



ONLINE LEARNING AND ACADEMIC ANXIETY AMONG ADOLESCENTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN

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Abstract

COVID-19 created a global pandemic leading to shutting down of educational institutions and forcing students to stay at home and learn online from their homes. This led to virtual contact and no physical meeting with friends, classmates and teachers. Classes were taken up online and examinations were online or got postponed or cancelled, which made the learners concerned about their learning process and their future with regard to educational objectives. Online teaching-learning was a new setting for most of the adolescents as well as teachers. These circumstances created a state of dilemma and stress among adolescent learners about their academic perspectives to adjust and prove themselves. Thus, the present study attempted to study the academic anxiety among adolescents in online learning during COVID-19 pandemic. The study employed quantitative descriptive survey method. A questionnaire comprising 24 items on a Likert scale was administered on a sample of 178 adolescents through snow-ball non-probability sampling technique, and data was collected from different school/colleges from three districts of Himachal Pradesh, India. It was observed that 43.82% adolescents felt anxious; 29.77% felt isolated; 44.94% felt stressful; 62.92% felt lazier during online classes. 48.67% adolescents responded that online education created health problems. The study concluded that the students observed online learning as a good substitute to carry on their education when there was no other option of education in the lockdown time during COVID-19 pandemic, but it created stress and academic anxiety among them with regard to their academics due to the lack of digital skills as well as their newness to the online learning environment. Further, the study suggests that the online methodology needs to be strengthened for all the students for increased availability and accessibility to innovative teaching learnings with quality in future.

Keywords: Academic Anxiety, adolescents, online learning, COVID-19.



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Introduction

In the twenty-first century, school has been given a place in which students acquire skills that transforms a child to later become a productive citizen for the nation. School education provides avenues for holistic development of children. The outbreak of COVID-19 resulted in interruption of conventional school



education in India as well as in most of the countries in the world. School and colleges had been closed down. The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), originated from Wuhan City, China, it spread rapidly around the world, and created lockdown situation around the world. The coronavirus epidemic quickly became a global hazard, prompting the World Health Organization (WHO) to proclaim it a pandemic.

Coronavirus has acted like an asteroid that hits the earth and made everything unbalanced. All the countries, economies, businesses, professionals, self-employed, un-employed and poor people were struggling and fighting with it as social distancing has come up as one of the possible solutions for this problem (Hooda, 2020). Thereby forcing all educational institutions worldwide especially in India suspended all on-campus activities (Sahu, 2020). School children were forced to stay at home, and learn at home. COVID-19 created a global pandemic situation so as schools were closed and students were compelled to stay at home with extremely limited contact with friends which will be virtual contact and no physical meeting with each other. All school, colleges and students in the pandemic time turned to continue their education through use of online technology through distance mode. Use of online teaching-learning in education sector became evidently beneficial in the present pandemic world. During the pandemic, teaching-learning could only take place through distance mode, so it would not be wrong to say that distance education or online learning played a very important role during the pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic time students were commonly observed in stressful situations due to incomplete exam or pending results. They were worried about their future plan regarding their education. But, in this situation distance education helps the students with technology to continue their curriculum as well as syllabus. The advancement of technology, lead to the use of distance and online learning from home. Dignan (2020) pointed out that “video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp and WebEx were extensively used with incorporating learning management systems like Instructure's Canvas, Blackboard and Google Classroom, Google Chrome extension etc.” Google Classroom were commonly used for teaching-learning because of its popularity.

Academic anxiety is related with academics and it is an experience of negative emotional condition (Collie, Ginns, Martin & Papworth, 2017). Anxiety is dynamic psychological problems that impact cognitive, behavioral, and psychological symptoms. Examination anxiety, anxiety of any specific subject, and any form of institutionally associated anxiety, all of which are included in academic anxiety.

