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**Guided Research (ECO 4395)”**

**“Guided Research On”**

**“An exploration into the Impacts of COVID 19  
Pandemic on the Mental Health of school going  
Children: Bangladesh Perspective”**

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## Abstract

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The 2019 corona virus (COVID-19) illness was initially reported to spread worldwide in Wuhan, China, in order to cause a global pandemic. The corona virus was propagated to 219 nations on 6 February 2021, resulting in 2 311 1001 deaths globally, with at least 106.003,626 cases confirming it. Several countries have declared this pandemic a national emergency and have forced millions into lock-down. This unanticipated social isolation caused the worldwide population, especially youngsters, significant disturbance of everyday routines. Most schools stopped, canceled courses, and shifted them into home or online learning so that social spacing standards may be promoted and followed as a method to social spacing. The shift from physical lessons has considerably affected the lives of kids and their families, putting youngsters at danger. Change in the learning environment and restricted social contacts and activities were exceptional for the developmental brains of youngsters. The psychological impact of the corona virus pandemic on children is important to evaluate and understand. Bangladesh must also tackle this problem since Bangladesh has also been shutting down schools for a long time. This study aims to assess the influence of COVID-19 on the psychology of the children in Bangladesh, and to offer alternative ways to prevent the adverse psychological effects of this crisis. The participants in the research were subjected to a detailed interview in order to determine the impact of COVID 19 on their mental wellbeing. A key informant interview and a focus group discussion on children and families were both conducted.

**Keywords:** Corona Virus, School going children, Mental health, Parents, Mental disorders

## **Introduction**

### **Background of the study**

China's new Corona Virus spread like wildfire throughout the world. WHO has declared the situation pandemic due to the millions of deaths and widespread terror. It is estimated that as of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, 103,971,134 people have been infected with COVID-19 and 2,248,887 have died as a result of the pandemic, which has claimed the lives of millions around the world. Since the majority of countries wanted to reduce the number of infections and deaths, they established "social distancing" among people, imposed lockdowns, and closed borders for a period. One in five Chinese children, or 20 percent, suffers from depression or anxiety, according to a study of 1800 children in China under lockdown. As a result of this outbreak, the World Health Organization has classified it as a pandemic (WHO). COVID 19 caused the deaths of 2,251,128 people and the recovery of 75,909,100 people. As well as the common cold, corona viruses can cause severe diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). COVID-19, the seventh corona virus known to affect humans (Brazendale et al., 2017). While sneezing or coughing, maintain good hygiene. Keeping a minimum distance of one meter (three feet) between each other will be considered "physical distancing." As much as possible, people should avoid contact with animals, and their hands should be washed afterward. When talking about the new corona virus, public health professionals don't use the technical phrase "lockdown," which is reserved for scientists. As per the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), school closures caused by the Corona virus have affected more than three - quarters of the world's school population in 186 countries in total. A decline in corona virus transmission has prompted Denmark to send its youngest students back to school ahead of older students, justas Norway did. Quarantine was required to stop the spread of the disease, but it was not mandatory. Adults and children are both affected by it in different ways. Because of the global virus epidemic, the world has been severely affected. Millions of people are at risk for their long- term health, as well as their economic and social well-being. Everyone in society is impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. However, members of these social groups are particularly at risk: people living in poverty, the elderly and disabled as well as youth and indigenous peoples. Included in this is the potential for affecting the population. . People who are homeless, for instance, are at increased risk of getting the virus since they might not have been capable of moving aroundsecurely. Individuals that don't have accessibility to indoor plumbing are also harmed by the pandemic and its aftermath as a consequence of

restrictions on their movement, limited work prospects, and immigrant isolation, among other factors. Poor people are disproportionately affected by the virus's health and economic impacts, according to early indications. The social impact of COVID-19 | DISD is expected to be released in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic, which affected 221,964,329 students in 28 countries, forced the closure of education at all levels of education in the month of February from disruption to recovery in education, 2021. Therefore, many countries have turned to online or home-based training. In consequence, individuals and their families are obliged to invest more money in education, as they cannot receive the support and attention that professional teachers require. In youngsters who are subjected to stresses such as separating themselves from the family and friends, anxiety, panic attack, sadness and other mental diseases can emerge, witnessing or knowing severely ill members afflicted by the corona virus, or even worrying about their own deaths from the virus. The beginning of the school year in Bangladesh is expected to occur 11 months after the first COVID 19 case. The Bangladeshi government has just recently agreed to delay making a decision on school openings until March (Bhuiyan, Sakib, Pakpour, Griffiths & Mamun, 2020). Children's health, nutrition, safety, education, and mental health are all significantly impacted as a result of this. The long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's mental health is not yet documented in Bangladeshi literature (Bodrud-Doza et al., 2020). An important goal of this study was examining how the COVID-19 pandemic affected children's mental health and identifying related factors.

However, these definitions recognize the developmental context of childhood, including the ability to develop psychologically and emotionally; to develop and maintain mutually satisfying relationships; to become aware and empathize with others; to use and enjoy solitude; to become aware of others and to empathize with them (HAS 1995; Mental Health Foundation 1999). (HAS 1995; Mental Health Foundation 1999) briefed this type of definition is useful because it pertains to the expectations that society has for young children. Attaining developmental and emotional goals, forming positive social relationships, and overcoming obstacles are all important components of kid. Home, school, and community life are better for mental health of children ("What is Children's Mental Health, "2021).

