



## **Effect of Covid-19 on Senior Secondary Education in Uttar Pradesh, India**

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### **Abstract**

Covid-19 outbreak has caused a downward spiral in the world economy and caused a huge impact on the senior secondary education system. The sudden closure of campuses as a social distancing measure to prevent community transmission has shifted face to face classes to online learning systems. This has thrown the focus on utilising e-Learning tools and platforms for effective student engagement which may have limitations of accessibility and affordability for many students. The pandemic has exposed the shortcomings of the current senior secondary education system in Uttar Pradesh, India and need for more training of educators in digital technology to adapt the rapidly changing education of Uttar Pradesh. In the post Covid-19 situation, the use of e-learning and virtual education may become an integral part of the senior secondary education system. The senior secondary institutions need to plan the post pandemic education strategies to ensure student learning outcomes and standards of educational quality.

**Keywords:** Senior Secondary Education, U.P., during Covid-19, Impact.

### **Introduction**

On March,11,2020 World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 as a Pandemic. Covid-19 has affected more than 11 crores peoples worldwide (WHO). In India, the first affected case of Covid-19 was detected on 30 January 2020 in the state of Kerala and the affected had a travel history from Wuhan, China. In India, the first death was reported on 12 March,2020 and the nation observed Janta Curfew for one day on 22 March,2020. India again observed 14 hours Janta Curfew on 24 March to combat the Coronavirus pandemic and assess the country's ability to fight the Virus. Then the first phase of lockdown was announced by the Prime Minister of India on 25 March, 2020 for 21 days. Monitoring the effects of the virus, Indian Government has been extending the lockdown period in different phases and the lockdown

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five was declared on 30, April, 2020 which is effective from 1 June to 30 June 2020. In all the phases of lockdown starting from 1 to 5 lockdown, the educational institutions throughout the country have never got any relaxation to start their educational activities. Thus, pandemic Covid-19 impacted significantly on the education sector. According to the UNESCO report, Covid-19 pandemic, over 800 million students, more than half of the World's student population, still face significant disruptions to their education, ranging from full School Closures in 31 countries to reduced or part-time academic schedules in another 48 countries, according to UNESCO'S per data taken during 25 January, 2021. In India, more than 32 crores students have been affected by the various restrictions and the nationwide lockdown for Covid-19 (Google). Most Governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to control the spread of the pandemic Covid-19. This worldwide closure has impacted drastically the world's student population. Governments around the world are making efforts to diminish the immediate impact of closure of educational Institutions particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantages communities and trying to facilitate the continuity of education for all using different digital modes of learning. According to a survey report of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, conducted on higher education it was observed that there are 39931 colleges, 10725 stand alone institutions and 993 Universities listed on their portal, which contribute to education (Kumar, D.N.S., 2020).

In Uttar Pradesh, observed that, there are 866361 primary schools, 8459 higher secondary schools, 758 degree colleges and 26 Universities and total population 23.50 crores in Uttar Pradesh state. Even though the state has been adapting to the new age learning, but there still lies an obstacle in achieving entire success as only 5601034 lakh students have enrolled according to the Uttar Pradesh Secondary Education Board of our total population of the country have access to the internet/e-learning. The people residing in rural areas are still very much deprived of the technologies and therefore hampering the cause of online education. The Covid-19 pandemic thought to entire society on how necessity is the mother of invention by allowing educational institutions to adopt online learning and introduce a virtual learning culture. The pandemic has been steering the education sector forward with technological innovation and advancements. The pandemic has significantly

disrupted the higher education sector. A large number of Indian students who are enrolled in many Universities abroad, especially in worst affected countries are now leaving those countries and if the situation persists, in the long run, there will be a significant decline in the demand for international higher education and Uttar Pradesh senior secondary education also.

## Materials and Methods

Various reports of national and international agencies on Covid-19 pandemic are searched to collect data for current study. As it is not possible to go outside for data collection during lockdown, information are collected from different authentic websites, journals and e-contents relating to impact of Covid-19 on higher educational system of India.

