

## Under The Circumstances Of Covid-19 Pandemic Impact And Strategies For The Education Sector

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### ABSTRACT

Education is the potential elements for every nation, and it decides the economic status of the country. Also, education increases competitiveness in the global economy. Hence, it is essential to provide more attention to quality education for every student belonging to a poor and rural population. The global pandemic has affected education institutions and interrupted students' learning. Here, to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries closed schools, colleges, and universities, leading to a gap in education. The researcher has observed that virtual learning is shocking for students, parents and teachers as well. Teaching become online, student assessment also moved to online, and it becomes difficult to determine students' performance.

**KEY WORDS:** *Corona virus pandemic, social distancing, digital learning platform, virtual classes, student agency*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A global pandemic, the Covid-19, has brought enormous changes in human life and resulted in suffering, death and misery. The education sector is a critical determinant that decides a country's economic future, but the pandemic significantly affected the education system. The entire global population, including school students, college students, primary school students, received the impact of this pandemic. On average, over billion-plus school children, millions of higher education students and millions of children in the most affected countries are facing changed schooling and education routine. In short, the Covid-19 global pandemic received popularity as a disrupter of everything, including learning, education, and culture, tradition, rich and poor.

Countries with solid technological infrastructure and financial stability have shifted most of their educational potential, including teaching and learning online. But those countries that cannot afford shifts in learning due to a lack of robust technological infrastructure are struggling to attain the best possible outcome. As a result, countries with on-going disputes around social and economic differences give rise to poor access to technology-based education in a crisis time. Additionally, online or virtual classes are not that much powerful to allow students interactions, communication which was there in real time classroom teaching. Besides, teacher's body language, ability and tactic to explain particular concept were helping students to understand easily. But now, with virtual learning and teaching, everything got vanished and creating multiple challenges for students as well as for teachers.

Here, the researcher has observed a study performed by Doward, 2020.[1] The World Bank's private-sector unit, the International Finance Corporation, has recently announced that it will suspend funding in for-profit pre-primary, primary and secondary schools; because they may "do more harm than good." It has raised questions about the quality of its educational product and its high fees, among other areas of concern (Doward, 2020)[2]. All the studies show that the pandemic has affected communities, students, and the overall learning and education system.

### 1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PANDEMIC

Here, to understand the historical background of pandemics, the researcher performed the study and observed that pandemics are not new to humankind. A human living in the 18th century have faced such 13 events, 19th-century people have faced 12 circumstances, and people from the 20th century have faced four events.[3] The pandemic situation in 1918-19 was somehow relevant to the day's case involving the death of 20 million people and impacted several in Bombay. In the past, the loss was severe due to a lack of awareness and knowledge about advanced medical facilities and the capacity to deal with the impact. In contrast, currently, every state has acquired advanced medical facilities and can deal with the pandemic impact. In ancient times, many such events occurred due to the spread of influenza a quite similar to Coronavirus of 2020.

The World Health Organization (WHO) proposed an official name of the virus as COVID-19 on February 11, 2020. Here, COVID-19 is the acronym for Coronavirus disease 2019 and was first identified in Wuhan, China, on December 31, 2019. The first death occurred due to an infection of COVID-19 to the 61-year-old man in Wuhan, China, in 2020. Afterwards, with the rapid spread of the virus, the World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. According to Wikipedia's information, on 30 January 2020 in Kerala, the first case of the COVID-19 pandemic reported, and the affected person had a travel history from Wuhan, China.[4]

In India, the first death due to COVID-19 was reported on March 12, 2020. Further, according to WHO's data, the COVID-19 affected more than 4.5 million peoples across the world. Based on the information given by UNESCO, COVID-19 had affected around 90% of the total world's student population during mid-April 2020. In June 2020, the number of infections reduced to nearly 67%. In short, more than 120 crores of students and youths across the planet received the impact of the outbreak of the virus. [5]

In India, around 32 crores of students got affected due to government restrictions and lockdown to control the spread of the novel coronavirus. As mentioned in the UNESCO report, the virus affected the two most important levels in India as 14 crores of primary and 13 crores of secondary students. [6]After taking observations, WHO suggested maintaining social distancing as the first prevention to control the spread of the coronavirus and pandemic situation. As a result, every country across the globe took the action of lockdown to separate contaminated and non-contaminated people. Since the lockdown declaration, all education sectors, including schools, colleges and universities, became closed.

