



EFFECT OF LOCKDOWN ON QUALITY LIFE AND LEARNING PROCESS OF INDIAN WOMEN: A MIXED RESEARCH

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Abstract

This study is aimed at exploring the changes in Quality Life of female learners because of lockdown, with impact of the lockdown on the education. The study also discusses the relationship between the quality of life and educational process. A mixed research was conducted on female learners studying in different institutions of India, under various courses; starting from senior secondary to PhD level. For collecting data about their Quality Life and for knowing details about their educational process structured questionnaire were used. For analysing data of Quality Life of the learners, and significant difference between rural and urban learners both mean and t-test were used. Thematic analysis has followed for the explanation of the educational process. A total number of fifty female learners were selected through convenient sampling. Out of 50 female learners 31 (62%) have a Poor-Quality Life because of lockdown, and also there is significant difference between Quality Life of rural and urban female learners. Since lockdown started, whatever alternative educational process is followed was not satisfactory to that extent for them. In a patriarchal family being the follower of gender roles, their socialisation and mental health were affected badly, and ultimately affected their learning process. It is concluded that while a large part of the highly educated women was affected by lockdown, then it will be no wrong to imagine the condition of the educationally and economically weaker section.

Key words: *Lockdown, Quality Life, Education of Female*



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Introduction

Corona noble virus entered our lives unexpectedly and put the whole thing in the world to a halt. It brought tension, worries and negative thoughts in the lives of the people around the world. The first step to control this pandemic was lockdown. From March 25th the country went into lockdown. It was the strictest action towards controlling the virus from spreading. Not only in this lockdown people lost their lives worldwide but also affected public health, global economy, employment, labour, and education system. People lost their means of living and were unable to feed themselves and their families as well. Because of lockdown educational institutions have to be shut down. According to UNESCO “1.37 billion students in 138 countries have been affected by the closure of educational institutions because of lockdown and 60.2 million school and university teachers are no longer in the classrooms”. As the whole world was under lockdown so e-education was the only way left for the continuation of the learning process. And this sudden shift of the educational process into the virtual mode and creating home-learning programmes brought so many challenges for learners. Students have reported home-learning programmes are more stressful than regular classrooms.



Offline classrooms may have some difficulties but the presence of friends was making it less stressless. According to a study by NCERT, “most of the students find this online learning difficult and burdensome and increase the burden of the assignments only”. Issues related to internet connectivity and not the availability of devices are the basic challenges faced by the learners found by UNESCO.

All the sections of the society have been cut off because of lockdown, while the whole world is facing the same storm, the boats we sail in are different. But the social groups cannot be ignored, as the challenges were different for all the groups: class, caste and gender, if the difficulties will be counted on the gender basis women were in the worst situation. The suffering of the women was around the four walls of the house which are beyond the count. During the lockdown, the traditional gender roles of women as ‘caregivers’ and ‘homemakers’ became more visible. The National Commission for women has reported physical violence towards women has increased during this lockdown homebound period. Many women have lost their income sources. Many women experienced depression because of problems in education, family pressure and lack of socialization. If the past crises will be analysed the women and girls are at high risk of being withdrawn from school or colleges. During financial problems in family’s young women are forced to drop out and discontinue their education. After all these challenges the female learners were able to manage their Quality Life and education or not will be explored through the study.

Lockdown during Pandemic

WHO has declared the COVID-19 outbreak as pandemic and called "all countries to continue efforts that have been effective in limiting the number of cases and slowing the spread of the virus." For this reason, some countries and territories have started implementing mandatory mass quarantine. Lockdown means for restricting people from the public get together, not to go to any public institutions like school, temple, movie theatre, parks, market, shopping mall, etc. people are suggested to stay at home following home quarantine.

Quality Life

WHO defines Quality of Life as “individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns. It is a broad-ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationship to salient features of their environment.”

Rationale

Indian women have been facing problems like physical violence, gender discrimination, education field, unemployment, (Agnihotri and Patil, 2018). Discrimination leads to creating challenges for them in the areas like nutrition, education, health, care, a decline of the female population, jobs, public life. In India, females are the most sufferers of “specific mental disorders like mood disorders (depression, neurotic disorders, phobic anxiety disorders, agoraphobia, generalized anxiety disorders and obsessive-compulsive disorders.” (NMHS, 2015-16). While the women are already struggling with so many challenges in daily lives and for education as well, lockdown made the situation much worse. This lockdown has increased domestic load on women as government Odisha asked men not to treat the lockdown as a holiday and ask women to prepare food multiple times even requested to share this burden even UNESCO has reported unpaid work by women has increased during the lockdown.

Again, this homebound lockdown has also affected the health and mental health of Indian women. While discussing the education of girls a study on “Life in the Time of Covid-19” by The Right to Education Forum, Centre for Budget



and Policy Studies and Champions for Girls' Education found that about 70percentage of the families didn't have enough food, which puts studies, especially education of girls, most at risk.”

