



## COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHING-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

## Social Science

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## ABSTRACT

It is the unusual time. The covid-19 pandemic has unleashed a complex crisis with long-term implication on life. This borderless crisis faces by international community today, asserts the fact that no individual can fight to the pandemic individually. The pandemic has obviously affected every possible aspect of our life on a global level. On the educational front, the pandemic has led to disruption in teaching and learning. All component of teaching-learning come under tremendous changes. These changes transformed the traditional mode of teaching into online mode that poses various challenges and difficulties for students. This crisis has deeply disruptive implication for education. Pandemic crisis has tested our resolve to deal with large-scale educational disruption. This Article is about educational deprivation owing to the covid19 induced lockdown and social distancing and researcher tried to point out the strange changes and difficulties in educational activities.

## KEYWORDS

Covid -19 pandemic, teaching, learning

## INTRODUCTION

We are almost in the last quarter of 2020, a year that has had a tremendous impact on every individual and social group around the globe emotionally, physically and mentally. "The COVID-19 pandemic has not stopped at national borders. It has affected people regardless of nationality, level of education, income or gender" (Schleicher, A). When the coronavirus appeared in small numbers, unplanned nationwide lockdown were clamped down with a lot of haste. The pandemic and the lockdown have altered all sense of time. it is the feature of post-modernity. One feature is "the deepening social and economic inequalities associated with the growth of electronics-based technologies" (Lyon, D). The pandemic induced lockdown that hardly gave time to make arrangements was draconian in nature. When covid-19 was declared a pandemic, no one imagined the changes it would bring. Covid has pushed back timelines. "Almost every young person has had to adjust to dramatic changes in their education, routine and home life. Some have experienced bereavement or other traumatic experience during the lockdown period" (young mind). What students planned to achieve in a certain number of years will now take more time. For the batch of 2020—school pass outs, the year has been full of challenges, chaos and confusion. Students are upset and confused. The pandemic is reshaping career plans for many and put the dreams and ambitions at stake. A large section of students do not have access to an internet connection or smart phones that will enable them to attend online classes, as a result, student are unable to cope with studies and developmental problems for not becoming the part of the normal.

## Impact Of Covid -19 On Various Aspect Of Education

The year 2020 is a year of change. The covid-19 pandemic has forced people to think differently and consider options that they have never used or heard of before. The pandemic has obviously affected every possible aspect of our life on a global level. "beyond the health consequences of covid-19, the pandemic has caused school closure as well as economic hardship due to migration and loss of livelihood" (ASER). Education is no exception. The abruptness of the lockdown in March was a shock to the educational system and institution. "this crisis has exposed the many inadequacies and inequities in our education system-from access to the broadband and computers needed for online education, and the supportive environment needed to focus on learning, up to the mismanagement between resource and needs" (Schleicher). On the educational front, the pandemic has led to disruption in teaching and learning. All component of educational system come under different type of life constraint. "The novel coronavirus has turned our ailing pedagogic spaces topsy-turvy. All is now fair and there are no fouls. And in any case, there is no referee" (Kumar, K). Unexpected advent of novel coronavirus led to the shutdown of schools. Closure of schools created a new situation in regard to students-teacher's relation. As Hurllock mentioned "the teacher's influence is second only to that of parents. The influence of the teachers' attitudes and behavior on the students' personality pattern

comes from two major sources: the kind of relationship that exist between the teacher and student and the effect of the teacher on the emotional climates of the school". Lockdown seemed the temporary step to control the situation but long time presence of covid made the temporary measure the permanent. Students had to bear the ruinous impact of new situation in term of teaching-learning process. A widely anticipated consequence of covid-19 pandemic was the drop out of children from school.

## Impact on teaching-learning environment

Coronavirus has interrupted conventional schooling with nationwide schools' closure. This necessitated an alternative teaching-learning process. In the eight months that schools have remained closed. Teachers and educators under the compulsion adopted the virtual methods of teaching. Teachers-Students' community has made concerted efforts to maintain learning continuity during this period. It has become pointless to discuss the comparative benefits of in-person and virtual teaching because it was time that we have to accepted reality and prepared for a blend of the two. During lockdown, teachers realized the need to examine their priorities and reinvent themselves. Teachers adapt themselves to the world of Google meet, Microsoft, and Zoom classes, searching on internet for appropriate ways and resources to make children "work from home". Unfortunately, this emergency move was not the perfect solution of the new challenge. "an estimated 'ten to forty' percent of the students are unable to attend online classes regularly, only 'four out of ten' teachers said that their students had adequate bandwidth and power for the entire duration of classes. A good ten percent said that more than forty percent of the students were unable to attend the classes. Connectivity is a common problem: forty percent or more of the class end up having intermittent access to the lecture" (Madhurima, Ramaswamy).

