

Chapter 1

COVID Lockdown – A boon or a bane for Researchers

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Abstract

The paper is to bring into light the major advantages that the researchers have got as a part of the COVID-19 Lockdown and also the demerits of the same. It talks about the experiences that many of the researchers had faced during the pandemic. This paper has tried to bring in the varied ways by which the researchers had tackled the pandemic lockdown. They could make use of the time in a very fruitful manner. The researchers were also getting a lot of opportunities to increase their critical thinking and innovative thinking in the area of research.

Introduction

Research is very well known to be one of the major pillars of academia. We have seen a lot of important discoveries that have been the result of research. In almost many fields research has brought up a fundamental progress and has also supported a vast range of industries and communities. The COVID – 19 and the lockdowns that were resulting from it has created a major impact on the research area across the world. It was bringing the research activity into a dormant situation. Many of the researchers who were undergoing researches in different disciplines found it difficult to continue with it and they were also forced to abandon the ongoing projects. The researchers who were mainly into experimental research studies which required the hands-on-laboratory work were finding it difficult to proceed with their research studies which resulted in the termination or delaying of the research projects.

Was the Lockdown a boon for the researchers?

Well, this was a question which had varied answers from researchers of

different fields. There were researchers who were able to continue and progress in their research studies because of the advancement in technology. As we all know, for a research to be carried on data pertaining to it is really vital. And so with the help of technology which enabled the researchers to pool the required data from different parts of the world, it was really making the research possible for many. The researchers could generate data and they could also get valid answers which were helpful in solving their research questions.

Even with technology it was easily possible for the researchers to collaborate with other researchers and carry out their studies. Many of the researchers could find scope for even collaborating with researchers from other countries. It could be seen that there has been an unprecedented move towards a stronger cooperation and collaboration between different researchers across the world. There were also a lot of initiatives which were most importantly carried out through multi-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary collaborations.

Social media was actually building up a favourable platform for the researchers which enabled them to create connections and to even form groups which could help them to stay connected with each other and to also further connect with others which could be helpful in gathering the required data. Many of the researchers had a large number of opportunities which were enabling them to come up with research studies in varied areas and it was even creating a spirit of compassion among them to explore more and more in-depth.

Another most remarkable impact that the lockdown had on the researchers was the massive explosion of large number of research studies that were conducted based on the COVID – 19 pandemics on different areas across different disciplines. It was very well understood that the pandemic had really affected every sector either positively or negatively. The research studies were mainly done to analyze the impact of the pandemic and more than 50000 articles were published based on this topic within the last one year.

We could even see that the lockdowns were also paving way for many young and aspiring researchers to conduct studies and many of them could also publish their articles in journals which could enable the communication of new information and facts to the global public. Even the students who were having to undergo research as a part of their graduation were having to take up the initiative to come up with innovative projects. This was also helping them to learn better and work smarter, thereby enabling them to refocus and to prioritize.

COVID 19 Lockdown – an Opportunity to Redefine Research Problems

For many of the researchers this pandemic was a challenge which forced them to break out from the conventional research problems and to think differently. It was motivating the researchers to utilize their knowledge base, training and experience to solve the different problems that the society was facing at the present moment. And it was the tireless efforts of the scientific research community that we were able to

develop the vaccines and therapeutics to keep safe from the pandemic.

Some of the researchers also emphasized that it is the time to collaborate and not to compete. It was also commented that redefining our research problems and collaborating were considered to be the key solutions to overcome the present adverse situation.

COVID 19 Lockdown – a Bolt from the Blue

For some of the researchers the lockdown was a complete surprise and totally unexpected situation. Many of the young researchers could fruitfully utilize this time to explore their career paths. There were many of those who could come up with their articles and get the same published within no time. As researchers, normally major interactions happen within a niche of subject experts and so there emerged a lot of groups and forums which were demonstrating the importance of networking and interactions among the members. So, it could be seen that the lockdown had supported and allowed the researchers to explore, engage and experience the ‘new normal’.

COVID 19 Lockdown – Breaking the Boundaries and Building the Bridges

The lockdown had forced many of the researchers to work from home and so for an experimentalist being away from the lab for a very long period of time is unfathomable. This was also a time that was enabling many of the researchers to dive deep into the literature and finish writing or submitting manuscripts. Many virtual journal clubs and seminar series were created to keep the research community abreast of the latest research. More surprisingly, the virtual conferences have reflected up to three times participation and it included people from countries across the globe. This is a move towards more inclusive and high-quality online research communities that are continuing to grow in the post COVID-19 world.

COVID 19 Lockdown – Reinventing Laboratory Life

The lockdown was bringing in a positive outlook for many of the researchers as it created an opportunity for them to plan and prepare themselves for moving ahead with their research process. It was helping the researchers to start planning and get done with their pending assignments. They were able to utilize the time in reviewing scientific papers and to boost up their knowledge by keeping aside the negative thoughts. It has also enabled the researchers in enhancing their power of scrutiny and critical thinking process.

So, from all the above experiences it is evident that the COVID 19 Lockdown was a boon for many of the researchers as they could enhance their knowledge base in research as well as their area of interest. The researchers could move on with a proper schedule which could help them in getting along with their research. They could draft a lot of articles which were related to their interest. The publication was

also happening on an increased basis. A huge number of research workshops and webinars were conducted and organized across the country which had increased the participation from many people across the globe.

Now, was the Lockdown a Bane for the Researchers?

One of the first and foremost demerit of the COVID 19 Lockdown was the Economic crisis. As the lockdown was bringing the whole country into a halt the economy of the country was very much affected. The researchers were also facing a lot of issues which was due to the pandemic that had occurred. Those of the researchers who usually used to conduct a one-to-one personal talk with their research guides had to be satisfied by online meetings. The lockdown was also creating certain adverse effects on the mental health of the researchers as they were not able to consult with the subject experts or to even get the advice to create and compile data collection tools. Many of the researchers have also not been able to consult their research guides due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Conclusions

The researchers were actually having to consider the COVID 19 pandemic as a boon as well as a bane. But to come out with a conclusion it could be clearly seen that there were researchers who has really benefitted from the COVID 19 Lockdown. Many of the researchers were trying hard to get along with the Lockdown, but it was very difficult as they were to make arrangements to carry on their viva voce and also to consult with the authorities to initiate such matters. But to say for sure that the lockdown has given a wide number of advantages also to the researchers by way of the knowledge base that they could attain, by way of the workshops and seminars they could attend. So, in one way we can say that the COVID 19 was a real boon for the researchers and to some extent it was also a bane for the researchers. So as a researcher let's take up the challenge and move ahead so that we do not get stressful and bored with research but we get to understand and enjoy it with an urge and zeal within ourselves. We get ready to take up research with more enthusiasm and passion that could be useful for the country as a whole

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