



AN ONLINE SURVEY OF THE IMPACT OF EXAMINATION CANCELLATIONS AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A PERSPECTIVE

Akansha Jain¹ and Rekha Choudhary²

¹Assistant Professor (Economics), Shri Mahalaxmi Girls College, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

E-mail : akansha22.aj@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Jai Narain Vyas University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

E-mail : rekha.ec@jnvu.edu.in

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Abstract: The scrapping of board exams by the Indian government is a watershed moment in the country's educational history. An online survey was performed to determine the impact of the decision on students' lives. COVID-19 has caused mayhem in the world's educational institutions, affecting over 1.6 billion pupils in over 200 nations. School, institutional, and other learning facility closures have impacted more than 94 percent of the world's student population. As a result, substantial changes have occurred in every aspect of our lives. Social alienation and movement restrictions have wreaked havoc on traditional teaching practices. To discover more about the effects of the epidemic on students' lives, we surveyed 130 students aged 15 to 18, their teachers, and their parents from several educational establishments in Rajasthan, India. In addition, the study looked at how students of all ages used social networking platforms. Government officials should take all necessary steps, according to the findings, to improve the educational experience by reducing the harmful effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. Through the survey, we learned about the actual conflict and uncertainty that exists among individuals regarding the cancellation of the examination, where some believe it was a good decision taken by the government while others believe it would have an impact on the future education system. According to our findings, people genuinely need this exam to be done with sufficient protection and vaccinations for students, so that kids can have equitable and fair possibilities for their futures and the nation can find better human resources for quicker GDP growth. There are concerns that the academic year of 2021, as well as the succeeding years, may be lost. Alternative educational systems and assessment methodologies must be created and deployed as soon as possible. The outbreak of COVID-19 has provided us with an opportunity to create the foundation for digital learning.

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The goal of this study is to provide a detailed analysis of the influence of the COVID-19 epidemic on exam cancellations.

Keywords: COVID-19, Impact, Online education, Students, Cancellation, Examination

JEL Codes: A21, I29

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the second wave of coronavirus in March 2021, the Indian government, like many other countries around the world, shuttered schools for the majority of pupils as a precautionary step to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Because of the late start of the admissions process in 2020, the tests were postponed from the usual examinations in February–March to May–June 2021, although the second wave was later canceled examinations in May 2021. School systems around the world have delayed or postponed senior secondary school examinations as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic's social isolation and lockdowns. As schools and education policymakers scramble to adapt, students in their senior year of high school are concerned not only about 2020, but also about how the pandemic will affect their future education, careers, and quality of life. Alternative teaching and assessment procedures must be devised and implemented as soon as possible. The COVID-19 outbreak has provided us with the chance to lay the groundwork for the implementation of digital learning (Dhawan, 2020).

The outbreak of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) has caused a global public health emergency. To stop the virus from spreading throughout India, emergency rules were put in place, limiting any non-essential public movements (Saha *et al.* 2020). With the closing of educational institutions, a swift transition from physical to digital learning has become necessary (Kapasias *et al.* 2020). Online learning has been offered as a viable alternative to traditional schooling (Adnan and Anwar 2020). Cook (2009) found that online learning is better than nothing and comparable to traditional learning in an e-learning meta-analysis. Educational institutions must follow government standards and proposals to improve the e-learning experience while encouraging students to continue learning remotely in this challenging climate (Aucejo *et al.* 2020). Bao (2020) discusses five high-impact criteria for conducting online education effectively. Student's academic performance is likely to decrease in classes held for both year-end and internal examinations due to reduced contact hours for learners and a lack of communication with teachers during learning/understanding issues (Sintema, 2020). This rapid evolution on such a large scale has influenced students of all ages (Hasan and Bao 2020). A drop in family income, limited

access to digital resources, and the expensive cost of internet connectivity have all affected students' academic lives. Furthermore, 1.5 billion children worldwide lack access to basic education (Lee 2020), which has a severe psychological impact on their health. Distance learning institutions frequently begin the course preparation process by deciding which student assessments will be included. Teachers who are making a quick transition to remote operations might explore this method of communicating learning objectives and information. It will aid them in selecting which aspects of the regular curriculum they will concentrate on, as well as their objectives for incorporating other topics. There are also observational studies of online courses in higher education. Many examining bodies (such as the CBSE, ICSE, and RBSE) have canceled or suspended end-of-year evaluations across India. As a result, millions of students have been left in the dark, especially those who dread tests. Since COVID19 continues to rage in most regions of the world and countries, these bodies are unable to anticipate when they will resume normal activities or how, if at all, they will deliver findings for this year's cohort at this time (May 2021).

