IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The covid-19 crisis has affected every field disrupting all aspects of human life. Higher education system has been adversely affected by this pandemic. Students are stopped to go to colleges and Universities. All academic institutions are closed, educational activities are almost brought to an end .Despite of all these challenges Institutions of Higher Education are reacting positively. academicians are trying to continue teaching by online mode. New innovative technologies are emerging to assist academicians. The MHRD and UGC have launched many virtual platforms. During lockdown teachers and students are using popular social media tools like zoom, Google meet, Telegram app, YouTube channels. Monitoring the students' performance and their assessment is still a big challenge in present scenario.AI may use digital platform to resolve it. Virtual labs has developed the web enabled curriculum- based experiments to design remote learning..

Keywords: *e-Learning, Virtual Platform, Digital Gap.*
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Introduction

The spread of pandemic COVID-19 has drastically disrupted every aspect of human life on global level. The educational sector has also been suffered .This worldwide pandemic is imparting critical changes in teaching – learning process in higher educational institutions and the interaction between teachers and students has been influenced . Regular offline classes are suspended citing threat to the lives of teachers, other staff in academic institutes, students and aspirants preparing for competitive exams. Almost all educational activities have been brought to an end as the campuses of educational institutions are closed.

Millions of students in India have stopped to go to their colleges / universities higher education system is facing a lot of challenges and problems. Despite of all these challenges, higher education departments are devoted and determined to ensure the continuity of teaching. Shifting classroom teaching in online mode is such a reinnovation in teaching – learning methodology which has generated a new virtual culture of teaching learning even though we are adapting this new era learning, but still there lie obstacles to make virtual teaching learning successful and meaningful. Education sector can be steered forward with more technological innovations and advancements.

Objectives

Objectives of this research paper are:

- To highlight the impact of **Covid-19** on higher educational sector.
- To capture the challenges faced by higher educational sector.
- To study the effectiveness of e- learning.
- To put suggestions regarding advancements and improvement needed in **COVID** and post **COVID** scenario.

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Challenges

- Students who were aspiring to take admissions in their dream college/university of professional or general higher education are now in a doubt and getting it difficult to take decision for further higher education.

- Many institutions are facing difficulty in maintaining their financial status which in turn is reflected in qualitative education.

- Delayed starting of academic sessions, postponding and cancellation of university and other exams.

- To ensure the effectiveness of online learning is also a big challenge.

- Due to unequal socio-economic background all student are not capable of availing the facility of required devices threat of digital gap is arising as rural and under privileged students are deprived of technology.

- Due to cancellation of recruitment exams and placement activities, passout degree holder students are facing great challenge in getting jobs. corporate sectors are withdrawing job offers. Student are being depressed. their interest towards studies may diminish.

- Most of the teachers and students are not well versed with modern technology. To make them tech friendly is also a big challenge.

- Lack of student involvement during online classes has resulted raised no absentees, Less sincerity in classes poor foucs and poor performance. To overcome this drawback and to maintain the interest of students towards their virtual classes is a great challenge.

- Students assessment system has been severely affected. Promoting them not only causes direct impact but also a further threat for their overall career and occupation.

- E-learning depends on accessibility and convenience of mobiles, laptops, tablets, internet connection and electricity but poor internet and electricity facilities in villages/ remote area is a big challenge.

Various Platforms of e-Learning

Higher education institutions in india have taken positive efforts and have developed a wide strategies to face the crisis. The MHRD and UGC have made arrangements by launching many virtual platforms. Teachers as well as students are using popular educational apps like Zoom, Google, meet, You tube live teachmint, Telegram etc. Digital initiatives have been proved to be effective. Some important emerged approaches are as follows **e-ADHYAYAN** is a platform to provide 700 + books for P.G courses. Play list of video contents is also facilitated.

- **e-PG-PATHSHALA** consists high quality curriculum based interactive e- contents in 70 subjects including maths, arts, social science.

- **e-YANTRA** is a competition to encourage innovative project its goal is to complement existing higher education system worldwide.

