Indian Journal of
School Health & Wellbeing

● Health Services ● Life Skills Education ● Healthy School Environment

The National Life Skills, Values Education & School Wellness Program

Healthy Schools ...... Healthy India

Education is not preparation for life...
Education is life itself

- John Dewey

Submission Guidelines

- All submissions should follow the APA 7th Edition style

- All submissions should have an abstract summarizing the main points.

- The submission should have a clear and informative title

- The submission should be original and should not be in the process of consideration by any other publication at the same time.

- The submission should have rigorous and reliable information and provide a deeper level of understanding.

- Submissions should be engaging and accessible to non-expert readers as well.

- Submission emails must contain an inline declaration stating that the research work is the author's original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for publication.

- Initial acceptance of any submission does not guarantee publication. The editorial board shall do the final selection.

- If necessary, the editors may edit the manuscript in order to maintain uniformity of presentation and to enhance readability.

Types of Manuscripts and Word Limits

1. Original Research Papers: These should only include original findings from high-quality research studies. The word limit is 5000 excluding references and an abstract (structured format) of not more than 250 words.

2. Brief Research Communication: These manuscripts should contain short reports of original studies or evaluations and service-oriented research which points towards a potential area of scientific research or unique first-time reports. The word limit is 1500 words and an abstract (structured format) of not more than 150 words.

3. Case Reports: These should contain reports of new/interesting/rare cases of clinical significance or with implications for management. The word limit is 1500 words and an abstract of not more than 150 words.

4. Review Articles: These are systemic and critical assessments of the literature which will be invited. Review articles should include an abstract of not more than 250 words describing the purpose of the review, collection and analysis of data, with the main conclusions. The word limit is 5000 words excluding references and abstract.

5. Grand Rounds in child psychiatry or psychopathology (Case Conference): This should highlight one or more of the following: diagnostic processes and discussion, therapeutic difficulties, learning process or content/technique of training. This may be authored by an individual or a team, and may be an actual case conference from an academic department or a simulated one. The word limit is 1500 words.

6. Viewpoint: These should be experience-based views and opinions on debatable or controversial issues that affect the profession. The author should have sufficient, credible experience on the subject. The word limit is 3000 words.

7. Commentaries: These papers should address important topics, which may be either multiple or linked to a specific article. The word limit is 3000 words with 1 table/figure.

8. Literary child Psychology/ Developmental studies/ Psychiatry/ Disability studies/ Education for mental health: Original Contributions are welcome which cover both literature as well as mental health. These can be in the field of poetry, drama, fiction, reviews or any other suitable material. The word limit is 2000 words.

9. My Voice: In this section multiple perspectives are provided by patients, caregivers and paraprofessionals. It should encompass how it feels to face a difficult diagnosis and what this does to relationships and the quality of life. Personal narratives, if used in this section, should have relevance to general applications or policies. The word limit is 1000 words.

10. Book/ Movie reviews: Reviews of books or movies relevant to school mental health and wellbeing may also be submitted. The word limit is 1000 words.

11. Announcements: Information regarding conferences, meetings, courses, awards and other items likely to be of interest to readers should be submitted with the name and address of the person from whom additional information can be obtained (up to 100 words).

Faculty members are invited to be the guest editors of the journal on a theme relevant to school health and wellbeing.

The Manuscripts for publication in the peer-reviewed and refereed Indian Journal of School Health and Wellbeing (IJSHW) are to be submitted via e-mail to journal@expressionsindia.org along with a copy of the email to the editor.

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Message from the Editor

The current global COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented in many ways. Historically it is linked to the Spanish Flu and Plague Epidemics and their implications for human life, but each of these were in restricted geographical areas unlike COVID-19 which is a worldwide phenomenon. Recognising the seriousness and intensity of the Corona Virus and its highly contagious nature with variable symptomatic manifestations in human beings resulting in many mortalities, the World Health Organisation declared it as a pandemic in March 2020. If we look at life in India from the beginning of the pandemic, there have been drastic changes. The lockdown and home confinement that is recommended compelled everyone to re-organise and re-define their lives. Children could not physically go to school or interact with their friends and peers. Same is the case for older students. Fear of contracting the disease and observing strict precautions to prevent oneself from contacting it has altered family life in many ways. In effect, the current situation has spread a lot of uncertainty and has affected many lives. As we all make an attempt to decode this uncertainty, it is clear that the consequences of the pandemic will only be understood in the long term. Yet at the same time, the pandemic has affected routine life equally across all age groups and of various stakeholders resulting in a disturbed life and disrupted psychosocial environment. Popular media carries many reports of the same.

It is important to acknowledge that the imminent uncertainties that surround COVID-19 have spiked anxiety levels not only in children and adolescents, but in their parents and teachers as well. The anxiety results from not being able to go out of one's home, loss or possibility of loss of one's livelihood, financial difficulties on account of reduced income or no steady source of income, overcrowding in restrictive home accommodation, difficulties in maintaining the boundaries of personal and professional life, etc. Physical distancing has created social distance; family and friends can no longer meet with the same intensity and regularity. All these aspects impact people's mental health.

For many, the home environment may not be ideal for their wellbeing and mental health. In this backdrop, the issue of emotional wellbeing assumes considerable importance. The pandemic has placed all of us in a challenging situation which is now being seen as a new normal. This has made us introspect and questions ourselves, doubt the choices we have made and rethink the life that we have lived and rethink the future that we had dreamt of. Today, we wonder whether this new normal, is a permanent feature with which we will have to learn to live.

Various questions that have arisen due to the current situation. What does this uncertainty hold for us? Who is speaking about the current crisis and with what advice? Which voices are heard and which ones are unheard? How can we ensure the emotional wellbeing of children, adolescents, parents and teachers? How has the current situation affected the education of children and all concerned stakeholders? How do they affect every individual and his/her relationship with others? What are the ways through which individuals and families are coping with the current crisis? What is the effect of COVID-19 on the risk propensity of individuals developing anxiety, depression, and other outcomes, such as self-harm? What is the optimal structure for a mentally healthy life in the era of COVID-19?

This issue of **Indian Journal of School Health and Well Being** attempts to address, understand and answer the above questions. The papers in the current issue reflect on a wide range of areas focusing on COVID-19 and its implications for all the stakeholders. The papers dwell upon the experiences and challenges of the stakeholders. They also brought to fore for contemplation the issue of inclusivity in the light of online interaction and increased risk of abuse, child labour, mental stress. Papers also

focused on how the crisis of COVID-19 has changed the dynamics in educational processes and blurred the demarcation between professional and personal space for teachers and students.

Rashi Mukhopadhayay

Message from the Patrons

It is a matter of great happiness to note that the latest issue of the Indian Journal of School Health & Wellbeing published by the Expressions India is being released. It is a well known fact that Research publications and Journals in particular are the most authentic sources of verified knowledge and experiences. The sharing of such knowledge and experiences not only amongst the Researchers, Scientists, Policy Planners and Implementers, but also the Activists working in the concerned area and persons having special interest in that area benefits all. It is our privilege to reiterate that the Expressions India has been doing pioneering work since long, in the field of Health Education under its banner of "Holistic Health and School Wellness Programme" to enable the school education and teacher's holistic facilitation in realizing the goal of Health Education in Schools. The present publication is a momentous indicator of this initiative.

The major bottleneck in the way of achieving the objective of Health Education has been the particularistic conceptualization of its transaction process. The goal of development of holistic health and wellbeing of young learners cannot be attained by making them gather certain information and rote-learn those. It can be attained only by a transaction process focused on experiential co-scholastic methodology that ensures active participation of learners and substantially contribute to the development of life skills enabling young children to manage their lives more competently and grow as truly empowered human resource of the nation and human society at large. To facilitate this process it is very critical to encourage and empower the teachers, so that they act like facilitators and mentors.

The formal school education system needs to look towards interacting and taking the support from the initiatives like the one taken by Expressions India under its National Life Sills Education & School Wellness Programme aimed at realizing the Goal of "HEALTHY SCHOOL......HEALTHY INDIA". It is pertinent to state that the Schools and other educational institutions that have been associated with such endeavours have strongly felt the need for such programs to be adopted by all schools including Higher Education System.

It is this context the Journal of School Health has potential to reinforce the process of realizing the vision of Health Promoting Schools getting integrated into the education system in India. We are more than confident that the present issue of the Journal will strengthen this grand endeavour and empower all who are creatively engaged in the promotion of Health Education in Schools. With immense pleasure we would like to express our gratitude for Advisory group, Editorial Board and Members of the Executive Editorial Committee for their valuable contribution, ungrudging cooperation and keen interest and also for making available the benefits of their rich experiences and knowledge.

"If there is will, there is way, and if the will is reinforced by enlightened path-breakers, the way would lead to the destination at the earliest ".

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Teachers' Identities and Mental Health: Reflections in Times of COVID-19

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Abstract

The present paper is set in the context of COVID-19. One of the impacts of the changing dynamics in educational processes has been the blurring the demarcation between professional and personal space for teachers and students. While spending several hours together on school days, there is little that students and oftentimes, colleagues get to know of the personal lives of teachers. Scholars in the field of education are scrambling to document the challenges that this sudden advent of online teaching has brought with itself. As professional and personal spaces overlap, teachers are required to redefine themselves and cope with the physical and psychological challenges that this time of lockdown imposes. This paper focuses on dimensions of identity and mental health within these novel experiences.

Keywords: *teacher's identity, mental health, COVID-19, online teaching*

Introduction

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a sudden change in the way educational institutions function in India. Till early 2020, schools, colleges and other educational institutions were running with the usual complexities of heterogeneous classroom spaces, preparation for impending examinations, parental anxiety over admissions, and the like. In the middle of the senior secondary school examinations conducted at the end of twelve plus years of schooling at the all India level, the pandemic reached a proportion where a sudden nationwide lockdown was declared. Examinations were halted, classes in higher education institutions were suspended, and all teachers and students were asked to stay at home. The need for online teaching emanated from this lockdown and the realisation that the lockdown was unlikely to end anytime soon. At the time of writing this paper, the Prime Minister of India declared an extension of the lockdown till early May 2020; it is likely to be extended further.

Schools and colleges that had little exposure to technology for teaching in classrooms were forced to explore the possibilities of teachers engaging students through online classes. Most schools had little over a week to prepare before the beginning of the 2020-21 academic session. Higher education institutions were thrust into the world of online teaching overnight. The dynamics and complexity increased as students who were visiting their home or their relatives on the festival of colours, Holi, could not return to home or their hostels as the lockdown was declared immediately after vacations.

The present paper is set in the context described above. One of the impacts of the resultant changing dynamics in educational processes, has been blurring the demarcation between professional and personal space for teachers and students. While spending several hours together on school days, there is little that students, and often, colleagues get to know of the personal lives of teachers. Scholars in education are scrambling to document the challenges that this sudden advent of online teaching has brought with itself. As professional and personal spaces overlap, teachers are required to redefine themselves and cope with the physical and psychological challenges that this time of lockdown imposes. This paper reflects on teachers' identities as they redefine their sense of self during these novel times.

Context

The reflections shared in their paper are located within the specific context of New Delhi. The experiences of COVID and the changes emanating from the world-wide pandemic are far from universal. New Delhi is the capital city of the second most populated country of the world. The city is characterised by a metropolitan culture. The young are aspirational and engaged in building a meaningful life through exploring higher education opportunities within and outside the country. This however, is true more for those belonging to the middle and upper class

population. The contrast is apparent in the struggles of the lower socio-economic class to access two meals a day, sometimes not even that.

The last pan India census survey conducted by the government of India shows that Delhi hosts 1.39% of the country's population. It has a literacy rate of 86%. About 16,00,000 people live in urban areas within Delhi while the rest 4,19,000 live in rural areas. Roughly 2.5% of the population in Delhi lives in rural areas. (GoI, 2011) Delhi sees the highest share of inter-state migrant population among other states in the country. (Kawoosa, 2019) The heterogeneity is reflected in the lifestyles of Delhiites. On the one hand you would be able to witness youth who discuss international series they watch on Over the Top (OTT) media platforms, a culture of visiting high end cafes, lounges and bars is seen alongside a different group of people enjoying their lives with the delicacies of street food.

The diversity is equally reflected in the school system within the country and the city. The city has a vast network of privately funded and state funded schools. The state funded schools are themselves divided into those funded by the central government and the state government. Further, there are state run schools for the gifted (Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya, loosely translated as State school for promotion of the gifted), and most recently Schools of Excellence, admission to which is on the basis of an entrance examination. Diversity within the classroom extends to the various domains of class, caste, gender, religion, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds. A similar diversity can be seen in the teacher population as well. Teachers in government schools are likely to be better paid than private schools with the exception of a few private schools charging extremely high fees. While infrastructural facilities were likely to be better in private schools, reforms in the last few years have been working towards levelling the playing field.

The diversity in contexts lends itself to the assumption that the experience of each school, student and teacher will be different. In this paper, thus, there is only an attempt to reflect on the experiences of teachers and not to draw conclusions. In writing this paper, conversational interviews were conducted with about fifteen teachers teaching in state run and private schools at various levels of education, in New Delhi. The

interviews were focussed on but not limited to the following questions:

- In what ways do you think your personal and professional lives have changed, together and separately, as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown?

- What are the influences of the new work pattern on your role as a teacher, teacher-student relationship, and your sense of self?

- What do you think is likely to be the impact of the lockdown on your role as a teacher in the future?

- How has the experience of lockdown had an impact on your psychological wellbeing?

Teachers' identities and mental health

Orders or closing schools came weeks before the declaration of the nationwide lockdown. (The Economic Times, 2020, March 06, The Economic Times, 2020, March 25) At that time, schools were busy preparing final assessments. Examinations were cancelled and the school administration had to make a sudden decision about whether to ask teachers to be present in schools. Schools worked independently till further orders from the government that followed soon after. In a city like Delhi, where distances are large and teachers sometimes travel from neighbouring states, this could mean delay in assessment and the declaration of year end results.

During the interactions some teachers shared that they were asked to visit schools and collect answer scripts of students, if they had failed to carry them home before the lockdown. Navigating police personnel on duty to ensure implementation of the lockdown provided several insights about teachers' identities. One of the teachers shared being intercepted by the police several times, while commuting to school. In tackling transgressions of lockdown rules, police personnel are known to have occasionally taken an aggressive stance. However, his experience was in sharp contrast. Manish said: *"*हवलदार आया और थोड़े गुस्से में बात कर रहा था। कि बाहर क्या कर रहे हो? मैंने बोल स्कूल में ड्यूटी लगी है। तो पीछे से उसके सीनियर ने आके बोला टीचर है। थोड़ा आराम से बात करो। डंडा नीचे करो। *(Constable came and was talking to me aggressively. What are you doing outside? I said I am on duty in school. So his senior came and said, he is a teacher. Talk*

politely. Put your stick aside.)" The mention of his being a teacher immediately softens many of the enforcement officers, even before he could justify his not being at home. The external recognition is evidence to the sense of dignity and respect accorded by the society to teachers. Government school teachers have also been assigned rotational duties to monitor and supervise the work in their schools. Many schools have been converted into shelter homes and food distribution centres for the homeless, migrant population and other citizens in need of help. Teachers shared that despite the difficulties in performing their duties, they derived a sense of pride from their work at these temporary shelter homes. They felt that they were in a position to work closely with the community. Alok said, *"all said and done, whether I teach or I distribute food, I am serving the society. I feel good that I am able to help people in need."* Here, the professional identity takes precedence over personal identity. Self-esteem is derived from the professional identity of being a teacher.

Pertinently, there was a sharp contrast in the nature of work that government and private school teachers undertake. Besides being asked to engage with students over WhatsApp, there is little else that government school teachers have been asked to do. It is too soon to arrive at generalisations about the effectiveness of this mode of teaching, in the absence of systematic research. However, teachers shared that not more than twenty to thirty per cent students were able to join the groups. Many of these did not respond to tasks and reading material being shared. Teachers shared their concerns about the lost time in effective teaching. They also felt that many of the children would have returned to their home towns in remote villages in various states across the country. They wondered if these students, particularly those in primary classes, would ever return to Delhi. Alok said, *"Many students will not return. They called me before leaving and said that their father has told me that they will take admission in a school in their village only. My class will completely change by the time the school reopens."* Their concern for students and their wellbeing is an indication of how strong a bond they share with their students and the important place that students hold in the lives of teachers.

The role profile of teachers in private schools varied greatly from that of government school teachers. Private schools found online platforms to conduct classes in synchronous mode. Some schools had already purchased software and subscribed to platforms for asynchronous teaching and management of learning resources. These were extended to synchronous teaching. Other schools made use of free platforms for conducting online classes. Most teachers were required to upgrade their technological skills. Some of the teachers, particularly those in the middle or end of their teaching careers were not able to keep up with the pace of online teaching. They sought assistance from their younger colleagues. This also meant that the younger colleagues had greater work in training their seniors besides taking their classes. Pankhuri shared how she has become the assistant for all her senior teachers. She said, *"I understand how difficult it is for senior teachers to suddenly keep pace with so much technological intervention. However, when they repeatedly call, I also get frustrated in trying to explain simple things to them. In such situations, I just tell them, you tell me the work, I will do it. So, I end up doing all their work also."*

In conducting synchronous classes, teachers shared concerns over security of the platforms. Further, greater involvement of parents often translated into interference, during and after the classes. Teachers shared that parents could be heard prompting answers to their children or commenting on teachers' appearances. Teachers also engage in what is known as 'upper half dressing' or 'waist up dressing' to appear presentable to students. Teachers feel that even more so than regular classroom teaching, they are judged for their appearance, by students as well as parents. Gauri shared one of her colleague's experience. *"My colleague was almost in tears. One of the parents came online and said,* देखना ज़रा कैसे कपड़े पहने हैं। बेकार लग रही है। *(Just look at her, what kind of clothes she is wearing. She is not looking good.) It is so humiliating that parents would criticize us in front of our students. These are primary school children. They get influenced by what is said to them. Nobody pays attention to the effort we are putting in."*

Some of the teachers also shared the joys of online teaching. They felt that this abrupt change provided an opportunity to them to learn and explore more. The excitement of learning something new every day infused energy in

teachers. The younger teachers also find working from home as more enjoyable as it accords greater flexibility of time. Like the government school teachers, private school teachers also felt a sense of disconnect with their students. Although most students from their classes were able to access infrastructural and technological facilities that pre requisites of online learning, the intimacy of teaching within the shared physical space of the classroom was missing. Not being able to gauge learning from students' faces, or monitor their pace of learning, teachers felt a sense of meaninglessness in engaging in online teaching. Akshita particularly reported missing the expressions of her students when they came across a new poem. *"The joy of revelation, of understanding something complex, online teaching has taken away the only thing that was enjoyable in school. I feel as if the purpose is lost. What is the point of doing all the administrative work if I can't see my students' faces!"*

Interactions in physical classroom spaces extend beyond academics. Students' conversations provide insights into their lives and concerns. Classrooms serve as spaces for addressing these concerns, providing support, perspective building, peer learning and promoting mental health. With greater surveillance by parents, and schools, communication on online platforms is often one way and teacher dominated. Students are often asked to keep their mikes on mute to avoid simultaneous talk and disturbance. The spontaneity of responses, asking questions, and expression is missing. Even when group work is organised online, the joy of huddling together towards a common purpose is missing. Teachers felt that much of the spontaneity in teaching has vanished with increased planning and structuring of their lessons. This marks for them the need to redefine their identities as teachers and the nature of engagements with students.

The possibility of an early burnout cannot be ruled out. This is particularly true for women teachers. All teachers, men and women, shared that they were happy about being able to spend a greater amount of time with their children. In the absence of domestic help, however, the primary responsibility of completing household chores, fell on women. The deeply patriarchal social set up has not left teachers untouched. Women teachers thus felt burdened with the new pace of work. They were also required to organise home set ups for classes of their own children. Teachers also shared that given the special circumstances where work was still in the process of being streamlined, there are no longer any office hours. The time for professional and personal work overlaps. While the schedules for teaching are fixed, school administration schedules staff meetings at off hours and on short notices, sometimes stretching late into the night. Teaching and assessing students' work online has increased screen time. The boundaries of time and space for personal and professional work are no longer tightly drawn. With these fused spaces, families, teachers said, have already started complaining about being relegated to the margins in their lives. This was reported by Manish who has a young child, and also by Akshita and Gauri.

Most of the teachers said that they look at their personal and professional identities as closely interwoven. They felt that being a teacher changes the way you think and respond to the world. Yet, in the interviews conducted, teachers unanimously complained about not finding time for self-care. They were acutely aware of the distance that exists between them and their students. In private schools, where students were sometimes from families more financially affluent than their teachers, the teachers hesitate in appearing on camera in their classes. They feel that their home spaces will be intruded upon. Teachers are also conscious of the background home noises that provide opportunities to students to take a peek into their personal lives. In small apartments, teachers struggle to find quiet spaces within their homes in order to take classes. They resign to taking classes in their bed rooms, in an attempt to block the background conversations of their family members. However, this is a level of privacy invasion that teachers were not prepared for. Although they maintained that they did not see their personal and professional selves as different, there were indications that they wanted to maintain demarcations of how much they wanted their students to be privy to their personal lives. Mansi joked, "मेरे घर में मेरी क्लास के टाइम पे ही किचन में से सब से ज़्यादा आवाज़ आती है। एक दिन तो स्टूडेंट ने पूछ ही लिया, क्या बनने को रखा है गैस पे! (In my house, kitchen is the noisiest at the time of my class. One day one of the students asked, what am I cooking!)" This appears to be a one-way phenomenon. Mansi added that this was not

because students are concerned about her but because they wanted to point out that they now know what is happening in her life. Teachers are often aware of the smallest details of the mental, emotional, physical and financial health of not their students as well as other members of their families. The relationships between teachers and students are thus intimate, albeit one sided.

The impact of fusing together of personal and professional spaces is compounded by the shared physical space with their families. There is little time for the teachers to be alone. This, teachers feel, is likely to be a bigger cause of burnout than the increased workload. Teaching is seen as a reflective exercise. Quiet deliberation is important for better teaching, but also to think about the highly engaging classroom sessions. Adding to the stress was the issue of a government order asking schools in Delhi to not increase the school fee in these financially stressful times. (The Economic Times, 2020, April 17) School administrators raised concerns about meeting expenses if the fee was not paid by all students. Teachers are thus worried about not being paid salaries and facing financial constraints.

Teachers were also acutely aware of similar stressors that students would be experiencing. Given the heterogeneity of students' backgrounds, it would be an oversimplification to not be conscious of the home dynamics that students witness. Students may be borrowing phones and laptops from their parents or other family members to complete school tasks. They may be conscious of the anxious voices and hushed tones of their parents and grandparents about financial difficulties. Watching news of increasing numbers of infections and deaths and not being able to step out to play with friends, not having access to supplies of essentials are some of the concerns that students may be facing. Education that continues to be restricted to textbooks and syllabus is detached and does not alleviate students' anxieties. The absurdity of presuming that the only change required in education is the shifting of engagement from physical to digital spaces has left teachers feeling alienated. (Pathak, 2020, April 28)

What lies ahead?

The paper has been an attempt to document the state of flux that makes teachers' lives in contemporary times. Teachers are so busy in making sense of the changes around them that they are barely able to pause and reflect on the meaning of the whole phenomenon. It is a bit ironic that the imposition of a lockdown has brought about a flurry of activity that rather than slowing things down. This requires that teachers take a pause to reflect on what teaching will mean post the lockdown.

The change in work spaces for instance can have many ramifications. For instance, would the ability to conduct classes from home, translate into more women entering the workforce? Schools are already contemplating asking teachers to teach during periods of long leave. This may translate into changes in terms and conditions of work.

The blurring of boundaries is also visible between various institutions. Teachers are collaborating with each other to conduct online sessions in their institutions, sometimes across continents. Barriers of time, space and economies are thus no longer applicable to garnering educational experiences. This has the potential to reduce the number of full-time teachers required by schools. Content based teachers may be separated from teachers in roles of mentors and counsellors. This may lead to a lack of an institutional identity for teachers. Teachers will thus have to redefine a change in their roles as well as their sense of self.

