

## The Impact of Lock down due to Covid-19 on a typical Indian family in West Bengal: A Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Pandemic due to Covid-19 virus, more popularly known as Corona, had an immense impact on the economic, social and psychological aspects of different countries across the world. India had its first reported case of Corona on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2020. As the numbers started creeping up slowly, India declared lockdown of all establishments, except supply of essential items, on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 for 21 days to halt the spread. However, the lockdown continued till 30<sup>th</sup> May, and partial services were resumed except in containment zones. It was only on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 that the Government announced “Unlock 1”, after which services started resuming in a phased manner. The given case study deals with a typical Indian family of 5 members closeted together 24 x 7 due to the lockdown and goes through their emotional turmoil during the period in the words of each of the members.

**Design/methodology/approach:** This is a qualitative study. The methodology adopted for the case study is structured interview with each member and observation of their behaviour from close quarters.

**Findings:** The Corona-induced psychological impact on the family shows the common strains of frustration and fear of the uncertain. The impact on individual members varied and was dependent on the priorities of their life which got unsettled due to the lockdown.

**Research limitations/implications:** The Case Study is based on members of a single family. The lockdown prevented data collection from any other sources. Hence, the data is limited.

**Social implications:** Pandemic and resultant lockdown has disturbed the social fabric but at the same time brought families together. Families engaged in rat race found time to relax, re-live their relationships and rekindle their hobbies. It made families realize the important role that their helping hands play in running their household.

**Originality/value:** This Case Study is original, containing reliable and authentic primary data on the subject, collected through interviews and observation.

**KEYWORDS:** Covid-19, Depression, Fear, Frustration, Psychology, Uncertainty.

### I. INTRODUCTION

“Have we become poor?”, asked the youngest member of the family to her mother. Born with the proverbial golden spoon, the teenager had never seen such a situation in her life. Every busy, working member of the family was at home barring those who were the regular visitors and actually ran the household – the maids, the driver, the caretaker and the gardener. There was an eerie silence in the neighbourhood. The incessant honking of cars and autos, the deafening sound of bikes in high speed had suddenly stopped. It was replaced by the vendors selling vegetables, fruits and fish – their call to attract sellers revealing their inexperience. Though there was no paucity of essential items but there was an undercurrent of rationing and outside fast food was not available. A bell in the gate spread panic. Buying anything meant a huge task of decontaminating them. Her

parents whom she had grown seeing bent over books were now busy in household chores – cooking, cleaning, washing, dusting and mopping – nothing remotely connected to academics. Newspapers were stopped and media blared news on Corona virus with press briefing by the government everyday. Hand wash, sanitizers, gloves and mask were the most used words of the year 2020 but equally difficult to procure initially. Each member of the family was at home – together – happy but tensed. This is a typical picture of an Indian household after the sudden announcement of lockdown to counter the Covid-19 pandemic that hit India.

**The Context :** Covid-19, caused by SARS-Cov-2, i.e., Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2, which originated from China, was first reported in India on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 and the first death occurred on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. In the meanwhile, the Government of India had been busy air lifting its nationals and few foreigners from across the globe – China, Japan, Iran and Italy. By 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 India had reported 100 cases. Looking at the rise in cases, the Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi announced a token lockdown (Janta Curfew) on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2020. From 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 a nationwide lock-down was imposed till 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2020, which was extended till 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2020 then 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 and finally 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2020. Unfortunately, the cases climbed up continuously and reached 1,50,000 by then with 5000 confirmed deaths. By June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 the Government announced unlocking of areas free from Corona in 4 phases. As on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2020, India has climbed upto the 3<sup>rd</sup> position in the world in number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 [906,752 confirmed cases, 571,459 recoveries, 23,727 deaths as on 14 July 2020, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)], behind Brazil and United States of America. Six cities including West Bengal – the state under study - account for around half of all reported cases in India. The status of Covid 19 in India from March, 2020 to September, 2020 is given in **Annexure – 1**. The graphics are based on month-wise data taken on the first day of every month. The timeline for this case study is: March 2020 to September 2020. The steep rise in confirmed cases is clearly seen in the graph but it is heartening to note that there is a decrease in case-fatality rate, mainly due to the rapid increase in testing and new treatment techniques adopted by the doctors. The lockdowns had a major impact on the already slowing down economy and its growth nose-dived to 3.1% (Ministry of Statistics). Lockdown increased unemployment and salary cut. Business was severely affected with most companies declaring temporary suspension of operations. The Government of India announced financial packages to tackle the fall in livelihood of the people. In the state of West Bengal, the Government had taken pre-emptive measures by closing down all educational institutions since 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 till date and announcing special financial packages to feed the poor and the needy. Lockdown also affected its exchequer and people lost their jobs. A natural calamity caused by Amphan – a super cyclone devastated parts of the state, thereby increasing the hardships of the people, affecting their employment and hitting the economy of the state harder.

