STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION BY INDIAN ARMED FORCES ON COVID-19 : A STUDY OF PRESS RELEASES DISBURSED BY DEFENCE PUBLIC RELATIONS, INDIA

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges for governments and organizations around the world, including the Indian Armed Forces. Effective communication has been recognized as a critical component of the response to the pandemic, with the potential to shape public perceptions of the government's actions and responses. In this study, we analyze the strategic communication employed by the Indian Armed Forces during the COVID-19 pandemic, using press releases from the Defence Public Relations in India. Specifically, we seek to identify the key communication strategies and tactics used by the Defence Public Relations in communicating the role played by the Indian Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence in supporting the Government of India's crisis management during covid times. The methodology involves a content analysis of press releases disbursed by DPR during the pandemic, using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Findings of study will shed light on the important role of strategic communication in projecting government's response to the pandemic, and provide insights into effective communication strategies of Indian Defence ministry and armed forces in case of non-war global military contingency.

Key Terms: Covid-19 Pandemic, Strategic communication, Defence Public Relations, Indian Ministry of Defence.

Background of the study

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching impacts on the global community, posing unprecedented challenges for governments, healthcare systems, and economies. In India, the pandemic has led to a range of responses from the government, including measures such as nationwide lockdowns, increased healthcare spending, and vaccination drives. The Indian Armed Forces, as an integral part of the government's response to the pandemic, have played a key role in managing the crisis.

Effective communication has been recognized as a critical component of the response to the pandemic, with the potential to shape public perceptions of the government's actions and responses. In this context, the Indian Armed Forces have relied heavily on their public relations strategies to communicate their role both domestically and internationally in the nation's response to the pandemic. The Defence Public Relations in India has been the primary channel for disseminating information about the Ministry of Defence and Indian Armed Forces' response to the pandemic to the public.

This study seeks to analyse the strategic communication employed by the Indian Armed Forces during the COVID-19 pandemic, using press releases from the Defence Public Relations in India.

Objectives of the study
1. To examine the press releases of Defence Public Relations in India and their role in strategic communication during the pandemic.
2. To identify themes and patterns emerging out of the DPR releases disbursed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Research questions
RQ1. What role did the Defence Public Relations in India play in facilitating the communication efforts during the pandemic?

RQ2. Were there any notable differences in communication strategies used by different branches of the Armed Forces and Departments under Indian Ministry of Defence during the pandemic?

Review of Literature
(Aslam et. al., 2020) discuss the framing of CPEC in press of India and China. (Yin et. al., 2020) aim to help in designing effective communication strategies to ensure information is delivered to the maximal number of users.

Kata Kunci :Kampanye Public Relations; Covid-19; Pemerintah Kota Bekasi ABSTRACT (Putri et. al., 2020) aim to find out the process of covid-19 prevention campaign conducted by bekasi city government based on the concept of LeondOstergaard campaign. Based on the review and analysis, the authors consider that (Radhakrishnan et. al., 2020) provide convincing evidence for efficacy of Favipiravir. Based on the review and analysis, the authors consider that (Radhakrishnan et. al., 2020) provide convincing evidence for the efficacy of favipiravir. The economic cost of it was estimated at USD 98 billion, while the social costs are still unknown.

(Debnath et. al., 2020) investigate how government formed reactive policies to fight coronavirus across its policy sectors. (Desai et. al., 2020) present a brief analysis of two preliminary case studies of specific social special-purpose funds in India.

(Choudhary, 2021) discuss the main challenges faced by J & K Police officials (In incharge Police posts, Station House Officers and newly recruited Sub-Inspectors) posted in the Jammu region, during COVID-19. (Kearns, 2021) consider links between language and everyday life, focussing on tropes that both invoke and engage with geographical dimensions. The subject of (Liew et. al., 2021) was to use social media data to capture close-to-real-time public perspectives and sentiments regarding COVID-19 vaccines, with the intention to

understand the key issues that have captured public attention, as well as the barriers and facilitators to successful COVID-19 vaccination. A randomized controlled trial showed that a serious game, "Escape COVID-19", was significantly more effective at improving the intention of adopting adequate infection prevention behavior than regular guidelines among long-term care facility employees (Suppan et. al., 2022). To determine time evolution characteristics of organizational collaboration in emergency information release (Liu et. al., 2022) take the response to COVID-19 from the central government of China as an example and conducted research based on social network analysis.

