

**IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: AN OVERVIEW****Tanisha Dalal**

(Assistant Professor, St. Paul Institute of Professional Studies, DAVV, Indore)

**Abstract** - As the SARS – like outbreak originated in Wuhan, China and it silently swept the world, no one had expected that it would bring the whole world to a stand-still. Corona Virus also commonly known as Covid- 19 has put the world on a pause. 'Educational Institutions' all over the world are affected by it. This pandemic has permanently altered the education sector as the traditional classroom learning was not possible. It has led to the technological advancement of a field which has not changed in centuries. We are moving towards a new era of teaching- learning the use of online platforms like Google Classroom, Zoom etc. It has also brought on major reforms in the Education Sector. The purpose of this research study is to understand the impact of this pandemic on the Educational Institutions.

**Keywords:** Corona Virus, Covid- 19, Educational Institution, Reforms, Online Platforms etc.

**1 INTRODUCTION**

As we know, the word education comes from the word 'educere' which means to bring about what is already in. The purpose of school education is to guide the children to discover themselves by identifying and nurturing their potential to a full extent.

The history of education can be traced back to 3500 B.C., when various systems of writing developed around the world. But the Formal Educational Training came into being in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. The idea of a formal education revolved around the concept that there should be some lessons that children should learn. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Germany, the leader in the development of schooling, had laws in most of its states requiring that children attend school.

In America, in the mid 17th century, Massachusetts became the first colony to mandate schooling, the clearly stated purpose of which was to turn children into good Puritans.

Employers in industry saw schooling as a way to create better workers; to them the most crucial lessons were punctuality, following directions, tolerance for long hours of tedious work. As nations gelled together and centralized, national leaders saw schooling as a means of creating good patriots and future soldiers.

Even with the varying point of views, everyone believed` that schooling as inculcation, the implanting of certain truths and ways of thinking into children's minds. In recent times, the methods of schooling have become less harsh, but basic assumptions have not changed. Learning continues to be defined as children's work, and power-assertive means are used to make children do that work.

We as Indians have always cherished a glorious heritage in sphere of education. Universities such as Nalanda, Taxila have never had second options and any amount of homage paid to their literary and scholarly products such as Vaskaracharyya, Arya Bhatta etc. can never define their contribution to the sphere of education.

Education plays the most important role in shaping the personality and future of a person, which, in turn is elementary in socio-economic development of a nation.

The present education is based on below three facts:

- Quality of Education: In terms of infrastructure, teachers, accreditation, etc.
- Affordability of Education: Ensuring poor and deserving students are not denied education.
- Ethics in Education: Avoiding over-commercialization of education system etc.
- Education is important as it empowers an individual to succeed in the future. Success may be calculated in terms of monetary and respect at work.

Indian education system in India can be divided into many phases. They are as below:

- **Pre-Primary:** Pre primary education system involves children of 3-5 years of age studying in nursery, lower kindergarten and upper kindergarten. At this stage

students are taught the concepts of school life, reading and writing some basic words.

- **Primary:** Primary education system includes the age group of children of 6-11 years studying in first to fifth class.
- **Middle:** Middle education system consists of children studying in classes from sixth to eighth.
- **Secondary:** Secondary education system includes students studying in classes ninth and tenth.
- **Higher Secondary:** Higher education system Includes students studying in eleventh and twelfth classes.
- **Undergraduate:** Undergraduates are those students who completed their higher education in college.
- **Postgraduate:** After completing graduation a student may opt for post graduation to further add to his qualifications.
- But the COVID-19 pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of schools, universities and colleges.

Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19. As of 7 June 2020, approximately 1.725 billion learners are currently affected due to school closures in response to the pandemic. According to UNICEF monitoring, 134 countries are currently implementing nationwide closures and 38 are implementing local closures, impacting about 98.5 percent of the world's student population. 39 countries' schools are currently open.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

**Wunong Zhang, Yuxin Wang, Lili Yang and Chuanyi Wang (2020)** conducted a study on "Suspending classes without stopping learning: China's educational emergency management policy in the COVID-19 outbreak". Under the research they evaluated the current conditions of the country and the steps taken by the government to facilitate learning.

**Wei Bao (2020)** conducted a study on "COVID-19 and online teaching in higher education: A case study of Peking University". The study focused on the steps taken by the Peking University to sustain a learning environment during the pandemic.

**Pawan Agrawal (2006)** conducted a study on "Higher Education in India: The need for change". The study focused on the structure of Higher education in India and its drawbacks.

