

**Education In Times Of Covid Pandemic With Special Reference To Higher Educational
Institutes In Kerala, India**

¹Dr. Ajith Sundaram, ²Dr. Issac K Varghese

¹Professor, Adi Shankara Business School

²Assistant Professor ,Loyola Institute of Business Administration

Abstract

This paper focuses on HEIs response towards education at time of Covid-19 pandemic. It includes brief description about the crisis, opportunities and initiatives that came out as part of this pandemic. The paper concludes with the discussion of how corona spread adversely affected teaching – learning, job opportunities and other financial implications and ends with a positive note of adapting to new learning technologies and to develop robust post corona strategies.

Keywords: Education System, Covid-19, online learning, disruption

Introduction

The latest outbreak of the pandemic of Coronavirus has widened the global disparities in education. Although the pandemic of Coronavirus is recent, it already has adverse consequences for humanity. Outbreak COVID-19 produced Education and public health issues, which have proven to be very difficult for public health systems to manage. No country or race worldwide is currently immune from the pandemic of coronavirus.

The speed of spread and the destructive effects of COVID-19 seem overwhelming. The pandemic of coronavirus has no limits and the effect is broad and rapid. Just a few months after the epidemic outbreak, it has changed the lives of the whole world dramatically, causing millions of people to 'lay home,' 'observe themselves' isolated and work and learn from their homes. It has restricted people's freedom to travel, exchange or associate. Not only did COVID-19 trigger complete locks in many countries around the world, but thousands of people, including women and the elderly, have also been killed. More troubling was that new cases and deaths due to COVID-19 increased every day from reports from different continents, including America, Africa, Asia and Europe.

How pandemic affected the Teaching Learning System

Coronavirus outbreak impacted educational activities worldwide. The coronavirus pandemic impacted education systems worldwide, leading to widespread school closures. It creates significant delays in academic and career plans. As part of the global battle against COVID-19, several countries around the world closed schools to contain coronavirus pandemic. UNESCO observed that Educational, Science and Cultural Organizations over 100 countries introduced national closures, affecting over half of the world's students.

The disruption caused by COVID-19 in the education sector will last longer than anticipated.

Coronavirus is not found on time and disease transmission continues. Director-General UNESCO, Andrey Azoulayals, quoted by VOA News (2020), warned “Coronavirus disruption is unprecedented and, if prolonged, could endanger the right to education. No doubt, unplanned school closures can cause significant problems for students, teachers, parents and community at large. It might affect students academic interest and results. Unless students are engaged productively, it may lead to idleness leading to youth participation in crimes, lack of interest in learning and bad academic results. The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) also said concerns over school closures consequences. According to the CDC, "longer closures will increase students assemble outside classrooms. Quentin (2014), says school closure is very contentious and can have spillover effects on many students in colleges. It can affect teaching quality, learning and academic achievement, particularly for students with special needs or learners also requiring more physical attention and instructor guidance. Technology, however, may be used to address some of the school closures failures, it can not replace the essential impact of face-to-face experiences by students and teachers. Furthermore, many students have no access to technologies making it harder to optimise learning technology capacity during school closures.

However, against all odds, statistical model and empirical study of past school closures during pandemics shows that it decreases the overall number of group cases by 25% and postpones pandemic peak by one or two weeks, while constructive school closures during pandemics remain one of most beneficial measures to mitigate the effects of infectious disease.

Technology is a central component of the 21st century. Growing technical use in education has changed teachers' approaches from a conventional approach, mostly putting them as information dispensers a more versatile approach, serving as facilitators, mentors and motivators to inspire students join and learn (Onyema & Deborah, 2019). Technology enables distance learning, Virtual Training, Mixed Learning, Mobile Learning, Distributed Learning, Ubiquitous Training, deep learning and social learning. Most of education goes digital, and education stakeholders, including teachers, face the challenge of transitioning online education. The use of effective educational technology improves access to learning opportunities, such as Massive Open Online courses (MOOCs) and multiple learning methods for various learners.

