

## Students' Experience of Dealing with Challenges During the Pandemic

### Abstract

The current paper has two main sections. The first section paints a macro picture of the study that was gathered from school and college students. The micro part of the study consisted of narratives of students' lives. In the first section of the study, a total sample of (n=50) in which half of the students were from school and the other half of the students sampled were from college. The areas covered in the study were changing lifestyle of students, the impact on education, and relationships with family and friends.

In the second section, narratives related to students' lives were captured. In one of the narratives, a student who came from a distant state shared and narrated the changes he viewed in his hometown. The second narrative, outlined in the section B part, was chosen to highlight the insecurities a student may face during the pandemic related to personal life. All the narratives along with the quantitative part of the study arrived at interesting conclusions and one may find peculiar similarities in both sections of the study.

**Keywords:** *students, pandemic, migrant students, education, lifestyle, and relationships*

### Introduction

The impact of COVID-19 did not affect only our health, but the way we spent our lives, worked on a day-to-day basis and most importantly the way we learnt things. When we focus on learning, many questions arise, such as how are our students learning in schools and colleges? What are their home situations? Whether they can cope up with academics and home pressures? Are our students satisfied with online learning? What challenges are our students facing and dealing with in day to day lives?

To address the above queries, one entire article is dedicated to understanding the lives of our students and their mental well-being. In mental health, the best element is being honest with our feelings and sharing with ourselves first and others. This section reflects the honesty of students about the feelings they were encountering in their narratives. Thus, making it more powerful and giving us our share to reflect and move further in our lives strongly.

### Section A

This section is particularly dedicated to the macro part of the study, where the data was gathered from a group of students from both school and college fields.

### Methodology

In the current study, half of the students were school children and the other half of students

were from college. Thus, the total sample of the study was 50 (n=50). The age of the school students was in the 12-17 years age group. However, college students were above 17 years old. In both groups, the majority of the girls participated (76% in the school group and 78% in the college group). Only 4 % of the school students were single-child, and the rest of the students in both groups had at least one or more than one sibling/s. The data was gathered through online questioning. The data were analysed through quantitative methods.

### Findings of the study

This read shares the findings of the study obtained from both school and college students. The revelations bring out interesting questions to mull over and connect to our own lives during the pandemic. There were three main components covered viz. change in lifestyle, impact on education, and relationships with family and friends. Regarding the change in lifestyle; diet and sleep patterns, physical health status, activities during the lockdown, physical activities, substance abuse in immediate surroundings, the role of media and strategies to combat stress came. Impact on education caters to sub-areas such as receptivity towards online classes, the content of online classes, the role of teachers, challenges during online classes. As far as relationships with family bonds were concerned, sub-themes explored were family's emotional well-being, family bond, emotional support, ways to regain connections

## Change in Lifestyle

### Diet Pattern

8. Has your opinions/preferences changed regarding COVID-19 due to the potential influence of the social media like whatsapp/facebook/twitter ?

25 responses

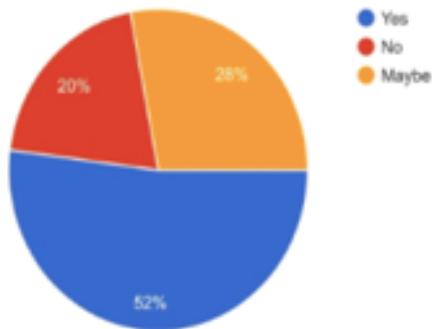


Fig 2.1 School Students (12 - 17 years)

1. Have you observed any change in your dietary pattern during this pandemic?

25 responses

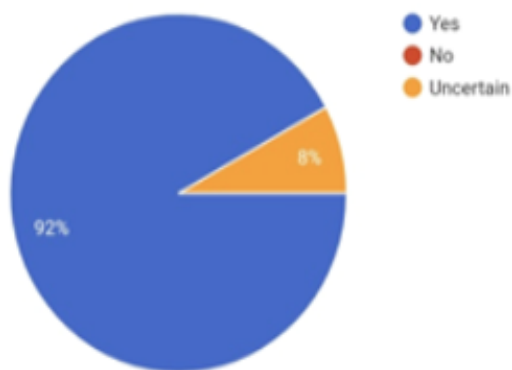


Fig 2.2 College Students (17 years above)

When asked if the participants had experienced any kind of change in their dietary patterns during the pandemic induced lockdown, 72% of school students (12-17years) agreed, as compared to the 92% of the college students who too agreed about the changes. 4 % of the school students and 8% of the College students were uncertain about the changes, while 24% of the school students did not witness any alteration in their dietary pattern.

Around 40% of the school students who confirmed that their dietary pattern had changed, shared that they had started taking their meals timely as compared to 18% who were eating at

erratic hours. Few school students (9%) were taking more junk food during the lockdown. Around 68% said that they had started consuming green leafy vegetables and healthy home-cooked food. As seen from the data above, almost 42% of the College students had started eating healthy and another 20% started eating on time while 33% of the respondents responded that they were eating at erratic hours and the rest 17% responded that they started having more junk food during the lockdown

### Activities during Lockdown

Among both groups (school students – 76% and College Students – 64%), listening to music was the activity that most respondents indulged in. 52% of the school students took up physical exercises such as cycling, walking, dancing etc. and 48% helped with household chores. 28% took up yoga and meditation. As per the College students, 52% took up household duties like gardening and cleaning, while 20% kept themselves engaged with physical exercises. In both groups, around 16% of the respondents enrolled themselves on online classes for physical training.

