

Covid-19 and its Impact on Education in Kashmir: A Sociological Review

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Abstract

Education is the only means through which a nation can progress to a large extent. And it can be expected that if nation has a large number literate population of males and females then the nation can become advanced. It is the nourishment of the mind with information and as such it helps in the formation of an integrated personality of an individual. At the present time everything is going to be disturbed because of spreading of a global pandemic Covid-19 and especially education. Before the pandemic started, most of the students have experienced one or more diagnosable mental disorders in Kashmir valley because of the political disturbance and the psychological effects of Covid-19 increased this number and it can also exacerbate student's mental health issues poorer than before. In Kashmir female literacy rate is already quite low and stands at 65.48 percent according to the census of 2011 and it has been expected that these serious conditions will make it worse. The present study examines the effects of Covid-19 on the education as well as on the mental health of students in Kashmir. This article provides some important suggestions that can prepare educational institutions and health professionals for addressing the mental health issues and challenges posed by Covid-19 Pandemic. The study is based on reviewing of secondary sources of data like as journals, articles, newspapers etc.

Keywords; Covid-19 pandemic, Educational challenges, Kashmir, Mental health, Students

INTRODUCTIONS

Stress and many other mental health issues are normal responses to be perceived or real threats and at times when we are faced with uncertainty. So it is normal and understandable that people are experiencing fear in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. But with the global development of the corona virus disease (Covid-19) outbreak, many psychological issues which accompany this pandemic have rapidly compounded its public health burden (Torales et al: 2020). The up-and-coming research assessing the mental health implications of Covid-19 has identified a heightened pervasiveness of moderate-to-harsh self-reported or fake news's create the depressive nature among the general public (Wang et al: 2020) sparking the pervasive effects of indistinctness and health-related fears. The fear of contracting the virus in a pandemic such as Covid-19 are the significant changes to our daily lives as our movements are restricted in support of efforts to contain and slow down the spread of the virus. But when we are going to talk about students the susceptible levels of psychological agony and downstream negative academic consequences are prevalent under normal circumstances (American College Health Association: 2019). As a result of physical estrangement measures implemented in response to Covid-19, tertiary educational institutions have shifted to an emergency online learning format, which would be expected to further intensify academic stressors for students. It is reasonable to undertaking that students may experience reduced motivation toward studies, enlarged pressures to learn separately, rejection of daily routines and potentially higher rates of drop-out as unswerving consequences of these measures (Wickens: 2011). Thus, by increasing academic stressors in a population with heightened aggravate levels and a potentially reduced ability to rely on typical coping strategies the Covid-19 pandemic has placed an unequalled mental health saddle on students. The pandemic has revealed an attention on inequality every were the world around: School closures and social isolation have affected all students every were, but particularly those living in poverty like as in Kashmir which is the territory of a developing country (India) and most of the people here are depend on agricultural economy and tourism. And especially during these days (the days of Covid-19 Pandemic) due to physical isolation people didn't move anywhere because of the deaths occurred

or the threat of spreading this pandemic disease (Covid-19) which also damages the economy in the Kashmir Valley to a large extent. Adding to the damage of the students in to their learning or education due to the shortage in resources because of poverty, a mental health crisis is emerging as many students have lost access to services that were offered by schools. And not only this but the teachers are also facing pressing issues, how can they help students to recover and stay on track throughout the year even as their own lives are likely to continue to be disrupted by the pandemic. No doubt that the students from the hottest countries of the world during the summer, their formal schooling stops, and learning loss happens at roughly the same rate for all students. But what about the students who are from the cold places like as Kashmir is where in winter season the temperature goes down to minus and formal schooling stops and learning loss happens at roughly the same rate for the students and also the schools remains off in summer and not only this but because of political disturbance the curfews, strikes, shutdowns in the valley the students face a different types of psychiatric traumas. Also the instructions has been uneven during the pandemic, as some students who have the broadband facilities are able to participate in online learning while others have faced obstacles such as lack of internet access that have hindered their progress because every year the students in Kashmir face internet problems but especially or we can say it strictly from 4th August 2019 only the 2-G¹ network is available with which most of the students are unable to take online classes. And it is common among the Students in Kashmir that they forget some of what they learned in school because of these problems. But now there's a big difference between summer as well as winter learning loss and pandemic-related learning loss also makes the condition worse because of internet problems. Horace Mann once referred to schools as the 'great equalizers,' yet the pandemic threatens to expose the fundamental inequities of inaccessible learning. According to a 2015 Pew Research Center analysis 17 percent of teenagers have difficulty of carrying out the homework assignments because they do not have consistent access to an internet connection.

The continuous Covid-19 pandemic (Covid-19 as well as by its different or changing waves such as; 1st, 2nd, 3rd wave of corona virus, Delta virus, black fungus, Covid-19 Omicron etc.) has resulted in many social isolation trials intended to keep individuals physically distanced from others for the probable future. Even though these initiatives are essential to avoid the spread of the novel corona

¹ 2G or 2G is the short form for second generation cellular network. 2G cellular networks were commercially launched on the GSM standard in Finland by Radiolinja (now part of Elis Oyj) in 1991.

