REFORMS IN EXISTING EDUCATION POLICY VIA NEW EDUCATION POLICY: Right to Education in Amidst of COVID – 19

Deepanshi Jain[1] & Ritika[2]

ABSTRACT

The Coronavirus pandemic has created a critical situation around the world with most of the states struggling to curb the infection and to cure the infected people. Similar to every crisis, the masses are suffering aggravated hardships. This has not only led to cascading economies but has also perniciously affected the education of scholars. To curb the spread of Coronavirus schools and colleges across India are temporarily shut and this unprecedented move has created an infinite gap in providing education to the scholars. The Indian Education system which mostly supports the offline system and as classes has got to choose the online classes, one in four students is unable to attend the online classes as they lack the essential technological equipment and adequate internet connectivity to pursue their studies. The Right to Education is thus a challenge during this pandemic where laptop continues to be a luxury for quite a half of the scholars. The digital divide that exists in India has denied the children their Right to Education.

The present research paper through insights on the Guarantee of Right to Education by the Constitution and International Conventions, the major hurdles involved in exercise this right in the pandemic and the steps taken by government to ensure that education is guaranteed to all students without any discrimination. The paper ends with some effective suggestion that could be implemented to ensure that no student faces any kind of educational loss in this era of COVID 19.

Keywords: Right to Education, COVID - 19, Constitution, Digital Divide

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[1] Student, Indore Institute of Law
[2] Student, Indore Institute of Law

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic COVID -19 has spread in the entire world and compelled the human society to keep up social distancing. After observing the coronavirus pandemic situation, the country started the action of lockdown to separate the contaminated people. The educational institutions – schools, colleges and universities became closed. Classes suspended and every examination of schools, colleges, and universities including entrance tests were postponed indefinitely. Thus, the lockdown destroyed the schedule of the students.

The education of several students worldwide has been transferred online. The change in the educational system from traditional classroom teaching to virtual online teaching is one of the greatest changes brought by COVID - 19. The campus has been closed but not the education. To ensure that education is not affected due to crisis educational institutions have made concrete efforts to provide education to students during the pandemic through digital technology and online resources. Teaching pedagogy has undergone change and students being safe in their home could easily avail the opportunity to continue their studies.

Students of the privileged families are able to learn and study owing to the availability of resources they have to continue their education. This unplanned shift from physical classes to virtual classes has not been advantageous for the marginalized communities. There are numerous reports of suicide by students in Kerala, Punjab, Assam, and various other parts of India because of the net and devices' deficiency for attending the online classes.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION: A BASIC RIGHT FOR DIGNIFIED LIFE

I.   Education as a Human Right

An overarching international legal framework of treaties and conventions is in place to ensure and protect the right to education. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ('UDHR') affirms that the Right to Education is a basic human right for everyone. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 has also made provision under Article 13 which state about the Right to Education and a plan for implementing compulsory education.

The UDHR and ICESCR provide that primary education 'shall be made compulsory and should be available free to all'. On the other hand, secondary and higher education are not compulsory but shall be made generally available and accessible to all through appropriate means. Thus, these two statutes take into consideration, both social and economic inequality and aims to ensure that the right to education is free from all types of discrimination. Further, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has also urged States to make sure that they continue to teach online and ensure that there is affordable and equitable access to internet services and important technical equipment for education, especially for students in poor regions and communities.

Article 10 of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was also ratified by India along with the above-mentioned Convention. This covenant under Article 10 promotes girl education. It mentions that women shall be entitled to equal rights and opportunities in matter related to education.

India being signatory to the declaration and the covenants has provided a number of rights to its citizens. Part III of Indian Constitution guarantees fundamental rights available to citizen of India.

II.   GUARANTEE OF RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN THE CONSTITUTION

Education is one of the most essential requisites to live a dignified life. It helps in overall growth of individuals and nations. It is a hallmark for rational thinking and keeps the wolf out of the door. Recognizing the importance of Education in an individual's life the framers of our constitution has incorporated Article 45 in the Constitution which states that "**The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory Education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years"**.

