

## **Covid 19 and youth: Understanding the perception**

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### **Abstract**

India stands youngest among the ageing world. Youth in India constitutes one fifth of the total population of the country who has an active role in developing the skilled human capital of the nation. The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the young population of the country. It has a negative impact on all aspects of the lives of the young population viz income, employment, health especially mental health and other social aspects of the life. The study aimed to identify the youth perception about the covid19 situation, government's response to covid19 situation, youths' future after covid19 in terms of education, employment and other engagements. The study outlines findings from an online survey of youth in the age group of 14-35. The study tried to explore the youth perception on their education, employment, income, mental health and other social factors of their life.

**Key words:** covid19, youth perception

There are more than 1.2 billion youth which constitute almost 18 percent of the global population. The covid19 pandemic has impacted the people around the world including the youth in an unexpected way. Various countries started regional and national level containment measures to protect from the in-

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fection of corona virus since January 2020. At individual level, the measures adopted were included wearing face mask, washing hands, using sanitizer, practicing social distancing which was not normal in the day to day lives. At a societal level closure of educational and employment institutes and other activity area lead the people in distress, anxiety, emotional swings and feeling of helplessness.

It has been noticed that compared to adults, the youth have an increased consequence of covid19 pandemic. The nature and extend of covid19 impact on youth centers around a numbers of vulnerability factors like the mental health condition, financial well-being, employment status, job demand, social interactive pattern, higher educational aspirations etc.

Mental health impacts may be more severe among adults under the age of 35 (Yeen Huang and Ning Zhao, 2020).According to the ILO report, Youth and COVID-19: impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being , 65 per cent of young people reported having learned less since the beginning of the pandemic because of the transition from classroom to online and distance learning during lockdown. Despite their efforts to continue studying and training, half of them believed their studies would be delayed and nine per cent thought that they might fail.

As many as 41 lakh youth in India lost jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of them face job losses in the construction and farm sector according to a joint report by the International Labour Organization and the Asian Development Bank.

In the case of education in India during COVID-19, online education is considered to be the best alternative for regular school going education practice. During lockdown, students are using popular social media platforms like WhatsApp, Zoom, Google meet, Telegram, YouTube live, Facebook live, educational channels of many kind etc. for online teaching and learning system. ICT initiative of MHRD is a unique platform which combines all digital resources for online education.

Study shown that adolescents and young adults had higher risk perception of covid19 for their relatives than for themselves. There are many factors associated to this higher risk perception which includes higher disease knowledge, presence of chronic disease and use of immunosuppressants. Adolescents and young adults who has high risk perception of covid19 are more likely to engage in the covid19 preventive measures (Yang, 2020).

In a study conducted to evaluate the social and emotional impact of covid19 revealed that there are changes in their relationship with family and friends during the covid19 pandemic (Adam A. Rogers, 2021). It also revealed that these perceived social and emotional changes were associated with elevated depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and loneliness.

Studies related to the perception of young people on covid19 shown their concern about their relatives and loved one than themselves. Also, young people worried about their education and future social life after covid19. Studies also revealed that information being informed about and trusting the information received had reduced the anxiety level of the youth population (Atle Dyregrov, 2020).

India stands youngest among the ageing world. Youth in India constitutes one fifth of the total population of the country who has an active role in developing the skilled human capital of the nation. The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the young population of the country. It has a negative impact on all aspects of the lives of the young population viz income, employment, health especially mental health and other social aspects of the life. These determinants have an impact on the lives of the youth during covid19.

The theoretical underpinnings of the study centres around social model of health in which social, economic and environmental determinants should be addressed in order to address health gains. Here, the determinants like income, gender, employment, education, mental health need to be addressed in order to cope with the covid 19 pandemic. For these determinants have an impact on the daily lives of individuals in the community which questions

the sustainability of their lives. These determinants are interlinked and it will aggravate the social inequalities in the society.

### **Objectives**

1. To understand the basic profile of the youth population
2. To identify youth's perceptions about the COVID-19 lockdown situation
3. To explore youth's perception about the Government's COVID-19 response
4. To know youth's perception about their future after COVID-19 in terms of education, engagement and economic opportunities

### **Methodology**

The study is based on both primary data, which is collected from an online survey and secondary data, which includes various articles and other available resources. The primary data collected with the help of a questionnaire. The respondents included youth between the age 15 to 35. The questionnaire for the study included the following part: 1) Demographic information 2) and youth's perceptions about the current COVID-19 lockdown situation 3) youth's perception about the Government's COVID-19 response 4) youth's perception about their future after COVID-19 in terms of education, engagement and economic opportunities. A basic analysis of collected data was done.

