


# CHALLENGES FACED BY UNIVERSITY-LEVEL STUDENTS OF DELHI NCR DUE TO THE SUDDEN TRANSITION FROM ONLINE MODE OF EDUCATION TO OFFLINE MODE OF EDUCATION



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**MIHIKA PAL**, Postgraduate Student,  
MBA (Pharmaceutical Management Student),  
School of Management & Business Studies,  
Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, INDIA 110062  
 ORCID 0000-0001-7316-5402

**TAPAS PAL**, Postgraduate Student  
MBA (Pharmaceutical Management Student),  
School of Allied Health Sciences,  
Delhi Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research University,  
New Delhi, INDIA 110017  
 ORCID 0000-0002-6778-6453

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## ABSTRACT

The genesis of COVID-19 disrupted the normal functioning, daily routine, and habits of all people around the world. The social distancing measures resulted in the world's most significant revolution of digitalization – starting from schools to colleges and MNCs, everything and everyone was online in front of a screen. The new normal was the digital screen, working in pyjamas, PowerPoint presentations, online quizzes, and work-from-home culture. However, with the global decrease in the overall cases of COVID-19 in late 2021 and 2022, the inevitable transition was again set in motion. The only difference this time was going to be from online to offline mode. The most affected section of people during both transitions were students. As most of the educational institutions are reopening, students have buckled up to attend the schools and colleges so that they can interact with their friends, classmates, professors, and teachers in person rather than talking to them across a screen. Considering this, research has been conducted to identify the challenges faced by university-level students of Delhi NCR due to the sudden transition from an online to an offline mode of education.



The study aims to identify and examine the causes and suggestions for the challenges faced by students due to sudden changes. The research focuses on the advantages and disadvantages of the online and offline modes of education. This study is a reflection of the minds of university-level students. It also aims to provide suggestions to college and government authorities to aid students to acclimatize to this transition smoothly.

<b>Keywords</b>	Online mode of education, offline mode of education, students, learning, challenges
<b>JEL Classification</b>	I2, I21, I23, I28
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## INTRODUCTION

The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 in December 2019 has impacted the lives of billions globally. As of the beginning of April 2022, there were 52 crore cases, and 62 lakh deaths reported globally. The usual normal was restricted and the new normal was the lockdown. Everything familiar, starting from meetings, education, festivals, and personal care, everything changed! As of October 2022, the total COVID-19 cases in India reached 4.46 crore with 5.30 lakh deaths. The pandemic is not only a global health problem but has also transformed the education landscape in almost every country.

One of the most affected sectors was the education sector. The students and teachers had to suddenly shift from the classical pedagogy methods to digital methods, which made it very difficult to adjust. It was new and unconventional as no one was prepared and nothing like this had ever happened in India since the beginning of education. Universities and teaching institutions around the world were on the run to modify their typical timetables and teaching methods to prepare for a safe and productive learning environment.

But restrictions and lockdown were lifted from March 31, 2021, and it became a thing of the past. Everything started to come back on track including the educational institutions. Soon, colleges and schools started to reopen, and students were also ready to get away from



the screen, and back to their physical classes where they could interact with their peers and teachers face-to-face.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the challenges faced by university-level students in the transition from an online mode of education to an offline mode of education.
2. To enumerate the advantages and disadvantages of the online mode of education.
3. To enumerate the advantages and disadvantages of the offline mode of education.
4. To suggest measures at the Government and University level for the welfare of children.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A study titled “Face-to-face or face-to-screen? Undergraduates’ opinions and test performance in classroom vs online learning” (Kemp N.; Grieve R., 2014) found out whether students’ preferences and favourites for learning psychology varied upon the method used to deliver the teachings. It was observed that the students have a general choice for face-to-face learning, even relating to academic discussions. However, the results showed no noticeable differences in academic performance during online learning compared to offline learning.

A study titled “Online versus Offline Mode of Education – Is India ready to meet the challenges of Online Education in lockdown?” (Khatak S.; Wadhwa N., 2020) shows that there are a lot of benefits to online learning such as flexible studying hours, less travelling time, ease of submission of assignments, hassle-free storage, and saving of documents and study material, time for self-care, etc. It also allows one to pursue studies with a job or internship. Enrolment in a side course is also feasible in addition to classroom teaching for gathering knowledge in a better way. The only problem with the online mode is that it lacks face-to-face interaction and exchange of ideas with classmates and teachers in real time. On the other hand, the offline mode of education inculcates a sense of discipline and responsibility in a student. It necessitates the physical presence of students and teachers along with face-to-face interaction and makes the interaction more fruitful and helpful. Another important aspect is that the exams are taken physically on paper which significantly reduces the chances of copying, thus making student independent.

