



POST COVID-19 CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE SCHOOL CHILDREN: A STUDY

Dr.THIPPESH K

Assistant Professor, Department of Studies in Social Work, Davangere University, Shivagangothri, Davangere-577007, Karnataka.

Abstract:

This study aims to assess the conditions and obstacles that schoolchildren face in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. While a global pandemic has been a looming risk for decades, Although the pandemic has adversely affected the lives of all the people, it has had a very significant impact on the lives of the school going children. Post pandemic has majorly turned into a digital world and one of the most important pillar for any economy around the world i.e., education has witnessed a drastic transformation from the actual classroom environment to a digital classroom. This transformation has come with its pros and cons. However, the cons are more significant when it comes to school children. The present paper trying to focus on understanding that, how to maintain the engagement of the students in education after Covid-19 conditions with the implications of an online class environment on the school students in terms of physical growth, mental growth, psychological effect, and the connected health issue.

Keywords: Covid-19, pandemic, digital world, education, online classes and transformation.

Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic is harming health, social and material well-being of children worldwide, with the poorest children, including homeless children and children in detention, hit hardest. School closures, social distancing and confinement increase the risk of poor nutrition among children, their exposure to domestic violence, increase their anxiety and stress, and reduce access to vital family and care services. Widespread digitalization mitigates the education loss caused by school-closures, but the poorest children are least likely to live in good home-learning environments with internet connection. Furthermore, increased unsupervised on-line internet use has magnified issues around sexual exploitation and cyber-bullying.

As the COVID-19 crisis spreads around the world, it is transforming children's day-to-day lives. The pandemic and the associated policy responses of confinement and social distancing touch on almost every part of children's worlds. COVID-19 directly affects formal care arrangements, education and leisure services offered by early childhood services, schools and other organizations are interrupted. To date, 188 countries have imposed countrywide school closures, affecting more than 1.5 billion children and youth (UNSDG, 2020). COVID-19 exacerbates the risks of poor nutrition, experiencing maltreatment, and being exposed to violence at home. Recognizing that the impacts of these measures will hit some groups of children harder than others is critical. These groups of vulnerable children include children living in poverty, children with disabilities, children in out-home care, children in detention, and also refugee children and children at risk of child labor. Furthermore, the pandemic has the potential to create new vulnerable children and countries must prepare to respond to growing needs for support.

The COVID-19 crisis is evolving in the context of widespread digitalization. The majority of children, at least in OECD countries, are spending a significant chunk of their time online. Therefore, the availability of digital tools may mitigate some of the effects of the crisis: digital devices and internet access provide valuable resources for children, parents, authorities and caregivers to continue schooling and teaching. Digital tools also provide from outside. They facilitate social interactions among children and contribute to their digital savings more generally. However, the greater use of digital tools has its downsides – the quality of home-schooling and social contacts may be lower than through school or contacts in person. Increased digitalization can also magnify risks such as sexual exploitation and cyber-bullying, if internet use is increasingly unsupervised. Moreover, increased digitalization is likely to widen inequalities between children, as the poorest children are least likely to have a quiet place in their home to concentrate on their studies and/ or have the tools to access on-line education. The effect of this “education gap” may be long-lasting. If appropriate action is not taken, the legacy of COVID-19's will be an even wider gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children.

Post-Covid-19 Conditions and Challenges of School Children:

Children's learning, nutrition, mental health, and overall development have all been harmed as a result of school closures. Closed schools also make child protection screening and delivery more challenging. Some students, particularly girls, are on the verge of dropping out. Although lots of schools are reopening, all the parents are not willing to send their kids to school due to the risks associated with the pandemic.

The classes are being continued from where they were left in the online. The inability of the student to understand the online syllabus might make it difficult for them to understand the further topics. It will be challenging for the school students to get out of their comfort zones of their homes and visit schools regularly.

Most children have lost substantial instructional time and may not be ready for curricula that were age- and grade- appropriate prior to the pandemic. They will require remedial instruction to get back on track. The pandemic also revealed a stark digital divide that schools can play a role in addressing by ensuring children have digital skills and access.

Most students have lost a significant amount of educational time and may not be ready for curricula designed for their age and grade prior to the pandemic. To get back on track, they'll need remedial instruction. The epidemic also revealed a significant digital divide, which schools may help close by ensuring that students have digital skills and access.

Teachers are in an unprecedented scenario where they must make up for significant instructional time lost during the previous school year while also teaching the current year's curriculum. In addition, they must safeguard their own health at school. To accomplish this, teachers will require training, mentoring, and other forms of assistance. After frontline personnel and high-risk groups, they will need to be given priority for the COVID-19 immunization. School closures have also shown that, in addition to digital abilities, teachers may require assistance in adapting their methodology to give teaching remotely.

With the above illustrations, following are the major challenges are faced by the school children, they are;

Inability to Focus on Screens

For many students, one of the biggest challenges of online learning is the struggle with focusing on the screen for long periods of time. With online learning, there is also a greater chance for students to be easily distracted by social media or other sites. Therefore, it is imperative for the teachers to keep their online classes crisp, engaging, and interactive to help students stay focused on the lesson.

