

Impact of Covid-19 on Learning, Behavior and Habits of School Going Children

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on the learning and behavior of school-going children. The pandemic has disrupted traditional in-person learning, leading to an increase in remote and hybrid learning. This has resulted in challenges for both teachers and students. These factors have impacted their overall well-being. This research has been done in this context to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on the learning, behavior, and habits of school-going children. The study included 272 teachers who are mentoring more than 12000 students at Navy Children School from 8 different states of India. The result reveals the consequences of the erratic situation aroused by the pandemic. This study explains that a considerable number of children got affected by the circumstances evoked by COVID-19 in terms of change in behavioral patterns, irregular habits and learning gaps.

Keywords: Learning, Habits, Behavior, COVID-19, Impact

Background

The world has seen one of the worst times for mankind in the last 3 years in the form of COVID-19 pandemic. It has not left any aspect of life untouched. Society as a whole was affected badly because of it. People lost their lives, jobs, social life, finances and even the motives to grow, to live. But the one of the most affected components of society was children. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the education of school-going children around the world. Many schools were closed for extended periods to slow the spread of the virus, and students were forced to adapt to online learning or face disruptions in their education.

Children are known for their incredible ability to learn and adapt to new situations. From a very young age, children are constantly processing new information, developing new skills, and acquiring knowledge about the world around them. The learning capabilities of children are truly remarkable, and they are capable of achieving great things when given the right opportunities and support. According to Jean Piaget theory of cognitive development which suggests that as the children grow, their thinking, capacity of exploring and figuring out various things grows by the knowledge they acquire. Knowledge enhancement is just one aspect of cognitive development, another important aspect is the surrounding environment which helps them to build a modal for mental development.

Another factor that contributes to children's learning capability is their brain development. The human brain is incredibly complex, and it goes through a rapid period of growth and development during the early years of life. During this time, the brain is highly adaptive, which means that it is capable of changing and acquiring responses to new experiences and information. This allows children to learn new skills and develop new abilities at a much faster rate than adults. Erik Erikson theory describe that at every stage of life like childhood, adolescence and adulthood, two opposite psychological tendencies may develop. First tendency may be positive or Syntactic, and the second may be negative or Dystonic, which leads to the development of their strengths or weaknesses. Being that case childhood is a crucial stage for upshot of their virtue.

School-going children lost almost 2 years of their life during this pandemic. Those two years were most precious as children's learning capability used to be at its peak between the school-going age. Years of school are the treasure of learning and knowledge. The human brain develops most rapidly till the age of 5 years. Most of the thing children learn are by observing others, being in a group and by interacting with more and more people. Social development theory by Vygotsky supplements the importance of social interaction in analytical and intellectual development of children. According to this theory, mental growth is a social process which depends upon their circumambience to a great extent. In school, children learn beyond the knowledge of books in terms of self-discipline, manners, way of behaving, a sense of responsibility, teamwork and decision making. That is why school time is the most essential period of children' overall development. The two years of COVID pandemic were of least interaction for children. So obviously it has affected their learning in one way or another. So, this loss of two years created a gap in their overall development.

The alternate used for coping up with that scenario was online learning. One of the biggest challenges of online learning has been the lack of access to technology and the internet for some students. In many cases, students have had to share devices with siblings or have had to make do with limited access to online resources. This has made it difficult for some students to complete their coursework and stay engaged with their studies. The shift to online learning has also highlighted existing inequalities in the education system. Disadvantaged students and those from low-income families faced greater challenges in accessing education during the pandemic.

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the education of school-going children, and while efforts have been made to mitigate the negative effects, there will likely be long-term consequences for some students. This study is intended to find out the impact of covid-19 on the learning, behavior and habits of school going children in India.

Methods

Study area

The study was conducted in the context of impact of COVID-19 on learning, behavior and habits of school going children in India. For this purpose, data has been collected from Navy Children Schools situated in different states of India. There are 12 Navy Children Schools in India which are having classes up to XII standard. Responses were received from total 10 schools which are situated in 8 different states of India. These states are Goa, Kerala (Kochi), Maharashtra (Mumbai, Karanja), Andaman & Nicobar Island (Port Blair), Tamil Nadu (Arakkanom, Coimbatore), Andhra Pradesh (Visakhapatnam), Karnataka (Karwar) and Delhi.

