



Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Indian education: a critical analysis

Mr. Suresh Kashinath Ghatge**Prof. Dr. Anuradha Parasar***Ph.D. scholar, MIT WPU, Pune-38(Maharashtra, India).****Professor, Liberal Arts, Galgotia University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh (India)***Abstract**

COVID-19 pandemic had affected every sector in the world. The health crisis became crisis for many sectors. Education in India is one such sector which was badly affected. There was worldwide lockdown during this pandemic. It affected learners in India and world. There were around 32 Crore learners who badly suffered due to pandemic lockdown. All activities came to stand-still or stopped. It was worldwide crisis. New changes came in educational instructions and media. It was a kind of revolution and transformation in the field of Indian education. This paper brings out these new modes of instructions adopted in India. This paper tells about Government of India measures to provide education in the country. Both positive and negative impacts of COVID-19 on education are stated and suggestions are provided. This was a novel experiment in India to face and overcome difficulties in Corona-pandemic situation.

Key Words: Education, COVID -19, Effect, Govt. of India.

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Introduction:

The pandemic Covid-19 brought health crisis and lead to economic and educational Crisis. Educational sector in India suffered to great extent. World Health Organization (WHO) suggested name of the virus as COVID-19 on 11 February 2020. The first patient was found in Wuhan, china on December 31, 2019. First death was noted on January 11, 2020 in Wuhan, China. The first death due to COVID -19 took place on March 12, 2020. According to UNESCO report it had affected more than 90% of total world's students. The first case of COVID -19 pandemic in India was reported on 30 January 2020 in the state of Kerala. More than 120 crores of students affected. In India more than 32 Crores of students were affected by various restrictions and nationwide lockdown [Research Article: Dr. Pravat Kumar Jena July, 2020]. As per the UNESCO report about 14 Crores of primary and 13 Crores of Secondary Students were affected in India.

Due to lockdown in India schools, Colleges and Universities were closed. Classes were suspended. Examinations of schools, colleges and universities were postponed. Lockdown destroyed the schedules of students. It gave birth to new era of digital model.

The lockdown modified educational mode in India. There was transformation in instruction modes. Education was brought to online mode. At the beginning all were Confused and found it difficult. But afterwards they got used to it.

Pandemic taught good lesson in education. COVID-19 has brought many challenges and opportunities for educational institutions. They strengthened their technology to great extent. Their technological knowledge expanded to cope up with time. (Pravat 2020). Teachers and students continued educational activities through online mode. Teachers assigned work through internet, delivered lectures through live video using Apps like Zoom, Google meet, Facebook, Youtube and Skype etc. There were whatsapp group of parents teachers for Communication. They shared their difficulties and teacher solved it through e-medium. In India this was new era in education. China, USA was using these mediums earlier. In rural India students suffered but solutions were discovered. Many institutions strengthened their digital knowledge and improved technical aspects. Traditional education system was transformed to face new challenges of modern digital era.

Objectives:

The paper focused on the following objectives.

- 1) To take into consideration various measures taken by Govt. of India for education sector during this pandemic.
- 2) To mark various positive impact of COVID-19 on education.
- 3) To register negative impacts of COVID-19 and give some effective suggestions.

Methodology:

Data and information is collected by national and international agencies on COVID-19 pandemic. Authentic website will provide required information. References are taken from some journals and e-contents relating to effect of COVID-19.

Government initiatives on education during COVID-19 in India: Government of India had taken preventive measures. The Central Government declared a country wide lockdown of all educational institutions on 16 March 2020. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) postponed all examinations of secondary and higher Secondary schools on March 18, 2020. CBSE released revised guidelines for examination Centres to conduct examinations by maintaining a distance of 1 meter between students and taking class of 24 students. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) postponed the interview for the Civil Services examinations. Most of the State Governments and other educational boards postponed examinations due to COVID-19 outbreak. Central Government observed one day nationwide, Janata-Curfew on March 22 and implemented lockdown from March 25, 2020 in different phases. Central Government had extended lockdown from time to time and fought with pandemic. Educational institutes remained closed. Lockdown from 1st July to 31st July 2020 was declared with less restrictions in other sectors except education. All state governments had taken proper steps to continue slowly with educational activities in the respective states. The online mode of instruction was adopted. The digital technology was brought to help. It was used to improve new professional skills and knowledge. Online learning was the best solution during pandemic Covid-19 (Pravat 2020b). Central Governments "digital" India mission was fulfilled by online education during pandemic COVID-19. Technology based education is transparent in nature. State Governments and private players in education took required steps to implement online learning throughout the state in schools and colleges as well. Universities were not behind in implementing online learning. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) had made several arrangements, including online portals and educational channels through Direct to Home Tv, Radios for students to learn online. During lockdown students used social media tools like whatsapp, Zoom, Google meet, Telegram, Youtube live, Facebook

live etc. for online teaching, learning process. ICT initiative of MHRD (e- Broucher - [https:// mhrd.gov.in/ict](https://mhrd.gov.in/ict) - initiatives) was unique platform. The digital initiatives of MHRD for secondary and higher education during COVID-19 are listed below:

Secondary Education:

Diksha portal was helpful for teachers and students, Video lessons were imparted, worksheets were completed. CBSE and NCERT created Content with more than 250 teachers who taught in multiple languages. The app was available to use offline Contents were available through QR codes on textbooks. They could download the app through IOS and Google Play Store. Website: <https://diksha.gov.in> or <https://seshagun.gov.in/Shagun>.

e- Pathshala is an e learning app by NCERT for classes 1 to 12 in multiple languages. NCERT had deployed 1886 audios, 2000 videos, 696 e-book 504 Flip books for classes 1 to 12 in different languages. Mobile Apps is available. Website: <http://epathshala.nic.in> or <http://epathshala.gov.in> National Repository of open Educational Resources (NROER) portal provides host of resources for students and teachers in multiple languages. Content was mapped to the curriculum for classes 1 to 12. It had a total of 14527 files including 401 Collections, 2779 documents, 1345 interactive, 1664 audios, 2586 images and 6193 videos on different languages - Website: [http://broes.gov.in/ welcome](http://broes.gov.in/welcome).

