

“Impact of COVID -19 on Higher Education in India”

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Abstract

The world is fighting COVID-19 and economies across the world have declared a lockdown. Work from home (WFH) has become the standard, particularly for service organizations. The spread of pandemic Covid-19 has severely interrupted every aspects of human life including education. It's created an unprecedented test on education. In many educational institutions round the world, campuses are closed and teaching learning process has moved online. Internationalization has bogged down significantly. In India, about 32 crore learners stopped to maneuver schools/colleges and every one educational activities delivered to an end. Despite of all these challenges, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have reacted positively and managed to make sure the continuity of teaching –learning process, research and repair to the society with some tools and techniques during the pandemic. This research paper highlights on major impacts of Covid-19 on HEIs in India. Some measures taken by HEIs and academic authorities of India to supply seamless educational services during the crisis are argued. Because of Covid-19 pandemic, many new modes of learning, new perspectives, new trends are emerged and therefore the same may continue as we work ahead to a replacement tomorrow. So, a number of the post Covid -19 trends which can allow imagining new ways of teaching learning process of higher education in India are outlined.

Keywords: Covid-19, Higher education, research, employment, virtual learning.

Introduction

On March 11, 2020 World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 as an epidemic. Covid-19 has exaggerated quite 4.5 million peoples worldwide (WHO). The first phase of lockdown was announced by the Prime Minister and again extending the lockdown period in several phases therefore the Covid-19 pandemic has forced schools and colleges to pack up temporarily and is causing havoc within the education system. Consistent with UNESCO report quite 157 crore students across 191 countries severely impacted by closure of educational institutions due to corona virus. Most of the Governments round the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an effort to control the spread of the pandemic Covid-19. This worldwide closure has impacted drastically the world's student population. Closing universities and cancelling classes became a COVID -19 realities in many countries of the planet, resulting in enormous unease and hesitation.

Governments around the world are making efforts to reduce the immediate impact of closure of educational institutions particularly for more in danger and disadvantaged communities and trying to facilitate the continuity of education for all using different digital modes of learning. The national lockdown and therefore the ascending health crisis were prominent the education of the scholars also, with their universities being shut and their syllabi stranded, until the industry decided to begin a

revolution instead. Reinventing their radicals and making a conscious option to grow even within the time of crisis, the schools decided to digitalize the world. The tutorial reform in India within the COVID-19 era seems to be a live example of how need truly is that the mother of invention or reinvention, during this scenario. Allowing educational institutions to adopt online learning and introduce a virtual study culture, the pandemic is already steering the world forward with technological innovation and advancements.

Impact on Higher education

Pandemic Covid-19 has harshly affected the entire educational system of India also because of the globe but a number of the foremost impacted areas of upper education of India are as pointed below. **Educational activities affected most** : Outbreak of Covid-19 has compelled lockdown in every sector including education. The institutions got closed with end of educational activities and created many challenges for the stake holders (Pravat, 2020a). So, the varied activities like admissions, examinations, entrance exams, competitive examinations conducted by various boards/schools/colleges/ universities are postponed. Many entrance tests for higher study got cancelled which created a tremendous challenge within the lifetime of a student of higher education. The first challenge was to continue teaching learning process when students, faculties and staff could not be physically present on the campuses. The obvious solution for the institutions was to depend on online teaching learning. However, within a comparatively short time, HEIs are ready to provide support to the scholars through online modes. Covid-19 has accelerated adoption of digital technologies to deliver higher education. It encouraged all teachers and students to become more techno savvy. The HEIs have started conducting orientation programmes, induction meetings and counseling classes with the assistance of various e-conferencing tools like Google Meet, Skype, and YouTube live, Facebook live, WebEx etc. to supply support services to the scholars. This initiative has taken to make an efficient virtual environment of teaching learning and to make motivation among students for online activities. The teachers and students improved the utilization of electronic media for sharing information by making use of WhatsApp, Google drive, Telegram, Twitter etc. (Pravat, 2020b). They have been sharing important documents with the group members and creating online local repository also. Students are advised to submit the scanned copies of the assignments or making pdfs to the institution through email. Institutions have also started receiving internship reports and projects through email during the lockdown for Covid-19.

