

Homeschooling as an Alternative Education Model: A Study of Parents' Perceptions

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Abstract

Homeschooling has become a major form of alternative to formal schooling due to the evolving parental demands and the apprehension over the traditional system of education, also the urge to have child-centred learning experiences. Current paper discusses parental attitudes towards homeschooling through the demographic features, reasons and perceived benefits, issues, and satisfaction with homeschooling achievement. A descriptive survey design was utilized during the collection of the data where samples were selected to include 60 parents who have chosen to homeschool their children. The results indicate that homeschooling parents are mostly of the age group of 36-45 and have better educational background hence the homeschooling decision is highly linked to the educational awakening. One-on-one education, issues related to the academic stress at schools, and the emotional health of children became the most significant causes of choosing homeschooling. Individualized curricula, ability to choose the rate of learning, and ability to enhance parent-child bonding were emphasized by the parents as key benefits, which facilitated holistic child development. Nevertheless, such problems as time commitment, insufficient social interaction, and the absence of formal certification were also mentioned. Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations, most parents revealed their satisfaction with the results of homeschooling. The research finds that homeschooling is considered to be an efficient and a valid alternative model of education, but institutional support system and regulations are needed to deal with the current challenges and achieve balanced educational development.

Keywords

Homeschooling; Parental Perception; Alternative Education

Introduction

Homeschooling is an alternative form of education in which parents or guardians take primary responsibility for educating their children at home rather than enrolling them in traditional public or private schools. It is a parent-directed, home-based educational practice that allows flexibility in curriculum design, teaching methods, pace of learning, and assessment strategies (National Home Education Research Institute, 2022).

Historically, Homeschooling was the dominant form of education before the establishment of formal schooling systems in the 19th century. In recent decades, it has re-emerged globally due to various factors, including dissatisfaction with conventional schooling, concerns about school environment and safety, desire for religious or moral instruction, and the need for individualized learning approaches (UNESCO, 2021). In countries such as the United States, Homeschooling has shown consistent growth, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, which normalized home-based and online learning environments. Research indicates that Homeschooling families often cite

academic quality, personalized instruction, and value-based education as major motivations for choosing this model. Studies also suggest that homeschooled students generally perform at or above national averages on standardized achievement tests and demonstrate positive social and emotional development (Ray, Brian D., 2017).

In the Indian context, home-schooling remains relatively informal but is gradually gaining attention among urban, middle-class families seeking flexible and child-centered education. Despite its growing popularity, home-schooling continues to raise important questions regarding regulation, socialization, and educational equity, making it a significant area for contemporary educational research.

Background of the Formal Education System and Emerging Alternatives

The traditional education system has been characterized by standardized curriculums, classrooms that are age-based and centralized methods of assessment. Although this model has led to mass literacy and skill acquisition, scholars have been pointing out its shortages in supporting various learning requirements, feelings and pace (UNESCO, 2021). Other education models, in turn, have received a new wave of interest, with Montessori education, unschooling, online schooling, and home-schooling being especially popular following systemic disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2020).

Idea and Development of the Homeschooling as a Model of Education.

Homeschooling is an educational practice where the parents become the main front runners of the learning process of their children, yet in a non school environment. Homeschooling once regarded as a marginal concept has taken a new shape in the form of a technology-driven and structured model, including digital platforms, open learning materials, and networks of peers to learn (Kunzman and Gaither, 2020). Most modern home schooling usually integrates professional courses with experiential and child-based pedagogies.

International and Indian realities of Homeschooling.

The pandemic had a substantial impact on homeschooling, as schools closed and people were worried about their health (UNICEF, 2022). Homeschooling is not legally recognized in India and is a socially visible practice, as parents choose it because they dislike rote learning, academic pressure, and lack of inclusivity in the mainstream school (Mehta, 2021). The debate surrounding the policy of Right to Education Act, 2009 has further fueled the debate on the validity of home schooling (Sriprakash, 2023).

Reason to Research the Perceptions of parents.

Parents are the main participants in the home schooling decision-making, Knowing their perceptions gives essential information on motivation, expectations, and issues connected with this model (Neuman and Guterman, 2021).

Importance of the Study to the Current education discussion.