Research design

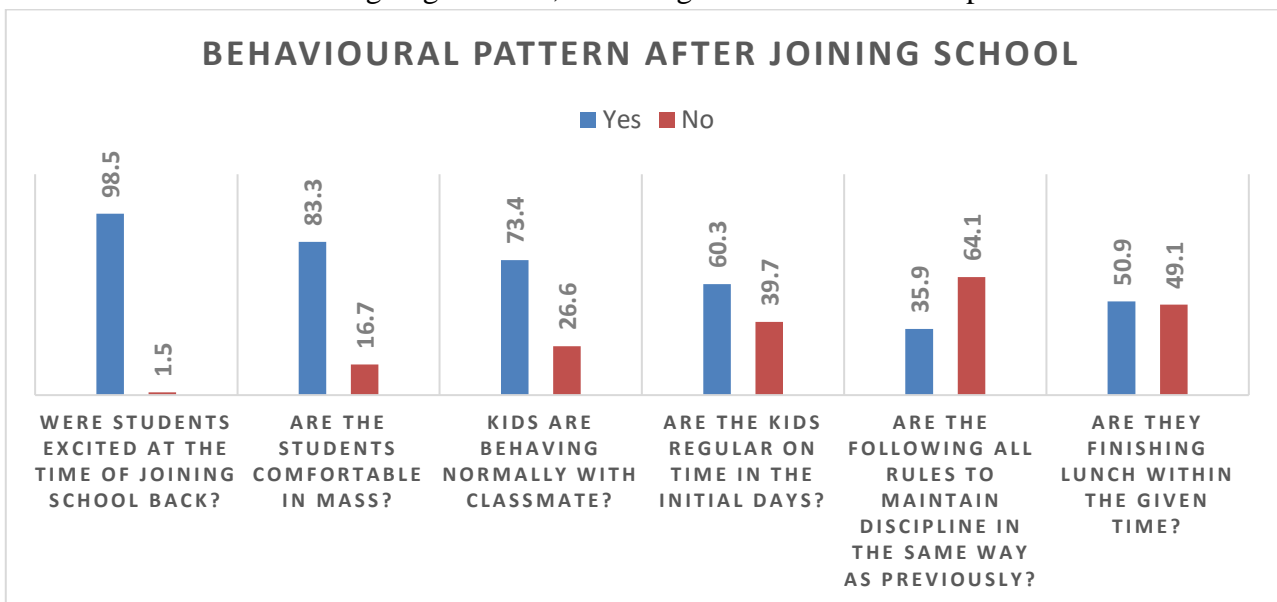
Some studies have already been conducted regarding the knowledge, attitude, and practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no study available so far that describes the impact of COVID-19 particularly on school-going children. So, the research design is Exploratory Research. It is a non-interventional, self-administered, questionnaire-based survey for assessing the impact of COVID-19 on learning, behavior and habits of school going children.

Sampling and data analysis

For this study, the purposive sampling technique is chosen for data collection purposes. A sample of 272 teachers who are mentoring more than 12000 students, is used for this study. The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions which can be divided into five parts. The first part was about basic information about school and teachers. The second part was related to the changes in behavioral patterns of students after COVID. The third part consisted with questions comprised of COVID related practices and the fourth part was allied with learning gap in students occurred in interlude of COVID -19. The last part consisted of questions in which teachers gave detailed information about anxieties faced by students and particular lag in learning. This questionnaire was designed through google form and sent to all Navy schools by mail. All responses were collected in four-month period from July 2022 to Oct 2022. Data analysis was done through SPSS software.

