



“E-Learning: Covid19 Pandemic: Impact and strategies for education sector in India”

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ABSTRACT

Education is one of the most powerful weapon for reducing poverty and inequality. education is equally key to enhance India's competitiveness in the global economy. Therefore, ensuring access to quality education for all, in particular for the poor and rural population, is central to the economic and social development of India. The global lockdown of education institutions is going to cause major (and likely unequal) interruption in students learning; disruptions in internal assessments; and the cancellation of public assessments for qualifications or their replacement by an inferior alternative. This column discusses what can be done to mitigate these negative impacts. The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis. Many countries have (rightly) decided to close schools, colleges and universities. The crisis crystallises the dilemma policymakers are facing between closing schools (reducing contact and saving lives) and keeping them open (allowing workers to work and maintaining the economy). The severe short-term disruption is felt by many families around the world: home schooling is not only a massive shock to parents' productivity, but also to children's social life and learning. Teaching is moving online, on an untested and unprecedented scale. Student assessments are also moving online, with a lot of trial and error and uncertainty for everyone. Many assessments have simply been cancelled. Importantly, these interruptions will not just be a short-term issue, but can also have long-term consequences for the affected cohorts and are likely to increase inequality.

KEY WORDS

Corona virus pandemic, social distancing, digital learning platform, virtual classes, student agency.

SUMMARY

Online classes are not capable of substituting classroom lectures. The former is very seldom able to generate the interaction that is needed in a class. Moreover, the teachers' body language, which is a part and parcel of the classroom lectures and is imperative for their success, is also missing in online classes. The use of technology will not only lead to more discrimination, but also will create some practical problems. It will also lack the desired interaction in the class.

I.INTRODUCTION

As the Covid-19 global pandemic inflicts suffering, death and misery upon the global population, over a billion plus school children, millions of higher education students and tens of millions of children in the world's poorest countries find their daily routine of education and schooling disrupted. The Covid-19 global pandemic is a disrupter of the cruellest kind, and shows no mercy when it comes to ruling classes, ruling cultures, rich, poor and those in between. Countries that can afford it, and have the technological infrastructure have shifted most of their educational capacity, including teaching and learning online. Countries that cannot afford it, and lack the technological infrastructure are struggling through as best they can. And within those countries debates rage around social and economic inequalities, and why it is that only the well-off have access to technology for education in a time of crisis. Recently, the World Bank's private-sector unit, the International Finance Corporation, announced it will freeze funding in for profit pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, because they may "do more harm than good" (Doward, 2020). Bridge International Academies was singled out because of the questions raised about the quality of its educational product and its high fees, among other areas of concern (Doward, 2020). It has been claimed that

often the for-profit private sector in the developing world “excludes marginalized communities, and has questionable impact” in the educational landscape of the urban and rural poor (Doward, 2020).

