



MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF COVID-19: A STUDY

Dr. G. Sarvani

Guest Faculty, Dept of Psychology, Andhra University

ABSTRACT The COVID-19 virus, emerged at the end of 2019 began threatening the health and lives of millions of people within few weeks. Governments of world countries, declared lockdown for controlling highly contagious and pandemic virus. During this lockdown period people are restricted to stay at home, for few weeks. During the idle stay at home for very long hours, will cause mental health problems, like stress, fear, anxiety, depression and sleep problems. In this present study, the researcher, made an attempt to study the psychological and social aspects, its impact on mental health of individuals during the lockdown period. The basic aim of this study: is to find out the viz. 1) "Mental health" and its influence on 'Gender and Age' differences; and 2) The impact of "COVID-19 on Mental Health" of individuals. The data has been collected through online questionnaire. The data has been analyzed using "one way analysis of variance" The study found that significant differences are attributed between male and female on mental health. And it is also found, that no significant differences among age groups on mental health are identified, but there is significant effect on mental health during the lock down period (impact of COVID-19).

KEYWORDS : covid-19, Lockdown, Psychosocial, Mental Health

INTRODUCTION:

Coronaviruses (Cov) are a large family of viruses that cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more serious ones. The COVID-19 Coronavirus was first detected in China in December 2019, and has since spread into all regions of the world. The World Health Organisation (WHO) provides proven and constantly updated information about COVID-19 and its spread, and also suggests which health measures should be taken at the individual and collective levels in order to prevent it and void its spread.¹

The impact of Coronavirus on education, according UNESCO, by 30th March, over 166 countries have implemented nationwide closures, impacting over 87% of world's student population, 1.52% billion students. In addition, nearly 60.2 million teachers are no longer in the classroom.²

W. H. O Mental Health and Psychosocial Consideration:

The review of the present study observed, that, 'the messages for the general population', the World Health Organisation (WHO) in January 2020, declared the outbreak of COVID-19, to be Public Health Emergency of international concern. WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 can be a characterized as a pandemic, which generates stress throughout the population. The people also have affected by COVID-19, they deserved our support, compassion and kindness in order to reduce stigma. Working together as one community can help to create solidarity in addressing Covid-19. The public in general experiencing invisible, fear, pressure, strain and strain. But the stress and strain with Mental Health and Psychosocial wellbeing is as important as managing your physical health. To avoid the Covid-19, one must well prepared to take care of themselves, try and use coping strategies to ensure sufficient rest and respite during working hours. Take sufficient healthy food, engage in some physical activity, and stay in contact with family and friends creates, please, happiness, which helps to avoid the pressure and strain. Don't use unhelpful coping strategies, i.e. use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. As a responsible citizen, you must know how to "De-Stress", and keeping yourself psychologically well. This is "Not a Sprint, It's a Marathon".³

This Corona virus has quickly impacted governments and its public health systems, Countries have initiated preventive measures to limit the spread of virus. As Millions of lives have been significantly impacted, efforts are being made at a global, multi-level, to address through stress-coping-adjustment processes. Accordingly, in our country, the national government have taken stringent measures, and the Andhra Pradesh Government have also implemented all these measures.

Symptomatic Observations of the Study:

Corona viruses are a group of inter-elated viruses that spread diseases among the public in general and birds. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough, throat pain etc. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, running nose, or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't attribute any symptoms about feel unwell. About 80% of the people recover from the disease without any

special treatment if the patient detected early. Around 1 out of every 6 people who got tested as positive, of COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty in breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough, throat pain and difficulty in breathing should seek medical attention.⁴

People can perceive COVID-19 from others who have tested positive. The disease can spread from person to person through their micro-splinters delivered from the nose, mouth or eye drops are strong agents to spread of Covid-19 from person to person or person to a group. These emitted splinters land on objects and surfaces around the person, stay alive for five to 10 minutes. The people in and around that area, perceive that virus, and infected with COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.

