

**EFFECTS OF PANDEMIC AND LOCKDOWN ON MENTAL HEALTH OF FEMALE FACULTIES****Mrs. Reet Mayuresh Thule**

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact worldwide. This study sought to assess the “Effects of Lockdown on the Mental Health of Female Faculties.

*The 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) caused by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) began in the city of Wuhan in China and spread quickly around the world, generating a global health crisis of massive proportions. As a result of this pandemic, people found themselves forced to cope with new emotional challenges and particularly with feelings of stress, uncertainty and fear. COVID-19 poses a real threat to physical and emotional health¹. While social distancing may make people feel safer, it can also increase their feelings of isolation, stress and frustration and cause difficulties in many life situations. Bereavement, isolation, loss of income and fear are triggering mental health conditions or exacerbating existing ones. Many people may be facing increased levels of alcohol and drug use, insomnia, and anxiety. The COVID-19 pandemic has led Faculties to an unpredictable scenario where the lockdown situation has accelerated the shift from traditional to online educational methods, and relationships have been altered by the avoidance of direct contact with the others, with implications for their mental health. Physical activity seemed to be a factor that could prevent mental disorders such as anxiety or depression in this peculiar situation. Female Faculties have experienced higher levels of distress due to the workload generated during the lockdown. As females are expected to balance both their professional and personal life (Household chores) efficiently, compared to male faculties, Female faculties are expected to face more difficulties and challenges, both physically and mentally. Therefore, the aims of this study were to explore how female faculties have been affected by the lockdown with respect to their **Personal and Professional life**. In conclusion, to prevent **mental health problems** among female faculties in future similar situations, it would be important to facilitate the practice of physical activity at home. Furthermore, Faculties training in blended or online educational methods would be crucial for their favourable work development.*

Keywords COVID-19, Lockdown, Stress, Mental Health, Female faculties, Personal life, Professional life



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Introduction

➤ **Pandemic and Lockdown**

In the last 12 months, the novel coronavirus has paralysed economies, devastated communities and confined nearly four billion people to their homes. It has been a year that changed the world like no other for at least a generation, possibly since World War II.

By mid-April, 3.9 billion people or half of humanity were living under some form of lockdown. From Paris to New York, from Delhi to Lagos, and from London to Buenos Aires, streets fell eerily silent, the all too frequent wail of ambulance sirens, a reminder that death loomed close¹

- **Stress-** **Stress** is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. **Stress** is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand.

Stress and female faculties

Women faculty are also more likely to offer emotional support to students, many of whom are themselves coping with added **stress** and anxiety. This disproportionate burden on **women** academics adds to their increased **stress**, anxiety and burnout.

A new report from humanitarian organization CARE is pointing to an overlooked crisis: women's mental health. According to the report, women were almost three times more likely than men to report that their mental health had been impacted by the pandemic. Women cited issues such as skyrocketing unpaid care burdens and worries about livelihoods, food and health care—all of which are causing rising rates of anxiety, stress and other mental health issues²

➤ **Types of Stress**

- a. physical stress,
 - b. psychological stress,
 - c. psychosocial stress, and
 - d. psychospiritual stress.
- a. **Physical stress:** trauma (injury, infection, surgery), intense physical labour/over-exertion, environmental pollution (pesticides, herbicides, toxins, heavy metals, inadequate light, radiation, noise, electromagnetic fields), illness (viral, bacterial, or fungal agents), fatigue, inadequate oxygen supply, hypoglycaemia I(low blood sugar), hormonal and/or biochemical imbalances, dietary stress (nutritional deficiencies, food allergies and sensitivities, unhealthy eating habits), dehydration, substance abuse,dental challenges, and musculoskeletal misalignments/imbbalances.
- b. **Psychological stress:** emotional stress (resentments, fears, frustration, sadness, anger, grief/bereavement), cognitive stress (information overload, accelerated sense of time, worry, guilt, shame, jealousy, resistance, attachments, self-criticism, self-loathing, unworkable perfectionism, anxiety, panic attacks, not feeling like yourself, not feeling like



things are real, and a sense of being out of control/not being in control), and perceptual stress (beliefs, roles, stories, attitudes, world view).

- c. **Psychosocial stress:** relationship/marriage difficulties (partner, siblings, children, family, employer, co-workers, employer), lack of social support, lack of resources for adequate survival, loss of employment/investments/savings, loss of loved ones, bankruptcy, home foreclosure, and isolation.
- d. **Psycho-spiritual stress:** A crisis of values, meaning, and purpose; joyless striving (instead of productive, satisfying, meaningful and fulfilling work; and a misalignment within one's core spiritual beliefs.

