



Challenges and Opportunities in Education, During and Post Covid-19

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Abstract:

As we all know that the Covid-19 affected the higher educational systems all over the world. The various educational measures are taken in order to continue the education of the students in this the COVID-19 pandemic. This article introduces that how the higher education system of all over the world is affected in terms of challenges and how other opportunities develop as a outcome of this pandemic. This article provides a recommendation regarding the educational system to proliferate and document the impact of this pandemic and also on the greater needs for giving strength to those practices of the curriculum which are important during and after this COVID-19 and make us more responsive towards the demands and needs of learning of the students even beyond the conventional classrooms and prepare them for such types of future pandemics, epidemics and other natural calamities.

Keywords: COVID-19, Higher education, Curriculum, online learning, mental health services, nutrition, hygiene practices, environmental health education, digital learning, distance learning.

Introduction:

The **COVID-19** stands for the Coronavirus disease which is referred to as the 2019 novel coronavirus or '2019-nCoV'. This virus is mainly linked to **Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV)**. This novel virus can be transmitted very fastly. Because of this virus caused pandemic disease the various schools and universities closures are implemented all over the world in this lockdown due to which the teachers faced many challenges in using technology to provide an education to their students. So, there is a great need to strengthen our educational system as per the conditions which can provide the students an opportunity to continue their learning safely at home. Hence, this paper has been created to focus on the various educational teachers, researchers, professors to document and produce many research evidences in this present pandemic that

addresses how the working process of the educational systems has been changed in the entire world that is responsible for the birth of certain challenges and opportunities during and after this post covid-19 situations. A large number of research is done in the field of education that explain how the COVID-19 affected the educational system and also the technology which is used for teaching and learning purposes. (1,2,3)

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES TO BE FACED IN AN EDUCATION SYSTEM

1.Delay of exams due to the educational institutions closure worldwide

In India on 16 March the countrywide lock-down of schools, colleges and universities was declared. Due to this pandemic spread the schools, colleges and

universities was closed. Their semester, yearly and various entrance exams are delayed all over the world. On 19 March, the University Grants Commission (UGC) ordered universities to postpone their exams till March 31. According to data released by UNESCO on 25 March the schools and universities closures due to COVID-19 were implemented nationwide in 165 countries that involves the localized closures which affects over 1.5 billion of the students worldwide having 87% of the enrolled learners. (4)

2. Distance learning

Now a days the online learning for the students are very necessary for the education of the students. The technology can provide the teachers and students a facility to access the various available specialized materials available in various formats that can acts as a bridge between the educators and the students. During this pandemic the educational institutions began conducting the online classes by using many software's such as Zoom, Google classrooms, google meet etc. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development has created the special framework by using various online methods of distance learning. (5,6)

3. Nutrition and Non- Availability of food

The children's and others are totally depends on food for their nutrition and mental growth. The Nutrition plays an important role in cognitive development and academic performance of children. Many children worldwide depends upon that meals which are given by the schools free of cost. When schools are closed, they are not able to take food due to the poverty. In the United States several school lunch programmes are conducted for the students to provide the free food to them. In Alabama, where state-wide was closed from 18 March have affected over 7,20,000 students and the state Superintendent announced that staff in schools are very badly affected by poverty because they create the meal distribution networks to provide food for the students who rely on school lunches. (7,8)

4. Impact on learning outcomes of students

As we all know that the school closures impact student learning outcomes a lot and very badly. The outcomes of this is that the under-privileged learners comes under very critical situations and the parents are facing

various challenges in the fulfilment of this task specially for those who are poor and having very limited education and other resources. The educational institutions are known as the hubs of social activity and human interaction. Due to their closure the students are failed to meet each other which is necessary for their mental growth and development, due to this many students undergo depression. (9)

5. Impact on the inability of the students to access various educational resources

Due to the copyright and limitation features the several initiatives were taken to grant the open access for reading the various textbooks. The International Council for Open and Distance Education issued a special website to provide an explanation to teachers that how to navigate complex copyright scenarios, webinars, tips for online teaching and other resources to educate the students. The Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property at the American University is holding a lot of set of webinars to guide the teachers for delivering online teaching and explain about the usage of necessary practices for educating the students. (10,11,12)

