



Effect of COVID-19 on Higher Education

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Introduction

“Ultimately, the greatest lesson that COVID-19 can teach humanity is that we are all in this together.”

: Kiran Mazumdar Shaw

Change is the law of nature and the Corona epidemic has brought the same change. Because of this, people are making physical distance and staying in their own homes and teaching children online. This technique has made this task easier, because children cannot be taken away from education for many days. Keeping this in mind, all schools started teaching children through online education. The medium of online education has been largely successful. Overall, the loss of children's education was saved due to the lockdown in Corona. There have also been some miseries such as the health of the children and the eyes were affected. There was a lot of net problem as well. Some parents could not provide phones or laptops due to financial problems. Children's education was shut down in lockdown. There is definitely a support from online education because children were getting away from studying while sitting at home. The lockdown occurred throughout the country due to the growing threat of Corona when all educational institutions were closed. In such a situation, it was necessary to give education to children online. It is true that it is not going to be very good for the children. The burden has increased on the parents and the headache is also affecting the eyes of the children, but there was no other solution.

Online education is being seen as a compulsion in the Corona era. Can say that this is the need of the hour. Online education is the right thing to maintain physical distance during the epidemic. However, there is no comparison to physical school and class. Online education cannot replace the school classroom at the level of learning well. Finding a solution in online studies in such an epidemic was impeccable and unprecedented, but as time went on we realized that there were many flaws in online education as well. It is of course that the only support in the lockdown was online. In a city like Delhi, a network-like problem arose. In such a situation, studying through online is also a good thing.

The difference between boys and girls deepened due to virtual studies. This difference is being called Digital Divide. The digital divide is the gap between people that is connected to the availability of the Internet. Digital learning is making a difference to the digital divide. Children who are in villages, on mountains or in any remote area, where there is no electricity, internet, will not be able to study there.

But on the other hand, online education is far beyond the reach of rural India and is non-practical. It is also true that comparing the classroom with the online education system will affect the education of the majority of children in India. It is difficult to gather adequate resources and internet data for the children of disadvantaged communities studying in government schools. A report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India, 2019, states that 67 percent of men and 33 percent of women in India use the Internet. In rural India, this ratio is even more imbalanced. Only 28 percent of women use the Internet compared to men here. In such a situation, it is clear that it is more difficult to provide smart phones and internet for little girls. In a very large category, digital mediums are not proving to be particularly effective for girls. The psychological impact of the closure of the school is also more

visible on the girls. The reason for this is that they are constantly falling victim to domestic violence. Child line India itself admitted that within two weeks of the lockdown, calls from children approaching them increased by 50 percent. Needless to say, that most of these calls were from girls who have been facing many kinds of violence during captivity.

The United Nations Population Fund estimates that more than 13 million girls will be married at an early age in the coming 10 years. Note that this figure is different from that figure, which shows how many girls have been victims of Girl Child Marriage even before Corona. The Right to Education Forum (RTE Forum) along with the Center for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS) and Champions for Girls' Education (Champions for Girls' Education) conducted these studies in 5 states of the country, the results of which are intimidating. The survey on 3176 families in June included 11 districts of Uttar Pradesh, 8 districts of Bihar, and 5 districts of Assam. At the same time, 4 districts of Telangana and 1 district of Delhi were also included in it. During the interaction with the families of economically weaker sections, about 70% of the people admitted that they do not have enough to eat. In such conditions, studies and girls' studies are also most at risk. About 37% of adolescent girls are not sure that they will be able to return to school. Girls from rural and economically weaker families are already in this JD. In total, twice as many girls than boys are able to attend school for less than 4 years.

In 2014, the consequences of the Ebola epidemic in African countries were similar. There, too, the school of girls left more than the boys. Early marriages and misconceptions such as becoming a mother at an early age were also seen there. I am sure all of you will be very concerned about the education of children due to the corona epidemic. In India, about 25 crore children study in 15.5 lakh schools from the first to the 12th. 70% of these schools are government. Restrictions were imposed on people gathering anywhere in the world for protection from Kovid-19, and of course schools and anganwadis were also closed. With the closure of schools, children, their parents, teachers, administration and non-government social institutions are grappling with a new question: How will children learn now? Or maybe a more appropriate sentence: Now how do we teach children? (It seems to be mainly a matter of schooling.) Apart from this, another important question is, what will be the effect of this lockdown on children physically and mentally? Will these effects be different or similar in rural and urban areas? But for the deep question of this method, the discussion is less now. There has been a rapid response from the government and non-governmental organizations. As most people were confined to their homes due to the lockdown, a stormy wave of trying the online medium ran. Some started teaching the lesson using this medium, some started telling the story and some started feeding math games. Do you know that there are so many videos on YouTube that if you keep watching continuously without blinking, it will take more than 60000 years to see all the videos? Well, still there was a need to make new videos and people have made and are making in abundance.