A study, “COVID-19 Pandemic and Online Education: Impact on Students, Parents, and Teachers” (Gupta R., 2021), contained questions relating to ease of accessibility, attentiveness, learning outcomes, stress levels, and preferred learning mode. The



questionnaire was circulated via online channels revealing that almost all the respondents have access to virtual platforms. The results showed that 71.6% of students were not able to grasp the topics that were taught to them and 48.3% of students were inattentive during the online classes. Only 11.3% of students were sure that no cheating or unfair means were used during the exam; therefore, the integrity of the education provided has also been questioned. An additional concern was shown by parents relating to increased screen time (94.2%) and workload (57.7%) of the children. Online education has provided a solution to the current scenario, but it cannot replace offline learning, which ensures the holistic development of young minds for a better future.

The study, “Perception of Students towards the Offline and Online Modes of Learning during COVID-19 Lockdown” (Horo A.; Biswas N.; Das J., 2020), indicates that the respondents believe in the offline mode of study to be more effective as they could interact and coordinate better with their classmates and teachers. According to them, the study material is quickly accessible and can be circulated among peers aiding the learning and memorization of the concepts easily, especially during their examinations. Most of the students (70.5%) feel that a hybrid mode, including both online and offline methods, should be incorporated after the lockdown period ends.

A study titled “The Effectiveness of Online Learning: Beyond No Significant Difference and Future Horizons” (Nguyen T., 2015) proposes that the online mode of education is as effective as the conventional method when it comes to academic performance and understanding of subjects. Although there are some shortcomings in the online mode, those can be corrected with effective policies and efforts from the government and educational institutions in India. Online mode of education cannot be neglected as this is the future of education and learning, therefore it should be involved and embraced.

Meta-research conducted by Cook et al. (2008) titled “Internet-based learning in the health professions: a meta-analysis” selected 76 articles that compared internet and non-internet-based interventions and 130 articles containing no-intervention control for health professional learners. Through a meta-analysis, this study concluded that internet-based interventions were associated with positive effects compared to no interventions, still, the results and statistical heterogeneities were generally minor compared to offline teaching.

According to the article “Challenges faced by students while switching from online to offline classes” by Jyothi Menon, students are happy to go back to schools and colleges physically because they are going to interact with their classmates and teachers physically rather than via a screen. It was also noted that the student’s interest had been lost in physical,



and social activities and they refrain from them since they have been away from them for a long time.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** A descriptive study was conducted to identify the characteristics and gather data that described events, followed by organizing, tabulating, depicting, and analyzing them.

**Target respondents:** The target respondents of this study include university-level students of Delhi NCR.

**Sampling technique:** Convenient sampling was used. A Google form questionnaire was sent to university-level students in various regions of Delhi NCR via email and other digital media like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram.

**Sample size:** The Google form was filled out by 179 respondents, out of which four responses were deleted. Therefore, the total number of respondents is 175.

**Data Collection:** Data collection was done by both primary and secondary methods. This research problem is contemporary; therefore, no exact secondary study is available on the Web. However, we have conducted secondary research by searching keywords like “online mode of education”, “offline mode of education”, “India”, “world”, “education”, “COVID-19”, etc. Primary research was conducted using a Google form questionnaire.

**Period of Study:** The study was conducted from April 2022 to October 2022.

**Questionnaire design:** The questionnaire contained close-ended questions with a multitude of multiple-choice questions, checkboxes, and Linkert’s scale based on variables identified from the literature review. All the questions are written in simple English language. The content and face validity of the questionnaire were done in discussion with academic experts and students through focused group discussions on Google Meet.

