

Learning Loss during Pandemic: A Case Study

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Abstract: Learning Loss is a key phenomenon of COVID-19. This research has tried to understand actual loss of learning of students in a government school. It also tried to understand the Factors influencing it.

Keywords: Learning Loss, COVID-19 and Education

I. LEARNING LOSS AND PANDEMIC

Pandemic have affected all sectors of Indian economy and Indian society. It has changes social perception about various things. Education is no exception to it. A recent study of Azim Premji Foundation has showed that learning loss has happened throughout the country. This article is a case study where, the author has tried to find out the actual learning level of children and factors influencing it.

Learning Loss

Learning loss is a state where there is difference between actual learning levels of entire group (in this case almost entire country.) with respect to their expected learning outcomes at their class level. It is not same as learning gap. Learning gap is of individual students instead of entire group.

Objectives and Methodology

This study was conducted in a government school located in Ghasdi Village of Tonk district of Rajasthan for the period of 2 months. To know actual learning level of children following objectives has been set:

- Identify the impact of COVID-19 on students
- Know the factors of learning loss of students
- know about government efforts and potential solutions to recover the learning loss.

To get the data document study, discussion with teachers, school visits and assessing the learning

level of student in a school were used to collect the data.

II. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Learning Level of Students

An assessment of students at a government school. This assessment was done with help of an assessment tool. This tool was prepared to test the

foundational literacy efficiencies related to reading-writing and essential outcomes of class 4 and 5. The level of questions were from class 1 to 5. It helped to get the actual class level of students in class 3, 4 and 5. The basic details are as follows:

Table: 1

Total Students						34
Present Students						25
Class 3 (Total)						14
Class 3 (Present)						10
Class 4 (Total)						9
Class 4 (Present)						5
Class 5 (Total)						11
Class 5 (Present)						10
Level of Students Class	1	2	3	4	5	Total Attendance
Class 3	6	4	0	0	0	10
Class 4	0	1	2	2	0	5

Class 5	0	6	1	3	0	10
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Table 1 shows that in this school, no child is at his/her class level except of 2 students. There are other things to note that, it was observed that enrolment has suddenly increased in that school. There are many students who are regularly absent. There is a correlation between enrolment, retention and learning of student. Family and socio-economic background are other factors.

Factors Influencing Learning Loss

To know the factors influencing learning loss of children several discussions were held with teachers. Most of teachers were saying they were following government orders. Online Education was happening, but it was not effective due to lack of connectivity, mobile availability, and many other reasons. Teachers also tried to went house-to-house and tried to teach, but it was not effective as children were not at home. They also tried to communicate through phone calls and sending photos and videos on mobile which also proved to be ineffective. In initial 3-4 months, both children and student did not take interest. Around 20% students were able to study. It was not even applicable at primary section as they need teacher's support.

Government had taken several initiatives in form of programs like SMILE 1, 2 & 3, radio and TV programs, Diksha App etc. It was a common experience that these efforts were inadequate due to the following reasons:

- Lack of Necessary resources like access to mobile and internet etc,
- Poor connection of teachers with children and reach out to them
- There were inadequate assessments. Hence the delivered content was ineffective.

After a long period of time, schools were reopened. But it was not easy ride. There were several challenges in school reopening. Many of points came out. These are:

- Children are now at 2 level ahead (without learning)
- Enrolment of children has increased as many private schools have closed or due to issues like inability to pay fee or low parental income etc.
- *Tugalaki Orders* of government are being forced to follow, which are not effective in their context. For example – conducting exam.

The impact of learning loss can be seen in the table above. Following are examples of both cause and consequences of learning loss in pandemic:

- Children have lost interest in education.
- They are lagging from their class level.

- Children are afraid to come to school.
- Interest in mobile is increased

Learning loss has been influenced by various factors. These factors do not work in isolation. Depending upon time and space, one factor may be dominant over other. The factors are:

- Teaching – Learning Process
- Opportunities available to children (Family & Social Background, Environment, Teachers etc.)
- Guidance to Students
- Children's Interest

These factors, learning loss and COVID-19 has summarily led to following issues:

- Issue of retention has increased. attendance has decreased.
- Sense of inferiority is developed among children.
- Children are not acquainted with school processes. Like – Prayer, exams etc. • Sense of social insecurity has developed/increased.
- Parents economic situation is depleted.
- Drop out of some children has increased.
- Self-learning/ self-reading is decreased in students.
- Dependency on teachers has increased.
- Work efficiency of teachers has decreased.
- Various Mental Disorders have developed among children.
- They are not able to connect education with life.
- Value of education has decreased due to promotion to next classes.
- Difference in level of learning of children have varied.
- Learning loss was there, it is highlighted now.
- Dependency on online medium
- Challenges in conceptual understanding of the subject leading to loss of basic efficiency is lost (at least 1)
- No opportunity of Learning and teaching process.
- Both Academic performance and normal life is affected.
- No effective assessment
- Class time, frequency and period were not effective
- Access for *Divyang* was even more difficult.

Solution

It is very evident that learning loss has happened among children. The point which is even more important is that how to regain this learning loss. To regain the learning level of students following steps can be followed:

- Understanding the learning level of students
- Grouping them based on learning level
- Planning and selecting appropriate (and diverse) activities for each group

- Teaching/Helping to learn based on their level
- Regular assessment

Assessment of present level of understanding of children and frequent assessment of whatever being taught is essential. It is important to note that teacher availability, academic freedom of teachers, attitude and leadership style are very critical factors to regain the learning loss. Because it is teaching practices which will help to regain the loss. Extra time and efforts are needed to regain academic loss.

III. CONCLUSION

There was already learning gap among children even before COVID-19. This gap is widened and exposed due to COVID-19. Learning loss in children has resulted posed challenges to students, teachers, and functionaries. There is a need of recovery of learning loss. It could be done with activities and teaching process designed to cater this issue. For that, identifying actual learning level, and planning appropriate activities to recover the loss would be helpful.

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