EDUCATION DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC : A PSYCHOSOCIAL STUDY CONDUCTED AMONG POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AT KARIAVOTTOM CAMPUS, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, KERALA

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ABSTRACT

The impression of the, Covid-19 pandemic has been reflected in, every sector. The education sector is affected worldwide and created tremendous unprecedented changes in students' lives. This, in turn, made the sudden penetration of technology in the field of education to a boundless extent. In 2016 Kerala has been acknowledged with the principal digital state in India, and in 2020 amidst this pandemic, Kerala has become the first Indian state, to achieve comprehensive Digital education. The lockdown has compelled many educational institutions to cancel their classes and examinations and choose online. The present paper aims to find the answer to one crucial question: whether all this 'new normal life' helped to impact higher education positively or not. Exploring a quantitative research paradigm, the study further probes into the psychosocial impact of 'digital education' using the 'PERMA' model of well-being proposed by Martin Seligman (Seligman 2011). Hence the present paper investigates the subject under study using the questionnaire data collection method to delineate, the perceived effect of Covid-19 contagion amongst, students.

KEYWORDS: Digital education, Covid-19, psychosocial health, positive well-being

1. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization has designated the new coronavirus disease an international public health emergency. According to Sahu's research, this virus has caused the closure of schools in more than 150 nations around the world, having an impact on the education of about 1 billion children (Sahu, 2020). From March 2020 to May 2020, India also experienced absolute lockdown; most educational institutions stayed closed, and the situation is still not better now. The student's life has come to a complete stop, and both their schools and universities have been impacted. By limiting possibilities for numerous vulnerable children, teenagers, adults, and others, this crisis widens already-existing inequality. According to a United Nations report, the economic effects of the pandemic alone might cause twenty-three million children and youth, almost from the pre-primary sections to higher education fields; to drop out of school or even do not have access to it the following year (United Nations, 2020). Being unable to get the most out of educational institutions, which are thought of as our second homes, makes the matter worse.

Students who attend higher education institutions often live and study nearby. In universities or colleges, you can find students from many ethnic backgrounds. The epidemic caused the academic calendar to be disrupted and forced classes to operate online. More than 32 crore pupils in India have been impacted by Covid-19's varied ramifications, restrictions, and state wide lockdown. Even if the nation is adjusting to newer forms of education, there are still people who lack access to technology, which hinders the advancement of online education.

In Kerala, things are different. Kerala's COVID-19 administration has drawn international notice. In Kerala, the government gives importance to issues like equity, access to education, public health, and people's ability to support themselves.

The digital gap was a major worry from the beginning of the online courses, and news outlets and other media outlets frequently highlighted the challenges faced by students without access to computers. To assist individuals in need, the government and other organisations have stepped forward. Kerala became the first state in the nation to embrace an online education system across educational institutions during this crisis.

2. METHODOLOGY

The paper purposes to apprehend, the psychosocial effect of the covid pandemic on students and deploys a quantitative research design to explore the subject area. The data was gathered using both primary and secondary sources. In order to gather primary facts, researchers used a questionnaire to gather more about the topic, and the secondary sources of data included journals, articles, and newspaper readings. For the present study, 30 participants were selected using the simple random method with the full consent of the participants. A questionnaire was given to them and filled with their willingness to part in the study.

3. PERMA MODEL OF WELL BEING

Psychology has historically placed a lot of emphasis on helping those who are in anguish. Though there have been significant advances in the understanding and treatment of mental health illnesses since the occurrence of the Second World War, post-traumatic suffering has not been discussed anywhere. Lessening suffering is not the same as thriving. Instead of just surviving, the people wanted to thrive.

These five fundamental components of well-being will have differing degrees of impact on different people. A prosperous life experienced by one individual may not be successful for another. The path to a flourishing experience and existence are numerous. The descriptive component is required rather than prescriptive, positive psychology. To put it in an alternative manner, examination on the components that endorse thriving in a way can direct people to make decisions that are in alliance with their beliefs and interests. In other words, it is not necessary to suggest to people; what choices they have to make or, what to value in their respective life.