**Objective :** The objective of this case study is to analyse the psychological impact, if any, that the sudden lockdown has on different members of an Indian family in the state of West Bengal.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The sampling technique adopted is non-probability sampling. The respondents belong to a nuclear family in urban (metropolitan city) area, comprising the parents, elderly mother, an adult boy in higher education and a school-going teenage daughter. The respondents belong to different age groups and gender. All of them have their own set of commitments, daily routine and independent thinking which is governed by the family values and principles. Due to the lockdown the researcher resorted to convenience sampling for selecting the respondents. The methodology adopted was structured in-depth interview but without a questionnaire and observation of the respondents from close quarters.

### Case Study

(1) ***From the youngest member of the family – 14 years, Female, Student of a reputed English-medium school in Kolkata.*** : My annual exams are over today, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 and I am super excited. I am looking forward to the one week break next week and the invitation to my bestie's birthday on Sunday, 22 March, 2020. It will be a gala reunion of all my close friends. I really do not know whether we all will be in the same section in the next class or not. Once the results are declared, I will be a student of the senior school. Senior School! O My! All these years I used to look up to those senior students and yearned to flaunt my blazer. Now, I am at the threshold of reaching that milestone. Government has declared closure of all schools from 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020 onwards. I feel sad. I did not even bid a proper goodbye to my middle-school class, classmates and teachers. Most of these teachers who had taught us with so much care all these years will no longer guide us in our secondary level. I miss peering through my marked papers with bouts of happiness and disappointments and the trepidations of holding the results in my trembling hands. The smell of my new books, their sheer weight, the

ritual of covering them up and labelling them meticulously – all gone with the winds with one announcement! I am sooo disappointed and angry that I cannot express. My friend's birthday get together will be our only way to meet after the examinations. The World is conspiring against me! The Prime Minister had to call a Janata Curfew and that too on a Sunday which had to be our get together day. Aunty whatsapped to cancel the get-together. All of us are crestfallen. I am ANGRY against whom and what I don't know. I am simply ANGRY with the developments. I am spending my time reading a story book and lifting my sagging spirit with the Boy-Band One Direction. I am keeping myself updated with the developments regarding Corona. I want the lockdown to be lifted so that I can start the new academic session with full energy. The Government of India has now declared total lockdown across India till 14<sup>th</sup> April. There are no maids, no caretaker, no gardener since 25<sup>th</sup> March. Mother has suddenly vanished from my radar. She is busy downstairs since early morning taking care of house hold chores. I can feel a sense of uneasiness and tension in my parents. They look normal from outside but I can feel that they are apprehensive of the unknown disease. They discuss about Corona in hushed tones and devour any information related to Corona excitedly. My father changes news channels on television the moment the status of Corona is discussed. I have not seen him at home at a stretch for so long. My brother is glued to his laptop all day and moving around with a sullen face, unsure of what will happen to his training.

