Research Paper on Psychological Effects on Students Due To Lockdown and Online Classes

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ABSTRACT: COVID-19 has resulted in worldwide lockdown. To stop the spread of this pandemic, the Indian government has declared lockdown as this virus can spread from person to person hence, maintaining social distance is necessary. Due to which, the educational institutions are conducting online classes. This study is to understand how lockdown has affected the study pattern and psychological behavior of students. Google forms were used to collect the data. There were a total of 250 respondents. The questionnaire focused on two main aspects on predicting student satisfaction of online classes and mental health of students during the lockdown. On analyzing the data we found that postgraduates and graduates are finding it difficult to cope up with online classes, and this has affected their study pattern, having said that the usage of social media has markedly increased and also there is a huge impact on sadness and anxiety, however, 50% of the respondents have seen improvement in the relationship with their family. Research suggests that schools and colleges should try to understand the reason behind the difficulties faced by the students concerning online classes, and also should conduct online counseling sessions which will help students to deal with mental health.
Keywords: Covid-19, Lockdown, Educational institutions, online platforms, Psychological behavior, mental health.

staying at home, there is no means of transport, and everything is to be shut across the country only the essential services are to be functional. This indirectly caused a major impact on the psychological behavior of the students, as no one has ever faced such a situation where they had to stay away from meeting people for this long, this leads to loneliness, anxiety, and many other behavioral changes in students.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is facing the worst problem of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic originated in Wuhan city of China. The World Health Organization declared that the outbreak of the pandemic has spread to more than 190 countries around the world. The pandemic has drastically disrupted all the sectors including the education sector worldwide. The country is under the complete lockdown of all the socio-economic activities and movements of the people to protect them from the community spread of the virus. All the sectors including educational institutions closed for more than 2 months and there is uncertainty about when the education sector will reopen. This is a critical time for the education sector in India because this is the time of various activities to be running within the sector like nursery school admission procedures, board and university examinations of various academic courses, entrance exams for admissions in various universities all over India and competitive examinations of many government and non-government departments are to be held during this period.(1)

Lockdown is a situation where maintaining social distance is a must which means

II. METHODS

To get a better understanding of the overall level of satisfaction of online classes and the mental health of students during the lockdown a questionnaire was designed using Google forms. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections one related to online classes and the other related to psychological effects or behavioral changes due to lockdown. The link to Google form was sent through different social media platforms and students were encouraged to share the survey with as many students as possible. The online questionnaire was filled by 10+2, graduates, and postgraduate students. The population-based variables included age, gender, education, and place. The online questionnaire focused more on interaction during online classes, affects study patterns, MOOC courses, relationships with family

members, loneliness, sadness, feeling optimistic during the lockdown. Most of the questions had to be rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never, occasionally, sometimes, often and always.

III. RESULTS

A total of 250 responses were recorded out of which more than 57% were postgraduates and 35% were graduates rest of the respondents were 10+2 and 10th grade students. The participants belong to 14 states of the country with maximum respondents from Karnataka followed by Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Online Learning And Technology Adoption

Education in the country has come to a standstill and this is a huge concern for all the students as they don't want to waste an entire year of their hard work and determination. All the schools, colleges, entrance exams as well as placements will be affected due to this current pandemic situation. So, the only way to keep going during social distancing is virtual classes.

India offered distance teaching as a fundamental substitute strategy of delivery long before the coming of Covid-19. The nation has more than 15 open universities and 110 Dual Mode Universities, which provide teaching through distance techniques. For the duration of Covid-19 outburst, the administration has also allowed the top 100 India's HEIs to deliver fully online degrees. In extension, the administration even integrated online learning in the New Education Policy currently under review. (2) In our study, we found that most of the educational institutes are using Google meet and Zoom for conducting online classes followed by cisco WebEx meet. However, 53% of students tend to be more satisfied using Google meet application and only 42% of students are satisfied using Zoom for online classes.

