

TRANSFORMATION OF INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic is the humanity's most dangerous crisis that disrupts every aspect of life. It is the biggest challenge for every sector how to face this problem. Education sector is extremely affected by this pandemic. Due to nationwide lockdown in India, all the schools, colleges and universities across the country are closed. The Government of India takes major initiatives towards transformation in Indian education system via major announcements in the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan'. The present scenario of Indian education is totally changed. Now the traditional education system is transformed into online education system during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers and students have got the opportunity to learn lots of new skills.

Keywords: *Digital Transformation, e-Learning, Innovative, Skills, Technology.*

COVID-19 pandemic disrupts the normal life and smooth working of every people across the globe. Due to this pandemic, online education seems to become essential and safe way to impart educational knowledge for acquiring new skills. Online learning helps to maintain 'social distancing' and control on the spread of this disease to some extent. Moving towards digital learning with the use of unique and innovative methods has now become the new normal for schools and colleges. It is the basic need of the hour.

Objectives of the study

1. To identify the status of Indian education system during COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To study the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education sector.
3. To know the need of transformation of Indian education system.
4. To evaluate the various government schemes of education sector in India during COVID-19 pandemic.
5. To aware the society about the use of digital

technology in the field of education during this pandemic.

Research methodology

The research study is based on secondary data obtained from magazines, thesis, reports, newspapers, books and the like.

History of covid-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing serious global pandemic of corona virus disease 2019 that is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The virus was first identified in Wuhan, a city in the Hubei province of China in December 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern regarding COVID-19 on 30 January 2020, and later declared a pandemic on 11 March 2020. In India, the first case of corona virus was confirmed in Kerala on 30 January 2020. As of April 14, 2021, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has confirmed 1365704 active cases, 12336036 discharged and 172085 deaths due to COVID-19 in India.

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Lockdown and unlock phases in India

Table 1
Lockdown and Unlock Phases in India

NATIONWIDE LOCKDOWN		
PHASES	TIME PERIOD	NUMBER OF DAYS
Phase 1	25 March 2020 – 14 April 2020	21 days
Phase 2	15 April 2020 – 3 May 2020	19 days
Phase 3	4 May 2020 – 17 May 2020	14 days
Phase 4	18 May 2020 – 31 May 2020	14 days
UNLOCK PHASES		
Unlock 1.0	1 June 2020 – 30 June 2020	30 days
Unlock 2.0	1 July 2020 – 31 July 2020	31 days
Unlock 3.0	1 August 2020 – 31 August 2020	31 days
Unlock 4.0	1 September 2020 – 30 September 2020	30 days
Unlock 5.0	1 October 2020 – 31 October 2020	31 days
Unlock 6.0	1 November 2020 – 30 November 2020	30 days
Unlock 7.0	1 December 2020 – 31 December 2020	31 days
Unlock 8.0	1 January 2021 – 31 January 2021	31 days
Unlock 9.0	1 February 2021 – 28 February 2021	28 days
Unlock 10.0	1 March 2021 – 31 March 2021	31 days
Unlock 11.0	1 April 2021 – 30 April 2021	30 days

The table 1 shows that nationwide lockdown in India is from phase 1 to phase 4. This situation is not good for the economy's development process. But the main reason of lockdown is to save the life of the people via maintaining social distancing. No doubt, lockdown phases in India disrupt the education initially but after some time online education starts that give new direction towards the establishment of digital infrastructure in the Indian economy. During unlock phases still education sector is based on online study. It takes time to become everything normal. To fulfill this target, many initiatives take and discover new path especially which are in favour of our new generation. The lockdown has accelerated to adopt online classes to get knowledge that give golden opportunity to students to develop skills through online learning in a more efficient way.

Government Initiatives to Promote Online Learning Resources

DIKSHA: DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) is an online national platform for school education. This revolutionary initiative is taken by National Council of Educational Research

and Training (NCERT), Ministry of Education, Government of India. It offers engaging learning material relevant to the prescribed school curriculum, to teachers, parents and students. DIKSHA makes it possible for all states/UT's to enable learning at home through innovative state programs during the disruption of schooling in COVID-19 pandemic.

