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on**

**‘Life After COVID-19 Pandemic and
Rebooting Economy’**

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THE STUDY OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION MANAGEMENT IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION DUE TO THE IMPACT OF COVID – 19

Swapnali Kulkarni
Kajal Maheshwari
Anuradha Phadnis

ABSTRACT

The petrifying and severe impact of COVID-19 has shaken the world to its core. Further, most of the Governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In India too, the government as a part of the nationwide lockdown has closed all educational institutions, as a consequence of which, learners ranging from school going children to postgraduate students, are affected.

These nationwide closures are impacting over 91% of the worlds' student population. Several other countries have implemented localized closures impacting millions of additional learners. UNESCO is supporting countries in their efforts to mitigate the immediate impact of school closures, particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning. The UNESCO report estimates that the coronavirus pandemic will adversely impact over 290 million students across 22 countries. The UNESCO estimates that about 32 crores students are affected in India, including those in schools and colleges.

Therefore, the government has come up with e-learning program. Many ed-tech firms have tried to leverage the occasion by offering free online classes or attractive discounts on e-learning modules. These measures have been met with overwhelming response by students with some startups witnessing as high as 25% uptick in e-learning. Remote learning seems a viable solution to students during this time as they offer convenient, on -the- go and affordable access to lessons. E-learning also comes as an interesting and interactive alternative as compared to classroom teaching.

Introduction –

At the end of February as alarm bells began to sound on the growing spread of the COVID-19 virus, the World Bank established a multi-sectoral global task force to support country response and coping measures. At the time, only China and a handful of schools in other affected countries were enforcing social distancing through school closures. A little over two weeks later, 120 countries have closed schools impacting almost a billion students across the globe that have seen their schools close for varied lengths of time.

Sometime in the second week of March, state governments across the country began shutting down schools and colleges temporarily as a measure to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus. This is a crucial time for the education sector—board examinations, nursery school admissions, entrance tests of various universities and competitive examinations, among others, are all held during this period. Closures will not only have a short-term impact on the continuity of learning for more than 285 million young learners in India.

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Assistant Professor, S.B. Patil Institute of Management, Nigdi, Pune 411044

Contact No. : 8007548648

Email Id: swapnalik.2003@gmail.com

Assistant Professor, S.B. Patil Institute of Management, Nigdi, Pune 411044

Contact No. : 9326505453

Email Id: kajaljuly28@gmail.com

Assistant Professor, S.B. Patil Institute of Management, Nigdi, Pune 411044

Contact No. : 9850728206

Email Id: phadnisanuradha@sbspatilmba.com

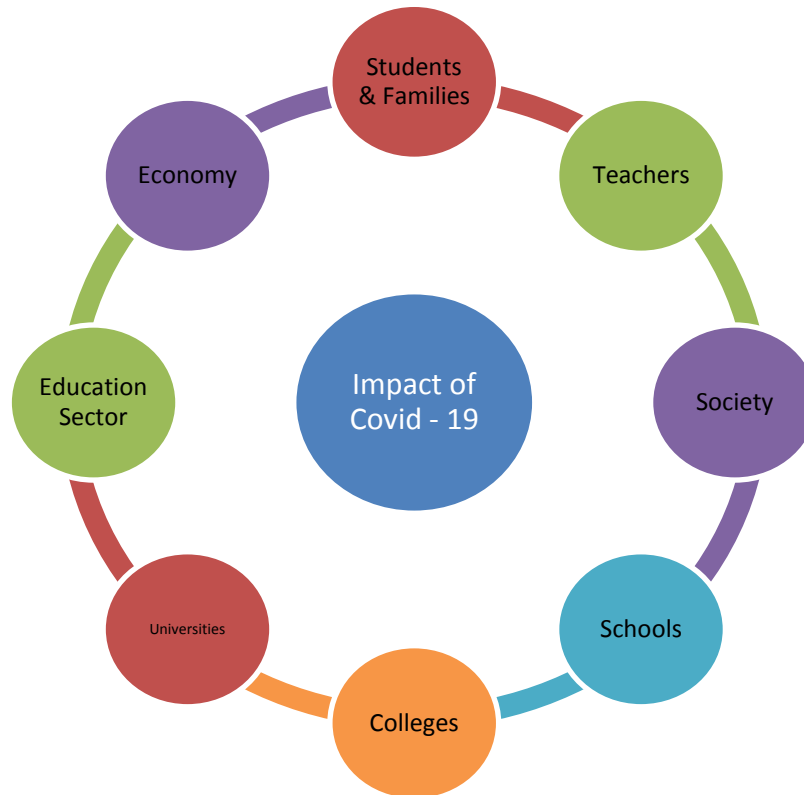
Objectives of the study –

1. To study the various elements of education sector which are being affected by Covid – 19.
2. To study the ways in which the elements are being affected.

