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Research Article

Challenges And Innovations In Primary Education In Chhattisgarh During The Post-COVID Era: A Stakeholder Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the education system in Chhattisgarh, with primary education being especially affected due to challenges related to infrastructure, limited access to technology, and the sudden transition to online learning. This study investigates the perspectives of four critical stakeholders—teachers, parents, educational functionaries, and students—on the challenges they faced and the innovations they implemented during the post-COVID recovery phase. Utilizing qualitative methods, including interviews and surveys, the research highlights the distinct difficulties experienced by each group and the innovative strategies developed to ensure the continuation of learning. The findings underscore the importance of stakeholder collaboration in addressing educational setbacks and offer valuable recommendations to enhance primary education in the state for future resilience.

Keywords: COVID-19, primary education, post-COVID recovery, Chhattisgarh, stakeholders, challenges, innovations, education system, infrastructure, online learning, educational functionaries, teachers, parents, students.

1. Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted nearly every sector globally, and education was no exception. In India, the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing inequalities in the education system, particularly in rural and remote areas. Chhattisgarh, a state with a large rural population and limited access to technological infrastructure, faced significant challenges in maintaining educational continuity. Primary education, which serves as the foundation for lifelong learning, experienced major setbacks due to the sudden closure of schools, limited online learning opportunities, and a lack of preparedness among teachers, parents, and students to adapt to a digital learning environment.

As schools shut down in March 2020, millions of students, especially in rural areas, were left without formal education. In Chhattisgarh, where many students lack access to smartphones, the internet, and electricity, the shift to online education was particularly problematic. Teachers, who were accustomed to traditional classroom settings, were also unprepared for online teaching. Furthermore, parents, many of whom were struggling with the financial impact of the pandemic, were unable to support their children's education due to their lack of digital literacy and the absence of necessary devices. Educational functionaries, tasked with ensuring that learning continues, faced logistical and infrastructural challenges that hindered the successful implementation of government policies.

Despite these significant challenges, various stakeholders—teachers, parents, educational functionaries, and students—developed innovative strategies to address the educational setbacks caused by the pandemic. Teachers began to employ creative teaching methods, including the use of WhatsApp groups for disseminating e-content, and in some cases, visited students' homes to ensure they had access to learning materials. Parents, though often overwhelmed by the circumstances, also took on the role of facilitators, guiding their children in their learning and ensuring their participation in community-based educational initiatives. Educational functionaries worked tirelessly to implement government programs and facilitate the distribution of learning resources, even if the digital divide remained a major hurdle.

This study aims to explore the perspectives of these key stakeholders—teachers, parents, educational functionaries, and students—on the challenges they encountered and the innovations they implemented in the post-COVID recovery period in Chhattisgarh. By examining their experiences, this study seeks to provide a

comprehensive understanding of the barriers to education in the post-COVID era and the strategies that were employed to overcome them. Ultimately, the study will offer recommendations for improving primary education in the state, drawing on the insights gained from these stakeholders.

2. Review of Related Literature:

The closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic has led to widespread disruptions in education systems globally, particularly in low-income and rural areas. Research has shown that the transition to online learning, while necessary to curb the spread of the virus, created significant challenges for many students and teachers, especially in regions where digital infrastructure is underdeveloped (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). In India, the pandemic highlighted the deep digital divide that exists between urban and rural areas, as well as among different socio-economic groups. According to a report by the National Statistical Office (NSO) (2020), only 24% of rural households have access to the internet, and only 15% of rural households have access to a computer. This stark contrast between urban and rural access to technology exacerbated educational inequalities during the pandemic.

