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IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA: PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS ON ONLINE TEACHING AND ASSESSMENTS

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Abstract

In Sri Lanka, access to higher education is already very limited. The government ordered all educational institutions closed from 12 March 2020, including higher education institutions—15 state universities and about 40 other state and non-state tertiary education institutions. Such disruptions in tertiary education by COVID-19 could delay the creation of the leaders and skilled workforce the country needs to successfully transition to upper- middle-income status. It has changed the traditional education system to the educational technologies model, where teaching and assessments are conducted online. This paper aims to measure the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the University Education System in Sri Lanka: perspectives of teachers on online teaching and Assessments. This research study adopted the Interpretative phenomenological Analysis (IPA) of qualitative research methodology. The study was conducted among the teachers working in the state Universities of Sri Lanka. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted among 20 Lecturers to collect data regarding the barriers faced by them during online teaching and assessment. The findings revealed four categories of barriers that are faced by teachers during online teaching and assessments. Under home environment settings, a lack of basic facilities, external distraction and family interruption during teaching and conducting assessments were major issues reported. Institutional support barriers such as the budget for purchasing advanced technologies, a lack of training, a lack of technical support and a lack of clarity and direction were also reported. Teachers also faced technical difficulties. The difficulties were grouped under a lack of technical support, it included a lack of technical infrastructure, limited awareness of online teaching platforms and security concerns. Furthermore, the findings of the study can be helpful to the regulatory authorities and employers of higher education institutions who are planning to adopt online teaching as a regular activity in the future. The insights gained from the findings can help them to revisit their existing policy frameworks by designing new strategies and technical structures to assist their teachers in successfully embracing the Education Technology to deal with any crisis in the future.

***Keywords**: HEIs, Coronavirus, COVID-19, Pandemic, Teachers' perspectives*

Paper type : Research paper

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19, an infectious virus, spread all over the world and adversely affected all facets of the economy. This economic earthquake reached into an astonishing array of many sectors, mutilating them to a great extent. The temporary closure of educational institutions during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has abruptly transformed the global education landscape in favour of distance learning. This radical shift saw a surge in the use of various digital platforms and applications, including digital learning management systems, collaboration platforms for live-video

communication, massive open online courses (MOOCs), and tools for creating learning content. Some platforms have offered free access to basic services, especially during the pandemic, which higher education institutions used extensively, especially among academic staff and students with digital experience. For example, 90.3% of universities in Japan were providing distance learning as of 1 June 2020.4 In upper-middle-income countries, 88% of youth managed to continue learning, including 54% by video lectures and 40% by online testing. The pandemic had incurred an enormous loss to the economy and had a staggering impact on global education. According to UNESCO, 63 million teachers were affected in 165 countries. A total of 1.3 billion learners around the world were not able to attend school or university and approximately 32,07,13,810 learners are affected in Sri Lanka alone (UNESCO, 2020). The Director of the Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems also highlighted the concern that prolonged closure of schools may have major implications on teaching, learning, assessments and credentials. The disruption of teaching and examination has delayed student progression and resulted in a broader socio-economic impact.
In Sri Lanka, access to higher education is already very limited. The government ordered all educational institutions closed from 12 March 2020, including higher education institutions—15 state universities and about 40 other state and non-state tertiary education institutions. Such disruptions in tertiary education by COVID-19 could delay the creation of the leaders and skilled workforce the country needs to successfully transition to upper- middle-income status.

