

AIRTTKC 2026 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS A RESEARCH
TOOL: TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE CREATION

**THE LASTING MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON
COUPLES AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN INDIA**

Atluri Vijaya Lakshmi

Counselling Psychologist & Research Scholar
Sikkim Skill University, Sikkim
Email: vijayapeddina@gmail.com

Abstract:

Covid-19 reshaped emotional and relational wellbeing for couples and families in India. Lockdowns, financial uncertainty, health fears, and prolonged proximity led to increased conflict, emotional fatigue, anxiety, and communication breakdown among partners. This paper explores long-term psychological effects of the pandemic on relationship satisfaction and family dynamics based on counselling observations and existing research. A conceptual table is included to summarize key insights, along with counselling-focused recovery strategies. Findings are intended to support practitioners working with couples in post-pandemic India.

Index terms: Covid-19, Couples, Family Relationships, Mental Health, Emotional Regulation, Post-Pandemic Stress

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic created deep disruptions within couple and family systems. Sudden changes in daily routines, fear of illness, economic stressors, and prolonged confinement intensified emotional reactivity and psychological strain. While some couples reported increased bonding due to shared time, many experienced heightened conflict, emotional distance, and communication breakdown. This paper explores key psychological impacts of Covid-19 on couples and families in India, drawing from counselling insights and post-pandemic behavioural patterns.

Table 1: Major Psychological Impacts Observed Among Couples Post-Covid

Impact	Description
Heightened Anxiety	Persistent fear, uncertainty, and emotional sensitivity.
Conflict Escalation	Arguments arising from stress, proximity, role fatigue, and emotional overload.
Communication Breakdown	Withdrawal, misinterpretation, and reduced

AIRTTKC 2026 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS A RESEARCH TOOL: TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE CREATION

	emotional expression.
Intimacy Disruptions	Lowered emotional and physical intimacy due to exhaustion and psychological fatigue.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper follows a conceptual methodology supported by qualitative observations from counselling more than 200 couples between 2020 and 2024. Themes were identified through repeated relational patterns and emotional responses in therapy sessions. Secondary literature on pandemic-related mental health and relational stress was used to strengthen the conceptual framework.

IV. POST-COVID RELATIONAL STRESS CYCLE

Based on counselling experiences, couples frequently displayed a repeating emotional cycle triggered by unresolved pandemic stress. The cycle typically follows this pattern:

Anxiety → Conflict → Withdrawal → Guilt → Anxiety

This cycle demonstrates how emotional strain escalates when couples lack communication, emotional regulation, and structured relational support.

V. COUNSELLING STRATEGIES FOR RECOVERY

Key therapeutic strategies useful for helping couples recover from pandemic-induced stress include:

1. Emotional Regulation Training – Enhancing tolerance to distress and slowing emotional reactivity.
2. Structured Communication Rituals – Encouraging daily check-ins and weekly emotional sharing practices.
3. Redefining Boundaries – Balancing work, personal time, and relationship needs.
4. Processing Pandemic Trauma – Encouraging partners to openly express fears, grief, and uncertainty.
5. Strength-Based Interventions – Highlighting resilience, gratitude, and shared coping successes.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic created lasting emotional and relational impacts on couples and families. Persistent anxiety, conflict patterns, and communication barriers continue to appear in post-

AIRTTKC 2026 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS A RESEARCH TOOL: TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE CREATION

pandemic counselling sessions. By focusing on emotional regulation, structured communication, and relationship rebuilding, couples can restore stability and deepen connection. This paper underscores the need for continued counselling support as families navigate long-term psychological and relational recovery.

REFERENCES

- [1] Prime, H. et al. Risk and Resilience in Family Well-Being During the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- [2] Galea, S. Mental Health and the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- [3] Pieh, C. Impact of Lockdowns on Mental Health and Family Dynamics.
- [4] Gottman, J. The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work.
- [5] Twenge, J. iGen: Understanding the Digital Generation.