The analysis part discussed how the exam alignment debate works, evaluated its impact on future curriculum implementation, and examined its broader implications in light of the COVID-19 epidemic. It looks at the relationship between standardised tests and curriculum implementation in order to develop a more complex understanding of the interdiscursive intersection of policy and practice, with the goal of improving outcomes and learning experiences for students in their final years of schooling. This study investigates and analyses the impact of exam cancellations and the COVID-19 outbreak on students' lives.

2. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The present research paper focused on the following objectives:

- To illustrate some of COVID-19's educational benefits.
- To enumerate the several consequences of the cancellation of the examination due to COVID-19.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The questionnaire was separated into four parts to have a better grasp of the situation. A questionnaire was prepared that included a variety of multiple-choice questions as well as a Likert scale with only one option for responses. The poll was run on the Google Forms platform, which required participants to be logged in to an e-mail account to participate. It was not possible to make multiple entries from a single account. The survey was

disseminated using social networking sites, e-mail, and traditional messaging methods. The respondent's status as a student, parent or instructor was checked explicitly on the Google form. On the main tab, they give their basic details. They were sent to the first section of the questionnaire if they chose to participate. The survey's primary purpose was to collect socio-demographic data (age, occupational status, city of residence). The second section of the questionnaire consists of four segments (A, B, C, and D) of questions about exam cancellations due to government action. The goal of this survey is to determine how the COVID-19 epidemic has impacted students of various ages' exams. For this study, we performed a survey with 130 participants (students, parents, and teachers) from various educational institutions. In the form of numbers and percentages, an overview of demographic data is offered.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The paper examined the impact of COVID-19 on A-Level students, as well as their experiences with school closures and test cancellations. Primary data is essential for a thorough examination of effect analysis. Explanatory investigations were conducted on socio-demographic variables. The statistical tabulation technique was used to analyze and interpret data collected through an online survey, which included the usage of average, percentage, mean and, pivot table.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Respondents' Details

In this graphic, we performed a survey of 130 respondents in order to show the impact of the cancellation of the board exam on people in various occupations. In this regard, we have primarily taken three main occupations related to education, namely students, teachers, and parents, particularly parents of students in the 10th and 12th grades, and out of 130 respondents, it has been discovered that the majority of students have filled out this survey because it is specifically targeted at student groups to learn about the impact of exam cancellation on student groups, and about 65 percent of students have filled it out.

In this current pandemic second phase condition, 91 respondents to a study agreed that canceling the exam is a good alternative for the government to avoid any health concerns in the country. The remaining 39 people are against the exam being canceled. According to the poll, 70% of people believe the exam should be canceled. According to the findings, 67

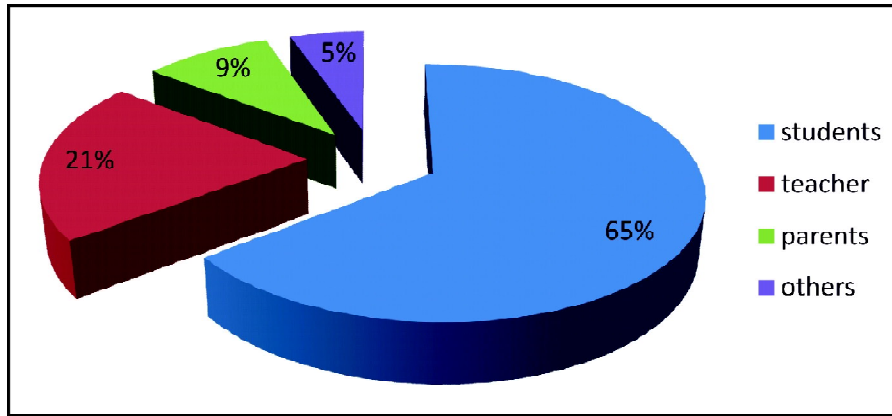


Figure 1. Count of occupation

Source: Author calculation based on primary data

people use social media frequently to stay informed, 50 people use it occasionally, and only a few people do not use it at all. Whatsapp is used by 47 percent of respondents when it comes to social media. The bulk of the respondents are students, so Instagram and Facebook are also popular among them. YouTube has become increasingly essential in the lives of social media users. It is crucial, according to our findings, to comprehend how people become aware of various news articles.