Present Study:

The basic aim of the present study is to assess, what extent the public observing and inculcating the guide lines suggested by the national and state governments, under 'Mental Health and Psychosocial aspects of Colvid-19. Stress has been given to identify the few variables, viz. and its acceptability by the public, particularly in Visakhapatnam, and Andhra Pradesh in general. The data has been collected through structured online questionnaire, and it is open for about 15 days, during the Lock down Period. The conceptual framework of the present study verify the following areas in this survey:

- Fear and worry about your own health and
- The health of your loved ones, near and dear;
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Unable to Stay at home freely, and unable to concentrating on any work;
- Stay Idle at Home, cause, pressure, stress and strain
- Locked at Home, cause: un-easiness, disturbed mind, lack of mental peace
- Increased use of Alcohol, tobacco other drugs

Review of Literature:

Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASE) guidelines for Mental Health and Psycho Social Support in Emergency Settings recommends that multiple levels of interventions be integrated within outbreak response activities. These levels align with a spectrum of mental health and psychosocial needs and are represented in a pyramid of interventions ranging from embedding social and cultural considerations in basic services, to providing specialized services for individuals with more severe conditions. Core principles include: do not harm, promote human rights and equality, use participatory approaches, build on existing resources and capacities, adopt multi-layered interventions and work with integrated support systems.⁵

Dr. Maria Oquendo(2020) (chair of psychiatry at Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia) said

"Somebody who is already suffering from any kind of psychiatric condition ... is going to have a heightened anxiety response". The experts worry that this could contribute to increased risk of suicide for months and years to come. We know that there are increases in cases of depression, increases in cases of post-traumatic stress disorder and increases in cases of anxiety disorders," Oquendo explained. "These conditions do increase the risk for suicidal behavior."⁶

In a recent survey conducted by the Indian Psychiatry Society (2020), the sudden rise in those suffering from mental illness is up to 20 per cent. According to the survey, at least one out of every five Indians is suffering from mental illness. This comes amid the corona virus pandemic spreading across the world like a global disease thereby affecting the lifestyle and economy of the world.⁷ Speaking exclusively to India Today TV, Dr Manu Tiwari, Head of Department of Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences in Fortis Hospital located in Noida(2020), stated that this is a rising graph and will have bigger implications in days to come. He explained, "The lockdown has had a massive impact on the lifestyle of people. They are staying indoors with limited resources. They are now suffering from anxiety, panic attacks, and even alcohol withdrawal syndrome. Dr Tiwari said, "Unprecedented conditions and more vulnerable groups of patients are a big threat to the spread of this illness, especially with the patients not even realizing he has a disease". Mostly are those who worry a lot and are addicted to any substance or alcohol.⁷

Objectives of study

- To assess the 'Use patterns of Coping Methods of Mental health', during the lock down period.
- Whether the respondent 'Observing the Psycho Sociological considerations', for mental health during lock down period.
- To find the impact of COVID19 on mental health of the respondents during lock down period.

Sample

The selected sample population of the present study belongs to middle class, socio economic status. The sampling procedure adopted is more or less purposive sampling, and the data has been collected through the structured and closed Online questionnaire, accessible through mobiles and systems. It is open for about 15-days, during the lockdown period, and out of which, the total response rate is about 83, and the male 54 and 29 are female.

Data collection

The present survey aimed to collect data from the Visakhapatnam district only, but we got responses from outside the Andhra Pradesh and few responses from other states also.. The data collected through what's app and e-mail of respondents. Moreover the data collected from April 5th 2020 to April 20th, 2020, both days inclusive, comes around 15 days.

Tools

The Mental Health, and psycho sociological aspects covered in the questionnaire, was classified into two broad categories. First category items related to social and psychological aspects during the lock down period (COVID-19). Second category items related to mental health during lock down period. A total 30 items are listed in this questionnaire. Each item was represented as a single statement. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a three point likert scale – where a score of one indicated strongly dis-agree and three indicates strongly agree, with intermediary score of undecided. Reverse scoring was given for some of the negative statements present in the questionnaire. The questionnaire prepared from Google forms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher formed two checklist questions: viz. 1) how people are engaging during the lock down period and 2) what sort of problems experienced while stay at home. For the first check list 37(44%) expressed, that they are engaged in simple regular exercises, followed by yoga, meditation and walking, About 66(78.6%) exhibited, that they are spending time in following social media, nearly, 28(33.3%) respondents, concentrating on improvising skills, a reasonable size of the population, i.e. 29(34%) are spending time on book reading and most of them are involved 37(44%) in painting as well sharing the cooking and housekeeping activities. For second check list felt, that about 21(25.3%) indicated, unable to meet their friends, near and dear. About, 19(22.9%) attributed, that they can't enjoy outdoor activities, while 7(8.4%) shows, that staying at home is a problem, very few

4(4.8%) expressed, it is very difficult to follow lock down rules, some indicated 11(13%) the fear of life, no fear, nothing 44(53%) and others 7(8.4%).

