

Analysis of the covid-19 situation and its impact on education system in India

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Abstract:

The Corona virus pandemic has shuttered educational institutions across the globe. Closure of schools, colleges and Universities, shutdown of routine life of students and teachers, disruptions in education and the education ministry remaining incommunicado, have created an unprecedented separation and thrown many unexpected challenges to administrators, educators, teachers, parents and students. The situation has created the new normal. How to cope with the new normal is the question that everyone is now asking.

It is good to carry out SWOT- strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of the covid-19:

Strengths:

As educational institutions across India have remained closed for months; parents are worried about their children's education. Some parents have forced their children to take up some online courses, but students do not seem to show interest in learning online. Some educational institutions have asked teachers to prepare online material, but most teachers do not have the experience of preparing e-material. Some universities and colleges want to move classes/courses online in order to engage students, but they do not know how to go about. The situation described above may present a gloomy picture,

Here are some such interesting questions:

1. Will 'education' be defined in a different way, in the future?
2. Is there a need to learn differently?
3. Will the transition has a positive or negative impact on students and their learning?
4. How should students' knowledge and skills assessed?
5. Will online education be successful in our country where millions of students do not own computers and have access to the internet?
6. How important is home learning?
7. How important is learning autonomy?
8. Is it good to depend on teachers and cling to the traditional way of learning?

Many more questions.....

The pandemic should have a positive impact on our education system. It should not be the same after the situation eases. There should be some positive changes.

Weaknesses:

The weaknesses in our system include lack of innovative thinking, inadequate infrastructure, untrained teachers, unequal accessibility, exam centre assessment, and the lack of learning autonomy.

How do these weaknesses act as hurdles now at the time of the pandemic and lockdown?

Remote learning, distance learning, home learning, online learning, e-learning and webinar are the buzz-words that we hear today. Recently, the Delhi government announced that it would conduct online classes for class XII students, but school teachers say that it is impractical since most students do not have access to the required facilities. Yes, we are challenged by these questions:

can everyone in the country afford e-learning?

Is online education and elite concept in India?

Will the digital divide further cement inequality and create an academic divide in the country?

Teachers working in elite schools in cities and big towns proudly state that they conduct classes online using and help students make use of the lock down period in a useful manner. What about teachers working in government-aided and government schools in cities and towns and private schools and colleges in rural areas? Neither teacher nor students have access to computers and the internet. They may neither have the awareness of online tools such as Google classroom available for such purposes, nor have the expertise to use them. It is possible for such teachers to even think of conducting classes online? Since our education system has not trained our teachers and students to think creatively and manage in a crisis situation, and has underplayed the important of e-learning, they are unprepared for the transition from the classroom to online.

Opportunities:

All systems have strengths and weaknesses. Maximizing strengths and minimizing weakness in order not to miss the opportunity to move forward should be the goal.

The 3 main opportunities that we have are:

1. Our students who belong to Gen Z,
2. Numerous web resources, and
3. Enthusiastic teachers.

Gen Z learner's (born between 1997 and 2010) are true digital natives. They are born in the digital era and are familiar with computers, multimedia content and internet-based activities from an early age. As they live in the online environment, enjoy watching YouTube videos, love connecting with people through social media and speak the language of Technology, they need to be taught differently. Now is the right time to move our classes to a different platform introduce e-learning and develop learning autonomy. The covid-19 lockdown has enabled teachers to become creative. They can now create e-material such as YouTube videos and PPTs and share the links with their students and engage them during the lockdown period.

Some teachers are using video conferencing facility such as zoom and bluejeans meetings for online teaching. These video conference facilities have features such as one-click scheduling, screen sharing and collaboration, cloud streaming, and recording and so on. Some educators use Google meets. Look up for Google resources available for distance learning at Google for educators teachers Centre online.

Threats:

India is far behind some developing countries where digital education is getting increased attention. In countries where e-learning is popular, students have access to various online resources such as massive open online courses (Moocs) which help students; teachers and professionals upgrade their skills.