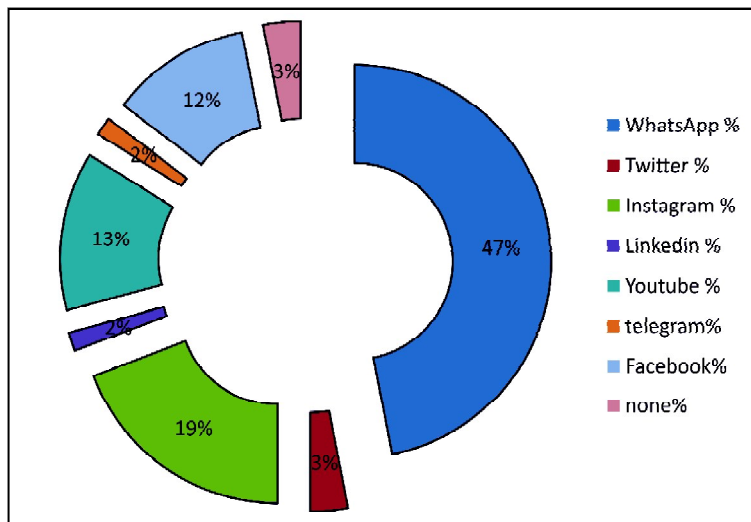


Figure 2: Preference of the mode of use of Social Media over different availability

Source: Author calculation based on primary data

It can be seen in the graph below that people found and confirmed this news through news channels, based on the survey done here. It can be seen that our respondents place a higher value on news channels in terms of the news' legitimacy and consistency. As a result, they confirm the report of the exam cancellation from the news channel the most.

