

## A study on utilization of time in Indian population during COVID-19 pandemic

Dr. Kausik Rej<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Paramita Datta<sup>2</sup>, Aparajita Sahoo<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The survival and prosperity of human life are suddenly threaten by pandemic COVID-19. COVID-19 is fatal and highly contagious disease. With aim to reduce it's community spread Government of India implemented lockdown. Lockdown creates economic uncertainty leading to depression and anxiety among every level of society. But we got ample of time which to be used judiciously to improve mental health. So, aim of this survey is to evaluate how do people utilize time during lockdown. Total 174 participants were selected using snowball sampling technique through online in India. Data were assessed using SPSS software. Major participants spent time by listening to music 58.6%, watching movies 54.6% and learning new things in internet 50%. The results reflect most of people utilizing their time during lockdown in monotonous way which may enhance their anxiety and stress in present and future both.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Lockdown, Utilization of time and Mental health

For the last few months we are very much familiar with few words like COVID-19, pandemic, quarantine, lockdown. Now from pre-school to hi-school, illiterate to literate, poor to rich all are used to with these new language of life. Life changed due to COVID-19. COVID-19 was started on December 2019 at Wuhan city of central Hubei province of China<sup>1</sup>. On 11<sup>th</sup> January China announced it's first COVID-19 related death<sup>2</sup>. Then within few weeks the infection spread across the globe in rapid pace<sup>3</sup>. On the 11<sup>th</sup> March WHO declared COVID-19- a pandemic as by then about 114 countries were affected<sup>4</sup>. India was also not spared, we also affected by COVID-19. COVID-19 infection is a highly contagious and can affect a large population in a short span of time. Also it causes huge deaths, as on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 total world deaths were 14, 509<sup>5</sup>. It indicates that even with well equipped health care system countries like China, Italy, France, USA were unable to

<sup>1</sup>Psychiatrist, Siliguri, West Bengal, India.

<sup>2</sup>Guest Lecturer, Ph.D in Psychology, Department of Psychology, Salesian College, Siliguri, West Bengal, India.

<sup>3</sup>HR, Datametrics Software Systems. MA in Psychology, USA.

\*Responding Author

Received: June 07, 2020; Revision Received: June 20, 2020; Accepted: June 25, 2020

## **A Study on Utilization of Time in Indian Population During COVID-19 Pandemic**

control death toll. A country like India which is densely populated without proper health care infrastructure is highly vulnerable to major catastrophe. So to prevent the spread of infection and to stop community spread lockdown was implemented by Government of India on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Lockdown leads to closer of all commercial and private establishment (only work from home allowed), all shops except essential commodities, schools, colleges and places for worship. Every type of transport were stopped. People were forced to stay at home. These leads to uncertain future. People become more prone to anxiety, depression and mental health issues<sup>6</sup>.

It's not easy yet the positive and constructive mind builds strategies in the form of utilization of time that can make this uncertain times meaningful. However, there will be individual differences in time utilization which determines the level of mental wellbeing of each person.

Considering the present scenario a list of ways have been observed. Many of us have tried to divert our mind by explaining that we have been given this time to improve certain areas which we seldom get an opportunity due to our hectic lifestyle. To begin with many of us have started to practice yoga, meditation and physical workout in a disciplined manner which has overall benefits for complete physical and mental well being. Research proved that exercise, yoga and meditation are helpful in people with anxiety and depression<sup>7</sup>. In fact any physical workout triggers a feeling of happiness and wellness by reducing depression and anxiety<sup>8</sup>.

Some of us are also going back to our forgotten hobbies and passions like listening to music, singing, playing musical instruments, reading, writing and painting. All these have been neglected till now as we were super busy and to think this time as a blessing than a curse can actually boost our immunity which is most important to fight this enemy.

Some of us are also learning new things from the internet which actually is making us prepared for times ahead with new set of skills and confidence. Watching movies, engaging in social media, gossiping with family members are also adopted by people. But excess engagement in social media may create more problems for us. Instead if we use social media and the time we are getting to connect with family and other people who are important in our lives then it can be actually beneficial.

