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Impact of Covid on Higher Education System

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ABSTRACT: Universities and college campuses are places where students live and study in close proximity to each other. They are also buzzing cultural hubs where students are brought together from nations around the world. Recently, the foundations of this unique ecosystem have been impacted significantly by the rapid spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, creating uncertainty regarding the implications for higher education. Over the past weeks, education officials have been forced to cancel classes and close the doors to campuses across the world in response to the growing coronavirus outbreak. In addition, US institutions have switched classes to online learning, cancelled spring break trips and students studying abroad in China, Italy and South Korea have been encouraged to return home to complete their studies.

While class closures, dips in enrollment at the beginning of a new semester and cancellations may be temporary, it's hard to foresee whether the novel coronavirus will result in long-term disruption to the higher education system

KEYWORDS-Covid-19, impact, higher, education, institutions, coronavirus

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest concerns for the sector at large is the percentage of international students that make up the domestic higher education markets. In the US alone, Chinese students make up 33.7 per cent of the foreign student population, while Indian students comprise of 18.4 per cent.

While travel restrictions to and from China have been helpful in slowing down the spread of the disease, they have also left international students stranded. According to a Covid-19 Survey by the Institute of International Education (IIE), 830 Chinese students have been unable to return to the US to continue their studies. While this may be a small percentage of the overall international student population, the question remains: How long will this last? If the restrictions remain in place, the US higher education system could bear the brunt of an economic downturn. So, how should universities and colleges around the world adjust their learning styles to retain program enrollment and provide accessibility to students[1,2]

Maximise online learning

The most effective tool in keeping student retention and maintaining access to learning has been online courses. Universities across the US, in particular, have adjusted their programs in response to the spread of the coronavirus. Stanford University has called off the remaining two weeks of in-class lectures, urging its professors to move any remaining lessons online. The University of Washington announced a ban on on-campus classes until after spring break, after a member of staff was diagnosed with coronavirus last week. Other universities, including New York's Hofstra University, New Jersey's Princeton University and Seattle University are making starting to make the move to virtual classes.

Develop robust systems

While the majority of colleges and universities around the world integrate some form of online education into their coursework, moving all programs online may prove challenging. While some universities may already have strong online systems, smaller universities may struggle under the weight of the demand. University course creators should work closely with their IT departments to ensure their programs are able to be supported online.

One such university that is currently undertaking these measures is the University of Southern California, which is testing its online platforms to ensure its technology can handle its 7,000 plus lectures.

Educate students on best practices

With online learning the way to go, universities should also ensure students and staff are protected while on campus.

While Covid-19 is a high risk for those over 60, traditional-aged university students face relatively low risks from the disease. However in recent weeks, we have seen just how quickly the novel coronavirus can spread in areas with a high concentration of people – and university campuses are no exception.

Administrators should undertake simple measures to prevent the spread of the disease on their campuses. This should include instructing students on the appropriate protocols for hand washing, covering sneezes and coughs with their elbows, and self isolating if they are experiencing flu or cold-like symptoms.[3,5]

Educators should also be aware of students who have travelled extensively during the spring break, and remind those who have been abroad in heavily affected places to be mindful about returning to campus.

Gather information and apply learnings

Universities and colleges yet to implement changes to campuses in response to the novel coronavirus should take cues from others who have already taken action. They should analyse the steps already taken by other educators to understand what has worked, what hasn't worked and how to tackle the challenges they may face. With the spread of the disease expected to worsen before it gets better, administrators should take quick action to safeguard their campuses and students in preparation for potential closures.

