



Work, Risk, And Resilience: The Life And Struggles Of Female Nurses During Covid-19

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic placed extraordinary demands on healthcare systems, with female nurses in India occupying a critical frontline position. The objective of this article is to examine the nature of work, occupational risks, and resilience of female nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic in India, with particular attention to their physical, psychological, and social challenges.

Methodologically, the study is based on a qualitative review and sociological analysis of Primary and secondary data, including field work data, peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, and reports from national and international health organizations related to nursing experiences during COVID-19 in India. Relevant literature was systematically analyzed to identify recurring themes concerning workload, risk exposure, mental health, gendered responsibilities, and coping mechanisms.

The findings indicate that female nurses experienced intensified workloads, heightened risk of infection, psychological distress, burnout, social stigma, and difficulties in balancing professional and family roles. Despite these challenges, nurses displayed significant resilience through professional commitment, peer support, adaptive coping strategies, and limited institutional interventions. The study underscores the importance of gender-sensitive policies, improved occupational safety, and sustained psychosocial support to strengthen the nursing workforce during future public health emergencies.

Key words: COVID-19, frontline healthcare workers, occupational risk, resilience, psychosocial stress, coping mechanisms

Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed critical vulnerabilities in healthcare systems worldwide. In India, nurses — the backbone of patient care — bore a disproportionate share of the burden during multiple waves of infection. Female nurses, who form a significant portion of the nursing workforce, faced not only occupational hazards but also societal and personal pressures exacerbated by the pandemic. Their

experiences reflect a complex interplay of **work demands**, **risk exposure**, and **resilience** in the face of adversity.

Review of Literature:

Marjan Vejdani (2021), Challenges faced by nurses while caring for COVID-19 patients: A qualitative study: COVID-19 is considered the greatest challenge in public health all over the world. As nurses are in the frontline of the fight against the coronavirus, they play a significant role in this concern. Hence, hospital managers and authorities should do their best to meet the financial needs of nurses, providing them with financial and non financial incentives (motivations), and eliminating the prevalent discrimination observed at medical centres. The findings obtained in the present study can help hospital authorities and managers to get a deeper understanding of nurses' experiences so that they can take effective measures to solve the serious challenges nurses are faced with in current and future public health emergencies.

Nader Salari and et al., (2021), conducted study on the prevalence of stress, anxiety and depression within front-line healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients: a systematic review and meta-regression. The study's findings unequivocally show that frontline healthcare personnel who are providing treatment for COVID-19 patients have a significant prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression. Thus, actions should be taken by national and international decision-makers and healthcare authorities to lower these illnesses among hospital staff members who treat COVID-19 patients. This makes the hospital personnel more productive, expedites the pandemic control measures, and offers COVID-19 patients more efficient treatment methods.

Sinu Jose, et al., (2020), a prominent Indian study conducted in the emergency department of a tertiary care center in North India revealed that nurses experienced **moderate-to-severe burnout**, particularly in *emotional exhaustion* and *depersonalization* during the COVID-19 pandemic. The same study also measured resilience, showing that many nurses maintained moderate-to-high resilience, and that resilience was **negatively correlated with burnout**, suggesting resilience may help mitigate adverse psychological outcomes.

Ratish Nair, et al., (2022), qualitative research from Eastern India documented the **lived experience of nurses working in COVID-19 units**, highlighting intense psychological pressure. Nurses reported *anxiety*, *fear of infecting family members*, *social isolation*, *stigma*, and *emotional hardship* as they tried to balance professional duty with personal safety. These experiences illustrate the embodied reality of risk among female nurses providing direct care to COVID-19 patients.

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify the struggling of the female nurses during pandemic period.
2. To know the work-life balance of female nurses as a CORONA warriors.

Research Methodology:

This is the study on female nurses as a CORONA warriors of Bagalkot district. For the present study Descriptive research design has been used to explain the causative relationships in between the independent and dependent variables. It helped to analyse the struggles of female nurses during pandemic period.

