

Impact Of COVID-19 On Education Sector In India

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Summary

There is far difference between Online classes and classroom lectures. The interaction between student and teacher is needed in a class. Moreover, the teachers' body language, which is a part and parcel of the classroom lectures and is imperative for their success, is also missing in online classes. The use of technology will create some practical problems. It will also lack the desired interaction in the class.

Keywords: COVID-19, Educational sector, Technology.

Introduction

The coronavirus causes a deadly disease,

COVID-19 with a fatality rate between 2- 3%. It has spread throughout the world, being declared a pandemic by the WHO. Lockdowns that have been imposed in almost all countries to save the citizens from the lethal infection. The disease has not spared even the advanced European countries, let alone the backward African countries and the developing Asian countries. The first and foremost job in the hands of the governments is not to save their people from the infection by imposing lockdown and social distancing only, but also to cope with the lockdown to save the economies. The Indian Government is no exception. The Indian economy was already passing through a recession and experts were saying that the economy was heading towards depression even before the advent of the corona virus. COVID-19 has dealt a severe blow on the economy. It will be difficult to come out of this situation and depression once the lockdown is over.

Against the backdrop of such a pandemic, it is obvious that the education sector will suffer in all the countries like many other sectors. The Indian education system has been badly affected by the entry of the disease and also because of social distancing measures that were taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

Objectives-

1. To study the impact of COVID-19 on Education sector

2. To study the impact on Indian economy of pandemic situation
3. To study arising role of technology in Education.

Education sector

Schools and colleges and the other educational institutions closed for a certain period of time from the middle of March. The closure was extended for some more time and finally the lockdown was declared. Thus the education system has been hampered for last few months. This was followed by cancellation of the all transportation system all over the world also in country also thus resulting into people not being able to visit the places for educational purpose even inside the country. Finally with the lockdown, the trains also stopped running and thus the scheduled seminars etc had to be cancelled in all the stages, like, national, state and regional, and even local. Not only have seminars been cancelled, even visiting educational institutes for other purposes had to be postponed.

With the full lockdown being imposed in the country, the education sector initially came to a standstill. This is an unprecedented and unfamiliar situation, and nobody still knows when the situation will be normal. It is imperative that the lifting of lockdown should obviously not take place in one go, but gradually, as otherwise the very purpose of the imposition of lockdown will be defeated with the spreading of the disease again. It is also true that unless the social distancing measures are removed, bringing back normalcy will be difficult. It is a known fact that the educational institutions are most vulnerable for the spread of the disease due to the

mass gathering in the classrooms. Therefore unless, the infection is totally eradicated from the states, it is difficult to bring back the students to the schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions. Resuming normal classes in classrooms therefore seems a distant dream at this time.

The situation is very different when one looks at rural colleges and universities. Many students in rural areas may not have access to smartphones or computers. Even if they do, the net connectivity may not be as high as in urban areas. In any case, many students of the most elite institutions, the IITs, are not able to have access to online classes from their homes due to these reasons. Therefore some if not all of the universities, and some of the colleges have started online classes. The same can be said about other higher educational institutions, be they governmental, government-aided or autonomous. Private institutions normally draw students from affluent urban classes, and hence do not face problems in dealing with this unprecedented situation.

The school education system portrays a dismal picture. There are many kinds of schools in the country: government, government-aided, private schools run by missionaries as well as those run by public and private trusts. There are also elite “public schools” and innumerable village level elementary schools under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme, the latter catering to the below-poverty-level sections of society. A majority of children attend village elementary and primary schools. Even in the urban areas, many such primary schools give classes to the poorer sections; most slum children attend these schools. In addition to the economic divide and the rural-urban divide there is a language divide as well. Also here again comes the aspect of the digital divide: most poor students do not have access to smartphones, and even if they do, the net connectivity is poor and content is often not available in vernacular languages. This gives rise to discrimination in access to education.

