

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### HIGHER EDUCATION OVERVIEW AND SOCIETY: A RESEARCH REPORT

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#### ABSTRACT

In ancient India, the educational system was developed in terms of the needs of individual and that of the society and at present it is the largest system of its kind in the world. As the pace of educational system changed quickly within no time due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic which drastically disrupted every aspects of human life including education and to cope up with rest of the other countries and impart education at a functional level, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have also reacted positively and managed to ensure the continuity of teaching-learning, research and service to the society with some tools and techniques during the pandemic, in the context certain methodology were adopted and used various user-friendly software tools and apps like Google class room, Google Meet and Zoom, WhatsApp, e-content etc. for online Classes. We have also used software's with inbuilt features for conducting virtual class rooms for video conferencing besides registering in SWAYAM initiated by the Government of India which seeks to bridge the untrodden digital revolution to the unprivileged aspirant students of our Country.

**Key words:** Higher Education, Society.

#### INTRODUCTION

The ongoing Coronavirus threat continues to loom large, claiming over 1000 of lives globally. The governments had temporarily closed educational institutions and universities in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. These nationwide closures had lead several universities and educational institutes to impart education to all the students online. Just after declaration of COVID-19 as pandemic the university started self-imposed social distancing protocol in the overall university campus right from the university gate from 14.03.2020. The University also postponed the mid-term examination which was supposed to be held from 17 March 2020. All precautionary measures were taken by the university to prevent the spread of such deadly disease in the university campus. Keeping in mind the dangerous of this disease, the university also conducted one day workshop on COVID 19. The workshop was organized by the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Department of Public Health, Noida International University. This took place on the 12th March 2020 at the seminar hall from 11am onwards. There was an excellent word of wisdom from our Honourable Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Jayanand that preceded the occasion. He spoke on the burden of the disease coronavirus and its impact on the nation as well as globally. It was indeed a brain storming session after the presentation by the Director School of Nursing and Health Sciences followed by interactive session.

In this challenging situation where our country finds and face a common thread "The corona virus- COVID19" infecting 1,502,618 globally and particularly and about 5865 in India. We Noida International University Institute of Medical Sciences in order to prevent the transmission and reduce the outbreak and to support the medical system.

#### Few important control measures have been taken.

- ) 24/7 Ambulance services.
- ) 24/7 emergency services.
- ) Isolation ward for confirmed cases.
- ) OPD for screening and further investigation.
- ) Basic life support facilities.
- ) Fully equipped Intensive Care Unit with ventilators.

Since the country is facing Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown throughout country. The University had started the academics in "online-mode" by upholding a meeting with Directors, HODs and faculty members under the leadership of Honourable Vice Chancellor followed by a complete instruction through emails about the conduct of lectures through "online-mode". The students were also informed and prepared about the "Teaching-Learning" process in "online-mode" and separate WhatsApp app groups were made to render lecture information. All academic and teaching workloads of faculty members, HODs and other staff members were continued in the same pace as it was conducted during normal mode by following the academic calendar and individual faculty timetables as scheduled. The learning materials for every lecture delivered were collected department

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wise and are uploaded in the University website. The lecture materials used are in different forms such as in word, pdf, ppt, excel and video formats (Fig-1). Some of the video lectures were uploaded in public domain like YouTube in addition to University website, where the students can have direct access anytime during their course of study period. In addition to the Tailor-made teaching materials by individual faculty members for the respective subjects, the school also encouraged all students to access open-source learning materials in the world of internet, by guiding students with relevant reference links for learning resources in various formats including links for video lectures.

Online learning is education that takes place over the Internet. By far the most popular approach today is online teaching learning mode as it is catalysing a pedagogical shift in how we teach and learn. The university is taken initiation in supporting the migrated students with the immediate impact of university closures, particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged students, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning. As they say, every cloud has a silver lining. This is an opportune time to realize the potential of online learning. Our university had tried to leverage the occasion by offering online classes with attractive e-learning modules. The measures have been met with overwhelming response by students with some start-ups witnessing as high as 75% uptick in e-learning. E- Learning was a viable solution to students during this time as they were convenient, on -the- go and affordable to access to the on line lessons. E-learning also made an interesting and interactive session as compared to classroom teaching. However, Our University is given its best in imparting online education and also has a long way to go before it can be seen as a potential alternative to educate its students in such pandemic state. Face-to-face interaction is usually perceived as the best form of communication as compared to the rather impersonalized nature of remote learning. Our faculties during such crucial period rendered online education and met with great success and we still have a long way to go before this pandemic ends and I am sure we will mainstream our education.

