

## A STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19 AMONG MIDDLE CLASS COMMUNITIES IN JAIPUR

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### ABSTRACT

*The COVID-19 pandemic, originating from Wuhan City, China, in 2019, declared a global health crisis by the World Health Organization, has profoundly impacted individuals and societies worldwide. The occurrence of the pandemic has disrupted economic activities, particularly vulnerable individuals having co-existence of heart and lifestyle diseases. The disturbance caused by the pandemic led to extensive challenges in social, political, cultural, and psychological aspects of life. The pandemic has resulted into psychological impacts of the pandemic, including heightened anxiety, social isolation, grief, financial stress, remote work challenges, educational disruptions, trauma among frontline workers, stigmatization, and the disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations. The study on the psychological impacts of COVID-19 in Jaipur emphasizes the complexity of challenges faced by middle-class communities, revealing anxiety, social isolation, grief, financial stress, and adaptive coping mechanisms among respondents.*

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**Keywords:** *Pandemic, Covid-19, Psychology, Community, WHO.*

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### Introduction

The COVID-19 disease, arising from the novel coronavirus and originating in Wuhan City, China, spread globally in 2019. Recognizing its widespread impact, causes, and nature, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic. This global health crisis created an uneasy environment affecting individuals, businesses, and public authorities worldwide. The economic activities of various countries, including India, were significantly disrupted due to lockdown measures like "Janta Curfew," exacerbating challenges for people with health conditions such as heart problems, respiratory issues, and diabetes. The imposed restrictions had profound effects on social, political, cultural, and psychological aspects of people's lives, making it a challenging time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound psychological impacts on individuals and communities worldwide. These effects are diverse and can manifest in various ways. Here are some key psychological impacts of COVID-19:

#### Anxiety and Fear

- **Health Anxiety:** Fear of contracting the virus has led to heightened health anxiety. Individuals may experience constant worry about their health and that of their loved ones.
- **Uncertainty:** The unpredictable nature of the pandemic and the constantly evolving situation contribute to a sense of uncertainty, leading to heightened stress levels.

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### Social Isolation and Loneliness

- **Physical Distancing Measures:** Lockdowns, social distancing, and quarantine measures have resulted in increased social isolation. The lack of social interactions can lead to feelings of loneliness and emotional distress.
- **Impact on Mental Health:** Prolonged periods of isolation have been linked to mental health issues, including depression and anxiety.

### Grief and Loss

- **Loss of Loved Ones:** The pandemic has caused significant loss of life, leading to grief and mourning. Bereaved individuals may face challenges in grieving properly due to restrictions on gatherings and funerals.
- **Loss of Normalcy:** The disruption of daily life and routines has led to a collective sense of loss. People mourn the loss of normalcy, routine activities, and life as it was before the pandemic.

### Financial Stress

- **Job Insecurity:** Economic uncertainties, job losses, and financial instability contribute to stress and anxiety. Individuals may worry about their financial future and ability to meet basic needs.
- **Impact on Mental Well-being:** Financial stressors can have a significant impact on mental health, leading to increased rates of depression and anxiety.

### Remote Work Challenges

- **Work-Life Balance:** Balancing work and personal life while working remotely can be challenging. The blurred boundaries between professional and personal life may lead to burnout and stress.
- **Technostress:** The rapid shift to remote work and increased reliance on technology may contribute to technostress, affecting mental well-being.

### Educational Disruptions

- **Students and Parents:** School closures and disruptions to traditional learning methods have affected students and parents. Remote learning challenges and uncertainties about the academic future can lead to stress and anxiety.

### Trauma and PTSD

- **Frontline Workers:** Healthcare professionals and frontline workers may experience trauma due to the overwhelming nature of the pandemic. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may develop in some individuals.

### Stigmatization

- **Social Stigma:** Individuals who have contracted the virus or have been in contact with infected individuals may face social stigma, leading to feelings of shame and isolation.

### Impact on Vulnerable Populations

- **Existing Mental Health Conditions:** Individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions may experience exacerbation of their symptoms due to the added stressors of the pandemic.
- **Marginalized Communities:** Vulnerable populations, including those with lower socioeconomic status, may be disproportionately affected by the psychological impacts of COVID-19.

Understanding and addressing these psychological impacts is crucial for developing effective mental health interventions and support systems during and after the pandemic. Mental health resources, counselling services, and community support play essential roles in mitigating the long-term psychological effects of COVID-19.

