

# Covid-19 Impact on Education in India

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*Abstract: Corona virus (Covid-19) pandemic has significantly disrupted various sectors in India including oil and gas, automobiles, aviation, agriculture, retail, etc. We can't ignore that hardly a sector would remain unaffected by the crisis. The impact may be more or less. Same is with the education sector in India. The petrifying and severe impact of COVID-19 has shaken the world to its core. Further, most of the Governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In India too, the government as a part of the nationwide lockdown has closed all educational institutions, as a consequence of which, learners ranging from school going children to postgraduate students, are affected. In this paper I tried to explain the challenges faced by Indian education sector and students by the impact of corona virus with some possible solutions.*

Keywords: Covid-19 impact, Education, hurdles to students, online learning

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## Introduction:

As we know that due to corona Virus pandemic the state governments across the country temporarily started shutting down schools and colleges. As per the present situation, there is an uncertainty when schools and colleges will reopen. No doubt, this is the crucial time for education sector because entrance tests of several universities and competitive examinations are held during this period. Along with them how can we forget about board examinations, nursery school admissions, etc. The immediate solution of corona virus is necessary or if like these days pass then closure of schools and colleges does not even have short term impact in India but can even cause far-reaching economic and societal consequences. Let us tell you

that due to the closedown of educational institutes it is estimated to affect around 600 million learners across the world.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

- \* Find out the impact on education in India caused by covid-19 pandemic.
- \* Examine the Reach and effectiveness of E-Teaching and E-Learning.
- \* To find out the challenges of rural area students in this pandemic crisis.

### **India and Corona Virus:**

The COVID-19 pandemic in India is part of the worldwide pandemic of corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus. The first case of COVID-19 in India, which originated from China, was reported on 30 January 2020. As of 17 June 2020, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has confirmed a total of 3,55,052 cases, 1,87,715 recoveries (including 1 migration) and 11,922 deaths in the country.<sup>1</sup> India currently has the largest number of confirmed cases in Asia, and has the fourth highest number of confirmed cases in the world with the number of total confirmed cases breaching the 100,000 mark on 19 May and 200,000 on 3 June. India's case fatality rate is relatively lower at 2.80%, against the global 6.13%, as of 3 June. Six cities account for around half of all reported cases in the country – Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Pune and Kolkata. As of 4 May 2020, Lakshadweep is the only region which has not reported a case. On 10 June, India's recoveries exceeded active cases for the first time reducing 49% of total infections.

On 22 March, India observed a 14-hour voluntary public curfew at the instance of the prime minister Narendra Modi. It was followed by mandatory lockdowns in COVID-19 hotspots and all major cities. Further, on 24 March, the Prime Minister ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, affecting the entire 1.3 billion population of India. On 14 April, the PM extended the nationwide lockdown till 3 May which was followed by two-week extensions starting 3 and 17 May with substantial relaxations. Beginning 1 June the Government has started unlocking the country (barring containment zones) in three unlocks phases.

The United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have praised India's response to the pandemic as 'Comprehensive and robust,' terming the Lockdown restrictions

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.covid19india.org](http://www.covid19india.org)

as aggressive but vital for containing the spread and building necessary healthcare infrastructure. The Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT) noted the government's swift and stringent actions, emergency policy making, emergency investment in healthcare, fiscal stimulus, investment in vaccine and drug R&D. It gave India a score of **100** for its strict response. Michael Ryan, chief executive director of the WHO's health emergencies programme noted that India had tremendous capacity to deal with the outbreak owing to its vast experience in eradicating smallpox and polio. In June, India was ranked 56th of 200 countries in COVID 19 safety assessment report by Deep Knowledge Group. Other commentators have also raised concerns about the economic fallout arising as a result of the pandemic and preventive restrictions. The lockdown was justified by the government and other agencies for being pre-emptive to prevent India from entering a higher stage which could make handling very difficult and cause even more losses thereafter.

### **Education institutions struggling against covid-19:**

To stop spreading of corona virus we need to maintain social distancing, so lockdown is the tool for fulfilling it. That's the reason in India all the educational institutions closed for the safety of the students. Traditional teaching is discontinued and every institution turned towards the online teaching mode. Started taking measures to fight against the covid-19. The measures are as follows.

- Closed school, Colleges
- Cleaning and sanitisation of premises.
- Rescheduled the examinations.
- Started e-teaching through different platforms

### **Education sector: Impact and concern during covid-19:**

On 16 March, the union government declared a countrywide lock-down of schools and colleges. On 18 March, CBSE released revised guidelines for examination centres. This includes maintaining a distance of at least 1 meter between the students taking the exam with a class not having more than 24 students. If the rooms of the examination centres are small, divide the students and make them sit in different rooms. On 19 March, CBSE and JEE main examinations were postponed till 31 March.

