

Impact of Covid-19 at different levels on the Indian Education System: A Review

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected education systems across the globe, bringing significant challenges while also driving technological advancements. The abrupt closure of schools worldwide necessitated a rapid shift to online learning, exposing technological barriers and insufficient knowledge of digital platforms among both educators and learners. Socioeconomic and geographic disparities became more pronounced, with marginalized communities facing significant hurdles in accessing quality education. The pandemic also intensified psychological issues, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation, affecting student engagement and motivation. Educational policies and practices underwent substantial modifications, including shifts in assessment methods and the introduction of innovative teaching strategies. Teachers and staff experienced increased workloads and stress, underscoring the need for professional development and mental health support. Long-term consequences of the pandemic include potential learning loss and educational gaps, which may impact future generations. However, the crisis also accelerated technology integration in educational institutions and fostered a reimagining of traditional teaching models. Globally, the impact varied between developed and developing countries, highlighting the importance of international collaboration and support. The educational system faced numerous challenges as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, also it catalyzed resilience and adaptability, prompting a re-evaluation of educational approaches and the potential for positive, long-lasting reforms.

Keywords: Anxiety, COVID-19, Depression, Educational policies, School.

1. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Originating in Wuhan, China, this outbreak has affected numerous countries worldwide. Countries where new coronavirus infections are recorded have had substantial growth disruptions as a result of the pandemic. Many countries implemented measures such as lockdowns, workplace closures, school shutdowns, suspension of transportation services, and other actions to reduce the spread of infections [1]. In order to curb the COVID-19 outbreak spread, most countries have partially shut down their educational institutions. More than 90% of the global student population is impacted by this countrywide shutdown. The epidemic is also affecting India.

Significant Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on India's Educational System

The prime minister of India announced the very first Jnata Curfew on March 22, 2020, as one of the measures the government has taken to tackle the COVID-19 epidemic. The Prime Minister of India later announced a 21-day

nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19 cases. The Indian government further prolonged the lockdown on April 14, 2020, and it lasted till May 3, 2020. Every sector of the nation is impacted by this decision. The educational system, which is essential to determining the trajectory of the country's economy, has been adversely affected by the lockdown. According to government regulations, all colleges, universities, and schools are closed. The epidemic has affected the educational sector as a whole by COVID-19 [2].

As per (UNESCO) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization the COVID-19 pandemic has affected education settings globally [3]. Since education has always been the foundation of national development, it is essential to the progress and development of any nation [4]. The educational sector has been affected by a number of problems, ranging from changes to the curriculum to its shutdown due to pandemic infections that are rapidly spreading. Around the world, COVID-19 affects educators and parents in addition to children. According to UNESCO, the global shutdowns of schools have left over 1.5 billion learners in 195 nations [3]. The epidemic led educators to quickly adjust to online instruction, sometimes without sufficient preparation, requiring them to learn new technology and acquire new abilities. Despite efforts from various organizations, not all teachers received sufficient support [5]. The emotional and physical health of children, their parents, educators and learners worldwide are all significantly negatively impacted by the closing of schools and higher educational institutions, particularly in developing nations [6].

The Indian education system was profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, influencing students at all levels, from primary schooling to higher education. The immediate and extended shutdown of educational facilities caused disruptions to traditional classroom instruction and compelled a quick switch to online learning [7]. Existing gaps have been brought to light and made worse by this change, which mostly affects learners from low-income families and rural backgrounds. Concerns including lack in digital infrastructure, teacher's and learner's absence of readiness, and differing degrees of parental support have grown to be serious obstacles as learning experiences have shifted online [8]. Also, students anxiety levels have increased and scholastic progress has been further hindered by the delaying crucial exams and enrollment exams. Further information on these matters is discussed in a number of studies and reports, such as the Ministry of Education's report on pandemic draws attention to the digital gap and access disparities in online education [9]. Effects of the COVID-19 epidemic over time have brought attention to the need for an inclusive and powerful Indian education system. In order to provide flexibility and close the digital gap, blended learning models—which include online and in-person instruction—were adopted more quickly as a result of the crisis [10]. Future education depends on funding digital infrastructure, especially in rural regions, and granting inexpensive access to digital gadgets [11]. It is crucial that educators pursue ongoing professional development with an emphasis on digital literacy and online learning [12]. Moreover, the pandemic highlighted the significance of mental health and wellbeing, making support services for instructors and students necessary in the post-pandemic environment. Furthermore, UNESCO research has highlighted global challenges around educational disruptions with an emphasis on developing nations like India [3].

