

Learning Concerns of Children with Disabilities using Online Learning during COVID 19: The Parent's Perspective

– Sunil Kumar*

Research Scholar, STRIDE, IGNOU, New Delhi, India

✉ skeducator@gmail.com ID <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3943-3754>

– Anita Priyadarshini

Associate Professor, STRIDE, IGNOU, New Delhi, India

✉ anitapriyadarshini@ignou.ac.in ID <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3161-4171>



ARTICLE HISTORY

Paper Nomenclature: Empirical Research Paper

Paper Code: GJEISV13I2AJ2021ERP1

Submission at Portal (www.gjeis.com): 03-Apr-2021

Manuscript Acknowledged: 06-Apr-2021

Originality Check: 30-May-2021

Originality Test (Plag) Ratio (Urkund): 0%

Author Revert with Rectified Copy: 04-June-2021

Peer Reviewers Comment (Open): 08-June-2021

Single Blind Reviewers Explanation: 11-June-2021

Double Blind Reviewers Interpretation: 18-June-2021

Triple Blind Reviewers Annotations: 19-July-2021

Author Update (w.r.t. correction, suggestion & observation): 24-August-2021

Camera-Ready-Copy: 28-Nov-2021

Editorial Board Excerpt & Citation: 20-Dec-2021

Published Online First: 31-Dec-2021

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The COVID-19 pandemic affected the education of children as it led to the closure of all schools, in India. The existing face to face system was on an emergent basis replaced with online learning for all children, including those with disabilities. However teaching learning for children with disabilities is a specialised task as the teacher plays a key role in the academic progress of the learner. Children learn according to a Individualised Education Plan (IEP) which is administered by trained teachers. The school provides learning resources, specialised support staff for children with disabilities. During the pandemic, the children with disabilities had to study at home and the parents had to suddenly take on the role of assisting the learner during the online classes. This study attempts to study the learning concerns that affected the academic progress of the children with disabilities and is based on the perspective of the parents. It makes suggestions for an appropriate learning environment for children with disabilities studying through an online mode.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The present study is descriptive in nature. A semi-structured questionnaire consisting of 13 items based on five point Likert Scale was constructed to observe the responses of parents of children with disabilities who were studying through online classes. A mixed method approach was adopted in the study. This study was conducted on a sample of twenty five parents of children with special needs from inclusive schools in Delhi. The purposive sampling technique was employed to collect sample for the study.

Findings: The study revealed that online learning as was conducted during the pandemic for children with disabilities was not effective with 84% of the respondents agreeing that this type of online learning was not able to create the same learning environment as classroom teaching. Facilities could not be provided at home which affected the academic progress of the child. Such online learning was unable to arouse attention and interest of the children and an appropriate pedagogy for online learning for children with disabilities was recommended. Parents agreed that there was a negative effect of the lockdown on the physical, mental and social health of their children. Parents recognised that they required training to better support the academic concerns of their children.

Originality/Value: The study throws light on a new aspect related to learning concerns of children with disabilities i.e. online learning for children with disabilities. While technology is widely used as assistive and adaptive support devices for children with disabilities, however during the pandemic, the children were exposed to online learning in their home environment without the support of their specialised teachers, therapist and staff. The observations of parents throws new light on this issue of online learning. The study makes recommendations for making new pathways for making education for children with disabilities truly inclusive.

KEYWORDS Children with Disabilities | Covid19 Pandemic | Teaching-Learning | Online Learning | Parents of Children with Disabilities

*Corresponding Author (Sunil et Al)

- Present Volume & Issue (Cycle): Volume 13 | Issue 2 | Apr-Jun 2021
- International Standard Serial Number:
Online ISSN: 0975-1432 | Print ISSN: 0975-153X
- DOI (Crossref, USA) <https://doi.org/10.18311/gjeis/2021>
- Bibliographic database: OCLC Number (WorldCat): 988732114
- Impact Factor: 3.57 (2019-2020) & 1.0 (2020-2021) [CiteFactor]
- Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Subodh Kesharwani
- Frequency: Quarterly

- Published Since: 2009
- Research database: EBSCO <https://www.ebsco.com>
- Review Pedagogy: Single Blind Review/ Double Blind Review/ Triple Blind Review/ Open Review
- Copyright: ©2021 GJEIS and it's heirs
- Publisher: Scholastic Seed Inc. and KARAM Society
- Place: New Delhi, India.
- Repository (figshare): 704442/13



Introduction

COVID 19 has affected the well-being of all children, according to the UNICEF “but those with disabilities face multiple threats because of the challenges they already face in their daily lives.”(UNICEF, 2020) According to Section 31 of India's Rights of Persons with Disability Act, “every child with benchmark disability between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the rights to free education in a neighboring school or special school of their choice.” (RPWD Act, 2016). However in 2020, the intensity of the corona virus pandemic led to the closure of all schools. According to UN, schools were closed in 189 countries (UN,2020). In India, as a part of the preventive measures taken to contain the pandemic, the Government issued orders under which “all educational, training, research, coaching institutions etc. shall remain closed.” (GoI, 2020). This was followed with directions, in March 2020, for educational institutions to ‘work from home’, adopt distance and online teaching modes (GoI, 2020) . In order to protect children and adolescents from the pandemic, and at the same time cause minimum disruption to their learning, formal schools and other educational institutions which were earlier running in face to face mode now adopted an online teaching methodology. All classes from primary to higher education levels were delivered through online mode. This change to teaching through online mode also included inclusive schools having children with disabilities. Both the teacher and the child were separated and teaching-learning was taking place from home. However this came with its own challenges and could not have been an easy task. In the case of teaching-learning of children with disabilities, they need resources, specialised instructional strategies and supportive learning environment such as ICTs as well as teacher support. Research has shown that children with disabilities learn better through a conducive social environment with face to face interaction with teachers and peers on regular basis. (King & Ryan, 2019) . Children with intellectual disability need more attention for their activities of daily living with the help of trained rehabilitation professionals otherwise they are not able to sustain their development which are learnt before. (Ruteere, Mutia, Mwoma, & Runo, 2015). In the changed circumstances when learning is taking place from home through online mode, it is the parent, sibling or caregiver who now functions as a supporting hand. Therefore the preparation for the mental readiness of learners has to be created by them along with the skills to use the technology. There is a need to study these new challenges caused by the pandemic that may have occurred due to online learning for children with disabilities.

