

Socio-Economic Effect of Covid-19 Lock-Down and Its Associated Factors Among College Students

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to analyze the socio-economic effect of COVID-19 lockdown and its associated factors among college students. A survey study was conducted through social media in the age group of 18-25, in which 41% males and 59 % were females, out of which 13% male and 07% female students felt depression, 75% faced financial crises, 73% faced financial difficulties within family, 70% worried about parents' earnings and 52% felt changes in employment activity, 84% unable to control the important things in life, 75% dealt successfully with irritating life hassles, 51% felt things were going their way, 61% felt nervous, 81% confident about ability to handle personal problems, 82% able to control irritations in life and only 20% felt moderate to severe depression, 54% said need to reduce the amount of food, 49% said financial issue being an obstacle for getting food, 35% experienced increased snacking, 15% decreased appetite and 38% inconsistent eating, 18% increase in quarrel or fight, 16% in domestic violence in the family as well as 37% experienced reduced interactions with people, 03% fill great positive and 08% fill negative effects on social relationships. The statistically significant association is observed in depression with gender, financial crises, nervousness, financial issue for getting food and increase in domestic violence. Thus, it is concluded that COVID-19 lock-down and its associated factors are building socio-economic problems among college students. Therefore, various measures should be encouraged to prevent such emotional distress.

Keywords :Socio-economic, COVID-19, Students

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I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19, caused by a new strain of coronavirus, risen out of Wuhan city of China in December 2019 and its outbreak has affected millions of people worldwide and was declared a pandemic by the

World Health Organization on 11th March 2020 (WHO 2020). Confirmed cases and deaths grew rapidly, on 5th April 2020 there were more than 1,200,000 confirmed cases worldwide and more than 68,000 people had died from it (Johns Hopkins University & Medicine 2020). On that time India is

also one of country in the world with the most people affected by this pandemic.

On 24th March 2020, Indian government announced a lock-down period of 21 days in response to the seriousness of the pandemic and enforced Section 144 of Cr PC all over the country (Sengupta 2020). But even after the 21 days of lock-down period, the infection is not contained and hence the lockdown is prolonged further (Dutta 2020), following this, the peoples social lives are severely affected. It is not just a health crisis; it is the economic and humanitarian crisis and called a black swan by many economists (Aneja and Ahuja 2021). Such isolation strategy in an attempt to contain the pandemic, could also lead to development of psychological distress, loneliness, anxiety, depression, panic states, economic troubles and extreme mental stress (Hawryluck et al, 2004; Buheji et al, 2020; Reynolds et al, 2008). The societal impacts are dire too with job losses, mental illness, increased domestic violence, and so forth (Aneja and Ahuja 2021).

Although the overall impact on education and mental health of the university environment is still unknown, it is expected to be very considerable (Araújo et al, 2020; Sahu, 2020). "Considering the usual high incidence of emotional disorders in university students, it can be expected that the current situation may cause a notable impact on this population" (Auerbach et al, 2016; Bruffaerts et al, 2018 and Hunt and Eisenberg 2010). The continuous spread of COVID-19 and the circumstances of the situation creates various problems in students life because college students, are one of the groups that are vulnerable to distress due to active social life. Hence studying the effect of lock-down on the social and mental health of this group of people is needed. Therefore, this study aims to show the socio-economic effect of covid-19 lock-down and its associated factors among college students of some rural areas of Gadchiroli District, Maharashtra, India.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study population

A community based survey study was conducted in the some rural areas of Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, India. All university undergraduate science students living in study area who were willing to participate, who had access to internet and social media and who were able to understand English was eligible for participation in this study.

Survey instrument and Statistical analysis

A web-based anonymous survey was conducted in the month of May to June, 2021 by Google form through social media like Whatsapp, first to the groups containing college students in our contact and the participants were encouraged to share it to other students they knew of. It was an internet-based survey and consent was obtained from the participants. It composed of 23 multiple-choice questions which included questions referred to participants' demographic characteristics, financial crises, negative emotional states, food habits, domestic violence and social life. Data entry and analysis was done using SPSS Statistical software. The associations between different variables assessed using chi square test and p value was calculated.

