Online Pre - School: Impact on Education and Health!

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1. Introduction

One of the biggest casualties of the COVID - 19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown has been institutionalised education. Schools have been shut to prevent the spread of the virus and this has given way to online classrooms, a very new concept in India even for the most sophisticated schools. It is commendable how easily some educational institutions have moved to virtual classrooms, all thanks to tools such as Zoom, Google Hangouts and Microsoft Teams. But there are some still struggling to get online.

Problem Statement
A study to assess the impact of online teaching on education and health status of pre - schoolers.

Objectives
1) To assess pre - schoolers utilizing online teaching modes of education.
2) To assess effect of online teaching on education status of pre - schooler.
3) To assess the effect of online teaching on health status of pre - schoolers.
4) To assess any strategies adapted by parents to make online learning convenient.

Research Methodology
- Research Approach: Descriptive study
- Research Design: Non - experimental survey
- Setting: Selected community in Mumbai
- Population: Pre - schoolers in a selected community
- Sample size: 100
- Sampling: Purposive sampling
- Tool: Semi - structured questionnaire
- Technique: Interview

2. Findings

A] Demographic data– The study included to identify pre - school children in the area. After identifying the pre - schoolers it was noted that 87% families had one pre - schooler, 10% families had two pre - schoolers and 3% families had three and more schoolers within the family. This itself indicates that 3% of the families must be facing a bigger challenge in handling the educational needs of their children. Around 31% of the samples belonged to both age 3 to 4 years and 4 to 5 years where as 38% samples where in the age group of 4 to 5 years.

21% samples utilized Google classroom as a medium for online studies, 73% samples used Google/ zoom meet and 6% samples used other mediums of online learning.27% Students spend 1 hour in online learning everyday, 52% spend 2 hours and 21% students spend more than 3 hours in a day for online learning.70% pre - schoolers had single parent working and 30% pre - schoolers had both parents working.52% parents are well trained in computer applications where as 48% were not well trained. The reason for acquiring this information is that most parents of pre - schoolers are attending the online sessions with their kids to ensure that they don't miss out on any important information and at the same time can give repeated explanation for the benefit of their child.

B] Effect on Education – Introducing a new mode of teaching is as fascinating for the teacher as for the child. It was observed that 61% pre - schoolers were excited by online teaching and 39% depressed about online studies.97% samples preferred online classes via mobile and 3% samples preferred classes via laptop or desktop. This data could be associated by the fact that mobile is a more affordable and convenient device available for virtual learning.55% samples missed school where as 45% samples didn't miss school. Every child is different and feels sad or happy about the school environment.72% samples attended online classes and the remaining 28% are not attending the classes sincerely.79% samples are able to understand online instructions where as 21% samples find it difficult to handle the online teaching. It is not uncertain that 100% pre - schoolers lose interest during online sessions.

82% parents agreed that they are spending much more time in explain pre - school concepts to their children along with online teaching. And 18% disagreed the fact.67% samples were content that he online teaching sessions also included dance, craft, singing and music lessons in their teaching.97% parents also expressed their disappointment about facing technical problems during online learning.3% samples faced no difficulties. This also indicated one factor behind pre - schoolers losing interest during online sessions.

Problems encountered were as follows: Network issues was a major concern in 85%samples, electricity cut off in absence of parents noise pollution lack of technical competency.