➤ **Stress coping strategies**

- **Rejuvenate-** Take good care of your mind and body by following a physical fitness routine. Cut down on calories and pile up proteins, fruits, salads and leafy vegetables in your diet. The entire meal-plan should be *re-worked* to be suitable for the current life-style.
- **Re-connect-** with your far-flung family, cousins and old friends and enjoy catching up with them. Consciously steer away from unhappy and negative conversations. Instead talk of happy memories that give you peace and joy. Create a support-group for each other.
- **Renewal** of self will need some *me-time* to do that one thing that makes you truly happy. To do this you will have to learn to *'prioritise'* and *'say no'* which is less stressful than promising but not being able to deliver.
- **Recognise**, understand and believe that people need compassion, help, and generosity to survive COVID-19 pandemic with minimum damage. Try not to be critical- it doesn't help them and only fills you with negativity. Give – kind words, share resources and empathise with everyone.
- **Resolve** to Make 'self-care' a habit. Remember during turbulence you should first put on your *'oxygen mask'*, so that you are in a position to help others. When you find *oxygen supply to your soul* becoming low – take a break and re-join with your energies recharged.
- **Repurpose** by looking at your work from a totally new perspective. Think of new ways to engage with learners who have so far not responded to your efforts. Read about inspirational experiences of teacher's world over. Believe that you can *make a difference* and meet your learners with new optimism and energy.

Literature Review

- **Asma Zaheer** – (January 2016) [Journal of Human Resource Management](#) 4(1): 1-5 Published online October 21, 2015 ISSN: 2331-0707 (Print); ISSN: 2331-0715 (Online) – The female faculty of central universities of Delhi are having a moderate level of work-life imbalance or Work-Life Balance. Stress is not a big problem in the environment of higher education institutions as there is a moderate level of stress perceived by university teachers of Punjab. The correlation analysis identified a strong positive relationship between occupational stress and work life imbalance of female faculty in central universities of Delhi.
- **Dr. Anuj Sheopuri¹, Anita Sheopuri** (March 2015) **Impact of Stress on Job Satisfaction and Plight of Faculties -International Journal of Business Quantitative Economics and applied management research.** ISSN: 2349-5677 Volume 1, Issue 10 - "Role insufficiency" and "role ambiguity" should be improved and



supervisor support must be increased. Inadequate salary, lack of time to prepare the lecture, insufficient leaves, overload of lectures / subjects, insufficient institutional recognition, frequent changes to timetable, etc. causes mental stress.

- **Rashmi Chari in Edutrends India, India, Lifestyle, TOI – July 3,2020 - Teacher wellbeing & self-care in Covid times** - Teachers are also responsible of taking care of their learner's mental well-being who are struggling under the impact of social distancing, lack of routine, absence of friends during the lockdown. It's not easy to teach a class full of dejected, distracted and disinterested adolescents through a computer screen, who would prefer to connect with you socially and emotionally and share their feelings rather than learn from textbooks. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/edutrends-india/teacher-wellbeing-self-care-in-covid-times/>
- **Shefali Luthra – Economic Times, January 4th,2021 -Amid coronavirus pandemic, teachers' mental health suffers in ways they've never experienced.** The National Education Association, a major teachers union, found that 28% of educators said the pandemic made them more likely to leave teaching. The sources of stress and fatigue are complex. Many teachers have had to switch back and forth between in-person and online learning. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2021/01/04/covid-19-teachers-mental-health-suffering-during-pandemic/4091864001/>
- **Leire Aperribai 1 , Lorea Cortabarria2 *, Triana Aguirre3 , Emilio Verche4 and África Borges 3 -11th Nov,2020 –Frontiers in psychology- Original Research Article-Teacher's Physical Activity and Mental Health During Lockdown Due to the COVID-2019 Pandemic** - Lack of direct contact with students, Fear of using Modern Technological tools, More working hours and Concern for students creates higher levels of Mental stress which thereby reduces Job satisfaction

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the effects of lockdown on the **Professional life** of female faculties causing mental stress.
2. To examine the effects of lockdown on the **Personal life of** female faculties causing mental stress.
3. To suggest some **Stress coping strategies** for female faculties to overcome mental stress.

Scope

This study has a covered the school and college faculties with an intension to know their level of mental stress being affected due to the Pandemic and Lockdown period.

