

Effect of COVID-19 on the Mental Health of College Going Girls of Nalanda District

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic has affected individuals of all sections of society including the student's community. This crisis has led to closure of educational institutes which has put their career at stake. Although online mode of teaching was carried out still majority of students mental health was affected because of unavailability of smart phones, lack of internet facilities. Lack of social interaction and confinement to home also affected mental health of girls. The present study was conducted with 200 college students selected from colleges namely Nalanda College, Kisan College, Allama Iqbal College and SPM college. Mental Health was measured by Mental Health Inventory developed by Jagdish and Srivastava (1983). A questionnaire was developed where response was recorded as always or never to measure effect of COVID-19 on mental health of students. Data collected was analyzed using different statistical techniques namely mean, percentage, standard deviation and chi-square test. Results after analysis of data revealed that majority of girls have moderate mental health also majority of them have average level of COVID-19. The study also found that there exists significant relationship between mental health of girls and their COVID-19 level. This study also suggested that certain measures undertaken by educational institutes will help in providing better mental well-being like conducting workshops on stress management techniques, improved technology for conducting online classes, adopting measures to spread awareness about mental health in college campus, good home environment at home will help in better mental health.

Keywords: *Mental Health, COVID-19, Pandemic, Stress Management, Online Classes*

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was initiated from Wuhan city in China and from there it had slowly spread all over the world. This disease has attacked respiratory system of humans and in severe cases may even lead to death. WHO has declared COVID-19 as pandemic because of its contagious nature. This pandemic was uncontrollable and one had to control his/her behaviour to ensure safety. Social distancing and lockdown situations were created because of contagious nature of the disease. Lockdown and social distancing had affected lifestyle of human beings at all stages. College students were affected the most. Closure of colleges has long term negative psychological impact on students. With the closure of educational institutes due to lockdown there was rise

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in digital learning (Kapasia et al 2020). Online learning is observed as possible alternative to conventional learning (Adnam and Anwar 2020). Colleges not only provides academic atmosphere but also act as a social and cultural hub that can satisfy student's psychological and emotional needs. Students spend their maximum time in colleges, along with attending classes they are engaged in various co-curricular activities and different sports activities. With the closure of educational institutions students experience frustration, anxiety, isolation and loneliness which has affected their mental health. Although efforts were made to encourage digital mode of learning but it had its own limitations. Unavailability of smart phones, laptops, inability to teach practical courses, lack of internet facilities in remote areas are some of the problems which were faced during the period of COVID-19. Chaturvedi et al (2021) in their study found that COVID-19 outbreak has significant impact on mental health education and daily routine of students.

Health of an individual comprises of both physical and mental health. Mental health enables a person to cope with normal stresses of life and work well in a community. According to Kuppaswami (2004) mental health means the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideal in one's daily life. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood to adulthood. A longitudinal survey of adolescents in Bihar found that mental health issues increase over time, it was higher for girls than boys (Gundi *et al.*, 2020). College students, mental health is an important factor in ensuring their ability to study and have a normal life.

Keeping above facts in mind the present study was undertaken with following objectives

- To measure mental health of college going girls
- To measure level of COVID-19 in college going girls
- To find the relationship between mental health and COVID-19 levels among girls.

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is significant association between mental health and COVID-19 level among girls

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Nalanda district of Bihar. A total sample of 200 respondents were selected from colleges namely Nalanda College, Kisan College, Allama Iqbal College and SPM college. The colleges were selected purposively and from these colleges 50 respondents were selected from each college. Mental Health Inventory developed by Jagdish and Srivastava (1983) was used to measure mental Health. The inventory measures mental health of individual on six dimensions namely positive self-evaluation, perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy, group-oriented attitude and environmental mastery. Mental health Inventory comprises of 56 statements. In order to find out effect of COVID-19 on mental health of students a questionnaire was developed where response was recorded as always or never. After recording of answers levels of effect of COVID-19 was found.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected underwent different statistical techniques viz mean, percentage, standard deviation, chi-square test for analysis and inference was drawn.

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Table 1 Distribution of college going girls as per sociodemographic variables (n=200)

Variables	Girls	
	N	%
Ordinal position		
First	54	27
Second	63	31.5
Third	62	31
Fourth	21	10.5
Father Education		
Illiterate	10	5
Primary	9	4.5
Middle School	8	4
High School	43	21.5
Intermediate	32	16
Graduation	75	37.5
Above Graduation	23	11.5
Father Occupation		
Unemployed	5	2.5
Elementary Occupation	18	9
Plant and Machine Operators	10	5
Trade Workers	22	11
Agriculture and Fishery Workers	23	11.5
Shop and Market Sale Workers	82	41
Clerks	8	4
Technicians	19	9.5
Professionals	13	6.5
Family Monthly Income		
≤ 9226	44	22
9232-27648	54	27
27654-46089	51	25.5
46095-68961	34	17
68697-92185	0	0
92191-184,370	17	8.5
Type of Family		
Joint	118	59
Nuclear	82	41
Religion		
Hindu	153	76.5
Muslim	47	23.5

The above table describes the frequency and percentage distribution of college going girls as per sociodemographic variables. Maximum respondents belongs to second birth order (31.5%) and those whose father were graduated (37.5%), engaged in shop and market sales workers and whose monthly family Income was Rs 9232-Rs 27648 and were those who belong to joint family (59%) and were hindu (79.8%).