### Role of Media

8. Has your opinions/preferences changed regarding COVID-19 due to the potential influence of the social media like whatsapp/facebook/twitter ?

25 responses

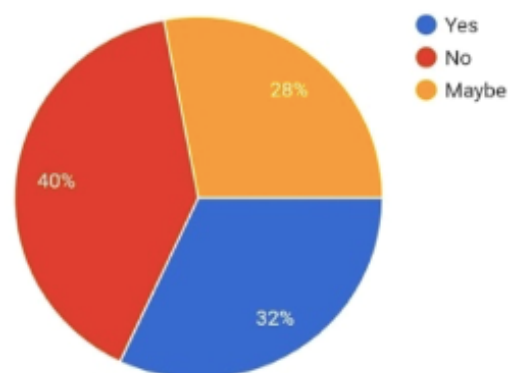


Fig 2.3 School Students (12 - 17 years)

When asked about their perception towards the media, 40% of the school students found the media misleading and only 24% found it informative. 36% of school students were uncertain. Among college students, the majority

(44%) felt uncertain and only 28% responded that the media was informative and the other 28% responded that it was misleading during the pandemic situation.

8. Has your opinions/preferences changed regarding COVID-19 due to the potential influence of the social media like whatsapp/facebook/twitter ?

25 responses

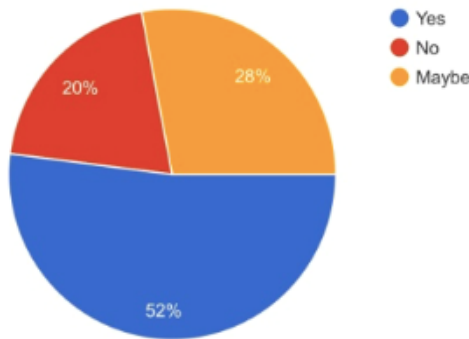


Fig 2.4 College students (17 years above)

According to 40% of the school students, social media had no influence over their opinions regarding COVID-19 whereas 32% agreed that social media does impact their preferences. While 52% of the College students agreed that the media changed their perception regarding the COVID-19 situation. But it failed to do so for the 20% of the respondents from colleges.

**Strategies to combat Stress**

In the conducted survey, 64% of the school students believed that the strategy of self-talk or talking to someone would be the most helpful in the state of stress, while 44% relied on getting more sleep, 40% said indulging in some physical activity would relieve stress during the lockdown. Whereas 36% believed taking up creative activities could help and 24% choose relaxation techniques. Among College students, when asked about the coping strategy towards managing stress, out of 25 respondents 64% responded that they would talk to someone or engage in introspection, 36% respondents said that they would get more sleep, 24% respondents answered that they would engage in physical exercise, 32% of them said that they would engage in creative pursuits while only 8% of them responded that they would try relaxation techniques.

**Impact on Education**

**Receptivity towards Online Classes**

10. Please set your level of satisfaction for the ongoing online classes?

25 responses

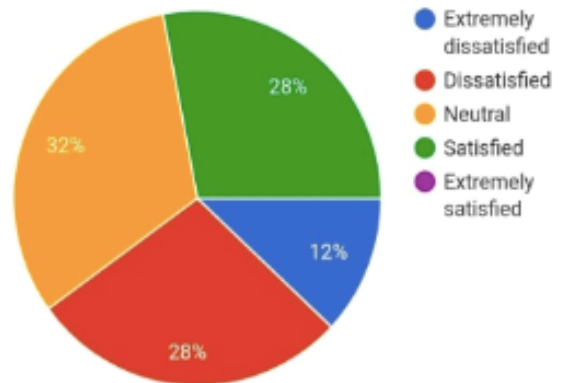


Fig 2.5 School Students (12 - 17 years)

10. Please set your level of satisfaction for the ongoing online classes?

25 responses

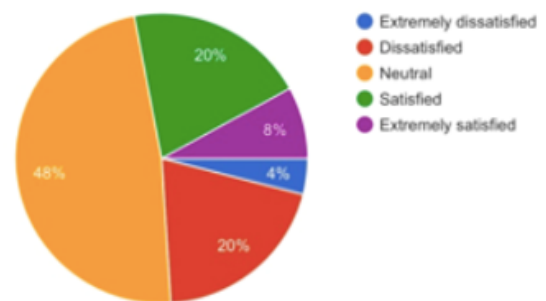


Fig 2.6 College Students (17 years above)

When asked about the satisfaction regarding the online classes, an equal number of school students (28%) confirmed their satisfaction and dissatisfaction, however, 12% indicated that they felt extremely dissatisfied with this change. Among College students, a large number (48%) showed a neutral opinion towards the online classes. 20% of respondents were found to be in the satisfied and dissatisfied category, and 8% were extremely satisfied with classes being held

**Content of Online Classes**

To know about the content of their online classes, only 4.1% of School students felt that online classes provided the right amount of theoretical and practical knowledge whereas 41.7% of students said somewhat, 37.5% of students said very little, 16.7% of students felt they don't provide much of the content in either form. With the help of the above data, we can see that 44% of the College students felt that

online classes provided a balance of theoretical and practical knowledge while 28% responded that a very little balance is maintained and the rest 24% believe that no balance is maintained between theoretical and practical knowledge while conducting online classes.

