More than 2 billion people around the globe are living under lockdown as a precautionary measure in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. A recent rapid review in the *Lancet* reports that restriction of movement and quarantine can generate mental health symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress syndrome, irritability and anger.

An ongoing COVID-19 knowledge, attitudes and practices study implemented by the Population Council Institute in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh with 2,041 respondents sought to assess people’s mental health, as assessed by feeling lonely, irritable or depressed, during the lockdown.

**Mental health symptoms during COVID-19 lockdown**

- Mental health symptoms during the lockdown need to be disseminated in local languages widely.
- Of the total female participants, 2.7% reported experience of violence (2% in Uttar Pradesh & 5% in Bihar) during the lockdown.
- A notable proportion of participants, comparatively more female participants, felt lonely, depressed or irritable during the lockdown (38% of males and 45% of females).
- Mental health symptoms were relatively higher among the participants (in comparison to their counterparts) of:
  1. Households where respondent or any other family member lost the job due to the lockdown
  2. Households with financial resources to survive for less than two weeks
  3. Households with fewer number of rooms in the house
  4. Migrant households where a family member has not returned home
  5. Women who experienced violence during lockdown

**Mental health symptoms among women who experienced violence at home during lockdown (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental health symptoms</th>
<th>Bihar</th>
<th>Uttar Pradesh</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes or often</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mental health symptoms among those who reported household financial resources available for:**

- **Less than 2 weeks**
  - Women who experience or observe more violence are more likely to experience loneliness, depression and irritability. Access to counselling and better social protection is necessary to address this issue.

- **More than 2 weeks to survive**
  - Poor mental health is closely tied to job loss and concerns for how long household resources will last. Making (remote) work possible or distributing food and essential resources is important.

**Survey Methodology**

Details can be accessed at: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/8ZV0XW

*The study builds on the UDRA longitudinal study of adolescents to know more about UDRA longitudinal surveys, please visit: https://www.projectudaya.in/
For more information on this brief, please write to: info@pcinstitute.org.in; mgundi@popcouncil.org

Note: This brief presents findings from the first round of the COVID-19 KAP study (N=2041), and results from follow-up rounds will be shared in due course.