



**IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN ON INDIAN STUDENTS: A
NATION-WIDE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

The SARS-CoV-2, also known as the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), appeared for the first time in China on November 17, 2019. Having infected millions globally in a span of a few months, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Eventually, the Indian Government imposed a nationwide lockdown. Shutting down schools, colleges, universities and rescheduling major entrance examinations, internships and research projects led to increased levels of anxiety and uncertainty amongst the students. The objective of this paper is to study the effects of lockdown on Indian students, thereby enabling a better understanding of students' adaptation to the sudden changes. Numerous cases complaining of deterioration in mental health amongst the students are being reported. An attempt has been made to shed light upon the aggravated anxiety levels of students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent stages of lockdown. The paper seeks to answer certain questions regarding the well-being and overall health of students, based on the data collected with the help of an online questionnaire. Various statistical parameters and graphs further provide a stronger basis to conclude the findings of the paper.

Keywords: COVID-19, Anxiety, Mental Health, Pandemic, Online Indian Education, Lockdown.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an infectious respiratory disease that originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in 2019 (WHO, 2019). The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). As of 30th October 2020, 43.87 million cases have been reported in more than 200 countries of the world, with more than 1.1 million deaths (WHO, 2020). COVID-19 was jeopardizing all the nations in almost every aspect. On 30th January 2020, India reported its first case of COVID-19 in Kerala (Press Information Bureau, 2020). As of 30th October 2020, India stood at the 2nd place in terms of the number of cases and the 3rd in terms of total deaths (WHO, 2020).

To restrict the spread of the disease, the Government of India had imposed a nationwide lockdown from 24th March, 2020. Educational institutions, shops, restaurants, cinemas, religious places, and other public and tourist spots were shut down during the lockdown period enforced by the government (PM Calls for Complete Lockdown of Entire Nation for 21 Days, March 24, 2020). This closure was extended several times, leading to a catastrophic period of 3-4 months where people had to force themselves into a new and brave world of self-isolation, lockdowns and social distancing.

The lockdown has led to a financial crisis in numerous houses, especially those that depend on daily wages (Abdin & Kumar, 2020). With educational institutions closed, syllabi left incomplete and the prospect of examinations obscure, students have been enveloped in a feeling of anxiousness and dubiety. COVID-19 pandemic has affected the education of about 320 million students in India alone (UNESCO, 2020). Students, or in general, teenagers, were unable to meet their peers and friends, which had an adverse effect on their mental health and well-being. The

psychological and health impacts of this disease have taken a toll on the overall wellness and mental health of people. This has created a feeling of uncertainty and gloom among the masses (Dubey et al., 2020). But the silver lining is that a lot many people have had the opportunity of spending comparatively more time with their families and have, at least, had a brief break from the monotony of their routine lives. Nature also started healing itself in the absence of humans (Lokhandwala & Gautam, 2020).

WHO is helping people gain knowledge about the COVID-19, giving expert guidance about the disease, preventive measures as well as myths associated with the virus and the disease (WHO, 2020). The Government is also sharing crucial information through different social media platforms and appealing to people to take measures and precautions, such as wearing masks, regularly washing hands, maintaining social distance and keeping their surroundings clean, healthy and hygienic.

This study was conducted from a cross-sectional, observational point of view. The data was collected using a self-constructed, semi-structured questionnaire via Google Forms. The questionnaire began with a consent form, along with a brief description of the study in order to inform participants of the objective as well as relevance of the research. Respondents were also ensured of anonymity and confidentiality of their identities and responses. The questionnaire contained questions that can be grouped into six sub-heads: Demographic parameters (Name, Gender, Educational Status, etc.), Awareness (about COVID-19, the concept of zones), Academics (study schedule, access to study material), Personal Growth (for instance, learning new skills, things students are currently involved in), Effects on Self and Family (analyzing effects of lockdown or stress in the family, social media time) and Expectations from the Future (predicting the time needed for technology to traditional classrooms, the situation of institutes after lockdown).

This study was conducted using the snowball sampling technique. To be a part of the study, participants were required to have access to the Internet and the ability to understand English. The target audience for this study consisted of students from grades 9 to 12 from different schools, as well as undergraduate students of various colleges and universities across the country. The sample size of this study was (644/630).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The history is evident of the fact that the pandemics have had numerous and long-term impacts on the nations affected. These impacts do not limit themselves to the health and well-being of citizens, but also include economic, social and psychological aspects of the general lives of people. Similar was the case with COVID. It brought a massive spike up in the anxiety levels of the public and a trough in the economic condition of the nation. Abdin et al. (2020) discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the social lives of many, specially the workers and middle class families. India comprises of 40 to 50 million migrant workers, out of the total 465 million workforce, directing on how the pandemic has made it extremely difficult to survive for the daily bread earners and migrant workers. It also details how COVID has impacted India economically, along with its consequences and shortcomings to be dealt with. This loss of income and bread has lead to severe anxiety, tension and stress in masses. Dubey et al. (2020) have analyzed the psychosocial impacts of the pandemic and lockdown imposed in India. It also discusses about how these impacts can be minimized with the help of the social media and appropriate guidance, along with adequate mentorship. It highlights the need of psychosocial and mental preparedness of the public in order to deal with the future impacts of this COVID and upcoming pandemics in future.

