



### **Impact of Covid-19 on Education in India**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The coronavirus is one of the most disastrous viruses in the entire history of the modern human era after world War second. The whole global community despite all the latest state of medical facilities and medicines trembled before the pandemic in the first and second waves during 2020 and 2021. The impact of the pandemic covid-19 is observed in all the walks of life the world over . Education sector in India as well as in the world has been badly affected by this naturally life threatening catastrophe. It badly damaged the educational activities and all other extra curriculum activities of the students as well as the general population of the world. In India it has however worked as a catalyst for the educational institutions to take a detour along alternative platforms and techniques which have not employed on a wider scale so far in our country. Around 32 crore students faced this grave situation and they were widely seen in a state of dilemma particularly about their future. Schools , colleges and universities remained closed for months making everything at sixes and sevens in the lives of students. After observing the global scenario of the covid-19 crisis, the World Health Organisation issues the mandatory norm of social distancing and the initial preventive measures. So the nations of the world started the governmental measures of lockdown. Consequently classes were suspended and tests and examinations of educational institutions were postponed indefinitely . The pandemic which topsy-turvied the entire world also messed up the regulated and scheduled lives of students. Yet by way of a silver lining, covid-19 crisis threw open numerous newer opportunities to swap the tedious and traditional classroom teaching model with an out-and-out digital model of teaching.



This present paper is devoted to the study of the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on education sector in India.

**Keywords:** Coronavirus ,Covid-19, Education, E learning, Alternative Education ,Virtual Education, Internet, Digital Means, Interactive Classes, Webinars

Before going to discuss the impact of coronavirus on education and educational system in India and abroad,we should know about education and its overall impact on human being.The most common definition of education which we often encounter is by Swami Vivekanan:

" Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man" (Vivekananda, Vol.3,58)

Here through this powerful definition, Swami Ji means to say that knowledge is inherent in man; no knowledge comes from outside . Education only nurtures and naurishes human being, and in this way it refines man and makes him /her/it different from animals. In other words, all knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind and so, the infinite library of the universe is in the mind. Swami Vivekananda observes:

"Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riots there undigested all your life. We must have life building, man making, character making assimilation of ideas. if you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character you have more education than any man who has got by heart the whole library.( Vivekananda ,Vol 3, 302)

It is interesting to note that Swamiji was a strong champion of morality . He was dead against any such education which makes a man machine and disrupts the cordial relation between Guru and shishya. In an intellectual congregation at Madras in 1897 ,he observed:

"My idea of education is personal contact with the teacher (guru vasa). Without the personal life of a teacher ,there would be no education. Take your universities. What



have they done during the 50 years of their existence? They have not produced one original man. They are merely an examining body. The idea of sacrifice for the common weal is not developed in our nation"( Vivekananda,Vol. 5 ,224)

It is interesting to note here that two types of education is being imparted to the students at present time; they are formal mode of education and the distance mode of education .The formal mode is the traditional mode of education which is seen today facing so many problems and challenges like low attendance of the students particularly in the remote villages. On the other hand ,distance mode of education is being criticised of making the students mechanical and lacking the interest for academic socialization. Rashmi Sharma rightly says:

"Distance education is the process of extending learning or delivering instructional resources, sharing opportunities to locations away from a classroom building or site to another classroom building or site by using video ,computer ,multimedia communication or some combination of these with other traditional delivery methods "(Sharma, Rashmi,20)

Distance education or Open University is a field of education that lays stress on the science of teaching that aims to deliver education to students who are not physically on site. In the Corona pandemic, teachers and students are widely seen in an online teaching process, but a large number of poor students who have no smartphones ,tablets and laptops ,they are devoid of taking advantage of this online teaching in India. In the advanced countries like America and Britain, most of the students belonging to both the villages and the towns mostly take advantages of the online teaching. We know that the University of London was the first university to offer distance learning degrees.M.S.Kurhade is of the opinion that radio television and FM channels may be fully utilised for imparting education. He says:



