IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The present study has been designed to investigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education in India. The world has seen many a dangerous disease like Ebola, Swine Flu, and Plague which have catastrophic impact on demography, economy, education and cultures of different society. Likewise COVID-19 also has so much of disastrous impact on various sectors all over the world. This pandemic infectious disease was caused by SARS- COV-2 which first came to light in Wuhan in December 2019. As the positive cases of COVID-19 spread in bombarding number throughout the world WHO declared it as a pandemic. Almost all the countries of world have been put into lockdown. It has affected the lives in all sectors of our society. It has brought global recession in economy because of the lockdown. Education sector is also badly affected facing the disastrous impact of COVID-19. There is closure of educational institution through -out the world. To deal with teaching learning process the focus is drawn to online learning platform. But due to lack of resource and technically expertise people many underdeveloped and developing countries are facing problems in conducting online classes. In this time period, India is also focusing on online learning but there is a lot of disparity in accessibility to education through online platform because there are network issue, accessibility to internet, personal computer and other devices in India. Some students have accessibility to online learning platform and some are not which create new kind of digital inequality in accessing education leading to barrier in smoother teaching-learning process. This paper focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on education in India, where the impact of COVID-19 has been the highlight of the major issues and transition from traditional system of education i.e. face to face classroom learning and teaching to focus on online learning. It seeks to create a forum that can be referred to by the all stakeholder in education sector to give wings to young India.

KEY WORDS: Education, COVID-19, impact, Pandemic, Online teaching, digital inequality, Govt. of India.

INTRODUCTION:

The pandemic COVID-19 has spread over whole world and compelled the human society to maintain social distancing. It has significantly disrupted the education sector which is a critical determinant of a country's economic future. On February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) proposed an official name of the virus as COVID-19, an acronym for Corona virus disease 2019. It was first identified in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019. First death by COVID-19 was the 61-year old man in Wuhan, China on January 11, 2020. WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020. The first case of the COVID- 19 pandemic in India was reported on 30 January 2020 in the state of Kerala and the affected had a travel history from Wuhan, China (Wikipedia). The first death due to COVID-19 was reported in India on March 12, 2020. It has affected more than 4.5 million peoples worldwide (WHO). According to the UNESCO report, it had affected more than 90% of total world's student population during mid April 2020 which is now reduced to nearly 70% during May 2020. Outbreak of COVID-19 has impacted more than 120 crores of students and youths across the world. In India, more than 32 crores of students have been affected by the various restrictions and the nationwide lockdown for COVID-19. As per the UNESCO report, about 14 crores of primary and 13 crores of secondary students are affected which are two mostly affected levels in India. After observing the corona virus pandemic situation the WHO advised to maintain social distancing as the first prevention step. So, every country started the action of lockdown to separate the contaminated people. The education sectors including schools, colleges and universities became closed. Classes suspended and all examinations of schools, colleges and universities including entrance tests were cancelled indefinitely not only that board and council examinations of 10th & 12th, final year / semester examinations of colleges and universities were cancelled. Finally most of the state of India including west bengal has announce the result of board and council examinations in the month of July 2020 without taking examination of some subjects due to COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason there have no merit list. Thus, the lockdown destroyed the schedules of every student. Though it is an exceptional situation in the history of education, COVID-19 has created many opportunities to come out of the rigorous classroom teaching model to a new era of digital model. The lockdown has compelled many educational institutions to cancel their classes, examinations, internships etc. and to choose the online modes. Initially, the educators and the students were quite confused and didn't understand how to cope up with the situation of this sudden crisis that compelled closure of the educational activities. But latter on all realized that the lockdown has taught so many lessons to manage with the emergence of such pandemics. Thus, COVID-19 has created many challenges and opportunities for the educational institutes to strengthen their technological knowledge and infrastructure. The lockdown has given them a ray of hope for teachers and students to continue their educational activities through online. The teachers assigned work to students via internet, delivered lectures through live video conferencing using different Apps like

GoToMeeting.com, Skype.com, Google Classroom, Youtube.com, Blackboard.com, MOOC.org, openculture.com, Zoom (zoom.us), Whatsapp.com, Facebook live, Google meet, Webex cisco, Microsoft teams, Telegram, etc. There are whatsapp groups of guardians, teachers, students and parents for affective communication through which they are always in touch to share their difficulties through this e-medium. The same is the situation that happens with India where not every student is well equipped with the high-speed internet and digital gadgets and are along these lines of suffer. Numerous advanced educational institutions in India are not also equipped with digital facilities right now to cope up with sudden change from traditional education set up to the online education system.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present research paper focused on the following objectives:

- ➢ To enlighten various measures taken by Govt. of India for education sector during this pandemic.
- ➢ To highlight various positive impact of COVID-19 on education.
- ➢ To enlist some negative impacts of COVID-19 and to put some effective suggestions for continuing education during the pandemic situation.

