



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

A Study on the Impact of Governmental Measures on Elderly during COVID 19

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the global population in radical ways. In many countries, elderly people are facing the most threats and challenges at this time. The corona virus pandemic has strained all of us to stay study and work at home. The elderly are more prone to the viral infection, complication and mortality due to the virus which restricted them to be within their houses. Nevertheless, with nothing to do older people are likely to feel more stressed, lonely and affect their health as well. This study focuses on the impact of preventive measures taken by Government like lockdown, curfew and social isolation on elderly population the specific objectives of the study are to find out the effect of lockdown/Social isolation on the physical aspects of elderly during COVID-19, to find out the effect of lockdown/Social isolation on the Psychological health of elderly during COVID-19, to examine the effect of lockdown/Social isolation on the Social relationship of elderly during COVID-19 and to find out the impact of lockdown/Social isolation on the family relations of elderly during COVID-19. Descriptive research design is used in this study. The universe of this study consists of senior citizens of Kochi city. From the source list of elderly collected from Kochi Corporation, representatives of sample of 100 respondents were taken at random and thus simple random sampling is used in the study. Data was collected through online using Google form.

Key words: COVID-19, Social isolation, Elderly, Preventive Measures

1.0 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had enormous effect on the daily lives of most individuals. Widespread lockdown and preventive measures have isolated individuals, affected the world economy, and inadequate access to physical and mental health care and social interactions. While these measures may be essential to decrease the spread of the virus, the negative impact on the physical, psychological and social effects are evident. However, the elderly population has been the least affected group by both the virus and the lockdown measures. Although all age groups are at risk of contracting COVID-19, older people face significant risk of developing severe illness if they contract the disease due to physiological changes that come with ageing and potential underlying health conditions.

The lockdown, has possibly in all ways, been the hardest on the elderly. Not only are they in the high-risk category and thus constantly anxious about the contraction of the virus, but the several ways they used to pass time are also now unreachable. Going for a walk, mild exercise, meeting with their friends who live nearby, reading the newspaper or books were some of the ways they would while away time. Spending time with their children or grandchildren was also something they would look forward to, but given that most professionals are working from home, and children are now studying through online classes, the elderly are finding themselves lonely and stressed, which may also have an adverse effect on their health. While most of us spend all our time on social media, scrolling through different apps, older people are not as tech-savvy, nor does the virtual world interest them as much. If we feel bored we can imagine how far the elderly feel isolated and bored.

The studies have already reported an increase in anxiety and depression in the universal population, especially those facing extended lockdowns. These effects are overblown in the elderly population due largely to stricter lockdowns, higher threat of illness and loss of social support. The lockdown and social isolation has worsened by the physical limitations that have put on the movement of individual outside their homes resulting in less exercise opportunities for many persons. Elderly also face the loss of socialization, increased mental strain during this lockdown. The social interaction and social interconnectedness has become impossible for the older people that lead them to social isolation and alienation. The opportunity to meet their friends, spend time with their children and their grandchildren are not possible as they are engaged and busy with their work at home as well as their online classes. Since they are less advanced in technology and use of digital equipments they deprived of connecting themselves with the world and their loved ones. Although the lockdowns may be temporary, the effect of it is long lasting and poses major risks to the quality of life of the older people in coming years.

2.0 Review of literature

Joel Philip and Vinu Cherian in their study on ‘Impact of COVID-19 on mental health of the elderly’ found that, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented effect on the lives of people, irrespective of social demographics. The elderly, however, face special challenges, and it is imperative that healthcare professionals identify and highlight their special needs so that they can be adequately protected and supported through these trying times. Unless care is taken, the elderly as a group may face significant fallout with regard to their mental and psychological well being. Gabrielle Martins Van Jaarsveld in his study on ‘The Effects of COVID-19 among the Elderly Population: A Case for Closing the Digital Divide’ aims to explore the increased negative effects the digital divide is having in the elderly population during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also aims to highlight the need for increased attention and resources to go toward improving digital literacy in the elderly.’ A Study on Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on older person’ discusses on the economic well-being, mental health, vulnerability of the elderly. Vihang N Vahia and Ashutosh B Shah in their study on ‘COVID-19 pandemic and mental health care of older adults in India’ discusses on the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on the mental health of elderly and the remedies and policies the government could have undertaken to help out this vulnerable group.