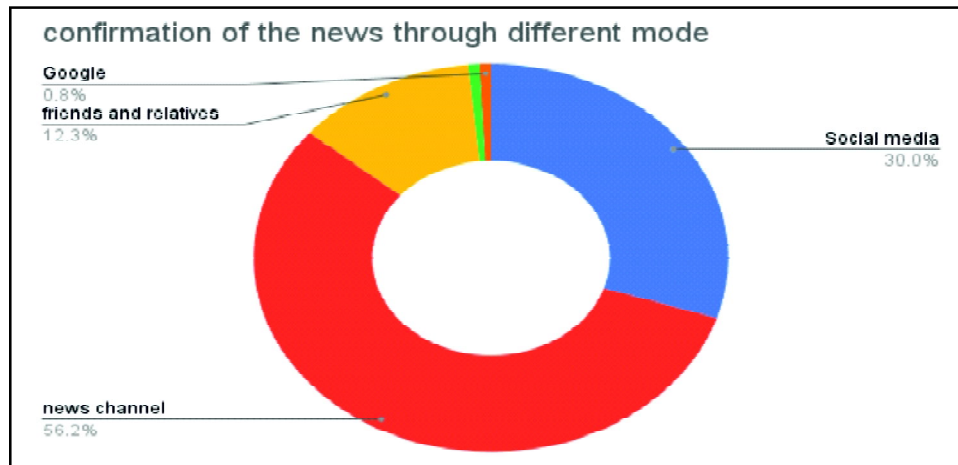


Figure 3. Confirmation of news through different mode

Source: Author calculation based on primary data

5.2. Scope of the Study

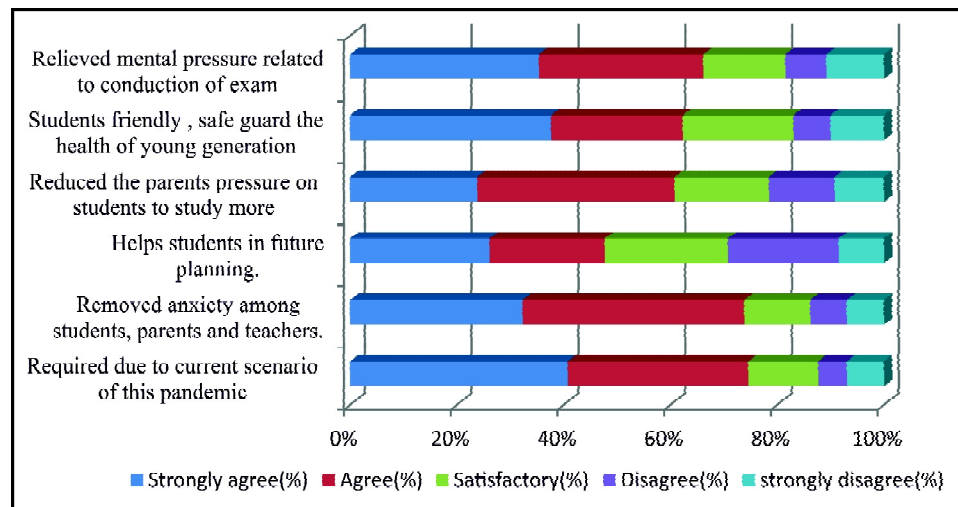
The studies were conducted between June 8, 2021, and June 22, 2021, following the formal announcements of school closures and examination cancellations but before the distribution of A-Level results. A total of 130 people responded to a survey questionnaire that was widely marketed on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, email, and discussion boards on websites.

5.3. Impact of cancellation of examinations on students

The survey was done to further the goal of this article, which is to learn more about the overall impact of exam cancellation on several parameters. For this reason, Likert scale-based questions were asked in this survey, with the focus on respondents' awareness and input regarding the cancellation of this examination in the present and future scenarios. The first topic in this rating-based question was taken as the government's choice to cancel the exam, and six supportive statements were presented to learn about respondents' reactions to these claims, such as:

1. It is essential due to the current pandemic situation.
2. It is student-friendly and protects the health of the next generation.
3. It has helped students, parents, and instructors feel less anxious.
4. It aids students in their long-term planning.
5. It relieves parental pressure on students to study more.
6. It alleviated the mental strain associated with exam administration.

A. The decision of Government for cancellation of exam

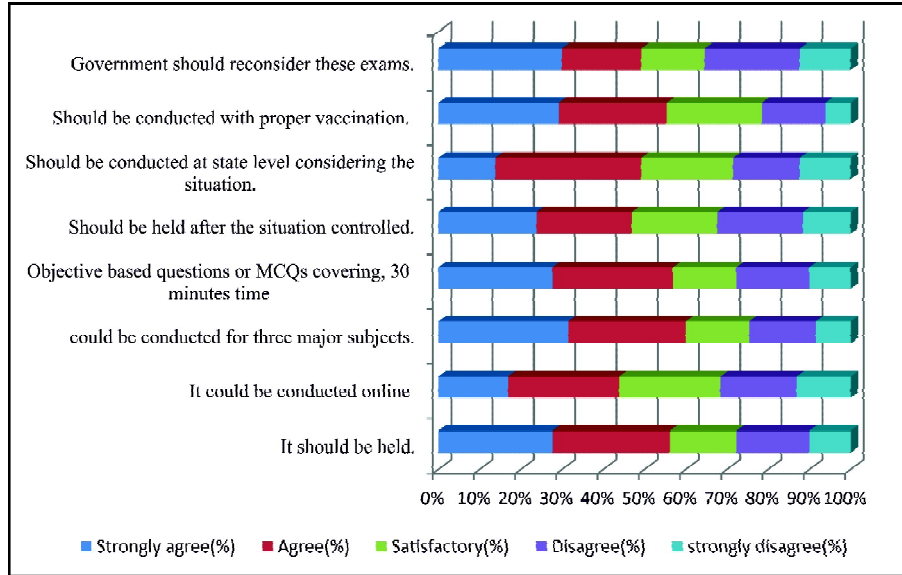


Source: Author calculation based on primary data

This parameter taught us that respondents are strongly in favor because it is necessary for the current situation, and respondents are in favor because it alleviates concerns among children, parents, and teachers. Comparable responses in favor of highly agreed and satisfied have been observed, which students will consider in future planning. Respondents agreed that it relieved mental pressure on students to study more because it relieved parental pressure on students to study more. They also strongly agree and believe that this step is student-friendly and protects the health of the younger generation. It also relieved mental pressure related to the exam administration.

