

**RESEARCH ARTICLE****Veterinary Students' Perception Towards Online Education in Andhra Pradesh****R. Madhuri<sup>1</sup> and G.R.K Sharma<sup>2</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The COVID-19 pandemic affected many aspects of human endeavor with no exception to education system in India. This has forced all the educational institutions to take a hands-on trial on online learning. An attempt was made to find out the Veterinary students' perception towards online education in Andhra Pradesh. Ex-post-facto research design was opted for the study and was conducted in three constituent colleges of Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Andhra Pradesh which have moved their academic activities onto online mode through zoom platform as a part of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). From each college 40 veterinary students were selected following random sampling procedure, thus to form a sample size 120. The findings revealed that majority of the students perceived online classes as very structured but are not more effective for basic courses when compared to applied courses; not easy to communicate with instructor, comfortable in responding to questions, improves digital skills, requires more time for homework, more effective for theory component than practical, doesn't help to continue education during COVID-19 pandemic and not satisfied with online classes over classroom learning. Despite of the above findings almost all the respondents (99.2%) had high overall perception towards online education. The findings revealed that, computer efficacy and benefits had significant positive relationship, while bottlenecks had significant negative relationship with the Veterinary students' perception towards online education at one percent level of significance. Remaining three variables like gender, socio-economic status and technical accessibility had no significant relationship at both one per cent and five per cent level of significance.*

**Key words :** Veterinary students; Perception towards online education.

**A**t the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, an extremely infectious virus, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), emerged, causing a respiratory illness and, in severe cases, the death of thousands of people (Aguilera-Hermida *et al.*, 2021). India declared COVID-19 pandemic as a national public health emergency and WHO also declared as a global health emergency on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020 as well as a pandemic on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (Veerakumar *et al.*, 2020). The emergence of the virus has so far disrupted economic, social, political as well as educational activities. Our nation took different measures to stop the spread of the virus, such as social distancing, lockdowns, and/or stay-at-

home orders. So online teaching and learning is the only mode of education to continue the uninterrupted flow of knowledge because of shutting down of all the educational institutions for an indefinite time as social distancing is an important precautionary measure to reduce this disease. While technology makes things accessible and easier, it can also be limiting especially in developing countries like India.

Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Andhra Pradesh offering Under-graduate, Post-graduate and Ph.D programs in Veterinary Sciences, Dairy Sciences and Fisheries Sciences. The university has four sophisticated campuses located in Tirupati, Proddatur, Gannavaram and the recent one at

Garividi offers only undergraduate program. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown in India from 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 has disrupted teaching-learning process and created the need for alternative ways to continue learning process. The academic program of the university purely based on intense classroom and laboratory-based activities but, due to sudden emergency, the university re-strategized its teaching-learning process, and the academic activities were moved onto online mode through zoom platform as a part of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) and started online classes to the students from May 2020 to ensure uninterrupted educational delivery. However, the major concern is about the quality of learning which is closely related with how well the content is designed and executed. Effectiveness of learning also depends on how the content is curated to online environment and also in understanding and addressing the constraints faced by the students (*Muthuprasad et al., 2021*). In this line, research uncovering students' feedback may offer valuable data for improving possible learning strategies and a better road map for online education. This study is even more relevant considering that the system of online education has never been tried by the university before. So, this study was planned to document Veterinary students' perception towards online education.

## METHODOLOGY

Ex-post-facto research design was followed in this study. This study was conducted in purposively selected, Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University of Andhra Pradesh state. Out of four, three veterinary colleges under Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Andhra Pradesh viz. College of Veterinary Science, Tirupati; College of Veterinary Science, Proddatur and NTR College of Veterinary Science, Gannavaram were selected purposively for the study. Simple random sampling technique was followed for selecting the respondents each 40 from Tirupati, Proddatur and Gannavaram veterinary colleges thus making a sample size of 120. The data was collected through structured interview schedule and the same was pre-tested in non-study area through google form.

In this study the perception of the veterinary undergraduate students towards online education was measured through a schedule consisted of 9 statements out of which 8 were positive and 1 was negative. The statements were measured on three-

point continuum namely Agree (A), Undecided (UD) and Disagree (DA) with weightage of scores assigned 2, 1, 0 respectively while the scores have been reversed for the negative statement. The minimum possible score was '0' and maximum was '18'. Based on the total score obtained by the veterinary undergraduate students they were grouped separately into three categories i.e., low, medium and high perception levels by using mean and standard deviation. The data thus collected was coded, tabulated, tested statistically and suitably interpreted. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 22.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the Table 1, it was observed that 47.5 per cent of the students agreed, 15.8 per cent students were neutral and the remaining 36.7 per cent students disagreed to the statement that online classes were very structured with set due dates similar to face-to-face classes. Majority of the respondents agreed may be due to conducting the online classes regularly according to the schedule in order to complete the syllabus in stipulated time.

From the Table 1, it was clear that majority of the students (60.8%) were in disagreement with the statement that online education was more effective for basic courses when compared to applied courses, followed by agreement (30%) and neutral (9.2%) to the statement. These results may be because most of the students opined that online education is not effective for the applied courses as they require more of usage of practical laboratories.

