

CHALLENGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION DURING PANDEMIC SITUATION BY COVID19

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Abstract: Education is a systematic process for a civilized and socialized society through which an individual acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound manner. Every society gives importance to education because it is a universal remedy for all problems. It is the answer to solve the various problems of life. In the learner-centred concept of education, students are confident to take greater accountability for their learning outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to be spontaneous and solicitous learners, learning from themselves, their peers and their immediate environment just as much as they would from their knowledge giver. Accordingly, the teaching learning attitude involves less lecturing and rote note-taking and more hands-on activities to allow for empirical and interactive learning. Excellence in Higher Education has become a primary plan of the countries worldwide. In the context noticeable by development of higher education and globalization of economic actions, education has become a national apprehension in developing countries with an international aspect. To cope with this shifting context, developing countries have been rushed to make certain and guarantee eminence of higher education at a nationally equal and internationally suitable standard. This paper is mainly focused on issues and challenges in higher education in general and pandemic situation too in India as compared to world context, the methodology of this paper is followed by secondary source only and paper concluded with solutions during pandemic situation in overcoming challenges in higher education.

Key words: General issues and challenges in higher education, status of higher education during pandemic situation, strategies to overcome challenges in higher education by COVID 19

Introduction: The general scenario of Higher education in India does not match with the universal quality standard. Higher education is superficial as an important form of investment in home capital development. Higher education institutions are charged with formation of human

capital through teaching construction knowledge base through research and awareness development. The growth rates of India in the last two decades can straightforwardly quality to the higher education system. If India wants to greater growth, it must convert its universities and other higher technical education institution to world class institutions, and then its higher education system must be changed. Since, the country must maintain the interests of young researchers, besides providing a strong proposal for research and make sure permanent engagements for faculty members. Higher education means different things to different people. If we talk about higher education in terms of rank, it means to gain higher educational qualification by the teaching-learning method in the higher educational institutes such as colleges and universities. Moreover higher education imparts information, develops the student's ability and also gives him/her a wider perception of the world around.

Challenges in higher education- India have the third largest higher education system in the world in terms of size and its variety and largest in the world in terms of number of educational institutions. After independence Indian higher education reach a huge growth. In the Indian education system, higher education starts after the primary, secondary and two years of senior secondary education. Framework of higher education in India is very difficult. It includes various type of institutions like universities, colleges, institutes of national significance, polytechnics etc. Universities are also of different types like central universities which are shaped by government of India, by an act of parliament which are accountable for arranging and distributing resources necessary by university grant commission(UGC), State universities, Deemed universities (aided and unaided) and Private universities. India has a federal set-up and the Indian constitution places education as a concurrent responsibility of both the centre and state. While the centre co-ordinates and fixed standards in higher and technical education, school education is the responsibility of state. Under the department of higher education there are several regulatory bodies and research councils viz., University Grant Commission (UGC). All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) National Council of Rural Institute (NCRI),Project of History of Indian Science Philosophy and Culture (PHISPC) which are responsible for the higher education in India. So, Indian education systems are facing multi challenges to follow its process.

Challenges are-

- There is an enormous gap between those who move out from school and who register in higher education system, which means gap between the supply and demand and really needed to be bridged. India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is around 19 percent which is 6 per cent lower than the world average and it is 50 per cent lesser than countries such as Australia and the US. India has the largest population of young people (100 million) among 17 to 19.
- Less number of Quality Research work: There is no shortage of funding for the top level Indian Institutions such as IITs, IIMs and other institutes of national significance. In India budget for the standard research is not exhausted due to the inadequate good quality research work. Hardly any Indian higher educational institutes are globally recognized due to the limited focus on Research in International level. That is the reason why no higher education institution of India figures in the global top 200 higher education institutes around the world.
- Shortage of quality faculty is proving to be a great uncomfortable obstruct in the alteration of higher education in India. According to a government report, there is a massive need for development in higher education; India does not have adequate high quality researchers; there are few scope for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary operational, lack of early stage research experience; a weak system for advance, and low levels of industry commitment, such a deficiency will greatly confirm to be a stumbling block, which mainly due to the terrible decisions taken by policymakers, bureaucrats, and administrators of university.
- Shortage of High Student-Faculty Ratio- In most of the state and central universities more than 30% of faculty positions are lying vacant. The last few years the student enrolment in higher education is growing with faster rate.
- India has increased publication of research papers for the past few decades but reflected in low citation impact if compared with other countries like United States, Germany, France and China.