Harari (2018) pointed towards the need for greater adaptability in the 21st century. This is as true for teachers as for any other profession. "In such a world, the last thing a teacher needs to give her pupils is more information. They already have far too much of it. Instead, people need the ability to make sense of information, to tell the difference between what is important and what is unimportant, and above all to combine many bits of information into a broad picture of the world." (Harari, 2018, 261) Changes in pedagogic approaches will be required as an increasing number of students are able to connect online. Learning may shift towards asynchronous engagements. There will be lesser synchronous teaching and students will become academically independent. "So what should we be teaching? Many pedagogical experts argue that schools should switch to teaching 'the four Cs'- critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity." (Harari, 2018, 262) The engagement of teachers with students may

become less personalised in the absence of real time, and face to face engagement.

To reiterate, it is still early to conclude what lies ahead for teachers. However, this is the time when teachers will have to redefine themselves in their engagements with schools, students, and themselves.

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The Impact of COVID-19 Crisis on the Wellbeing of Children

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Abstract

The crisis of COVID-19 has disrupted everyone's life all over the world. The global pandemic is not only a health emergency, but also a challenge that humankind has not faced ever. Though children have been largely spared from the direct effects of this global crisis, they risk being amongst the ones facing the colossal damage. The crisis is exceptional and has posed an entirely new set of challenges for child's exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. Also, this pandemic is likely to have a particularly pernicious impact on the children living in poverty. Furthermore, countrywide lockdown imposed by the government to bring down overall transmission has increased the crisis of wellbeing. The condition is intensified by the lack of interaction with school friends, peers and teachers, and lack of access to services provided by the school. Children in conflict settings, as well as crowded situations are also at considerable risks. For many, the growing crisis has increased the risk of abuse, child labour, mental stress and behavioral risks. Therefore, the aim of this article is to highlight the effects pandemic is having on children's life.

Keywords: *children, child's wellbeing, COVID-19, India, pandemic*

Introduction

India declared the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak an "informed disaster" on 14th March 2020. The outbreaks posed a whole new set of challenges in everyone's life. Although children are not the face of this crisis and mostly spared from its direct health effects, it has a profound effect on their wellbeing. As the crisis of COVID-19 spreads around the world, it is transforming children's everyday life. The pandemic has intensified the risks of malnourishment, chances of ill-treatment, isolation and likelihood of being exposed to abuse at home. It is probable that these events will cause more damage to the children belonging to vulnerable groups.

The child's wellbeing includes development across all the domains; those are physical, cognitive, emotional and social. Child's wellbeing is essential to enable them to successfully overcome difficulties. Hence, a positive wellbeing promotes right conditions for learning and development. The United Nations policy brief (2020) highlights that children of all ages, in all the countries are being affected by the global pandemic. Further, the COVID-19 crisis poses challenges to children's wellbeing in all the domains. According to the data shared by Women and Child Development Ministry of India, the Childline received more than 92,000 SOS calls asking for protection from abuse and violence against children during the first 11 days of lockdown. Hence, this paper aims to capture the issues children are facing in this pandemic.

Impact on emotional wellbeing

We all, children notwithstanding are trying to understand the overwhelming uncertainty before us because of the worldwide pandemic. Although children are not so much at risk of infection, they are most vulnerable due to chances of being parted from their loved ones. The reports show children may experience a series of psychological issues such as worry, fear, anxiety, loss of appetite and difficulty in sleeping (Jacob *et al* 2020).

During the crisis, worries of adults can be transferred to children and make them restless and fearful. Without an opportunity for outdoor play and socialisation, children can become easily bored, angry and frustrated. This crisis would have made them even more socially isolated when they would emerge out of this situation (WHO, 2020). For many children, home may not be a safe place— either because it never was or it has become unsafe now due to the crisis. For children the impact of this crisis

might be life-long. The pandemic has created a situation where there is uncertainty, and the lockdown has restricted movement. There is overcrowding at home with many people being around all the time. All of this creates a high-stress home environment and children are generally exposed to diverse forms of abuse. For children who cannot access any e-learning resources that are being provided, there is also an added risk of shame or embarrassment.

Discrimination and stigma related to COVID-19 may make children more vulnerable to abuse and psychosocial distress (UNICEF, 2020). Both direct and indirect exposure of children to physical abuse, psychological aggression and/or neglect by caregivers at a very early age leave permanent wounds in the form of impaired development of brain and psyche, neuro-psychiatric disorders and higher rates of psychosomatic, multiple substance abuse and suicidal thoughts (Tsavoussis *et al* (2013); Al Odhayani *et al* (2013); Iram Rizvi and Najam (2014).

The fear of losing loved ones from COVID-19 infection is most obvious among children who are dealing with immense anxiety and emotional stress brought by the pandemic and lockdown (Shelar, 2020). Large numbers of children are likely to miss out on vaccinations due to postponement of routine vaccinations (GAVI, 2020).

Impact on physical wellbeing

Physical wellbeing represents not just a disease-free life. It includes a healthy lifestyle; stable state of body and mind but the restrictive movements have changed the whole lifestyle. Lockdown during this pandemic has implications for children's physical health. Constrained access to schools, clinics, clean drinking water, and sanitation is a particular threat to the vulnerable populations, and the lack of child protection particularly harmful to children in need of safety (Fore, 2020).

Due to decreased physical activity and too much consumption of fast food, children from privileged sections of the society may become overweight. In contrast, children from less privileged sections of society may suffer from malnourishment. Furthermore, excessive screen time during lockdown may cause eye strain and other behavioral issues (Kinikar & Kulkarni, 2020).

School closure may heighten food insecurity for children, who depend on mid-day meal programs (Jamal 2020). Further adverse effects include delays in seeking care for illnesses which are not related to coronavirus. Other effects vary from delayed medical attention to omissions of routine vaccinations of children due to parent's fears of exposure to corona virus in hospitals.

Impact on intellectual wellbeing

Increased digitalization is likely to extend inequalities between children, as poor children are least likely to have the tools to access on-line education and have a quiet environment in their home to focus on their studies. There may be long-lasting effects of this education-gap. Further, regular schedules have been disturbed without knowing when the schools will be reopened (Jacob *et al,* 2020). Therefore, children are missing the consistent reinforcement of their learning at school and all the chances to expand their existing knowledge. Since there is lack of opportunities for intellectual nourishment, some children are likely to regress even more than they would during a usual break from school (Robson, 2020). It's not just the lack of learning opportunities; however, the more serious concern is a reversion that will be much harder to remedify. This could result in severe lifelong impact on cognitive abilities of children.

Besides the disruption in the school year, there is a risk of prolonged out-of-school learning which may lead to isolation of children and exacerbation of existing inequalities. Due to lack of resources, the learning gap will also widen between children from lower and higher-income families during the institute closure (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). Nor will these inequalities end once the schools start to re-open. A study by Andrew *et al* shows that poor families are less eager to let their children return to schools (Robson, 2020).

Impact on social wellbeing

The worldwide school closure has no precedence. All over the world, 188 countries have enforced countrywide closures of schools, affecting more than 1.5 billion children and youth (UNESCO, 2020). Making real life connections, and spending time with friends and peers, is much easier when you're regularly meeting someone (Robson 2020). But due to lockdown, children have limited or no

opportunity for socialization which is making them angry and easily frustrated (Kumar et al 2020). The UNICEF (2020) report stated that the COVID-19 lockdown in India has adversely impacted the education of over 247 million school children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools, apart from the 28 million attending pre-school classes in the countries' many Anganwadi centres.

School is not only an educational hub for children, but also a home away from the home with ample free space. Besides providing education, schools offer a window to freedom, scope of interaction with fellows and seniors. Schools play an enlightening role in promoting social interactions, personal hygiene, physical activity, and healthy food habits (Sylva, 1994). A school is a support system for many children living in difficult circumstances and constrained access school is a particular threat to these children. School also provides a safe space for children while parents are at work.

Children may become increasingly engrossed in social media and increased unsupervised on-line internet can also magnify risks of sexual exploitation and cyber-bullying. "Child Abuse materials" seeking activity are rising as children are expected to be less supervised, having more online exposure and are thus easy targets (Closure of schools, 2020). Children's dependency on online platforms for distance learning has also magnified their risk of exposure to unsuitable content and online predators (UN Policy Brief, 2020).

Conclusion

However, children who contract COVID-19 seem to have less severe symptoms and lower mortality rates than other age groups at least till date. But in many other ways, the crisis is having a profound effect on children's wellbeing, with potentially long-term negative impacts. The accompanying economic crisis during the pandemic is putting poor children at even greater risk and increasing their existing vulnerabilities. The data from various global as well as national reports it is apparent that a large student population is out of school, and widespread economic insecurity is likely to increase violence against children- child labor, sexual exploitation, and child marriage. School closures, though, is an important way to stave off the spread of COVID-19, but chances are that it could result in increased social isolation for the young population. Stress on families, lockdowns and constrained freedom of movement, may increase the prevalence of violence at home. The reports and articles reviewed, child safety and wellbeing came out to be a major concern during pandemic. Hence special care of children is one of the most important task during this time and for this we all have to work together. It is necessary to give children correct information of what is happening around the globe so they overcome the difficulties of this period and come out stronger. Though children are resilient, families need to make children feel secure and loved, spend quality time, look out for emotional cues and talk to them about the same. Our Government, media and community need to support families so that children come out from this pandemic mentally and physically healthy and stronger.

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Online Learning in Educational Institutions: Issues, Paradoxes and Possibilities

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Abstract

This paper is a reflection on the issues, paradoxes, hopes, and challenges that have arises because of the shift to online learning during the long period of lockdown for protection against COVID-19. Even though the transition was metamorphic with a general atmosphere of appreciation about technology and hopes and optimism are high regarding the future of online learning, but, at the same time, there are still many other considerations that need to be reflected upon before any shift towards online learning is made at the state or institutional level. The paper is broadly divided into three sections: School Education, Higher Education, and Teacher Education, within which specific issues have been discussed.

Keywords: *educational technology, learning during the pandemic, online education, educational issues during COVID-19, digital divide, teacher education and the pandemic*

Introduction

The long lockdown period for protection against COVID-19 created unprecedented challenges for schools and colleges to provide education. These challenges ignited the discourse around online learning and pushed teachers into action to seek resources and equip themselves to deal with the situation, fully recognising that schools and colleges will be shut, but teaching and learning needs to continue. When seen from the lens of the students, their lives also suddenly changed in unimaginable ways. They are attending classes, submitting assignments, and being assessed online. A virtual school has been created for students with teachers creating video-lessons, using learning-management software, and working-from-home. Interestingly, these times have also changed the way children now celebrate their birthdays, have parties, and spend time with their families and friends. These changes were expected in the next decade but they are here now and not being prepared for them is what makes them seem so overwhelming.

The immediate response to school and college closure was to transit at metamorphic speed to technology-based learning. In fact, interestingly there is a general atmosphere of appreciation about technology and their high degree of optimism around the future of online learning. But at the same time, even if we keep the impact on mental health aside for the moment, stemming from the sudden change in the daily lives of students and teachers, there are still many other considerations that need to be reflected upon before any shift towards online learning is made at the state or institutional level.

In this perspective paper, an attempt has been made to reflect on some issues and possibilities concerning online learning and the principles underlying them. The idea is to generate discussion, debate and reflection on key issues and assumptions by a wider community. Many of the themes discussed in the sections that follow reflect the issues, assumptions and inherent paradoxes that merit consideration. It is pertinent to point out that they have emerged from focussed discussions with a community of peers, students, administrators, school teachers, and teacher-educators. To systematize the ideas, questions and issues which came up, the present paper is organised into three sections, each pertaining to an important domain of Education. The first section deals with School Education, the second section with Higher Education and the final section with Teacher Education. Needless to say the main objective of this paper is to bring to the fore all relevant discussion and debate to ultimately to inform institutional practices and policy-making processes.

School education

Access

Access has emerged as an important theme in the discussions with stakeholders from the rural and urban context. However, their responses and feelings are as varied as the diversity that characterises Indian society. In cities, where there are provisions of internet, electricity, and technological literacy is high, the stakeholders feel comfortable using e-resources for online learning, such as, e-books, videos, podcasts, video-conferencing platforms, and learning management software. Recognising the bleak possibility of resumption of the face-to-face teaching-learning process, the students in cities are gearing up to using these systems and being technologically-native, it is assumed that they can transition smoothly to the online mode of learning.

However, at the other extreme, we have children from the rural and low-income backgrounds who are geographically and socio-culturally separated through generations. They rarely possess a smartphone and have to make do with very slow speed of internet, at best, on which they can barely access some e-resources, largely web-pages. It would be elitist if one thinks that the students of rural India can learn through e-resources for quite some years. Where resources such as books and other material for off-line learning could still be borrowed or used and shared by different children studying in the same school, online learning demands individualized access to e-resources and availability of multiple devices. Is it possible to use one phone by two or more students along with their parents to attend classes, read texts, type assignments, and watch videos? Moreover, in a household where people live in a single room, finding a conducive space to attend online classes requires some personal physical and mental space, which is an idea that most people in the rural or semi-urban societies may not be familiar with. In addition, considering that the average monthly surplus in Indian rural households is a mere ₹1,413/- (Paliath, 2018), affording internet connections and other amenities (e.g., electricity needed to run gadgets) is nearly impossible. When it comes to educating daughters, some parents do not invest in gadgets for their girl children as they might want them to do household chores instead.

Any such hope can only be fulfilled if we can ensure that every child has access to these devices and other required resources to operate them, has been trained with their operational aspects and the basic know-how of how to use them, along with a dedicated helpline for troubleshooting. Further, to keep children safe online, parents need to be familiarized and oriented about the use and abuse of these devices as well as the internet. An easy but costly way could be a centralized designing of devices for educational purposes for the whole nation which would require a centralized database of essential e-resources. This process has to be data-driven, in which the local data of learners need to be reliably collected to ensure quality education for all. The position vis-à-vis social inequities in terms of access, outcome, and empowerment needs to be carefully chalked out with reference to equity, equality and social justice for all, particularly, persons with disabilities and marginalised communities (Basham et al. 2015). Moreover, there is a dire need to overcome the digital divide (Tewathia, Kamath, and Ilavarasan 2020). Digital divide manifests itself in various forms and aspects, such as the range of the percentage of households (rural + urban) with computer and internet facility for different States 75th NSS Survey (A-74) spans from 4.4% in Jharkhand to 34.9% in Delhi followed by 23.5% in Kerala. Households (rural+urban) with internet facility range from 10% in Odisha to 55.7% in Delhi. Apart from access to computers and the internet, the digital divide is also visible in the abilities of people to use computers and the internet. With the minimum of 8% (10.6% males & 5% females) people in Bihar to a maximum of 42.8% (47.3% males & 37.2% females) people in Delhi have the ability to use computers (NSS Survey, A-76); and 10.9% people (14.4% males & 7.3% females) in Odisha have the ability to use internet in comparison to 50.5% people (55.5% males & 44.2% females) in Delhi. Further, the number of people who actually did use the internet in the past 30 days of the survey ranged from 9.1% in Odisha to 49.1% in Delhi (NSS Survey, A-77). Apart from access and ability to use the internet, the content has to be made available in regional languages so that access of all learners may be ensured. No such data is available in reference to Persons with Disabilities. To fulfil any hope to bridge digital divide, the state must consider the following:

- *Access to devices*: Affordability of devices might not be a problem in the middle class and upper-class households, but that is not the case with people who, a lot of times, still use outdated phones with which the most people can do is call somebody.

- *Access to conditions to use devices*: Even if these households do have a smartphone, accessing to monthly/yearly internet subscriptions are simply out of the question. The area must also have network facilities, electricity, etc.

- *Access to the technical knowledge to use the devices*: Parents of first-generation learners would need a lot of support and people in whose lives technology has not become an integrated part would take time to adjust to the changing scenario.

- *Availability of good quality content in different languages*: The need for content in regional languages is not only important because people have varied abilities to understand English, but also because there are first generation learners, there is indigenous knowledge which has not been codified in English, and people may choose to learn in a language of their own choice.

- *Collection of relevant data for policy-making*: Data regarding the number of students in schools & colleges who have access to internet and technology could really help us towards a more grounded policy making process. As of now, there is no such data available to argue either for or against a shift to online classes or the extent to which online learning can be blended into offline learning processes.

Quality of interaction

In an off-line classroom, a teacher changes the ways of engagement, taking into cognisance the diverse needs of students, the socio-political context, the local needs, and demands of the stakeholders. Further, the teacher has space to address issues and challenges in learning as well as the development of the learner. It would be hoped that online learning would enable the teacher to continue to do the same.

However, such a process is not happening just because a teacher is observant, rather, it is a response of the teacher-community to every student. Teachers meet to discuss, brainstorm, reflect and consult on students' needs and the

response that school as an institution may provide (Kanuka 2011). They attempt to humanise the system rather than just doing one-on-one counselling. The emotional and intellectual support that teachers provide to each other cannot be replaced via online discussion meetings. Moreover, a lot of learning and education takes place in the corridors, large-group meetings, excursions, playground, lunch-time, celebrations of festivals, and taking part in each-others successes, trials, and tribulations.

For such a diverse range of engagement, we need to plan offline engagement between learners, teachers, and the administration. The personal-professional divide is not that clear when one engages with young children and this educative relationship is the central aspect of teaching at school-level that needs to be maintained (Emde, Doherty, & Flynt 2020). Parental intervention in the teaching-learning process also is a big issue in online classes.

Classroom ethos

Another hope that many parents have is that their children will learn at his/her own pace in an online learning environment where time would be saved as the teacher would not have to waste time in classroom management. It is also hoped that the individual learning needs of students will be met in online learning.

However, online learning systems have their own challenges, for example, if the teacher is teaching live, then the teacher cannot ensure that all students are attentive because students either turn their videos off or pretend that they cannot hear what the teacher is saying. Further, students face the same difficulty regarding the pace of the class in an online learning environment as well if the teaching is in a live mode. On the other hand, if learning is taking place via audio or video content, then the student has to wait for the teacher to respond to their queries- if they ever do.

Therefore, online learning needs specific measures to be taken for a smooth learning experience, which does not make it as low-cost as it is made to sound, for example, the person who is responding to the queries needs to be of a level equal to that of the teacher, lest the explanation is incorrect or unsatisfactory. Further, there is a need to develop a basic sense of etiquettes in an online learning environment

along with a more in-depth consideration of ethical issues involved in it (Cline 2020).

Overcoming institutional dependence

Open learning systems assume that learning may happen from various sources and in different ways; and that educational institutions are not the only source of learning. The student would have the freedom to learn from nature, by reflecting on personal experiences, from his/her elders, by reading a book, etc. Further, it would enable students who wish to help their families financially or aim to become financially independent.

However, without an institutional framework, how would one ensure whether the learning of a child is leading to education rather than indoctrination, and likewise how would one differentiate between socialization and education. Further, online learning may enable parents to limit the exposure of their children or focus it on teaching them ideas that ensure the propagation of the established norms and belief systems.

Therefore, institutions of education cannot be deemed irrelevant or peripheral since they endeavour to nurture good citizens who appreciate and live by the values enshrined in the Constitution of India. Online learning, since it is generally focused more on content, tends to lose sight of this larger aim. We need to structure online and offline learning experiences for a wider range of engagements to nurture humane and capable citizens.

Addressing students' needs

The hope from online learning is that it could benefit learners with disabilities or any other personal needs by offering courses based on their choice, pace, interest, and career plan.

However, can learning for students of all age-groups be made online? Can any online platform address the needs of students from pre-nursery to doctoral studies? Can a person without basic literacy learn via online platforms? How can we expect parents to take charge of their child's entire education based on online learning modules, without the guidance of a teacher?

The legitimacy and feasibility of online education may not be suitable for very young learners who are to be taught how to read and write. Reading and writing do not include merely decoding and encoding, respectively; rather it needs a cultural space for rich interaction with people or with print media. Thus, imparting early literacy is a challenge and to provide exposure to all components of language. Moreover, children do not require school only for learning, but in India, especially for people living Below-Poverty Line, the school is a way to monitor, support, and guide the development of children. Schemes, such as Mid-day Meal and other provisions, enable children to access education and to continue their education despite the hardships that their parents face. A shift to online learning needs to be planned while ensuring the fulfilment of the developmental needs of children. Another role that schools play in the development of learners is to civilize them by enabling them to engage with various social institutions and diverse members of society. Without a classroom, learners might have no opportunity to learn the essential social skills, life-skills, and ways of a good citizen. Schools also help learners to build their cultural capital by engaging with other learners and teachers from diverse backgrounds and with different perspectives. For a re-envisioned educational system, we need to chalk out the parents' role and the needs of first-generation learners to ensure quality education for all.

We need to reconsider education fundamentally, not just fill the gap created by the lockdown through online teaching. It need not be considered merely as an emergency measure for ensuring optimal learning experiences. Such learning experiences may be able to provide some basic information and some scope of guided analysis, however, learners' development needs much more than information because the overall cognitive, social, and emotional development of the learner is a process of social mediation that might remain absent in online classes.

Impact of and attitude towards screen-time

The hope in online learning is that students are responsible, and they know the judicious use of the internet and their electronic devices. It is also expected that there will be a redefining of the idea of education, the role of teachers and students.

However, with the increasing concern over internet-addiction, pornography, phishing, and hacking, it is important that either educational devices are secure or with restricted access.

Further, there are negative outcomes of spending too much time in front of the screen, such as strain in the eyes and headaches.

Therefore, the modalities of e-learning need a structure that would keep learners safe and do not add to their psycho-social issues. Moreover, this would require a radical shift in attitude towards school and screen-time. A child's going to school is something that is taken for granted both by parents and children. When children are not in schools, it typically means that children may not do any 'studies'. Online learning ethos would require a change in this attitude and a rethinking of the school-home dichotomy and continuity.

Assessment

With online learning, the hope is that reciprocal assessment of students' learning and teachers' teaching would maintain the quality of education. Further, the aim of online educators is to make the assessment as comprehensive as possible.

However, in schools, teachers do not assess just what the students have learnt, but the formal assessments in various aspects of school life that include diverse abilities along with the informal assessments such as pointing, suggesting, feedback, and reflections by the teachers enable the school as an institution to respond to the child's wholeness.

In order to serve the larger purpose of assessment, the online learning experience needs to be thought through as more than online lecture and discussions. It has to envision diverse kinds of learning spaces, which would most probably require supplementary off-line learning experiences as well. Further, the idea of assessment as a process of comparison, in which students cannot be trusted because they tend to use unfair means, also needs to be transformed to the idea that assessments are for gauging and reflecting on one's own learning

Parental involvement

However, a much bigger consideration is the merging of the boundaries of the home and the school. Many teachers and parents are happy with this as they see learning as a natural process that can happen anywhere anytime and if classes are also held online then they are happy that they can get involved or at least be more informed about the process.

However, there are parents who feel cheated because, in the name of home tasks and assessments, they are being shouldered with the responsibility to teach various concepts to their children or they have to take more responsibility for the child's learning than what they feel capable of. Further, there are teachers who feel unhappy about parent's interference in the teacher-student engagement.

We see this as an opportunity to reduce the divide between work and play, school and home, and teacher and parent. What we need is a re-orientation of these roles for a smooth continuity, open dialogue and collaboration between parents and teachers. Yes, for these modalities need to be outlined and both teachers and parents, but it is time that we bring learning out of the too-often rigid classroom environment to make it more natural and more social. Probably, these are the times to put our learning theories and curriculum frameworks to test because the class has already shifted to the home. It is hoped and expected that the knowledge of the home can be refined and knowledge of the school can be made more experiential.

Higher Education

Motivational factors

One of the popular selling points of online learning is the possibility that students could opt for the preferred courses rather than being taught similar things without their interest or inclination towards the course. Further, the hope is that such courses would lead them to specialize and earn advanced degrees. The assumption in this is that learners need to self- initiate and take forward the learning process.

However, this view ignores the motivational factor of a peer-group and the impact that peer-relationships have on the personality of a learner. How confidently can we say that learners in India are aware and capable of deciding their own course-combinations and are disciplined enough to go through it?

Online learning would require students to be informed, learning-oriented, and disciplined. Learners who do not have enough awareness about career choices, career-trajectories, and their own potential and capabilities would need additional support and mentoring. Hopefully, taking up these courses would help students to become independent, develop functional autonomy and discover the agency within

themselves to engage in self-study at their own convenience and pace.

