

Impact Of Covid -19 On Indian Education System

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic was a global outbreak of coronavirus; an infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Covid -19 pandemic adversely affected all the spheres of life including the education system on a global basis. India, like every other country, was confronted with this difficulty across the board. The pandemic resulted in a substantial amount of damage to the educational system in India. On the one hand, lockdown and social isolation had a negative impact on the student's life, but on the other hand, it led to the establishment of a new education system that made use of technologies. Around 32 crore children were prevented from attending schools and colleges as a direct result of the closure of schools and institutions; yet, this setback ultimately helped to pave the way for the development of the online education system. In this world, the only thing that is consistent is change, and the other aspects of life are highly unpredictable. As a result, the education industry has shown itself to be a fighter all over the world and has effectively faced the challenge posed by COVID-19 by digitizing its processes. The purpose of this paper is to explore both the positive and negative aspects of COVID 19, as well as the steps that the Indian government took to combat the challenges caused by the pandemic.

Keywords: Pandemic, Digital, Technology, Infrastructure

INTRODUCTION

The deadly and contagious Corona Virus, also called Covid-19, quickly spread over the world, leading to a pandemic. The WHO has officially recognized it as a pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, declared the novel coronavirus (Covid -19) outbreak a global pandemic. Almost every economic area was severely impacted by COVID-19. Worldwide, the educational system was shaken by this tragedy. More than 1.5 billion students and 63 million teachers in 188 countries were impacted as mounting positive case counts in early March 2020 prompted many governments to temporarily close the educational institutions, which included schools, colleges, and universities, Although the lockdown caused disruptions in the schedules of the education sector, it provided a fresh window of chances to move away from the traditional classroom teaching model and towards a new era of online learning (the digital model). Numerous educationalists, decision-making excellencies of education, and scientists issued a call to take advantage of the new opportunities afforded by the internet facility while working from the comfort of one's own home. Therefore, the pandemic COVID-19 problem presented educational institutes with both challenges and chances to continue the teaching-learning process.

The introduction of COVID-19 brought about a sea change in the landscape of the education industry in India.

OBJECTIVES:

- To analyze the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector.
- To enlist both positive and negative impacts of COVID-19.
- To highlight initiatives taken during this pandemic by Govt. of India for education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has been done on the basis of secondary data in order to know the impact of COVID – 19 on the Indian education system. The data for the study has been extracted from works of previous literature, related websites and research articles.

Covid 19 and India

The COVID-19 pandemic in India is a part of the worldwide pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first cases of COVID-19 in India were reported on 30 January 2020 in three towns of Kerala among three Indian medical students who had returned from Wuhan, China the epicenter of the pandemic. Lockdowns were announced in Kerala on 23 March and in the rest of the country on 25 March

Several measures have been taken by the government of India to stop the spread of the deadly COVID-19 virus. On March 16, 2020, the union government announced that all schools and other public facilities would be closed. On March 18, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) updated its directions for examination centers to include social distance. On March 19, the Central Board of Secondary Education and the Joint Entrance Examination were both postponed for students applying to the Indian Institutes of Technology and other engineering institutes. The country-wide postponement or cancellation of standardized tests meant that the students of all ages were automatically or retrospectively advanced to the next grade. Interviews for the Civil Service Exam were further delayed by the Union Public Service Commission.

Department of School Education and Literacy allocated Rs. 818.17 million for digital efforts to promote online learning and Rs. 267.86 core for online teacher training to support teachers' continuing professional development in light of Covid-19.

To make sure that kids who continue to attend school during the COVID-19 Pandemic do not fall behind, the Ministry of Education held many meetings with states and UTs at all levels and implemented several measures to ensure the progress of education in the country.

PM e-VIDYA:

PM e-VIDYA is a comprehensive program that brings together all programs associated with digital/online/on-air education to provide access to learning through a variety of channels. Part of the plan involves:

DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing): DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing in Asia) was officially introduced on September 5, 2017, by the Hon'ble Vice

President of India. It is a National Teacher Platform used by educators and students across the country to facilitate distance learning for students. The MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development) and the NCERT (National Council for Education Research and Training) have collaborated to create a digital education initiative. Despite the COVID-19-related disruption to schooling, DIKSHA facilitates learning and education at home for all states and union territories through innovative state programs, thus advancing the use of technology for the benefit of teachers and students across India. The National Teacher Platform is now known as DIKSHA. The guiding principle at DIKSHA is "our instructors are our heroes." The goal of this program is to help both educators and students continue their regular course of study while strengthening their overall education.

