



RESEARCH ARTICLE

MENTAL HEALTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL STUDENTS IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC COVID-19

Barsha Ghosh¹, Tapash Das², Ankur Nandi³ and Prof (Dr.) Tarini Halder⁴

1. M.A Student, Department of Education, Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol, West Bengal.
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol, West Bengal.
3. Junior Research Fellow, Department of Education, University of Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal.
4. Professor, Department of Education, Kalyani University, Nadia, West Bengal.

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Abstract

Globally, the Covid-19 epidemic has an effect on pupil's mental health. As a result of the epidemic, symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder have all been documented in pupil's life. The pandemic has damaged social bonds, disrupted education, as well as jobs and income, and increased public anxiety and terror. Main purpose of the study was to find out the impact of pandemic covid-19 on mental health of higher education level students. The current research is qualitative and is a descriptive survey study. In the current study, eight institutions in West Bengal purposefully chosen as a sample, and 274 students ultimately chosen from those ten universities by using a random sampling technique, a self-prepared questionnaire (Google form) used, and a percentage calculation used for data analysis. As a result, the mental health of the higher education students has been disrupted due to pandemic covid-19.

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Introduction:-

The World Health Organization (2013) defines mental health as "a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" Everyone has to be in good mental health. At every stage of life, mental health is just as important as physical health. Our emotional, psychological, and social well-being are all components of our mental health. Our ability to think, feel, and act are all impacted. It also affects how we make wise judgments, communicate with others, and manage stress. From childhood to maturity, mental health is important at every stage of life. A child's healthy growth depends heavily on their mental health, which is determined by the interaction of physical, environmental, social, and psychological factors. When one or more of these factors are out of balance, a child may experience mental health issues that limit their ability to develop into healthy, responsible adults.

There are several connections between education and mental health. Good mental health is the first and most crucial requirement for any type of schooling. Poor mental health will make it difficult for a youngster to focus in class and remember what they have learnt. Good mental health is necessary for learning. Children who are in good health have a strong desire to learn new skills and knowledge that will give them more control over their environment. This study sought to determine how the COVID-19 affected university students in West Bengal's

Corresponding Author:- Barsha Ghosh

Address:- M.A Student, Department of Education, Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol, West Bengal.

mental health. It was done to establish the prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression among university students during the pandemic and to assess their psychological well-being. It was also done to lay the groundwork for government and university assistance programmes for COVID-19-affected university students. For students at all levels and levels of study, the Covid-19 pandemic forced the closure of all educational institutions around the world, creating numerous challenges.

Many institutions all around the world have taken precautions, including shutting down campuses or buildings, postponing classes, switching to online-based curricula and exams, and cancelling practicums. However, as of mid-June 2020, many colleges are still unsure of how long such measures will endure and how they would affect students. Such COVID-19-related disruptions can exacerbate existing stressors and have a severe influence on students' mental health by elevating levels of tension, anxiety, and sadness. University students encounter a range of passing events and ongoing stressors as they become used to new academic surroundings and responsibilities. Constant stress can be detrimental to both mental and academic health. There is significant effort being made by all higher education institutions, institutional administrators, instructors, students, and other stakeholders.

Brahmbhat (2016) found that male English medium students of higher secondary school have found to be better mental health than remaining groups of students of higher secondary school. Significant difference is not existed between male and female students of higher secondary school on mental health. Significant difference is existed between Gujarati and English Medium students of higher secondary school on mental health.

Moghe, Kotecha, and Patil (2020) in their study showed there is overall increased awareness about mental health among the student population and with programs/strategies focusing on background and gender, a significant improvement is attainable.

Chen, and Lucock (2022) they discovered considerable levels of anxiety and despair, with more than 50% of people reporting levels that greater than the clinical cut-offs. Females also performed significantly better than males. The survey also indicated relatively low resilience levels, which we attribute to limitations and isolation that limited people's ability to engage in healthy coping mechanisms and activities rather than persistent personality traits. Lower levels of exercise, greater levels of tobacco use, and a range of life events related to the pandemic and lockdown, such as cancelled events, deterioration in personal relationships, and financial worries, all linked to higher levels of distress. We talk about the significance of long-term observation and assistance with mental health for college students.

Objectives:-

Objectives of the present study were -

1. To study the impact of pandemic Covid-19 on mental health of higher education level students regarding academic related dimension.
2. To study the impact of pandemic Covid-19 on mental health of higher education level students regarding temperament related dimension.
3. To study the impact of pandemic Covid-19 on mental health of higher education level students regarding social relation related dimension.