Socio-political factors

The sense of hope that students hold through online learning platforms is the availability of courses from various universities at a much lower cost, as compared to going abroad to learn. These students and teachers are seen consolidating information about courses from international universities for which they are willing to pay to learn. They are hopeful about getting updated content knowledge and reduced dependence on educational institutions to make this intelligible and available to them, given that making changes to curricula and text books is a long-drawn-out process which may span efforts across several years, as has been the case in the past.

However, with the legitimacy that the online content gets because of the promotion of online learning, the paradox that might arise is that students may access sub-standard content and end up learning from sites that have inaccurate content knowledge or are ideologically biased. This is a major challenge considering the diversity of religion, caste, class, gender, region, and ideology. This fear is not much in the textbooks that are liberal in their spirit. However, if these texts become a tool for propaganda, then the teacher's autonomy, which to some extent is maintained in offline, face to face teaching, would also not be able to counter it.

What may be inferred from all the arguments above is that if the nature and quality of students' learning is the responsibility of the state through the schools that it regulates and controls, then, identification of quality e-resources also becomes their responsibility. Students or their parents cannot be left alone to try to locate good quality e-resources. Further, various educational boards & universities need to plan courses that are suited to the contextual needs of the learners rather than offering uniform courses. There is also need to re-envision the school as an institution with features like physical space, teachers, sports, activities, cultural events, and many other subtle aspects of the school.

Disciplinary considerations

A related hope is that all learners could study courses they find interesting and that there would be ample space for interdisciplinarity, trans-disciplinarity, and multidisciplinary learning. It would be learners' hope that by earning credits online, they could add them to the choice-based credit system, which has been implemented in some Indian universities following the international format of courses.

However, the concern here is whether every discipline is amenable to online learning. Does every discipline have its unique nature, which might get ignored in online learning? What about those courses that are training-oriented and skill-specific, such as B.Ed. MBBS, and B.Tech that need extensive hands-on training, or courses that require field-engagement such as Law, B.Ed., Social Work, Sociology, Psychology?

The shift to online learning cannot be complete but only partial, which would vary amongst courses, subject-streams, and disciplines. A sudden shift instigated by the COVID-19 outbreak should not put students' valuable time and efforts at risk.

Assessment

Any online certification can be considered equivalent to a regular course, only when the assessment criteria is made as stringent as a regular class. The expectation of equivalence of credits is dependent on the validity and reliability of assessment in online courses.

However, one wonders whether the range of formative and summative assessment that is done in regular classrooms be replicated in online courses? In online courses, formative assessment becomes laborious and almost impossible as the student enrolment increases. Further, can such an assessment gauge the development of critical thinking and higher-order thinking skills?

Online learning systems need to be integrated with assessment tools based on programmed instructions, peer-feedback, and self-reflection. Other modes of assessment such as on-demand examination and no 2n-traditional ways, such as open-book examinations, paper-writing, and long-essays may be used along with course-requirements such as publication of a research paper in a reputed journal or peer-reviewed by two professors. Another option is to make courses partly online so that learners and teachers have the freedom to assess and include papers as per the need of the course. All assessments must be inclusive and fair to individual and social differences of learners.

Attitude towards online certification

An expectation of students learning online is that the educational institution should consider their course at par with the usual classroom-based course. They hope that their credits be added to their certification and that this certification is considered valid across institutions.

This may not be much of an issue with courses for professional development, however, for school and college-going learners it is important. Not getting acknowledgement or equivalence of a course may defeat the purpose of pursuing online studies.

For a seamless integration of online and off-line studies, the option of credit-transfer is important. Various agencies, such as schools, educational boards, and universities have to join hands to evolve norms for credit transfer and equivalence under schemes such as CBCS, LOCF, or grade-based system.

Teacher Education

Hopes

Many principals and school administrators, such as Wattal (2020), Wal (2020), and Choudhary (2020) have shared their felt needs and hopes of a cadre of teachers who are digitally aware, resilient, with a shared sense of purpose, and a reinvigorated enthusiasm for teaching and learning. They highlight that all stakeholders require an attitudinal change in their understanding of teaching as 'information-providing' to 'learning of skills to learn on one's own'. They envision building a sense of academic freedom which is matched by the teacher's role of being a facilitator.

Drawing from Peters (1964), we may call this education as an initiation into "worthwhile activities and modes of conduct" (p.69) where students understand the relative importance of activities through the teacher. This conception of education places a lot of importance on the teacher's ability to communicate a sense of the quality of one's own life to students, but it also demands a lot from students in terms of deciding for themselves the worth of various learnings, actions, and things. To these principles the 21st-century skills: "critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity,

social skills, seem all the more relevant" (Stauffer 2020).

Issues

However, the issues are not just about the modalities of scheduling online classes at a time suitable to all students and teachers, or how can one ensure that a teacher does not feel burdened, there are deeper concerns other than the modalities of teaching: "Can we go on teaching the same syllabus in the same fashion at a time when the world no longer remains the same?" (Pathak, 2020). Should our education be anthropocentric anymore? Can our notions of development and progress remain the same? Should the prevalent processes of schooling educate our children for the future? Should a teacher's role be that of a deliverer or instructor anymore? Should our schooling experiences remain to be focused on remembering facts and creating a workforce? And the like. Each of these is a debate if not a paradox which is pressing in its own way. It makes for a formidable cumulative for which sustainable solutions and strategies will have to be worked out, recognising changing times.

Considerations and Reconciliations

With respect to the issues spelt out above, not only will the prevalent ideas of modernity need to change, as highlighted by Pathak (2020), but our notions of being human, notion of society, relationships, and vision of civilisation will also have to change. We need to reconsider education in its fundamental contours and not just fill the gap created by the pandemic through online teaching. If education is perceived as a matter of experience and not just as an act of passing of information, then we need to plan our experiences closer to reality and more relevant to students' lives.

With this intent, we need to reconsider what is worth teaching and what is worth learning for students, because what is worth teaching largely remains a political affair, which ignores the emotional, the spiritual, and the personal. We need to make learning personally relevant without losing sight of the social. Our learners need to be prepared to face any new challenge positively, such as the present one. We should probably consider narrow-mindedness, bigotry, apathy, and violence as indicators of the shortcomings of our educational system and it is an opportune moment to critically relook at it.

As teachers and teacher-educators, we must position ourselves in a much more grounded way and not limit our deliberations to the processes of schooling, but also focus on the various factors that impact the educational system.

Any such re-envisioning has to be comprehensive so that we become more humane rather than merely thinking of being prepared to face any such scenario in future. This is an 'event', a moment in history that has given us the opportunity to decide our future direction collectively, rather than merely waiting for the tsunami to pass so that we can go back to our usual lives. Either we may consider the present scenario as a break from the routine or as proof of the breaking down of our collective understanding of human life and a humane society.

Concluding remarks

COVID-19 has forced us to reconsider not just the importance of technology and sustainability, but, probably, these are the times when collectively we need to reflect on not just the systems and processes, but also the overall vision and direction of education. It is hoped that the discussion presented above would enable administrators, policy-makers, and educational consultants to structure the educational system in a comprehensive, inclusive, and just way. The constitutional values of freedom, equality, liberty, justice, secularism, and fraternity need to be our benchmarks and one must not forget that a system has to be made inclusive in its fundamental design, otherwise, it would be violent towards certain people without intending to be so. These reflections are intended to integrate social sensitivity and responsibility with the bureaucratic rationality of a system so that education can become humane and humanizing.

A learner in higher education is an adult who has a distinct identity, psychologically, socially, and politically. However, it is unfair to expect that one fine day our children will suddenly transform into adults. Growing-up and becoming a responsible adult is a gradual process and before we expect our young adults to begin making right decisions, we have to provide space for some wrong ones along with support and guidance for them to become better at fulfilling their responsibilities towards others and towards themselves. Therefore, as parents, teachers, and administrators, we need to build in our educational institutions this increased flexibility and scope for their independent decisions.

Taking the position that we need to find a new direction, there has to be a re-imagination of the idea of education and schooling towards the direction pointed out by Ambedkar's socialism in reference to the role of the State, Tagore's creative and humane living in reference to our notions of work and earning, Gandhi's Swaraj in promoting us to becoming independent and more democratic in our use of technology. We can also draw from Krishnamurti's dialogue particularly in the context of the teacher-student relationship and from Phule's idea of mass-education for the empowerment of all. These are the times, when we have both the need as well as the opportunity to move out of the shadows of the colonial techne and move towards a pedagogy of heart (c.f. Freire) and realisation of what Vivekananda would call a civilisational consciousness of India.

The mere pragmatic concerns that have led us to an unjust, inequitable and hierarchical social order needs to give space to a more humane, considerate, and cooperative ethos that can lead us to actualise our own potential and live a life of dignity and fulfilment. This is not just a matter of having happiness classes or employing mental health professionals to cater to the lifestyle issues that our present way of thinking has created. We are at a juncture, where we can rectify many of our mistakes and wrong turns. However, for this, we require a serious rethinking and exhaustive deliberations, which are also something that we usually avoid.

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Teacher Wellbeing During COVID-19 School Closures

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the government across the globe to close down the school to control the spread of the virus. This led to shifting of the teaching-learning process in an online mode. The transition from face to face to online mode was new to all– teachers and students alike. Most of the teachers were new to using technology in such an extensive manner and also working from home. Managing work life balance when working from home was also unprecedented. Amidst these changing circumstances, teachers may have found themselves in situations where there might have been an emotional toll of isolation due to the social distancing norms and uncertainty about health. Teachers would have reacted differently to these circumstances. This reaction to the individual and collective physical, environmental, and social events that shape how educators respond to their students and colleagues is termed as teachers wellbeing (Graham, A., & Truscott, J. 2019). The present research has been carried on a sample of 94 teachers working in schools at different levels and attempted to assess their wellbeing during this COVID-19 phase through a specifically designed tool.

Keywords: *teachers, wellbeing, COVID-19*

Introduction

The onset of pandemic has brought changes in lives of people across all age-groups, different professions crossing the boundaries of the cities, states and nations. The world is witnessing one of those situations which has rampantly affected all of us in different manners. The schools have been physically shut since March in most parts of India but the learning has not stopped. The current pandemic has changed our ways of teaching and learning like never before. The teaching-learning shifted from face-to-face mode to remote/ online mode. These educational disruptions have brought a change to the way schools operate. Schools cannot be just accorded as the learning centres for children, but they hold an important place in the economy. Schools are indeed complex institutions where many people come together to achieve outcomes of education, not just limited to learning. Teachers play a very important and influential role in the teaching-learning process and in ensuring the wellbeing of children. The current situation has reinforced the belief in the teacher's role in supporting students' learning and wellbeing. Teachers are well equipped and experienced to adapt to new and sometimes uncertain situations and events. However, the demands of the pandemic have raised complex and unexpected challenges to the teachers in terms of adaptability to navigate the demands of their professional life. This is because of unexplored drastic changes in the teaching-learning process coupled with the multi-tasking that they have to do so as to adjust to their personal and professional life on the same plane. In our country, the teaching profession is largely dominated by females, especially in schools and the household work is also generally their responsibility. Further, teachers are supporting their students, while managing their own physical health, stress, anxiety, and supporting their family's needs.

The discussion above clearly accentuates the need of ensuring wellbeing of teachers during this phase. The researcher made a modest attempt to understand the wellbeing of teachers during the school closures owing to pandemic.

Methodology

The prevailing conditions allowed only electronic reach to the teachers. The wellbeing of teachers was assessed through specifically designed questionnaires consisting of both open–ended and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was administered using a google form on the sample. The sample was identified through snow-ball technique and the link was shared with the teachers using WhatsApp or email. A total of 94 teachers had filled in the tool.

Since the objective of the study was to understand the status of wellbeing of teachers,

data collected was analysed using statistical analysis.

Results and findings

The main findings of the study have been encapsulated under the following headings for better comprehensibility of the readers.

- *Demographic profile of the sample* – Teachers in the study were in the age range of 22-55 years with an average of 33.07 years. The range shows that teachers were distributed across the different age pattern of lifespan. A majority (84%) of the teachers were female while only 16% were male, which clearly indicates that that school teaching is seemingly dominated by females. Teachers were teaching multiple classes (primary and secondary both, or secondary and senior secondary both) – however, a larger percentage of 46.8% was teaching primary classes. 89.4% primarily taught in schools but there were others who were teaching in coaching centres or taking private tuitions. From those who were working in schools– 88.3% worked in private schools and rest in government schools. 55.3% teachers have been engaged in teaching for more than 5 years. There were teachers from different streams– language, science, commerce, mathematics, commerce, and art & craft among others. The variety in age, subjects taught, and classes taught would cover a larger population.

- *Online teaching-learning during COVID-19 school closures*– 97.9% teachers had adapted to online teaching during the school closures imposed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Out of these only 12.8% had done some form of online teaching before the current times. These numbers indicate the quick navigation of the teachers to the new mode of teaching-learning. However, teachers did mention they had felt changes in their relations with the students such as the loss of emotional connect and bonding with students because of lack of physical contact. There were few who mentioned there was no change in their relationship with their students but largely teachers expressed this concern.

- *Adaptability to online teaching-learning process* – When teachers were asked about adaptation to online teaching-learning, teachers had mixed responses as clear from the following graph.
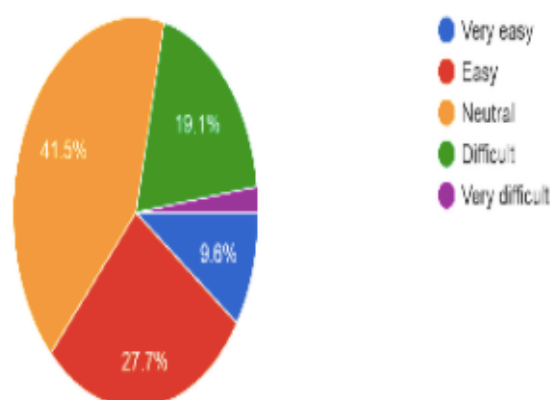

This adaptability needs to be seen in light of the fact that whether they got any kind of training for the same or not. 45.7% mentioned that they were not given any kind of training for the same. On the other hand, 33% said that they got some training and there was another 24.5% who acknowledged that they got infrastructural support also from the school. There were others who mentioned that need based training was given or they learnt on their own form YouTube videos. Further 47.9% highlighted that they did not feel any kind of fear in adapting to new technologies while a significant 30.9% accepted that they were afraid of adapting to new technologies. These numbers are still encouraging that teachers had well adapted to the new technologies and that too within a short span of time and without much dedicated / guided training.

- *Workload changes* – When asked to mark on a linear scale of 1 to 5 (one being lowest), about the workload changes during the phase, 36.2% teachers marked 5 and the average of the responses was 3.96 which indicates that teachers felt a considerable increase in their workload in adapting to the changed mode of teaching-learning process. Further, teachers with school-age children reported having to juggle with school teaching and home schooling their own children, as well as other regular household routines (Beng et. al., 2020)

- *Work-life balance*– 44.7% teachers expressed that they are struggling in managing their home with work life because generally there is no external house help available. Further 76.6% teachers mentioned that they have family support in managing work-life balance. This is an encouraging sign in our generally stereotype role bound society whereby the household work is assumed to be the responsibility of the lady of the house.

Majority (55.3%) of teachers asserted that this work-life (im)balance was not affecting their ability to teach, but a significant 28.7% do mentioned that it is affecting. So, this number was feeling the pressure.

- ***Emotions felt*** – Teachers are feeling a mixed bag of emotions during the day from tired, stressed, bored, exhausted, depressed, anxious to positive, satisfied, learning new things. Teachers felt that this cannot go on for long and going to school and teaching there is easier because it rewards you with more satisfaction, interaction with students and colleagues and you have friends in colleagues. There were many who felt that there is no end to working from home and want to return to schools soon.
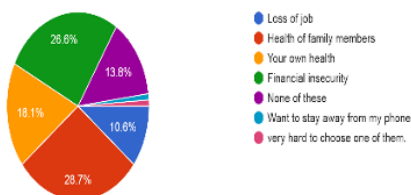
- A significant 28.7 % were worried about the health of family members, 26.6% were worried about financial security and there were several participants who gave more than one reason for their worries. Financial insecurity or worries is very natural because a large majority of 75.5% had experienced pay cuts in their salaries.

- ***Emotional support from school*** – When asked about if they were getting any kind of emotional support from the school- an equal number 46.8% were affirmative and another 46.8% said no support from the school.

- ***Symptoms experienced*** – When teachers were asked to mark on what they experience from a list of options, their answers have been tabulated in the following graph. This very well indicates that they are experiencing a large number of negative symptoms like-

40.4% mentioned that they experience physical symptoms such as headaches etc. Then there were others who are having feelings of inadequacy and withdrawal from friends among others.
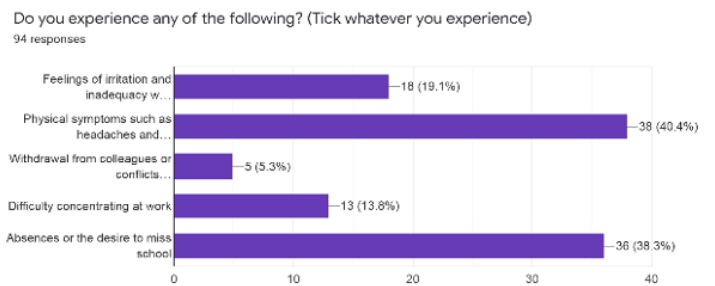
Conclusion

Juggling a teaching job and role of primary caregiver in the family is a challenging task for most of our teachers. This is in light of the fact that women disproportionately dominate teaching profession, especially at school levels. They are supposed to take care of the learning and wellbeing of their students and care for the educational and health needs of their children also along with other household responsibilities. This can be quite a daunting task and may affect the health (both physical and mental), and general well- being of the teachers. It is important for the concerned to realise the importance of the health and wellbeing of the teachers and take appropriate steps accordingly. There is no doubt to the fact that the academic success of the students is also affected by the mental health and wellbeing of the teachers. So, this makes it more imperative to take appropriate steps to care for the teachers. There have been some promising steps in this direction, like a school in the city of Faridabad has arranged for yoga classes for their teachers in evening through video conferencing mode. Such steps are welcoming and give ideas to others also to provide for such arrangements for their teachers to share their concerns and have a vent out of the daily routine life of teachers during this phase of home bound, physical distancing and very limited outdoor experiences for most of the teachers.

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Care and the COVID-19 Challenge: The Missing Link in the Fulfilment of Educational Needs of Children and Young Persons Living in Alternative Care

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Abstract

In a developing country like India, inaccessibility of education to vulnerable children and youth has been quite prevalent, and often unheard and un-prioritized. The basic education often falls short of quality education required for an independent living and due to pandemic, the right to education has been further compromised and learning has been reduced substantially. The paper highlights the existing gaps in the rights to education of children in vulnerable groups, challenges faced by them with respect to mental health issues, emotional distress, and trauma which consequently impacted their academic performance. It highlights the importance of addressing and gearing the overall child protection system along with the education system of India thereby providing recommendations and highlighting the importance of training and sensitizing teachers and carer staff in schools in handling of such children, widening the understanding of childhood trauma, and developing a clear policy to provide guidance about safeguarding children at large, in particular children coming from institutions.

Keywords: *education, child care institutions, child protection, child rights, child wellbeing*

Introduction

Amongst the various measures to combat the pandemic, with no historical model, has been the closure of schools worldwide, leading to the right to education being hugely compromised and learning being reduced substantially as a result affecting several million children across the globe. We can barely summarize the loss in terms of human capital and development, but we have to accept the current evolving measures for obvious reasons. While school closures are being used as a mitigation tool to help curb the spread of the pandemic, it has also widened the h gap which already exists in the system that fails to address the basic educational rights of vulnerable children within families as well as of children living in child-care institutions and without parental care. Distant learning programmes and online training quickly evolved to make up for the loss, but unfortunately, these are available only to a small section of children across the world. "At least 463 million students around the globe remain cut off from education, mainly due to a lack of remote learning policies or lack of equipment needed for learning at home during this pandemic" (UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures).

Amidst a lot of misgivings around school closures, along with a plethora of quick changes being adopted by several actors to ensure that learning is not completely lost; the educational rights of marginalised children as well as children living in child-care institutions yet remain overlooked. And children living in informal settlements like alternative care spaces and refugee camps suffer the most as they have limited infrastructure, limited number of devices, lack of staff, lack of knowledge about handling the electronic gadgets and hardly any access to internet (Breu & Stephan, 2020). India's education system's preparedness to deal with such unprecedented pandemic was already low, and hence, the gulf of learning inequalities has become wider during this pandemic.

Children in alternative care and COVID-19

For millions of children, vulnerable within families, and those without parental care and living in alternative care settings, majorly residential care, compromising their basic and fundamental right to education has been a common reality, often unheard and un-prioritized, even before the pandemic. Even before the crisis, there were several challenges in implementing the right to education, pandemic has only exacerbated the situation.

The Constitution of India, various legislative and policy measures such as the Juvenile Justice laws, coupled with international prescriptions like the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which India ratified in 1992, together, strongly mandate the clear obligation on governments to protect and promote the rights of children and ensure right to family and education for all children. Due to the lack of evolved family strengthening measures, parenting trainings, and community initiatives, children from poverty-stricken backgrounds are falling from the safety net of families, and protection measures are implemented of an alternative care system, where children without parental care could get their rights to life, development, growth and education served. Child Care Institutions, in the want of other family based and community-based mechanisms, like foster care and kinship care, thus find prominence, in the Indian care system, despite the clear mandate of children should not be separated from the families

Children, separated from their families, due to myriad reasons, being sent to residential care, have already faced several challenges such as experiencing early trauma, betrayal of trust and loss of family attachment as well as disrupted education. Once in the child care institutions, also, due to various reasons, many of them do not find stability and constant transfers from one institution to another, disrupting education, making formal education quite incomprehensible to them. In fact, a study done in 2008, found that frequent mobility amongst children in residential care is one of the highest contributing factors that may lead to poorer education and learning outcomes (Trout et al., 2008). Accordingly, another study that further explored the perspectives of youth formerly in institutional care revealed that these children as adults often felt that it could have been beneficial if they were presented with an opportunity beforehand to properly prepare with a structured transition, in the event of changing schools (Clemens et al., 2017).

Other contributing factors may also prevail as they come to an institution at a stage where they have lost early years of learning and getting them admitted to schools in their age-appropriate classes poses a challenge for the caregivers, as to how to accelerate their learnings to make up for the lost years; additional problems are posed as

they do not have legal identity documents and schools often refuse to admit them under the economically weaker section quota or give them provincial admission when they lack identity evidence. Several studies have indicated that the need for a safe and stable school environment is the most important component to consider in order to facilitate learning among the children and youth in care (Schroeter et al., 2015; Rutman & Hubberstey, 2018).

Often the baggage of trauma that children come with to an institution is not addressed for a variety of reasons, like having lack of material and human resources available to the child care institution, and they find it difficult to focus on their studies; and resultantly, they often lose interest in academics and many become drop outs. A research study that aimed to assess the educational successes among the children and youth in care, reported that more than half of the children in care were being negatively impacted by mental health issues, emotional distress, and trauma which were also consequently associated with their academic performances (Rutman & Hubberstey, 2018). Further research also reiterates that in the long run, poor academic performance often leads to negative long-term outcomes, such as unemployment or low wages, making it difficult for young people to earn a decent livelihood (Torrico, 2010). In a study conducted by Udayan Care in 2019, it was found that 40% of the care leavers could not complete their schooling and 24 care leavers across the five states of India had not studied beyond primary education. It also found that children and youth in care faced issues of accessibility along with the quality of education which was accessible to them and this education was further impacted during the transition to aftercare as 34% of the care leavers had to discontinue education (Beyond 18, 2019).

The adverse impact of COVID-19 on the already existing vulnerabilities of such children can only be imagined. Several studies have reportedly shown that this period is likely to be the most vulnerable time of their lives, given their early exposure to trauma and their life history (Mann-Feder, 2019). Lanker & Parolin stated the negative impact of non-school factors as a cause of inequalities in education and social crisis concerns emerging due to a combination of child poverty and school closures. The learning gap between children from high and low socio-

economic backgrounds has widened due to the focus on digital education. There has been a digital divide as though some children would have access to online learning facilities; a majority of children living in residential care facilities have no access to phone, or computer (Fore, 2020).