On the eve of Independence, approximately 20% of the population was literate. To promote literacy among its citizens, the Government has implemented various educational policies. In 1964, M.P. Siddheshwar Prasad said about the backwardness of Indian Education System. Then the State paid heed towards it and set up the Kothari Commission in 1964. In 1968, India's first education policy was enforced. Main aim of the policy was to provide primary level education. Regional language subjects were given privileges. Later in 1986, education policy was reformed aimed to promote secondary level education and specialised fields. For this, the Government started providing mid-day meals which resulted in increase in the number of students and got quite successful in reducing gender disparity. NCERT at National level and SCERT at State level was set up to maintain the quality of education. UGC was set up to maintain the level of higher education**.**

Thus, to achieve the objective of free and compulsory education for all children, the Directive Principle contained in Article 45 has been given the status of fundamental right in 2002. The 86th Amendment of the Constitution has inserted a new Article - Article 21A making education mandatory for all children of the age group of 6- 14 years. It states that **"It is the duty of the state to provide free and compulsory education to all the children of the age group of age 6- 14 years".** The aim of the article is to reduce illiteracy from the country and provide the people with human dignity.

Mohini Jain vs. State of Karnataka[3] is considered as the most prominent landmark case in the field of Right to Education. The Petitioner had moved to the supreme court when her admission was denied in private medical college because she was unable to pay the tuition fee which was way higher than the fee paid by students of government seats. In this, the college pleaded that the cost of medical education is very high and the burden of fee of students of a Government quota also gets shifted upon the students of management quota as college get no financial aid from state or central government. In return, supreme court answered that though right to education was not mentioned in the Part III of the Constitution but constitution makers have imbibed it in DPSP principles, Article 38, 39(a), 41 & 45 which is enforceable in Article 21 of the constitution as man will able to live dignified life only when he is educated. The Supreme Court also remarked that It is the education which ensures people are aware of their rights and responsibility.

In *Unni Krishnan, JP & Ors. Vs. State of Andhra Pradesh and Ors.*,[4] the Supreme Court held that the Right to education for all children of the age group of 6 -14 years is a fundamental right. The Court aforesaid that after the age of 14 years the obligation of state depends on the economic capacity and development.

Article 21A[5] makes it obligatory for the government to enact a Central Legislation to give effect to the Constitutional Change. Subsequently, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 was passed to give effect to the Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002. The Act provides the responsibility of the Central and State Government, teachers, parents in assuring that all children of the age group of 6- 14 years receive free and compulsory elementary education.

The Kerala High Court of Kerala, in the case *of Faheem Shirin RK v. State of Kerala & Ors.,*[6] held that the right to have access to the internet is an integral part of the right to education under Article 21. The Court said that the State ought to make sure that children are equipped with modern technologies to compete in the developing world and attain success.

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[3] Mohini Jain vs. State of Karnataka, 1992 AIR 1858 (India)
[4] Unni Krishnan, JP & Ors. Vs. State of Andhra Pradesh and Ors, 1993 AIR 2178 (India)
[5] India Const. art. 21A, amended by The Constitution (Eighty Six Amendment) Act, 2002
[6] Faheem Shirin RK v. State of Kerala & Ors. WP (C) NO. 19716 of 2019 (India)

An analysis of judicial precedents emphasizes the fact that Indian courts have liberally interpreted and widened the scope of the right to education.

India has the population of 380 million children – the largest population of children in the world. A large number of them are between the age group of 6-14 years. It is a difficult and burdensome task to provide free education to them. It has been estimated that the financial expenditure to implement the free education of children would be forty thousand crore rupees during the year. The Government is not expected to provide huge economic resources which are required to be made available for free education to children. So, the Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 has added a new clause (k) to Article 51[7] – A which provides that it's the duty of a parent to provide education to his children between the age group of six to fourteen years. But the tragedy is that they themselves are reluctant to educate their wards. Awareness among parents is essential to educate their children. It's time to realize that Children are not an expense, they are an investment. They shape the future of the country. It is the duty of parents and Government to ensure that every child gets education especially during the emergency crisis.

Thus, Our Constitution not only guarantees the right to education, it further ensures equal access to education without any discrimination. When the Constitution of India casts a duty upon the State to ensure that the less privileged children do not suffer, is it just and equitable to pass a direction for the academic establishments to adhere to the educational calendar through an online platform? In doing so the State is grossly impairing the right of a majority of the student population and widening the urban-rural education gap. It is moreover a violation of Article 14 of the Constitution to allow access to e-learning to a privileged section of the student population, while depriving the unprivileged.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF IMPACT OF COVID – 19 IN EDUCATION SECTOR

The researcher has analysed the positive and negative changes bought by COVID -19 in educational sector. The paper also focused on how the new opportunities could be created in learning sector.

