



Homeschooling: An alternative option

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Abstract

The Covid -19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the education system. It has had an unprecedented impact on school education. It has affected a large number of school going children, due to the lockdown & extended school closures. It has given rise to self and virtual learning situations. There has been a shift in the person imparting knowledge. Parents have taken control of their child's education. Parents who are dissatisfied with the prevalent traditional education system have shifted their focus to a more evolved dynamic and progressive education where the children follow their self-directed path. Homeschooling is thus gaining popularity among parents who want to take the sole responsibility of imparting knowledge to their children with the support of different learning resources. The curriculum can be tailored as per the child's requirement and thus help work on the child's strong areas. Experiential learning has gained momentum which is centered around the belief that children have the ability to construct knowledge. Learning can be blended between online or through books which can be semi-structured or structured.

Keywords: Homeschooling, Self-Learning, Education.

Introduction

The education system in India is facing a new crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The current education system is undergoing its biggest shift ever. The attack of covid-19 pandemic gave rise to an uncertainty over school re-opening and the risk involve in sending the children to school has made parents think about Homeschooling. Homeschooling is the education of school aged children at their homes instead of sending them to a traditional or private school. Homeschooling is often referred to as a progressive movement that gained its popularity in 1970s. It is a widespread alternative to the regular school education system in many developed countries. In India it is slowly gaining popularity among the educated urban parents.

Home schooling is the best option to focus on the child's interests and sharpen their skills by giving them lots of practical experiences. Homeschooling is a different experience altogether. The children are free to learn what they want and when they want. They learn with commitment and they do their research in each and every topic they pick!

Homeschooling is not an alien topic in India, and due to the recent COVID pandemic and uncertainty of reopening of schools, people are thinking more about alternatives forms of education and thus exploring the options of providing learning opportunities to their children at home. For children in today's technologically advanced world, learning is self-directed and

can happen anywhere and everywhere. The curriculum for homeschoolers does not have to be rigid like the mainstream school, you are free to merge and customize the best of all the curriculums and create one that is best suited for your child's overall development. Homeschooling liberates children from the chalk and talk method and homework after school.

The homeschooling movement began growing in the 1970s, when some popular authors and researchers-such as John Holt and Dorothy and Raymond Moore suggested homeschooling as an alternative educational option. According to the National Home Education Research Institute, there are now more than 2 million children being homeschooled in the U.S., with the percentage rapidly increasing each year.

In his best-selling book 'The Element', Ken Robinson writes that "the key to [educational] transformation is not to standardize education, but to personalize it, to build achievement on discovering the individual talents of each child, to put students in an environment where they want to learn and where they can naturally discover their true passions."

Meaning

What is Homeschooling?

To homeschool means to educate children at home instead of sending them to a school, especially on a permanent or long term basis. Children who are homeschooled are taught by homeschoolers (their parents or other guardian) and the practice

of doing so is called homeschooling.

Parents nowadays are more educated than before. They hold the capability to teach their kids the values and lessons taught at school. With this, the idea of educating children at home has also gained momentum. And, this is what homeschooling is all about, teaching kids at home rather than sending them to any education providers.

A homeschooling atmosphere provides a natural setting in which parents can deliver an individualized method of instruction that matches the child's unique interests, ability, and learning style. Families that homeschool often combine certain subjects that are not necessarily grade or age-specific, such as history, literature, and the arts. For studies in other subjects, such as math and reading, a homeschooling parent might tutor each child one-on-one to meet the student's individual needs.

Reasons

Parents choose to homeschool for a variety of reasons, including

1. Dissatisfaction with the educational options available.
2. Different religious or educational philosophies.
3. The belief that children are not progressing within the traditional school structure.
4. The increasing concern for their child's safety and security.
5. The rising crimes in the schools.
6. The ever-rising fee structures of schools.
7. The belief that their kids are not gaining much from traditional schooling system
8. Dissatisfaction with the prevalent school structure as they are unable to respond to individual
9. needs and pace due to exam constraints.
10. Since exams/degrees as a means of achieving livelihood is losing validity, schooling as a
11. necessary component of life is no longer acceptable.

Concerns regarding homeschooling

Which syllabus to follow? Do you have the time? Can you spare that time? Will you be able to cater for the child's social well being?

Questions to consider

- Should you take up NIOS or CBSE or IGCSE syllabus for the child?(research well on this).
- What facilities is each education board providing for such children?
- Are the books available for the child in the bookstore for that academic year?
- Does the child have any exposure to other children if homeschooled?
- How many hours can you dedicate?
- Can the child take the pressure for that many hours of studying at home?
- Will you be able to have a "me" time? This is important as the initial stress is very

How to go for it

- 1) Homeschooling needs an educated parent/mentor who can take responsibility for getting the child equipped with knowledge and learning techniques that makes him/her choose the career path.
- 2) It needs planning and structuring the format on how every year you may accomplish in training the child just like any other school goes.
- 3) You need to have a laptop, smartphone, tablet or iPad.
- 4) Parents may customize the curriculum to suit the child's interests, often seeking out tutors or online mentoring.
- 5) Home schoolers have complete freedom over the structure of their school year.

