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Higher Education in India in context of Pandemic - Covid 19

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Abstract: ***The spread of pandemic Covid-19 has definitely upset each part of human life including training. It has made an extraordinary test on training. In numerous instructive organizations around the globe, grounds are shut and educating learning has moved on the web. Internationalization has eased back down significantly. In India, around 32 crore students halted to move schools/universities and every instructive action finished. Regardless of every one of these difficulties, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have responded emphatically and figured out how to guarantee the congruity of instructing learning, exploration and administration to the general public with certain devices and methods during the pandemic. A few estimates taken by HEIs and instructive specialists of India to offer consistent instructive types of assistance during the emergency are examined. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, numerous new methods of learning, new points of view, new patterns rise and the equivalent may proceed as we proceed to another tomorrow. The Covid-19 pandemic encouraged the whole society on how need is the mother of development by permitting instructive organizations to embrace internet learning and present a virtual learning society. The pandemic has been guiding the instruction area forward with mechanical development and headways. The pandemic has essentially upset the advanced education segment. An enormous number of Indian understudies who have tried out numerous Universities abroad, particularly in most noticeably awful influenced nations are currently leaving those nations and if the circumstance continues, over the long haul, there will be a critical decrease in the interest for worldwide advanced education moreover. The ongoing pandemic made an open door for change in instructive methodologies and presentation of virtual training in all degrees of training. As we don't have a clue how long the pandemic circumstance will proceed, a steady move towards the on the web/virtual training is the interest of the current emergency. UGC and MHRD have eaten numerous virtual stages with online vaults, digital books and other web-based educating/learning materials. A mix of the conventional innovations (radio, TV, landline telephones) with portable/web advancements to a solitary stage with all vaults would upgrade better openness and adaptability to training. Virtual training is the most favoured method of instruction during this season of emergency because of the flare-up of Covid-19. The post-Covid-19 instruction is by all accounts training with broadly The COVID-19 scare is giving sleepless nights to students who were to appear in entrance examslike JEE for B. Tech admissions and/ or to class 12 students appearing for Board exams. KCET, GUJCET & MHT CET (supposed to be conducted in April) are expected to be postponed to May tentatively. CBSE has also postponed its exam for now and will release the revised dates on March 31, 2020. It is not incorrect to assume that we will soon see many other organisations follow suit and a whole lot of entrance exams in India be further postponed due to Coronavirus. Looking at the state of affairs, it is a matter of concern what the impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) will have on the higher education system in India.***

I. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION SETUP

A. According to UNESCO, around 1.3 billion learners across the world were not able to attend school or university as of March 23, 2020, and current UNESCO statistics put this figure at over 1.5 billion (McCarthy, 2020).

B. An Indian national newspaper, *The Hindu* (April 14, 2020) reports that during the most significant months of February to April, which includes activities around the curriculum and assessments, around 60 million students around the world are restricted to home. Both students and teachers are under the pressure of not losing the academic time and are trying to re-design the teaching-learning techniques by changing it to an online mode, which is the only possible alternative at the moment (The Hindu, April 14, 2020).

C. Attending online classes requires long hours of internet, peaceful space and one device/ phone dedicated to each student in a family, might not be affordable for everyone. In a country like India, as all students do not belong to the same socio-economic background and have to take care of domestic chores, family members and children, managing with limited space in the house, managing with a limited budget and poor connectivity in rural areas etc. may cause them to deal with discomfort, frustration and shame. Thus, according to Sarkar (2020), online classes have added to the already existing feelings of vulnerability among students.

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D. The Hindu (April 14, 2020) states that online learning is an amalgamation of various pedagogical models instead of anyone single model as it is a specialized learning science that includes delivery of content, behavioral analytics, learning psychology and assessments. This enables to measure the learning progress of individuals and therefore, having a 'hand-stitched' mechanism of delivery is the need of the hour. Through interactions and discussion in the face-to-face classes, the teachers get an idea of the prior knowledge and the collective ability of the students based on which they can customize the teaching-learning techniques and lesson plans. However, this becomes difficult in the digital platform. The focus is not on delivering the content but ensuring effective opportunities for learning. The shift is, thus, from a teacher-centric approach to a learner-centric one. The aim is always to impact learners in such a manner that they are able to understand concepts better, think effectively and apply them practically. Thus, it becomes extremely essential for facilitators to further orient themselves to become efficient disseminators of knowledge on digital platforms.

E. COVID-19 is a viral respiratory illness caused by a new corona virus called SARS-CoV-2. The World Health Organization declared the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak a global public health emergency. Regardless of every one of these difficulties, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have responded emphatically and figured out how to guarantee the congruity of instructing learning, exploration and administration to the general public with certain devices and methods during the pandemic. A few estimates taken by HEIs and instructive specialists of India to offer consistent instructive types of assistance during the emergency are examined. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, numerous new methods of learning, new points of view, new patterns rise and the equivalent may proceed as we proceed to another tomorrow.

F. The conventional Indian education system follows face-to-face or physical teaching, even though the trend of audio-visual aids in classrooms was introduced a decade ago. Renowned universities in India such as the University of Delhi are offering online classes to its students already. But many higher education institutes in India are not equipped with such facilities. In the event of such a gap, some students might face the brunt brutally, which might affect their entire academic year. Unless we adopt from countries where the standard of education is far more advanced & flexible compared to ours.

