

# Impact of Lockdown on Education, Economy and Environment in India

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## ABSTRACT

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The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures throughout the world and specifically in India have several ramifications on the Education system. There is a sudden unexpected shift from the traditional classroom based education system to an online based education system. The lockdown has given a good opportunity and ample amount of time for the young students to acquire new skills through digital platforms, to learn moral and family values through frequent family interactions and being more hygienic in addition to attending the online classes conducted by educational institutions. On the contrary there are various challenges with online education system and closure of the educational institutions. This situation requires quick reforms in the education system to embrace digital technology and encouraging personal development of the student fraternity.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In lieu of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic disease and subsequent closure of schools & colleges, Department of Education, Government of India has recommended resuming teaching & learning process through online classes for the student fraternity. This Online Education system serves as a good interim solution in the current lockdown situation when social distancing has become a norm to prevent COVID-19. However, the lockdown and online education system has both pros and cons and require quick reforms in the education system to embrace digital technology which we shall go through in detail in this chapter.

## II. PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS DURING LOCKDOWN

The lockdown and subsequent closure of educational institutions in India has immensely helped in keeping the Covid-19 infection & fatality rate low when compared to many other developed countries as of mid of May 2020. This strategy reduces people from being exposed to the virus which in-turn saves valuable lives amongst whom the future generation potential leaders, scientists, astronauts & entrepreneurs can thrive towards making India a super power.



This lockdown has given an opportunity for students to spend quality time towards learning new soft skills through digital devices, media & other latest technologies which would vastly improve their knowledge and talents and make them competent in the modern day world. It has also given students who are always under stress some essential leisure time as they are able to interact with family members at home and the extended family through virtual platforms and thus by the exchange of ideas amongst the family members and imparting of wisdom from the elders onto the younger one's is an invaluable process taking place for the students at home while also involving themselves in doing household chores. Many students are now learning to be hygienic all the time and the meaning of the quotes "cleanliness is next to godliness" & "health is wealth" is now being truly understood and put to work by them.

### III. TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM BENEFITS

Due to the lockdown & closure of educational institutions, students and teachers both are finding it difficult to cope with the missing physical teaching classroom environment.

Traditional classroom education involves a lot of interaction between students & teachers and students & their peers. As teachers through years of acquiring the teaching skillset possess good classroom management skills like maintaining eye contact with the students during teaching as it effectively is the most proven concentration fixating technique which draws the students to understand the subject in an easy way. Also, in typical physical classroom setup if

the students have any doubts on the subject, they can inquire about it in the classroom right away and get them clarified. Teachers can also cite various relevant examples for student's clarity, based on mass understanding levels in accordance with the needs of the subject/topic. But during virtual online classes as there is limited time and teachers have limited control over the students the above said elements do not work with the same efficiency.



The extra-curricular and co-curricular activities that take place inside educational institutions make the students physically & emotionally, active and strong. These activities are also the stress busters.

A lot of learning happens through these activities. Competitive spirit, understanding levels and individual personalities develop through such activities. Students simultaneously also improve their spoken, written and social skills while being at the educational institutions and also during their interactions with their peers. So the all-round development of the students is hindered to a large extent due to the long stay at home during lockdown, physical activities at educational institutions with their peers is also a big miss for the students. Hence the student's life being restricted only to the family environment can cause a major impact on social skills for the students especially for those who are already passive.

### IV. CHALLENGES WITH ONLINE CLASSES

As many of the teachers and students lack formal training about virtual/online teaching, the quality of

teaching and learning seems to be reduced. The problem of Teachers dealing with technical glitches is altogether another domain which needs a special mention as they seem to be struggling to maintain good quality audio, avoiding noise disturbance, using mute/unmute features, using proper presentation modes, etc. While younger school students unable to maintain constant attention to the online classes is been another struggle of sorts. Also, it has been observed that even many college students are unable to work on the assignments effectively or not putting much thought into them as much as they do during classroom training.



To top it all, many of the students from under-privileged families do not have the opportunity to utilize the online classes due to the costs involved for necessary Laptops/Computer desktops/smart phones, Internet, etc. Some students also face imminent distractions during these online classes as they are called for by their parents to help them in agriculture and other occupational works etc. in order to meet their ends during the ongoing difficult times of lockdown amidst covid-19 pandemic.

## V. STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

When we look at the impact from students' perspective at various levels of education, there are mixed feelings among the students.

Students aspiring to seek admission in major professional courses are very much confused and are uncertain about their future as their scheduled

examinations got postponed and their routine time table got abruptly disturbed.

The mental health of the students is also taking a huge toll as it is building anxiousness and creating lot of stress due to the uncertainty created by the lockdown extensions as well as due to the rapid spike of Corona cases. A long wait for the vaccine & medication to tackle the virus and also the effect of this pandemic on the global economy which is resulting in the reduction in the number of jobs are also affecting the students enormously.