My school is on schedule but virtually after announcing the results online. It is a first for all of us – the administration, the teachers and the students. There are constant complaints from parents against our being glued to the computer and whatsapp. We virtually spend our entire day in a virtual world. Needless to say, we have our bouts of laughter at the cost of our teachers. Frankly speaking, they are at a far greater difficulty taking online classes than us doing them. They have to balance so many things – learn a new technology, prepare to take online classes and take care of their family in the absence of maids, as informed by our Principal through email. Moreover, we have no books. Teachers have to share the study material and teach us too. They have to monitor the whatsapp messages sent by the students who fail to get network connection or wait for joining approval. The burden has been so much that one day instead of booking a 2 PM slot for our class, the teacher booked a 2 AM class! We had a riot of laughter among friends. Our school closed for summer vacation. The school wanted a feedback on the online system and I very candidly remarked that I want normal schooling. Our school books were delivered by courier service and they underwent a huge sanitization process. For 3 days, the text books and exercise books were kept outside in the sun. Only then were they allowed to be brought inside the house. All books and exercise books which had lamination were again wiped with a sanitizer. I was not allowed anywhere near my books for these few days. I am happy to receive my books but do not have the motivation to wrap them up and label them. I look at my new school bag and wonder when I will need it again! School has reopened and it is apparent that the authorities had spent the holiday to gear up with the challenge. All of us now have school email ID and our platform used for taking class has been changed. We have also started having our examinations online but I must admit, a lot more needs to be done to make it error-free. So many more birthdays and other events of our dear ones were missed during this entire lockdown period. I have not stepped out of my home since I came back from my last examination in March. We tried to be innovative to celebrate our friends' birthdays online. We learnt to edit and make videos of friends wishing those celebrating their birthday.

We had good food specially because my mother was cooking which was definitely different from that prepared by the cook. But, I yearned for fast food from outside. Initially, during the first lockdown, I could feel that food was being rationed. But, now, slowly people are getting used to the "new normal". My father has started going to office, geared up to avoid Corona with head cover, gloves and mask. Sanitizer is his closest companion now. I am super busy now, what with all tutors adapting to the new online mode of teaching. I even learn singing online. I am glued to my laptop or mobile throughout the day. At school, we used to run up and down during breaks. We used to go to the field and run around. Even climbing up the stairs to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor was a good exercise. I am huddled in a room now and to avoid noise from outside, I literally seal myself inside the room, which is not likely to have a positive effect on my health. So many times I had wondered what if I had a long uninterrupted holiday. But, guess, like Macbeth's witches my wish was fulfilled but I failed to fathom the deeper meaning of having a holiday but getting stuck at home. I realize I am getting irritated at the drop of a hat. Day in and day out I am with the same set of people and having the same routine, which is affecting my behaviour with others. I am so unsure of the future. If only someone could give a date by which everything would become normal! But, this uncertainty is killing me. I don't know if at all when the school resumes we can huddle together, sit closely with each other and share each others' tiffin. There may be a sense of fear lurking inside us initially but I don't think we can keep away from each other for long.

**(2) From the elder child of the family – 26 years, Male, Student of a reputed professional institute in Pune**

January last week to February last week, 2020: I was at my college in Pune when COVID-19 started in India and life was still normal back then. We were having classes regularly, there were no restrictions on movement and we were still visiting crowded places without any hesitation.

March (first 2 weeks): Number of cases started increasing in India, offices were getting closed, and no more crowds could be seen on the streets. Maharashtra was/is the worst affected state and Pimpri-Chinchwad, the area where I was staying, was the worst affected area at that time in the whole state. Very few people on the streets would be seen wearing masks and I could resemble that with the photos I've seen on the internet. We were scared. The food-stalls (*tapris*) were no more there, D-Mart/Big-Bazaar became overcrowded (hence, we avoided going there). Our exams got postponed first and then they were cancelled. But people were still confused, whether to leave for home or not. Our summer internships were expected to start from April first week and we were scared to travel 'unnecessarily' (going home, then again going to the internship location, etc.).

*Janta* Curfew (March 22nd): I, along with 80-100 friends of mine were still waiting at our hostels for our internship locations. We were following hand-hygiene practices seriously, doing all the necessary things, but deep down in our minds, we were still worried about our internships. The mess-workers were doing a great job for us by maintaining hygiene and preparing food for us even at that time. The cancellation of domestic flights from 24th was announced and this added to our worries. Lockdown announcement: I had rushed back home by the last available flight as hostel was closed down. I was expecting the announcement any day looking at the increasing number of cases in the country. One by one our internship offers started getting postponed for obvious reasons. Some of my batch mates started losing their internship opportunities and the real 'values' of the companies were out in the open. I read the lockdown circular, 30 minutes after the announcement and I was well aware of the services that would remain open, but people started panicking after hearing the announcement. There was panic-buying everywhere and people started stock piling. In all the renowned big malls there were empty shelves, hitherto unseen. It was only the local *kirana* shops who came to the rescue of the common mass.