#### **Methodology adopted in teaching students of NIU**

Has we initiated online classes for students to provide an excellent method of course delivery free from the limitations of time or location allowing for accessibility to knowledge at anytime from anywhere.

#### **The following methodology was adopted by NIU for online teaching**

All the faculty members were asked to upload all their lecture contents in the form of videos, e-resource such as pdf files, e-books and other e-contents on ERP and University website. We have used various user-friendly software tools and apps like Google class room, Google Meet and Zoom etc. for online Classes. And we have also used software's with inbuilt features for conducting virtual class rooms for video conferencing. We shared the recorded videos, PPT and e-content related the topic on what'sapp academic groups and emails. For laboratory based courses, we have used live demonstrations in the field of medical and Virtual Programming Lab for computer science. Documentary features on the ongoing Corona virus situation are also produced by the students of SJMC as part of their practical training exercises.

Virtual tours of the industries related to the respective fields have also been shown to the students for better understanding of the concerned subjects. Virtual tours of the industries related to the field of Journalism and Mass Communication have also been shown to the students for better understanding of the concerned subjects. Apart from this students are also registered themselves in different courses on SWAYAM platform, whose content is giving them lots of information and clearing their fundamentals. Regular production of Radio programs are also undergoing. Some productions are completed. Video programs are also produced by the students of SJMC on daily basis.

With the prevailing situation amidst the lockdown, it is not possible to hold DRC with the physical presence of the research scholars. So the school decided to hold the DRC in online mode. It will evaluate the progress of the scholars, some are in the initial stages of their work and some are in final stages like submission and final evaluation. Online Classes of the coursework for research scholars are also been conducted. Research guidance was also given to the scholars on regular basis. We have also adopted blended mode learning, in which faculty teach a topic scheduled for that day and upload related videos, e-content for their references. After completion of reading the resources students were asked to attempt Quiz (MCQ, Short answer, match the following, true/false etc.) and Assignment to upload for grading. Internal Assessment components. The quizzes and assignments are time bounded and secured with various security features.

For tracking student's presence, faculty used to take attendance on wts app, which provides them each information's like time spent for the activity and all necessary information like ip capturing, mode of browsing etc. with video conferencing based attendance. We have shared all the training modules in the form of videos to train the faculty members for utilizing Google Classrooms and Zoom, Skype etc. for virtual class rooms as well. For UG and PG students undergoing internships, project evaluations and reviews were also conducted online by professors and conducted various different seminars for how to write research paper, book chapters and patents. So that students can utilize this time for publishing research papers in Scopus/sci/esci and other indexed journals and conferences. Students were encouraged for enrolling online course, related to Prevention of COVID 19 infection and other online courses on UBA/SWAYAM etc. For placement, prospective point of view students were asked to take online challenges on hacker rank, hacker earth to compete with other students across the world and their star rankings were captured by skill and training team for their progress and performances.

**Challenges faced by students in remote learning:** Remote learning increasingly relies on the reliable power supply and ubiquitous Internet connectivity which might be a far- fetched thing in few cities. Another challenge is that e-learning comes across as somewhat patchy and impersonal experience. Also, e-learning is likely to witness a high dropout rate due to lack of atmosphere for studying. Students usually tend to get distracted by homely environment, family pressure, gaming consoles, social media at home and might not feel a sense of community while taking online classes. Though we knew that online learning appears to be no substitutes for field trips, academic exchanges and the social and cultural attractions of vibrant campus life. But still the faculties were the key here in

making remote learning more interactive and personalized through customization.

**University opinion on E Learning education:** Nevertheless, Covid-19 has prompted experts to rethink the conventional mode of education. Digital education appears to be a viable solution to fill in the void for classroom education for a time span of three to four months while minimizing the chances of any infection to students until classes resume. More importantly, it has also brought the issue of digital education to the centre stage. Going forward, digital education is likely to be integrated into mainstream education.

This will enable inclusive education by facilitating learning across diverse geographies in India. Moreover, it will provide an opportunity for educators to come up with customized learning solutions for every student.

Additionally, smaller screens and enhanced focus of Ed-Tech companies on vernacular modules will be the shot in the arm for digital education. The Ed-Tech market is predicted to grow manifold in the next few years at the back of various policy initiatives. Until then, it is can be assumed that the global coronavirus may be an inflection point for the Ed-Tech industry.

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