

IMPACT OF COVID - 19 PANDEMIC ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Covid 19 pandemic has not only affected India, but its effects can be seen around the world. It is the greatest blow the world is currently facing after the great depression in 1930's. Nations have suffered economic and social devastation as a result of this virus. While most nations place a higher priority on the health of their people than on the economy, some choose the economy over the health of their citizens. One of the majorly affected sectors in the Indian context is the higher education system. The central aim of the researcher is to understand the impact of the covid 19 pandemic over higher education systems. It also analyzes the changes occurring due to pandemic. The research paper is based on secondary data which was collected through the internet, books, and research articles by scholars etc.

Keywords - Covid-19, Pandemic

Higher Education &
Research Society

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Introduction

Coronavirus appeared in China's Wuhan provinces in December 2019 and changed the course of history. The world was shaken and a sudden halt was observed. The conditions of the global economy and the local economy were adversely affected by the Covid -19 Pandemic. Due to this, the world lost 2.4 percent of the value of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over 2020 (WorldBank, 2020)¹. Covid-19 has severely disrupted all aspects of human life, including education. Education in each and every component is a vital element for the boom and improvement of the country. No country without the aid of training can acquire great funding in human capital. It facilitates the enhancement of the information of human beings. In the majority of the underdeveloped countries or developing countries poverty and low quality life is a major hurdle in advancement. Education can lead to enrichment of quality life of the people which is directly affiliated with the social benefits of the society. Through higher education, specifically productivity and creativity of the people advances which can prove to be a backbone of the society. The effect of the pandemic and lockdown was significant on the education sector. According to the UNESCO report², based on data collected in the first week of June 2020, Covid-19 has affected almost 68% of the total global student population. The outbreak of Covid-19 had affected around 1.2 billion students and young people worldwide with the closure of schools and universities. Several other countries have also introduced localized lockdowns, affecting millions of additional students. In India, students worth more than 32 million were affected by the various restrictions and national confinement due to Covid-19. Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to cease the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. This global lockdown has had a dramatic impact on the global student population. The education sector shifted its base from physical education to online education. According to a survey document of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, carried out on better schooling it was found that there are 993

universities, 39931 Colleges and 10725 stand-on establishments listed on their portal, which make contributions to schooling. Even though the country has been adapting to the new-age learning, there still lies an obstacle in achieving success as only 45 crore people of our total population of the country have access to the internet/e-learning. The people residing in rural areas are still very much deprived of the technologies and therefore hampering the cause of online education.

Impact of Covid 19 on higher education system

The disruptive nature of any change can also bring with it opportunities to make the higher education system around the world more effective, including in the case of India, which is planning to reform this sector.

Digitalization of education - The lockdown accelerated the adoption of digital technology, forcing educational institutions, business houses, data management methods, and online education solutions to work together. There is a growing trend among educational institutions to experiment with and deploy new technology for the purpose of improving their delivery of education. The digital transformation of educational institutes has become the new norm as a means to not let the crisis hamper the curriculum.

Change in teaching and learning approach - Due to pandemic situations, the adoption of technology in education has led to an unprecedented transformation from teacher-centric education towards student-centric education. Teachers and students can continue to engage in classroom type activities with the help of virtual classrooms and other online tools. Teachers and parents will be able to easily meet in smart classrooms, as well as management and staff meetings. It was observed that the Technology-based education makes education more crystal clear and equal. Course content, educators, technology, and students must be coordinated for digital education to be successful, and basic amenities like internet access and availability are essential. Nonetheless, it can be denied that here in such extreme situations, the technological changes made education more mobile and accessible.

E- learning platforms - As the pandemic was hitting hard more and more e-learning platforms emerged for the sake of education like ZOOM, Google Meet, Webex which are interactive and can be accessed from home. Teachers can create online classes using these platforms by storing course materials online; managing assignments, quizzes, and exams; monitoring due dates; grading results; and providing feedback to students all from one place. Furthermore, students

and faculty can conduct video/audio conferences via Skype, WhatsApp, Google Hangouts, and similar e-resources for discussion related to their course. There are numerous screen recording videos like Screen Hunter, Camtasia screen recorder, windows screen recorder, etc.

A change in the purpose of learning- the course of learning was totally changed in such a critical situation. Aspects that were once considered fundamental and crucial to education were revised to largely accommodate life skills of the future. Learning in schools was now having a new aim, and it was a major deviation from the information-focused education of today.

Role of Government

Various initiatives have been developed by the government, state governments, and private sector in response to the closures of colleges and universities. Numerous measures have been taken by the government to minimize the impact of the lockdown on education. Utilizing Information and Communication Technology techniques, they engage students with online learning using numerous online platforms. There are various initiatives being carried out by the Government of India through its Human Resource Development Ministry and a number of departments working under it. In addition to the University Grants Commission, the Inter University Centers (IUC) - Library and Informational Networks (INFLIBNET) and Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC) are part of this network. Students, teachers, and researchers can all access these platforms.

The central aim of the University Grant Commission was to shift 25 percent of the syllabi online and to achieve this virtual classrooms were developed with videoconferencing facilities and also staff training was provided. A hybrid method of online and offline was also adopted by the UGC which urged flexibility in modes of conducting exams. With no stone left unturned the government of India was providing various e-learning portals and applications such as SWAYAM, MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), E-Pathsala, SWAMPABHA, e-SHODH SINDHU etc.

Research Methodology

Present study is based on Descriptive Research. The resources used for the secondary data collection were magazines, books, research articles from national and international scholars and the internet.

Objectives of the study.

1. To analyze the impact of COVID 19 in higher education in India.

2. To study the Challenges and Opportunities in higher education in India

3. To understand the teaching and learning process after COVID 19.

Conclusion

Due to pandemic and sudden lockdown students were being prevented from learning and the qualification assessments were being disrupted by the closure of schools, colleges, and universities. Online teaching has replaced traditional teaching methods. However, the new method of teaching was not hurdle free. The education institutions are trying to fill the learning gap resulting from the lockdown and are looking for ways to resolve the issues. Various questions are still in front of higher education institutions regarding the quality of education as well as its assessment. The impact of COVID-19 will remain for years, if not longer. There will be a considerable increase in the number of students attending classes from home in the future. COVID-19 gave this trend a massive impetus, even though it was already on the rise. Those who learn in virtual classrooms find their learning experiences to be as good as or even better than those who sit in classrooms. In addition to bringing an endless number of courses to students' doorsteps, virtual classrooms have a hugely transformative power. Like a lightning bolt, COVID-19 has struck our education system and shaken it to its core. A new kind of educational model is expected to emerge from COVID-19, just as the First Industrial Revolution shaped today's educational system.

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