

## A Study on Effect of Lockdown During 2020 on the Students of Agricultural Universities in Maharashtra

Amit Deogirikar<sup>1\*</sup> and Chandan Bora<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Engineering, College of Agriculture, Maharashtra, India

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, India

**\*Corresponding Author:** Amit Deogirikar, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Engineering, College of Agriculture, Maharashtra, India.

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### Abstract

The novel SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus caused a large-scale Coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic all over the world. COVID-19 is an infectious disease that spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, and through the touch. The infected person may leave the virus on the surfaces where he/she touches. Social distancing is the only way to restrict the spread of the disease. As a precautionary measure, the boarding colleges vacated their hostels and closed the colleges. It was a sudden decision when students could not get time to collect their study material while going home. The evacuation was indefinite and was totally dependent on the COVID-19 spread.

The students were not aware about their syllabus completion, examination and no clear-cut idea of the study. Hence, it was felt necessary to study their psychological condition and preparation of their study during this unfamiliar situation. It was also felt necessary to know about their own concept about their preparation in lockdown period. Hence, an online study was conducted through a Google form which was circulated through WhatsApp of students and staff of all colleges under the four Universities in Maharashtra. The responses for the same are discussed in the present paper.

**Keywords:** COVID19; Lockdown; Agriculture Students; Study

### Introduction

The novel SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus that is said to have emerged in the city of Wuhan, China in 2019 has caused a large-scale Coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic all over the world. COVID-19 is an infectious disease that spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette. Body contact is also the major way of disease transmission. At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. Social distancing is the only way to restrict the spread of the disease. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments.

Major part of the world is suffering from Corona Virus and India is not the exception. As on 16/04/2020, there are 2,084,735 COVID-19 cases all over the world and has taken the death toll of 134,685 while in India there are 12,456 registered COVID-19 cases and 423 death cases confirmed on the day. USA, France, Italy, Spain, China are worst affected due to the pandemic and India is not the exception.

### Corona virus and lockdown in India

The first case of the Corona Virus in India was reported on 30th January 2020 which was originated from China. The figure of affected cases crossed 11,000 and caused deaths of more than 350

people. The outbreak of the Corona Virus has been declared an epidemic in India. Government has decided to close all the educational institutions and commercial establishments.

On 22nd March 2020 Prime Minister called people of India to practice Janata Curfew of 14-hour to restrict the spread of COVID-19. As the number of cases in India started increasing, the government decided to observe lockdown all over the country. On 24th March 2020 Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the world's largest lockdown asking 1.3 billion Indians to stay home for 21 days. First phase of lockdown started from 25th March 2020 and expected to end on 14th April 2020. Before the first lockdown ends many state governments decided to extend the lockdown in their states till 30th April 2020. As there is continuous increase in the cases of infected people government of India decided to extend the lockdown till 3rd May 2020.

### Impact of corona virus on education

Most of the HEIs are following classroom teaching almost all over the country. There is increasing trend of using teaching aids such as LCD Projector, K-Yan, Google Classroom etc. but still it is not widely used by teachers and students. There are many universities and colleges in India which are still using traditional techniques of teaching. In many academic institutes although modern teaching aids are available, but it is rarely used by the faculties.

The Corona Virus pandemic has adversely affected traditional educational system all over the world. There is worldwide closure of schools, universities and colleges to avoid spread of the virus. However, school closures are an essential step in halting or limiting community-level and local transmission. Dr Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli has sent back students to their native places from 15th March 2020.

Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions as an attempt to restrict the COVID-19 pandemic spread. These nationwide closures are impacting over 91% of the world's student population. Several other countries have implemented localized closures impacting millions of additional learners. According to UNESCO there are 1,57,52,70,054 affected learners which consist of 91.3% of total enrolled learners from 191 country-wide closures.

The impact on education is likely to cause losses in terms of dropout rates and learning outcomes, especially in regions with

low shock-resilience. Children have fewer opportunities of learning from home. Further, closure of schools is likely to lead to parents missing work, in order to stay at home and take care of the children. This also affects productivity, incurs loss in wages, consequently affecting the community and the economy as a whole.

Due to COVID-19 outbreak, University exams are under threat. On 6th April, Higher Education Minister Mr. Uday Samant has taken meeting with all Vice Chancellors from Maharashtra through video conferencing. After discussion with the Vice Chancellor, it is decided that University exams in Maharashtra has not cancelled but rescheduled. Tentative plan for the exam is expected to be drawn after the lockdown.