Positive Emotion: When discussing happiness and well-being, positive emotions almost seem evident. When one's basic necessities are met, this sensation can already be felt. Examples include eating, drinking, and sleeping. Intellectual stimulation and creativity can be attained by people; only when their demands are met through building positive emotions. Affirmative feelings also make it easier to deal with undesirable thoughts. Constructive mental state can only be evaluated subjectively, by the subject. This path to happiness is hedonistic—it fosters good emotion. Within certain parameters, it is possible to nurture pleasant feelings; concerning previous experiences, the existent life, and the impending life of a person. Instances of such positive emotions include gratitude, forgiveness, and the enjoyment of physical pleasures (e.g., by having hope and giving hopefulness)

This route to well-being has a limit, which pauses the vulnerability of humans and their well-being. It points out the good emotions a person can experience. In other words, our emotions often fluctuate within a range; and can contribute to positive affectivity; which is somewhat heritable. A large number of people experience low levels of happy feelings with the influence of their surroundings. It can be freeing to know that there are alternative paths to well-being because orthodox conceptions of happiness; that tend to emphasize a pleasurable state of mind. These paths are discussed in the paper.

Engagement: As soon as someone totally obligates to their capabilities, strengths, and devotion to a challenging venture; they are considered as actively engaged. How genuine is a person's interaction with

those around him? How are their relationships with friends, family, co-workers, and other social connections? Pleasant, worthwhile, and healthy interactions with others are fundamental to happiness and well-being. More great feelings and total support will result from these relationships, the better they are. Happy and healthy people engage in stable relationships and social interactions. That is why making new acquaintances and encouraging others to do the same are both beneficial. This lays the groundwork for solid, dependable partnerships that foster mutual respect. This will raise people's quality of life in general. It will direct into an experience; identified as a "flow"; that is so fulfilling that individuals willingly participate in it for the end outcome, in contrast to what they will receive from it. Its reward is 'the action'. The minute a persons' abilities are sufficient for a challenging activity; to pursue a specific goal, with immediate feedback on advancement toward the goal, then it can be said that the 'flow' is experienced. In these circumstances, in any action, self-awareness vanishes, and automatically the focus is entirely disbursed in the current situation, and the sensitivity of time is distorted in retrospection. A pleasant conversation, and a career activity, and playing an instrument, and construing a book, and scripting, and gardening, and sports preparation, or concert are just a few case in point of events in which the flow can be experienced.

In other words, this is about someone giving their all to their work and doing it with passion and dedication. It can also be referred to as flow. Engagement can only be evaluated subjectively, much like joy. A person's degree of engagement with his work or task increases as his involvement in it increases. The activity should also provide him with energy and be enjoyable for him. In spite of the fact that it demands a lot of endurance and focus, it will ultimately result in a high level of engagement and production.

Relationships: Connections are crucial to contentment. Our relationships often augment the affirmative experiences that boost our well-being, such as insightful bliss, significant smiling, a sense of being in the right place, and pomposity in accomplishment. Associations with people in a community can give life significance and drive. A suggestive way to deal with "the downs" of life and a reliable way to feel up is to receive backing from people and connect with them. According to previous studies, being kind to others makes us feel better. We are social beings because, from an evolutionary-historical perspective, the urge to interact with and serve others improves one's endurance. Building concrete networks is important to adaptableness and can only be attained by our ability to love a fellow individual, and offer care, be generous, empathize, to put effort together, collaborate without any egoistic thoughts.

Meaning: What is a person's life's purpose, and how does he make a difference in his community and in society at large? What conceptions and convictions does a person hold, and what gives his life purpose? People are motivated to live and care for others when they are in love and feel appreciated. What is a meaningful life, and when does one begin to live one? If someone responds to all of these inquiries and believes that his life has a greater purpose, then his happiness and well-being also include the fulfilment of meaning. According to research, those who identify as religious or spiritual have a more meaningful experience of life than those who do not. Being a part of and serving something bigger and more meaningful than one can give one person a sense of worth and drive. Societal institutions, such as religion, family, science, politics, work organizations, justice, the community, and social causes have tried their best to ensure and build a sense of 'meaning' or 'purpose' to the lives of individuals.

Accomplishment: This is about feeling accomplished and successful, about continually pushing oneself, and about having the chance to sharpen and enhance one's abilities. The main component of achievement is striving to do better. This primarily entails difficulties that enhance a person's self-image and enable him to be proud of the performance he gave. This boosts self-assurance, which in turn leads to greater happiness and well-being. People can achieve their goals by setting realistic ones. Someone will feel satisfied as a result, which will encourage them to keep continuing. In a variety of contexts, such as office space, sports, competitions, and hobbies of personal interests, people endeavour for achievement, competency, triumph, and mastery for their own growth. People nevertheless pursue the goal; though there is less chance to result in great feelings, meaningful connections, or success every time.

Each of these five fundamentals promotes well-being and is pursued independently rather than as a pathway to an aim. It is demarcated and assessed separately from the former components.

