



# MENTAL HEALTH OF TEENAGERS DURING PANDEMIC

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## ABSTRACT

Mental Health of students is a growing concern, especially during unpredictable situations like the pandemic. The study was upheld with the purpose of understanding the behavioral changes that a student could undergo. The concerned topic was selected for this article, in order to enlighten the thought process of teenagers. It aims to provide a detailed analysis on mental health of university students.

**Keywords:** Mental health, teenagers, pandemic, COVID 19

## INTRODUCTION

The outcome of COVID-19 pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the early 2020 had led to various outcomes, affecting the people in multiple ways (Naiana Dapieve,2021). Social distancing was implemented to reduce the spread of the deadly virus, and later lockdown or simply “shut-the-doors-lock” was the only way to control the cases. Positive became a negative word which created fear among the public.

The impact of pandemic was severe throughout the globe. The enormous downfall of society in all the streams was notable. Both physical and mental health of people were affected in different ways. There were cases where people fell into the dark edge just because of fear. Financial crisis was a major concern, that led the economy of the countries to drop. However, out of all the dilemmas that was going around, the mental health of students, especially teenagers seemed to be of utmost importance, vividly because of their age which was vulnerable and easily prone to emotional crisis (United Nations,2020). In psychological view, the mindset of people tends to vary within a short duration of time, and when it comes to students, they tend to face extreme emotions when an unavoidable crisis strikes them out of the blue.

The mental health of various indigenous groups and population have been brought into focus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sudden changes in lifestyle have created a fear among the public. Several studies and surveys have been undertaken regarding the mental health issues, mostly focusing the workers, employees, patients, children and the public.

## SURVEY CRITERIA

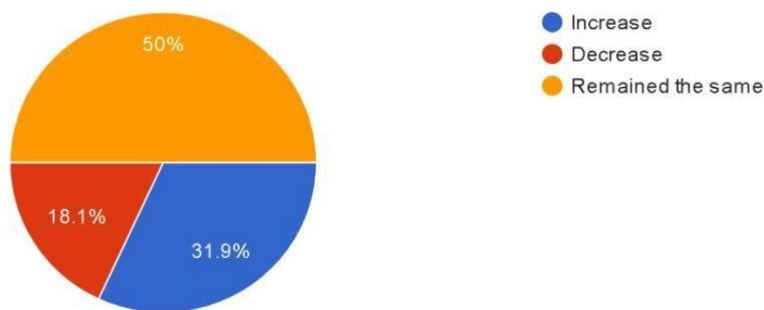
The first wave resulted in the complete shutdown of educational institutions for over 8-10 months. University students had to face a lot due to the long lockdowns. Though the students enjoyed the closure initially, where they could skip schools and colleges, it affected them in the long run. Several surveys were taken, and statistical data analysis were done in most of the places to understand the mental health and changes of the public, especially the students. It was basically regarding how they managed themselves during lockdown. They were enquired if they felt a sense of depression and loneliness on the long run. Participants had to report if the level of stress and anxiety had increased/decreased, and they had to submit their reasons for such deviations. According to the survey conducted among the students at JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research - Off Campus Ooty, various observations and statements have been recorded from February 17 to March 5. Around 94 responses were submitted by the University students via Google platforms.

## DATA ANALYSIS

When the participants were guided to describe their stress level with reasons (Fig 1), many perspectives were observed depending on the individual. Though it wasn't positive, half of them (50%) responded that their stress level remained the same. 18.1% reported that their level of stress decreased while 31.9% responded negatively.

Figure 1

Did your overall stress \_\_\_\_\_  
94 responses



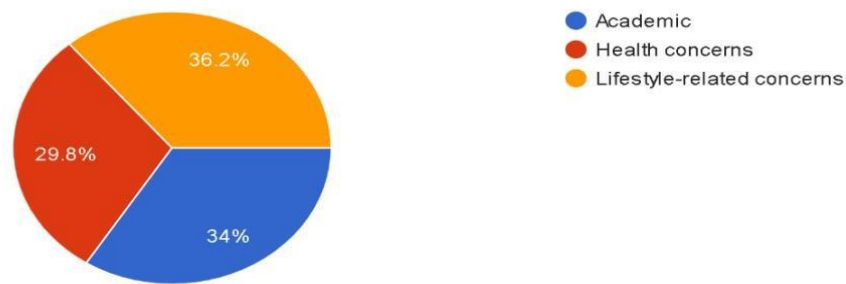
Out of the 94 responses, about 34% of students had academic concerns (Fig 2), whereas 29.8% had health concerns. About 36.2% had lifestyle-related concerns.

