

A study on the impact of COVID-19 on the quality of adolescent girls in institutional and non-institutional setting

Athira Paul¹ Thejus Thomas² Bindu K B³

^[1] 2nd MSW, Vimala college Autonomous, Thrissur,

^[2] 1st MSc Geography, Department of Geography, Kannur University, Kannur

corresponding Author ^[3], Assistant Professor on contract, Department of Geography, Kannur University, Kannur

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes over social economical and psychological dimensions of human life. After having dealt with the physical health, the post pandemic world will have to deal with its mental health. Fear and anxiety of the virus, physical distancing and safety had its impact on the world population. In Kerala 173 children committed suicide during the lockdown period (till October 30,2020) of which majority are girls. The study was conducted in the Kondazhy Panchayath in the Thrissur district of Kerala. The study was based on primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using questionnaire and personal interview method of data collection while secondary collected from government officials. The paper highlights the need of emotional regulation, interaction with peers and proper guidance for children. It also studied about how peer interaction and involvement of experts influence lives of children. The study finds that quality of life of girls in institution is better than that of homes due to safer feeling and expert's services in agency. Study suggested that in order to accomplish the new circumstances, an understanding of impact of the pandemic on not just girl children, but the whole human race and the trends should be investigated thoroughly. Appropriate and effective measures are to be taken to reduce the socio-environmental impact of the pandemic on children.

Key words: *COVID 19, Quality of Life, Social Relationships, Psychological Dimensions, Anxiety*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid 19 pandemic has brought significant changes over social economical and psychological dimensions of human life. In this study researcher focus on quality of life of children, because researcher believes that the quality of life of children who are already vulnerable will be different before and after facing this pandemic. Researcher also believes that in this study there are a lot of importances in the current context and even post pandemic. After having dealt with the physical health, the post pandemic world will have to deal with its mental health. Fear and anxiety about the virus, social distancing and safety had its impact on the world population. March 22 was the day of National curfew. Unexpectedly this curfew further continued as a yearlong lockdown which is now slowly losing its severeness. Children who were so happy to hear and enjoyed the beginning of school holidays even before the exams were unaware of the adverse effects there were going to bring to them.

The ability of a person to respond to or control emotional response is called as emotional regulation. The greatest response and growth of a child occurs through the interaction with peers. Friends, teachers and society were having their unique role in shaping and firming a child. All these were very adversely affected due to lockdown. The mental growth of every child was thus negatively affected by the lockdown. Although online classes are going on, the physical presence and care factor is still missing. COVID-19 has brought about a complex array of factors such as uncertainty, social isolation, and parental angst that have an impact on the mental health of children and adolescents. Predictability, the stabilizing force for children and adolescents, has been disrupted since the COVID-19 outbreak.

Children have many worries related to the consequences of COVID-19 such as whether they will see their friends and relatives, go to school or get sick. It is often the uncertainty in their lives that makes it difficult for parents to calm their children's anxieties. Parents are typically adept at making plans for their children, but future plans are currently on hold. The parents facing challenges may interfere with their usual ability to address their children's emotional needs. It has led many people to depression and even suicide. In Kerala 173 children committed suicide during the lockdown period till October 30 The statistics shows it all. The present study was conducted using quantitative methods as the researchers feels that there is quantitative data needed for the proper analysis of the research problem. This quantitative study deals with the number of children who are affected with mental health issues and low standards on quality of life. Also since the situation is new, needs further exploration and explanation as very little research has been done in this area.

2. PRESENT STUDY

The study is Comparative study of the impact of COVID-19 on the quality of life of adolescent girls in institutional and non-institutional setting. The study was conducted in the Thrissur district of Kerala. Out of more than 100 recognised children’s home in Thrissur, Thanal was taken for this study since Thanal is the agency with most number of inhabitants in the district. The non-institutional data was collected from children studying in St. Thomas Higher Secondary School, Mayannur. Since the data of both institutional and non-institutional children were collected from the same locality, influence of regional variation is nullified. Questionnaire method was used to collect data. World Health Organization Quality Of Life Brief (WHOQOL-BREF) was used to assess the quality of life of children. WHOQOL-BREF was taken as tool because it is short and precise for collecting data. Researchers also conducted semi structured interview for understanding reasons behind the responds of respondents.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study is based on secondary and primary data. The application of various statistical tools including unstructured questionnaire, focused interviews and observation methods were used during the primary data collection. The 4 domains suggested by WHO, physical, psychological, environment and social relationship, were studied, analysed thoroughly and conclusions were made.