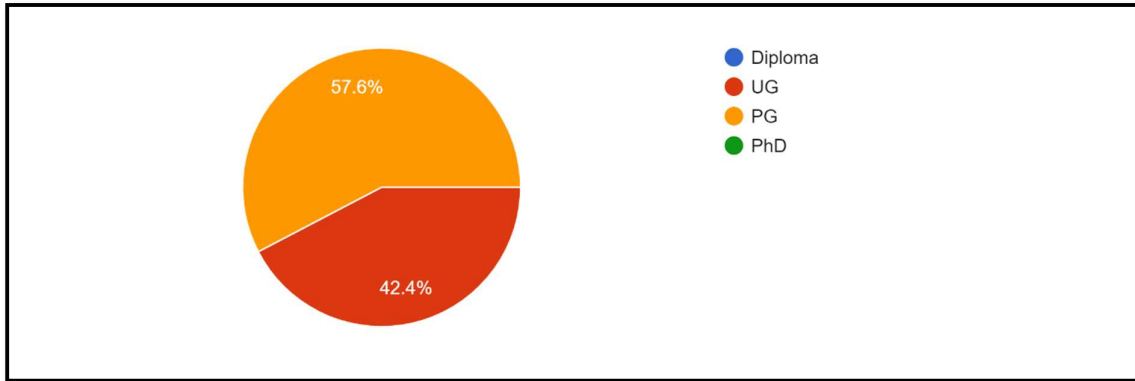
**Data Analysis Tool:** MS Excel was used for organizing, depicting, tabulating, and analyzing data.



## DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

The data collected from the structured questionnaire is analyzed in the following section.

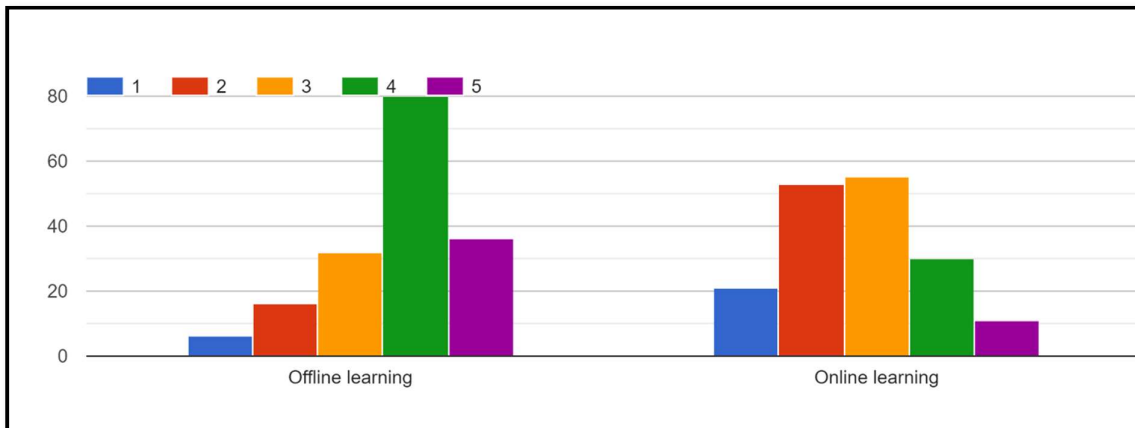
**Figure 1: Current Degree of respondent**



Data Source: Author compilation

According to the pie chart in Figure 1, 42.4% of the respondents are undergraduate students, and 57.6% are postgraduate students. None of the respondents is pursuing Diploma courses or a PhD. This shows that all the respondents are University level students only.

**Figure 2: Effectiveness of offline and online learning**



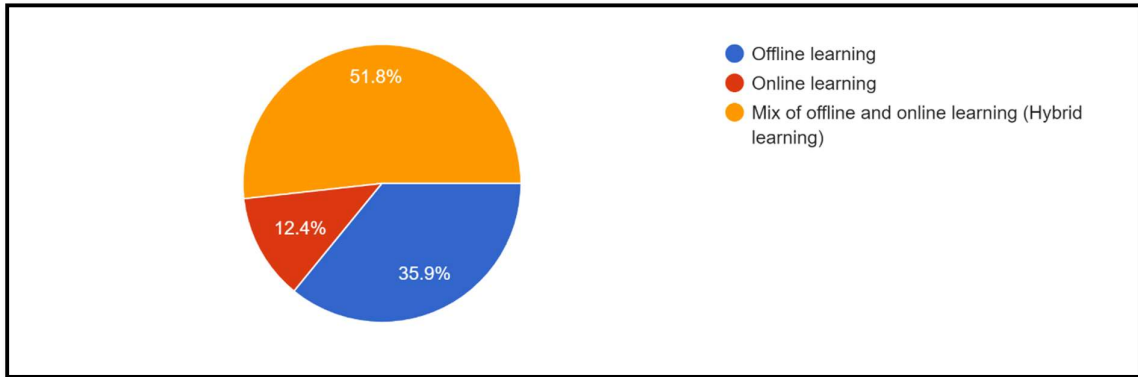
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(Likert scale: 1-Very ineffective, 2-Ineffective, 3-Pretty effective, 4-Effective, 5-Very effective)