Homeschooling in India

In India, Rabindranath Tagore's Visva-Bharati University, Sri Aurobindo's Sri Aurobindo International Center of Education and Mahatma Gandhi's "Basic Education"-are examples of alternative schooling. In recent years, many new alternative schools have emerged.

The most prevalent methods of homeschooling in India are Montessori method, Unschooling, Radical Unschooling, Waldorf education and traditional School-at-home. Many homeschoolers follow formal education methods at home through CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education), NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling) and IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education). Of these, IGCSE and NIOS are especially suited for homeschoolers.

To help students from Class 5 to Class 12 to benefit from homeschooling, the Maharashtra government on January 10, 2019, launched 'Open SSC board' as a platform for athletes, artists, Divyang, seniors and anyone who wishes to continue their academic journey while pursuing others interests and obligations surpassing all hurdles.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) makes formal education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 to 14. As per the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which India is a signatory, quote: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

Most standard avenues/opportunities in India have a few standard requirements.

At the school level, these standards are the Class 10 and Class 12 examinations. Private Candidates is a category in both these examinations. At higher education levels, exams like the JEE or PMT require these minimum standards to form a basic filter. At the university level, homeschooling becomes even harder, especially with the involvement of practical courses. As expected, this is again due to the specialized nature of study. It is here, though, that open courses, and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course) can help in homeschooling.

Again, it is the end goal, that makes homeschooling possible. This is precisely the problem with areas such as Materials Science or Electronics. Theory, does not make an Engineer or a Doctor. On the other hand, with arts and business courses, this gap does not exist. That is why there are more self-made artists and businessman than engineers. So, in these areas, you'd expect homeschooling to work.

Homeschooling in India is not regulated by any of the Government recognized Educational boards, however homeschoolers can appear in board examinations conducted by NIOS and IGCSE which have international recognition. So, you can get formal certificate as mainstream schools without putting them under the pressures of traditional schooling. According to RTI Act, 2009, every kid should be attending school, but if for any valid reason, parents choose not to, the government is not going to interfere. The only idea behind all this is schooling children, whether at home or at school. And, as far as education need of kids is getting fulfilled, there is no issue with homeschooling.

Advantages of homeschooling

1. Helps to develop in the child high levels of self-reliance, responsibility and discipline as they take up ownership of their education.
2. Opportunities to learn following their natural instincts of exploring and discovering to accumulate knowledge.
3. Makes learning engaging, along with, freedom to pursue their interests as there is no pressure on the child.
4. Provides an opportunity to make learning exciting through your innovative learning ideas
5. Provides an opportunity that aids in practical learning experiences
6. Provides an opportunity to pass on the values and beliefs to the children.
7. An opportunity to provide attention to subjects where the kid lacks attention.
8. Helps in teaching in a better and an effective manner by developing a one-to-one relationship with them.
9. An opportunity, to learn from life experiences.
10. Helps in believing that education can be exciting and fun.
11. Helps in making parents aware of their children's hidden talents.
12. Helps initiate discussion between parents and kids where the parents can also learn from children.
13. Timetable is flexible and children can study at their own pace.
14. Child can pursue his/her hobby/sport at ease and remain consistent.
15. Parents are aware of their child's limitation & help him to overcome it.
16. There is no peer pressure.

Although, above points show the positives of homeschooling but there are also major other concerns related to the aspect of social development of the child. Many psychologist and educationist believe that learning is more effective with peer group and social interaction.

In a school environment, students interact with peers from diverse backgrounds.

Disadvantages of homeschooling

1. Child is limited to the current surrounding and may feel irritable if not taken out for some time.
2. The child can be stressed out if the parent is unable to grasp or is not open to learning the way the child chooses to learn.
3. If the parent is unable to understand the topic it becomes

- difficult to impart that knowledge to the child.
4. Children may go into depression as they have no or minimal interactions outside their home.
5. There will be days when parents will not be able to give entire attention to their child.
6. Large costs are involved in homeschooling as the parents have to bear the expenses of the study material, and other resources needed.
7. Sometimes parents may lack patience when teaching their child which may lead to your child getting distant from you.
8. No overall knowledge of all the subjects as parents may not be good at teaching each and everything.
9. No further opportunities as colleges ask for schooling certificates when seeking admissions.
10. Irregular learning as parents may have their personal commitments that may prevent them from daily teaching session.
11. Social Interaction of these homeschoolers is very limited, which ultimately limits their development in those areas.
12. It is not suitable for working parents or parents with limited education.
13. It requires high level of motivation from parents as well as children to be consistent and committed to the studies.
14. People with limited resources and facilities or who are living in remote areas where internet reachability is limited, may face a lot of challenge in planning the learning experiences for their child.

If parents work on the drawbacks by giving more opportunities to socialize, joining the support group for homeschooling, participating in various exchange programmes and by being consistent in their efforts can overcome the negatives.

Conclusion

We can conclude that Homeschooling is best for those children whose parents are willing to take the charge of their child academics performance and are dedicated in fulfilling it. The choice between homeschooling and traditional schooling is highly subjective. Thus it totally depends on how much parents are willing to take up the responsibility for their child's future. Thus it can be said that home-schooling is a better option for those who think of an alternative solution.

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