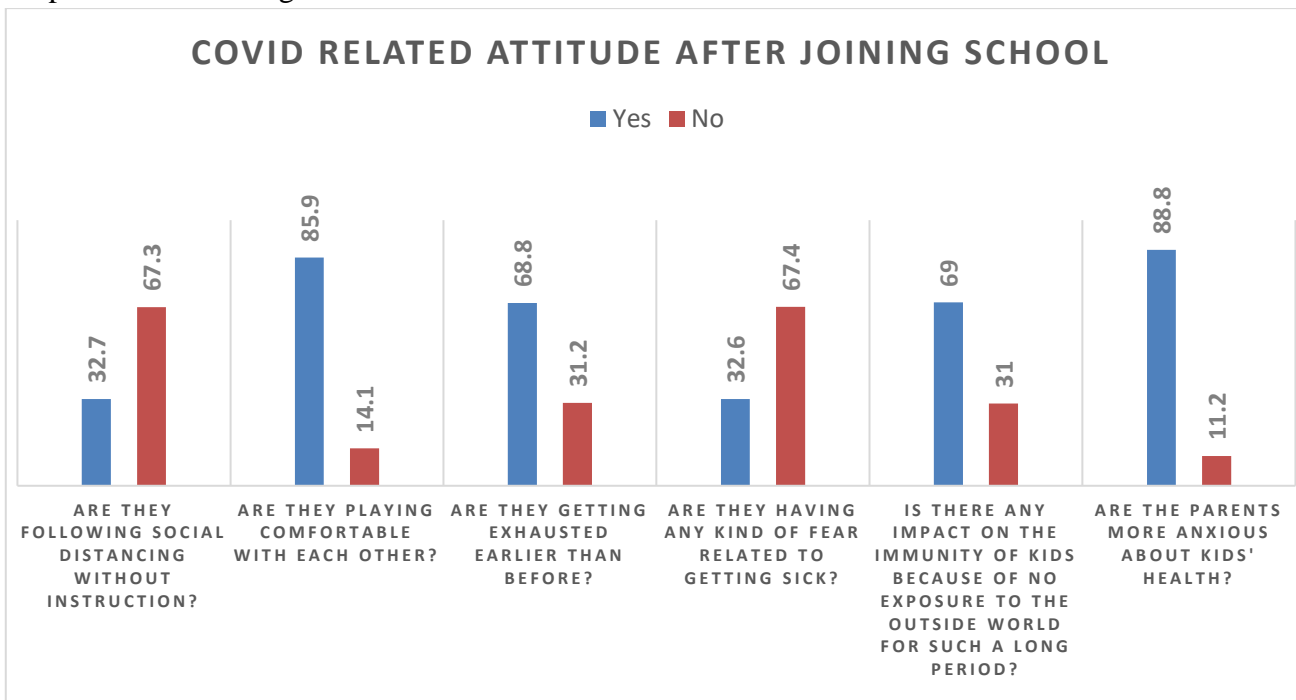
Result and Findings:

After analyzing all the data gathered through research related to impact of COVID-19 on Learning, Behavior and Habits of school going children, following results were drawn up:

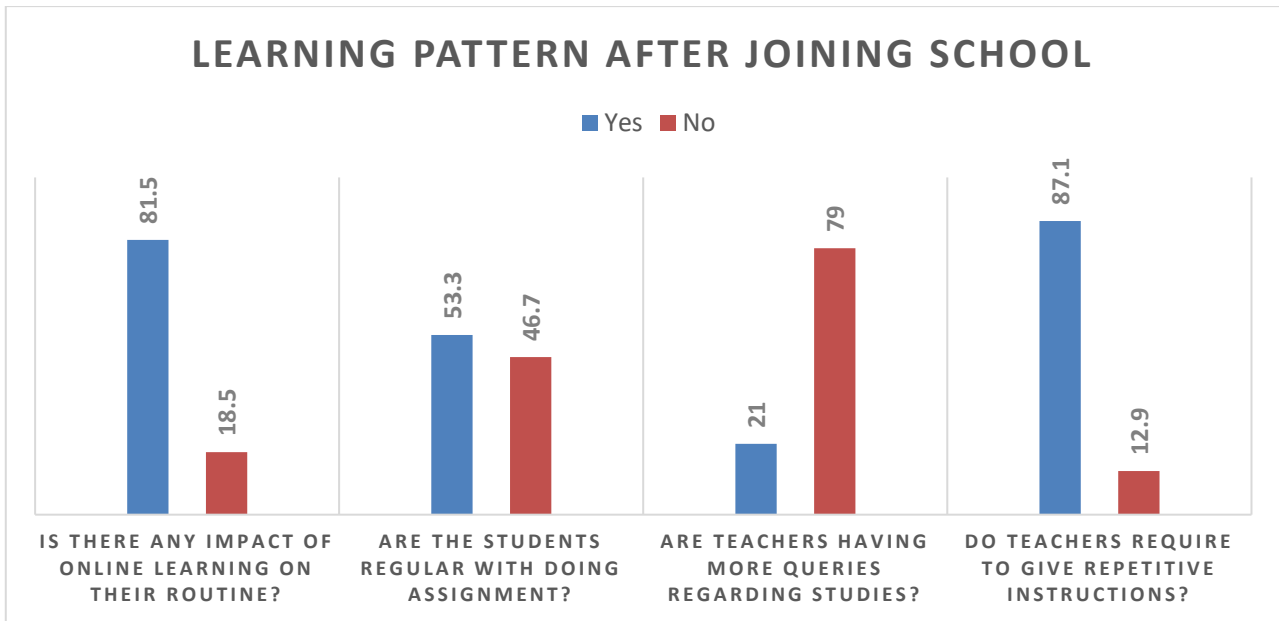


Research revealed that 98.5% of children were so excited about joining the school after a gap of more than two years. It reflects that most of the children were excited and eager to resume in-person education. The impact on the behavior of children upon returning to school after Covid-19 varied depending on their individual experiences and circumstances. Despite of certain level of excitement about joining back, research shows that 16.7% of students were not comfortable in mass while 83.3% of students were comfortable. If we talk about kid’s behavior with each other than data disclose that 73.4% children behaved normally with each other and 26.6% were not normal in terms of dealing with others. A large

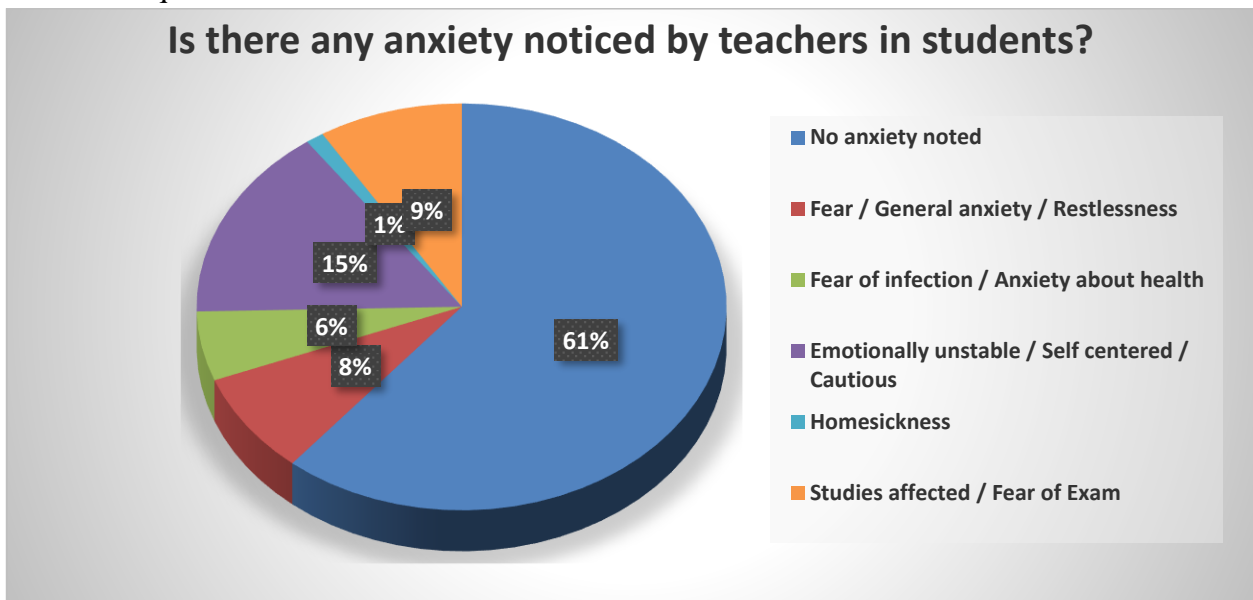
number of students, that was 39.7%, were not regular on time in initial days of joining back. On the other side 60.3% of students were regular in initial days after COVID-19. The impact on the discipline of children upon returning to school after Covid-19 also varied. Some children struggled to readjust to the rules and structure of the classroom after months of remote learning, while others developed more self-discipline and independence during the pandemic. Regarding the discipline to maintain in the same way as previous, data shows that 64.1% of children were not following rules as before as they were used to before covid. Only 39.9% of students were following disciplinary rules as previous. Research indicates that approximately half, that is 49.1% children were not finishing their lunch on time and 50.9% of children were punctual in this regard.