In India, the government closed the schools and colleges temporarily to control the spread of the novel coronavirus. Initially, they closed for a month, and reopening will be postponed indefinitely. The pandemic situation adversely affected the education and learning sector and suspended examinations, nursery school admissions, entrance tests for higher education, and competitive examinations. In short, the lockdown and COVID have destroyed the learning schedule of every student. For the learning and education sector, the situation made history. Hence, the government of every country come out with rigorous online teaching to sustain in a new era of digitalization. As a result, many educational institutions changed their methods of conducting classes, lectures, examinations, internships, etc.

### 1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The present research study focused on the following research objectives:

- To enlighten learning transition in online study during this pandemic.
- To evaluate evolution of alternative learning resources during COVID – 19 outbreaks
- To understand learning and teaching evaluation techniques for continuing education during the pandemic situation

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Here, in the present research study, the research scholar has reviewed the literature to obtain meaning to the research objective. Reviewing available literature observed that pandemic situations are not new to humankind. Pandemics spread due to influenza and coronavirus show some similarities regarding the abrupt outbreak, rapid spread after contact, higher mortality, high fever, and all age groups.

Further, the researcher reviewed the literature to understand the actual difference between the pandemic situation caused by influenza and coronavirus. According to a study performed by Nosaiba sultana, Dr. Shatrajit Goswami, "E-Learning: Covid19 Pandemic: Impact and strategies for the education sector in India", the researcher observed several differences as coronavirus requires long incubation time and it spreads is rapid compared to influenza. Coronavirus affects aged people, whereas influenza impacts children. Further, considering the impact of the virus, early detection of viral infection, quarantining affected individuals, and maintaining social distancing are the only solutions to deal with coronavirus.

### Relation of COVID-19 with China

Further, the researcher reviewed the literature to understand the relation of COVID-19 and china and observed information. China reported the first case of COVID-19 to the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 31

December 2019. Then on 30 January 2020, the WHO declared COVID 19 a health emergency, and on 11 March 2020 outbreak was considered a pandemic.[7]WHO suggested several preventive measures are essential to control the spread of COVID-19. Also, it has issued various guidelines to safeguard community and WHO expert visited China to review the impact at the place of origin. China supported WHO and executed complete lockdown in around 20 cities and various provinces helped to control the spread of the pandemic. Additionally, the Chinese government acquired complete medical assistance, implemented preventive mechanisms, and followed the social distancing and sanitisation of infected areas. On 7 March 2020, China recorded no new case.

### **Impact of COVID-19 worldwide**

Nowadays, the world is completely inter-dependable, and the involvement of technology made communication and commute easy irrespective of nationality. Hence, the rapid spread of COVID 19 with high magnitude is not an unusual occurrence. COVID-19 virus spread across 200 nations within the span of two months. Countries like the United States of America and the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Iran, and several others received the significant impact of the virus. The sudden outbreak caused a shortage of medical capacity to treat and handle the infected number of patients, and the governments became anxious to take outside assistance. Countries like Italy and the US were considered for having the worlds' best healthcare facilities, although they faced a massive loss of lives due to the spread of coronavirus. Such unprecedented circumstances have forced the governments to take strict action on quarantining people and extend economic relief except for the relaxation for the basic amenity essential for survival.

No other country except China received success in controlling the spread of the virus. Further, the researcher has observed that the number of people impacted globally with virus increased day by day. As a result of the rapid spread of the virus, many manufacturing units in several countries are closed, and they are struggling to reinstate the process. Further, to understand the impact of the coronavirus on developing nations, the researcher has reviewed literature and found that according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reports, global economic depression will last few months ahead will receive the worse impact.[8] Many developed and developing countries are facing massive unemployment. Further, the researcher reviewed literature that shows coronavirus has caused severe impact on agriculture as several nations completely depend on agriculture and stock holding due to complete lockdown changed their financial status.

### **The Impact of COVID-19 on education system**

While reviewing the literature, the researcher found that the COVID-19 is a pandemic disease and holds the potential to affect the education system of different countries. [9]. Further, the researcher found that UNESCO (The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) has recognized that the coronavirus pandemic has affected the education system across the world. [10]Spread of coronavirus exponentially have completely locked the education system in many countries, government-enforced their people to stay home to limit the spread of the virus. Further, the researcher has observed the study performed by Haleem et al., which says that the governments focus on fulfilling equipment, organizing medical institutions and laboratory centers, identifying the virus, training health workers, and creating awareness for their people. [11] Education is the principal priority that supports the development and growth of the country. The rising pandemic has severely affected the education system and has given birth to challenges such as a change in the education curriculum and completely closing down the education system. [12] According to TUAC Secretariat Briefing, 2020, most countries have temporarily closed child-care units, nursery homes, primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities to control the spread of the virus. [13]