III. RESULTS

The survey study on socio-economic impact of COVID-19 outbreak and its associated factors among college students was completed by a total of 100 college going students belonged to the Science field and are thus the sample considered in this study. Out of 100 study subjects, 41% males and 59 % were females. All the participants were in the age group of 18-25 years. The demographic characteristics of the final survey respondents are summarized in Table 1.

In the present survey study more number of male students 13% and only 7% female students felt depression and gender is significantly associated with

depression ($p < 0.05$) as well as majority of participants 75% faced financial crises, 73% faced financial difficulties within family, 70% worried about parents' earnings and 52% felt changes in employment activity during second wave of COVID-19. The statistically significant association is observed between depression with financial crises ($p < 0.01$) and non-significant with worries about parents' earnings (Table 2 and 4).

In this period of lock-down during COVID-19 second wave the various negative emotional states shows that majority 84% participants felt that they were unable to control the important things in life, 75% dealt successfully with irritating life hassles, 51% felt that things were going their way, 61% felt nervous, 81% felt confident about ability to handle personal problems, 82% able to control irritations in life and only 20% felt moderate to severe depression. The statistically significant association is observed between depression and nervousness ($p < 0.05$) (Table 2, 3 and 4).

The present study on food pattern and habits during second wave of COVID-19 shows that majority 54% said need to reduce the amount of food and 49% said financial issue being an obstacle for getting food is the probable reason as well as 35% experienced increased snacking, 15% decreased appetite and 38% experienced inconsistent eating. The statistically significant association is observed between depression with financial issue for getting food ($p < 0.05$) and non-significant with need to reduce the amount of food (Table 2, 3 and 4).

In our study on domestic violence, out of the total participants only 18% experienced increase in quarrel or fight and 16% in domestic violence in the family as well as the survey study on the status of social relation or social isolation in COVID-19 reported that majority 37% participants experienced reduced interactions with people however, only 03% fill great positive and 08% fill negative effects on social relationships. The statistically significant association is observed between depression with increase in domestic violence ($p < 0.01$) (Table 3 and 4).

IV. DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic being one such pandemic which has terrifically affected the lives of people. As a way to control the spread of the virus most countries opt for social distancing and lock-downs which brings loss to human lives also bring many adverse impacts on the society specially college going students therefore this study aimed at assessing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 outbreak and its associated factors among college students, who are known to have an active social life. To our knowledge, this study is the first one from study area that analyzes the impact of COVID-19 outbreak among college students from science field.

The present survey study revealed that depression is higher in males than female and gender is significantly associated with depression. Similarly, Kazmi et al, (2020) reported the depression and stress levels were higher in males as compare to females and Aylie et al, (2020) revealed that sex is significantly associated with depression in their respective studies. But Ravichandran et al, (2020) reported contradictory findings where no association between gender and the negative emotional states was observed. Our study on financial crises show that majority of participants 75% faced financial crises which is statistically significant with depression. This is supported with a study done in Ethiopia among university students (Aylie et al, 2020) and in China among college students (Cao et al, 2020).

Furthermore, this study showed that the prevalence of nervousness is 61% and the statistically significant association is observed between depression and nervousness as well as the prevalence of depression is 20% which is supported with a review of existing literature reported by Ayeli et al, (2020) in Ethiopia (21.3%) and Rajkumar et al, (2020) (16–28%) but lower than studies conducted by Salman et al, (2020) in Pakistan (45%) and Odriozola-gonzalez et al, (2020) in Spain (34.1%) and higher than study conducted by Rehman et al, (2020) in India (13.97%).

In the period of lock-down food being an important need and getting food was a major issue. The present study on food pattern and habits revealed that majority 54% students said need to reduce the amount of food and 49% said financial issue being an obstacle for getting food is the probable reason as well as 35% experienced increased snacking, 15% decreased appetite and 38% experienced inconsistent eating. The statistically significant association is observed between depression and financial issue for getting food. The findings is in agreement with study reported by Christodoulou et al, (2013) where 16.6% said that their financial situations are stopping them from getting food and this was found to have a strong association with anxiety as well as Acard et al, (2003) also reported, over-eating was found to be associated with negative psychological experiences and Ravichandran et al, (2020) reported that the frequency of food intake has increased by 41.8% and 48.3% said they feel a need to reduce the food intake in the lock-down, but these weren't associated with the negative emotional states in their studies.

