IMPACT OF CORONA CRISIS ON EDUCATION SECTOR

Dr. Priyanka Narayan Khose

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Economics,

New Arts, Commerce and Science College,

Ahmednagar-414001.

Abstract:-

COVID-19 has struck our education system like a lightning bolt and shaken it to its core. In a matter of weeks, this pandemic has changed how students are educated around the world. Although it is too early to judge how reactions to COVID-19 will affect education systems around the world, there are signs suggesting that it could have a lasting impact on the trajectory of learning innovation and digitization. These unprecedented disruptions will have immediate consequences for students learning and their wellbeing. The brunt of the impacts, as with most crises, will be borne by those who are already most in need of education. In this time of crisis, a well-rounded and effective educational practice is what is needed. But if the education downturn continues, there's a pressing need for innovators to come up with technologies that can help Indians learn remotely, especially in the most remote and vulnerable parts of the country. Given that the traditional focus has been on offline centers of education and assessment, a mix of online and offline mechanisms is what will work, which can hopefully be converted to a permanent module. In summary COVID-19 will impact education sector in India but what it has taught us is to build resilience to face such threats in the future. Just as the First Industrial Revolution forged today's system of education, we can expect a different kind of educational model to emerge from   COVID-19.

Keyword: COVID-19, Education sector, Remote learning, e-learning

1. Introduction:-

The novel Coronavirus has had a severe impact on the World as a whole and has shaken every industry to its very core. Close to a billion people are still locked down after the coronavirus outbreak brought life around the world to a virtual standstill. The pandemic is expected to have enormous economic consequences and it is also having a devastating impact on global education. It is clearly visible that the impact of Corona on education system in India has been huge but the learning process never stops and the educational institutions in the country from the bottom level to the highest level can use COVID-19 as a blessing in disguise and strengthen their educational system and enhance the learning process for all the students and learners in the future.

2. Negative impacts of Covid-19 on Education:-

There are a number of areas of potential risks for global education. Sluggish cross border movement of students: Universities in many countries such as Australia, UK, New Zealand, and Canada are highly dependent on the movement of students from China and India. Many parents will avoid sending students abroad for higher education due to high risk from the pandemic.

a) Passive learning by students: -

The sudden shift to online learning without any planning especially in countries like India where the backbone for online learning was not ready and the curriculum was not designed for such a format has created the risk of most of our students becoming passive learners and they seem to be losing interest due to low levels of attention span. We are now beginning to realize that online learning could be dull as it is creating a new set of passive learners which can pose new challenges.

b) Unprepared teachers for online education:-

Online learning is a special kind of methodology and not all teachers are good at it or at least not all of them were ready for this sudden transition from face to face learning to online learning. Thus, most of the teachers are just conducting lectures on video platforms such as Zoom which may not be real online learning in the absence of a dedicated online platform specifically designed for the purpose.

c) Changing format of student recruitment:-

Universities and colleges worldwide are facing a major risk in the area of student recruitment and retention. The risk of losing students is so high that they will need to relook at their admission practices, admission criteria and the overall recruitment process itself which will include, new methods of outreach and application process itself.

d) Mental health impact of students:-

Students experience increased stress and anxiety. Key causes are

- uncertainty about the future of their education
- fear falling behind in their coursework and
- Struggles with remote learning.

3. Positive changes in Education due to Covid-19:-

Any change that is so disruptive is also likely to bring with it some new opportunities that will transform the higher education system worldwide and especially in a country like India which is planning to bring about a planned reform in this sector. Some of the key areas of opportunity are the following:

a) Rise in Blended Learning:

Universities and colleges will shift to a model of blended learning where both face to face delivery along with an online model will become a norm. This will require all teachers to become more technology savvy and go through some training to bring themselves to the level that would be required.

b) Learning management systems to be the new norm:

A great opportunity will open up for those companies that have been developing and strengthening learning management systems for use by universities and colleges. This has the potential to grow at a very fast pace but will have to be priced appropriately for use by all institutions.

c) Improvement in learning material:

There is a great opportunity for universities and colleges to start improving the quality of the learning material that is used in the teaching and learning process. Since blended learning will be the new format of learning there will be a push to find new ways to design and deliver quality content especially due to the fact that the use of learning management systems will bring about more openness and transparency in academics.

d) Rise in collaborative work:

The teaching community to a large extent has been very insulated and more so in a country like India. There is a new opportunity where collaborative teaching and learning can take on new forms and can even be monetized. A large number of academic meetings, seminars and conferences will move online and there is a possibility that some new form of an online conferencing platform will emerge as a business model.

4. How is the education sector responding to COVID-19?

The impact on education sector has been significant with the disruption of academic schedules at schools and higher education institutions due to suspension of classes over a prolonged period. This unplanned closure has severely affected the scheduled plans for completing courses within the academic year. With COVID-19, we are seeing how yesterday's disruptors can become today's lifeguards. While traditional institutions once viewed online education as a threat, it has come to their rescue.