2. POSITIVE IMPACT ON EDUCATION SYSTEM

Indian educational institutions have embraced the challenges and are attempting the best they can to provide the seamless support services to learners during the pandemic, even though the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted education in a number of ways [13]. The Indian educational system had the chance to go from a traditional system to a modern one. These elements might be categorized as the advantages.

- **Promote the use of digital/soft copies of educational material:** Since most learners were unable to obtain hard copies of their learning resources during a lockdown, they mostly used soft copies as a source of information [14].
- **Enhancement of group work:** A fresh chance exists for innovative approaches to collaborative education [7].
- **Increased options for telephone conferences, online meetings, webinars, and e-conferences:** The epidemic has led to a significant increase in these types of gatherings [15].
- **Increased literacy in digital technologies:** As a result of the epidemic, more individuals are aware of and comfortable with modern technology, which has raised the level of digital literacy [16]
- **Greater efficiency in the exchange of information through electronic media:** Students can now more quickly share resources for learning, and issues may be handled via telephone, texts, emails, and various social website for example Facebook etc [17].
- **Worldwide exposure:** Teachers and learner have the chance to engage with experts from all over the world. Students acclimated to a world environment [18].
- **Improved management of time:** During outbreak of disease, learners who receive courses online are able to better organize their time [19].

3. NEGATIVE IMPACT ON EDUCATION SYSTEM

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the Indian educational sector, leading to numerous adverse effects on education. Some of these negative impacts include:

- **Learning activities restricted:** Courses have been interrupted and schools are shut down. In India, some boards have already delayed the yearly exams and entrance exams [20].
- **Lack of readiness on the part of both educators and learners:** Educators and students were unprepared for the sudden transition from in-person to online learning, lacking the necessary readiness for virtual education. [21].
- **The role of parents:** In metropolitan areas, some knowledgeable parents can provide guidance, while others may lack the necessary knowledge to teach their children at home [22].
- **Tech devices:** A digital gap between learners may result from online education and instruction as many children particularly those in rural areas, are unable to purchase laptops, desktops, or associated mobile phones in their homes [23].
- **Generate Disparity:** The use of online teaching-learning techniques widens the difference between learners from wealthy and poorer and from rural to urban settings [24].
- **Effect on jobs:** COVID-19 caused significant delays in hiring processes. Companies that postpone the onboarding of students may potentially impact their placement opportunities. This pandemic is predicted to result in a higher unemployment rate. Public sector hiring is nonexistent in India, and newly graduated individuals fear that the current state of affairs may force private firms to rescind their employment offers. [25].

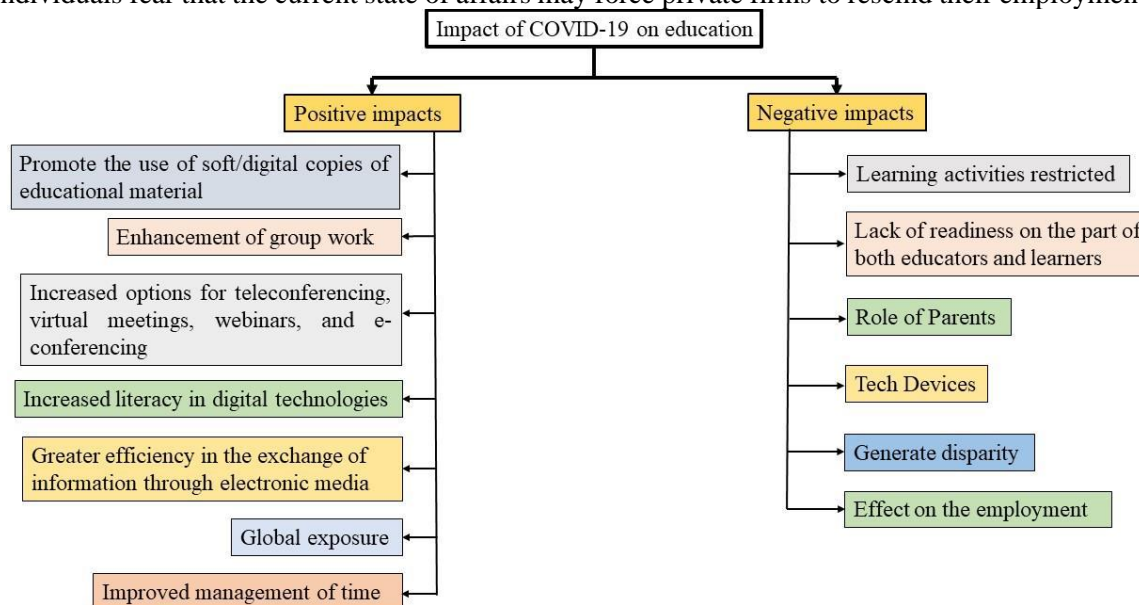


Figure 1: Impacts on Education System.

