



Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education during Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The spread of COVID-19 worldwide has enforced many governments to suspend in-person schooling. According to UNESCO (2020), more than 100 countries had temporarily closed schools, which have affected 91% of students.. The present study aimed to know the parents involvement in early childhood education during COVID-19 pandemic. The sample for the research work consisted of 80 parents. The sample was selected from eight preschools in Jammu City. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire and both qualitative and quantitative analysis was done.

The findings revealed that parents involvement in early childhood care and education was affected by the pandemic, with parents facing various challenges such as limited access to resources, changes in work and home environments, and increased stress. Both mothers and fathers reported increased involvement in their children's education, with many taking on new roles and responsibilities in response to the challenges of online learning. However, the study also identified several barriers to parental involvement, including lack of access to technology and educational resources, and competing demands on parents time. The study also revealed that the majority of parents have the necessary facilities and infrastructure available for learning activities at home, there is still a considerable number who do not have access to resources and faced challenges such as poor internet connectivity, technical, issues with online platform. The study also found differences in the level and nature of involvement between parents, mothers were more likely to take on the primary role of educator and to engaged in activities such as reading to their children and helping with homework. Fathers, on the other hand, were more likely to provide practical support, such as setting up technology for remote learning and providing emotional support. Efforts should be made to support and engage parents, and to develop strategies for addressing the specific barrier faced by parents.

Keywords: COVID-19, Early Childhood, Parental Involvement.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions in the field of education, including early childhood education. Early childhood education is critical for a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development. With the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional methods of delivering education have been disrupted. Parents have been forced to take a more active role in their child's education, leading to an increased emphasis on parental involvement in early childhood education. With the closure of schools and childcare centers, parents have been playing a crucial role in supporting their young children's learning from

home (UNESCO, 2020). The combination of school closures and reliance on tech solution for teaching learning during the pandemic, made the role of parents in engaging their children in education far more crucial than even before (UNICEF, 2020), especially for younger age group (Borup, et al, 2014).

Even prior to the pandemic, parental involvement in children's education has been found to greatly improve leaning capabilities (Heckman, 2002), social adjustments and behavior, self –esteem and mental health (Jeynes, 2003; Smith, et al., 2020). The reliance on online learning during School closures however, necessitated engagement of parents and caregivers for continuance of learning of children during the pandemic.

In context of online modes of learning used during the pandemic, accessibility of internet and devices (Hohlfeld, et al., 2010; Hollingworth, et al., 2011); Low self-efficacy in use of technology (Riberio et al. 2021; Povey, et al., 2016) and perceptions about effectiveness of online modes might have posed challenges for parental engagement . Additionally parent's propensity to invest time in their child's education (Riberio et al., 2021) and their cognitive capability to support their children's education might also determine the quality of engagement (Mani, et al., 2013). Finally, parental perceptions of the importance of engaging with their children's education, their knowledge about how their engagement might influence the learning and development of their children, knowledge about methods to effectively engage and facilitate children's learning (Dighe & Seiden, 2020) and finally whether they perceive their child to require such support (Riberio et al., 2021), are all important determinants of their meaningful engagement.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the parental involvement in early childhood education during COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To study the challenges faced by parents related to online classes of their pre-school children during COVID-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sample for the research work consisted of 80 parents. (40 fathers and 40 mothers). The sample was selected from eight preschools in Jammu City. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire and both qualitative and quantitative analysis was done.

Sampling Technique: - Multi Stage Sampling technique was used to select the sample parents. In the first stage, Eight preschools were randomly selected from Jammu city and from these preschools a list of Eighty children was prepared. In the second stage, five Mother and five Fathers of these children were selected purposively.

Tools for the Study

The tool used was a self- devised interview schedule to analyse the parent's involvement in Early childhood Education during COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Collection: The data was collected by visiting homes and 8 preschools of Jammu City. Visits were made to know the parental involvement in Early Childhood Education A Self – devised interview Schedule was applied on 80 parents (40 Mothers and 40 Fathers) of preschool Children. The researchers explained the entire Schedule to parents in detail and asked them to give the responses.

Data Analysis: - Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used for data analysis. The raw data was coded and tabulated depending on the kind of information required keeping in view the objectives of the study.

