

Consequence of COVID-19 on the Education System

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Abstract: Education is the building block of any nation; it builds skills, habits, knowledge and mind of the child. Any nation cannot afford the discontinuation of its education system. Health is also a major concern for any nation and keeping its countrymen healthy is the responsibility of the nation's government. The outbreak of the corona virus (COVID-19) has declared by WHO a public health emergency of international concern. The impact of pandemic COVID-19 is observed in every sector around the world. The education sectors of India as well as world are badly affected by this. The shutting down of schools & colleges and the decision of shifting traditional classrooms to digital platforms is not only increasing learning inequality among children, but also pushing a large number of children out of school & colleges due to the digital divide. Other than learning, the absence of schooling would also have a long-lasting effect on the health and nutrition of children.

Key-words: Education, COVID-19

Introduction:

The progress of any nation is impracticable without education; it acts as a key element for the expansion of mind of a person. A developed mind can only innovate and come up with new ideas and thoughts for a nation's improvement. We all know that "health is wealth." i.e. health is everything a person wishes to have. From last 2 years whole world is fighting with a COVID 19 pandemic. Most of the nations have decided to for the time being close all schools, colleges and universities to diminish the spreading of COVID 19. Educational institutions cannot sustain social distancing. Therefore it is compulsory to temporary closure of schools and all education institutions to maintain social distancing. Owing to the present situation teaching is switching to the online platform. The selection of appropriate Learning platform must be driven by the fact that the pedagogy must be shifted from teacher-centric education to learner-centric education. It is evident from different studies that COVID-19 lockdowns have adverse effects on the education sector and Indian students particularly from remote areas and marginalized sections are facing enormous challenges related to unavailability of smart-phone and computers, poor internet bandwidth, and critical study environment at home¹. Therefore, there is always a need for Government intervention to set up a uniform academic plan for the universities and colleges regarding online education during this COVID-19 lockdown. A emergency plan is required to deal with any possible prejudice among aspiring students for online education². However, online education is not new in India. Some universities successfully run 'dual mode' programs using common

MOOC implementations. Many Universities have also brought in courses from SWAYAM online platform into the curriculum to enhancing outcome based learning (Indian National Commission for Cooperation With UNESCO Response to COVID 19). On the other hand, some Universities provides e-Learning through LMS where focus is on assisting teachers in the management of their course, developing quality content, providing hands-on experience to strengthen skills, and arranging live and interactive sessions for question-answers and doubt clearance³ (Phutela & Dwivedi, 2020,). With the reduced cost and enhanced quality of ‘software as a service’ (SaaS) based e-learning tools and virtual classrooms, more and more Institutions are now offering courses on online platform. The sudden compulsion due to COVID-19 lockdown has now triggered the search for selecting appropriate e-learning platforms for colleges and Universities many of whom are not even ready for online education. Institutes also need to be aware of their ability to continuously monitor the quality of the learning contents and students’ outcome.

Our study focused on the following Aim:

- To inform various measures taken by Government of India for education sector during this epidemic.
- Draw attention to various positive impact of COVID-19 on education.
- Draw attention to various negative impacts of COVID-19 on education.
- Place few efficient suggestions for progressing education during the pandemic situation.

Initiatives of Govt. of India on education during Covid-19

To prevent spread of pandemic COVID-19, the Government of India has taken number of preventive measures. The union government declared a countrywide lock-down of all educational institutions. CBSE postponed all examinations of secondary and higher secondary schools. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) postponed the interview for the Civil Services Examination. Similarly the most of the state Governments and other educational boards postponed examinations due to outbreak of COVID-19. Almost all state government ministries have taken measures to ensure that the academic activities of schools and colleges do not hamper during the lockdown period. Online learning is the best solution during this pandemic Covid-19 situation⁴. So, the digital India vision of the government is emerging as a vital tool for solving the present crisis due to Covid-19. It is a fact that technology-based education is more transparent with all respect. Looking at this challenge of colleges and schools being shut, government of India, as well as state governments and private players have undertaken proper initiatives. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has made

several arrangements, including online portals and educational channels through TV, Radios for students to continue learning. During lockdown, students are using popular social media tools like WhatsApp, Zoom, Google meet, Telegram, Youtube live, etc. for online teaching learning system. ICT initiative of MHRD (e-Broucher- <https://mhrd.gov.in/ict-initiatives>) is a unique platform which combines all digital resources for online education. The digital initiatives of MHRD for secondary as well as higher education during COVID-19 are listed as below:

1. DIKSHA (one nation, one digital platform) is the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content for school education in states/UTs and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all grades are available on it.
2. Swayam Prabha TV channel per class from Class 1 to 12 (one class, one channel)
3. Extensive use of Radio, Community radio and CBSE Podcast- Shiksha Vani.
4. Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired developed on Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube.
5. **e-Pathshala** is an e-Learning app by NCERT for classes 1 to 12 in multiple languages. The app houses books, videos, audio, etc. aimed at students, educators and parents in multiple languages.

