



A paradigm shift in education system during Covid-19: Challenge for students, teachers and parents

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Abstract

None of us before 2019 would have predicted that our Lives and every system we are part-of will turn upside down with a Virus that would be so deadly, destructive with global impact; that it would be bring our whole life to a halt. Without any geographical boundary, this pandemic changed our life and lifestyle. Covid-19 pandemic had a drastic impact on whole world with people loosing lives, loosing health, losing jobs, and also resulted in huge change in our daily lives. Education system is no different where institutions all over the world were closed and people were forced to follow and adapt to something completely different than normal. As per a study, throughout the world, this pandemic pushed 1.2 billion children to leave from their schools. Learning and Teaching has taken a new turn through digital platform and it took some time for everyone whether it be a learner or an instructor to adopt the new normal. It is a big paradigm shift in education system and a very big challenge for students, teachers and parents too. In this article, I would discuss about the Challenges for Students, teachers and parents as it is of a great concern, especially when they interfere with a student's opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to the nation's future.

Keywords: pandemic, Covid-19, education, digital, online classes, challenge, students, teachers, parents

Introduction

Education is a deed of teaching and giving knowledge to others, it is the turn of receiving knowledge from others. Education decreases the challenges that comes in the way of the success, the more knowledge you gain the more opportunities will open up to allow individuals to achieve better options in career and empowers people to develop personally. Prophet of Islam (PBUH) said: "Whosoever follows a path to seek knowledge therein, God will make easy for him a path to paradise." (Sunan Ibn Majah 225). Education is not only the right, but is the duty of every human being. The best gift from a father to his child is education. Education is the wisdom of truth as said by A. P. J. Abdul Kalam "Ultimately, education in its real is the wisdom of truth. It is an endless journey through knowledge and enlightenment". It is learning about the world we live in and how to live in it.

Due to Covid-19 pandemic, many changes came to the whole world with all of its tragic impacts on individuals, families, and communities, and has resulted in the closure of educational institutions all over the world. The Covid-19 impact was everywhere, which resulted in the closure of Schools and other educational institutions. During lockdown the educational community have made concerted efforts to maintain learning in continuity, but the online teaching has its own set of challenges. Various issues come in when education has been moved from offline to online learning, how does one provides informal social interactions, how to ensure student attention, or even how to ensure active participation? Most schools and other educational institutions struggle with these since neither their teaching material addresses this nor their staff had training for this mode of teaching. Students from well-developed families

and backgrounds, supported by their parents and elders, could find their way past closed school doors to alternative learning opportunities, and those from underprivileged backgrounds and poor families often remained shut out when their schools shut down. This disaster has exposed the many insufficiencies and imbalances in our education systems – from access to the broadband and computers needed for online education, and the supportive environments needed to focus on learning, up to the misalignment between resources and needs. Children and students have had to rely more on their own resources to continue learning remotely through the Internet, television or radio.

Challenges faced by the students

The students who used to go to schools to learn in the company of their friends and under the guidance of their teachers, when switched to e-learning, most of the students encountered serious problems and challenges. Some of these are specific to remote learning, such as not feeling connected with the teacher or not knowing how to handle the level of independent work.

Many students find difficulty in managing their time with online classes. As the online learning is completely new for them and requires intensive work. They need a scheduled planner to manage their time in an effective manner. Online learning provides flexible time, unlike traditional classrooms. But some face difficulties in adjusting to the time required for online classes.

Even though such problems were realized by all students irrespective of age and grade, however it was a magnified challenge for children below 5 years mainly due to the capability to follow instructions, attention duration, and

even handling a device like a computer. The other challenges include 'Adaptability struggle' like reduced face to face communication, interaction, self-motivation (learning in a new way), class control, adoption to new technology, and technical and device issues. In the technology front, Google classroom, Zoom, MS-teams and other VCS tools (Version Control System) are used worldwide, there are challenges in multi-student classes with regards to the bandwidth of a particular user being poor and affecting the overall class quality, also users using mobile hotspot suffer from packet loss leading to poor video quality.

There are many students who still cannot operate basic computers with MS word and PowerPoint. And whenever some technical issues emerge, they find it difficult to solve the problem in such a scenario. They face difficulties with live classes, usage of appropriate icons, MS office, communication-related apps and websites, browsing study materials, etc. Sometimes they do not know technology proficiency like login, live classes, creating and submitting work, communicating with teachers and friends.

