

PROBLEM FACED BY STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION DURING VIRTUAL CLASSES: A CASE STUDY OF CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

Hafsah Jan

Assistant Professor (Contractual), Department of Teacher Education, School of Education, Central University of Kashmir, Green Campus, Ganderbal, J&K, India.

ORCID- <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4996-1705> Email: hafsahjan786@gmail.com

Sumaya Yaqoob

Masters Students, Department of Education, School of Education, Central University of Kashmir, Green Campus, Ganderbal, J&K, India. Email: wanisumaya343@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

During the Pandemic, the all the sectors went suddenly from off-line to on-line mode, from on-campus to off campus, from office to work from home. The education sector is no exception. Till date the education sector is not fully operational via on-campus or off-line mode. All schools up to universities went from offline mode to online mode of learning within a very short period of time. The qualitative method of research was used to achieve the specific objectives. The research aimed at finding the problems faced by the students during the online mode of learning in various departments of Central university of Kashmir. The study was conducted using a google form questionnaire prepared by the researchers. The questionnaire was based on the various problems or issues faced by the students during online mode of learning & contained 20 questions regarding the problems faced by students. The google link was shared in the WHATSAPP groups of the departments of Central University of Kashmir. The investigator was reminding the student of all the departments on daily basis till required sample size of 104 respondents were reached. Finally, the recorded responses were accessed by the investigator according to the objectives of the study. It was found that majority of students were not interested in taking online classes. So, blended approach needs to be taken under consideration. The most important part of learning that was affected drastically was the practical education as this part of education cannot be fulfilled in online mode of learning. More than one third of students believed that practical part was not justified in online mode of learning. Majority of students feel that technological knowledge has a great role to play in online learning. When both the teachers as well as learners are techno-seavey then the online education becomes possible.

Keywords: Higher education; Virtual class; Central University of Kashmir; Students

INTRODUCTION

During the Pandemic, the all the sectors went suddenly from off-line to on-line mode, from on-campus to off campus, from office to work from home. The education sector is no exception. Till date the education sector is not fully operational via on-campus or off-line mode. All schools up to universities went from offline mode to online mode of learning within a very short period of time. A few years ago, we had a choice to have education via online mode. But in pandemic situations online education has become the only choice for serving the students by providing academic facilities without going for the on-campus education. It has proved helpful to students of all age groups as well as faculty members by serving from home, thus, providing more time for students and teachers regarding their personal and family related responsibilities. However, the online mode of learning had some serious issues like learning facilities, less knowledge about the electronic gadgets both by teachers and students, laboratory works, new applications to be used for online mode of learning, assignments, and evaluation.

Now continuing use of technology in education has compelled education systems to shift its focus from Face-to-Face mode to online mode of learning. Since the electronic devices have variety of multimedia properties, they are helpful to make abstract concepts easy to understand. They are useful in self learning mode rather than face to face where a single teacher is trying to teach a number of learners together irrespective to their learning styles, pace, capacity and study habits. In online mode of learning, the technology plays a crucial role in performing many academic functions such as supplementary teaching, witnessing activities and performances of students, evaluation and assessment of knowledge, record keeping and preserving data, giving feedback and supporting instructions with graphics, pictures, animation and sound. It allows the learners to learn at their own pace, leisure and learning styles. The research can be used to minimize the various issues faced by the students during online mode of learning. The student teacher interaction can be enhanced by providing proper learning schedule and platform. The research showed that the class size and delivery modes during the online learning have a negligible impact on the students' academic performance. The digital technology, internet issues, voice cuts and audibility impacted on the performance of students. The teachers also faced constraints during regular online teaching as they have to position themselves and act in a very liable way. As a matter of fact, the online education should be made a part of the regular course so as to avoid any disturbances and negative impact during any emergency situation like COVID-19 pandemic.

The quality of education is determined by the quality of teachers. With the emerging technologies the teaching-learning, the teacher must have 21st century skills (Jan, 2017). Some faculty members wanted the online education to be the part of the routine curriculum and some want to continue the online mode of learning even after the pandemic (Gupta et al 2021). The implementation of online education in the existing curriculum is very challenging but has to be imparted during the covid-19 pandemic to promote and maintain the learning of students without having much impact on the overall performance of the students. According to Singh et al (2021) initiatives launched by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) includes Diksha, Swayam Prabha Channel, Shiksha Van, E-Pathshala, and National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER). Apart from the Indian central government efforts, each state has various online education initiatives that are tailored to their needs. Pradas et al (2021) revealed that there was an increase in the student participation as well as the academic performance in the online mode. Lone (2021) revealed that both teachers and students had moderate level of motivation and attitude for online teaching while there is higher level of attitude/motivation of secondaries than collegians. Online learning cannot produce effective results in remote areas like Kashmir, where a huge majority of students are not able to access the internet due to technical and financial issues (Khan et al 2021). Jan (2020) found issues like Administration and management awareness, Technical, Linguistic, Availability of resources; affect the implementation of e-learning in the higher education institutions of Kashmir. MuttuPrasad et al (2021) specified that most of the students (70%) were ready to opt for online classes. The students preferred the recorded classes and quiz at the end for effective learning. Bashir and Bhat (2017) explored the effect of social-media on mental health. Yu-Fong Chang et al (2021) revealed that the students were ready to take online course however it was obtained that the blended learning course i.e., the combination of physical course and online course will be a trend in the near future.

A little research has been carried out related to the higher education students' problems faced while online learning. Aderbigbe (2021) studied that online education can facilitate deep learning provided that the teachers provide students with proper guidelines and reasonable time to spent with colleagues. The online mode of learning also faced the technological issues such as internet disruption, voice cuts other than social effects like isolation and social distancing. Most of the students (70%) were ready to opt for online classes (Prasad et al 2021). Naik et al (2021) analysed the efficiency of online teaching and learning in India. The study revealed that offline classes are always better than online sessions. This is due to lack of facilities, infrastructure, technical tools, and the internet issues being the major setback in taking online session. The study showed that more than 60% students are not ready to take online classes due these issues which leads disinterest and demotivation towards the online mode of learning. The urban scholars possessed more e-learning interest than rural scholars (Jan and Mattoo 2018). So, the present study is to find the various problems faced by the students during the online learning. The need of the hour is to detect these problems and resolve by providing the best solutions. There are various problems in online learning like connectivity issues, learning facilities, student teacher interaction, distractions, learning environment and so on. All such issues of online learning were taken into consideration and the survey was carried on the various departments of Central University of Kashmir. This paper tried to reveal the problems faced by the students of Central University of Kashmir during the online classes.

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

- To find out the issues faced by the students of Central University of Kashmir during online learning.
- To suggest the strategies for making online learning more interested and motivating for the students.

Research Question

- What are the issues faced by the students of Central University of Kashmir during online learning?
- What are the strategies to make the online learning more interested and motivating for the students?

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The representative proportion of the population is called a sample. In the present study, the 104 sample was taken from the various departments of the Central University of Kashmir using the stratified proportionate random sampling. The sample was drawn from all the programmes.

Tool used

In the present study, the researchers used the following self-constructed tools.

- Personal Information Blank:** This part of the study includes the personal information blank of the questionnaire. The students need to fill up this part prior to questionnaire response section. The section includes the personal data of the students such as Gender, Department, Semester and area to which the student belongs. These areas were mandatory regarding the research and the personal information acquired from the students was kept confidential to avoid any misuse of the data.