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari held a virtual meeting with the University administrators in Maharashtra. He discussed with the Vice Chancellors of the Universities in Maharashtra whether it was feasible to hold the annual exams at this time. The VCs told him that considering the rising number of Coronavirus cases, it would be difficult to hold the university annual exams any time before May 15.

Still it is unpredictable when the lockdown will be lifted. The Agricultural Universities in Maharashtra have regular schedule of Semester End Examinations of II Term in the month of April - May. But considering the COVID-19 pandemic spread, this time it is not possible to follow the regular schedule. The students are sent to their native places and the decision for sending them was taken suddenly considering the situations at that time. This has severely affected the course completion and Mid-Term examinations of the Second semester all over Maharashtra. Yet it is very difficult to schedule the period/dates of examination. The students cannot be gathered for the exam before the decrease or complete eradication of COVID-19. Hence, it was felt necessary to conduct a survey to collect the views of the students towards the exam during this crucial stage considering the availability of notes, syllabus completed, sources of notes available etc. The survey was conducted online through 'Google form' from the students of the Agricultural Universities of Maharashtra.

### Materials and Methods

The present study is an attempt to find out the students' view towards the university exam during the Lockdown period. The research methodology of the current study is concerned to un-

derstand the mood of the students to face the university exams. Logical conclusions were drawn through use of different statistical techniques used to analyse the data. The primary data is the base of the current study which was collected through structured online questionnaire via Google form. The questionnaire was circulated amongst the students all four Agricultural Universities in Maharashtra through teachers and students' WhatsApp account on 10 April 2020 and the responses were collected till 15 April 2020. The study tried to analyse different aspects of exam and students' preparation for the exam depending upon the present scenario. The chapter concentrates on the detailed research methodology used for the current study.

### Research methodology

The present study tried to explore the impact of the lock down on their study and their readiness for exam. The study also tried to review the status of syllabus completion in colleges, study material available with students for preparing for the exam and their comfort level and stress of exam during lockdown period. The present study was descriptive type empirical survey based on primary data. The research models selected was of descriptive and quantitative in nature. The major components of the study are as follows.

#### Need of the study

The sudden intrusion of COVID-19 has not given any opportunity to any University teaching staff to complete the syllabus and to have examination on the scheduled time. The period engulfed by COVID-19 is not short enough to cope up easily. Still the forthcoming days are uncertain. The students are supposed to lose their academic year if the period extends up to next semester. There must be some tool to find the mental condition of the students for the examination. As it's a lockdown period for maintaining social distancing, it is not possible for the students to attend the classes or examination. And hence, to know the mental condition, the online survey is conducted so that the exam can be rescheduled. The survey was also expected to find out students preparedness to face the exam. The study also tried to find out role of universities, colleges and teachers during the period of lockdown.

#### Scope of the study

The scope of the study is limited to Agricultural Universities students in Maharashtra to know their status of study, syllabus completion and their willingness for appearing for exam.

### Objectives of the study

- To study the impact of COVID-19 on syllabus completion.
- To study the availability of study material with the students.
- To study the means from which the study material can be made available to the students.
- To know the willingness of the students to appear for exam in such situation.
- To study the other means of examination.
- To find out exam related updates and its source to the students
- To study whether the students want to get promoted to the next class without exam.
- To study whether lockdown affects student's study
- To get the suggestions and comments from the students regarding examination due to the lockdown.
- To draw the conclusions on the basis of the survey

### Limitations of the study

- The limitations of the present study are as follows
- The present study has geographical and universities limitations. The study is limited to the state of Agricultural Universities Maharashtra.
- The present study is based on the sample online survey because of time and financial constraints and social distancing constrains.
- The study may carry the limitations of collecting data through online questionnaire.
- The study is related only for the period of lockdown

### Primary data

The primary data is the foundation on which analysis of the present study is based that is collected by structured online questionnaire. The primary data help in collecting the information regarding the impact of lockdown on preparation of Agricultural University exams of students in Maharashtra. Online Questionnaire prepared with the help of Google Forms and it is circulated through WhatsApp. During the study 5,552 respondents filled the questionnaire. But after analysis of data, it is found that many students responded the questionnaire in wrong manner. The researchers

analysed the data and deleted irrelevant responses. At last, for analysis 4858 respondents were considered. These students were from different Agricultural Universities in Maharashtra. Wherever necessary scaling method is used for measuring emotions, feelings and behavioral responses of the students. Questionnaire consists of some open and close ended questions.

