



The Effects of COVID-19 on Education

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ABSTRACT: The current pandemic situation has affected half the world's students with partial or full closure of their schools. Some schools have started online classes for the students but due to many technological barriers, many students are unable to join these classes. According to the news reports, there were more than 55 percent schools that had seen a reduction in the number of new admission in the new academic year. Many parents have lost their jobs during the pandemic and were forced to stop the education of many students. As per a new report by UNICEF, child labor has increased to 160 million in 2021 which is the first-ever increase in the last two decades for this number. In another report by UNICEF, the impact of COVID-19 has led to an increase in child marriages in some parts of India that account for half of the child marriages all over the world. The lockdown and the financial crisis all over the country have only increased the cases of child marriages and child labor in many parts of the world especially third world countries. Apart from the social evils, the schools are facing delays in getting the proper finances from the government to run smoothly and make a proper transition to online education. The teachers were not trained on how to use the right equipment which led to an interruption in imparting the education to the students and a gap in between lectures. Most of the examinations were either delayed or canceled due to the pandemic. The students who were used to going to the schools are stuck at home and dealing with stress and other serious mental disorders. Being stuck at home for most of the hours, there has been a lack of physical exercise which leads to many health issues among the children.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Schools, Child Marriage, Child Labor, Schools, Education, Mental Health

I. INTRODUCTION

By the end of 2019, the world was dealing with COVID-19 which lead to many changes around. The life that we are living right now was unimaginable when the pandemic first started.

Something that started with a few days of lockdown, stretched to an extent that going out of the house now feels like a big task. There were many financial crises around the world as most of the businesses were affected due to pandemics. Many people around the world lost their job and many lost their loved ones due to COVID-19. However, among all that happened, the most affected sector was education. With all the schools shutting down for an indefinite amount of time, most of the students were not sure what would happen to their future. There was no surety if their examinations will be conducted and when they will be going back to school again. Many people around the world did not have a stable internet connection in their homes and most schools did not have the infrastructure to shift their schools online.

II. TECHNICAL ISSUES FACED BY THE STUDENTS

Online teaching is not a new concept and it is one of the most effective ways of teaching in most professional classes. However, for students who are in school and lower grades online teaching techniques may not be always effective for them. The lack of face-to-face engagement with the teacher and the other students can be challenging for them. Most of these students are missing one of the most crucial parts of learning. In developing countries, the problem of online education is the lack of access to a stable internet connection. It is one of the rough adjustments that the students are making due to the covid and pandemic situation these days. The students who are in lower grades are mostly struggling with the jump of physically being at school to online education. They are unable to focus on what the teacher is teaching and retain the information that is being passed with online education. It makes them feel that they are learning less than what they would have learned if they were physically present at the school. Many students who were lagging in schools are not lagging further behind as the time is running out for them to meet the key academic benchmarks required for them. Most teaching professionals think that online education



cannot replace physical education. According to a report published by Sage Pub Journals, there were 50% low-income families and 42% families of color who lacked the devices that were required for the student to join an online class that was being conducted by the school. Also, only 38% of teachers reported interacting with their students daily [3]. Therefore, we can say that almost half the students of the country and 30% of teachers are not comfortable or prefer this mode of education as the best.

Many students are also facing a challenge in juggling their family responsibilities with their coursework for education. The transition to online education has been tough for everyone. From every day traveling to schools and colleges, to suddenly being at home 24 hours have been difficult to adjust especially for big families. There are many families where few members are working at night which makes it easier for them to manage the children and the time schedule so that everyone can get the time to complete their work and studies. Now, with everyone working and studying from home it is getting difficult for them to manage the time and focus on their work and education. In a survey reported by the US News where around 400 college students were asked regarding the switch to online education, 60% of the student felt that it was something that they were least prepared for. There were around 64% who were concerned about how they were going to maintain their self-discipline and focus. They even felt that it was worse than the in-person classes [2].

III. MONETARY ISSUES DUE TO PANDEMIC

Most people either lost their jobs or their jobs were affected due to the pandemic. This economic impact was not good for the education sector. The students who are working part-time with their studies were adversely affected due to COVID-19. With most of the workplaces closing and the college campus closing, the students lost their part-time income which affects their lifestyle. The youth who are living in the low-income countries are in an even worse situation as they even lack the proper equipment to study and sometimes even proper space at home. Most of the parents of these children whose jobs are affected due to COVID-19 could not continue the education of the students. According to a report, around 38% of students are unsure of their future career prospects and expect a crisis in getting proper jobs after their education is completed. At the peak of the pandemic situation, 45 countries in Europe and Central Asia region closed their schools which affected 185 million students [1]. According to a paper published by the World Bank on the impact

of COVID-19 on education recommendation and opportunities for Ukraine, it was found that despite all the best efforts to set up support for a remote learning experience for the students and the teachers, there were pieces of evidence that show that the school closures have led to learning losses [1]. In places such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, there were learning losses as well as an increase in inequality where the children whose parents are in a socio-economically advantaged position were more supportive of their students during the school closure period. There were learning losses in Europe's high-income countries due to the abrupt transition from an in-person class to an online class [1].