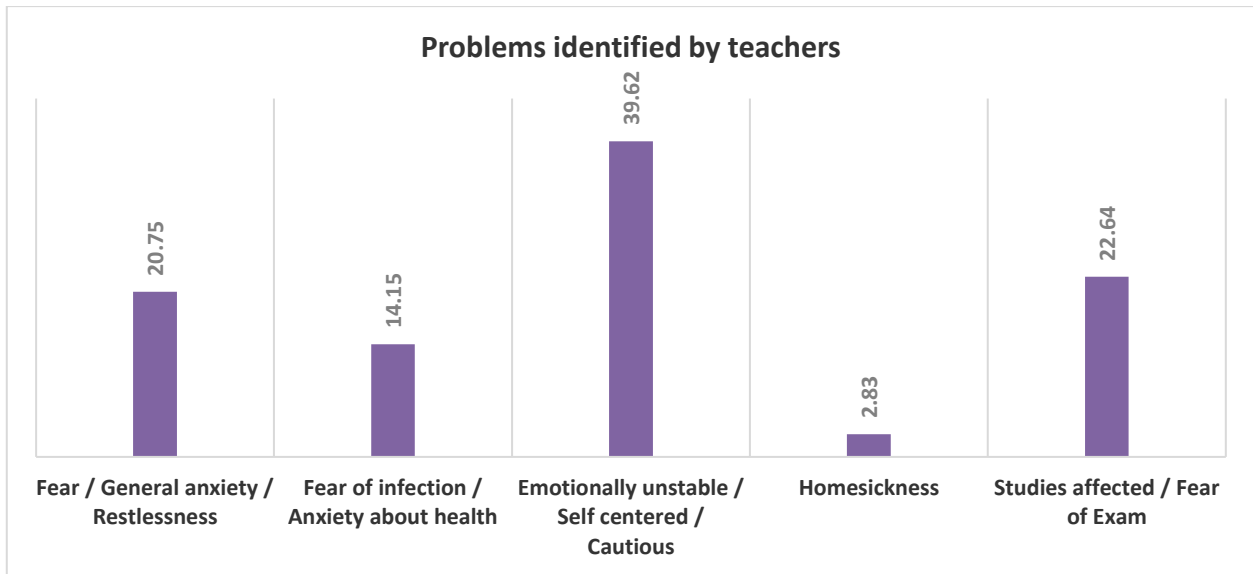
Some children faced difficulty in adjusting to the new routines and safety protocols in schools, such as wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. Research data reveals that only 32.7% of students were maintaining social distance without repetitive instructions while 67.3% needed time to time instructions for maintaining social distance. Although results divulged when it comes to playing with each other, children forgot all the apprehensions regarding COVID as 85.9% of children played comfortably with each other and only 14.15% were not enjoying it. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the physical stamina of children due to extended time duration of remote learning and reduced physical activity. We can deduce it because 68.8% children got exhausted earlier than they used to exhausted before. Only 31.3% children were having same kind of endurance. In the research it came into notice that 32.6% students were having fear of getting sick in one way or another. Though 67.4% were not thinking about getting sick. Teachers let it out in survey that immunity of children got weaker after COVID-19. They conveyed that immunity of 69% children got weaker and only 31% were not affected with regards to immunity. It elucidates the reason behind the anxiety of parents about kid’s well-being as 88.8% of parents were concerned and anxious about their ward’s health.



