

## IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS 2019 ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT:

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by new virus originated from China, which affected around 200 countries in the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared COVID-19 as pandemic and most importantly the vaccine of which is not found till date. Since past few days had been very crucial for India too, like other affected countries. Almost all states in India are threatened due to the speedy spread of this dangerous disease which is life challenging. To prevent and eradicate the darkness caused by the COVID-19, the Government of India has taken number of preventive measures including the closure of all Educational institutions followed by one day nationwide Janta-curfew to combat virus and 21 days lockdown to curb the coronavirus, etc. Showing the great concern towards students, Teachers and other stakeholders many circulars/ notices/ letters have been issued by the relevant authoritative governing bodies like MHRD, UGC, CBSE, etc. On the other hand, the lockdown period has caused some severe issues also such as breakdown in regular lectures, postponement of exams, etc. which might cause the shortage of time during the next upcoming academic year. Focusing on the various issues, The study highlights the Impact of COVID-19 on educational institutions in India.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, World Health Organization, Pandemic disease, Educational Institutions

### INTRODUCTION:

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus2 (SARS-CoV-2). The outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei, China, in December 2019 (The first confirmed death was on 9th January 2020 in Wuhan), and was recognized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11th March 2020. WHO depicted countries to take immediate actions and scale up responses to treat, detect and reduce transmission to save people's lives. As of month March 2020, more than 7,50,000 cases of COVID- 19 have been reported in over 200 countries and territories, resulting in around 45,000 deaths and over 1,00,000 recoveries.

The Indian government has announced several preventive measures to minimize the entry and spread of the coronavirus in the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is continuously reviewing the country's preparedness in combating the COVID-19 pandemic in India while both the state and central governments continue to announce new measures and responses to deal with the current situation. COVID-19 outbreak has impacted many states in India where the top five states with the highest number of the suspected case are Maharashtra, Delhi, Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttarpradesh.

The closure of schools, colleges, and universities by the respective State governments was an urgent need of the current situation which prevailed in all over India. Indian Government has started taking preventive decisions on COVID-19 just after WHO recognized it as pandemic disease. For most of the Schools and colleges in Maharashtra, the Academic year almost gets over by March and April. Also, it is seen that many colleges and schools have almost completed their academic syllabus and they were to concentrate on scheduling their final exams. But due to the decisions taken by our Governments for closing down the educational institutions, the schools and Colleges all over India had announced for either cancellation or re-scheduling their Exams dates, Keeping in mind the measures taken for bringing down the pandemic. Considering this, the study is conducted to analyze the impact of COVID-19 on Educational institutions and related stakeholders.

### LITREATURE REVIEW

#### How Covid-19 Spreads

Literature evidence shows that the source of the COVID-19 is from animals and recently the virus is spreading from humans to humans [ECDC, 2020]. Recently there are no reasonable facts to identify how easily viruses are transmitted from person to person. However, the virus transmitted through respiratory droplets that human beings sneeze, cough, or exhale.

The incubation period for COVID-19 (i.e. the time between exposure to the virus and onset of symptoms) is currently estimated at between 2 and 14 days. At this stage, we know that the virus can be transmitted when those infected show (flu-like) symptoms [WHO, 2020].

### **Is COVID-19 comparable to SARS or the seasonal flu?**

The novel coronavirus detected in China is genetically closely related to the SARS-CoV-1 virus. SARS emerged at the end of 2002 in China, and it caused more than 8,000 cases in 33 countries over eight months. Around one in ten of the people who developed SARS died.

The current COVID-19 outbreak caused around 7,000 reported cases in China during the first month after initial reports (January 2020), with a further 80,000 cases reported globally during the second month (February 2020). Of these first 87,000 cases, about 3,000 died. The third month caused around 8,00,000 cases globally with death count touched to 45,000. Cases are now being detected across the globe. See the situation updates for the latest available information [ECDC, 2020].

### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

The recent evidence shows that the fundamental symptoms of the COVID-19 are where the virus can cause mild, flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, difficulty breathing, pain in the muscles and tiredness [ECDC, 2020].

More serious cases develop severe pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome, sepsis and septic shock that can lead to the death of the patient. People with existing chronic conditions seem to be more vulnerable to severe illness.

### **Facts about the Vaccine against the COVID-19**

The development of vaccines takes time. Several pharmaceutical companies are working on vaccine candidates (different kinds of vaccines). It will, however, take months before any vaccine can be widely used as it needs to undergo extensive testing to determine its safety and efficacy [ECDC, 2020].