Online education is a general concept for online learning with technology tools and platforms. Online education success depends on factors like strong internet connectivity, learning software, digital skills, accessibility and technology. Online education platforms are vital tools. Virtual education has its origins in distance education.

Digital technology enables effective and accurate seminars, virtual classroom sessions and other multimedia materials and events (Onlineeducation.com, 2020). Deep penetration of online education networks can be maximized by bridge internet and mobile technologies worldwide and it will reduce education disparities and global analphabetism rates.

How pandemic affected the Exam Department of HEIs

Due to the unpredicted arrival of Covid – 19, exam calendar got shattered. Due to lockdown, physical availability of students got restricted which put scheduled exams on hold. 90% of PG students and 60% UG students were hosteliars. During pandemic, government rule came to close all hostels to reduce the spread of Covid-19. If exams needed to be conducted in campus it was necessary to open the hostels which was not possible. After long days of planning, HEI consortium decided that colleges will reach to students for conducting exams, instead of students coming to college for their exams. And as part of that, exams were conducted on different centers inside Kerala state and even outside and students were allowed to go to their convenient exam centres. Teachers travelled to each exams centres for the smooth functioning of exams. For centres in containment zones, necessary permissions from the concerned government authorities were taken and teachers were given training with regard to covid-19 protocol to ensure safe functioning of the exam. Conducting exams in the time of pandemic was challenging. Special

rooms were arranged for students coming from containment zone. Hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, PPE kits and other necessary covid-19 preventive measures were arranged in every centre. Teachers were advised to take personal care also while conducting the exam. The main problem was to convince the parents. Most of the parents had a lot of queries and some were against conducting exams. Exam department in HEIs took the challenge and answered each and every question of parents through phone and mail. 24*7 they worked coordinating the activities with teachers, students, Police, panchayat and other stake holders. Currently internal exams are conducted online with Moodle and safe exam browser. In Kerala education system individual colleges are affiliated to a government university. So now the parent University is not ready to give permission to conduct semester final exams online. They still stick to the traditional mode of pen and paper. This is one of the main challenge HEIs are facing today. Controller of Exams in one of HEIs told that we should be ready for any external challenge at any point of time. Things which are normal and usual are not normal and unusual now. Always have a contingency plan. Sometimes without getting enough time we have to take necessary decision and move forward. For future we are waiting for intervention by state government or central government with regard to conducting exams online or in shifts.

How pandemic affected the Admission Department of HEIs

The major challenge faced by admission department was the delay in higher secondary school and university results. The lockdown started from February and due to that, majority of the exams got cancelled. Eventually it resulted in delay of final results. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) came out with a decision that they are going to project the scores. It means whatever papers students had written already, on that marks they will project the score for other unwritten papers. But State board told they will conduct exams in midst of pandemic also. Similarly each university have their own way forward. That directly affected the admissions because there were lot of uncertainties regarding the conduct of exams and when the results were going to come out. Without the results it was not possible to admit students or send offer letters to them. Some deemed universities started admissions on their own way, whereas universities in Kerala decided not to start admissions until the results came out. The problem that could happen was, due to this irregularities, students would look for universities where admission had already started and would join there. And it reduces the chance of getting good students to colleges in Kerala. HEIs were not able to do anything regarding the delay in publishing of final results since it's done by the CBSE or state board or by the university. So HEIs started to give provisional admission to students with their Digi locker certificates. The next problem was with the document verification. That happened in a very phased manner across one month. Google forms were sent through email to the applicants to know the convenience of them to reach college with their original certificates for the verification and according to that, date and time were fixed and everyday 10 -15 students came down to college. Likewise verification happened so colleges could avoid applicants getting crowded. For doing this activity colleges took necessary precautions. Admission department arranged special classrooms for conducting these verifications. Classrooms were fumigated before and after the verification process. Social distancing and other covid-19 protocols have been implemented. Non Residential Indians (NRI) sent the certificates through courier and on their behalf their local guardians came and submitted the documents. All other process such as Group Discussions and Personal Interview happened online using different platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Zoom etc. To an extend admissions moved to online mode and HEIs believe this will be useful even in the future. Students also feel good about this. Before Covid-19 students who were living far away needed to come down to college for attending interview and GD. Now this is a blessing in disguise for the students as well as for faculty and the non-teaching staffs. Arranging classrooms, schedules and other infrastructure to conduct

