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## RELEVANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF WEST BENGAL DURING COVID-19

Mental health subjects hindrance to scholastic achievement. Mental health crunch has appeared during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students' stimulation, devotion, and social exchanges all these decisive variables were affected due to mental illness and it creates an impact on the success of higher education. Understudies are progressively perceived as a weak populace, as suffering from higher levels of tension, melancholy, substance misuse, and confused eating contrasted with everyone. This scenario has brought a drastic change in educational system —such as sheltering in place during the COVID-19 pandemic—the burden on the mental health of this vulnerable population is amplified. The key concentration of the study is to conjecture the impact of a pandemic on the mental health of undergraduate students in West Bengal. The mental health problems have been emerged among the understudies and it will gauge the relevant factors that is related to the problem. The approach adopted by the investigator is Descriptive Survey in nature. To assess the mental health of fresh minds a Perceived Stress Scale has been used by the investigator on 5-point Likert scale to measure the mental health of 384 college going students of West Bengal through Google form. The Brief-COPE Scale was used to measure the operative and non-operative ways to cope with a stressful life event. The data were analyzed with the help of SPSS software. The results of the study revealed that the mental health of college going students have been severely affected due to stress, which ranges from low to moderate and moderate to high levels, respectively. Students preferred more emotion focused, actively focused, emotional support, positive reframing than self-blame, substance use, denial, venting. The research found that different social factors have a significant impact on the students' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. They have become mentally depressed, as the educational institutions have been closed for more than a year. With the closer educational institutions, most students are deprived of social contacts, which leads to depression, sleep, financial educational problems, etc. As appearing of various kinds of family and social crises in front of the students, like the quarrel between parents, lack of income in the family, and loss of job by family member leads them to be more mentally ill. To recover from the situation, they adopted various effective and ineffective coping strategies to make proper adjustment in life.

**Key words:** Mental Health, Stress, Stressor, Students, Coping Styles.

### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic cater to psychological illness of different influenced populace. WHO states «Mental health includes subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others». The occurrence of epidemics creates new stressors, including apprehension and stress for oneself or friends and family, requirements on actual development and social exercises because of isolate, and abrupt and revolutionary way of life changes. This new audit of epidemic flare-ups and pandemics recorded stressors, for example, disease fears, disappointment, fatigue, deficient supplies, lacking data, monetary misfortune, and disgrace i.e., worldwide wellbeing crisis. India's Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a nationwide lockdown

for 21 days on day March 24, 2020, for restricting the movement of the entire 1.3 billion population of India as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic in India (Bureau, 2020). After the end of initial lockdown period approached, frame drew closer, state governments and other warning boards of trustees suggested expanding the lockdown Narendra Modi broadened the cross country lockdown until 3 May, with a contingent unwinding after 20 April for the areas where the spread had been contained or was negligible (Bureau P. I., 2020). India's Government again broadened the cross-country further lockdown by about fourteen days from 1<sup>st</sup> May until May 17 (Mishra, 6 December, 2020). With this, the locale were segregated into three zones reliant on the spread of the infection green, red and orange with reductions applied likewise. Again, the lockdown was additionally reached out till from 17<sup>th</sup> May until 31<sup>st</sup> May by the National Disaster Management authority. On

30 May, announcement was made that the present lockdown would be extended again until 30 June in regulation zones, with administrations continuing in a staged way beginning from 8 June (Mishra, 6 December, 2020). The overall quick increment of contaminated cases has made a feeling of vulnerability and nervousness about the thing will occur. It has additionally caused an enormous degree of stress among the understudied. This pressure might prompt horrible impacts on the learning and mental well-being of understudied. Understudied who figured out how to return home is stressed over being not able to get back to their separate. Besides actual anguish, it is not phenomenal for affirmed or associated cases with COVID-19 to experience the ill effects of huge mental pressing factors and other wellbeing-related issues. Forlornness, drives of dread, melancholy, conditions of agony, mental ailment, dangers, and a few different issues impact the presence of the individual and local area overall (Rehman, 23 June, 2020). Understudies felt more nervous, frustrated, depressed, irritated, and withdrawn during the epidemic or while in quarantine, especially in isolation for those with cognitive impairment or dementia (Wilson, 2020). The closures of universities may contribute to poor mental health. Undergraduates are likewise emotionally unsuitable and lockdowns located social distance surrounded through them and unique human beings while they inhabit at domestic. Committing suicide is a dangerous social problem derived from mental health problems where electronic and print media and online platforms like social media, blogs, and online forums play a significant role in increasing the problem. With the closer of educational institutions, the majority of university students were deprived of pocket earnings. As appearing of various kinds of family and social crises in front of the students, like the quarrel between parents, lack of income in the family, and loss of job by family members leads them to be more mentally ill. Their intellectual communicate hold diminished all in conjunction with the pandemic role. Learning does not simplest rely upon schooling; it additionally necessitates interplay, which is constrained through the coronavirus frequent. Students exist going through depression as the family disaster exist seen and impoverished of leisure due to the distance set up with accomplice resulting latest frustration, alienation, despair that affect their psychic fitness. Late examination shows that individuals set in isolation and isolate experience significant melancholy as dread, dissatisfaction, vulnerability, and manifestations of posttraumatic stress. (Brooks et al., 2020).

