

## CHALLENGES POSES BY PANDEMIC COVID-19 IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

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### Abstract

*The pandemic COVID-19 is the greatest threat in our whole life. It is an epidemic of the 20th Century. Whole world is facing this pandemic. It affects millions of pupils in the world. Human Beings are struggling for their existence. Every field of human life is affected by this epidemic. It created many challenges in every field/sector like: Health & Medical Science, General Sciences, Agriculture, Finance, Education, Culture, Mental health, Technology, Human Life, and International Relations etc. In the Field of Education it resulted in the worldwide closure of schools, colleges and Universities, affecting more than 188 countries. Education of more than 1.5 billion children and youths are affected. Due to lock-downs academic activities stopped and examinations were postponed. No one knows when the normal situation will be re-established. This epidemic affects every aspect of education. One of the most important measures to fight against the Covid-19 is 'Social-Distancing' or 'Physical-Distancing'. To follow this All the Educational institutions i.e. from Primary/Nursery to University level education system and academic activities are also. All stakeholders of education system i.e. Students, Teachers, Guardians, Society, Colleges, Universities, Educational Administrators etc. are affected by it and facing different challenges. Classes and other academic activities are suspended, Board and University Examinations are postponed, admission procedure / entrance test/examinations, competitive examinations are also postponed. The pandemic Covid-19 affected the whole life style of every person in the world. Since life-style is changing, the education sector also needs to change. However, institutions are trying to minimize the students' academic loss through on-line classes. But in our country where traditional mode of learning or face to face mode of learning is the back-bone of our education system, there are a lot of present and future challenges towards our education system. But we should never forget that challenges also bring opportunities.*



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The pandemic COVID-19 is the greatest threat in our whole life. It is an epidemic of the 20th Century. Whole world is facing this pandemic. It affects millions of pupils in the world. Human Beings are struggling for their existence. Every field of human life is affected

by this epidemic. It created many challenges in every field/sector like: Health & Medical Science, General Sciences, Agriculture, Finance, Education, Culture, Mental health, Technology, Human Life, and International Relations etc. Covid-19 is an unprecedented crisis and it presents unprecedented challenges to the education system. In the Field of Education it resulted in the worldwide closure of schools, colleges and Universities, affecting more than 188 countries. Education of more than 1.5 billion children and youths are affected. Due to lock-downs academic activities stopped and examinations were postponed. No one knows when the normal situation will be reestablished. This epidemic affects every aspect of education. One of the most important measures to fight against the Covid-19 is 'Social-Distancing' or 'Physical-Distancing'. To follow this All the Educational institutions i.e. from Primary/Nursery to University level education system and academic activities are also locked-down. All stakeholders of education system i.e. Students, Teachers, Guardians, Society, Colleges, Universities, Educational Administrators etc. are affected by it and facing different challenges. Classes and other academic activities are suspended, Board and University Examinations are postponed, admission procedure / entrance test/examinations, competitive examinations are also postponed. The pandemic Covid-19 affected the lifestyle of every person in the world. Since life-style is changing, the education sector also needs to change. It is a very crucial time for our education sector because Covid-19 pandemic created many challenges.

**Major challenges in the field of Education:**

**Present challenges in the field of Education:**

1. Learners and pedagogical methods in our country are largely offline based. The students as well as the teachers have grown accustomed to face to face mode teaching-learning mode. The new change of on-line classes is unfamiliar to the majority of educational institutions, teachers and students.
2. Teachers are trained for the traditional mode of teaching and learning process. They are untrained for the on-line mode of teaching and learning process. Majority of teachers are not tech-savvy.
3. Our examination systems are based on pen-paper mode. Students are accustomed to giving examinations through written mode in the examination hall/room.
4. Promotion of students to the next class without any examination is also not good, because it will affect the quality of our education system.

5. Scarcity of infra-structure in government institutions. Basic infra-structure is also unavailable in different institutions of the country. So we cannot imagine that these institutions will be able to impart technology based on-line learning to their students.
6. Weaker sections or low-income family students have no Smartphone's, Laptop's, internet connectivity, electricity etc.
7. Too much use of laptops/computers and Smart-phones by the students for on-line learning will create health issues among students. It will affect students' eyes as well as their mental and physical health.
8. Home-environment is totally different from the institution-environment, where students engage in their learning activities in a disciplined manner. Home-environment can not be the option of an institution's academic environment.
9. A large number of Indian students are enrolled in foreign-universities. Many of such students are migrating or leaving these countries. If this situation persists for long-time, a decline in the demand for international higher education is expected.
10. Students who have graduated this year are in fear of withdrawal of jobs from corporate because of the current situation.

**Challenges in the field of Education after Covid-19:**

1. Fall in Enrollment of students in the next session especially in technical/professional courses due to severe recession the world over. Because the market oriented courses have high tuition fees and slender/low chances of employability, students will not take admission in these courses Private institutions will also suffer because of rising cost and declining enrollment.
2. Limited mobility of the students. Under present circumstances parents might be reluctant to send their childrens to faraway places for education. Parents will prefer the nearby institutions due to which the campuses will become localized and that will affect the diversification of the campuses.
3. There may be cut in the numbers and rates of scholarship of students. Private institutions might not be able to continue fee concessions, fee waiver and scholarship due to rising cost and less revenue. This will create vital inequalities among students, as students from weaker sections will not be able to pursue their dreams.

