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A Study of Students' Performance during COVID-19 at Primary Level in District Poonch

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Article Details

ABSTRACT

Students' **Keywords:** COVID-19, Primary Level

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Performance, COVID-19 is an infectious disease and spread from one person to another. It affects the humans on a large scale. It causes major effect on different areas of education. The present study was conducted to find out the impact of COVID-19 on student's performance at primary level in district Poonch. Teachers used distance learning program and it had a great effect on student's performance. The study was quantitative and descriptive in nature by using survey design. Population of this research study was all primary level teachers of district Poonch. Stratified sampling technique was used. The researcher delimited her study to only Rawalakot city. Sample size was taken by krejci and Morgan sampling table. Questionnaire was used as a research tool. Questionnaire was consisted of 30 close ended questions related to research objectives. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics i.e., Frequency, percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation. The research concluded that online education has a effect on student's performance and E-learning has developed significant change. The researcher found that without the direct supervision of teacher during online education had adverse effect on primary level students. Teachers and students face great difficulty in online process because of limited resources.

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INTRODUCTION

An international disease caused by virus known as COVID-19 is a transferable disease from one person to other. This virus belongs to the viruses' family which causes some major diseases such as common cold to more stern diseases which is called severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) it also causes middle east respiratory syndrome MERS. The name of this virus derived from a Latin word corona, Little is known about it, although human-to-human transmission has been confirmed, similarly, according to (Center of disease control and prevention, 2020) the virus is typically spread from one person to another via respiratory droplets produced during coughing. According to (Wickrama singhe et al. 2020) a disease which appeared in the Chinese region of Wuhan surprisingly spread so for across China and other parts of the world. COVID-19 has affected education systems worldwide. Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Teaching, exams, administrations, assessment have been moved online. In response to school closures, UNESCO recommended the use of distance learning programs and open educational application and platforms that school and teachers can use to reach learner remotely and limit the disruption of education.

In term of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on different countries' education system many different views exists. Fortunately there is a range of modern tools available to face the challenge of distance learning imposed by COVID-19 pandemic. There are however other important task in the learning process, such as assessment or autonomous learning that can still be challenging without the direct supervision of teachers and has a great effect on learning performance of students. E-learning has experienced significant change due to the exponential growth of the internet and information technology. New e-learning platforms are being developed for tutors to facilitate assessment and for learner to participate in lectures.

According to (Flores and Gago, 2020) epidemic Corona has greatly influenced education, especially teacher education, in different ways. In case of the closure of schools and universities, teachers and students had to rapidly adapt to far-off teaching. Teacher education is no exclusion. Given the need to create an educational environment for students, teachers made some beneficial decisions, choices and adaptation. The aim was not only to meet the expectations of students but also to meet the educational requirements of the teachers as well as the favorable conditions in which schools and universities had operated.

(Yokozeki, 2020) suggested the remote learning format has also been assessed as a good

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opportunity for teachers and students to become stronger, more creative and innovative.COVID-19 pandemic enhanced the role of remote working, e-learning, video streaming, etc. on a broad scale. Classes are being delayed as staff and teachers acclimate to the new online platforms and try to switch their material to a new teaching style. Through technology has already had a big hand in most school affairs, the new dependence on technology for every aspect of education is forced to occur overnight- many students struggling with technologies difficulties, as well as coping with the challenges of studying at home and learning and outside of the school environment.

Many students do not have access to internet in their home, without the proper education and technology; many students will be forced to miss out on their education. Young children need the assistance of in-person instruction and may find it difficult to concentrate in a typical frontal class conducted on a computer. Students with special needs, who also relay on in-person instruction, may find it especially difficult to switch to online platforms.

(Huber and Helm, 2020) identified the fast, unexpected and sudden change in learning environment which changes from regular mode to online mode of teaching that create many challenges. It is necessary to understand the crises and develop a mechanism for effective online teaching and learning modes that is possible through good teaching design and planning. Many teacher education programs to adapt to online format may provide a wide understanding of selected practices, yet it is essential to make sure to ensure that these practices are beneficial.

(UNESCO, 2020) guided the concern of teachers engaged in teaching processes have been observed to be related to their capacities of conducting remote / online learning due to the level of their knowledge and skills in the use of technology, their access to technology, and at home isolation. Such concerns have been reported in particular by countries that declared an extremely low level use of classroom technology prior to the current circumstances. In addition requests for shifting teaching to online format have also been reported to increase the level of stress and anxiety among teachers in different part of the world. There are great difficulty in the implementation and advancement of the online process in the country.

