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Education in India Post Pandemic – Challenges and Scopes

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ABSTRACT:

More than a year has passed since online classrooms and remote learning were established as the major ways of delivering educational content to students. The ability for both teachers and students to make the most of this type of instruction has evolved throughout time. This is not meant to imply that distant learning is the best or only option available to students. India's school system has seen a significant transformation as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, altering the country's dynamic. According to the Economic Survey 2021-22, children of all ages in rural areas shifted from private to public schools during the pandemic; nevertheless, it is difficult to determine the real-time impact of frequent lockdowns on the education sector.

Introduction:

The issues that need to be addressed:

1. Decreasing the number of students who drop out during and after the pandemic

2. Decline in educational results and well-being of children and adolescents

3. The inclusion of computer-assisted learning (CALL) in the curriculum

4. Teacher's position and capabilities

5. Long-term viability of private educational institutions

It is because of financial hardship that children are being forced to attend government schools. While highlighting the Annual Status of Education Report, the survey also suggests that the closure of low-cost private schools, financial distress among parents, free facilities in government schools, and families returning to their villages may all be contributing factors to the shift from government to private schools in the country (ASER).

When asked about academic interruptions caused by the pandemic, the poll responded, "While recognising that academic interruptions have occurred, enrollment in the 15-16 year old age range has improved, with the number of unenrolled youngsters falling from 12.1 percent in 2018 to 6.6 percent in 2021." "However, the number of children (ages 6-14 years) who are not currently enrolled in schools has increased from 2.5 percent in 2018 to 4.6 percent in 2021," the report stated, citing data from the United Nations Development Programme. More aid for the government-run school system, such as increased teacher-to-pupil ratios, classroom space, and teaching-learning materials, was requested in the survey in order to accommodate children who were transferring from private schools and from urban to rural areas.

The government has adopted a new shift in the positioning of the Higher Education post 1990s. As per that the Higher education was declared as 'non-merit good' whereas the school education was declared as 'merit goods'. Ambani-Birla Reportin 2000 recommended the entire removal of subsidized system and convert higher education into a fully controlled profitable market. Under the influence of Ambani-Birla Report, UGC recommended the restructuring of higher education on the market oriented enterprises promoting corporate values. Under neoliberal agendas India has agreed to consider education a tradable service.(Oza,2018)Flexibility is a crucial breakthrough that will become an indelible aspect of the Indian educational system in the future. In India, the vast majority of courses offered by any university have only one port of access and one point of exit. The Pandemic taught us about the inevitability of life's events. Therefore, the higher education system must be more versatile, with different entry and exit points to accommodate the changing needs of students. The second key change concerns the availability of possibilities for working-professional education.

The coronavirus pandemic has caused widespread disruption in the educational system. As a result of the transition from traditional classrooms to computer displays, nearly every aspect of learning is being scrutinised. Instructional format, attendance, evaluation, the use of technology, and human interaction are all being re-imagined, and some of these changes are likely to be permanent.Schools and institutions have been forced to close for an extended period of time, exposing some basic flaws in the educational system. As multiple stakeholders seek to address these issues and close the gap, education as we know it will forever change. As forecasted in our National Education Plan 2020, blended learning will become the norm.

After the pandemic has passed, screen-based or remote learning will continue to play a significant role in education, even after schools can resume operations. Education digitalization is the way of the future, and we've been making significant strides in that direction even before the pandemic hit the country.Is it true that physical training is the most effective method of learning? This epidemic has taught us that traditional classroom instruction combined with human interaction is still the most effective method of learning. Technology, on the other hand, is a tremendous enabler, and as a result, it plays an important role in the educational process. With the majority of educational institutions experimenting with digital learning and teachers having to learn to adapt to technology, teachers' training will need to be revised in order to integrate practical features of technology into teaching. Future teacher education programmes will place a strong emphasis on the appropriate use of technology in conjunction with improved pedagogy.(Tilak,2019)

Problems that can emerge when taking online classes

For both parents and teachers, the learning imbalance that has evolved in online courses is a huge source of concern and causes them great stress. Because they were teaching from behind a screen, teachers couldn't tell how well their students understood the fundamentals of the disciplines they were instructing. When education institutes reopen, the imbalance in learning will be a concern, and this gap will have to be filled in order to build a middle ground between the two groups. The capacity of artificial intelligence to automate operations such as grading would be extremely beneficial.

