

**The impact of covid-19 pandemic on the accessibility of educational services among the school going children of 6-14 years of age in Samantarapur, Bhubaneswar****Saloni Panda**

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E-mail: [salonipanda0168@gmail.com](mailto:salonipanda0168@gmail.com)**Abstract**

*The widespread prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the education sector in India. It forced an unprecedented global shutdown that led to the closure of educational institutions for months. Due to lockdown, teachers directed educational activities through remote learning. This study reflects the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the educational accessibility of students from different background along with the attitude of teachers and parents to rapidly adapt to this new mode of learning and teaching. Schools and families had to react rapidly to a new mode of teaching and learning. The structure and size of families' economic, social and cultural backgrounds have produced significant differences in the learning opportunities of children from different backgrounds. Middle class families were able to maintain higher standards of education quality in comparison to children from socially disadvantaged families. Results differed by the type of school (Government/Private) where students were enrolled according to the economic and social backgrounds of their parents.*

**Key words:** Education, Covid-19, Learning, Schools, Students.**Introduction:**

From the time of the outbreak of the corona virus disease 2019 (COVID 19), people have been impacted in one way or the other. Countrywide lockdown have strongly impacted the lives of people of all occupations and all ages. The pandemic has also affected the education system across the world and has altered the lives of learners in many countries (UNESCO, 2020). Several countries have adopted different measures to deal with the educational crisis.

The consequences of the containment measures of COVID-19 are being deleterious to the mental health of people around the world. It is logical that the most critical are children who are not able to recognize what is happening around them, along with the concern and frustration of their elders, any present risk factors, such as anxiety and affective and post-traumatic stress disorders (Giallonardo et al., 2020).

Around the world, attempts to continue providing education to students varied greatly, due to great changes in the modes of access to technologies, which could support remote teaching, such as books, TV, smart phones and the internet. Many of the international providers of educational tools made their resources free of charge during the pandemic, and UNICEF launched the learning at home initiative, which provided certain activities everyday that parents could easily adapt and share with others, given that they had internet access (Miks and McIlwaine, 2020).

**Objectives:**

- To state the effects of COVID-19 lockdown on the educational accessibility of the students with respect to both Government and Private schools in the locality.
- To highlight some positive and negative impact of the global pandemic on the education in the locality.

**Study Area:**

Samantarapur is located in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. The map driving distance from Samantarapur to Bhubaneswar is 8 km. Samantarapur was born as a village which is now an accreditation of a Municipal Corporation, Ward no-59 which is confined to the south-west boundary of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation.

**Methodology:**

This cross-sectional study was conducted in some Government and Private schools in the area of Samantarapur, Bhubaneswar. The target populations in this study were students of (6-14) years of age. The sample of informants such as students, teachers and parents has been selected by employing random sampling technique. Those who were not willing to participate in the study were excluded. In terms of methodology, both primary as well as secondary data were collected for this study.

**Results and Discussion-**

**Table-1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Sl. No	Respondents	Age-Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	Students	6-14	90	64.3
2	Teachers	30-40	10	7.14
3	Parents	30-45	40	28.6

Table-1 depicts about the total respondents taken into consideration. Respondents include students, teachers and parents. A total of 90 school students and 10 teachers from both government and private schools have been included. Response of 40 parents were considered. Majority of school students were taken because the topic most probably relies upon the impact of COVID-19 on students. Response from parents and teachers were taken in order to record their attitude towards adjusting to this critical scenario.

**Table-2: Demographic profile of both Government and Private School Students and Teachers-**

Variables	Primary		Secondary		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Government Schools</b>						
Students	11	73.33	4	26.67	15	16.6
Teachers	2	66.67	1	33.33	3	30
<b>Private Schools</b>	No	%	No	%	No	%

Students	43	57.33	32	42.67	75	83.3
Teachers	4	57.14	3	42.86	7	70

Table- 2 illustrates the number of students and teachers of Government Schools and Private Schools taken into consideration. Due to the location being in an urban setup, few government school students and teachers have been included.

**Table-3: Educational Profile of Parents**

Educational Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	0	0
Primary	3	7.5
Upper Primary	4	10
Secondary	6	15
Graduation	20	50
Post Graduation	7	17.5

Table3 shows the educational qualification of the parents of both the government and private school students. Out of the total 40 parents covered in the sample, majority around 50% do have the qualification up to Graduation level and the least being 7.5% of parents had their education till primary level. Parental Education plays a major role in participating and engaging themselves in supporting and guiding their children. Parents being qualified used to discuss school things with children, checking their homework and participating in school activities. In case of parents not being qualified enough are not able to guide and support their children in their academic performance.

**Table-4: Occupational Profile of Parents-**

Types of Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Household Work	7	17.5
Government Jobs	10	25
Private Service	16	40
Wage Labour	5	12.5
Any other	2	5

Table 4 shows the socio-economic conditions of parents. Among a total of 40 parents covered in the sample, most of the parents around 40% are having Private jobs followed by 25% of parents having Government Jobs. 17.5% of parents mostly women perform household chores and no other secondary work followed by 12.5% as wage labour and 5% as having other jobs. Parental socio-economic status can affect their children's schooling quality significantly. The higher the social-economic status of a family, the better schools their children get enrolled.

