

An online descriptive study to assess the level of stress and coping strategies of people from different cities of Gujarat state during COVID-19 induced lockdown with a view to develop an information booklet

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ABSTRACT

Background: Due to COVID-19 pandemic, on 24th march, the prime minister ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, affecting the entire 1.3 billion population of India. On 14th April, the prime minister extended the ongoing nationwide lockdown till 3rd may. On 1st may, lockdown across the country was further extended by two more weeks till 17th may. **Aim:** the purpose of the study was to assess the stress and best coping strategies people residing in Gujarat during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown situation. **Method:** a descriptive research design and quantitative approach has been used in the study with the use of perceived stress scale. **Sample:** the study consisted of 226 people residing in Gujarat during COVID-19 pandemic national lockdown. **Design:** for the present study, non-experimental descriptive design was adopted, as it was a virtue of a situation that naturally happens. **Result & conclusion:** the study showed that the majority of respondents are suffering from a moderate level of stress. Majority of male respondents shows that mobile chat, social media activation and watching television at home is the best way to get relaxed while least shown interest towards dancing during covid-19 national lockdown. Similarly, majority of female respondents data revealed that mobile chat, social media activation and watching television at home is the best activity to reduce their stress during lockdown. Surprisingly, least female respondents show interest towards cooking as a stress buster.

Keywords: Stress, Coping, relaxation strategy, COVID-19, Pandemic, Lockdown

The first case of the COVID-19 pandemic in India was reported on 30th January 2020, originating from China. As of 20th May 2020, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have confirmed a total of 106,750 cases, 42,298 recoveries (including 1 migration) and 3,303 deaths in the country.

On 22nd March 2020, India observed a 14-hour voluntary public curfew; the government followed it up with lockdowns in 75 districts where COVID-19 cases had occurred as well

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as all major cities. Further, on 24th March, the prime minister ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, affecting the entire 1.3 billion population of India. On 14th April, the prime minister extended the ongoing nationwide lockdown till 3rd May. On 1st May, lockdown across the country was further extended by two more weeks till 17th May.

Stress and Coping with stress have become important concern both in research and practice during National Lockdown in COVID-19 crisis. This study conducted to assess the level of stress and coping strategies of people living in different cities of Gujarat.

The purpose of the study was to assess the stress and best coping strategies people residing in Gujarat during COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown situation. The study was descriptive in nature. The study was conducted from 1st April 2020 to 31st May 2020 with the use of online Google forms and Perceived Stress Scale. A total of 226 people who met the inclusion criteria were selected from Google Master sheet by using purposive sampling technique. The investigators first introduced him to the subjects online and obtained the consent for the present study. The investigator sent online forms to samples with the use WhatsApp and email. The study was based on Betty Neuman's system model. The instruments used for the study was Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) stress inventory to assess the stress level and investigator added eight general coping strategies with open questioning to assess the best coping strategies used by samples during COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown situation.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the stress and coping strategies of People living in Gujarat
2. To find out association between stress and demographic variables.
3. To find out the best relaxation strategy used by people during lockdown.
4. To develop information booklet on stress and coping strategies.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design and quantitative approach has been used in the study. Reliability of The Perceived Stress Scale standard tool was utilized in this study. Purposeful Random sampling technique was used to collect data from the people who are using smart mobile phones. The tool used for the study was standardized Perceived Stress Scale which is a classic stress assessment instrument. The data was collected through online Google Form from total 226 samples who meet the inclusion criteria. The obtained data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics and interpreted in terms of objectives of the study.

RESULTS

To assess the stress of People living in Gujarat

Majority 70.79% was suffering with Moderate stress level, 25.22% were suffering with High perceived stress level and 3.98% respondent had Mild Stress level.

To find out association between stress and demographic variables.

The findings revealed that the chi square value of marital status is 4.018 which are greater than table value at 5% level of significance. Hence there is a significant association between stress level and marital status of people residing in Gujarat during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. There is no significant association between stress level and demographic variables like age, gender, education, professional status.