Swayam Prabha – TV Channels

- ✚ This mode of education is for people who do not have access to education.
- ✚ High quality educational programmes are telecasted.
- ✚ There are a total of 32 channels to meet the requirements.
- ✚ Different channels are used for higher education and school education.
- ✚ The Department of School Education and Literacy also tied up with private DTH operators like Tata Sky & Airtel to air educational video content to enhance the reach of these channels.
- ✚ Number of TV channels for school education will increase from 5 to 12 to transform into 'one class, one channel', that is, one channel each for all grades from 1 to 12 channels.
- ✚ To ensure asynchronous usage at anytime, anywhere, and by anyone, the same content will be organised by chapter & topics on DIKSHA.

e-Pathshala

(E-textbooks) is a portal/app developed by the CIET, and NCERT⁵. It was initiated jointly by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, CIET, and NCERT, and launched in November 2015.



It hosts educational resources for teachers, students, parents, researchers and educators, can be accessed on the Web, and is available on Google Play, App Store and Windows. The content is available in English, Hindi and Urdu.

- e-Pathshala mobile app (Android, iOS, Windows), and web portal can be used to access e-textbooks.
- It can be accessed by students, teachers and parents.
- 3,500 pieces of audio and video content of NCERT are available.
- It is available in different languages – English, Sanskrit, Urdu and Hindi.

For the differently-abled

1. For hearing impaired students, one DTH channel is available with sign languages.
2. Study material has been developed in Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY), for hearing and visually impaired.

Radio Broadcasting

1. The radio broadcasts focus on activity-based-learning.
2. For broadcasting content related to National Institute of Open Learning – NIOS (grades 9 to 12), 289 community radio stations have been used.
3. This mode of education is particularly useful for students who are living in remote areas, particularly for grades 5 to 1.
4. Shiksha Vani is a Podcast of the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE)
5. Shiksha Vani is used by learners of grades 12 to 9.
6. There are more than 430 pieces of audio content for all subjects from grade 12 to 1, in Shiksha Vani.

Advantages of Digital Education in India

During 2019-20 when India and the entire world were fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, Digital Education in India was the sole source of learning for the students in the country. Discussed below are a few other benefits of Digital Education in India:

- This initiative has made students not just gain erudite information but also gain practical and technical knowledge.
- No limitation as to the place of learning or studying. With digital learning, a student can engage in online classes or learning anywhere, at any time.
- With study material available online, students can take their time to understand any topic.
- Through the mode of digital education, learning can be made more engaging and interactive between the students and teachers.

It is also important that Digital Education acts as a supplement and does not completely overpower physical education.

Disadvantages of Digital Education in India

By far, it appears that online learning has numerous advantages for all individuals involved. However, while cyber learning has a positive impact, it does present some challenges too. To avoid significant roadblocks, we must adequately consider, plan, and account for these challenges. Therefore, let's learn more about the disadvantages of online education.

- Absence of Face-to-face Interaction
- Compromised Communication Skills
- Potential Social Isolation
- Technological Setbacks
- Screen time
- Lack of hands-on learning
- Extra work for teachers

Challenges with Digital Education in India

A lot of technology-based adaptations will have to be encountered by the Government to ensure that digital education can be reached out to students across the country. Given below are a few major challenges with Digital Education in India:

- Availability of internet connection to all is one of the biggest requirements for digital education. This will have to be achieved by the Government for easy access to information.
- Providing the devices and technology to the people belonging from socio-economically weak sections so that they are not deprived of education.

- Training teachers is another challenge. Only when the teachers are technically sound, they can conduct the digital classes.
- Making digital cost-effective should be a key motive of the Government.
- To ensure that Government schools and colleges are provided with proper facilities for digital classrooms.

Conclusion

There are advantages and disadvantages of online learning for higher education. But as technological capabilities have reached new heights and many of the key concerns of students taking online classes have been addressed, the advantages of online classes are beginning to drown out the disadvantages. With multiple initiatives taken up in the Covid time for the improvisation and ease of access of Digital learning in India, the Government aims to allow online or e-learning for students broadly.

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