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IMPACT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SKILLS ON COLLEGE STUDENTS WRT THANE   CITY DURING COVID PERIOD

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic in the world forced the governments to close the schools and colleges. Likewise Indian government was also forced to temporarily close the schools and colleges. Various education initiatives like online classrooms, radio programs, education through TV channels were undertaken by the government. The learners had to adopt to online mode of learning. The use of internet led to information literacy. The information technology skills was a blessing for the students who had access to the electronic gadgets required for online classes. However there were many students who were deprived of education due to inaccessibility of the gadgets. This research paper focuses on the impact of Information technology skills on the college students of Thane City.

Key words: *Covid-19 Pandemic, Education, Information Technology Skills, Internet, Information Literacy.*

Introduction:

ICT literacy is the ability to appropriately use digital technology, communication tools, and /or networks to solve information problems in order to function in an information society. This includes having the ability to use technology as a tool to research, organize and communicate information and having a fundamental understanding of ethical issues surrounding, accessing and using information. (ETS, 2004). ICT literacy focuses on critical thinking and problem solving. It consist of research and communication skills that occur in the context of technology.

Review of Literature::

According to Pakistan Economic survey 2021, it is difficult to attain the sustainable development goal 4 i.e quality education. Information on insufficient online learning and long gaps before the reconfiguration of offline education reveal that students from vulnerable groups have borne high cost of school closures. The most compelling statistics reveal that big number of refugee children have not been able to engage in remote learning due to technology barriers. Lasko(2021) finds that : " Internet access, tablets, laptops and cell phones currently serving as stopgap classrooms for millions of children throughout the world were much harder to access from within refugee communities".

Technological competence does not alone equal ICT literacy. The cost of not being able to handle information effectively via technology are real barriers in school, workforce and society. ICT literacy is a specialization of information literacy, focusing on information competence demonstrated through technology. ICT literacy is not just being technically competent. Many college students are familiar with technology but they lack information handling skills. Today's undergraduates are generally far less prepared to do research than were students of

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earlier generations, despite their familiarity with powerful new information gathering tools. (Breivik, 2005, p. 22)

Information technology force us to visualize education more broadly than the formal schooling.

Objectives of the research::

1. To identify the whether suitable gadgets were available to the students for their online studies.
2. To analyse the number of hours students spent learning online
3. To find out whether students were trained wrt information technology for education purpose
4. To evaluate the impact of technology skills on the college studies in their education.
5. To analyse the relation between internet usage and information literacy.
6. To assess the problems in applying information technology skills.

Research Methodology:

A) <u>Reference period</u>: The time period considered for the study is from 2019 to 2021.

B) <u>Geographical area</u>: The area for study will be Thane region.

C) <u>Target Population</u>: The target population for the study will be 100 college students in the study area.

D) <u>Sources of Data collection</u>: Data will be collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data will be accessed from various official and private sources viz. magazines, journals, reports of Government of India, newspapers, official websites of the government etc. On the other hand primary data will be collected online through google forms.

E) <u>Sampling method</u>: Samples would be selected based on simple random sampling method so as to minimize the impact of biases**.**

F) <u>Analysis</u>: Data analysis will be done using Microsoft excel.

Scope of the Study:

❖ The study focuses on the need to address the problem of inaccessibility of required gadgets to implement IT skills.

❖ The study mainly covers the college students of Thane City.

❖ It would provide an insight to impact of IT skills on college students in Thane City.

❖ It would unveil the gaps if any in the implementation of Information Technology skills in Thane City. Thereby measures could be suggested to remove the same.

Limitations:

▪ The study is limited to Thane City only.

▪ The study mainly does an in-depth analysis of impact of IT skills on only college students.The findings of the thesis are subject to the availability of data.
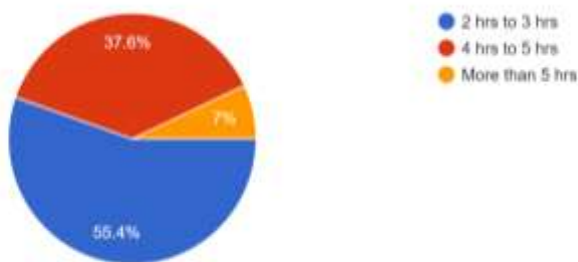
Findings of the Study:

The data has been collected from 186 students, out of which, 66.7% are females and 33.3% are males. From the total students 7% students belong to FY class, 53.2% to SY and 39.8% to TY classes. Out of the total students 56.5% represent commerce stream, 28.5% represent BA stream and 15.1% represent Bvoc stream.

