



Blended Learning in Higher Education in Ranchi: A Qualitative Analysis of Existing Literature and Reports

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Abstract:

Blended learning has become an important approach in higher education by combining traditional classroom teaching with online and digital learning methods. This study presents a qualitative analysis of existing literature and reports to understand the status of blended learning in higher education institutions in Ranchi. The study is based on secondary data collected from research articles, government reports, policy documents, institutional publications, and online academic sources related to blended learning. The purpose of the study is to explore how blended learning is being practiced, along with the key challenges and benefits identified in the available literature. The analysis of existing studies shows that blended learning offers several advantages for higher education institutions in Ranchi. These include greater flexibility in learning, improved access to educational resources, better student engagement, and the promotion of independent and self-directed learning. Blended learning also supports the use of digital tools and multimedia resources, which help teachers present content more interactively and effectively. For students, this approach helps in developing digital skills that are important for academic success and future employment. However, the literature also highlights several challenges related to the implementation of blended learning in Ranchi. Major issues include limited digital infrastructure, poor internet connectivity, lack of access to devices for some students, and insufficient training for teachers in digital pedagogy. Institutional readiness and clear policy guidelines for blended learning are also found to be weak in many cases. These challenges affect the effective use of blended learning and create inequalities among learners. The study concludes that blended learning has strong potential to improve the quality and accessibility of higher education in Ranchi. To fully benefit from this approach, institutions need to strengthen infrastructure, provide regular training for teachers, and adopt inclusive strategies that support all students. The findings of this study can be useful for educators, administrators, and policymakers in planning effective blended learning practices.

Keywords: *Blended Learning, Higher Education, Digital Education, Ranchi.*

Introduction:

Blended learning has emerged as an important teaching-learning approach in higher education, especially with the rapid growth of digital technology in the education sector. It combines traditional face-to-face classroom teaching with online learning methods such as virtual classes, digital study materials, learning management systems, and interactive platforms. This approach aims to improve the quality of education by making learning more flexible, engaging, and accessible to students. In recent years, higher education

institutions across India have increasingly adopted blended learning to meet the changing needs of learners and to ensure continuity of education. In the context of higher education in Ranchi, blended learning has gained attention due to its potential to address several educational challenges. Ranchi is home to universities and colleges that serve students from diverse social, economic, and geographical backgrounds, including many from rural and tribal areas. Blended learning allows students to access learning materials beyond the classroom, helping them study at their own pace and revisit content when needed. It also supports the development of digital skills, which are essential in the modern academic and professional environment. Despite its advantages, the implementation of blended learning in Ranchi faces several difficulties. Limited digital infrastructure, unreliable internet connectivity, and lack of access to digital devices remain major concerns for both institutions and students. Teachers also face challenges due to limited training in using digital tools and designing blended courses. In addition, many institutions lack clear guidelines and support systems for effective blended learning practices. This study presents a qualitative analysis of existing literature and reports related to blended learning in higher education in Ranchi. By reviewing secondary sources such as research articles, policy documents, and institutional reports, the study aims to understand current practices, challenges, and opportunities. The findings of this analysis can help educators, administrators, and policymakers develop more effective and inclusive blended learning strategies for higher education institutions in Ranchi.

Need and Significance of the Study:

The need for the present study arises from the increasing use of blended learning in higher education and the growing reliance on digital technologies in teaching and learning. While blended learning has been widely discussed at the national and global levels, there is limited focused understanding of how this approach is being applied in specific regional contexts such as Ranchi. Higher education institutions in Ranchi cater to students from diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, including learners from rural and tribal areas. Therefore, it is important to examine existing literature and reports to understand whether blended learning is suitable, effective, and inclusive in this local setting.

The significance of this study lies in its qualitative analysis of existing literature and reports related to blended learning in higher education in Ranchi. By relying on secondary data, the study brings together insights from research articles, policy documents, and institutional reports to identify common trends, challenges, and opportunities. This helps in understanding gaps between policy intentions and actual practices at the institutional level. The study also highlights important issues such as digital infrastructure, teacher preparedness, student access to technology, and institutional support systems, which directly influence the success of blended learning. This study is significant for educational administrators and policymakers, as it provides evidence-based insights that can support better planning and decision-making. It can help institutions improve digital infrastructure, design effective training programs for teachers, and adopt inclusive strategies for students who face digital disadvantages. For teachers and researchers, the study contributes to academic knowledge by offering a consolidated view of blended learning practices in Ranchi. Overall, the study serves as a useful reference for strengthening blended learning implementation and enhancing the quality and accessibility of higher education in the region.

