

COVID-19 and Distance Education on Private Universities Library Services in Chhattisgarh : A study

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Abstract :

On March 11, 2020, the World Health organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Following the speed with which COVID-19 spread to all parts of the world, and to contain the spread of the disease, most governments around the world, including the US, authorized unprecedented social containment measures to stem the tide. These measures among others required social distancing and the temporary physical closure of educational institutions. The IGNOU - The People's University , like all other institutions of higher learning, had to create distance-learning opportunities to enable students to complete the 2019–2020 academic year. The unplanned, rapid, and uncertain duration of the approach presented challenges at all academic levels and play or various role of library in covid-19. The purpose of the study was to collect data on how the transition to distance learning impacted undergraduate and graduate students taking courses in public health at DEC. The goal was to identify student academic challenges and the unforeseen benefits of distance learning, and to use that information to inform practices that can be implemented during crises that impact university education.

Keywords: COVID-19, distance learning, Public Health, students, course transition, school

Introduction:

On December 31, 2019, Chinese authorities reported to the World Health Organization (WHO), the presence of numerous cases of an unknown pneumonia-like disease that presented like flu in Wuhan City, Hubei Province in China . After virus isolation and analysis of the viral genome sequence from the lower respiratory tract samples of infected patients, a novel coronavirus named severe acute respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus 2 or SARS-CoV-2 was identified and subsequently named COVID-19 by the WHO . A month after its emergence, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic and a day later, the United States (US) declared the disease a public health emergency . By May 27, 2020, the WHO had confirmed 5,488 million cases of COVID-19 in over 180 countries, with about 1.634 million of those cases occurring in the US .

With no successful vaccine or treatment available, and in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19, most governments around the world, including the US, authorized unprecedented social containment measures. These measures, among others, included social distancing and the temporary physical closure of educational institutions. Educational institutions and library to adopt a digital approach to instruction and student learning, dramatically transitioning traditional in-person classroom instruction to predominantly distance learning where teaching is provided remotely on digital platforms. At present, there are over 300 college and university closures in



the US, affecting millions of students . While distance learning is not a new approach to instruction and learning Indra Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) School in library, the unplanned, rapid, and uncertain duration of the approach, is presenting challenges and taking a toll on students at all academic levels. Not much information on best practices was available to guide such abrupt transitions to college education. The purpose of this study was to collect information on how the transition to distance learning impacted undergraduate and graduate students taking courses in public health at IGNOU library provid the online facility of student . The goal was to identify student academic challenges and unforeseen benefits of distance learning, and to use that information to inform practices that can be implemented during future crises that impact university education.

Distance Learning and Indian Students:

From time immemorial, faculty lecturing in a classroom setting, students listening, taking notes, asking questions, and getting those questions answered have been the backbone of traditional academic education . With advancements in communication technology such as the telephone, radio, television and most recently the Internet, new methods of learning, including distance learning, have emerged . Through the Internet, students can now obtain instruction and learn with ease at home by simply clicking a few buttons on the computer to listen live or asynchronously to a professor thousands of miles away, interact with the professor, and solve problems without having to physically be in a classroom . While a more expensive option for education in terms of set up, distance education has progressed in concept and practice from an “anywhere” to an “anytime” education delivery method .

Distance learning, also known by various names such as distance education, e-learning, mobile learning, or online learning, is a form of education where there is physical separation of teachers from students during the instruction and learning process . It is also an instructional practice that effectively utilizes a wide range of tools and technology to enrich the student learning experience and to facilitate student-faculty and student-student communication . The minimum technological requirements for successful distance learning include the acquisition of hardware such as a computer, mobile device (cellular phones), or webcam, some form of listening device, video conferencing applications such as WebEx or Zoom, Microsoft Windows or Apple operating systems, and a stable internet connection with a speed of about 56K (56,000) or greater .The distance learning is a Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) accredited school, located in the heart of downtown Atlanta, an area often referred to as the public health capital of the United States. Given the school's close proximity to leading national, state and local public health institutions, our school attracts many students interested in public health education.