Students are expected to gain more skills and high scores in the academic sector right from the very beginning of child's education. Students are expected to bear extra educational load compared with their age in order to achieve the goal. This form of pressure causes them to experience psychological stress. As a result, they feel anxious with fear, helplessness, depression and mental disorganization in the academic field. Academic (test) anxiety leads to academic difficulties through unrelated thoughts, worry and decreased concentration and attention (Das, 2014). There are several factors responsible for causing academic anxiety, including financial, family, social and institutional anxiety. Personal factors include personality disorders, psychological problems, in adjustment, poor self-concept, low level of motivation, levels of intelligence etc. Family considerations include low socioeconomic status, lack of direction,



parental indifference and other family issues. Social factors include arbitrary norms imposed on others, casteism, unequal resource distribution, position of the illiterate etc. Institutional factors also responsible for academic anxiety like type of school (government-private school), school setting, curriculum and co-curricular aspects, student teachers' relationships etc. (Alam, 2017). Meji & Dennison (2020) found that students faced many difficulties like syllabus coverage, assignments, curriculum, examination, results etc. which creates academic anxiety among adolescents regarding their academics. Anxiety among students is a common thing to achieve success in education like school, college or university etc. With the passage of time, anxiety become severe and affects students' academic results so anxiety among students cannot be ignored (Mahato, & Jangir, 2012).

Government of India ordered the schools to coordinate with the teachers, and start to prepare online lesson plans for their students. India adhered to online learning to maintain educational setup during lockdown. But, due to the pandemic situation all known and recognized boards postponed or cancelled their examinations in India (Vidisha,2020). So, many students were commonly found in the state of dilemma about their academics and future. There was a panic situation all around, and both educators and students were confused about the next steps and continuity with regard to educational objectives. Some students were caught in limbo because the educational outcomes of COVID-19 were strained. Some of them do not have the result, because some of the tests either did not happen or left in the middle. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the education process has been disrupted, so students also faced a major challenge to prove themselves in the future. All these issues and circumstances build academic anxiety among students about their academic perspectives. And, so this was the purpose to carry out the present research that was aimed to study the academic anxiety among adolescents in online learning during pandemic lockdown time.

So, the present paper was focused on the anxiety among adolescents in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

OBJECTIVES

The research objectives for the present paper are:

- i. To study the challenges faced by adolescents that caused academic anxiety in online learning during pandemic time.
- ii. To study the influence of the online learning on academic anxiety among adolescents during pandemic.

Operational Definition: Anxiety is dynamic psychological problems that impact cognitive, behavioral, and psychological symptoms. Examination anxiety, anxiety of any specific subject, and any form of institutionally associated anxiety, all of which are included in academic anxiety.

METHODOLOGY

To study the challenges faced by adolescents that caused academic anxiety in online learning during pandemic time lockdown this research employed quantitative descriptive survey method. The survey was conducted through the online tool i.e., Google forms. The survey questionnaire was comprised of 24 items on a Likert scale. Further, the data collected through the online survey was statistically analyzed and



interpreted to derive the conclusions.

Population and Sample

For the present study, 178 adolescents from different schools and colleges from three districts i.e., Bilaspur, Hamirpur, and Kangra of Himachal Pradesh, India, were taken up as sample by adopting snow-ball non-probability sampling technique.

Instrument for Data Collection

To conduct the online survey for the present study the researcher developed a questionnaire, which was divided in three sections and comprising 24 item-statements based on five-point Likert scale. The first section of the questionnaire explained the details of the study and the instructions to the respondents for their awareness about the requirements of the study. Then the second section of the survey was developed to collect the socio-demographic details of the respondent adolescents. And, then the last third section consisted of 24 item-statements on the Likert scale. This five-point Likert scale had five options ranging from Never (1) to Mostly (5).

Before circulating the questionnaire to the sample of the study, the reliability and validity of the survey questionnaire were also measured. In order to establish the face and content validity the self-developed questionnaire was evaluated by the subject-area experts. And, to find the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was also conducted on 35 adolescents. The Cronbach Alpha value was calculated and found as 0.8. Since, this Cronbach alpha value was signifying a good reliability of the questionnaire, it was finalized for the present study.