(Kalyanaraman et. al., 2020) describe the contact-tracing effort's place within the broader county health agency Incident Command System, as well as the capabilities needed, team composition, special considerations, and major lessons learned by county health officials. The primary objective of (Alhajji et. al., 2020) is to assess Saudis' attitudes towards COVID-19 preventive measures to guide future health communication content. The mathematical MoDel can help when these intervention measures are the best strategies for disease control as well as how they might affect the disease dynamics.

For ten European countries, the study shows a maximal correlation between driving mobility and disease dynamics with a time lag of days (Linka et. al., 2021). (Kohút et. al., 2021) examine those relatively stable predictors of well-being along with COVID-19 specific factors, such as the perception of health and economic threat, unrealistic optimism, lack of control, trust in government regulations, and the endorsement of conspiracy beliefs. Other influential work includes (Knight et. al., 2020), (Wallace et. al., 2020).

 (Narayana et. al., 2020) study knowledge, perception, and practices towards Covid-19 pandemic among general public of India: a cross-sectional online survey. A cross-sectional, online survey was performed among Indian residents who were aged above 15 years. (Samui et. al., 2020) propose a compartmental mathematical model to predict and control the transmission dynamics of COVID-19 pandemic in India with epidemic data up to April 30, 2020. The insights presented can help the authorities mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic effectively and help different agencies in the face of similar pandemics in the future (Jena et. al., 2021). (Wang et. al., 2021) compare the government policies and non-pharmaceutical interventions adopted by South Korea, Japan, India, and China in response to COVID-19 during 2020-2021.

(Bikkina et. al., 2021) enhance understanding of the working of governmental administrative systems amidst the emergency. This requires the central and state governments to collectively forge strategies to enable their reverse migration and smooth reintegration in the post-COVID economy. (Khan et. al., 2021) focus on the inter-state migrants in India and returnee migrants only from Gulf countries as they account for two-thirds of Indian migrants living abroad. (Harjule et. al., 2022) propose a novel modified epidemiological model that predicts the

epidemic's evolution over time in India. (Liu et. al., 2022) study what, where, when and how of Covid-19 patents landscape: a bibliometrics review. A comprehensive study of 3741 COVID-19-related patents (3,543 patent families) worldwide was conducted using the Derwent Innovation database.

(Segars et. al., 2001) provide a useful framework for assessing strategic communication through the CEO's letter and for operationalizing a key dependent variable in future studies related to strategic corporate communications through digital media. In a bid to combine the two major perspectives (strategic communications and strategic brand management) of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) (Tsai, 2005) propose a Holistic Consumer Experience Management framework. (Hallahan et. al., 2007) examine the nature of strategic communication, which is defined as the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission. The theoretical jihadist terrorist communication plan described shows that the jihadist terrorist knows how to apply strategic communication management techniques (Bockstette, 2008). (Hagenbach et. al., 2009) consider situations in which individuals want to choose an action close to others' actions as well as close to a payoff relevant state of nature with the ideal proximity to the common state varying across the agents. (Sandhu, 2009) study strategic communication: an institutional perspective. Institutional theory is no monolithic concept but covers different schools and camps.

(Meng et. al., 2013) investigate the role of leadership in facilitating strategic communication management and effective public relations practice by proposing a set of dimensions measuring corporate communication executives' perceptions on leadership. The field of strategic communication encompasses a burgeoning crisis communication literature that seeks to identify effective and ineffective crisis communication efforts. Strategic communication has identified an array of crisis response strategies and the factors that determine when these response options are effective or ineffective (Coombs, 2015). (Zerfass et. al., 2018) draw on a decade of research in strategic communication and especially on the contributions in this special issue to propose a new and more comprehensive definition of strategic communication. Other influential work includes (Holtzhausen et. al., 2014).

Gap in Research
The literature review of foreign and international publications revealed absolute absence of research work on armed forces' role in portraying the efforts of the Government of India, Ministry of Defence during Covid-19pandemic in crisis management through strategic communication.

Significance of the Study
The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical role of effective communication by the Indian Armed Forces, as an integral part of the government's response to the pandemicand

Defence Public Relations in India has been the primary channel for disseminating information about the Indian Armed Forces' response to the pandemic.