In absence of sufficient reported study in Indian context this survey is an attempt to unveil the utilization of time during lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The participants were selected using Snowball sampling technique. This was a cross-sectional, observational study carried out in India. Total no of participants were 174. An online questionnaire was developed by using Google Forms. It's started on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 9:10 am IST and ended on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 3:10 pm IST. The link of the questionnaire was sent through emails and whatsapp to the contacts of the investigators. Then the participants were encouraged to forward the link to other who meets the inclusion criteria. On receiving and clicking the link the participants got auto directed to the information about the study. First they field up the demographic

## A Study on Utilization of Time in Indian Population During COVID-19 Pandemic

details. Then a set of several questions appeared sequentially, which the participants were to answer. Separately consent from all the participants were taken.

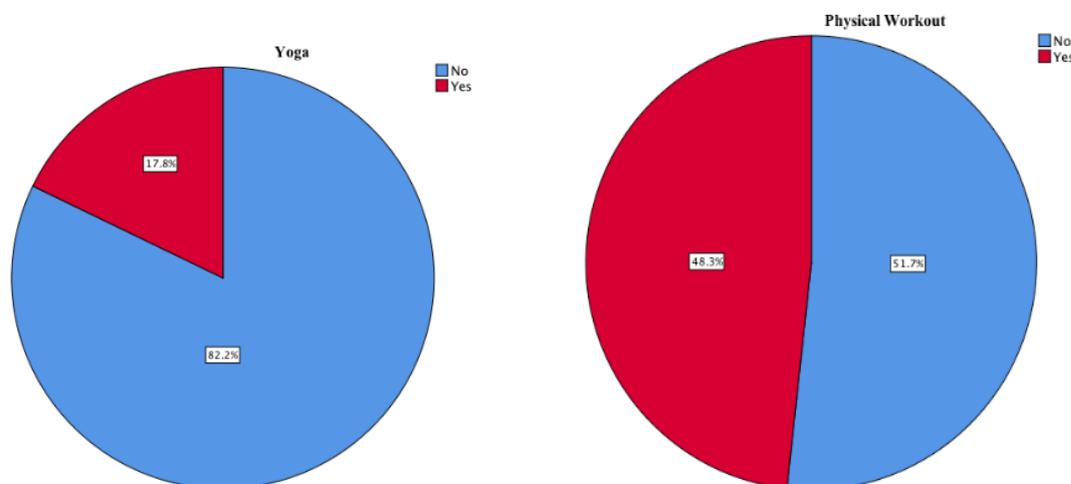
The inclusion criteria for this online study were that the participant must had access to the internet, their age must be above 18 years and able to understand English. The demographic variables included age, gender, education and occupation.

The online self-reported questionnaire developed by investigators was formed on three sections. The first section contained background data, second section contained opinion regarding COVID-19, in this section items were supposed to rated on 5 point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree and the third section contained 14 multiple choice regarding the ways which help the participant to utilize the time as well as overcome the psychological impact of lockdown. These 14 ways include yoga, meditation, physical workout, listening music, singing, playing musical instruments, watching movies, engaging in social media, reading books, writing, painting, learning new things in internet, gossiping with family members, watching present situation in news. SPSS 25 was used for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics have been used in the study to analysis the findings.

### RESULTS

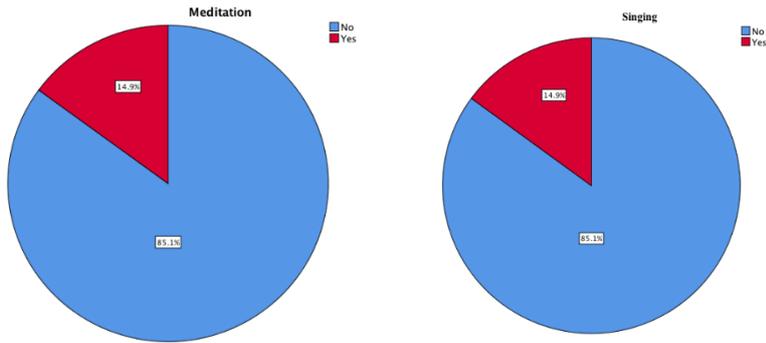
The mean age of participants was 35.41 ( $\pm$  8.65) years. Among the 174 participants 69.5% were males and 30.5% were females.

