The International Journal of
INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Research Paper

Capturing College Students' Experiences of the COVID-19 Lockdown: The Photovoice Initiative

Novena Nirel Jacob[1]*

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study employs photovoice, a participatory action research method, to explore the lived experiences of college students who had been staying away from home for higher studies who but were now living with their families owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide lockdown. By analyzing photographs and narratives, we delve into the emotional, familial, academic, and social adjustments triggered by this transition. Fifteen participants shared their insights through interviews and a focus group discussion. The findings shed light on how students navigated challenges and found positives amidst the COVID-19 pandemic's disruptions.

Understanding the COVID-19 Pandemic. The first case of COVID-19 was recorded in December 2019 in China but did not hit the rest of the world till March 2020. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases, and COVID-19 is the disease caused by the said virus. The disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or speaks. It can also be caught by touching surfaces where these droplets have landed and then touching our face or mouth. With time, the various symptoms of COVID-19 recognised are cough, cold, fever, aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell, and a rash on skin or discoloration of fingers or toes, among others.

Table 1: Pandemics in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Name	Time period	Type/Pre-human host	Death toll
Spanish Flu	1981-1919	H1N1/Pigs	40-50M
Asian Flu	1957-1958	H2N2 Virus	1.1M
Hong Kong Flu	1968-1970	H3N2	1M
HIV/AIDS	1981-present	Virus/Chimpanzees	25-35M
Swine Flu	2009-2010	H1N1 Virus/Pigs	200,000
SARS	2002-2003	Coronavirus/Bats, Civets	770
Ebola	2014-2016	Ebolavirus/Wild animals	11,000

[1]Department of Psychology
*Corresponding Author

This pandemic is much more than a health crisis, it's also an unparalleled socio-economic crisis. It has stressed out every one of the countries it has touched and it has the potential to create devastating social, economic and political effects that can leave deep and long-standing scars. People are losing jobs and income every single day and there is no way of knowing when normality will return. Small island nations, heavily dependent on tourism, have empty hotels and deserted beaches. Developing economies are less diversified and with increased dependence on fewer industries ― largely in manufacturing, resourcing, and tourism developing countries continue to struggle to generate revenue in times of market volatility. For example, with supply chains disrupted by closed borders, manufacturing companies are taking a big hit. The International Labour Organization estimates that 195 million jobs could be lost. The World Bank projects a US$110 billion decline in remittances this year, which could mean 800 million people will not be able to meet their basic needs.

Because of high transportation connectivity, globalization, and economic interconnectedness, it has been extremely difficult and costly to contain the virus and mitigate the importation risks once the disease started to spread in multiple locations. It has become clear that most governments in the world underestimated the risks of rapid COVID-19 spread and were mostly reactive in their crisis response. This warrants international collective action and global investment in vaccine development and distribution, as well as preventive measures including capacity building in real-time surveillance and the development of contact tracing capabilities at the national and international levels.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pandemics can fundamentally changed our lives and the way society functions, likely having lasting effects. Without a doubt, trying to maintain a normal routine is difficult. People have had to make changes both big and small to their everyday lives. Several studies indicate that the effects of lockdowns, layoffs and massive public measures to contain COVID-19 will last long after any threat from the virus is gone (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

According to a web-based survey study conducted in India, the lockdown has had a substantial impact on people's everyday routines and behaviours, such as sleep, eating, and internet use (Kumar and Dwivedi, 2020). Lockdowns have altered daily routines and ways of life, including how people utilise the internet and their working environment. The prevalence of working from home, using internet data, and accessing social media online has increased (Kumar and Dwivedi, 2020). The majority of people said that the government of India's actions to combat COVID-19, particularly the imposition of lockdown, planning and implementation of containment zones, innovation within the healthcare sector, etc., were satisfactory (Basu et al., 2020).

The pandemic's effects on mental health. The COVID-19 scenario has developed into a crisis with unparalleled global repercussions and has caused a significant change in mental health. Numerous studies have focused on this change in mental health and the subsequent development of coping mechanisms.

Parental stress during Covid-19. A study in Hubei province, China during the COVID-19 pandemic situation, showed close to a quarter of the students reported depressive symptoms and close to a fifth of the students reported anxiety symptoms during the 3 month lockdown situation (Xinyan Xie et al.2020). Increasing evidence suggested that parents who considered COVID-19 as a source of problem for their health, had elevated levels of

depression (Mechelli et al., 2020). The increasing stressors also had a negative impact on the home environment (Spinelli et al, 2020). Apart from the home environment, the workspace of working adults also played an important role in a person's state of mental and physical well-being (Zhang et al, 2020).

In another study aimed to assess the stress due to the pandemic, the APA, within the US conducted an online survey on parents across domains of their children's education and employment (APA Stress in America Report, 2020). More than 70% of the respondents who were parents showed stress related to housing and access to food, and these numbers were much higher than those reported in 2019. The study confirmed the earlier findings of pandemic related stress among individuals.

Uncertainty and isolation related distress. During the lockdown, loneliness levels have been reported to have increased significantly (Killgore et. al 2020). Loneliness has been seen to be correlated with depression and suicidal ideation to be most prevalent among individuals who reported that they were still under community restrictions to socially isolate due to the novel coronavirus (Killgore et. al 2020). A study conducted by Indian Psychiatric Society aimed to evaluate the psychological impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic on the general public (n=1871) found that more than two-fifths of respondents were experiencing common mental disorders, due to lockdown and the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic. This finding suggests that there is a need for expanding mental health services to everyone in the society during the ongoing pandemic situation.

Children and adolescents' mental health in the midst of COVID- 19 pandemic.
Even though the new coronavirus has sparked a global fear and affected people's general health, particular populations, such as children, are more vulnerable to long-term effects on their mental health. In 2020, Miranda et al. According to a study by Lee (2020) in the UK, the pandemic has had a significant negative influence on children and adolescents' mental health and has made matters worse. He suggested that college and school schedules serve as crucial coping techniques for young people who are dealing with mental health concerns. In an abusive household, the social isolation caused by the measures can increase the abuse, which is probably worsened by the current economic instability and stress.

Some responses also reported that their mental health had improved during the crises, as it made them feel beneficial to be away from the pressures of their normal life (e.g. bullying or academic pressure at school). A cross-sectional survey conducted in China (February 2020) showed significant gender difference in levels of depression, with females reporting lower levels of depressive symptoms than males. The study also found that staying up late or irregular bedtimes were prominent problems experienced by college students when quarantined at home.

The Population Foundation of India (PFI) published a three-state study (in Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh) that examined the impact of India's COVID-19 lockdown on the mental health of teenagers. During the lockdown period, many teens reported feeling depressed, according to the study. For example, two out of every ten teens polled in Rajasthan reported feeling melancholy as a result of the lockdown. Some adolescents in Bihar used television to address issues of mental and emotional well-being, while others sought assistance through social media platforms to address mental health difficulties. In Uttar Pradesh, some young individuals suffered from depression, and some young women sought treatment for a variety of mental health disorders.

In Uttar Pradesh, some young individuals suffered from depression, and young women sought treatment for a variety of mental health disorders. Saurabh and Ranjan (2020) studied a group of children and adolescents who were quarantined during the Coronavirus outbreak in India, describing their knowledge of the psychological consequences of isolation. Quarantined children and adolescents had more psychological discomfort than non-quarantined children and adolescents, according to the findings. As a result, studies have observed mental health difficulties such as stress, worry, despair, insomnia, denial, wrath, and terror.

Dealing with Uncertainty: Coping with stress, fear and worry. Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts, both behavioral and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events. In order to deal with concerns of life, people tend to adopt certain coping strategies to achieve some semblance of control in these distressing times. Studies have shown that there has been a greater engagement with social media among people. Higher level of engagement was found useful to be connected with one's family and to learn something new (Singhal and Vijayaraghavan, 2020). Social media may lead to (mis)information overload (Florian and Brönnimann G, 2020), which in turn may cause mental health problems. It was found that less intense exposure to the media during COVID-19 led to less mental health problems (Jing Guo et. al., 2020).

Studies which examined the effect of coping style and coping behaviors against COVID-19 found that a problem-focused coping style, positive cognitions and prosocial coping behaviors predicted reduced mental health problems (Jing Guo et. al., 2020). The positive effects of problem-focused coping, studies have found that practical behaviors such as emphasizing positive cognitions and getting more information about the virus were associated with less mental health problems and thus helps in coping (Lazarus,1999). Positive cognitions about the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak were shown to result in less psychological disorders (Qian et. al, 2005). Religious coping mechanisms were also found helpful during lockdown in some populations (Chirombe et al., 2020).

Watching television, social networking, listening to music, sleeping, doing household chores studying, chatting with family and friends worked as coping strategies during Covid- 19 lockdown (Khan et al, 2020). A recent study indicated that personal psycho-neuro-immunity prevention measures such as the frequent practice of hand hygiene and wearing face masks as well as organizational measures including significant improvement of workplace hygiene were found to be associated with less severe psychiatric symptoms (Wanqui Tan et al., 2020).

These coping strategies provide insight into the kind of mechanisms people have adopted to relieve stress caused by the pandemic.

