

RESEARCHER'S PERCEPTION ON RESEARCH ETHICS AMID COVID AND POST- COVID: A STUDY OF INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

In the year 2020 the whole world is suffering with a virus that primarily affects the lungs of human body. It has cause numerous problems and at the same point appeared as opportunity too. The present study is in the same context that how it has affected the research work and how the ethical activities are maintained while conducting research in this scenario. The research ethics represents some practices in research work that must be followed by a researcher, for the sake of the research as well as for the community. For the study, research scholars of selected higher educational institutions of capital city of Uttar Pradesh in India will be taken. A survey was conducted using online and offline questionnaire as the tool for the collection of data. It reveals that the COVID has appeared as hurdle for the research activities but at the same time, the research scholars have managed in an efficient manner that it become opportunity for them.

Keywords- Research Ethics, Pandemic, COVID-19, Researcher, Research Ethics, Higher Educational Institutions

Introduction

The virus that gets exposed to the common society from the laboratory of Wuhan, China has not affected the routine life of the public but, the researcher's community is also adversely suffering from it. The COVID-19 pandemic is also an adverse effect of some research work, that may be avoidable if the measures were taken carefully. Research ethics is not just a thought. It is much more than it. It helps to guide the researcher community to fulfil their work in logical manner and up to a level that will be universally accepted. This also suggests that research should meet its ultimate objective which is to serve to the society.

Literature review

Marino et al. (2020) discussed the various aspects that a researcher has felt during COVID period and also encouraged thr researchers to conduct their work ethically.

Frunza (2020) argued in the article that in spite of so much difficulties, there should follow the ethical guidelines.

Ma et al. (2020) discussed the problems concerned with the ethics during the pandemic. The article also described the characteristics of researcher in pandemic. They suggested that there is need for the updating in guidelines related to the research ethics.

Objective

1. The study will be an attempt to examine whether the pandemic is an opportunity for the researchers or not.
2. In which manner it has affect them and their study

3. How the researcher has maintained the ethical conducts in their research work.
4. The views of researchers are also observed regarding the research ethics during pandemic.

Research Methodology

The survey method has been used for conducting the study. A structured questionnaire was designed for the study and distributed online and offline among the research scholars on random basis. Further, the collected data input into an excel sheet and then analyzed.

Scope and Limitation

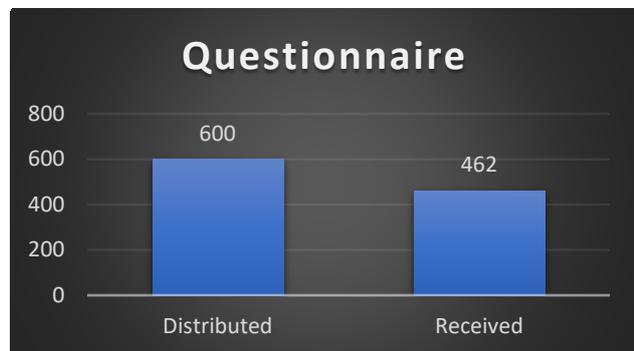
The research scholars of the higher education institutions that are running in the Capital city of Uttar Pradesh, India are taken for the study. They are Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow and University of Lucknow, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Questionnaire