the admission process were tedious tasks. Now due to this pandemic, department was forced to look for a new option. But it created a new venue to improve. That is one positive thing occurred. Due to this covid-19 pandemic HEIs got chance to find out areas that needed to be improved. It was tough to change all the processes to online mode. But once all the process were aligned it became very convenient for all the stakeholders.

How pandemic affected Non-Kerala Admissions of HEIs

For this academic year a lot of promotional activities were planned by HEIs outside Kerala in a multiple phased manner for the admissions of non-Keralite students. But unfortunately due to this pandemic even first phase was not able to be complete by most of HEIs. National lockdown was declared all of a sudden and it made every college to shutdown suddenly and it hindered the promotional activities. So all of a sudden HEIs had to change activities to e-mails and communication through call centres. Some of the colleges outside Kerala whom admission department is already in touch helped by providing students list who were waiting to apply for colleges in Kerala. At the beginning, HEIs had no idea, to what extent this lockdown would go on, what would happen to the admission and when the new academic year would be started. But eventually HEIs were getting used to the new normal. They coped up with the situation. For around one month there were not that much of communication that happened between non-Keralite students and the admission team. Once lockdown got relaxed admission team started communicating with them one by one through mail, phone calls, zoom meetings and all other possible online platforms. Interviews and GD are arranged through online facilities. Due to this pandemic, parents from far off areas got confused to send their children to colleges in Kerala. “Why not take a break for one year and apply next year?”. Safety of their kid was something they gave priority to. But Kerala HEIs were able to convince all parents explaining about online classes and that the students not needed to travel physically to college for attending classes. HEIs guaranteed them that the college would conduct only online classes till the government permits students to campus. Study materials from colleges are delivered to the students’ address. To some remote areas of the country where delivery from the college was not possible, library purchased e-books and provided access to students. Some students who were in very remote areas where delivery was not possible, HEIs made arrangements to deliver to their nearby college from where they could collect. And for other study materials we provided scanned copies or download link by utilizing moodle platform and email facility. Here after even for the future endeavors HEIs will be focusing more on online mode of communication. Physically going to places and meeting students are a different experience, but HEIs are getting used to the new normal.

How pandemic affected the Office of International Relations of HEIs

Office of International Relations basically takes care of the agreements with International academic institutions and the activities in association with them. In the month of March when the lockdown was being announced in various parts of the world there were a lot of foreign students in Kerala who were from different countries especially from Europe, Africa and from S.Korea. Lockdown warranted the closure of campuses and cancellation of the ongoing exam. March is the last month of academic year. Students were on tenterhooks as to how the exams would happen later and also more importantly how to go back to their country. International airports in Kerala announced a one week time for the last international flight to fly from airport before closure. So they all the foreign students have to cancel their previously done bookings and take an urgent return flight neglecting the additional amount that they had to spend. There were announcements from airlines that when a flight gets cancelled due to the situation the money will get reimbursed. But the situation here was different, as the students themselves were

EDUCATION IN TIMES OF COVID PANDEMIC WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIGHER
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES IN KERALA, INDIA

forced to cancel and rebook. All these incidents made the exam department of HEIs to think about the online exam mode. Timetable was sent in another one month and informed all the students who had returned to various countries to write the online exam. One month would have seemed like a big gap but since the institution had previous experience only in conducting invigilated written exam in the partner universities in similar situations in the past, not online exams. But that had to be fixed and framed and it took time. The exams went successfully in all the countries such as Germany, France, Belgium, S.Korea etc and the results were announced in another one month time.

