

A STUDY ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON INDIAN EDUCATION SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Schools, colleges, and universities in India are currently based only on traditional methods of learning, that is, they follow the traditional set up of face-to-face lectures in a classroom. Although many academic units have also started blended learning, still a lot of them are stuck with old procedures. The sudden outbreak of a deadly disease called Covid-19 caused by a Corona Virus shook the entire world. Around 32 crore learners stopped to move schools and colleges and all educational activities halted in India. The outbreak of COVID- 19 has taught us that change is inevitable. It has worked as a catalyst for the educational institutions to grow and opt for platforms with technologies, which have not been used before. The World Health Organization declared it as a pandemic. This situation challenged the education system across the world and forced educators to shift to an online mode of teaching overnight. Many academic institutions that were earlier reluctant to change their traditional pedagogical approach had no option but to shift entirely too online teaching-learning. This Research paper also put some light on the growth of Ed.Tech Start- ups during the time of pandemic and natural disasters and includes suggestions for academic institutions of how to deal with challenges associated with online learning. The Research paper will attempt an analysis of Origin of COVID 19, its impact on education, Role and importance of Internet during COVID 19.

Keywords: COVID 19, Lockdown, e-learning, Learning Management Systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a new public health crises threatening the world with the emergence and spread of 2019 novel coronavirus. The virus originated in bats and was transmitted to humans through yet unknown intermediary animals in Wuhan, Hubei province, China in December 2019.

The **COVID-19 pandemic in India** is a part of the worldwide pandemic of coronavirus (COVID-19) caused by SARS-CoV-2. As of 9 June 2023, according to Indian government figures, India has the second-highest number of confirmed cases in the world (after the USA) with 44,991,880 reported cases of COVID-19 infection and the third-highest number of COVID-19 deaths (after the USA and Brazil) at 531,884 deaths. In October 2021, the WHO estimated 4.7 million excess deaths, both directly and indirectly related to COVID-19 to have taken place in India.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following two specific objectives:

1. To examine positive and negative impact of COVID-19 on Indian education sector.
2. To analyse various Initiatives taken by Government of India for education during COVID-19 pandemic.

3. METHODOLOGY

The data for the present study is collected mainly through secondary sources like Books, national and International reports of various agency on Covid-19 and also collected from different authentic websites, journals and e-contents relating to impact of Covid-19 on educational system of India.

4. IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON EDUCATION

The endeavours of every developed country in terms of health system have resulted in failure. The world is in bafflement, failing to get its cure. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, one of the founding fathers of United States of America has wisely analysed that '**An Investment in Education Pays the Best Interest**'. This analysis of Franklin about investment should be an eye-opener for policy makers. As education a basic right of an individual is in pitiable form in our country India. The new entry of COVID-19 has changed the scenario once again. It has become so horrible that people fear it more than the tutelary deity of death. Lockdown is pivotal and effective step taken by the rulers. But at the same time around more than 200 countries in the world, majority of them are investing huge amounts of money in education sector to uplift their countries by boosting diligent ones who yearn to prove their valour in any field.

4.1 Positive Impact of COVID-19 on Education:

Though the outbreak of COVID-19 has created many negative impacts on education, educational institutions of India have accepted the challenges and trying their best to provide seamless support services to the students during the pandemic. Indian education system got the opportunity for transformation from traditional system to a new era.

The following points may be considered as the positive impacts:

- i. **Move towards Blended Learning:** COVID-19 has accelerated adoption of digital technologies to deliver education. Educational institutions moved towards blended mode of learning. It encouraged all teachers and students to become more technology savvy. New ways of delivery and assessments of learning opened immense opportunities for a major transformation in the area of curriculum development and pedagogy. It also gives access to large pools of learners at a time.
- ii. **Rise in use of Learning Management Systems:** Use of learning management systems by educational institutions became a great demand. It opened a great opportunity for the companies those have been developing and strengthening learning management systems for use educational institutions.
- iii. **Enhance the use of soft copy of learning material:** In lockdown situation students were not able to collect the hard copies of study materials and hence most of the students used of soft copies materials for reference.
- iv. **Improvement in collaborative work:** There is a new opportunity where collaborative teaching and learning can take on new forms. Collaborations can also happen among teachers across the world to benefit from each other.
- v. **Rise in Online Meetings:** The pandemic has created a massive rise in teleconferencing, virtual meetings, webinars and e-conferencing opportunities.
- vi. **Enhanced Digital Literacy:** The pandemic situation induced people to learn and use digital technology and resulted in increasing the digital literacy.

