COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

Shashi Mawar[*]
Suman Mawar[**]
Anubha Devogourou[***]

ABSTRACT

COVID – 19 had a tremendous impact on education system, administrators learners and teachers. The education got delayed, recruitment was affected and increased responsibility of parents in educating their children. Pandemic had both positive and negative impact ranging from use of technology to decreased migration and loss of jobs even. Sudden shift in medical and Nursing education from human touch to learn skills to distant learning is a challenge for teachers and students to learn and practice skills.

***Keywords:** COVID – 19, recruitment, Pandemic, Practice Skills, WHO.*

Introduction

The petrifying impact of COVID-19 has shaken the world to its core. The education sector of India as well as world is badly affected enforcing worldwide lock down creating an impact on students' life. Indian government as a facet of the nationwide lockdown closed down academic institution and as a consequence all students were affected from school-going kids to postgraduate college students. Approximately 32 crores of learners stopped attending schools/colleges and all educational activities were discontinued. The outbreak ofCOVID-19 has taught us that "change is inevitable". It has worked as a catalyst for the educational institutions to grow more and opt for platforms with technologies, which have not been used before.

The education sector with Indian government has been fighting to survive the crises with a different approach and digitizing the challenges to wash away the threat of the pandemic and to bring the education to function properly.

Background

World Health Organization (WHO) named the virus as COVID-19 on 11th February 2020 and was declared as a pandemic on March 11,2020.

As per the UNESCO report, initially more than 90% of the world's student population has been affected since mid-April 2020 which later decreased to nearly 67% during June 2020. A major population of students i.e. about 14 crores of primary and 13 crores of secondary level students were affected in India.

All the educational institutes were closed, classes were suspended and all examinations including national entrance tests were postponed indefinitely. This lockdown situation opened many avenues to continue teaching and learning. It changed the system from the rigorous classroom teaching model to a new era of digital model and to choose the online modes. Initially, the educators and the students were quite confused and didn't understand how to cope up with the sudden crisis situation but later learnt to manage and challenges and opportunities.

---

[*]   Associate Professor, College of Nursing, AIIMS New Delhi, India.
[**]   Assistant Professor, Government Law College, Ajmer, India.
[***]   Tutor, College of Nursing, AIIMS, New Delhi, India.

Impact of COVID- 19 on Education Sector

In a nation like China it may be simpler to change to digital learning compared to other countries Even in a nation like U.S.A, there are low- pay students who don't approach broad bands and unable to use computerized learning arrangement (Study Abroad Life). The Indian situation may be worse as India is a developing country, and every student is not well equipped with the high-speed internet and digital gadgets.

Numerous advanced educational institutions in India are also not equipped with digital facilities right now to cope up with sudden change from traditional education set up to the online education system. There have been positive as well as negative impact on education

Positive Impact

- **There have been a Shift towards Blended Learning**: This mode of teaching has been adopted widely in teaching institutes and have encouraged all teachers and learners to be technology savvy. New ways of lesson delivery and assessments have created opportunities for a major transformation in the area of curriculum development and pedagogy. It also gives access to large pools of learners at a time.

- **Increased use of Learning Management Systems**: Several companies who have been developing and strengthening learning management systems for use educational institutions could utilize this opportunity to use learning management system

- **Increased use of Soft Copy of Learning Material**: During this period when learners were unable to attend regular classes soft copy materials for reference were used more often. All the assignments and requirements are submitted in the form of soft copies which made education ongoing smoothly.

- **Intersectoral Collaboration:** New opportunities where collaborative teaching and learning took new forms among faculty/teachers and many other professions across the world to benefitted from each other. Eg Technical support, IT support collaborated with academicians to organize webinars, google meets etc.

- **Online Meeting Demands: C**reated a massive rise in teleconferencing, virtual meetings, webinars and e-conferencing and telemedicine opportunities.

- **Improved Digital Literacy:** To move ahead and continue workpeople had to learn and use digital technology and resulted in increasing the digital literacy.

- **Worldwide Exposure:** Educators and learners got opportunities to interact with peers from around the world and learn from diverse resources. Learners adapted to international level community learning.

- **Time Management:** Self-learning approaches enabled learners to learn at their pace and was seen prominently. They customized learning as per their needs.

- **Negative impact**

- **Delay in Courses and Employment:** Regular classes were suspended and exams postponed, admission to schools and colleges got delayed. Students suffered a loss of nearly 3- 6 months delay. Recruitments were postponed, placement was also affected with companies which delayed recruitment due to lockdown. There was fear of withdrawal of jobs too.

- **Unpreparedness of Teachers and Students:** All teachers/students were not prepared for sudden transition from face to face learning to online learning. Most of the teachers just conducted lectures on video platforms such as Zoom, Google meet etc. which may not be real online teaching and learning.