But it's not all doom and gloom. The higher education sector has withstood turbulent economic times in the past, and it will withstand them again. In a digital age, universities and colleges are better placed today more than ever to provide students with easy access to continue their studies online

III. DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic shocked the world. The pressure on students and higher education institutions is high. Universities have been closed, but solutions to continue teaching and learning activities were offered by the online platforms. Hence, the aim of this study was to investigate how university medical students perceive this current form of education. The results of the survey highlighted that most of the students were satisfied with the measures taken by the university during the COVID-19 outbreak and the way the teaching-learning assessment process took place. However, some negative aspects were reported, such as: lack of an adequate infrastructure for some students, less effective teacher-student communication and interaction, impossibility of performing practical applications, lack of socialization, less objective examination, possibility of physical and mental health problems. The main conclusion is that the students prefer to continue with hybrid model of learning, where the theoretical classes could be online, but practical classes would be face-to-face. Universities, now more than ever, should invest in teacher professional development of their faculty – for teachers to be updated on effective pedagogical methods with or without the use of online technologies.[7,8]

The global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has spread worldwide, affecting almost all countries. The outbreak was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The countries around the world cautioned the public to take responsive care. The pressure on students and higher education institutions was high. Schools and universities were closed and examinations postponed in many cases. Classrooms and teaching went virtual and admissions for the 2022 academic year were fraught with confusion . It was not easy for all members and stakeholders in higher education institutions to transfer education to the distance education system, as it was not easy for families and students to accept that the educational process takes place entirely from home, so it is very difficult for parents and students to accept this direct transfer in the method of delivery for the education system (Rapanta et al., 2022). Additionally, it was very hard to request from physics professors to prepare lectures from the Zoom program, because this method was also new for the students. It was also difficult for all students to accept this shift in which they are required attend a full program of study, lectures and register attendance while they are in front of a laptop or a mobile phone screen (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2022). On the other hand, the crisis this has encouraged innovation within the education sector. Countries are started to reopening schools and higher education institutions either based on grade level and by prioritizing exam classes, or through localized openings in regions with fewer cases of the virus. However, given the continued virulence of the virus, the majority of the countries surveyed in May-June 2022 had yet to decide on a reopening date at the time of the survey report (UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank, 2022). These decisions carry enormous social and economic implications and will have lasting effects on educators, children and young people, their parents and indeed societies as a whole.

Positive Impact Of Covid 19 On E-Education Are As Follows:

Online Education during this covid has given a ray of hope to teachers and students to continue their educational activities.

This system of education is trying to make youths more digitalized and technology prone it will further help them to be more and highly skilled in technology

Move towards Blended Learning: COVID-19 has accelerated adoption of digital technologies to deliver education. Educational institutions moved towards blended mode of learning. It encouraged all teachers and students to become more technology savvy. New ways of delivery and assessments of learning opened immense opportunities for a major transformation in the area of curriculum development and pedagogy. It also gives access to large pools of learners at a time.[9,10]

Enhance the use of soft copy of learning material

Rise in online meetings

Enhanced Digital Literacy

Demand for Open and Distance Learning

Improved the use of electronic media for sharing information

Worldwide exposure

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON E EDUCATION:

Educational activity Hampered:

Classes have been suspended and exams at different levels postponed. Different boards have already postponed the annual examinations and entrance tests. Admission process got delayed. Due to continuity in lockdown, student suffered a loss of nearly 3 months of the full academic year of 2022 which is going to further deteriorate the situation of continuity in education.

Impact on Employment:

Most of the recruitment got postponed due to COVID-19 Placements for students may also be affected with companies. For India, the report estimates job loss for 4.1 million youth. Construction and agriculture have witnessed the major job losses among seven key sectors," said the ILO-ADB report, titled "Tackling the COVID-19 youth employment crisis in Asia and the Pacific"[4]

Increased responsibility of parents to educate their wards:

Some educated parents are able to guide but some may not have the adequate level of education needed to teach children in the house

Non Access to digital world:

As many students have limited or no internet access and many students may not be able to afford computer, laptop or supporting mobile phones in their homes, online teaching-learning may create a digital divide among students. The lockdown has hit the poor students very hard in India as most of them are unable to explore online learning according to various reports.

Delay in payment of fees:

During this lockdown most of the parents were facing the unemployment situation so they were not able to pay the fee for that particular time periods which affected the private institutes.