- vii. **Improved the Use of Electronic Media for Sharing Information:** Learning materials are shared among the students easily and the related queries are resolved through e-mail, SMS, phone calls and using different social Medias like WhatsApp or Facebook.
- viii. **Worldwide Exposure:** Educators and learners are getting opportunities to interact with peers from around the world. Learners adapted to an international community.
- ix. **Better Time Management:** Students are able to manage their time more efficiently in online education during pandemics.
- x. **Demand for Open and Distance Learning (ODL):** During the pandemic situation most of the students preferred ODL mode as it encourages self-learning providing opportunities to learn from diverse resources and customized learning as per their needs.

4.2 Negative Impact of COVID-19 on Education:

The COVID-19 pandemic affected educational systems across the world including India. . The number of cases of COVID-19 started to rise in March 2020 and many educational institutions and universities close down. Many countries especially India decided to temporarily close tells schools and colleges in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. According to the UNICEF the COVID-19 pandemic has affected more than 91% of students worldwide, with approximately 1.6 billion children and youngsters unable to attend physical schools due to temporary closures and lockdowns. All school and college activities were stopped in India as around 32 crore pupils left there school and colleges.

On 16 March, India declared countrywide lock-down of school and colleges. on 19th March the University Grant Commission (UGC) asked Universities to postpone exam until 31st March. The board examination conducted by CBSE and ICSE boards were postponed until 31st March at first and then later until July. Online learning quarter of households (24%) in India had access to the internet and there is a large rural-urban and gender divide. By April 2021 almost all states had opened schools.

Education sector has suffered a lot due to the outbreak of COVID-19. It has created many negative impacts on education and some of them are as analysed below:

- i. **Educational Activity Hampered:** Classes have been suspended and exams at different levels postponed. Different boards have already postponed the annual examinations and entrance tests. Admission process got delayed. Due to continuity in lockdown, student suffered a loss of nearly 3 months of the full academic year of 2020-21 which is going to further deteriorate the situation of continuity in education and the as students would face much difficulty in resuming schooling again after a huge gap.
- ii. **Impact on Employment:** Most of the recruitment got postponed due to COVID-19. Placements for students may also be affected with companies delaying the on board of students. Unemployment rate is expected to be increased due to this pandemic. In India, there is no recruitment in Govt. sector and fresh graduates fear withdrawal of their job offers from private sectors due to this pandemic. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's estimates on unemployment shot up from 8.4% in mid-March to 23% in early April 2020 and the urban unemployment rate to 30.9%.
- iii. **Unprepared Teachers and Students for Online Education:** Most of the teachers are just conducting lectures on video platforms such as Zoom, Google meet etc. which may not be real online learning without any dedicated online learning platform.

- iv. **Reduced Global Employment Opportunity:** Many Indians might have returned home after losing their jobs overseas due to COVID-19. Hence, the fresh students who are likely to enter the job market shortly may face difficulty in getting suitable employment.
- v. **Increased Responsibility of Parents to educate their Wards:** Some educated parents are able to guide but some may not have the adequate level of education needed to teach children in the house.
- vi. **Loss of Nutrition due to School Closure:** Mid-day meals is a school meal programme of the Government of India which is designed to provide better the nutritional food to school-age children nationwide. The closure of schools has serious implications on the daily nutrition of students as the mid-day meal schemes have temporarily been shut.
- vii. **Access to Digital World:** As many students have limited internet access and may not be able to afford computer, laptop or supporting mobile phones in their homes, online teaching-learning may create a digital divide among students.
- viii. **Access to Global Education:** The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector. A large number of Indian students who are enrolled in many Universities abroad, especially in worst affected countries are now leaving those countries and if the situation persists, in the long run, there will be a significant decline in the demand for international higher education.
- ix. **Payment of Schools, Colleges fee got delayed:** During lockdown most of the parents were faced the unemployment situation so they may not be able to pay the fee for that particular time periods which may affect the private institutes.
- x. **Govt. and educational institutes should plan to continue the educational activities maintaining social distancing.** 30-40% students and teachers may attend schools/colleges in two shifts per day to carry on educational activities by obeying guidelines for COVID-19.