## **Objectives**

This research has three main goals:

- To identify the elements that have an influence on the mental health of school-aged children.
- To make some policy recommendations for addressing the mental health problems that

children in Bangladesh experience in overall, and those that arise during times of crisis in particular.

### **Research questions**

To fulfill the aforesaid study aims, the underlying questions will be answered:

- I. How is the COVID 19 epidemic affecting school-aged children's mental health?
- II. Which variables impact school-aged children's mental health throughout the COVID 19 crisis?
- III. What policy recommendations may be made to improve children's mental health in Bangladesh, particularly amid crises?

### **Study Limitations**

There was not enough material on this issue in the country. Thus, articles and journals from different countries were compared. The research was part of the educational course and had a deadline for delivery. So time constraint is a key study restriction. In addition, the COVID 19 epidemic made in-person interviews difficult, and contact details were scarce. To overcome these difficulties, convenient sampling was included.

## **Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The nature of the research is exploratory in nature. Exploratory research is conducted on subjects or problems that have not been thoroughly investigated or on which there is a lack of sufficient understanding. A comprehensive investigation into this subject, discussed in the context of Bangladesh, has, however, been lacking. According to the findings, a qualitative study was carried out utilizing a convenient sampling technique. Interviews with important informants were also performed in order to obtain further information. Data triangulation has been accomplished through the utilization of secondary materials from a variety of publications, conference proceedings, periodicals, and official documents. It was necessary to maintain a continual balance between the

participants' views in order to find common features.

### **Data Collection Tools**

The research employed a set of semi-structured surveys to interview the school's students and their parents. During an in-depth interviewing with both the main respondents and focus group discussion, two sets of unstructured questionnaires were independently employed. Due to lockdown circumstances and social distance standards, certain data have been gathered over the internet and telephone via virtual mode. Some data were gathered from person to person. In addition, the interviews were undertaken in Bangladesh according to the interviewee's attributes.

### **Data Collection Method**

#### ***Sampling Technique***

The researcher utilized non-probability convenience sampling to perform this research. We know that convenience sampling is a systematic sampling that uses convenient individuals. Thus, the survey included kids and parents from 3 nearby schools. In addition, four key informant interviews were performed. The study used non-probability convenient sampling to choose schools and informants.

#### ***Study Area***

The researcher interviews school pupils from Students from Savar Government Primary School in Dhaka, Singair Primary Model School in Manikganj, and Mirpur Cantonment Public School and College in Mirpur, Dhaka. Certain geographical issues might be overcome by collecting data via phone and in-person interviews.

#### ***Ethical Consideration***

All the respondents were told that their data will be utilized in this study and were only recorded with their agreement. No one was coerced into providing data for the research.



## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

This section entails literature critically accessible and various research on the issue. The epidemic of the novel 2019 corona viral illness (COVID-19) develops rapidly over Chinese territory and is designated as a pandemic by the WHO. Most of the countries have made an unheard of effort to instruct the practice of social distancing in order to stop COVID-20 transmission. To stop the burden on health systems which resulting in closing of many schools and classes into home-based models for distance learning (*Schools Won't Open Now: PM | The Daily Star*, 2020). This has negative effects on children's mental health and well-being, resulting in a wide range of mental health conditions (Yeasmin et al., 2020). In the context of Bangladesh, other research studies were carried out on the same subject; however, the subject in the context of Bangladesh is not covered thoroughly. Therefore, the researchers attempted to link other nations experience in the same subject in their respective study on Bangladesh with a lack of sufficient material.

### **Defining Mental Health**

It is more than just a shortage of mental illnesses. In WHO's definition of health the positive aspect of mental health is emphasized as stated in its constitution: "Health is not just an absence of illness or disability but is a condition of complete bodily, mental, and social well-being (Leighton & Dogra, 2013)." Mental health concepts include subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, skill, interpenetrative reliance, and the awareness of one's intellectual and emotional capacity. It has also been characterized as a condition of well-being in which people acknowledge their capacities, are in a position to deal with regular pressures of life and to work effectively and fruitfully. Mental health is about increasing the skills and achievement of self-determined objectives of people and groups. Instead of simply individuals with a mental condition, mental health should be a priority for all of us. Things in mental health influence society as a whole, not only a tiny portion separated. It is thus a serious impediment to global development. There is no group that is mentally impaired, although the danger is greater among the poor, homeless people, jobless, poorly educated people, victims of violence, migrants, and refugees, indigenous communities, young people, battered women, and elderly people. In all people, the fundamental elements of life are tightly intertwined in mental, physically and social health.

