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Effects of COVID – 19 on Education Sector

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Abstract

Education plays a very important role in the life of every individual. Education is the mode of medium of techniques, skills, information and knowledge. Educated people are respected in the society enhances safety against crime, women empowerment, removal of poverty, prevention from war and terrorism, whereas when education is in regard to the country it enforces job opportunities, true potential, improvisation of sectors, standard of living, wealth, welfare, balanced growth, economic stability, grading and so on. The Era of COVID- 19 time broke down many sectors and one among them is the Education sector. As COVID – 19 pandemics expressively disturbed the educational sector which is a critical element of a country's economic growth; online platform became the mode of learning from kinder garden to university education. COVID - 19, though a big downfall in the economy it transformed the traditional way of learning (Offline mode), as an interactive session through online mode. Through Online education, the modules and activities uplifted courage among students to get on track on board in Education. Online education wasn't that much easy to be implemented in the initial stage but during that time there was no other go, so there were so many highly advanced resources and techniques that threw light on the education sector where as E - learning took place through assignments, seminars, webinars and workshops during the COVID – 19 pandemic. The swift transformation to online teaching opened the gates to many e -resources E - Learning has worked towards bringing learners, tutors, experts, practitioners, and other interest groups to one place. As a result, there is a good practice of knowledge sharing followed through different online platforms that are highly advanced ones namely as e- Shodh Sindhu, e-Gyankosh, SWAYAM, SAKSHAT, You Tube, UG/PG MOOCs, National Digital Library, Vidwan and so on. E-learning can also be termed as a network which enabled transfer of skills and knowledge, and the delivery of education is made to a large number of recipients at the same or different times. Digital technology of utilising the e resources to adapt e learning is a very big priority as it's a need of the hour during COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, quick information helps in the better growth of an individual. This is important in current times as competition is rising and the world is also growing. With this background the present paper tries to focus on the effects of of COVID – 19 on Education Sector.

Keywords: Education, COVID – 19, E - learning, Electronic Resources, learning system and Online Education.

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Introduction:

The end of 2019 followed by the beginning of 2020 witnessed a terrible turning point in the history of the world. The whole world was shaken by a small virus which led to a pandemic across the globe. COVID – 19 has affected a large number of students across states, class, caste, gender and region. By the end of March 2020, the epidemic had spread to over 185 countries and resulted in the closure of over 90 percent of all schools, colleges and universities impacting close to 1.38 billion students. COVID-19 has greatly disrupted access to education in India, with 247 million primary and secondary school students out of school. In response to school closures, UNESCO recommended the use of distance learning programs and open educational applications and platforms that schools and teachers can use to reach learners remotely and limit the disruption of education. Education institutions moved toward blended learning and encouraged the teachers and students to acquire technology savvy. With this background the present paper tries to focus on the effects of COVID – 19 on Education Sector.

Objectives

➢ To explore the rise of online education in India

➢ To highlight the initiatives taken by the Government state-wise and

➢ To assess the issues and challenges in online education during COVID- 19.

Methodology

The data and information presented in this current study were taken from various authentic websites, journals, reports and articles based on the impact of COVID-19.

I.   Rise of online education in India.

The deadly virus Corona brought the pandemic period during the third week of March, 2020. It led to total lockdown for around 7 months. This lockdown directly affected sectors such as the primary sector, secondary sector, informal sector and service sector. On the other side, lack of education highly affected individuals of all age groups right from pre-school going children to adolescents in school, colleges and universities. Before pandemic they all attained their education in offline mode but during pandemic period they all were confined within four walls of their homes and had to attain their education through online mode.

Just not in one nation but all nations adopted the method of "Online Delivery of Information and Learning". The country adopted national and digital resources to pursue the way of learning during the unprecedented situation. The MHRD (Ministry of Education), UGC (University Grants Commission) and Government of India paved a strong focus on multiple schemes for the usage of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) in the Country. The main aim of ICT during COVID was to provide a quality education to young minds. Online Learning motivated the younger generation and gave them the hope for making their future bright and built their foundation strong in a very advanced manner.

During pandemic many online portals were made use of as there was a sudden closure of the educational institutions. They kept the students so much engaged in providing them the techno-friendly applications. The swift transformation to online teaching opened the gates to many e - resources.

E-learning Platforms

1. **E - ShodhSindhu**: - The main objective of this e resource is to provide access to education electronic resources for students who have been doing their Higher education, in Universities, Colleges and so on.

2. **E - PG Pathsala: -** The great initiative was taken by most of the institutions in India and initiative of MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development). This e resource facilitates an easy way of campus learning to Post Graduate students in both online and offline access.