11. Do you think that online classes provide the right amount of theoretical and practical knowledge?

24 responses

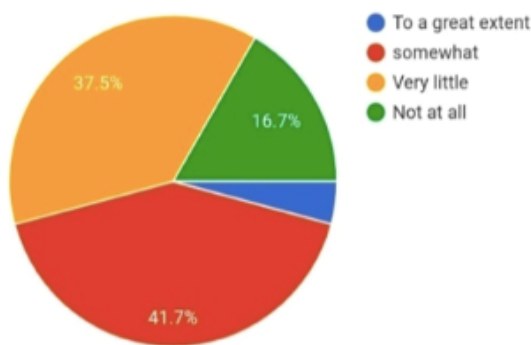


Fig 2.7 School Students (12 - 17 years)

11. Do you think that online classes provide the right amount of theoretical and practical knowledge?

25 responses

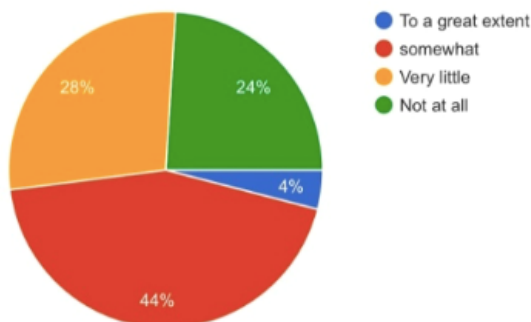


Fig 2.8 College Students (17 years and above)

### Role of Teachers

When School students were asked about the teachers' role during pandemic induced online classes, 20% of the respondents confirmed that their teachers have provided them extra lectures, 44% agreed that teachers were compromising with their time in clearing students' doubts. 56% agreed that teachers were searching for new ways to make teaching effective. 28% said teachers were trying to incorporate new changes in teaching patterns. 36% said teachers are giving new ideas for assignments, whereas 48%

agreed that teachers are using technology to make teaching better. The College students too were aware of the teachers' role in helping them understand the concept during these uncertain times. 44% of the respondents felt that teachers are trying their best to incorporate changes in their teaching practices and have started using technology to make their teaching interesting, while 40% said that the teachers were still trying to incorporate new ideas for assignments, 24% of the respondents feel that teachers are helping them by compromising their free time while clearing the doubts of the students, and they are constantly searching for new and better ideas for an efficient understanding of the concepts and 16% of the respondents said that the teachers are also taking extra lectures in case students need more clarification.

12. How do you think teachers are playing their role in helping the students to cope up with the situation? (You can select more than one option)

25 responses

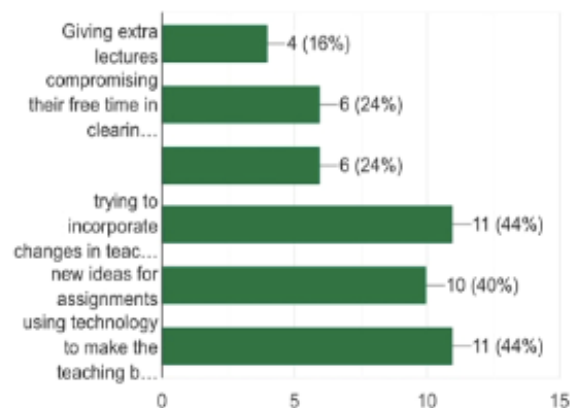


Fig 2.9 School Students (12 - 17 years)

12. How do you think teachers are playing their role in helping the students to cope up with the situation? (You can select more than one option)

25 responses

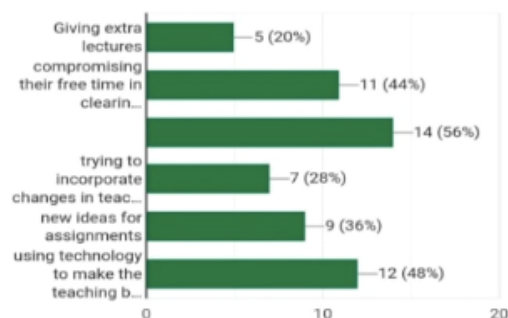


Fig 2.10 College Students (17 years and above)



### Challenges during Online Classes

13. What are your biggest concerns about online teaching? (You can select more than one option)

24 responses

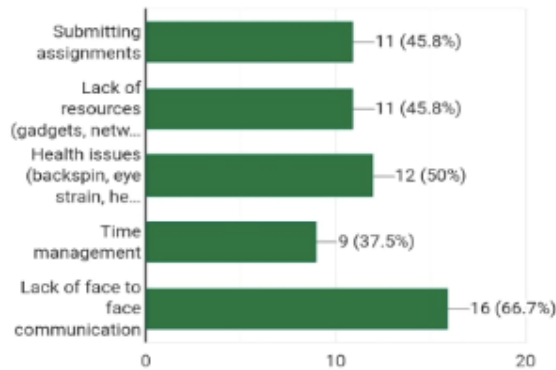


Fig 2.11 School Students (12 - 17 years)

13. What are your biggest concerns about online teaching? (You can select more than one option)

25 responses

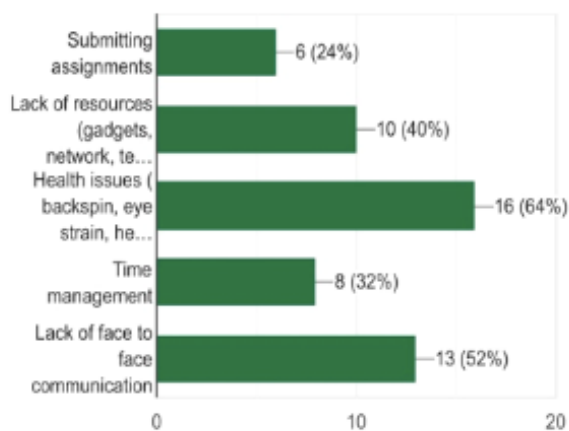


Fig 2.12 College Students (17 years above)

When we asked school students about their biggest concerns regarding online learning it was found to be the lack of face-to-face communication as raised by 66.7% of the respondents, followed by health issues which one might have to face due to the online classes (50%). Difficulties while submitting assignments (45.8%) and lack of resources like gadgets, network, and technology (45.8%) too were considerable concerns.

