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## COVID -19: IMPACT ON EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

The Pandemic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has had a lasting impact on the education. The pandemic has certainly made the education a tough nut to crack. With social distancing norm and no formal classes in the school, education via Online is the future but not for many. There is vast contrast in the Urban and Rural areas and also between developed and developing countries. Infrastructure and availability of technology is limited to the Urban areas mainly and to some extent to the rural areas of the developed countries. The availability of Internet connectivity and Technology to conduct Online classes is only for the few who can afford. Hence it is tough for the lower section of the society to continue the education without school classes. Education reforms are required to collaborate all strata of the society and provide an equal opportunistic assessment criterion so that those who do not have access to online classes may still be able to continue their education. Resource utilization and building up of Infrastructure by the Government to allocate the need for low-income families which in turn will encourage the need to education.

**Keyword:** Covid 19, Infrastructure, Education System, Anxiety and Depression, Information and Communication Technology.

### Introduction

COVID-19, also known as coronavirus, is a highly infectious disease caused by a new strain of virus that was first detected in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. It has since spread rapidly across the world, becoming a global pandemic that has affected millions of people and caused significant economic and social disruption. The disease has had a profound impact on every aspect of our lives, from public health to the economy, education, and personal wellness.

In the early days it was not thought to be highly contagious and hence as per the research it can be concluded that the Chinese doctors thought it to be normal ILI (Influenza Like Illness). The reports also mention that the first cases didn't cause any panic among the Chinese doctors and Officials and hence they didn't report to the higher authorities. With time more cases appeared with same symptoms and some fatalities shocked the Doctors who reported to the authorities subsequently.

### IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION

Initially, the Governments closed down the schools and educational institutions so that the infection stays within the grasp and fortunately it happened similarly which in turn provoked the Governments to lift lockdown for higher grades.

Turned out to be disaster as cases soared that of Teachers and Students. Realizing the grave situation, the Administration were forced to close down Schools and Colleges.

Though schools are closed, students are attending their classes through various education initiatives like online classrooms, radio programs but it is not a good thing happening on the other side, there are lots of students who didn't own the resources to attend the online classes. Many students are struggling to obtain the gadgets required for online classes.

Teachers who are well accustomed to Classroom Teaching using Chalk and Blackboard now has to undergo a radical shift in their daily equipment's. Online classes using Gadgets is something most Teachers are not fully comfortable with. It takes time to adjust to the new reality but they gave their best in order to deliver their support to the students. But on the negative side, many teachers are looking for an alternative job to support their families.

Parents are supporting their children throughout the pandemic, but it is to be noted that not many can help out their ward due to their lack of education or less time to spend. Students who came in just to get hold of Mid-Day Meal service is most impacted. Many were not getting enough food to survive until the Government took some measure by introducing rations from schools and Ration shops. Learning took a back seat in those scenarios. When survival instinct takes over the mind then education has to take back its influence.



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Distance learning has become the new norm, and most schools have shifted to online or virtual learning. This shift has had a mixed impact. While some students may have adapted quickly to the new methods, other students have had difficulties with access to online resources, lack of suitable study spaces at home, and the need for self-motivation. In addition, virtual learning has also revealed the glaring digital divide that exists, with students from lower-income backgrounds bearing the brunt of this divide.

Schools also took some impact of the situation as many non-Teaching staff were either not paid or partial paid which had direct impact to their livelihood and also the education of their ward. Government schools took time to adjust to the new norms and students got hold of gadgets after a long time and that too after concerted effort from NGO's, citizens and Charitable institutions. The glaring disparity among Private school and Government schools were visible as the private institutions were able to restart the education system after some hurdles but the Government institutions took long to restart the system.

The pandemic has impacted the mental health of students severely. The challenges of online learning, the lack of socialization, and the general uncertainty around the situation has caused an increase in stress and anxiety levels among students. Schools have had to provide increased mental health support services to cater to the surge in demand. Covid-19 has created a crisis of inequality. Children from lower-income backgrounds who do not have access to reliable internet and digital devices have been further marginalized by the shift in learning methods. It has highlighted the reality of the educational divide that exists for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

### Negative impact of COVID-19 on education system

In India, around 250 million students were affected due to school closures at the onset of lockdown induced by COVID-19. The pandemic posed several challenges in public and private schools which included an expected rise in dropouts, learning losses, and increase in digital divide. Anxiety and depression may be masked as increased mood swings, irritability, withdrawal, and emotional dysregulation. Physical symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, and others that cannot be medically explained, including those of disordered eating habits and self-harm, are not uncommon.

Irregular school routines and closure of regular classes have adverse effect on the mindset of students. The pandemic fear cast a dark shadow on the careers of the student. Demotivated and disconnected from their studies impacts their focus on the career goals. Extracurricular activities get disrupted which deprive the student from having social skills and leadership qualities.