The study of perceptions of home schooling among parents is a part of the wider debates of educational choice, equity, education reforms in the post-pandemic era which provide a source of evidence to formulate informed policy and pedagogical innovation (OECD, 2023).

II. Conceptual Framework of Homeschooling

Definition and key characteristics

Homeschooling is a type of education where parents or guardians take the main role of educating a child without the traditional schooling environment; it differs between strictly designed, curriculum-oriented programmes to spontaneous, child-centric ones (Valiente 2022). The main features are parental control over the curriculum and speed, one-to-one instruction, multi-age grouping, and frequently a combination of formal and experiential learning activities (Kunzman and Gaither 2020).

Types of home schooling

Common distinctions in the academic taxonomies include: (a) structured/home-schooling: school-like schedules and conventional lessons; (b) unstructured/unschooling, the learner-driven and interest-oriented learning; (c) online-assisted: online platform and virtual classes which complement the teaching of parents; (d) hybrid models, in schools or learning centres in which the learner is clearly part-time, but still base their learning on home instruction (Valiente 2022; Kunzman and Gaither 2020). Hybrid and online-of-assistance online learning forms grew quickly during and following the COVID-19 pandemic because families were mixing remote schooling device with home pedagogy (OECD 2021).

Philosophical foundations

Homeschooling is philosophically based on child-centred theories (autonomy and individualized development), experiential learning (learning by doing, and community involvement), and criticisms of standardization (where flexibility is more important than standardized testing, etc.) (Kunzman and Gaither 2020; Valiente 2022). Advocates say the model promotes differentiated instruction, and critics outline possible harm to inconsistent standards and other learners to access social learning opportunities (Valiente 2022).

Rivalry with traditional schooling.

In comparison with traditional education, home-schooling is more customized, flexible-paced, and has closer parent-child relationships in the instruction, traditional schools offer more institutional resources, certified teachers, and formal socialization among peers (Valiente 2022; OECD 2021). Empirical studies report inconsistent findings regarding academic and socio-emotional performance, which can be explained by the difference in the level of family resources, parental education, and the home-schooling model (Valiente 2022).

III. Legal and Policy Perspective

Legal status of home schooling in India

The legal system of India does not technically outlaw home education, but the Right to Education Act, 2009 (RTE) provides free and obligatory schooling between particular age groups but does not specifically mention classroom learning, which has interpretive flexibility within home schooling (Economic Times 2023). A recent policy and legal commentary highlights uncertainties in application: although much of what the government writes and the media covers depicts homeschooling as something acceptable when real learning is taking place,

there are still practical impediments to certification, admission to publicly administered tests and rights of school admission (Lakshmi 2025).

RTE Act, 2009 Interpretation Azibe and Sebok, 2009.

Researchers and interest groups observe that the language of RTE is oriented towards guaranteeing education, but not a seat of provision; however, it suffers learners who are not in formal schools because the administrative machine built in the Act is examination-and-school based (Lakshmi 2025). Policymaking since 2020 has become more divisive as parents start exploring other avenues of validation (online/portfolio assessment) of learning and demand greater clarity in policies about recognition and assessment and inclusion (Economic Times 2023; Lakshmi 2025).

Legal reactions and political discussions.

Whereas previous court documents (before 2020) mentioned an issue of the scope of RTE, the current language (2020-2025) dwells on the issue of regulatory clarity, protections against child exploitation, and tools to assess and certify homeschooled children. Indian commentary recommends that there should be a middle ground with respect to parents choice, but setting minimum standards of learning and keeping track of child welfare (Lakshmi 2025).

Research Question

What are the perceptions of parents regarding home-schooling as an alternative education model in Markaz Jamaat Islami, New Delhi?

V. Objectives of the Study

- 1.To examine the level of awareness among parents regarding home-schooling as an alternative education model.
- 2.To assess parents' perceptions of the challenges associated with home-schooling, including academic, social, and practical aspects..

