SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE IN A DIGITAL WORLD DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Social Work education provides practical shape to the theoretical concepts. The Social work believes in the social nearness than social distance. Today, the pandemic Covid-19 stood a firm stage to destroy people's life and has forced the people in keeping social distance although people have lack of awareness towards this situation it made its dominant role in all over the world. Social Work Practice is not meant only in distributing the necessities but also requires psychological care and the role to be played in as an advocacy. The government has made an attempt to stop the widespread of Covid-19 by lockdown and social distancing; this has been affected in all spheres of activities including the education system. The worldwide closing of academic institutions would trigger a significant disruption in learning process; most households across the globe are facing short-term disruptions: residential education is not only a huge blow to parents' income, but also to children's public existence and learning. Pertinently, such distractions may not be a short-term problem, but will have long-term implications for the impacted populations. The objective of the study is to assess the critical situations in education system and respond to implement new internal task giving policy.

Keywords: Pandemic, Education System, Social Distance, Digital Learning And Social Work Practice.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus is a kind of common virus that causes an infection in your nose, sinuses, upper throat. The World Health Organization identified SARS-Cov-2 as a new type of coronavirus. The outbreak quickly spread around the world.COVID-19 is a disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 that can trigger what doctors call a respiratory tract infection. It can affect your upper respiratory tract or lower respiratory tract.SARS-CoV-2 is one of the seven types of coronaviruses, including the ones that cause severe diseases like Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). It spreads the same way other coronavirus do, mainly through person-to-person contact. Infections range from mild to deadly.

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggested COVID-19 as the official name of the virus on February 11, 2020, an acronym for Coronavirus Disease 2019. On December 31, 2019, it was discovered for the first time in Wuhan, China. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization proclaimed COVID-19 a pandemic. On 30 January 2020, the first instance of the COVID-19 pandemic in India was recorded in the state of Kerala, with the victim having travelled from Wuhan, China.

Impact of pandemic in the country:

The Covid-19 led to a loss of human life and experienced challenge to public health and the food system. The economic and social disruption by the pandemic caused severe shock. Millions of people were at risk of falling into extreme poverty. During lockdown without earning an income, many were unable to feed their family and themselves. The pandemic had affected the entire country. On 11th March 2020, the WHO carried out a press conference and confirmed everyone's fears. Travels were shut down and all were stuck. Many of them suffered due to fever, weakness, and breathlessness. Many of them lost their loved ones, some lost their jobs and all their savings and many of them were homeless. Anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Country-wide lockdown and the restrictions like grocery stores, pharmacies, hospitals were only allowed. Vehicle travel was restricted and social interaction was limited. Shops were closed and everyone stayed at home. Millions of agricultural workers- waged and self-employed regularly face high levels of working poverty, malnutrition, and poor health and suffered from a lack of safety and labor protection as

well as other types of abuse. One must rethink the future of our environment. Only then we can protect the health, livelihood, nutrition of all people.

Initiatives of Government of India on education during Covid-19:

The Indian government adopted variety of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. On March 16, 2020, the union government declared a nationwide lockdown of all educational institutions. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) postponed all their examinations in India on March 18, 2020. The Civil Services Examination 2019 interview was postponed by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Similarly, owing to the emergence of COVID-19, majority of the state governments and educational boards postponed their examinations. Almost all state government ministries took steps to guarantee that school and college academic activities are not disrupted during the lockdown. They told the schools that all of their classes would be held online. The lockdown encouraged the use of digital technologies. It offered an opportunity to build new and better professional skills and update knowledge in a more effective and productive manner through online learning. For students to continue learning, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) created many arrangements, including online portals and educational channels via Direct to Home - TV and radios. Some other digital initiatives of MHRD for secondary as well as higher education during COVID-19 are Diksha portal, E-Pathshala app, Swayam platform and National Repository of Open Educational Resources portal.