This study seeks to analyze the strategic communication employed by the Indian Armed Forces during the COVID-19 pandemic, using press releases from the Defence Public Relations in India. By examining the communication strategies employed by the Indian Armed Forces and assessing their effectiveness, the study hopes to shed light on the role of strategic communication in government's response to the pandemic.

The findings of this study will be of significant importance to various stakeholders, including policymakers, communication professionals, and the general public. Policymakers can use the insights from this study to improve their communication strategies during public health crises or emergencies. Communication professionals can learn from the Indian Armed Forces' communication strategies and apply them in their own communication efforts. Finally, the general public can gain a better understanding of the Indian Armed Forces' response to the pandemic and their communication efforts during this challenging time.

Methodology
The research methodology decided for this study was qualitative with thematic and Pattern Analysis.

Research Design
The research design for this study is descriptive.

Time Period of Study
February 2020 to February 2022

Data Collection
Data has been collected from the Government of India's Press Information Bureau (PIB) website from the Ministry of Defence section.

Sample Selection
A purposive sampling technique was used to select representative sample of press releases from the Defence Public Relations in India related to the Indian Armed Forces' communication efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample could be selected based on factors such as the date of release, the branch of the Indian Armed Forces, Departments under Ministry of Defence and the type of work done by the organisations individually or collective during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Data Compilation
Data was sifted to finally just keep the releases disbursed on COVID-19 communication by the Ministry of Defence, Government of India. Then they were listed under the Categories

Ministry of Defence, Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Airforce, Defence Research & Development Organisation, Ordnance Factories Board, Border Roads Organisation and Indian Coast Guard.

Stories were then coded for aim of the press release as per the contentdisbursed, under various categories. These areHumanitarian Assistance, Relief Supplies , Medical Support . International Cooperation, Aid to Civil Authorities, Evacuation and Covid R&D .

Data Analysis
The analysis will be identifying the key themes and patterns in the press releases related to the Indian Armed Forces' communication efforts during the pandemic. The analysis will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature, using techniques such as coding and frequency analysis.

Categories & their codes
Categories were divided into two parameters. One armed forces & other defence services and second content of releases disbursed.

Service wise coding
- Indian Navy ------IN
- Indian Air Force -----IAF
- Indian Army ------ IA
- Ministry of Defence -------MoD
- Indian Coast Guard ---- ICG
- Defence Research & Development Organisation ------ DRDO
- Border Roads Organisation ----- BRO
- Ordnance Factories Board ------ OFB

Content wise coding
- Humanitarian Assistance ----- Humas
- Relief Supplies ----- RelSup
- Medical Support ----- MedSup
- Evacuation ---- Evac
- Aid to Civil Authority ----- ATCA
- Covid Research & Development ---- Covid R&D
- International Cooperation ---- IntCoop

Results

Total releases disbursed: from 01 January 2020 to December 2021 were 186

Table 1: Servicewise distribution of press releases disbursed by DPR

Service/Department of Indian MoD	No. of Releases
MoD	55
IAF	19
IN	74
IA	9
DRDO	20
OFB	4
BRO	3
ICG	2
Total	186

Total numbers of press releases disbursed by DPR, MoD. Government of India in the period of study on the PIB website were 186.

Table 2: Month wise distribution of press releases disbursed by DPR

2020	MoD	IAF	IN	IA	DRDO	OFB	BRO	ICG	Total
January	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
February	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
March	6	3	4	3	1	1	1	0	19
April	12	7	10	2	8	2	2	0	43
May	9	0	17	0	2	0	0	1	29
June	1	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	15
July	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
August	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
September	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
October	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
December	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
2021									
January	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
February	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
March	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

April	9	2	3	2	2	0	0	0	18
May	9	4	18	2	2	0	0	0	35
June	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	1	7
July	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
August	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
September	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
October	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3 : Topic wise distribution of Releases Disbursed by DPR in COVID-19 times

Topic	No. of Releases
Humanitarian Assistance	44
Relief Supplies	21
Medical Support	36
International Cooperation	15
Aid to Civil Authority	16
Evacuation	31
Covid R&D	23
Total	186

Observations

- Ministry of Defence (MoD) started disbursing information through the DPR on the PIB website about its various roles in helping the government in its task of combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

- It disbursed information on the tasks undertaken by the various departments under MoD like DRDO, BRO, OFB and the Indian armed forces in helping civilian authorities while combating the onslaught of Covid-19 on India.