- **Vidyamitra** is an integrated e- cotent portal.

- **Swayam** has been developed by MHRD and AICTE cooperatively. It offers free access and hosts courses at UG and PG level and also for school level.

- **e-Gyankosh** IGNOU has redesigned and reactivated this popular educational resource portal with advanced features .

National Digital Library of India (NDLI)

It has been developed by IIT, kharagpur to help students to prepare for competitive and entrance exam available to access through mobile app. **DISH TAVO:** The main motto of this platform is to provide students with lectures both in online and offline modes students can directly watch video lecture and download the related study material. They can also ask college to provide them video lecture if they don't have assess of internet. **FOSSEE** Promotes use of floss tools to improve the quality of education. **VIDWAN** is a premier database and national research networks having profiles of scientists researchers and academicians which establishes communication directly with experts.

- **Virtual Labs** provide remote assess to labs in various disciplines of science, engineering and technology.

- **Google Classroom** allows teachers to conduct virtual classes, online teaching, distributing study material. Students can organize their daily educational activities.
- **Zoom** allows two way communication in cloud video conferencing.
- **Think Link:** Student can be easily rostered to think link by teacher. Students are empowered to work on projects and assignments using text, photos, voice and videos.
- **CISCO- WEBEX ,** Microsoft teams, teachmint, ez- talks , etc are powerful and useful apps for online teaching –learning .
- **Advantages** Indian students who were interested in foreign institutions for higher education are not allowed to go there due to health and travel risk . They are now preferring Indian institutes. Money, mind and resources are retained now in our country.

To overcome the challenges brought by COVID crises and to enhance learning process for students, e- learning is the only mode in current scenario. Students can now better assimilate information. It becomes much significant for shy, introvert and slow learners.

Because of flexibility in delivering and lectures and accessing contents as well as resources, it has now become popular among students. They can learn lessons topics according to them needs and interests virtual presentation make difficult topics more interesting and easy to understand. It saves time and money as students need not to travel to institutions from for apart students can opt and communicate with any expirt as they are not limited to teach from their teachers only.

Disadvantages of Online Learning

Online learners may get distracted easily due to poor focus poor internet connection. It needs and depends on technology, any error or interruption may appear any time which may result in decreased interest and motivation both in teachers and students it may cause physical and mental health risks as spending many hours in front of mobiles ,laptops may cause back pain, eyes sight problems and other health issues . There is no any provision for real attendance of students. Socio- economically underprivileged students cannot afford it, thus threat of digital gap is being created. Transparent assessment is not as possible as in offline mode.

Suggestions

- In order to make e- teaching learning really successful, govt. should provide necessary infrastructure and facilities at remote places so that students living in rural areas can be facilitated for virtual learning.
- For underprivileged students internet assess and required devices must be made available free of cost .
- Parameters for admissions assessments must be revised.
- Prestigious institutions are advanced but general colleges and state universities still need transformations and advancement in technology.
- Knowledge / skill must be shared among various institutions through collaboration.
- Teachers as well as students must be well introduced with technical and technological institutes may play a significant role in this training.
- Regular feedback sessions quizzes and many similar activities must be organized and responses must be observed and analysed.
- Rapid growth of online learning platforms has raised the need of quality assurance so that students can get the best study material, audio- visual explanations without wasting time in choosing it.
- A blend of online and offline studies have to be adopted as we may have to live with corona for a long time.
- There should be provision in apps for taking attendance of students really joining online classes.

Conclusion

The whole world is suffering and facing the crisis of COVID-19. Nobody knows how long this situation will continue Higher education departments, like all other sectors have to move forward gradually and teaching – learning must be carried on continuously. UGC and MHRD have launched many platforms for online teaching- learning. Academicians and institutions are doing their best by

creating their own channels, providing AV between and study materials. Virtual education is the only solution in this crisis period. It may be best also if it can be assessed by all sections of society and further advancements done in it. Academicians students and govt. must stand unitedly so that it can be proved that learning is a continuous process which can never stop.

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