Finding kindness and resilience during a pandemic. Psychological resilience is the ability to mentally or emotionally cope with a crisis or to return to pre-crisis status quickly. In the current circumstances of the COVID 19 pandmeic, resilience and strategies of resilience building become even more important.

There is increasing evidence suggesting that communicative and organizational processes across entire families are disrupted in times of distress (Browne et al., 2016). Studies have reported that active resilience building techniques within groups is needed for better mental

health. An approach based on caring, empathy, generosity, sharing of experiences, and humanism can help recover effectiveness and develop coping and resilience strategies (Cenat et al. 2020). An integrative approach offering everyone the opportunity to share their experiences within a deeply caring, empathic, non-directive, non-judgmental, and humanistic group where people are free to join can aid in building resilience as people focus on the present "here and now" as well as recover effectiveness. (Cenat et.al 2020). Hence, actively cultivating an attitude of togetherness and translating this into direct prosocial behaviors, particularly reaching out to the most vulnerable in our communities, can have powerful effects on mental health resilience especially during the pandemic. Social support from family, friends, and a special caring loved one are each independently associated with greater resilience. During this period of lockdown, it is important to foster these relationships and to find creative ways to stay emotionally connected with those we care about.

Family life in a pandemic: changes in family dynamics. The global pandemic along with a historic economic shutdown and stay at home rule has impacted families across the world and turned their lives upside down, forcing them to adjust to new changes and lifestyle apart from battling the health risks as well as work and family demands. A number of studies have been conducted to study family life aimed at understanding the modifications in daily routine, changes in the division of labour within the household, and personal wellbeing, family tension, beliefs and aspirations, risk attitudes, and the willingness to cooperate within and outside of the household during the lockdown.

For many people, just keeping children busy and safe at home is a daunting prospect. The family disruptions that have been reported have ranged from new work patterns and chore allocations to household tensions (Biroli et al., 2020). For those living in low-income and crowded households, these challenges are exacerbated (Cluver et al., 2020). Families have also reported loss of community and freedom of movement in response to quarantine/lockdown measures as well disruptions in the patterns of family life and family conflicts associated with reallocation of duties (Biroli et al., 2020). Though men have been reported to have taken a greater share of childcare and grocery shopping duties than usual, reallocations have not been nearly as stark as disruptions to work patterns might suggest.

Some researchers have focussed on identifying individual characteristics of parents that are associated with coping. For e.g., Roggea and colleagues (2020) in their survey-based study (n=742 co-parents) focussed on psychological flexibility of parents and reported that parent inflexibility predicted more COVID-19 related stress and to lower functioning across all family substructures while parent flexibility was linked to greater family cohesion and constructive parenting. They also found that COVID-19 stressors predicted greater family and coparent discord, which in turn predicted greater use of caustic parenting (reactive, inconsistent, aggressive), which in turn predicted greater child and parent distress. Another study by Brown and colleagues (2020) was conducted with the aim to examine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to parental perceived stress and child abuse potential. With the rise in stress in various domains of life, stress and compromised parenting often place children at risk of abuse and neglect. The results indicate that an accumulation of stressors due to COVID-19 was a key risk factor implicated in higher parent-perceived stress whereas anxiety and depression are associated with both higher parent-perceived stress and child abuse potential (n=183 parents).

In conclusion, the assumption that disease and its prevention is a family affair is manifested in the full spectrum and scale of the current coronavirus pandemic (Ones, 2020). The coronavirus pandemic, the shutdown and stay-at-home efforts to slow its spread have radically impacted the lives of families across the world, completely disrupting routines and challenging them to adjust to new health risks as well as to new work and family demands. Families have faced many uncertainties during this crisis and their daily lives have changed tremendously which can be seen in the positive as well as negative light.

The impact of Covid-19 on students. The closures of educational institutions due to the outbreak of COVID-19 have led to an unprecedented impact on education. As many universities suspended classroom teaching and switched to online teaching in response to the pandemic, the lives of students have changed drastically. Several studies have reported that social distancing measures have increased the social isolation of students and affected their psychological well-being and mental health (Kumar, 2020). Reduced social interactions, a lack of social support, and newly arising stressors associated with the COVID-19 crisis could potentially affect students' mental health negatively. Among a number of students in China, the enforced COVID-19 home confinement has led to psychosocial strain and decreased social participation, which is associated with lower life satisfaction (Ammar et al. 2020). Conversely, the social contact score through digital technologies has significantly increased during the confinement period with more individuals being socially connected through digital technology (Main et al., 2020). In a study conducted on University of Ibadan students on psychological state and family functioning during the COVID-19 lockdown (Ojewale, 2020), it was found that there was a high prevalence of anxiety and depression among them due to various factors like poor family functioning, inability to afford three meals/day, living in a state with a high incidence of COVID-19 and having a chronic illness.

For a number of students in India, uncertainties related to their examinations and growth path by way of internships, jobs, etc. were found to be a major cause of mental stress created due to COVID-19 (Khattar, Jain, Quadri et al., 2020). Students have also expressed that online teaching can supplement classroom teaching but it cannot substitute face to face interactions. Kapasia et.al (2020) in their study on undergraduate and post-graduate students in West Bengal found that 70% of learners were involved in e-learning and that students have been facing various problems related to depression, anxiety, poor internet connectivity, and unfavorable study environment at home. Students from remote areas and marginalized sections have been reported to face enormous challenges in their education during this pandemic. A recent paper explored different psychological and social ways of coping with stress and anxiety experienced during Covid times (Rawat, 2020). The recommended strategies for students to cope up with stress & anxiety included- to try maintaining a routine, stay connected with the world (via call, text or video-chat), accepting one's emotions and inculcating positive thinking, acknowledge and respect the interdependence and existence of all beings and be informed and updated (Rawat, 2020).

Through a rigorous review of the previously stated literature, it becomes apparent that the impact of the novel coronavirus is wide-spread and has severely impacted mental and emotional well-being. The present literature available has been a key indicator that the degree of impact of the virus extends beyond physical health. Further, important factors like isolation, family networks, student life etc. come into play.

Rationale for the Present Study

The COVID-19 pandemic poses an acute threat to the well-being of families due to challenges related to social disruption such as financial insecurity, caregiving burden, and confinement-related stress such as crowding, changes to structure, and routine (Prime, Wade & Browne, 2020). There will be considerable variability across families in terms of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as some will be more vulnerable to the consequences of the pandemic than others. The effects of extended isolation and home confinement that are inherent to the COVID-19 crisis are causing profound changes to family routines and rituals. One such predicament is that of college students who have lived away from home and are now grappling with changes with regards to family dynamics, online learning and much more.

The very nature of Indian families which are highly diverse and influenced by culturally determined factors, must be looked at in their own right as findings from studies conducted in the West may not be entirely generalisable to eastern cultures. A culture specific study is fundamental to gaining true scientific insight into systemic influences which are involved in family dynamics and structures, and manifested through gender roles, family hierarchy, oppressive relations, distribution of resources and opportunities etc. The present study, conducted in India, with a diverse sample seeks to provide insights into the role of families in the context of college students adapting to changes brought about by the pandemic.

The Present Study

The present study explores the lived experiences of college students, who had been staying away from their hometown for higher studies, living with their families currently owing to the Covid-19 lockdown. The study takes into account various areas of possible impact- emotional well-being, subjective experiences with regards to coping, personal and academic life balance, stressors as well as possible shifts in family dynamics. The present study builds upon past research in a unique way- it attempts to bridge gaps in the existing literature with regards to a lack of focus on college students and the challenges faced by them, especially in the Indian context. The current study focuses on a population that had so far largely been ignored due to the fact that they are less susceptible to the physical health complications posed by COVID-19. However, the need to focus upon their socio-emotional and mental well-being becomes essential in order to assess the true impact of COVID-19 in India.

METHODOLOGY

The present study aimed to explore the lived experiences of college students who had been staying away from home for higher studies who are now living with their families owing to the current pandemic. For understanding the same, photovoice was used which is a participatory action research method that employs photography and group dialogue as a means for marginalized individuals to deepen their understanding of a community issue or concern. As a photovoice participant, individuals share ideas and concerns about their experiences and their community.

Research Objective

The present study was guided by the following research objective:

To explore the lived experiences of college students, who had been staying away from their hometown for higher studies, living with their families currently owing to the Covid-19 lockdown.

In order to attain the said research objective, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What changes did returning back to the hometown due to the pandemic bring in the life of the college students?
2. How did the students adjust to these changes?

