

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown on Mental Well-Being amongst Individuals in Society

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Abstract-The main objective of this study is to find out the impact of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on mental well-being amongst individuals in society, reasons for psychological impact and to search out the solutions for the recovery from negative impact, if any. The survey is conducted on students, employees from different sectors, housewives, professionals and is also based upon secondary data. The findings of this study shows that the Lockdown as a result of the covid-19 pandemic has seriously affected the mental health of people and almost every section of society has suffered ranging from people residing in small town to metro cities and male or female population, people belonging to whatever age group and people belonging to nuclear family or joint family. But the sections of people which have been worse hit are young generations belonging to nuclear family and residing in big metro cities. The negative impact has resulted in suicide and has given birth of many severe diseases. But this lockdown has also had positive impact in life. The study recommends that Authorities must take into consideration not only the economic impact of social isolation, but also the mental impact on the society and must implement appropriate measures. People need to consult their psychiatrist and follow the remedies as prescribed in their daily routine life.

Keywords- Covid-19 pandemic, mental well being, masses boredom, lockdown, psychological problems

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the loss of a mass of human lives and is badly affecting the health and livelihood of the humans all over the world. Pandemics in general have not only affected public health seriously, but also resulted in disastrous socio-economic and political crises in the infected countries. The Government of various countries had to take the much required step of lockdown to control this pandemic which has led to the severe losses of economy/ business. This lockdown has negatively affected the economic activities which have resulted in the downturn of the world economy.

Problem Statement

When the primary focus is on examining the existence of virus, preventing the spread of disease, proper health treatment of infected patients, finding a medicine/vaccine/cure and development of strategies for revival of economy, there is a requirement to note that masses are going through mental illness/psychological problems due to the fear of the disease and making adjustment in current lifestyles.

Research objectives

The main objective of this study is to find out the impact of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on mental well-being amongst individuals in society, reasons for psychological impact and to find out the solutions for the recovery from negative impact, if any. The study was focused mainly to assess the psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mohammad Alradhawi, Nour Shubber, Jack Sheppard, Yousif Ali, performed a study on the Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental well-being amongst individuals in society. On the basis of the findings, it was recommended that "COVID-19 social isolation measures have had a profound impact on the psychological and mental well-being of individuals across society. Social interaction has been widely interlinked with psychological well-being, social opportunities and employment; thereby restrictions of these measures are suggested to be profoundly distressing to those experiencing strict isolation. Due to the high demand for emergency funding, many self-employed individuals are resorting to short-term bank loans to maintain lines of income. Those in low-paid, self-employed or insecure occupations experience the greatest impact due to loss of work or the temporary closure of their business. There have been reports of heightened feelings of anxiety and depression, with some fearful of post-lockdown anxiety and paranoia; the largest stressor being an overarching feeling of loss (loss of income, routine or social interaction). Other at-risk groups include children and students who have experienced closure of schools and/or universities causing significant disruption to daily routines, with factors such as exam postponement, accommodation expulsion and graduation cancellations contributing. Furthermore, there has been a significant detrimental impact to those suffering from ongoing mental health conditions, due to decreased access to support and resources."

As per the article published in World Health Organization on mental health due to corona virus, “The new realities of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues take time to get used to. Adapting to lifestyle changes such as these, and managing the fear of contracting the virus and worry about people close to us who are particularly vulnerable, are challenging for all of us. They can be particularly difficult for people with mental health conditions.”

Mohit Varshney, Jithin Thomas Parel, Neeraj Raizada, Shiv Kumar Sarin performed a study on “Initial psychological impact of COVID-19 and its correlates in Indian Community: An online (FEEL-COVID) survey”, and concluded that “COVID-19 pandemic has caused a lot of uncertainty in the lives of Indian public, just like their global counterparts. Our survey is one of the first mental health related data from India, during the initial phase of COVID-19 pandemic and indicated that a significant proportion of them have had a psychological impact during the crisis. The factors that predicted higher impact were younger age, being female and having a known physical co-morbidity. There is a need for considering mental health issues by the policy makers; while planning interventions to fight the pandemic.”

As per the article published in aditya birla capital dt. 30.04.2020 “Many of us are bored, miss our daily routines, and frustrated about staying indoors all the time. It is completely normal to feel this way as it is in our nature to go out and socialize with other people. But what we don’t seem to have realized is that there is a plus side to being in lockdown. The first and obvious reason is that we are helping to flatten the curve by safeguarding ourselves from Corona virus. It might not seem like it at first, but the lockdown can have many benefits. The positive impact on our health and well-being is a good reason why everyone should take this time and make the most of it. If staying active if your forte then you might as well earn rewards by staying fit and avail discounts on your health insurance premiums and other services.”

III. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The survey is conducted on students, employees from different sectors, housewives, professionals through online meetings and persons available in social media with age group ranging from 16-50, as social distancing is important in this Pandemic. Some psychiatrists were also interviewed as part of study. It is also based on secondary data which is collected through newspaper, websites, magazines and journals.

Data Collection Method

In order to meet the objectives of the study, the data has been collected from -

- Primary Data
- Secondary Data

Primary Data

To get primary data for the analysis, discussions were done with students, employees from different sectors, housewives, professionals. The data collected from such discussions are analyzed in this study.

Research questions

The research question in this study is: “psychological/mental problem faced during this lockdown”. The questionnaire contains two major parts. The first section included data about the respondent like age, sex, joint/nuclear family they belong, occupation, nature of income, city and the duration of their complete isolation. Second section included the data regarding psychological/mental problem faced during this lockdown.

Secondary Data

For getting secondary data different sources were used, which are-

- Newspaper
- Websites
- Magazines and journals

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As per the study made by collecting the primary data from students, employees from different sectors, housewives, professionals and secondary data, covid 19 pandemic and the lockdown have resulted in social isolation and changes in lifestyle and work style which has a great impact on psychological and mental well-being of individuals across society.

The result shows that the people living in metros are more affected than people of small towns and villages. Also, people from nuclear families have been affected more than people from joint families. The people from age group 16-30 have been worse affected and females have been affected more than males. Studies also show that the single earner has been affected more than the families which are having more than one income earner. Also, persons having single source of income have been affected more than the persons having multiple sources of income.

The reason for such impact is that many people have lost their jobs; some of them are working with salary cuts while many are working from home as a result of this lockdown. It has also restricted people to remain in home and not to enjoy life like before such as visiting restaurants, shopping malls, parties, disco, pubs, and cinema halls or out of station for fun. Also, home-schooling of children, lack of physical contact with friends, colleagues and other family members have increased boredom and dullness among the masses. There is also psychological fear among the masses related to the transmission of disease and its potential effects. There is frustration among housewives due to increase household work due to unavailability of maids. Wearing of face masks to prevent transmission of disease is also very irritating.

The results drawn from the data collected are as follows:-

Negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health of individuals in society:

- **Suicide:** Covid 19 pandemic and the lockdown have resulted in social isolation. Lack of physical contact with friends, colleagues and other family members have increased boredom and dullness among the masses. It has also restricted people to remain in home and not to enjoy life like before such as visiting restaurants, shopping malls, parties, disco, pubs, and cinema halls or out of station for fun. Many people have lost their jobs; some of them are working with salary cuts. So boredom and financial crisis can be the two reasons for suicide in this pandemic. The recent cases of suicide of bollywood actor sushant singh rajput and tellywood actor sameer sharma are examples of this case.
- **Increase in divorce rates:-** Research also shows increase in divorce rates due to misunderstanding, difference in opinions and quarrels between couples.
- **Self-harm, anxiety, worries and insomnia:** Many people have lost their jobs; some of them are working with salary cuts while many are working from home as a result of this lockdown. This has resulted in anxiety, worries and insomnia mainly with a question in mind "how to run their family in this pandemic and save them from the spread". This result is Self-harm like birth of many diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, hypertension and other related diseases.
- **Wild behavior with colleagues:** The lockdown and the increased work pressure with reduced salary have a very negative impact on the mental behavior of persons with their colleagues. Even polite persons with efficiencies have started behaving in a very wild way.
- **Substance misuse:** The covid 19 pandemic has created a myth that consumption of alcohol or drugs like hydroxychloroquine can cure the disease. The overindulgence in alcohol or misuse of prescribed medication/ use of illegal drugs can't cure the disease rather such misuse is harmful to our health.
- **Domestic and child abuse:** The lockdown has also resulted in the increase of domestic violence and child abuse as some men adopts this method to remove their frustration.

Positive impact of lockdown on mental health of individuals in society:

- **Family time:-** The first and foremost positive impact of lockdown is the quality time which one can spend with family. Before, many people used to complain that they are not getting enough time to spend time with their family. But with the concept of work from home and children not having to go to school due to

lockdown, there is enough time to spend quality time with family. This time together is a great way to relieve stress and improve mental health.

