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Stress among the higher secondary school students during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract---In the present study an investigation was done on the level of stress of the higher secondary level students once affected by COVID- 19 virus and later recovered and students who were never affected by the virus. For this purpose descriptive survey was done and a total number of 100 students from higher secondary level were selected using Purposive Sampling as sample of the study. The researcher adopted Students Stress Scale developed by Dr. Zaki Akhtar. The findings of the study shows that the Covid-19 affected students are facing higher level of stress and the non- affected students are facing moderate level of stress.

Keywords---stress, COVID-19 pandemic, higher secondary, school students.

Introduction

No one would have imagined that a calamity in China's Wuhan would create such chaos in the world. The deadly virus was confirmed as an international emergency since the middle of January. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic. The terror of COVID-19 grasps the normal lifestyle of the people in many part of the world including India. It has totally changed the daily lives of the people such as social, economic, professional as well as educational aspects. Everyone is now dealing with the new normal such as wearing mask, following COVID-19 protocol, online classes, which shows that every aspect of life have taken a paradigm shift. From male to female, child to adult, it has affected the life of each and every students of every level as

all the colleges, schools and other institutions have been shut down as per lockdown guidelines.

Generally the stage of adolescents comprises between 12 years to 18 years of age. Stanley Hall remarks Adolescence is a period of great stress and strain, storm and strife. It is a period where rapid physical, intellectual, emotional, as well as social development takes place. They are not too small to be called as child and not too old to be called as adult; this often creates role conflict in them accompanied by sudden physical change. Apart from that as it is a peak point of their life their minds are already filled up by different types of stress related to personal, social adjustments, relationship stress, academic stress as well as competitions. At this stage they also face lots of pressures from their family, society, and teachers etc. to fulfil their level of expectations. Stress can be said as the degree to which one's feel overwhelmed or unable to cope as a result of pressure that is difficult to manage. What leads to stress can vary significantly from person to person and differs according to one's social and economic circumstances.

Moreover to this COVID-19 pandemic situation has also added new pressures on them as they too had to adjust with this new normal, along with the pressure of their board examinations, fear of getting affected by the virus, online classes, completing the syllabus without any face to face interactions with their teachers. This time is the time when most of the guidance is needed from the teachers related to various subject, also earlier coaching classes were highly preferable at this time for the better understanding of the concepts. But now due to pandemic all these things have changed and limited to only online classes. Considering the present circumstances the researchers have found it very important to study the level of stress of this particular group of students.

Rationale of the study

The COVID-19 pandemic has directly or indirectly impacts each and every part of live of a human being. The emergence of this wave has stopped all the activities of daily life and as a result of it everything has to be adjusted and changed according to this new life. As per the governments rules in orders to stop the spread of the virus a complete lockdown was declared for which each and every activities have stopped. Shopping malls, markets, offices, holy places, transportations, even the education institutes such as schools, colleges, etc have shut down and in place of this online shopping, work from home, home delivery, online classes etc. took place as a new normal. This pandemic has affected each and every individual and also the students. Among the students the high school and higher secondary level students have been affected the most, as they are at the period of deciding their future goals, attending the serious board exams, need much of the guidance from the teachers which is not possible only through online, selecting stream of their choice, etc. They are at the adolescence stage when they go through the various developments within them as well as at the point between the childhood and the adulthood which makes this period as a period of stress and storms. So the level of stress at this stage is much more than they were at their childhood and in addition to it this new daily life after the pandemic made it worst for them which may add the level of stress more. So the

researchers decided to study the level of stress among the COVID-19 affected and Non-affected students of Higher Secondary level.

Objective of the Study

- a. To study the level of stress among the Higher Secondary level students once affected by the COVID-19 Virus and the one never been affected by the COVID-19 virus.
- b. To study the significant difference between the levels of stress of the Higher Secondary level students once affected by the COVID-19 Virus and the students never been affected by the COVID-19 virus.

Hypothesis of the Study

Null hypothesis (H_0) on the basis of objective no. 2:

There is no significant difference between the levels of stress of the Higher Secondary level students once affected by the COVID-19 Virus and the students never been affected by the COVID-19 virus.

Delimitations of the study

The study is delimited to only Higher Secondary School level students of Kamrup district of Assam.

Methodology

Method Used: Descriptive Survey method was used for the purpose of the present study.

Population of the Study: All the Higher Secondary School level students of Kamrup district of Assam fall under the population of the study. There are 70 provincialized Higher Secondary Schools (20 HSS from Kamrup-Metro and 50 HSS from Kamrup-Rural) in Kamrup district of Assam

Sample of the Study: 10 provincialized Higher Secondary Schools (5 HSS from Kamrup-Metro and 5 HSS from Kamrup-Rural) were selected using purposive sampling technique as sample HSS for the present study. From the selected institutions, a total number of 100 students were selected as sample students using purposive sampling technique for this study. Out of 100 sample students, 50 students who were affected by the Covid-19 virus and other 50 who were never affected by Covid-19 virus.

