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## More monkey, less human

**M**uch before humans of 2020 got pandemic-bitten, a friend looked up at the Delhi sky in disgust and said, 'We're really monkeying around with our environment.' Well, he was right to some extent because many would feel that monkeys are still more human than humans because humans are forever monkeying around with disruptions.

Talking of monkeys, not many are aware that the three monkeys of Gandhi aren't really a copyright idea of the great man. This triplet was popular as a lucky charm with British soldiers since the 1900s and many of them carried little statuettes with them as they went into battle during World War I. The Gandhian interpretation of not listening to, not looking at, or not speaking what is evil is a gift from Japanese Buddhism where they are called Mizaru, Kikazaru, and Iwazaru. A sensational twist was given to this sedate Buddhist proverb by Osho Rajneesh who interpreted them as a warning to not listen to, not look at, or not speak the truth if one wants a better life in the present world. This is because first disturbs your own reassuring lies that you are comfortable with, the second interferes with lies about God, heaven and hell that religions have propagated, and the third will instigate mobs of slumbering intellects to judge, censure, condemn, and denounce you.

There exists a fourth monkey, Shizaru, who does no evil. Osho defines doing as making known the truth. He recommends that making known or talking about one's own joys truthfully will fetch only envy, curses, and wishes that only mean to harm. This brings in destruction and, therefore, according to him Shizaru must not share one's truth.

### The FOUR monkeys in a post-covid world

What sort of interpretation will the four monkeys prefer in a world that has been turned upside-down by the corona virus? This virus is neither a Buddhist nor has the marketing instincts of Osho. However, the pandemic has certainly changed the way people are going to behave in the post-covid period.

The first monkey is the individual who will need to STOP hearing suave gimmicky pitches of politicians, advertisers of inferior products, employers with vested

interests, relatives and friends with sugar-coated disruptive ideas, and even pseudo intellectuals on the social media. And yes, stop hearing people asking you to flout social distancing norms or inciting you not to wear masks, or pushing you to enter crowded spaces the almighty will protect you. Bullshit! You are the epicenter of change and so 'you must be the change you want to see in the world', as Gandhi put it decades back.

The second monkey is obviously the governments who will need to STOP seeing points-of-view that are not aimed to help life of citizen get better... from a global perspective. Thus every facet from economy to environment and from volatile borders to divided mind-sets will have to be reset to follow the rules of global harmony.

The third monkey is the businessman who will need to STOP speaking or even endorsing words and ideas that hurt the cause of humanity. If this sounds like a socialist chant, then so be it. People must convince the business community to ensure that this happens as Gandhi did tell us that 'nobody can hurt me without my permission'.

I believe the fourth monkey in the post-covid scenario will be the media and it needs to STOP being the mouth-piece of untruth. Lots of journalists have forgotten that reporting is flawed when you begin to subtly suggest answers or start creating scenarios that their channel or paper has an affinity towards. I guess it is time for them to unlearn their flaws and relearn the rules of journalism.

Change happens when fear leaves. Change happens when the fear of failing leaves. Change happens when fear of being mocked leaves. Suzy Kassem wrote: 'A lion does not flinch at laughter coming from a hyena. A gorilla does not budge from a banana thrown at it by a monkey. A nightingale does not stop singing its beautiful song at the intrusion of an annoying woodpecker. Whenever you should doubt your self-worth, remember the lotus flower. Even though it plunges to life from beneath the mud, it does not allow the dirt that surrounds it to affect its growth or beauty.'

**Remember, YOU are the epicenter of change, not Covid-19.**

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Rimli Bhattacharya

# HOW TO MOTIVATE YOUR CHILD TO READ

**S**

hilpa and Shekhar were just back from the United States. They had been abroad for 15 years where Shilpa had worked as a school teacher. The couple were initially very skeptic on how their 11 year old son Rahul would adjust in India. But Rahul proved to be very adjusting with the Indian ways, his school mates and also his neighbors. Though things seemed hunky dory Shilpa grumbled about the lack of a public library for children here in the city. She said back in the US it was mandatory that each parent read stories to the child for at least half an hour a day. Rahul even had a membership with a local library club and that he loved to read. Reading is important for overall development and I couldn't agree more with her.

But mind you all children are not Rahul and also we do not have a public library exclusively for them either. While taking away a book from the hands of a voracious reader can be hard, on the other hand inculcating in a reluctant child the habit of reading a book might look difficult, and sometimes impossible. I loved to read and I had developed this habit right in my childhood from my mother. I needed no nudge. Reading came to me naturally.

Motivated children will actively seek out for books to enjoy and are very happy reading the same quietly by themselves. Motivation is the key to become a successful reader. So naturally when a child is fueled by inspiration s/he will read frequently, and gradually propelling themselves as successful readers. S/he learns well and it is the reading which will prove beneficial for his/her overall development.

There are exceptions. As I said earlier some children loathe reading, especially the ones who are grappling. To a certain extent coaxing and convincing the child to read might work but as a parent I say one needs to first identify the reason for this reluctance. Once we know the cause it becomes easier for a parent to motivate the child to read.

## Does your reluctant child fit in any of these two categories?

**Reading is difficult** – Do we adults choose a hard work as a leisure activity? Of course not.

The same is applicable in case of the child. The one who has to work on reading will never find reading to be a fun or leisure activity. S/he might have issues with fluency, or might have gaps in his/her phonogram expertise. Look for signs if the child is struggling with words or hasn't developed strong vocabulary skills. So that calls for enormous working on improving reading and the child will never be ready for that. Address the areas of weaknesses. The better s/he gets the more s/he will enjoy. Also remember improving reading requires lot of patience unlike watching television or playing video games. Make sure you cut down on your child's screen time. Parenting is not that easy.

**Reading is tedious** – It might happen that your child doesn't find reading hard but finds no charm in it either. Look out for the reading material which motivates them. Does your daughter love dancing? Does your son love gardening? Do they have any hobbies? Once you get to know their areas of interest gift them books accordingly. Here you are inspiring your

child to read and which in turn will increase their enthusiasm for reading books.

As a parent here are some pointers of mine on how to motivate a child to get into the habit of reading.

**Tip # 1: Read yourself** – Your child sees you as a mentor and that is how they learn. Set good examples by reading yourself and you will find



your child doing the same. If your child is settled with a few books make sure that you too grab a book or magazine yourself and provide a company to your child. Avoid checking your phone and scrolling social media sites (it is difficult in today's world but not impossible) but rediscover the fun in reading rather than wasting time on gadgets and social media. The child is bound to learn the importance of reading.

**Tip # 2: Practice reading from day one** – Children love routine and once you program them into reading from day one you will find that they have turned into a book worm. This is applicable for babies as well as there is no such thing as starting too early. All babies respond to the lull rhythm of a voice reading aloud. Make reading a part of your daily routine and your child will grow up looking forward to it.

**Tip # 3: Surround your child with reading material** – With increased collection of reading resources the child is bound to perform better on standardized tests. Evoke the reading habit by having a vast collection of interesting books, comics and magazines of his/her reading level. Just as Shilpa complained that we have no public library for the children why not turn your home into a small library?

**Tip # 4: Time you consider reading an activity** – In this competitive era the child is often shoved between studies and extracurricular activities. Reading might seem like an unwelcome drudgery. See to it that you consider reading a part of your daily activity and set a scheduled time for it. If nothing, then bed time readings are welcome.

**Tip # 5: Create a cozy reading nook** – It's not necessary that you revamp your house with lot of bookshelves. Children only need a cozy space to read. It can be the couch or chair in the room where your child sleeps. Pick a comfortable spot that has enough light and space to keep books which will help your child in connecting reading with comfort and coziness. And yes the complains will be less and you will be a happy parent.

**Tip # 6: Let the child decide what to read** – Do not limit your choice of books only with one genre. Children love fiction, comics, picture books, graphic novels and children's magazine. Let the child decide what s/he wants to read.


**Tip # 7: The sibling game** – Do indulge your reluctant reader to read a picture book to the younger sibling. Not only the child will have reading practice but will also consider reading as fun.

**Tip # 8: Buddy reading** – Also known as paired reading or partnered reading it improves the child's fluency and makes reading an enjoyable activity for him/her.

**Tip # 9: The humor magic** – Do settle down with a funny book with your reluctant child and read out a humorous chapter. Read only the first chapter and then stop. The child needs to read himself/herself to find out what happens next.

**Tip # 10: Reread the favorite books** – Yes it is indeed a tiring task for an adult to re read the same story again and again. But it has been my experience that this is also one of the ways how children learn to read themselves. They love pointing out your errors, spot missing words and lot more. And before you know it, the child will read the story back to you! Rewarding isn't it?

You must be wondering that I started the narration with Shilpa and Shekhar's son Rahul. And then I mentioned about libraries and books. I also mentioned that both I and Rahul loved to read. Then where did I get these pointers and why did I discuss them? Just so you know, it's my eleven year old daughter on whom I had to conduct these experiments, though not all so that she develops interest in reading rather than watching television and playing video games. To certain extent I am to be blamed. Being a single mother I was involved in too many activities that reading out to my daughter took a back seat.

Albert Einstein had once said that if you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales. Though not fairy tales but I am glad that I could at least inspire my daughter into reading books by reading out them myself and following some of the above practices. In case you have better and additional tips to motivate little readers please do let me know. This is a genuine request from a mother to all the readers reading this essay. 

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Arvind Passey

**WILL A  
POST-COVID INDIA  
BE ANY DIFFERENT?**

**F**rom learning to earning, from survival to career, from passion in relationships to passion in professions, from choices one wants to choices that exist, from what was to what is... this pandemic has the power to roll over and transform entire lifestyle landscapes, conceptual environment, and everything else as we have known or experienced. That the post-covid world is going to be different, is obvious. What remains a conjecture is the manner in which change is going to express itself. There are definitely going to be changes in the way the countries of the world perceive each other, the way we look at each other, the way education is going to head and the way job profiles may change.

Some of these changes have already begun to get clear, for instance, the role of armed forces may get broader if we consider the way the three arms were directed towards the expression of gratitude to covid warriors. The mainstream media has been constantly heckled for either being hopelessly propping up the lost cause of literate leftist liberals or being in a down-in-the-dumps sycophantic mode. We have been seeing how news reporting has been a blatant attempt to paint words on hoarding and placards, so to say and it is no surprise to find a lot of people calling it the lame-stream media. Is it time for the spread of real news to become the privileged option for the online world? Only time will tell... but a change is definitely on and any form of media that survives will be the one that shapes up.

So yes, this contagion is no more about just Covid-19 or just another viral pandemic or conflict needs a resolution... it is about all-pervasive changes that have decided to usher in a new era.

**This contagion is no more about just Covid-19 or just another viral pandemic or conflict needs a resolution... it is about all-pervasive changes that have decided to usher in a new era.**

online content, community, and even lifestyle. An epidemiologist Gary Slutkin compared the maps of killings in the US, violence in Rwanda, and cholera outbreaks in Bangladesh and found that the cluster-and-outward-spread logic was common to them all. A Yale sociologist found that the statistics of shootings in Canada showed clearly that 'for every 100 people who were shot, contagion would result in 63 follow-up attacks.' It is these kind of studies that led to the creation of R or reproduction number. It is these mathematical conclusions that are equally valid during the corona virus pandemic.

One solution to the violence contagion problems forwarded by sociologists and epidemiologists is sending in a team of 'violence interrupters' who use techniques like counselling victims, their friends and family to walk away from violent retaliation. This is the sort of solution that helps in the case of the present covid pandemic as well. Thus the mitigation of any contagion needs not only an in-depth analysis of reliable data but also the role of new technologies interacting with

**This is an age of contagion**

Adam Kucharski in his book 'The rules of Contagion' writes that a contagion is about why things spread and why they stop. He also points out that mathematics and models can be used to study contagious events. The book also points out that the word contagion can be applied in many ways... and this includes finances. The word 'financial contagion' has existed since the mid-nineties and the concept got a deeper and firmer footing during the 2008 financial crisis. Besides finances, contagion is connected to other diverse facets like violence and crime, ideas and internet memes,



human behavior as we have seen when paramedical teams enter hot-spots to not just talk about testing everyone in the zone but also isolating the patient and the need for others to go into a self-quarantine period. This is the sort of scientific breakthrough that may play a major role in tackling any future outbreaks like the one we are facing now.

**India vs other countries, statistically speaking**

It was in 1883 that Ronald Ross, a British surgeon, collected enough data to suggest that it took 48,000 mosquitoes to result in an average of one new human infection... and his conclusion was that removing or treating stagnant water would thus have a direct effect on the spread of infection. Thus rate of infection and rate of recovery matter just as much as steps taken to break the spread. If we compare this data, it is easily deduced that so far as strategic conflict resolution is concerned, India has been performing rather well so far. If the trend continues, the post-covid era may see India climbing a few notches up in the arena of political will and administrative strategic as well as tactical handling of a conflict. If this is equated to being a sort of world war, India is definitely leading the victory march.

The pan-India Covid-19 related figures, as on the 5th of May 2020, according to the statistics mentioned on Arogya app point to 46,433 infected cases, 12,727 recovered and 1,568 deceased. More than a million tests have been conducted over all the states so far.



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Let me compare these seven states of India with a country with the nearest population. Mexico has a population of 11.42 crore against 12.62 crores of Maharashtra and has 23,471 confirmed cases, 13,447 recovered, and 2,154 deceased. Gujarat with a population of 6.27 crore can be compared to South Africa with 5.78 crore which has 7,220 confirmed cases, 2,746 recovered, and 138 deaths. France with

State	Population	Infected cases	Recovered	Deaths
Maharashtra	11.42 crore	46,433	2,465	583
Gujarat	6.27 crore	5,804	1,195	319
Delhi	4.61 crore (NCR)	4,898	1,431	64
Madhya Pradesh	7.33 crore	2,942	798	165
Rajasthan	6.89 crore	3,061	1,394	77
TamilNadu	6.79 crore	3,550	1,409	31
Uttar Pradesh	20.42 crore	2,766	802	50

6.7 crore vs Madhya Pradesh with 7.33 crore has a much serious condition with 1,32,000 confirmed cases, 51,371 recovered, and 25,201 deaths. UK with 1,91,000 confirmed cases and 28,734 deceased has a population of 6.89 crore as against 6.66 crore of Rajasthan. Brazil with a population of 20.95 crore has 1,08,000 confirmed cases, 45,815 recovered, and 7,343 deceased and the Indian state that comes nearest in population is Uttar Pradesh with 20.42 crore. Turkey with a population of 8.2 crore is comparable in population with Tamil Nadu with 6.79 crore and has 1,28,000 confirmed cases, 68,166 recovered, and 3,461 deaths.