## Discussion

The present study is focused on following types

- Effect of Corona virus on senior secondary education.
- Emerging approaches of Uttar Pradesh India for senior secondary education.
- Post Covid-19 trends of senior secondary education.
- Suggestions

### 1: Effect of Covid-19 on senior secondary education

Corona Virus Pandemic has severely affected the total educational system of India as well as the globe but some of the most effected areas of senior secondary education of Uttar Pradesh, India are as pointed here.

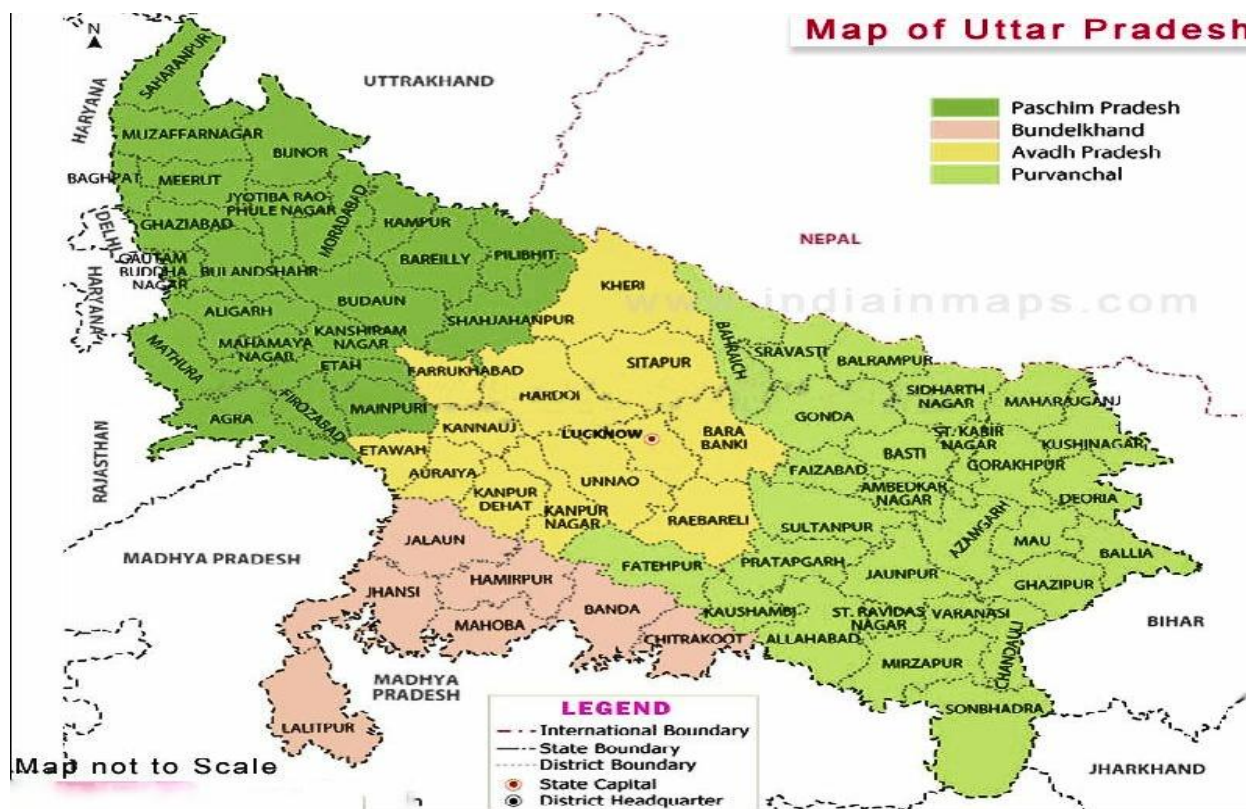
**a. Destabilized all educational activities:** Outbreak of Covid-19 has completed lockdown in every sector including education. The institutions got closed with cease of educational activities and created many challenges for the students. So, the various activities like admission, examination, entrance tests, competitive examinations conducted by various boards/Schools/Colleges and Universities are postponed. Many entrance tests and class tests for senior secondary students study got cancelled which created a great challenge in the life of a student of senior secondary education. The primary challenges was to continue teaching learning process when students, teacher staffs could no longer be physically present on the School campuses. The obvious solution for the Institution