(Bozkurt and Sherma, 2020) refer to distance education as a process characterized by distance in time and/or space' and to remote education as a context of 'spatial distance'. Online environments that enable teachers to teach and interact with their students providing a variety of learning possibilities in a remote scenario

(Ni She et al. 2019) suggested online method of teaching-learning required a particular

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procedure that is observable and enhance roles and competencies professionals. It is essential to know about how remote process of teaching-learning for teachers' education happen and identify the inferences, especially for present emergencies situations. This is not because education is not directly affected by the effect of the COVID-19 epidemic but rather because studies in education rarely incorporate effects of disease on the effective provision of education to learner across the globe. The rate at which COVID-19 has rapidly been spreading has made every sector of human life to immediately feel its impact. With new increased number of cases of COVID-19 around the world it was legitimately reasonable for the government of Pakistan to start worrying and putting measures in place that would prevent any form of COVID-19 outbreaks in the country.

COVID-19 is an infectious disease and affects the humans on a large scale. It causes major effect on different areas of education. The purpose of my study was to find out the effect of COVID-19 on performance of primary level students. COVID-19 had mostly affected the primary level students because they have short memory and easily forgettable. The global lockdown of educational institution was going to caused major interruption in student's learning. Teaching and exams were moved online. Teachers were used distance learning program and it had a great effect on student's performance at primary level because they totally depended on their teacher and this is more difficult for young children because the online system was completely new to them. Therefore the present study was conducted to find out the impact of COVID-19 on student's performance at primary level in district Poonch.

According to (Giallonardo et al. 2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted educational systems around the world and has a significant impact on pupils. Scientists and doctors play a critical role in ensuring the emotional and psychological well-being of people all over the world, particularly schoolchildren's minds. COVID-19 has a significant impact on people's health and social well-being. Children under the age of five are the most sensitive to the sickness. It has an impact on the elderly as well. Anxiety and tension are the most common side effects.

(Zhang, et al., 2020) stated that students at all levels have been affected largely by the spread of COVID-19. To be isolated for months and coping up with the online learning system has become stressful. Under such circumstances students with disabilities are more vulnerable to the changing learning scenario. They are not only at a higher risk health wise but the risk to their education is also greater due to the inaccessibility to their course contents and also they

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miss their classroom environment. As far as the learning process of special needs students are concerned, it was found that they are more anxious about studying online than their non-disabled peers, particularly when it comes to graduating from one class to the next (Zhang, et al., 2020). The unexpected shift to online learning had a great impact on the students with learning disabilities (LD) and relationship with their teachers were suddenly disrupted.

(Patel, 2020) suggested that the sudden shift to online distance classes has created scarcity in giving special education assistance to students with learning and other disabilities as their parents are not fully trained to become their resource. Moreover, there is a dearth of assistive technologies. This affects developments of children with learning disabilities like Down syndrome or Autism as well as children having any physical disability. The lives of these children need to have special attention worldwide as there are planning needs to be done to cater to the requirements of children with disabilities.

According to (Bajwa, 2020), the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted worldwide dependence on virtual education to help with the interference of educational progress in academic institutions. The government of Pakistan required educational institutions to remain closed until further notice. To allow students to proceed with their educational advancement, the Global response has been a reliance on virtual teaching and learning. Yet in Pakistan, children studying in rural areas or from impoverished backgrounds especially studying in government funded institutions do not have the technology required for virtual learning. This implies that the advancement of more than 47 million students studying in state funded schools will be in danger. This interruption in their education will have long lasting effects and will effectively compound the educational inequality that exists in the country, the impact of which will resonate long after the pandemic is over.