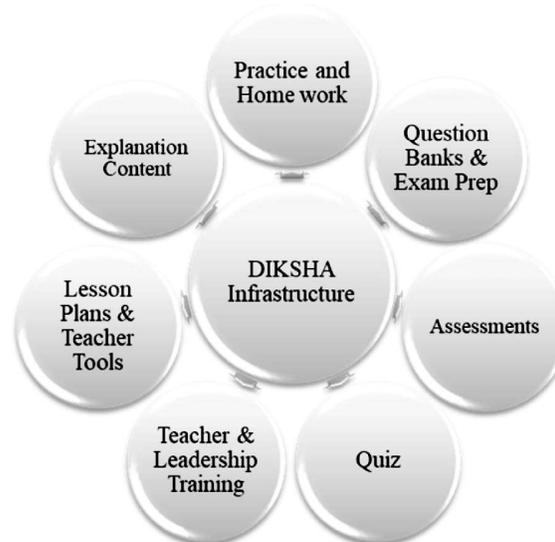


Figure 1

e-Pathshala: e-Pathshala is a e-Learning portal/app and jointly launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in collaboration with the Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in November 2015 that provides educational resources for the students, researchers, teachers, educators and parents. Students of class 1 to 12 can access all the digital textbooks, supplementary books and e-resources like videos, audios, maps, question banks etc. It is the best and easiest way of e-Learning during COVID-19 pandemic.

National Repository of Open Educational Resources: National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) is developed by CIET, NCERT in collaboration with the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resources and Development, Government of India. NROER was launched for the nation on 13th August 2013. It offers resources for all subjects pertaining to school education.

Table 2
eLibrary: Free access to various e-Resources and Learn at Home

Files	Number
Documents	5934
Interactives	1453
Audios	2956
Images	2582
Videos	6446
All Files	19371

Source: <https://nroer.gov.in/home/e-library/>

The table 2 shows that there are large numbers of documents, audios, images and videos available at this eLibrary that can easily access by the students. It is a free online repository. Its main motto is to provide access to a variety of digital resources to students and teachers. It is the most suitable online repository to enhance knowledge during COVID-19 pandemic.

The most important role of Digital learning is to revitalize the education system in India. Digital learning enhances many creative and innovative qualities among students. The National Mission on

Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) is a centrally sponsored scheme to leverage the potential of ICT to make the best quality content accessible to all learners in the country. It seeks to move the country ahead toward digitalization.

Special Initiatives towards to develop Digital Education

Initiative 1

Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM)

Website and Motto-<https://swayam.gov.in> and Free Online Education

Description

- Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime learning at no cost and to empower the students with knowledge and skills.
- Offer courses from the high school level to post graduate level in an electronic platform.

Initiative 2

SWAYAM PRABHA

Website and Motto-<https://www.swayamprabha.gov.in> and Free DTH Channel for Education

Description

- Provide 34 high quality educational channels through DTH on 24×7 basis using the GSAT-15.
- Main focusing aim at making quality learning resources accessible to remote areas where proper internet availability is still a challenge.

Initiative 3

National Digital Library of India (NDLI)

Website and Motto-<https://www.ndl.gov.in> and 24×7 Learning Resources

Description

- To provide learning resources through a single-window to the learners.
- A digital repository containing textbooks, articles, videos, lectures, audio books, thesis and all other kinds of learning material in English and Indian languages.

Initiative 4**Virtual Labs**

Website and Motto-<http://www.vlab.co.in> and Enthuse students to conduct experiments

Description

- To provide remote-access to Labs in various disciplines of Science and Engineering for students at all levels from under graduate to research scholars.
- To provide a complete Learning Management System around the Virtual Labs where the students can avail the various tools for learning, including additional web-resources, video-lectures, animated demonstrations and self evaluation.