was to depend on online teaching. However, with in relatively short time, senior secondary school have been able to provide support to the students through online modes. Covid-19 has accelerated adoption of digital technologies to deliver education. It encouraged all teachers and students to become more technology only depend but in rural area not survive on technology medium because rural area network problem and money poor student family. School Classes start with the help of different e-teaching like Google meet, Skype, Youtube live, Zoom app, Facebook live etc. to provides support service to the students. They have been sharing important documents with the group members of School and creating online local repository also. Students are advised to submit the scanned copies of the assignments to the School through e-mail. Students have also started receiving internship reports and projects through e mail and whatsapp during the lockdown for Covid-19.

**b: Severely affected the educational assessment system:** Most of the external examinations, class tests and class work have been postponed and almost all the internal assessments have been cancelled. The cancellation of assessments and class tests have negative effect on students learning. Many senior secondary schools have been managing the internal assessments

through online mode using different digital tools but the postponement of the external assessments, has a direct effect on the educational and occupational future of students life. This uncertainty has created anxiety among students as they are stuck in the same grade/class without promotion. Similarly, many students who had appeared final/board examination would suffer a lot as by the time they get their certificates, it might be too late for them to apply for the forth coming academic year in other countries due to lockdown.

In Uttar Pradesh, the survey included 944 households in rural and peri-urban areas of 16 districts-Kushinagar, Basti, Balrampur, Gonda, Bahraich, Lucknow, Barabanki, Faizabad, Ayodhya, Sultanpur, Ambedkar nagar, Hardoi, Hamirpur, Moradabad, Kanpur and Rai Bareilly. Nearly half of the families belong to the SC/ST while 30% were OBC. About 15% families were Muslims. The survey also noted that the presence of technology did not ensure access to education during pandemic. Even though 53% had a TV set at home, only 15% reported watching educational TV shows or programmes for educational purposes, also most children reported having a phone at home but only 22% (21% girls against 29% boys) had access to it (Map-1).



Map-1: Location of survey area

## **2: Emerging approaches of Uttar Pradesh India for Senior secondary education:**

Many challenges are created by Covid-19. The Senior Secondary education have responded positively and adopted various strategies to face the crisis during the Pandemic. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has also taken number of preventive measures to prevent spread of pandemic Covid-19. The MHRD and Uttar Pradesh senior Secondary education minister have made several arrangements by launching of many virtual platforms with online depositories, e-book and other online teaching/learning materials, educational channels through direct to home TV. Radios for rural students to continue their learning. During lockdown, students are using popular social media tools like Whatsapp, Zoom, Googlemeet, Telegram, Youtube live, Facebook live etc. for online teaching learning system. ICT initiative of MHRD (e-broucher-<https://mhrd.gov.in/ict> initiative) is also a unique platform which combines all digital resources for online education (Pravat, 2020 a,b&c)., All terminal examinations have been postponed and shifted to September 2020.

The central board of secondary education (CBSE), the Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) board has also decided to start holding Pre Board examination for students of class 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. The first one of such preboard examination will be held in the third and fourth week of February next year 2021, the board informed. The Uttar Pradesh Board has also reduced the syllabus by about 30% for students of class 9-12 in view of the Corona Virus disease (Covid-19) Pandemic outbreak. According to the U.P. Board spokes person, schools across the state are closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. In such an atmosphere, online classes are being held via Swayamprabha Channel-22 for students of class IX and XI, via DD Uttar Pradesh for class X and XII. All divisional joint education directors have also been ordered to send weekly reports of students studies through Virtual Schools and e-Gyan Ganga.

## **3: Post Covid-19 trends of senior secondary Education**

The world is changing fast and so is the education sector. Covid-19 has made us adapt new norms, innovations and tools faster than we thought were possible. As the sector reinvents itself and adopt new rules, the very meaning and purpose of School education get irrevocably changed. Social distancing forced educational institutes to be shut down and

resort to virtual platforms. As educational institutes adapt to change and are redefine ways of teaching, to ensure maximum learning impact, here are the possible trends in the educational sector post Covid-19.