Faculties from the Panvel and Kharghar area were mainly considered for the study.

Personal and Professional life stressors were taken as a base with 5 point Likert scale method

Research Methodology

➤ Profile of the respondents

This study has a focus only on the female faculties of both Schools and Colleges.95 % of the respondents are college faculties and mere 5% are school teachers.

➤ Sample size

35 respondents were considered for the study.

➤ Geographical Coverage

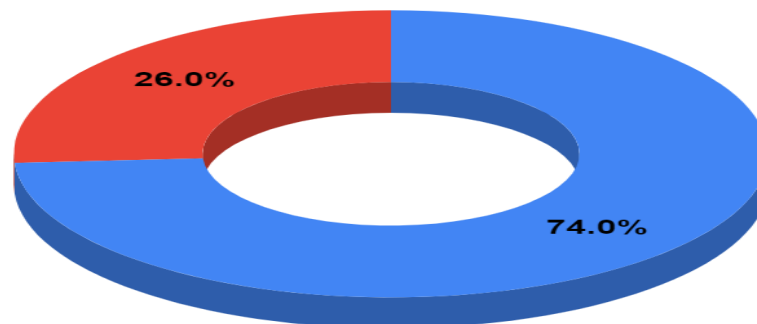
Panvel and Kharghar area was the prime focus..

➤ Hypothesis

1. H_0 – Professional life has no impact on the mental health of female faculties during lockdown period.
 H_1 – Lockdown period has an impact on the Professional life of female faculties causing mental stress.
2. H_0 – During Lockdown period, Personal life has no role to play in maintaining the mental health of female faculties.
 H_1 – The period of lockdown has greatly influenced the Personal life of female faculties causing mental stress

Limitations of the study

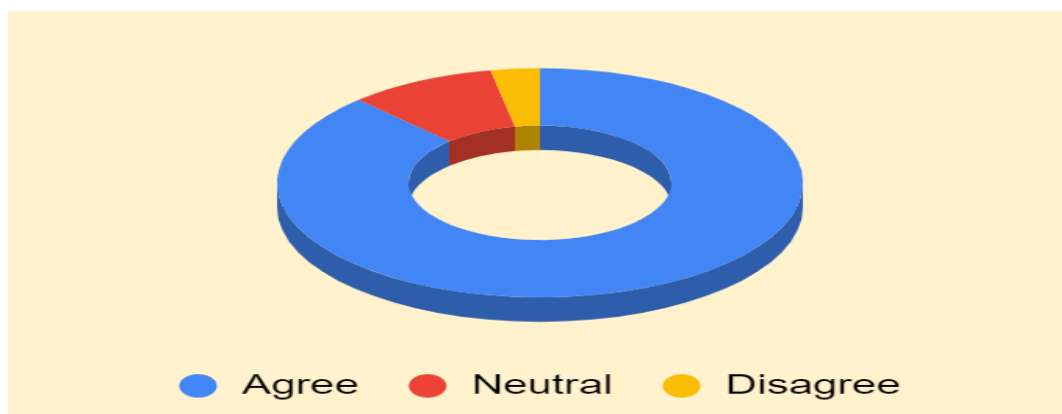
1. Period of Lockdown is the only Duration taken for this research study.
2. Only Females are taken into consideration in this study.
3. Females only from the Educational sector are considered for the study.

Findings (Results)**1. Where have you spend maximum time during lockdown?**

● Making a learning content for lectures
● with your loved once (family members)

➤ 74% of the participants responded that, during lockdown, their maximum time has been spent on making an e-content.

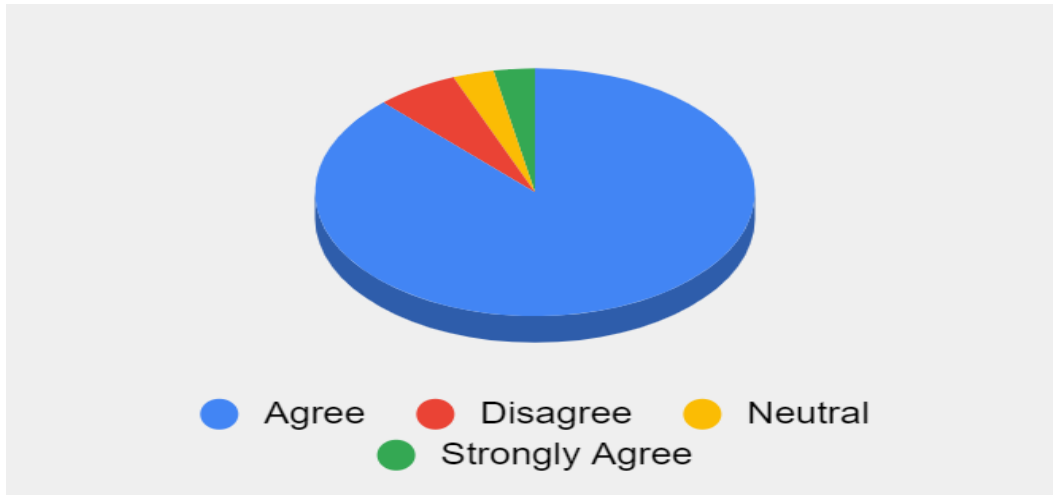
➤ Only 26% could spend their time with their loved ones during lockdown period