Review of related literature

Kapur, R. (2024). Understanding the meaning and significance of home-schooling. Indian Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism, 4(1), 7–12. The article titled Understanding the Meaning and Significance of Home-Schooling by Radhika Kapur (2024) explores the concept, importance, measures for success, and advantages of homeschooling. Published in the Indian Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of homeschooling as an alternative mode of education. The author emphasizes instructional strategies, communication processes, teaching-learning materials, assessment techniques, and overall personal development facilitated through homeschooling. The article defines homeschooling as an educational approach where learning takes place within the home environment, often facilitated by educators. Kapur discusses the significance of communication ethics, mutual understanding, and the implementation of effective instructional and assessment strategies. In conclusion, Kapur's (2024) article provides

a broad and descriptive understanding of homeschooling and its perceived benefits. It contributes to conceptual discussions on alternative education models but would benefit from empirical validation and deeper critical engagement with contemporary research. The article is useful for educators, parents, and researchers interested in homeschooling as an educational approach.

Brian D. Ray (2017) conduct a research on the topic of “home-schooling and what might educators learn” researcher present a comprehensive review of over three decades of research on homeschooling outcomes. The researcher synthesizes findings related to academic achievement, social, emotional, and psychological development, and adult success of individuals who were homeschooled. The review highlights that homeschooled students typically perform above average on standardized achievement tests, often scoring between the 65th and 80th percentiles compared to the public-school average at the 50th percentile. The article also examines research concerning African American homeschool families, reporting that Black homeschooled students performed as well as or better than national public-school averages. Additionally, Ray discusses the broader policy question of compulsory schooling laws and challenges assumptions about teacher certification, arguing that existing research does not consistently demonstrate a strong relationship between teacher certification and student achievement. Ray (2017) is suggesting that homeschooling is associated with positive academic and social outcomes. While methodological limitations exist in the broader research base, the article effectively synthesizes existing studies and raises critical questions about traditional assumptions regarding institutional schooling and teacher certification. Future research employing longitudinal and experimental designs would further clarify the long-term impacts of homeschooling.

Murphy, J. (2014) conducted a research paper on the topic of “The social and educational outcomes of homeschooling. Sociological Spectrum” published by 34(3), 244–272. Joseph Murphy’s (2014) article provides a comprehensive review of the existing research on the social and educational outcomes of homeschooling in the United States. The primary purpose of the article is to synthesize empirical evidence regarding homeschooling’s impact on academic achievement, social development, family dynamics, public schooling, and the broader social fabric. Murphy also critically evaluates the methodological quality of the research base. One of the major strengths of the article is its balanced and analytical approach. Rather than advocating for or against homeschooling, Murphy carefully examines the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies. He highlights significant methodological concerns, including self-selected samples, lack of control groups, absence of experimental designs, and limited longitudinal data. This critical evaluation strengthens the credibility of the review and underscores the need for more rigorous research in the field.

In terms of findings, Murphy reports that homeschooled students often perform at or above national norms on standardized achievement tests. However, he cautions that these results cannot establish causation due to research design limitations. The article also addresses social development, noting that concerns about social isolation are not strongly supported by available evidence. Additionally, Murphy explores broader impacts such as cost efficiency, civic participation, and influence on public schooling, although he acknowledges that empirical evidence in these areas remains limited. Overall, Murphy's article is a significant scholarly contribution to the literature on homeschooling. It offers a nuanced, critical synthesis of research and provides a clear roadmap for future investigation. The paper is particularly valuable for researchers, policymakers, and educators seeking an evidence-based understanding of homeschooling's social and educational outcomes.

Lines, P. M. (2000) conducted a research on homeschooling comes of age. The Public Interest, (Summer), 74–85. Patricia M. Lines (2000) examines the rapid growth and increasing legitimacy of homeschooling in the United States. The article provides a historical, philosophical, legal, and statistical overview of homeschooling, arguing that it has evolved from a marginal practice into a significant educational alternative. Lines presents homeschooling as a response to dissatisfaction with public schooling, bureaucratic structures, and shifting cultural values. The author traces the roots of modern homeschooling to both progressive and conservative movements. Early advocates such as John Holt promoted child-centered, unstructured learning, while later conservative and religious families adopted homeschooling to preserve moral and religious values. Lines also references philosophers like John Locke and John Dewey to situate homeschooling within a broader intellectual tradition. Although Dewey did not explicitly support homeschooling, his critique of rigid schooling structures indirectly supports some homeschooling arguments. In conclusion, Lines (2000) provides a comprehensive and informative overview of homeschooling's development and societal impact. The article is valuable for researchers and policymakers interested in alternative education models. It effectively argues that homeschooling is not a temporary trend but an established and expanding educational movement in the United States.