In the case of Chhattisgarh, the lack of digital infrastructure was a significant barrier to continued learning during the pandemic especially in remote and rural areas. According to a report by the Chhattisgarh State Government (2020), many students in rural areas were unable to access online classes due to the lack of smartphones, computers, and reliable internet connections. Teachers in these areas, accustomed to traditional classroom teaching, were also ill-prepared for the sudden shift to digital education. A study by Sharma and Rathi (2021) on teachers in rural India found that many teachers lacked the necessary digital skills to effectively teach online, and there was also a lack of training and resources to help teachers transition to the digital medium.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the mental and emotional well-being of students and their families. Studies have shown that the lack of social interaction and physical activity, combined with the stress of learning in isolation, led to negative psychological effects on children (Fegert et al., 2020). In rural areas, where students are often more dependent on face-to-face learning and community interactions, the closure of schools and the lack of social engagement had a particularly detrimental effect on students' overall development. A report by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) (2020) noted that students in rural areas were especially vulnerable to mental health issues due to the lack of structured learning environments and limited access to psychological support services.

Despite these challenges, many teachers, parents, and educational functionaries found innovative ways to continue education. In rural India, teachers began utilizing alternative methods to engage students, such as sending learning materials via WhatsApp groups or using television broadcasts and radio programs to deliver lessons (Sharma & Rathi, 2021). In Chhattisgarh, teachers made home visits to provide educational materials and to ensure that students continued their learning in the absence of digital tools (Chhattisgarh State Government, 2020).

Parents, too, played a crucial role in supporting their children's education during the pandemic. In many cases, parents took on the responsibility of helping their children access online learning resources, providing emotional support, and acting as facilitators in the learning process. A study by Tiwari et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of parental involvement in remote learning, particularly in rural areas where digital resources were scarce. Parents in Chhattisgarh were often instrumental in ensuring that children engaged with the educational materials provided by teachers, even if they lacked the digital literacy to fully understand the content themselves.

Educational functionaries, including district education officers and block education officers, were also instrumental in ensuring that education continued during the pandemic. They played a critical role in coordinating the distribution of educational materials, organizing community-based teaching programs, and ensuring that government initiatives, such as the DIKSHA platform, were utilized effectively (Chhattisgarh State Government, 2020). However, the effectiveness of these programs was often hindered by logistical issues, such as transportation difficulties and the limited reach of digital platforms in remote areas.

The pandemic also spurred the development of several innovative solutions aimed at bridging the digital divide and ensuring continuity in education. The Indian government launched several initiatives, such as the DIKSHA platform, to provide digital resources to both students and teachers. Additionally, the use of community radio and television programs became a popular method for delivering educational content to remote areas (UNESCO, 2020). However, the success of these initiatives was contingent on the availability of infrastructure and the willingness of stakeholders to adapt to new modes of learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed significant challenges in the Indian education system, particularly for primary education in rural and underprivileged areas like Chhattisgarh. However, it also prompted the development of innovative solutions to overcome these challenges. By examining the experiences and innovations of key stakeholders—teachers, parents, educational functionaries, and students—this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced in the post-COVID recovery period and the strategies that can be employed to strengthen primary education in the state. This review of the literature underscores the importance of collaboration among stakeholders and highlights the need for continued

innovation to ensure that education is accessible to all, regardless of geographic location or socio-economic status.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To study the challenges faced by educators, parents, and students in teaching and learning during the COVID-19 period.
- To explore the innovations introduced by stakeholders to continue education during the pandemic.

4. Methodology

The research used a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Data was gathered through surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions with teachers, head teachers, educational functionaries, parents, and students from two districts of Chhattisgarh namely Durg and Mahasamund.

4.1 Tools:

- **Questionnaires for head teachers, teachers, educational functionaries, and parents**: To study challenges and innovations.
- **Focus Group Discussions**: To capture students' perspectives on their learning experiences.

4.2 Sample: Sampling was conducted using a multi-stage random method, ensuring representation from both rural and urban schools presented in Tale -1 and Table-2.