Thus, thereafter the structured self-made questionnaire was circulated online to the sample adolescents through emails as well as through phone and WhatsApp over a period of one month to study academic anxiety among adolescents in online learning during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

Data Analysis

Microsoft™ Excel™ was used to analyze the data after creating one master sheet. The study objectives were evaluated by calculating mean and standard deviation. No additional statistical analysis was conducted.

RESULTS

Findings and Interpretation of Data

The data collected through the online survey questionnaire was analyzed thoroughly to put forward the findings of the study. Thus, the major findings of the present study are described as below:

Out of total 24 questions the mean value to 15 questions was found greater than 3 (i.e., the mean value lies somewhere between 3 and 4) which suggest that most of the respondents recorded the 'often' to the item statements of the questionnaire that further explained that the adolescents had often faced the similar situations to what has been stated in the item-statements of the questionnaire. Further, the mean value to 4 questions was found greater than 4.0 which suggest that most of the respondents recorded their agreement with the given statements. And, the standard deviation for almost all the questions was observed to be a



smaller value which further indicated the reliability of the questionnaire. The mean and the standard deviation to each of the item-statement is explained in the Table 1 and shown with the graphical representation in Figure 1.

Table 1: Item-statement's Mean & Standard deviation

S. No.	Item statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	I have sources to take online classes.	4.1	1.5
2	Online classes are good as compare to face-to-face classes.	2.4	1.3
3	I learn more effectively in online classes as compare to face-to-face classes.	2.7	1.4
4	In face-to-face classes communication is more effective as compared to online classes.	4.1	1.2
5	I effectively use technology for online classes. Online learning tools and platform are effective for all in online education.	3.6	1.2
6	Online learning tools and platform are effective for all in online education.	3.3	1.4
7	I have high speed internet.	3.4	1.0
8	Online education is time saving.	4.2	1.4
9	In online education poor net connection create problem in learning.	3.3	1.2
10	I feel more isolated in online classes.	2.9	1.2
11	In online classes I cannot communicate effectively with my classmates.	3.6	1.2
12	In online education I present my presentation with confidence with the help of technology.	3.9	1.2
13	Teachers are helpful while teaching online.	3.6	1.3
14	School or college offered online courses or material are helpful for me.	3.5	1.3
15	I feel anxious during online classes.	3.3	1.2
16	Online Education is not good for all subjects.	3.8	1.2
17	I become lazier at home due to online education.	3.9	1.1
18	I cannot attend all the classes at a time in online classes.	3.3	1.2



19	Online education improves academic result.	2.8	1.4
20	Online education is stressful.	3.3	1.3
21	Online education creates health problem.	3.3	1.4
22	Due to online learning my daily sleeping schedule has got disturbed	2.9	1.5
23	I spend a lot of time on internet now.	4.0	1.2
24	During lockdown online learning gave us hope for no academic loss.	3.5	1.3

