# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION IN INDIA

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*Abstract:*

*The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the education system in the world. Closures of schools, institutions and other learning spaces have brought difficulties for students, teachers, and parents. Lockdown and social distancing policies have significantly changed traditional educational practices. Face to face teaching has been disappeared in several schools, colleges and universities. No one could anticipate the potential risks and opportunities which are associated with this sector due to this pandemic. Setting up many new standard operating procedures for reopening of schools and colleges is another big challenge for this sector. Implementation of innovative and alternative educational system and assessment strategies are required to handle this pandemic situation. Introduction of digital learning is an opportunity which is provided to us during this pandemic situation. However, this digital system has requirement of network infrastructures, computers, and internet access which is also challenging job. Various strategies have been designed by IT sector so that educational technology, zero-fee internet educational resources, free online learning resources, and broadcasts teaching can be used. The objective of this paper is to find out both the positive and negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on online teaching and learning and indicate the way forward. This paper also examines a few such initiatives taken by government which have contributed significantly to making it possible for education to reach the remotest corners of the country with the help of technology related tools.*

*Keywords:* *Internet Use, Learning, Pedagogy, Teaching*

**INTRODUCTION:**

The corona virus had a global impact on education system of India. The education system of India need to take radical changes in the education sector until the corona virus is eradicated. The epidemic of corona virus has changed the education system around the world. The lockdown in India had created devastating effect on more than million student's education in India. The pandemic has forced the Education Sectors to shift dramatically to virtual and blended modes of teaching and

learning using various Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and has radically accelerated the pace and urgency of various ongoing technology-driven educational initiatives. Students and teachers are now relying on various online platforms to adopt new pedagogical methods to learn and teach. This epidemic is also an opportunity for students to make decisions in this uncertain world, to make informed decisions, to solve problems in a constructive way, and most importantly to adapt to situations where skills need to be learned. To ensure that these skills will be elementary for all students, flexibility must be developed in our educational systems. Online education system has also created lot of confusion in India and students are unable to follow their regular academic routines. To overcome these problems most of the institutions have taken initiative to facilitate telecommunication, Skype call, Zoom application, Google Class room and Microsoft Teams to reduce the distance in education. It is training students and teachers to use virtual classrooms and technology to facilitate the exchange of information. Undoubtedly, this is a very important time for students. Therefore, the objective of the study is studying Impact of covid-19 on education and different initiatives taken by government.

## OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

- To highlight the various positive impact of covid-19 on students and teachers due to covid-19 pandemic in India.
- To discuss various challenges that have to be faced in adoption of online learning tools.
- To enlighten various measures taken by government for improvement of education sector during this pandemic situation.
- To enlist some effective suggestions that should be taken for continuing education during the pandemic situation.

## METHODOLOGY:

The research is based on national and International reports of various agency on Covid-19. As it is not feasible to collect data from outside due to lockdown, so data is collected from different authentic websites, journals and e-contents relating to impact of Covid-19 on educational system of India.

## INITIATIVES OF GOVT. OF INDIA ON EDUCATION DURING COVID-19

During the time of Pandemic, there is technology that is a source of hope and lifeline in many ways. Considering the Education Sector, Educational communities have taken various steps to continue the process of learning for students amid pandemics.

➢ **National Level ICT Initiatives:**

Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has undertaken several initiatives to support students and educators. To tackle the learning gaps created due to pandemic, some of the already

existing digital platforms are used like Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA), e-Pathshala, National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER).ICT tools like TV, Radio are also used during this situation to reach a larger number of target audiences. Some of such widely used initiatives on a larger scale in the country are discussed in detail below.

(i)     **DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing):** DIKSHA is a national platform can be accessed through a web - portal and mobile application. Under the guidance of its national boards of education (CBSE) and NCERT, the content has been created by more than 250 teachers who teach in multiple languages. The app is available to use offline. It has more than 80,000 e-Books for classes 1 to 12 created by CBSE, NCERT in multiple languages. The contents can also be viewed through QR codes on textbooks. As of July 2020, it is estimated that over 60 crore ETBs are being printed this year in India by 35 states and Union territories, with more than 30 crore content plays and 200 crore page hits already on DIKSHA.

(ii)    **Manodarpan:** In order to provide psychosocial support to students, the Ministry of HRD launched the initiative MANODARPAN during the challenging times in the Pandemic. COVID crisis has brought stress, anxiety, and fearfulness along with other behavioural issues. Understanding these challenges Indian government felt the need to focus on the mental wellbeing of the students. The platform covers a wide range of activities to provide psychological support to the students, counselling services, online resources, and a helpline. Primarily designed to help students, the platform has many advisories for teachers to follow during the lockdown period on how to make use of the interactive online classes, peer learning, identifying professional support, etc.