## Review of Literature

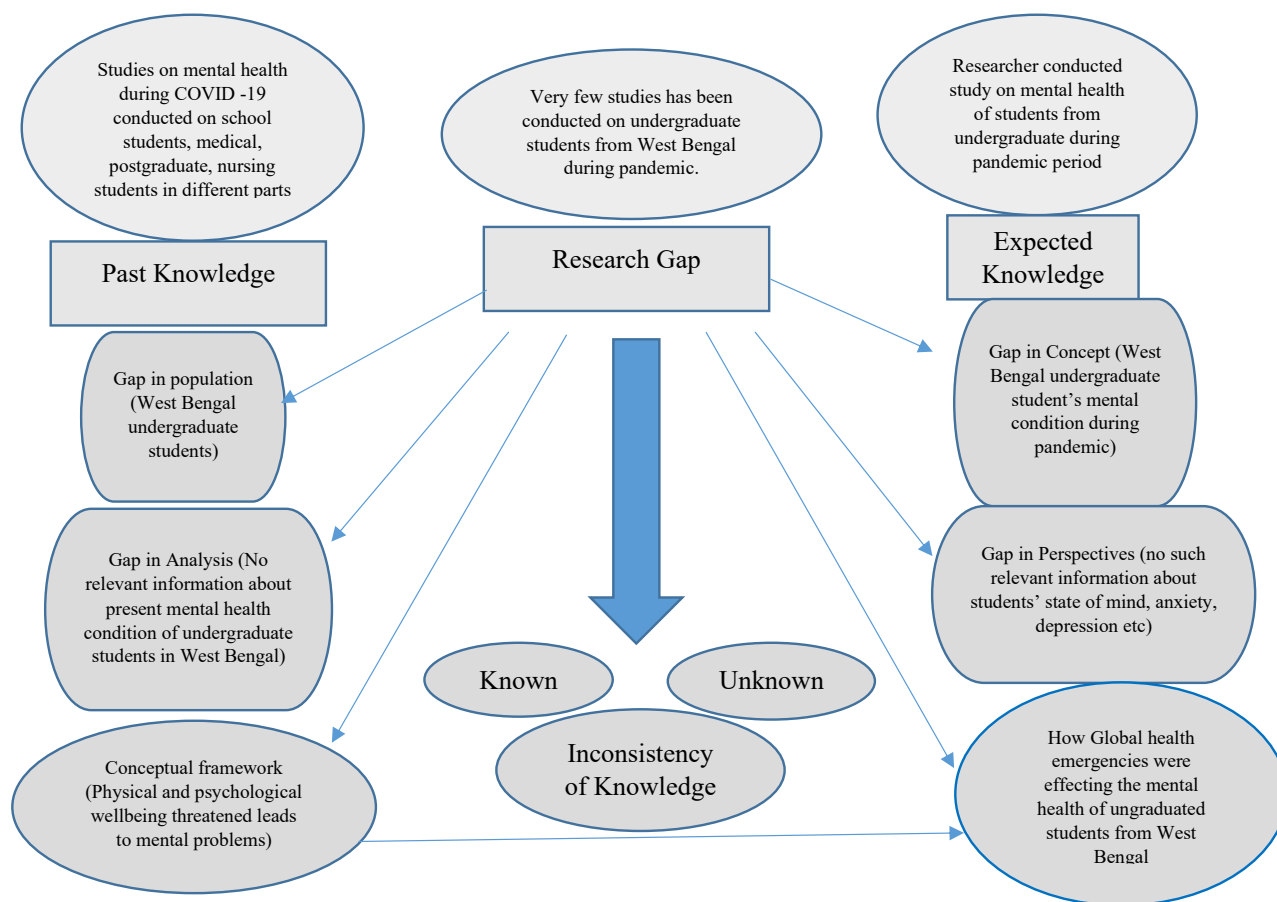
Various studies has been conducted in past i.e., from the onset of COVID 19 and as well as in present situation.

Purabi, Sakia. Sarma, Jinamoni. (2020). «A Study on Impact of COVID 19 on Under Graduate Students in Assam, India». Most of the students have become passive learner in online education; reasons are like technical problem, economical barrier, lack of motivation and communication with the teacher and institutions. Mental disturbance was another mostly affecting factor in student's education due to adjustment, communication, completion of course content, mental disturbances, changing guideline problem and technical problems. Khan, Qutbudin. & Swaminathan, J. (2021). «Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown on Mental Health and Social Life of University Students of Delhi». The study revealed that majority of the respondents (67.5%) reported that they believe continuous lockdown may affect the mental health of the people. Bhargava, Rashi. et al. (2021). «Anxieties and Fears: A Sociological Study of Mental Health of Students in COVID-19 Pandemic». Their issues can be broadly put into three categories – firstly, uncertainty about career/higher studies (62.3%); secondly, continuously changing university guidelines especially with regard to academic calendar and online exams which might lead to lower grades (45.6%) and thirdly, financial problems that might come up in days to come (27.8%).

This study estimated the mental health impact of COVID-19 on university students in West Bengal. It was conducted to investigate the psychological status of undergraduate students during the pandemic for the following reasons: to evaluate the prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression of university students during the pandemic; and to provide a basis for universities and governmental policies to support university students affected by COVID-19.

## Statement of Problem

Mental health issues obstruction to scholastic achievement. Presently, COVID-19 is one of the vital reason for creating emergencies on mental health. It has exaggerated the students' enthusiasm, attentiveness, and social interactions. These fundamental factors create barriers for students to succeed in higher education. Therefore, the statement of problem is «A Study on Mental Health of Undergraduate Students of West Bengal during the Era of COVID».



**Figure 1** – Showing the Research gap of previous study and the formation of new conceptual framework  
**Source:** Kumar, D.M. (2020). Journal through research Gap. White Paper.

### Hypothesis of Study

H<sub>0</sub> 1: There is no significant relationship between the effect of lockdown and the perceived stress on the undergraduate students of West Bengal.

H<sub>0</sub> 2: There is no significant relationship between the specific pandemic stressor and their impact on mental health of undergraduate students of West Bengal.

H<sub>0</sub> 3: There is no significant relationship between perceived stress and coping strategies adopted by undergraduate students of West Bengal.

### Methodology of Study

According to Kerlinger (1973), research design consists of a structure of research and research techniques. The design of the study is Survey in nature. It is a stable and systematic plan prepared for directing a study. The objectives of the study and techniques to be adopted to testify the above stated hypothesis.

### Area of Study

The study was conducted in the government-aided colleges of West Bengal where degree courses of arts, science and commerce were conducted under the affiliation of different universities.

### Target Population

The total percentage of students who were studying in the government aided colleges of West Bengal under the affiliation of different universities. The population of study includes all the students who were studying in the government-aided colleges of West Bengal and pursuing their certification on graduate degree.

### Method of Data Collection

The study made use of both primary and secondary data.

Primary data were collected by applying psychological tools and responses were collected from the

respondents through Google Form. It refers to data, which are collected for a specific purpose from the field and are original.

Secondary data were collected through various web sources and expert opinions, various textbooks, websites, journals, dissertations, etc.