The major concern is towards the quality of online classes and how shifting to online classes has impacted the overall study pattern of the students. Referring face-to-face learning with online understanding brings forth considerable shortcomings in the online method such as the absence of human connect, shortage of opportunities of combined learning, teacher supervision, and the most glaring being shortage of chances for hands-on learning in problematic subjects such as science and mathematics. (3) From our data, we found out that almost 50% of the postgraduate students found it difficult to shift to online classes and also they feel their interaction and participation in online classes is much less than face to face classes, because of which it might be a reason why students find it difficult to concentrate and understand the subject properly. However, during this time we can see that the most affected are the graduates as well as postgraduates' students because their exams have not been held and this has severely resulted in their overall study pattern is upside down.

How optimistic are you feeling about your future? (1 being the least and 5 being the highest)
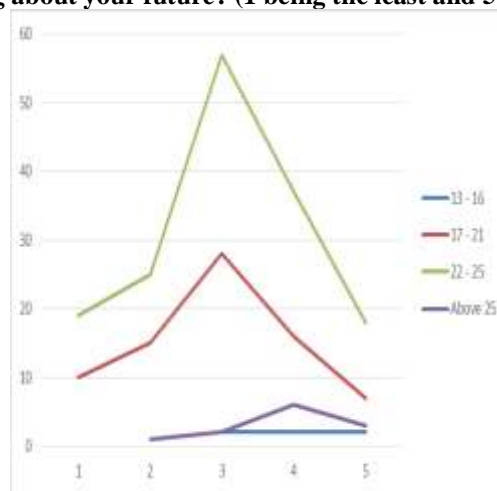

Figure 1

CHALLENGES OF ONLINE CLASSES

When we think of what can go wrong with online classes here is an article which states the difficulties faced by teachers as well as students during online classes, "The importance of classroom learning is undeniable and this pandemic proves that we are not yet ready to handle online

classrooms," said Dr. Saroj Rani, a professor at Delhi University's Maitreyi College.

While digital classes might get the job done, Dr. Saroj felt that it is difficult to provide the same level of education to all students - especially to those in rural India. (4) The digital class divide has especially been highlighted in this pandemic. Internet is no more privilege, but a necessity. If a student does not have access to it, he/she risks missing out altogether.

According to a study conducted by scholarship ed-tech platform Buddy4Study, of the 25 crore students affected by the lockdown, 80 percent fall in the Economically Weaker Section category. [4] Our survey results show that almost 60% of the postgraduates are struggling to cope with online classes, this can be due to several reasons which include MOOC courses or they have more assignments to complete also this might be due to poor internet connectivity or due to loss of interest in online classes because of less interaction with teachers and other students during online classes. To overcome the internet and economically weaker section category the government needs to find out some way out to give each student equal opportunity, here is an article which tells how the US education system has provided basic gadgets to run online classes smoothly. Schools in New York, the United States, prepared for online learning by distributing gadgets to their students, ensuring they had access to learning materials. As of early April, education authorities distributed around 500,000 laptops and tablets to their students, allowing them to participate in classes online. (5)

It is important to make sure that there is student engagement during the online classes and also proper time management. It is important that when a lecture is delivered every student should understand the subject. Time management plays a major role in an online class as the traditional classes were less time consuming when compared to online classes this can be due to internet connectivity, less interaction by students, hence a proper strategy needs to be formed to overcome these challenges to ease the function of online classes.

MOOC COURSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

In India, Internet users are rapidly increasing. The penetration percentage has now reached 35% of the whole population, with some 462 million users. After the United States, India also has the second-highest portion of people enrolled in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). For higher education, this also indicates the enormous ability for broadening access through digital learning. (6)

MOOC courses are very beneficial for students as it is Massive Open online courses so students can choose any of these courses as they are often free of cost and they can become more productive during COVID 19. MOOC courses offer academic credits, certification, and helps in the overall development of students. As per the data collected in this study, we found that almost 50% of graduates and postgraduates feel that MOOC courses are very helpful. Many of the online courses are made free for students during COVID 19 some of them are related to how to upgrade your professional communication skills by Google Digital training. Udemy is also offering free courses and courses with very less price as well as EDEX has been providing some of the free courses, all of this has helped students to build their skills and stay productive during the lockdown period. Along with MOOC courses, students are busy with the assignment works, as per our research more than 87% of students are getting assignments from their colleges regularly. As assignments are always good for students to have a better and deeper knowledge of the subject it should also be considered that if the online classes, MOOC courses, and assignments together are assigned then it might end up in too much pressure and hence this might lead to stress in students. Hence allocation of courses and assignments should also be taken care of by the institutions. Students should have proper time management and should not feel pressured while completing any of the courses or assignments. As these free courses are for a better understanding of the subject matter so students must understand the learning's from these courses and assignments.

