



The Influence of Covid-19 on Education in India

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Abstract— The spread of the pandemic Covid-19 has impacted negatively on all aspects of human life, including education. It has created a new educational test. Many educational institutions around the world have closed their campuses, and teaching and learning have moved online. Globalization has slowed significantly. In India, approximately 30 crore students were unable to transfer to new schools/colleges, and all educational activities were halted. Despite these challenges, higher education institutions have responded positively, ensuring the continuity of teaching/learning, research, and societal service with some tools and techniques during the pandemic. This paper highlights some of the key effects of Covid-19 on higher education institutions in India. During the crisis, some necessary measures by higher education institutions and educational authorities in India to provide seamless educational services were discussed. Many new modes of learning, viewpoints, and trends have emerged as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and this trend may continue as we move forward to a new tomorrow. As a result, some of the post-Covid-19 trends that may allow for new ways of teaching and learning in higher education in India are outlined. Some useful suggestions for carrying out educational activities during a pandemic are also made.

Keywords— higher education, impact, India, post Covid-19

I. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. More than 4.5 million people have been affected by Covid-19 worldwide (WHO). The first Covid-19-affected case in India was discovered on January 30, 2020, in the state of Kerala, with a travel history from Wuhan, China [5]. The first death was reported in India on March 12, 2020, and the country observed a Janta Curfew for one day on March 22, 2020. On March 24, India imposed a 15-hour Janta curfew to combat the Coronavirus pandemic and assess the country's ability to combat the virus. The Prime Minister then declared the first phase of lockdown to begin on March 25, 2020, for a period of 21 days. The Indian government has been extending the lockdown period in stages as the virus's effects have been monitored, and lockdown 5 was declared on April 30th, which will be effective from June 1st to June 30th, 2020 [1]. Throughout all phases of lockdown, from lockdown 1 to lockdown 5, educational institutions across the country have never been given permission to begin their teaching programs. As a result, the pandemic Covid-19 had a significant impact on the education sector. And according to a UNESCO report, Covid-19 affected nearly 65 A. percent of the total global student population as of the first week of June 2020, based on data collected during the first week of June. The Covid-19 outbreak has resulted in school

and university closures affecting approximately 1.2 billion students and young people worldwide. Several other countries have also implemented localised closures, affecting millions more students. More than 32 crore students in India have been impacted by the various restrictions and nationwide lockdown for Covid-19. The majority of governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an effort to control the spread of the pandemic Covid-19 [2]. This global closure has had a significant impact on the world's student population. Governments all over the world are attempting to reduce the immediate impact of educational institution closures, particularly on more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, while also attempting to facilitate the continuity of education for all through the use of various digital methods of delivery. According to a survey report conducted on higher education by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the Government of India, there are 993 universities, 39931 colleges, and 10725 stand-alone institutions listed on their portal, which make a contribution to education [3]. Even though the country has been adapting to new-age learning, there is still a barrier to complete success because only 45 crore of the country's total population has access to the internet/e-learning. People living in rural areas are still severely underserved by technology, undermining the justification for online education. By allowing educational institutions to adopt online learning and introduce a virtual learning culture, the Covid-19 pandemic taught the entire society that necessity is the mother of invention. With technological innovation and advancements, the pandemic has propelled the education sector forward. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the higher education sector. A large number of Indian students enrolled in many universities abroad, particularly in the worst-affected countries, are now leaving those countries, and if the situation persists, there will be a significant decline in demand for international higher education in the long run.

II. METHODOLOGY

To gather data for the current study, various reports from national and international agencies on the Covid-19 pandemic are being searched. Because it is not possible to collect data somewhere else due to the lockdown, data is collected from various authentic websites, journals, and econtents regarding the impact of Covid-19 on India's higher education sector.

The Effect on Higher Education:

The Pandemic Covid-19 has had a significant impact on India's educational system as well as the rest of the world,

where some of the most affected areas of higher education in India are listed below.

A.1 All education programs were impacted The Covid-19 outbreak has forced a lockdown in all sectors, including education. With the cessation of educational programs, the institutions closed, posing numerous challenges to stakeholders [4]. As a result, various activities such as admission, exams, entrance exams, and competitive examinations held by various forums have been postponed. Many entrance tests for higher education were cancelled, posing a significant challenge in the lives of students of higher education. The biggest challenge was to continue teaching and learning when students, faculty, and staff could no longer be present physically on campus. For institutions, the simplest solution was to rely on online teaching and learning. However, HEIs have been able to provide support to students through online modes in a relatively short period of time. Covid-19 has promoted the adoption of technology for educational delivery. It inspired teachers and students to become much more techsavvy. To provide support services to students, HEIs have begun conducting training programmes, induction meetings, and counselling classes using various e-conferencing tools like Zoom, Microsoft team, Google Meet, and other. This initiative was launched in order to create an effective virtual environment for teaching and learning, as well as to motivate students to participate in online communications [3]. Teachers and students improved their use of electronic media for information sharing by using Google Drive, Telegram, and Twitter, among other platforms [4]. They have been sharing important documents with group members and have also created an online local repository. Students are advised to email scanned copies of their assignments to the institution. During the Covid-19 lockdown, institutions also began receiving internship reports and projects via email.