The unavoidable lockdown in India not only brought the closing of markets, malls, theatres and legislative bodies, but also of schools and colleges. The students were sent to home by institutions and this led to some major changes, conduction of online classes being one of the major ones. Gaur et al. (2020) established how attending the online classes were a major challenge for many students. The Indian education system that mainly relied on the classroom and textbook education suddenly saw drastic changes, ranging from the extensive use of e-books to classes in virtual mode, along with conduction of regular school and college events such as Annual day functions and Farewell parties in online mode. Many acting barriers include lack of facilities and the dip in financial and psychological condition of a large fragment of the society. Technical barriers including lack of resource knowledge also acted as a highlighting factor.

Extending further, Jena (2020) outlines the prime requirement of resources for the online education to proceed smoothly. The stability of virtual education and the need to evolve and expand the free online resources availability to the students should be looked after by the supreme educational bodies like MHRD and UGC. Upgrading the accessibility and availability of technology to the students at a cheap or nominal price would boost their interest and ratio in classes.

Due to this trend of online classes and the 'Work from Home' concept, the abundant time available while being at home has led to a sudden increase in the time spent by the students and public at the social media platforms. Javed et al. (2020) brings how of the 99% people attempting the survey feel that they spend their free time on social media and 39% feel stressed and anxious due to the over usage of the social media and delay in the timelines of their routine works. Due to restricted outdoor activities, people commit to have become addicted to social media platforms. Patel et al. (2020) further expands on how a social media app 'TikTok' flourished in India before getting banned in the last week of June, 2020. The app which seemed to be the talent showcasing platform in the beginning, later on had major shortcoming and ill influence on the young and tender minds.

This sudden drop in the employment and the economic status of India, along with the constant growth and increasing cases of COVID, has caused havoc amongst public, leading to anxieties and stress. All this has hampered the mental health of Indians, especially students who were restricted to just a 6 inches college life, present at their hands, that is, their mobile screens. This prime idea has been dealt in detail by the authors here, highlighting the psychosocial impacts on the students due to the lockdown and online classes. This brings out their various experiences, including those of online classes, their personal development, mental health and much more.

3. EXPERIENTIAL WORK

As stated earlier, the items of the questionnaire used for the current study can be grouped into six sub-heads: Demographic Parameters, Awareness, Personal Growth, Academics, Effects on Self and Family and finally, Expectations from the Future.

3.1 Demographic Parameters

The present research was aimed at studying awareness, attitude and anxiety among students due to the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the issues related to the shift in education to online mode. Out of the respondents, 56.6% were females, 43.2% were males and 0.2% belonged to other genders (Fig.1).

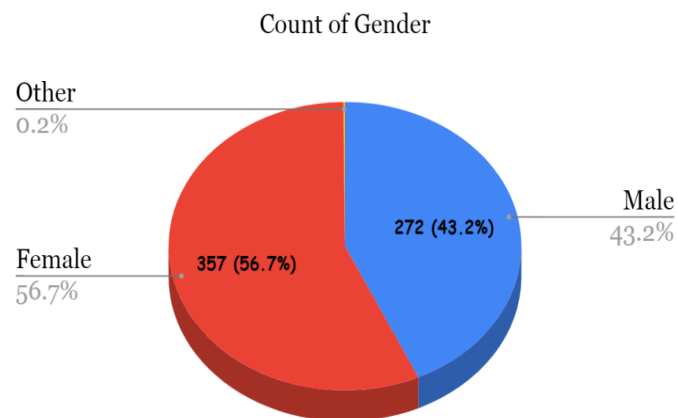


Figure 1: Participants' gender ratio

83.4% of the participants were undergraduate students, 11.3% were grade 12 and 5.3% were grade 10 school students. According to our survey, 53.8% of participants were studying in government institutes, 16.6% were enrolled at semi-private institutes and 29.6% were studying in private institutes. The Government of India introduced the structure of 'zones' for citizens to comprehend the degree to which their locality was under threat.

The current sample consisted of 44.9% of participants residing in red zones, 37.1% in orange zones and the remaining 17.9% in green zones.

Count of According to the government guidelines, under which zone does your locality fall?

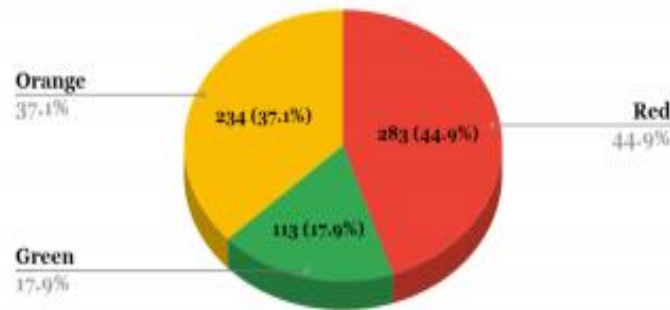


Figure 2: Division on the basis of COVID Zones as created by GOI

3.2 Awareness

The respondents were asked to rate their awareness about COVID-19 on a scale of 1 to 5. Approximately 45.5% rated their knowledge as 5 out of 5 and 41.0% rated it as 4 out of 5. Hence, 86.6% of the total respondents thought that they were sufficiently aware of COVID-19 and its impacts. Of the remaining, 11.9% gave themselves a score of 3, followed by 1.11% who rated themselves as 2 and finally, 0.47% of respondents rated their awareness level at 1.

