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Academic, Social and Emotional Learning among Children during Online Schooling

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School is often known to be the second home for children. This place plays a chief role in inculcating values in a child. The fact of not being physically present at school has its own benefits and drawbacks. A child's value of being disciplined, punctual, compassionate about the knowledge that is being shared, performing a team task and many more have taken a back seat which has resulted in low social and emotional intelligence of the child. The present study purposes to highlight the social, academic and emotional learning pattern of the child through descriptive method and bring out the issues that the child faces in the current situation due to online learning mode along with their parents' perspective. The online discussions were conducted for parents and their school going children. Earlier researches have established that a socially and emotionally strong child has a better understanding of academics and achieves higher. The physical environment of the child shapes the social animal in the individual. The household and the school are where the emotions of the child develop and are made stronger. The outcome of the present study indicate that the child and the parents are dissatisfied with the quality of online learning, the social, academic and emotional growth of the child has been affected which would have been stable during physical mode of learning. Results have also directed that online exam have enabled incorrect means of qualifying in the exams and that as a result is applied by the children in all other aspects of their lives.

Keywords: social, emotional, academic, school children, values

Learning commences with cradle and ends with grave. An individual learns through various methods, some can be based on operant conditioning involving the reward and punishment aspect while other can be trial and error method. Learning is a variable which depends on various stimuli. Every activity that one does or observe is a part of their learning process. Many a times an individual learns from their mistakes. Learning never stops because life never stops teaching.

The recent pandemic has exposed people to adapt to new methods and technologies of learning and has brought in a shift in the pattern. This shift is seen in their socio-economic and academic lives. The highly pretentious population are the school going children. They have adapted to a new method of learning which might or might not be suitable to their grasping ability. The announcement of complete lockdown and the shutting of educational institutions led to a change in the child's overall development. The development is still taking place but in forms that does not suit their age and personality. Families have had a traumatic experience with finance, may it be the loosing of their jobs, cut down in the salary or extra expense on the gadget and internet along with the usual school fees of the child/ward. The human life was at risk so was the survival. The education institutions responded to the lockdown by gearing up and by training the teachers to conduct the online classes. The condition was stimulating for the parents, children and school authorities.

The digital method of imparting and learning had its own pros and cons. Various mediums were used and tested for the online classroom, including Zoom meeting app, Microsoft Teams, Google meet and many more. The black and white teaching and learning was now turned into power point presentations, videos and hyperlinks done through screen sharing. Initially the online

system was new and exciting for the students, but as time passed it became more of a stress and compulsion. The quality of learning (QOL) plays a very important role in any mode of knowledge acquiring. The level of satisfaction with learning, ability to comprehend and have feedback for the same, level of understanding and being understood operationally defines Quality of Learning. With the passage of time, children and parents seemed to be unsatisfied with the QOL. Along with mental health issues, children also faced physical issues resulting to poor health.

Bourne (1997) framed (keeping in mind the young-adult population) that online learning could make things like submission of homework, group discussions, grading the project, real time audio and video, study material regarding syllabus, assignment, reading, etc possible. All the above was well imbided in the online education system during the pandemic worldwide but couldn't be successful to an extent with the school going children. It was also noticed that (Bourne, 1997) online learning had something more than the syllabus and a list of assignments to be done by the students. Among these, a major challenge was to keep the child motivated for online learning. Along with motivation, parents, teachers, educators and students also believed that the academic institutions should look for ways to enhance the students' social-emotional competence, their character and the civic-engagement (Greenberg et al, 2003). The online system of learning has impacted the students' behavioural, emotional and psychological health which also results in significantly poor school performance, obesity and risky behaviours (Durlak et al, 2011).

Emotions do have the ability to facilitate or hinder the child's academic assignation, commitment and the ultimate school accomplishment; as they do affect the procedure of how and what a student learns (Elias et al, 1997). A child develops better emotional stability when engages with other peers. The exchange of positive and negative emotion helps them understand self and others in a more profound manner. The emotional intelligence of the child is hence better shaped and developed in the presence of similar aged individuals. The

monotonous online system of learning has changed the emotional system for the child, majority of the time they do experience negative emotions as compared to positive ones. The unpreparedness of schools and universities for the online teaching-learning course due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, disabled proper methods and strategies for the process and that in return has impacted the psychological and physical health of the students worldwide.