The lockdown and Covid-19 scare has jeopardized my summer internship. Students of all professional courses look forward to their summer internship for having that feel of the corporate world. There is also a strong undercurrent of competition among the batch mates as to who can bag the PPO, i.e., Pre Placement Offer. Such students are looked up in awe by the juniors and they throng around him/her for special guidance. Since I already have adequate work experience, for me the PPO and learning opportunity were the main attraction. Now, I am uncertain when the internship will begin, if at all.

My internship company postponed the joining date thrice and then decided to follow the safe norm of online internship. I got to do the job minus the office environment. A number of my batch mates were not that lucky. I am worried – the uncertain future, the steep rise in the number of those affected by Covid cases and those losing their lives in the fight, the downward slope of the economy and the inevitable recession likely to affect our upcoming final placement season – everything is affecting my peace of mind and increasing my anger against China from where the pandemic has spread. I had always dreamt of a long uninterrupted holiday with my family and friends. Now, I am spending long hours only with my family but even if I consider this locked-down situation to be a holiday for a minute, all these worries are not helping me set the holiday-mood.

My daily routine has changed. I'm staying at my home right now. Life at home is obviously different from life at hostel/college. I am utilising the opportunity to enhance my knowledge, doing my internship, doing a number of online certification courses and watching all movies and web series in my list. I read the news minutely daily, specially I track the restrictions and important announcements by the government, the areas under containment, the slow unlocking process, the development of vaccines, the war among countries to announce the first commercially available vaccine. I also monitor the economic trend as my future is hanging by a thread. My food habit has also undergone a change with fish disappearing from our menu. There is no dearth of quantity of food but the food items to which we were accustomed are not readily available. With mother not having much time to monitor my activities, I am busy with my laptop throughout the day. Now-a-days, we are seeing everyone as a potential carrier of the virus and Corona virus has ushered in an era of mistrust. For things to get back to normal, it would take months, even after the lockdown is lifted. With the second wave of Covid hitting countries like China and Singapore because the people there thought that life has become normal again, I don't think even after the curve flattens and the lockdown is lifted, people's attitude towards others will become normal suddenly. It will definitely take some time to come out of this hesitation. Even when we purchase any

item – earlier from the vendors now, after ‘unlock’ from the online platforms – the items are kept separately in the garage for days and the consumables are thoroughly sanitised and only then brought inside the house. ‘*Atithi Deva Bhava*’ – is definitely not a choice phrase right now. In fact, no matter what, outside my family, I would see everyone as a potential carrier of the virus. Why do I exclude my family? Because I am well aware of their movements and the kind of hygiene they are maintaining. So, if someone knocks at my door, and if opening the door for him/her is important, then I would maintain at least 3 feet distance, with my face covered with a mask; otherwise, I’d simply ask him/her to come another day and apologize for that. This strange behaviour of mine might affect the visitor mentally but with the increasing number of cases, this is not the time to think about that. In fact, I believe, if the visitor is as aware as I am about the pandemic, then he/she would also appreciate my behaviour, or the visitor might not visit my home in the first place in that case. Frankly speaking, I could not care less.

