

Research Article

Challenges In Imparting Quality Education During The Pandemic: With Special Reference To Indian Context

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Abstract

It Is Not Exaggerating To Say Covid Is Redefining The World Scenario. Covid Which Slowly Started In One Part Of The World Soon Captured The Whole World. No Country Has Escaped Its Webs. An In-Depth View And Analysis About The Impact Of Covid Shows That Covid Is No More A Mere Medical And Health Issue, Rather It Has Become A Social Problem. The Social Situation That Was Forced Due To Covid Has Indeed Swept The Social Life Of People In India, Leaving The Whole County Facing A Huge Turmoil, Getting Even Worse With The Second Wave. The Second Wave Of Covid Is More Threatening, And Has Become Uncontrollable, Where The Nation Is Struggling To Keep Its People Alive, Pushing The Country To A Frightening Situation That Was Witnessed Never Before. The Restrictions Laid By The Government Of India To Prevent The Spread, Which There Was No Other Option, Does Left The Majority Of The People To Lose Their Livelihood. When The Entire Society Is Concentrating In Live Saving And Livelihood Saving Acts, One Of The Silent Victim Of The New Situation, Which Is Been Overlooked Is Definitely The Education Of Children. Imparting Quality Education Has Become A Challenge During This Pandemic. This Paper Thoroughly Analyses The Challenges The Indian Society Is Going Through In Providing Quality Education To The Children, While At The Same Time, Working Hard To Bring Back The Situation Under Control. Some Of The Issues Related To The Provision Of Quality Education That The Paper Discusses Are, Missing Out Of Potential Population, Health Related Problems In Due With The Changing Trends In Education, Psychological Strains, Financial Crisis, And An Inability To Provide A Conducive Environment For Teaching – Learning Process. The Paper Also Suggests

Ways To Deal With The Issues Of Education And Student Behavior, In The Perspective Of Professional Social Work.

Keywords: Quality Education, Challenges In Education, Covid Pandemic

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Introduction:

The Covid'19 Out Broke At Wuhan, China In 2019 And Has Spread Throughout The World In A Fast Pace. Almost All The Countries Were Captivated By Covid By 2020. India's First Case Was Identified In Kerala In 2020. India Announced Its First Lockdown To Prevent The Spread Of The Disease In March 2020. Since Then There Were Several Lockdowns Initiated By Both Central Government And The State Government In Order To Prevent The Spread. India Was Having Its Second Wave Of Covid In 2021 Which Was More Severe Than The First Wave. The Country Was Literally Suffocating Due To Lack Of Oxygen Facilities. The Hit Was So Severe That All Sectors Including The Government And Health Sectors Became Helpless. So Far, India Has Almost 3.8lakh Covid Deaths.

Impact:

The Impact Of Covid Was Seen In Almost All The Fields Such As Health, Economy, Mental State, Social Life, Education And So On. When The Entire Society Is Concentrating In Live Saving And Livelihood Saving Acts, One Of The Silent Victim Of The New Situation, Which Is Been Overlooked Is Definitely The Education Of Children. Imparting Quality Education Has Become A Challenge During This Pandemic.

Challenges In Imparting Quality Education During The Pandemic:

Missing Of Rural And Marginalized Population:

When The Entire Platform For Education Was Switched From Actual Classrooms To Virtual Classrooms, On One Hand, The Efforts Taken By The Management Of The Educational Institutions Were Appreciated, While On The Other Hand, The Change Was Not Coalesce As The Benefits Of The Change Have Not Completely Reached The Marginalized And The Rural Population. According To 2011 Census, 117.6 Million Children Belong To Rural India. Online Education Has Gone Inaccessible To Most Of The Children Living In Rural Areas And Who Were Under-Privileged And Marginalized. Hence A Year-Long Lockdown And Pandemic Situation Has Made Education A Chance, For Children In Rural Areas.

