"Post Covid-19 impact on Higher Education System in India"

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Abstract:

On March 11, 2020 World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Covid-19 as a pandemic. Covid-19 has affected more than 4.5 million peoples worldwide (WHO). In India, the first affected case of Covid-19 was detected on 30 January 2020 in the state of Kerala and the affected had a travel history from Wuhan, China. In India, more than 32 crores of students have been affected by the various restrictions and the nationwide lockdown for Covid-19. Most Governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to control the spread of the pandemic Covid-19. This worldwide closure has impacted drastically the world's student population. Governments around the world are making efforts to diminish the immediate impact of closure of educational institutions particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and trying to facilitate the continuity of education for all using different digital modes of learning. The pandemic has been steering the education sector forward with technological innovation and advancements. The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector. A large number of Indian students who are enrolled in many Universities abroad, especially in worst affected countries are now leaving those countries and if the situation persists, in the long run, there will be a significant decline in the demand for international higher education also. This paper focuses attention on impact of COVID 19 on Higher Education and new trends in India. Some fruitful suggestions are also pointed to carry out educational activities during the pandemic situation

Keywords: - COVID 19, Higher Education, trends

Introduction:

The recent pandemic created an opportunity for change in pedagogical approaches and introduction of virtual education in all levels of education. As we do not know how long the pandemic situation will continue, a gradual move towards the online/virtual education is the

demand of the current crisis. UGC and MHRD have lunched many virtual platforms with online depositories, e-books and other online teaching/learning materials. Combination of the traditional technologies (radio, TV, landline phones) with mobile/web technologies to a single platform with all depositories would enhance better accessibility and flexibility to education. This would involve upgrading the service platform to enable it to meet the required volume of educational demands of students. All service providers need to be mobilized to provide proper access to the educational service platforms to the disadvantaged groups of population also. Virtual education is the most preferred mode of education at this time of crisis due to the outbreak of Covid-19. The post Covid-19 education seems to be an education with widely accepted online/virtual education which may perhaps be a parallel system of education

Objectives of Study:

1) To highlight the impact of Covid-19 on higher education sector in India.
2) To study various emerging approaches of India for higher education.
3) To enlist post Covid-19 trends of Higher Education institutions.
4) To give suggestion for improving quality of higher education in post COVID worldwide circumstance.

Research Methodology:

The present research is of illustrative Research. For the purpose of study, information has been collected through secondary sources, such as reference books, articles on web sites and so on.

Post Covid-19 Trends of Higher Education:

Change is inevitable which has been forced upon the society due to Covid-19. The opportunities created by the pandemic Covid-19 will lead towards a better tomorrow. Tomorrow will be a new morning which will entirely be in our own hands. New technologies will certainly challenge the traditional paradigms such as classroom lectures, modes of learning and modes of assessment. The new trends will allow the education sector to imagine new ways of teaching learning and some trends may be pointed as below;

1) Reduction in National and International student mobility for higher:

Student safety and well-being issues are important deciding factors for students and their parents for movement to international institutions for higher study. New modes of social distancing will continue for quite some time and may affect on-campus face to face teaching

learning. Most of the parents will prefer to find workable alternatives closer to their home and may restrict for less movement within the country due to the pandemic. The international education has also been affected by the crisis. Many international universities have been closed and are delivering all educational activities online. Many international conferences in higher education have been cancelled or turned into a series of webinars. So, the national and international student movement may be diminished.

2) Learning with social distancing:

. All will maintain social distancing and avoid warm handshake, hug, personal greeting, and intimacy for a long time. Invisible restrictions may constraint the fun & joy of campus life. Sports, Gyms, tournaments may be in low gear for a longer period resulting less physical activities of students.

3) Encourage personalized learning:

Learning may not be confined to classes or to any specific boundaries. Students may be the virtual learners with one teacher leading dozens of students in the new age. The learning modules may be modified to suit different learning styles and the learning contents may come from different sources to meet the learners' aspirations and needs. Students may pursue their learning in the new paradigm as per their choice.

4) Raise the gap between privileged and unprivileged students:

Learners from low-income families and disadvantaged groups are the more likely to suffer as they may not afford high-speed internet connection and required technical gadgets for online learning. It will widen the gap between privileged and unprivileged learners creating inequality.

5) Technological teaching and learning:

More and more students will depend on technology and digital solutions for teaching learning, entertainment and connecting themselves with the outside world. Students will use internet technology to communicate virtually with their teachers and fellow learners through E-mail, Whatsapp, Video conference, Instant message, webinar or any other tool. Educational institutions may run with different shifts per day. The need for social distancing may imply lesser students in each class. So, most of the educational institutions may work in different shifts per day which may put more pressure on the teaching and administrative staff of the institution to manage. Covid-19 has accelerated adoption of digital technologies to deliver education and encouraged the educational institutions to move towards blended mode of learning. All teachers

and students became more technology savvy. The traditional face to face mode with post Covid-19 technology mode will lead the education towards blended mode of teaching learning and it may transform the structure of the education system.