Figure 2 shows that most of the respondents (80 respondents) agreed that offline learning is effective for them, whereas only 36 respondents agreed that offline learning is very effective. On the other hand, 55 respondents feel that online learning is pretty effective, 30 respondents think that online learning is effective, and only 11 respondents feel that online

learning is very effective. All in all, this shows that many students have benefitted from offline education, but we cannot ignore that many students also benefitted from online education.

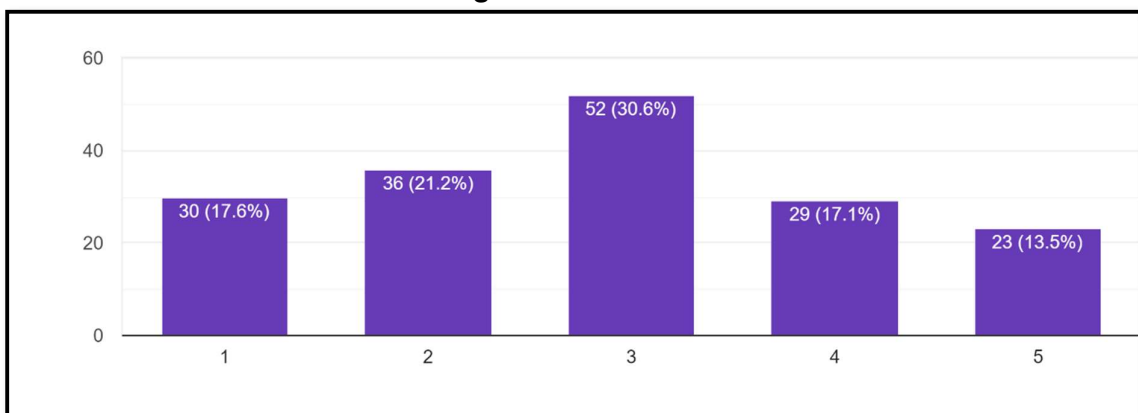
**Figure 3: Preference of learning  
(assuming appropriate safety measures are in place)**



Data Source: Author compilation

The pie chart (Figure 3) shows that 51.8% of respondents prefer hybrid learning which is a mix of offline and online learning, while only 12.4% of respondents prefer online learning and 35.9% of respondents prefer offline learning. This is an indicator that the viewpoint of students in terms of the mode of education has considerably changed post-pandemic. This is because many students have benefitted from online learning (Figure 2) and want to continue with the same.

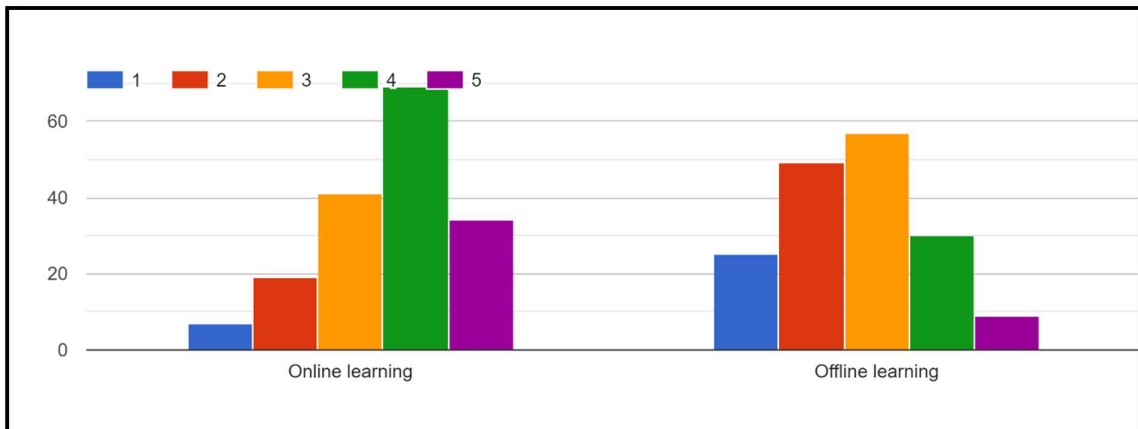
**Figure 4: Respondents' view on "Learning on the Internet is more motivating than a regular course in class"**