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[7] India Const. art. 52 cl. K, amended by The Constitution (Eighty Six Amendment) Act, 2002

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was undertaken by the researcher which helped to analyse the situation deeply and to make interpretation out of it. Covid-19 pandemic has made challenging to continue the education. In this time of crisis various educational institutions have started conducting online classes. This change is both beneficial as well as challenging.

The following analysis highlights it:

Strengths:

- Covid-19 taught us teamwork that how during a pandemic we can look towards our creativity emotional balance and being able to work in different yet innovative manner.
- A facility of remote learning is available. A student can attend his lecture anywhere, no such graphical constraint is present. Students and teachers both are getting well versed with technology also.
- Learning material are shared in effective way. As many are suffering from financial loss, then e-books are of great help as they are available free of cost. Many educational portals like the Diksha, Swayam was started by Indian government.
- Students activity is well recorded on just a finger tip. Their assignment, performance can be monitored easily by both teachers and parents.
- E – learning is gaining momentum as it is involving parents with school and students.

Weaknesses:

- It is uncertain that how to handle this global issue because many exams are getting postponed by sitting quarantined at home.
- Some exams cannot be conducted online because there is a high chance of cheating and everyone can't give exam properly as some network, technical issue can come anytime.
- Adequate resources are not present in online learning which only classroom education can provide.
- Lack of concentration can be seen as a student need not to show their faces and in background, they can even use another application too which is more than enough to draw their attention from class.

- Students don't have their social life anymore. In school or college, we used to talk and indulge with many persons but now no such thing is taking place.
- Students of Pre primary are the most affected one as they don't attend classes and even if they do their eyes hurt. In this manner, many new students didn't even take admission.

Opportunities:

- Those who were planning to go abroad but can't then there is a chance for local institutions to form new education strategies so that they can meet with the standard students are looking for. It will also help in the country's GDP.
- Work from home is helping teachers to learn about virtual programmers and it even save time that they can indulge in other activities also.
- Expansion of e learning is helping students to learn various new courses online as travelling time is saved and they can even listen while doing small chores also. For example – Art and craft video can be seen while peeling peas.
- Students can develop social skills and help people with need. It will also help in emotional development. As helping people may not change the world but it will lead that person to help someone in future. For example – We all can help housemaids kids by teaching them.

Threats:

- Many small education institutes are getting shut down due to financial losses causing Pune local students to drop out and it is also leading towards unemployment.
- Increasing unemployment and financial problems leading students to go for an alternate higher education course as family problems are leading them to compromise.
- Many students are not able to study anymore. There is a very low chance for them to rejoin their studies.
- Some students are facing problems in studying at home as many distractions can takes place.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

I. **Increase in Drop out Ratio: A Significant Hindrance in Right to Education**

In India, school closures have affected millions of students. However, the statistics report has shown that only 37.6 million children across 16 states are continuing education through

various education initiatives such as online classrooms and radio programmes etc. A recent study by **Save the Children** reports that during the pandemic the discontinuation of children's education in 62 per cent of the surveyed households with 67 per cent in rural and 55 per cent in urban areas, respectively (Save the Children, 2020). The reason for the increase in Drop out Ratio is accredited to the fact that COVID – 19 has created widespread unemployment and income loss and thus it becomes difficult for the lower middle and underprivileged section of households to continue the education of students in schools. This has caused children to drop their schools and be pulled into economic activities to support their parents' in earning.

The situation of dropout rates and out-of-school children was already poor prior to COVID 19. According to NSS 75% of Household Survey in 2017-2018, around 3.22 crore children in the group of 6-14-year age group are out of school, 31 percent of whom have never attended any school. These figures were higher for rural areas as compared to urban areas. The major reasons cited for being out-of-school are engagement in economic activities and participation in household chores due to low family income. The pandemic has further aggravated the situation and thus there is an increase in the drop out ratio during COVID - 19.