Health Issues:

In The 'Pragyata' Guidelines Provided By The Department Of School Education And Literacy, Ministry Of Human Resource Development, Government Of India, Which Was Released In July 2020, It Was Clearly Stated That During Online Education The Screen Time For Pre-Primary Children Was Limited To 30 Minutes Per Day, For Children Studying Between I To Viii Standard It Was Suggested To Have Two Online Sessions Not More Than 45 Minutes Each, And For Classes Between Ix And Xii, It Was Suggested To Have Four Online Sessions Not More Than 30-45 Minutes Each.

Though Clear Cut Recommendations Were Given With Regard To The Timings Of The Online Sessions With Respect To The Children's Standard Of Education, It Was Observed That Most Of The Schools Especially If The Management Is Private, Tend To Have Lengthy Online Sessions For Several Hours Per Day, Which Strains The Health Of The Children Both Physically And Psychologically.

The Common Physical Health Issues Related To Lengthy Screen Time Are As Follows,

- Phototoxicity – When Eyes Get Exposed To Excessive Blue Rays, It Irritates The Eyes, Makes It Blurry Resulting In Decline In Eyesight.

- Back Pain – The Reason For Back Pain Was Usually Assumed That Sitting For Long Hours, But Physicians Opine That Attending Classes In Unusual Positions Like Lying Down, May Cause Back Pain.
- Sleep Deprivation
- Head Ache Or Migraine
- Indigestion And Acidity - This May Be Due To Irregular Food Practices Or Casual Skipping Of Food.

These Are Some Of The Typical Health Issues Related To Online Mode Of Education.

Psychological Strain:

Prolonged Exposure To Online Medium Does Have An Influence On The Mental Health Of Students. The Uncertainty, Lack Of Clear Understanding, Isolation From Actual Classroom Setting, Inability To Be With Friends, Group Study Practices Which Always Have A Fun Factor And More Such Things Are Been Terribly Missed By Student Community Which Effects Their Psychological Wellbeing. The Constant Pressure Put On The Students Especially When They Have To Appear For Public Exams Amidst The Total Chaos Happening In The Field Of Education Disturbs The Psychological Health Of The Students. This Was Evident From The Reported Hike In Suicide Incidents Among The Students Across The State, Who Were Unable To Handle Stress Due To Online Education. Now The Children, Apart From Studying The Subjects They Are Also Expected To Learn The Technology In Terms Of Attending Classes, Submission Of Assignments In A Prescribed Format, Attending Examinations And Checking Of The Stability Of Their Device And Internet In Case If They Encounter Connectivity Issues.

Risk Behaviour:

Continuous Exposure To Online Sources And Easy Accessibility To The Internet Facilities All The Time, Sometimes May Result Negatively. As Children Are Spending More Time In Online Ever Before, There Is A Shocking Amount Of Threat Of Online Sexual Exploitation And Abuse. According To Unicef 80% Of Children Living In 25 Different Countries Have Expressed Feelings Of Danger. They Had Also Been Victimized Because Of Cyber-Bullying. When Curiosity And Innocence Being The Natural Characteristics Of Children, They Always Have A

Risk To Fall Prey To The Dark Web. Parents, Especially When Both Of Them Were Working, Whose Children Are On Their Own, Has A Higher Risk, As The Parents Struggle To Monitor Their Children's Internet Behaviours. As A Result Of Online Education, Parents, Once Who Denied Access To Gadgets To Their Children Were Now Arranging One For Them To Facilitate Uninterrupted Education.

Financial Constraints:

Online Education Comes With Its Own Tag. To Provide Uninterrupted Online Education The Student Should Arrange For A Good Device That Is An Android Phone, Or Laptop Or Personal Computer With Webcam Facilities And A Minimum Of 2gb Data For Primary Classes And 4gb For Higher Secondary And College Students. As Soon As The Shift Occurred, From Offline To Online Mode, There Was A Sudden Hike In The Prices Of Gadgets Required For Online Education. This Was An Unexpected Expense To The Family, Unavoidable Though. Families Belonging To Middle Class Income, Who Were Already Struggling To Meet The Ends, Were Forced Either To Become A Debtor Or To Give Up The Education Of Their Children.