Sample of the study:

The female nurses who are working in solitary Government and Private Hospitals at Bagalkot are the Universe for the present study. There are totally 291 hospitals and 2553 female nurses are working. For the present study researcher has collected the data from the 450 respondents. The Lottery method of Simple Random Sampling technique has been used to select the respondents.

Data Collection:

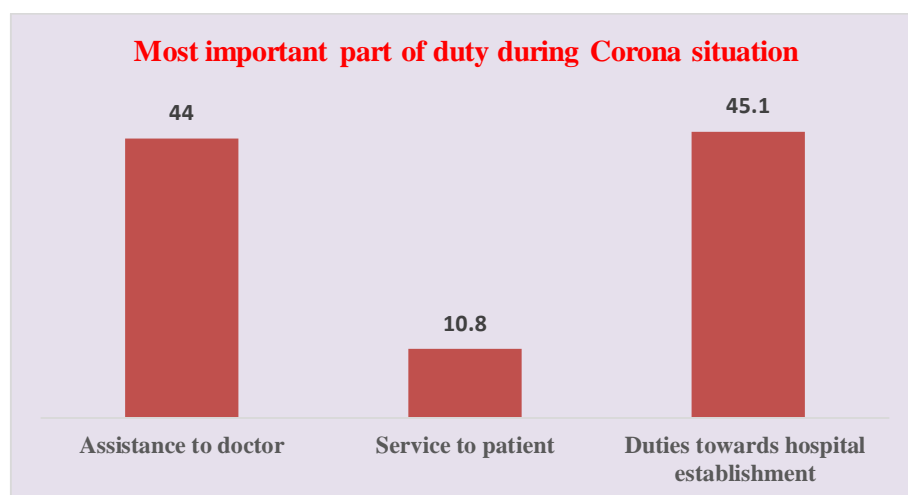
For the present study is based on a qualitative and descriptive analysis of both primary and secondary data to understand the work conditions, occupational risk and resilience of female nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Interview Schedule has been adopted for the present study as the tool of data collection.

In the present research study researcher has used simple tabulation method. The analysis focused on key dimensions such as workload, exposure to health risks, psychological stress, social challenges, gendered responsibilities and coping mechanisms.

Data analysis and Interpretation :

Table -1: Most important part of duty during Corona situation

Details	Frequency	Percent
Assistance to doctor	198	44
Service to patient	49	10.8
Duties towards hospital establishment	203	45.1
Total	450	100

Graph -1: Most important part of duty during Corona situation

The most significant tasks carried out by female nurses during the COVID-19 epidemic are displayed in table No. 1. According to the data, a significant percentage of respondents (45.1%) were primarily engaged in tasks pertaining to hospital establishment and support services. This illustrates how important it was for female nurses to keep healthcare facilities running smoothly throughout the crisis. However, just 10.8% of respondents stated that providing direct patient care was their main responsibility. Stricter safety regulations, more administrative duties, and the requirement to oversee emergency plans could be the cause of this. The results show that female nurses had to do many frontline tasks during the pandemic.