Table-1: Distribution of Sample

Sample	Durg	Mahasamund	Total
Rural Schools	5	5	10
Urban Schools	5	6	11
Students	573	403	976
Head Teachers	10	10	20
Teacher	20	20	40
Parents	20	20	40
Educational Functionaries	6	6	12

Table-2: Details of Districts and Block

Sample	Durg		Mahasamund		Total
	Durg	Dhamdha	Mahasamund	Bhatapara	
Schools	5	5	8	3	**21**
Students	300	273	310	93	**976**
Head teachers	5	5	6	4	**20**
Teachers	10	10	10	10	**40**
Parents	10	10	10	10	**40**
Educational Functionaries	3	3	4	2	**12**
Total	**333**	**306**	**348**	**122**	**1109**

5. Results and Discussions

5.1 Challenges and Innovation of Stakeholders during Covid in Chhattisgarh at Primary Stage

During the COVID-19 pandemic, various stakeholders—including head teachers, teachers, parents, students, and educational functionaries—faced numerous challenges in continuing education. This section highlights the experiences of **stakeholders** in Chhattisgarh, focusing on both the difficulties encountered and the innovative responses adopted.

5.1.1 Challenges and Innovations Faced by Head Teachers in Chhattisgarh During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

5.1.1.A: Challenges Faced by Head Teachers in Teaching Learning at Primary Level in Chhattisgarh during COVID - 19

- **Digital Divide:** Many students lacked access to smartphones or stable internet. In rural areas, poor connectivity and power outages further disrupted online learning.
- **Technical Challenges:** Both head teachers and students had limited experience using platforms like Zoom and Google Meet, which hampered digital instruction.
- **E-Content Development:** Many head teachers lacked the skills and tools to create digital content and relied on resources from state authorities.

- **Low Participation:** Students' attendance in online and community classes was low due to fear of COVID, lack of motivation, and device unavailability.
- **Assessment Difficulties:** Regular assessment was disrupted due to lack of devices, irregular submissions, and poor communication with students.
- **Limited Training:** Online platforms such as DIKSHA and Nishtha offered training, but teachers struggled to adapt to digital pedagogy.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Some teachers hesitated to follow government guidelines, especially when travel to remote areas was involved.
- **Learning Loss & Mental Health:** Students experienced setbacks in foundational skills and faced emotional challenges like anxiety and loneliness.

5.1.1.B: Innovations by Head Teachers in Teaching Learning at Primary Level in Chhattisgarh during COVID - 19

- **Parental Engagement:** Head teachers involved parents in their children's learning and encouraged support at home.
- **Home Visits & Material Distribution:** Teachers conducted door-to-door visits, shared books and worksheets, and organized small community learning groups.
- **E-Content Creation:** Teachers used YouTube, WhatsApp, and other platforms to share educational videos and materials.
- **Safe Community Classes:** In-person learning resumed in small groups in safe local spaces like temples and Panchayat Bhawans.
- **Digital Assessments:** Online assessments and feedback mechanisms via WhatsApp helped track student progress.
- **Online Teacher Training:** Head teachers upskilled themselves through platforms like DIKSHA, NISHTHA, and Padhai Tuhar Dwar.
- **Government Initiatives:** Programs such as *Padhai Tuhar Duwar*, *CGSchool.in*, and *DiGi Duniya* provided crucial support in terms of content and delivery.
- **Holistic Development:** Teachers shared simple, accessible learning materials and focused on students' overall well-being and engagement.

5.1.2 Challenges and Innovations of Teachers at Primary Level in Chhattisgarh During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges for teachers across the globe, and Chhattisgarh was no exception. The investigator designed a questionnaire to understand the challenges, learning gaps, and innovations implemented by 39 teachers from two districts in Chhattisgarh. Below are the key insights gathered from their responses:

5.1.2.A: Challenges Faced by Teachers at Primary Level in Chhattisgarh During COVID

- **Limited Access to Devices & Connectivity:** Many students lacked smartphones or stable internet. Teachers also faced technical issues and parents struggled to afford data recharges or new devices.
- **Lack of Digital Training:** Teachers were not well-versed in creating or delivering e-content, and faced difficulties with online platforms like Zoom or Google Meet due to lack of training and resources.
- **Low Attendance & Engagement:** Due to device unavailability, family issues, and relocation, many students could not attend online classes regularly, especially in rural areas.
- **Poor Student Participation:** Even those who joined online classes were not actively engaged, and the lack of face-to-face interaction hindered meaningful learning.
- **Health and Mental Well-being Issues:** Teachers observed increased screen time, leading to physical problems like eye strain and behavioral issues such as anxiety and disinterest in learning.
- **Learning Gaps:** Key academic skills—like reading, writing, and numeracy—declined. Students also missed out on physical and social development opportunities.
- **Difficulty Following Government Guidelines:** Logistical issues like poor connectivity, limited mobility in containment zones, and lack of ICT skills made it hard to meet official education guidelines.