Areas of Focus

1. Emotions at getting more time to spend with family (both positive and negative)
2. Change in the role and responsibilities within the family (including any role reversals)
3. Personal experience with any particular family member (both positive negative)
4. Coping Strategies (individually and with family, any new discoveries with respect to hobbies, recreational activities that are helping, spiritual/religious involvement)
5. Managing online classes with respect to family (including possible changes in their personal or family routine due to the online classes)
6. What is going really well for them right now, and what they are grateful for
7. Challenges/Problems being faced (sense of intrusion in personal space and experience of freedom, any changes with respect to dressing/appearance, reverse homesickness, any restrictions with respect to or changes in lifestyle, dealing with uncertainties about the future, expenses etc.)
8. Stress of not having personal belongings (including books, documents, possibly clothes and accessories owing to the sudden imposition of lockdown).
9. If and how their freedom and ability to communicate with their friends and romantic partners have been affected (if it has led to social isolation in any way, problems in emotional ties or connectedness)
10. What they miss about their previous living space

Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach. The purpose of qualitative methodology is to describe and understand, rather than to predict and control (Streubert & Carpenter, 1995). Qualitative methods focus on the whole of human experience and the meanings ascribed by individuals living the experience; broader understanding and deeper insight into complex human behaviours thus occurs as a result (Lincoln, 1992; Mason, 2006). Lincoln (1992) argued that qualitative methods are naturalistic, participatory modes of inquiry that disclose the lived experiences of individuals.

Within the qualitative approach, photovoice was adopted as the method of choice for the present study. Photovoice is "a strategy that relies on informants to produce images' ' (Bell, 2013; p. 145). These photographs are made with participants as well as of them. Participation in a photovoice project requires that participants document their experiences related to important themes in their lives using photography. According to Catalani and Minkler (2010), photovoice is consistent with principles of community based participatory action research (CBPAR) in its emphasis on empowerment, participant–researcher collaboration and co-learning, community capacity building and a focus on action.

In order to make the study truly a Participatory Action Research (PAR) study, an interview was conducted in the beginning of the study, the second interview was conducted after the participants clicked the photographs and an FGD was conducted at the end of the study, so that participants could be active stakeholders in designing and interpreting the data. All the

participants participated in the FGD and also engaged in clicking photographs (photovoice), submitting minimum 5 and maximum 15 photographs each.

Participants. The participants for this study (n= 15) are male (7) and female (8) college students in India who meet the following

Inclusion criteria
- Undergraduate students from universities across India
- Age group 19-24 years old
- Students who have shifted cities for college and were living away from home
- Students who have lived away from home for 1-3 years
- Students who have been with their parents for a minimum of 1 month owing to lockdown.
- Students who have siblings living with them
- Must be staying with their parents during the month of September.

Exclusion criteria
- Students who have taken admission to their respective courses this year (students just out of high school)
- Students of Jesus and Mary College
- Single child

Procedure
Virtual meeting (orientation) and photovoice training. Participants meeting the inclusion criteria for the study were identified based on convenient sampling, and approached by the researchers. In order to explain the purpose of the study and clarify the participants' role, the first virtual interview was scheduled with each participant during which an information sheet (Appendix I) was given to them to read. All doubts were clarified. This was followed by getting them to sign an informed consent form (Appendix II) and a photo release form (Appendix III). The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the data provided by them.

It was ensured during the selection of participants that they have access to a camera or smartphone and have basic photography skills. The training essentially involved socializing the participants to the method of photovoice and acquainting them with the process of the study. The participants were then asked to click 5 to 10 pictures on the theme *'Experience of coming back home and living with the family during pandemic and lockdown'*, within 21 days. The photography mission was a loosely structured photo-topic that suggested participants take photos of situations or things that they felt were pertaining to the research question. The participants were also asked to give captions or longer written descriptions to each picture, as is comfortable with them.

Photo Selection and Eliciting Photo Narratives. Individual virtual interviews were conducted by each researcher wherein each participant was asked to select any 5 photographs that best represented the stories they wished to share with the researchers (which would also be the photographs they would like the researchers to display if an exhibit is arranged to disseminate the research findings), and a discussion was held for those 5 photographs using the SHOWED framework (Wallerstein, 1987; Wang and Redwood-Jones 2001) which poses the following questions about the pictures: What do you See here? What

is really Happening? How does this relate to Our lives? Why does this problem/strength Exist? What can we Do about it?

Focused Group Discussion. All the participants then came together in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in which they looked at photographs clicked by other participants (all displayed in a powerpoint presentation) and had a discussion on the same.

Data analysis. The data consisted of internal and external narratives of photos (which included captions, photonotes, photo journals) and transcription of the recordings of the three meetings. Thematic analysis was used to analyse all the data.

Ethical Considerations

Given the intimate and often revealing nature of images, and therefore the potential for misuse of these images, it is particularly important to consider issues of privacy and confidentiality when conducting a photovoice study. The following measures were taken in the present study, as advised by Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001), in order to ensure ethical conduct at all stages of research:

a. Discussing and agreeing upon expectations between researchers and participants with regards to clear boundaries of participation in order to protect against the invasion of participants' private space.
b. Safety of participants must be given greater priority over the naturalness and spontaneity of photographs.
c. Providing participants with consent forms and photo-release forms to sign.
d. Similarly, providing written material to participants, detailing the various aspects of the study
e. Finally, promoting open dialogue around issues of ethics, photography, and the power of the image with participants at the start of the study
f. A few other ethical considerations were also kept in mind throughout t
g. the course of the study:
   1. The photographs were not used for any other purpose without the participants' consent.
   2. The participants were informed about taking written informed consent from all those who appear in their photographs.
   3. Caution was exercised to ensure participants are emotionally protected, particularly since they are producing work based on personal experiences.
   4. Debriefing was used to make sure the participants leave the research feeling better and not overwhelmed.
   5. Data anonymity was ensured.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The data consisted of internal and external narratives of photos (which included captions, photonotes, photo journals) and transcription of the recordings of the individual and group meetings (interviews and focus group discussions). The data collected was analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is an accessible and flexible method used for qualitative analysis. It is a method for systematically identifying, organising and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set. It allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experience. It is a method which allows the researchers to identify what is common and make sense of these commonalities.

The Six-Phase approach proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) was used for the current study. Following are the 6 phases:

- Phase I- Familiarising yourself with the data: This phase involves reading and rereading the textual data in order to get a better understanding of the data.
- Phase II- Generating initial codes: systematic analysis of the data begins through the process of coding.
- Phase III- Searching for Themes: In this phase there is a shift in the analysis process from codes to themes, which represent some level of patterned responses within a data set.
- Phase IV- Reviewing potential themes: During this phase the developing themes are reviewed in relation to the coded data and the data set.
- Phase V- Defining and naming the themes: This process involves clearly stating the unique and specific characteristics of each theme.
- Phase VI- Producing the Report

The two research questions that guided the analysis were as follows:

- Research Question 1. What changes did returning back to the hometown bring in the life of the college students?
- Research Question 2. How did the students cope with these changes?

Results of the Thematic Analysis done on the transcripts of the interviews and Focus Group Discussions are displayed in Table 1 and Table 2 for research question 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis results for changes brought about in the life of the participants after returning to their hometowns due to the pandemic

Theme	Sub-theme	Code
F for Family, Fatigue, Friction and Fervor	**Family Fatigue: #growingupwithstrictparents**	• Lack of freedom at home • Lack of privacy at home • Increased interference at home • Monotony and frustration of • living with the same people leading to fight • Lack of time for self at home • Having to be answerable for every action • Grateful for being safe at home with parents • Gratitude for being able to celebrate festivals at home • Good food available at home unlike college • Acknowledged growth in her mother • Appreciation of the liberties at home • Realization that online is tough for parents • realization that one should celebrate life • Acknowledging need for change post return
	Fringe Benefits of the Pandemic: There's no place like home	• Happiness in meeting siblings after a long time • Important to look at the bright side of things • Realization that parents have been teaching us patiently since so long now • Happiness because of family photoshoot for the first time • Spending quality time with the whole family- not a part of routine earlier • Desire to help father in terrace farming that was not there earlier • Memorable birthday despite not being able to go out

		• Missed being with all her cousins, Gratitude for getting to spend time with loved ones • Bonded with her father • Gratitude to be with family and acknowledgement of privilege • Gratitude and acknowledgement of privilege • Acknowledgement of her own freedom • Feels secure, safe and protected at home • A certain sense of comfort at home that cannot be felt at the college hostel. • Being at home provided opportunity to play chess with brother again • Settling into/ getting used to being home • Usually feeling like a guest in own house post return
	The Struggles of Being with Family	• Learning to cook during quarantine due to parental pressure despite hating it • Getting scolded for small things at home • Home is different- the absence of structure and set routine
Pandemic Ennui	**Locked in Lockdown: Going Nowhere**	• Confinement due to lockdown • Restrictions imposed due to the lockdown • All activities confined to the bed • No scope of planning a vacation • Missing street food • Missing out on birthday celebrations • Miss partying, social interaction • Losing track of time due to lockdown
	Tired of doing nothing, just pandemic things	• Monotony because of experiencing the same weather conditions for a long time • Lack of fixed routine at home • Monotony due to the virtual mode • Excited at first but now family time is monotonous
"I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them"	**College memories: Offline over online?**	• Missing out on college events due to transition to virtual mode • Loss of anticipated, positive experiences at college • Disappointments due to missing out on college life • Missing hostel and its cozyness
	E- Learning: A boon or bane?	• Disruption/interference during online classes, inability to attend online classes without any disturbance • Monotony due to the virtual mode • negative impact of online classes on daily routine • Realization that working online was a tough task • Dislike for online classes • Multi tasking with online classes, helping with chores • Online classes impacting education negatively • Difficulty to perform all the tasks simultaneously • Tough to choose between household work, classes and online games • College workload causing stress, restricted movement at home, • Switch to online mode for all events irritated by teachers in online classes/ • Irritated due to online classes • Household chores happen during online classes

		• Increased workload due to college moving online • Online classes impacting education, lack of practical knowledge
Time, But No Time	**Free Time is a Terrible Thing to Waste**	• Learning new skills during quarantine availability of time for pursuing hobbies • Lockdown as a time for hobbies • Grateful for free time • Doing new fun things independently • Trying new courses • Chance to explore new perspectives • Chance to attend new workshops • Feelings of not being productive • Extra time to try new activities • Gaining new skills in free time • Learnt a lot of new things • Can use the internet to access anything and to improve knowledge regarding anything engaging in hobbies to "kill time" • Inculcating skills to distract oneself from overuse of electronics • Purchasing book- desire to pick up abandoned hobby • No time for interests like reading pre-lockdown • Lockdown- an opportunity to indulge in abandoned hobbies • engaged in new activities during the lockdown
	"Water, Water Everywhere, Nor Any Water to Drink"	• Lack of time for self at home • Inconvenience caused due to lack of space at home • A sense of lack of/ restriction on freedom • A sense of one's privacy being invaded • Having to be answerable for every action.

