

A Psychological Exploration Towards Indian Education Fraternity during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Background: The purpose of the current study is to understand the COVID-19 pandemic as the greatest psychological challenge that humankind has ever faced. COVID-19 started in China in December 2019 and has conquered the whole world today. Everyone is responding to this pandemic in their own unique way and psychologically facing a global threat in the process. This paper seeks to examine how COVID-19 has psychologically affected the education sector. The purpose of the study is to analyze the prevailing situation and to study the impact of COVID-19. **Materials and Methods:** ANOVA is used as a tool to analyze the impact of school closures on different levels of students in India and to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the education sector in India. **Results:** The major findings are that due to COVID-19 the number of students affected at different levels (pre-primary students, primary students, lower secondary students and upper secondary students) whereas whether students are male or female COVID-19 have an impact on different levels of students. The experience gained during this tough period will sow seeds for both health awareness and an understanding of the importance of remaining healthy to tackle any such future impediments. **Conclusion:** The paper sheds light on the psychological challenges in the Indian education sector and the various steps adopted by the Indian government to ensure the nation to survive and overcome the prevailing COVID-19 situation.

Keywords: COVID-19, Education, Pandemic, Psychology, ANOVA.

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has had a profound impact on various sectors, including education. In response to the pandemic, educational institutions have had to implement drastic measures such as lockdowns, closure of schools and the transition to online learning. These measures have disrupted the traditional approach to education, forcing educational institutions to adapt and find new ways to continue delivering education to students. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, the education sector has shown resilience and innovation. Educational institutions have quickly adopted online learning platforms and tools, ensuring that students can continue their studies remotely.¹

Recently considering the future of students a big question mark is in the mindset of parents and school authorities, which is better home schooling or classroom schooling. As there is a certain kind

of aura always associated with school. A home cannot replace a school and a school cannot substitute a home. School is the training ground for children to imbibe values, develop interpersonal skills and acquire knowledge. The classroom experiences even after so many years because of the ambiance, the settings, the bullying, the punishments, scurrying to school during a heavy downpour and the thrill of being let out earlier than the usual time.

COVID-19 is a present crisis, which is temporary. Now or later, the normalcy will return to the world. This temporary phenomenon of Homeschooling is only a stopgap to keep pupils and teachers engaged at home. Man does not create this pandemic, it occurs as a Natural disaster. The tsunami created havoc and went off claiming so many lives. It affected a part of the world. Here the disaster due to the Pandemic Virus is affecting the world population. People with immune power resist the virus.

It is the idea of the Government to safeguard the children and the teaching population where the virus can spread easily that Virtual education is taken and accepted as an alternative as a regular schooling as a temporary measure. Through Virtual education, the teachers must not lose their grip and that could touch on education and learning towards students. Maybe the



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virtual classes do not reach a hundred percent of the teaching and taught community because of Infra deficiency. However, that cannot be the reason to stop virtual learning as the Government is providing the appropriate steps to keep the learning part going and still trying to find an alternative for students who do not have the Infra facility.

It was indeed heartening that Professor Abhijit Banerjee and his colleagues (won 2019 Nobel Economics Prize) for their experimental method towards alleviating global poverty through education, healthcare setups and investment flows thus enriching the people at the bottom of the pyramid who are deprived of the benefits, which they should have gotten anyways. This path-breaking work, as carried out by this trio, is a shining example of how education can benefit from the right flow of capital in this sector. In this regard, it would be pertinent to mention the names of such industry honchos like Azim Premji and Shiv Nadar are famous for their educational initiatives as they are known for their corporate achievements. Specifically, the name of Mr. Azim Premji, the biggest philanthropist of the nation, under whose guidance Azim Premji University is doing path-breaking work to highlight the plight of the downtrodden sections of the society and what could be done to uplift. The Shiv Nadar Foundation, the brainchild of current Chairperson Roshni Nadar, has provided learning opportunities to the unprivileged children in the backward states of the country apart from opening an excellent university where interdisciplinary work is carried out. Likewise, when one talks about such corporate groups like Hero, they have established the BML Munjal University, the Jindals have set up O P Jindal Global University, the computer training company NIIT has put up the NIIT University and there are scores of other examples wherein the corporate czars have put their hands together to provide exceptional educational opportunities to the masses. Even the richest man of India, Mr. Mukesh Ambani runs his international school and an HEI to impart education of the best possible standards.