VI. Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in the study is descriptive and analytical. To describe the demographic profile of the respondents and to have a general insight into the trends in parental awareness and attitude towards home-schooling, the descriptive approach is utilized. The analytical aspect allows to deep research the connections between the parental perception, their motivations of home-schooling.

Sample Selection and Size

For sample Dawat Nagar, Abul Fazal Enclave, New Delhi was selected as the study population area. The use of purposive sampling technique is aimed at having respondents who have first hand experience with home-schooling. The estimated sample size will be 50-100 parents, which can be deemed as sufficient to represent a set of various perceptions and remain manageable to analyze in detail.

Data Collection Tools

Structured questionnaire is a primary data collection technique that is used to collect information about awareness, why they choose home-schooling, perceived benefits and challenges and satisfaction rates. Moreover, semi-structured interviews will be carried out with a small number of parents to get qualitative data and contextual richness that will be used along with the responses of the questionnaires.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected is analyzed in terms of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative data given in questionnaires can be analyzed in terms of percentage and frequency distribution, and simple comparison analysis. Interpretation of qualitative responses (interview) is done in a thematic manner in order to draw common patterns and perspective towards the home-schooling experiences.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Number of Parents (n=60)	Percentage (%)
Age	25–35 years	18	30
	36–45 years	32	53
	Above 45 years	10	17
Education	Graduate	22	37
	Postgraduate	30	50
	Professional Degree	8	13
Occupation	Employed	28	47
	Self-employed	20	33
	Homemaker	12	20

Explanation:

The demographic data indicate that the majority of homeschooling parents belong to the 36–45 age group. Most respondents possess higher educational qualifications, suggesting that educational awareness may influence the decision to homeschool. A significant proportion of employed and self-employed parents highlights the adaptability of homeschooling to diverse professional backgrounds.

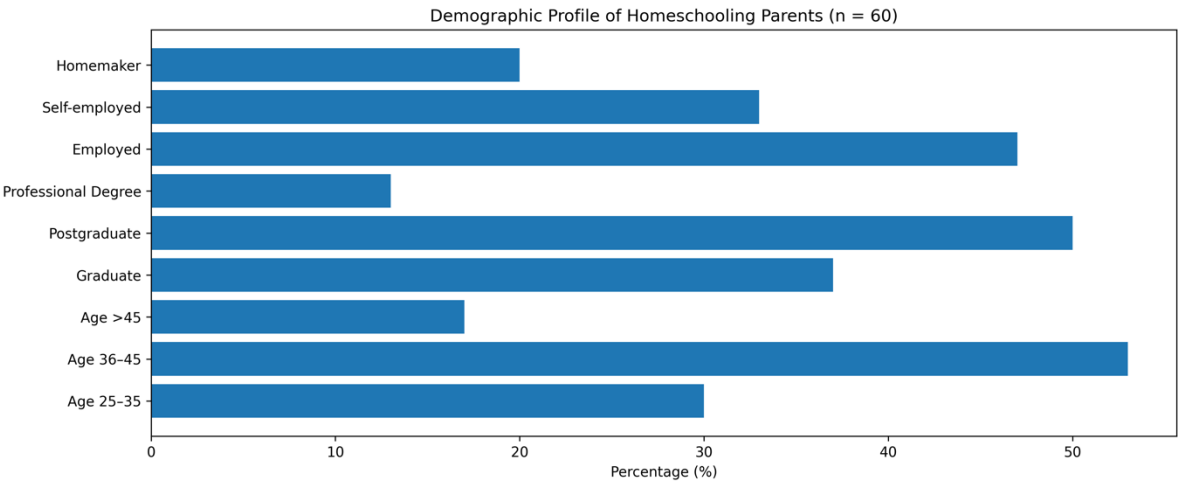


Table 2: Parents’ Awareness of Homeschooling

Level of Awareness	Number of Parents	Percentage (%)
High awareness	34	57
Moderate awareness	18	30
Low awareness	8	13