Table 2. Thematic Analysis results for how the participants have dealt with the changes discussed in Table 1.

Theme	Sub-theme	Code
"In the dew of little things, the heart finds its morning and is refreshed"	**Celebrating Family**	• Important to look at the brighter side of things. • Gratitude to be with family and acknowledgment of privilege. • Spending family time together to improve bonding. • Enjoying time with cousins. • Family is the source of happiness. • Increased closeness with siblings.
	Celebrating Festivals	• Happiness of celebrating festivals with family • Celebrating festivals at home: positive aspect of quarantine. • Celebrations help in breaking the monotony

A Little Time for Myself: Breaks as Self-Care		• Taking breaks necessary amongst other work • Breaks important to bust stress and boost energy • Taking out time for self when overwhelmed with work • Changes in the essentials carried pre and post pandemic discovering new things about oneself • Realization that enjoyment lies in the little things and taking out time for oneself • Reusing/reclaiming unused space as own
A Friend A Day, to Keep the Stress Away		• Video call with friends as a way to deal with overburdening • Talking to friends lightens mood • Talking to friends helps in gaining perspective about one's issues • Talking to friends helps in finding solutions to problems • Recognizing value of friends
Nature and Pets to the Rescue		• Would be affected by lockdown worse without pets • Beauty of nature as a source of happiness • Pets as source of happiness • Pet= motivation to attend online classes • Happiness due to witnessing changes in the weather after a long time • Attachment to pet increased • Pet dog as a companion and strength during online class

DISCUSSION

The current study set out to explore the varied experiences of college students, who have returned to their hometown to live with their families currently owing to the Covid-19 lockdown, using the photovoice method. The pandemic, in addition to being a health crisis, is also a social-economic crisis which has impacted the living conditions of the population. With this background the current study offered an opportunity to explore changes in families where children have returned home due to the lockdown. The study used a qualitative approach and the photovoice method was used to collect data from 15 participants. The data that was analysed comprised the internal and external narratives of photos (which included captions, photonotes, photo journals) and transcription of the recordings of the three meetings. The analysis undertaken was Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and it was guided by the following two research questions:

Research Question 1. What changes did returning back to the hometown due to the pandemic bring in the life of the college students?

Research Question 2. How did the students cope with these changes?

Figure 1 depicts the themes and sub-themes of the data analysed for answering research question 1. What follows is a discussion of findings for research question 1 i.e. the changes brought about in the life of our participants on returning to their hometowns and staying with their families for an extended period of time.

Theme 1 is 'F for family, fatigue, friction and fervour', which highlights both sides of spending a lot of time with one's family owing to the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. The first subtheme 'family fatigue: #growingupwithstrictparents' highlights the chief downside of prolonged family time- 'family fatigue'- which can be described as a boxed in feeling caused by lack of variety. The second subtheme highlights gratitude of being safe in one's home with family, labelled as 'Fringe benefits of the pandemic : no place like home'. The third subtheme, labelled as 'Struggles of being with family' highlights the struggles of being at home for such a long period of time, with many participants struggling to adjust to parental authority and their lack of independence.

F for Family, Fatigue, Friction and Fervor	Pandemic Ennui	"I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them"	Time, But No Time
Family Fatigue: #growingupwithstrict parents	Locked in Lockdown: Going Nowhere	College memories: Offline over online?	Free Time is a Terrible Thing to Waste
Fringe Benefits of the Pandemic: There's no place like home			
The Struggles of Being with Family	Tired of doing nothing, just pandemic things	E- Learning: A boon or bane?	"Water, Water Everywhere, Nor Any Water to Drink"

Figure 1: Themes and sub-themes for research question 1

Family Fatigue: #growingupwithstrictparents
It is clear that there have been many changes brought about in the life of the participants after returning to their hometowns due to the pandemic and one among them was family fatigue, a boxed-in feeling caused by a lack of variety and stimulation. During the subsequent lockdown in this pandemic lot of participants have given up their independent lives and headed home to their parents so they can isolate better and help care for those in the family who need it. Since many are surrounded by their parents majority of times they find it difficult to have fresh conversations and talk to new people. Many lack the sense of their freedom and privacy at home with increased interference in their personal life by other other family members. The constant need of being answerable for every action and the frustration that comes with living with the same set of people was found to be evident.

Family fatigue or family burnout is increasingly on the rise. In times of high stress, it may not always be the best thing to be locked at home together, incapable of getting the space

and clear head that's often needed to work through family distress. When there are no other people to talk to; no fresh conversations to have; nothing much to do, cohabitants can feel like they are on edge. This has been found to be especially true for young people who have come back to live with their parents from their PGs etc. A recent Forbes article reported on a survey that found only 18 percent of respondents were happy with the communication within their relationships since the pandemic began (Sternlicht, 2020). In China, an unprecedented number of divorce requests were filed as soon as marriage offices began reopening (Liu, 2020).

Gauri Dange, a family counsellor and author of Always A Parent, says she went into the lockdown knowing it could get difficult (Rego, 2020). *"The healthiest thing you can do now is articulate your feelings, if it is safe for you to do so. Use description in place of accusation. Say, 'this is how this makes me feel'. Try and find a solution — such as not discussing certain subjects that you just can't agree on,"* Dange says. *"Don't hold too much in. You might be surprised by the change a conversation can bring about."*

Fringe Benefits of the Pandemic: No Place Like Home
Participants in the pandemic described their gratitude of being home, with their loved ones and being able to meet their siblings after a long time. Most of them also elaborated on being safe with their families and spending quality time with their parents and siblings.

Privileged
I am one of the few lucky ones who did not have to worry about the fact that how will I manage to get home safe and sound after the lockdown was imposed.

A participant expressed: *"I feel extremely grateful for all that I have and for being safe and to be with my family in these distressing times, you know. And there are days when I really enjoy spending time with my family and they help me through my phases of doubt".* One participant for instance stated that she felt a certain sense of safety and security at *"home that she did not feel in her college hostel, But now that I am home, whenever I have such a feeling, mom and dad are there to remind me that I am worth it. They tell me that I worked hard and definitely have something in me as a result of which I got admission in that college".* Other participants expressed the joy they felt being able to spend time with family members and be with them for celebrations, festivals and even the small joys like eating home food and appreciating the liberties one can avail at home. They also spoke about spending quality time by helping their family members in mundane activities and even playing board games. A participant stated, *"me and my brother, we have been very fond of chess, I don't know, since we were kids. And we used to play a lot. And all the time, you*

know, when we lived together, then I went away for college. And we stopped playing, then recently, we got a hold of chess again".

Struggles of Being with Family

Returning home due to the pandemic and having to live with their family for an unusually long time, several participants spoke about the struggles that come with staying at home during this time and being with their family during this period. Participants shared that settling in and getting used to being at home required effort, which usually made them feel like they were guests in their own house: *"when that shift happened it felt weird like, why is every little thing being asked about but then gradually with time, it's okay, now I'm used to it"*.

Watched
Sometimes it feels as if people in my family are monitoring me. Questions like "why" "what" "when" pretty much takes away my freedom.

Participants also spoke about the presence of parental authority, because of which sometimes they were expected to do activities they did not enjoy and were also scolded for small things at home: *"I've always hated cooking, it's like the worst thing. I hate going to the kitchen. But, being at home for so long and being forced by parents also to learn cooking and everything, I eventually land up making a few stuff. So, this was one of the first things that I got to do in quarantine which was something new for me which I would have not done otherwise"*. The same participant also shared: *"So it does, so it becomes a very you know chaotic thing and you get scolded for anything using a lot of phones, sitting on the laptop"*.

Some participants also mentioned that they were experiencing a lack of structure and routine at home as compared to when they were living in their hostels and had fixed timings and a better routine.