6. Impact on the unequal access of technology

The lack of access to technology or bad internet connectivity creates an obstacle in the process of continue learning specially for the poor families. Due to this pandemic when the schools and universities are closed, the UNESCO recommends about the usage of distance learning programmes and open educational applications and other platforms in order to reach learners remotely and limit the disruption of education because the libraries have temporarily closed and this increases the difficulty level of distance learning for the students. (13,14)

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES DURING AND POST COVID-19 IN EDUCATION

1. Introduction of Health and Environmental science Courses in the Curriculum

The Higher educational systems should include the curriculum having the health courses also with the environmental one. This is particularly very helpful in the present pandemic situation for maintaining the health. The Environmental science education is necessary to create an opportunity in developing the

positive attitudes among the students and strengthen other health practices which are useful for the successful implementation of other related environmental education policies and strategies. (15,16)

2. To strengthen the various other Hygiene Practices

In order to create awareness among the students about societal issue specially of health concerns and other challenges in the universities, the environmental hygiene practices are very necessary for the prevention from the transmission of this infectious diseases in the future. The students should also be taught to gain knowledge and behaviour practices on the prevention of infectious diseases, maintaining social distancing and also provided health management tools that can let them practice protocols until good hygiene becomes a school culture. (17)

3. Incorporate an Online Mental Health and Medical Services

The successful incorporation of online medical services and mental health is very necessary now a days . Due to this global pandemic trend the higher education needs to prioritize the academic, career counselling, and even the medical services and programs that should be accessible to the students in the university and even through online means and mental health have gained an attention due to the increasing number of mental disorders among college students. The various Free virtual services like the medical counselling, mental health teleconferencing, and other related online health services from medical staff representatives and professional health experts such as psychologists and guidance counselors should be provided to the students and also formulate a management protocol and flow chart that focuses on the health awareness steps . (18,19)

4. Improve the student learning by Teachers training

The online training for the teachers can improve student learning in an educational programming for the instructors to facilitate the goals aligned to the learning goals of higher education institutions. Various programmes are run by the government for the successful delivery of lessons to the students so that they can be benefitted by the best possible methods and the teachers also get training about the ne

technologies, programme design and other ways for the successful design of curriculum. (20)

5. To strengthen data monitoring, documentation and evidence based practices

The Higher education institutions worldwide are having a lot of opportunities in order to strengthen their data monitoring, documentation and evidence based practices of the services and programs that are offered to the students. There have been several innovative programs of higher learning are available to use for teachers and students that are become very helpful in document best processes, increases evidence-based practices and improve student learning in higher education . (20,21)

Crisis management Strategies During COVID-19 in Education Sector

A multi-pronged strategy is necessary to manage the crisis and build a resilient Indian education system in the long term.

- Immediate measures are essential to ensure continuity of learning in government schools and universities. Open-source digital learning solutions and Learning Management Software should be adopted so teachers can conduct teaching online.
- Inclusive learning solutions, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized, need to be developed. With a rapid increase of mobile internet users in India, technology is

enabling ubiquitous access and personalization of education even in the remotest parts of the country. This can change the schooling system and increase the effectiveness of learning and teaching, giving students and teachers multiple options to choose from.

Many aspirational districts have initiated innovative, mobile-based learning models for effective delivery of education, which can be adopted by others.

- Strategies are required to prepare the higher education sector for the evolving demand- supply trends across the globe—particularly those related to the global mobility of students and faculty and improving the quality of and demand for higher studies in India. Further, immediate measures are

required to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on job offers, internship programs, and research projects.

- It is also important to reconsider the current delivery and pedagogical methods in school and higher education by seamlessly integrating classroom learning with e-learning modesto build a unified learning system. The major challenge in EDTech reforms at the national level is the seamless integration of technology in the present Indian education system, which is the most diverse and largest in the world with more than 15 lakh schools and 50,000 higher education institutions. Further, it is also important to establish quality assurance mechanisms and quality benchmark for online learning developed and offered by India HEIs as well as e-learning platforms (growing rapidly).
- Indian traditional knowledge is well known across the globe for its scientific innovations, values, and benefits to develop sustainable technologies and medicines. The courses on Indian traditional knowledge systems in the fields of yoga, Indian

architecture, hydraulics, ethnobotany, metallurgy and agriculture should be integrated

with a present-day mainstream university education to serve the larger cause of humanity.

