



Implications of Indian Education System during COVID-19: A Review

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 virus in the world caused havoc and fear among all and also deeply affected educational sector. Indian education profoundly, based on offline structure of teaching and learning, faced derailment from its path due to corona virus but soon switched from offline mode to online mode of education to maintain the continuity in education flow. Various departments such as MoE, UGC, AICTE, etc. started to work in synchronized manner to fulfill the task. The purpose of this paper is to analyze and assess the changes in educational sector due to COVID outbreak. The impact of COVID on primary level to higher education has been discussed in this paper. This article highlights the impact of COVID-19 along with the coping mechanism used by the educational institutions and also predicts its possible effect on post COVID era.

Keywords: - Corona virus, Post COVID, Online Education, Higher Education

Introduction

The origin of Corona virus is traced back to 2003 when first version of SARS-CoV or SARS-CoV-1 was found and had its outbreak in Asia. The first outbreak of corona virus didn't cause much of a chaos when compared to its latest strain or COVID-19. The 2003 epidemic was restricted to only few countries such as China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Canada, Taiwan and Singapore, etc, total of 29 nations. The SARS-CoV-1 had pneumonia as its symptom and affected the respiratory system of the infected. (Hui, Chan, & Wu, 2004).

COVID-19 is a viral disease that is partly caused by the SARS-CoV-2. The epicenter of this disease is a Hubei province of China which spread around the world causing panic and distress among the population. The first cases of COVID-19 were traced to Wuhan of China in 2019. The COVID-19 has globally affected more than 207,173,086 and still counting with claiming lives of 4,361,996. When we talk of India alone, total cases count goes to 32,225,513 with death toll of 431,642. (WHO, 2021)

India with a massive population of 1.3 billion faced and still are facing a lot of disturbance in the state of panic and stress. The introduction of corona virus in India occurred with the shift of Indian population back to their homes from different parts of the world. The government of India started taking appropriate measures and soon declared lockdown. Public transport such as flights and trains were shut leaving only few special trains for shift of migrant worker.

All the pillars of world's biggest democracy were under heavy stress. Emergency Health Infrastructures were put into place and isolation centers were made for suspected patients and the symptomatic patients.

Educational Sector was also massively affected by the outbreak of corona virus, the schools and higher educational institutions such as college, universities were forced to close and students were asked to vacate the hostels and move back to their homes. Education of more than 26 crores school students of 15 lakh schools and 1043 universities, 42343 colleges and 11779 stand-alone institutions were affected of this disease (MoE, 2020).

Ministry of Education (MoE) along with All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), University grant commission (UGC) and various other authorities started assessing the situation and finding possible alternatives to continue the education of more than 27crore learners of the country.

Methodology

Due to covid-19 pandemic and lockdown implemented across the nation, no primary data has been collected. Secondary data from multiple articles and research papers have been taken as reference for this review. This paper is a mere review of various papers and articles published by different researchers.

Indian Education Structure in Pre-COVID period

Indian Structure of education is immensely depended on offline mode and face to face interaction among students and teachers. The system has been very effective in fulfilling its function and the results of the method are magnificent. The involvement of teacher and students in a classroom lets gain both the professional knowledge along with personality development (Jalote, et. al, 2020). The campus provides students to interact and come in contact with various individuals from diversified fields and areas providing them an opportunity to inherit qualities and experience that helps in building their character as well as help in various other aspects. The laboratory and practical knowledge is acquired by students in a much easier and

understandable manner as reading from a book doesn't help that much when compared with performing those concepts and techniques themselves in a lab. The assessment of learned and understood concept and assignments and the development in offline mode helps in students' overall growth.

Indian Education Structure in COVID period

Sudden exposure of COVID outbreak led to the use and installment of alternative methods of teaching and learning. Though correspondence/distance mode programmes, Indian Education system were running through online mode but not to that extent. The Indian education system had to install the appropriate measures and take appropriate steps for continuous flow of knowledge. The schools being closed were started in online mode with taking classes through online meeting platforms such as Zoom, Google meet, WebEx, etc. The assignment were given and asked to submit through e-mail, Telegram app, and Whatsapp. Higher education institutions also applied the blended mode of education (both online and offline). The online submissions of assignments were considered as an option. The exams were canceled for intermediate students and online open book exams were conducted keeping in mind the safety and health of students and faculties.