### Study Variable

#### *Independent Variable*

Demographic characteristics like age and sex of students.

#### *Dependent Variable*

Perceived stress level and coping approaches to stress.

### Sample of the Study

The states where larger proportions of out-migrants

were enumerated are west-Bengal (21.4 per cent)

The total no. of enrolment of students in colleges is about 1,693,448 and the collected number of sample from the study area should be 384. To determine the sample size investigator used the Morgan's Table with 5% error of margin at 95% confidence level (Morgan, 1970) to justify the authenticity of selected sample size.

### Sampling Technique

Investigator used snowball non-probability sampling techniques for data collection. Data, collected from primary sources, have been compiled from Quantitative analysis. This technique is based on three criteria, which are delineated below:

- Firstly, the respondents must be from undergraduate course.
- Secondly, they must belong to the state of West Bengal.
- Thirdly, they must be between the age group of 19- 24 years.

### Tool used for the study

To conduct the study two psychological tools were used by the investigators. The Perceived Stress Scale was used by the investigators to measure the mental health wellbeing of students from undergraduate course from West Bengal. The second tool is a Brief Coping strategic which were applied to students who were suffering from high stress to measure the effective and ineffective ways to cope with stressful situations.

### Techniques Employed For the Development of Research Tool

Sheldon Cohen developed the Perceived Stress Scale and his colleagues discovered the Perceived Stress Scale in the year 1983. The primitive PSS consisted of 14-items that measured the seeming stress degree subjective interpretation of the reactions of the individuals during a 1-month period. Nowadays, the PSS has been scaled down to 10-item with stress-related questions, focusing on the respondent's feelings and thoughts during the preceding month. The Perceived Stress Scale score is obtained by summing the points awarded to the 10 items and it ranges from 0 to 40 where: 0–13 is Low stress, 14-26 is moderate Stress and 27-40 accords High Stress. Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10 come under the answer option of Never-0, almost Never+1, Sometimes+2, Fairly Often +3, and Very Often +4. Items 4, 5, 7, and 8 come under the option of Never +4, Almost Never +3, Sometimes +2, Fairly Often+1, and Very Often 0 (Cohen, February 2006). The reliability of the scale is .80.

The **Brief-COPE** is a 28 items tool, which was discovered to measure effective and ineffective ways to cope with different situations of stressful events. «Coping» is defined broadly as an effort used to minimize distress associated with negative life experiences.» It has been divided into 4-point Likert scale-»I haven't been doing» +1, «A little bit» with +2, «a medium amount» with +3 and «I have been doing a lot» as +4. The scale is useful in counseling settings for formulating the helpful and unhelpful ways someone responds to stressors (Rickhard, n.d.). The reliability of the scale is .82. The scale has certain coping styles, which were adopted by the individuals and it can be heads into the following groups:

- Problem-Focused Coping
- Emotion-Focused Coping
- Avoidant Coping.

To start with, the college student phone number was retrieved from individual departments and they were called up to legitimate the main reasons for the study. After that, Google Form then forwarded the survey linkage to the representative of each college with the help of their phone numbers. Thereafter, the students from each college shared the linkage with the help of WhatsApp. Finally, students who view the link they further shared it with their classmates through Facebook and WhatsApp, using the snowball sampling technique.

**Table 1** – Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
19-20 years	123	32.03%
21-22 years	156	40.63%
23-24 years	105	27.34%
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	195	48.5%
Female	189	47.0%

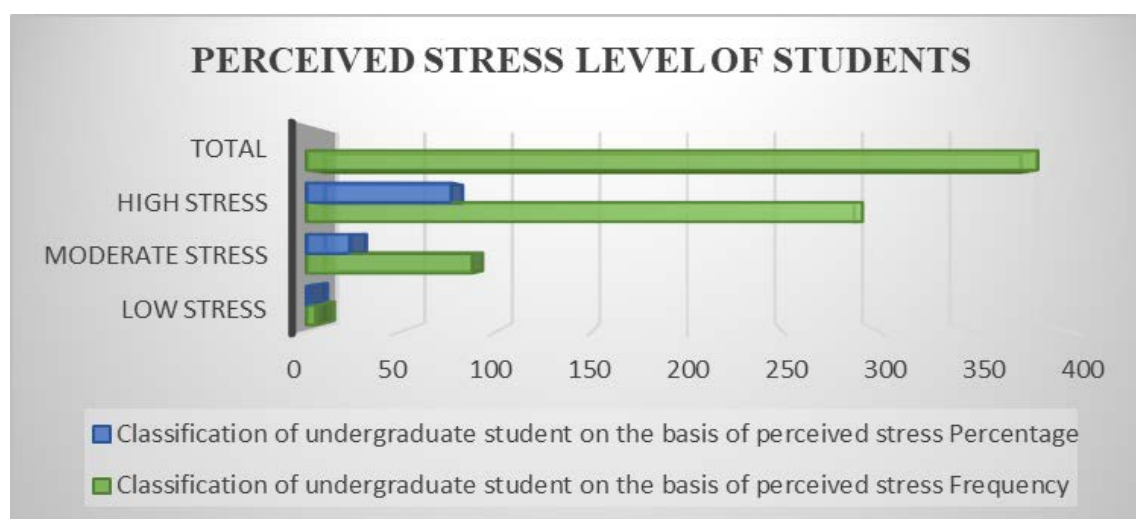
Source: From field survey

### Analysis and Interpretation

For analysis, data were scientifically interpreted.

*Pertaining to Hypothesis 1*

There is no significant relationship between the effect of lockdown and the perceived stress on the undergraduate students of West Bengal.



**Figure 2** – Showing the perceived stress level of undergraduate students of West Bengal

To test the hypothesis investigators applied Perceived Stress Scale on the selected sample and the responses were recorded and were analyzed using the package of SPSS. figure 2 revealed that the mean of 384 undergraduate students is 192.24 where 76.04% of students were suffering from the highest level of stress, 21.6% by moderate stress and 1.2% of students facing no or lowest level of stress. Joey Man Yee, Kwok, conducted «A Study of the Perceived Stress Level of University Students in Hong Kong». & Douglas, Kei Shing NG., where stress level of undergraduate students was measured it was found that, the stress level of the participants who were mostly from the age group of 18–29 had an average score of 19.02 which was considered to be higher than the standard score ( $M = 14.2$ ;  $SD = 6.2$ ), and thus undergraduate students who belonged

to this age group were found to present a potential higher stress level among those participants (NG2, 3 October 2016).