Objective:

The study's objective is to learn about students' emotional, behavioural, and social well-being in relation to the online learning system throughout the epidemic. The qualitative method used in the study permits the researcher to get first hand responses to the issues, difficulties and perception which does not have to fit the structured questionnaire pattern. It aims to study the pattern and feedback of the schoolchildren and parents about the online learning. It also tries to understand the difference in terms of advantages and disadvantages of learning through online and offline medium.

Method

Research Design

The study applies qualitative research design as a medium of analysis and data collection. Among the qualitative design, it was a Phenomenology research design which is used to focus on the commonality of the lived experience among the particular group. It is also called as Descriptive Phenomenology. In this method, all collected data is laid out and treated as equal, clustered into themes, examined from multiple perspectives, and descriptions of the phenomena (how and what) are constructed. Video-call interviews were scheduled with the parent and their school going child. The responses recorded and transcript were in descriptive form so that the researcher can have a first-hand experience of the participants and which does not necessarily have to be fitted in the structured questionnaire pattern.

Participant and Procedure:

The sample size of the study was a total of 15 parent and 15 children/ward, they were interviewed on the semi-structured interview.

The thematic analysis was used to understand the data gathered. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and then transcripted. The children's age was between 10-15 years. Being a child, the informed consent was obtained from every parent before interviewing the child. Purposive sampling was used, children in the age range of 10-15 years, who have been attending online classes during the pandemic were considered from the population as the sample. There were no criteria of selection for the parents.

Each interview with the participant (parent and child separately) took around 20-30 minutes. The parents and the children were both interviewed in isolation, without the presence of the other to reduce any kind of bias or provocation. For ethical consideration, the recoding and the transcript of the child's interview was emailed to their parent for review and approval. The video sessions were recorded using the screen-recorder or the in-app recording facility (present with Zoom) and the transcription was done using Otter app.

Data analysis:

The method used to analyse the gathered data was thematic analysis for qualitative study. The data collected through semi-structured interview method was in descriptive form, it was then transcripted using Otter app, a software to transcript the verbal responses of the individual. Once the transcript was ready, the answers were coded manually and themes were assigned to each response. The common themes were then coded together under broad category for discussion. The rare response category/ code were discussed separately towards the conclusion of the discussion.

Results and Discussion

The outcome of the study has been characterized under various themes related to parents and the children separately. The concerns and the perspective of both have certain similarities and also differences. A total of 30 parents and children were interviewed for the study and the transcripted was analysed. The themes obtained for parents only are Work-Life Balance, Values and Discipline, Child's Growth

and Development. The themes identified for children only are Online V/s Offline Learning, Mental Health and Emotions. The themes seen to be in common for both are Social Networking, Social Isolation, Outdoor Engagement and Scholastic Development.

Themes related to Parents:-

a) Work-life balance: Due to work from home (WFH) arrangements, the majority of the parents were constantly in touch with their child/adolescent throughout the day. Attending work and also assisting their children in online classes took up most of their energy and mental balance. The parents seemed to be frustrated with the routine of working and also looking after their children constantly. There was also loss of personal space, variety of roles to be played by the parents. Most of them confessed targeting their children for their anger outburst and frustration.

b) Values and Discipline: During the pandemic, the parents have noticed certain changes in the values of their children. The children seem to take parents for granted and are not thankful enough as they used to be. Children lack fear of authority, understanding, respect, etc. children have become more argumentative, rebellious, make untruthful excuses for not doing things, formal, ignorant. Basic sharing and caring, teamwork also have decreased.

c) Child's growth and development: Pandemic has bought a number of irregularities in the growth and development of children. The age being a period of puberty, has affected the child's overall development. With the changing nature of self, the fluctuations in the environment seem to be over-whelming to the adolescents. The level of maturity, attachment, patience, self-care, compassion, effort is lost. They have become more dependent on parents for all that they do. The mental health is at risk with degrading quality of learning and living. Students have stopped making efforts on their own and want everything done by the parents.