II. Historical Background of Pandemics

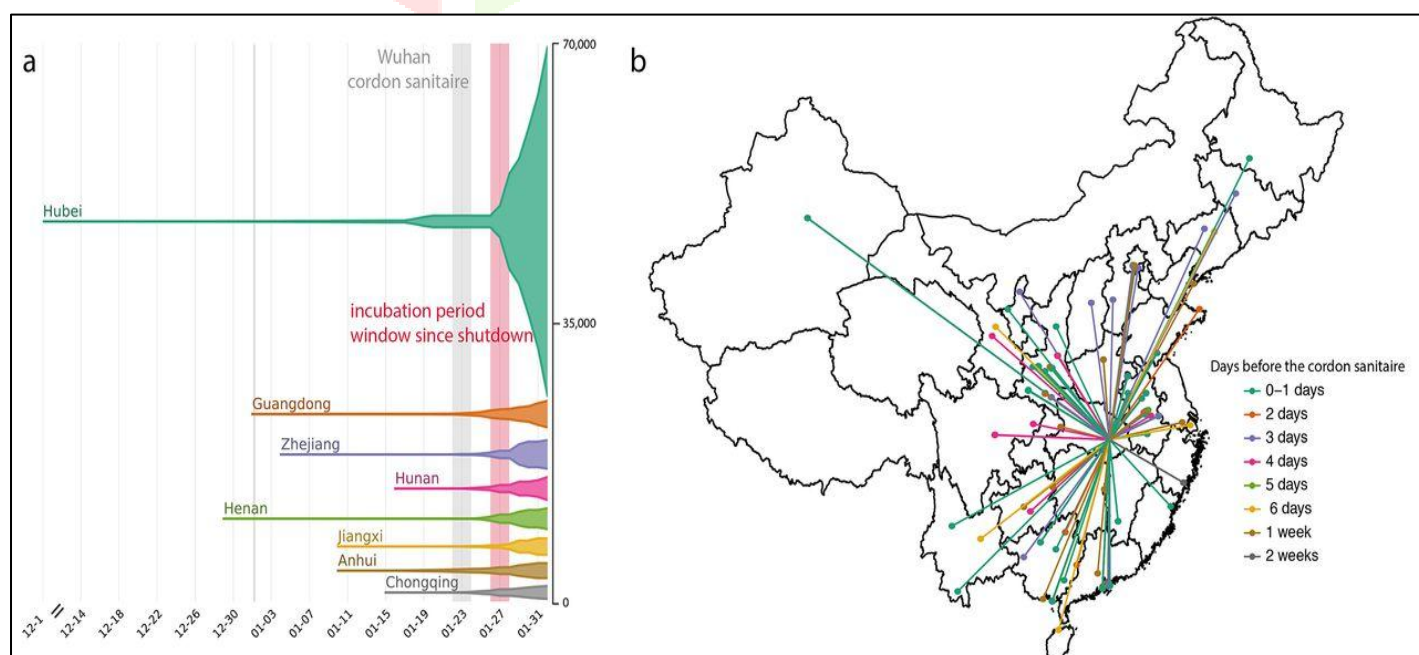
Historical review of the past three centuries indicates that pandemics are not new to the humankind. In the 18th century, there were 13 such events, in the 19th century there were 12 such events, and in the 20th century, there were four events. The pandemic of 1918-19 was quite similar to the one the world faces today, where 20 million people died, impacting many in Bombay. The loss of lives in the past was much higher, due to the lack of advanced medical treatment and capacity to mitigate the impact, which presently exists with various states. Most of these pandemics were due to influenza, which is quite similar to the coronavirus of 2020. In terms of similarity, both diseases have the following commonalities:-

- (a) Sudden Outbreak.
- (b) Rapid Spread by contact.
- (c) High Mortality rate.
- (d) Acute fever.
- (e) All age groups affected.

However, in terms of differences, the incubation time of coronavirus is longer and it spreads more rapidly than influenza. While influenza impacts the children to a large extent, coronavirus adversely impacts the aged people. Coronavirus also is nothing new to humankind. There are six viruses of this family and barring the present one- COVID 19, vaccination for others is available, and the recorded mortality rate is low. Assumingly, the present coronavirus has spread through human contact with the bats, which took place in China. The vaccine for COVID 19, as per the Chinese claim is in the clinical trial stage, and across the globe, there is no other alternative treatment available, creating a state of more considerable panic amongst the states. Apart from China today, many more nations are trying to find an effective vaccine for COVID 19, but success is unlikely at least for the next few months. Therefore, detection of the virus, quarantining those affected and social distancing is the only alternative available.

COVID 19 in China

On 31 December 2019, China reported the COVID 19 to the World Health Organisation (WHO). The WHO declared COVID 19 a health emergency on 30 January 2020 and on 11 March 2020; it was finally called a pandemic. The WHO, from the time it was involved in the crisis, has undertaken various measures to control the pandemic. It has issued various guidelines concerning safeguards, and its expert committee has visited China to review the impact at the place where COVID 19 originated. The Chinese government has also shown its forthrightness to cooperate with WHO by working with them in close coordination. The WHO has been quite appreciative of China's handling of the crisis. China's initiative of the complete lockdown of nearly 20 cities and various provinces helped in curbing the further spread of the pandemic. The government of China made extensive use of the state resources to upgrade the medical assistance, enforce preventive mechanisms, the social distancing of its effected population and sanitisation of its areas. As on 7 March 2020, China claimed that there is no new case of the virus. The travel restrictions relaxation on provinces under the impact of COVID 19 is underway, and for the Chinese people, their routine life is to commence shortly. However, the government, both at the central and provincial level, are undertaking necessary cautions to free the country from COVID 19 completely. A closer examination of the spread of COVID 19 in China indicates that only a few provinces came under its impact, as indicated below before the shutdown.