Today many schools in urban areas are having online classes, while the majority of rural schools do not. Very young children are not able to learn through online processes as they can neither handle computers nor mobile phones. In many households, there is no computer, and in many,

children are not allowed smartphones as well. Both these problems exist regardless of class. Therefore, the digital divide at the school level leads to a gap between the haves and have-nots.

India is a vast country with many complexities. The economic divide, the rural-urban divide and the resulting digital divide all have played an important role. The overall response of the country to the pandemic has thus been very mixed in the education sector.

Understanding the Economic impact:

No one knows at present, what the ultimate effect of this economic harshness it will be once the lockdown is over. The threat looms large particularly over low-income families. Many students belonging to low income families may not be in a position to continue with their education due to a loss of income, especially those in the informal and unorganized sectors. This may especially be true for science and other technical education. At the same time, guest teachers or para teachers in private educational institutes may lose their jobs as well.

So far not much political change has been seen as a result of the pandemic. Social changes may emerge due to people staying at homes day after day, forced to spend time within small families and in limited space. The strain induced by the lockdown could have long-term effects, but how this will affect the higher education system is hard to predict right now. There is some evidence that domestic violence has increased, and there may be some effects on students’ education, especially if families break-up as a result of the lockdown. In any case, the resulting economic changes are sure to affect the higher education system indirectly.

Maximise Role of Technology

Technology ought not to play a bigger role in teaching of economics in the post- corona period. It has already been mentioned how the digital divide plays an important role; therefore in order to reach all students, classroom teaching is the best option.

This is especially true for laboratory-based subjects. While humanities related subjects may be taught online, the teaching will not reach all students. (Lab-based practical classes cannot be held online as it is not possible to set up labs at homes, but that is another story.)

Online classes are not capable of substituting classroom lectures. The former is very seldom able to generate the interaction that is needed in a class. Moreover, the teachers' body language, which is a part and parcel of the classroom lectures and is imperative for their success, is also missing in online classes. The use of technology will not only lead to more discrimination, but also will create some practical problems. It will also lack the desired interaction in the class.

Impact of Online Education

As per 2020 statistics, the students population is 40 crores in India. These Students include school and college students everybody who studies in an educational institutions in India. While it is difficult to gauge the impact of the online classes in the institution so early, students of all subjects do not have the access to online connectivity, especially those staying in the rural areas. The practical classes in the lab-based subjects are also not being held online and mathematical papers are difficult to be instructed online. The lockdown has generated uncertainty over the exam cycle. May be universities may face impact in terms of a slowdown in student internships and placements, lower fee collection that can create hurdles in managing the working capital. Hence, it can be said that the impact has not been very positive.

Effects on Research

Research has been affected in a negative way. In many cases, where secondary data are needed, the students cannot visit the sources like the institution itself, offices and libraries, as all data are not available online. Similarly, primary data collection has also stopped since visiting sources is forbidden, and hence research is severely hampered. Mentorship improves only when there is face-to-face correspondence. In the lab-based subjects, research is totally stalled. Doctoral research has been hindered, both in primary and advanced stages.

There is a negative effect on project work as well. Thus on the whole there has been an adverse effect on research at all the levels due to the coronavirus and COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting lockdown effect on the economy.

Conclusion

It is safe to say that the present pandemic will not only affect the economy adversely, but it will also affect the education sector adversely in India. Already, 4 months is lost. No one is sure how long it will take for the education sector to come out of the abnormal situation prevailing in the country at present. Moreover, education system is especially vulnerable since mass gathering cannot be avoided in our classrooms.

Online classes are no substitutes for classroom lectures for a variety of reasons. The digital divide will only leads to discrimination and practical classes based on laboratories cannot be held online. Giving instructions for mathematical courses is also difficult online. The interaction between the teachers and the students is a crucial component of teaching and cannot be replicated in online classes. Research has been severely hampered due to the lockdown, and hence the sooner normalcy returns, the better

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