Majority of the participants are spending time during lockdown by listening to music (58.6%), watching movies (54.6%) and learning new things in internet (50%). Among 174 participants 17.8% doing yoga, 14.9% doing meditation, 48.3% doing physical workout, 14.9% singing, playing musical instruments 7.5%, 47.1% participants engaging themselves in social media, 44.3% reading books, 13.8% participants giving time on writing, 12.1% on painting, 42.5% enjoying the time by gossiping with family members and 33.3% spending time by watching present situation in news.

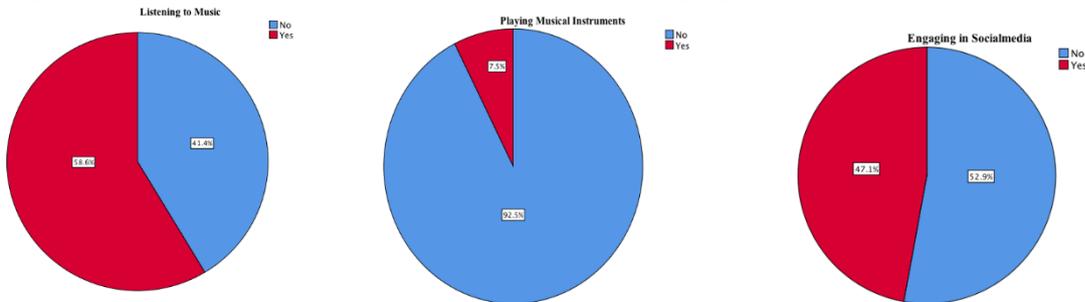


*Fig.1. Utilization of time by yoga and Physical workout*

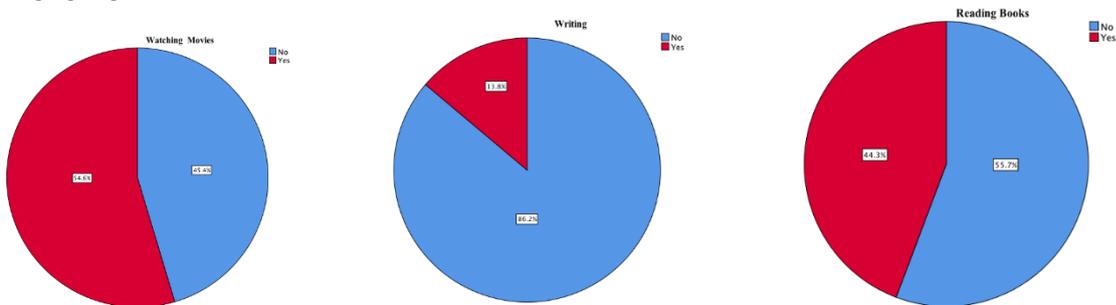
**A Study on Utilization of Time in Indian Population During COVID-19 Pandemic**



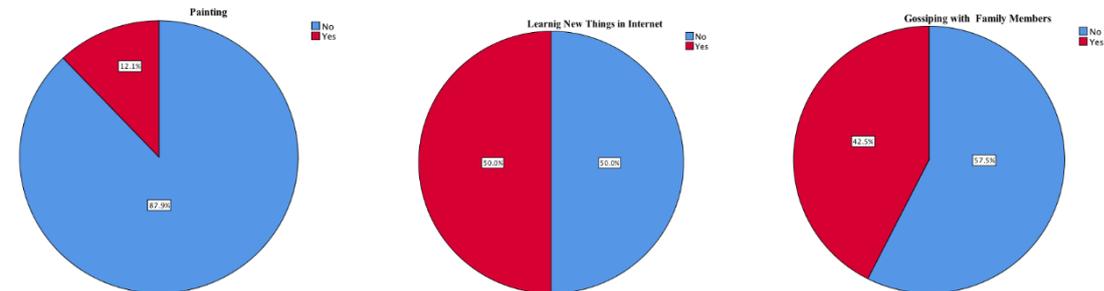
**Fig.2. Utilization of time by meditation and singing**



