Effect of Covid19 on Elementary Education in Odisha and Government Policy Response

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Abstract- COVID-19 is considered as a public health emergency of International concern (PHEIC) and thus a pandemic with an explosive increase rate of infection worldwide. The whole educational system from elementary to tertiary level has been collapsed during the lockdown period of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 not only in India but across the globe. Based on secondary sources of data the intended purpose of this paper seeks to study how the elementary education system in Odisha is facing the impact of COVID-19 and the steps taken by the Government to combat the negative impact of the pandemic for continuous smooth education of elementary school students. This paper addresses the advantages and disadvantages related to online learning in elementary education in Odisha during covid19 for providing quality education. The present paper also tries to study the changes in the trend of enrolment and dropout rate in Elementary Education in Odisha during covid19. So, some of the post Covid-19 trends which may allow imagining new ways of teaching learning of elementary education in Odisha are outlined. Some fruitful suggestions are also pointed to carry out educational activities during the pandemic situation.

Index Terms- Covid19, Elementary Education, online learning, Enrolment & Drop out

JEL Codes: I2,I21, I28

I. INTRODUCTION

The whole educational system from elementary to higher level has been collapsed due to COVID 19 lockdown not only in India but across the globe (Mishra et al., 2020).COVID- 19 is referred as pandemic due to its severity and fierceness also as the greatest global health crisis since after centuries in human civilization. The onset of the novel corona virus made everything from world economies to social rituals devastated. (Mishra et al., 2020).The spread of pandemic Covid-19 has drastically disrupted every aspects of human life including education. It has created an unprecedented test on education. In many educational institutions around the world, campuses are closed and teaching-learning has moved online. In India, about 32 crore learners stopped to move schools/colleges and all educational activities came to an end. On March 11, 2020 World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Covid-19 as a pandemic. Covid-19 has affected more than 4.5 million peoples worldwide (WHO). In India, the first affected case of Covid-19 was detected on 30 January 2020 in the state of Kerala and the affected had a travel history from Wuhan, China.

In India, the first death was reported on March 12, 2020 and the nation observed Janta Curfew for a day on March 22, 2020. India again observed 14 hours Janta Curfew on March 24 to combat the Corona virus pandemic and assess the country's ability to fight the virus. Then, the 1st phase of lockdown was announced by the Prime Minister on March 25, 2020 for 21 days. Monitoring the effects of the virus, Indian Government has been extending the lockdown period in different phases and the lockdown 5.0 was declared on April 30 which is effective from 1st June to 30th June 2020. In all the phases of lockdown starting from lockdown1.0 to lockdown 5.0, the educational institutions throughout the nation have never got any relaxation to start their educational activities. Thus, pandemic Covid-19 impacted significantly on the education sector. According to the UNESCO report, Covid-19 has affected nearly 68% of total world's student population as per the data taken during first week of June 2020.Outbreak of Covid-19 has impacted about 1.2 billion students and youths across the globe by school and university closures. Several other countries have also implemented localized closures impacting millions of additional learners. In India, more than 32 crores of students have been affected by the various

restrictions and the nationwide lockdown for Covid-19. Most Governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to control the spread of the pandemic. This worldwide closure has impacted drastically the world's student population. Governments around the world are making efforts to diminish the immediate impact of closure of educational institutions particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and trying to facilitate the continuity of education for all using different digital modes of learning. Even though the country has been adapting to the new-age learning, but there still lies an obstacle in achieving entire success as only 45 crore people of our total population of the country have access to the internet/e-learning. The people residing in rural areas are still very much deprived of the technologies and therefore hampering the cause of online education. The Covid- 19 pandemic taught the entire society on how necessity is the mother of invention by allowing educational institutions to adopt online learning and introduce a virtual learning culture. The pandemic has been routing the education sector forward with technological innovation and advancements. The pandemic has significantly disrupted the school education sector particularly elementary education. Schools have been closed and examinations postponed. Classrooms are going virtual and admissions for the upcoming academic year are fraught with confusion. According to UNESCO, over 320 million students in Indian schools are currently impacted the pandemic has pushed the world to drastically reinvent ways of coping with the 'new normal'. After the initial phase of complete revamp, it is critical to understand the short and long-term impact and future measures.

