

Effects of and response to pandemic on the education sector in India

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Abstract - In both the urban and rural areas of India, the education system is still in its infancy. The midday meal is a programme developed to encourage students to continue their study. To combat pandemic, the government implemented a countrywide lockdown on March 25, 2020., which has had a significant influence on schooling. After China, India has the world's second-largest educational system. As according UNESCO, 63 million instructors in 165 countries were impacted. A number of 1.3 billion students were unable to attend the school or institutions throughout the globe, with nearly 320 million students in India alone. It has shifted the old educational system to a paradigm based on educational technology, in which instruction and evaluations are done online. Pandemic has both beneficial and bad effects on the Indian educational system. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of pandemic on the Indian educational system.

Keywords - Pandemic, higher education, Impact, India, Post Covid-19, Govt. of India.

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INTRODUCTION

There have been more than 10 million instances of PANDEMIC, making India the second most afflicted nation in the world in terms Of Total although with significantly fewer documented fatalities. It was officially documented on 30 January 2020 that the first instance had occurred. 28 As of March 24, India had just 500 verified COVID-19 cases and less than ten fatalities, therefore the country went into complete lockdown without warning to the public.[1] Many low-wage migrant labourers were affected by the unexpected lockdown, who were forced to leave their jobs and go without food and shelter. Between 2 and 10 million migrant workers were affected by the epidemic, according to current estimates. As the number of cases grew, the country-wide lockdown was extended until June 2020, and then gradually removed throughout the country as the economic closure that followed the global health lockdown increased. Since state governments play such an important part in India's health-care system, the country's reaction must be seen in this context. State-to-state variance in the number of COVID-19 cases and fatalities is enormous in India.[2] Kerala, for example, was commended by the UN for the early pandemic response tactics it deployed. There may be a correlation between the state's investing in infrastructure health and its experience dealing with the Nipah epidemic in 2018 as well as its ability to respond quickly to the present outbreak.

International travel warnings and obligatory quarantine and quarantine compliance have been issued since mid-January 2020, as well as public awareness efforts

on cleanliness and social distance. A nationwide lockdown has also been put in place to stop the spread of illnesses. EXCLUSIVE: The IPC Section 144 IPC was used to limit people's mobility as well as to prohibit exports of vital medicinal and non-medical products. The Pandemic Containment Plan, released by MoHFW on March 22nd, 2020, included recommendations and planning processes for control and quarantine. 33 From an economic standpoint, the PANDEMIC reaction has resulted in the loss of millions of jobs and has had a devastating impact on the economy. An estimated \$110 billion in fiscal stimulus was announced in May as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat programme, which represents 10% of India's GDP. 34 As a whole, though, it is comprised of monetary measures designed to strengthen the economy over an extended period. PANDEMIC ETF announced the \$23 billion PMGKY assistance plan for the poor and vulnerable as a reaction to the current financial climate. Direct cash transfers, free food, cooking gas, and other necessities are all part of this programme, which also covers COVID-19 health personnel.[3]

The pandemic has spread throughout the globe, forcing human civilization to keep a distance from one another. A country's economic future is heavily influenced by the quality of its educational system, which has been severely damaged by this incident. COVID, an abbreviation for Coronavirus disease 2019, was recommended by WHO on February 11th, 2020 as an official term for the virus. Wuhan, China, is the first place to discover it on Dec. 31, 2019. 61-year-old Wuhan, China 2020 guy was the first victim of COVID 19 In 2020, the World Health Organization

labelled a pandemic. Kerala, India, reported the first instance of pandemic on January 30, 2020, and the person infected had travelled from Wuhan, China. COVID-19 has claimed its first victim in India on March 12, 2020. WHO estimates that it has infected over 4.5 million individuals throughout the globe.[4] Nearly two thirds of the world's student population was impacted as recently as mid-April 2020, according to a study from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Over 120 million kids and young people have been affected by the pandemic's outbreak. ' More than 32 million pupils in India have been impacted by the numerous restrictions and the statewide lockdown due to the epidemic in the country. It is estimated that 14 crore primary school children and 13 crore secondary school pupils in India are impacted by the UNESCO study.[5]

To begin preventing further spread of the corona virus, the WHO recommended that people keep their distance from one another until the outbreak was under control. Because of this, every nation began the process of locking down in order to isolate tainted individuals. Schools, colleges, and institutions around the country were shut down as a result of the government shutdown. Indefinite suspension of classes and postponement of all examinations in schools, colleges, and universities, including admission exams. As a result, the lockdown completely wiped out everyone's plans. It's a unique opportunity in education's history, but COVID can help usher in a new age of digital learning instead of the traditional classroom paradigm.