However, students who are not career oriented and are already addicted to high screen time are getting more addicted now which in turn causing health issues like eye problems, weight gain and certain psychological disorders. As the students get habituated to the present circumstances of lockdown staying at homes, laziness can increase and the zeal of learning may reduce. This can lead to decrease in motivation for education and raise in dropout rate of the students.

The students who are in real pursuit of acquiring knowledge always try to find ways to make the best use of available free time and resources. They can spend time on completing various certificate courses, learning new languages, developing new skills & hobbies, gaining indepth knowledge in subjects of their liking, understanding their own strengths & weaknesses and utilize the time constructively for their career planning.

Many universities, libraries and publishers are making e-books, book series and videos available for free or discounted rates for students. Some are conducting workshops, webinars and online competitions through media for attending from home itself and ensuring continuity of learning during the lockdown. Students can take advantage of these and scale up their knowledge and skillsets.



As physical activities like sports, drills that are usually mandatory in educational institutes for student's well-being are missing during lockdown, it is important for the young people to continue physical exercise at home and stay fit.

### VI. PARENT PERSPECTIVE

If the closures of educational institutions continue for longer time then the parents may fall prey to negative thinking and assume burden to pay the educational fees/ transport charges/rents and in turn may opt for Distance Education or home schooling for their wards while also forcing their children to take up small odd jobs while studying through Distance Education system.



For students coming to cities from rural areas for education, their parents may find it better that their ward may rather get occupied with their family occupations and can do better in those fields rather than staying away from families and risking Covid-19 infection.

### VII. LOSS OF FOOD BENEFITS

In Government schools & colleges, where food benefits are usually provided towards extra nourishment for students and since these institutions are closed due to covid-19 pandemic, the students who are mostly under-privileged also happen to miss their food benefits. This can lead to malnutrition and reduction of immunity and in turn make them vulnerable to Covid-19 infection and compensating the same by providing extra nourishment towards their children would bring more woes to the parents who are already dealing with existing stress and anxiety due to lack of livelihood during this pandemic.

### VIII. LIFE LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC FOR STUDENTS

As Covid-19 impacted education globally every student in the world is feeling the impact and slowly the students do get adapted to the new situation. Students have learnt lot of life lessons and values during this pandemic and lockdown. They learnt being more hygienic, eating hygienic food that is cooked at home and using limited resources effectively as new nonessentials cannot be bought during the lockdown. They also learnt minimalism and quickly understood the importance of time, family bonding, health, education, money and survival needs. These values cannot be taught in such a short span of time at the educational institutions.





In future, the present generation students as now are being forced to learn lives most valuable lessons can withstand any crisis as this experience of pandemic and lockdown has increased many moral and ethical values among the youth. These life lessons will definitely be useful and will be passed on to the next generations.

### IX. REFORMS REQUIRED IN EDUCATION SYSTEM

- ❖ The following measures can be implemented to bring about reforms in the Education system to embrace digital technology and to encourage personal development of the student fraternity:
  - ❖ Every teacher at every level should get trained and gain in-depth knowledge in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools in order to conduct the online classes in an efficient way.
  - ❖ At every level of education, one or two subjects should be imparted through online platform or self-learning through digital media even after the lockdown is lifted.
  - ❖ Every student should be given the details of various websites, SWYAM Courses, free educational TV channels such as SWAYAM PRABHA, DEEKSHA, foreign universities offering free online certificate courses, digital apps, virtual museums, virtual tours of universities and digital books in the libraries which are either free or can be bought.
  - ❖ With time, institute managements must change their policies, fee structure, facilities they provide to staff and students.
  - ❖ Institutes should also provide some tripods, white/black boards with markers, teaching aids for facilitating teaching from home. Besides conducting regular classes, they should organize some fun events using online classes, quizzes, asking what students have learnt, making videos, anything that is fun to make the learning process as more interesting.
- ❖ Universities to have advisory/health centres/information sites for COVID-19 or other infections.
- ❖ It would be great if personality development classes are made compulsory at every level of education.
- ❖ Changes in the examination patterns would also be required.
  - Online exams to be increased
  - Open book system for some of the exams to be included
  - Credits for extracurricular and co-curricular activities
  - Credits for good citizenship, adherence to hygienic practices and social responsibility
- ❖ Competitions on future problem solving, creating innovative digital apps, Artificial Intelligence (AI), etc. have to be introduced on a large scale among student fraternity.
- ❖ The bright and talented students can impart training to the lower classes students under few bridge courses and awards/rewards/ cash prizes/certificates can be given to them, which increase the soft skills & confidence for the students and also enable knowledge sharing among student community.
- ❖ Students to devote more time for self-learning.
- ❖ Promote reading books (Fiction/Non-Fiction) from a very young age.



## X. CONCLUSION

Considering all these aspects it is imperative for the students, parents, teachers and management of educational institutions to adapt to the changing times while supporting the initiatives of the governments, embrace digital technology in education systems and ensure a bright future for the youth and bring glory for India.

No Pandemic can stop a learner to learn and a teacher to teach when both are passionate in doing so!

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