



A Study on Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Indian Education System

*Neha Nupoor

*Kishlay Kumar

**Dr. Sandeep Kumar

*Research Scholar

Commerce & Management.

Sarala Birla University, Ranchi.

**Associate Professor

Commerce & Management,

Sarala Birla University, Ranchi.

Abstract

Covid 19 pandemic has adversely affected all the sectors including the education system on a worldwide basis. India has also faced that challenge in all sectors. The Indian education system has been hampered a lot. Lockdown and social distancing, on one hand, has badly affected the student's life, whereas, on the other hand, it led to the foundation of a new education system using technologies. Closure of schools and colleges stopped around 32 crores students from attending schools and colleges but in turn, it also saw the seeds to start the online education system. Change is constant in this world, and all the other circumstances are variable. So, the education sector has proved fighter worldwide and has successfully overcome the threat of COVID-19 through digitization. The positive and negative, aspects have been discussed in this paper including the measures taken by the Indian government to overcome the prevailing pandemic situation. There is a certain negative impact and which needs to be resolved on a priority basis so that students and teachers could smoothly take the classes. Also, parents are facing certain issues with their wards education, so some fruitful suggestions have been discussed in this paper to carry out smooth educational activities during the pandemic.

Keywords: Pandemic, Impact, Education, Digital



Introduction

For the first time, the disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in Wuhan, China, in 2019 and spread all over the world. The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed on December 31, 2019, when the World Health Organization (WHO) received reports of pneumonia patients with no known cause in Wuhan, China. On January 11, 2020, a 61-year-old man in Wuhan, China died as the first victim.

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggested COVID- 19, an acronym for Coronavirus illness 2019, as the official name of the virus on February 11, 2020. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization proclaimed COVID-19 a pandemic. On 30 January 2020, the first instance of the COVID-19 pandemic in India was recorded in the state of Kerala, with the victim having traveled from Wuhan, China (Wikipedia). On March 12, 2020, the first death from COVID- 19 was recorded in India. It has afflicted over 300.851 million people all across the world (WHO).

According to UNICEF monitoring,23 nations have implemented countrywide closures and 40 have implemented local closures, affecting over half of the world's student population.

Due to school closures aimed at controlling the spread of COVID-19, more than

1.3 billion students are at risk of falling behind. Countries have implemented remote education programs to keep the world's children educated. However, many children around the world – particularly those from impoverished families– do not have access to the internet, personal computers, phones, televisions, or even radios at home, exacerbating the consequences of existing learning inequities. Students who do not have access to the tools required for home-based learning are limited in their options for furthering their education. As a result, many people risk never going back to school, ruining years of educational achievement around the world.

Meanwhile, in an effort to stem the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, Indian government has temporarily closed educational institutions in both the urban and rural areas, where the education system is still in its infancy. The midday lunch is a programme designed to entice students to pursue school. Under this circumstances government has halted all educational institutions as part of the nationwide lockdown, affecting learners ranging from elementary school pupils to postgraduate students.

One of the primary effects of the pandemic is on the Indian education system, which is rapidly deteriorating. A properly organized education, personality development, discipline, peer management, and, most importantly, life skills continue to be at risk for students across the country.

Prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, 320 million students were enrolled in schools and higher education institutions around the world. As a result of the pandemic, the entire country has been put on lockdown. According to UNICEF estimates (2021), 1.5 million schools in India were entirely shuttered for over a year during the first wave, affecting 247 million students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools. Therefore, admissions and evaluation procedures and plans have been affected. Rapid tests, as well as quick evaluation and assessment approaches, have supplanted traditional methods. Year-end exams have been postponed or cancelled for the second year in a row; they have been substituted in some cases with (internal) assessments, which are not always completed in a systematic and timely manner. As a result, COVID has presented



educational institutions with numerous difficulties and possibilities to improve their technical expertise and infrastructure. The lockout has offered teachers and students a light of optimism that they can continue their instructional activities online. Teachers distributed assignments to students via the internet and delivered lectures via live video conferencing utilizing apps such as Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook, Youtube, and Skype, among others. For effective communication, there are WhatsApp groups of guardians, instructors, students, and parents who are always in touch to share their issues through this e-medium.

