# ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

## Education

## HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF COVID-19 IN INDIA

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**ABSTRACT**

The global widespread of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused huge restrictions in our normal life- style methods. Like other important sectors in our country the sector of Education has been also affected.

Instead of the traditional teaching and learning techniques E-Learning methodologies have been adopted in various levels of education including the higher education area. Demands of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has increased resulting saving precious time lost in conveyance.

## INTRODUCTION

The world is witnessing the COVID-19 Pandemic which has enforced humans to live a life with extreme caution and restrictions. Social distancing has become the new normal for survival. Such an unforeseen situation has caused immense disruption in the usual way of living of people and especially affecting the young minds adversely, who have been compelled to stay away from the learning institutions such as Schools ,Colleges and Universities. As an obvious consequence the economic future of a country has become highly vulnerable .The first active case if the COVID -19 Virus affected person was first detected in Wuhan China on December 31,2019.Due to the widespread nature and increasing active cases of affected people of the virus the World Health Organization had declared the COVID-19 Virus as a pandemic on March 11,2020.In India the first case was detected on 30th January 2020 in Kerala and the affected person was found to have a recent travel history from Wuhan, China. This was followed by the first death in India on March 12,2020.

Post which till now nearly 9 crore people have been affected across the world and there has been more than 19 lakh persons who have lost their lives .Based on reports from UNESCO more than 90% of the world's entire student population was impacted during middle of April 2020. The massive outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus has impacted more than 120 crores of students and youths across the globe The various restrictions and the nationwide lockdown for COVID-19 in India has directly impacted 32 crores of students .

Based on the advice from WHO to maintain social distance as the primary preventive measure, every country initiated the action of lockdown and isolate the active group of affected people. As an immediate effect all educational institutions including schools, colleges and universities were closed. Regular schedules of classes were suspended and examinations including entrance tests were postponed for an indefinite period. The regular rhythm of studies for students from all levels and disciplines were disrupted .

As an earnest endeavor to mitigate the deadlock in the regular operations of education systems digital platforms enabling online mode of education were started to be used extensively. Soon the initial uneasiness of using technology actively was overcome and the wider student and teacher community adapted to the new mode of communication .The knowledge of using digital communication technology has been acquired very fast as a response to the challenges triggered during the PANDEMIC. The value of digital technology and stable infrastructure has increased by manifolds.

Students and teachers have become efficient in handling digital communication tools such as Zoom, Goto Meeting, Google Meet, Facebook ,Skype etc, E forums in Applications like WhatsApp, ,Telegram made Teachers, Students, Guardians ,Education Institution are widely being used for passing on real-time information .

These online platforms provide opportunities to faculty members and students from fundamental or advanced to enhance their knowledge in specific domains of their interest and use them effectively like preparing for competitive examination.

As an area of improvement India where every student is still not well equipped with the high-speed internet facilities, digital tools and gadgets still needs to be made available for every student .There is also a considerable area of improvement for traditional educational institutions to completely cope up to the online education system.

## METHODOLOGY

Due to the present COVID-19 situation restrictions I am unable to collect data from individual persons. Information in the article have been gathered from various journals ,e-learning portals ,renowned websites etc.

## OBJECTIVES
• COVID -19 Impact on higher education.
• Enlightening role of e-learning for Higher education in the era of COVID-19.

## Impact of COVID -19 on Higher Education

The outbreak of COVID-19 World Health Emergency has resulted in a massive change in the operating process of overall education system. Below are the major areas where significant changes have been observed.

### 1: Change in traditional way of teaching learning

In traditional ways of teaching and learning teachers and students are located in the same classroom of black boards are used for communication through live demonstration .In this approach the attention level of students are high and teachers are able to assess the the body language of the students and control them. However, in online mode of education these aspects are missing causing difficulty to students and teachers.

### 2 : Problem regarding data collection of research work

Research initiative works in both national and international spectrum are significantly dependent on data collection gathered through field works. The pandemic situation has imposed restricted social meetings which has consequently affected the real time data collection work to a great deal. Data Collection is being done through online methods such as email communication which has extensively limited the scope for gathering required information.

### 3: Academic Sessions have got Postponed

Due to long duration of lock down periods and imposed

social distancing norms the usual Academic Sessions in various Curriculums have got postponed extensively resulting in the undesired delay for students in completing their respective courses in a timely manner.

## 4: Time Saving
The online mode of teaching and learning session does not require travelling to the institutions for students and teachers which has saved considerable amount of time and effort which can be used in other productive activities.

