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## Gaining a Better Understanding of Higher Education: During and Post-Pandemic Scenario

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## **1. Introduction**

The world is undergoing massive and unprecedented technological transformation right now. This has resulted in a dramatic shift in the educational ecology that has never been seen before in human history. Projections of the OECD's Project for the forthcoming of skills and learning in 2030." We must replace out-of-date educational standards with a groundwork that integrates knowledge with 21st-juncture abilities such as imagination, analytical thinking, conversation, and cooperation" (FICCI,2021). Simply going from a whiteboard to a Zoom call will not suffice, but by fundamentally changing how We are changing away from one-way knowledge propagation and memorization and toward individualized, self-directed education when it comes to scientific and technological abilities. To thrive in and build the forthcoming for a more legitimate global citizenry, we all need more than just information. We also need skills, attitudes, and values. This is more visible than ever before in the present pandemic. The ecosystem for higher education has experienced a significant and undeniable transformation by 2020. All colleges, from the most forward-thinking to the most conservative one need to accept the expansion of virtual tools and technological platforms, which have revolutionized higher education institutions, academic, experiential, and administrative components. The consequences of the SARS CoV2 Virus (COVID-19) quarantine were felt initially in the education sector. It's still one of the last to open, even though we've gone to staggered unlocking. Higher education institutions have switched to an online delivery strategy to address this problem, ushering in a " new normal" and reshaping the educational landscape for upcoming generations. The shift to Education 4.0<sup>1</sup> has been expedited as a result of this pandemic, a digitally driven, student-centered paradigm that encourages moldable learning routes while focusing on proficiency and skill required for industry. The focus on Education 4.0 is on higher education institutions' transition from course-driven, automated "mass teaching systems" into actualized learning style which values resilience as well as personalization when it is being backed by automation (FICCI, 2021).

### **1.1. Why online learning**

Traditional schooling is enriched with online learning (Erickson and Siau, 2003). In the field of education, new science and technology has resulted in a detonation of learning opportunities in online education. Online learning can be successful for determined students. Instructors and teachers can tailor their teaching methods and approaches to their students' requirements. Virtual learning is a method of

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<sup>1</sup> "The key growing tendencies within the higher education sector that have occurred and have only escalated with the commencement of the pandemic in the current climate" (FICCI, 2021)

advancing education that allows students to fit their studies into their everyday lives and job schedules, increasing both resources and productivity. Because of the benefits listed below, online education continues to gain popularity in terms of

- Accessibility to Information
- Global Presence
- Flexibility
- Efficiency
- Mutation and Integrity

### **1.2. Virtual learning as part of the new normal**

A substantial growth in online learning has been seen since the outburst of COVID-19 epidemic (Li & Lalani, 2020). By the end of the subsequent quadrant of 2020, Zoom, for example, had more than 370,000 customers, up 458 percent over the previous quarter. While students are urged to learn online the official staffs preferring “work from home” during this unusual and unpredictable time, while corporations and organizations "adjust" in this “new reality (Nah & Siau, 2020)”. Subsequently, because of the fact that teachers, academic instructors as well as the students having very less or in some cases zero expertise in online academic system as well as work from home with limited Internet access, this poses a barrier to the online learning environment. On the other hand, it provides an unexpected and amazing chance for a greater number of students to participate in online learning. In this situation academic organizations have tried to conquer the methods so that the pupil can maintain the academics even at the time of maintaining social distancing. The result is an extraordinary pressure to learning through “virtual mode” (Teras et. al, 2020). As per report on this pandemic academic institution is forced to become close throughout the globe (Li & lalani,2020). Data shows that students counting approximately 1.2 billion are forced to leave schools around the world. According to a news symposium<sup>2</sup> China had 1454 universities and institutions offering education in online mode (1.03 million professors providing 1.07 million students) (Siau & Nah, 2020). Another data shows that in USA “post-baccalaureate institutions and K-12 schools” began offering virtual programmes from 2020 (More specifically March 2020). In the fall semester of 2020, several of them went on to finish their degree online. These reports reveal that online education is the most popular option amid this pandemic. Although various advantages have noticed in online teaching over traditional learning, it is also opined that it may use to enhance traditional classroom learning but is not for everyone.