3.0 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to analyse the impact of Governmental Measures on elderly during COVID 19.

The specific objectives of the study are the following:

- To find out the Socio -economic profile of the respondents
- To find out the impact of lockdown on the physical and psychological health of elderly during COVID-19
- To find out the impact of lockdown on the Social relationship of elderly during COVID-19
- To find out the impact of lockdown on the family relations of elderly during COVID-19
- To understand their suggestion regarding the steps to be taken by Government for the elderly during COVID -19

4.0 Methodology

The COVID 19 pandemic has caused immeasurable trepidation and distress for elderly across the world. The preventive measures taken by the Government during pandemic has left more of them lonely and feeling vulnerable considering they are wary of stepping out COVID-19 is changing older people's daily routines, the support and care they receive, their ability to stay socially connected and how they are perceived. Elderly are being challenged by requirements to spend more time at home, lack of physical contact with their family members, friends and colleagues, temporary cessation of employment and other activities; and anxiety and fear of illness and death of their own and others. So this study focuses on the issues faced by the elderly during lockdown and social isolation as preventive measures taken by Government.

4.1 Material and methods

Descriptive research design is used in this study. The universe of this study consists of senior citizens of Kochi city. Snowball sampling is used in the study. Data was collected through online using Google form.

5.0 Data Analysis and findings

The primary data collected using questionnaire. It was daily edited coded, analyzed and interpreted using Google form and charts and diagrams were also prepared using goggle form to make it more attractive.

Socio economic profile

In this objective, Socio-economic profile of the respondents it was found that a high percentage (68.3%) of the respondents belong to the age category of 60-70, With regard to gender, high percentages of the respondents (76.7%) are female. It was found, sixty three percent of the respondents are living in rural areas and on the other hand 36.7% are living in urban area. With regard to the level of education of the respondents, it was found that 36.7% have only below SSLC education. Sixty three percent of the respondents belong to nuclear families. It was found that the majority of the respondents (96.6%) are not living alone. It was found that all the respondents (100%) are aware of the COVID -19.