There are some students who adapted to different styles of e-learning quickly but there are students who needed time to understand the new different styles of e-learning, they faced the difficulty in creating projects and assignments using the new technology of e-learning.

The subjects of the 'Social Science and humanity' streams can be well taught through e-learning but this is not the case with subjects like science, music and arts, where students need to attend laboratory and practical classes. This is the other challenge with the students, as the students are able to learn the theoretical aspects of these subjects through e-learning, but they can't attend the practical classes and the classes or the experiments done in the lab.

For those who have access to the all prerequisites of e-learning in terms of technology and atmosphere, there is a possibility that learning online can be more effective in a number of ways. Some researches show that in average, students maintain more material when learning online as compared to a classroom teaching. This is mostly due to the students being able to learn faster online; the students feel that the e-learning requires less time to learn than in a traditional classroom setting because students can learn at their own rung, going back and re-reading, skipping, or hurrying through concepts and notions as they choose. However, a classroom is a place where all students learn irrespective of understanding level, learn at same pace under the guidance and monitoring of the teachers. However, while taking online classes in the comfort of one's own home, children miss out on the classroom experience. This made a lot of students feel distracted or less attentive and soon they feel to log out in the middle of the session and some students engage themselves in other digital activities, such as browsing the internet and chatting with their friends. As a result, students fail to learn or focus well through remote learning. However, with schools closed, there is not much that we can do to overcome this problem.

There are some students who feel shy to communicate with their teachers and friends due to the new system of learning. It might happen due to lack of interest, poor technological skills with apps and video calls or unable to express themselves via live chats, emails and text messages.

In many states, children from extremely poor families come school just because they can get free food since they

couldn't get proper food at home. This doesn't only help such children to get nutritious midday meal at school, but helped to get free education. With the schools closed, such students were left out not only from learning but were also unable to eat which gave them a challenge to survive during the hard time. Most of these school going children got involved in child labor to support their families as their parents suffered and are suffering from the financial crunch. This caused immense emotional distress to these students and obviously took their focus away from their studies. Schools, as and when they reopen, cannot possibly go back to learning as usual. Socio-emotional learning must take center-stage, so that these children can cope, process and regenerate their passion to learn.

Challenges faced by the Teachers

To bring up distinguished persons require distinguished educators. Only an educator who has established his aim in educating people and practices what he will teach and advise to his students, only one who knows the character, potentialities, desires, and ambitions of his students with the shortcomings and strong and weak spots and the level of learning and understanding of each, can be successful in educating people. Of course, this is not all that a good, successful educator must have. Furthermore, he must know how to treat his students in all circumstances, how to approach their problems and how to purify them of bad qualities and morals and, in place of them, inculcate laudable and good ones. (*Prophet Muhammad PBBH: The man and the message*, Milli Publication, p-112) Along with the students, teachers too have had to make changes. Teachers who were all specialists in chalk board, white board, Write files, books, schoolroom and classroom teaching are really new to this digital teaching, they adopted the new methods and tried to handle it like a pro to aid the students in the current position, but most of them were not trained to give online lessons and were forced to adapt in a hurry by learning on their own.

In an offline atmosphere where a teacher can see all students together, but in an online classroom a teacher simply cannot pay attention to multi-student class and is a big challenge to pay attention to all students at one go. Initially, in institutions, instructors were simply not ready to deliver high-quality lectures remotely. However, given where we are today, most users have got familiar to Video Conferencing tools and can use them with ease. But on the negative side, many teachers mostly in schools are looking for an alternative job to support their families, because they are not use to this new technology at all. Teachers also had to adapt to new pedagogical concepts and modes of delivery of teaching, for which they never have been trained. In particular, learners in the most marginalized groups, who don't have access to digital learning resources or lack the elasticity and arrangement to learn on their own, are at risk of decreasing behind.

Keeping the right teacher-student ratio is very important in this situation to maintain class control. Given teaching methods, self-learning and pre-recorded content have low completion rates since they suffer from user motivation loss. Live classes have fairly good completion rates but are also teacher dependent. Social or peer learning is another aspect that becomes a challenge in online education. Preparing teaching materials for conducting online classes, teachers have to prepare extensive teaching materials and also