Data Source: Author compilation  
(Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree)

Ironically in Figure 4, the majority of respondents that is 30.6% of respondents neither agree nor disagree with the idea “Learning on the Internet is more motivating than a regular course in class”, which means that they are indecisive about choosing one mode of education over the other. This is why 51.8% of respondents prefer hybrid learning, as shown in Figure 3. Although 17.6% of respondents strongly disagree and 21.2% of respondents disagree with the idea, a fair number of respondents are in its favour. 17.1% of respondents agree, and 13.5% strongly agree with the idea, which proves that online education is gaining momentum among the youth of Delhi NCR.

**Figure 5: Time management (in terms of playtime, leisure, academics, self-development, and family responsibilities) during offline and online learning**



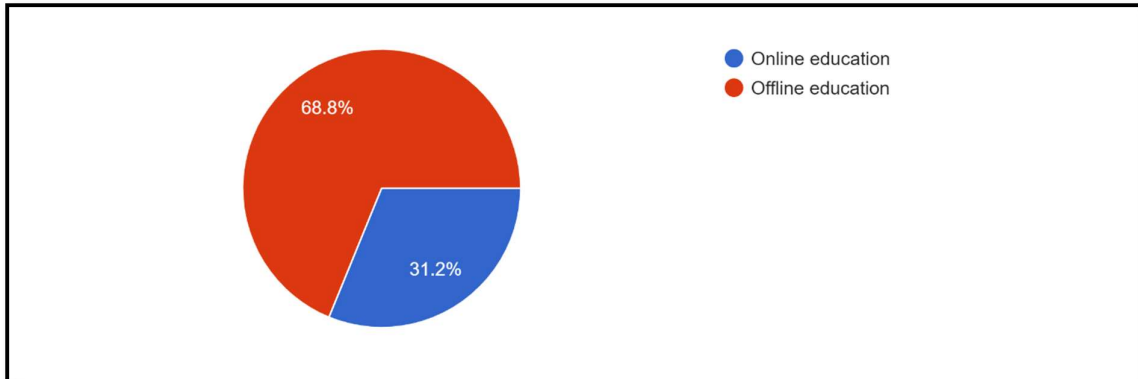
Data Source: Author compilation

(Likert scale: 1-Unmanageable, 2-Hardly manageable, 3-Reasonably manageable, 4-Manageable, 5-Well manageable)

Playtime, leisure, self-development, and family responsibilities are integral to one’s life. As per Figure 5, during online learning, the majority of respondents (69 respondents) were able to manage their time in between academics, leisure, self-development, and family responsibilities while 34 respondents chose the “well manageable” option. During offline learning, 57 respondents were reasonably able to manage time, 30 respondents were able to manage time, and only nine were able to manage their time very well. The data shows a healthy balance between academics and other activities during online learning as opposed to offline learning. This also might be a reason why many respondents prefer hybrid learning over offline or online learning.



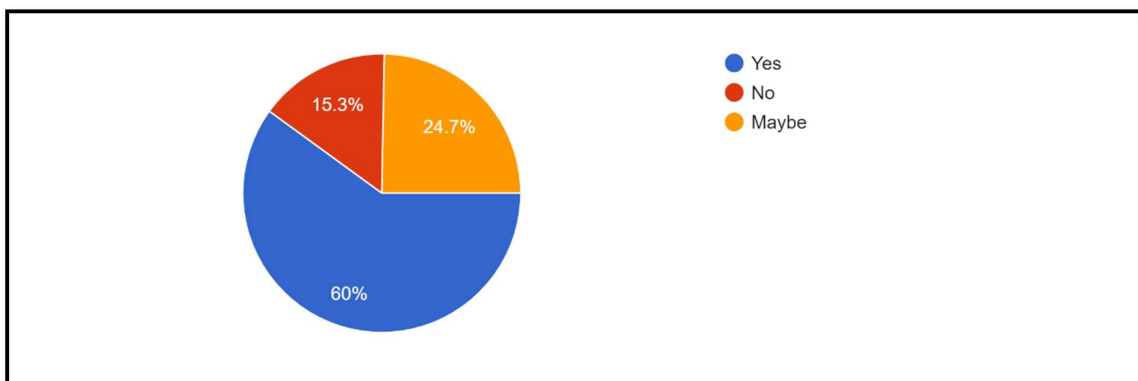
**Figure 6: Productivity of respondents**