## Impact on students

Every specific population groups have been influenced by covid -19 pandemic in different ways. Adolescents and young (secondary school students) are at high risk in the present crisis. Students, away from school, peer group, friends and confinement at home experienced anxiety and social isolation that effects on their mental health. "The aim of the school is to foster cooperative effort rather than competition" (Stones). Pandemic create the social vacuum among students. "Social isolation, reduced physical activity and reduced intellectual stimulation increase the risk of cognitive decline and dementia" (U N). There were changes in student's behavior like difficulties in concentration and attention, excessive annoying, increased sadness, avoiding activities that they enjoyed in the past. They were under exceptional mental stress, as most mental health conditions emerged during this sensitive period of life. Globally, Students were uncertain about their future career prospects and fearful about life and feeling that their future impacted. For instance, suddenly, schools have been closed, Examinations has been

postponed, and teaching learning abruptly ended. Educational disturbance made students life difficult. Hope and enthusiasm in future activities was blocked. The students of secondary level were more in difficulty in regard to admission of professional courses. Education of youths and jobs had been the major causality of the pandemic. The lockdown and social distancing norms have badly affected the future plans of students.

In case of girl students, a new family phenomenon has emerged during pandemic, they have become vulnerable to family pressure to marry to avoid pandemic induced crisis. Juvenile girls were being married off or even trafficked. Abruptly, their age of learning has turned into age of marriage. Undoubtedly, pandemic brought the new abnormality in girl's life.

### Impact on teachers

Teachers are important component of teaching-learning system. Pandemic made teacher fraternity more vulnerable to professional deprivation. The covid 19 disruption brings about a upheaval in mode of teaching. Teachers were felt with the need to be skilful to online teaching. Traditionally trained teachers have learnt some education related information technology to teach in class room, but could not cope with pandemic induced online teaching mode emergency efficiently. This new situation produced the feeling of inferiority in traditionally trained teachers. In pre-pandemic time, these teachers were on merit list due to their vast teaching experience. In this way a very confusing situation emerged.

### Impact on guardians

The reaction of parents to the changes induced by pandemic and lockdown was divergent. Middle class guardian tried to adjust and adopt the novel changes. They have the capacity and ability to fulfill the new needs of pandemic situation. Educated parents had greater access with teachers and learning materials than the uneducated and less educated guardians. Prospects of parents and children had been jolted because of pandemic and both were worried about the outcome of enrolling in next classes. The future chances of employment have worsened because of the pandemic situation. A bleak job scenario across the globe was having a negative impact on the minds of guardians. Families have witnessed and expecting cuts in incomes.

### Impact on digital facilities

Covid -19 crisis has exposed the yawning digital divide in access to education. There is devastating impact of covid -19 on the access to digital facilities in term of teaching –learning process. Pandemic has initiated a special use of technology in the teaching and learning. Students are under pressure because of the present situation. The network coverage has been a huge source of concern for rural and interior located students. Many students are deprived of the fruits of distance learning because they neither have access to the internet nor possess the appropriate devices. Especially, the first generation learners in rural areas have limited access to smart phones and cannot attend online classes at the stipulated times. They were on deficit side in online teaching. Digital access might be impaired by many factors, such as lack of connectivity, but the most basic reason is lack of device. “Only eight percent of India's students have a laptop with internet connection” (Chaudhuri, S). Around eighty-five percent students are from the backward and underprivileged communities and forty percent do not have smart phones. The majority of students have learnt less since the onset of the pandemic because of the deep digital divide. As the annual status report mentioned that the supply of all learning material, online or offline, during lockdown has been inadequate and irregular. Nearly two-thirds of rural schoolchildren received no material. . Online classes were suffering because of inadequate faculty and connectivity issues. Digital divide is found in form of disrupted internet connectivity, unavailability of smart phones, lack of skill and interest to teach or to learn on line among rural and poor students. Teachers and students are in worry about the deepening digital divide. Their learning has practically come to a halt. Many rural background students had to cross several hurdles to bridge the digital divide to be able to learn through online mode. This shameful inequality and injustice must be addressed urgently and through public investment and delivery. Warr (1990) concluded that mental health is affected by environmental psychology feature, such as teaching- learning characteristic, peer interaction and availability of educational infrastructure.

