

Perception of Teachers on Homeschooling

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Abstract: *To study the perception of teachers about Homeschooling by understanding the concept of homeschooling and the teachers those are going to be part of the process. The concept of Homeschooling is discussed and the perceptions of the teachers are taken into consideration. The teachers involved are in-service teachers and pre-service teachers. Survey method is used to collect information about the perceptions of 56 entry-level pre-service teachers, 36 exit-level pre service teachers and 56 in-service teachers. The questionnaire is bifurcated in three parts dealing with perception about traditional schooling, perception about homeschooling and comparison between the two. The conclusion drawn out of the observation is that the participants have only heard the concept of homeschooling but do not know what it exactly is. The differences in the responses of the entry-level and exit-level pre-service teachers exist because of the exposure that the exit-level pre-service teachers receive in the process of their long duration of internships in regular schools. The in-service teachers may be expecting a change in the regular education system to be more conducive to the current changing trends in the world around.*

Keywords: Homeschooling, perception of teachers, in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, teachers on homeschooling

1. Rationale of the Study

A restricted curriculum and no freedom to do as they wish, is not the kind of curriculum that can produce thinkers of tomorrow and represent the country on a worldwide platform. The individual will become redundant if their creativity is not encouraged. This inflexibility demands an escape route away from the 150 years old “British formal education system.” Alternative ways of schooling have emerged across the world and have now entered India as well. Homeschooling is one of these alternative methods or systems of education wherein the parents take charge of the kind of education their wards should be exposed to and the way that education must be imparted.

Homeschooling or home education is educating the children in natural setting away from the four walls of schools and providing freedom to choose the subjects of their choice. At the same time, it is not necessary there have to be any particular subject. Similar concept was introduced by Ivan Illich named **Deschooling** based on which his book “Deschooling Society” is based. Deschooling is the term used to refer to the transition process that children and parents go through when they leave the school system in order to start homeschooling. Another concept of Homeschooling is **Unschooling**. John Holt coined this word which is used to refer to the children who are never sent to school and are part of homeschooling since day one.

The reason researcher has chosen homeschooling as the area of research is because there is dearth of researches about the same in India. Homeschooling has been taking place in India since the 1990’s but there are only few researches which have been done and hardly provide any base for the parents. The parents who did homeschooling previously found out their information from homeschooling parents and groups in abroad. But there is no information for the newer parents even after a decade.

Furthermore, it is also important to understand the perceptions of teachers in the whole process of education. It is necessary to understand if the teachers would ever consider the homeschooled children an equal part of the system, only not part of the traditional methods. Moreover, there are different sets of teachers whose opinions differ based on the amount of exposure and experience they have gained over the years of entering the profession. Hence, it became necessary to study the perceptions of each set of teachers separately. All these reasons prompted the researcher to choose this topic as a subject area of study.

Objectives

- 1) To study the perceptions of pre-service teachers towards homeschooling
- 2) To study the perceptions of in-service teachers towards homeschooling
- 3) To compare the perceptions of pre-services and in-services teachers towards homeschooling
- 4) To understand the perceptions of senior secondary school students towards homeschooling

Hypothesis

- 1) There will be no significant change in the perception of in-service teachers on homeschooling.
- 2) There will be no significant difference in the perception of pre-service teachers and in-service teachers on homeschooling.

2. Methodology

Sample

- 1) **Pre-service teachers**-Fifty-six participants of entry-level (F Y B. Ed) pre-service teachers (n = 56) and thirty-six participants of exit-level (S Y B. Ed) pre-service teachers have responded to the tool (n = 36).
- 2) **In-service teachers**-Fifty-eight participants of in-service teachers responded to the tool (n = 58).