The data is collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided in three parts. The first part covers the personal information of the students. The second part covers Impact Assessment of Students Due to Lockdown. The third part covers Students' Psychology to Face the Exam. The responses of the PG students consist of the views with respect to their research work instead of their exams.

### Secondary data

Secondary data is also an important source of data on which the present Study Report is based. The researchers have collected the secondary data from various published and unpublished sources. The researcher uses the following sources for collection of secondary data:

- Reports and publications of National and International Institutes.
- Reports of Government and NGOs.
- Various research journals, periodicals and newspapers related with commerce, management, social science, economics etc.
- Internet browsing.

The secondary data has been analyzed and used for drawing conclusion.

### Statistical tools

The data has been collected through primary and secondary sources as described above. During the study data is collected through questionnaire and properly classified, tabulated, and presented in graphical form wherever necessary.

The statistical tools such as percentages, averages, comparative analysis, correlation, statistical tests etc. are used for the purpose of analysis and interpretation of data. Collected data is classified, tabulated and analysed by using different statistical tools by using data processing and statistical tools. The interpretations are drawn from the analysis to suggest recommendations to overcome the

problem under research. Statistical tools such as central tendency, correlation etc. are used to analyze the data. Analyses help in interpretation of the problem and drawing conclusions.

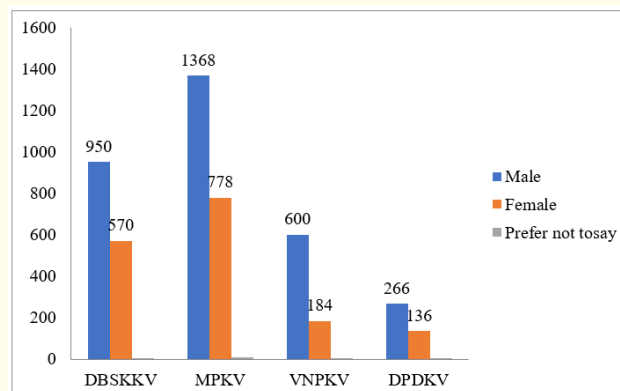
Even though the survey of the PG and Phd students is also conducted, their responses are not considered in drawing the conclusions. The data is also not shown colleges under each University due to the limitation of the time [1-4].

### Results and Discussion

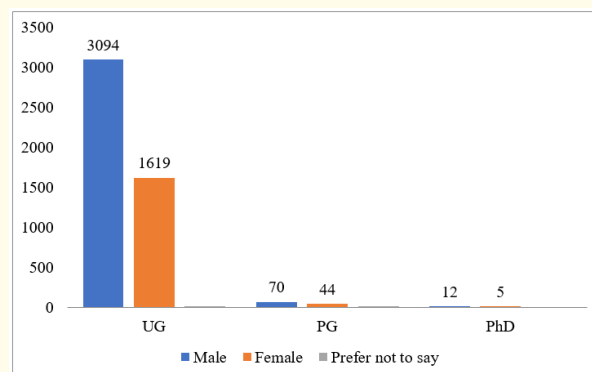
The responses obtained are divided according to the gender. It is observed, from the overall responses, 66% responses were from male while 34% from females. Very negligible i.e., 14 responses from the persons who preferred not to disclose their gender (Figure 1). The responses then categorized according to the university (Figure 2-5). It is observed that about 66% male and 34% female responded the survey from each University (Figure 6).

**Figure 1:** Response of students all over Maharashtra.

**Figure 2:** Response of students from DBSKKV, Dapoli.

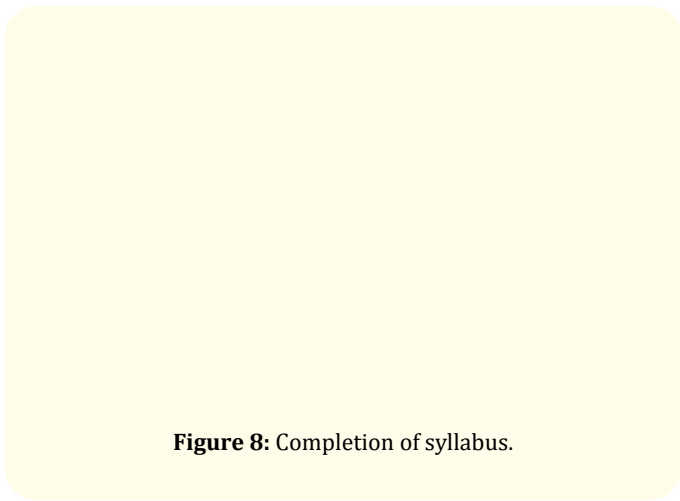
**Figure 3:** Response of studens from MPKV, Rahuri.**Figure 6:** Universitywise comparative response male and female students.