- Press releases disbursed during the period were on the tasks undertaken by Indian Air Force, Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guardin aiding medical support, evacuation of stranded Indians and foreign nationals, providing humanitarian assistance, getting relief supplies to India from friendly nations and transporting relief supplies to countries in the region., followed by the releases on statements made by the Ministers, bureaucrats and service officers on the involvement levels of MoD in fighting Covid-19.

- The information released was on the research, development and manufacturing medical necessities required to prevent spread of the disease, provide medical support, improving treatment facilities, creating quarantine facilities and expanding testing facilities.

- Statements by both Minister of Defence and Minister of State (Defence), service chiefs, organisation heads and PROs were released to the public on international cooperation to combat covid 19 in the form of talks, phone calls, meetings etc.
- Maximum news emanated from the Indian Navy, followed by MoD, then DRDO, in turn by IAF, then Indian Army, followed by OFB, BRO and lastly ICG.

Findings

1. There were patterns in which the news by MoD on Covid-19 was disbursed. These were frequency of news releases, topics covered, emphasis on safety measures, use of multimedia and collaboration with other agencies.
2. There were themes which emerged from the news disbursed by MoD on Covid-19. These were military involvement in pandemic response, relief and assistance, safety measures, international collaboration, innovation and technology, community engagement, medical aid to civilians and others.
3. Each force and organisation has its individual frequency, style and language ofcontent disbursement.

Discussion

Patterns visible

1A. First pattern was frequency of news which indicated that the MoD had increased the number of releases disbursed on Covid-19 to reflect on the response of MoD to the crisis.

1B. MoD releases also saw a pattern of focus on topics such as getting and giving medical aid, providing humanitarian assistance and support government's pandemic response effort.

1C. Another pattern which was visible was highlighting the safety measures like social distancing drive, use of sanitizers and masks , creating quarantine facilities and testing centres both for their own personnel and the public from the virus infection.

1D. Fourth pattern was the use of multimedia like pictures, videos, films and graphics to project the role of armed forces in pandemic response to the masses.

1E. Fifth pattern was Releases grew in numbers as the pandemic grew, lessened in numbers as the pandemic lessened .

1F. Focus on collaborations done to combat the pandemic both domestically and internationally was highlighted regularly.

Themes emerging
2A. First theme emerging from studying the data collected is Image building of India by DPR.It portrays Indian military's involvement in improving geo-political ties by providing

evacuation drives, relief supplies and medical support to neighbouring, smaller countries and also it's reputation within India.

2B. Second theme is Portrayal ofIndian Armed Forces as Goodwill Ambassadors accepted by vulnerable communities and countries when it comes to crisis management both within the country and abroad.

2C. Third theme is India as an Innovation & Technology Giant by projecting it's research and development, inventions and discoveries in Covid-19 fight along with getting patents and clearances.

2D. Fourth Theme is Aid to Civil Authority in projecting national preparedness and response.The military provided assistance to civilian authorities, including setting up field hospitals, training of medical staffs in both military and civil hospitals to combat the corona virus spread, recruiting manpower to fulfil the deficit, setting up quarantine facilities, creating Covid-19 testing centres and providing logistical support for medical supplies.

2E. Fifth theme is Crisis communication where the DPR has focussed on providing clear and concise information to the public during the pandemic, including updates on the situation and guidelines for preventing the spread of the virus. Community engagement is also a theme which comes up simultaneously with this and so does national preparedness.

Differences in communication strategies
3A. Indian Navy's and MoDsstrategic communication during the COVID-19 pandemic provides valuable lessons for other organizations that are seeking to communicate effectively in a crisiseven when the information is constantly changing and the public is anxious and fearful. It is important to be clear, consistent, and targeted in your communication efforts, focus on messages that are credible, trustworthy, written for both internal and international audience.

3B. DRDO and OFB along with the forces had well portrayed roles in communicating their research, innovation, development and manufacturing covid combat necessities which they did by communicating each development through DPR releases.

3C. Indian Army and Indian Air Force could have portrayed their roles in the pandemic better and more frequently, keeping in mind the evacuation and relief flights IAF undertook and aid to civil defence duties of Army throughout the geographical realms of the country. Also they should have used strong and clear communication about tasks successfully performed by different formations both operative and administrative, in combating the crisis created during the pandemic.

