A REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICES AND MANAGEMENT OF CHALLENGES UNDER COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN INDIA

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Introduction:

As on today the Higher Education Sector of India consists of 993 Universities and around 50,000 colleges across the country in which about 38 million students are pursuing higher education in different streams. All these educational institutions do have their syllabi under the guidelines of the UGC and AICTE. Apart from the traditional methods of class room teaching most of them also offering the online courses. In the present Pandemic Era of COVID 19 it has caused several needs among these institutions to adopt online methods of Teaching, Learning and Evaluation System. Due to the impact of the pandemic there is an utmost need emerged not only to continue their existence but also to sustain the competition among themselves.

Need for the study:

The present pandemic situation forced the higher education system across the world in general and India in particular to adopt the Digitalization of the education system which is a lesson learnt to execute the system in online manner without inculcating the core ideologies behind the education system. The virtual classrooms, blended learning and online learning has become a common scenario among the educational institutions in India now a days. There are several challenges also while adopting the digital methods of education system processing. In this context this paper presents a holistic approach on the practices and challenges prevailing in the Higher Education System of India as on today.

Methodology of the Study

The present study has been conducted by referring various reports of the National and International institutions under the Covid 19 scenario in the Higher Education System. The data and information are of mostly secondary in nature collected through the websites and research articles available through the Internet sources.

Objectives of the Study: The following are the objectives behind this study. They are:

1. To explore the impact of Covid 19 on the Higher Education Scenario in India.
2. To find out the structural changes made in the Higher Education System in India in the present Covid 19 pandemic scenario.
3. To observe the change implementation strategies of the regulatory bodies of Higher Education System in India.
4. To know about the adjustments made to suit the online education system in the Higher Education System in India.

Hypotheses of the study:

1. Majority of the Indian Higher Education System is offline and traditional due to the infrastructural limitations of India.
2. Recent Covid 19 Pandemic scenario has imposed several challenges to Indian Higher Education System.
3. Indian Higher Education System is on transition towards online and Digital systems gradually to face the similar Pandemic challenges in the future.

Limitations of the study:

1. The study is confined to Indian Higher Education System only.
2. This study is pertaining to the Covid 19 Pandemic scenario in the Indian Higher Education System only.
3. Data and information are from the secondary sources only.

Review of Literature:

The present pandemic has really disrupted the Indian Education Sector in general and the Higher Education Sector in particular. It has brought the time to transform from the traditional pattern to the e-learning pattern of education at all levels. Technology enabled education has become necessary at present due to the no human connectivity. Ms. Richa Chaudhary has opined that there is a need of Multi-pronged strategy to manage the present crisis in the Indian Education System.

1. Continuity of teaching and learning needs an urgent attention by adopting open learning and digital learning initiatives online.
2. Blended learning may not completely work and there is a need to use the internet sources and internet enabled education system.
3. Globally practiced educational strategies are needed to plunge into the competency based teaching and learning and evaluation systems.
4. Technology based education and evaluation is required
5. Capacity and skill based education is needed to be augmented at present.

Some authors opined that this pandemic has its disastrous effect on the education system of India. There are both positive and negative impact on the education system of India. Some opined that this pandemic has sent a clear message of transformation requirement. While some others opined that it has brought several hardships in the education sector of India due to the infrastructural lacunas in Indian Education Sector and also with the huge disparity between the haves and have-nots economically. Affordability is really matters to associate with the costs involved in the e-leaning

system based education system especially with the poor and rural based students more in the country.

Data Analysis and interpretation

1. **DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing):**
   Diksha is a portal for the teachers to facilitate the National Digital Infrastructure. Through this all teachers are able to use the digital technology. It will enable the teaching community at various levels to get solutions related to online teaching and ICT oriented teaching activity. It works as a training module for the teachers also. It is a teacher centric facility which provides unique opportunities to the teachers to deliver their content in different modes. It contains the whole lifecycle of the teacher –student interaction to the end of the output evaluation.

2. **SWAYAM PRABHA:**
   The SWAYAM PRABHA a cluster of thirty four DTH channels for broadcasting of high-quality educational programmes 24X7 streamed through the GSAT-15 satellite. It facilitates the scholars to make a choice of their time fixation to attend the session. The channels are uplinked from BISAG, Gandhinagar. The contents area unit provided by NPTEL, IITs, UGC, CEC, IGNOU, NCERT and NIOS. The INFLIBNET Centre maintains the online portal.

3. **For open schools and pre-service education:**
   MOOCs are the courses delivered online and accessible to all free of cost. MOOC stands Massive Open Online Courses. Massive because enrollments are unlimited and might run into many thousands. Open because anyone can pursue these courses. Online because they're delivered via the Internet. MOOCs typically comprise video lessons, readings, assessments, and discussion forums.