Not only females, but learners have also been affected largely due to lockdown. Physical school closure reduced the duration of learning time compared to when schools are open (Huber et.al, 2020). For the continuation of the educational process, schools came with the plan of virtual learning but that also created a long challenge for the learners also. Brazendale (2017) has mentioned some of these challenges which are created because of online learning like “lack of online teaching skills in educators, online preparation of lesson plans as it is very time-consuming, lack of appropriate support from the technical teams, and traffic overload in online educational platforms. Not only the teachers but the students are also facing challenges due to their deficiency of proper learning attitude, lack of suitable materials for learning, more involvement in classroom learning, incapability of self-discipline, and the inadequate learning environment at some of their homes during self-isolation”. Females in our who are already dealing with so many problems and facing discrimination are becoming more vulnerable because of lockdown. The challenges like violence, illiteracy, unpaid work, mental health, and nutrition problems became more highlighted. Here the study is focusing on after so many issues the female learners are able to maintain their Quality Life and education at the same time.

Objectives

1. To explore the changes in Quality Life of female learners because of lockdown.
2. To find out the impact of the changes in Quality Life on education of female learners.

Hypotheses

1. There is no effect of lockdown on Quality Life of Female Learners.
2. There is no significant difference between the Quality Life of rural and urban female learners.

Research Questions:

1. What is the effect of poor-Quality Life on the Learning Process of female learners?
2. How do learners with good Quality Life be able to manage their learning process?

Methodology

A mixed approach is used in the present study, and for analysing data researchers has used both statistical techniques and thematic analysis. Through convenient sampling fifty samples are selected from both rural and urban background above the age group of 16. Samples were part of various courses from senior secondary to PhD level. For collecting data both Likert scale and close ended questionnaires are used. After pilot study, reliability of tool on Quality Life was found 0.67.

Quality Life of Female Learners During the Lockdown

TABLE 1

Quality Life of Female Learners

	Mean	Good Quality Life	Poor Quality Life
Rural	99.04	10 (47.61%)	11 (52.38%)
Urban	89.24	9 (31.03%)	20 (68.97%)
Total	93.36	19 (38%)	31 (62%)

(The maximum and minimum scores possible in the test is 150 and 30 respectively)



*101-150 scores refer to Good Quality Life ** 30-100 scores refer to Poor Quality Life

From table-1 it is found that 62% Female learners had poor Quality Life during the lockdown period, so the hypothesis-1 is rejected. Rural female learners (47.61%) have a better-Quality Life than Urban female learners (31.03%).

Difference Between the Quality Life of Rural and Urban Female Learners.

TABLE 2

Difference Between Quality Life of RURAL and Urban Female Learners

Locality	N	Mean	SD	T ratio	Df	P-value	Remark
Rural	21	99.04	9.80	2.45	48	2.01	Significant
Urban	29	89.24	15.91				

(At 5% level of significance the table value of 't' is 2.01 at df 48)

As the p-value (2.01) at the 0.05 level is less than the t-value (2.45), so the null hypothesis is rejected and alternatives will be accepted, i.e. there is significant difference found between the Quality Life of Rural and Urban female learners.

Learning Process During Lockdown

Learners were not satisfied with the alternative education process during the lockdown. 30 out of 50 (60%) female learners prefer physical mode of education in the place of virtual learning. Learners were facing network issues and lack devices for attending classes. The alternative learning process has failed to replace the face-to-face mode of learning.

Female learners were failed to cover their learning goals due to lockdown. Learners missed opportunities of higher education as per the lockdown rules they couldn't go outside. 82% of the learners couldn't achieve their learning goals because of the homebound situation. Learners were not able to focus on personal goals and self-study because of Online learning and overloaded assignments.

Learners couldn't explore better learning opportunities as they are homebound. As per the government rules libraries were shut down and in online mode, every resource is not free for them. As guidance of teachers and peer groups plays an important role in the learning process, 46% of them had very limited learning exposures.

Lockdown made learners face so many challenges, especially in the learning process as 80% of the learners shared about their failures because of accessing resources, achieving learning goals, financial issues, and ineffective methods of teaching. Lack of support and motivation from family members, health issues created obstacles in the process of learning.

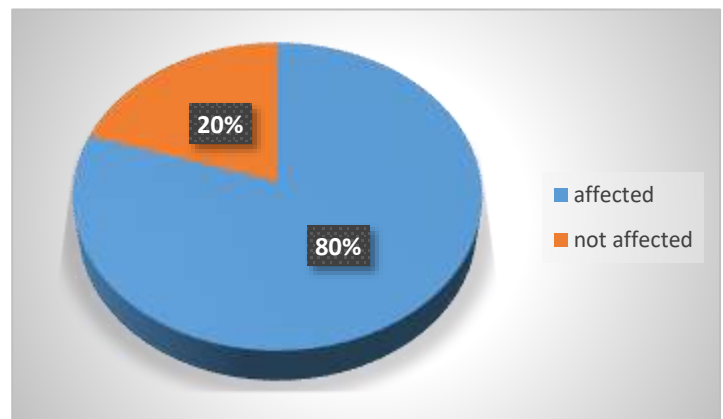


FIGURE 1

Learning Process During Lockdown



Teaching is incomplete in the absence of a real environment, real-time interaction, peer group discussion, guidance of teachers, which is absent in alternative ways of learning. So, 72% of the female learners wanted the college and universities to be reopened.