Negative Impact of the pandemic on education:

Due to Covid-19, many changes came to the world and it took some time for everyone to adopt the new normal. The Covid-19 impact was everywhere, which resulted in the closure of Schools and other educational institutions. Classes were suspended and examinations were postponed at different levels. Entrance tests like NEET, JEE were also postponed. Initially, most governments had decided to temporarily close the schools to reduce the impact of Covid-19. Later it was reopened for a few grades, which increased the number of infection rates and then closed again.

Though schools were closed, students were attending their classes through various education initiatives like online classrooms, radio programs. Though it is a good thing happening. On the other side, there were lots of students who didn't own the resources to attend the online classes and suffered a lot. Many students were struggling to obtain the gadgets required for online classes. While some students had trouble getting gadgets some other students had trouble shifting from face-to-face learning to online learning including teachers. There was also the issue of network and internet connectivity. Remote communities had poor network and internet connectivity. Educated parents supported their children throughout the pandemic and were able to guide them but there were some illiterate parents who did not have the necessary education to teach children at home. As a result, during the pandemic COVID-19, the online teaching-learning method may have widened the gap between affluent and poor, urban and rural. There was always a delay or cancellation of exams, which leads to confusion for many students and there is no room for curriculum. The pandemic had a tremendous impact on higher education. Many Indian students enrolled in universities throughout the world, particularly in the worst-affected nations, were leaving those countries. During the lockdown most of the parents facing the unemployment situation were not able to pay the fee for that particular time periods which may affect the private institutes.

Positive Impact of the pandemic on education:

Educational institutions have shifted to a mixed form of learning and teaching. It inspired all teachers and students to learn more about technology. New methods of learning created many opportunities for transformation in the area of curriculum development. It enhanced the use of soft copy material because students were unable to acquire hard copies of study materials during a lockdown, the majority of pupils relied on soft copies for reference. The pandemic increased the use of online platforms like zoom and G-meet this led to increase of teleconferences, virtual meetings, webinars and e-conferencing opportunities. Anyone could attend these meetings from any part of the country. The pandemic condition compelled individuals to understand and use digital technologies, which increased digital literacy. Learning materials were easily shared among students, and all the doubts and questions could be answered through mail, SMS, phone calls, and various social media platforms. Teachers and students had an opportunity to engage with peers from all around

the world. Learners adapted to a global community. Online education allowed students to manage their time in a better way. During the pandemic, many students chose open and distance learning mode because it supports self-learning and provides an opportunity to learn from a variety of resources and they could also personalize learning based on their requirements and convenience.

Impact of the pandemic on fieldwork:

The purpose of social work practicum is to prepare students for social work practice by providing them opportunities to integrate knowledge with practice in the preparation to become professional social work. It facilitates self-awareness and self-assessment in the student and motivates them to uphold professional social work standards values and ethics so that they can work better to face challenges in society, and to meet the social needs and development of the human being.

The covid-19 has radically changed the lives of millions of people around the world. The worldwide spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the fieldwork of surveys. The data collection efforts via the face-to-face mode have been affected especially, including the ongoing surveys that were in the field during the COVID-19 outbreak and the planned surveys scheduled for field work later in 2020.

Some of the ways the pandemic affected fieldwork were; as a team, workers could have contributed more to social work. They could not get more opportunities to be more social with people. Due to a lot of Covid related restrictions, the scope of social work was limited. Workers were able to understand and do social work in their hometowns. Due to Covid, the fieldwork got diversified covering various activities. Workers missed more social activities practically. There were some opportunities to do fieldwork online but they did not get a chance to experience mingling with the others face to face.

Statistics on children who were unable to receive an education during a pandemic:

1. Because of COVID -19, millions of youngsters did not have a digital device with which they could access online education.

2. According to the figures, which were prepared by the states as a part of study conducted on Feb.1, nearly 14 million youngsters in the eastern state of Bihar did not have access to a computer, tablet or smartphone.