G. In a survey by Times Higher Education in 2018, the leaders of well-known global universities were of the opinion that online teaching could never match with physical room teaching. When we talk about how equipped Indian Higher Education System to handle the change, we need to keep in mind that the digital shift in India is relatively new. Not only in India, but in Asia as well. You will be amazed to know that the first Asian Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) was developed by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in the year 2012 only.

H. Indian Colleges will take time to handle the change and be open to the new methods as the approach of the education system here is a lecture-based approach to teaching. Digital teaching is more evident in schools and the school students/ teachers/parents are more comfortable with this approach when compared to higher education set-up in India. In the event of COVID-19, online teaching has become a necessity, for not only colleges in India but worldwide to look for innovative solutions in a short period of time and to always have a Plan-B in place.

I. A large chunk of India's admission system is fractured and most of the students in India rely on the offline process for admissions. It is a known fact that most people in the country do not have access to high-speed WiFi and most of the students in small cities/towns/ villages prefer the offline admission process. While it is a still grey area, platforms like ours have provisions to facilitate remote applications to colleges in India for their UG & PG. CollegeDekho has a platform called the Common Application Form or CAF, wherein students can fill up a single application form to apply to more than 250+ colleges in India at one go! This is facilitated with an online counseling facility, wherein education experts counsel students on the best course, degree or college for students basis his/ her academic background and aspiration.

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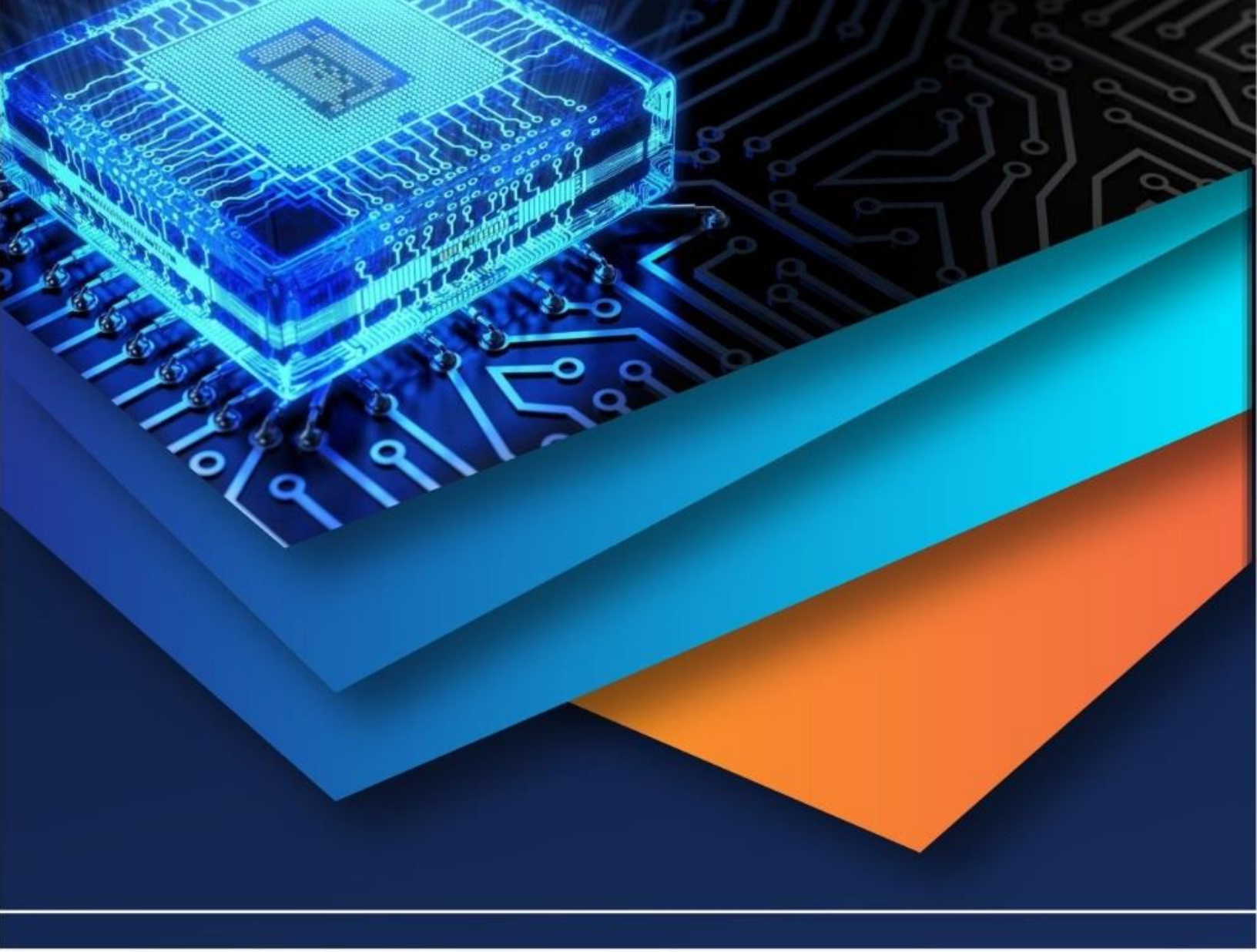

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