Table – 2 : Nurses experience harassment during work as a Corona warrior

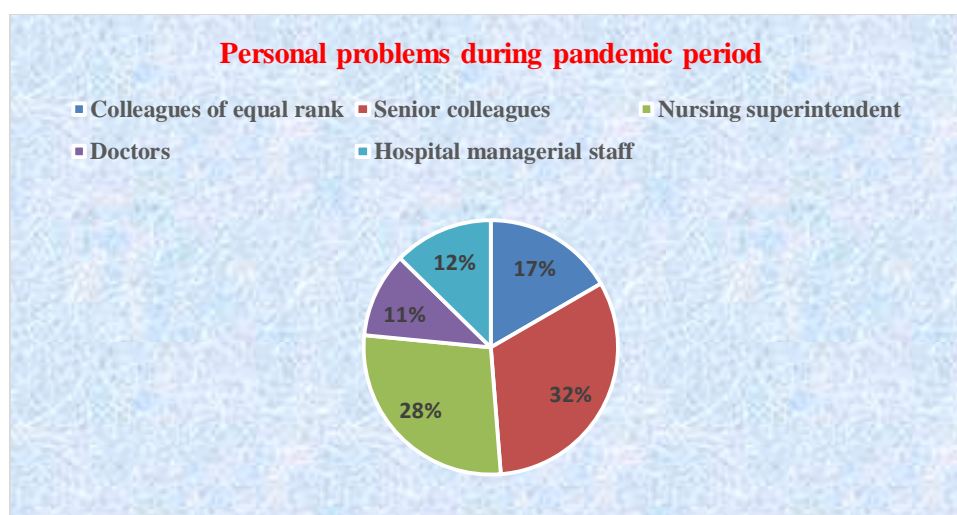
Details	Frequency	Percent
Doctors	98	21.7
Patients	183	40.6
Attendants	89	19.7
Visitors	80	17.7
Total	450	100

Graph - 2: Nurses experience harassment during work as a Corona warrior

Table No. 2 reveals that female nurses faced harassment during their duties as Corona Warriors, with 40.6 percent reporting patients as the main source and 17.7 percent reporting visitors. Such harassment increased occupational stress and exposed nurses to psychological and workplace risks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table - 3: Discussion about Personal problems during pandemic period

Details	Frequency	Percent
Colleagues of equal rank	75	16.6
Senior colleagues	144	32
Nursing superintendent	125	27.7
Doctors	49	10.8
Hospital managerial staff	57	12.6
Total	450	100

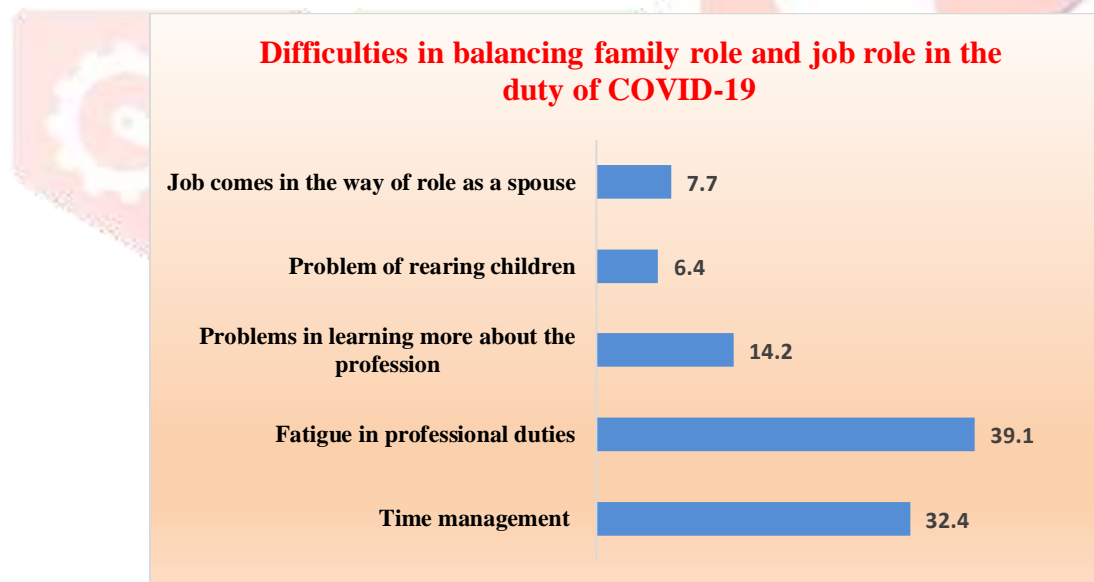
Graph - 3: Discussion about Personal problems during pandemic period

During the epidemic, female nurses talked about their personal issues with the people listed in the above table. The majority of respondents (32%) confided in senior coworkers about their issues, suggesting that they rely on workplace help to manage professional stress. Conversely, the lowest percentage (10.8%) talked about their issues with other medical professionals, indicating a lack of cross-professional communication throughout the crisis.

