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Analysis of Online Education in India Post Covid

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ABSTRACT

The pandemic of Covid-19 has inflicted devastation on many facets of human life, including academia. To counteract Covid-19, the administration implemented a nationwide lockdown on March 25th, 2020, which significantly influenced the educational system. In India, over 32 crore students could not move to schools or universities, and all educational activities were halted. This pandemic has changed teaching, learning, and assessment approaches. The issues that students in India confront will be discussed in this essay. It also aims to determine the pros and cons of teaching, learning, and our policymakers' actions to ensure that students pursuing education in India can receive smooth learning. Many new modes of learning, new views, and new trends have evolved due to this pandemic, and this tendency may continue as we move forward towards the future. Some valuable suggestions will be further discussed in this essay for carrying out educational activities.

Keywords: Covid-19, impact, post-Covid-19, virtual learning, education, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

The world is struggling with COVID-19, which has impacted around 1.2 billion students and young people worldwide through college and school closures. The various constraints and the cross-country lockout for COVID-19 have influenced more than 32 crores of students in India. Most countries worldwide have temporarily shut down educational institutions to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This famous remark has had a significant impact on the student population around the world.

Governments worldwide are attempting to promote the advancement of education by applying various innovative techniques of learning. According to a review report on advanced education published by the MHRD and GOI, 993 schools, 39931 colleges, and 10725 independent organizations are listed.³ Despite the country's adaption to digital learning, only 45 crore people

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out of the country's entire population have access to web e-learning. On the other hand, rural residents do not have numerous advances, defeating the purpose of online education. The COVID-19 outbreak enlightened society about the need for creation and pushed educational institutes to gain online learning and exhibit a virtual learning culture. The epidemic has been propelling the education industry forward with mechanical innovation and breakthroughs. The outbreak particularly hard hit the education sector.

So, there is a need to establish a compatible education environment. As before covid, India was not much familiar with the online education system. Everyone has to update themselves as per the need of an hour, whether it is government, educational institutions, or students. Further, in this essay, we have discussed the pros & cons of online education, measures taken by the government, and suggestions on how to improve and update ourselves post-covid.

(A) Research Methodology

The research paper is secondary in nature. It covers various aspects, and to cover the same various articles and research papers were analysed, and after taking reference from it, the research paper was drafted.

II. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION

(A) Positive Impact

Change is unavoidable, and it has been imposed upon society as a result of Covid-19. The education industry will be able to envisage new modes of teaching and learning due to new developments. Although the pandemic had many detrimental effects on education, Indian educational institutions have acknowledged the challenges and do their utmost to support students. COVID-19 has created many opportunities which will lead to a bright future. Some of them are listed below:

- 1. Enhance digital learning:** Students do not have many opportunities to learn new things in some rural areas. Due to COVID-19, when everything became online. It increases students' belief that they can learn and grow even staying in rural areas and connecting with the globe. Due to this pandemic, it is observed that learning and growing are not restricted to any specific geographical limits. By staying anywhere, a student can still learn and grow. Due to this pandemic, E-learning courses are also being enhanced by teachers, which will benefit students in the long term.

- 2. Enhance technology knowledge:** For teaching, studying, entertaining, and communicating with the outside world, an increasing number of students will rely on

technology and digital solutions. Learners will use the internet to communicate electronically with their faculties and classmates via webinars, WhatsApp, videoconferencing, instant messaging, and e-mail. They are becoming more well-versed with the technology as they learn more about operating these gadgets and using them to enhance their knowledge.

3. The increased role of AI: Artificial Intelligence (AI) may make it easier for teachers to manage assessment, grading, mark-sheet preparation, and student performance monitoring. If these activities were simplified, academicians would focus more on course development, qualitative teaching-learning, and skill development.⁴

4. Increasing Participation: It is observed that some of the students who did not confidently take part in offline classes are now participating actively in online classes. So, the online mode acts as an opportunity for them to enhance their communication skills.