Procedure

The researcher conducted a mail survey with approximately 150 teachers from different groups. The mail survey was intended to be safe for the environment and help the researcher reach teachers from different areas of the world. The 30 questions in the mail survey are asked in such a manner that they are divided into three categories which would help the researcher analyse in a better manner. Following are the categories:-

- a) Perceptions about traditional schooling
- b) Perceptions about homeschooling

- c) Comparison between the above two perceptions

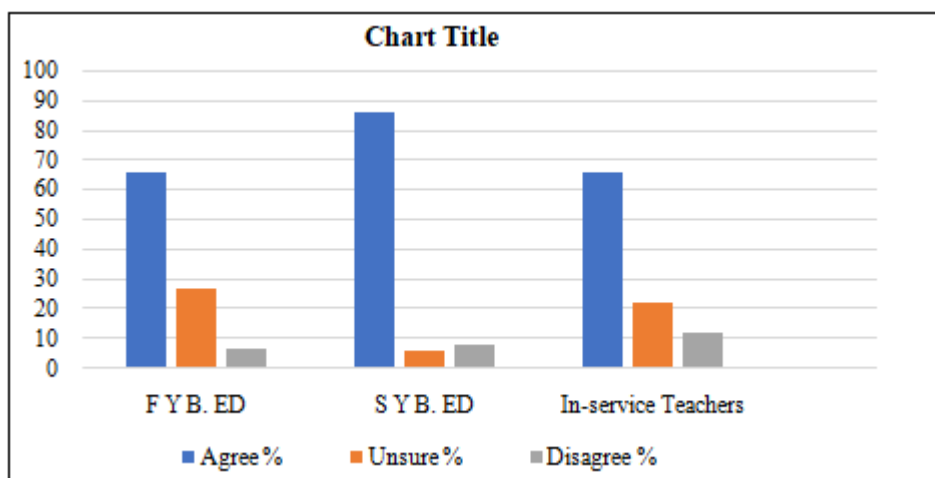
The findings below are in relation to the comparison of the two methods of schooling, i. e., traditional schooling and homeschooling.

Comparison between the two systems of schooling

- 1) **Compared to homeschooling, a regular schooling experience has more advantages**

Table 1: What is Advantageous? – Homeschooling or Traditional Schooling?

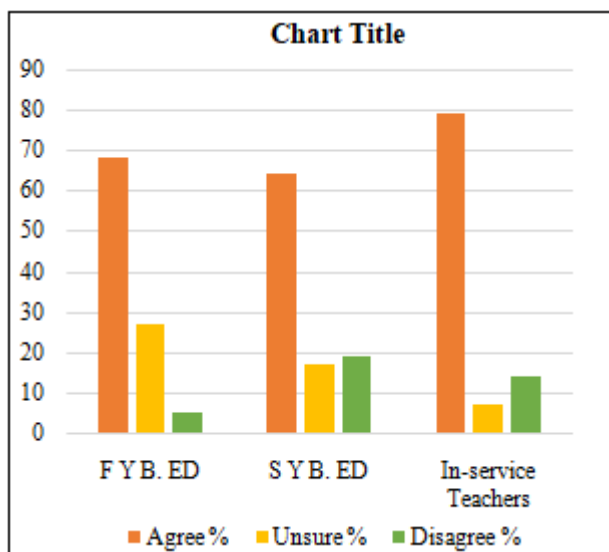
Responses	No. of participants	Agree	%	Unsure	%	Disagree	%
F Y B. ED	56	37	66	15	27	4	7
S Y B. ED	36	31	86	2	6	3	8
In-service Teachers	58	38	66	13	22	7	12
Overall	150	106	71	30	20	14	9



- 2) **Traditional schooling system instils more discipline as compared to homeschooling**

Table 2: Education Systems and Discipline

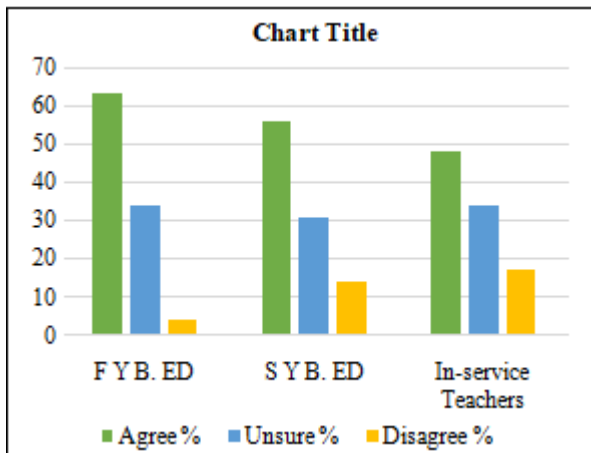
Responses	No. of participants	Agree	%	Unsure	%	Disagree	%
F Y B. ED	56	38	68	15	27	3	5
S Y B. ED	36	23	64	6	17	7	19
In-service Teachers	58	46	79	4	7	8	14
Overall	150	107	71	25	17	18	12



