

Impact of the COVID-19 on University Students in Bangladesh: A Comprehensive Study

Anira Mohiuddin* , Md. Abdul Kader Miah, Mahmuda Akter

Department of Criminology and Police Science, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Tangail, Bangladesh

Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic has influenced all levels of the instruction framework, especially in University education. Since March 26, 2020, public holidays was pronounced by the Government of Bangladesh in all educational institutions which hamper the students' everyday schedules and affect their both physical and mental wellbeing. This study aims to explore the impact of COVID-19 among university students in Bangladesh by identifying their socio-demographic condition, changes in livelihood, and distinctly measuring the social, economic, educational, technological, and psychological impact. A quantitative research design is followed in this study where participants were selected using convenience sampling (135 respondents) through an online survey (Google Forms). The time period of data collection was from August to October 2020. From this study, university students have experienced both social stigmatization and economic crisis due to the pandemic. Furthermore, the maximum has experienced anxiety, loneliness, emotional breakdown, sleeping disorder, keep checking the news in the little time interval, difficulty to connect with daily normal life, tensed about re-infected by COVID-19. Besides, due to the inadequate availability of internet in remote and rural areas, the speed and cost of internet, the availability of electronic devices to access the internet, and the lack of interaction between students and teachers. Indeed, it is high time that the government and associated educational institutions should make a proper plan about how to overcome the challenges of ongoing university students' condition to improve the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as early as possible.

Keywords

COVID-19, University Students, Lockdown, Impact, Bangladesh

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 virus, which was first reported in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, has impacted everyone [1]. The World Health Organization declared it as a pandemic on March 11, 2020 [2], and the primary three cases of COVID-19 were found in Dhaka, Bangladesh on March 08, 2020 [3]. Given the abundant populace of Bangladesh and other positive variables, COVID-19 has ended up a major public health concern in Bangladesh, as in other nations [4]. To decrease the spread of COVID-19, public holiday was pronounced by the Government of Bangladesh on March 26, 2020 [5]. All

educational institutions have remained closed since then [6]. This circumstance may ruin college students' concentration, disturb their everyday schedules and propensities, and affect their both physical and mental wellbeing. Besides, home quarantine, physical/spatial separating, and other confinements are likely to have mental impacts on understudies [7] and contrarily impact their mental prosperity. Whereas isolated and out of the college environment and plan, understudies' involvement push, un-easiness, outrage, boredom, depression, and other feelings, with both shorter-

* Corresponding author

E-mail address: prama.anira@gmail.com (A. Mohiuddin)

and longer term impacts [8]. News, deception, and rumors approximately COVID-19 may too increment negative considerations and feelings inside understudies and around their prospects [1].

COVID-19 pandemic has influenced all levels of the instruction framework [9]. Educational institutions around the world have either briefly closed or actualized localized closures influencing approximately 1.7 billion of the understudy populace around the world [10]. Numerous universities around the world either put off or cancelled all campus exercises to play down social occasions and subsequently diminish the transmission of infection. In any case, these measures lead to higher prudent, therapeutic, and social suggestions in both undergrad and postgraduate communities [11]. Due to the suspension of classroom education in numerous universities, a switch to online education for undergrad and graduate understudies gets to be viable [12]. This frame of learning gives an elective way to play down either the contact between understudies themselves or between the understudies and instructors [13]. In any case, numerous understudies have not got to online instruction due to the need for either the implies or the disobedient due to economical and advanced partition [14].

The corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic and the different measures presented to moderate its spread have essentially influenced the day-to-day way of life and mental well-being of the people especially the students; though numerous higher instruction understudies have found themselves in a one of a kind circumstance confining in a family with others they don't know well. Whereas the larger part of universities around the world coordinated a few shapes of online instruction into their coursework, moving all programs online may demonstrate challenges. Whereas a few universities may as of now have running online frameworks, few universities are still struggling with it. Universities' course makers ought to work closely with their IT offices to guarantee their programs are able to be supported online for all socioeconomic classes of students.

This study represents the impact of the Corona Virus among university students in Bangladesh by identifying their socio-demographic condition, changes in livelihood, and distinctly measuring the social, economic, educational, technological, and psychological impact of COVID-19 condition.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to explore the impact of coronavirus or the COVID-19 among university students in

Bangladesh. To fulfill this, the specific objectives of this study are the following:

To examine the socio-demographic condition of the university students based on their entire living arrangements in the COVID-19 situation.