Figure No.1 Type of Family

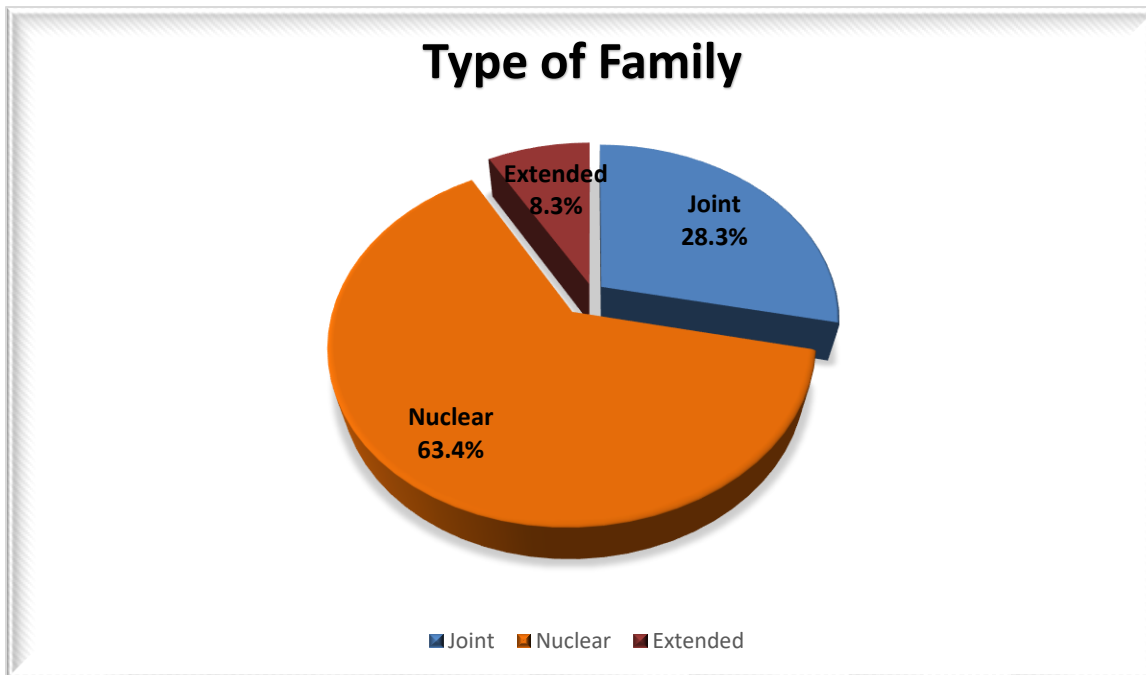
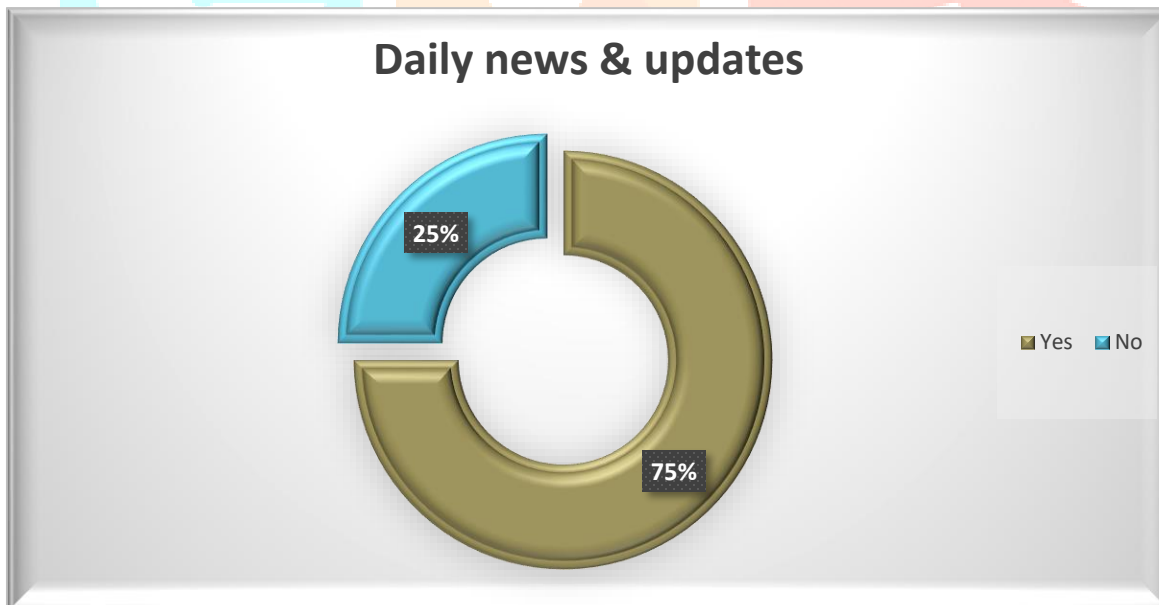


Figure No. 2 Disturbed through daily news & updates of COVID 19



Impact of lockdown on the physical and Psychological health of elderly during COVID

With regard to the impact of lockdown on the physical movements of the respondents, it was found that while 66.7% of the respondents feel that lockdown effects their physical movements. While 63.3% of the respondents have taken measures to boost their immune system, 70% of the respondents have taken natural and Ayurvedic medicines to boost their immune system, 20% of the respondents have taken healthy nutritious food, 5% of the respondents have taken Homeo medicine, 3.3% of the respondents do physical exercise and 1.7% of the respondents have taken vaccine. With regard to the Psychological health, majority of the respondents (75%) are disturbed by the daily news and updated on COVID -19. While 71.7% of the respondents feels they isolated from family during lockdown 28.3% of the respondents do not feel isolated.