Artificial intelligence also enables students to personalise their learning by responding to their needs, emphasising specific topics, and allowing them to progress at their own pace, among other things. Adaptive programmes, such as those used in education, will only continue to develop and expand as new advances in artificial intelligence are made. There are also groups of pupils in the lowest part who have been advanced to the next level despite never having been in a traditional school setting. The fact remains that an important proportion of students began their official education at home, in front of a computer screen.

Physical Distancing and Hygiene Checks are Required. Schools would be expected to adhere to stringent policies and procedures. Aside from the increased emphasis on health and cleanliness for the safety of students and faculty, schools will also be required to comply with re-opening and day-to-day operational criteria. In addition to the classroom, physical separation will be practised in the buses that transport students. In the words of AlkaKapur, principal of Modern Public School in Shalimar Bagh, Delhi, "we will surely refrain from participating in events that need social gathering for at least a year." On school buses, in classrooms, and during recesses, physical separation will be maintained at all times. To remind pupils how to behave on school premises, [distance markers] will be placed in each hallway, as well as 'does and don'ts' signage," says the principal. Schools will need to make significant changes in order to provide learning results while also reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission to a safe level. In order to accomplish this, administrators will need to completely rethink their annual calendars, timetables, academic solutions, and teaching approaches from ground zero. The planning and implementation process will be complicated, with obstacles ranging from staggered lunch breaks to requiring younger students to eat lunch in their classrooms under the supervision of an instructor, to sterilising school buses before each shift and ensuring that the middle seat is always available. Even the number of games and physical activity courses offered each week will have to be cut.(Bora, Baruah,2011)

In response to the present pandemic, there has been an explosion of educational initiatives. The majority of these advances have to do with digitalization and information technology. The education industry is one of the sectors that has seen a complete transformation in the way it operates. The education sector is classified into three categories: basic education, secondary education, and higher education. Basic education is the most basic type of education. At all levels of education, adjustments have been made, however the majority of the modifications have been focused on classroom engagement. At schools, colleges, and universities, traditional classroom instruction has been supplanted with online instruction. These classes have also shown to be quite successful in a wide range of subjects over time.

However, there is a great deal of concern concerning the admissions and examination subsystems of the school system. Some educational experiments must be made permanent in order for them to be effective.The epidemic created a lot of challenges in both public and private schools, including an increase in dropouts, learning losses, and the digital divide, to name a few examples. The outbreak also called into doubt the systems' ability to deal with a disaster of this magnitude, particularly the teachers' ability to do so, as well as the long-term survival of private schools. COVID-19, on the other hand, functioned as a catalyst for the adoption of digital technologies in educational settings. Given the fact that schools are reopening in many areas, it is vital that a plan be put in place to make children's transition back to school after more than 15 months of home-based learning go as smoothly as possible. This change must take into consideration the previous year's learning losses as well as aforward-thinking approach in order to build a resilient system that can withstand future shocks and setbacks (Verma, Mohammad,2020)

Changes in the classroom structure:

The seating arrangements in classrooms will be significantly altered as a result of this change. Given that physical separation will continue to be used, schools are altering their classroom furniture, reorganising its placement, and reducing the number of students in each classroom. It will no longer be feasible to have 30 to 40 students in a class; class sizes would have to be reduced by half, maybe through the use of a different student roster technique. Double-seater desks, as well as the traditional practise of students sitting in tightly packed rows one after the other, are no longer in use in public school classrooms. Some predict that classroom layouts will be 'U-shaped,' with at least four feet between students, starting in the next school year.

Blended learning and hybrid schools are two terms that come to mind. When schools reopen, teachers will be asked to serve as mentors and counsellors to students in addition to their traditional roles as teachers. Changes in school timetables, as well as increased division of classrooms into various parts, will be critical components of the evolution of hybrid education. In order to accommodate parents who do not want their children to attend school, online lessons will be offered as a new addition to the curriculum. In order to accommodate students, Kapur claims that schools will operate on an odd-even basis. Blended learning will be used to supplement the curriculum, which will be reduced down. Online and classroom instruction will be provided at the same time in anticipation of the likelihood that some parents would choose not to send their children to school owing to security concerns. It is encouraged that parents drop off their children in their own autos rather than at the school. In order to avoid taking any chances, they'd have to make certain that the van conductor only took three children at a time."

The majority of Indian schools would be required to use an integrated online-offline strategy, which would need the upgrading of technology. Teachers, on the other hand, will need to become adept in the use of technology while also ensuring that teachings are personalised to the specific needs of each student in the classroom. "With an integrated online-offline strategy," adds Mehta, "schools would be able to manage alternate-day learning easily." In order to maximise efficiency, schools should operate on alternate days with clearly defined responsibilities for in-school (offline learning) and at-home (online learning) days."

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