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Table 2 Measure of Mental Health of girls

Mental Health Level	Girls	
	N	%
Low	19	9.5
Moderate	159	79.5
High	22	11
Total	200	100

The above table indicate the measure of mental health of girls and it was found that maximum girls (79.5%) have moderate mental health, 11% have high mental health and only 9.5 % have low mental health.

Fig 1 Pie diagram showing mental health level of girls

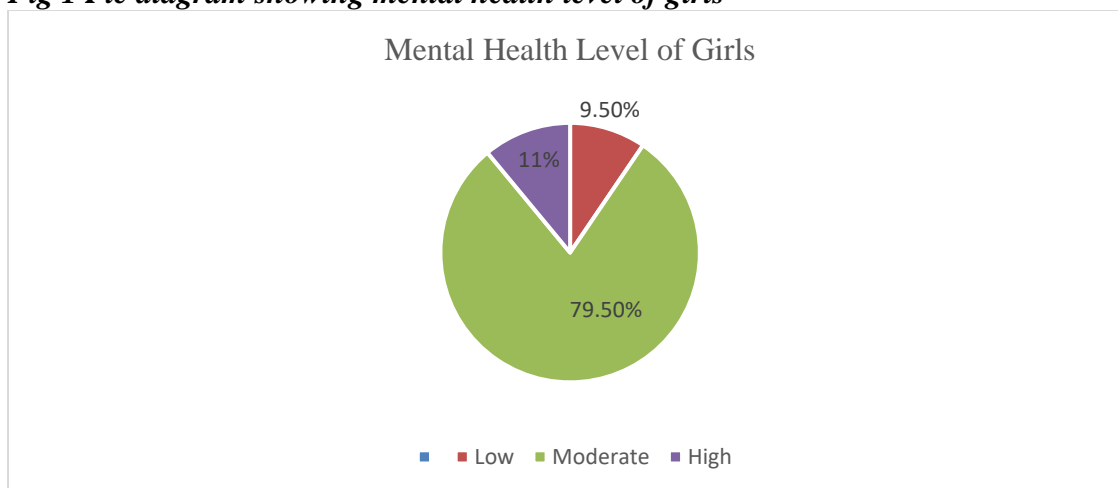


Table 3 Effect of COVID-19 level for girls

COVID-19 level	Girls	%
Below Average	34	17
Average	127	63.5
Above Average	39	19.5

The table 4 illustrate the effect of COVID-19 on mental health of girls and it was found that majority of girls (63.5%) have average level of COVID-19 whereas 19.5% have above average effect of COVID-19 and 17% have below average level of COVID-19.

Fig 1 Pie diagram showing effect of COVID-19 level of girls

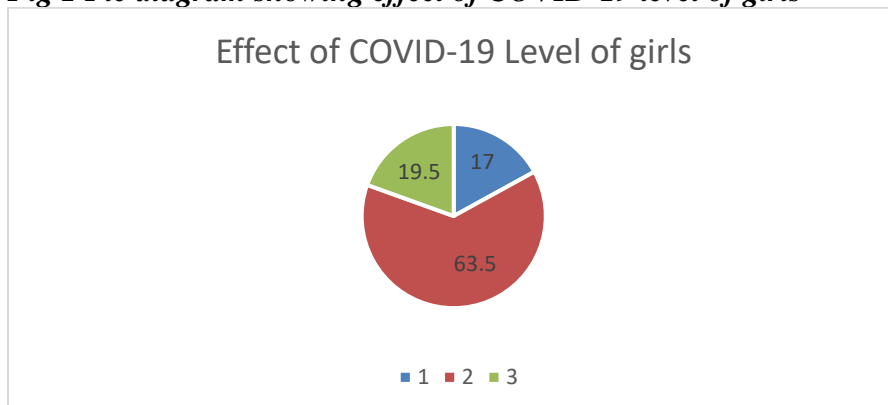


Table 4 Showing the relationship between Mental Health and COVID-19 level of girls

COVID-19 LEVEL	Mental Health of girls						Total	
	Low		Moderate		High			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Below Average	9	47.4	60	37.7	10	45.5	79	39.5
Average	4	21.1	83	52.2	0	0	86	43.5
Above Average	6	31.6	16	10.1	12	54.3	78	17
Total	19	100	159	100	22	100	200	100

$\chi^2 = 40.278, p = 0.000^*$

*Stands for significant at $p < 0.05\%$ level of significance

The above table indicates low, moderate, and high level of mental health of girls as compared with below average, average and above average COVID-19 level. It is clear from the table that maximum girls (54.3%) are with high mental health has above average COVID-19 level and 45.5% of girls are with below average COVID-19 level. It was also found that p value is 0.000 which suggest that there is significant association between mental health and COVID -19 level. The result is supported by Moghe *et al* (2021) in their study found that female students were mentally affected during pandemic. Thus, there is a positive association between mental health and COVID-19 level.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there is significant relationship between mental health of girls and their COVID-19 level. The pandemic has affected mental health of girls as they were confined to their homes, unavailability of internet facilities has hampered their academics, lack of social interaction and worry about their physical health and health of family members and friends.

Suggestions

The study suggests that regular exercise, yoga can help to reduce anxiety and distress. A well-balanced diet rich in nutrients, proper sleep can also help in reducing stress. Conducting lectures by educational institutes on stress management techniques viz deep breathing, exercise, proper nutrition, minimize screen time, making social connections with people will help in improving mental health of girls. Frequent organization of workshops, seminars in colleges on mental health will help in creating awareness regarding mental health. It is also important to focus on development of better technology that can help students residing in remote areas to study online. A good conducive environment at home will also help in improving mental health of girls.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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