

Understanding Self while Dealing with Online Education: Perspectives of Teachers

Abstract

Parental involvement in children’s education has always been considered as important but its significance has increased manifold during the pandemic. As the schooling takes place from the home, parents have to take up the role of full-time educators, manage household chores and work from home and fully take the responsibility of child care and children’s education in absence of any institutional support. The parental engagement becomes all the more challenging in single parent families and dual earner families. The role of schools become important to ensure home-school connect (for the child) and to ensure parental participation and collaboration in the time of pandemic.

Keywords- *teachers, online education, stress, family relationships*

Introduction

During the pandemic, there were mounting concerns over the education of students. How would our teachers connect with students? Are teachers equipped enough to teach through technology? How effective would our online education be? How are teachers balancing online education and home responsibilities? With these concerns, many studies were carried out in the education arena. The real question arises of how teachers maintain their mental well-being, especially in difficult times.

Methodology

This section elaborates on the Strand-I of the study. An online questionnaire was given to teachers of primary grades and teachers teaching adolescents. The total teachers sampled for the study were 49 (n=49). In the study, the majority of teachers who (75%) facilitated young children and adolescents were females and the rest were males. In the primary grade, the majority of the teachers (96%) were dealing with the Vth grade and very few teachers were taking VIth and VIIth grades (Elementary level). In higher grades, almost an equal proportion of teachers 48% in Secondary and 52% teachers in Senior Secondary were taking classes of adolescents. In the primary teachers’ section, the majority of the teachers (66.7%) had less than five years of experience. Teachers teaching adolescents reported that 40% had less than 5 years of experience. The majority of the primary teachers (41.7%) were post-graduates.

In primary grades, 25% completed Nursery and Primary Teachers Training (NPTT). In senior secondary grade teachers, 76 (n=19) were reported to be post-graduates. The majority of

primary grade teachers (70.8%) reported being in the age group of 22-30 years. In addition, very few primary teachers are in the age group of 41-50 years. 32% of senior grade teachers were in the age group of 22-30 years. 66.7% (n=16) of primary grade teachers belonged to a private type of school. A large portion of secondary teachers (60%) were teaching in private schools.

Findings of the Study

This part of the read elucidates the findings obtained from Strand-I of the study. The data was gathered through an online survey and teachers were from Delhi/NCR. The findings of the study are organized in four major areas such as Impact of Pandemic on teachers-their challenges and concerns; change in their lifestyle, impact on education and relationships with family and friends.

Impact of the Pandemic: Challenges and concerns

Mental well-being

1. How the pandemic has affected you?

24 responses

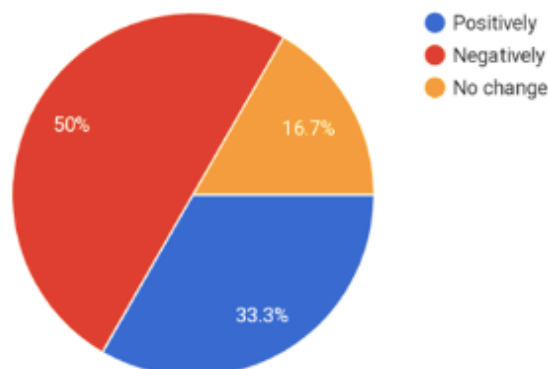


Fig 3.1 Teachers teaching young children

1. How the pandemic has affected you?

25 responses

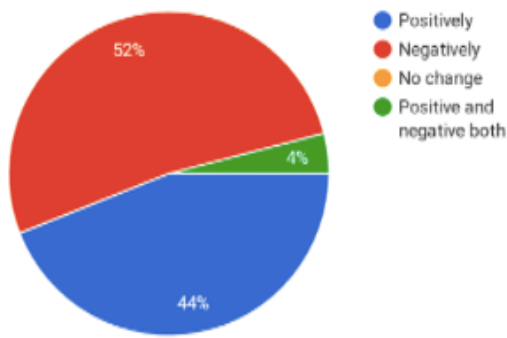


Fig 3.2 Teachers teaching adolescents

On being asked about the impact of the pandemic on teachers, almost a similar number of teachers of primary grade (50%) and secondary school teachers (52%) shared that the impact had been negative. However, 33.3% of teachers in primary grade the pandemic was positive, in sync with 44% senior grade teachers. 16.7% of the primary teachers reported that there had been no change during pandemic induced lockdown. This is in contrast to 4% of senior grade teachers who said it was both.

Challenges faced during Lockdown

On further being asked regarding challenges faced, it was found that 45.8% of primary teachers and an almost similar percentage of secondary teachers (40%) felt low, anxious and fearful. This was followed up with financial stress and pressure by 37.5% of primary teachers, and an almost similar trend was visible in secondary school teachers (32%). However, a similar set of secondary school teachers 32% also said that there were no challenges faced during the pandemic and for primary teachers. On the contrary, the next higher percentage received the category of anxiety and panic that was reported by 33.3% of primary teachers. However, 24% (n=6) of secondary school teachers also reported the same feelings of anxiety and panic.

Feelings during Lockdown

The responses from the teachers showed that 48% of secondary school teachers along with 45.8% of teachers handling primary classes reported that they were neither stressed nor calm/ were neutral. However, 33.3% of primary teachers along with 28% of secondary grade teachers reported being stressed during the

lockdown. In addition, 12.5% of primary grade teachers shared that they were too stressed, as compared to 4% of teachers teaching adolescents. However, 20% of secondary teachers were reported to be calm, in contrast to few primary teachers (n=1).