Review of Literature

Every child has an equal right to get an education regardless of any discrimination. To ensure the education of learners with special needs, the Right to Education Act(RTE) and Rights of Persons with Disability Act (RPWD) have

established the groundwork for a rights-based framework (UNESCO, 2019). Section 16 of chapter-III in the RPWD Act is devoted to educational provisions for children with special needs, including guidelines to the institutions to ensure support services to optimize social and academic progress of the child with a disability, most appropriate ways of communication for the blind, deaf and individual with deafblindness, provide facilities for sports and recreation, monitoring the participation and progress of the child with a disability amongst others.(Kumar & Kumar, 2018). The federal laws in the United States, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), specified the accountability of schools to ensure the success of the students with disabilities through appropriate instructional accommodation, modification, and evaluation (Demirdag S, 2014).

Teaching learning for children with disabilities is a specialised task as the teacher plays a key role in the academic progress of the learner. A well trained teacher can quickly identify those learners who are struggling or not actively involved in the regular classroom. Due to limitations in processing and academic progress of learners with intellectual disabilities, teachers need to apply appropriate approach in the teaching process. According to Algahtani (2017), in order to meet the special needs of learners with intellectual disability, teachers need to apply strategies based on constructivist and behavioural models to teach effectively.

According to Agarwal (2015), e-learning technologies facilitate a flexible, constructivist, learner-friendly and multi-perspective approach to teaching-learning processes. In an extensive study on technology use by students with intellectual disabilities, Wehmeyer, Smith, & Davies (2004) concluded that while there was need for more research yet there was sufficient evidence that “students with intellectual disabilities can benefit from technology across multiple domains.” Learners with disabilities may benefit from those technologies that help them and allow them to keep with their peer group (Martin & Mishra, 2020). However most studies are related to the use of technology as an assistive device. Wehmeyer (1999) makes mentions that a national survey of parents on the use of technology by their school-age child having intellectual disability focussed on technology for a specific purpose i.e. devices for better hearing and vision, mobility, communication, environmental and independent living and home adaptations. Ahmad (2018) concluded that assistive technology can be a useful and supportive tool for students with disabilities as they help both teachers and students create an unforgettable learning experience. The use of ICTs for persons with disabilities should be systematic. All issues such as access to ICT, professional training, development of new methods in ICT should be considered and addressed at all levels, whether it is the individual learner, an institution or broad educational system level (UNESCO, 2011).



Various studies have shown that all children learn differently and use different sets of skills for learning. The pandemic changed the regular face to face learning and compelled all children to engage through an online learning environment. According to Herscovitz (2020), in the case of children with disabilities, they face hurdles in their learning and many children need physical and occupational therapy and other support services, which are not feasible in online learning or remote instruction. It is reported that the challenges of online learning exist even for children without disabilities, more so during the Covid19 pandemic. In a study conducted on e-readiness of secondary school learners during the pandemic, Bhaumik & Priyadarshini (2020) noted that 73% of the learners felt isolated in online learning classes. The lack of social interaction among students was seen as a most severe obstacle during online classes (Muilenburg & Berge, 2005). Studies have also noted that all children do not have easy access to technology, lack internet access at home, and struggle with computers. Sari & Nayir (2020) found that teachers teaching from a distance during the COVID pandemic had difficulty in the accessibility of the internet, lack of infrastructure, management of the class, and human resources. A better understanding of thoughts, especially concrete concepts, needs physical or face-to-face interaction. Depending on online interaction is also harmful to the eye's health and general body health (Mishra, Gupta & Shree, 2020). COVID-19 has had a significant effect on student's mental health, education, and daily routine activities (Chaturvedi, Vishwakarma & Singh, 2021).

The significant role of the parent in understanding the child was noted when based on an extensive review of studies regarding children with motor skill difficulties, Hohlfeld, Harty & Engel (2018) highlighted the importance of the therapist, teacher and parent involvement along with methodological sound interventions. During the pandemic, the parent had to suddenly take on the role of assisting their child in the online classes which were initiated following the closure of schools. Bozkurt and Sharma (2020) called this kind of online learning, which emerged due to educational crisis caused by the pandemic as 'emergency remote teaching' and pointed out that many distinct features of an online learning process were not present in this "temporary solution" form of learning. There is therefore a need to study the observations of parents on how their children with disabilities managed this situation of online learning or 'emergency remote teaching'.