## **Defining Mental Health Children**

A child's mental health — and by extension, their entire health — has a deep connection to their academic, professional, and societal success, which depends on their capacity to not just maintain physical wellness but also a good emotional state. Physical and mental health influence how we think, feel, and behave in both the physical and the mental worlds. The Mental Health for Children Report, in 2021 (“Children's Mental Health”, 2021). The Health Advisory Service (HAS) (1995) and the Mental Health Foundation (1999) presented several definitions of mental health in relation to children (1999). Definition by Ryff and Singer (1998) that "are done in leisure, independently, and for pleasure rather than out of necessity or obligation, and that are also original, unusual, and represent new ways of thinking and doing" helps in understanding creativity as a complex process of growth. -> Defining creative activities as ones that "are done in leisure, independently, and for pleasure rather than out of necessity or obligation, and that are also original, unusual, and represent new ways of thinking and doing" helps in understanding creativity as a complex process of growth. Creative activities as defined are those that are done in leisure, independently, and for pleasure, and which are also original, unusual, and represent new ways of thinking and doing (HAS 1995; Mental Health Foundation 1999). Defining a child's behavior based on “societal” expectations helps describe it. Childhood well-being includes an understanding of how to identify challenges and how to cope with them when they occur. In general, healthy children do well in different environments, including their homes, schools, and communities (“What is Children’s Mental Health?”, 2021).

## **Impact of Socio-economic Crisis on Mental Health**

In a study by G. Christodoulou et al (2013), financial crises have an unavoidable effect on mental health. Negative mental health can be a result of both direct and indirect socioeconomic consequences such as material disadvantages and inequalities as well as social fragmentation, unemployment, debt and deteriorating standards of living. These consequences have been directly linked to psychopathology in previous global financial crises as well as the current one. Mental health services, service delivery, and policy can all be affected. Because the ramifications are long-term and cross-generational, it is worthwhile to consider their prevention. Psychologists must understand the impact of financial crises on mental health and find evidence-based solutions. A similar tool would be useful not only for countries that are already affected, but also for other

countries that are at risk of becoming infected. With Greece as an example, we offer a fact-based account of this topic and offer some suggestions for how to respond to it. Suicide attempts and - arguably - actual suicides have increased in Greece and other austerity-hit countries, such as Ireland and England, in recent years. This evidence confirms earlier reports linking the financial downturn to an increase in suicide rates among Europeans (Leighton & Dogra, n.d.). Each percent increase in unemployment is associated with a 0.79 percent increase in suicides among people under 65 years of age. In Greece, between 2007 and 2009, the homicide rate nearly doubled due to unemployment. Psychopathology and poverty have been linked repeatedly in diverse cultural contexts and over time. Suicide rates have risen in the Far East and Southeast Asia as a result of severe financial losses resulting from the Asian economic crisis of the 1990s, and in particular, unemployment. Chinese socioeconomic reforms of the last three decades were accompanied by an increase in suicides. Following the agricultural reform of the mid-1990s, farmers in India committed mass suicides (Christodoulou & Christodoulou, 2013). Even if financial circumstances improve, socioeconomic factors during a crisis can have an impact on children's development and mental health. We cannot ignore this trans generational effect, not even as health professionals or members of the public can. Spending cuts in the public sector can have a devastating impact on public healthcare services as impoverished people turn to the public sector for their healthcare (Dunleavy, 2020). Due to record attendance, Greece's public hospitals are experiencing budget cuts of up to 40%. Increasing public sector stress is morally problematic because it can lead to health inequalities, which disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations. Between the socioeconomic determinants of financial crises and adverse physical health outcomes, there is a well-documented relationship. The link between unemployment and high morbidity/mortality rates (Bodrud-Doza et al., 2020) is perhaps the best illustration of this. Evidence from Spain suggests a strong link between socioeconomic factors and mental illness, including a rise in the incidence of dogmatization. Somatoform disorders have been linked to poor health perception, as Kentikelenis and colleagues found in Greece. According to the same study, heroin use and associated physical morbidity are on the rise. While other countries have seen a decline in overall alcohol consumption, Somatoform disorder, among other mental illnesses, is on the rise in Spain, according to recent research. The Greek public views their health as 'poor' or 'very poor'. In contrast to other countries, Greece has seen a decline in overall alcohol consumption, as well as a drop in the number of drunk drivers (Dalton et al., 2020).

## **Mental health of Children during COVID 19**

According to a recent study of 1800 Chinese children, one in five of them (20 percent) suffer from depression, anxiety, or both. Also, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health issues are still prevalent among children in the United States. COVID-19 quarantine has caused anxiety and depression in more than 4.4 million children aged 3-17, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). An additional three out of four children have depression and anxiety together, according to research (Galvin, 2020). Children's mental health and wellbeing are negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a survey of parents with primary-aged children. 87 percent of parents said their children were missing school, and less than half said their kids were lonely (Rawstrone, 2020). There are large numbers of children in Bangladesh who are suffering from mental health problems during the lockdown period, according to Yeasmin and colleagues (2020). For their children, it may be important for mothers and fathers to avoid emotional pain or depression that interferes with their role as parents. For this study, the most vulnerable cohorts are children living in urban areas, with parents who have a higher level of education, with both higher and lower family incomes, who smoke (yes), who have parental depressive symptoms (threat, scream, hit, etc.), and who have abnormal behavior as a child.

### **Culture of ignoring children mental health**

Based on (Express, 2020) The country of Bangladesh has long given insufficient consideration to mental health, and this is especially true in regards to children, who are more reticent to report worries and issues that they face. Additionally, the 2007 WHO-AIMS study shows that mental health spending is tiny and comes to about 0.5% of the overall health expenditure. The National Children Policy was created to address several difficulties kids face. Mental health, regrettably, was neglected in many areas. It's tragic that Bangladeshi children, who suffer mental illnesses as a result of being exposed to Covid-19, have not been getting the attention they need.