### **Impact of COVID-19 on teachers and parents**

The current global coronavirus outbreak has affected schools, students, parents, and teachers as well. While reviewing the literature, the researcher found that the COVID-19 increases social inequality in schools. Also, it is observed that students belong to more advantaged parents connect with schools with better digital infrastructure and teachers in those school holds higher levels of digital technology skills. However, several schools possess no digital infrastructure and education resources. According to Di Pietro et al., 2020, students of disadvantaged parent attend schools have less ICT infrastructure availability and educational resources. [14]Several studies were performed so far explain that most parents stated that children had developed a habit of using electronic gadgets. Further, they said that schools are best for children as it is the good place that engages children in studies and inspires them.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Here, in the present study, the researcher has collected data and presented it here. To attain the study's purpose, the researcher has collected data from various reports submitted by national and international agencies on the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the researcher has referred to several authentic websites, scientific journals and e-contents reflecting knowledge about the impact of COVID-19 on the educational system.

### **3.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

The spread of coronavirus and the extended lockdown has severely affected higher education in India. Many institutions were shut down in the middle of the academic semester, causing a huge loss of knowledge diffusion. Also, most students don't have access to instructional activities conducted by institutes through online learning. Many students failed to reach and retain the academic activity. The present study helps to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education.

### **3.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Here, the present research study was performed to evaluate the impact and strategies of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the education sector. To understand the impact of COVID-19, the researcher has studied the alternative teaching-learning methods adopted by education institutions during an outbreak of coronavirus in the country. Here, the fundamental aim of the study is to understand the impact and strategies for the students to avoid educational loss.

### **3.3 Significance of the study**

Increased use of digital social media and online platforms to conduct learning is vital in a new normal life. The changed education and teaching procedures have affected students', and strategies are essential to avoid students' educational loss during a coronavirus outbreak situation.

### **Findings**

#### **1. Study to enlighten learning transition in online study during this pandemic**

The researcher has performed this study to enlighten learning transition in the online study during this pandemic, and for that, the research scholar has reviewed many references. According to Niranjana, 2020, COVID-19 impacted the overall economy, lifestyle and changed the emotional, mental, and physical health of humankind. [15] Lockdown and spread of the virus have produced huge impacts on national and international businesses, affected travel and tourism, and changed the culture, celebration, and festive events.[16]

- **Distance learning and lack of ITC**

Further, the researcher observed that distance learning is a solution to avoid the academic loss of students, but it is challenging to execute in developing countries. As parents from developing countries have not themselves been to school and lack access to the fundamental Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructures, laptops, computers, radio, and television to ease distance learning. The success of distance learning lies in having availability to the computer system and high-speed internet. According to Zhang, 2020, all these facilities are not available in developing countries. [17]

- **Less flexibility of teaching staff with digital learning platforms**

Further, the researcher has observed that many teaching staff are unaware of the online teaching platforms in developing countries. Here, teachers struggle to understand the working technology-aided infrastructure. In developing countries, several private schools do not have access to infrastructure even they don't pay their staff's salary on time. In contrast, several schools pay half their salary to their teachers. In short, students belonging to low-income families don't get access to online learning platforms, and the physical closure of school creates an educational loss.

Further, the researcher has observed that, in previous times, learning a new technology gadget requires a decade. But this online or distance learning system has brought huge acceptance and flexibility in every student and teacher about using a various digital platform to boost learning. More specifically, the pandemic situation has improved digital literacy among student, teachers, and parents, as well.[18]

#### **2. To understand evolution of alternative learning resources during COVID – 19 outbreaks**

Further, the researcher has performed a study to understand the evolution of alternative learning resources during COVID – 19 outbreaks.

Virtual learning and studying is the best way to keep students in the learning and development phase without disturbing its pace. The growth of multiple digital learning platforms has helped the country in attaining its objective of digital India. Online learning is a transparent method that supports schools, colleges, and universities in reaching their targets.

Here, the researcher has observed the following things:

- **High pace movement towards technology-based learning**

The spread of coronavirus has accelerated the pace of digital technologies acceptance among teachers, students, and parents. Additionally, continuous lockdown forced educational institutions to offer technology-aided learning to avoid the academic loss of students. Such web-based learning and teaching encouraged teachers and

student to become tech-savvy. Further, the researcher has observed that the latest learning methods created huge opportunities to transform students' curriculum and personal development. [19]

- **Improved use of the digital copy of learning material**

Online learning methods hold the power to enhance the cognitive skills of students and make students independent learners. Also, it helps to them concepts by themselves through technology-based instructive models. The researcher has observed that students submit a hard copy of assignments to their teachers in offline learning. But due to lockdown, students and institutes don't have access to the hard copies and started submitting study material online. Hence, the majority of students have given preference to soft documents, PDF, PPTs to submit their homework.[20]

- **Enhanced collaborative learning**

COVID 19 has given new opportunity to work, learn and grow in collaboration through digital platforms. It has boosted the culture of cooperation between student and teachers, and it became easy to receive the benefit of each other. [21] Besides this, online learning helps students stay in touch with teachers, friends, and other faculty members. Also, it boosts communication and quickly resolves issues. Also, it eliminates the fear of teachers from students' minds and allows for better understanding.