Questionnaire	Distributed	Received
Response	600	462

Figure 1: Questionnaire

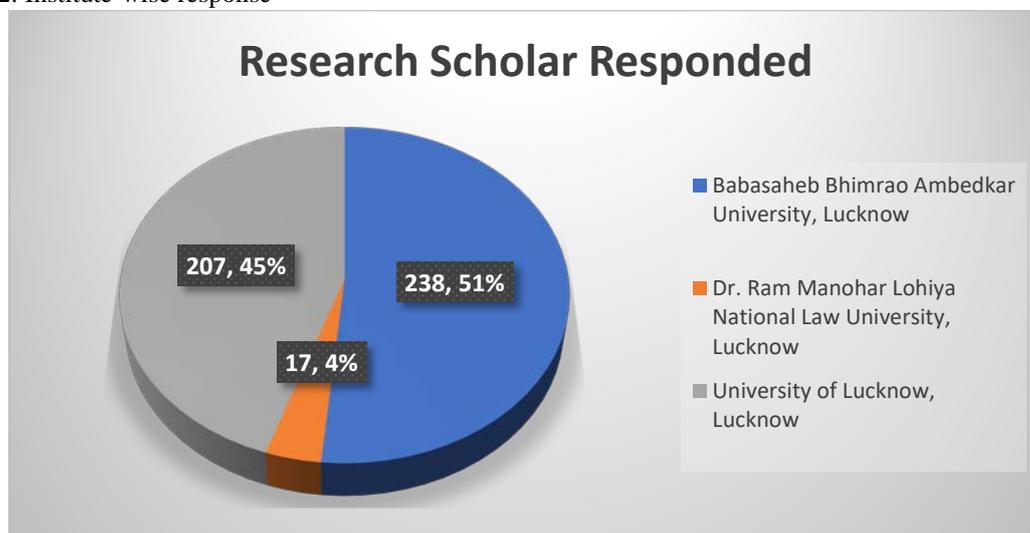


There was total 600 questionnaire were distributed, via online using email and offline to the research scholars of the various institutions. Out of that only 462 were received.

Table 2: Institute-wise response

Name of Institution	Research Scholar Responded
Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow	238
Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow	17
University of Lucknow, Lucknow	207

Figure 2: Institute-wise response

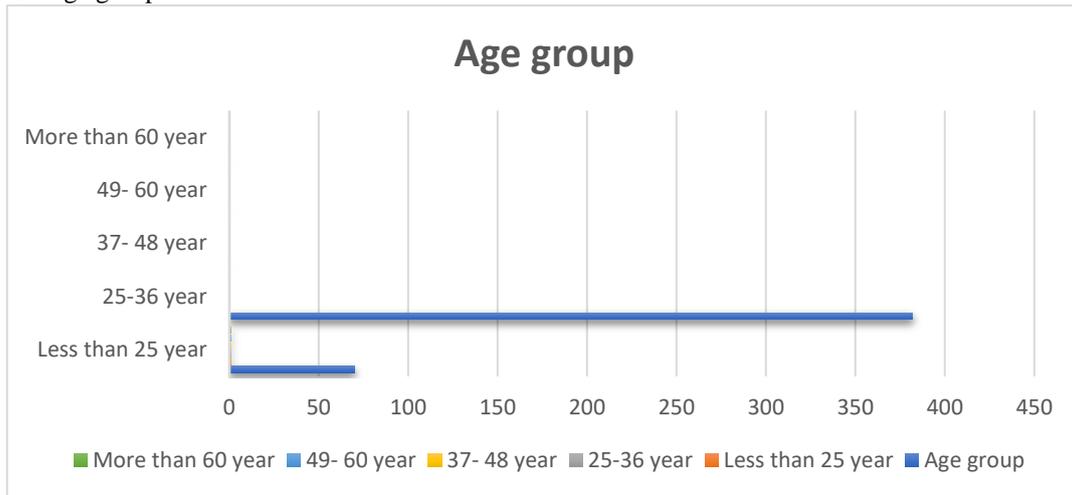


From the above table and figure 2, it can be concluded that the highest percentage of respondents were from the Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow. After that the University of Lucknow holds second position with 207 respondents which makes 45% of the total and there were only 17 response received from the Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow.