The responses also divided as per the UG, PG and Phd level of the students. The responses according to the number are presented below. The contribution of the PG and PhD students is negligible as compared to the UG students all over the Maharashtra (Figure 7).

**Figure 4:** Response of the students from DPDKV, Akola.**Figure 7:** Response of UG, PG and PhD students over all Maharashtra.**Figure 5:** Response of students from VNMKV, Parbhani.

### Objective 1. To study the impact of COVID-19 on syllabus completion

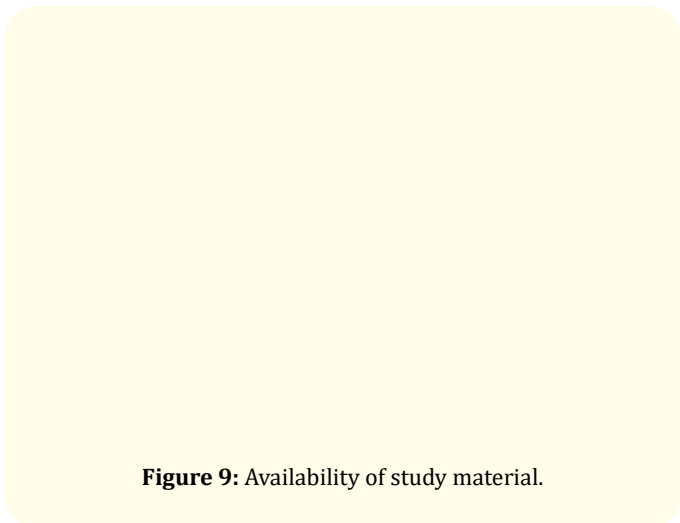
Due to the sudden lockdown, the syllabus might not be completed. When it was inquired, 53% favoured that the syllabus is not completed, while 44% quoted partially completed and only 3% quoted the syllabus is completed. The maximum percentage of non-completion of syllabus might be from the first year students whose semester started little late (Figure 8).



**Figure 8:** Completion of syllabus.

#### Objective 2: To study the availability of study material with the students

The study material availability is the major issue that makes the students confident for examination. It was observed that only 7% students agreed that they have study material available while 49% partially available and 44% not available. These students have kept their study material while leaving the hostel as they never thought of having such a lengthy lockdown (Figure 9).

