

New Pedagogies and Digital Technologies Emerging for Mitigating the Effects of Covid-19: An Indian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown has become a popular buzzword. It is a well-known fact that pandemics have plagued humankind throughout history, and outbreaks of coronavirus have been responsible for affecting more than two billion children in more than two hundred nations. School, college, and other institutional closures have affected almost 94% of students worldwide. Every aspect of our lives has seen significant changes due to the recent deadly pandemic. A variety of research techniques have been used to disseminate the findings of studies that have been conducted following the COVID-19 outbreak. COVID-19 has given us a chance to lay the foundation for digital learning. This study aimed primarily to provide a thorough analysis of COVID-19 and how it affects both teaching and learning processes in schools and higher education, and, finally, to suggest a course of action in response to it.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Institutional Closures, New Pedagogies and Digital Technologies

The Coronavirus disease of 2019 is a communicable disease, commonly known as COVID-19 (Kaushal and Kaushal, 2021) that has caused havoc on people all over the world. It has aggressively disrupted the educational process for around three hundred million students all over the world (UNESCO, 2020). As a result of the pandemic, educational institutions, administrators, teachers, students, or even parents have ended up finding themselves unprepared for the remote education process. Schools have been pushed into a complex and constrained flow of learning as they shift from conventional teaching methods to more indirect methods (Rasmitadila, 2020) as this method influences the teachers, students, and school as well (Mailizar et al., 2020). People have surely run into many challenges and barriers in institutions during this process. Students' psychological well-being has been affected by school closings, a shortage of classroom supplies, unable to access the online resources from home, and being prevented from returning home for an extended period (Bhat & Jan, 2023; Apriyanti, 2020). Investigating the lack of technical support provided by educational institutions, which becomes a hindrance to the effectiveness of the educational programme, was another issue.

The Indian Government ordered the implementation of several measures in the Covid affected zones, preventing mobility of the whole 1.38 billion (138 crore) Indian population as a preventive precaution against the COVID-19 pandemic in the whole nation. Corona virus is

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having a profound impact on the learning process, affecting all sectors, including the education sector, which impacts the socioeconomic conditions of the people and the education system itself (Kaushal and Kaushal, 2021) and it will have an even greater impact on the academic institutions. Several schools, colleges, and universities have begun to phase out face-to-face instruction. New methods for education and assessment must be created by putting it into use immediately. The COVID-19 epidemic had given us an opportunity to lay the foundation for using digital learning.

A paradigm shift from conventional (or traditional) face-to-face learning to internet based (or online) learning via many web platforms was an entirely new experience for both students and their teachers, who were forced to adapt with few or no other options. Students, parents, and teachers all throughout the world felt the unexpected consequences of the COVID-19 disease as schools were closed to combat the global pandemic. As governments, emergency rescuers, and health professionals put forth great effort to stop the outbreak, educational systems work hard to continue offering all students a best education during the difficult situations. Many students and educators have struggled psychologically and emotionally at home and lack the ability to communicate effectively and additionally, the health care system is particularly hard hit as it attempts to meet the increased demand for its services with its already heavy workload (Hebbar et al., 2020).

The use of appropriate and relevant pedagogical skills for online education was a good exposure to become familiar with information and communication technology (ICT). While prior research indicates that working from home with ICT may result in stress, anxiety, fatigue, and low job satisfaction (Cuervo et al., 2018), this was the only resource that instructors (or teachers) had during a pandemic to impart knowledge and information to their students.

The Indian government and various stakeholders in education have explored various digital technologies as a means of combating the current COVID-19 crisis by utilizing open and distance learning, as part of their attempt to survive the crisis and digitize challenges to eliminate the threat of the pandemic. (Jena, 2020). The coronavirus does not have a short-term impact on India; however, its spread has had far-reaching economic and social consequences. According to estimates made by Singh (2015) and Barman and Mandal (2015), the closure of educational institutions was expected to have an impact on around 600 million students across the globe, including more than 285 million young students in India. Therefore, an immediate solution to the problem was required.

Several limitations exist, according to the research findings, which include a lack of online teaching infrastructures, a lack of accessibility for teachers to online teaching, a communication gap, and a non-conducive atmosphere for studying at home. The challenges that faced by teaching and learning processes in an Indian environment during COVID-19 outbreak is examined in this research. The various mitigating measures and possible opportunities of online and lifelong learning were highlighted during the COVID-19 epidemic, and a roadmap forward was provided.

