ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Geography

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND HEALTH OF GIRLS

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ABSTRACT

A pandemic is not just a medical phenomenon; it affects individuals and society and causes disruption, anxiety, stress, stigma, and xenophobia. Isolation, social distancing, and closure of educational institutes, workplaces, and entertainment venues consigned people to stay in their homes to help break the chain of transmission. However, the restrictive measures undoubtedly have affected the education and health of individuals. Especially, students can experience anxiety, distress, future uncertainty, irritability, lost of study, headache, migraine, vision problem and social isolation, and an abusive environment that can have short- or long-term effects on their education and health. There are both positive and negative matters happening around us amid the Covid-19. Technology paves the way for education, thus helping the students and teachers to connect virtually through online classrooms, webinars, digital exams, online evaluation and so on. But the sad truth is that it is not available to many students all over National, State and the study area of District Charkhi Dadri in Haryana. Everything is happening for the well-being of the students so that they can stay safe at home without getting affected by the life-threatening virus. We were not ready for this, but it came. So, we have to go through this together. For such kind of pandemic we have to update the infrastructure and should think of ways to undertake the situation and providing education to every student amid the pandemic. If we face something precisely like this in the future, to aid the forthcoming generation with precautionary measurements of health issues which are very important for man power as resource for our developing country.

INTRODUCTION

The recent worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has thrown the entire education system. Most governments worldwide have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the pandemic. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics data, over 91 per cent of learners are affected worldwide with 188 countrywide closures of educational institutes. Similarly, the decision to close educational institutions in India is affecting nearly 360 million students enrolled in 1.4 million schools and 51,000 colleges. However, this closure of schools and colleges has opened up new avenues and platforms in the virtual world. Accordingly, both government and private Ed-Tech companies are promoting their digital learning platforms vigorously. Though these digital initiatives are fruitful for those who fulfill all the prerequisite criteria to access digital learning, such as having an internet connection and a digital device (Android Phone, laptop or computer) at home. For the lower strata of the society, deprived of such resources, these initiatives generate inequalities, anxieties, and challenges, both for teachers as well as learners.

This policy brief starts with a description, of initiatives undertaken by the Central government, State governments, and Ed-Tech companies to mitigate educational issues arising out of Covid-19. It also highlights the challenges experienced by students, teachers, and parents from divergent sections of society, specifically the disadvantaged and vulnerable, such as migrant children, girls, and 'nowhere children'. It gives an overview of the emerging educational disruptions induced by such challenges, and focuses on analyzing the impact of Covid-19 on higher education and health of especially girl students.

A cursory glance at the available grey literature shows that only a handful of institutes and parents are able to reap dividends of the facilities and participate in this virtual teaching-learning process. Numerous practical issues are impeding the success of online learning/education or virtual learning models. Stakeholders are encountering many challenges and obstacles that reflect some of the persistent realities of our societies, such as caste and class divide, as many of these challenges are directly linked to socio-economic backgrounds. A significant section of the population remains excluded from access to learning due to sudden and unexpected changes in the education process.

The pandemic is an unfavorable condition for the lower middle classes and economically weaker sections of society since its outbreak has created a widening gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Those who fulfill all the prerequisite criteria to access digital learning, such as having internet connections or data packs, digital devices like laptop or computer, smartphone, storage devices, and physical space, come in the realm of the 'haves' whereas, those are deprived of such resources fall in the category of the 'have nots'. Although the vulnerabilities of both the 'haves' and 'have nots' is a grave concern in the current scenario, this section will largely focus on the 'have nots', specifically a group of children who have few or no opportunities of online learning due to the closure of educational institutions. These are migrant, 'nowhere children' and children belonging to the economically weaker section of society.

The digital wave amid the pandemic has cultivated ambiguities for teachers. These ambiguities are explained by the changing role of teachers as well as pedagogical practices in this digital age. As most of the teachers are compelled to translate their lectures and give notes to the students digitally, education in the virtual mode is taking the form of a monologue. This also levies burden on teachers to stick to old pedagogical practices to finish the curriculum through textbook learning. The teachers still have to use the old pedagogical practices to finish the curriculum, which was mostly based on textbook learning in the classroom which has now shifted to online platforms. Moreover, to facilitate online learning, teachers are expected to have the devices, internet connectivity and a reliable power source. This leads to an added financial cost. Teachers, due to the lockdown and classes shifting to online platforms, are switching between prepared videos and PowerPoint lessons and hosting live teaching via Google Classroom, Zoom, Microsoft team and others. Though most teachers and students are digitally literate and savvy, full-time online education is still a new experience for them. Many teachers are not trained adequately to handle the digital teaching style and are accused of being unwilling to adapt. Moreover, teachers are struggling to adapt to a new way of teaching since, to conduct an interactive online class, the teacher needs to develop not only lesson plans, but also PowerPoint presentations, worksheets, assessment sheets and other materials. In addition, there will be an immediate impact on children in terms of loss in learning. It is understood that online learning directs the students away from textbook based learning and

towards critical analysis and self-motivated education, which needs an adjustment in the pedagogical styles of the teachers.