How much do you feel, you are aware of CoVid-19

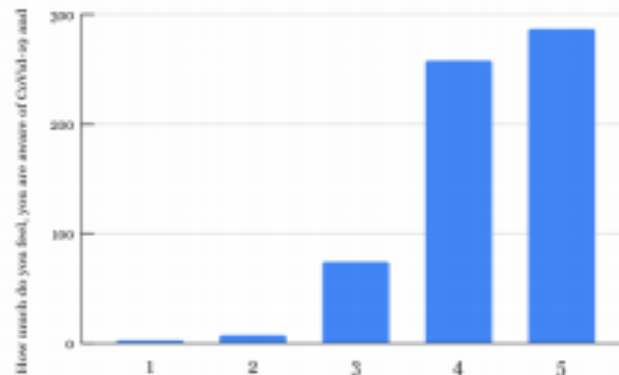


Figure 3: COVID-19 Awareness among participants

3.3 Personal Growth

The current study found that this lockdown, on one hand, allowed room for self-discovery and exploration of one's ambitions, as was reported by 56.1% of the respondents. They reported having worked on themselves and investing their time in enhancing their personalities, by learning new skills and resolving issues (academic or non-academic) that they had been facing in the days prior to the lockdown. On the other hand, many students (48.41%) agreed that due to the lack of interaction with teachers and peers, they had lost track of their study schedule. Only the remaining 5.56% believed that it had not affected them in any significant way.

The study conveyed that around 64.3% of families faced one or more of financial, emotional, psychological or mental issues, while only 35.7% of families reported not having faced any major problem. The following Venn-

Diagram illustrates the above information. The cases wherein any response other than those provided as options in the Google Form were filled as separate entries could not be included here with the generalized results.



Figure 4: Venn diagram representing different issues faced by participants

Here, E stands for 'Emotional', P for 'Psychological', M for 'Medical' and F for 'Financial'. The number (within brackets) indicates the number of participants who chose that particular option.

The sudden lockdown was not only unavoidable but also unforeseen. Hence, the pending exam and entrances had to be postponed indefinitely. While a small percentage of 8.6% students from our sample reported that they remained unaffected, as many as 46.0% reported having some anxiety about the delay. 16.0% were comfortable with or perhaps could afford the delays, while 29.4% of students remained tense about the uncertainty.

3.4 Academics

Our survey also found that around 58% students were worried about their school/college routine post the lockdown as they think that the students would be overburdened with syllabus completion and examinations would be conducted shortly, 31% believed that since online studies were going on continuously so it might take a while but they would cope-up easily. 7.6% believe that students may not face any major changes, while some others responded that they have no idea about the school/college routine once the educational institutions are reopened.

Undoubtedly, due to the prevailing inevitable circumstances, study schedules were greatly affected. As many as 34.4% of students reported having lost track of their academics, 24.6% stopped studying at all. Only 17.8% of students could continue studies smoothly since the lockdown began, while 23.2%, despite being comfortable now, admitted having faced issues initially.

Only 53.2% of the students had access to the required study material. Since many students were off to their native places or homes for festival vacations, they hardly had any access to their books and notes, and hence had to resort to using online resources. 25.7% of students belonged to educational institutions that were not conducting classes at all, possibly due to reasons such as technological difficulties, network issues and lack of preparedness to deal with the sudden pandemic, and the resulting lockdown.

On an average, students spent around 1.5 hours on online classes. 34.4% could not attend classes at all. These were mainly students from humbler backgrounds who did not have access to any form of technology like smart phones, tablets or laptops. Those residing in remote areas faced network issues despite having access to technology. These factors also had additional adverse effects on academics.

Count of With boards/ entrances/ results/ placements in process, how have the recent happen...

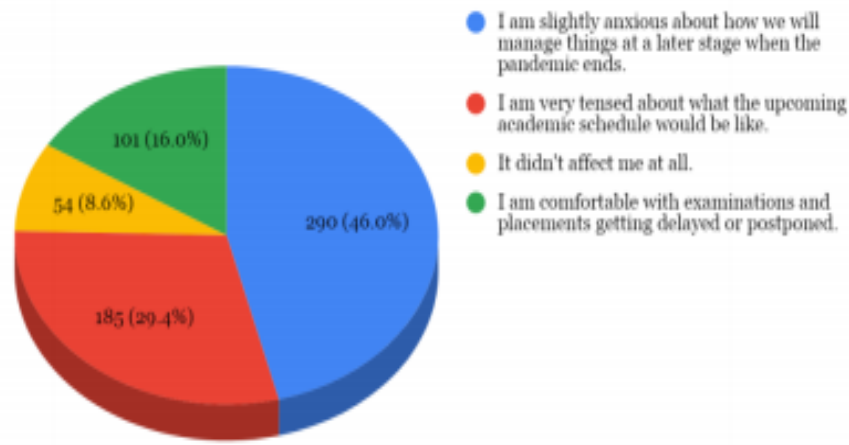


Figure 5: Participants' opinion on academics and career prospects

Count of What has your study schedule been like in the past few weeks?

