

## Impact of Covid-19 on Teaching and Learning ability across the Indian Education System

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### Abstract

The worldwide pandemic due to the new coronavirus Covid-19 is affecting the higher education structure all over the world. Some of the most influential limitations that occurred during these times is majorly affecting accomplishment of the terminal exam, university exam, starting of the new academic year and also hampering the desires of the students towards higher studies. Around the country learners stopped to move schools/colleges and all educational activities halted in India. The outbreak of COVID-19 has taught us that change is inevitable. This paper focuses on the challenges in higher education in the times of Covid-19 pandemic as well as some solutions to continue the higher education. It further aims to describe the impact of higher education in India due to Covid-19 and it suggests the ways to face the ongoing situation to achieve objectives of the Indian higher education system. As per the study one of the suggestions is, to continue online learning system in India, easy accessibility to internet as well as low-cost internet facility may be provided in addition to that it also highlights some major events and happening during the Covid-19 times in relation to higher education in India which includes government initiatives, students demand etc.

**KEYWORDS** – Higher Education, Indian Education System, Covid-19, Teaching and Learning

#### Introduction –

The outbreak of Covid-19 has impacted both students and teachers. The students have been impacted by not been able to attain the classes physically in the classrooms at higher educational organizations. Similarly, those who were planning to start their higher education are also facing the difficulties in selecting the dream institution. Also, the children at secondary and higher secondary level have been sitting at home since the pandemic. Students who are about to graduate will also might face difficulties in finding the right job in the post covid – 19 recessions.

The teachers have been affected significantly as they are not able to continue conventional teaching activity and they have been forced to adopt virtual modes of teaching. In India, many private educational institutions are thriving to adopt the new modes of teaching. At the same time, they are finding it difficult to develop the required infrastructure and facilities necessary for online teaching and learning.

As the days progressed with no immediate solution to overcome this outbreak completely, the closure of schools and universities is hugely affecting the learning across the country. All educational activities like examinations, school admissions, entrance tests of various universities and competitive examinations, others, are halted during this period. The structure of the Indian education system i.e., learning

methodology, teaching techniques & assessment methodologies, is quite affected, resulting in a shift to online education with most focus on virtual education to accomplish the set aims and objectives. But only few of schools and universities could adopt such methods and most of the private and government schools are not been able to adopt the same, thus resulting in a shutdown.

In the end of March 2020, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India had asked all higher education organizations and universities to extend the date of final semester examinations as well as intermediate semester examinations [1]. In India, more than 32 crores of students have been affected by the various restrictions and the nationwide lockdown for Covid-19. As per the UNESCO report, about 27 crores of primary and secondary students and more than 5 crores of higher secondary students are affected.

In India, around 1000 universities and around 40,000 colleges are moving to conduct classes through online [2]. According to union health ministry (UHM) around 4,30,732 people died due to Covid-19 in India as of 14<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and around 3,21,56,493 people are affected by Covid-19 [3]. Figure 1 illustrates that India is one of the mostly affected country in the world [4].

The remaining portion of this paper is stated as follows. Section II describes the objectives of the research and methodology of research. Section III describes the effects of Covid-19 in Indian higher education systems. Section III suggests the possible solution to maintain the quality in higher education and section IV concludes the study.