A non-COVID related issue that really needs to be addressed is that the overall child protection system as well as the education system in India is not geared towards child protection issues and preventing the vulnerabilities of children without parental care. There is large scale ignorance in teachers, who are the biggest influencers in the early years of a child's life. The biggest missing link in the education system is that the teachers are not trained to develop their understanding and sensitivity to child protection issues. Often unaware of the trauma and adverse childhood experiences that may accompany children, comments or remarks are made that can hurt the sentiments of children. This is largely due to the lack of training to teaching and carer staff in schools in sensitive handling of such children, wider understanding of childhood trauma, what constitutes their wellbeing and a clear policy to provide guidance about safeguarding children at large, in particular children coming from institutions.

'Wellbeing' of children in the broader connotation includes physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing, protection from abuse and neglect in domestic, family and social relationships, at educational institutions and recreational spaces. It also includes happiness, comfort and security as an all-encompassing requisite. Schools and teachers can play a very crucial role in the preventive phase of child protection. Children spend over 6-7 hours (nearly 50%) of their waking hours in schools. Due to their central position within the community, with parents and staff of child care institutions, schools provide opportunities for their teachers to observe children's interactions with their own families, and with care staff and peer interaction at child care institutions, at least five-six days a week. School teachers are thus in a position to observe children closely and notice the presence of neglect and other child rights violations, at different levels. School staff, for instance, do notice shabby attire, dirt and grime on a child's body, lice in their hair, able to 'see' hunger or distress on a child's face, even bruises

and scars. When they see a child significantly withdrawn, isolated or crying, displaying unhappiness or anger, unable to concentrate on academics they can easily perceive these visible emotions to causes such anger, tiredness, hunger, lack of nutrition, above all, lack of care. Teachers actually can perceive if there is something the matter even if there is no physical evidence, as these are potential pointers that a child is living with emotional neglect and maybe a victim of physical, emotional or even sexual violence. In the case of school dropouts and long absence from school, concerns about possible trafficking, early marriage, pledged for employment, runaway etc. also come to the fore.

If teachers are sensitised and made aware of the different indicators of neglect, trained in the importance of early prevention strategy and intervention for such children, and if they are given tools to work with, they can help in strengthening the family and ensuring that childhood days are empowering for each child they come in contact with. It will work in both ways, the child within the family will be better taken care of and will not succumb to child rights violations and ultimate separation from the family and landing up in alternative care settings like a child care institution. There is enough evidence to show that intervention and information of neglect, abuse and other violations against children at the early stages can go a long way in mitigating the risk of separation of children from their families. Working with the children and their immediate families to ensure that children remain close to their community roots is the essence of child protection. Preventing the separation of child from family is the first step in gatekeeping and schools and teachers can play a critical role here by aiding the prevention of children landing in institutions. Teachers and other school staff are thus in an optimal position to prevent, identify, and assist victims of child abuse and neglect because of their frequent contact with students. Taking students in difficult situations into confidence and helping them with a plan can be difficult, but students are known to be receptive despite their struggles and have the ability to empower themselves and get genuine relief once the plan is in place.

This opportunity to identify families on the verge of separation, or children coming from

institutions in an abusive situation, which the teachers could easily fathom, got restricted due to COVID-19 crisis. Lockdowns tragically have provided an opportunity to some extent for child abusers to harm/abuse children as children are rarely in a position to report any of such acts as due to the changed circumstances as they do no longer have the same access to teachers to report incidents at home. All these effects can often cause children to drop out of school in general and be more exposed to risks like child labour. Still the teachers can, while conducting online, WhatsApp classes, be more vigilant about child absenteeism or other indicators of abuse, or abandonment, and inform the authorities to take the necessary steps in time. The successful and prompt recognition of child abuse and neglect is largely dependent upon the interest of the teaching staff, schools logically and practically should thus become the first line of intervention for prevention and protection of children whose rights are violated, and these additional responsibilities need to be trained and supported. Making 'child protection' and promotion of 'child rights' a shared responsibility of the school system and the child protection system is yet to gain priority. Barriers to effective interdisciplinary practice include poor inter-departmental communication, information sharing and difficult inter-professional relationships, heavy teaching loads and focus on

attainment of targets, rather than 'lack of interest' in safeguarding concerns. This gap in services on prevention provokes a need for an important legislative transition and new policy articulation. To reduce the consequences of the violations of children's right to education in every sector, priority should be given to implement ways to uphold schooling programmes which can provide an equal access along with secure case management for children who require supplementary personalized care, including those living in alternative care spaces and children with disabilities.

Promotion of investments in digital learning platforms along with access to internets should be prioritized, even after the pandemic, but more effort is needed to link education with child protection measures. We have an opportunity out of this pandemic to reimagine education and link it to child protection, so that children are served adequately in families, gain meaningful education, care and support from their teachers, and do not get separated from their families, and those in institutions, also get additional support from the teachers in developing better protection and restoration pathways for children. This would require actions and investments of both the private and the public sector together.

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Experiences of Teachers in Online Classes during COVID

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Abstract

Overnight everything changed for us. Teachers had to move from traditional means to online mode with use of technology to an extent that was never done before. From seeing the bright faces in the class every day to now just initials like BK, AJ appearing on the screen. A challenge was thrown open to teachers. How to conduct classes online? Teachers learnt to use technology and they had to adapt to the change overnight. Zoom, Microsoft teams, Google meet various platforms were being tried and used during this period. Teachers responded well. The paper shares the case vignettes of online teaching experiences of teachers teaching different subjects. The challenges faced by teachers, how they overcame them and the means they adopted to make their classes exciting have been discussed in the paper.

Keywords: *online teaching, teachers' experiences, virtual tours, virtual labs, technology*

Introduction

Amidst these times of global pandemic and rising apprehensions, teachers continue with the efforts of imparting knowledge and holistic learning. The sudden shift from face-to-face teaching, greeting and meeting all students and peers, daily routine of hustle bustle came to a halt one morning. The scenario changed to distant learning mode for the students. Nonetheless, the mentors decided to gear up and continue with the new medium of virtual classroom teaching. With the new apps being downloaded, they adapted themselves to this new way of interaction with students and the efforts put for this transition were commendable.

Teaching in the new-normal

Mupinga (2005) in his concluding remarks saw the virtual school market expanding due to shortage of teachers, overcrowding facilities and geographical and monetary barriers. Today, schools had to go virtual due to none of the above reasons, but a virus. The debate on use of technology and online mode of education in the school system has been on since more than two decades. Educational policies of nations across the globe have been strongly recommending use of ICT in curriculum and for teaching. Fabry and Higgs (1997), suggested that, "teachers must make two radical changes—they must learn how to use technology and they must fundamentally change how they teach."

COVID-19 did not give time for teachers to learn how to use technology and how to change their methodology. Overnight, teachers were expected to hold online classes, learn the use of technology as well as use methodologies best suited for online teaching. Teachers struggled from zoom to Microsoft teams to google meet, schools tried various platforms and after a month or two settled with one of the many platforms available. There were issues related to students' behaviour and teachers did not seem to be in control of the class. The young generation is definitely more tech savvy than some decade old teachers. There were reports of students muting the teacher, removing other students from the meeting, writing on the whiteboard when the teacher was explaining and presenting their own screen. Also, there were others who were not part of the class but were able to join the meeting, thus making it an issue of cyber security. Each platform also quickly started updating depending on the needs of the school. Now, things seemingly were improving with time. Soon teachers learnt new techniques to again be in charge of the class. Teachers were able to control who enters their class, who presents and now the technological control was with the teachers. The classes were becoming smooth with teachers learning and adapting to the *new normal.*

There have been reports of problems faced by teachers during online teaching. Teachers were required to put in double the efforts in their work as a lot of preparation was required to conduct classes. PowerPoint presentations were required, searching for videos or making own videos for

each and every topic was required. Teachers were stressed out with the increased workload. Mathematics and Science teachers found it difficult to explain concepts and solve problems online. They tried many methods like solving questions beforehand and took screenshots which were explained stepwise during the online class. Many Mathematics teachers came back to chalk and board methods. They after experimenting with a number of ways started using whiteboards and their phone or laptop camera to present the content. Much like the classroom earlier on, with one major difference- students were virtually present. Science teachers faced problems with practical sessions. Experiments were difficult to conduct. Every subject teacher had their set of problems.

A Mathematics teacher shared his story, "When suddenly the classes went online, as a Maths teacher I was in a messed-up situation. We were to use zoom. I scheduled my classes and was all set to take up the challenge. I started with holding my phone in one hand and with another wrote on a sheet of paper. It was very tiring and ineffective as my hand that held the phone (camera) was not stable. I tried to search on the internet for solutions and spoke to my colleagues. Some suggested use of PowerPoint and videos so I resorted to that. But even after all my efforts, my students were not satisfied as due to connectivity issues the videos were suspended, I was unable to share audio of the videos and to add to my troubles was the 'screen share' using which students played inappropriate videos. I had to suddenly call off the class (meeting). Many other teachers faced similar problems so we had an extensive training on security features and how to control the meeting. These training were conducted every evening and we had classes in the morning. Learning new security features helped me control the class. I was now the host and was able to control the class. Then our school planned to shift to Microsoft Teams. Again, we had training and shifted to teams. Now, I was able to organize meetings with settings to control my class. Even on teams I continued to share my screen and discuss the solution of questions stepwise. I was not satisfied. Then I started using a whiteboard and moved to the conventional method. The teaching is not satisfying. I am not able to connect with my students."

Study of 13 teachers from four online schools in Alberta, Canada by Muirhead (2000) showed that online teachers have experienced increased workloads. All teachers who were interviewed talked about increased workload. They were concerned about inability to connect well with students. Teachers were unable to identify who all had understood the concept and who needed help. Students had connectivity issues and sometimes also made excuses when asked a question, that they were unable to see, hear or unmute themselves. To add to all the troubles was conducting exams online. Many platforms had been tried and every platform had some advantages and some disadvantages. What further created trouble for the teachers was frequent change in use of technology. Initially, all subjective papers were being mailed or sent by WhatsApp to teachers, now the 'turn in' option in Teams was being used where all papers were available together at one place. Correcting these papers was very difficult as checking on screen increased screen time.

Yes, there have been numerous difficulties faced by teachers as well as students during online classes. These have been talked about much at various platforms. Stress and mental health issues have risen due to lack of interaction. Students are disinterested, report difficulty in understanding, face network issues and do not feel connected with their peers and teachers. Do we have any positives from these online classes?

The teachers who dreaded the use of computers and were more comfortable with hand-written work than using Excel or PowerPoint initially thought they would not be able to cope with this sudden change. According to Hargreaves (1992) and Jones (2004), teachers' readiness is the key to success of online programs. If teachers were skeptical about use of technology, they would be reluctant towards online teaching. In the present situation, forced teachers to resort to use of technology in absence of any other solution. Now they found online mode easy and useful, thanks to the pandemic. One teacher shared her story, she narrated- She used to shy away from use of technology and always took help of her children or husband for such work. When the pandemic forced schools to close, she had to resort to online teaching mode. She learnt how to use the online teaching platform, when there was no other choice left. She quoted, "I love to be with children, online classes have taken away

that wonderful experience of being one of them. Still, technology has helped us be in touch. The classes are going on regularly, curriculum is being followed and when the students and I feel like talking, we just turn on our cameras and chat our hearts out."

Despite similar concerns, Social Science teachers mentioned use of PowerPoints and videos helped making connections and presentation of the content easier. The ease to use videos and quick short research was cited as an interesting aspect of online teaching. With improvement in technology and features provided by platforms like zoom, meet and teams, it became convenient for teachers to use videos as a resource. Virtual tours to different places, galleries and museums gave students a chance to explore. This had been possible with the new technology, during this new normal situation.

When we talk of Science, we think of many hands-on activities and experiments. The apprehension of not being able to conduct practicals made science teachers think out of the box and use material available at home to conduct experiments. Extraction of DNA, Tyndall effect, chromatography using newspaper, to mention a few, were done at home by students. Science teachers also explored OLabs and other virtual labs and conducted online lab classes. Students performed experiments, noted down observations and drew inferences. Like a normal lab session, only without physically touching the material and apparatus, everything was done virtually. The simulations available online on platforms like PhET. These simulations took the students to the molecular level to explain behaviour of particles. The simulations on gas laws where students could change values of pressure, temperature and volume to study the relationship between these variables for gases and many such simulations scaffold student understanding. These experiments were not possible in labs but the simulators are a helpful tool.

DiPietro et al. (2008,16–27) identified teachers' actions to make online classes effective. These included experimenting with new technologies and improving their technological skills, motivating students online and connecting with them through various modes. Teachers in this new normal have adopted all these means.

Schools have adapted well to the current situation. Teachers have shown remarkable resilience. When the lockdown was announced in India, the new session was to start. Teachers were allotted a new set of classes. It takes time to bond with students in a normal classroom, but teachers have wonderfully bonded to the new set of students whom they have never met in person. Teachers are not just conducting classes, inter school and intra school competitions, prize distribution ceremonies, student council formation, assemblies, special assemblies, PTM (Parent Teachers' Meeting), unit tests, terminal examination, practical classes, report cards distribution, everything that forms a part of the normal school calendar is happening! VIRTUALLY ....

There are many takeaways. Shifting to online mode has made it possible, for schools, to break boundaries. Participants or guests can be present in events from anywhere on earth. Technology has made inter school events go beyond small regions, online a student from a school in Kerala or Assam can participate in quiz, debate or any other competition being held by a school in Delhi. Travel is not required; you just need good connectivity. We have become a global society in a true sense. Teachers have adapted and adopted technology. Though online assessment has its drawbacks, a quick assessment of the topic taught is possible with Google forms and you get immediate responses and analysis of data. Teachers can immediately after teaching the topic, post a few questions and get feedback. In case previous understanding is to be tested, a few questions will help teachers identify grey areas of class as a whole and individual student with a click of a button.

Conclusion

There is an innovation involved in teaching, which has peaked during the pandemic. All activities, clubs, competitions and webinars are planned and administered virtually, with efficacy. Finally, a new mode has been set in, that is dependent on just a click of the button. The satisfaction and optimism that teachers can keep the children engaged and engrossed despite a no in -person interaction, gives great contentment. But school is being missed.

Noisy corridors, chitter-chatter in the classroom, challenging each other in the playground and the school is being missed by students as well as

teachers. Emotional bonding between peers and teachers is missing. Transaction of curriculum virtually is not completely possible. It misses the human touch. However, once we are back to physical school, the advantages of the virtual world should not be forgotten. A blended program, classroom transactions and online mode, will facilitate learning. Teaching–the learning process will not be the same post COVID. Teachers will use the technology they learnt and used during COVID times to improvise their teaching methodologies.

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Emotional Wellbeing of Children, Adolescents, Parents, Teachers in the Era of COVID-19

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Abstract

The current outbreak of COVID-19 has a profound impact on psychological wellbeing of children, adolescents, parents and teachers. The closure of schools and the social distancing have prevented the children from interacting with their peers and limited their access to learning. This has become the main reason for children and teens to feel anxiety, stress, grief, aggression. At the same time, the higher levels of income loss due to lock down have affected mental wellbeing of adults in a negative way. However, staying positive, calm and with a daily regular routine of life help to combat the harsh difficulties of life.

Keywords: *emotional wellbeing, COVID-19, children, adolescents, parents, teachers*

Introduction

Dr. Marisa Navarro rightly says in her book "La Medicina Emocional" (Emotional Medicine)

"No one is safe from suffering this emotional state. It is a very serious problem that can result in constant states of anger, sadness, worry and even anxiety or depression".

"Emotional wellbeing is indicated by the emotional quality of an individual's daily experiences like of joy, fascination, anxiety, sadness, anger, and affection that make one's life pleasant or unpleasant". (Daniel Kahneman& Angus Deaton,2010) According to Garry R. Lee and Masako Ishii Kuntz, emotional wellbeing is referred to a state of mind having inclusive feelings of happiness, contentment and satisfaction with the conditions of one's life. The concept is usually used interchangeably with terms like morale and life satisfaction. (Lee R.G & Kuntz I.M.,1987) Characteristic mood and self-esteem are often taken as two important aspects of individuals' emotional wellbeing. The affective evaluation of the self is considered as the component of self -esteem. It is seen that people who are able to understand and regulate their emotions experience better emotional health. (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, Hollander,2002)

"The COVID-19 pandemic and the policy measures to control its spread– lockdowns, physical distancing, and social isolation – has coincided with the deterioration of people's mental wellbeing." (Bertuol, T.M., Cheng,Z., Mendolia,S., Paloyo, R.A. and Savage,D.,2020).

To help slow the spread of the virus and prevent overloading the health care system, many schools moved children to online learning from home and at the same time many working parents were asked to work from home. But the real challenge lies in front of families as they have to take care of children while working and schooling at home without panic during this period.

If we want our children to feel safe, keep healthy routines, manage their behaviour and build resilience, then we have to keep a sense of calm. Though it is very difficult to show empathy and patience while staying calm during this unprecedented pandemic time. Compared to adults, children are more vulnerable to the emotional impact of this traumatic event of outbreak of COVID-19 as it disrupts their daily lives. In addition to physical health, emotional wellbeing of children is equally important.

As the young children were unable to identify these changes, may behave differently in reaction to strong feelings (e.g., fear, worry, sadness, anger) pandemic and related conditions. Social distancing from the loved ones like grandparents, friends, worship community, home confinement, closure of schools and child care centres may disturb the structure, predictability and sense of security sense of children. This may result in significant mental health problems including trauma related stress,

	Children with elevated emotional symptoms									
	Age 4–5 (2008)		Age 6–7 (2010)		Age 8–9 (2012)		Age 10–11 (2014)		Age 12–13 (2016)	
	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI	%	CI
Maternal warmth										
High warmth	19.2	[17.6,20.8]	16.0	[14.4,17.6]	17.1	[15.6,18.6]	19.7	[18.0,21.5]	19.9	[18.0,21.7]
Low warmth	25.5	[22.2,28.7]	23.0	[19.8,26.2]	24.5	[20.3,28.7]	25.3	[21.6,29.0]	27.0	[23.0,30.9]
Total, *N*	3,796		4,152		3,940		3,610		3,220	
Maternal hostility										
Low hostility	17.2	[15.7,18.8]	14.0	[12.6,15.4]	15.2	[13.9,16.6]	17.8	[16.1,19.5]	17.7	[15.9,19.4]
High hostility	37.1	[32.7,41.4]	33.2	[29.0,37.5]	32.8	[28.8,36.8]	35.3	[30.7,39.8]	40.4	[35.3,45.5]
Total, *N*	3,784		4,150		3,939		3,610		3,219	
Maternal consistency										
High consistency	18.6	[17.1,20.2]	15.7	[14.2,17.2]	16.3	[14.9,17.7]	19.2	[17.5,20.8]	19.7	[18.0,21.5]
Low consistency	29.4	[25.6,33.3]	25.8	[21.5,30.2]	29.1	[24.9,33.4]	29.7	[24.9,34.4]	30.9	[25.9,35.8]
Total, *N*	3,781		4,150		3,939		3,610		3,215	

Notes: Chi-squared test significant for warmth, hostility and consistency at each age at 95% level. CI: confidence interval. Confidence intervals that do not overlap indicate a statistically significant difference between two point estimates. The cut point is different at age 4–5.

Source: LSAC Waves 3–7, B cohort, weighted

anxiety and depression. Here comes the role of parents and caregivers as from the birth children rely on their parents and caregivers to protect and care for them. Research done on children's socio-emotional wellbeing due to parent behaviour shows that children who experienced lower levels of maternal warmth showed elevated levels of hyper activity. (Rioseco, P., Warren, D. & Daraganova, G., 2020)

Protective factors of well being

For children

Some of the protective factors that help children to restore good emotional health and wellbeing are as follows:

Open dialogue
One of the key factors for children and young people experiencing emotional difficulties is absence of someone they can talk to whenever they want, who is a good listener and is also available for them. A trustworthy relationship helps the children to regain their emotional wellbeing.

Boosting up child with low mood

Due to spending periods of time focussing on worries and negative thoughts during lock down period in the current pandemic situation, children may have long periods of sadness, tiredness, changes in sleeping and eating patterns, irritation, and tearfulness. This is the time for the parents to spend time with the child to reassure the safety and security of the child and also the loved ones.

Engaging the children in activities

Rise in boredom increases the levels of worry and disruptive behaviour. So, adults can provide opportunities for safe and joyful activities for children. These activities, planned according to the age and interest of children, may be the source of brainstorming other creative ideas.

Reading together

Liverpool reveals that reading increases personal confidence, reduces social isolation, improves power of concentration, fosters an interest in new learning, enhances self-awareness and the ability to articulate profound issues of self and being. (Billington, J., Dowrick, C., Hamer, A., Robinson, J. & Williams, C., 2010)

A good book is a good friend. Reading develops positive thinking, keeps the mind active and enhances creative ability. Reading a book helps to relieve stress, stimulates the brain muscles and keeps the brain healthy and strong. For younger kids, parents can provide audio books or recordings of parents reading the child's favourite book.

"Every child can become a lover of books"- Michelle Martin, a professor at the University of Washington.

Delegating work at home

It becomes a challenge for parents working from home due to the spread of COVID-19, to keep their kids independently occupied so that they themselves can work. In this situation, parents may delegate some age-appropriate work at home like cooking, cleaning, dusting, watering plants, feeding pets, arranging things in an

orderly manner, setting dinner table etc. This provides an opportunity for children to learn through their own experience. For example, kitchen can be a learning hub for Science and Mathematics. Gardening and taking care of pets help children to develop their emotional quotient as well as learning of biology happens in a joyful manner.

Keeping normalcy for children

Parents should maintain their daily routine to assure children that nothing has changed and everything is normal as usual. So daily schedules can be followed like morning exercise/ yoga time, breakfast time, getting ready to work from home, then lunch time, break time, playing in the afternoon etc. This gives children a sense of security that nothing has changed and the world is not falling apart right now.

Connecting friends

Research done on effects of social support on wellbeing reveals that individuals with low social support show greater level of stress and vice versa. (Abbey, Antonia, Abramis, D. J & Caplan, R. D, 1985)

When children connect to their friends over phone or virtually, they feel excited and energetic. This helps them to get relief from stress. Parents may organise some fun activities like reading challenge, painting/ drawing, poster making, quiz with children of same age group. When children see their friends and get involved in activities with them, their anxiety level goes down, they feel happy to see their friends in good health, their confidence level increases, life force becomes strong, they feel more secured, they sense the presence of normalcy in their life. Their depression level goes down as they share their worries and problem with their friends, they become optimistic for life.

Educating parents regarding emotional wellbeing

In the Book- "The state of mental, emotional and behavioural health of children", the following fact is shared for promotion of mental, emotional and behavioural health.

In another area promoting MEB health, Michigan State University's Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES) Program 5 focuses on providing parent education for those with children ages 0–3. Data from this program so far are very positive and suggest trends in the right direction, most especially an improved acceptance from parents of their children's negative emotional behaviours. Under this program, knowledge about early social-emotional development increased, and parenting distress decreased following completion of the program. Results from the BEES Program suggest positive effects on parental functioning and overall quality of parenting.

For adolescents

Adolescent itself is an age of change which is considered to be the vulnerable time when a child can develop many behavioural issues like high level of anxiety, depression, mood swings etc. As being teenager is difficult, and at the same time corona virus disease is making it even harder. With the closures of school and cancellation of many events, most of teens are missing out important moments of their young lives as well as each day moments like hanging out with friends, participating with them in the class events. As a result, many teens may feel anxious, isolated, disappointed. But with a little effort they can practice self-care and look after their mental health.

Accepting anxiety as a normal behaviour during the lock down period

With every day's alarming headlines, it is normal to have anxiety. Psychologist Dr. Damour says "Your anxiety is going to help you make the decisions that you need to be making right now — not spending time with other people or in large groups, washing your hands and not touching your face."

Checking information through reliable sources

Reliable sources like WHO (world health organisation), UNICEF should be used to get information. Unreliable sources may not provide true, accurate and update information, rather may create confusion. It is better to avoid out of date materials, post from social networks and blogs which may lead to panic state.