To mitigate the effects of disrupted learning, higher education institutions utilized existing Moodle-based learning management systems under university web servers. The Lanka Education and Research Network (LEARN) was connected to university web servers and used for online education. The network could monitor the utilization of Zoom daily. In addition, all internet service providers in Sri Lanka provided free access to university web servers during the pandemic until 17 August 2020 access to university servers during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic until 17 August 2020. This has been instrumental in promoting online learning for students in Sri Lanka. The ministry also issued an advisory for HEIs to continue teaching through online mode and requested teachers to teach from home. COVID-19 changed the traditional teaching model to the educational technology (EdTech) model where teachers and students were exposed to new innovative educational methodologies. Respecting the decision of the government, many higher education institutions (HEIs) started to put their efforts to use technology in support of remote learning, distance education and online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Renowned HEIs such as University of Colombo, University of Kelaniya, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Peradeniya, University of Ruhuna, University of Moratuwa, Eastern University of Sri Lanka, and University of Jaffna etc. offer online classes to their students.

However, it is worth mentioning that many HEIs in Sri Lanka are not well equipped with institutionally supported technologies such as Moodle, Blackboard (teaching app), Microsoft Teams and Zoom; however, they made it obligatory for teachers to use open-source online teaching platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Skype and Google hangout to deliver online sessions. Online teaching is stirring at an untested and unprecedented scale and student online assessments are also being conducted with many uncertainties. It is pertinent that online teaching cannot be successful without the involvement of teachers, as they are the frontline workers of any educational institution. Few studies have addressed the barriers of online teaching in various developed countries such as Germany, Luxembourg (Stoffregen), Japan (Sutherland), FL (Shea), but very

limited studies have been conducted on developing countries (Stoffregen et al., 2016; Sutherland, 2014; Shea, 2007).

Online teaching is a relatively new concept in developing countries such as Sri Lanka. COVID-19 epidemic has made it mandatory for the teachers of developing countries to use online platforms for teaching and assessment to support the education sector. The teachers need to adapt the technology for the successful execution of online teaching and assessments.

In Sri Lanka, online teaching is not very popular. Most of the teachers were not well trained to teach and conduct assessments online. Because of lockdown, with no choice, teachers started to teach and conduct assessments from their homes. They faced challenges such as a lack of technical infrastructure, namely, a laptop, internet and microphones in their home to teach or conduct assessments online. There is no direct technical support that can be offered to teachers in case of any technical difficulty during the online lecture delivery or online assessment. They face distractions because of the frequent visit of family members during online lecture delivery and assessments. Many universities are still using the open-source platform for online teaching which rises questions on the assessment quality and confidentially. This also raises the concern on the quality of student's assessment that may also get compromised because of the teacher's lack of information on the assessment pattern and online assessment platforms.
Online teaching and assessment at home environment setting has different challenges from online teaching and conducting assessment in the university environment. The university environment has a conducive environment where all the facilities are available at ease. This research aims to identify those barriers that are faced by the teachers during online teaching and assessment in the home environment setting in the Sri Lankan context. The findings of the study can be helpful to the regulatory authorities and employers of HEIs who are planning to adopt online teaching and assessment as a regular activity in the future.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Universities resumed learning from 6 July 2020, contingent on adherence to health guidelines, and done on a limited scale, with priority given to final-year students. Following a gradual approach, incoming first-year students have yet to start their tertiary education. The resumption also depends on the vice chancellor's decision reflecting the context of each university. As such, online education would remain an important means for delivering tertiary education. Indeed, improving access to quality tertiary education is among the Government of Sri Lanka's highest priorities in its efforts to realize a knowledge-based economy under Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour, its new economic framework.

Against this backdrop, it is important to understand emerging issues and challenges in the radical shift toward online education. This brief presents the status as of June 2020 of online learning in Sri Lanka's higher education sector since the university closures. Some universities conducted their own evaluation for improving online education, and provided recommendations on internet access and training for faculty. The current study examines the issues and challenges faced by the teachers and students of Universities in Eastern Province in Sri Lanka further, the findings of the study can be helpful to the regulatory authorities and employers of HEIs who are planning to adopt online teaching and assessment as a regular activity in the future.