Data Source: Author compilation

Figure 6 depicts the productivity of respondents during the online and offline modes of education. While 68.8% of respondents were more productive during the offline mode of education, a fair percentage of 31.2% were also productive during the online mode of instruction. This shows that the productivity of a student in terms of learning is more in the offline mode of education. However, overall productivity is subjective to their own will and decisions (as shown in the above pie chart).

**Figure 7: Challenges in the transition from online to offline mode of education**

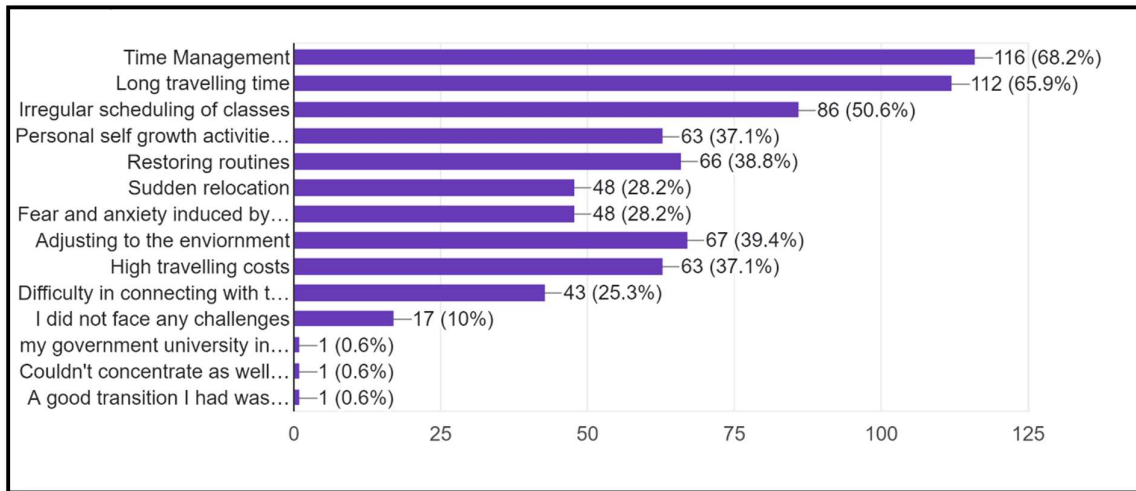


Data Source: Author compilation

Figure 7 shows that a whopping 60% of respondents (102 respondents) faced challenges in the transition from the online to offline mode of education. In comparison, 15.3% of respondents (26 respondents) did not face any challenges in this transition. 24.7% of respondents (42 respondents) were indecisive and chose the “maybe” option. This shows that a vast number of students faced challenges in the transition from online to offline mode of

education, which calls for intervention, help, and guidance from family, professionals, Universities, the Government, etc.

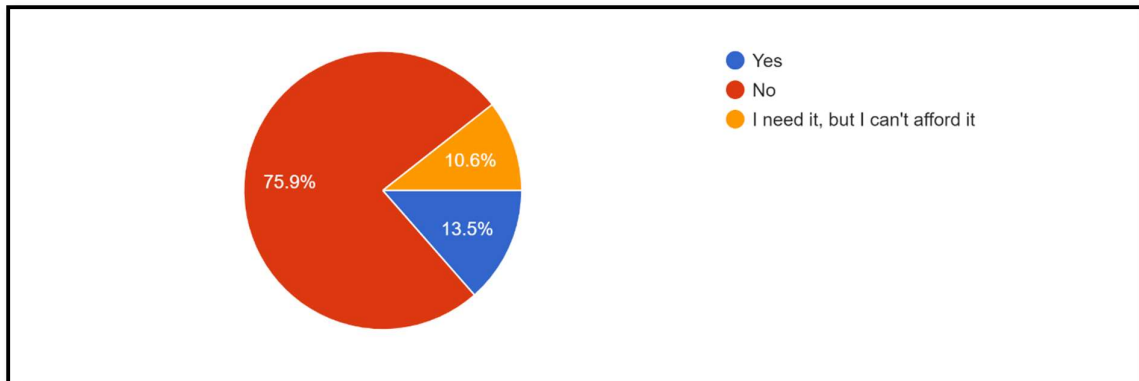
**Figure 8: Challenges faced in the transition from online to offline mode of education**