5.1.2.B Innovations by Teachers during COVID-19 for Primary Students in Chhattisgarh

- **Digital Content & Tools:** Teachers created e-content, recorded lessons, and shared them via YouTube, WhatsApp, DIKSHA, and *Padhai Tuhar Dwar*. They also used TLMs and PPTs to make learning engaging.
- **Home Visits & Phone Support:** Teachers delivered materials and encouraged participation through phone calls and in-person visits, even in hard-to-reach areas.
- **Activity-Based Learning:** Storytelling, one-act plays, and creative assignments were used to keep students engaged and encourage learning through fun.
- **Flexible Assessments:** Teachers assessed students using WhatsApp submissions and local community centers. They also monitored students' physical and emotional health during visits.
- **Online Training:** Teachers enhanced their digital skills through government-led programs like DIKSHA, NISHTHA, and ChalkLit.

- **Community Involvement:** Collaboration with parents and community members helped sustain learning. PTAs and group activities supported student engagement.
- **Innovative Resource Sharing:** Teachers developed accessible TLMs and shared them widely using WhatsApp and other platforms, benefiting both students and peer educators.

5.1.3 Challenges and Innovation of Parents:

The investigator has constructed questionnaire for 70 parents of two districts with the purpose to know the challenges, support and initiative taken during the COVID pandemic. The responses collected by the investigator are presented below:

5.1.3.A: Challenges Faced by Parents During COVID-19

1. **Lack of Digital Devices**: A majority of parents reported that they did not own smartphones. In families where smartphones were available, they were often shared among multiple members, preventing children from consistent access—especially during working hours.
2. **Poor Network Connectivity**: Even where digital devices were available, poor internet connectivity, particularly in rural and remote areas, hindered children's ability to attend or engage in online classes.
3. **Limited Digital Literacy**: While most parents claimed they could operate digital devices, a considerable number admitted to having only basic or limited knowledge. This made it challenging to support their children's digital learning.
4. **Difficulty in Ensuring Study Discipline at Home**: Due to school closures, many children struggled to concentrate on studies at home and instead spent more time playing or using mobile phones for non-educational purposes.
5. **Inability to Support Content Understanding**: Some parents noted that their children attempted self-study but faced difficulties due to a lack of guidance. Without teachers' direct support, doubts remained unresolved until schools reopened.
6. **Behavioral and Digital Addiction Issues**: Parents observed behavioral changes in their children. Those who had access to smartphones became addicted to online games such as Free Fire, and platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube. This led to reduced attention toward academics and increased screen time.
7. **Gaps in Holistic Development**: Many parents noted that their children fell behind in foundational skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Some, however, did not observe major learning gaps.
8. **Decline in Physical and Mental Wellbeing**: Children became physically inactive due to the lack of outdoor activities, yoga, and sports. Parents reported increased irritability, sadness, loneliness, and social withdrawal in their children. Fear and anxiety about the pandemic further affected their mental health.
9. **Social Adjustment Challenges**: Parents found that their children exhibited reduced cooperation and adjustment skills, showing reluctance to interact with peers and family members. Emotional development was also perceived to have been hampered.
10. **Motor Development Concerns**: Most parents did not notice significant issues in their children's motor development, though a few felt that lack of physical activities may have contributed to reduced energy and movement.