4. SIGNIFICANCE 0F WELL-BEING

Well-being is important because it has constructive everyday significance. When linked to those people with lower levels of well-being, individuals with higher levels of well-being exhibit certain behaviour styles: They perform improved at work; Individuals have added fulfilling relationships; Accommodating; Invulnerable systems; Healthier physical strength; Higher life expectancy; Less chance of cardiovascular mortality; Better appetite; Less chance of exhaustion; Self-control; Self-regulation and coping capabilities; Pro-social

Studies on these factors have acknowledged hopefulness as one of the fundamental backers of well-being. Evidence shows that positivity brings countless benefits when equated to pessimism, including: A lower level of depression and anxiety; the enhanced presentation at public institutions; a compact risk of the dropout rate; enhanced physical health outcomes.

5. PANDEMIC AND THE HAVOC ON STUDENTS

The Covid-19 pandemic emerged in 2019, in the city of Wuhan, in China, and quickly blowout across the globe. Students' psychological health is obstructed by the epidemic's ongoing blowout, its stern quarantine guidelines, and interruptions in opening schools, colleges, and universities across the nation. There have been accounts about the psychological impact of the epidemic on members of the general public, patients, medical experts, children, and senior citizens. The widespread has triggered distress in about twenty-five percent of students. Learners who live with their parents in urban extents, and have solid personal earnings are less likely to experience anxiety during the outbreak due to the availability of resources that can satisfy their needs. Though, a distinct risk factor for anxiety is knowing somebody who has covid-19, especially when it turns out to be one's own family member or friend. Economic stresses, effects on everyday living, and academic delays—all pandemic stressors—are positively correlated with Chinese students' anxiety levels during epidemics. Social assistance is positively associated with lessening their worry. When there is a communal health emergency, scholars' mental well-being is substantially affected, and they necessitate care, support, and consideration from the neighbourhood, their families, and higher education institutions. It is advised that the government and schools work together to find a solution so that pupils can receive high-quality, prompt crisis-oriented psychological assistance. In the study conducted at South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, major insights regarding the performance of students in higher education has been pointed out by the researchers (Rameez A., Fowsar M. A. M., & Lumna N. 2020). The significant impact the pandemic had on students in higher education sector is very relevant and broad. So is the consequences of that.

To be safe, people begin a new life under quarantine. Life in quarantine has psychological, social, and financial repercussions, and it must be implemented with the help, oversight, and cooperation of the nation's medical workforce. Postgraduate learners with prior experience living in isolation participated in the study. With the questionnaire, the research data theoretically achieved its saturation point.

Change is inescapable, and Covid-19 has compelled society to go through it. The scenarios built by the Covid-19 epidemic will definitely result in a 'disaster-preparedness' realm and mitigates future events. Undoubtedly, new technology will put old paradigms—like classroom lectures, learning styles, and evaluation methods—to the test.

With Covid-19, we may observe how the disruptors of the past can now serve as lifeguards. Online education has rescued established institutions from the threat they formerly saw (Kandri, 2020). But lecturers still find it difficult to maintain the similar level of connection with students as they could in a traditional teaching space circumstances. Only when a working method is successful and widely used in effecting positive change can it be said to be effective and efficient. For the online mode of education, it

is essential to find effective teaching methods, carry out assessments, and make sure teaching-learning is captivating, appealing, and context-specific. A number of of the partnerships that the epidemic generated between universities, online education providers, and digital co-operations might endure after it (Kandri, 2020). However, remote learning is only the beginning of the long process of providing online education, which also entails providing useful student engagement technologies and instructor preparation.

 The transition from in-person to online instruction wasn't without its difficulties. The key ones were having access to technology resources, having the necessary skills and pedagogies for distant learning, and having access to certain subjects under study (IAU, 2020). The abrupt alteration on or after schoolroom to digital education has widened the gap amongst the privileged and the deprived. Despite the fact that higher education institutions in industrialized nations have done a good job of instigating digital learning, universities in Africa and South Asia still have a lot of obstacles to overcome before switching completely to digital learning methods. Access to technological tools and infrastructure is a vital aspect in higher education access, which facilitates the divide.

The students experience difficulties since taking lessons online is very different from learning in a classroom where socialisation and interaction take place. Some students cannot even attend the classes because of net and range problems, and the portions might not be covered altogether. Students have also struggled with the issue of not discussing classes. Due to this, there is a problem with the digital divide and student diversity. The level of difficulty is increased. Even so, several students said that since they could access online lessons from the comfort of their homes, they were better. They don't need to go anywhere. It was also noted that pupils lacked access to the campus's library and other amenities.

6. THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS

The covid-19 contagion is a human-induced disaster that has the prospective of affecting everyone's psychological and mental health. The emergence of a pandemic induced stress at many levels of society, according to WHO (2020). Several research relating to endemics have demonstrated an undesirable influence on the mental health of victims, despite the fact that the effects of covid-19 on psychological health have not been the subject of a comprehensive review.

The quick spread of COVID-19, vigorous transmission, the possibility of mortality in extreme cases, and the lack of specialized treatments constitute a serious menace to human life and well-being. Additionally, it has a significant negative effect on the general public's mental health, leading to a range of emotional issues among individuals. Therefore, we can anticipate that the Covid-19 epidemic would result in tension, worry, and fear in the general population, which will inflict to psychiatric diseases such as severe stress syndrome, post-traumatic anxiety disease, depression, and suicide. The emotional reactions and coping mechanisms of nurses are significantly impacted by Covid-19, which poses a serious threat to their lives and health. From February 1 to February 9, 2020, the study performed an online questionnaire survey to learn more about the emotional reactions and coping mechanisms that nurses and nursing students in Anhui Province are currently using. The COPE brief modification approach (Carver, 1997) and the emotional reaction scale are also used in this study. The findings revealed that women displayed higher dread and anxiety than did men. Urban participants displayed more dread and anxiety than rural participants did, whereas rural people displayed more melancholy than urban participants did. Anxiety and rage increase with the participants' proximity to Covid-19.

Under typical circumstances, university students frequently experience higher intensities of psychological discomfort and subsequent detrimental educational outcomes (American College Health Association, 2019). Higher education establishments have switched to a substitute virtual learning style as a result of the physical distance procedures put in place in retort to Covid-19, which is projected to make academic pressures for students even worse. In one of the study conducted in Sri Lanka, it was found that crisis management leads to success only when it is planned sustainability (Fowsar, M. A. M., Raja, N. K. K., & Rameez, M. A. M. 2022). It is reasonable to speculate that students may experience lower motivation for their studies, increased pressure to study independently, leaving behind daily routines, and possibly greater

dropout rates as a direct result of these measures based on study looking at the impact of academic disruptions on scholars (Wickens, 2011). The Covid-19 pandemic has thus put an unprecedented mental health burden on students that urgently calls for further investigation and prompt intervention. This is because it has increased 'academic stressors' in a populace with increased pre-existing anxiety stages. This on the other hand potentially reduced the ability to rely on typical surviving approaches, such as families who may themselves be experiencing amplified distress.

7. MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

These first results illustrate the variety of causes of students' anxiety during this pandemic, but there is still much to learn about minimising the negative psychological effects on students. A timely call to action is made for more investigation into how Covid-19 affects students' mental health. Priorities should be placed on disruptions to educational progress, modifications to ingrained coping mechanisms, and academic institutions' measures for lowering unfavourable academic and psychosocial results. New-fangled explorations may promote student-centred backing initiatives and aid to lessen the long-term detrimental effects on scholar learning and mental health. The actions that are now taken to support a susceptible learner populace will help lessen the general world-wide psychological well-being accountability connected with this period of extreme commotion and vagueness in terms with the continuing truths of the Covid-19 epidemic.

These respondents' distinct socio-psychological experiences were disclosed by this investigation. It is good that so many overseas students were frightened during the pandemic, though. This might be as a result of the respondents' increased focus on family safety in affected areas.

In conclusion, the Covid-19 epidemic has generated a number of teething troubles for universities around the global domain. Numerous educational organisations have abruptly swapped from face-to-face education to virtual learning as a result of lockdown and other Covid-19 restrictions. This study demonstrates that despite the fact that in the Covid-19 era this move was seen as a prospective remedy to the problems in higher education, it was not without its difficulties for both students and academics. These difficulties are described in this study and include concerns with connectivity, an unfavourable physical environment, problems with mental health, a lack of basic necessities, and a lack of resources for teaching and learning. Despite these difficulties, this study demonstrated how Covid-19 stimulated chances for innovation and capacity building. The effect of Covid-19 on academic outcomes is not well supported by scientific data. It is advised that more study be done to evaluate the short-term and lasting effects of Covid-19 on academic outcomes.

Government, healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders should establish urgent psychosocial crisis preventive and intervention models to better address these psychosocial challenges affecting many social strata. The proper use of social media, technology, and internet services is required to stop pandemics and "infodemics." It is vital to be psychosocially prepared by establishing mental organisations specifically for upcoming pandemics.

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