### Review of Literature

The World Health Organization characterizes mental health as *"a condition of prosperity wherein each individual understands their own latent capacity, can adapt to the ordinary stresses of life, can work beneficially and productively, and can make a commitment to her or his community"*. In this, the shortfall of mental disorder doesn't truly signify the incidence of fine mental health. Checked out in a different style, folks existing with mental disorder can too bring about good levels of affluence – living a wonderful, significant, aiding life inside the needs of difficult, distressing, or crippling side effects. (Yao et al., 2020)

In India, the decrease in jobs is not the same for everyone. The job opportunities vary for men and women. During the first month of lockdown, it was found that men lost more jobs compared to women. However, the gender gap in the time spent on household chores reduced during this period. Men also started helping more with housework, spending 0.5 to 4 more hours on it after the lockdown. But, the distribution of housework still favours men (Deshpande, 2020). Because of the COVID-19 crisis, people with lower skills and those who are poor are having a harder time. Economists believe that the pandemic is making inequality worse within countries and between countries (Initiative on Global Markets, 2020). A study also showed that people with basic education are facing more income loss compared to those with advanced degrees, which means that income inequality is increasing because of the pandemic (Furceri, Loungani, Ostry, & Pizzuto, 2020). In rural areas, the healthcare system isn't ready to deal with the pandemic. Especially in northern states with high population density, there aren't enough doctors, beds, or equipment to handle the virus. This makes it even more challenging to stop the spread of COVID-19 in these areas (Kumar, Nayar, & Koya, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many changes to our lives. People are now relying more on the internet for education and managing things online. This means more online shopping, working from home, and studying online. These changes have also made students think differently about their future careers because our social lives have changed. Some studies from around the world also say that family life has improved. The pandemic has caused a lot of stress, worry, and fear for people. Our daily routines have changed because we now work from home, some people have lost their jobs temporarily, and kids are studying from home. All of this is affecting our mental and physical health, as well as the healthcare system and the economy globally (WHO, 2021).

On a personal level, people are feeling insecure, scared, and lonely. Many are also dealing with anxiety and depression because of the pandemic (Ventriglio et al., 2020a). Some people, especially those with lower incomes, are turning to substance abuse like drinking more alcohol because of the stress (Torales et al., 2020b). Our sleeping and eating patterns have also changed because of mental health issues and the pressure from the pandemic (Ventriglio et al., 2020). There's even evidence that COVID-19 can affect our brains and mental health. In the UK, a study found that among 153 patients, 62% had brain problems like strokes, and 31% had changes in their mental state (Varatharaj et al., 2020, as cited in Ventriglio et al., 2021). At the societal level, the lockdown caused problems too. Many businesses had to stop working, restaurants closed because fewer people were going out, and schools, colleges, and universities shut down. Conferences and meetings got cancelled, and we had to stay home. Only hospitals stayed open because of the disease, but this also raised the cost of healthcare (Ventriglio et al., 2021).

According to the National Crime Records Bureau of India in 2020, there were 381 reported cases of suicide daily in 2019, making it the highest rate globally. This marked a 3.4% increase from 2018, indicating a growing mental health crisis that extends beyond India to the rest of the world. The objective of this study is to identify the various socio-economic, psychological, and other factors contributing to mental illness, and to investigate its repercussions on the quality of life. The study holds particular significance in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, including job losses, financial instability, medical emergencies, the loss of close relatives, personality disorders, and setbacks in personal and professional life. Addressing these issues is crucial, as doing so can boost motivation, performance, and overall life satisfaction. Failure to tackle these concerns puts societal equilibrium at risk, leading to an upsurge in criminal activities, suicides, and public health problems.

### **Objectives and Research Methodology**

The objective of this paper is to understand the impact of lockdown imposed by the pandemic caused by Covid-19 on psychological aspects of people living in the city of Jaipur district of Rajasthan. The paper aims to assess the state of mental health and well-being during the pandemic in the city. The proposed study has been conducted in the city of Jaipur having residents of diverse socio-economic, demographic and cultural backgrounds. The field work has been taken in the city of Jaipur and deals with analyzing effects of lockdown during emergence of Covid-19 on middle class communities in the municipality area of Jaipur. A sample size of 200 respondents (*out of which 100 will be Male respondents and remaining 100 will be Female Respondents*) has been used from the population of middle-class communities in Jaipur employing the Random sampling technique. The sample will be selected considering the heterogeneous effects of Covid-19 on various segments of society like children, adults, women, elderly etc. The respondents have been selected focusing socio-economic and demographical variables among middle-class communities. Both the primary and secondary data have been used to

