Desperation, Isolation and Mental Health: A Study of Isolated Cognitive Development

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Abstract: *Mental health of students had been a primary concern among the parents as well as for the educationist all over the world. In the modern day world a lot of stress had been put over the context of mental health of students because it had been identified that the aspect of mental health not just only becomes important for the aspect of cognitive development but also for the moral as well as intellectual development and stability of the student. In the modern technological world of education very little scope of mental relaxation could be seen in the curriculum and activities of the students because students had been getting more and more confined in their own room while learning through digital platforms. Physical activities of the students and social interactions of the learners had been getting reduced to a significant extent. Hence the scope of relaxation through sports and outdoor activities had been getting reduced by a significant margin as opposed to the traditional mode of learning. And in situations like COVID-19 pandemic or any other endemic kind of situations where students had to forcefully confined themselves inside the four walls of their room, in such situations the learners gets more and more isolated, desperation crops in inside the learners. However, the general trend of the modern day education system had been approaching towards the isolated learning through digital platforms. Parents had preferred such mediums of education. In such situations the cognitive development as well as mental health of the students somehow gets distorted.*

Keywords: Isolation, Stress, Depression, Cognitive Development, Moral weakness, Dependency

1. Introduction

The advent of Corona Virus resulted in a dramatic turn of events in India. India was struck heavily by the Corona Virus because of its huge population and the density of the population made it lot harder to fight with the spread of the virus. However, several immediate measurements were taken both the state and central government to counter Corona Virus; transportation, businesses, factories, entertainment sources, educational institutions, everything was put under a sudden uncertain halt. On March 2020, the government of India announced a nationwide lockdown to confine the spread of the virus. As the virus was of a fatal nature, many deaths occurred in India and people died like falling pins. There was a grim looking atmosphere throughout the nation. People were suffering from unemployment and as a consequence hunger for food. In such a condition education hampered and the teaching learning process went through a very dramatic change which shifted not only the mode of teaching but also the ways of learning. In a new turn of events education went a drastic change. But before delving deep into the discussion about the changes that occurred, the traditional mode of teaching and learning processes needed to be understood.

The article would try to put forward questions such as- How far such isolated form of education impacts the moral growth of the student? How such isolation impacts upon the cognitive development of the students or learner? What needs to be done during such isolated learning processes in order to heighten to moral, cognitive as well as mental health of the students? Why such online study method proves inappropriate as well as an essential mode of learning during periods of isolation? Why there had been an increasing demand of isolated study? Why parents are shifting from group or mass education system to personalized education system for their children? This present article would look forward to answer these questions in a very acute manner.

My initial approach to this particular research work would be to look at the existing texts on cognitive development, moral development and mental health and to bring out the issues, challenges and pattern of moral, cognitive and mental health development of the students or learners learning outside the parameters of traditional learning, specifically in isolation. I will try to analyze and compare some selected texts to understand the discourse with much more fidelity. And as my research area is concerned with mental health in the context of isolated learning, I will take aid of archival records about traditional and moral development within the society, mental health, and cognitive development theories. My intended research work would also take account of historiography. And according to the context of my intended research, it will also include significant amount of fieldwork for collecting and recording essential data for understanding the pattern of isolated learning, development of cognitive ability in isolation and for understanding the current shift in establishing moral, mental and cognitive development in a non-traditional way of learning.

The Cognitive Development of students during the lockdown and in such situations where they had to remain aloof from the traditional way of learning make them not only desperate to study in the usual way, in which they are habited with. The mental health of the students also gets hampered when they are not allowed to follow the general of learning, in which our centuries of grandparents had been learning. The shifting mode of education had helped in some way or the other in enriching the students' ability and scope of study. But the not so used to medium take a lot of time and has some unexpected challenges also, such challenges not only affects the rate and growth of study but also the mental health of the students also. The history of human civilization had seen that the cognitive ability and its development process had been a balancing act of mental

development. But situations such as quarantine, isolation and halt of normal life flow, not only stop them from getting the normal flow of life but also the normal flow of their cognitive development which has a significant contribution from the society around us.

The fact being that exercising the traditional way of teaching- learning processes was not a possibility. Hence the joint efforts of state and central government made it a possibility for a new mode of teaching - learning processes through the digital mode. It was during the middle half of the year 2020, the government of India thought of cancelling examination for the college and university students. But later on it was decided that cancellation such crucial examination would not only hamper their educational growth but would also hamper their educational achievements. In a study Ms. Veena Shenoy, Ms. Sheetal Mahendra and Ms. Navita Vijay, found that, in such a condition the digital platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet and E-mail had been used by the faculty members to either conduct online classes or for examination purposes.' Students were asked to give exam from their home and send their written pages through *Mail* or *Whatsapp* if necessary. This opened up a new mode of learning through digital media. Now teachers were instructed to conduct classes through the digital medium, and this mode of learning came to be known as online learning and the traditional mode of learning came to be known as offline mode of learning.