4. GOVERNMENT OF INDIA INITIATIVES IN THE EDUCATION FIELDS DURING COVID-19

The Indian government took several initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain the continuity of education, even with schools being closed. The following are the principal actions and digital projects carried out:

1. Preventive Measures and Postponement of Exams:

Nationwide lockdown of educational institutions started on March 16, 2020.

CBSE postponed all the school exams on March 18, 2020, implementing revised guidelines for examination centers to ensure social distancing.

UPSC postponed the Civil Services Examination 2019 interviews.

All State governments and their educational boards also delayed exams due to the pandemic [26].

2. Online Learning and Digital Education:

The lockdown advanced the digital technology revolution, leading to increased online learning.

To promote lifelong learning, the MHRD established a number of educational channels and web portals [10]. :

2.1 Digital Initiatives for Secondary Education:

- **Diksha Portal:** provides video lessons, worksheets, textbooks, and tests as well as other online education resources for parents, teachers, and students [27]. The app supports offline use and is available on iOS and Google Play Store [28].
- **e-Pathshala:** An NCERT app providing books, videos, and audio resources for classes first to twelfth in multiple languages [29].
- **National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER):** Offers materials in several languages that are correlated with the academic standards for grades 1 through 12. These materials include books, interactive modules, and videos [30].

2.2 Digital Initiatives for Higher Education:

- **Swayam:** A nationwide online learning network with 1900 courses including areas for both high school and college. It supports credit transfers for up to 20% of courses.
- **Swayam Prabha:** Comprises 32 DTH TV networks that broadcast instructional programming around-the-clock on topics related to school and higher education.
- **e-PG Pathshala:** A postgraduate student portal that provides electronic books, live classes, and instructional materials that may be accessed without continual internet connectivity [7].

These initiatives have helped mitigate the disruption caused by the pandemic, ensuring that students continue to learn and develop their skills through various online platforms and digital resources.

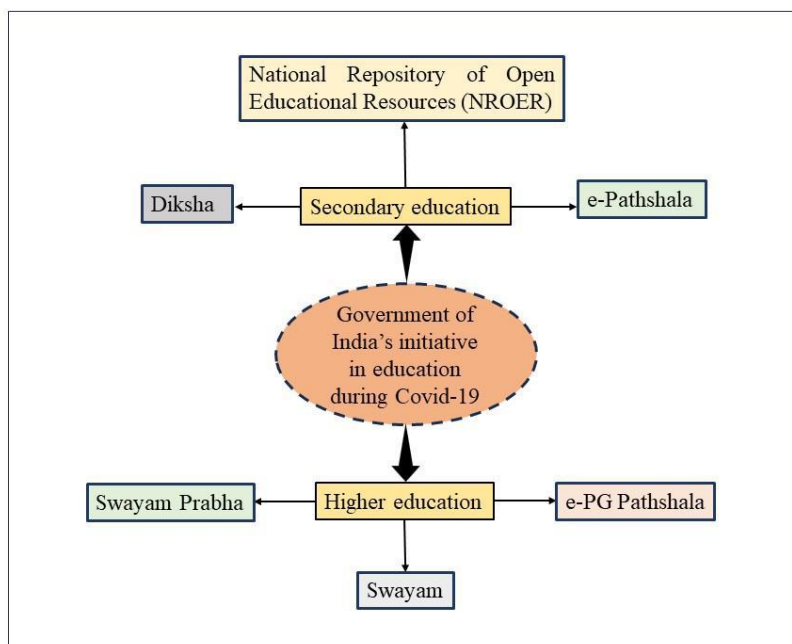


Figure 2: Government of India initiatives in the field of education during COVID-19.

5. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the Indian education system at all levels, from primary to higher education. The sudden shift to online learning exposed gaps in infrastructure, digital access, and preparedness among both educators and students. However, it also accelerated the adoption of technology and digital platforms, offering opportunities for innovation in teaching and learning. Educational programs like as Diksha, e-Pathshala, NROER, Swayam, Swayam Prabha, and e-PG Pathshala provide teachers and students easily accessible and extensive curriculum. But this change also brought attention to important problems including the technological gap, unequal access to technology, and differing degrees of digital literacy among instructors and students. The government's proactive measures, including the introduction of e-learning platforms, helped mitigate some challenges, but the crisis highlighted the need for long-term solutions to bridge educational divides and ensure that education remains accessible and effective in any circumstance.

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