Are MOOC courses helpful along with online classes?
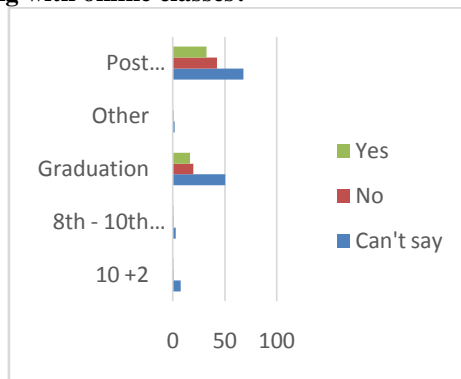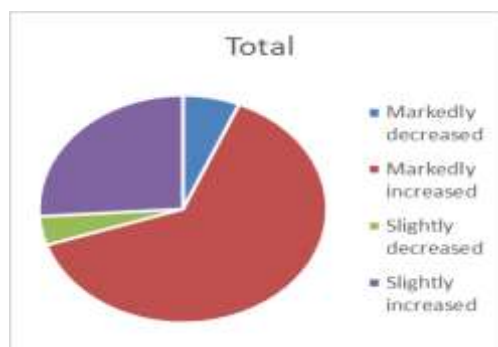

Figure 2

USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

During this lockdown period, social media has been an immense help to all of us regarding the hourly updates about the COVID 19 situation. Even Study suggests active social media use is better for you than inactive use, so consider writing a blog or posting status updates as a way of communicating yourself. And it will help you to organize virtual meet-ups with friends and family. These needn't be limited to chatting: they can take part in group activities like watching films, drama, and online discussion through video calls and share their views on academic aspects as well as other aspects of cooking together. (7) As per our study, there has been a significant increase in the usage of social media, around 80% of students say that during the lockdown they have used social media apps on a very high scale and it has markedly increased during this time. And this is where social media can also be used for marketing purposes for many online courses to target the right customers and even students can benefit from these online courses. Social media applications like Google meet, Zoom can be useful for academic purposes teachers can conduct online lectures students can read from e-books. While sitting home both the students and teachers can work on their academics and it will give them mental satisfaction, rather than wasting time they can engage themselves in some useful work. (7) Social media apps are also useful for students especially postgraduate to get internship opportunities on various platforms.

Social media is also turned out to be a platform where people can stay connected and, in this way, they can keep interacting.From live music performances on Facebook and Instagram to online antakshari on Twitter, to hashtag challenges on TikTok egging users to suggest ways to beat the lockdown blues, social media platforms, and their users are finding novel ways to stay engaged. (8)

Use of Social Media

Figure 3

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental fitness implies cognitive, behavioral, and subjective well-being. It is all about how people think, believe, and behave. People periodically use the term "mental health" to imply the deficit of a mental disorder. Problems such as tension, unhappiness, and uncertainty can all involve cognitive health and disrupt an individual's habit.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO):

"Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." (9)

A study was performed by mental health charity YoungMinds on 2111 people up the age of 25 with a past of mental illness in the UK. It was found that 83 percent of the people accepted that pandemic had affected their cognitive health situation and made it nastier, while the 26 percent noted that they were not able to get the expected mental health assistance due to the COVID-19 outbreak. (10)

In our research, we found that 65% of the students had often felt stressed during the lockdown period, about 55% of students had the feeling of loneliness, and nearly 60% of the students feel depressed nearly every day. Most of the students are postgraduates and graduates.