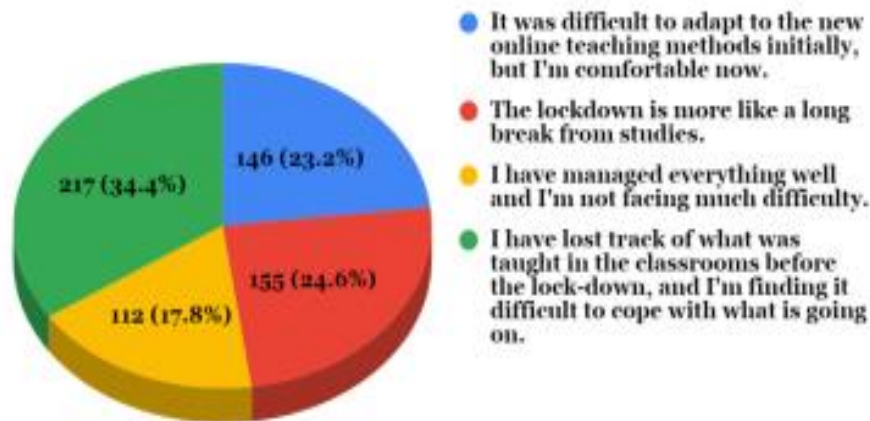


Figure 6: Division on the basis of participants' study schedule

Most of the institutions started the series of delivering online lectures using different modes like Google Meet, Zoom, Google Classrooms, Microsoft Teams, Skype, etc. to continue the teaching and learning process. As per the studies, 50.6% of students had used Zoom as their educational platform, while other platforms like Google Classrooms and Skype were also used widely.

How much time do you spend daily on online classes?

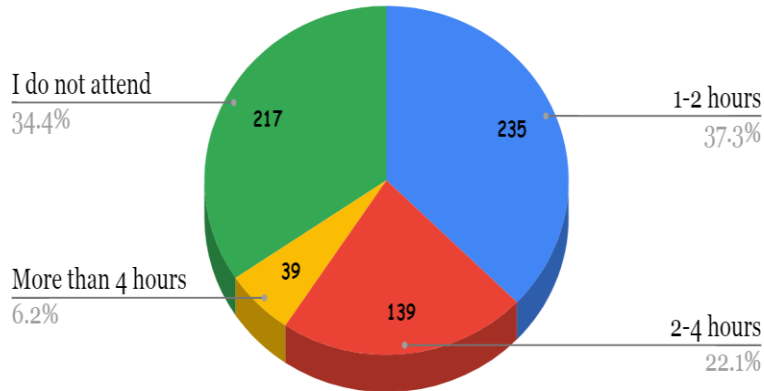


Figure 7: Time spent on Online Classes

On being asked, on a scale of 1 to 5, 18.8% of students rated their level of understanding as 1 (signifying poor clarity), 25.07% marked theirs as 2 while 37.9% ranked theirs as 3 (signifying an average level of understanding). Only 18.09% had a good or excellent level of understanding (4 or 5). This indicates the significance of physical classrooms that enable instant doubt clearing sessions and help teachers in assessing the perception of students and the fact if the concepts that are being taught are being readily grasped by the students via their facial expressions and gestures.

How well do you think you are able to develop the same level of understanding of the concepts through online lectures as in classroom teaching?

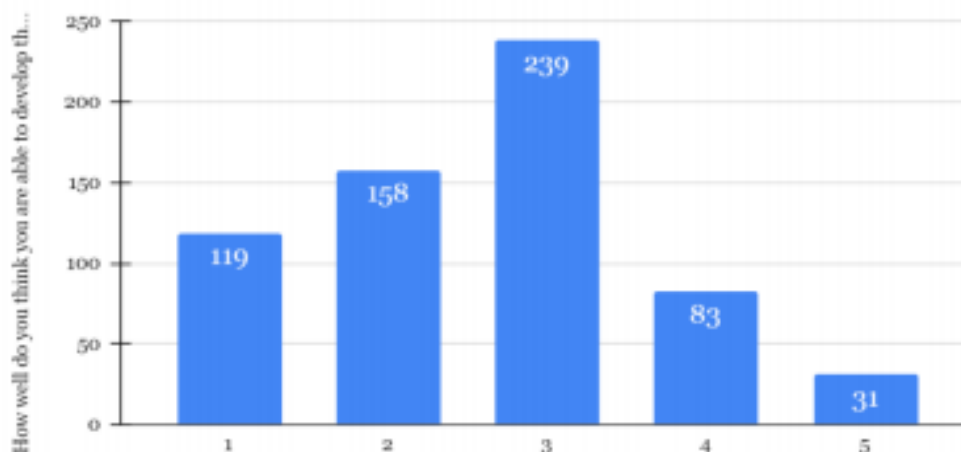


Figure 8: Level of comprehension in online class

Apart from online classes, which are almost entirely based on a predefined curriculum of schools and colleges, students were asked if they were learning any new skills or polishing the ones they already had, apart from what was being taught to them at schools/ colleges. Around 62.4% of students replied in the affirmative. The major skills

By how many hours has usage of your social media varied?