An immediate and effective response to the crisis was to go digital. Developing strong online platforms has become necessary for steadiness in learning. Yet in a developing country like India with vast disparity in socio-economic backgrounds of students and the quality of educational institutions, the change has not been easy. The digital divide has been a constraint widening the gap, and needs urgent attention from both public and private sector players as the crisis continues. Good teachers, refreshed curricula and effective tools will ensure students stay involved and active in the learning process. (Ramakrishna, 2021).

The mobilization of resources to prevent and treat COVID-19 infections is unparalleled in the history of public health. Different measures have been adopted by the different states to fight against COVID-19.Odisha also has not escaped from this COVID-19 disaster at present and as of August 31,2020 Odisha has   reported 1,03,536 confirmed cases, 25,705 active cases, 545 deaths from COVID-19. To minimize the infection and controlling the COVIID-19 disaster, Odisha was the first state to announce lockdown 2.0, following strict quarantine guidelines, community monitoring for home quarantine people, and extending care by establishing COVID hospital.(Swain &Das2021).

Since its outbreak in late December 2019, COVID-19 has wreaked havoc across the world and like any critical sector, education has been hit hard. Students, schools, colleges and universities have been deeply impacted. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), over 800 million learners from around the world have been affected, 1 in 5 learners cannot attend school, and over 102 countries have ordered nationwide school closures while 11 have implemented localized school closure. The COVID-19 pandemic will adversely impact the progress as some governments were increasing the education budget. Therefore, this is a crisis that requires urgent attention and collective action by all Governments, stakeholders and communities. Each day millions of children do not go to school due to emergencies and ongoing humanitarian crises. (March 18, 2020).Amid a sharp rise in COVID-19 cases, the Odisha government said that it was withholding its decision to reopen elementary schools for students of Classes 1 to 5. School and mass education minister S R Dash, in a statement, said the decision was taken after officials visited various primary schools across the state and held discussions with the stakeholders. "Keeping in view the rise in number of daily cases and based on the feedback provided by parents across the state, we have decided not to reopen schools for students of Classes 1 to 5 from January 3," he stated. He also said that offline examination, as scheduled earlier, will be conducted adhering to COVID-19 protocols. Odisha on 2.1.2022 registered 424 more corona virus cases. Sixty-seven of the new patients are children below 18 years of age. (Hindustan times Jan 06, 2022).

The outbreak of COVID-19 has compounded the plight of learners in countries affected and or emerging from conflict and disaster. While the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) acknowledges the public health decision to close schools. GCE is convinced that all learners no matter where they live and circumstances have a right to education. Education is indispensable for children, young and adults in emergencies and must be a priority in any emergency responses.(Global Campaign for Education (GCE) March 18, 2020).On the above backdrop this paper looks at the impact of the pandemic on the elementary education sector in Odisha.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.1 Impact of COVID-19 on Education

UNICEF (2020) in its paper "Education and Covid -19 Response" has found that the countries in the East Asia and Pacific region were the first to be impacted by Covid-19 and ensuring major public health emergency caused by the pandemic. This situation has affected education provision in all of the 27 countries supported by UNICEF programs since late January 2020.Approximately 325 million children had been affected by COVID-19 school closure and 80 million were not able to continue learning remotely throughout2020.Prolonged school closures predicted to result in a large increase in

children and adolescents dropping out of school, late enrollment of young children, and significant learning loss. The secondary impacts of the crisis, and especially the economic and financial fallout, are expected to negatively impact the education system in the mid and long term and put education gains achieved pre-COVID-19 at risk. So what is suggested is safe school reopening ensuring schools having protective measures in place to receive children including wash facilities, nutritional support and PSS services. Continuity of learning with access to quality high-tech, low-tech and no-tech learning materials during school closures, continued learning during pandemic. Addressing learning loss with availability of essential learning recovery packages to mitigate learning loss. Building back better by increasing education system resilience and better learning outcomes for children is inevitable.