METHODOLOGY

Data and information presented in current study are collected from various reports prepared by national and international agencies on COVID-19 pandemic. Information are collected from various authentic websites. Some journals and e-contents relating to impact of COVID- 19 on educational system are referred.

INITIATIVES OF GOVT. OF INDIA ON EDUCATION DURING COVID-19

To prevent spread of pandemic COVID-19, the Government of India has taken number of preventive measures. The union government declared a countrywide lock-down of all educational institutions on 16 March 2020. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) postponed all examinations of secondary and higher secondary schools on March 18, 2020 throughout India. CBSE released revised guidelines for examination centres to conduct examinations by maintaining a distance of at least 1 meter between the students taking the exam with a class not having more than 24 students. If the rooms of the examination centres are small then the students should be divided into different rooms accordingly. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) postponed the interview for the Civil Services Examination 2019 (Wikipedia). Similarly the most of the state Governments and other educational boards postponed examinations due to outbreak of COVID-19. Govt. of India has observed one day

nationwide Janata curfew on March 22 and implement lockdown from March 25, 2020 onwards in different phases. Govt. of India has been extending lockdown periods from time to time adopting different strategies to fight with the pandemic but educational institutions remained closed continuously. On May 17, 2020, the 4th phase lockdown has been extended till 31st May 2020 with some less restriction in other sectors except education. Almost all state government ministries have taken measures to ensure that the academic activities of schools and colleges do not hamper during the lockdown period. They have instructed the schools to hold all their classes online. The lockdown has accelerated adoption of digital technology. It has provided a chance to develop new and improved professional skills/knowledge through online learning in more efficient and productive way. Online learning is the best solution during this pandemic COVID-19 situation. So, the digital India vision of the government is emerging as a vital tool for solving the present crisis due to COVID-19. It is a fact that technology-based education is more transparent with all respect. Looking at this challenge of colleges and schools being shut, government of India, as well as state governments and private players have undertaken proper initiatives. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has made several arrangements, including online portals and educational channels through Direct to Home TV, Radios for students to continue learning. During lockdown, students are using popular social media tools like GoToMeeting.com, Skype.com, Google Classroom, Youtube.com, Blackboard.com, MOOC.org, openculture.com, Zoom (zoom.us), Whatsapp.com, Facebook live, Google meet, Webex cisco, Microsoft teams, Telegram, etc. for online teaching learning system. ICT initiative of MHRD (e-Broucher- https://mhrd.gov.in/ict-initiatives) is a unique platform which combines all digital resources for online education. The digital initiatives of MHRD for secondary as well as higher education during COVID-19 are listed as below:

SECONDARY EDUCATION:

- **Diksha** portal contains e-Learning content for students, teachers, and parents aligned to the curriculum, including video lessons, worksheets, textbooks and assessments. Under the guidance of its national boards of education (CBSE) and NCERT, the content has been created by more than 250 teachers who teach in multiple languages. The app is available to use offline. It has more than 80,000 e-Books for classes 1 to 12 created by CBSE, NCERT in multiple languages. The contents can also be viewed through QR codes on textbooks. The app can be downloaded from IOS and Google Play Store. Website: https://diksha.qov.in or https://seshaqun.qov.in/shaqun

- **e-Pathshala** is an e-Learning app by NCERT for classes 1 to 12 in multiple languages. The app houses books, videos, audio, etc. aimed at students, educators and parents in multiple languages including Hindi,

Urdu, and English. In this web portal NCERT has deployed 1886 audios, 2000 videos, 696 e-Books and 504 Flip Books for classes 1 to 12 in different languages. Mobile Apps is available. Website: http://epathshala.nic.in or http://epathshala.qov.in.