This pandemic has furthermore reasonably affected the mental state of the pupils. They are also in the dilemma of being contaminated with this disastrous pandemic infection. The vast spread of the fake information over social sites (WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook) and media have built havoc and annoying environment for the students. The scary atmosphere is influencing the concentration level and the learning capacity of the students. Furthermore, several kinds of assessments have been hampered due to this zoonotic virus and there is complete anxiety about the examination policies i.e. how and when it will be conducted. In addition to the regular examination, most of the competitive assessment has also been aborted or delayed for which students were preparing for the last couple of months or even a year. The postponement of the assessments is also resulting in frustration and concern among the students. These numerous kinds of uncertainties disrupt the sleep duration of the students which ultimately reduces the body's immunity and hence makes them more sensitive to the virus. (11) This might be one of the major reasons for students to not be able to cope up with online classes. Our research states that only 33% of the students feel optimistic about their future, this data signifies the negativity within the students due to lockdown and also how it's been affected their studies and career. Postgraduates are more stressed about their internship and future job scope looks minimal to them due to the current pandemic situation hence this leads to stress and anxiety in them which don't let them concentrate and end up affecting their mental health. Sleep and mental health are closely connected. Sleep denial impacts on your psychological state and cognitive health. And those with cognitive health issues are more inclined to have insomnia or other sleep difficulties. (12) The mental health and anxiety have caused improper sleep patterns, in our study we found 72% of the respondents finding it difficult to sleep nearly every day or several days in a week.

Relationship With Family During Lockdown

In our research, we found that 50% of the students have seen the relationship with their family improving during the lockdown. This might be because most of the students stay in a hostel and are unable to spend much time with their family usually. Lockdown has resulted in more interaction between the family members as they get more time to spend with each other. This has resulted in families coming close together. During the time of stress or anxiety, the family will play an important role in understanding and supporting their children by keeping them motivated during their hard times.

IV. DISCUSSION

There is some major problem related to internet connectivity which needs to be focused on, the educational institution should build some strategy to overcome this hurdle. Also, the essential tools for online classes which are laptops and stable internet connectivity is a major concern as most of the poorest communities are finding it difficult to afford. At this point, technology and access to the internet are a must for each student hence government and private colleges must see to it that the required infrastructure is reached to all students. The institution also needs to give training on how to use the digital platform with ease, there are certain difficulties faced by students as well as teachers when we talk about virtual classes.

Class interaction is very minimal when compared to face to face classes, students tend to lose interest in online classes, teachers are not able to see the students physically and hence that creates a gap between the understanding of the subject and learning. Lack of physical class environment can hamper in the overall development of the students. Online classes are restricted to the home; the industrial visit is something the postgraduates and graduate student will need to sacrifice on and this will result in loss of practical knowledge.

Most of the graduates and postgraduates are finding it difficult to find internships and placements which is directly affecting their study pattern as well as mental health, Government must take immediate measures to lessen the effects of COVID 19 on placements, internships, and projects' courses should be encouraged by the

teachers to students to stay productive during the lockdown period.

Every educational institution must conduct sessions on how to manage time, how to have a structured timetable during the lockdown period and also should create awareness about mental health and its importance and how to stay healthy and fit physically and mentally to overcome stress and anxiety. Excessive use of mobile phones, as well as a laptop for a long period, can also end up having health-related issues, therefore, it's important the institution should make sure they don't end up with long class hours which will affect the students' health. During this pandemic, its important people stay connected on social media platforms, also support and positivity from family are equally important.

V. CONCLUSION

All the educational institutes are shut due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The educational sector has been affected severely due to COVID-19 as there are many challenges faced by the educational system right now however there are opportunities as well. It's time for the Government as well as private educational institutes to make ample utilization of online platforms to bridge the gap between students and teachers. Institutes must focus on the quality of education delivered to students as well as should encourage students to enroll in MOOC courses for a better understanding of the subject. Teachers should make sure there is interaction in the virtual classroom from the students by encouraging them to interact and give their opinions while attending the classes. Teachers must also be provided training regarding how to use the online platform effectively as most of the teachers are new to this online teaching concept. Zoom and Google meet apps are popularly used by most of the institutes hence proper training must be provided to teachers and students to deliver the lecture in a better and effective way. Internet connectivity is a huge concern hence the government of India should build a proper information technology infrastructure so that all the students can benefit from the virtual classes. Students are also dealing with mental health issues because of sudden lockdown, social distancing concept, and overall changes in their study pattern hence it's important that the institute must arrange sessions based on how to tackle mental health during this pandemic and think positive and stay productive. Students should be able to express their feeling regarding the feel of online classes and [13].

colleges should reach out to students who are facing difficulties and identify the problem and find a solution to it.

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