

Anxiety, Stress and Depression among Employees During Covid-19 Period

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ABSTRACT

Employees face tremendous work pressure during the corona virus disease 2019 pandemic, which may cause some psychological issues in this population. As a result, the prevalence of such issues in them must be explored. The current study sought to ascertain the level of stress, anxiety, and depression among employees in Kerala, India, during the covid-19 period. A sample survey research design is used in this descriptive study. The study population sample comprised of 100 employees from various private and government sectors in the state of Kerala, India. Samples were chosen using the snowball sampling approach, and they were contacted via various social media channels to participate in the current study. The depression, anxiety, and stress scale (dass-21) scale was used to obtain the necessary data, which is an online questionnaire delivered via google forms. The difference between the anxiety, stress and depression among male and female employees during covid-19 were analyzed using independent sample t test and the relationship between anxiety, stress and depression among employees during covid-19 were analyzed using Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation. The results of independent sample t-test shows that there is a significant difference in the anxiety, stress and depression among male and female employees during covid-19 period and correlation shows that there is a significant relationship between anxiety, stress and depression among employees during covid-19 period.

Keywords: Anxiety, Covid-19, Depression, Employees, Stress, Mental Health

Covid-19
Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by a new corona virus discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) contacted China on December 31, 2019, in response to media allegations of a cluster of viral pneumonias in Wuhan, which were eventually linked to a corona virus, now known as SARS-CoV-2. Only a month later, on January 30, 2020, WHO proclaimed the virus to be a pandemic.

Covid-19 and Employees

Employees are the one who are at risk of Covid-19 infection and the one who faced lots of challenges during this period. In general, challenges include placing and maintaining

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physical distance between persons, enhanced sanitation, employee sensitization and awareness, management of employees who begin to show symptoms, and ensuring that sick/infected persons are not allowed to enter the premises.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies related to Anxiety, Stress and Depression among Employees during Covid-19 Period

Prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress in China during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review with meta-analysis was conducted by gathering data from existing studies (Bareeqa et al., 2020). A total of 62,382 people took part in the survey. During the Covid-19 crisis, the prevalence of depression and anxiety was found to be moderately high, while the pooled prevalence of stress was found to be extremely high in Chinese people.

Eleonora (2020) investigated "levels of severity of depression symptoms over time among high-risk individuals in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic. People with psychosocial and health-related risk factors, as well as those with lower SEP, were at the highest risk of developing moderate or severe depression symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to this cohort analysis of UK adults participating in the COVID-19 Social Study.

The effect of health literacy (HL) changes on depression and Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) in people with suspected COVID-19 symptoms was conducted with 3947 individuals recruited from outpatient departments of nine hospitals and health centers in Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2020). It was a cross-sectional study. The interviews were carried out using printed questionnaires that contained information about the individuals' characteristics, clinical data, health behaviours, HL, depression, and HRQoL. The study found that those who had S-COVID-19-S had a higher risk of depression and a worse HRQoL than those who did not.

The researcher analyzed posttraumatic stress, anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic (Moreno et al., 2020). A sample of 1422 health workers was used to examine the relationships between burnout, resilience, demographic, work, and COVID-19 characteristics. 56.6 percent of health workers have posttraumatic stress disorder, 58.6 percent have anxiety disorder, 46 percent have depressive disorder, and 41.1 percent are emotionally drained. A health worker with more posttraumatic stress symptoms is someone who works in the Autonomous Community of Madrid, at a hospital, is a woman, is frightened that someone he or she lives with is sick, and believes that he or she is very likely to get infected. A woman, working 12- or 24-hour shifts, and being concerned that a family member may be infected are all risk factors for anxiety and despair.

The study by Labrague and Santos (2020) focuses on the role of personal resilience, social support, and organisational support in reducing COVID-19 anxiety in front-line nurses. A total of 325 registered nurses from the Philippines participated in this cross-sectional study, which used 4 standardised scales. According to the findings, resilient nurses and those who experienced stronger organisational and social support were more likely to have reduced COVID-19 anxiety. COVID-19 anxiety may be addressed through organisational interventions such as increasing social support, ensuring adequate organisational support, providing psychological and mental support services, and providing resilience-promoting and stress management interventions, according to the findings of this study.