- **National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER)** portal provides a host of resources for students and teachers in multiple languages including books, interactive modules and videos including a host of STEM-based games. Content is mapped to the curriculum for classes 1-12, including aligned resources for teachers. It has a total of 14527 files including 401 collections, 2779 documents, 1345 interactive, 1664 audios, 2586 images and 6153 videos on different languages. Website: http://nroer.qov.in/welcome

HIGHER EDUCATION:

- **Swayam** is the national online education platform hosting 1900 courses covering both school (classes 9 to 12) and higher education (under graduate, post graduate programs) in all subjects including engineering, humanities and social sciences, law and management courses. The unique feature is that, it is integrated with the conventional education. Credit transfers are possible for SWAYAM courses (max. 20%). Website: https://swayam.gov.in/

- **Swayam Prabha** has 32 DTH TV channels transmitting educational contents on 24 x 7 bases. These channels are available for viewing all across the country using DD Free Dish Set Top Box and Antenna. The channel schedule and other details are available in the portal. The channels cover both school education (classes 9 to 12) and higher education (undergraduate, postgraduate, engineering Out-of-school children, vocational courses and teacher training) in arts, science, commerce, performing arts, social sciences and humanities subjects, engineering, technology, law, medicine, agriculture. Website: https://swayamprabha.gov.in/

- **e-PG Pathshala is** for postgraduate students. Postgraduate students can access this platform for e-books, online courses and study materials during this lockdown period. The importance of this platform is that students can access these facilities without having internet for the whole day. Website: https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/

POSITIVE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION:

Though the outbreak of COVID-19 has created many negative impacts on education, educational institutions of India have accepted the challenges and trying their best to provide seamless support services to the students during

the pandemic. Indian education system got the opportunity for transformation from traditional system to a new era. The following points may be considered as the positive impacts.

- **Move towards Blended Learning:** COVID-19 has accelerated adoption of digital technologies to deliver education. Educational institutions moved towards blended mode of learning. It encouraged all teachers and students to become more technology savvy. New ways of delivery and assessments of learning opened immense opportunities for a major transformation in the area of curriculum development and pedagogy. It also gives access to large pools of learners at a time.

- **Rise in use of Learning Management Systems:** Use of learning management systems by educational institutions became a great demand. It opened a great opportunity for the companies those have been developing and strengthening learning management systems for use educational institutions**.**

- **Enhance the use of soft copy of learning material:** In lockdown situation students were not able to collect the hard copies of study materials and hence most of the students used of soft copies materials for reference.

- **Improvement in collaborative work-** There is a new opportunity where collaborative teaching and learning can take on new forms. Collaborations can also happen among faculty/teachers across the world to benefit from each other**.**

- **Rise in online meetings**- The pandemic has created a massive rise in teleconferencing, virtual meetings, webinars and e-conferencing opportunities.

- **Enhanced Digital Literacy**: The pandemic situation induced people to learn and use digital technology and resulted in increasing the digital literacy.

- **Improved the use of electronic media for sharing information**: Learning materials are shared among the students easily and the related queries are resolved through e- mail, SMS, phone calls and using different social Medias like WhatsApp or Facebook.

- **World wide exposure**: Educators and learners are getting opportunities to interact with peers from around the world. Learners adapted to an international community.

- **Better time management**: Students are able to manage their time more efficiently in online education during pandemics.

- **Demand for Open and Distance Learning (ODL):** During the pandemic situation most of the students preferred ODL mode as it encourages self-learning providing opportunities to learn from diverse resources and customized learning as per their needs.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION:

Education sector has suffered a lot due to the outbreak of COVID-19. It has created many negative impacts on education and some of them are as pointed below:

- **Educational activity hampered:** Classes have been suspended and exams at different levels postponed. Different boards have already postponed the annual examinations and entrance tests. Admission process got delayed. Due to continuity in lockdown, student suffered a loss of more than 4 months of the full academic year of 2020-21 which is going to further deteriorate the situation of continuity in education and the as students would face much difficulty in resuming schooling again after a huge gap.

- **Impact on employment:** Most of the recruitment got postponed due to COVID-19 Placements for students may also be affected with companies delaying the on board of students. Unemployment rate is expected to be increased due to this pandemic. In India, there is no recruitment in Govt. sector and fresh graduates fear withdrawal of their job offers from private sectors 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% (Educationasia.in). When the unemployment increases then the education gradually decreases as people struggle for food rather than education.

- **Unprepared teachers/students for online education-** Not all teachers/students are good at it or at least not all of them were ready for this sudden transition from face to face learning to online learning. Most of the teachers are just conducting lectures on video platforms such as Zoom, Google meet etc. which may not be real online learning without any dedicated online learning platform.

- **Reduced global employment opportunity-** Some may lose their jobs from other countries and the pass out students may not get their job outside India due to restrictions caused by 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. Many students who have already got jobs through campus interviews may not be able to join their jobs due to lockdown. The Indians who have been doing their jobs abroad may lose their jobs. Recent graduates in India are of also fearing for withdrawal of job offers from corporate sectors because of movement restriction in the current pandemic situation.

