Online Education & School Students: A Reality Check

Priti Verma, Anjali Trivedi

Abstract: Online Education, a technology based modern tool of education, a class without wall and boundary; with a trail of advantages associated with it: Easy availability, global accessibility, affordable cost, flexibility of time, and green examination system; has gained popularity all over the world. In India, its use is being encouraged in the field of Higher Education, and the results appear to be positive. However, at Secondary School level, it is still at nascent stage. The objective of the paper is to find out whether in the secondary schools, the teachers, students and Parents are aware of the on line courses and are they willing to learn through online tuitions. This paper analyses the views of the students, parents and teachers regarding their ICT usage and whether they consider online education or courses as an ideal option for learning. The paper further discusses the acceptance and popularity of online education amongst the students, teachers & the parents. The findings show that on line education is not popular amongst the school going children, their parents as well as the teachers .It is almost the last choice for them. This questions the awareness of importance of online education among the concerned stakeholders.

Key words: Online courses, Digitization, Modern methods of teaching/Learning, ICT usage.

I. INTRODUCTION:

The roots of the Indian education system go back to the ancient *vedic* age where education was imparted to the members of the royal families. The *Gurukul* system was prevalent during that period in which the *shishya* (students) were supposed to renounce the luxuries of home and stay with the *Guru* (teacher) till the completion of education. Various subjects including warfare, moral values, culture etc. were taught to the students. As the time passed, we moved from one era to another, each era brought with itself new ideas, which became the base for future innovations. The good practices in the field of education were carried forward with modifications where as the unnecessary ones were left behind. Though the historians witnessed many changes in the field of education but one feature that remained constant was the relation between the students and teachers.

The teachers always held the highest position in the society and were equally respected by the students as well as parents. Slowly education became available to all who wanted to learn, no discrimination of any sorts was made for the ones willing to gain knowledge. In the current scenario the government is providing free and compulsory education to all the children till the elementary level.

With the introduction of technology various innovative techniques of teaching and learning have found its way in the field of education. One such innovation is the method of learning through online courses. Initially it was thought that online courses are only for the use of students doing distance-learning courses, but gradually it started becoming popular amongst the regular students as a tutoring application. A decade ago the students opted for Private or group tuitions as a supplementary form of education, but by the introduction of various online learning apps like; Byju's, Khan academy, Educom, Tata edge etc. the internet became a huge market place for the learners.

Nowadays, not only the students but the teachers are also benefitting out of online courses, there are many online platform for tutors. These platforms are excellent to share knowledge. Many websites promote online teaching and are willing to pay teachers to upload courses/tutorials on their websites. The teachers can post offline/live video sessions and connect to students all over the world. This gives them a great opportunity to explore themselves as teachers. Being an online tutor is slowly becoming a bigger deal because people have started understanding the value of online learning. A teacher teaches according to their convenience and time from his/her own place and a student can learn at a time that suits him/her from his/her home. Thus the time & hassle of commuting is saved. A computer with a well-connected Wi-Fi is the only thing required by the teacher and the learner.

II. ONLINE EDUCATION HAS ITS OWN ADVANTAGES:

- Taking tutoring online enables the student to be flexible in the learning process and it personalizes their learning pace and learning goals.
- This makes learning twice as much fun, because the handling of digital media is varied for students.
- Online tutoring is very effective and inexpensive.
- Students would rather use online communications for their problems, rather than visiting a faculty in person.
- Students find great comfort in generating email responses rather than meeting in real life.
- Students search for and find a tutor online because they feel intimidated, nervous or mildly embarrassed in direct class-based tutoring.

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- They don't need to hesitate to declare straight answers when they don't understand a few things under discussion.
- Online tutoring gives a vast opportunity to the teachers also. They can broadcast live or recorded tutorials online to a bigger audience.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Turrentine & Macdonald (2006), The Researcher focuses the study on the origin of on line tutorials and discusses at length the features of the same. The online tutoring service was originally conceived as a means to provide assistance for students enrolled in distance learning classes.