B. Questionnaire: The questionnaire provided to the students was based on the various problems faced by the students during the online mode of learning. The main aim of the questionnaire was to obtain the feedback/responses from the students required for carrying out the research process. The various questions included in the questionnaire were regarding the issues like motivation, effect on mental health, delivery of the content, assignment submission, technical knowledge etc. The questionnaire contained 20 questions regarding the problems faced by students. The questionnaire was 3-point likert type.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In the present investigation, an effort has been made by the investigator to access the problems faced during online learning by the students of various departments of Central University of Kashmir. The data collected from the sample subjects was put to percentage statistical analysis, so as to reach at specific conclusion. Taking into consideration the objectives of the present study, the data were arranged in the tabular form followed by the pictorial representation. The various results obtained from the research are mentioned as:

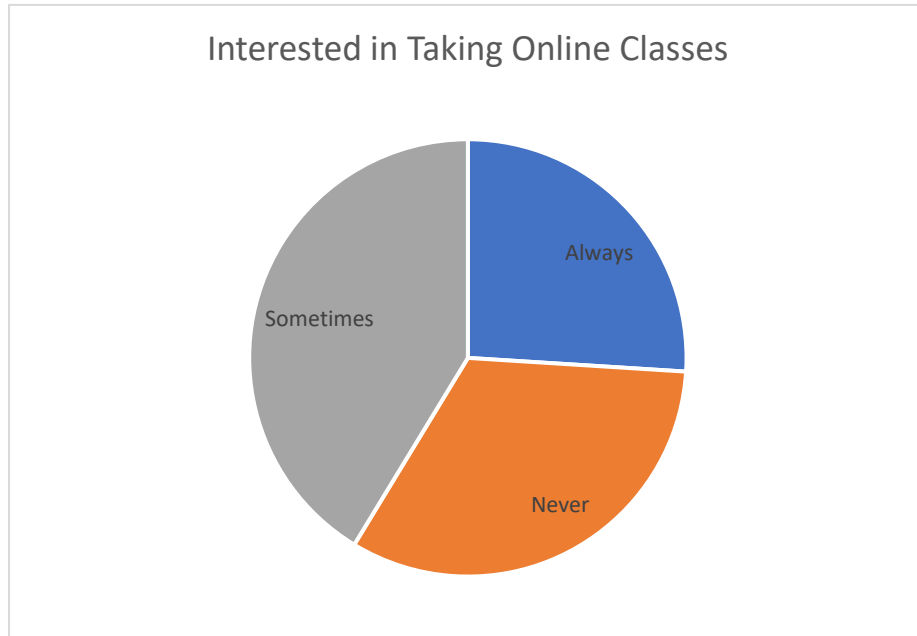
Table 4.1: Questions related Problems faced during online learning

S.No.	Question	Student response		
		Always	Never	Sometimes
1.	Are you interested in taking online classes?	26%	32.7%	41.3%
2.	Are you motivated towards online learning?	22.1%	47.1%	30.8%
3.	Does online class have any effect on your mental health?	53.8%	19.2%	26.9%
4.	Are you satisfied with student-teacher interaction in online mode?	28%	57%	15%
5.	Is it easy for you to follow the schedule of online classes?	31%	42%	27%
6.	Do you get deviated by the ads during online mode of learning?	38.5%	46.2%	15.4%
7.	Is there practicum part justified while online mode?	15%	61%	24%
8.	Do you feel isolated while you learn from online mode?	62%	20%	18%
9.	Does technological knowledge play any role in taking online classes?	80.8%	8.6%	10.6%
10.	Do you feel content easy to understand which is being delivered while online mode?	22.1%	43.3%	34.6%
11.	Are you satisfied in taking the assignments online?	48.1%	34.6%	17.3%
12.	Are you satisfied in submitting the assignments online?	61.5%	22.2%	16.3%
13.	Do you feel comfortable while taking online classes?	33.7%	44.2%	22.1%
14.	Are you getting any kind of ads while you are in online class?	19.2%	51%	29.8%
15.	Is your learning being affected by sitting at one place during online classes?	54.8%	20.2%	25%
16.	Do you have any effect of instructors/teachers' skills during online classes?	31.7%	29.8%	38.5%
17.	Are all your teachers cooperative will being in online mode?	65%	13.6%	21.4%
18.	Are you satisfied with the learning facilities provided online?	46.2%	35.6%	18.2%
19.	Do you possess your own device for online learning?	92.3%	7.7%	0
20.	What kind of device you possess?	Phone	Laptop	Other
		76%	20.2%	3.8%

4.1. Interested in Online classes:

After analyzing the student responses from the various departments, it was observed that only 26% of the total samples are fully interested in taking online classes while 32.7% students are not interested (Table 4.1). This shows that the maximum students of Central University of Kashmir were interested in offline as well as online learning. The result is shown in the figure. 4.1.

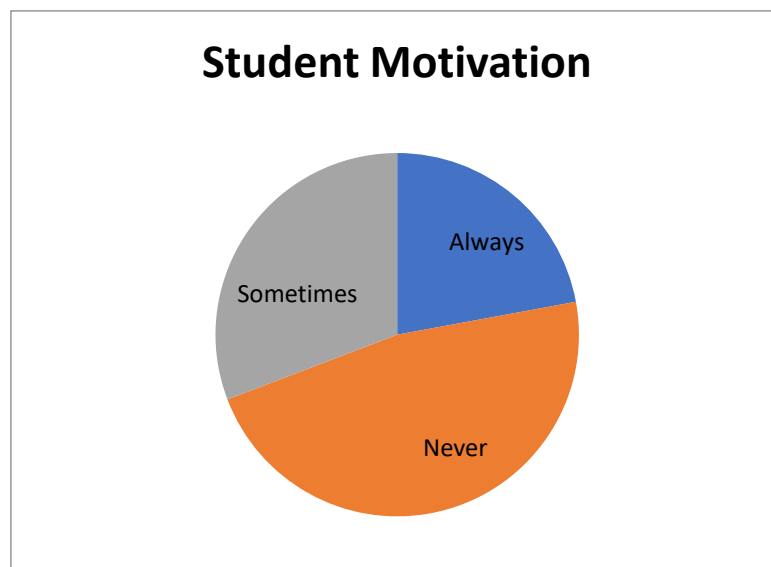
Fig 4.1: Percentage of students interested in online classes.



4.2. Motivation towards Online learning

It was observed from Table 4.1, that only a small percentage of students were motivated towards online mode of learning. Most of the students felt very less motivation towards online learning. The results showed that only 22.1% showed motivation towards online learning and 47.1% were not motivated at all towards online learning. Fig 4.2 shows the student motivation towards online learning.

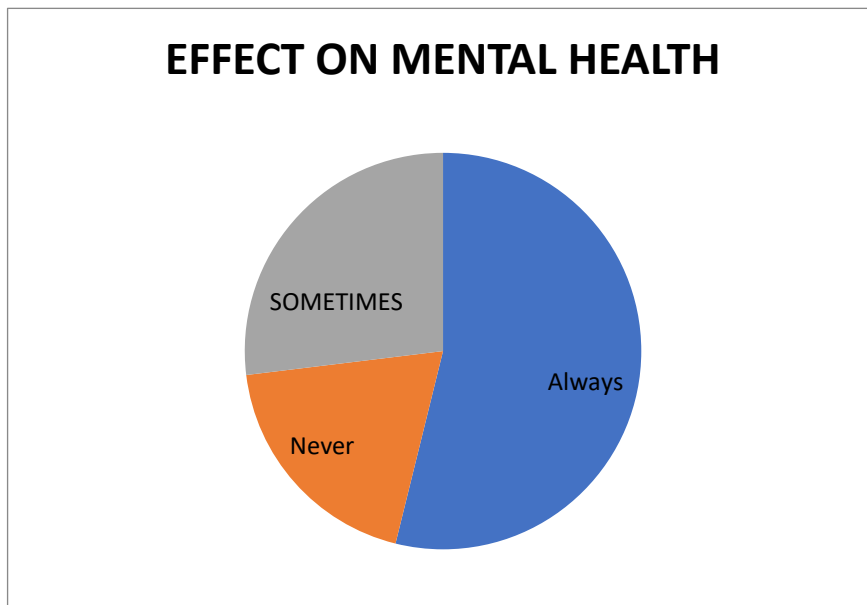
Fig 4.2 Student Motivation towards online learning



4.3. Effect on Mental Health

The research showed that most of the students were of opinion that online classes have effect on their mental health. After analyzing the student responses, it was observed that 53.8% of students were of opinion that online classes affected them mentally while as only 19.2% students feel that online classes don't have any effect on their mental health (Table 4.1). The graphical representation of effect on mental health is shown in figure 4.3.