From the figure 3, in compare to male and female low stress perceived by both the gender, i.e. for male it is 1.0% and for female it is 1.6%, moderate stress is perceived by more in male i.e., 21.2% while for female it is 24.1% and lastly the high stress is perceived by male i.e., 74.9% and for female it is 77.2%. shows that females show higher rates on perceived stress level than males among college students. In relation to gender differences in Perceived Stress levels and coping strategies among college students participants were compared with the help of t-test for independent samples where female students scored higher ( $M=20.2$ ,  $SD=4.79$ ) than males ( $M=18.3$ ,  $SD=5.23$ ) (Anbumalar, July 17 2017).

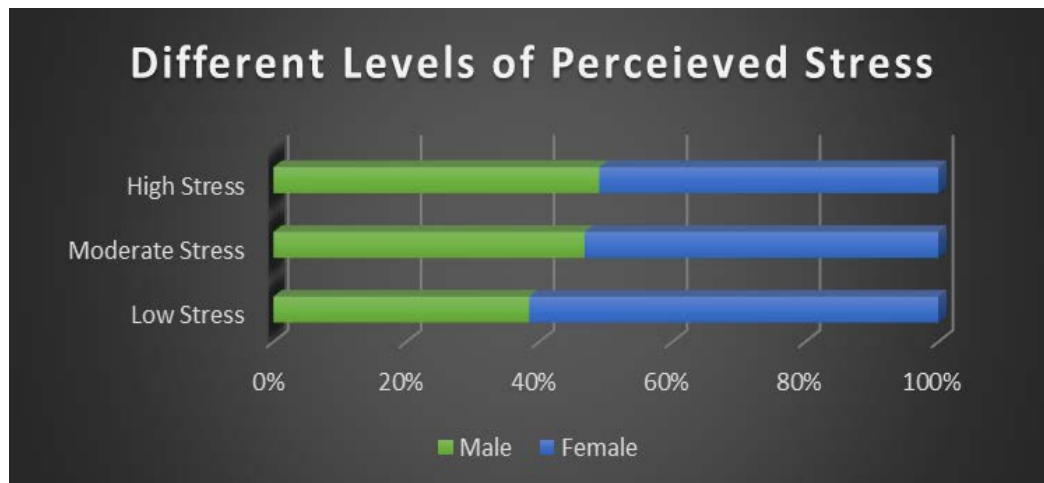


Figure 3 – Showing the different levels of perceived stress of students

Mc.Dougough & Walters, 2001; Matud, 2004 stated that «researchers have contributed to studies that support that female students in general have a higher level of stress, and are more prone to have chronic stress» (Raman, 2020). The data collected from 384 respondents (male=195 and female=189) was analyzed and presented in Tables and Figures.

**(Reference to Table 2 data were analyzed)**

- In response to statement 1, «In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?» majority of respondents reported that (male=86.24%, female=86.7%) reported very often.

- In response to statement 2, «In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?» majority of respondents reported that (male=49.7%, female=60.8%) reported fairly often.

- In response to statement 3, «In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?» majority of respondents reported that (male=48.7%, female=56.1%) reported very often.

- In response to statement 4, «In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?» majority of respondents reported that (male=42.6%, female=42.6%) reported almost never.

- In response to statement 5, «In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?» majority of respondents reported that

(male=42.6%, female=42.6%) reported almost never.

- In response to statement 6, «In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?» majority of respondents reported that (male=42.6%, female=42.6%) reported fairly often.

- In response to statement 7, «In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?» majority of respondents reported that (male=41.5%, female=41.8%) reported almost never.

- In response to statement 8, «In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?» majority of respondents reported that (male=41.5%, female=41.8%) reported almost never.

- In response to statement 8, «In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?» majority of respondents reported that (male=34.9%, female=36.4%) reported very often.

- In response to statement 9, «In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?» majority of respondents reported that (male=63.1%, female=67.2%) reported very often.

- In response to statement 10, «In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?» majority of respondents reported that (male=64.1%, female=68.2%) reported very often.

**Table 2** – Showing the statements related to stress that were perceived by students during the pandemic period

SL. No.	Statements	Responses	Male	Female
1	«In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly»?	«Never»		
		«Almost Never»		
		«Sometimes»		
		«Fairly often»	25(12.8)	27 (14.3)
		«Very Often»	169(86.7)	162(85.7)
2	«In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life»?	«Never»	4(2.1)	7(3.7)
		«Almost Never»	2(1.0)	5(2.6)
		«Sometimes»	6(3.1)	3(1.6)
		«Fairly often»	97(49.7)	115(60.8)
		«Very Often»	86(44.1)	59(31.2)
3	«In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed»?	«Never»	6(3.1)	3(1.6)
		«Almost Never»	4(2.1)	6(3.2)
		«Sometimes»	46(23.6)	39(20.6)
		«Fairly often»	44(22.6)	35(18.5)
		«Very Often»	95(48.7)	106(56.1)
4	«In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems»?	«Never»	2(1.0)	4(2.1)
		«Almost Never»	49(25.1)	38(20.1)
		«Sometimes»	8(4.1)	6(3.2)
		«Fairly often»	83(42.6)	88(46.6)
		«Very Often»	53(27.2)	53(28.0)
5	«In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way»?	«Never»	2(1.0)	4(2.1)
		«Almost Never»	49(25.1)	38(20.1)
		«Sometimes»	8(4.1)	6(3.2)
		«Fairly often»	83(42.6)	88(46.6)
		«Very Often»	53(27.2)	53(28.0)
6	«In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do»?	«Never»	2(1.0)	4(2.1)
		«Almost Never»	49(25.1)	38(20.1)
		«Sometimes»	8(4.1)	6(3.2)
		«Fairly often»	83(42.6)	88(46.6)
		«Very Often»	53(27.2)	53(28.0)
7	«In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life»?	«Never»	8(4.1)	8(4.2)
		«Almost Never»	81(41.5)	79(41.8)
		«Sometimes»	39(20.0)	32(16.9)
		«Fairly often»	67(34.4)	70(37.0)
		«Very Often»		
8	«In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do»?	«Never»		3(1.6)
		«Almost Never»		3(1.6)
		«Sometimes»	54(27.7)	59(31.2)
		«Fairly often»	70(35.9)	58(30.7)
		«Very Often»	71(36.4)	66(34.9)
9	«In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control»?	«Never»	2(1.0)	2(1.1)
		«Almost Never»	2(1.0)	1(.5)
		«Sometimes»	15(7.7)	11(5.8)
		«Fairly often»	53(27.2)	48(25.40)
		«Very Often»	123(63.1)	127(67.2)
10	«In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them»?	«Never»	2(1.0)	2 (1.1)
		«Almost Never»	2(1.0)	1 (.5)
		«Sometimes»	15(7.7)	11 (5.8)
		«Fairly often»	53(27.2)	48(25.40)
		«Very Often»	123(63.1)	127(67.2)

