

Causes of Stress and its Impact on Students of India during Covid 19 Lockdown

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Abstract:- The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted several sectors globally and education is no exception. The education sector has taken a hit with closure of colleges, universities and other educational institutes across the country affecting the students and aspirants preparing for their future. According to UNESCO monitoring, over 160 countries have implemented nationwide closures, impacting over 87 percent of worlds student population. In India University Grants Commission (UGC) and other apex education bodies have issued COVID-19 specific guidelines for Indian higher education institutions (HEIs) resulting in ~1000 universities and ~40,000 colleges temporarily closing, students being asked to go home, and efforts being undertaken to move classes online. These measures will have varying degrees of impact on ~3.75 crore students. Due to this different situation which the students have never experienced before, they started getting prone to different kinds of stress including mental, physical and psychological stresses. In this paper we tried to identify the major causes of stress found in the students. It is found that maximum number of students cannot follow on their planned actions and even spending maximum amount of time in social networking and online gaming. Interestingly the major step taken in this lockdown period is to spend time with family ranking it the highest irrespective of gender or education background. The main objective of this paper is to study the major symptoms of stress in the students, analysing the measures taken by the students to mitigate stress in this lockdown period and finally finding the source and predictors of stress. It is also proved that students are subjected to stress irrespective of the gender and education. This study helps the researchers, parents and academic institutions to understand the behaviour of students and the level of stress the students are being subjected to in this lockdown period.

Keywords:- Covid 19, Stress, Mitigation, Symptoms.

I. INTRODUCTION

COVID -19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered Corona virus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China in December 2019. On march 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic. The Government of India confirmed India's first case of corona virus disease on 30th January, 2020 in the state of Kerala, when a student from Wuhan travelled back to the state. As the number of confirmed positive Covid-19 cases increased to 500, on 24th march 2020 the prime minister of India ordered a 21-day lockdown limiting the 1.3 billion population in the country. This lockdown was meant to avoid local transmission of virus and to maintain social distancing. Later the lockdown is subjected to further extension till date as the cases are increasing and crossed 80,000 mark on 18th may,2020.

Due to the extension of the lockdown, many sectors faced huge problems and education sector is no exception. All the colleges and universities remained closed in the country until further notice, pushing students to stay home and maintain social distancing. This lockdown has brought enormous uncertainty for young people studying for exams, hoping to establish their career. The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences launched a Covid -19 psycho-social helpline in conjunction with health ministry to tackle the situation and give support to the students during the crisis.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Questionnaire is prepared and distributed to students of Undergraduate and Post Graduate degree studying in different educational institutions. The students are of Adolescence period ranging between 17 to 25 and include both young male and female gender. The data analysis include descriptive analysis and Minitab 19 Statistical Software was used to draw the conclusions. The confidence level of the sample is 95% and k value = 1.93. Stratified random sampling is adopted.

The questionnaire was self-administered and includes three phases:

- Phase 1: Dealing with different symptoms of stress.
- Phase 2: Dealing with the measures taken to overcome stress.
- Phase 3: Finding the sources and predictors of stress.

Data Collection:

- Primary Data through Questionnaire
- Secondary Data through Literature review, Media, Newspaper, Internet etc.

The 3-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire and scoring to the response is given below.

RESPONSE	WEIGHTAGE
Never Felt	1
Sometimes Felt	2
Often Felt	3

Table 1:- Response vs weightage

A. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The table shows the total number of responses are 134. Maximum responses are given by the students of age 22 (25.37%) and minimum by the students of age 25 (5.22%). The male respondents are 64 and female respondents are 70 which accounts for 47.4 % and 52.6 % respectively. Maximum students are from Undergraduation (64.9%) and Minimum for postgraduation (34.1%).