**Table-5: Reasons for not being regular and losing interest in online classes-**

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Could not afford digital gadgets	9	10
Doubts remain unresolved in this online mode	28	31.11
Do not have internet connectivity	8	8.89
Distractions in the home environment	38	42.22

Unemployment and non-payment of fees	7	7.78
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Table 5 shows the reasons of the students for not being regular and losing interest in online classes. Out of the total 90 Private and Government students covered in the sample, majority which is 42.22% students had the major reason of distraction in the home environment with the least 7.78% of students being resisted from online classes due to unemployment and non-payment of fees. The seriousness that the physical presence can instil in their children is not possible with online learning. Lack of physical supervision of teacher’s leads to the doubts of the students remains unclear following a poor academic performance. Families facing economic crisis are not able to pay their dues and fees in time which hampers their children’s learning.

**Table6: Mediums used for Online Learning**

Mediums	Frequency	Percentage
Smart phones	42	46.67
Laptop/Desktop	28	31.11
Tablet	11	12.22
No mediums	9	10

Table-6 depicts about the mediums used by the students to attain online classes. Among the total 90 students, 46.67% of majority students use smart phones for this online mode of learning followed by 31.11% of students using Laptop/ Desktop and 12.22% of students using tablet for attaining online classes. The least 10% of students remained who could not afford any mediums for attaining online classes due to many reasons.

**Table 7: Time spent on daily regular activities-**

Variables	Time Interval(hrs/day)	Frequency	%
Online classes	0-2	14	15.55
	2-4	34	37.78
	4-7	42	46.67
Self study	0-2	35	38.89
	2-5	34	37.78
	5-9	21	23.33
Fitness	0-0.5	51	56.67
	0.5-2	39	43.33
Sleep	4-6	28	31.11
	6-8	42	46.67
	8-11	20	22.22
Social Media	0-0.5	13	14.44
	0.5-1.5	32	35.56
	1.5-3.5	36	40
	3.5-6	9	10

Table 7 reflects the time spent by students on different regular activities on a daily basis. Among total 90 students, for online classes, 46.67% of students spend 4-7 hrs/day in attaining online classes with the least 15.55% of students for 0-2 hrs. For self study, 38.89% of student’s utilised 0-2 hrs/day for self study at home with the least 23.33% of students spend 5-

9hrs/day for self study. For fitness, 56.67% of students spent 0-0.5 hrs/day for fitness followed by 43.33% of students spent 0.5-2 hrs/day for fitness. For sleep, a majority of 46.67% of students used to spend 6-8 hrs/day followed by 31.11% of students sleep for 4-6hrs/day and 22.22% of students used to sleep for 8-11 hrs. And lastly in case of social media, a majority of 40% of students involve themselves in the use of social media for 1.5-3.5 hrs/day with the least 10% of students use social media for 3.5-6 hrs/day.

Majority of students utilise most of their time in sleeping followed by online classes and social media. Very few hours are spent on self study and fitness by the students in this scenario. Very few competent students use to involve themselves in online studies, self study and in other productive co-curricular activities.

### **Government Schools during COVID-19**

- **Delivery of Education during the Lockdown-** After the announcements of State Government for the delivery of education through online mode, many parents reported that education was not delivered during the lockdown due to lack of awareness among parents and teachers about the delivery of education through online mode. Lack of technological knowledge and affordability for the use of digital services forms a great reason for the non-delivery of education through online mode.
- **Suitable environment-** As during lockdown schools are closed for a long period, the students were unable to access the same learning environment that they used to get in their schools. As of now, the delivery of education relied upon the digital online mode, the government school students being unable to afford such internet connectivity facilities were being abstained from those facilities and neither their parents could afford them private tuitions due to their limited socio-economic status.
- **Time spent in Education-** Most probably these students do not invest much time in studying because of certain reasons like-Parents could not afford guidance and support due to being illiterate or less literate and having low confidence to communicate and support their children in online learning. Lack of consultation with teachers which leads to their doubts remain unclear and no access to digital education. Losing interest in studies due to reduced contact with books and digital resources of education.
- **Physical activity-** Due to the school closure, the students were lacking the physical activity due to lack of proper knowledge and awareness about it. Students not being in contact with teachers consider physical activity as not so important for their health.
- **Mental Health-** Among Government school students, mental stress plays a major role in particularly secondary level students. They face a sheer pressure due to certain reasons like lack of affordability of private tuitions, lack of teacher's consultation and supervision, lack of affordability of materials and online digital resources and lastly the vulnerability to slavery and poverty.

### **Private Schools during COVID-19:**

- **Delivery of education during lockdown-** Here education is being delivered in online mode through digital devices. The most widely used mode is WhatsApp followed by telephonic conversations between teacher and student. Arising of technical issues and non-conducive internet connection tends to have a major impact on the accessibility of educational facilities. Apart from these challenges, no alternative of non-digital devices were evidenced during this lockdown.

