

Chief Editor's Note

The recently occurred pandemic called the COVID-19 caused by a tiny invisible microorganism called the SARS COVID-2, has made the world feel the serious repercussions of a natural being for which human activities have been put to a halt. The pandemic, perhaps the most seriously occurring one since the Spanish Flu that broke out in Europe during World War I, has made forced changes in various walks of life such as education, economy and governance. Such ramifications seem to continue even in the post-COVID era, for instance, online classes were a compelling factor during the pandemic; but even today, many institutions are still resorting to the same, when the impact of the virus has subsided.

The education system in India, which is anyway subjected to extremely slow and gradual changes since the nation's independence, has been witnessing a rapid metamorphosis recently. The demand for quality education and changes in several aspects of school and higher education had led to the formulation of the National Education Policy in 2020. The country was then oblivious to the subsequent changes that would be needed to be brought in the education system as a result of the pandemic and the horrors that the country had to endure in shutting down educational institutions and converting the entire education system to online mode. The pandemic has affected researchers, students and academics. More than 300 million students in India alone were affected due to institute closures at the onset of lockdown induced by the COVID-19 disease. Higher educational institutions had negligible in-person activities and hence research and training were significantly disrupted. The challenges were not unique only to students but also to faculty members and researchers who had to face their own difficulties in navigating new barriers introduced by the pandemic. Several researchers had to put data collection projects on hold and have had to delay writing research projects and articles due to the herculean increase in demand for online teaching. Most of the focus had been on adapting to the online mode and helping students cross the pandemic situation and continue their progress.

Research using web-based services or secondary data analysis could be continued. Researchers did not face problems related to such data collation but data collection requiring in-person presence had to come to an immediate halt. Travel and social restrictions had a serious toll on scientific research worldwide. The pandemic had serious negative impacts on researchers affecting their research and mental health. Less commuting and work-related travel had some positive impacts on the time for research but most researchers reported poor levels of mental health because of depression and mental distress.

There had been a few positive impacts of the pandemic, providing opportunities for growth for individuals and the scientific research committee, for example, several conferences pivoted to a virtual format and drastically reduced the cost of registration, travel and attendance, allowing for greater and more inclusive participation. Many journals removed financial barriers to access articles but they were mostly related to COVID-19. There is no doubt that the crisis has led to a massive influx of publications in the medical field but serious disruption in offline data collection had negatively impacted research in business and management areas. The pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the research and innovation community with profound impacts on institutions and businesses and on the people working in them. However, the community has responded superbly and had been able to adapt during these trying times. Army Institute of Management, Kolkata is pleased to come out with this issue of Kindler in the post-pandemic period, once again giving an opportunity to researchers to showcase their research activities.



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