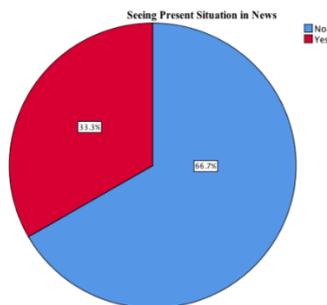
**Fig.3. Utilization of time by listening to music, playing musical instruments and engaging in social media.**



**Fig.4. Utilization of time by watching movies, writing and reading books**



**Fig.5. Utilization of time by painting, learning new things through internet and gossiping with family members.**



**Fig.6. Utilization of time by seeing present situation in news.**

## DISCUSSION

Time is costlier than money and time is what we want most, but what we use worst. Lockdown due to pandemic COVID-19 gives ample of time along with uncertainty, anxiety, depression and stress to the people. In other words this pandemic creates a psychological scar in individual's life. Individuals are battling pandemic not only from outside but also from within. But determination, with an optimistic attitude is the key to success. Optimism evolve ideas to improve situation and hope for better future. Individual can use this lockdown as a boon and utilize the time in a positive way to create positive vibes within the family. It will definitely improve their psychological health. Hence aim of this survey is to evaluate that how people utilizing their lockdown time.

Yoga, meditation have been shown to be effective in alleviating symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress. Poor mental health conditions, including stress and depression are known to increase the risk of acute respiratory infections<sup>9</sup>. According to the findings yoga and meditation could be useful for preventing and post-recovery management of COVID-19<sup>10</sup>. But present study shows that only 17.8% participants are doing yoga and 14.9% are doing meditation. It indicates that people are not that much concern regarding their physical and mental health. Yoga along with meditation can be considered as an all round exercise which will take care of our body, mind and soul.

Similarly physical workout plays an important role to keep physical and mental health fit. But physical activity is reduced arguably while locked in home in afraid of being contracted virus from man to man. Sedentary behaviour in home during lockdown reduce the energy expenditure due to less physical activity, as persons are inclined mostly watching television, using mobile device, sitting idle causing less activity. So physical activity is needed to keep healthy and boosting up immune system in current devastating situation<sup>11</sup>. Official measures for corona virus do not mean limited physical activity or eliminated entirely. Exercise has been shown to have clear health benefits for healthy individuals and patients with various diseases. Results of present study shows that 48.3% participants are doing physical workout which is good but it also indicates that more emphasis on physical activity is required. Because regular physical activity is an important strategy for living during this crisis.

Among various positive ways for utilizing time in a proper way reading good books and writing are important. A growing body of research indicates that reading books literally changes mind. Reading books benefits mental health and those benefits can last a life time. There is growing evidence that books is effective treatment for a mild to moderate mental health problems<sup>12</sup>. So it is definite that in present lockdown situation reading good books will help to combat stress and anxiety. On the otherhand writing can be healing for persons with mental health issues. Healing properties of writing include reducing anxiety and clarifying thinking<sup>13</sup>. Expressive writing may help some people manage with the emotional fallout of stressful events.

But result of present study shows that 44.3% participants are reading books and only 13.8% are giving time to writing during this lockdown.

Similarly the role of art and music in supporting subjective wellbeing is well known<sup>14</sup>. Listening to music can be entertaining and some research suggest that it might even make people healthier. Result of the study revealed that most of the participants

## A Study on Utilization of Time in Indian Population During COVID-19 Pandemic

(58.6%) spending time in listening music. Definitely music has a positive energy and mood booster when we hardly have minimum time from our daily work pressure. But during lockdown we have ample of time which to be use in a qualitative way. We have quantity but we must spend it qualitatively. So in this scenario of lockdown spending excess time in only music may increase loneliness and the person may feel isolated. It may promote sedentary behaviours and dangerously aggravate the negative thoughts regarding the current situations. On the otherhand singing, playing musical instruments and painting may give satisfaction and energy to manage this situation as because these are creative work. But results revealed that only few participants (singing 14.9%, playing musical instruments 7.5% and painting 12.1%) have given time for these creative works.

Findings of this study shows that 50% of participants learn new things through internet which have positive effect on mental health. Present world is materialistic, peoples are unable to spend quality time with their family members. But COVID-19 give opportunity to spend more time with family. Both young and old couple can re-discover togetherness and parents can give quality time to their children. This will strengthening the family bonding and will help to fight in this situation even help to develop resilience. But result shows that only 42.5% participants spending quality time with family members. We also find that the 47.1% participants are engaging themselves in social media, 54.6% are spending time in watching movies which also may enhance sedentary behaviour. 33.3 % participants are also seeing present situation in news.

