

# Student feedback on learning experiences during the pandemic



**A Research Study**

**IT for Change, Bengaluru  
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# Background



- Many schools and their teachers tried to communicate and provide learning opportunities for students in different ways during the academic year 2020-21 when schools were closed across the nation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These included Vidyagama programs (meeting in community settings or schools), online classes, sharing teaching-learning materials through WhatsApp, etc.
- Understanding students' experiences and expectations would help us design better interventions and student interactions.
- The main objective of this survey was to view the teaching-learning process through the eyes of students and take in their opinions and thoughts.



# Survey Methodology and Sample



- A sample of 43 students from around 13 government and aided schools in Bengaluru South 3 block.
- A bilingual questionnaire was designed and used to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions.
- The survey was administered over the phone and responses were recorded. The discussion was in the language which students found comfortable.



# Response Analysis



Class 8 and 9 students reported that there was no regular communication from their teachers and this greatly impacted their learning. They were directly promoted to the next grade despite the long academic gap.

## Student activities during the pandemic:

- It was found that 51% of the government and aided schools in Bangalore South 3 block did not conduct any online classes, though some schools shared learning materials with students through WhatsApp groups.

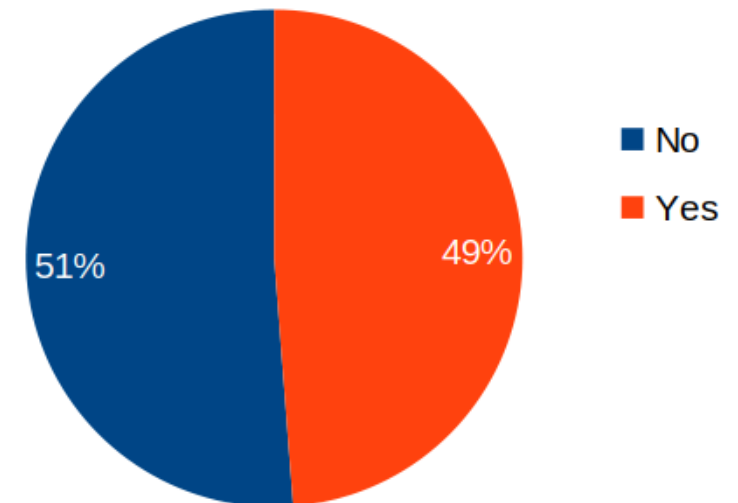


Figure 1: Percentage of schools that conducted online classes



- 77% of the students who were surveyed were able to download resources (mainly text resources) sent by their teachers through WhatsApp. Among these, only 47% of students read all the shared materials.
- It was found that 58% of the students read text books of their class. They spent time 'writing notes' (answers to questions found in the textbook). Almost 26% of the students read different kinds of story books based on their interests.

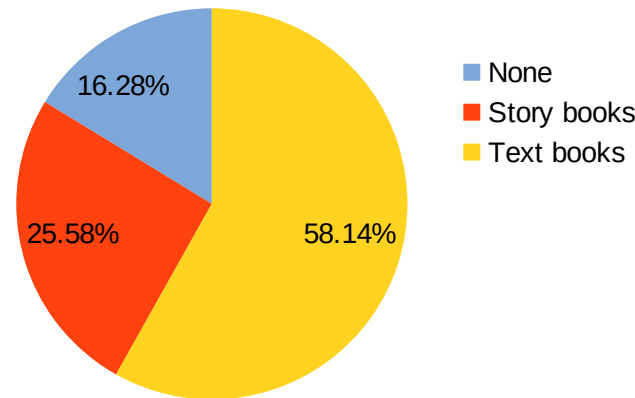


Figure 2: Reading habits of students



- All students reported watching TV programs as an activity. Only 42% followed the 'Samveda Program' telecast on the DD Chandana channel.
- Some other activities included attending tuition classes, doing art and craftwork, and playing online mobile games as against physical games due to the pandemic.
- A few students took help from their elders to learn and also taught their friends or younger siblings.

