



The Impact of COVID-19 on Student Life: An Overview

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to students' lives, impacting their mental, social, and academic lives. This study uses both local and international research to examine these effects in the state of Mizoram. Closing schools and universities necessitated a quick transition to online education, exposing inequalities in resources, technology literacy, and digital access. Students from economically disadvantaged and rural backgrounds reported lower engagement, wider learning gaps, and concern about their academic progress. Increased stress, anxiety, and depression are caused by social isolation that is exacerbated by the suspension of extracurricular and cultural activities, as well as by a lack of peer connection and community involvement. Lack of physical activity during home confinement further affected students' health and psychological well-being. This review focuses the need for inclusive digital strategies, adaptive pedagogy, and accessible mental health support. Enhancing digital infrastructure, promoting hybrid learning, and fostering holistic well-being through social engagement and physical activity are essential. Integrated and collaborated efforts by institutions, families, and policymakers are crucial to support resilient and adaptive student development during current and future crises.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Education, Social Life, Health, Mental Health*

1. Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) emerged in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and rapidly escalated into a global pandemic. By December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was notified of pneumonia cases of unknown etiology, and the first fatality was reported on January 11, 2020. The disease was officially named COVID-19 on February 11, 2020, and declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020a, 2020b). In India, the first confirmed case was reported in Kerala on January 30, 2020, followed by the first death on March 12, 2020 (Government of India, 2020; MoHFW, 2020). By early 2022, the pandemic had affected over 300 million people globally (WHO, 2022).

Beyond the health crisis, COVID-19 caused unprecedented disruptions in education. According to UNICEF (2020), nationwide school closures affected over 1.3 billion learners worldwide, with both urban and rural students facing interruptions. The rapid adoption of remote learning sought to mitigate academic losses; however, disparities in access to internet connectivity, computers, and other resources intensified pre-existing inequalities. According to UNICEF (2021) report highlighted that in India, the temporary shutdown of over 1.5 million schools affected approximately 247 million students, disrupting academic programs, examinations, and institutional support mechanisms namely the Midday Meal Scheme.

The pandemic also geared up digital learning platforms namely Zoom, Google Meet, YouTube, and Skype enabled instructional continuity, while communication channels like WhatsApp maintained teacher-student and parent-teacher interactions across the globe. These developments emphasized the necessity of integrating technological competencies and flexible in teaching-learning process of the curriculum of educational systems. The COVID-19 outbreak also created an impact in terms of socio-cultural changes, community networks disconnected, and students faced challenges in both academic and psychosocial domains in Mizoram.

The paper presents an overview of existing literature with regards to the impacts of COVID-19 on student lives at International, national and state levels. The literature review was focused on the areas of education, social life, and health and mental health realms impacts. The paper also suggests some relevant suggestions and recommendations that how students to overcome the crisis at the time of pandemic.

2. Review of Literature

This section focuses on the available literature review classified on the studies pertaining to the Impact on Education, Impact on social life, and Impact on health and Mental health of student lives across the globe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.1 Impact on Education

Zhou and Zhang (2021) in their study stated that U.S. college students generally maintained stable mental health during the pandemic, expressing satisfaction with remote learning. However, limited interaction between students and teachers was a recurring concern. Hybrid learning models that combine online, and in-person instruction were suggested as optimal for maintaining academic assignment while ensuring safety.

Tarkar (2020) discussed that the educational institutions faced considerable challenges in planning, assessment, and pedagogy, particularly by adapting to online instruction in India. However, the crisis also created an opportunity for adopting innovative teaching practices and modernizing learning systems at the time crises. Jena (2020) highlighted the importance of IT infrastructure and digital literacy among both educators and students to carry on learning during the outbreak without any hindrances in the teaching learning process.

Upoalkpajor (2020) and Banerji and Wadhwa, (2021) revealed that pre-existing socioeconomic inequalities were aggravated by school closures in Ghana and in India. Further students from lower-income households faced barriers to digital learning, leading to widened learning gaps. In order to address the issues, Baruah and Sahay (2022) emphasized government initiatives such as the Samagra Shiksha Mission, which aimed to enhance teacher training and inclusive education.