Table 1: Different Aspects of Need and Significance:

| Aspect | Description |
|-------------------|---|
| Need of the Study | Blended learning is increasingly used in higher education, but its effectiveness depends on regional conditions. There is a need to understand how blended learning is applied in higher education institutions in Ranchi, where students come from |

| | |
|---|---|
| | diverse social, economic, rural, and tribal backgrounds. Studying existing literature helps identify whether blended learning is suitable and inclusive in this local context. |
| Focus on Regional Context | Most blended learning studies focus on national or global levels. This study fills the gap by focusing specifically on Ranchi, helping to understand local challenges such as digital access, infrastructure availability, and institutional readiness. |
| Significance of Using Secondary Data | By analyzing existing research articles, policy documents, and institutional reports, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of blended learning practices without primary data collection. This approach helps identify common trends, gaps, and recurring issues. |
| Academic Significance | The study contributes to academic literature by offering a qualitative synthesis of existing studies related to blended learning in Ranchi. It helps researchers and scholars understand current practices and areas needing further research. |
| Significance for Institutions and Policymakers | Findings from the study can guide administrators and policymakers in improving digital infrastructure, planning teacher training programs, and developing clear guidelines for blended learning implementation. |
| Overall Importance | The study serves as a reference for strengthening blended learning models and improving the quality, accessibility, and inclusiveness of higher education institutions in Ranchi. |

Literature Review:

During the last five years (2021–2025), literature on blended learning in higher education has grown rapidly, mainly due to the expansion of digital teaching after the COVID-19 period and the wider policy push for technology-supported education. Many studies describe blended learning as a planned mix of face-to-face classroom teaching and online learning activities, where digital resources are used to strengthen classroom learning rather than replace it. Policy-oriented sources also emphasize that technology should support access, flexibility, and quality, while still valuing in-person learning for meaningful interaction and support. In the Indian context, research repeatedly highlights that blended learning can improve learning continuity, provide wider access to study materials, and encourage self-paced learning, especially when institutions use learning platforms, recorded lectures, e-content, and online discussion tools.

Recent review studies point out that blended learning brings opportunities but also strong barriers. A 2024 integrative review identifies challenges such as weak course design, passive learning patterns, and lack of proper training for teachers and students, suggesting that blended learning requires careful planning and strong capacity building. Studies focusing on students' views in higher education also show generally positive attitudes toward blended learning, but they connect successful experience with good ICT skills and supportive institutional systems. Across 2021–2025 literature, common barriers include limited internet access, lack of devices, low digital confidence, and increased workload for teachers because they manage both classroom and online tasks. These issues are closely linked to the digital divide, which affects learners from rural and low-income backgrounds more strongly. For Ranchi, available institutional and research sources reflect similar patterns. Ranchi University's quality-related documents indicate increasing attention to learning outcomes and the use of online or distance-related components within institutional functioning, showing that digital-supported learning is part of the broader academic environment. At the same time,

college-level self-study documents connected with the Ranchi University system mention efforts to provide online resources and support structures to develop interactive and independent learning, suggesting gradual movement toward blended practices. A study on B.Ed. trainee teachers linked to Ranchi University reports that blended learning programmes can be effective in that context, indicating potential benefits when learners receive proper academic and technical support. Overall, the last five years of literature suggests that blended learning in Ranchi can improve flexibility and engagement, but progress depends on strengthening infrastructure, training teachers, and ensuring inclusive access for students who face digital disadvantages.

Objectives:

1. To analyze existing literature and reports to understand the current status and practices of blended learning in higher education institutions in Ranchi.
2. To identify the major challenges and opportunities of blended learning in higher education in Ranchi as reported in previous studies, policy documents, and institutional reports.

Methodology:

The present study follows a qualitative research approach to examine blended learning in higher education in Ranchi through an analysis of existing literature and reports. The study is based entirely on secondary data. Relevant information is collected from research articles, books, government policy documents, university and college reports, accreditation documents, and online academic sources related to blended learning and higher education. Only recent and relevant studies are selected to ensure the usefulness of the data. The collected secondary data are analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Main themes such as blended learning practices, digital infrastructure, teacher readiness, student access, and institutional support are identified and interpreted. The study focuses on understanding patterns, similarities, and differences reported across various sources rather than measuring numerical data. This approach helps in gaining an in-depth understanding of the current status, challenges, and opportunities of blended learning in higher education institutions in Ranchi.

Discussion:

The discussion of the present study is organized around the two objectives and is based on a qualitative analysis of existing literature and reports related to blended learning in higher education in Ranchi. The discussion highlights the current status, practices, challenges, and opportunities as identified in secondary sources such as research studies, policy documents, and institutional reports.

The first objective was to analyze existing literature and reports to understand the current status and practices of blended learning in higher education institutions in Ranchi. The reviewed literature shows that blended learning in Ranchi is still at a developing stage. Many institutions have started using online platforms mainly for sharing study materials, conducting online classes, and supporting assessment during emergencies such as the COVID-19 period. Learning management systems, recorded lectures, and digital resources are increasingly used as support tools alongside traditional classroom teaching. However, blended learning is often applied informally or partially rather than through well-structured course designs. Institutional reports indicate that while there is awareness about blended learning, systematic planning, integration of digital tools into curricula, and regular evaluation mechanisms are still limited. The literature also shows that blended learning practices vary widely across institutions depending on available infrastructure and institutional leadership.