B. Opinion of respondents in favour of conduction of exam

In continuation of rating-based question, the B part was taken to know about the respondent opinion in favour of conduction of the exam for this

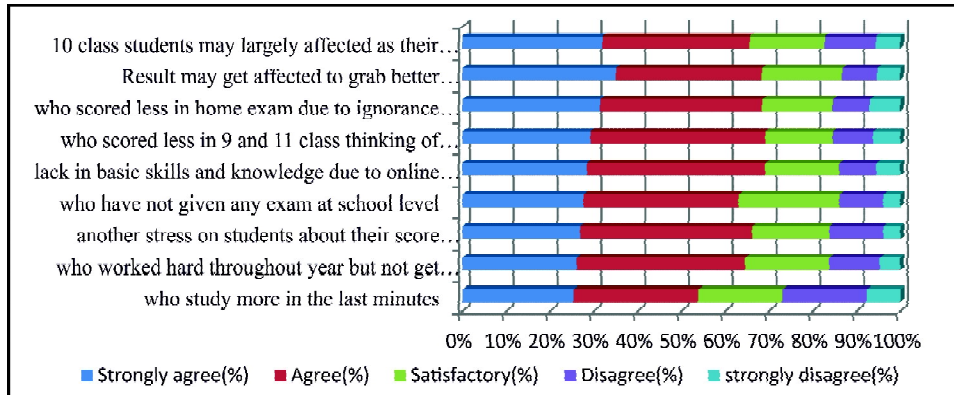


Source: Author calculation based on primary data

8 rating based statement has been taken to know about the feedback of the respondents. It is realized that respondents are equally agreed or strongly agreed for the exam should be held and 27% of correspondence agreed in favour of conducting the exam online. 32% of the respondent strongly agree with the conduction of exam at least three major subjects. Again respondents are strongly agreed and agreed to for conduction of exathe m based on objective questions or MCQs covering 30 minutes. Mixed responses have been found in favour of the exam should be held after the situation control. 35% of the respondent believes that the exam should be conducted at the state level considering the situation and 29% believe that it should be conducted with proper vaccination to the students. 30% of a respondent are strongly agreed that government should reconsider this exam.

C. Reconsideration of the exam is required because

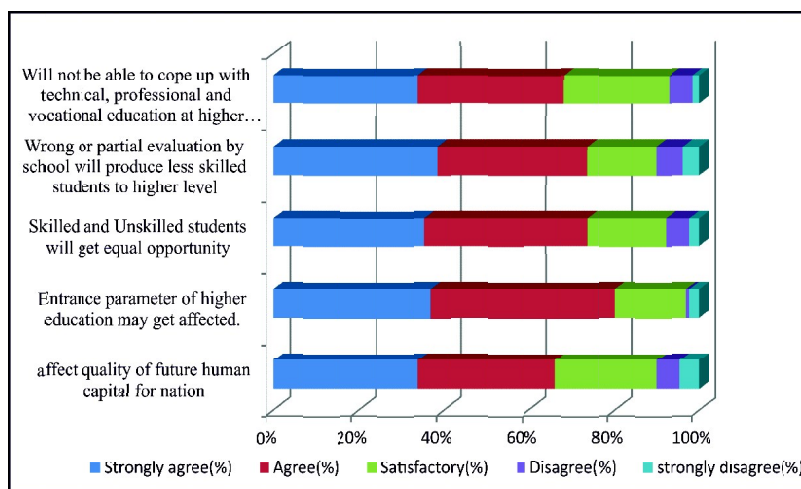
The following subdivided bar diagram depicts respondent feedback on different rates of different statements regarding exam reconsideration in the country because 25 percent of respondents strongly agree and 28 percent agree that it should be considered because students who study more in the last minutes score more and better than students who study earlier. Reconsideration is essential for students who work hard throughout the year but do not perform, according to 38 percent of respondents. The majority believe that this canceled step will cause students to become more concerned about their scorecard metrics. Because few students have never



Source: Author calculation based on primary data

taken an exam in school, 35 percent of respondents said that the exam should be reconsidered. The majority agreed once more that students are lacking in basic skills and knowledge as a result of online programs. 40% agreed that kids who did poorly in 9th and 11th grades but expected to do well in 10th and 12th grades may be harmed and that this is why the exam should be re-considered. Respondents also believe that it may influence students who score lower on the home exam owing to some misunderstanding and that their results may be harmed in their pursuit of better chances and prepare for future competitive exams such as NEET, IIT, and CA Foundation.