The researcher further discusses the differences between the online teaching environment & the face-to-face teaching environment. The major difference according to them is, " the effect of tone and word usage, in the online environment, without the assistance of body language or eye contact, the tone comes across much stronger."

The researchers conclude that, the evolution of online tutoring has showed us that success may not depend so much upon the tool selected, but on the development of an appropriate culture for online tutoring, an understanding of the process and parameters involved.

Anna Sun and Xiufang Chen (2016): The researchers based their study on the findings that, effective online instruction is dependent upon:

- A course content that is well designed.
- Motivational interaction between the teachers and learners.
- Knowledgeable & efficient teachers.
- Creation of an online learning community.
- Dynamic technology.

The research methodology for this study was to review published studies and research on online teaching and learning. The terms online learning, online teaching, online education, online instruction, and online courses are used interchangeably throughout the article. The focus was on:

- How online education evolved?
- What are the evidence-based effective practices in online teaching?
- What are the evidence-based effective practices in online learning?

The researchers pointed out that teacher's roles in online education have not been extensively defined. It was emphasized that the crucial role of teachers was in "facilitating discussion, providing direct instruction, and giving feedback to students"

The researchers concluded by saying that online education is a growing trend, and more and more institutions may eventually be offering more and more online courses to an increasing number of students. Therefore, "future studies should be designed to obtain students' perspectives, especially those who are new to computer- based learning."

In addition, the researchers raised several serious questions for future research, such as investigating whether an online learning community had any direct impact on student's learning outcomes.

McKay, McGinnis, Fowler, Sae Kleriga, Guaracha Chow, Aldredge (2019) According to the authors "the goal of online tutoring is to create a virtual tutoring environment for students that emulates a face-to-face experience which can help a student achieve success in a given class". The

researchers have analyzed the importance of online learning and highlighted that*:*

- Online tutoring provides multiple developmental opportunities for all students.
- Online tutoring includes the organization of information, development of ideas and citation of sources.
- Online tutoring can also create opportunities to electronically document student's prior knowledge, areas of difficulty, and progression of learning.

The researchers concluded that to help students achieve their goals, programs and services must be aligned with system wide initiatives, informed by data driven pedagogy, and assessed regularly to ensure student learning and achievement. As research continues to grow in the field on online education, so too should programs and their development of services aimed at supporting students both inside and outside of the classroom.

M.Raj (2012): The researcher talks in detail about the importance of science and technology at secondary school level. The author is of the view that technology is very important because it is being used in all fields of life including education. The system of education which happens to be the most important factor of development is under increasing pressure to use new technologies to prepare our future generations for the knowledge and skills they will need in future years. Our educational system is making efforts to employ a variety of technology tools into all areas such as academic, administrative and research. Use of mobile phones, televisions, computers, Internet and machines, all are included in our day-to-day life. In fact, we are getting dependent on technology in our instructions, communication, transportation, information surfing, entertainment and for all kinds of necessities of life.

The author further adds that, " the teachers need to adjust their teaching techniques to follow those that involve the transfer of pedagogy from the traditional approach to electronic (entirely online) or computer assisted classroom (courses supported in any way by computer technology) so that they can satisfy modern students who might otherwise face problems of adapting to the requirements of the new information age."

Zhan, S; Bray, TM; Wang, D; Lykins, CR; Kwo, OWY (2013): This paper examines the perceptions of the effectiveness of private supplementary tutoring relative to mainstream schooling in Hong Kong. The researchers are of the view that many students are in favor of private tuitions in comparison to the regular classes in schools.

According to the researchers, the operations of the parallel sector of private tutoring have significant implications for the nature of schooling, and therefore need to be considered by teachers and school administrators. The researchers have focused their study on:

- Relationships between private tutoring and mainstream schooling.
- The effectiveness of private tutoring.
- One-on-one tutoring.
- Small-batch tutoring.
- Lecture-type tutoring, either live or recorded.
- Online tutoring.