4. **All India Radio (AIR):**
   As of today AIR network broadcasts nearly 2000 programme hours each day in 24 languages and 146 dialects. It reaches 97.1

per cent of the population, which has substantial population in geographical area, and covers 89.7 percent of the geographical region of the country.

a**. University broadcast project:**

This project was started in 1965 to focus on the upper education students. The Programme consisted of two types- 'General' & 'enrichment'. The final programmes included topics of public interest and enrichment programmes supported correspondence education offered by universities in their respective jurisdictions. School of Correspondence studies, University of Delhi and the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad is well-known for preparation and broadcast of their programmes through AIR.

b. IGNOU-AIR Broadcast:

AIR collaborated with IGNOU to broadcast major IGNOU programmes in January 1992. Initially, the AIR stations of Mumbai, Hyderabad and Shillong started this service. This program still continues to be broadcasted in Mumbai and Hyderabad.

c. IGNOU-

AIR Interactive Radio Counselling (IRC):

IGNOU together with AIR, Bhopal started Interactive Radio Counselling (IRC) in 1998. This program was mainly for college kids of Open / Conventional Universities. Soon after its huge success, AIR expanded to other cities: Lucknow, Patna, Jaipur, Shimla, Rohtak, Jalandhar, Delhi and Jammu. As of now, Interactive Radio counseling (IRC) is being provided on every Sunday for one hour (4:00 PM - 5:00 PM) from 186 radio stations of All India Radio.

d. Gyan-

Vani (Educational FM Radio Channel of India):

Launched in 2001, to focus on the scholars of Open / Conventional Universities, is that the only dedicated educational radio channel of India. Gyan literally means Knowledge and Vani means aerial broadcasting. Gyan Vani stations operate as media cooperatives, with day-to-day programmes contributed by different Educational Institutions, NGO's and national level institutions like IGNOU, NCERT, UGC, IIT, DEC etc. Each stations will have range of about 60-KM radius, covering the whole city /town plus the encompassing environs with extensive access. Gyan Vani also pander to awareness programmes including those for Panchayat Raj Functionaries, Women

Empowerment, Consumer Rights, Human Rights, the Rights of the kid, Health Education, Science Education, Continuing Education, Extension Education, vocational training, Teacher Education, Non-formal Education, course of instruction, Education for the handicapped, Education for the down trodden, education for the Tribals and many more.

5. **For the differently-abled:**

One DTH channel is being operated specifically for hearing impaired students in linguistic communication. For visually and hearing impaired students, study material has been developed in Digitally Accessible data system (DAISY) and in sign language; each are obtainable on NIOS website/ YouTube.

6. **E-textbooks:**

The e-textbooks will be accessed through e-Pathshala net portal and mobile app (Android, iOS, Windows), by students, teachers, teacher educators and fogeys. over 600 digital books together with 377 e-textbooks (grades one to 12) and 3,500 items of audio and video content of NCERT are accessible within the property right in varied languages (Hindi, English, Indic and Urdu).

7. **National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER):**

NROER is an open depository of e-content for college students, teachers, and teacher educators. Nearly 17,500 items of e-content of NCERT and others are on the NROER for all courses in numerous subjects. E-content is also on NCERT's official YouTube channel.

8. **National Digital Library of India (NDLI):**

National Digital Library of India is a library for free and online study material and books and a digital platform for the learners and referrers across the country. National Digital Library of India (NDLI) is currently available to all. It's feed from value study material. in spite of the pause place by COVID-19 on the educational lifetime of the scholars, this step has been taken. NDLI may be a virtual world jam-packed with books and resources in digitalized formats. NDLI is simple to use and any resources are often accessed here with one search choice. NDLI is that

the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) sponsored and is hosted by IIT Kharagpur.

9. **E-Yantra:**

It provides hands on experience on embedded systems. It has about 380 Lab and made 2300+ colleges benefited.

10. **FOSSEE:**

FOSSEE is a project of National Mission on Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India which promotes the utilization of ICT tools in education content and analysis.

11. **Virtual Lab:**

These virtual labs provide access to Labs in various disciplines of Science and Technology. These Virtual Labs enable the students at the U.G. level, P.G. level as well as to researchers. The use of the virtual laboratory allows the students to carry out laboratory experiments virtually.

12. **E-ShodhSindhu:**

This provides access to over Ten thousand core and peer-reviewed journals, citations and factual databases in several disciplines from a variety of publishers to the centrally-funded technical institutions in universities. It's a set of e-journals, e-journal archives and e-books on long-run access basis. It has 10,000+ e-journals, 31, 35,000+ e-books. It provides access to qualitative electronic resources together with full-text, and factual databases to the institutions at a cheapest rate.