**Pawan Agrawal (2007)** conducted a study on "Higher education in India: Growth, concerns, and change agenda". It identifies the concerns and builds a case for change in Indian higher education so that the country's virtuous cycle of economic growth fuelled mainly by its large pool of qualified manpower is sustained.

### 2.1 Objectives

- To understand the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Education Sector and Institutions.
- To review the steps taken by the government and educational authorities to facilitate learning.
- To find out the probable solutions to the difficulties faced by the learners.

## 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is explanatory as well as descriptive in nature and the data collected for the paper was from secondary sources. The secondary data was taken from sources like-Journals, Aricles, research paper, reports and government websites.

### 3.1 Limitations of the Study

- The study based only on secondary data.
- Limited sources of secondary data were utilized.
- The study only focuses on the impacts on the educational sector during this time of pandemic.

### 3.2 Analysis

On 23 March 2020, Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) released a statement announcing the cancellation of Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge O Level, Cambridge International AS & A Level, Cambridge AICE Diploma, and Cambridge Pre-U examinations for the May/June 2020 series across all countries. International Baccalaureate exams have also been cancelled. In addition, Advanced Placement Exams, SAT administrations, and ACT administrations have been moved online and cancelled.

School closures impact not only students, teachers, and families. But have far-reaching economic and societal consequences. School closures in response to the pandemic have shed light on various social and economic issues, including student debt, digital learning, food insecurity, and homelessness, as well as access to childcare, health care, housing, internet, and disability services. The impact was more severe for disadvantaged children and their families, causing interrupted learning, compromised nutrition, childcare problems, and consequent economic cost to families who could not work.

In response to school closures, UNESCO recommended the use of distance learning programs and open educational applications and platforms that schools and teachers can use to reach learners remotely and limit the disruption of education.

Efforts to stem the spread of COVID-19 through non-pharmaceutical interventions and preventive measures such as social-distancing and self-isolation have prompted the widespread closure of primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling in over 100 countries.

Previous outbreaks of infectious diseases have prompted widespread school closings around the world, with varying levels of effectiveness. Mathematical modelling has shown that transmission of an outbreak may be delayed by closing schools. However, effectiveness depends on the contacts children maintain outside of school. School closures may be effective when enacted promptly. If school closures occur late relative to an outbreak, they are less effective and may not have any impact at all. Additionally, in some cases, the reopening of schools after a period of closure has resulted in increased infection rates. As closures tend to occur concurrently with other interventions such as public gathering bans, it can be difficult to measure the specific impact of school closures.

In India, 286,376,216 students are enrolled from pre-primary to higher secondary education, 34, 337, 594 students are registered in tertiary education and on 16 March, a countrywide lock-down of schools and colleges was declared. On 19 March, the University Grants Commission asked universities to postpone exams till March 31. The board exams conducted by CBSE and ICSE boards were postponed until March 31 at first and then later until July 1.

Some important decisions were also taken the University Grants Commission (UGC) to curb and safeguard the people working the Higher education sector:

- Modes of Teaching-learning Process: The universities are adopting offline mode, i.e. conducting classes in face to face interaction, with a few exceptions and that too, for very few courses. MHRD and UGC have issued certain guidelines and advisories from time to time and have taken concrete steps to impart online education by making the best use of e-resources which are available on [www.ugc.ac.in](http://www.ugc.ac.in). The MHRD and the UGC have been emphasizing to continue with the teaching-learning process using online modes such as Google Classroom, Google Hangout, Cisco Webex Meeting, You Tube Streaming, OERs, SWAYAM Platform and SWAYAMPURABHA (available on Doordarshan (Free dish) and Dish TV), etc. The faculty members have contributed a lot for the benefit of students during the lockdown period by using a number of tools like WhatsApp groups, other social media tools and emails. But the students also expect that the faculty must maintain a “substantive contact” with them. So, even after posting the lecture material online, teachers need to maintain communication with the students and discuss course material with them on a regular basis.
- Academic Calendar for the Session 2019-20: Most of the institutions had already covered 60% to 70% of teaching-learning process for ongoing Even Semester before the dispersal of classes in March, 2020. Further, the remaining part of the curriculum has been attended/ being attended through online mode as the norms of “social distancing” are to be followed by all educational institutions in the interest of the students, faculty and the staff. In fact, the norms of social distance will be required to be maintained by the educational institutions for quite some time, even if the

normalcy returns by the first week of May, 2020. Therefore, for the sake of safety of the students, faculty and staff, all universities are required to reschedule the academic calendar 2019-2020.

