

Library and Information Science Webinars During Covid-19: Stay Connected for Dissemination of Knowledge

MANISH KUMAR*
RK BHATT**

ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to know and check the proliferation of webinars being organized by good number of library associations, library groups, librarians and subject experts to orient, teach and preach the LIS professionals regarding how libraries and information centres can extend and provide information services during travail times and how professionals can learn, practice and extend effective services. It was an attempt through Google. doc form forwarded on LIS professionals WhatsApp group in India in the month of June 2020 and after a gap of five months 68 professionals responded to it. Thus, the study presents the varied issues, concepts and challenges related to library science, libraries and technologies being used to abridge the information gap between the knowledge hubs and seekers through straight from the horse's mouth during pandemic crisis. Hence in the study N 68 represents 100% professionals' responses.

Keywords: Webinar, COVID 19, COVID Pandemic, Library Science, Library Science Webinar, India Webinar. LIS Professionals

0 INTRODUCTION

Time and circumstances changes everything in man's life and compel to abide, learn and survive with new changes as witnessed during this pandemic crisis affected and forced the academic community hard. The unprecedented changes and challenges compelled the library professionals to be in touch with their stakeholders and quench their information quests incessantly. This new reality provided another opportunity to library associations, library professionals and professionals groups to organize webinars on the new areas of library science, technological usage and how knowledge hubs can succinctly help and support their users' by inviting eminent speakers, subject experts and practicing professionals to share their experience and knowledge with LIS professionals in India. No matter, the enigmatic allurements for augmentation of participation was free webinar certificate. The researchers designed a questionnaire to observe and study varied aspects and questions regarding webinars being conducted rampantly even two or three at the same time by different organizers and tried to present the results.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Delhi, Delhi-110007; Email: kkmaniii2014@gmail.com

**Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Delhi, Delhi-110007; Email: drbhattrk63@gmail.com

1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (i) To know the purpose of attending webinar(s) by LIS professionals during COVID-19 Lockdown period.
- (ii) To check the ground realities regarding in terms of availability of technological gadgets, ICT constraints and professionals' problems in attending the webinar(s).
- (iii) To study the constrains/problems, observations of LIS professionals for attending the webinar(s).

2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research was carried out through WhatsApp group of LIS professionals and only limited number of professionals responded to the google.doc. The study was conducted between June 2020 to November 2020.

3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Burstein highlighted the objectives and how to arrange webinar checklist. Webinar are new mode of interaction and connectivity through Internet for asynchronous learning management systems. (Gegenfurtner and Ebner) The article tangibly explains the approach of improvement of school wellness efforts through webinars. (Hoke et al...) Webinar a new mode of disseminating information and knowledge and can be valuable tool for education system. (Gupta and Sengupta)

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study being conducted by using a Google doc. form circulated on whatsapp groups of LIS professionals by requesting them to share their observation and experience of attending the webinar(s). Accordingly, only 68 LIS professionals responded to the questionnaire and hence the data is compiled and presented in graphs, tables and interpretation.

5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

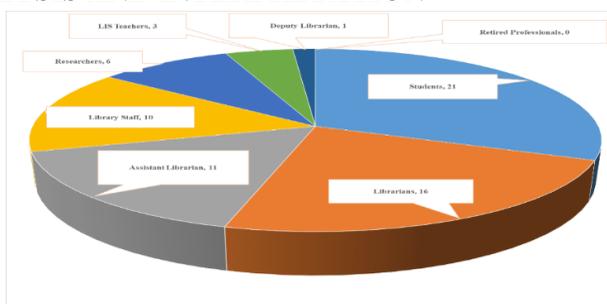


Fig. 5.1: LIS Professionals Category

It is evident from the fig. 5.1 that maximum 21(30.88%) students responded to the questionnaire. Further, 16(23.53%) Librarians, 11(16.18%) Assistant Librarians, 10(14.71%) Library Staff, 6(8.82%) Researchers, 3(4.41%) LIS Teacher and only 1(1.47%) Deputy Librarian responded and no retired professional submitted their response and thus their category is not covered in the other responses.