II.   DISRUPTION IN MID- DAY MEAL: A SIGNIFICANT HINDRANCE IN RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The Mid Day Meal is one the most significant schemes of the Government to provide nutritious diet to children. It provides several benefits to school children of underprivileged society to avoid classroom hunger, to increase school attendance, to solve the problem of malnutrition among children. Thus, the main aim and objective behind the scheme is to relish hunger and to provide nutrition to the needy children. Various studies undertaken by scholars suggest that there is a relationship between nutrition and education. Proper diet and food are essential to build a good mind for education. Children need proper and nutritive food to grow and to study things better and faster. As the schools are closed across the country, the school feeding programme could no longer provide help to supply free food to 115.9 million

children who are enrolled under the scheme (MDM Portal). The nutritional level of the vulnerable section would further decrease. Children and families who rely on these programs to satisfy hunger are further being pushed to hunger and poverty.

A study conducted by IFPRI reveals that as on June1, 2020, only 15 out of the 36 states/UTs had taken steps to adapt to implement the MDM scheme during lockdown. A survey by Save the Children reports that 39 per cent of households did not receive Mid-Day Meal during lockdown between April and June (Report on Save the Children, 2020).

III.　　DIGITAL DIVIDE: A SIGNIFICANT HINDRANCE IN RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The Covid-19 pandemic has once again highlighted the society's structural imbalances in the digital world. The major problem with E-learning is the issue of internet access, electricity, and the lack of important devices like a laptop, computer, or smartphone to access the content being made for them. India with the world's largest youth population is now experiencing an e-learning experiment which will be more feasible for teachers and students in metropolitan cities to adopt when compared to those living in rural areas.

This digital divide is the outcome of multiple factors like – lack of infrastructure in terms of access to the internet, shortage of computers in schools, the inability of the disadvantaged students to avail computers, and lack of digital literacy amongst both the facilities and the students. Students studying in rural areas and children of migrant workers experiencing homelessness and poverty due to the lockdown are likely to be impacted the most.

The Annual Status of Education Report (Rural), 2018 emphasised the harsh reality that in 596 government schools belonging to 619 districts, only 21.3 per cent of students had access to computers in their schools. The Parliamentary Committee of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology revealed that the digital literacy drive had reached just 1.67 per cent of the population.

Rural India's poor internet penetration is further aggravated because of their low incomes, frequent cable cuts, unreliable electricity. Mission Antyodaya, the programme within which a nationwide survey of villages was conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2017-

18, pictured that 16% of India's households received only 5 hours hours of electricity daily, 33% of the population received electricity 10 to 12 hours, and only 47% received electricity for more than 12 hours a day. The Digital India program gave India the required push towards digitalization however it failed to guarantee much success. The National Statistical Office reports says that only 24% of Indian households have an internet facility. Almost 66% of India's population lives in rural areas and only a little over 15% amongst them have access to internet connections.

The issue of Digital Access is a major hurdle in E- learning. It makes us rethink questions like "Are the elite group only entitled to Right to Education. It is the utmost duty of the government to take measures to provide 'free and compulsory' education to each and every children of this country, especially in the time of COVID crisis through the provision of alternatives to online classes, ensuring that no children face any discrimination in receiving education.

IV.   INCREASE IN GENDER DISPARITY: A SIGNIFICANT HINDRANCE IN RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Since time immemorial girls have always been treated as an inferior part of society. Society has always witnessed gender disparity especially when the topic is education of a girl child. The advancement of girl education has been the focus of the nation. The government schemes related to promotion of girl's education have started to reap benefits in form of increase in enrolment ratios of girls in schools. Even poor families realised the importance of girls' education. The sudden outbreak of pandemic shook the financial status of the country. The most affected were the poor farmers and the daily wage earners. The school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to millions of girls dropping out before they complete their education. This particularly holds true for children living in poverty, those with a disability or the ones living in rural isolated places. Here, the dark side of patriarchy can be seen because now the lower income group would prefer to educate boy children over girls as it is believed by the society that a male runs the family and earns.

The gender divide in access and ability to use digital infrastructure is also stark. Only 33 per cent women had access to the internet, while this figure is 67 per cent for men. This disparity is more prominent in rural India where 72 per cent men and only 28 per cent women had access to the internet. Thus, girls are more likely to miss out on online education and this will lead to an increase in learning gaps. According to the UNESCO Report in year 2020 it will lead to the same situation where girls will be exploited and they won't be able to do anything because of lack of education and support. All these activities will hinder the social growth of girl children, which the nation started to achieve after decades of hard work. In school, girls are free to express their views, opinion but at home these things become slightly difficult. In one of the interviews, Prof. Anita Rampal from Delhi University estimated that around 20% of the girls won't be able to join school after lockdown.