3.1 Physical

Physical wellness is important to achieve improved quality of life. In the tool used there are seven questions which enquire about the physical wellness of respondents. From the data collected, it is visible that respondents from institution have more scores in physical wellness. Physical pain has its impact on the children from institute more than the non-institutional children (Fig. 1). Although some of the children in the institute are in need of daily medication, the non- institutional children are more vulnerable to diseases as per the survey (Fig.2). The survey gives the result that institutional children are more energetic than non-institutional children (Fig. 3). Institutional children experience more freedom of movement and mobility than non-institutional children. It may be due to their difference in expectations (Fig. 4). Everyone in the institute are very much satisfied with their sleep while some non institutional children experiences trouble in sleeping (Fig. 5). Non-institutional children are more satisfied with their daily activities than the children in institutes (Fig. 6). Non-institutional children express more dissatisfaction in their working capacity than institutional children (Fig. 7)

3.2 Psychological

Psychological factors are one of those factors which influence quality of life in to a greater extent. The questionnaire has six questions about the psychological factors influencing the quality of life. Institutional children enjoy life to a greater extent than non-institutional children as per the results of the questionnaire (Fig. 8). Ability to concentrate shows a moderate curve in both institutional and non-institutional children’s data (Fig. 9). The feeling of self-esteem is more among the institutional children than the non-institutional children (Fig. 10). Acceptance of body appearance is more for institutional children than non-institutional children (Fig. 11). Non-institutional children are having negative feelings more frequently than the institutional children (Fig. 12). Institutional children feel their life to be more meaningful than the non-institutional children to a great extent (Fig. 13).

3.3 Social Relationships

The influence of social relationships on the quality of life is very high. There are two very important questions about the influence of social relationships on the quality of life. Non-Institutional children more in both extremes whereas non institutional children feel more of a moderate to satisfied feel in terms of relationships (Fig. 14). Institutional children are getting more support from their friends than non-institutional children (Fig. 15).