Reimagining Education in Pakistan While physical learning has come to an absolute halt for both public and private schools, virtual learning has come to the fore for private schools catering to the upper and middle social strata that promptly started giving e-classes through free websites and applications like Skype, Zoom, Edmodo and Google Classroom. These online classes in the urban centers of Pakistan specifically limit the damage caused by disruption from the students' usual routine. For most of the educational institutions that come into this income category, it was nothing but a small strain. Most of these children have parents well versed in technology and have a high speed connection. While the online classes are not a total substitute for physical classes, they do make up for a portion of the academic loss with the added

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advantage that they are making children tech savvy. Students in these virtual classes speak with their instructors, enroll in assignments and figure out how to use email, websites and videoconferencing giving them a developmental edge. The disadvantage is the lack of social communication and face to face interaction, sports and extracurricular exercises which are as significant as academics. If factors like loss of social connection, children's poor capacity for attention, noise and distractions, poor internet connection and a lack of independent study skills are set aside then it can be said that these privileged few students of private educational institutions in the urban parts of the country have a key learning advantage than those who attend state funded institutions (COVID-19 and education: Unequal learning loss, 2020).

This unequal division of internet access and educational instruction has led the Pakistani government to launch a commonplace tool as a remedial measure for distance learning, namely using the humble television. After the government made the call for an educational shut down across the country, on April 14, 2020 the Federal Ministry of education with the state owned PTV launched Pakistan's first dedicated instruction channel "Teleschool," customized with academic content from kindergarten through secondary school with one hour of curriculum per class every day (COVID-19 and education: Unequal learning loss, 2020).

(Naviwala, 2020) identified that the Government of Pakistan and the ministry of education worked rapidly to get Teleschool on air with a working committee of three hundred organizations, individuals, associations and companies who donated their content for the televised broadcast. The World Bank stepped in to help with the hourly expense that an educational program of this scale would incur. The hope in the long run is that Teleschool will continue even after the C-19 emergency and work as an approach to connect out of school children and unskilled adults. The state run channel PTV or Pakistan Television Network on which Teleschool airs covers 90% percent of Pakistan's regions with 63% of Pakistan's families having a TV unit.

(George, 2020) stated that the Teleschool channel reflects the bigger issues that underscore the Pakistani education system created during the pandemic. According to educational specialists, the quality of the Teleschool channel is uneven with hits and misses with some content of better quality than can be found in a public school while other content being too fast paced for children of the relevant age and having incomprehensible programming.

Primary education is affected by pandemic which spread through corona virus COVID-19 in 2020. Due to it, the teaching is shifted from real to far off learning. It has an enormous

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effect on education process, the evaluation system and reporting of results. The performance of students at all levels affected with this global pandemic, likewise in our country. Hence, this study is planned to determine the effects of Corona virus on academic performance of students at primary level in AJ&K.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1. To identify the student-learning strategies after covid-19 at primary level.
- 2. To investigate the modes of online teaching during lockdown.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used. It is appropriate for research because it facilitate a researcher to assimilate the quantitative data. The purpose of my research was to identified the student-learning strategies during COVID-19 and also identified the challenges of lockdown during COVID-19. Cross sectional survey was conducted for data collection from sample which was drawn from desired population. In the present study researcher used survey approach to collect the data. Population as a comprehensive group of individuals, institutions, objects which has common characteristics that are the interest of researcher. The population of current study was consisted of all the teachers in primary schools present in district Poonch. The total number of primary teachers is 1591 respectively. In the current study stratified sampling technique is used because there is a large population. The researcher delimited her study to only Rawalakot. Firstly the researcher made strata of public and private sectors. Then the researcher made the strata of male and female teachers at primary level in Rawalakot. Sample was taken by krejci and Morgan sampling table. The sample size is selected through krejcie and Morgan sampling table that is 230. Questionnaire is used for data collection. Questionnaire was consisting of 30 close-ended statements related to impact of COVID-19, about different strategies. Close-ended statement had been comprised due to the fact they are easier to manage and to analyze. Five point likert scales was chosen to collect the data. Copy of questionnaire is also attached with my thesis. Reliability is computed by Cronbach's alpha which is commonly used and found 0.739. For data collection relevant information about population of my study was taken from the relevant authority DEO office poonch. Teachers had been contacted within their respective school. I explained the statements to them so that I can get the right and sincere response. Data was collected by hand with the participants in their respective school.

DATA ANALYSIS

To analyze close-ended questions, a software program (SPSS) was used. Descriptive Statistics

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Frequency, percentage Mean and standard deviation was used in data analysis.