Rationale of the Study

The present study has been carried out to study the learning concerns of children with disabilities during the pandemic. This learning was carried out through online mode with the teacher being at a distance from the learner i.e. being at home. In these circumstances, the parent had to perform the task of assisting the learner during the online

classes and was able to closely observe the child's progress. This was an unusual situation as children with disabilities need a physical and social environment as well as resources as a part of their learning process. There is therefore a need to study the observations of parents on how their children with disabilities fared during this changed scenario of online learning which replaced face to face learning.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were to find out the learning concerns of children with disabilities while studying online and to examine the effect of online learning during lockdown on their physical and mental health. The study attempts to find out the challenges faced by the learners studying through such kind of online learning in term of disturbance in daily routine of the child, studying in isolation, and absence of social interaction with peers. This study is based on the perspective of the parent who was assisting and observing the learning progress of the child. It attempts to make suggestions for ensuring a appropriate learning environment for children with disabilities studying through an online mode.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and adopted mixed method approach. The sample included parents of children with disabilities who were earlier studying in the face to face mode in inclusive school and who were now engaged in learning through online classes. Purposive sampling method was employed. The sample size was 25. The area of the study was New Delhi.

The data was collected with the help of an online semi-structured questionnaire which was developed using Google Forms. The questionnaire had three sections namely (i) informant's demographic details (ii) children's demographic details and (iii) issues related to their learning concerns. The third sections was based on a five point Likert scale having scale points were Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The initial tool had 16 items. The questionnaire was pilot tested. The content validity was also carried out by experts. Based upon the results, a total of thirteen (13) items were retained in the final questionnaire. The reliability of the tool was computed using Cronbach Alpha value, which was found to be 0.70. The consent was taken from the participants. All ethical considerations were followed during the conduct of this research.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was carried out by using statistical techniques. Table 1 shows the mean score and standard deviation of response statements .

Table 1.1 Mean and Standard Deviation of Response Statements

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I was able to provide same facilities of Resource Room /Assistive Devices during online learning at home as were being provided in school.	25	2.80	.957
There is negative impact of current lockdown on physical health of my child.	25	3.64	1.07
My child is able to use the smartphone or other gadgets easily during online learning.	25	3.48	.872
Online learning strategies used by the school are compatible with the academic capabilities of my child.	25	3.08	1.04
My child was able to study better from the soft copy of course materials than from printed materials.	25	3.08	1.15
During online learning, my child faced difficulty following and retaining information, instructions and practicing coordination.	25	3.84	.987
The use of games, puzzles and such co-curricular activities is more effective in classroom than in online teaching.	25	4.08	.997
Due to absence of teaching practices through face to face mode, the academic progress of my child began to slow down.	25	3.60	1.04
There was a negative impact of the lockdown on my child's mental health.	25	3.40	.957
Social distancing had a negative impact on the social life of my child .	25	3.56	1.08
Being in a home environment, my child tended to break the set schedules of routine activities of daily life.	25	4.00	1.04
Due to studying in online mode, the routine of daily learning activities of my child done at school got disturbed affecting the overall development.	25	4.04	.735
During the lockdown, my child became comparatively less creative.	25	3.44	1.12

Results and Discussions

The focus of the questionnaire was to find out the learning concerns of the children with disabilities during their online learning classes and obtain the observation of the parents upon their academic progress.

(i) Parent's (informant) demographic information

The results of the data analysis shows the frequency distribution and percentage of data with regard to their various demographic information related to informant i.e. parent($n=25$).

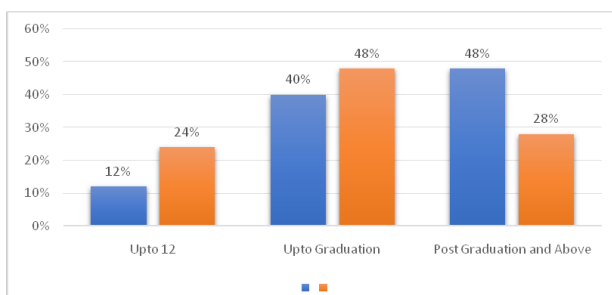
Table 1.2: Mother and Father's Education (in %)


Table 1.2 shows the frequency distribution and percentage of the participating Mother and Father's educational level. The table indicates that out of 25 participants, there were

03 Mothers who had education up to Grade XII, while 10 had studied up to graduation and 12 were post graduates and above. Their percentage was 12%, 40%, 48% respectively. Whereas out of 25 Fathers, it was seen that, 6 were educated up to Grade XII, and 12 were graduates and 7 were post graduates and above. Their percentage was 24%, 48%, 28% respectively.

Table 1.3 Socio Economic Status of Family (in %)


Table 1.3 shows the frequency distribution and percentage of socio-economic status of the family. The above table indicates that out of 25 participants, income level of the 7 parents was up to Rs. 250000, 7 parents was up to Rs. 250001- Rs. 500000, 9 parents was up to Rs. 500001- Rs. 1000000 and

in other category of income level there were 2 parents whose income was above Rs. 1000000 annually. Their percentage are 28%, 28%, 36% and 8% respectively.

(ii) Children’s demographic information

As regards the demographic information of the children, the data analysis related to gender, grade, age, and nature of disability revealed the following:

Table 1.4 Sample with regard to Gender (in %)

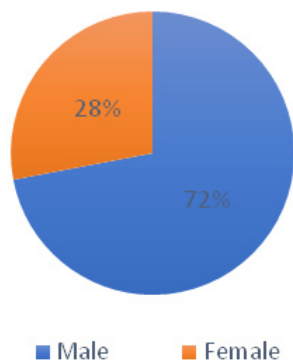


Table 1.4 shows the frequency distribution and percentage of the participants with regard to their children’s gender included male, female and transgender. The above table indicates that out of 25 participants, 18 belong to male and 7 belong to female category. Their percentage are 72% and 28% respectively. No participants were found in ‘transgender’ category of sample.