The purpose for this comparison is that India with 29 States and 7 UTs is a massive country with a population that may compare with just as many different countries in the world. We have limitations in number of hospitals, availability of Covid test kits, and Personal Protective Equipment. We have a mind-boggling diversity in not just our geography but also culture and religion... and yet to have been able to manage this crisis these past couple of months with the sort of figures mentioned, is worth a commendation.

**Transformation of post-covid social habits**

The population density of India is 424 people per sq km which is actually 29,500 people per sq km in Delhi. Now even if Netherlands is India's

neighbor on the global population index and has 464 people per sq km, this figure seems angelic when we are talking about social distancing if only urban areas are considered.

**The work-related acenario in post-covid India is definitely going to have WFH making critical inroads into work culture.**

Social shoving, social scuffling, social suffocation, social scavenging, and also social side-stepping are realities that people from many developed countries may not even comprehend the way those from densely packed countries like India do. I remember discussing poverty with a bank executive in York more than twenty years back and what she said, surprised me. She said: 'We lived in the poorer quarters of my city. I had to share my room with my brother.'







I can only imagine why social distancing appears like a somewhat surreal canvas of a corner of this world where some people gallop through only when equipped with rolls of toilet paper and cartons of mineral water. So far as India is concerned, space considerations are directly proportional to the way we go about managing our daily needs. Denser areas have more individuals queuing up for smaller portions and thus the frequency and intensity of violations of social distancing is larger.

If it is correct that adversity is a harsh but great teacher, a post-covid India must see a 360 degree transformation in social habits which include social distancing. For a country of the size of India, an ongoing process of surveillance and evaluation, though difficult, is an essential task that will catalyse this change. If achieved, this one factor will create a formidable impact in the area of governance.

### Preventing people from going in the wrong direction

Any conflict is ultimately a battle between

a pessimist and an optimist. Battles like the one that we are currently fighting against the Corona virus is fought in the mind. Yes, there are hospitals, quarantine wards, doctors, and other para-medical staff doing their work... but the population of a country the size of India will have trouble built into it. Imagine what happens if people do not have enough options and incentives to stay at home and follow the norms of social distancing... imagine the chaos if bored and anxiety-burdened psyches decide to rush out. Yes, it is the responsibility of the government to take care of jobs, finances, food, and safety and there are steps that are already being considered and will be implemented. Meanwhile, it is the individuals who must take care to contribute in a positive way.

Let me also add here that an article in HBR Ascend clarifies that so far as the definition of 'contagion' is concerned, even 'feelings are more contagious in person, they can still be transmitted online — and by email, phone, or any other ongoing remote interaction with other people. In fact, isolation can increase social loneliness, which can dampen our mood, making us even more susceptible to negative emotional contagion. Given this, we can all benefit from becoming more aware of how we respond to emotional contagion during

this time, even if we're working at home.'

This is the reason why the social media today has an overdrive of people drawing, sketching, reading, writing, cooking, and so many other things. Equally true is the fact that a large number of people don't read and do not draw or sketch or paint. The pessimist sees people just sitting and forwarding messages that make no sense at all. Many, according to the pessimist, are busy pushing whatever it is that they wish to push – ideas, books, products that don't sell otherwise, and even their own below-average talents. Then there are those who sit and worry... or those who are unfortunate enough to be willing to be led to do something as foolish as trying to walk hundreds of miles away from wherever they are. There are many who are busy milking a crisis... by words or actions that have all the vile ideas that were born to mislead. The pessimist hisses: 'Who is healing? Earth? Fewer people driving around is only a small part that most see and is probably insignificant to be initiating any healing at all. I don't see even hope making inroads because hopelessness is fast overwhelming everything else.' What matters in such times is positivity and more and more individuals who choose to be optimists.

### WFH status in the post-covid world

It is wiser than a virus, keeps the economy happy, gives impulse-driven relaxation a chance,

makes bosses seem like horned dudes who can only be heard barking out insane instructions, keeps organisations trim, makes catnaps possible... and allows us to go to work in pyjamas. You've got it if you murmured WFH.

Work-From-Home is going to strike humanity with full force once we're done dealing with Corona. Companies have obviously begun to realise that employee clutter can be immensely contained and offices kept for more important strategic wine and cheese get-togethers without having the compulsion to entertain even the riff-raff. CTCs can be reined-in, maintaining office space can become less bothersome, and online monitoring will cause lesser headaches to HR.

I believe a lot of companies might already have realised that Corona has actually introduced WFH without expensive workshops, training sessions in exotic locations, and without having to deal with a barrage of protest-dipped questions that make no sense at all.

Employees, on the other hand, have probably realised that the romanticism linked to WFH was, in reality, just a play of words. Fiction. A lot of friends have told me that WFH is a pain... in more than one way.

However, the work-related acenario in post-covid India is definitely going to have WFH making critical inroads into work culture.

Social shoving, social scuffling, social suffocation, social scavenging, and also social side-stepping are realities that people from many developed countries may not even comprehend the way those from densely packed countries like India do.



## Post-covid plans for education

Students in India are as excited and as nervous as teachers are during the learn-from-home phase going on. This is because in a country where a large percent of both school as well as higher education is propped on subsidies, online communication hasn't really been the norm yet. The covid outbreak led to this intense phase where everyone concerned (and this also includes administrators and managements) had to bring on the online alternative with no past experience in any of its modalities.


For education to go online it is both teachers and students who need to be there and exude confidence. Statistics point out that India has a billion phone connections with 87 percent being pre-paid which simply means that money invested in telephony is on a need basis. The country has 67 percent with a reasonable 3G or 4G internet connection and around 13 percent households have laptops or PCs. What is more interesting is the 10:40:40:10 ratio of technology grading which means 10 percent belong to the privileged class with home access to broadband through multiple devices, 40 percent have internet through mobile another 40 percent have mobiles without internet, and the remaining 10 percent have neither access to mobile nor internet. What also needs to be considered is that neither access to the hardware nor internet can be a guarantee of comfort with online learning.

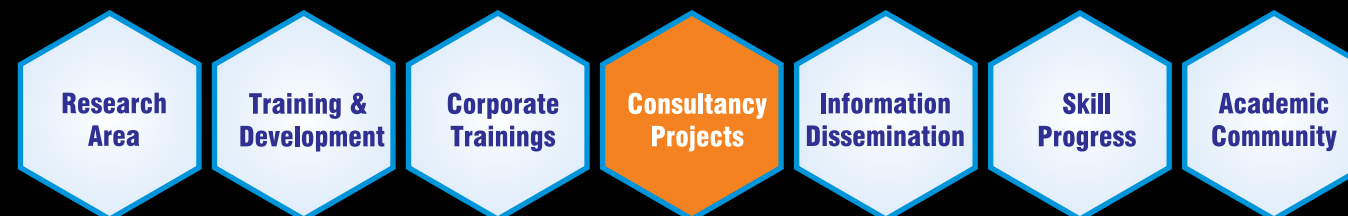
What is surprising is the way both teachers and students accepted this challenge and within days we have reports of even tier 2 and tier 3 towns loving the concept of education through hastily but painstakingly shot home-videos. Applications from Zoom to platforms on Google and Microsoft and even other smaller and relatively unknown apps have been used for online learning extensively. We are a nation where notes and study material are quite literally creating their own hungama online. E-learning, webinars, classes on whatsapp, zoom sessions, Google docs, and even podcasts are a part of the new subset of terminology that have been

adopted by the education sector in India. This sector, by the way is massive with nearly 1.5 million schools and colleges. Besides a new aura of comfort with online communication of even the more complex facets of education, another vital post-covid development is going to be the proliferation of regional language online interaction for learning. A report by Google India and KPMG confirms that nearly 73% of the Indian internet users are going to interact in a regional language by 2021. The vernacular approach has even earlier attempted to make inroads but the impact has always been doubtful. A post-covid India is also going to see this rise in vernacular power finally 'bridging the country's digital divide'.

**India with 29 States and 7 UTs is a massive country with a population that may compare with just as many different countries in the world. We have limitations in number of hospitals, availability of Covid test kits, and Personal Protective Equipment. We have a mind-boggling diversity in not just our geography but also culture and religion... and yet to have been able to manage this crisis these past couple of months with the sort of figures mentioned, is worth a commendation.**

## Confidence

The single word that matters today is confidence. Every step that the government has taken to counter the pandemic has been full of confidence without the negativity associated with arrogance. It is this simple form of confidence that is going to lead us into a renewed India in the post-covid era where a transformed reality is going to be accepted by us all. 



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COVID-19 and Higher Education

# IMPACT, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

**T**he COVID-19 virus pandemic is rampaging across the world with untold loss to economy and life. This virus has brought even the mighty countries to their knees; in its spread it has obliterated national boundaries. With no medical cure available at the moment, it has ruthlessly affected one and all irrespective of nationalities, rich-poor class, gender, social status, or even religious faith. As both the number of infected and the number of dead rises, governments across the world have to go through the necessary economic evil of lockdown measures that stifle jobs and economic growth. The priority, globally, is to save lives because growth can come later.

It is a wise thing to consider past as a guide to understand or forecast the future. When we are dealing with a pandemic as unprecedented as due to this COVID-19, how do we anticipate the future? The impact of this pandemic and the resultant challenges are something that the higher education sector is currently grappling with.

## Impact

With plummeting demand and disruptions in supply chain, every sector of the economy has been impacted adversely, directly or indirectly including certain businesses facing closure, the education sector is uniquely placed, however. According to UNESCO, as of April 23, 2020 191 countries have implemented nationwide closure of academic activities, impacting about over 90 percent of the world's students totalling over 1.5 billion students! The visible disruptions in academics are for all to see in terms of disturbances or interruptions in academic sessions, admission processes, examinations, evaluations of courses, convocation ceremonies (the highlight of a student's life), etc.

While coping strategies are being put in place by institutions worldwide, many challenges seem insurmountable, and, perhaps, the biggest one is the uncertainty about how long this disruption will last. This uncertainty hangs over the choice of what tools to use to continue imparting education, the amount of investment that can be made, the extent of retraining to be undertaken, and several other pertinent aspects of it.

## Challenges

The challenges for students come not just from schedule disruptions, but there are over-imposing socio-economic implications considering the widespread prevalence of student debt, issues of migrant students' accommodation and travel back to their homes in a lockdown situation, the difficult transition to online learning due to both lack of technical savviness and lack of availability of the required hardware, and untrained

**According to UNESCO, as of April 23, 2020 191 countries have implemented nationwide closure of academic activities, impacting about over 90 percent of the world's students totalling over 1.5 billion students!**

**The fact that students in many of the impacted countries have unequal access to technology is something that will become glaring as classes attempt to move online.**


instructors who suddenly have to make the difficult transition to online mode. The fact that students in many of the impacted countries have unequal access to technology is something that will become glaring as classes attempt to move online. In some countries legal roadblocks in attending online classes by students on full-time student visa are some unique issues that have cropped up. Pedagogies developed over many years with concerted effort and collaboration now have to be revised if schedules and calendars have to be maintained in this challenging distance-learning environment to carry out academic activities online.


**In terms of how effective the move towards online classrooms will be, that will depend on a number of factors, including but not limited to:**

- Technical preparedness of the institutions and faculty to conduct the sessions using digital tools,
- Preparedness of students to be able to access and absorb academic contents online,
- Availability of content that can be delivered online as well as that can be weaved into online instruction,
- Adequacy of monitoring and evaluation processes that will need to replace physical processes,
- With almost all contents available on the web to students, developing pedagogy that is conducive to learning and evaluation that is not memory recall based but learning based. This perhaps will be the biggest challenge.

## Opportunities

The move towards conducting academic sessions online is fraught with challenges, as listed above, but there are many opportunities as well, which are the silver linings and creating a new education ecosystem:

 **Technology access:** In the immediate timeline, there are constraints on availability of resources required for access but in the medium term, the pandemic response by the education sector will boost technology access and make it democratic.

 **Copyrights:** In response to the crisis, many authors and universities have made contents, including books and articles, freely available. It appears as if they have temporarily suspended their copyrights. This has further democratised access to content.



**Research collaborations and partnership schemes:** The crisis has rallied researchers worldwide and has resulted in deepening collaborations between international educational institutions to make content and technology available widely.



**Virtual internships:** Students in tertiary level education have proactively started taking up virtual internships that make the most of the situation as well as help them comply with course credit requirements. This has been further facilitated by the explosion in availability of data as well as proliferation of data analysis techniques. Many of these internships are beneficial for industry as well given that they are focused on how businesses can cope with the prevailing situation.




**Sustainability:** The hope is that the present crisis will bring out the best in humanity and lead to a renewed focus on sustainability by both industry and academia. This will create additional opportunities for creating new higher education programmes focused on sustainability as well as attract talent to this much needed field.



**Expanding the base:** The biggest opportunity perhaps exists in the reskilling and upskilling that many potential candidates will be thinking about. In a sense, this pandemic offers an opportunity to tap a large segment of the population that was not considering tertiary level higher education in the first place. Job market pressures combined with a larger array of courses being made available will perhaps entice these fence sitters to finally take decision to enrol in a distance learning programme. In other cases where people have been furloughed or retrenched, the opportunity cost of a full-time, residential programme reduces, which can also lead to an increase in enrolment in higher education.



**Community building:** Physical isolation can at least partially be overcome by creating online communities of students, parents, and teachers. Used innovatively for this purpose, the kind of digital collaboration and instant messaging tools at our disposal can be a fantastic resource.

We are witnessing emergence of a new ecosystem for imparting education that is likely to be very different from what it was barely a couple of months ago and savvy adopters of the changes will have the first mover's advantage. 



**Prof. Asim Kumar Mishra**  
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IIM Lucknow

# RESPONDING to COVID-19 A Road Ahead For Corporate World

**T**he spread of COVID-19 is an epidemic affecting hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, with significant economic implications to linger for years to come. This is not the just another turn of the business cycle, but a shakeup of the world economic order. The economic impacts are beginning to be felt, and many economists are predicting a deep recession of unknown length. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has expressed that the coronavirus could cut global economic growth in half, with industries across the board facing fallout.

The pandemic has set foot in India and may lead the country towards a major slowdown.

The trade impact of the coronavirus epidemic for India estimated to be about 348 million dollars and the country figures among the top 15 economies most affected as slowdown of manufacturing in China disrupts world trade, according to a UN report.

Whereas according to Asian Development Bank (ADB) the Covid-19 outbreak could cost the Indian economy between \$387 million and \$29.9 billion in personal consumption losses. Remittances to India are likely to fall by 23% to \$64 billion this year as the pandemic impacts jobs and wages globally, Consumer spending (including summer essentials

such as home appliances, soft drink and ice cream) has taken the hit owing to the country's lockdown. The stock market has fallen leading to reduction in wealth effect. With lockdowns across markets, foreign buyers are postponing orders, and asking for hefty discounts. Goods in transit goods are also not moving. Those already dispatched are also finding no takers on various foreign ports. Low profitability and production disruptions along with low consumer spending has affected business sentiments and investments.