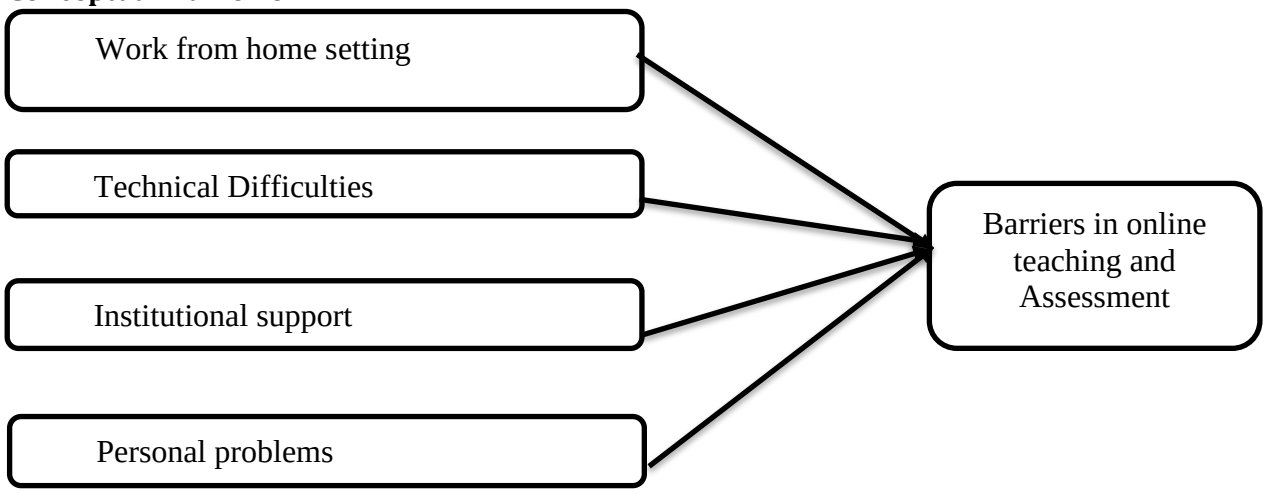
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the problems faced by the teachers in online teaching and assessments in the home environment settings
- To find out the type of supports were provided by their universities in online teaching and assessments
- To Provide Suggestions to conduct technology-driven education through the LMS

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study can be helpful to the regulatory authorities and employers of HEIs who are planning to adopt online teaching and assessment as a regular activity in the near future. The identified barriers can be considered in advance and a roadmap can be designed for smooth execution of online teaching and assessment. For example, in view of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown and quarantine, University Grants Commission issued guidelines on examinations and students assessments (Circular No.11/2020). The insights gained on the barriers faced by the teacher during an online assessment can be considered by HEIs to plan their examination systematically. Once the HEIs get back to the new normal, teachers can be trained to deal with these barriers for the smooth execution of online teaching and assessment.

Conceptual framework



(Develop for research purpose)

METHODOLOGY

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of qualitative research methodology will be used in this research. IPA aims to explore and understand in detail about the person's experience of a particular phenomenon (Alase, 2017; Smith, 2011; Pringle et al., 2011; Smith and Eatough, 2007). Dipboye and Foster (2002) pointed out that IPA helps in understanding the participant's perception and describing it rather than generalizing it on the basis of pre existing theories and concepts. IPA interview was subjective in nature which generates an opportunity for the investigators to understand the perception of the participants which arose from their experience and involvement in a particular phase of an event. IPA provides not only descriptive but also focused upon interpretative of the views and experiences of the respondent (Smith and Osborn, 2008). Smith 1996, (2004) precisely stated that IPA is deployed in situations where the sample size understudy is small and they are required to be

analyzed at greater lengths. Many IPA studies have considered the sample size of 1, 4, 9, 15 and more as a respondent (Smith and Osborn, 2008). Many authors have used IPA in their research work across many disciplines concepts such as spiritualty (Agarwal et al., 2020), elearning (Phutela and Dwivedi, 2020), whistleblowing (Chaudhary et al., 2019); Gupta and Chaudhary (2017), research (Saini and Chaudhary, 2019), genderism (Farmer and Byrd, 2015), emotions (Gill, 2015) and health sciences (Peart et al., 2020; Smith, 2011). In this research, IPA is used to understand the barriers faced in online teaching and assessments during the era of COVID-19 where lockdown had made teachers teach and conduct the assessment in their work environment settings.