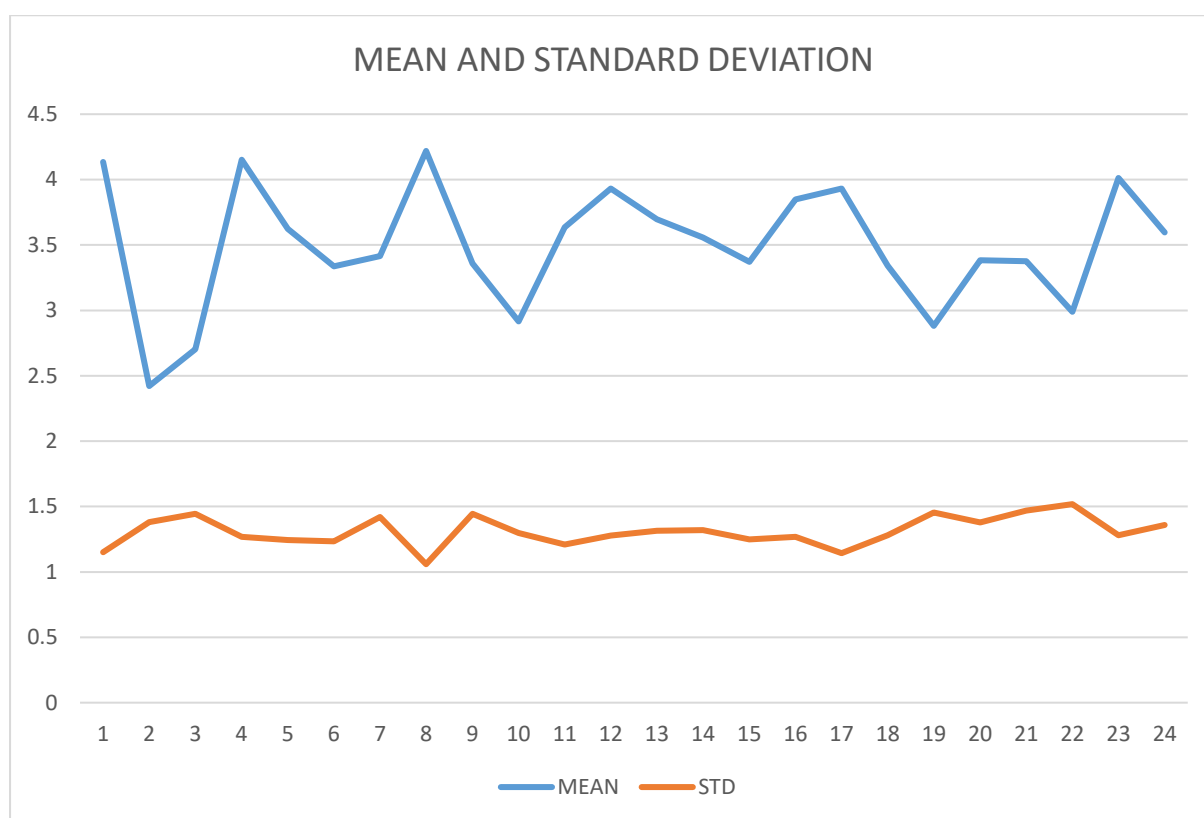


Figure 1: Mean and standard deviation (graphical representation)

Table 2: The sample's sociodemographic characteristics

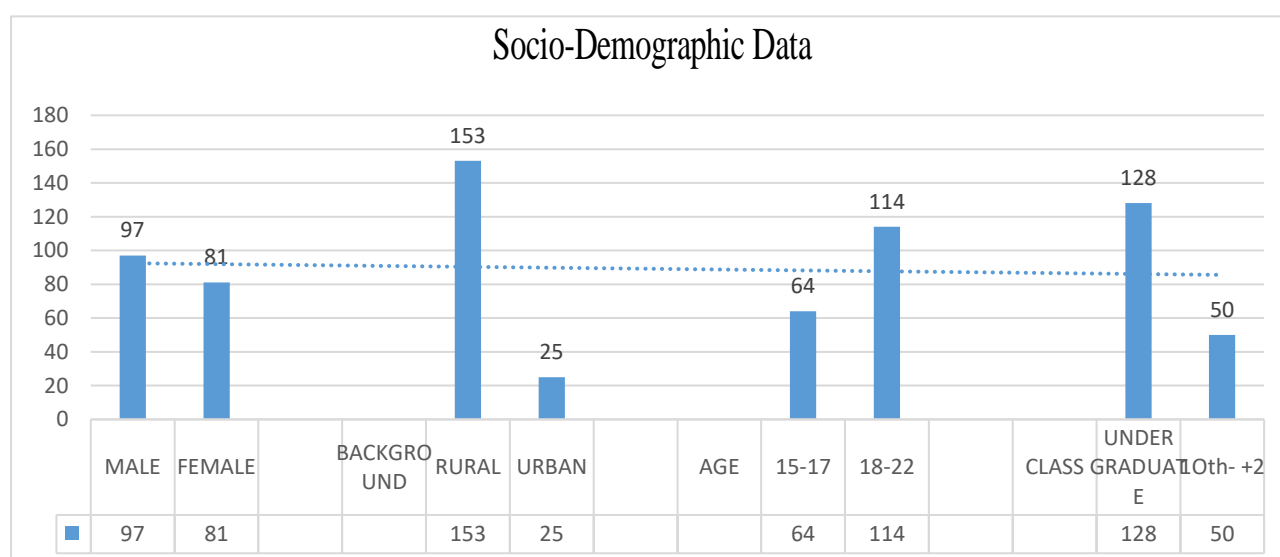
Category	Sub-Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	97	54.49%
	Female	81	45.50%
	TOTAL	178	



