

## Youth perception on public sector, personal activities and psychological problems during the lockdown in India

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The worldwide spread of corona virus and lockdown interrupted the social life of human beings. **Aim:** The current study is to understand the public sector activities and personal activities and psychological problems among youth during lockdown in India. **Methods and Materials:** A cross sectional survey has been done in eighty-one districts of nineteen states and three union territories in India. There were 788 youth participated in online survey and administered self-reported questionnaire focused on government activities, personal activities & psychological problems during the first and second phases of lockdown period in India. **Results:** The findings revealed that majority of youth prefer to be engaged in social networking sites (30.7%). About 77.8% mentioned that lockdown interrupted their basic needs and 16.4% of youth involved in voluntary service. The majority of youth agreed that government advices, campaigns and the supportive services helped them in lockdown. There was highly significant gender comparison with personal activity ( $P=.005$ ) & psychological problems ( $P=.01$ ) and significant correlation between personal activity and psychological problems ( $P=.02$ ). **Conclusion:** The public sector activities helped to resist the spread of coronavirus during lockdown and there is a need of psychosocial interventions among youth.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Public Sector Activities, Personal Activities, Lockdown, Youth, Corona Virus

Coronavirus is a biological disaster, started by the end of 2019 and spread gradually across world in the beginning of 2020. There several epidemic diseases affected in 21st century across the world. The highly pathogenic global epidemic diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus & Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus emerged from bats (Paules, Marston, & Fauci, 2020).

The situation report 112 by WHO on 11 May 2020 revealed that coronavirus cases cross 4 million and 278 892 deaths across the world. There were 1 lakh coronavirus cases detected

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and 3481 deaths in South East Asia (WHO, 2020). In India, the active coronavirus cases are 63624 and 3435 deaths till 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 (MoHFW, 2020). For controlling pandemic disease the Government of India ordered its first lockdown, which lasted for a period of 21 days from 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (MHA, 2020b).

The lockdown in India is stopped public gathering/activities and closed worship places, educational institutions, government department, private sector practice etc. The coronavirus affected people or suspected people are kept in quarantine and isolation. Caregivers or health workers should take safeguards. The public sector suggested that the people need to follow the social distance, physical distance and quarantine for reducing the pandemic diseases. The Union Government of India gives up-to-date direction to the state/union territories during the lockdown period. There were a close collaboration between central government and state government in India to defeat corona virus (MHA, 2020a).

India has the largest youth population in the world and it is 422 million youth in the country (Census, 2011). The youth in India falls under age-group of 15 to 29 years and youth needs to be empowered with potential skills (NYP, 2014). In the studies related to youth/Adolescents are; a systematic review, reveals that there is a significant correlation with social media and psychological distress (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020). A meta-analysis study found that there is a significant positive correlation between problematic Facebook use and psychological distress (Marino, Gini, Vieno, & Spada, 2018). A recent study highlighted the role of social media during lockdown and the social media helps to organize virtual meetings, academic activities and promote healthy activities (Jadhav VV, 2020).

The current study gives emphasis on the youth perception on public sector activities (government activities), personal activities and psychological problems. The public sector activities include both union & state government support and services during the first and second phase of lockdown in India. The personal activities in the current study focus on daily activities, voluntary services and any psychological disturbance during lockdown in India.

### **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

A cross sectional descriptive study carried out across India by using snowball sampling technique and the target population youth (15 to 29 years). There were 788 respondents from 81 districts in 19 states and 3 union territories in India. An online questionnaire was made by using google form which comprised consent form, socio demographic profile and questions related to public sector activities and personal activities during the first and second phase of lock down in India.

The prime minister of India declared lockdown period from 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 across India. The current study concentrated on the first phase (25<sup>th</sup> March to 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020) and second phase (15<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020) of the lock down. The google form questionnaire link was shared through social networking sites to many people and questions were in English language. The respondents' response was started from 09:05 PM IST on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and terminated at 10:49 AM on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020. The frequency, chi-square test and correlations have been used in the current study to analyse the results.

### **RESULTS**

A total of 788 respondents were taken for analysis and they were Indian citizens. The highest respondents rate was from Kerala (81.1%) and lowest respondents was from Bihar

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(0.1%), Pondicherry (0.1%), Nagaland (0.1%), Arunachal Pradesh (0.1%), Goa (0.1%) & Madhya Pradesh (0.1%).

**Table – 1: Socio demographic details of youth.**

<b>Values</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<i>15 to 19</i>	96	12.2
	<i>20 to 24</i>	470	59.6
	<i>25 to 29</i>	222	28.2
<b>Gender</b>	<i>Male</i>	334	42.4
	<i>Female</i>	454	57.6
<b>Education</b>	<i>Senior Secondary &amp; Below</i>	66	8.4
	<i>Under Graduate</i>	383	48.6
	<i>Post Graduate</i>	309	39.2
	<i>M. Phil/Ph. D</i>	30	3.8
<b>Occupation</b>	<i>Unemployed</i>	84	10.7
	<i>Student</i>	487	61.8
	<i>Government Sector</i>	54	6.9
	<i>Private Sector</i>	134	17
	<i>Self employed</i>	29	3.7
<b>Marital Status</b>	<i>Un married</i>	679	85.8
	<i>Married</i>	109	13.8
	<i>Separated</i>	3	0.4
<b>Settings</b>	<i>Urban</i>	474	60.2
	<i>Rural</i>	314	39.8
<b>Socio economic status</b>	<i>APL</i>	617	78.3
	<i>BPL</i>	171	21.7

The table 1 illustrates the socio-demographic details of respondents. The majority of respondents comes under age group 20 to 24 (59.6%), 57.6% were female, 48.6% were undergraduate, 61.8% mentioned their occupation as students, 85.8% were unmarried, 60.2% hailing from urban area and 78.3% were above poverty line. This shows that majority of the respondents are educated.