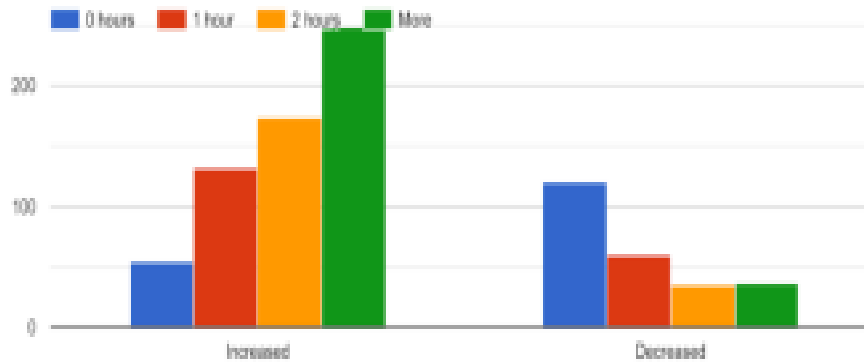


Figure 10: Variation in social media usage of participants

The sleep schedule of many students got disrupted since they were worried about the pandemic and its effects on themselves, their families, or around them in general. Around 57.1% of students were satisfied with their sleep schedule, while around 42.9% of students rated their sleep schedule as below average or poor. By a good sleep schedule, we mean a proper adherence to wake up and bed time as the one that the students had been following before the lockdown. Under-sleeping and over-sleeping, both count as qualities of a poor sleep schedule. A substantial surge in the screen time, or in particular, the time spent on social media, is further suspected to have a negative impact on sleep patterns of students. As high as 90.3% students who reported an increase in social media time, also reported a disturbed sleep.

Count of How has this lockdown affected your sleep schedule?

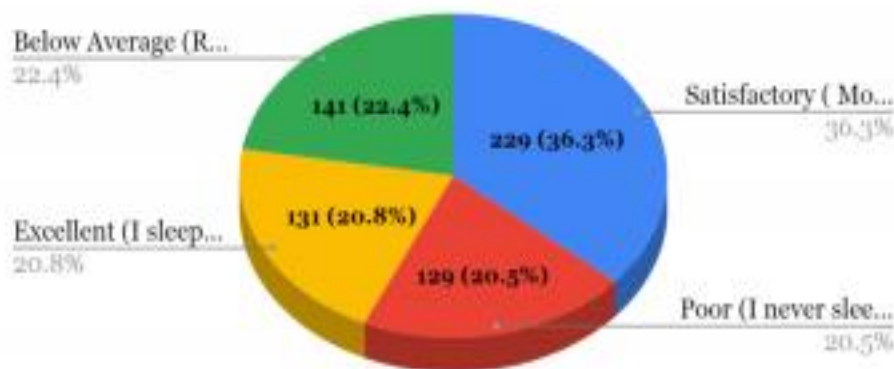


Figure 11: Impact of lockdown on sleep schedule

The data conveyed that during the lockdown around 51.6% of students practiced yoga or exercised frequently to keep their anxiety and mental health in check. 31.6% of students practiced it very rarely and

another 16.8% never practiced yoga at all. Another notable conclusion that can be drawn is that 23.1% of students who exercised regularly, also observed a health sleep pattern.

Count of How often do you exercise/yoga during this lockdown?

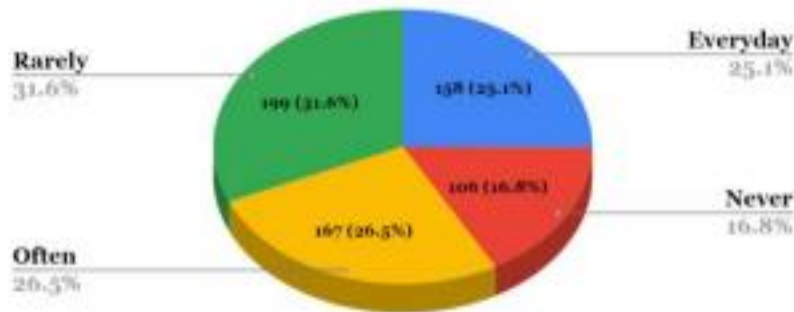


Figure 12: Frequency of exercising/ participating in yoga during lockdown

4. DISCUSSION

The online survey of students' perceptions, worries and expectations of their education in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic has yielded convincing results. In the initial phase of the pandemic, Indian news channels covered its spread on a large scale. Mediums like social platforms, newspapers and hearsay also played a part in people learning about the virus (though unreliable data was widely circulated). Hence, 45.5% of the participants reported themselves as fully aware of the virus and its effects. Many started consuming decoction and other various healthy food items to boost their immunities (Banerjee etc., 2020).

The central government delineated 'zones', taking into consideration the parameters shared by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Updates on COVID-19, May 1, 2020). The zones are as follows:

1. RED : Hotspots with the highest caseloads.
2. ORANGE : Limited cases with no recent positive case reported.
3. GREEN : Areas with zero/no confirmed case in the last 21 days.

The results from the study show that 44.8% of people resided in the red zone, 37.2% of people resided in the orange zone and the remaining 18.0% in the green zone.

All calculations such as mean, standard deviation, skewness of the data at hand, etc. have been calculated using Google Sheets.