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To find out the best relaxation strategy used by people during lockdown.

Overall, the people of Gujarat preferred maximum of (22.56%) mobile chat and activation on social media as the best strategy to reduce stress, while merely (0.44%) person shown interest in dancing. The figure difference greatly.

The third & fourth ranked method of stress management was spiritual activity and watching television by 16.81% and 15.04% of people, respectively. Other activities preferred such as cooking by 12.83% and Reading by 12.38% of people. There is clear evidence prove that the maximum number of people used social media as a stress buster during the lockdown.

To develop information booklet on stress and coping strategies.

A short information booklet was prepared which contains information regarding definition, causes, signs and symptoms of stress, prevention of stress, relaxation techniques like which can be easily followed in our day to day life like meditation, yoga, relaxed breathing, imagery and coping with stress in the work domain. The main emphasis was given on the importance of stress reduction and thereby reducing the stress in the work place.

Classification of subjects based on the level of stress

Table :1 shows the classification of subjects based on the stress level

SNo	Aspect	Stress Level		
		MILD	MODERATE	HIGH PERCEIVED
1	STRESS LEVEL	3.98% (N=9)	70.79% (N=160)	25.22% (N=57)

Above tabulated data revealed that Majority 70.79% were suffering with Moderate stress level, 25.22% were suffering with High perceived stress level and 3.98% respondent had Mild Stress level.

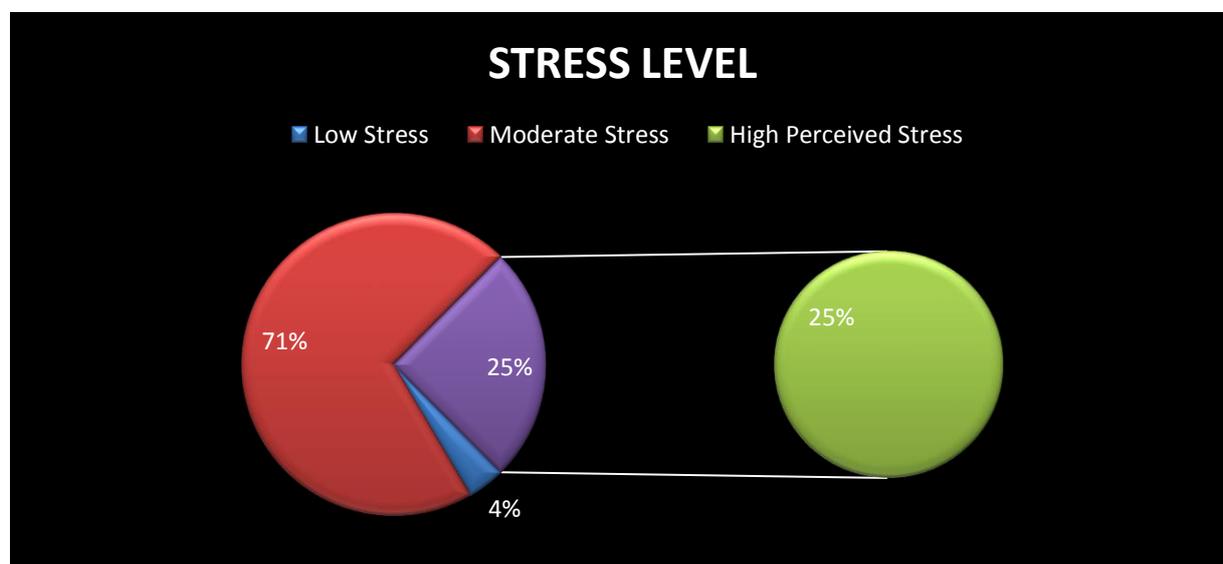


Figure No. 1 Classification of Stress level among Samples N=226

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Assessment of coping responses used by the people residing in Gujarat.

