



COVID-19 : THE HISTORICAL IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

The chief objective of this paper is to explore the implications of Covid-19 Pandemic on the education system in India. More precisely, it will basically focus on the vicious impact of the pandemic on higher education in India. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act (2002) has been a remarkable milestone in the history of education system in India as it is committed to impart education among all citizens by recognizing the right to education as one of the fundamental rights of the Indians. But the corona virus outbreak had been the biggest as well as most unprecedented blow to the right to education of the people as it dismantled everything along with the normal education system. In India the covid-19 outbreak had been declared as an epidemic in all its states and Union Territories in early 2020. To combat covid-19 lockdown was imposed on march 25, 2020, which affected the education system in the country badly. Classroom lecture quickly shifted to online platform. In a quick succession the entire India found numerous online platforms, virtual classrooms and various forms of e-learning materials came into the field of higher education to combat the problem of self-isolation or social distancing. Examinations were postponed. In this context various online platforms such as *DIKSHA*, *Swayam*, *Swayam Prabha*, National Academic Depository, National Digital Library, Virtual labs under the digital India initiative helped to continue the teaching-learning process to some extent. But students from marginal sections had been excluded from the benefits of online education because of the poor background and vulnerable situation. In other words, it clearly divided the students into 'haves' and 'have nots'. This paper tries to explain the challenge of higher education amid pandemic and amid online platform in a country like India where a vast majority are still suffering to fetch the minimum fruits of higher education in a proper manner.

Keywords: Pandemic, Online, Virtual, Covid-19, digital learning, skill, poor, NEP-2020

INTRODUCTION

During the pandemic from 2020 to 2022, the whole world faced a major crisis that disrupted normal life across countries. Education sector was not exception of it. The pandemic refers to here is covid-19. This covid-19 virus has been arising from china, rapidly spreaded almost all over the countries in the world. To check the spread out of this virus the government had adopted 'Lock Down' and consequently the whole world becomes confine in the house. From economy to employment in every fields of activities covid-19 had a serious effect. Like other sectors, education sector is also greatly damaged by this virus. From primary level to research level almost 540



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million learners continued their study from home. The medium of study transformed from face to face system to online mode of education system. The learners became introduced with one or more internet technology based apps or medias. E-learning became the only way of education. To continue flow of education from administration to schools, colleges, and universities, took different initiative. Through these system India's educational system enters into a new era. Many learners welcomed to this new education system. Through this new education system the learners get introduced with world class education. But the matter of regret is that many learners from remote villages of India are deprived of this scope of education due to lack of proper infrastructure. The education which is regarded as the fundamental right, many are deprived of this right. In this regard, it must be mentioned that the existing education system used to conduct education in India was forced to undergo structural changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of late we reached a 'New Normal' condition. The learners have returned to their traditional class room studies in schools, colleges, and universities. Yet it has not been totally impossible to ignore the online education system. No one can makes guarantee that online teaching can give us hundred percent (100%) success. But it must be admitted that during covid-19 pandemic there was no other alternative without online education system. Even at present many educational institute and offices continue their performance through online and offline system.

OBJECTIVES

- (A) What was the impact of COVID-19 on India's higher education system?
- (B) What was the role of teachers and the administrative authorities in continuing the education system during the pandemic ?
- (C) What role did the online education system play during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- (D) What was the impact of internet technology on the learners of remote villages during the COVID-19 pandemic ?

RESEARCH METHOD

The research work is analytical in nature. The work primarily based on secondary data. Published articles, books, various websites, and newspapers were consulted as sources of literature and data.

DISCUSSION

It was 11march in 2020, WHO announced a pandemic throughout the world called covid-19. It comes to the notice that at the end of 2019 this pandemic virus has come out from wuhan provinces, a high technology business hubs in china. Only with in 15 days many thousand of Chinese had lost their lives. The China's scientist called this virus as covid-19 virus. Later, within a very short time, this deadlier virus broke out rapidly almost all over the world. In India this virus was first identified on 30 january,2020 in kerala. (D.Silva, A. Mohanan, A.Paulose)

What is the corona virus(covid-19)?



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Covid-19 is a zoonotic disease with intermediate host. The possible intermediate host for SARS-COV-2 is pangolin or snakes. The reserve host for all is bat. So the primary mode of transmission is from bats to intermediate host to human. The transmission of covid-19 can be directed in the form of droplets produced during sneezing, coughing, speaking, and accidentally inhaling the droplets in a closed proximity of an infected person. The direct transmission is when virus is deposited on a dead surface like doorbells, lift buttons, stairs, vegetables, fruits etc. From here the virus reaches to eyes, nose and mouth and finally leads to a new corona patient. (Srivastava, P.Sing, V.P.Sing)

All most all the countries in the world declared ‘Lock Down’ to safeguard and resist the expansion of this deadlier virus. Like other countries India also announced lock down in some phases. At the first phase the honorable prime minister declared lock down on 25 march in 2020. The effect of this lock down had greatly on India’s society, economy and educational institution.

According to report of UNESCO due to lock down about 68% or 1.2 billion learners faced great loss. In India 320 million or 32 crores learners had effected as a result of this pandemic. All the school, colleges, and universities were forced to close only to get escape from this deadlier virus and it’s expansion. As a result of the education institution remained close, the number of dropout had increase rapidly. In few cases it become a challenge for the education institution particularly the schools to return the dropout into the school. The school education system which is regarded as the social and human hubs of performance, many learners became disconnected from these school due to the cause of closing. It become a great drawback for education development in the society. The education system which is regarded as an inseparable part of life. The education which is regarded as our fundamental right, many learners from different parts of India become deprived of that education.