More than 1 billion children in the world over are at risk of falling behind due to school closures aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19. To keep the world's children learning, countries have been implementing distant education programmes. Yet many of the world's children – particularly those in poorer households – do not have internet access, personal computers, TVs or even radio at home, that increases the existing learning inequalities. Students lacking access to the technologies needed for home-based learning have inadequate means to continue their education. As a result, many face the risk of never returning to school, undoing years of progress made in education around the world (UNICEF, 2020).

Mishra, et al.(2020). In their paper "Online teaching-learning in higher education during lockdown period of Covid-19 pandemic" authors seek to address the necessity of online teaching-learning in education amid the COVID-19 pandemic and how can existing resources of educational institutions effectively transform formal education into online education with the help of virtual classes and other pivotal online tools in this continually shifting educational landscape (Mishra, et al.2020). It is found that three relevant stakeholders, namely, academicians, technicians and students, started effort to experience and utilize the transition. Students faced specific problems like connectivity issues due to the remoteness of their location and could not compromise the quantum of time required for machine learning. Again, several available online teaching-learning tools like Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook and YouTube streaming available for both teachers and students were put to need-based use. Most of the teachers were trained by institutions to gain hands-on experiences. There is a difference between online and face-to-face mode of teaching. It was an arduous task for them to use new teaching approach. At the very onset of the lockdown, teachers intended to use WhatsApp, Email and telephonic conversation for imparting teaching. But gradually, as the lockdown period extended from time to time, WhatsApp, email, and telephonic conversation proved inadequate. Teachers and students started installing online learning platforms such as Zoom, Google meets, Webex, LinkedIn learning, Solo Learn, Udemy, and many more to widen their academic exposure and understanding to deal with the complexity of online education.

Global Campaign for Education (GCE) (March 18, 2020), has outlined in the article *"Corona Virus: Don't Let Our Children Down!"* that each day millions of children do not go to school due to emergencies and ongoing humanitarian crises. The outbreak of COVID-19 has multiplied the plight of learners in countries affected. While the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) acknowledges the public health decision to close schools, still contingency plans should be in place to ensure the right to education even in times of crisis. GCE is convinced that all learners no matter where they live have a right to education. So it is suggested that as Education is an essential right for children, young and adults in emergencies and must be a priority from the very beginning and all emergency responses.

Ramakrishna (2021) in his article "Impact of Covid-19 on Higher Education in India" highlights on major impacts of Covid-19 on HEIs in India. The study found that Virtual education is the most preferred mode of education at this time of crisis due to the outbreak of Covid-19. The post Covid-19 education seems to be an education with widely accepted online/virtual education which may perhaps be a parallel system of education. As there is no certainty with regard to how long the pandemic situation will continue, a gradual move towards the online/virtual education is the requirement of the current crisis. Thus to know about the impact of COVID on education the paper outlined the following Objectives.

Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to analyze the Impact of COVID-19 on Elementary Education System in Odisha.

i. To find out the impact of COVID-19 on the elementary education in Odisha.
ii. Advantages and disadvantages related to online learning in elementary education in Odisha during Covid19.
iii. To study the change of trend of enrolment and dropout rate in Elementary Education in Odisha during Covid19
iv. To examine the steps taken by the Govt. to combat the negative impact of the pandemic on the students for continuity of education.

Methodology

The present study is purely based on secondary data.Various reports of national and international and state agencies on Covid-19 pandemic are referred to collect data for current study. Information are collected from different authentic websites, journals and e-contents relating to impact of Covid-19 on elementary educational system of Odisha. Certain observations are made by enquiring school teachers and parents.

Analysis and Findings
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1. **Effect of COVID-19 on the Elementary education system in Odisha**
   - Due to Covid Schools were closed. As the pandemic's devastating effects were being felt in our nation's economy and loss of life , It is also felt in education sector . Particularly primary education is affected most as children are not coming to school till now. In response, educators, staff, and school leaders at all educational levels and in all parts of the state have made commitments and dedicated their talents, energy, and resources to address the needs of students.
   - Students are also being imparted online classes through smart phones. However with poor mobile connectivity in some parts of Odisha, online classes failed to reach many students of the State. Of the 60 lakh students, the Department could hardly reach 22 lakh students during the lockdown. The situation worsened further when the lockdown was lifted. Many parents returning to their workplaces took the only smartphone in the family with them. As per the Department's assessment, the number of students taking online class dropped to 6-7 lakhs after the lockdown measures were eased.
   - The following table shows the percentage of elementary schools and students access to online learning in Odisha during COVID19.

