Pandemic Covid-19: Present and future challenges in Education

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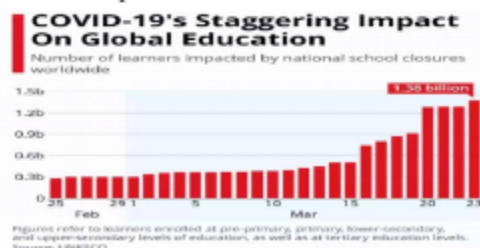
Abstract: *Covid-19 Pandemic is a global crisis and it has been many months and still there is no certainty when this crisis will resolve. Most of the countries are in lockdown. The world is battling COVID-19 and economies across the globe. Work from home (WFH) has become the norm, especially for service organizations. Following government instructions, even the academic institutions had to shut down temporarily, affecting academic delivery. Thus, they had to find new alternatives to academic delivery, and virtual classes were the way forward. In the present paper, we attempted to study the impact of lockdown on the teaching - learning process. The study considered responses from various teachers from different colleges & universities. One type of respondents were those who adopted virtual classrooms and another hand that did not adopt virtual classrooms. Among those who adopted virtual mode, the mean of actual benefits was significantly less than the mean of expected benefits. Network issues, lack of training, and lack of awareness were stated to be the major challenges faced by them. Lack of awareness was stated to be the most important reason by those who did not adopt virtual classrooms followed by lack of interest and doubts regarding the usefulness of virtual classes. Less attendance, lack of personal touch, and lack of interaction due to connectivity issues were found to be the significant drawbacks of virtual classes. The study also suggested the ways to overcome the above challenges, drawbacks, and reasons behind non - adoption of virtual classes.*

Key Words: Pandemic, certainty, resolve, countries, economies, especially, organizations.

The Indian government has also taken action to this crisis by providing several guidelines including restricting movement of people and social distancing. University grand commission (UGC) and other education bodies have also issued specific guideline for higher education institute. Around 1000 universities and 40000 colleges are closed temporarily. This is the crucial time for education sector as various board exams, university exams, competitive exams and admissions are held during this period.

Impact on global education in month of February and up to 23March, 2020 has been shown by a chart as per UNESCO source

School closures carry high social and economic costs for people across communities. Their impact however is particularly severe for the most vulnerable and marginalized boys and girls and their families. The resulting disruptions exacerbate already existing disparities within the education system but also in other aspects of their lives. These include:

*   Interrupted learning: 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.

*   Poor nutrition: Many poor children and youth rely on free or discounted meals provided at government schools for food and healthy nutrition. When schools close, nutrition is compromised.

*   Confusion and stress for teachers: When

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schools close, especially unexpectedly and for unknown durations, teachers are often unsure of their obligations and how to maintain connections with students to support learning. Transitions to distance learning platforms tend to be messy and frustrating, even in the best circumstances. In many contexts, school closures lead to furloughs or separations for teachers.

*   Parents unprepared for distance and home schooling: 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.

*   Challenges creating, maintaining, and improving distance learning: Demand for distance learning skyrockets when schools close and often overwhelms existing portals to remote education. Moving learning from classrooms to homes at scale and in a hurry presents enormous challenges, both human and technical.

*   Gaps in childcare: In the absence of alternative options, working parents often leave children alone when schools close and this can lead to risky behaviours, including increased influence of peer pressure and substance abuse.

*   Unintended strain on health-care systems: Health-care workers with children cannot easily attend work because of childcare obligations that result from school closures. This means that many medical professionals are not at the facilities where they are most needed during a health crisis.

*   Rise in dropout rates: It is a challenge to ensure children and youth return and stay in school when schools reopen after closures. This is especially true of protracted closures and when economic shocks place pressure on children to work and generate income for financially distressed families.

*   Social isolation: Schools are hubs of social activity and human interaction. When schools close, many children and youth miss out of on social contact that is essential to learning and development.

*   Challenges measuring and validating learning: Calendared assessments, notably high-stakes examinations that determine admission or advancement to new education levels and institutions, are thrown into disarry when schools close. Strategies to postpone, skip or adminsiter examinations at a distance raise serious concerns about fairness, especialy when access to learning becomes variable. Disruptions to assessments results in stress for students and their families.

Over 1 crore students appeared for exams. The largest number of students appeared in the board is from Uttar Pradesh i.e. 26 lakh students followed by 10.9 lakhs in CBSE. approximately 1.43 crores students appeared for different annual examination/ board conducted by national or state-level authorities.

Present Situation: Pandemic covid-19 disrupts the life of students, parents, teachers and many more. Many academic activities either have been cancelled or postponed. It is the time of uncertainty for everyone.