As a whole, the Indian traditional knowledge system may play an essential role in reshaping the global education system. This can be incorporated into the current situation's convention. Ayurveda, agriculture, architecture, hydraulics, Indian medicinal studies, metallurgy, and yoga should all be included in the educational curriculum in order to develop a stronger foundation for humanity and the country's future generations.





Objective

- To provide information on the various steps implemented by the Indian government in the education sector during the outbreak.
- To evaluate the impact of COVID- 19 on the education system

Research Methodology

Data and information presented in the study are collected from various reports and articles published by national and international agencies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Information is also collected from various authentic websites. Some journals are also referred to relating to the impact of COVID- 19 on the educational system are referred.

Result and Discussion:

COVID-19's terrifying and devastating impact has shaken the globe to its core. The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on educational systems around the world, forcing schools, early childhood education and care (ECEC) centers, universities, and colleges to close almost entirely. To combat the spread of COVID-19, most governments agreed to temporarily shut down academic institutions. As of January 12, 2021, around 825 million students are affected by school closures as a result of the pandemic. During the Covid-19 pandemic, educational institutions were harmed and students and others who were connected to them. Despite the lockdown and social distancing, educational institutions have developed ways to ensure that students can continue their studies. This has created space for online learning. Many educational institutions have assured that students can continue their studies by immediately adopting technical education. The educational system was severely impeded, but technology was able to remedy the problem. Fixing every possible problem with technology, or online learning, is inextricably linked to addressing societal issues and educational obstacles. We think about what online learning should look like in the Covid-19 environment because of the use of technology in education and examination. Although online learning was created to assist students, teachers, and parents, it has delayed growth by denying kids access to the outside world. As a result, this report encourages educational leaders to consider carefully if the decisions they are now making during the Covid-19 issue are the wisest course of action for the future.



Actions are taken by the government in the field of education in covid- 19

The Indian government has adopted a variety of efforts to prevent the spread of the pandemic COVID-19. The union government ordered the shutdown of schools and institutions on March 16, 2020. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued amended examination centers instructions on March 18 that included social distancing measures. The CBSE and JEE tests for admission to the Indian Institutes of Technology and other engineering colleges were postponed on March 19. School examinations were postponed or canceled across the country, and younger students were either promoted automatically or based on earlier performance. The Civil Services Examination interview has also been postponed by the Union Public Service Commission.

To counteract the effects of Covid-19, the Department of School Education and Literacy has set aside Rs. 818.17 million for digital efforts to encourage online learning and Rs. 267.86 crore for online teacher training to ensure teachers continued professional development.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Ministry of Education had multiple meetings with states and UTs at all levels and implemented a number of steps to ensure that school-going students do not fall behind in their studies, including the following:

PM eVIDYA:

PM eVIDYA is a comprehensive initiative that unites all initiatives linked to digital/online/on-air education in order to offer multi-mode access to education. The initiative entails the following:

- 1. DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing):** On September 5, 2017, the Hon'ble Vice President of India formally launched DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing). It's a National Teacher Platform that's currently being utilized by teachers and students all around the country to deliver school education via remote learning. The National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development – MHRD have collaborated on a digital learning program. Despite the disruption of schooling caused by COVID-19, DIKSHA enables learning and education at home for all states and union territories through innovative state programs; hence leapfrogging the use of technology for the benefit of teachers and learners across India. DIKSHA is the new name for the National Teacher Platform. DIKSHA's motto is "our instructors are our heroes." This program aims to assist teachers and students in continuing their studies as usual while ensuring holistic learning for both. DIKSHA is available to all Indian states and union territories. It currently supports 18+ languages as well as NCERT, CBSE, and SCERT curricula across India. QR codes on textbooks can also be used to view the contents. It is the 'one nation; one digital platform' for school education. DIKSHA portal is an advanced platform that is available for android and iOS users also.