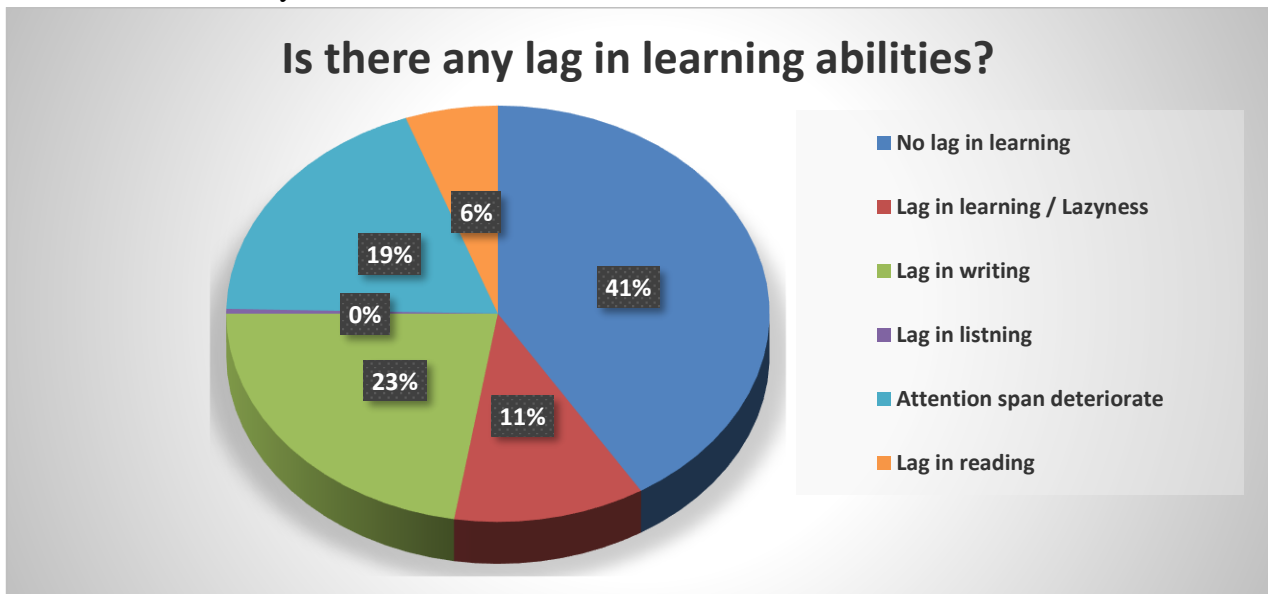
The most substantial shift for children during COVID was online schooling. It muddled their disciplined routine abundantly. According to data gathered regarding impact of online learning on daily routine of children, 81.5% of them had huge impact on their fixed schedule, however 18.5% had no impact on it. Nearly half of the students that were 53.3%, completing their assignments on time but 46.7% students were late in submitting their assignments given by teachers. 21% of teachers said that they received more queries regarding studies from students and 79% said they received same number of queries as before. When asked about giving repetitive instructions regarding studies to students, 87.1% teachers admitted that students required constant directions for studies to students.