2. Increased workload and excessive time dedication lead to Headache and Fatigue

● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree

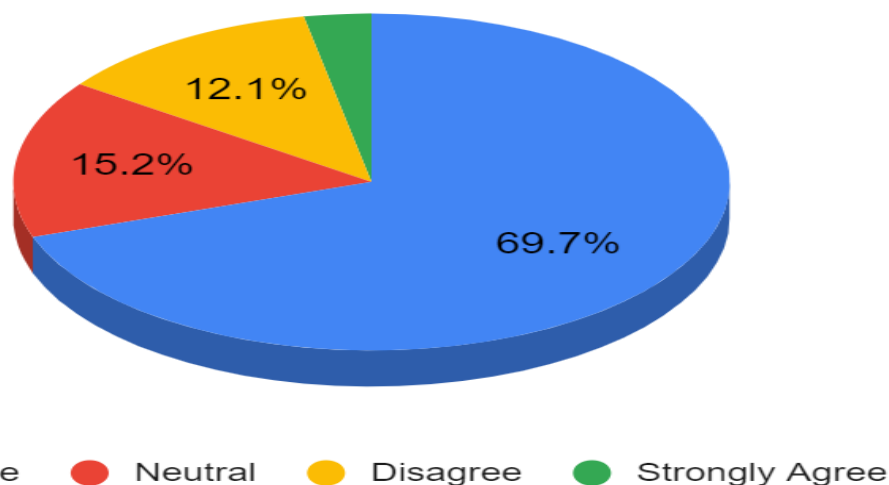
- Majority of the participants responded that due to increased workload and excessive time dedication, they were suffering from headaches and fatigue during lockdown
- Very few participants were unaffected by the increased workload and excessive time dedication during lockdown period

3. Feeling tensed, due to lack of direct contact and increased concern for students



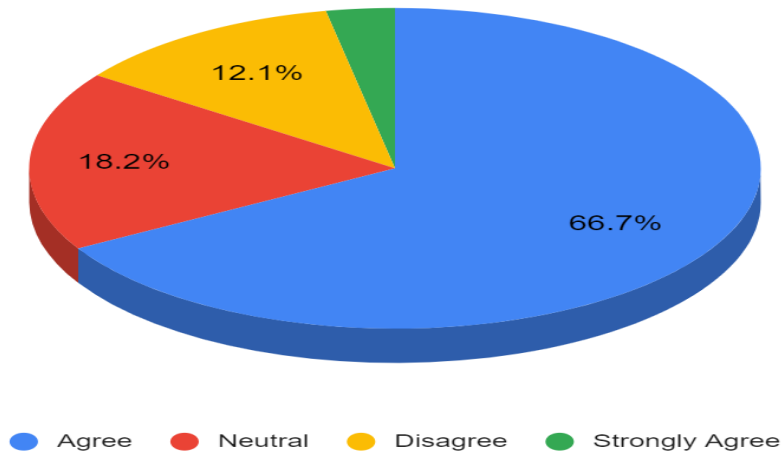
- 75 % of the participants suffered from tension and worries due to the lack of direct contact and increased concern for students.
- Remaining 25% were unaffected by the lack of direct contact with the students

4. Feeling frustrated and irritated due to the absence of Maids or servants at home



- During lockdown period, as the maids and servants couldn't extend their services, nearly 73% of the participants were frustrated and irritated.
- Remaining 27% were unaffected with the absence of maids or servants at their homes during lockdown period

5. Network issues and technical glitches leads to anger and frustration



- Approximately 70 % of the participants were angry and frustrated due to the network issues and other technical glitches at the time of conducting online lectures from home.
- Assuming remaining 30% of the participants were more techno savvy and hence they could overcome some basic technical or network issues, if any.

