

COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO FASHION AND INTERIOR DESIGN DISCIPLINES

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Abstract :

The Covid-19 pandemic that struck the world in December 2019 has connected people globally through the media. Now man is more aware of the surroundings and happenings worldwide. And the age group that is taking the most advantage of the virtual world is the youth. Before the pandemic the youth was engaged in the traditional methods of classroom studies, whereas the imposed lockdowns have opened new windows for their overall development. The study highlights that, in the time of Covid-19 the students of technical education were made aware of the different ways of learning methods other than the traditional classroom method. They were exposed to the internet and hence came across the different ways and methods of learning. Frequent virtual seminars, conferences, trainings and workshops were organized for the students by their respective educational institutes where they were given guidance not only from local experts but also from international experts too. This phenomenon brought positive changes in the overall development of the learners and also provided a broader spectrum to the teachers. This research lays emphasis on the two different streams of technical education which are 1) Fashion Design and 2) Interior Design. These streams are more practical oriented streams of technical education. The impact of the online teaching and learning on these fields is discussed in detail in this research. In this pandemic period the students of these disciplines got more insight of the designs acclaimed not only at national levels but also at the international levels. But on the other hand, due to the online classes the students were deprived of the practical knowledge and finesse that they gain in their subject related laboratories. The study deals with the effect of the pandemic on the overall academics of these design students.

Keywords : Covid-19, Pandemic, Technical Education, Fashion design, Interior design, Virtual education, Webinar

1. INTRODUCTION

The world was struck with a deadly pandemic in the year December 2019. Complete live style of humans got changed due to this situation. Lockdowns were imposed in all the countries around the world to stop the spread of this deadly disease. Education institutes like schools, colleges and universities were also closed down as a result of the lockdown. These lockdowns of indefinite durations lead to a new alternative of teaching learning methods and that is the virtual online platform. Students as well as the teachers were exposed to a whole new world of internet. Many innovative techniques and applications were introduced to the academicians for making this online learning easy and convenient to the learners. A number of learning websites, video lectures and online training platforms came into existence to help students gain knowledge in any manner. Certainly, everything has a good as well as a bad aspect to it and so does the online teaching learning method have. Students got aware of a completely new spectrum of studies. The learners got connected globally and got to know the latest trends and technology prevailing in the world whereas on the other hand they were deprived of the practical knowledge. This study specifically deals with two creative technical fields that are more oriented towards gaining practical knowledge namely 1) Fashion Design and 2) Interior Design. Fashion and Interior design demand a one-to-one link between the student and the teacher. Here the positive and negative aspects of the online teaching learning methods are discussed keeping in mind these two creative fields.

1.1 Technical Education in India :-

Technical education is a type of education that equips a student with skills involving practical approaches and different physical instruments for the execution of projects. Technical education imparts theoretical and practical scientific knowledge as well as skills that allow the student to solve production engineering and other problems related to economy in his specialty. It concentrates on training in specific areas related to technology that includes electrical, electronics, designing, computers and other similar fields that require industrial training. Technical education in India comes under the Department of Higher Education. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is a national level statutory body which was established in the year 1945 for technical education. The main objective of the technical education is to provide quality education to the students. It aims at the technological and socio-economic development of the country by imparting high quality technical education to the students of all sections of the society.

1.2 Fashion and Interior Design Disciplines :-

Fashion Design and Interior Design are the two different creative fields that are innovative too. Both these streams cater to the basic requirements of a human being that are clothing and dwelling respectively. A large number of creative students opt for these two design-oriented fields as their career options. Fashion Design deals with the clothing, apparel and accessory design of a person, be it a female, male or a kid. These outfits are usually designed keeping in mind the physical appearance, social and cultural background, budget, occasion and the age of the client. Various types of clothing and apparels are designed in this particular stream. The different types of accessories a person carries along with the clothing suitable to the occasion are also designed, suggested and stitched by these fashion designers. Interior design deals with the beautification of the entire built-up space of a human, be it a residence, a commercial building, an office, or any other enclosed area. The interior designers learn to design the enclosed place as per the client's requirements, current market trends, budget, climatic conditions, ergonomics, aesthetics and functionality of that particular space. Interior designers also design home furnishings like curtains and blinds, rugs and carpets, bed linens, kitchen accessories, etc.

Fashion and Interior Design are two fields where more practical subjects are taught in the academic institutes. Below table 1.1 shows a list of few practical subjects where students need a laboratory and technical staff for study assistance.