When asked to rate their awareness about the pandemic on a scale of 1 to 5, the mean value was found to be 4.30, which shows that students think that they are in good correspondence with COVID, the necessary precautions they need to observe and the preventive measures. A low value of standard deviation, that is 0.76, was recorded. The skewness stood at -0.98. Clearly, such a high negative skewness towards the left indicates that most of the students felt that they are fully aware of the pandemic, as is evident in the following Bell Curve as well.

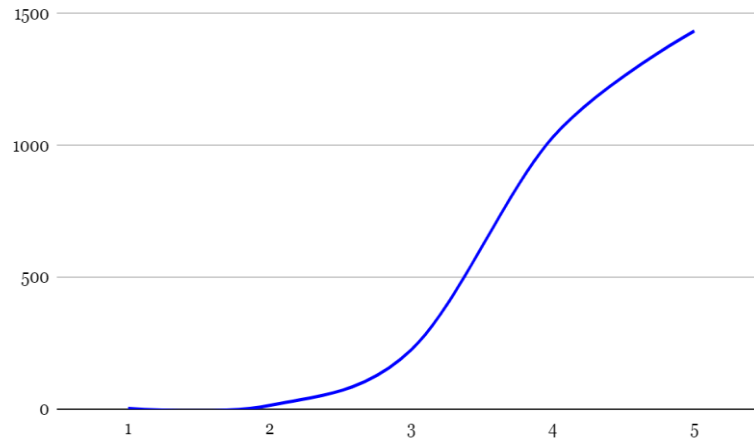


Figure 13: Bell Curve representing awareness about COVID-19

The projected mean from the study shows that students think that India would recover from the effects of COVID-19, within 4 months from the time the survey was conducted (June, 2020). Also, the skewness of the data was observed to be -0.69, which shows that the data was skewed moderately towards the left. This clearly indicates that most of the respondents felt that the pandemic would not end anytime soon, the actual prevailing situations being in a clear agreement with the same.

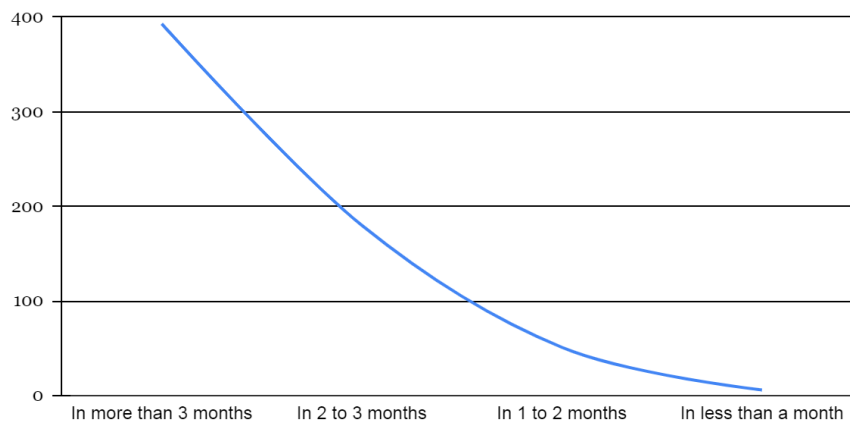


Figure 14: Bell Curve representing the time needed for the situation to be under control, as per the perception of the participants

Although the lockdown had to be waved off partially from the first week of June, 2020 itself and economic and commercial activities proliferated like the exponential curve (along with the number of cases), the situation is still not as much under control as was expected. On September 17, 2020, India recorded 97,894 cases in a single day, which was contrary to expectations of respondents. By the end of November, being almost 5 months apart, the situation is still not fit for colleges to reopen, however owing to upcoming board examinations, some states have granted permission to educational institutions to conduct classes for standard 10th and 12th only, upon having a written permission from guardians, and with all necessary precautions and physical distancing (MHA Issues New Guidelines for Re-Opening, Sep 30, 2020). Some major examinations like JEE, NEET-UG and UPSC-Prelims also had to be conducted but they recorded a higher number of absentees and significant delay in conduction as compared to the previous years. The unforeseen and precipitous spread of the virus highlighted India's dependence on the orthodox 'chalk and talk' model of teaching that could not meet the call for a spontaneous transition to remote learning.

As far as the chances of replacement of traditional classroom teaching by online medium were concerned, the questionnaire had an option of choosing 'never' as a possible answer, so for calculation purposes, the authors have quantified 'never' as 25 years [which is totally reasonable since there have been pieces of evidence (such as the transition from landlines to smart phones) which show that the world can experience a complete technological overhaul in 20 to 25 years]. The mean for this transition to become a reality stands at 8.27 years, which clearly indicates that the students might not be very satisfied with ongoing online going classes, but broadly, they do think that online classes will be able to replace the classic methodology of teaching in 7 to 9 years, on an average. On the other hand, the large value of standard deviation that is 7.50, as compared to the range of acceptable values (1-25 years) also indicates that there is a wide variation in the opinion of students about the notion of the possibility of replacement of the classic education system with technology. In a very fair correspondence with the standard deviation, the skewness also stands at +1.53. This value shows that the data was highly skewed towards the right. Clearly, most people did agree on the fact that the 'complete' replacement of traditional classroom teaching with online education might seem to be a far-fetched or unlikely concept, but is certainly attainable within the next few years.