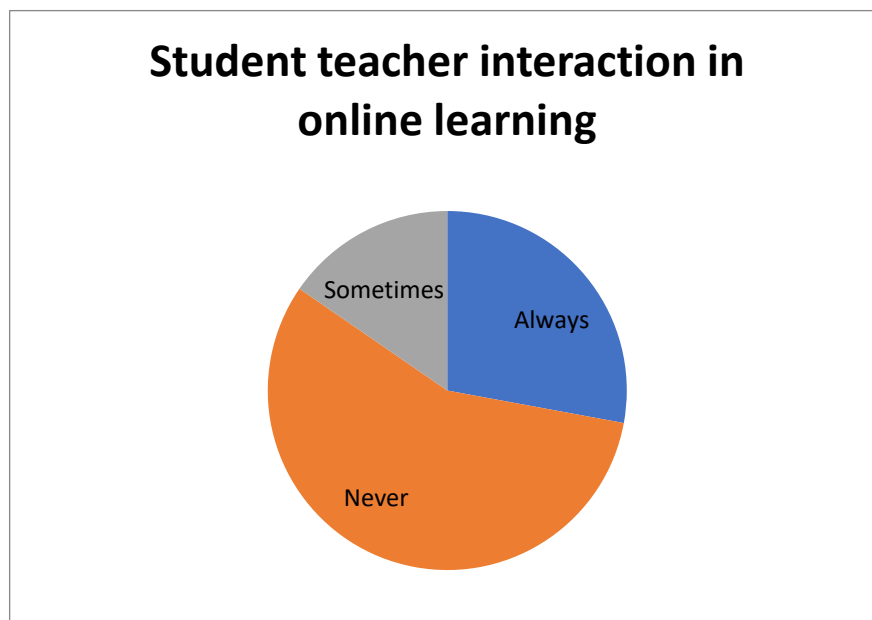
Fig 4.3 Effect of online learning on mental Health



4.4. Student-Teacher interaction in online mode of learning

Most of the students were not satisfied with student-teacher interaction in online mode of learning. Only 28% students were satisfied with online interaction (Table 4.1). Fig 4.4 shows the student teacher interaction in online mode of learning.

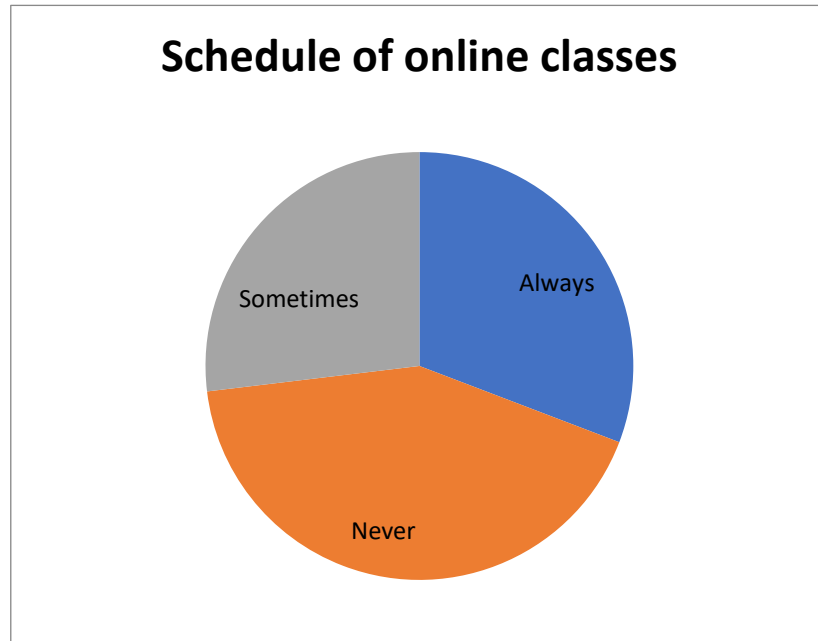
Fig 4.4 Student-Teacher interaction in online mode of learning



4.5. Schedule of Online Classes

It was observed from Table 4.1, that 42% of students found it difficult to follow the schedule of online classes and 31% found it easy to follow the schedule of online classes while 27% students found it sometimes easy and sometimes difficult. Fig 4.5 shows the percentage statistics of the online schedule followed by the students.

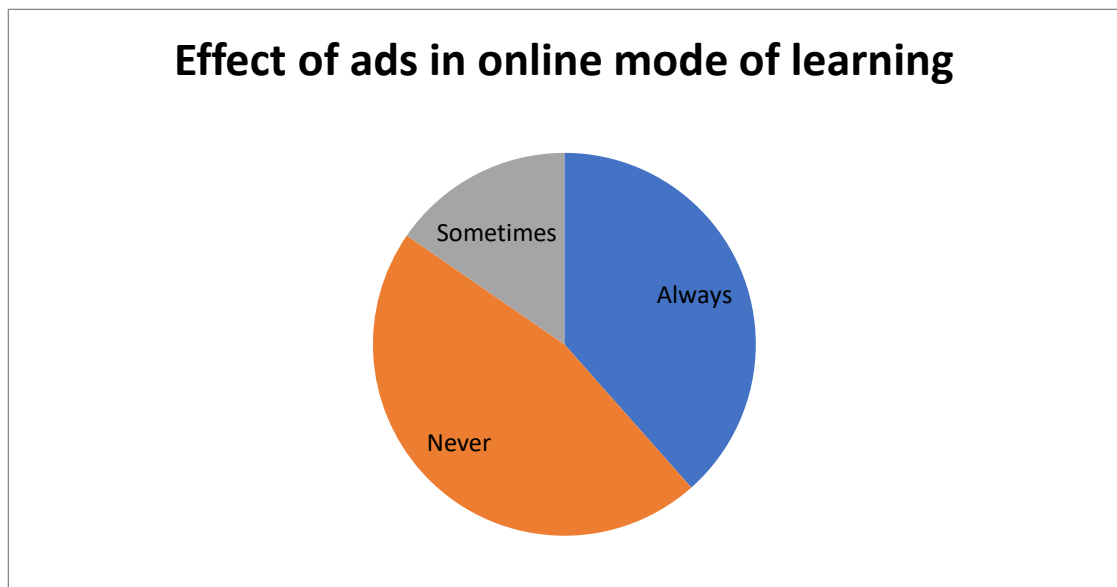
Fig 4.5. Follow schedule of classes in online mode of learning



4.6. Deviation caused by the Ads during online learning

The student responses showed that 46.2% students were not affected by ads and 38.5% students were deviated by ads due the distraction caused by these ads (Table 4.1). Fig 4.6 shows the effect of ads in online mode of learning.