The Government of India's program itself (SWAYAM) also got light. There is material to read from class 9th to postgraduate here. Anyone can take advantage of it for free. I tried to watch some videos but fell asleep. This is not the first time I have questioned the quality of Massive Open Online Courses made in India. MHRD has prepared 19 different forums where it can be learned and read. This is a good try. But a lot of work will have to be done to improve the level of basic structure of digital learning in our country.

Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman announced a very comprehensive initiative in May. PM E-Vidya (which has its own and other education/educational forums) as well as HR Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank "One Nation, One Digital platform" and One class, one channel". Many programs were introduced to make e-learning possible from school education to college. At the same time, an initiative was also taken to provide psychosocial support to the children. I liked reading all this. Our government is somewhat concerned about the children. Commenting on e-learning, Ashwin

Jayanti, who is an assistant professor at IIT Hyderabad, has written the MOOC in The Hindu newspaper.

Kerala is also one of the few state governments that chose the medium of television. Some friends from Kerala told me that TV is at home of most people, so whatever is taught will reach almost all the children. This content was also added simultaneously on YouTube. I saw quality in their teaching. It took a good initiative from the Government of Kerala. In some similar states, radio was also chosen, which I found to be a good initiative to some extent. But it is important to understand from a psychological point of view on how much children can learn and understand on TV or by listening to the radio. How will children ask questions if they do not understand a point? On TV, the teacher will teach you with a script, but how will he know whether the children are understanding or not? On the one hand, we talk about multisensory approach to teach anything to young children, now such a pedagogical practice will be over on TV, radio or mobile.

Conclusion

Many private schools in the cities (and many non-governmental organizations that work with children) started offering classes like Zoom Call, Google Classroom, WhatsApp etc. I discussed this with some of my relatives. They live in all cities and their children go to private schools. He said that online live class is being organized 3-4 days a week. Children are studying. However, small children are having difficulty in sitting in front of the computer/laptop for a long time. Children swagger and get filled with boredom. Seeing the methods of these private schools, a friend of mine jokingly asked me that May-June is a summer vacation in many states of India, so why are these school children taking classes?

I am not saying at all that this is nonsense. This is definitely a good thing. Children sitting at home are getting a chance to read and learn. But it has to be understood that cities and villages are different. You cannot give the same syrup to the children of both the places. Some basic things will definitely be the same (Ex. every child should get good books to read and nutritious food to eat) but we cannot ignore the variation. What is shocking is that quality content for reading and learning is available in many places for free. A lot is happening online. If the children too can benefit from it, learn something, what is the harm? Some children of our village, whose network has reached the village, are having a lot of fun in running mobile and internet. He loves to take photos, watch YouTube, make videos on Tiktok, chat on WhatsApp. And many children are asking me how to read online? Many children are also raising money to buy mobiles. I have seen such a stir among older children. Of course, this child is worried about his studies.

After good content, the problem has reached and then the fear of the screen being bound. Apart from this, it is not necessary that if you give a child a video of mathematics, then he stops watching it. He has reached a big virtual world and anything is possible there. There are threats from cyber bullying to the dark web. Have we thought about these things? I do not see any discussion on these things (posting Facebook will not work). Did we think about teaching and teaching on this medium from a different point of view before making anything? If not, why not? What was the hurry? In such a situation, there is no difference between my silly story telling experiments and the response of the big institution and the government. Something must be done, but does it require such a fast response?

A big issue is also arising about online learning and teaching, will everything become centralized now? The most important for any child and his community is the world around him. The process of learning begins by living in this world and forming a relationship with its constituents. We are connected to this world at a deep level. Further experiences stand at the foundation of the experience here and we learn new things. This is the reason why we are easily connected to a minor story written on our surroundings and have difficulty in connecting with the rewarding story of a great Russian writer. Education is associated with the environment and the stories emanating from it, people and

their works. Now if a person in a room tries to teach a subject, assuming that he has to reach all the children of the country, then how will be able to put the linguistic, cultural, social and historical diversity of a country like India into a lesson?

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