**(3) From the lady of the house – 50 years, Academician :** I am a busy person. I wake up early, go late to sleep, juggle the household and profession with ease, monitor the needs of each member of the family, direct the support staff, supervise their work and take care of them too. In other words, I am a quintessential modern Indian woman - wife, mother, colleague, teacher, researcher all roles blend together in one; independent yet bound in chains of love and responsibility towards my family. My life was a routine till March, 2020 came and changed it forever. I was busy with my daughter’s annual examination and a workshop planned for 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 when Corona started making headlines in bold in the newspaper and entered our living room through the electronic media. Government declared closure of all educational institutions and with it we had to announce postponement of our declared workshop – which was all ready to be conducted. Classes could not be completed. Internal assessments were pending and hostels shut down too. So, students were asked to return home. None expected that the lockdown will continue for so long. They went home for a break – keeping behind their books and laptop – ready to come back and continue from where they had stopped abruptly. Thus, when the lockdown continued for months, most of the students did not have the basic requirements to study or have online classes. My driver had planned a ceremony for his grandson on March 22, 2020 and had invited the entire family. I was in a dilemma as it clashed with my daughter’s best friend’s birthday. I was already in the look out for an alternative way to take her to her friend’s home. Then the Government called for Janta Curfew on the same day. My daughter was upset with the cancellation of the get together. We – my husband and I – spent hours trying to make our driver understand that curfew meant that no programmes can be organised. He was adamant that with all preparations done and money already spent in the arrangement the function must be performed. It was only when his relatives started declining the invitation that he buckled under pressure and called off the programme. Rows and rows of empty shelves greeted us when we went for our weekly shopping. Government had announced lockdown but had assured that all essential items will be available. But people have panicked and stock piled the essentials. We also went around a few shops and stocked up essential items to take us through the announced lock down period, not knowing then that it will keep on extending.

Lockdown brought along with it a major problem – non availability of support staff who runs the show for working couples. It meant all the work at home was now my responsibility – a responsibility which I am not too adept at and not to my liking too. Cooking a special dish once in a while is different from cooking four square meal every day. Coupled with it are the associated tasks of cleaning and washing. My husband and children do pitch in but they are also busy with their work online. Thankfully, in the initial phase we had total closure of the educational institutions. Slowly they changed over to the online mode. This brought in an additional challenge of providing food on time or else my daughter will miss her breakfast or lunch. It kept me in the kitchen throughout the day. After a few days of struggle I applied my managerial lessons. I started segregating the days for chopping and cooking. I kept many items half prepared and gave the finishing touches the next day. Life became more strenuous the days we purchased any food item – raw vegetables, non vegetarian items and grocery. Decontaminating them was a long drawn process. I discouraged my family members from coming near the freshly purchased items and preferred to do the task alone. Never had I dreamt of such a life for myself. I was slowly getting disassociated with my primary task of teaching and research. I needed to put a brake to this new normal of mine. So I changed my strategy. I completed all domestic work by late afternoon and made the other family members do the rest for dinner – heating food and putting rice in the rice cooker. This made my life a little more comfortable and I could spend some time with academics. I had always wanted to spend long holidays with my family, busy that we all keep throughout the year. But this was different. I was at home but there was no time to enjoy. There was tension in the air. The work I was doing was both mentally and physically exhausting. I find people moving around still not taking precautions despite the repeated warning. It frustrates me to see such lackadaisical attitude. It is like Corona will affect others but not me. People still huddle in groups and move around without masks. Only a few sport masks.

The term “new normal” has become the cliché word of 2020. But, in real life this is abnormal. If new normal means wearing mask, I have no problem with it. But I can feel a change in basic human behaviour. There is a pall of mistrust. Everybody is seen as a threat. The physical distance maintained even during normal communication, of enquiring about someone’s well being seems so formal. With half the face covered in mask, rest by spectacles and head cover, facial expression – an important part of body language in communication – will soon become history. I am also apprehensive of rise in unsocial activities – not only because people are facing financial crisis but also because they are losing the fear of getting caught by the CCTVs because of the new normal. This concern is voiced by the police also. The “new normal” has made me confident of handling the daily chores. What was a challenge at first, has slowly become lucid albeit by practical use of managerial techniques. The fear of what will happen if the household staffs are not there does not bother me anymore, though I cannot deny the comfort of having them around. Attending webinars, organising them, having online meetings, using the e-platform for all official purposes, preparing and uploading study materials and assignments for the students, managing all expenses through online mode, honing my culinary skill – are the positive outcomes of the “new normal” for me. But, what bothers me most is that the children had learnt to be on their own since childhood. But, with mother around 24x7, they are fast becoming dependent for small little things that they could independently handle earlier. I find all my family members irritated and losing their temper at the drop of a hat. My daughter is on my laptop and mobile – the new essential commodities – for her school, club activities and tuitions, and I am bereft of both. This is the story of every Indian household now. I have to squeeze in my work sequencing it with her free time, which is less or do it late in the night. This full day long concentration is affecting both her psyche and physical health. This may pose a major problem if and when our old normal returns. We all are together – which in itself is a big bonus – but happiness has become elusive.

