

# The Experience of Pregnant Women during COVID-19: A Descriptive Study in Bhopal

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**Abstract:** *Worldwide outbreaks of COVID-19 drastically affect the health of all including pregnant women. A descriptive study was conducted on 15 pregnant mothers, sample were selected by purposive sampling technique at Devmata Hospital Bhopal. The aim of the study was to understand the feelings of expected mothers infected with COVID 19. Data was collected by WhatsApp app and interview by calling. After getting the data, saturation of data done and 4 theme is developed on the basis of collected data. The categorized theme including Interruption of the peace and obstruction in daily activities, Crises due to epidemic, Rehabilitation methods, Acceptance of condition. On the basis of this theme result revealed that pregnant mothers were experienced severe anxiety and stress in there day to day activity. The stress level was high in initial days of COVID 19 announcement. After some time, the stress level was reduced to some extend by using all sanitization protocols and hygienic habits.*

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Pregnant mothers, Stress, Anxiety

## 1. Background

The serious intense respiratory condition novel COVID-19 [SARS - COV - 2] otherwise called COVID-19, has been viewed as a crisis in general wellbeing around the world. Since this pandemic sickness was accounted for by the first run through in Wuhan, China in December 2019, in excess of 2 million, individual has tried positive worldwide and very near 140 thousand have passed on. [1] At the same time pregnancy is also one of the most crucial period for women. It involves a pleasant emotions and unexpected experiences. Wore fully with the out breaks of COVID-19 pandemic, child birth for women create entirely new and unusual situation. With this time period woman have a state of anxiety and fear with current epidemic crisis because of number of infectious persons increasing day by day with severity and also causes death. [2] Second concerning points are the mentally physical and emotional exhaustion with reducing the number of medical stakeholders and shortage of medical appliances it also leads the non - fulfillment of proposed regimen. [3] Moreover, broad casting of negative news or information on a digital platform create high level of stress and people get more worried. This will also affect the health of pregnant women. [4] And also increase the risk of death and severe complications to both of them, mother as well as child. [5] Previous studies high lights the area where pregnant women have affected very dreadfully during this COVID-19 epidemic in Hong Kong. It increased the frustration, level of anxiety and disruption of daily lives routine with fear of infection. [6] Pregnant ladies get worried to attend hospital due to fear of get infection. They were felt disquiet and insecure even at place of residence. [7] Hence this study's aim was to understand the experience of expected ladies during COVID-19 outbreak with their mental and physical state. By investigation these matter will help for better treatment, support and also decrease the complication of expecting mother.

## 2. Method

The aim of the study was to understand the review and feelings of pregnant women infected with COVID-19. In this study we have utilize descriptive phenomenological approach to highlight the feelings of pregnant women in COVID-19 outbreak. By using descriptive phenomenon, the researcher scrutinizes the nation of participant's outlook regarding COVID-19.

### Participants and setting

A qualitative study was conducted on expected mothers who were registered and regular patient of Devmata Hospitals and affected with COVID-19, which is located in urban area near Narela Bhopal. By using purposive sampling technique data were collected from the participants in which in - depth semi structured interview was conducted in Microsoft platform and calling through Whatsapp. The time period for data collection between 10<sup>th</sup> May to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020. We include varied sample of pregnant women who have different criteria like house maker, working women, primi mothers and women have different graduations.

Total 15 women were selected for the study. The time duration of each interview session is 20 - 25 minutes in Whatsapp calling.

### Inclusion Criteria

Pregnant women who are infected with COVID-19 epidemic and who are willing to participants in the study.

Interview is begun with the questions which is related to expected mother's feelings in the initial days of announcement of COVID outbreak. After that the questions continued regarding the feelings of home isolation, surrounding news land effect of news on their daily lives. One more session was conducted for the interaction regarding experience of expected mothers in letter stage

after recovery. We done saturation of first interview data and used this data for the base of next interview session.

**Data Analysis**

The data obtained were analyzed by using Colaizzi’s seven step content analysis method, with use of MAXODA software version 2020.

In Colaizzi’s seven step method total seven parameters are their;

- 1) In first step we read all the data carefully which is obtained from interviews session to clarify the feelings and views of pregnant women, in this step we stop our previous thoughts.
- 2) In second steps, we highlight the certain clause from the text and underlines the important points.
- 3) In third step we extract the statement which highlight in second phase and found the meaning of concept.
- 4) In 4<sup>th</sup>Phase we divide and organize the data or concept based on theme which is similar.
- 5) In 5<sup>th</sup> phase we integrate the data in to the cluster of theme and categorize them.
- 6) In sixth stage, we make fundamental structure of fact and presented comprehensively.
- 7) In seven stage validation was done by comparing all experience of pregnant women.

**Ethical consideration**

We have taken informed consent to the pregnant women from the text message. We gave all the information about research study to them they have communicated her consent by responding “ I am ready to participate” in text message. We also informed participants could change their name in profile and respond the question by their answer. When interview session is over, we tell to participants to do exit from group. Then we copy the details and paste in word file from each interview.

**3. Result**

A study was conducted with descriptive phenomenology on 15 expected mothers between the date 10<sup>th</sup> May to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The study was started when the quarantine period is going to end. Demographic data is showing in table 1 with specific points. After analysing the data from interview we acquired 4 category including psychological response, behavioral response, crisis due to epidemic, rehabilitation methods and acceptance of condition which is shown in table 2.