According to College Students (64%), health issues were the biggest concern about online learning. 52% of the respondents felt that lack of face-to-face communication is a hindrance, while another 40% feared lack of resources. 32%

of the College students were not able to manage their time well and the rest 24% faced difficulty while submitting their assignments.

### Relationships with Family and Friends

#### Family Bond

17. if yes, what kind of change have you observed?

20 responses



Fig 2.13 School Students (12 - 17 years)

17. if yes, what kind of change have you observed?

21 responses

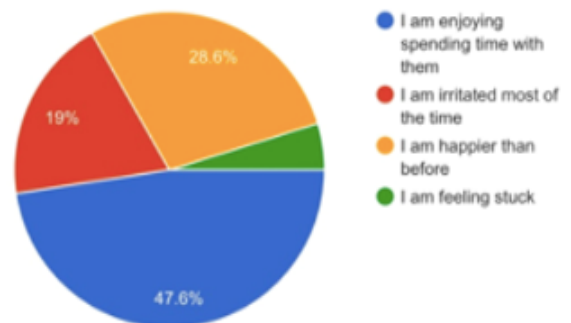


Fig 2.14 College students (17 years above)

Both the School students (84%) and College students (80%) confirmed that during the pandemic, they became closer to their respective families. However, 85% of the school students said that they were enjoying the time being spent with their families, with 10% confirming that they felt happier than before. 5% of the respondents claimed that they felt irritated around their family members during the lockdown. Among College students, 48% of the respondents enjoyed spending time with their family members, 19% of them felt irritated most of the time and approximately 30% of them were feeling that they were happier than before.

*Family's Emotional Well-being*

In the conducted questionnaire, 96% of the school students found watching TV together as a good strategy to maintain emotional well-being followed by 68% who found playing games together as a good way to bond emotionally with their families. 20% found group workouts and only 4% found cooking together as another way to maintain emotional well-being within the family. Within the College group, like the school group, watching television together (72%) was the most popular strategy adopted to maintain emotional well-being in the family. 44% of the respondents even played games with the family members for the same benefit. However, conversation (4%) was the least adopted strategy.

*Emotional Support*

19. Whom are you most comfortable with, for sharing your thoughts and worries during the COVID time? (You can select more than one option)

25 responses

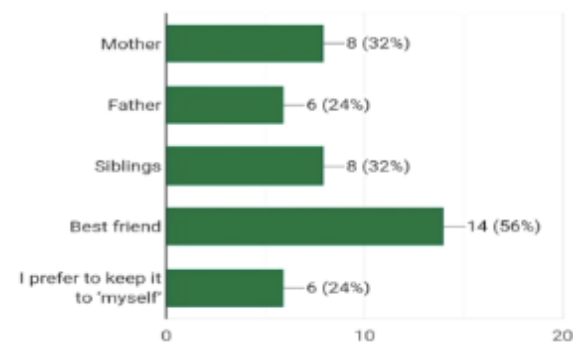


Fig 2.15 School Students (12 - 17 years)

19. Whom are you most comfortable with, for sharing your thoughts and worries during the COVID time? (You can select more than one option)

25 responses

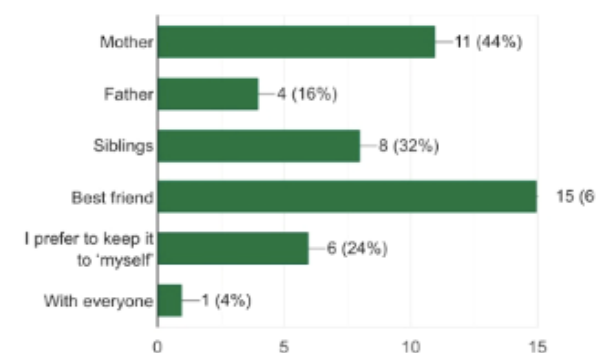


Fig 2.16 College Students (17 years above)

According to the School students, 56% of them said that they could share their thoughts and worries with their best friends most comfortably, followed by their mother (32%) and siblings (32%). The Remaining 24% shared it with their father and 24% kept it to them. College students like School Students felt most comfortable with their best friends (60%). For 44% of college respondents, their mother was the person they could share their worries with during this pandemic, followed by their siblings (32%). There were few (24%) who kept their thoughts to themselves.

*Positive Affirmations*

20. Do you think positive affirmations (telling yourself positive things) help in coping with the pandemic related stress?

25 responses

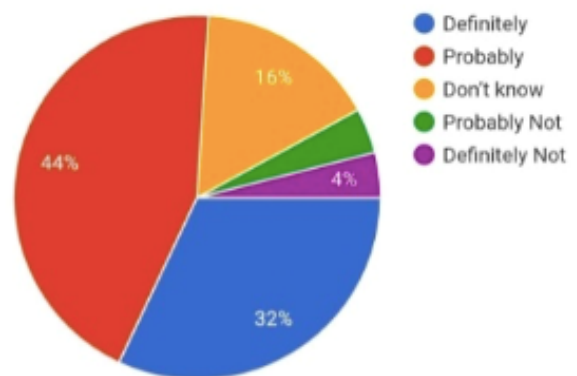


Fig 2.17 School Students (12 - 17 years)

20. Do you think positive affirmations (telling yourself positive things) help in coping with the pandemic related stress?