Table - 4: Difficulties in balancing family role and job role in the duty of COVID-19

Details	Frequency	Percent
Time management	146	32.4
Fatigue in professional duties	176	39.1
Problems in learning more about the profession	64	14.2
Problem of rearing children	29	6.4
Job comes in the way of role as a spouse	35	7.7
Total	450	100

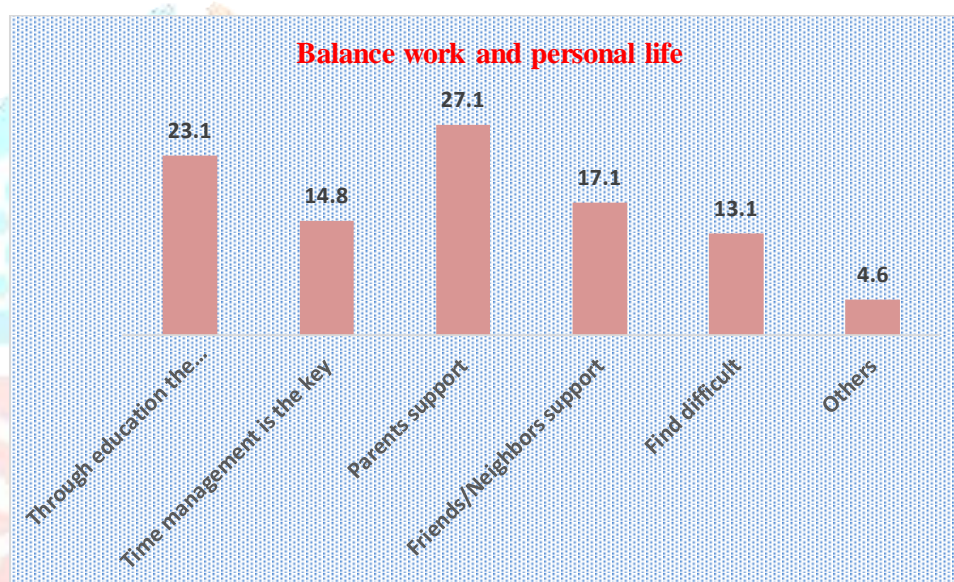
Graph-4: Difficulties in balancing family role and job role in the duty of COVID-19



The above table shows the difficulties in balancing family role and job role in the duty of COVID-19 details Majority of 39.1 percent of respondents fatigue in professional duties and least of 6.4 percent of respondents problem of rearing children.

Table-5: Balance work and personal life

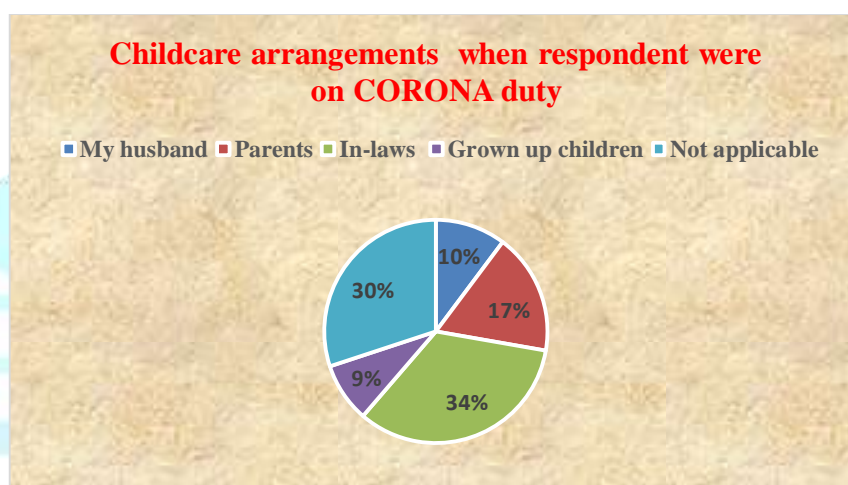
Details	Frequency	Percent
Through education the family members	104	23.1
Time management is the key	67	14.8
Parents support	122	27.1
Friends/Neighbors support	77	17.1
Find difficult	59	13.1
Others	21	4.6
Total	450	100