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Ettman (2020) calculated the prevalence and risk factors for depressive symptoms in adults in the United States before and after the COVID-19 outbreak. Two population-based surveys of US people aged 18 and up were employed in this nationally representative survey study. Estimates for COVID-19 were collected from the COVID-19 and Life Stressors Impact on Mental Health and Well-being study, which took place from March 31, 2020 to April 13, 2020. Estimates prior to COVID-19 were drawn from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, which was conducted from 2017 to 2018. And the data was evaluated between April 15 and April 20, 2020. According to the study's findings, the prevalence of depression symptoms in the United States was more than three times higher during COVID-19 than before the pandemic. Individuals with fewer social supports, fewer economic resources, and more exposure to stressors (for example, job loss) reported a higher burden of depression symptoms.

According to Armour's (2020) study, on Tuesday 24 March, 38% of research participants expressed substantial depression and 36% expressed substantial anxiety, while the day before the declaration, 16% expressed severe depression and 17% expressed substantial anxiety.

The researchers conducted a cross-sectional study evaluating the prevalence of mental health problems and examine their connection with social media exposure among Chinese citizens aged above 18 years old from January 31 to February 2, 2020 during the covid-19 outbreak (Gao et al., 2020). The current study enlisted the participation of 4872 people from 31 states and autonomous territories. The study's findings revealed a significant frequency of mental health issues, which were found to be positively correlated with frequent SME during the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings suggest that the government should pay greater attention to mental health issues, including depression and anxiety in the general population, as well as addressing the “infodemic” while fighting a public health emergency.

Summary of Review of Literature and Rationale for the Present Study

The Review of Literature is determined through surveys conducted among employees and based on the three factors Anxiety, Stress, and Depression. According to the preceding literature, several authors have researched the impact of pandemics on employees and health care personnel in many nations. It has also been discovered that the research on the influence of covid-19 on employees in the state of Kerala is relatively minimal. This report attempted to investigate the impact of covid19, a global epidemic, in Kerala, India.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

- To assess the level of anxiety, stress and depression among employees during covid-19 period.
- To understand the difference in anxiety among male and female employees during covid-19 period.
- To understand the difference in stress among male and female employees during covid-19 period.
- To understand the difference in depression among male and female employees during covid-19 period.
- To know the relationship between anxiety, stress and depression among employees during covid-19 period.

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Hypothesis

- H01: There is no significant difference in anxiety among male and female employees during covid-19 period.
- H02: There is no significant difference in stress among male and female employees during covid-19 period.
- H03: There is no significant difference in depression among male and female employees during covid-19 period.
- H04: There is no significant relationship between anxiety, stress and depression among employees during covid-19 period.

Research Design

Present study adopts a sample survey research design approach; wherein information is explored using quantitative research techniques. Questionnaires were used to collect the quantitative data from employees through online mode during covid-19 period. This design has been adopted in this present study also because of its minimal cost and the responses gathered will be highly accurate.

Sample

Samples for the study consisted of 100 employees out of whom 50 employees are men and rest of the 50 employees are women. Snowball sampling method was adopted to select the sample. Sample was selected from the government and private sectors situated in different parts of Kerala.

Inclusion criteria

- Employees between 25 to 60 years of age.
- Employees who can understand English and Malayalam.

Exclusion criteria

- People who are working from home.
- People who work in hospital settings (Doctors, Nurses, supporting staffs, etc.).

Variables

- **Independent Variable** - Gender (Male and Female).
- **Dependent Variable** - In the current study Anxiety, Stress, Depression among employees during covid-19 is considered as dependent variable.

Instrument

DASS-21: The DASS-21 Scale was developed by P. F. Lovibond, and S. H. Lovibond (1995). The DASS-21 is based on a dimensional rather than a categorical conception of psychological disorder. The assumption on which the DASS-21 development was based is that the differences between the depression, anxiety and stress experienced by normal subjects and clinical populations are essentially differences of degree. The DASS-21 therefore has no direct implications for the allocation of patients to discrete diagnostic categories postulated in classificatory systems such as DSM and ICD.