- **Increased virtual meetings**

This COVID-19 outbreak has given a breakthrough rise in the global video conferencing concept to communicate within a group. Nowadays, almost every individual working in government, private companies, student, or corporate have become fond of video conferencing and meetings to communicate virtually. The sudden lockdown has stopped actual face-to-face interactions, but the digital meeting platforms have resolved this problem. The covid situation has given birth to many teleconferencing platforms to conduct virtual meetings, webinars and e-conferencing. [22]

- **Students received global learning exposure**

The extended lockdown and social distancing have changed learning patterns among students. Nowadays, everyone belongs to either schools, training institutes, or universities that are looking for virtual learning modules to receive a quality education. Online learning has widened the learning process among students; through various portals now they have learned to communicate with teachers, faculties, and colleagues. So, they can easily be in touch with their online friends, philosopher or guide present even in any corner of the world. Increased usage of online learning medium supports the process of learning, sharing and communication. Students and educators are getting options to interact with individuals present across the globe to exchange information.

### **3. To understand learning and teaching evaluation techniques for continuing education during the pandemic situation**

Students, educators, and institutes were quite confused with the changed method of teaching and learning in the initial days. But with passing time, everyone realized the need for a complete lockdown, and it taught many lessons to manage the pandemics. Here, the entire pandemic gave birth to many challenges and opportunities for everyone, specifically educational institute, to strengthen their knowledge and technological infrastructure. [23] The researcher observed that the lockdown had given a chance to teachers and students to continue their educational activities through virtual modes. Teachers started giving assignments to students through the internet during online teaching and used video conferencing applications to deliver lectures. Additionally, to ease the communication, many have created WhatsApp groups of teachers, guardians, students and parents. Through these groups, students received the opportunity to stay in touch with teachers to resolve their difficulties.

For developed countries like China online leaning is simpler as they have already acquired all the infrastructure and knowledge to handle technical part. This online learning option became a challenge for low pay students as they don't have access to broadband and less understanding about computerized learning. The same situation is about Indian students, as many students do not have access to digital gadgets, high-speed internet, and awareness to handle automated systems. Additionally, many educational institutes in India are not fully equipped with digital facilities to cater to the right education through internet-based applications.

- **Increased user-friendliness with online learning modes**

To reach the research objective, the researcher has performed the study and observed that the one and 2nd phase of the Novel Coronavirus lockdown, i.e., 40 days, comprises about 10 million academic hours. The complete lockdown has caused a huge loss of students, and it isn't easy to compensate. Hence, University Grants Commission instructed educational institutes to continue online classes as per feasibility and engage ICT tools.

For the execution of online learning, many tools are available which are already in use by several institutes and colleges to communicate with their students residing in a remote area. To prove this, the researcher has given reference to the Departments of Gauhati University, Assam. They are using various online tools like Skype, YouTube, Piazza, Zoom, easy class, etc., to conduct live online classes.[24] Those students having the availability of high-speed internet and access to computer system have made success stories and engaged themselves in online learning.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, digital learning platforms have acquired a vital position in the learning and teaching sector. Many modern technology tools are available to support learning in students. While working with available digital platforms, it is essential to acquire high-order skills like critical analysis and independent learning ability. Additionally, the researcher has observed that working with online learning tools requires collaborative working in a group of persons. Further, the present study focused on understanding the impact of online learning on student's academic life to prevent educational loss. The current study explains that due to outbreak and advanced learning options has affected education adversely. The use of digital learning platforms came into existence only after the pandemic crisis took place. The researcher has observed that the present Coronavirus spread has changed the entire education architecture by introducing e-learning tools and techniques.

#### 5. SUMMARY

After performing the in-depth study, the researcher has observed that online classes are not useful to replace offline classrooms. This online mode of learning does not support the student's interaction that occurs in offline courses. Also, online courses fail to convey teachers' body language and teaching style, which greatly impacts learning and concept clarification. Here, the researcher has tried to explain that increased use of technology has caused many discriminations and practical issues.

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