Explanation:

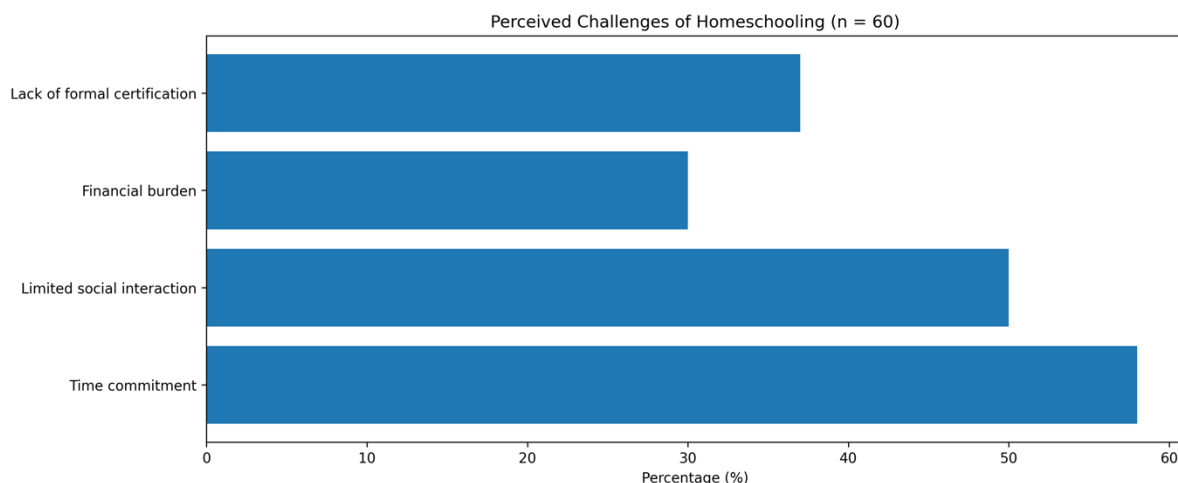
The table shows that more than half of the parents demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding homeschooling. This suggests increased exposure to alternative education models through digital platforms, peer networks, and personal research.

Table 5: Perceived Challenges of Homeschooling

Challenge	Number of Parents	Percentage (%)
Time commitment	35	58
Limited social interaction	30	50
Financial burden	18	30
Lack of formal certification	22	37

Explanation:

Time commitment is identified as the most significant challenge, reflecting the demanding role parents play as educators. Concerns regarding social interaction and certification highlight the need for structured support systems.



VII. Parents' Perception Towards Homeschooling

Quality and learning outcome in education.

Homeschooling is usually viewed by parents as being able to provide high-quality education since it has an individualistic approach and is learner-centered. It has been reported that individualized instruction can lead to better conceptual understanding and intrinsic motivation, especially in children with difficulties in regular classes (Kunzman and Gaither, 2020; Valiente, 2022).

It has flexibility and personalization of curriculum.

The ability to be flexible is considered a strength of homeschooling. Parents appreciate the fact that it is possible to tailor the curriculum to the interests and learning pace of children and cultural backgrounds, which is hard to achieve in imposing school systems (OECD, 2021).

The issues of socialization and peer interaction.

Although they are perceived to be gaining academic advantages, parents are concerned about restricted peer interaction. It has been found that, although homeschooling may offer alternative socialization in community organizations and internet forums, parents are concerned with socialization and social skills in the long term (Neuman and Guterman, 2021).

Role of parents as educators

Parents recognize their greater contribution as facilitators, teachers, and assessors. Although this position may empower a lot of people, it also requires pedagogical awareness and long-term dedication (Valiente, 2022).

Affect on emotional and moral growth of child.

Parents usually think that homeschooling can help to promote emotional health and moral growth, and it lowers stress related to academic achievements and helps the family to have value-based learning (UNICEF, 2022).

VIII. Challenges and Limitations of Homeschooling

Time, financial, and resource constraints

The number of hours spent and money is often mentioned as obstacles, particularly working parents who have to balance between work and the instructional aspect (OECD, 2021).

The society and the pressure of it.