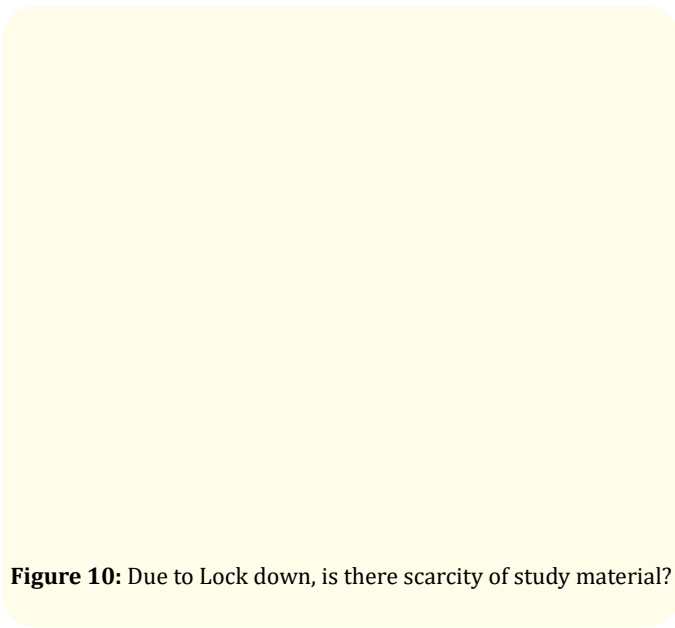


**Figure 9:** Availability of study material.

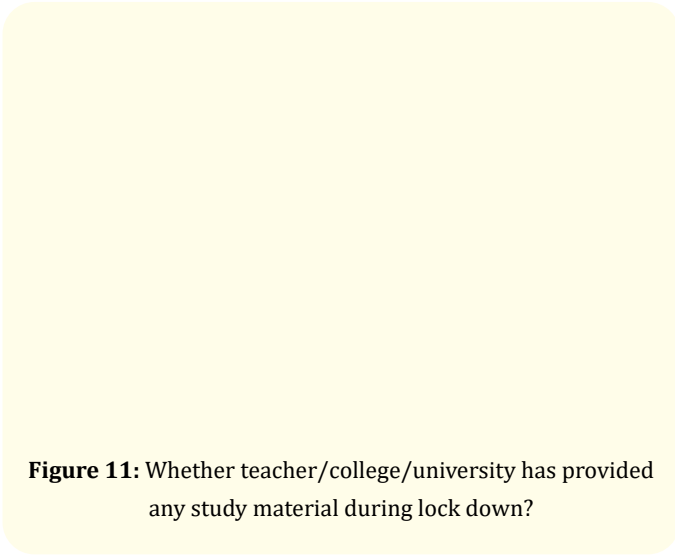
#### Objective 3: To study the means from which the study material can be made available to the students

The survey was conducted to gather the information to find where from the study material can be made available to the students. But as the data was very discrete, it is not quoted here. It

was inquired whether they got the study material in hard copy format, from internet, video, or any other e-resources. From the data it is observed that the students are more inclined to the hard copy material and not on the online material (PDF files) (Figure 10,11).



**Figure 10:** Due to Lock down, is there scarcity of study material?



**Figure 11:** Whether teacher/college/university has provided any study material during lock down?

#### Objective 4: To know the willingness of the students to appear for exam in such situation

The majority of the students i.e., 70% are not ready for the examination and merely 3% are in favor of examination. Out of total respondents 20% are partially ready for the exam while 7% remained neutral to respond this question (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Are you ready to face the exam?

About 83% of the students are not satisfied with their preparation for the examination and merely 5% are ready for the examination. The 12% of the students are not in condition to stand in favour of any of these previously mentioned categories (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Are you satisfied with your preparation for the exam?

Considering the lockdown, as it is not possible to conduct the exam, it was inquired when the students will be ready for the exam after the lockdown period is over. Majority of the students i.e., 61% showed their interest to have the examination one month after the lockdown period is over. About 6% of the students want to have the examination as soon as the lockdown period is over. The second largest share of the students is in the category of having the exam 15 days after the lockdown period is over (Figure 14).

Figure 14: If exam taken, when are you ready to appear for exam after lock down is over?

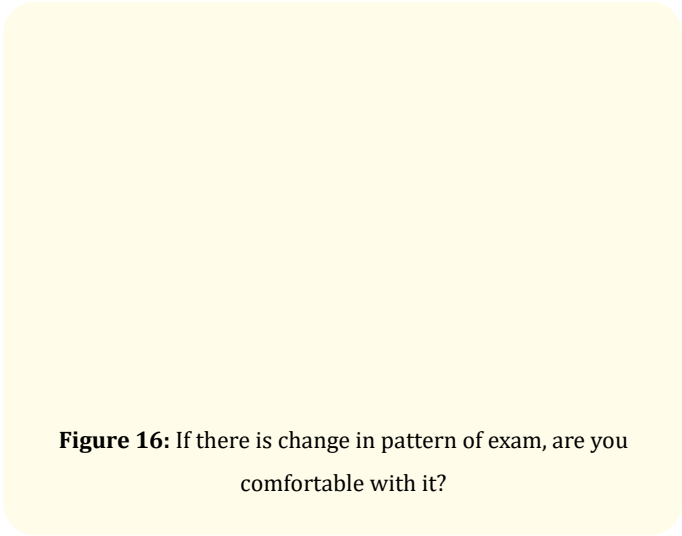
Objective 5: To study the other means of examination

As it is difficult to have the traditional exams of the students, considering the social distancing, it was inquired whether to have other means of examination. The largest portion of the students i.e., 49% opined not to have other means like mobile or computer of examination. Least portion of the students i.e., 24% favoured the other means of examination. The 27% of the students couldn't say anything about it (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Are you ready for the same if Computer or Mobile Based Exam is taken?