(B) Negative impact

Traditional models like classroom lectures, learning, and assessment will undoubtedly be challenged by new technology. The online method was once viewed as a threat, but it has now proven to be beneficial. However, several challenges emerged due to the introduction of online education as a mode of educating students. One of the most critical questions about online learning is if it is efficient? However, it is helpful for students who have access to technology and wants to study. Some of the challenges that arise due to digital learning are listed below:

1. Digital divide: Some underprivileged families who lost their jobs due to covid may not be able to afford to send their kids to schools and colleges. It will increase the gap between rich and poor students. Due to varying socioeconomic backgrounds, all students in India cannot have all of the required facilities. This may cause discomfort and frustration among students, resulting in the sense of segregation and thus creating a digital divide between the wealthy who can afford to purchase all of the necessary equipment and the poor who cannot afford to purchase the necessary equipment for E-Learning. Students from underprivileged families are also more likely to suffer because they may not afford a high-speed internet connection essential during the teaching and learning process or the necessary technological devices for online learning, resulting in inequity.

2. Debt Crisis: The student debt situation could worsen. Many students and their parents in India take out education loans for their studies. If the employment situation does not improve, student debt issues may worsen, posing a severe problem. Due to these student loans, they may encounter heightened stress, worry, and despair. Due to COVID-19, there is no

⁴ Prof.Dr Geetali Tilak, *Impact of COVID -19 on Higher Education in India*, 14 International Journal of Grid and Distributed Computing 1938, 1941 -1942 (2021)

recruitment in the government sector, and fresh graduates may lose their employment offers in the private sector.

Consequently, many Indians have returned home after losing their jobs abroad. As a result, recent graduates entering the labour market soon may have trouble finding good jobs. Many entrance exams and employment interviews were cancelled, which had a negative influence on students' life. All of this points to an increase in India's unemployment rate. As a result of the rising unemployment rate, there was a reasonable risk that interest in education would decrease due to the struggle for survival. This escalating problem has generated emotional stress among India's youth. It will pose a threat to the country's future.⁵

3. Effect on Physical Fitness: It is possible that learning with social separation may persist. Invisible constraints may limit the enjoyment and fun of university life. Sports, gyms, and competitions may remain in low gear for a more extended time, resulting in fewer students participating in physical activities. As a result, it is creating a significant impact on student's physical fitness.

4. Less attention of students during lectures: Absenteeism and poor performance have increased due to a lack of student participation in virtual classrooms. However, the passive role of learners in the class has become one of the major causes of poor online teaching and learning. Virtual meeting hubs have emerged in mobile applications or virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams. A large number of learners were attending lectures to show that they were present. They barely paid attention to what the teacher said because there is no class control in these virtual classrooms. Students are occasionally distracted by video games and social media, failing to pay attention in class. As a result, there is no discipline and studying environment at home.

5. Lack of technology awareness: Educational institutions instructed teachers to engage classes online utilizing virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet. Due to the abrupt move from offline to online education, teachers unfamiliar with new technologies and mobile applications found it challenging to engage in online classes. Some teachers were doing their jobs because they were asked to teach students through these platforms. The majority of class time is lost due to professors' lack of technological knowledge. On the other hand, institutions should provide training to their faculty members. The online

⁵ Pravat Kumar Jena, *Impact of Covid-19 on higher education in India*, 5 *International Journal of Advanced Education and Research* 77, 78 (2020).

platform cannot provide an adequate assessment. As a result, students stop paying attention in the classes.⁶

III. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS DUE TO COVID

Due to COVID-19, teachers are also facing numerous challenges. It was observed that there were substantial concerns such as a lack of basic amenities, external distraction, and family disturbance during teaching. The teacher's technical issues include a lack of technical infrastructure, understanding of online education platforms, and security concerns. Barriers to educational organization support include a lack of funding for purchasing advanced technologies, training, technical assistance, and clarity and vision.⁷

Teachers were introduced to various online platforms that will undoubtedly continue to be used in the future. The professors should establish themselves as "competent" professionals who can deliver on the expectations of the students.