- Uneven growth and access to prospect: Socially, India remains highly separated; admission to higher education is uneven with multidimensional inequalities in enrolment across inhabitants groups and geographies.
- Lack of proper teaching method-The Indian higher education system has been subsequent lecture method for several years. This has turned fruitless and not adequate in many areas. There is a lack of teacher's knowledge and progress areas need which is should be in the form educating them. There are no approaches like mentoring, spot visits, practical educational tours and participation in research projects with peers. In this respect one need to change the teacher's training curriculum along with content of subject and methodology. Teachers must be encouraged take short duration professional training courses, which could help to support the teacher's knowledge and progress. There is no syllabus for integrating development concepts like emotional competencies, life skills and other technical skills etc. Institutions often lack the importance for pointing out on the knowledge outcomes than content teaching.
- Poor Infrastructure Facilities-Apart from the highly recognized higher educational institutes in India most of the colleges and universities lack in the basic and high-end research facilities. Many institutes are operating course without proper infrastructure and basic facilities like library, hostels, transport, sports facility etc. which is desirable to level the quality institutional activity.
- Presently there is a very less teamwork of higher educational institutes with industries for future prospect.
- Low employability of graduates is one of the major problems in India. Only a small percentage of Indian graduates are considered employable. Placement outcome of graduate students also drop significantly as we move away from the top institutes.
- Indian higher education is facing with the problem of low standard of curriculum. In most of the higher educational institutes curriculum is not up dated and inappropriate.

Higher education is the production of qualified human resources, preparation for qualified scientists and researchers, efficient management of teaching-learning, provisions by improving the quality of teaching, enabling higher completion rate among the students and as an opportunity to participate in the development process of the individual through a flexible, continuing education mode. But the world today is facing pandemic as the Corona virus is

extensive its way around the globe and its impact is on higher education too. The COVID has challenged the advancements not only in the healthcare sector but in several other sectors such as finance, education, industry & engineering sectors.

Status and challenges of higher education during pandemic situation-

The International Association of Universities is strongly monitoring the impacts of COVID-19 on higher education around the Globe. IAU is an independent worldwide NGO created in 1950 and officially associated with UNESCO. As part of the IAU activities, it developed a first Global Survey on the impact of COVID -19 on Higher Education. The aim is to recognize the major challenges, global crisis has triggered a re-conceptualization of education condition at all levels. The exhaustive use of different scientific and industrial platforms and resources to make certain learning continuity is the boldest experiment in educational technology - although unexpected and unplanned. Universities and other higher education institutions face in the short- medium- and long term and to distribute and help expand solutions. UNESCO has expected that around 1.26 billion children or 70 percent of children around the world have had their education broken up because of the pandemic and a large number of these are from what UNESCO calls the “low tech or no tech” phase, with India contributing 300 million of the 1.26 billion children.

Over the past weeks, education officials have been forced to withdraw classes and close the doors to campuses across the world in response to the increasing corona virus epidemic. In addition, US institutions have switched classes to online learning, cancelled spring break trips and students studying abroad in China, Italy and South Korea have been encouraged to return home to complete their studies.

During pandemic situation first challenge is to assess the student's access to internet connectivity, especially, the students hailing from rural and backward areas. The students are expected to have a smart phone with 4G compatibility to enable streaming of the live teaching. The second challenge is to have good internet connectivity even in urban areas to avoid buffering and covering of the live stream, this can take place when Internet connection speed is insufficient to accommodate the encoder's bitrates or if there is excess load on the server which will make the application to crash. The third challenge is the live streaming focuses only on the theoretical

imparting of the subjects without actual use of the laboratory, as technical education is more practical oriented.

While class closures, dips in enrollment at the beginning of a new semester and cancellations may be temporary, its solid predict whether the novel corona virus will result in long-term disturbance to the higher education system. While Covid-19 is a risk for those over 60, traditional-aged university students face comparatively low risks from the disease. However, in recent weeks, how quickly the novel corona virus can increase in areas with a high concentration of people- and university campuses are no exceptions.

These nationwide closures are impacting over 91% of the worlds' student population. Some other countries have implemented constrained closures impacting millions of additional learners. UNESCO is supporting countries in their efforts to lessen the immediate impact of school closures, particularly for more weak and disadvantaged communities, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through distant learning. The UNESCO report estimates that the corona virus pandemic will negatively impact over 290 million students across 22 countries. The UNESCO estimates that about 32 crores students are affected in India, counting those in schools and colleges.

A report of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India conducted a survey on higher education and observed that there are 993 universities, 39931 Colleges and 10725 Stand Alone Institutions listed on their portico, which contribute to education. These institutions more reflect the student density of India as the total enrolments in higher education every year are nearly 37.4 million, reflecting the going up horizons of the education industry. The sector was seen easily spread speed by the passing day until Corona virus impacted the country intensely.

India is going to witness a 50% increase in students over the next 15 years and although it has many universities and colleges, only few have the facilities to match this flow of students in the future. Online education could be a reasonable resolution to accommodate this problem. The government of India, for the first time, is allowing Indian universities to offer an online degree which previously was limited to foreign universities. Now, to support and extend the admittance to higher education, this constraint has been lifted from 20% to offer 100% courses online.

The current pandemic is not only seen disturbing the health of the citizens in the country but is also seen hindering various industries and shaking them to their extraction. The national lockdown and the rising health crisis were arresting the education of the students as well, with their universities being shut and their syllabi cut off, until the industry decided to initiate a revolution instead. Reinventing their radicals and making a conscious choice to grow even in the time of crisis, the universities decided to digitalize the sector. The educational reform in India in the COVID-19 era seems to be a live example of how need truly is the mother of innovation or reinvention, in this scenario. Allowing educational institutions to adopt online learning and infuse a virtual study culture, the pandemic is already course-plotting the sector ahead with technological innovation and advancements.

