



Impact of Covid-19 on educational sector in India

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Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted every aspect of life. This effect has been felt on all the sectors of the economy. Among these the education sector of India as well as of world has been terribly effected Schools, Colleges & Universities are closed to control the spread of the Coronavirus. The closure of educational institution has impacted 80% of world's student population which has raised an unparalleled challenge for the minsters and educational institution to rethink and wrestle in order to ensure continuity of learning while predicting long term closure. According to UNESCO, 63 million teachers are affected in 165 countries. A total of 1.3 billion learners around the world are not able to attend the schools or universities and approximately 320 million learners are affected in India alone.

It has changed the traditional educational system to the educational technologies model in which teaching and assessments are conducted online both the positive and negative impacts of COVID-19 on Indian education system are discussed and some fruitful suggestions are also pointed to carry out the educational activities during the pandemic situation.

Keywords: Covid-19, coronavirus, UNESCO

Introduction

Indian government has announced the Lockdown and closure of Educational Institutions as Logical solution to enforce social distancing within the communities. The Nation wise Lockdown had a tremendous impact on the educational system of the country.

The corona pandemic has made all the schools and colleges across the country to adapt online teaching through various apps like ZOOM, GOOGLE MEET, MS TEAMS and many more. Classes and examinations are conducted online whereas the assignments are submitted through E-mail wats app and other digital platform. But only a handful of schools and universities could adopt such methods and the low income private and government schools are quite inefficient to adopt the same thus resulting in shut down. India should establish a good infrastructure for online education as it will help in advancement of our country. This will help in creating the future entrepreneurs and professionals this is one of the ways to beat unemployment and increase business skills amongst the youth.

Objective of Study

1. To know the current situation of this pandemic and its positive impact of COVID-19 on Education sector.
2. To find out the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on this sector and to explore the corrective steps to overcome the negative impact.
3. To know the various measures taken by government of India for education sector during this pandemic.

Methodology

Data and information presented in study are collected from various reports and article published by national and international agencies on impact of COVID-19 pandemic information is also collected from various authentic websites. Some journal are also refereed relating to impact of COVID-19 on education system are refereed.

Limitation of the Study

- Time constraint is the main problem to prepare this paper.
- No primary data that is direct feedback of stake holder's considered for this research.
- Only Indian perspective is considered here.

Steps taken by the Government to ensure no loss of education during Covid-19

During COVID-19 Pandemic, Government of India has held various consultations with the States and UTs at different levels. Also, a brain storming session was held with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in January, 2021 for taking their views/ perspectives to assess and to bridge the learning gap in the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools are under the domain of respective State and UT Governments. However, to ensure that every student gets continued access to education, a multi-pronged approach has been adopted. A comprehensive initiative called PM e-VIDYA has been initiated as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan on 17th May, 2020, which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education. The initiative includes:

DIKSHA (one nation, one digital platform) is the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content for school education in states/UTs and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all grades are available on it. 35 of the 36 states and UTs have on boarded on DIKSHA platform and contextualized the content as per the local need.

One earmarked Swayam Prabha TV channel per class from Class 1 to 12 (one class, one channel). Extensive use of Radio, Community radio and CBSE Podcast- Shiksha Vani. Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired developed on Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube.

Besides, the Ministry has undertaken a proactive initiative, named, 'MANODARPAN' covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond.

Positive impact of COVID-19

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.

- **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.
- **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 (Misra, 2020) [5].
- **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.
- **Improvement in collaborative work:** There is a new opportunity where collaborative teaching and learning can take on new forms. Collaborations can also happen among faculty/teachers across the world to benefit from each other (Misra, 2020) [5].
- **Rise in online meetings:** The pandemic has created a massive rise in teleconferencing, virtual meetings, webinars and e-conferencing opportunities
- **Enhanced Digital Literacy:** The pandemic situation induced people to learn and use digital technology and resulted in increasing the digital literacy. 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.
- **Worldwide exposure:** Educators and learners are getting opportunities to interact with peers from around the world. Learners adapted to an international community.
- **Better time management:** Students are able to manage their time more efficiently in online education during pandemics.

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.

Negative impact of COVID-19 on education sector

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 pointed below:

- **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.
- **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 because of the
- **Current situation.** The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's estimates on unemployment shot up from 8.4% in mid-March to 23% in early April and the urban unemployment rate to 30.9% (Educationasia.in). When the unemployment increases then the education gradually decreases as people struggle for food rather than education.
- **Unprepared teachers/students for online education:** Not all teachers/students are good at it or at least not all of them were ready for this sudden transition from face to face learning to online learning. 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.
- **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.
- **Loss of nutrition due to school closure:** Midday 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. Various studies have pointed out that mid-day meals are also an important contributing factor for increased enrolment in the schools
- **Access to digital world:** As many students have limited or no internet access and many students 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. The lockdown has hit the poor students very hard in India as most of them are unable to explore online learning according to various reports. Thus the online teaching-learning method during pandemic COVID-19 may enhance the gap between rich/poor and urban/rural.
- **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, a there will be a significant decline in the demand for international higher education.

- **Payment of Schools, Colleges fee got delayed:** During this lockdown most of the parents will be facing the unemployment situation so they may not be able to pay the fee for that particular time periods which may affect the private institutes.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 is a pandemic disease caused by a virus that has affected the education sector of India, Education is the Pillar of every country's development. In the world, most schools college's universities are closed to control the spread of the COVID-19.

The school closure brings difficulties for student's families and teachers. So distance learning is a solution to continue the education system. The Indian government and different stake holders of education have explored the possibility of open and distance learning by adopting different digital technologies to cope up with present crises of COVID-19. India is not fully equipped to make education reach all corners of the nation via digital platforms. The students who are not privileged like others will suffer due to the present choice of digital platforms. The priority should be utilised digital technology to create an advantageous position for millions of students in India. It is need of the hour for the educational institutions to strengthen their knowledge and information technology infrastructure to be ready for facing COVID-19 like situations.

If the COVID-19 crises stretches longer there is an urgent need to take efforts on maximum utilisation of online platforms. India should develop creative strategies to ensure that all children must have sustainable access to learning during COVID-19 pandemic. As online practice is benefiting the students immensely, it should be continued after the lockdown.

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