To identify the changes in livelihood due to Corona Virus among university students in Bangladesh.

To find out the social, economic, educational, technological, and psychological impact of COVID-19 among university students in Bangladesh.

1.2. Materials and Method

This study is exploratory in nature as it shows the overall impact of COVID-19 on university students in Bangladesh. A quantitative research design is followed in this study where all university going students were the population for this study. Active (current) students from public, private, and national different universities in Bangladesh participated in the survey method. Here, by considering the severity of the Corona Virus situation and for ensuring the health safety purpose, participants were selected using convenience sampling (135 respondents) through an online survey. A structured questionnaire (in the English language) was given to the respondents to collect data. The survey was conducted with an online survey tool (Google Forms). No incentives or rewards were offered for participation. During the survey, individuals first provided informed consent and then were asked to answer the posted questions. The time period of data collection was from August to October 2020. The data were processed through coding, categorization, and tabulation. Then, the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel programs were used for analysing the online survey data. Finally, the data were interpreted and analysed in the descriptive method.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

In this section demographic parameters of the respondents have been analysed. Demographic is often important as it indicates the number of people represents the highest in the study and influence to frame the research. Often socio-demographic data are linked with other research variables to find out the relationship, association between them either positive or negative.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

Variables	Indicators	Number	Percent	Total
Gender	Female	56	41.5	135
	Male	79	58.5	
Age	Mean Age= 22.26			
	17-20	32	23.7	135
	21-24	84	62.3	
	25-28	19	14.1	
University Nature	Private	11	7.7	135
	Public	121	84.7	
	College	3	2.1	
Educational Background	University (1st year)	24	17.7	135
	University (2nd year)	17	12.6	
	University (3rd year)	49	36.3	
	University (4th year)	22	16.3	
	University (Post-graduation)	23	17.0	
Religion	Buddhism	3	2.2	135
	Hinduism	13	9.6	
	Islam	119	88.1	
Employment status	Causal (tuitions, coaching, etc.)	51	37.8	135
	Not specified	10	7.4	
	Part-time	4	3.0	
Area of living	Unemployed	70	51.9	135
	Rural area	55	40.7	
Living arrangements	Urban area	80	59.3	100.0
	Live alone	1	.7	
	Live with parents	90	66.7	
	Live with shared accommodation (hall/mess)	43	31.9	
Majority of respondents Districts (Top 4 out of 64 districts)	Live with spouse	1	0.7	135
	Dhaka	31	22.8	
	Tangail	19	14	
	Gazipur	13	9.6	
	Sirajganj	8	6.0	
	Other Districts (60 more)	64	47.6	100.0

Source: The authors

From table 1, it is seen that majority of the respondent for this study is male. Total 58.5% of males have fill-up the online survey questionnaire compares to 41.5% of females. The mean age of the respondent is 22.26 years and most of them are between the age group 21-24 years (62.3%). 84% of students are from different public universities and 36.3% of their year of education is graduation 3rd year.

Of the student who takes part in the survey, 51.9% of them currently unemployed following by 37.8% are working in causal such as a house tutor or taking coaching classes as a part of their income source. Respondents are living generally in the urban area (59.3%) but a good number of the respondents also living in rural areas (40.7%). Total 66.7% are currently living with their parents due to pandemic corona were 31.9% still have to stay in shared accommodations. This study has also found that respondent corresponds near 35 districts but the top four districts have a compromise of above 5% respondents. The top four districts where respondents reside were Dhaka, following by Tangail, Gazipur, and Sirajganj.

2.2. Respondents Knowledge of COVID-19 Virus

A very small number of respondents didn't hear about the coronavirus before this survey while 98.5% of respondents have heard of coronavirus or COVID-19 or sars-cov-2 due to huge publicity in the newspaper, televisions, and internet and even by every countries government. Their perception of coronavirus shortly is "A deadly disease, curable and low mortality rate" by 53.3% of the respondents. Other hands 32.4% are said that "It is a deadly disease with a certainty of death" and very few are believed in "It is a curse from God" (11.1%) and "A Rumour" which is being spread through the public or media (3.0%). As the sample population is university students it can be said that they will be well aware of the fact of coronavirus due to their access to media and awareness-related sources. Although worldwide the rate of COVID infected population is breaking the everyday record, in this study out of 135 respondents a total of 53 (39.3%) has so far tested positive for corona virus. Moreover, this 53 has faced the reality more than the other 82 people.