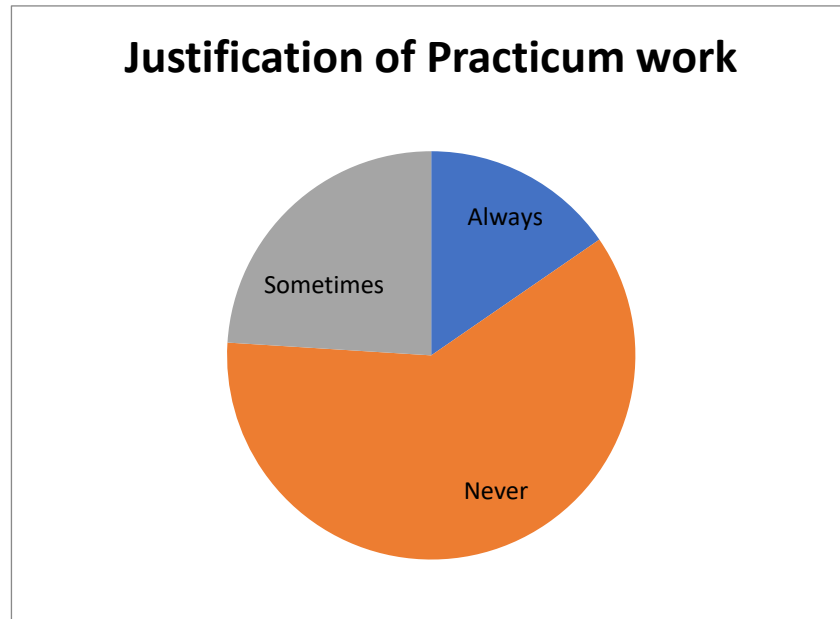
Fig 4.6 Effect of Ads in online mode of learning



4.7. Justification of Practicum work in online learning

After analyzing the student responses, 61% students said that practical part was not justified in online mode of learning and only 15% students feel that practical part was justified while 24% students feel that practical work was justified to some extent. Fig 4.7 shows the student response regarding the justification of the practical work.

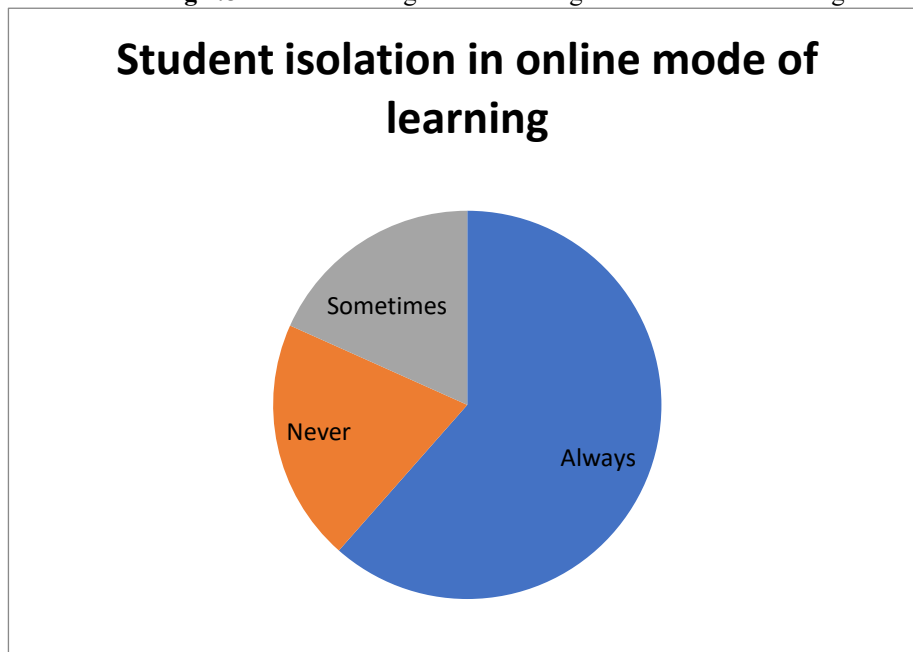
Fig 4.7 Justification of Practicum work in online mode of learning



4.8. Feeling isolated during online mode of learning

It was observed that 62% students feel isolated during online mode of learning and 20% does not feel isolated and while 18% sometimes feel isolated. Fig 4.8 shows how the students feel in online mode of learning.

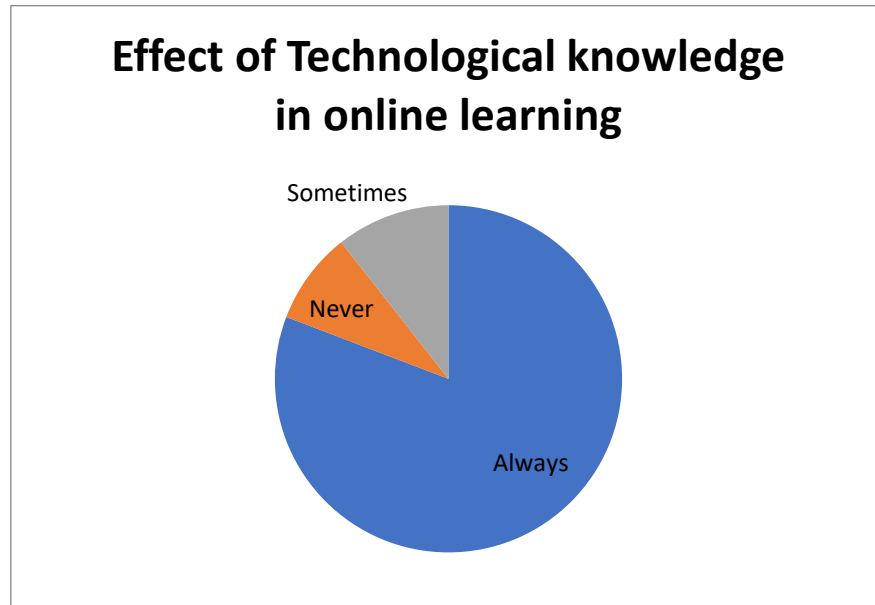
Fig 4.8 Students feeling isolated during online mode of learning



4.9. Role of technological Knowledge in online learning

The results showed in Table 4.1 that 80.8% students feel technological knowledge has a role to play in online learning and 8.6% students feel technological knowledge has no role in online learning. Fig 4.10 shows the role of technological knowledge in online mode of learning.

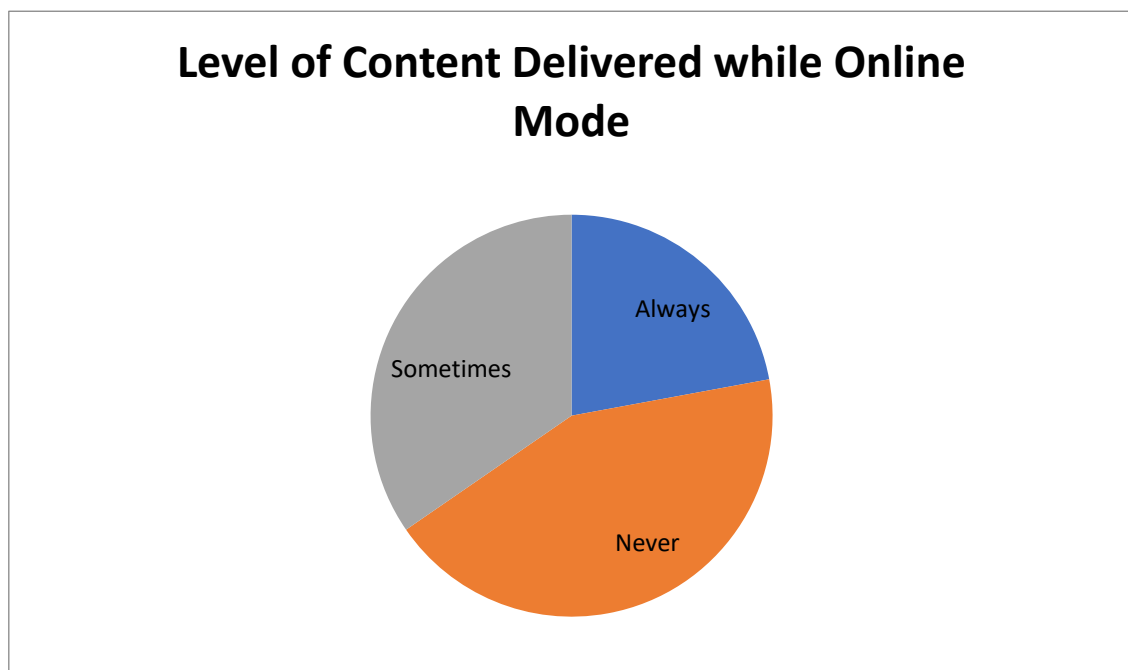
Fig 4.9 Role of technological Knowledge in online learning



4.10. Level of Content delivered while online mode

After analyzing the student responses, it was observed that only 22.1% students feel the content easy to understand and 43.3% students found the content not understandable (Table 4.1). Fig 4.10 shows the percentage of students about the content whether easy to understand or not.