- **Challenges faced by parents of Private School students-** The shift from traditional mode of learning to online mode led to the parents to adapt many changes. Some parents reported a combination of difficulties that their children face like signal/internet speed issues, data is too expensive, don't have digital device, difficulty in negotiating software and no internet connection.
- **Expenditure on private school education-** In case of Private school, a huge amount of total income is spent on education from each household. For a family with single earning member, the average expenditure on private schooling (for two children) constitutes around 20% of the household income. Due to this lockdown, many parents are even planning to drop out their children from private schools and enrol them in government schools in order to save money spent in private school. Some parents reported about the fee hike and about being pressurized to pay the fees through the reminders and messages.
- **Environment-** In Private Schools, the students most probably manage to get the perfect conducive environment for the learning. But still some parents could not afford the appropriate conditions for their students like they could not afford the internet connection in case for two children reading at a time in private schools. Some parents also reported that due to lack of sufficient assignments their children are wasting more time in playing video games, watching TV, and do not show much interest in studies. Due to this current pandemic situation and the trend of unemployment, many students also face issues of violence leading to an inappropriate form of environment for studying.
- **Mental Stress-** These students often face the issues of mental stress due to the pressure of assignments, private online tuitions and engrossed in certain household work. Some students also face the issues of family disturbances along with financial issues which increases their mental pressure.

#### **Positive Impact of COVID-19 on Education:**

- **Online Education being an opportunity in disguise-** This ongoing crisis can be considered as an opportunity for the prevalence of online learning. This e-learning overcomes geographical barriers and ensures equitable access of education for all. It also facilitates convenient, quick and 24\*7 access.
- **A Step towards blended learning-** COVID-19 has increased the adoption of digital technologies to deliver education through online mode. Educational institutions incorporated the blended mode of learning. It encouraged teachers and students to continue the process of education with the same interest and enthusiasm. It also facilitates access to a large number of learners at a time.
- **Proper usage of the soft copy of learning resource materials-** In the critical scenario of the COVID-19 pandemic, students were unable to collect hard copies for their reference. Moreover, it enhanced the student's analytical way of searching for good materials for their reference and learning.
- **Development of collaborative work-** The online learning creates new chances for collaborative learning and teaching on new platforms. This platform encourages collaborations even among teachers, faculty members through virtual meetings, teleconferencing, e-conferencing opportunities and webinars.
- **Flexible Schedule-** Students and teachers are free to schedule their timings as per their own convenience. During lockdown, teachers have to perform some extra tasks and

training so as to get themselves fit in the operation of the latest software which leads to the effective delivering of education.

- **Refined use of electronic media for sharing information-** Learning resources are allocated among the teachers and students easily and the related queries are resolved through phone calls, SMS, e-mails, and other social media platforms.

#### **Negative Impacts of COVID-19 on Education:**

- **Negative influence on Education-** Due to lockdown, schools, colleges and other educational institutions have been closed. Classes have been suspended and many exams at different levels postponed. Different boards have already postponed their examinations and entrance tests. Admission process got delayed and rescheduled. Due to this situation, students suffered a huge loss of nearly more than a full academic year which is going to further hamper the situation of continuity in education and students may face difficulties in starting over schooling again after this huge gap.
- **Incompetent teachers/ students for online education-** Most teachers and students are not equipped with this sudden transition of traditional face-to face learning to online mode of learning. Teachers are trying their best to adapt themselves to their new mode of learning. Students are also managing to learn through this online platform but also face many difficulties in understanding and resolving of doubts.
- **Challenges and difficulties that parents face to educate their children-** Some parents manage to guide and support their children in this remote learning. Some parents due to lack of adequate knowledge about the technology as well as the curriculum pattern won't be able to guide their children. Many parents face the problem of affording online education to their children.
- **Access to digital world-** Due to lockdown, the transition of face-to-face learning to online learning has formed a digital divide among most of the students. Many students do not possess the digital gadgets required for online education hence they are resisted from the present mode of learning.
- **Lack of nutrition due to closure of schools-** Mid-day meals is a government initiative to provide good nutritional value to school-age children nation-wide. Due to school closure, students were restricted from the facility and do not be able to get the required nutritional value.
- **Payment of fees being an additional problem for the parents and even private institutions-** Due to lockdown parents face the crisis of unemployment for which they could not afford to pay school and college fees. And this non-payment of fees affects the private institutions to a larger extent.

#### **Conclusion:**

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a very broad and major impact on life in general to the world. Moreover, it has impacted immensely the education sector in India. The present study reflects the challenges and problems faced by the school students, teachers and parents in adopting to this new mode of learning in such critical scenario. The limitations remain like how parents from different backgrounds will follow through the instructions, students from all backgrounds are unable to have access to the online mode of education. The inaccessibility to the modern digital gadgets and internet connectivity forming the major obstacle towards the



online mode of learning. It is important for us to reimagine a better education with technology and find creative ways to make education more equitable, including out the digital divide.

In the rebuilding phase, it is necessary to establish an education system that incorporates a whole-child approach, addresses the impact of poverty and inequality on students capacity to learn and on teachers ability to do their jobs, offers a flexible set of solutions that mitigates the impact of the inequities that are built into the system, values education and educators, and creates proper contingency plans for future consequences.

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