Table 3: Age group

Age group	Less than 25 year	25-36 year	37- 48 year	49- 60 year	More than 60 year
Responded	70	392	00	00	00

Figure 3: Age group

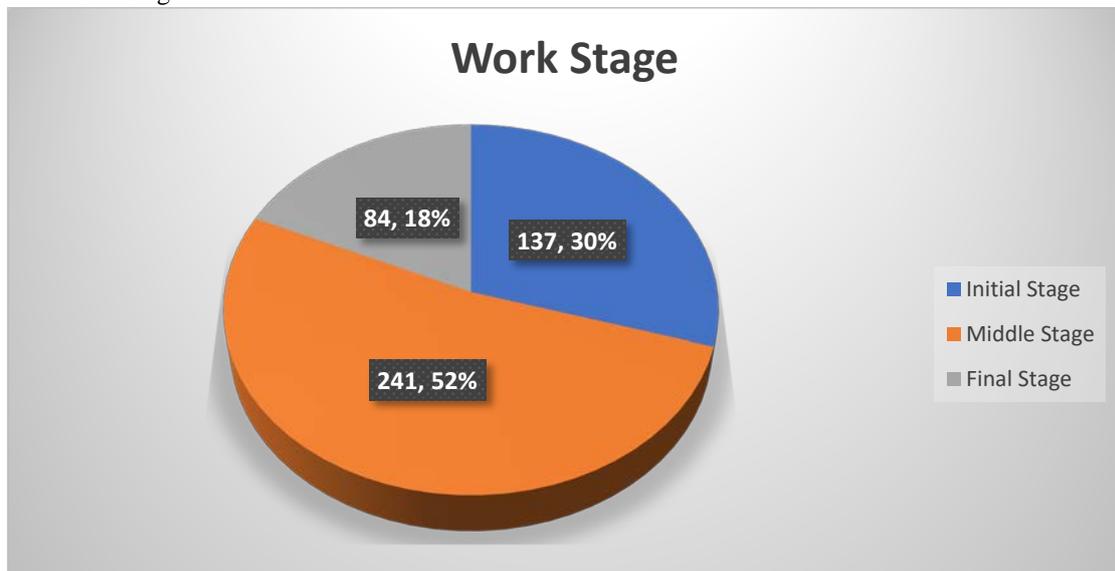


It was found that the most of the research scholars were falls under the age group of 25- 36 years. Rest of the scholars were of less than 25 years.

Table 4: Work Stage

Work Stage	Initial Stage	Middle Stage	Final Stage
Response	137	241	84

Table 4: Work Stage

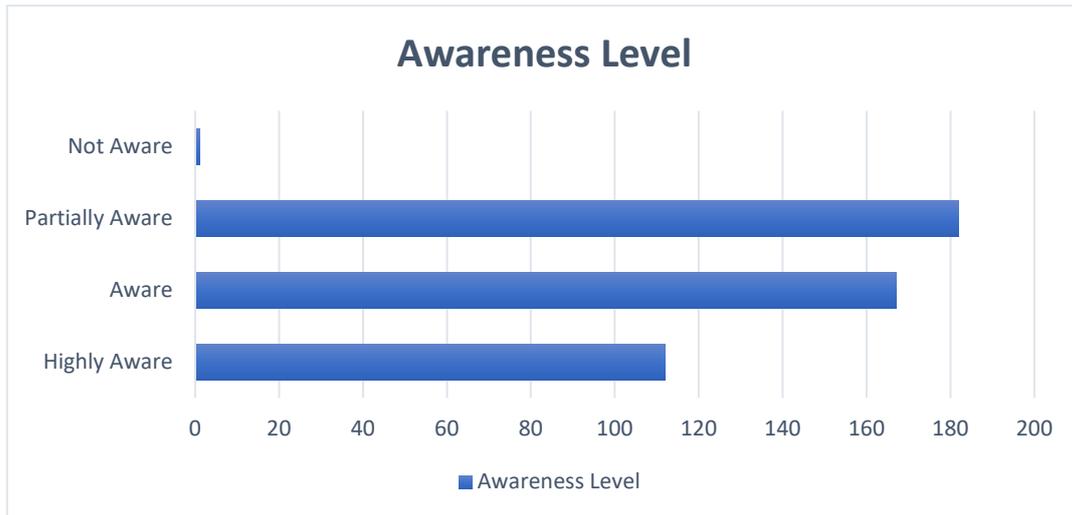


From the table 4, we can find that the 30% of respondents, which is 137 were on the initial stage of their research. Majority of them were on middle stage and only 18% of them at the final stage of their research work. Figure 4 is representing the data very well.

