

Challenges of Elementary Teachers During Pandemic (Covid-19) in Bhoirymbong Block, Ribhoi District, Meghalaya

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Abstract:

This study emphasized the challenges of elementary school teachers in bhoirymbong Block During Covid -19. The study reveal the challenges confronted by teachers and method of instruction engaged during Covid -19.

INTRODUCTION

A lot have happened in the past three years after the COVID-19 global pandemic. The pandemic has affected so many lives and livelihoods, impacting all spheres of life and institutions. Of the different aspects which have been affected, the education sector is one sector which has seen the worst impact and facing numerous challenges. As we know, due to the Corona virus pandemic, state governments across the country have temporarily shut down schools to avoid the spread of Coronavirus due to which teachers and students have faced major challenges to continue their education. The transition from in- person classes to online instruction occurs in a groundbreaking and staggering way, which constitutes a significant challenge for teachers. Throughout the pandemic, we have seen that teachers have been adapting their lessons to virtual environments to continue their labour of educating learners. On the other hand, “students taking online classes also faced difficulties that they might never have encountered in a traditional teaching and learning environment.” For instance, they are expected to access information and interact with peers and teachers through technological devices and applications to sign appropriate participation.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Bhoirymbong Block, teachers found difficult to Conduct online classes because of poor network connectivity and Parents cannot afford to buy smart phone or any learning devices for their children. These are the main challenges that teachers face during pandemic in Bhoirymbong Block Ribhoi District.

To address these challenges of elementary school teachers in bhoirymbong Block there is a need of undertaking research to establish the causes of these challenges, the specific challenges facing the teachers in their teaching career and suggest the strategies to improve the teaching and learning in Bhoirymbong Block, Ribhoi District Meghalaya.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study will therefore help to inform audience on knowledge and skills about the challenges faced by

elementary school teachers in their teaching career during Covid-19, especially in Bhoirymbong area. The study exposed specific challenges that face the teachers in their teaching career and how they affect the teaching of the primary schools pupils. Further the study established strategies that can be employed by education authorities to improve the working condition of the primary school teachers in Bhoirymbong Block, Ribhoi District to realize quality education to primary school pupils. Moreover the study provided information about the educational status during pandemic March 2020 to December 2021.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study comprised several study included

1. **Kumari and Sethy (2021)** conducted a study on the Problems Faced by Teachers During the Pandemic for Teaching: An Exploratory Study.
2. **Etomes (2022)** conducted a research study on the Challenges Faced by Students During the Covid-19 Lockdown: Rethinking the Governance of Higher Education in Cameroon.
3. **Gurung (2021)** conducted a study on the challenges faced by teachers in online teaching during pandemic.
4. **Sindhya (2021)** conducted a study on Challenges for teachers during COVID-19.
5. **Ujianti(2020)** conducted a study on “Challenges Faced by Teachers in Remote Area During Pandemic Covid-19”
6. **Sarala Birla University (2022)** conducted a study on A Study on Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Indian Education
7. **Soni(2020)** conducted a study on A Comprehensive Study On Covid-19 Pandemi

From the review of related literature it can be said that a number of studies have been reviewed, the approach, methodology differs from one context to another with however the findings generally stresses on the Challenges of elementary schools teachers during pandemic (covid-19).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the proposed study are stated as follows:

1. To find out the challenges face by elementary teachers during Pandemic.
2. To find out the role of the school management during pandemic.
3. To find out the status of education at the primary level during the Pandemic in Bhoirymbong Block.
4. To find out the teaching methods adopted by teachers during Pandemic.
5. To ascertain the relationship between parents, and teachers in respect of educational activities during the pandemic.
6. To provide suggestions to improve and integrate online teaching at the primary school level.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Considering the objectives, the study will be based on the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges faced by elementary teachers in Bhoirymbong Block during Pandemic?
2. What role is played by the school management during pandemic?
3. What is the status of education at the primary level during the Pandemic in Bhoirymbong Block?
4. What are the common teaching methods adopted by teachers during Pandemic?

Methodology

The study aims to explore the challenges faced by the elementary teachers within the block. The data for the current study collected from an exploratory field of the research study that focused on the problems and challenges faced by elementary teachers in Bhoirymbong Block. In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, a qualitative research method through the use of Questionnaires both in open and Closed ended form. The current Study was conducted in 10 elementary schools located within the Block and to identify the problems faced by teachers during pandemic since 2020 till 2021. The investigator was selected 4 respondents (teachers) from each school and 5 respondents (students) from class 8 from each school Head Master or Head Mistress from each and every school with a grand total of 100 respondents.

Population

A population is the group of individuals from which study samples are taken for measurement. A population should have at least one thing in common (Kombo et al., 2006). It is from the population that sample of study was drawn for investigation of the challenges faced by the elementary school teachers in their teaching career during pandemic that is from March 2020 to December 2021.

