



# An Analytical study of Impact of Covid-19 on Higher Education in India

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## ABSTRACT

*Spread of Novel corona virus has intervened every walk of human life. Education, being a vital aspect of human life has affected mostly. Almost all the educational institutions have been closed and online teaching came into focus.*

*The rate of internationalisation has slowed significantly. In India, over 32 crore students were unable to transfer schools or universities[1]. Despite these obstacles, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have responded positively and have been successful to a considerable extent in maintaining teaching-learning, research, and societal service with the help of some instruments and strategies throughout the epidemic. The main effects of Covid-19 on HEIs in India are discussed in this research. HEIs and educational authorities in India took some steps to ensure seamless educational services during the crisis, which are discussed. Many new ways of learning, new views, and new ideas have emerged as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and this tendency may continue.*

**KEYWORDS:** Covid-19, Education, Epidemic.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Novel corona virus has been announced as pandemic by World Health Organisation (WHO) officially since March 11, 2020. More than 4.5 million people have been harmed by Covid-19 over the world (WHO). In India, the first incidence of Covid-19 infection was discovered in January 2020. Throughout all periods of the lockdown, educational institutions around the country have never been given permission to resume their educational activities. According to a UNESCO estimate, Covid-19 has impacted over 68 percent of the global student population as of the first week of June 2020 [Wikipedia]. The Novel corona virus outbreak has caused school and university closures in over 1.2 billion kids and teenagers around the world [2].

Covid-19 has affected more than 4.5 million people worldwide (WHO). In India, the first affected case of Covid-19 was detected in the month of January, 2020. In all the phases of lockdown, the educational institutions throughout the nation have never got any relaxation to start their educational activities. Thus, pandemic Covid-19 impacted significantly on the education sector. According to the UNESCO report, Covid-19 has affected nearly 68% of total world's student population as per the data taken during 1st week of June 2020. Outbreak of Covid-19 has impacted about 1.2 billion students and youths across the globe by school and university closures. 32 crores of student community have been affected due to lockdown covering whole India. Many educational institutions situated at different corners of the world have been closed in the

lockdown period. This international closure has had a significant influence on the global student population. Governments all around the world are attempting to mitigate the immediate impact of educational institution closures, especially for more marginalized, vulnerable and underprivileged communities, by facilitating the continuation of education for all through various digital forms of learning [3].

According to a study report on higher education conducted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, revealed that in totality 993 universities, 39931 colleges, and 10725 standalone institutions are already indexed on their webpage that is assigned to education. Our country is speedily marching towards new era learning still the target is far away as only 45 crore people out of 135 crore population have means to access digital learning. In rural area, lack of infrastructure arising as a biggest challenge towards complete access to education in online mode.

Our entire country is adopting online teaching-learning trend whole heartedly as spread of novel corona virus made it compulsory as it is a need of the hour. With technological innovation and developments, the pandemic has been propelling the education industry forward. The present situation aroused due to spread of novel corona virus affected adversely to entire higher education sector. Many students, who were pursuing higher education in numerous universities overseas, are now departing those countries and if the situation continues for a large duration demand for higher education in abroad will certainly face drop down in coming years [4].

## OBJECTIVES

The present research paper focused on the following objectives:

1. To provide information on the various steps implemented by the Indian government in the education sector during this challenging situation of covid-19
2. To draw attention to the positive effects of pandemic on education.
3. To list some of adverse effects of novel corona virus and to make some practical suggestions to continue education during a pandemic.

4. Put out a few ideas for HEIs to continue their academic activities in the face of the challenges posed by pandemic.

## 2. IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Pandemic Covid-19 has had a significant impact on India's and the world's educational systems, but some of the most badly affected areas of higher education in India are included below.

### *A. All instructional activities have been destabilized*

HEI's are one of the major victims of novel corona virus, as it hampered not only teaching-learning activities as well as it also disrupted various academic works like examinations, admissions, entrance and varied competitive exams [5]. This pandemic raised a doubt on educational proficiency and life of Higher Educational Institutions.

### *B. Positive and negative effects on research*

Pandemic situation has turned out to be both as an opportunity as well as a challenge in the field of research. Researchers are not able to travel often for research work or joint research projects, laboratory testing, etc. While looking at the brighter side, Web based conferences, seminars, workshops has provided immense opportunities for enhancing knowledge and skills of researchers as they can exchange information, knowledge with the scholars spread all round the world.

### *C. Evaluation System hampered critically*

Novel corona virus adversely affected evaluation system i.e., internal evaluation as well as external evaluation. External exams already been cancelled and internal assessment is now becoming the basis of evaluation of results which is also conducted by online mode. Students who are about to start their careers on the basis of grades and marks are the most affected stakeholders of Higher education.

### *D. Challenge of creating and retaining employment*

Young aspirants who were searching for jobs in various fields including Govt. jobs through entrance exams and other modes are highly depressed due to several constraints posed by pandemic. Indians who were employed outside India has also suffered mostly as they had to face many uncertainties including losing

jobs [6]. The disappointment caused by novel corona virus may have long term adverse effects over learning attitude of learners of Higher Education Institutions [7].

### 3. POSITIVE IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON EDUCATION IN INDIA

Current pandemic situation is undoubtedly a biggest challenge every Educational Institutions all over the globe are facing. But as every coin has two sides and every challenge comes with an opportunity, this present situation also has some positive impact on Indian and all other world's educational Institutions. For Indian education system this is a boon period as it has a golden opportunity to adopt new technologies in academics. Apart from this some more benefits are discussed under [8]:

#### A. Teachers and learners are becoming technoid in the field of education

Novel corona virus has made it vital for teachers as well as learners to be technologically proficient. This resulted into opening of new ways of development for Indian educational Institutions. Not only teaching-learning process but curriculum also got transformed digitally. More and more students are being added to the educational system.