Table 5: Research Ethics awareness

Awareness level	Highly Aware	Aware	Partially aware	Not Aware
Awareness	112	167	182	1

Table 5: Research Ethics awareness

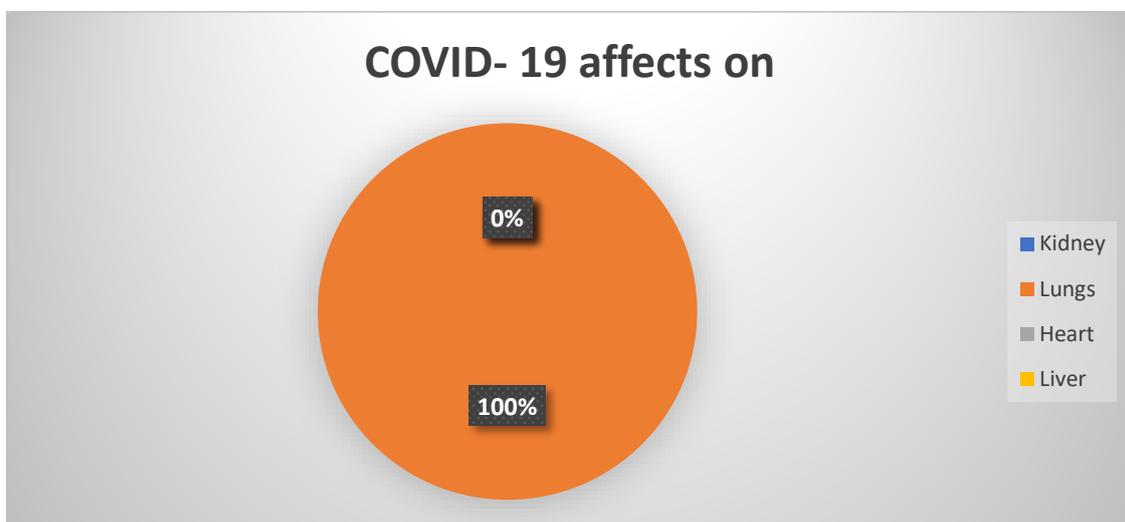


With the help of objective type questions, the awareness level of the researchers regarding Research ethics was analyzed. It reveals that 112 respondents were highly aware, 167 were aware, 182 were partially aware and only 1 respondent was not aware of that what the research ethics covers. It is clearly indicated in the table 5 and figure 5.

Table 6: Affected body part from COVID-19

COVID- 19 affects on	Kidney	Lungs	Heart	Liver
Response	00	462	00	00

Table 6: Affected body part from COVID-19



A question was asked from the research scholars to know whether they are familiar with the COVID-19 is or not. All the respondents were aware that the virus of COVID-19 primarily affects the Lungs of a human body.

Table 7: Role of Research Ethics amid COVID-19

Role of Research Ethics amid COVID-19	Very important	Neutral	Not important	Can't say
Response	392	42	0	28