3. How did you feel during the lockdown ?

24 responses

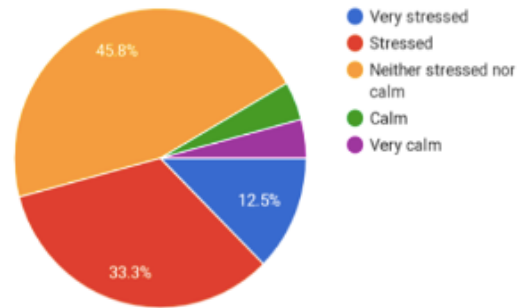


Fig 3.3 Teachers teaching young children

3. How did you feel during the lockdown ?

25 responses

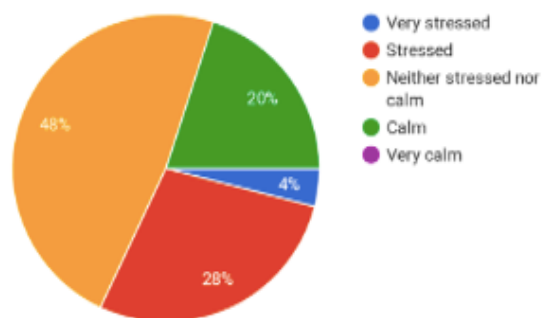


Fig 3.4 Teachers teaching adolescents

Employment concerns

5. How often do you worry about lockdown's effect on your job and financial status in a month?

24 responses

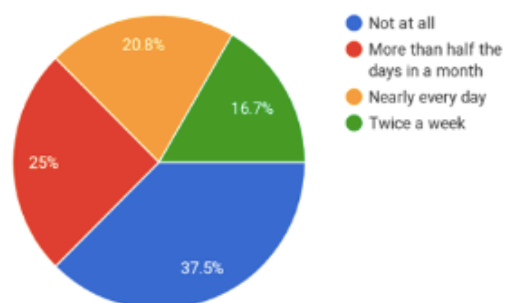


Fig 3.5 Teachers teaching young children

5. How often do you worry about lockdown's effect on your job and financial status in a month?

25 responses

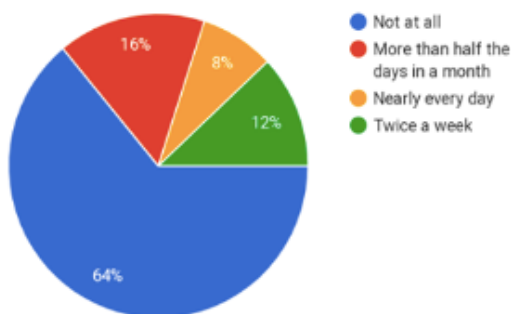


Fig 3.6 Teachers teaching adolescents

64% of secondary school teachers and 37.5% of primary school teachers reported that they did not worry about the lockdown's effect on on-the-job and financial status in a month. However, 25% of teachers of primary grade and 16% of teachers of adolescents worried about more than half the days in a month. Nearly every day worrying about the job was reported by 20.8% primary grade teachers along with 8% secondary grade teachers. However, 16.7% of primary level teachers reported worrying twice a week, along with 12% of secondary grade teachers.

Professional life concerns

In the questionnaire when asked about the impact of the pandemic on professional life, the data emerged in the study as follows. The pandemic had led to odd working hours for 66.7% of primary teachers, as compared to increased workload for 28% of teachers leading adolescents. However, an increased workload was also reported by 58.3% of primary teachers, along with 52% of teachers with adolescents and children. Extended working hours were reported by 50% of primary school teachers, as compared to 28% secondary school teachers. The major impact on salary cut was reported by 44% of teachers with adolescents, as compared to 37.5% of teachers with primary grades.

Changes observed in own behaviour/s

On being asked about behavioural changes observed during the lockdown, the major change observed for 50 % of teachers of young children was that they were delighted to stay at home and spend time with the family, as compared to 36% of teachers teaching adolescents. The next behavioural change was devotion to learning

technology for 52% of teachers handling adolescents, along with 45.8% (n=11) teachers handling young children. Moreover, 33.3% (n=8) of teachers handling young children became less patient as compared to 4% of teachers handling secondary school-aged children above. A high level of frustration was reported by 25% of teachers of young children, along with 16% of secondary school teachers. However, becoming more creative was true for 32% of teachers teaching adolescents, along with 20.8% of primary teachers.

Coping with Stressful Situations

To cope with the stressful situation due to the pandemic, 45.8% of teachers with young children supported watching a television show, as compared to 32% of teachers of adolescents for the same category. The next emerging category was cooking for 45.8% primary teachers as compared to 40% secondary teachers. 48% (n=12) secondary teachers shared chatting to someone and doing household work for each category, as compared to 25% primary teachers for chatting and 33.3% primary teachers engaged in household chores. Remaining up-to-date with the latest news was true for 37.5% of primary teachers and 32% of secondary teachers. Being engaged in exercise and yoga was adopted by participants from the primary wing, as compared to 36% from the secondary wing.

Feelings about Future

21. How do you feel about future after the pandemic?

24 responses

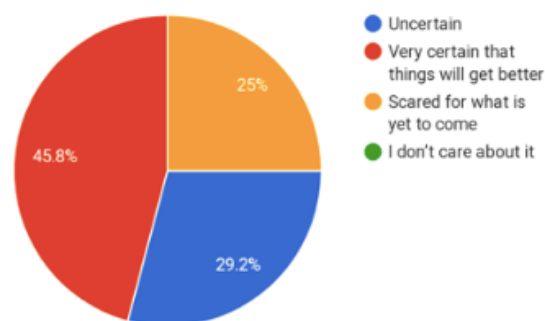


Fig 3.7 Teachers teaching young children

45.8% of participants related to young children and 56% of participants of adolescents shared that they were very certain that things would be better. However, 29.2% of the primary teachers and 24% of the secondary teachers showed uncertainty about the future. 25% of teachers of

the primary wing as compared to 20% of teachers of the secondary wing shared that they were scared for what is yet to come.