Table 2. Respondents knowledge of COVID-19 virus.

Variables	Attributes	Number	Percent
Respondents heard of COVID-19	Maybe	1	.7
	No	1	.7
	Yes	133	98.5
Respondents perceiving COVID-19	A curse from God	15	11.1
	A deadly disease with a certainty of death	44	32.6
	A contagious disease, curable and low mortality rate	72	53.3
	A rumour which is being spread through public or media	4	3.0
Respondent tested positive for COVID-19	Yes	53	39.3
	No	82	60.7
	Total	135	100.0

Source: The authors

2.3. Changes in Life Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Respondents

Corona virus pandemic has enormous direct and indirect effects on our life directly or indirectly. The government or by own choice people has started to made changes in their regular lifestyle. Table 3 shows, in this study, 94.8% of students are agreed that they made changes in their lifestyle due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Life changes are a crucial component to fight back the spreading of the corona virus [15]. In this study,

life changes made due to the COVID-19 pandemic are analysed from respondent responses and presented in tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Lifestyle changes of respondents due to the spread of corona virus.

	Frequency	Percent
No	7	5.2
Yes	128	94.8
Total	135	100.0

Table 4. Lifestyle changes of respondents due to the spread of Corona Virus (%).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Stop going outside unnecessarily	57.8	31.9	2.2	3.7	4.4
Avoiding crowded places	67.4	24.4	2.2	.7	5.2
Stop using the public transports	41.5	33.3	13.3	7.4	4.4
Cancelled plans to meet friends & family	34.8	36.3	13.3	12.6	3.0
Avoiding recreational, shopping, and entertainment places	53.3	28.9	9.6	3.7	4.4
Have been using personal hygiene products (ex: mask, sanitizer, and hand washes)	63.7	27.4	3.0	2.2	3.7
Washing hand after coming from outside	71.9	20.7	2.2	.7	4.4
Maintaining social distance	56.3	28.1	6.7	6.7	2.2
Have stocked up food and necessities	12.6	25.9	26.7	24.4	10.4
Maintaining a proper diet	20.7	40.0	19.3	15.6	4.4
Isolating myself from other COVID-19 suspects	56.3	26.7	5.2	9.6	2.2
Avoiding touching mouth, nose, and face	35.6	34.8	18.5	8.9	2.2
Using tissue / handkerchief while coughing	41.5	36.3	12.6	6.7	3.0

Source: The authors

According to table 4, the major change for students and their families with the spread of the corona virus is washing hands after coming home from outside (71.9% percent are strongly agreed on this change). Other than this change most of the changes are strongly agreed by the respondents except have stocked up food and necessities (26.7% were neutral), maintaining a proper diet (40% agreed), and cancelled plans to meet friends & family (36.3% agreed). Avoiding touching mouth, nose, and face is also balancing in between strongly agree (35.6%) and agree (34.8%) which is crucial to stop the spread of the corona virus.

Besides, the positives changes people made to protect themselves from corona viruses are, 57.8% of respondents have stopped going outside unnecessarily, 67.4% of

respondents have avoided crowded places, 41.5% of respondents have stopped using public transports, 53.3% of respondents have avoided recreational, shopping, and entertainment places, 63.7% of respondents have been using personal hygiene products (ex: mask, sanitizer, and hand washes, 41.5% of respondents have used tissue or handkerchief while coughing, 56.3% of respondents have been trying to maintain social distance and isolating myself from other COVID-19 suspects.

2.4. Social Impact of the Corona Virus Among Respondents

According to table 5, most of the respondents generally either agreed or disagreed on some social impact of the corona virus on their life. Two variables are disagreed as 32.6% thinks this

pandemic will not create a clash with religious views and 28.9% of the respondent disagreed on more pressure of marriage. The other five variables have shown a great amount of intensity to agree by respondents. A total of 43% of respondents said it has increased the line of equality gaps between poor and rich, male and female, 40.7% of respondents are agreed on it has developed social cohesion crisis and risen uncertainty in social

security respectively. The other two social impacts are immense social stigmatization (38.5% agreed) and the spreading of the traditional clash (35.6% agreed). Previous pandemic-related studies have also found similar results in the case of increased stigmatization, social cohesion crisis, and uncertainty in social clashes [16-18].

