

Changes in Education System: Effects of COVID19

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COVID19, a national pandemic, has made all the educational schools across the world to adopt online teaching. Courses, examinations are conducted online, assignments are submitted through email. For countries like India, this is a good opportunity to strengthen the internet connectivity across rural India. Every village and towns in India should be digitally connected for better interaction between the students and teachers. Some of the students are quick to adjust to this system and some take little longer time to accustom with this system. India should establish a good infrastructure for online education like some of the advanced countries. The greatest advantage of such a system is education can become international. Advance institutes should globalize online education while Universities, initially, nationalize online education. Essential structural changes should be made in the curriculum and curriculum should be popularized to attract students across the countries. Skill development should be part of the curriculum in Engineering and science degree programmes. This will create future entrepreneurs. This is one way to beat unemployment and increase business skills amongst the youth. The business community should play a leading role in this new educational system.

The strength lies in the faculty and institute nurture. Faculty need to change their ordinary teaching methods and adapt to evolving technology-centered teaching. The faculty should establish themselves as “competent” individuals who can deliver what the students expect. To establish faculty should be active in research and research publications and gain experience /skills in online teaching. In a way, the learning institutes become virtual institutes. Every student’s home becomes his institute. This will reduce the demand for the infrastructure of the institute. However, research labs should function as usual to support research. Research collaboration can go online and can be internationalized.

Higher education in India needs to be more international; more flexible (curriculum) should be innovative and should be open for more collaboration.

According to Dr Francisco Marmolejo, advisor to Qatar Foundation in India, during his webinar, held by the Jio International Institute, India, higher education should be re-designed. It should be flexible, more innovative, more international but more locally connected and socially responsible, more collaborative and less risk-averse. Innovative models should be introduced. Universities/institutes could be online- providing internet-based flexible offerings (open universities); traditional learning with hand-on work; collaboration with other schools. Of course, there are challenges one has to face at the initial stages: e.g. leveraging technology to deliver better and more inclusive education, contributing to digital economy and society and responding to global demand but shifting demographics. Faculties play the most important role in such a system. According to Dr Francisco, true international engagement comes with curriculum integration and active participation by the faculty. Faculty need to be motivated and actively involved in curriculum integration.

Online education does not mean students should be deprived of laboratory experience. Skill development needs laboratories/workshops. There could be centers across the countries to support skill development activities. These centers could be institutes, colleges, universities. On the research front: it is all collaboration and not competition. Projects need to be designed through collaboration so that laboratory/research facilities could be shared. This will lead to strong centers of research laboratories on the scale of a region.

Post Covid-19 is an opportunity to change the higher education system. Institutes/ universities should utilize this opportunity to transform themselves. Curriculum design, collaborations, skill development and faculty involvement —all should focus on internationalizing higher education. Today it is Covid-19...we don't know what lies ahead in future for the million youngsters.

Corona virus-related disruption can give educators time to rethink the sector.

- Technology has stepped into the violation, and will continue to play a key role in educating future generations.

- In a world where knowledge is a mouse-click away, the role of the educator must change too.

Since World War II not many countries around the world had seen schools and educational institutions go into lockdown at around the same time and for the same reason. While we know that the impact of this virus will be far-reaching, what it might imply in the longer term for education is still not known.

For a while now, educators around the world have been talking about the need to reorganize how we educate future generations. This might just be the commotion that the sector needed to get us all to rethink how we educate, and question what we need to teach and what we are preparing our students for. So, as we educators struggle with the new ways of communicating with our students away from our classrooms and lecture theatres, it is a good time to reflect on how this disturbing crisis can help us define what learning should look like for Generations.

While we educate students through technology, we are re-organizing and re-educating ourselves on modern technological innovative ways of teaching and education system.

Some are predicting that this will change the way we live; one even predicts that it will “change us as a species.” We will certainly remember this time for the rest of our lives. At least momentarily, we will be grateful for the smaller things in life a bit more. But it will really change anything fundamentally, for the long-term. With COVID-19, schools are rapidly changing the basic way they do their work. Some have become old-fashioned correspondence schools, with the vast majority of interaction happening by written mail. Others have tried to re-establish the school background online using digital tools like Zoom. Rest of them are in-between, directing students to online tutoring and practice programs, and posting videos. Most people think that they just want to get things back to normal.

So what does this teach us?

First, crisis force us to adapt. In the current crisis, COVID is forcing parents to be teachers and forcing everyone : students, parents, and teachers to adapt to online learning tools.

Second, people get comfortable with some of these changes. Families are now stressed out trying to educate their children; they are also experiencing educational methods and tools that they’ve never seen before. They are getting more accustomed to them.

Third, our adaptations have indirect effects that lead to other changes. The necessary shift to school choice has changed our neighborhoods in ways that were not intended. In the current crisis, the shift to online tools may also have indirect effects.

Schools are now making much greater use of online tools. Most students around the world will soon have laptops and some type of internet access. Teachers are going to like many of the tools out there, and they will have an easier time using them now that students have some experience with them. As Dave Deming recently pointed out, online tools can be helpful complements to in-

person instruction—instead of a replacement for it—allowing teachers to focus more on engaging students and mentoring them.

A shift to some online tools could shift the role of teachers, making them more like coaches and mentors. They can point students to very good online lectures and then be there to provide guidance and feedback, and to make connections across topics. The roles of students and parents could also shift. Now that they have more places to look, they may be more likely to try and address learning needs on their own. When roles change, everything else can change with it, in less predictable ways.

In the current crisis, we are still wading through the dark fog. It is hard to know how millions of students, millions of teachers, and thousands of educational organizations will act in the months and years ahead. However, it is useful to start thinking about what might be coming and which of these changes we should be encouraging. Let's be prepared for the future.

References:

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