

# “The psychological implications of COVID-19 – a Case Study”

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## Abstract

The advent of the Corona virus has brought about major changes in the world nearly in all walks of life. The educational sector underwent a complete upheaval in terms of delivering the goods. The traditional classroom teaching which involved face to face interaction between the teacher and students was substituted for online teaching in keeping with the need of the hour. This shift in the educational system was extremely difficult for some students while some found it easier to learn in this method teaching.

This paper attempts to discuss the psychological impact of COVID-19 .

Key words – COVID-19, Traditional method of teaching, Online method of teaching, psychological impact

## Introduction

**Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)** is a contagious disease caused by the virus severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first known case was identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The disease quickly spread worldwide resulting in the COVID-19 pandemic. The symptoms of COVID-19 were variable but often included fever, cough, headache, fatigue, breathing difficulties, loss of smell, and loss of taste. Symptoms began one to fourteen days after exposure to the virus. Due to the contagious nature of the virus various restrictions were imposed such as lockdown, travel restrictions, compulsory use of face masks, social distancing and quarantine.

Teaching within the four walls of classroom where the teacher is the sole source of knowledge is referred to as the Traditional method of teaching. Here the learning tools includes blackboard, posters, textbooks, maps, quizzes.

In the online method of teaching the content is delivered through texts, images, video call, webinars, live classes, using screen white board, recording of classes.

Environmental or biological factors affecting an Individuals social or psychological state is defined as psychological impact. For example if an individual is undergoing stress for a long period of time it will definitely affect his sleep, appetite, concentration and relationships with others.

The rapid spread of COVID-19 brought about a massive upheaval in the lives of people all over the world. It caused a major psychological impact in them especially in the students. The college students had to move out of their hostels, leaving the campuses immediately with most of them not even able to take their belongings.

The undergraduate students were the most deeply affected as they were at the vulnerable age of adolescence which is a period affected by uncertainty, self doubt, risk taking behavior and heightened emotional level. The pandemic entailed a period of social isolation, fear, anxiety, instability and no physical exercise. Previous to this they had not faced any calamities except for the flood that ravaged Kerala in 2018. Even in such a situation there was no social isolation or any other restrictions that were there imposed during the pandemic. The pandemic also affected the special needs children. They could not go to school thus affecting their daily routine and exercise with some of them suffering a setback in their development.

The pandemic not only brought about physical, psychological and behavioral changes but it also affected the relationship among people. It affected their non verbal and verbal behavior, the way they communicated with others. The compulsory use of face mask restricted the interactions with others. For a meaningful communication to take place, facial expressions are taken as social cues. But due to the face mask only part of the face can be seen hence most of the social cues were missed resulting in misinterpretation or lack of understanding of the conversation. As only upper part of the face could be visible, people had to put in more effort for making themselves understood either by raising their voice or tone. They had to strain their vocal chords to make themselves heard as speaking through the mask in a normal voice tone sounded muffled. This was more in the cases of teachers. They learnt to communicate through their eyes and eyebrows. Some started using transparent masks. Social distancing also played a role in affecting the psychological well being of the people. The usual method of greeting each other socially such as handshake, hugging shifted to no touch greetings.

As the lockdown phase continued people shifted to online tools for educational, work, business and even for personal use. Speaking to a loved one over a video call became the new normal. Zoom, Cisco WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Skype were some of the online platforms which were used extensively by the people. They started following online etiquettes such as appropriate dressing, not disturbing the speaker, being punctual for online sessions and trying to get connected with the speaker by paying more attention to his verbal and non verbal behavior.

But usage of these online tools brought about its own share of problems. Spending too much time resulted in physical as well as psychological issues. It led to poor posture causing shoulder, neck, back pain, obesity and insomnia. Some were affected by depression, anxiety, fear and suicidal thoughts. During this period some gave up and ended their lives due to losing their job, lack of income, despair and loneliness. For some the pandemic became a turning point in their life as they had to search for a source of income in order to keep their family from dying of starvation. They started online business ventures in the areas of food, apparel, education with most of them becoming hugely profitable. Such ventures became a source of inspiration to others too.

Covid-19 affected family life in positive as well as negative ways. There were some families who totally cherished the lockdown period as a way bonding again with their family. Parents started spending more time with their children. Boredom led to them thinking innovative ways to keep their children occupied. Playing games with them, reading books along with them, getting them involved in household chores, doing gardening. Couples too got close with each other. Husbands started helping out their partners in the day to day activities. They realized the amount of work their spouse do at home as a home maker. As they were confined to the homes due to lockdown and not able to do any outdoor physical exercise most of them started their own physical routine at home.

But in some homes the lockdown led to strained relationships. Living together under the same roof twenty four hours a day led to frequent quarrels and arguments between the spouses. Because prior to the pandemic most of their waking time would be in their respective workplaces and they would be with each other for only a short period of time at home. Domestic violence increased during this period. Relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter in law became strained. Also affected were the teenage children's relationship with parents.

### Conclusion

It can be seen through this case study the psychological impact of COVID-19 in all walks of life. It has also shown how people have adapted to the challenging situation by making themselves equipped with tools such as making interpersonal communication meaningful by focusing attention on eyes and eyebrows, raising their voice to communicate. Even though the entire world came to a standstill the education sector continued to impart education to the students by making use of the latest online technology. The workplaces shifted to work from home mode. Ordinary common individuals became successful online entrepreneurs. This shows that human beings are the most highly evolved and intelligent species able to adapt to any situation.

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