Age	15-18	64	35.95%
	18-22	114	64.04%
	TOTAL	178	
Class	Under Graduate	128	71.91%
	10-12	50	28.08%
	TOTAL	178	
Background	Rural	153	85.95%
	Urban	25	14.04%
	TOTAL	178	
District	Bilaspur	93	52.24%
	Hamirpur	68	38.20%
	Kangra	17	9.55%
	TOTAL	178	

The data of Table-2 revealed that maximum respondents were found pursuing Bachelor's degree (71.91%) and those pursuing classes 10-12th were 28.08% from the three districts of Himachal Pradesh. This Table also revealed that 64.04% respondents were young (i.e., Age group 18-22 years) and more than half (54.49%) were male and (45.50%) were female, further, most (85.95%) respondents belonged to rural area and (14.04%) from urban area. Nearly half of the respondents (52.24%) belonged to District Bilaspur, (38.20%) from Hamirpur and (9.55%) were from Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. The data explained in table 2 which are further presented in the graphical form which was shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Socio-Demographic Data (graphical representation)





Due to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown all the teaching-learning process from primary level to university level had gone in virtual mode. Means to say, that all the process of teaching-learning changed into online mode of learning from home, but this also affected students learning behaviour. As, during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, all the students suddenly were forced to stop learning in face-to-face mode and become totally dependent upon the technology like phone, laptop, computer and internet etc. In the pandemic time when the whole world is following the social distancing, the use of technology became the need of hour. But this use of technology and online study affect students learning with positively and negatively, both. Sometimes it created stress and anxiety among students (Pragholapati, 2020). The data collected in this respect through a questionnaire of 24 item-statements on a five-point Likert scale is graphically represented in Figure 3 and explained in Table 3, given as below:

Table 3: Online learning and Academic Anxiety

S. No.	Item statements	Never		Rare		Sometime		Often		Mostly	
		NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
1	I have sources to take online classes.	6	3.37%	9	5.06%	44	24.72%	15	8.43%	104	58.43%
2	Online classes are good as compare to face-to-face classes.	72	40.45%	15	8.43%	54	30.34%	18	10.11%	19	10.67%
3	I learn more effectively in online classes as compare to face-to-face classes.	54	30.34%	24	13.48%	54	30.34%	13	7.30%	33	10.67%
4	In face-to-face classes communication is more effective as compared to online classes.	13	7.30%	8	4.49%	29	16.29%	17	9.55%	111	62.36%
5	I effectively use technology for online classes.	16	8.99%	10	5.62%	57	32.02%	37	20.79%	58	32.58%
6	Online learning tools and platform are effective for all in online education.	19	10.67%	18	10.11%	65	36.52%	36	20.22%	40	22.47%
7	I have high speed internet.	25	14.04%	21	11.80%	48	26.97%	23	12.92%	61	34.27%