3. **SWAYAM (Study Web of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds):-** Lifelong learning process free online portal which consists of enormous learning courses and makes it high accessibility for both teachers and students.

4. **E - GyanKosh – A National Digital Repository :-** The main purpose of e - GyanKosh is to preserve, store, index and distribute the Digital Learning Resources.

5. **Gyan Dhara :-** The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) offers Gyan Dhara. It is an Internet audio counselling service.

6. **National Digital Library of India (NDLI):-** National and international digital libraries have collect and collate metadata which provides full text. NDLI is a government project of India.

7. **E - Yantra :-** Digital platform that boosts the young Indians to create utility based robotic applications for industrial agricultural health and Environmental sectors.

8. **FOSSEE (Free/ Libre and open source software for education project):-**FOSSEE is established to promote tools in academia and research.

9. **Shodhganga: -** It contains list of massive thesis which is maintained by Inflibnet Electronic Portal.

10. **VIDWAN:-** VIDWAN is database and network of research scholars in India with updates on resources for publication

11. **SAKSHAT:-** A portal available at free of cost for teachers and students facilitating lifelong learning process.

12. **NEAT (National Education Alliance for Technology):-** NEAT makes use of the artificial intelligence which makes the learners more conservativ to learn.

13. **You Tube :-** An online portal is available freely where we can collect information very easily, Since the pandemic period is highly used by teachers and students for educational purpose. Teachers have opened their own channels to upload videos and contents in you tube which are in regard to education matters.

14. **DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) :-** One of the well-known renowned national platform tools to uplift the school education from grade - 1-12. DIKSHSA provides and contributes large number of curriculums linked e-contents such as Energized Text Books (ETB's)

15. **LMS (Learning Management Solution) :-** A kind of learning functions that develops, conducts and hosts online courses. It is a quality of additional possibility to integrate tools related to social media education.

Opportunities during lockdown

- ❖ **Assignments :-** To keep the students much active and kill the boring hours from being simply at home , teachers assigned day to day assignment activities for students daily. This also enhanced the students to keep in touch with their subjects. Daily assignments brought a wider change to all the students.

- ❖ **Seminars :-** Like assignments seminars on the other side also motivated and brushed up the brains of students. Teachers asked their students to take even class seminars to know whether the students are in the track of their regular subjects.

- ❖ **Workshops :-** Many institutions and Universities organized one day, two days and one week workshop virtually to mentally improve the skills and pave different platforms even for students from various fields.

- ❖ **Webinars :-** Online seminars and conferences were organized by great resource persons in zoom and Google meet. Most of the webinars were conducted based on awareness program related to COVID 19 and importance of online education

- ❖ **Quiz :-** To refresh the minds of students, online quiz competitions were conducted virtually to encourage the students to potentially make them understand and revise their subjects through quiz competitions.

ICT initiatives of IGNOU during COVID 19

The IGNOU (The Indira Gandhi National Open University) adopted almost 184 programs with the help of ICT approaches. It brought about learner support system in providing additional service to about more than 4 million students and for the usage of academic counselling few social media platforms were made use of namely Twitter, Facebook, e-mails, whatsapp, Gyanvani, Gyan Darshan etc. Moreover 59 courses had been launched by IGNOU during the COVID- 19 Pandemic in digital platforms. The faculty and staff made use of extensive technology for online counselling session, continuous assessment, evaluation of assessment, practical's, official meetings, Conducting of examinations through WEAS (Web Enabled Academic Support) and other social platforms such as Google meet, Google Classrooms, Zoom meetings, CISCO, Microsoft teams etc. To seek the comfortability of the students and to make their way of learning very much effective and the University made a remarkable effort by organizing thirty-three thousand sessions in a digital manner during COVID and uploaded almost Seven hundred and eighty six courses on the Mobile app as an e- content.

Table - 1
Usage of Online Platform statistics in India

Online platform	Students
Zoom Meeting	300 Million
Google meeting	300 Billion
Educational Apps	900 Million
CISCO	84 Billion (internet video minutes per month)

Source: The Economic Times, June 2021

The above table indicates the usage of four main online learning platform statistics that are keeping the students highly active and are convenient to use. Thus, most of the Institutions preferred Google Meet app for teaching learning process.

II.   Government Initiatives:

The Indian Government and various stakeholders of education had explored the possibility of distance learning by adopting different digital technologies. Table – 2 represents state wise initiatives taken by the government in India.