SAMPLING

The study was conducted among the teachers working in the state universities in Sri Lanka. To get diversity from the viewpoint of teachers, we will contact around 20 teachers through email and phone from different state universities in Sri Lanka. All the interested participants were asked to give their written consent and submit the statement carrying ethics approval for participation in the study (Creswell, 2013).

DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to collect data from the teachers to gather information about the barriers faced in online teaching and assessment. The questions will be were verified by experts for its reliability and validity, and the modifications will be incorporated as per the given suggestions. Due to COVID-19 in-person interviews were not conducted, alternatively they were interviewed through the phone. All the interviews will be recorded in the form of audio clips. During the primary stage, few triggering questions were asked to the teachers: firstly, what are the problems faced by the teachers in online teaching and assessments in the home settings? Secondly, what type of support is provided by their universities in online teaching and assessments? The average time duration of the interview was 60 min and the overall timing of the interviews between 40 and 110 min.

DATA ANALYSIS

Step 1: All interview records were closely read and terminologies that provided meaningful insights for recognizing themes for identifying barriers in online teaching and assessments in the home environment settings will be recorded.
Step 2: The notes were prepared based on the verbatim transcripts and themes emerging were marked upon the transcripts.
Step 3: These emerging themes will identified and were recorded separately to the transcript.
Step 4: Similar themes were grouped and the terminology was given that well defined higher-order argument.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- **Findings of Objectives 01:**

  - *To find out the problems faced by the teachers in online teaching and assessments in the home environment settings*

In this section, findings from the analysis of the 20 interviews using IPA are reported. The findings have been grouped under three larger units i.e. teaching and assessments in home environment

settings, technical difficulties faced by teachers in online teaching and assessments and personal problems faced by teachers in online teaching and assessments.
The various factors that affect online teaching and assessments in home environment settings are a lack of basic facilities, external distraction and interruption from family members

- ***Lack of basic facilities***. Teachers require basic facilities such as marker, whiteboard, printers for smooth online teaching. Because of limited facilities at home, teachers are not able to explain and express themselves in a video conference. Even if the platform is supported by the universities then also teachers require basic facilities for the smooth delivery of the lecture.

Responses regarding online teaching.

- "Many times it is difficult to explain topic without facilities like whiteboard and marker, though Zoom provides inbuilt whiteboard, but it is not very effective"
- "To prepare lectures, sufficient books are not available in my home, college library has many options".
- "The conventional teaching has all the facilities like board, marker, and printer. In the home environment settings, these are not available, without these facilities my confidence and efficiency reduces as I am not able to express myself in an influential manner"

Responses regarding online Assessments.

Teachers prefer to print out the assignment and then evaluate them. Because of limited facilities at home, teachers are not able to do justice with evaluation. The marks are required to be entered in the software, but it opens for a limited period of time, and once submitted it cannot be edited. Teachers believe in rechecking by taking a printout of the evaluation sheet to in the printing of marks and rechecking, to avoid errors.

- "There are lot of online assignments and it's difficult to check them online. I would like to take the printout and evaluate them, but it is not possible because of absence of printer in my home"
- "Since the marks are directly entered in the software, there are chances of errors. I would prefer to print the student's marks and verify them online to avoid errors. I can't do it because I don't have printer"

- ***External distraction***. Teachers face a lot of external distractions because of noise created by neighbours, pets, vehicles and visitors. Continuity and efficiency get affected during lecture preparation and delivery.

Response on online teaching.