3D. ICG had role in Covid relief, maritime security and aid to civil authority but it did have a communication strategy of portraying itself as an asset to MoD. BRO too did not formulate a communication strategy to project its role both in infrastructure development and aid to civil authority.

Conclusion

The findings and discussions of the research study answered both the research questions, which have been explained above. The answer to RQ1 is that Defence Public Relations in India played many roles in facilitating the communication efforts during the pandemic.It is an Image Builder, Disseminator of accurate information, Crisis communicator, Perception manager, Coordinator of public health messaging, Internal communicator and manager of various stake holders.

The answer to RQ2 is that there were notable differences in communication strategies used by different branches of the armed forces and departments of the Indian ministry of defence during the pandemic. Indian Navy and MoD had pro-active communication strategy along with positive reinforcement. BRO, Indian Airforce and Indian Army had delayed and non-transparent communication strategy. DRDO and OFB had information dissemination with public appeal and transparency as their communication strategy.

Limitations

The limitations posed by this research study were that the Indian DPR also disbursed visuals in the form of pictures and videos but as the numbers were large , they couldn't be studied here as the numbers were many and could be another individual research project taken up another time.

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TEACHING PERFORMING ARTS ONLINE: A STUDY OF CERTIFICATE COURSE IN HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL MUSIC OF IGNOU

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Abstract

At present e-Learning, is considered as the most effective mode of learning in higher education. With its easy reach among the learners, this expanding alternative mode calls for ensuring and imparting a sound and qualitative education. It has surpassed the limitation of earlier distance learning modes and has successfully taken along the subjects with practical components too. IGNOU has become the first University in India to venture into teaching music through online mode. The present study is an attempt to look at the issues related to the quality dimensions of e-learning in the subject of Indian Music.

Keywords: e-Learning, Qualitative education, Covid 19, Music

Introduction

The advent of communication through Web based technology has transformed every field, including the area of higher education sector, which has undergone a sea change in the recent past while braving the COVID 19. Internationally, a majority of the institutions offering higher education are making strenuous efforts to revise their academic orientations and the course delivery strategies to suit the present need of the student community. It was also observed by several researchers that integration of the Information technology tools into higher education stream has made the process of teaching and learning more interesting and engaging. In this context, online learning mode has emerged as a major higher education option before the global student community in general and students of Indian Classical Music in particular. Music institutions, though operating privately in countries like America, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and various other developed countries have made efforts to re-adjust their strategies of imparting education in the light of the contemporary challenges. While advanced countries responded to these pressures of globalization rather more successfully with their vast resources, country like India is still in the process of designing strategies to re-adjust to the dynamic phase of global reforms in the formal education in the subject like music. In this context, it has been found that the student options are no longer constrained by boundaries, rather many keen western learners are finding an easier and affordable means of learning Indian Classical Music and, therefore, it is paving the way for the emergence of new internet-based borderless virtual education.

The Concept of e-Learning in the Context of Indian Classical Music

Music education involves active practical training apart from the study of theory which makes the learner understand how these two aspects interact to enhance the practice of music

as a discipline. Although the theoretical aspect comprises a lesser proportion of the discipline, the successful interaction between theory and practice is vital to the understanding of music, and, arguably, results in better performance of the art of music. Both theoretical and practical components are therefore important and complementary to music education. It is pertinent to mention here that Music departments at all levels of education worldwide are considerably small in general, for a number of reasons which are enlisted in the following-

1. Much of vocal and instrumental training is skill-based, geared towards developing proficiency in performance. Since pace for acquiring skills to sing or play instruments vary student to student, there is always a need for personal attention in teaching resulting in discouragement in admission of large number of student in one class. On the contrary, less quantity of students means less financial contribution from the students and more financial burden on the institution. So which is why even the colleges and institutions funded by the government have very small music departments in their institutions.

2. On one hand equipping the music rooms in an institute is quite expensive, while on the other hand the requirement of having personal instruments for the students, compel the students to purchase their own instruments which also further reduces the number of potential students.

3. Thirdly and most importantly, there are very few structured avenues of employment opening for the music students. Except for the teaching jobs in schools and colleges there are not many jobs for the average students of music. Talented extra ordinaries however become individual performers or join in media and film music industry.