Themes related to Children/Adolescent:-

a) Offline v/s Online learning: In the online system of learning, students face a lot of

technical issues and disturbances which reduce the QOL which wouldn't have affected them in the physical school setting. Due to these issues, they find it difficult to concentrate and the attention span has reduced. They fear missing out on important things. Technical issues from their end such as inability to unmute the mic and respond, inability to hear the teacher's command leads to embarrassment, shame and guilt. They see students interrupting and not answering the teacher. In the absence of primary contact with the teacher they find it difficult to approach and clarify doubts which results in losing interest in the topic. A benefit that they see of online learning is extra hours of sleep in the morning and reduced travel time.

The offline physical school enabled playing on the ground, practical lectures for experiments, in between talk with friends, sharing of tiffin, appreciation from teachers, personal correction when mistake made and also the punishment. Children seem to miss these basic activities that shaped and developed their growth.

b) Mental Health and Emotions: The emotions experienced by the children throughout the day involving their online classes, assignments, play, etc are aggression, frustration, annoyance, lethargy, crankiness, irritability, frequent cry spells, dull mood, etc as reported by the parents. According to students, they feel lonely, left out, unhappy most of the time, frustrated, anxious, annoyed, bored, helpless, guilty, mentally exhausted, etc. The mental health is a risk and stress increase as they proceed to higher grades of education. The emotional development is paused due to online mode of learning as children do not find opportunities to interact and exchange the basic feeling and experiences that take place between them and teachers or among the peers while in offline school.

Themes seen in common among the parents and the children:-

a) Social Networking: Students spend more hours on gadgets due to e-learning. The ads pop-up in between the usage of internet directs the child's attention to various other websites that might not be appropriate to them which put the parents under constant fear of inappropriate exposure of their ward. This leads

to distraction and loosening of concentration among the adolescent in terms of chatting with their friends in between the class. This has posed a big challenge for the parents, teachers and students in the form of lack of attention span. The monotonous of instructing and learning process distracted the students into various activities like watching web series between the class, playing games on phone simultaneously when class is logged in, etc. Hooking onto computers is either one of the addiction or compulsion for the children. They are competitive in nature but with things which are not required to be, like gaming, browsing, surfing, etc. The isolating and repetitive nature of the online world can be stunting in terms of development. In order to establish a good and argument proof plan with the adolescent when approaching them, it is central to know exactly what the teen does and how much time has been spent on the what. This might help in reducing the activity when confronted.

b) Social Isolation/ Introvertedness and Self-Centeredness: The initial lockdown enabled children to stay indoors and that pattern has impacted their social behaviour to a very great extent. The only way to socialize is through social media for them. Parents are of the view that the children do initiate any social gatherings, not even meeting their school friends. The quality time with parents has also been affected, children have started hiding things from them and prefer to stay on their own and have inclined towards introversion. With reduced initiative to socialize, they have started losing friends, increase in sibling rivalry, etc. Unfortunately, we are witnessing the development of feeling of I instead of WE which means individualism is overpowering collectivism resulting in self-centeredness, selfishness at the cost of ethical values.

c) Outdoor Engagement: The lockdown has reduced the physical activity of the children, converting them into couch potatoes due to the passive entertainment. The constant interaction with the screen has strained the eyes and the muscles which in turn has impacted the shaped of the posture. The staying indoor pattern has increased the diet intake which resulted in weight gain for most of the students. The stamina has

done down and so is their energy level and motivation. Children seem to miss more of physical activities done on the ground at school, picnics, etc. Physical activities, yoga, sports are also a source to channelize the energy, hyperactivity and emotions, which has stopped with not being on the play areas.

d) Scholastic Development: Students seem to experience a wide range of changes in their academic performance, some score high due to inappropriate methods of passing the exam like copying from the internet, cheating, while some score low due to level of difficulty. The method of evaluation by the teachers have changed to MCQ from the traditional subjective responses. The creativity and the imagination power of the teenager has been deprived. The easy to choose options have taken away the power to imagine. The level of concentration, attention, excitement to learn, memory, capacity to intake, sense of achievement has been reducing. Lack of scientific practical make it hard for them to understand and process the information. Academic also means extra-curricular activities, which are again being deprived of in terms of expressing their creativity.