As a preventive government has taken the step of closing educational institutions during Lockdown. School closure made the girls drop the studying. There are some common difficulties mentioned by the subjects, especially girls above age 20. Girls were getting very little time for studying even some failed to join higher education courses. Learners were especially busy in Unpaid household works, instead of spending time studying they were helping out at home. This shows in our country the education of girls is not that much important and still, the household chores are considered under Gender roles. Even the students were not encouraged by their parents, as many of the families were facing financial and health issues. Learners used to get a scope of socialization during offline classes, which was very helpful in reducing the family pressures. Closure of institutions, and lack of socialization affecting the mental health of the students also. Many of the students also mentioned that they don't have even a better learning environment at home. Noisy environment and family distraction are affecting their learning process.

The relation between the Quality Life and learning process:

After both the collected data from Quality Life and learning situation of female learners are analysed following points are inferred. Quality Life (62%) and Learning Process (80%) of most of the female learners are affected. Of 62% whose Quality Life was affected, only 3 (9.67%) are able to manage their education. Learners who had poor Quality Life, from them 90.32 % of learners' educational process was affected as well. 38% of learners were able to manage their quality lives but from them, the learning process of 12 (61.29%) learners was affected.

Most of the learners failed to manage their studies with their Quality Life as the learners were so

burdened with household works and family responsibilities. Anxiety due to pandemic and health issues affecting both their quality lives and learning process. Because of financial issues, many of the learners had no proper electronic device, so they were not able to attend online classes, not able to submit their assignments on time also. Internet connectivity issues during examinations and lack of support from family members caused mental health problems among the female learners. Some of them also used to share their devices with their younger siblings as their education was more important for the family than the education of a girl, for which reason their privacy and learning both got affected. Lack of social interaction also created challenges in both the process of managing a good life and the learning process. As many of the students learn peer from peer group discussion, especially higher education learners. Same with Quality Life also as the young girls are not able to express problems Infront of their peers that is affecting their psychological state. Very few of them were able to manage their learning process with a poor-Quality

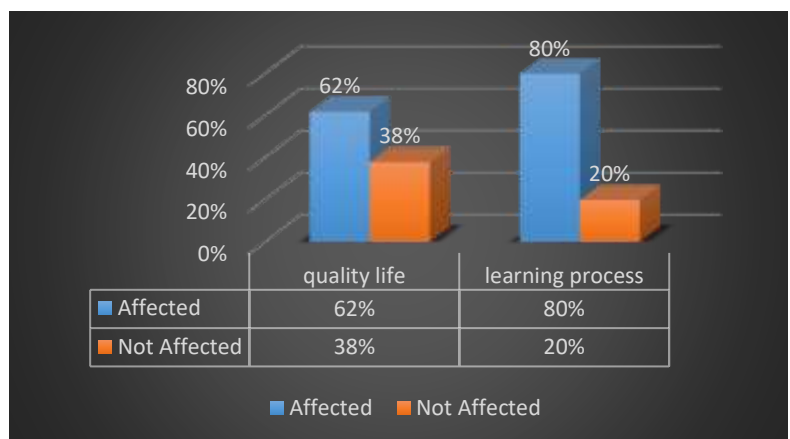


Figure-2

Quality Life and learning process



Life as they got exposure to online learning and webinars.

32% were able to manage their Quality Life but their learning process got affected because of the shifting of the learning process from offline to the virtual mode of learning. As the online learning process is not so effective for them, methods of teaching are not appropriate for them, absence of proper study timetable female learners are failed to achieve their learning goals. Only 7 (14%) were able to manage their both Quality Life and learning process, as the lockdown brought them so much free time, so they utilised it for self-study and self-improvement.

Conclusion:

The pandemic is exposing and exploiting inequalities of all kinds, majorly Gender inequalities. The harmful impact of it, was on women's health, rights and freedoms. This pandemic was an alarm for the global surge in Quality Life and education of women. Covid-19 and the lockdown recreated the past scenarios of women education and made the lives of women worse, for many women around the world. From the result of the study, the situation of 800 million girls could be imagined, who are out of school during this pandemic time. The situations are at a critical level in developing countries like India, the situations of underdeveloped countries could be imagined. While the educated women, who are aware of their rights are suffering government should focus on uneducated women for whom life is already a challenge. The implication of the study might be prudent on the government agencies and policymakers across the globe to carry out special surveys to identify the vulnerable women group, particularly domestic workers, health workers, daily wagers, migrants. And also, there is an urgent need for social awareness about the rights and education of women.

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