Table.1. Percentage of elementary schools and students access to online learning in Odisha during COVID19.

Year	Total number of government elementary schools in the State	Percentage of schools access to online education	The number of children who attend online classes through the Smartphone
2020	67,128	27.68%	31.95%

Source: https://www.thestatesman.com/cities/online-learning-initiative-odisha-fails-reach- disadvantaged-children-27-68-schools-initiated-online-education-1503009260.html

The above table states that out of 67,128 government elementary schools in the State, only 27.68% have initiated online education so far. The number of children who attend online classes through the Smartphone was 31.95% per cent.

2. **Advantages and disadvantages related to online learning in elementary education in Odisha during covid19 for advancing quality education**

   Advantages: Launching of several online platforms like you tube classes, e-pathasala and e- Mulyankan facilitates elementary education in the state. These online platforms will benefit students, teachers and district education officers (DEOs).The e-pathasala is an online learning platform that have repositories of e-contents in the form of documents, audios and videos. The e- contents support different areas of online learning like self-learning, online classes, assignments and evolution of the learners' progress. The e-Mulyankan platform is designed to act as a digital bank practice for examinations and final examinations through the e-Mulyankan platform. These e-learning facilities were created as long term solution for any difficult situation by the odisha Govt. The school and mass education department also signed an MOU with central square Foundations to achieve foundational literacy and numeracy among children in class 1 and 3.Teachers have been identified for this programme and it has been taken up in a mission mode. The department has also started identifying dropouts and migrant children through door-to-door surveys. Mainstreaming the children is also a priority for the department. The department also plans to activate the Odisha Siksha Sanjog, a whatsapp based programme that allows the teachers to share e-content and materials with students. So learning is encouraged during lockdown period for Covid-19.
   i. Online learning encourages more productive use of time which keep individuals safe from pandemic situation like spread of Covid-19.
   ii. It has greater access to experts/specialists (nationally and internationally) and Learners can access 24/7 at their own pace and time. It allows geographical reach even to rural or remote locations.

iii. Cost-effective technologies are quite affordable and enhance communication between educators and students. One teacher educator can teach in various virtual classes simultaneously which reduces travelling time and not risky. These can accommodate more learners at a particular time.

iv. Online class/conference session can be saved for future reference e.g. class notes can be saved and distributed via network for references by students. The digital recordings of the classes/meetings can be uploaded in website to access later.

v. In order to conduct exams, institutions may consider using online examination software which may help for conducting online examinations. This will prevent institutions delaying in its annual academic calendar for lockdown.

vi. Useful for girl child and physically handicapped learners who can learn at home.

Disadvantages of online learning during lockdown:

Contrary to the government claim that 33 per cent of the 60 lakh students in the age group of 6 to 14 years pursuing elementary education in Odisha are attending online classes, a survey has revealed that only about 6 lakh students are getting access to digital learning. The survey titled 'Paused Classrooms', carried out by Save the Children and Odisha RTE Forum, was released recently. The study aimed at understanding the education scenario, particularly pre-school and elementary education during Covid-19 in Odisha, stated that pandemic has not only slowed down the learning process among children but also created a digital disparity among students in urban and rural parts of the State. The survey pointed out that the School and Mass Education department did not take into consideration the infrastructure and connectivity issues in rural parts of the State before launching the online education programme.

The study revealed that the Odisha Shiksha Sanjog programme that aimed at e-learning during the pandemic, has not been able to cover even 50 per cent of the school students except in Khurda district. The programme was launched by the School and Mass Education department in the year 2020 to engage students in the learning process through WhatsApp groups. Apart from this, the pandemic has brought to a complete halt to mother tongue-based learning for tribal children. While children of 22 among 63 tribal communities in the State are learning the curriculum in their mother tongue till Class V and Odia and English are subsequently added to it, the study found out that there was no specific planning by the government to develop online learning materials in their language. "No tribal student of primary grades is currently receiving learning materials in his/her mother tongue", it claimed.