- **Time for leisure, fun and passion:-** People are now getting time to fulfill their passion like writing, drawing, painting etc. They are also getting enough time to sleep, relax, exercise, meditate, watching movies in home etc which has created positive impact on mental health.
- **Reduction in environment pollution:-** Air, sound, water pollution has been reduced to a high level making the environment clean for humans which has also resulted in positive impact on health.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Covid -19 pandemic has resulted in the loss of a mass of human lives, health and livelihood of the humans, disastrous socio-economic and political crises. But one should note that the Lockdown as a result of the covid-19 pandemic has also seriously affected the mental health of people and almost every section of society has suffered ranging from people residing in small town to metro cities and male or female population, people belonging to whatever age group and people belonging to nuclear family or joint family. But as per the data analysis, the sections of people which have been worse hit are young generations belonging to nuclear family and residing in big metro cities. The negative impact has resulted in suicide, increase in divorce rates, self-harm, anxiety, worries and insomnia, wild behavior with colleagues, substance misuse, domestic and child abuse and has given birth of many severe diseases. Government of India has launched helpline numbers to provide guidance and counseling. World Health Organization has also urged to take the necessary precautions to tackle the negative impact of the spread of Corona virus on psychological health and well-being. But data also conclude that this lockdown has also had positive impact in life.

Recommendations

Authorities must take into consideration not only the economic impact of social isolation, but also the mental impact on the society, implementing appropriate measures. People need to consult their psychiatrist and follow the remedies as prescribed in their daily routine life.

As per the study, some tips to fight with the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic are as follows:-

1. Start your morning with drinking 4 glasses of warm water followed by meditation and yoga. This will boost your immunity and will keep you fit both physically and mentally.
2. Try to minimize the newsfeed that make you feel anxious or distressed. Many people have the habit of watching tv/mobile in the early morning to know the latest news on the affected cases of corona or the number of deaths which has a negative impact on minds. Seek the latest information at specific times of the day, once or twice a day if needed.

3. Don't rely on fake news which disturbs you otherwise. Listen to trusted news channels, such as local and national TV and radio, and keep up-to-date knowledge with the latest news from WHO on social media.
4. Read good books, update the knowledge, attend webinars and upgrade your skills.
5. Use social media like face book, whatsapp to spread positive news and happiness.
6. Watch good movies over subscription channels if you are very fond of movie.
7. Watch and play online games but please ensure to take breaks in between.
8. Make changes in your daily routine work like one can take a walk on his/her terrace to have a change.
9. Maintain personal hygiene and take healthy meals and enough drinking water at regular times. Keep yourself hydrated.
10. Take proper sleep as rest is very important to keep you mentally fit.
11. Involve yourself in things which you enjoy. Try to do things for which you are passionate like online teaching, painting, drawing, cooking, singing, dancing or even house dusting.
12. Keep in regular contact with people close to you i.e. your friends, colleagues, relatives by telephone and online channels. This is the most important solution as man is a social animal.
13. Spend time with your family. Give time to children and ensure that they are not involved much on online activities. Try to do some things along with them like singing, dancing, painting, writing poems etc.
14. Help others either giving support to your employees, house maid, street animals or any person who needs mental counseling
15. Listening music of your type is best medicine.
16. Avoid using alcohol and drugs as means of dealing with fear, anxiety, boredom and social isolation.
17. Avoid discrimination against people who are affected by corona virus.
18. Give respect to the corona warriors like cleaners, delivery man, doctors, nurses etc.
19. Write a letter of thanks to the persons who have supported you.
20. Set small goals and give 100% to achieve them.
21. Celebrate festivals and annual celebrations staying at home with full enthusiasm. It will give some change and relaxation from boredom.
22. Self appreciation is a must. In this modern era, people are just busy in letting others down instead of motivating others. Better cultivate the habit of self appreciation which boosts your morale in this pandemic.

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Authors Profile

CA Amit Nath pursued Chartered Accountancy from The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India in 2007 and Masters of business administration in Finance from SMU in 2010 and Bachelor of accounts from Ranchi University in 2005.



He is currently working as senior faculty (Finance and accounts) in Techno India University (I-nurture), Kolkata since Feb. 15, 2018 and has more than 12 years of experience in finance and accounts (both academic and non-academic). He has presented 6 research papers in national and international conferences and was a resource speaker in tax related workshops.