4. Provision of checking the temperature of every student of the institution at the entry point, providing them masks, hand-sanitizers etc. and making them sit at appropriate distances, will produce additional burden on the capital expenditure of the institutions.
5. Public institutions building also needed to be redesigned to maintain physical-distancing. Universities have to revise the norms for the infra-structure facility such as spacious but small size classrooms and laboratories.
6. Well equipped health-centers in the campus are also essential for each institution.
7. Proper sanitization of classroom, laboratories and library etc.
8. Students will demand single room accommodations with attached washrooms in the hostels.
9. Diversification of curriculum is necessary to promote pluralism. Curriculum designing will now require clear-cut alienation of the course content in terms of face to face mode learning, blended learning and on-line learning.
10. Digital delivery of programmes/lectures is a big challenge for not tech-savvy teachers.
11. ICT enabled classroom learning would be a new norm of teaching & learning, which will cause anxiety to few teachers.
12. For the assessment of a student's potential the mode of examinations and assessment required a lot of changes. Teachers are required to use multiple sources, multiple techniques and multiple criteria of assessments.
13. Funding for the research is going to be tougher and extremely competitive due to limiting resources of the funding organizations.
14. There may be very few chances for the sponsorship of the National & International Seminars/Conferences.
15. There might be occasional delay in the salary of the Teachers. Contractual and ad-hoc teachers also will continue to suffer.

**Suggestions to handle the above challenges :**

1. Use of Educational Resources (OERs), e-Pathshala, digital learning solutions and learning management software etc. should be promoted.
2. Telecommunication companies need to apply zero-rate policies on downloading educational learning materials through the Internet on smartphones because educational institutions are using Social media like WhatsApp groups , Zoom, YouTube etc. for on-line teaching-learning and providing learning materials to students.

3. Use of Radio and Television is also a powerful tool for teaching-learning activities. Teaching-learning activities or content delivery by radio or Television is more effective because it has the capacity to reach more students.
4. To increase the enrollment of students universities & institutions have to introduce short term, innovative & market oriented Diploma programmes and Certificate Courses with vocational and non-vocational orientations.
5. Diversification of curriculum provisions of the universities. There should be provisions of short-term certificate and diploma programmes in the curriculum to upgrade the market oriented professional skills and competencies among the students.
6. Students coming from far-off places should be offered certain concessions and relaxation in tuition fees and other charges. This is very much necessary to avoid the localization of individual educational institutions.
7. Both private as well as public institutions are required to make aggressive publicity of their USPs (Unique Selling Points) i.e. best programmes, concessions and facilities of the institutions, arrangement of the safety and security of the students etc. this will help in diversifying the students populations in the in the institutions campuses, which is the real strengths of the higher learning institutions.
8. Universities have to commit a certain percentage of their budgets (approx. 15%) for the award of scholarships, concessions, fee-waiver etc. Loan schemes will have to make it simpler and user friendly.
9. Universities will have to create a position of fund raiser whose task will be to contact the resource persons from society/community, and persuade them to start the institution scholarship on their own name or name of their parents.
10. Universities will have to design the curriculum in such a manner that part of it could be delivered through face to face mode and part of it could be delivered through on-line mode. We have to follow the blended learning approach.
11. Teachers are needed to be trained for the efficient use of ICT, producing e-content and following the blended learning approach.
12. Universities have to make the optimum use of ICT. Theory lectures must be video-recorded and made available before hands of the students and their problems

could be addressed face to face mode in smaller groups to ensure the social/physical distancing in campuses.

13. Universities have to renovate hostels, create additional reading space in libraries and multiply play-grounds to ensure social distancing.

14. Universities have to modernize their health-centers with equipment like: thermal scanners, gloves, masks, hand sanitizers, bleaching-powders etc.

15. We shall have to develop flexible-learning pathways for the diverse groups of the learners (i.e. common-sense learners, slow-learners, fast-learners, analytical learners etc.) so that we can provide differential learning.

16. On-line proctored examinations system should be introduced, which a digital form of assessment is allowing students to sit in exams from any location which is reliable and free from fraud. It is supervised by a designated person who ensures the identity of the test-taker and the integrity of the test-taking environment. It can be recorded by the proctoring software.

### **Conclusion**

Greater goodwill and support will be needed from Central government and State government to Educational institutions, so that they can improve their infrastructure and also can train their teachers and other staff according to the demand of post Covid-19 situations. Traditional mode of teaching will continue but we have to place greater emphasis on blended learning approaches and on-line delivery of programmes/lectures. We have to also focus on the use of Radio and Television for the delivery of educational content. Universities are the organizations which have always shown ways to the society and taken the society to the next stage of the development. Solution of Covid-19 will also emerge from the campuses of higher learning institutions. Teachers will have to rise with the occasion because the teacher is the king in the teaching & learning process. Success of the university depends on the creativity and hard work of the teachers. Improved academic excellence must be the goal of every department and faculty. We must set standards and expectations high. Let us seek and support policy makers.

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