

Pandemic Covid-19: A Changing Educational Scenario in India

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Abstract

A global impact of the COVID-19 epidemic may be observed in many aspects of society. This has had a negative effect on the education sectors in India and across the world. A global lockdown has been implemented, and this has had an adverse effect on the lives of students. All educational activities were put on hold for approximately 32 million students in India who were unable to move to other schools or institutions. Change is inevitable, as shown by the development of COVID-19. Educational institutions have been encouraged to grow and embrace platforms that include technology that had not previously been used in their operations as a result. Since the beginning of the pandemic scare, educators have been fighting to keep their students safe from the disease by implementing new strategies and digitising issues. Some of the Indian government's efforts to make sure that education is available to all people are discussed in this article. COVID-19's positive and negative impacts on education are discussed, as well as some practical suggestions regarding how to conduct educational activities in the event of a pandemic.

Keywords: Government of India, Impact, COVID-19, Education

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has already reached every corner of the world, has compelled human society to maintain a mindset of social isolation. Particularly on the education sector, which is an essential indicator of a country's economic future, it has had a significant effect. According to WHO, the virus should be referred to as COVID-19, which stands for Corona virus illness 2019. This recommendation was made public on February 11, 2020. In 2015, the virus was discovered for the first time in the United States. It was found for the first time on 2019-12-31 in Wuhan, China. COVID-19 claimed the life of a 61-year-old Wuhan, China, man on January 11th, 2020. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Indian authorities announced India's first confirmed case of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kerala on January 30, 2020. The patient had travelled to India from Wuhan, China. The first death linked to COVID-19 was reported in India on March 12th, 2020. More than 4.5 million people across the world have been affected by it (WHO). The UNESCO research found that by the middle of April 2020, it had affected more than 90% of the world's student population. However, by the end of June 2020, that percentage had fallen to nearly 67%. More than 120 million children and teenagers across the globe have been affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. According to official estimates, the many restrictions and the nationwide lockdown for COVID-19 have affected more than 32 crore Indian students. About 14 crore elementary pupils and 13 crore secondary students are affected, making them the two most afflicted grade levels in India, according to the UNESCO research

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggested that the primary strategy to prevention be the maintenance of social distance after an evaluation of the corona virus pandemic scenario (see below). As a consequence, nations across the world implemented lockdown procedures to keep affected people apart. As well as other educational

establishments, schools and colleges were compelled to close. According to the statement, classes were stopped and all assessments, including admission examinations, were put on hold indefinitely. As a consequence of the lockdown, all students' schedules were thrown off. Despite the fact that this is an uncommon occurrence in the history of education, COVID-19 has given numerous opportunities for instructors to move from the rigorous classroom teaching paradigm to the new era of digital learning.

A lot of educational institutions have opted for online distribution because of the shutdown and have had to cancel examinations or internships. Educators and students were baffled and uncertain of how to cope with the new conditions produced by the unforeseen crisis that necessitated the suspension of educational activities for a time. The lockdown had taught them a lot about how to cope with the spread of pandemics, but in the end, everyone agreed. Since then, educational institutions aiming to enhance their technological skills and infrastructure have faced a range of challenges and opportunities as a result of the COVID-19 standard. Because of the lockdown, their teachers and students will be allowed to continue their online teaching, which they like. Teachers used different applications such as Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook, YouTube, and Skype to give lectures and provide assignments to students over the internet. WhatsApp groups have been created to help guardians, teachers, students, and parents connect on a more emotional level. These teams communicate often and openly about their issues thanks to the internet. The shift to digital learning may be easier in countries with a more centralised educational system, such as China. However, even in a developed nation like the United States of America, some low-paid students are unable to access digital learning settings since their salaries do not reach broad ranges. Many kids in India face similar challenges since they do not have access to high-speed internet or digital gadgets. As the traditional education system gives way to the online education system, many of India's most prestigious educational institutions are still lacking in digital skills to handle the change.

Objectives

The present Article focused on the following objectives:

- To provide light on the different steps taken by the Indian government to support the education sector during this epidemic.
- To draw attention to the many beneficial effects of COVID-19 on education.
- To Identify some of the negative consequences of COVID-19 and provide some practical suggestions for further education in the event of a pandemic.

Methodology

The statistics and information on this page were collected from a range of publications on the COVID-19 pandemic epidemic published by national and international organisations. The data was collected from a number of trustworthy sources. On this page, you'll discover links to a number of papers and e-contents regarding COVID-19's impact on the educational system.