### **Pandemic Disease Swine Flu (H1N1)**

The H1N1 virus first emerged in Mexico in April, 2009 and has since spread to many countries. Swine flu is a communicable respiratory disease caused by a subtype of influenza a virus called H1N1. Its first outbreak was reported in 2009 globally and soon it was declared a pandemic by the WHO. The virus killed 981 people in 2009 and 1,763 in 2010. The mortality decreased in 2011 to 75. It claimed 405 lives in 2012 and 699 lives in 2013. In 2014, a total of 218 people died from the H1N1 flu, India recorded 837 laboratory-confirmed cases in the year. More than 450 people died of swine flu in India when it first broke out in 2009. More than 13,000 people were infected with the virus. The states with the highest number of swine flu deaths in 2009 included Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Gujarat.

Literature evidence shows that the original source of the Covid-19 is from animals and recently the virus is spreading from human to human [ECDC, 2020]. Recently there are no reasonable facts to identify how easily viruses are transmitted from person to person. However, the virus basically transmitted through respiratory droplets that human beings sneeze, cough, or exhale.

The incubation period for Covid-19 (i.e. the time between exposure to the virus and onset of symptoms) is currently estimated at between 2 and 14 days. At this stage, we know that the virus can be transmitted when those infected show (flu-like) symptoms [WHO, 2020].

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- 1) To assess the effect of COVID-19 on education in India with special reference to Schools and Colleges.
- 2) To analyze the actions and decisions taken by the government for the safety of Educational Institutions and related stakeholders.
- 3) To suggest and make them aware of some safety measures needed and to be adhered to by stakeholders to prevent themselves from COVID-19.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study is aiming to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on educational institutions and related stakeholders in March 2020, when the government has taken early actions for the prevention of viruses among the community. The study is descriptive and analytical and the data has been collected from the various official websites, newspapers, E-news articles and discussion with Teachers. To analyze the actions and decisions of the government in regards to preventive measures, the data has been compiled from various authentic sources available for March 2020 which is used for the interpretation and conclusion.

## LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

1. The study concluded with the help of data which is collected from the available sources such as Government websites, Official websites, News and the decisions and actions taken for the prevention of pandemic by Relevant Institutional bodies like CBSE, UGC, MHRD, etc.
2. The study is done to analyze the cause and effect of COVID-19 on educational institutions within the boundary of India only.

## ACTIONS AND DECISIONS OF GOVERNMENT AND RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL BODIES:

Purpose/Subject of Letter/Notification/Circular	Date dd/mm/yyyy	Reference no.	Issuing Bodies	Official Website
1) Awareness regarding Corona virus disease	04/03/2020	D.O. No. 14-3/2020-Sch.3	DHE, MHRD	<a href="https://mhrd.gov.in">https://mhrd.gov.in</a>
2) Creating Awareness about preventive interventions for reducing transmission of Novel Corona virus disease	04/03/2020	Circular No. Acad-16/2020	CBSE	<a href="http://cbseacademic.nic.in">http://cbseacademic.nic.in</a>
3) Advisory for Universities and Colleges- Novel Corona virus (COVID-19)	05/03/2020	D.O.No. F.No.1-14/2020(website)	UGC	<a href="https://www.ugc.ac.in/">https://www.ugc.ac.in/</a>
4) Press Release- Exam Postponement and Other Institutional Related Works	18/03/2020	Press Release	CBSE	<a href="http://cbse.nic.in">http://cbse.nic.in</a>
5) Precautions to be taken in light of Novel Corona virus (COVID-19)	18/03/2020	No.Secy(HE)/MHRD/2020	DHE, MHRD	<a href="https://mhrd.gov.in">https://mhrd.gov.in</a>
6) Notification no. 11/2020(Precautions to be taken)	19/03/2020	F.4.4/2020/NIOS/eval/RC/	NIOS	<a href="http://www.nios.ac.in">http://www.nios.ac.in</a>
7) Precautions to be taken in light of Novel Corona virus(COVID-19)	19/03/2020	F.No.110350/01/2020-KVS (HQ)/Acad/	KVS	<a href="http://www.kvsangathan.nic.in">www.kvsangathan.nic.in</a>
8) COVID-19: STAY SAFE Digital Learning Initiatives of Ministry of HRD	20/03/2020	D.O.No.Secy(HE)/MHRD/2020	DHE, MHRD	<a href="https://mhrd.gov.in">https://mhrd.gov.in</a>
9) Preventive measures to achieve "social distancing" - permission to teaching and non-teaching staff to work from home	21/03/2020	D.O.No.Secy(HE)/MHRD/2020	DHE, MHRD	<a href="https://mhrd.gov.in">https://mhrd.gov.in</a>