The basic aim of the researcher is to study and verify the 'Two Areas' in this study, **the first one:** i.e. 1) Psycho-sociological aspects, for which group of items are taken into for assessing i.e. (troubles during the lock down period and awareness questions related to COVID -19). And the **second one** deals with Mental Health of the individuals i.e. (fear, anxiety, stress, suicide ideation, sleeplessness and psychological wellbeing). It is to be noted that Covid-19, vulnerable, can be extremely frightening and fear-inducing. Under these circumstances, most of the older people already in "Socially Isolated at Homes', and are experiencing loneliness, which worsen their mental health. All these factors are taken into account, while collecting the data, with multiple choice questions.

Table 1: One way ANOVA of Psycho-sociological aspects on mental health (Psycho-Sociological aspects: How the people engaged in lock down period)

Psycho-sociological aspects	N	Mean	S.D
Low	6	1.67	.516
Medium	57	1.86	.350
High	20	2.10	.641
Total	83	1.90	.458

ANOVA

	SS	df	MS	F	sig
Between groups	1.22	2	.609	3.04	0.05*
Within groups	16.01	80	.200		
Total	17.23	82			

The mean scores of these three variables, i.e. Low, Medium, High, out of which, the psycho-social aspects (impact of Covid-19) under the option High shows the highest with (M=2.10), followed by Medium 1.86, and Low with 1.67 value on mental health. The individuals of high group have less mental illness compared with medium and low groups. This may be due to better awareness well understanding about the precautions of COVID19. Medium and low groups have less mental health due to psychological and socio-economic aspects during the lockdown period. One way ANOVA indicated (F=3.04) there is a significant relationship between impact of COVID 19 on mental health of individuals. High score group have know about consequences of COVID 19 and they were easily handle mental illness.

Table 2(A): One way ANOVA, Mental Health of Individuals. (Male/Female)

Gender	N	Mean	S.D
Male	54	1.98	.48
Female	29	1.76	.43
Total	83	1.90	.45

	SS	Df	MS	F	sig
Between groups	.93	1	.93	4.65	.034*
Within groups	16.29	81	.201		
Total	17.22	82			

Table-2(A) shows the mental health of male and female during the lock down period. The data analysis under mean values of male shows the highest, with (M=1.98) followed by female (M=1.76). It shows that male have less mental health problems compare with female. Female group have more house hold burden, lead to mental illness due to attending to the children and the children always more close and depending on the mothers. One way analysis of ANOVA indicated that (F= 4.65, p>0.05) male have less mental illness.

Table 2(B): One way ANOVA, Mental Health of Individuals (Age Groups-Class Intervals)

Age	N	Mean	S.D
Group A(18-29yrs)	44	1.91	.473
Group B(30-44yrs)	25	1.84	.374
Group C(above 44yrs)	14	2.00	.555
Total	83	1.90	.458

ANOVA

	SS	Df	MS	F	sig
Between groups	.233	2	.116	.54	.58
Within groups	16.99	80	.212		
Total	17.22	82			

More over Table-2(B) shows that mental health of individuals during the lockdown period on various age groups(class intervals), The Class interval, Above 44 Years, i.e. Group C (above 44yrs) has high mean value compared with other class intervals/groups. The data analysis shows, that class interval (above 44 years of age)/group-C has less mental illness. But in ANOVA F value is not significant which means, that there is no significant relation among age groups.

CONCLUSION

During the lockdown period, under Covid-19, brought huge change in our routine habits and in our life styles. People are facing many problems between March, 21 and 31st March, due to non-availability of vegetables, milk and other domestic needs. The researcher collected data for about 15 days during the lock down period. In this study significant mental health problems attributed more in female than male folk. There is no significant health problems are identified among aged in particular, those who have less awareness and understanding about the psychological and social aspects, ignorant of care and safety are under COVID-19, faced some problems.

Suggestions:

The present study observed and suggested the following:

1. The Social networks should not encourage “alarmism or spreading of false rumors or news”.
2. The Social Networks should promptly and truthfully inform about Covid-19 recommendations to be followed as preventive measure.
3. The Police and the Central/State authority must actively countering the discriminatory attitudes and behaviors that emerge as a result of misrepresentations.
4. Accept the medical support provided by the state/central governments.
5. Social support is very important to create confidence and to develop good mental health, well being, to avoid the fear among their public.

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