Source: Data retrieved from online survey

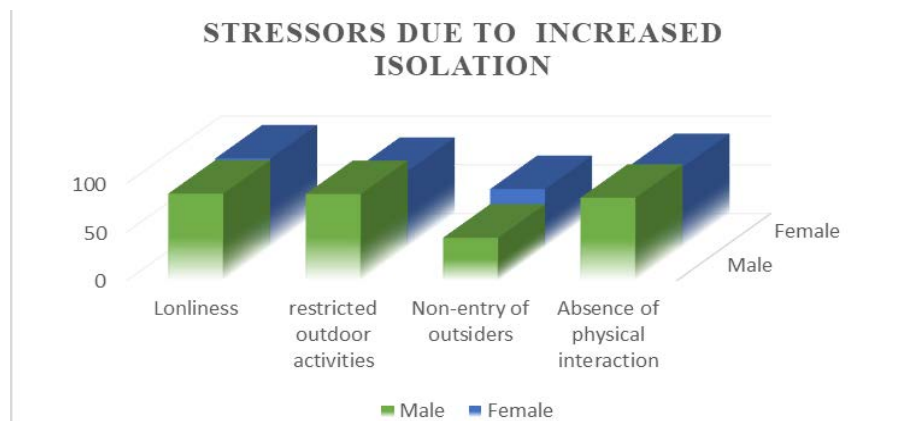
Therefore, from Table 2, it is being revealed that most participants have perceived stress, which had a great psychological impact on their mental well-being. During COVID-19, several prevention and regulator measures focusing on college students lead them to have different degrees of stress. Stressed students faced numerous health issues, namely physical exhaustion; sleep disorders, irascibility, negative thoughts, and feelings of nervousness (Beata Gavurova, November 28, 2020). Whenever the lockdown period started, the female students were prone to high stress as with online classes they need to perform household duties, which created problem for them to balance between the same. Again, due to sudden overwhelming academic online assignments and sessions many of them did not have the opportunity to continue class due to socio-economic crises at home. A reduction of social interactions, likely caused crisis and distancing measures that lead to lower mental health. Female students who cannot meet with their beloved one for a long time creates an anxiety and tensions about their partners' relationship status. Constant overloading of information in social media creates a disinterest between the things, which they used to perform before the lockdown. A kind of rigid routine activity they were bound to follow within the home environment with no such charm in life that has dampen their mental health. So most of the time they felt upset, even they want to control the

situation but they lacks it, so they were just unable to cope with the situation as a result they felt nervous and stress mostly. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the effect of lockdown and the perceived stress on the undergraduate students of West Bengal.

#### *Pertaining to Hypothesis 2*

There is no significant relationship between the specific pandemic stressor and their impact on the mental health of undergraduate students of West Bengal.

The vast majority of the participants (292/384, 76.04%) detected that pandemics have increased the level of stress and fear and it has created many negative psychological impacts on their mental well-being due to following challenges. For those who indicated increased stress and anxiety during the pandemic a literature was collected through a questionnaire about pandemic-specific stressors and their manifestations across their lifestyle categories and their significant outcomes in their life. These stressors are specific components of stress, which effects the mental health of students like academic workload, isolation or separation from the institution and fear of contagion (Chen, 10 February, 2021). There are many stressors that specifically affect the mental well-being and life style of students like health condition, depressive thoughts, suicidal thought, financial difficulties, change in the living environment and so on (Son, September 3, 2020).



**Figure 4** – Showing the stressors due to increase isolation

**Increased Isolation:** Almost every human being wants a company to lead a successful life. This is especially true for teenagers because they always want to stay in the social group, which have approves their social role. However, the pandemic has created a distance between every human being, which created a high volume of stress among the teenagers. From figure 4, it is found that among the high stress

participants about 89.3% of males and 91% of female strongly agree that the increased isolation in pandemic has created a high degree of loneliness among them. About 88.8% male and 78.1% female strongly agreed that their outdoor activities were restricted which created a monotonous in their home environment. Over half of them, like 44% male and 59.5% of female strongly agreed that nobody was allowed to



make entry in their home as because of fear of viral contamination, which created significant worries due to decreased interaction. In addition, 85% male and 82% female strongly agree that they badly miss their friend’s jokes, gossip and face-to-face interaction. It has been estimated that understudies between 18-24 experienced a higher level of loneliness during ex-

treme or mandatory lockdown. On one hand female experienced loneliness while male students prone to diseases like stroke, hypertension, and other heart issues, cognitive issues such as dementia, somatic symptoms including physical exhaustion, headache, insomnia, fatigue, muscle pain and so on (Leodoro, 6 January, 2021).