When we go to the past few decades, the establishment of IITs and NITs along with such national institutions like AIIMS has put education on the front foot about the commitment of the government to the society. Even at the school level, the government has established scores of schools that have served the purpose well. All said, a lot to be done but the work in progress is in the right direction.

Literature Review

Many researchers observed the impact of epidemics and pandemics are often intense, which may adversely affect the mental well-being of a given population.² The history is replete with instances wherein the human race has been afflicted with a host of pandemics, epidemics and other diseases of global order which have wrecked havoc on the humankind. Not only this, even manmade disasters like the two world wars, various

bilateral, trilateral and multilateral wars fought across the various continents, manmade accidents like Chernobyl nuclear accident in USSR, Bhopal Gas tragedy in India, WTC terror attack in USA have redefined the ways in which we respond to various crisis situations. As has been the case with the present pandemic due to COVID-19, which has marred the entire year of 2020 so far, there have been pandemics every 100 years for the past three centuries starting with the great plague of Marseilles, which originated in France and killed close to 100 thousand people, mainly in Europe. Then the first cholera pandemic happened during 1817-24 which was known as the first Asiatic cholera pandemic. It affected almost every country in Asia and spread as far as Eastern Africa and the Mediterranean Coast. There have been the two world wars of the twentieth century which took place between 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 respectively. That tells a lot about how human history has been witness to catastrophic events, both natural and manmade.

A previous study on education sector has also incorporated the positive and negative impacts of COVID-19 on education.³ Experts demonstrated that during the lockdown the business and every type of job is influenced the economy of country.⁴ Amidst all this chaos, the humankind has responded in its own way with regard to continuing the cause of education. Special schools, night schools, classes during war time and a host of other measures have been utilized to further the educational efforts. The present pandemic situation has led to the exponential growth of online education efforts on the part of educators. Platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams have revolutionized the way education is imparted. Every single crisis, whether natural or man-made, has tested human kind for its resilience and humans have responded in a manner which befits the situation.

The purpose of the study is to focus Indian Education System, especially the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) during COVID-19. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have done a wonderful job with regard to disseminating knowledge across the length and breadth of the country and many talented students went abroad with regard to pursuing higher education as well as for lucrative job opportunities.⁵ At the same time, it has become a challenge also to keep the talented lot in the country owing to the various issues which plague our current education system. The problem of brain drain is real and has been adversely influencing the manner in which the nation is dealing with the talent at hand. To make matters worse, the literacy rate in the country is 74% where anyone who can read, write and speak even the most elemental words is considered to be literate. Even then the number shows that almost one-fourth of the population is still illiterate. One of the major challenges which the country is facing is the ineffectiveness with regard to implementing the universal education policy in connection with ensuring that the remotest villages get schools where the teachers on government payrolls just provide lip-service in the name of education and a student

studying in such schools can hardly read or write the subject information as expected from them. This has direct implication on the employment scenario of the nation. Moreover, even those who go for higher education find it difficult to get suitable job openings. More so, such professional degrees like B Tech has as high as 80% unemployable graduates which implies that they lack what it takes to be fit for being put for employment. All this is indeed a disheartening scenario and needs to be dealt with on an emergency basis. But all is not lost. The government is taking steps in this direction by bringing in the New Education Policy for changing the educational setup up to intermediate. Even for the HEIs, the government has set up various parameters which have given the universities the freedom to operate reasonably and factor-in the challenges which they are facing.

The ancient education system in India was among the world's leading ones. Takshashila and Nalanda, hallmarks of this system, attracted scholars globally. Educators there taught disciples from across the globe, fostering information sharing and knowledge gathering. Renowned for their vast libraries, these universities acted as magnets, drawing scholars who descended upon them to learn and grow together.