Table 1.1

Fashion Design Subjects	Interior Design Subjects
Fashion Illustration	Basic Design
Art and Design	Design Studio
Pattern Making and Draping	Carpentry workshop
CAD and computers	AutoCAD, 3D Max, Sketch up
Indian Textiles and Embroidery	Pencil rendering and Presentation
Fashion Marketing	Landscape Designing
Fashion Merchandising and Retailing	Lighting Design
Garment Construction	Building Services, Air conditioning
Product development and Accessories design	Building Construction
Major project/Industrial Training/ Industrial Project	Design Dissertation

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The below given researches were studied for the completion of this study. These studies are all based on the changes which have occurred in the education system post Covid-19.

- **Jacob Hoofman, Elizabeth Secord (2021)-The Effect of COVID-19 on Education :-**

The author here states that COVID-19 pandemic has changed the education for all age learners. He says that long term effects are yet to be seen, but the primary data shows that the education system is at loss at many levels and also anxiety and depression amongst the students has increased. Guidance related to safety and efficacy of the delivery models given by many organizations is quickly been rejected. The author says that the socio – economic gap is increasing. Also, the gap for special learners has widened. Professions that teach with the incremental internship method like medicine and other such professions have been severely affected and so they had to make certain drastic changes.

- **Mukesh Rawal (2021) - An analysis of COVID-19 Impacts on Indian Education System :-**

The research highlights the fact that the Indian education system has not yet attained maturity at neither the urban area nor the rural area. Government provides schemes like the midday meal to attract students to gain education. Under such weak circumstances the government had to impose a nationwide lockdown from 25th March, 2020 to fight COVID-19 which left a severe impact on the Indian education system. Worldwide India second second in the school system after China. As per the reports submitted by the UNESCO, 63 million teachers got affected in around 165 countries. The survey also states that totally 1.3 billion learners from around the world were devoid of attending schools and universities. In India approximately 320 million learners were affected. The new scenario has changed the traditional teaching learning system to a more technological advance model where, teaching as well as assessment both is conducted online. The research closely observes and analysis the negative and the positive impacts of Covid-19 on the Indian Education System, where online classes were conducted from home.

- **Seble Tadesse, WorkuMuluye(2020)- The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on +Education System in Developing Countries: A Review :-**

This study confirms that the coronavirus has affected the world education system. To

help control the spread of the corona virus, schools, colleges, and universities had to be closed. Closing down of schools, posed difficulties for the learners, teachers and for the parents too. Distance learning came as an option to continue the education system. But issues like lack of network infrastructures, internet accessibility and computers pose a challenge to distance learning in the developing countries. The research reviewed the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on the educational system of the developing countries. Therefore, these developing countries should design strategic use of educational technology, free of cost online learning resources, zero-free internet educational resources and broadcast teaching. At the time of closing the educational institutions should design the curriculum keeping in mind the new teaching learning strategies for post Covid19. The author says that the educational institutions should design such learning strategies that the loss of the learners can be fulfilled once the school reopens. The face-to-face education system has been severely affected by the corona virus in all the developing countries. The research concludes that the developing countries should develop the broadcast and online teaching methods and the virtual class infrastructures also.

• **Seema Nazneen, G. Vishal (2020)- The Impact of COVID-19 on Education :-**

The study says that the world has witnessed a very different scenario in the year 2020 which has not been recorded in history till date. The economies of the whole world including powerful and developed countries like the USA and China have been adversely affected. All streams including important sectors like the production sector, financial sector as well as the education sector have been badly affected. Due to the spread of the Corona virus, state governments throughout India were forced to shut down all the schools and colleges. And till date there exists an uncertainty as to when these schools and colleges will reopen. This time of the year is considered to be very crucial for academics as all the entrance and competitive exams of several colleges and universities are being conducted during this time of the year. This is also crucial as board exams; all the admission processes in various courses and even foreign education trips take place during this time. An immediate solution to this posing problem of Covid-19 has to be looked for or else along with the Indian education system it will harm the economy and society both in a long run. Approximately 600 million learners are being affected around the world due to the closing down of the educational institutes. The study states that considering all these statistical facts, the universities, colleges and schools have adopted the online methods of imparting education to the learners. This has well been accepted by the learners too. And this in turn

has initiated in the rise of online teaching platforms. The study deals with the problems that are arising due to this online teaching and learning methods.

3. OBJECTIVE

To study the impact of covid-19 on technical education in India with specific reference to fashion and interior design disciplines.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the study of this topic both primary and secondary data were taken into consideration. As secondary data, different researches that were done post Covid-19 are studied and mentioned in the literature review section. For the collection of primary data, structured interview method has been chosen. For this purpose, a set of 25 research related questions were framed and were asked to the students and teaching staff of Fashion Design and Interior Design Departments of Government Women's Polytechnic College Indore. On the basis of these questions the primary data analysis was done. The answers of these questions were collected from 100 students and 15 teaching and lab technician staff. These staff members as well as students clearly presented their views on the changes that have taken place in the technical education system post Covid-19. Their responses have been compiled presented in this research paper.