**a: Teacher's role will be redefined:** The idea of a teacher as the reservoir of knowledge, one who shares knowledge to students will no longer be opposite. Today one has easy access to knowledge and skills, through digital connectivity on phones and computers. Tomorrow's class room will need a definition of teacher in the lines of someone who facilitates development as contributing member of society instead of just lecturing.

**b: Technology driven teaching:** Technology will be the world wide helper and will dominate the education and learning space and will go beyond Zoom sessions. However online education demands access to gadgets and stable connectivity. Today the education sectors are working on taking a lot of science lessons to 3-D which will surely be more exciting way of learning. Technology is going to add value to teaching and it will be imperative for teachers and technology makers to preserve and innovate.

**C: Blended learning and personalized education:** There will be going forward, a great opportunity to develop new forms of blended education (that will be much demand). Pre crisis there was already a growing demand for more flexible and blended forms of lifelong learning beyond initial education in order to address the need to up skill and reskill for digital economy. Mature adult learners in the future will be more and more interested in micro-credentials which allow them to acquire specific knowledge and skills. The demand will be for more work relevant courses or learning paths and learning experiences that prepare students for AI, AR, VR, ML, Blockchain, Bigdata, Cloud, data analytics, voice deployment and more. We will see a significant thrust towards experimental learning too.

We will see the emergence of top of the line Master class formats taught by best in domain in every field, digitally delivered. A lot of this will be self learning, that too self motivated and self funded. Adult learners will also spend more on passion learning hobbies or skills they always wanted to acquire but had no time for. With lesser travel, lesser likely socializing and greater work from home there will be more time home, there will be more time for such learning indulgences.

**d: Safety tips for returning to School during Covid-19:**

Returning to School has taken on new meaning and a new set of worries for parents and other caregivers during the age of Covid-19. Schools must now balance the educational, social and emotional needs of their students along with the health and safety of students and staff in the midst of the evolving Covid-19 pandemic. The decision on what School and learning looks like is usually made on the local level by school boards and government officials. Overall, School largely choose from one of three options:

**Distance learning:** All instructions is done remotely in this model using technology and other tools.

**In person Schooling:** This model is similar to traditional schooling with enhanced health and safety precautions and procedures.

**Hybrid Schooling:** This model includes elements of both distance and in person schooling.

Schools may one or more approaches during the course of the school year and pandemic. Being prepared for a variety of schooling environments can empower you and your child and reduce anxiety. In each case there are steps you can take to reduce the risks of Covid-19, help your child feel safe and make informed decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Practice safe distancing:** Social distancing or physical distancing is the practice of allowing enough space between individuals to reduce the spread of disease. During the Covid-19 pandemic, World Health Organization (WHO) recommend keeping at least 6 feet (2 meters) of space between yourself and people outside your household to meet these goals. But that might not be practical in some schools or with younger children. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says following strict physical distancing can conflict with ideal academic, social and emotional learning standard. It's also not clear how easily Covid-19 spreads among children.

Steps to encourage social distancing during in person schooling may include-

**a:** lockers or grouping them by student groups or cohorts.

**b:** Creating one way traffic in school hallways.

**c:** Using outdoor spaces when possible for instruction, meal and recess.

**d:** Reducing the number of children on school buses.

**e:** Spacing desks out and having them all face in the same direction.

**f:** Using physical barriers, such as plexi glass shields and partitions, to separate educators and students.

**g:** Dividing students up in to distinct groups or cohorts that stay together during the school day and reducing interaction between different groups.

**Wear a mask:** WHO recommended wearing cloth face masks in public places where it's difficult to avoid close contact with others and schools are no exception. This advice is based on data showing that people with Covid-19 can transmit the virus before realizing that they have it. If your child's school requires or encourages the use of cloth face masks, consider these tips-

**a:** Wearing cloth face masks should be a priority especially when it's hard to maintain social distance, such as on the bus, at carpool drop off or pickup and when entering the building.