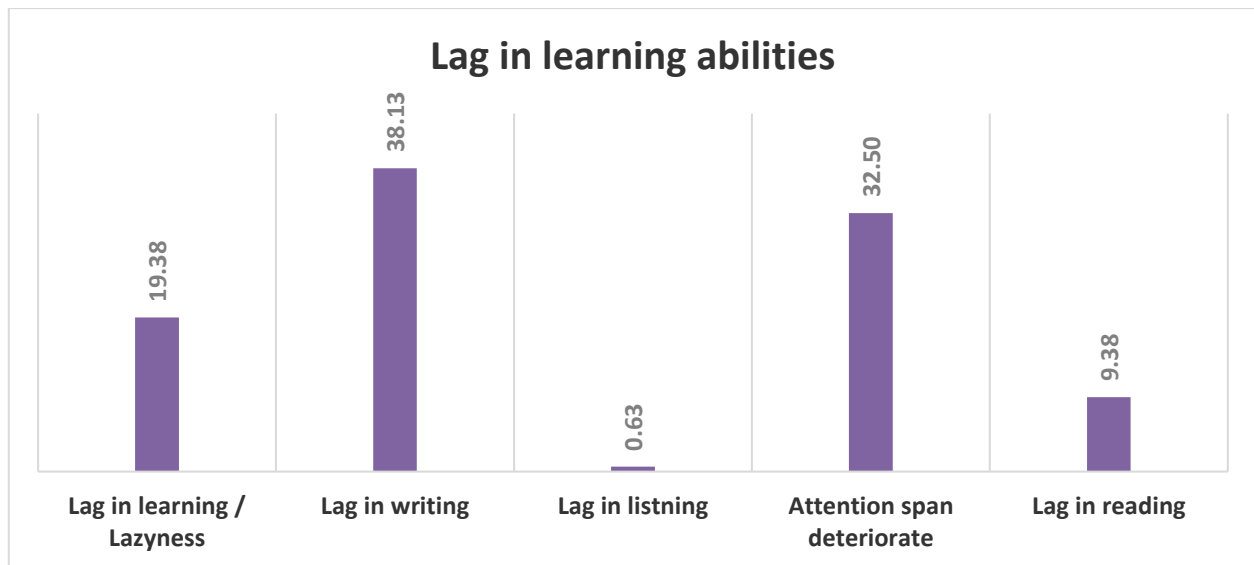
Above illustration shows the data regarding the anxiety of students noticed by teachers. Teachers revealed that 61% students had not shown any anxiety, while 39% had various type of anxieties after joining the school back. Teachers were requested to elaborate the specific pattern of anxiety or fear noticed in children.



This graph represents the percentage of different problem identified by teachers in school going children when they join school after COVID-19. Data demonstrate that out of only 2.83% children showed home sickness, 14.15% of children were anxious about health and getting infected, 20.75% of students had general anxiety and restlessness, 22.64% of total children was afraid of exams and studies and lastly 39.62% of them were emotionally unstable, self-centered and cautious.



As per the data received from research, many of the students exhibited lag in learning abilities. 59% of total students evinced learning gap in various form. Teachers were requested to intricate those lags and gaps.



The graph shown above is for the percentage distribution of different lags in learning ability of children arouse because of the gap in regular schooling due to COVID-19. Teachers particularized these gaps as 38.13% of students had writing issues like slow in writing and illegible handwriting, 32.50% faced the issue of attention span deteriorate, 19.38% of them showed lag in learning or remembering and laziness, in 9.38% children reading problems were identified. Only 0.63% of students had issues related to listening.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The various impacts left by this pandemic is hard to evaluate and time taking. However, this study has depicted the impact of COVID-19 on school-going children to some extent. It covered their behavioral pattern, health related anxieties, discipline, routine, and the learning gaps identified by teachers. This study explains that a considerable number of children got affected by the circumstances elicited by COVID-19. This erratic situation aroused by COVID pandemic in regular schooling had many consequences such as uncomfortable deoprtment in mass gathering, irregularity in routine, neglected classroom discipline, not following instructions, difficulty in understanding concepts and struggling with writing. It is suggested that schools should carry out some counselling sessions to retouch the behavioral issues of students. Schools should also arrange some bridge programs or additional classes to get over the identified learning gaps. It is also proposed that the same type of research should be repeated after one year to understand whether these lags in learning and behavior have been fulfilled or not.

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