### **1.3. Eternity of virtual learning in proximate new normal**

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<sup>2</sup> “Held by Chinese Ministry of Education on May 14, 2020” (Siau & Nah,2020)

In later decades learning will be focal point for improving the student experience and ensuring that higher education institutions (HEIs) support students throughout their educational journey. In order to give a high-quality experience, HEIs may choose to give stress on the whole HEI's structure to assure that institutions are running properly (FICCI, 2021). These are,

- Pedagogy and curricula should be altered to improve learning, include formal, informal, physical, and virtual elements. Blended learning, micro credentials, and trans-disciplinary enabling models may assist in attracting and retaining new student groups, while technological integration across teaching and assessment may aid in providing a high-quality education.
- If faculty have proper and clear working rules and processes, they can effectively contribute not only to instruction, but also to research and the advancement of students.
- Faculty development models could assist them improve their function and social status by allowing them to up-skill across disciplines and sectors.
- Research efforts including co-operative and collaborative could aid in the development of a network of knowledge exchange, resources, and shared objectives. Furthermore, in order to maintain research activities in the future, long-term funding methods must be developed.
- Cross-border, unique interactions could help HEIs improve the quality of education they deliver, the student experience they provide, and professors and students develop the skills they require.
- Building and institutionalizing a solid digital infrastructure could aid in improving internal operations and processes, as well as teaching and learning.
- HEIs could improve their resource efficiency by making greater use of their existing assets. HEIs may be able to improve their financial condition by using differentiated delivery options and analyzing cost structures.
- Addition to proficiency and research projects should benefit considerably from transnational governance techniques and expanding technology-related leadership roles.

## **2. Literature Review**

Despite the fact that several studies have been carried out, the global shock of this epidemic on “teaching and learning” has led the conclusion that “appropriate pedagogy and platforms for different class levels of higher secondary, middle, and primary education” in developing countries required to investigate farther. This epidemic has demonstrated the importance of training instructors as well as learners and students to adopt and value of using online educational technology. There should be encouragements to both instructors as well as learners to pursue extended

online technology to promote academics after regular classes resume following the epidemic (Pokhrel and Chhetri, 2021).

As a result of the COVID-19 situation, students and teachers have been driven in an unfamiliar atmosphere of online teaching - learning methodology through “virtual classroom”. Teachers and students must address and overcome several difficulties in this transition to create a mutually beneficial collaborative learning and social environment. Collaboration between students and instructors is essential, particularly for adult learners, because both sides must be able to actively engage throughout the learning process (Neuvirth et.al, 2020).

Information technology advancements provides a technical foundation for educational reform as well as chances for educational innovation. The global outbreak has ushered in a new normal, presenting even more prospects for large-scale online education deployment. For a variety of reasons, including “flexibility, information accessibility, global reach, equity, creativity, and efficiency”. An increasing number of academic organizations are announcing “distance and hybrid education” courses. On the other side, there are several drawbacks to online education, including technological limits, loss of “sense of belonging and connectedness” and distraction. Network based academics can be successful for students who are self-motivated and time-disciplined, as well as those having technological knowhow and “access to technology”. In post- pandemic which is often termed as “new normal”, online education will presume to linger and play a significant part. To give more educational possibilities, raise educational equity, and boost educational innovation, Network based study is supposed to coexist with conventional education by utilizing artificial intelligence and mobile education (Nah and Siau, 2020).

The health crisis at global level has brought humanity's flaws and concerns into sharp perspective. It has provided us with a clear picture of the current inequities. —and a sharper vision of the measures forward we need to take, the most important of which is to address the education of the more than 1.5 billion pupils whose learning has been impeded by school closures. It lays out nine critical ideas for handling the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath, arguing that we must remember core values and known strengths as we face extraordinary disruption to economies, society, and, in this case, education systems (UNESCO, 2020).