Connecting friends

While practising physical and social distancing, teens can connect to their friends in various ways. When they share their feelings with their friends, they feel relaxed, anxiety level goes down. They feel happy. When they post the happy status in social media, it becomes contagious.

Knowing me

This is time to know about ourselves. Teens can spend this time in a productive way like doing some indoor activities such as playing instrument/ reading books/ doing fine art/ experimenting in kitchen with new innovated recipes/ taking care of plants etc.

"What psychologists know is that when we are under chronically difficult conditions, it's very helpful to divide the problem into two categories: things I can do something about, and then things I can do nothing about," says Dr. Damour.

Coping up with grief and loss during COVID-19 period

In spite of the devastating loss in life, running away and numbing oneself from feelings will not only create confusion while dealing with so many fused emotions, but can also affect emotional, mental and physical health. Rather feeling and experiencing the pain is the effective way of embracing the difficult motion. At the same time comforting, cuddling and consoling oneself will help to get relief from the pain and anxiety.

Sound sleep

Anxiety and depression can be a challenge to quality sleep in teens which can worsen both sleep and emotional wellness. Inadequate sleep can affect the mood causing irritability and exaggerated emotional reactions. However, the best idea to get adequate sleep is to clean all thoughts from mind before sleeping. After lying on the bed, making a conscious effort not to carry a conversation with the mind, and at the same time focussing on pitch black behind the eyelid while closing the eyes will help us to fall asleep.

Promotion of Social and emotional learning (SEL)

In the Book- "The state of mental, emotional and behavioural health of children", the following fact is shared for promotion of Social and emotional learning (SEL). "There are opportunities for developmentally relevant promotion efforts like universal social and emotional learning (SEL) and adult development. Schools present a great platform to teach core competency skills around SEL and allow children to develop their own skill sets to navigate relationships, work, and life in general".

"A few participants suggested SEL as a key strategy for pre-K through adulthood because there are formal and informal opportunities at every level. One person suggested making empathy a skill that is a graduation requirement for high school. If children and youth can learn to demonstrate empathy, conflict resolution skills, interpersonal skills, and communication, they are likely to have better MEB health potential going into adulthood".

"Simply having doctors and academics discussing it will not get the job done, but engaging social influencers can have a great impact."

One example is "Talk, Text, Act", a program designed to bring teens together to talk about mental health with peers and in their community.

For parents and teachers

Wheaton suggests that "instead of being stressful, life events may be beneficial by offering escape from a chronically stressful role situation, creating the apparent paradox of functioning as stress relief." (Wheaton 1990).

Managing anxiety

The effects of this corona virus pandemic have already cascaded into the financial, physical, and mental health of parents and teachers. Many families have reported relatively higher levels of income loss and food insecurity. This is the real struggle time for teachers to motivate the learners and for parents to get time to help them. In these unprecedented times, all have to work extra hard to manage emotions effectively. By seeing the daily headlines, it is natural to get panic and to feel anxiety. But if anxiety is managed properly, it can be a good thing. Staying calm and being engaged in normal activities will lead to hope and resilience all around despite of uncertainty. Making a list thing to focus on and things to let go will help increase in radical acceptance of the situations that are beyond our control.

Gratitude

A life filled with gratitude is a happy life. Gratitude stimulates the hypothalamus, the stress regulator and also activates ventral

segmental area that controls brain's reward system which produces feelings of pleasure.

"Building the best life does not require fealty to feelings in the name of authenticity, but rather

rebelling against negative impulses and acting right even when we don't feel like it," says Arthur C. Brooks, author of Gross National Happiness. "Acting happy, regardless of feelings, coaxes one's brain into processing positive emotions," explains Brooks. In other words, "fake it till you make it" works.

Interior gratitude starts with keeping a daily or weekly list of grateful things helps to harness positive health effects. Writing thanking notes or sending thank you messages or emails to friends, colleagues and family members for their support are a part of exterior gratitude. Expressing gratitude to every small thing happening in life irrespective of its value is best way to help the brain to process positive emotions.

Science reporter for The New York Times Heather Murphy writes, "After receiving thank-you notes and filling out questionnaires about how it felt to get them, many said they were 'ecstatic,' scoring the happiness rating at 4 of 5. The senders typically guessed they'd evoke a 3."

Getting hold of morning

Getting hold of morning help us to have a control of our lives. Cleaning the toxic feelings from our mind in the morning before we start our day helps to develop our inner power.

Optimism

``Optimism is only one of two dozen strengths that bring about greater wellbeing''- Martin E.P. Seligman- Author of the book-Authentic Happiness. According to Seligman, optimism and hope cause better resistance during a bad event time. In his book `Learned Optimism' he shares about that `Never give up' spirit can help break up depression, boost up immune system, better develop inner potential, and scale of happiness increases.

Opportunity

In this turbulent time everyone is suffering in different ways. The Chinese character 'crisis' comprises of danger and also opportunity. This indicates that even in the darkest phase of life, one can get the bright side of it.

Encouraging others

We all live for ourselves. Life becomes great if we encourage that one person who is right in front of us in this difficult time. In the process of encouraging others, our mental strength increases multiple times. As mind and body are related, it strengthens our physical strength as well as boosts up our immune system. Aspinwall says "If positive emotions broaden attention and cognition, enabling flexible and creative thinking, they should also facilitate coping with stress and adversity" (Aspinwall, 1998)

Conclusion

"Make joy your GPS"- Robin Sharma (Author of the book- A monk who sold his Ferrari)

Happiness is the state of mind that does not occur in the absence of difficulties and worries in life. Rather it is found in the courage to fight head on with the challenges of life with strong life force. Even the sages cannot avoid problems of life. So instead of avoiding the reality of the pandemic situation due to COVID-19, let's have a spirit to fight it with invincible and standalone spirit.

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COVID-19 and the Psychological Effects: An Indian Review

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Abstract

Several studies have highlighted the psychological effects of COVID-19 in children and young adults especially during the lockdown period. Studies and surveys suggest an increase in mental health issues due to the impact of COVID-19. The paper aims to bring out some strategies and approaches to bring down mental health deterioration and also look at the causes and key areas for its origin.

Keywords: *COVID-19, lockdown, psychological impact, mental health, strategies*

Introduction- The situation

The corona virus outbreak or the COVID-19 is a mammoth pandemic that anyone has experienced, especially children and adolescents in this century. The COVID-19 spread continued at a fast pace, with a total number of cases reported worldwide as of June 17th, 2020 were 8,264,468 and 3,54,161 total number of COVID-19 cases in India with death tally at 11,921 of India (WHO, 2020). COVID-19 continues to affect healthcare needs and other domains of human life, be it social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing. With the COVID-19, there has been a lot of distress around illness, death and uncertainty regarding the future among the population along with disturbances in psychosocial behaviour, affecting a large proportion of the population worldwide (Sultana & Ananthapur, 2020). Most studies have indicated negative psychological effects like post-traumatic stress, confusion and anger. Stressors included longer quarantine duration, fear of infection, helplessness, frustration, boredom, inadequate supplies, inadequate information, financial loss and stigma (Das, 2020). Varshney et al. (2020) note increasing day-to-day concerns regarding health and livelihood with progression of disease. Overall, among the 653 respondents, 33.2% had significant (mild/moderate/severe) psychological impact regarding COVID-19. Since these findings were during the early phase of COVID-19 outbreak in the country, chances are they could have changed over time and hence, should be interpreted accordingly. Also, the study shows males had a lesser psychological impact of COVID-19 outbreak as compared to their female counterpart, showing them at a higher risk of falling mental health. Reddy,

Revanth, Jezreel, Afeen & Khairkar (2020) report among 891 responses, depression was found in 22%, anxiety in 15% and stress in 10% individuals and 27.5% with either of them. To note, widow/divorcee and/or unmarried had significantly more depression, anxiety & stress compared to married ones.
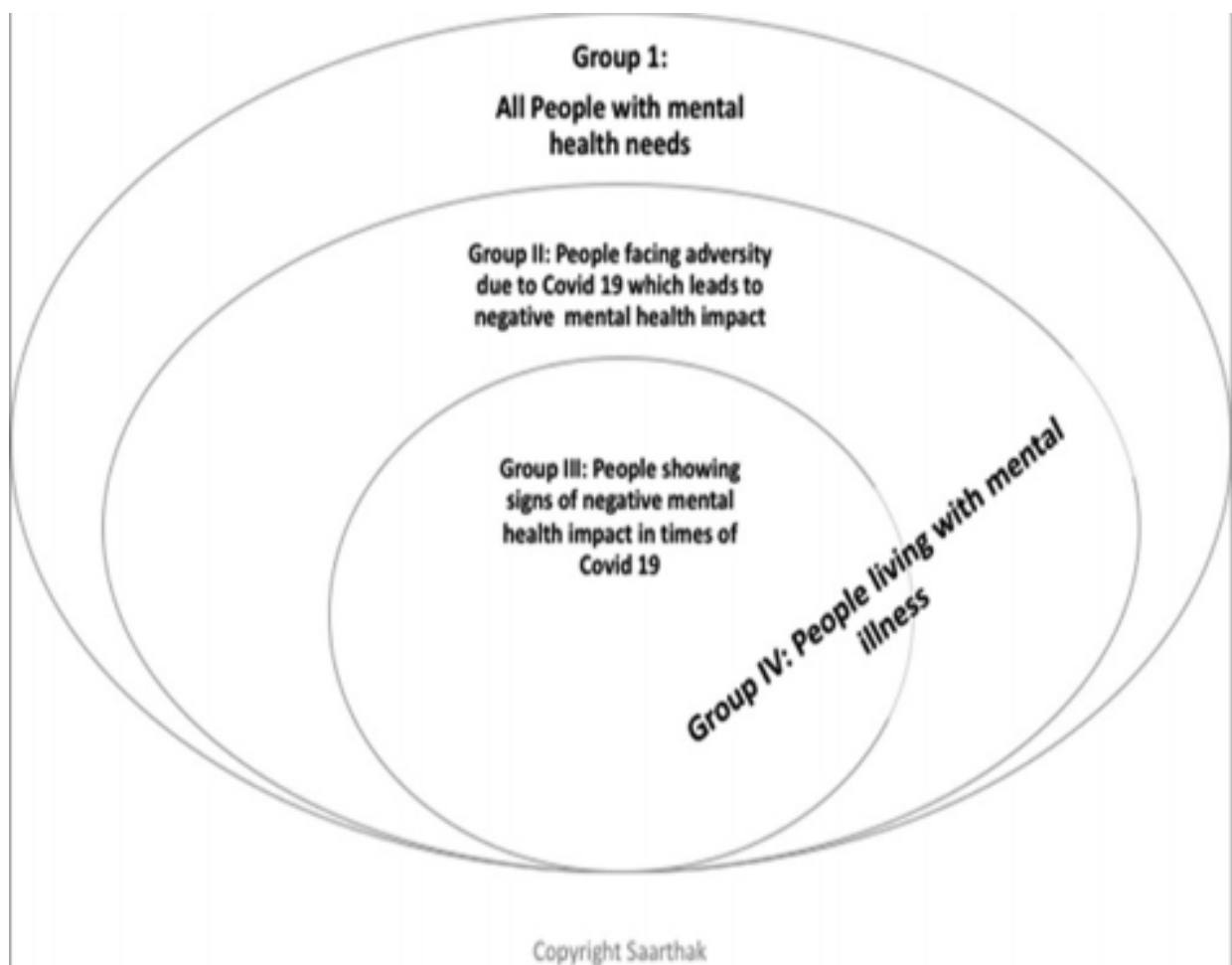
A large part of the Indian population has diverse and vulnerable life situations such as the elderly and those living poor conditions, having chronic or acute ailments, migrant labourers and people stranded in locations other than their own homes, individuals who are quarantined either in their own homes or other setups available by the government and their family members- they may show signs and symptoms of mental distress and emotional problems (Das, 2020). Further, Das (2020) also mentions all large-scale disasters have had notable negative impact on people such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorder, behavioural disorders, domestic violence and child abuse. Noting the widespread transmission of COVID-19 in India, the only possible solution that could help in controlling the situation was to put up a lockdown- an emergency protocol preventing movement of people from one area to another. During lockdown, all educational institutions, shopping malls and local markets, factories and industries, offices, forms of transportation are completely shut down except emergency services such as hospitals, police stations, fire stations and groceries (Chakraborty & Chatterjee, 2020). Although lockdown can be thought of as a successful strategy to control the situation, it has an adverse psychological effect. The on-going lockdown in India tends to induce fear and worries thus forcing us to alter our normative ways of living ultimately resulting in

catastrophic effects on self, family and health of the community. Such situations indicate diathesis for close bio-psychosocial risk factors for depression and anxiety along with higher mortality rate (Xiang et al.,2020). Significant mental health concerns have been indicated especially after the declaration of lockdown in India on 24th March, 2020 such as anxiety, worries and insomnia (Varshney et al., 2020). There is risk of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, loneliness, domestic violence and real probability of child abuse, due to the schools being shut (Das, 2020). In the research paper by Tang et al. (2020), it is reported by university college students are more prone to depression than post-traumatic stress disorder with fear as an important predictor of both depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. The lockdown can have varied psychological impact for different age groups: children may feel restless due to lack of options for their engagement, elderly may feel restriction in their movements and adults may feel burdened with chores at home in absence of house help (Chakraborty & Chatterjee, 2020). Miglani (2020) notes a significant association between anxiety and people who are self-employed. Anxiety is more in the age group of 41-50, persons staying alone, in the containment zone and those who had acquaintances/ friends

suffering from COVID-19 are also found to be significantly anxious and respondents in the age group of 31-40 are found to be more apprehensive about financial loss. Fear of getting infected is significant in people aged 60 years and above probably due to prevailing co-morbidities in old age.

Moreover, it is being noted that the COVID-19 pandemic may continue to have increased long-term adverse consequences on children and adolescents in comparison to adults (Shen et al., 2020). Ghosh, Dubey, Chatterjee and Dubey (2020) in their review paper have outlined various impact factors in the context of children. Some of them are:

• Psychosocial impact on quarantined children- Various studies highlight psychological burden, psychosocial stigma and neurological manifestations when in quarantine (Brooks et al., 2020). Children quarantined at institutional setups tend to be the worst sufferers are they lack parental support and companionship making them feel anxious, stressed, detached from their parents, feeling insecure and may even be causing long term psychological consequences like PTSD, depression, psychosis, delinquency and anxiety (Liu, Bai, Huang, Shi & Lu, 2020).

Group 1:
All People with mental health needs

Group II: People facing adversity due to Covid 19 which leads to negative mental health impact

Group III: People showing signs of negative mental health impact in times of Covid 19

Group IV: People living with mental illness

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- Effects of school closures- If the education disruption is prolonged, it might threaten the Right to Education as quoted by UNESCO Director General, Audrey Azoulay. Schools promote physical activity, personal hygiene, healthy food and body habits (Sylva, 1994). Physical inactivity, disturbed sleep patterns, awful diet and food choices, sedentary lifestyle, prolonged usage of gadgets like phones and laptops during lockdown and school closures will ultimately lead to childhood obesity and reduced cardio-respiratory fitness (Rundle, Park, Herbstman, Kinsey & Wang, 2020).

- Child abuse, domestic violence and teenage promiscuity- There has been an increasing number of reports of child abuse, neglect, exploitation and domestic violence at the time of COVID-19 and lockdown (UNICEF, 2020). COVID-19 along with the negative impacts such as loss of parental affection and care, financial crisis, school closures and discontinuation will certainly outrage the risk of sexual exploitation, teenage pregnancy, transactional sex as similarly faced by children from Africa after ebola epidemic (Dubey et al., 2020).

Figure 1: Mental health concentric in times of COVID-19

Source: Bhagat, A., 2020

An illustration (Figure 1) laid down by Bhagat (2020) tries to put light on four types of mental health needs in times of COVID-19, believed not only to be an effect of the pandemic but also as a result of socio-economic consequences that the pandemic has led to. These groups are described as:

- Group I- Universal need for mental health
  With the increasing levels of anxiety across the population, more information, skills and coping strategies for mental health awareness is required.

- Group II- People facing adversity in times of COVID-19 (Bhattacharya, Chatterjee, Bhattacharyya, Gupta, & Banerjee, 2020)
  The psychosocial realities of loss, helplessness, hopelessness, adversity and risks faced by children under difficult circumstances, gender-based, caste-based and disability-based discrimination, violence, neglect, unemployment, malnourishment, decreased access to health care services and pertaining poverty are likely to increase morbidity and mortality related to mental health problems.

- Group III- People who develop mental health problems during the COVID-19 pandemic
  Psychiatric disorders such as anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders, depressive disorders and mood disorders are likely to rise in number. With an increasing number of alcohol and substance abuse incidences *and* risk taking and impulsive behaviours.

- Group IV- People with mental health concerns developed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic
  For people with pre-existing mental illnesses, their condition is likely to worsen (Tang et al., 2020). A study from Basque had found a greater psychological impact on younger people and those with pre-existing illnesses (Gorrochategi, Munitis, Santamaria & Etxebarria, 2020).

Stressors during quarantine

Duration of quarantine

Studies show the longer the duration of quarantine, the poorer the mental health, specifically post-traumatic stress symptoms (Hawryluck et al, 2004; Reynolds et al., 2008), avoidance behaviours and anger (Marjanovic et al., 2007).

Fears of infection

Participants reported fears about their own health or fears of infecting others (Bai et al., 2004; Cava et al., 2005; Desclaux et al., 2017; Hawryluck et al., 2004; Jeong et al., 2016; Maunder et al., 2003; Reynolds et al., 2008; Robertson et al., 2004) and were more likely to fear infecting family members (Bai et al., 2004). They also became particularly worried if they experienced any physical symptoms potentially related to the infection (Desclaux et al., 2017) and fear that the symptoms could reflect having the infection continued to be related to psychological outcomes several months later (Jeong et al., 2016)

Frustration and boredom

Confinement, loss of usual routine, and reduced social and physical contact with others were frequently shown to cause boredom, frustration, and a sense of isolation from the rest of the world, which was distressing to participants

(Blendon et al., 2004; Braunack-Mayer et al., 2013; Cava et al., 2005; Desclaux et al., 2017; DiGiovanni et al., 2004; Hawryluck et al., 2004; Reynolds et al., 2008; Robertson et al., 2004; Wilken et al., 2017). This frustration was exacerbated by not being able to take part in usual day- to- day activities, such as shopping for basic necessities (Hawryluck et al., 2004).

Inadequate supplies

Having inadequate basic supplies such as of food, water, clothing or accommodation during quarantine was a source of frustration (Blendon et al., 2004; Wilken et al., 2017) and continued to be associated with anxiety and anger 4–6 months after release (Jeong et al., 2016)

Inadequate information

Many participants cited poor information from public health authorities as a stressor, reporting insufficient clear guidelines about actions to take and confusion about the purpose of quarantine (Braunack-Mayer et al., 2013; Caleo et al., 2018; Cava et al., 2005). Lack of clarity about the different levels of risk, in particular, led to participants fearing the worst (Desclaux et al., 2017).

Stressors post quarantine

Finances

Financial loss can be a problem during quarantine, with people unable to work and having to interrupt their professional activities with no advanced planning; the effects appear to be long lasting. In several studies, the financial loss as a result of quarantine created serious socio-economic distress (Pellecchia et al., 2015) and was found to be a risk factor for symptoms of psychological disorders (Mihashi et al., 2009) and both anger and anxiety several months after quarantine (Jeong et al., 2016). People who are quarantined and have lower household incomes might require additional levels of support, along with those who lose earnings while in quarantine such as self-employed people unable to work or salaries staff not able to take paid leave.

Stigma

In a comparison of healthcare workers quarantined versus those not quarantined, (Bai et al., 2004) quarantined participants were significantly more likely to report stigmatisation and rejection from people in their local neighbourhoods, suggesting that there is stigma specifically surrounding people who had been quarantined. Participants in several studies reported that others were treating them differently: avoiding them, withdrawing social invitations, treating them with fear and suspicion, and making critical comments (Cava et al., 2013; Desclaux et al., 2017; DiGiovanni et al., 2004; Hawryluck et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2005; Maunder et al., 2003; Pan et al., 2005; Pellecchia et al., 2015; Reynolds et al., 2008; Robertson et al., 2004; Wester et al., 2019; Wilken et al., 2017).
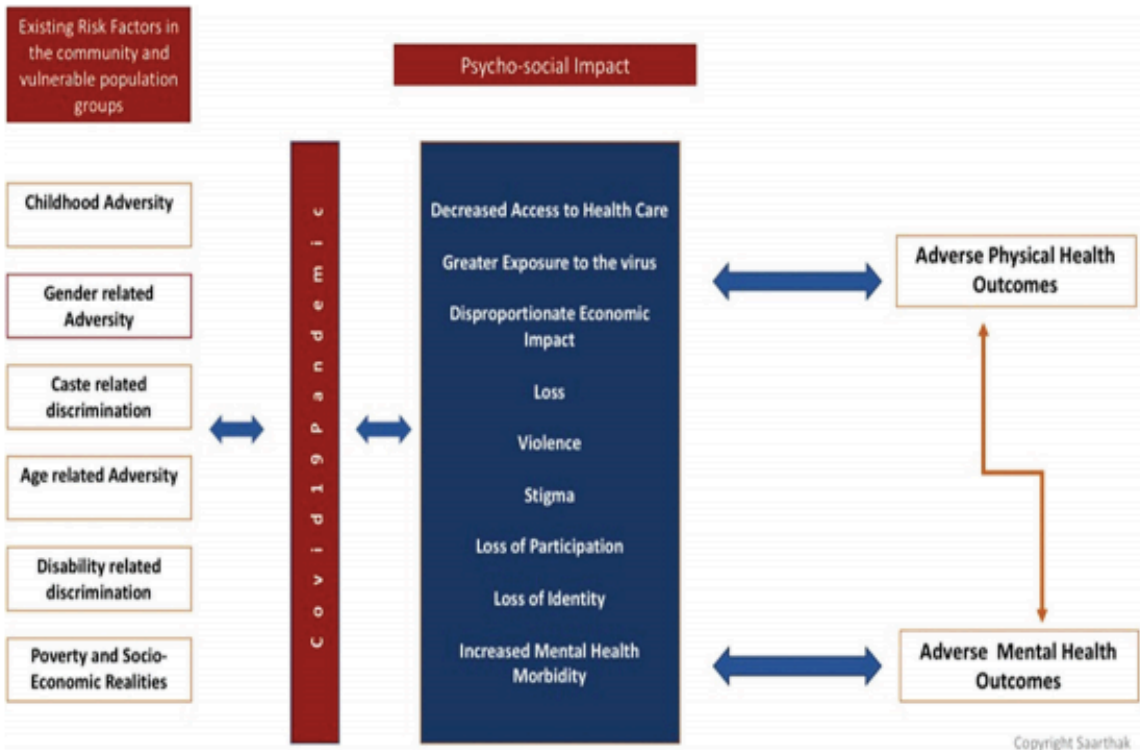
Figure 2: Relationship between mental health psycho-social impact and COVID-19

Source: Bhagat, A., 2020

Through the medium of the illustration (figure 2), Bhagat (2020) tries to explain that there are pre-disaster vulnerabilities in the society such as gender or caste related adversities, poverty or discrimination on the basis on disability, which ultimately have an impact on the mental health of the individuals. Amidst the pandemic, these adversities are likely to magnify.

Vulnerable population groups	Probable reasons of mental health issues during COVID-19 pandemic	Recommended intervention strategies for COVID-19 related mental health problems
Children	• Alterations in their daily routine • School closures and restriction of outdoor movements • Not being able to meet their friends	• Reducing screen-time • Engaging in creative and mentally stimulating indoor activities • Management of anxiety by identifying their emotional needs • Making ways to keep in touch with their friends
Geriatric population	• Co-morbid conditions causing fear and anxiety of the consequences of getting infected • Difficulty in day-to-day activities for those living alone • Social isolation due to lockdown • Difficulty in availing online or telemedicine services for healthcare due to challenges in handling smartphones or computers	• Giving out clear, concise and necessary information • Assurance and assistance including medications • Connecting with loved ones living away • Engaging in recreational activities
Migrant workers	• Less familiar in their new environment in which they temporarily live • Concerned about their families who are living elsewhere • Financial and economic loss	• Treating with dignity, respect, empathy and compassion • Providing assurance of mental and physical support and economic assurance
People with existing mental illnesses	• Trigger factor- Isolation, Quarantine and being confined at home • Tele-counselling sessions not be as effective as face-to-face sessions • Alterations in the daily routine of people with pre-existing mental illness	• Providing access to treatment through telemedicine consultations and video consultations • Adequately modifying their counselling sessions to help them cope • Involving family members in their care and attention
People with COVID-19, contacts, survivors, family members	• Complete isolation from near and dear ones • The feeling of being the cause of transmitting the disease to others • Discrimination causing emotional trauma	• Addressing the grief and trauma faced by people with COVID-19 and their family • Creating self-help platforms • Helping cope with emotional loss • Providing them the mental and physical comfort at their isolation sites or hospitals

Roy et al. (2020) elucidates probable reasons of mental health issues and recommend intervention strategies for them specifically for each different population group.