Age	Responses	%
18	9	6.72
19	8	5.97
20	14	10.45
21	16	11.94
22	34	25.37
23	28	20.90
24	18	13.43
25	7	5.22
Total	134	100

Table 2:- Distribution of responses according to age

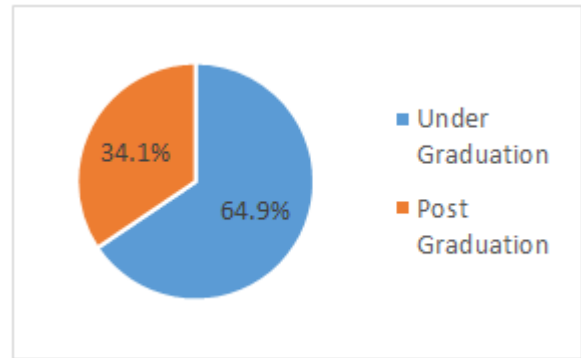


Fig 1:- Chart showing distribution according to Education

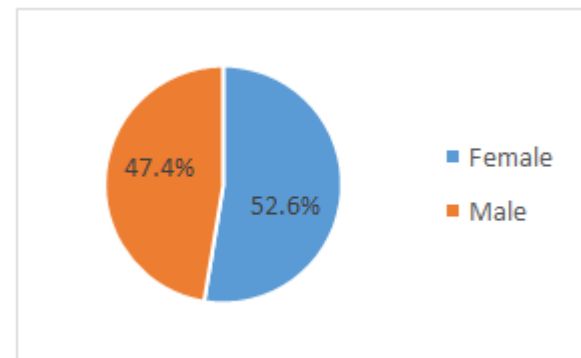


Fig 2:- Chart showing distribution according to Gender

B. Symptoms of Stress

The student responses for the symptoms is being analysed and it is been observed that students do experience stress and interesting insights are gathered. Maximum number of students are not able to follow their planned actions (85.8%) followed by Boredom (84.4%), sleeping disorder (82.3%), Unfocussed (81.6%), Angry (75.8%), frustration (75.3%) respectively in this lockdown period.

Students in this lockdown period are in a confused situation and are lacking with time management. Most of them couldn't follow their timetable since they've never experienced such sudden change in their curriculum pattern and are not able to tackle the situation properly. Instead many are feeling bored, isolated and are even suffering with sleeping disorder. The students are not self-driven in the utilisation of time and are falling into stress condition.

SYMPTOMS OBSERVED	RANKING
Planned actions not followed	1
Boredom	2
Sleeping disorder	3
Unfocussed	4
Angry	5
Frustration	6
Fatigue	7
Improper diet	8
Headache	9
Body pains	10

Table 3:- Ranking of the symptoms

Interestingly a smaller number of students are suffering with body pains (54%), headache (62%) respectively. The young students want to succeed in their life and have many dreams. Symptoms like the above make them highly stressed and act as a barrier in their life. It is highly important to mitigate the above symptoms and make them stress relief during this lockdown period.