- **Increased responsibility of parents to educate their wards:** Some educated parents are able to guide but some may not have the adequate level of education needed to teach children in the house.

- **Loss of nutrition due to school closure:** Mid day meals is a school meal programme of the Government of India which is designed to provide better the nutritional food to school-age children nationwide. The closure of schools has serious implications on the daily nutrition of students as the mid-day meal schemes have temporarily been shut. Various studies have pointed out that mid-day meals are also an important contributing factor for increased enrolment in the schools.

- **Access to digital world:** As many students have limited or no internet access and many students may not be able to afford computer, laptop or supporting mobile phones in their homes, online teaching-learning may create a digital divide among students. The lockdown has hit the poor students very hard in India as most of them are unable to explore online learning according to various reports. Thus the online teaching-learning method during pandemic COVID-19 may enhance the gap between rich/poor and urban/rural.

- **Access to global education**: 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, a there will be a significant decline in the demand for international higher education.

- **Payment of Schools, Colleges fee got delayed:** During this lockdown most of the parents will be facing the unemployment situation so they may not be able to pay the fee for that particular time periods which may affect the private institutes.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. India should develop creative strategies to ensure that all children must have sustainable access to learning during pandemic COVID-19. The Indian policies must include various individuals from diverse backgrounds including remote regions, marginalized and minority groups for effective delivery.

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

3. 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 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India keeping in view of rapid growth of the online learning platforms.

4. 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.

5. Govt. and educational institutes should plan to continue the educational activities maintaining social distancing. 30-40% students and teachers may attend schools/colleges in two shifts per day to carry on educational activities by obeying guidelines for COVID-19.

6. At current times, access to technology and internet is an urgent requirement. So, the digital capabilities and the required infrastructure must reach to the remotest and poorest communities to facilitate the students to continue their education during the pandemics. There is a need to deploy public funds to fix the internet gap and ensure that students continue to learn digitally. The state governments/private organizations should come up with ideas to address this issue of digital education.

7. Some significant issues associated with distance learning strategies like the availability and access to digital devices with internet connectivity, the need for safe learning spaces, creating capabilities for teachers, families and students to operate and navigate digital devices, and engaging lesson plans for disabled students and other marginalized groups should be addressed by Govt. and the stakeholders.

OVERVIEW OF CORONA VIRUS DISEASE

Corona virus Disease is a contagious disease that first emerged in Wuhan, China in 2019. It was later coded "COVID-19" by the W.H.O which stands for Corona virus Disease 2019. The Corona virus outbreak remains one of the worst global pandemics for decades. The mortality rate soared and the easy of spread was upsetting. Research shows that older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer were more likely to develop serious illnesses from corona virus (W.H.O, 2020). Some of the symptoms of Corona virus include; Sore throat, runny nose, constant coughing/sneezing, breathing difficulty and fatigue.
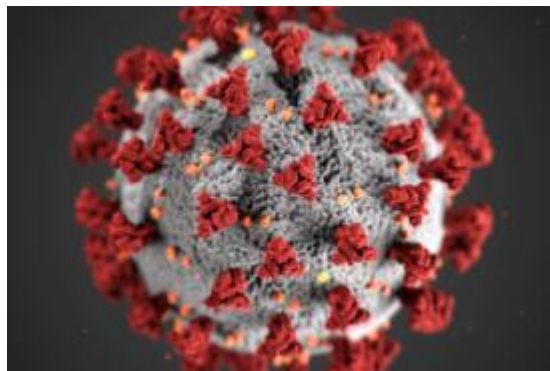
Image 1: Illustration of the Morphology of Corona viruses; the club-shaped viral spike pelomers, coloured red, create the look of a corona surrounding the virion when observed with an electron (Wikipedia, 2020 SARS-CoV-2.jpg).

As at the time of this study, there were no reliable treatments for Corona virus, but a series of researches were in the pipeline across the world towards finding a clinical vaccine for the contagion. However, recent events shows that behavioral change can help contain the spread of corona virus. Some of the suggested measures to halt the corona virus pandemic include;, improved individual habits such as personal hygiene, including constant washing of hands with alcohol-based sanitizers, good respiratory attitude (close coughing and sneezing), and other personal protection practices like wearing of face mask, social distancing, avoiding touching of the face, and reducing contacts with people through self-isolation at home or avoiding nonessential travels or gatherings. Corona virus is a global problem that requires more action coordination and global cooperation to successfully contain the outbreak and to deal with its aftermath effects. Consequently, the United Nations appealed for 2 billion dollars to support global response efforts towards tackling the corona virus pandemic. The consequences of COVID-19 could be more severe; if people do not comply or adhere strictly to public health regulations and advice.

IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON EDUCATION:

The outbreak of Corona virus negatively affected educational activities worldwide. The corona virus pandemic affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the widespread closures of schools. It created serious disruptions in academic activities, as well as in career plans. As part of the global efforts to combat COVID-19, many countries across the world closed down schools in an attempt to contain the corona virus pandemic.

EFFECTS OF CORONA VIRUS SCHOOL CLOSURES:

School closure means the closing down of schools as a result of the pandemic, emergencies, labour strikes, disasters or deliberate efforts to reposition a school or curb crimes in a given campus or environment. This means that school closures are not only for emergencies or pandemics, but also a deliberate way of addressing some identified gaps in a given school.

While proactive school closure occurs before the disease even reaches the doors of the school. Madeline (2020) opined that school closures due to corona virus has posed new problems like how to make the transition to online and at-home learning, and how to cater for those who rely on school for food and housing security. School closures for corona virus tends to increase pressures on students, teachers and parents especially those with limited digital skills, education and resources for continued education. It increases the burden on parents to not only struggle to provide for the home, but also to perform the supervision task of ensuring that their children learn from home. Unparalleled school closures increases the pressure on hospitals because they have to cater for as many health situations as possible that ordinarily could have been attended to by school health centers. Corona virus school

closures could increases student debt, extend the graduation time of students, and shatter the academic dreams of students, as well as programme schedules of educational institutions. Protracted school closures may result to increase rate of dropouts due to loss of interest and lack of resources to continue. If not well managed, school closures can also increase the rate of crimes, because prolonged school closures can lead to idleness which contributes to negative peer influences and youth involvement in crimes. Education jobs were also affected; many workers risks pay cuts or even disengagement from work during unscheduled school closures.

Image 2: COVID-19 Closure of school effects.

According to UNESCO (2020b), some of the harmful effects of school closures for corona virus are as follows:

- ✓ **Interrupted learning**: School provides essential learning and when they are closed, students are deprived of opportunities for growth and development.
- ✓ **Nutrition**: Many youngsters rely on free or discounted meals provided at schools for food and healthy nutrition. This is compromised as a result of school closures for corona virus.
- ✓ **Unequal Access to digital learning portals**: lack of access to technology or good internet connectivity for continued learning during school closures.
- ✓ **Increased pressure on schools and school system that remain open;** Localized school closures place burdens on schools as parents tend redirect their children to open schools.
- ✓ **Social Isolation:** Considering the fact that educational institutions are hubs for social activity and human interactions, school closures can deprive youth and children of some social communications and socializations that are essential to learning, development and creativity.

Research activities were negatively affected because school closures and lockdowns limit researchers' ability to conduct researches particularly in situations whereby face-to-face interactions with students and teachers are required or access to school facilities or research laboratories were denied. School driven innovations and research are also affected during school closures.

Erika and Nicholas (2020) suggested that closing schools are not the only option to mitigate corona virus. They advocated for authorities to give parents some flexibility to choose what is best for their families, while implementing stronger mitigation measures. However, in contrast to Erika and Nicholas's position, the president of the New South Wales Teachers Federation opposed the opening of schools during the outbreak of corona virus. He believed that "the design of their schools and the size of the classrooms makes it impossible" to implement social distancing in schools (Michael, 2020). To mitigate the effects that accompanied the closures of schools, educators and learners had to rely on use of technological tools and platforms to ensure continued education. Consequently, it is important to admit in the present study that despite the perceived challenges imposed by school closures for corona virus, the option remains one of the most effective measures to halt the spread of the pandemics.

RESPONSES TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN IN INDIA:

Lock down and Unlock list in India with date:-

Lockdown-

- Phase 1: 25 March 2020 – 14 April 2020 (21 days)
- Phase 2: 15 April 2020 – 3 May 2020 (19 days)
- Phase 3: 4 May 2020 – 17 May 2020 (14 days)
- Phase 4: 18 May 2020 – 31 May 2020 (14 days)

Unlock-

- Unlock 1.0: 1 June 2020 – 30 June 2020 (30 days)
- Unlock 2.0: 1 July 2020 – ongoing (14 days); scheduled to end on 31 July 2020

Before lockdown India govt. has announce the 14-hour Janata curfew on 22 March (from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Every person was required to obey the curfew, with exceptions for people of "essential services" such as police, medical services, media, home delivery professionals and firefighters. At 5 p.m. that day, all citizens were asked to stand in their doorways, balconies or windows, and clap their hands or ring their bells in appreciation for the professionals delivering these essential services. People belonging to National Cadet Corps and National Service Scheme were to enforce the curfew in the country. The Prime Minister also urged the youth to inform to others about Janata Curfew and encourage everyone to observe the curfew.