(iii)   **Swayam Prabha TV Channels:** 'SWAYAM' stands for Study Webs of Active Learning for Young-Aspiring Minds.32 channels are devoted on a 24x7 basis to telecast high-quality educational programs by the MHRD. The channel covers both school education (class 9th to 12th) and Higher Education in a wide range of subjects like engineering, vocational courses, teacher training, performing arts, social sciences and humanities subjects, law, agriculture, and many more. Reaching out to students through television has helped with the challenge of remote learning in India amid the COVID-19 crisis.

(iv)    **All India Radio:** For the vast reach and depth of dispersion of various educational resources to the remotest region of the country, All India Radio (AIR) is being used to broadcast virtual classes and other educational content through regional channels across the country. The broadcasts focus on activity based learning. 289 Community Radio Stations have also been used to broadcast content for the National Institute of Open

Schooling (NIOS) for grades 9 to 12.The purpose of this special educational radio program is to provide regular study to students of the state at home during the lockdown period. The program includes class wise and subject wise educational resources. Many states have been utilizing this national platform to reach every student of their state.

➢ **State Level Initiatives:**

States governments have been making various efforts to continue students' education from their homes during the lockdown reach everyone using some form of technological tools. State governments attempted innovative ways of providing syllabus-based e-content. Here are some of the initiatives by these states.

**(i)** **Chhattisgarh - Education at your doorstep Initiative:** The state government released its platform - 'Padhai Tuhar Duar' - 'Education at your Doorstep' Portal to tackle the impact of the COVID crisis in the education sector. The platform has a mix of resources like live classes, offline video lectures, simulations, animations, worksheets, podcasts, etc. The state education department has worked on creating around 45000+ virtual schools, where the teachers engage with their students and provide the teaching and learning material daily.

**(ii)** **Kerala - KITE initiative:** Kerala government launched virtual classes through Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), an educational television channel launched in 2005 with the vision of taking the benefits of technology-driven education to grass root levels. A program of Online or Digital classes named "First Bell" was devised to be broadcasted through VICTERS Educational Channel. To help the teachers for the transition to virtual teaching, specific ICT training was provided to 81000 primary school teachers for 5 days. The teachers used the SAMAGRA resource portal for self-learning with the help of numerous digital contents available in the portal. Having their TV channels: KITE VICTERS and KITE was a big advantage and a strong preparation for the state to shift to a digital way of education.

➢ **Madhya Pradesh - DigiLEP Initiative:** The state government of Madhya Pradesh has been swiftly responding to the current COVID crisis by introducing IT-based platforms in the education sector. Addressing the challenges of the students who do not have adequate availability of high-speed internet to access online resources, in April 2020 the state government launched the DigiLEP initiative. DigiLEP stands for Digital Learning Enhancement Program, which takes the advantage of the WhatsApp platform to provide learning opportunities. In addition to this, the state has been actively engaging with other possible ICT-enabled interventions. Initiatives like, collaborating with All India Radio (AIR)

to conduct Radio School, utilizing DIKSHA platform for providing educational resources for the students and teachers.

> **Individual Initiatives**

Independent initiatives by various profit, non-profit organizations, and individuals have also been an incredible force behind the nation's collective effort to utilize technology to make learning possible for so many students. Here are some of such initiatives in India.

**(i) SmarterED Platform:** SmarterED is an initiative by Lenovo, the global technology leader, in collaboration with Vidyalaya, a non-profit that connects volunteer teachers with students. It is a platform designed to bridge the teacher-student gap in India, especially in the time of online learning. .

**(ii) Digital Daan**: Digital Empowerment Foundation has started a movement to collect and encourage people to donate all kinds of old and used (but functional) Smart phones, Laptops, Tablets, Desktop/Computer (Monitor & CPU), Printers, Projectors, cameras and any such device which can help someone to learn virtually.

**(iii) Individual Efforts of the Teachers:** Despite the efforts of the national and state authorities, many teachers have gone out of their way to support their students in all possible ways. Many teachers have been going for such innovative approaches to problem-solving using limited resources while taking online classes. In rural areas, few teachers are using the tool loudspeakers to teach their students following the protocols of social - distancing at the same time. This way lot of teachers have potentially explored various ICT tools to teach their students in the pandemic.

**POSITIVE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION:**

Though the outbreak of COVID-19 has created many negative impacts on education, educational institutions of India have accepted the challenges and trying their best to provide seamless support services to the students during the pandemic.

- Educational institutions moved towards blended mode of learning. It encouraged all teachers and students to become more technology savvy.

- Use of learning management systems by educational institution sopened a great opportunity for the companies those have been developing and strengthening learning management systems for use educational institutions.