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Figure 2

What were your worries or fear during the pandemic?

94 responses

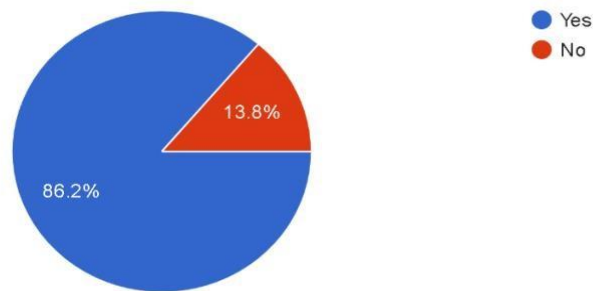


The only best outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it enhanced family relationships; the bonds between family members were highly celebrated (Fig 3).

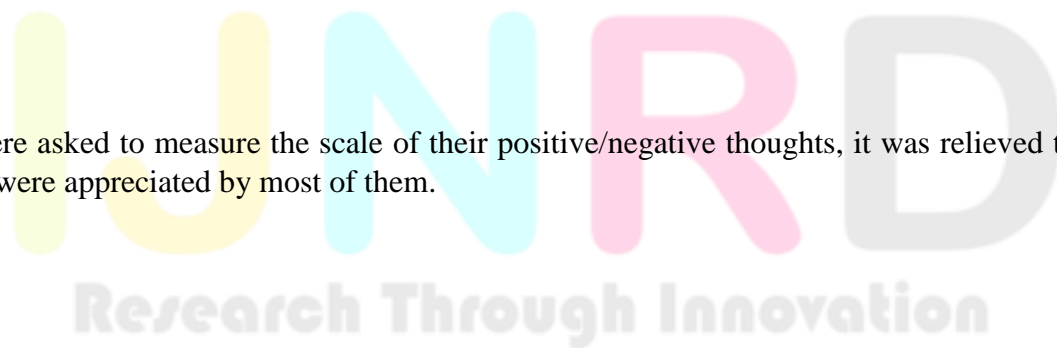
Figure 3

Did this lockdown help in enhancing your family bond?

94 responses



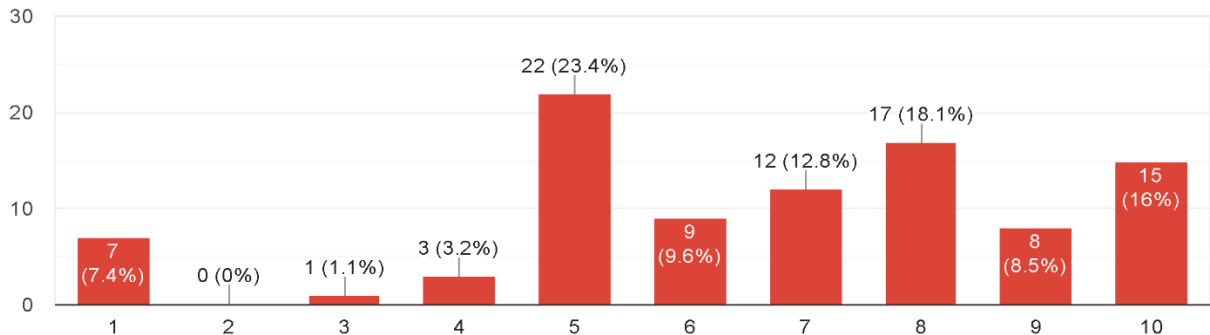
When students were asked to measure the scale of their positive/negative thoughts, it was relieved to know that positive thoughts were appreciated by most of them.



**Figure 4**

On a scale of 1-10, your level of positivity during lockdown?