Participant P7 mentioned *"I mean, the hostel had a proper schedule, the mess timings were fixed. If you wanted food you'd have to eat in that hour itself. It wasn't like you could go get it whenever you wished to but that distraction was less due to the fixed timings."* Another

participant during a focus group discussion also said *"I sleep during the day and work at night".*

Pandemic Ennui - Due to the ongoing pandemic, participants also experienced listlessness and dissatisfaction arising from a lack of occupation or excitement. This theme consists of two sub themes- one relating to the confinement as a result of the lockdown and the other emphasizing on the ennui aspect of the lockdown where one is 'tired of doing nothing'.

Locked in Lockdown: Going Nowhere. The COVID 19 pandemic and the subsequent nationwide lockdown imposed completely changed people's lives by confining them to the four walls of their homes. Participants reported missing street food which was easily available before the pandemic as a participant mentioned their longing for street food by saying *"I miss momos to be honest."* They also mentioned missing parties and vacations, or even any remote scope of planning vacations. A participant expressed their disappointment regarding cancellation of all vacation plans by saying *"This is happening to everyone, I think when lockdown started, I felt that july mei summer vacation ka plan banate hai, abhi to winter vacation ane wala hai and there is no hope."* More importantly, the participants reported missing socialising with their friends and families. The lockdown restrictions have resulted in leaving people no choice but to be confined to their beds. as a participant was quoted *"My father always tells me, I study from my bed, I eat from my bed, so he's like "why are you there"* and I'm like I have nowhere else to go, where should I go." While being stuck at home, participants mentioned the restrictions they had to face. One talked about their struggle of missing the freedom they enjoyed earlier: *"uh, in that pic it was 1 am or something and I was just sitting and watching movies and having maggi and all. So, like I put this one because at home I can't do all this because there is some sort of restriction ki 1 baj gaya hai, so jao chalo, sone ka time ho gya hai. And 1 o'clock being on your phone and being suspicious, ki phone pe kya kar rahe ho, itni raat phone pe movie toh dekh nai rahe hoge. Kisse baat kar rahe ho and etc etc. so that goes on And I miss that hostel ka space"* roughly translated to English as *"uh, in that pic it was 1 am or something and I was just sitting and watching movies and having maggi and all. So, like I put this one because at home I can't do all this because there is some sort of restriction regarding staying up till 1 AM, and being on your phone and your family gets suspicious and asks who you're talking to, its so late, why are you watching a movie at this time etc etc so that goes on. And I miss the hostel space."*
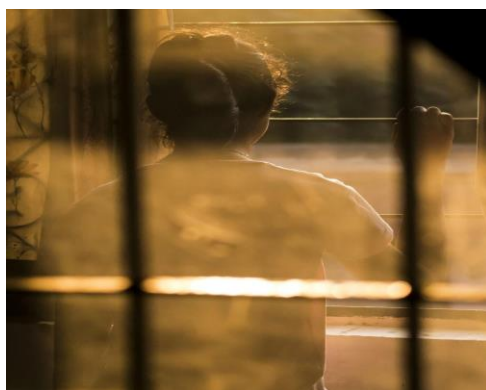
Wanna go for a walk?
Long walks with the morons of my kind was something we really used to cherish. Full on masti, lame jokes and great memories. Canteen and it's stupid samosas and tea which we

used to eat, promisisng to pay later, all became a way down the memory lane. Now, mom makes me tea and I sip it while gazing down the window.

These days it has been the most used thing these days. It is also a get away from everything. All the tension, fights are set to an end. Also helps in resetting the mind and going back to work.

Tired of doing nothing, just pandemic things

The COVID 19 pandemic and the subsequent nationwide lockdown imposed brought in a new experience for most of the participants as they expressed their concern of being tired of doing nothing, just pandemic things. *"Because of all this our brains aren't getting the same amount of stimulation that they are used to; we're having to spend our days in the same few rooms of our houses and with the same few people, so it's natural to feel more lethargic than normal as a result."*

Participants shared how being restricted to their indoor places resulted in the lack of a routine and monotony experienced by the participants. The lockdown is impacting how tired people are feeling. A lot of this comes down to routines being hacked, less exposure to sunlight and increased screen time.

However, the experience of staying at home and living through a lockdown wasn't monotonous right from the beginning. It did commence with some excitement, new experiences and increased closeness with one's family However, eventually reached the stage of boredom and monotony as shared by one of the participants: *"Like I used to come back for maximum 15 days till like the third year. And now in the first two months I was like, finally, I have time to spend and enjoy. So, all these festivals at that time were actually fun because I have not celebrated any festival for the past three years. This is the first that I could. I had celebrated so it was exciting then, now it's just too monotonous like I'm done".* The stage of monotony and boredom also resulted from the virtual mode of all interactions which hardly offers a lot to look forward to. This was highlighted as the participant mentioned: "But, here because of all of this going online, half of my events have been cut down and made online because of which it just becomes very boring and monotonous". The monotony was further heightened due to other constant environmental conditions as well, for instance the constancy in the weather conditions as shared by one of the participants "But it's been like four months now and now I'm tired of seeing that every day".

Participants reported experiencing a complete lack of routine and structure to their day resulting from lack of fixed timing as one of them mentioned: *"I mean, hostel had a proper schedule, the mess timings were fixed. If you wanted food you'd have to eat in that hour*

itself. It wasn't like you could go get it whenever you wished to but that distraction was less due to the fixed timings"

This lack of routine has also led to participants losing the track of time altogether as shared by one of the participants: *"I don't know if it's Monday or October already, and if someone asked me the date, I'd probably say October 30th. I don't know"*.

The Entrapment

According to psychotherapist Lucy Beresford, humans are *"hard-wired for growth and stimulation"* (Huffpost UK). The particular issue with this form of tiredness is that allowing yourself more time to rest, relax and unwind will only make you feel more tired, not less. Poor sleep quality and higher-than-usual levels of anxiety-induced hormones have the potential to negatively affect judgement and emotional control. Ultimately, this can lead to irritation, restlessness, poor concentration and a feeling of exhaustion.

Monotony because of experiencing the same weather conditions for a long time

Monotony due to the virtual mode

Time But No Time.
Since it is a lockdown, participants had a lot of time in their hand which wasn't present earlier due to busy schedule and routine. Even though an ample amount of time was there, participants found it difficult to use it to full potential and found it regretting wasting time where they could do something productive. Some of the sub themes that come under this theme are free time is a terrible thing to waste and water, water everywhere, nor any water to drink.

Free Time is a Terrible Thing to Waste. People in general felt the need to revisit their long lost hobbies or engage in activities that they never seem to have time for or were forced upon to do. Initially, when the pandemic along with the subsequent lockdown happened, people felt the need to at least seem productive during their leisure time while for some, being productive was a means to deal with the 'new normal'. The internet, especially the social media, has also reinforced the demand to get things done. Mental health experts have also observed a significant rise in productivity guilt and productivity anxiety levels amidst a flood of quarantine content. *"It's something we are noticing across people who are in their early twenties up till middle-age. The kind of work people are engaging with can be different, but the underlying feeling seems to be common,"* says Naina Shahri, counseling psychologist and team lead at The Alternative Story.

One of the participants (P1) talked about how they didn't like to cook initially but were forced by their parents to learn to cook seeing the amount of time they had and also highlighted the fact how they wouldn't have learned to cook otherwise. "I've always hated cooking, it's like the worst thing. I hate going to the kitchen. But, being at home for so long and being forced by parents also to learn cooking and everything, I eventually land up making a few stuff. So, this was one of the first things that I got to do in quarantine which was something new for me which I would have not done otherwise."

Personal experience with a family member

Participants reconnected with their long lost hobby owing to the pandemic. *"apart from the tech field that I am into, I am actually quite interested in music as it is a sort of my passion. And when I was in my 6th grade which is my 11 yrs of age, I have been learning piano/synthesiser. so that's a thing which I had actually developed a lot during the school days which I had to leave behind when I went to attend my college."*

Took my violin after 2 years and started again

Water, water everywhere, nor any water to Drink

Participants also expressed how the lockdown this far had been a time when they had come to have an enmeshed personal and family life. Some of the participants expressed a lack of time for self at home, inconvenience caused due to lack of space at home, and a sense of one's privacy being invaded, having to be answerable for every action, etc.

One of the participants mentioned "now coming back home after living for three years outside we have a habit of living our life our style, like I will get up whenever I want to, I will eat whatever I want to, I'll sleep when I want to, which is not the case at home which is not the case at home, its like you have to have a proper routine which is not and I am still not in a very fixed proper routine so I get scolded for that or anything that I liked to do might not be appreciated outside I mean, at home which I do at college and everything." This is strongly reflective of how there is a sense of one's privacy being invaded and how an individual when at home is answerable for every action.