Table – 2, Initiatives Taken by the Government in India (State Wise)

S.No	States & Union Territories	Interventions
1.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	Broadcast through Doordarshan, audio classes, Tele- classes on local cable TV network, repository of digital content, Google platform
2.	Andhra Pradesh	Vidhya Varadhi TV lessons, NISHTHA online courses, Online training for teachers and school safety, Health & teaching aptitude levels, bridge course material, whatsapp group chat, zoom meetings, Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat online quiz, DIKSHA
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	Radio school, E- Studio, Arun Prabha Channel, EDUSAT, Portal for educational administration, Local content in vernacular .
4.	Assam	DIKSHA, Energized Textbook, Virtual mode, Television &Radio classes, Vidya Daan Programme
5.	Bihar	Web- based learning, Mera Doordarshan Mera Vidyalaya, Digital Educational Portal, Vidyavahini App, Unnayan App,Bihar Career Portal and app, Mobile learning center, providing mobiles to school students, Anandshala
6.	Chandigarh	Online Talent Hunt, Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan, Maths and science clubs, writing skills,

		Virtual Reading mela, Book Mela, Online Language Fetsival, Inclusive education, Whats app group learning, Samagra Shiksha, Samvaad
7	Chhattisgarh	Padhai Tuhar Dwar, CG multimedia mobile app, EDUSAT network, Connected learning initiative, Code club, 8 Credit modular course, Tech4teachers, SAGES, Girls Education, Program, Har Kadam Beti ki Sang campaign, School Ek- Ehsaas, Haushle ki Dagar, E-Gupshup, Sampark Foundation.
8.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu	E-Gyan Mitra Portal, Mobile Applications, Vande Gujarat Channels, Home Visits, Report generation monitoring, Mission Vidhya Project
9.	Delhi	SCERT, Inclusive Education, Samagra Shiksha, Departmental Website,
10	Goa	Online teacher training programs, TV- lessons, Educational E- content, DIKSHA, JIO Embibe, Online Capacity building program, STEP app program
11	Gujarat	Parivar No Maalo Salamat ane Hufado, Gare Shikye, Assesment of Studetnts, Distribution of books, Virtual classes, Granthalaya Programme, Ekam Kasauti, Prashna Ukelo Inaam Melvo, Samulkyanam Building Programme
12	Haryana	TV learning, EDUSAT, Whatsapp & SMS, SHIKSHA MITHRA campaign, e-content creation, DIKSHA- Haryana
13	Himachal Pradesh	Content creation, Online Assessment, Har Ghar Pathshala
14	Jammu & Kashmir	Online Monitoring Tool, Career Information on Portal, DIKSHA, e- content
15	Jharkhand	DigiSath initiative, Teacher Professional Development, DIKSHA, Inclusive education, Vocational education, Liasion with civil society groups.
16	Karnataka	Vidyagama Program, Makkalvani Program, Samveda, DIKSHA,
17	Kerala	First- Bell online classes, White board, Thenkoodu Mobile app, Sameeksha, Mudrika Patam, DIKSHA, Shruthipatam, Mazhavilppovu, Digi-fit, Hello English, Sathrapatham, Rasakkootu
18	Ladakh	Tablet distribution, ICT/ Smart classrooms for HS/HSS,DD kashir, Kargil, DSEL online educational apps,
19	Lakshadweep	TALENP,SCERT, MPLAD, Share Class, you-tube, DIKSHA

20	Madhya Pradesh	DigiLEP program,Radio school, whatsapp group, Digital oritntiation, online classes, CM rise teacher professional development,
21	Maharashtra	Abhyasmala Campaign, Academic Leaning Calendars, Missed Call do kahani suno, Goshticha Shaniwar, JIO TV & JIO SAAVN, Google classroom, Counselling Portal, Dyanganga programme, A special English Hour, Online Shikshak Vyavasayik Vikas Manch, SWADHYAY, Vidhyarthi Mitra
22	Manipur	Jio- TV channel, Radio Class, e-learning, Lairik app, You tube, School Syllabi.
23.	Meghalaya	E-learning portal. DIKSHA- Meghalaya, CR projects, The Way Forward, MLEAD
24	Mizoram	TV channel, You- tube channel, NIKSHATA on DIKSHA, Online classes at DIET's, Health and Wellness programme, Early English Language Teaching, ECCE, Bharat- Swantanra Bharat
25.	Nagaland	Tele/ Radio online education, Supplementary study materials, inclusive Education, online Evaluation portal, teachers' app, teachers online transfer portal
26	Odisha	Odisha Shiksha Sanjog, Radio Pathsala, Shiksha Darpan, Madhu App, DIKSHA, Microsoft teams, Zoom meetings, Google meeting, E-Vidyalaya app, Pariksha Darpan,
27.	Puducherry	Community Radio, DTH TV channel, Vetri Nichiyam, online Textbooks, Digital Repository, you-tube, establishment of studio in the directorate
28	Punjab	Ghar Bethe Sikhiya Program, Harmonizing Learning, Radio programme, Virtual classes, Project based experimental learning, Punjab Educare app, KHAN academy, DIKSHA, EDUSAT.
29.	Rajasthan	Aao Ghar Mein Seekhein, e-kaksha, Shala darpan,
30.	Sikkim	Sikkim edutech app, Collaboration with Joy of Learning Foundation, provision of 32- inch smart android TV with connection TATA sky free subscription of 1 month, 3 months free subscription of Vedantu Channel
31.	Tamil Nadu	Video lessons through High – tech lab and Kalvi TV, video bridge courses, Video work books, you – tube, TNSCERT, DIKSHA, Vidya Daan, TNTP, SMC/SMDC
32.	Telangana	Energized Textbooks, DIKSHA- Telangana, Live- Phone In Program, Tic Tac Learning videos, Whatapp chat Box, Rashtriya Avishkar Saptah 2020, India Toy Fair 2021.