No doubt, its hardest time for business with no topline. As the coronavirus pandemic has upended our daily routines, staying focused and productive without clear boundaries can pose a challenge. Big, ambitious projects can be both friend and foe — inspiring us to do our best work but often intimidating us to the point of paralysis. The COVID-19 crisis is not only disruptive to every company, but it has created a “Big Reset”

I foresee seven different ways in which the business environment is likely to transform in the coming days

### The shift towards localisation

COVID-19 has been the black swan event that finally forced many companies, and entire

industries, to rethink and transform their global supply chain model. The shrinking of the supply chain footprint dynamic may accelerate as companies seek a different cost/resilience trade-off and look to localize production and sourcing.

This expects to lead more localization of supply chains, especially of essentials & for sectors which are strategically important.

### Going digital is imperative

Manual and on premise solutions no longer make the cut. Many

small, mid-sized and even global organizations today still rely on ad-hoc, manual processes to get the job done – but relying on error-prone manual administration only guarantees that eventually, processes will break. An ERP implementation may appear stable on the surface, but the moment trouble arises – a pandemic, for example – the system is effectively shut down, rendering it inaccessible if it is entirely on-premise. It's time to use these uncertain times as a wake-up call, and ensure safety and security is built-in to an organization's system from the get-go.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the value of IT and digital transformation across industries and businesses must utilize this time to speed up the transition. This would have far reaching implication on B2B, B2C, B2G services, commercial real estate, e-commerce, e-governance, cyber security, process automation etc.

### Cash is the king for the business

The crisis has reiterated that Cash is the king, which is less valuable on the balance sheet is today's most valuable asset. The crisis has retaliated that over levered companies are more vulnerable as compared to financially prudent companies.

**The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the value of IT and digital transformation across industries and businesses must utilize this time to speed up the transition.**

### Move towards the variable cost model

With revenue streams drying up, companies are forced to restructure their workforce. Reduced working hours, work without pay, salary cuts and downsizing the workforce are new norms which are expected to stay. More specifically, layoffs seem inevitable in the many sectors where cash flows have dried up almost completely. Small and mid-size local businesses would be the worst affected as they struggle to cover fixed costs. Businesses will now have to learn outsourcing to reduce the fixed cost.

### Building agility

“Crisis response” is not something you do once every few decades. Every company will have a “Black Swan” event on a periodic basis. With consumers moving online in reaction to coronavirus restrictions, companies will need to learn how to launch new e-commerce businesses quickly. Going forward, policies will need to evolve faster than the market and policymakers will need to be more responsive, inclusive and agile.

### Leadership matters no matter what

Leaders have to be now worried about revenue, executive and workplace safety, continuity, and offering sound and ethical policies to employees. There will be layoffs, restructuring, and many difficult financial and human decisions ahead.

Finally, let's just accept that most of the changes in The Big Reset are here to stay. Today's challenges have shown us that we need resilient enterprise systems to help us with these processes as they tie directly into resource productivity, utilization, project and business profitability, and other critical business metrics. Investing in an effective solution can revolutionize how you manage your projects and resources when the world throws you a curveball. 📧

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# Origin and Spread of CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC (COVID-19)

Coronavirus epidemic (COVID-19) also called 2019-nCoV, 2019 Novel Coronavirus emerged from Wuhan in China in December 2019 and from there it has spread across the world. Today 210 countries around the world have reported cases of Covid-19, 49 countries around the world are currently in full or partial lockdown. There are currently over 2.7 million cases diagnosed worldwide and 190,000 deaths (Worldometer, 2020). It is an unprecedented crisis in human history in terms of speed of spread of COVID-19 and its impact on national economies, global trade, industries, and daily life.

**Dr. Rajesh K Pillania**  
Professor of Strategy  
MDI, Gurgaon



## Impact on Industry

This epidemic has huge negative and some positive impact on the industry.

According to UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the global economy could shrink by up to 1 percent in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, and it may contract even further if restrictions on the economic activities are extended without adequate fiscal responses. With around 100 countries closing national borders in the last one month, this pandemic has disrupted cross border movements of people and good and international trade.

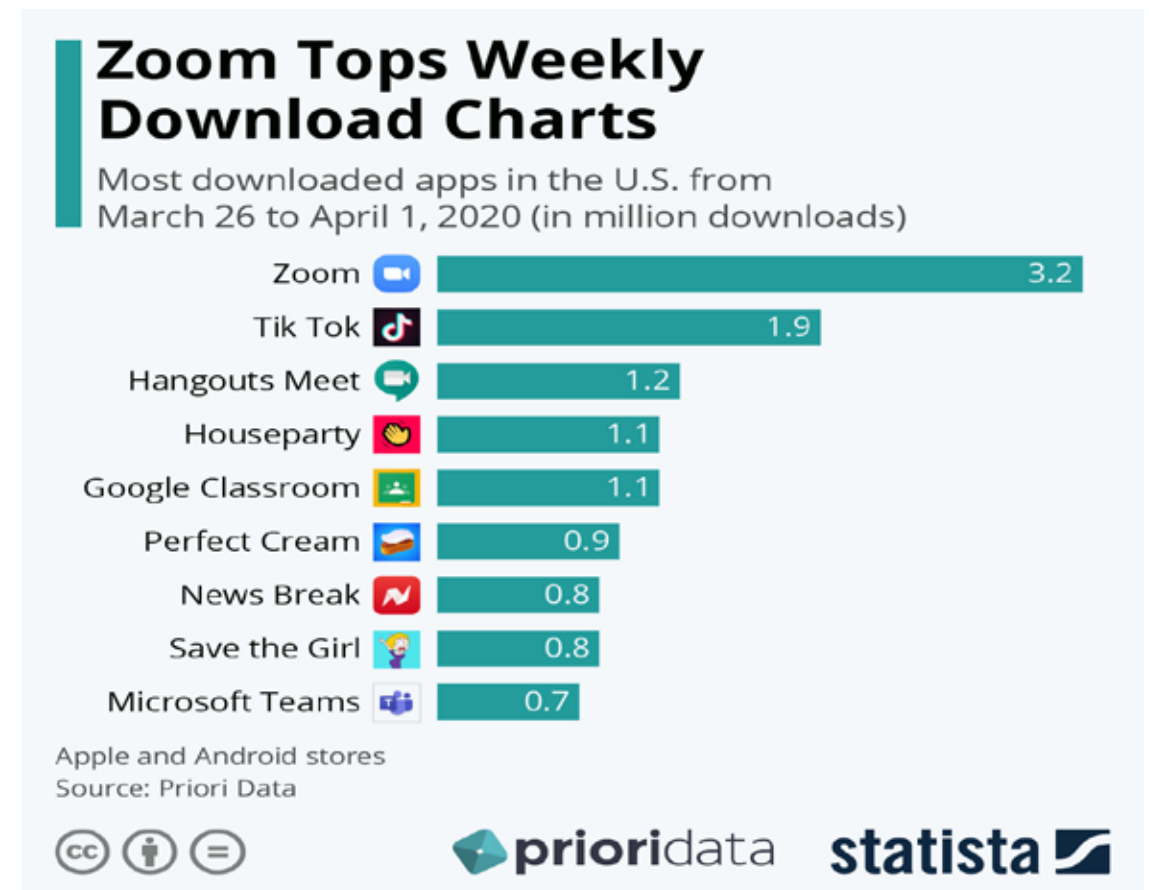
A McKinsey Global Institute analysis, based on multiple sources, indicates that the shock to our livelihoods from the economic impact of virus-suppression efforts could be the biggest in nearly a century. In Europe and the United States, this is likely to lead to a decline in economic activity in a single

quarter that proves far greater than the loss of income experienced during the Great Depression (McKinsey 2020). A UN report from ILO highlights that lockdown is currently affecting 2.7 billion workers, representing 81 percent of the world's workforce. Employment contraction through layoffs or working hours' reductions equivalent to 195 million full-time workers will be felt through the second quarter of the year (ILO, 2020).

The impact is across the globe but there are a few countries like Taiwan that can handle the pandemic without getting affected by it much and without closing its economy.

The impact is widespread but it has impacted certain industries very hard such as tourism, hospitality, and aviation. And few industries have got new momentum such as online communication platforms such as zoom and others (as shown in Fig 1).

Figure 1: Rise of Video Platforms



Source: World Economic Forum April 2020.

The economic growth and industrial growth is generally criticized for its lack of focus on environment and sustainability. One positive impact of the pandemic is a reduction in pollution levels and a breather for mother earth, other species on planet earth, and sustainability.

There is another positive impact in terms of focus on innovation. We have seen great examples of innovation across industries, moving entire workforces home, cross country collaboration, and sharing of open-source material to make ventilators, masks, visors and the utilization of 3D printing to fill in where supply chains have failed.

### Impact on Higher Education

There is both a negative and positive impact on higher education.

“We expect rated universities in all of our current jurisdictions – US, Canada, UK, Australia, Singapore, and Mexico – to enroll fewer students for the next academic year than planned, due to the outbreak,” said Jeanne Harrison, Vice President, and Senior Analyst at Moody’s. (Moody’s Investor Services, 2020).

However, another way to look at it is, one industry that is going to gain out of COVID-19 is for sure is higher education in general and online higher education in particular. For this these institutions need to come up with innovative approaches. In an era where unemployment rates are going higher and higher, many people will try to upskill or upgrade to be fit enough to get back in the job market when it improves.

Higher education institutions need to come up with innovative ways to create value for this big size of the market by creating innovative ways to support this upsurge in the need for upskilling. One innovation needs to be in the way fees are charged. Maybe to start schemes like, learn now and pay a 1 or 2 later or some variation of it. Travel restrictions may last past the start of the next semester so institutes need to adapt to the unique needs of the situation.



### The way forward: What Industry and Higher Education Institutions need to do?

COVID-19 is a reality and it is going to stay here, till some vaccine is not innovated. It might come by year-end if Oxford University vaccine and other vaccines in the trial shows positive results or might take some time and come in 2021 or 2022. We need to

accept this reality and move forward accordingly.

To survive the challenges posed by COVID-19, governments, international organizations, industry, and higher education institutes need to demonstrate agility and innovation. Utilizing technology, to allow workers and students to work remotely, present content online, implement social distancing in workplaces and places of learning and secure alternative supply chains will allow this to take place.

### Conclusion

We are at the beginning of the global battle against COVID-19. There may be a second wave and possibly more, and the survival of both educational institutes and industries depends on how agile we are in responding to the current crisis and how we innovate and pivot if necessary out of this crisis.  

*(The author acknowledges inputs from Ms. Dearbhla O’Reilly)*

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# INDIA'S APPROACH in its **Fight against Coronavirus**

Some Management Perspectives

**F**

or the last two months the world has been taken over by the novel coronavirus. It has indiscriminately infected 2.9 million people with an alarming death toll of 200,000 people affecting 210 countries across the globe. Evidently, most of the people on the planet have not experienced a pandemic of this nature. While there are about 65,000 deaths in the USA with a population of about 320 million, death per one million population is 197, whereas the same statistics for India appears to be in a mitigating state. To date, India has reported 26,917 cases [1, 2] and 1233 deaths in a country of 1.3 billion population, making it close to 0.9 deaths per million population.

As we know, the Covid-19 global pandemic is an unforeseen uncertainty; hence any attempt to make scenarios-based planning (as we teach in B-school) may not work. In the book "Managing the Unknown" [3] it says that in such a situation what will help is a trial and error learning (learn as we move with the problem).

The real problem in a pandemic is that the demand of goods and services are uncertain and the demand keeps changing as the pandemic is spreading. This triggers a problem for managing the inventory and

loss, an early lockdown is found to be effective. It is a given that the economic benefits of a lockdown will boil down to the fundamental question as to what is the number of lives saved, the economic value of a human life and what is the benefit (or value) of number of lives saved? Based on the compensation provided by the Government of India or various state governments on an accidental death case on a road, economic value of life becomes INR 600,000. This economic value for an individual life at this rate may not justify a lockdown. However, if we value life at the living standard of the

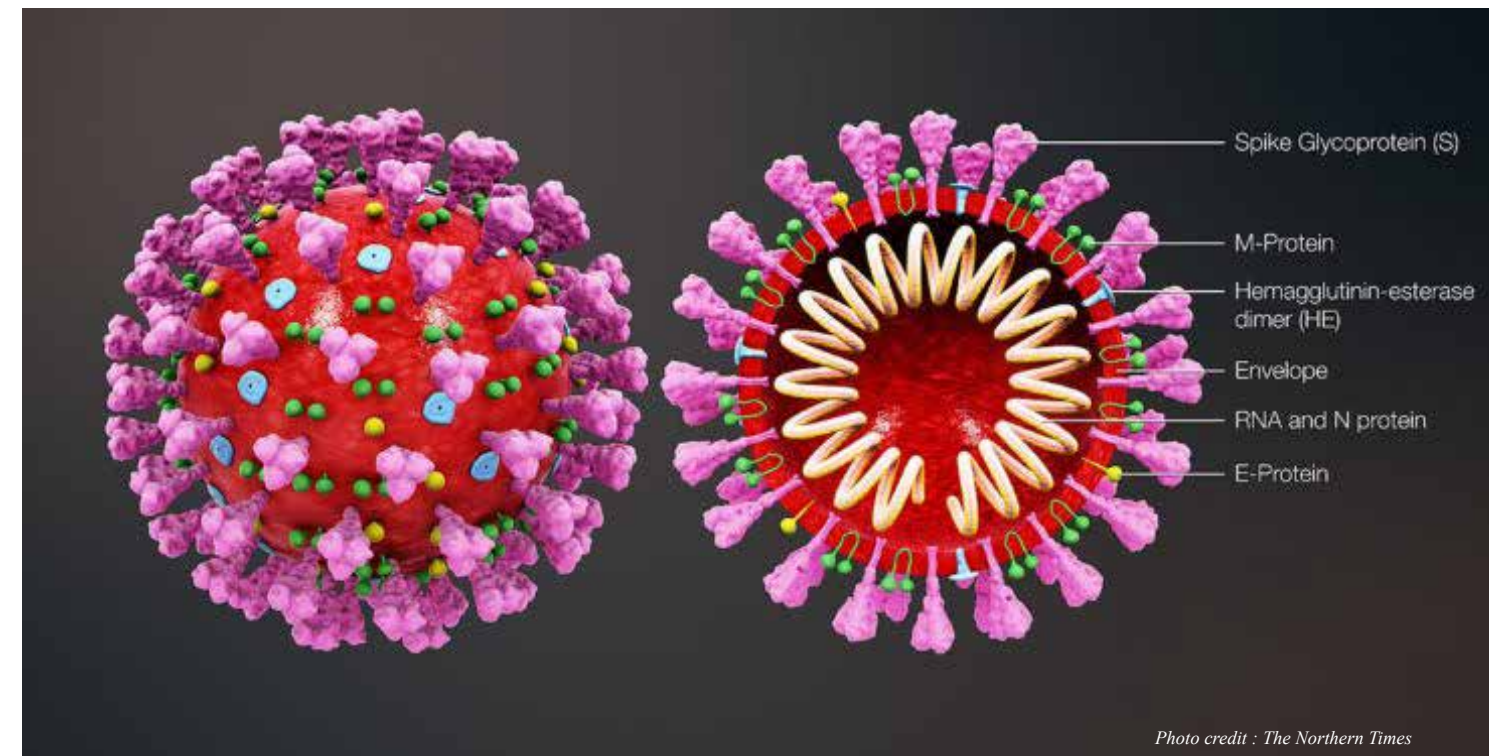


Photo credit : The Northern Times

results in a supply chain upheaval. Here are some of the operations management techniques that possibly helped India.