A.2 Academic research and professional development have had a mixed impact

The effects of Covid-19 on research are both negative and positive. On the negative side, it has made it impossible for researchers to travel and collaborate with others on a national and international scale. Some collaborative research or project work is made difficult to complete. Some scientific laboratory testing and research could not be carried out. On the plus side, academics have more time to improve their theoretical research work. Academics became more familiar with modern tools and managed to improve their research. e-conferences and webinars have become common methods for students and academics all over the world to share expertise on similar issues. They could devote more time to professional development by conducting research and expanding their knowledge by participating in webinars and e-conferences. They improved their technical skills and gained the ability to write articles for books and journals in their spare time.

A.3 The educational assessment system was severely impacted

The majority of external examinations have been rescheduled, and nearly all internal assessments have also been cancelled. Assessment cancellation has a negative effect on students' learning. Several institutions have all had to manage internal assessments online using various digital tools, but the postponement of external assessments does have a direct effect on learners' educational and occupational futures. Students are anxious because they are stuck in the same grade/class and have not been promoted as a result of this uncertainty. Similarly, several students who had taken final/board examinations would suffer greatly because, by the time they received their certificates, it may be too late for them

to apply for the following academic year in other countries due to the lockdown.

A.4 Employment opportunities have been reduced:

Exams and job recruitment were cancelled, creating a negative impact and a significant challenge on the lives of students in higher education. Indians who had been working abroad were also dissatisfied with their job losses. Because of the pandemic situation, there is no recruitment in the government sector in India, and fresh graduates are under pressure to fear the withdrawal of job offers from corporate sectors. Many students from India and other countries may lose their jobs. Due to various restrictions imposed by Covid19, graduates may be unable to find work outside of India. All of these facts point to an increase in the unemployment rate as a result of the pandemic. As the unemployment rate rises, people's interest in education may dwindle as they prioritise food over education [6].

B. India's Emerging Higher Education Approaches in Covid-19

Covid-19 generates a plethora of challenges. During the pandemic, HEIs responded positively and implemented a variety of strategies to deal with the crisis. The Indian government has also taken a number of preventive measures to halt the spread of pandemic Covid-19. The MHRD and the University Grants Commission (UGC) have made several arrangements for students to continue their learning by launching many virtual platforms with online depositories, ebooks and other online teaching/learning materials, educational channels through Direct to Home TV, and radios. During the lockdown, students use popular social media tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft team and others for online teaching and learning [8]. The MHRD's ICT initiative is also a one-of-a-kind platform that combines all digital resources for online education [6]. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown on April 29th, 2020, the UGC has issued Guidelines on Examinations and Academic Calendar (UGC notice). All final examinations have been postponed and rescheduled for July 2020, with classes set to begin in August 2020. The UGC has also prepared a complete calendar for the academic session 2020-2021, including new dates in light of the lockdown. Some of the UGC and MHRD's digital initiatives for higher education during COVID-19 are listed below.

B.1 NPTEL

Swayam (NPTEL) offers Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) with credit transfer from 140 universities. Swayam Prabha offers high-quality educational programmes via 32 DTH channels that broadcast educational content. e-PG Pathshala (<https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/>) is a website for postgraduate students. Postgraduate students can use this platform to access e-books, online courses, and study materials. The author describes the specifics of these three digital platforms in the previous study [6].

B.2 National Digital Library of India (NDLI)

National digital library of India is an e-content collection for all types of users, including students (at all levels), teachers, researchers, librarians, library users, experts, differently-abled users, and all other lifelong learners. The Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur is working on it. It is intended to assist students in preparing for entrance and competitive examinations, to allow learners to know and prepare for best practices from around the world, and to enable students to investigate inter-linked exploration from various sources. It is a virtual repository of learning resources with a search function in a single window. It is also possible to gain access to it.

B.3 Virtual Labs

Virtual Labs has created web-enabled curriculum-based experiments that can be operated remotely. It has over hundred Virtual Labs, each of which contains approximately 750+ web-enabled experiments designed for remote monitoring. It enables remote access to labs in a variety of scientific and engineering disciplines. These Online Labs serve students at the undergraduate, postgraduate, and research scholar levels.