It was all about inclusiveness and the feeling of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which means the world, is our oyster. Even the New Education Policy talks about inclusiveness of every type of student in the education system and marks are not the only judging parameter. Like the ancient education system, the students will be taught courses which would help them with regard to utilizing the learned information to do something meaningful with their lives. Additionally, the NEP has acknowledged the significance of digital learning and this could not have come sooner keeping into perspective the tectonic shift that has come with regard to dealing with Pandemic and addressing the concerns of the students. Digital is the way ahead as far as teaching the students is concerned and the government has taken up to in a comprehensive manner. Such digital initiatives as Massive Open Online Course or MOOC has been immensely successful with regard to bringing the students closer to quality learning. National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), Swayam courses, considered by the premier institutions in the country, have brought classrooms to the living room, thereby giving students the opportunity to learn from the best.

Objectives of the Study

The current study focused on the following objectives:

Highlight the School Closures in India caused by COVID-19.

Enlighten the Impact of the Global Pandemic.

Highlight the psychological challenges in the education sector.

Enlighten various measures adopted by Government of India for education sector during pandemic.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A secondary data was used for this research study. This study uses data and information from UNICEF 2020. EduView Dashboard provides up-to-date information on education and COVID-19. Information is also collected from various authentic websites. Journals and e-contents related to educational system have been referred. To understand the impact of COVID-19 on student achievement levels, an ANOVA was conducted.

Statistical analysis was executed on Microsoft Excel-2016. The statistical method, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) explains the statically difference between two or more independent groups. In present study the school closures in India caused by COVID-19 was calculate through ANOVA between level of students affected and gender. The authentic website and e- journals were used to discuss the impact of the global pandemic, the psychological challenges in the education sector and the various measures taken by Govt. of India for education sector during this pandemic.

The School Closures in India caused by COVID-19

Amidst this lockdown, all educational institutes including schools, colleges and even coaching centers were closed for the safety of students, teachers as well as the general public at the national level. Globally In response to the educational crisis caused by school closures, UNESCO has actively promoted distance learning solutions and the use of digital teaching aids.⁶

The future generations are the hidden victims of the pandemic as their lives upended. Researchers had highlighted the findings of a survey of Indian parents conducted in March 2020, the majority of participants preferred that schools be closed for an additional two months, till the end of May.⁷ On June 1, 2020, more than 81% of respondents wanted the schools to reopen. Many Indian families that viewed COVID-19 as a health concern said they are being vigilant and taking safety precautions.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is collaborating with the Indian government to develop alternative learning methods during school closures.⁸ With the potential for extended school closures, UNICEF is supporting the national and state education departments of 17 states in ensuring that all children can continue their education. UNICEF is advocating for state-specific strategies that promote continuous learning by enabling school-aged children, teachers and schools to use flexible and remote/home-based learning options. These options may include reading materials, radio broadcasts, television programs and online content and internet-based learning platforms.

School closure has affected 275 million children in India despite taking measures to use technology for education.⁹ Students who are familiar and user-friendly working on mobile, computer system and laptops can avail online learning facility with accessibility of internet. It is a struggle for students belong to rural area and not having internet facility to learn through technologically.

The Table 1 depicts the survey on school closures in India in the year 2020. It shows gender-wise how the numbers of students are affected at different levels during COVID-19.

Table 2 depicts the variation between the number of students affected at different levels and gender was analyzed by ANOVA. The value of ANOVA was significant for the number of students affected at different levels ($F=494.9, p=0.00$) that exhibits there is a significant difference between the pre-primary students, primary students, lower secondary students and upper secondary students. It is significant at a 1% level of significance, which means that there exists a significant difference between the numbers of students affected during COVID-19. On the other hand, the value of ANOVA is not significant for the Gender ($F=0.51, p=0.52$), which exhibits no significant difference between gender and affected students. It means that the COVID-19 does not affect considering whether it is male or female.