The DASS-21 is a set of three self-report scales designed to measure the emotional states of Anxiety, Stress and Depression. Each of three DASS-21 scales contains 21 items, divided into subscales with similar content. The depression scale assesses dysphoria, hopelessness, devaluation of life, self-deprecation, and lack of interest/involvement,

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anhedonia and inertia. The anxiety scale assesses autonomic arousal, skeletal muscle effects, situational anxiety, and subjective experience of anxious affect. The stress scale is sensitive to levels of chronic non-specific arousal. It assesses difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, and being easily upset/agitated, irritable/over-reactive and impatient.

Item Coding

Individuals read each statement and circle a number 0, 1, 2, or 3 that indicates how much the statement applied to him/her the past week.

0 – Did not apply to me at all.

1 – Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time.

2 – Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time.

3 – Applied to me very much, or most of the time.

Scoring

Scores on each scale will be added up and multiplied by two and then classified as usual, mild, moderate, severe and extremely severe as per the total score, according to DASS manual.

Norms

Severity	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Normal	0 – 9	0 – 7	0 – 14
Mild	10 – 13	8 – 9	15 – 18
Moderate	14 – 20	10 – 14	19 – 25
Severe	21 – 27	15 – 19	26 – 33
Extremely severe	28+	20+	34+

Procedure

Two participants who are eligible for the study was contacted and the purpose and objectives of the study were explained to them. After ascertaining their willingness, they have been given a WhatsApp group link to join the research group. Then they were asked to share the WhatsApp group link to their colleagues via different social media sites. After the sample size have been met, Google forms link was sent with clear instructions and consent form written on it and it comprised of 2 sections, one section for collecting socio-demographic information and another section consisted of 21 questions to measure the emotional states of Anxiety, Stress and Depression. The participants were then asked to complete the questionnaire. Responses were collected and results were analyzed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

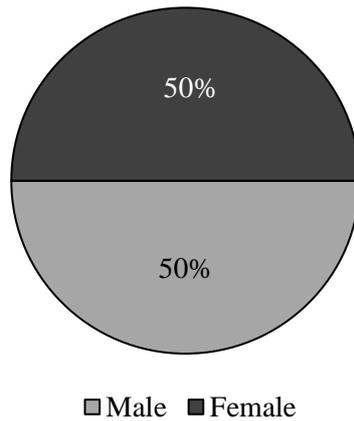
Figure 4.1 Age of the employees

Add figure

The age of employees indicates that 22% of the employees fall under the age range of 25 – 35, 27% of the employees fall under the age range of 34 – 42, the same 27% fall under the age range of 43 – 51 and 24% fall under the age range of 52 – 60.

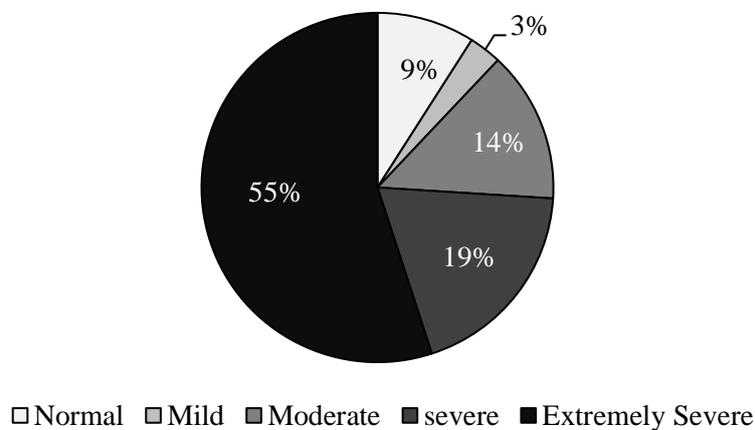
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Figure 4.2 Gender of the employees