From the Table 1, it was evident that majority of the students (51.7%) were in disagreement with the statement that online environment makes it easier to communicate with instructor, followed by agreement (37.5%) and neutral (10.8%) to the statement. This may be due to the fact that students may feel afraid or shy to communicate directly with the instructor in front of all the students during offline class.

From the Table 1, it was observed that more than half of the students (56.7%) were comfortable in responding to questions through online mode than orally in classroom, while 38.3 per cent students were not comfortable and the remaining 5 per cent were neutral. These results may be due to fear or shy or uncomfortable feeling of students to respond to the instructor's questions in the presence of many students or it may be due to lack of confidence among the

**Table 1. Distribution of veterinary students according to their perception towards online education**

Statements	Response categories		
	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Online classes are very structured with set due dates similar to face-to-face classes	57 (47.5)	19 (15.8)	44 (36.7)
Online education is more effective for basic courses when compared to applied courses	36 (30.0)	11 (9.2)	73 (60.8)
Online environment makes it easier to communicate with instructor	45 (37.5)	13 (10.8)	62 (51.7)
Comfortable in responding to questions through online mode than orally in classroom	68 (56.7)	6 (5.0)	46 (38.3)
Digital skills got improved by attending to online classes	82 (68.3)	15 (12.5)	23 (19.2)
It requires more time for homework (assignments) for online classes in comparison with regular classroom learning	78 (65.0)	22 (18.3)	20 (16.7)
Online education is more effective for theory component when compared to practical	77 (64.2)	11 (9.2)	32 (26.7)
Shifting to online platform during COVID-19 pandemic helps to continue education	44 (36.7)	28 (23.3)	48 (40.0)
Online classes give more satisfaction over classroom learning	15 (12.5)	16 (13.3)	89 (74.2)

Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

students in responding to the questions in classroom.

From the Table 1, it was found that majority of the students felt that their digital skills got improved by attending to online classes. These results may be due to the fact that online classes can be conducted only through digital platforms which requires some technical skills to attend the online class. Doing anything repeatedly can enhance skill in that particular thing, may be due to attending online classes for long period majority of the students felt that their digital skills got improved. The results revealed that majority of the students felt that it requires more time for homework for online classes in comparison with regular classroom learning. These results may be due to lack of technical skills to complete assignments or due to network and electricity constraints.

The findings confirmed that majority of the students agreed that online education was more effective for theory component when compared to practical. This may be due to the fact that curriculum of veterinary science gives lot of importance to practical aspects which make students necessary to expose to practical laboratories and clinics directly in-person.

From the Table 1, it could be inferred that only 36.7 per cent of the students agreed to shifting to online platforms during COVID-19 pandemic helps to continue education, 40 per cent of the students disagreed and 23.3 per cent students were neutral. This

may be due to requirement of practical and clinical exposure to students in veterinary science, they were pulling back from accepting to shift education to online platforms. It was evident from the Table 1, that nearly three fourth of the students (74.2%) were not satisfied with online classes over classroom learning. As discussed earlier due to network and electricity constraints or due to requirement of practical and clinical exposure to students in veterinary science majority of the students were not satisfied with online classes over classroom learning.

From the Table 2, it was observed that all most all the students (99.2%) had high overall perception level towards online education. As discussed, earlier majority of the students had high computer efficacy and all the students had high technical accessibility, maybe it routed all most all the respondents to have high level of overall perception towards online education.

**Table 2. Distribution of veterinary students according to their overall perception level towards online education**

Perception level	No.	%
Low	0	0
Medium	1	0.8
High	119	99.2
Total	120	100

Mean=0.95 SD=0.82

**Table 3. Relationship between perception towards online education with selected independent variables of veterinary students**

Variables	Perception
Gender	-0.016
Socio-economic status	0.115
Computer efficacy	0.322**
Technical accessibility	0.120
Benefits	0.768**
Bottlenecks	-0.261**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results in Table 3 confirms that only variables such as computer efficacy and benefits had significant positive relationship, while bottlenecks had significant negative relationship with the perception of veterinary students towards online education at one percent level of significance. When the students have high computer efficacy, they can attend online classes confidently without facing any difficulty, if they face low level of difficulty then only, they can perceive online education positively and also only when they found beneficial, they will have positive perception towards online education, maybe due to these reasons perception of veterinary students had significant positive relationship with variables such as computer efficacy and benefits. As mentioned above vice versa to that facing more bottlenecks may impact students to have negative perception towards online education, maybe because of which perception of veterinary students had significant negative relationship with bottlenecks.

## CONCLUSION

The present study is an effect of sudden onset of COVID-19 and to provide continuous education system through Emergency Remote Teaching. In present day context, online learning finds to be individualised, flexible, interactive, user-friendly and easily accessible. Any institution opting for online environment should therefore give priority to meeting all those students' preferences, perceptions and needs. It is believed that high quality online learning environment can be designed through early interventions. Online education of veterinary students' perception might change according to their aim of the course they have registered.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

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