25 responses

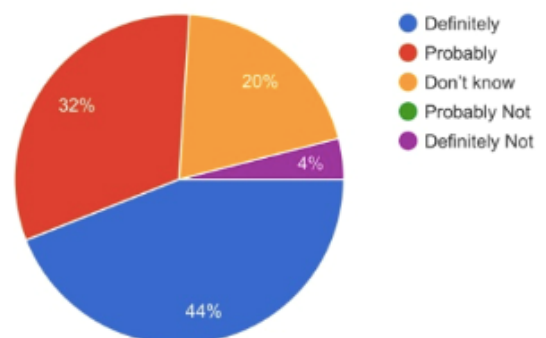


Fig 2.18 College Students (17 years above)

32% of the school students agreed that positive affirmations help in coping with pandemic related stress, and 44% were incongruent and selected probably as an option. While 16% said they did not know, there were 5% of the school students who did not find positive affirmations useful. Amongst College students, 44% said it does help, followed by 32% who said it could probably help. Here also, there were 4% of respondents who did not find affirmations helpful in dealing with stressful situations during the pandemic.

## Section B

In this section, perspectives of a student from a different state had been shared to highlight the changes he and his family encountered. He had been settled with his cousin in Delhi and narrated his experience of his journey returning home. The other part within this section highlights the insecurities and tribulations a student faces. Both the narratives reflect COVID-19 anxious descriptions. Thus, this section highlights migrant students and their personal stories.

### *Perspective of a Student living in a distant village-Migration*

परिवार का परिचय (*Nirbhay on self*) COVID anxious

- पिता: राम सुमरन सिंह
- उम्र: ५७ वर्ष
- व्यवसाय: प्रधानाध्यापक मध्य विद्यालय, बिहार
- शिक्षा: एम ए पटना यूनिवर्सिटी १९८६ डीडी
- माता: सियामनी देवी
- उम्र: ५३ वर्ष
- शिक्षा: बी ए
- व्यवसाय- गृहणी राइस मिल्स ओनर बार गाया, बिहार गया
- निर्भय कुमार: सोनू (पुत्र)
- उम्र: २९ वर्ष
- शिक्षा: एम ए बीएड दिल्ली शिक्षा विभाग
- व्यवसाय: अध्येता
- अभय कुमार (पुत्र)
- उम्र-३३ वर्ष
- शिक्षा- बी टेक (डिप्लोमा टेक्नोलॉजी) करनाल हरियाणा
- व्यवसाय प्रोडक्शन मैनेजर एंड एनुअल डेयरी मुंबई
- पुष्कर कुमार (पुत्र)
- पत्नी संगीता शर्मा (बहु)
- व्यवसाय- रिटायर्स कंपनी

- शशि रंजन (पुत्र)
- उम्र २६
- शिक्षा- बी टेक केमिकल इंजीनियरिंग आई आई टी, दिल्ली
- व्यवसाय- ओएनजीसी मुंबई

इस प्रकार हम अपने परिवार में कुल सात सदस्य हैं मेरे माता-पिता गाया शहर में रहते हैं हम अपने सभी भाई अपने माता पिता से दूर दिल्ली और मुंबई में रहते हैं लेकिन हम सभी भाई और माता-पिता के साथ प्रतिदिन बात करते रहते हैं और एक दूसरे का स्वास्थ्य का खयाल रखते हैं

इस वर्ष होली पर्व के अवसर पर अपने सभी भाई को अपना पैतृक घर जाना था लेकिन मेरे बड़े भाई अपने बच्चों के स्कूल परीक्षा के कारण नहीं जा पाए और मैं भी अपनी बीएड परीक्षा के कारण नहीं घर गया था लेकिन हमारे छोटे भाई घर गए थे होली कुछ दिनों बाद थी ४ मार्च को अपने नौकरी पर घर से लौटा था इस प्रकार हम सभी भाई अपने पैतृक शहर से दूर रहे थे जब २२ मार्च को जनता कर्फ्यू के दिन मैं अपने मसूरे भाई के साथ दिल्ली में रह रहा था २२ मार्च २०२० रविवार का दिन था २२ मार्च दिन रविवार के सुबह सात से रात ९:०० बजे तक सभी नागरिक को बाहर नहीं निकलने की बात कही जा रही थी ज़रूरी सेवा करने वाले लोग लोगों के इस इससे छूट दी गई थी

इस तरह हम दिल्ली में भाइयों भाभी और दो बच्चे पूरी लोग डाउन में दिल्ली लोधी रोड स्थित स्टाफ क्वार्टर में रह रहे थे मेरी भाभी का भी स्कूल बंद हो गया था लेकिन कुछ दिनों के बाद उनकी ड्यूटी स्कूल के क्वारंटाइन सेंटर में खाना बांटने का ड्यूटी लग गई थी घर में प्रीति और गोलू के साथ रहते थे हमारे राजेश भैया भी ऑफिस जाते थे शाम के टाइम साथ में न्यूज देखते और कोरोना वाली खबर को लेकर चिंतित हो जाते पहले लॉकडाउन में हम सभी को लगता था कि पी के दिन में हम सब कोरोना से मुक्त हो जाएंगे। लेकिन जब घर से कॉल आते थे तब ऐसा लगता था कि घरवाले हमारे माता पिता ज्यादा ही भयभीत थे। भैया के भी घर फ़ोन पर उनके पिताजी के आदेश आता था कि लॉकडाउन के बाद सभी को गया भेज देना। धीरे धीरे मार्च अप्रैल और मई महीने में हम सब परिवेश करने लगे थे घर में रहना सभी के लिए एक उबाऊ का काम हो गया था भाभी के बच्चे भी प्रीति और गोलू हमेशा बोलते थे कि कब हम सब बाहर जाएंगे क्योंकि उस समय तक बाहर जाने पर पाबंदी थी और दिल्ली में कोरोना के केस बढ़ रहे थे अंकित साथ ही साथ पूरे देश में केस बढ़ रहे थे ऑफिस सप्ताह में तीन दिनों के लिए शुरू हो गया था। हमारी ऑनलाइन क्लास चल रही थी। हमारे प्रीति और गोलू को भी ऑनलाइन कक्षा में भाग लेना पड़ता था। इस प्रकार हम सभी परिवार के सदस्यों का पूरा दिन बीतता था।

