

# Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education in India – An Analysis

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## Abstract

*Corona virus has seriously affected various sectors in India. We cannot ignore hardly a single sector which has been unaffected by this pandemic. The impact may be the same as with the Indian education sector. The impact of COVID-19 on higher education has negatively affected the academic year. Lock down and post lock down period have enforced very bad effect on the schools/colleges and all educational activities. But, this change is inevitable in the context of health of students. Now educational institutions have to sustain with technologies (ICT), which have not been used before. They are fighting to survive with this tiny virus. This paper highlights some new born challenges in the Indian educational sector.*

**Keywords:** Indian education sector, Corona virus, Lock down and post lock down period, ICT

## Introduction

The traditional education system in India follows chalk and board system, though the practice of ICT aids in classrooms was introduced many years ago still the physical teaching is famous in this country. Reputed universities in India are teaching their students with ICT tools and have smart classrooms. But many first grade colleges in India are not equipped with modern technical tools. During this corona period education for students has not become flexible compared to other countries. The pandemic Covid-19 has compelled the human society to stick on to social distancing. It has seriously disturbed the education sector which is a significant determinant of a country's future. According to the source from Wikipedia, It has affected more than 90 percent of total world's student population during mid April 2020. It has affected more than 120 crores of students and youths across the planet. More than 32 crores of students have been affected by the corona wise across India.

The lockdown during covid has forced many educational institutions to cancel their classes, examinations, internships etc. and enforced teachers and students to go for the online modes. In the beginning both the educators and the students were confused and could not understand to cope up with this sudden crisis which compelled the closure of the educational activities. Seriously, COVID created many challenges and opportunities for the educational institutes to strengthen their infrastructure.

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## Steps taken by Educational Institutions in India

- Closed schools
- Online teaching mode
- Postponed or rescheduled the examinations
- Cleaning and sanitisation of premises.
- Consideration of long term uncertainty etc.

This accidental situation raised due to Covid-19 has resulted in large scale disturbances in life of students. The impact on education sector has been significant with the disruption of academic schedules at higher education institutions due to the sudden suspension of classes for long period. Colleges struggled a lot for completing courses within the academic year. Students and teachers remain confined to their homes, colleges tried to keep engaged with their students virtually and completing their courses. While most governmental education institutions are not equipped to digitally connect with students and conduct online classes.

## Objectives

The present research paper is based on the following objectives

- To highlight various challenges raised due to covid in higher education in India
- To enlist some effective suggestions for continuing education during covid period.

## Methodology

This study focus on secondary data. Information is collected from magazines, internet sources and journals. Due to time constraint descriptive method has been adopted.

## Challenges in Higher Educational Institutions during Covid -19

Colleges are shut down and students are confined to four walls at home with limited contact with friends and colleges postponed or cancelled examinations. Likewise, top colleges like closed and started online classes. Institutions like IITs and IIMs all closed their campuses and started classes virtually. Even standardized tests like GMAT, GRE, SATs, ACT remain postpones and the future of many students still in dilemma! Certainly, there is a panic situation all around and educators and students. Government is also confused to take next steps and continuity with respect to educational objectives.

- Students do not have a result because exams either did not happen or were left in the middle. Many of them face uncertainty as to their future because their next steps further education or careers are dependent upon them clearing their college level exams
- Both teachers and students faced a degree of uncertainty with respect to teaching and future.
- All entrance examinations are postponed like engineering, medical, law, agriculture, fashion and designing courses, etc. This situation created havoc in private sector universities and colleges some faculties and employees are face salary cuts, bonuses and increments.
- Technology is playing a major role in this lockdown period like study from home for students and work from home for teachers. In India, both public and private college have adopted online teaching aids. Government colleges with poor infrastructure are struggling to adopt online teaching methods Therefore, there will be completely shut down due to no access to e-learning solutions.
- Another major concern is employment. Students those have completed their graduation during this period may have fear in their minds of poor job offers from the IT and other 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%.

- Admission process got delayed, due to uncertain lockdown. Student suffered a loss of nearly 6 months for the academic year of 2020-21 and the as students would face much difficulty in filling this gap.
- Not all teachers and students are good at online teaching aids because it is a sudden transition from chalk and board learning to online learning. Most of the teachers are just conducting lectures on video platforms such as Zoom, Google meet etc and preparing MCQs without any dedicated online learning platform.
- Students may not get their jobs abroad due to restrictions caused by COVID-19. Hence, the fresh students who are likely to enter the job market shortly may face difficulty in getting suitable employment.
- Many students who have already got letter from companies for jobs through campus interviews may not be able to join their jobs due to lockdown.
- The pandemic has made educational institutes to invest in educational apps and ICT tools development for easy learning and staying connected to lessons and teachers but it is creating heavy financial burden for both government and private managements.

In the phase of a pandemic, technology has emerged as a major lifesaver for educational institutions. Technology has become the driving force that maintains connections between students and colleges. The future of education will find no room to ignore the utilization of technology since it is the best time to empower and well equipped learning in an age that is integrating technology as a way of life.

### **Suggestions**

Now that Educational Technology or 'Ed-Tech' has become a buzz word and we have to go for effective digitalization of the curriculum and complete reliance virtual teaching and learning. Some suggestions are pointed out as follows,

- Colleges especially government educational institutions which suffer from lack of infrastructural bottlenecks can work towards the development of an online book bank where students can have the opportunity to access books, journals, notes, documents and study materials whenever students expect them.
- Both private and government colleges organize training sessions or programmes for teachers, counsellors and placement consultants for capacity building and knowledge enhancement.
- Government should take immediate measures to improve job offers, internship programmes and research projects for fresh graduates.
- Educators can engage students in an interactive 3D model to grab attention and motivate them. Both students as well as educators have to stick to advanced technology. Educational apps with AR features help students study and practice with full digital content.

### **Conclusion**

During this short period of covid time, the challenges would be in two ways. Online platforms should include multiple options for meeting practical teaching needs and even the uninterrupted availability and cost of electricity. It is the time to shed light on advanced technological tools in an educational institutions. Now covid has given opportunity for educators to reinvent themselves in advanced skills. Now we need to rethink that, how educational institutions can be so effective for students' overall cognitive and non-cognitive development with e-learning tools.

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