Sudden closure of educational institutions led to the syllabi being left unfinished. We had 86 entries from school students. Since the school sessions had just begun or were about to commence shortly, post the year-end examinations, they mostly reported that the entire syllabus was left at the time the lockdown was imposed. Since the term at colleges typically begins in January and ends in May in India, therefore a large part of the syllabus was already covered by the second week of March. On an average, 49%, 47% and 49% of the syllabus were reported uncovered at government, private and semi-private UG institutions respectively.

The study schedule of most students who were dependent on the offline medium was affected and they found it difficult to cope with online classes. A whopping 34.4% of participants reported having lost track of their studies due to lockdown, whereas 24.6% felt that the lockdown was more like a 'long break' from studies/ academics. Only a meager 17.8% managed to keep up with their studies in the same way as they did prior to the pandemic.

We asked students about the approximate time they spend on online classes in a day. This question had an option of choosing 'I do not attend' and 'more than 4 hours' as prospective answers, apart from selecting fixed time slots like '1 to 2 hours' and '2 to 4 hours'. 'I do not attend' option directly corresponds to zero hours whereas, the authors have taken 'more than 4 hours' to correspond to 5 hours, keeping in mind that a usual day at school/college invariably takes approximately 6 teaching hours. The results showed that 22.1% of participants spent 2-4 hours on online classes on a regular basis. The overall mean of 1 hour 32 minutes in this question implies that the online classes were not too active at the beginning but this figure, in all certainty, may have increased, considering that the new sessions have begun and most of the institutes have adopted online teaching methodology. A standard deviation of 1 hour and 25 minutes that is very close to the mean of this data, shows that a considerable fraction of the respondents might not be having, or attending online classes at all, whereas we also had a large number of students whose online classes used to extend up to roughly 3+ hours on a daily basis. A sudden increase in screen time had an adverse impact on their health. Headache, excessive fatigue and body ache were reported to be common problems with comparatively more frequent occurrence (Gaur et al., 2020). The skewness of the data, in this case, was observed to be +0.71, that is, the bell curve representing the data was skewed fairly more towards the right, indicating that a larger section of students had online classes for lesser numbers of hours than the mean duration, as compared to those with a greater number of hours.

The mean of responses in "the level of understanding during online classes" was 2.60 on a scale of 1 to 5, demonstrates that most of the students could capture only about half of what they used to capture during the conventional classroom teaching. Only 5% of people, viz. 31 in 630, said that they were able to develop that same level of understanding through online lectures. On the contrary, 44% of students rated their understanding during online classes to be 1 or 2 on the scale of 5, signifying a huge dip in concept clarity amongst students.

Students have also observed a slight lack on the part of faculty members during the conduction of online classes. The mean stands at 2.70 on a scale of 5 which fell short of the expectations. A possible reason for this could have been a sudden and unanticipated shift from the classroom teaching to the online medium, which was more challenging for the teachers, especially the senior and aged ones, than students. A considerable fraction of teachers, who were not very conversant with technology, faced the most difficulties in ensuring the smooth functioning and

uninterrupted flow of their lectures. Almost 26% of students hardly observed any difference in the quality of teaching on the part of teachers.

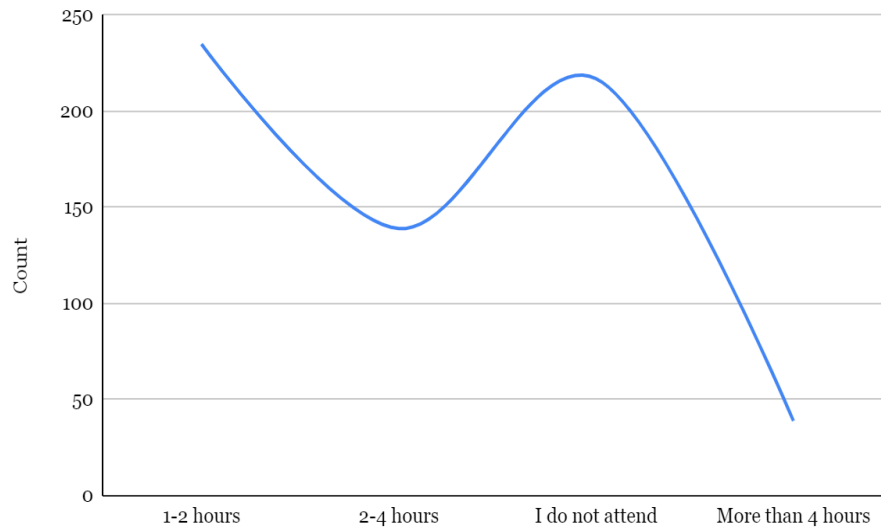


Figure 15: Bell Curve representing 'Time spent on Online Classes'

The students judged their own mean dedication during online lectures to be 2.03 on 5, which is certainly much lower than expected. This could have been due to the non-availability of the internet, no or improper access to the required study material, financial or medical constraints in the family, or a general inability to leave the 'old regular' and swiftly adapt to 'the new normal'.