33.	Tripura	Whatsapp & Telegram group, Call center to clear doubts, Psychological counselling, All India Radio, Agartala, Ekto Khelo Ekto Pado, Vande Tripura
34.	Uttar Pradesh	Tic Tac learn, Gully Sim, Toon Masti, English Seekho, e-Pathsala 2.0, Doordarshan
35.	Uttarkhand	Continuous Learning plan (CLP), PRAGYATA, DIETs, Doordarshan, DIKSHA, OM e- vidya, Gyan Deep
36.	West Bengal	Learning through activity tasks, Banglar Siksha Portal, Banglar Siksha Durabashe, Audio – Visual learning.

Source: India Report Digital Education (2021), Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India

Table 2, shows the new initiatives taken by the government during COVID – 19 pandemic which had been implemented by states and union territories in India. All states and Union Territories have diversified their pattern of education system. Therefore, the new way learning has withdrawn the aspect of widening the gap in education.

Issues and Challenges faced in Online education: -

1. **Distance Learning: -** As the students had online classes, they were not able to have direct communication with their staff and this created distance learning and it wasn't easy for students and staff to interact with each other. The mode of distance learning had created a gap with present education system.

2. **Online Classes: -** Daily online classes are an effective measure implemented for the confident study pattern of the students. Though it's a great initiative taken up, there have been so many obstacles in online classes such as network issue, miscommunication, lack of routine work, irregularity of students, students being inattentive by the students and so on. Students began losing main focus in their academic life and they failed to show interest. Online classes became a hurdle to all.

3. **Unsupported Jobs: -** The pandemic era brought a big downfall to all kinds of jobs. Specifically, when we notice the educational institution management many teachers were forced to resign their jobs as the management was not able to pay them. As its online classes, many staff were not able to manage their time withholding personal and institutional works. They started to quit voluntarily as it was pressurizing them. And moreover, the teachers were not able to balance their own schedules. So many dropped out of teaching field.

4. **Time Prolonging: -** Due to limited staffs, staffs were not able to manage their time table schedule. They had to take extra classes with no option because they had to take additional classes. They did not have sufficient time to handle classes as they personally felt time is prolonging and they were unable to complete their online schedules on time. Time factor was an important component during online sessions.

5. **Technology an obstacle: -** The 21st century is much friendly with techno world. From kids to old age people technology has a pertinent role to play with current society. In the pandemic times without the usage of advanced technology online education wouldn't have taken place. Technology is an easy method in the hands of everyone. But still it wasn't easy for all to make use of it. Many teachers did not know how to implement it and Make use of it and secondly from the side of students all couldn't adopt it because few were not able to afford a laptop or mobile and few others did not know how to use the latest learning applications.

6. **Less Potential: -** If students are in offline class, they will be able to make their learning active and their routine activities very productive. Students will be much involved in offline classes but whereas in their online classes it has been noticed that students are being absent from their daily activities that are conducted through online mode and the problem of digital education gap developed lack of interest among the students circle. Less potential has been noticed and it led to losing of track in education.

Conclusion

The COVID – 19 pandemic has brought numerous changes in the current educational sector. Indian Education system has suffered a lot due the outbreak of COVID – 19. This pandemic has not only affected the students but also the low budget institutions and schools resulting in close – down the same. School closures have forced the education system to quickly devise and apply different modes of remote learning such as radio, television and various other types of online tools. Online learning has become smart way of learning in our environment which enhances featuring personalization, real- time feedback and intelligent interaction. Online mode of learning enables improvisation of strategies. Thus, the technology paves the way for education which helped the teachers and students to connect virtually through online classrooms, webinars and so on , But access to this education technology is not available to many students all over the Nation. E- Learning has become the need of the hour despite the problems like data limit, poor network connections and cost of internet. Students preferred online classes for their progressive online learning process. The technology will drive us towards virtual learning in the near future.

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