



# LOCK DOWN AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: A STUDY AMONG PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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## *Abstract*

Lock down is an emergency situation imposed by Government authorities where people are temporarily prevented from entering or leaving a restricted area. Generally the condition is imposed by the Government during the outbreak of epidemic diseases in which people are required to stay in their homes and limit their entry from homes. But an individual employed in various occupational fields such as health care, public works, law and enforcement, food supply are continue to work outside the home during lockdown. This situation is faced by the whole world for a period of 2 months. Lockdown is a difficult period for children with special needs as most of them cannot communicate even with their parents, leading to conflict within the family. The lockdown is a tricky time for parents of children with special needs as they are with various responsibilities while working from home. The parents should use emotional intelligence skills to understand and manage their children. They should try to involve their kids in various daily tasks which are easy to do and kids can easily understand them through visual prompts, like dusting, vegetable washing, filling water bottles, vegetable segregation, and various small role-playing games. Doctors said that Parents should ensure that children with special needs should avoid excessive use of the phone and television as it is associated with a decrease in a neurotransmitter which leads to abnormal behaviour. Sometimes the Parents can use video calls with children for short consultations with their special educators and therapists. So the present paper attempt to analyse the difficulties faced by the children with special needs during the lock down and to find out the emotional intelligence skills used by the parents to engage them.

Keywords: Lockdown, children with special needs, Emotional Intelligence

## 1.1 Introduction

These can be difficult times for all of us as we hear about spread of COVID-19 from all over the world, through television, social media, newspapers, family and friends and other sources. The most common emotion faced by all is Fear. It makes us anxious, panicky and can even possibly make us think, say or do things that we might not consider appropriate under normal circumstances. Due to the spread of corona virus, a severe lock down was implemented in whole world.

Lock down is an emergency situation imposed by Government authorities where people are temporarily prevented from entering or leaving a restricted area. Generally the condition is imposed by the Government during the outbreak of epidemic diseases in which people are required to stay in their homes and limit their entry from homes. But an individual employed in various occupational fields such as health care, public works, law and enforcement, food supply are continue to work outside the home during lockdown. This situation is faced by the whole world for a period of 2 months due to the spread of COVID 19.. It is a group of viruses with single stranded RNA that have a lipid envelop studded with club shaped projection which may cause illness in animals or humans. It act as the causative agents of SARS, MERS and COVID 19. It causes a variety of illness in animals but in humans it primarily showed as common cold, cough, throat pain and subsequently it affect the respiratory organs in human body.

Due to the spread of corona virus, a severe lock down was implemented in Kerala. As a result schools, colleges and hostels were shut, gatherings were banned, and a strict and longer quarantine was imposed. The lock down seriously affects some category of persons. Among them special childrens are one group. The lockdown disrupt their routine activities and they got upset. They are getting restless and frustrated. They always felt better at school, where they communicated well with their special educator. The parents and children across the country prepare for a mass experiment in homes chooling and online learning, but it is also challenging the parents of children with special needs. The closure of schools means their children are missing not just their studies, but also therapies. The lockdown is a tricky time for parents of children with special needs as they are with various responsibilities while working from home. They should try to involve their kids in various daily tasks which are easy to do and kids can easily understand them through visual prompts, like dusting, vegetable washing, filling water bottles, vegetable segregation, and various small role-playing games. The parents should use emotional intelligence skills to understand and manage their children.

Emotional intelligence refers to the capability of a person to manage and control his or her emotions and possess the ability to control the emotions of others as well. In other words, they can influence the emotions of other people also ie, emotional intelligence is the capacity and ability of a person to understand the emotions of himself or herself as well as others. It is the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions(Salovey and Mayer ,1990).

Children with special needs are those who have a disability or a combination of disabilities that makes learning or other activities difficult. Special-needs children include those who have Mental Retardation, which causes them to develop more slowly than other children, Speech and Language Impairment( problem expressing themselves or understanding others),Physical Disability( vision problem, cerebral palsy, or other conditions).

