

## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN: COPING DURING THE NEO NORMAL TIMES

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<b>Abstract</b>	<i>The NOVEL CORONA VIRUS has created an unprecedented health crisis that has not been experienced in years, a century to be precise. Besides physical health the Virus had severely affected the psychological, social and financial aspects. India being the largest democratic country embedded in rich social culture of socializing found it very difficult in social distancing. This created panic, leading to fear psychosis and anxiety disorders as expressed telephonically by 100 randomly selected individuals across India.</i>
<b>Keywords</b>	<i>Corona (Covid 19), Psychology, lockdown, Counselling, neo normal</i>

As per the definition of health by WHO, it is a physical, mental, social, spiritual well being of a man [1]. But people all over the world are experiencing a health crisis that has not been collectively experienced or seen in years. The attack of Corona virus, popularly known as COVID-19, has caused a pandemic that has put up literal dividers to the Mother Earth and severed the definition of health.

### WHAT IS COVID 19?

The origin of the NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (now referred to as COVID-2019) is speculated that it originated from a Seafood Wholesale Market which also sold live wild animals in Wuhan city, China. The current strain is a zoonotic virus, meaning it can be transmitted from animals to humans. The virus is also contagious among people. [2] It is a disaster creating panic among the people. Besides the physical symptoms, the illness is also affecting the mind, showing variety of signs and symptoms. People, during the lockdown days have / are facing the bitterness. They are showing resentment and discomfort. Too much of anger and disappointment is seen resulting in sadness, leading to guilt and shame.

The Psychological impact of the people during the whole of the unprecedented disaster is to be noted. Each one at home is made to understand what lockdown is meant for. By social distancing advice, the children and the elders are the worst affected ones. The children particularly are being difficult to manage, as it is affecting their growth and development. India being a democratic country, and the rich culture of socializing, the social distancing had been very difficult leading to suffocation.

### HOW CAN WE OVERCOME OR COPE WITH THE NEO NORMAL TIMES?

A quick telephonic survey conducted by the authors with a random sample of 100 was analyzed. The samples were picked up from across India living both in the urban and the rural settings. 100 % of them expressed panic, frustration, fear of unknown, and also expressed "the world is coming to an end" feeling. A chaos and panic was expressed by each of them.

It's now time to rethink what could be the strategies of coping in the neo normal times. Time after the lockdown shall not be the same. This should be realized and accepted by one and all. Victor Frank, an Austrian Psychiatrist and Neurologist accurately said "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our own power to choose our response. In our response lie our growth and our freedom"[3]. Therefore, when we are no longer able to change a situation, we are

challenged to change ourselves. Most of the stress, in other words the psychological problems resulting from the lockdown, comes from the way we respond. Adjustment of attitude is required to say goodbye to extra stress. The adjustment will depend on the personality of an individual. The power of the background of a person, the outlook towards life and the culture in which he/she is brought up.

The expected challenges during the neo normal times will pose as:

- 1 Fear: The fear of falling sick again of COVID-19, then isolation hence leading to stigma
- 2 Guilt: Guilt for not having followed health advice that was enforced by the authority.<sup>[4]</sup>
- 3 Guilt and fear of being responsible in spreading the infection again
- 4 Fear of association of anxiety and panic during the neo normal times
- 5 Concern of safety of the family
- 6 Fear of inability to cope up with the new tasks entrusted

The farmers are panicking for their lost produce, laborer for their lost jobs, salaried employees are uncertain, businessmen at a confused state, and vendors panicking, maid servants lost their jobs, are all at their wits end. Senior citizens will be worried of the livelihood.

The mental health of all the people are at stake. The memory of anxiety and panic experienced by their near and dear ones at home will pose as a threat during the neo normal times.<sup>[5]</sup>

To adjust during the coming times, one has to acknowledge one's own feelings and share if possible. This will act as a catharsis. One has to learn to derive pleasure out of work and remain cautious towards spread of the existing infection. One has to trust the world to be a safe place and that we belong to it. Learn to transform trauma into a story. Accept the fact that Psychological Counseling is the need of the hour.<sup>[6]</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Growth and change of a Nation is painful and time consuming. The neo normal times will not be easy for the citizens of India But nothing can be as painful as staying stuck somewhere one do not belong i.e. the lockdown times which need to be overcome.

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