21. How do you feel about future after the pandemic?

25 responses

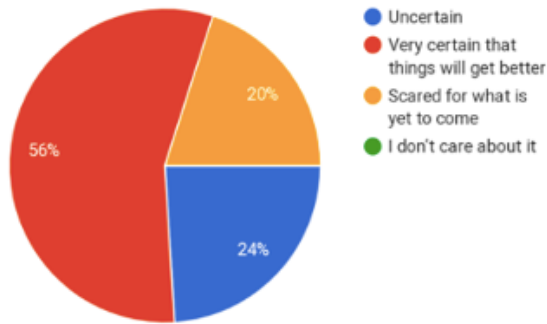


Fig 3.8 Teachers teaching adolescents

Changes in Lifestyle

Developing new habits and hobbies

The data received from the questionnaire found that 58.3% of primary teachers along with 48% of secondary teachers resorted to cooking. The next major activity reported was watching web series/ surfing the internet for 50% of primary teachers and 36% of secondary school teachers. This was followed by another favourite habit developed during lockdown for 41.7% primary teachers along with 36% secondary school teachers was yoga/ workout/ exercise. Writing a diary/ maintaining a journal was reported by 16% of secondary school teachers and 8.3% of primary teachers.

Activities performed for a peaceful mind

To maintain a sound and peaceful mind, talking about feelings with family and friends seemed to be the highest reported activity that 62.5% of primary teachers and 44% of secondary teachers adopted. This was followed by eating well for 58.3% of teachers with primary children, as compared to 16% of teachers with secondary school-aged children. However, remaining active was reported by 50% primary teachers as compared to 40% secondary grade teachers. This was followed by 45.8% (n=11) primary teachers along with 40% secondary grade teachers on doing meditation and yoga. Using social media to maintain a sound and peaceful mind was reported by 33.3% of primary grade teachers, along with 28% of secondary grade teachers.

Any major lifestyle changes observed

When being asked about the lifestyle changes due to pandemic induced lockdown, 54.2% of teachers teaching young children reported that they started spending more time on gadgets as compared to 60% of teachers of the adolescent age group. The major lifestyle change that emerged during the pandemic was 72% of teachers related to secondary school reported that sleeping schedule was irregular, along with 54.2% of primary teachers for the same category. Being less socialized such as meeting friends was shared by 62.5% of primary teachers as compared to 28% of teachers teaching adolescents. However, 37.5% of teachers of the primary group along with 36% of teachers of the secondary group (n=9) shared that about disturbed eating patterns. In addition, 20.8% of teachers with young children along with 12% of teachers with adolescents (n=3) reported that they had little to no exercise.

Diet Patterns

15. Has your appetite/ food intake changed during the lock down?(multiple answers available)

24 responses

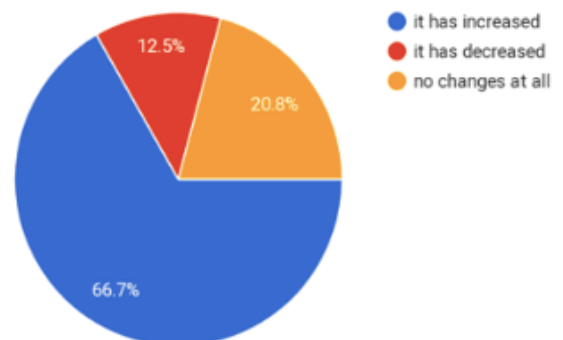


Fig 3.9 Teachers teaching young children

15. Has your appetite/ food intake changed during the lock down?(multiple answers available)

25 responses

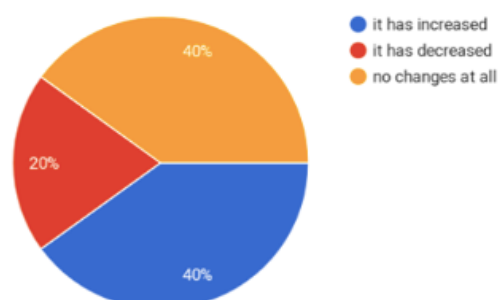


Fig 3.10 Teachers teaching adolescents

For 66.7% of teachers teaching young children as compared to 40% of teachers teaching adolescents, the appetite has increased. However, 40% of teachers related to the secondary grades and higher and 20.8% of teachers related to primary grades the diet pattern had not changed at all. Only for 12.5% of primary teachers and 20% of secondary teachers, it has decreased during the lockdown induced pandemic.

Impact on Education

Feasibility of Online classes

8. Do you face any pressure while taking online classes?

24 responses

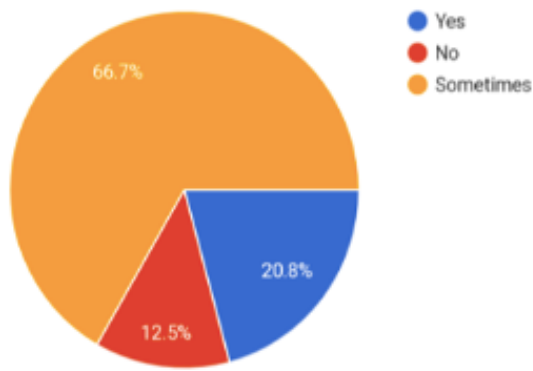


Fig 3.11 Teachers teaching young children

8. Do you face any pressure while taking online classes?

25 responses

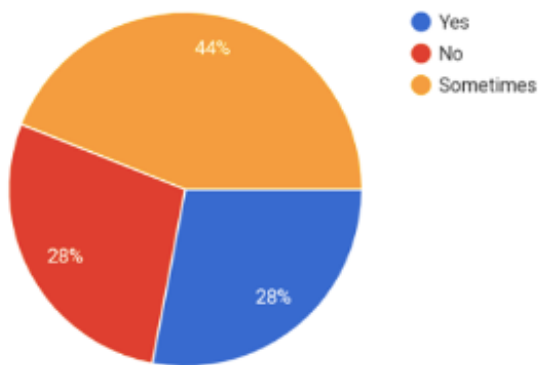


Fig 3.12 Teachers teaching adolescents

Pressures of taking online classes sometimes (Not always) was reported by 66.7% of primary grade teachers, along with 44% of secondary grade teachers. This was followed by consenting pressure by 20.8% of teachers teaching primary grade children, along with 28% of teachers taking adolescent children. However, 12.5% of primary grade teachers as compared to 28% of

secondary grade teachers denied that online classes created any pressures on them.