Table 1.5: Sample with regard to Grade Level (in %)

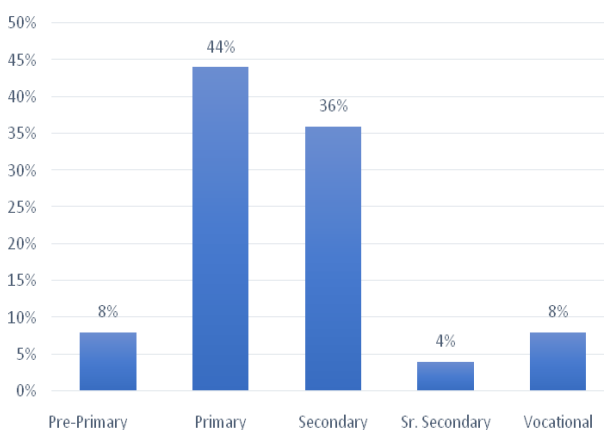


Table 1.5 shows the frequency distribution and percentage of the participants with regard to their children’s grade level. The above table indicates that out of 25 participants, 2 belong to pre-primary, 11 belong to primary, 9 belong to secondary, 1 belongs to sr. secondary and 1 belongs to vocational level. Their percentage are 8%, 44%, 36%, 4% and 8% respectively.

Table 1.6: Sample with regard to Age in years (in %)

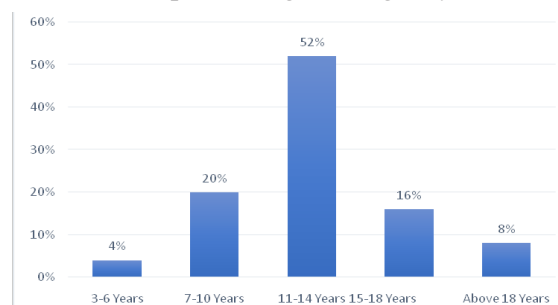


Table 1.6 shows the frequency distribution and percentage of the participants with regard to their children’s age level. As per their age, participants were distributed into five categories, i.e. participants belong to age range from 3-6 years, 7-10 years, 11-14 years, 15-18 years and above 18 years. The above table indicates that out of 25 participants 4% belong to category 3-6 years, 20% belong to category 7-10 years, 52% belong to category 11-14 years, 16% belong to category 15-18 years and 8% belong to category above 18 years.

Table 1.7: Types of Disability (in %)

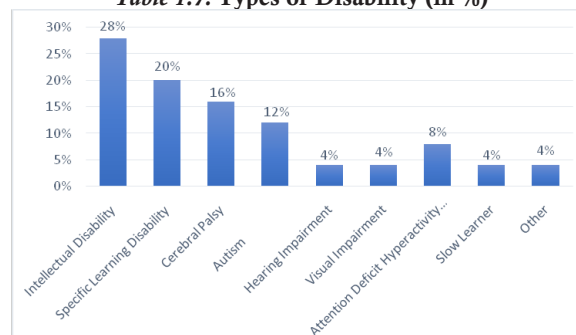


Table 1.7 shows the frequency distribution and percentage of the participants with regard to their children’s disability. As per their disability participants were distributed into nine categories, i.e. participants belong to Intellectual Disability, Specific Learning Disability, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Slow Learner and Other. The above table indicates that out of total 25 participants 28% belong to intellectual disability, 20% belong to specific learning disability, 16% belong to cerebral palsy, 12% belong to autism, 4% belong to hearing impairment, 4% belong to visual impairment, 8% belong to attention deficit hyperactivity, 4% belong to slow learner and 4% belong to other disability.

(iii) Learning Concerns

During the study, an attempt was made to find out more about the various learning concerns of children with disabilities who were studying through online mode as perceived by their parents. The parents responded to statements related to issues of cognitive, physical and social skills of their children.

Table 8 : Parents' responses with respect to learning concerns of their children with disabilities

S No	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
1.	I was able to provide same facilities of Resource Room /Assistive Devices during online learning at home as were being provided in school.	1	4.0	5	20.0	7	28.0	11	44.0	1	4.0
2.	There is negative impact of current lockdown on physical health of my child.	5	20.0	10	40.0	6	24.0	3	12.0	1	4.0
3.	My child is able to use the smartphone or other gadgets easily during online learning.	1	4.0	16	64.0	4	16.0	4	16.0	-	-
4.	Online learning strategies used by the school are compatible with the academic capabilities of my child.	1	4.0	7	28.0	8	32.0	8	32.0	1	4.0
5.	My child was able to study better from the soft copy of course materials than from printed materials.	4	16.0	5	20.0	5	20.0	11	44.0	-	-
6.	During online learning, my child faced difficulty following and retaining information, instructions and practicing coordination.	7	28.0	10	40.0	5	20.0	3	12.0	-	-
7.	The use of games, puzzles and such co-curricular activities is more effective in classroom than in online teaching.	9	36.0	12	48.0	2	8.0	1	4.0	1	4.0
8.	Due to absence of teaching practices through face to face mode, the academic progress of my child began to slow down.	7	28.0	7	28.0	7	28.0	4	16.0	-	-
9.	There was a negative impact of the lockdown on my child's mental health.	3	12.0	8	32.0	9	36.0	5	20.0	-	-
10.	Social distancing had a negative impact on the social life of my child.	4	16.0	12	48.0	4	16.0	4	16.0	1	4.0
11.	Being in a home environment, my child tended to break the set schedules of routine activities of daily life.	8	32.0	12	48.0	1	4.0	4	16.0	-	-
12.	Due to studying in online mode, the routine of daily learning activities of my child done at school got disturbed affecting the overall development.	7	28.0	14	56.0	3	12.0	1	4.0	-	-
13.	During the lockdown, my child became comparatively less creative.	5	20.0	9	36.0	5	20.0	6	24.0	-	-