One of the silver linings of covid-19's cloud of disruption is that it has shattered the reputation of higher education as being reluctant to adjust to change and tradition-bound. The behavior of sector towards the epidemic, if anything has demonstrated its competence to pivot quickly and accept a new educational approach. For the higher learning system to not only survive, but prosper, in the face of Covid-19 and beyond, it will be vital to shift from emergency operation mode to fully adopting innovative and moldable models of literature. To meet the challenge, educational leaders throughout the world should gain insights about

Covid-19's cries around the world and band together to provide higher education the "teeth" it need to improve Now and in the future, global resilience is essential (Wilder, 2001).

Individuals, institutions, and civilizations are all affected by the crisis, which is speeding up the blending of digital worlds. As a result of these changes, many jobs in the industry have been eliminated or replaced, thanks to automation, artificial intelligence, robots, and new business design. Individuals must be comfortable with technology, unpredictability, and unforeseen hazards in the current era. The work market is undergoing tremendous transformations, necessitating new approaches to meet existing and emerging difficulties. Scientific and technological advances are transforming the world, and these changes are having an impact on educational institutions and processes. They're altering the educational landscape. Today, it is vital to ensure that staff members are just as acquainted with technology as students (FICCI,2020).

The present pandemic has affected millions of people around the world, including students in higher education, in just a few months. This extensive global survey, in this manner, gives systematic and considerable “insights” for student’s contentment and studied numerous elements for their livelihood during epidemic on “immediate” and “distant future”. During the outbreak, it is discovered, instructional personnel as well as “public relations” at university level were ultimate need for students. Due to insufficient technical skills, it is feeling as bigger burden, respondents were unable to recognize a best level performance when shifting to the "new normal". Result is they feel monotone, uneasy causes frustration for professional prospects and academic obstacles. (Aristovnik, et.al, 2020).

Another study explored a handful of the technologies that have the potential to change the educational landscape dramatically for educators causes forthcoming years as breathtaking and fast pace. Development of Internet2 project (More than 200 colleges are collaborating “private sector and the National Science Foundation” to construct a cutting-edge “network” based on cutting-edge technology and applications.)in digital video and other fields make possible what was before technologically or financially out of reach.<sup>3</sup> It's also becoming evident of collaboration between “public and private funding” organizations that in turn help academicians and researchers for future research. It is presumed that next ten years and beyond, access to education will be a prominent concern in education. The approaches employed by organizations to create and exploit technologies will almost become important in the near future (Erickson & Siau, 2003).

UNESCO (2020) discuss about nine ideas on public action plan — education for navigating through the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath, arguing

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<sup>3</sup> “For example, internet television, tele - immersion, virtual laboratories, digital libraries, distance autonomous learning, mobile internet infrastructure technologies like WAP, Bluetooth etc.”

that when we face enormous change to economies, society, and—our particular focus here—systems, we must remember key principles and known strengths.

According to Li and Lalani (2020) this current situation has revamped the entire learning system. It causes 1.2 billion children are out of classrooms, children in one hundred and eight-six countries are affected by school closure around the globe. Given the dramatic shift “away from the classroom”, it seems that online teaching -learning will be lingering “post-pandemic” and might affect “the global” education market.

While the full impact of the novel coronavirus caused health emergency will take several years to determine, the immediate impact on children and educators is severe and necessitates a coordinated and well-informed response. This report demonstrates that EI member organizations around the world are committed to promoting the right to a high-quality education for all, as well as their members' rights (International, 2020).

### **3. Objectives**

The objectives of this present study is as follows:

- To explore the present and future scenario of higher education
- To study the concept of online education and its benefits
- To draw attention for government initiatives for higher education and provide suggestions in post pandemic period
- To analyze higher education's most serious concerns and, as a result, propose a road plan.