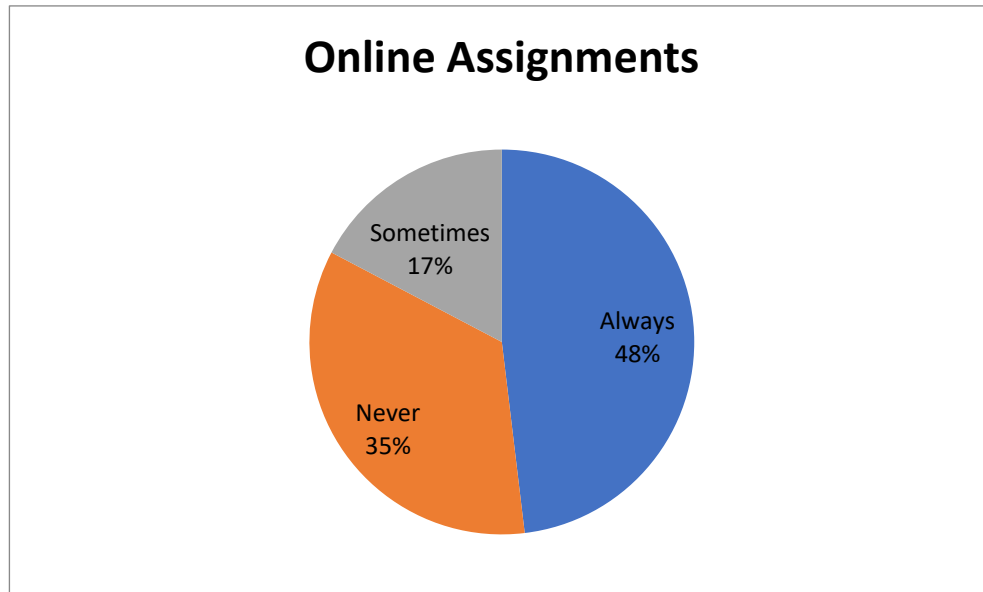
Fig 4.10 Understanding the content delivered online



4.11. Online Assignments

It was observed from Table 4.1, that 48.1% students were satisfied taking online assignments and 34.6% students were not satisfied with online assignment. Fig 4.11 shows the percentages statistics of students regarding the online assignment taking.

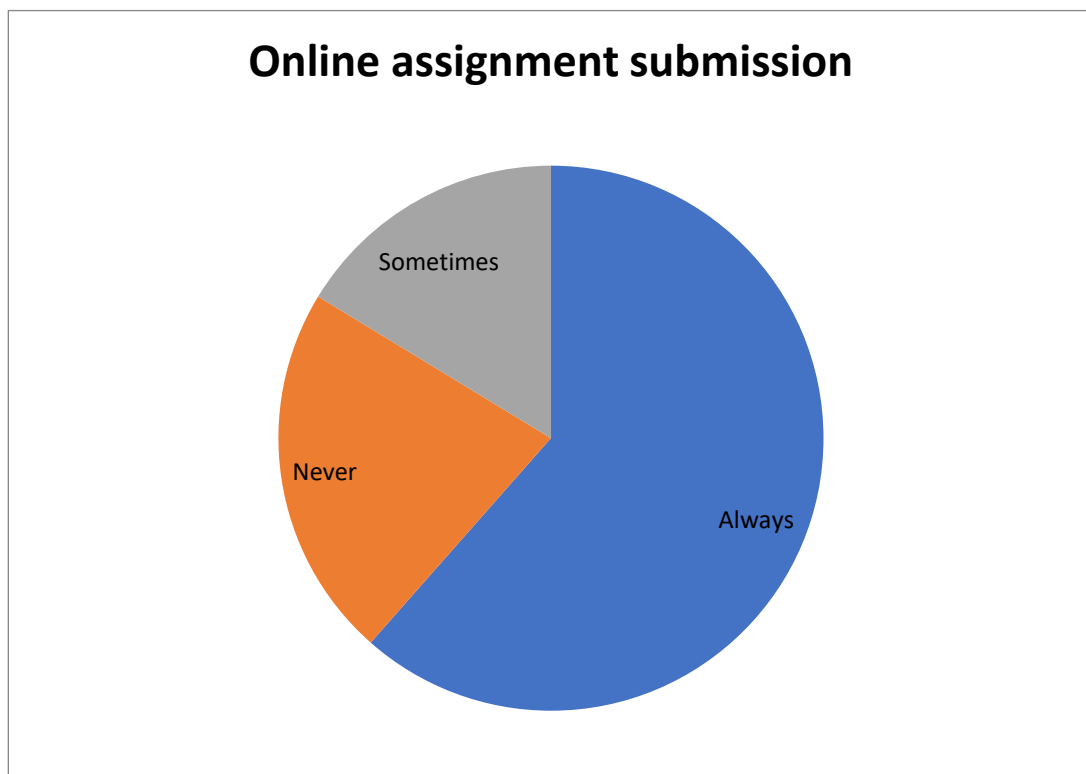
Fig 4.11 Online Assignments



4.12. Online Assignment Submission

After analyzing the responses, from Table 4.1, it was observed that 61.5% students found the online assignment submission much comfortable and easy while as 22.1% students found it difficult to submit assignment online. Fig 4.12 shows the student percentage interested in submitting the assignments online.

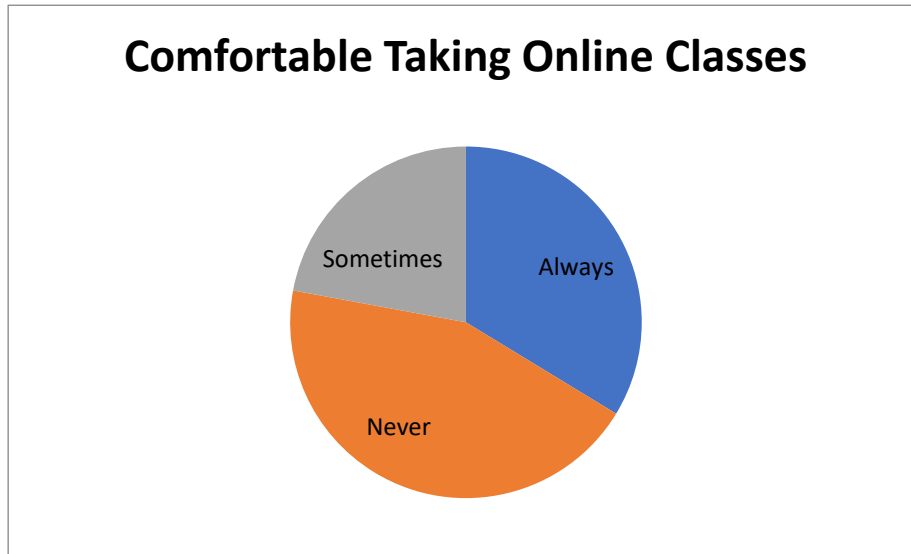
Fig 4.12 Satisfaction submitting the assignments online



4.13. Comfort

It was observed that 33.7% of students feel comfortable while taking online class and 44.2% student feel uncomfortable (Table 4.1). Fig 4.13 shows the percentage of comfort-ness in taking online classes.

