

COVID-19 IMPACT ON INDIAN SOCIETY, EDUCATION AND STUDENTS

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Abstract

COVID-19 outbreak has caused the lowest spiral in the world level economy and resulted a big impact on educational arena. The extreme closure of educational campuses in the name of social distancing criteria to protect community spread largely shifted face-to-face interactive classes into online learning methods. This throws a special focus on using eLearning tools and techniques for effective student's enrollment that had limitations of access and affordability to many of the students. This Covid 19 pandemic has exhibited the shortcomings of our education system and expected a broad level apprenticeship to the educators in this digital period to shape them as per the world climate in education. In the post covid 19 situation the maximum use of eLearning has been a regular part of the education system. The educational organization and the educational universities and the commission which controls these universities and colleges are expected to upgrade their educational, research functioning, strategies to ensure standardized and quality education system.

Introduction

The outbreak of Corona 19 pandemic hiked the gaps in the education sector worldwide. Though, the Corona virus pandemic is new, but its spread and effects are truly noxious on our human society. Its outbreak has generated educational disturbances global health issues which were very difficult to adjust by health

systems of the world. In fact no nation or category across the world has remained immune from the covid-19 pandemic, indeed the entire system still seems perplexed by its rapid spread and rapid death rates. The virus has resulted a sudden push in the technology and advancement in our education system of pre-corona period. The pandemic is a significant factor in disruption at the higher education sector. A bulk of students pursuing education at Indian or foreign universities left their premises in order to save their lives that caused a sudden decline in quest for better and quality kind of education. This outbreak has disrupted all the areas namely education, research, sports, entertainment, transportation, religious areas, social gatherings/interactions, economy, businesses, and politics. In fact, the entire world was in trauma as a result of COVID-19 threats, the reality of the condition was altogether challenging to bear, and our education remained one of the worst-hit systems by covid-19 outbreak.

Objectives

The present study focuses on the given objectives

1. A closed view of the impact of Covid-19 in higher education system.
2. To detail numerous emerging methods in India in higher education.
3. To provide post Covid-19 trends of HEIs.
4. To put some suggestions to continue educational activities of HEIs encountering the challenges resulted by Covid-19.

Methodology

National and international reporting agencies on Covid-19 pandemic have been explored for data collection in present study because of complete lockdown where face to face interaction was not permitted therefore information is obtained from various authentic websites, journals and e-contents related to impact of Covid-19 on higher educational system of India.

Impact on Higher Education

Pandemic Covid-19 has severely affected the total educational system of India as well as the globe but some of the most impacted areas of higher education of India are as pointed below.

1. **Destabilization of educational activities:** Outbreak of Covid-19 has forced complete lockdown in all the areas including educational organization. And these organizations got ceased of educational activities and created many challenges for the educators and students. Hence activities like admissions, examinations, entrance tests, competitive examinations conducted by various boards/schools/colleges/universities remained postponed. Many entrance examinations for higher education sometimes got cancelled or degraded their level of questions which created a great challenge in the life of a student of higher education.
2. **Mixed impact on Academic research & Professional Development:** Covid-19 has put negative and positive impacts on research activities. For example, due to lockdown a researcher was not allowed to travel nationally and internationally. Therefore joint research works became full of complications. Some scientific laboratories, testing/research libraries remained closed so the work could not be completed.
3. **Severely affected the educational assessment system:** Most of the universities

examinations including internal and external assessments could not remained up to the mark and therefore it spread a negative impact and the assessment of the students. Some institutions tried to conduct such assessment through various online tools but that could also be not as per the earlier standards. This assessment internal or external put an uncertainty amongst the students about their post degree future.