## **Results and Discussion**

**Table 1**

*Gender of the respondents*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total</b>
Male	23
Female	42
Total	65

The above table shows the gender of the respondents. Female constitutes the

majority of respondents followed by male. There are 42 female respondents and 23 female respondents.

**Table No. 2**

*Age of the respondents*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Category</b>
14 to 17	6
18 to 21	6
22 to 25	28
26 to 29	20
30 and above	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>

Table No.2 depicts the age of the respondents. Majority of the respondents are in the age group of 22 to 25. It was followed by the age category 26 to 29. The least number of respondents included 30 and above.

**Table No. 3**

*Source of information on covid19*

No	Source	Response
1	WhatsApp	7
2	Television	17
3	Radio	0
4	Social media	14
5	Family members and elders	4
6	Religious leaders	0
7	Friends	1
8	Mobile phone	22
9	Total	65

Table no.2 shows source of information of COVID-19 pandemic. Majority of the people relies on mobile phone to get information on the COVID-19

followed by television and social media respectively.

Studies shown that youth received information regarding covid19 from social media, news and govt notifications. They found it to be more reliable.

**Table No. 4**

*The activities of youth to prevent spread of COVID-19*

No.	Activities	Response
1	Social distancing, staying at home and washing hands regularly	44
2	Serving vulnerable members of community and raising awareness	8
3	Dispelling rumours and fake information	1
4	Working with organizations focused on the Coronavirus relief effort	7
5	Supporting local government by providing feedback and suggestions	5
6	Total	65

Table No.3 shows the activities of youth during COVID-19 for its prevention. Majority of the respondents kept social distancing, staying at home and washing hands regularly to reduce the spread of the corona virus. Activities were not only included at individual level, they practiced covid19 preventive measures at societal level. Many studies shown that young population worried more about their relatives and loved ones than themselves during covid19.

**Table No.5***Impact on mental health*

No.	Impact	Response
1	Yes	31
2	No	13
3	I am not sure	7
4	May be	14
5	Total	65

Mental health is an important area where COVID-19 situation impacted. In this study 31 respondents believed that COVID-19 impacted their mental health. 13 respondents believed that their mental health is not impacted by COVID-19. Also, there are people who are not sure about whether their mental health is impacted by COVID-19. The data can be substantiated with literatures available. Studies revealed that young population undergone anxiety and depressive symptoms during covid19 pandemic.

**Table No. 6***Opinion on closure of educational institutes*

No	Opinion	Response
1	Strongly agree	21
2	Agree	29
3	Neither agree nor disagree	11
4	Disagree	3
5	Strongly disagree	1
6	Total	65

The opinion of the youth on the statement “National guidelines on school closure and limitation of movement are effective in preventing the spread of coronavirus” is listed in the above table. Majority of the young population responded that they agree to this statement followed by 21 are strongly agreed

to the statement. 11 of them neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Studies shown that adolescents and young adults have high risk perception on covid19 and are more likely to engage in preventive measures. In the present study, the youth population are engaged in the individual preventive measures and also community level awareness making. The youth have shown high risk perception in terms of their relatives than for themselves.

It was shown in the studies that youth seek information from trusted sources. The youth in the present study also seek covid related information from trusted sources. The various sources from which the information seek was social media websites of various government organisations, television and mobile phones. Trusting reliable sources has reduced anxiety level of the individuals. Mental and emotional health impact was also discussed in related studies.

### **Limitations**

The study sample was youth in the age group of 14-35 who have accessed the questionnaire of the survey anonymously. It was not easy to rule out that someone outside of the sample unit has participated in the study. The background information asked was short and it seemed that there is a decreased representativeness of the people who responded.

### **Conclusion**

The perception of youth population on covid19 pandemic was mostly about the risk for infection of covid19 to their relatives and loved ones. Furthermore, they are worried about the mental health condition, financial well-being, employment status, job demand, social interactive pattern, higher educational aspirations etc. many of them are happy with the measures taken by the government agencies to tackle the pandemic situation.

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