"The radio remains a very viable form especially in the developing countries because of its reach in India. The FM channel is very popular and is being used by various universities to broadcast educational programs on areas such as teacher education, rural development, programmes in agriculture for farmers, science education, creative writing, mass communication, in addition to traditional courses in arts, science and business administration. The increasing popularity of MP3 players and smartphones has provided a new medium for the distribution of distance education content." (Kurahde, M.S., 2)

Lockdowns and social distancing due to covid-19 pandemic have led to the total closure of schools, colleges, universities and training institutes in most countries. Most of the teachers and students are extensively engaged in taking classes through the online distance education. So this was entirely a new experience for both the teachers and the students. They adopted location through various online platforms and are compelled to adopt a system they are not accustomed to or prepared for:

"E-learning tools have played a crucial role during this pandemic helping schools and universities facilitate student learning during the closure of universities and schools. While adapting to the new changes, staff and student readiness needs to be gauged and supported accordingly. The learners with a fixed mindset find it difficult to adapt and adjust whereas the learners with a growth mindset quickly adapt to a new learning environment." (Subedi, et al., 2020)

Before covid-19 pandemic, I have a very little idea about the digital apps like Zoom, CamScanner, Adobe Scanner, Google Office and Google Meet and some other advanced digital apps. But when I started taking my online classes I knew everything about these apps and it was really a very good and fruitful experience for me. I am very fond of learning new things and this way, the pandemic proved to be a great boon. I also came to know Google Sheet through which I have written this research article by dint of voice typing. Now I open my keyboard, press the voice button and the voice tool starts writing my dictation very fast. It is said that the necessity is the mother of invention.



,and it fits well to me during this pandemic. My students, especially the poor students ,the girl students from the different places join through WhatsApp group daily. All the relevant information about the time and topics schedules as well as the link are uploaded in WhatsApp group , and consequently the students attend the classes accordingly but sometimes the interactive online classes are disrupted and halted all of a sudden due to the poor internet connectivity. So the government should pay attention to this grave problem of Internet connection ,only then the dream of digital India will be completely fulfilled. This pandemic also taught me how to conduct online webinars and how to present the paper on this online platforms.For this, first I learnt it through Google and then I taught it to my students and Research scholars which benefited them amply and now all these digital activities have become common things for them and also for me as well.William Shakespeare was right when he observes:

"Sweets are the uses of adversity

Which,like a toad ,ugly and venomous

Wears yet a precious jewel in his head"(Shakespeare,As You Like It)

Virtual education is a manifestation of the new type of knowledge revolution which allows students and instructors to participate in a remote learning activities using personal computers, Power Point slides and other digital means of learning. Online examples are used for illustration. Video streaming technology and audio based animated courses are used making the content interesting with the accompaniment of the soundtrack of the lecture.Web supported textbooks courses are being encouraged so that the students may read and reflect on the study material by themselves, review questions and interact with the teachers online.

Wang Tao, the Vice President ,resident of Tencent Cloud and Education is of the view that the integration of information technology in education will be further accelerated



and that online education will eventually become an integral component of school education ([www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org).)

The importance of online mode of education from primary to higher levels can never be overemphasized particularly in India . The lockdown has given the teachers and students a ray of hope in the shape of apps like Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook ,YouTube ,WhatsApp, etc through which lectures for educational communications are made between both the parties. The lockdown has worked as a catalyst in accelerating the place of adoption of digital technology. It has given opportunities to develop new and improved professional skills and knowledge through online learning in more efficient and productive way .Hence the digital India vision of the Government has proved itself to be the saviour of our educational system during the present Pandemic. Undoubtedly ,technology based education is not only more efficient and time saving but also more transparent in the present context. Nevertheless it has its glaring demerits too, in the Indian context. A big question right now is: Does the technology driven education give equality of opportunity to all the learners irrespective of the socio-economic strata they belong to? Students belonging to the poorest families and lower classes for rural and background regions are seemingly at a great disadvantage vis-a-vis the use of the widely acclaimed digital technology of education.

Thus the reach of internet connectivity is not satisfactory, whereas access to internet and technology is an urgent requirement. If the online mode of education has to fully succeed, the digital infrastructure and digital capability should reach to to poorest and remotest communities so that students of all categories should be able to continue their education during the covid-19. The digital gap must first be bridged in order to ensure that all students continue to benefit from e learning. This is not to belittle the laudable initiatives for online education undertaken by government like ICT ,Diksha ,e pathshala, National Repository of Open Educational Resources etc.