### **4. Methodology and data sources**

This study looks into the state of higher education in India and its numerous components. Other stakeholders, including as students, instructors, and regulators, are also taken into account. Secondary data was used in the research to get better insights, assess industry awareness, and eventually come up with solutions.

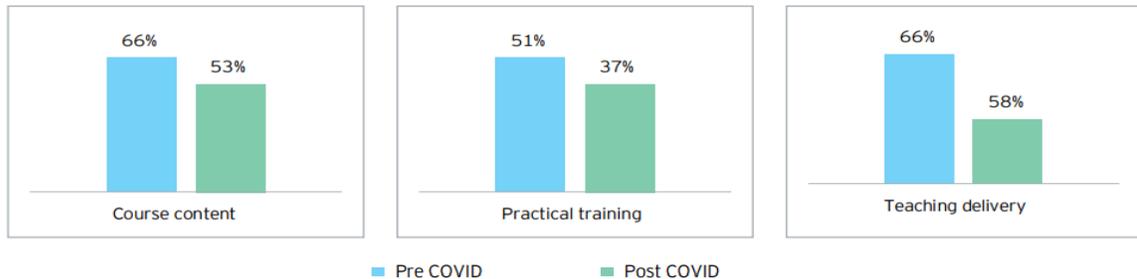
### **5. Findings**

#### **5.1. Higher Education Ecosystem**

##### **5.1.1. Curriculum and Pedagogy:**

Because of the immense use of digital technology, virtual learning and teaching entails some didactic subject expertise, especially in terms of developing improved “learning experiences” and generating various “learning environments”. In order to support academicians, HEI’s must become updated crosswise the syllabus, delivery

Figure 1: Changes in Curricula and Pedagogy before and after pandemic (World) <sup>4</sup>



**Source:** Higher education institutions (FICCI, 2021)

strategies and evaluations. Student satisfaction has dropped dramatically in all areas, testifying that students are dissatisfied by this service offering by various organizations during this epidemic.

### 5.1.2. Faculty:

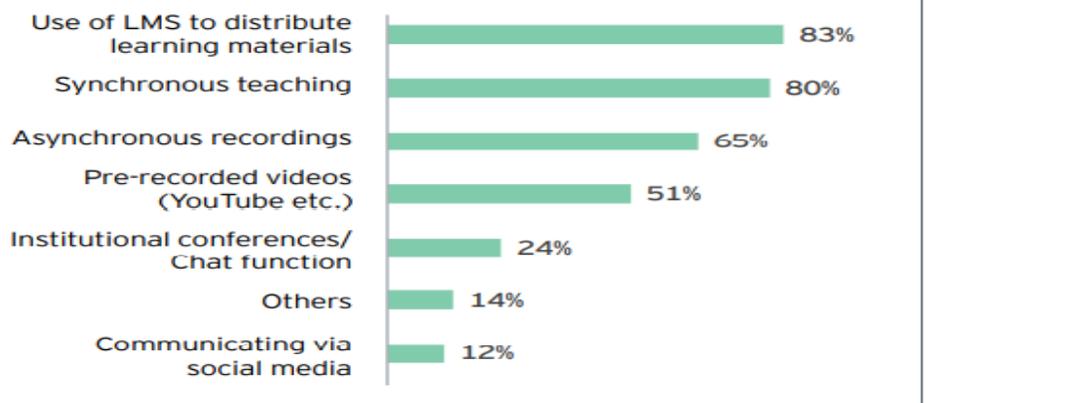
“Before the epidemic, faculty members were educated in online teaching approaches because 15 percent of each module was already taught digitally. We’ve also taken use of Coursera MOOCs.”<sup>5</sup> (FICCI, 2021). Faculty have to make considerable changes to their teaching methods, communication skills, and carrying out their daily activities as HEIs education transitioned to online form across the globe. HEI’s have introduced technological training and up skilling programmes. These programmes concentrate on “online and virtual teaching” approaches and resources to gain skills they need to instruct in virtual mode.