Given the fact that the distance learning SPH student body like other schools and colleges on campus comprises traditional and non-traditional students, a combination of classroom, fully online and hybrid courses are offered each semester. Although initially geared toward non-traditional Distance learning SPH adult learners such as full-time workers, and individuals who were unable to attend classroom lectures in person, distance learning has become an established part of the Distance learning SPH curriculum and an option for some traditional students as well. What is at issue with distance learning in the COVID-19 environment is the lack of options for students to determine whether they want to take online courses or not, the lack of access to free technology hardware, software and internet services on campus due to social distancing, a lack of

motivation to learn; the new course workload, adapting to unfamiliar technology for first time online student users and uncertainty about the future among others .

Making distance learning work for all students is challenging. The best tools can be in place, but without equitable access by all students to the tools, adequate preparation time and training for faculty, and the adaption of existing curricula, or the development of brand-new course syllabus, it will be difficult to replicate the in-person learning experience, online. Consequently, some questions that have arisen with distance learning is whether it offers the same value as learning in a classroom, and whether it helps students to imbibe knowledge as they would if they were in a classroom? While these questions are relevant, there are additional significant issues that institutions of higher learning, have to consider, such as how to assist students without reliable internet access and/or technology to participate in digital learning. The disparity in access to technology and internet access is especially glaring among minority populations. While some universities have been able to provide digital equipment to students in need, some including SPH have not been able to adequately provide this service and are concerned that the pandemic will widen the digital divide between students and thus, negatively impact their education.

University in Chhattisgarh

S.No.	Chhattisgarh Universities Under UGC	Affiliation
1	Amity University, Raipur	Private University
2	Ayush and Health Sciences University of Chhattisgarh, Raipur	State University
3	Bastar Vishwavidyalaya, Bastar	State University
4	Bilaspur Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur	State University
5	Chhattisgarh Kamdhenu Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur	State University
6	Chhattisgarh Swami Vivekanand Technical University, Durg	State University
7	Dr. C.V. Raman University, Bilaspur	Private University
8	Durg Vishwavidyalaya, Durg	State University
9	Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur	Central University
10	Hidayatullah National Law University, Abhanpur	State University
11	ICFAI University, Durg	Private University
12	ISBM University, Gariyaband	Private University
13	Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur	State University
14	Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya, Khairagarh	State University
15	ITM University, Raipur	Private University
16	Kushabhau Thakre Patrakarita Avam, Raipur	State University
17	Kalinga University, Raipur	Private University
18	Maharishi University of Management and Technology, Bilaspur	Private University

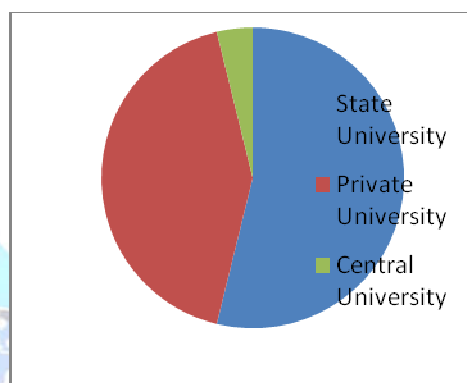
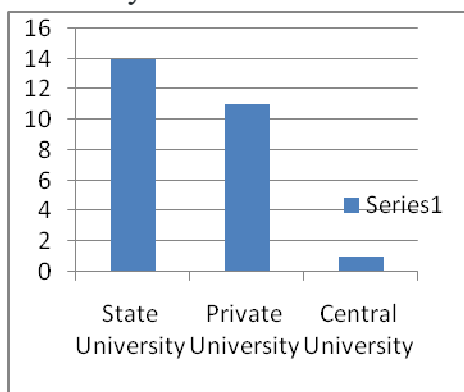
19	MATS University, Raipur	Private University
20	O.P. Jindal University, Raigarh	Private University
21	Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur	State University
22	Pt. Sundarlal Sharma (Open) University, Bilaspur	State University
23	Sarguja University, Darripara	State University
24	International Institute of Information Technology, Naya Raipur, Chhattisgarh	State University
25	Shri Rawatpura Sarkar University, Raipur	Private University
26	AAFT University of Media and Arts, Raipur	Private University