The sudden, forced concentration of learners into virtual learning during this period of Covid-19 has proved that the education production is disrupted. Education is going to be digital in the probable future and with the right infrastructure and policies in place for better prepared to handle it.

Strategies for on line education during pandemic situation in higher education- Sahana Murthy explained the context behind the rush forward of online education in India as the idea of “Emergency Remote Teaching”. She asserted, however, that there is a difference between emergency remote teaching and effective online learning. She explained that for online teaching, along with the requirement of tools such as online platforms, one needs right to use as well as trained teachers. She concluded her opening statement by emphasizing on the importance of changing the mindsets of the teachers as well as students since online teaching only limits to a through a face-to-face lens and could be implemented is through the LCM Model, which focuses on a “learner-centric approach towards the designing and conducting of online courses.”

Online education, a result of the digital world has brought a lot to the learning desk at all levels of education, beginning from preschool up to higher level institutions. The move to distant learning has been enabled by several online techniques such as Google Classroom, Blackboard,

Zoom and Microsoft Teams, all of which play an important role in this revolution. With the development of ICT in education, online video-based micro-courses, e-books, simulations, models, graphics, animations, quizzes, games, and e-notes are making knowledge easier to get to, engaging, and contextualized.

The entire revolution in the way people learn today has been brought about by Technical skill. Each student gets in touch with a world-class education, which is not easy to impart by the traditional white chalk, duster and blackboard technique of teaching. This new process learning is more interesting, modified and pleasurable. A massive open online course (MOOC) is an online course aimed at limitless contribution and open admittance via the web. India is considered to be the biggest market for MOOCs in the world after the USA. Since the population of India is enormous, massive open online course (MOOC) is said to open gateways for a lot of Indians in terms of bringing an educational uprising. Online distant learning programs give a great occasion to avail choice process of learning with the help of internet connectivity.

Therefore, at present the pandemic situation has transformed the centuries-old, chalk-talk teaching model to one driven by technology. This disturbance in the delivery of education is approaching policymakers to figure out how to drive dedication at scale while ensuring comprehensive e-learning solutions and tackling the digital divide. The switch to online education has been ensuring that students suffer no loss of studies and their progress is being tracked at the same time with timely evaluation.

This is the first time for India to experiment with the education system and make a paradigm shift to the virtual world, blending classrooms with online learning. Alchemizing education with technology and forming a collaborative strategy to step ahead while as long as online lectures will also enable the students to be trained stimulation. Boosting preservation of the syllabus by using innovative technology, the universities are also charming students to learn by choice and not just by their physical presence in a classroom. Moreover, providing AI-enabled learning by universities as they offer diverse courses in association with other collaborations is only making the country predict a new tomorrow based on educational reforms. For instance, medical students can opt interactive sessions to talk about specific case studies, engineering aspirants could consider into depths of environmental engineering and city development along with the mentors

plying videos and conducting online doubtful sessions for regulation excited and much more. So E-learning comes as an interesting and interactive option as compared to classroom teaching.

Dr.Shakila Shamsu shed focus on the use of technology for education should not be seen as an outcome of the pandemic, but as an idea that has been continuing for several years and also recommended that “higher education institutions should begin to construct an academic plan of actions.” So there is a “need to guide institutions, faculty and students to repurpose e-content in a manner that fits into the curricula for achieving the desired learning objectives of that particular course” and concluded by saying that to reach a larger audience, it is essential e-content should be made available in regional languages.

Conclusion-It can be concluded that Digital education appears to be a practical solution to fill in the invalid for classroom education for a period of three to four months while minimizing the chances of any infection to students until classes start again. More importantly, it has also brought until now nonessential issue of digital education in India to the centre stage. Going forward, digital education is likely to be incorporated into mainstream education. This will enable inclusive education by facilitating learning across diverse geographies in India. Moreover, it will provide an opportunity for educators to come up with modified learning solutions for every student. Dr. Ashwin Fernandes pointed out that COVID-19 brought a “second wind to higher education in India.” Behind this concept his believe is based on three main reasons like the increased use of technology for various ideas, especially for education, has “instilled confidence for users”, India has tried to follow the footsteps of UK,US and UNESCO models of online education and lastly it depends on how both these factors “level the playing field for Indian universities.” The survey conducted by his organization which focused on whether India was ready for a digital transformation, and more than 80 percent of India’s population uses their mobile hotspot for accessing the internet. Out of which, 95 percent of students who used mobile hotspot to gain access to educational resources had problems with internet connectivity.

E-learning will always provide the students with different information in different ways. So, the authenticity of the educational material should be tested before these resources are circulated with the students. Creation of content, distribution of content and evaluation of content should be

done. Blended education has to come face to face and distance education should go hand in hand currently. Educational data circulated in online should be properly maintained. A multi-pronged strategy is necessary to manage the crisis and build an elastic Indian education system in the long term.

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