The Impact of the Global Pandemic

Recommendations of several education commissions' right from Education Policies could change education scenario but to very limit success. Ng (2012) demonstrated that everyone is familiar with the buzz terms like world-class quality, GER, inter-nationalization of education, various education models like PBL, OBE, computer Based, MOOC, blended learning, on-line, e-learning, etc., Indian Higher Education eco-system could effectively handle issues like Research and Development, quality education, affordable cost of education, accreditation,

credit system, research publication patenting, industrial parks, placement, etc.,

COVID-19 impact on the education sector in India, the USA and the UK are discussed in the following key points:

Online, simulation-based, management game-based education is one approach that can effectively bridge the gap between theory and practice in education. By using online, simulation-based management games, educators can provide students with an immersive and hands-on learning experience that allows them to apply theoretical concepts in a practical and engaging way.

The demand for online education has been steadily increasing, driven in part by the desire from industry personnel to prepare for the next phase of remote working.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a major disruption in the education sector, leading to the closure of schools and universities worldwide. As a result, there has been a surge in online education providers seeking to meet the sudden demand for remote learning. These providers, often referred to as "fly-by-night" due to their opportunistic nature, offer quick and convenient online courses without the necessary accreditation or quality standards.

Inclination towards online examinations rise that is around 30% and gradually alleviating at 50% of the total examinations held.

The requirements for infrastructure, such as the number of classrooms, books in the library, faculty, etc., will have to be relaxed by the statutory bodies. Experience in the industry will take the role of faculty members' credentials.

A significant number of employees from the industry, designated as middle-level and junior-senior employees, were available to share their experience and exposure at the institutes to enhance learning.

Revised syllabus, course content and new programs like crisis management, disaster management and health attack management were executed during COVID-19, developed with core skills and evolving electives for students to be prepared during uncertainties.

Faculty keep themselves abreast about newer knowledge, newer methods of teaching, industry trends and prepare videos and uploaded on YouTube to put greater emphasis on learning management systems effective.

Placements or joining dates for fresh students has affected and consequently, students motivated to develop competitive skills to get reputed placements opportunities. To manage the situation

Table 1: School Closures in India.

Number of Students Affected	Year	Value
Number of Pre-Primary Students Affected	Total	2020 10004418
	Female	2020 4557249
	Male	2020 5447169
Number of Primary Students Affected	Total	2020 143227427
	Female	2020 72877621
	Male	2020 70349806
Number of Lower Secondary Students Affected	Total	2020 65448214
	Female	2020 31723156
	Male	2020 33725058
Number of Upper Secondary Students Affected	Total	2020 67696157
	Female	2020 32260521
	Male	2020 35435636

(Source: Statistical Report, UNICEF 2020).

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA.

Sources of Variation	D _f	MS	F	p-value	F critical
Level of students Affected	3	1.49626E+15	494.9212743	0.000154	9.276628
Gender	1	1.56567E+12	0.517879555	0.523744	10.12796

the concept of Make in India, Make America Great Again and the shift of industries from China was under planning to execute.

Innovations, Research and Development will get a big impetus. Health, Biotech, Pharmacy will see an increase in admissions.

To conclude, there is a new 'normal' in the education sector during post-COVID-19 and that give escalate towards to the new normal.

History has turned a new corner. The time of Western control is finishing. Prior to the emergence of COVID-19, Asia experienced a resurgence in global affairs and the global economy. Following the crisis, a new global order will be established. The norm in the 19th and 20th centuries of respect for Western societies will be replaced by growing admiration and respect for East Asian ones. Experts suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic might mark the beginning of the Asian century. This has led to a decline in interest among Indian students for pursuing higher education in Western countries, as evidenced by the downward trend in overseas study applications.¹⁰

The psychological challenges in the education sector

In 1851, India's international market share was 21%, whereas that of US and European countries collectively was 24%. On the other hand, India's international market share was hardly 2% in 1947. Lord Macaulay addressed UK Parliament in 1835 advised England that if England wanted to rule India, two systems existing in India need to be abolished: (1) Education system (2) Social harmony, villages were self-reliant, remain unaffected without regards who was the ruler.