The second objective was to identify the major challenges and opportunities of blended learning in higher education in Ranchi as reported in earlier studies and documents. A major challenge highlighted across the literature is inadequate digital infrastructure, including unstable internet connectivity and limited access to

devices among students. This issue is more serious for students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds, leading to unequal learning experiences. Another important challenge is limited digital preparedness of teachers. Many teachers lack formal training in blended pedagogy, online assessment, and use of interactive digital tools, which affects the quality of teaching. Institutional support systems such as technical assistance, clear guidelines, and workload management are also reported as weak. Despite these challenges, the literature points to several opportunities. Blended learning increases flexibility in learning, allowing students to access materials anytime and revise content as needed. It supports student-centered learning, improves digital skills, and encourages independent study. For institutions, blended learning helps ensure academic continuity and modernize teaching practices. Overall, the discussion suggests that with proper infrastructure, training, and planning, blended learning can significantly strengthen higher education in Ranchi.

Table 2: Different Aspects of Discussion:

| Objective | Theme | Discussion Summary |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Objective 1: To analyze the current status and practices of blended learning | Stage of implementation | Literature shows that blended learning in higher education institutions in Ranchi is still at a developing stage. Most institutions use digital tools mainly as support to classroom teaching rather than as fully planned blended courses. |
| | Teaching–learning practices | Online platforms are used for sharing study materials, recorded lectures, and conducting online classes during emergencies. However, structured course design and regular evaluation of blended learning are limited. |
| | Institutional variation | Practices differ across institutions depending on infrastructure, leadership, and availability of digital resources. Some institutions are more advanced, while others are at an initial stage. |
| Objective 2: To identify challenges of blended learning | Digital infrastructure | Inadequate internet connectivity and limited access to digital devices remain major challenges, especially for students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds. |
| | Teacher preparedness | Many teachers lack proper training in blended pedagogy, online assessment, and digital tools, which affects effective implementation. |
| | Institutional support | Lack of clear guidelines, technical support systems, and workload management reduces the effectiveness of blended learning practices. |
| Objective 2: To identify opportunities of blended learning | Flexibility in learning | Blended learning allows students to access learning materials anytime, supporting self-paced and flexible learning. |
| | Skill development | Students and teachers develop digital skills that are useful for academic growth and future careers. |
| | Academic improvement | Blended learning supports student-centred learning, improves engagement, and ensures academic continuity during disruptions. |

Conclusion:

The present study concludes that blended learning has become an important approach in higher education by combining traditional classroom teaching with digital and online learning methods. Based on a qualitative analysis of existing literature and reports, the study shows that higher education institutions in Ranchi have gradually started adopting blended learning practices, especially after the increased use of technology in education. Digital platforms are mainly used to support classroom teaching through online classes, the sharing of study materials, and recorded lectures. However, blended learning is still at a developing stage and is not yet fully integrated into regular course design in many institutions. The study also highlights several challenges that affect the effective implementation of blended learning in Ranchi. Limited digital infrastructure, unstable internet connectivity, and unequal access to digital devices remain major barriers, particularly for students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds. Teachers often face difficulties due to limited training in blended pedagogy and increased workload while managing both online and offline teaching responsibilities. In addition, the absence of clear institutional guidelines and strong technical support systems further restricts the smooth adoption of blended learning.

Despite these challenges, the study finds that blended learning offers significant opportunities for improving higher education in Ranchi. It provides flexibility in learning, encourages independent and self-paced study, and helps students develop essential digital skills. For teachers and institutions, blended learning supports innovative teaching practices and academic continuity during disruptions. Overall, the study concludes that with improved infrastructure, continuous teacher training, inclusive student support, and proper institutional planning, blended learning can play a meaningful role in enhancing the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of higher education in Ranchi.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are suggested to strengthen the implementation of blended learning in higher education institutions in Ranchi. First, institutions should focus on improving digital infrastructure by ensuring reliable internet connectivity, updated computer facilities, and access to suitable learning management systems. Special support should be provided to students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds through device assistance, campus internet facilities, and access to digital libraries.

Second, regular training and capacity-building programs should be organized for teachers. Faculty members need practical training in blended teaching methods, use of digital tools, online assessment techniques, and course design. This will help teachers gain confidence and reduce difficulties in managing blended classes. Institutions should also establish technical support units to assist teachers and students in resolving digital issues.

Third, higher education institutions should develop clear policies and guidelines for blended learning. These guidelines should include structured course planning, assessment methods, and monitoring mechanisms to maintain academic quality. Blended learning models should be flexible and adapted to the needs of local learners.

Finally, collaboration between educational institutions, government agencies, and technology providers is essential. Policy-level support and funding for digital education can help ensure inclusive and sustainable blended learning practices, ultimately improving the quality and accessibility of higher education in Ranchi.

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