Actions taken by the Govt. of India in the arena of education during Covid-19

A variety of preventative measures have been implemented by the Indian government in order to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic virus. On March 16th, 2020, the Union government ordered an emergency nationwide lockdown of all educational institutions. The Central Board of Secondary Education in India has scheduled a postponement of all secondary and upper secondary school exams for March 18, 2020. There will be a minimum of one metre between exam-takers and the rest of the class, which will have a maximum of 24 persons in it, according to new rules issued by the CBSE for testing centres. If the test centres have too tiny rooms, the students should be split into smaller groups. As a result, the interview date for the 2019 Civil Services Examination has been postponed until later in the year. In light of COVID-19, a number of state governments and educational boards have decided to delay exams. This lockdown would begin on March 25, 2020, and will last for one day, according to the Indian government's announcement on March 22. School closures in India have

persisted despite the government periodically extending lockdown durations and using various ways to fight the disease. As of June 29, the lockdown 6.0 will be in effect from July 1 through December 31 of 2020, with some easing of restrictions in other sectors except education. This was stated in a press release on June 29. Many state government agencies have made precautions to ensure that academic activities at schools and colleges are not disrupted during the lockdown, which is virtually likely. In order to comply with their directive, all institutions must provide all of their courses completely online starting this fall. As a consequence of the closure, digital technology deployment has been accelerated. Online learning has made it feasible to improve professional skills and knowledge in a more time-efficient and cost-effective way than was before achievable.

Online learning is the most efficient way of learning when confronted with a pandemic like Covid-19. Digital India is gaining pace as a key tool to resolve the present economic crisis because to Covid-19. Technology-based education has been shown to be more transparent, and that's a fact. The Indian government, together with other public and private players, has taken necessary measures to address the problem of colleges and institutions being closed. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has implemented many initiatives to help students continue their education beyond high school, including online portals and educational channels provided through Direct to Home TV and radio. Kids use popular social media apps like WhatsApp to stay in touch when the school is under lockdown. Zoom Take a look at what happens when Google and Facebook get together Online teaching and learning systems make use of Telegram, YouTube Live, Facebook Live, and other social media channels. ICT project of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (e- Broucher-<https://mhrd.gov.in/ict-initiatives>) is a unique platform for online education that brings together all digital materials. It's a one-of-a-kind platform. For COVID-19, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has the following digital initiatives for secondary and higher education.

Secondary education

- **Diksha Students**, teachers, and parents may access curriculum-linked e-Learning materials, such as videos, worksheets, textbooks, and examinations, via the site. More than 250 instructors who teach in a range of languages under the supervision of the country's national boards of education (CBSE) and the National Council of Educational Research and Training have created the materials used in the courses (NCERT). The app does not need an internet connection to be used. There are almost 80,000 e-Books accessible for grades 1 to 12 from the CBSE and NCERT, all of which are available in several languages. Scannable QR codes placed on textbooks may provide access to their contents. Download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store to get started with the programme.
- **e-Pathshala** -You may get e-Pathshala via the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), which has created the programme for grades 1 through 12 in several languages. As well as audio and video content geared at children and adults alike, the app also includes novels in Hindi, Urdu, and English. This website contains 1886 audios created by NCERT. There are a total of 2,000 videos on the website. Students in grades 1 through 12 have access to 696 e-books and 504 Flip Books in a variety of languages. It's possible to use mobile apps to get the information you need. The website URL is <http://epathshala.nic.in> or <http://epathshala.gov.in>.
- **The National Repository of Open Educational Materials (NROER)** Besides books, interactive modules, and videos, the site also has STEM-based activities and a broad selection of STEM-based materials in a number of languages for students and teachers. There are tools for teachers related to the curriculum, and the material is tied to the curriculum for grades 1-12. 14527 files in total, including 401 collections, 2779 papers and 1345 interactive files are accessible in different languages and include 1664 audios as well as 2586 images and 6153 videos. Thanks for visiting the NROER website at <http://nroer.gov.in/welcome>