13. **Shodhganga:**

The Shodhganga @INFLIBNET is set-up and an open supply digital repository referred to as DSpace developed by university (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in partnership between Hewlett- Packard (HP). The DSpace uses internationally recognized protocols and ability standards. Shodhganga provides a platform for analysis students to deposit their Ph..D. theses and makes them available to the whole academic community in open access. The repository has the flexibility to capture, index, store, publicize and preserve ETDs (Electronic Theses and Dissertations) submitted by the researchers.

14. **VIDWAN:**

VIDWAN is the premier data and information profiles of scientists / analysts and academicians at leading educational esta blishments and an R & D organizations c oncerned in teaching and research. The information developed and maintained by INFLIBNET with resource from the National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT).

The information would be instrumental in ch oice of panels for constitution of numerous committees, taskforce, established by the Ministries / Govt. institutions.

15. .**National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT)**:

A new Public-Private-Partnership theme has been declared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, named National instructional Alliance for Technology (NEAT). This has been created to bring all the startups providing one-stop access to those technological solutions on one platform and use their experience to assist deprived communities. Its objective is to harness the technologies of the businesses for higher learning outcomes in education. The platform can offer easier access to technology to the marginalized students. AICTE is to look after the implementation and administration of the programme.

16. **SAKSHAT:**

A One Stop Education Portal launched in 2006, by the then President of India to facilitate continuous learning for college students, academicians and people working in the Education Sector. The content development task for 'SAKSHAT' was taken care of by the a Committee contain IGNOU, Delhi University, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangthan (KVS), Navodyaya Vidyalaya Sangthan (NVS), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and NCERT and distinguished academicians in the Academic field. Additionally, some NGOs have provided the contents developed by them with no cost for this portal. 'SAKSHAT' is to cater the training needs of individuals through a projected of 'National Mission in

Education through information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Upcoming Challenges under the COVID 19 scenario for Higher Education of India

1. Encourages self and personalized learning on the part of the students (**Yekalavyans**) which may not fulfill the capability requirements among the students in a competitive manner.
2. Lesser student attendance due to parental fear about the life of the students (Online)
3. Mobility of students for education in and out of India will reduce.
4. Physical Interaction mode of education slowly come down.
5. Shift wise classroom interaction may arise in both online and offline.
6. Gap between privileged and underprivileged students may arise.
7. More technology enabled education scenario seems to be augmented in future.
8. New performance assessment systems like Artificial Intelligence orientation comes into practice among the Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Process.
9. Distance and open learning modes of course structures compulsinate the students to adopt for their education.
10. Scope for Blended Learning and Knowledge Impartation may increase.
11. Students may not coop up the stress related to new methods of education system.
12. Educational institutions may not generate funds for their existence and struggle for resources.
13. Unemployment rate may enhance due to more drop outs.
14. Rural and under developed sections of the society may face hurdles to adjust to the new education system under the Covid 19 Scenario changes.
15. It is not easy to augment the Network related issues to all for effective education imparting communication to every nuke and corner of the country.
16. Affordability among the students to have the ICT gadgets may be highly variable due to their economic status.

Now it is well understood that facing the change and implementing the policies so designed to augment the change is not so easy. While promulgating the policies and strategies by the Governments either at Central level or at the State level in India it should be kept in mind that there should be minimum loss to the prospective students on the path of education and be in a position to accept the change and flourish in their career development. The educational institutions should also make those changes which are the easiest way to their students while keeping in mind the socio-economic conditions of the different segments of the society. Adopting coherent changes in the education system all of a sudden is not possible and disastrous. Different platforms are needed to be developed through which there may be a choice among the students to pursue their education with lesser discomfort and more possibility.

Future plans include the following:

1. Digital Class rooms
2. Virtual class rooms and labs.
3. Use of Social Media and Multiple sources through Mass Media also
4. E-content design in local language and mother tongue.
5. Effective participation with student convenience in Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Systems.
6. Balance between the online and offline modes of imparting education to the students.

Measures for effective implementation in the reality

1. Timely supply of Text Books to the students along with reference books
2. Blend of both online and offline activity for continuous student connectivity.
3. Preparing the teachers to be skilled enough to augment the online and digital versions of teaching and evaluation methods.
4. Use of Mobile based education strategies with social and mass media platforms

Conclusion:

It may be observed through the above discussion of various elements that all the statements of Hypotheses have been addressed and found to be valid.   Apart from that the role of governments and educational institutions is very vital to bring the change and manage the change in a perfect manner in the Higher Education System of India. There is a great need and essentiality among the teachers of the Higher Education System to be the game changers and initiators in the present pandemic situation of Covid 19.

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