Table 5. Social Impact of the Corona Virus Among Respondents (%).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Increasing equality gaps	17.8	43.0	25.2	9.6	4.4
Creating clash with religious views	8.1	23.0	23.7	32.6	12.6
Growing social cohesion crisis	14.1	40.7	24.4	17.0	3.7
More pressure of marriage	8.9	25.2	21.5	28.9	15.6
Rising uncertainty in social security	34.1	40.7	14.1	7.4	3.7
Influences spreading on the traditional clash	10.4	35.6	28.9	21.5	3.7
Immense social stigmatization	23.7	38.5	25.9	9.6	2.2

Source: The authors

2.5. Economic Impact of the Corona Virus Among Respondents

As it is evident that every century has witnessed some pandemic and each pandemic has hit the economic backbone of the national and individual level. The 1918 influenza has costs that reach about US\$500 billion each year, the 2003 SARS virus, the 2009-2011 H1N1 virus, 2017 Zika Virus has the same impact so far [19]. World Bank (2019) has estimated future pandemics will impact the global economy to fall by

2.2-4.8% of the GDP (US\$3trillion) and for South Asia, the fall rate is 2% (US\$53billion). From the health sector to agriculture, trade, tourism, and travel sectors are potentially impacted by this epidemic [20]. Even pandemic has a long impact on a person's economic stability as the cost of living and unemployment of citizens will increase [18, 21]. A similar finding has come out in this study. Bangladesh is a country where most of the public university students bear their education costs by doing some casual and part-time jobs.

Table 6. Economic Impact of the Corona Virus among Respondents (%).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Pressure on paying house rent	43.7	36.3	7.4	8.9	3.7
Rising the supply of food cost	36.3	48.9	5.9	5.9	3.0
Increasing unemployment	65.9	25.9	3.0	2.2	3.0
The increasing threat of losing the job of the family main earner	28.1	34.8	23.0	9.6	4.4
Loss of student's part time job	55.6	29.6	5.2	5.9	3.7
Growing economic hardship	46.7	33.3	7.4	8.9	3.7
Growing educational cost (tuition fee/ semester fee/ internet fee)	27.4	37.0	20.0	6.7	8.9

Source: The authors

In this table 6, around 43% of respondents have strongly faced pressure to pay house rent following by 65.9% of unemployment, 55.6% of students lost their part-time job, and 46.7% having witnessed growing economic hardship day by day. Further, they are agreed on the rising supply cost of food (48.9% agreed and 36.3% strongly agreed), 34.8% agreed on the increasing threat of losing the job of the family main earner and 37% agreed on growing educational cost on tuition fee or semester fee or internet fees.

2.6. Educational Impact of the Corona Virus Among Respondents

From table 7, the respondents show concern related to education. As prior to lockdown, 45.9% and 48.9% of the

students were strongly worried about the session jam and unpredictable future careers respectively. As online classes started some new issues arise that are expressed by students. According to them, 46.7% is believed if it continues it will obstacle the learning capabilities, 52.6% are agreed on feeling distracted in the interactive session and 49.6% said inadequately understand the online classes. More important is 49.6% have agreed that there is lower attendance in the online class and 31.9% strongly agreed that not all classes are happening online so far in the last 7 months (March to October 2020). The pandemic has changed the conventional way of education and based on situation demand the online platform has come to rescue the students [22].