### **Inequality in Access**

A report by (Unicef, 2020), At least a third of the world's schoolchildren – 463 million children globally – were unable to access remote learning when COVID-19 shuttered their schools, according to a new UNICEF report released as countries across the world grapple with their 'back-to-school' plans. At the height of nationwide and local lockdowns, nearly 1.5 billion schoolchildren were affected by school closures around 70 per cent of schoolchildren of pre-primary-age – 120 million children – cannot be reached, largely due to challenges and limitations

to online learning for young children, lack of remote learning programs for this education category, and lack of home assets for remote learning. *The Remote Learning Reachability* report outlines the limitations of remote learning and exposes deep inequalities in access (Dalton et al., 2020).

### **Impact due to quarantine and separation from parents**

Researchers (Singh et al., 2020) found that children and adolescents manifest COVID-19 infection differently. However, worldwide, there have been reports of minors becoming infected and being quarantined. More often than not, either one or both parents are infected with the virus and quarantined. Regardless of the situation, children are kept apart from their parents. To combat the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries have implemented strict quarantine policies. In China, for example, several adults, adolescents, and children were placed in complete isolation in order to prevent the spread of infection among those who were exposed. The psychological effects of quarantine cannot be ignored, even though they are for the community's benefit. Children who are isolated from their parents may develop mental health problems as a result of their grief. The future is bright for Huang, Shi and Lu in 2020. As parents play a crucial role in a child's formative years, any disruption in the form of parental isolation can have long-term effects on the child's perception of attachment. Separation from primary caregivers can increase a child's vulnerability and threaten their mental health, according to research. It will be published in 2020 by Dalton, Rapa & Stein

### **Poverty, Food Crisis, Uncertain future, and Mental health**

Around 85.60% of youngsters have COVID-19 stress, which leads to sleep shortage, short temper, and family turmoil. According to this (Islam, Bodrud-Doza, Khan, Haque&Mamun, 2020). The major causes of human stress are fear of the COVID-19 (i.e., family member(s), family, family and/or family), restriction of the study plan and future careers, as well as financial issues. The PCM results explain the linkage between the elements of the stress of human beings. The economic difficulty found and the food crisis are connected together to cause the tension of masses of people (Christodoulou & Christodoulou, 2013).

A survey of the existing research on COVID 19 and children's minds indicates that COVID 19, with the spread of illness I, spreads dread also in their minds. Fear of new illness, the parents' economic problems, school and friends' stays, parent loss and online class pressures have a detrimental effect on children's mental health in COVID 19. Anxiety, sadness, tension are exacerbated by COVID 19. The results are based, however, mostly on the interpretation of quantitative data. More qualitative data should be added to evaluate the severity of the problems

and depth of the problem. To determine the concerns in particular, a hybrid approach is required (Ahmed, 2021).

### **Mental Health Care System of Bangladesh**

In 2018, Bangladesh adopted the new Mental Health Act, substituting the obsolete Lunacy Act of 1912 of 105 years. Mental health issues are common in the country with a countrywide assessment reportedly showing less mental health treatments. However, for the following reasons, the new legislation on mental health was criticized:

- It allows children and adolescents to be separated from adults in psychiatric facilities. This clause, however, has mainly not been enforced. In addition, there is little funding in the mental health field and minimal personnel resources. In this underemployed government hospital, the level of service is quite bad.
- Mental health legislation does not build more area-specific mental hospitals. As a result, most practitioners focus on major urban regions like Dhaka's capital. Comparably superior service and atmosphere are available in private hospitals. But private hospitals cost too much beyond the reach of individuals with poor incomes. Patients are therefore faced with the potential of abuse.
- The Act should be modified to include criminal measures against witchdoctors' cruel acts.

The mentioned literature reflects the general psychological condition, the consequences of a crisis and the picture of the mental health system and COVID 19's influence on children's mental health in Bangladesh. To address a wide range of issues facing children, the government developed the 2011 National Children Policy. One area that was sadly left out was mental health. Unfortunately, in Bangladesh, children's mental health issues resulting from Covid-19 have not received the attention they deserve.

## Findings and Discussion

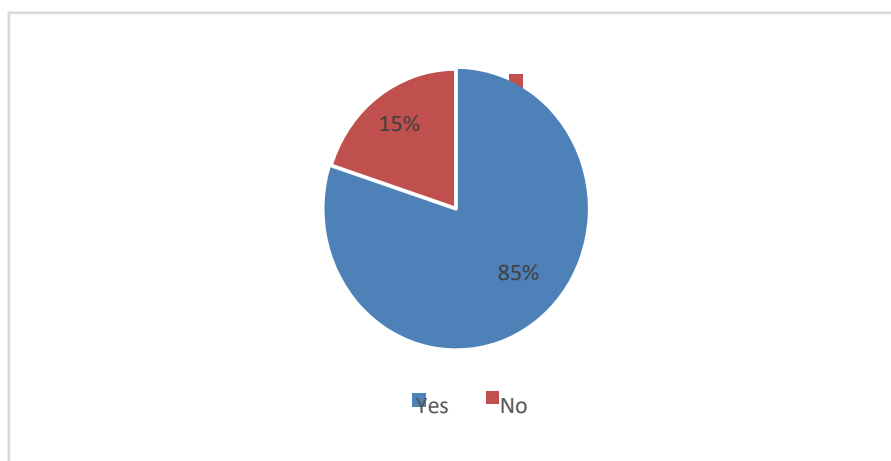
### Demography

There were 22 men and 11 women among the respondents. Students from primary and secondary schools, they were all in the age range of 5 to 18. It was a diverse group of people from different parts of the country. Students from Savar Government Primary School in Dhaka, Singair Primary Model School in Manikganj, and Mirpur Cantonment Public School and College in Mirpur, Dhaka, made up the majority of the students in this year's survey. In and around Dhaka, other respondents live. As mentioned above, participants achieve the objectives of the study:

Demographics	Frequency(n=30)
Gender:	
Male-	20
Female-	10
Education:	
Primary-	15
Secondary-	15
Age	
(5-10)	18
(10-18)	12
Attending Online Classes:	
Yes	18
No	12

## Impact of COVID 19 epidemic on school-going children's mental health

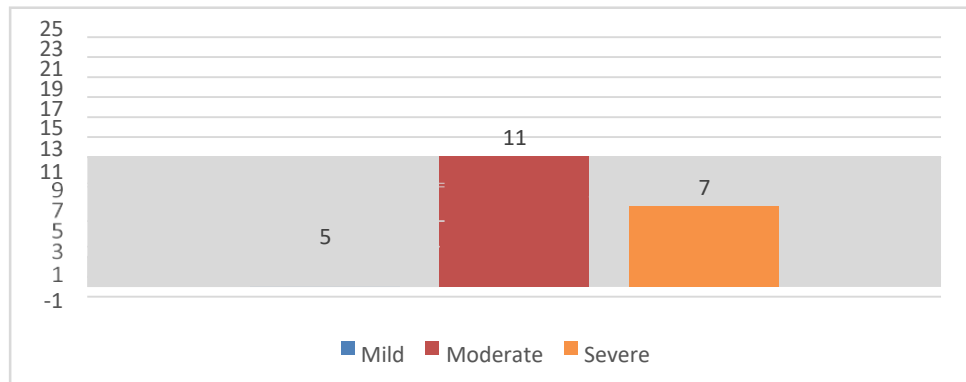
Bangladesh Covid- 19 has adversely affected every aspect of life. Even though its devastating effects, even children were not immune to its effects. COVID 19 has had a variety of effects on children. Most educational institutions will be closed as of March 18, 2019. Most school-going children stay at home and do not interact with their classmates or teachers. Neither they nor their neighbors are allowed to play outside with one another. Children have never experienced a home-based online system before. They could seriously harm children. The study found that 20 children and their parents (85%) reported feeling worried because to the COVID 19 epidemic. The graph below depicts children's stress due to COVID 19. Children and their parents were questioned whether they were worried, sad, or had a sleeping issue during the lockdown. They also evaluated symptom severity. The number of children who experienced each symptom, as well as the severity of each symptom, is shown in the table below. There were varying degrees of depression reported by both the children and their parents.



**Figure 1: Number of stressed children due to COVID 19**

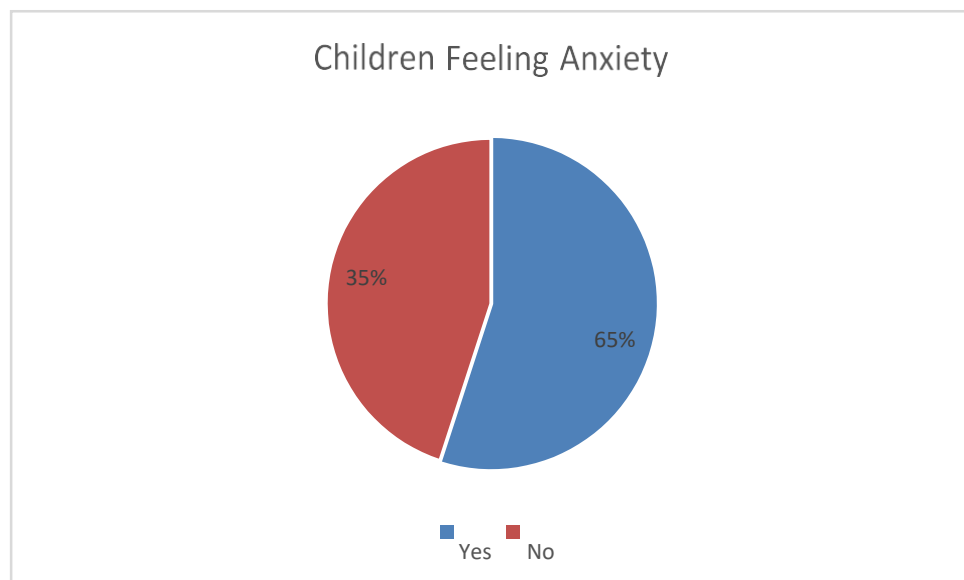


The COVID-19 caused severe stress in 5 children, moderate stress in 11, and light stress in 7. The figure below depicts children's stress levels related to COVID 19.



