

## Mood of people during the Covid-19 pandemic: Analysis from Kerala State, India

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**Abstract:** A study was carried out to analyze the mood of people during the Covid-19 pandemic through an on-line questionnaire survey among a random sample of 500 people from Kerala, India, who had not contracted the disease. The feelings inventory suggested by Gauvin and Rejeski (1993) was used to collect the mood responses. The data was analyzed as frequencies and using *t* test. Results show that the respondents mostly experienced positive mood parameters moderately only during the pandemic period, indicating that it has affected them psychologically to some extent, due to which, they were probably unable to feel calm, relaxed, happy, peaceful, enthusiastic and other positive mood states significantly. No statistically significant difference was observed between the score of most of the mood parameters. The respondents were not found to be affected much by being tired and worn out during the pandemic period. Since the respondents did not experience the negative mood states much, which may otherwise require medical care if the pandemic continues in time and severity, practice of effective relaxation techniques such as meditation and yoga is suggested for such people to improve their mental well-being.

### Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns which affected the population in different countries of the world was a real shock to the society and its institutions, affecting the economy and lives of millions. An important consequence of the pandemic is the mental health problems, which would have developed in many people. Gopal *et al.* (2020) suggests that while the Covid-19-induced lockdown may help in effectively addressing the pandemic, the State and society

at large need to be sensitive to the mental health impacts of a long-drawn-out lockdown. Such effects likely have long-term sequelae. Significant mood disturbance during the period of Covid-19 restrictions, representing increased risk of psychopathology has been reported (Peter *et al.*, 2020).

Green *et al.* (2021) highlights the vulnerability regarding young people's mood and emotional reactivity during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially for adolescents who experience more stressors.

People in isolation during the pandemic may experience fear about the consequences of the contagious virus, anxiety, insomnia and mental distress. People in quarantine might experience boredom, loneliness, anger, anxiety and guilt about the effect of contagion and stigma on family and friends (Anon., 2020).

In this context, a study was carried out to analyse the mood of people during the Covid-19 pandemic among a sample of people from Kerala State, India.

### Methodology

An on-line questionnaire survey to analyse the mood of people during the Covid-19 pandemic condition was carried out among a random sample of 500 people from Kerala State of India who had not contracted the Covid-19 disease, since, analyzing their psychology is important, considering the psycho-somatic cause of the disease. The feelings inventory suggested by Gauvin and Rejeski (1993) was used to collect the 12 mood responses in the study. The data was analyzed as frequencies and using *t* test.

### Results and Discussion

Except for the mood parameter, namely, “felt revived”, the mean score of the other eight positive mood parameters is close to 3, which will be the score obtained for the response – “felt moderately” (Table 1). This implies that the respondents were able to experience all these mood parameters moderately only during the Covid-19 pandemic period. It can be seen from Table 1 that the mean score for

**Table 1. Score of the respondents for mood parameters**

<b>Positive mood parameters</b>	<b>Mean score*</b>
Feeling refreshed	2.96
Feeling calm	2.84
Feeling enthusiastic	2.64
Feeling relaxed	2.96
Feeling energetic	2.84
Feeling happy	2.92
Feeling peaceful	2.92
Feeling revived	2.32
Feeling upbeat	2.88
<b>Negative mood parameters</b>	<b>Mean score*</b>
Feeling tired	4.08
Feeling worn out	4.68
Feeling fatigued (very tired)	4.20

\*Maximum attainable score for the parameter is 5

the “felt revived” mood parameter is nearer to 2 (2.32), indicating that the respondents mostly felt slightly revived, for which, the score is 2.

Table 2 shows the levels of mood reported by the respondents for various parameters. Respondents in the range of 20 to 28% only have experienced the positive mood parameters either strongly or very strongly, with others reporting not felt, felt slightly and felt moderately. 40 to 60% respondents report experiencing eight out of the nine positive moods moderately (Table 2).