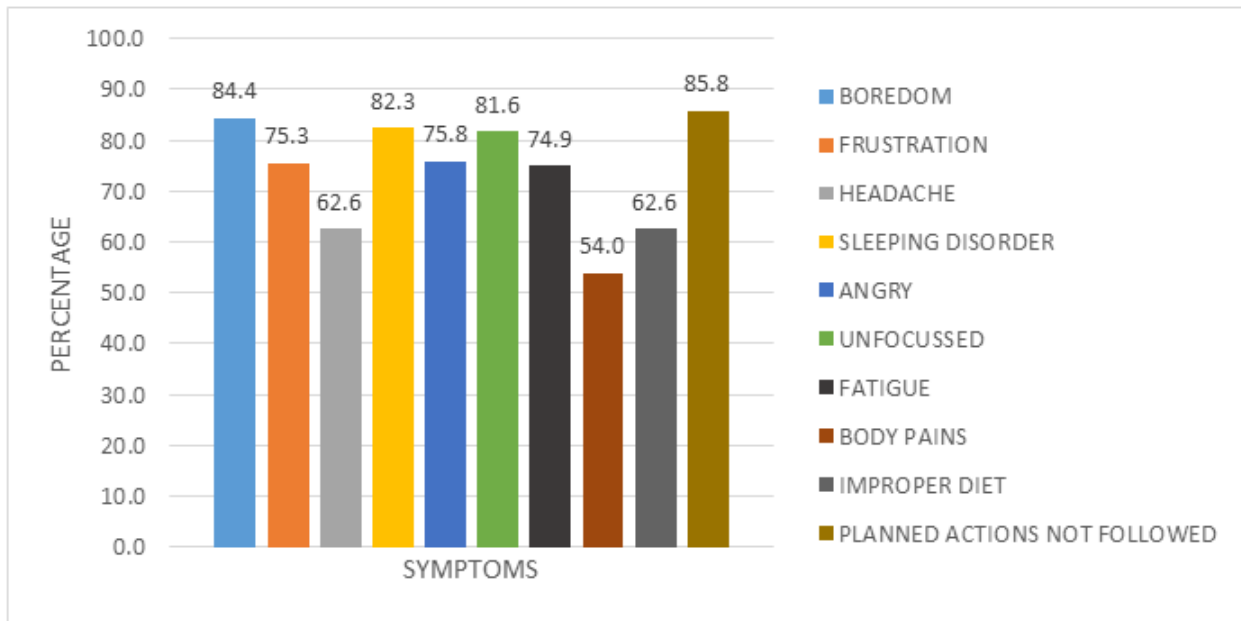


Fig 3:- Histogram showing symptoms vs percentage of responses

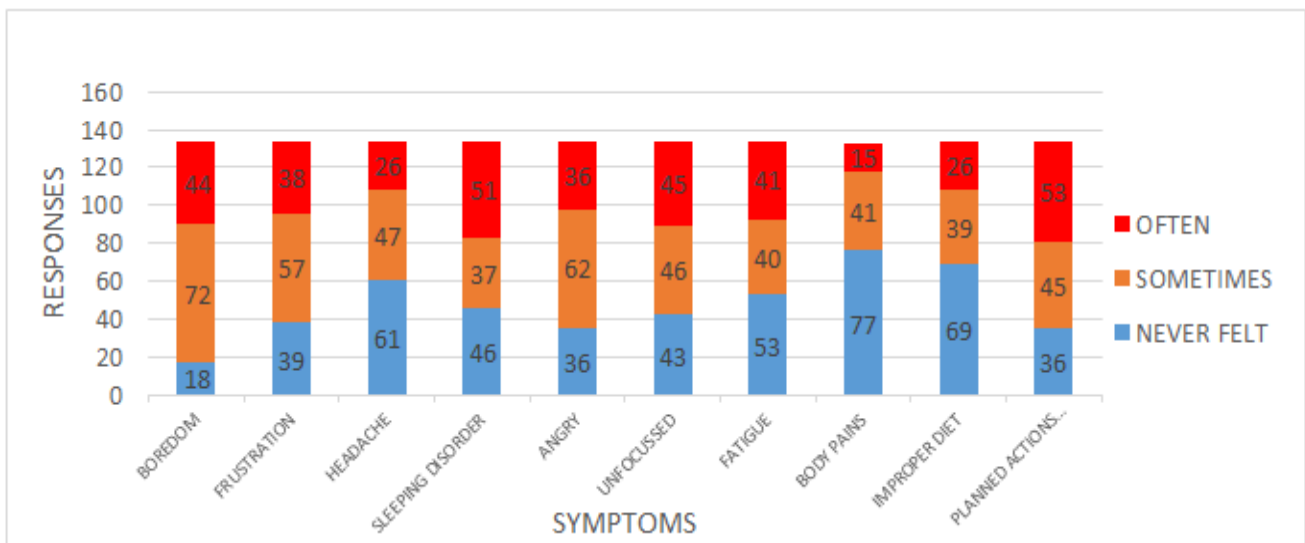


Fig 4:- Histogram showing various level of students affected with symptoms

C. Measures Taken to Mitigate Stress

Specified measures to mitigate stress is drafted through literate review. Attempt is made to analyse the time spent by students in following activities in order to mitigate stress. It is noticed that maximum number of students are spending with family (86.3%) followed by social networking (78.9%) and watching movies (74.9%) respectively in the lockdown period. The students are utilising this time to engage in family related activities and it is an essential factor that helps to create strong bonds, love, connections and relationship among family members. Spending quality time with family does helping in coping with challenges, install a feeling of security, inculcate family values, fill students with confidence and helps to mitigate stress.