**(4) From the man of the house – 56 years, Researcher:** Bent over a book or solving complicated mathematical problems with a cup of tea or coffee now and then is my notion of an ideal holiday. The lockdown gave me ample opportunity to do just that. Academically it was highly satisfying as I concentrated on a new area of research concerning Corona virus and enjoyed every minute of it. Learning new things, discussing major points with my co-authors, writing the drafts and finalising them were my major concerns. While my wife concentrated on running the home and the hearth in the absence of support staff, I was left to do my research till the paper was submitted for publication. While my academic aspect was not affected by the lockdown, administrative responsibilities were missing. A few important tasks like selection of new students for their higher studies got postponed indefinitely. But, this is definitely not the holiday I often wanted but could not take because of work pressure at office and finding a common free time for the entire family. Now, everybody is not only at home but forced to stay at home. I am definitely not enjoying this break because of the anxiety at the back of my mind. A novice in household work, I was slowly trained to wash and measure appropriate rice in rice cooker, heat cooked food for dinner in microwave, put clothes in the washing machine and occasionally wash dishes. I believe that there should be equality of labour between man and woman, but my inexperience and disinterest forces me to look the other way when the occasion to prove so comes up as far as house work is concerned. But, I do give mental support by being physically present in the vicinity where my wife is toiling and offering help now and then. But, in my wife’s words, “The biggest help is that you don’t help. Undoing your help takes more time than my doing the task without your help”. There is no dearth of supply of essential items but the items have changed. During the first lockdown, we had to depend on the food we had stocked and use them judiciously. Once the courier services and home delivery opened up there were no more constraints. Wonder when all this will end and we return to normalcy. Research requires peace of mind.

I was an avid news reader and listener till Corona came and started showing upward curve. Reading or listening to news demoralises me and increases my level of anxiety. So, I avoid sitting in front of news channels and listening to detailed discussions on it. I just keep myself updated without going into the details. With the closure of educational institutions from 17<sup>th</sup> March onwards, my wife and daughter were at home and son joined a few days later. He stayed in quarantine in a room for a few days but we all were relieved to be together. Janta Curfew and then the announcement of lockdown filled me with extreme anxiety as I could understand very well that unless the Government felt that a huge threat was looming over India it would not have announced such a decision that would affect it economically. The pandemic has shown us that even with so much of scientific innovations around the world how helpless and unprepared we are when confronted with a disaster of this proportion. It is more surprising as statistics is showing that the so called developed nations are fighting a losing battle with the number of affected and mortality rates on a very high note. The uncertain tomorrow has made the promising future of my son look bleak. Though I don’t discuss it openly with him, in my heart of hearts I know

that the future that he was hoping he will get being the topper of his batch is not likely to materialise. And, I know, he is aware of it too as he can feel the pinch right now with the deferring dates of his internship.

Being a very cautious person my behaviour is referred to as 'paranoia' by my wife. Anybody rings the bell alarms me. There is no support staff since the announcement of lockdown and it is for the first time that we are living in this house without a caretaker to keep vigil at night. Obviously, it is a matter of great concern for me. When vegetable vendors and local shopkeepers come to deliver items, I try to make them see reason and wear masks. I do not handle cash. I have convinced all regular vendors and support staff to receive their payment online. Everybody has thankfully agreed. Only on rare occasions that I need to handle cash, I leave the money in a designated place and the vendor returns the change at the same place. I insist on everything being carefully washed over and over again before being used. My behaviour with anybody at the gate may be considered as at the verge of being rude. But, I cannot afford to be concerned about the feelings of others right now, specially because people here are very careless and do not take adequate precautions or follow Government guidelines strictly. Unlock 2 unlocked our office and as a senior officer I was required to go daily. This is the part that I hate the most as I need to dress up properly for safety needs. Mask, gloves, head cover and hand sanitizer are my regular accompaniments. Wearing them while going out and sanitizing everything on return is a major headache. May be I am over-doing but I believe it is better safe than sorry. I understand that psychologically I am affecting all members, except my wife, and that they too are becoming paranoid about Covid 19 but I can't help. It is only about being cautious. I think that there is no mistrust among people though there is fear and all behaviours are a reflection of that unknown fear. Social media contributes a lot to creating this environment. Barring going to my office by private car, I have not stepped out of home for any reason. But, I am hopeful that things will be normal in the long run.