- 2. SWAYAM Portal:** SWAYAM is a government-sponsored initiative aimed at achieving the three cardinal principles of education policy: access, equity, and quality. SWAYAM aims to close the digital divide for students who have been left behind by the digital revolution and are unable to participate fully in the knowledge economy. Swayam is a platform that allows anyone, anywhere, at any time, and at no cost to access all of the courses taught in classrooms from Class 9 to post-graduation, and currently, more than 1.5 crores students are enrolled. Its works on 4 quadrants;
- (a) video lecture
 - (b) reading materials
 - (c) test and quizzes
 - (d) online doubt clearing session.
- 3. SWAYAM PRABHA TV:** Swayam Prabha is a 34 DTH channel group dedicated to providing high-quality educational programming 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Swayam Prabha publishes new content at least four times a day. This is repeated five more times during the day, allowing students to choose the time that is most convenient for them. BISAG (Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geo-Informatics), Gandhinagar, uplinks the channels. These channels broadcast curriculum-based education programs created by NCERT and other organizations including CBSE, KVS, NIOS, Rotary, and others from class 9 to 12. Both Hindi and English have been used to create the video content. It also covers the higher education curriculum-based post-graduate and undergraduate course content in a variety of areas including arts, science, commerce, performing arts, social sciences and humanities, engineering, technology, law, medicine, agriculture, and others.
- 4. Radio, Community Radio, and Podcasts:** For youngsters in distant locations who do not have access to the internet, radio broadcasting is used. Content for NIOS for grades 9 to 12 has also been broadcast on 289 community radio stations. A Podcast called ShikshaVani for CBSE disseminates is being effectively used by learners of grades 9 to 12. For Android phone users, CBSE-Shiksha Vani is accessible on the Play Store. Shikshavani now has over 400 pieces of content in the form of audio files covering topics from the NCERT syllabus. On radio, YouTube, and television, Doordarshan and All India Radio are airing virtual classes and educational information across the country.
- 5. e-Content for CWSN:** The study materials for Visually Impaired learners are developed in Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY). These lessons are broadcast on Gyanamrit, channel 30 of Swayam Prabha. The NIOS course content has also been recorded in sign language and is available on the NIOS website and on YouTube for hearing impaired students. In addition, NIOS has created over 270 videos in Sign Language in seven subjects to provide educational access to students at secondary level and Yoga courses. The recorded content is sent to HI learners on DVD.



6. **E-textbooks:** The e-textbooks are accessible through the e-Pathshala website and mobile app (Android, iOS, Windows). More than 600 digital books including 377 e-textbooks (grades 1 to 12) and 3,500 pieces of audio and video content of NCERT are available in the public domain in various languages (Hindi, English, Sanskrit, and Urdu).
7. **National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER)** is developed by CIET, NCERT. It was launched during the National Conference on ICT (Information and Communication Technology) for School Education. Meta studio, the platform hosting the repository is an initiative of Knowledge Labs, Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Mumbai.: NROER by the Ministry of Education offers resources for all school subjects and grades in multiple languages. Concept maps, movies, audio clips, talking books, multimedia, learning objects, pictures, diagrams, charts, articles, copies, and textbooks are just a few of the resources available. NROER is an open e-content repository. There are about 17,500 pieces of e-content available for all grades and disciplines.
8. **Manodarpan:** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched Manodarpan, an initiative to promote the mental health issues and concerns of students and teachers and to facilitate providing support to address the mental health and psychosocial aspect during the conditions like Covid 19 and beyond.

Positive Impact of the pandemic on education system of India

Any change that is so disruptive is certain to bring with it some new changes that will reshape the education system around the world, particularly in a country like India, which is seeking to reform this sector in a planned manner. The following are some of the prominent areas of opportunity:

1. **Blended learning is on the rise:** Universities and colleges will adopt a mixed learning approach, in which both face-to-face and online delivery will be standard. This would necessitate all teachers to become more tech-savvy and undergo training to reach the required level. It will be necessary to adopt new methods of delivery and assessment of learning outcomes, which will provide enormous opportunities for significant changes in curriculum development and pedagogy.
2. **Learning management systems are expected to become the new standard:** Learning Management System has become a new trend in online classes due to Covid 19 lockdown. Companies that have been developing and strengthening learning management systems for use by universities and colleges will have a huge opportunity.
3. **Rise in collaborative work:** To a large extent, the teaching community has been insulated, especially in a country like India. Collaborative teaching and learning can now take on new forms and even be monetized. Even students from competing institutions can take online courses taught by faculty members. Faculty collaborations can also take place across the country to benefit from



each other's expertise.