### Impact on curriculum

In the mid of pandemic, there was announcement from the side of government that curriculum content for school students would be

reduced in each subject to its “core essentials”. Thirty to thirty-five percent syllabuses for secondary classes have been pruned for board exams as the regular classes could not be held amid the pandemic. A large section of students doesn't have access to laptop or smart phones. Many of them stay in places that lack robust connectivity. So it was not possible to hold classes on digital platforms. Although teachers tried to hold classes through different portals, laptops and others suitable devices, these models were inadequate to complete the syllabus. That is why, reduction the syllabus was inevitable. “the council for Indian school certificate examinations twice curtailed the syllabuses for classes X and XII students who will take their board exams next year after taking into account findings of a survey on the progress of online teaching” (Chowdhury). Teacher's fraternity was having a big sigh of relief that the government finally accepted that whole syllabus could not be taught in disturbing situation. The reduction in the syllabus was welcomed to teachers. Reason was that more compact syllabus would facilitate better assimilation of subject matter. Students would get more time for deeper study of each topics. But difficult question is that, on what basis, the core essentials be identified. What is the supportive role of reduced content to the existed content? Does the reduction not develop the gap of knowledge among students understanding? Reduction in syllabus produces knowledge and understanding vacuum in students. The reactions of parents to reduction in syllabus were varied. Some appreciated the move, because it facilitates transition to a new and completely unfamiliar environment in spite of adverse situation. Some complained that certain chapters in syllabus had not been dealt with thoroughly by the teachers. Result would be that students will fail to recognize the demands of the times. All this was matter of grave concern for secondary school students and produced the fertile situation for stress, anxiety, depression and others components of mental illness.

### Impact on examination

The cancellation of board examination due to the ongoing pandemic has left many students in limbo. Students are concerned that the decision to cancel board examination and marking them on an average will hurt their future. The uncertainty involved in how students are going to be marked has become a cause of severe distress. The decision of marking, based on internal examination, though seem just, but has not produce a sense of relief. On the contrary, it has added to their worries. Students have been left in lurch. They are perplexed by the uncertainty of future. High achievers are in dark, they feared to be average, and anxious about the mark, they will finally score. Many students are extremely upset losing the chance of proving them self. The last six months have been frustrating, with no clarity what so ever. Due process of exams was disturbing and changed under new normal. New examination's dates will trigger more anxiety for prospective examinees. For example, Bengal secondary board postponed “selection test” for this year. The exams are conducted by individuals' school and those passed in the selection test are allowed to appear for secondary and higher secondary. Because of pandemic situation, students are unable to go school, so this decision has been taken. This situation was causing stress. The court 's anger is warranted and stems from the concern that such dilly-dallying only adds to the anxiety of students already stressed on account of the interruption in the academic calendar because of the pandemic. There is mass scale miscarriage of dreams and expectation of the students.

### Suggestions

Form a 'support group for discussion on online teaching' to facilitate conversation within the teacher –student's community about the problem related to online teaching. These conversations aimed at sharing experience and facilitating learning from one another. Our healthcare sector is not equipped to deal with the growing number of covid patients. There is the steep paucity of healthcare professional in our country. We the people, have to be careful ourselves. As students continue to be restricted to their homes as a result of covid-19, the medical professional fraternity has once again, emphasises the importance of exercise for physical and mental well –being. As education is a concurrent subject, both, central and state policies would be designed to solve the problem of connectivity. It is crucial that measures should be taken to mitigate the digital divide that exists among students, among teachers, and among various institutes. Online education is expensive for teachers and students therefore help in form of subsidies are urgently needed. The effect of the pandemic will not go quickly and online educational instructions will continue for some time. So there is an urgent need re consider education policies to face the changed reality.

**CONCLUSION:**

We have been living in unusual times. The year 2020 has tested mankind in unprecedented way. Covid-19 impacts live and livelihoods together. The coronavirus pandemic has created its own pressure on the education system. Closure of educational institution, unequal access to technology based on-line facilities necessary for remote learning and other related disruption due to covid-19 are result in 'learning loss' and aggravated existing equity gaps. Educational deprivation due to digital divide was the main concern for the unprivileged and rural background students. The digital medium is an invaluable pedagogic asset. It has been the readiest source for remote learning during the covid-lockdown. We are in confusing situation; on the one hand, digital teaching-learning is advocated more arduously than ever. It is posed as an absolute advance over aged-old class learning and teaching. On the other hand, uncritical and nuanced use of digital resource by teacher, make teaching-learning reductive and mechanistic program. There is no evidence that smart classes contribute to intellectual development. There has been a serious lack of institutional support in providing hardware and adequate internet bandwidth to teachers. During this time of virtual learning, the lack of peer-to-peer cooperation and interaction has made online classes boring and burdensome. Practical, the essential part of learning could not be taken place online, so, students are losing interest in academics and nurturing mental illness. Covid-19 widen the digital divide inevitably. It would be an indicator of a fundamentally divisive educational order. The lack of a uniform approach to conduct the examination is the cause of anxiety and depression. Teachers and parents may help students to see their problems objectively and realistically. The pandemic had presented an opportunity to teach teachers and children life's lesson like discipline, responsibility and integrity and educational cooperation. Humans have adapted to the new normal by making the necessary adjustments such as minimizing physical contact and practicing social distancing even though it was not an easy exercise. When covid-19 broke out, there was panic and fear among students' beings across the globe. With lockdown, the life came to a standstill. But now, with time, the atmosphere of fear has been replaced by a sense of acceptance.

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