To avoid disruptions, several educational institutions have had to postpone or cancel their scheduled events in favour of doing lessons and exams online. Teachers and students were first unsure of how to respond to this abrupt catastrophe, which necessitated a complete shutdown of all educational activity. It was only afterwards that everyone came to understand that the lockdown had taught them so much about how to deal with pandemics. In this way, the pandemic presented educational institutions with a wide range of obstacles and chances for strengthening their technological infrastructure. A glimmer of optimism has emerged for teachers and pupils as a result of the school lockdown.[6] A variety of video conferencing tools, such as Zoom, Google meet, Facebook meet, Youtube meet, and Skype etc. were used by professors to distribute assignments and offer lectures to students online. Affective communication among parents, instructors, and kids is facilitated via WhatsApp groups, which keep everyone in the loop on the challenges they're facing on the app. Change to elearning may be easier in a country with a more centralised system like China. A small percentage of low-income pupils are unable to access wide bands or computerised learning arrangements, even in the United States. Not every Indian student has access to the highest internet and digital devices, which is the same predicament that exists in the United States today. In order to keep up with the rapid shift from a conventional education model toward an online one,

many of India's leading educational institutions lack the digital infrastructure necessary to do so.

HOW PANDEMIC AFFECTS THE EDUCATION SECTOR.

After China, India has the world's second-largest educational system. It seemed sense to close schools during the pandemic emergency in order to preserve social distance, given the uncertainty about connection speeds among school-aged kids and the possible effect of the virus. The whole Indian educational system was placed on indefinite hiatus in March 2020. The 2019–20 school year was coming to a close when India fell into lockdown in March 2020[7]. As the number of people infected with PANDEMIC increased throughout the nation in May, it became evident that classes could not be resumed in time for the start of the new school year. An AAC guideline for online schooling will be issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in April 2020. Four publications, each for primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary education, offer strategies for educators to maintain continuity in curricular learning from the security of students' homes using a combination of online and offline activities.

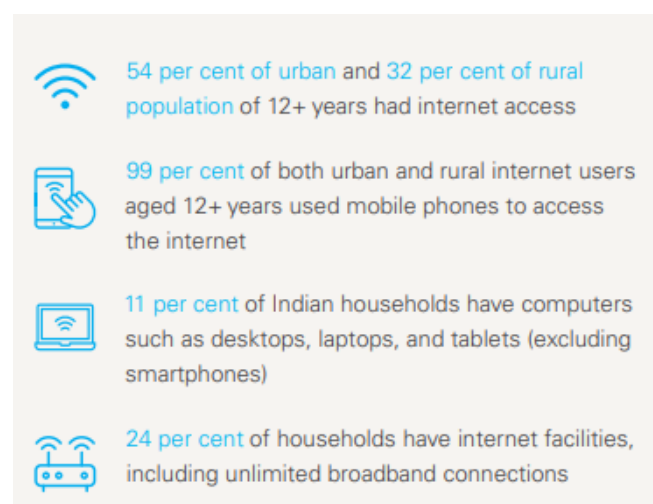


Fig.1. Indians have access to the internet and mobile devices.

Influence of Remote Learning On Children's Attitude

More than three-fourths of the families (73%) that received educational materials during in the survey week said their children used such resources throughout that time period.[8]

- Sixty percent of students in all schools said they used textbooks.
- Younger students were less likely to use online lessons or videos than their older peers. There were 28 percent who watched videos or recorded lessons, while 16 percent

took live online classes for kids in grades 9 through 12.

- There were 29 percent of private school students who used video recordings and 18 percent who used live online courses, which were more available for private school students. The percentages were 18% and 8%, respectively, for pupils attending public schools.

Similar findings have been seen in other studies and publications. e-education highlighted India's digital divide. UNICEF's RLR report (2020) reported that just 24% of households in the nation had access to the internet.

UNICEF conducted a poll in six states⁴⁵ and found that the majority of respondents believe that pupils are falling behind in a variety of areas, including social skills, fitness, employment prospects, and more. 67% of parents of kids ages 5–13 and 71% of students ages 14–18 say their children's overall growth is substantially or somewhat behind what it would be in school. Parents of younger and older students both in Kerala are more optimistic about their children's education at home than they are about their children's success at school.[9] Kerala is the only state where virtually everyone who utilised remote learning reported that the government supplied remote learning tools, and more than 90% of students said that they were able to communicate with their professors.