PARENTS VIEW ON ONLINE PRE-SCHOOL IMPACTING CHLDRENS EDUCATION
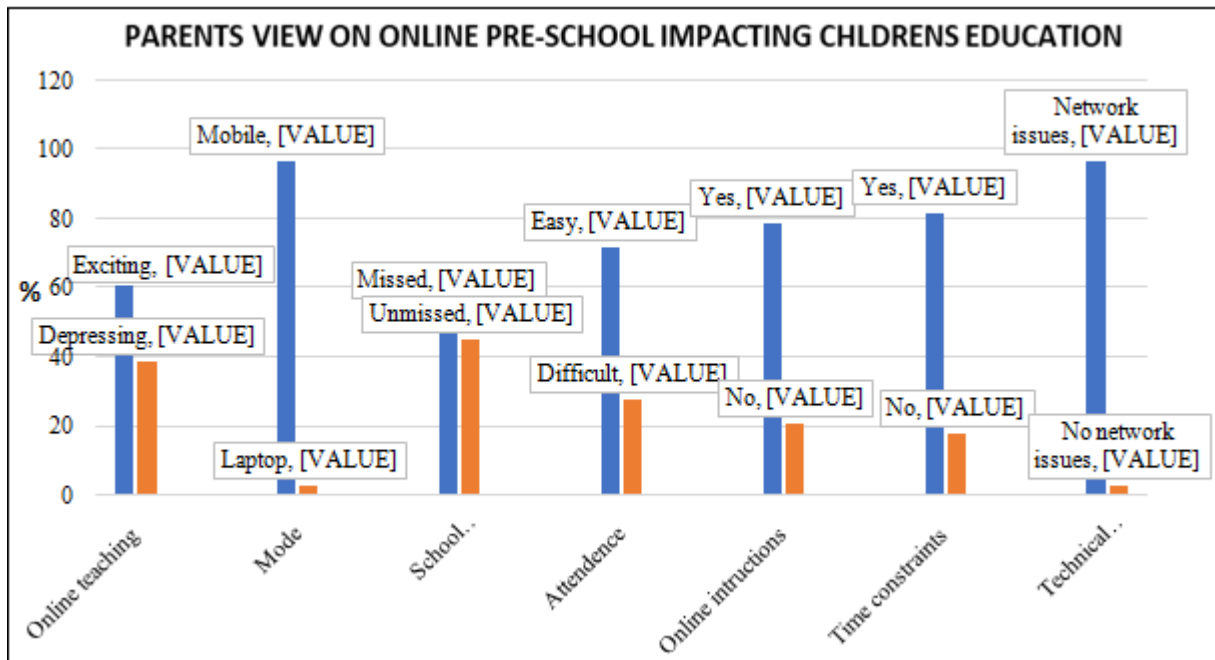
C] Effect on Health–78% parents mentioned that their child had difficulty in completing assignments and 22% children had no difficulty in completing the assignments.55% parents also agreed that their children were suffering from health problems and 45% parents said that their child had no problems related to health.55% Parents agreed that their child suffered from health problems due to online teaching Straining Eyes, Headache, Attention deficit, Backache, Stressed, Sleeplessness.67% parents felt that their child was demotivated because of the health problems 33% parents felt no problems were encountered by the students.

Parents view on online pre-school impacting childrens health
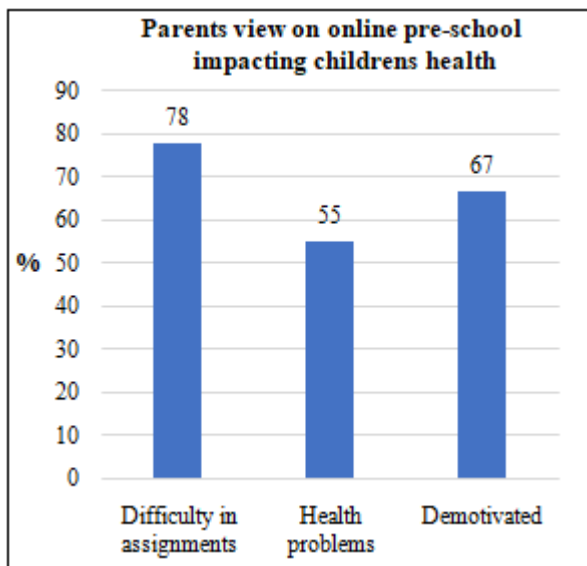
D] Strategies – The strategies adapted by the parents for their children in creating a comfortable environment for online learning were as follows, 32% used comfortable seating arrangement, 3% used separate room for online learning, 23% used periods of rest, AC/Cool environment, 39% used attended online classes with your child to clarify concepts.58% parents felt that their child were frustrated spending long hours at home.100% parents also agreed that they preferred classroom teaching for their child.

Suggestions provided by parents to improve online learning skills in children: -
- Reducing the syllabus and the hours of online classes.
- Supporting with revision classes.
- Start classroom teaching
- Increase skill based activity
- Wearing uniform for hours together makes it discomforting.
- School should give break after 1 hour lecture to reduce stress, headache, backache and other problems.
- It should be a two way conversation
- Parents involvement to some extent.

3. Conclusion

The nationwide COVID - 19 lockdown has forced schools and universities to close and send their students home which, in turn, has impacted over 91% of the world's student population. The closure has placed unprecedented challenges on governments, institutions, teachers, parents and care givers around the world. The sudden, forced immersion of learners into virtual learning during this period of Covid - 19 has proved that the education industry is disrupted. Education is going to be digital in the foreseeable future and with the right infrastructure and policies in place, we would be better prepared to handle it. With the increasing need for online pre - schools special care needs to be given to minimize the impact on the health status of the young children.

References

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