

Technological advances- a boon for teaching zoology during covid times

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Abstract

As covid 19 forced large scale restrictions and lock down, studies of zoology students got adversely affected in the beginning of the academic year. However, with timely introduction of technological advances in short duration, teaching remotely to a large number of students became possible. Online teaching has proved to be a boon for academic calendar with continuation of studies, teacher-student interaction, increase in student interest, participation in quiz, assignments by students etc. Present paper discusses how halted academic calendar in lock down went live with technological advances.

Key words: Covid 19, Zoology, Science and technology, Technological advances, Online teaching.

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I. Introduction

As corona virus pandemic affected all over the globe, education sector was also impacted badly.¹

The deadly and infectious disease Covid-19 deeply affected the global economy. This tragedy has also shaken up the education sector.² Initially all education activities were stopped until online education started. IT infrastructure is a pre requisite in large scale online teaching. Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization of education has been deteriorated remarkably due to limited mobility and limited exchange programmes of academic activities among poor countries during the COVID-19 lockdown.³ However, Full support from the Government helped to prevent disruption of academic calendar in India. Government arranged training/ demonstrations for educators in novel online teaching and soon online teaching became regular activity for educators. Zoology teachers also carried out online education of college students. Earlier during lock down in may 2020, we presented a paper on impact of online education in general from March to May 2020.¹ As covid related restrictions continued there after, new academic year also started with online teaching. Present paper discuss how this activity helped continue academic calendar in Zoology and which difficulties were faced.

II. Discussion

Many countries across globe appropriately decided to close schools, colleges and universities due to covid 19 pandemic related global health crisis in 2020. As it was necessary to protect youngsters and mentors from pandemic, academic calendar was disturbed. However a good alternative to onsite teaching (now popular as offline teaching) emerged soon as Online education. Loads of advantages gained by this online teaching are as under:

1) Teaching continued without disruption during restriction era when students couldn't come to college. This saved student's time to commute apart from following restriction norms on going out. They also were able to avoid public transport saving from any possible infection. This also saved cost of uniform etc for the time being. Time saved on transport could be used well in study. This also applies to teachers or professors as they also saved time and cost on commuting and prevent possible infection. Zoology students benefitted by watching marine ecosystem /coral reef etc interesting pictures/ videos while being at home in the presentations of online classes. It is well known that a picture is worth thousand words. It was not required to visit forest to study wild life topics. Visit to zoo was not needed to learn about birds and animals.

2) Remote teaching also involved students from all corners of the state. As outside students vacated hostels to go home, online study provided them comfort to continue study while At home. They could also continue working for family like those in remote villages working in farm. These might have strengthened their family values. This also helped them to become multitaskers by helping family and studying. Those students in villages might have benefitted by actually watching birds or identifying plants while attending online class.

3) Online education also provided opportunity to develop student interest. Pro active teaching with quiz/assignment etc. available tools on provided platform helped to develop interest of students in the subject. As animal dissection etc and laboratory practical are not possible in online teaching time, online tools helps

developing student interest in study as they try to perform well. Educators could also enlarge images on computer to help students learn well with interest.

4) Large number of students can be taught at same time in online teaching. A class may contain 60 to 80 students but an online class may be attended by upto 300 students at a time. Thus educator can reach to large number of students at a time saving repetition in teaching. Even higher number of participants are also possible for e-conference or lectures. For ex. A recent Eco club teacher's training programme involving participants from all over India involved around 1000 teachers.

5) Student evaluation is also possible by questioning, online quiz, assignment etc. which can help to access large number of students at a time saving educator's time from repeated efforts required when off line. Thus evaluation and results became faster. Students also benefitted by getting to know results instantaneously. These also inspired them to learn well. Semester examination were held as regular but online and academic calendar went on swiftly.

6) Continuation of online teaching since start of academic year has made educators to adapt to online teaching. Adaptation is an important topic in zoology. All living creatures adapt to surroundings. Online study made students adapt to it. Rather than missing classes and learning opportunity, students could continue studies in corona times. Saving an year of large number of students was indeed a big gain in covid times.

7) As the pandemic reappeared again as second wave, expertise and comfort gained earlier became handy to switch to online mode to save student community from infections by remaining at home to study.

8) For many students, comfort of being in online learning made familiar to quickly apply newer apps to help themselves and in surrounding for better protection like Aarogya setu app for prevention, Covin app for vaccination etc.

There is some caution also. Increased screen time due to increased online activities has increased effect of blue light on human eye.⁴ There are specific guidelines in terms of hours spent in front of display devices like phone, computer etc. Students and educators must take care of eye health in work from home (WFH) times.

III. Conclusion:

Due to covid 19 related large scale restrictions and lock down, studies of zoology students got adversely affected in the beginning of the academic year. But timely introduction of technological advances in short duration by the Government made teaching remotely to a large number of students possible. Online teaching has proved to be a boon for disrupted academic calendar with continuation of studies, possibility of remote learning, teacher-student interaction, increase in student interest, participation in quiz, assignments by students etc. Thus halted academic calendar in lock down went live with technological advances.

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