Convenor of Odisha RTE Forum Anil Pradhan said online education was also a new concept for a majority of teachers who were technically weak. In a survey which is carried out in 15 districts the online learning process has also been affected during the pandemic because teachers were not habituated to e-learning and often found it difficult to communicate with students. Hence, they were unable to conduct online classes regularly and properly. Besides, the online learning process has remained one-sided with no scope for interactions or doubt- clearing sessions and follow-up by the teachers.

So following are demerits of online learning of elementary education during the pandemic.

i. Not all children have the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to go through online classes. Spending more time on virtual platforms can have health impact on them.

ii. Learners from low-income families and disadvantaged groups are the more likely to suffer during online learning as they may not afford high-speed internet connection and required technical gadgets. It widens gap between privileged and unprivileged learners.

iii. It may lead to laziness with some students being at their home and may lack self discipline.

iv. The atmosphere of a face-to-face meeting is lost. Interpersonal relationship between students and teachers or between students may hamper.

v. The security of personal data may be compromised as one can hack the digital devices without latest software updates and antivirus programs.

3. The trend of enrolment and dropout rate in Elementary Education in Odisha

The trend of enrolment and dropout rate in Elementary Education in Odisha during Covid19 and whether the enrollment & dropout patterns has changed as a result of the covid19 pandemic. According to the Odisha Economic Survey Report(2020-2021) the Gross enrolment ratios at primary and upper primary level stood at 102.17% and 97.99% respectively. The trend from 2014-15 to 2019-20 shows the stability of enrolment at the Elementary level in the State. Dropout rates for primary education improved to 1.55 in 2019-20 from 5.42 in 2018- 19.As shown in the figure.

Figure 1 Stability of enrolment at the Elementary level in the State (2014-15 to 2019-20)

The trend from 2014-15 to 2019-20 shows the stability of enrolment at the Elementary level in the State
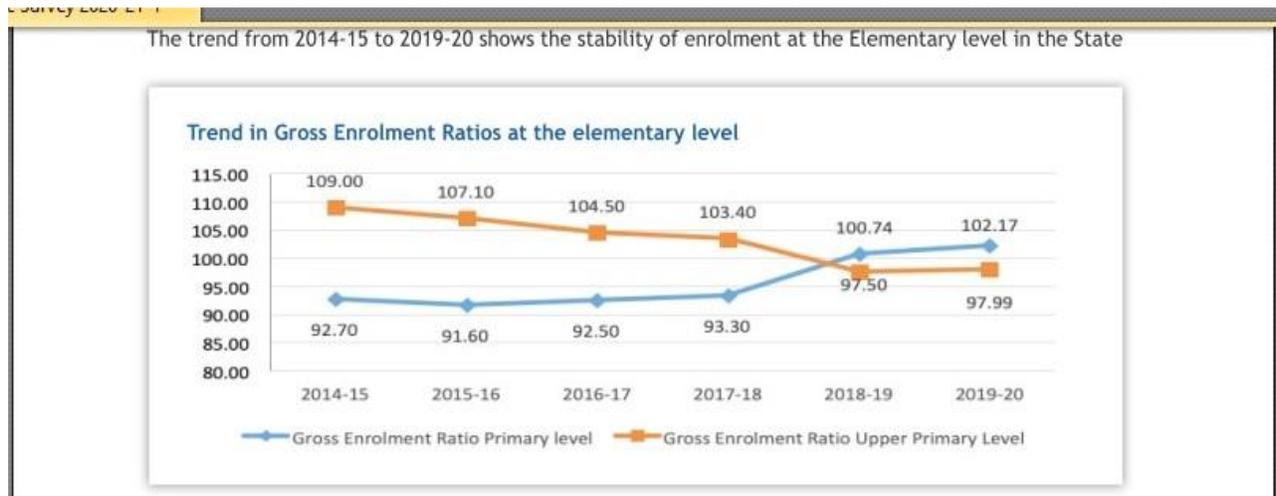
Source:Odisha Economic Survey(February2021)