"I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them"

Due to the lockdown imposed on account of the pandemic, the participants had to return back to their hometowns and their experience of college life shifted towards online mode. Participants also reported disruption/interference during online classes and inability to attend online classes without any disturbance. They felt monotony due to the virtual mode. Various negative impacts on the daily routine were shared by students. The realization that working online was a tough Brought dislike for online classes. However, tasking with online classes such as helping with chores was possible because of online mode of education.
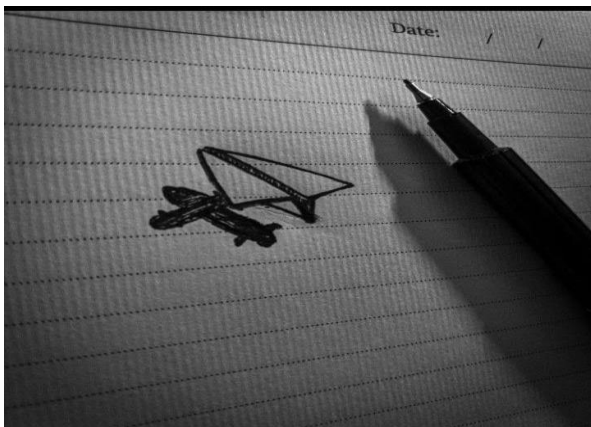
Missing out on college events due to transition to virtual mode
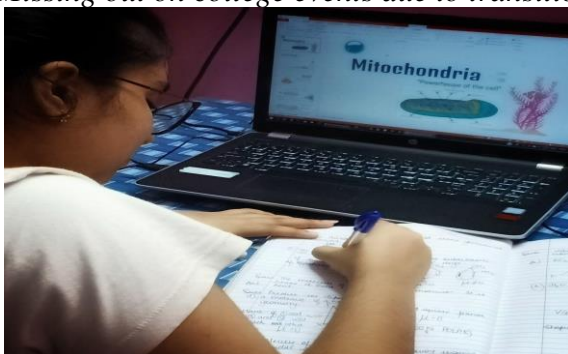
Loss of anticipated, positive experiences at college

"But, here because of all of this going online, half of the events have been cut down and made online because of which it just becomes very boring and monotonous".

"Because ahh in my whole entire college life this was supposed to be the best experience that I can gain as an organiser because I'm in my fourth year so I have like a student crowd of 2000+ under me, so this was supposed to be where I get to lead and work and everything and now it has come down to nothing, it's not giving me anything in return as much it should have."

Disappointments due to missing out on college life
P: *"You can say I'm bored, pretty much. Yeah. This is mostly boredom. I've realised that I was basically communicating more when I was in the hostel but here, I think I'd rather just do whatever, put on my earphones. That's it, man, that's all there is to say."*
P: *"But, here because of all of this going online, half of my events have been cut down and made online because of which it just becomes very boring and monotonous"*
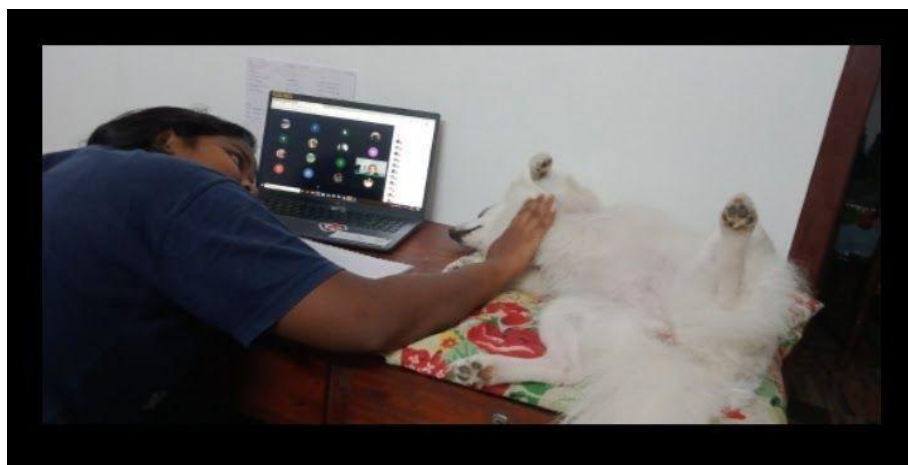

Missing hostel and its cozyness
P: *"Uh, I don't know, this is really nice, like, ya it's really cozy and sometimes I miss it, hostel, so, that's it, yeah".*
P: *"So back in the hostel, we wouldn't really binge watch much cause you know, we would, because all of the friends are together. Like the entire block is together. We don't really have much to do, so we just like to play around or do something collectively."*
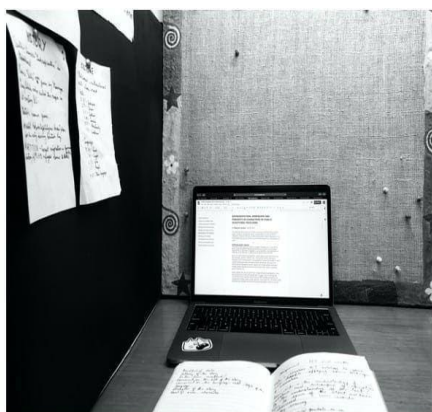
Productivity

My motivation to work decreased after coming home. Who wants to work when you see your family playing cards every night after dinner? So I created a small workstation to push myself to focus on work and not become a gambler. Not yet.
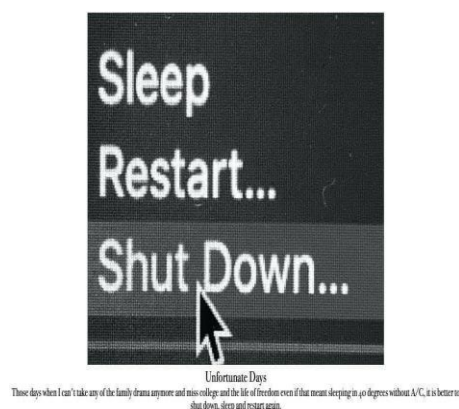
E-learning: A boon or bane?

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a sudden shift away from the physical classroom worldwide. Participants complained that they couldn't attend online class with full concentration due to constant disturbances which was: *"wake up in the morning at eight or something from nine, you have classes so uss time me ghar ka hi atmosphere set nhi hota. Mumma will come and then yhi hoga ki ye karde, ab maid nhi aa rhi jhadu laga de, aaj ye nhi ho rha to aloo pyaaz kat de. So, that's going on everytime"*.

"The lockdown has made the entire life go online. Now the full life is spent just on the front of the 15 inch screen. Be it class, meeting or any other work."

The classes also negatively impacted the daily routine at home because of which their lives have come to appear monotonous as one of the participant has said: *"But, here because of all of this going online, my half of the events have been cut down and made online because of which it just becomes very boring and monotonous"*. Many students as well as teachers reported a quick change in adjusting to new routines. A study showed that students got bored with online learning after the first two weeks of learning from home (Andi Wahyu et. al., 2020). They came to realize that working online is a tough task because of which they disliked virtual classes even more, like one participant mentioned: *"moreover a writing person whatever I feel or see i just write it down. So, uh, depicting these with pictures was a tough task for me"*.

Unfortunate Days

These days when I can't take any of the family drama anymore and miss college and the life of freedom even if that meant sleeping in 40 degrees without A/C, it is better to shut down, sleep and restart again.

A number of participants spoke of the difficulty in choosing between household work, classes and online games. Many shared that they found it difficult to engage in multitasking, as mentioned by one of the participants: *"It is just very difficult when many people text you like abhi match ke liye aa raha hai, ek aur online game ke liye aa jao. And when you're looking at the broom and when you're looking at the screen uh, mobile screen it's just difficult to choose between".*

Participants reported being stressed due to the workload of college-work and having their movements restricted in their homes: *"As in there was an environment at home, that's at home, of studying and adapting is very tough, so that caused a lot of stress. And classes and all, every second day, tests and all. Plus, at home there is a little restriction on obviously. I mean, there whenever I needed free time, I could just leave home for sometime, Or talk to somebody then. So that's restricted at home".*

Participants also had to take care of household chores that were happening during the online classes. A survey conducted by the Ambedkar university, Delhi concluded that the atmosphere for online studies could not be created at home. Almost 96% of the students surveyed admitted that during the online classes, the household work also has to be done which requires almost 2 to 3 hours per day. One of our participants shared: *"I kind of clicked because it was always like that you wake up in the morning at eight or something from nine, you have classes so uss time me ghar ka hi atmosphere set nhi hota".* The classes being moved to online mode caused an increase in their workload.

The participants also felt that moving to the online mode is impacting education in a negative manner, and that it is causing a lack of practical knowledge. The online classroom is a new environment for many students, the first challenge is to adapt to online learning. Students tend to lose interest in certain topics or the entire course when the information they learn gets too abstract and when they can't relate it to their life.: *"Mainly it was that it was practical based. How to use a stethoscope, how to prick a patient, how to take BP etc. All that is not possible in online classes. So, that is something we are still lacking that skill".*

Research question 1 looked at the changes brought in the lives of the individual's after returning to their hometown. Through the analysis, four major themes were identified. The first being included, F, for family, fatigue, friction and fervor; highlighting the sudden shit leading to feelings of lack of privacy, lack of time for self, at the same time being grateful for family and loved ones. The theme of pandemic ennui, saw responses depicting feelings of monotony and tiredness. Responses highlighted missing out on college, negative impact of the sudden shift to online classes, and lack of physical interaction. The initial phases of

lockdown also saw a sudden surge in exploration of activities, keeping oneself engaged and prodcutive.