3. According to survey, online education is not a possibility for everyone because only one out of every four children has access to digital devices and internet access.

4. During Covid only a quarter of Indian families (24 percentage) had internet connectivity, and there was a significant rural -urban and gender disparity.

5. In India, the pandemic had resulted in the shutdown of 1.5 million schools as well as lockdowns in 2020.

6. Covid-19 severely interrupted access to education in India, with 247 million primary and secondary school pupils missing school.

While school systems in India and around the world have made efforts to reach students at home through various means, recent estimates of the impact on learning and socio - emotional well- being suggest that the poorest children will be the ones who suffer the most from school closures caused by the pandemic. Indeed, school closures have prompted educational administrations to quickly invent and implement numerous forms of remote learning such as radio, television and online resources. However, access to education technology varies greatly between rural and urban communities with children in urban communities having access to online, virtual schooling while children in rural communities have trouble accessing the same.

II.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

APA-Jena, P. K. (2020) the global impact of pandemic COVID-19 can be seen in every industry. This has a negative impact on India's and the world's education sectors. It has imposed a global lockdown, which has had a negative impact on the lives of pupils. In India, over 32 crore students were unable to transfer schools or universities, and all educational activities were halted. The COVID-19 epidemic has shown us that change is unavoidable. It has acted as a spur for educational institutions to grow and use platforms using previously unexplored technologies. The education industry has been striving to survive the crises with a unique approach and by digitizing the difficulties in order to eliminate the possibility of extinction.

Kidd, W., & Murray, J. (2020) the Covid-19 pandemic forced the closure of universities and institutions in England, just as many pre-service students were starting their final practicum. The issues that this provided for teacher educators are the topic of this study. The article examines how pedagogies altered as learning communities were shifted to new online venues using qualitative research methodologies and notions from spatial geography. Educators showed a willingness to rethink long-held habit.

Varea, V., & González-Calvo, G. (2021) bodies have been claimed to be an 'absent presence' and touch 'risky business' in physical education. This paper explores how PE practices have become 'touchless' and bodies absent using the concepts of risk and assemblage. The conclusions of this study reveal a shift in the way that bodies are being constituted as assemblages.

Ilmi, M. U., Setiawan, F., Hikmah, M. N., Kharisma, A., Feryawan, D., & Hanafie, A. A. (2021) Education is a continuous activity and will never stop (never ending process). . The purpose of implementing online learning is to provide quality educational services in an open, networked manner in order to achieve a wider reach. This online learning is usually carried out by teachers who are unable to attend or arrive on time for class. The outbreak of the corona virus disease 2019 (covid-19) which is currently effecting the world poses challenges for the world of education. In order to reduce the rate of the number of transmission covid-19, the government made social distancing and keeping a physical distance between individuals.

Dewart, G., Corcoran, L., Thirsk, L., & Petrovic, K. (2020) Covid 19 pandemic has affected nursing education globally with more impact in nations like Nepal with limited resources although the use of technology and virtual platforms has long history in nursing education, it is relatively very new for teaching hospitals in Nepal where the health system is fragile. The challenges seen in nursing education have depicted an urgent need to address nation's gap in educational infrastructure including capacity building of faculties and enabling nursing students to utilize technology effectively. In fact, the pandemic has unveiled underlying structural vulnerability and existing disparities in educational settings between nations, particularly in nursing education.

Jena, P. K. (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. Internationalization has slowed down considerably. In India, about 32 crore learners stopped to move schools/colleges and all educational activities brought to an end. Despite of all these challenges, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have reacted positively and managed to ensure the continuity of teaching-learning, research and service to the society with some tools and techniques during the pandemic. This article highlights on major impacts of COVID-19 on HEIs in India.

Kim, Jinyoung (2020) online learning is an educational process which takes place as an important part than offline education due to COVID-19 pandemic during 2020. Because of these circumstances, online teaching and learning had a main role in education programs, even though debates continue on whether or not it is beneficial for young children Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This informative study says how a teacher education course in childhood education was to provide student teachers with opportunities to learn and teach online.