So from above discussion it is reflected most of the people utilizing their time in monotonous way, which may enhance their anxiety and stress in near future.

### *Limitations*

Our study is also limited to educated persons having smartphones. We accepted that lockdown cause depression and anxiety. We also not explore other variables (like cooking etc.) by which people can utilize their time in a productive way.

## **CONCLUSION**

During this pandemic most of the people aware of physical health but unaware mental health. There is need of positive and creative utilization of stay home time which improve mental health. A well phrase is there that “every cloud has silver lining” so this cloud of pandemic, lockdown and uncertainty will also see a silver lining soon. So it will be better not to think much about the present situation and utilize the time in productive ways because time is precious.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Holshue, M.L., DeBolt, C., Lindquist, S., Lofy, K.H., Wiesman, J., Bruce, H., Spitters, C., Ericson, K., Wilkerson, S., Tural, A., Diaz, G., Cohn, A., Fox, L., Patel, A., Gerber, S. I., Kim, L., Tong, S., Lu, X., Lindstrom, S., Pallansch, M. A., Weldon, W. C., Biggs, H.M., Uyeki, T.M., Pillai, S.K., (2020). First case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 382, 929–936. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa2001191>.
2. WHO, 2020. Pneumonia of Unknown Cause- China. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/csr/>

## A Study on Utilization of Time in Indian Population During COVID-19 Pandemic

3. WHO, 2020. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report- 46. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavirus/situation-reports/20200306->
4. WHO, 2020, Rolling Updates on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>.
5. WHO, 2020. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 63
6. Roy, D., Tripathy, S., Kar, S.K., Sharma, N., Verma, S. K., Kaushal, V. (2020). Study of knowledge, attitude, anxiety and perceived mental healthcare need in Indian population during COVID-19 pandemic. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, 51, doi: 10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102083
7. Sy, Atezaz Saeed, Diana, J. Antonacci, Richard M. Bloch. (2010). Exercise, yoga and meditation for depressive and anxiety disorders. *Journal of American Family Physician*, 81(8), 981-6.
8. Peter J. Carek, Sarah E. Laibstain, Stephen M. Carek. (2011). Exercise for the treatment of depression and anxiety. *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 41(1), 15-28. doi: 10.2190/pm.41.1.c
9. Maxwell, L., Barrett, B., Chase, J., et. al. (2015). Self-reported mental health predicts acute respiratory infection. *World Medical Journal*, 114, 100.
10. Tillu, G., Chaturvedi, S., Chopra, A., Patwardhan, B., (2020). Public health approach of ayurveda and yoga for COVID-19 prophylaxis. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 26(5), 360-364. doi: 10.1089/acm.2020.0129.
11. Chen, P., Mao, L., Nassis, G. P., Harmer, P., Ainsworth, B. E., Fuzhong, L. I., (2020). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the need to maintain regular physical activity while taking precautions. *Journal of Sport and Health Science*, 9(2), 103-104. doi: 10.1016/j.jshs.2020.02.001.
12. Robertson, R., Wray, S. J., Maxwell, M., Pratt, R. J., (2008). The introduction of a healthy reading scheme for people with mental health problems, usage and experiences of health professionals and library staff. *Mental Health in Family Medicine*, 5(4), 219-28.
13. Ero, Phillip, Adrienne M. (2015). The healing properties of writing for persons with mental health issues. Retrieved from Sophia, the St. Catherine University repository website. [https://sophia.stkate.edu/ma\\_osot/10](https://sophia.stkate.edu/ma_osot/10).
14. Daykin, N., Mansfield, L., Meads, C., Julier, G., Tomlinson, A., Payne, A. et.al.(2018). *Journal of Perspective in Public Health*, 138(1), 39-46.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** K Rej, P Datta & A Sahoo (2020). A Study on Utilization of Time in Indian Population During COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 8(2), 1179-1185. DIP:18.01.135/20200802, DOI:10.25215/0802.135