8	Online education is time saving.	4	2.25 %	10	5.62 %	30	16.85 %	33	18.54 %	101	56.74 %
9	In online education poor net connection create problem in learning.	31	17.42 %	15	8.43 %	47	26.40 %	29	16.29 %	56	31.46 %
10	I feel more isolated in online classes.	31	17.42 %	35	19.66 %	59	33.15 %	24	13.48 %	29	16.29 %
11	In online classes I cannot communicate effectively with my classmates.	12	6.74 %	13	7.30 %	63	35.39 %	30	16.85 %	60	33.71 %
12	In online education I present my presentation with confidence with the help of technology.	11	6.18 %	15	8.43 %	40	22.47 %	21	11.80 %	91	51.12 %
13	Teachers are helpful while teaching online.	14	7.87 %	20	11.24 %	44	24.72 %	28	15.73 %	72	40.45 %
14	School or college offered online courses or material are helpful for me.	18	10.11 %	17	9.55 %	52	29.21 %	30	16.85 %	61	34.27 %
15	I feel anxious during online classes.	15	8.43 %	27	15.17 %	58	32.58 %	33	18.54 %	45	25.28 %
16	Online Education is not good for all subjects.	13	7.30 %	11	6.18 %	47	26.40 %	26	14.61 %	81	45.51 %
17	I become lazier at home due to online education.	8	4.49 %	8	4.49 %	50	28.09 %	34	19.10 %	78	43.82 %
18	I cannot attend all the classes at a time in online classes.	19	10.67 %	21	11.80 %	65	36.52 %	26	14.61 %	47	26.40 %
19	Online education improves academic result.	45	25.28 %	31	17.42 %	35	19.66 %	34	19.10 %	33	18.54 %
20	Online education is stressful.	23	12.92 %	22	12.36 %	53	29.78 %	24	13.48 %	56	31.46 %
21	Online education creates health problem.	29	16.29 %	22	12.36 %	41	23.03 %	25	14.04 %	61	34.27 %



22	Due to online learning my daily sleeping schedule has got disturbed	49	27.53 %	15	8.43 %	46	29.78 %	25	14.04 %	43	24.16 %
23	I spend a lot of time on internet now.	14	7.87 %	9	5.06 %	33	18.54 %	27	15.17 %	95	53.37 %
24	During lockdown online learning gave us hope for no academic loss.	19	10.67 %	18	10.11 %	46	25.84 %	28	15.73 %	67	37.64 %

