

14. **MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL INPUTS IN COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

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INTRODUCTION

The world has never faced such pandemic attacks which have affected almost all aspects of life. The pandemic is happening alongside the conditions of the increased pervasiveness of mental health issues. COVID-19 outbreak has been reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) in January 2020 and declared this as Public Health Emergency of International Concern. WHO stated that there is a high risk of COVID-19 spreading to other countries around the world. Whereas in March 2020, WHO has declared that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic. WHO and other public health authorities around the world has tried their best to hold the COVID-19 outbreak but in vain as almost all the countries of the world are suffering a lot due to this pandemic. The present condition of lockdown and restriction of movements has created a profound impact not only on economical situation but also on the mental health and psychosocial well being of people. India is at the number third and at times of this crisis to support mental health and psychosocial well being is a great matter of concern. Humans are social animals and they cannot live unaccompanied. Fear and anxiety about their health along with the health of treasured family members is a big cause of the mental disturbance. This pandemic has affected the mental health and well being of people drastically and the whole world is going through an unfortunate phase of COVID-19. The present paper aims to understand psychological, social and behavior inputs in COVID-19 outbreak and set out clear immediate priorities and longer-term strategies for each of these aspects.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To succeed in a study, one should have clear aims and objectives. We cannot even think about the line of action, process to be undertaken, and mode to be adopted to carry on and accomplish the task. The objectives of this study are as under:

1. To study psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak and how positive family environment such as the practice of Yoga and meditation helped to overcome the fear of pandemic.
2. To find out the constraints experienced by people due to the negative environment.
3. To suggest remedial measures to improve mental health.

POPULATION

The population of the present study constitutes students, faculty and staff of various colleges in Haryana. The sample size was between 16 and 58 years across Haryana.

METHODOLOGY

There are mainly three types of methods in didactic research:

- Historical method
- Experimental method
- Descriptive method or normative survey method

The survey approach to the didactic problem is one of the most commonly used approaches. It involves interpretation, comparison, measurement, classification, evaluation and generalization, all directed towards proper understanding and solution of significant didactic problems. In the present study, the descriptive method of research was adopted. An online survey was conducted on mental health and psychosocial inputs of COVID-19 pandemic and the coping strategies used by families. The survey was promoted via email and various social media platforms. In total, 1683 people completed the survey. Almost 445 people stated what has helped to maintain mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic. A thematic analysis of the full data was done.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table -1 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 1)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
1	Has COVID-19 exaggerated the possibility of anxiety, depression and other outcomes, such as self-harm?	40	60	40	40%

Although a rise in symptoms of anxiety and coping responses to stress are expected during these extraordinary circumstances, yet only (40%) of respondents believed that COVID -19 has exaggerated possibility of anxiety, depression and other outcomes such as self-harm. 60% of respondents believed that COVID-19 has not affected emotional distress.

Table -2 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 2)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
2	Do you feel that social isolation and loneliness has increased adverse consequences?	70	30	70	70%

70% of respondents believed that due to isolation and loneliness children and older people have felt developed mental issues and stress. While 30% believed that due isolation and loneliness they have not felt any adverse affect on them.

Table -3 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 3)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
3	Changes in sleep and lifestyle behaviours influence our mental health and stress response?	75	25	75	75%

Sleep and lifestyle behaviour are individualised ways of coping in such a situation. 75% believed that positive the family environment is an important resilience-related factor and the changes in sleep patterns can cause health difficulties under particularly stressful circumstances. Whereas 25% of the respondents considered that sleep patterns and lifestyle behaviours have not affected them.

Table -4 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 4)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
4	Have you experienced that news, social media and digital platforms has increased your anxiety?	55	45	55	55%

Majority of the respondents (55%) felt that anxiety has been increased after watching news and similarly digital platforms and social media has disturbed their peace of mind. While 45% of the respondents said that these things have not affected them much.

Table -5 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 5)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
5	Have you felt difficulty in sleeping and eating during lockdown?	60	40	60	60%

Most of them (60%) felt that in beginning it was difficult to adopt the current scenario and hence they felt difficulty in sleeping and eating as well 40% did not find any changes in these activities.