- "Continuity of lecture is interrupted by visitors"
- "Disturbance in teaching is caused due to barking of my dog"
- "My neighbour keeps on playing loud music"

Response on online assessments. Because of limited space no matter which platform teachers use, the external distraction is evident in their home environment setting which breaks their concentration, and the chances of error increase during assessment and evaluation.

- "For me, evaluation requires concentration which is broken by frequent visits"
- "Television, music, machine noise disrupts my concentration and adversely impact evaluation"

- ***Family interference***. Teachers face a lot of disturbance because of limited space in the house. There is a lot of distraction from children, conversation between family members, family members approaching for personal work, etc. It results in unwelcomed breakages and teaching is hampered.

Response on online teaching.

- "My family do not take online classes seriously and keep coming with household work during the session"
- "My daughter interrupts during the class; she is too young to understand the online teaching"
- "My son makes lot of noise while playing video games"

Response on online assessments. Under the home environment setting, teachers reported that the family does not understand the gravity of the online assessments. Regular interruption at home breaks the continuity and results in faulty assessments and evaluation.

- "Evaluation requires reading, understanding, evaluating and deducing, but continuous discussion at home breaks the continuity and creates frustration"
- "I miss the assessment evaluation deadlines as household work keeps coming up"

➢ **FINDINGS OF OBJECTIVES 02:**

- *To find out the type of supports were provided by their universities in online teaching and assessments*

A teacher requires institutional support for successful online teaching and assessment. Universities can support them by providing institutional-supported technologies, proper training, technical support and clear directions for successful online teaching and assessments.

- ***Budget for institutional-supported technologies***. The university should spend money on obtaining a license for institutional-supported technologies. Teachers who were having access to Zoom, Moodle and Google Meet were able to teach online effectively as compared to the open-source users.

Response on online teaching.

- "We are asked to teach online but there are no institutional-supported technologies platforms, so we use open source which lacks effectiveness".
- "My organization has provided me with Zoom which has facilities to engage the students through discussion forum".
- "I did not face any problems in teaching, teaching with Zoom is easy. I have uploaded all lectures and study materials"

Response on online assessments. Teachers who were using open-sources for assessment reported faced many problems and limitations. Institutionally supported technology made the process easy for teachers as they could do multiple online assignments and evaluations easily.

- "The open-source online platform doesn't have assessment facilities, so I ask students to send assignments on e-mail".
- "I have limited options to assess the students. I ask them to submit the assignment on Google drive".

- "Some open-source software allows assessment, but ask for payment to download grade reports, so I don't found them worth".
- "I conduct assessment on LMS by giving an online quiz, it automatically evaluates and gives marks immediately".
- "I ask students to submit online assignments on LMS by giving them a timeline for online submission".

❖ ***Lack of training.***

Response on online teaching. The teacher needs training in conducting online teaching. Teachers were not well equipped and trained in online teaching. Many universities instructed teachers to teach online without any training on open-sources of software.
"I want to teach online by using Zoom, but I don't understand how to use this platform for teaching".
"I am not trained in online teaching. Many times I found difficult to manage the camera, microphone and teaching together on Zoom".
"My institute was already using Moodle for in normal teaching, so I didn't found any difficulty in teaching from home".
Response on online assessments. Teachers were not aware of online assessment platforms for evaluation and were not well equipped and trained to do online assessments, only a few teachers who were already trained on institutionally supported technology found it easy.
"I have some idea about LMS free software for the online quiz, but I am not trained with it. I may so error in designing quiz".
"I am well versed with Zoom, so during the lockdown, I was able to use it for assessment without any problem".