The sector of education can never possibly exist in an autonomous state of being.The educational administrators and teachers should better come out of the class, syllabus,



examinations, and try their best to educate the students and make them fully aware of their duties to their selves, society and nation. The present pandemic is a global catastrophe in human history and likewise the younger generations today should be taught at length about the deadly issues, its causes and impacts and the remedial measures for overcoming the crisis ridden times. The nurseries of education are not meant to make them machine but to make them true human being full of all the human features of love, grace, divinity and morality. They should be properly trained and oriented so that they prove to be a great asset to the whole society and the nation. Rabindranath Tagore says that a lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn with its own flame. We know that a student is the great wealth and possession of the nation. He is just like the lamp which must be burned by the greater lamp, that is, the teacher regularly and constantly. Only then the new light which is the student will be able to burn another light in the same manner and thereby making the whole nation flourish.

It is also interesting to note here that the real meaning of education is to upgrade the moral character of the students in all the walks of life. Today we see that due to the advancement of science and technology, moral education is depleting and degenerating by leaps and bounds. There is a great need of infusing moral values among the students because they are the real future. Today we see that most of the students do not have the moral strength; they do not abide by the conventions and morals established by our society; they seldom follow the great truth enshrined in our great epics and scriptures, Vedas and other great religious books of India. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation has likened the life of a student to that of a Sanyasi. He says that

a student must behave like a Sanyasi. According to him a student's life has been rightly likened to the life of a Sanyasi. He must be an embodiment of simple living and high thinking; he must be disciplined in conduct; his pleasure is derived from his studies. But today we see that the situation is just the otherwise. There is a great topsy-turvy in the lives of students. They seldom believe in leading a simple life, they are seen indulging in so many luxurious activities which true students must be away from. So, for the proper development of the society and the nation and so for that matter, the whole world, it is essential that the teacher must be well versed with all the morals, ideals, and he must



teach and guide the students in such a manner that they will be able to understand the moral values in their lives.

Besides this, the extreme physical and mental pressure affect the impressionable minds of the youth in a more detrimental way.

So it is all the more necessary that the teachers and experts should better do their thorough counselling in order to enable them to lead a normal and healthy life. Creativity and humanness seem lacking in the approach and responses of our educational system during this difficult times. Apart from this psychosomatic problems, the youth and students in India today are witnessing the shrinking employment market and increasing number of people are being thrown out of jobs. Thus a high reductions in employment prospects both globally as well as nationally are making their lives more complex and complicated. They have turned very shaky and pessimistic about their employment opportunities. The 'ivory tower' approach to education must be shunned in favour of making the curriculum more pragmatic and human and welfare oriented.

To conclude, the coronavirus pandemic has affected India's education system both negative and positive ways. The lockdown has created a number of obstacles and hurdles in the traditional system of classroom education. But, at the same time, it has opened new vistas of acquiring education through digital technologies to cope up with the present crisis of covid-19, as for example, Open Distance Learning etc. India has, however, needs to go a long way for becoming fully equipped to make education reach all the corners of the nation in equal measures via digital platforms. For this the educational institution and administrators are making great efforts for resolving this problem. It is advisable to encourage the students as well as teachers to learn more and more about this new technology and thereby keeping abreast of the changing scenario. Online teaching must have to be accepted as part and parcel of life so that millions of youngest students in India should stand in good stead in future even in case of a prolonged period of the pandemic. The judicious use of online digital platforms will hopefully enable the students not only in getting informal degrees but in readying themselves for future digital oriented ethos of the world. The concept of work-from-





home, webinars have greater relevance in the pandemic. India needs to formulate and implement some such creative and human strategies and policies .It should have an equitable and sustainable access to education during and after the pandemic.Education in India must be imparted in such a manner that it should not be an obstacle rather a momentum for the education sector to create a concept of equable and sustainable learning in improving the quality of education services in India in the future.The only thing needed is to make our lovely country progress by encouraging Digital India mission of the Government,but not at the cost of morality , divinity and creativity.

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