Objectives

As a result of this study, the following objectives has been highlighted:

1. To identify the effects of online learning on both learners and educators as a transition from face-to-face learning.

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2. To understand the various challenges of teaching and learning that has arisen due to Covid-19 pandemic.
3. To conclude, some possible solutions to mitigate the effect of Covid-19 while adopting new pedagogies and modern technologies.

Data Collection & Procedure

The current study was mostly based on secondary data while using the two large bibliographic databases, viz., Google Scholar (GS) and SCOPUS. The face-to-face paradigm of Indian education has given way to a totally online paradigm for the first time in its history. This study examined various published online research articles, academic journals, references, conference papers, working papers, newspaper pieces, books, and authentic websites.

Challenges of Teaching and Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic

Although the Covid-19 disruption has gotten worse since the disease first appeared, it has had a big impact on educational institutions. Social segregation and lockdowns were used as protective measures against Covid-19, which made in-person instruction obsolete in educational institutions. In order to allow students to finalize their education while adhering to Covid-19 standards, most learning activities were shifted online. According to Friedman (2020), because the disease cases are growing, most institutions have switched to online education (or leaning) as a method to solve Covid-19 distractions and reduce time waste. Teachers and students frequently run into problems using or referring to online educational resources, although there are many platforms and online educational resources available. Many scholars have identified and highlighted the following problems:

- **Technical Issues:** It is a well-known fact that technology was praised for being effective and successful during online learning, evidence suggests that many students encountered technical difficulties during the Covid-19 (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Researchers, who acknowledge that the internet world is hampered by technical difficulties, have confirmed this difficulty. As such, students have experienced a sudden shutdown of personal computers while taking part in live videoconferencing, forcing them to restart the equipment while other students continue the session (Friedman, 2020). After then turning the computer 'ON', this takes time to get and catch up with other people that causes both student and teacher to abandon the class.
- **Distractions and Poor Time Management:** It is because of Covid-19, distractions and ineffective time management were the other significant problems with online learning. Due to the inability of students to meet in person at school, online learning through Covid-19 was typically done at home. But once they were back to home, students were faced with a variety of distractions, especially when managing household duties and academic function (Friedman, 2020). As a result, most students find it difficult to learn and teachers to deliver lectures online due to poor time management and home distractions.
- **Understanding Course Expectations:** Furthermore, as a result of Covid-19, many students engaged in online learning finds it difficult to hold the course expectations. Students had begun some courses prior to the closure of the majority of schools. As a result, the abrupt move to online instruction has left many students puzzled and unable to determine where they had left (Aliyyah et al., 2020). However, most students remain off-topic, making it difficult for them to understand the course. Notably, some courses require that students present final group projects or conduct practical lessons in order to pass the class (Friedman, 2020). Finally, digitally recorded sessions prevent other students from completing crucial tasks, unlike live labs. As a result, this issue may have

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an impact on both student's and teacher's competence when implementing practical sessions.

- **Shifting to Unfamiliar Technology:** Shifting to new technologies has been a key challenge with distant education. Formerly, not all teachers or students could connect with one another using technology and digital gadgets. But the Covid-19 pandemic has encouraged the bulk of them to try out cutting-edge tools like Zoom, Google Meet, and Skype. They can access online lessons using these digital instruments (Dhawan, 2020). Therefore, individuals who do not know how to use the devices must learn how to do so before the lectures commence in order to be able to participate in the lectures successfully. Consequently, time is a major concern, and keeping up with what is left is difficult. Multiple students experienced anxiety and stress because of the unusual transition from face-to-face to online instruction. Others may also be concerned about future of their education if the condition persists (Friedman, 2020). As a result, there is tremendous doubt regarding the future and stability of the education system if pupils experience worries and stress as a result of online lessons.
- **Online Learning and Assessment:** Several pedagogies have been developed for online and remote learning, but in order to connect with their students, teachers who lack digital literacy require the proper professional development and training. It has been shown that the school system and teachers find this challenging. Throughout the epidemic, variety of online infrastructure had been established by several educational institutions and made freely accessible for learning. The accessibility and availability of those online infrastructures for students from all socioeconomic backgrounds continues to be a problem. Considering that all assignments and tests were done at home, teachers found it difficult to assess the validity of the work and the learning that took place. However, a lot of parents have an impact on and assist their children to learn, and the intensity of that effect and help varies greatly.