Mitigation strategies

Proposing and practising interventions for the better is not an individual task rather a team effort having victims (the target group), paediatricians or other specialists, psychologists, social workers, hospital authorities, government and non- governmental organisations. Parents, peer groups and teachers also play an important part in planning interventions, when the victim is a child.

Bhagat (2020) recommends a three-tier intervention process, namely:

1. At the primary level- The emphasis must be on "enabling and enhancing skills for

coping" with availability of more supportive resources and accessible information. Interventions must be both psychological and social including:

- Empathetic relationships with dignity and participation

- Equitable access to resources and information

- Returning to education and work

- Early recognition of mental health and psychosocial problems and referrals

- Support for those with pre-existing mental health problems

2. At the secondary level- Creating social support groups and helplines *and* building resilience can benefit those with mental health illnesses, or facing distress and dysfunction. Activities can include:

- Dissemination of information about mental health

- Facilitation of mental health services to support individuals with early signs and symptoms

- Guided self-help programs through webinars and online training and learning platforms

- Tele-psychiatry and tele therapy

3. At the tertiary level- Rather than a focusing on large-hospital setup, interventions can prove fruitful in the local community, having three roles:

- Provision of biological, psychological and social interventions with existing mental health problems

- Knowledge management and creation of tools for implementation at the primary and secondary levels

- Influencing policy through evidence-based initiatives

Galea et al. (2020) suggested three main preventive strategies for better mental health amongst populations:

1. Planning for loneliness due to isolation being faced by the populations such as ways of intervention, taking lead of digital technologies.

2. Having mechanisms for surveillance, reporting and intervention for individuals at

risk or abuse like those of domestic violence and child abuse. These numbers can see a decline if provision of safe spaces are available and social service systems are creative in their approach.

3. Boosting up mental health services to deal with psychological aspects especially being caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Scaling up treatment, training local communities for psychological first aid and checking with one another to provide support can add to other helpful strategies to sail through the crisis.

4. To bolster the mental health system and prepare for the parallel challenges that COVID- 19 has brought with it (Das, 2020).

The WHO (2020) too has shared strategies to enable global populace to stay mentally healthy during this unprecedented global health crisis.

In summary, it implores people to engage in routine activities, stay calm, indulge in hobbies, stay connected through social media, talking to friends or counsellors in case of unmanaged anxiety or fear, doing physical exercises and not resorting to alcohol or drug to deal with emotional problems (Das, 2020).

Conclusion

In sum, the review so far suggests that the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is huge and can even be long-lasting. The initially used term 'social isolation' must be interchanged with the term "physical isolation", which can further help in the management of psychological issues running on a major pace among the populations. Also. It puts light on how crucial the actual provision of support systems and measures are. Review suggest there can be long-term consequences affecting almost everyone- the people who are quarantined, health officials, government and the whole system that had mandated the guidelines of quarantine among others. Through the review, it can further be analysed that there is a great amount of research still needed in the area of psychology with relevance to the pandemic across populations and various regions of the world.

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Being Schooled in Pandemic

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Abstract

COVID-19 has changed our lives in unimaginable ways A 'new normal' has become our default living condition, online teaching-learning has become part of our everyday lives. The online classes, bring a sense of continuity of schooling experience during a pandemic but is riddled with various concerns as well. As an educator and a parent, I express my observations and reflections about the new ways in which schooling is being carried out. The virtual schooling experience is characterised by regular engagement between teachers and learners with the key focus on the completion of the syllabus. This often leaves a limited or no scope of interaction and informal/ unsupervised conversations amongst the learners. There is always a sense of a 'watchful and omnipresent eye' on teachers, children and their families in online classes. It pertains to the process of teaching-learning, learner participation and response, parental involvement and family background.

Keywords: *schooling, online classes, teaching, learning, parental involvement*

Introduction

With the advent of COVID- 19 and the nationwide lockdown, many schools almost immediately or eventually shifted to the online mode. Almost no time was spared to consider teacher preparedness, learner readiness, difficulties (health crisis, anxiety about one's and others' wellbeing, economic uncertainties) posed by ensuing pandemic and challenges of schooling in an online mode. This article is an attempt to reflect on a child who has been closely observed, while he attended his online classes, over a span of four months. A daily journal was maintained in which observations related to teacher-student interactions, learner and parent participation and the nature of home tasks were noted. These observations were shared with fellow educators and their remarks/ suggestions were noted. This article is a compilation of my thoughts on 'being schooled' in the pandemic. the article has been divided into three sections - Boxes on the screen, being watched and becoming watchful and Learning must go on.

Boxes on the screen

A typical online class requires children to be seated at a given time with their cameras turned on and their mikes turned off. Their faces appear in boxes along with their names and classes. The children can also see each other and their teachers (who also appear in their designated boxes). For a young child, who has never been to a school, the school gets reduced to the talking boxes on the screen sans a physical building where face to face human interaction could have been possible. The teacher gets to know about the learners mainly by observing them in their designated boxes, often following the instructions given by the teacher or being busy with the assigned task. The young learners (4-8 years old) who are in the Pre-operational or Concrete-operational stage of Piagetian developmental stages, the absence of physical space bereave children of sufficient opportunities to touch, feel, manipulate things in their environment to make sense of it and learn. At times, children are allowed to be unmuted and can converse briefly with the teachers during the classes. However, the scope of getting to know the peers, having regular interactions and learning from them is completely absent. Almost, all conversations are scheduled, monitored and supervised leaving little scope for children to engage in informal interactions beyond what is required for the teacher governed learning process.

It is also enthralling to see these boxes emulate the ethos and routines of everyday school-exchanges such as reciting of daily prayers, listening to teachers and following the instructions, being told on how to sit and behave in a class and so on. The sanctity and sacrosanct nature of a classroom and learning process are also established well in the everyday boxed interactions. The habits and behaviours that are

stressed in online classes increasingly manifest in other interactions at home. For instance, the child in the study responds with a thumb up in case he wants to eat something that has been offered and a thumb down in case he doesn't like something such as if his favourite cartoon was interrupted. Response by a thumb up or down is the most convenient way to gather a child's response or ascertaining his/ her participation in an online class. The next section discusses another aspect of online schooling- being always watched not only as a learner but as a teacher and a parent as well.

Being watched and becoming watchful

Since online classes are fairly transparent (in terms of visibility), every stakeholder watches the other with the consciousness of being watched as well. As if looking at and teaching a screen was not sufficient, teachers have to teach in the presence of parents who at times pass judgements and often have high expectations from the teachers. Even the slightest lapse on part of the teacher gets highlighted- she mispronounced a word, a child's name was not called out today, she did not smile enough and so on. Teaching gets reduced to a theatrical debacle expected to not only woo and amaze young minds but also appease the consumers (parents) who are paying a high fee for the commodity called 'good education'. Not to disregard, the monitoring and surveillance of these online classes by higher authorities of the school adds to the mental stressors and anxieties of a teacher.

It is not only teachers who are being constantly watched but also the child, her family members and her home environment. The pervasiveness with which the school has infiltrated the homes lays bare the cultural capital possessed by the child and her family. Cultural Capital (Bourdieu, 1985) refers to the advantages that an individual has owing to her education, that helps her achieve a high social status in the society. One can clearly see the class differences in online classes through the visuals present on the screen - availability of laptops or sustained internet connection, kind of clothes worn by the child and her parents, presence (or sheer absence) of expensive home furniture/ other household objects, patterns or paints of the walls and kind of language being spoken at home. It is no wonder that children and parents belonging to the economically weaker groups (EWS) are engaged in very different ways than the others.

The names of these children are repeatedly called out to check if they have finished their assigned work, instructions given to them are specifically given in Hindi, the tone used by the teachers in addressing and correcting them is authoritative and they are singled out more for the delay in joining classes or movements during the classes. The subsequent section discusses the impetus of online schooling experience- learning must go on.

Learning must go on

Parental involvement in a child's learning is crucial but are the parents equipped or prepared enough to take on the roles of the teachers altogether? What about the children coming from a single-parent family or where both the parents are working? In the absence of regular schooling, the responsibility of teaching-learning of the children has fallen entirely on the parents (predominantly on mothers). Parents of young children, especially, have to participate in their child's schooling on daily basis. Some of the ways of participation are- sitting with children during online classes to enable the use of technology and to act as an effective mediator between teacher and child (learner), help simplifying teachers' instructions to make them comprehensible for learners, help in completion of the assigned tasks during and after the classes, being a substitute for any peer interactions or engagements.

The schools may take pride in covering the syllabus on time over the online mode as well, however, it certainly becomes an added burden on the parents. The parents are already engaging with stressors of working from home, domestic chores, mental health concerns and anxiety about wellbeing of the loved ones. Add to it, the pressure to ascertain continued learning of children (as per the expectations of the school) which often strains the parent-child relationship by pedagogically driving the home space.

Being schooled in a pandemic is characterised by a continuation of the school-sanctioned learning process, increased parental involvement and watchfulness in the teaching-learning process, constant surveillance on teachers supervised and restrained participation of children in the learning process and minimal or absence of peer interactions and learning.

An Initiative for Emotional Wellbeing of Students

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Abstract

The paper is a reflective account of a special educator taking over the role of a counsellor (class 6th and 7th) during the scenario of lockdown and home-confinement which was necessitated due to COVID-19 which led to reorganization of the system. Initially students were happy about school holidays but soon the pandemic created fear and uncertainty. The ambiguity around school reopening created a disturbed the psychosocial environment for children. Although siblings, parents, grandparents were at home but not being able to meet with peers, go out, or engage in co-curricular classes further added to anxiety contributing to emotional uncertainty among students. The paper therefore dwells into the activities and strategies used by a special educator to understand the emotions and feelings of students. It also describes strategies used to reach out to students and facilitate them during this scenario where "normal" is being redefined.

Keywords: *acceptance, emotions, pandemic, psychosocial environment*

Introduction

The entire world is going through what is unexpected. Everyone is going through an emotional turmoil in some or the other way. As schools got shut in the middle of exams, some students were happy with cancellation of exams whereas, some felt bad about the hard-work they put in the entire year for these final exams. Complete lock-down was implemented, which was a new experience for everyone that made everyone stay at home. This led to families spending more time together. But as the period of lockdown extended and resuming of old normal seemed to be a distant thing, the need was felt to study the psychosocial environment.

The affected routine life brought about many changes in the lives of children such as academics loss, no co-curricular activities, no interaction with peers and changed definitions of classrooms. As students were just beginning to get familiar with the virtual medium, soon the summer break was declared that resulted in classes being put on hold. This time gave students, teachers and schools a breather to rethink the classrooms and teaching-learning process. The school, among many adaptations, emphasised on the importance of counselling sessions for students. They were planned for at least once a week. But in the given scenario where teachers were even more occupied with adjusting to this new medium of interaction with students, they were seldom left with enough time to indulge in informal discussions with students.

The concern was brought up by many teachers on different occasions amongst themselves. The entire scenario of pandemic brought emotional stress everywhere including children. Several conversations with parents with special needs revealed that initially the parents were engaging their children in new activities and were able to spend family time together. As the school remained closed, and several other factors such as monitoring studies along with their own work (work from home), non-availability of help at home, it became difficult to engage children every day in different activities and cater to the socio-emotional needs of children. Frustration of being unable to meet these needs was causing parents a lot of pain.

During this constantly changing phase, students needed constant outreach programmes for smooth transition to online teaching, virtual classrooms, changing dynamics of classrooms and staying at home 24x7. It demanded monitoring, adjustment and support- '*Students wanted to be heard*'. One period each week was allocated the four sections of grade 6th and 7th, as a counsellor This paper is a reflective account of my experiences as a counsellor and interaction with students- their experiences, needs, desires, emotions.

Initiation

Rapport formation is a crucial part of any counselling setting. While understanding what children wanted to engage in, in this pandemic

time, I gathered their views on "Would you rather". Some of the answers were: "*Although I like this new medium sitting at home but I miss my friends and teachers so would prefer school over online classes*", "*I like School as I could be little naughty with teachers and enjoy with my friends*", "*like home-made food and my mumma is trying new dishes for me at home only these days*". It was evident from these sessions that students were getting a platform to express themselves freely, where they were not being judged. It also gave them an opportunity to resume their conversations with peers and friends.

Experiencing time of COVID

From the earlier sessions emerged the need to explore the theme of discussing COVID and associated emotions and feelings of students. The shift to talk about this was gradual. In the beginning students were asked to share about the good thing(s) lockdown brought. Students' mentioned aspects like "*No Pollution*" during complete lockdown. They got a chance to spend with family, which was evident from the responses, "*Family time with all members together at home*", "*Sharing of Responsibility*" such as helping their parents in various household chores. Students also highlighted their increased mother's role in managing the entire house. Most of the students were empathetic towards their parents' increased responsibilities, especially mother. They also expressed that they are learning many things from their parents such as ways in order to manage their time productively, multitasking and taking care of everyone at the same time. These learnings were possible as they are always at home and are able to observe several facets of their parents' personality. They also mentioned that many times they felt like meeting their friends, relatives, and going out but they also expressed that they understand the safety aspect and therefore indulged themselves in learning new activities on their own through online sources or from adults at home. Thus, these sessions helped the students to understand the importance of focusing on staying positive and finding a silver lining in every situation no matter how difficult it is. It showed students' coping mechanism and their will to develop the attitude of learning something from every situation they are.

Taking inspiration from a quote by Rachel Samson, an Australian Psychologist, "*If little boys are given neither opportunities nor support to express their emotions, are we surprised when they become men who struggle to understand emotions in themselves and others?*", following sessions focused on discussing emotions and feelings with students. They can see through different perspectives when they are made to think through explorations and when discussion is facilitated around what could they see? Each week one emotion was taken up through an emoticon. The interaction of the session followed around the following points:

- What makes them feel so? (happy, confused, angry etc.)

- How do they know you are in this emotion? (happy, sad, shy etc.)

- What thoughts do they have when they are happy, sad, angry etc.

- How does the body react? (when feeling so?)

- What can be done to overcome negative emotions?

It brought forth the different perspectives of students. The first day discussion was around Happiness. Students mentioned about what makes them happy "*I am happy when I get a surprise*", "*good marks in exams make me happy*", "*when teachers and other elders appreciate it, it makes me happy*". they further mentioned "*I want to remain happy always*", "*I am not sad means, I am happy*" mentions one of the students. "*I have a smile on my face*", "*I am feeling excited, I dance at times when I am happy*".

Next session focused on emotion: Sad. Students responded that they felt sad in the situations such as "*I start feeling low*", "*I feel tired as well*", "*I don't want to talk to anyone*", "*I get irritated, eventually get angry*". Students shared that while attempting question paper, either choosing between different options or recalling between similar answers, also confusion while shopping came into "*I was confused other day when my mom liked black top but I wanted to buy red colour*", "*I got confused when my sister was in one of team while playing a game and wanted me to join her team, but I wanted to join other team as it had strong members*", "*whether I should share my personal feelings to my friends or not*" were few examples shared by students. Some situations where confusion happens were: Similarities in options - When Multiple options -

Obstacles/hurdles - When it is about winning/losing - Sharing personal experiences

Students also shared how they overcame a situation of confusion. They mentioned actions such as looking at benefits, likeness /dis-likeness, trying new things, risk involved elements of exploration etc.

Anger-Students mentioned following situations which made them angry- when they were already irritated with something and parents were not listening to them, when they were pulled away from their comfort zone. The elder person was scolding and not able to meet expectations parents held for them.

The discussions in the several sessions with students revealed that children's feelings and emotions are valuable to others and their emotional expressions give wealth of social information. There is a need to be aware and accept the emotions of children. Parents who themselves believe in the value of emotion also understand the benefit of its experience and expression. These emotions provide opportunities for children to learn and develop (Gottman et al., 1996; Parker et al., 2012; Stelter & Halberstadt, 2011).

The parents who value both positive and negative emotions are ought to create environments that are more emotionally expressive, sensitive to, and accepting of children's emotion as compared to parents who do not value emotion; such beliefs may thus provide children with opportunities to learn how to express and identify their own and others' emotions. (Lunkenheimer et al., 2007)

Reflection

Experience of being a counsellor and interacting with children online to facilitate their self-exploration, enabled the researcher to reflect on the role of counsellor especially in these unprecedented circumstances. In today's time of uncertainty arising due to COVID, children are going through a phase that they have never experienced before. Throughout the school years children continue to develop self-confidence by indulging in new things. This is a time they need encouragement so that they can explore new facets of themselves. Guidance can be effectively used to instill the basics of socializing and accepting the constantly changing phase. Through various activities an attempt was made to uncover the layers of emotions which are difficult for children to express. Although schools can't recreate school experiences where children used to interact face to face with teachers and peers and learning happened in a structured environment, these sessions with counsellor provide spaces to children to have hope of returning to the old normal. These sessions gave platform to children to express their emotions that helped them to understand themselves and others, take decisions, and build more meaningful relationships with parents and peers.

It also placed utmost importance on the role of school counselor in a school and the lives of children. They play multiple roles including social and emotional educator, academic adviser, conflict mediator, wellness coach, mental health therapist, educational collaborator and family liaison.

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Spirituality, Wellbeing and Anxiety: Correlates of Corona Pandemic

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Abstract

With the increase in corona cases, there has been an incredible degree of frenzy and tension among the individuals. Isolated at home, without an average timetable, for the most part, jumbled up with the emotional wellness of individuals. The situation as a result of COVID-19 is upsetting for the people. The main aim of the study was to assess the impact of the fear in people due to corona pandemic on their wellbeing and spirituality along with the levels of anxiety. The study further examined the co-relationship amongst the three variables-anxiety, wellbeing and spirituality. To test the hypothesis, a sample of young adults was taken into account. A random sampling method was used and different scales were used. Statistical analysis was undertaken to measure the scores, where it was hypothesized that there is a significant correlation amongst the variables. The correlation between wellbeing, anxiety and spirituality was also studied. This research widens, the consciousness of the psychological wellbeing corresponding to the extraordinary pandemic, assists with getting the reasonableness of concentrating on emotional wellbeing, particularly in the zones of helpless social help and less family support. Further exploration can give an itemized assessment of which age group influenced the most, the emotional wellbeing administrations furnished alongside the quality and amount of the social help across the country so as to improve the conditions.

Keywords: *wellbeing, mental health, corona pandemic, spirituality, anxiety*

Introduction

The corona virus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic might be unpleasant for individuals. Dread and uneasiness about another sickness and what could happen can be overpowering and cause compelling feelings in grown-ups and children. General wellbeing guidelines at the time of pandemic such as social distancing can cause individuals to feel segregated and desolate and can build pressure and tension.

How one reacts to worry during the COVID-19 pandemic can rely upon their experiences, social help from family or companions, financial circumstances, wellbeing and enthusiastic foundation, the network one lives in, and numerous different elements. The progressions that can happen in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the manners in which we attempt to contain the spread of the infection can influence anybody.

Individuals with previous emotional wellness conditions or substance use issues might be especially defenceless in such a crisis. Emotional wellness conditions, (for example, misery, uneasiness, bipolar turmoil, or schizophrenia) influence an individual's reasoning, feeling, temperament or conduct such that impacts their capacity to identify with others and capacity every day. These conditions might be situational (present moment) or durable (incessant). Individuals with prior emotional wellness conditions should proceed with their treatment and know about new or declining side effects.

Spirituality is a significant part of psychological wellness. St. Augustine implored "O God, thou made us in thy picture and our hearts will be eager until they discover their rest in Thee." The absence of spirituality can meddle with relational connections, which can add to the beginning of mental unsettling influence. Mental manifestations can have a strict substance. For instance, the loss of enthusiasm for strict exercises is a typical manifestation of sorrow. It is all around perceived that some strict states and encounters are misdiagnosed as manifestations of mental disease.

The World Health Organization has as of late put out direction on emotional wellbeing and psycho social contemplations during the COVID-19 pandemic, which explicitly targets medicinal services labourers, everybody, those in

disconnection and individuals with co-morbidities.

This COVID-19 has compromised the very presence of each person and of enormous wraps of populaces across nations and mainland all through the world and it will undoubtedly leave a large number of relatives and companions and family members lamenting.

The COVID-19 encounters will undoubtedly leave a permanent scar on the mind of a large number of individuals which may fundamentally change their perspectives to disease and social insurance. The stressed may well start to decipher each sign and indication that their bodies might be showing as a genuine sickness and may in general ascribe this to some calamitous reason. Wellbeing nervousness in the typical populace and sickness uneasiness in the incredibly stressed ones will undoubtedly build significantly and medicinal services must be prepared and to deal with such wellbeing and disease tension related concerns.

There are numerous researches conducted before the pandemic stating the positive relationship between anxiety and wellbeing. Since the pandemic, a few pieces researches have been conducted to understand the wellbeing of the individuals. Riberio, M. et al (2020) conducted a research study depicting the importance of letters sent via hotline. It showed spirituality helped to improve the wellbeing of individuals. Yasaranasi, T. (2020) in his review paper concluded that by increasing spiritual practices can help in the improvement of an individual's mental wellbeing. Another research conducted by Whitehead, B. et al (2020) in qualitative research mentioned that coping strategy like spiritual practices help in improving the stress and wellbeing of individuals. Koenig, H. G. (2020) helped us understand the importance of spiritual activities to decrease the levels of stress and improves wellbeing.

As Mosheva, M. et al. (2020) stated in his research a clear evidence of how fear associated with the pandemic is a direct cause of high levels of anxiety in the individuals. Another research done by Bäuerle, A. et al. (2020) presented the increase in the number of Anxiety and Depression cases. The fear related to the pandemic affects the wellbeing of the individuals to a great extent.

Petzold, P.M. et al. (2020) studied about the risk and psychological distress due to pandemic. It was concluded that fear related to corona pandemic was directly related to high levels of stress in individuals. Nwachukwu, I.et al. (2020) also talked about increased distress and anxiety in older individuals due to the fear related to corona pandemic.

From the review of literature, a few pieces of evidence have been found stating how spirituality can positively affect the wellbeing of a person. But the many reviews show the relation between wellbeing and anxiety in the times of pandemic and fear related to the effects of the virus. Every individual has a different perspective for the fear related to the corona pandemic and is equally (more or less) psychologically and physically affected by the situation. This paper explores the correlation between the variables- spirituality and wellbeing, anxiety and wellbeing and spirituality and anxiety.

Methodology

An aggregate of 100 young adults (17-26 years) were part of the study who were inhabitants of New Delhi. The random sampling strategy was used with the minimum educational qualification as 10+2. The accompanying scales were utilized to quantify the factors for all the members of the research study:

- A specifically designed questionnaire was used in order to get an idea of the understanding of the sample population about corona and its effect on the health of people.

- *Wellbeing Index (1998):* This is a wellbeing index made by the World Health Organization. It consists of 5 items, and is a self-rated questionnaire *ranging from "all the time to No time".* The totaling is done by adding up all the raw score of each question and the range of the total score is from 0 – 25.

- *Spiritual assessment scale:* This scale was given in 1992 by Howden. The scale has a total of four domains*:* Purpose and Meaning in Life, Innerness or Inner Resources, Unifying Interconnectedness and Transcendence. The SAS has high internal consistency (alpha=0.9164).

- *Generalized Anxiety Scale:* The Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale-7 (GAD-7) is a self-graded scale having 7 items given by Spitzer

and colleagues (2006) was used as an indicator for screening anxiety and also for the measurement of level of anxiety. GAS is one of the most commonly used screening tools for the predictor of anxiety.