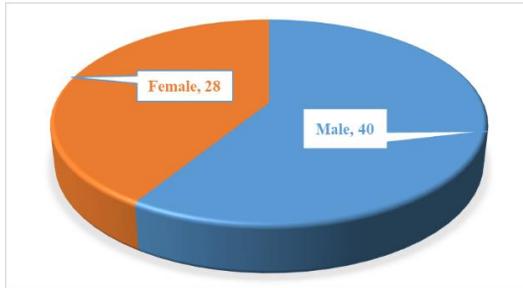


Fig. 5.2: LIS Professionals Gender

The data tangibly shows that 40(58.82%) males and 28(41.18%) females responded to the questionnaire.

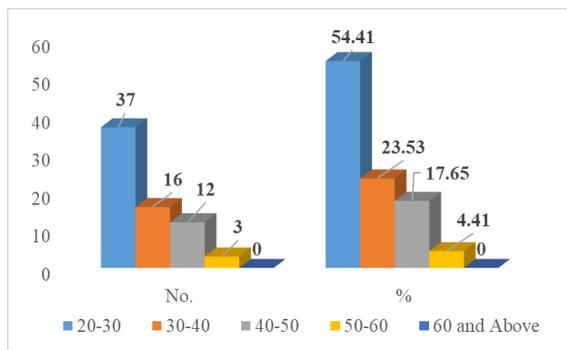


Fig. 5.3: LIS Professionals Age

It is found that maximum respondents 37(54.41%) belongs to 20-30 years age group, seconded by 16(23.53%) to 30-40 years. Further, 12(17.65%) respondents are of 40-50 years age group and only 3(4.41%) are of 50-60 years.

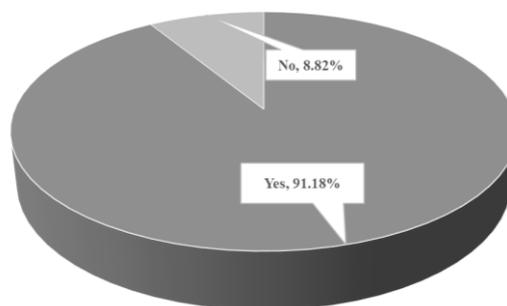


Fig. 5.4: Webinar Experience

The data of above table shows that maximum 62(91.18%) respondents admitted and responded affirmative that learning through webinar(s) is a good initiative in comparison to only 6(8.82%).

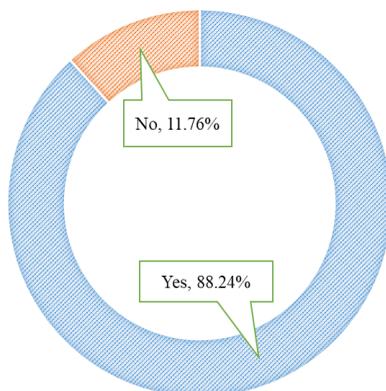


Fig. 5.5: Software Used for Attending Webinar

It is found that 60(88.24%) respondents admitted to find it good to attend the webinar(s) through any free web conferencing software viz. Google meet/Zoom.

Table 5.1: Use of Gadget to Attend Webinar

Usage of Device			
S. No.	Device to Attend the Webinar	No.	%
1	Mobile Phones	53	77.94
2	Laptop	12	17.65
3	Tablet	2	2.94
4	Personal Computer	1	1.47
Total		68	100

The data shows that maximum 53(77.94%) respondents attended the webinar through mobile phone, seconded by 12(17.65%) through laptop, 2(2.94%) through tablet and only 1(1.47%) by personal computer.

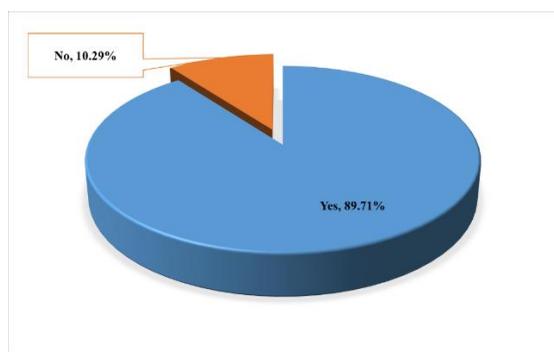


Fig. 5.6: Gadget Compatibility

The data shows that 61(89.71%) admitted of having their personal computer/laptop/mobile phone compatible to download the free web conferencing software(s).