Classification of subjects based on the strategies used for stress management during COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown. (N=226)

Table: 2 The classification of samples as per their selected strategy for stress management during COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown

S No	Aspects	No. Of Samples Who Used It	Percentage
1.	Cooking	29	12.83%
2.	Dancing	01	0.44%
3.	Exercise	25	11.06%
4.	Mobile Chat or Activation through Social Media	51	22.56%
5.	Indoor Games	20	8.84%
6.	Reading	28	12.38%
7.	Spiritual Activity	38	16.81%
8.	Watching Television	34	15.04%

The Table 2 illustrates the proportion of Stress Management Strategy used by People residing in Gujarat during COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown.

Overall, the people of Gujarat preferred maximum of (22.56%) mobile chat and activation on social media as the best strategy to reduce stress, while merely (0.44%) person shown interest in dancing. The figure difference greatly.

The third & fourth ranked method of stress management was spiritual activity and watching television by 16.81% and 15.04% of people, respectively. Other activities preferred such as cooking by 12.83% and Reading by 12.38% of people. There is clear evidence prove that the maximum number of people used social media as a stress buster during the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown.

Association between the level of stress and selected demographic variables of people residing in Gujarat.

Table: 3 The association between level of stress with selected demographic variables (Age, Gender, Marital status, Education, Professional Life, Best Method to get relaxed)

SNO	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	TOTAL SAMPLE	STRESS SCORE		CHI SQUARE
			Mild/Moderate	Severe	
1.	Gender				R= -0.34 (NS)
	a) Male	115	86	29	
	b) Female	111	85	26	
2.	Age				R=0.15 (NS)
	18-29 years	91	64	27	
	30-44 years	71	60	11	
	45-54 years	35	30	05	
	55-64 years	22	21	01	
	65 & Above	07	07	00	
3.	Education				R=0.038
	Up to 12 th std.	11	10	01	
	Diploma	37	27	10	

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SNO	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	TOTAL SAMPLE	STRESS SCORE		CHI SQUARE
	Graduation & Above	178	134	44	(NS)
4.	Marital Status				R=4.18 (S)
	Married	152	118	34	
	Unmarried	74	60	14	
5.	Professional Status				R=0.78 (NS)
	At Home	49	40	9	
	Working in Govt.sector	94	79	15	
	Working in Private sector	13	13	00	
	Business	70	48	22	

(P=0.05, df=1, NS= Not Significant, S= Significant)

The above table depicts the chi square test value established at 0.05 level of significance for finding the association between level of stress and selected demographic variables.

To find out the association between Gender and stress the chi-square test was done. The chi square value - 0.34 is less than the table value at 5% level of significance. Hence, there is no association between age and stress level. With regard to age, the chi square value 0.157 is less than the table value at 5% level of significance. So, there is no association between gender and stress level. The table revealed that there is no significant association between education and stress level. The chi square value 0.038 is less than the table value at 5% level of significance. The chi square value 4.018 for the stress and marital status is greater than the table value at 5% level of significance. So, there is an association between marital status and stress level. The chi square value 0.78 for the stress and professional status is greater than the table value at 5% level of significance. So, there is no association between professional status and stress level. The table revealed that the chi square value of marital status is 4.018 which are greater than table value at 5% level of significance. Hence there is a significant association between stress level and marital status of people residing in Gujarat during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. There is no significant association between stress level and demographic variables like age, gender, education, professional status.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that the majority of respondents are suffering from a Moderate level of stress. Majority of male respondents shows that mobile chat, social media activation and Watching Television at home is the best way to get relaxed while least shown interest towards dancing during COVID-19 National Lockdown. Similarly, Majority of female respondents data revealed that mobile chat, social media activation and Watching Television at home is the best activity to reduce their stress during lockdown. Surprisingly, least female respondents show interest towards cooking as a stress buster.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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