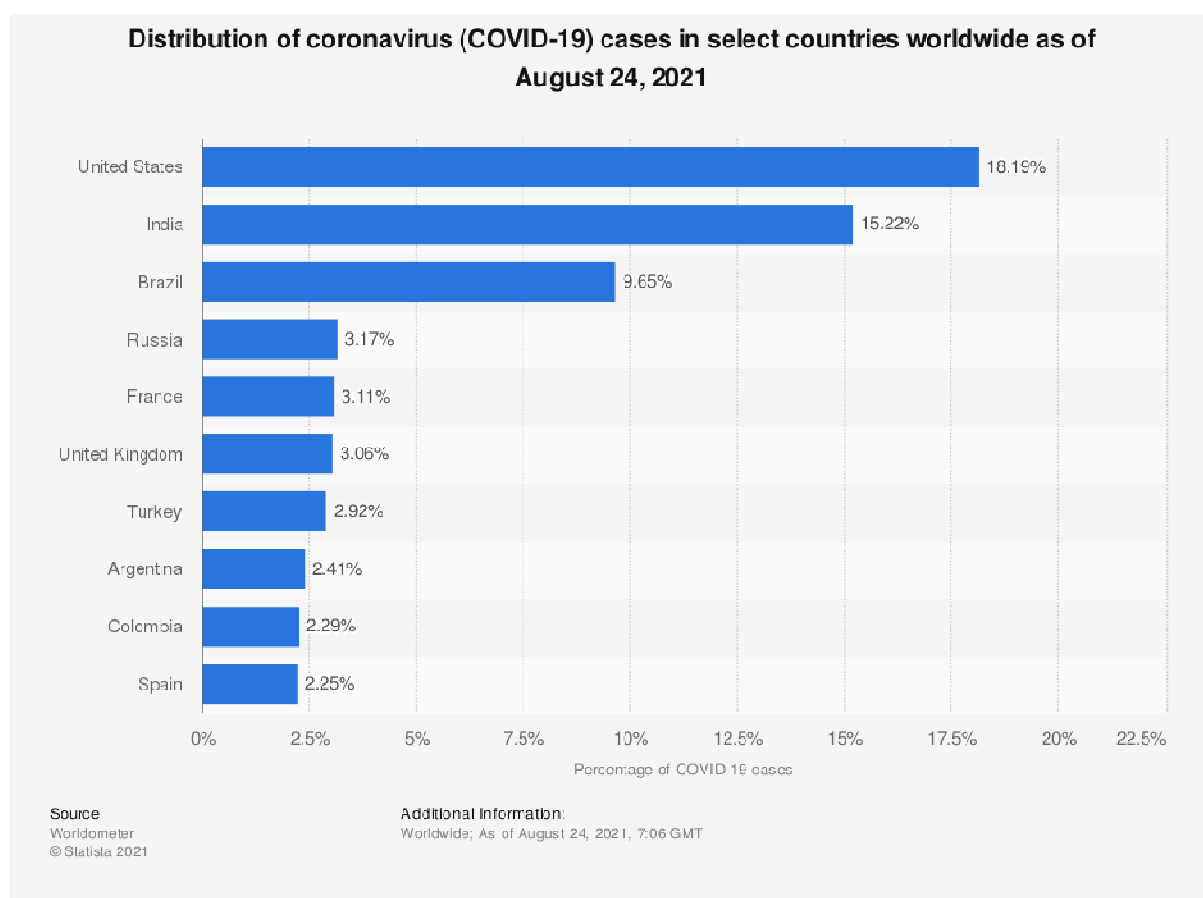


Figure 1 – Most affected countries in the world as per COVID-19 cases.

## Objectives

The present research paper focused on the following objectives:

- To find out various measures taken by Govt. of India for education sector during this pandemic.
- To study Impact of Covid-19 on Teaching and Learning ability.
- To study challenges in higher education and solutions to continue the same.

## Methodology

Data and information presented in current study are collected from various reports prepared by national and international agencies on COVID-19 pandemic. Information is collected from various authentic websites. Some journals and e-contents relating to impact of COVID-19 on educational system are referred.

### Impact & effects of Covid-19 in Indian higher education systems –

In India, all academic activities were suspended after the announcement of the University Grants Commission (UGC) on 19 March to postpone examinations in all universities until the end of March. All the central universities like the University of Hyderabad announced to postpone all academic activities and close their hostels, and even private universities the SRM Institute of Science and Technology and VIT, Vellore declared the summer vacation for students. Higher education institutions have not been spared in the deadly second wave sweeping across the country, which is reporting upwards of 300,000 new infections a day. The quality of education is being impacted as there is no substitute to face-to-face learning. The majority of universities do not have the capacity to do either [online or in-person exams] under current conditions.

### IMPACT ON TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Both teachers and students are facing many difficulties during online education. Lack of basic facilities, external distraction and family interruption during teaching were major issues noticed for the students. Educational institution has difficulties in terms of the budget for purchasing advanced technologies, a lack of training, a lack of technical support and a lack of clarity and direction were also noticed. Teachers also faced technical difficulties. The difficulties were grouped under a lack of technical support; it included a lack of technical infrastructure, limited awareness of online teaching platforms and security concerns. Teachers' personal problems including a lack of technical knowledge, course integration with technology is damper their engagement in online teaching.

Teaching and learning through Mobile applications or virtual meeting platforms like Zoom, Google meet is being undertaken. Educational institutions directed teachers to engage classes through online mode using the virtual meeting platforms like Zoom & Google meet. The teachers who were not well versed with modern technology and mobile applications had to struggle a lot to engage online classes.