83.3% students attended online class through mobile and 16.7% students used laptop to attend their online classes.
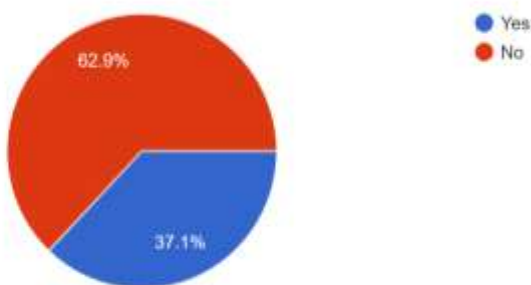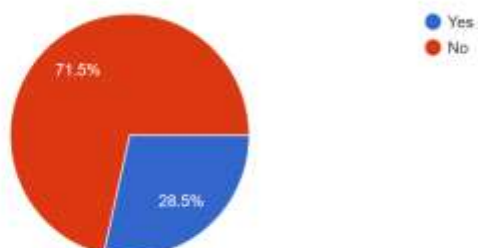
Q1. The mobile or laptop used were.

- Your personal
- You borrowed it
- You had to share it with your family members

79.6%   18.8%
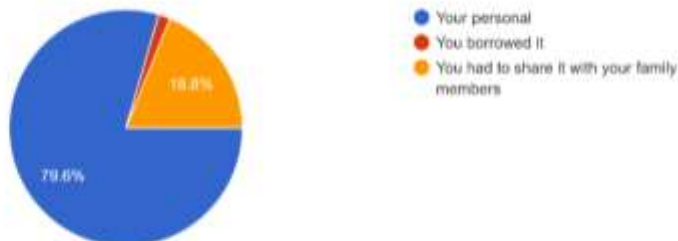
Q2. Number of hours online lectures attended.

- 2 hrs to 3 hrs
- 4 hrs to 5 hrs
- More than 5 hrs

37.6%   7%   55.4%

Q3. Number of people faced health issues due to online lectures.

- Yes
- No

62.9%   37.1%

Q4. Online education is costlier for

- Yes
- No

71.5%   28.5%

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Q5. Number of people received training from college for online lectures

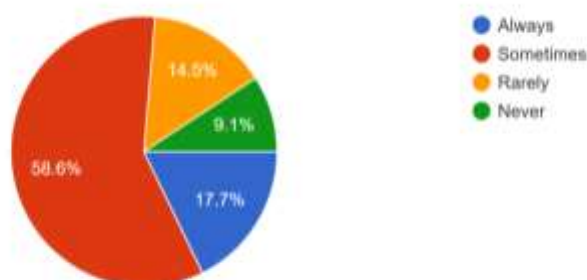- Yes
- No

51.6%

48.4%
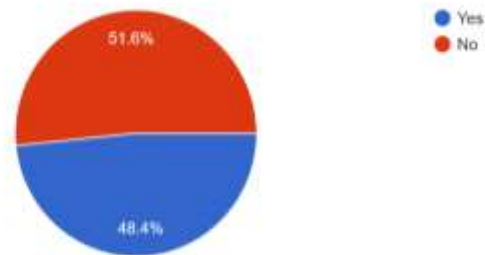
Q6. Number of people found knowledge of IT skills helpful to collect information for assignment

- Yes
- No

93.5%
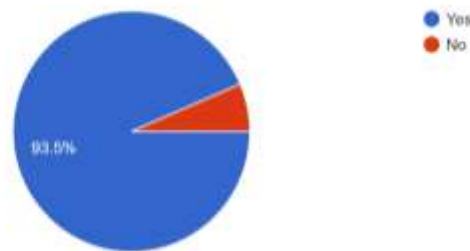
Q7. In online class discipline was a problem

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

22.6%

20.4%

38.2%

18.8%
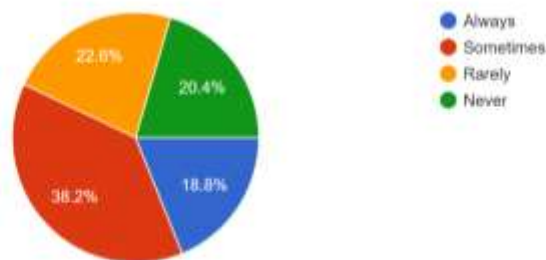
Q8. Internet connectivity was a problem for attending online classes

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

14.5%

9.1%

58.6%

17.7%

Conclusion:

Most of the students were of the opinion that IT skills have definitely helped them in online education during COVID Pandemic. They also strongly feel that the IT skills that they have learnt are beneficial to them in the present and will be beneficial even in the future. However the increase in screen time has created health issues for few students. Moreover many times students get confused as to which information has to be extracted from the online sources. Hence it is not necessary that IT skills create information literacy. However one cannot deny the fact that IT skills was a blessing for those who could afford to have a mobile or laptop. But there were many in our country who were deprived of education. So it is important that resources must be pooled and the weaker sections must have affordable access to mobile or laptop in future.

An initiative taken by the government in the form of providing mobiles and laptops at highly subsidised rates can lead to achieve an inclusive growth. Education is each one's right. Nobody should be deprived of acquiring new skills. When every individual will have access to acquire all skills, then in true sense we will achieve freedom.

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Information technology and education