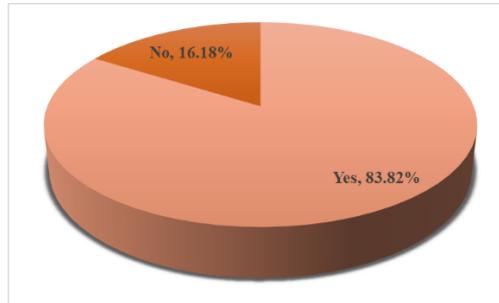


Fig. 5.7(A): Opinion About Resource Person

It is clear that 57(83.82%) admitted of understanding the concept properly communicated by a resource person and only 11(16.18%) responded against it.

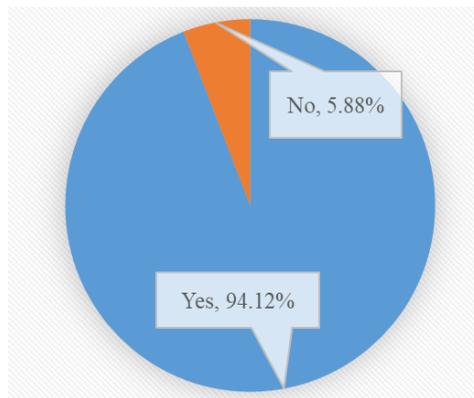


Fig. 5.7(B): Opinion About Resource Person

64 (94.12%) respondents responded in affirmation that good subject expert(s) deliver through varied platforms and only 4 (5.88%) did not think so.

Table 5.2(A): Reason to Attend Webinar

S. No.	Attend Webinar because of the Theme/Concept/Area	No.	%
1	Yes	66	97.06
2	No	2	2.94
Total		68	100

The data reflects that 66(97.06%) admitted for attending the webinar(s) because of theme/concept/area whereas only 2(2.94%) did not consider it as a reason.

Table 5.2(B): Reason to Attend Webinar

Resource Person			
S. No.	Attend Webinar because of Resource Person	No.	%
1	Yes	53	77.94
2	No	15	22.06
Total		68	100

53(77.94%) respondents attended the webinar(s) because of resource person and 15(22.06%) did not consider its as reason.

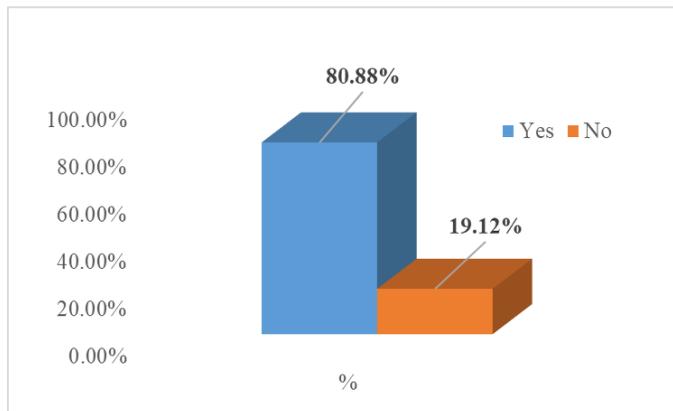


Fig. 5.8: Content Coverage

The data shows that 55(80.88%) admitted of fair coverage of the concept/content in a session and 13(19.12%) did not agreed to it.

Table 5.3: Opportunity to Ask Question

Question Answer Session			
S. No.	Opportunity to Ask Question	No.	%
1	Yes	57	83.82
2	No	11	16.18
Total		68	100

The data reflect that 57(83.82%) respondents admitted of having an opportunity to ask a question in a session whereas 11(16.18%) denied to it.

Table 5.4(A): Doubt Clearance by Resource Person

Doubts Clearance in a Session			
S. No.	Opportunity to Clear Doubts	No.	%
1	Yes	49	72.06
2	No	19	27.94
Total		68	100

49(72.06%) responded affirmative of having an opportunity to clear their doubt(s) in a session whereas 19(27.94%) denied to it.

Table 5.4(B): Doubt Clearance by Resource Person

Doubts Clearance After the Session			
S. No.	Opportunity to Clear Doubts	No.	%
1	Yes	52	76.47
2	No	16	23.53
Total		68	100

52(76.47%) responded affirmative of having an opportunity to clear their doubt(s) after a session whereas 16(23.53%) denied to it.