V.   INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES TO MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN SCHOOL

As schools in India are making efforts to reopen, maintaining physical distancing norms requires some basic school infrastructure to be in place which currently is lacking in most of the schools and universities. As per the DISE statistics, in 19% schools, the student classroom ratio (SCR) is 35 and above. In 8 percent schools, around one lakh schools, more than students sit in one classroom. Proper sanitation facilities are a key prerequisite for schools to reopen safely in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the statistics prove that only 52 % schools have overall WASH facilities, i.e., clean drinking water, functional toilets and hand wash facilities.

The hygiene of teachers is also very crucial. At present, around six lakh teachers who are above 55 years are serving the school education system. As per the emerging disease pattern, they are also more vulnerable to COVID-19. Moreover, the majority of schools have a single staff room for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Thus, keeping social distancing will be difficult to observe.

VI.   INCREASING DEPRESSION AMONG YOUTH

Limited resources, no or lesser income, depression is a part of a lower- or middle-class people's life. Today's parents want to provide everything to their child. They do teach them what is right or wrong. But they often forget two things – Firstly, they didn't teach them how to deal with their problems and that don't give their time to the child. Problem are a basic part of everyone's life weather financially, spiritually, emotionally or socially, etc. But the problem with the teens are they don't know how to deal with it and didn't even bother to share it with parents.

This pandemic shattered everyone not just financially but emotionally causing depression among youth leading them to take big step of their life. That's what happens with 19-year-old Aishwarya. She was the bright student of the Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University. In her suicide note, she stated about her financial problems about laptop, scholarship, etc. In one of the interviews, her friend said that she had arrange education loan for her but she doesn't know why did she commit suicide.[8]

A 17-year-old Vikrapandi from Theni district was struggling to cope with the syllabus. He committed suicide because he thought he would fail and won't be able to fulfil his parents' dream.[9] A 10th class girl committed suicide because she had no access to smartphone and TV as her father is a daily wage worker. But her father told her to look at other options as they can go to their friend's house. Later she went missing and her body was found to be near her home. Police said she born herself alive. Students were very bright and intelligent in terms of book in language. But did not know the Life lesson and how to deal with it.[10]

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[8] P. Pavan ,HOW POVERTY FORCED LADY SHRI RAM COLLEGE STUDENT BELIEVE 'DEATH IS CORRECT FOR HER', Mumbai Mirror,(Nov. 09, 2020, 21:47), https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/news/india/how-poverty-forced-lady-shri-ram-college-student-believe-death-is-correct-for-her/amp_articleshow/79134089.cms

[9] Akshaya Nath, Tamil Nadu: Two student suicides raise concerns over online classes, India Today, (September 3, 2020 15:17 IST), https://www.indiatoday.in/amp/india/story/tamil-nadu-two-student-suicides-raise-concerns-online-classes-1718204-2020-09-03

[10] Gladwin Emmanuel, KERALA'S EXPERIMENT WITH VIRTUAL CLASSES: UPSET OVER NOT HAVING SMARTPHONE, CLASS 10 GIRL COMMITS SUICIDE, (Jun 2, 2020, 12:53 IST), https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/news/india/keralas-experiment-with-virtual-classes-upset-over-not-having-smartphone-class-10-girl-commits-suicide/amp_articleshow/76151031.cms

The problem might be different but the solution is same i.e to realize that we as a human being will face obstacle and hurdles in every path of our life but we shouldn't get depressed but should take it as a challenge and successfully complete it

MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPART THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AMIDST COVID 19

I. Measures undertaken by Government

The state government ministries of almost all states have taken measures to ensure that the academic activities of schools and colleges do not hamper during the lockdown period. They have instructed the schools to hold their classes online. The lockdown has changed the way of education and has made us adapt to digital learning. So, the Indian Government's vision of digital India is playing a vital role in solving the present crisis due to Covid-19. There is no denial that technology-based education is more convenient at present in all respects. Looking at the challenge of colleges and schools being shut; the government of India and the educational institutions have undertaken proper initiatives and converted the challenge into opportunity. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has made several arrangements, including online portals and educational channels through Direct to Home TV, Radios for students to continue learning. The digital initiatives provided by the Ministry of Human Resource Development for Secondary and Higher Secondary Education are:

Secondary Education

Diksha portal provides e-Learning content for students and teachers aligned to the curriculum. It includes video lessons, textbooks and assessments. The national boards of education CBSE and NCERT with the help of 250 teachers has helped to prepare the content in multiple languages. The most significant feature of this app is that it is available to use offline. It provides more than 80,000 e - books for students of class 1 to 12.