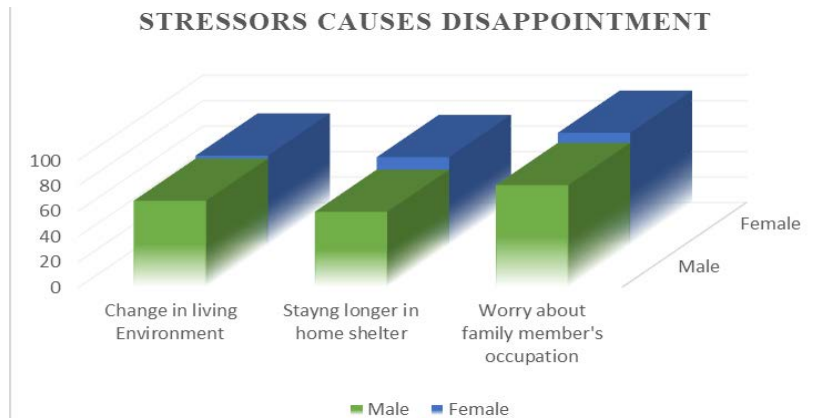


Figure 5 – Showing the stressors causes the feeling of disappointment

**Feeling of Disappointment:** The learning environment is one of the important factor of learning. Zhai and Du, 2020 stated, that students who remain for a prolonged time in home deprived of their friends and course mates are prone to mental health issues. In University group, work, joint, and combined projects are backbone, but due to global emergencies, the opportunity for students to work with their companion has been squeezed and that is the challenging. As a result, frequent and intense feelings of loneliness, anxiety and isolation is high, owing to the disconnectedness are very common among them. (Danielle Burns, 14 October, 2020). From the figure 5, it is a fund that large portion of participants like 67.7% male and 70% female reported that pandemic has brought a

change in their living environment. About 59% of male respondents mentioned that hanging locked inside for longer duration brought a primary change in their living circumstances. Therefore, it is tiring for them and for girls the ratio is only about 68.8% where they felt disappointment for staying a long in their own shelter as because prior to pandemic many of them after returning from their college they remain in their home. Some participants like 80% male and 87.9% female expressed their worry about their family members whose occupation increased their risk of exposure to COVID-19 such as frontline workers. These constant worries about their family members and relatives have created a mood of disappointment and it affected their mental well-being.

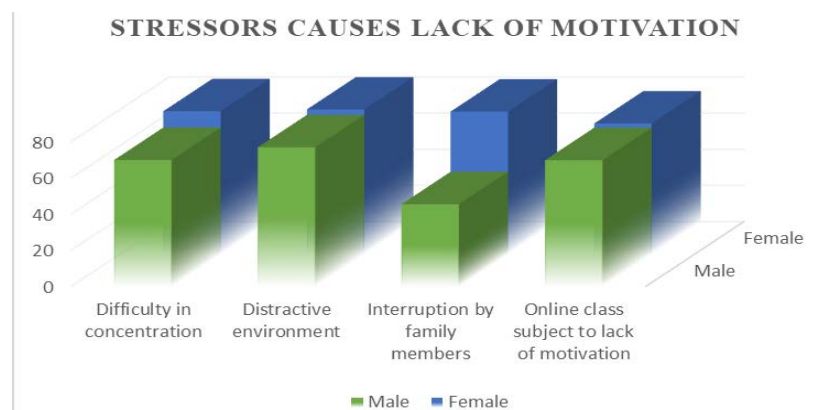


Figure 6 – Showing the stressors causes lack of motivation

**Lack of motivation:** Figure 6, displayed that 70% male and 79% female participants reported that in directing attention to academic work prone to difficulties due to various sources of distraction and diversion, they mentioned that to home is a place of distraction for study but a suitable place for relaxation. 77% male and 80% female reported it is prone to distractive environment. Participants mentioned that 45.5% male and 78.8% of female reported that they were more susceptible to interrupted by their family members and household chores. Other factors affecting students' concentration were the lack of accountability and social media, internet, and

video games. Again 69.9% male and 72.2% female stated that online classes were subject to distraction due to lack of interactions and prolonged attention to a computer screen. Female learners were prone to more distraction due to household chores and responsibilities. Considering the size of the family, female students' challenges ranges from mild to severe. Gender equalities prevails in the families that were subjected to the preference of male education in compare to female. These restricted their movement towards education and as result, lack of motivation, dissatisfaction, biasness etc were created towards education (Khan, 2021).

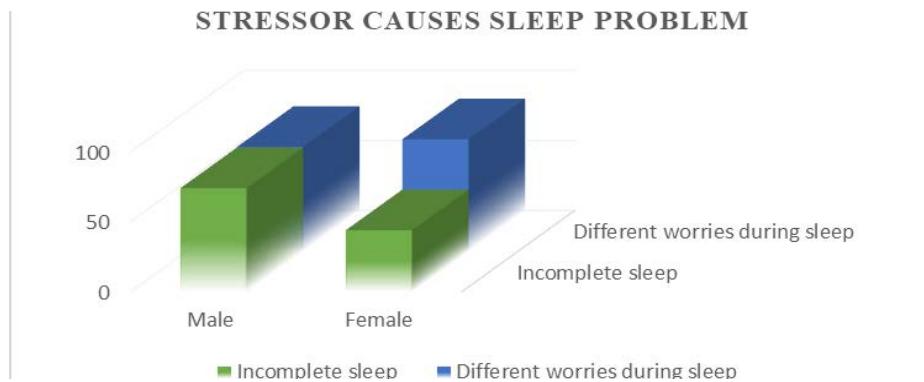


Figure 7 – Showing the stressors due to increase isolation

**Sleep Problem:** Participants reported that COVID-19 pandemic has brought changes in the sleeping habits. Figure 7 displayed that 74% of male students reported that they tended to stay up later or wake up later in the COVID-19 outbreak due to incomplete sleep while for female it is 44%. As there is no hurry to get ready for college so the time schedule to go to bed and to rise up have been changed. 74.4% male and 79.9% female stated that due to different kinds of worries in their

mind they could not even complete their regular sleep. Change in sleep pattern has significantly found higher in college students who read the news with higher daily frequency. Sleep problems were increased among families who had a higher frequency of going out per week. During this period, they were addicted to online games and unconfirmed news on social media, which affected their psychological wellbeing and required amount of sleep (Xing Wang, 23 November, 2020).