Data Source: Author compilation

Figure 8 highlights the challenges faced by students in the transition from online to offline mode of education. Time management and long travelling time were the most common challenges faced by the respondents, followed by irregular scheduling of classes. 39.4% of respondents had problems adjusting to the environment, 38.8% of respondents had difficulty in restoring routines, 37.1% of respondents felt personal and self-growth activities suffered, 37.1% of respondents were troubled with the high travelling costs, 28.2% of respondents were troubled due to sudden relocation, 28.2% of respondents faced fear and anxiety induced by the virus, and 25.3% of respondents faced difficulty in connecting with teachers. One respondent pointed out that they had trouble concentrating, and another respondent is unhappy due to a hike in college fees post-pandemic. However, only 18 out of 170 respondents did not face any challenges; one of the respondents pointed out that this was a good transition for them to restore their routine. This is contradictory to Figure 7 where 15.3% of respondents (26 respondents) did not face any challenges in this transition; therefore, 18 respondents are the revised number of respondents who did not face any challenges.

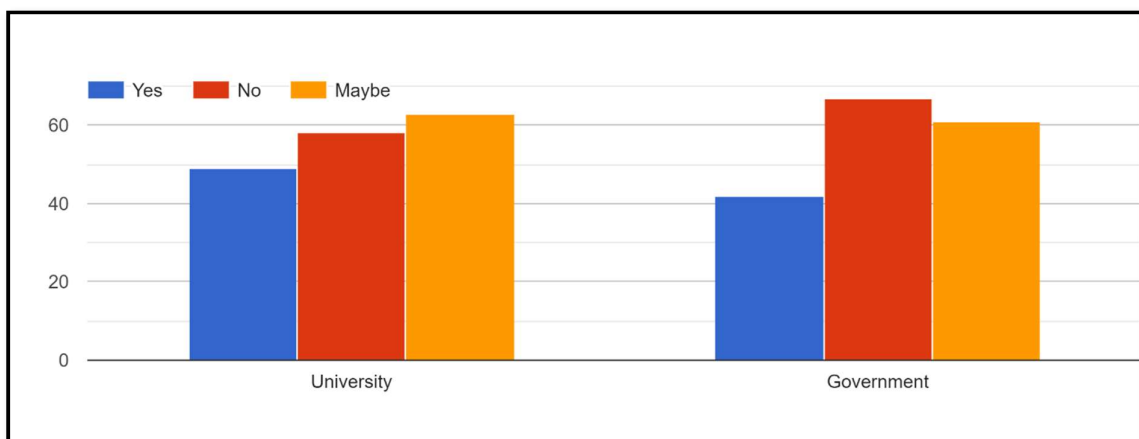
**Figure 9: Socio-emotional care and support received by respondents**



Data Source: Author compilation

The pie chart in Figure 9 shows that 75.9% of respondents did not receive socio-emotional care and support from family, friends, teachers, and professionals to deal with the transition from online to offline mode of education. Only 13.5% of respondents received socio-emotional care and support to deal with this transition, while 10.6% of respondents needed help and support but couldn't afford it. This lack of resources, awareness, and self-care among students could eventually affect their mental health.

**Figure 10: Assistance provided to respondents to adjust to the sudden transition from online to offline mode of education**



