore, presuming it to be a general holiday, many students returned to their village homes without their books and notes. Therefore, a majority of them are not being able to participate in virtual classes. Moreover, many remote areas lack proper electricity supply and internet infrastructure which has a detrimental effect on the students living there. In addition to that, students have concerns and suffer from anxiety attacks relating to proper understanding of online lectures, stable internet connection during virtual classes and exams and overall output through this alternative method. In order to conduct online lectures, teachers must have practical knowledge of online teaching methods and resources. However, most of the primary school teachers of Bangladesh are struggling with this issue. In the rural areas, most of the teachers do not even own a smart phone.

Therefore, not just the students, the teachers are also in a precarious situation. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted almost every part of the education sector, from primary schools to the university level. The government of Bangladesh should give immediate attention to improving the online education system. This pandemic has severely disrupted Bangladesh and troubling educational sectors widening the education gap. The government ordered educational institutions to shut down on 16 March, initially until November 4.

The government and university administrations were late in taking the decision to shift to online academic activities. According to information obtained from Bangladesh's University Grants Commission (UGC), as of June only seven out of 46 public universities were running academic activities online. While top private universities started online teaching soon after the pandemic hit in March, many public universities could not start before July, with conflicting statements from government ministers on the need to extend closures adding to the uncertainty. The reality is Bangladesh is not ready for online classes. But in this pandemic situation it is also true that we don't have any alternative to online education. The challenges are that teachers are not familiar with the idea of online class, internet coverage is poor and mobile internet connection charges are high.

The current pandemic has brought us to a new reality in the culture of education - learning online, which has been a major trend in the past four months. Online classes transcend geographical boundary, and introduce us with a virtual reality. In virtual classrooms, there are students who are connected with high-speed Internet from Dhaka while a few others joining from the country's remote areas struggle with unstable Internet. The online class has also generated certain debates involving academics, scholars and the general public. Reportedly, a significant number of Dhaka University students are unable to attend classes due to lack of access to smartphones, inability to afford internet packages, and power supply disruptions. This is a typical scenario of most public universities in Bangladesh. Apart from rural-urban gap, children of poor and lower middleclass families cannot join online classes. This disparity among the

students in accessing online learning facilities has created a new debate on the social media, over what we call 'Digital Divide', a phenomenon which is not new either. Affordability of internet is the first and most important thing for users. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has asked the government to introduce free internet packages for university students to help them take part in online educational activities. Bangladesh has been placed in the 41st position in the world and 14th in Asia, shows the Global Affordability Report, 2019. Affordability, according to standard definition, means: If anyone can buy 1GB mobile prepaid data with less than 2.0 per cent of his/her average monthly income, it is affordable for him/her.

In Bangladesh, the total number of internet users has stood at around 100 million as of end of May 2020, said the latest report of the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC). This indicates that internet is still not accessible for a significant number of people. The pandemic has taught us that basic access to internet is just not enough. Video calling and live streaming require the highest level of Internet connectivity to conduct online classes. Unfortunately, there's not enough bandwidth for the students in remote areas of Bangladesh to make online education viable.

After the COVID-19 pandemic forced unexpected shutdowns of schools around the world, parents from South Point School and College, Mastermind, Scholastica, Yale, Aga Khan School, Dhaka (AKSD) and some other private school parents remain grateful to the teachers who have made the transition to online school a smooth one.

Parents acknowledged that their children would not have been able to complete the academic year without hardworking of the teachers. They are grateful for access to online tools such as Zoom and google meet through which the teachers host their classes. Some private universities also conducted their online classes, exams and semester finals through online but this is a little scenario based on Bangladesh as most of the public schools, colleges and universities could not continue due to proper internet connection and lack of IT training of teachers.

vii. Methodology:

This study was conducted based on Different relevant research papers and national and international journals from websites. The study examines the attitudes of teachers, students, parents, and admins towards online teaching (digitalization in teaching). The quality and quantity research of the study embedded questionnaires with Likert scale and open ended questions have been used to collect data from relevant persons.

viii. Procedure:

Questionnaires have been developed to examine the response of teachers, students, parents and admins towards online teaching. The findings are interpreted and analysed.

ix. Data collection instrument:

Questionnaires were prepared for the teachers, students, parents, and admins to evaluate the digitalization state in education (online classes) of South Point School and College.

x. Participants:

The participants of the study are the teachers, students, parents, and admins of South Point School and College, session 2020 – 2021. Thirty students and thirty parents of English medium, twenty students and twenty parents of English version, twenty students and twenty parents of Bangla medium, twenty teachers from English medium, ten teachers from English version, ten teachers from Bangla medium, and ten persons from admin.

xi. Aim:

To establish and show the importance of online education for broader development and to provide new opportunities for those who are not getting the online facilities in Bangladesh.

xii. Objective:

To establish and raise practical suggestions to design effective programs for students in Bangladesh, with particular reference to their social and economic status and also identify the particular needs of the under privileged students.

xiii. Key Concept:

The importance of addressing the online education as a mean to ensure education for students all over the country focusing the current Covid 19 pandemic.