So, in India, as in many other countries, access to music education is limited, with a considerable number of students interested in furthering their education for a lucrative salaried employment. However, effect of music in one's life cannot be ignored. One of the great things about music in general, is that music opens up a whole new world of experience that further enhances the mental and physical coordination. Music can provide an escape from everyday life or even it can serve as an alternative means of expressing one's own capabilities. Though most of academicians are of the opinion that all fine arts including music should be extracurricular activities, it is increasingly evident that there is a need for extension of music training to the many interested people who do not have opportunities to study the discipline at university level. So, for many, online learning comes as easy solution to this challenge. The above situation compels service providers to explore possibilities of conducting music instruction through the internet as a way of reaching more people.

The potential of e-Learning in music education

The key components of the e-Learning industry are content, technologies and services.

E-lessons are generally designed to guide students through information or help them perform specific tasks. Two distinct types of e-content have been identified, namely information-based and performance-based content. The former communicates information to the student, while the latter involves the building of a procedural skill in which the student is expected to increase proficiency. Both types of content are applicable to music education.

The theory of music is information-based, and includes such aspects as history of music, theory of music, technicalities of ragas and forms, ethnomusicology, the psychology and sociology of music, among many others. The application of e-Learning to information-based content greatly enhance the process of teaching and learning in this area, and provide a forum for students to interact widely with their peers and teachers through web based various discussion forums now available even on mobile phones.

The practical aspect of music forms the core aspect of the discipline, since music is essentially a performing art. The application of e-Learning to this aspect of music is hence very important, yet is also the more challenging of the two types of content. It is for this reason that, Universities do not wish to provide music education through e-learning. However, this constraint has been successfully overcome by traditional and famed Music practitioners. All the named and famed Indian music personalities today impart practical music training through internet-based environments. There are many private organizations too who are using LMS, you-tube, video – conferencing and virtual platforms to teach Indian Classical Music to the learners on one-to-one basis.

Developments in internet and multimedia technologies are the two key enablers of e-Learning. According to Rosenberg (2000), successful e-Learning depends on building a strategy that optimises the technology within an organisational culture that is ready and willing to use it. Various technologies, which are constantly improving, have been developed to facilitate e-Learning. The increasingly popular trend in e-Learning, particularly in higher education, is the creation of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), sometimes in combination with a Management Information System (MIS) to create a Managed Learning Environment in which all aspects of a course are handled through a consistent user interface standard throughout the institution. Virtual education refers to instruction in a learning environment where teacher and student are separated by time or space, or both, and the teacher provides course content through course management applications, the internet, multimedia resources and videoconferencing among other technologies. A virtual classroom is therefore a learning environment created in the virtual space. It improves access to advanced educational experiences by allowing learners and lecturers to participate in remote learning communities using personal computers. The quality and effectiveness of education is the process improved through the support of a collaborative learning process. The teachers

demonstrate the possibilities of expanding access to music education by the use of pre-recorded lessons in practical, which can be imported to remote areas for use by learners.

Being said so, the above technology will not be able to totally replace the great teachers or Gurus in the first generation of e-learners of Music. However, e-Learning in music is an important development in education today. A combination of traditional, face-to face instruction with e-learning has resulted in a concept known as blended learning, which is widely being used in learning music on line.

Challenges of Teaching-Learning Music through E-Learning
While many opportunities for expansion exist, the adaptation and implementation of e-learning courses creates certain challenges that may have remarkable impact on its processes. With regard to implementation of e-learning courses in music education, the following are some of the challenges that have been noted:

1. Reluctance to move away from fixed traditional approaches used over the years. Resistance to change causes people to shy away from e-Learning since it differs fundamentally from such approaches;
2. Experience in the use of computers, computer ownership and efficient time management also determine the rate of adaptation and implementation of e-Learning approaches;
3. Technological shyness is another problem to be addressed. The need for requisite technical skills among instructors or lecturers is necessary for the realization of effective results following the dissemination of e-content. Staff working with students online must be able to understand the content as well as be at least reasonably or highly trained in the use of computer and the internet.
4. Proper implementation of e-Learning presupposes availability of individual computers and the necessary software for the students. This is because e-Learning frequently requires hands-on activities, whether one is participating in asynchronous or synchronous activities. Insurance of music as a practical subject requires some special software for use in notation and transcription. There is therefore a need for a wide spectrum of relevant computer or internet-based resources;
5. Time is also an essential factor in developing e-content. In contrast to traditional lesson preparation, the amount of time required to develop and implement e-content may at times be prohibitive to its utilisation. Since e-content is expected to be handled within the same time frame as conventional face to face instruction, there is need for careful time management if one is to cover the required level of course content;
6. The lack of proper or constant internet connectivity and the speed of the internet, brought about by inadequate facilities and slow dial-up speed respectively, also

poses a challenge to proper implementation in India, more so in some rural areas. This may hamper the relay of distance learning courses;