E-learning promotes learning autonomy and enables students to acquire knowledge and skills without depending on teachers. To take the threat of many developed and developing countries leading the way in online education seriously and promote it earnestly.

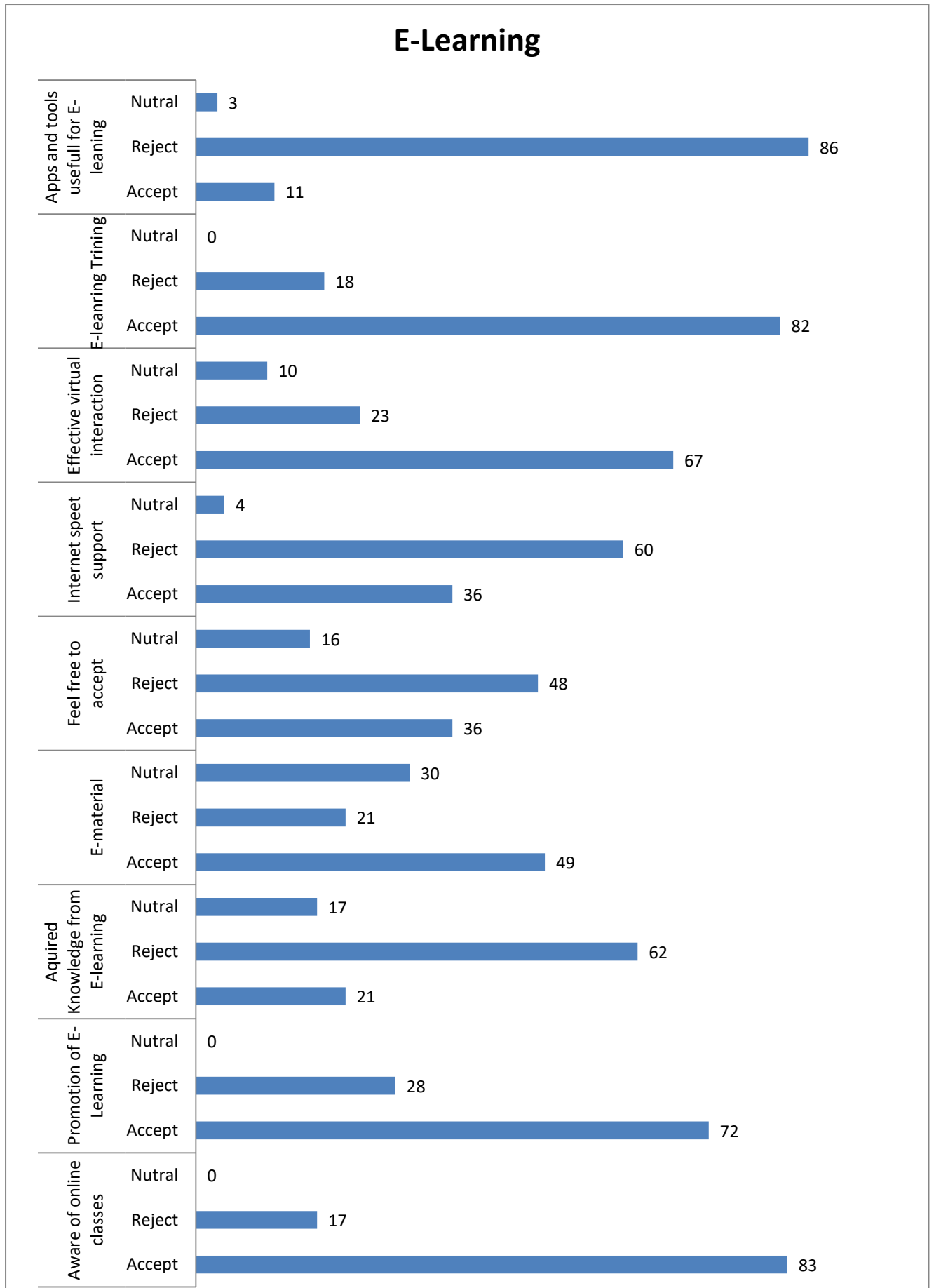
To summarize,

Education must continue.