Challenges about online classes

The major challenge in educating school-aged children for 62.5% (n=15) of primary teachers reported was pressure to deliver content using different methods along with managing household chores along with work, as compared to 32% of secondary teachers who reported pressures to deliver content in different ways. However, the fear to handle technology was visible for 40% of secondary school teachers as compared to 8.3% of teachers with young children. Also, fear of performing in front of parents was reported by 29.2% of primary school teachers, in contrast to 4% (n=1) of secondary school teachers. Also, fear of judgement from authorities with 25% of primary teachers shared fear of judgement from authorities as compared to 16% of secondary school teachers shared for the same category.

Health issues faced during extended Screen Time

The major health issue faced due to extended screen time induced by lockdown was an excessive strain on eyes for 66.7% of primary teachers along with 64% of secondary teachers. This was followed by the next most frequent health issue was headache reported by 58.3% of primary teachers along with 44% of teachers teaching adolescents. Back pain occupied the third category for 41.7% of primary teachers, along with 36% of teachers with children of secondary grades. However, an increase in body weight too was also reported by 58.3% of primary teachers along with 28% secondary grade teachers. Restlessness was reported by 37.5% primary grade teachers, as compared to 20% secondary grade teachers.

Relationships with Family and Friends

Dealing with the change at the Household front

To deal with the pandemic, 83.3% of primary teachers as compared to 72% of secondary teachers reported sharing responsibilities at home. However, 16.7% of teachers related to young children as compared to 16% of teachers with adolescents reported that they had adapted easily. Moreover, 12% of secondary teachers shared that they were not able to adapt easily

Change in Family Relationships

On being asked about the impact of the pandemic on family relationships, 62.5% of

teachers belonging to the primary wing shared that they were learning to adjust with each other, as compared to 48% of teachers from the secondary wing. 58.3% of primary teachers and 60% of secondary teachers reported that as a family they had come close to each other. Frequent arguments and fights were reported by 16.7% of participants from the primary section, as compared to 8% of participants from the secondary section. However, one primary teacher shared that she tried to learn being a student from her child and the other secondary teacher said there were problems in dealing with children.

16. During lockdown, how is your family dealing with this changed household environment?

24 responses

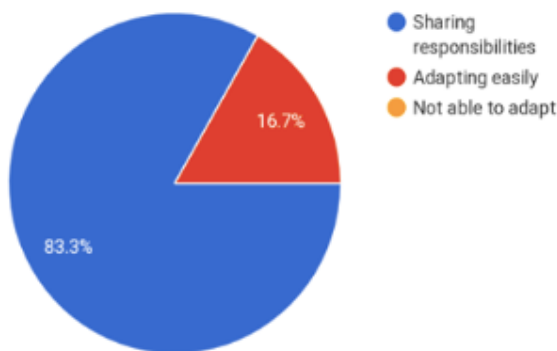


Fig 3.13 Teachers teaching young children

16. During lockdown, how is your family dealing with this changed household environment?

25 responses

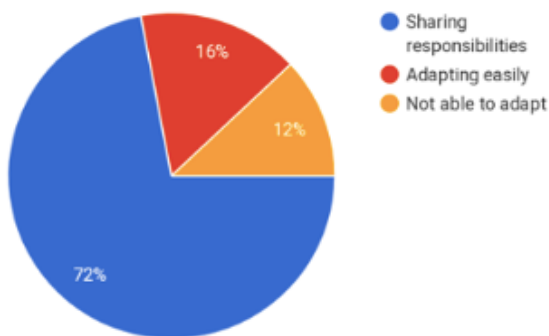


Fig 3.14 Teachers teaching adolescents

Spending time with Family

Taking out time for the family and managing 'work from home' responsibilities was reported by 95.8% of teachers teaching young children

and 96% of teachers teaching adolescents. For the rest, for both groups of participants, nearly 4% reported they failed to give time to the family.