5.1.3.B: Innovations and Support by Parents During COVID-19

1. **Efforts to Facilitate Learning Access**: Many parents attempted to ensure continued learning by purchasing new digital devices, recharging mobile data, and encouraging their children to attend community learning centers.
2. **Utilization of Online Resources**: Parents encouraged their children to watch curriculum-based educational videos on YouTube and other platforms. Some also arranged online tuitions or personal tutors to fill the learning gaps.
3. **Parental Guidance and Supervision**: Parents offered guidance during morning and evening hours, assisting their children with homework and encouraging them to consult teachers when in doubt. Some actively monitored their child's learning routines.
4. **Engagement in Holistic Development**: To promote physical, mental, and personal development, parents motivated children to engage in household activities like cooking, gardening, painting, and physical exercises. These were intended to reduce stress and keep children engaged.
5. **Efforts Toward Emotional and Social Wellbeing**: Parents reported adopting a more empathetic approach—spending quality time with their children, talking with them regularly, and maintaining a calm demeanor to reduce anxiety and behavioral issues.
6. **Motor Skill Stimulation (Limited)**: Although most parents did not initiate special efforts for motor development, a few indirectly supported it through home-based chores and playful activities.
7. **Support from Schools as Perceived by Parents**: Parent's acknowledged the role of schools during the pandemic. They mentioned that teachers visited homes for doubt clearing and facilitated community teaching, which allowed children to interact with peers safely. Schools also shared digital resources through WhatsApp groups and YouTube video links provided by the Government of Chhattisgarh.

5.1.4: Challenges and Innovation of Educational Functionaries

The researcher collected data regarding challenges and innovations from educational functionaries such as DEO, BEO, ABEO, CRCC etc. by using a questionnaire having six items. The responses collected by the investigator are presented below:

5.1.4.A: Challenges Faced by Educational Functionaries During COVID-19

1. **Limited Access to Digital Devices Among Students**: Functionaries reported that only 20–30% of students had access to digital devices. Many students lacked experience with smartphones, making it difficult for teachers to conduct effective digital learning.
2. **Technical Challenges in E-Content Creation**: While functionaries themselves were trained in device usage, they observed that many teachers were not technologically skilled. This posed difficulties in training teachers to design, develop, and upload e-content effectively.
3. **Low Student Participation**: Student engagement in online and community-based classes was low. Although YouTube classes were made available, fear of COVID-19 limited both student and teacher participation, especially in home visits or community settings.
4. **Assessment Difficulties**: Regular assessment was a challenge, particularly due to student migration to native villages. Many students were disinterested in assignments and preferred watching television, reducing opportunities for academic evaluation.
5. **Gaps in Teacher Training Quality**: Although online training was provided, some functionaries admitted that the quality of training was not always sufficient to equip teachers for the digital transition.
6. **Failure to Achieve Learning Outcomes**: Functionaries indicated that poor attendance in online and community classes, combined with lack of routine and structured academic engagement, resulted in students failing to meet expected learning outcomes.
7. **Holistic Development Concerns**: Students reportedly lagged behind in literacy, numeracy, and personal development. Prolonged screen exposure led to headaches, vision issues, and reduced physical activity. Emotional and social well-being also declined, with signs of stress, depression, anxiety, and behavioral issues such as anger, loneliness, and disinterest in interaction.
8. **Widened Disparities for Disadvantaged Groups**: Learners from rural areas and marginalized communities (SCs, STs) were most affected due to lack of devices, infrastructure, and migration-related disruptions. Functionaries emphasized that gaps were particularly severe in these groups compared to their urban counterparts.

5.1.4.B: Innovations and Initiatives by Educational Functionaries During COVID-19

1. **Community-Based and Home-Level Outreach**: Functionaries undertook door-to-door visits and made telephonic contact with parents to ensure learning access. Teachers were encouraged to make scheduled home visits and promote community teaching practices.
2. **Use of Digital Platforms and E-Content Sharing**: E-content developed by functionaries was uploaded on YouTube and shared through WhatsApp groups. Content from platforms such as DIKSHA, Padhai Tuhar Dwar, and ChalkLit was also disseminated widely.
3. **Encouraging Student Participation**: Teachers were advised by functionaries to use a variety of Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) and activity-based methods like storytelling and one-act plays to generate interest and engagement among students.
4. **Teacher Capacity Building**: Functionaries facilitated continuous professional development through state-supported training programs like DIKSHA, NISHTHA, Padhai Tuhar Dwar, and ChalkLit. These helped improve teachers' technological and pedagogical skills.
5. **Supporting Achievement of Learning Outcomes**: To improve learning outcomes and attendance, functionaries encouraged the development of innovative TLMs, organized group activities, and involved parents through Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings at community centers.
6. **Government-Supported Innovations:** Functionaries acknowledged several innovations by the state government, such as:
   - WhatsApp group-based teaching
   - DTH channel-based learning
   - Community classes and YouTube video distribution

These were implemented with community awareness drives and regular on-ground monitoring.

