

## **Effects of COVID-19 on Education**

**Dr Dilip Kumar Jena**

Assistant Professor in English

Dhote Bandhu Science College, Gonda, Maharashtra.

Email: [dilipsjena1970@gmail.com](mailto:dilipsjena1970@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** COVID-19 pandemic leaves not a single domain of activity related to human life untouched of its adverse effect. The vulnerability of education sector has been exposed with all its deficiencies and unpreparedness in front of its sudden and substantial impact. All the stakeholders including students, teachers and their families are forced to bear the brunts, costing disruption not only in their profession but also in their lifestyle and earning. Students in particular are in a big perplexity regarding their next journey and career. Moreover, e-learning solutions by providing digital platforms though useful in this period of isolation and confinement but are proved to be unviable to a large extent because of some stiff challenges. Adding fuel to the woes of education sector, the government's apathetic approach, considering it unproductive and of non-essential category, makes the situation out of control.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, corona-crisis, e-learning, digital platforms, disheartening.

Man's unstoppable desire and invincible spirit of knowing the unknown, exploring the unexplored and attaining the unending more and more expand the horizon of the scope of life beyond his home and hearth and enable him to land on the Moon and other planets, to climb the Mount Everest, to dive deep under the Pacific Ocean, to excel in series of scientific inventions, to gain endless technological advancements and to expatiate almost all spheres of life. Humans are proved as the most evolved species on the Earth because of their superior cardinal virtues like justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude. In the process of evolution, human race witnesses incredible changes and transformations taking place in each and every aspect of life including education. On the other hand, the vulnerability of the humanity knows no bounds and it has been exposed off and on since the very inception of its civilization. The brunts emerged out of crises, which are both man-created and nature-created, inflict umpteen traumas and tragedies, and halt all sorts of development.

COVID-19 (Corona Virus Diseases 2019) entraps the world completely and thrusts the mankind into a hell of helplessness. The severity of the crisis can be clearly ascertained from the declaration of WHO on March 11 at the every initial stages of its enforcing impact as quoted by Jamie Ducharme, "The World Health Organisation on March 11 declared COVID-19 a

pandemic, pointing to the over 118,000 cases of coronavirus illness in over 110 countries and territories around the world and the sustained risk of further global spread.” As of now, it seems that the corona-crisis has already influenced, with death and desolation, all segments of population, all nook and corner of the world and all domains of activities related to human life, and will continue to do so in coming months, maybe years. Education, one of the important sectors of one and all nation, becomes susceptible to all the invisible consequences almost to the extent of uncertainty and apprehension beyond the estimated time limit of the pandemic.

Education, the real architect of nation’s character-building as well as the foundation of civilized society, is a sublime function of humankind. Precisely speaking, it is “the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life.” First of all, it is a two-way process consisting of the giver and the taker accompanied with a lot of stakeholders. So, the process requires the sound mental health of the people involved in this act of reciprocation which must complemented by a conducive ambience.

The crisis created out of COVID-19 has significantly razed the eagerness to work and so as the ethics and aesthetics of education. It has truly aggravated the private life as well as thrown the working situation into disorder and left no stone unturned to damage the education sector by inducing economic fall-out, loss of fees and lack of needed exposure. As per the demand of the situation, many steps have been either taken or planned to be initiated which are doubtlessly demoralizing. The educational institutions became the substantial victims which were either forced to be shut down in the very beginning of the spread of the virus or converted to quarantine centres for the infected and suspects of COVID-19 and have been facing the same subordination so far in comparison to other offices for some cause or other. Besides, there are so many disheartening factors related to education directly or indirectly and to mention a few: the publishing houses have postponed or cancelled titles; the sales of books and materials have considerably decreased due to the indefinite closure of bookshops; reading especially in schools, universities, libraries, cultural institutions and bookshops have been put on a hold; moral-boosting events like award ceremonies, book fairs, workshops, lectures, residency scholarships are effaced; rich and diverse literature festivals like Paris Book Fair having strong international dimension inviting big names in literature, anticipating the collection of contemporary creations and by the way inspiring the books of tomorrow, creating avenues through tourism, selling of

books and publishing-contracts become prey of the crisis; and more conspicuous among all, public-contact-activities, the real stimulating influencer of promotional activities of education are blacked out.