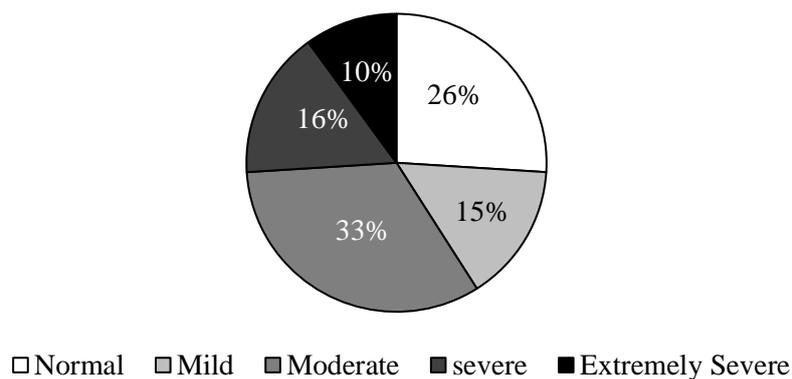
The gender of the employees indicates that 50% of the employees are male and 50% of the employees are females.

Figure 4.3 Level of anxiety among employees during covid-19 period



Level of anxiety among employees during covid-19 period indicates that 55% of the employees have extremely severe anxiety, 19% of the employees have severe anxiety, 14% of the employees have moderate anxiety, 3% of the employees have mild anxiety and 9 % of the employees have normal level of anxiety.

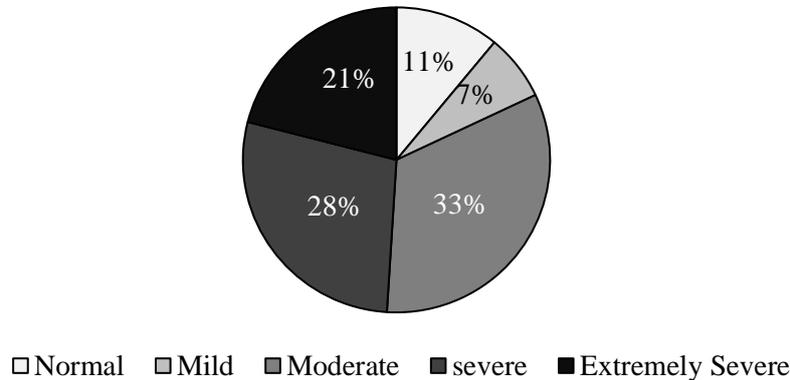
Figure 4.4 Level of stress among employees during covid-19 period



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Level of stress among employees during covid-19 period indicates that 10% of the employees have extremely severe stress, 16% of the employees have severe stress, 33% of the employees have moderate stress, 15% of the employees have mild stress and 26% of the employees have normal level of stress.

Figure 4.5 Level of depression among employees during covid-19 period



Level of depression among employees during covid-19 period indicates that 21% of the employees have extremely severe depression, 28% of the employees have severe depression, 33% of the employees have moderate depression, 7% of the employees have mild depression and 11% of the employees have normal level of depression.

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T TEST RESULT

Table 4.1 Mean, SD, t and significance in the area of anxiety among male and female employees during covid-19 period.

Gender	N	df	Mean	SD	T value	Sig.
Males	50	98	17.92	7.22	3.18	.002
Female	50		23.20	9.28		