- Pandemic has created a massive rise in teleconferencing, virtual meetings, webinars and e-conferencing opportunities.

- The pandemic situation induced people to learn and use digital technology and resulted in increasing the digital literacy.

- Educators and learners are getting opportunities to interact with peers from around the world.
- Use of electronic media has improved for sharing as students related queries are resolved through e-mail, SMS, phone calls and using different social Medias like WhatsApp or Facebook.
- Students are able to manage their time more efficiently in online education during pandemics.
- During the pandemic situation most of the students preferred ODL mode as it encourages self-learning providing opportunities to learn from diverse resources and customized learning as per their needs.

**DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES:**

In the new world of online learning, there are so many problems and challenges which are to be faced by teachers and students and due to the enactment of lock down these challenges have become more critical. These are:

- **Learning Style and Cultural Challenges:** Online learning provides resources and study materials via the online route and to motivate the student to learn by themselves in contrast to the ordinary classroom environment, teacher motivates the students to learn using the available material. Teacher student learning environment of online learning is totally different from the classroom. Another point to be noted that in case of online learning, student do not have anyone to around him who will verify the correctness of the available information. Student may assume that the information he is studying is the correct one. Further, there might be a problem of students' learning capacity that may never remain same. Classroom learning can solve this problem by providing the teacher on demand basis but online route is unable to solve that problem so effectively.

- **Pedagogical E-learning Challenges:** Online course contents are to designed according to the requirement of 'end customer' as in that case there is the absence of the learning level, understanding level, memory retention and recall level and other measurable factors relating to delivery and receipt of education. In order to design the contents of these type of courses, academicians must be update themselves about the latest technological developments in the field of Information and Communications Technology so that they will be able to deliver useful content to the students in an effective way.

- **Technological Challenges:** Technological issues is one of the problems that is discovered with the introduction of e-learning products and system. There is not a single product which satisfies all parties a difficult one. For example 'Blackboard' a popular e-learning product is restricted to discussions, updates, information updates, notices and other messages from a single vendor only and restricts student engagement due to its unique features, limiting the

academic staff and the students to the borders of the environment. . Many other IT tools have these type technological issues which restrict the adoption and the popularity of e-learning tools.

- **Technical Training Challenges:** In order to implement online teaching, there is a need to train the students and teachers about these tools. It is important for the teacher to familiarize himself or herself with these tools so that they will be able to understand how to use the tools and how to teach about this to gain the maximum benefit from it. With the use of these tools, they can help their students in understanding these tools thoroughly and students can learn the most from it. A teacher who understands these tools in a very good way will be able to sort out students' doubts, questions and queries about this.

- **Time Management Challenges:** Online learning tools can be accessed at any time in the day as it is not limited like the general classroom hours (09 am to 05 pm). In the absence of a defined usage time, i.e. there is the possibility of a student trying to contact or get the attention of the teacher, at a time slot when the teacher is offline from the system as he does not know, when the teacher will be using the system. To solve this problem, there is a need to create proper batches to interact with the students. In addition with other challenges related to the system – internet availability, electricity availability, workload of the teacher and student etc. are also experienced by students and teachers in the present, COVID-19 scenario.

## SUGGESTIONS:

- India should develop creative strategies to ensure that all children must have sustainable access to learning during pandemic COVID-19.

- Immediate measures are required to lessen the effects of the pandemic on job offers, internship programs, and research projects.

- Govt. and educational institutes should plan to continue the educational activities maintaining social distancing. 30-40% students and teachers may attend schools/colleges in two shifts per day to carry on educational activities by obeying guidelines for COVID-19.

- At current times, access to technology and internet is an urgent requirement. So, the digital capabilities and the required infrastructure must reach to the remotest and poorest communities to facilitate the students to continue their education during the pandemics.

- Some significant issues associated with distance learning strategies like the availability and access to digital devices with internet connectivity, the need for safe learning spaces, creating capabilities for teachers, families and students to operate and navigate digital devices, and engaging lesson plans for disabled students and other marginalised groups should be addressed by Govt. and the stakeholders.

**CONCLUSION:**

This study has highlighted various impacts of Covid-19 on education system in India. The recent pandemic created an opportunity for change in pedagogical approaches and introduction of virtual education in all levels of education. UGC and MHRD have lunched many virtual platforms with online depositories, e-books and other online teaching/learning materials. Combination of the traditional technologies (radio, TV, landline phones) with mobile/web technologies to a single platform with all depositories would enhance better accessibility and flexibility to education. All service providers need to be mobilized to provide proper access to the educational service platforms. Virtual education is the most preferred mode of education at this time of crisis due to the outbreak of Covid-19. The post Covid-19 education seems to be an education with widely accepted online/virtual education which may perhaps be a parallel system of education.

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