

COVID-19: It's Impact on Indian Higher Education

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COVID-19: It's Impact on Indian Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The spread of Covid-19 pandemic has drastically disrupted every aspects of human life. One of the most crucial parts of human life is education. COVID-19 has created an unprecedented test on the system of education. In various institutions of learning around the globe, campuses are shutdowns and teaching-learning process has moved online instead of face to face. Internationalization has displayed quite down considerably. Nearly thirty two crore learners blocked to go in the institutions of learning and all tasks have come to a close in almost all the educational institutions. In spite of all these issues, the Institutions of higher learning have worked hard with positivity and handled the situation to ensure the continuance of research work, teaching and learning process, examinations & other services to the mankind with an appropriate methods during this epidemic COVID-19. In this paper an attempt has been made by the researcher to highlight the major impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on Indian higher education system. Some suggestive measures arose by the institutions of higher learning as well as higher authorities-Government of India to give flawless educational opportunities during the pandemic are also discussed. The author has made some suggestions for to educational pursuits be executed during this epidemic.

Introduction:

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) proclaimed Covid-19 a pandemic. More than 4.5 million people have been harmed by Covid-19 over the world. (World Health Organization, 2020). In India, the first case who affected with this coronavirus was discovered on 30th Jan. 2020 in Kerala, with a travel history from Wuhan, China (Wikipedia). On March 12, 2020, India's first death was reported, and on March 22, 2020, the country celebrated a one-day Janta Curfew. On March 24, India imposed a 14-hour Janta Curfew to combat the Coronavirus outbreak and examine the country's capabilities to tackle it. The Prime Minister then declared the start of the first phase of lockdown on March 25, 2020, for a period of 21 days. As the virus's impacts have been monitored, the Indian government has lengthened the lockdown duration. Lockdown was issued on 30th April & be in service from 01-06 to 30-06 2020. Institutions of higher learning throughout the nation have never been given any leeway to resume educational pursuits throughout any phase of lockdown, from lockdown 1.0 to lockdown 5.0. As a result, the Covid-19 epidemic had a profound impact on the educational system.

As per study carried out by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation-2020 coronavirus has impacted roughly 68 percent of the global student population, which is based on data gathered during the first week of June 2020. The Covid-19 emergence has caused school and university closures in over 1.2 billion kids and teenagers around the world. Many other countries have enacted localized closures that will affect millions of more students. The severe limitations and the nationwide lockdown for Covid-19 have impacted more than 32 crores of pupils in India (Wikipedia). Most of the nations in the globe have closed institutions of learning to combat the flow of this deadly virus. International finality has had a significant effect on students' population all over the globe.

Governments all over the world are approaching to mitigate immediate impact of closing of institutions of learning particularly for more vulnerable and underprivileged groups, by giving the continuation of learning for all through the use of different digital forms of learning. A study conducted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, "there are 993 universities, 39931 colleges, and 10725 standalone institutions listed on their portal that contribute to education" (Kumar, 2020). Even though the country has adapted to new-age learning, there is still a roadblock in the way of all success as only forty five crore people total population have right to use internet for e-learning. People in far flung located area are still mostly without access to technology, which is hampered the cause of virtual teaching learning. By allowing educational institutions to adopt online learning and build a virtual learning culture, the COVID-19 epidemic showed to the entire society that want is the mother of invention. With technological innovation and development, the pandemic has been pulling the schooling world forward. The epidemic has had a tremendous impact on higher education. The majority of Indian students enrolled at various universities around the world, particularly in the worst-affected countries, are currently leaving those countries, and if the scenario continues, there would be a considerable drop in demand for international higher education in the long run.

Impact on Higher Education:

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, state governments across the country began to close schools and institutions in the second week of March 2020. As we all know, this was a critical time for students because several universities/colleges examinations were to be held during this period, as well as many entrance tests and competitive examinations for various institutions and competitive examinations. The closing of institutions of learning altered the organization of learning, evaluation, and testing, causing an irreversible teaching and learning crisis in the Indian education system. As a result, a dramatic change from traditional face-to-face classroom learning to online learning occurred. It was as if yesterday's disruptors had become today's survivor. The virtual mode was once viewed inappropriate, but it has now proven to be beneficial. However, there were a number of challenges that arose as a result of the introduction of online learning in higher education institutions (HEIs). One of the most important considerations about online learning is if it is successful. However, it is effective for individuals who have appropriate access to technology. The internet is extremely important for improved teaching and learning. However, in our country India, all students are expected to have all of the needed facilities due to the diverse socioeconomic backgrounds of students, which may cause discomfort and frustration, leading to a sense of segregation and thus creating a divide between the wealthy who can afford all of the amenities and the rest of the

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population who cannot. In India, the majority of people do not have access to all of the necessary amenities, and they frequently lack access to fast internet, which is required during the teaching and learning process. As a result, India continues to face the problem of digital divide. Absenteeism and low academic performance have increased as a result of a lack of student involvement in online programmes. Unfortunately, one of the major causes of unsuccessful online teaching and learning is students' passive engagement in the classroom.