### Being Proactive

The best way to handle the situation is to take early action. When the total number of reported cases in India[1,2] was 499 (March 23), the death toll was 23. India decided to go on a complete lockdown. At this point USA had 44,400 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 689 deaths on March 23, 2020. At this time, Italy reported 69,000 cases and 68,00 deaths and the U.S. did not enforce large scale quarantine. No matter what the critics of lockdown argue in terms of economic

population of the US at 7.5 million USD to 10 million USD per live saved, then saving 100,000 lives by an early lockdown will make saving a trillion USD dollar and certainly justify the decree.

### Reduce Demand with an Early lockdown

If we make an International comparison, we will find that while USA has 2.9 beds per 1000 and 2.6 physicians per 1000 population [4], Italy has 3.4 hospital beds and 4.1 physicians per 1000, South Korea has 11.4 hospitals and 2.4 physicians per 1000, India has only 0.7 hospitals and 0.8 Physicians per 1000. In other words, if the early lockdown was not enforced in India, it may not be in a position to handle the pandemic and its aftermath. So the best strategy



for India was to reduce the demand and not let the pandemic spiral out of control. With an early lockdown, it actually reduced the immediate future demand for beds, ventilators, personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, sanitizers and the like. India had about 1.4 million of hospital beds. This in real terms reduces to 100,000 beds only if the length of stay is 14 days for an average patient. If the crisis goes out of control, there would have been serious shortage of hospital beds and India may have needed tens of thousands of beds per week.

This adept decision bought us time to create capacities for manufacturing, procuring and resourcing from abroad.

### Create a Capacity for Products and Equipment

One of the important machines in this scenario is the requirement of ventilators. It is vital when it comes to saving the lives of critically ill patients. There are a total of seven ventilator manufactures in the country in Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Thane, Vadodara, Mysore and New Delhi. Within a time span of two months India has seen a dramatic advancement in the manufacture of ventilators. Initially the plants produced 3000 equipment per month and ever since March the production has increased exponentially that currently we have a total of 50,000 ventilators in the country.

Another immediate urgency was the need to create masks. Masks are essential and it curbs the transmission of virus through egress and ingress. However, according to a video by Dr. Devi Shetty, a renowned heart surgeon in India, N-95 masks should be reserved for infected patients, doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals alone who are at a higher risk of contracting the virus. Several organizations and individuals came forward to make reusable masks. For example, volunteers at Blind School Association, Ahmedabad supplied ordinary reusable masks.



Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India

### Create Capacity for Beds for future demand

India has decided to have ITBP Border camp as quarantine centres and putting people in 14-day strict quarantine has helped to curb the spread of coronavirus. Anticipating that the problem may go out of hand, India decided to convert hotels and schools to temporary hospitals.

### Create Mobile Facility or Hospitals

Indian railways have converted railway coaches to hospitals. This is one of the brilliantly pragmatic ideas that the Government of India has come up with. Indian Railways passenger coaches can travel to any part of the country. If these passenger coaches are converted to Covid-19 hospitals, the doctors, nurses, and ICUs can all move to the city or town or villages. As of today, 20000-30000 mobile hospital beds have been created with probably no other parallel in the world.

### Need for a Unified Command

According to an editorial article [6] New England Journal of Medicine, it suggests a period of 10 weeks to flatten the coronavirus growth curve. While he wrote this article in the context of the United States, it could be applicable to India as well. According to the article, there is need for a Unified Command, under the head of the state and it appoints a person under the Direct Command of the head of the state. The commander has the respect of all the people in the country and must have the authority to execute orders.

It is necessary to mention the coherent decisions implemented by the Prime Minister of India. He has led from the front. He addressed the nation on TV and declared a three-week lockdown. The initial three week period was increased to another three weeks as part of the second phase of lockdown. Had he not taken the critical decision for an immediate

lockdown, India might have been in a rather precarious situation.

### Use innovative ideas to Mobilize Law Enforcement authority

Barring some unfortunate incidents, we found that the country was unified in observing quarantine. This was also the time when people got to see the creative side of our police force that otherwise display their heavy-handed side. In Kolkata, the Police sang a famous song from a Satyajit Ray movie “Oray Sharabasi, tora baira ghure kobi Ki tai Bol” (Oh my dear city residents, what are you going to get being outside). Similarly, the traffic police officers in Mumbai sang in Marathi asking people to wash hands and police officers in Goa sang songs in Portuguese and other languages asking people to stay at home. They came forward and used poetry, stories and many other innovative ideas to make this point clear.

### Indian Council of Medical Research is now experimenting on Plasma infusion method to treat the novel corona virus.

### Respect the Warriors

Like the soldiers of Indian armed forces, even doctors in India are considered one of the best in the world. We have found that India has very highly disciplined, excellence embracing doctors, nurses and paramedics. All of these people deserve our attention and salute. Some have worked continuously for 10-12 weeks. Some doctors worked for days without going home and meeting their families. They have made huge sacrifices for the nation and it is our duty to appreciate the hard work of these doctors and other healthcare professionals. When there was an attack on these warriors by some immature laymen, the government came out with an ordinance [Emergency Executive Order approved by the cabinet and signed by the President of India] to

protect the healthcare professionals of the country and quite appropriately called them corona warriors.

### Indigenous Technology Development is important

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is now experimenting on Plasma Infusion Method [10] to treat the novel corona virus. During the outbreak of the Spanish Flu in 1914, a group of doctors set out to experiment with convalescent blood plasma to treat the patients. It might seem akin to grasping elusive straws at this point but pilot studies have reported the infusions to be successful. In this method blood from the recovered patient (Patient A) after several tests, and the separated plasma alone is injected to another patient (Patient B) who has contracted the novel coronavirus. The blood plasma from patient A is said to have antibodies that can

India has very highly disciplined, excellence embracing doctors, nurses and paramedics.

potentially fight the virus in patient B. Human trials have started with the guidance of ICMR and results may be encouraging.

### Statistical Analysis Helps

One of the important points here is the efficiency of transmission (R0 statistics). R0 (pronounced “R-naught”) is the rate at which a virus is transmitted. It is also called the basic reproduction number; it indicates the average number of people who will contract the virus from an infected person, in a population that does not have immunity for the said disease. On 26th March 2020, it was 2.2 for USA [8]. According to the study made by IMS, Chennai, on 11th April R0 was 1.55[8, 9] for India. As of 26th April it has come down and is at 1.36. We need to go nosedive below 1.0 to flatten the curve.



Worldometer and World meter India [1,2] are two important sources of data and many of these are very helpful for understanding the gravity of the problem. I think this crisis will lead to new dimensions for research for academicians in Statistics, Operations Research Practice or Operations Management and Leadership Issues.

There are a number of questions that are waiting for answers and a large portion of success in countering this threat may depend on the sort of answers we manage to find. There are obviously a few that will get their answers as we progress from one to the other stage in solving this crisis. Questions like...

- What are the best practices outside India that we can adapt and at what cost and what time?
- How to manage supply or create capacity in a very short time in increasing demand situation as we are when there is no capacity?
- What is the average length of stay of patients with different medical conditions?
- Does the transition of a patient from uninfected, infected, critical, with ventilator, death and cured be modelled in a Markov Model?
- Does the probability of symptomatic or asymptomatic transmission vary with the number of people living in a family?

India is somewhere in the middle of the coronavirus war[9]. Victory is in sight and there are signs that we are close to flattening the curve. But at this point the looming uncertainty makes it difficult to predict when that day will arrive. Only time will tell when we will win this battle against coronavirus and this test will help us in our strategic advantages in the near as well as the distant future. **EP**

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# Management Education and Industry Response Post Pandemic



**Harjeet Khanduja**  
Vice President -HR, Reliance Jio

## Digital World

You come to know about your strengths only when they are tested. Over the past two decades there has been a remarkable acceleration in the development of technology. Connectivity speeds increased, computing power increased, Landline phones moved to smart phones. Social media apps came from out of nowhere and on-boarded half the population of earth. YouTube redefined learning. Money became digital. Retailers removed the “R” to become e-tailers. A parallel digital world got created. It touched each and every one in some way.

## Adoption of Digital

There were only few million people and select industries which took full advantage of the digital world. In general, adoption of the new digital world was not encouraging. Few things like Whatsapp were adopted, which catered to unfulfilled needs. However, wherever the digital world tried to replace the experience of the physical world, there was resistance.

People were fearful. It was hard for people to believe that money can be digital. Digital transactions can be a way of life. However, disruptions like demonetization taught many to understand and use digital wallets like Paytm. There has also been a need for touch and feel, which kept us away from taking the full advantage of digital life.

## Crisis or Opportunity

It looks like as if we were preparing for 2020 for the past twenty years. This is the time when all the pieces of the puzzle have come together. This time has given us opportunity to sit back and see the bigger picture. People have started realizing the importance of digital infrastructure.

## Higher Education

This is an important junction for Higher education. Organizations like Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, UdeMy are poised to take advantage of the situation. Higher education will be even more digital. A day is not far, where a university will only exist on cloud with world class courses and professors without any physical infrastructure and will be legitimised and revered by industry and academia. Higher education will definitely move from delivery to content, assessment and research.

Skills like digital marketing, digital payments, digital security, e-commerce, remote people management will be in hot demand.

## Industry Response

Except a few essential services industries, all others are in a bad shape. Revival will not be easy and quick because the fear of COVID-19 will take a few quarters to disappear. If we approach the scenario in a traditional manner, the scenario looks gloomy with dismal demand and huge operations cost.

However, companies have creatively found ways to bring the demand back. They are looking at new ways of doing business by leveraging technology and redesigning jobs. For example, contact centres have innovated and asked agents to login from their mobile phones and work from home. The infrastructure cost for these companies has vanished. These companies are going to enjoy higher margins and disrupt the industry.

## Opportunity for Management Students

As the industry changes with such disruptions, old jobs will vanish and eventually new opportunities are going to appear. Digital savvy management students with an understanding of digital tools for remote working, collaboration and knowledge management will have an advantage. Skills like digital marketing, digital payments, digital security, e-commerce, remote people management will be in hot demand. [EP](#)

*The author is an International speaker, writer, poet, visionary, influencer and a HR Leader. Alumnus of IIT Roorkee and INSEAD. He is currently working with Reliance Jio.*

*Harjeet has been a LinkedIn power profile, Chicken Soup Writer, TEDx Speaker, Global Digital Ambassador, FWA Board Member and Guest Faculty at IIM Ahmedabad.*



**Avadhesh Dixit**  
CHRO  
Acuity Knowledge Partners



# IMPACT ON JOBS & WORKPLACE



We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.

**Martin Luther King**



**C**ovid-19 is an unprecedented crisis in many ways. Many of us have possibly not witnessed this kind global pandemic and health crisis in our lifetimes. It is a matter of time and the world will get over this (hopefully soon!) but the impact that this crisis will have is bound to be as deep as the crisis itself. The world is not expected to be the same and many aspects of our lives are going to see structural and permanent changes. These structural changes will cut across politics, world economy, foreign affairs, social norms, wellbeing to mention a few.

The world of work and jobs too is going to be affected and is expected to see permanent shifts. Many of these changes may be structural while some may accelerate the changes that were already initiated by Industrial revolution 4.0. Here is what may play out as we plan recovery from the current crisis.

## Workplace is redefined significantly

With millions of people working from home for months, the classical definition of workplace, which included physical boundaries, is bound to be under severe threat. Not that this definition was not under attack, but this time the impact is deeper and more permanent. Obviously, not all work can move towards homes (example: farming/manufacturing) and thus, the workplace when mentioned here is largely restricted to workplaces where work can potentially be done out of home or any other remote location. Manufacturing too is going to be impacted through accelerated automation driven by a further need and desire to reduce dependence on physical labor. Even in manufacturing, a large component of work (IT enabled functions) can be moved out of the physical premises. This redefinition of workplace has implications for all parts of the organization including renting of commercial real estate, IT and Information security, HR, compliance and almost all other functions. Offline and online will blend, co-exist and thrive together in times to come. Workplace is not going to be the same.

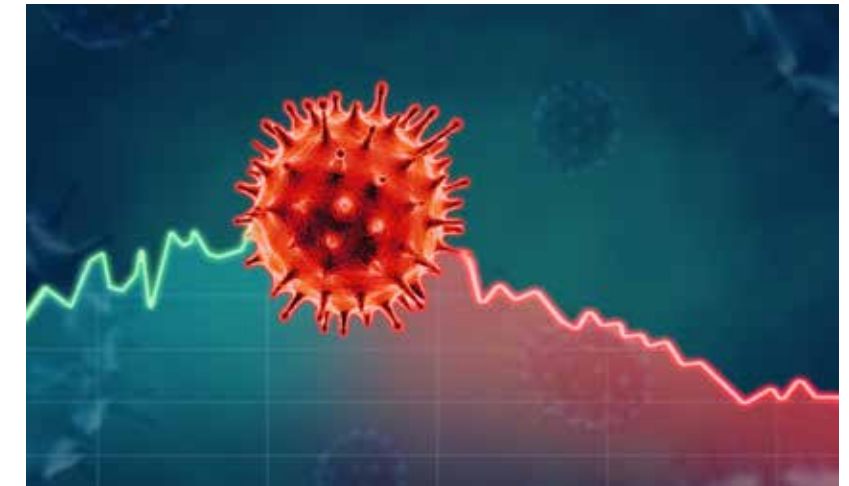
## Gig is winning

At the heart of the Gig Economy lies flexibility, ability to deliver work remotely (using technology) and empowerment. Therefore, if one has skills that can be delivered to multiple clients using technology then you are surely winning in the post-Covid world. As the world accepts remote working, Gigsters who were already gaining momentum stand to gain further. What also works in favor of gig economy is cost cutting measures that companies may resort to as part of their post-Covid business adjustments. Employing gig workers offers flexibility and makes some employee costs variable. However, the pace at which gig economy will proceed further is also dependent upon how government regulation plays out. Countries like

India still do not have social security provisions for gig workers as most of the social security measures are geared towards only certain class of workers. Will this be beginning of more discussion around expansion of social security and other measures for those who work remotely and for multiple employers?