It is usually in Jan to March, that the campus will have most of the International visiting Faculty members and it's natural that atleast some of them will push it for the last month. Coordinator – Office of International Relations in one of HEIs told, there were 5 faculty members from different countries in campus and one Professor from Belgium had just been able to take one day lecture and then the campus was announced to be closed. Situation that followed the decision was like a helpless but unavoidable loss of game. What he did was he transferred all the notes he prepared including the references to the batch and left the country. He designed a mode of online quiz as assessment after few days and finished the course.

The worst situation was that of some groups of Kerala students then doing semester abroad in other countries. At that time Italy was the place which was fastest in Corona spread. The media in India made a scary presentation each day of Italy. This made the parents of those students completely disoriented and anxious. They forced all the HEIs staffs of international relations to liaison with the universities to either have the exams early or leave them immediately and have the exams remotely. They were open for the second option. Students in France were of different opinion. They decided to quit immediately as the disease was spreading fast in France at that time. But the universities were very transparent in giving exact situation from the city to those students and that was a boon at that time of darkness. These universities stopped the face to face class and made everything online. All foreigners were allowed to leave the country quickly and were asked to join online classes as online classes had been one mode of instruction there already. Exams were also conducted online. But some foreign universities took a totally different decision. Their place of residence gave a completely isolated atmosphere to them and hence they found staying back was better than resorting to travel by flight at that time of covid spread. Thus students in that universities underwent full semester there and came back after two months.

Response from Belgium was a wonder. Universities there offered students to continue for one more semester free of tuition fees. But it took a reversal of all the decisions regarding semester abroad both by Kerala HEIs and the universities in Belgium as maximum time as per the agreement for a semester abroad activity was one semester. Kerala HEIs also had to see that the less number of papers that they could take in Belgium would be sufficient for them to finish with sufficient credits in Kerala. Course format was reworked and with a little bit of additional effort from the side of students the new format will work out by the time they finish the entire course.

During summer time in April and May it was customary that many international universities visit Kerala and make their way of interactions. But this time none of those happened because of the situation.

Slowly the situation was opening the new way of connecting online and that was becoming the order of the day even for the office of international relations. There were several universities that were contacted through faculty members who were in to combined research with professors of those universities. Agreement with Foreign Universities are now signed through a zoom meeting between the institutions. Availability of visiting faculty members became more on online platforms compared to earlier situations. Online conferences, webinars were introduced with association with foreign universities. Now due to online faculty more and more participation across the globe is there in all these programmes. This is also one of the new possibilities that happened due to the pandemic situation and following online platforms that was made popular.

Another blessing that happened was regarding the students from different countries where India Government runs a scholarship programme called Study In India scheme. Kerala HEIs starts academic year early, in the month of June, these students face difficulties due to coming late by August. But this time as Kerala HEIs also had to extend the commencement month to August and September it was a blessing for the international students from Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Eritrea, Malawi etc to join the classes online in time. Moreover since the Government of India has announced the First semester of all institutions to be online they are all still in their countries attending the classes online.

For the future HEIs international plans are mostly centered around making use of the online platforms for more interactions for summer school, research works, co-teaching, conferences, seminars, workshops and many more.