Results and Discussion

Background Information

Figure No. 1 Distribution of Sample as per age of the Respondents,

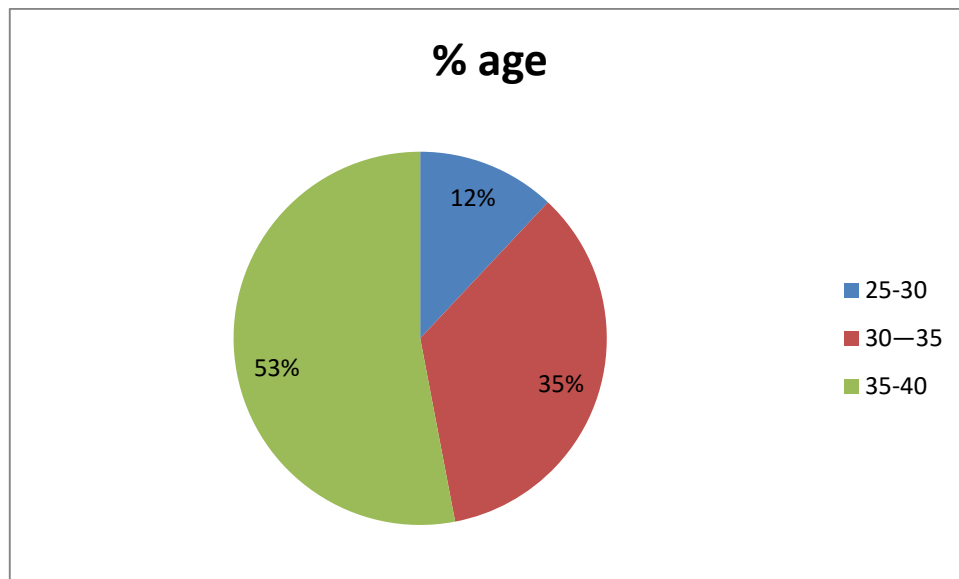


Figure No.1 reveals that the age distribution of a sample of 80 parents, with 12% respondents between the ages of 25-30 years, 35% respondents between the ages of 30-35 years, 53% between the ages of 35-40 years.

Figure No. 2 Type of Family

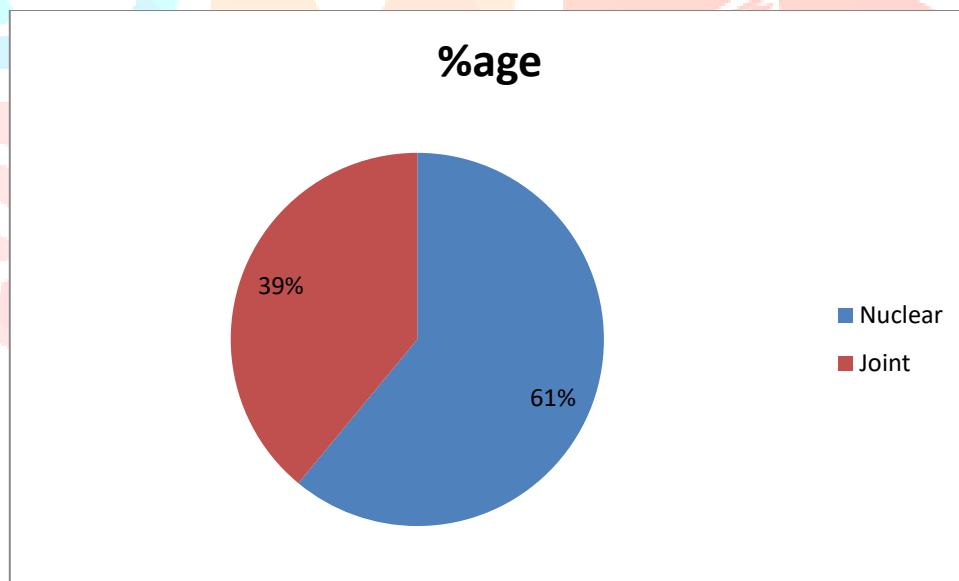


Figure No.2 reveals that more than half of the respondents 61% were from nuclear family and 39% of the respondents were from joint family.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND CHALLENGES FACED BY PARENTS**Table No. 1. Presence of parents with children during online class**

S.NO.	Variables	N=80	%age
1.	Daily	31	39%
2.	Sometimes	48	60%
3.	All the time	1	1%

Table 1. reveals that the majority of parents (60%) were present with their child during online classes sometimes, while 39% of parents were present with their child daily. Only 1% parents reported being present with their child all the time during online classes, indicating a very high level of parental involvement.

Table No.2 . Extend of facilities and infrastructure provided by parents at home

2	Variables	N=80	%age
1.	Always	27	34%
2.	Often	3	4%
3.	Sometimes	46	57%
4.	Never	4	5%

Table 2 reveals that the majority of parents (57%) depicts that they were available sometimes, (34%) stated that they always provided facilities and infrastructure to children needed in learning activities. The results are consistent with the study conducted by Hani et al(2021) showed that parental involvement in child learning guidance is good as evidenced by parental involvement in the provision of facilities and infrastructure.