## Where is my classroom

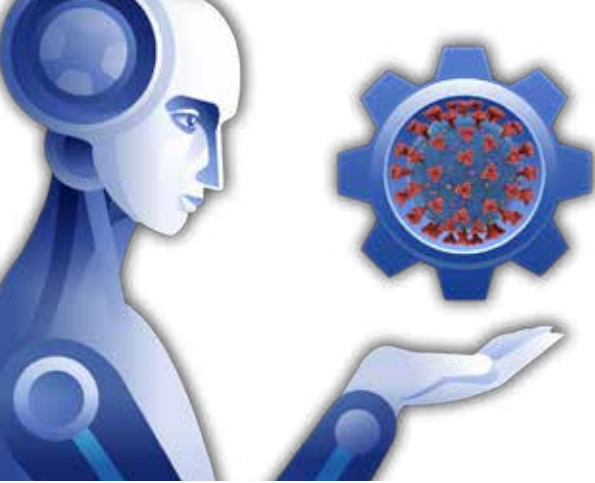
With millions of students worldwide attending to lectures and classrooms remotely, one can imagine the kind of shift we will see in the education space. This shift is going to be one of the most structural shifts that this sector has seen in centuries. With both students and



faculty getting comfortable with remote classrooms, the reach and impact of education will be exploited globally. There are more reasons than ever for a class to become more diverse and globally located. This has implications for revenue models for educational institutions and if they do not adapt fast, some of them will lose out to those who exploit this shift to their advantage. Education is truly going to more accessible and hopefully more affordable as well.

## Training center is shut

Like education in schools & colleges, even learning and development inside corporations is set to witness the similar shift. I do not see how corporations will justify the pre-Covid levels of physical training rooms and training centers. There may still be need for classroom induction, soft skills training etc. but percentage of training going online is going to see a




## Industry 4.0 gets in top gear

Everything that is potentially a part of Industry 4.0 gets wings and gets into top gear due to the Covid crisis. With social distancing becoming an accepted norm, the desire and necessity to reduce 'worker density' in all types of businesses was never more pronounced. Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, cloud and cognitive computing etc. are bound to be accelerated in the post-Covid world. All kinds of industrial and farming activity that requires manual labor will be forced to further automate due to this crisis. Even services organizations are expected to accelerate the automation journey. The crisis has permanent implication for Industrial revolution 4.0 and the way it will shape the future of work and jobs.

## Jobs redefined

Every structural shift in economy and market place is accompanied by shifts in nature of jobs. All such similar events and crises tell us that some types of jobs are lost while new ones are created. There is no doubt that this crisis will also accelerate certain types of jobs as we go forward. It is an easy guess that all jobs related to online, remote enablement will boom post crisis, and these include (not limited) to digital, IT enablement, online gaming, online entertainment, virtual well-being programs, online education, online counsellors, e-commerce etc. All jobs related to Industry 4.0 are also going to get in the fast lane. However, there is enough research to suggest that jobs involving application of multi-disciplinary skills or skills that require complex human interactions are tough to automate. One would wonder if jobs that involve complex counselling, behavioral therapy, inspiring people, setting direction etc. could ever be automated fully. Some of these jobs require application of skills like emotional intelligence, relationship building, listening, language, communication etc. One needs to evaluate if one's current and future job would involve some combination of these skills. Remaining relevant will require that one is learning and re-skilling all the time.

Covid-19 is going to change the way we see and navigate the world. Let us prepare and adapt to thrive in post-Covid world! 

*The author is CHRO at Acuity Knowledge Partners. He is a global HR leader who has led HR function at Moody's Corporation (India Region), GE Capital (India), Tata Consultancy Services and CMC Ltd both in India and outside India.)*

dramatic rise. Training function inside organization will have to make a dramatic shift in their strategy as more and more people will be comfortable learning online.

## Remote Employee Experience

If gig workers and work from home employees are going to be integral and large part of the organizations, then it is obvious that the ways to create positive employee experience throughout the employee lifecycle will see a significant shift. Moreover, whole employee engagement and experience gets even more complicated when one thinks in the context of gig workers. They are not employees (in contractual terms) and yet may be delivering critical work for the organization. Given that organizations are going to be hybrid organizations (physical & virtual), the end-to-end employee experience will also move to hybrid model. It will be interesting to see how HR departments evolve to engage a large number staff through remote interventions. This shift also has policy implications for organizations who will have to think of policies and processes that support hybrid model.

## Enable me remotely

Most enablement roles (also referred as support roles), are also going to see a significant shift. Operational side of HR, Payroll, Finance, IT, compliance etc. has already been tested to run a virtual organization. There is no reason to believe that what worked in the times of crisis (modified processes) will not work in normal times. Further, there is no reason to believe that some of the roles and related work in enablement functions will not go remote. The crisis has tested some strong assumptions around compliance, information security; privacy and confidentiality. There is no suggestion that some of these critical requirements will go away but it is surely not going to be 'no-discussion' territory. During the crisis, many processes within these functions have been re-invented and they may remain in practice forever.



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**Prof. Kishore Sharma**  
Mentor  
Taxila Business School, Jaipur

# IMPACT ON MANAGEMENT STUDIES

**T**here are fairly well-defined reasons why Indian students may find it difficult to get the MBA College of their choice... and one of these could be the extra enrolment pressure on Indian Business Schools. Those who apply for an MBA overseas either take the GMAT or the GRE. The number of Indian GMAT test takers, on an average as per GMAC (Graduate Management Admission Council) is around 30,000, out of which close to 80% apply to international

programs. GMAT testing is on hold in India which means that till June 2020 there will not be any GMAT test conducted in India. Approximately 3.0 lakhs students appear for entrance tests like CAT, XAT, CMAT, MAT and ATMA to get into top 50 Business Schools. These statistics are enough to make the overall picture crystal clear for sort on impact that this pandemic has had on management studies.

## Good News for Indian Business Schools

As per AICTE as on March 25, 2020, there are a total of 407 Business Schools offering PGDM course pan-India and having approximately one lakh seats. If we talk about the top 50 Business

understand the impact on the higher education sector and its student mobility flows, Taxila asked prospective international students whether the coronavirus episode had impacted their plans to study abroad.

As of March 25, the results reveal that an 81% of respondents said the global health crisis had affected their plans to study abroad, while 19% said it had not. Of those respondents whose plans had been impacted by the pandemic, 73% said they now intend to do their MBA locally in India. Additionally, 16% said they now intend to study in a different country and only a minority of 11% said they may wait till next year. Understandably then, many respondents cited health concerns as the key reason why they decided to amend their study plans. Another prospective student believes that the virus has

Are you in a dilemma about whether to pursue an MBA degree from India or abroad? If so, then it's worth figuring out the pros and cons involved in each case so that you're in a position to make an informed decision.

Schools in India, the total seats could be close to 15,000, keeping in mind an average of 300 seats per B-school.


The additional 24000 students who were expected to move overseas will stay back home and may apply to these business schools thereby making admission competitive for those who intended to pursue MBA from India.

Surveys done by one major US-based agency has found how potential international students are dealing with their admission plans during the pandemic, and the uncertainty that it has on international student enrolment. One respondent states: "I got selected into an MBA program in Hong Kong. However, I dropped the idea of joining there due to a few factors, one of them being the proximity to the coronavirus outbreak epicentre, and now I don't want to waste one year so I have decided to stay on and study in India."

Coronavirus, or COVID-19, has caused a devastating ripple effect and a significant amount of disruptions to industries worldwide. To

already impacted many students: "Coronavirus has affected so many people, either directly or indirectly, because so many of us were planning to go to Europe or China for our studies, but the outbreak of this disease has scared people away and now we wish to continue higher studies locally."

With such a large proportion of students deciding to defer until the health crisis has dissipated, universities abroad will have tough time attracting international students.

The COVID-19 pandemic phase will indirectly benefit Indian B-schools with better talent taking admission at home schools vis-à-vis the students who have planned to pursue their MBA from international business schools. As a consequence, admission to their choice of B-school within the country will also have a tough competition. The advice to such students is they should book their seats before the pressure of non-migrating students are felt by the B-schools in India. 



**Prof. M J Xavier**  
Founder Director, IIM Ranchi

# SKILLS AND STRATEGIES in a Post-Covid World



**W**e belong to a generation that has the dubious distinction of having seen tsunami, demonetization and now the corona virus in our life-time. But the corona virus turned out to be the worst to hit India and the whole world. The lockdown has given time for people to rediscover their talents and introspect about healthcare, the planet and life in general. All of us have had to cut down our copious consumption instincts and stick to the essentials. In some sense it has taken us back to life during the pre-industrial days. The only saving grace is that we have electricity and the internet. Otherwise, our visits to restaurants and malls are gone. Many have not had their hair trimmed or facials done as the beauty parlour remains closed. We have realised that we can live

without many things that we took for granted, such as, cars, aeroplanes, bars, jewellery shops, gyms, swimming pools and even parks.

Thanks to the efforts by the Government, we should get over the Corona acute phase soon with limited damage to lives. Of course the damage to the economy is going to be colossal. Many have lost their livelihood and their jobs. A number of other people are going to be subjected to pay-cuts. Many companies and brands will fall by the wayside. Our supply chain is crippled and money supply has shrunk. Under these circumstances, how should the individuals and corporates prepare themselves to face the post-Corona world. This article looks at the factors enabling recovery, industries aided and hit by Corona, and strategies for individuals and corporates.

## Factors Impacting Recovery

There are many factors that determine to what extent a community will bounce back after a disastrous epidemic like Corona. That includes no. of people who faced the disease, demographic profiles of the population, the Government and the Industry.

To understand the size of the population that has witnessed the death trail of corona, we should not look at aggregate numbers but the number of people affected per million population. The data about the number of cases, deaths, cases per million population, deaths per million population, no of tests done and tests per million as of April 15<sup>th</sup> is reported in the **Table below**.

Country	Cases	Cases/Million	Deaths	Deaths/Million	Tests	Tests/Million
USA	1237761	3739	72275	218	7727938	23347
Spain	250561	5359	25613	548	1932455	41332
Italy	213013	3523	29315	485	2246666	37158
UK	194990	2872	29427	433	1383842	20385
India	49436	36	1695	1	1276781	925

Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?#countries>, accessed on 06.05.2020

With only 8 cases per million population and 0.3 deaths per million, the Indian public would have hardly understood the enormity of the problem. Of course, adequate testing has not been done yet in India. Other developed countries, such as the USA, Spain and Italy have done a lot more testing. Italy has done 100 times more tests per million population than India. One other

factor is that the death rate per million has doubled in 5 days in India as of 14<sup>th</sup> April as compared to 7 days in the US. (<https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>). Given the steps we have taken so far, we should be able to contain it within reasonable limits.

The second major factor that determines the speed of recovery is the nature of the population. India is a country of young people with more than 85% of the people (as of 2017) below the age of 55. This group is raring to get back to work. A substantial 17.9 % of the population belongs to the 15-24 age group. This group is the one with an entrepreneurial mindset and is already finding business opportunities in these difficult times. For example, Paytm was born during the demonetization. A number of youngsters are working on start-ups that provide online education, wellness tips, AI enabled service companies.

The most adverse factor is the income distribution. 70% of wealth is concentrated in the hands of top 10% of the population. Bottom 50% of the population owns only 2.5% of the wealth. About 22% of the India's population lives below the poverty-line. Further, poverty levels are acute in rural areas of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand where it is as high as 45%. These people are worst hit due to the lockdown. They will need a lot of subsidies and support from the government before they can join the main-stream.

The other two factors are the Government and the Industry. When the Government will lift the lockdown and what relief and revival packages

will they announce will determine the speed of recovery. The speed of response of the Industry in terms of reinventing their businesses will also play a critical role in the recovery of the country. For example, Swiggy has enabled its 'Grocery' deliveries section in over 125 cities in India. The company says that it has tied-up with national

brands and retailers including HUL, P&G, Godrej, Dabur, Marico, Cipla, Vishal Mega Mart, and Adani Wilmers to deliver essentials to its customers. They also supply vegetables and meat products. Since work-from-home is catching up, companies including Myntra, Lifestyle and Peter England have introduced attires for home-wear.

### Impact on Consumption

Lockdown has taught consumers to be frugal and keep away from non-essential things. Except for groceries, fruits & vegetables, electricity, internet and medicines, all other items have taken a beating. To some extent there is a surge in online training and skill upgradation. During the time of distress, people also seek counselling services, yoga, meditation and spirituality. This in turn has the impact of stalling the entire economy.

Consumers will re-examine what they consume, and how much they consume. Having experienced shortage and thus the value of even small little items like masks, milk, and other necessities, consumers are expected to minimize waste. Many would have experimented with cooking different food items. Home cooking, gardening to grow vegetables and herbs are likely to stay on for a long time. Many who lost jobs and experienced pay-cuts are sure to spend less and save more. People would have become aware of our weak health-system and would have prepared to stay healthy by eating healthy food and through physical exercises. Some would have discovered the joy of yoga, meditation and spirituality. Many would have become conscious of the planet and its fragility and would become more eco-friendly.

According to Philip Kotler<sup>1</sup>, there is an anti-consumerism movement and he has identified 5 types of anti-consumerists.

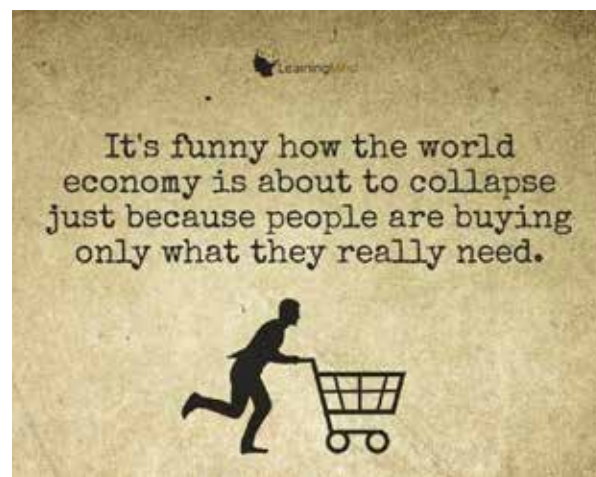
- *Life simplifiers, who want to eat less and buy less*
- *Degrowth activists, who feel that too much time and effort are going in to consuming*
- *Climate activists, who worry about the planet*
- *Sane food choosers, who have turned in to vegetarians*
- *Conservation activists, who plead to repair, reuse and give to needy people*



**People are not going to be against marketing, advertising and brand promotion in India. However, the consumers will become more value seeking. Once again, Nirma type of brands for the bottom of the pyramid will spring up to satisfy the value seeking consumers.**



In India, anti-consumerism may not have such a great impact. People are not going to be against marketing, advertising and brand promotion in India.