7. **Local Innovations to Promote Holistic Development**: At the local level, functionaries developed and shared e-content and accessible TLMs with students, teachers, and parents. Awareness initiatives were conducted to ensure a balance between academic learning and student health. These approaches supported the holistic development of learners, both academically and emotionally.

5.1.4 Challenges Faced by Primary Students during COVID in Chhattisgarh

The researcher had developed FGD items for class 3 and class 5 students of two districts with the purpose to know the challenges, support and initiative taken during the Covid pandemic. The responses collected by the investigator are given below:

- **Limited Access to Devices and Connectivity**: Most students had to share a single smartphone with siblings, causing scheduling conflicts. Poor internet and inability to recharge phones due to financial issues further limited online learning.
- **Difficulty Operating Digital Devices**: Although some students knew how to use smartphones, many struggled to use them for educational purposes. Parental help was available but not always sufficient.
- **Mixed Support from Teachers and Parents:** While some students received strong support through home visits, learning materials, and motivation from teachers and parents, others felt neglected due to lack of timely communication or absence of digital classes.
- **Gaps in Holistic Development**: Physical activities were reduced, leading to negative effects on health. Students also reported emotional challenges like loneliness and sadness, though rural students had more opportunities for social play.
- **Academic Learning Gaps**: Students faced difficulties in subjects like reading, writing, math, and EVS, as their doubts remained unresolved and learning continuity was hampered.
- **Innovative Teaching Efforts Recognized**: Students appreciated efforts like YouTube video lessons, WhatsApp-based content, and community teaching. These helped mitigate the learning loss to some extent.
- **Health and Safety Awareness**: Teachers and parents promoted COVID-appropriate behavior and encouraged physical exercises. Teachers also provided extra support through phone calls and visits.
- **Loss of Learning Motivation**: Despite support, many students lost interest in academics, became addicted to mobile games and videos, and struggled to focus on studies.

  These findings highlight the numerous challenges students faced during the pandemic, including issues with access to technology, reduced physical activity, and the difficulty of maintaining focus on learning. Despite the support provided by teachers and parents, the overall learning experience was hindered by various external and internal factors, which affected students' academic and personal development.

5.2 Itna To Mere Bachhe Kar Hi Sakte Hain" Initiative During COVID-19 for Primary Stage in Chhattisgarh

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Chhattisgarh faced significant challenges in ensuring that students, particularly at the primary school level, continued their education while staying safe at home. To address this challenge, the state government introduced the **"Itna To Mere Bachhe Kar Hi Sakte Hain"** initiative. This initiative aimed to engage primary school children in learning activities that were simple, effective, and could be managed by the students with minimal adult supervision.

The primary objective of this initiative was to ensure that children, even in rural and remote areas, could continue their education in a way that was both engaging and achievable. The program encouraged students to take small steps and gradually build learning habits despite the lack of physical school attendance and traditional classroom resources.