Casual approach in learning process:

During this covid pandemic physical education system converted into virtual education system because of which students become non serious towards studies.

IV. RESULTS

Initiatives of Govt. of India on education during Covid-19 Diksha portal contains e-Learning content for students, teachers, and parents aligned to the curriculum, including video lessons, worksheets, textbooks and assessments. Under the guidance of its national boards of education (CBSE) and NCERT, the content has been created by more than 250 teachers who teach in multiple languages. The app is available to use offline. It has more than 80,000 e-Books for classes 1 to 12 created by CBSE, NCERT in multiple languages. The contents can also be viewed through QR codes on textbooks.

e-Pathshala is an e-Learning app by NCERT for classes 1 to 12 in multiple languages. The app houses books, videos, audio, etc. aimed at students, educators and parents in multiple languages including Hindi, Urdu, and English. In this web portal NCERT has deployed 1886 audios, 2000 videos, 696 e-Books and 504 Flip Books for classes 1 to 12 in different languages.

National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) portal provides a host of resources for students and teachers in multiple languages including books, interactive modules and videos including a host of STEM-based games. Content is mapped to the curriculum for classes 1-12, including aligned resources for teachers. It has a total of 14527 files including 401 collections, 2779 documents, 1345 interactive, 1664 audios, 2586 images and 6153 videos on different languages.[11]

Swayam is the national online education platform hosting 1900 courses covering both school (classes 9 to 12) and higher education (under graduate, post graduate programs) in all subjects including engineering, humanities and social sciences, law and management courses. The unique feature is that, it is integrated with 12583 Pravat Kumar Jena, Impact of pandemic covid-19 on education in India the conventional education. Credit transfers are possible for SWAYAM courses

Swayam Prabha has 32 DTH TV channels transmitting educational contents on 24 x 7 basis. These channels are available for viewing all across the country using DD Free Dish Set Top Box and Antenna. The channel schedule and other details are available in the portal. The channels cover both school education (classes 9 to 12) and higher education (undergraduate, postgraduate, engineering Out-of-school children, vocational courses and teacher training) in arts, science, commerce, performing arts, social sciences and humanities subjects, engineering, technology, law, medicine, agriculture.

e-PG Pathshala is for postgraduate students. Postgraduate students can access this platform for ebooks, online courses and study materials during this lockdown period. The importance of this platform is that students can access these facilities without having internet for the whole day.

India should develop creative strategies to ensure that all children must have sustainable access to learning during pandemic COVID-19.

Central government should bring out more job opportunities for jobless youths during this pandemic to reduce unemployment rate

More interesting and effective learning tools should be used by teachers on e-learning platforms.

At current times, access to technology and internet is an urgent requirement. So, the digital capabilities and the required infrastructure must reach to the remotest and poorest communities to facilitate the students to continue their education during the pandemics.

COVID-19 has impacted immensely to the education sector of India. Though it has created many challenges, various opportunities are also evolved. The Indian Govt. and different stakeholders of education have explored the possibility of Open and Distance learning (ODL) by adopting different digital technologies to cope up with the present crisis of COVID-19. India is not fully equipped to make education reach all corners of the nation via digital platforms.

The students who aren't privileged like the others will suffer due to the present choice of digital platforms. But universities and the government of India are relentlessly trying to come up with a solution to resolve this problem. The priority should be to utilise digital technology to create an advantageous position for millions of young students in India.

It is need of the hour for the educational institutions to strengthen their knowledge and Information Technology infrastructure to be ready for facing COVID-19 like situations. India should develop creative strategies to ensure that all children must have sustainable access to learning during pandemic COVID-19. As online practice is benefitting the students immensely, it should be continued after the lockdown

V. IMPLICATIONS

According to a report of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India conducted a survey on higher education and observed that there are 993 universities, 39931 Colleges and 10725 Stand Alone Institutions listed on their portal, which contribute to education. These institutions further reflect the student density of India as the total enrolments in higher education every year are nearly 37.4 million, reflecting the expanding horizons of the education industry. The sector was seen catching pace by the passing day until Coronavirus impacted the country intensely.