18. Are you able to make time for your family along with this 'work from home' phase?

24 responses

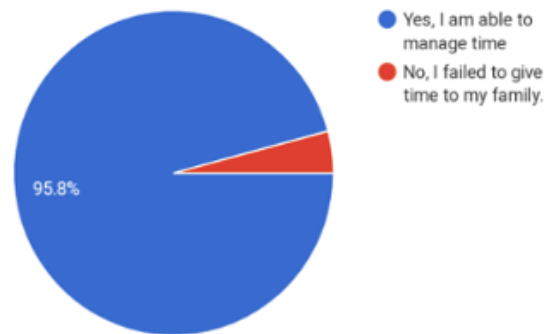


Fig 3.15 Teachers teaching young children

18. Are you able to make time for your family along with this 'work from home' phase?

25 responses

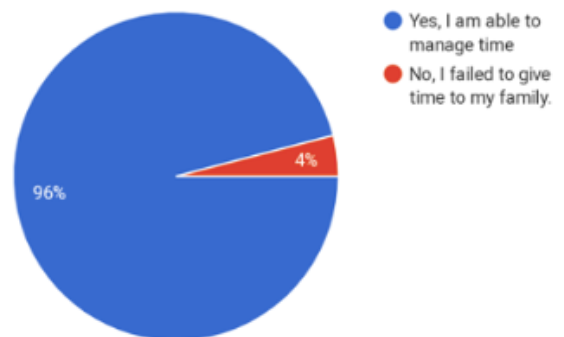


Fig 3.16 Teachers teaching adolescents

Safety Measures adopted to protect family

20. What measures do you take to protect your family members? (multiple answers available)

24 responses

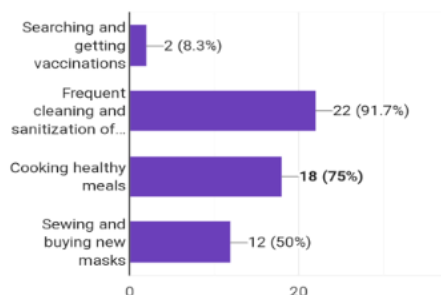


Fig 3.17 Teachers teaching young children

20. What measures do you take to protect your family members? (multiple answers available)

25 responses

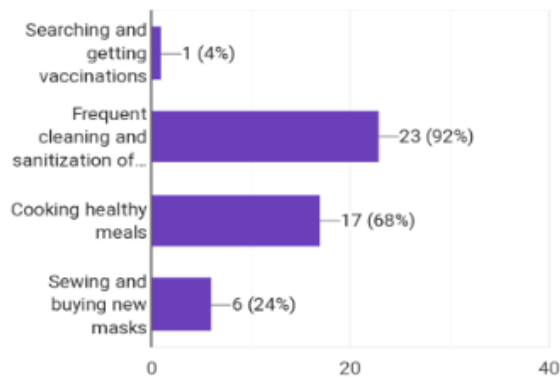


Fig 3.18 Teachers teaching adolescents

When asked regarding measures taken to protect family members, 91.7% of teachers belonging to young children and 92% of teachers related to adolescents reported that they were engaged in frequent cleaning and sanitization of homes. The second measure was cooking healthy meals for the family members for 75% of participants with young children and 68% of participants with adolescents. Sewing and buying new masks were also reported by 50% of primary teachers, as compared to 24% of secondary teachers.

Section B

Case Study: Living in a staff quarter with a teacher

I was in Delhi when WHO announced the novel coronavirus, a global pandemic. My mother immediately called and told me to move to Dehradun for a few days. I hesitated a while as I did not think this would last long, and I had to attend college, however, on the next day, the University of Delhi announced a 21 days lockdown. So, I thought about moving to Dehradun. So, my journey from Delhi to Dehradun began on the night of 13th March 2020. I had travelled a lot of time between Delhi and Dehradun, but never felt paranoia. The six-hours journey felt suffocating as the bus was closed. A lot of people were on the bus, and I was worried that someone would sit next to me. The fear and anxiety of coming across someone who might have COVID-19 woke me up throughout the journey and kept checking for anyone coming close to my seat.

On the 20th of March 2020, I went to stay at my friend's place in Selaqui, Dehradun. His name is

Tenzin Topjor. He is a computer teacher in Tibetan Children Village School, a co-ed boarding school. The school has students varying from six to twelve standards. We have known each other for the last three to four years and have been friends since then.

My friend and I are in one room set with a kitchen, bathroom, and toilet. There are two balconies, one from the kitchen side and the other from the room side. It was the end of March and summer heat was yet to knock on. We would wake up early and go for a run or walk for 45 minutes or so. We would move on in making our breakfast, Topjor would make roti and I would make the sabzi or omelette and a cup of chai. We would hardly indulge in cereal or bread in the morning unless we don't want to cook. The school was to begin classes on the 3rd of March 2020, but the authorities decided to return the students of class six to eight on the day of their arrival itself, which created quite a chaos and fear among the parents and students. Many parents were cooperative with the administrative decisions, but some parents thought the decision was unnecessary and done in haste.

Lockdown

As a resident of this country, this was the first-ever nationwide lockdown situation I had experienced. There was news of states curfew and area lockdowns but never a whole country in the past. Therefore, we were anxious and at the same time excited to live through the first-ever one-day lockdown.

The first two to three days of the 21 days lockdown were quite tense and perplexing. In the school, students and staff were waiting for the orders and decisions of higher authorities. During the lockdown, school campus gates were locked unlike usual, which stays open from 5 am to 10:30 pm. We were scared to even step out of the room as if the COVID-19 virus had already entered our campus. The entire school was empty and silent the entire day, only in the evening, some people were coming out for their evening walk. I heard the news of police lathi charging people who were either unaware or deliberately distorting the lockdown rules; opening the shops, riding bikes and scooters.

In April, we were finding things to keep us occupied. We would mostly sit in our place reading books or skipping through social media. Topjor had been taking two or three online

courses to improve his professional profile. Though we hadn't fixed a concrete timetable for a day, we followed the same routine. After lunch, Topjor would continue his online classes as much as he wanted, and I was on social media. Listening to all the political, social and Bollywood news.

My mother fears about my health as I am an ex TB patient and my mom thinks corona can be easily contactable to people who have gone through severe disease. My parents called me regularly and checked about my health. She consistently mentions wearing a mask, not going outside for unnecessary things, washing hands and also wearing our Tibetan protective thread, a consecrated nylon thread that is also common for Hindus. The protective thread is important and precious and supposed to keep us safe. My family were worried as I was not staying with relatives and had been staying with someone who was a stranger to them. But I keep on assuring myself about my health and safety. My lovely parents have three children, I being the eldest, have a younger sister and a younger brother. We are a family of five. In Shillong, during the lockdown, there were no cases of COVID-19 which was relieving as I was worried about them, but they seem to be taking the lockdown as a holiday from daily lives. They were less worried about themselves and were worried about me all the time, asking me to come back to Shillong when the lockdown was lifted. I did not, as I feared the consequences of travelling due to the pandemic.

In April, we were finding things to keep us occupied. We would mostly sit in our place reading books or skipping through social media. Topjor had been taking two or three online courses to improve his professional profile. Though we hadn't fixed a concrete timetable for a day, we followed the same routine. After lunch, Topjor would continue his online classes as much as he wanted, and I was on social media. Listening to all the political, social and Bollywood news.