5.2.1 Key Features of the Initiative

1. **Simple and Accessible Learning Materials:** The initiative focused on making learning materials simple and accessible for primary-stage students. These materials were designed in such a way that children could easily understand and follow them, even without much external help.
2. **Video lessons**, **audio recordings**, and **interactive activities** were shared through platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp, and mobile apps.
3. **Home-based Learning:** The initiative emphasized home-based learning that children could do independently. Teachers created content that was easy to follow and required minimal resources. This was crucial as many students lacked access to expensive devices or the internet.
4. Teachers also provided **workbooks**, **worksheets**, and **self-assessment exercises** that students could complete at their own pace.
5. **Digital and Non-digital Resources:** While digital learning was encouraged through YouTube channels, apps, and online portals, the initiative also recognized that not every student had access to the internet or smartphones.
6. **Non-digital resources** like worksheets, reading materials, and even radio lessons were used to ensure that learning continued for those in areas with poor network connectivity.
7. **Parental Involvement:** Since children were learning from home, parental involvement was crucial. Parents were encouraged to help children complete their tasks, monitor their learning progress, and ensure that they stayed engaged. The initiative also provided resources and tips to parents on how they could support their children's learning, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.
8. **Promotion of Holistic Development:** "Itna To Mere Bachhe Kar Hi Sakte Hain" was not just about academic learning. The initiative aimed to ensure the holistic development of students, including:

- Physical health through home exercises and activities.
- Emotional well-being by encouraging mindfulness, creativity (such as drawing, painting, and storytelling), and reducing screen time.

- Social skills by encouraging interaction with family members and community members in a safe and healthy manner.

9. **Feedback and Regular Communication**: Teachers maintained **regular communication** with students and parents via WhatsApp groups, phone calls, and even home visits when possible. This ensured that students remained engaged and received feedback on their progress.
10. Teachers also provided **personalized support**, answering any queries from students or parents and ensuring that the learning process continued smoothly.
11. **Celebrating Achievements**: The initiative highlighted and celebrated small achievements of students, encouraging them to feel proud of their progress. Certificates, recognition in community groups, and regular check-ins with teachers helped maintain motivation among students.

5.2.2 Impact of the Initiative

1. **Accessibility:** The initiative made learning accessible to students in even the most remote parts of Chhattisgarh, ensuring that the digital divide did not prevent children from continuing their education.
2. **Parental Engagement:** By involving parents, the program also strengthened the role of families in the educational process, creating a sense of community and collective responsibility.
3. **Engagement and Motivation:** The approach focused on small, achievable goals, which helped keep students motivated and reduced the feeling of being overwhelmed.

The **"Itna To Mere Bachhe Kar Hi Sakte Hain"** initiative was a well-thought-out response to the challenges faced by primary school children during the COVID-19 pandemic in Chhattisgarh. It emphasized simplicity, accessibility, and independence, all while ensuring that students did not miss out on their education during such an uncertain time. By focusing on holistic development and practical learning solutions, this initiative helped students continue their academic journey and develop life skills, even while staying at home.

6. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruption to the education system worldwide, and Chhattisgarh was no exception. This study explored the multifaceted challenges and innovative responses of key stakeholders—head teachers, teachers, parents, students, and educational functionaries—during the crisis, particularly at the primary level. Across all groups, common challenges emerged: the digital divide, lack of training and infrastructure, reduced student engagement, learning loss, and threats to holistic development. These issues were amplified in rural and marginalized communities, revealing deep-seated educational inequalities.

However, the crisis also became a catalyst for innovation. Stakeholders showed remarkable resilience and adaptability. Head teachers and teachers devised creative ways to reach students through home visits, community classes, and digital platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube. Parents played a more active role in their children's education, offering guidance, motivation, and even making financial sacrifices to support learning. Educational functionaries facilitated teacher training, promoted e-content sharing, and introduced community-based learning strategies to ensure continuity. Students, too, acknowledged and responded to these efforts, appreciating interactive content and safe community-based learning spaces.

Initiatives like *"Itna To Mere Bachhe Kar Hi Sakte Hain"* exemplified the state's commitment to child-centered and accessible education. By promoting simple, self-directed learning tasks and prioritizing emotional and social well-being alongside academics, this initiative bridged the learning gap for many children, particularly those without digital access.

In conclusion, while the pandemic posed severe challenges to primary education in Chhattisgarh, it also revealed the potential of community engagement, local innovation, and low-tech solutions in sustaining learning. The experiences documented in this study offer valuable insights for building a more inclusive, resilient, and adaptive education system—one that is better prepared for future disruptions and more responsive to the diverse needs of learners.

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