

Impact of COVID-19 and Lockdown on the Mental Health of Adolescents

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Abstract: *The aim of the present study was to research upon the effects of the pandemic on the mental health of adolescent students. The researcher used a self-prepared questionnaire to conduct a survey among the adolescent students of the Delhi NCR through random sampling. 88 adolescents of the National Capital Region (Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida) participated in the online survey. The data collected was analysed using both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the mental health of the adolescents was impacted negatively due to COVID-19 during lockdown, particularly in areas related to their education and social life.*

Keywords: Mental Health Adolescents COVID Pandemic Lockdown Online Education

1. Introduction

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was formally notified about a cluster of cases of pneumonia in Wuhan City, home to 11 million people and the cultural and economic hub of central China. By 5 January, 59 cases were known and none had been fatal. As of 12 May, 82,591 new cases of COVID-19 worldwide were being confirmed daily and the death rate was over 4200 per day (WHO, 2020). On 24 March 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated a lockdown for 21 days to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Mental health involves our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects our thought process, feelings and behaviour. It also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices in our lives. Mental health is very important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood to old age. People are classified as healthy only when they are both physically and mentally stable.

According to the 2011 census, around one-fourth of the Indian population is adolescent (253 million). As per the National Mental Health Survey of India (2015–2016), the prevalence of psychiatric disorders among adolescents (13–17 years) is reported around 7.3%.

A sense of fear and anxiety around the globe had been created as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This phenomenon has led to short-term as well as long-term psychosocial and mental health issues among children and adolescents. The quality and magnitude of impact on adolescents is determined by many vulnerability factors like developmental age, transition to online mode, change in daily routine, general state of mind, non-existence of social life, etc.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact at a global level and particularly on the mental health of adolescents.

1.1 Need

The pandemic induced a lot of changes in our lives. It was strenuous and stressful to cope with the various challenges which cropped up due to COVID-19 and the lockdown. Every day seemed to be monotonous topped with the fear and trauma of the calamity and being confined to the four walls of one's room without any connection with the outside world created an environment of stress. Therefore, during these unprecedented times, the present study endeavors to explore the mental health problems faced by adolescents.

1.2 Objectives

- 1) To study the general state of mind of the adolescents with respect to their mental health during the pandemic.
- 2) To study the views of adolescents on online education during the pandemic.
- 3) To study the impact on the work ethic of adolescents as a result of the pandemic.
- 4) To study the coping strategies taken up by adolescents in order to adjust to the unprecedented situation.

1.3 Tools

Self-prepared online questionnaire on mental health.

1.4 Sampling

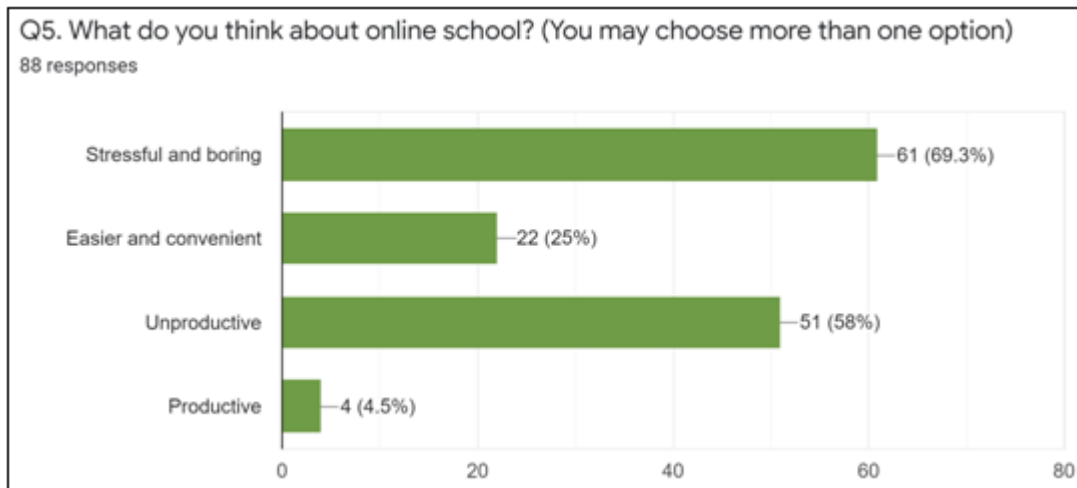
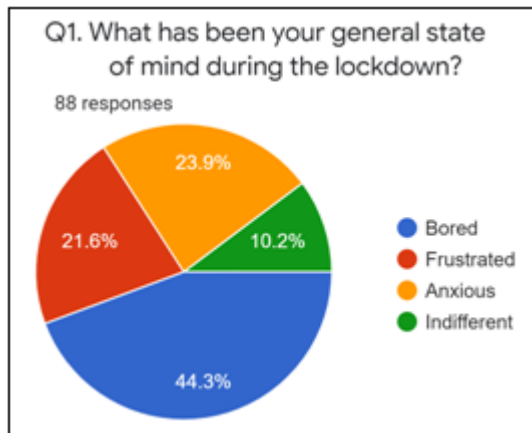
The present study was conducted through an online survey on 88 adolescents in the National Capital Region (Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida).

2. Methodology

The researcher used the survey method for data collection. The study was carried out among the adolescent students of the Delhi NCR through random sampling.