**(5) From the eldest member of the house – 92 years, House-wife, Female :** I have seen the world for over 90 years and have lived most of my life in the village. I have never encountered anything or heard anything of such sort in my entire life. When cities reel under diseases and pollution, we normally remain free from such problems. Our only concern is natural disaster, which is thankfully, not so regular. Now I am living in the city and most of the time I spend in my room. Though I can walk on my own, I am not physically strong any more. I hear about Corona and people dying, of shops closed, of schools, colleges and universities and offices being closed. People cannot visit any places of worship and no religious festival is being observed. It is during such crisis periods that we look up to the Almighty for His benevolence and today those doors are being closed shut. Sometimes I wonder whether it is the end of the world that we are moving towards.

### III. CONCLUSION

The case study discussed, from the view point of five members of a family, covering the age range of 14 years to 92 years, is representative of many families in West Bengal in India. Recent studies (Brooks et al, 2020) studying the effect of quarantine has brought about issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), confusion, feeling of loneliness, boredom and anger. Torales, et al (2020) listed stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, insomnia, denial, anger and fear as the major effects. Loneliness, difficulty in concentrating, low motivation and a state of distraction, stress threshold, negative emotional spirals, desperation, panic and fear, financial strain and apprehension about future are the symptoms identified by a number of researchers (Banerjee, 2020; Dickerson, 2020; Zandifar and Badrfam, 2020). People with positive Covid 19 symptoms, are advised isolation by all medical experts. Unfortunately, this triggers loneliness, anxiety and depression (Zhou et al, 2020). Moreover, lockdown is affecting the socio-economic framework of the country resulting in unemployment, homelessness, increased domestic violence, poverty, etc. This in turn is going to see a spike in mental health problems. Chronic stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol dependence will be a few of the prominent disorders. The studies reveal that a few of the impacts identified are repetitive in almost all studies and the same is reflected in this case study too. The most common symptoms identified in all the studies are anxiety, depression, anger, loneliness and stress.

An online survey conducted by [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com) in July, 2020 to assess the percentage of respondents (out of 10,000) who felt down, depressed, or hopeless during COVID-19 pandemic in India, shows that 56% of the respondents were not affected at all, while 40% felt so for a few days to more than half of the days; only a meagre 4% felt down, depressed, or hopeless nearly every day. However, the picture was very different in April, 2020 when fears and concerns arising out of Covid 19 was very high. 37% of the respondents were concerned about unavailability of essential items and medicines, 25% were afraid of access to health resources and fear of a loved one falling sick. Isolation, impact on mental and emotional stability and losing job due to lockdown were a few of the major concerns faced by 20%-22% of the respondents. Pay cut, losing money in stock market,

falling sick or being responsible for others getting sick were the other major concerns shared by around 16% to 18% of the respondents.

Respondents who were afraid of contracting Covid 19 presents an interesting picture. Respondents belonging to the Baby boomers generation and Gen X were the least scared of getting affected, whereas the Millenials (60%) and Gen Z, youngest members of the group (52%) were the most scared ones. This may be because they had never been exposed to any calamities in their life and have seen movies on such viruses affecting human lives. A whopping 59% of the respondents were busy in doing household chores, others watched movies on OTT (over the top) platform, did exercises or tried to catch up with family and friends over phone or video calls. They even sat down together to play board games. Many got the time to hone their creativity and pick up old hobbies. Around 28% used the time to do online courses and develop new skills. So, overall we find that the respondents found time for both the family and relatives or friends with whom they had lost touch and even for themselves. This is a major positive impact of the pandemic-induced lockdown. The negative effect was that around 15% of the respondents hoarded food and 18% found news circulating on the social media very challenging. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India has established helpline for behavioural and psycho-social help besides issuing guidelines to deal with mental health challenges in collaboration with National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience. India with its high population density and a fragile health-care system will continue to remain vulnerable. India is recording over 75,000 active cases per day.