To control the spread of corona virus educational institutions were remained closed. As a result of it school examination and the assessment of the student were greatly hampered. Indian education system fell into a kind of teaching and learning crisis. The central and state government adopts many institution to hold the improvement of the education system. One such initiative was to introduced e-learning education system. Face to face classroom education system changed into online education system. Through this education system the whole India enters into a new system of education. Traditional education system was known apparently good bye and internet education system was welcomed. In this context, learners were introduced to digital learning platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, YouTube, Facebook Live, and Skype to continue their education. MOOC can be mentioned as such an online education platforms, where Indian students have started a revolution in the Indian education system by taking the opportunity of unlimited participation and open access. (Dr. A. Dutta) Thus the use of technology has enabled students to compete with everything else in their academic life. In this context, the government of India recognized the ‘National Education policy 2020’ and expressed satisfaction that the use of technology will play an important role in improving the education system. (Dr. P. Rai)

With the introduction of online education in higher education institutions, several problems arose. Initially, questions were raised about whether online teaching would be effective in a country like India.



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However it may be said positively that it is effective to those who have got the scope of proper utilization of the technology. Many learners adopted internet technology based e-learning in the field of education. In contrast to the traditional education system, many learners now enjoy online education because they can access a large amount of information within a very short time. They can continue their studies willingly from their houses. Through e-learning education system they can save time by collecting study materials within a very short time. In a word it may be said that e-learning enhanced the digital literacy. In the context of the online mode of education for India Novel Laureate Abhijit Benerjee told to the Indian Express on 6 may 2020 that “my prediction is that many more people will now take online classes”.

Besides these, institutions like the UGC and the MHRD provided learners with many teaching materials to keep education continuing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the digital initiative had prove to be very effective during the covid crisis . Some of them are Swayam, National Digital Library, Virtual lab, E-gyankosh, Gyandarshan etc.

SWAYAM- Swayam was launched on 9 July 2017 by the Ministry Of Education. Swayam the meaning ‘Self’ is a hindi acronym that stand for “study webs of active learning for young aspiring minds” is an Indian massive online online course platform. The initiative was taken by the then ministry for the students perusing education from class ix to xii, graduate and post graduate level. The portal is connected to national coordinators such as AICTE, NCERT, IGNOU, UGC, NPTEL, NIOS, IIMB for delivering updated quality content. Students registering for the courses at swayam need not pay the fees as the course is free of cost. However, to obtain certification, registration is required, and a minimal fee has to be paid. This platform is playing important role in the pandemic situation to provide virtual education.

NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY- National Digital Library is a project under the Ministry Of Education. Government of india has given free access to the National Digital Library of India, where over 3,82,00,000 books and periodicals are available. These ICT based initiative of the government helping to continue the education through virtual mode in a pandemic situation.

VIRTUAL LAB- Virtual Lab is an initiative of the Ministry of Education. The project aims to provide remote access to the lab in various discipline of science and engineering. These type of governmental arrangements helping the learners at the time of the covid-19 outbreak in India.

E-GYANKOSH- e-gyankosh is a national digital repository to store and share the digital learning resources which is developed by the open and distance learning institutions of India. Items in e-gyankosh are protected by copy right , with all rights reserved by Indira Gandhi National open university(IGNOU).

GYANDARSHAN- Gyandarshan is a web-based TV channel devoted to educational and developmental needs for open and distance learner. A web-based TV channel devoted to educational and developmental needs of the society. (Pravat kumar Jena)



India is a country where nearly 20% people live below the poverty line. According to the 2011 census, 68% of people in India live in rural areas. On the other hand 31.16% people live in urban areas. More than 8% of total population of the country are most vulnerable for every aspect of socio-economic life. They are living mostly in remote villages across the country. Due to different socio-economic background in India student can not expect to have all the require facilities. Which might give the student the feeling of segregation and thus create digital divide between the rich who can avail all the facilities and the poor who cant not afford to purchase the equipment that are required for e-learning. So, India`s education system is facing a big challenge.

Some challenges are- (i) Private school across India started full-fledged online education. But to date a large population of the country depends on public school. Most of public school are not able to operationalize online mode of education due to their infrastructural weakness. So, the educational rights of the poor people`s children are facing serious challenge. As a result, day by day gap is increasing between the students of common and elite people in the country.

(ii) Internet connectivity in India till the day an ongoing project. Many villages and remote areas till not connected through high speed internet. There are many villages across India to date not connected by the internet.

(iii) The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher educational sector, which is a critical determinant of country`s economic future. A large number of Indian student enroll in universities abroad, especially in countries worst affected by the pandemic such as the US, UK, Australia and china. Many such students have now been barred from learning in these countries. (A.Karmakar, P.Mukherjee)

CONCLUSION

Right to education act 2009 was launched in April 2010 for ensuring the education of everyone. But the outbreak of corona virus ceased the fundamental right of people. At this situation traditional educational system changed into online basis education system. To maintain the pace of education system many educational institution and Administration adopt many initiatives. At the conclusion it may be said that India still will have to cross a long way and will have to stay alert to maintain the progress of education in time of crisis period like this type of deadlier virus. The government should have to increased the amount of budget for education sectors and with it technology based infrastructures should have to be created. We have to keep it in mind that Economic standard and geographical location can not be the cause of burden for a student to take education.

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