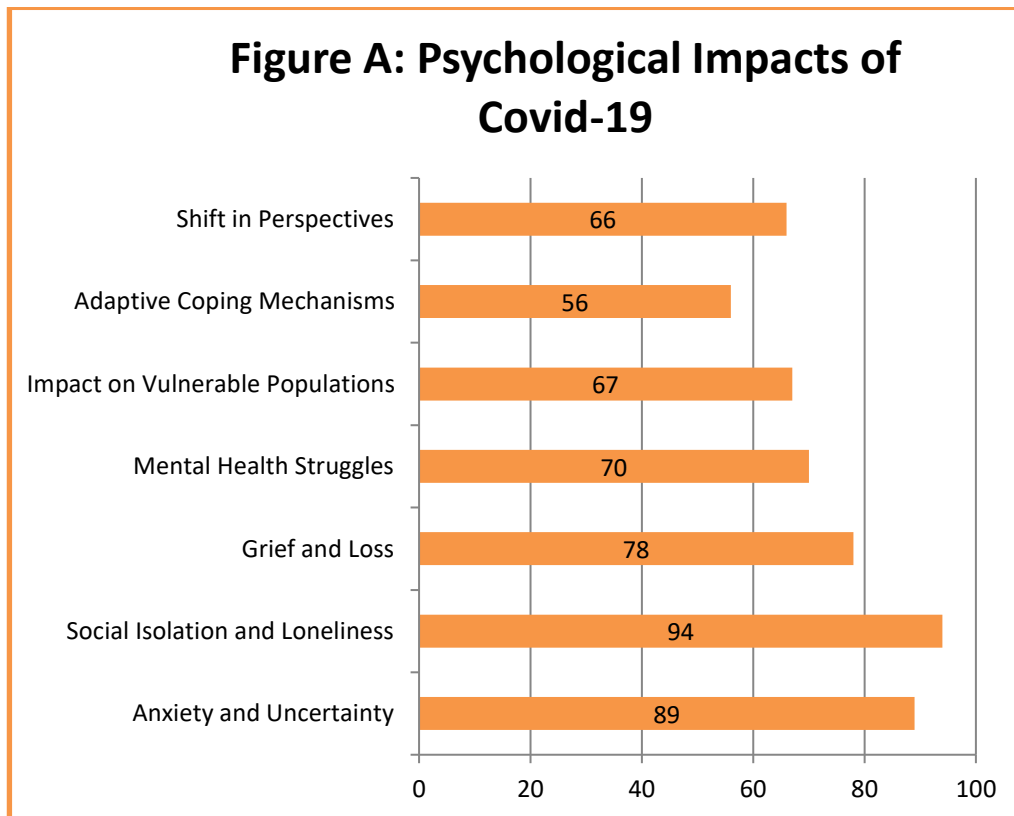
discuss the descriptive statistics of the study. Efforts will be done to answer the requisite questions pertaining to study and of relevance to the study such as level of distressed due to over work of household without house help, changing structure of social system (divorces, suicides, marital stress, family disputes), change of perspective towards life, greater bonding and cohesion in family etc.

#### Data Analysis and Interpretation

In the data collection, respondents were asked about their choices their option regarding their impacts due to covid-19 and imposing of lockdown therein. The respondents have given more than one options considering the multifaceted impacts of the disease and circumstances created in psychological and social sphere of life of people of targeted samples.

**Table 1: Psychological Impacts of Covid-19**

Answer(s) of Respondents	% of Respondents
Anxiety and Uncertainty	89
Social Isolation and Loneliness	94
Grief and Loss	78
Mental Health Struggles	70
Impact on Vulnerable Populations	67
Adaptive Coping Mechanisms	56
Shift in Perspectives	66



The data from Table given above sheds light on the intricate psychological impacts of COVID-19 based on the responses of the surveyed individuals. A striking 89% of respondents reported heightened levels of anxiety and uncertainty, underscoring the pervasive impact of the ongoing unpredictability surrounding the pandemic. Additionally, an overwhelming 94% expressed feelings of social isolation and loneliness, emphasizing the profound toll of restrictions on social connections. Grief and loss were prevalent, with 78% acknowledging the emotional burden of these experiences.

Mental health struggles were reported by 70% of respondents, reflecting the broader implications of the pandemic on individuals' psychological well-being. Furthermore, 67% recognized the societal impact on vulnerable populations, indicating a collective awareness of the disproportionate challenges faced by certain groups. On a positive note, 56% of respondents adopted adaptive coping mechanisms, showcasing resilience in the face of psychological challenges. Lastly, 66% noted a shift in perspectives, suggesting a nuanced transformation in outlook among a significant portion of the surveyed population.

In summary, the data paints a detailed picture of the diverse psychological landscape during the pandemic, revealing the complex interplay of emotions, coping strategies, and shifts in perspectives among the surveyed individuals.

### Conclusion

The study on the psychological impacts of COVID-19 among middle-class communities in Jaipur reveals a complex web of challenges stemming from the pandemic. Anxiety and fear, especially health-related concerns, affect 89% of respondents, highlighting the pervasive worry about health and the unpredictable nature of the situation. Social isolation and loneliness, reported by 94%, underscore the emotional distress caused by lockdowns and distancing measures, leading to mental health issues.

Grief and loss, acknowledged by 78%, reflect the emotional burden of losing loved ones or the disruption of normal life. Financial stress, job insecurity, and economic uncertainties impact 70%, emphasizing the interconnectedness of economic and mental well-being. Adaptive coping mechanisms are adopted by 56%, showcasing resilience.

The study recognizes the societal impact on vulnerable populations (67%) and highlights a positive shift in perspectives (66%). This comprehensive understanding emphasizes the need for targeted interventions and support systems to address specific needs and promote overall well-being during and after the pandemic.

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