#### B. Digital learning system has come into focus

Novel corona virus has resulted into a golden chance for growing the business for the companies who are engaged in providing digital learning management systems to Higher Educational Institutions.

#### C. Environmental benefits

Pandemic situation restricted physical presence of learners to the colleges and universities, resulting into various environmental benefits such as reduced use of papers due to availability of reading material in soft copy.

#### D. Increased educational alliances:

Many stakeholders of education are joining hands in this period of pandemic as pandemic has provided easy access digitally with each other.

#### E. 24\*7 access to education

Students can have 24\*7 access to education by sitting comfortably at home as digital learning facilitated flexible time zone to everyone.

### 4. NEGATIVE IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON EDUCATION IN INDIA

Novel corona virus has posed various difficulties in front of educational sector. Some of them are listed below [9]:

#### A. Discontinued academic schedule

Almost all the schools, colleges, universities are closed during lockdown phase. This resulted into cancellation and postponement of various academic activities which badly affected academic schedule of the students.

#### B. Employment opportunities hampered

Novel corona virus has resulted into a golden chance for growing the business for the companies who are engaged in providing digital learning management systems to Higher Educational Institutions.

#### C. Lack of Digital Literacy

Pandemic situation restricted physical presence of learners to the colleges and universities, resulting into various environmental benefits such as reduced use of papers due to availability of reading material in soft copy.

#### D. Inaccessibility of education to rural and poor people

Lack of infrastructural facilities at rural area and inaccessibility to technology due to poor economic condition has put a question mark on reach to education. Many students are compelled to drop education in between as they do not have necessary means for online education such as advanced cell phones, laptops, tablets etc.

#### E. Financial burden due to pandemic

Pandemic caused financial difficulties to large number of people. Most of them are not able to pay fees within time resulting into inaccessibility to education.

### 5. INNOVATIVE LEARNING INITIATIVES IN DIGITAL MODE OF INDIA IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR DURING PANDEMIC

Keeping in view the challenges imposed by novel corona virus as well as enhancing the educational quality in Higher education sector, Government of India has introduced some effective modes of online learning in the form of digital initiatives which is the

fruit of hard work by UGC under the guidance of MHRD. Some of the digital initiatives are listed below [10,11]:

- i. *SWAYAM*: SWAYAM is India's made in India's online MOOC'S platform, providing easy and free access to everyone at any place.
- ii. *SWAYAM PRABHA*: SWAYAM PRABHA is a project offering 32 DTH channels through 24\*7 basis, offering free education with wide accessibility.
- iii. *NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY (NDL)*: NDL is a digital library freely accessible to all having 72 lakhs digital books covering all the levels from schools to post graduate courses.
- iv. *NATIONAL ACADEMIC DEPOSITORY(NAD)*: NAD is an initiative by MHRD under Govt. of India to store, access and verify academic records and certificates.
- v. *E-SHODH SINDHU*: E-SHODH SINDHU is a reservoir of e-journals and e- books freely accessible to all [12].
- vi. *SHODH GANGA*: SHODH GANGA is a reservoir of PhD thesis having open access to everyone interested in research work [12].
- vii. *VIRTUAL LABS*: Near about 205 Virtual labs have been set up to enable experiments through digital laboratory, would be helpful to have access to laboratories even from remote areas.
- viii. *E-YANTRA*: E-YANTRA is an initiative by MHRD to provide robotics implementation in engineering subjects adopted by more than 100 colleges and number is increasing day by day.
- ix. *Campus Connectivity*: Campus Connectivity is a facility offered under NMEICT, to provide free Wi-Fi to colleges and university campuses to ensure 24\*7 digital connectivity.
- x. *E-VIDWAN*: E-VIDWAN is a database contained all the required information about renowned researchers, research scholars throughout the world.
- xi. *Central cloud Infrastructure*: Central cloud Infrastructure, cloud called as "BAADAL", hosting e-content and video content of e-Acharya.

## 6. SUGGESTIONS

- i. Training should be provided to teachers as they can be well versed with modern age technology [7].
- ii. Government should employ more resources to strengthen infrastructure facilities for digital education.
- iii. Recruitments and placements should be initiated at Government at private sector to reduce unemployment rate and to save young people from stress of livelihood.
- iv. Digital learning should be standardized and upgraded to international level as it would be helpful for the learners to have various opportunities for their development [13].
- v. If novel corona virus impact is prolonged then new methods for academic evaluation and assessment should be introduced to make the process effective.
- vi. Government should raise a helpful hand towards HEI's so that they should develop all the required facilities for web-based learning for students. Even learners who lack resources for online studies should be supported by Government in every possible way [14].
- vii. Higher Education should be listed as one of the priorities of life which seems to be very difficult in this pandemic situation by making available all the required means by Government, society, NGO's and many others who can extend help [15].

## 7. FUTURE SCOPE AND CONCLUSION

This paper provided an insight about the challenges and opportunities put forth by current going pandemic situation. Marching of Indian higher educational institutions from traditional to modern age teaching learning process may be viewed as a gain. While difficulties faced by lot of persons in terms of lack of financial, academic, economic resources created a big challenge before educational entities to convince society about vital need for education. Various online platforms provided by Govt. of India through UGC and MHRD are proving to be answer to the question of inaccessibility to online learning. However, poor and marginalized section of the society needs to be addresses by the resourceful persons of the society as

well as Government apart from the harden efforts of various Higher Education Institution [16]. This paper does not include any statistical analysis to measure the effect of pandemic on higher education, however a detailed investigation based on statistical research may be conducted in future.

However, trying to be a rainbow in someone's cloud, Higher Educational Institutions efforts should be admired by all the way for continuing flow of education in the country.

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