- Government agencies must invest in research and development to find out technological ways to achieve digital learning rather than cutting expenses. Regulating agencies should give full autonomy to educational institutions for adopting the digital learning system.
- Earlier best to best universities were using online teaching and learning as their

Supplementary tool. Challenges have created new opportunities for higher education

centers, basically to ensure that online courses have the same quality as in-person ones. It is time to explore such possibilities to evolve stronger online teaching methodologies as an essential tool. Leveraging modern technologies such as proctoring, Learning

Management Software (LMS) and a suite of examination tools help execute digital

learning. Now there is also an urgent need to make examination tools that are scalable, secure, and credible.

- Virtual Reality is another technology that can make learning much more immersive and take students to far away and inaccessible locations while Augmented Reality can help in contextual learning. Artificial Intelligence too can help in making learning more adaptive and personalized. Teachers are finding Chatbot's very useful at different stages to enhance the student experience. Social media platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp, are also being put into use extensively for more informal and interactive learning. Many students are also increasingly using podcasts and Youtube for learning.
- Technology can play a critical role in not only the creation and dissemination of

educational content but also in the assessment of students. Then there are Enterprise

systems to manage admissions and academic administrators through ERP, SAP, CRMs, etc.

- As for internships of the outgoing batches, some corporates are offering online opportunities as also projects in problem-solving involving secondary research but placements in an expected downturn will prove to be a major challenge.
- It is imperative therefore that steps are taken to ensure that entrance examinations such as JEE and NEET go online. The Human Resources Development Ministry, institutional regulators such as UGC, AICTE, and Telecom operators should work in close coordination with state, Central and private universities to ensure that students don't lose out in the long run for at stake is the very future of India itself.

Measures taken by Government

To promote digital education in the country and make e-learning feasible for students and teachers, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday launched the PM eVidya programme. Twelve Direct to Home (DTH)

channels, one for every class till 12th, also named as 'one class, one channel', will start beaming lessons right into students' homes while the country's top 100 higher education institutes will start new online courses as the Centre unveiled a Pradhan Mantri e-Vidya plan to ensure quality education continues to be imparted in an academic year hit by the COVID-19. Among other areas, the government is set to launch Manodarpan, a portal for the emotional well being of students, while National Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission is in the pipeline.

"All universities which have an accreditation A+ ie a score of 3.26 and above or all universities which are in top 100 in NIRF can automatically offer Full Online Degree courses without prior approval of UGC during this academic year 2020-21," is announced by the Higher Education Secretary. Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired developed on Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language on NIOS website and YouTube has also been brought in to ensure equity. 'PM eVIDYA' programme will consist of 'Diksha' involving e-content and QR coded energized textbooks for all grades and will be called as 'one nation, one digital platform'.

Conclusion

The Higher education worldwide is badly affected due to this COVID-19 pandemic that results into the temporary closure of thousands of universities, schools and other educational institutions which have an immense impact on our educational system. But this global pandemic gives us a various challenges and opportunities to face. Actually these opportunities opened a lots of gateways of success for us to upgrade our knowledge and other learning teaching methods for the use of technology very effectively. It also provides various scientific evidences to us and prepare ourselves to fight against the other future pandemics and epidemics. This article can also serve as a reference for future studies which involves several challenges and opportunities during and after the pandemic situations and also provide a large focus on how to use the available resources and technology methods to strengthening our educational systems, develop other methods of learning that minimize the

errors in future and our students are successfully benefitted by the present educational system without any problems and safely at home. The government also run various online courses. The universities also conducting the webinars, e-conferences, an international conferences, faculty and student development programmes, training and workshops for educating the students and teachers both to increase their knowledge through the e-learning platforms and helps in the development of their confidence and enhance their practical knowledge also.

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