

Impact of COVID-19 on Employment – with reference Education Sector in India

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ABSTRACT

Corona virus pandemic has significantly disrupted various sectors in India including oil and gas, automobiles, aviation, agriculture, retail, etc. We can't ignore that hardly a sector would remain unaffected by the crisis. The impact may be more or less. Same is with the education sector in India. Let us find the impact of corona virus on education in India with some possible solutions. As we know that due to corona virus pandemic the state governments across the country temporarily started shutting down schools and colleges. As per the present situation, there is an uncertainty when schools and colleges will reopen. No doubt, this is the crucial time for education sector because entrance tests of several universities and competitive examinations are held during this period. Along with them how can we forget about board examinations, nursery school admissions, etc?. The immediate solution of corona virus is necessary or if like these days pass then closure of schools and colleges does not even have short term impact in India but can even cause far-reaching economic and societal consequences. Let us tell you that due to the closedown of educational institutes it is estimated to affect around 600 million learners across the world. Remember here we are talking about the school going students. Sometimes in the second week of March, state governments across the country began shutting down schools and colleges temporarily as a measure to contain the spread of the novel corona virus. It's close to a month and there is no certainty when they will reopen. This is a crucial time for the education sector-board examinations, nursery school admissions, entrance tests of various universities and competitive examinations, among others, are all held during this period. As the days pass by with no immediate solution to stop the outbreak of covid-19, school and university closures will not only have a short-term impact on the continuity of learning for more than 285 million young learners in India but also engender far-reaching economic and societal consequences.

Keywords: Covid 19, Education Sector, Lecturers, Issues.

INTRODUCTION

The structure of schooling and learning, including teaching and assessment methodologies, was the first to be affected by these closures. Only a handful of private schools could adopt online teaching methods.

Their low-income private and government school counterparts, on the other hand, have completely shut down for not having access to e-learning solutions. The students, in addition to the missed opportunities for learning, no longer have access to healthy meals during this time and are subject to economic and social stress.

The pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector as well, which is a critical determinant of a country's economic future. A large number of Indian students-second only to China-enroll in universities abroad, especially in countries worst affected by the pandemic, the US, UK, Australia and China. Many such students have now been barred from leaving these countries. If the situation persists, in the long run, a decline in the demand for international higher education is expected.

The bigger concern, however, on everybody's mind is the effect of the disease on the employment rate. Recent graduates in India are fearing withdrawal of job offers from corporate 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%.

Needless to say, the pandemic has transformed the centuries-old, chalk-talk teaching model to one driven by technology. This disruption in the delivery of education is pushing policymakers to figure out how to drive engagement at scale while ensuring inclusive e-learning solutions and tacking the digital divide.

A multi-pronged strategy is necessary to manage the crisis and build a resilient Indian education system in the long term. One, immediate measures are essential to ensure continuity of learning in government schools and universities. Open-source digital learning solutions and learning Management Software should be adopted so teachers can conduct teaching online. The DIKSHA platform, with reach across all states in India, can be further strengthened to ensure accessibility of learning to the students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the research is to analyze the impact of covid -19 on Education sector in India .However, in order to give direction to the study, the following specific objectives are set forth.

The particular objectives of the research study are:

- 1) To study the education system in India
- 2) To analyze the impact of Covid 19 on education sector in India
- 3) To examine strategies for education sector in India during the covid 19 pandemic

Two, inclusive learning solutions, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized, need to be developed with a rapid increase of mobile internet users in India, which is expected to reach 85% households by 2024, technology is enabling ubiquitous access and personalization of education even in the remotest parts of the country. This can change the schooling system and increase the effectiveness of learning and teaching, giving students and teachers multiple options to choose from. Many aspirational districts have initiated innovative, mobile-based learning models for effective delivery of education, which can be adopted by others.

Three, the quality of and demand for higher studies in India. Further, immediate measures are required to mitigate the effects if the pandemic on job offers, internship programs, and research projects.

Four, it is also important to reconsider the current delivery and pedagogical methods in school and higher education by seamlessly integrating classroom learning with e-learning modes to build a unified learning system. The major challenge in EDTech reforms at the national level is the seamless integration of technology in the present India education system, which is the most diverse and largest in the world with more than 15

lakh schools and 50,000 higher education institutions. Further, it is also important to establish quality assurance mechanisms and quality benchmark for online learning developed and offered by India HEIs as well as e-learning platforms. Many e-learning players offer multiple courses on the same subjects with different levels of certifications, methodology and assessment parameters. So, the quality of courses may differ across different e-learning platforms.