Industrial Revolution-I took place in mid-18th Century, giving rise to factory system wherein labor is required to report to the employer. This rooted out the craftsman social system (there were 12 Baluledars: Professionals like blacksmith, goldsmith, carpenter, potter, barber, Mochi, from the village scenario and they became irrelevant, jobless. Capitalism, customer, factory, consumerism, marketing, credit, etc., terms were evolved in Capitalist countries who adopted factory system.

According to Philip Kotler "Capitalism have a proven track record of driving economic growth. While some argue that this growth does not benefit everyone equally, policies can be implemented to promote inclusive prosperity. Raising taxes on high earners does not equate to socialism; it is a strategy to redistribute wealth and create a larger consumer base by putting more money in the hands of working families. This, in turn, can stimulate economic activity and potentially benefit everyone. We should move beyond the outdated notion that helping the rich automatically helps the poor." Philips has also commented that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be an psychological challenge and also health care will bring out rise of credit system, anti-consumerism, GDP, measuring people's well-being, better balance between work, family and leisure.

During lock down and the post-COVID period, India has been facing entirely different set of issues because of the policies India adopted since 1947 like capitalism under the name of socialism (India is at the bottom with regard to per capita income), neglecting public health care (India ranks 150), education, agriculture, manufacturing, widening gap between the haves and the haves-not, imbalanced regional growth (the issue of interstate migrants), MSMEs, work force in unorganized sector that constitutes 60% of Indian work force contributing almost 50% to GDP and farmers are hard hit. However, the State and Central Govt. in spite of all shortcomings and political obstacles, acted swiftly and smartly minimizing damage including death toll notably.

Capitalism is for hyperactive growth tending to unlimited profit through unlimited production, unlimited use of resources and improving consumerism through credit chain. Charvak who advises taking loan and consuming ghee (Runam Krutva Grutam Pibet: issue of student debt in US)' Mahatma Gandhi's India has forgotten the Gandhian Theory of Economics (as against Capitalism and Communism), the concept of simplicity, Philip recommended that COVID has taught simplicity that may reduce consumerism: anti-consumerism and "Nai Talim". We have equally forgotten Lokmanya Tilak: Swarajya, Swadeshi, National Education and boycott and also his principle of Home Rule. COVID-19 has opened up an excellent opportunity for India to become world power.

Since January 2020, the entire world is passing through an unprecedented, life-threatening challenge posed by COVID-19 before one and all of us; never seen before in Human History.¹¹ Nevertheless, together we will have to sail through these difficult times. The explosive spread of the COVID-19 virus and its consequences world over, on our daily life and routine, is quite evident. We are experiencing them day in and day out. Every passing moment is adding more to our uncertainty. It is unpredictable whether academic institutions would be in a position to start their normal functioning or routine after the lockdown. It is all happening unfortunately at a crucial time, the transition period of the end of the Academic Year 2019-20 and commencement of Academic Year 2020-21. The time in hand is getting compressed with every passing moment. The current situation, however, has been posing a series of life-threatening or survival challenges to all sectors like tourism, travel, banking including education.¹² For example, institutes are shut down, compelling to go for online education, no examinations, no results, no in-plant training, admission uncertainty for Academic Year 2020-21 programs and their unpredictable start, maybe six months later or start odd batches. Such and similar challenges are only adding to ever-increasing uncertainty in the education sector. Broadly, two ways to manage the challenges in the education sector:

Institutes and Admission Process

For decades, entrance tests like MAT, CAT, GATE, JEE, CET, NEET have been used for entry in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). For that, a lot of investment, manpower, time and finance, from the Government or public side are undertaken every year. Researcher suggested that because of the COVID-19 crisis, a big challenge is posed before the regulatory machinery.¹³ Following are the measures to overcome the barriers meant for institutions and admission procedure:

For the Under Graduate program, could consider only XIIth standard score to prepare the merit list at the State level (already many institutions are doing so).