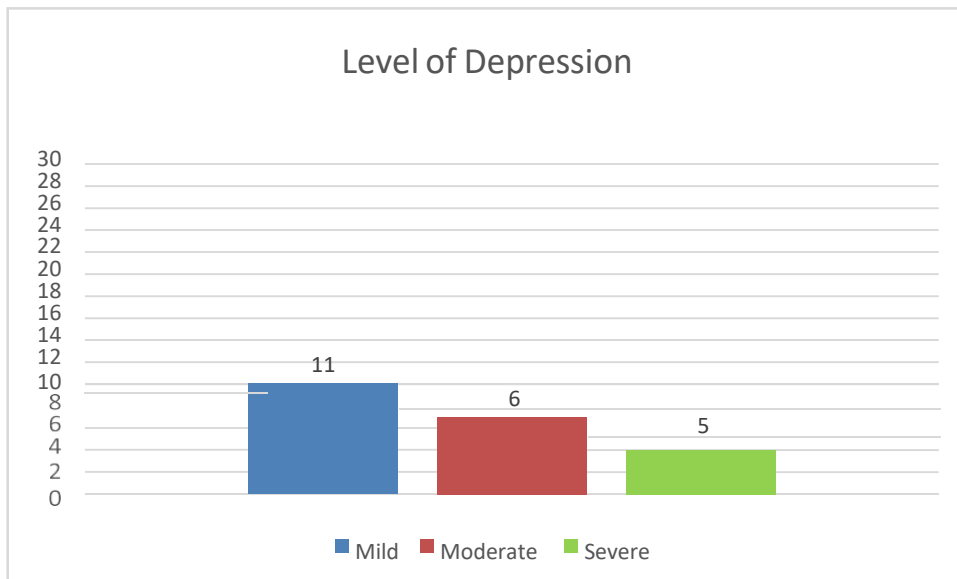
**Figure 2: Stress level among children**

During the lockdown, we questioned the kids and their parents if they were anxious, depressed, or had trouble sleeping. They also assessed the symptoms' severity. On the basis of 30 young folks, the following symptom counts and severity levels were determined:

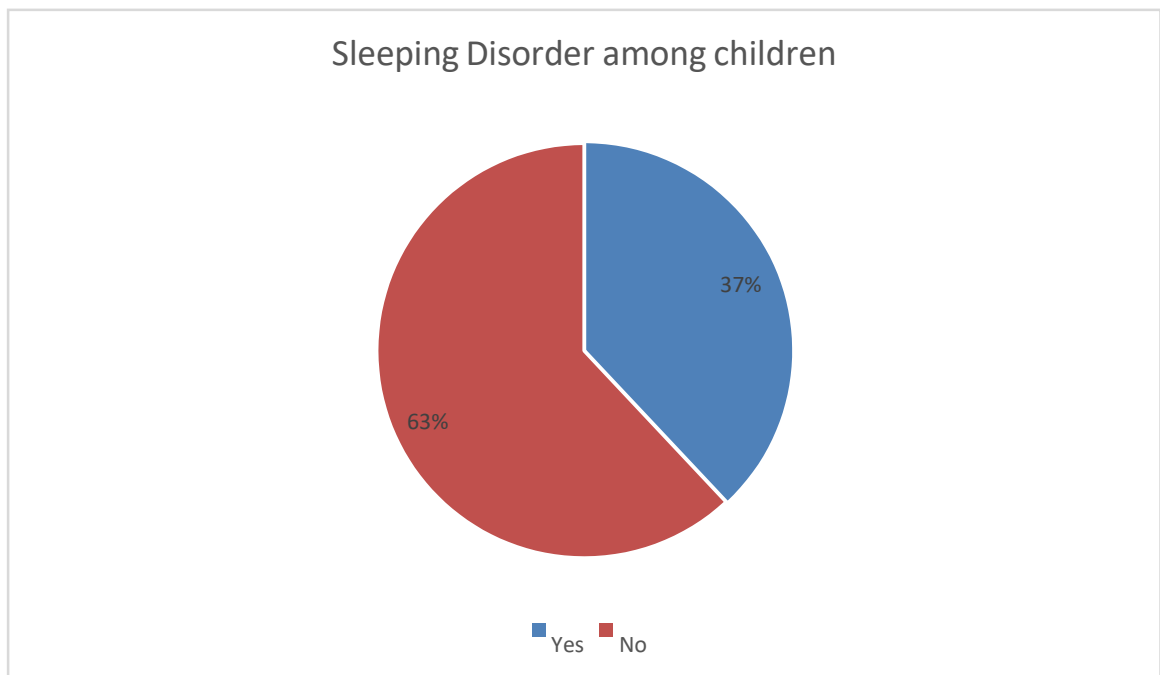


**Figure 3 Children anxiety in lockdown**

In addition, children and their parents reported feeling melancholy in varying degrees. During lockdown, 22 out of 30 kids were depressed in varying degrees.



**Figure 5: Level of depression among children**



**Figure 6: Sleep disorder of children**

During the lockdown, however, 15 out of 30 children reported sleeping problems. The following variables were identified as affecting the population's mental health in Covid 19. They

were filled with dread at the thought of an unknown disease. As a result, Bangladesh does not have a widely available vaccine. And to top it all off, children are the last ones in line to get immunized. Because of this, children may feel anxious about contracting this disease, or even dying from it, at times. In fact, they were worried about their parents, who had to work and go out every day. It was feared that their parents would die from COVID 19. A 15-year- old child explains,

*"my mother is a nurse at the hospital doctor's office". Every day, she must visit the hospital. As a result, I am concerned that she may contract Corona and become ill".*

A secondary school student, says,

*"The kidneys of my father are failing him. He visits the bank on a daily basis. If he is affected by Corona, I am very worried about him."*

Internet and social media publish different types of news. A few of them are fake, while others are factual in nature. It is common for children to be unsure of what to believe and what not to believe. Because of this, their little minds are frightened. Covid positive parents and their children were kept apart. Because of this, they were extremely stressed. The children had a difficult time adhering to the safety measures, such as washing their hands and wearing masks at all times.