According to students, the syllabus doesn't get complete due to online mode and lots of disturbance and technical errors. Major difficulty is the writing and the handwriting which has degraded to a great extent. The concepts are not clear which makes it difficult to understand and register. The overload of information creates a blockage to comprehend and hence requires more time to process after clearing the blockage. The room for new information is hardly created in them.

The pattern of studying online is novel to every student. The lack of planning of the process to teach online has made it very grim for the parents and the students to adjust to these new surroundings. Teachers too lacked confidence with online teaching as the appropriate training did not happen. The social, academic and the emotional development of every child has been affected and it has also hampered their growth. Children have unlearned the basic values of behaving in a family setting which is very well accepted by them and reported by their parents

as well. A child learns well in the presence of similar aged children a surrounding that has aspects to facilitate their learning. The home environment may be lot of safer and secure, however, doesn't allow the child to discover the full potential and excel.

Future holds online and offline learning as a mixed system of education, which definitely needs planning and structure; that might bring the necessary amount of dedication in children to learn and become more adaptive. Children learn better when there is self-directed learning (Hsieh, 2001), motivation (Deci, 2000), computer and internet self-efficacy (Freeman, 1997), online communication self-efficacy (Roper, 2007). How a faculty interacts with them has a lot to do with their perception about online learning (Jha, 2021). Whether a class is effective or no, depends upon advanced technologies, well-prepared instructors, a feedback session (Gilbert, 2015). Researchers have noted that there is no difference in the level of satisfaction and academic performance in the online versus offline learning mode (Hara & Kling, 1999). Along with what helps in making online class better, there are certain weakness of the same. Certain amount of delay in response from the faculty makes it difficult to process the information and stay connected (Hara & Kling, 1999). Technical issues, the lack of join forces with the co-learners does cause a setback for online learning (Song, Singleton, Hill & Koh, 2004). When there is a necessity for greater writing skills, discipline, self-motivation, a commitment to learn, the students don't seem to enjoy the process (Golladay, Prybutok & Huff, 2000).

The over-exposure to screens to have its own repercussions. There is distress and an increase in abnormal/obsessive tendency to bite nails, suck thumb or pull the hair. It simultaneously leads to mental health issues, stress, excited or thrilled sensations, anxiety, headaches, obesity, laziness, pain on the backs, shoulder and neck, changes in the sleep wake pattern and time. The motionlessness of the children impacted the posture, longer hours of sleep and later waking times. They also start postponing the work due to certain health issues. This overall leads to questioning of the credibility of the degree.

There are certain advantages and disadvantages of online education elicited from parents and children.

Advantages include:

a) There is efficiency in online learning as it uses mediums like PDFs, videos, podcast, etc.

b) There is accessibility of time and place, children can attend from anywhere and record the class for future reference.

c) It suits variety of learning styles, for those who prefer through visuals, through audio or through writing.

d) It has increased the student's attendance, where they usually need to only join or login and the attendance is marked.

e) This medium of learning seems to be affordable to many which saves travelling charges, fuel, time, energy, food.

Disadvantages seems to be higher:

a) Children find it difficult to keep the attention intact and seem to get easily distracted with the ads, chatting with friends, browsing, etc.

b) A lot of technological issues frustrate the child, like, connection, internet issues, sound and video, etc

c) It creates a sense of isolation where the child has no one around to interact and discuss the happenings of the class.

d) The feedback is limited from the teachers end.

e) Higher chance of cheating in the exam.

f) The focus is more on the theory and very limited on the practical aspects of the subject.

g) This mode is inaccessible to the computer illiterate population.

h) There is also lack of accreditation and quality assurance in the online mode.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study presented the difficulties and perception of parents and children in the online learning structure and how it has been affecting their social life, academic performance and perception, and their emotional well-being. The discoveries of the study would help in assisting the policy makers to take into consideration the impact of online education system on children and parents so that they can formulate the policy based on the reported facts. The study lacks taking into consideration the perception of older children, university youngsters and the professional. Further studies on the similar lines can explore the perception of teachers and academicians.

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