

Impact of Covid-19 on Education System in India: An Overview

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Abstract:

Educational institutions in India are currently based only on traditional methods of learning. They follow the traditional set up of face-to-face lectures in a classroom. Indian education system is still not mature at both the urban and rural area. Midday meal is the program organized to attract the students to get education. Under these circumstances government imposed nationwide lockdown on March 25th, 2020 to combat COVID-19, has made severe impact on the education system. Many academic units have also started blended learning, still a lot of them are stuck with old procedures. India has the world's second largest school system, after China. According to UNESCO, A total of 1.3 billion learners around the world were not able to attend schools or universities, and approximately 320 million learners are affected in India alone. It has changed the traditional education system to the educational technologies model in which teaching and assessments are conducted online. 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 to online teaching-learning. Both the positive and negative impacts of COVID-19 on Indian Education system are observed. This paper aims to analyze the Impact of COVID-19 on Indian Education System, focusing on education during online teaching and assessment of students getting online classes in this pandemic from sittings at home.

Key notes: Covid-19, Pandemic, Education.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Indian government has announced the lockdown and closure of educational institutions as a logical solution to enforce social distancing within communities. The nationwide lockdown has had a tremendous impact on the education system of the country, especially for students from rural areas. Since the Indian education system is dominated by classroom study, the present scenario has made the functioning of the educational institutions go very difficult.

All educational activities like examinations, school admissions, entrance tests of various universities and competitive examinations, others, are being held during this period. As the days are passing by with no immediate solution to stop this outbreak, the closure of schools and universities is hugely affecting the learning across the country. The structure of the Indian education system i.e. learning methodology, teaching techniques & assessment methodologies, is quite affected, resulting in a shift to online education with most focus on virtual education to accomplish the set aims and objectives. 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 a shutdown.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the Impact of COVID-19 on Indian Education System.
2. How to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 on students for their smooth education.
3. To analyse importance of online learning.
4. To analyse Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Challenges (SWOC) of e-learning modes in the time of crisis.

Methodology: In this research paper the data for the present study is collected mainly through secondary sources the objectivity of historical and current writings has been used to develop a frame work of the study and to arrive at an unbiased conclusion. The data collected with a view to identify and analysis the impact of covid 19 on education in India.

Impact of Covid19 on Education: Corona virus that originated in china, spread at an alarming rate throughout the world, took lives in thousands and put its adverse effects on millions. The endeavors of every developed country in terms of health system have resulted in failure. Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of United States of America has wisely analyzed that an investment in education pays the best interest. This analysis of Franklin about investment should be an eye-opener for policy makers or rulers. As education a basic right of an individual is in pitiable form in India. The new entry of Covid-19 has changed the scenario. 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 valor in any field .In our country unfortunately this sector is run by bureaucrats selected by ruling parties who have no experience .The more we bureaucratize the education system the more it will fall down. The trauma can be solved only by establishing modern systems equipped with scientific technologies and scrupulous teachers. This will definitely yield paramount mountains and help in solidification of education system. Without investing there will be no change and if done it should be utilized in a proper-proper manner. 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.

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.

❖ **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.

❖ **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:

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 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.

❖ **Reduced global employment opportunity:** Some may lose their jobs from other countries and the pass out students may not get their job outside India due to restrictions caused by COVID-19. 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. Many students who have already got jobs through campus interviews may not be able to join their jobs due to lockdown. The Indians who have been doing their jobs abroad may lose their jobs. Recent graduates in India are of also fearing for withdrawal of job offers from corporate sectors because of movement restriction in the current pandemic situation

❖ **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:** 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. 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. integrated with a present-day mainstream higher education system.

❖ **Social Distancing:** 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.

❖ **Lack of internet and appropriate technology:** At current times, access to technology and internet is an urgent requirement. So, the digital capabilities and the required infrastructure must reach to the remotest and poorest communities to facilitate the students to continue their education during the pandemics. There is a need to deploy public funds to fix the internet gap and ensure that students continue to learn digitally. The state governments/private organisations should come up with ideas to address this issue of digital education.

III. OBSERVATION AND RECOMMENDATION

This pandemic has revealed some of the major loopholes in the Indian education system. The closure of schools has made a severe impact on marginalized students. One of the critical trends that can be followed is the need to have a combined approach to online learning with increase in investment on the upgrading of the technology infrastructure of educational institutions. Stress needs to be given to training the teachers. All higher education institutes now are aware of the importance of technology and should take serious measures to conduct technology-driven education through the learning management system. It is recommended that educational institutions should use technology in all aspects. This pandemic shows the partnership between technology and education is going to stay forever.

One more suggestion is that education Institutes can divide the courses into conventional teaching and online teaching, it will help in inculcating the technology into the classrooms. Online teaching will increase digital literacy among teachers and students which will increase their exposure and learning and making them more employable for the digital world-leading thereby contributing to social sustainability.

IV. CONCLUSION:

COVID-19 has impacted immensely the education sector of India. Though it has created many challenges, various opportunities are also evolved. The Indian Govt. and different stakeholders of education have explored the possibility of Open and Distance learning by adopting different digital technologies to cope up with the present crisis of COVID-19. India is not fully equipped to make education reach all corners of the nation via digital platforms. The students who aren't privileged like the others will suffer due to the present choice of digital platforms. The priority should be to utilize digital technology to create an advantageous position for millions of young students in India.

Even if the COVID-19 crisis stretches longer, there is an urgent need to take efforts on maximum utilization of online platforms. India should develop creative strategies to ensure that all children must have sustainable access to learning during pandemic COVID19. As online practice is benefitting the students immensely, it should be continued after the lockdown. Further detailed statistical study may be undertaken to explore the impact of COVID-19 on education system of 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

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