Findings and Discussions

The findings based upon the responses of the parents highlighted many important issues. The data revealed that 48% of the participants were not able to provide the same facilities of the resource room as were available in the school, while as many as 28% were neutral in their responses. As is known, the resource room in schools serves many purposes for children with special needs. Here learners can receive specialized instruction based upon their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Children can also interact in small groups and trained teachers can help them with their social skills. In

the present lockdown situation, it was reported that such facilities could not be provided at home which affected the academic progress of the child.

The physical fitness of the children is an important aspect for developing a healthy body and mind. It was reported that as many as 60% of the parents agreed that there was a negative effect of the lockdown on the physical health of their children. Physical activities in which all children remain engaged are an integral part of the school time table. Children with disabilities were unable to participate in



physical exercises supervised by an expert trainer, which in turn had a negative effect on their physical health.

Another challenging issue was that of providing learning through an online mode to children with disabilities. The testimonials of teaching experiences documented by Jandrić, Hayes, Truelove, et al. (2020) show that the online teaching during the pandemic brought its own struggles for teachers, students, and families. It is seen that 36% parents felt that the online learning strategies used during this pandemic period were not compatible with the academic capabilities of their child while 32% were neutral. In a school situation, there are diverse strategies adopted for children according to their disabilities. However the sudden lockdown which led to an 'overnight' switch to online learning gave no time for preparation or training or developing an appropriate teaching strategy for children with disabilities. The specialized assistive and adaptive technologies used by children in the physical classroom along with the warmth and comforting presence of the teacher tends to give confidence and security. In this case, some parents reported that due to their own limitations and the inadequacies of online teaching process, they were unable to support their children in grasping concepts. For children with multiple disabilities, participating in academic activities during online classes proved even more difficult and frustrating. The 'video off' sessions prevented the teacher from observing the responses including facial expressions of the child. While one parent observed that her child "dozed off" during the online class, others felt that such forms of online learning were unable to arouse attention and interest of the children.

It is accepted that use of technology has led to the empowerment of persons with disabilities. According to Raja (2016), there is a large range of accessible learning materials in the form of e-books, audio-books, screen readers and other ICTs that support children with disabilities. In this case, opinion was divided with 36% agreeing to the statement that their children were able to study from soft copy of printed material while 44% disagreed to it.

One of the important objectives in teaching children with disabilities is to ensure that they are able to follow and retain information as well as practice coordination. However it was reported that 68% of the parents felt that their child faced difficulty in following and retaining information during the online classes. Focus and concentration were a challenge for many learners, especially for children with intellectual disability (ID) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) as they struggled in completing tasks on prescribed time during online learning.

Research has shown that children learn better using a play way method and co-curricular activities are considered as important component for teaching through constructivist approach. The use of quizzes, games and puzzles in the

classroom and the physical presence of the teacher who supervises each child make the learning more individualized. However most parents found doing these activities in a virtual mode not to be found effective. This study shows that almost 84% of the respondents agreed that this type of learning during pandemic was not able to create the same learning environment as classroom teaching. As a result, 56% of the parents agreed that academic progress of their child slowed down during online classes.

This study also revealed that in terms of mental and social health the children with disabilities suffered. The pandemic demanded social distancing be maintained and as result children felt alone and isolated. However such a feeling during the pandemic was not unique to children with disabilities. Bhaumik and Priyadarshini (2020) found that school going children without disability studying through the online mode also faced anxiety during the lockdown.

This study revealed that the effect of the home environment and the break in the scheduling pattern of the children also resulted in a disturbance. The regular practice of getting 'ready for school' was disturbed. The routine of Activities of Daily Living (ADL) are different for each child and the individualized schedules of ADL are prepared by trained professionals in the school. It was reported by many as 80% of the parents that there was a breakdown of the routine activity of daily life and this disruption affected the overall development of the child.

All these disturbances in the daily schedule also affected the creativity of the child according to over 56% parents. Lack of recreational activities like dancing, playing, interacting in small groups, project work and having to work in isolation without support were cited by parents as being some of the possible reasons for lack of creativity. Further parents admitted that they were not experts in building creativity and trained teachers were often much better at bringing out the talents of their children. For children with multiple disabilities, it was felt to be very difficult to cope with the academic activities through online classes. Some parents stated that during the lockdown period their children missed 'hands on' practical work done in vocational education classes.

While expressing their observations, many parents, especially mothers, found online teaching to be very exhausting as the responsibility of assisting the teacher was transferred to them. Parents who were working from home experienced anxiety in juggling between support to their child's learning as well as handling their own work responsibilities. At school, the child with a disability is supported by special educators, shadow teachers, or other rehabilitation professionals. The lack of social interaction also resulted in anger outbursts, feeling of sadness and frustration. The pandemic created a situation where the parents found themselves playing multiple roles to support

their child's learning. Parents added that they are not so versed with technology, which hampered the teaching-learning of their child. Most of the parents agreed that there is a need for a training programme for parents so that they can better support the online teaching-learning of their child at home.