### **Extended School Closure**

The Global Curriculum Partnership says the school provides a balanced education to promote children's mental and emotional growth (Global Education Partnership, n.d.). For the socialization of youngsters, schools are also crucial. School is the place to meet friends, to be able to play with them, to study and do new things. However, when schools were closed, these chances were lost for children. The government of Bangladesh has stated that all types of training institutes would cease from 18 March 2020 in order to continue the practice of social distance. This was done for general and children's safety. For more than 11 months, children now spend at home. Many said they used to feel quite tedious and sometimes alone during the early lock-down days. They are worried because they cannot meet with their friends and mate. They were not even allowed to play in the neighborhood even in the early days. This upsets their thoughts. For youngsters that lived in the country or small city, the situation is extremely prevalent. The urban youngsters,

meanwhile, were primarily unhappy because they could not go to school. A primary school student aged 8, living in urban area reported,

*“Sometimes I feel very frustrated why I cannot go to school and play with my friends. I’m imprisoned all the time at home.”*

The closing of the school is a serious problem for their everyday routine. Your hours and sleep have altered every day. Certain youngsters experienced sleeping difficulties. After all day school, they were tired and fatigued. School even offered kids opportunities for physical work. This has caused some sleeping disturbances. It is stated in (Bhuiyan, 2020) that e-learning or distance learning has taken precedence over traditional classroom instruction during the current COVID-19 pandemic situation. Nevertheless, none of these tools is as effective as a classroom in a situation like this. Primary school students were less likely than secondary school students to engage in online learning, based on the research sample. Numerous children reported that they were unable to pay attention in an online class setting. A 13-year-old student in class seven, says he is "extremely disturbed" when a network suddenly goes down during class. Many parents terminated their home tutors because of vacations or a lack of funds. The majority of students, according to many parents, have almost forgotten what they learned in the previous class. Even though the fact that they have no homework, children report feeling pressured by their parents to study. Occasionally, however, the date of the SSC exams is postponed for whatever reason. In an interview, SSC examinee revealed:

*“Uncertainty often makes me anxious, and we're unsure if there will be an exam or not.” ‘I can't pay attention to my online classes because of my eye problem,’* says, another SSC examinee. As a result, *“I am concerned about my results.”*

This was reported by a 10-year-old girl,

*“Online classes are too much for me to handle. As a result of this, I was unable to understand what my teacher was saying most of the time. As a result, I struggled in my exams. ‘It makes me anxious.’”* Children are often bothered by the evaluation system of online classes. Students are under tremendous pressure to complete their assignments in the limited amount of time. There are many obstacles that kids with less tech-savvy parents face when it comes to completing online courses.

## **Addiction to Digital Device, Video Games, and Social Media**

Digital devices such as Android and PC are popular ways for students to pass the time during the school holiday period. They spend most of their time playing video games or on social networking sites. An over-reliance on technology on one hand, and social media misinformation on the other, lead to confusion. According to parents, their children spend the majority of their time on their mobile devices. According to a guardian,

*"My child is always on her phone and playing games." Because they are unable to play, we are unable to prevent them from doing so either. However, the use of the device may result in eye and mental health problems."*

Another guardian, said:

*"My son spends most of his time on the computer playing videogames. He spent more time on his phone than with his family, siblings, or playing outside." A parent's primary concern is for their child. However, they are powerless to stop them from becoming dependent on electronic devices. In spite of being prohibited from using mobile phones, they appear agitated."*

## **Digital Device among Children**

People with and without access to modern information technologies have been experiencing a "digital gap" since the mid-1990s. A digital device among youngsters has been reported by Sranan and Bohlen (2011). Urban or small town areas are represented by almost all schools, and most of them have either started online classes or implemented assignment-based evaluation systems, according to the sample. This is not the case in rural areas, where children do not have access to such opportunities. Schools like this lack the technological know-how or resources to implement online learning. Digital devices are out of reach for some students, even those who are in college. Many students said that they had never heard of online classes before they enrolled in them. So far, they have forgotten everything they've learned so far. As a result, some students are falling behind in their academics. Aside from that, it could lead to a digital device among students within the same school. Some school students find it frustrating that they do not have access to digital devices.

