Impact of COVID-19 on Education – Lessons for the Future

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1. Abstract

The outcome of pandemic COVID-19 has enormously troubled every aspect of human life, including education. It has twisted unparalleled check on education. In many educational institutions around the globe, campuses are closed, and teaching-learning has progressed online. Internationalization has concentrated considerably. About 32 crore learners stopped up moving to schools/colleges in India, and all educational activities are brought to an end. Despite all these challenges, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have reacted optimistically and managed to guarantee the stability of teaching-learning, research and service to the society with some tools and techniques during the pandemic. It highlights the momentous impacts of COVID-19 on HELS in India. Some trials taken by HEIs and educational authorities of India to provide uninterrupted educational service during the crisis have conversed. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many new modes of learning, new perspectives, new trends emerge, and the same may continue in future. Some of the post-Covid-19 trends that may allow imagining new ways of teaching-learning of higher education in India are outlined. Some productive suggestions are also pointed to carry out educational activities during the pandemic situation.

Keywords: *Higher Education, COVID-19, Impact, Post COVID-19, India*

1.1 Introduction

On March 11, 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. It has affected more than 4.5 million peoples worldwide. In India, the first affected case of "COVID-19 was detected on January 30 2020, in Kerala" (Wikipedia). In India, the first death was reported on March 12, 2020, and the nation observed Janta Curfew for a day on March 22, 2020.

1.2 Review of Literature

According to the UNESCO report, "COVID-19 has affected nearly 68% of the total world's student population as per the data taken during the 1st week of June 2020. An outbreak of Covid-19 has impacted about 1.2 billion (WHO official website) students and youths across the globe by school and university closures." Several other countries have also implemented localized closures impacting millions of additional learners. This

worldwide closure has impacted the world's student population drastically.

1.3 Objective of The Study

Governments worldwide are making efforts to lessen the immediate impact of the closure of educational institutions, predominantly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and trying to assist the continuity of education for all using different digital modes of learning.

According to a survey report of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, conducted on higher education, there are 993 universities, 39931 Colleges and 10725 standalone institutions listed on their portal, which contribute to education" (DNS Kumar 2020).

Even though the country has been adapting to the new-age learning, there still lies an impediment in achieving entire success as only 45 crore people of our total population have access to the internet/e-learning. The people residing in rural areas are still very much underprivileged of the technologies and therefore hampering the cause of online education.

2. Findings

The COVID-19 pandemic taught the entire society how "necessity is the mother of invention" by allowing educational institutions to implement online learning and introduce a virtual learning culture. A large number of Indian students who are enrolled in many universities abroad, especially in worst-affected countries, are now leaving those countries. If the situation persists, there will be a significant decline in the demand for international higher education in the long run.

As per the UNESCO report, about 14 crores of primary and 13 crores of secondary students are affected, affecting India's two most affected levels. After observing the corona virus pandemic situation, the WHO advised maintaining social distancing as the first prevention step. So, every country started the action of lockdown to separate the contaminated people. The education sectors, including schools, colleges and universities, became closed. Classes suspended, and all examinations of schools, colleges and universities, including entrance tests, were postponed indefinitely. Though it is an exceptional situation in the history of education, COVID-19 has created many opportunities to come out of the rigorous classroom teaching model to a new era of the digital model. The lockdown has compelled many educational institutions to cancel their classes, examinations, internships etc. and to choose the online modes.

Initially, the educators and the students were quite confused and did not understand how to cope with this crisis that compelled the closure of the educational activities.

However, later on, all realized that the lockdown had taught so many lessons to manage the emergence of such pandemics. Thus, COVID-19 has created many challenges and opportunities for educational institutes to strengthen their technical knowledge and infrastructure (Pravat 2020).

The lockdown has given them a ray of hope for teachers and students to continue their educational activities online. The teachers assigned work to students via the internet and delivered lectures through live video conferencing using different Apps like Zoom; Google meet, Face book, YouTube, Skype, etc. There are WhatsApp groups of guardians, teachers, students and parents for effective communication through which they are always in touch to share their difficulties through this e-medium. In a nation like China that practices a considerably more centralization system, a change to digital learning may be more straightforward. Even in a nation like the U.S.A, some students do not access broad bands and are unable to use computerized learning arrangement (Study Abroad Life).

The same is the situation that happens in India, where not every student is well equipped with high-speed internet and digital gadgets and is along these lines of suffering. Numerous advanced educational institutions in India are not equipped with digital facilities to cope with a sudden change from traditional education to the online education system.

2.1 Suggestions

COVID-19 has impacted immeasurably to the education sector of India. The Indian Govt. and different stakeholders of education have explored the possibility of Open and Distance learning (ODL) by adopting different digital technologies to cope with the present crisis of COVID-19. India is not fully equipped to make education reach all corners of the nation via digital platforms. However, universities and the government of India are relentlessly trying to come up with a solution to resolve this problem. The priority should be to utilize digital technology to create an advantageous position for millions of young students in India. It is a 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. Even if the COVID-19 crisis stretches longer, there is an urgent need to make efforts on maximum utilization of online platforms to complete their degree in this academic year and get ready for the future digital-oriented environment. The concept of "work from home" has greater relevance in such a pandemic situation to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

2.2 Conclusion

India should develop creative strategies to ensure that all children must have sustainable access to learning during pandemic COVID-19. The Indian policies must include various individuals from diverse backgrounds, including remote

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regions, marginalized and minority groups, for effective education delivery. As online practice is benefitting the students immensely, it should be continued after the lockdown. A further detailed statistical study may be undertaken to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the world's education system.

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