Figure 2 depicts the themes and sub-themes of the data analysed for answering research question 2. What follows is a discussion of findings for research question 2 i.e. to understand how the participants coped with changes brought about by returning to their hometowns and staying with their families for an extended period of time.
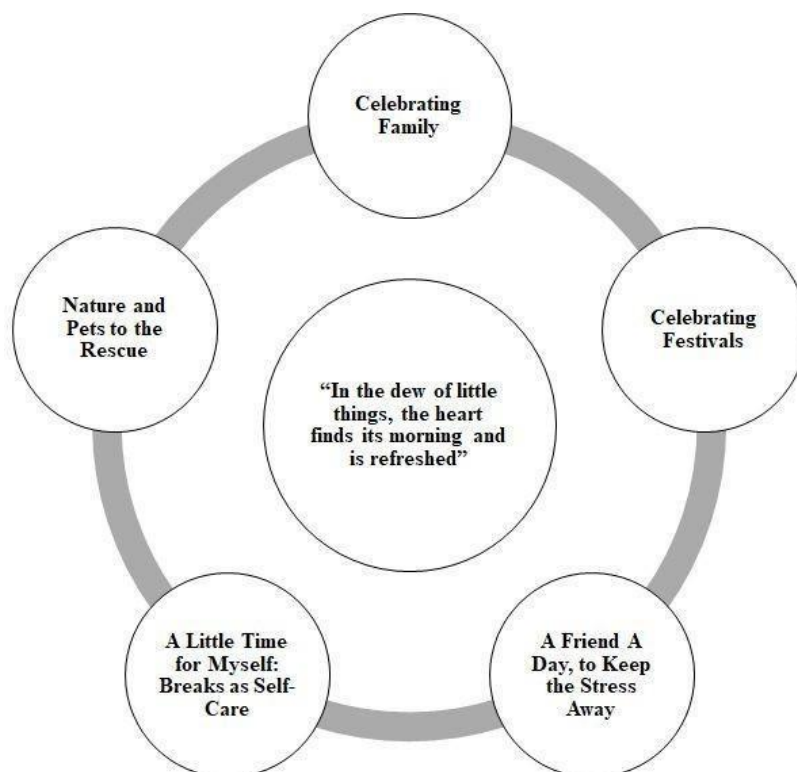

Figure 2: Themes and sub-themes for research question 2

The core theme for answering research question 2 is "In dew of the little things, the heart finds its morning and is refreshed", which highlights the little moments of joy that are derived from the people, places and things around, during the pandemic. It encompasses the celebration of the smaller things in life and the increased appreciation for family, self, friends, nature, art and animals. The first subtheme, 'Celebrating Family', delves into blossoming family ties, gratitude for being around loved ones and finding happiness and gratitude in family. The second theme, 'Celebrating Festivals', highlights the feeling of joy surrounding being around family during the festive season, which is also viewed as a relief from the monotony felt during the lockdown imposed during the pandemic. The third theme, 'A little time to myself: breaks as self-care', highlights the realisation of the importance of caring for oneself, taking breaks and the value of alone time. The fourth theme, "A friend a day, to keep the stress away", dives deeper into the value of friendships in coping with stressful situations and gaining better perspective in tough situations. The fifth theme, "Nature and pets to the rescue", highlights the sense of happiness tied to nature and pets, the increased appreciation for nature and a growing attachment to pets during the pandemic, all of which have been instrumental in helping the participants deal with the changes brought about in their life after returning to their hometowns due to the pandemic. The sixth and

final theme, "Art", delves into art as an escape and coping mechanism to deal with online classes and additional stressors tied to being back home for an extended period of time.

Celebrating Family

As humans we have a tendency to take things and people for granted but since this chapter of lockdown began, we are learning valuable lessons especially the ones that help us celebrate our family and time spent with them. It's been too long since we have been stuck at home because of the pandemic but one good thing that has come out of it is that it has given us the opportunity to rekindle our relationship with our families that once started to fade away due to our fast paced lives. Everyone has started discovering and rediscovering the pleasure of spending time with each other. It has helped people to find a middle ground and resolve their differences and during the subsequent lockdown in this pandemic, a lot of participants who lived away from their families and are now back because of the pandemic have reported finding joy and contentment in getting to spend 'quality time' with other members of the house.

Many participants reported feeling happy and content with their families as it provided them an escape from the worries of the pandemic. A participant even reported how their family ties have grown stronger and how they bonded over a game of cards. She said, "*There are like some Friday nights where we all sit, play cards and just, just in order to spend some family time so that we don't start hating each other.*" It was also a time for them to spend time with their distant relatives and cousins whom they hadn't met in a long time and missed dearly. Participants also reported looking at the bright side of things and for them, spending time with their family was the bright side to this deadly pandemic. A participant reported, "*Firstly, it is that we might matlab there are a lot of problems that we are facing but the first thing is we are at home, we are safe, we are with our parents.*"

Being able to return back home and getting to spend time with family members also helped certain participants realize how privileged they are to be having a family to return back to and being safe inside their homes. Apart from being able to spend time with parents, a few participants also reported development of closeness with their siblings and one participant even said, *"Sometimes it happens that something that we couldn't share before, we're able to share a bit it better now. There's no negative aspect as such but we've to keep in mind each other's timings."* The pandemic has led siblings to know each other better and how they think about things and has led families to understand each other better.

A Little Time for Myself: Breaks as Self-Care

Due to the ongoing pandemic and the often perceived need for being productive through it all, there are times when one forgets to take care of themselves. Self-care is usually overlooked by many of us, but it is also a key to having a good relationship with oneself and others. Even though distress is a normal reaction to the pandemic situation, to aid the process of adaptation, planning routine day-to-day activities and promoting self-care can be useful (Kalisch et al., 2017). The participant reported that taking breaks necessary amongst other work, *"maybe I have a lot of things on my plate but for me it's very important to get a little time for myself where I can do what I want to do because there are things that you have to do just because you are enrolled in it like I have to go to college and I have to take the classes and everything but I need a little time for myself so that I can get more energized and work for the entire week again".*

Breaks here have been regarded as an important tool to bust stress and boost energy. Taking out time for self when overwhelmed with work, *"There are few days where you have like a lot of work happening because of my college, then Aarush and then some personal stuff and then studies and everything. So I try to take out like one or two hours for myself in like a week or two where I only do what I like".*

A Friend A Day, to Keep the Stress Away

Due to this pandemic, we all are stuck within our houses, without any face to face interaction with our close friends. It can be easy to let relationships slide during quarantine so one needs to consciously schedule time when one can check-with friends. Friends add a wonderful dimension to our lives: they help us celebrate the good times, and they help us make it through the tough times. A number of our participants mentioned how important it is to have a close relationship with friends especially during this pandemic. As it is not very possible to meet our friends in the middle of the pandemic but we can always video call them which will also help in dealing with our stress. The participant reported that "So this very rarely happens, it happens like once a week, so when, once a month, so when all of us are full messed up everybody is getting scolded, everybody is not able to study, sabka assignment is all sab bakwas ho raha hai, then we do a video call" (P1). Talking to friends not only helps in getting perspective about some issues but also helps in solving our problems. The participant reported that *"Secondly when you listen to the other one's problems then you realize that your problem is not that big. So it also helps us like okay I was just stressing over something which is not that big"* (P1). Talking to friends lifts our mood and keeps us energised. We always realize the value of our friends when they are away from us and we are not able to meet them. One of the participants reported that *"all my friends are in delhi and i am in dehradun so ya we video call everyone once a week so you know make sure that everyone is okay and coping up with the lockdown, with stress, classes, internships. We all have some kind of stress like siblings stress, fights, housecore etc".*

Nature and Pets to the Rescue With increased confinement owing to the lockdown, a lot of people have found their solace in nature and their pets. According to a report by Nature Scot (Osowska, 2020), lockdown in Scotland saw an increase in the number of people visiting the outdoors to enjoy nature and stay healthy. Nature-based activities, such as gardening and farming, have been used as part of improving mental health and to destress around the world for centuries. Pets are proving to be absolute lifesavers for some especially at a time like this. A new study from the University of York (Ratschen, 2020) found that pets can act as a buffer against psychological stress. From the discussion with the participants it became clear that they too have found consolation in nature and their pets.
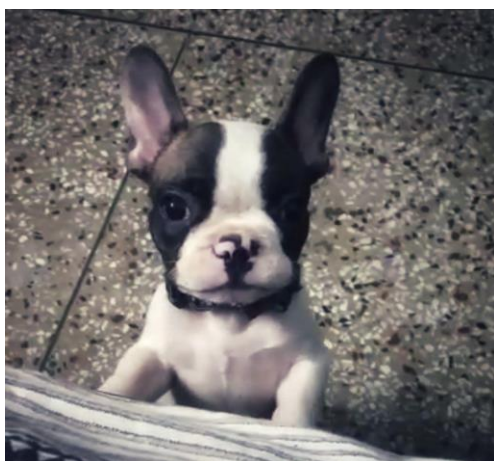
A number of participants reported having found motivation due to their pets. With increased time being spent at home, participants conveyed how difficult their situation would have been without a pet.