COVID-19 is impacting almost every sector of the economy. And, the education sector is no exception. Schools, colleges, and institutes are close even, and students are at home with the least contact with friends.

The Impact of Covid – 19 is studied on the following elements –

1. Students & Families
2. Teachers
3. Society
4. Schools
5. Colleges
6. Universities
7. Education Sector
8. Economy

**Impact of Covid – 19 on Students & Families –**

Everything is virtual, with no physical movement. Schools, universities, institutes of all levels have deferred or dropped examinations. Indeed, even graded tests like GRE, SATs, GMAT, ACT are on a delay, and the fate of students hang in a critical state!

The students, in addition to the missed opportunities for learning, no longer have access to healthy meals during this time and are subject to economic and social stress.

Many such students have now been barred from leaving these countries. If the situation persists, in the long run, a decline in the demand for international higher education is expected. Perhaps to the disappointment of some, children

have not generally been sent home to play. The idea is that they continue their education at home, in the hope of not missing out too much.

Families are central to education and are widely agreed to provide major inputs into a child's learning, as described by Bjorklund and Salvanes (2011). The current global-scale expansion in home schooling might at first thought be seen quite positively, as likely to be effective. But typically, this role is seen as a complement to the input from school. Parents supplement a child's maths learning by practising counting or highlighting simple maths problems in everyday life; or they illuminate history lessons with trips to important monuments or museums. Being the prime driver of learning, even in conjunction with online materials, is a different

question; and while many parents round the world do successfully school their children at home, this seems unlikely to generalise over the whole population.

So while global home schooling will surely produce some inspirational moments, some angry moments, some fun moments and some frustrated moments, it seems very unlikely that it will on average replace the learning lost from school. But the bigger point is this: there will likely be substantial disparities between families in the extent to which they can help their children learn. Key differences include (Oreopoulos et al. 2006) the amount of time available to devote to teaching, the non-cognitive skills of the parents, resources (for example, not everyone will have the kit to access the best online material), and also the amount of knowledge – it's hard to help your child learn something that you may not understand yourself. Consequently, this episode will lead to an increase in the inequality of human capital growth for the affected cohorts.

It is also possible that some students' careers might benefit from the interruptions. For example, in Norway it has been decided that all 10th grade students will be awarded a high-school degree. And Maurin and McNally (2008) show that the 1968 abandoning of the normal examination procedures in France (following the student riots) led to positive long-term labour market consequences for the affected cohort.

Impact of Covid – 19 on Teachers –

Teaching is moving online, on an untested and unprecedented scale. Student assessments are also moving online, with a lot of trial and error and uncertainty for everyone. Many assessments have simply been cancelled. Importantly, these interruptions will not just be a short-term issue, but can also have long-term consequences for the affected cohorts and are likely to increase inequality.

The closure of schools, colleges and universities not only interrupts the teaching for students around the world; the closure also coincides with a key assessment period and many exams have been postponed or cancelled.

Internal assessments are perhaps thought to be less important and many have been simply cancelled. But their point is to give information about the child's progress for families and teachers. The loss of this information delays the recognition of both high potential and learning difficulties and can have harmful long-term consequences for the child.

Andersen and Nielsen (2019) look at the consequence of a major IT crash in the testing system in Denmark. As a result of this, some children could not take the test. The authors find that participating in the test increased the score in a reading test two years later by 9% of a standard deviation, with similar effects in mathematics. These effects are largest for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Importantly, the lockdown of institutions not only affects internal assessments. In the UK, for example, all exams for the main public qualifications – GCSEs and A levels – have been cancelled for the entire cohort. Depending on the duration of the lockdown, we will likely observe similar actions around the world. One potential alternative for the cancelled assessments is to use 'predicted grades', but Murphy and Wyness (2020) show that these are often inaccurate, and that among high achieving students, the predicted grades for those from disadvantaged backgrounds are lower than those from more advantaged backgrounds. Another solution is to replace blind exams with teacher assessments. Evidence from various settings show systematic deviations between unblind and blind examinations, where the direction of the bias typically depends on whether the child belongs to a group that usually performs well (Burgess and Greaves 2013, Rangvid 2015). For example, if girls usually perform better in a subject, an unblind evaluation of a boy's performance is likely to be downward biased. Because such assessments are used as a key qualification to enter higher education, the move to unblind subjective assessments can have potential long-term consequences for the equality of opportunity.