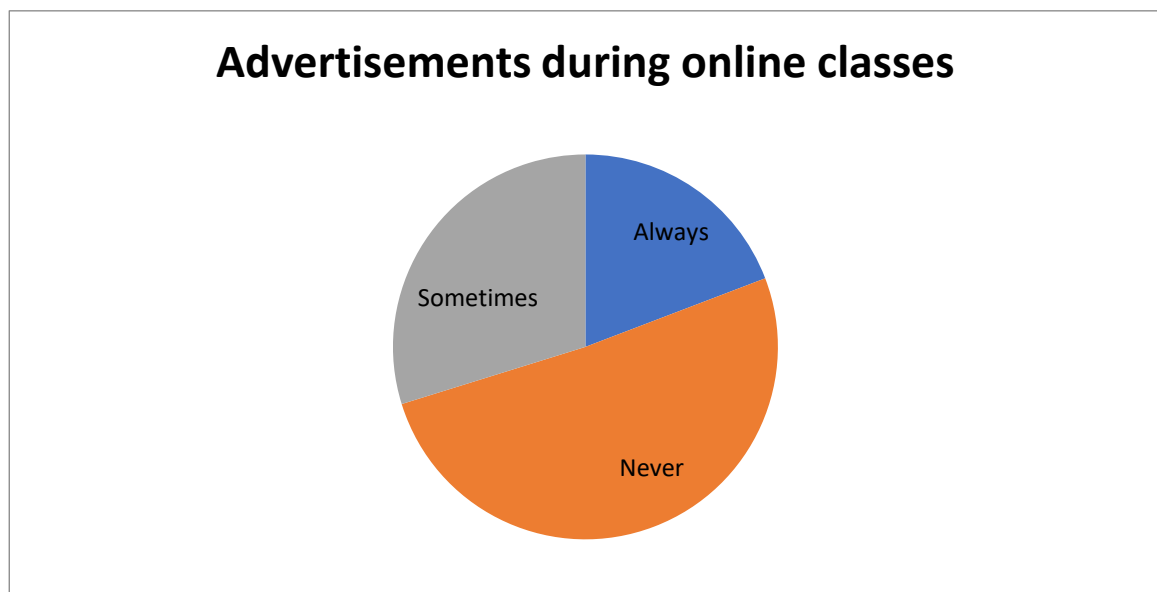
Fig 4.13 comfortable while taking online classes



4.14. Advertisements during online classes

It was observed that only 19.2% students get ads during online classes while 51% student responses were not getting ads while taking online classes (Table 4.1). Fig 4.14 shows the percentage of students regarding the ads during online classes.

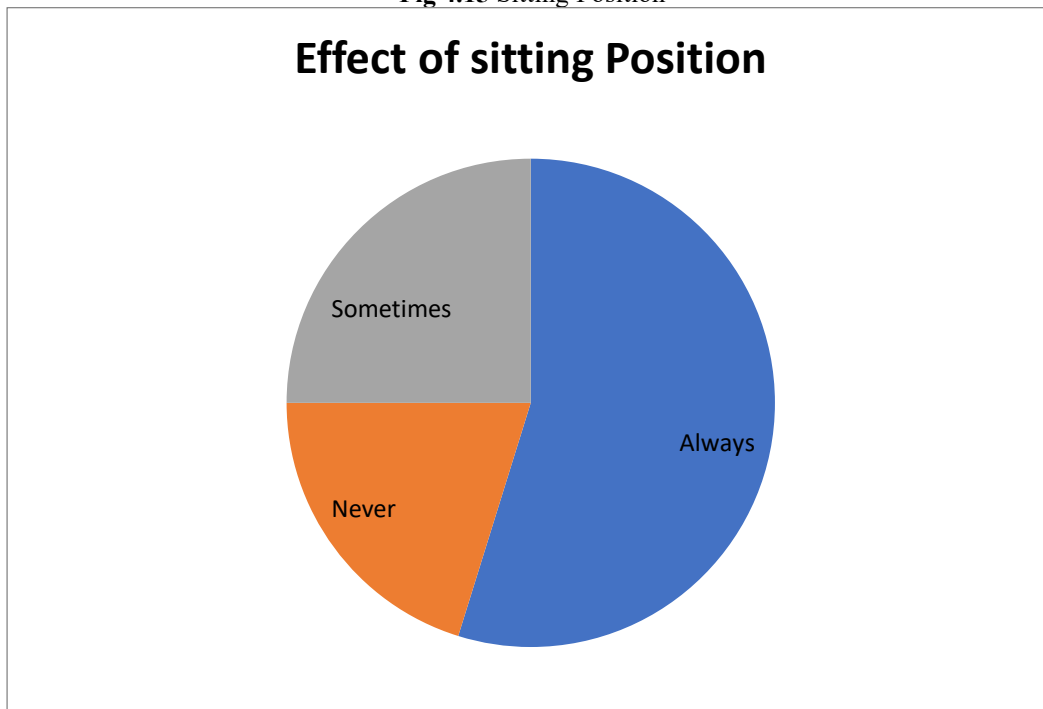
Fig 4.14 Get ads during online class



4.15. Effect of sitting Position

From Table 4.1, it was observed that 54.8% students are affected by sitting at one place and 20.2% students found it comfortable to sit at one place during online mode of learning. Fig 4.15 shows the percentage of students affected by at sitting at one place during online learning.

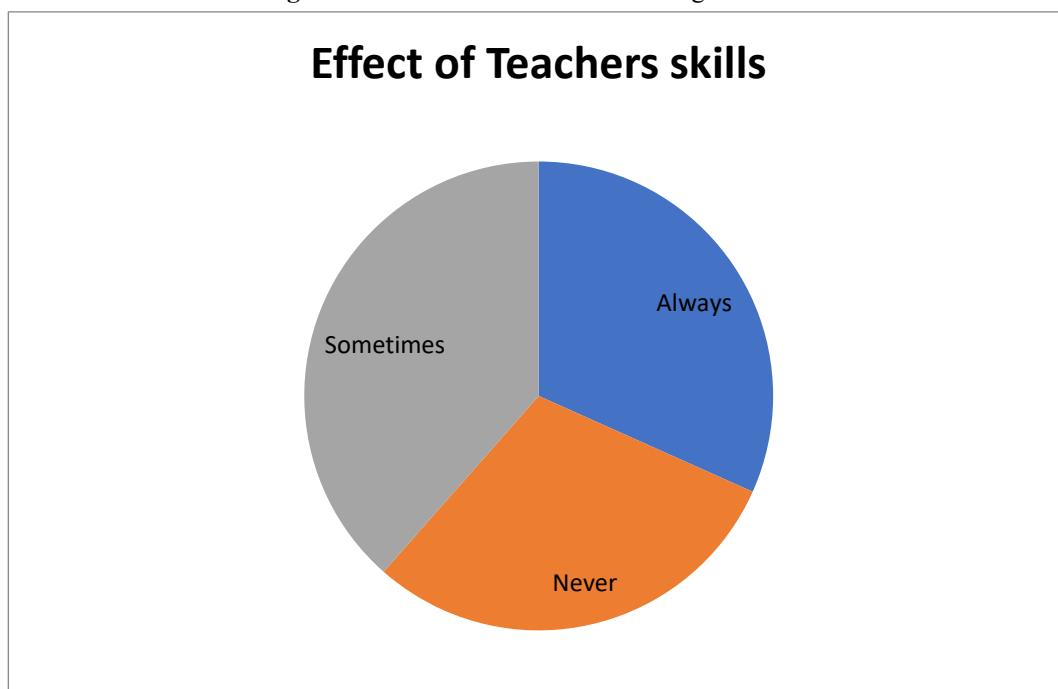
Fig 4.15 Sitting Position



4.16. Effect of Teachers skills

The students gave different responses and after analyzing the data it was observed that 31.7% students feel teachers' skill play a vital role in understanding the content delivered online and 29.8% students feel that teachers' skills play no role in online learning (Table 4.1). Fig 4.16 shows the student percentage regarding the teacher skills in online mode of learning.