B.4 E-Shodh Sindhu

E-Shodh Sindhu is a long-term access collection of ejournals, e-journal archives, and e-books. It has over 9,000 ejournals and over 30,00,000 e-books. It provides academic institutions with discounted access to high-quality electronic resources such as full-text, bibliographic, and factual databases.

B.5 Sodhganga

Sodhganga is a platform for Ph.D. students to deposit their theses and give them open access to the entire scientific community. The collection is capable of capturing, indexing, storing, disseminating, and preserving E-Theses submitted by researchers.

B.6 SAKSHAT

(<https://sakshat.ac.in/>) is a one-stop learning portal for students, scholars, teachers, and effective communicators to address all of their educational and learning needs. The portal provides the most recent news, press releases, accomplishments, and other information about the MHRD. So, to learn more about the world of online learning, go to SAKSHAT.

C. Higher Education Trends in the Post-Covid-19 Era:

Change is unavoidable, and it has been imposed on society as a result of Covid-19. The opportunities provided by the pandemic Covid-19 will lead to a brighter future. Tomorrow will be a new day, and we will have complete control over it. Conventional paradigms such as classroom lectures, modes of learning, and modes of assessment will undoubtedly be challenged by new technologies. The new trends will enable the education sector to imagine new ways of teaching and learning, and some of these trends are listed below.

C.1 It is possible that learning with social distancing will continue

For a long time, everyone will maintain social distance and avoid warm handshakes, hugs, personal greetings, and intimacy. Invisible constraints may limit the fun and joy of campus life. Sports, gyms, and tournaments may be in hibernation for an extended period of time, resulting in fewer physical activities among students.

C.2 Educational institutions may operate on different shifts throughout the day

Because of the need for social distance, there may be fewer students in each class. As a result, most educational institutions may work in different shifts per day, putting additional strain on the institution's teaching and administrative staff to manage.

C.3 It is possible that this will widen the gap between privileged and underprivileged students

Learners from low-income families and marginalized groups are much more likely to suffer because they may not be able to afford a high-speed internet connection or the necessary technical gadgets for online learning. It will widen the gap between privileged and underprivileged students, resulting in inequity.

C.4 Technology has the potential to revolutionise teaching and learning

Students will increasingly rely on technology and digital solutions for teaching, learning, entertainment, and connecting with the outside world. Students will use internet technologies to interact virtually with their teachers and peers via E-mail, WhatsApp, Skype, Instant Messaging, Workshops, or any other tool.

C.5 Blended learning has the potential to take the lead

Programs combine in-person and online learning modes. Covid-19 has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies for education delivery and encouraged educational institutions to shift to a blended mode of learning. All instructors and learners improved their technological skills. The traditional face-to-face mode, combined with postCovid-19 technology, will lead to a blended mode of teaching and learning, potentially transforming the educational system's structure.

C.6 The unemployment rate is expected to rise

Because of the pandemic Covid-19, there is no recruitment in the government sector, and recent graduates fear that their job offers from the private sector will be withdrawn [7]. Many Indians may have returned home after losing their jobs abroad as a result of Covid-19. As a result, fresh graduates who are about to enter the job market may have difficulty finding suitable employment.

III. SUGGESTIONS

Educators and students should be trained to use technology in the online teaching and learning process. Governments and educational institutions should implement policies that provide free internet and digital gadgets to all students in order to encourage online learning, which will engage people and keep them safe during a pandemic [6].

Almost all online learning platforms provide different programs on the same topics, each with a different level of certification, methodology, and assessment parameters. As a result, the quality of programs may vary across different online learning platforms. As a result, given the rapid growth of online learning platforms, HEIs in India must develop and offer quality assurance mechanisms and quality benchmarks for online learning programmes.

If the Covid-19 pandemic persists, educational institutions should adopt new approaches to academic assessment. Students' academic performance can be evaluated online or through quizzes and small projects.

The government should help HEIs improve their resources for running virtual educational activities. Students must also be provided with improved access to the internet and technology, as the majority of students cannot afford these amenities. During this pandemic, HEIs should place a greater emphasis on virtual educational activities such as television, radio, and web-based education.

The World Health Organization recently stated that Covid-19 may never be eradicated and that people will have to live with it. "It is critical to state the obvious: this virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities, and it may never go away. Although HIV has not been eradicated, we have come to terms with it. I don't believe there are any promises or deadlines in this. This disease may become a long-term issue, or it may not," said WHO emergency expert Mike Ryan in an online briefing (Sandhya, 2020). In response to this statement, many countries are now planning to continue their education via distance or virtual mode, and India should do the same.

Indian traditional knowledge is well known around the world for its scientific innovations, values, and benefits in

developing sustainable technologies and medicines, and this knowledge system in various fields should be integrated with a modern mainstream higher education system.

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