Total Universities - 26

State University - 14

Private University - 11

Central University - 1



Private University in Chhattisgarh :

Universities in India are recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC), which draws its power from the University Grants Commission Act, 1956. Private universities in India are regulated under the UGC (Establishment and Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities) Regulations, 2003. Per the UGC act and these regulations, private universities are established by an act of a local legislative assembly and listed by the UGC in the Gazette upon receiving the act. As confirmed by ruling of the Supreme Court of India, recognition by the UGC is required for the university to operate. Also per the 2003 regulations, the UGC sends committees to inspect the private universities and publishes their inspection report. And provide the affiliation in Chhattisgarh.

Amity University, Raipur

Dr. C.V. Raman University, Bilaspur

ICFAI University, Durg

ISBM University, Gariyaband

ITM University, Raipur

Kalinga University, Raipur

Maharishi University of Management and Technology, Bilaspur

MATS University, Raipur

O.P. Jindal University, Raigarh

Shri Rawatpura Sarkar University, Raipur

AAFT University of Media and Arts, Raipur

Distance Education Universities in Chattisgarh

As it has been seen that various **Distance Education Universities** are available in Chattisgarh for those individuals who want to join distance education courses, you can readily explore the best distance learning universities for pursuing your desired distance learning program. Therefore, for resolving this situation, here is the list of approved **Distance Education Universities in Chattisgarh** which has gained more popularity recently in 2019-2019.

Dr. C.V. Raman University kota Bilaspur Chhattisgarh

Mats University Raipur Chhattisgarh

Kalinga University Raipur Chhattisgarh

These universities offer diverse education courses under distance learning mode with quality services. Some of the instances are online MCA course, online MBA, correspondence BBA, distance BCA, online MSC IT degree, distance BSC IT, MBA, and much more. It's absolutely true that if you choose **Top Ranked Distance Education Universities**, then you can avail of the great services which are provided by them. Some of the services are as following:

- These universities have been listed by **UGC**(University Grants Commission) and **DEB** (Distance Education Bureau).
- These sorts of universities offer online lectures where the experts will guide to resolve your queries related to the course.
- As these universities are offering management courses via distance mode, you can find all your course-related details from examination list to courses of study information through online.

So, when you will join the **Distance Education Universities in Chattisgarh** from these sorts of online learning universities, then you will definitely get the top-notch quality services from the comfort of your home. Therefore, you should start to work on them.

Student Online Teaching Style Preference

- Student Academic Workload
- Faculty Activities
- Student Motivation to Learn
- Behavioral and Economic Impact on Students
- Student Reports of Positive Outcomes of Distance Learning Experience

While the transition to distance learning was abrupt and unnerving to many students, they reported some positive outcomes. Not having to commute to school and subsequently saving money was reported by more than a third of students (n= 144). They said:

"I do not have to commute to campus, which would take at least 2 hours out of my day everyday"

"I don't have to spend an hour and \$61 to commute to Atlanta campus via MARTA"

"I don't have to commute and pay for gas."

Other positive outcomes listed included the fact that students had more time to work on assignments and to be with family and friends (21 responses) - "Because courses have switched to online I now have more time to complete assignments and make sure the assignments submitted are done well."Some students learned to manage their time (three responses), others

had faculty support (19 responses)- “I think that some teachers have really shown flexibility and a strong desire to continue to help our class connect and keep things as normal as possible,” and a few had flexibility and thus, could manage course schedules at their own pace (27 responses). Only a small percentage of students reported that there were no positive outcomes (10 responses).