Students should keep learning.

The lockdown period should be productive.

Educators should think creatively and introduce innovative ways of learning.



In a country where access to the internet and high-speed connectivity is a problem and the digital device is an issue, it is important to address the challenges. Those who are involved in education planning and administration should give a serious thought to reducing the digital divide in the country and popularize digital learning.

Strengths	Weakness
Majority interested on online courses Online E-material Live pictures, demonstrations' Online classes/courses	In-adequate infrastructure Lack of motivation Lack Expertise Un-Equal accessibility
Opportunities	Threats
Exploration to technology Practical videos/pictures/exposure Supports social distance by virtual meeting Distance learning courses	Hacking issues Dependency on technology Lack of supervision Distractions

Implications of learning strategies:

Acquisition of given knowledge that can be genetic didactically by a teacher or a text constitutes only one minor segment of curricular content. But learning education means much more than this. It involves development of analytical and other intellectual skills, the ability to critically deconstruct and evaluate given knowledge and the creativity to make new connections and syntheses. It also means to acquire operable skills, inquire, seek solutions to complex problems and learn to work in teams. All these take over direct human engagement- not just teacher-student interaction, but also peer interactions. Deconstructing given knowledge in relative isolation is never the same as doing it in a group. Arguably, some of this can, to some extent, be built on a digital platform. But curricular knowledge has a leaning to adjust its own according to the mode of transaction and focus of evaluation. It gets collapsed into largely information-based content when transacted through standard structures of teaching-learning and examination. While digital forms of learning have potential to enable students to pursue independent learning, conventional and digital forms of education should not be considered reciprocally exclusive. Online learning needs to be understood as one strand in a complex tapestry of curricular act that may still assign an important central role to direct human engagement and social learning.

Strategies to enhance the enrollment:

An April 13 report quoted the UGC chairman as saying that to maintain social distancing, e-education was the only way out. This was clearly meant to prepare the higher education community for the emergency of a protracted period of closure of campuses.

However, close on the heels of this, he was also quoted as saying that online education was likely to be adopted as a strategy to enhance the gross enrollment ratio in higher education. About the appropriateness of what may be an affective eventuality measure to tide over the pandemic crisis to be deployed as a long-term strategy for enhancing enrollment in higher education.

1. How far will online education help support greater access to and success in higher education among those who are on the margins?

2. How equipped are digital forms of education to support the depth and diversity of learning in higher education?
3. Is there an unstated political motivation for this shift in strategy?

Higher education has an influx of students who are first-generation aspirants. They have no cultural capital to bank on while struggling their way through college. Access is not merely enrollment. It also includes effective participation in curricular processes, which includes negotiating through language and social barriers.

Limitations of online learning:

There was anxiety, particularly about the graduating batches of students be declared a 'zero semester'. This prompted a number of local initiatives. There were attempts from individual teachers to keep their students engaged. A few universities made arrangements for teachers to hold their classes virtually through video conferencing services such as Zoom. The transition to virtual modes was relatively less difficult for those institutions that had, even prior to the lockdown, adopted learning management system platforms. All the above were well meaning attempts to keep the core educational processes going through this period.

Conclusion:

While the clear priority right now is to cope with the number of cases and the economic havoc that the pandemic is wreaking, it is also time for the community and the government to take steps to minimize the pain of another pandemic. The temptation to forget COVID-19 and move on will be over whelming. But India must let not let that happen. These crises create opportunities for innovation. We need a vision of a post COVID-19 economy that is not "Simply a return to normal". A new normal can build upon what we have discovered under lockdown, about making a living and living well. Let us work on an economy and online learning resources with latest technology that conserves earth resources, digital technology, now education system should implementation to the students and teachers with new classroom education and avoids future pandemics and enhances physical and mental well-being.

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