Results and discussions

Correlation analysis was used to study the correlation. The correlation was studied in pairs, and it is as follows.

Table 5.1 shows the correlation analysis used to study the correlation between spirituality and wellbeing. The correlation coefficient for the variables spirituality and wellbeing is 0.874, hence making it significant at 0.05 level

Table 5.1: Correlations between spirituality and wellbeing			
		Spirituality	Wellbei ng
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	1	0.874
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.016
	N	100	100
Wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	874	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016	
	N	100	100

Table 5.2 shows the correlation analysis used to study the correlation between anxiety and wellbeing. The correlation coefficient for the variables anxiety and wellbeing is -0.320, hence making it significant at 0.01 level

Table 5.2: Correlations between anxiety and wellbeing			
		WellBeing	Anxiety
Wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	1	-.320**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	100	100
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.320**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	100	100

Table 5.3 shows the correlation analysis used to study the correlation between Spirituality and Anxiety. The correlation coefficient for the variables Spirituality and Anxiety is 0.149, hence making it insignificant at 0.05 level

Table 5.3: Correlations between Spirituality and anxiety			
		Spir itual ity	Anx iety
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	1	0.149
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.139
	N	100	100
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	0.149	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.139	
	N	100	100

The fundamental point of the examination was to locate any noteworthy relationship among the three factors (Anxiety, Spirituality, and Wellbeing) The current investigation focused on the relationship among the three, assuming any. The outcomes as per the study have been talked about as follows.

The scores in table 5.1 show the correlation analysis used to study the correlation between Spirituality and Wellbeing. The correlation coefficient for the variables Spirituality and Wellbeing is 0.874, making it significant at 0.05 level thus concluding the hypothesis is true. The variables spirituality and wellbeing are positively correlated.

As supported by the study done by Yasaransi, T. (2020) in his review paper concluded how increasing practices like spiritual practices can help in the improvement of an individual's mental wellbeing. Riberio, M. et al (2020) also conducted a research study depicting the importance of letters sent via hotline. It showed spirituality helped to improve the wellbeing of individuals.

Koenig, H. G. (2020) also helped us understand the importance of spiritual activities to decrease the levels of stress and improves the wellbeing. Hence spirituality and wellbeing are positively correlated.

The scores in table 5.2 shows the correlation analysis used to study the correlation between Anxiety and Wellbeing. The correlation coefficient for the variables Anxiety and Wellbeing is -0.320, making it significant at 0.01 level, hence concluding that the hypothesis is true.

The correlation between the variables anxiety and wellbeing is negative. A few studies mentioned above support the hypothesis stating a negative correlation between the variables'

anxiety and wellbeing. Mosheva, M. et al. (2020) stated in his research a clear evidence of how fear associated with the pandemic is a direct cause of high levels of anxiety in the individuals. Another research done by Bäuerle, A. et al. (2020) presented the increase in the number of Anxiety and Depression cases. The fear related to the pandemic affects the wellbeing of the individuals to a great extent.

Petzold, P. M. et al. (2020) studied risk and psychological distress due to pandemic.

The scores in the table 5.3 shows the correlation analysis used to study the correlation between Spirituality and Anxiety. The correlation coefficient for the variables Spirituality and Anxiety is 0.149, making it insignificant at 0.05 level, thus concluding the hypothesis not true.

Thus, it can be concluded, no significant relation was found between the two variables anxiety and spirituality.

Way forward

The study assists with giving the fundamental data about the emergency circumstance alongside its administration by giving the right measure of help by means of care exercises and different treatments. It is imperative to make that condition of mindfulness, to tell people the significance of emotional wellness and prosperity.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having extensive impacts into the psychological make up of people in the public eye. Specialists must consider the financial impacts of social segregation, yet the psychological effect on the network additionally, executing proper estimates, for example, development of the "sheltered spaces" model, to support those enduring residential maltreatment and the most powerless, forestalling further drawback.

We must know and be ready that such worldwide pandemics may repeat if not routinely yet certainly often thus the administrations of countries all around the globe must vow themselves to a continuing and driving forward duty for a considerable improvement of social insurance financial plans on different occasions and production of a reinforcement bolster base of hardware extending from individual assurance rigging to testing offices, immunizations, pharmaceutical activities and even exceptionally prepared open human services experts and irresistible ailment specialists over the globe. Formation of such devoted foundation and having a lot more elevated level of readiness will console and give want to the whole mankind.

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Impact of COVID-19 on Classroom Processes in Higher Education: A Student's Perspective

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Abstract

In the paper, the author shares her experiences of being a student enrolled in an institution of higher education and explores the impact of shift to remote learning as a result of COVID-19 outbreak on classroom processes such as engagement, assessment and physical environment of classroom. Since literature suggests that these processes have implications for learning outcomes of students, it is hoped that through such an inquiry, interventions for addressing the same can be identified.

Keywords: *classroom processes, higher education, COVID-19, India*

Introduction

December 2019 saw the beginnings of the COVID-19 outbreak. Initially restricted to parts of China and its neighbouring countries, the disease spread quickly across the world, with governments hastily enacting lockdown and quarantine restrictions (Crawford, et al., 2020). In India, as of 29 March 2020, only a few cases were reported (World Health Organization, 2020), leaving many concerned that the number of community-acquired cases were higher than those reported (Mansoor, 2020). The first phase of lockdown, thus, was announced pre-emptively to stop the spread on 25 March 2020, which continued till 14 April 2020. This was followed by three more phrases of lockdown (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2020). As a result of restrictions many educational institutions were forced to shift to online teaching and learning mode.

This had implications for students' learning outcomes. While it has shown to have helped in moving towards blended learning i.e., teaching methods that combine online educational materials with traditional place-based classroom methods (Jena, 2020). Preliminary data suggest that the pandemic has introduced new stressors for students like lack of food and safety, housing insecurities, etc., (American Psychological Association, 2020) and worsened learning outcomes for students at primary and secondary levels (Kuhfeld, et al., 2020).

Researches conducted At higher education level, researches have shown that confinement as a result of COVID-19 has had positive effects on students' performance by changing students learning strategies to continuous reading, thereby, improving their efficiency (Gonzalez, et al., 2020; Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). However, studies conducted in South Asian countries point towards increasing disparities in educational attainment and negative impact has been created due to lack of face-to-face interaction with the facilitator, and absence of traditional classroom socialization (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Jena, 2020).

Therefore, in this perspective paper, based on my experiences of being a student in an institution of higher education, an attempt has been made to explore how the classroom processes have been impacted as a result of remote learning. Literature emerging from areas of traditional classroom settings and distance learning, suggests that engagement (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998; Carini, Kuh & Klein, 2006; Guthrie & Anderson, 1999), assessment (Cilliers, et. al., 2012; Scouller, 1998) and evolving physical environment of classrooms (Hannah, 2013) have implications for students' learning outcomes. Thus, the paper critically engages with these emerging themes.

Engagement

Engagement is defined as activities involving "active cognitive processes such as creating, problem-solving, reasoning, decision-making, and evaluation" (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). Most classes across colleges in India have lecture method as a dominant pedagogical tool, as it allows substantial amounts lf content to be delivered to a large audience. However, for transfer of factual information into usable knowledge there is a need for active engagement with the concept being delivered (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2004). For example, a study conducted by Schwartz et al. (1999), showed

that students who actively compared simplified data sets from schema experiments on memory and then heard a lecture around the topic performed much better on transfer test as compared to students who read and summarized a text on the topic of schema theory and then listened to a lecture or those who didn't receive a lecture at all.

In general, beyond the lecture method, students in traditional classroom setup can be seen engaging with content through three primary methods- reading and summarizing text, through interaction with teachers and peers, and fieldwork. As a result of the shift to online modality, while the avenue to read and summarize text continued to exist, the other aspects of classroom engagement were severely impacted.

Interaction with teachers- Since, the online medium is a synchronous learning platform the opportunities for interaction with the teachers continue to exist in classroom settings though virtually. These interactions might be compromised at either end due to network issues. Furthermore, in offline learning modality, there is space to approach the teacher post lecture to clarify doubts, and/ or to schedule appointments. However, due to changed scenarios teachers' devoted time which was the function of separate home and professional space has been deeply impacted, in lack of one's own room (Virginia Woolf) and increased commitment towards home (e.g., teachers who are also young parents may have to oversee their own children's schooling and fulfill child care responsibilities), the ability to find a time slot for engagement with the teacher outside a classroom has been critically compromised.

Interaction with peers- It has been observed that many students don't turn on their video while attending online classes, often due to bandwidth issues. The non-verbal communication, such as gestures and expressions, impacts the overall quality of classroom discussion. Furthermore, most students tend to log out immediately after class completion. Thereby losing the time for reflection on course content through peer interaction. This reduces spaces for scaffolding and peer learning. However, in order to overcome the same, practices like using co-working spaces in form of permanent google links wherein students can all collectively log in, mute themselves and work together, as well as

study sessions wherein students can discuss course material can be adopted. However, the benefit of these practices may be restricted only to those who have undisrupted Wi-Fi and access to mobile/ computer for extended durations.

Fieldwork- The fieldwork is often conducted in the form of practical and internship that allows students to apply theoretical knowledge to real life situations. Which has been compromised in online modality. For example, those studying clinical psychology, the lack of in-person supervision for therapeutic interventions may reduce the attainment of key competencies required as practitioners (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Assessment

Assessment refers to "a process of documenting, in measurable terms, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs of the learner" (Capraro, Roe, Caskey, Strahan, & Bishop, 2012, p. 1). Assessment can be broadly classified as formative (i.e., assessment that occurs throughout college year) and summative (i.e., assessment that tries to capture the culmination of students' achievements within a specified time frame). Most college assessments in India have a combination of both assessments.

Following the shift to online modality, different colleges have adopted new models for assessment. University of Delhi adopted the Open Book Evaluation (OBE) for its final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students. Such assessment shifted the focus from evaluating rote memorization to testing students on more application-based questions. This can be seen as a positive step. However, it is important to note there should be a synergy between teaching and learning. While teaching modality with its increased dependence on lecture method continues to focus on rote memorization, the new evaluation criteria might be misaligned. Furthermore, it is important to ensure principles of fairness in evaluation. However, such new modalities raise questions of exclusion as students belonging SC, ST, OBC and economically weaker backgrounds may find it difficult to attend to such evaluations (Baruah, 2020).

Evolving physical environment of classrooms

Classroom setting is assumed to have an impact on students' learning outcomes. Due to the shift to online modality, instead of formal learning

spaces, students now log into their classroom through their homes. Increased distractions in terms of family members walking or talking in between classes may lead to disruption in ability to concentrate on the class. This issue may be further compounded for individuals who don't have separate rooms for themselves. Furthermore, instead of attending lectures in different locations, students now tend to attend lectures from a fixed space leading to experience of increased fatigue.

Concluding remarks

The shift to online modality has created new opportunities for innovation in classroom processes through use of blended learning and new forms of assessment. However, the new practices also raise issues of reduced engagement, lack of symmetry in learning and evaluation as well as disruptive classroom environments. Since these have implications for learning outcomes of students, it is hoped that the discussion undertaken above would help educators, administrators and the student body to come together to develop innovative solutions to tackle the same.

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Mocking Inclusivity

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Abstract

The current pandemic has hit the world hard. Every aspect of life has been affected and everyone is still struggling to get back to the old normal. While authorities have tried their best to ensure that everyone gets equal educational opportunities, the factual reality is that a large number of learners have been excluded from teaching-learning processes because of varied reasons. It has been assumed the learners are well-equipped with the various essential requirements of attending online classes including the possession of a smart device that can enable them to access online classes, varied accessories such as earphones, a reliable internet connection, regular electricity supply, a suitable environment to ensure learning, etc. But are these actually available to all the learners keeping in mind the diverse population of India? There is a need to look at the issue of inclusivity in context of diversities existing in India. This article seeks to explore more such experiences where the rights of the learners have not been catered.

Keywords: *inclusion, COVID-19, online classes, migrant labour, learners, education,* examinations

Introduction

The year 2020 has brought huge challenges for all people and governments of the world as the world has been hit by COVID-19. The struggle to create a vaccine effective enough to enhance human beings' ability to survive and fight against COVID-19 is still going on. Various countries and governments are trying out different methods to control the spread of the virus. For instance, enforcing lockdown allows accessibility to essentials only. This changed the lives of everyone. While some gradually shifted their livelihood to online mode, thanks to the presence of digital equipment and the technological advancement of the 21st century, some lost their occupation entirely.

The greatest challenge

The availability of various resources is significant for the primary inclusion of the learners in the teaching-learning processes. India, being a developing country, is continuously struggles with the issue of poverty. In fact, every fourth person in India is poor. This means, roughly 270 million (or 27 crore) people in India live in poverty 2011-12. (Economics textbook NCERT, 2019)

People who are economically disadvantaged form the most vulnerable, and their vulnerability got manifoldly increased during the period of lockdown. The countrywide lockdown led to loss of jobs, people were unable to pay their rents or buy food.

Though a sector which is seen as recession free got majorly hit by COVID-19 and that is 'Education'

Compulsory education

"*The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the* Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and *standards.*" ("Ministry of Education, Government of India," n.d.)

In India, education is a fundamental right. To prevent the outstretch of the COVID-19, schools have to be closed since mid of March 2020. In order to continue the process of education, all the schools shifted their classes to the various available virtual platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, etc. But are online classes accessible and available to all the diverse learners of India? This question needs an answer, it is important to understand the

prerequisites for attending the online classes, to participate in the teaching-learning process and learn virtually.

All the software programs and applications that provide face to face virtual calling facilities have some minimum requirements that include an electronic device such as a computer/ laptop/ smartphone/ tablet, consistent electricity supply, and a working internet connection. The availability of these equipment is only sufficient to ensure the attendance of a learner and there are few more requirements to really enable a learner to participate and learn in the online classes. These are majorly related to the environment of the learner. For learning, a space without any external disturbance plays a major role and as the learners have been asked to attend the classes from their home, there is a need for a comfortable space with ample and without any external disturbances. This leads to the need for a specific place unaffected from household chores and activities of other members of the house for the learner in order to participate and learn through online mode of education. Also, if one believes that by only organizing online classes everyone would get included in the educational processes then the concept of inclusion behind this thinking is indeed vague.

Intersecting poverty and education

Urban areas like Delhi, the capital of India, invite an immensely large population as they provide pull factors in the form of jobs and education. The countrywide lockdown started a wave of insecurities among all the migrants. While the people who migrated for jobs, no longer had jobs nor the hope of getting their jobs back anytime soon, the learner who migrated for education, especially those who were enrolled in higher educational institutions, were facing the same uncertainty as schools and colleges were closed for an uncertain period of time. "Coronavirus In Delhi: Delhi Shuts Schools, Colleges, Cinema Halls to Counter Coronavirus - The Economic Times," 2020; Haryana Schools Closed, 2020)

The migrant workers faced yet another challenge even with the best of their abilities, they were not able to get a place to stay or arrange transport to go back to their native village/ town. What about the learners who migrated for the purpose of education? Every year thousands of learners migrate to big cities for better educational opportunities. Most of them either resided in hostels provided by the universities or rented rooms offered by the individual owners. Most of the students were in the middle of their session when the complete lockdown was announced. All of a sudden, students found themselves stuck at a place that they can't call their homes. The only motive for them to stay was to attend classes. At present all the institutions were asked to close down, so classes came to a stall. What were they doing by staying in the hostels and Paying Guest rooms? They were not only living with uncertainties and insecurities but were also feeling futile to be where they were.

Learners who were residing in hostels went in despair when many of the institutions asked their hostel residents to vacant the hostels as soon as possible. ("Delhi University hostel asks students to vacate within a week," 2020; Fatima Khan, 2020; "Punjab University asks students to vacate hostels amid mounting COVID cases on campus," 2020) Many of the hostels' mess stopped working and learners were asked to become self-reliant and thus were left with nothing but to manage their meals on their own in a time when they were having a lack of availability of necessary equipment required for preparing food and even the shops that would provide the similar stuff were closed. At the same time, they were also supposed to leave for their hometowns using the scarce mode of transportation available during that time that included few overcrowded buses, or aeroplanes that were overcharging. Thus, the learners were left with the choice of either travelling through the buses, avoiding the social distancing measures and taking the risk of catching coronavirus or purchasing a flight ticket costing almost double the charges that were being taken during the time period before the attack of coronavirus. Which option do you think a learner would have opted for who does not belong to a well-off family? What about those who somehow managed to gather the money required for travelling through the air mode but faced a lot of hardship because of that as they gave prime importance to their health and not to their pocket? Simultaneously, the universities also resumed their classes using an online mode of education. Hence, a learner who was worried about how s/he would manage his/her next meal, a learner who was uncertain about his/her stay

and could be asked anytime to vacant the place s/he was residing at, a learner who was struggling to get back to his/her home was supposed to attend, focus and learn through virtual classes. The whole idea of inclusion seems to be getting misted here.

Nevertheless, the classes were soon resumed in all educational institutions including schools and colleges using the online mode of learning and life appeared to be back on track again but for many, it was the beginning of new challenges including those who were not migrants but natives. Let us take an example to understand this.

A family of six, living in a small house in an urban city, has four children. Out of these four children, two are too young to attend the school, and the other two study in standard five and three respectively. Both of the older children have classes during the same hours of the day, but they have access to only one smart device that is sufficient to enable only one of them to attend the online class. As a result of this, they attend only half of the classes meant for them as they share the same device. Their father, a small-scale businessman indulge in the house construction business, is unemployed as his work has been hampered significantly due to the current scenario where the economy is continuously declining. Their mother is a housewife who takes care of the two younger children. While both of the older children miss half of their specific classes, they find it really difficult to concentrate in the remaining classes because of the regular chaos in the house. Meanwhile, the school is moving further with the syllabus and these children are lagging behind.

There were countless such experiences and the situation where lack of resources added to physical and mental stress.

Examinations

Till now the coronavirus has succeeded in stalling almost everything but not the examinations. Be it a school or a college, many of the institutions were able to find out one way or another to conduct examinations for their learners. While some organized open book examinations for the learners, some took the help of the various online applications providing the facilities of conducting multiple-choice quizzes, and some were asked to keep the camera of their device open, answer all the questions on sheets of paper in the virtual presence of an invigilator, scan the answers and send them to the teachers through various supporting applications. (Fareeha Iftikhar, 2020; Schools put to test as they gear up for 1st online exam - Times of India, 2020) This way, even the learners who had been quarantined inside their home because one of their family members had been found positive with COVID-19 or even if they were themselves suffering from the same life-threatening disease, had no choice but to give the examinations for the sake of one crucial year of their lives. Their inclusion, keeping their circumstances in mind, was nowhere.

Conclusion

We are living in a time where learners are supposedly assumed as responsible for making themselves included in the educational processes. Multifarious and immense challenges have been faced, since the spread of the world pandemic COVID-19. These circumstances have made them vulnerable and insecure physically, mentally and emotionally. While some have struggled to reach out their houses, some suffered with the issue of the absence of resources. For some, even the presence of the bare minimum amount of food had been a luxury. The situation was worse for the learners who came from the lowest rung of the society. Nevertheless, the various institutions were moving forward with their classes, covering their syllabuses, and were conducting examinations to assess the learners. The way in which the concept of inclusion has been mocked was indeed a mocking in itself.

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Understanding School Students' Experiences of Online Learning During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

COVID-19 has led to a number of changes in the educational scenario of India, including shift from face-to-face interaction with children in classroom to online interactions. However, the experiences of online learning have not been the same for all owing to the diverse socio- economic context of India. The present study is an attempt to understand the experiences of online learning at the secondary and senior-secondary school level in a metropolitan city, Delhi, through a brief online survey. Based on the responses of 52 students, the study found that even though teachers were trying hard to maintain the quality of the teaching-learning process, there were many other factors that affected the learning of students.

Keywords: *students' experiences, online learning, COVID-19*

Introduction

India witnessed a rise in COVID-19 cases by the end of March, which led the government to impose lockdown. The spread of virus affected almost every aspect of life including the economy, education, healthcare, and agriculture.

The government decided to close the schools and universities on 16th of March in an attempt to reduce the spread of coronavirus. The pandemic managed to disturb the routine functioning of the educational institutions all around the world. Even though the lockdown had been lifted, educational institutes have decided to continue with online classes.

The 21st century is marked by the advancement and use of technology. It has also seeped into the classrooms, where students are dependent more on the internet than libraries for their school projects and assignments. However, another reality is that every student does not have access to the internet and associated gadgets. Thus, it becomes of importance to relook at the current strategy of online classes. During the ongoing lockdown, as the transition from the traditional classroom learning to online learning took place, some people described it as a change that was needed for the modernization of the education system. They argued that the system will now be more accessible and flexible.

Another argument is that the system is not inclusive, especially for students with disability. Even for the people who can afford the said means, online education seems to be a mixed experience.

As the situation because of COVID-19 became graver with time, online education became the only alternative, seemingly for the whole year. The objective of this research stems from the situation created in education due to COVID and how the system was seemingly not prepared for it, especially students and their families.

Even though there are many newspaper articles and blogs related to online learning during COVID-2019, almost all of these are perspective-building articles, and not empirical studies. Considering that the issue of students' experiences of online learning during COVID-19 pandemic is a context specific issue, therefore, not many researches are available related to this topic. Though, there are numerous studies related to students' experience of online learning in general, some significant ones are discussed below.

A study by Blackmon and Major (2012) found that students enrolled into online courses to bring a balance in their time and energy between work, studies and family. However, it also reported that students also missed the classroom interactions with the teachers and batch mates. The lack of student-teacher and student-student communication has been a cause of concern for many students.

A study by Kemp and Grieve (2014) concerning undergraduates' opinions and test performance in classroom vs. online learning revealed that the students prefer face to face discussions rather than online discussions. The study further revealed that students preferred completing

written exercises online in the comfort of their homes and found online exams to be more flexible and easier.
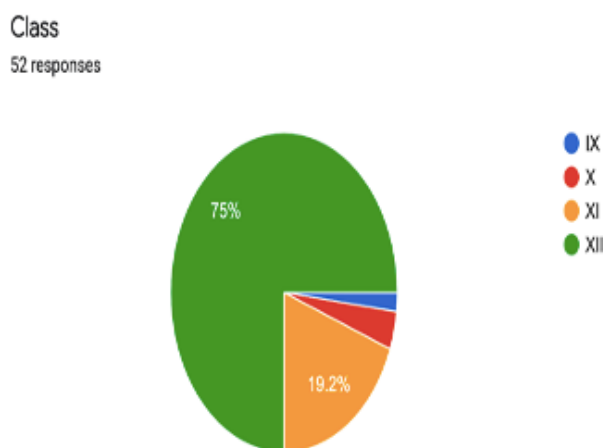
Students' experiences of online learning during the pandemic were further looked into understanding the difference between online learning and classroom learning from students' perspectives. The study examined various factors that influenced the online learning of students.

Method

The present study is a survey of opinions, feelings, and reflections of school students regarding online learning. The method adopted for this research is survey.

Participants for this study were students of class IX-XII. 52 students from tier 1 private schools in Delhi participated in this survey study and the distribution is presented in the figure below:

Chart 1: Grades in which the respondents' study

internet connection for classes, whereas 28.8% had a good-enough connection but with limited data. Only 2% students felt that they did not have an adequate internet connection. They also stated that even if they had good enough internet connection, the access was limited in terms of limited data availability. Hence, the data was over after one or two lectures or was not sufficient for all the lectures in a day. The responses clearly indicated towards a class-divide in terms of digital access, also known as digital-divide which has resulted in a difficult transition towards online learning. Participants also reported that the situation related to access to the internet for online classes became even more grave when there were two or more children in the house who needed to attend online lectures, but couldn't due to limited or no internet availability, and lack of electronic gadgets such as smartphones, laptops and computers for each individual. Thus, students who did not have internet connection have fallen behind on their education during the pandemic. "The 2017-18 National Sample Survey reported only 23.8 percent of Indian households had internet access. In rural households (66 percent of the population), only 14.9 percent had access, and in urban households only 42 percent had access" (Sahni, 2020). This also raises questions of equity and universal access to education, especially in the times of a pandemic or any other natural disaster.
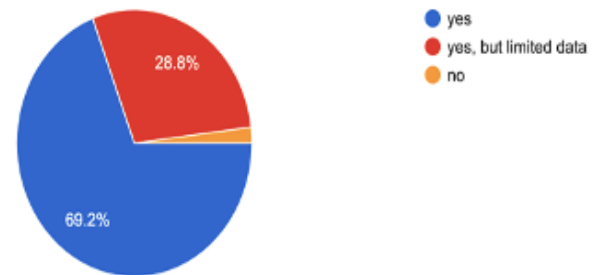
Result and discussions

Based upon the responses of the participants, this section presents the results obtained from the data, its analysis and discussion. The first sub-section presents the analysis of closed-ended question and the second sub-section presents the analysis of open-ended questions.