D. Impact of cancellation of the exam on the education system of India.



Source: Author calculation based on primary data

An attempt was made to learn about respondents' feedback on the impact of this exam cancellation on India's education system using a survey. For this, five parameters have been chosen to learn about people's feedback. People are unanimous in their belief that the quality of the nation's future human capital may be impacted as a result of this research. According to 43% of respondents, it could alter the entrance criteria for higher education. They also agreed and felt that competent and unskilled students will have equal possibilities in higher education, and they are adamant that a school's incorrect or partial evaluation will result in less skilled pupils reaching higher levels. Furthermore, 28% of respondents strongly agree or agree that less-skilled students will not be able to cope with technical, professional, and vocational education at the university level. So, accurately, we learned from this 4th rating-based question that our higher education system may be severely impacted as a result of the government's decision, which is unprecedented in the history of a country's educational system. It may result in lower-skilled human capital for the country's future. On an economic level, the government's actions in this regard cannot be deemed prudent.

6. DISCUSSION

These findings raise severe concerns about present and future services, policies, and the ultimate accomplishments and outcomes for children and adolescents in school. Some exams in India, such as the CBSE and ICSE Board, have been completely canceled. The majority of students oppose taking the exam and have demanded that it be canceled or postponed. This has been done for a long time, but it has resulted in some new issues. The students argue that the evaluation criteria are unfair. Similarly, the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) and the National Eligibility Test (NEET) have been postponed until the future, but students and parents are unsure how their wards' futures will be decided in the absence of senior and senior secondary examinations. In the study, there are clear limitations to generalizability with a sample size of 130 and data acquired from young people who cannot be considered to fully represent all vulnerable learners and who were also interviewed at one point in a particularly stressful setting. In addition, the impact of several parameters was explored in this research. Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that a survey using a primary data collection technique revealed some significant input and diverse perspectives from various categories of people regarding the cancellation of the board test in 2020-21. On the one hand, some individuals say that canceling the exam is a positive government decision since it will help children plan for the future and reduce tension among students, instructors, and parents. It also benefits students by alleviating the anxiety and mental

stress associated with exam administration. However, the study also found that exams should be performed in a variety of ways and with a variety of techniques at various levels of a country. In this regard, a response to this opinion has emerged in the re-consideration of the exam; they favor doing the exam online, at least for three subjects, for 30 minutes of MCQs-based questions, or it should be held after the situation has been stabilised. The government may make some moves in this direction, and it should be done with adequate vaccinations. They also believe that exam reconsideration is necessary for students who study at the last minute, who work hard throughout the year, who have not performed well at school, who score poorly in-home examinations, and who believe that this step will make it difficult to obtain better opportunities after the 12th examination. As a result, we feel the exam should be re-examined. Not only is reconsideration required for this reason, but it may also have an impact on our higher education system, as it produces less skilled, less qualified, and lower quality human capital for the nation, who will be unable to cope with technical, professional, and vocational education at the higher level. As a result, we believe that the government's choice is necessary, but it will hurt students and the nation's future, as less trained human capital will contribute less to the country's production and result in lower GDP generation. Our research has certain substantial limitations that should be mentioned. The first limitation is the sampling procedure. It is built on digital infrastructure and volunteer participation, both of which contribute to selection bias. Students who did not have access to online learning were unable to participate due to the imposed travel restrictions. Second, we believe these findings are fairly generalizable to schools across the state and country, given the lockdown orders and online structure of the courses.

7. CONCLUSION

The global epidemic of COVID-19 forces us to adapt to a new normal. The tumultuous changes wrought by nationwide lockdowns and test cancellations force educators to recognize "the ways in which we howplicated in, and bound up and into, the current neoliberal and globalizing settlement that most of the time we do not even aware it is there" (Ball *et al.* 2012). The cancellation of exams caused by the COVID-19 epidemic had a significant impact on students' education and daily routines, according to our findings. COVID-19's disruptions bring to light key issues and provide an opportunity to test alternative learning methods. New regulations and suggestions in this area would help to mitigate some of the negative effects while also preparing educators and students for the impending health disaster. Students' time spent on online classes did not