The online education sector is not guided by any standard norms or regulations by the government. There are no definitions and frameworks for online education. Therefore, it is an urgent priority for the government to regularize the online education sector and define standards and regulations for it and also to devise monitoring mechanisms and online assessment.

Study Area
The study area of the case study is related with District Charkhi Dadri in HARYANA where about 300 college girl students were involved in a survey through printed questionnaire. This questionnaire containing 34 questions covering the education and health of students who are engaged in online Education. The area of the District is 1370.11 sq.km. where 502276 persons were living in 2011 census. About 67% of the District population is literate and about 80% of the population is living in rural area of the District. The area of the District lying in South-West of Haryana. The district area is being covered by District Bhiwani in North-West, Mohindergarh in South, Jhajjar in East and Rohtak in the North-East. The map of the study area is enclosed herewith.
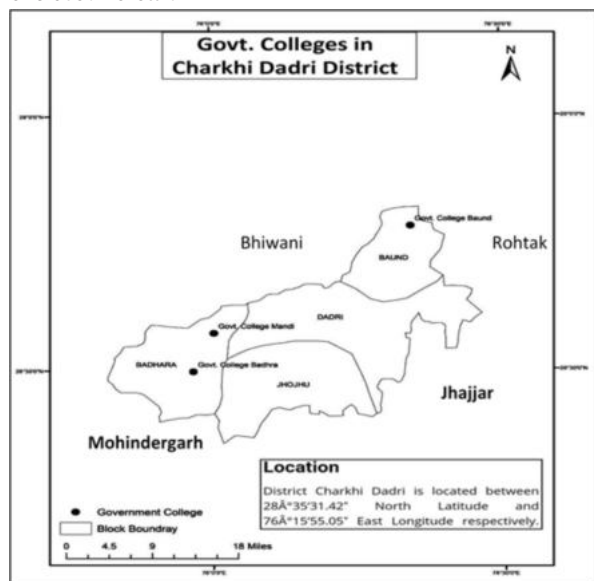
Objectives
1 The objective of the case study is to examine the impact of online study on Higher Education and Health of the girl Students.
2 The second objective is to study the comparison between online and offline education.

Data Sources And Research Methodology
1. The case study is based on primary data. These primary data are collected from the students by filling the questionnaire by three hundred students which were studying in different Govt. Colleges of District Charkhi Dadri (Haryana)
2 The map of the study area is shown by Arc – GIS Technique.

Impacts Of Covid-19 On Health And Higher Education Of Girls Students
Table 1.1 (Key Factors)

Sr. No.	Nature of Impact	Yes	No.	Doubt	Total
1	Whether online teaching is good and effective	16%	37%	47%	100%
2	Did you feel offline method of teaching is best.	97%	03%	-	100%
3	Was Internet connectivity good during the classes	23%	77%	-	100%
4	Are you satisfied the online mode of teaching for future security	11%	89%	-	100%
5	Did concentration reduced during online classes	70%	30%	-	100%
6	Did you feel depression / stigma for uncertainty of future	89%	03%	08%	100%
7	Did you feel vision problems and allergy/reddishness in eyes during online classes	90%	10%	-	100%
8	Did you feel headache during online classes	77%	23%	-	100%
9	Did you feel irritability/ vehemence due to online classes	81%	19%	-	100%
10	Did you feel any change in your daily sleeping habits during lockdown period	93%	07%	-	100%

RESULTS – (Educations)
- 77% not having enough internet connectivity.
- 99% used android / mobiles phones for online classes.
- Only 1% students used laptop and PC's due to poverty. (3)
- 59% students having their own mobiles
- 41% students used the mobile of their father/brother/ sister for online classes which were not easily accessible for them all the time during classes.
- Only 16% students were satisfied with online teaching.
- 97% students are in favour of offline classes.
- Only 3% students are in favour of online classes.
- 89% students were feeling depressed for their future during lockdown.
- 70% students could not concentrate due to anxiety and internet connectivity.

RESULTS (HEALTH) –
- 90% students felt low vision and reddishness / allergy in their eyes due to online classes.
- 77% students were feeling headache during online classes.
- 81% students were getting irritability or vehemence due to online classes.
- 93% students felt sleeping disorders.

CONCLUSION
Corona Pandemic has transformed the age old chalk-talk teaching model giving place to a technology-driven teaching model without weakening the pivot role of a teacher. There was a ground-breaking initiative by the government which might be proved very important and useful for the students for their higher studies during lockdown. Full potential of online learning and teaching technology needs to be explored for this purpose. But this online teaching– learning direct the students away from textbook learning and critical analysis.

Teachers and students find it difficult to cope with online teaching mostly due to their lack of familiarity with technology. As evident from anecdotal evidence, all the initiatives and efforts from the government as well as private companies are focused on a specific section of society, which has the basic facilities like android phones, laptops, PCs and connectivity to access portals, social media, and e-learning platforms. The government is ignoring the plight of a large percentage of students belonging to the marginalized

sections of society such as Rural Area students and especially girls as they all do not have even their own android phones and connectivity is very poor in rural areas which make them vehement and irritable. Other health issues as eye sights, allergy of eyes and migraine which may cause serious concern in their future life.

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