The population for this study is presented as follow-

Sl. No	No. of LP Schools	No. of UP Schools
1	190	77
2	Total of Elementary Schools-267	

Sl.No	No. of Lp teachers	No. of Up Teachers
1	440	208
2	Total of Elementary Teachers- 648	

Numbers of Students as per the enrolment of 2023 and 2024

SL.No	Class I		Class II		Class III		Class IV		Class V		Class VI		Class VII		Class VIII	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1	165	160	141	133	146	128	125	127	116	125	905	99	747	98	688	94
2	3,252		2,752		2,754		2,522		2,421		1,903		1,732		1,631	
3	Grand Total- 18,967															

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample comprised three sub samples i.e. schools, teachers and pupils. The sample of school was the basic sample out of which the other two samples were also selected. The sample was drawn with the help of simple random sampling technique. In all 267 Elementary schools teachers, 6% of the schools teachers was selected, 18967 elementary students both boys and girls in which 3% of the population were selected and 4% of the Schools was selected.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To analyze the survey data, statistical methods were employed to determine the problems faced by elem-

entary school teachers during Pandemic in Bhoirymbong Block. The study is concerned almost exclusively with the sensitization of problems faced by teachers due to sudden shift of classroom (offline classes) to online classes due to Pandemic.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

FINDINGS: This Study deals regards the findings which have been completed after thorough analysis and interpretation.

- It is found that only 40% of schools located in Bhoirymbong Block were conducting online Classes while 60% of them were conducting offline classes during pandemic.
- The study revealed that teachers used limited devices for online Classes which include smart phone and What's app.
- The Study also indicated that 50% of teachers who were conducting offline classes during pandemic were using the instructional design by providing study materials to parents for their children's learning, home assignments, alternative days schools was opened for alternative classes and only 10% of them were opted the method of teaching by waiting till the school is normally reopened.
- Further more the study also revealed that 100% of the respondents were facing problem in term of network connectivity. It is also indicated that 50% of the teachers are unable to complete the syllabus during Covid time.
- Its is found that during Covid-19, 17. 5% students were drop out from their studies ,due to the closure of schools and lockdown.
- During Covid -19, parents were complain to the teachers as some of their children were not able to download and getting the necessary materials provide to them which revealed of 45%.
- This study shown that 55% of the students were not able to submit their assignment and test papers on the given time frame because of network connectivity failure and unable to meet their teachers.
- Its is also found that 22.5% teachers were not able to get their monthly salary during covid-19 lockdown and schools closure. Its also found that 10% of the teachers were not having proper teaching devices to conduct online classes.
- During covid 19, the study revealed that 60% of the students were majority of them passed and few of them failed in the assessment test while 40% of the students passed all in the assessment test.
- In the analysis of the open ended questions, the respondents shared different perception as indicated below.
- The study revealed that 40% of the students were attending online classes and all the students are aware or heard about covid-19.
- During pandemic i.e. 2020 and 2021 98% of the students passed in all the assessment test.
- In the promoted class, the study revealed that 80% of the students were understood on the new lesson and new textbooks.

Below are some of the opinions of schools authority to some open ended Questions:

Opinion -1

- What are the problems you faced during the pandemic as a school manager?
“Most of the parents do not have smart phone and it became a problem for the School to control or management online Classes for the students”

- What according to you are the problems faced by the teachers during pandemic in your School?
“Some teachers find very hard to cope with the sudden change in the mode of teaching. Teachers were also faced problem for preparing notes for all the students as they were not allowed to sit in a physical classroom”.
- What steps did you take to helps the teachers to overcome the problems?
“I took the initiative to guide them how to use multi-media platform like google meet, zoom app etc to communicate for the functioning of the school. I encourage them to utilize the technology available but it was challenging due to network problem and later the school conducted an alternative day for alternatives classes for the students”.

Opinion -2

- What are the problems you faced during the pandemic as a school manager?
“As a school manager, I found many problems as the school located in the rural area, though online classes were conducted but there was a lack of cell phone or smart phone by the students and also of network problem which was very difficult to conduct online Classes”.
- What according to you are the problems faced by the teachers during pandemic in your School?
“Among the teachers I found that it is difficult to conduct online meetings due to network problem and lack of skills and knowledge about ICT “.
- What steps did you take to helps the teachers to overcome the problems?
“I manage to open the School in alternate days for taking Class and arrange the routine in systematic ways”.

Opinion -3

- What are the problems you faced during the pandemic as a school manager?
“The first problem that we faced was how to make students understand because online classes is not enough for them beside that some students do not have smart phone”.
- What according to you are the problems faced by the teachers during pandemic in your School?
“The problem that we found was that how to complete the syllabus or course because we were not able to meet or discuss the problems”.
- What steps did you take to helps the teachers to overcome the problems?
“To overcome the Problems we were only discuss through telecommunication”.