During that time online class was yet to happen and no one thought this would last long. We all were waiting for the normal classes to begin. Topjor stayed free of school duty, but he said some teachers were teaching on WhatsApp. Zoom is less known and Google Meet was yet to introduce it to the market. In the evening, Topjor and a few of his colleagues would go for a long

walk, including a short rest at the other campus. We started doing short Zumba dance, few physical exercises. After that, a few circumambulations at the Stupa would end our day well by offering our merits for the benefit of all living beings and confessing our sins and demerits for our wellbeing. Our prayers included all the people who were affected by this pandemic; the dead and their bereft families.

Locking down inside the school was no punishment, for we have all the space and social activities to keep ourselves engaged in. The school has lots of space excluding the football and basket grounds, there are two huge parks; 'Peace Park' and 'Healing Farm' which are full of fruit trees and flowering trees. In the second week of the lockdown, people were coming out in the parks and grounds for their afternoon and evening walks. Being new to this place and people, I was uncomfortable going out. Topjor would go for his regular evening football game with his colleagues. Students were on the ground too. We would hear daily that the lockdown rules in the markets were getting stricter every day, but no one knew for real, as school gates were closed.

One evening, Topjor came running back to the room earlier than usual. I asked him for any reason to end the game sooner, and he said, "there are two policemen on a bike, honking at us over the gate to stop playing. We all ran our way". He went quickly to the balcony to watch them. "They told the gatekeeper to open the gate, but the gatekeeper too was playing with us, Ha! Ha!" Later we came to know that policemen had met the school principal. He then announced on the School WhatsApp group to stop playing and prevent future gatherings on the school campus.

Since the rules were not that clear, students and teachers were on their usual routine. Class 9, 10 and 11 students were in school as the school heads were not sure about returning them to home and if I was not wrong CBSE had issued guidelines to keep the senior students at school until further notice. They all left for home at the end of the 21-day lockdown.

Every Tuesday is meant for vegetable and fruit buying, which is organized by an individual in the school campus for staff who cannot go outside or are afraid to go outside. The benefit of this has been very convenient in these difficult times, for some they did not have a vehicle to go

to market and for some it might be the fear of contracting coronavirus, for some, it's the wholesale price and the freshness of a variety of vegetables and fruits. Once in a month the same individual sends a Google form to order ration orders to every staff residing on the campus, this also helps the staff and their children to remain safe within the campus and not fear going out and contracting the virus.

I started cooking our meals except for roti. I cooked whatever fresh vegetable Topjor got from the truck. Alu-Dam for the morning, rice and dal for lunch, and roti and some sabzi for dinner. Topjor liked all my food. He has been calling me an alchemist. He said, "You turn every vegetable into gold, ha-ha". I never thought I can cook so well, maybe I have inherited my mother's cooking skills as all mothers are great cooks. She is a known cook in my hometown. She has been cooking for most of the town's communal gatherings, such as prayers and weddings. Of course, I have been reporting my cooking progress to my mom by sharing a picture on WhatsApp to indirectly tell her not to worry as I am doing well and eating well. She too thinks I am good at cooking. Topjor tried cooking a few things and ruined them all. He makes only roti. But I have to also acknowledge that he taught me how to prepare a good cup of sweet tea. There would be days as we both would be thinking not to cook and reliant on instant noodles as we both have this joke regarding our cooking; the cooking normally takes 90 minutes but only 10 to 15 minutes to eat. We think it's unfair as a lot of hard work and time we had put in which we wanted the results to last longer. The outcome of lockdown is that I come out as a very fine cook, which would not have happened in pre-COVID as I would not indulge in cooking and experimenting with new recipes. Someday I would make our Tibetan spicy snacks "Laphing", Biryani, and bake some yummy Oreo cakes without oven. During the lockdown, we both relish the various fruits and vegetables available which would not have happened in normal times. I am aware of the importance of green vegetables and fruits for our health and the words of doctors, experts recommend building our immune system to reduce the risk of contracting coronavirus. One way of building the immune system is by consuming lots of fruits. It's also taking care of the body. Both of us would drink six litres of water every day as we feared if we did not drink

water, it would be easier for the virus to contract. We thought if we have good immunity, then the virus would not be able to contract. Even if we contracted, recovery will be assured without hospitalization.

I had been hearing daily how millions of Indian migrant workers were trying to get back to their village on their feet. Having lost their jobs due to the closure of factories, shops, restaurants, hotels and other manufacturing and service sectors due to lockdown. They had nothing but to return to their village to survive. Barkha Dutt, an eminent journalist who was relentlessly covering the story of migrants, unlike the mainstream media who were boiling in other discussions. Her series of videos was eye-opening about these struggles. Negligence of Central and state governments regarding the wellbeing of these workers. I saw the story of a migrant family who was walking in the wee hours and when she asked "why walking in this time to go village and not waiting for the government officials", the mother replied, "since in the day it gets very hot, so they have to walk at night and if we waited for government help there won't be any help coming for us". I felt sad watching stories of the migrants trying to survive the hunger and hardship while losing all hope in their government. My friend and I both would pray for the people who are affected by the pandemic. I felt blessed and grateful that I have a friend to rely on, a place to stay, caring parents and relatives who always look after me.

Partial Lockdown

At the end of April, a partial lockdown began, where there was an opening of essential shops and other services. The school opened the gate from 7 AM to 12 Noon, but only a few people were brave enough to exit. In May, many staff members started to go to the market to buy things and for other purposes. Words were going around that the nearby village had a COVID-19 case which feared us all. But one of the Indian workers from that village assured us that no such case was reported. Several industrial workers in the nearby town had tested positive, and the whole factory was closed. This made an informal discussion in our school about the staff who were going out. Some were saying that going out is unnecessary, some were saying that the gate should remain closed, some others were unbothered, at least if they were wearing masks and carrying hand sanitiser.