The current pandemic is not only seen affecting the health of the citizens in the country but is also seen hindering various industries and shaking them to their roots. The national lockdown and the ascending health crisis were striking

the education of the students as well, with their universities being shut and their syllabi stranded, until the industry decided to initiate a revolution instead. Reinventing their radicles and making a conscious choice to grow even in the time of crisis, the universities decided to digitalise the sector. The educational reform in India in the COVID-19 era seems to be a live example of how need truly is the mother of invention or reinvention, in this scenario. Allowing educational institutions to adopt online learning and infuse a virtual study culture, the pandemic is already steering the sector forward with technological innovation and advancements.

The switch to online education has been ensuring that students suffer no loss of studies and their progress is being tracked simultaneously with timely evaluation. It is probably a first for India to experiment with the education system and make a paradigm shift to the virtual world, blending classrooms with online learning. Alchemising education with technology and forming a collaborative strategy to tread ahead while providing online lectures will also enable the students to learn creatively. Boosting retention of the syllabus by using innovative technology, the universities are also engaging students to learn by choice and not just by their physical presence in a classroom. Furthermore, providing AI-enabled learning by universities as they offer diverse courses in association with other collaborations is only making the country envision a new tomorrow based on educational reforms. For instance, medical students can opt for interactive sessions to discuss specific case studies, engineering aspirants could delve into the depths of environmental engineering and city planning along with the mentors playing videos and conducting online moot sessions for law enthusiasts and much more.

In fact, some of the universities are also offering courses related to the fourth industrial revolution, which will stimulate the minds of the students and inspire them to bring a change in their respective fields. Gaining popularity worldwide, online education is nourishing a lot many inquisitive students, instead of giving in to the circumstances.[12]

One of the opportunities to focus amidst the crisis is the virtual internships, which are allowing the students to go beyond their curriculum and learn about the practicality of their professions. Another value addition for the field of education and thus students is the way universities are encouraging them to observe the current scenario and understand the need to automate. This will further allow them to digitalise their fields in the near future along with preparing them for any such situations. This practice will instil more confidence than chaos or panic.

Apart from interactive and virtual learning, the universities are teaching much more than just syllabus. They are sensitising their faculty to tackle the situation wisely. Online support groups along with emotional help by lecturers are only strengthening the system. Educating the students simultaneously about their anxiety, the current state of chaos, fears and emotions is not only preserving their sanity but also making them aware of how it is only natural for them to be in such distress amidst the crisis. Improving their emotional intelligence, this, coupled with the UGC's guidelines of providing psychological support to students will transform the education system for good.

Even though the country has been adapting to the new-age learning, but there still lies an obstacle in making the endeavours entirely successful. What still remains intact is that only 45 crore people of our total population of the country have access to the internet and thus to e-learning. The people residing in rural areas are still very much deprived of the latest advancements and therefore hampering the cause of online learning. Now, virtual classrooms are not only dependent on e-lectures but also require one to have access to the e-content and online study material, practise sheets etc. as well. And that's where we lag behind as India is not fully equipped to make education reach all corners of the nation via digital platforms or online classrooms. The students who aren't privileged like the others will be held back due to the current resort and there is no denying that. But universities and the government of India are relentlessly trying to come up with a solution to resolve this problem.

Uncertain times call for stronger measures and the education industry has been stepping up to take some. The pandemic has been working as a catalyst for the educational institutions to grow and opt for platforms and techniques, they haven't used before. The times are changing, and the theories have always pointed out towards the survival of the fittest. Surviving these crises with a different approach and digitising the sector are the two elements which will get the industry through the storm and wash away the blues of the pandemic.