Delimitation of the Study

The study has the following delimitations:

1. **Sample size**-For this study, the researchers only chose a small number of college universities students.
2. **Area**-Only a few districts in West Bengal chosen as the study region.
3. **Dimension**-The researcher has examined a few aspects of living for education level students.
4. **Analysis of data**- Only frequency, percentage calculations, and graphical data presentation are used by the researcher among the various methods of data analysis.

Rationale of the Study

A student's mental health is the most important factors in determining their performance. Without a healthy mental balance, students struggle to concentrate on their studies, which negatively affects their marks and increases their worry and anxiety. Since mental health can have a big impact on pupils, it's crucial to be aware of this. In order to engage in productive activities, develop satisfying interpersonal relationships, and be able to adapt to change and overcome obstacles, one must be in good mental health. In this ground the present study was justified.

Methodology of the Study:-

1. **Method of the study:** The current study was descriptive type survey and a qualitative study.
2. **Population of the Study:** All the higher education level students in West Bengal selected as population for the present study.
3. **Sample of the study:** 274 students in all, drawn at random from ten universities, served as the sample for the current study.
4. **Data source of the study:** For the purpose of performing this study, researchers combined primary and secondary data. Primary data was collated by the researcher using self-prepared questionnaire and the secondary data available in print form and various online databases are also used.
5. **Instrument for data collection:** Self-prepared questionnaire (Google Form) was used as a tool for collecting data from the sample in the present study.
6. **Data collection procedure:** Researchers have collected data for current research using social networking sites (What App, Facebook, G-mail) with the help of Google from self-made close ended questionnaire through internet survey across the different university of West Bengal during current epidemic situation keeping in mind hygiene and social distance.
7. **Technique of data analysis:** For data analysis and presentation of data researcher used frequency, percentage and graphical presentation as a data analysis technique.

Analysis and Interpretation: Dimension wise

1. Impact of Pandemic Covid-19 on Mental Health of HEI_s Students Regarding Academic related Dimension.

Table 1:- Item wise percentage of response towards Academic related dimension of HEI_s students.

Item No	Statements of Academic Dimension	Percentage of Responses		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	I feel worried about my studies.	69	7	24
2	I get headache when I continuously think about my carrier.	59	16	25
3	I feel suffocated to think about present situation.	78	6	16
4	I am not able to concentrate while studying.	67	9	14
5	The pace of my studies has slowed down for Lockdown.	81	6	13
6	I get more opportunity to study at home for lockdown.	53	21	26
7	Being deprived of co-curricular activity	86	5	9
8	Having been taking online exams for long time, there is fear in the minds about taking exams offline.	82	7	11
9	Online assessment is not an accurate assessment of one's own abilities	61	22	17
10	Online examination gives me satisfaction.	77	12	11

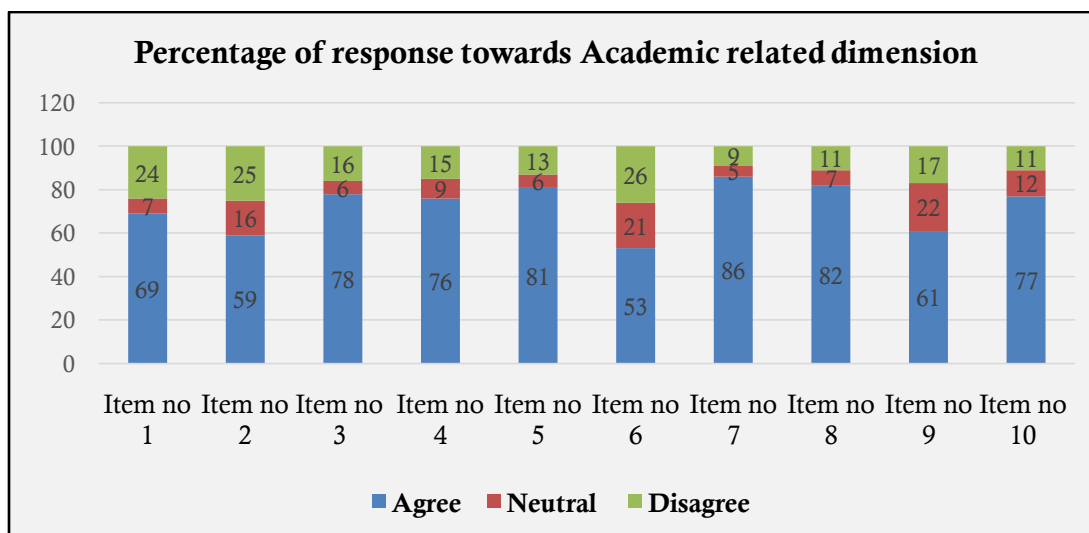


Figure 01:- Item wise percentage of response towards Academic related dimension of HEI_s students.