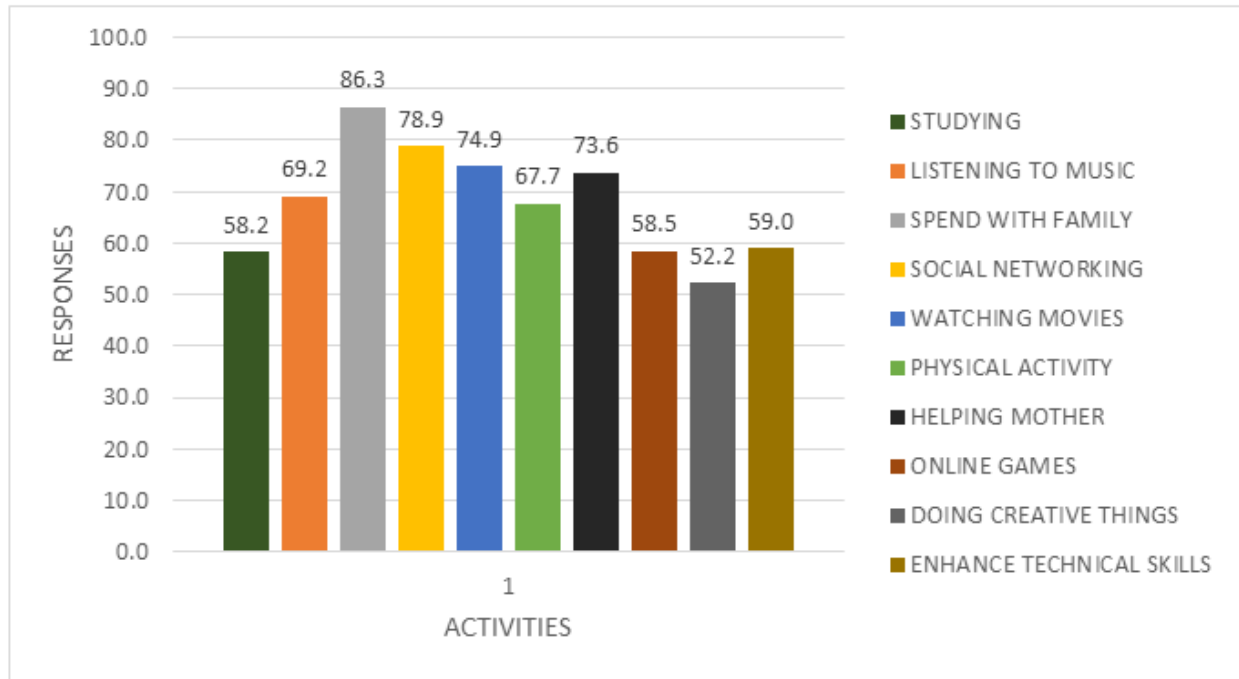


Fig 5:- Histogram showing activities vs percentage of responses

Interestingly instead of studying (58.2%), most of the students are spending in social activities and watching movies. This insight is very important to understand the behaviour of student and often such activities will lead to lack of focus which leads to stress. Minimum number of students (52.2%) are spending in doing creative things in this lockdown period. Many students find music is stress relief measure in this lockdown period. 94 students listen sometimes to music while 25 listens often out of 134 responses received.