A large part of China did not suffer the impact of the virus. This assessment is as per information jointly released by WHO and China. Still, China's prior history of record manipulation gives less surety of data correctness. For instance, the world accuses China of lack of transparency while calculating its national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The WHO has also come under criticism for standing in support of the Chinese pandemic crisis management. This criticism has been primarily due to recent developments which have come to the notice of the world. For instance, the whistle-blower in the case of China was Dr Li Wenliang, who in mid-November 2020 warned the Chinese authorities regarding the magnitude of the virus. However, the Chinese government's suppression of the doctor's opinion caused a delay in acknowledging the magnitude of the crisis. If the doctor's opinion regarding the pandemic was transparently shared, many lives in China and other nations could have got saved. Dr Li himself became a victim of COVID 19 and died.

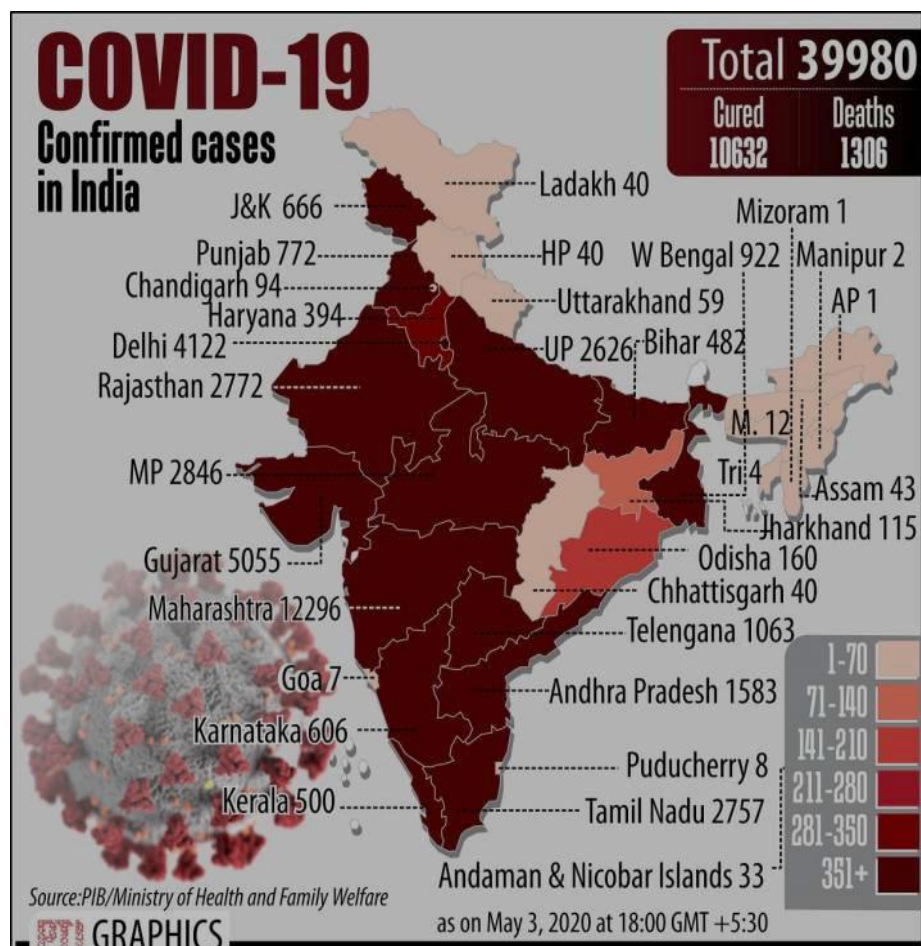
Today many nations, including the United States of America accuse China of causing this purposeful delay. The WHO, as per these nations, should have maintained greater caution, regarding warning against the pandemic. Within China, the lack of preventive mechanisms at the initial stages is visible by the fact that the National Health Commission during the critical period of the pandemic gave out seven different versions of COVID 19. Then, there are unconfirmed reports circulating across the globe through various digital platforms that this virus was not transmitted through the bats but has infused in the environment through the Chinese biological laboratories in Wuhan. From China's initial stage of being a victim to a nation fighting for the well-being of its people, and then a state which caused the spread of the virus across the world, China has created rapid image transformation. China is cautious of this fact, and the government is denying any such occurrences. Instead, a senior bureaucrat of China has accused the Americans of planting the COVID 19 in Wuhan. The blame game will continue from all sides, especially where the governments are trying to justify their failures regarding preparedness against the spread of the virus. However, it seems there is more to come from the Chinese side, impacting the world beyond the virus, which will be covered shortly in detail. First, it becomes essential to examine the global impact of COVID 19 before making any more evaluations about China. This global coverage becomes all the more remarkable, as it finally again involves China.