4. **Improved use of electronic media for information sharing:** Learning materials are easily shared among students and questions are answered via e-mail, SMS, phone calls, and various social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook.
5. **The use of soft copy learning materials was encouraged:** Because students were unable to collect hard copies of study materials during a lockdown, the majority of students relied on soft copies for reference.
6. **Demand for Open and Distance Learning (ODL):** During the pandemic, most students preferred the ODL mode because it encourages self-learning and allows them to learn from a variety of resources while also tailoring their learning to their specific needs.

Negative Impact of Pandemic on education System in India

The education sector has suffered a lot due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The UNESCO estimates that about 32 crores of students are affected in India, including those in schools and colleges. Some of the points are discussed below stating the negative impact of Covid 19 on the Indian education system:

1. **Student migration across borders is sluggish:** Many universities in Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Canada rely heavily on student migration from China and India. It is becoming increasingly evident that this cross-border student movement will suffer a setback for at least the next two to three years, posing a significant financial danger to universities in these nations, which are already under financial strain.
2. **Teachers, students with their parents were not digitally prepared:** Teachers who were professionals in book, talk, chalk, and classroom methods faced a dilemma in the digital era. They needed to be prepared to tackle the demands of the current scenario and to continue teaching online. Many students also struggled to secure the necessary technology for digital learning, particularly in rural areas, students have limited or no internet connectivity. Poor students were unable to afford a computer, laptop, or supporting cell phone in their homes, resulting in a digital divide among students. Also, parents were bound to sit with their kids to facilitate them with online techniques.
3. **Nutritional loss as a result of school closure:** Mid-day meals in schools is a program started by the Indian Government to provide nutritional food to the students who are studying in government-owned schools. As the midday meal provision is a great blessing to many students in India, the closure of schools during lockdown meant many children were deprived and malnourished.



4. **Educational activities got hampered:** Educational activities have been severely affected, and we've noticed a lot of confusion, as well as the postponement or delay of tests, academic sessions, and other things. The so-called co-curriculum had run out of room.
5. School and college fees were not paid on time: During the lockdown, most parents were afraid of losing their jobs, and as a result, they may not be able to pay the fees for that period, which might damage private institutes. Many low-budget schools got shut down.
6. Create difference between rich and less fortunate students: Students from a low-income background in both rural and urban areas are more likely to be affected because they have limited or no internet access and not be able to afford necessary technical equipment for online learning
7. Educators and students should be taught how to use technology to facilitate online teaching and learning. For students' entire growth, high-quality education and effective learning strategies are required. For the enrichment of young minds, more capacity-building, skill development, practical knowledge enhancement, motivating programs, the use of new tools and techniques, and other welfare programs are required.
8. Access to technology and the internet is an absolute necessity in today's world. As a result, digital capabilities and infrastructure must reach the farthest-flung and poorest places to allow students to continue their education even during pandemics.
9. The government and educational institutions should prepare to keep the educational activity going while maintaining social distance. By following COVID-19 criteria, 33% of students and teachers may attend schools/colleges on a rotational basis to carry out educational activities.
10. Educational institutions should adopt new ways of academic assessment. Students' academic performance can be evaluated in a variety of ways, including online tests, quizzes, and short projects.

Conclusion

The effects of Covid-19 on the Indian education system have been discussed in this article. Covid-19 has paved the way for pedagogical shifts and the adoption of virtual education at all levels of education. We don't know how long the pandemic would last, so to deal with the current crisis, the Indian government and several education stakeholders have looked into the idea of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) by implementing various digital technologies. India isn't yet ready to use digital platforms to bring education to every corner of the country. Due to the current selection of digital platforms, students who are not as fortunate as others may suffer. However, universities and the Indian government are working tirelessly to find a solution to this problem. The objective should be to use digital technology to put millions of young Indian students in a better position. Educational institutions must improve their knowledge and information technology infrastructure to be prepared for COVID-19-like situations. There is a pressing need to maximize the use of online platforms so that students can not only finish their degrees on time but also prepare for the future



digitally oriented world. India should devise innovative measures to ensure that all children have continuous access to education. For efficient education delivery, Indian policy must incorporate persons from varied backgrounds, including remote regions, marginalized, and minority groups. Although online learning is extremely beneficial to students, it should be continued after the lockdown. This work does not include any statistical analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on the educational system; however, a more in-depth investigation using statistical research might be conducted.





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