Analysis of the case:

Education is a basic right to all students and these uncertain times have made it tough for students from economically weaker backgrounds to gain education. The recommendation of the Union Education ministry is apt because large corporations have the needed resources, facilities, ideas and skill to make an impact. There is a need for CSR because there is an expectation of people for businesses to help out of volunteering basis, there is an expectation to be socially responsible to the community they are located in or cater to.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) means the voluntary assumption of responsibilities that go beyond the purely economic and legal responsibilities of business firms and making decisions that may fairly balance the claims of all key stakeholders. This may involve taking advantage of an economic activity that is judged to be less profitable but socially more desirable than other alternatives. There is an expectation to fairly balance the needs and claims of all stakeholders. There is a need to break down the sense of isolation in the conduct of business professionals pertaining to business and society and bring in the sense of integration of business and society, one cannot survive without another. Corporations require skill and labor from the society and society utilize the products and services of a corporation to enhance their life, this is a symbiotic relation.

These are unprecedented times where one can access education remotely. The growth of technology has enabled some students to gain such a privilege. It is only fair to help those who do not have access to these resources to gain equity. CSR can have a drastic impact by enabling the students to gain education. This in return benefits the society which requires educated, moral and responsible citizens. Education is key to this ideal society. One of the arguments in favor of CSR emphasizes on the benefit or outcome of such a task (although according to the Kantian ethical theory, one should not be concerned about the outcome but perform the duty as it is a moral responsibility). There are three circles of corporate responsibility:

1. Economic responsibility: this involves the monetary aspect among the stakeholders of the corporation.

2. Legal responsibilities: corporations are bound to follow some guidelines set by the government which are to benefit the environment, employees, etc.

3. Ethical-social responsibility: it is here where the value is CSR is highlighted. This circle involves addressing social issues like poverty, hunger, education, etc.

An impact made on the third circle helps the first two circles. This can be directly observed in the case presented above. For example, CSR funds helping students gain education will benefit them on the long run as these are the students who will be potential employees to their companies. The intention behind CSR is very important to judge as it should not be a public relations ploy or a means of deception to the customers they cater to.

Immanuel Kant proposed (by the second formulation of categorical imperative) that one should not use a person as mere means i.e. to use only for personal benefit with no thought to the interests or benefit of the person you are using. In the case presented above, corporations have the moral responsibility to treat the society they cater to as ends and not as mere means. Regardless of whether one wants to be moral or not, the moral law is binding on all of us. Even if there is an economic burden on the corporation, one should not be worried about the outcomes or consequences while performing moral duty.

To summarize the analysis of the case, corporations providing their support in difficult times is not an additional burden but an ethical concern to serve the needs of and be fair to the society. They have the power to bridge the gap between the students and education with the help of technology.