Consciousness, Health, and Protection

HEALTH: As a result of school closings, the free lunch programme has been put on hold. Over 1.26 million schools in India are participating in this programme, which enrolls 120 million pupils. 58 As a result of the pandemic epidemic, several governments and territory have had to halt this programme, denying children what may be the only healthy meal of the day for some. Children from a wide range of families find this lunch to be a powerful motivator to attend school. In addition, schools often provide basic necessities like sanitary items. This is a necessary service for teenage girls, considering the difficulties they have in keeping up with even the most basic aspects of menstruation hygiene.[10] Increased censorship and limits on girls' movement are some of the consequences of menstruation taboos in rural India, along with fears of sexual abuse, early marriage, and major health hazards. Due to school closings and the elimination of this benefit, teenage females are now facing even more difficulties.

SOCIAL PROTECTION: We applaud the government for increasing welfare benefits under PMGKY and delivering a bundle of cash as well as in social aid to safeguard poor and vulnerable families. Design and execution issues have limited the scope and effectiveness of India's social protection programmes, which cover a wide range of life phases. As an example, just 39 percent of eligible women with babies

were receiving maternity benefits under the PMMVY before to the epidemic.[11] As a result, most Indian workers are self-employed and do not have access to benefits.

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING SUPPORTED BY THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR IN THE FACE OF PANDEMIC

DIKSHA: DIKSHA is a nationwide open-source platform for students and teachers that empowers educational autonomy. – And over 80,000 e-books in several languages may be accessed by students, with the aid of 'question banks' for homework and test preparation. Educators may take use of the platform's resources for lesson planning, explanation of topic, and student evaluation. A QR code on a textbook may be used to access the information.

e-PATHSHALA: This site has 1,886 audios, 2,000 video, 696 e-books and 504 Flip Games for grades 1–12.

SWAYAM: There are 1,900 courses on the national online learning portal that span both school and university subjects. SWAYAM's integration with traditional schooling is a standout feature. SWAYAM courses may be transferred for credit.

SWAYAM PRABHA (professor of mathematics): D2H TV stations are available, all of which broadcast educational programming round-the-clock. Doordarshan's free dish, set-top box, and antenna may be used to watch these stations throughout the nation.[12] Other information, such as the schedule of the channels, is accessible on the site. Schools, out-of-school kids, higher ed vocational courses, and teacher-training programmes in the arts, science and humanities are all included in these channels.

Student Teacher Relationship

There has been a lot of discussion and controversy about the (NEP) 2020 announced by the Ministry of Education in July 2020, which was authorized by UC in July 2020. The previous NEP dated from 1986. The ambitious NEP 2020 plan calls for a thorough reorganisation of the educational system. 6% of India's GDP is a clear indication of the government's dedication to make this ambition a reality.[13] For India's society and its schools, NEP of 2020 seeks to bring about a paradigm change in perceptions of education and education delivery. People in India are forced to reconsider the value of education in general.

Significant adjustments have been made to the NEP.

- The current 10+2 school structure will be replaced with a 5+3+3+4 framework based on a child's cognitive growth phases. Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary stages

will follow the Foundation Stage for a total of seven and a half years.

- NCERT is now redesigning NCF in accordance with the new policy, with the goal of adopting it in the academic session of 2022–23. It is hoped that the new syllabus would not only alleviate academic stress but also allow instructors to concentrate on conceptual comprehension and higher-order thinking abilities, thereby making the transfer from content to competencies..
- To begin, the curriculum will focus on developing literacy and numeracy abilities in the early grades. In the future, secondary school pupils will be able to pick from a wide range of academic options, rather than being limited to the conventional science, humanities, and business streams.
- Digital learning & computational thinking, as well as practical courses, have also garnered more attention.
- Students should not be required to take tests as part of the National Education Program (NEP) in order to achieve competency-based education. Formative assessments should instead be used to measure overall learning outcomes.

Process of Reopening

Education continuity and school reopening in India is handled at the state level. Since PANDEMIC's distribution and reaction has varied widely throughout India, districts have been given responsibility for reopening.[14] It's up to local authorities to decide when schools may resume and for what grades. The MHF Order of September 30th, 2020[9] stated that states might begin reopening schools on October 15th in a staged way, excluding confinement areas. In addition, it says:

- As long as the epidemic continues, online or distant learning will be the favoured teaching and learning method.
- Attendance must be voluntary and based only on written permission from the parents.
- Children who choose not to return to class should either attend lessons online or instructors should follow up on mobile telephones in the absence of ICT capabilities either at the school or student's home.