III. Impact of COVID 19 across the Globe

In today's world where trade inter-dependability and use of technology has made people to people contact, irrespective of their nationality, more frequent, the spread of COVID 19 at such magnitude is not an unusual occurrence. Within two months, COVID 19 has infected citizens of almost 200 nations. The significant impact of the virus has been in the United States of America (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Spain, Italy, Germany, France, and Iran, to name a few. The existing medical capacity of nations to handle the rising numbers of infected people is facing near collapse, and the governments are becoming anxious for outside assistance. US and Italy, considered of having the best health care support system are facing a massive loss of lives. The only solution visible to nations is complete lockdown of their entire country, so as the quarantining of the population will limit the spread of the virus. In many nations currently, only those falling in the category of essential services are permitted to operate.

These unprecedented circumstances have forced the governments to extend economic relief to those in desperate need for the basic amenity for survival. The numbers of relief packages are increasing with time, as more and more individuals are getting affected by the virus. Apart from China, no other nation is successful in controlling the spread of the virus. Daily the number of people impacted globally with the virus is on the increase. Many economists understand that the status of extending government relief packages by various nations is not sustainable for a long time. Presently, the private manufacturing units in many states are close and will struggle to reinitiate their supply lines without further governmental support. If the governments continue to bear the load of national lockdowns, this may well surpass their capacity to be effective. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reports reflect a likely global economic depression in the months ahead, and the worse impact will be on the developing nations, with already constrained resources. Many governments in developed nations, which have understood the magnitude of the next stage of crisis are planning accordingly; however, there are many developing nations for whom crossing over the stage of controlling the spread of disease is itself a unique challenge. As an outcome of economic recession, the next significant challenge facing many nations will be the massive scale of unemployment. Notably, the manufacturing industry and the service industry to recover from this economic crisis will slash the workforce presently employed by them. Such trends are already visible where few people have lost employment in companies during the lockdown, which is still less than a month. The other critical area of concern is the agriculture sector. Some of the nations will survive due to their ability of self-sustainability. Rather their stock holding will see them through the current crisis. India happens to be one such nation. However, many nations survive on import of agriculture produce. Such nations will be worse affected. Many International organisations are worried in this regard and are raising voices for addressing these concerns. United Nations (UN) has recommended USD 2.5 trillion rescue package for such nations. Besides, many nations will lose the capacity for undertaking infrastructure development which is critical for their progress and the funds for the same will not be available under the global economic recession. All the above-listed challenges will be critical, once the world finally revives from the impact of COVID 19. The timeframe for the same is uncertain. The successful Chinese control over the virus is impressive, but due to lack of resources, many nations will not be in a position to emulate.