Five, Indian traditional knowledge is well known across the globe for its scientific innovations, values, and benefits to develop sustainable technologies and medicines. The courses on Indian traditional knowledge systems in the fields of yoga, Indian medicines, architecture, hydraulics, ethno botany, metallurgy and agriculture should be integrated with a present-day mainstream university education to serve the larger cause of humanity.

In this time of crisis, a well-rounded and effective educational practice is what is needed for the capacity-building of young minds. It will develop skills that will drive their employability, productivity, health, and well-being in the decades to come, and ensure the overall progress of India.

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis. Many countries have, decided to close schools, colleges and universities. The crisis crystallizes the dilemma policymakers are facing between closing schools (reducing contact and saving lives) and keeping them open (allowing workers to work and maintaining the economy). The severe short-term disruption is felt by many families around the world: home schooling is not only a massive shock to parents productivity, but also to children's social life and learning. Teaching is moving online, on an untested and unprecedented scale. Student assessments are also moving online, with a lot of trial and error and uncertainty for everyone. Many assessments have simply been cancelled. Importantly, these interruptions will not just be a short-term issue, but can also have long-term consequences for the affected cohorts and are likely to increase inequality.

Impacts on education: Schools

Going to school is the best public policy tool available to raise skills. While school time can be fun and can raise social skills and social awareness, from an economic point of view the primary point of being in school is that it increase a child's ability. Even a relatively short time in school does this; even a relatively short period of missed school will have consequences for skill growth. But can we estimate how much the COVID-19 interruption will affect learning? Not very precisely, as we are in a new world, but we can use other studies to get an order of magnitude.

Two pieces of evidence are useful Carlsson et al. (2015) consider a situation in which young men in Sweden have differing number of days to prepare for important tests. These differences are conditionally random allowing the authors to estimate a causal effect of schooling on skills. The authors show that even just ten days of extra schooling significantly raises scores on tests of the use of knowledge ("crystallized intelligence") by 1% of a standard deviation. As an extremely rough measure of the impact of the current school closures, if we were to simply extrapolate those numbers, twelve weeks less schooling (i.e. 60 school days) implies a loss of 6% of a standard deviation, which is non-trivial. They do not find a significant impact on problem-solving skills (an example of "fluid intelligence").

A different way into this question comes from Lavy (2015), who estimates the impact on learning of differences in instructional time across countries. Perhaps surprisingly, there are very substantial differences between countries in hours of teaching. For example, Lavy shows that total weekly hours of instruction in mathematics, language and science is 55% higher in Denmark than in Austria. These differences matter,

causing significant differences in test score outcomes: one more hour per week over the school year in the main subjects increases test scores by around 6% of a standard deviation. In our case, the loss of perhaps 3-4 hours per week for 30 weeks. So, rather bizarrely and surely coincidentally, we end up with an estimated loss of around 6% of a standard deviation again. Leaving the close similarity aside, these studies possibly suggest a likely effect no greater than 10% of a standard deviation but definitely above zero.

Impacts on education: Families

Perhaps to the disappointment of some, children have not generally been sent home to play. The idea is that they continue their education at home, in the hope of not missing out too much.

Families are central to education and are widely agreed to provide major inputs into a child's learning, as described by Bjorklund and Salvanes (2011). The current global-scale expansion in home schooling might at first thought be seen quite positively, as likely to be effective. But typically, this role is seen as a complement to the input from school. Parents supplement a child's maths problems in everyday life; or they illuminate history lessons with trips to important monuments or museums. Being the prime driver of learning, even in conjunction with online materials, is a different question; and while many parents round the world do successfully school their children at home, this seems unlikely to generalize over the whole population.

So while global home schooling will surely produce some inspirational moments, some angry moments, some fun moments and some frustrated moments, it seems very unlikely that it will on average replace the learning lost from school. But the bigger point is this: there will likely be substantial disparities between families in the extent to which they can help their children learn. Key differences include (Oreopoulos et al. 2006) the amount of time available to devote to teaching, the non-cognitive skills of the parents, resources (for example, not everyone will have the kit to access the best online material), and also the amount of knowledge—it's hard to help your child learn something that you may not understand yourself. Consequently, this episode will lead to an increase in the inequality of human capital growth for the affected cohorts.