The pandemic has also led to changes in teaching practices, with educators forced to adapt to a new model of teaching. This includes adjusting instructional materials, assessment formats, and instructional strategies to accommodate online learning. Teachers have had to cope with the challenge of providing classwork and feedback remotely, and this has often meant more work hours and additional stress. Moreover, the rapid shift in teaching has compelled many educators to learn how to use technology tools, specifically for delivering remote instruction, which has its own set of challenges.

In developing countries many Parents are themselves are unaware of the benefit of schooling since they were not privilege to get educated. Also, necessary infrastructure for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) like Computers, Radio and television are not present t most students in developing countries. Access to computers and access to the internet is basic to successful distance teaching. This is not guaranteed for all students in developing countries. Also, staff and teachers should familiar with online teaching platforms. Teachers struggle with difficulties in the area of technology and lack of infrastructure availability. Private schools may find hard to pay full salary to their staffs as many parents would argue of paying school fees since no physical classes. This again impacts the household of staffs and simultaneously affects the children in their careers. The physical school closure and the implementation of distance education led the student to spent less time learning, stress, and lack of learning motivation.

Schools in disadvantaged, rural areas lack the appropriate digital infrastructure required to deliver teaching at the remote. Teachers there had to establish the infrastructure which again I not very cost effective. The local administration came in with their support but it wasn't possible until the pandemic situation was under control. Rural areas are the worst affected due to the lockdown. Attendance during normal times were scarce and it only got bad during the pandemic. Many were forced to leave schooling and support the families by earning. Third world countries are the most impacted in pandemic and education system in those countries have been the worst hit.



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### Access to Educational Resources and Technology - Unequal

The school's closure due to COVID-19 may not affect students equally. Students from less advantaged backgrounds highly suffered during COVID-19 than advantaged students. To control the coronavirus spread, most countries have been working to encourage parents and schools to help students continue to learn at home through distance learning.

The Governments encouraged students to learn from radio and television which is more accessible in home. In rural areas even Television is scarcely available and hence lesson planning via these items may not be helpful. Urban areas are more equipped with Technology to continue the education process via online. Access to uninterrupted power supply is not omnipresent hence it is a challenge for those students who are deprived of it. The schools in urban areas are teaching their students from a distance by uploading assignments, books, and reading materials through Google Classroom, e-mail, social media, and other applications. In some urban areas, even if distance learning is provided due to a lack of monitoring strategies some students may not use it properly. Private schools sending learning materials directly to parents through social media platforms. There is a difference between rural and urban schools and the public and private schools to keep their students learning from home. Also, public school teachers and students have limited or no access to the internet.

The closure of regular classes brings difficulty to the students and their families and also makes situation tougher for the teachers. Students from low income- based family suffer the most as they might have to start earning to feed their family in case of financial crisis. Students with low motivation and very less approach toward studies would find opportunities to skip studies amidst the fear of pandemic. Younger children would require more time from their parents in absence of regular schools and classes. Furthermore, poor and digitally-illiterate families' children are further suffering. There were already inequalities before coronavirus in access to quality education between students in urban and rural areas, and students from families with higher and lower socioeconomic status.

School closures could further increase the inequalities between students. Students in rural areas and from disadvantaged families lack access to technology, internet access, and educational resources.

Parents were forced to pull out their child from schools and put them in earning fields. And those who were able to keep up their studies had to undertake hardship in order to continue studies along with earning for the family. Mental trauma in the pandemic and the physical labor to make sure the family gets enough to feed themselves takes a great toll on the education of those. Girl's education was always the best thing for cost cutting and families did the same by stopping their investment on that. It not only saved financially but also provided extra hand to work inside the house.

### Assessment and Evaluation

Distance learning is not a new concept for developed world and some developing countries as they are capable of continuing studies via those method. It is challenging for countries not financially capable of distance learning and collective infrastructure to support the same. Shifting from regular classes via Blackboard and face to face method to more technology driven zoom, Google meets etc. doesn't make much of the problems for developed countries or those countries which have existing system. Furthermore, computers and other IT equipment, at home are difficult for most parents, children, and students in developing countries. Additionally, some courses are difficult or impossible to teach and learn through online learning methods such as sport, nursing, laboratories, music, and art courses.

The shift from face-to-face class to online class has a serious impact on assessments and evaluation. Depending on the course nature and the assessment type applying assessments and evaluation online is a challenging task. So that teachers have enforced to change their assessment types to fit the online mode. Also, it is difficult to monitor the student how they are taking courses online and difficult to ensure that students are not cheating during online exams.

Lab Test and Practical test are hard to conduct without proper setup like schools and it becomes increasingly tough to assess the merit inly via Project and assessment test. Also, students without computer and Internet makes the situation more tough for the teachers to assess the curriculum progress. In the assessment and evaluation of students' performance in online learning is difficult for both instructors and students particularly teaching practicum, technical competencies, and the assessment of practical skills is difficult.

It is mentioned in report that it is also tough for Teachers, Students and Parents to switch from the traditional approach of class room teaching to Online Teaching. Training in the regard is often readily available in developed countries than to those in underdeveloped or developing countries.



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Education inequalities are a threat to education system continuity at a time of unexpected educational system closures. Because, there are a limited number of computers, internet access, mobile network access, and lack of ICT trained teachers in developing countries.