Discussion:

The study was conducted to identify challenges Distance learning students experienced as a result of the transitioning of all courses online in response to COVID-19, what faculty need to do to address the challenges that students faced, and also to identify the positive efforts that faculty made during the transition. Findings from the study provide information on the challenges and potential benefits Distance learning students experienced as a result of the transition of all courses to an online format owing to COVID-19 for the rest of the fall 2020 semester. The results also provide information on the strategies employed by Distance learning faculty that positively impacted student motivation during the pandemic, those that need to be improved upon, and those which can be replicated going forward.

Student Technology and Connectivity

Prior to the study, Distance learning faculty were concerned that students would have difficulty accessing and participating in courses online due to challenges associated with access to technology off campus. There was also a concern that this challenge along with other factors would affect student motivation to learn, academic performance, and success in classes during the spring 2020 semester. Faculty concerns are well documented in the literature. confirmed that lack of access to technology by college students has the tendency to negatively impact their learning outcomes . Study results however showed the contrary, only one of the 184 students surveyed did not have access to a technological device. Nonetheless, access to a technological device does not guarantee access to internet services.

Although Distance learning provided students with access to the Schools hotspot, study results found that many could not use those hotspots to access the internet. Students who were unable to access internet services had to find alternative means. Given that distance learning will continue for the foreseeable future, it is imperative for Distance learning leadership to further examine this matter and seek viable solutions to assisting students with gaining reliable internet access. This is a matter for the success of our students, which is inexplicably tied to the future of higher education overall.

Student Online Teaching Style Preference:

The majority of students indicated a preference for the asynchronous approach to online teaching. Their choice was primarily based on the fact that it gave them the ability to learn at their own pace, and to do course work when they were ready. Additionally, having access to pre-recorded course lectures and other resources was convenient and enhanced their ability to manage their schedule from wherever and at whatever time. This finding is consistent with what Trach noted and what Distance learning faculty found based on evidence from a small unpublished student survey that was conducted when the Distance learning the Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSPH) program was initially established in 2017. When asked to rank their preferred course offering modality, the majority (46%) of pre-public health students, opted



for the 100% online (asynchronous) offering. According to Trach, asynchronous learning gives students the ability to access course information, demonstrate what they have learned, and to communicate with classmates and instructors on their own time without having to be in the same classroom or same time zone. To Trach, asynchronous learning not only provides flexibility for non-traditional students, but also accommodates different learning styles, as students can choose the order they wish to cover material and how much time they want to dedicate to delving into a particular class (15). On the other hand, some students said the synchronous approach was the better option in that, it gave them the opportunity to participate in live streamed lectures, allowed for high faculty-student interaction, and the receipt of immediate feedback on course material. It also gave them some structure and caused them not to be lazy with their schoolwork. In their study, Lobel et al. found that one frequently mentioned advantage of the synchronous learning method, was the spontaneous and dynamic nature of interactions that the asynchronous method does not support. Other students preferred a blend of the synchronous and asynchronous style of teaching.

Student Academic Workload:

Although students indicated that their academic workload significantly increased as a result of the transition to distance learning, it did not affect their motivation to learn or to complete their assignments on time. This shows that irrespective of the challenges, students were determined to complete the semester with good grades. It also suggests that the best way forward with distance learning will be to adjust expectations, and to reduce assessments that overly test online participation and content assimilation. The best way forward will also require faculty to check on students from time to time and to talk with them about their academic challenges to strike the right balance and not overburden students. Some students indicated that faculty engagement in such activities will be very helpful.