### **Caregiver's Income Loss**

20 percent of individuals were poor in 2019, according to Business Insider (2020). As a result of COVID 19, the poverty rate is expected to rise from 20% to 40%. An estimated 9% or more will be food insecure. From 20% to 35%, the Vulnerability Index No matter how things turn out financially, the socioeconomic factors that contribute to a crisis can have an impact on children's mental and physical health (G. Christodoulou & N. Christodoulou, 2013). Chaos in the family caused mental distress in children whose parents lost their income source. Several students used to earn income from tuition, but now they are burdens on their families as a result. According to a student in class 10:

*"I used to listen to my tutors." Corona, on the other hand, cost me money in terms of tuition. To be a burden on my family is depressing".*

### **Culture of ignoring mental health of children**

A child's mental health problem is less vocal. It's ironic that children's anxiety and stress went unnoticed for so long. They lacked adequate mental support. A lot of the time, they were punished for acting out of irritation. Nobody from the mental health field was contacted. Rarely did parents explain the crisis to their children and educate them about it. As a result of their excessive use of mobile phones and other gadgets, children reported that their parents were angry with them. As a means to relieve boredom and connect with friends, these devices were merely used to pass the time. In the words of 12-year-old girl:

*"My parents are always mad at me because I use the phone." But I can't think of anything else to do besides play games on my phone".*

## Discussion

It is crucial for mental wellness but is frequently overlooked. Moreover, since the children's mental health is less loud, this area is typically ignored. The results represented the psychological state of the youngsters who commonly neglect mental health requirements. In the 2003-2005 national survey 16.05 percent of the country's adult population with mental illnesses reported. Social insurance covers no mental condition, the mental health inspection agency in the country does not exist, and a particular mental health authority is not established in the country. In addition, Bangladesh's Mental Health Unit does not provide enough distinct wing, much alone a separate children's mental health wing. The study identified several sorts of symptoms such as stress, anxiety, sleeping problems and depression at a varying level of severity among the study group. The results indicate a range of factors affecting the population's mental health. The responder talked about life difficulties and changes that affect their mental health generally. The closing of schools, loss of parents' income, loss of income, etc. had various effects on their mind. Many teenagers complain sleep and depression but there is no policy to treat children's mental health concerns in such a critical period.

In Bangladesh, social protection networks look for children's needs. However, the mental health of youngsters is not properly examined. The mental health of children should be treated with the utmost seriousness. The research shows that crises determine the socio-economic problem of mental health in communities and children. The COVID 19 epidemic was caused by socio- economic causes such as financial loss. Loss of income impacts everyone, especially children.

This research is in line with the study's findings that children whose parents lost their jobs faced instability at home or inadequate family assistance. They were enraged. Also, home-based online programs widen the digital gap. Students who lack access to digital devices or have access but struggle suffer enormous emotional stress. Then, the submission deadline affects children's mental health. Cost of bandwidth and broadband commonly lost network signals. This implies that the children's online education system should be updated appropriately, with a focus on their mental health. Bangladeshi social safety net programs address various elements of child welfare.

But children's mental health is not adequately reviewed. Children's mental health should be treated as seriously as any other societal issue. Studies show that socioeconomic factors in any crises affect the population's mental health, especially youngsters. The COVID 19 pandemic is a catastrophe, and one of its socioeconomic drivers was income loss. Income loss affects general

health, especially children's mental health. The study revealed that children whose parents lost

money faced instability in the household or lack of family support. This shook their mental health.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Recommendations**

(Thiel, 2020), made several recommendations to address children's mental health concern because of the COVID epidemic. These proposals can be adopted from a national point of view.

- Invest in the prevention, response and recovery strategy of the COVID-19 mental health and psychosocial support services.
- Recognizing and classifying social care providers as important workers and supporting critical health, education, social and mental health professionals who are able to handle the requirements of mental health.
- In cases of separation or displacement, reach children and families, particularly the most vulnerable, with disabilities, mental health issues pre-existing, support across "the continuum of care." This demands a cross-sectoral and integrated approach to the psychosocial and mental health programs of all COVID 19 players.
- Engage children and adolescents in the formulation, design and implementation of plans for preparation, reactions and recovery, while ensuring their healthy growth, protection, learning and wellness. By integrating mental health and well-being assistance via education, healthcare and child protection services, children and adolescents who are affected by this pandemic may make a difference.

In addition, based on the study, if added to the mental health policy, some more actions may be taken in response to children's mental health in the COVID 19 pandemic, in a scenario of crisis like this generally-

- Online mental health Services such as IACAPAP-initiated online CAP treatments should be extended to give children with mental health services over the phone. Such initiatives at least at the district level should be conducted at the community level.
- Every school should hire a psychological counselor, which can only be done if




mental health investments are raised as previously proposed.

- In addition, national curricula may contain chapters on mental health, and under particular on mental health, in crisis circumstances such as COVID 19 pandemic.
- National television programs comprising of children's psychology and psychiatry professionals in the field of children's mental health can be shown in COVID 19. This will make kids and parents aware of the situation. In times of crisis, such activities should also be included in national programs.
- An annual conference may be organized to train teachers and parents in the crisis situations to take care of their children
- School teachers should be trained to discuss difficulties and crisis situations so that pupils are prepared to deal as closely as possible with these situations.

## **Conclusion**

Even though COVID-19 is now well recognized throughout the world, determining its immediate and long-term impacts on children's mental health remains a challenging task to assess. Prevention of virus transmission and dealing with unclear situations have both been demonstrated to have a detrimental influence on children's mental health. In addition to causing emotional distress, fear, and anxiety among the children and their caregivers, the measures taken have resulted in the closure of schools, the restriction of social interactions, the imposition of travel restrictions, the suspension of sports activities, and the conversion of all courses to online instruction. Guardians, educational institutions, and health authorities must collaborate in order to preserve and safeguard the mental health of children. This may be accomplished by open communication and expert counseling amongst all parties.

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