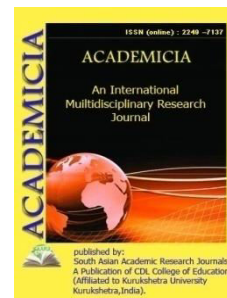




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“IMPACT ON COVID-19 IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA”

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in human history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 200 countries. Human Civilization has come a long way in terms of education. Starting from the 'Pathshala'-'Gurukul' system to modern-day Keywords, we made some massive strides. But, with arrival of Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19), an autopsy has happened to this millennium-old education system. This has pointed us to realize that, when we needed to shift the education paradigm from traditional chalk-talk method to online LMS-Blended learning technique all of a sudden within weeks, we are actually not ready. From premier institutions to the school/ colleges/ universities in rural area, everyone has struggled to some extent and huge amount of ground level remedial work need to be done to overcome the hurdles. Institutions need to be armed with proper infrastructure, teachers need to be trained, contents need to be developed, collaborations need to be built and the list goes on. In this paper we have discussed the challenges faced by the higher education learners and institutes in India. 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 settings at home.

KEYWORDS: LMS, Online Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Indian education system is still not mature at both the urban and rural area. Mid-day meal is the program organized to attract the students to get education. Under these circumstances government imposed nation wise lockdown on March 25th, 2020 to combat COVID-19, has made severe impact on the education system. India has the world's second largest school system, after China. According to UNESCO, 63 million teachers were affected in 165 countries. 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. Both the positive and negative impacts of COVID-19 on Indian Education system are observed.

COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world much sooner than anyone could have imagined or expected. Globally interconnected societies, for which whole humanity took so much pride for years, have transformed into life in lockdown equipped with restricted mobility. Economies are collapsing in rapid pace and massive unemployment and recession will follow in the near future. Worldwide the governing bodies, educational institutions, public and private organizations, all are affected and radically changed their way of functioning within weeks and unfortunately, might be for longer run too. The education sector is witnessing massive changes and adopting revolutionary ideas shifting entire pedagogical approach to keep the momentum going. This shift in education from traditional classroom learning to computer-based learning might be one of the largest educational experiments to date.

Objectives:

1. How the Indian education system is facing the impact of COVID-19.
2. To study the positive impact online education.
3. To study the negative impact online education.

Purpose of the study:

All systems have strengths and weaknesses. Maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses in order not to miss the opportunity to move forward should be the goal. The main purpose of the study is to analyze the impact of COVID-19 on the Indian education system. It covers the impact of COVID-19 on rural and urban students, Higher education Institutions.

Effect created by pandemic on Higher Education in India

Since the second week of March 2020, state governments across the country began shutting down schools/ colleges/ universities temporarily as a precautionary measure to stop the spread of the Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19) and still there is no certainty when they will reopen. This is a crucial time for the board/ semester examinations, entrance tests of various universities and several competitive examinations. With each passing day, having no immediate remedy to stop this unwanted outbreak, prolonged closures of schools, colleges and universities, in addition to the short-term impact on the continuation of learning for young education seekers in India, will create far-reaching far more dangerous consequences overall. Most of the institutions had to take initiatives through ICT (e.g. ZOOM, Google Meet, Webex, Go To Meeting etc.) to remove the sudden distance barrier from education, providing priority to the safety issues of students and teachers both. Numbers of Indian students get them enrolled in reputed foreign universities every year, mostly in American and European countries, which are worst affected by the pandemic. Such students now have no other option but to think of alternate ways. If Situation persists, demand for such students will see a huge drop eventually. In short term, international student travel or exchanges will experience eventual decrease. UNESCO have estimated that around 1.26 billion or in other words 70% of the children around the globe have experienced

educational interruption during this period, where majority of these children comes from “low-tech or no-tech” countries, with India’s contribution of 300 million⁴. It’s fair to say that, higher education sector is experiencing tectonic shift, standing still. Not a very long ago, several leaders of reputed global universities held strong opinion that, online mode of teaching could never match with class-room teaching environment, even though the education technologists were vocal about technology-friendly education forecast for years now. Eventually, it has happened and teachers and students are dealing with the sudden new paradigm of completely tech-mediated education. Technology became the biggest and only intermediary of teaching–learning processes and with no denial at all, definitely it’s the need of the hour and the way forward. What the whole higher education is up to is very much different from all the educational systems evolved since the starting point of human civilization, namely, Gurukula system and traditional school.

Government and Institutional Roles

Few educational institutes gracefully and actively acted upon the changing situation and transformed community interactions online. The organization is standing by its students during these distressing moments. Graduation, post-graduation levels classes are now being conducted online. Student-faculty interactions have graded to the virtual world. Access to technology and faculty determination is contributing to the success for this redefined paradigm shift, ensuring the cover up for academic calendar without the undesired break. Institutes are employing webinars as knowledge sharing sessions, video calls for one-to-one interactions, also made their admission process online in totality. Online applications are being accepted from aspirants desirous of applying for fresh batches followed by virtual/online interviews. Results too are to be announced online and fees payment and other admission formalities will also be completed online. Eventually governments will plan reopening College/ university campuses sooner or later. New modes of social distancing will continue to apply for quite some time for sure, affecting on-campus learning in physical spaces, library reading and on-campus student activities, in short almost everything in campus culture. When we discuss in particular about Indian Higher Education and its ability to maneuver the change, we must keep in mind that the digital shift in India is relatively new, even for overall Asia as well, evident from the fact that the first Asian Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) was developed by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in 2012 only.

