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Impact of COVID 19 on Higher Education Institution and their Preparation

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ABSTRACT

Covid'19 Virus affected the whole world as we know. It has affected Educational Institutions too and millions of students were also affected because of the Pandemic which resulted in the change of mode of education from Offline Education to Online Education as it was required to reduce the disturbance and hindrance in the studies of the students. It also increased the participation of the international student in Indian Educational Institutions and it is believed that it will be adapted after the pandemic too. In the future, education will shift to a hybrid model and the digital divide will widen the quality gaps. Covie'19 pandemic has increased the focus on utilizing the e-learning tools platforms for higher education. As a result of this pandemic, the shortcomings of higher education have become apparent and a great emphasis needs to be placed on training the teachers in digital technology in order to adapt to the rapidly changing climate of education in the world and the preparations are required to tackle this situation and to come out of this situation. It is important for higher education institutions and universities to plan for a post-pandemic education and research strategy to improve student learning outcomes and standardize the quality of students. So this paper discusses the impact of Covid'19 on higher education institutions and their preparations.

I. INTRODUCTION

As we know that Covid'19 infection was reported firstly in Wuhan, China in 2019. It was declared as the Pandemic on 11th March 2020 by World Health Organization (WHO) and it spread all over the world and it affected many countries. Millions of people died because of pandemic Covid, 19 throughout the world which lead to the closure of Universities, Educations institutions, Schools and Colleges all over the World. The Covid'19 pandemic had a devastating effect on economics around the world and hit both the developed and developing World's education system so the online system of education needs to be adopted as there were restrictions by the Govt. to open the Universities and Colleges as social distancing was to be

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followed as there were other restrictions too, so Covid'19 pandemic has a great impact on the education system.

II. DIGITALIZATION OF EDUCATION: E-LEARNING

Covid'19 has impacted offline study across the World which enables to rise in e-learning in various Universities and Colleges. As a result of this deadly Covid'19, higher education has been transformed. In response to this education system all around the world adopted e-learning in such an emergent situation which contributed to the rapid transition that is from face to face classes moved to online education which has various benefits as well as drawbacks. Closed campuses and the switch from offline classes where face to face interactions as possible to online education is just a mere first step in the long journey towards online education. This includes the effective tools of engaging students and for their training that needs to be provided to the teacher about using the various ICT Tools such as Microsoft teams, Zoom etc. to enable e-education and to carry out it smoothly.

It leads to various difficulties too as it needs time to adapt to any change which is not possible very quickly. The educational institutions have to face many challenges to adapt to this system like providing training to their staff, access to internet facilities, managing necessary infrastructure etc. They also need to choose the best suitable technology to ensure that teaching-learning takes place smoothly. Universities should train and equip their educator with digital technology. Government must commit actively to the professional development programs to enhance the ability of educators and to boost their effectiveness. Universities and Govt. should prioritize it.

As a result of the current situation, it is challenging deeply ingrained notions about the role of higher education institutions in providing quality higher education, mode of delivery, accessibility and educator perceptions of learners have been all challenged by the present situation. In times like these, both developed and developing countries have a need to develop their digital literacy. The pandemic has also revealed the gaps and limitations of the current education system. It has also reinforced the need for digital literacy, training and has uncovered the weakness, vulnerability of the current education system. It will also provide insight to educators, policymakers for the improvement in the education system.

If E-learning is relied upon and adapted during this time it may push the educators to online components and sources in their teaching. But this approach has numerous difficulties and limitations due to limited access to digital technology as we know that there is a problem of inequality in India and the students of remote and rural areas do not have access to online

education as they don't have adequate resources and even they can afford these resources, which are important to access the online education.

So far for rural students, this online education is a great financial burden. If Govt. policies are not designed to ensure that there is affordability and accessibility of the internet to students in higher education, it can have serious consequences on the students. Remote learning is not conducive to the learning process as face to face communication provide a better chance for students to share their knowledge and to interact with their educators. The educators who teach higher education need to be empowered with professional autonomy and trust them with judgment in order to achieve a more focused learning outcome. They should also be able to communicate clearly and compassionately with all stakeholders within the higher education system.