In higher education many universities and colleges are replacing traditional exams with online assessment tools. This is a new area for both teachers and students, and assessments will likely have larger measurement error than usual. Research shows that employers use educational credentials such as degree classifications and grade point averages to sort applicants (Piopiunik et al. 2020). The increase in the noise of the applicants' signals will therefore potentially reduce the matching efficiency for new graduates on the labour market, who might experience slower earnings growth and higher job separation rates. This is costly both to the individual and also to society as a whole (Fredriksson et al. 2018).

- As discussed above, all major entrance examinations are postponed including engineering,

medical, law, agriculture, fashion and designing courses, etc. This situation can be a ringing alarming bell mainly in private sector universities. Maybe some faculties and employees may face salary cuts, bonuses and increments can also be postponed.

The **lockdown** has generated uncertainty over the exam cycle. May be universities may face impact in terms of a slowdown in student internships and placements, lower fee collection that can create hurdles in managing the working capital.

- Another major concern is that it can affect the paying capacity of several people in the private sector, which is catering to a sizeable section of the students in the country.

Impact of Covid – 19 on Society –

Five, Indian traditional knowledge is well known across the globe for its scientific innovations, values, and benefits to develop sustainable technologies and medicines. The courses on Indian traditional knowledge systems in the fields of yoga, Indian medicines, architecture, hydraulics, ethnobotany, metallurgy and agriculture should be integrated with a present-day mainstream university education to serve the larger cause of humanity. The severe short-term disruption is felt by many families around the world: home schooling is not only a massive shock to parents' productivity, but also to children's social life and learning.

Impact of Covid – 19 on Schools –

The structure of schooling and learning, including teaching and assessment methodologies, was the first to be affected by these closures. Only a handful of private schools could adopt online teaching methods. Their low-income private and government school counterparts, on the other hand, have completely shut down for not having access to e-learning solutions.

In this time of crisis, a well-rounded and effective educational practice is what is needed for the capacity-building of young minds. It will develop skills that will drive their employability, productivity, health, and well-being in the decades to come, and ensure the overall progress of India. The

COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis. Many countries have (rightly) decided to close schools, colleges and universities. The crisis crystallises the dilemma policymakers are facing between closing schools (reducing contact and saving lives) and keeping them open (allowing workers to work and maintaining the economy).

Going to school is the best public policy tool available to raise skills. While school time can be fun and can raise social skills and social awareness, from an economic point of view the primary point of being in school is that it increases a child's ability. Even a relatively short time in school does this; even a relatively short period of missed school will have consequences for skill growth. But can we estimate how much the COVID-19 interruption will affect learning? Not very precisely, as we are in a new world; but we can use other studies to get an order of magnitude.

Two pieces of evidence are useful. Carlsson et al. (2015) consider a situation in which young men in Sweden have differing number of days to prepare for important tests. These differences are conditionally random allowing the authors to estimate a causal effect of schooling on skills. The authors show that even just ten days of extra schooling significantly raises scores on tests of the use of knowledge ('crystallized intelligence') by 1% of a standard deviation. As an extremely rough measure of the impact of the current school closures, if we were to simply extrapolate those numbers, twelve weeks less schooling (i.e. 60 school days) implies a loss of 6% of a standard deviation, which is non-trivial. They do not find a significant impact on problem-solving skills (an example of 'fluid intelligence').

A different way into this question comes from Lavy (2015), who estimates the impact on learning of differences in instructional time across countries. Perhaps surprisingly, there are very substantial differences between countries in hours of teaching. For example, Lavy shows that total weekly hours of instruction in mathematics, language and science is 55% higher in Denmark than in Austria. These differences matter, causing significant differences in test score outcomes: one more hour per week over the school year in the main subjects increases test scores by around 6% of a standard deviation. In our case, the loss of perhaps 3-4 hours per week teaching in maths for 12 weeks may be similar in magnitude to the loss of an hour per week for 30 weeks. So, rather bizarrely and surely coincidentally, we end up with an estimated loss of around 6% of a standard deviation again. Leaving the close similarity aside, these studies possibly suggest a likely effect no greater than 10% of a standard deviation but definitely above zero. Let us tell you that due to the closedown of educational institutes it is estimated to affect around 600 million learners across the world.

Impact of Covid – 19 on Colleges/Institutes –

Needless to say, the pandemic has transformed the centuries-old, chalk–talk teaching model to one driven by technology. This disruption in the delivery of education is pushing policymakers to figure out how to drive engagement at scale while ensuring inclusive e-learning solutions and tackling the digital divide.

Four, it is also important to reconsider the current delivery and pedagogical methods in school and higher education by seamlessly integrating classroom learning with e-learning modes to build a unified learning system. The major challenge in EDTech reforms at the national level is the seamless integration of technology in the present Indian education system, which is the most diverse and largest in the world with more than 15 lakh schools and 50,000 higher education institutions. Further, it is also important to establish quality assurance mechanisms and quality benchmark for online learning developed and offered by India HEIs as well as e-learning platforms (growing rapidly). Many e-learning players offer multiple courses on the same subjects with different levels of certifications, methodology and assessment parameters. So, the quality of courses may differ across different e-learning platforms.