Diverse impact on Academic research & Professional Development:

Covid-19 has both negative and positive impacts on research. If we take the negative side, it's made impossible for researchers to travel and work along side others nationally and internationally. Some joint research work or project work are made complicated to finish. Some scientific laboratory testing/research work couldn't be conducted. If we take a quick look at the positive side, academicians got much time to enhance their theoretical research work. Academicians got familiar with technological methods and improved their research. Webinars and e-conferences became normal methods for sharing expertise among students and academicians around the globe with similar issues. They might get much time to consider professional development by doing research and to enhance knowledge by sharing ideas

through webinars and e-conferences. They improved their technical skill and will get the capacity for publishing articles in journals, publishing books during this free time.

Strictly exaggerated the educational assessment system:

Most of the external examinations are postponed and almost the central assessments are cancelled. The cancellation of assessments has negative impact on students' learning. Many institutions are managing the central assessments through online mode using different digital tools but the rearrangement of the external assessments, features a direct impact on the tutorial and occupational way forward for students' life. This uncertainty has created anxiety among students as they're stuck within the same grade/class without promotion. Similarly, most of the students who had appeared final/board examinations would suffer tons as by the time they get their certificates, it'd be too late for them to use for the forthcoming school year in other countries thanks to lockdown.

Reduced employment opportunities:

Many entrance tests job recruitments got cancelled which created negative impact with an excellent challenge within the lifetime of a student of higher education. The Indians who are doing their jobs abroad became upset of their job withdrawal also. In India, there's no recruitment in Govt. sector and fresh graduates are in pressure of fearing withdrawal of job offers from corporate sectors due to the pandemic situation. Many students may lose their jobs from India and overseas. The pass out students might not get their job outside India because of various restrictions caused by Covid-19. All these facts imply towards increase of percentage due to this pandemic. With increase of unemployment situation, the interest for education may gradually decrease as people struggle for food instead of education (Pravat, 2020b).

Challenges in education

A lot of challenges are created by Covid-19. The HEIs have reacted positively and adopted various strategies to face the crisis during the pandemic. The Government of India has also taken number of precautionary measures to stop spread of pandemic Covid-19. The MHRD and University Grants Commission (UGC) have made a number of arrangements of many virtual platforms with online depositories, e-books and other online teaching/learning materials, educational channels through Direct to Home TV, Radios for students to continue their 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 furthermore a singular platform which mixes all digital resources for online education (Pravat, 2020a). UGC has released Guidelines on Examinations and Academic calendar in sight of COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown on 29th April, 2020 (UGC notice). All terminal examinations are postponed and shifted to July 2020 and suggested commencement of classes from August 2020. UGC has also prepared complete calendar for the tutorial session 2020-2021 with new dates keeping in sight of the lockdown. a number of the digital initiatives of UGC & MHRD for education during COVID-19 are pointed as below:

- e – Gyankosh ; Gyandharshan; Gyandhara; Swayam; e – Adhyayan; e – Pathya; National Digital Library of India (NDLI) ; e – Yantra; FOSSEE; Virtual Labs, e – Shodhsindhu; Shodhganga; VIDWAN; National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT); SAKSHAT

Post Covid-19 Trends of higher Education

Change is unavoidable which has been forced upon the society due to Covid-19. The opportunities created by the pandemic Covid-19 will lead towards a far better tomorrow. Tomorrow are going to be a replacement morning which can entirely be in our own hands. New technologies will definitely challenge the normal paradigms like classroom lectures, modes of learning and modes of assessment. The new trends will allow the education sector to imagine new ways of teaching learning and a few trends could also be pointed as below.