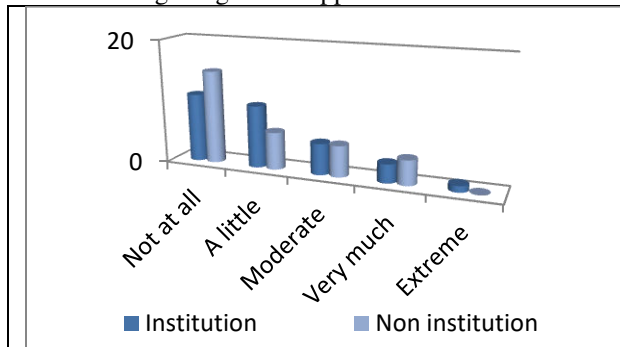


Fig. 1

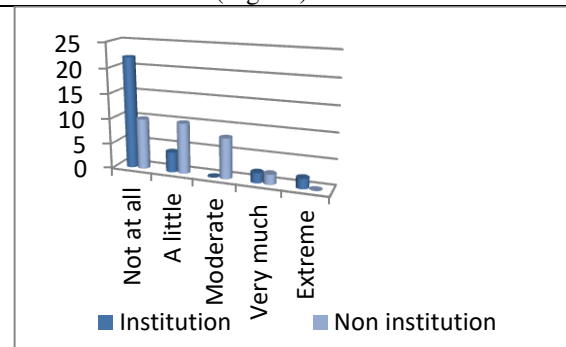


Fig. 2

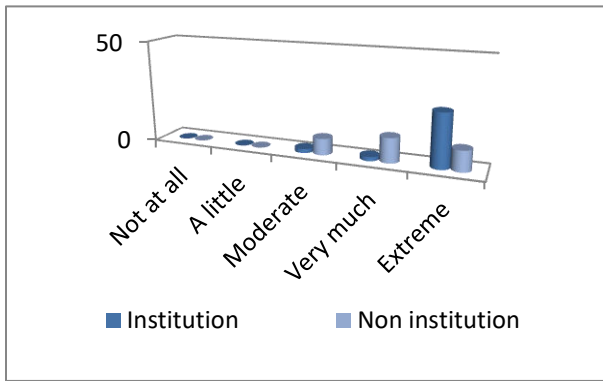


Fig. 3

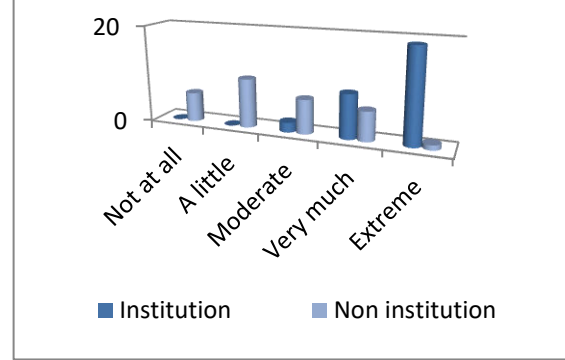


Fig. 4

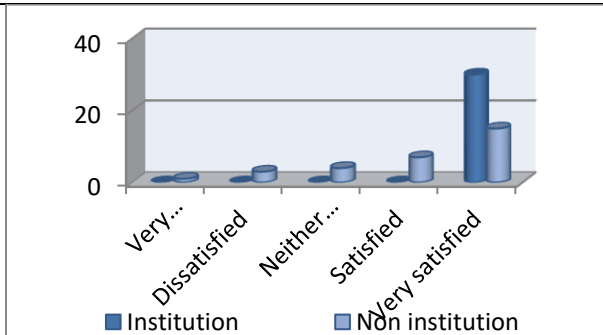


Fig. 5

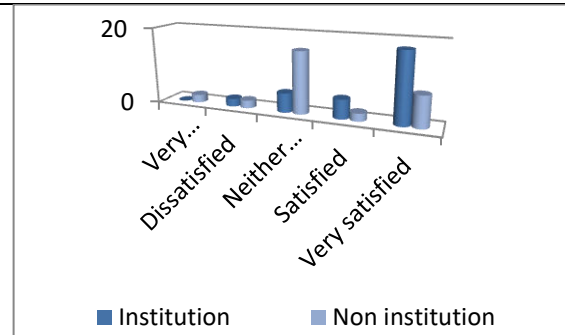


Fig. 6

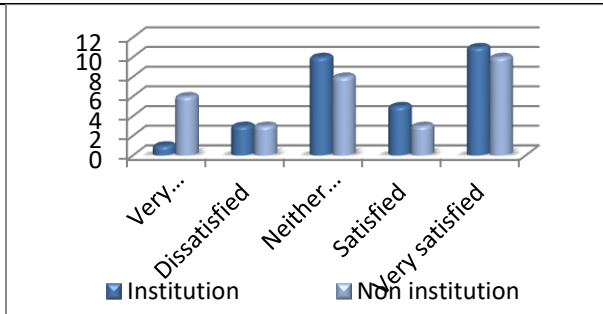


Fig. 7

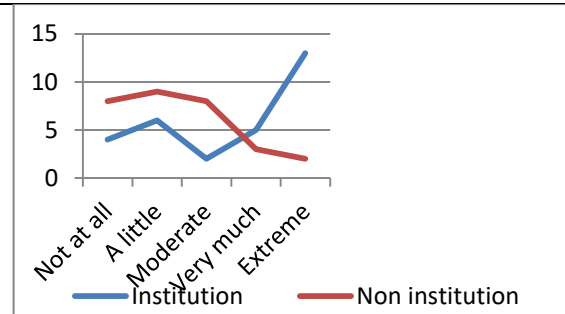


Fig. 8

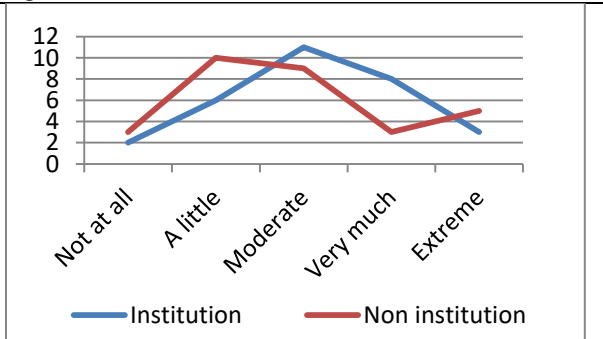


Fig. 9

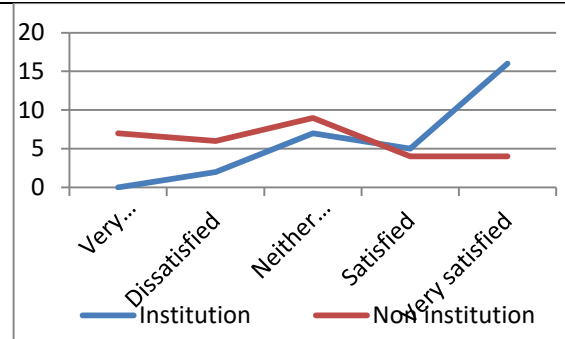


Fig. 10

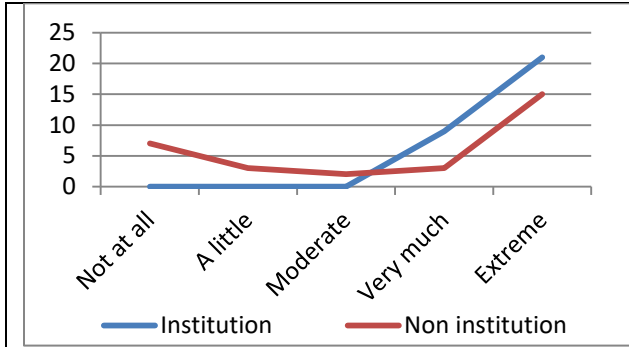


Fig. 11

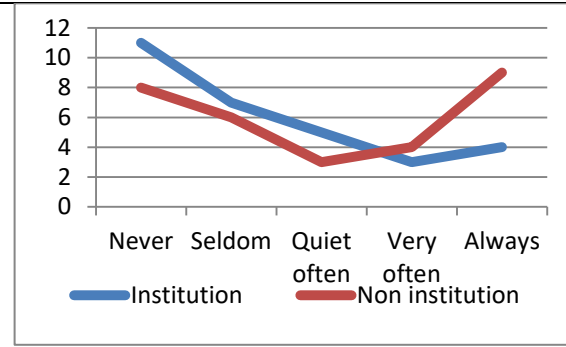


Fig. 12

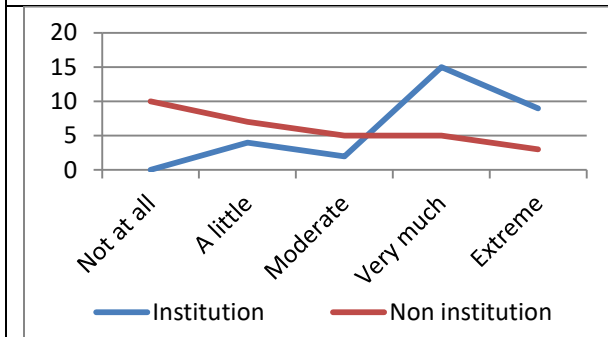


Fig. 13

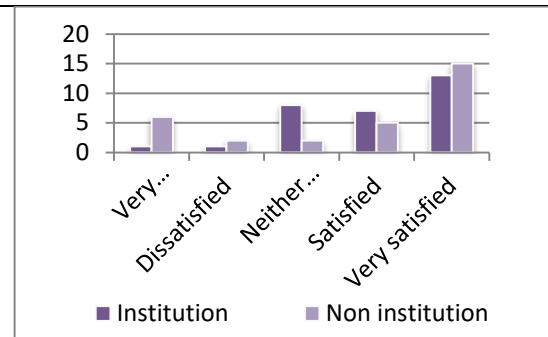


Fig. 14

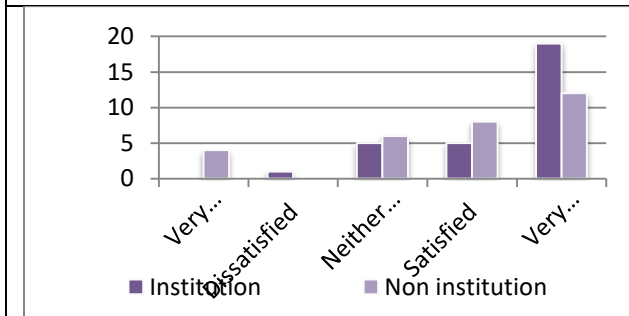


Fig. 15

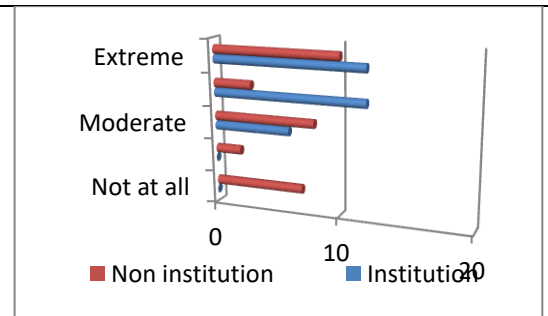


Fig. 16

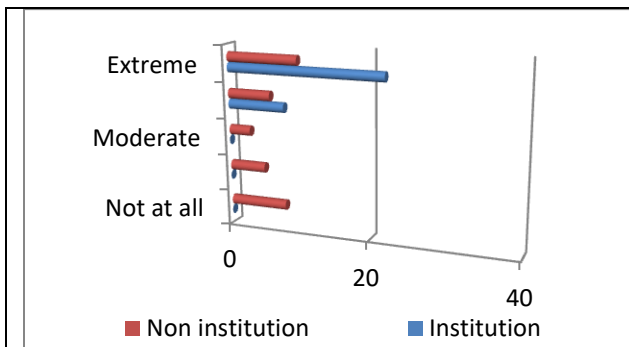


Fig. 17

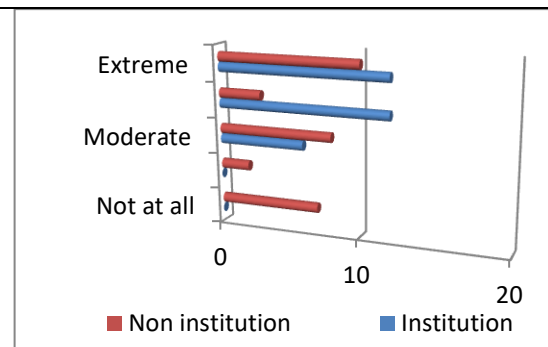


Fig. 18

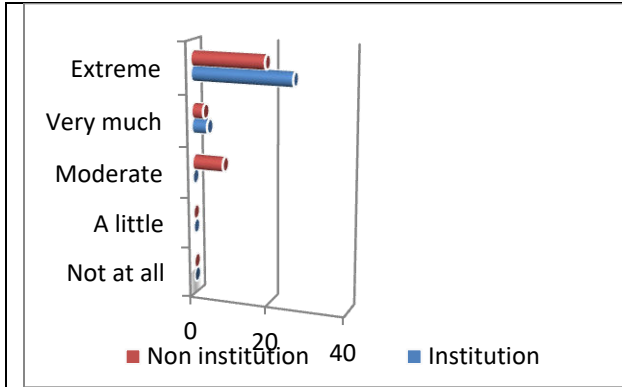