The Researchers conclude that, parents play an important role in student's schooling choices, especially when students are young. This finding suggests that pushing children into tutoring may not be an effective way to improve school and examination performance, or to improve broader study habits. The paper also highlighted student's comparisons of teachers and tutors, it may be disquieting to see that students consider their tutors to be more knowledgeable and inspiring.

When comparing teachers and tutors, many students complained in interviews about lack of support from teachers in providing examination skills, and appreciated tutors' roles of helping them with learning difficulties and facilitating examination preparation. The study suggests that teachers and school administrators could usefully pay more attention to the students' perceptions and the reasons why large numbers seek tutoring despite the existence of a well-funded public education system.

Dikshit, Garg, Panda (2013) The main objective of this study was to assess the pedagogic effectiveness of three modes of learning:

- A self-instructional unit − print, with face-to-face tutorial support.
- An interactive multimedia CD-ROM.
- An interactive multimedia on the web with online support.

The researchers assessed in terms of achievement scores and responses to various learning activities (so as to advise open universities and dual mode conventional universities on future developmental directions for development of media and technology). An earlier descriptive study conducted by one of the author formed the basis for designing the self-learning unit and three types of learning modes was used for experimental research in this study.

This study found that, in general, instructional content provided through interactive multimedia CD-ROM for self-learning was more effective than printed module and online learning. Those who studied entirely through online pointed out that they observed that web based learning was more effective than face-to-face for the content & for discussion. Apart from that content pre-test, induction to study, self assessment questions and activities, objectives and study guide, summary, and content post-test were other features which were highlighted.

The results of this study suggest that adoption of a blended learning design strategy where students could be provided learning modules through interactive multimedia CD- ROM, and supported by printed booklets, and discussion forums and activities through World Wide Web will be more beneficial. Occasional face-to-face support for discussion and clarification of doubts is also a desired activity.

IV.   LIMITATIONS OF LITERATURE REVIEW:

The researchers have at length talked about the benefits & effectiveness of online tutorials, but certain gaps have been found in their analysis:

The research work by *Turrentine & Macdonald (2006)*, discusses the origin of online education but lacks the responses of the direct users of the facility i.e. the students. The preference of the students has to be taken into consideration. Similarly the research work by *Zhan, S; Bray, TM; Wang, D; Lykins, CR; Kwo, OWY (2013)* examines the success of private and online tuitions in comparison to the education imparted in school, it also mentions that the students under the pressure of parents take up online courses or private tuitions. This analysis cannot be universalized; the preference of students and parents both has to be analyzed*.*

The research work by *Anna Sun and Xiufang Chen (2016)*is based on secondary data and previous research work. The researchers talk about the origin & effectiveness of online courses but have not taken the views of either the students or the teachers.

The research conducted by *Dikshit, Garg, Panda (2013)* discusses the comparison between face-to-face teachings versus multimedia teaching. The research lacks quantitative analysis. Further the analysis seems to be more appropriate for the students at the university level.

The research work by *M. Raj (2013)* is concentrating more on the scope of online courses on the subjects of science & technology. This research too lacks quantitative analysis.

The current research paper would try to fill in the gaps of the previously done research work by:

- Using Primary data.
- Applying Quantitative analysis.
- Analyzing the views of Students, Parents & teachers.
- Focusing the research on school going students.

V.   OBJECTIVE*:*

The main objective is to find out whether the teachers, students and Parents are aware of the on line courses and are they willing to learn through online tuitions.

VI.   HYPOTHESES*:*

H_{01} : Online tutorials is a very popular mode of learning amongst school going   students.
H_{02} : Teachers prefer to upgrade their skill and knowledge through online tutorials.
H_{03} : Parents encourage children to study through online tutorials at home.