supplementary materials to support learning. Live classes are the closest today in providing a classroom-type experience, but at the same time adjustments need to be made on content, teaching, and delivery of the programs and topics, because in an offline classroom, teachers not only teach from textbooks, they used to hold discussions and conversations with students. They also do various activities, testing, researches and experiments in presence of a teacher which used to keep the students attentive, motivated, involved, inspired and interested in learning. But, now in online class learning, it is not possible to do the activities that students and teachers engage in classrooms. So, keeping the students involved and motivated becomes another challenge for a teacher.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a severe impact on teachers who are faculties in higher education. As universities closed their premises and countries shut their borders in response to lockdown measures many difficulties occurred. Although higher educational institutions were quick to replace face-to-face lectures with online learning, but the closures affected learning and examinations as well as the safety and legal status of international students in their host country. The teachers who went to attend the international seminars or conferences just before few days of lockdown got stuck in other countries and could not come back even after the opening of the higher institutions in our country, because of the non-availability of the flights on time. By hook or crook they were able to reach back to their own countries. Once they approached to join the duties back in their institutions, they faced a lot of problems due to the protocol from the government and their institutions.

Most importantly, the crisis increases enquiries about the value offered by a university education which includes networking and social opportunities as well as learning content. To remain relevant, universities tried to reinvent their learning settings so that digitalization expands and balances student-teacher and other relationships. During the pandemic, distant learning became a sustenance for education but the opportunities that digital technologies offer go well beyond a substitute solution during a crisis. Digital technology offers entirely new answers to the question of what students learn, how they learn, when and where they learn. Technology can enable teachers and students to access particular materials well beyond textbooks, in multiple formats and in ways that can bridge time and space. Working alongside teachers, intelligent digital learning systems don't just teach students science, but can at the same time observe how they study, the kind of tasks and thinking that interest them, and the kind of difficulties that they find. The systems then adapted the learning experience to suit students' personal learning styles with great granularity and precision. Initially it was not possible to learn from the virtual laboratories but later due to the continuity of the Covid-19 pandemic forced the education institutions to facilitate the students with the virtual labs. Therefore, virtual laboratories gave students the opportunity to design, conduct and learn from experiments, rather than just learning about them. But there was always a delay or cancellation of examinations, which leads to confusion for many students, teachers as well as parents, ultimately the online examinations have been conducted, but the teachers always are not sure if the work turned in by the students was copied from their peers or completed on their own. So preventing children from using unfair means proves

another challenge for teachers. Therefore, to avoid the use of unfair means during this remote learning, the teachers started taking initiatives to give assignments orally and vocally on spot during online classes. Few teachers are taking the viva voce in one to one online meetings which is apparently time taken but at least justified as the teachers look at students' body language and gauge their response to what is being asked. The students' expressions help teacher to understand if the student is able to follow the questions and the lessons taught in the online class. These teachers are not in the dark about how much a child has really understood.

This new technology just changed the methods of teaching and learning, it promoted the role of teachers from imparting received knowledge towards working as co-creators of knowledge, as coaches, as mentors and as evaluators. The teachers were forced to renew their skills regularly in order to be able to innovate their practices and adapt to the rapid transformations in the current context, where the COVID-19 health crisis has pushed teachers to adapt very quickly, especially in our country where we do not necessarily have the instructive and technical skills to integrate digital tools into learning.

During this period the teachers also participated and attended the faculty development programmes through online mode and its impact was not that much fruitful as it has in offline mode. Some of the teachers who are literally good got the Grade C even after doing well in their online trainings. So teachers are more likely to participate in courses or seminars and conferences offline as it gives more concerted forms of professional development. One more challenge is that the teachers and faculties could not visit to their home towns from last two years as they did not get any breaks from their schools, colleges and universities. All the teachers, professors and other faculties were working from their homes during the lockdown period and as soon as educational institutions reopened they worked in continuity from their schools, colleges and universities.

Challenges faced by the Parents

Parents who are responsible for building ethics into the children and to educate themselves to be good parents. Since the family plays a major role in helping a child socialize and has great influence and bearing on the progress of the child, the most natural environment to grow mentally and spiritually from a state of selfishness to unselfishness, the school of love where children cultivate heart and build character, manners, norms etc. As the Kids follow their Parents, Parents are the first teachers for their kids and also the developers in their learning. For them, parents are their heroes and can solve any of their problems. This way Parents have a greater influence on kids than teachers. When the COVID-19 lockdown brought many challenges in education system while boosting educational innovation, teachers and children faced many challenges and same was the case with the parents. The shift of classroom learning to online learning has created many challenges for parents.