Figure No. 3 Effect of lockdown on respondent's Physical Movements

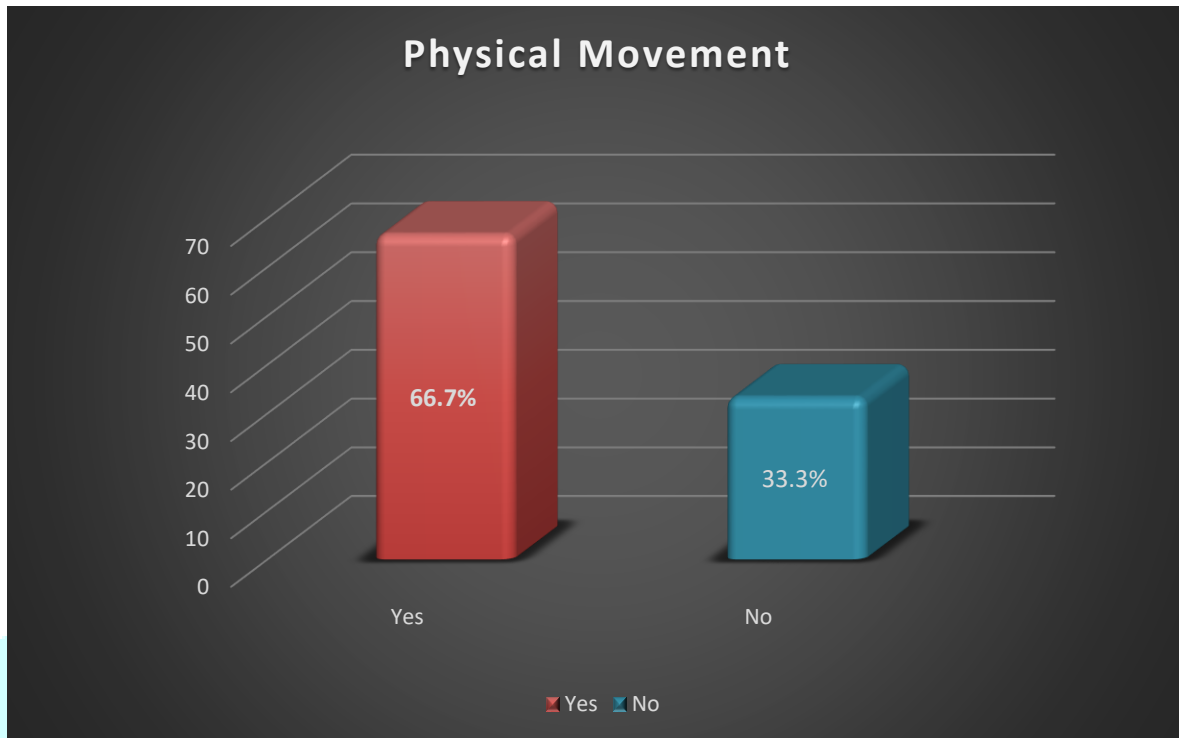
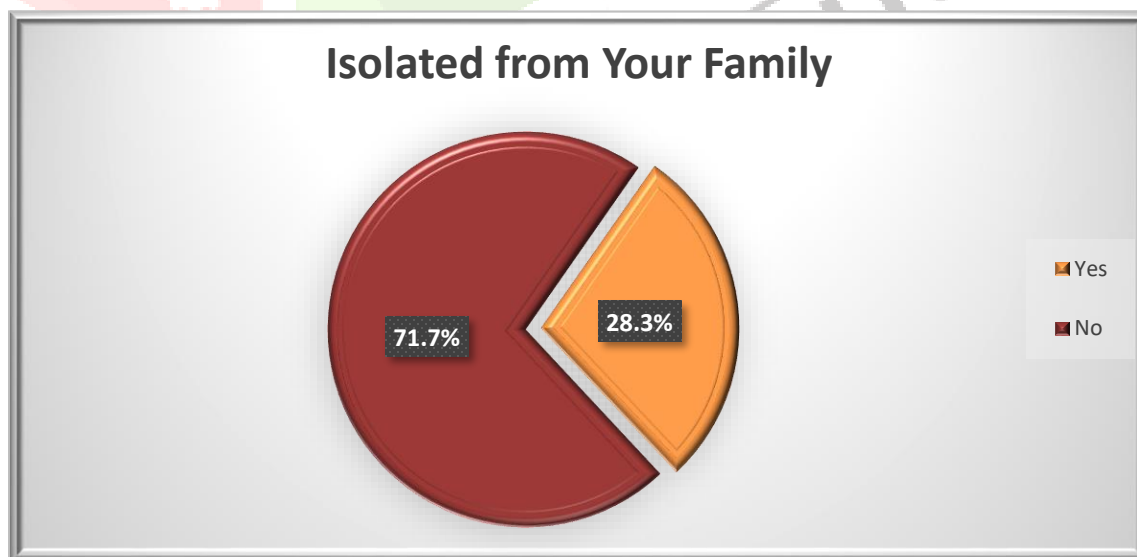