III.1. COVID 19 Impact on India



The policymakers in India must closely monitor the activities in China, especially regarding their economic developments. A few months prior, a nation which seemed to be a victim of COVID 19, today seems to be regaining normalcy. On the other hand, the world has become the victim of this virus. While a period of uncertainty is visible to fight this pandemic across the globe, China is slowly making its economic revival. Whether this entire occurrence is a Chinese design or a default, does not matter. The blame game can continue, but without the backing of firm actions, it is rather futile. Even in case, China committed deliberate errors; it is not likely to admit. Neither will it be of assistance to any nation. Thus, a country like India has to rise on its own, to ensure that China does not draw advantage by creating an economic crisis. Under the present circumstances where crisis management is very dynamic, the approach also needs to be frequently monitored and modified. India, under the stewardship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been quite proactive to make the much-needed policy guidelines regularly, meeting the challenges of this unprecedented situation. The state governments, irrespective

of political differences with the Centre, have pitched in for ensuring the safety and well-being of the people of India. The Indian government has followed the positive measures similar to the Chinese government, to curb the virus and treat the patients. For instance, the national level lockdown applies, and the extension of the same is likely in the coming months. The finance ministry has undertaken all measures to provide relief to the citizens, with a particular focus on the protection of the people belonging to the weaker economic background. For instance, the government gave time extension for the loan payment, rent deposit and school fee deposit. The bank interest rate brought down, relief fund created, and such measures are underway in India. Various schemes of the governments, both of Centre and the states, are quite innovative and ideal to meet the requirements of the Indian citizens. Like the free distribution of ration, cooked food, and availability of accommodation, to name a few. Besides all these measures, India also needs to ensure the following. First, the agriculture sector of the country must not suffer any adverse impact. The crop production should continue unhindered so as, at no junction, the food supply chain in the country is -Adversely impacted. Second, in collaboration with the private sector, the government must undertake all measures to ensure that the unemployment figures do not increase in the country. For this relief and assistance from the government will be required. Third, some of the essential production units need to be operational, ensuring India does not fall short of its supply lines and becomes desperate to fall back on the Chinese supply lines, especially for essential commodities. Many of these manufacturing, for instance, medicines manufacturing, is not hampered. The government also need to ensure that that banking sector continues to deliver services uninterrupted and there must be continued monitoring of the situations which may rapidly transform. Next important issue of focus for the government should be to stop any illegal hoarding and stocking of essential supplies which may create a panic situation. The law in regard must be forcefully applied.

India has enormous potential to fight back and emerge as a winner from this crisis. The leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is already receiving admiration at the national, regional and global levels. Even as per the World Bank assessment, India will be an exception to face the minimum impact of the likely economic slowdown due to COVID 19. Thus, with the contribution of each citizen toward the government's efforts to fight this virus, India will soon emerge well out of this crisis. However, India must also maintain a close guard on China and ensure that they do not draw out undue advantages in the name of COVID 19 or the economic recession, which is to follow.

SOCIAL DITANCING

A recourse to history tells us that social distancing is not new concept. It was first used in 1918, during what is known as the Spanish flu that triggered a global pandemic, killing up to 50 million people worldwide. This happened after World War I when cities such as Philadelphia held huge gatherings to celebrate soldiers that led to thousands of Americans dying, even in Iowa at Camp Dodge. Cities need to learn from these mistakes and enforce social distancing, which can save thousands of lives.

Though social isolation necessitated by COVID-19 is difficult for a lot of people; between being mostly stuck inside, having reduced contact with other people, and the creeping boredom that comes after you have done everything on your to-do list, it is little wonder that people are getting stressed out about it. But we do not have that same knowledge about COVID-19. This is new, and we do not know what is going to happen. If the public knows more about the past, we will take social distancing or distancing from groups seriously for our future.

Impact on Social Relations and Health:

Social distancing involves staying away from people to avoid the spreading and catching the virus. It is a new emerging terminology which means to avoid the crowd. This has forced people to work from home and avoid social gatherings and contacting even their near ones.

Eric Kleinberg, a New York University sociologist, stated that “we’ve also entered a new period of social pain. There’s going to be a level of social suffering related to isolation and the cost of social distancing that very few people are discussing this yet.”