Higher Education:

Swayam is national online education platform hosting 1900 Courses covering both school (classes 9 to 12) and higher education (under graduate, post graduate programs) in all subjects including engineering, humanities and social sciences, law and management courses. It is integrated with the conventional education. Credit transfers are possible for SWAYAM Courses (Max 20%) website: <https://Swayam.gov.in>.

Swayam Prabha has 32 DTH TV channels transmitting educational contents on 24x7 basis. These channels are available for viewing all over the country using DD Free Set Top Box and Antenna. This channel Lover school education (classes 9 to 12) and higher education (undergraduate, postgraduate, engineering, technology, law, medicine, agriculture). Website: <https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in>.

Positive effects of COVID-19 on education Educational institutions accepted the Covid-19 challenges State governments with support of Central Government carried out educational activities. This was a challenge and break from traditional education pattern. This was beginning of new era for Indian education. The following positive effects were noted.

Towards Blending Learning:

COVID-19 pandemic made education to adopt digital mode. Digital technology was used to continue education through online mode. It made teachers and students technology savy. It was beginning of 'brave new world'.

Learning Management System: Institutions invented novel ways of learning. It was a great opportunity to electronic companies to sale their equipments to institutions and individual students (Misra 2020).

Increase use of soft learning material: In lockdown students were unable to collect hard copies of study materials. Students used soft for reference.

Improvement in collaborative work: There was new opportunity for collaborative teaching and learning. Collaboration was useful to share experiences in faster way, (Misra 2020).

Rise in online meetings: Teleconferencing increased during pandemic of COVID-19. Virtual meetings, webinars and

e-conferences were usual features.

Increase of digital literacy:

Digital technology was developed during pandemic and digital literacy also increased.

Use of electronic media for sharing information: During pandemic of Covid-19 electronic media was used to great extent for sharing information. Learning material was provided to students through electronic media. Teacher solved difficulties through e-mail, SMS, phone calls and using social media's like WhatsApp or Facebook.

World Wide exposure:

Educators and learners got opportunities to interact with from around the world. International community was formed.

Time management:

Time management is important factor in education. Students were able manage their time more efficiently in online education.

Demand for open and distance learning (ODL):

During pandemic most students preferred ODL mode. It encouraged self learning and opportunities to learn from diverse sources and Customized learning at per needs.

Negative effect of Covid-19 on education:

Education sector had suffered lot due to outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. It had created many negative effects on education.

Educational Activity Obstructed:

Due to COVID-19 pandemic classes were suspended and examinations were postponed. Different boards, postponed examinations. Due to lockdown students suffered loss of nearly 3 months for academic year 2020-21.

Loss or employment: Most of the recruitments got postponed. New placements were obstructed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Economy suffered and many lost their jobs. Unemployment shut up from 8-4% in mid March 2020 to 23% in early April 2020 and the urban unemployment rate to 30-9% (Educationasia.in) When the unemployment increases then education decreases.

Unprepared teachers / Students for online education Teachers and students were not ready for online mode from traditional Classroom teaching, learning. Some students found it difficult to understand.

Increased responsibility of parents:

Some educated parents guided their wards. But it was difficult for uneducated parents.

Loss of nutrition due to school closure:

Mid day meal scheme suffered due to school closure.

Access to digital world: Economically poor students suffer as they had no mobile or too laptop for online learning. They had no internet to access.

Access to global education: Higher education sector suffered great loss due to COVID-19 pandemic. Indian students from abroad affected to great extent.

Payment of school and college fees affected: During the lockdown many parents lost their jobs and it created great problem for schools and colleges to recover their fees. Non-grantable institutions suffered a lot.

Suggestions:

India should develop creative strategies to ensure that all students must get access to online learning. It will be useful to remote groups, marginalized and minority groups for effective learning.

Immediate measures are required to lessen the effects of the pandemic on jobs and research projects.

Establishment of quality assurance mechanism and quality benchmark for online learning programs must be developed.

There should be rapid growth of online learning.

Indian traditional knowledge must be spread through online learning to rest of the world. India is treasure of ancient knowledge:

At present access to technology and internet is an urgent requirement so the knowledge and latest information will reach to remotest and poorest communities. The state governments/private organizations should come up with idea to address issues of digital education.

Central Government and state governments should strengthen digital education to remotest places of India.

Conclusion:

Education sector in India had suffered great loss during corona pandemic. It has created many opportunities India should develop digital technology. Open and Distance learning method should be adopted.

This is effective method to cope up with present time. ODL method should be adopted in India. Many students will be benefited due to it. It is a need of the hour. Strengthening digital technology for better education to all students is must. Online learning platform should be developed to great extent. The concept of “work from home” has greater importance. Better education to all should be our motto. Online practice is benefitting the students statistical study may be undertaken to find out effect of COVID-19 on education.

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