The above results could be interpreted to imply that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the respondents psychologically to some extent, leading to a situation, wherein, they were unable to experience significantly the positive emotions such as calmness, relaxation,

**Table 2. Levels of mood of the respondents**

<b>Mood parameter</b>	<b>Respondents (%) reporting different levels of mood</b>					<b>Total (%)</b>
	<b>Did not feel at all</b>	<b>Felt slightly</b>	<b>Felt moderately</b>	<b>Felt strongly</b>	<b>Felt very strongly</b>	
Refreshed	12	4	60	24	Nil	100
Calm	8	28	40	20	4	100
Enthusiastic	20	20	40	16	4	100
Relaxed	4	24	48	20	4	100
Energetic	8	20	52	20	Nil	100
Happy	8	24	40	24	4	100
Peaceful	8	20	48	20	4	100
Revived	40	12	28	16	4	100
Upbeat	12	8	60	16	4	100
Tired	32	48	16	4	Nil	100
Worn out	80	16	Nil	Nil	4	100
Fatigued (Very tired)	44	40	12	Nil	4	100

happiness, peacefulness, enthusiasm etc. However, the fact that they were able to experience many of the positive mood parameters moderately could be probably because the uneasiness / uncertainty created in them by the pandemic is not that much. Madhava Chandran *et al.* (2020) have reported that majority of the respondents under their study had low to medium uncertainty only due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Data collected by the authors of this paper under another study on mental stress during the Covid-19 pandemic period (report under preparation) also shows that respondents in the range of about 71 to 81% have either less or very less stress only. Further, about 84 to 100% of them do not attribute the different levels of stress they have experienced to the pandemic.

With regard to the negative mood parameters, namely, feeling tired, worn out

and fatigued (very tired), it can be seen from Table 1 that the respondents get a score of 4.08 and 4.20, respectively for the mood parameters, namely, feeling tired and fatigued. This means that the respondents have mostly felt these two negative mood parameters slightly only (for which the score is 4). But, in the case of the parameter, namely, feeling worn out, the mean score is comparatively higher (4.68) and close to the score of 5, which will be obtained when a respondent reports “did not feel” for this parameter. Hence, the results reveal that the respondents were not physically affected much by being tired and worn out during the pandemic period.

No statistically significant difference was observed between the score of any of the nine positive mood parameters, except with the score of the parameter, namely, “Feeling revived”. Respondents in the range of only 16

to 36% either did not experience or experienced seven out of the other eight parameters slightly only. However, a higher proportion (52%) either did not feel revived or had the feeling of slight revival only (Table 2). This could be the reason for the significant difference observed between the score of this parameter and the other positive mood parameters.

The respondents, who did not experience the positive mood parameters very strongly or strongly were asked about the reasons for this. 62.7% mentioned Covid-19 pandemic as the reason, while less than 15% only report financial / family problems and other reasons for not experiencing the positive emotions strongly during the pandemic period (Table 3).

**Table 3. Reasons for not experiencing the positive moods parameters**

<b>Very strongly / strongly</b>	<b>Respondents (%) reporting*</b>
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic	62.7
Due to financial problems	14.3
Family problems	11.5
Others	11.5
Total	100

\*Mean % considering all the positive mood parameters

## Conclusions

This study shows that the respondents mostly experienced the mood parameters moderately during the pandemic period, indicating that it has affected them psychologically to some extent, due to which,

they were probably unable to feel calm, relaxed, happy, peaceful, enthusiastic and other positive mood states significantly. However, they were not affected much by being tired and worn out during the pandemic period. Even though the respondents were able to experience the positive mood parameters to a moderate extent, they would have probably experienced happiness, calmness, relaxation, enthusiasm and other positive mood states better, if the Covid-19 pandemic was not there.

As in the case of people under this study, for those who have not experienced significant negative moods during this pandemic period, the practice of relaxation techniques of Indian origin such as meditation and yoga could prove useful to improve their mental well-being, thus preventing them from having psychological/psychiatric problems, if the pandemic continues for long with severity. An article mentions that besides the diversities of culture, languages, ethnicities and religious affiliations of India, there are certain commonalities, which include Hinduism as a religion which is spread across the country, ancient Indian system of medicine and emphasis on use of traditional methods like yoga and meditation for controlling the mind. The need for vigorously testing the applicability of methods like yoga and Indian models of psychotherapy to validate our age-old principles and philosophies and acknowledging the uniqueness of the country and nurturing its traditions have been

highlighted by Ajit Avasthi *et al.*, 2013. Lykins and Baer (2009) reported that meditators had significantly higher levels of mindfulness, self-compassion and overall sense of well-being, and significantly lower levels of psychological symptoms, rumination, thought suppression, fear of emotion, and difficulties with emotion regulation, when compared to non-meditators. Changes in these variables were linearly associated with the extent of meditation practice. The positive effect of yoga and meditation on well-being, mental stress and anxiety have been reported in other studies also (Madhava Chandran, 2017; Vijayaraghavan and Madhava Chandran, 2019; Vijayaraghavan *et al.*, 2020; Madhava Chandran *et al.*, 2020; Vijayaraghavan *et al.*, 2020).

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