The inherent features of education like its subtleties and assumptions are being marred with discord and disunity. The closure of educational institutions adversely affects “not only students, teachers and families, but have far-reaching economic and societal consequences.” Many services such as coaching centers, private tuitions, translations, photocopying and typing, language training, imparting soft and communication skills, home tutoring, etc., which are directly or indirectly associated with education, are being severely affected. Millions of people absorbed in these services have been out of work and facing a precarious financial condition. Moreover, they are thrust into the web of fear and anxiety whether these services would be resumed and if so, whether their employability would be furthermore required after the unseemingly end of the pandemic. This sort of apprehension alongside of their current financial miseries poises a paralyzed situation for them.

Till date, the learners have been the worst sufferers during this pandemic. Their routine life with a pleasing timetable become outcast; their learning centers do not remain the same cynosure for them; their programmes and examinations are left in the middle or postponed by leaving them in the lurch; the hostelites and outstation students staying in private accommodations are made to live in unsafe and unhealthy condition; they are put into confinement with the measures of social-distancing by keeping themselves away from their playful friends; they are discarded from physical activities like playing, gymnasium exercises, and merry-making by conditioning them lethargic; the imposed isolation has created a sense of deprivation and psychological depression among them. What is more to be noted here that these hostile changes, in the psyche and lifestyle, are levying a cultural trauma on the student community. The impact of this trauma will affect the cross-border movement, both intranational and international, of students and educators in the coming years. Taking the problems created due to the pandemic in the field of education, Prof. Kamlesh Mishra in his article in India Today on May 12, 2020 expresses his concerns about the movement of student by saying, "movement of students will take a beating at least for the next two or three years and will lead to a major financial risk." Education moulds up the facets of students' personality by opening avenues for cognition and conviction what are absolutely trailing in this uncanny atmosphere.

Education itself is passing through a phase of irresolution and misrepresentation. If we evaluate the situation of India, we would find that every state interprets the things related to schedule of the programmes, examinations, current and coming academic sessions, etc. in its own way forgetting the whereabouts and whatabouts of the students and stakeholders. India is a vast country and students from one corner move to another for pursuing higher education. It appears impossible to fall apart and to take decisions in a disintegrated manner. Universities and boards fail to judge the matters out of confusion and concussion and eventually leave the things for Governments to mull over. On the other hand, the Governments, being entangled in the matters of health sector, settlement of displaced migrant labourers, providing conveyance facilities to the citizens stranded inside and outside the country, supplying bare necessities of life to the underprivileged and unemployed people and searching way outs for resuming normalcy, are paying less heed towards education which is, as usual, regarded to be the most unproductive sector and coming under the non-essential category.

E-learning solutions to the disruptions arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic in education sector have their advantages and disadvantages. Without an iota of doubt, it can be claimed that digital platforms or sources of remote learning are very useful at this critical juncture when social-distancing measures are the only remedies to stop the spread of the virus. The UNESCO encourages this online mode of teaching learning and proclaims, “UNESCO is supporting countries in their efforts to mitigate the immediate impact of school closures, particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning.”