Interpretation: A survey of 274 HEI_s students had been done to study the impact of Pandemic Covid-19 on Mental Health. Out of total students 69% responded Agree, 7% responded Neutral, 24% responded Disagree on item no 1; Out of total students 59% responded Agree, 16% responded Neutral, 25% responded Disagree on item no 2; Out of total students 78% responded Agree, 6% responded Neutral, 16% responded Disagree on item no 3; Out of total students 76% responded Agree, 9% responded Neutral, 15% responded Disagree on item no 4; Out of total students 81% responded Agree, 6% responded Neutral, 13% responded Disagree on item no 5; Out of total students 53% responded Agree, 21% responded Neutral, 26% responded Disagree on item no 6; Out of total students 86% responded Agree, 5% responded Neutral, 9% responded Disagree on item no 7; Out of total students 82% responded Agree, 7% responded Neutral, 11% responded Disagree on item no 8; Out of total students 61% responded Agree, 22% responded Neutral, 17% responded Disagree on item no 9; Out of total students 77% responded Agree, 12% responded Neutral, 11% responded Disagree on item no 10.

2. Impact of Pandemic Covid-19 on Mental Health of HEI_s Students regarding Temperament related Dimension.

Table 2:- Item wise percentage of response towards Temperament related dimension of HEI_s students.

Item No	Statements of Academic Dimension	Percentage of Responses		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
11	Feeling bore after long time lockdown.	81	8	11
12	During lockdown I addicted to Mobile and Internet.	73	9	18
13	Due to the pandemic, daily life has changed drastically	66	12	22
14	I forget my previous lessons.	56	13	31
15	Attention is distracted while taking online classes.	53	21	26
16	Assignments in the virtual class cause discomfort.	61	11	28
17	Standing in the present moment I am losing my confidence.	47	28	25
18	I am getting mentally ill while staying at home in Lockdown.	56	23	21
19	Very soon I lost my temper.	63	28	9
20	Family matters are causing emotional distress.	45	23	32

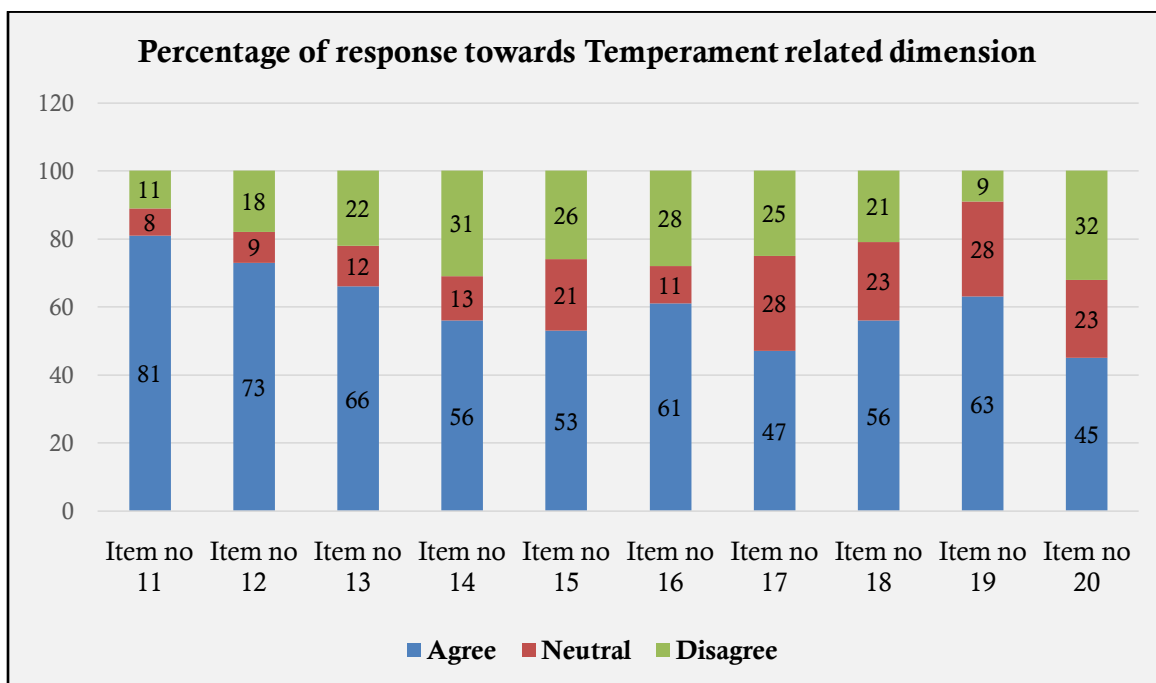


Fig 2:- Percentage of response towards Temperament related dimension of HEI_s students.