10) Lockdown imposed for 21days with effect from 25/03/2020.	24/03/2020	No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A)	MHA, GOI	<a href="https://www.mha.gov.in">https://www.mha.gov.in</a>
11) Making the Quarantine Productive	25/03/2020	Circular No. Acad-20/2020	CBSE	<a href="http://cbseacademic.nic.in">http://cbseacademic.nic.in</a>
12) Safety and Care of hotel residents	27/03/2020	F.No.1-1/2020(Secy)	UGC	<a href="https://www.ugc.ac.in">https://www.ugc.ac.in</a>

**Table 1: Measures taken by relevant governing bodies to stop the outbreak of COVID-19**

About the letters/notifications/circulars cited in Table 1, the following implications of such are summarized to study the actions and decisions taken by relevant authorities to take care of their stakeholders to stop the spread of the coronavirus among them.

Regarding **1st and 2nd** cited letter (Table 1), wherein it has been stated by Department of Higher Education(DHE) under Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) thereafter Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and other State Boards that "creating awareness among students, preventive interventions such as frequent hand washing, respiratory etiquettes (using handkerchief over mouth while coughing / sneezing, use of tissue paper or using the sleeve of shirt covering the upper arm, staying away from school when sick, avoiding public gatherings, etc.) would help in preventing/reducing transmission of not only this diseases but also a large number of another communicable disease, notably flu-like illnesses. Because, such informed youth can be agents of changes for their family, community and beyond."

Concerning **3rd** cited letter (Table1), wherein it has been stated by University Grants Commission (UGC) that "avoid large gathering, wearing of the mask if any symptoms related to Coronavirus, use of alcohol-based sanitizer or soap in restrooms, 14days home quarantine to students/teachers who have traveled history to any of COVID-19 affected countries, contact the helpline number if found any symptoms of coronavirus (fever, coughing, difficulty in breathing, etc.), avoid the use of biometric-based attendance, and so on. "These are the guidelines issued by UGC which depict that these measures were taken by the institution for taking care of their students, teachers and other stakeholders".

Regarding the **4th** cited letter (Table1), wherein it has been stated by CBSE that "all ongoing and upcoming examinations of the board for classes-X and XII will be rescheduled after 31st March 2020. "This clearly shows that the early decisions were taken by the Educational Institution for the prevention of stakeholders to break the speedy spread of COVID-19 among them."

Regarding **5th, 6th and 7th** cited letter (Table1), wherein it has been stated by DHE under MHRD thereafter CBSE and National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) that "CBSE has already issued the guidelines to rescheduling of exams after 31st March 2020 but Universities, Colleges, NIOS, and other entrance or competitive exams may schedule by them after 31st March 2020." This decision is taken by the Ministry of Human Resource Department and other relevant bodies that are implemented from time to time wherein they decided to postpone all exams and other related work to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and took these measures for the safety of their stakeholders."

About **8th** cited letter (Table1), wherein it has been stated by DHE under MHRD that "Institutions shall promote the digital learning among students so that they can continue their learning by making full use of available digital/e-learning platforms i.e. for School Education-DIKSHA, E-Pathshala, National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) and for Higher Education- SWAYAM, SWAYAM PRABHA. The suggestions were also made that access to these resources should be made available free of cost." This particular initiative is provided by the Government of India to all the students in lockdown period so that they can take the advantage of the ample of time which is available to them and E-learning boosts and saves their energy as they learn new things in new ways in their own pace and comforts of their Homes."

About **9th** cited letter (Table1), wherein it has been stated by DHE under MHRD that "Faculty members/Teachers/Researchers utilize their time for the development of online content, teaching and learning, evaluation, preparation of lesson plan, carry on research, write articles, papers, preparation of innovative Question Bank, etc. All faculties/Teaching staff/Non-teaching staff shall be counted as being on duty." These initiatives by the Government have provided relief to the staff of educational Institutions to WORK FROM HOME and utilize their valuable time in developing the required skills and bring out their best to the society even during the tough times."

About **10th** cited letter (Table1), wherein it has been stated by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under Government of India (GOI) that "Whereas the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), is satisfied that the country is threatened with the spread of COVID-19 epidemic the PM Modi has announced 21days lockdown in the country to stop the spread of coronavirus." This decision is taken by the Government which was made to prevent the society from the speedy spread of Coronavirus. But it is found that this decision made many Teachers, Students, etc unhappy because the exams and other related administrative work are now postponed due to the 21 days lockdown policy.