Faculty Activities:

In preparation for the transition to a full distance learning format, Distance learning faculty engaged in a series of preparatory activities to make the transition a smooth one. Results from the study show that the attention that was given to preparing faculty for meeting student needs in the online format was communicating course expectations to students, making available recorded class lectures and being accessible for office hours. Investigations from demonstrate that students show a high probability of assigning an excellent overall rating for faculty who in their view, facilitate learning, effectively communicate course materials and information, organize courses effectively, assesses student progress accurately, show interest in students' learning, and show respect for their students. Student Motivation to Learn Over 50% of students surveyed indicated that they were motivated to learn regardless of the learning environment. Thus, it was not surprising that they completed their assignments and turned them in on time and also remembered to log in to take quizzes. Some aspects of student motivation can be attributed to their access to faculty during the semester, their ability to access course materials and recorded lectures asynchronously, and the flexibility of schedules. Define motivation as the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained. They indicate that one's motivation can influence what they learn, how they learn, and when they choose to learn. According to available literature, motivated learners are more likely to engage in challenging activities, be

actively engaged, adopt an approach to learning, and exhibit enhanced performance and persistence even under challenging circumstances.

Behavioral and Economic Impact on Students:

Not as many students were worried about contracting COVID-19 (24.7%). Financially, the majority of students (66.1%) had their economic activities disrupted by the pandemic. As was predicted by economists, the implementation of mitigation efforts around the world to counteract the tightening grip of COVID-19 will accelerate job losses and create new schedules. This is exactly what happened to indian students who work. Consistent with what indian faculty presumed, a little under 37% of students said that overall, their daily lives had been affected by the pandemic a lot. With unimaginable national response measures in place to contain the pandemic, families have been separated, public spaces have been closed, and economic activity has drastically slowed down, creating a new normal, and rearranging the lives of indian students to fit into the shifting land scape . indian international students who have no home in the US except campus, had to cope not only with the closure, but also with the fear that inflation arising from global economic inactivity, could potentially affect their scholarships.

Student Positive Outcomes of Distance Learning:

As students were still processing the shock of campus closure and adjusting to the new world of predominantly online classes, the general consensus was that they would miss out on face-to-face interaction with faculty and their peers. This is because, in any given semester, students do not usually enroll in only online courses- they usually go for a combination. After analyzing the data collected, it became apparent that many students were okay with not having to be in the physical presence of faculty - in so far as faculty communicated course expectations, were available, and made course materials and assessments available. Less commuting, saving on gas, having more time to do assignments, time management, and spending time with family were some of the positive outcomes proffered for the closure of campus. Additional positive outcomes stated included having more time to rest, increased communication with faculty, and obtaining leniency with assignment submission dates. The responses associated with time management were unforeseen.

Student Recommendations:

Students provided a number of recommendations in response to the question related to what indian students leadership and faculty can do to improve the distance learning experience. After analysis of the qualitative statements made by the students regarding recommendations, the following six themes emerged;

- (i) Need for reliable technology;
- (ii) more flexibility in assessments and grading;
- (iii) improve faculty access and response times to student correspondence; (iv) adjustment to student course workload;
- (v) faculty preparation for online teaching; and
- (vi) facilitate engaging content for synchronous classes.

Practices that did not enhance their experience will be addressed and those that were positive will be documented and replicated in the future. Research shows that educational experiences that are active, engaging, and student-owned lead to deeper learning.

Study Limitations:

Limitations to this study include the fact that <25% of the Indian student population participated in the study. While the data is supportive of the efforts that SPH faculty and leadership have exerted in facilitating effective, relevant pedagogy during this crisis, it would have been preferable to have at least one-third of the student body respond. Additionally, the study is limited in that, it was conducted in unprecedented times, where there was a high likelihood that students' emotional levels could have affected their perceptions of the impact of the online transition.

Conclusion:

Despite the unprecedented events that led to the need for Indian students to conclude the spring 2020 semester via distance learning approaches, this study found that students were still motivated to learn and to complete their assessments and assignments on time. Considering that the abrupt and unforeseen changes also had an impact on faculty teaching, motivation and preparation, student recommendations for SPH leadership and faculty to take certain measures to make their distance learning better going forward, were documented and will provide evidence for changes in the future. This study is specific to student outcomes only at Indian, however, some of the recommendations provided by students may be pertinent to other institutions of higher learning.

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