Parents helping their children with online classes and homework: Covid-19 pandemic has created a lot of pressure and stress on students, teachers as well as on parents. Before the pandemic struck, like teachers and children, parents didn't know much about remote classes. With schools switching to online classes, it fell upon parents to ensure that their children attend these classes. They made all efforts

from downloading the software, online applications and ensuring the availability of right devices, proper internet connection for teaching their child how to use these, parents have to do everything during these online classes as children and parents stay confined to their homes, and due to overburden parents are finding it difficult to focus on different aspects of their child's overall development.

Educated parents are supporting their children throughout the pandemic, but the requirement to understand that there are some uneducated parents and their feeling of helplessness to help their children in their education which has to be considered. Uneducated parents were so helpless to talk to the teachers while interactions during the online classes, and after the classes they are not able to complete their homework given to the children by their teachers, they are finding it difficult to keep their children on track and help them with assignments. The challenge and trouble becomes multifold if the children happen to be in different grades. They try to make it possible that children attend the online classes as per the timetable given by the school or college, complete their homework and send it to the teacher and prepare for the next day's class has been a cause of worry for many parents. Apart from this there are several problems which has been faced by the working parents. Some of the parents left their jobs in order to help and support their child's online school education, mostly the mothers left their jobs. As the effectiveness of online learning varies amongst age groups, my personal experience is that the children, especially younger ones need someone to be with them during the online classes, because kids are small they get distracted easily. To get the full benefit of online learning, there needs to be a determined effort to provide the structural environment of physical class/lecture through video capabilities. Reopening schools and universities may bring absolute benefits to students and the wider economy. In addition, reopening schools will bring economic benefits to families by enabling those parents to return to their work. Those benefits, however, must be carefully weighed against the health risks and the requirement to alleviate the toll of the pandemic.

Parents are dealing with the fears and stress of the children at home: Parents are facing challenges while addressing their child's fears. The child's brain is a store of thoughts and questions circulating all the time which is good for a growing brain, but unexpected and unimaginable questions regarding the Covid 19 pandemic they use to ask. If something bad happens in the family due to this virus the parents have to explain everything to the child while taking extra care of their emotional comfort, those questions and their thoughts always spat out. If the kid does not get the answers and finds no dear one to share, it is not good for their health, because the young children get panic very easily. The home environment plays an important role in encouraging a child to learn. The families where parents show interest with happiness in the studies of their children, this can help children learn better through remote learning from their homes, whereas the families who show disinterest, unwillingness and always keep an unhappy environment at home may badly disturb the enthusiasm of their children to learn through remote learning.

Parents unable to keep a healthy routine for their children: Kids need to follow a daily routine which suits their requirements, but as the pandemic struggles on and the burden of household and professional work continue to

increase, parents are unintentionally ignoring their normal daily routines. This time as the life is at risk parents totally does not want to be authoritative, rather want to deal as a friend and want to exchange all thoughts with their kids in a friendly manner. As a result, children tend to follow the same disorganized habits and routines. It has become especially difficult for parents to maintain a strict routine for their children, with fixed times for meals, studying and sleeping. In this situation, parents don't want the children to wake up early in the morning, they don't want the children to perform exercises, neither encourage the child to go for a morning walk to experience the health benefits. They don't want to force their children to maintain a balanced diet to avoid the stress and tension for them. And the parents who forcefully wanted their children to do as the way their parents wanted them to do to restore structure but as a result, children tend to lose interest in everything and become aggressive.

Parents have a challenge to keep the children engaged: People are unable to meet their loved ones. It is not only adults but children are also frustrated to adapt to this situation, a situation that is mentally and psychologically challenging. From the time when schools have come to a halt, parents are having a tough time to keep their children engaged in significant activities. The role of parents, which has always been important, is critical in this situation. Many parents are not prepared with the proper teaching resources and literally are unable to teach effectively. While children learning from home, parents have to take care of not only their child's physical and emotional requirements, but also academic requirements. For working parents, this became very tough, this means an increased workload and high levels of stress. They are trying their best to balance the office work and household responsibilities altogether.

Parents have challenge to manage the behavioural problems of their children: There is no doubt that Covid-19 pandemic has drastically disrupted the lifestyle of all individuals and children have been impacted in the worst way as their normal routine has been shaken. While children remain confined to their homes during this pandemic, playing, talking and doing activities together is a part of children's daily lives but they are unable to meet their friends, they are unable to play outdoors, to enjoy with the friends in the park. This resulted them to get more stressed and tend to disobey, they lose their temper, they have become aggressive and increased clinginess are some of the ways young children may express their frustration. Parents are facing difficulty in dealing with this stressful situation to reassure the children and help them cope up with the situation. This environment has an effect on their behavior, so parents have this challenge to be able to change that behavior by changing the environment, parents gradually change their parenting styles, but the lack of social interactions make children, especially teens, feel uninterested and distracted from their studies.