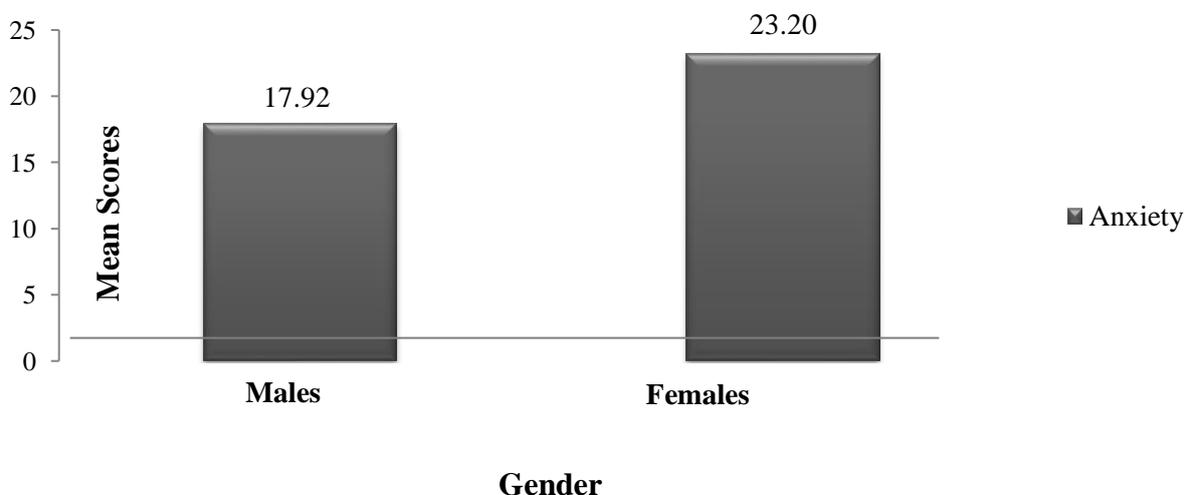


Figure 4.6 Mean scores on Anxiety among Male and Female Employees during Covid-19 Period

Null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the anxiety among male and female employees during covid-19 period was tested using independent samples t test. The t value for anxiety among male and female employees is 3.18 which indicate that there is a

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significant difference among male and female employees in their anxiety during covid-19 period ($p < .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there is a significant difference in the anxiety among male and female employees during covid-19 period. Mean scores indicate that anxiety is significantly higher among female (23.20) employees compared to males (17.92) employees. The result of the current study is supported by the study which states that during months of covid-19, women suffered more than men did. Women had disturbed sleeping pattern, anxiety, depression and was under trauma.

Table 4.2 Mean, SD, t and significance in the area of stress among male and female employees during covid-19 period

Gender	N	df	Mean	SD	T value	Sig.
Males	50	98	18.08	6.54	3.89	.0002
Females	50		24.08	8.73		

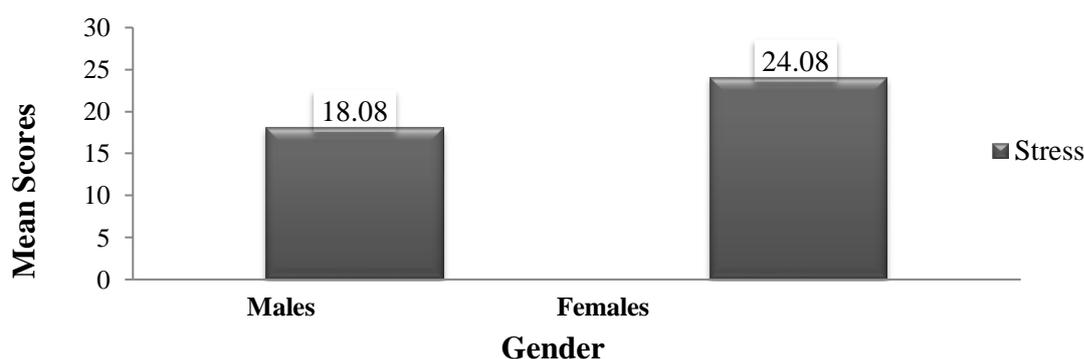


Figure 4.7 Mean scores on stress among Male and Female Employees during Covid-19 Period

Null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the stress among male and female employees during covid-19 period was tested using independent samples t test. The t value for stress among male and female employees is 3.89, which indicate that there is a significant difference among male and female employees in their stress during covid-19 period ($p < .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there is a significant difference in the stress among male and female employees during covid-19 period. Mean scores indicate that stress is significantly higher among female (24.08) employees compared to male (18.08) employees. The result of the current study is supported by the study which states that women are three times more likely to suffer stress than men due to covid-19.

Table 4.3 Mean, SD, t and significance in the area of depression among male and female employees during covid-19 period

Gender	N	df	Mean	SD	T value	Sig.
Males	50	98	18.12	8.16	3.13	.002
Females	50		23.44	8.85		