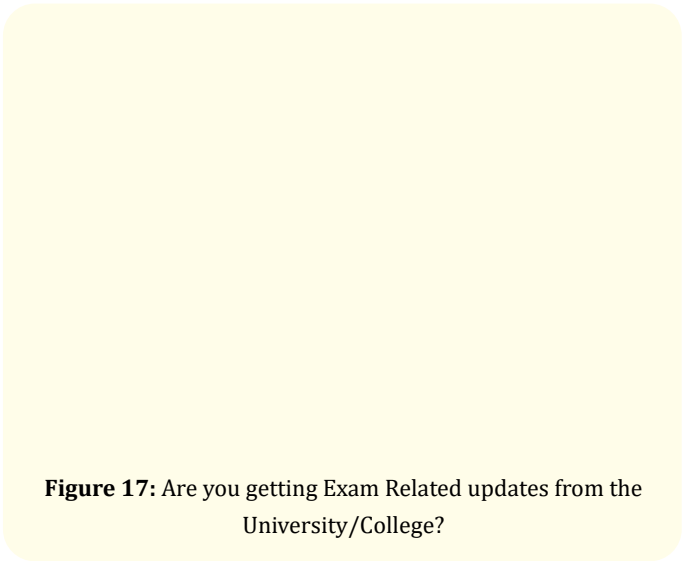
It was inquired are the students comfortable if the pattern of the examination is got changed. Only 12% students are in the fa-

vour of change in examination pattern and the highest portion of the students i.e., 48% are not in favour of it. The 27% students are partially ready for it while 13% showed their neutral opinion in this regard (Figure 16).



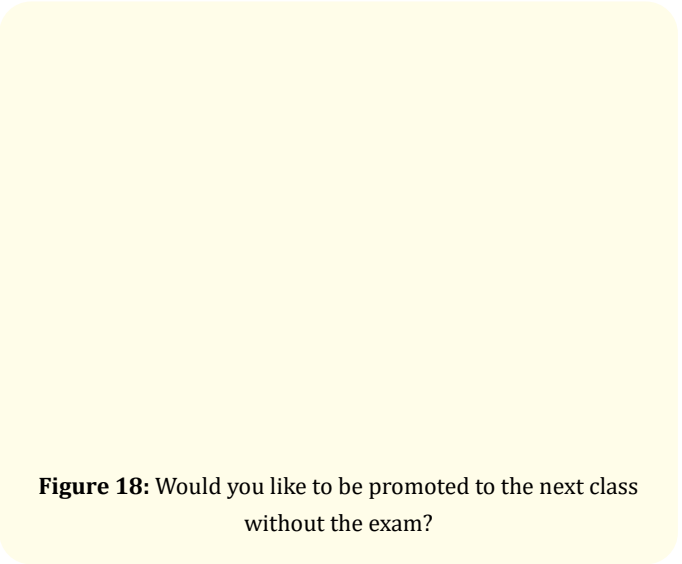
**Objective 6: To find out exam related updates and its source to the students**

The students were inquired how frequently they receiving the updates related to examination. Maximum i.e., 26% quoted 'sometimes' and minimum i.e., 8% quoted 'often'. About 21% students are in the favour that they are always getting the updates about the information from the University or the College (Figure 17).

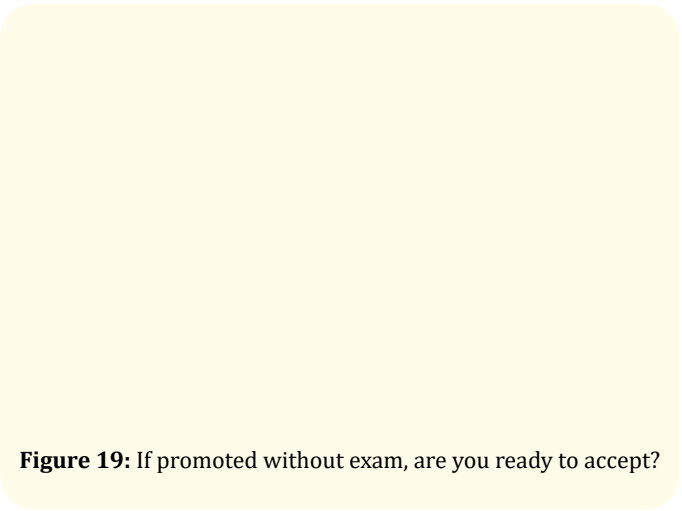


**Objective 7: To study whether the students want to get promoted to the next class without exam**

Maximum of the students i.e., 73% wants to get promoted to next class without exam while only 10% don't want to get promoted. The 17% of the students could not favour either 'Yes' or 'No' or it can be said that they are uncertain about it (Figure 18).