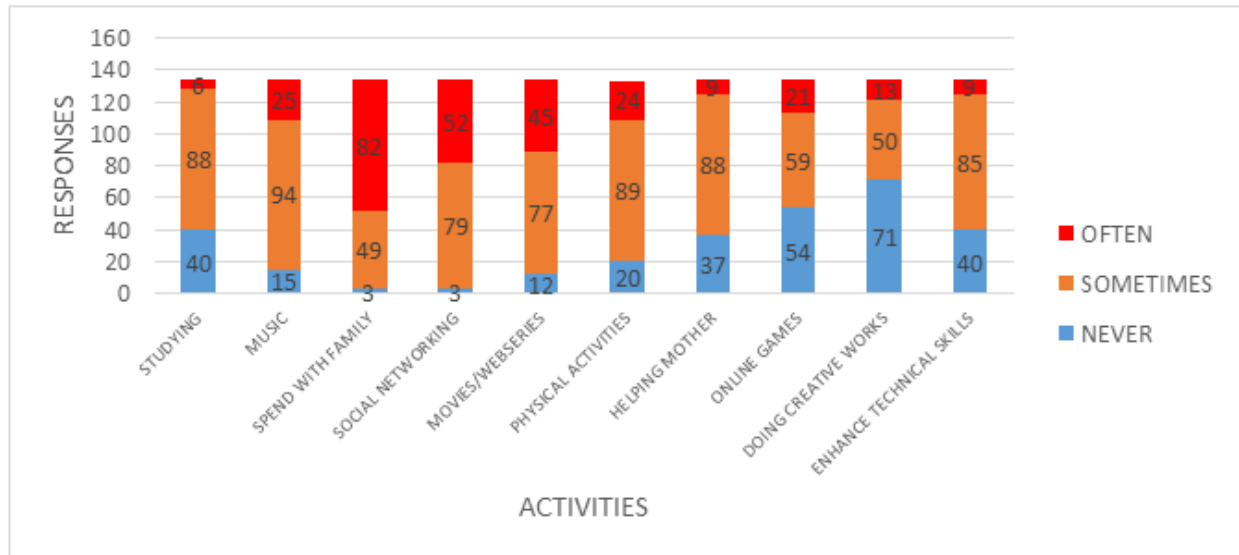


Fig 6:- Histogram showing level of students involved in different activities

D. Causes and predictors of Stress

The predictors of stress are carefully sorted out from phase 3 of the Questionnaire and it included factors such as worried about academics, placement, being threatened by the false news and propagandas, wanted to be socially active like before, being absorbed into non- social activities that can cause health issues, facing family problems and being optimistic that our economic status will revive. About 82.8% showed optimistic nature while 63.9% are threatened by the media.