करोना जैसे बीमारी है जिस प्रकार सर्दी जुकाम में वायरस एक दूसरे को फैलाते हैं। उसी प्रकार करोना वायरस भी आसानी से एक व्यक्ति से दूसरे व्यक्ति में फैल जाता है। उस समय करोना के बारे में बहुत सारी ब्राह्मिक होने लगी थी। आशंका से भरे वे कहते हैं अभी तो उनमें ज्यादा मरीज नहीं है पर शायद जल्द ही यहाँ कोई जगह नहीं बचेगी।

जिसके देश की आबादी रोज़ कमाती और रोज़ खा जाती है उस देश में तीन सप्ताह के लिए लॉकडाउन से पूरा आर्थिक स्थिति खराब हो जाएगी। ऐसी समाचार सुनकर हम सभी के मन में थोड़ा नकारात्मक मन हो जाता था। विश्व बैंक को अनुमान था कि करोना बहुत से लोगों को गरीबी में धकेल देगा। इनमें से बहुत लोग अधिकांश भारत में होंगे। इस समय समाचारपत्र में यह आ रहा था कि दिल्ली से बिहार उत्तर प्रदेश के लिए बहुत सारे श्रमिक पैदल जा रहे थे। इस प्रकार की समाचार पत्र को सुनकर घर में थोड़ा माहौल नकारात्मक होता जा रहा था।

मई महीने, 2020 तक यातायात के साधन शुरू होने की समाचार प्राप्त होने लगी थी। इसी दौरान हमारे कॉलेज की ऑनलाइन क्लास भी समाप्त होने लगी थी। हमारे और गोलू भी कक्षा समाप्त हो गई थी। हमारे भैया ने हम सबका फ्लाइट की टिकट 22 जून की करवा दी थी। और हम सब प्रीति गोलू भाभी हम अपने गृह जिला पटना और गाया पहुँच गए थे। हमारी भाभी पटना अपने घर चली गई थी और हम अपने घर गाया आ गए थे।

हमारे घर में हमारे माता-पिता फ़ोन पर यही कहते थे कि जल्द ही दिल्ली से तुम सब आ जाओ। हमें ही नहीं हमारे बड़े भाई अभय भैया हमसे पहले 12 जून को मुंबई से गाया आ चुके थे। मैं 22 जून को घर पहुँचा, तभी 29 जून को हमारे छोटे भाई शशि का आने का इंतजार था। जब हम तीनों भाई घर आए तो पापा की चिंता थोड़ी कम हो गई थी। 14 जून तक बिहार में फ्लाइट से आने वालों को होम क्वॉरन्टीन किया जाने लगा था। हम सबने घर में सरकार के आदेश के अनुसार होम क्वॉरन्टीन का पालन किया लेकिन हमारी माँ बोलती थी कि अभी किसी पड़ोसी के पास मत जाना क्योंकि तुम सब बाहर से आए हो। लगभग एक महीने तक हमारे घर कोई भी पड़ोसी बात नहीं करते और न ही कोई रिश्तेदार आते। इस प्रकार हम सभी अपने पूरा परिवार के साथ घर में रहते। ऐसा बहुत दिनों के बाद हुआ कि तीनों भाइयों को अवसर मिला होगा अपने माता पिता के साथ लगभग दो महीने रहने का। हम सभी भाई मिलकर अपना काम करते और घर में नए नए खाने बनाने का प्रयोग करते थे। हमारे पिताजी ने सभी को समाचार न्यूज़ चैनल देखने से मना कर दिया था। सुबह के समय सभी लोग छत पर माता पिता, भाभी और बच्चे सभी व्यायाम करते। उसके बाद हम सभी अपने अपने काम करने

लग जाते थे। हम तीनों भाइयों की कोई न कोई योजना बनी होती थी और साथ में काम करने चले जाते।

हमारे गाया शहर से हम अपने पैतृक गांव “बारा” जाकर वही अपने राइस मिल्स का काम देखते। हम अपने कृषि कार्यों में सहयोग करते थे। इस प्रकार हम सभी अपने काम को करते थे।