Graph-5: Balance work and personal life

The assistance that respondents got in juggling their personal and professional lives is displayed in Table No. 5. The results show that parents provided support to the majority of respondents (27.1%), underscoring the critical role that family support plays in maintaining work-life balance. On the other hand, only 4.6% of respondents said they had received assistance from others. Overall, the table highlights how important parental support is in assisting respondents in managing their personal and professional obligations, particularly during trying times like the COVID-19 epidemic.

Table-6: Childcare arrangements Respondents were on CORONA duty

Details	Frequency	Percent
My husband	46	10.2
Parents	79	17.5
In-laws	151	33.5
Grown up children	39	8.6
Not applicable	135	30
Total	450	100

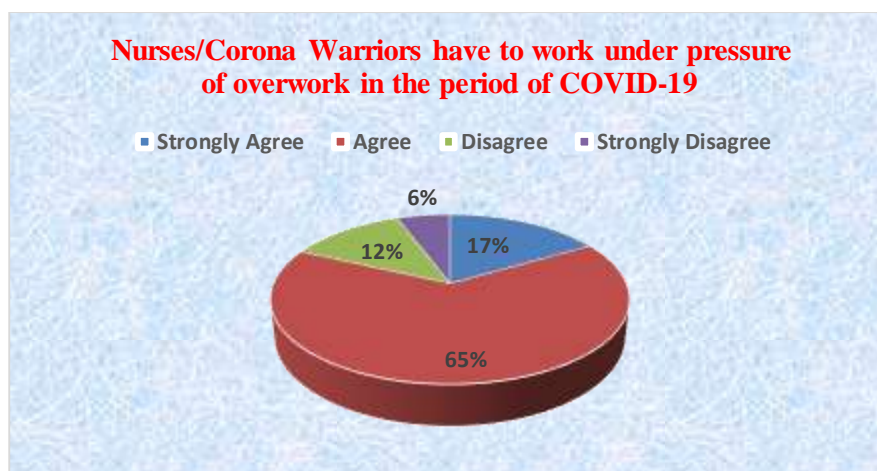
Graph-6: Childcare arrangements when respondents were on CORONA duty

The childcare arrangements made while the respondents were on COVID-19 (Corona) duty are shown in table No. 6. According to the results, the majority of respondents (33.5%) stated that their in-laws looked after their kids throughout this time. This emphasizes how important it is for frontline employees, particularly women, to have support from their extended families in order to carry out their professional duties during the epidemic. Conversely, the lowest percentage of respondents (8.6%) said that since their children were now adults, childcare was not an issue. This implies that the majority of respondents were juggling heavy work obligations with active childcare responsibilities.