In our study on domestic violence, out of the total participants only 18% experienced increase in quarrel or fight and 16% in domestic violence as well as majority 37% participants experienced reduced interactions with people however, only 03% fill great positive effects and 08% fill negative effects on social relationships. The statistically significant association is observed between depression with increase in domestic violence. Similarly Ravichandran et al, (2020) reported that 20.9% increased in quarrels and fights but no associations were found with the negative emotional states and 5% increase in domestic violence which was associated with the anxiety and stress among the participants within family in this lock-down. Jones and Isham (2020) also suggested that in such periods of lock-down, domestic violence cases would increase in their study on the consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence.

The possible reasons for the difference between the earlier studies and present study may be

the age group of students have analyzed is different from that of the other study, a significantly smaller sample size in the study and could be because of a care-free attitude of college students.

V. CONCLUSION

COVID-19 pandemic has incurred social and economic problems which affects the students life and creates various problems like depression, financial crises, worries and irritations, nervousness, change in food habits, quarrel or fight, domestic violence, reduced interactions with people, positive as well as negative effects on social relationships. Thus, it is concluded that COVID-19 outbreak and the lock-down are building distress among college students. Therefore, measures to prevent such distress should be encouraged. During lockdown everyone must be involved in their hobbies, physical activities and exercise, share emotion with parents and friends, it could make this time productive and happy instead of getting stress.

VI. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The outcomes of this study cannot be generalized to other population because the study involved only the age group of 18-25 years and an educated group. Since the data were collected by internet, the respondents may not provide accurate information for the study, which may have an effect on the findings of this study. The study could not be superior to a professional psychiatrist's assessment.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: No conflict of interest

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of survey respondents

SN	Particulars	Category	Percentage (%)
1	Age	18-25 years	100
2	Gender	Male	41
		Female	59
3	Class	UG - I	23
		UG - II	48
		UG - III	29

Table 2 Characteristics of the survey respondents related to the situation

SN	Particulars	Percentage (%)	
		Yes	No
1	Have you faced Financial crises in COVID pandemic?	75	25
2	Have you faced Financial difficulties within family in COVID pandemic?	73	27
3	Have you Worried About Parents' Earnings in COVID pandemic?	70	30
4	Have you felt any Changes in employment activity in COVID pandemic?	52	48
5	In the COVID pandemic, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	84	16
6	In the COVID pandemic, how often have you dealt successfully with irritating life hassles?	75	25
7	In the COVID pandemic, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	51	49
8	In the COVID pandemic, how often have you felt nervous?	61	39
9	In the COVID pandemic, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	81	19
10	In the COVID pandemic, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	82	18
11	Need to reduce the amount of food?	54	46
12	Financial issue being an obstacle for getting food?	49	51

Table 3 Characteristics of the survey respondents related to the situation

SN	Particulars	Percentage (%)			
		None	Mild	Moderate	Severe
1	Have you felt Depression in COVID pandemic?	67	13	14	06
2	What was your eating pattern during second wave of COVID?	No change	Increased snacking	Decreased appetite	Inconsistent eating
		12	35	15	38
3	Have you faced Quarrel and Fight in family during COVID pandemic?	None	Increased	Decreased	Same as before
		53	18	08	21
4	Have you faced Domestic violence in COVID pandemic?	59	16	08	17
		No change	Restricted outdoor activities	Reduced interactions with people	Problems with parents
5	What is the status of your Social relation/social isolation in COVID?	34	20	37	09

		None	Little	Some	Great
6	Fill any Positive effects on social relationships.	58	24	15	03
7	Fill any Negative effects on social relationships.	58	19	15	08

Table 4 Associations between various negative emotional states

SN	Particulars	Number	Depression Number	P value
1	Gender			
	Male	41	13	0.048*
	Female	59	07	
2	Faced financial crises			
	Yes	75	06	0.008**
	No	25	14	
3	Worried about parents' earnings			
	Yes	70	15	0.653
	No	30	05	
4	Felt nervous			
	Yes	61	17	0.039*
	No	39	03	
5	Financial issue being an obstacle for getting food			
	Yes	49	16	0.011*
	No	51	04	
6	Need to reduce the amount of food			
	Yes	54	12	0.622
	No	46	08	
7	Increased domestic violence			
	Yes	16	09	0.003**
	No	84	11	

*p < 0.05, **p<0.01

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