TABLE 1. ONLINE CLASS (DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS)

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Online classes have a dramatic long term impact on	230	3.04	1.06
students' competencies and skills	200	0.01	1.00
Online inequalities among students' classes increase existing	230	3.22	.91
education	250	0.22	.91
Online education replace face to face teaching	230	4.44	.59
Teachers face great difficulty in the implementation of	230	4.00	70
online process	230	4.23	.79
Students feel isolation in online learning	230	3.74	.89

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 provide an overview of impact towards online classes based on a sample of 230 respondents. Each statement is evaluated on a scale where higher values indicate stronger agreement. The mean score of 3.04 (SD = 1.06) suggests a neutral perception regarding the long-term impact of online classes on students' competencies. The relatively high standard deviation indicates varied opinions among respondents. The mean score of 3.22 (SD = 0.91) indicates a slight agreement that online inequalities among students' classes exacerbate existing educational disparities. The lower standard deviation reflects more consensus compared to the first statement. A significantly higher mean of 4.44 (SD = 0.59) indicates strong agreement that online education can replace traditional face-to-face teaching. The low standard deviation suggests that most respondents share this belief. With a mean of 4.23 (SD = 0.79), respondents generally agree that teachers face substantial difficulties in implementing online education. The standard deviation indicates a moderate level of agreement among participants. The mean score of 3.74 (SD = 0.89) reflects a moderate agreement with the perception that students experience isolation during online learning. The standard deviation suggests a fair range of responses but aligns closely in general sentiment. Overall, the data indicate a complex view of online education, with strong agreement on the challenges faced by teachers and the potential effectiveness of online education compared to traditional methods, while opinions on its impact on competencies and feelings of isolation vary more widely.

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TABLE 2. E-LEARNING STRATEGY (DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS)

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
E-learning facilitate assessment of students	230	3.11	.93
E-learning has made students' stronger, creative and	230	2.96	1.07
innovative			
E-learning enhance students' participation in lectures	230	2.87	1.04
Students show positive attitude toward E-learning	230	2.75	1.12

The descriptive statistics in Table 2 provide insights into perceptions of e-learning strategies, as reported by a sample of 230 respondents. Each statement's mean score indicates the level of agreement, with higher scores reflecting more positive opinions.

FACILITATION OF ASSESSMENT: The mean score of 3.11 (SD = 0.93) suggests a moderate agreement with the idea that e-learning facilitates student assessment. The standard deviation indicates some variability in responses, but overall, the perception is leaning towards a positive view.

STRENGTHENING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION: With a mean of 2.96 (SD = 1.07), respondents express a neutral to slightly positive opinion regarding e-learning's impact on making students stronger, creative, and innovative. The higher standard deviation reflects a wider range of opinions, indicating that some may not see e-learning as beneficial in this regard. ENHANCEMENT OF PARTICIPATION: The mean score of 2.87 (SD = 1.04) indicates a neutral perception about e-learning enhancing student participation in lectures. The standard deviation suggests that there are significant differences in how participants view this aspect, with some believing it does not contribute positively.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD E-LEARNING: The mean of 2.75 (SD = 1.12) shows a tendency towards disagreement regarding students' positive attitudes toward e-learning. The higher standard deviation indicates considerable variability, suggesting that some respondents feel more negatively than others about e-learning.

In summary, the data from Table 2 reflect a generally moderate to neutral perception of e-learning strategies. While there's some recognition of benefits in assessment facilitation, opinions on creativity, participation, and overall attitudes toward e-learning tend to lean more towards skepticism, with varied responses highlighting differing experiences and perspectives among students.

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TABLE 3. DURING LOCKDOWN (DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS)

Statements			Std.
		Mean	Deviation
During lockdown students' were provided a variety of learning	230	2.89	1.12
possibilities			
During lockdown students' were given different strategies in	230	2.78	1.11
teaching			
During lockdown students' avail flexible teaching methodology	230	3.79	.98
Lockdown is causing interruption in students' learning	230	4.51	.54
Lockdown is causing disturbance in teacher assessment	230	4.43	.62

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics reflecting perceptions of educational experiences during lockdown, based on responses from 230 participants. The mean scores indicate the level of agreement with each statement, where higher scores represent stronger agreement or concern.

VARIETY OF LEARNING POSSIBILITIES: The mean score of 2.89 (SD = 1.12) suggests a neutral to slightly positive perception regarding the variety of learning opportunities provided to students during the lockdown. The relatively high standard deviation indicates considerable variability in responses, suggesting differing experiences among respondents.

DIFFERENT TEACHING STRATEGIES: A mean of 2.78 (SD = 1.11) indicates a general disagreement with the statement that students were given different strategies in teaching during lockdown. The standard deviation suggests a range of opinions, but overall, it reflects a sentiment that the variety in teaching strategies was limited.