5. INITIATIVES OF EDUCATION SYSTEM DURING COVID-19

To prevent spread of pandemic COVID-19, the Government of India has taken number of preventive measures. Looking at this challenge of colleges and schools being shut, government of India, as well as state governments and private players have undertaken the proper initiatives. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has made several arrangements, including online portals and educational channels through Direct to Home TV, Radios for students to continue learning.

During lockdown, students are using popular **social media** tools like **WhatsApp, Zoom, Google meet, Telegram, YouTube live, Facebook live** etc. for online teaching learning system. ICT initiative of MHRD is a unique platform which combines all digital resources for online education. The digital initiatives of MHRD for secondary as well as higher education during COVID-19 are listed as below:

Secondary Education

- i. **Diksha Portal:** During pandemic through this portal Govt. has been provided e-Learning content for students, teachers, and parents aligned to the curriculum, including video lessons, worksheets, textbooks and assessments. This portal has more than 80,000 e-Books for classes 1 to 12 created by CBSE, NCERT in multiple languages.
- ii. **National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER)** portal provides a host of resources for students and teachers in multiple languages including books, interactive

modules and videos. Content is mapped to the curriculum for classes 1-12, including aligned resources for teachers. It has a total of 14527 files including 401 collections, 2779 documents, 1345 interactive, 1664 audios, 2586 images and 6153 videos on different languages

- iii. **E-Pathshala** is an e-Learning app by NCERT for classes 1 to 12 in multiple languages. The app houses books, videos, audio, etc. aimed at students, educators and parents in multiple languages including Hindi, Urdu, and English. In this web portal NCERT has deployed 1886 audios, 2000 videos, 696 e-Books and 504 Flip Books for classes 1 to 12 in various languages.

Higher Education

- i. **Swayam Prabha:** portal has 32 DTH TV channels transmitting educational contents on 24 x 7 basis.

This is a big e-learning platform providing 32 channels all across the country using DD Free Dish Set Top Box and Antenna. The channels cover both school education (classes 9 to 12) and higher education including undergraduate, postgraduate, engineering, Out-of-school children, vocational courses and teacher training in arts, science, commerce, social sciences and humanities subjects, engineering, technology, law, medicine, agriculture etc.,.

- ii. **Swayam:** is a national online education platform hosting 1900 courses covering both school (classes 9 to 12) and higher education in all disciplines.

- iii. **PG Pathshala:** is an e-learning platform for postgraduate students, can access eBooks, online courses and study materials during this lockdown period.

5. SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are made to improve education in India in the context of COVID-19 pandemic:

- i. India should accept the Full technology for development of education.
- ii. The Indian govt. should enact sound laws for private schools so that there will be no exploitation with the teachers.
- iii. Internet is a fundamental right of citizen so it should be open for all without any discrimination
- iv. India must invest more and more on education.
- v. The schools should start classwork of internet for students.
- vi. The teachers should take training of accessing internet and electronic devices.

CONCLUSION

In India, the COVID-19 outbreak has been declared an epidemic in all its states and union territories. To combat COVID-19, lockdown was imposed on March 25, 2020 which has adversely affected the education system in the country. It has changed the traditional education system to the educational technologies (Ed.Tech) model, where teaching and assessments are conducted online.

There is a Chinese proverb which says that “if you want to live for more than hundred years then you have only one option to educate people”. I hope effective and pivotal steps will be taken to overcome the high lightened problems which have not been taken yet.

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