About **11th** cited letter (Table1), wherein it has been stated by CBSE that "Teachers can make quarantine time productive by (1)Planning for the whole session/Year by preparation/writing of Learning Outcomes (LOs), mapping Learning Outcomes (LOs) to Curriculum, developing E-content, etc (2) Performing Students Enrichment Activities by tutorials/video lectures, designing online formative assessment & self-assessment, etc. And (3) Performing Teacher Enrichment Activities by updating themselves with reading books, using online training platforms like SWAYAM, and writing blogs, etc. "These measures suggested by CBSE to all the Teachers which will help them to focus on their professional development thereby enhancing their skills and make the best and productive use of time."

Concerning last i.e. **12th** cited letter (Table1), wherein it has been stated by UGC that "The students who are residing in hostel are the responsibility of the team members (wardens, deans, other officials, and other staffs). So it was directed to work together for the welfare of one and all by taking due care of students through team members covering all aspects from health care, safety, accommodation, food and hygiene." This decision was really helpful to all those hostel students who are far away from their homes, families and relatives, to feel safe and secure in their respective Hostels and not to consider themselves as neglected ones."

"Overall every institutional body, State and Central Government in coordination with each other have taken decisions to prevent their stakeholders from this pandemic, without much concerning about the long delay in institutional work and this loyal step shows the priority is given to the health of their employees, stakeholders, etc than any other work."

#### **SOCIAL DISTANCING:**

Social distancing measures are steps one can take to reduce social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

They are to:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of the coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport when possible.
3. Work from home, where possible. Employers should support the employees to do this.
4. Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces, noting that pubs, restaurants, leisure centers, and similar venues are currently shut as infections spread easily in closed spaces where people gather together.
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
6. Use telephone or online services to contact with others to avoid personal interaction.

#### **SUGGESTIONS:**

1) Educational Institutions must adopt different ways to make students aware about these pandemic diseases like Swine Flu, COVID-19, etc. through Seminars, conferences, Special lectures on awareness, etc. so that, they know the basic things to be taken care of while dealing with such disastrous situations in future.

2) To date there has been no Antivirus to kill this disease except the Social Distancing to avoid the spread of COVID-19. So, keeping a distance and being at home, as suggested by our governments, is the only cure for such pandemic diseases.

3) The awareness must be created for preventives interventions such as the use of sanitizer for cleaning hands, use of mask, avoid handshake, using handkerchief over mouth while coughing/sneezing and follow other guidelines given by the relevant authority, which will help in reducing the transmission of disease from one person to another.

## CONCLUSION:

A problem of COVID-19 started from Wuhan city of China affected around 200 countries in the world including India. Because of COVID-19 there was lockdown imposed in almost each affected country to prevent their residents as the situation needs social distancing to stop the spread of the virus among residents.

In India, the various Institutional bodies and Governments have taken timely decisions to prevent their stakeholders from the spread of pandemic disease COVID-19. Schools and Colleges closed down by the relevant governing bodies and Government till the time situation comes under control. There is a huge threat of spreading the disease caused by the Coronavirus among the stakeholders, students, teachers and others as they come in direct contact with many known and unknown people. It is also seen that the disease can be easily spread just by coming in contact with a carrier of such disease. While traveling, visiting malls/restaurants, playgrounds, attending lectures in schools or colleges, buying products, and more, the Students, Teachers and other stakeholders can easily be caught by the virus. This is the main reason that our Government has asked for observing Quarantine and to adhere to the rules stated to prevent the society/ country from being affected by such dreadful disease. The early actions of closing down all the Educational Institutions was indeed a good decision for the welfare of their people, but it is also noted that the examinations which are postponed may affect the student's final performance as there is now a long gap between the lessons taught to them in the class and their final exams. They may not score that good because of the long delay. Also, we may suffer a shortage of time in the next upcoming academic year. Such problems can be solved, if Teachers show a little concern about their students and provide them with online revision lectures to keep them in touch with the syllabus covered maybe a month ago. Also, students need to actively participate in those online lectures and practice the same in their spare time. And last but not least, we all must observe the rules and regulations stated by our Government to prevent our Nation from the spread of the Coronavirus.

Overall, As per the need of the situation, the Indian government in cooperation with state government and relevant institutional bodies have taken right and appropriate decisions to close down institutions for the welfare of the stakeholders and society.

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