Table 5.5: Number of Webinar(s) Attended

S. No.	Number of Webinar(s) Attended	No.	%
1	One	9	13.24
2	Two	9	13.24
3	Three	4	5.88
4	Four	8	11.76
5	Five	0	0
6	More Than Five	38	55.88
Total		68	100

With regard to number of webinar(s) attended it is found that 38(55.88%) respondents attended more than 5 webinar(s) seconded by 9(13.24%) respondents attended 2 webinar(s) and same number of attendees 9(13.24%) attended 1 webinar. Further, 8(11.76%) respondents attended 4 webinar(s) and 4(5.88%) attended 3 webinar(s).

Table 5.6: Benefit of Attending Webinar

Importance of Webinar			
S. No.	Webinar Enhance Information & Knowledge	No.	%
1	Yes	65	95.59
2	No	3	4.41
Total		68	100

It is evident from data that 65 (95.59%) admitted to have help through webinar(s) in enhancement of their information and knowledge whereas only 3 (4.41%) denied to it.

Table 5.7: Constraints/ Problems Faced

Sr. No.	Constraints/ Problems faced to join Webinar	Yes (No.)	Yes (%)	No (No.)	No (%)
1	My PC/ Laptop/Tablet is not compatible to download the Free Web Conferencing Software(s)	14	20.59	54	79.41
2	I am not having a Smartphone	5	7.35	63	92.65
3	Poor Internet Connectivity at My Place	25	36.76	43	63.24
4	Problem to connect any Free Web Conferencing Software	21	30.88	47	69.12
5	I tried many times but could not connect the Webinar	22	32.35	46	67.65
6	Too many Webinar(s) Simultaneously Organized	35	51.47	33	48.53
7	I could not attend Webinar(s) due to limited seats	37	54.41	31	45.59
8	Too much waiting to join the Webinar	33	48.53	35	51.47
9	Many times, the Meeting Code Shows Incorrect	22	32.35	46	67.65
10	Difficult to Attend/continue Session through Phone	29	42.65	39	57.35
11	Poor Audible Quality	34	50	34	50
12	Poor Video Quality	27	39.71	41	60.29
13	Difficult to Read on Screen the ppts/text	26	38.24	42	61.76
14	Frequent Interruptions/Glitches	37	54.41	31	45.59
15	Limited Session Time	38	55.88	30	44.12
16	Too much background noise from participants side	35	51.47	33	48.53
17	Participants busy in chats/sending messages than listening the content	33	48.53	35	51.47
18	Difficult to re-join the Webinar session after an interruption	41	60.29	27	39.71

With regard to the constraints/problems faced by the attendees it was revealed that only 14 (20.59%) were having the gadget compatible to download the

free web conferencing software and 54 (79.41%) did not. Further, only 5 (7.35%) were having Smartphone and 63 (92.65%) did not. For another question 25 (36.76%) admitted of having poor internet connectivity at their home and 43 (63.24%) responded in negative. 21 (30.88%) responded of having problem in connecting to any free web conferencing software and 47 (69.12%) did not. For another constraint about connectivity 22 (32.35%) respondents responded that they tried many times but faced connectivity problem whereas 46 (67.65%) did not faced any such hardship. 35 (51.47%) respondents admitted that organization of too many webinar(s) was also a constraint but 33 (48.53%) did not think so. 37 (54.41%) respondents responded that they failed to attend webinar(s) due to limited seats but 31 (45.59%) did not. 33 (48.53%) found too much waiting to join the webinar was also a problem whereas 35 (51.47) did not think so. 22 (32.35%) revealed that many times they found the meeting code incorrect but 46 (67.65%) did not faced any such constraint. 29 (42.65%) respondents found it difficult to attend/continue session through phone but 39 (57.35%) did not. 34 (50%) complained of poor audible quality but another 34 (50%) did not. 27 (39.71%) complained about poor video quality but 41 (60.29%) did not faced any such problem. 26 (38.24%) faced difficulty to read on screen ppts/ text whereas 42 (61.76%) did not.37 (54.41%) complained of frequent interruptions/ glitches but 31 (45.59%) did not faced such problem. 38 (55.88%) responded limited session time as a constraint but 30 (44.12%) did not. 35 (51.47%) found too much background noise from participants end as a constraint whereas 33 (48.53%) did not. 33 (48.53%) found another problem was participants busy in chats/ sending messages than listening to the content but 35 (51.47%) did not. Further, 41 (60.29%) participants responded affirmative having difficulty in re-joining the webinar session after an interruption whereas 27 (39.71%) did not face any such constraint.