**Table 1:** Showing characteristics of expected mothers

Variables	Mean
Age	28.2
Gestational age	26 weeks
Education	15.5
<b>Parity</b>	<b>N %</b>
Nullipara	9 (60%)
Para 1	4 (26.6%)
Para 2	2 (13.33%)
Employed	9 (60%)
House maker	6 (40%)

Table 1 showing theme categorization

S. N.	Themes	Clusters
1	Interruption of the peace & obstruction in daily Activity due to; Psychological Response	Fear of complications Feeling of loneliness Fear of further infection Lack of support
	Behavioural Response	Obsession for daily activity Reduced intake Obsession for sanitization Easily trust in news
2	Crisis due to epidemic	Difficult to acquire health products Difficult to found health care facilities Cancelled pregnancy classes like yoga, parenthood.
3	Rehabilitation methods	Through whatsapp & Facebook Taking online classes for preparation of motherhood
4	Acceptance of condition	Relief from anxiety or stress by adherence of sanitization methods & social distancing protocols

**Interruption of the peace and obstruction in daily activities, due to psychological response and behavioral activities;** There are four sub themes in the psychological responses which are - 1. Fear of complication, feelings of loneliness, fear of infection and lack of support. In second category of behavioral activities sub area including obsession for doing things, changed food habits, obsession for sanitization, and easily trust in news.

**Psychological responses**

When the official confirmation of COVID-19 in countries, the level of stress was high in initial days. Pregnant women are worried to go anywhere like in work places, shopping’s, and even in hospital for checkup. Because the mortality rate was increased day by day. Pregnant women were also afraid to become highly infected during their gestational time and have fear to develop complications to their unborn child. Some of responses given below by expected mothers regarding their anxiety and stress: -

“I am fear full to go outside from the house even wouldn’t let my husband go for work”.

“When I was 5<sup>th</sup> month pregnant and saw a video clip on you tube, in that an infected pregnant women given birth with some complications. I was so worried because I don’t know what will happen with me and my unborn child. I have fear – Is my child become sick too?”

**Feeling of loneliness**

Expected mothers were felt they were not supported by their close friends and relatives during this pandemic. They also complain about unavailability of sufficient maternity clinics during COVID-19. They are telling no organization provided proper support to them during their infected condition. So that they felt alone and lack of support. The hospital is supposed to give care of pregnant women but most of them closed their doors.

**Behavioral activities**

The pregnant women were felt about they had more obsession from previous daily routine activities like using

surface disinfectant, hand washing, washing of household things and disinfections of vegetables and foods. They had become highly sensible for all sanitation protocols. Some of them told they wash each and every product which they purchase from market and wash it again before cooking or eating.

#### Changed food habits

Due to this COVID-19 epidemic pregnant women have changed their food habits. They included vitamin C, iron and many more. They were consuming foods which are highly nutritious and increased immunity. Like lemon consume are increased.

#### Easily trust in news

In initial days of COVID-19, pregnant women followed all the news on social platform and TV news channels. One single bad news was enough for them to feel stressed for all days. Some of them lost their loved ones or relatives. Because of this their anxiety levels were so high. Moreover they reduced faith on ministry of health statistics which are related to COVID-19. Cases were increased day by day; morbidity rate was also increased but data showed less number. After some time, some of them decided to abstain from all the news which are in social media.

#### Crises to epidemic

COVID-19 caused so many problems for the expected mother such as closing of many maternity clinics, unavailability of health products. Some of pregnant women cancelled their child birth preparatory classes due to fear of getting infected. They faced issues to get health facilities according to their choice.

#### Rehabilitation methods and Residences with crisis

COVID-19 changed all expected of life including daily activities, mental activities, physical activities, and leisure activities. To overcome the problems which are associated with these epidemic pregnant women were chosen many ways as resilience, such as they created WhatsApp group and engaged with friends with massages, calls, and video chats. Secondly, they were taking online child birth preparatory classes in Microsoft platform. In their free time or in quarantine periods.

#### Acceptance of condition

Result showed that after passing their quarantine days pregnant women felt somehow relaxed, their stress level was also reduced and obsession habits subsided gradually, because they lived most of the time in their homes. They told that now they feeling stress free by using all sanitization guidelines, social distancing protocols and faith in God. Some of pregnant women were telling they have no longer fear but they follow all the cleanliness method as previous.

### 4. Discussion

This qualitative research study takes a look of pregnant women on their experience of COVID-19 outbreak during their quarantine period. In this research study the data were collected online by using WhatsApp and carefully data analysis was done and extracted 4 theme and 17 subthemes by using that conversation which obtain through WhatsApp.

The result revealed that pregnant women were experienced severe anxiety and stress in their day to day activity. The stress level was high in initial days of COVID-19 announcement. After some time, the stress level was reduced to some extent by using all sanitization protocols and hygienic habits.

### 5. Conclusion

In this phenomenological study assessment of experience of pregnant women infected with COVID-19 is the main concepts of study from the findings the extracted four areas and 15 sub areas from collective data. Main theme works: Interruption of the peace and obstruction in daily activities, crises due to epidemic, rehabilitation methods, and resilience with crises and acceptance of condition. Epidemic created so many crises including lack of social support mobilization of health system anxiety and fear due to these difficulties of expected mothers increased, further study is needed to support pregnant women health and tranquility calmness in difficult time.

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