For Post Graduate, could consider Under Graduate marks only (already many institutions are doing so).

In the mid-80s, there was no GATE. Admissions were done by allotting university-wise quota in proportion to the applications received from a university, saving time and money and ease of access. This model worked successfully till the GATE was introduced. Admission can be increased by adopting the above approach plus the followings:

Manpower, finance and time can be drastically reduced allowing institutes to start functioning by August/September 2020.

The fad of coaching classes (pollution in education) can be brought down to zero.

Admissions will be executed free of cost by the State Agency with the help of a few institutes in a region.

The admission cycle could be of hardly 3 weeks.

The qualifying entrance examination level can be brought down.

Reservation quota will be maintained as per State quota.

Reduction in employee's payment (in-scale or consolidated).

Education is made free, tuition reimbursed by State (at present over 70% of students get reimbursement by State, Reserved categories, EBC).

Liberal soft loans to institutes/students.

No taxes like GST for institutes.

Innovative engagement with the stakeholders may also provide the solutions to strategies pertaining to admissions. To arrange a "Consensus" meeting with teachers and management regarding the preference of pedagogy in view of online skill development experienced during the lockdown. Organize community speeches for prospective parents attending the Parent Teacher Meet to brief them on the career dynamics of the global value chain in the post-pandemic world.¹⁴ Further, can seek industry opinion regarding curriculum modification with a view of the future work

culture and skills development and also regulatory bodies may come up with down-to-earth guidelines.

Role of Faculty Members

Pandemic has hit badly all the sectors and teachers are no exception. The institute management is required to get more evolved, cautiously and seriously, in the given COVID-19 life-threatening scenario at the national and global levels. Academic institutes are needed to be judged by how they treat the least fortunate amongst them. Institute management is required to interact with the Heads of Institutes, senior faculty members, educationists and to study or analyze the approaches being adopted by State or Central Government, industry.¹⁵ The current unpredictable scenario calls for certain critical decisions and strategies for survival in the larger interest of every institute family member or stakeholder. As this scenario is unique and there is no precedence to follow, the management needs to take certain decisions based on national and global facts and figures in the matter. Management is essentially required to review the current situation, focusing on interests of the organization, its people, especially of the least fortunate ones at the bottom line, thus helping in sailing one and all and institutes through this challenging time and can adopt some strategies as listed below:

Reduce program instruction structure from the existing 30-35 hr/week to 6 theory credits and 6 practical/tutorial credits per week.

Give more emphasis on online education including virtual classrooms and labs, relying more on mobile technology.

Train the faculty and students to upgrade for online education. Adopt a blended (Internet, Face to Face and e-learning) approach.

Identify areas where cost reduction is possible with a target to save at least 15% of costs.

The outsourced workforce is to be excluded from these orders for the time being. Separate orders need to be issued in due course of time.

Measures Adopted by Government of India for Education Sector during Pandemic

To control the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian government implemented public health measures like social distancing, handwashing and mask wearing. These guidelines were effectively communicated to the entire population through various communication channels.¹⁶ To prevent the ill-effects of this global pandemic, that is COVID-19, serious steps have been undertaken with the closure of educational institutes all over India being one of them. It is basically for the safety of students and teachers both. The Indian Government and the MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development, responsible for higher education) have worked out to ensure that the academic loss towards students must not hampered the carrier even though when schools and colleges required to remain shut.¹⁷

The Indian government started thinking of how to take care of teachers and students without risking their life. Instead of compelling teachers in any manner, the government, universities and institutes managed the academic and non-academic load by resorting to conducting online classes. The strategy of “work from home” was implemented successfully in the education domain as the teachers are adept and comfortable with working on computers and today being an era characterized by internet, are taking the best advantage of that^{18,19}. Also, the institutes are providing the platforms to teachers to access e-learning programs sitting at home. To enhance academically free online faculty development programs, conferences are also taking place to improve their performance drastically. This inspired and boosted the morale of the teachers and they have started providing training also. The continuous positive attitude of teachers made them motivated that after the unpredicted and unwanted break due to COVID 2019 they just have to link and need to connect.