VII.   METHODOLOGY & DATA COLLECTION:

The survey conducted used quantitative analysis, which included students from both private as well as government schools. The sample students were from two different categories of schools from the NCR. The students belonged to senior secondary level i.e. classes XI-XII. There were two categories of school namely:
Group: A (Private: CBSE)
Group: B (Government: CBSE)
7.1Questionnaire:
A simple structured questionnaire consisting of 5 target questions was provided to the students, parents and teachers. The first four questions in all the three questionnaires had used dichotomous scaling whereas nominal scaling was used for the last question.
7.2Sampling & Sample size:
Random stratified sampling was used. The sample size for the students was 426, that for the teachers was 123 & finally for the parents was 79.

In total 450, student questionnaires were distributed in each category of school, 426 valid questionnaires were included in the analysis.

For the teachers 125 questionnaires were distributed and 123 valid questionnaires were included in the analysis.

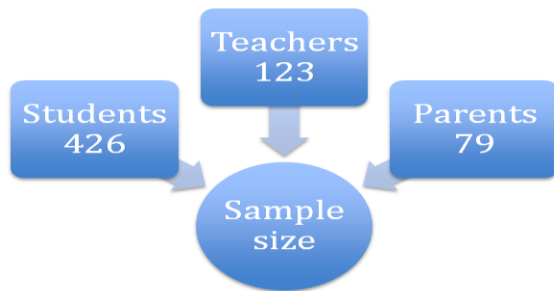For the Parents 100 questionnaires were distributed and 79 valid questionnaires were included in the analysis.

Figure 1: Sample Size

7.3 Scaling:

Dichotomous & Nominal scale was used.

VIII.   SURVEY

8.1 Students Survey:

A brief questionnaire consisting of 5 questions was handed over to the students and their views were noted.

I. In the first question the students were asked whether they had access to computer at home?

Most of the students almost 340 out of 426 i.e. 80% said "yes" they had a computer at home.

2. In the second question students were asked whether they had access to M-Learning?

Almost 324 i.e. 76% students said "yes" they had excess to mobile learning but they confessed that usually they used it for "Google search" & not any learning app.

3. In the third question the students were asked whether they were on any social networking site?

Almost 389 students out of 426 i.e. 91% students said they were active on social networking site either on computer or through mobile.

4. In the fourth question the students were asked were they doing online shopping?

Maximum number of students said "No" almost 312 out of 426 (73%) shared that their parents managed the shopping online or otherwise.
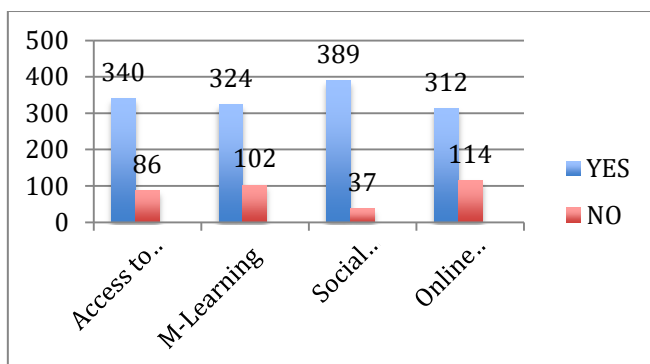

Figure: 2   Student's Analysis

5. In the last question the students were asked to choose their most preferred way of Studying at home, the choices given to them were:

Self Study
On line Tutorials
Private Tuitions
Group Tuitions
Under Parents Guidance.

Self-study: 264 students out of 426 i.e. almost 62%, students chose the method of self study at home. Studies at the school are good enough for them & a mere revision of the same at home satisfies them.

Private Tuition: This was the second most popular option chosen by the students. 82 students preferred private tuition as the best method to study at home. In private tuitions a tutor visits the students house & teaches mostly on an hourly basis in the subject desired by the student. Individual attention is given to the student.