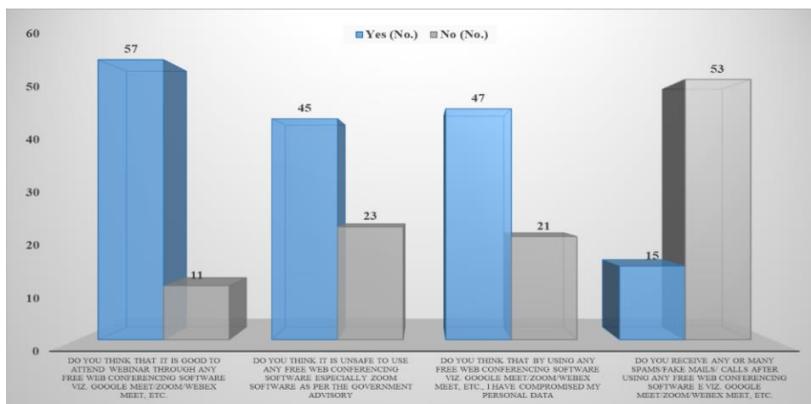


Fig. 5.9: Data Security Issues/ Concerns

The data shows that 57 (83.82%) participants were affirmative in realization of that it is good to attend webinar through any free web conferencing software but

11 (16.18%) did not think so. Further, 45 (66.18%) respondents admitted that they found it unsafe to use any free web conferencing software especially Zoom software as per government advisory but 23 (33.82%) did not think so. 47 (69.12%) respondents admitted they feel that by using any free web conferencing software they have compromised their personal data but 21 (30.88%) did not think so. 15 (22.06%) admitted that they received any or many spams/ fake mails after using free web conferencing software but 53 (77.94%) did not think so.

Table 5.8: Observation/ Satisfaction/Suggestions

Sr. No.	Observation/Satisfaction/Suggestions	Yes (No.)	Yes (%)	No (No.)	No (%)
1	Do you think that Webinar is better mode than traditional Conference/Seminar	32	47.06	36	52.94
2	Do you think that many Resource Person(s) are not having expertise and knowledge but still deliver session(s)	36	52.94	32	47.06
3	Do you think that Webinar(s) limited time is sufficient to complete the Theme/Concept/Topic/ Area	37	54.41	31	45.89
4	Some time(s) I observe that content is of very basic nature	46	67.65	22	32.35
5	Some time(s) I observe that the content is not appropriately explained	36	52.94	32	47.06
6	I attend the Webinar(s) for getting a certificate	18	26.47	50	73.53
7	I attend the Webinar(s) as there is no registration fee	41	60.29	27	39.71

It is tangible from the data that 32 (47.06%) respondents found webinar is better mode than traditional conference/seminar whereas 36 (52.94%) did not. 36 (52.94%) respondents opined that many resource person(s) were not having good expertise and knowledge but still deliver the session(s) but 32 (47.06%) did not. 37 (54.41%) respondents found webinar(s) limited time is sufficient to complete the theme/concept/topic/area but 31 (45.89%) did not think so. 46 (67.65%) respondents admitted that they observed the content delivered is of very basic nature but 22 (32.35%) did not think so. 36 (52.94%) participants opined that sometimes they found the content is not appropriately explained but 32 (47.06%) did not think so. 18 (26.47%) respondents admitted the reason for attending the webinar(s) for getting a certificate whereas 50 (73.53%) did not. Further, 41 (60.29%) respondents admitted the reason for attending the webinar(s) was charging of no registration fee but 27 (39.71%) did not think so.

Table 5.9: Webinar Assessment (N=68)

Sr. No.	Rating Point	Excellent	Fair	Very Good	Good	Poor
1	Web Conferencing Software User Interface	26	5	17	19	1
2	Web Conferencing Software Connectivity	20	8	21	16	3
3	Web Conferencing Software Video Quality	18	18	17	13	2
4	Web Conferencing Software Audio Quality	17	12	17	18	4
5	Web Conferencing Software Features in terms of invite, screen share, etc.	17	10	21	16	4
6	Theme/Concept/Topic/ Area Covered	19	7	18	22	2
7	Resource Person(s)	17	7	30	13	1
8	Communication Skills of Resource Person	18	5	26	18	1