6) Change in assessment system to new shape:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) may help teachers to deal with assessment, evaluation, preparing mark-sheet and monitoring the performance of each student easily. AI may use digital platform extensively to reduce burden of examiner in handling examination and evaluation systems. If these activities are made simpler, the academicians would be able to concentrate more on course development, qualitative teaching-learning and skill development.

7) Growing demand for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and online learning:

Covid-19 has forced the human society to maintain social distancing. It has created more challenges to continue teaching learning by maintaining social distancing. To meet these challenges there is more demand for ODL and online modes of education and the same trend may continue in future also.

8) Student debt crisis may rise:

In India, lots of students or their parents take education loans for higher education. If the employment market does not pick up, student debt crises may rise and create serious issue. Students may face increased stress, anxiety and depression due to their student loans.

9) Student Attendance may slow down:

Many parents may be reluctant to send back their children to schools and colleges suddenly after the end of lockdown. Some poor family parents who have lost their livelihood during the pandemic may not be able to afford the expenditure to send their children to institutions. This may lead to home education for another few months.

10) Unemployment rate is expected to be increased:

There is no recruitment in government sector and fresh graduates fear withdrawal of their job offers from private sectors because of the pandemic Covid-19. Many Indians might have returned home after losing their jobs overseas due to Covid-19. Hence, the fresh students who are likely to enter the job market shortly may face difficulty in getting suitable employment.

11) Mixed impact on Academic research & Professional Development:

Covid-19 has both negative and positive impacts on research. If we take the negative side, it has made impossible for researchers to travel and work together with others nationally and internationally. Some joint research work or project work are made complicated to complete.

Some scientific laboratory testing/research work could not be conducted. If we look at the positive side, academicians got much time to improve their theoretical research work. Academicians got acquainted with technological methods and improved their research. Webinars and e-conferences became normal methods for sharing expertise among students and academicians around the globe with similar issues. They could get much time to concentrate on professional development by doing research and to improve knowledge by sharing ideas through webinars and e-conferences. They enhanced their technical skill and could get the scope for publishing articles in journals, publishing books in this free time.

Suggestions for improving quality of higher education in Current Scenario:

1) Immediate measures are required to lessen the effects of the pandemic on job offers, internship programs, and research projects.

2) Many online learning platforms offer multiple programmes on the same subjects with different levels of certifications, methodology and assessment parameters. So, the quality of programmes may differ across different online learning platforms. Therefore, establishment of quality assurance mechanisms and quality benchmark for online learning programmes must be developed and offered by HEIs in India keeping in view of rapid growth of the online learning platform if the pandemic Covid-19 continues; new approaches for academic assessment should be adopted by educational institutions.

3) Across the globe, Indian traditional knowledge is well known for its scientific innovations, values and benefits to develop sustainable technologies and medicines and this knowledge systems in different fields should be integrated with a present-day mainstream higher education system.

4) Academic assessment of the students may be done through online mode or through quizzes and small projects

5) Educators and learners should be trained to utilize online teaching learning process using technology. Policy should be adopted by Government/educational institutions to provide free internet and free digital gadgets to all learners in order to encourage online learning as a result of which people would get engaged and remain safe during pandemic.

6) Government should support HEIs to strengthen their resources to run virtual educational activities. Students also need to be supported with better access to internet and technology as most students are unable to afford the facilities. During this pandemic, the

HEIs should focus more on virtual educational activities including television, radio and web-based education.

7) WHO has recently pointed out that the Covid-19 may never be eradicated and people will have to live with it. "It is important to put this on the table: this virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities, and this virus may never go away. HIV has not gone away, but we have come to terms with the virus. I think there are no promises in this and there are no dates. This disease may settle into a long problem, or it may not be.

Conclusion:

The spread of pandemic Covid-19 has radically disturbed each part of human life including education. It has made a remarkable test on education. In numerous educational institutions around the globe, grounds are shut and educating learning has moved on the web. Internationalization has eased back down significantly. In India, around 32 crore students halted to move schools/universities and every single instructive action finished. Regardless of every one of these difficulties, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have responded emphatically and figured out how to guarantee the coherence of instructing learning, examination and administration to the general public with certain apparatuses and procedures during the pandemic. A few estimates taken by HEIs and instructive specialists of India to offer consistent instructive types of assistance during the emergency are examined. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, numerous new methods of learning, new points of view, new patterns are developed and the equivalent may proceed as we proceed to another tomorrow.

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