But according to another report published in The Indian Express on January 7, 2022**,** |in the pandemic-hit 2020-21, 49,098 students dropped out of school before entering higher secondary level, including 15,792 tribal and 11,045 students from the Scheduled Caste (SC) category. In 2019-20, 8,168 students dropped out after secondary school, shared School and Mass Education Minister Sameer Ranjan Dash in a reply in the assembly. According to the data, at 6,731, the highest dropouts were in Kalahandi district, including 2,086 ST and 905 SC students, followed by Koraput district, 3,587, including 1,821 ST and 618 SC. The lowest was recorded in Mayurbhanj district with 13 students, followed by Cuttack, where only 19 dropped out. Among the coastal districts, 2,363 students in Ganjam, 1,822 in Bhadrak, 1,734 in Khurda, 1,592 in Balasore, 1,364 in Jagatsinghpur and 1,255 in Puri dropped out. In Sundargarh, 3,426 students and in Angul 2,715 left. Similarly, 2,679 students left education midway in Bargarh, 2,350 in Nuapada, 2,020 in Malkangiri and 2,011 in Keonjhar. As per data accessed by the (Mohanty,2021) while the dropout rate decreased for primary, upper primary and elementary sections to six per cent in 2018-19, it drastically increased to 23.39 per cent in 2019-20. The Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) also dropped for secondary sections from 57.51 per cent in 2018-19 to 54.62 in 2019-20.

In another response furnished by the minister, only 29 per cent students from across the state have access to smart phones. For maximum reach, the school and mass education department even started lessons through Doordarshan, YouTube and radio.

Through YouTube, the state could only reach out to 33.52 per cent of the total students, while only 22.46 per cent attended classes broadcast by Doordarshan under the Shiksha Darpan initiative.

The figures were further low for radio pathshala for classes I -VIII, which was only attended by nine per cent students. Of the 43.72 lakh students enrolled at the elementary level (from Class I to VIII), only 15.92 lakh, 36.42 per cent, watched live YouTube classes when school remained shut. At secondary level, the percentage who attended live YouTube classes was only 33.52.

The Shiksha Darpan programme on *Doordarshan* was attended by 20.10 per cent students at elementary and 24.8 per cent at secondary levels. The radio pathshala was attended by 9.47 per cent students. Of the 43.72 lakh elementary students, a little over 4 lakh attended radio classes in the previous academic session.

In the last one year, the department has initiated various schemes to curtail and check dropout rates. "As schools are now reopening, we will ensure all students are tracked and enrolled in school. We already have an initiative where teachers and principals visit dropout students and their families to convince and provide them help to continue school.

4. Government Policy Initiatives

Odisha is alone state which is recurrently affected by natural disasters and is therefore experienced the greatest human and economic impacts. The COVID -19 pandemic is the greatest disaster of 2020 not only in our State but over the globe. Odisha government created a historic mile stone in facing the challenge of COVID 19. After the GOI announced the complete nation-wide lockdown on 23rd March 2020, all educational institutions in Odisha were shut to contain the spread of the virus and to abide by the lockdown norms.
The following initiatives taken by School and Mass education for prevention of the negative impact of the pandemic on the students of elementary schools for continued education and supplementary nutrition for vulnerable students.

(a) Continuance of Mid-Day meals: The Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha (GoO) instructed all Collectors to provide Mid-Day meal dry rations to school children for the period 16th March to 13th June 2020 through fair price shops or PDS retailers. In June 2020, the Department of School and Mass Education, GoO invoked Section-145 of MDM Rules (2015) to pay the food security allowance consisting of food grains as per entitlement of the child and prevailing cooking cost. This was also in line with the GOI's order that the Food Security Allowance under the Mid-day Meal Scheme be provided during the lockdown, summer vacation and later when schools had not reopened. The money was transferred to the student's or parent's account by DBT mode.

(b) School syllabus reduced by 30 percent for this academic year: In August 2020, the School and Mass Education Department of the GoO reduced the syllabus for the academic year 2020-21 by 30 per cent, in view of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The state government's decision is applicable for classes I to XII.