However, consumers will become more value-seeking. Nirma type of brands for the bottom of the pyramid will spring up to satisfy the value-seeking consumers. There will always be a section of people with deep pockets, and will easily go back to their old ways of consumption the moment lock down is lifted. The summary of corona aided and affected industries is presented in the following [Table \(pg. 23\)](#).

<sup>1</sup>Philip Kotler, "Consumer in the Age of Corona Virus", <https://sarasotainstitute.global/the-consumer-in-the-age-of-coronavirus/>, April 4, 2020.

Corona Aided Industries	Corona Hit Industries
AI and Data Sciences	Air Travel and Tourism
Healthcare, Hygiene products and pharmaceuticals	Automobiles, Minerals and metals
Supply Chain and Logistics	Real estate and Housing
Psychological Counselling and Spirituality	Consumer durables
Online education and Skill Upgradation	Higher Education (especially Engineering and Management)
Social sector and Eco friendly products and Services	
High Tech Agriculture	

Due to lockdown, items such as alcoholic beverages, gold and jewellery, leather items, textiles and apparel and beauty parlours have got hit temporarily. Same is the case with eating out. Consumer durables, such as mobile phones, refrigerators, furniture etc. are also hit and may take a couple of years for the demand to get back to its normal levels. Air travel, automobiles, real-estate and housing have taken a big hit and could take a long time to recover. This is because of the overall downturn in the economy is likely to leave lesser disposable income in the hands of consumers. Pay-cuts and job losses will add to the woes of the consumers and the industry. Domestic travel and tourism have also been adversely affected. Insurance and healthcare are temporarily down; but would surge in a big way in the years to come. Higher education could get adversely affected due to its high cost. With dwindling global opportunities and reduced corporate pay, people would not see much value out of higher education. Of course, AI and data sciences have been in great demand due to their application potential in virtually every industry and every function.

### Skills and Courses for the Post-Corona World

Indian middle class dream is certainly shattered. Typically, "study engineering, get an IT job and migrate to the US", kind of model is gone for the foreseeable future. There are definitely

opportunities for engineers to become techno-preneurs. Engineering education itself has to become more hands-on so that a graduate should come out with several new product ideas to set up a new venture. There will be a demand for good engineering colleges and the weaker or the less efficient ones will see a difficult time. Demand for core disciplines such as mechanical, civil, electrical and electronics will remain subdued for the next 5 years or so. Courses on AI, data sciences and Block chain would assume prominence. Chemical Engineering may pick up once again as India will become a major supplier of bulk drugs to the world. Bio-tech also will see a marginal growth.

There will be a major shake-up in MBA education too. Top institutions will survive but the weaker ones will wither away. Obscene fees collected by colleges will see a downturn. Value for money should be the mantra of all businesses. With the health sector becoming important, Health Management programs will assume importance. Supply chain and Logistics will gain prominence. Media management and Business analytics programs will also be in demand. Name of the game is specialization.

Now that people have experimented with online classes, more and more online programs have come to the market. Be it business analytics, digital marketing, dieting and exercises, yoga and meditation, psychological counselling, design thinking, drawing, music, or fashion design, everything is available online. People are not shy of learning online. Corporates have also started valuing such skills acquired through online portals. Though these courses, by themselves, may not fetch a job, these are good value-additions for professionals like engineers, doctors, MBAs or even other graduates.

The Universities will have to reinvent themselves by making every program a blended learning program. Residential programs should re-think their idea of wasting 4 years for an engineering or two years for an MBA program. They could send them to industry during alternate semesters so that they can double their in-take with the same residential facilities. During the semesters in industry, courses can be offered online to stay in touch with their students.

Psychology and counselling will assume greater importance to deal with mental trauma



**Health care, pharmaceutical and allied industries are the ones that would take India to newer heights. Needless to say that AI and data sciences will continue to be high growth areas. Complement your skills by doing several add-on online courses in these areas. Be prepared to do more work for the same or less pay.**

caused by death of loved ones or loss of job and financial issues. Suicides are on the rise as people are unable to maintain the living standards that they were accustomed to. Many won't be able to pay EMIs for their car or house bought by them. Opportunities are there for yoga, meditation and spirituality. Either specialized courses can be introduced in these areas or can be bundled with every course taught by colleges and Universities.

Healthcare is at the cusp of a major revolution. We see a convergence of engineering, medicine, technology and management to solve health problems. IIT professors are working on medical equipment. Corona has brought healthcare in to sharp focus. Research is happening on precision medicine and data scientists play a key role in developing new therapeutic methods. Just as everyone migrated to IT in the 80's, people are getting in to healthcare in a big way.

### Strategies for Companies


Companies operating in Corona-hit industries will experience decline in their business. They will have to come up with innovative ways to

create value for their customers. Real estate and housing have touched obscene heights. They have to come to realistic levels to sustain and stimulate demand. Air travel will definitely dip in the coming days as people have started using teleconferencing to conduct meetings across geographic boundaries. Hence they should focus their attention away from 'travel for business' to 'travel for pleasure'. Offer tour packages by tying up with tour operators. Innovate in every way to offer better value to customers. Auto companies should do a lot of thinking to reduce cost of owning a vehicle. Instead of selling they may resort to leasing. They need to reinvent their business. Same is the case with consumer durables.

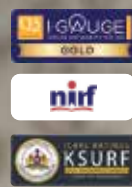
Since IT companies have now got metrics and measures to manage the people who undertake work from home, they have to think of permanently shifting at least one third of their work to this mode of working. The more they cut the need for brick and mortar, the more is their gain in terms of productivity and profitability.

With the millennials joining the workforce, many corporates have to re-think their job design. Unless they offer challenging and engaging assignments, the young kids are not likely to stick to their jobs. Work-from-home and flexi-working are options that could entice them.

Individuals must, therefore, prepare to move to industries that are expected to do well in the post-Corona world. Healthcare, pharmaceuticals and allied industries are the ones that are likely to take India to newer heights. Needless to say, AI and data sciences will continue to be the high-growth areas. Complement your skills by doing several add-on online courses in these areas. Be prepared to do more work for the same or less pay.

Corporates will do well to develop products for the bottom of the pyramid. Every company will have to re-think their business and reengineer their processes to offer better value to their customers. Innovation will be the key to corporate success. Have a better value discovery, design and delivery process to attract and retain customers. 

*The author is a Professor of Marketing and Business Analytics with LIBA, Chennai*



*Building  
the Future*

## School of Architecture

### Bachelor of Architecture Highlights

#### Experiential learning:

- ◆ On site exposure
- ◆ Hands on learning
- ◆ Study tours
- ◆ Workshops , Seminars & Guest lectures

#### Dynamic curriculum:

- ◆ Independent Board of Studies
- ◆ Choice of Professional Electives( C.B.C.S)
- ◆ Cross disciplinary open electives

#### Social responsiveness:

- ◆ Project selection
- ◆ Design solutions
- ◆ Community outreach

#### Technological integration:

- ◆ Climatology and Services labs
- ◆ Cutting edge softwares

Well qualified faculty with different specialisations from National and International Universities. Students and faculty have many accolades from A3 foundation, Everest Design Challenge, NASA and INSDAG (Institute for Steel Development & Growth)

### Other Disciplines

Engineering | Law | Management Studies | Commerce | Science and Technology  
Arts & Humanities | Performing Arts

Rukmini Knowledge Park, Kattigenahalli, Yelahanka, Bengaluru - 560064.



COVID-19 PANDEMIC & ITS IMPACT ON

# HIGHER EDUCATION

**Vishal Khurma**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Woxsen Group & Ormeal Foods Pvt. Ltd.



Research has clearly proven in the past that home-learning affects the student's productivity, social life, and their learning outcome. Despite all of this, Higher education space is an exciting place to be right now. The current situation has in fact set the stage for growth and disrupt the education landscape.

**'Change is the end result of all true learning'**

– Leo F. Buscaglia  
Author & Speaker.

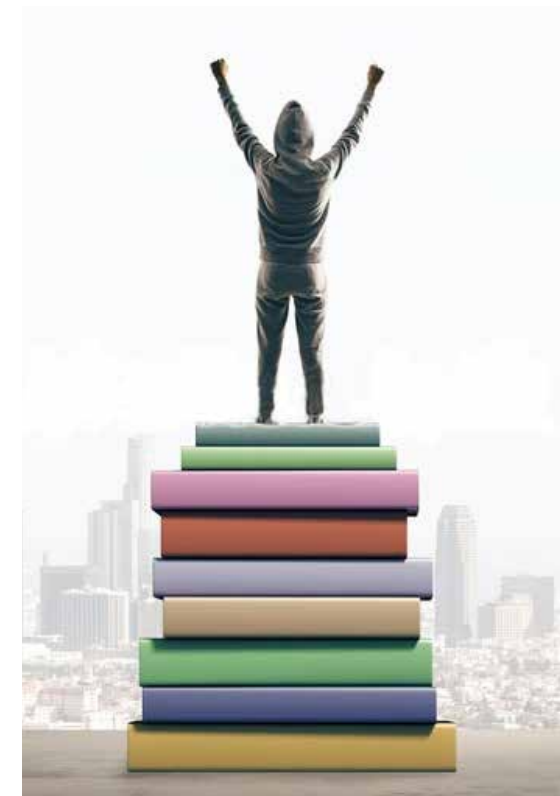
**T**he current COVID-19 pandemic has pushed us into uncharted waters & forced us to look at things with a completely new lens. In the field of education, over 100 crore students worldwide are not able to attend their schools and universities, as a measure to stop this contagion. In India also, it has forced the central and state authorities to shut down all the educational institutions resulting in the disruption of studies.

Our conventional education system has always made us believe that superior learning is a function of studying at the campus where the student gets personal attention from the faculty, cross learning from the peer group, develop social skills, group work and assignments to foster student growth & ability. Even a short period of missing physical classes is perceived to negatively impact multidisciplinary learning, connect across different fields, skills and ideation.

Research has clearly proven in the past that home-learning affects the student's productivity, social life, and their learning outcome. In my opinion, online teaching will never be able to completely replace the brick and mortar based learning environment because of so many inherent merits. Online teaching is a relatively newer phenomenon for a country like India, and can lead to serious setbacks later in the decade.

Despite all of this, Higher education space is an exciting place to be right now. The current situation has in fact set the stage for growth and disrupt the education landscape. Post COVID-19, I think we are poised to witness 5 key trends in the Higher education space illustrated as below:

- ◆ **Embrace Digital Transformation** Technology will be all pervasive & shall stay at core of any new disruption in every aspect of higher learning and education. All forward looking institutions will take a bold step into the future & create their 360 degree digital integration plan since there are only 2 options available – Pivot Or Perish!
- ◆ **Rise of Blended Curriculums** Digital platforms & online delivery will become an integral part of the future curriculums giving rise to blended Programs where core delivery will be in the form of self-paced online modules, virtual delivery & classroom delivery. Further, the inclusion of e-Learning would only create more curious and inquiring youngsters and



embrace technology for their learning needs.

◆ **Unprecedented growth in Short-Term Certification Courses:**

This COVID-19 led global recession & liquidity crunch in the economy will lead to spike in the unemployment rate. It is expected that this time will be duly used by people to upskill themselves on various functional & behavioural skills, hence signing up for Short-term Certification Courses. Even Nielsen's latest report declared that 47% consumers will consider spending more on education.

◆ **Launch of New Programs in emerging technologies & digital space:**

Technology disruption will be all pervasive & hence will

impact most industries across the globe. We expect the demand to pick up for programs in emerging technologies & digital space like Data Sciences, Artificial Intelligence, Deep Learning, IOT etc.

- ◆ **Study Abroad Category to shrink:** Student & parent preference is expected to shift from pursuing higher education abroad to staying within India. However, only Top tier Institutions which offer cutting edge programs with immaculate delivery will stand to benefit from this trend.

It is said that a crisis is usually the best time to reform and reflect upon ourselves. We can utilize this lockdown as an excuse to broaden our skill set, pivot our goals & priorities and spend quality time with our families, focus on our hobbies, and a lot more!

No doubt, this pandemic has unleashed the biggest catastrophe that humanity has faced so far. We all have to make sure that we take all measures to lessen this disruption so that when life returns to normal, we all are even more prepared to turn this crisis to our advantage! 📖

# CAMPUS PLACEMENTS

in the post-lockdown phase



**Vikas Dua**  
TEDx Speaker

**I**t is no secret that in our society, the value of a MBA/ PGDBM (or equivalent) program is perceived to be more with respect to the internship and job placement opportunities it provides, than for the knowledge that is provided through grueling lectures, collaborative projects and intense research elements.

However, one of the most unfortunate impacts of the covid-19 pandemic has been the cancellation of these very internships and final job placements by many corporates. Thousands of students across the country eagerly await this opportunity to enable their transition from a student life to that of a working professional.

Even if one were to assume that this was a knee-jerk reaction given the swiftness with which the pandemic struck the world, the fact remains that at least till the time society develops a comfort with the scenario or we have a vaccine (which is at least an year or two away according to the experts), the campus placements process will change dramatically. Let's explore the likely scenarios.

## Limited Campus Coverage

Organisations will be looking at re-modelling their recruitment operations, whether it is the daily walk-in interviews that happen within their premises (for entry level roles) or campus interviews. With social distancing being the order of the day, most organisations will prefer to prune the list of campuses that they engage and recruit from, purely to adhere to this and reduce any non-essential contact.

## Reduced Internship Opportunities

Given that organisations will want to reduce the number of 'floating' resources in their workplaces, internships may be reduced. A more suitable alternative, however, would be for organisations to offer 'virtual internships' - where the intern can work on a project for the organisation working from his/her own residence or in the field.