Figure 7: Role of Research Ethics amid COVID-19

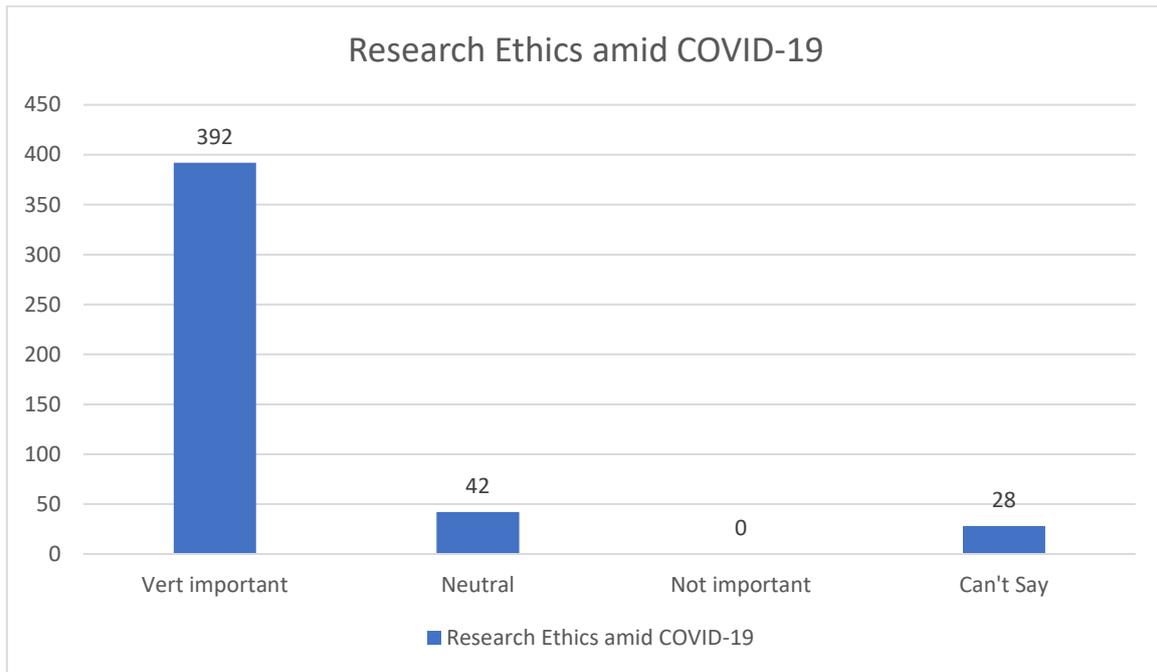
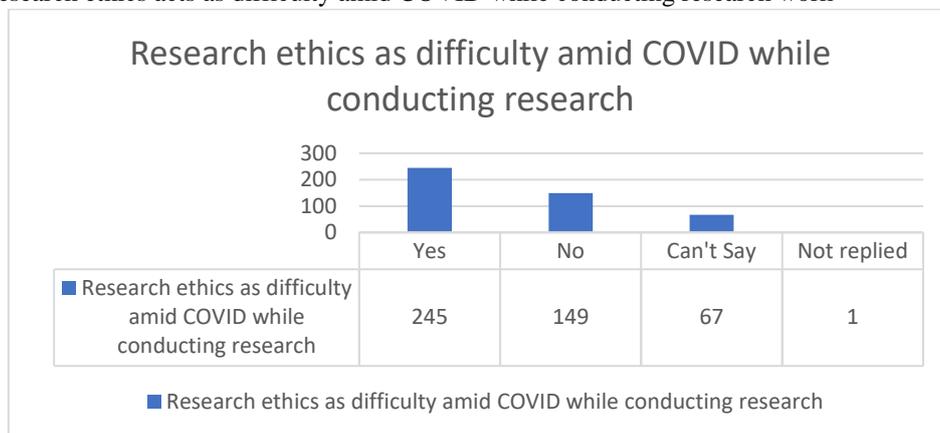


Table 7 and figure 7 is displaying the opinion of respondents for the role of Research Ethics amid COVID-19. 392 respondents feel that its role is very important, 42 feel neutral and 28 respondents were not sure about it.