Group Tuition: 75 out of 426 students preferred Group tuitions as the best option to study at home. Coaching institutes are a fast growing & popular medium of parallel studies. The students are taught in batches. Coaching institutes cater to all schools so the students are from different schools, they get an opportunity to exchange new ideas, concepts & method of learning.

Parents Guidance: 42 out of 426 chose the option of studying under Parents' guidance. It is a very small number & not very practical one as nowadays, in most of the households both the parents are working . Supervision is possible but teaching regularly is not practical. However, a small number of students do benefit out of this option.

On line tutorials : The lowest ranking was given to this option, only 18 students chose the option of on line tutorials as a preferred way of studying at home. It can be assumed that the students at school level are still supervised by parents at home. The students are considered young enough to have on line coaching when lots of other options are available. With the gaining popularity of on line knowledge it can be assumed that this option is more popular in the higher education at the university level.
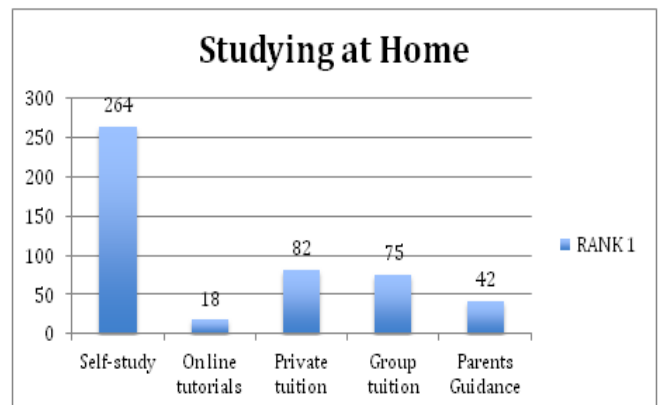

Figure: 3 Student's Response

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8.2 Teachers Survey:

The teachers too were handed over a similar format questionnaire comprising of 5 basic questions.

1. In the first question teachers were asked whether they had access to ICT equipment while teaching in school?

Almost 82% teachers said "yes" i.e. (102 teachers) they had access to ICT equipment in school, some teachers also shared that they carried their personal equipment like laptop or other teaching aid to the school.

2. The teachers were asked whether the school in which they were teaching had
a School website?

Half the number of teachers (64) except from the government school said "yes" their school had a website. The teachers from the government school shared they did not have an exclusive official website but the details of the school were shared under a government website by the education department.

3. In the third question teachers were asked whether they interacted with parents online?

Almost 65% of teachers said they actively interacted with the parents online.

4. In the fourth question the teachers were asked whether they regularly updated the assignments and other important activities for the students on the school website?

Only 38% of teachers said "yes" they regularly updated the assignments of their subject.
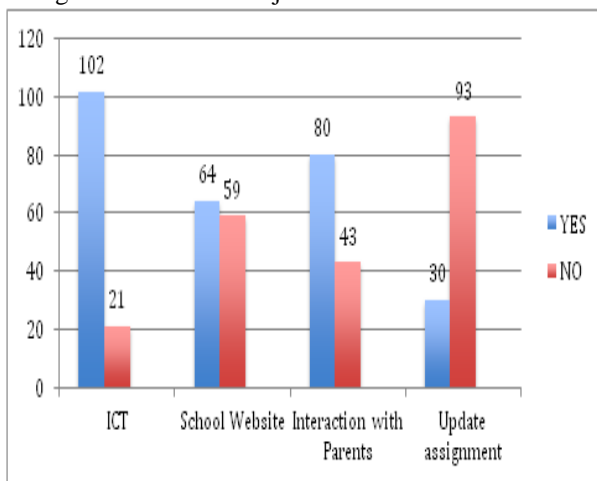

Figure: 4 Teacher's Analysis

5. The teachers were finally asked which was their preferred option to upgrade their skill & knowledge?
   On job training by experts
   Workshops to learn new teaching methods
   Online courses
   Free time for self-study

