

# A Descriptive Study to Assess the Level of Anxiety Among Higher Secondary Students in Relation to Futuristic Opportunities During Covid-19 Pandemic

Gyanendri Tomar<sup>1\*</sup>, Pooja Godiyal<sup>2</sup>, K.Chitra<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, <sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, State College of Nursing, Dehradun, Uttarakhand (India)

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of anxiety among students going to complete their school education during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 39 students living in Uttarakhand participated in this cross-sectional online survey through e-form. A modified anxiety inventory was used to gather information and the link was shared through Gmail ID. The analysis was done on two levels, such as univariate and bivariate. Out of a total 21% were experiencing mild anxiety, 48% were with moderate anxiety, and 15% were having severe anxiety related to their futuristic opportunities.

**Keywords:** assess, anxiety, futuristic opportunity, pandemic

## INTRODUCTION

Across the world, the coronavirus disease outbreak negatively impacted people's lives. As it was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020, by the World Health Organization, millions of people were infected with COVID-19, with a confirmed death toll of 0.4 million worldwide. Many countries restricted movement within their borders. It was all to restrict the transmission of the COVID-19 infection from human to human.

The Indian government implemented certain measures to control the outbreak of COVID-19 in India. They made strict guidelines for lockdowns, restrictions on outer state passengers' avoidance of large gatherings, social distancing, and online teaching systems on the educational side. At first, all these restrictions were accepted, but slowly, social isolation resulted in consequences such as

depression, anxiety, and some other mental and behavioral issues.

Individuals, as well as the family, were trying to fit into this new environment. Family members were supporting each other to utilize such practices that would enhance their confidence level and provide happiness. It was a great challenge for everyone worldwide to fit into new environments. Parents were playing an important role in making their children safe, and there was one more burden on them to make their children do well during online classes as much as possible.

Salelkar SS et al. conducted a cross-sectional study that was carried out to find the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress among School Going Adolescents and their Relationship to Socioeconomic Status by using the DASS-21 scale on a total of 231

students. Almost 3 out of 4 children from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> class had symptoms related to at least one of the mental morbidities discussed, i.e., depression, anxiety, or stress. Depression and stress were found to be significantly more prevalent in students who appeared in board exams, than those not answering board exams. Students of class 11<sup>th</sup> had a comparatively lower prevalence of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress.

Islam MA. et al (2020) conducted a web-based cross-sectional survey on Depression and anxiety among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh and reported that students were experiencing heightened depression and anxiety around 15% of the students reported moderately severe depression, whereas 18.1% were severely suffering from anxiety.

Children's overall development depends on their environment during COVID, it was a great challenge for parents to maintain the normal physical and psychological health of their children. Unfavorable conditions push children into unpleasant states of mind that increase the risk of disturbance in mental health. A rapid systematic review has been done to find the impact of quarantine on children's and adolescents' mental health adolescents and measures to improve psychological outcomes of isolation (Imran N. et al, 2020).

Globally, the pre-lockdown learning of children and adolescents predominantly involved one-to-one interaction with their mentors and peer groups. Unfortunately, the nationwide closures of schools and colleges have negatively impacted over 91% of the world's student population (Bobade PM et al, 2022).

The home confinement of children and adolescents is associated with uncertainty and anxiety, which is attributable to disruption in their education, physical activities, and opportunities for socialization (Jiao et al., 2020). The absence of a structured school setting for an extended period of time causes disruption in routine, boredom, and a lack of innovative ideas for engaging in various academic and extracurricular activities. Some children have expressed lower levels of effect

because they are unable to play outside, meet friends, or participate in in-person school activities (Zhai and Du, 2020).

These children have become clingier, attention-seeking, and more dependent on their parents due to the long-term shift in their routine. It is assumed that children might resist going to school after the lockdown gets over and may face difficulty in establishing rapport with their mentors after the schools reopen. As a result, the restriction on their freedom of movement can have a long-term negative impact on their overall psychological well-being (Lee, 2020).