Table -7: Nurses/Corona Warriors have to work under pressure of overwork in the period of COVID-19

Details	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	75	16.6
Agree	293	65.1
Disagree	56	12.4
Strongly Disagree	26	5.7
Total	450	100

Graph-7: Nurses/Corona Warriors have to work under pressure of overwork in the period of COVID-19

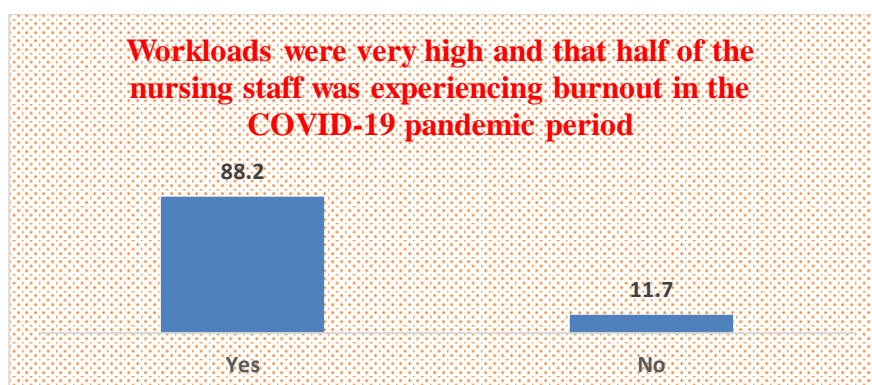


The responses of nurses reporting working under pressure as a result of overwork during the COVID-19 period are shown in Table No.7. According to the findings, the majority of respondents (65.1%) agreed that they had to work under extreme pressure due to an excessive workload. This illustrates the unique challenges that nurses faced during the pandemic, such as longer workdays, a lack of personnel, and more responsibility for patient care. However, just 5.7% of respondents strongly disagreed, indicating that relatively few nurses did not view overwork as a major source of stress during this time.

Table-8: Workloads were very high and that half of the nursing staff was experiencing burnout in the COVID-19 pandemic period

Details	Frequency	Percent
Yes	397	88.2
No	53	11.7
Total	450	100

Graph-8: Workloads were very high and that half of the nursing staff was experiencing burnout in the COVID-19 pandemic period



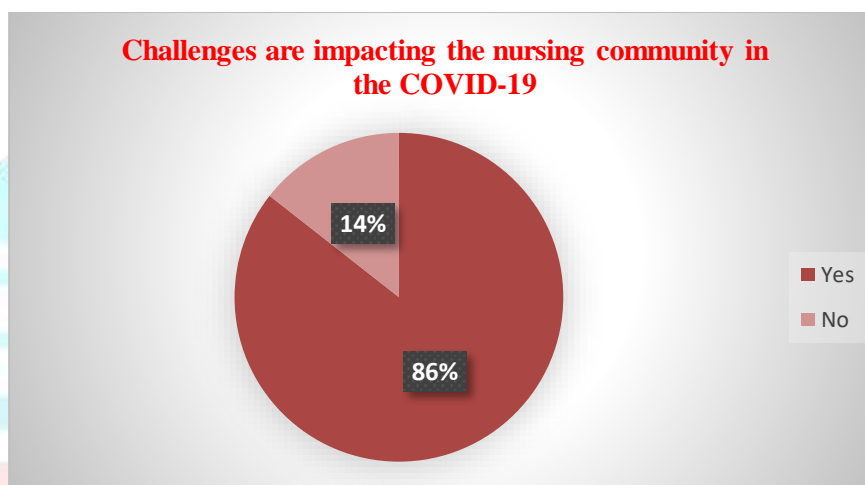
The aforementioned table shows that during the COVID-19 epidemic, nurses had an exceptionally heavy workload, which led to widespread burnout among the nursing staff. Due to the extreme physical and psychological strain brought on by extended work hours, an increased patient load, and hazardous working

circumstances, a sizable majority of respondents (88.2%) stated that they had burnout at this time. However, only 11.7% of respondents said they had never experienced burnout, indicating that burnout was a widespread problem that affected the majority of nurses during the epidemic.