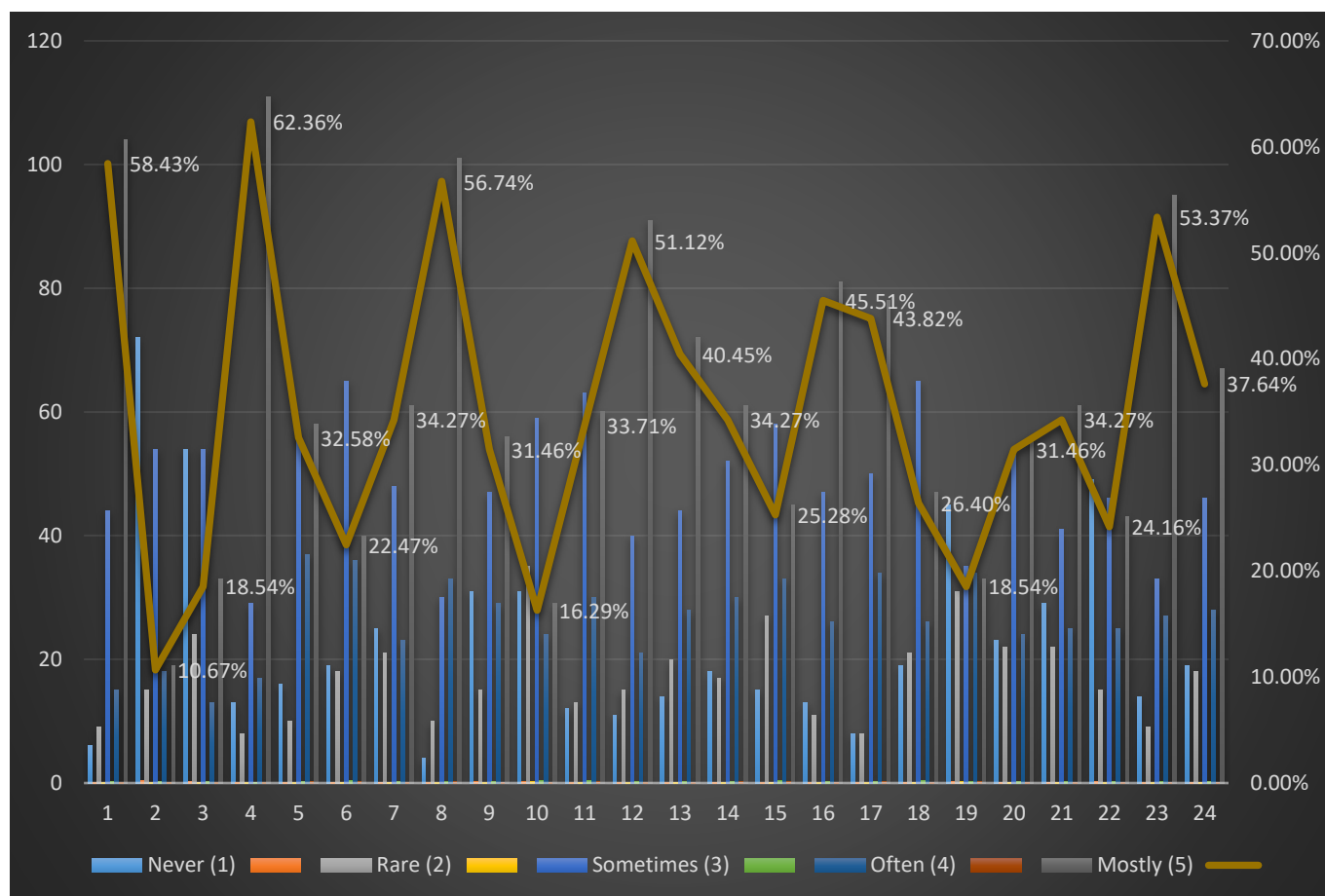


Figure 3: Online learning and Academic Anxiety (graphical representation)

DISCUSSION

(i) Challenges faced by adolescents that caused academic anxiety

The data of Table 3 revealed that almost all colleges and school used online teaching learning during this pandemic time. It was found that 58.3% of the respondent mostly have sources to take online classes. It suggested that most of students were studying through online classes. But it was found that 24.72% students have lack of sources to attend online classes some-time this could be a reason for anxiety and stress. Only 10.67% responded that online classes can be good and they can learn more effectively like face-to-face



classes, however, 40.45% respondents were not in the favor of online classes. 62.36% respondents said that they mostly communicate more effectively in face-to-face classes as compared to online classes. These findings were in accordance with the findings of Unger & Meiran, (2020) which concluded that students did not find the online learning alone as same effective as in-class learning. Further, it was observed from Table 3 that, 33.71% respondents said that they cannot communicate with their classmate effectively in online classes. 32.58% responded that they can effectively use technology for online classes and 32.02% responded that they some time can use technology effectively i.e., smoothly for their online classes. Only 22.47% respondents said that online learning tools and platform were effective for all classes. Only 34.27% respondents have high speed internet but 31.46% respondents said that poor net connection created problem in online learning. 56.1% respondents said that online learning was time saving, also a quite significant number of the respondent (i.e., 51.12%) said that with the help of technology they can do their presentations effectively and confidently. 34.27% respondent were 'mostly' and 16.85% responded 'often' on the Likert scale which suggest that a total of 51.12% agreed that school or college offered online courses or material were helpful. 40.45% responded 'mostly' and 15.73% responded 'often' on Likert scale which showed that total of 56.18% respondents agreed that teachers were helpful during online classes. However, it was observed that the remaining respondents did not find out the teachers and the materials much helpful for them, this could be because of the lack of proper technical skills in them and newness of learning in an online environment which made learning online a difficult work to do.