The Government platforms were developed and were advertised to make accessible of all the required materials for learning purpose. Various platforms included:

1. **Shodhganga** – It is a platform developed by the Higher Education department for submission of PhD thesis of students all across the nation.
2. **e-PG Pathshala** – This platform provides important concepts of various masters courses compiled by pioneers of the field.
3. **Swayam** – This Platform provides as opportunity to register students for multiple MOOCs on topics of their choice which are approved and accepted by 140+ universities.
4. **National Digital Library** – This is the one of the largest repository of e-content on multiple disciplines for teachers, students, scholars, and all kinds of learners. It was developed by IIT kharagpur.
5. **E-GyanKosh** – It is a digital repository whose rights is reserved by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to store and share learning resources developed by open and distance learning Institutions.
6. **Gyandarshan** – A web based TV channel with a sole purpose to provide education to learners for all parts.
7. **Diksha app**- An application made for educational need of school from class 1 to class 12.

Other than these, there are few other platforms that are providing knowledge to learners and continuity of education.

In a developing nation there are various hindrances in smooth flow of education and knowledge such as:

- Unavailability of internet facility in every part of the country. The learners face massive pressure as difficulty to attain knowledge without any issues due to network issues. Sometime learners have to move to different places and find a suitable location with stable network; it may be at their houses or places miles away.
- Another issue faced is the faculty being not so techno-savvy. Majority of educators are not well trained and practicing online teaching-learning which proves difficult for them to handle the situation.
- Not all students have smart phones (android phone) and laptops at their disposal which results in disadvantage to those learners.
- A major issue in case of school education is that Indian students don't have a personal smart phone to attend classes to and even though the family has mobile phone it is a feature phone in case of village population.
- Another issue is that students of primary classes are not at all aware of technology and don't know how to use cell phones (especially village learners).
- Health risk also come into play for younger learners, the young individuals are at risk of eye problems because of stress on the eye due to excessive staring at the screen for hours, and headache.

Indian Education Structure in Post COVID period

The COVID-19 led to the changes that were about to happen with increased speed and time. The education system would have the following features along with various other factors which will help the education of individuals.

1. **Introduction of home tutors or home schooling:** The sense of fear among human being may lead to the development of home tuition or home schooling in the country.
2. **Increase in dropout rates:** After the end of this pandemic, people will try to keep their children away from public places and gatherings which will affect the school enrollment numbers.
3. **Use of Online tools:** Multiple online education providers will take the opportunity for their growth and will become the education providers instead of schools. These platforms include:
 - *Byjus*
 - *Unacademy*
 - *Udemy*
 - *Coursera*
 - *Vedantu, etc.*
4. **Blended mode of education:** The Educational institution will start working in both online as well as offline mode for the convenient of the learners.
5. **Maintaining COVID-19 norms even after COVID:** Even in the post covid phase fear among people could lead to follow the norms such as physical distancing, use of masks and sanitizers, no hug & handshakes, etc.
6. **Difference among the privileged and underprivileged:** Learners from low financial backgrounds cannot pursue their higher education due to the excessive fees charged by online educators which may result in creating differences among learners on the basis of economy.

Few important aspects to be looked at post covid which can't be neglected at any way:

1. Credibility of learner / quality of students: Due to online education implemented and cancelation of examination to access the knowledge gain by the learner their credibility as well as amount of knowledge they have, comes into question which can lead to a bigger problem in future.
2. Question about employment of COVID era graduates: Due to COVID majority of schools and colleges had canceled their final examination and had to promote the learners on the basis of their previous performance, which raises a question about them getting an unbiased employment opportunity. Whenever the degree or certificate of any COVID phase graduate will be check, one thought hovers around in one's mind that that person was promoted without any assessment, is that person qualified in real sense, does that person has proper skills, etc. This somehow creates biasness and can lead to unemployment of graduates.
3. Pressure of clearing debt: Many learners are not financially stable to pursue their higher education, to do so they require a large sum of money or any financial support. But when there will be unemployment the pressure to clear that debt will increase and cause distress to the affected person.

Conclusion

This article tries to put forth the sudden and huge changes in educational structure of India due to the outbreak of pandemic COVID-19. In the situation, how the authorities moved to online or blended mode of education in very little time and provided a result that was quite decent. Physical learning was largely affected by the pandemic; students, teachers, and institutions as a whole were far behind and at a risk of extreme pressure and stress. This article reflects the hindrances and difficulties to that occurred due to sudden shift in the basic structure of educational institutions from offline to online/blended mode of education. The paper aimed towards accessing the situation of educational institutions and the steps taken to adapt and provide the education they are known to deliver. The paper discusses the education into 3 sections – pre-COVID, during COVID, and post-COVID; showing all the possible difficulties, steps taken for providing education, along with possible future of Indian education structure.

The outbreak of COVID caused changes in educational structure in a massive way and made the changes in lesser amount of time that would have taken when this change would have happened gradually. It made a lengthy and time taking scenario happen in only a fraction of time. The various infrastructures which were involved in making this online/blended education a success did a good job and are making improvements day by day. A system in place has been kept for need in possible future and to maintain the continuity.

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