Figure No. 4 Isolated from family during lockdown



Impact of lockdown on the Social relationship of elderly during COVID-19

With regard to the impact of lockdown on the social relationship of the respondents, it was found that While 86.7% of the respondents feels that due to lockdown they are not able to meet their children, relatives and friends. Majority of the respondents (75%) are not affected by social distance and spatial distance. Among the respondents who are affected by social distance and spatial distance 96% of the respondents experience loneliness and isolation.

Table No. 1 Effect of lockdown on respondent's Social relationships

Effect of lockdown on Social relationships	Frequency	Percent
Social Isolation	3	5
Not able to attend go out and attend any function	3	5
Not able to meet children, relatives and friends	52	86.7
Breakdown of relationships	2	3.3
Total	60	100

Impact of lockdown on the family relations of elderly during COVID-19

With regard to the impact of lockdown on the family relationship of the respondents, While 63.3% of the respondents feels that lockdown keep them away from their loved ones. Majority of the respondents (88.3%) express their readiness to face the challenges of COVID 19 and 11.7% of them are not ready to face it. It was found 83.3% of them feel that they weak and too old and 16.7% of the respondents are afraid to face the challenges of pandemic.

Table No. 2 Effect of lockdown on respondent's Family relationships

Effect of lockdown on family relationships	Frequency	Percent
More time with the family	15	25
Financial constrain	6	10
More chance for conflict	1	1.7
Keeps away from loved ones	38	63.3
Total	60	100

Steps to be taken by Government for the Elderly during pandemic

With regard to the various steps the elderly wish the Government to take during pandemic, it was found 62 % of the respondents had opinion to make sure everyone takes the vaccine, 24% of them wish to provide them with free medicines, medical and mental support, 7.1% wish to provide possibility to engage than isolate, 2.3% wish their pension to make it available on time, 2.3% wish to start a vaccination centre for elderly alone and 2.3% wish to provide checkups at home by the Government. In spite of the constraints in the daily activities, routine life, relationships it was found that 95 percent of the respondents have a favourable opinion about lockdown as good.