Conclusion

This study shows that online learning conducted in during the COVID 19 period was a struggle for all – learners, teachers and parents. The suddenness of the change gave no time to design an appropriate teaching strategy for children with disabilities through online learning. The combined impact of a changed learning system along with social distancing and isolation had a detrimental effect on the academic progress of the children with disabilities affecting their physical, mental and social health. As one parent reported that her child had gone back two years in terms of academic development. These findings resonate with the UNESCO Policy Brief (2020) which indicated that in the case of persons with disabilities, it was likely that the Covid 19 crisis would have “exacerbated their exclusion from education.”

This study showed that online learning methods used during the COVID 19 pandemic were inadequate. Despite the universally accepted mantra that education must be inclusive with equal opportunities for all, yet the Covid 19 online learning model tended to create inequality. The earlier progress made by children with intellectual, motor, psycho-social and other disabilities was threatened. The danger of many such children falling into the ranks of the marginalized has become an imminent reality.

The need for an appropriate pedagogy for online learning for children with disabilities based upon more research is recommended. That there is a lack of awareness of alternative strategies amongst academic counsellors teaching learners with different disabilities has already been established in a study by Kumar & Priyadarshini (2020). The need for training the classroom teacher for developing strategies for retaining and processing information through various creative and systematic ways is also recommended. Teaching methods as per the characteristics of the specific disability of the child would help in achieving the goal of Individualized Education Program (IEP). Being prepared for engaging with different learning environments such as those of flexible open distance learning including home schooling options in the post pandemic period need to be considered. Therefore there is a need for workshops, seminars, and training programs regularly for the teaching staff to effectively deal with students with special needs.

The role of the parent is undoubtedly critical to the overall development of the child. Hieman (2002) noted that despite various problems, the parents responded with strength and fortitude displaying positive parental feeling towards their child with a disability and suggested coping strategies to

build competencies of parents. Undoubtedly the limitations of parents in terms of their own educational background and technological competencies need to be overcome in the larger benefit of the child. Systematic honing of diverse skills of the parent would help in providing better long term support to the child. The close collaborations between parents and teachers may lead to greater equal opportunity for the child. The uncertainty of the post pandemic scenario demands that parents be well equipped with knowledge and skills so that they are able to cope better in their efforts to provide a secure future to their child.

Technology is recognised as a means for empowering persons with disabilities. New solutions have to be designed for making online learning truly interactive and differentiated. This study shows that there is a need for improvement in the handling of technology for learning. Digital games enhance creativity and strengthen cognitive skills. The need for differentiated instruction through appropriate technology based teaching learning practices will ensure that no digital exclusion can take place due to the limitations of a child. There is also a need for training of special education teachers so that they can integrate the learning concerns of the children with technology through new innovative ways in online classrooms rather than replicating the physical classroom itself. The problem of affordability and access to technology must be addressed to ensure that children with disabilities do not suffer a wider digital divide that hampers their inclusion

The UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mandate is to ‘leave no one behind’. The Covid experiences showed that while the goalpost for promotion of quality education for children with disabilities remained the same, yet new pathways have to be designed for its achievement. The learning concerns pertaining to such emergency online learning that arose during the pandemic may be the starting point for making teaching-learning for children with disabilities truly inclusive.

References:

- Algahtani, F. (2017). Teaching students with intellectual disabilities: Constructivism or behaviorism? *Educational Research and Reviews*, 12(21), 1031-1035. doi:10.5897/ERR2017.3366 . Retrieved from: <https://academicjournals.org/journal/ERR/article-full-text-pdf/118EAB166524>
- Ann Nevin, C. A., Nullman, S., Salazar, L., & Silio, M. C. (2004). *Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction: Resolving Competing Mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and No Child Left Behind*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED490358> .
- Bhamani, S., Makhdoom, Z. A., Bharuchi, V., Ali, N., Kaleem, S., & Ahmed, D. (2020). Home Learning in Times of COVID: Experiences of Parents. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 7(1), 09-26. doi:10.22555/joed.v7i1.3260 . Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1259928.pdf>
- Bhaumik, R., & Priyadarshini, A. (2020). E-readiness of senior secondary school learners to online learning transition amid COVID-19 lockdown. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15(1), 244-256. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1289945.pdf>