The important factor that arises regarding online learning that whether it is effective? However, answer is that it is effective for those who have access to the technology. Internet plays very important role for better learning and for higher education. However, in the country like India all students do not have all the required facilities due to different socio-economic background which might cause difficulties to

students. Therefore, we can state that India is still facing this challenge in terms of Internet access and other technologies. This has further resulted in Lack of student involvement during the online classes and poor performance. [5]

Measures taken by Govt. of India -

During COVID-19 Pandemic, Government of India has held various consultations with the States and UTs at different levels. Also, a session was held with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in January, 2021 for taking their views and to bridge the learning gap in the Covid-19 pandemic period. An all-inclusive initiative called PM e-VIDYA has been initiated as part of AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan on 17th May, 2020, which promotes all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education. The initiative includes:

DIKSHA (one nation, one digital platform) is the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content for school education in states/UTs and QR coded Energized Textbooks for all grades are available on it. 35 of the 36 states and UTs have on boarded on DIKSHA platform. Besides, the Ministry has undertaken a proactive initiative, named, 'MANODARPAN' covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond.

The HRD Ministry has taken several new and unique initiatives to ensure that the education of learners does not get adversely affected by the lockdown measures to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the direction of MHRD, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has launched measures to that effective schooling continues to reach the unreached directly at their homes.

Quality educational content is being made available via Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) through the 'SWAYAM' platform for grades 9 to 12. Students who are at home preparing for JEE and NEET are also benefitting from this initiative. Along with self-learning material, the 'SWAYAM' portal features video lectures and self-assessment tools. There are also discussion forums where learners can have their questions and queries resolved.

For learners who have limited internet access, video lectures are being telecast on MHRD SWAYAM PRABHA TV channels. The telecast features live sessions where students are interacting with their teachers and subject experts.

Swayam Prabha is a group of 32 Direct to Home (DTH) channels dedicated to telecasting of high-quality educational programmes, 24x7, using the GSAT-15 satellite. Contents are provided by NPTEL, IITs, UGC, CEC, IGNOU, NCERT and NIOS. Using their own Direct to Home (DTH) channel as well as DTH channels of Swayam Prabha and NCERT, NIOS is working with KVS, NVS and CBSE and NCERT to broadcast live sessions. Tata Sky and Airtel DTH operators have agreed to air three Swayam Prabha DTH channels on their DTH platform. Subject experts are able to connect into the Live telecast of SWAYAMPBABHA through Skype directly from their home.

The channels cover the following Higher Education (post- and under-graduate level), School (grades 9 -12), preparation for competitive exams and continuing education for life-long learners.

In addition to these education initiatives, the HRD Ministry launched a web-portal to cover the different dimensions of COVID-19 challenges in a very holistic and comprehensive way. YoungIndia Combating COVID with Knowledge, Technology and Innovation (YUKTI) is a unique portal and dashboard to monitor and record the efforts and initiatives of MHRD. The portal will cover both qualitative and quantitative parameters for the effective delivery of services to the academic community at large. The portal will also establish a two-way communication channel between the Ministry of HRD and the institutions so that the Ministry can provide the necessary support system to the institutions.

#### CONCLUSION:

COVID-19 has impacted immensely the education sector of India. Though it has created many challenges, various opportunities are also arisen. The Indian Govt. and various stakeholders of education have explored the possibility of Open and Distance learning by adopting different digital technologies to handle the present crisis of COVID-19. As we cannot expect in country like India to have availability of all required resources due to different socio-economic conditions in India. This means India is not fully prepared to make education reach all corners of the nation via digital platforms. The students who do not have such facilities like the others will suffer due to the present choice of digital platforms. The priority should be to make highest possible use of digital technology to create a favorable position for millions of young students in India. It is need of the hour for the educational institutions to strengthen their knowledge and Information Technology infrastructure to be ready for facing COVID-19 like situations.

Even if the COVID-19 crisis is far from over, there is an urgent need to take efforts on maximum utilization of online platforms. India should develop strategies to ensure that all children must have sustainable access to learning during pandemic COVID-19. As online practice is benefitting the students immensely; it should be continued after the lockdown. Further detailed statistical study may be undertaken to explore the impact of COVID-19 on education system of India. It is important that colleges and University understands the experience and issues of the students and prepare according the further and design the study pattern in such a way that all students benefit.

#### OBSERVATION AND RECOMMENDATION

This pandemic has revealed some of the major loopholes in the Indian education system. The closure of schools has made a severe impact on abilities of the students.

One of the important factors that can be followed is the necessities to have a combined approach to online learning with increase in adoption of modern technological methods. At the same time focus needs to be given to training the teachers. All higher education institutes now are aware of the importance of technology and should take serious measures to conduct technology-driven education through the learning management system. It is recommended that educational

institutions should use technology in all aspects. This pandemic shows the partnership between technology and education is going to stay forever.

One more suggestion is that education Institutes can divide the courses into conventional teaching and online teaching, it will help in adopting the technology into the classrooms. Online teaching will increase digital literacy among teachers and students which will increase their exposure and learning and making them more employable for the digital world-leading thereby contributing to social sustainability.

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