How pandemic affected the Office of Corporate Relations in HEIs

Though it was most uncertain and challenging time, the routine works of the department had not been suffered in any way. The Office of Corporate Relations (OCR) explored almost all possibilities to carry their day to day tasks. Companies changed hiring process to online. Even on national lockdown time also a few of campus selects got on boarded virtually by the recruiters. That was totally unexpected because at that time all other recruiters were updating that the onboarding will get delayed due to this uncertainty. It's a known fact that welcoming a new employee is easy if he/she is physically present. There will be a lot of queries, concerns, and doubts regarding nature of work and it can be easily resolved in real time and can provide best employee experience at more ease. However considering the present scenario, social distancing and Work From Home (WFH) are the new norm and it is obvious that the approach towards induction and onboarding will also need to have a paradigm shift from face to face to become completely virtual. So it has to be taken as a blessing to get on boarded atleast virtually during this pandemic time because many companies are revoking the offers. All HEIs placement cell faced a lot of challenges during this pandemic period for placements. For overcoming all these hurdles, HEIs first created awareness among the students as to how they should cop up with the current situation. There was a lot of uncertainty as to what was going to happen to their internship or the industry-academic partnership programmes, final placements etc. So HEIs thought we should prioritize the students' concerns first and solve it. Then the second challenge was to make students capable to cope up with the current situation and to own their required skills. So HEIs started and motivated students more to indulge in corporate related activities simultaneously along with academics to make them survive in this gig economy. Rather than restricting oneself to one internship or one live project HEIs let them to involve in multiple projects. They like to take this current pandemic as a blessing because now proximity is not at all an issue and students are getting more free hours. So students got more involved in internships, industry-academia partnership programme, webinars, industrial training programme by Alumni, lecture series done by the professional bodies and so on. Even in the normal scenario all these were provided to the students. But now HEIs are able to give in greater numbers with more focus with a change in platform. When the whole world was talking about the crisis these corporate relation offices in HEIs were encouraging the students for their transformation, how well they could transform according to current scenario a live example of the implementation of change management.

All the events that OCR planned for this academic year is going on well. Only the platform changed. With the right approach HEIs are able to generate great quantum of results through all this virtual events whether it is industry interaction, pre-placement talk, training or live project discussion etc. Since everything happens online it becomes easy for both corporates and the OCR to schedule and conduct the meetings and events.

For everyone this was first experience. The only takeaway is that always be prepared. Whatever comes the work should not get stuck. Always have a backup or strategy or succession plan for each and everything. There are lot of stakeholders involved being a HEI and OCR is answerable to each one of them. So OCR can't think about a situation where they are standstill. They are always mobile and there should always be a plan 'B' to make things happen continuously. Placements is not just a six months process. Placements are something that happens round the year. Even though placements are categorized into first phase starting from October to December, second phase from January to March and the extended phase as April and May, the work for it has to start very well in advance. Even though a student pass out from college, placements will not stop. It will happen through various alumni networks online and offline. HEIs can't even think about a pause happened to OCR work because that much is the responsibility of Office of Corporate Relations and the obligation they have towards this goal. OCR believe that each and every student's future is in their hands. Every HEIs aim is not just to give 100% placements but to give quality placements to all students who seek admission in their prestigious institution. For that OCR team members need to work round the clock, continuous improvement is needed, sustainable relations is needed, and succession planning is needed. Last year Kerala had flood that disturbed the whole state, this year Covid-19 and next year we don't know what crisis HEIs are going to face. With out doubt, Change Management is the key word for this department.

How pandemic affected the Consultancy department in HEIs

When covid-19 started in february and then when the national lockdown came, there was a big challenge in the consulting domain. Even global firms suffered due to this crisis and to reduce the expenses the first thing companies did was to cut short or take away the consulting budget. Many of the consulting firms in India, even today haven't resumed the business as it was earlier. But fortunately in Kerala, HEIs consulting department has reasonable workload. One reason is some of the companies that they are already in touch, are looking at transforming the business in view of Covid-19. For them it's an opportunity to look at the situation, reinvent, and transform the businesses. That started to give small assignments. That was actually an opportunity for HEIs. More than that this covid-19 situation made the world to become a global village which means we can sit anywhere and work on the virtual platforms. So previously if we wanted to take project in Bangalore, the lead consultant had to travel to Bangalore. Today he could sit in Kochi and can work for companies from US or GCC or anywhere in the world. Consulting firms who differentiated themselves from others by giving good 'impact' on their work was able to fetch a lot of new assignments. Good 'Impact' in the sense when many of the consulting firms are into the sales domain where they go and leverage their brand and assign some junior resources to execute the project, where as the latter focus on two elements of consultancy - one is integrity and other one is impact. Such firms are termed as an outcome based consultancy service. Their primary focus will not be sales. But their first priority will be on execution or delivery and how this delivery would impact the company. So the advantage is that companies that you already worked in the past, approach you directly even if we are not too capable to do that work They insist to do that work.