FLEXIBLE TEACHING METHODOLOGY: The mean score of 3.79 (SD = 0.98) indicates moderate to strong agreement that students had access to flexible teaching methodologies during lockdown. The lower standard deviation indicates that responses were relatively consistent, with most respondents recognizing some level of flexibility.

INTERRUPTION IN LEARNING: With a high mean of 4.51 (SD = 0.54), there is strong agreement among respondents that the lockdown caused significant interruptions in students' learning. The low standard deviation reflects a high level of consensus, indicating that nearly all participants share this concern.

DISTURBANCE IN TEACHER ASSESSMENT: The mean score of 4.43 (SD = 0.62) similarly shows strong agreement that the lockdown disturbed teacher assessment processes.

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The low standard deviation further emphasizes the consensus among respondents regarding the negative impact on assessment.

In summary, the data from Table 3 highlight a mixed perception of educational experiences during lockdown. While there is recognition of some flexible teaching methodologies, the general consensus points to significant interruptions in learning and disturbances in assessment, suggesting a challenging educational environment during this period.

TABLE 4. FORMS OF TEACHING STRATEGIES USED DURING COVID-19

Teaching strategies	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Video conference	3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Video recording	6	2.6	2.6	3.9
Audio recording	14	6.1	6.1	10.0
Sending presentation	9	3.9	3.9	13.9
Sending reading materials	78	33.9	33.9	47.8
Home tasks/ assignments	120	52.2	52.2	100.0
Total	230	100.0	100.0	

The data presented in the table provides insights into the various teaching strategies adopted by respondents during the COVID-19 pandemic following the cancellation of regular school classes. The total number of respondents is 230, and the frequencies and percentages indicate the distribution of preferred teaching methods.

VIDEO CONFERENCE: Only 3 respondents (1.3%) selected video conferencing as a teaching strategy. This low frequency suggests that this method was not widely adopted among the participants.

VIDEO RECORDING: A slightly higher response of 6 participants (2.6%) indicated the use of video recordings. Similar to video conferencing, this method did not gain significant traction.

AUDIO RECORDING: With 14 respondents (6.1%) choosing audio recordings, this method still reflects minimal adoption compared to other strategies, highlighting a preference for more interactive or extensive materials.

SENDING PRESENTATIONS: Nine respondents (3.9%) utilized sending presentations as a teaching strategy. This also demonstrates limited engagement with this method.

SENDING READING MATERIALS: This strategy garnered a more considerable response, with 78 participants (33.9%) selecting it. This indicates that a substantial portion of

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respondents found sending reading materials to be a valuable method during the transition to remote learning.

HOME TASKS/ASSIGNMENTS: The most popular choice was home tasks or assignments, selected by 120 respondents (52.2%). This suggests that the majority of participants favored this approach, indicating a strong reliance on assignments to facilitate learning during the pandemic.

In summary, the data highlights that the most widely adopted teaching strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic was the use of home tasks and assignments, followed by sending reading materials. In contrast, more interactive methods like video conferencing and video recording were less favored, indicating a preference for structured, independent learning during this challenging time.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

It is found by the current study that both teachers and students face great difficulty in online education. Mostly Students did not have access to the internet; students did not even have laptops and smart phones and the speed of internet was very slow. Teachers also faced great difficulty in the implementation of online education because of limited resources and mostly teachers did not know how to use educational technologies. In present study, researchers found that the effect of COVID-19 on students performance at primary level and identified those teaching strategies which were used during this pandemic. Researchers concluded that online class has a great positive effect on students learning and the performance of the students, and has long lasting effect on students competencies and skills. It is also concluded that online classes increase education inequalities among students. During COVID-19 pandemic, all education system moved online and researcher concluded that modern equipment's and elearning has been used. The researcher found that E-learning experienced a significant change in students learning.

On the other hand, teachers face great difficulty in the implementation of online learning. The researcher found that no other applications were used such as Google classroom, Zoom, LMS etc. Teacher was sending home task and reading material for students on WhatsApp and in a parents teaching meeting instead of using video conferencing or audio recording because of limited resources. Government authorities should provide maximum funding to all public and private sectors for educational technology. It is recommended that Government of AJK should provide technical services like internet, laptops, desktops etc in all

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primary schools.

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