virus, but they may be causing pervasive mental health effects, including melancholy and solitude among all ages of individuals alike, according to experts. Students faced many challenges when Covid-19 forced most schools to shift online. Mental health issues have increased, that impact on well-being may be exaggerated by another effect of school closures. School closures may be especially unruly for children from lower-income families, who are disproportionately likely to receive mental health services entirely from schools. The Covid-19 pandemic may worsen accessible mental health problems and lead to more cases among children and adolescents because of the unique amalgamation of the public health crisis, economic decline or social isolation. Persistent stress changes the elemental and physical structure of the brain, impairing cognitive skills like interest, concentration, reminiscence and creativeness. While distress informed practices were widely used before the pandemic, they are likely to be even more integral for the students experience economic hardships and mourn the loss of family and friends. According to Jena Lee, MD, (medical director of pediatric consultation at University of California, Los Angeles) ‘Daily configuration is important to everyone, but predominantly to children in their psychological and emotional development,’ ‘the reliability of schedules, predictable rules, penalty and set opportunity teach children how to perform, develop self-discipline and impulse control’. Clinically, we often see an exacerbation of behavioral problems in our pediatric patients when their schedule is disturbed. The level of this challenge depends on the family’s aptitude to provide support and configuration at home, which further depends on the family’s unique possessions and stressors, Lee noted. It has been considered that children are the great imitators of their parents and elders. They learn by watching the adults and since they will often be at home together now, they will observe what the adults in the home say or how they implement structure, ensure steadiness and deal with their own emotions but also if their parents are not good with each other or torture each other physically as well as verbally in front of their school going children then it can create a big mental trauma for their children and here it can also be expected that it will become a root for the cycle of abuse as nowadays one of the news is more common in most of the news papers that domestic violence is growing very fast during the days of Covid-19 pandemic. So teaching every parent the importance of daily structure and reliability in their responses to their children’s behaviors or living peacefully in front of their children is a precedence which is not easily possible especially during these days of Covid-19 Pandemic.

According to Sarah K. Lipson, PhD, (assistant professor in the department of health law, policy and management at Boston University School of Public Health) research over the past decade has shown a steady increase in the pervasiveness of depression among students across the United States. 'For students who are besieged with nervousness, which has surpassed melancholy as the most common mental health concern on college campuses, the ambiguity regarding the corona virus is something we really need to be worried about, since it has the potential to amplify already high rates of anxiety,' Lipson said.

The current condition of Covid-19 is creating psychiatric problems not only for the students reading in first second or third level/standards but for the students at all levels whether at secondary level, higher secondary level or at college and university level. At all levels each and every student is facing different psychiatric or mental health problems. For college or university students, who are more serious about their career or bright future, experience a lot of miscarriage and distress contributed by the uncertainty and abrupt disruption of the semester in addition to the anxiety caused by school closure. As more universities transitioned to inaccessible learning after the spring break, some students suffer from poor mental health due to the commotion of academic schedule (Agnew et al: 2019). Many students have to stop their research projects and internships when universities evacuated them from campus. Moreover, disruptions of their research projects and internships endanger their program of study or delay their graduation which in turn fuels concern among college students. Many college or private college students have lost their on-campus jobs due to the emigration and the awaiting problems of room fees can worsen their economic hardship and mental health outcomes. They also have concerns and fears of infection and transmission of Covid-19 to their family members if they want to move from home to university or return to home. Although the overall impact on education and mental health of the university environment is still unknown, it is expected to be very considerable (Araujo et al: 2020). Considering the usual high incidence of emotional disorders in university students, it can be expected that the current situation may cause a notable impact on this population (Auerbach et al: 2016). Given the anticipated impact of the situation on this community, it is decisive to examine the experience of members of the university community during the Covid-19 crisis and detention in order to develop measures and execute psychological interventions appropriately accustomed

to this situation. That may help alleviate the probable adverse effects on education and mental health among the university members.

There are some studies which explains that due to this world wide pandemic (Covid-19) the students are facing different types of psychiatric problems;

Yusen Zhai, Xue Du (2020) in '*Addressing collegiate mental health amid Covid-19 pandemic*', states that college students encounter unique challenges leading to poor mental health in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak. Before the pandemic started, one in five college students experienced one or more diagnosable mental disorders worldwide. The fact that the Covid-19 pandemic affects cloistered mental health underscores the burning need to understand these challenges and concerns in order to inform the development of courses of action and public health messaging that can better support college students in this crisis.

Paula Odriozola González et al (2020) in '*Psychological effects of the Covid-19 outbreak and lockdown among students and workers of a Spanish university*', addresses that the students from Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences & Law showed higher scores related to anxiety, depression, stress and impact of event with respect to students from Engineering & Architecture. University staff presented lower scores in all measures compared to students, who seem to have suffered an important psychological impact during the first weeks of the Covid-19 lockdown.

CONCLUSION

In order to summarize with some suggestions, it is important to mention that in order to lessen the inexorable realities of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world we have to take the actions that can support a vulnerable student population to reduce the generally global mental health lumber connected with this period of astonishing disturbance and vagueness. Educational institutions should also continue to help the students through different ways; first, in addition to isolated education, student advising should continue and conversion to telecommunication (e.g., phone call, online meeting) in order to provide academic support for students and especially to those who are belonged to poor families and are from rural backward areas of the world. Faculty and staff should consider offering virtual office hours to students, and they need to work together to maintain the connection and help students process and address academic concerns caused by the commotion

of the semester. Second, for students whose internships or research projects were affected by the pandemic, the internship site supervisors and research advisors should actively engage in helping them to seek alternative plans, enabling them to work from home to maximize internship and research experiences. Third, universities should work on innovative methods to support students to move research projects and capstones forward, so that the students can fulfill graduation requirements; meanwhile, university career centers should control to asset services, enduring to ease career growth for college students.

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