I remember we would wear our masks, carry hand sanitiser, and keep sanitizing our hands after touching something. Going to market was an easy job earlier with no preoccupied thoughts but in COVID-19 times everyone can be the carrier so the thought of meeting a COVID-19 patient had always been in our thoughts and at the same time keeping us a bit safe. When we came back from the market we would take our shoes outside, and we would directly take shower and wash our clothes, dump our masks. We washed and sanitized the things we bought. With lots of guidelines and safety measures about how not to get COVID-19 after visiting markets from the likes of Dr. Gupta of CNN, and other medical experts and researchers, about how to wash our shopping items, how to restrain from touching metallic surfaces, we were compelled to follow certain steps to feel safer without certainty. One of the teachers in the school washes all the vegetables and fruits before carrying them inside. Another teacher keeps all her items bought online outside the room for a whole 24 hours.

School administration started to sanitize the entire campus weekly. They had bought two sanitizing pumps and PPE for the one who was sanitizing. At one time they had washed my bike with that white liquid and stains had left for a few weeks even after washing. A bottle of hand sanitiser is always at the gate. Anyone coming in has to sanitize their hands and then check the temperature. Non-residential people coming inside the school, for fixing school WI-FI or fixing the staff's cable, were required to fill the COVID-form along with submitting their Aadhaar Card.

We were receiving news of Hospitals charging huge sums for COVID-19 beds. There was a forwarded WhatsApp news which said the minimum bed charge for COVID-19 patients in a hospital would be around 2 to 5 lakhs. 2 lakhs to reserve a bed and then a few more lakhs for the treatment. This was one of the most shocking news that we heard as to how can common people afford all this. After this news, we started taking more precautions.

The Internet has been the only service that remained undisturbed by this pandemic, and the whole world found a medium to stay connected and do their jobs. I loved watching shows, dramas and series, so I found solace in apps like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and YouTube. The

Internet-connected strangers to strangers and when there was a good thing happening it was touching, and I was so grateful for the kind people who were voluntarily helping strangers.

The first time we travelled was when Topjor had a bad tooth, and we went to see a dentist. There are lots of dental clinics in the city, but we travelled almost an hour to a remote clinic to minimize the risk of coronavirus exposure. When we go to the market, he makes sure that whatever we touch our hands should be sanitized. He makes me wear a double mask, as he thinks one mask won't be able to stop the virus. I get irked by all his weird actions in the market. He would even sanitize the scooty. He would make sure to keep his distance by standing far away from people and would avoid all the crowded places. I was scared of getting COVID-19, but sometimes his actions in the market were so careful that it annoyed me a lot. I used to tell him to move to the Himalayas for a while and then come back when things get normal.

The fear of getting COVID-19 was so severe that sometimes too much thinking on the subjects of "what if" leads to a lot of anxiety and mood swings. Sometimes you realize after reaching your home that you didn't sanitize your hands when visiting that shop earlier. Sometimes we forgot to cover our mouth and nose when that stranger was speaking to us, or I was asking him something. After every trip to the market, we had to stay in, our hearts floated with the fear of contracting corona. Anxiety would fade only after days. The situation involved not only me but also my mate, neighbours and the whole school. If I had asymptomatic COVID-19 and unknowingly became a carrier in the school. The Consequences would be huge, and I would have to take the blame for bringing in the virus carelessly.

A more concerning part is if there were any deaths. This was the reason the wife of one of Topjor's colleagues quit working at a local hospital, where there were several COVID-patients and the hospital was not providing adequate PPE for the nurses and other staff.

Topjor was quite paranoid about the entire COVID-19 scene; the changes that came along to him were drastic. He had always been carrying a big bottle of sanitiser wherever he went. Especially when things were being

delivered, he made sure to sanitize things before he brought them inside the home. After bringing things in, he made sure to wash them again. Sometimes his new habit irks me as he is being completely paranoid about all these.

As the summer heat burned the low land river bed, every single drop of liquid in our body was squeezed out. This place is so hot and humid in comparison with nearby areas. As the heat grew, everything was hot and baked. Even the concrete walls and wooden doors, not to mention the marble floors. I have been staying in Delhi for the last three years and didn't feel hopeless about how to get rid of heat and humidity. When it shines, everything was baked and all stood still. No animals were seen, no humans were to be seen, even trees were motionless. When I came from Delhi, I had brought only a couple of T-shirts and pants and some warm jackets as it was cold in Dehradun and who knew it was going to last so long. When the summer started soaring in, I did not have some light pyjamas so when things started opening in May, I had gone to Big Bazar to get a pair of shorts from their clothing section. Never had I seen such an empty convenience store, where there were only the storekeeper and cleaners. I got two pairs of shorts and spent my entire summer in those. I have learned to live minimally in this pandemic. Later when online shopping started up and things were being delivered, I could order some nice sets of pyjamas and T-shirts. Usually, in Delhi, I would always end up buying clothes whenever I go to the mall or market, but this time clothes were not necessary. I did not have to go outside, so pyjamas and t-shirts had been my regular clothing.

When you are sharing space with one person constantly and there would be some argument and frustration. We both had to go through once or twice a week where we would not agree on the same thing, or someone expected the other to do things, but he failed. Eventually leading to disappointment and frustration. When you expect too much from someone, it surely leads to one's disappointment. We would argue over different things from food eating habits to being lazy throughout the day. In the first few weeks of lockdown, we would be constantly having arguments over silly little things. Over time, we have evolved over our arguments and learned to understand each other by placing ourselves in others' shoes. The understanding is not easily

achievable, but we are thriving with sharing one another's feelings and growing in this COVID-19 times.

My online classes had also begun, there were a lot of challenges for the online class as the network was a big problem and once the network stopped working the concentration in the class also zones out. However, I've been used to this online mode now as an introvert like me in normal class helps me in keeping my ideas and view in front of the class. I was thankful that we did not have an online examination, as it would be a big concern for people who have weak internet connections. We were assessed by our assignments.

Summer went so fast; I had no clue what we had done except complaint about the scorching heat. Only at the end of July did I see a clouded sky lashing the fresh breeze beneath. And then the monsoon kept pouring rain for two months. Besides our online classes, we started planting a few trees around the school campus. Topjor likes to plant trees and flowers. I helped him to water, but ploughing and digging were done by himself.