Video-conferencing apps like Zoom and WebEx are throwing universities a lifeline. However, lecturers are still struggling to maintain the same depth of engagement with students they could have in a classroom setting. The adoption of online solutions in recent months has been unprecedented. But they are quickly realizing that remote learning is just a baby step experiment in the long journey to offering online education that has been conceived as such, which includes effective student engagement tools and teacher training.

5. Three ways the Coronavirus pandemic could reshape education:

a) Education - nudged and pushed to change - could lead to surprising innovations

b) The slow pace of change in academic institutions globally is lamentable, with centuries old, lecture-based approaches to teaching, entrenched institutional biases, and outmoded classrooms. However, COVID-19 has become a catalyst for educational institutions worldwide to search for innovative solutions in a relatively short period of time.

c) Public-private educational partnerships could grow in importance

d) In just the past few months, we have seen learning consortiums and coalitions taking shape, with diverse stakeholders - including governments, publishers, education professionals, technology providers, and telecom network operators - coming together to utilize digital platforms as a temporary solution to the crisis.

e) Most schools in affected areas are finding stop-gap solutions to continue teaching, but the quality of learning is heavily dependent on the level and quality of digital access. After all, only around 60% of the globe's population is online.

6. Will digital education take over the conventional education?

Covid-19 has prompted experts to rethink the conventional mode of education. Digital education appears to be a viable solution to fill in the void for classroom education. Going forward, digital education is likely to be integrated into mainstream education.

❖ **Advantages of Remote learning**

Though there are drawbacks of digital learning, but the advantages outweigh them. The impact of COVID-19 on education in India has been huge but has pushed the people towards technology which can not only provide a strong and strong alternative of the conventional education system but also diminish and compensate the threats posed by the deadly virus on the education system in the country

❖ **Challenges in remote learning?**

However, this remote learning throws lot of challenges –this relies on the reliable power supply and ubiquitous Internet connectivity which might be a far- fetched thing for Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. Another challenge is that e-learning comes across as somewhat patchy and impersonal experience. Also, e-learning is likely to witness a high dropout rate due to lack of atmosphere for studying. Students might tend to get distracted by gaming consoles, social media at home and might not feel a sense of community while taking online classes.

Online learning appears to be no substitutes for field trips, academic exchanges and the social and cultural attractions of vibrant campus life. The key here lies in making remote learning more interactive and personalized through customization.

Few rituals in education are as old-fashioned and out of kilter with the way the world works today as examinations, both in their physical format and their end goal of regurgitating reams of notes and index cards containing declarative knowledge to be mentally stored but forgotten soon afterwards.

7. Will COVID-19 spell the end for exams?

Big questions are being posed about the future of examinations. Educational reform tends to be a delayed process, and the catalyst is more often than not new technologies. Might not critical thinking, curiosity and social skills be better taught?

What could be done instead of examinations?

Everyday life, most especially in the workplace, almost never involves exam-taking techniques. People do presentations, they write up assignments and argue positions. Assessment systems that schools/colleges should consider because they are much closer to the type of assessment used in the workplace include portfolios, projects, interviews and presentations. If we want a more balanced, sustainable world, it is essential to interweave ethical questions on the consequences of our actions into all of our assessments, so as to stimulate deep reflection.

What is to be done to build a resilient Education system in the long term?

a) **A multi-pronged strategy** is necessary to manage the COVID-19 crisis. Immediate measures are essential to ensure continuity of learning in government schools, colleges and universities. **Open-source digital learning solutions and Learning Management Software** should be adopted so teachers can conduct teaching online

b) **Inclusive learning solutions**, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized, need to be developed. With a rapid increase of mobile internet users in India, which is expected to reach 85% households by 2024, technology is enabling ubiquitous access and personalization of education even in the remotest parts of the country

c) **Strategies are required to prepare the higher education sector** for the evolving demand–supply trends across the globe—particularly those related to the global mobility of students and faculty

d) Reconsider the current delivery and pedagogical methods in school, college and higher education by seamlessly **integrating classroom learning with e-learning modes** to build a unified learning system.

8. A perspective on how COVID could change how we educate future generations

COVID-19 is a pandemic that illustrates how globally interconnected we are – there is no longer such a thing as isolated issues and actions. Successful people in the coming decades need to be able to understand this interrelatedness and navigate across boundaries to leverage their differences and work in a globally collaborative way. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in educational institutions across the world being compelled to suddenly harness and utilize the suite of available technological tools to create content for remote learning for students in all sectors.

Conclusion:-

The COVID-19 epidemic is hitting everyone hard. But schools, colleges, universities which have always been places for physical interaction, have been among the hardest hit. As hundreds of millions of students around the world struggle to study at home, it remains to be seen how educators and the sector on a whole will deal with the new learn-at-home reality. Learning disparities will widen. Existing inequalities have been heightened during this pandemic. Given that the traditional focus has been on offline centers of education, we believe a mix of online and offline is what will work in the coming months, which can hopefully be converted to a permanent module. More fundamentally, COVID-19 is causing us to challenge deep-rooted notions of when, where, and how we deliver education, of the role of colleges and universities, the importance of lifelong learning, and the distinction we draw between traditional and non-traditional learners.

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