**Table – 2: Youth activities during first and second phase of lockdown**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Reading books	120	15.2
Social networking sites	242	30.7
Television	61	7.7
Listening music	29	3.7
Watched news	87	11
Cooking	104	13.2
Physical exercise	43	5.5
Voluntary services	8	1
Studied	23	2.9
Playing online games	12	1.5
Slept	3	0.4

N=788

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The chief activities of respondents during the first and second phase of lockdown depicted in the table-2. The majority of the respondents were involved in the social networking sites (30.7%). This indicates that youth activities are less productive in nature.

The table-3 shows that the youth perception on public sector and personal activities during lockdown. Majority of them responded that Lockdown was helpful to reduce the coronavirus (99.2%), health dept. made an effort to control coronavirus (93%) and 58.2% said that they did not get any supportive service from government. Overall, in youth perception the activities of union and state government of India helped to reduce the vulnerability of COVID-19 during the first and second phase of lockdown. There were 53.4% respondents who were not able to work/study at home/isolated place, 16.4% of them did voluntary service during lockdown and 7% of youth did voluntary service under government department. This indicates that majority of youth not able to do healthy personal activities during first and second phase of lockdown.

**Table -3: Youth perception on public sector and personal activities during lockdown**

		No (%)	Yes (%)
<b>Public sector activities</b>	Lockdown was helpful to reduce the coronavirus	6 (0.8)	782 (99.2)
	Government advice helped to reduce corona virus	18 (2.3)	770 (97.7)
	Lockdown interrupts your basic needs	175 (22.2)	613 (77.8)
	Health dept. made an effort to control coronavirus	55 (7)	733 (93)
	Got supportive service from government	459 (58.2)	329 (41.8)
<b>Personal activities</b>	Able to work/study at home or isolated place	421 (53.4)	367 (46.6)
	You shared information's regarding corona virus	168 (21.3)	620 (78.7)
	Strictly follow the instructions of health department	84 (10.7)	704 (89.3)
	Voluntary services during lockdown	659 (83.6)	129 (16.4)
	Voluntary work under government department	733 (93)	55 (7)

**Table – 4: Gender comparison with personal activity and psychological problems of youth**

Values		Gender		X <sup>2</sup>	P-Value
		Male (%)	Female (%)		
<b>Personal activity</b>	Healthy	167 (50)	274 (60.4)	8.36	.005**
	Unhealthy	167 (50)	180 (39.6)		
<b>Psychological problems</b>	Low risk	285 (85.3)	367 (80.8)	7.94	.01**
	Moderate risk	19 (5.7)	52 (11.5)		
	High risk	30 (9)	35 (7.7)		

N=788; \*P≤ 0.05; \*\*P≤ 0.01

The gender comparison with personal activity and psychological problems were shown in table-4. There is a highly significant gender comparison with personal activity ( $\chi^2=8.36$ ,  $P=.005^{**}$ ) and psychological problems ( $\chi^2=8.36$ ,  $P=.01^{**}$ ) among youth. This indicate that in personal activity females were done healthy activity (cooking, reading, studying, physical exercise, voluntary service) than male during first and second phase of lockdown. The female had more psychological problem than male during the first and second phase of lockdown.

The table-5 indicates the correlation between personal activity and psychological problems of youth. The result found that there were significant relationship between personal activity and psychological problems ( $P=.082^*$ ). The majority of respondents were mostly engaged in

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unhealthy activities such as playing online games and social networking etc . This may lead the youth in to some level of psychological problems.

**Table – 5: Correlation between personal activity & psychological problems of youth**

	Psychological problems
Personal Activity	.082*

### DISCUSSION

The lockdown affected financial as well as social supporting system of individuals across the country. The government of India had given a comprehensive daily broadcasts to the public sector and do review meetings from top to bottom level through different technologies. The health care professionals & workers immensely did service activities to the vulnerable people (MHA, 2020a). The central and state government did collective work to stop the pandemic in the first and second phase of lockdown.

The current study found that youth involved most of the time in social networking sites during lockdown. The majority of the respondents are college students. The other studies also indicate that youth are mostly engaged in social networking sites that leads to psychological distress (Anand et al., 2018; Keles et al., 2020; Mutalik, Narayan, Choudhari, & Bhogale, 2016). In various studies it studies was found that female had psychological distress than male (Amr, Amin, & Saddichha, 2013; Inam, 2007; Yusoff et al., 2017) as similar in the present study. During the lockdown period every individuals has some kind of distress because of isolation, loneliness, and fear about future or death.

The current study mention that healthy personal activities during lockdown are physical exercise, reading, studying and cooking and found that female is healthier than male youth. This indicates that majority of female youth are engaged in cooking, study, reading and physical exercise whereas males engaged in online games or social networking sites. A study on gender differences in academic performance in a rural County in Tennessee revealed that females achieved better than males in all subjects (Sparks-Wallace, 2007); another study found that male is more involved in online games (Chih-Hung, Yen, Chen, Chen, & Yen, 2005).

The current study found a significant relationship between personal activities and psychological problems of youth. The significant relationship is, because of interest in unhealthy personal activity among youth, and the fear about COVID-19 pandemic situations make them dissuaded from healthy personal activities. The studies also found that excessive use of social media has a significant correlation with psychological problems (Jadhav VV, 2020; Keles et al., 2020; Marino et al., 2018). The limitations of the study are questionnaire in English language, respondents were less from majority of the states in India, thus not be generalized to whole population.

### CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there is a need of mental health service for the development and empowerment of youth and to make them free from psychosocial problems and anxiety caused by COVID-19 pandemic. The youth need systematic time consumption for their daily activities and must engage in productive work.

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***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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