Table 8: Research ethics acts as difficulty amid COVID while conducting research work

Research ethics as difficulty amid COVID while conducting research	Yes	No	Can't say	Not Replied
Response	245	149	67	01

Figure 8: Research ethics acts as difficulty amid COVID while conducting research work

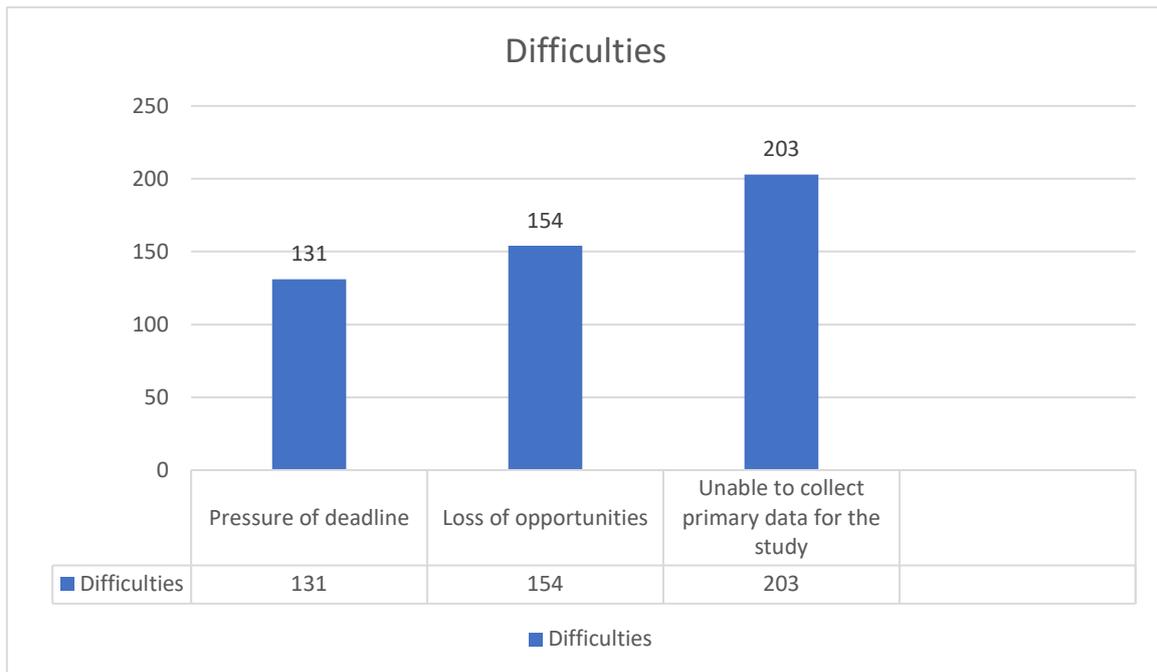


The table 8 and figure 8 shows that the 245 respondents feels that research ethics is acting as difficulty for them amid COVID while conducting research work. 149 respondents do not feel like that. While 67 were not confirm about it.

Table 9: Difficulties feel amid COVID for the formal conduct of research

Difficulties	Pressure of deadline	Loss of opportunities	Unable to collect primary data for the study
Response	131	154	203