Managing the screen time for the children is also a challenge for parents: Parents like me were worried about long screen time. But when they found no solution for long screen time, they started discussing how should we convert the online exposure to productive screen time. They started guiding their children towards technology that teaches them something fruitful, that increased the learning opportunities for children. What I realized being a parent that it is the responsibility of parents to arrange and prioritize our

children's overall progress that includes both academics, sports, and health. I try to find some online physical activity sessions which are designed in a way that they ensure children are physically moving and are not stagnant, the child's focus is on performing the activity, and the sessions act as an avenue of social interaction with peers while learning new skills.

The children are happy when they are having fun, when they are 'moving' or interacting with their friends and peers. Therefore, various online media wherein children not only have the option to move, have fun, and interact with their peers, at some level- is a positive thing. People always say and believe that a happy child is a healthy child. So if a child is happy automatically will be healthy. As parents we have to ensure that our children are active, healthy, and most importantly happy.

The period of learning at home has made visible the many benefits that students gain from being able to learn in close contact with their teachers and peers, and with full access with the wide variety of educational, social and health-related services which schools offer. This public awareness of the importance of schools and of teachers could be strategically deployed to increase engagement and support from parents and communities for schools and for teachers. This will be particularly important in the current context as the health and economic costs of the pandemic risk reducing the funds available to education. While some believe that the unexpected and speedy move of offline to online learning with inadequate training, insufficient bandwidth, and tiny preparation will result in a poor user experience that is unfavorable to constant growth, others believe that a new hybrid model of education will emerge, with significant benefits which we did not see yet.

Conclusion

Education is about learning skills and gaining knowledge. It helps people to learn how to do the things and how to support them to think about what they have learnt. Only with the help of education, the knowledge of society, the knowledge of country, and the knowledge of the world is passed on from one generation to the other generation. Technology paves the way for education, thus helping the students and teachers to connect virtually through online classrooms, webinars, digital exams, and so on. But the sad part of the story is that it is not available to many students all over the world. Many students, teachers and working parents are struggling to obtain the gadgets required for online classes and for their online work. Everything is happening for the well-being of the students so that they can stay safe at home without getting affected by the life-threatening virus Covid-19. This is a time for love, support and care as you stretch to help your young ones to learn and to grow and, perhaps, even train them with the necessary skills to prepare them for the future. There is a famous quote of APJ Abdul Kalam "If you fail, never give up because F.A.I.L. means, First Attempt In Learning." The online learning is a demand and requirement of the time, so teachers have to keep their students engaged through compelling content to make remote learning a success. Our challenge is to educate children where they are, within the infrastructure and setting they are in. This requires innovation and creativity to enhance remote learning tools, services and education. We need to update the structure and should find the methods to provide education to every child

during such situations like the pandemic and if we face something just like this in the future, we would be able enough to support the coming generation. "Let us sacrifice our today so that our children can have a better tomorrow". (A. P. J. Abdul Kalam).

We all students, teachers and parents need to know that we must be able to do something to succeed in learning, teaching, in the workplaces and in our life. The system should be very strong and successful which clearly can face any kind of challenge in the process of facilitating learning and the acquisition of knowledge. Instructors should prepare for a probable increase in remote classes going forward. Students feedback is a valuable aspect in improving the quality of online learning. So the teachers must prepare themselves with the quality of teaching. It is essential that teachers and communities be better prepared and supported if impartial and inclusive learning, in and beyond classrooms, is to be assured. Technology alone cannot promise good learning outcomes. More important than training teachers in ICT skills, is ensuring that they have the assessment and pedagogical skills to meet students at their level and to implement the enhanced curricula and differentiated learning strategies likely to emerge in the coming back to school. It is also the responsibility of the governments to stay true to principles and conduct reforms, so that, not only the children and youth regain their promised future, but all education patrons also find their role in making it occur.

Acknowledgment

This paper and the research behind it is based on the personal experiences that I got and faced time to time during this pandemic. Like everyone, I was devastated and terribly depressed, terrified about Covid -19. Myself being a faculty as well as a parent, and looking at my child being a student I experienced and faced a lot of challenges. Now, I realize that that experience was probably what made me finally reach out to write about the challenges faced by the students, teachers and parents with the impact of E – learning during this COVID-19. More importantly, this experience gave me a lifelong compassion for others.

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