

Article

The Impact of COVID-19 That Outbreak on the Quality Education vs. Role of Social Worker in the Context of Kerala

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Abstract

It is impossible to overstate the importance of social workers as frontline responders to this pandemic. However, it appears that social workers in Kerala are unaware of the many roles they may perform. The study suggests that social work instructors should be more proactive in their course interpretation. The article discusses about the current situation of Novel Corona Virus also called as the COVID-19 that hinder for all human's life including the education. Rapidly escalating COVID-19, has caused havoc in quality education and every educational institution are closed. As the UNESCO report it showed that 1.6 billion children being affected due to the close of institution across 191 countries. With the alternative method every education institution started blended learning virtual classes in order to continue learning environment in students. The articles investigate COVID-19 impact on student's quality education in Kerala and social work implication. The findings of the study shows that the COVID-19 has seriously effects on the students learning environment. It showed the huge gap between getting the good education in Kerala. However, Kerala has also made some policies to provide equal quality education to all the children through the ICT and also encourage social work to actively participate on providing education to all the majority of group children in Kerala. Whereas social work applied the micro, messo, and macro level of implication in practice to provide the education for children in remote area of Kerala.

Key words: Pandemic, Social Worker, Kerala, policies, Education.

Introduction

The globe is in the midst of the centuries most serious and unparalleled public health catastrophe. COVID-19 has resulted in famine and malnutrition, huge unemployment, and economic hardship. This rapid epidemic of coronavirus requires everyone's attention, but especially that of medical and paramedic personnel. Quality education is one of the most worthwhile goals refers to the Sustainable Development Goals which comes under goal number four. The prominent purpose of this SDGs goal no.4 is to procure inclusive education for all the students and create lifelong opportunities to indulge in different professional section. (UNESCO, 2020). In addition, the world isn't moving on effective track to meet 2030 education target. Before the beginning of Corona, it assumed that more than 200 million children will leave school, and only 60% children will finish the upper secondary education by 2030. Unfortunately, the worldwide Teaching-learning method completely halt by the COVID-19 outbreak. The number of truancy levels has also increased in the education sector. The vulnerable children are exclusive from quality education right now. Most of the countries have announced to off the schools which is going to be affecting for more than 91% of students worldwide. It is stated that 1.6 million children and youth have left their school, college and university (UNESCO, 2020). However, SDGs goal no. 4 is trying to provide education for every children and youth which is planned to achieve its goals by the end of 2030. The SDGS goals have ten targets to mentor different countries around the world, as it is a part of mission need to accomplish prior end of 2030.

SDGs 4 Global and National Level

From 2000, SDGs successfully accomplishing the universal primary education to meet their target whereas aggregate involvement in primary education rate in developing nations have 91% in 2015. The literacy rates were increased as more girls are in school than ever prior. This is one of the resounding successes of the SDG no.4. Quality education is an essential part of every child's right to acquire through schools, parents, and society. The target of SDGs four still hasn't reached to provide education for underprivileged children globally, as it is a sad part of SDGs 4, whereas inclusive productive education progressed was too slow. According to SDGs no.4, it is said 200 million children still out of schools from different parts of the countries around the world. In fact, A few countries have been lagging in education, prominently in sub-Saharan Africa, whereas still some countries that have literacy rates comes under below 50% among the youth (R. Max, and O.Esteban, 2016). Similarly, the quality education program of SDGs 4 badly impacts children globally as it harms inclusive and quality education. All around the world practice of digital classes has been drastically augmented, but it hasn't benefited all the children because most of them have no laptop, internet, and abundance sources to engage in digital classes. Today, due to the contagious COVID-19, virus approximately 1.6 billion students are leaving schools and college across 191 countries. They don't have proper access to engage in digital classes due to poor economic background. However, the inequality in education seems in a more different part of the countries at the pandemic time were due to the lack of inadequate infrastructure, lack of teacher-student interaction in school, lack of the socialization, and lack of the learning motivation among the students. (Radhu, M.-C., 2020).

In addition, Kerala has also experienced negative side effects in quality education due to the contagious COVID-19 virus and as continued lockdown and prohibitory orders. According to the Kerala census 2011, the literacy rate of Kerala was 65.8% (Census , 2011). Generally, Kerala progressively made outstanding progress in education system over last 20 years accompany involvement of the primary schools which is uplifted exactly to 97%. Though the country is still confronting numerous challenges for tackling with different issues in the education because of low quality of technical education, practical education and inadequate infrastructures. Somehow the literacy level of country has risen tremendously, and the government keeps supporting vulnerable, marginalized children, and economically weak children to meet the target of SDGs goals by 2030. The government of Kerala has launched several projects and programs related to Quality Education where different local NGOs, INGOs, and civil society were involved to support the government as well. Education for all, and every child should be provided education without biased are the major steps taken by the Kerala's government as a crucial part of the government program.