Figure 9: Difficulties feel amid COVID for the formal conduct of research

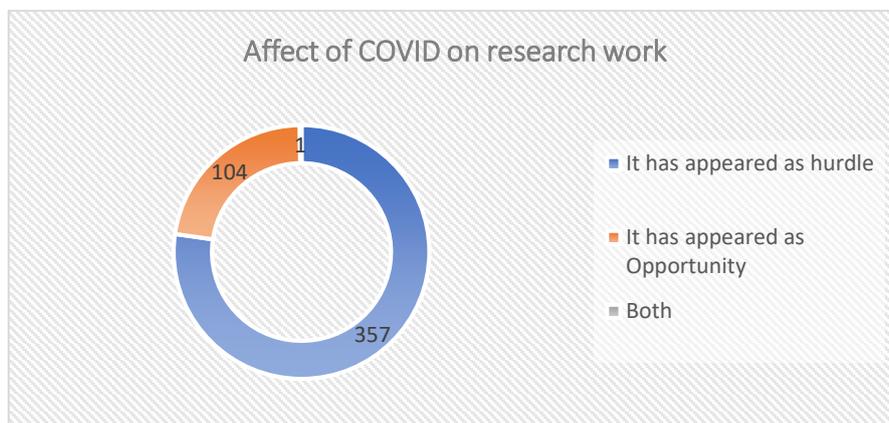


The table 9 reveals that most of the respondents were not able to collect primary data for the study. After that the researchers feels the that the COVID becomes a reason for the loss of opportunities.

Table 10: Affect of COVID-19 on research

Affect of COVID-19 on research	It has appeared as Hurdle	It has appeared as Opportunity	Both
Response	357	168	01

Table 10: Affect of COVID-19 on research

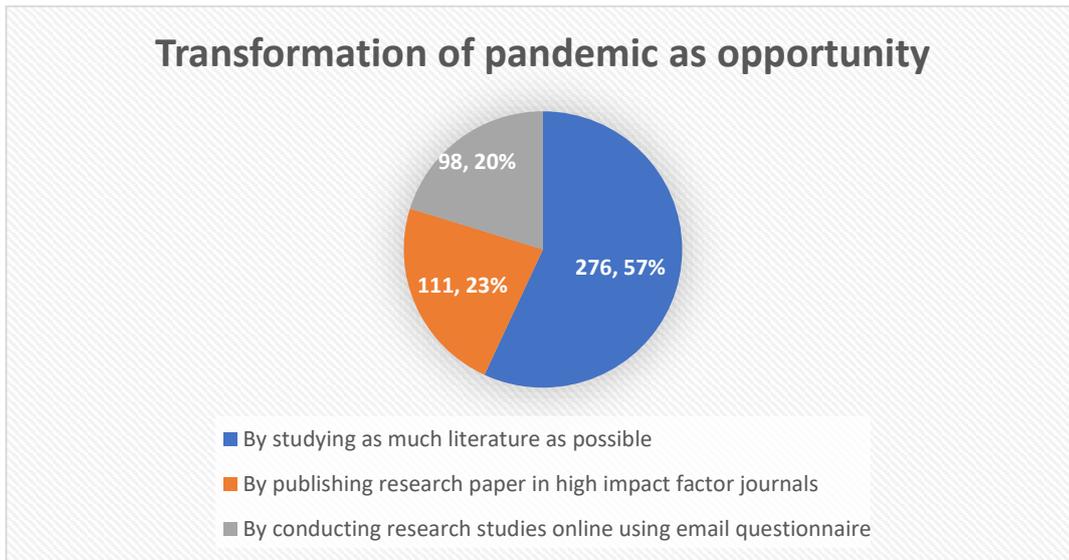


The study reveals that the out of 462 as per the 357 respondents, COVID is appeared as hurdle while 104 feels that it has bring opportunity along with. 1 respondent opt for both, means COVID has appeared as hurdle but also at the same time as opportunity too.

Table 11: Transformation of pandemic as opportunity

Transformation of pandemic as opportunity	By studying as much literature as possible	By publishing research paper in high impact factor journals	By conducting research studies online using email questionnaire
Response	276	111	98