A person might say that online learning offer advantages to those whose personal and financial circumstances did not allow them to attend a face to face learning. In light of varied responses, it is clear that technology adoption in education can have wider repercussions and unintended consequences. Therefore, Universities should reflect on the implications of technology adaption as it will shape the future and career of this generation.

If we talk about our country, it is a matter of fact that there is a large number of students who are underprivileged and belongs to a very poor family which are even not having sufficient amount to pay fees of their students and who are getting an education with the help of various charitable organizations. Even in the villages, people do not think to send their children to school for want of fess and in order to create interest among such students, the Govt. had launched various schemes like Mid-day meals etc. in order to motivate them to get an education. But in the pandemic and post covid situation, it will be difficult for them to get online education for want of resources. Most of the schools in India are not having modern technologies, hence in this situation, it is a really big challenge in our country to adopt online education. The students of rural areas are still deprived of technology. Hence in India, there are positive as well as negative effects, particularly in Indian society. Due to closure imposed in India, a large number of students had been badly affected. They were under a great dilemma in respect of their examination, their future admissions, their competitive examination for their further higher education as well as for their bright career. The self-financed school, colleges, educational institutions had to face a big financial setback as they had been deprived of their earnings and due to this reason, a huge financial burden had been created upon them. They were not having sufficient funds to pay salaries to their staff etc. In such a situation it was the need to time that the traditional methods of imparting education may kindly be changed and

they had to adopt the online education/e-education system in order to survive the educational system. Even in the Govt. schools, colleges and educational institutions and the institutions which were located in a rural and remote area, the teachers, staff and students were not having sufficient knowledge of computers, internet, broadband services etc.

III. SUGGESTIONS

- Access to e-resources, internet facilities should be provided to all to make a better online education system.

- Make an effort to reduce the cost of e-learning.

- Training should be given to Educators, on how to use ICT tools and resources to enable better teaching and to increase the effectiveness of online education.

- Universities need to invest more in health, safety measures and should follow the Covid protocols.

- Vaccination camps should be organized.

- Regular Health checks camps should be organized for staff, educators and students.

- Focus on main specific research areas.

- To develop a better system for communication between the students and educators.

- To develop confidence among the students.

- To educate the students regarding the precautions, covid protocols and to take necessary steps for removing the stress among the students as well as educators.

IV. CONCLUSION

There are no settled modules that can be adopted by any Universities or Educational system which can be adopted by them to impart online education. It requires proper planning, strategy and points out the challenges which may arise in imparting online higher education. This system has its own limitation and in order to cure and minimize the demerits and limitations of this system tough and strict decisions are required to be taken. A clear vision and an earnest effort are required to impart higher education with a good standard and to ensure the best result of the aforesaid education. An effort is required to be made that there should be no compromise with the quality and standards of education. Regular consultation is necessary for making a balance in the cost of education, a financial burden upon the students and to provide a proper and hygienic environment with health saving campaigning. A tough path is ahead and to

streamline all the things appropriate decisions are required to be taken in order to provide a smooth way for the progress in quality education and a better career for the students.

In this regard, references can be taken from the various experts in respect of online teaching. According to Judith Boettcher, an expire in online teaching, "We learn as social beings in a social context" (Miller, 2016), online learning needs to accommodate the aspects of social connectedness in their program design. According to Miller(2016) encouraging cooperation and faculty-student connections are two of the principles of Chickening and Gramson and these are connected to the idea of interpersonal connectedness. Further, due to changed situations online classes are being used as a substitute for regular classes under the compelled circumstances of the Covid'19 pandemic, hence in this situation the internet and technology services should be considered as a necessity and not a luxury. In order to promote learning which is being conducted remotely access to online libraries, books, journals should be preferred to promote learning. Further, adequate facilities are required to be developed for all the categories of the students including the un-privileged and differently-abled students. The Universities and edu-tech companies are required to work for more innovative solutions, research in making digital learning and to make earnest efforts to make it more effective and hassle-free. As per Miller (2016), there is a need to exchange social cues and generate the feeling that is authentic interaction between the members in the virtual platform. The success of online education is definitely dependent on this other than making the online class pleasant.

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