Maximum number of teachers opted for the choice : **Workshop to learn new
teaching methods** . Their school Management provided them with the facility of
learning through workshops. It is very essential for the teachers to be aware of the
changes in the teaching style & the use of new audio visual aids in the market.
The second option, which was chosen by the teachers, was the **on job training by**

experts.. The teachers are benefited out of it , sometimes the training is outdoor or in other schools which gives them an exposure to different environment.
According to the new education policies it has become mandatory for the schools to provide some training programs to the teachers.
The other options given to the teachers were of **On line Courses & Free Time for
Self Study**, not many teachers chose this option as their school did not provide them
with these facilities. Teaching job is quite time consuming , other than teaching during the working hours the teachers are involved in other activities. The teachers hardly get time during the school hours to learn something new through self study.
The situation in the government school is all the more demanding where the teachers are involved not only in teaching but also various social & political activities like election duties, Campaigning, health awareness programs e.g. Polio drops, importance of hygiene, & yet other activities like mid day meals, adult education etc.
As very less number of teachers opted for the provision of on line courses by the
School Management it can be assumed that it is a personal choice for the teachers to
pick up such courses to upgrade their knowledge. Much depends on the personality & capability of the teachers whether they are inclined towards learning some thing new or are they stuck up & comfortable in the traditional way of teaching.
However if it is beneficial even the school Management should provide such on line
Programs for the teachers & even sponsor them in some specific cases. It will only
raise the level of teaching standard & will be good for the reputation of the school as
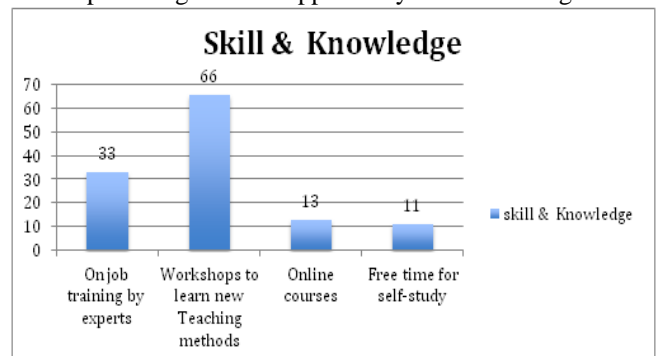well as provide growth & opportunity to the teaching staff.

Figure: 5 Teacher's Response

8.3 Parents Survey:

A questionnaire was prepared for the parents as well. It also consisted of 5 questions.

1. In the first question the parents were asked whether they had a computer at home?
   Maximum number of parents almost 78% said "yes" they had access to computer at home.

2. In the second question the Parents were asked did they regularly visit the school website for activity or curriculum updates?

   Almost 63% said they regularly checked the school website for updates. Others confessed they checked the site but not on a daily basis.

3. In the third question the parents were asked were they aware of online education?

   Nearly 80% of Parents said " yes" they were aware of online education.

4. In the fourth question the parents were asked whether they monitored their children's activities on Internet?

   Maximum number of parents almost 78% said "yes" they monitored their children's activities on internet.
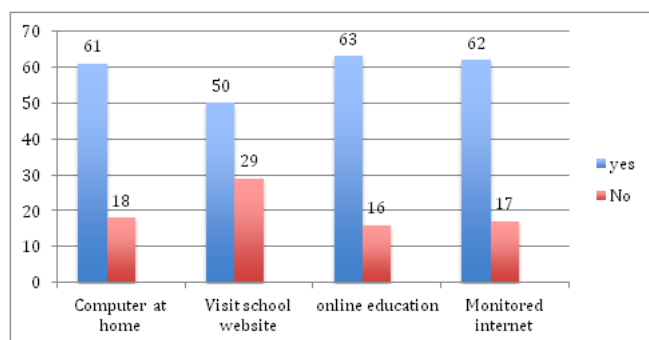