SOPs for opening schools have been provided with states and union territories by the Education ministry and states have been told to build their own SOPs for restarting schools. SOPs in various countries are being supported by UNICEF. States are using an alternate academic calendar developed by the NCERT.[15] For the most part, governments want to gradually restore schools, beginning with the upper grades. It's also possible that this might be an issue for younger students, who are less able to interact with distant learning resources. States have been slow to

determine start dates thus far. According to Delhi's decision, pupils would not be allowed back until further notice, despite the federal government's approval. When it comes to reopening, Uttar Pradesh has indicated that it would do it in stages depending on local conditions. Students will have varied experiences of returning to school based on where they reside, which will exacerbate the gap in learning outcomes across states and the nation as a whole because of this.[16] There is strong evidence that long-term school closures have a lasting impact on the lives of generations of children. Schools were shut down for an average of 14 weeks in Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake, leaving impacted pupils 1.5–2 years behind their classmates. Lessons & curriculum do not account for the learning losses that occur while schools are closed, which means that when students return to class, the losses will have accumulated.[17]

TEACHERS REPORTED A HIGH DEMAND FOR ICT TRAINING.

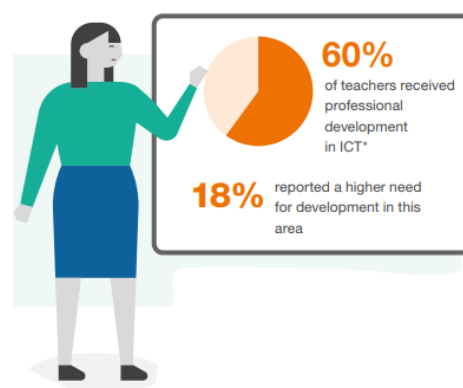


Fig.2. Training in the usage of ICT is required.

As a lifeline for learning during the epidemic, digital technologies now offer prospects that go well beyond a temporary fix. The questions of what individuals learn, how they learn it, and when and where they learn it have all been transformed by digital technology. Teachers and students may now have access to specialised resources outside of traditional textbooks, in a variety of forms, and across time and location.[18] When used in conjunction with classroom instruction, intelligent elearning systems may not only instruct students in scientific concepts, but also monitor their study habits, interests, and difficulties. The systems then have the ability to tailor the learning opportunity to each student's unique learning preferences and styles. A virtual laboratory provides students with the option for hands-on experimentation rather than just studying about it.

In addition, technology has the potential to transform the function of teachers from conveying information to serving as founder of knowledge, coaches, mentors, and assessors.[19] PISA's 2018 results

show that most of the world's education systems weren't equipped to take advantage of digital learning possibilities at the time of the pandemic crisis. 25% of principals in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries reported that digital technology shortages or inadequacies hampered learning somewhat or a lot, ranging from 2% in Singapore to 30% in France and Italy. Many school administrators may not even be aware of the potential for education that contemporary technology may give. Technology is only as good as the people who put it to work.[20]

CONCLUSION

PANDEMIC has had a significant influence on India's education industry. Despite the many difficulties that have arisen, there are also several possibilities. For the current pandemic problem, the Indian government and several educational stakeholders have looked at the feasibility of (ODL) by using various digital technologies (such as ODL). India lacks the technology to ensure that education reaches all parts of the country through the internet. Students who aren't as well-off as others may be negatively impacted by the current selection of digital tools. However, universities and the Indian government are working tirelessly to find a solution to this issue. The primary focus should be on using digital technology to provide millions of Indian students a leg up on the competition. In order to be prepared for pandemic-like events, educational institutions must increase their knowledge and IT infrastructure.[21] There is an urgent need to maximise the use of online platforms to ensure that students not only finish their degree this academic year, but also to prepare them for the future digitally oriented environment. When dealing with a pandemic like PANDEMIC, the "work from home" notion becomes more important. Creative measures should be developed to guarantee that every kid has access to education during a pandemic. India's policies must encompass a wide range of people, especially those from distant areas, marginalised and minority groups, in order to effectively offer education. After the lockdown, online practise should continue for the benefit of the pupils. The influence of the epidemic on India's education system might be studied in more depth using statistical analysis.

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