4. **Reduction in job opportunities:** Many entrance tests job recruitments got cancelled which created negative impact with a great challenge in the life of a student of higher education. The Indians who have been doing their jobs abroad became upset of their job withdrawal also. In India, there is no recruitment in Govt. sector and fresh graduates are in pressure of fearing withdrawal of job offers from corporate sectors because of the pandemic situation. Many students may lose their jobs from India and overseas. The pass out students may not get their job outside India due to various restrictions caused by Covid-19. All these facts imply towards increase of unemployment rate due to this pandemic. With increase of unemployment situation, the interest for education may gradually decrease as people struggle for food rather than education.
5. **Emerging approaches of India for Higher Education during Covid-19**

Many challenges are created by Covid-19. The HEIs have responded positively and adopted various strategies to face the crisis during the pandemic. The Government of India has also taken number of preventive measures to prevent spread of pandemic Covid-19. The MHRD and University Grants Commission (UGC) have made several arrangements by launching 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 (e-Boucher-<https://mhrd.gov.in/ictinitiatives>) is also a unique platform which combines all digital resources for online education. UGC has released Guidelines on Examinations and Academic calendar in view of COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown on 29th April, 2020 (UGC notice). All terminal examinations have been postponed and shifted to July 2020 and suggested commencement of classes from August 2020. UGC has also prepared complete calendar for the academic session 2020-2021 with new dates keeping in view of the lockdown.

Discussion

The study affirms the devastating effects of COVID-19 pandemic on education and the various barriers that hinder students and instructors engagements in online education for continued learning during the COVID-19 lockdown. The results show that educational activities were badly affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Some of the identified effects include; learning disruption, limited access to learning facilities such as laboratories, job losses in the education sector, increase in students' debts, reduced funding for education, research constraints, and loss of learning interests among learners. The finding is in line with earlier assertion that Coronavirus pandemic created multiple problems for education sector leading to decreased education opportunities for underprivileged learners and those in rural areas.

Also, from the factor analysis, it was found that Poor digital skills, School policies, Digital divide, Poor electricity, Unavailability and accessibility, Network issues, Inadequate

facilities, Lack of training, Lack of funding, Resistance to change, etc. are the major barriers for online education during the COVID-19 pandemic school closures. Among them, inadequate facilities appeared to be the highest impediment to online education during the pandemic. More than 70% of the respondents agreed that inadequate facilities such as lack of computer, internet facility, were the major factors that limited their engagement in Online education. Similarly, poor electricity service, unavailability and accessibility issues, network issues, etc. also created lots of problems for education during the COVID-19 lockdown. The result of the study shows that Coronavirus disrupted educational activities and tends to reduce educational opportunities for disadvantaged people. It displaced students and teachers and created multiple barriers in teaching and learning. The study indicates that COVID-19 lockdowns have the tendency to increase school debts and pressure on parents and educational institutions.

The finding recognizes the need for technology in education particularly in times of emergencies. This is in line with an earlier assertion by Onyema (2019), that integration of emerging technologies in education is no longer a choice, but a need for all educators considering the changing learning environment, demands for flexibility in methodology, and the need to enhance creativity and innovations in learning. The study would contribute to the growing knowledge on Coronavirus effect on education sector and the need for technology in education.

Conclusion

This study has outlined various impacts of Covid-19 on higher education in India. The recent pandemic created an opportunity for change in pedagogical approaches and introduction of virtual education in all levels of education. As we do not know how long the pandemic situation will continue, a gradual

move towards the online/virtual education is the demand of the current crisis. UGC and MHRD have launched many virtual platforms with online depositories, e-books and other online teaching/learning materials. Combination of the traditional technologies (radio, TV, landline phones) with mobile/web technologies to a single platform with all depositories would enhance better accessibility and flexibility to education. This would involve upgrading the service platform to enable it to meet the required volume of educational demands of students. All service providers need to be mobilized to provide proper access to the educational service platforms to the disadvantaged groups of population also. Virtual education is the most preferred mode of education at this time of crisis due to the outbreak of Covid-19. The post Covid-19 education seems to be an education with widely accepted online/virtual education which may perhaps be a parallel system of education. This paper has not covered any statistical analysis on impact of Covid-19 on higher education however further in-depth study with statistical research may also be undertaken.

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