Table-9: Challenges are impacting the nursing community in the COVID-19

Details	Frequency	Percent
Yes	385	85.5
No	65	14.4
Total	450	100

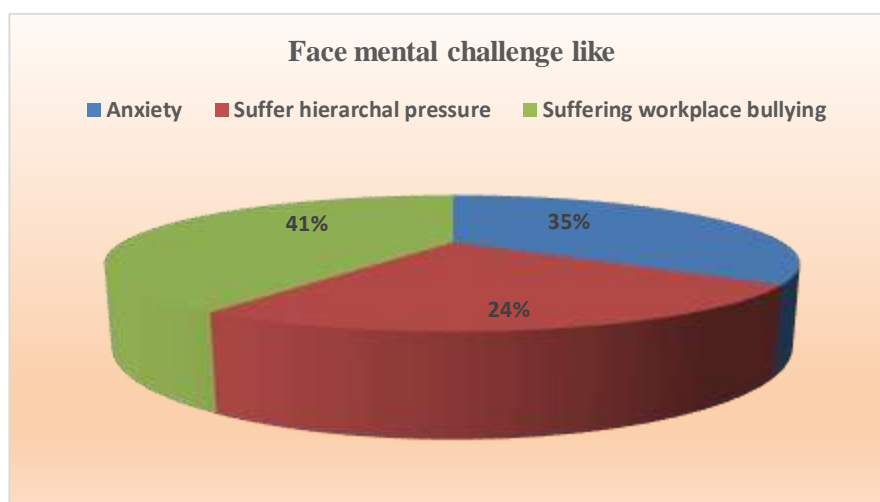
Graph-9: Challenges are impacting the nursing community in the COVID-19



Nurses' answers to the question of whether the COVID-19 problems affected the nursing community are shown in Table No. 4.107. The statistics unequivocally demonstrate that a sizable majority of respondents (85.5%) confirmed that the COVID-19 pandemic's difficulties had a considerable effect on the nursing community. This suggests that throughout the pandemic, the majority of nurses faced a variety of challenges, such as increased workload, occupational stress, health hazards, emotional strain, and work-family imbalance. 14.4% of respondents said that these difficulties had no discernible effect on them, indicating that a very small portion of the nursing workforce was comparatively less influenced.

Table-10: Face mental challenge like

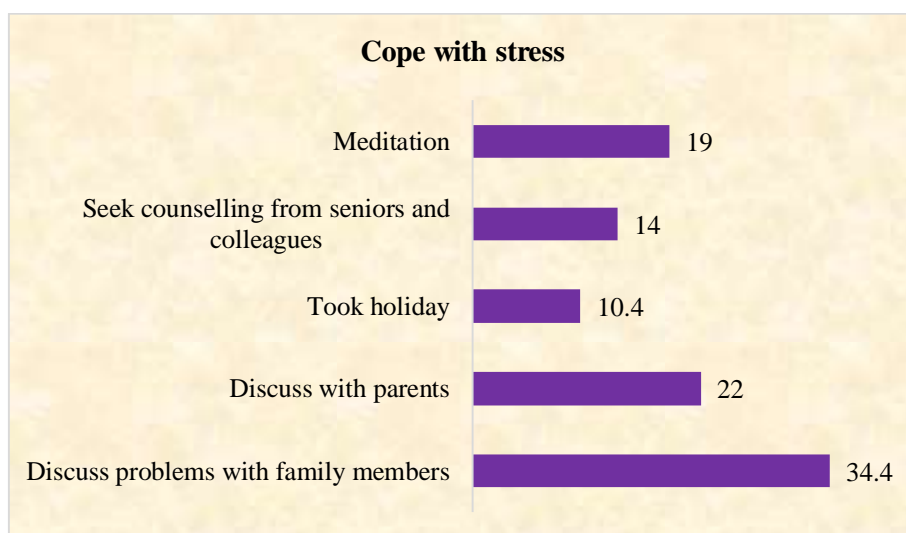
Details	Frequency	Percent
Anxiety	156	34.6
Suffer hierarchal pressure	110	24.4
Suffering workplace bullying	184	40.8
Total	450	100

Graph-10: Face mental challenge like

The respondents' mental health issues throughout the COVID-19 period are shown in Table No. 10. According to the data, the majority of respondents (40.8%) said they had been bullied at work, suggesting that psychological distress at work was a serious problem at the time. Increased work pressure, staff shortages, fear of infection, and strained professional relationships during the pandemic may all be associated with such experiences. The lowest percentage of respondents (24.4%) said they had experienced hierarchical pressure, indicating that although organizational authority and supervision presented difficulties, they were viewed as less serious than interpersonal workplace problems.