Data Analysis and Interpretation-This segment of the paper deals with analysis and interpretation of the collected data, that is in reference to the objectives of this research. A systematic treatment of raw data has been done by analyzing the structured interview questions. In order to arrive at certain conclusion and to achieve the objective of the study in accordance with the specific objectives of the study, the results have been discussed under: 5.1 Impact of Covid-19 on Fashion and Interior Design Disciplines-

This pandemic has brought about many changes in all sectors of the society including the education system. There have been positive as well as negative impacts of Covid-19 or so to say the online method of teaching and learning on the students as well as the teachers. The below table 1.2 mentions some of these impact of covid-19 on fashion and interior design disciplines.

Table 1.2

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Student was able to connect globally with other students pursuing the same subjects.	One to one teacher-student relation was not formed

Exposure to an abundance of learning material in many languages.	Lack of hands-on training
Boring theoretical subjects were made interesting by the input of visuals, graphs, clippings, etc.	Teachers had to work hard and undertaken trainings for conducting online classes and making video lectures.
Time saving as commuting time is saved. Knowledge can be gained at the student convenience and time availability.	Students with weaker economic background were not able to afford the internet expenses and electronic gadgets
Studies as well as exams became paperless to a higher extent leading to sustainability	The academic schedule of exams and studies got disturbed
More webinars, e-conferences and e-workshops were conducted for the betterment of the students.	Rural area students were not able to attend the online classes due to poor availability of the internet
More visuals are available to make the subject more interesting.	Since the teacher is not face to face, the concentration of student's wavers.
Problems and their solutions could be discussed with peer students.	Absence of teacher lead to less problem solving.
No outdoor activities and get together with friends.	Physical problems like poor eye sight, headache, back ache increased due to prolonged screen hours.
Personal notes and data could be made available anywhere and at anytime as it was in soft copy.	Writing and drawing skills of students suffered.

Covid-19 has affected the Indian education in many ways and the technical education is no different in this matter. Technical education and specifically design streams like fashion design and interior design requires more practical knowledge and hands on trainings. These disciplines also require global exposure for keeping in pace with the latest technological developments.

As a result of the structured interview conducted on the design students and faculties the below discussed points were highlighted as they needed special attention. These

matters came into limelight as they couldn't be dealt with in the online classes and the imposed lockdowns made them more vulnerable.

- **Need of Machinery and Designing Tools** - For the students of fashion design sewing machines were not available with each and every student, so they could not learn to operate these machines. Also, for interior design students, expensive drafting tables and other drafting tools were not easily available and so they faced difficulty in developing their drafting skills.
- **Special Software's Required** - For design, pattern making etc. students need special licensed software which they were not able to afford and so couldn't attain command on these design software's.
- **Requirement of Market and Industry Visits** - For better performance and practical approach students need regular market and industry visits which enhance their knowledge, understanding of work process and confidence. Imposed lockdowns lead to the absence of these market and industry exposure.
- **Need of Personalized Feedback to Every Student** - Students need personal feedbacks on their design sheets and patterns, etc. and this became a bit difficult through online classes.
- **Delivery of Theory Subjects** - It is very difficult for the teachers to deliver theory lectures online keeping the interest of the student intact for a longer period of time.
- **Conduction of Examination** - Conducting online practical and theory exams is very complicated and involves a high level of networking. It was a bit difficult for the rural area students as internet facility with high band width was not easily available.
- **Lack of Confidence** - As the students didn't perform practical experiments and exams in front of their mentors, they didn't gain confidence on their relative subjects.
- **Shortage and Unavailability of Material** - At the time of Covid-19 and in the present time too, many particular design tools and stationery are not available in the market as a side effect of the imposed lockdown.
- **Problems in Building Basic Concepts of The Students** - This basic concept building problem was very common amongst the first-year students. It was very difficult for them to get the nook of the subject.

CONCLUSION

From the above study it can be easily concluded that Indian education system has undergone a lot of changes post Covid-19. Indian technical education needs a lot of practical knowledge to survive successfully in the market. Covid-19 no doubt has brought a drastic change in the learning methods of students but at the same time has got a few drawbacks too. The students of technical fields are now aware of the upcoming as well as trending technologies related to their subjects, but at the same time this knowledge is not sufficient. They need more of hands-on training sessions with experts to gain command on the subject. The virtual education has proved to be a boon to the keen learners of technical streams like Fashion and Interior Design. Students are able to connect with their peers and subject experts. The online mode of teaching has taught the students time management and smart working. Through this study it can be said that this new mix mode of online and offline teaching learning is better for the overall development and progress of the students in all fields. Online learning platform gives them a broader exposure and on the other hand the offline mode gives them the needed practical practice.

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