The first and foremost question that arises in reference to online learning is whether students have an adequate internet connection to attend classes seamlessly. Responses to this question are presented below as Chart 2:

Chart 2: Responses to adequate internet connection to attend classes seamlessly

As can be seen from the pie-chart above, 69.2% students mentioned that they had adequate

The next question was regarding the number of students who did not join online classes. Chart no. 3 depicts that 22 students reported that the estimated number of students who missed lectures every day is 0-10%. Along with access, the related issue that emerged from the survey was students' motivation to attend online classes. Most of the classrooms in India consisted of 40-45 students, 10%, i.e., 4 students fail to attend lectures every day. Out of 52 students, 16

students reported that rate of absence in their classrooms is more than 20%.

Chart 3: Estimation of students missing online classes

In comparison to classes in school, an estimate number of students in my class who do not join online classes everyday is:
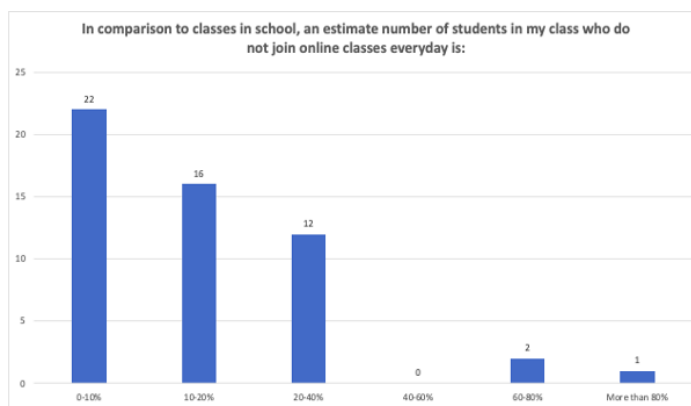
One of the major challenges in online learning was to keep students motivated. During online lectures, students reported that they were more prone to disengagement. The absence of non-verbal cues also made students unenthusiastic. Students said that they first felt that online learning was simple and minimal engagement in the same will lead to the same results as face-to-face classroom learning. The absenteeism would also be less as compared to offline classrooms. But even if there was less absenteeism, students were attending classes with less concentration. Participants shared that they were falling behind on their lectures and schoolwork and were unable to catch up due to lack of communication with their peers. It, in turn, negatively impacted students' learning experience as well as their performance in classes.

Furthermore, even when there was access to the basic minimum requirements to attend an online class, there were other non-technical issues that affected the process of learning. Issues such as ethos to concentrate on learning, engaging with peers, and other learning resources. Chart 4, below, presents the views of the participants regarding their privacy and personal space while attending online classes.

Chart 4: Existence of space at home to attend online classes

Do you have a space where you can attend lectures and study without any disturbances?
52 responses

- always
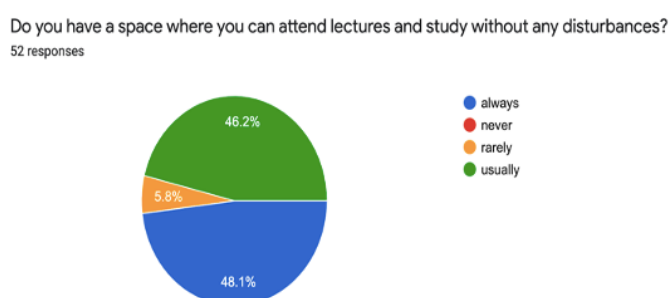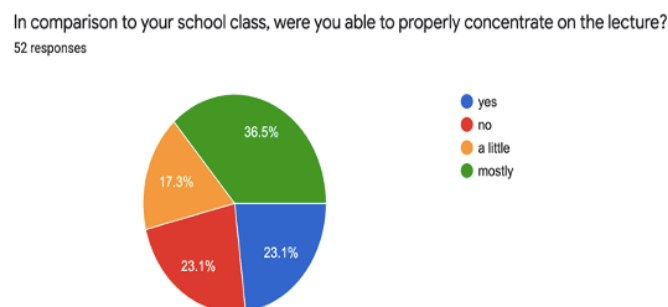- never
- rarely
- usually

Chart 4 shows that about 48% students responded that they are always able to find a space where they can work undisturbed by their parents or other family members. Around 46% students noted that they usually have a personal space to study. Whereas, only about 6% students reported that they can rarely find enough quiet to keep their mental and physical state together while attending lectures. As a result, the learning process is not consistent and smooth. A peaceful space for one's own self while studying was an important factor that determined the concentration and attentiveness of the students. This was reported by most of the participants. This was affected by the ongoing activities at home and led to students not having a personal space for attending classes online and doing work allocated for after school hours. The absence of existence of a day that used to be a divided day- at school and after school, led to a diffused kind of situation at home. The lecture on the smartphone/computers and the conversations with or among the other members of the household at the same time created an attention divide in the students.

Chart 5: Responses to ability of students to concentrate in online classes

In comparison to your school class, were you able to properly concentrate on the lecture?
52 responses

- yes
- no
- a little
- mostly

The next important concern for students is their concentration in online classes. As depicted in the Chart 5, when asked, "if they were able to concentrate during online lectures as well as classroom lectures?" 23 percent of the students in the sample reported that they were unable to concentrate properly on the online lectures. The students noted that they were constantly being distracted by other things going on in their smartphones, such as social media. About the same percentage of students i.e., 23 percent noted that they were able to easily concentrate during online classes. Another 36.5% students noted that they were mostly able to concentrate in the online classes, while another 17.3% students reported that they were only able to

concentrate a little during the online classes. These findings were quite intriguing as almost the same percentage of students said that they were able and unable to concentrate on the online lectures. Though the survey could not reveal the reasons for such a trend in the data, the factors affecting concentration of students in online classes may be worth considering in the subsequent studies.

Chart 6: Responses of online classes being more convenient to offline classroom lectures

Do you think that online classes are more convenient as compared to classroom lectures at your school?
52 responses
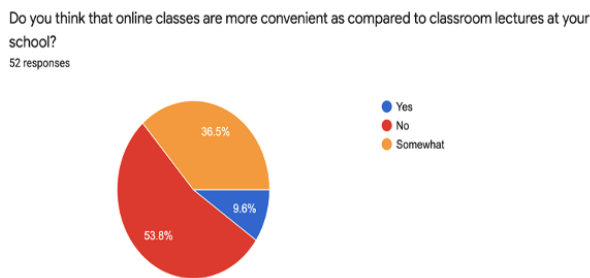
Apart from ability to concentrate, another pertinent point that was explored in the survey was convenience of online classes. As can be seen from Chart 6, most students, i.e. about 54 percent of students, reported that they found online classes inconvenient as compared to the classroom lectures. About 36 percent of students noted that online classes were somewhat more convenient as compared to the classroom lectures while about 10 percent of students were convinced that online classes were definitely more convenient than classroom lectures. Thus, it is quite clear that online classes were not as convenient as going to school for most students. It could be because of lack of dedicated space for learning at home, absence of adequate internet connection and existence of general disturbances at home. The students who reported finding online classes more convenient mentioned reasons such as considerations of commuting long distance to reach the school.

Chart 7: Responses to understand nature of learning with online classes

The survey further explored the issue of effectiveness to understand if students were able to learn equally well with online classes. As can be observed from Chart 7, a miniscule 13% of students in the sample found online classes more effective than classroom lectures. 15.4% students found no difference and the rest 71.2% of students in the sample clearly reported finding

Do you think that online classes are more effective as compared to classroom lectures at your school?
52 responses
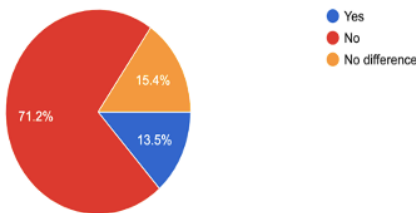
classroom lectures much more effective as compared to the online classes. The reasons for the same were multifold. Multiple reasons reported for ineffectiveness to learn well from online classes were sitting at the same place the whole day and listening to lectures creates a monotonous environment, unavailability of resources at home, especially for persons with disabilities, such as Braille printers or support of a special educator, noise at home arising from cooking or doorbell or conversations among people at home.

As is notable from Chart 8, when enquired if they observed any difference in the teaching method of teachers in online mode, about 20% students felt that teachers have not changed much in their ways of teaching. A majority of students, i.e., about 44% of students, suggested that there were only minor changes in the pedagogy. About 36% students noted that there were significant changes in the teaching methods used by teachers in online lectures.

The change in the teaching methods employed by teachers in online teaching seemed to be a positive trend, but, when probed further students did mention that the changed methods were not enough to sustain their concentration for a particular class in online mode.

Chart 9: Responses for beliefs of students with respect to online learning and experiences with
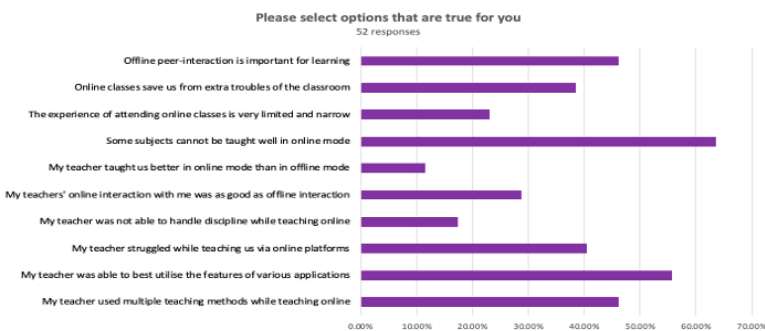
teachers in online learning mode

Participants were further asked about their beliefs with respect to online learning and their experiences with teachers in online learning mode. About half of the students (about 46.2%) believed that offline peer-interaction is important for learning. This seemed to be the biggest casualty in the whole process of online learning and contributor to the disengagement of students. When asked if online classes saved students from the extra troubles of the classroom, only about 38% students agreed. This indicated that there are very few students who see online classes as a viable substitute for an actual classroom despite its usual troubles. Few students (i.e., about 23%) believed that their experience of attending online classes is limited and narrow. The rest of the students found online learning enriching.

In reference to the possibilities of online learning, the majority of students (i.e., about 64%) agreed that there were limitations to online learning as some subjects just can't be taught in the online mode. When asked if their teacher taught better in online mode as compared to the offline mode, only about 11% of students agreed. This indicated that most students believed that their teachers did a better job of teaching in a regular face to face classroom scenario than in online mode. About less than half (i.e., 46%) students reported that their teachers used multiple methods while teaching in the online classroom.

In reference to the experiences with teachers, only a few students (i.e., 29%) believed that their interaction with them in online mode was as good as offline mode. Most of the students felt that the quality of interaction with the teachers was better in actual classroom and school. About 40% students in the survey also expressed that their teachers struggled in using the different online platforms. Further, about half of the students (i.e., about 55%) believed that their teachers were able to utilize the different features of the online learning applications.

The discussion above indicates that online mode of teaching does not offer students an interpersonal space where they could open up and engage with the teacher and with each other. This idea was further explored in the next question where students were asked if they felt comfortable while sharing their concerns and feelings with the teachers in the online classes. As depicted in Chart 10, only about 25%

students reported feeling comfortable in sharing their feelings and concerns with the teacher in the online mode. Equal percentage of students reported that they felt uncomfortable with the same and felt that they were able to share and discuss multiple aspects about themselves with teachers in offline mode. About 50% of students mentioned that they only feel comfortable discussing the academic matters with their teachers in the online mode and not personal issues.

Chart 10: Responses about sharing concerns/ feelings with teachers in online mode

How comfortable did you feel to share your feelings/concerns with the teacher?
52 responses
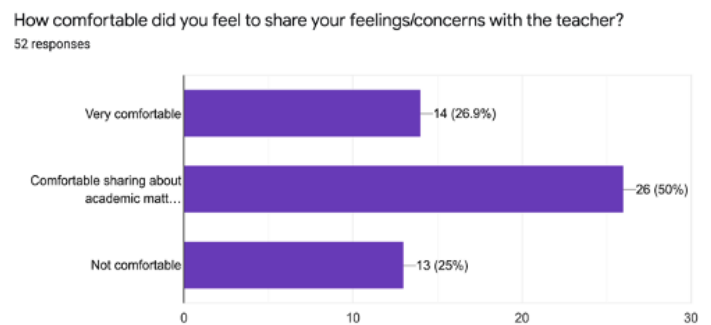
For the purpose of analysis, the following broader categories of few (under 30%), many (30-50%), most (50-80%), and almost all (above 80%) have been used, wherever needed. The questions were not mandatory for the respondents to respond.

While exploring the support of family for online learning, most of the respondents replied that their family members do not disturb them during their studies. They are provided with a separate space, privacy, as well as necessary peace to attend a class online. A few mentioned that their parents sit with them during the classes. Only two students mentioned that their parents do not find any value in online classes but still supported them fully.

On being asked what participants considered important in school life, but found it missing during online learning, most of the students responded that they missed being with friends, having fun with their peers, meeting teachers, and other classroom interactions. Only a few students missed physical activities, practical learning, and a daily routine. The responses of students clearly indicated the importance of their peer-group and other aspects of the school life that made offline classroom a more wholesome experience.

With reference to improving their learning in online classes, many students mentioned that use of presentations, quizzes, research activities, and individual attention to students can be helpful. A few respondents mentioned that more discipline on the part of students, counselling sessions, one on one interaction are required. A few students also mentioned that recordings of the sessions need to be made available and sessions need to be made more interesting.

Many respondents felt that online assessments should be done, but only during emergency times, such as lockdowns. Most of the respondents did not support online assessments because of issues of access, loopholes such as possibility of use of unfair means, application malfunction or software glitches, and would not include any practical work. A few respondents also mentioned that online assessments of younger students would not be easy. When asked what kind of interactions would help participants to learn better in online classes, many students shared that they did not think that anything else could help them learn better in online classes. Only a few students felt that better teacher-student interaction, individualized attention, and projects or quizzes might help.

More number of students felt their relationship with their teachers has changed now. They felt that the change was in terms of reduced quality of interaction. Of those who feel that teachers have not changed, only one student mentioned that their teachers still focused on the students who scored more marks. Many respondents did not give reasons for their responses.

Most respondents felt that their relationships with their peers had changed negatively because of reduced interaction while attending online classes. This may also be due to not being able to meet their friends daily. Only a few felt that there was no change in their relationships with their peers.

Of the challenges that the respondents faced while attending classes online, most of them reported internet breakdown or slow internet as the main reason. A few of them also reported headaches, irritation in eyes, inattentiveness, lack of concentration, less time to clear doubts, and issues with sitting for long hours. A few of them also felt that certain practical concepts were not easy to be understood in an online classroom.

In comparison to their online classes, most students felt that other spaces apart from classes are equally important. Many respondents found that physical activities in schools are important. The importance of friendships, institutional ethos, discipline, going out of one's comfort zone and a constant engagement with teachers are aspects that are amiss in online learning.

As can be discerned from the discussion above, both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the survey complement each other. Some insights which are missing from the quantitative section of the discussion are provided by the qualitative analysis of participants' responses to open-ended questions in the survey. Yet, there are many unexplored ideas which could have been explored in-depth with help of an interview with some participants.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the study provides us with an overview of the experiences of online learning of students from urban metropolitan privately managed schools. Even though there was a lot of similarity in the context of these schools, yet there are many differences in students' experiences. As far as the commonalities are concerned, many students reported the lack of proper communication between the students and the teacher as well as among the students. Students expressed that the lectures were mostly one way, where only the teachers spoke for half an hour without any interaction with the students. The lack of excitement about classrooms caused boredom and in turn, caused low levels of concentration.

Most students disclosed that even though they understood that online classes are the best option that they have during the ongoing crisis, they, along with their parents, did not prefer online classes over regular classroom classes. The reason for this was limited classroom interaction among peers, lack of feeling of connect of the students with the teachers, no physical activity, no lunch breaks and associated merriment, no sense of healthy competitions, joy of school academic and non-academic festivities and the general ambience of the classroom and the school. They felt that all the above aspects were very helpful in inculcating a sense of unity and willingness to learn in a student. Maximum students suggested that regular classes were

more convenient and effective as compared to online lectures.

Participants believed that practical knowledge that they gained in schools through projects, debates, reflections, games, workshops, brainstorming etc. foster learning. One of the major sources of inconvenience as revealed by the participants was online assessment of students which they felt was unfair. In schools, teachers understand and cater to the different needs of different students which seems impossible during online lectures, even though teachers were trying their best to incorporate aspects of individualized attention to students.

The healthy and casual conversations not related to books, which lightened the mood of a classroom seemed to be missing from the picture and made lectures tedious. Even if students came up with queries or topics of discussion, the duration of the lecture was not enough for the teachers to respond to queries. Hence, students were reluctant to voice their doubts. The teachers also strictly stick to the curriculum and what was there in the books that it barely left any space and time for creativity. Most of the teachers were not familiar with the functioning of gadgets and hence they struggled with the same. It usually took a lot of time for everyone to join in on lectures in time, which left very little time in hand for actual engagement with a topic in a particular lecture, let alone using multiple methods such as videos, PowerPoint presentations, films, etc. to aid education. Online classes demanded a lot from the family as well.

It can be concluded that though the online classes are the need of the hour, but they cannot replace the face-to-face classes. The classroom interactions lead to a more holistic development and learning of a child.

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Book Review

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'**Understanding Childhood and Adolescence**', *edited by Prof. Namita Ranganathan* is a compendium of profoundly researched and engaging academic chapters that cover the historical development, professional perspectives, educational technologies and methodologies in learning. The focus on gender, inclusion and diversity makes it a holistic text.

- Education is undergoing a great change. The educators' role in global dynamics, new societal perspectives, the student as a co-learner, parents as stakeholders, are some of the issues that are being explored, as we go forward into the millennia. Schools at present are working to recalibrate themselves into quality schools of the future. The larger patterns emerging are:

- The contours of global citizenship are shifting.

- The barrier between a human being and a machine is shrinking.

- A focus on sustainable goals is the future of students and educators.

Amidst so many uncertainties, what is the future path we must traverse? What will our students need to know, and believe in order to add value to such a rapidly changing world?

We need to prepare children for classrooms that are volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA).

This book provides a wide range of definitions and approaches to modern day understanding of learning. The author has tried to establish a relationship between intelligence, creativity, emotions and theory. The identification of subjects related to the nature of knowledge in the Indian context have been depicted through an interdisciplinary, disciplinary, epistemic and procedural lens.

We are facing a global learning crisis. Apart from the quarter of a billion children who are out of school today, even more than 330 million children who are in school are failing to learn. If learning has to be inclusive, lifelong and across stratas, we will need to refine, extend and reinforce the existing model by re-engineering methodology, pedagogy and transaction.

The contributors in this book try to look at innovative strategies that blur lines between formal and informal learning, which is critical to transformation. Many of them speak from a lifetime's perspective of learning. While others create linkages through their chapters that weave together the context and interdependent role of social and institutional spaces.

Across the world, especially in India, much of the curricula in the 21st century schools are still focused on equipping students for life in the last century. The Indian population is young. Approximately 30.8 per cent of India's 1.1 billion people is under fourteen years of age. By 2030, India will have one of the youngest populations in the world. This vast resource will shape the nation and the world. Its primary values, aspirations, knowledge, abilities, skills and dilemmas will have their bearing on their choices and indeed on the world that they inherit.

Preparing the young population with the necessary literacies, skills and attitudes, is the challenge.

Interpersonal communications and problem-solving offer the most powerful keys to success in the modern economy, replacing the narrowly focused, repetitive skills that are the earmarks of the industrial age. Literacy, numeracy and other fundamentals are still necessary prerequisites for employment. Students today must also be trained to think creatively, innovate widely and use technology-based collaborative tools effectively.

In this book, the attempt is to bring together a myriad strands and weave a fabric of learning which will be of interest to specialists, teachers, principals and civil society. Infact, to all those who are on a voyage of discovery of an evolving child centred educational experience.

The wide range of chapters carried in the book, though varying in length, style and content are research oriented and throw light on the emerging scenarios of learning in a digital world,

the rights of children, issues of adolescence and the spectrum of multiple intelligences.

Young adults are likely to take up as many as seven different careers in a lifetime, in contrast to youth in the past. In this changing environment it is essential to adapt, innovate and cope with change. Students need to meet the challenges of the 21st century, shape wellbeing and sustainability for themselves and others. Adolescents need transformative competencies through which they contribute to a better future, create new values, reconcile tensions and dilemmas.

The same technologies that created the Internet and the information revolution will have the power to transform education. What we now see on the horizon is Education 3.0, a new phase in which educators will develop and implement a transformative template for the coming years. Education 3.0 will build on the Education 2.0 reforms, but add the power of cutting-edge communications, the latest pedagogical tools, and collaborative technologies to equip learners for work and life in the present age. This will adequately prepare students for the future.

The importance of growing up in a digital world has been reflected in one of the chapters. It throws light on the trends that have taken over large spaces in the virtual life of adolescents. They are leading a parallel life on Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Vchat etc. which is affecting their social and emotional identities. This leads to disturbing psychological trends and mental wellbeing.

Digitalization has created both connections and divides leading to social isolation and marginalization, creation of stereotypes and leapfrogging of children into early adulthood.

The book explores creative development in education and the related factors which are environmental, sociological, philosophical and psychological.

Cultural and Ecological literacy are an integral part of 21st century learning. It helps us to understand diversity and the environment. It is imperative that the education we receive helps us to see ourselves as part of a complex, interconnected, and interdependent world. Today, more than ever, we need teachers who challenge prevailing standardised education policies and practices, in favour of more individualised holistic approaches. This will help

to tap into the talents of children to be better prepared to live productively in a rapidly changing world.

Teachers need to implement processes which foster student autonomy and leadership. Encourage inventive learners with skills, channelize their creative spirit, maximize liberty to make decisions and develop global partnerships. We must enable our children to live together in mutual empowerment. If we can create a common humanity in our school communities, it will go a long way in generating collaborative careers which are the need of the hour.

Many issues that are faced by schools today are essentially about the skills and sensibilities, the attitudes and qualities of children. Classrooms have become challenging spaces where students come together from varying social, cultural and economic backgrounds, often physically and mentally challenged with a baggage of divorced or single parents, sexual abuse, victims of domestic violence and a plethora of behavioural issues as a result of a violent society.

Consequently, traditional responses to the demand for education that are essentially quantitative and knowledge based are no longer appropriate. It is not enough to supply each child early in life with a store of knowledge. Each individual must be equipped to seize learning opportunities throughout life, both to broaden his/her knowledge, skills and attitudes, and to adapt to a changing, complex and interdependent world.

As demonstrated by the authors, this book would not only be useful to all the school heads, teachers, educators and policy makers but also serve as a valuable resource of reference in libraries. The content is crucial for classroom teachers who want to help children learn to their maximum potential. Teachers will benefit greatly from the knowledge and understanding of many complex topics.

This valuable resource, empowers teachers with core teaching principles and mind friendly strategies along with new educational ideas, theories and trends which are reliable and long lasting.

- 'Understanding Childhood and Adolescence' is a reader friendly resource which covers both processes and content and identifies specific

characteristics of successful strategies, providing techniques that are:

- Easy to learn and implement

- Adaptable for differentiated instruction and individual learning styles

- Applicable to all grade levels

- Teacher tested and proven to deliver results in any school setting

- Aligned with contemporary neuro and cognitive science research

Students of education, experienced teachers and administrators can find inspiration in the ideas and strategies that the authors share in this wonderful compendium.

Prof. Namita Ranganathan has edited a book that reveals a practical approach to implementing best practices in the classroom. Exploration of this book will bring a wealth of material to invent a new learning future for children and adolescents.

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