Figure No. 5 Wish government to take any step for elderly during COVID 19

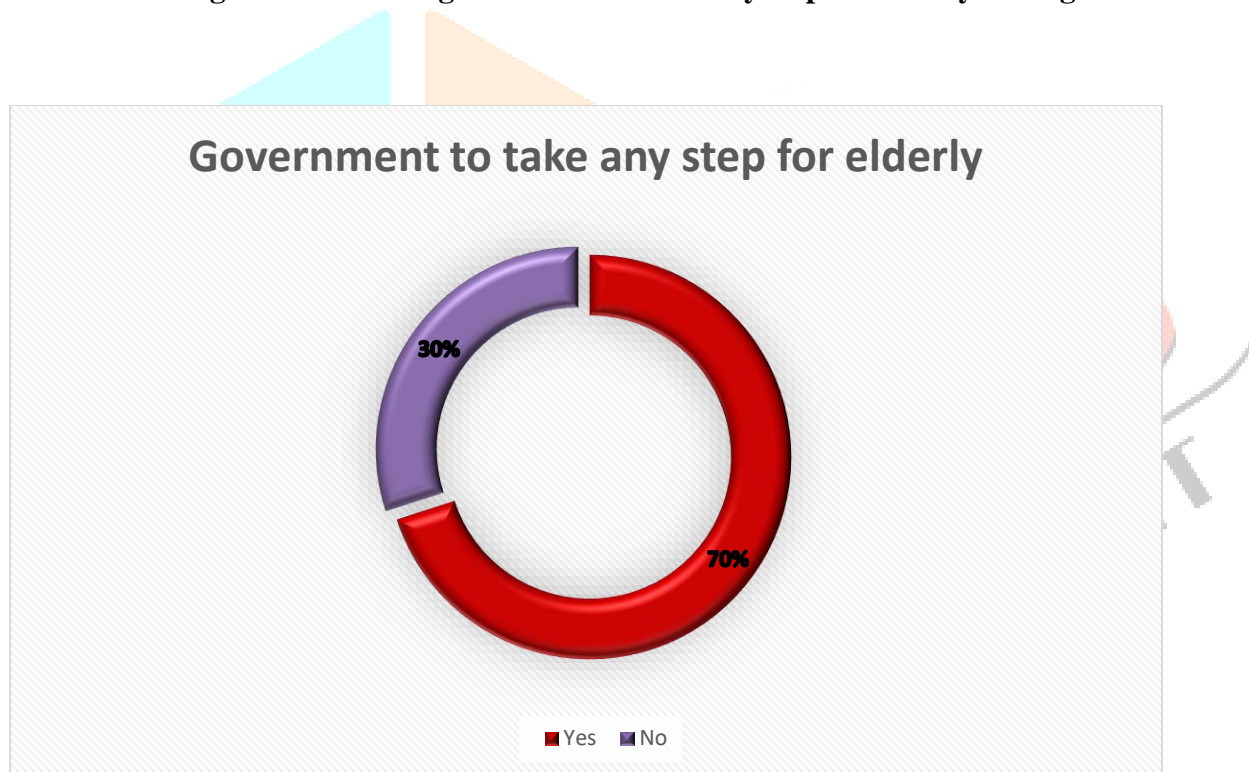


Table No. 3 The steps the government to be taken for elderly during COVID 19

The steps the government to be taken for elderly during COVID 19	Frequency	Percent
Provide possibility to engage than isolate	3	7.1
Free medicines, medical and mental support	10	24
Make sure everyone takes the vaccine	26	62
Make it available their pension on time	1	2.3
Vaccination centre for elderly alone	1	2.3
Provide checkups at home	1	2.3
Total	42	100

6.0 Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic and the preventive measures taken by the Government has brought unparalleled challenges and an inconsistent threat to humanity, especially to the elderly with direct impact on their lives, relationships and well-being. At this juncture, it is important to find ways to keep the elderly involved. Doing things they would enjoy, can help them to relieve stress and make them feel better and strengthen the bond with their family too. Therefore it is very essential that we create opportunities to promote healthy ageing during the pandemic.

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