Fig. 19

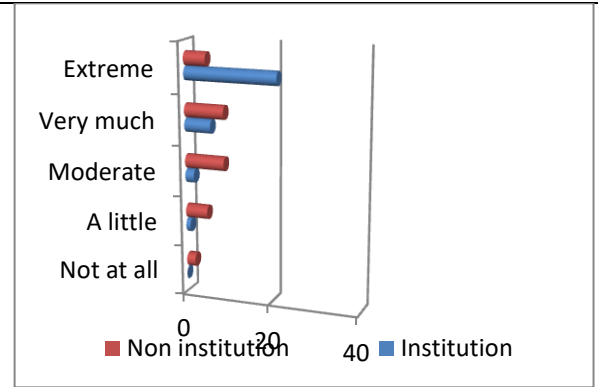


Fig. 20

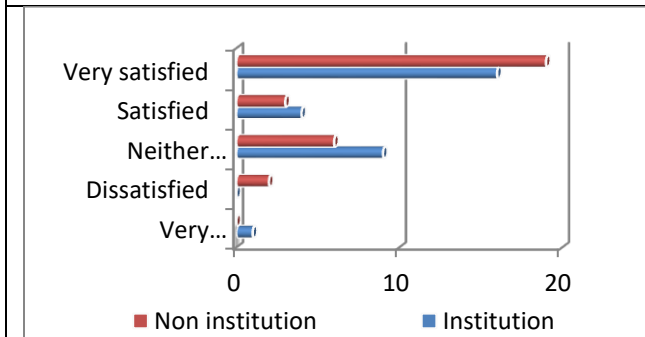


Fig. 21

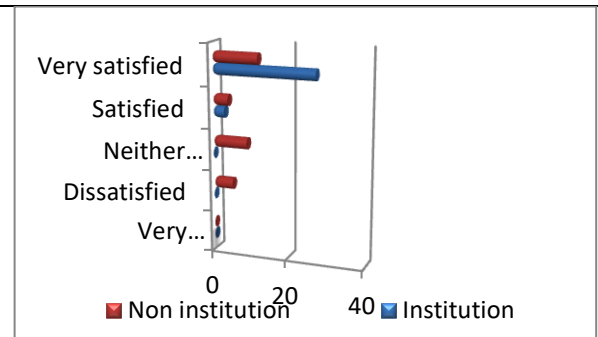


Fig. 22

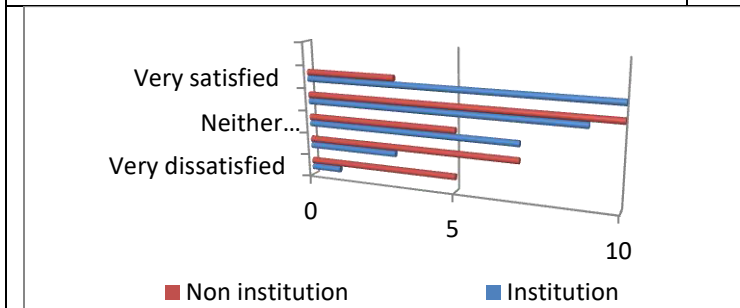


Fig. 23

3.4 Environment

Environment and surroundings are the next factor that influences the quality of life of children. The eight questions studied here proves the importance of the environments they live upon on the quality of life. Institutional children were feeling safer than the non-institutional children (Fig. 16). Institutional children feel their environment to be more healthier than non-institutional children (Fig. 17). Non-institutional children are feeling the lack of money for their personal needs where as institutional children feel they have enough money for their needs. It may be due to their expectations being lesser than non-institutional children (Fig. 18). Institutional children are having more access to information