IV. INCREASE IN CHILD LABOR

Child labor was a problem that needed to be addressed even before the COVID-19 pandemic came into existence. However, at this time of crisis, it has put millions of more children at risk of being pushed into child labor. This is the first rise in child labor after 20 years of progressing and ending the problems that lead to child labor. Children who are already into child labor are now working even longer hours and under much worse conditions which is creating significant harm to their safety and health. With so many people losing their jobs due to pandemics, the family income is getting affected and so many people are resorting to child labor to raise the family income to some extent. Social protection is very important during these days which are also not able to act to the best level to protect these children from being pushed into child labor. Most of the government has started giving money and support to unemployed families but in most cases, it is not enough for them.

COVID-19 is endangering the progress done by most of the countries in improving the situation of child labor in most countries. As per a report that was published by UNICEF on the situation of child labor during the pandemic situation, it was found that globally there are additionally 9 million children are at the risk of being pushed into child labor in 2022 due to the pandemic situation. With the schools being closed would mean that children who are already in child labor would work for more hours a day in worsening conditions [4]. The Executive Director of UNICEF, Henrietta Fore comments on this heart-breaking situation and feels that the governments and other international organizations should make investments in programs that will help in getting the children back to school and protect them from being pushed into the workforce. The families should be helped so that they can avoid choosing



byThissending their children to work rather than to school in the first place [4].

V. INCREASE IN CHILD MARRIAGE

While boys are being pushed to child labor, the girls are being forced into child marriage. The number of children marriages has only increased during the COVID-19 lockdown. The school closure, economic stress, service disruption, parental death, or pregnancy are putting a lot of pressure on young vulnerable girls to be at the risk of child marriage. In the last 10 years, there has been a decrease in children marriage to 15% but with the pandemic situation the number of child marriages is only increasing and more than 100 million more girls are now under threat. The pandemic has already made a difficult situation for them to study and isolated them from external support networks and their friends. Like child labor, the rising poverty in the country is only adding fuel to the fire of child marriage [5]. As we already know the psychological and physical consequences of child marriage like the risk of unplanned pregnancy, domestic violence, and mortality. In addition to that, the pandemic travel restrictions have only isolated the girls from their parents and made it difficult for them to access health care or social services, or community support. There is nothing to help protect them from gender-based violence against them or unwanted pregnancy. The job losses and increase in economic insecurity among the parents are only forcing them to marry their daughters to ease the financial burden on them. According to a report published in UNICEF, it was found that half of the child marriages are occurring in Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Ethiopia, and Nigeria [5].

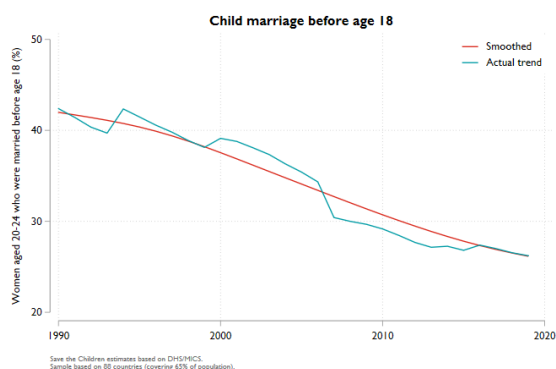


Figure 1: Child Marriage in last four decade

As per the figure, we can see that the number of child marriages cases has only increased in the last few years and how the trend was reducing in the last decade. As per the data, we can say that

what changes and improvements that happened in the last few years have only spoiled with the current pandemic situation.

VI. HEALTH PROBLEMS AND COVID-19

COVID-19 pandemic has not only brought a disease that is being caused by the virus but also many more issues that are not related to the virus. With the current trend of working from home that has changed the whole world, people are getting used to staying at home and being less active. The less active lifestyle has led to many health issues such as fatigue, obesity, digestive problems, and many more. Not just that, continuously staying at home has a lot of effect on our mental health. We are dealing with the stressful situation of losing our jobs, family members, and fear. According to a news report by WHO, there are more than 10 million people who are at the risk of falling into extreme poverty due to the pandemic situation which will only increase in the number of undernourished people. If this is the situation of people who are working professional, the situation of the children is even worse. Continuously staying at home with less physical activities has made them more addicted to gadgets and made a significant effect on their health.

VII. CONCLUSION

The pandemic situation has only increased the social evils and took us backward from all the development we had made in curbing those in the last decade. Although there have been a lot of technological improvements in some parts of the world, those do not count when you have so many social evils counter reversing all the advancements that we have done in the past decade. Apart from that, most of us are dealing with a lot of mental health issues and health issues. People have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. They are dealing with financial stress as well as the stress of losing their family members. The ones who have their jobs are continuously at home without proper physical movements. Among people, there have been instances of increasing the use of alcohol, and drugs which lead to insomnia and anxiety. People from all age groups are affected by the pandemic. While the children are facing the closing of schools and disruption in their education, their parents are facing the stress of losing their jobs and the stress of working from home. People in their old age are developing some severe illnesses due to the physiological changes that are being caused by the virus. The only way to stay in a sane mind state during this insane situation is through physical activity and relaxation techniques. It is very



important for the government of the countries to continue to protect the health and mind of people during this unpredictable time with the help of proper support. Awareness needs to be created so that people can understand the seriousness of these issues.

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