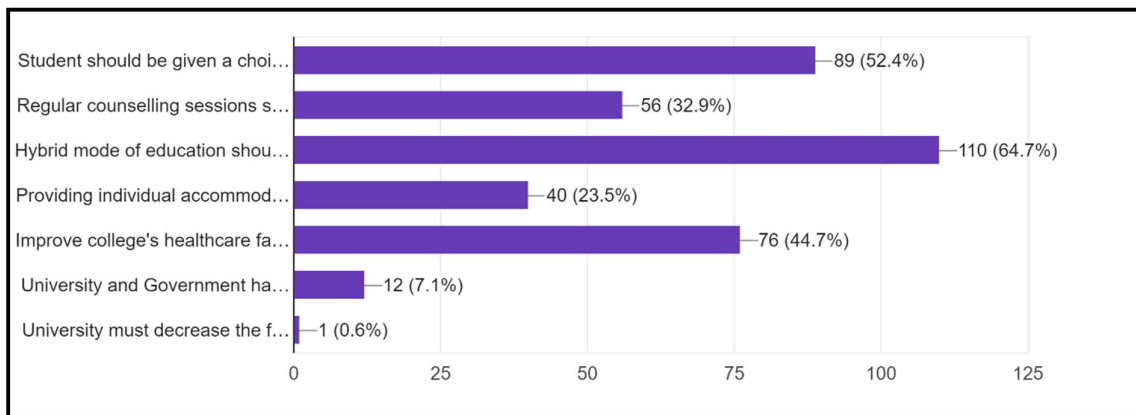
Data Source: Author compilation

As per Figure 10, 49 and 42 respondents concurred that the University and Government, respectively were doing their best to aid them with this transition. However, 58 and 67 respondents were not satisfied with the measures taken by the University and



Government respectively. At the same time, some respondents could not decide between 'yes' or 'no' options and therefore, chose 'maybe'. 63 and 61 respondents were not confident if the University and the Government, respectively had aided them in acclimatizing in any way possible. As more than 70% of respondents chose the 'no' or 'maybe' option, this shows that the administration of the Universities and Government is unable to provide student-centric care in acclimatizing to this online-to-offline transition.

**Figure 11: Measures that should be undertaken by Universities and Government**



Data Source: Author compilation

Figure 11 suggests some measures that should be undertaken by the Universities and the Government. According to 64.7% of respondents, a hybrid mode of education should be allowed. At the same time, 52.4% of respondents feel that students should be given a choice if they want to start offline classes; 44.7% are concerned about their health and urged to improve the college's healthcare facility. Another 32.9% of respondents want regular counselling sessions, and 23.5% want individual accommodation to maintain social distancing. Only 7.1% of respondents (12 respondents) feel that the University and Government have done their best and that no measures need to be taken. This is incongruent with the results of Figure 10, where 49 respondents and 42 respondents agreed that the University and Government, respectively were doing their best to aid them. Finally, we can conclude that only 12 respondents are content with the measures and initiatives undertaken by the Universities and Government.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to Deloitte's Annual Status of Higher Education (ASHE), 34.3 million students were enrolled in higher education in India in 2021. Looking at this vast number of students, it is vital to take care of their needs and grievances. This study compared the effectiveness of offline and online modes of education; it was found that most of the students agreed that the offline mode of study is more effective, while a significant number of students also benefitted from online education. 51.8% of respondents agreed that a hybrid mode of study is more effective overall. Students in the Delhi NCR region are confident that neither online nor offline mode of education is more efficient; rather it is the combination of both.

One interesting finding was related to time management in terms of playtime, leisure, self-development, and family responsibilities. It points out that during online learning, many respondents were able to manage their time efficiently. This was not possible during the offline mode of education. In terms of productivity, students believed they were more productive in offline mode than in online mode. However, this is true only when academic productivity is concerned. Overall productivity is high in the online mode of study. If we look into the challenges faced by students in transitioning from the online to the offline mode of education, it is clear that a massive number of students faced challenges in this transition, which calls for intervention, help, and guidance from family, professionals, University, Government, etc. Time management and long travelling were the most common challenges faced by the respondents, followed by irregular scheduling of classes.

## **MANAGERIAL SCOPE**

While the online and offline mode of education has their advantages and disadvantages, the shift from online to offline mode of education has been socially, mentally, and physically challenging for students. This study has identified the challenges faced by university-level students in the transition from an online mode of education to an offline mode of education. This data can be used by Universities and Government agencies to formulate measures and initiatives for the welfare of students. The Universities can conduct parent-teacher meetings to sensitize and educate parents about the need for socio-emotional support.



## LIMITATIONS

1. As of 2019, 2.9 lakh students were enrolled in the colleges of Delhi. The sample size of this study is minuscule compared to the population.
2. Due to the small sample size, statistical tests would not be able to identify significant relationships within the data set.
3. An unbiased random sampling technique could not be followed.

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