Table No. 3 Predominant form of parental involvement

S.NO.	Variables	N=80	%age
1.	Supporting task realization	35	44%
2.	Monitoring only	32	40%
3.	Autonomous child	11	14%
4.	Other	2	2%

Table 3 shows that the majority of parents (44%) reported that their predominant form of parental involvement is supporting task realization, which involves helping their child with specific tasks or assignments, 40% of the parents responded with Monitoring only, providing feedback, was the predominant form of involvement. A smaller proportion of parents (14%) promoted their child's autonomy as their predominant form of involvement. It is important to note that different forms of parental involvement may be more or less effective depending on the child's age, development, and specific needs. The results are consistent with the study conducted by Rebeiro et al (2021) found that parents supported their children during the pandemic mainly through the monitoring of attention in classes and task realization.

Table No.4. Parents assisted by others during online class

S.NO.	Variables	N=80	%age
1.	Husband/wife	61	77%
2.	Grand parents of children	12	14%
3.	Others	7	9%

Table 4 indicates that the majority of parents (77%) were assisted during class by their spouse. A small proportion of children were assisted by grandparents (14%) These findings suggest that parental involvement in online learning varies, with some parents providing more support than others. The high respondents of children being assisted by their husband or wife highlights the important role played by parents in supporting their children's online learning.

Table No. 5. Devices used for online class

S.NO.	Variables	N=80	%age
1.	Parents Smartphone	45	56%
2.	A separate Smartphone	13	16%
3.	Laptop	15	19%
4.	Smartphone of other family member	7	9%

Table 5 indicates that the majority of respondents (56%) used their parents smartphone for online learning purposes. Meanwhile, 19% used laptops and (16%) of the respondents used a separate smartphone for a child's online class and only 9% reported that they used smartphones of other family members.

Table No. 6. Parents face challenges while assisting child for online class

S.NO.	Variables	N=80	%age
1.	Yes	24	30%
2.	No	56	70%

Table 6 reveals the challenges faced by parents while assisting their child for online classes. Majority of the respondents (70%) do not face any challenges and 30% of the respondents faced challenges such as poor internet connectivity, technical issues with the online platform and difficulty in explaining concepts to the child while assisting their child for his/her online class.

Table No. 7. Children find it difficult to sit at a particular place

S.NO.	Variables	N=80	%age
1.	Yes	28	35%
2.	No	13	16%
3.	Sometimes	39	49%

Table.7. depicts the difficulty of sitting at a particular place to attend the online class. Less than half of the respondents (49%) said that sometimes it is difficult for their children to sit at a particular place to attend the online class and (35%) parents responded that their children find it difficult to sit at a particular place and only (16%) of the respondents do not find it difficult.

Table No. 8. Interest of children in what had been taught during the class

S.NO.	Variables	N=80	%age
1.	Yes	19	24%
2.	No	13	16%
3.	Sometimes	48	60%

Table 8. indicates that (24%) of the respondents said that their children felt interested in what had been taught to it during the class and more than half of the parents (60%) responded with sometimes and only (16%) children do not felt interested in what had been taught to it during the class.

Table No.9. Reward and punishment strategies used by parents for online classes

S.NO.	Variables	N=80	%age
1.	Rewards		
.	Yes	23	29%
	No	57	71%
2.	Punishment		
	Yes	10	12%
	No	70	88%

Table 9 shows that majority of parents (71%) don't use any such Reward strategies can be effective in motivating children to learn and engage in educational activities. Further table reveals that majority of the respondents (88%) didn't use any threat strategy to teach their child

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that parents have played a crucial role in the early childhood education of their children during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study also revealed that the majority of parents have the necessary facilities and infrastructure available for learning activities at home, there was still a considerable number who did not have access to resources and faced challenges such as poor internet connectivity, technical, issues with online platform. The study also found differences in the level and nature of involvement between parents; mothers were more likely to take on the primary role of educator and to engaged in activities such as reading to their children and helping with homework. Some parents also use reward strategies to motivate their children to learn. Overall, the findings suggest that parents' involvement is critical in ensuring the success of early childhood education during the pandemic. Interventions that promote parental involvement, especially for parents who spend less time with their children, may be beneficial in improving children's outcomes. The vital role that parents played in their children's education and suggest that promoting and supporting parental involvement was crucial for ensuring children's academic success during times of crisis.

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