3. Analysis and Interpretation of data

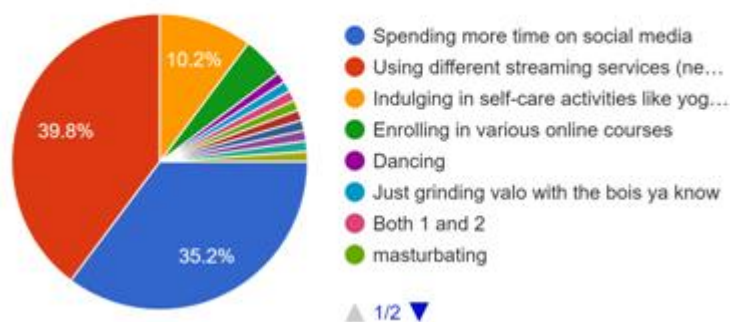
Given below are the graphical representations of a few questions:



Q7. Explain briefly how your work ethic has been impacted due to COVID-19, whether negatively or positively?

	Health		Education		Co-curriculars		Overall Motivation	
Positive		13		2		8		7
Negative		8		20		8		35
Neutral		1	-	-	-	-		6

Q3. How are you coping up with not being able to do your favorite activities?
88 responses



4. Findings of the Study

1) General State of Mind

The analysis of the data represented in question and figure 1, shows that 44.3% of the respondents were bored during the lockdown, 23.9% reported that they were anxious, 21.6% were frustrated and only 10.2% said that they were indifferent to the situation. So, based on this data it can be said that the majority of the respondents were bored and frustrated during the lockdown. The analysis of the data represented in question 2 and the bar graph, shows that 73.9% of the respondents missed meeting people (friends, family, etc.) during the lockdown, 69.3% missed traveling, 60.2% yearned to be involved in outdoor activities (going to the park, mall, eating out, etc.), 55.7% missed going to school, 35.2% seemed to lose out on outdoor sports. Hence, based on this data it can be said that the majority of the respondents missed meeting people and traveling the most during the lockdown.

The analysis of the data represented in the question and figure 9 shows that 35.2% of the respondents were able to gradually improve their self-confidence during the lockdown, while 29.5% seemed to be struggling with it, 20.5% believed it to have deteriorated, 14.8% felt that there was an improvement. Thus, it can be inferred that approximately one-third of the respondents found themselves to be gradually improving and one-third were struggling with self-confidence during the lockdown.

The analysis of the data represented in the question and figure 10 shows that 55.7% of the respondents were able to enhance their relationship with their family members during the lockdown, 23.9% felt that there was a monotonic pattern, 20.5% found their relationship to be strained. Hence, based on this data it can be said that the majority of the respondents felt that their relationship with their immediate family has been enhanced as a result of the lockdown.

The analysis of the data represented in the question and figure 11 shows that 48.9% of the respondents hope that everything would resume to the old normal, 33% were uncertain about the future, 12.5% feared that inevitably online mode would be the new normal, 5.7% seemed to think that online classes are more effective than conventional classrooms and as a result, they would prefer to study in online mode. So, based on this data it can be said that the majority of the respondents hope to go back to the old normal or are uncertain about the future of their general lives post the pandemic.

2) Online Education

The analysis of the data represented in the question and figure 5 shows that 69.3% of the respondents thought that online school was stressful and boring, 58% found it to be unproductive. So, based on this data it can be said that the majority of the respondents found online school to be stressful, boring, and unproductive. The analysis of the data represented in question 6 and the corresponding bar graph shows that 45.5% of the respondents felt that there was a marginal increase or decrease in their grades, 37.5% believed there to be a deterioration in their performance, while 17% seemed to have improved. Hence, based on this

data it can be said that the majority of the respondents felt that online education was not productive in improving their knowledge and skills in their grades during the lockdown.

3) Work Ethic

The analysis of the tally marks table shows that 70% of the respondents felt that their motivation level was negatively impacted in all areas and particularly in the education sector. It was interesting to note that about 20% of the respondents were positively motivated to take care of their health and also indulge in co-curricular activities. But, about 10% of the respondents were negatively motivated in the areas of health and co-curricular in the face of the pandemic. Only 6% of the respondents said that their motivation level was not impacted by the pandemic.

The analysis of the tally marks table shows that the majority of the respondents felt that their work ethic was negatively impacted due to the pandemic as life had become monotonous, there wasn't much to look forward to, lack of routine and procrastination also played attributed to low motivation. Only 10% of the respondents felt that their work ethic was enhanced as they had more flexibility, fewer distractions, and also saved upon the precious time lost in traveling which helped them in better time management, and 10% of the respondents were not affected by the pandemic.

4) Coping Strategies

The analysis of questions related to coping strategies revealed that 39.8% of the respondents started using different streaming services while trying to cope up with the unprecedented situation of a pandemic, while 35.2% spent more time on social media. The analysis of the data represented in the question and figure 4 shows that 43.2% of the respondents listened to music or watched their favorite shows/movies when feeling low, 25% talked to friends online, 22.7% withdrew into their own world and isolated themselves, 9.1% began binge eating.

5. Discussion of the Results

The results of the present investigation indicate that adolescent students have had a negative impact on their mental health as a result of COVID. The general lifestyle of adolescents mainly revolves around the pursuits of education and socializing, which was seriously impacted by the lockdown which in consequence affected their mental health. The majority of the respondents found online school to be stressful, boring, and unproductive. It was found that the majority believed their work ethic was negatively impacted during the pandemic, while fewer found that there was a positive change as there was a scope for flexibility and the number of distractions were also lesser. Some of the coping strategies that adolescents adopted included listening to music, watching web series/shows and movies, isolating themselves, and binge eating.

6. Suggestions for Further Research

The present study was limited to the adolescents of the Delhi NCR region and a sample size of 88. It is suggested that similar studies can be conducted on a larger sample and different regions of the country which can facilitate the

educators, parents and other stakeholders to take positive steps to guide and counsel the students for maintaining a stable mental health.

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