Higher Education

- **Swayam It** is a national online education platform with over 1900 courses, including engineering, arts and social science, and law and management courses, all of which may be found on it. Courses may be taken by students in grades 9 to 12 as well as those in higher education (undergraduate and graduate degrees). Its unique feature is that it's completely integrated with the rest of education. Credits between SWAYAM courses may be transferred (max.20 percent). The official website is located at swayam.gov.in.
- **Swayam Prabha**- With 32 DTH TV channels from Swayam Prabha, you'll never be without access to educational programming at any time of day or night, seven days a week. To see these channels from anywhere in the nation, you'll need a DD Free Dish Set Top Box and Antenna Combo. On the website, you'll find channel schedules and other information. Out-of-school children and out-of-of-the-school youngsters may take advantage of both secondary school education (classes 9–12) and higher education (undergraduate and postgraduate engineering degrees as well as vocational courses and teacher training). The website address for the organisation is swayamprabha.gov.in.
- **E-PG Pathshala** solely serves as a resource for postgraduates. Postgraduate students may use this site, among other things, to access e-books, online courses, and study materials when the university is closed. Student access to materials is made possible even if they don't have internet for the whole day thanks to this platform <https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/> is the website address.

Positive Impact of Covid-19 on Education

Education in India has been severely impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19, but educational institutions there have risen to the occasion and are doing all they can to keep students well-supported throughout the epidemic. As a result, the Indian educational system now has the opportunity to transition from a more conventional model to one that is more in sync with contemporary society. Some good outcomes to consider include the following.

- The transition to blended learning has been hastened by COVID-19, which has increased the use of digital technology in the delivery of education. Educational institutions have begun to transition to a mixed learning environment. It aimed to inspire all instructors and students to become more technologically literate and proficient. In the field of curriculum creation and pedagogy, new modes of delivery and evaluations of learning have created enormous possibilities for significant change. It also provides access to big groups of students at a given moment.
- There has been a rise in educational institutions' need for learning management systems (LMS). Because of this, companies that create and improve learning management systems for educational institutions were able to make a lot of money off the situation.
- Rather of scrambling to get hard copies of study materials, most students turned to utilising soft copies instead.
- Collaboration becomes more successful because of the different forms and dimensions that may be taken on by collaborative teaching and learning. To benefit from one another's knowledge, collaborations among faculty/teachers across the world are possible.
- The flu pandemic has led to a substantial rise in the usage of teleconferencing, virtual meetings, webinars, and other electronic conferencing options.
- More individuals are studying and utilising digital technology as a result of the pandemic scenario, which has led to an increase in digital literacy.
- E-mail, SMS, phone calls, and other social media platforms like WhatsApp or Facebook are often used to share information amongst students. Students may also ask pertinent questions by sending e-mails, SMSes, or phone calls.
- Global exposure: As part of this effort, educators and students alike will be able to interact with peers from all around the world. learner adaptation to life in a globalised world

- When pandemic education is available to students, it helps them organise their time more efficiently.
- Most students selected the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) approach during the pandemic scenario because it encourages self-learning while also providing opportunities to study from a range of resources and customise learning to meet their own needs.

Negative Impact of Covid-19 on Education

Because of the emergence of COVID-19, the education sector has suffered greatly. The result has been a wide range of negative consequences for education, some of which are listed below:

- Classes have been halted and exams have been postponed at different levels due to the disruption. The postponement of annual examinations and entrance tests has already been announced by a number of boards. The admissions process has been postponed. As a consequence of the ongoing lockdown, students have been deprived of almost three months of the academic year 2020-21. This would make continuity in education even worse, and students will have a hard time picking up where they left off after such a long absence.
- Possibilities for work: The vast bulk of recruitment has been put on hold because to COVID-19. Businesses delaying the onboarding of new staff may potentially compromise student placements. We may expect more unemployment as a consequence of the outbreak. Recent graduates in India are worried that their job offers from private businesses may be revoked since there is no recruitment in the government sector. It is estimated that the unemployment rate rose from 8.4% in mid-March to 23% by early April, with the urban unemployment rate hitting 30.9 percent over the same time. When unemployment grows, schooling suffers because people are forced to choose between providing for their families and going to school.
- It's important to note that not all professors and students are comfortable with online education, and in this instance, they weren't even ready to make the switch from face-to-face training to online training. In the lack of a specialised online learning platform, most instructors are just delivering lectures through video platforms like Zoom, Google meet, and other similar services.
- Because to COVID-19's restrictions, some individuals in other countries may lose their employment and pass out students may be unable to obtain work outside of India. As a consequence of COVID-19, many Indians who had been working abroad have likely returned to their native country. Thus, new graduates who are anticipated to enter the labour market soon may find it challenging to locate employment that suits their skills and interests. Many students who have been hired after campus interviews will be unable to start their new jobs because of the lockdown. There is a chance that Indians who have been employed abroad may be laid off. Additionally, recent graduates in India are fearful of losing their job opportunities due to the current pandemic scenario's movement limitations.
- The role of parents in educating their children has become more important: Even while some educated parents are capable of leading their children, it's possible that others haven't acquired the proper training to educate youngsters in the family.
- School Closure Causes a Nutritious Deficit: To provide better nutrition to students in India's schools, the government implemented the Midday Meals Program. Children's daily nutrition will be badly harmed as a consequence of the school closures temporarily suspending the mid-day meal programmes. The results of several studies indicate that mid-day meals also have a major impact on boosting school enrolment.
- Online teaching-learning may cause a digital divide among students since many have no or restricted access to the internet, and many cannot afford a computer, laptop, or phone that supports it. Many people report that the lockdown has harmed poor Indian students, who are unable to take advantage of online learning options as a result of the restrictions. Consequently, online education and training during the pandemic COVID-19 may increase the gap between rich and poor, as well as rural and urban regions. Increasing the number of people with equal access to a global education Colleges and universities have been particularly hard hit by the outbreak. In the worst-hit countries, thousands of Indian students are

