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REACTIONS TOWARDS MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF COLLEGE STUDENTS DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic has caused havoc all over the world. India is going through a challenging situation as the number of infected/positive cases are increasing day by day. With strict preventive measures and restrictions by the Indian Government in the form of nationwide lockdown, the citizens are going through a range of psychological and emotional reactions, fear and uncertainty being one of them. This study was conducted with the aim of exploring the reactions of COVID-19 and lockdown on the mental health and emotional well-being of students. In this study data were collected in respect of reaction towards mental health and emotional well-being of students during lock-down. Reactions of college going students were assessed with the help of reaction towards mental health and emotional well-being scale prepared by the investigator. The sample comprised of 67 randomly selected graduate and post graduate students of Haryana state. The data was collected from both boys and girls living in both urban and rural areas. Data were analyzed by computing percentages. Results revealed that more than 60% students responded positively in 19 items which shows that students were keeping themselves busy in different tasks at home. On the other hand, more than 60% students responded in four items had negative feeling that they are tired of staying at home during lockdown; they feel nervous when they see news of covid-19 on TV; they feel that social isolation increases anxiety in the person being isolated; they are unable to manage their feelings/emotions during Covid-19; and uncertainty of today makes life intolerable. Additionally, the majority of the students received increased support from friends and family members, increased shared feeling and caring with family members and others. In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with mild stressful impact in the sample, even though the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing. These findings would need to be verified in larger population studies.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19, Reactions towards Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being, Students

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health refers to psychological or emotional health and wellbeing of people. It is about how one thinks, feels, behaves, affects life and copes with it etc. Good Mental Health is a sense of wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem. It enables human beings to fully enjoy and appreciate other people, day to day life and our environment. Mentally healthy person can:

- 1 Form positive and maintain stable relationships
- 2 Use abilities to reach their potentials
- 3 Deal with life's challenges
- 4 Work productively and are able to contribute to our community, etc.

One can probably recognize times when one feels 'down' or 'stressed'. Sometimes there is a valid reason of feeling stressed but with time it passes. Response to stress varies from person to person: some people can cope and adjust positively, some find certain aspects of life challenging at certain times, and find it hard to cope with and engage with many aspects of life. It can lead to feeling of isolation and results in suicidal thoughts.

Mental health conditions can be difficult to talk about, and they are often poorly understood or misunderstood. Some people have particular ideas about what mental health conditions mean, and how someone with a condition will be affected by it.

Depression, anxiety, stress, poor body image, grief, loss, etc. affects mental and emotional health adversely. Moreover major change in life such as becoming a new parent can affect ones mental and emotional health and day to day living. Many a time it is difficult to know the source of depression, sadness, worry or anxiety.

It can be useful to understand mental health and wellbeing as being along a continuum, naturally fluctuating in response to life events and situations such as unforeseen problem of Covid-19. With the COVID-19 (coronavirus) situation continuing to evolve, it's difficult to feel grounded. We are all dealing with major disruptions in our lives and overwhelming unknowns that have shaken our foundations.

In addition to various psychological problems like depression, anxiety, and panic disorder, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe threats to the lives and physical health of people around the globe. Although isolation helps in achieving the goal of reducing infections, access to family, friends, and other social support systems but loneliness is increasing mental issues like anxiety and depression. Researcher at Tongji University and University of Adelaide surveyed 369 adults living in 64 cities in China that had been under one-month of lockdown in February 2020. The result revealed that COVID-19 cases had higher levels of distress, as well as lower levels of physical and mental health and life satisfaction.

Mental health is crucial aspect that needs to be addressed during this lockdown. Although every single citizen needs to contribute to this war against the virus by performing all the necessary measures, especially social distancing, the government of India has clearly understood that it cannot be fought alone. It depends upon how people react to the lock-down decision of Government of India. Except on research, there is no research conducted related to a study of reaction towards mental health and emotional well-being of college going students. Keeping in mind the need to have good mental health and emotionally stable, the present research was undertaken.

The purpose of this study was to study reaction towards mental health and emotional well-being of college going students during COVID-19 lock down. The psychologists aim to assess rates of anxiety, depression and trauma symptoms among young people. They assess whether factors like family relationships and background increase their risk of pandemic-related mental health issues, and how their wellbeing affects their level of adherence to lockdown rules.

So far, little research has been done into how the pandemic is specifically affecting students and teachers, so the experts hope this study will inform future government policy designed to support them and their parents and careers during and after the lockdown.

The isolation and fear in this lockdown era are driving an escalating nervousness among many people. Not just those with pre-existing conditions like anxiety, depression and OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder), but also the elderly who are struggling with new levels of loneliness and helplessness.

OBJECTIVE

To study the Reactions towards Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing of college students during COVID-19 Lockdown.