(c) 'Radio Pathsala' and 'Radio Surbhi': With schools closed since 17th March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the School and Mass Education Department, GoO announced that students from classes one to eight of government-run institutes in Odisha will be taught via radio from Monday 28th September 2020. The Department had provided textbooks to school children earlier.

Lessons conducted for two classes each day are aired through all radio stations in the state. The audio programme is also uploaded in the central government's DIKSHA online platform. Students from Class I to VIII learn their lessons through a class of 15 minutes duration everydayfrom 10 a.m. to 10.15 a.m. conducted by experienced teachers.Like 'Radio Pathsala', differently abled students are being taught through a community radio programme Radio Surbhi during the pandemic.

(d) Odisha ShikshaSanjog': A digital learning programme through WhatsApp groups has been initiated since 19th April 2020 to engage students in teaching learning activities during lock down situation due to COVID-19. Community based teaching-learning programmes are adopted in different districts like Shiksha Setu (Bargarh), Shiksha Sanklapa (Jajpur) Shiksha Sanjibani (Bhadrak), Mo Shiksha Sathi and Ashara Pathe (Sundargarh).

(e) Madhu App: A syllabi-based e-learning App in Odia language dedicated to provide mother tongue based virtual classroom experience focusing on Self-learning and self-assessment of learning achievement in online mode.Telecast of Video Lessons in Doordarshan (Odia Channel) going on for Grade-10 since April 2020. Recording of video lessons for Grade 9 and 12 are going on for telecast in Swayamprabha Channel.

(f) Teacher training on-line: 1,37,705 teachers trained on making educational videos through Smart phone to facilitate Odisha ShikshaSanjog, 163 Principals of OAVs trained on understanding School Leadership. 3122 Teachers trained on Ganita Kalika Andolan. 3258 English teachers trained through MOOC provided by British Council on Learner and Classrooms organised by Mo School, Odisha. 517 DEO, BEO and Headmasters trained online on Knowledge series which was organised by Mo School, Odisha.

Hence, the School and Mass Education Department turned to All India Radio to reach out to children in remote parts of the State. The AIR service reaches the remote parts of the State. Also, radio is cheap compared to smart phones and the recurring cost is also low. The School and Mass Education Department has covered more students with the radio school programme.

III. Summary and Conclusions

Certain Observations were made with regard to implications of pandemic on elementary education.

First, emerging facts shows that the pandemic has negatively affected academic expansion widening existing disparities.

Second, for many learners, the sudden shift to learning from home amid the challenges of the pandemic has become harder for the students to cope with.

Third, almost all students have experienced some challenges to their mental health and well-being during the pandemic and many have lost access to school-based services and supports for education. It is true that technology paves the way for education, thus helping the students and teachers to connect virtually through online class, digital exams, and so on. But the sad truth is that it is not available to many students all over the nation.
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In this study, our findings indicated that the Covid-19 outbreak has made a significant impact on the elementary education sector in Odisha. The Covid-19 related interruptions highlight key challenges and provide an opportunity to further evaluate alternate measures in the education sector. To develop multimodal approaches to achieve course content objectives for better learning outcome can be a better idea to deal with the complexity of online education. Undauntedly, the governments must ensure the availability of reliable communication tools, high quality digital academic experience, and promote technology-enabled learning for stu-dents to bridge the disparities originated in the education system before and after COVID-19 catastrophe which is also inevitably necessitated for uninterrupted learning. Few steps should be accounted in the wake of this pandemic; to develop such a curriculum that reflects the perceptible change in the content knowledge and learning experience of students as well as enable them to think critically.

Various steps are also being taken by the Govt.Odisha to curtail dropout rate and to enhance enrollment rate that has been affected by the pandemic by extending all help to students of elementary education to continue school. Everyone must learn to live and survive

with the present crisis as it will continue for some more years; in the long run, no can afford the negligence towards digital transformation in elementary education sectorsThe new policies and guidelines in this direction would help mitigate some of the negative effects and prepare educators and students for the future health crisis. The infrastructure should be updated and providing education to every child amid the pandemic is the need of the hour.

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