Opinion -4

- What are the problems you faced during the pandemic as a school manager?
“Non availability of Smart phone by the Students to attend online classes and lengthy of syllabus”.
- What according to you are the problems faced by the teachers during pandemic in your School?
“Problem of taking repeated attempts to do online classes (videos) and unable to cover the syllabus due to time constrain”.
- What steps did you take to helps the teachers to overcome the problems?
“I took the initiative to conduct online classes and directed the teachers also to follow the same pattern. Divided the subjects and time table among teachers and deducted some unnecessary chapters from the syllabus”.

Opinion -5

- What are the problems you faced during the pandemic as a school manager?

“Unable to conduct regular classes for the student and unable to reach them through online classes as majority of them were not having Smart phone”.

- What according to you are the problems faced by the teachers during pandemic in your School?
“Cannot access to online classes for the students and unavailability of teaching devices for online classes and also due to poor network connectivity.
- What steps did you take to helps the teachers to overcome the problems?
“The School was opened in alternate days for teachers and students”.
- What are the problems you faced during the pandemic as a school manager ?

SUGGESTIONS:

Despite Challenges, online learning, distance and continuing education have become a panacea for this unprecedented global pandemic, Transition from traditional face to learning to online learning is an entirely different experience for the learners and the educators, which they must adapt to with little or no other alternatives available.

The Following Suggestions are:

- The government should provide training for educational stakeholders, especially students and teachers on the technical skills needed for online learning. In the same light, students should be trained on how to manage studies remotely to avoid frustration and effective participation in studies. In addition, the university administration can recommend online certification training programmes for lecturers that are free or affordable and certificate presented to the administration at the end of the course.
- The government should institute a blended approach to teaching and learning during the face-to-face teaching to enable students and teachers acquaint themselves with remote learning. For change to be effective, it should be a gradual process while all necessary equipment's are put in place.
- The government should put in place measure to ensure the constant supply of electricity and internet facilities which are key to online learning.
- The government should also review policies on primary education. The policies should be well-designed and implemented to meet the demands of teachers; for example by making them participating and have a say on matters regarding themselves and provide them more opportunities for training and development teachers will likely be motivated.
- Teachers should set clear expectations and most important is, they should ensure enough time to dedicate to their course and can consistently attend all aspects of the programme, including any live teaching sessions.
- Teachers should take care about the timing of class. The teaching period should not be longer than 1 hour. Excessive of long classes may reduce children's interest from study, and get irritated from study.
- The administrators of schools should improve performance expectancy as it had significant relationship with behavioural intention and attitude to conduct online classes.
- It is suggested to apply well designed learning structure, proper guidance and monitoring of student learning, frequent interaction with parents, blended learning opportunities, low teacher student ratio, resource sharing among teachers, reducing content overload, transparent online assessment tools and strategies, opportunities for creative expression of students, regular interaction with counsellors for

meeting psychological issues, ensuring safe and effective use of internet and the team based learning for making the education during the pandemic, more effective.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research is necessary to determine the types of resources and training that are required like Technology trainings would provide the opportunity for teachers to feel more confident in their remote instruction, to provide higher quality and more effective remote instruction to their students, and to increase student learning and development.

teachers need to be able to support students and their families in learning about how to navigate technology and online learning platforms to be able to engage in remote learning. This indicates that additional funding is needed for schools to fund teacher professional development, both for keeping up with new technology and new uses for that technology and for supporting students and families in navigating technology.

CONCLUSION

The unprecedented effects of COVID-19 pandemic are more than reported. It has affected every phase of human life through the novel issues and restrictions like quarantine, lock down, social distancing, wide spread use of masks and sanitizers that curtailed the so far enjoyed freedom of man. Never before in the history of mankind that this kind of a catastrophic situation occurred. As man has the capacity to adapt and find new modes of business in every sphere, this will also be managed to overcome the challenges to become the new normal. The study reported the common problems that the teachers faced during their academic activities and the difficulties experienced directly from their students.

Though the problems noted are almost same among the different groups of teachers, the major issue remains the access of internet and the problems associated with social isolation, compatibility and assessment. Murgatroid (2020) identified similar challenges with e-learning that include accessibility, affordability, flexibility, learning pedagogy, life-long learning and educational policy. As parental involvement is emphasised by many teachers in the effective monitoring of their students in the home classroom low parental education also become detrimental to student learning. Parents are even ignorant of the activities in which their children are more involved while using internet as a medium of learning poses serious problems especially among adolescents who are prone to misuse.

The sudden shift from traditional classroom to online classroom put challenges as well as brought newness to the education system. The situation taught the teachers to move forward with the challenges and difficulties. At the beginning, adopting online mode of teaching was not possible for many teachers as well as students but gradually acceptance to online mode caught a high speed throughout the country.

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