By and large, many of us are getting accustomed to the mode, and many are still learning to tackle it, and the initially grumbling lot has surrendered to the situation and starts using the platforms haphazardly. Ensuring the use of these e-sources in an inclusive manner seems to be very difficult in countries like India where the pandemic has not only compelled but also “transformed the centuries-old, chalk-talk teaching model to one driven by technology.” On the other hand, it was a sudden shift to online learning for which our curriculums were not designed and our educational institutions, teachers and students are not equipped with and as a result, the whole process appears as a passive engagement of students and teachers. Barring a few teachers of Science and Technology who possess the knowledge of ICT by virtue of their course of

education, others are truly novices like teachers of Arts and Humanities. Furthermore, challenges in online teaching and learning are plenty like shortage of electronic gadgets required for the mode, lack of accessibility and low speed of Internet in remote areas, unprepared mindset of teachers as well as students, constraints of timing, deficiency of communication skills, time management in delivering the lectures, clumsiness of being in front of camera and recorded, content development, lack of professional training of teachers, lack of funds, etc. Even, the students of developed countries like Korea are complaining about the online teaching learning process, Aimee Chung reports in University World News on 1 May 2020, “Server crashes, poor lecture quality, an inability to communicate with professor and a lack of laboratory-based classes and meant lower quality education.”

Moreover, online teaching learning cannot accomplish the process of education in terms of genial satisfaction and aesthetic values. One of the report on the discontent of the students of U.S. Universities pertaining to online learning, CBS NEWS brings out on May 5, 2020, “They wanted the campus experience, but their Colleges sent them home to learns online during the coronavirus pandemic. Now, students at more than 25 U.S. Universities are filing lawsuits against their schools demanding partial refunds on tuition and campus fees, saying they are not getting the caliber of education they were promised.” In Indian contest also, teaching learning courses of traditional knowledge like Yoga, Classical Music, Dancing, Agricultural, etc. cannot be imagined to be conducted through digital platform. So the real solution lies not in complete transformation of the system into a digital one but perfect blend of tradition and technology complying with ethical values and contemporary demands.

Hence, let us hope for the early dissolution of corona-crisis and the revival of all coveted normalcy. Thereafter, we will surely prepare a multi-pronged strategy to manage and maintain the modern pedagogy, technology and ethology in education which will overcome all the challenges, provide an effective education practice, develop capacity-building, character-building and skill among youth required for employability, health and well-being and most importantly, ensure the overall progress of our nation as well as the world.

#### **References:**

1. Dewey, John. (1916) *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York:Macmillan Publication, 2016 (Retrieved).
2. Srinivasan, M. V. *Education in Contemporary India*. Delhi: Pearson Education, 2019.

3. Mondal, Ajit and Jayanta Mete. *Right to Education in India*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2016.
4. Ducharme, Jamie. *Time.com*. 11 March 2020. Web. 26 May 2020. <http://time.com/5791611/who-co>
5. "Edu." *Dictionary.com*. Web. 26 May 2020 <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/edu>
6. Vidisha, Kamini. "How The Covid-19 Pandemic Has Thrown Education Around The World In A Loop". *India Today*. 07 April 2020. Web. 26 May 2020. <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featurephilia/story/how-is-the-covid-19-pandemic-affecting-education-all-over-the-world-1664380-2020-04-07>
7. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>
8. Choudhary, Richa. "COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact And Strategies For Education Sector In India". *ETGovernment.com*. 16 April 2020. Web. 26 May 2020. <https://government.economictimes.indiatimes.com/amp/news/education/covid-19-pandemic-impact-and-strategies-for-education-sector-in-india/75173099>
9. Chung, Aimee. "Students head to court over tuition fee refund demands." *University World News*. 01 May 2020. Web. 26 May 2020. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200501085528893>
10. "Students Sue Colleges For Refund Of Tuition And Fees." *CBSNews.com* 05 May 2020. Web. 26 May 2020. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/students-tuition-refund-online-only-coronavirus-pandemic/>
11. "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Education." *Wikipedia.org*. Web. 26 May 2020. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact\\_of\\_the\\_COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_on\\_education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_on_education)
12. "Covid-19: 4 Negative Impacts And 4 Opportunities Created For Education." *India Today*. 12 May 2020. Web. 26 May 2020. <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featurephilia/story/covid-19-4-negative-impacts-and-4-opportunities-created-for-education-1677206-2020-05-12>