A proactive response is critical to the containment of any disease outbreak, but the corona virus took the world by surprise and most countries were not prepared initially for the pandemic, including the world powers. Shortly after the outbreak of COVID-19, the World Health Organization (W.H.O) issued guidelines and updates on how to mitigate the spread of the pandemic, and thereafter, many countries adopted different measures in addition to the W.H.O guidelines to contain the spread of the disease. There were lockdowns in most parts of the world, and people were asked to work from home. Some countries even deployed their military to enforce corona virus restrictions, and to reduce the number of covidiots. There were increased demands for health equipment including, protective gowns, sanitizers, face masks and hand gloves.

In India, all schools and educational institutions were closed down and the government imposed "Janata" Curfew which restricted all citizens to stay at home to contain the spread of Corona virus. The police also went round some cities to create public awareness about the pandemic.

LOCKDOWN

Phase 1 (25 March – 14 April)

On 25 March, the first day of the lockdown, nearly all services and factories were suspended. People were hurrying to stock essentials in some parts. Arrests across the states were made for violating norms of lockdown such as venturing out for no emergency, opening businesses and home quarantine violations. The government held meetings with e-commerce websites and vendors to ensure a seamless supply of essential goods across the nation during the lockdown period. Several states announced relief funds for the poor and affected people while the central government was finalising a stimulus package. On 26 March, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a ₹170,000 crore (US$24 billion) stimulus package to help those affected by the lockdown. The package was aimed to provide food security measures for poor households through direct cash transfers, free cereal and cooking gas for three months. It also provided insurance coverage for medical personnel. On 27 March, the Reserve Bank of India announced a slew of measures to help mitigate the economic impacts of the lockdown. Prior to the announcement of the nationwide lockdown, on 22 March, the government had announced that the Indian Railways would suspend passenger operations through 31 March. The national rail network has maintained its freight operations during the lockdown, to transport essential goods. On 29 March, the Indian Railways announced that it regular freight service. The national rail operator also announced plans to convert coaches into isolation wards for patients of COVID-19. This has been described as the first time in 167 years that India's rail network had been suspended, although there was also a strike in 1974. On 5 April, citizens all over India cheered and showed solidarity with the health workers, police, and all those fighting the disease by

switching off the electric lights at home for 9 minutes from 9:00 p.m. to 9:09 p.m. and observed lighting diya, Candle; and flashing torchlight and mobile flashlight. As the end of the initial lockdown period came near, many state governments expressed their decision to extend it till the end of April. Among them were Odisha, Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka with some relaxations, West Bengal and Telangana. Towards the end of the initial period, the rate of growth of COVID-19 infections in India had significantly slowed, from a rate of doubling every three days prior to the lockdown to one of doubling every eight days on 18 April.

Phase 2 (15 April – 3 May)

On 14 April, PM Modi extended the nationwide lockdown till 3 May, with a conditional relaxation promised after 20 April for the regions where the spread had been contained by then. He said that every town, every police station area and every state would be carefully evaluated to see if it had contained the spread. The areas that were able to do so would be released from the lockdown on 20 April. If any new cases emerged in those areas, lockdown could be reemployed. On 16 April, lockdown areas were classified as "red zone", indicating the presence of infection hotspots, "orange zone" indicating some infection, and "green zone" with no infections. The government also announced certain relaxations from 20 April, allowing agricultural businesses, including dairy, aquaculture and plantations, as well as shops selling farming supplies, to open. Public works programmes were also allowed to reopen with instructions to maintain social distancing. Cargo transportation vehicles, including trucks, trains and planes, would run. Banks and government centres distributing benefits would open as well. On 25 April, small retail shops were allowed to open with half the staff. Again social distancing norms were to be followed. On 29 April, The Ministry of Home Affairs issued guidelines for the states to allow inter-state movement of the stranded persons. States have been asked to designate nodal authorities and form protocols to receive and send such persons. States have also been asked to screen the people, quarantine them and to do periodic health checkups.