SAMPLE

The sample comprised of 67 randomly selected graduate and post graduate students. The sample comprised of college students of Haryana state. The data was collected from both boys and girls living in both urban and rural areas.

TOOL

In this study, data were collected in respect of reaction towards mental health and emotional well-being of students during lock-down. Reactions of students were assessed with the help of reaction towards mental health and emotional well-being scale prepared by the investigator. There were 43 statements related to different aspects of mental health and emotional well-being. Of these, one was filler statement which helped in identifying the genuine responders. Out of 42 statements, 21 were positively worded and equal number negatively worded. Against each statement, five alternatives were given and subject was requested to put a tick mark on the alternative which best represented his response. There was no time limit for giving the responses. Statements like “I use my time in developing new skills” “I miss the company of my friends during lock down” were included in the scale.

PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

The college going students were given the scale of reactions towards mental health and emotional well-being by online mode. Students filled their responses and submitted the scale online. The data were collected randomly from undergraduate and post graduate students by giving scale online.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

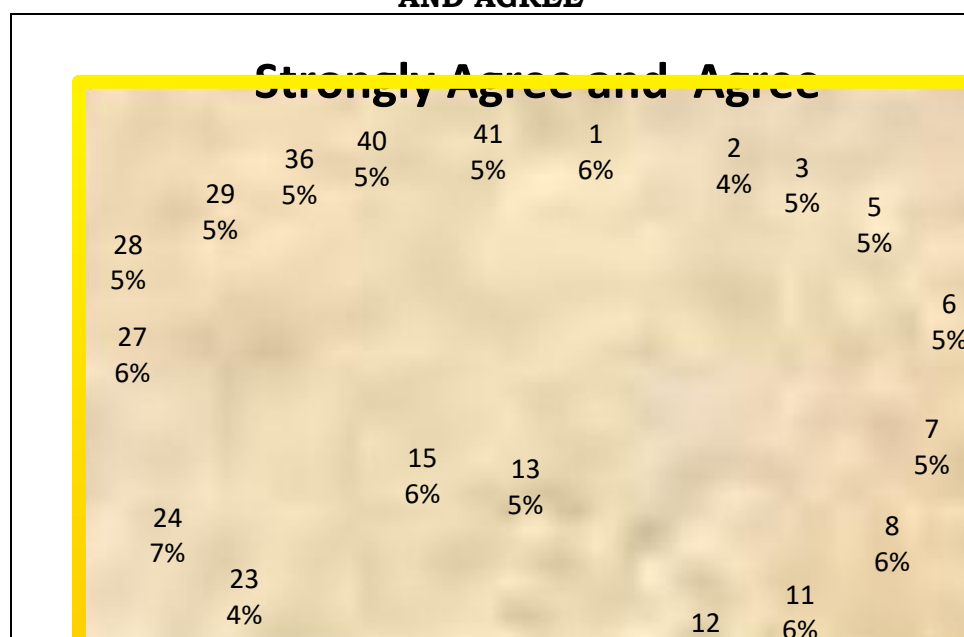
Data was analyzed by computing percentages.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES OF STUDENTS WITH PERCENTAGE**