Unfortunately, due to the unprecedented situation of the pandemic, many students were not allowed to go to school, college, and university physically due to the continue lockdown and prohibitory orders imposed by the government. A few schools, colleges, and universities have started digital classes but it wasn't accessible to everyone due to the limited internet users. In Kerala, only 56% people used the internet, whereas 35% school has the internet in their area and out of them only 13% Schools are conducting the online classes. Most of the students those from rural areas of Kerala who can hardly afford to the internet access, because of COVID-19, outbreak the dropout rate has also tremendously increased in different schools of Kerala because of two reasons; the first reason was parents lost their regular job due to the COVID-19, outbreak, and their financial circumstances was completely collapse compare prior initiating of COVID-19. Therefore, some parents are not able to afford their children to send school, college, and varsities. However, Kerala's economy was massively depending on Gulf countries jobs whereas Kerala is considered as the 19th biggest receiver of remittances which sent by the Keralite migrant workers to home and reached around \$8.1 billion in 2018 (D. Saraswoti; G. Ram; S. Padam , 2020). Indeed, most of the families in Kerala depended on remittances, but due to the pandemic most of the people have lost their jobs and couldn't send money to their family in Kerala. Many workers back home with empty hand. However, the circumstance may lead to a higher give up in education due to the poor economy in family (D. Saraswoti; G. Ram; S. Padam , 2020). Kerala government has initiated to provide internet facilities for every part of the country so that every child can enroll in e-learning that help to get access to used e-resources from their respective teachers. Even though the government has organized different classes from Dish home, radio and television as well to meet the target of SDGs goals number 4.

Global initiative on SDGs-4

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number four has initiative few activities which was directly related to inclusive quality education for every children and youth. Some of the initiatives of SDGs goals number four are procuring fast internet connectivity, providing online educational content delivered via satellite. The SDGs target focuses on electronic attendance monitoring, provision of incentives for parents to reduce give up rates, which will provide effective facilities to the rural marginalized groups. SDGs have also initiated the studies on NANO satellite

technology linked with SDGs goal number four, UNOOSA has launched initiatives for Space4women and Space4youth as well.

SDGs Progress

In educational sector, there is lack of innovation-orientated training and effective research which means there is to be a profound connection between research education institute and the economy, that can assist to overcome the problems concerning to the knowledges share to the real life of underprivileged children and youth. Formal and non-formal education gives dramatic change in the society as people are aware, capable, oriented, and lifelong learning practices help for the sustainability concept, and their approaches obviously leads to transform of society in many context (Pd.Dr.Uddhab, 2017). However, the SDGs-4 progress rate was too slow around the world. The theme of SDGs goal no. 4 “inclusive and equitable quality education” didn’t progress yet as it predicted that 200 million children is going to leave school by 2030. But due to COVID-19, outbreak, and imposed lockdown and prohibitory order all the schools, colleges, and varsities were closed was adversely affected on inclusive and equality quality education. Due to the COVID-19, outbreak inequalities in education were dramatically exacerbated wherein low-income countries 79% children complete their school education which is belong to the rich family and 34% in poorest households. Almost 500 million children who lived in remote areas were out of reach for learning. During COVID-19, time only 65% of schools were providing hand-washing facilities, sanitizer and mask in different educational institution across the world. However, due to the COVID-19, outbreak the progress of SDGs- 4 seems to be too slow and many marginalized, vulnerable and poor children are out of school and they’re not getting abundant internet facilities for e-learning and even they don’t have proper device to use it. Unfortunately, the SDGs goal number four couldn’t provide internet facilities and devices in remote areas of different countries around the world which was indicated that the inequality in education that couldn’t massively address the inclusive education.

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic

Due to the unprecedented pandemic of COVID-19, inclusive and equitable access to education is likely to be missed in every part of the countries around the world. It has projected that more than 200 million children are going to leave education by forthcoming 2030. Different schools, colleges, and varsities were closed due to the spreading COVID-19 virus, commencing in April 2020 and it has affected up to 91% of enrolled learners. COVID-19 has badly affected those children in the world who were deprived of formal education that could threaten the SDGs' underlying ambition which means “no one leave behind”. In fact, ongoing pandemic, most of the Schools, College and varsities are organizing the class through Virtual method but many students in developing countries have less access of internet where they’re also lacking of safe and supportive e-learning environment. However, to foster quality education different NGOs, INGOs, Civil society is working on designing and deploy innovative solutions for an effective e-learning environment for all children and youth all around the world.