On 20 March, Maharashtra government cancelled examinations for class 1 to 8 and promoted the students to the next classes, whereas examinations for class 9 and 11 were postponed till

15 April. Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education postponed board exams for class 10 and 12 and asked school principals to promote or detain students of class 5 to 8 based on their performance in previous terms. Board exams of class 10 and 12 were postponed in Kerala. Assam government cancelled all exams till 31 March. The Union Public Service Commission also postponed the interview for the Civil Services Examination 2019 to be held from 23 March to 3 April. The SSC exams in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry were postponed to 15 April.

All major entrance examinations are postponed including engineering, medical, law, agriculture, fashion and designing courses, etc. This situation can be a ringing alarming bell mainly in private sector universities. Maybe some faculties and employees may face salary cuts, bonuses and increments can also be postponed. 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.

Another major concern is that it can affect the paying capacity of several people in the private sector, which is catering to a sizeable section of the students in the country. Student counselling operations are also affected. Several institutions may pause faculty hiring plans for existing vacancies which in turn affect quality and excellence. Structure of schooling and learning includes teaching and assessment methodologies and due to closure, it will be affected.

Technology may play an important role in the lockdown period like study from home and work from home. In India, some private schools could adopt online teaching methods. Low-income private and government school may not be able to adopt online teaching methods. And as a result, there will be completely shut down due to no access to e-learning solutions. In addition to the opportunities for learning, students will also miss their meals and may result in economic and social stress.

Higher education sectors are also disrupted which again pave an impact on the country's economic future. Various students from India took admissions in abroad like the US, UK, Australia, China etc. And these countries are badly affected due to **COVID-19**. Maybe there is a possibility that students will not take admissions there in future and if the situation persists, in the long run then there will be a decline in the demand for international higher education also.

Another major concern is employment. Students those have completed their graduation may have fear in their minds of withdrawal of job offers from the corporate sector due to the current situation. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's estimates unemployment shortage from 8.4% in mid-March to 23% in early April. In the urban unemployment rate is 30.9%. We can't ignore that technology plays a crucial role in the educational system and the demand for the current situation is this only. Rural area students are facing major problems of attending the online classes without the laptops, smart phones and internet connections. So here online teaching mode is creating discrimination between the students with all the facilities and the students without the facilities.

### **Possible alternatives or solutions for interrupted education during covid-19:**

With the help of power supply, digital skills of teachers and students, internet connectivity it is necessary to explore digital learning, high and low technology solutions, etc. Students those are coming from low-income groups or presence of disability, etc. distance learning programs can be included. To provide support for digitalisation to teachers and students.

The necessity to explore digital learning platforms. Measures should be taken to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on job offers, internship programs, and research projects. EDtech reform at the national level that is an integration of technology in the present Indian education system. We can't ignore that at this time of crisis effective educational practice is needed for the capacity-building of young minds. Central Government and State need to take some measures to ensure the overall progress in the country. Time never wait, this tough time will also pass. Till then stay safe, stay at home.

### **Conclusion:**

With so many different ways to define e-learning and the educational approaches that can be taken in these learning environments, many colleges and extra curriculum activity classes have started making use of the technology. Through applications such as Zoom, various colleges especially engineering and designing colleges of Pune have undertaken the task of educating students through video conferencing. Undeterred by the security concerns which such video conferencing applications may pose, these applications are widely used and have proved to be beneficial and with a lot of advantages. There is picture, sound clarity which makes imparting of knowledge and learning effective for both the instructor and the student.

But at the same time, there is a glaring disadvantage as exams have to be postponed. Examinations cannot be conducted online. It is not only just the question of imparting continuous and uninterrupted learning during the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic but also the most important challenge for the instructor is to focus on the overall elements of a well-developed course. Developing a purposeful and well-defined online course, which supports the instructor and learner, means devoting the appropriate time and embedding the applicable course elements into the e-learning environment. Through the use of technology, we can, if not provide a strong alternative to the conventional education system, mitigate and compensate for the impediments posed and inconvenience caused due to COVID 19 pandemic to the education system and learners by extension. Learning, as they say, is a continuous and ever-evolving process. The educational institutions in India, from schools to universities, can use this present adversity as a blessing in disguise and make digital education a major part of the learning process for all learners in the future.

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