School routines are important coping mechanisms for young people with mental health issues. When schools are closed, they lose an anchor in life and their symptoms could relapse. "Going to school had been a struggle for [some children with depression] prior to the pandemic, but at least they had school routines to stick with", said Zanonchia Chiu, a registered clinical psychologist working with children and adolescents in Hong Kong, where schools have been closed since Feb 3. "Now that schools are closed, some lock themselves up inside their rooms for weeks, refusing to take showers, eat, or leave their beds." For some children with depression, there will be considerable difficulties adjusting back to normal life when school resumes. Students in their final years are anxious about the job market they are going to enter soon. "College students are more vulnerable than we think, especially with the current academic and financial burden," said Chiu.(Lee, 2020) )<sup>11</sup>

## METHOD AND MATERIAL

### Data source

The survey was conducted in September 2021 when students completed their 12<sup>th</sup> and started searching for good professional courses in different universities outside of Uttarakhand. In this study, they were included as the target population. Online platforms such as Google Forms were used to create a questionnaire that was used to collect basic information about students and their anxiety related to their future.

## Sampling technique

For collecting information, a snowball sampling technique was used where participants were asked to share the e-questionnaire with their classmates and friends. Informed consent was given by each student to be part of this study, which was attached to the e-questionnaire.

## Ethical issues

There is no ethical issue. The participants responded after accepting informed consent for the online survey. In the consent form, the purpose of research and confidentiality of information was early mentioned.

## Measures

Basic information includes the age of students from 17 to  $\geq 20$  (17-18, 18-19, 19-20, >20), students' gender (male, female and their preference to disclose gender), their religion (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, and others), types of the school board (Uttarakhand board of secondary education, central board of secondary education, council for the Indian school certificate examinations), and living arrangement (alone, with parents, with relatives, with friends).

Anxiety was evaluated by the modified BAI inventory. This inventory contains 21 items that are used to screen students aged 17 or older for anxiety. This instrument employs a Likert-type scale of 0 to 3; "0 = Not at all," "1 = Mild," "2 = Moderate," and "3 = Severe." These items are categorized as not at all, mild, moderate, and severe. These categories contain scores of 0 for not at all, 1 for mild, 2 for moderate, and 3 for severe anxiety related to success. The Inventory has good internal consistency with test and retest correlation ( $r = 0.7$ ). This scale is designed for >17 years old, it is an appropriate scale to assess anxiety in the age group included in this study.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Result of descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive information of different selected variables of the School

student in Uttarakhand. The majority of the population falls in the category of the 18-19 yr. of age group. Compared to males females were more about 54%. Out of the 95% were living with their parents. 87% of students were from the Central board of secondary education.

Table 2 demonstrates the prevalence of futuristic anxiety in the students who passed 12<sup>th</sup> during the Covid pandemic. Out of the total 39 participants, 6 (15%) didn't show any kind of anxiety, 8 (21%) were found to have mild anxiety, 19 (49%) were found with moderate anxiety and 6 (15%) were found with severe anxiety.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample

| S. No | Demographic variables |   |    |      |
|-------|-----------------------|---|----|------|
|       | Variables             | Category  | F  | %    |
| 1     | Age                   | 17 - 18yrs  | 15 | 38.5 |
|       |                       | 18 - 19yrs  | 20 | 51.3 |
|       |                       | 19 - 20yrs  | 3  | 7.7  |
|       |                       | > 20yrs   | 1  | 2.6  |
| 2     | Gender                | Male  | 18 | 46.2 |
|       |                       | Female  | 21 | 53.8 |
| 3     | Religion              | Hindu   | 37 | 94.4 |
|       |                       | Sikh  | -  | -    |
|       |                       | Christian   | 2  | 5.1  |
|       |                       | Muslim  | -  | -    |
|       |                       | Others  | -  | -    |
| 4     | Types of school board | Uttarakhand board of secondary education              | 1  | 2.6  |
|       |                       | Central board of secondary education                  | 34 | 87.2 |
|       |                       | Council for the Indian school certificate examination | 4  | 10.3 |
| 5     | Living arrangement    | Alone   | -  | -    |
|       |                       | With parents  | 37 | 94.9 |
|       |                       | With relatives  | 1  | 2.6  |
|       |                       | With friends  | 1  | 2.6  |

**Table 2. Level of anxiety and frequency**

| Anxiety    | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Not at all | 6         | 15%        |
| Mild       | 8         | 21%        |
| Moderate   | 19        | 49%        |
| Severe     | 6         | 15%        |