when compared to non-institutional children (Fig. 19). Institutional children are having more leisure time while non-institutional children feels they have moderate amount of leisure time for them (Fig. 20). Non-institutional children feels more satisfied with their living conditions than institutional children (Fig. 21). Institutional children feel very satisfied with their access to health services when compared to non-institutional children. (Fig. 22). Institutional children feel more satisfied with their transport facilities than non-institutional children (Fig. 23).

Using the equation given by WHO researchers calculated the quality of life of both institutional and non-institutional children in all four domains. Results show that quality of life of institutional girls is better than that of non-institutional once.

4. CONCLUSION

Lock down related to Covid 19 pandemic has brought significant changes in lives of every individual. Children being the vulnerable group had to face this difficult situation which caused significant problems in their own lives. Among children girl child face more issues which make adolescent girls as most vulnerable. This study was to find the impact of lock down in quality of life of institutional and non-institutional adolescent girls. Result of this study shows that institutional girls had better quality of life during lock down than that of non-institutionalized girls. Because being excluded from mainstream was not a new thing for girls in institution they had faced worst in their life and also now they have a well maintained support system to lean on. But for non-institutional children this whole situation is a first experience and they do not know what to do or do not have anyone to help. Impact of pandemic over children is a vast topic to be studied more. Hoping there will be more studies on it.

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