Tool used: As per the requirement of the present study the researchers used "Students Stress Scale" developed by Dr. Zaki Akhtar.

Statistical technique Used: following statistical techniques were used to analyse data.

Objective of the Study	Statistical Techniques Used
Objective No.1	Percentage and frequency
Objective No.2	Mean, S.D. and t-test

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

- a. Analysis and interpretation of the objective no. 1: To study the level of stress among the Higher Secondary level students once affected by the COVID-19 Virus and the one never been affected by the COVID-19 virus.

In order to access the level of stress among the COVID-19 affected and non-affected students of Higher Secondary level, the scores obtained by the students are classified into 5 categories from higher to lower level of stress namely; very high stress, high stress, moderate stress, low stress and very low stress and the result of the scores obtained by the students are discussed under the following table:

Table No. 1
The result of the level of stress obtained by the students affected by Covid-19 virus and non- affected by Covid-19 virus

Level of Stress	COVID-19 Affected students	Covid-19 Non-affected students
Very High Level Stress	48% (24 students)	30% (15 students)
High Level Stress	32% (16 students)	4% (2 students)
Moderate Level Stress	12% (6 students)	36% (18 students)
Low level stress	6% (3 students)	16% (8 students)
Very low level stress	2% (1student)	14% (7 students)
Total	50	50

From the Table No. 1: it can be find out that in case of the level of stress of the students affected by Covid-19 virus majority of the students falls under the category of Very High level of Stress i.e. 24 out of 50 students and lowest number of students falls under the category of Very Low level of Stress i.e. 1 out of 50 followed by high level stress by 16, moderate level stress by 6 and low level by 3. And in case of the level of stress of the non affected students, majority of the students falls under the category of Moderate Level stress i.e. 18 out of 50 and lowest number of students falls under the category of High Level Stress i.e. 2 out of 50 followed by very high level of stress by 15, low level stress by 8 and very low level stress by 7. Hence it can be said that the highest level of stress can be found among the students affected by Covid-19 virus than the Non-affected students.

- b. Analysis and interpretation of the objective no. 2: To study the significant difference between the levels of stress of the Higher Secondary level students once affected by the COVID-19 Virus and the students never been affected by the COVID-19 virus.

Null Hypothesis (H_0) 1 - There is no significant difference between the levels of stress of the Higher Secondary level students once affected by the COVID-19 Virus and the students never been affected by the COVID-19 virus. In order to find out the difference between the level of stress of the COVID-19 affected and non- affected students t-test has been conducted and the result of the t-test are under the following table.

Table No.2:
The result of the t-test among the level of stress between the COVID-19
Affected and Non-affected students

Variables	Type of Students	N	Mean	S.D.	df	Calculated 't' value	Level of Significance	Critical 't' value
Student's Stress level scores	COVID-19 Affected	50	185.16	292.831	98	3.96	0.05	1.98
	COVID-19 Non affected	50	170.32	408.9976				

From the above table no. 2 it can be seen that the calculated or the obtained t value i.e. 3.96 is higher than the critical or tabulated t value 1.98 at significant level of 0.05. So it can be said that the Null Hypothesis (H_0) 1 is rejected. Hence this shows that there is a significant difference between the stress levels of COVID-19 affected and non-affected students of higher secondary schools level. And as the mean score of COVID-19 affected students i.e. 185.16 is higher than the students not affected by COVID-19 i.e. 170.32, so it can be said that the COVID -19 affected students have higher level of stress than that of the non affected one.

Major Findings

From the analysis and interpretation of data it was found that:

- a. From the results of the study most of the students were found to have high level of stress during COVID-19 pandemic.
- b. After comparing the results of the study it was found that the students once affected by the COVID-19 virus have high level of stress than the students not affected by the virus.

Suggestions

It's natural to feel stress, grief, anxiety, and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful and overwhelming. Below are ways that you can help yourself, others, and your community to manage stress.

- a. Students should be well acquainted with the techniques of stress management.
- b. Family, community and government should come forward to create awareness programmes about how to handle academic as well as personal life during times of pandemic.
- c. There should be a chapter on stress management in the curriculum of higher secondary school level.
- d. Take breaks from daily news, including those available on social media. It's good to be informed, but constant information about the pandemic can be

upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from phone, T.V, and computer screens for a while.

- e. Find creative ways to safely spend time with friends, like virtual movie parties, feed yourself with healthy foods and get enough sleep.
- f. Make time to relax by reading, listening to music, or exploring a new hobby.

Conclusion

This study was done when the pandemic of COVID-19 Virus was at the pick when people were horrified by the consequences of the fast spreading virus. This pandemic has made people weak both physically as well as mentally. Each and every day news of the death of the people of their relatives, neighbourhood even their own have made them anxious. Also the many of the people have lost their jobs, lost their business; students were away from their daily schoolings, etc. And these entire things have made them mentally in stress. In this study it was observed that among Covid-19 affected and non-affected students, affected are facing high level of stress than that of who were not affected by the virus. To tackle this problem awareness education and prevention measures should be adopted both at the family and community level.

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