All of India's states and union territories can use DIKSHA. All of India's national curriculum standards (NCERT, CBSE, and SCERT) and 18+ languages are currently supported. Textbook content can also be accessed through QR codes. The educational system uses this "one nation; one digital platform" approach. The DIKSHA portal is a cutting-edge system that works with both Android and iOS.

SWAYAM PRABHA TV: Swayam Prabha is a network of 34 direct-to-home (DTH) channels that broadcasts nonstop, high-caliber educational content around the clock, every day of the week. At the very least four times per day, new articles appear in Swayam Prabha. This happens six more times during the day so that students can attend at their own convenience. These channels are uplinked by the Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG) in Gandhinagar. Class 9–12 curriculum-based educational programming produced by NCERT, CBSE, KVS, NIOS, Rotary, and others is broadcast on these channels. The video was produced using the use of both Hindi and English. Content from graduate and undergraduate courses in the arts, sciences, commerce, the performing arts, the social sciences and humanities, engineering, technology, law, medicine, agriculture, and other disciplines are also included. During the pandemic period it proved to be an important means of learning for the students in the whole country.

SWAYAM Portal: SWAYAM is a government-backed program with the overarching goal of improving educational access, equity, and quality. Students who have been left behind by the digital revolution and who are unable to fully engage in the knowledge economy are the focus of SWAYAM's efforts to bridge the digital divide. More than 1.5 crores students are currently enrolled in Swayam, which is a platform that enables anybody, anywhere, at any time, and at no cost to access all of the courses taught in classrooms from Class 9 to postgraduation. It covers all 4 corners, with video lectures, reading materials, Exams and tests online inquiry and reply session. This also proved handy in imparting education during the Covid -19 induced lockdown period.

E-textbooks: The e-Pathshala app and website (Android, iOS, Windows) provide access to the library of electronic textbooks. There are almost 600 free digital books available in many languages (Hindi, English, Sanskrit, and Urdu) from NCERT. This includes 377 e-textbooks (grades 1–12).

e-Content for CWSN: Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) is used to create CWSN's electronic content for the visually impaired. Gyanamrit, channel 30 on Swayam Prabha, airs these classes. The NIOS website and YouTube channel both feature recordings of the NIOS course content in sign language for the benefit of students with hearing loss. In addition, NIOS has produced over 270 videos in Sign Language across seven subjects, allowing secondary school students and Yoga practitioners to have more access to education. DVDs containing the recorded material are mailed out to HI students.

National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER): It is a product of NCERT's CIET. At the National Conference on ICT (Information and Communication Technology) for School Education, it was unveiled. The archive, housed on the platform known as Meta Studio, is the brainchild of the Knowledge Labs at Mumbai's Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education. The Ministry of Education's NROER is a multilingual database of educational materials for use in all grade levels and a wide variety of subject areas. There are a wide variety of tools at your disposal, including concept maps, videos, audio recordings, talking books, multimedia, learning objects, images, diagrams, charts, articles, copies, and textbooks.

NROER is a free and public digital archive. About 17,500 individual pieces of digital content are already available across all grade levels and subject areas. This also helped students to continue their efforts of learning in a positive manner during the lockdown period.

Radio, Community Radio, and Podcasts: Students in rural areas who lacked access to the internet could resort to radio broadcasts instead. Two hundred and eighty-nine local radio stations have aired NIOS-produced content for students in grades nine through twelve. ShikshaVani is a podcast created by CBSE is being put to good use by students in high school and beyond. When it comes to Android phones, the Play Store now features CBSE-ShikshaVani. Over four hundred pieces of files of audio content spanning the NCERT curriculum. The media (e.g., radio, Doordarshan and All India Radio on TV are broadcasting online courses and instructional information on a national scale. Student community benefitted immensely during the lockdown period by using such available resources.

Manodarpan: Nirmala Sitharaman, the Union Minister of Finance, launched Manodarpan, an initiative to raise awareness about students' and educators' mental health concerns and to facilitate the provision of support to address these concerns in the context of conditions related to Covid 19 and beyond.

Positive Impact of the pandemic on education system of India

Any change that is so disruptive is certain to bring about additional changes that will reshape the global education system, especially in India, which is attempting to reform this sector in a systematic manner. The following are some of the most significant opportunities:

Increased Digital Literacy. The pandemic compelled people to study and use digital technology, resulting in an increase in digital literacy.

Develop the use of soft copies of learning materials. When there was shutdown, students couldn't get their hard copies of study materials, so most of them used soft copies as a reference.