Table -6 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 6)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
6	Do you feel that children need	75	25	75	75%

	extra time and attention from their primary caregivers?				
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Majority of them (75%) said that children need extra-time and attentions from their primary caregivers as these testing times are difficult for kids. While 25% of respondents believed that extra time and care may not be required for children.

Table -7 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 7)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
7	Do you feel the words like “diseased” COVID-19 Victims troubles you?	70	30	70	70%

Yes, majority of them (70%) felt that these niggling words trouble them. While 30% of the respondent said that these words do not trouble them.

Table -8 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 8)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
8	Do you think that managing mental health is important during this time?	80	20	80	80%

80% of the respondent said that managing mental health is very important while 20% did not believe the same.

Table -9 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 9)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
9	Have you tried coping strategies like yoga and meditation to manage stress?	40	60	40	40%

40% of respondent have replied that they have tried yoga and meditation to manage stress whereas 60% replied that they have not followed the same.

Table -10 Psychological and individual factors in COVID-19 outbreak (Statement 10)

S.N.	Statement	Yes	No	Frequency	Percentage
10	Have you tried to stay connected with your loved ones?	75	25	75	75%

75% of the respondent answered in a positive way and said that they have been in constant touch with their loved ones whereas 25% said that due to work stress they have not connected with their near ones

CONSTRAINTS EXPERIENCED BY PEOPLE DUE TO NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Spread of this COVID-19 has caused a great loss to most of us. Front line health workers, children and older people are more prone to chronic stress and poor mental health. Though there are many coping strategies to manage psychosocial issues and well being yet people face some constraints in adopting new normal environment created by COVID-19. Thus, a small part of this study was devoted to analyze the constraints as perceived by the public.

People were asked through an open-ended discussion to indicate the problem, which they were facing during lockdown and after unlock. The following constraints were mentioned by the respondents, which are presented in Table 11.

Table: 11 To find out the constraints experienced by people due to negative environment

S.N.	Constraints	Percentage	Rank
1	No face to face interaction between loved ones	85%	I
2	Stigma and fear of disease	70%	II
3	No guidance how to provide help to affected people	60%	III
4	No regular routine or schedule	45%	IV
5	Decrease in physical activity	40%	V

A perusal of the figures in Table11 showed that the constraints perceived by the students are varied. It was reported that “No face to face interaction between loved ones” as many as (85%) percent respondents and was ranked first. However decrease in physical activity was perceived by (40%) and scored a last rank in all constraints. In the constraints series, stigma and fear of disease scored (70%) and ranked second “No guidance how to provide help to affected people” was perceived by (60%) and is ranked third in order. This constraint was followed by “no regular routine or schedule” (45%),

TO SUGGEST REMEDIAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH

1. Parents should response to child’s reactions in positive way
2. Coping strategies like yoga and meditations should be included in daily routine
3. Government should ensure that good quality communication and accurate information updates should be provided to all
4. Difficulty in sleeping and eating pattern should be dealt
5. Engagement in playful activities are required
6. Volunteers should be willing to talk at any time
7. Promotion of physical distance rather than social distance should be followed

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

From the analysis and interpretation done in the preceding chapter, the investigator reached the following findings and conclusions.

1. The use of digital technology can help to bridge the gap in present living situations as COVID -19 has provided new platforms of digital technology to connect to people all over the world. Constructive talks on will enhance the cognitive skills of academicians and other people in general
2. Fear of young minds can be cured by love, affection, attention and explaining what is happening. Expert knowledge can be helpful in better achievements.
3. COVID -19 has taught many how to adapt the situation and innovate new ways to live and learn in the present scenario.
4. Negative family environment has made the situation worse, which results in failure of clear comprehension of the ailment and it has lead to mental stress
5. People face constraints as stigma and fear related with the disease is more problematic which ultimately leads to mental stress
6. Media consumption on Corona-virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has affected mental wellbeing of the population, though it helps individuals stay informed by authoritative sources yet over-exposure and mitigating increases effect traumatic content

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Since all kinds of research have some scope of improvement, the present study is no exception of this. The following suggestions may therefore be considered for further research.

1. The sample size can be increased.
2. A similar study can be conducted by taking samples from other states.
3. A comparative study can be conducted between psychosocial issues and individual factors.

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