Table-11: Cope with stress

Details	Frequency	Percent
Discuss problems with family members	155	34.4
Discuss with parents	99	22
Took holiday	47	10.4
Seek counselling from seniors and colleagues	63	14
Meditation	86	19
Total	450	100

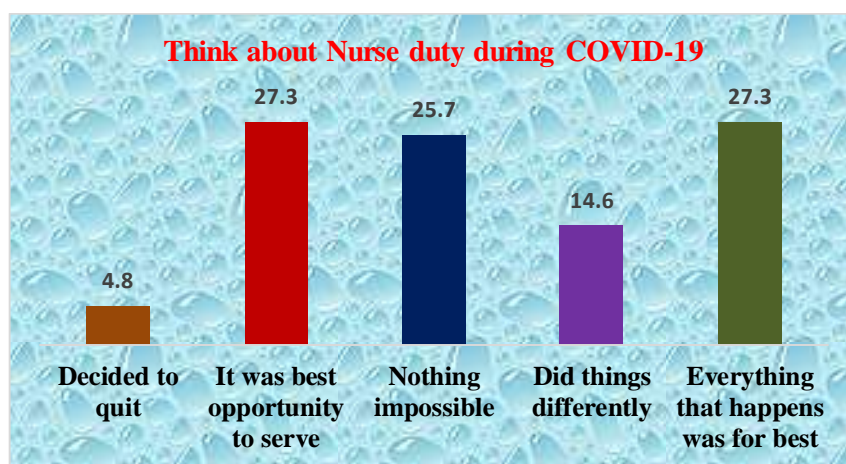
Graph-11: Cope with stress

The coping mechanisms used by the respondents to deal with stress throughout the COVID-19 period are shown in Table No. 11. The results show that the majority of respondents (34.4%) discussed their issues with family members as a way to deal with stress, underscoring the significance of family support as the main source of emotional strength during difficult times.

However, the lowest percentage of responders (10.4%) stated that they took vacations to cope with stress, which may be related to the pandemic's high workloads, staffing shortages, and restricted leave availability.

Table-12: Think about Nurse duty during COVID-19

Details	Frequency	Percent
Decided to quit	22	4.8
It was best opportunity to serve	123	27.3
Nothing impossible	116	25.7
Did things differently	66	14.6
Everything that happens was for best	123	27.3
Total	450	100

Graph-12: Think about Nurse duty during COVID-19

The responders' opinions of their nursing duties during the COVID-19 epidemic are shown in Table No. 12. According to the results, the majority of respondents (27.3%) believed that all that happened during this time was ultimately for the greater good and saw their role as the best chance to assist society. Despite the difficult circumstances, nurses have a strong sense of professional commitment, moral duty, and perseverance, which is reflected in their positive outlook.

Conversely, the lowest percentage of respondents (4.8%) said they had thought about leaving their position, suggesting that very few nurses were so unhappy or distressed that they were thinking about leaving the field.

Conclusion:

The present study shows that during the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses had significant social, psychological, and professional difficulties. Their well-being was greatly impacted by a heavy workload, overwork, burnout, mental stress, and job pressures. Despite these challenges, many nurses were able to manage stress and carry out their jobs with determination thanks to strong family support and a sense of professional commitment. Overall, the results show how critical it is to provide mental health services, institutional support, and efficient workload management in order to safeguard nurses and increase their resilience in the event of future medical emergencies.

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