❖ ***Lack of technical support.***

Response on online teaching. Teachers face technical issues such as connectivity and software's, and they require technical support for online teaching, which is not available at home. An institution using institutional-supported technologies had direct technical support. Their technical issues were resolved by the technical department and the teaching was not hindered, however, the same was not true for teaching through open source as there was no direct support and teaching was taking place on trial and error method.
"Many times I am unable to connect my laptop with ZOOM and I am unable to identify the problem".
"I found taking online classes is a challenge; there are so many technical things to be taken care".
"I am a beginner in technology; don't know how to overcome technical failure. Sometimes I get disconnected and then can't get connected again".
"My organization uses the Zoom as the learning management system (LMS) and had made me well acquainted with it, so I can manage the technical issues easily"
"My university technical department staff is always available online to deal with technical difficulty".
Response on online assessments. Institute using institutional-supported technologies were having many options for the assessments. If teachers face any issues, technical assistance was provided without any time lag, so the sanity of the evaluation was maintained. Though assessments through open sources were not having any direct technical support and faced and teachers found it difficult to evaluate and time-consuming process.
"Once I was entering the marks, the laptop, it got hanged, when I restarted the laptop all data was

lost. I couldn't ask for any help".
"I have faced issues in downloading the assessment file and opening them. Sometimes the file format is not supported. I have to look for technical support as I am not aware how to change it".
"Assessing students on Zoom platform is easy and in case if I face any problem, my institute technical department provided support".

❖ ***Lack of clarity and direction.***

Response on online teaching. Institutions using institutional-supported technologies have communicated the structure and strategy to implement the online classes time-table.
On the other hand, institutions not having any licensed platform and dependent on open software, they did not have any clarity about the process to be followed, a lot of confusion prevailed in that case.
"I have been asked to teach online, but without any information how it is to be done. No clarity was given about the platform to be used for online teaching"
"I was compelled to teach online, but I don't know how to do it. Simply sending notes on e-mail or WhatsApp is also online teaching".
"My Head of the Department has not shared any time table neither any details were given. I am not clear what, when, and how should I do the teaching. I keep on sharing YouTube links with my students where lectures recorded by other faculties"
"Head of the Department has shared the time-table for conducting sessions on Zoom We have been conducting sessions accordingly without any confusion"
"We are required to update all details on Zoom so the Head of the Department can check the progress".
Response on online assessments. Teachers' dependent on open-source software lack clarity and direction and no uniform assessment pattern was adopted by the institution.
Teachers were doing it as per the convenience without any clear instruction. Institution supported technologies have become a boon during this time of crisis Teachers had clarity and direction from the institution about the type of assessment to be conducted with proper examination schedule.
"I am asked to evaluate the students but no clarity and direction is given on how it has to be done".
"I was not told which platform to be used for online assessment".
"I don't any have clear instructions on students assessment, whether we have to take the quiz, assignment, case study, etc.".
"Since my institute is using Zoom LMS's for internal evaluation, so we are continuing the same for external assessments".
"Clarity in the evaluation mechanism is provided by the Head of the Department. The rubrics are already uploaded on Moodle so I did not face any problem in assessment".

➢ **FINDINGS OF OBJECTIVES 03:**

- *To Provide Suggestions to conduct technology-driven education through the LMS*

Every dark cloud comes with a silver lining, the lockdown has disturbed the education sector but HEIs have an option to start a new curriculum by integrating traditional and online learning. Sri Lanka should establish a good infrastructure for online education following some of the advanced countries. All higher education institutes now are aware of the importance of technology and should take serious measures to conduct technology-driven education through the LMS. This study offers the following suggestions:

- ***Higher education institutions' planning***

The education sector in Sri Lanka should realize the importance of technology and take up severe measures to implement the technology-driven teaching sessions and assessment. HEI needs to revise its existing policy frameworks by designing new strategies and technical structures to assist their teachers for successfully embracing the EdTech for dealing with any crisis in the future. This study advocates that HEIs should use technology in all aspects, beginning with attendance, delivery, assignments, examinations, devices, software, internet connectivity and power backup, evaluations and results.