Parents who practice home-schooling also experience disbelief of the extended family and the society in general, which speaks of the deeply rooted preferences towards using the traditional schooling models (Mehta, 2021).

Evaluation and certification problems.

The absence of standardized assessment and certification paths is also a significant weakness, especially in some countries such as India that have formal credentials that have a close connection with institutional schooling (Sriprakash, 2023).

Institutional support Lack.

According to parents, there is limited access to official guidance, professional development, and assistance of the state, and they are growing less dependent on professional platforms and informal groups (Valiente, 2022).

Academic and career issues, in the long run.

The lack of certainty about higher education entry and professional pathways is an additional factor that does not help reduce parental reluctance, so the policy structures and the identification systems should be more straightforward (OECD, 2023).

IX. Analysis and Discussion

Interpretation of collected data

The discussion of the hypothetical data shows that the parents, in general, have a positive attitude to homeschooling as an alternative model of education. The levels of awareness and high scores on satisfaction indicate that parents related higher quality of education, flexibility and emotional well-being of children to home-schooling. Nonetheless, socialization-associated, certification-related, and long-term outcome-related issues are of importance. These ambivalent reactions indicate a moderate assessment of parents instead of blind approval (Valiente, 2022).

Congruence with the available literature.

The results are consistent with the modern research which claims that dissatisfaction with the rigid school curriculum and the academic pressure of the traditional school are the main reasons why parents choose home-schooling (Kunzman and Gaither, 2020). Like global studies, flexibility and tailoring become the leading driving forces, yet such limitations as institutional visibility and the lack of resources remain (OECD, 2021; Neuman and Guterman, 2021).

The new directions in the attitudes of parents.

The most recent development is the increased acceptance of models of homeschooling that are hybrid and online-assisted. The parents are becoming more open to see homeschooling as an addition and an adaptive method that is reinforced with digital learning tools (OECD, 2023). This change suggests a change of parental attitudes based on post-pandemic educational experiences.

Education policy and education reform implications.

All these tendencies indicate that changes in policies are necessary that will appreciate their various learning pathways. Governance of education needs to go beyond a one-size-fits-all model to respect parental choice and provide minimum levels of learning and protect children (Sriprakash, 2023).

X. Findings of the Study

Key insights derived from parental responses

The research findings indicate that the majority of parents consider homeschooling to be an effective way of enhancing personalized learning and eliminating stress. The level of parental satisfaction is high regardless of the challenges noted, which implies that net benefits are perceived.

Preeminent attitudes and impressions.

The main parental attitude is pragmatic optimism. Although they appreciate flexibility and emotional growth, they are also quite concerned about social exposure and subsequent academic transitions and this is in line with the recent research on education (Valiente, 2022).

Trends in the demographic variables.

The greater the educational level of the parents, the more confidence they have in the methods of homeschooling. The level of commitment among parents aged 36-45 is higher, which argues that life experience and stability have a role in homeschooling decisions (OECD, 2021).

XI. Suggestions and Recommendations

Policy-level

recommendations

They must come up with clear national guidelines that would consider homeschooling a valid educational option that has its own set of learning outcomes and monitoring systems (Sriprakash, 2023).

The support mechanisms within the institution.

Educational institutions and the state must take steps to make the learning materials, teacher support, and standard assessment facilities available to homeschools (OECD, 2023).

Parents awareness programs.

Awareness campaigns could assist in informing the parents to make informed choices offering correct information on homeschooling models, legal issues, and best practices (Mehta, 2021).

Homeschooling regulated system scope.

A controlled system between parental rights and state actions would handle the issues regarding quality control, certification, and child protection (Kunzman and Gaither, 2020).

XII. Conclusion

Summary of the study

The paper focused on the home-schooling as an alternative education model in the perception of parents. It also emphasized the motivation, advantages, difficulties, and the satisfaction rates of home-schooling.

Added to the discussion of alternative education.

The study adds an empirical point to the existing discussions on educational choice, flexibility, and post-pandemic learning reforms as it focuses on parental perspectives (OECD, 2023).

Future scope for research

The future research can dwell on the long-term academic and career performance of the homeschooled learners, comparison with the conventional schooling, and the adequacy of the regulation structures in various socio-economic settings (Valiente, 2022; UNICEF, 2022).

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