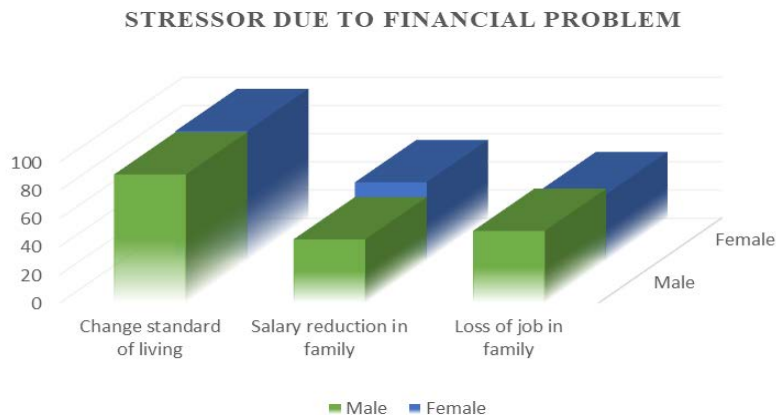
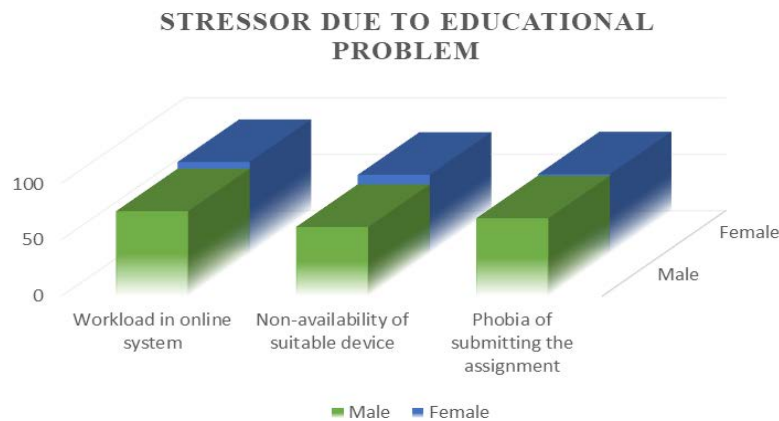


Figure 8 – Showing the stressors due to financial problem

**Financial problem:** The countrywide lockdown has brought paucity to almost all economic activities. “The International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut India’s development gauge for FY21 at 1.9% from 5.8% assessed in January, notice that the “most exceedingly awful downturn since the Great Depression” will overshadow the financial harm brought about by the worldwide monetary emergency 10 years back. Community for the Monitoring of Indian Economy (CMIE) the general joblessness rate expanded from 8.4% to 23.8%” (Shri Pradeep Ku-

mar, May 1, 2020). Almost every family members have faced at least some amount of financial crunch. From the figure 8 it is found that about 91% male and 91.8% females reported that great financial loss in the family had totally change the scenario of their living standard which created lot of stress and tension in the family. 45% of male and 55.5% female reported the salary reduction of family members. 51% male and 47% female reported about loss of jobs of their family members, which affected their mental well-being.



**Figure 9** – Showing the stressors due to educational problem

**Educational Problem:** From the figure 9, it is found that a majority like 75% male and 80.9% female reported increased workload in online system and the deadline for the submission of assignment and project had created lots of stress in the fear of unable to compete with deadline. Many like 61.1% of males and 69.5% of female stated that due to non-availability of suitable device they face lots of trouble for joining the online class even they face problem in recharging their balance, as because it need money. Again 68.8% male and 70% female mentioned that they always have a phobia of not completing the course successfully. All these factors have created a stress on participant that affected their mental well-being. In fact mobile device users in online studies have made many shortcomings like the device were very small to view the content, recharging mobile frequently created a cost issues, create a problem of navigation of input, creates a problem to interact with supplied content, problem for downloading the material etc., cited by Ciprian, Ceobanu. (2014) Mohammad, Ally. (2018), Mohammad Mahmood (2020).

In understudied with this example, we discover lower study-related desire, helpless capacity to adapt to pressure, and weakened passionate prosperity. Understudied experienced vulnerability and worry

about their scholastic future, just as friendly segregation and an absence of supports. Study detailed more elevated levels of pressure and seclusion just as bad temperament during a simultaneous internet-learning experience, contrasted with a customary vis-à-vis learning climate (Rebecca Prowse, April 7, 2021).

Isolation, at such a stressful time, can contribute mental anxiety and have a negative impact on mental health. This loneliness often causes dissatisfaction and slowly they loss interest from their daily life. During the period of hardship, most of them loose social contact with their close one due to restrict physical activities and mostly it empowers them with negative thoughts. So all these created a psychological issue and affected their mental health. Loneliness, isolation distance relationship mostly has a negative impact on students as because the relation and interaction both are insufficient. Female understudies’ experienced high rate of disappointment in compare to male because their dwelling environment has undergone a change due pause of entertainment activities and pursuits, observed through lifestyles with friends and faculty life challenged relational nicely-being the most, whilst family existence opened up new views and generational harmony. Staying at home and decreased physical interest affected the physical health of kids,

missing direct contacts with friends and teachers positioned social members of the family to check, worry of the virus reduced feeling secure and relaxed, and the lockdown-limited participation in society. Again new assessment gear, college students were on the receiving give up of too many adjustments in too brief a period. Students who are used to a set calendar via the educational 12 months had to revel in first-rate uncertainty when it came to studying desires, the possibility of the behavior of exams, and the evaluation modes, to call only some. Uncertainty hampers the incentive of the student to perform due to the fact there are not any exams, the exams are little. Therefore, when the students do not get to look outcomes for his or her efforts, their motivation certainly comes down. Many of them became very casual with their studies as they know very well that the exam has now become a kind of ritual practice in pandemic academic calendar and it is an open book system. So they do not have any urge to perform well in the exam and they do not have any interest in the online class as it lacks various social

skills. Traumatic events such as those caused by COVID-19 outbreak can produce psychological distress and anxiety symptoms, which negatively affect sleep quality. Therefore, there is significant relationship between the specific pandemic stressor and their impact on the mental health of undergraduate students of West Bengal.

#### *Pertaining to Hypothesis 3*

There is no significant relationship between perceived stress and coping strategies adopted by undergraduate students of West Bengal.

The Brief-COPE is a 28 items designed to measure effective and ineffective ways to cope with a stressful life event. «Coping» is defined broadly, as an effort used to minimize distress associated with negative life experiences. The scale can determine the primary coping style of any individuals and it can be heads into following groups:

- Problem-Focused Coping
- Emotion-Focused Coping
- Avoidant Coping.