**b:** Have multiple cloth face masks available for your child. Provide your child with a clean mask and backup mask each day and a clean, reusable bag for them to store the mask when they cannot wear it, such as lunch.

**c:** Label your child's mask clearly so it not confused with another child's.

**d:** Practice properly putting on and taking off cloth face masks with your child while avoiding touching the cloth portions.

**e:** Remind your child that they should clean their hands before and after touching their mask.

**f:** Instruct your child to never share or trade masks with others.

**g:** Talk to your child about the importance of wearing a face mask and model wearing them as a family.

**h:** Discuss with your child why some people may not be able to wear face mask for medical reasons.

**Keep hands clean:** Practice hand washing at home with your child and explain why it's important to wash his or her hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before and after eating, coughing, sneezing or adjusting a face mask. To prevent rushing, suggest washing hands for as long as it takes to sing the happy Birthday song twice. When hand washing is not available, suggest that your child use an alcohol based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Also explain that he or she should avoid touching his or her eyes, nose and mouth.

If your child attends in person schooling, develop daily routines before and after schooling that foster healthy habits such as packing a backup face mask and hand sanitizer in the morning and washing their hands as soon as they come home.

#### 4: Suggestions

1: Educated and learners should be trained to utilise online teaching learning process using technology. Policy should be adopted by Government/educational institutions to provide free internet and free digital gadgets to all learners in order to encourage online learning as a result of which people would get engaged and remain safe during Pandemic (Pravat, 2020 c).

2: Immediate measures are required to lessen the effects of the Pandemic on job offers, internship programs and students.

3: Many online learning platforms offer multiple programmes on the same subjects with different levels of certification, methodology and assessment parameters. So the quality of programmes may differ across different online learning platforms. Therefore, establishment of quality assurance mechanisms and quality benchmark for online learning programmes must be developed and offered by secondary board education in Uttar Pradesh, India keeping in view of rapid growth of the online learning platforms.

4: If the Pandemic Covid-19 continues, new approaches for academic assessment should be adopted by educational institutions. Academic assessment of the students may be done through online mode or through quizzes and small projects.

5: Government should support senior secondary education to strengthen their resources to run virtual educational activities. Students also need to be supported with better access to internet and technology

as most students are unable to afford the facilities. During this pandemic, the senior secondary education should be focus more on virtual educational activities including television, radio and web-based education.

6: Who has recently pointed out that the Covid-19 may never be eradicated and people will have to live with it. It is important to put this on the table: this virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities and this virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities and this virus may never go away. HIV has not gone away, but we have come to terms with the virus. I think there are no promises in this and there are no dates. This disease may settle in to a long problem or it may not be WHO emergencies expert Mike Ryan said in an online briefing (Sandhya Ramesh, 2020). With reference to this statement, many countries are now planning to continue education through distance or virtual mode and Uttar Pradesh should be plan for the same also.

7: Across the globe, Indian traditional knowledge is well known for its scientific innovations, values and benefits to develop sustainable technologies, medicines and this knowledge systems in different fields should be integrated with a present day main stream senior secondary education system.

#### Conclusion

This study has outlined various effects of Covid-19 on senior secondary education in Uttar Pradesh, India. The Recent pandemic created an opportunity for change in pedagogical approaches and introduction of virtual education in all levels of education. As we do not know how long the pandemic situation will continue, a gradual move towards the online/virtual education is the demand of the current crisis. MHRD and U.P. Government have launched many virtual platforms with online depositories, e-book and other online teaching/learning materials. Combination of the traditional technologies (radio, TV, landline phones) with mobile/web technologies to a single platform with all depositories would enhance better accessibility and flexibility to education. This would involve upgrading the service platform to enable it to meet the required volume of educational demands of students. All service provider need to be mobilized to provide proper access to the educational service platforms to the disadvantaged groups of population also. Virtual education is the most preferred mode of education at this time of crisis due to the outbreak of Covid-19.

The post Covid-19 education seems to be an education with widely accepted online/virtual education which may perhaps be a parallel system of education. This article has not covered any statistical analysis on impact of Covid-19 on secondary education however further in depth study with statistical research may also be undertaken.

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