ONLINE LEARNING VS TRADITIONAL EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE PORTRAIT

1.1. Introduction:

Online education is a form of education where students use their home computers through the internet staying away academic institutions. In recent time online teaching learning has become a buzz word in the field of education. In Bangladesh the current Government's vision "Digital Bangladesh" took the initiative of teaching students in a distant posture by broadcasting pre-recorded lessons through television. Along with that, some private schools have started teaching students using internet and video conferencing software like Zoom and Google Meet. The upsurge of pandemic left us no options to providing education to the students in the class. It is the first time in Bangladesh the online trend of education has been introduced at a wide scale but this online trend has meanwhile encountered some avoidable circumstances. For both students and teachers, it is their first experience to get connected with online class, so they are found to be struggling with the proper adaptability with this trend as switching from traditional classroom to computer-based training in a virtual classroom makes the learning and teaching experience entirely different for them. Secondly, during the shutdown most of the students are staying home in different areas of the country as still in the rural areas internet

facilities are hardly found, students use mobile internet which interrupts the online connectivity due to poor internet signal. Besides the internet is still expensive in our country. Thirdly, there are some technical issues like poor literacy on handling computer and smart phone. Moreover students and teachers have to download some apps like Zoom, Google meet, etc., sometime seem challenging due to not having prior experiences and these apps have limited time to be connected online. Fourthly, time management has been a crucial thing.

1.2. Key comparison Factors between online Education and traditional

Education:

Before deciding on which option to choose between online education and traditional education, it is important to first weigh the pros and cons of each. Here are some of the key factors that come into play when looking at online vs traditional education differences.

1.2.1. Social Interaction:

Online education usually provides an opportunity for lecturers and students to interact with one another through online portal or video conferencing software. With the use of such online meeting software, it's easier to hold or attend classes online from anywhere at any time. Teachers can also take advantage of screen sharing feature to easily begin their lessons by using the software.

The traditional brick-and-mortar school is a great option for those looking for face-to-face communication. It makes it possible for students to have direct engagements with instructors and students. With this mode of learning, students are capable of having detailed discussions, asking lots of questions and covering many concepts in one topic. That will, in the long run, improve student performance and competence in the field of specialization.

1.2.2. Flexibility:

Studying online offers flexibility to students. The schedule is flexible so the student can create a personal study plan with their needs in mind. There's no need to give up anything because of a lack of time.

On the other hand, traditional education provides no flexibility to create a personal calendar in order to combine studies and personal or work life.

1.2.3. Budget:

Online-based courses and programs tend to offer cheaper options to learning than the traditional education options. While traditional education might be insanely expensive, it does offer tangible learning programs and materials that match the amount paid. Brick-and- mortar learning institutions tend to offer real-time learning or study experience.

1.2.4. Methods, Tools and Facilities of Teaching:

Online teaching offers experiences which are tailored to meet each student's needs. But as much as it's easier to deliver on theory lessons, it is often challenging to hold practical classes online. The traditional education often provides a hands-on experience to all students who need to learn from practical lessons. It often has the necessary facilities and equipment for practical studies and activities. It also provides peer and group learning, which cannot be achieved with online education.

Survey Questionnaire, Responses and SPSS interpretation

Survey Questionnaire

For Admins

Email address

Your email address

Name:

Your answer

Age:

Below 30 yrs

31 yrs to 50 yrs

51 yrs to 70 yrs

More than 70 yrs

Other:

Gender:

Male

Female

Designation:

Principal

Vice Principal

Coordinator

Other:

1. When did you decide to conduct online class? (Specify the time)

Your answer

2. Are you following the rules regarding the pandemic in conducting educational sessions?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Other:

3. Are the teachers cooperating to conduct online class?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Other:

4. Are the parents and students satisfied with the online mode of teaching?

Yes

No

May be

Other:

5. Did you conduct any survey or feedback to measure the satisfaction / dissatisfaction?

Yes

No

No comments

Other:

6. Did you face any problem conducting online class as administrator?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Other:

7. Did you design any training session for teachers for getting acquainted to online class?

Yes

No

No comments

Other:

8. Did you arrange any training for students for getting acquainted to online class?

Yes

No

No comments

Other:

9. Do you have any long term training plan for teachers regarding online class?

Yes

No

No comments

Other:

10. Do you think it will be better to continue online class parallel to traditional classes?

Yes

No

May be

Other:

11. Do you think government should take initiatives to provide education friendly internet packages for students and teachers?