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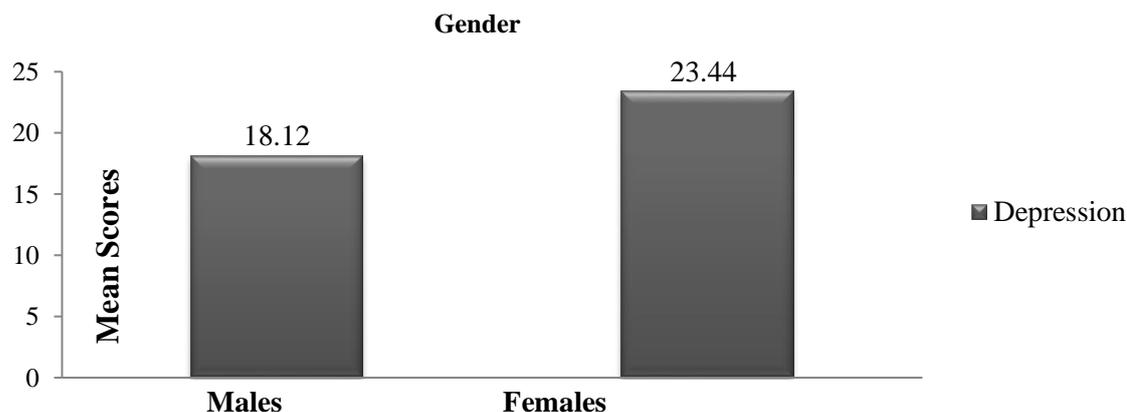


Figure 4.8 Mean scores on depression among Male and Female Employees during covid-19 period

Null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the depression among male and female employees during covid-19 period was tested using independent samples t test. The t value for depression among male and female employees is 3.13 which indicate that there is a significant difference among male and female employees in their depression during covid-19 period ($p < .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that there is a significant difference in depression among male and female employees during covid-19 period. Mean scores indicate that depression is significantly higher among female (23.44) employees compared to male (18.12) employees. The result of the current study is supported by the study which states that women are suffering more than men with poor sleep and more anxiety, depression and trauma during the months of covid-19.

Karl Pearson's Co-efficient of Correlation

Table 4.4 Pearson's correlation of Coefficient between anxiety, stress and depression among employees during covid-19 period

Variables	Anxiety	Stress	Depression
Anxiety	1		
Stress	.83**	1	
Depression	.82**	.81**	1

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

The hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between anxiety, stress and depression among employees during covid-19 period was tested using Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation. All the correlation coefficients were found to be significant. There exist a significant positive relationship between stress and depression ($r = .81$) which indicates that as the stress increases, the depression also increases among employees during covid-19 and vice versa. There also exist a significant positive relationship between anxiety and depression ($r = .82$) which indicates that as the anxiety increases, the depression also increases among employees during covid-19 and vice versa. There is also a significant positive correlation between anxiety and stress ($r = .83$) which indicates that as the anxiety increases, the stress also increases among employees during covid-19 and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which

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states that there is a significant relationship between anxiety, stress and depression among employees during covid-19 period. There is a huge bunch of research studies which indicates inter correlations between anxiety, stress and depression. A large number of studies have found that, when a person is subjected to persistent anxiety and worry, he or she loses self-confidence, becomes depressed, and feels humiliated, which increases workplace stress and performance (Salari et al., 2020). The latter exacerbates worry, and a continuance of this cycle can eventually erode people's mental and physical abilities and, after a while, lead to unstable neuropsychiatric disorders. Stress can also worsen depression and anxiety, limit job satisfaction, impair individual relationships, and even lead to suicidal ideation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicate the importance of framing intervention plans to reduce the level of anxiety, stress and depression among employees especially during this covid-19 period. Physical safety and health, work-life balance, employment and financial security, and psychological well-being should all be prioritised. Other measures, primarily focusing on training and skill development, virtual work and alternate work arrangements, recognition, and involvement, can promote a safe and healthy workplace during the Covid-19 pandemic. These interventions should primarily target employees who are at varying levels of risk for corona virus infection in order to avoid infection, ensure early diagnosis of symptoms, and assist infected employees in achieving full recovery and returning to work.

Limitations of The Study

- The data of the study was collected from the government and private sector employees of the state Kerala.
- People working from home and frontline health workers were not considered for the study.
- Only questionnaire method was used in the study.
- The data was obtained only using self-report inventories.
- The researchers utilized online Google forms for data collection that hindered the participation of a larger section of the population such as those who do not have internet, especially the underprivileged.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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