There are companies in Kerala that are actually transforming big time during the Covid-19 situation. Consulting firms are working with them for merging the units, change management, in short helping them in transforming the organization. Some organization want to reduce cost, so they are recruiting people internally rather than outsourcing activity to consulting firms. In many ways consulting department were rediscovering ways to do consulting services.

Being in Kerala a small market, many of the consulting firms these companies compete are global firms. They all have big offices and big brands. But these small firms focus on execution and outcome, due to which they are able to get consulting projects in competition with these big global players. These small

consulting firms are hopeful that, once they execute a project, then the same client will come back again to them rather than going to those global firms because these small players are priced competitive and execution is done through senior resources rather than freshers or junior resources who have only 2-3 years of experience. Now the advantage for these consultancy departments in HEIs is that tomorrow after this pandemic, people will understand and recognize that they need not want to sit for face to face discussions. Instead of that they can connect through virtual platform where you can interact with each other, you could actually get your minds to interact, your thoughts can be easily shared, collect inputs and move forward. Now these small players are able to reach globally rather than focusing on Kerala market only.

Most of the current work is going in virtually. Occasionally some Kerala firms would like physical meetings, so consultants do travel to their companies. It's more of an opportunity that they are able to work globally right now as and when they get projects.

The lessons consultancy department learned in this pandemic was reinventing oneself, continuous learning and looking at problems or situations as an opportunities than as restrictions or issues.

For future consulting departments of HEIs are reaching out globally. Now it's a gig economy. Instead of permanent employees, people are leveraging on experts of different domains. Even consulting firms are trying for the freelancers to get enlisted. So on this contest they will be able to reach out to the globe as long as they are able to give outcome based deliverables.

How pandemic affected the Research department in HEIs

Many of the faculty members and students faced difficulty in meeting timelines associated with their research and publication activities. For many of them, peer reviews for their submitted manuscript had been pending for long. Most of the journal publications got delayed since production team was on WFH. And the entire production process from submission acknowledgement to EO checklist, reviewer assignment, peer review, revisions to the paper and the final acceptance got affected adversely.

Submission date of minor projects funded by the central government has to be extended because of the pandemic situation, many of the faculty members were unable to complete their data collection and other activities related to the project. Another instance was some of the foreign publishers such as Emerald Publishing House based in UK publish twice a year, in June and December. This year due to pandemic, production team was able to complete it only by July. Even though they sent the hardcopies of journals from UK to India in July, it was received in colleges in Kerala only in September due to the travel restrictions as well as the work disruptions faced by logistic partner.

To a great extent the transition from offline mode to online mode of teaching, learning, data collection, data analysis etc. helped. And with the support of entire faculty members, supporting staff and students, HEIs were able to manage various challenges in a time bound manner.

Now the day to day work of department is going on without much disruption and deviations. HEIs have started using different online platforms and databases for facilitating data collection, analysis and for conducting review meetings, trainings etc. So everything is back to normal now.

Research department in HEIs can withstand any crisis if they work as a team and if they are adaptable to change. And out of the crisis HEIs learned that Research department have to bring some inevitable changes in the way they have been imparting research culture in colleges. So this is what HEIs are going to implement in future also. They will be following the online pattern along with offline platforms for research. HEIs are also encouraging faculty members to go for online mode of data collection and data analysis even after the pandemic.

How Pandemic affected the Finance Department in HEIs

Mobility was the major distractor that came in the way of the smooth working of Finance department. In the month of March following the lockdown announced by the state government, country wide lockdown was also announced by the central government. Two days of state lockdown neither gave a relaxed time for doing some arrangements nor gave any clue that there was a country wide lock was in waiting. The accounting staff working in the department could not turn up for almost two weeks. And thus the complete payments to different vendors were all blocked. Most of them didn't have the phone numbers of the accounting persons but had only the landline numbers and hence were unable to connect. After almost two weeks there were a silent permission for finance people to travel with written affidavit across the state as that was the only way for the government to allow organisations to release salary for the employees. But the Bank did a welcome move by giving permission for accountants to connect with the bank on official mail and get the bigger amounts of money transacted for urgent purposes. The head of the institutions also gave an advance permission for the finance department to work from remote this way. So it is impossible to say that everything was blocked in Finance.

