



“A STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM”

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ABSTRACT

It has been globally perceived that the education system is one of the significant factors in the economic development of a nation. A Developed nation is predetermined to be an educated nation. The education system should be transformed to suit the needs of the time and changing scenario of the world. The recent Covid-19 Pandemic caused by the Coronavirus has posed challenges to the entire world, with the number of known cases climbing daily and hundreds of millions of people in lockdown. As countries strive to support their people and public health systems, their economies are grinding to a halt and their education systems are being shattered. Almost 1.5 billion students are no longer able to physically go to school. The impact has been dramatic and life-changing as educators scramble to put in place viable short-term solutions for remote teaching and learning. This study is mainly focused on the overall issues faced by the higher education system in this time of pandemic and to understand the various steps taken by educational institutions to reduce the negative impact of Covid-19. While traditional institutions once regarded online education as a threat, it has now come to their rescue. The successes and failures that unravel should give us all a better grasp of what is possible.

Key words: Higher education, Pandemic, Covid-19.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education, also called post-secondary education, third-level or tertiary education, is an optional end of formal learning that happens after completion of secondary education. Higher Education provides opportunities to people as well as provides specialized knowledge and skilled persons for national development.

However, due to the pandemic the higher education system has been affected globally, leading to the shutdown of schools, universities, and colleges. All educational institutions are temporarily closed worldwide in an

attempt to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As of March 28, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic is causing quite 1.6 billion children and youth to be out of faculty in 161 countries. This is on the brink of 80% of the world's enrolled students.

While each level of education faces its unique challenges, it's the upper education segment that will be triggering a learning revolution. Corona Virus has forced universities across the world indeed, to set aside physical classrooms and shift to online classes. While this alteration has been smooth for many private universities, the general public ones are still adapting. There have also been debates on the nature of the classes and the future of examination and evaluation- whether they could be conducted online or not.

The paper highlights the educational challenges, opportunities caused by COVID-19, and strategies to curb them. While faculty tackles with new ways of managing this sudden transition to online education, where students are left holding on to their cell phones and laptops. If the lockdowns are to be continued, how would higher education be affected?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Researchers have studied various challenges faced by the higher education system. There are relevant studies on how to cope with such problems. Some experts from the review of the literature are as follows:

According to Ratan Lal (2019) higher education has developed a lot in terms of quantity, however we are still lacking of quality higher education as expected. It has many barriers to development teaching method, gross enrolment ratio, finance, lower standards, etc. It needs international standard of education system, which could produce professional and expert of international standard.

Sneha Balyan (2019) stated that India is one of the fastest growing countries with annual growth rate of 9%. To sustain that growth rate there has to be an increase in the number of institutes with quality education. There should be a digitally-centered learning methodology included. Student mobility within and between countries should be focused on.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the impact of COVID-19 on higher education system.
- To identify the various challenges in the education system worldwide.
- To suggest various measures to grapple new ways of managing this transition.

LIMITATIONS

- The period of the study has been very short.
- This study has been conducted only with the help of secondary data collected through various books, journals, letters, reports, periodicals, etc.

EFFECTS

Personal touch: Due to the lockdown and the importance of social distancing during this pandemic many educational institutes will shift to e-learning. These approaches can be very solitary and didactic, students are asked to sit and quietly watch videos, read documents online or click through presentations. Lecturers are struggling to maintain the same depth of engagement with students they could have in a classroom setting.

Increase in appetite for e-learning: Even before the pandemic, many universities were seeing declines in enrolment for campus-based programs and parallel increases in uptake of their online courses. Students can learn faster online; than during a traditional classroom setting because students can learn at their own pace, going back and re-reading, skipping, or accelerating through concepts as they choose.

Lack of resources: Many students do not have internet connectivity, a laptop at home, or other required resources. During the months of enforced remote learning, it is seen how advantages in resources can accrue into advantages in learning. All of this will result in less equity.

Lack of training: As the teachers are so used to Campus-based teaching methods, it will be a little difficult for them to shift to more digitally-centered methods. Adapting to the right technologies and approaches for educating and engaging their students is a challenging and time-consuming task.

Innovative solutions: Online education allows innovative methods of teaching with the help of technology and online tools. There is no disruption in learning because of the pandemic and reaching out to a large number of students across geographies has become easy. The physical infrastructure of the institutes is also not being used. Students are listening to recorded and live conversations and working at their speed.

International higher education: A large number of Indian students enroll in universities abroad, especially in countries worst affected by the pandemic, the US, UK, Australia, and China. Most of these students have now been barred from leaving these countries. If the situation persists, in the long run, a decline in the demand for international higher education is anticipated.

Grading system: Institutes are struggling to figure methods for online assessment and grading students. Students will have a hard time studying while living at home, with family and other distractions and will

become unhappy because the mental health effects of being isolated will be profound. Hence the test scores of students will be impacted negatively.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Teachers and students should be given the training to utilize online education. This will make them aware and comfortable with technology and improve the efficiency of online education.
2. Modules should include podcasts and other resources that require less data usage. This will facilitate learning material to be downloaded on a Smartphone, which more students are likely to have.
3. The education technology used should incorporate features like unlimited video conferencing time, auto-translation capabilities, real-time co-editing of project work, and smart calendar scheduling,
4. Institutes should seek help from private sectors for investments in education solutions and innovation. While most initiatives to date have been finite in scope, and relatively isolated, the pandemic could pave the way for much larger-scale, cross-industry alliance to be formed around a common educational goal.
5. Access costs should be decreased and quality of access should be increased in order to reduce the gap in education quality and socioeconomic equality. Hence narrowing the digital divide.
6. It is also important to initiate quality assurance mechanisms and quality standard for online learning developed and offered by India HEIs as well as e-learning platforms.
7. The courses on Indian traditional knowledge systems in the fields of yoga, Indian medicines, architecture, hydraulics, metallurgy, and agriculture should be integrated with a present-day mainstream university education to serve the larger cause of humanity.
8. The fee structure of higher educational Institutes should be re-evaluated, as most of the physical infrastructure of the college is not being used. These funds should be directed towards e-learning processes.

CONCLUSION

Higher education is seldom about exams, classes, or grades. Rather, it is about an experience that prepares a student to become a functioning member of the workforce, with the requisite knowledge, skills, and life experiences. This is an opportunity for the education sector to unite, forge connections across countries and continents, and truly share what works globally. This research has listed the issues faced by the Higher education system worldwide and a few suggestions to bridge the gap. In this time of crisis, a well-rounded and effective educational practice is what's needed for the capacity-building of young minds. It will develop skills that will drive their employability, productivity, health, and well-being within the decades to return, and make sure of the overall progress. The importance of disseminating knowledge across borders, companies, and all

parts of society has been made clear through this pandemic. If online learning technology can play a task here, it's incumbent upon all folks to explore its full potential.

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