meet the Ministry of Human Resources Development's (MHRD) guidelines, according to the data (Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development 2020). After the COVID-19 pandemic has ended and educational institutions have reopened, the authorities in charge should continue to invest in online learning. They should examine the problems that have arisen as a result of the rapid shift to online learning and be prepared for any future crises. It is necessary to provide proper educator training in digital skills and to increase student-teacher engagement. Disadvantaged children must have access to digital infrastructure, which includes reliable internet access and gadgets, to minimise educational delays. The survey, which was based on the primary method of data collection, concluded here. Data collection has revealed some useful input and differing perspectives. Regarding the cancellation of the board test for this year's 2020-21, several groups of people have expressed their opinions. On the one hand, some people say that canceling the exam is a good government choice that would help pupils cope with the crisis and ease stress among students, teachers, and parents. On the other hand, they feel that kids who study at the last minute, who work hard all year, who have not performed well at school, and so on, should have their exams reconsidered. As a result, we feel the exam should be re-examined and conducted with adequate vaccinations. Not only is reconsideration required for this reason, but it may also have an impact on our higher education system, as it produces less skilled, less qualified, and lower quality human capital for the nation, who will be unable to cope with technical, professional, and vocational education at the higher level. As a result, we believe that the government's choice is necessary, but it will hurt students and the nation's future, as less trained human capital will contribute less to the country's production and result in lower GDP generation.

Declaration of Competing Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

A. Decision of Government for cancellation of exam ———	Total	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total (%)
It is required due to current scenario of this pandemic second phase.	130	41%	34%	13%	5%	7%	100%
It has removed anxiety among students, parents and teachers.	130	32%	42%	12%	7%	7%	100%
It helps students in future planning.	130	26%	22%	23%	21%	8%	100%
It has reduced the parents pressure on students to study more	130	24%	37%	18%	12%	9%	100%
It is students friendly, which can safe guard the health as well as young generation	130	38%	25%	21%	7%	10%	100%
Relieved mental pressure related to conduction of exam	130	35%	31%	15%	8%	11%	100%
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B. Your opinion in favour of conduction of exam mode :	Total	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total (%)
It should be held.	130	28%	28%	16%	18%	10%	100%
It could be conducted online	130	17%	27%	25%	18%	13%	100%
It could be conducted at least for three major subjects.	130	32%	28%	15%	16%	8%	100%
Objective based questions or mcqs covering 30 minutes time should be used for exam.	130	28%	29%	15%	18%	10%	100%
It should be held after the situation controlled.	130	24%	23%	21%	21%	12%	100%

It should be conducted at state level considering the situation.	130	14%	35%	22%	16%	12%	100%
With proper vaccination to students , it should be conducted	130	29%	26%	23%	15%	6%	100%
Government should reconsider these exams.	130	30%	19%	15%	23%	12%	100%
C Reconsideration of exam is required because	Total	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total (%)
1 Students who study more in the last minutes	130	25%	28%	19%	19%	8%	100%
2 Students who worked hard throughout year but not get performed.	130	26%	38%	19%	12%	5%	100%
3 Increased another stress on students about their score board parameter.	130	27%	39%	18%	12%	4%	100%
4 Students who have not given any exam at school level.	130	28%	35%	23%	10%	4%	100%
5 They are lack in basic skills and knowledge due to online classes	130	28%	41%	17%	8%	5%	100%
6 Students who scored less in 9 and 11 class thinking of scoring good in 10 and 12 classes.	130	29%	40%	15%	9%	6%	100%
7 It may affect those students who scored less in home exam due to ignorance and other issues.	130	32%	37%	16%	8%	7%	100%

8	Their result may get affected to grab better opportunity and preparation of future as well as competitive exams after 12 class like NEET and IIT.	130	35%	33%	18%	8%	5%	100%
9	10 class students may largely affected as their mark sheets are counted everywhere as document.	130	32%	34%	17%	12%	5%	100%
D	Impact of cancellation of exam on education system of India	Total	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total (%)
1	It can affect quality of future human capital for nation.]	130	34%	32%	24%	5%	5%	100%
2	Entrance parameter of higher education may get affected.]	130	37%	43%	17%	1%	2%	100%
3	Skilled and Unskilled students will get equal opportunity in higher education.]	130	35%	38%	18%	5%	2%	100%
4	Wrong or partial evaluation by school will produce less skilled students to higher level	130	38%	35%	16%	6%	4%	100%
5	Less skilled students will not be able to cope up with technical, professional and vocational education at higher level.	130	34%	35%	25%	5%	2%	100%