Adopting New Pedagogies and Modern Technologies During Covid-19

Due to its ubiquity (ability to be accessed anywhere and at any time), affordability, simplicity of use, and interactive nature, digital learning systems are currently a vital source of information. The great characteristics of the e-learning system have proved too helpful even during recent Corona virus outbreak. At such, students can use an e-learning system from home to communicate with teachers via message or take part in a learning activity. Teachers also run online classes and supply the materials for the students' convenience and advantage. With every passing day, digital learning replaces more and more traditional educational methods in the classroom, and digital learning can take many forms, from simple tablet substitutions for paper to more sophisticated software and tools.

Initiatives for Higher Education in the Digital Age

New programs and platforms are continuously being introduced by the government and educational organizations to promote digital learning and empower students with digital skills. The following initiatives are noteworthy:

- i. **SWAYAM:** SWAYAM is one of the best digital initiatives for higher education. An integrated platform called "Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds" (SWAYAM) allows for the delivery of online courses for students in grades 9 through 12 and up to and including postgraduate level.
- ii. **SWAYAM Prabha:** SWAYAM Prabha as a programme is designed to continuously stream 32 educational channels across the country via DTH (Direct to Home). It provides course material that is based on curriculum across a range of areas. The main

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goal of this is to increase access to excellent educational resources in remote areas with limited internet connectivity.

- iii. **National Digital Library (NDL):** A project called the National Digital Library of India (NDL) seeks to offer a single-window search interface together with a virtual collection of educational resources. The NDL provides access to over 3 crore digital resources. A mobile app can be used to access the NDL as well. You can access it at www.nd.gov.in.
- iv. **Spoken Tutorial:** These are open-source software 10-minute audio-video tutorials designed to help students improve their employment prospects. It is intended for independent study and has an online version and audio dubbing in all 22 languages.
- v. **Free and Open Source Software for Education (FOSSEE):** FOSSEE is a project that promotes open-source software in educational institutions using instructional material such as documentation such as textbook companions and awareness programs such as conferences, training workshops, internships, and spoken tutorials as well. It can be accessed through <https://fossee.in>
- vi. **Virtual Laboratory:** The Virtual Laboratories Project seeks to provide an interactive online simulation environment where students can conduct experiments, collect data, and answer to enquiries in order to assess understanding of the acquired knowledge.
- vii. **E-Yantra:** The goal of this effort is to strengthen embedded systems and robotics courses at engineering colleges across the entire nation. This effort has benefited around 275 colleges in India. All projects and code are open-source and available on the E-Yantra website, www.e-yantra.org.
- viii. **ShodhGanga:** "Shodhganga" is the name given to the INFLIBNET Centre's digital archive of Indian Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Shodhganga offers a platform for research scholars to deposit their PhD theses and make them open access to the whole scholarly community.
- ix. **Shodhgangotri:** Under the "ShodhGangotri" initiative, research scholars and their supervisors in various universities are asked to deposit an electronic version of the approved summary supplied by research scholars to the universities in order to register for the PhD programme.
- x. **e-ShodhSindhu:** More than 15,000 e-books and electronic journals from around the world are made accessible to all higher education institutions under the e-ShodhSindhu project. This enables access to the world's top educational resources via digital format.
- xi. **e-Vidwan:** INFLIBNET launched an expert database and then a National Researcher's Network. The primary goal was to facilitate information exchange and networking among scientists.
- xii. **National Academic Depository (NAD):** A project of the Indian government called the National Academic Depository (NAD) aims to make it simpler to digitally issue, save, and verify academic awards positively issued by academic institutions. It is an innovative step, one-of-a-kind, and forward-thinking project with the "Digital India" concept.

Initiatives for School Education in the Digital Age

- i. **e-Pathshala:** The e-Pathshala is a collaboration between the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the Government of India, and the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to display and disseminate all educational e-resources like textbooks, audio-video periodicals, as well as a variety of other print as well as non-print materials for students, teachers, researchers, and parents.

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- ii. **e-Basta:** e-Basta is a platform for digitally distributing school materials as e-books which may be read and readable on tablets and laptops.
- iii. **Sugamya Pustakalaya:** An online library-Sugamya Pustakalaya provides books for those who are blind, has low vision, or have any other print disability. It was developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan).
- iv. **Diksha:** The National Teacher Platform (NTP), commonly referred to as "Diksha," an important initiative by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Indian government. It is a cutting-edge platform created to contain Open Educational Resources (OER) and resources for teachers in order to boost their professional growth in schools.
- v. **Saransh:** This is a CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) based project. It is a platform that allows CBSE affiliated educational institutions and parents to undertake in-depth self-evaluation and analysis. Saransh connects schools, instructors, and parents so that they can monitor their children's progress and help them perform better.