It is evident from the data that regarding the rating for question about web conferencing software user interface, 26 (38.2%) responded excellent, 17 (25%) opined very good, 19 (27.9%) good, 5 (7.3%) fair and only 1 (1.4%) as poor. Further, for question about web conferencing software connectivity 20 (29.4%) excellent, 21 (30.8%) very good, 16 (23.5%) good, 8 (11.7%) fair and only 3 (4.4%) as poor. For another question about web conferencing software video quality 18 (26.4%) responded excellent, 17 (25%) very good, 13 (19.1%) good, 18 (26.4%) fair and only 2 (2.9%) as poor. For question about web conferencing software audio quality, 17 (25%) responded excellent, 17 (25%) very good, 18 (26.4%) good, 12 (17.6%) fair and only 4 (5.8%) as poor. For question about web conferencing software features in terms of invite, screen share, etc. 17 (25%) responded excellent, 21 (30.8%) very good, 16 (23.5%) good, 10 (14.7%) fair and only 4 (5.8%) as poor. For question about theme/concept/topic/area covered, 19 (27.9%) responded excellent, 18 (26.4%) very good, 22 (32.3%) good, 7 (10.2%) fair and only 2 (2.9%) as poor. For question regarding resource person(s) 17 (25%) responded excellent, 30 (44.1%) very good, 13 (19.1%) good, 7 (10.2%) fair and only 1 (1.4%) as poor. For another question regarding communication skills of resource person(s) 18 (26.4%) excellent, 26 (38.2%) very good, 18 (26.4%) good, 5 (7.3%) fair and only 1 (1.4%) as poor.

6 MAJOR FINDINGS

- The study reveals that maximum 21(30.88%) students responded to the questionnaire. Further, 16(23.53%) Librarians, 11(16.18%) Assistant Librarians,

10(14.71%) Library Staff, 6(8.82%) Researchers, 3(4.41%) LIS Teacher and only 1(1.47%) Deputy Librarian responded and no retired professional submitted their response.

- The data tangibly shows that 40(58.82%) males and 28(41.18%) females responded to the questionnaire.
- It is found that maximum respondents 37(54.41%) belongs to 20-30 years age group, seconded by 16(23.53%) to 30-40 years. Further, 12(17.65%) respondents are of 40-50 years age group and only 3(4.4%) are of 50-60 years.
- It is found that maximum 62(91.18%) respondents admitted and responded affirmative that learning through webinar(s) is a good initiative in comparison to only 6(8.82%).
- It is found that 60(88.24%) respondents admitted to find good to attend the webinar(s) through any free web conferencing software viz. Google meet/Zoom whereas 8(11.76%) did not.
- The study shows that maximum 53(77.94%) respondents attended the webinar through mobile phone, seconded by 12(17.65%) through laptop, 2(2.94%) through tablet and only 1(1.47%) by personal computer.
- It was found that 61(89.71%) admitted of having their personal computer/laptop/mobile phone compatible to download the free web conferencing software(s) whereas 7(10.29%) did not.
- It was found that 57(83.82%) admitted of understanding the concept properly communicated by a resource person and only 11(16.18%) responded against it.
- 64(94.12%) respondents responded in affirmation that good subject expert(s) deliver through varied platforms and only 4(5.88%) did not think so.
- The data reflects that 66(97.06%) admitted for attending the webinar(s) because of theme/concept/area whereas only 2(2.94%) did not consider it as a reason.
- 53(77.94%) respondents attended the webinar(s) because of resource person and 15(22.06%) did not consider its as reason.
- The data shows that 55(80.88%) admitted of fair coverage of the concept/content in a session and 13(19.12%) did not agreed to it.
- The data reflects that 57(83.82%) respondents admitted of having an opportunity to ask a question in a session whereas 11(16.18%) denied to it.
- 49(72.06%) responded affirmative of having an opportunity to clear their doubt(s) in a session whereas 19(27.94%) denied to it.
- 52(76.47%) responded affirmative of having an opportunity to clear their doubt(s) after a session whereas 16(23.53%) denied to it.
- With regard to number of webinar(s) attended it is found that 38(55.88%) respondents attended more than 5 webinar(s) seconded by 9(13.24%)

respondents attended 2 webinar(s) and same number of attendees 9(13.24%) attended 1 webinar. Further, 8(11.76%) respondents attended 4 webinar(s) and 4(5.88%) attended 3 webinar(s).