E-Pathshala is a Learning app for classes 1 to 12 initiated by NCERT. The app provides books, videos, audio, etc. for the students, educators and parents in multiple languages including Hindi, Urdu, and English.

National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) is an e learning portal that provides resources to students and teachers in multiple languages including books, interactive modules and videos. Content is designed in accordance with the curriculum of classes 1-12, also encompassing aligned resources for teachers.

Higher Education

Swayam Portal is an online portal designed to impart education covering more than 1900 courses for classes 9 to 12 and higher education (undergraduate, post graduate programs) in all subjects like management, engineering, law, humanities.

Swayam Prabha has 32 DTH TV channels transmitting educational contents on a regular basis at all times. These channels are freely available for viewing all across the country with the help of DD Free Dish Set Top Box and Antenna. The schedule of channels and details are available in the portal. The channels cover school education from classes 9 to 12 and higher education (undergraduate, postgraduate, vocational courses and teacher training) in subjects of arts, science, commerce, social sciences, humanities subjects, engineering, technology, law, medical and agricultural subjects

E -PG Pathshala is an e learning platform for postgraduate students. Postgraduate students can access this platform for eBooks, online courses and study materials. Through this platform students can access these facilities without having internet for the whole day.

II. MEASURES UNDERTAKEN BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

COVID -19 didn't spare anyone. But some group of people took responsibility for the betterment of children and try to reach poor students and helping them to learn and write so that they can cope up with the school syllabus. By undertaking these activities, they promote social welfare.

• **Akshaya Patra Foundation:** It was established in 2000 with the aim to provide meals to the students. Their   headquarter is in Bengaluru but currently they are active in many cities all over the country discharging their responsibilities. During pandemic along with the

means, they distributed learning material to students to help them to continue their learning. There also started 'Back - to - School' initiative to help poor students to get education.

• **Smile Foundation:** It was established in 2002 with the aim to provide a better livelihood to the children. The focus areas are under privileged and migrant children. They are providing their services in 25 districts over 2000 villages by educating poor children's. They partnered with NASSCOM Foundation and Quest Foundation to educate school children during the pandemic. In April, they organised a week-long painting project to engage and encourage the children.

• **Nirbhed Foundation:** This initiative was started by two individuals named Shushil Kumar Meena and Taruna in 2015. It aims to teach students free of cost to help the poor families financially. Now it has become a large group of young individuals. During pandemic, they started the program known as 'Mai Bhi Hoon Shishak' which aims to teach one senior student from a particular area who will then teach poor students.

• **Notun Jibon:** Some people have potential to give new life to the people and that's what the 'Notun Jibon' mean. It was started by Arup Sengupta in 2016 to provide a better education and nutrition to the children of slum area, prostitutes, labourers, etc. This entry was started the school 'Sahaj Path'. Along with studies, curricular activities are also given equal importance. To overcome the pandemic situation, they reopen the school with strict social distancing norms.

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has casted a significant impact in the education sector of India. Though it has created many challenges, various opportunities are also evolved. At present India is not fully equipped to make education reach all sectors of society via online platforms. But universities and the government of India are continuously making efforts to come up with a solution to solve this problem. The priority of the society should be to fully utilise digital technology to create a win - win situation for millions of students in India. The educational institutions need to strengthen their Information Technology infrastructure to be fully equipped for facing challenges

like COVID-19. Proper access to technology and the internet needs urgent attention. So, the digital capabilities and the required infrastructure must reach the remotest and poorest communities to facilitate the students to continue their education during the pandemics. There is a need to raise public funds to narrow the internet gap and ensure that students continue to learn digitally. The state governments and private organisations should come up with ideas to address this issue of digital education to ensure the Right to Education amidst COVID-19.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The researcher has made use of various scholarly articles and research papers to provide key information in the research -

1. Swarup Saha have made a study on the importance of Education to lead a dignified life and the constitutional guarantee of this right in India.

2. Srijita Mandal studied on how COVID – 19 impacts in education sector and the reinforcement of digital divide among rural and urban area.

3. Dr. Supti Kotal discussed the role of government schemes which will help the underprivileged students to help them pursue their studies amidst the pandemic.