Students' fees was not possible to be strictly collected in time after a notice from the government that the fee payment shall not be strictly time bound because of the situation. That caused fund crunch in crucial time. Moreover since there students had all vacated hostels, till now the hostel has also not fetched any income. That added to the vows due to fund crunch for many maintenance activities that was supposed to happen during the summer season in India which was April/May.

The respondent from the finance department also comments one another side of this situation. Some of the outbound activities scheduled for students as part of experiential learning got cancelled and cancellation of all those or conversion of them all in to online activities saved a not so small amount of expenses too. To make it short though there was delay in activities in finance department and tough situations due to fund crunch and issues due mobility restrictions of the staff, there has not been any reduction in salary to the employees and the HEIs managed that skillfully with the whole hearted support of the finance staff.

Support provided to community by HEIs in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic

In response to COVID-19 pandemic, most of the HEIs in Kerala conducted awareness classes through mike announcements, telecommunication, social media, creative tasks activities, site visits and house visits during lockdown period. Tele counselling for Migrants in association with Disha – the toll free Call Center of Health Department – Govt. of Kerala, telephone Befriending, Psycho Social Support tele counselling for children etc were done. Masks and personal protection suit kits were provided to health workers. Food and provisional relief kit and health care kit were distributed to the needy. Study materials for tribal students and sewing machine for women were distributed. Sanitization of nearby public places such as ration shops, bus stops etc is done. Various HEIs developed there on online platforms for effective online teaching. Encouraged students to take up MOOC courses. Various colleges introduced data scholarship for students. Supported nearby schools and colleges to implement online teaching. Institutional infrastructures were provided to district authorities to convert it into covid-19 care centre and First Line Covid Treatment Centre (FLCTC). Financial contribution provided to Covid-19 relief fund. Helped government authorities to implement various Covid-19 related projects and schemes. Conducted various research works on the psychological and social wellbeing of people in Kerala. Through HEIs CSR wing resources were sourced through funding from various companies and routed it to the needy in association with the local self government.

Conclusion

The research confirms the destructive effects of COVID-19 on education, the multiple barriers arised and online learning obligations for students and teachers during COVID-19 lockout.

Results indicate that educational practises were seriously affected by COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Some of the known effects include: learning interruption, restricted access to learning facilities such as laboratories, job and education losses, increased student debt, reduced education funding, research constraints, and lost learning interest among learners. In paper of Onyema et al. (2020), its shown as the Coronavirus pandemic created several educational problems leading to reduced education opportunities for poor and remote learners. It was also found that low technical skills, school policies, digital divide, low electricity, Non-availability, Accessibility, Network problems, Insufficient services, Lack of preparation, support, resistance to change, etc. are major obstacles to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among them, insufficient facilities seemed the biggest obstacle to online education. Insufficient facilities such as a shortage of servers, Internet facilities etc were the key factors restricting students' participation in online education. Likewise, bad electricity supply, non-availability and connectivity problems, network issues, etc affected COVID-19 lockdown education. The study shows that Coronavirus affected education activities and decreases educational opportunities for the poor. It transferred students and teachers and established several learning barriers. The study suggests COVID-19 lockdowns increased school debt and burden on parents and educational institutions. This is in line with

Ben, Mathew, and Kristen (2010) argue that closure of schools will add stress to students already in school.

Combat urban poverty-related challenges. The finding recognises the technology need education, particularly in emergencies. This is consistent with Onyema's earlier statement (2019). Integrating new technology in education is no longer an option, but a necessity for all educators.