**Table 3** – Showing different patterns of coping strategies used by students

Variables	Levels			Different Coping strategies used by students (%)						
	Low	Medium	High	No. of students M F		No. of students M F		No. of students M F		Mean and SD
Problem-Focused Coping	17-19	20-23	Above 24	99 67.3	135 93.1	40 27.2	8 5.5	8 5.4	2 1.4	21.36 ±1.592(Male) 20.79 ± 1.276(Female)
Emotion-Focused Coping	29-30	31-34	Above 35	28 19.0	38 26.2	97 66.9	113 76.9	6 4.1	10 6.9	31.82±2.006(Male) 32.19±1.991(female)
Avoidant Coping	15-18	16-19	Above 20	59 40.1	101 69.7	47 32.0	40 27.6	8 5.4	2 1.4	16.95±3.172(Male) 15.33±1.871(Female)

*Source: Data retrieved from the online survey and analysed with the help of SPSS Software*

Students have adopted different coping techniques to reduce or manage stress. They gave responses for 28 techniques ranging from never to a lot. From the table it is found very few have accepted the first strategy i.e., Problem Focused Coping Strategy with Mean and SD for Male are 21.36 ±1.592 and Female with 20.79 ± 1.276 respectively. Items like 2, 7, 10, 12, 14, 17, 23, and 25 coincides with such a strategy. Such strategy is least preferred by the female in compare to male that indicates the lack of practical approach more in female in compare to male (Smriti Sinha, 20 February, 2018). Moderately 27.2% of Male and 5.5% of female support such

strategy where they move by taking some useful suggestions from others to improve the situation, trying hard to improve the situation, trying to visualize the situation from different perspective. They were more move by problem-focused than adjustment focused. So the predictive positive outcome is very less. Most of the students prefer the Emotion-Focused Coping with Mean and SD 31.82±2.006 for Male and 32.19±1.991 for female. Matud in 2004 stated gender differences in stress. Female experience more mental misery than men and their adapting style is more feeling centered than that of male (Garcia, 2018). Female are more probable than men to adapt to emotion-

focused practices and to look for social help and the investigation of who found that female who trusted in others and unveiled an individual issue were decreed to be preferable composed over the female who hushed up about the issue (Carpenter, April, 2013). Items 5, 9, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28 are related to Emotion Focused coping strategies where they seek emotional support from others, relief of unpleasant feelings, they criticize themselves for the situation, they seek comfort from others, religious or spiritual help, self-blame, they accepted the reality as it, many relieving the negative feelings by sharing with others, items were mostly preferred by the students the least preferred the making of jokes or fun of the situation. However, female students mostly undertaken spiritual or mediating strategies in compare to male and the male students preferred for accepting the reality and accepting their own shortcomings as to compensate with stress. Very few students have adopted the third strategy i.e., Avoidant Coping Strategy with Mean and SD for Male are  $16.95 \pm 3.172$  and Female with  $15.33 \pm 1.871$  respectively. Items 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 16, 19 coincides with such strategy and most of them favoured to devote their mind to useful activities like book reading, watching movies, or television in home, playing games or doing assignment or rather sleeping to distract themselves from stress and very less respondent have taken the help of substance like alcohol or drugs. However, for male some of them were habituated to smoking to deal with stress (Heike Eschenbeck, March 2007). Depend upon the different socio-economic background students' use different types of Avoidant coping strategy. Students preferred more emotion focused, actively focused, emotional support, positive reframing than self-blame, substance use, denial, venting. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between perceived stress and coping strategies adopted by undergraduate students of West Bengal.

### Recommendations

Due to Covid 19 situation these undergraduate students suffers a lot from stress that affected their mental health status. So during such situation emotional support need to be provided by the educational stakeholders. Under every university, online guidance and counselling support need to be delivered to those who faced such state of affairs. Parents need to keenly observe their youngsters any such behavioral change and dealing with them empathetically in resolving their issues. They need to be engaged in those home activities, which were preferred by them before the lockdown to distract their negative emotions. Celebrate each events at home to bring chang-

es in their mood and to maintain a wise connection with social life. Encourage them for regular simple indoor physical exercises. This will also solve their sleep problem. Avoid the discussion about affected and sickness of people instead of those who were recovered from it. They should be encouraged to form an online group so that they can communicate and interact among them as it was in the classroom.

### Conclusion

College students have been greatly affected by the trauma of COVID 19 epidemics. The highlights of this investigation indicated that psychological changes has greatly taken place in them, which is vulnerable for the future generation. Our discoveries recommend an extensive adverse consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic on an assortment of scholarly, wellbeing, and way of life-related results. From the study it is being found that 76.04% of students were suffering from the highest level of stress, 21.6% by moderate stress and 1.2% of students facing no or lowest level of stress. By referring to the various web studies in the midst of pandemic, it was tracked down that a greater part of these members was encountering expanded pressure because of COVID-19. It was found that among the high stress participants about 89.3% of males and 91% of female strongly agree that the increased isolation in pandemic has created a high degree of loneliness, disappointment, lack of motivation, financial crunch, new augmentation of education etc., all worked as a stressor for them which creates a crux for them to gauge with the situation. In addition, consequences of the PSS showed high degrees of pressure among our members. Trouble in concentrating, much of the time communicated by our members, has recently been displayed to unfavorably influence understudied' trust in themselves which has because of expanded pressure and emotional well-being. Past explores announced about the undergrad populace to have self-destructive contemplations outside the pandemic circumstance. Besides, except for high-burn-out classes. Although in this examination members explicitly referenced a few factors like sensations of forlornness or expanded segregation, weakness, vulnerabilities, absence of inspiration unpredictable rest design different results that were seen to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic may likewise go about as supporters of upsetting considerations and various procedures of managing it through some compelling and ineffectual adapting systems. At last, to find out the relation between perceived stress and undertaken coping strategies it revealed that females were mainly adopted Emotion-Focused Strategy than the other it is because it is liable to alter the situation of stressed

person. It is a bipolar technique as it help with emotions and solutions and mostly it fits with individual needs. So future work can zip profoundly on the job of various outskirts to help our childhood age.

### Disclosure Statement

The author reported no potential conflict of interest.

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