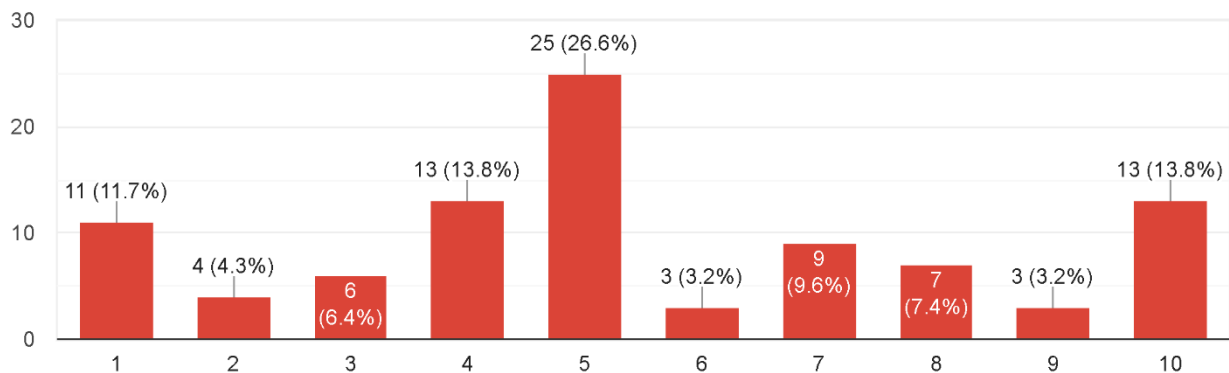
94 responses



**Figure 5**

On a scale of 1-10, your level of negativity during lockdown?

94 responses



However, even if it was a small variation negative outcome were slightly more. Few even responded that they didn't know if they had any sort of stress or anxiety to cope with.

**RESULT**

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown have shaken the entire globe with a sense of anxiety and fear that extremely affected students' mental health. It had a pompous effect on the economic and financial plight, mental illness, fear of getting infected, and the fear of getting quarantined and staying away from friends and families, thus worsening their living conditions (Zhang et al, 2020d). It also affected the students' educational footing and their development.

The responses received by conducting the survey were highly positive. Negative responses were comparatively lower. The survey included their challenges, coping mechanisms and scale of their mental stability faced during the pandemic lockdowns. It was enthralling to check the responses as most of it were surprisingly positive.

## CHALLENGES FACED

In the survey, we asked the university students to submit a response on reasoning for their stress and anxiety. It was recorded that most of the students found it difficult to stay locked at home for a long time. It later affected their socializing skills after the lockdown was lifted. It was onerous to cope with their behavioral changes before and after the lockdown. Some of the other students also stated that their level of anxiety and stress remained the same as before and during the pandemic shutdowns. Few felt isolated as the lockdown has totally restricted many areas due to the spread of the virus. When the government closed the colleges, the students' opposition was less as most of them enjoyed it in the beginning, but in spite of it, many students suffered fear and anxiety due to their low academic performances and lack of knowledge. Online classes and exams benefited the students; however, the knowledge went down due to a lack of concentration and numerous distractions. Social media was highly appreciated by most of the students as a source of entertainment, which had a negative impact as it took up most of their time. Students who were extroverted found it difficult to not interact with other people and explore places, which made them push to the edge of solitude which affected their mental health. Few faced issues not only mentally but also physically as their health took over them, as they faced irregular sleeping patterns, eating a lot and barely moving from one place to another. As their routine changed, it paved the way to a complex lifestyle beginning with degrading health issues. Since the economy of the nation had come down due to the lockdown, many families also faced a financial crisis that affected their emotional and mental stability. Some students also had to face severe struggles as they lost their family members to the disease.

## COPING MECHANISMS

Apart from all the challenges faced, there were also responses that showcased the coping mechanism during the lockdown. Majority of the responses stated that it helped them in connecting more with their family members as the lockdown helped them to enhance their relationships. In challenges faced, many students had declined health concerns but on the other hand few students also coped up with the lockdown by exercising and working out at their own houses. The pandemic lockdown also helped students to explore their enormous talents. They engaged themselves in augmenting new activities. Some emphasized on reading books and listening to music as it soothed their mental health. New hobbies were taken up by the students to cope with their loneliness. Some of them even developed their skills and theoretical knowledge by attending internships and online workshops.

## CONCLUSION

The only benefit of the pandemic must be the enrichment of nature, and the slight enhancement of family bonds. However, it brought negative impacts on higher education. Though our survey resulted in an even ratio of positive and negative outcomes, it enlightens that the mental health of students must be handled with caution. Adults must voluntarily take responsibilities to ensure that their academic concerns would be dealt with care and that the students could look forward for a secure future.

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