now leaving, and if the situation persists, the demand for foreign higher education would fall substantially in the long run.

- During this time, many parents will be unable to pay their children's tuition because of the government shutdown, which may have an effect on private schools. This could cause delays in school and college payments.

Suggestions

- During a pandemic, India should come up with creative solutions to ensure that all children have long-term access to education. COVID-19. This means that in order to execute Indian policy effectively, individuals from all walks of life must be included, especially those from remote regions and marginalised or minority groups.
- Immediate measures must be made, among other things, to minimise the effect of the epidemic on job offers, internship programmes and research projects.
- More and more companies are offering online learning platforms with many courses on the same subject area, each with a different level of certification and methodology. As a consequence, depending on the online learning platform, programme quality may vary. To keep up with the rapid growth of online learning platforms, Indian HEIs must create and provide quality assurance processes and quality standards for their online learning programmes.
- Sustainable technologies and medicines rely on Indian traditional knowledge, and this knowledge system should be linked with the present mainstream higher education system in order to achieve sustainability in a wide range of areas.
- In order to maintain instructional activities, the government and educational institutions should develop a plan that keeps them apart socially. Thirty to forty percent of students and teachers may attend school/college twice a day to carry out educational activities if they follow the COVID-19 criteria.
- Nearly everyone nowadays relies on technology and the internet for some aspect of their daily lives. Students must be able to continue their education even in remote and poor regions during pandemics if digital capabilities and infrastructure are made accessible. To bridge the internet divide and ensure that students may continue to learn digitally in the classroom, public funds must be used. Governments at all levels, including state and local, should work together to find answers to the national issue of digital education.
- Aside from that, the government and other stakeholders should deal with some important issues related to distance learning strategies, such as making digital devices with internet connectivity more readily available and accessible to students with disabilities, as well as the need for safe learning environments (including the development of skills for operating and navigating digital devices).

Conclusion

COVID-19 has had a significant effect on India's educational system, according to observers. Despite the difficulties, it has created a slew of possibilities. A number of educational institutions and the Indian government are examining Open and Distance Learning (ODL) options using various digital technologies in order to deal with the current COVID-19 issue. In order to ensure that education reaches every part of the country, India must first properly equip itself to utilise digital platforms. Due to the current availability of digital channels, students who are less wealthy than their peers may be at a disadvantage. Universities in India and the government are still trying to solve the issue. The use of digital technology must be prioritised if present conditions for millions of Indian students are to be improved. Educational institutions must improve their knowledge and information technology infrastructure to deal with circumstances like COVID-19.

Students will not only finish their degrees this academic year, but they will also be better prepared for the future in a digitally oriented environment if the COVID-19 issue continues. That's why in a pandemic, "working from home" becomes even more critical. To guarantee that all children have equal access to a decent education,

COVID-19 urges India to come up with innovative solutions. To ensure successful education delivery in India, policies must involve people from a variety of backgrounds, including those from distant areas, marginalised populations, and minority groups. When the lockdown is lifted, kids will still benefit much from the online practise that was provided. Further in-depth statistical research may be carried out to better evaluate the effect of COVID-19 on the Indian education system.

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