



PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS REGARDING IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Background: During March 2020, the coronavirus escalated into a global pandemic resulting in schools and colleges all over the world to make the difficult decision to shut their doors, forcing an abrupt and universal shift of conventional learning to distance learning. Student well-being had become a wide growing concern for educational institutions as they acknowledged the importance of a balance among psychological, social, emotional, and physical spheres of lives.

Aim: To assess the perception of teachers and parents regarding impact of COVID- 19 on education and psychological well being of students.

Methods: Qualitative research approach was used to conduct the study. The perception of teachers and parents regarding impact of COVID-19 on education and psychological well being of the students was assessed. Convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample. Semi structured interview schedule was used. 15 teachers were interviewed. Each interview session lasted for around 45-60 minutes. Focused group discussions were conducted for 21 parents participating in the study. 3 groups were formed and each discussion session lasted for 40-50 minutes. The information collected was recorded in the written format. Content analysis was done to interpret the results.

Results: Most of the teachers (73.3%) were females with 33.3% in the age group of 41-50 years, followed by 26.7% in the age group of 21-30 years and more than 50 years. All the teachers reported post graduation as the highest level of education. The areas identified in which most of the teachers expressed their concerns regarding online teaching included a) problem in implementing teaching plan, b) time limits, c). Communication and feedback from students and parents, d). Difficulty in assessment of student's performance, e). Uncertainty regarding the schedule of classes. The major factors contributing to impact of covid-19 on well being of students as reported by most of the teachers were identified as isolation, change in lifestyle, decreased motivation to learn among the students and lack of interest in online classes. Majority of parents included mothers (71.4%) who were in the age group 31-40 years. 42.8% of the parents were illiterate or received non-formal education. Majority (42.8%) of them were laborers, 52.3% had 1 child in the family. Regarding perception of parents about impact of COVID on education of children, most of the parents expressed their satisfaction regarding efforts taken by the school and teachers for online learning. However, the problems faced by them included the financial burden of buying separate phones for children, lack of involvement caused by educational and technological limitations and lack of suitable environment at home that supports child's learning.

Conclusion: Teachers and parents have significant contact with the children and have an integral role in education and development of children. The findings of the study presented the concerns raised by teachers and parents regarding online learning.

Keywords: COVID-19, Teachers, Parents, Students, well being

INTRODUCTION: In India, about 250 million school children were affected due to closures at the onset of lockdown caused by the pandemic. It posed several challenges in the schools including a rise in dropouts, difficult learning and increase in digital divide. The pandemic also questioned the readiness of our educational system, including our teachers to address the situation. However, COVID-19 also acted as a catalyst for adoption of digital learning in school education.¹

The abrupt and rapid change to mode of teaching and learning in the online format induced by COVID-19 has impacted the health of many students. Student well-being had become a wide growing concern for educational institutions as they acknowledged the importance of a balance among psychological, social, emotional, and physical spheres of lives.^{2,3}

Teachers have the most significant contact with students in school and play an integral role in child's growth and development. COVID-19 raised new wellbeing difficulties for students and their families, caused by financial hardships, restriction of contact with others, sharing an isolated or confined space, increased stress or combinations of all these factors.⁴

Parents assumed homeschooling responsibilities during lockdown and have reported raised negative effect, which might have partly been caused by a struggle to maintain a balance between work and homeschooling of children. Moreover, some parents might have faced additional factors causing stress such as unemployment or job insecurity, etc.

OBJECTIVE

To assess the perception of teachers and parents regarding impact of COVID- 19 on education and psychological well being of students.

METHODS

Qualitative research approach was used to conduct the study. An exploratory study was carried out to assess the perception of teachers and parents regarding impact of COVID-19 on education and well being of students. The study was carried out in a school of district tarantaran. Convenience sampling was used to select the participants. Sample of 15 teachers and 21 parents were selected. The data was collected during September, 2022. Structured questionnaire was used to assess the demographic information. A semi structured interview schedule was developed. Throughout the period of contact, participants were informed regarding the purpose of study, their participation was voluntary and that they had right to withdraw their participation at any time. However, it was found by the researcher that participants developed good interest and no participant withdrew his/her consent from the interview process. To maintain the confidentiality, all the information through which their identities could be revealed was removed from the content. For teachers, each individual was interviewed for 45 minutes to one hour. Focused Group Discussions were conducted for 21 parents. The parents were divided in 3 groups (7 in each group). Each discussion session lasted for around 45-60 minutes. The discussion was conducted using a guide tool including satisfaction of parents with online learning, problems faced by them during online classes of their children, the changes they noted in the behavior of their children during online learning, their attitude towards online learning.

RESULTS

As per the demographic characteristics, out of 15 teachers selected, 33.3% belonged to the age group 31-40 years, followed by 26.7% in the age group 41-50 years and equal number (26.7%) were having age more than 50 years. 13.3% of teachers were in age group 21-30 years. Out of 15 teachers, 11 (73.3%) were females whereas 26.7% were males. All the teachers were educated upto post graduation level. 53.3% teachers had 41-50 students in their class followed by 33.3% who had 31-40 students in their class. 13.3% had less than 30 students in their class. 33.3% had a teaching experience of 5-8 years, followed by 26.7% who had teaching experience of 9-15 years. 20% teachers had an experience of more than 15 years. The qualitative data collected was analyzed through content analysis. The coding was done with in-vivo coding, through which categories and codes were generated. It was ensured that the codes included information from all interviews and substantive categorization was made among the codes.