Richer countries are better prepared to move to online learning strategies, although with a lot of effort and challenges for teachers and parents. In middle-income and poorer countries, the situation is very mixed and if we do not act appropriately, the vast inequality of opportunities that exists - egregious and unacceptable to start with - will be amplified. Some of the private schools have started online classes for teaching. On the other hand, government schools and low income private schools are not able to conduct online classes. Covid-19 pandemic has largely disrupted the life of parents who are poor and or belongs to remote areas. All are not able to deal with online learning, as they don't have laptops, mobiles or internet connectivity.

What should we be worried about in this phase of the crisis that might have an immediate impact on children and youth? Losses in learning, increased dropout etc. Moreover, most countries have very unequal education systems, and these negative impacts will be felt disproportionately by

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poor children. When it rains, it pours for them.

The pandemic has significantly affected the higher education sector as well. Students are uncertain about their academic session. A large number of Indian students, second only to China, enrolled in the universities abroad, especially in countries worst affected by the pandemic, e.g. US, UK, Australia and China. Many such students have now been barred from leaving these countries. If the situation continues, in the long run, it may be that there is a decline in the demand for international higher education is expected.

The bigger concern, however, on everybody's mind is the effect of the disease on the employment rate. Recent graduates in India are fearing withdrawal of job offers from corporate because of the current situation. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's estimates on unemployment shot up from 8.4% in mid-March to 23% in early April and the urban unemployment rate to 30.9%. Some immediate measures are required to minimise the loss affected by pandemic covid-19.

Learning- Attending school, college is not only about learning any subject, but also about social relationships and one to one interactions. It is about learning to be a citizen and developing social skills. That is why it is important to be connected with the school or college are essential.

Needless to say that the pandemic has transformed the conventional teaching process to the one driven by technology. This situation, the delivery of education is forcing policymakers to chalk out different ideas of e-learning. This crisis teaches all bodies to be self dependent and develop our education system. One, immediate measures are essential to ensure continuity of learning in government schools and universities. Diksha Platform should be strengthened and teachers should be trained for conducting online classes.

Since people are at home, uses of mobile has been increased in India. Many schools and teachers have been using mobile based learning model for education.

Future Challenges- Pandemic covid-19 has created many crisis but also created an equal opportunities to look around the education system which was earlier neglected. Today many webinar are being organised to discuss the problem associated with not only the education system but many more areas and finding their alternative solutions. While some believe that the unplanned and rapid move to online learning - with no training, insufficient bandwidth, and little preparation - will result in a poor user experience that is unconducive to sustained growth, while others believe that a new hybrid model of education will emerge, with significant benefits. "I believe that the integration of information technology in education will be further accelerated and that online education will eventually become an integral component of school education," says Wang Tao, Vice President of Tencent Cloud and Vice President of Tencent Education.

Reforms at the national level are necessary for the seamless integration of technology in the present Indian education system, which is the most diverse and largest in the world. Educators around the world have been talking about the need to rethink how we educate future generations. This might just be the disruption that the sector needed to get us all to rethink how we educate, and question what we need to teach and what we are preparing our students for.

Most universities and colleges are replacing traditional exams with online assessment tools in higher education. This is a new area for both teachers and students. Mobile, radio and TV are also very powerful tools. The advantage we have today is that through social networks, WhatsApp or SMS, ministries of education can communicate effectively with parents and teachers and provide guidelines.

Conclusion- It is important to stay connected with the school by any means necessary. For all students, this is also a time to develop socio-

emotional skills and learn more about how to contribute to society as a citizen. The role of parents and family, which has always been extremely important, is critical in that task. So, a lot of the help that ministries of education provide, working through mass media, should also go to parents. Radio, TV, SMS messages can all be used to provide tips and advice to them on how to better support their children.

Pandemic COVID-19 may well change our world and our global outlook. It may also teach us about how education system needs to change to be able to better prepare our young generation for what the future might hold. These lessons include:

1) Redefining the role of teachers
2) Flexibility and adoptability in education system
3) Use of technology in teaching
4) Online learning and assessment
5) Develop scenarios to assess impact of covid-19

Possible Mitigations Steps-

* Webinar with experts of various institutes

to clear doubts of students, teachers and help in decision making process.

* Online counselling of students for admission and seat allocations
* Avail syllabus and courses of all subject online so that student can learn from home
* Group discussion and doubt clearance session should be initiated online.
* Develop online video conferencing platform for personal interview
* Prepare online video content to help fresh admitted student to understand and navigate facilities available on campus.

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