जुलाई महीने तक थोड़ा नॉर्मल जीवन हो चुका था लेकिन अगस्त महीने तक भैया की छुट्टी समाप्त हो चुकी थी। की कंपनी का फ़ोन आने लगा था कि आप कब ज्वाइन कर रहे हो। हमारा पिताजी के साथ थोड़ा वाद विवाद होने लगा था। हमारे पिताजी को कहना था कि अपनी नौकरी छोड़कर यहीं पर रहे और अपना डेयरी से संबंधित काम करो। वह चाहते थे कि हम सब यहीं पर व्यवसाय करें। घर के पास रहना ही ज्यादा सुरक्षित है। इस प्रकार हम तीनों भाइयों और पिताजी के बीच शाम में इस बात पर हमेशा चर्चा होती रहती थी। उसके बाद हम सबने भविष्य की योजना भी बना ली थी। फिर पिताजी ने अगस्त में भैया को मुंबई जाने का आदेश दिया। भैया अपने स्थान पर चले गए। कुछ दिनों के बाद छोटे भाई भी अपनी कंपनी में जा चुके थे। लेकिन मेरे माता पिता का मन था कि अब कोई भी बाहर नहीं जाएगा। ये सभी विचार उनके करोना के कारण आ रहे थे। लेकिन धीरे धीरे करोना को लेकर उनका विचार भी बदल गया। जब तक 4 सितंबर आया हम सब अपनी अपनी जगह पर पहुँच गए थे। मैंने अपनी ऑनलाइन क्लास शुरू कर दी थी। हमारे गृह जिला गाया में इंटरनेट सही से नहीं काम कर पाता था। इस प्रकार हमारे घर में थोड़ा करोना को लेकर विचार बदलें और थोड़ा सात घर का वातावरण निर्मल हो गया था। हमारे घर के आसपास सभी घर का ऐसा ही वातावरण था। कुछ पड़ोसी के घर वाले के बच्चों की नौकरियां चली गई थी। उन्होंने अपने शहर में अपना व्यवसाय प्रारम्भ कर दिया था।

इस प्रकार हमारे लिए लॉकडाउन तथा हमारे परिवार को एक साथ बहुत दिनों बाद रहने का मौका दिया। हमारे लिए, करोना का भय और आतंक हमारे परिवार के लिए शुरू में था। धीरे-धीरे असमान्य से सामान्य वातावरण हो गया था। परिवार के सभी सदस्य अपने अपने सामान्य जिंदगी में परिवेश कर चुके थे।

मैं भी 4 सितंबर, 2020 को दिल्ली आने के बाद, एक अपना कमरा लेकर भैया के सहयोग से अलग रह रहा हूँ, क्योंकि हमारे मौसरे भाई ने लगभग आठ महीने तक हमारा साथ निभाया और इस महामारी से हमारी जिंदगी को यादगार बना दिया। मेरे लिए एक ये भी महत्वपूर्ण है कि मैं इस वैश्विक महामारी के बीच अपनों से दूर एक अज्ञान शहर में पढ़ाई के लिए रह रहा हूँ। मेरी जिंदगी एक अनमोल और एक यादगार पल के रूप में है। इस चुनौती पूर्ण वैश्विक करोना महामारी ने



हमें एक अनोखी शिक्षा दी है। हम बिना बाहर खाएं या बिना ज्यादा घूमे भी रह सकते हैं। हमारी आवश्यकता बहुत ही कम चीजों की है। हम अपनी जिंदगी बहुत ही कम संसाधनों के साथ व्यतीत कर सकते हैं। इस महामारी को मुझे एक सबक के रूप में लेना चाहिए। “धन्यवाद”

निर्भय कुमार

### **Romantic Relationship (COVID- anxious)**

This story is of my family about the experiences which we went through in COVID-19 times. We are a family of seven members and residents of North-western, Delhi. We have been residents of Delhi for over 32 years. My both parents' hail from a village in Uttar Pradesh. My father is a government employee and works as a clerk in a post office. My mother is a homemaker too. I have one elder sibling and a younger one. My elder brother is married and works as an accountant in a mall. His wife is a homemaker. They recently became parents to their first child in February 2020. My younger sister is doing post-graduation via distance mode, and she has been staying in the house to help with her daily chores. I am a male and currently pursuing B.Ed. from the University of Delhi. In the past, I have done graduation in psychology. Alongside, I am also preparing for a competitive exam to secure a government job

.....I would like to talk about myself now. When COVID-19 started, I was in the first year of the B.Ed. course and our class were planning a college trip to Jaipur. But everything got cancelled as we received the news that Rajasthan has reported one of the first cases of COVID-19 in India. At the same time, we got our autumn break, and it was for about one week. It continued because the government decided to shut educational institutions as a precautionary measure. When I heard this news, I was happy, just like every other student. Till now, these educational institutions haven't opened for students yet. The classes are going on an online mode. I did not expect that one day we will be having classes like this. Initially, I did not attend these classes because I thought to utilize this free time for my preparation for competitive exams. Soon, I received the news that we would be promoted based on internal assessment and exams will not happen. The news was good and bad both because I did not take my internal assessment seriously which had gone till now. After this, I tried to do good in every assignment

which the remaining teachers were going to ask for. Later I got promoted with decent marks. The competitive exams for which I was preparing were postponed. When the new dates of exams approached, I was expecting it would further get extended. But it did not go as I thought. I remember when I went to write for my exam, I was very anxious and stressed out due to the pandemic. I told myself, “I am giving an exam and I might go back home carrying an infection”. I was also concerned that if I get infected, then it is very likely that everyone in our family will catch the infection from me. The most important part was that we had an infant in our home. I thought about quarantining myself after returning from the exam hall but later dropped the idea. Even I got a fever and cough after a few days of exams, and I thought to myself that I might have gotten infected at that time. Also, two people in my family were coughing. I was so afraid and tense then. I discussed it with my girlfriend, and she tried to calm me down. I was panicking at that time so much that I thought I would die and if I die, then anyone would check my phone, and it will not be good. My phone had a few unwanted elements. I decided to delete all the things which I did not want others to know. I was so convinced that I would die, and finally, I just deleted all the inappropriate content from the phone. Fortunately, it was not COVID-19 and I got healthy in a few days.