Since a large number of students received recorded videos of the prescribed curriculum or handwritten/ typed notes, it not only resulted in less interaction with teachers, but also heavily affected the domain of doubt clearance, thus registering a low mean of 2.23 on 5.

The worst affected were the terminal year school/ college students. For school students, admission to institutions of higher education was a priority, which was delayed significantly (Jena, 2020). For final year college/ university students, the likelihood of employment seems bleak when 122 million jobs have already been lost due to pandemic (CMIE, 2020). Again, a large fraction of the respondents (46.0%) were not only anxious because of a delay in the entrance examinations and placements, but were also uncertain about the employment prospects in the upcoming years.

The usage of social media also increased significantly for a multitude of reasons. While it served as an escape from the seriousness of the situation for some, many also started creating content on a variety of platforms, unleashing their creative energies (Patel & Binjola, 2020). Many also sought comfort through social media, especially those away from family and friends. As a result, social media usage increased by more than 2 hours for many. Many also took this time to reduce their social media presence and detoxify themselves, as far as their social set ups were concerned.

The average time spent on different social media platforms escalated by nearly 1 hour 44 minutes. The possible reasons could have been a reduction in the number of classes in the initial months of lockdown, which felt like a short break from academics to most of the students, leaving them with much more free time than before. A very high value of standard deviation, i.e. 2.15 is in good correspondence with the responses, signifying that social media time of 221 students increased by 'more than 2 hours', while that only 32 students have reported a decrease by 'more than 2 hours'. On the other hand, the value of skewness stood at -0.85, clearly showing a bell curve skewed towards the left. An explicit increase in the number of hours spent on social media by a majority of the students evidently follows.

The pandemic brought with itself, apart from long term health risks, a wave of different problems for many households. With jobs lost and family incomes dwindling, 39.3% of the participants reported having financial troubles. 12.0% of the participants reported having gone through medical emergencies during the pandemic. Confined indoors for long hours (complete isolation for many) can have a heavy toll on one's mental health that is only exacerbated by financial, academic and employment woes. Around 42.2% reported having psychological and emotional turmoil.

The disturbed sleep schedules were made evident by the resulting percentages from the study. More than 20.5% of students reported poor sleep cycles, while 36.3% and 22.4% reported having satisfactory and below-average sleep cycles, respectively. Only 20.8% said that they were still able to maintain a healthy and stable sleep schedule. The following table represents some statistical values about questions that we have already talked about in the discussions section.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Skewness
Awareness about COVID-19	4.305194805	0.7568447598	0.6377777778	-0.9795991137
Expected time for control of the situation	3.95952381	1.375008517	1.298117914	-0.6896825753
Time spent daily on online classes	1.528526149	1.425492651	1.077747543	0.7103668499
Replacement of offline teaching	8.267226891	7.499440038	5.246578631	1.53298725
Change in duration of Social Media time	1.73659306	2.14594332	1.698444606	-0.8457587335

5. CONCLUSIONS

During this pandemic, most of the educated people are aware of this infection, possible preventive measures and the importance of physical distancing. On the other hand, those from humbler backgrounds despite having the cognizance of the virus did not have the privilege of being able to escape its effects by sitting at home as they had families to feed. Thus the pandemic had varying effects among different strata of society.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly one of the darkest periods of human history, with innumerable lives lost, increase in poverty and hunger, mass unemployment, a constant feeling of fear for one's life and uncertainty regarding the future among the masses, it was also a period of opportunity. It allowed people to think and reflect, spend time with their family and created room for personal growth and learning. Many have engaged themselves trying to learn new or honing skills and talents such as 'cooking', 'singing and dancing', 'coding', etc. Contrary to the expectations of many of the respondents, the situation is still not under control. Yet, gradually, life is coming back to normal, as the world is going about its way, learning to "live with the virus". Thus, many schools have started classes for senior students (not as a compulsion, to be attended only upon obtaining a written permission from their respective guardians) and competitive examinations are taking place with stricter precautions. Schools and colleges continue to hold online classes, and conduct end-term examinations online. Students spend most of their time in online classes, though the level of understanding and absorption is not the same. Thus, the education sector is gradually picking up, though its reach is still limited to those with access to internet and electronic devices. Students believe that a complete transition from the traditional classroom teaching to online classes seems a far-fetched idea in the near future.

The usage of social media has also changed drastically, by an average of 1 hour 44 minutes. This has caused a number of health risks for students as their screen time has increased manifold, owing to online classes. This has caused headaches, fatigue and addiction (Muhammad Kashif, 2020).

The pandemic thus changed the world and our lives in an unprecedented, unforeseeable way. Yet, the world has started dealing with the situation with a stronger conviction and living lives despite the pandemic. Many have

returned to their normal ways of life, going back to work and meeting friends. While it is impossible to comment on the time frame within which the world would restore to its ways until a vaccine is released and universalized, life needs to move on.

The results and findings of this survey do not represent a general public opinion and mental health status. Considering the prevalent lockdowns throughout the country, an online survey was the only feasible option left with the authors. Owing to this, the study represents the views and conditions of the students who have proper access to smart phones, laptops or computers and can read and respond in English. The findings of this study primarily throw light on the educated section of students, and the results might not agree when a random section of the population, representing all economic states and educational statuses is considered as a whole. The study was limited to a part of India and undergraduate students primarily.

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