7. Despite all the merits of e-Learning, there is a danger that students may rarely attend face-to-face, on-campus classes, resorting to purely online study satisfied with their online classes as they are with traditional ones.

8. Despite all, evaluating each student individually on on-line mode is a problem. The institute has to collaborate with the programme study centres regarding the on-line practical examination of each individual student. Till the number of students does not cross 30, evaluation can be done in the form of Webinar inviting external examiners to evaluate performance papers live on line. Viva can also be conducted live on-line by allocating distinct time to individuals.

Objectives of the Study:
The study was aimed at evaluating the quality of teaching-learning transactions of Indian Classical Music in the online mode. Since this is a performing art, and the learners, though commendable performers with keen interest in the field of music are mostly of a traditional bent of mind. Are the learners of today equally well-versed with the technological aspects so as to be able to learn the course components online? This was the specific objective of the study.

Methodology:
In India, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), which is primarily an open and distance university started a programme on Indian Classical Music (ICM). Other Open universities have also started programmes in ICM, however, to cover the practical component they hold regular classes of music as in conventional systems.

As discussed in the above section (challenges of teaching-learning music through E-learning), the number of students enrolling in the subject of music is very low and scattered all over the country. So, to provide practical guidance in cost-effective way, IGNOU started providing 'Web Enabled Academic Support' to the learners and turned the programme online.

In view of the above, a study was conducted with a focus on evaluating the quality of learning music through online mode. Methodology of the study was based on the observation of the performance of the students in their practical examination and interviewing the passed-out students of the programme. The study was conducted on the students of last three semesters (Jan 2021, July-2021 and Jan 2022).

The programme particulars are -
- The programme is a 6 months course consisting of and three practical courses.

- Objective of the practical courses are to teach basics of Indian Classical Music to the non-initiated but willing learners.
- Practical components are provided through the recorded lessons.
- Weekly mentoring is provided through Google Meet platform.

The study is conducted with the help of a simple questionnaire to the students of last three semesters (Jan 2021, July-2021 and Jan 2022). There were a total of 63 respondents and in-depth interview was taken from 11 of them. Data was also collected from the results of Term End Practical Examination conducted by External Examiner.

Results

After the interviews, the data collected was collated and analysed. Post analysis, the results that ememrged are presented in the following postulates:

- Practical Curriculum – It was found that Practical curriculum was designed aptly with keeping in mind the do-ability within the time frame of a semester.
- The performance of the students proved instructional system was successful as the students with no prior training could recognize their personal suitable pitches for singing, could practice according the video instructions and execute proper voice production for singing Indian Music.
- Students could render the songs with moderate tunefulness and confidence.
- At the end of the programme the students had the feeling of stifaction.
- The students themselves acknowledged the enhanced confidence level while performing Indian Music.
- The students were more open to pursue long duration programme in Indian Music through ODL mode.
- However, some students demanded more frequent mentoring classes than once in a week and some others felt at least one week of workshop will bring more better results.
- From the point of view of the external examiners, the programme was quite successful in terms of quality music education to the un-initiated learners.
- From the teacher's point of view it was felt that training in ICT is needed for the teachers and the students as well for better results.

Conclusion

Those conventional musicians who opposed distance learning in Music are privately imparting training to the distant learners in exchange of big fees. But private tuitions or institutes are never student centric. They are more interested in business. Most private tutors and institutes provide only practical training; component of theory is almost neglected in these institutes. Also, there are only one or two institutes who follow proper syllabus.

Evaluation methodology is questionable too in these institutes. At the end of the courses the diplomas they receive do not hold much recognition. However, distance universities can provide quality education in music if they wish. Universities such as IGNOU that have pedagogic guides, all technological facilities and EMPC to produce quality modules has become pioneer in this field. Future belongs to technology and especially in education, its use has proved to be fruitful. Indian classical music is no exception.

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