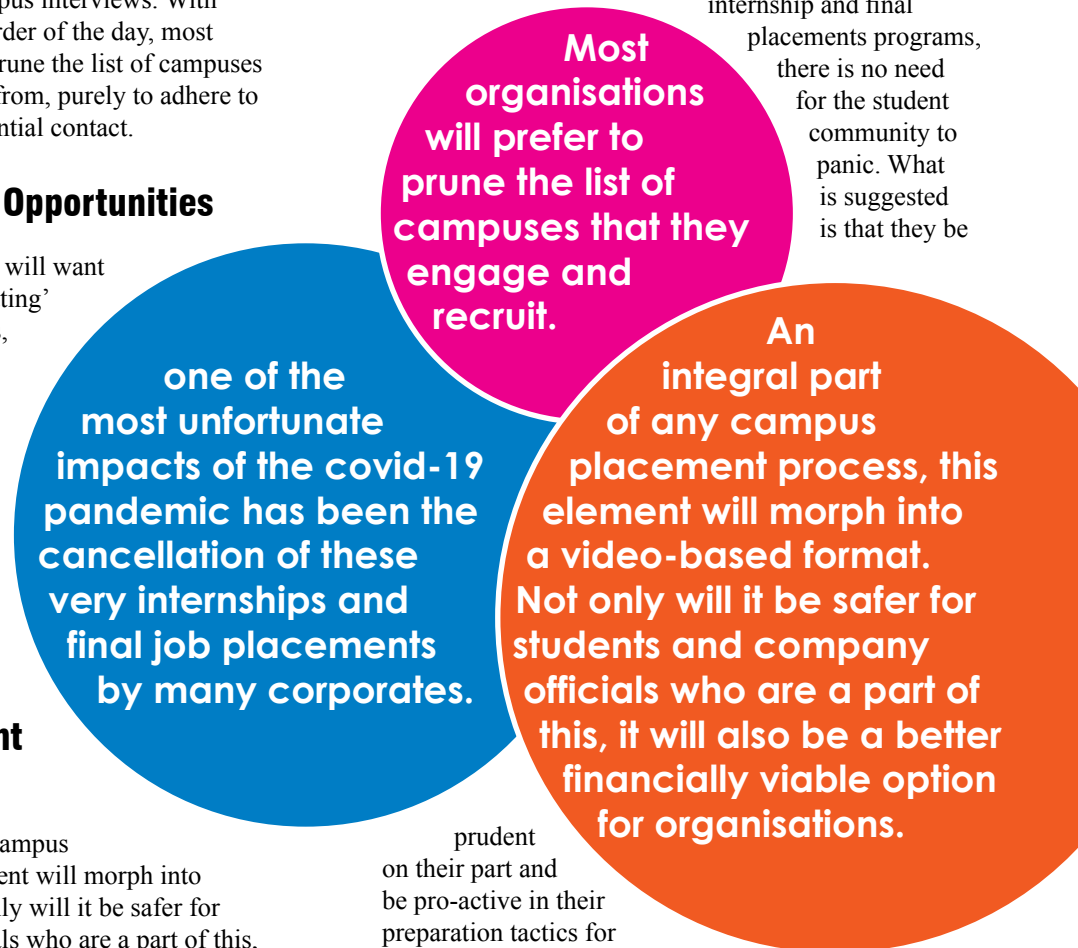
## Video-Conferencing based Pre-placement Talks

An integral part of any campus placement process, this element will morph into a video-based format. Not only will it be safer for students and company officials who are a part of this, it will also be a better financially viable option for organisations. The added advantage will be that organisations could rope-in leaders from across the globe to participate unlike in the traditional model, when this would have obviously been restricted.

## Remote Recruitment

Company officials will, in all likelihood, avoid non-critical travel and being a part of large gatherings which are typically seen in campus placement events. The clear alternative here would be the deployment of technology that supports the entire recruitment cycle remotely. These technology platforms support not only the transactional elements of recruitment such as applications, assessments and video interviews, but also support the candidate engagement aspect very effectively.

Even though these are the big ticket changes expected in the way companies drive their internship and final placements programs, there is no need for the student community to panic. What is suggested is that they be




prudent on their part and be pro-active in their preparation tactics for this 'new normal'. If they do this effectively, there is nothing that these sharp minds cannot overcome.

*The author is a Chief HR Mentor at Attayn, a TEDx speaker, a Vlogger and Blogger on HR practices, sharing his learnings under his self-designed 'HR in my HeaRt' brand umbrella.*



Dr. Shrihari Prakash Honwad

# COVID-19 OBSESSION WITH EXAMINATION


**T**he lockdown has really given us a lot of time on our hands and without skills how to use this God sent opportunity to stop and think about our life in this world. Many have used it to work from home at the same vigor, for many others, it has been an opportunity to experience the amount of work done by our home makers and hopefully some of us have given a helping hand. Some of us who are also home makers have had to double up on chores without the regular (trained) help. But at the end of the day there is still a lot of time saved and you realize it was the time spent in

travel, tea breaks, sending and reading irrelevant emails. Even whatsapp messages have reduced as there is only one issue COVID-19 to discuss. This seems to have had a disruptive effect on our higher education with everyone forced on line, be it ZOOM, Microsoft teams or Google classroom or any other, content creation is on the rise. Many universities are getting ready to administer even online examinations and a debate on the rigor of these examinations is bound to begin. At the same time the difficult times may be used to justify wrongly the use of these methods. It is therefore time to rethink our obsession with examinations and come up with a suitable methodology for certifying the extent of achievement of learning outcomes, after all is that not the whole purpose of an examination or test. Human society is so much obsessed with Testing and examinations in the hope of establishing meritocracy that the tests have become so much more important than what they achieve. It is this obsession with examinations that deserves a rethink. This rethink was long overdue but we never paused for a breath, now that we do have this break let us do the revaluation of our obsession with examinations.

First let us examine whether examinations are a part of the learning process. This would be true if on the run up to exam, during the examination and equally importantly even after the examination (at least till the results are declared) the learning continues. It is true for examinations which are challenging and testing your application abilities rather than memory. It would be true when friends continue to discuss even after the test is over and it would be wonderful if and only if you get to discuss your answers with your teacher post evaluation, it would complete the expected learning, provided the learning objectives are well defined,

learning activity is compatible with the objectives and finally evaluations are appropriately designed for estimating the attainment levels of learning objectives. This is a pretty tall order of expectation but the other end is standardised (mis interpreted to be standard) structure of a three-hour examination at the end of every term for every course which seems to be against principle of horses for races. It is reducing the examination into learning by rote and smarter students are going to find it a waste of their time and use their short-term memory to overcome the test thus defeating the whole purpose of learning. In fact, it is time to look at if this examination is required in this pattern and for every course. Apparently, no.

How do we, therefore, estimate the learning attainment levels? Most veteran teachers say they already know who their good students are, meaning they are continuously evaluating their students


## DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

during learning process some times in non-intrusive fashion (formative assessment?). If the formative assessment can be effectively used to both improve and document the learning process, it can be relied on for a greater portion of the overall grading. For every course the summative assessments have to be not only differently designed but also differently proportioned.

Coming back to COVID19 scenario for examinations it is apparent that the terms which are incomplete need to be completed. If the rigor and applicability of online examination is in doubt, it is desirable to avoid it, provided there is alternative documented evidence of learning having happened. Alternatively use appropriate methodology which documents learning objective attainments. For example, a design course can be evaluated on the



basis of a long duration design project rather than a three-hour examination. A course where ability to describe and argue need to be evaluated could be easily done on line where the students could type in answers. Mathematical answers however need to be written, scanned and then uploaded. Limited duration can ensure minimal unfair means coming in to play. On line quizzes would test memory or ability to eliminate wrong answers. Case studies discussed by the class online could be a documentable mechanism to see how the leaning objectives of the case are attained individually. Video call interviews could easily be as effective as oral viva voce. We have to treat every one of our examination to be de-facto open book examinations. There are some products available with varied degree of efficacy in time bound proctored examinations where proctoring is done through the camera and speakers of the students laptop. While any type of examination can be conducted, it is important to keep in mind why the examination is necessary and appropriately chose evaluation methodology. Afterall, what is important is that students learn, and not if an examination was conducted with rigor and strictness that we are accustomed to. Both validity and standardization of any test are done with the purpose of differentiating and certification of learning attainments

There would still be skeptics who would want rigor and a proctored test, for them I propose a remote exam model where a limited number of students could be permitted to travel with due care to nearest university and write an examination which is administered through inter university cooperation. Say MITWPU, Pune students in quarantine in Gurgaon could appear for examinations at say GD Goenka University, Gurgaon and those in Udaipur, may go to Sir Padampat Singhania University. As long as such requirements are few and deemed absolutely necessary. Post COVID 19, with the end game not clear and online getting even the regulators nod, this may be a convenient system to be followed in future. 

*The author is Former VC of UPES and GD Goenka Univeristy and former Provost of MITWPU Pune*

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**Anshumal Dikshit**  
Co-founder and Partner  
of HR Mantra Consulting

## *Coved19 Pandemic* **CONCERNS FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

The current global situation on account of the pandemic is going to change economies, societies and humans. The situation in some nations is quite alarming where India seems to be better off comparatively. However, the impact on industry and education system is still to be predicted.

Virtual meets and webinars covering impact on industry have become the order of the day; however, a similar effort is needed to protect the higher education system and the young students who will decide the future of the



country. In India, published reports indicate about 1000 universities and 40,000 colleges (Higher Education Institutions - HEIs) have been closed, impacting about 4 crore students and 14 lakh faculty members. This excludes the number of students stranded in colleges and universities outside India. Even this number is large enough to cause concern.

Every year a lot of Indian students vie for the best colleges and universities outside India in search of globally acclaimed qualifications and degrees. Not sure when these countries would come out of the lockdown. This would also mean a substantial decline in demand for international higher education. Will HEIs in India be able to come up to global standards of education and cater to the needs of these students?

Looking at the current infrastructure, it's not clear if all HEIs have been able to provide students with laptops/computers, or if all students necessarily have access to computers. Even if they have, would it also pre-suppose a good Wi-Fi connectivity to attend online classes? Online education also means digitised content but is such content readily available especially in remote areas of the country? And when the campus does open up, social distancing norms will ensure lesser number of students in every class which

mean more number of classrooms running parallel batches will be essential.

**Faculty for higher education in India also faces challenges currently on account of:**

- *Lack of adequate numbers*
- *Student – faculty ratios*
- *Industry experience to prepare students for industry roles*

Besides the above concerns, one concern is about the rate of adoption of technology by faculty to initiate virtual classes for students? It is easy to teach in a class on a whiteboard or with chalk but conducting online classes is quite different from this. How will diagrams be drawn? How will concepts be explained? How will practical be conducted? Training faculty members in all vital aspects still needs to be addressed.

Another challenge will be to ensure standardised education modules with similar assessment techniques. Will this also mean changing the course content and assessment methodology? There are also many e-learning platforms that can offer such courses online but the need is to evaluate and standardise such offerings so that quality of input does not get diluted.

Will virtual/ online teaching ensure student engagement? Looking at spans of attention for humans and comparing it with coursework to be completed will definitely impact in more than one way. Also, how will a 20 year old focus only on studies if he is not able to meet his friends over a cup of tea? Lack of student engagement could lead to drop-out rates going up. Here we are presuming that all faculty members are absolutely proficient in running zoom classes and also know how to keep students engaged during a virtual class. The need is to run FDPs and build faculty digital skills and digital facilitation skills. Equally important will be to teach counsellors and admission teams on how to engage the best students on a digital medium.

A source of revenue for HEIs is the hostel/ mess fee – with students being off-campus, will the fee structure go through a major change? Institutions will have to collectively take strategic fiscal decisions and look at rationalising the fee structure accordingly.

Another area to be looked at will be to decide on how to conduct exams? With study-from-home and remote classes now going on, how will student attendance and attention integrity be ensured? Will the near future be adopting an open-book examination? If yes, will students be even keen to study and learn the subject with commitment? Student enrolments may itself take a dip and for certain courses/ programs, students may not be interested. Also, will percentages really matter now? How will HEIs ensure reach to diverse segments of students in remote areas and tier

Every year a lot of Indian students vie for the best colleges and universities outside India in search of globally acclaimed qualifications and degrees. Not sure when these countries would come out of the lockdown. This would also mean a substantial decline in demand for international higher education. Will HEIs in India be able to come up to global standards of education and cater to the needs of these students?

2 and tier 3 cities? Will this also mean more girl students enrolling for higher studies from non-metros?

Industry not being able to offer as many in house internships, projects and a reduced number of final placements will adversely impact student morale. Remote projects may be an answer but this will hamper student learning. The need will be to create a pool of industry mentors and offer smaller internships/ learning opportunities to the students throughout the year.

Student employability skills, keeping in mind the world of the future, will be extremely important if we need to create future ready students. Behavioural skills like handling ambiguity, building resilience, remote working etc will have to be drilled into students by seeking active help from industry elders interested in mentoring students.

HEIs will also need to be more active on digital platforms and be able to attract students on a digital foothold. In the absence of campuses opening soon enough, student engagement models will have to be re-looked, and quite possibly, sports and extra-cultural activities may take a beating. This will mean development of a uni-directional personality in these crucial formative years.

Equally important will be the research projects and research work that is undertaken by these HEIs every year. These numbers will also change impacting the already challenged original research work happening at HEIs currently. The impact on the entire education system is going to be significant and requires focus at macro level and micro levels. Serious and focused efforts are needed to ensure our students do not suffer. The morale of the younger generation needs to be supported.



Prof. R K Shivpuri

## Impact of Covid 19

# INDUSTRY/ EDUCATION

Ever since 1917 no single event has disrupted the world economy as much as Covid 19. The outbreak of Covid 19 was announced by China on and it reportedly originated from Wuhan, an industrial town in China where live birds are sold. Covid 19 belongs to a family of Corona virus which has the effect of brutal assault on the human system. According to ACUITE research, India will lose US\$4.6 billion per day during these 54 days of lockdown announced by Govt. of India. Indian economy was already growing at 6 year low rate of 4.7%. The present lockdown has created unprecedented problem for Indian Industries and we are looking at a much lower rate of growth of <1 % as suggested by Moody. The total economic loss due to COVID-19 is expected to exceed \$4 trillion, almost 5% of the global GDP as per Asian Development Bank, and these seem only conservative estimates. It is difficult to quantify the contribution of Covid 19 to economic slowdown. We have yet to arrive at the truth regarding the reach, the scale and the amount of disruption caused to human life by Covid 19. This will be determined when the present disruption will stop. Let us understand the various factors contributing to economic slowdown caused due to Covid 19.

**Demand & Supply** – Due to the nationwide lockdown, there is a disruption of demand & supply chain across the country. The worst affected sectors are Hotels, Hospitality, Tourism & Aviation. Among these, the most vulnerable sections are the unorganized sector like labourers and daily wage workers in hotels, hospitality, loaders in the airports, and aviation & rail transport industry. This will cause a tremendous increase in unemployment leading to further weakening of economy. The retail sector has been affected by closing of malls, cinema halls & the shops. This is also raising the risk of the job losses of the employees. According to the estimate by Asian Development Bank (ADB), the total economic loss due to Covid 19 is expected to exceed US\$4 trillion. However the exact amount of loss can be calculated only when Covid 19 starts reducing.

In order to mitigate the effects of Covid 19, United Nations Council on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), April 2020, has proposed a number of measures to ensure the facilitation of international trade and the transport of goods. It is crucial to keep ships moving, ports open and cross-border and transit trade flowing.

The world has already started finding ways to run the economy in virtual environments and operate factories while complying with the social distancing.

### India Imports

The latest trade figures given by the Deptt of Commerce, Govt. of India show that exports in April-March 2019-20 are estimated to be USD 528.45 billion, exhibiting a negative growth of (-) 1.36 per cent over the same period last year. Overall imports in April-March 2019-20 are estimated to be USD 598.61 billion, exhibiting a negative growth of (-) 6.33 per cent over the same period last year.