DISCUSSION

Thanks to the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the digital tools and resources utilized in educational settings are concurrently growing and evolving. In recent years, digital technology in India has progressed, altering the way students develop concepts in classrooms. Traditional discussion and chalk teaching methods have paved the door for new participatory teaching methods as schools increasingly rely on digital solutions to keep up. With the introduction of new technology, today's pupils are accustomed with laptops, iPads, and cell phones; these creative teaching methods can increase student participation and has given a new direction to education to get delivered. It is also a powerful system capable of providing everyone with a world-class learning experience. However, educational technology organizations are constantly attempting to create and develop novel solutions to improve access to education for people who are currently looking for acceptable educational institutions. The best part about digital education is that you only must produce things once and then reuse them for future generations. This saves a significant number of resources and energy. The Indian educational system must become more dynamic in order to include and react to technology improvements in education and provide a more effective learning environment. Since most people in India reside in rural and semi-urban areas, such technological infusion must start at the local level; only then will problems like high dropout rates, illiteracy, and substandard education in the nation be resolved. Meanwhile, many studies that investigated how COVID-19 might affect stakeholders or education relied on quantitative methods and surveys (Maini et al., 2021; Sharma and Kiran, 2021).

Today, India's educational goal is to create an appreciative society, an enlightened existence that includes all its members, and to do so by utilising all intellectual and natural resources. The digital education platform is the most important and powerful weapon for rapid development, technological progress, and the formation of a social order based on libertarian ideas, socio-economic fairness, and equal opportunity for all with respect to all aspects of day-to-day life. India has implemented several digital initiatives in the field of higher and school education to enhance access, improve quality, and promote digital literacy. Mobile learning has become more popular as a result of its accessibility, particularly in areas with poor internet connectivity. The earlier research looked at how educational technology (EdTech) platforms were used to deliver content, promote communication, and offer individualized learning experiences. It talks about how these tools work, how they affect student engagement and motivation, and how teacher preparation plays a key role in maximizing their advantages.

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Our educational institutions should acknowledge that their curriculum approaches make students aware of pandemic diseases like Coronavirus, swine flu, etc. This will be great step as the students will be fully aware about how to handle these disastrous situations and literally, they are our nation's future (Barman and Mandal, 2015) and how to reduce the disease transmission from one person to another (Kaushal and Kaushal, 2015). Blended learning, which combines online and offline methods, has emerged as a viable alternative to mere online learning. Scholars have investigated the use of blended learning models, such as flipped classrooms, in which students access lecture materials online before participating in active interaction during virtual classroom teaching.

CONCLUSION

E-learning systems were crucial in helping universities and institutions continue to teach students during the Covid-19 outbreak even if many were closed, according to Subedi et al., 2020. During the transition to new changes, staff and student preparation must be monitored and supported as needed. Learners with a growth mindset may adjust to a new educational environment, whereas those who have a fixed mindset struggle to change and adapt. Teachers along with students should receive training and usage on a variety of online instructional technology, as the COVID-19 epidemic has demonstrated. Using technology, during a pandemic, becomes a lifesaving tool (Bhat, 2020 & Hebbber, et al., 2020). Future research could conduct cross-sectional surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of various online education methods. It would be fascinating to study what factors will control the sustained employment of the blended learning strategy after the pandemic gets over. Since the day regular classes returned in the country following the COVID-19 epidemic, teachers and students have been pushed to continue using such internet technologies to possibly improve teaching and learning. As a result of the COVID 19 outbreak, the education sphere from preschool to higher education has been pushed forward into a new paradigm which emphasized for optimal blended learning. Furthermore, the government has emphasized ICT-based teaching-learning activities. Let us hope that more digital initiatives will be launched in both school and higher education levels in the coming future.

The COVID-19 pandemic compelled India's education sector to rapidly embrace new pedagogies and technologies. This current study provides an overview of emergent trends and practices for mitigating the pandemic's effects on education. It discusses initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide, such as digital literacy programmes, the provision of gadgets and internet connectivity to disadvantages students, and community-based interventions. In addition to discussing the opportunities and innovations that have emerged, the study emphasizes the obstacles faced, such as infrastructure limitations and access to technology. The findings of the current study contribute to a comprehension of the changing educational landscape and provide policymakers, educators, and researchers with insights considering the post-India pandemic, future pedagogical approaches need to be shaped.

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Conflict of Interest

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