VI. CONCLUSION

In India, education system is closed temporarily to preventing spread of coronavirus, due to closure of both schools and colleges, 32 Crore students are affected. Classroom learning is converted into online classes. Online classes are implemented suddenly due to shut down of education system in India. Online Class is affected by these factors:

- Network issues
- Lack of training
- Lack of interest
- Lack of awareness
- Less attendance
- Lack of interaction
- Lack of connectivity
- Lack of personal touch
- Implementation of online classes in villages, remote areas are difficult

Lockdown changed the perspective of schools and college learning system. As traditional Indian class room learning are converted to digital learning suddenly, due to coronavirus and shutdown of temporary education system in India, both students and educational institution faces difficulties to adopt digital learning is the most common challenge faced. Also the quality content is major common challenging i.e. learning through online class room should reach the students with full quality learning and clear understanding of concepts. The new adoption of this digital technology was reluctant for students and teachers. This new technology faces many competitive edges in digital learning. Network issue and lack of concentration in online classes rapidly decrease the interest in learning of an individual and also decreases the effectiveness of learning. Some private and government school and colleges are not able to implement basic needs of digital learning. Online class has a huge gap between teachers and students and this causes lack of interaction in an individual. The main challenge of digital learning in India is huge difference between in urban and rural schools. Rural schools should be improved by government by giving proper training to pursue education through online. Most of the parents cannot afford internet connection for their children to study. Migration of people from one place to another due to pandemic situation sometimes causes loss of education. Other than online classroom students cannot attend coaching class for competitive exams like NEET, JEE, CAT etc. India has ranked 129th out of 180 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) as per UNDP. School Education GER is approximately 74% and for Higher education GER is 26.5% for the year 2018-19, due to the COVID-19 India faces lot of pressure on education system. India has to improve lot in online education system by developing more effective online leanings, new ideas and productive, improving professional skills through assessing online and improvement of quality of online education. Government of India should take steps in improving education system and the challenges faced in online classes.[10,11]

Coronavirus has given a great opportunity to Indian education system to improve and develop more and more. Any change can disruptively bring some new opportunities that will transform the education system to worldwide. This opportunity gives India to reform the education sector to worldwide. This pandemic situation has taken India to next advanced level of education through online classes. Proper development of basic needs of online classes can be implemented and developed all over India. Current development in education system changes the structure, method, concepts and way of learning with seamless integrating with digital learning modes and this builds a unified learning system. This method gives cost effective for both school and colleges. Different e-learning platforms can be introduced. Government of India can develop rural schools and colleges by developing basic needs of digital learning. Through this online education system government schools and colleges can be developed. Schools and colleges will change their model of learning. This opportunity will demand teachers to go through some training and change themselves to the level that would be required for digital learning. Distance learning has given many opportunities to teach differently and learn differently, self-learning is encouraged, providing more and more opportunities to learn from the diverse resources. This change gives great opportunity for schools and colleges, to improve and develop the quality of the learning material which is used in the teaching and learning process. Digital learning will be the new format of learning. There is lot of requirement needed to find new ways to design, develop and deliver quality of learning content. Learning management systems will bring more openness and transparency in education system. A large number of educational trainings, classes, meetings, seminars, assessment and conferences will be handled through online. This opportunity gives possibility to new form of business model in future. This education system is forcing teachers to reinvent their roles and responsibility by transferring information to enabling learning system. Government

of India can allocate funds for digital education system. The Ministry of Indian education is planning to develop high quality E-learning application. By this development of application for digital online education system parents or guardians are responsible to play a major role in educating their children. Google Classroom is a free web service given by Google, where schools and colleges can use to online education. Digital learning has many like digital learning has no physical boundaries.

Thus this paper provides an overview of impact of COVID-19 on education system of India. The education system of India due to lockdown is going to cause major interruption in students learning. As a result, Indian education system converted to next advanced level of education. Government of India should plan according to develop the digital platform. By this development government schools can make use of TV for classes which will be cost effective and direct reach to economically back students and also geographically reachable. The coronavirus pandemic has changed education system of India. New solutions for education could bring more ideas, innovation and technological development. This new solution can widen equality gaps of education.[11,12]

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