The situation will worsen as time progresses, since the full effects of Covid 19 will come into play.

China is the original victim of Covid19 and their industries have been shut for the last 4-5 months. India is one of the major importer of Chemicals, Pharma products and Dyes as shown in

the following table (source:https://commerce.gov.in). All of the above is in the form of raw material which is used to manufacture chemicals, pharmaceuticals etc. whose export has suffered severely due to stoppage of raw material from China.

China's share in total imports to India	
Organic chemicals	37%
Inorganic chemicals	13%
Medicinal & Pharma products	36%
Dyes	28%

Source: <https://commerce.gov.in>

**In world trade**, China accounts for 13% of world exports and 11% of world imports. It is only natural that China will impact the Indian industry. The dependence of India on China is massive so far as imports are concerned. The China accounts for a significant share in most of our imports. As shown in above table, almost two-fifths of **organic chemicals and 1/8th** of Inorganic chemicals that India purchases from the world come from China. Medicinal and Pharmaceutical products constitute about 36% of India's imports.

India imports 45% of its total **electronic needs from China. Apart from these, India imports Fertilizers, automotive parts, machinery which account for over 25% from China. Also**, about 90% of some **mobile phones** are imported from China.

Since India imports raw material from China, due to the closure of Chinese factories, our imports as well as exports took a heavy beating. This has resulted in a significant ramification on the Indian industry and hence a huge economic loss to India.

### Stock Market

The Stock Market in India has been experiencing extreme volatility in the last couple of months. Actually the fall in Stock Market is in tune with the markets across the world. The BSE Sensex which was 42273 points on 20th January 2020 is about 31000 points on 27th April 2020.

All large, mid & small caps have gone through sharp falls. Abhishek Ram in Outlook Money has referred to Covid 19 as a Black Swan event, which describes a highly unexpected event that also has an

extreme impact. The effect of Covid 19 on Stock Market has all the characteristic of black swan.

Currently, Stock Market has crashed around 30% in 3 months. It is not possible to guess when the economy will be back on track, which will depend upon several factors like trade, demand & supply and also when we will get rid of Covid 19.

Just two days back, Franklin Templeton India decided to wind up 6 Mutual funds. In an interview to CNBC TV on 27 April, Sanjay Sapre, President, Franklin Templeton confessed that he saw significantly reduced activity in Bond market in March-April and unprecedented illiquidity for securities rated below “AAA”. He further found unprecedented redemption in schemes post Covid 19. Here is the first straight victim of Covid 19.

Considerable work is going on in several countries to find a drug or a vaccine in a year or so to neutralize its health hazards. Only one thing is certain: life after Covid 19 in 2020 will not be the same as before in 2019i.

### Impact of Covid 19 on Education

In order to avoid any risk to the lives of students, most countries have closed Schools, Colleges and Universities. Teaching has moved online on an untried, uncommon and unprecedented scale. The impact of this new form of teaching and learning will be in areas of social, emotional and most importantly academic life of a student.

First, let us discuss about School Education. Loss of real Schooling will cause upheaval in children’s social life and learning. What children learn at School by interaction with class mates cannot be replicated online. Assessments of students can have large errors and will never reflect a child’s ability and potential. This will have longterm consequences on the personality development of a child. Also, access to different kits available to students will lead to differences in productivities of children and hence to inequality.

**Considerable work is going on in several countries to find a drug or a vaccine in a year or so to neutralize its health hazards. Only one thing is certain: life after Covid 19 in 2020 will not be the same as before in 2019i.**

Schools are important to childrens’ growth as they allow them to increase their confidence, socialization, teamwork and inspiration. School teaches students skills they need to succeed on the job and in other areas of life. School also help students achieve a well-rounded knowledge base, which leads to a more enriching life. Even a short period of missed School will have repercussions for student’s skill growth. Denial of three months of Schooling presently in India will lead to nontrivial deficiency in their skills. We can’t have a definite value of skill loss but only a rough estimate. The

United Nations has warned of the unparalleled scale and speed of the educational disruption being caused by Corona Virus. Currently, school closures in over a dozen countries due to the COVID-19 outbreak have disrupted the education of at least 290.5 million students worldwide, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

### Impact on School education

Carlsson et al. (Carlsson, M, G B Dahl, B Öckert and D Rooth (2015), “The Effect of Schooling on Cognitive Skills”, *Review of Economics and Statistics* 97(3): 533–547) discuss a situation in which young men in Sweden have variation in number of days to prepare for tests. The authors show that even just ten days of extra schooling significantly raises scores on tests of the use of knowledge (‘crystallized intelligence’) by 1% of a standard deviation. Burgess and Sievertsen (April 20120) have argued if we were to simply extrapolate those numbers, twelve weeks less schooling (i.e. 60 school days) implies a loss of 6% of a standard deviation, which is non-trivial. They do not find a significant impact on problem-solving skills (an example of ‘fluid intelligence’).

Some students will get help from home but that will not be the story for majority of the students. All the students’ families will not be literate and exposed to current levels of knowledge and will have non-cognitive skills. It is hard to help the children with something that the parents do not know. This will also lead to inequalities between the levels of student’s

understanding. This will lead to inequalities in the growth of the children.

### Assessments

March-April are the key assessments period for students. Internal assessments provide information to the parents and student about the performance and progress of the student. This information is a lodestar and provides information to the student’s direction and corrective steps to be taken, if necessary. The loss of this information can delay the understanding of the difficulties of the student which can have longterm consequences. Any wrinkle in understanding left untouched during school days will have effects later in life.

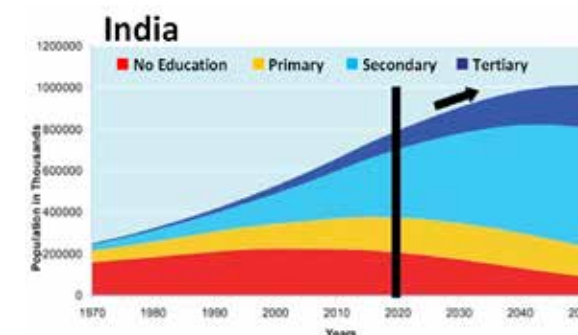
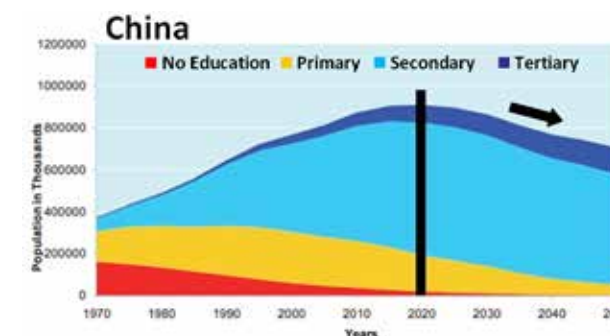
By the time, the lockdown was announced in India, most of the papers of class XII exam was over. CBSE has already announced the dates for the remaining papers.

In educational institutions, the online assessment tools are replacing traditional exams. This is a new area for both teachers and students, and assessments will likely have larger errors than usual.

### Graduates

In an interesting talk Marmolejo (Webinar on Covid 19 and Higher Education) has discussed that in 2008-16, globally the tertiary education enrollment increased 52%, in India the growth was 109%. A comparison of level of education between China & India is shown in Fig 1 (1970-2050 projected). It is seen that after 2020 the Chinese education level is showing a decrease up to 2050 and the Indian tertiary education is showing a significant increase from 2020-2050 of about 200 million people in the age group of 25-34. The large no. of students in the tertiary education system presents massive challenges for Indian education institutions.

Numbers accessing different levels of education, 1970 – 2050 (projected)



Source - Samir KC, Bilal Barakat, Anne Goujon et al. (2010) “Projection of population by level of educational attainment age & sex for 120 countries for 2005-2050”. *Demographic Research*, 22: 383-472.

The lockdown has resulted in all colleges & universities temporarily closed, students returned to home & efforts towards remote teaching started. Suddenly, research has been disrupted because there is neither laboratory at home nor is an availability of latest books presents in the library to be at home.

### Challenges ahead

In May-June 2020, there will be pressure on the internet for admission of present and new students plus online courses. This will be the dawn of a new era in students learning processes. It must be remarked that a teacher communicates not only by speaking but also by gestures of eyes, hands, and body language. These additional channels of communication play a non-trivial role in communicating with the students. We will have to think of new ways to overcome this lacunae in online teaching.

Since all teaching and learning will go online, there is bound to be learning deficit among the students. How do we ensure that this is kept to a minimum. It is extremely important that the students remain interested and motivated throughout the course of study. We have to ensure that and also maintain integrity of testing and learning assessment.

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Success Strategies for the

# EDUCATION SECTOR

The impact of COVID-19 can be felt around the world, especially across the higher education sector. Worldwide closures of educational institutions have impacted over 95% of the world's student population, with 1.5 billion learners not able to attend classes.

In the wake of this shift, educational institutions have had to quickly adopt new approaches to foster student success in these extraordinary times. In the short term, these measures include delaying start dates, shifting to online course delivery, and offering new forms of financial support. But, what can we do to support the future of Education?

Today Indian Higher Education System is the world's largest with 1,000+ universities, 42,000 colleges, 3,25,000 schools with closely 320 million student's population. 95% of Indian Institutions before this crisis concentrated promoting infrastructure facilities of their campuses to attract students. In this crisis situation most of the campuses are empty and a large part of investments in these institutions is spent on infrastructure development that remain unused and not even 5% of institutions are equipped to deliver online engagement to the students. Since the past few weeks every education institution is trying to deliver online classes without ever having invested in this format of technology.

**In this crisis situation it is the survival of educational institutions that becomes a great challenge.**

Rather than stop your marketing efforts, adapt your messaging and highlight your institution's strengths to attract candidates looking for a new opportunity. The coronavirus pandemic has been disruptive for educational institutes and candidate alike, shutting down campuses, changing admissions plans, and moving learning online.

Educational institutions naturally are wrestling with many questions about continuity of their programs during this time, such as whether they'll be able to offer in-person classes in the coming semesters, or how they can enhance their offerings to offset enrolment declines. But some questions are less obvious, and perhaps easier to broach, like, How should we pitch successfully to prospective students during this pandemic? What content should we share? Should we change or pause conventional marketing activities?

While candidates' priorities and study preferences are changing because of coronavirus, the pandemic has not impacted the number of people interested in joining full time education. According to a recent survey, 90 % of candidates still plan to opt for full-time programmes, even if their plans get a little delayed.

People are at home during lockdown and logged on to their computers. In this period, the traffic to visit educational institutions website has doubled, and we are seeing consistently high

Today Indian Higher Education System is the world's largest with 1,000+ universities, 42,000 colleges, 3,25,000 schools with closely 320 million student's population.

returns from institutions using digital marketing to attract candidates.

Stopping your marketing activities during this time is downright counter-productive. It's never been more important to promote your institution, stay present in this difficult period, and keep your brand in an always-on stance for prospective students.

The trick is to adapt quickly to the changing situation and find the right balance in your messaging, adjusting what you say and how you say it.

**Here are four tips for marketing your Institution during the pandemic:**

## 1. Understand Your Audience's Changing Priorities

Knowing who your audience is and what they're interested in is crucial for any marketing strategy. In the current climate, think also about how your audience's priorities, interests, and behaviours are changing. Think about how people are consuming your marketing content — any change in the time of the day they're online or whether they're using mobile or desktop devices will be vital.

We've found that webinars are an increasingly effective way to engage with candidates, who may have a little more time on their hands now and are getting more accustomed to video calls and online meetings.

It's also a time when social media posts with the right kind of messaging can go a long way, with communities engaged and active across social media channels. Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube are the most popular channels for students.

## 2. Rethink Your Messaging

According to market research, a vast majority of consumers do not think brands should stop advertising during this pandemic. Instead, they expect brands to keep them informed of what they're doing, set a positive tone, and communicate brand values.

The message: You should not be afraid to continue to promote your institutions to candidates during this time and you do need to be conscious of the climate you're doing it in.

Obviously, what won't work as well now is to promote the benefits of your institution's location, campus experience, international collaborations, or face-to-face experiential learning activities. Instead, share how your institution is dealing with the crisis — how you're engaged with the local community or if you're at the forefront of online learning.

Communicate the long-term value of the degree. Show how, in previous times of economic crisis, for example, going to full time programs helped students advance or change their career paths.

Get expert industry leaders and faculty to share their thoughts, leadership content related to the crisis. Create timely and useful content for candidates. Above all, create content that offers value and is relevant to your target audience. A genuine, less directly promotional approach is what distinguishes content marketing from advertisements and makes it an especially useful tool during such critical phases.

While the coronavirus crisis is temporary, showing that you are in tune with your target audience and understand their changing needs can help instill a lasting sense of trust and value.

## 3. Be Transparent

Coronavirus is presenting a lot of new challenges. Some full-time students have signed petitions asking for reduced tuition fees and refunds. Plenty of candidates are uncertain about whether to still apply this year or hold off, and many are unsure about the changing admissions requirements and shifting application deadlines.

It has never been more important to be honest and completely transparent with your audience. Address these issues head-on and with clear communication, answer candidates' questions, and do not be afraid to talk openly about the challenges you face in your marketing content.

Everyone understands that this is a difficult time and the future is uncertain; candidates mostly just want to be kept informed. If done well, communicating with candor can be an effective way to build trust with your audience.

You should also be honest with yourself. Some issues that are beyond your control will impact your carefully laid plans. You may have to re-evaluate your marketing campaign goals and expectations.

It's also important to be realistic when measuring the success of some marketing activities—for example, straight-up lead generation campaigns—during this time. Take a step back to consider the context you're operating in and which marketing approaches will deliver the best results.


## 4. Consider Content Marketing

Effective content marketing is one of the best ways to engage your audience, tell honest stories, be clear on your messaging, and define your brand. And it becomes even more important when you're looking to overcome challenges around context.

External issues can impact candidates and the perception they have of your institution. However, whatever the external challenges, you can overcome them if you have a strong brand that helps your institution stand out.

Content marketing allows you to define and promote your brand so you can overcome challenges like the current pandemic and instead have candidates associate your brand with the key themes you want to promote.

Much content marketing, particularly if its purpose is brand building or brand awareness, can be longer term in focus. However, especially in today's climate, content marketing is crucial when it comes to promoting your institution and keeping your brand in the minds of prospective learners.

The other positive advantage to Indian Higher Education Institutions is that the Covid-19 pandemic has left the entire admission processes for students looking to pursue overseas studies to defer. Several American and European Universities are reportedly considering cancelling all in-person classes until next year. In that case, students are unlikely to even apply for admissions for academic year 2021. Closely 2.5 million Indian students go overseas for higher education and all these students are ideal candidates for any good institution in our own country. 

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