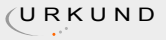
- Chaturvedi, K., Vishwakarma, D. K., & Singh, N. (2021). COVID-19 and its impact on education, social life and mental health of students: A survey. *Children and Youth Services Review, 121*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S019074092032288X?via%3Dihub>
- Demirdag, S. (2014). Effective Teaching Strategies and Student Engagement: Students with Learning Disabilities. *International Journal of Teaching and Education, 2(3)*, 168-175. Retrieved from: https://www.iises.net/download/Soubory/soubory-puvodni/pp168-175_ijoteV2N3.pdf
- Dhawan, S. (2020). Online Learning: A Panacea in the Time of COVID-19 Crisis. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems, 49(1)*, 5-22. doi:10.1177/0047239520934018. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0047239520934018>
- GoI, (2020) Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-1(A), dated 24th March 2020, Para 8, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, Government of India mofpi.nic.in Accessed on 15 May 2021. https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_children_16_april_2020.pdf
- Herscowitz, E. (2020). *For students with disabilities, e-learning fails to replicate in-person attention and support*. Retrieved from: The Daily Northwestern: <https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/04/21/city/for-students-with-disabilities-e-learning-fails-to-replicate-in-person-attention-and-support/>
- Heiman, T. (2002). Parents of Children with Disabilities: Resilience, Coping and Future Expectations. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities, 14(2)*, 159-171. doi:10.1023/A/1015219514621. Retrieved from: <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.902.7588&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Hohlfeld, A., Harty, M., & Engel, M. E. (2018). Parents of children with disabilities: A systematic review of parenting interventions and self-efficacy. *African journal of disability, 7*, 437. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v7i0.437>
- Jandrić, P., Hayes, D., Truelove, I. et al. Teaching in the Age of Covid-19. *Postdigit Sci Educ 2*, 1069–1230 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-020-00169-6>
- King, N., & Ryan, B. J. (2019). The Impact of Social Inclusion on the Social Development of Students with a General Learning Difficulty in Postprimary Education in Ireland. *Education Research International, 2019*, 1-7. doi:10.1155/2019/6327567. Retrieved from: <https://downloads.hindawi.com/journals/edri/2019/6327567.pdf>
- Kumar, S., & Priyadarshini, A. (2020). Awareness Levels of Academic Counsellors Towards Opportunities Available for Learners with Disability in Open and Distance Learning. *Distance Education And Educational Technology* (pp. 95-104). Maktaba Jamia Ltd., Jamia Nagar, New Delhi.
- Kumar, S., & Kumar, S. (2018). RPwD Act, 2016 and School Academic: Concerns And Challenges. *IJRAR-International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, 5(1)*, 382-385. Retrieved from: http://ijrar.com/upload_issue/ijrar_issue_694.pdf
- Martin, P. J., & Mishra, A. (2020). Unit 7, Assistive Technology. In *MES -132 Computer in Education, Block 3, Technology For Inclusion*. Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. Retrieved from: <http://egyankosh.ac.in/handle/123456789/70904>
- Millett, P. (2019). *Ontario's high school e-learning still hasn't addressed students with special needs*. Retrieved from The Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/ontarios-high-school-e-learning-still-hasnt-addressed-students-with-special-needs-121612>
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of AYUSH, G. o. (2020). *The Outbreak of Pandemic COVID-19 and Its Management*. Retrieved from: https://rajyasabha.nic.in/rsnew/Committee_site/Committee_File/ReportFile/14/142/123_2020_11_15.pdf
- Ministry of Law and Justice. Govt. of India (2016). The rights of persons with disabilities act, 2016 New Delhi. Ministry of Law and Justice. Govt. of India. Retrieved from: [https://www.ncpedp.org/sites/all/themes/marinelli/documents/Rights%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20\(RPWD\)%20Act%202016.pdf](https://www.ncpedp.org/sites/all/themes/marinelli/documents/Rights%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20(RPWD)%20Act%202016.pdf)
- Mishra, L., Gupta, T., & Shree, A. (2020). Online teaching-learning in higher education during lockdown period of COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Educational Research Open, 1*. doi:10.1016/j.ijedro.2020.100012. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344819302_Online_Teaching-Learning_in_Higher_Education_during_Lockdown_Period_of_COVID-19_Pandemic
- Muilenburg, L. Y., & Berge, L. Z. (2005). Student Barriers to Online Learning: A factor analytic study. *Distance Education, 26(1)*, 29-48. doi:10.1080/01587910500081269 Retrieved from: <https://www.cu.edu/doc/student-barriers-online-learning.pdf>
- Raja, D. S. (2016). *Bridging the Disability Divide through Digital Technology*. Background Paper for the 2016 World Development Report: Digital Dividends. Retrieved from: <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/123481461249337484/WDR16-BP-Bridging-the-Disability-Divide-through-Digital-Technology-RAJA.pdf>
- Ruteere, R. K., Mutia, J. M., Mwoma, T., & Runo, M. (2015). Challenges Experienced In Teaching Daily Living Skills to Learners with Mental Retardation. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6(18)*, 159-163. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1079775.pdf>
- Sari, T., & Nayir, F. (2020). Challenges in Distance Education During the (Covid-19) Pandemic Period. *Qualitative Research in Education, 9(3)*, 328-360. doi:10.17583/qre.2020. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344955009_Challenges_in_Distance_Education_During_the_Covid-19_Pandemic_Period
- UNESCO. (2011). *ICTs in Education for People with Disabilities*. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/ICTs-with-cover.pdf>
- UNESCO New Delhi (2019), Thematic report; Development of Human Resources for inclusion of children with disabilities in schools, New Delhi: UNESCO New Delhi. [Online]. Retrieved from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf000368780?posInSet=1&queryId=61d8f754-79af-400a-ae81-8b3700e24397>
- United Nations (2020) Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid -19 on Children.[Online]. Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_children_16_april_2020.pdf
- Walt, J. v., Plastow, N. A., & Unger, M. (2020). Motor skill intervention for pre-school children: A scoping review. *African Journal of Disability, 9*. doi:10.4102/ajod.v9i0.747. Retrieved from: <https://ajod.org/index.php/AJOD/article/view/747>
- Wehmeyer, M. L. (1999). Assistive technology and Students with Mental Retardation: Utilization and Barriers. *Journal of Special Education Technology, 14(1)*, 50-60. doi:10.1177/016264349901400104c
- Wehmeyer, M. L., Smith, S. J., Palmer, S. B., & Davies, K. D. (2004). Technology use by People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to Support Employment Activities: A Single-Subject Meta Analysis. *Journal of Special Education Technology, 19(4)*, 7-21. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/22659787/Technology_Use_by_Students_with_Intellectual_Disabilities_An_Overview
- Wehmeyer, M., Smith, S. J., & Davies, K. D. (In press). *Technology use and Students with intellectual disability: Universal design for all students* (4th ed.). Handbook of Technology and Special Education. Retrieved from: [https://books.google.co.in/books?id=ODWaBQAAQBAJ&pg=PA410&lpg=PA410&dq=Wehmeyer,+M.L.,+Smith,+S.,+%26+Davies,+D.K.+\(+in+press\).+Technology+use+and+students+with+intellectua+l+disability:+Universal+design+for+all+students.+In+D.+Ed+yburn+\(Ed.\),+Handbook+of+Te](https://books.google.co.in/books?id=ODWaBQAAQBAJ&pg=PA410&lpg=PA410&dq=Wehmeyer,+M.L.,+Smith,+S.,+%26+Davies,+D.K.+(+in+press).+Technology+use+and+students+with+intellectua+l+disability:+Universal+design+for+all+students.+In+D.+Ed+yburn+(Ed.),+Handbook+of+Te)