Improvement in collaborative work-There is a new possibility where teaching and learning in a collaborative setting might take on new shapes. This potential has recently shown itself.

Increase in the frequency of virtual conferences. The epidemic has resulted in a significant increase in the number of options for teleconferencing, online meetings, webinars, and online conferences (also known as e-conferencing).

Increased efficiency in disseminating knowledge via digital channels .E-mail, short message service (SMS), phone calls, and various social media platforms (e.g., What Sapp, Facebook), allowed students to effortlessly share learning materials and handle associated problems.

Global exposure .Educators and students are able to connect with people from all around the world. Students adapted to life in a global society. Online learning allows students to better manage their time, making it especially helpful during pandemics.

Better time management: During pandemics, online learning enables learners to manage their time more effectively.

Demand for Open and Distance Learning: During the pandemic, the majority of students favored Open and Distance Learning because it promotes self-learning and gives them the chance to receive individualised instruction based on their requirements while also giving them access to a variety of materials.

Negative Impact of Pandemic on education System in India

The Indian educational system has suffered greatly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has had several detrimental effects on education, some of which are listed here.

Teachers, students, and parents were not ready for digital learning. Parents, teachers, and children were unprepared digitally: Experts in book, talk, chalk, and classroom approaches faced a challenge in the digital age. They needed to be ready to handle demands and continue educating online. Many rural students faced challenges in obtaining critical technologies for digital learning, especially those with little or no internet access. The digital divide among learners was caused by their inability to purchase computers, laptops, or cell phones at home. Additionally, parents have had to assist their children with web technology.

Educational activities were hampered. Educational activities were badly affected, and we've seen a lot of confusion, as well as tests, academic sessions, and other things being moved or delayed.

The impact of school shutdown on students' diets: Damage to students' health from a lack of nutritious food is a real concern in India, where the government instituted the midday meal program to ensure that all children attending government-run schools received adequate sustenance. Many children in India greatly benefit from receiving a midday meal; hence the closure of schools during lockdown resulted in a significant number of malnourished children.

Digital gadgets .Online teaching-learning may create a digital divide in remote areas where students may not have access to computers, laptops, or mobile phones. For most Indian impoverished students, the lockout has been devastating. Online learning is unavailable to them, according to reports.

Widening the gap. The online teaching and learning technique contributes to a significant achievement gap between students who come from urban and rural settings as well as those who come from wealthy backgrounds.

Observations and Suggestions

This pandemic has brought to light some of the most significant deficiencies in the Indian school system. Students who are already at a disadvantage have been hit especially hard by the closing of schools.

One of the most important developments that may be pursued is the necessity of adopting a strategy that integrates online education with a rise in the volume of investment in the modernization of the technological infrastructure of educational institutions. Training for the instructors should be given a lot of priority.

All institutions of higher education are now aware of the significance of technology and should take substantial steps to conduct instruction that is driven by technology through the use of a learning management system. It is strongly suggested that educational institutions make extensive use of various forms of technology because students who practice online enjoy a wide range of benefits, it

is essential that disadvantaged members of society have access to affordable online education programs. Incorporating technology into classrooms can also be facilitated by dividing courses offered by educational institutes between those that are delivered via traditional methods and those that are delivered over the internet. The use of internet-based resources in the classroom will lead to an increase in both students' and teachers' levels of digital literacy, which in turn will lead to an expansion of both students' and teachers' horizons in terms of both learning and the employment opportunities available to them in the digital world. This will ultimately contribute to the social sustainability.

Conclusion

The field of education in India has been profoundly changed as a result of COVID-19. Even if it has resulted in a great number of difficulties, it has also produced a great number of possibilities. In an effort to find a solution to the problems caused by COVID-19, the government of India and other education-related organisations has investigated the viability of open and distance learning through the utilization of a variety of digital tools. The online educational system in India is not yet developed enough to allow education to spread to all regions of the country. Students who do not have the same advantages as others will be at a disadvantage as a result of the increased use of digital platforms in educational settings. It should be a top priority to take advantage of digital technology so that millions of young kids in India can be placed in a more advantageous position. It is of the utmost importance that educational institutions work to improve their knowledge and information technology infrastructure in order to better prepare themselves to deal with incidents like COVID-19.

Even though the COVID-19 situation is over, there is an immediate need to focus on maximizing the use of online platforms. This must be done. Whenever a situation similar to a pandemic arises, India should devise innovative plans to guarantee that all children would have continuous access to educational opportunities. Because students who practice online enjoy a wide range of benefits, it is essential that disadvantaged members of society have access to affordable online education programs.

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