The study will contribute to growing Coronavirus awareness on education and technology needs in education. The study shows that the Coronavirus pandemic adversely affects schooling. COVID-19's major effects on school features, including academic and professional development and jobs in academics, etc. The study emphasises the need for technology in education, to curb the effects of Coronavirus and other future education pandemics. The study acknowledges that the decision to shut down schools worldwide may be dangerous, but it is sensible to reduce the spread rates and dangers of COVID-19 pandemic.

Coronavirus remains a lesson and a warning to the entire educational world , particularly those who are still reluctant to adopt or accept new learning technologies or enabling online or remote education. Stakeholders in education has to develop robust post-Coronavirus strategies. In short, an elements like climate changes and environment adversities have iterated down very specifically in to a clear factor called Online Proximity, and that is now taking a prime place in all academic strategy building activities of HEIs in Kerala.

References

1. Adverse consequences of school closures. (n.d.). Retrieved April 21, 2020, from UNESCO website:
2. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/consequences>
3. Barranco, J., & Wisler, D. (1999). Validity and systematicity of newspaper data in event analysis. *European Sociological Review*, 15(3), 301–322. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.esr.a018265>
4. Brummet, Q. (2014). The effect of school closings on student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics*, 119,

6. 108–124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2014.06.010>
7. Cliff, N. (1988). The Eigenvalues-Greater-Than-One Rule and the Reliability of Components. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(2), 276–279. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.103.2.276>
8. Coronavirus. (2020). Retrieved April 21, 2020, from World Health Organization website:
9. https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1
10. COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response. (2020, March 24). Retrieved April 21, 2020, from UNESCO.org
11. website: <https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-educational-disruption-and-response>
12. Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2006). *Multivariate Data Anal.* (6th ed.). Analysis, 4–4.
13. Holcombe, M. (2020, March 18). Some schools closed for coronavirus in US are not going back for the rest of the
14. Kirshner, B., Gaertner, M., & Pozzoboni, K. (2010). Tracing Transitions: The Effect of High School Closure on
15. Displaced Stud. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 32(3), 407–429.
16. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373710376823>
17. Onyema, E.M. (2019). Integration of Emerging Technologies in Teaching and Learning Process in Nigeria : the
18. challenges. *Central Asian Journal of Mathematical Theory and Computer Sciences*, 1(August), 1. 35-39.
19. Onyema, E.M., & Deborah, E. C. (2019). Potentials of Mobile Technologies in Enhancing the Effectiveness of
20. Inquiry-based learning. *International Journal of Education (IJE)*, 2(1), 1–25.
21. <https://doi.org/10.5121/IJE.2019.1421>
22. Onyema, E.M., Deborah, E. C., Alsayed, A. O., Noorulhasan, Q., & Sanober, S. (2019). Online Discussion Forum
23. as a Tool for Interactive Learning and Communication. *International Journal of Recent Technology and*
24. *Engineering*, 8(4), 4852–4859. <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijrte.d8062.118419>
25. Onyema, E.M., et al. (2020). Pedagogical use of Mobile technologies during Coronavirus School Closures.
26. Sen, S., & Antara, N. (2018). Influencing Factors to Stay Off-Campus Living by Students. *International*
27. *Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 8, 40–44. <https://doi.org/10.25081/imrj.2018.v8.3698>
28. Shu, C. (2020, March 17). UNESCO updates distance-learning guide for the 776.7 million children worldwide
29. affected by school closures | TechCrunch. Retrieved April 20, 2020, from [techcrunch.com](https://techcrunch.com/2020/03/16/unesco-updates-distance-learning-guide-for-the-776-7-million-childrenworldwide-affected-by-school-closures/) website:
30. <https://techcrunch.com/2020/03/16/unesco-updates-distance-learning-guide-for-the-776-7-million-childrenworldwide-affected-by-school-closures/>
31. UNESCO: 290 Million Students Stay Home due to Coronavirus. (2020, March 7). Retrieved April 21, 2020, from
32. [learningenglish.voanews website: https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/unesco-290-million-students-stayhome-due-to-coronavirus/5317148.html](https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/unesco-290-million-students-stayhome-due-to-coronavirus/5317148.html)
- 33.