## 5 : Increasing demand of Open and Distance Learning (ODL)
The pandemic situation has resulted in the huge increase in demand of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) which promotes learning opportunities for all from any location with more flexible timings for classes and examination.

## 6 . Problem of slow learners
In traditional class room based classed teachers are able to interact with students face to face and are able to easily identify the group of slow learners in a class and are able to dedicate more time and effort for them to bring them up-to speed. However, in online modes of teaching and learning such options are very limited or practically not feasible which has caused difficulty for slow learners.

## E-Learning Portals
The UGC circular issued on 25th March 2020 ,in connection to the ICT initiatives of MHRD and UGC (https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/1573010_On-Line-Learning---ICT-initiatives-of-MHRD-and-UGC.pdf) promotes online learning some of them are :

- **SWAYAM**
SWAYAM (*Study Webs for Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds)* is an initiative undertaken by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India which has a mission to take high quality education facilities to the doorsteps of every person in India. Massive Open Online Courses(MOOCs) are offered by about 140 universities with approved credit transfer feature. . Students across India are encouraged for Self-Study in online mode. e-PG Pathshala ( https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/ ) is an Online Platform for Post-Graduate Students which provides access to numerous e-books, online courses and study materials.

- **NDLI**
NDLI is an initiative of The National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) .The Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur has developed the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) (https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/ ) .It is an online virtual repository containing huge volume of learning resource contents in various disciplines in multiple languages to be searched specifically and accessed . Various user group-specific services are provided including content for Examination Preparation for School ,College students ,job aspirants, Researchers , general learners and differently abled learners.

- **Virtual Labs**
Virtual Labs (http://www.vlab.co.in/ ) is an initiative of The National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT).It enables students studying in various disciplines of Science and Engineering from various levels such as undergraduate, post graduate and research scholars to remotely perform experiments in accordance to their respective curriculum.

- **SWAYAMPRABHA**
**SWAYAMPRABHA ( https://swayamprabha.gov.in/ )** is a platform offering 34 free DTH channels telecasting supreme quality programmes on Education 24x7 basis through GSAT-15 satellite. Contents are frequently updated every 4 hours in a day . They are developed by renowned educational bodies like NPTEL, IITs, UGC, CEC, IGNOU, NCERT and NIOS. It covers specific knowledge requirements in school education, under-graduate ,post graduate level and curriculum based for life-long learners in varied domains, such as arts ,science ,commerce, performing arts ,social sciences and humanities, engineering ,technology ,law medicine ,agriculture etc.

- **Shodhganga**
Shodhganga ( https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in )is a common online reservoir for the students of the research community where their PHD thesis is reposed and is made accessible to the scholar community for future reference. Key features include options for researchers to capture, index, store ,disseminate and preserve previously submitted ETDS .More than 500 universities are associated to this platform.

- **VIDWAN**
VIDWAN ( https://vidwan.inflibnet.ac.in/ ) is the information database of renowned scientists / researchers , faculty members serving at leading academic institutions , R & D organization for teaching and research in India. It includes key facts about expert's background, contact address, experience, scholarly publications, skills and accomplishments, researcher identity, etc. This online repository is managed by Information and Library Network Centre (INFLIBNET) involving financial patronage from the National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT). The database helps in quickly finding information of experts for peers, collaborator prospects funding agencies policy makers and research scholars. This database is very useful in selection of panels of experts for various committees, taskforce, established by the Ministries / Govt. establishments with purpose of monitoring and evaluation .

## CONCLUSION
The COVID 19 pandemic times have taken the usual education system through a lot of transformation. The situation at hand for the entire student and teacher community have made them go through the initial difficult phase to adapt to news ways of learning and have eventually unfolded huge scope of opportunities in the digital platform.

In this current context the Ministry of Human Resource and Development in our country have promoted Open and Distance Learning (ODL) through various digital online platforms. Through these initiatives a large section of the student community has been able to enhance their knowledge in their respective fields of education.

On the contrary it has been observed that the present digital infrastructure in India is still not fully ready to cater to all students residing in different locations. Electronic gadgets and adequate knowledge for using digital technologies is still required to be effectively transferred to a huge section of the under privileged students.

The government in close coordination with various educational bodies are putting a continuous effort to improve the situation.

Currently the greatest importance should be given to fully utilize the potential of digital learning in India.

This can be done by enhancing the knowledge of established educational institutions in E Learning methodologies and further upgrade the existing Information Technology infrastructure and make it enough robust to accommodate the need of millions of students in India.

During COVID times employment of students has been impacted due to sudden economic slow down and social

distancing restrictions. Gradually situation is improving slowly .Online interviews and Work From Home approach is being followed to address the situation.

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