Gurpratap Boparai, Managing Director, Skoda Auto Volkswagen India Private Limited (SAVWIPL) commented, "The COVID-19 pandemic has had an important impact on businesses operations and in industries. 'Safe Production and Safe Office' concept was working closely with the government, local administration and medical team to implement it in operations effectively. This concept is aim at ensuring the safety and well-being of our employees, as well as preventing the spread of COVID-19 within our workplace". The challenge and impact of COVID-19 during the lockdown shown on agriculture and vegetable market of India.²⁰

CONCLUSION

The literature review shows that COVID-19 has brought to the fore certain lessons for the education sector such as closing schools for 2-3 months which has had a limited impact on education outcome and recently the government has notified the same. Teaching online is the way to go for future learning. Many times it is observed that Indians follow Macaulay or Western model of education that needs to switch over to appropriate education model, to be executed with a spirit-like mission. Fear is that after lockdown still education sector will continue with the old practice. That's a big question and dilemma for the management of institutions and universities.

In continuation of this, there is a dearth on how to bolster admissions during COVID-19. It's a big and serious question as a challenge towards different schools, colleges and universities. There are few ways which could facilitate the admission and provide strength by reducing the tuition fees, providing scholarships, using blended learning to cut costs, investing in ongoing training of faculty members and students for online teaching and learning, converting libraries into training, teaching and learning spaces, increasing extension or continuing program,

better usage of the university infrastructure and investing in turning the university into more of an e-Campus. It is thus a challenge to come out with a successful strategy and effective implementation, in such unpredictable times and that too during the shortest time available. Academic loss is though important and is adversely affecting the future of students. Its severity can be reduced to some extent within one year bouncing back to the pre-COVID-19 routine. Indeed, working on excellent and realistic measures will collectively overcome this crisis and life will bounce back to normalcy. COVID-19 has opened several opportunities like online blended education, affordable cost-for-quality education, mode of delivery, assessment, curriculum design and development, rethinking internship, flexible model of the credit system, institute ranking. These are the ways how one can use this emergency as an opportunity.

The school closure in India during COVID-19 becomes an important challenge. The Ministry of Education comes up with the best possible solution to manage through online education. The impact on number of students at different levels and gender was analyzed through ANOVA. The main application of this finding was that due to COVID-19 the number of students were affected at different levels (pre-primary students, primary students, lower secondary students and upper secondary students) whereas whether students are male or female COVID-19 have an impact on different levels of students.

India's central government is developing a plan for the phased reopening of schools and educational institutions. This plan, discussed by a ministerial group on COVID-19 management, will likely be included in the forthcoming guidelines for easing lockdown restrictions. The final decision on reopening schools, however, will left to individual state governments, who will determine the specifics of when and how to resume in-person learning.²¹

It was found that an environment where Faculty or teachers become victims of political parties and their divisive ideologies. should be kept out of academia. Sadly, in India, many schools and colleges are run by politicians or their cronies. At the same time, it is not the environment that matters for good or bad learning. It is the attitude of the teachers and the taught only matters. Therefore, Environment is only a cause and not the Effect.

The experience gained during this tough period will sow seeds for Health awareness and to understand the importance of remaining healthy to tackle any such future impediments. Most of the organizations-public and private throughout the world-have been adopting some means like salary-cut, no salary and cost-cutting to overcome the financial crunch due to COVID-19 pandemic.²² The post COVID-19 era will have challenges both new and old. However, we need to look ahead with optimism once more. By resuming production, we will be in a better position to react to market demands and consumer needs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the current study is to understand the COVID-19 pandemic as the greatest psychological challenge and to analyze the prevailing situation. ANOVA is used as a tool to analyze the impact of school closures on different levels of students in India and to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the education sector in India. This difficult period has served as a wake-up call, fostering health awareness and a deep understanding of the importance of staying healthy to face any future challenges

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