Man is a social animal and social relations and the social interactions are integral to human civilization, but, due to the rapid pandemic spread of the virus and the increase of social distancing measures, this web of relationships was severely impacted. From the human existence, these social connections and relations have become integral into way of life. So, if there is absence of such deep meaningful connections it leads to stressful states of anxiety both in body and in mind. Loneliness, anxiety drives, depression, panic states, mental disorders, health hazards, and many other issues impact the life of the individual and the society as a whole.

Impact of Novel Corona virus (COVID-19) in Indian Higher Education

Due to the Novel Corona virus lockdown of 40 days (first and second phase), in all the institutions, a total of about 10 million academic hours will be compromised, which will be rather difficult to compensate. The University Grants Commission through its advisory instructed all the institutes to continue classes in online mode as per feasibility and engage ICT tools available for use in academic discourse. The faculty members of the university and colleges are also requested by its advisory to make use of the various online tools in order to reach out to the students. To assist this endeavour, there are many open access tools available, which are already used by many universities and colleges to reach out to students located in remote areas. For example, many Departments of Gauhati University, Assam has been using different online tools, such as live online classes through Skype, use of YouTube with recorded academic and class lectures, readymade lectures through NPTEL, lectures through Google Classroom, live online classes through Piazza, Zoom, easy class, etc. With the availability of high-speed mobile networks, online live classes from home became a reality and many success stories have emerged in the process of engaging the students effectively using different online applications. Despite the fact that the attendance rate in the classes is not more than 80 percent in aggregate due to the poor network connectivity, it restricts a sizeable number of students to avail of these opportunities.

EDUCATION DISRUPTION

The decision to close academic institutions in the mid of the outbreak, although important to prevent the transmission, but lack of advanced planning from both the state and institutions- side will have a long-term repercussion on ongoing academic-year and mental health outcomes of the students. The abrupt shutdown has pushed them to move to their hometowns through unsafe public transport which might have increased their chance of being infected or infecting other people during the journey and family members at the homes. Even if the lockdown is lifted, it is now uncertain when the institutions will resume. Parents are less likely to send their children unless pandemic declared over. A majority of academic institutions in a country with 320.7 million learners or students from primary to tertiary levels do not have a catastrophic resilient system, unlike its developed counterparts [32]. Considering the lack of education infrastructure, a majority of the schools, colleges and universities are not in a position to conduct virtual learning classes and distributing study materials to compensate for the academic losses. Not only from the institutional obstacles, but also a considerable number of the students are not equipped to be present online either due to poor internet connectivity in rural areas or lack of facilities at home. This might increase huge rural-urban and economic inequalities in educational outcomes in the country.

E- LEARNING

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis. Many countries have (rightly) decided to close schools, colleges and universities. The crisis crystallises the dilemma policymakers are facing between closing schools (reducing contact and saving lives) and keeping them open (allowing workers to work and maintaining the economy). The severe short-term disruption is felt by many families around the world: home schooling is not only a massive shock to parents’ productivity, but also to children’s social life and learning. Teaching is moving online, on an untested and unprecedented scale. Student assessments are also moving online, with a lot of trial and error and uncertainty for everyone. Many assessments have simply been cancelled. Importantly, these interruptions will not just be a short-term issue, but can also have long-term consequences for the affected cohorts and are likely to increase inequality.

THE TECHNOLOGY

It is online learning's big moment and education is about to be revamped just as much the industries that are going to remote work due to the novel corona virus.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced K-12 school districts and universities to close and send students home. This reality has forced a crash course for online learning plans and technology for students and faculty.

In many respects, the education industry's move to remote instruction rhymes with the work-from-home move in enterprises. Video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and WebEx are being used heavily as are learning management systems like In structure's Canvas, Blackboard and Google Classroom. In addition, there are enabling software such as Proctorio, a Google Chrome extension that monitors students taking exams online.

IV. Research Elaborations

Statement of the Problem : Due to the social distancing and Coronavirus lockdown in India, the higher education institutions were shut down in the mid of their academic semester, resulting in huge loss of knowledge diffusion and students' access to instructional activities that are designed in a face to face teaching-learning pedagogy. In view of this crisis, this study examines and assesses the impact of digital social media to reach and retain the academic activity of the students of higher education.