Lack Of Conducive Environment For Teaching-Learning:

Teaching-Learning Process Would Always Be Effective Only When There Is A Scope For Active Participation Which Happens Through A Lot Of Classroom Activities Like Brain Storming, Discussions, Debate, Group Activities, Role Play, Quizzes, Creative Presentations Etc., These Activities Are Either Not Effectively Happening Or Totally Hindered In Online Platforms, Where It Becomes Hard To Maintain Even The Primary Requirement For Teaching-Learning Process Which Is The 'Eye-Contact'. Hence A Teacher Has To Go On Lecturing Assuming That The Students Were Listening.

Unattended Behavioural Deviance:

As The Schools Were Closed For A Long Duration, It Becomes Really Difficult For Children To Access Professional Help To Curb Their Risky Behavior. During Regular Schooling, There Was Always Higher Scope For The Teachers And Professionals Like School Counsellors To Mentor The Students And Provide Necessary Guidance If There Were Traits Of Behavioural Deviance Among Children Especially When They Were In Their Teens. This Facility To Get Guidance

From Counsellors And Teachers, To Open Up About Their Personal Problems Would Be Hindered In Online Platforms.

What Can Be Done?

The Educational System Of India Is Utterly Confused In Addressing The Mushrooming Problems In The Field In Due With The New Shift In The Methods And Medium Of Imparting Education. Here Are Certain Suggestions To Handle The Situation In A Better Way Which Could Benefit All The Children Or People In Various Situations.

Survey: The School Management Before Starting Of Classes Abruptly And Then Informing The Parents About Their Mode Of Teaching, They Can Do A Survey Well In Advance About The Availability, Affordability, Facility And Preparedness Among The Parents With Regard To Online Education. This Helps The School Management To Have An Idea About The Status Of The Children And Their Family, Which Further Helps In Coming Out With Plans That Can Include Everyone. Schools Can Think Of Child Friendly Apps To Provide Education Which Can Be Handled Easily By The Children Themselves With Minimal Support Of The Elders.

Counselling: When School Management Learns That Their Children Has An Issue, They Can Engage A Professional Counsellor Or Social Worker To Do An In-Depth Analysis About The Children's Situation And To Take Necessary Steps To Manage The Problem. If There Is A Counsellor Or Social Worker Available, Online Counselling Can Be Given To Those Students Who Were Psychologically Disturbed.

Vaccination: Its Time That Government Seriously Start Thinking About Vaccinating The Children Before Commencing Regular School Functioning. Already There Is A Prediction That Third Wave Of Covid Would Be Targeting The Children. So It Is Important To Work Out Policies That Would Save The Lives Of Children, Which Would Help Them To Actively Participate In Learning Process.

Regular Health Checkups: Regular Health Checkups Among The Students Can Be Organized To Monitor Their Health Status. So That, In Case Of Health Issues Related To Online Education

Or Due To Any Other Reason Can Be Easily Identified In The Earlier Stages Itself And Which Can Be Treated Successfully.

Parental Care: It Is Important For The Parents To Spend Quality Time With Their Children Which Would Reassure The Health Of The Children Psychologically. Spending Time With Children Would Help The Parents To Understand Better About The Learning Environment In Which They Are Currently In And To Make Necessary Arrangements If Necessary, Instead Of Leaving The Children On Their Own Who Would Be Left Behind In Mental Agony.

Liaisoning: Its Time That Social Work Professional Get Back To Their Root Attribute Of Being A Liaison Between The Client And The Resources. If The Parents Or Children Have Any Difficulties That Bothers The Education Of The Children Such As Lack Of Gadget, Learning Material Etc., Social Workers Can Take An Effort To Find The Available Resources By Establishing Relationship With Ngos Who Can Offer Help In These Aspects And To Advocate For Them.

Conclusion:

It Is Important That Professionals Exercise A Teamwork To Address The Issues Concerning With The Education Of Children. The Remedy For The Problem With Regard To Facing The Challenges In Imparting Quality Education Among Children Always Lies In The Collective Efforts Of The Teachers, School Authorities, Parents, Social Workers, Health Workers And Government Officials.

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