Soon, my final year of B.Ed. had started, and I was excited and nervous about this online process. There were a lot of questions as our School Experience Programme was yet to be held, and we were worried about which mode is it going to be as the school is not yet open. The classes are being held regularly online and still facing the same issue of connectivity sometimes.

At the end of October 2020, school children started to come back for regular classes. Many of us were scared that someone would come with the virus, though authorities had issued a series of measures to combat any such incidence. Students had to submit their COVID-test report at the gate and their bags were sanitized. School made it mandatory for all the residents to give COVID-test just to make sure that everyone is clean and to produce a sense of security to the parents. We took our rapid- antigen test at the local government hospital for only 13 rupees. While standing in the queue for the test, I was scared that the result may come out positive. The long rubber test kid was pushed through my nose into the throat and pulled back after leaving there for a few seconds. Those few seconds felt like a way longer as it was so uncomfortable and hurt a little. I had to sneeze out the itch several times. After waiting for 30 minutes the policeman at

the hospital gave us the report with a negative result which was a huge relief. We all were smiling while coming back to school with the report.

We have been slowly getting more comfortable with this pandemic and forgetting safety practices and precautionary measures. We are going out more often than needed. We are taking it easy with sanitizing our hands when in the market. We have our usual discussion about the COVID-19 situation, but fear and anxiety reduce as time passes.

As people were trying to bring back normality, the coronavirus had never stopped its pace; the graph has always been climbing upward. And it has already reached our neighbouring retired army colony, where many blocks were put into quarantine after a family attended a wedding in the city. A Tibetan settlement in Sahasdhara, Dehradun, had 50-60 COVID-19 suspects put into home quarantine. We are still in the market, forgetting social distancing and hand sanitizing, waiting for a vaccine.

By Ngawang Yangkyi

Discussions

From section A, many major points emerged. There were almost half and more than half of the teachers in both the groups, viz. primary teachers and secondary teachers respectively shared that the impact had been negative. The major challenge that emerged in both groups was feeling low, anxious and fearful for the majority of teachers (45.8%) of young children and 40% of teachers of adolescents. The most frequent feeling reported was being neutral (neither calm nor stressed) for 48% of primary group teachers and 45.8% of secondary group teachers.

The majority of secondary grade teachers (64%) reported that they were not worried about the lockdown effect on the job, as compared to 37.5% of primary grade teachers. The majority of the primary teachers (66.7%) expressed odd working hours along with increased workload and extended working hours. Similarly, a study conducted by Arora and Srinivasan (2020) reported teachers faced problems like internet problems, a lack of orientation with technology and, more importantly, a lack of personal touch as there is no physical interaction as major challenges.

Nearly, both the groups, viz teachers of young children (37.5%) and 44% teachers teaching adolescents supported the lockdown which had an impact on salary cut. The major change observed in their behaviour, reported by half of the primary teachers (50%) was being delighted to be at home as compared to teachers teaching adolescents who were learning new technology. To cope with a stressful situation, nearly half of the primary teachers reported that they watched a television show and were engaged in cooking, as compared to 48% of secondary grade teachers for chatting with someone and being involved in household chores. Nearly half of the primary teachers (45.8%) and 56% of secondary grade teachers reported that they are certain that things will be better in future

About lifestyle changes, many new habits that emerged during pandemic induced lockdown were cooking, watching web series, yoga/ exercise for the majority of primary teachers along with secondary teachers. To maintain a peaceful mind, sharing feelings with family and friends followed by eating well and remaining active emerged to be favourite activities for primary and secondary teachers. Major lifestyle changes are observed to be spending more time on gadgets for the majority of primary teachers (54.2%) and secondary teachers (60%). The diet patterns seemed to be increased for the majority of teachers teaching young children, as compared to 40% of teachers teaching adolescents.

Regarding online education, pressures of taking online classes sometimes were reported by the majority of participants teaching the primary group (66.7%) as compared to 44% of participants teaching the adolescent group. Managing classes and household chores together was shared by the majority of primary teachers as compared to secondary teachers where the majority (40%) shared learning new technology is the biggest challenge. The major health issue that emerged in both groups was eye strain for participants dealing with young children (66.7%) and 64% secondary teachers. For nearly half of primary teachers (52%), the presence of family members did not bother them. On the contrary, for the majority of secondary teachers, it did bother sometimes.

In the arena of relationships with Family and Friends, sharing responsibilities at home was the way reported by the majority of primary teachers

(83.3%) along with 72% of secondary teachers. Majority of the teachers in both the groups, viz. 58.3% of primary teachers and 60% secondary teachers, shared that as a family they had come close to each other. Taking out time for the family and managing work at home was agreed by the majority of teachers teaching young students (95.8%) as compared to 96% teachers teaching adolescents. The major safety measure adopted by both the groups (nearly 92%) was being engaged in frequent cleaning and sanitization of homes.

However, in Strand-III of the study, the story shared is regarding COVID-19 anxious behaviours. The narrative reflected life in staff quarters. It also intricately defined the ways of balancing household responsibilities and professional duties. Equal division of labour was seen between two friends staying together. To deal with the unprecedented situations, COVID-19 appropriate behaviours were incorporated. Initially, when the lockdown was

announced, there were no particular guidelines to follow, gradually everything became streamlined. To beat loneliness, many hobbies are adopted like cooking, reading books and many more.

Conclusions

The findings received from both strands may conclude with the note that online education was challenging with teachers along with household responsibilities. There was an environment of uncertainty during the pandemic, yet our teachers faced it with absolute dauntlessness. They struggled with the technology and yet carried forward online education despite challenges.

To keep themselves sane, many activities were adopted like yoga and other activities, an equal share of responsibilities were seen. Thus, the role of families is reflected in teachers' contributions.

References

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