Yes

No

May be

Other:

12. Do you think government should increase budget in education sector regarding pandemic situation?

Yes

No

May be

Other:

13. Have you reduced the tuition fees of your institute for commoners?

Yes

No

No comments

Other:

14. Are scholarships available for students in the online session?

Yes

No

No comments

Other:

15. Do you have any plan to provide gadgets to teachers for smooth online teaching?

Yes

No

No comments

Other:

16. Do you think banks can offer easy loan scheme for students and teachers to facilitate education?

Yes

No

May be

Other:

17. What apps are being used in your institution for teaching online?

Zoom

WhatsApp

Google Meet

Google Classroom

All

Other:

18. How many students do you have in your institute?

Less than 2000

2001 to 3000

3001 to 4000

4001 to 5000

More than 5000

Other:

19. How many teachers do you have in your institution?

Less than 200

201 to 300

301 to 400

401 to 500

More than 500

Other:

20. Please provide your valuable assessment regarding online method of teaching: a) Effectiveness:

Excellent

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Other:

b) Student friendly:

Excellent

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Other:

c) Teachers' friendly:

Excellent

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Other:

d) Admin friendly:

Excellent

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Other:

e) Easiness and comfort:

Excellent

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Other:

21. Do you have any future plan regarding online teaching?

Your answer

22. Any recommendation regarding online class?

Survey Questionnaire (For Teachers)

For Teachers

Email address

Your email address

Name:

Your answer

Age:

Below 30

31 to 50

Above 51

Other:

Profession:

Private Service

Government Service

Business

Other:

Gender:

Male

Female

Other:

Income:

Below Tk 20000

Tk 21000 to 40000

Tk 41000 to 60000

Tk 61000 to 80000

Option 5

Tk 80000 to 100000

Above 100000

Other:

1. Which age group do you teach?

5 yrs to 8 yrs

9 yrs to 12 yrs

13 yrs to 16 yrs

17 yrs to 20 yrs

Other:

2. How many students are there in your class?

Less than 20

21 to 30

31 to 40

41 to 50

More than 50

Other:

3. What is your experience conducting online class? a) Communicable?

Yes

No

Satisfactory

b) Students Participation:

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

c) Impact of Lesson:

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

d) Easiness and Comfort:

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

4. Is there any differences between online and teaching in the classroom?

Little difference

Vast difference

Moderate

5. Do you think online mode of teaching can be imparted parallel to conventional classroom teaching? Suggest a ratio CL vs OL.

85% : 15%

75% : 25%

50% : 50%

None

Other:

6. Which platform of apps you found effective in teaching online?

Zoom

WhatsApp

Google Meet

Google Classroom

Other:

7. Do you think teachers' training should be conducted for taking online class?

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Other:

8. What kind of training do you prefer?

Long Term Training

Short Term Training

No Training Needed

Other:

9. Do you think government should take steps to provide education friendly internet packages for students and teachers?

Agree

Strongly Agree

Disagree

Other:

10. Do you suggest gadget to conduct online class?

Any Smartphone

Tablet

Laptop

Desktop

Other:

Survey Questionnaire

For Parents

Email address

Your email address

Name:

Your answer

Gender:

Male

Female

Other:

Age:

Less than 30 yrs

31 yrs to 50 yrs

51 yrs to 70 yrs

Other:

Profession (Designation)

Assistant Teacher

Senior Teacher

Other:

Income:

Less than Tk 20000

Tk 21000 to 40000

Tk 41000 to 60000

Tk 61000 to 80000

Tk 80000 to 100000

More than 100000

Other:

1. How many children do you have?

1 child

2 children

3 children

More than 3 children

2. How many of them are school going?

1 child

2 children

3 children

All

3. Are they attending online class?

Always

Sometimes

Never

4. Are you helping them in their online class?

Always

Sometimes

Never

5. Is it easy for them to attend online class?

Always

Sometimes

Never

6. Is it better than traditional class?

Yes

No

Moderate

7. Are you satisfied with online class?

Yes

No

Moderate

8. Do you think teachers need training for online class?

Yes

No

May be

9. Do you think students need training for online class?

Yes

No

May be

10. Do you think parents need training for their children's online class?

Yes

No

May be

11. Did you buy new gadget for your children's online class?

Yes

No

12. Do you think government should take steps to provide education friendly internet packages for students?

Yes

No

May be

Other:

Survey Questionnaire (For Students)

For Students

Email address

Your email address

Name:

Your answer

Class:

Your answer

Age:

Your answer

Name of your school:

Your answer

Medium

English Medium

Version

Bangla Medium

Other:

Gender:

Male

Female

Other

Other:

1. Are you attending online class?

Always

Sometimes

Never

Other:

2. Do you like online class?

Always

Sometimes

Never

Other:

3. Is it better than traditional class?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Other:

4. Did you face problem attending online class?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Other:

5. What are your experiences attending online class? a) Inter - personal communication:

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Other:

b) Student participation:

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Other:

c) Understanding lesson:

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Other:

d) Easiness and comfort:

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Other:

6. Suggest daily a block time for online class.

2 hours

3 hours

4 hours

more than 4 hours

Other:

7. Suggest the number of classes for online per day.

4 classes

5 classes

6 classes

more than 4 hours

Other:

8. Do you need parents' assistance to attend the online class?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Other:

9. What device do you use to attend the online class?

Smartphone

Tablet

Laptop

Desktop

Other:

10. Did your parents buy new gadget for your online class?

Yes

No

Other:

Interpretation:

According to admin, online class must continue before the institution opens again. Now there is no alternative to teach the students except online teaching. School is using WhatsApp and google meet to teach students.

Cheap rated internet offers are must. Banks can offer easy loan scheme for students and teachers to facilitate education. School is using WhatsApp and google meet to teach students.

According to teachers, online class must be more interesting to teach the students effectively now a days, different teaching materials can be used to make the class more interesting. Students can't be observed closely. The internet connection is poor sometimes. *Network problem, *Students' active participation is not possible always. *Both way communication is being hampered or interrupted.

Students have the tendency to leave the class frequently. Students are not attending their quizzes and submitting Homework assignments regularly. It is quite difficult to maintain liaison with students, parents and colleagues as well. Students don't want to response in online class.

Students are deceiving themselves by keeping their camera off. Sometimes by not responding to the teachers and even sometimes being out of the class but whenever they are being asked for the reason, they are telling that, they are having net problem. Which is creating communication gap in between teacher and students. As eye contact is not becoming possible every time it's creating obstacle to find out their understanding level. Taking feedback from students are a bit difficult in online class

According to the parents' survey, 23.9% earn more than tk1, 00,000. They say that 93.8% students are attending online classes. 61.7% say that they have to help their children to attend the online classes.

60.5% find it easy to attend online classes. 47.7% they had to buy new gadgets for their children.

62.5% think that traditional class is better than online classes. . 95% think government should take steps to provide education friendly internet package for students.

According to students' survey, 53.7% like online classes. 11.7% face problem attending online classes. 53.7% say lessons are good and understandable. Only 17% wants 4 hour classes. 72.3% wants 4 classes per day. 37% use desktop and iPhone and 33.7% use laptop. Others use mobile phone.

Recommendations:

3.1 The government should increase the budget allotment for the education sector and consider subsidising the sector to provide smart phones to unprivileged students.

3.2 To ensure effective learning, as suggested by western academics, the approach of "Flipped Classroom Theory" can be applied to this case where teachers will upload the video lectures beforehand in platforms like google classroom and students will see the lectures and understand the topics themselves. Then the teachers will hold an interactive session live through social media and discuss students' queries. This will turn passive learning into active learning and will improve the quality of education

3.3 The government should implement new policies to decrease the call rate per minute so that the students can collect notes from their classmates through phone calls as well. Mobile network companies may launch student friendly education packages with better mobile data facilities at a cheaper rate.

3.4 Government should increase budget in this sector, so that a more effective approach can be constructed which will ensure educational growth. Therefore, a collaborative approach between the government, NGOs and other stakeholders is necessary. Otherwise, Bangladesh's demographic dividend will turn into a demographic liability.

Conclusion:

The consideration in choosing a platform for online teaching is related with service quality, cost of using it, flexibility and relevance with academic teaching learning options which are the general considerations in one hand for quality teaching and on the other hand the targeted students in Bangladesh with restricted levels of affordability in general. The teachers were provided at first with the manual of the online platforms to be utilized in addition to video demonstration. This was followed by comprehensive live training so that each teacher could raise their inquiry on the processes to be followed and get familiar with it. The computer teacher and the admins played the most significant role in providing these training sessions and the materials inviting useful suggestions from the teachers who had already started using the platforms getting familiar with it and detecting the possible challenges to face ahead. Transition from the general perception and prejudices against online platforms that prevails in Bangladesh could thus be accomplished. Students were reached out through the online platform and a very well thought motivating them at this stage addressing all the possible confusions and apprehensions amongst students that were envisioned to be working in them regarding this new online session, the ways to access it, use it and be able to learn through it. Parallel to these initiatives from administration end, all the teachers were equally active in communicating with their students to make them realize the importance of keeping pace with the outer world and continue with their academic activities. No matter the number and complexity in challenges, schools and universities in Bangladesh should always look for the best solution and alternative that will fit the purpose of the students prioritizing the quality of education over anything else. Collating the experiences, documentations on platforms and other research from the institutions that have gone through these experiences would be instrumental for effective improvisation of online education in Bangladesh in future.

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