Virtual meeting hubs were created by mobile applications or virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. Teachers were instructed by educational institutions to engage classes online utilising virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. Due to the abrupt move from traditional to online teaching, teachers who were unfamiliar with new technologies and mobile applications found it difficult to engage online classes. Some teachers were simply doing their jobs because they were requested to. A large number of students were simply attending classes to mark themselves as present. Because there is no class control on these virtual platforms, they barely paid attention to what the teacher was saying. Many entrance exams, job interviews, and other events were cancelled, negatively impacting students' life. All of this points to an increase unemployment rate in India. As a result of the rising un-employment rate, there was a good risk that interest in education would wane as a result of the struggle for survival. This expanding problem has generated mental stress among the children and teens who will be our country's future leaders.

Initiatives taken by the Government to provide better Educational Opportunities to the Students:

COVID-19 has had numerous negative effects on the education sector, but it has also added a new dimension to the teaching-learning process. Despite its many disadvantages, online schooling emerged as a survivor throughout the country's worst crisis. It improved digital literacy. People began to study and use digital technologies. Electronic media were employed to disseminate information all over the world. Students and teachers had several opportunities to interact with people from all over the world. Because it supports self-learning, students favoured Open and Distance Learning (ODL) as a style of learning. HEIs also responded positively by implementing a variety of measures throughout the pandemic. During this epidemic, the UGC and the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD) established various digital initiatives for higher educational Institutions.

- E-GYANKOSH: Is government of India's initiatives to promote learning resources generated by the country's open and distance learning institutions. Students get access to study materials as well.
- GYANDHARA: Is an internet service that allows students to listen to live expert conversations and interact with them via telephone chat.
- SWAYAM- It offers over nineteen hundred courses ranging from elementary to higher education.
- SAKSHAT: It is one-stop education portal that caters to all the scholars, teachers, students and distance- learners educational and learning needs. The Ministry of Human Resources and Development's latest news, press releases, accomplishments, and other information are indeed available on the portal.
- VIDWAN: A famous database and national research network that contains achievements of scientists/researchers and faculty members who work in India's top academic institutions and R&D organizations.

- E-ADHYAYAN: Is a portal that offers more than seven hundred e-Books for PG and UG courses. These e-Books are all based on the e-PG Pathshala courses. It also allows you to create a video playlist.
- GYANDARSHAN: Is a TV channel which is web-based that caters to the developmental as well as educational needs of distance and open Learners. A web-based TV station dedicated to the society's educational and developmental requirements.

Suggestions:

- Criteria for student internships, research programmes and other activities must be updated to reflect the current circumstances.
- To reinforce the base of e-learning, the government should provide required infrastructure facilities in rural locations where people lack internet connection, bridging the internet divide and allowing scholars to learn virtually.
- Every state government in India should devise new methods to make the educational process accessible to all students, particularly those from marginalized, underprivileged, and rural areas of society.
- Many online learning platforms provide multiple courses on the same subject with varying levels of accreditation, methodology, and assessment criteria. As a result, the quality of programmes may vary between virtual platforms. HEIs must expand and supply quality assurance procedures and quality benchmark for online learning programmes in order to keep up with the increasing growth of online learning platforms.
- If this epidemic continues, all educational institutions should embrace new techniques of academic assessment. Students' academic achievement can be measured in a variety of ways, including online-tests, quizzes, and short-term projects.
- The government should assist HEIs in bolstering their resources in order to conduct online educational activities. Students also require improved access to the internet and technology, as most students cannot afford these amenities. During this epidemic, HEIs should place more concentration on virtual educational activities such as television, radio, and web-based education.

Summing Up:

This study looks at the impact of Covid-19 on Indian higher education. The recent epidemic has emerged as new pedagogical approaches, as well as the use of virtual education at all levels of education. The current dilemma demands a gradual shift to online/virtual education because we don't know how long the pandemic will endure. The UGC and the MHRD have launched a series of virtual platforms with online depositories, e-books, and other online teaching/learning materials. On a variety of virtual platforms, online depositories, e-books, and other online teaching/learning materials are available. The accessibility and flexibility of education might be improved by integrating traditional channels (radio, television, telephones) with Mb/web technology to form a unified platform with all depositories. This would entail improving the service platform in order to reach the requisite amount of educational needs from pupils. To ensure that the disadvantaged population has proper access to educational service platforms, all service providers must be unified. Virtual schooling became the most prominent form of teaching during this problem, due to the

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implementation of Covid-19. Education appears to be based on universally acknowledged online/virtual education, which may or may not be a smooth system of education, as per Covid-19.

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