These E-learning social platforms have emerged as one of the best measures to the continuity of learning of the students during this outbreak, changing national education landscape by addressing the much needed demand-supply gap. It also broadened the scope for education and transcended it beyond classroom boundaries. e-Gyan Kosh, Gyandarshan, Gyandhara, DIKSHA, e-Adhyayan, e-Pathshala, e-Yantra, FOSSEE, SWAYAM, e-Sodhsindhu, Sodhganga, Swayam Prabha, Vidwan, Sakshat, National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT), National Digital Library of India, Virtual Labs etc. have become boons in disguise⁵. E-learning will revolutionize the academic scenario by breaking various educational barriers in coming years.

All academic decision and UGC recommendations regarding the new examination method, evaluation pattern, research, and field study etc. also have not reached or appreciated across the mass too. Most of the stakeholders have given thumbs up, but one third of them are unknown of the governmental developments or announcements [educational survey report done in West

Bengal]6. But, the change is necessary as the time and scenario has evolved, what was relevant decades ago might not be equivalent today and definitely will not be the same in future. The future of education will find no room to ignore the utilization of technology as a way of life.

Various challenges of traditional learning methods such as, repetition, cost-effectiveness and monotonous design, limitation to the classroom boundaries, fixed timing and fixed concept for learning, can now be overcome through e-learning advancements. High speed internet connectivity, rise in numbers of Smartphone/ Computer users and incredible enthusiasm at the government level have remarkably pushed the growth of the digital/ online education in India. Latest e-learning platforms are helping teachers, students and institutions in evaluating their performance by proper training, quizzes, interactive sessions, providing enough opportunity to address queries using webinars/e-workshops/skill development programs and its accessibility anytime and anywhere. On a brighter note, students are in favor of studying through online classes too, but they feel that there is lack of co-curricular activities in online mode of conducting classes. Universities must design proper plan, so that while studying their regular courses, students also can participate in fun-loving activities helping them to gain whole-hearted interest in the online lectures². Definitely, E-learning is going to be embedded in institutions' policies and the portfolio in the post COVID-19 era.

Positive impact on education system:

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.

- 1. Develop the use of soft copy of learning material :-** In lock down situation, students were not able to collect the hard copies of study materials and hence most of the students used softcopy materials of reference.
- 2. Improvement in collaborative work-**There is a new opportunity where collaborative teaching and learning can take on new forms.
- 3. Rise in online meetings:-**The pandemic has created a massive rise in teleconferencing, virtual meetings, and webinars and e-conferencing opportunities.
- 4. Enhanced digital literacy:-**The pandemic situation induced people to learn and use digital technology and resulted in increasing the digital literacy.
- 5. 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 Face book.
- 6. Worldwide exposure:-**Educators and learners are getting opportunities to interact with peers from around the world. Learners adapted to an international community.
- 7. Better time management-**Students are able to manage their time more efficiently in online education during pandemics.

8. Demand for Open and Distance Learning:-During the pandemic situation, most of the students preferred Open and Distance Learning mode as it encourages self-learning providing opportunities to learn from diverse resources and customized learning as per their needs.

Negative impact on education system:

Indian education system 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:

- 1. Educational activity hampered :-** Schools are closed and classes have been suspended. Different boards have already postponed the annual examinations and entrance tests across India.
- 2. Unpreparedness of teachers and students:-**Teachers and students are unprepared for online education; they were not ready for this sudden transition from face to face learning to online learning.
- 3. Parents' role:-**In urban area some educated parents are able to guide but some may not have the adequate level of education needed to teach children in the house.
- 4. Digital gadgets:-** Especially in rural area 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 the more unable to explore online learning according to various reports.
- 5. Create Difference: This online teaching:-**learning method creates a big gap between rich v/s poor and urban v/s rural students.

CONCLUSION

Being in India, we are tired of listening, quality education comes at a huge cost and we have experience edit too, but with increasing e-learning trend/facilities, education has become cost-effective for poor/lesser privileged students. Economic hurdle will disappear. For a country like India that's remarkable. Learners can focus on building careers or becoming job-ready, discovering inner interests effectively and efficiently. It is the dawn of the unprecedented concept of e-learning, which got the potential to nurture the coveted change in the entire education system in India and provide a much better learning environment for the aspiring millennial. Looking at the brighter side, one must admit Covid-19 may have worked as the catalyst for the inter-change reactions that has been long pending. In a developing country like India where a light-year-gap between the socio-economic backgrounds of students in the most real thing and the quality of educational institutions too vary from place to place, the sudden paradigm shift towards digitalization has not been easy. But online education is here to stay and there's no other option but to adapt to it. Trained teachers, refreshed-revitalized curricula and tailor-made tools/Learning management systems are future for students to stay involved and active in teaching-learning.

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