Figure 2: Faculty in online classes employ a variety of teaching methods (World)

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<sup>4</sup> According to FICCI student survey worldwide

<sup>5</sup> Vice Chancellor, Private HEI in India



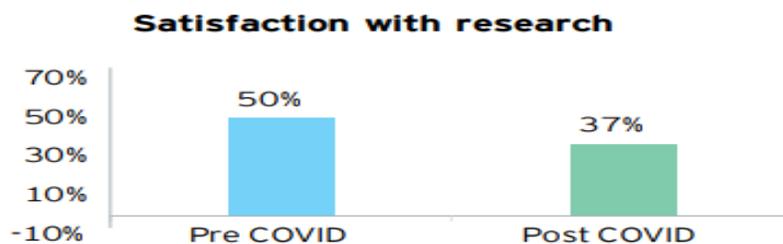
**Source:** Higher education Institutions (FICCI, 2021)

**5.1.3. Research and development:** Academic research has been significantly influenced by the outbreak and accompanying disruptions, with most research across sectors being constrained except for pandemic-related or other life-saving therapies. Not only did experimentation suffer as laboratories were closed and fieldwork was generally halted, but large-scale funding that aided in the execution of research was also unavailable.

**5.1.4. Funding:** “We did not increase the fees by 6 percent like every year in normal circumstances. We also offered students a flexible instalment scheme and provided scholarships”<sup>6</sup> (FICCI, 2021).

The impact of the pandemic has been felt in terms of enrolments, revenues, and funding, making these universities susceptible at this time. India is no exception. Higher education institutions are forced to make difficult decisions due to a shortage of financing (FICCI, 2021).

Figure 3: Satisfaction level of students before and after pandemic (World)



**Source:** Higher Education Institutions (FICCI, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> Vice President of a private Indian University

- One hundred and eighty colleges closed permanently
- According to a poll, while one hundred and thirty-four colleges did not seek accreditation for new batches
- This year, seven hundred and sixty-two higher education institutes (HEIs) cut their admission

## **5.2. Ideas for public action of higher education in post pandemic era**

The epidemic has compelled a significant change away from traditional learning and teaching environments with physical interactions. This is a big issue for students living in poverty around the world, who rely on their schools' physical setting to offer instructional resources, confinement or quarantine. The following are some public action ideas that invite participation guidance, and, in some cases, the only acceptable food of the day. Children can be subjected to a variety of forms of abuse and violence in their homes, particularly during times of and action from government officials, educators, researchers, students of all ages, and society as a whole (UNESCO, 2020).

- An increased commitment to education as a public good
- Enlarged perspectives on the right to education
- Teacher collaboration and the importance of teaching profession
- A focus on student, youth and children involvement and rights in transformation of education
- Technologies for students and teachers that are free and open source

## **6. Conclusion**

After rolling the tiers on online and hybrid education, even less technically equipped institutions have switched to new structures and teaching platforms fast. When the seismic switch has posed substantial issues for teachers and students alike, it has also opened up significant potential for an industry that has always valued its educators' research output over the quality of their instruction. For the higher learning system to not only survive, but prosper, in the face of Covid-19 and beyond, it will be vital to shift from emergency operation mode to fully adopting innovative and moldable models of learning (Wilder, 2001). To meet the challenge, educational leaders throughout the globe should follow the protocol and band together to provide higher education as global resilience in future.

### **6.1. Requirements for Government**

- Make equity a top priority. Governments should act quickly to make distant learning more egalitarian and to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged students.

- Assist teachers in delivering online education. Teachers require additional assistance in adapting to the many modalities of distance teaching and learning.
- Ensure that education workers' jobs and salaries are protected. All educators should be able to keep their jobs and earn their regular wages. Educators who have been laid off temporarily or permanently should be provided with adequate financial support (International, 2020).

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