GJEIS Prevent Plagiarism in Publication

The Editorial Board had used the Urkund – a Swedish anti-plagiarism software tool which is a fully-automatic machine learning text-recognition system made for detecting, preventing and handling plagiarism and trusted by thousands of institutions across worldwide. Urkund is GDPR compliant with privacy by design and an uptime of 99.9% and have trust to be the partner in academic integrity. <https://www.orkund.com>] tool to check the originality and further affixed the similarity index which is {0%} in this case (See below Annexure-I). Thus, the reviewers and editors are of view to find it suitable to publish in this Volume-13, Issue-2, April-June, 2021

Annexure 1

Submission Date	Submission Id	Word Count	Character Count
30-May-2021	D107087987 (Urkund)	6411	44242



Urkund Analysis Result

Analysed Document: Urkund Learning Concerns Paper 30 May.docx (D107087987)
Submitted: 5/30/2021 10:25:00 PM
Submitted By: anitapriyadarshini@ignou.ac.in
Significance: 0 %

Sources included in the report:
Instances where selected sources appear: 0

Reviewers Memorandum



Reviewer's Comment 1: All classes from primary to higher education levels were delivered through online mode. The present research is quite interesting and relevant in nature as there is a need to study new challenges caused by the pandemic that may have occurred due to online learning for children with disabilities.

Reviewer's Comment 2: The present study is descriptive in nature. A mixed method approach was adopted in the study. This study was conducted on a sample of twenty five parents of children with special needs from inclusive school in Delhi. Also it is rich in literature. A good number of supportive existing literatures are provided in the study. Also it has been presented in a structured manner. Overall the paper offers a strong basis for further study in the area.

Reviewer's Comment 3: The study tries to throw light on a new aspect related to learning concerns of children with disabilities i.e. online learning for children with disabilities. It makes fruitful recommendations for making new pathways for making education for children with disabilities truly inclusive.

Editorial Excerpt



The article has 0% of plagiarism which is the accepted percentage as per the norms and standards of the journal for the publication. As per the editorial board's observations and blind reviewers' remarks the paper had some minor revisions which were communicated on a timely basis to the authors (Sunil & Anita) and accordingly all the corrections had been incorporated as and when directed and required to do so. The comments related to this manuscript are noticeably related to the theme "Learning Concerns of Children with Disabilities using Online Learning during COVID 19: The Parent's Perspective" both subject-wise and research-wise. The present research article aims to study the learning concerns that affected the academic progress of the children with disabilities and is based on the perspective of the parent. It makes suggestions for an appropriate learning environment for children with disabilities studying through an online mode. Overall, the paper promises to provide a strong base for the further studies in the area. After comprehensive reviews and editorial board's remarks, the manuscript has been categorized and decided to publish under "Empirical Research Paper" category.



Sunil Kumar and Anita Priyadarshini
"Learning Concerns of Children with Disabilities using Online Learning during COVID 19: The Parent's Perspective"
Volume-13, Issue-2, Apr-June 2021. (www.gjeis.com)

<https://doi.org/10.18311/gjeis/2021>
Volume-13, Issue-2, Apr-June 2021

Online iISSN : 0975-1432, Print iISSN : 0975-153X
Frequency : Quarterly, Published Since : 2009

Google Citations: Since 2009
H-Index = 96
i10-Index: 964

Source: <https://scholar.google.co.in/citations?user=S47TtNkAAAAJ&hl=en>



Conflict of Interest: Author of a Paper had no conflict neither financially nor academically.



Acknowledgement



The acknowledgment section is an essential part of all academic research papers. It provides appropriate recognition to all contributors for their hard work and effort taken while writing a paper. The data presented and analyzed in this paper (by Sunil Kumar & Anita Priyadarshini) were collected first handily and wherever it has been taken the proper acknowledgment and endorsement depicts. The authors are highly indebted to others who had facilitated in accomplishing the research. Last but not least endorse all reviewers and editors of GJEIS in publishing in a present issue.

Disclaimer



All views expressed in this paper are my/our own. Some of the content is taken from open source websites & some are copyright free for the purpose of disseminating knowledge. Those some We/I had mentioned above in the references section and acknowledged/cited as when and where required. The author/s has cited their joint own work mostly, Tables/Data from other referenced sources in this particular paper with the narrative & endorsement has been presented within quotes and reference at the bottom of the article accordingly & appropriately. Finally, some of the contents which are taken or overlapped from open source websites for the knowledge purpose. Those some of i/we had mentioned above in the references section. On the other hand opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the views of the GJEIS. The author has made every effort to ensure that the information in this paper is correct, any remaining errors and deficiencies is solely the responsibility of the author.