### Education System during COVID-19

Education in schools' colleges and universities continue to get support for continuation of quality curriculum. This includes distance learning strategies like reading, assignment and project work and additional activities to assess the current progression in terms of education and physical activities.

The pandemic has made all the education system across the world to adopt distance learning since the pandemic pushes face-to-face learning to online learning. So, in most developed countries, courses, and exams are conducted online by using different applications, and social networks.

Used the situation as an opportunity to install network infrastructure and scale internet access across urban and rural areas. Students are started to learn from home and stay at home as much as possible, to maintain physical distancing, and to save themselves. Online coaching was prevalent in many countries but traditional Book reading and Classroom Teaching were the more preferred option. With the onset of pandemic the dynamics of education has taken a drastic turn with school closure and interaction in classroom reduced to minimum. Digital learning management systems such as Google Classroom, and Moodle. Massive Open Online Course Platforms such as Alison, Coursera, EdX, and Udemy were prevalent in pre covid days but not to the extent which they are in present situation.

The pandemic is certainly not going to end all of a sudden and hence curriculum should be maintained in such way that assessment via online is possible. Also, availability of technology to rural areas is must so that in the coming days we are better equipped to deal education in such times of crisis.

Regarding this, the country designs a strategy to scale educational technology during pandemics, establish zero-rating educational resources on the internet, universal service funds and connecting schools to the internet, prepare online teaching and learning resources, utilizing free online learning resources, practice mobile learning, practice radio and television teaching and grow up ICT infrastructures.

### Education in Developed and Developing Countries during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the education community. The requirement for social distancing strategies on higher educations, needs a rapid curriculum redevelopment for fully online learning. Due to the closure of school students, teachers, and parents are facing various difficulties in India. So, online teaching is a better solution, feasible, and appropriate but it challenges poor parents and students. According to UNESCO reports the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted the face-to-face class for at least 9 out of 10 students worldwide.

Developed countries are equipped with Technology and Infrastructure and moreover they have previous experience of Online learning. Whereas Developing countries are languishing to continue the social education system and lack of previous knowledge just adds up to the misery. Infrastructure builds up by the Government takes time and resources which is not possible to achieve overnight. Developed countries with Higher GDP has citizen equipped with Technology to assist Online Classes but the same does not hold true for developing countries with low GDP as it is not possible for many families to invest in Technology for classes. Hence the division in the amount of exposure to Online classes limits to the upper society.

### Post-COVID-19 - Education System

Educational institutions should design curriculums, prepare learning strategies and techniques for post-COVID-19, and transform the education system itself. During closures curriculum design, collaborations, skill development, and educational institutions should focus on advancing the education system.

Schools and Education Department needs to make up the lost time frame after opening of schools so that those who are deprived of the education during the social distancing practice may not be left back. School teachers in collaboration with education officers need to give awareness for parents and students to make sure that children are safe at home during school closures and trying to learn and read books as much as possible.



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There is inequality among urban and rural students; students from low-income or high-income and literate or illiterate parents. So that the education system should design and implement some evidence-based actions that aim to facilitate the recovery of the lost portion when schools are reopened. Because of the lack of required support during the school closures, it could take a very long time for children from illiterate and low-income parents to recover their missed portion when they return to school. Some students from low-income parents may decide to work as daily laborers to support their families financially and may never return to school when schools reopen. Parents from rural areas may be unwilling to send their children back to school because they may prefer their children to continue to support them in cattle herding and farming. The school authorities should trace out the families and encourage them to allow the return of their wards for education. It is the responsibility of the school authorities and Government to incentivize the school opening and provide financial support to the families so that there is no need for the student to hold back in the house as an additional earning member.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the Covid-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the education sector, and these challenges need to be addressed proactively. It is essential to create an online-friendly environment for both educators and learners, which includes increased access to technology and strong internet connectivity to facilitate the learning process.

Internet connectivity across the areas and availability of gadgets to all sections of the society is essential to address the difficult times ahead. Parents and teachers need to thoroughly support their ward so that the mental strength doesn't deplete. It is tough to focus in such drastic times and this is where the mental coaching from the administrators comes in the forefront. Counselling is a great step to start for those who are failing to cope up with the situation.

Educators need to identify the lacuna of their students and engage with them to settle for an amicable solution. Innovative solution is required to address the challenges posed by Covid 19. The pandemic has also shed light on the need for greater investment in digital infrastructure and services to achieve a more inclusive education system.

Policymakers need to make certain changes in the structure so that such challenges can be handled tactfully. Reduce disparity among students by providing assistance to the needful. Advance technology can be utilized with few requirements to provide a more hassle-free education. Concerted effort from the Government is required to address the digital divide among the students. Internet and gadgets should be made available to the students and Teachers and support those that are unable to get hold of them.

Certain aspects of the pandemic will have a lasting effect on the education and its structure. It should be noted that there is always a silver lining and, in the case, the apparent use of technology to transfer knowledge is testament to the fact.

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