One important event took place in my life during this lockdown time. It was my break-up with my girlfriend. The last time we met was in January 2020. After that, we never met each other. It was a very difficult phase of my life and our relationship. At times, she needed my support and help. I tried to be with her emotionally but not in person. We used to talk late at night every day, and during the days I used to give time to my studies only. She was very supportive of my studies. She kept telling me about how people around her house were getting infected. I used to encourage her and ensure that she did not worry about it. Things were moving smoothly between us. Unfortunately, something happened, and we had to break up this relationship. We loved each other and wanted to marry. I feel sorry for her that I discontinued this relationship. I also feel sorry that we could not meet even last time. If COVID-19 had not happened, at least we could have met even last time. I did not think our January date could have been our last date.

Because of this breakup, I got very disturbed and went into a very low state. I did not feel like doing anything. I tried avoiding people. During this time, my second-year classes also started online. I was emotionally so much disturbed that for many days I did not attend any class.

Now, I would talk about how covertness was creating fear in me. As I earlier mentioned that by watching news coverage daily data, I was so much threatened that I could not watch the news. Whenever I watched the news, I just got scared, especially in the initial few months. Later although the fear reached saturation point and even the number of cases came at the rate of 90,000 per day. I did not feel the same fear. I think the media exaggerated the whole issue which instilled fear among people. Media was showing viral videos from social media about how migrant workers were going back to their villages. I got very emotional by looking at their condition and thought how vulnerable the life of a poor is. I saw people standing in queues to collect the free cooked food provided by the government. We also witnessed how migrant workers were travelling in trucks by risking their lives and many accidents were happening in which migrant workers got killed. One relative of my neighbour reached his village from Maharashtra to Uttar Pradesh by cycling for about 7 to 10 days.

During this time, when people were at home, the government came up with a plan. The government telecasted one of the most popular television shows, Ramayana, on a Doordarshan. Everyone in my family used to sit together and have dinner along with Ramayana. This show was magical as it brought many families together. I also watched Upanishad Ganga on Doordarshan.

Lastly, I want to share about the education sector, which had been impacted by the pandemic in a very different way. It had moved to completely online mode. I am attending my classes daily on my mobile. I remember when online classes started, it was so difficult for all of us to study this way. The amount of time I see on the screen has increased too much. I spend almost five to six hours on average on the screen. This much usage of the screen had sometimes caused irritation and fatigue to my eyes. I think I should get my eyes checked soon. I'm enjoying my online classes, although I also hope things return to normal soon. We got new

things from this pandemic like we got to know a new world called quarantine, sanitiser, and social distancing. We have developed a new habit of wearing masks while going outside. I Hope Indians soon start their vaccination program and we all return to pre-pandemic life.

By Amit

### Discussions

Regarding the lifestyle change, findings revealed that the majority of the participants (School and College students) had observed changes in their dietary patterns during the pandemic. The maximum number of participants had started eating healthy home-cooked food like green leafy vegetables. This is supplemented with narratives where a student shared that he along with his brothers were involved in cooking. School students were eating more quickly compared to college students. This may be because school students were taken care of by their parents due to age. As the children grow up, they become more independent. More than one-fourth of the participants in both groups did not engage in any physical activity outside the premises of their homes during the pandemic induced lockdown. More School students found the role of media misleading during the pandemic as compared to the responses shared by the College students. This is complemented by the narratives of a student where he described the way news in the media during the pandemic instilled pessimistic views among the family members.

About the impact of the pandemic on Education, nearly one-fourth of the participants in both groups showed their satisfaction with the online classes and equal numbers of participants were dissatisfied. Most of the School and College students felt that the right amount of theoretical and practical knowledge was not being provided by the online classes. The role of teachers in innovating new assignments, providing extra time, was acknowledged by students in both groups. School students found a lack of face-to-face communication as the biggest concern during the online classes, while for college students, health concerns marked the highest. The findings in the macro part of the study supplemented the micro aspect through narratives where college students distinctly outlined that they initially enjoyed online classes but later started getting bored. The health issues

suffered were strain in eyes such as watery eyes, lack of concentration and many more. In relationships with family and friends, the majority of participants in both school and college groups confirmed that during the pandemic, they became closer to their respective families. The majority of school students enjoyed spending time with their families as compared with their college counterparts. Watching Television together was marked as highest when participants in both groups were asked to choose an activity that they indulged in upkeep with the emotional well-being of their family members, followed by playing games together. More than half of the participants in both groups agreed that they could share their thoughts and concerns most comfortably with their friends. This is further supplemented by the second narrative of Amit, who had a partner with whom he shared his concerns. Most importantly, the way mutual support was provided to each other in times of difficulty. However, more

college students believed in the power of positive affirmations to deal with stress as compared with the school participants.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude the student aspect about mental wellbeing, students are confined to homes. Many areas are impacted such as physical aspects such as exercise, diet and outdoor activities. There are new ways of countering the pandemic such as online education, doing exercises indoors using technology. Even though the media has an immense role to play, the kind of content displayed needs to be mulled over especially in unprecedented times like this. The media may be such which instils power of hope, resilience, and happiness apart from facts. Maybe showing good things/brighter side of a situation may foster optimism in one's mind.

### **References**

<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-impact-of-COVID-19-on-student-equity-and-inclusion-supporting-vulnerable-students-during-school-closures-and-school-re-openings-d593b5c8/>