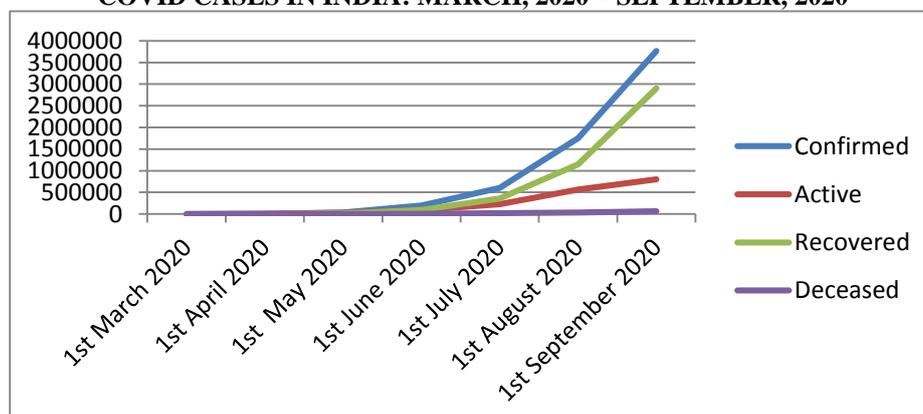
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### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

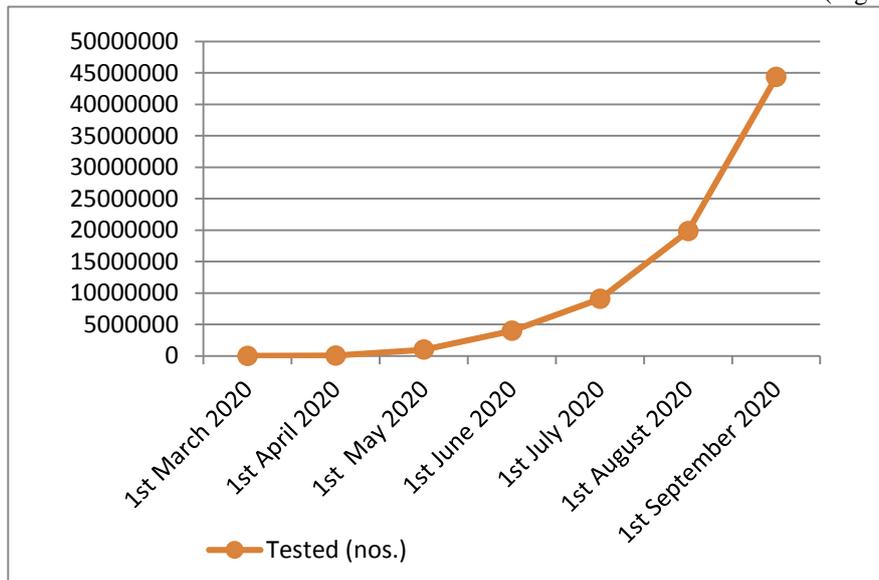
1. Prepare a report/presentation on the Covid-19 scenario in India with focus on its socio-economic and psychological impact.
2. Identify the mental impact of Covid-19 on the family covered in the case study.
3. Do you think that age has any effect on the mental impact of Covid-19? Illustrate with examples from the case regarding the areas of concern of each of the family member.

Annexure – 1  
COVID CASES IN INDIA: MARCH, 2020 – SEPTEMBER, 2020



**COVID CASES IN INDIA: TESTED (MARCH, 2020 – SEPTEMBER, 2020)**

(Figures in Numbers)



**COVID CASES IN INDIA: FATALITY RATE (MARCH, 2020 – SEPTEMBER, 2020)**



(Source: covid19india.org as on 16/09/2020)