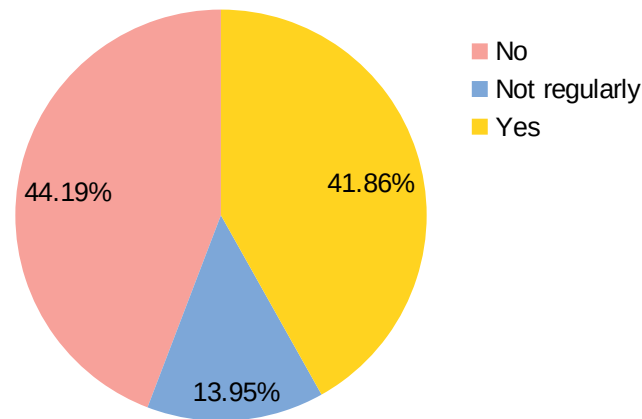


Figure 3: Students watching 'Samveda' Program on TV



## **What students missed during the pandemic:**

- Children expressed that school closures meant missing out on the joy of learning and interaction with peers and teachers.
- Students and their families were suddenly required to create a space at home for learning, but due to the economic and emotional problems faced by the families this was not possible.
- Students said that they missed computer classes, sports and physical training periods, and cultural projects/activities.
- A few students also felt they missed exams a lot which might be because their summative assessments usually signify the end of the school year.





## **Challenges faced by students during the pandemic:**

The pandemic has had a huge impact on structured learning. Many urban schools in Bangalore did not conduct 'Vidyagama' classes or face-to-face interactions, thus creating many challenges for students.

- Students whose native language and medium of instruction were different, found learning extremely difficult as their family members could not teach them in English (or Kannada for migrant families).
- Some schools attempted to send resources (mainly in text form) and conduct online classes, but students mentioned that they lacked clarity on concepts and were not able to access and download the resources.