- It is evident from data that 65 (95.59%) admitted to have help through webinar(s) in enhancement of their information and knowledge whereas only 3 (4.41%) denied to it.
- With regard to the constraints/ problems faced by the attendees it was revealed that only 14 (20.59%) were having the gadget compatible to download the free web conferencing software and 54 (79.41%) did not. Further, only 5 (7.35%) were having Smartphone and 63 (92.65%) did not. For another question 25 (36.76%) admitted of having poor internet connectivity at their home and 43 (63.24%) responded in negative. 21 (30.88%) responded of having problem in connecting to any free web conferencing software and 47 (69.12%) did not. For another constraint about connectivity 22 (32.35%) respondents responded that they tried many times but faced connectivity problem whereas 46 (67.65%) did not faced any such hardship. 35 (51.47%) respondents admitted that organization of too many webinar(s) was also a constraint but 33 (48.53%) did not think so.
- The data shows that 57 (83.82%) participants were affirmative in realization of that it is good to attend webinar through any free web conferencing software but 11 (16.18%) did not think so. Further, 45 (66.18%) respondents admitted that they found it unsafe to use any free web conferencing software especially Zoom software as per government advisory but 23 (33.82%) did not think so. 47 (69.12%) respondents admitted they feel that by using any free web conferencing software they have compromised their personal data but 21 (30.88%) did not think so. 15 (22.06%) admitted that they received any or many spams/ fake mails after using free web conferencing software but 53 (77.94%) did not think so.
- It is tangible from the data that 32 (47.06%) respondents found webinar is better mode than traditional conference/seminar whereas 36 (52.94%) did not. 36 (52.94%) respondents opined that many resource person(s) were not having good expertise and knowledge but still deliver the session(s) but 32 (47.06%) did not. 37 (54.41%) respondents found webinar(s) limited time is sufficient to complete the theme/concept/topic/area but 31 (45.89%) did not think so. 18 (26.47%) respondents admitted the reason for attending the webinar(s) for getting a certificate whereas 50 (73.53%) did not. Further, 41 (60.29%) respondents admitted the reason for attending the webinar(s) was charging of no registration fee but 27 (39.71%) did not think so.
- It is evident from the data that regarding the rating for question about web conferencing software user interface, 26(38.2%) responded excellent, 17(25%) opined very good, 19(27.9%) good, 5(7.3%) fair and only 1(1.4%) as poor. Further, for question about web conferencing software connectivity 20 (29.4%) excellent, 21(30.8%) very good, 16(23.5%) good, 8(11.7%) fair and only 3(4.4%) as poor. For another question about web conferencing software video quality 18(26.4%) responded excellent, 17(25%) very good, 13(19.1%) good, 18(26.4%) fair and only 2(2.9%) as poor. For question about

theme/concept/topic/area covered, 19(27.9%) responded excellent, 18(26.4%) very good, 22(32.3%) good, 7(10.2%) fair and only 2(2.9%) as poor. For question regarding resource person(s) 17(25%) responded excellent, 30(44.1%) very good, 13(19.1%) good, 7(10.2%) fair and only 1(1.4%) as poor.

7 CONCLUSION

The study overtly presents the opinions, observations and experience of attendees in terms of webinar organizations, content delivered, resource person expertise, reasons of webinar attending, constraints faced by the attendees, data security issues and other related aspects. Indeed, it is undoubtedly found that webinar proved as one of the best method of connectivity and dissemination of information and knowledge as well as learning platform to enhance skills and competencies during Pandemic Lockdown tenure.

REFERENCES

- Burstein, Rachel. Making the Most of Webinars. *Harvard Business Review*, 2013.
<https://hbr.org/2013/03/making-the-most-of-webinars> Accessed on 11 March 2021
- Gegenfurtner, Andreas and Christian Ebner. Webinars in higher education and professional training: A meta-analysis and systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *Educational Research Review*, Vol. 28, November 2019, 100293
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2019.100293>
- Gupta, Sanjib Kumar and Nabanita Sengupta. Webinar as the Future Educational Tool in Higher Education of India: A Survey- Based Study. *Technology, Knowledge and Learning*, January 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10758-021-09493-7>
- Hoke et al... Investigating the Effectiveness of Webinars in the Adoption of Proven School Wellness Strategies. *Health Education Journal*. 2018 Mar; 77(2): 249–257.
Published online 2017 Oct 20. DOI: 10.1177/0017896917734017