Interpretation: A survey of 274 HEI_s students had been done to study the impact of Pandemic Covid-19 on Mental Health. Out of total students 81% responded Agree, 8% responded Neutral, 11% responded Disagree on item no

11; Out of total students 73% responded Agree, 9% responded Neutral, 18% responded Disagree on item no 12; Out of total students 66% responded Agree, 12% responded Neutral, 22% responded Disagree on item no 13; Out of total students 56% responded Agree, 13% responded Neutral, 31% responded Disagree on item no 14; Out of total students 53% responded Agree, 21% responded Neutral, 26% responded Disagree on item no 15; Out of total students 61% responded Agree, 11% responded Neutral, 28% responded Disagree on item no 16; Out of total students 47% responded Agree, 28% responded Neutral, 25% responded Disagree on item no 17; Out of total students 56% responded Agree, 23% responded Neutral, 21% responded Disagree on item no 18; Out of total students 63% responded Agree, 28% responded Neutral, 9% responded Disagree on item no 19; Out of total students 45% responded Agree, 23% responded Neutral, 32% responded Disagree on item no 20.

3. Impact of Pandemic Covid-19 on Mental Health of HEI_s Students Regarding Social Relation related Dimension.

Table 3:- Item wise percentage of response towards Social Relation related dimension of HEI_s students.

Item No	Statements of Academic Dimension	Percentage of Responses		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
21	Our social relationship has change during lockdown.	69	23	11
22	I feel lonely because I don't communicate with friends and teachers in the online class.	79	11	10
23	Intends to take classes directly in the classroom.	82	5	13
24	I feel the need of teacher while reading by myself	89	7	4