Social work Implication on SDGs number four (Micro-Meso-Macro level)

It is saying that the social work profession is a holistic profession that may cover every portion of the services to enable better opportunity for sentient beings, protection of the environment, build up strong social bonds, and growth of the economy. The Social worker can work on to provide quality education for all children by addressing the different agendas around the world. Several social workers are working as education activists and promoting inclusive, practical quality education for all the children around the world without biased in gender. Education is a vital part of a human being to grow in a better way where they can empower themselves in the future not depending on others. Alas, still the progress in education is not sufficient as mentioned by the SDGs and targeted to accomplish till 2030. In the aftermath of the pandemic, many students were out of school, college, and varsities and most of them are not able to join virtual classes due to the economic crisis. On this matter, social work can oppress the concerned government to provide free internet facilities for all the children or, the government can run digital classes through television and radio for the students who are living in a remote area. Social work can also start community classes in their locality by maintaining social distance. Social work can implement its activities into micro, meso, and macro levels.

Micro Level

Basically, in micro level parents' plays vital role for the education who appears in the participation statistics for pertinent actors to support the policy dialogue (B. Ellen, 2019). social work can implement some micro-level functions in their community to promote and progress in quality education including the children and youth as it functions in collaboration with different organizations to provide inclusive quality education for every children, youth accompany implement the plans, policies, and programs in an effective way to achieve the SDGs goal by 2030.

Meso Level

social workers can be taken as powerful resources as social workers are the agents of change so for transformation into different settings like school, nurseries, college, varsities, and workplaces. Social work can do informative research at the Meso-level to know the scenario of education and concern to the local government for its improvement. It will help to translate education policies into the learning process, consider them as educational research, and knowing the qualification levels of staff members. Social workers as an educator could provide inclusive equal quality education for every needed children and youth in collaboration with government agencies, INGOs, NGOs, and civil society. Thus, the Social worker's role becomes prominent in implementing SDGs goal number four and they should remain alert and act as a watchdog to review the SDGs goal number four implanting process.

Macro-level

At the Macro-level social work can play the role of advocate to address the issues related to quality education. Different institutions are run under rules, regulations, and policies made by the state and central government. The social worker, directly and indirectly, helps the government to make policies for quality education that could be provide to underprivileged and marginalized children and youth. The social security policy is important to create a learning and working environment for both teachers and students. Social work can work under government projects to provide employment opportunities for youth, to provide vocational training, education, and skills-related classes for all. Social work can conduct national campaigns within a country to provide basic education for every needy children and youth and there should be a guarantee of a job when they completed their studies. In addition, at the macro-level social worker can work at the community, state, and central level to formulate different plans, policies, and programs for enhancing quality education for every needy children and youth whereas sustained action on education is now a very important matter of urgency at the national and global levels.

SDG 4 -Policies, Practice, and Research

Kerala committed to procure free, compulsory good-quality education for all children and youth at the all-educational level whereas Government agencies, civil society, NGOs, and INGOs stepping to measures the augment of free access of education to the marginalized and underprivileged children. In Kerala education provided free merely for selected groups till secondary level. It stated that low level education to secondary level education result was quite impressive but when students initiate from secondary to higher level the number of attending to higher school will be diminish (National Planning Commission , 2015). However, half of the children will attend the school at early age but later on the number will be decreasing due to the different circumstance. The number of girls participation in school was tremendously augmented whereas in rural improvement is needed to encourage the girl to send in school. Different agencies during the pandemic time providing free online education to the girls in Kerala and even government has formulated plan and policy to encourage girl to participate in digital learning. Similarly, social work also advocating for both boys and girls to actively participate in digital learning and promoting to the online learning with help of government agencies.

Results

- Formulated policies that 100 % enrolment and completion of primary education and higher education in government and private school and college.
- Increasing 75% of youth to engage in vocational training, practical knowledge and skills.
- Providing at least 95% literacy for youth and adults in forthcoming days.
- To reduce the gender inequalities in the education.
- Government formulates policies for providing free education up to grade eight for all deprived and vulnerable children in remote and urban areas.

Conclusion

Wherefore, quality education is a major portion of every child rights. Only education can empower all the children and youth. But unprecedented situation all institution has been closed due COVID-19, Pandemic. The government also in big confusion to run the education institution physically, whereas all the students were stuck in home. The students attend the class through online platform but it was very difficult to them to connect with access of internet. Therefore, both the private and public educational institution should provide blended e-learning platform to all the students through the proper coordination. The Social worker must be advocate for all levels students to provide the equal e-learning quality education with support of government agency, NGO and INGOs. Every activity should be implicated effectively so that it will provide authentic output whereas changes may happen in education. It is significant that every local, state and national government must mobilized to provide ample equal access of internet facilities to all the underprivileged and marginalized children in rural area. The study ascertains that COVID-19 mostly hinder for underprivileged children to get a proper education. So, every organizations are working constantly to provide quality education for every children and youth all over the world to achieve targeted SDGs goal number 4 by 2030.

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