Initiative 5**Free and Open Source Software for Education (FOSSEE)**

Website and Motto-<https://fossee.in> and or better education

Description

- FOSSEE project promotes the use of FLOSS tools in academia and research.
- It is the part of the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Indian Education System

The impact of corona virus on Indian education has been huge but the learning process never stops. The educational institutions adopt the new way of online education system to continue study. The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on education are as follows:

- **Promote Blended Learning:** Most of the Indian schools promote blended learning by using different teaching models. Teachers are now trained to teach online and become more tech-savvy. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, blended learning have become an essential need of the current life.

- **Digital Transformation:** Work from home and study from home is the outcome of the digital transformation. It is the innovative step to move towards the digitalization. Digital India is the dream project of the India. This pandemic encourages the people to do each and every thing via online mode.
- **Explore Digital Learning Platforms:** Before this pandemic, nobody knows about the ZOOM, Google Meet, Webex Meet, Microsoft Teams app. But now everyone knows about these digital learning platforms.
- **Crucial Role of Technology:** Technology plays a crucial role in the lockdown period. With the help of technology, online study is possible. Now everyone is eligible to work from home and even study from home.

Challenges Faces by Indian Education System during Covid-19 Pandemic

No doubt, online learning cannot have the equal position like offline learning. Due to control the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the first step is to maintain social distancing. To save the life of students from this pandemic, the only one way is to start online teaching during lockdown period. But the students and teachers faces many challenges to maintain the e-Learning environment. Some challenges are follows as:

- **Financial Constraints:** Only the rich parents can afford the online education for their children because they have enough capability to purchase electronic equipment such as laptops, mobiles, computers etc. But poor parents are not able to buy these facilities for their children. The financial constraint is the burning problem in the path of the getting poor students' e-Learning.
- **Physical Co-curricular Activities Hampered:** Online education hampers the physical co-curricular activities. Students cannot participate in sports activities which is the essential for the growth of the children and physical fitness. Students can participate only in indoor games.
- **Lack of Proper Infrastructure:** Online education is possible only if the communication

facilities are well developed. Regional disparities in India are the biggest challenge to establish smooth e-Learning environment. Most of the Indian population resides in rural area. In rural areas, the infrastructural facilities are not fully developed.

- **Loss of Mental Health:** Due to COVID-19 lockdown, most of the children play only indoor games. Even they play many games on their mobile that badly affects their health. Many health issues arise like headaches, shortness of temper, sleep disorders, decreased attention, depression etc.

So these are the many challenges that have to face and search the path how to overcome these difficulties.

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: The Leading Step towards Education

The main aim of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ is to make India self-reliant at every step. To fulfill this target, in the fifth tranche of Atmanirbhar Bharat package of 20 lakh crore rupees, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced many revolutionary measures to uplift the status of digital education in India. PM eVIDYA is a programme for multi-mode access to digital/online education to be launched immediately to promote e-Learning during COVID-19 pandemic. It consists of DIKSHA for school education in states/UTs: e-content and QR coded energized textbooks for all grades (one nation, one digital platform). The other initiatives are such as: One earmarked TV channel per class from 1 to 12 (one class, one channel) and extensive use of radio, community radio & podcasts and special e-content for visually and hearing impaired. Top 100 universities will be permitted to automatically start online courses by 30th May, 2020. Manodarpan is the most precious initiative for psychosocial support of students, teachers and families for mental health and emotional wellbeing to be launched immediately.

Implications

COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest horrible and serious obstacle in every field of life. This

pandemic teaches us lots of things how to survive. We should take initiative to live smooth life by adopting digital methods in each concerned areas of life. During online education, co-operation among teachers and students become basic essential need that creates an effective education environment. So we all should prepare to accept the challenge and adopt the transformative methods of online education. Leo Buscaglia rightly said, “Change is the end result of all true learning”. So we should try to learn how to handle the problems arises due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

COVID-19 pandemic affects every sector worldwide. The current pandemic considers like an opportunity in the field of education to introduce innovative teaching methods and e-learning platforms that reach every student of the country. Online education is the part of digital world. If we want to win war against invisible enemy corona virus then adopt two mantras i.e. wear ‘masks’ and maintain ‘social distancing’. Social distancing is fully maintained via using online study and threat of this pandemic curbs to some extent.

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