- **Decreased Migration:** Some lost their jobs from other countries and the fresh students may not get their job outside India due to restrictions in travel caused by COVID-19. Hence, the fresh students may face difficulty in getting suitable employment. Students who have already got jobs through campus interviews may not be able to join their jobs due to lockdown. The Indians who have been doing their jobs abroad have lost their jobs.

- **Increased Responsibility of Parents to Educate their Children:** Since students were not attending schools it became an added responsibility of parents to educate their children. Some educated parents are able to guide but some may not have the adequate level of education

needed to teach children in the house. In developing countries like India, majority are middle class , low middle class and poor class couldn't afford to provide resources for online mode of learning for their children.

- **Nutritional requirement of students:** School children were provided supplemental nutrition mid day meal program by Government of India to school-age children nationwide. The closure of schools has serious implications on the daily nutrition of students.

- **Access to Digital World:** In India most of the students had limited or no internet access and were not able to afford computer, laptop or supporting mobile phones in their homes. Online teaching-learning created a digital divide among students. The lockdown has hit the poor students very hard in India as most of them are unable to explore online learning according to various reports. Thus, the online teaching-learning method during pandemic COVID-19 may enhance the gap between rich/poor and urban/rural.

- **Access to Global Education:** A large number of Indian students who are enrolled in many Universities abroad, especially in worst affected countries are now leaving those countries and if the situation persists, in the long run, there will be a significant decline in the demand for international higher education.

- **Payment of Schools, Colleges fee Got Delayed:** During this lockdown most of the parents have faced the unemployment situation. So, they may not be able to pay the fee for that particular time periods which may affect the private institutes and students.

Initiatives of Govt. of India on Education during Covid-19

Government of India took several measures to prevent spread of COVID-19. Countrywide lock-down of all educational institutions was declared on 16 March 2020. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) postponed all examinations of secondary and higher secondary schools on March 18, 2020 throughout India. CBSE released revised guidelines for conducting examination taking into account all preventive measures.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) postponed interview for the Civil Services Examination 2019. Similarly most of the state Governments and other educational boards postponed examinations due to outbreak of COVID-19.

The digital India vision of the government emerged as a tool for solving the crisis due to Covid-19.The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has made several arrangements, including online portals and educational channels through Direct to Home TV, Radios for students to continue learning. During lockdown, students are using popular social media tools like WhatsApp, Zoom, Google meet, Telegram, YouTube live, Facebook live etc. for online teaching learning system.

ICT initiative of MHRD (e-Brochure- https://mhrd.gov.in/ict-initiatives) is a unique platform which combines all digital resources for online education. The digital initiatives of MHRD for secondary as well as higher education are: DIKSHA, E-Pathsala, National repository of open educational resources, swayamprabha, e-PG Pathsala etc where online and offline books, reading material and videos are available for students

Online Learning in Medical and Nursing Field

There has been a dramatic change and made the shift to online learning inevitable. Close human contact that was the essence of clinical teaching now looks so distant. The current coronavirus pandemic has forced us to explore non-conventional ways of teaching-learning and assessment. Medical schools need to be prepared to train the next generation of digital learners using virtual learning environments. This does not mean that traditional classroom teaching will become obsolete, but there is now an opportunity to use both methods efficiently in a hybrid manner, to make the process of learning efficient and effective. Though online learning has been in vogue for many years now, its application in medical education, especially in India, is rather new. Some teachers have had the experience of online learning – some as facilitators, and others as 'students' – during earlier faculty development interventions but its use for undergraduate education is a relatively new phenomenon.

The 'theory' of online learning is more or less the same when compared to face-to-face instruction, but there are subtle differences and similarities. The educational cycle, the learning processes, need for interactivity, integration, assessment and feedback are similar in both formats. Means et al[8]define online learning as "'learning that occurs entirely (purely online learning) or partially (blended learning) through the internet".

Online Learning Formats

Online learning platforms now offer many opportunities that are being widely used around the world, such as online videos, tutorials, webcasts, video-conferences and virtual simulations. Online teaching-learning can be implemented through synchronous or asynchronous modes. The range of available choices for real-time communication extends from online discussion spaces to online chat rooms to online meeting applications. Classroom lectures have now been replaced by live-streamed online lectures, where technology allows recording and online dissemination. Small group discussions and tutorials have been replaced with interactive webinars using online platforms. Almost all these learning resources can also be easily accessed using smartphones. Information or learning resources can be posted on online platforms, such as websites and blogs. Videos can be shared to demonstrate essential clinical skills, procedural skills or communication skills. Lectures, problem-based learning, simulated lab work, sessions using virtual patients, and discussions can be conducted online, both in synchronous and asynchronous mode. All of these, if used effectively, can build in student engagement and interaction.