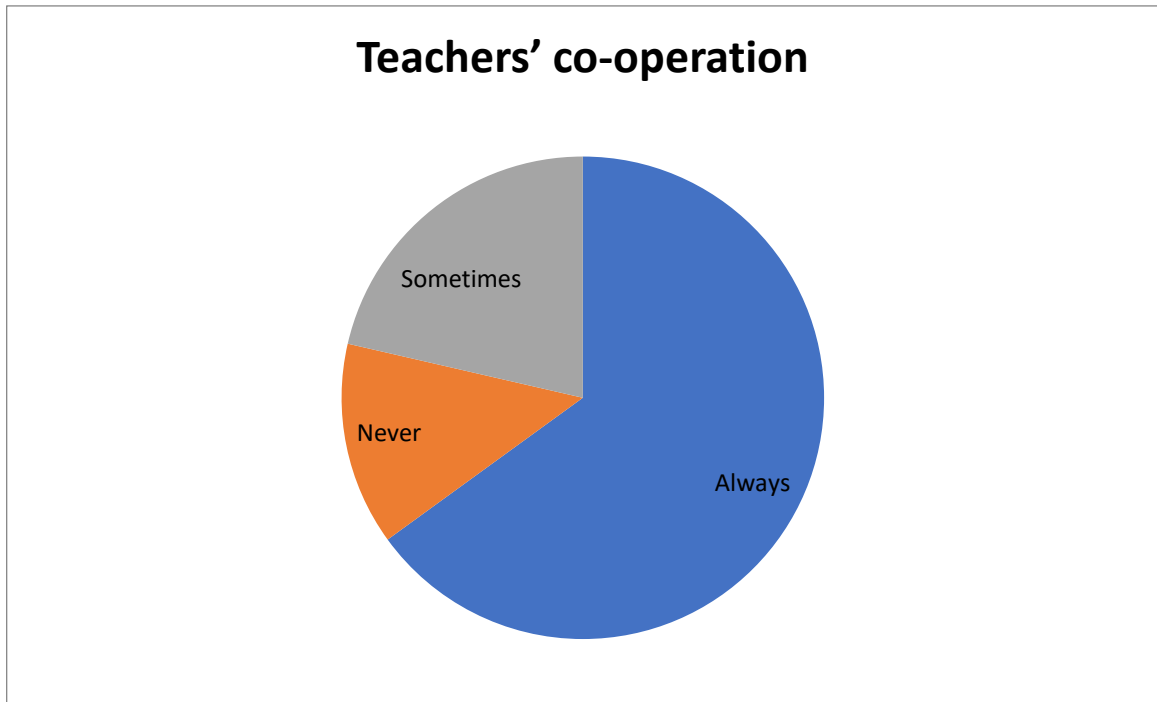
Fig 4.16 Effect of teachers' skills during online classes



4.17. Teachers' co-operation

From Table 4.1, it was observed that 65% students said that the teachers are cooperative while 13.6% students feel teachers are not cooperative. Fig 4.17 shows the teacher cooperation in online mode of learning.

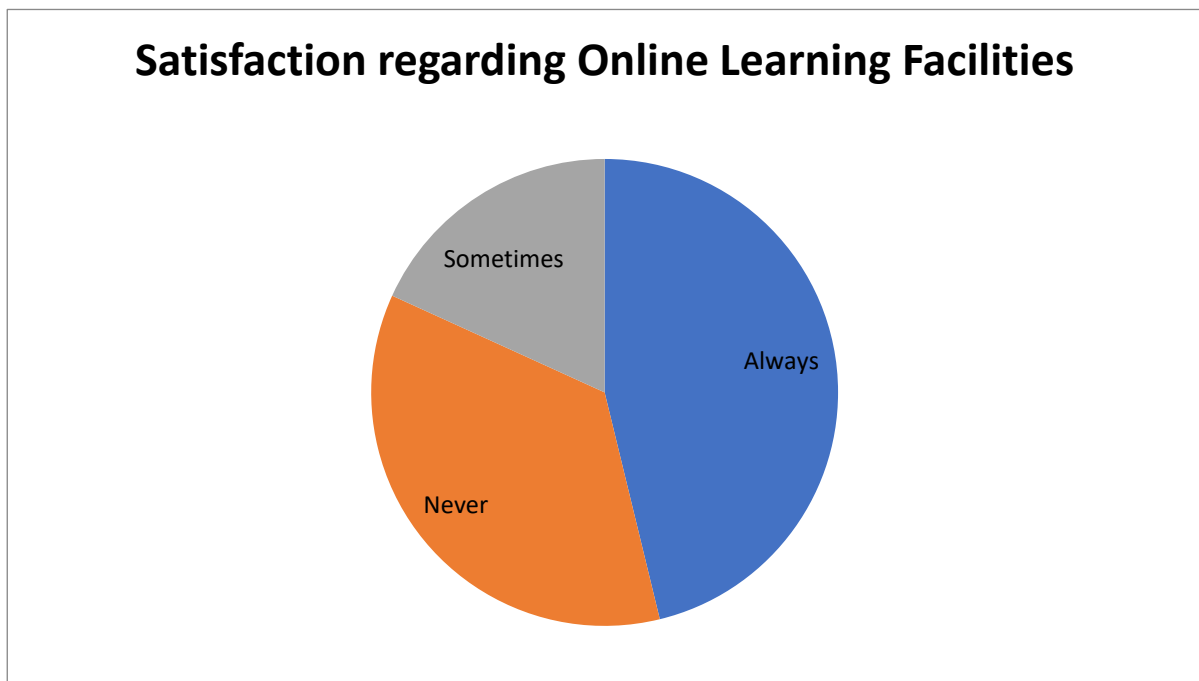
Fig 4.17 Teachers' co-operation



4.18. Satisfaction regarding Online Learning Facilities

It was observed that 46.2% students were not satisfied with the facilities provided for online learning while as 35.6% students were satisfied with the facilities (Table 4.1). Fig 4.18 shows the percentage of students' satisfaction with online learning facilities.