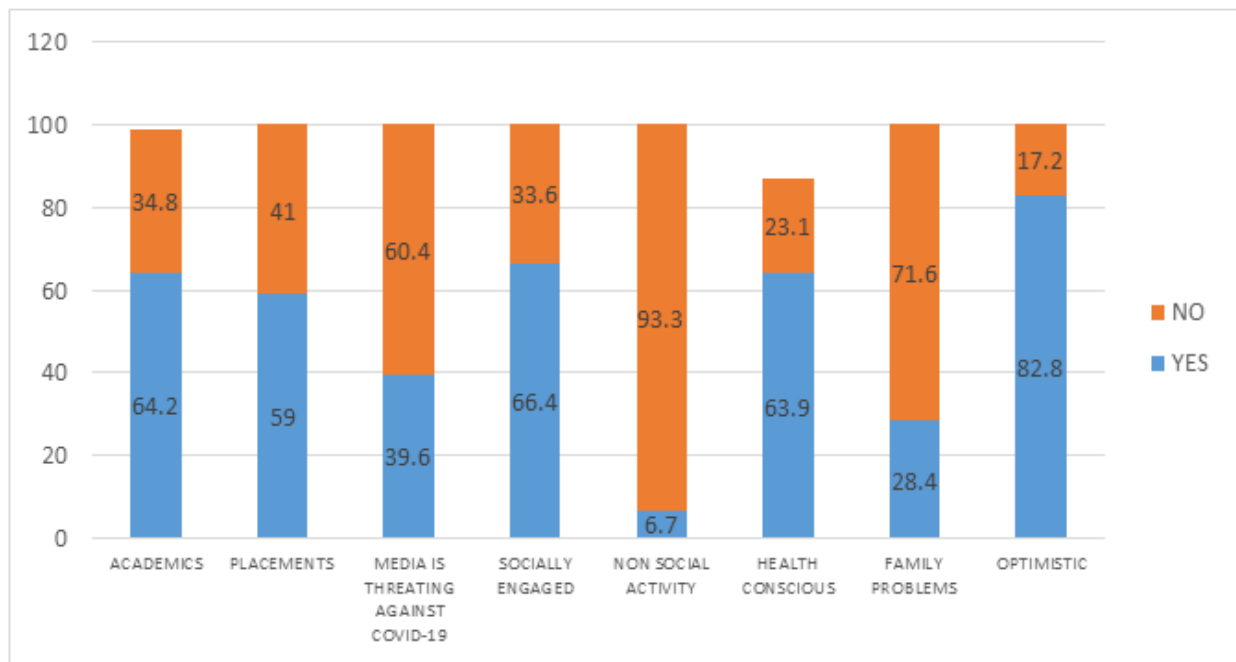


Fig 7:- Data showing sources and predictors of stress

Interestingly it was found that 64.2% people are worried about their academics which leads to 59% being worried about their final placements. Many people have gone health conscious too (63.9%) during this lockdown period. It is observed that Academics, placements, media are the sources of stress. Lack of motivation and lack of self-esteem are the predictors of stress.

E. Hypothesis Testing

To test the significant level of relation between stress and gender 2 sample t test is applied. A non-significant result is occurred between stress and gender (P value = 0.112). It is understood that both male and female students are subjected to stress irrespective of gender. This was further validated by the regression analysis test.

To test the significant level of relation between stress and education 2 sample t test is applied. A non-significant result is occurred between stress and education (P value = 0.367). Clearly P value is greater than 0.05 and it is understood that both undergraduate and post graduate students are subjected to stress irrespective of education further being validated by the regression analysis test.

III. CONCLUSION

In this paper, it is noticed that most of the students are suffering from lack of time management and boredom/depression in the lockdown period. Both male and female students irrespective of the education background are prone to stress. Many are spending time with their family and high utilisation of social network and streaming of online web series/movies is observed to mitigate the stress. Also, most of the students are worried about their academics and placements amidst lockdown. Majority of the students feel that media is threatening them on covid 19 which makes them highly stress and feel high self-

conscious. Interestingly most of the students are not utilising the lockdown time properly and not studying or enhancing their technical skills.

It is noticed that use of social networking platforms and online gaming makes them unfocussed/lack of concentration and the students cannot follow up on their planned actions. It is highly recommended that the proper guidance should be given by the parents and the educational institutions in giving the right direction to students. The role of these guidance's cannot be neglected.

Thus, to sum it up it is found naturally the students are stressed and thus they need proper guidance and work accordingly.

LIMITATIONS

- Only selected symptoms taken from the literature review are drafted in the questionnaire and analysed further. There could be more symptoms
- This is a generic view of the stress symptoms and the mitigation measures were specifically drafted through self-driven.
- Due to lockdown period only 134 participants are participated. The results would have been better if we have used more varied participants.
- The age group of the students were restricted upon filling the Questionnaire.
- Many more advanced technologies like SPSS could have given better results.
- Hypothesis testing could not give a true representative of the sample result.

SUGGESTIONS

The lockdown period is the difficult time for the students and fear is their biggest emotional challenge. It is important to remove the fear in the student mind. Remember, good mental status in the difficult times may win you the battle more easily. Following suggestions are valuable in dealing with the stress caused.

- Being busy. The students should have a regular schedule and stick to completing the task.
- Eating well and drinking plenty of fluids
- The availability of free time presents the perfect opportunity to brush up the students resumes by enrolling in one or more of the various online courses conducted by the government of India like nptel, Swayam etc.
- Doing creative things, reading books, following one's hobbies make the students stress relief.
- Being physically active. Doing simple indoor exercises that will keep students fit and feeling fit.
- Do not follow sensational news on social media posts which may impact your mental state.
- At times of anxiety, practise breathing slowly for a few minutes.
- When feeling angry and irritated, calming your mind, counting from 10 to 1, distracting yourself helps.
- The Educational institutions and parents should give proper support and guide the students in such difficult time
- "It's not the efforts that kills, but worry". Students should remember this and think only on the present and inculcate optimistic behaviour.

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