Assessments

The closure of schools, colleges and universities not only interrupts the teaching for students around the world; the closure also coincides with a key assessment period and many have been postponed or cancelled.

Internal assessments are perhaps thought to be less important and many have been simply cancelled. But their point is to give information about the child's progress for families and teachers. The loss of this information delays the recognition of both high potential and learning difficulties and can have harmful long-term consequences for the child. Andersen and Nielsen (2019) look at the consequences of a major IT crash in the testing system in Denmark. As a result of this, some children could not take the test. The authors find that

participating in the test increased the score in a reading test two years later by 9 % of a standard deviation, with similar effects in mathematics. These effects are largest for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Importantly, the lockdown of institutions not only affects internal assessments. In the UK, for example, all exams for the main public qualifications – GCSEs and A levels – have been cancelled for the entire cohort. Depending on the duration of the lockdown, we will likely observe similar actions around the world. One potential alternative for the cancelled assessments is to use ‘predicted grades’, but Murphy and Wyness (2020) show that these are often inaccurate, and that among high achieving students, the predicted grades for those from disadvantaged backgrounds are lower than those from more advantaged backgrounds. Another solution is to replace blind exams with teacher assessments. Evidence from various settings show systematic deviations between unblind and blind examinations, where the direction of the bias typically depends on whether the child belongs to a group that usually performs well (Burgess and Greaves 2013, Rangvid 2015). For example, if girls usually perform better in a subject, an unblind evaluation of a boy’s performance is likely to be downward biased. Because such assessments can have potential long-term consequences for the equality of opportunity.

It is also possible that some students careers might benefit from the interruptions. For example, in Norway it has been decided that all 10th grade students will be awarded a high-school degree. And Maurin and McNally (2018) show that the 1968 abandoning of the normal examination procedures in France led to positive long-term labour market consequences for the affected cohort.

In higher education many universities and colleges are replacing traditional exams with online assessment tools. This is a new area for both teachers and students, and assessments will likely have larger measurement error than usual. Research shows that employers use educational credentials such as degree classifications and grade point averages to sort applicants (Piopiunik et al.2020). The increase in the noise of the applicant’s signals will therefore potentially reduce the matching efficiency for new graduates on the labour market, who might experience slower earnings growth and higher job separation rates. This is costly both to the individual and also to society as a whole (Fredriksson et al.2018).

Graduates

The careers of this year’s university graduates may be severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have experienced major teaching interruptions in the final part of their studies, they are experiencing major interruptions in their assessments, and finally they are likely to graduate at the beginning of a major global recession. Evidence suggests that poor market conditions at labour market entry cause workers to accept lower paid jobs, and that this has permanent effects for the careers of some. Oreopoulos et al. (2012) show that graduates from programs with high predicted earnings can compensate for their poor starting point through

both within- and across-firm earnings gains, but graduates from other programs have been found to experience permanent earnings losses from graduating in a recession.

Solutions?

The global lockdown of education institutions is going to cause major (and likely unequal) interruption in students learning; disruptions in internal assessments; and the cancellation of public assessments for qualifications or their replacement by an inferior alternative.

What can be done to mitigate these negative impacts? Schools need resources to rebuild the loss in learning, once they open again. How these resources are used, and how to target the children who were especially hard hit, is an open question. Given the evidence of the importance of assessments for learning, schools should also consider postponing rather than skipping internal assessments. For new graduates, policies should support their entry to the labour market to avoid longer unemployment periods.

CONCLUSION:

Universities and better Education Institutions (HEIs) have instantly turned to conducting virtual classes, online assignment submissions and teacher-student interactions. Classes at schools, colleges and universities are now being conducted online. The dynamics of a physical class are diametrically different from conducting virtual classes, but professors have pitched in enthusiastically and innovatively in order that the challenges posed by the pandemic in continuous education can best be minimized. This is also a really crucial time for the admission processes for subsequent school term. Some institutes have made their admission process 100% online. To ensure the security of prospective students, parents and their staff, these institutes have adopted a variety of online virtual methodologies to facilitate the whole admission process.

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