- ***Teachers' self-development***

It is evident that the partnership between technology and education is going to stay forever. Based on this study, the teachers will be able to identify the problems they will face while conducting online classes and assessments. They will be able to equip themselves better and can strategies their efforts by enrolling in those courses which provide training for conducting online teaching and assessment. Teachers need to regularly update their technical knowledge. HEIs can also support their teachers by providing training related to technology and education and providing funds for enrolling in courses that focus on online teaching perspectives.

- ***Government support***

Non availability of technical infrastructure and irregular interrupted internet connectivity all across Sri Lanka is the biggest challenge in front of the HEIs and teachers. A collaboration of government, technology companies and higher education institutes in the mode of public, private companies, higher education institutes partnership can solve the problem of technical infrastructure. Investing in institutional-supported technologies is a costly venture for HEIs, Government financial support will reduce the burden on the institution and motivate them to adopt technology online teaching and assessments.

- ***Promoting sustainable development***

HEIs can divide the courses into conventional teaching and online teaching, it will help in inculcating the technology into the classrooms. The development of course-specific online teaching and assessment plans is a gateway for the strategic execution of technology in the classroom. Online teaching and assessment will reduce paper usage and will contribute to environmental sustainability; it will increase digital literacy among teachers and students which will increase their exposure and learning and making them more employable for the digital world-leading thereby contributing to social sustainability. All these efforts will contribute to economic sustainability by reducing unemployment and contributing to economic growth and development. All these activities will also help in achieving the sustainable development goals of Sri Lanka.

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 pandemic has helped the education system into a tech-savvy path. Though it is evident that online classes and assessments cannot substitute conventional mode of teaching but the role of technology and its extensive use in imparting education cannot be neglected.

The paper clearly projects the importance of institutional support technologies in online teaching and assessment. To absorb technology-driven teaching in real or virtual, it is required to have an exclusive department devoted to developing the technological infrastructure of the institution. Training teachers in LMSs and making it mandatory for all educational purposes will put the institute, teachers and students in a separate league. The future of education seems to be

technology-driven and Sri Lanka has to equip itself for it, the paper identifies the huge gap that exists between the open-source versus institutional- supported technologies and its implication in online teaching and assessments. HEIs are directed to dedicate a budget for online EdTechs (such as LMS, Moodle, Microsoft teams, Google Suite and so on). The policy also emphasizes to promote teaching through advanced technological tools such as artificial intelligence, bigdata, virtual reality, 3D printing and robotics, develop technical infrastructure and support the advanced teaching and learning mechanism., however, HEIs can initiate to transform the educational ecosystem by adopting online-based teaching and learning.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study can be helpful to the regulatory authorities and employers of HEIs who are planning to adopt online teaching and assessment as a regular activity in the near future. The identified barriers can be considered in advance and a roadmap can be designed for smooth execution of online teaching and assessment. For example, in the press release April 2020 by the Sri Lankan government, in view of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown, University Grants Commission issued guidelines on examinations and academic calendar. The insights gained on the barriers faced by the lecturers during an online assessment can be considered by HEIs to plan their examination systematically. Once the HEIs get back to the new normal, teachers can be trained to deal with these barriers for the smooth execution of online teaching and assessment.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE SCOPE

This research has highlighted the issues and challenges faced by teachers' in online teaching during a COVID-19 in Sri Lanka. The qualitative research methodology has been used in this research. These techniques have some limitations such as there is a possibility that participants might have not disclosed their true intentions and rather have responded in a more socially acceptable and desirable way during the interview. Though, we ensured all the steps suggest by Smith and Osborn (2008) have been meticulously followed. In spite of ensuring objectivity in each and every step in the present study, it is a possibility that other researchers' perspectives may vary and they might draw different themes and carve out varied categories and draw different conclusions. Furthermore, the study has been conducted amongst academic staff/professionals and university students from the education sector; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the professionals of other fields. The present study has involved the teachers working in state universities of Sri Lanka. In the future, a similar kind of study can be replicated and the findings can be extended to large samples in other states or countries. The research can be extended by the triangulation approach using different techniques and methods to get more valid and reliable results.

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