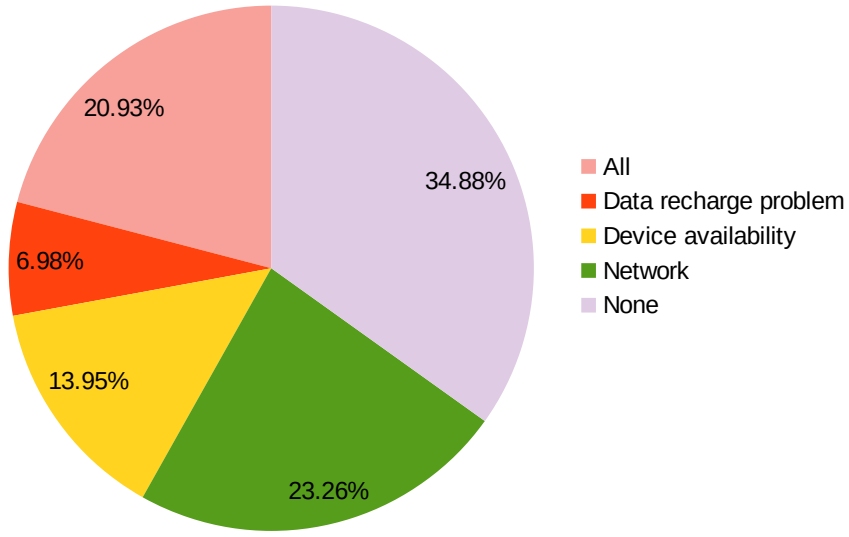


Figure 4: Challenges faced by students during the pandemic

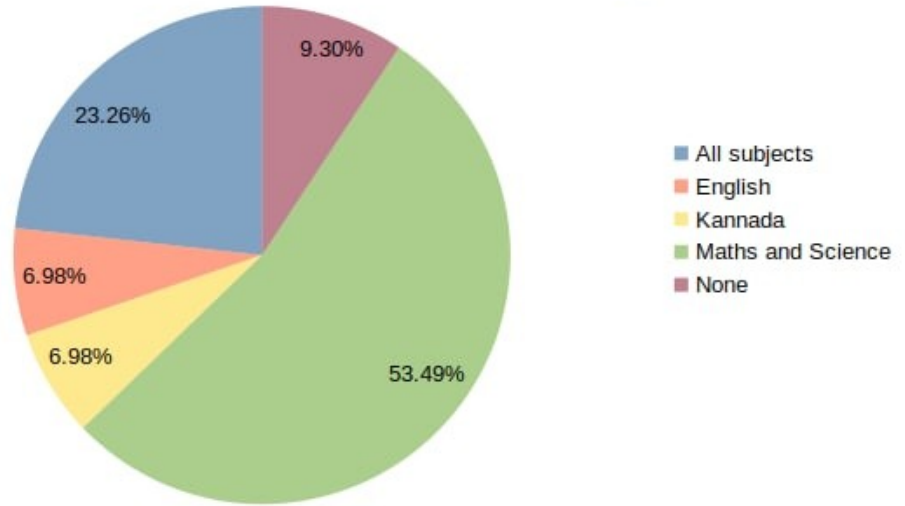


Figure 5: Subjects that were challenging for students

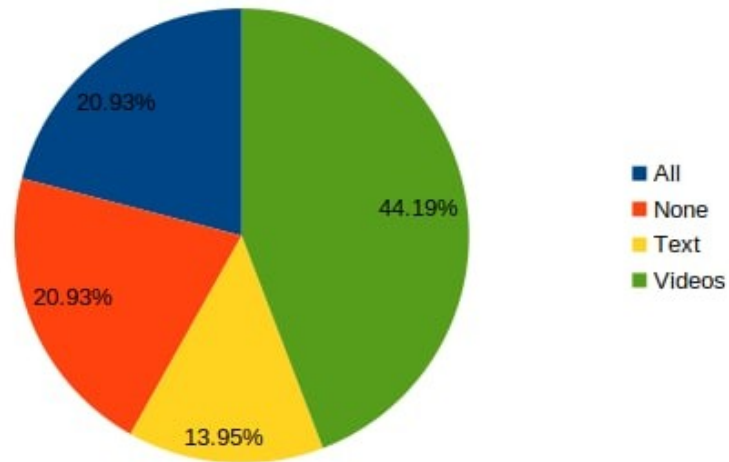


Figure 6: Kinds of resources preferred by students





## **Students' expectations from teachers:**

- Students expected their teachers to conduct online classes for ALL subjects. They felt face-to-face interactions, 'Vidyagama' program, regular homework and feedback, etc. would help them in their learning.
- Students also wanted their teachers to send a set of activities, worksheets and multi-media learning resources for all topics and subjects and provide constant guidance. Some students also suggested the need for sending home assignments or other learning support via SMS and recording of video lessons.





## **School culture and how a learning environment can be maintained – some suggestions:**

- Case 1: HM assigned a number of students for each teacher. They would call and if students did not respond visit their homes to enquire about their learning situation and then report back to HM. This developed the student-teacher-school relationship.
  - Case 2 : Students who stayed in a hostel felt their hostel wardens cared for them (had a good relationship/bond), unlike their school teachers (bonding with their school teachers was probably less). The warden arranged an external help for studying some subjects and the hostel teachers helped students to continue their learning activities. Hence, these students did not identify school as a place of learning during the pandemic.
  - Case 3: Create online/ offline platforms class-wise for students to share their experiences. This will help teachers plan and design teaching processes according to the needs of the students.
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- Case 4: Plan and implement 'vidyagama' classes in the school campus and if needed take help from community groups. This would be useful for many students, especially those who do not have device accessibility or availability.
- Case 5 : Use technology wherever required. For example, if there are too many students for the teacher to contact, IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System) can be used to convey messages to parents. This also builds a good relationship between parents and school.
- Case 6: Support students by making student groups with 4-5 members in each group. Assign one teacher for each group to track and give continuous support to the students by planning sets of activities for the group and encouraging peer learning.



# Limitations



- The students surveyed were only from classes 8 and 9. Due to limited size of sampling data, some findings cannot be generalized.
- Some students' responses were influenced/prompted by their parents during the phone call.
- In some cases, students did not completely understand the questions and gave similar responses to all questions.
- Some students could not think broadly and answer the survey questions which reflects on how their thinking is confined to books and rote methods.
- Questions were education-related only and did not capture data about other activities of students.



# Conclusion



The COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted structured learning processes of students. Although many government and aided schools did not conduct online classes, almost all shared some learning materials with students through WhatsApp groups. Students who had access to their parents' smartphones could benefit from these options, but studying just through resources received on WhatsApp was not found to be effective. Most low-income families have been badly affected by the pandemic and the students of these families are dependent on teachers to ensure that their educational needs/requirements are met. Teachers need to understand and build a good relationship with their students to develop innovative methods and strategies according to the needs of the students.