Phase 3 (4May – 17 May)

On 1 May, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Government of India (GoI) further extended the lockdown period to two weeks beyond 4 May, with some relaxations. The country has been split into 3 zones: red zones (130 districts), orange zones (284 districts) and green zones (319 districts). Red zones are those with high corona virus cases and a high doubling rate, orange zones are those with comparatively fewer cases and green zones are those without any cases in the past 21 days. Normal movement is permitted in green zones with buses limited to 50 percent capacity. Orange zones would allow only private and hired vehicles but no public

transportation. The red zones would remain under lockdown. The zone classification would be revised once a week.

Phase 4 (18 May – 31 May)

On 17 May, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) extended the lockdown for a period for two weeks beyond 18 May, with additional relaxations. Unlike the previous extensions, states were given a larger say in the demarcation of Green, Orange and Red zones and the implementation roadmap. Red zones were further divided into to *containment and buffer zones*. The local bodies were given the authority to demarcate containment and buffer zones.

UNLOCK:

Unlock 1.0 (1June – 30 June)

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued fresh guidelines for the month of June, stating that the phases of reopening would "have an economic focus". Lockdown restrictions were only be imposed in containment zones, while activities were permitted in other zones in a phased manner. This first phase of reopening was termed as "Unlock 1.0" and permitted shopping malls, religious places, hotels and restaurants to reopen from 8 June. Large gatherings were still banned, but there were no restrictions on inter-state travel. Night curfews were in effect from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. in all areas and state governments were allowed to impose suitable restrictions on all activities.

In future phases of reopening, further activities are to be permitted. In Phase II, all educational institutions are scheduled to reopen in August, pending consultations with state governments. In Phase III, easing of restrictions on international air travel, operation of metros and recreational activities (swimming pools, gymnasiums, theatres, entertainment parks, bars, auditoriums and assembly halls) would be decided upon in August.

Unlock 2.0 (1–31 July)

Phase II of Unlock began on 1 July under the guidelines and instructions of the MHA and the NDMA. Lockdown measures are only imposed in containment zones. In all other areas, most activities are permitted. Night curfews would be in effect from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. in all areas. State governments would be allowed to put suitable restrictions on all activities, but state borders are to remain open to all. Inter- and intra-state travel is permitted. Limited international travel has been permitted as part of the Vande Bharat Mission. Shops are now permitted to allow more than five persons at a time. Educational institutions, metros, recreational activities are to remain closed

till 31 July. Only essential activities are permitted in containment zones, while maintaining strict parameter control and "intensive contact tracing, house-to-house surveillance, and other clinical interventions". Further guidelines regarding usage of Aarogya Setu and masks were reiterated.

TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS DURING LOCKDOWN:

Due to shut down of the educational institution students are far away from their learning and other academic activities. UGC and MHRD have issued guideline for taking online teaching- learning processes by Google classroom, Google Hangout, Cisco Webex meeting, OERs, SWAYAM, SWAYAMPRAVA. But India is a developing country with world's second largest population where many students belong to poor rural family who do not have access to quality education and they learn in offline classes. Many universities of India conduct their teaching-learning process in face to face mode. They have lack IT infrastructure for effective delivery of education through e-learning mode. Only private institution could adopt online teaching methods. Comparing face-to-face learning with online learning brings significant deficiencies in the online mode like lack of human connect; absence of opportunities of collaborative learning and teacher supervision and the most important deficiency is lack of opportunities for hands on learning in complex subjects like Mathematics and Science. Only 24% house-holds of India have internet facility. Over 15% of rural population and 42% of urban population have access to internet services, while only 8% of all house- holds with members aged between 5 to 24 have a computer and internet connection according to the National Sample Survey Report on Education 2017-18. In 2019, Internet and Mobile Association of India reports 67% of men and 33% of women have access to internet and in rural area 72% of men and 28% of women have access to internet. It prominently shows the gender disparity in internet access. So there is also a big challenge of online learning and also equal educational opportunity of male and female students through online mode.

STUDENT:

As per Guidelines of UGC and MHRD some universities and colleges are providing online teaching to their students but mainly rural areas and those poor students who have no accessibility to internet, personal computer or smart phone for attaining the online classes are affected adversely by the pandemic. Poor meritorious students are suffering badly through the technical discrimination, because they do not have technical tools and expertise of internet and usages of digital devices. It creates a new kind of inequality in higher education in accessing the educational opportunities. Students with disabilities are also badly affected by the class room shut down. They are provided less with help and inadequately trained teachers. Many of teachers have lack of ICT skills and knowledge. They are unprepared to teach in online mode and cannot ensure student engagement in the virtual

classroom, especially students with disabilities. Equipment, internet access and specially designed materials and support make learning costly for students and their family. There is Gender disparities in education in India, where getting education is already a struggle due to poverty, economic vulnerability and crisis. If there will be poverty, economic vulnerability due to nationwide lock down then many of girl students may not join the educational institution. Dropout rate will increase due poverty, economic vulnerability and crisis. It was happened in Africa after the Ebola Crisis of 2014. A large number of Indian students enrolled in abroad universities like China, UK, USA, Italy and other different countries are badly affected by the pandemic and it is predicted that the demand of international higher education will decrease.