IV. POLICIES AND INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

Covid-19 impacted the education system a lot in India. If we talk about online education in India, it is a very challenging task. As firstly, our infrastructure is not in align with the online platform's requirements. Secondly, there is a lack of access to the internet and gadgets. There are many pros and cons of online education, but we do not have any other option, and we have to adopt the online mode of education. Online education also proves very fruitful as it connects students and teachers from all over the globe. It encourages Open and Distance Learning (ODL) which was new in India. UGC and MHRD also play a significant role in developing various digital initiatives and providing online platforms for students and teachers. Some of the initiatives taken by the government to increase awareness regarding education are discussed below -

1. **e-GyanKosh:** It is a national digital repository to share and store different learning material. It is an open-access platform developed by the open and distance learning platforms of the country. Everything in e-GyanKosh is copyrighted to Indra Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).⁸

⁶ Mr. Siddesh Tari and Ms. Gautami Amonkar, *Impact of covid on higher education in India*, 2 Educational Resurgence Journal 22, 24 (2021)

⁷ Mukesh Rawal, *An analysis of COVID-19 Impacts On Indian Education System*, 2 Educational Resurgence Journal 35, 38 (2021)

⁸ e-GyanKosh, <https://egyankosh.ac.in/> (last visited Sept. 18, 2021)

2. **e-Adhyayan:** It is an open-access platform that gives access to 700+ e-books of undergraduate and postgraduate courses. It is an initiative of UGC & MHRD. It has been deployed and managed by the INFLIBNET Centre.⁹
3. **e-Pathya:** It is another vertical of e-Pathshala, an item determined course/content pack that helps understudies pursue high-level training (PG level) through distance learning similarly as grounds learning mode. This vertical, in like manner, licenses disengaged permission to course content.¹⁰
4. **Gyandhara:** It is a platform made by IGNOU where teachers and experts discuss a particular topic via e-mail and phonic conversation. Students can also join the conversation.¹¹
5. **Gyandarshan:** It is a web-based TV channel for communication and learning. It was developed by the IGNOU and is mainly for open and distance learners.¹²
6. **Swayam:** It covers over 1900 courses, covering school and higher education.¹³

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Indian government consulted with states and union territories at various levels. In January 2021, a brainstorming session with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) was convened to review and overcome the learning gap during the Covid-19 epidemic.

1. DIKSHA (one country, one progressed stage) is the nation's modernized establishment for giving quality e-content to school preparing in states/UTs. QR-coded Energized Textbooks for all grades are open on it. 35 of the 36 states and UTs have boarded on the DIKSHA stage and contextualized the substance as indicated by nearby needs.
2. One Swayam Prabha TV channel per one class was launched for classes 1 to 12.
3. Exceptional e-content for physically disabled students was made available on the Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) platform and signed languages on the NIOS site/YouTube.

Additionally, the Ministry has endeavored a proactive drive, named 'MANODARPAN' covering a vast extent of activities to give psychosocial support to understudies, instructors and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID scene, to say the very least.

⁹ e-PGPathshala, <https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/> (last visited Sept. 18, 2021)

¹⁰ Pravat Kumar Jena, *Impact of Covid-19 on higher education in India*, 5, International Journal of Advanced Education and Research 77, 79(2020)

¹¹ IGNOU Online, <https://ignouonline.ac.in> (last visited Sept. 18, 2021)

¹² Gyandarshan, www.ignouonline.ac.in/gyandarshan (last visited Sept. 18, 2021)

¹³ *supra* 10.

V. CONCLUSION

Different effects of COVID-19 on education in India have been discussed in this essay. We tried to analyze the pros & cons of online education, its prospects, and the steps taken by the government post-covid in improving education in India. It is unclear how long this pandemic will last, so we have to prepare ourselves well for any situation. The government's role is significant in creating opportunities and enhancing the online era of education. MHRD and UGC have launched some online platform and come up with some digital books, that were very useful during first and second wave but has to focus more. This pandemic provided an opportunity for the didactic approaches towards education and a shift towards online education from the conventional method at all levels of education.

VI. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of the suggestions suggested after analyzing the whole situation which are

1. GOI should focus more on providing a robust IT Infrastructure which is an essential prerequisite for online learning.
2. We recommend the GOI to provide free access to the internet and gadgets to the needy ones.
3. Proper training sessions should be given to the teachers regularly as they are habitual of the traditional method.
4. The government must have a quality assurance benchmark and mechanism to secure content from hacking.

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