Some participants also talked about how they are spending more time out in nature now. They are more appreciative about the beauty of nature and said that being out in nature has become a source of happiness for them as was reported by one participant *"They are just wild flowers. So I went on drive with my family and this is just the scene from there and so I took a picture of it"* (P8).

It was found that although participants found it hard to get accustomed to the changes, they now have begun to adapt to the new normal and are hopeful about a better future. While challenging in many ways, the current pandemic may end up proving that humans have what it takes to find a way out of any crisis.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to explore the varied experiences of college students, who have returned to their hometown to live with their families currently owing to the COVID-19 lockdown, using the photovoice method. One area of this study was to explore the changes college students experienced in their lives when they returned back to their hometown due to the lockdown. From participants sharing and the analysis of their responses, it appeared that this shift had brought about changes in different areas of their lives, which took time to get used to. Adjusting to living with their families again, was one of them. Participants shared experiencing lack of freedom and privacy at home, with less time for themselves due to greater interference in their lives. This often led to them having to be answerable for every action, resulting in monotony and frustration, and sometimes fights. Additionally, the online mode of education acted as a major disruption and factor of stress, impacting their learning and overall, well being. Participants shared that despite all this, they were grateful for having a safe place, a home and a family to be with. They felt secure, safe and protected, and were happy about the time they got to spend with their parents, and the different occasions they had the chance to celebrate. This also made them realise things from their parents' perspective, making them value the good things in life more. This study also sought to understand how students coped with the above mentioned changes. They shared how self-care, taking breaks and enjoying time with themselves made them feel better. They discovered new things about themselves, learned new skills and realised that happiness lies in the little things in life. They spoke about how talking to their friends helped them immensely when they felt overburdened, low, stressed or stuck in a problem. Lastly, participants conveyed the role of nature and their pets in helping them get through that time, which gave them strength, perspective, motivation and happiness.

REFERENCES

Aga, S. S., Khan, M. A., Nissar, S. S., & Banday, M. Z. (2020). Assessment of Mental Health and Various Coping Strategies among the general population living Under Imposed COVID-Lockdown Across world: A Cross-Sectional Study. Ethics, medicine, and public health, 100571. Advance online publication.

Baloran, E. T. (2020). Knowledge, Attitudes, Anxiety, and Coping Strategies of Students during COVID-19 Pandemic. Journal of Loss and Trauma, 1-8.

Bharali, I., Kumar, P., & Selvaraj, S. (2020, July 2). How well is India responding to COVID-19? Brookings.

Brown, S. M., Doom, J. R., Lechuga-Peña, S., Watamura, S. E., & Koppels, T. (2020). Stress and parenting during the global COVID-19 pandemic. *Child abuse & neglect*, 104699.

Cénat, J. M., Noorishad, P. G., Blais-Rochette, C., McIntee, S. E., Mukunzi, J. N., Darius, W. P., ... & Menelas,

Chirombe, T., Benza, S., Munetsi, E., & Zirima, H. COPING MECHANISMS ADOPTED BY PEOPLE DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN IN ZIMBABWE.

Chonody, J., Ferman, B., Amitrani-Welsh, J., & Martin, T. (2012). Violence through the eyes of youth: A photovoice exploration. Journal of Community Psychology, 41(1), 84-101.

Elmer, T., Mepham, K., & Stadtfeld, C. (2020). Students under lockdown: Comparisons of students' social networks and mental health before and during the COVID-19 crisis in Switzerland. Plos one, 15(7), e0236337.

Gan, Y., Ma, J., Wu, J., Chen, Y., Zhu, H., & Hall, B. J. (2020). Immediate and delayed psychological effects of province-wide lockdown and personal quarantine during the COVID-19 outbreak in China. Psychological Medicine, 1-35.

Gao, J., Zheng, P., Jia, Y., Chen, H., Mao, Y., Chen, S., ... & Dai, J. (2020). Mental health problems and social media exposure during COVID-19 outbreak. Plos one, 15(4), e0231924.

Grover, S., Sahoo, S., Mehra, A., Avasthi, A., Tripathi, A., Subramanyan, A., ... & Chakraborty, K. (2020). Psychological impact of COVID-19 lockdown: an online survey from India. Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 62(4), 354.

Guo, J., Feng, X. L., Wang, X. H., & van IJzendoorn, M. H. (2020). Coping with COVID-19: Exposure to COVID-19 and Negative Impact on Livelihood Predict Elevated Mental Health Problems in Chinese Adults. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17(11), 3857.

How India is dealing with COVID-19 pandemic. (n.d.). ScienceDirect.com | Science, health and medical journals, full text articles and books. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666351120300218

Is the mental health of young students and their family members affected during the quarantine period? Evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic in Albania. (2020, July 13). Wiley Online Library. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jpm.12672

K. (2020). Together for Hope and Resilience: A Humanistic Experience by the Vulnerability, Trauma, Resilience and Culture Lab Members during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Journal of Loss and Trauma, 1-6.

Kapasia, N., Paul, P., Roy, A., Saha, J., Zaveri, A., Mallick, R., ... & Chouhan, P. (2020). Impact of lockdown on learning status of undergraduate and postgraduate students during COVID-19 pandemic in West Bengal, India. Children and Youth Services Review, 116, 105194.

Killgore, W. D., Cloonan, S. A., Taylor, E. C., Miller, M. M., & Dailey, N. S. (2020). Three months of loneliness during the COVID-19 lockdown. Psychiatry Research, 113392.

Kumar M, Dwivedi S. Impact of coronavirus imposed lockdown on Indian population and their habits. International Journal of Science & Healthcare Research. 2020; 5(2): 88-97.

Lazarus, R. S. (1999). Hope: An emotion and a vital coping resource against despair. Social research, 653-678.

Mahendra Kumar, Sachin Dwivedi. (2020, June 2). Impact of Coronavirus Imposed Lockdown on Indian Population and their Habits. International Journal of Science and Healthcare Research.

Main, A., Zhou, Q., Ma, Y., Luecken, L. J., & Liu, X. (2011). Relations of SARS-related stressors and coping to Chinese college students' psychological adjustment during the 2003 Beijing SARS epidemic. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58*(3), 410-423.

Nelson, G., & Prilleltensky, I. (Eds.). (2010). Community psychology: In pursuit of liberation and well-being. Macmillan International Higher Education.

New study assesses the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of adolescents in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. (2020, August 14). Retrieved from https://swachhindia.ndtv.com/new-study-assess-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-mental-health-of-adolesc ents-in-bihar-uttar-pradesh-and-rajasthan-48 287/

Nykiforuk, C. I., Vallianatos, H., & Nieuwendyk, L. M. (2011). Photovoice as a method for revealing community perceptions of the built and social environment. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 10(2), 103-124. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691101000201

Ojewale, L. Y. (2020). Psychological state and family functioning of University of Ibadan students during the COVID-19 lockdown. *medRxiv*.

Ones, L. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic: A family affair. Journal of Family Nursing, 26(2), 87-89.

PeConga, E. K., Gauthier, G. M., Holloway, A., Walker, R. S. W., Rosencrans, P. L., Zoellner, L. A., & Bedard-Gilligan, M. (2020). Resilience is spreading: Mental health within the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy.

Prime, H., Wade, M., & Browne, D. T. (2020). Risk and resilience in family well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. American Psychologist 75(5), 631-643.

Qian, M., Ye, D., Zhong, J., Xu, K., Zhang, L., Huang, Z., ... & Wang, C. (2005). Behavioural, cognitive and emotional responses to SARS: differences between college students in Beijing and Suzhou. Stress and Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress, 21(2), 87-98.

Rawat, N. S., & Choudhary, K. C. (2020). Coping Strategies with Stress and Anxiety of Tri-Pillar of the Education System in COVID-19 Pandemic Period. Available at SSRN 3596912.

Roy, A., Singh, A. K., Mishra, S., Chinnadurai, A., Mitra, A., & Bakshi, O. (2020). Mental health implications of COVID-19 pandemic and its response in India. The International journal of social psychiatry.

Saurabh, K., & Ranjan, S. (2020). Compliance and Psychological Impact of Quarantine in Children and Adolescents due to Covid-19 Pandemic. Indian Journal of Pediatrics, 1.

Verma, S., & Mishra, A. (2020). Depression, anxiety, and stress and socio-demographic correlates among the general Indian public during COVID-19. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *66*(8), 756-762.

Vijayaraghavan, P., & SINGHAL, D. (2020). A Descriptive Study of Indian General Public's Psychological responses during COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown Period in India.

Vinkers, C. H., van Amelsvoort, T., Bisson, J. I., Branchi, I., Cryan, J. F., Domschke, K., ... & van der Wee, N. (2020). Stress resilience during the coronavirus pandemic. *European Neuropsychopharmacology*.

Xie, X., Xue, Q., Zhou, Y., Zhu, K., Liu, Q., Zhang, J., & Song, R. (2020). Mental health status among children in home confinement during the coronavirus disease 2019 outbreak in Hubei Province, China. *JAMA pediatrics*.