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Lockdown is a difficult period for special children with mentally challenged as most of them cannot communicate even with their parents, leading to conflict within the family. It is a tricky time for parents of children with special needs as they are with various responsibilities while working from home. They should try to involve their kids in various daily tasks which are easy to do and kids can easily understand them through visual prompts, like dusting, vegetable washing, filling water bottles, vegetable segregation, and

various small role-playing games. Doctors said that Parents should ensure that children with special needs should avoid excessive use of the phone and television as it is associated with a decrease in a neurotransmitter which leads to abnormal behaviour. Sometimes the Parents can use video calls with children for short consultations with their special educators and therapists. . So the present paper attempt to analyse the difficulties faced by the children with special needs during the lock down and to find out the emotional intelligence skills used by the parents to engage them.

### 1.3 Significance of the study

Emotional intelligence is one of the most important qualities of every individual. It is the ability of a person to identify and understand the emotions and feelings of others as well as ourselves. It is very much essential for teachers especially teachers who handle special children. Children with special needs are those who have a disability or a combination of disabilities that makes learning or other activities difficult. Due to lockdown children with special needs are truly locked in their houses and the parents must engage them. so the parents should have some sort of emotional intelligence skills to engage them .

### 1.4 objectives of the study

1.4.1 To identify the problems faced by children with special needs during lockdown period.

1.4.2 To find out the emotional intelligence skills used by parents to engage the children during lock down.

### 1.5 Scope of the study

The study covers the parents of children with special needs in Thrissur District

**1.6 Research methodology:** The study is descriptive in nature based on primary and secondary data.

#### 1.6.1 Sources of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data

a. Primary Data: primary data was collected through telephonic conversation with the respondents.

b. Secondary Data: Secondary data will be collected from Books, Journals, Magazines and Internet .

#### 1.6.2 Sample Design:

**Population:** The Population consists of the parents of children with special needs residing in Thrissur District.

**Sample Technique:** **Convenient** sampling technique was used for the selection of the samples for the study.

### 1.7 Analysis and interpretation

The first objectives of the study were to identify the problems faced by children with special needs during lockdown. More than 90 percentage of the respondents agreed that the lockdown definitely created so many problems to their children. Anxiety, depression and frustration was one of the most important problem faced by the children during lockdown. They said that their child was happy when they go to schools. But now the schools were closed they became frustrated and anxious. Isolation is another major problem faced by this category of children. The parents said that their children were totally locked in the house without much physical movement and it was very difficult for them as well as for the families. The another problem regarding their medical treatments like therapy, exercises etc. Therapy centres and hospitals were closed. He is not doing those body movements and so they have severe muscle pain. Lack of necessities like medicines, diapers etc. was the another problem.

Second objective of the study was to identify the emotional intelligence skills used by the parents to engage the children during lockdown period. 10 emotional intelligence skills are used to identify the emotional intelligence skills of parents. They are self-awareness skills, ability to aware others, acceptance, empathy, acknowledgement, support and encouragement, patience and appreciation. More than 80 percentage of the

respondents agreed that they do their household activities before their child wakes and spent a large amount of time with him or her. They gave support and engage their child in various activities like gardening, drawing etc and encourage and appreciate their efforts. The parents show empathy and understand things from their child's point of view.

### 1.8 Major findings

- More than 90 percentage of the parents agreed that their children faces so many physical and mental problems during lock down such as depression, anxiety, violence, silence, isolation etc.
- 80 percentage of the respondents agreed that engaging the children to various household activities can reduce their anxiety and depression.
- 85 percentage of the respondents agreed that they gave emotional support and encouragement to the child
- Parents agreed that they always show patience and stability while dealing their child.

### 1.9 Conclusion

Lock down is a pandemic situation and it affected all categories of people. Children with special needs are one of the most important groups among them. The schools and hostels were closed as a part of lockdown, this category of people is totally locked down in their houses. It will create so many mental and physical pressures among them. Majority of the childrens missed their therapies and medical treatments so they returned their past situation. It creates problems in families also. . The lockdown is a tricky time for parents of children with special needs as they are with various responsibilities while working from home. They should try to involve their kids in various daily tasks which are easy to do and kids can easily understand them through visual prompts, like dusting, vegetable washing, filling water bottles, vegetable segregation, and various small role-playing games. The parents should use emotional intelligence skills to understand and manage their children.

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