



2021-22

Volume : I

Special Issue : Global Pandemic

SPECTRUM

**PEER REVIEWED
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
BILINGUAL JOURNAL**

**PRASANTA CHANDRA MAHALANOBIS MAHAVIDYALAYA
111/3 B.T. Road, Kolkata - 700 108**

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A PILOT STUDY ON THE ASSESSMENT OF LIFESTYLE, ATTITUDES AND STRESS AMONG COLLEGE TEACHERS OF PRASANTA CHANDRA MAHALANOBIS MAHAVIDYALAYA DURING COLLEGE CLOSURE DUE TO COVID-19

Tanima Paul Das¹ and Juthi Saha²

¹Assistant Professor, ²SACT, Department of Food & Nutrition
Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya, Bonhooghly, Kolkata

Abstract:

Covid-19 had a massive impact on deliberation of education worldwide, digital platforms are been resorted to. Forceful closure of educational institutions led to an overall setback. A questionnaire was framed to assess the lifestyle, teacher's activity pattern and attitude during college closure due to Covid-19 pandemic. Apart from other questionnaires, standardized stress assessment tool – Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was administered to assess stress level among faculties of PCM Mahavidyalaya located in Baranagar area of Kolkata. Faculties willing to participate filled out an online questionnaire shared through Whatsapp group of the college. A total of 45 faculties, roughly 90% of total strength participated in the survey. 77.8% were females and 22.2% were males. The high educational level of faculties may have impacted on experiencing feelings of optimism and helped them to cope with the situation well. It was revealed that 66.7% haven't been to a vacation during the past six months but visits to family/friend's place continued, although most of them refrained from visits to malls or for entertainment purposes. They also reported missing college, colleagues and students and closure of college was a mere compulsion for them. 40.0% of faculties slept less than six hours assumed to be functionally coping with digital skills. Responses concluded that they experienced moderate levels of stress as imposed by PSS score. The results imply faculties are exhausted at home, the more they adhere to quarantine restrictions, the higher they are exposed to stress. Pandemic induced stress can be reduced with the inclusion of online yoga, meditation, dance, art classes; workshop on stress management can also benefit teachers. Social programmes, observance of important days can add to some relaxation and mingling with students and colleagues. But post pandemic, they strongly hope to resume work in the place and way they know best, engrossing tough times.

Introduction:

The rampant out break of covid-19 since December 2019 in Wuhan, China (1) led to abrupt disruption of life globally. To control viral transmission, public health strategies of repeated hand washing, using sanitizer, maintaining physical distancing norms with limited socialization was enforced by Governments across countries as World Health Organization declared corona virus epidemic to be a pandemic (2). Travel restrictions came into effect, human congregation at religious places, health centres, malls, were prohibited and nationwide lockdown engulfed India from 23rd

In our study, 45 filled questionnaires were found from the participants who included 10 male faculties (and 35 (77.8%) female faculties. 33.3% of faculties were in the age group 20-29 years, another 33.3% faculties were in the age group 30-39 yrs., 31.2% belonged to 40-49 yrs. age group and 2.2% were 50 - ≥60 yrs. old. More than 1/3rd faculties (84.4%) live in urban areas whereas only 15.6% live in rural areas. It is also remarkable that nearly one third of the faculties (71.1%) had a Master's Degree whereas 28.9% faculties have already acquired a Ph.D. degree. It was also revealed that 57.8% faculties inhabit in nuclear families and 42.2% in joint families.

Table II: Life style of faculties of PCM Mahavidyalaya due to college closure following COVID-19 pandemic (N =45):

Variables	Frequency during the past two weeks		
	0(%)	1-2(%)	≥ 2(%)
Visiting family/ friends	19(42.2)	20(44.5)	6(13.3)
Being visited by family/friends	17(37.8)	25(55.6)	3(6.6)
Shopping/visiting shopping malls	28(62.2)	12(26.7)	5(11.1)
For entertainment and other activities	26(57.8)	18(40.0)	1(2.2)
Frequency during the past six months			
Going for a vacation	30(66.7)	13(28.9)	2(4.4)

In this study, five questions were asked on lifestyle regarding adherence of faculties to staying isolated, the results are demonstrated in **Table II**.

The results revealed that most of faculties maintained quarantine norms w.r.t visiting shopping malls and indulging in entertainment and other activities but visits to home of family members and friends continued to some extent. It was also found that 66.7% haven't been to a vacation during the past six months demonstrating disruption in normal life.

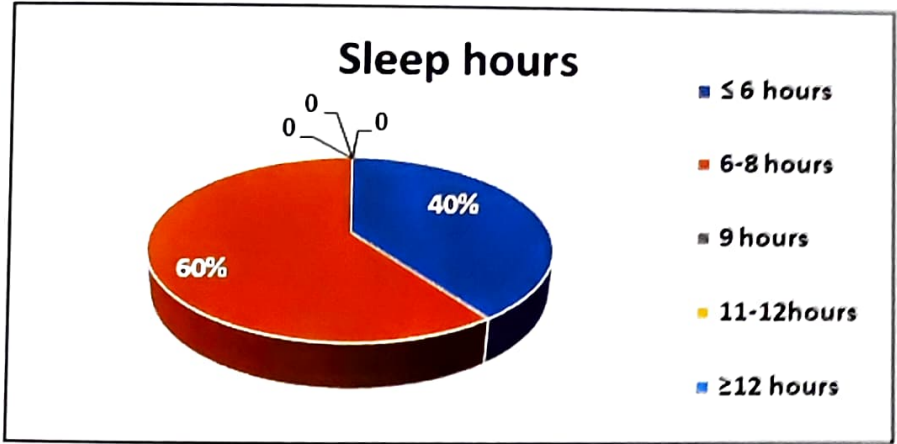
Lack of connection and online teaching were most difficult challenges faced by teachers during the pandemic; support from coworkers and administrators were helpful. A study from China, found that those isolated face monotony, lonely, irritation, anxiousness, and mental distress (7).