The noise barrier of teaching- learning process also decreased to a significant extent. The online method of learning also decreased the rate of students' absence in the lecture. Even if the student would have been unable to go the educational institutions in the normal situations because of ill-health, could now attend the class in his/her own comfort. The carefulness of the parents also influence the leaner, specifically the children's to attend classes without missing any. Now there was no escape for the students to bunk classes, all of a sudden all such atrocities decreased to a significant extent. Now there was no such phenomenon of disturbance, noises or discomfort. Hence it could be said that, the online mode of learning helped to facilitate the teaching-learning process and changed the outcome of the education system. And in near about future when situations would be back to normal, there would be a blended mode of learning; the traditional mode along with the online mode. This would definitely increase the level of teaching to a significant extent. Archil Abashidze, a notable researcher in his study also found that, instead of totally going online it would be always better to make part of the courses through online mode and the rest in a regular offline mode."

Not only that the online mode of learning had also the phenomenon of mental stress associated with it. In attending online classes students very often gets affected with stress full eyes, because the light coming out of the electronic screens could affect the eye and damage the eye sight permanently. That's why students always found it difficult to cope with it and very often they feel haziness in their mind after attending a long online lecture. And after attending such classes for such longer duration headache and unwantedness for doing any other work or task becomes the normal outcome. And looking at a particular object for a

longer duration also affects the neck bone and spinal cord of the students.

The mental stress of the online mode of education had been the chief most objections raised by the students. In the traditional mode of education students had to go to their educational institutions where they would come with friends and attend classes with them, they would gossip and laugh; they would also found a vigor and energy to attend classes together. But in the online mode of learning they would sit alone in an isolated atmosphere where except him or her there would be no other person, in most of the circumstances.

Hence learning in an isolated atmosphere impacts negatively upon their mental health and students found it the most difficult to cope with. The energy level of the learners decreases significantly after a couple of hours and those impacts heavily upon the classes to follow. With being no room for relief or a good time, students feel confined and tends to quit classes after a couple of hours and join classes in fragmentation. The online mode of learning had little scope for physical activity. In the traditional mode of learning, in a foremost manner they needed to reach their particular educational institutions either through bus, bicycle or by walking and later on they would roam about their institutions and would also take part in sports for a leisure time, which in turn helped in promoting their mental abilities and also in relaxing their mental stress. Physical activities not only helped students for the physical health but also in their mental health. Because very often physical activities meant indulging in sports and indulging in sports increased their mental strength, co-operative skills, tolerance skill and fellow compassion along with team spirit which had been considered as most crucial for moral development of the students. And in online education there had been zero scope of physical activities and hence the moral development of the students through physical activities, taking parts in sports, gets completely nullified.

In the traditional way, the students would go to a educational institutions where he or she would meet all kinds of people from different social strata and different religious background and there he or she would have learnt a lot from inter-personal relationships and from his or her friends. Not only that, teachers also plays a vital role in shaping the conduct and attitude of the students by his or her mere presence in the class. Students also learn discipline from the educational institution in the traditional mode or learning.

The online mode of learning also includes such discipline and conduct of the students but in a robotic way. Students would need discipline to stay quiet during the lecture of the teachers and would be required to perform the electronic settings accordingly. Such online mode and methodology of learning involves less amount of disciplinary caution as against the traditional mode of learning. However, it needed to be mentioned that, the online mode of learning had been designed to cater to a specific need and hence we should not desire all the aspects of the traditional educational outcomes from this mode of teaching. But it had been also a fact that the students learning through the online mode had been facing such vital issues and they had been also deprived of such traditional facilities of a teaching- learning process in a

particular educational institution which would have made their learning process a little bit easier and more effective.

To point out few other shortcomings of the online mode of education, we could also point out the effect of online education upon the teachers also. They also feel the same kind of difficulties. Alongside students they also feel it hard to keep up the motivation of the students and delivering online lectures also takes a heavy toll from the teachers also.

Many of the teachers had been unable to use such technologies to conduct online classes, they found it difficult to adapt with it. Not only teachers but also the students from rural places, they also found it difficult to cope with the online mode of learning because of the unavailability of the electronic gadgets to those students. Pramod Kumar an eminent researcher felt that the foundation for improving quality, accessibility and affordability of education in rural areas of the country can be laid down by encouraging technology interventions. Taking account of such situations, a question become evident that if India had been ready to meet the challenges of online education.

2. Conclusion

Hence it could be observed that students had been losing a significant amount of outdoor activities due to such confined and isolated mode of study. Their social interactions, which had been a very significant part, for the learner's moral growth and development had been getting hampered severely. Students had been struggling to get out of the trauma of isolation and to channelize their desire for outdoor exposure learners had been indulging in various social media platforms inorder to keep themselves connected with the world outside their confined room. Such activities in return had been harming their intellectual as well as cognitive and moral development. In such situations the government of India had been trying its utmost to indulge students in various activities such as homework, projects, online classes and examinations, interactions with teachers through digital platforms and through several other means. However studies proved that, such online medium of education did not only just fail to cater to the need of social exposure but also fails in creating a fellowship among their classmates. Hence it had been difficult for them to sustain the same flow of cognitive development. For this particular reason the method of blended learning, which has a beneficial aspects of its own, proves to be a little relaxing for the students also. Thus we could say that inorder for a sustainable mental health and cognitive process to go on the Indian education system will need modifications and alterations from time to time.

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