Technology Issues

Another key challenge of online classes is internet connectivity. While internet penetration has grown in leaps and bounds over the past few years, in smaller cities and towns, a consistent connection with decent speed is a problem. Without a consistent internet connection for students or teachers, there can be a lack of continuity in learning for the child. This is detrimental to the education process.

Sense of Isolation

Students can learn a lot from being in the company of their peers. However, in an online class, there are minimal physical interactions between students and teachers. This often results in a sense of isolation for the students. In this situation, it is imperative that the school allow for other forms of communication between the students, peers, and teachers. This can include online messages, emails and video conferencing that will allow for face-to-face interaction and reduce the sense of isolation.

Teacher Training

Online learning requires teachers to have a basic understanding of using digital forms of learning. However, this is not the case always. Very often, teachers have a very basic understanding of technology. Sometimes, they don't even have the necessary resources and tools to conduct online classes. To combat this, it is important for schools to invest in training teachers with the latest technology updates so that they can conduct their online classes seamlessly.

Manage Screen Time

Many parents are concerned about the health hazards of having their children spend so many hours staring at a screen. This increase in screen time is one of the biggest concerns and disadvantages of online learning. Sometimes students also develop bad posture and other physical problems due to staying hunched in front of a screen. A good solution to this would be to give the students plenty of breaks from the screen to refresh their mind and their body.

Interventions required to overcome form the existing pandemic conditions and challenges of the School Children.

It is imperative to implement public-friendly needful interventions to overcome form the existing pandemic conditions and challenges of the school children. Hence, this study concentrates on the following suggestions or interventions to the support of the school children where they engage in the educational activities to cope their overall development during and aftermath of the pandemic situation.

- To encourage and assist all students reenrollment, combine community participation with large-scale direct communication efforts to parents, and consider expanding attendance options to suit all children, particularly those who are at the greatest risk of dropping out.
- To assist families in overcoming the increasing costs of attending school, provide cash or in-kind assistance, such as school food. Maintaining the health and safety of people and environments will be more important than ever before in the aftermath of the COVID-19 school closures. To make school environments safe, additional health and hygiene measures should be implemented, and school-based psychosocial and nutritional support should be extended to students to strengthen their overall health and well-being in the wake of the pandemic. Pair school-based hygiene promotion with the distribution of waterless hand sanitizer and/or soap (where handwashing stations are already available).
- Consider school-based screening for fever and cough, which may reduce risk and improve confidence, but which does not by itself offer a reliable solution. • Train and support teachers and other school staff to offer school-based psychosocial support to returning students. • Prepare for a spike in the number of students with malnutrition and other unmet basic needs.

- Engage students in accelerated learning interventions to reverse crisis-related learning loss and strengthen future learning trends. Engage teachers in training and coaching so they can help students catch up, and ensure that school environments are safe and protected. Engage parents by capitalizing on their current involvement in remote learning to improve future outcomes

Conclusion:

The long-term consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic are far-reaching, affecting everything from the economy to politics and healthcare to education. This chapter explored the existing conditions and challenges of school children in the aftermath of the pandemic and predicted the suggestions related to taken care of the protection of children in all aspects as well as their education. The corona virus outbreak is a major and unexpected setback, but it is unlikely to be the last. Governments must keep the long-term goal in mind: ensuring that all children and young people in the country receive an education. To ensure a healthy, prosperous, and safe future, we must ensure that educational systems are appropriately funded, that technology is used wisely, and that teachers are protected. However, just as a crisis is full of risks, it is also full of opportunities. Once the storm has passed and the dust has settled whether the new world will emerge stronger – and the post-COVID-19 normal more resilient and enduring. (Gabriela, 2020)

References:

- apa.org. (2021). Student mental health during and after COVID-19: How can schools identify youth who need support?
- Cymaraeg. (2021). Returning to school after lockdown.
- Education Response and Recovery During and After COVID-19 (worldbank.org)
- Gautam, P. (2020). Advantages And Disadvantages Of Online Learning.
- Gabriela. (2020). Combatting COVID-19's effect on children. *OCED*.
- Jörg M. Fegert, B. V. (2020). Challenges and burden of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic for child and adolescent mental health: a narrative review to highlight clinical and research needs in the acute phase and the long return to normality.
- Mission: Recovering Education in 2021. (2021).
- Nations, U. (2020). The Impact of Covid 19 on children.
- OECD. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on student equity and inclusion: Supporting vulnerable students during school closures and school re-openings.
- Robson, D. (2020). How Covid-19 is changing the world's children.
- Shelby Carvalho, J. R. (2020). *Planning for School Reopening and Recovery After COVID-19*. Washington, DC 20036: Center for Global Development.
- Thomas, C. J. (2020). Coronavirus and challenging times for education in developing countries.
- UNICEF. (2021). Supporting your child's mental health during COVID-19 school returns.