

CHANGES IN EDUCATION SYSTEM OF UZBEKISTAN DURING COVID-19

Guzalkhon Khamidova,

English teacher at Kevin's academy NTM

Annotation: This article covers the changes in the education system of Uzbekistan during the COVID-19 pandemic

Key words: The pandemic, isolation, safety measures, education system, educational establishments, distant/remote learning, social networking, sanitary equipment, the public immunity.

A COVID-19 has become a serious threat to humanity. As the pandemic has spread, it has required unprecedented social isolation and safety measures. Emerged about one and half years ago, the COVID-19 has influenced on almost all spheres in communities in many parts of the globe. One area seriously affected is education sector.

In Uzbekistan, the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in 15th march in 2020 after which the national lockdown was started like many countries. Closure of educational establishments; kindergartens, schools, and universities in order to prevent spread of virus, alternative methods and technologies had to be adopted almost overnight. Online learning became an urgent necessity, rather than an option.



Soon after, the Ministry of Public Education announced the initiatives that country's 6,1 million school students would be offered remote learning during lockdown. There are some challenges as for school closures, the primary one is undoubtedly equality having access to distance learning. It is not true to say that all students have the same access to learn in distant. Connectivity is an issue in Uzbekistan, about 30% of its population do not have access to the Internet, and about 40 % of people live in villages. As of march 2020, the country ranked at 133rd place in the world for mobile internet speed. Thus, The Ministry of Education considered that it would not be possible to provide equal distant learning, but with 100 % TV coverage, it is quite easy to deliver the video lessons. Therefore, in negotiation with educational leading experts, National Television and Radio Co,

new team was organized to prepare video lessons for students and school pupils. The distance video lessons have been shown daily in three TV channels such as NatGeoWild, EuroSport, and Hunting and Fishing. Also teachers have regularly checked the homework of pupils via social networking site notably telegram.

The video lessons were also shown in the website of the Ministry of Public Education and its accounts on Telegram and Facebook, as well as kundalik.com and xanakademiya.uz.

In order to provide extra learning resources, the Ministry created some in-house platforms such as Talim.uz, Edu Market, Eduportal, and Kitob.uz where students can take the advantage of learning sources.

Students of Higher and secondary education had the opportunity to learn through platform named dist.edu.uz. In cooperation with teachers, universities provided learning materials, resources, and handouts as well as tasks in the platform in which students submitted their assessments online. Teachers marked students according to performance of students in the online platform.

After some time, the condition of COVID-19 seemed pretty stable. On 29th August, in the meeting about coronavirus situation, president Sh. Mirziyoyev has ordered to have cooperation with teachers and parents in the decision to resume classes. Due to this meeting and suggestion, the Ministry of Education conducted a survey among 5,5 million parents to choose the type of education whether traditional or online education. Approximately 76 % of participant (parents) decided to choose traditional way of teaching while 24 % of respondents opted to continue online learning. After that education has been organized in two forms – in the traditional way as majority of parents desired, and in the remote learning.

The ministry of Public education was ordered to resume new school year from September 14th in places where the COVID-19 situation was stable. The authorities of regions and districts were instructed to provide educational establishments with necessary sanitary equipment like face masks, disinfection sprays.

Also the Ministry of Education instructed head of regional educational establishments to have ventilation system in each classes and have students do breathing exercises.

President Sh. Mirziyoyev mentioned in the meeting that “If I was asked who the heroes of today are, I would say that these are our respected teachers, along with medical professionals”. The president also mentioned about hard work of teachers to bring pupils up to the community.

Additionally, many school teachers said that they are looking forward to the opening of schools, and ready to meet new challenges to educate the people.

Moreover, employees of the internal affairs and National Guard will be assigned to each school to monitor compliance with the order and quarantine requirements. At least one health care worker from a local clinic or medical center will be engaged to constantly monitor the health of students.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely influenced all the sphere including education system of the republic. The authorities and people are striving to combat against the virus. Also Tedros Gebreyesus, The World Health Organization Director-General, said that the globe is likely to tolerate the pandemic for another two years to completely get rid of. Moreover, the suspension of educational systems can have negative consequences on the communities in the future. The public immunity in the workplaces and study places needs improving to successfully combat against the current pandemic and to have a peaceful world in the long-run.

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