- 3) **A homeschooled child and a child from regular schooling system have vast differences in their competencies**

Table 3: Differences between the children of the two systems of education

Responses	No. of participants	Agree	%	Unsure	%	Disagree	%
F Y B. ED	56	35	63	19	34	2	4
S Y B. ED	36	20	56	11	31	5	14
In-service Teachers	58	28	48	20	34	10	17
Overall	150	83	55	50	33	17	11



3. Results and Discussions

From all the responses, it is observed that the participants have only heard the concept of homeschooling but do not know what it exactly is. It may be due to the simplicity of the word “homeschooling” that the teachers may have interpreted the word literally and just from the word they may have assumed what it must be. Hence, it is only the superficial understanding of the word and have responded from what they perceive it to be. Furthermore, the differences in the responses of the entry-level and exit-level pre-service teachers exist because of the exposure that the exit-level pre-service teachers receive in the process of their long duration of internships in regular schools. Therefore, their responses are contrasting in terms of what are their perceptions about the regular schooling system. Furthermore, the pre-service teachers, at any level of their professional competence, are part of the newer generation who are ready to go beyond their boundaries to explore the newer teaching-learning strategies. The responses convey that the curriculum of teacher training institutes must be updated and the student – teachers must be exposed to these alternative ways of learning.

To the astonishment of the researcher, the in-service teachers have responded to the survey in opposition to the fact that they are part of the traditional system of education. From this, it may be perceived that the in-service teachers may be expecting a change in the regular education system to be more conducive to the current changing trends in the world around. It may also be a possibility that the in-service teachers may be ready to explore the newer avenues for themselves and the students.

If homeschooling is going to be the future of the country, naturally the teachers are important stakeholders in this system. The monotony of the curriculum of teaching may be the reason for lesser number of students in the professional course of education for teachers. This may also be the reason of poor quality of teachers entering into the education system. It may be necessary for the authorities to take the change seriously.

An open-ended question is also asked by the researcher which asks the opinion of all the participants on carrying out homeschooling with their ward. Out of 150 participants, 116 participants responded. Maximum number of participants

are concerned about their child’s **social skills and interaction** because the participants think that the homeschooled child has zero social interaction. The next concern is the **holistic development** of their child where the participants think that homeschooling may not provide holistic development of their child. They are also concerned about their child’s **personality development** due to which they may not be able to face the competition in the world. The participants seem to be less concerned about the **cognitive skills** that are taught to the children at school due to which very few participants talk about the cognitive skills that may be developed in the children. This may be because the participants may take it into consideration that the basic learning normally takes place at home. The participants are also concerned from the point of view of **utilization of resources** because the participants believe that due to homeschooling the child may not be participating in any extra-curricular activities like sports, music, dance, etc. There are more reasons cited as miscellaneous which do not seem to have too much impact on the study.

It may be observed that a few participants are willing to home school their child. The few things that may be holding them back is the responses of their immediate families and the pressure that they may have to go through throughout the process. A few of them may have weighed the pros and cons of the format and have given honest answer to the question.

From all the positive and negative responses from the participants it can be observed that the participants hold the requirement of social interaction at the top of their concerns for their children. They may consider schools to be the primary agent of socialisation. It may also be because participants may be afraid of the reactions that may come from the society at large and their families in particular. It may also be possible that the upbringing of these participants also affects their perceptions. They may believe that human is a social animal and cannot survive without it. Also, the perception that homeschooling does not involve any interaction may also exist due to which they do not wish to pursue homeschooling. The most important factor in all this may be that none of the participants have ever interacted with a homeschooled individual to know what their routine is and what kind of social interactions are they involved in. All the participants being teachers, it may be possible that they consider school to be the biggest platform for students to interact with each other as the children end up spending more than 50 % of their time in school.

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