Table 7. Educational Impact of the Corona Virus among Respondents (%).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Escalating session jam	45.9	30.4	11.9	6.7	5.2
Increasing the chance of unpredictable future career	48.9	37.8	4.4	5.9	3.0
Creating obstacle in learning capabilities	28.9	46.7	13.3	5.2	5.9
Distraction in interactive session	25.9	52.6	14.1	4.4	3.0
Inadequate understanding	23.0	49.6	15.6	8.9	3.0
Lower attendance at online classes	37.8	40.7	7.4	8.1	5.9
Not all classes are happening online	31.9	31.1	14.1	12.6	10.4

Source: The authors

2.7. Technological Impact of the Corona Virus Among Respondents

One of the new impacts of the 21st-century pandemic is the technological impact that has never been seen in history. It's a coping tool for a student to deal with their everyday educational life and personal work via technology [23], it has played a great role to shape the future student's life and after pandemic some impacts. As a developing country although many steps have been taken to improve student access to technological staff the main challenge out of this is the unavailability of a digital device

(agreed by 41.5% of respondents), slow and costly internet connectivity (strongly agreed by 43.0% and 57.8% of respondents respectively), difficulties to attain online classes (agreed by 48.1% of respondents) and their low familiarity with distance learning apps (agreed by 48.9% of respondents) compare to the developed countries. The other two major side effects of technology are they are becoming addicted and dependent on various social media (agreed by 40.7% of respondents) and entertainment platforms (agreed by 38.5% of respondents) which will draw future.

Table 8. Technological Impact of the Corona Virus among Respondents (%).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Unavailability of digital device	17.8	41.5	12.6	20.7	7.4
Slow internet connectivity	43.0	32.6	6.7	11.1	6.7
Costly internet connection	57.8	25.9	7.4	4.4	4.4
Difficulty in attain online classes	32.6	48.1	4.4	8.9	5.9
Least familiarity with distance learning apps	15.6	48.9	20.0	8.9	6.7
Increasing social media attraction	38.5	40.7	9.6	8.1	3.0
Developing dependency on entertainment platform	32.6	38.5	17.8	8.1	3.0

Source: The authors

2.8. Psychological Impact of the Corona Virus Among Respondents

Psychological health is as much as important as physical health which is often ignored by many scholars. As the number of infections and death is increasing, it has created an indirect effect deep inside all of us. This study also has tried to find out the simple psychological impacts of respondents during the last seven months of lockdown. It is seen that the

maximum has experienced anxiety (44.4% agreed), loneliness (48.9% agreed), emotional breakdown (43% agreed), sleeping disorder (3.8% agreed), keep checking the news in the little time interval (51.1% agreed), difficulty to connect with daily normal life (21.1% strongly agreed and 41.5% agreed), tensed about re-infected by COVID-19 (40% agreed). Another, 51.9% of respondents are strongly agreed about worried about their family members' health.

Table 9. Psychological Impact of the Corona Virus among Respondents (%).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Anxiety related to COVID-19	34.1	44.4	12.6	6.7	2.2
Creating sense of loneliness	28.1	48.9	9.6	8.1	5.2
Having emotional breakdown	28.9	43.0	11.9	8.9	7.4
Facing sleeping disorder	27.4	37.8	11.1	17.8	5.9
Worried about family members health	51.9	37.8	5.9	.7	3.7
Checking news in little time interval	19.3	51.1	17.8	7.4	4.4
Difficulty to connect with the daily normal activities	31.1	41.5	16.3	7.4	3.7
Tensed about re-infected again by sars-cov-2	25.2	40.0	23.0	6.7	5.2

Source: The authors

3. Conclusions

The current study showed that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown affected not only the academic performance but also the overall livelihood of most participants with varying degrees. It is seen that they remained unemployed due to extended academic session jam, losing their temporary job like private tuition during the lockdown, facing economic hardship, and continuous pressure on paying house rent including the mess and hostel cost. Besides, those who are corona positive respondents have experienced some economic impact due to the pandemic. Furthermore, the maximum has experienced anxiety, loneliness, emotional breakdown, sleeping disorder, keep checking the news in the little time interval, difficulty to connect with daily normal life, tensed about re-infected by COVID-19. In addition, online education helps to keep the students up and running with an opportunity for self-study.

In Bangladesh, the most common problems associated with online education, in general, included the availability of the internet in-remote and rural areas, the speed and cost of the internet, the availability of electronic devices to access the internet, and the lack of interaction between students and teachers. To improve online education in general it is recommended to provide platforms for online learning, provide students with electronic devices to access the internet, improve the internet speed, provide cheaper or even free internet packages during the pandemic, provide professional training for lecturers, and enhance the interaction between students and teachers. Indeed, it is high time that the government and associated educational institutions should make a proper plan about how to overcome the challenges of ongoing university students' condition to improve the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as early as possible.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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