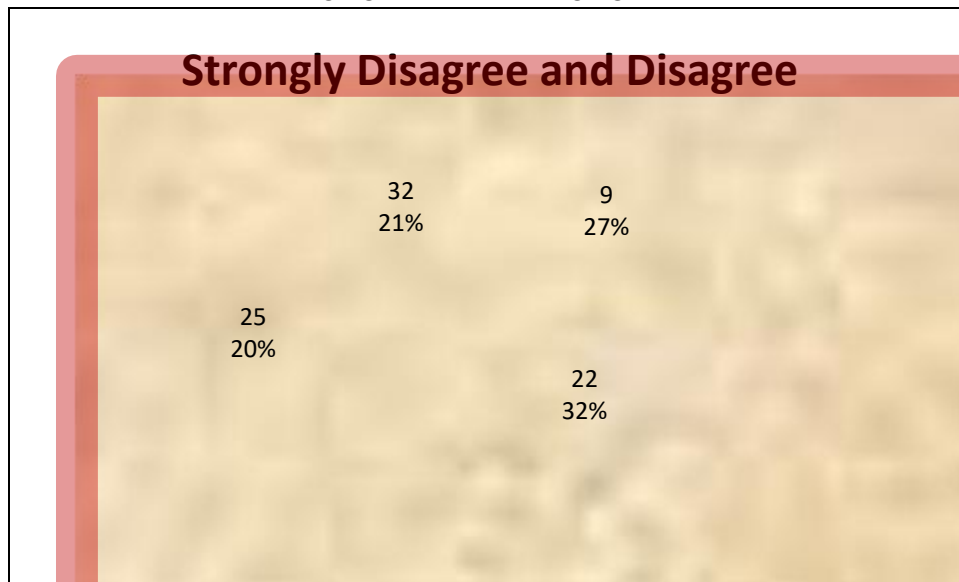
S. No.	SA	A	SA+A	Percentage	N	D	SD	SD+D	Percentage
1.	11	42	53	79.10	10	3	1	4	5.97
2.	13	29	42	62.68	11	13	1	14	20.89
3.	16	33	49	73.13	6	11	1	12	17.91
4.	6	26	32	47.76	13	22	0	22	32.83
5.	17	35	52	77.61	9	6	0	6	8.95
6.	17	35	52	77.61	7	5	3	8	11.94
7.	18	27	45	67.16	10	12	0	12	17.91
8.	31	30	61	91.04	5	1	0	1	1.49
9.	1	6	7	10.44	8	32	20	52	77.61
10.	7	21	28	41.79	19	19	1	20	29.85
11.	25	34	59	88.05	4	2	2	4	5.97
12.	18	25	43	64.17	10	8	5	13	19.40
13.	9	38	47	70.14	11	8	1	9	13.43
14.	4	21	25	37.31	10	27	5	32	47.76
15.	14	41	55	82.08	7	2	3	5	7.46
16.	2	9	11	16.41	13	34	9	43	64.17
17.	4	20	24	35.82	9	24	10	34	50.74
18.	4	23	27	40.29	12	16	2	18	26.86
19.	15	23	38	56.71	5	21	3	24	35.82
20.	10	24	34	50.74	16	14	3	17	25.37
21.	3	24	27	40.29	13	23	4	27	40.29
22.	1	1	2	2.98	3	23	39	62	92.53
23.	8	34	42	62.68	16	7	2	9	13.43
24.	29	33	62	92.53	4	0	1	1	1.49
25.	2	13	15	22.38	11	34	6	40	59.70
26.	8	32	40	59.70	12	11	4	15	22.38
27.	8	48	56	83.58	3	6	2	8	11.94
28.	9	40	49	73.13	10	6	2	8	11.94
29.	9	39	48	71.64	6	11	2	13	19.40
30.	4	17	21	31.34	11	30	5	35	52.23

31.	5	20	25	37.31	21	15	6	21	31.34
32.	5	13	18	26.86	8	30	11	41	61.19
33.	5	32	37	55.22	12	17	1	18	26.86
34.	3	26	29	43.28	22	13	3	16	23.88
35.	5	23	28	41.79	16	18	5	23	34.32
36.	3	41	44	65.67	13	8	2	10	14.92
37.	3	25	28	41.79	17	20	2	22	32.83
38.	6	20	26	38.80	7	30	4	34	50.74
39.	4	27	31	46.26	16	18	2	20	29.85
40.	6	38	44	65.67	10	10	3	13	19.40
41.	11	32	43	64.17	9	14	1	15	22.38
42.	3	25	28	41.79	21	14	4	18	26.86
43.	8	16	24	35.82	21	17	5	22	32.83

GRAPH 1: SHOWING PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES OF STUDENTS WITH ITEMS NUMBERS IN WHICH MORE THAN 60% STUDENTS WERE STRONGLY AGREE AND AGREE



GRAPH 2: SHOWING THE PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES OF STUDENTS WITH ITEMS NUMBERS IN WHICH MORE THAN 60% STUDENTS WERE STRONGLY DISAGREE AND DISAGREE



INTERPRETATION

More than 75% of students had positive feeling that they keep themselves busy at home; they use their time in developing new skills; they are able to decide what they should do during lock-down; they like to be with their family members all the time during lock down period; they are taking care of themselves during lockdown; they are now thinking that they have enough time to learn during lockdown; they feel that good mental health may win the battle of Covid-19 easily; and they protect themselves from chronic stress. They also had negative feeling that they miss the company of their friends during lock down. Further, between 60 to 74% of students expressed positively that they are not distracting from negative thoughts during lockdown; during lockdown whatever thought comes to their mind, they share it with their best friend; they do exercise/ meditation for keeping themselves mentally healthy; they are not in stress all the time during lockdown period; they are finding positive ways to express their feelings to others during lockdown; Now they don't think that their future is in dark; they have been handling their problems very well; and they are satisfied with the way they carry out their tasks during lock-down. Students also had negative feeling that they are tired of staying at home during lock-down; they feel nervous when they see news of covid-19 on TV; they feel that social isolation increases anxiety in the person being isolated; they are unable to manage their feelings/emotions during Covid-19; and uncertainty of today makes life intolerable. Additionally, the majority of

the students received increased support from friends and family members, increased shared feeling and caring with family members and others.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with mild stressful impact in our sample, even though the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing. These findings would need to be verified in larger population studies.

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