Purpose of the Study: This study was piloted to evaluate the impact of digital social media on higher education with special reference to the alternative teaching-learning approaches adopted by higher education institutions during Coronavirus lockdown in the country. To be precise, the study aims at exploring the kind of social media used to disseminate learning resources to the students of higher education institutions in India, and the impact it crafting on their educational loss.

V. Objectives of the study:

- a) To identify what digital social media platforms have been used by the higher education institutes in India as an alternative approach to deliver learning components
- b) To identify the usage of digital social media by students in balancing the academic loss during COVID19 crisis
- c) To identify the impact of adopting social media practices in providing and disseminating normal academic knowledge

Significance of the study: An understanding of the use of digital social media, how it influences students' learning environment would be of great relevance as an alternative online learning approach during a crisis situation. The outcome of the study will undoubtedly draw a structure to strategize and reconstruct a new learning environment during crises and risks.

Teaching Pedagogy: Pedagogy is defined simply as the method, and practice, of teaching. It is the art and act of teaching to make learners to get knowledge and to acquire skill based experience. Watkins and Mortimer (1999) define pedagogy as any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance the learning of another. Akhilesh Arvind Nimje and Kalyani Tripathi Dubey (2013) examined the Socratic lecture model on the teaching pedagogy in changing educational scenario and concluded that the Socratic lecture model allows the teachers to teach in a very smooth way. In general, pedagogy refers to the method in which a teacher teaches to make their classes more attractive and useful. It is the theory and practice of educating. Pedagogy is the relationship between learning techniques and culture and is determined based on an educator's beliefs about how learning should, and does, take place. Pedagogy requires meaningful interactions by establishing mutual respect between educators and learners. The goal is to help students build on prior learning and develop skills and attitudes and for educators to devise and present curriculum in a way that is relevant to students, aligning with their needs and cultures (Persaud, 2019). During This pandemic crisis, the educators and more particularly the teachers of the higher education institutes were bound to design their pedagogy to engage the students. Some of the pedagogies were not based on any theory, but they were innovative. The teachers, who were literally challenged in using ICT for education, also became experts in providing online teaching or using different social media platforms to engage their students academically and mentally. While discussing informally with a few university professors, the researcher found that providing meaningful teachings, creating an academic environment during quarantine by adopting new technologies is their accountability to the profession and responsibility towards their students. Even they denied receiving any instructions from their authority to conduct the classes except an advisory; they initiated the online classes only to help their students. The following is an alternative arrangement of face to face classroom teaching adopted by an academic department of an Indian public university.

a) **Benefits of Online Classes:** Online learning has become an indispensable part of academic and professional education during this novel corona virus pandemic. The University teachers have been exploring to create a more appealing and effective online learning environment. Lots of benefits have been mentioned by the participants during the qualitative data collection. A master's student expresses gratitude to the teachers saying, "The government officials are saving us today by doing every possible thing and our teachers are preparing us for tomorrow for what comes next". Another student has articulated the benefits from the online classes as, "The online classes have been very fruitful during these difficult times. Firstly, during this lockdown the online classes provide us a daily purpose to attend it, which helps us in staying somewhat focused and keeps us in the correct lane. Secondly, the syllabus is getting covered during these off-days, as there will be hardly few days hopefully for the completion of the syllabus in the future. Moreover, it is a unique experience which we are having and it certainly brightens us with hope for the upcoming days". In a FGD, a participant said that apart from the curriculum based learning, she learnt how to handle a crisis from the online classes. Another participant stated the online classes helped her to maintain the

flow of study. Among the participants, a student said, “The assignments and study materials given by the teachers are enhancing my understanding of the subjects and is also helping me to make myself busy in this duration”. Providing the feedback, a post graduate student of Mass Communication highlighted the benefits of online classes as, “The online classes have been really helpful to me during this lockdown period, for which I can keep myself engaged with all my studies or academic syllabus; it keeps me away from experiencing negativity, boredom or uselessness. Yes, there are occurrences of some technical issues at times, but, apart from that it is fine. The teachers are trying to cover the syllabus during this lockdown and are keeping us engaged with our studies by giving assignments and study materials like pdf files, PPTs etc. I am really enjoying the online classes and I really thank all the teachers, who are being extremely supportive all the time”. It’s evident from the focus group discussion, feedback and in-depth interviews that there are lots of advantages of using online classes, especially along with the academic activities; engagement through this mode helped the students’ mental health.