Online learning offers flexible learning experiences and allows learners the freedom to experiment with learning at their own pace. It is however not a replacement for face to face teaching. It is initially expensive to set up and requires familiarity with technology. Several skills are needed for online teaching.

Skills Needed

- **Communication Skills:** The need for clear and concise instruction is important which is feasible with good communication skills of the teacher.

- **Technological Skills:** Skills specific to the medium and content being taught, general computer literacy to be able to use word processors, spread sheets and presentations.

- **Pedagogical Skills:** A particular skills of the teacher to engage the students who are physically separated from the teacher as well from peers and to encourage them to apply what they are being taught.

- **Designing Skills:** Include understanding and applying instructional design principles using learning materials in different formats.

- **Managerial Skills:** Ability to manage time, demonstrating leadership, managerial and mentoring skills, handling assignments and record keeping are essential.

Technology for Online Teaching

There have been rapid advances in technology used to deliver educational content, and now even social media platforms have started exploring educational needs. Moore's law, which is often extrapolated to state that technology advances which almost doubles every eighteen months, suggests that training people in use of one technology will have limited effect. Further, with advances in technology, teaching methods are also expected to evolve:

- **Websites and Blogs:** Access to stored information and repositories; electronic versions of scientific papers

- **Multimedia Technology:** Appropriate combination of video / still images and sound

- **Asynchronous Modes:** Like threaded discussions, assignments

- **Interactive Resources**: Providing real time interaction between teachers and students

Online Assessment

Online assessment is used to monitor the progress of learners, to mark or grade assessments, and for record keeping of these data. The digital devices can range from simple devices such as smart phones or tablets, to laptops and desktop computers, and can go up to complex simulators and gaming devices.

With e-assessment, a whole range of different question formats are possible. These include multiple choice questions and their variations such as extended matching or assertion-reason type questions. But besides these, there is the possibility of using audio-visual triggers such as clinical photographs, X-rays, gross or microscopic images, graphs, or auscultation sounds. Simulations can be used to develop electronic patient management problems and virtual patient scenarios.

Electronic portfolios can be used to gather evidence of learning. Activity based assessment such as project-based assessment or reflective writing are useful methods which can assess behavioural competencies which are usually considered 'immeasurable'.

Conclusion

COVID-19 is an ongoing crisis; it is a real-time lesson in equity, leadership, social justice, ethics, and patient care. The world is facing unprecedented challenges in the face of a global pandemic. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has, to date, killed thousands worldwide (World Health Organization. This health crisis impacts not only frontline staff and clinical leaders but all systems and communities. COVID-19 has also already disrupted universities and academic institutions. Within the health field, schools of nursing are bracing for unique challenges related to our role in helping develop the next generation of care providers.

References

1.   UNESCO. COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response. Retrieved on WHO.

2.   National Medical Commission. Module on Online learning and assessment. 2020. New Delhi: pp 1- 57.

3.   WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard. Retrieved on May 20, 2020 fromhttps://covid19.who.int/Wikipedia.

4.   Covid-19 Pandemic in India. Retrieved onhttps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_India

5.   Challenges and Opportunities created by Covid-19 for ODL: A case study of IGNOU.

6.   International Journal for Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Filed, Volume-6, Issue- 5, Pg. 217-222.

7.   Study Abroad Life (2020). How Covid-19 will affect the Indian education system. Retrieved on May 25, 2020from https://www.studyabroadlife.org/how-covid-19-will-affect-the-indian-education-system/Pravat Ku. Jena 2020b.

8.   Online learning during lockdown period for covid-19 in India. International Journal ofEducational Research, Volume-9, Issue- 5(8), Pg.82-92.Misra Kamlesh 2020.

9.   Covid-19: 4 negative impacts and 4 opportunities created for education. Retrieved on May 25, 2020 fromhttps://www.indiatoday.in/education-   today/featurephilia/story/covid-19-4-negative-impacts- and-4-opportunities-created-for-education-1677206-2020-05-12Educationasia.in 2020.

10.   The Impact of COVID-19 on Education and Education Sectors, Know Here. Retrieved on May 25, 2020 from https://educationasia.in/article/the-impact- of-covid-19-on-education-and-education-sectors-know-hereMHRD notice (20 March, 2020).

11.   COVID-19 Stay Safe: Digital Initiatives. Retrieved on May 25, 2020 from https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Covid19.pdfMay   20, 2020 fromhttps://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/COVID- 19_pandemic_in_IndiaWikipedia, Education in India Retrieved on May 24, 2020fromJune26,2020fromhttps://en.unesco.org/covid19/ educationresponse.

○●○