

New Dimensions of Family Relations During COVID-19: A Review

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Abstract: Introduction: Covid 19 an previously unknown era for all of us. Every aspect of life gets affected by this 'new normal' and our family relations also couldn't escape. Lockdown was a side effect of this Covid pandemic because we had to break the chain of the community spread. The need of following Covid Appropriate Behaviour (CAB) in the form of social distancing somehow created strange challenges for maintaining of family relations. In the lockdown period we had lots of restrictions regarding movement, activities, offline communication. It was such a panic period when every simple behaviour of our lives became a challenge. Objective: To analyze the forced changes and their psychosocial effect in maintaining the family relationships during Covid. Methodology: Research studies indicating the impact of Covid 19 on family dynamics were reviewed and critically analyzed. Results: Results indicated that the Covid 19 has dramatically changed the pattern of maintaining the family relationships. Some effective strategies are suggested.

IndexTerms- FAMILY DYNAMICS, PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS, COVID 19, FAMILY RELATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

Family relationships are enduring and consequential for well-being across the life course. We discuss several types of family relationships—marital, intergenerational, and sibling ties—that have an important influence on well-being. (Thomas, 2017)

Family, the primary social group, we cannot deny the impact of our family relationships on the socialization process of the individuals life starting from birth. Throughout the life family members have significant impact on the allover personality development of the individual. Especially in India the age old enriched culture of joint family always work as a stress buster. But this Covid pandemic introduced some dramatic changes in the normal pattern of maintaining the family relationships. Lockdown was a side effect of this Covid pandemic because we had to break the chain of the community spread. The need of following Covid Appropriate Behaviour (CAB) in the form of social distancing somehow created strange challenges for maintaining of family relations. In the lockdown period we had lots of restrictions regarding movement, activities, offline communication. It was such a panic period when each and every simple behaviour of our lives became a challenge.

Relationships with family members are significant for well-being across the life course (Merz, Consedine, et al., 2009; Umberson, Pudrovska, et al., 2010). Plight of the hour is in the due course of time we stopped providing the importance to our families. Earlier in ancient Indian cultural practices we used to live in joint family structure, but the things have changed now. Nuclear family type is more preferred one. Covid 19 has also taught some lesson to us. One of the lessons is to reevaluate the importance of our families and relationships.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses an acute threat to the well-being of children and families due to challenges related to social disruption such as financial insecurity, care giving burden, and confinement-related stress (e.g., crowding, changes to structure, and routine). The consequences of these difficulties are likely to be longstanding, in part because of the ways in which contextual risk permeates the structures and processes of family systems. (Prime et al, 2021)

II. Objective

To analyze the forced changes and their psychosocial effect in maintaining the family relationships during Covid.

III. Perceived Challenges

FAULTY COMMUNICATION STYLES

we have to take notice on the communication style which we use while interacting with our family members, whether we are aggressive in our communication or simple submissive. During Covid pandemic it was observed that every individual got frustrated during lockdown period. Those who were unable to manage their emotions indulged in to aggressive communication styles. Being assertive can only help to smoothen the communication with our family members.

UNREALISTIC DEMANDS

Sometimes unknowingly we demand unrealistically from the family members. These unrealistic demands were on the geared up mode during the Covid pandemic. This contributed a lot in increasing the challenges of the family dynamics.

PRACTICING TOXIC BEHAVIOURS

Toxic habit nagging is one of the challenge while maintain the family relationships. We keep on asking for the desired behaviour from our family members, but no fruitful result is obtained. As during lockdown we came excessively closer with restricted movement so it became more stressful.

While trying to make our relatives understand we simply jump in to criticism, in a way we ignore their efforts and simply instruct them for their failures. This criticism simply can't help to enhance the level of our family relations.

OVERLAPPING OF WORK AND LIFE

It was a great challenge to simply segregate between the work and life both get mixed up with the newly emerged concepts of work from home, online classes, lockdown 1.0 and 2.0 processes etc. That simply mixing up of all things and segment of life really initiated challenges and resulted into disturbed family relationships. It was a weird overlapping of personal and professional issues.

UNABILITY TO PRIORTIZE DAILY CHORES

The inability of prioritizing between the daily chores is one of the major problems of disturbed family relationships. Sometimes it happens when we simply feel overburdened and in hustle bustle manner we put the daily chores in a weird way.

CONFLICTS DUE TO CONTINUOUS SHIFTING FROM PERSONAL ROLES TO PROFESSIONAL ROLES

The continuous shift from personal to professional roles was a major cause of conflict during pandemic situation. When you shifted from personal to professional roles it was not known. It created a lot of stress and challenging situation among working individuals.

IV. Suggested Strategies

COMMUNICATE RATHER GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

The communication is better to make the things done instead of the way of giving instructions always.

PRACTICE TONIC HABITS INSTEAD TOXIC HABITS

Practicing the habit of tonic habits like acceptance, empathy, and positive regards can help instead of practicing toxic habits like nagging, anger, blaming, criticism etc. it would be better to take a shift from toxic to tonic habits.

REACH OUT TO FAMILY MEMBERS

Try to sit with the family members and give time to listen their requirements. Assisting their mental health needs and giving quality time to the individual will definitely help to overcome the communication gap.

BE ASSERTIVE, EXPLAIN YOUR LIMITS

The practice of being assertive and the ability to communicate that you also have your limits can help in the smooth communication from the family members.

CONTRIBUTE TO MAKE ENVIRONMENT POSITIVE

Better to contribute to make the family environment positive rather than to make it more hostile and problematic.

BE MINDFUL OF THE PRESENT

Try to be in the present situation instead of jumping into the negative expectations of the future. The tendency of negative outlook of future can hinder the wellbeing of the individual as well the family as whole.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND HAVE PROPER BREAKS AND FUN ACTIVITIES

The tendency to have question on one's own abilities and skills is the major issue. We sometimes take notice only on the shortcomings of the

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