The careers of this year's university graduates may be severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have experienced major teaching interruptions in the final part of their studies, they are experiencing major interruptions in their assessments, and finally they are likely to graduate at the beginning of a major global recession. Evidence suggests that poor market conditions at labour market entry cause workers to accept lower paid jobs, and that this has permanent effects for the careers of some. Oreopoulos et al. (2012) show that graduates from programmes with high predicted earnings can compensate for their poor starting point through both within- and across-firm earnings gains, but graduates from other programmes have been found to experience permanent earnings losses from graduating in a recession.

Impact of Covid – 19 on Universities –

A multi-pronged strategy is necessary to manage the crisis and build a resilient Indian education system in the long term. One, immediate measures are essential to ensure continuity of learning in government schools and universities. Open-source digital learning solutions and Learning Management Software should be adopted so teachers can conduct

teaching online. The DIKSHA platform, with reach across all states in India, can be further strengthened to ensure accessibility of learning to the students.

Impact of Covid – 19 on Education Sector –

The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector as well, which is a critical determinant of a country's economic future. A large number of Indian students—second only to China—enroll in universities abroad, especially in countries worst affected by the pandemic, the US, UK, Australia and China.

Three, strategies are required to prepare the higher education sector for the evolving demand–supply trends across the globe—particularly those related to the global mobility of students and faculty and improving the quality of and demand for higher studies in India. Further, immediate measures are required to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on job offers, internship programs, and research projects.

Impact of Covid – 19 on Economy –

The bigger concern, however, on everybody's mind is the effect of the disease on the employment rate. Recent graduates in India are fearing withdrawal of job offers from corporates because of the current situation. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's estimates on unemployment shot up from 8.4% in mid-March to 23% in early April and the urban unemployment rate to 30.9%. Two, inclusive learning solutions, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized, need to be developed. With a rapid increase of mobile internet users in India, which is expected to reach 85% households by 2024, technology is enabling ubiquitous access and personalization of education even in the remotest parts of the country. This can change the schooling system and increase the effectiveness of learning and teaching, giving students and teachers multiple options to choose from. Many aspirational districts have initiated innovative, mobile-based learning models for effective delivery of education, which can be adopted by others.

A Cyclical Approach to education in emergencies

What we are learning from COVID-19, similar to what we have seen in previous pandemics, is that preparedness is crucial. While different scenarios exist, several of them assume that the COVID-19 spread will happen in waves, which means the process of addressing it should be cyclical. Countries not yet impacted should begin

“preparing,” starting with a response plan. This would facilitate “coping” once the crisis hits and minimizing the negative impacts. The plan can include introducing protocols for screenings in schools, rolling out hygiene practice campaigns, imposing school closures, offering distance learning, using closed schools for emergency purposes, etc.

As the emergency phase dissipates, communities could move into a “recovery” mode, with governments implementing policies and measures to regain lost time. The approaches may include adjustments to the academic calendar, prioritizing students in grades preparing for high-stakes examinations, and continuing with distance learning in parallel to schools. Countries that have shown greater resilience in repeated crises, such as those in East Asia, are the ones that were able to benefit from lessons learned and to respond quickly to new crises, such as this one. They have been able to use the momentum to re-prepare, investing and reinforcing systems going forward.

It is critical to jointly work building on the experience of previous outbreaks (SARS, Ebola, etc.) in support to Governments in understanding the options available. The World Bank is working with countries across the globe in each of the three stages of preparing, coping and recovery. Educational administrators and policy makers can use this crisis as an opportunity to introduce new learning modes that can reach everyone, to prepare for emergencies, and to make the system more resilient.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the closure of schools in 188 countries, affecting more than 1.5 billion students and 63 million primary and secondary

teachers worldwide. The interference in the education system due to the continuous COVID-19 is a reminder that there is a need for transformation.

Suggestions –

Possible alternatives or solutions for interrupted education during COVID-19

- With the help of power supply, digital skills of teachers and students, internet connectivity it is necessary to explore digital learning, high and low technology solutions, etc.
- Students those are coming from low-income groups or presence of disability, etc. distance learning programs can be included.
- To provide support for digitalization to teachers and students.
- The necessity to explore digital learning platforms.
- Measures should be taken to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on job offers, internship programs, and research projects.
- ED tech reform at the national level that is an integration of technology in the present Indian education system.
- Postponed or rescheduled the examinations
- Cleaning and sanitization of premises.
- Consideration of long term uncertainty etc.

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