**DISCUSSION**

Through this study, we tried to find out anxiety among school students who passed their 12<sup>th</sup> standard during the Covid pandemic. Mild anxiety is good to make student focus on their goal related to the future. Current study findings

**Table 3. Average level of anxiety**

| S. No. |                  | Mean | SD   | Min Score | Max Score |
|--------|------------------|------|------|-----------|-----------|
| 1.     | Level of Anxiety | 19   | 8.16 | 3         | 35        |

**Table 4: Association of the level of anxiety with socio-demographical variables**

| S. No. | Anxiety Score         |   |    | Anxiety Score |        |             |          | Association with knowledge score |            |         |                 |
|--------|-----------------------|---|----|---------------|--------|-------------|----------|----------------------------------|------------|---------|-----------------|
|        | Variables             | Category  | F  | Not at all 6  | Mild 8 | Moderate 19 | Severe 6 | df                               | Chi-square | P value | Significance    |
| 1      | Age                   | 17 – 18yrs  | 15 | 3             | 3      | 6           | 3        | 9                                | 16.92      | 4.05    | Not significant |
|        |                       | 18 – 19yrs  | 20 | 2             | 5      | 10          | 3        |                                  |            |         |                 |
|        |                       | 19 – 20yrs  | 3  | 1             | 0      | 2           | 0        |                                  |            |         |                 |
|        |                       | > 20yrs   | 1  | 0             | 0      | 1           | 0        |                                  |            |         |                 |
| 2      | Gender                | Male  | 18 | 4             | 7      | 6           | 1        | 3                                | 7.82       | 10.22   | Significant     |
|        |                       | Female  | 21 | 2             | 1      | 13          | 5        |                                  |            |         |                 |
| 3      | Religion              | Hindu   | 37 | 6             | 7      | 18          | 6        | 12                               | 21.03      | 1.53    | Not Significant |
|        |                       | Sikh  | -  | 0             | 0      | 0           | 0        |                                  |            |         |                 |
|        |                       | Christian   | 2  | 0             | 1      | 1           | 0        |                                  |            |         |                 |
|        |                       | Muslim  | -  | 0             | 0      | 0           | 0        |                                  |            |         |                 |
|        |                       | Others  | -  | 0             | 0      | 0           | 0        |                                  |            |         |                 |
| 4      | Types of school board | Uttarakhand board of secondary education              | 1  | 0             | 0      | 1           | 0        | 6                                | 12.59      | 10.89   | Not Significant |
|        |                       | Central board of secondary education                  | 34 | 4             | 8      | 18          | 4        |                                  |            |         |                 |
|        |                       | Council for the Indian school certificate examination | 4  | 2             | 0      | 0           | 2        |                                  |            |         |                 |
| 5      | Living arrangement    | Alone   | 0  | 0             | 0      | 0           | 0        | 9                                | 16.92      | 2.22    | Not Significant |
|        |                       | With parents  | 37 | 5             | 8      | 19          | 5        |                                  |            |         |                 |
|        |                       | With relatives  | 1  | 0             | 0      | 0           | 1        |                                  |            |         |                 |
|        |                       | With friends  | 1  | 1             | 0      | 0           | 0        |                                  |            |         |                 |

show that 21% of students were suffering from mild anxiety, 49% perceived moderate levels of anxiety, and 6 experienced severe anxiety related to their futuristic opportunities. In India, a student's rest of the life is solely based on the 12th board exams. Thus, the fear of the future pushes the students under tremendous stress which reflects in their behavior.

The above finding is supported by descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in the Gaza Strip in Palestine. Study was carried out in a sample size of 420 primary and secondary school students and The results revealed that most of the students experienced anxiety as well as depression including moderate to severe levels i.e. (89.1%) and depression (72.1%), whereas less than half of them (35.7%) experienced moderate to severe stress. Score for stress, anxiety and depression were significantly different across gender, age, size of family, and economic status of family.

## CONCLUSION

Because of anxiety student suffers from several negative psychological, physical, and emotional symptoms which negatively affect students' mental health and results in low self-esteem. The main aim of this study is to address the anxiety of 12th-standard students regarding futuristic opportunities during COVID-19. The results of this study provide results related to the mental pressure of students during such a crucial time related to futuristic opportunities.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING: SELF**

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST: NIL**

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Study is permitted by the Ethical Committee of the college. Consent of all the participants is secured ahead of their responses.

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