Figure 6: Parent's Analysis

5. In the final question the Parents were asked how would they prefer their child to
   study at home?
   Under Parent's guidance
   Self-study
   Private tuitions
   On line tutorials
   Group tuitions

Maximum number of Parents chose the option of **Self Study** at home. The children studying on their own are more responsible. By learning on their own the concept is much clearer. They just have to be attentive in class & revise the same at home. Self study develops a habit of reading amongst the students. The students realize, which is their weak subject which requires lot of time, they set their own time table & likewise set time for their strong & weak subjects.

The second preference was given to the study **Under Parents Guidance**. Here again self study is involved but under Parents Supervision. The students require help from the Parents and are more comfortable learning from them rather than any external source. The constraints can be in the form of time & knowledge.

The Third preference was given to **Private Tuitions**. A very popular method of being taught in which a qualified tutor visits the home & charges mostly on hourly basis. Home tuitions though fall a bit expensive but still are preferred by the Parents, as the child is taught in the safety & security of home & spares the child of commuting problems. Personal attention is given to the student.

The fourth preference was given to **Group Tuitions**. In a Group Tuitions students are taught in batches . It is economical as compared to Private Tuition. Many students like to study in a group. Exchange of ideas takes place.

Competition to perform better builds up amongst the students.

Lastly, the Parents chose **On-Line Tutorials** as their Option. Very less number of

Parents were in favor of this option. It is surprising to notice that when the country is

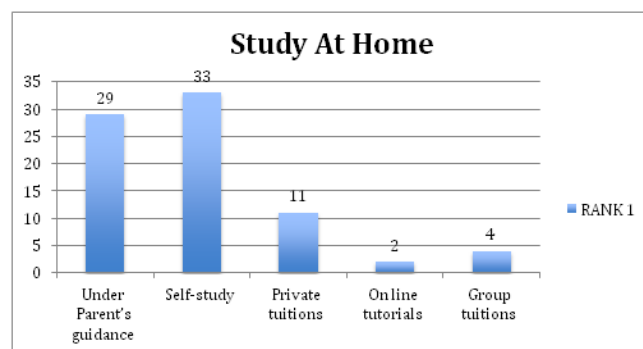moving towards Digitization not many are keen towards on line courses.

Figure: 7 Parent's Response

IX. RESULT ANALYSIS/SUGGESTIONS:

In the above survey we can clearly see that on line education is not popular amongst the school going children, their parents as well as the teachers .It is almost the last choice for them. This definitely questions the awareness and importance of online education.

Online courses might be popular amongst the students of higher education but the school going students use Internet for information and entertainment only, and are not encouraged to take online classes, as neither the students nor the parents are very open to the idea. Thus, the online way of learning, though very popular in western countries , still has to find its foothold in the Indian Education System.

The teachers too during the survey were not very enthusiastic about taking on line learning to upgrade their skill & knowledge, rather, they were happy with the traditional mode of workshops being organized by the school management to enhance their knowledge.

X. CONCLUSION:

Online classes and tutorials are bound to progress further in coming years in all spheres, especially in the field of Education.The parallel form of education like the coaching institutes though boast of a very high percent of placement in reputed & top institutes yet the major drawback of these institutes is that they are very expensive and very tiring for the students. Not all students are able to afford the hefty fees charged by such institutes. Neither are some students able to take up so much stress that they first finish the school hours and then struggle in the institutes for long hours. It is only an example of the scope of online classes. The students at the comfort of their home and at a convenient time can learn their lessons. Endless repetitions, online worksheets, immediate answer to the queries at any hour are the major advantages of online courses.

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The only thing required is the computer and a good network connectivity.

The parents have to encourage the children to look at online course options. The teachers should also explore the option of online courses to upgrade their skill and knowledge. For the teachers the option of giving online tutorials is also a great option. It can bring both money and fame.

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