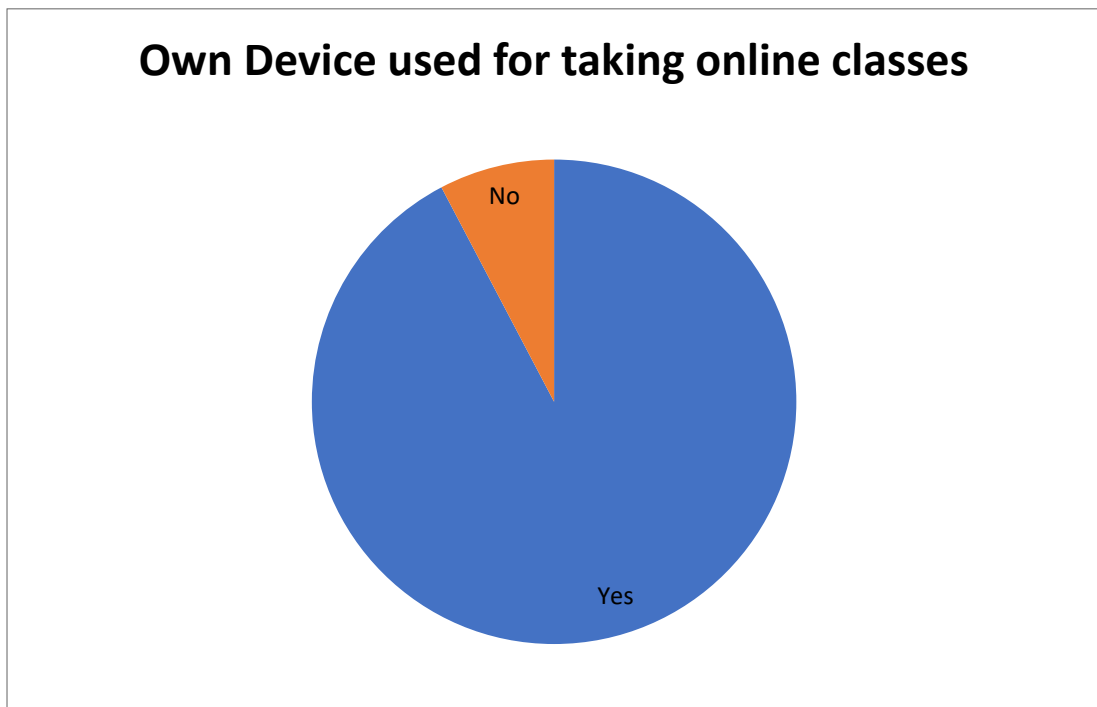
Fig 4.18 Satisfaction regarding Online Learning Facilities



4.19. Own Device used for taking online classes

After analyzing the results, it was observed that 92.3% students have their own device for online learning while 7.7% students do not possess their own device and use others device for online learning (Table 4.1). Fig 4.19 shows the percentage of students who possess their own device and those who doesn't.

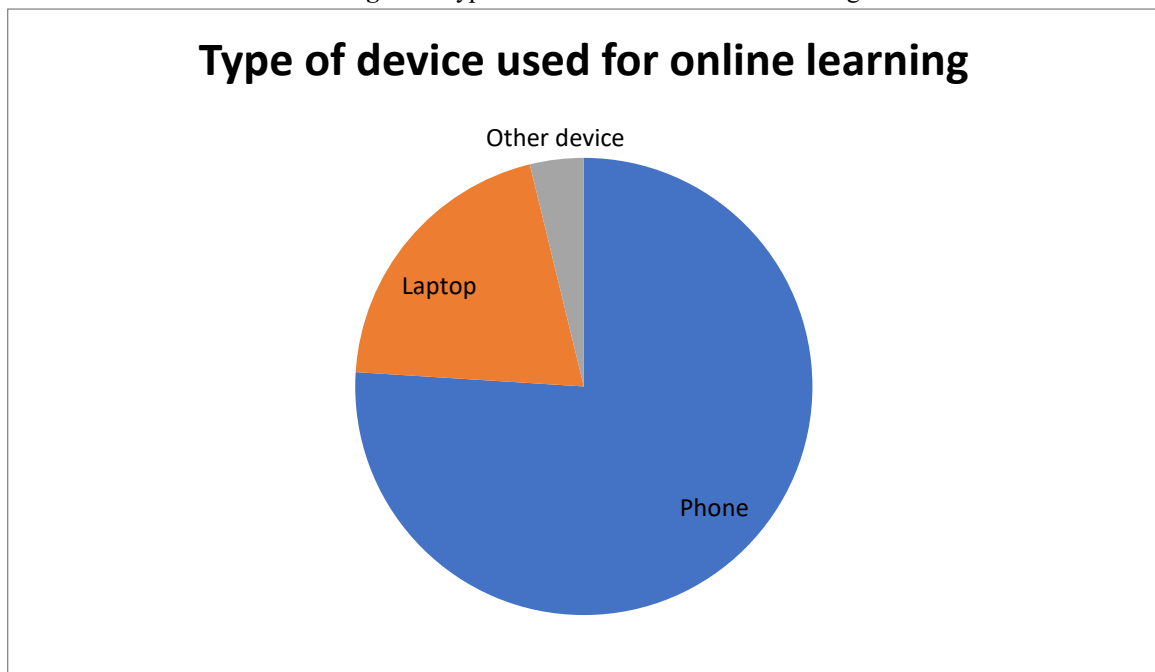
Fig 4.19 Own Device used for taking online classes



4.20. Type of device used for online learning

It was seen from Table 4.1 that 76% students use phone, 20.2% use laptop while 3.8% students use some other device for online mode of learning. Fig 4.20 shows the percentage of devices used for online mode of learning.

Fig 4.20 Type of device used for online learning



DISCUSSION

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the mode of learning shifted from face to face to online mode of learning as the pandemic halted the movement of people from one place to other. During this phase, the world saw a drastic change in the learning environment as everyone was confused how to start the educational institutions during these harsh prevailing conditions of COVID-19 pandemic. After a break of few months, the online mode of learning was started throughout the world with most of people not knowing how to cope with the technological issues faced

by both the teachers as well as students. This phase of learning faced many critics as well as hindrances in the beginning but with the passage of time, both the faculty as well as students learned the basics of using the digital platform for learning. However, the problems for both the students as well as teacher doesn't vanish at all, some of the issues still persist in this mode of learning. This research tried to work out the problems faced by the students of Central University of Kashmir during the online mode of learning. After the analysis of data, it was found that most of the students faces problems as:

- Majority of students were not interested in taking online classes. So, blended approach needs to be taken under consideration.
- About half of the students were not motivated to give online learning. The low motivation of students towards online learning may be due to less focus, poor learning environment and other distractions such as ads, technical issues etc. So, students mostly want to continue through face-to-face mode of learning.
- Most of the students who attend online classes have effect on their mental health. The mental illness may be due to increase in the screen time and sitting at one place for a long time leading to some negative thoughts which causes the psychological disturbances.
- The online mode of learning has a drastic effect on the student-teacher interaction as most of the students feel that the interaction with the teachers is below standard in this mode of learning. The students are not able to clear their doubts or confusion during online classes as everyone wants to leave the classes as soon as the class is completed.
- The most important part of learning that was affected drastically was the practical education as this part of education cannot be fulfilled in online mode of learning. More than one third of students believed that practical part was not justified in online mode of learning.
- Majority of the students feel isolated during online mode of learning. The online mode of learning has increased the mental illness and anxiety due to the isolation of the students.
- Majority of students feel that technological knowledge has a great role to play in online learning. When both the teachers as well as learners are techno-seavey then the online education becomes possible.

SUGGESTIONS

- Blended learning approach should be followed by the educational institutions so as to avoid any trouble in future.
- The online facilities should be enhanced for better understanding and comfort of students.
- There should be criteria for filling up the practicum part of education in online mode of learning as practical work plays a vital role in most of the courses and thus cannot be neglected. The gap between the theory and the practicum should be filled in online mode also.
- The students as well as teachers should be made aware about technological knowledge so that they can use the technological tools easily without any hindrance.
- Separate doubt clearance classes should be held to avoid any confusions and it will also increase the teacher-student interaction making the online learning more interesting.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the online mode of learning has both positive as well as negative impacts on the students as well as teachers. The shifting from face-to-face learning towards the online mode of learning has made us to ponder upon the technological development in the field of education which is currently below par in most educational institutions. The study suggests that both online as well as offline mode of education i.e., blended approach should be followed by all the schools as well as universities. From this research it can be concluded that:

- It was observed that the online platform still lacks in various fields like the student teacher interaction where most of the students were not satisfied with the student teacher interaction. It may be because no time was provided for doubt clearance or clearing any sort of confusion.
- The students also complained about the lack of learning facilities in online mode of learning. The lack of facilities hindered the learning abilities of the students.
- The online learning had also mental effects on the students making them prone to depression or some other psychological effects.
- The study also revealed that the lack of learning environment in online mode of learning has also affected their learning skills.

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