Table III: Attitude of faculties of PCM Mahavidyalaya due to college closure following COVID-19 pandemic (N =45):

Question	Answers				
	Completely agree (%)	Agree (%)	No option (%)	Disagree (%)	Completely disagree (%)
I miss my college	25(55.6)	16 (35.6)	2 (4.4)	0 (0)	2 (4.4)
I miss my colleagues	17 (37.8)	25 (55.6)	1 (2.2)	1 (2.2)	1 (2.2)
I miss seeing my students	29 (64.5)	15 (33.3)	1 (2.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
The longer the college remains closed, the more upset I become	13 (28.9)	18 (40.0)	10 (22.2)	3 (6.7)	1 (2.2)
College should be closed till the end of the semester no matter what	4 (9.0)	6 (13.3)	20 (44.4)	13 (28.9)	2 (4.4)

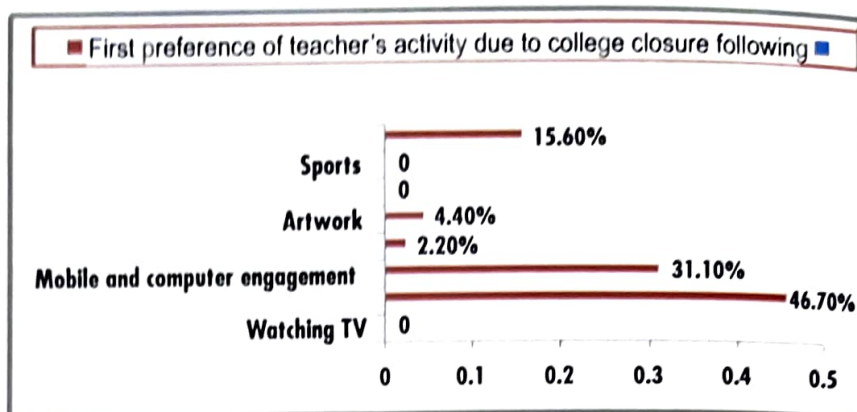
A total of five questions were asked from the faculties regarding their attitude towards college closure following COVID-19 pandemic, the results of which are demonstrated in **Table III**. 55.6% faculties of PCM Mahavidyalaya completely agreed missing college, 55.6% agreed missing their colleagues, 64.5% completely agreed missing their students, a total of 68.9% completely agreed/agreed about becoming upset for longer periods of college closure. Moreover, it was found 44.4% faculties chose 'no option' when asked about college closure till the end of semester no matter what. Attitude of most of the faculties towards college closure following pandemic is thereby not affirmative, rather they are left with no option.

Fig 1: Sleeping hours of faculties of PCM Mahavidyalaya following COVID-19 pandemic during college closure (N =45):



Based on the study, 18 (40.0%) faculties had 6 or fewer hours of sleep, 27 (60%) had 6 to 8 h, 12.8% had 9 to 10 h, 1506 (7.3%) had 11 to 12 h, and no one slept 9 hours or above throughout the day.

Fig 2: Most preferred choice of teacher's activity during college closure due to Covid-19.



As demonstrated in Fig 2, the overall first preferred choice of teacher's activity during college closure was reading books (46.7%), followed by mobile and computer engagement (31.1%), followed by studying (26.6%), no plan (15.6%), artwork (4.4%) and socializing with friends/family (2.2%).

Table IV : Perceived Stress Scale score of faculties of PCM Mahavidyalaya due to college closure following COVID-19 pandemic (N=45):

Variables	Median \pm IQR	Low Stress (0-13)	Moderate Stress (14-26)	High Stress (27-40)
PSS score	18 \pm 8	10 (22.1)	30 (66.7)	5 (11.2)

Calculated scores using Perceived Stress Scale was used to assess increased stress amongst faculties of PCM Mahavidyalaya due to college closure following COVID-19 pandemic. The median \pm IQR values of PSS scores of college faculties of PCM Mahavidyalaya were found to be 18 \pm 8, indicating that 'moderate stress' is evident amongst all during COVID-19 quarantine. Perz stresses that teaching profession is associated with added stress due to excessive workloads, interpersonal communication problems and improper training (8). Furthermore, as highlighted by Fuente et. al.(9) it is important to safeguard the emotional health of teachers because teacher-student relationships are also stressors for the student, and the teacher's behavior helps to predict the emotional well-being and commitment of the students, which are also important considerations for reducing their stress levels(9). Thus, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the emotional health of teachers is a major challenge that needs to be tackled by both the educational community and society in general. Pandemic induced stress of teachers can be reduced to some extent with the inclusion of online yoga, meditation, dance, art classes; workshop on stress management, observance of important days.

Conclusion:

Worldwide there is a shift in pattern in teaching learning evaluation methodology. With a compulsion, and an intervention strategy to stay behind closed doors and propagate social distancing, educational institutions are shut for more than a year in West Bengal. Online teaching is the new fashion compromising physical, mental and social well-being (10, 11) of all irrespective of gender and age.

The present study identified that faculties of PCM Mahavidyalaya, a representative of teaching community working from home during COVID-19, confronted a considerable amount of stress, changed lifestyle, overwhelming work pressure with constant adherence to digital tools and constantly defying emotional attachments with workplace, moreover reduced sleeping hours were also identified. Being left with no option, considering the present scenario, they are eagerly waiting for pandemic to get over and resuming normal college duties.

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