It was inquired whether they are ready to accept the promotion to the next class if done by the University. The 78% are ready to accept the promotion while 8% students are not ready for such promotion to the next class. The 14% of the students are in dilemma whether to get promoted or not (Figure 19).





It was inquired on which basis they want to get promoted to the next class. The 40% students quoted their view that on the basis of the marks of previous exam while 36% said that on the basis of the average marks of the previous exam. While 24% of the students want to have some other means to get promoted to the next class (Figure 20).

**Figure 20:** If promoted, on which basis?

#### Objective 8: To study whether lockdown affects student's study

It was observed that only 2% of the students' study is not getting affected due to lockdown while 62% of the students have major effect on their study. The rest of the students have their response in between i.e. minor, moderate or neutral (Figure 21).

**Figure 21:** Do you think, Lock down affects your studies?

It was intended to study whether the students are able to concentrate on studies or not. Merely 3% are quoting that they are always able to concentrate on their study, while 26% sometimes and 26% rarely able to concentrate to their study (Figure 22).

**Figure 22:** Are you able to concentrate on studies during lock down?

#### Objective 9: To get the suggestions and comments from the students regarding examination due to the lockdown

The following are the suggestions received from the students in their own wording.

- We don't have enough study material for semester examination, so please give us any online material.
- What will happen about the exams? Please make it clear to students as early as possible.
- Journals are not available due to lockdown
- Due to lockdown all students now at home. As per news information it may be extend. We want our 50% hostel fees return. We want up to date contact from university.
- Semester end exams should be skipped or took online method in MCQ form. Universities should not be open till June 2020 end. unfortunately if any single student found positive, it all make difficult situation for all hosteller students in university as a whole.
- This Corona Should be completely removed from our state.

- College should not start till complete destroy of this pandemic.
- Because students will come from all the cities like hotspots. even from other states.
- They may bring infection. Though the exams will extend lockdown should extend up to complete eradication.!
- Please cancel final 4th semester exam, so not completed portions and practical work and home is not study complete. All study material is hostel found and no study well. So please I hope to government cancel this exam and pass them this Student in next year Ok.
- Kindly requested to consider opinions of all the students and take positive steps for the better future of all the agricultural students.
- Medical health checkup should be conducted of all students, as they will be arriving from different regions of Maharashtra and India, after Lockdown to avoid silent carrier of Corona virus.
  - Whole college campus must be sanitized properly.
  - Steps must be taken to follow social distancing in college and prevent overcrowding in public places.
- Online examination of the students should not be conducted as no proper infrastructure is available with the students.
- The present examination may be conducted in the next ongoing semester as and when it will be started.
- WhatsApp and Google Classroom can be used for the online circulation of the notes. The students may be provided with sufficient online notes for the present and next semester too and its confirmation may be taken through calls only from the students who are unable to use WhatsApp or Google Classroom. The issue with the students in the remote area may be solved through Postal services if possible or nearby students may help each other.

### Acknowledgement

The researchers are thankful to the Google for provided the platform conducting online survey. The researchers are thankful to the WhatsApp for the wide and easy circulation of the Survey form amongst the students. The researchers are also very much thankful to all the students who responded the survey and spared their time for the same.

### Declarations of Interest

None.

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4. <https://www.indiaeducation.net/resources/articles/impact-of-coronavirus-on-education.html>

### Objective 10: To draw the conclusions on the basis of the survey

The following conclusions are drawn from the study.

- Students don't have sufficient study material.
- They are not in condition to prepare for the exam as the syllabus is not completed.
- Other means of exam are not feasible in view of the students.
- Examination may be conducted traditionally about one month after the lockdown is over.
- As the lockdown period is uncertain, the examination may be extended accordingly or results may be drawn with some empirical formula if exams extents too much.
- Students may not be promoted to next class on any ground.
- Students may be made instrumental with the online teaching system provided suitable infrastructure (internet facility with good bandwidth, mobile or laptop etc.) must be available with the students.

### Major recommendations

- The semester end examination of the students may be withheld indefinitely according to the lockdown situation.

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