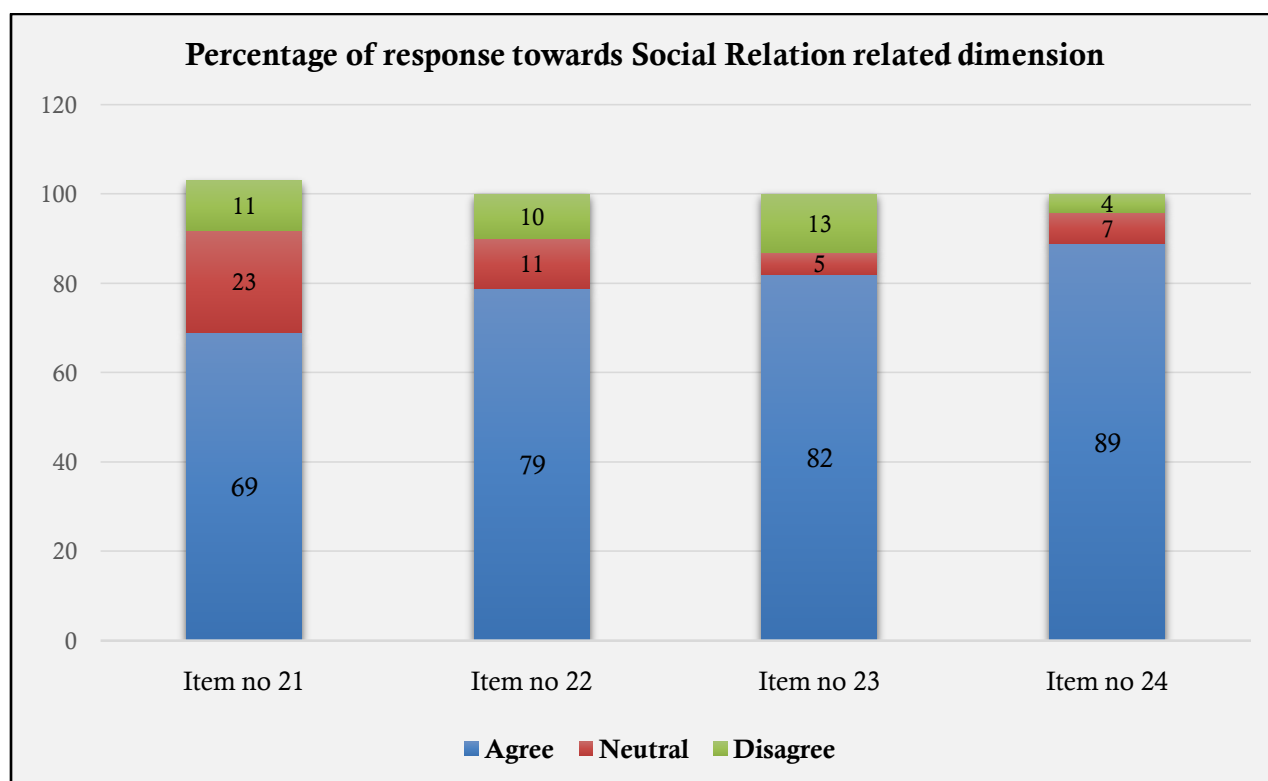


Fig 3:- Percentage of response towards Social Relation related dimension of HEI_s students.

Interpretation:

A survey of 274 HEI_s students had been done to study the impact of Pandemic Covid-19 on Mental Health. Out of total students 69% responded Agree, 23% responded Neutral, 11% responded Disagree on item no 21; Out of total students 79% responded Agree, 11% responded Neutral, 10% responded Disagree on item no 22; Out of total students 82% responded Agree, 5% responded Neutral, 13% responded Disagree on item no 23; Out of total students 89% responded Agree, 7% responded Neutral, 4% responded Disagree on item no 24.

Findings

The findings of the research study are as follows:

1. It is found from academic dimension that the pandemic situation disrupted the mental health of HEIs, students from the view point of various academic aspect related issues like-sifting examination system off-line to online, lack of concentration for study, feelings of suffocation due to lockdown, absence of co-curricular activity due to lockdown, fears and worried about studies due to lockdown.
2. The pandemic condition disrupted the mental health of HEIs, according to the temperament dimension. Changes in temperament brought on by lockdown include feeling bored, being addicted to mobile devices and the internet as a result of the lockdown, losing one's temper, experiencing emotional anguish, getting distracted from what needs to be done, and developing low self-esteem.
3. It was found from social relation dimension that the pandemic scenario affected HEIs' mental health, and the lockdown had an adverse effect on their disposition. Social relationship has change during lockdown, feel loneliness, intends to take classes directly had an adverse effect on their disposition.

Discussion and Conclusion:-

Pandemic situation disrupted the mental health of HEIs students from the perspective of various academic aspect related issues, such as sifting examination system from offline to online, lack of concentration for study, feelings of suffocation due to lockdown, absence of co-curricular activities due to lockdown, fears and worried about studies due to lockdown.(Zarima, H.D., & Linda, H, 2020) (Jena, P.K., 2020) (Dharanendrappa, S. N., 2012).

Temperament changes brought on by lockdown include feeling bored, being addicted to mobile devices and the internet as a result of the lockdown, losing one's temper, suffering mental distress, getting side-tracked from what needs to be done, and having low self-esteem.(Matiz, A, 2021) (Kluwe-Schiavon, B., 2021) (Roy, D. et al., 2020).

The lockdown had a negative impact on the HEIs' demeanour, and the pandemic scenario had an impact on their mental health. Their temperament was negatively impacted by the change in their social relationships during the lockdown, their feelings of loneliness, and their plans to enroll in classes.(Long, et. al, 2021) (Calbi, M.,& et al., 2021).

Pandemic covid-19 is currently the only cause of catastrophe in the history of human civilization. After a long time, one of the major disasters in the history of human civilization, which has devastated all aspects of human civilization especially education. Due to this epidemic, all educational institutions closed and the classroom method of direct teaching-learning was closed. As a result, the mental health of the students has been disrupted. It is necessary that "Increasing the strength of our minds is the only way to reduce the difficulty of life." — Mokokoma Mokhonoana.

Implication of the Study

According to the researchers, this study has the following significance:

1. By this study education professionals are aware of how a student's mental health affects their learning and achievement, and they also understand that there is a lot that can be done to support students who are struggling with mental health difficulties.
2. With the aid of the study, psychologists and counselors can provide complete services and assistance to the students and also providing access to behavioral and mental health services and programs.
3. Utilizing senior staff, such as those working for the Department of Education, to provide the support and services required by the help of the study.
4. This study teaches instructors and students how to see the early warning signs of mental health issues and raise awareness of and deal with mental health crises.

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