TEACHER:

All the educational institutions have been closed unexpectedly and for unknown durations and in such situation teachers are unsure about their responsibilities and struggling in maintaining connections with students to support their learning. Some teachers may feel confused and stressful in this new transitional time of teaching while dealing with online classes. In India, many teachers are not trained and not sound in ICT skills and knowledge to take online classes. It is very new to them and therefore, they are facing a lots technical problem while taking classes through online mode. They are unprepared to take online classes and they cannot ensure student engagement in the virtual classroom. Although it is not right time to give training to the teachers, it is the time to take maximum output from them. To deal with such unpredicted situation the teachers must be trained.

EXAMINATION:

The month from April to July is very crucial for Indian education system because in this time assessment, admission, entrance examinations are conducted but due to nationwide lockdown there is no certainty when school, colleges and universities reopen. Some colleges and universities had the scheduled mid semester and semester examination in the month of April and May but they have postponed the schedule of examination. Different board and council examination of maximum state of India was fixed but cancelled in the last moment , for example west bengal board and council examination was cancelled , examination date was fixed more than two times but every time the examination was cancelled and finally without examination of remaining subjects the result published without merit list. MHRD and UGC have issued guideline for examination of higher education. According to guideline of UGC and MHRD examination will be held from 1st July 2020 to 15th July 2020 for terminal semester and intermediate semester will be held from 16th July 2020 to 31st July 2020 and result of terminal semester will be declared on 31st July 2020 and intermediate semester result will come on 14th August 2020. Strategies to postpone, skip or administer examination after a long time raise major concerns about fairness, especially when assess to learning becomes only a variable.

Postponing examination will disrupt the next academic year of education leading lacking the quality of education as there will be limited time to complete the course content and other academic activities. Many agencies which conduct entrance examination in higher education have extended form fill up date and postpone the examinations till further notification.

ADMISSION PROCESS:

In the time of pandemic the Report of UGC suggested to conduct a common admission test at National / State level for admission to the PG, UG courses and Research Programmes in the universities and colleges (Report of the UGC Committee). Admission process will be held on 1st August 2020 to 31st August 2020 and classes will start on 1st September 2020 of fresh batch and 2nd year and 3rd year classes will start on 1st August 2020. It will be a big challenge for colleges and universities to complete their syllabus on time without compromising on the quality of education. The universities may conduct viva voce examination for M. Phil and Ph. D. through video conferencing using Google, Skype and Microsoft technology. In India most of the students and institutions prefer the offline process of admissions because they do not have access to high speed Wifi, IT infrastructure and many of them belong to villages, small cities or town internet connectivity is major challenge. Over 1.44 crore students are appearing their school leaving exams and over 50 lakh students will look to enroll in a higher education institution in this academic session in India. It will be also a big challenge for colleges and universities to complete their admission process without any failure. If higher education system will not take necessary step regarding admission process, enrolment rate in higher classes will decrease.

CONCLUSION:

The COVID-19 has disastrous impact on economy, demography, international relation, culture and trade as well as education. It creates a kind of disparity in accessing educational opportunities as teaching and learning process are done in online platforms and there is so much of disparity in accessing internet because of remote and rural areas as well as due to poor economic condition of people in India. Therefore, various problems of our education system should be solved, the disparity must be minimized and different measures and initiatives must be taken for shifting normal classroom learning to online learning which will help in combating such unprecedented situation in future.

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I am an enthusiastic, self-motivated, reliable, responsible, dedicated, flexible, punctual, hard working, honest and optimistic person by nature. I am joyful, polite, helpful, truthful and friendly person having a good sense of humour. I am able to work in every kind of situation both independently and in co-ordination with others. I am determined, decisive and I always want to be better than yesterday. I want to learn and adapt every new & newer things so that I can make the most of it. My strength is my passion for comprehensive learning and most importantly my adjustment capability with any kind of hostile environment. My Weakness is I am not comfortable until I finish my work in the given time.