Assunção Flores, M., & Gago, M. (2020) the Paper is a brief description and analysis of the initiatives and responses to the crisis as well as the difficulties, the challenges and the opportunities. The paper concludes with the discussion of the implications for teaching and teacher education in such uncertain times, particularly in regard to the role of practice as well as issues of mentoring within the context of a practicum.

Duraku, Z. H., & Hoxha, L. (2020) the worldwide educational systems have been impacted by the shutdown of educational institutions as a preventive step against the spread of COVID-19. While many educational institutions throughout the world have begun to transfer their learning to an online format, numerous elements are thought to influence the quality of remote or online learning.

Amadasun, S. (2021) drawing on the fallouts of the COVID-19 pandemic, this article considers how social work could be well positioned to effectively respond to Africa's social problems. Although recent evidence illustrates that the profession is generally viewed in a positive light among many African people, there are calls for practitioners to be more assertive in responding to Africa's perennial social problems, aggravated by the

current pandemic. Strategies for strengthening the quality of social work education and practice in Africa are explored.

III.   METHODOLOGY

The Case study method was used. Twenty Social work trainees of School of Social Work, Roshni Nilaya age 18-20 years were selected using convenient sampling. Self-prepared questionnaire and teleconference method were used to collect data.

Objective:

To assess the critical situations in education system and respond to implement new internal task giving policy

IV.   FINDINGS

▸ Fourteen respondents opined that E-learning method is very feasible.

▸ Six respondents expressed that they are not getting network connectivity so classes get disturbed due to Internet issues.

▸ All the respondents expressed that class room teaching is better than E-learning.

▸ Seventeen respondents said that social worker trainees need practical learning experiences than E-learning.

▸ Fifteen Respondents expressed that they lacking from emotional relations or bond from their peer mates.

▸ Fifteen respondents expressed that they cannot maintain a rapport between the teachers.

▸ Six Respondents expressed that increased number of screen times irritates their eyesight.

▸ Thirteen respondents opined that they need a classroom evaluation for their future endeavors.

▸ Seven respondents expressed that classroom evaluation leads to increase in Covid-19 and so they are not interested in writing the exams.

▸ Twelve respondents expressed they are tensed about their academic situation.

▸ Eight students are not bothered about current academic situation.

▸ Sixteen students opined that this pandemic situation will not give equal opportunities to all learners.

V.   SUGGESTIONS

▸ The learners should get a task related to their course and they should prepare a case study on particular issues.

▸ Advanced technology should invent which reach to the remotest and deprived communities.

▸ Introduction of sustainable innovative E-learning methods.

▸ Encourage distance learning which develops positivity among students.

▸ Provision of free apps and e-resources to the students.

VI.   CONCLUSION

Social Work Practice is not meant only in distributing the necessities but also requires psychological care and the role to be played in as an advocacy. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on India's education industry. Although it has generated numerous obstacles, it has also resulted in numerous opportunities. To deal with the current COVID-19 dilemma, the Indian government and several education stakeholders have looked into the prospect of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) by implementing various digital technologies. India is not yet ready to use digital platforms to bring education to every corner of the country. Students who aren't as fortunate as their peers would suffer as a result of the current digital platform selection. Universities and the Indian government, on the other hand, are working nonstop to find a solution to this problem. The top objective should be to use digital technology to help India's millions of young pupils gain an advantage. Educational institutions must improve their knowledge and information technology infrastructure to be prepared for COVID-19-like situations. Even if the COVID-19 problem lasts longer, there is a need to maximize the use of online platforms so that students not only complete their degrees this academic year but also prepare for the future digitally oriented environment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, India should come up with innovative measures to ensure that all children have continuous access to education. For efficient education delivery,

Indian policies must include people from all backgrounds, especially those from distant and remote areas, marginalized communities, and minority groups.

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