Use of technology by the teachers before pandemic: All the teachers stated that they did not have any previous experience in conducting online teaching. Most of the participants told that during COVID-19, communication with colleagues and students was done through phone. One teacher stated “Information was shared verbally during school-hours among all the teachers. Sometimes, it was done through phone calls or whatsapp. Parents were also contacted using phone and parent teacher meetings were conducted once a month. Out of total n=15 teachers, only 4 stated that they received training regarding use of technology and apps to conduct online classes.

Online learning versus offline mode of learning: 80% teachers stated that before the pandemic, classroom teaching was based on lectures, discussions and interactive sessions. One of the teachers stated “children can learn more easily in a school environment. The school environment helps to establish motivation among the children to learn. As there are several distractions at home, they interfere with child’s learning and performance. During online class, it was not possible to involve every student in the discussion or take feedback from each student due to limitations of time; it was difficult to ascertain the output or effectiveness of teaching.”

Concerns and challenges faced: Majority (66.7%) of the teachers were concerned regarding implementation of teaching plan during online mode of learning. They found it difficult to engage all the students in class and to motivate all the students to join the class. They stated that it was found to be more passive on the part of the students. The students showed lack of interest and motivation in attending the class. It was difficult for teachers to prepare the content for online class, due to overload of information. Sometimes, they were not able to establish contact with the students who were regularly absent from the class. During other times, sometimes class could not be conducted due to technological issues.

Majority (86.7%) of the teachers expressed that they had uncertainty prevailing around the factors that how many students will join the class, how to reschedule if there is some technological failure at the time of the class. They were concerned regarding the students who did not have phone to attend the online class.

All the teachers stated that time limit for class was another concern. As the time allotted for meeting with the students on online platforms was limited, they were unable to motivate the students to join class multiple times a day. They also found it difficult to deliver content during online teaching due to limits enforced by time.

One teacher stated “During online classes, we were busy throughout the day. It was difficult to maintain a balance between the classes of our own children and school students. Rescheduling the class often led to decrease in the number of students joining the class.”

Teachers expressed their concerns regarding the assessment of student’s work. Most commonly used method was conducting an online examination or test, in which limited students used to participate. They stated that they were concerned regarding feedback from the students. As students did not participate actively in the online class, teachers were not clear regarding the comprehension or understanding of the taught content.

Regarding impact of COVID-19 on psychological well being of students, out of 15, 86.7% teachers stated that the students had a change in their lifestyle during lockdown as there was limited contact with friends and relatives. 66.7% teachers stated that withdrawal of communication and social support in the school system led to isolation in students. 60% of the teachers expressed that the students failed to maintain high level of motivation during online learning. 46.7% teachers expressed that students failed to maintain interest in the learning as they were distracted by factors in the home environment

As per the demographic factors of parents, out of 21, 57.1% were in the age group 31-40 years, followed by 23.9% in 41-50 years and 19% in 21-30 years. 71.4% were mothers whereas 28.6% were fathers. 42.8% were illiterate, followed by 23.9% who were educated upto 10th standard. 19% had received non formal education whereas 14.3% were educated upto 10+2 standard. 42.8% were labourers, followed by 28.6% who were unemployed. Equal number (28.63%) were shopkeepers. 52.3% had one child in the family, followed by 33.3% who had 2 children and 14.3% had 3 children in the family. Most (90.4%) of the parents stated that they were satisfied by the efforts taken by school and teachers to arrange online classes for children. One parent shared “We are happy that teachers have taken sincere efforts to keep the students in touch with learning resources and material. We are satisfied from the initiatives taken by the teachers to maximize the utilization of available resources. They did best on their part. There was regular communication by the school teachers and information was shared using phone.”

Regarding problems faced, 33.3% stated that they did not have separate phone to attend the class. Sometimes, the message for class was communicated within short time, which led to inability of children to attend the class. 57% stated that as they were illiterate, they could not help the students to attend the class.

Another parent expressed “Most of us are illiterate and some did not have multimedia phone and had to arrange phones for the classes. The other problem faced was that some factors in the environment did not support learning of students. For example, children did not have separate room or space to attend the class, internet connectivity was another important issue during the class”

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to assess the perception of teachers and students regarding impact of COVID-19 on education and well being of students. The study concluded that majority of the teachers had no exposure to online mode of learning before lockdown. When compared to offline mode, teachers stated that online learning was more passive as influenced by various factors. Most of the teachers expressed their concerns in the context of implementation of teaching plan during online mode of learning, communication with students and parents during online classes, getting feedback from the students, time constraints imposed

by various online learning platforms and assessment of student's performance during online classes. The parents expressed their limitation of resources and lack of awareness and education regarding online learning modes as their main concern. The lack of social support and communication during lockdown resulted in significant impact on psychological well being leading to lack of interest, motivation and isolation of children at home. A study conducted by Lisa E. Kim, Suzanna Dundas and Karthyn Asbury (2020) to assess the teacher's concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on pupil learning and well being found that teachers reported emotional and logistical realities in the areas of pedagogy and teaching process, communication with pupils and families, life at home, role of parents, COVID-19 curriculum and moving forwards and making plans for future learning.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was based on semi structured interviews conducted with teachers and focused group discussions conducted for parents. Studies to correlate the teacher's perception with experiences of students can be done.

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