Conclusions

Even though telecommuting in the field of online teaching was originally set forth as a mode of working that facilitates autonomy and better a work–life balance because of the flexibility with hours and location it advocates, our results show the presence of several stressors or psychosocial risk factors such as mental overload, time pressure, lack of a fixed schedule, and emotional exhaustion may lead to the appearance of several psychosocial risks including stress, burnout, and difficulty with the work–life balance.

Sr. No	Changes in Professional life during lockdown	Changes in Personal life during lockdown
1	Time spend on professional work was too high	Very less time left for personal activities
2	They had to work on weekends/Holidays	There was no or very less effective communication between family members
3	Lack of direct communication with students led to inability to understand students' difficulties or challenges faced by students	Stress increased because of continuous worrying
4	Effective training was not provided to the faculties for digital transformation	Extra time spent to learn the things personally



5	Less physical interaction leads to decrease in job satisfaction and in ability to understand student's/colleagues' feedback	Low self-esteem due to which Relationships started spoiling.
6	Faculties were tensed to adapt the new delivery mode which is not traditional in format	Depression, Sadness, Nervousness due to no outings or not quality time being spent with near and dear ones
7	Infrastructure unavailability leads to student frustration and stress	Personal savings needs to spend to the loss of jobs of spouse.

Recommendations

- [Take Some Time Off](#): Female faculties must take some time off from their regular schedule to relax. During Pandemic, being continuously busy in online teaching and that too with increased workload leads to fatigue and headaches
- [Get More Laughter Into Your Life](#): Laughter can lead to better overall health and bring joy into your day. Be always happy. Try to keep yourself satisfied and contented and watch the comedy shows and movies which keeps you energetic, enthusiastic and charming.
- [Indulge in Hobbies](#): Don't wait until your life calms down to engage in your hobbies. Try keeping yourself busy in all those activities in which you have liking. No matter how busy you are in your day-to-day activities. At least take out some time for your own self. This will keep you happy and fresh
- [Get More Enjoyment Out of Your Current Job](#): If you landed in a job you don't love; all is not lost. Try to make your teaching more interesting to your students and to you too. Apart from traditional classroom teaching, as in this pandemic and lockdown period, you are supposed to work from home with increased time dedication, make your teaching different from the others e.g Show some topic related videos, case studies of the corporates, narrate some biopic or success stories of people. It will motivate your students and will keep stick to your lectures
- [Make Your Weekends Count](#): Learn how to bring some of your weekend into your work week for less stress. More than philosophies to read for reducing stress, it is up to you how you smartly cope up with the stress. Go out with your friends and family members for outings. Just forget about the work and related commitments for few days. This is very much necessary to make your post-holiday days more productive.
- [Write in a Journal](#): Apart from actual teaching, try to indulge in some activities relating to teaching which refreshes you. Involve in some research related activities wherein you get some more learning experience in your own field. You will be exposed to many unexplored areas of your field.
- [Talk to a Friend](#): Learn about the several different types of social support friends can offer you. Go and freak out with your friends. Remember to enjoy every moment of your life irrespective of your work pressure. Have an open communication with your close friend and be free to express your feelings and emotions.



- **Practice Mindfulness**: Mindfulness can help keep you rooted in the present moment. If your mind is happy, ultimately, it will keep you focused towards your goals and objectives. Mind controls over whole body
- **Exercise Regularly**: Exercise and stress management are closely linked for several reasons. Physical and Mental fitness is very crucial for one's healthy lifestyle. Do some daily exercises like Yoga or Suryanamaskar which keeps your body flexible enough.
- **Maintain a Healthy Diet**: Fuelling your body well can help with overall stress levels because your entire system will function better. Intake of type of food also influences your stress level. Consume fresh and healthy food as much as possible. Avoid junk and stale food
- **Cultivate Supportive Relationships**: Having a solid support system is a crucial coping mechanism. Increase your social relationships and build strong networks outside your home and work place. It will educate you in many areas and you will be involved in many extracurricular and social work activities
- **Meditate Regularly**: While quick meditations are great for dealing with acute stress, a regular meditation practice will help build your overall resilience to stress. Meditation increases your concentration power and thereby helps you in increasing your productivity and efficiency at work and nonwork places.
- **Listen to Music**: Music can act as a wonderful, stress-reducing backdrop to everyday task. Have a good collection of music of your choice either in your cell phones or any other music system. Tune in some silent / soothing music

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