- May give confidence on personalized learning
- Student Attendance may hamper
- National and International student mobility for higher study could also be reduced
- Learning with social distancing may carry on
- Educational institutions possibly will run with different shifts per day
- May raise the gap between honored and poor students
- Teaching learning may run with technology
- Assessment system could also be changed to new shape
- Demand for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and online learning may grow
- Combined learning may take the leading role
- Student debt crisis may rise
- Unemployment rate is predicted to be enlarged

Teaching and Learning after COVID-19

For Teachers

1. Students and teachers got introduced with diverse online platforms which confidently remain in use in future also. The format of time table would change to 24 x 7 teaching learning.
2. 24 x 7 may help to make stronger bonding between faculty and students. This may help better understanding of scholars.
3. Flexi-time for faculty also as for college kids is feasible which can help in maintaining work life balance.
4. The faculty should establish themselves as “competent” individuals who can deliver what the scholars expect. To determine faculty should move in research and research publications and gain experience /skills in online teaching.

For Students

1. Choice based credit system is now accessible. Students don't have to travel but join online classes.
2. Sharing expert faculty lectures to the scholars at university, national and international level is feasible.
3. Students can attend lectures from guests; professional from any corner of the planet through video conferencing is accessible.
4. A student living within the interior of the country can master a course on AI or big data without paying a substantial fee. Indeed, over subsequent few years, the amount of scholars who get an education online will grow considerably.
5. This pandemic busted comfort zone of teachers and Institutes. And a replacement quest of survival begins in e-education era.

Review of Literature

1. Professor Sahana Murthy explained the context behind the surge of online education in India because the idea of "Emergency Remote Teaching". She asserted, however, that there's a difference between emergency remote teaching and effective online learning.
2. Dr. Ashwin Fernandes acknowledged that COVID-19 brought a "second wind to education in India." He believed this is often due to three main reasons. Firstly, the increased use of technology for various ideas, especially for education, has "instilled confidence for users" Secondly, India has tried to follow the footsteps of UK, US and UNESCO models of online education and lastly it depends on how both these factors "level the playing field for Indian universities."
3. Dr. V. Sridhar explained the "Taxonomy of Online Education", which incorporates "Learning Management", "Course Delivery", "Assessment and Evaluation" and "Sync Course Conduct." believing Dr. Fernandes on the overloading of network connections resulting in the poor connectivity experienced by students in online education, he suggested a couple of potential solutions. Firstly, we should always record for later reference and providing internet connectivity through DTH or cable networks or give internet connection through landline infrastructure. Another roadblock to online education, is that the monitoring of online assessment. so as to enhance internet connection in remote areas, connections might be taken from cities or places with an opportunity of upper internet connection and access.
4. Consistent with Antonius Raghubsanie, Head of Teaching and Cultural Centres in India, British Council, "During the virtual classes, we are ensuring that students can have an interactive experience with their teachers and classmates, almost like how British Council classroom experiences are. Additionally, there's a pool of exciting and interactive online learning resources to enhance English grammar, vocabulary and build knowledge across subjects. From young learners to working professionals, anyone anywhere can access these resources, available freed from cost."

Conclusion

This paper has outlined various impacts of Covid-19 on education in India. The recent pandemic created a chance for change in pedagogical approaches and introduction of virtual education altogether levels of education.

The impact of COVID-19 will remain for years, if not longer. The new normal is going to be that significantly larger numbers of scholars will attend classes from home. While this trend was already on the uptick, it'll receive a huge impetus due to COVID-19.

COVID-19 has struck our education system sort of a lightning bolt and shaken it to its core. Even as the primary technological revolution forged today's system of education, we will expect a special quite educational model to emerge from COVID-19. Virtual education is that the most preferred mode of education at this point of crisis thanks to the outbreak of Covid-19. The post Covid-19 education seems to be an education with widely accepted online/virtual education which can perhaps be a parallel system of education.

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