- Modes of Examinations: Like the modes of teaching-learning, most of the universities follow the physical mode of examinations, with a few exceptions. On this aspect also, some of the universities lack adequate IT infrastructure for conducting online examinations. The hiring of private agencies for conducting online examinations also does not seem feasible in view of the fact that examinations are to be conducted simultaneously by all the universities. Therefore, keeping in view the basic infrastructure available at the level of the institutions and accessibility of internet to the students, especially in remote areas, it is not feasible to uniformly adopt the online mode of examination at this juncture.
- Academic Calendar for the Session 2020-21: Several School Boards are yet to complete their Class XII Examinations, as of now. Examinations for the Even Semester in the universities are also getting delayed due to national lockdown. Naturally, all these things will delay the admission process in the university system for the next academic session. In order to tackle this situation, the universities may require some amendments in their academic calendar for the academic session 2020-21.
- Functioning of Laboratories: Like teaching, research has also suffered during the lockdown period as the laboratories are closed. It would be appropriate that during the period of lockdown, laboratories are maintained by the research staff/ teachers of the concerned department(s) on rotation basis, without violating the norms of “social distancing”. However, the universities may take appropriate decision to allow PIs/ Ph.D. scholars and Post-Doctoral Fellows to maintain labs/ conduct research, with strict compliance of the guidelines/ directives issued by the appropriate authorities/ Governments from time to time.

### 3.3 Challenges

Although various guidelines have been issued to deal with the situation, there are various challenges that are prevalent:

- **Distance learning:** A math distance lesson over a video conference during the COVID-19 pandemic in India online learning has become a critical lifeline for education, as institutions seek to minimize the potential for community transmission. Technology can enable teachers and students to access specialized materials well beyond textbooks, in multiple formats and in ways that can bridge time and space. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools began conducting classes via video telephony software such as Zoom. But the online learning has not proven as effective as traditional teaching.
- **Unequal access to technology:** Lack of access to technology or fast, reliable internet access can prevent students in rural areas and from disadvantaged families. Lack of access to technology or good internet connectivity is an obstacle to continued learning, especially for students from disadvantaged families. In response to school closures caused by COVID-19, UNESCO recommends the use of distance learning programmes and open educational applications and platforms that schools and teachers can use to reach learners remotely and limit the disruption of education.
- **Unequal access to educational resources:** Lack of limitations and exceptions to copyright can also have an impact on the ability of students to access the textbooks and materials they need to study. Several initiatives were taken to grant that students and teachers can have access to open educational resources, or understand copyright limitations. The International Council for Open and Distance Education issued a special website to provide webinars, tips for online teaching and resources for teachers.
- **Student learning outcomes:** School closures negatively impact student learning outcomes. Schooling provides essential learning and when schools close, children and youth are deprived opportunities for growth and development. The disadvantages are disproportionate for under-privileged learners who tend to have fewer educational opportunities beyond school. When schools close, parents are often asked to facilitate the learning of children at home and can struggle to perform this task. This is

especially true for parents with limited education and resources. Schools are also hubs of social activity and human interaction. When schools are closed, many children and youth miss out of on social contact that is essential to learning and development.

#### 4 SUGGESTIONS

Some suggestions for engaging in online learning are:

- Examine the readiness and choose the most relevant tools: Decide on the use high-technology and low-technology solutions based on the reliability of local power supplies, internet connectivity, and digital skills of teachers and students.
- Ensure inclusion of the distance learning programmes: Implement measures to ensure that students including those with disabilities or from low-income backgrounds have access to distance learning programmes, if only a limited number of them have access to digital devices.
- Protect data privacy and data security: Assess data security when uploading data or educational resources to web spaces, as well as when sharing them with other organisations or individuals. Ensure that the use of applications and platforms does not violate students' data privacy.
- Provide support to teachers and parents on the use of digital tools: Organise brief training or orientation sessions for teachers and parents as well, if monitoring and facilitation are needed.
- Define the duration of distance learning units based on students' self-regulation skills: Keep a coherent timing according to the level of the students' self-regulation and meta-cognitive abilities especially for live-streaming classes.

#### 5 CONCLUSION

Efforts to stem the spread of COVID-19 through non-pharmaceutical interventions and preventive measures such as social-distancing and self-isolation have prompted the widespread closure of primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling in over 100 countries. Due to this pandemic, the educational sector has taken a giant leap towards modernisation. Although, various reforms have been introduced, it will take some time to achieve the desired outcomes and levels of efficiency expected.

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