(ii) Influence of the online education on academic anxiety

The data in the Table 3 revealed that 16.29% responded 'mostly' and 13.48% responded 'often' on the item 'isolated during online classes' for the Likert scale which means that a total of 29.77% respondents felt isolated. 25.28% respondents recorded 'mostly' and 18.54% responded 'often' on the Likert scale i.e., a total of 43.82% agreed that they feel anxious during online classes. 31.46% adolescents responded 'mostly' and 13.48% adolescents responded 'often' that suggests a total of 44.94% adolescent respondents felt stressful in online classes. 45.51% adolescents responded 'mostly' and 14.61% adolescents responded 'often' on the Likert scale that suggests a total of 60.12% which means that the majority of respondents said that online education is not good for all subjects. 26.40% adolescents responded 'mostly' that means mostly they cannot attend all classes at a time in online education. 43.82% adolescents responded 'mostly' and 19.10 % adolescents responded 'often' on the Likert scale that suggests a total of 62.92% of respondents felt lazier in online education. 24.16% respondents said that their daily sleeping schedule got disturbed due to online classes. In online education there found lack of physical activity so 53.37% respondent said that mostly they spent lot of time on internet. As a result, students facing health problems. 34.27% adolescents responded 'mostly' and 14.4% adolescents responded 'often' on the Likert scale that suggests a total of 48.67% respondent agreed that online learning created health problem. This finding is in consonance with Unger & Meiran, (2020) according to which students felt anxiety due to the rapid shift to online learning in the COVID-19 pandemic time.



Only 18.54% respondents said that online learning improved academic result and (25.28% never and 17.42% rare) i.e., a total of 42.7% respondent said that online learning did not improve their academic result. This finding is in consonance with Pragholapati (2020) that the students' economic situations, daily life and delays in academic works increased their anxiety (Rakhmanov & Dane, 2020). It suggested that most of the students did not find full-time online learning good enough to improve their academic results. However, the students observed online learning as a good substitute to carry on their education when there was no other option of education in the lockdown time during COVID-19 pandemic. It was observed only 37.64% respondent agreed that online learning gave us hope for no academic loss in lockdown. 25.84% respondents were neutral on academic loss and 20.78% respondents had not agreed on academic loss during lockdown.

Thus, the overall data as shown in Figure 3 showed that the present pandemic situation posed many new challenges to the adolescents in their learning, like mentally, physically etc. which increased their anxiety and stress. Challenges among adolescents continued with online teaching-learning and they tried to achieve their goal during COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that online learning methodology and academic anxiety are inter-connected with each other. There was academic anxiety among adolescents due to the sudden change of education mode into online teaching-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic time. The result showed that the students have negative thought to continue the online study after the pandemic. It was observed that only 10.7% students accepted online learning. It revealed that students faced various challenges in the online learning during COVID-19 pandemic. Teaching-learning with technology i.e., the online teaching-learning created problems for adolescents, as well as it created anxiety among them with respect to their academic result and future. The adolescents also faced lack of proper resources and internet connection to take their online classes. They were found worried about their final result and future academic goals. So, if these problems persist it would not be wrong to say that the target of 'education for all' cannot be achieved. To achieve the 100% education goal with social distancing in this pandemic there is an urgent need to enhance the use of technology which cannot be fulfilled without ensuring the availability of technology to all.

Further, the results showed that students have positive opinion on the use and the adoption of online teaching learning method in some context. Therefore, it is concluded that online learning can be seen as the option in this situation but some time it created stress and academic anxiety among students related to their academics. The online methodology needs to be strengthened for the future, with increased availability and accessibility for innovative teaching learnings with quality for successful distance education.

With the pandemic lockdowns and to avoid loss of learning among children, Government of India has shifted focus on distance learning and advised the use of Swayam, and MOOC etc. and advised teachers to reach out to all the students with online learning and other sources from a distance. The educational



teaching-learning process is going to be recast on an accelerated timetable due to the pandemic. Online learning came out as great opportunity to the students at this crisis COVID-19.

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