b) Limitation of Online Classes: For any approaches, if there are some benefits or advantages, a few limitations will be there too. The students are accustomed to the face to face classroom learning and hence, some of them couldn’t adjust themselves with the new academic environment while staying at home. There are pros of classroom teaching that digital or online education will find hard to replace, such as collaborative learning, enhancement of critical thinking skills, improvement of social skills, building organisational skills, keeping students stimulated, development of important personality and career building skills (Singhal, 2017). According to a participant, “I’m really struggling with my online classes, I know if I want to graduate I have to complete them, but, it’s obvious I do better in a classroom environment. Suspending our classes was the right thing to do but it’s tough”. Lots of advantages are missing in the online classes. However, in this research, it was found that these issues are not vital for the students. The basic limitation is the poor internet connectivity and mobile data. The final semester students of the universities are more emotional since they have only a couple of months to complete their master’s programme and hence, they are terribly missing the last days of a classroom environment. Also, another issue of mobile data was highlighted, “After the online classes are over, there is no Internet data remaining for completing other assignments or for even Google search”. A second semester post graduate student opines, “Online classes haven’t been in any way helpful to me because I couldn’t attend single classes properly due to network issues. With the initial assignments, I took help from others’ assignments to understand what I was asked to do, but, after a few assignments I was unable to do the same. Without understanding I am not being unable to do anything. It is somehow affecting me very adversely badly. I feel I am lagging behind while the rest of the people students have been progressed. I kept thinking of how I am not being unable to do anything about it since there is no one to blame and I also didn’t want to look like an excuse giver. It often leads to frustration and I would end up having arguments at home. Brainstorming is not doing any good either. That’s why I have stopped thinking about any of it. The classes are not helping me at all”. While discussing with a couple of teachers, it was their opinion that if the 80% students are taking the benefits, they shouldn’t stop the initiatives for the rest of 20%. Once, everything becomes normal, teachers need to give extra tutorials for the rest of 20% students. A few students have also mentioned in their feedback that although they have mobile internet connectivity, they always get in touch with the rest of the students and collect the recorded discussion of the online classes and submit their assignments on time. In spite of poor internet connectivity, a student expressed his spirit, “At times we have to face the potholes of network but that doesn’t let down our spirits”.

VI. Conclusion

In a world where digital social media has taken a significant role in teaching and learning, any modern pedagogy much accounts for students’ findings, analysing, and applying knowledge from a growing number of constantly changing sources. This requires higher-order skills like critical thinking and the ability to learn more independently, as well as in larger groups, both in person and online (Persuad, 2019). This study focused on the impact of digital social media on student academic life in higher education during the Novel Corona virus (COVID- 19) pandemic crisis. The study explains the impact of self-isolation, quarantine and lockdown due to the pandemic on the academic schedule of the students of Indian higher education. After studying the phenomena that are of interest to the study, and transcribing the various responses of the participants, even though some of the responses were not transcribed because they were all communicating the same idea; the results reveal that social media is widely used by students of higher institution. Opportunities and benefits of digital social media for academic purposes incurred by the students became visible only after the crisis took place. Although digital education based online learning was not systematically implemented in India, even in the open and distance learning as a whole, because it was not an essential pedagogy until the pandemic struck the world and the Indian state in particular. The present Coronavirus crisis has revolutionised the entire higher education architecture of the country through e-tools for teaching and learning, since there’s no other option for continuation of the academic activities. There are some limitations of this study, considering the number of participants involved and the methodology adopted due to the COVID-19 lockdown in India.

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