Lianhmingthangi, Harikrishnan, and Sailo (2020) conducted a study on “*Digital divide in Mizoram’s student population*” in their work they reported that unreliable internet connectivity, limited access to digital devices, and insufficient technical expertise among students and teachers created stumbling blocks in Aizawl, students encountered technological barriers that hindered academic assignments. Similarly, Tsamakis et al. (2020) marked the challenges faced by students in rural and remote areas of Mizoram, where high-speed internet remains limited.

McGorry (2020) pointed out that healthy teacher-student relationships, crucial for student motivation and engagement that are disrupted and adversely affected in the quality of education by and large. Zothantluanga et al. (2020) observed that students struggling with digital tools were

prone to academic hindrances, raising concerns about the long-term impact of online learning on the education system of India.

Jones, Mitra, and Bhuiyan (2021) noted that the absence of structured classroom instruction and limited real-time teacher feedback led to stagnation in student learning, further widening educational inequalities. Besides, the pandemic created the practical based subjects, such as laboratory-oriented science courses or arts, that require hands-on learning were affected abruptly.

2.2 Impact on Social Life

Bullock (2020) examined that socialization during adolescence is essential, and extended isolation can be as detrimental as exposure to COVID-19 for older adults. Studies conducted by Whittle et al., 2013; Jones, Mitra, & Bhuiyan, 2021 had shown that with schools, dormitories, sports facilities, and cultural spaces closed, students in many parts of the country during the lockdown and they experienced decrease in peer interaction and in extracurricular activities as well.

Lianhmingthangi et al. (2020) observed that students from disadvantaged backgrounds experienced increased anxiety and depressive symptoms due to limited opportunities for social engagement. These disruptions underscored the psychosocial toll of the pandemic and highlighted the importance of interventions that support emotional well-being in crisis situations.

2.3 Impact on Health and Mental Health

Rehman et al. (2022) stated that comparable levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among Indian men and women, with students and teachers particularly affected due to sudden institutional closures and lack of technological resources. Also, Chowdhury and Suvro (2022) pointed out that career uncertainty, delayed graduations, and disrupted employment opportunities exacerbated stress and depression among university students.

Perada and Diaz-Faes (2020) discussed the negative effects of home quarantine on students, including increased risks of family violence and exposure to emotionally and psychologically abusive environments. Socioeconomic stressors, fear, and misinformation contributed to heightened tension in vulnerable households, limiting students' access to support services.

Tasim and Islam (2020) documented an increase in suicidal ideation among university students, with risk factors including disrupted sleep patterns, prior mental health issues,

depression, anxiety, and stress. Approximately 12.8% of respondents reported suicidal thoughts, while 6.6% reported actual attempts during the early stages of the pandemic.

Ryff (2017) emphasized the interconnection between physical and mental health, and Zothantluanga et al. (2020) stated that closure of sports facilities and parks limited opportunities for maintaining overall well-being and on the other hand, the lack of physical activity during lockdowns contributed to weight gain and stress.

Whittle et al. (2013) pointed out the importance of parental support for adolescent well-being, yet the economic uncertainty caused by pandemic-related job losses intensified stress within households (Zothantluanga et al., 2020). Hertz & Barrios, (2021) opined that students received limited academic and emotional guidance from parents, related educational and psychological challenges. The absence of external support systems, including teachers and community leaders, exacerbated mental health concerns, leaving many students struggling to regulate emotions without professional assistance.

McGorry (2020) and Tsamakis et al. (2020) reported increased anxiety, sadness, and stress among students, in the same line, Jones, Mitra, and Bhuiyan (2021) highlighted the fear of sickness in communities as a factor contributing to helplessness and psychological distress.

3. Research Objectives

- i. To understand the impact of COVID-19 on student life in terms of education, social interaction, and mental health using secondary data.
- ii. To assess the challenges experienced by students and recommend strategies for preparedness during future pandemics.

4. Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data that were collected from peer-reviewed journals, articles, books and reports and internet sources. Sources were selected based on relevance to the educational, social, and psychological impacts of COVID-19 at global and national, state level existing literature.

5. Discussion

The relationship between schooling, social interaction, and mental health in determining student outcomes has been emphasized by the COVID-19 epidemic. The swift shift to online education exposed glaring disparities in technology, especially for pupils from underprivileged or rural areas.

Lack of access to devices, inconsistent internet connectivity, and insufficient digital literacy among both teachers and students hindered academic participation, highlighting the digital divide. In addition to accessibility, the quality of education suffered since traditional teaching methods did not transfer well to online learning environments, which decreased student motivation, engagement, and academic performance (McGorry, 2020; Zothantluanga et al., 2020) divide as a systemic obstacle to fair education (Tsamakis et al., 2020; Lianhmingthangi, Harikrishnan, & Sailo, 2020).

Social growth was hampered by the extended lack of extracurricular activities, cultural engagement, and peer interaction. Due to isolation, students throughout the state who often depend on social networks and community events reported higher levels of anxiety, depression, and loneliness (Lianhmingthangi et al., 2020; Jones, Mitra, & Bhuiyan, 2021).

There was copious literature on effects on students' mental health, including higher rates of stress, anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts (Perada & Diaz-Faes, 2020; Tasim & Islam, 2020). At the same time, teachers, counsellors, and community leaders were among the established support networks that were disrupted by the pandemic, leaving adolescents with few options for managing their emotions (Hertz & Barrios, 2021). Thus, there is a need for holistic interventions that concurrently address academic, social, and emotional aspects is further supported by the fact that psychological discomfort was made worse by the decrease in physical activity and modifications in family dynamics.

As a result, the studies indicate that in order to promote holistic development, reducing the impact of pandemics on pupils necessitates comprehensive strategies that include digital infrastructure, access, psychosocial support, and the encouragement of social connectivity.

5.1 Recommendations and Suggestions

- a) Education institutions have to improve their digital infrastructure in order to lessen the effects of COVID-19 on students' lives. By providing dependable internet access,

reasonably priced devices, and technical assistance, particularly for students from underprivileged or rural areas.

- b) Online pedagogy and digital literacy could be strengthened in teacher preparation programs to facilitate inclusive and dynamic learning. Flexibility and engagement can be maintained during emergencies via hybrid learning models that blend online and in-person instruction.
- c) Support for mental health is vital among the student community, peer support, counselling, and awareness programs could be easily accessible in schools and colleges to help people deal with stress, anxiety, and depression. Encouraging physical exercise, virtual social interaction, and regimented habits can all contribute to overall wellbeing.
- d) Policymakers could implement targeted interventions for vulnerable students, including financial assistance, scholarships, and family-focused programs to ensure continuity, reduce inequalities, and build resilience. Collaboration among institutions, families, and communities is critical to create adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable educational environments for the future.

6. Conclusion

The COVID-19 epidemic has had significant and varied effects on student life across the globe, especially in Aizawl, Mizoram the intensity was quite high in the remote corner of the country. Inequalities in access to digital infrastructure, technological literacy, and learning materials were made evident by the sudden transition from traditional classroom instruction to online learning. The impact was disproportionately felt by students from rural or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, leading to increased learning gaps, lower engagement, and anxiety about academic achievement. To maintain continuity in future crises, these difficulties highlight the necessity of inclusive digital initiatives and flexible instructional approaches.

Social interactions outside of the classroom were disturbed seriously in all parts of the country. Peer interaction, extracurricular involvement, and community engagement—all crucial for adolescents' cognitive, emotional, and social development—were diminished by lockdowns, school closures, and postponed cultural events and other social gatherings. Students experienced increased anxiety, despair, and stress as a result of this, as well as stress from family members and future uncertainties.

Physical health was also impacted among the student communities because sedentary behaviour was encouraged by a lack of exercise opportunities, which added to psychological stress. In order to create resilient learning settings and advance the general well-being of students, the pandemic emphasizes the critical need for shared access to technology, mental health services, holistic teaching methods, and concerted efforts by educational institutions,

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