Figure 11: Transformation of pandemic as opportunity

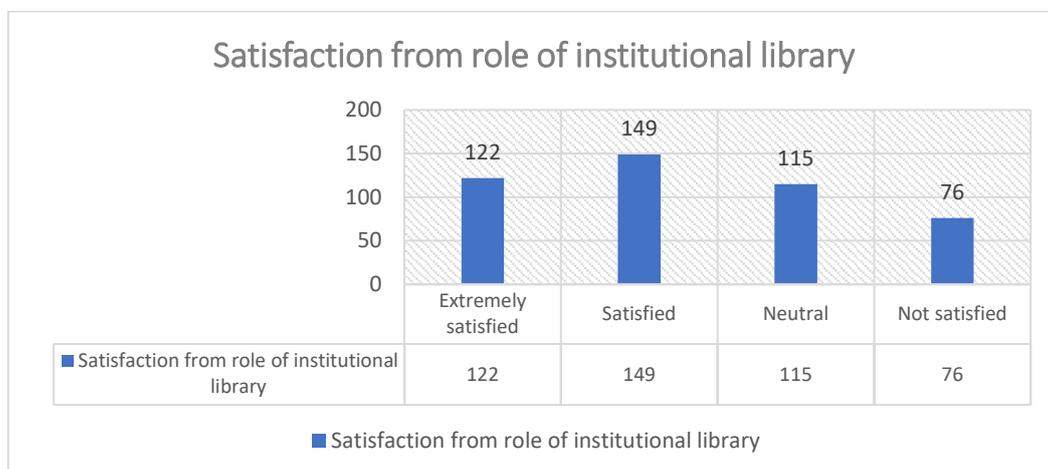


The table 11 shows that about respondents has voted maximum to the act of studying as much literature as possible to transform the pandemic as opportunity. After that they opted that they were utilizing that period by publishing research paper in high impact factor journal and minimum vote i.e. 98 was given to conducting research studies online using email questionnaire.

Table 12: Satisfaction with the role of institutional library amid COVID and post-COVID

Role of institutional library	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not satisfied
Response	122	149	115	76

Table 12: Satisfaction with the role of institutional library amid COVID and post-COVID

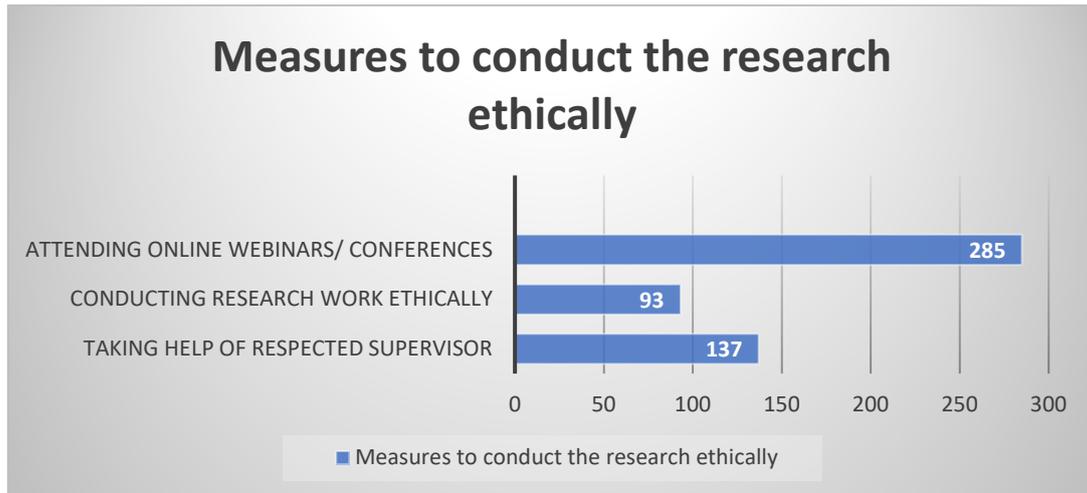


The study was conducted to take the views of researchers regarding the role of Library of their organization. Out of 462 respondents, only 122 respondents were extremely satisfied with the role of library of the institute amid COVID and post-COVID. 149 were satisfied, 115 responded neutral and 76 were not satisfied with their library. The table 12 and figure 12 is revealing this clearly.

Table 13: Measures to conduct the research ethically

Measures to conduct the research ethically	Taking help of respected supervisor	Conducting research work ethically	Attending online webinars/ conferences
Response	137	93	285

Table 13: Measures to conduct the research ethically

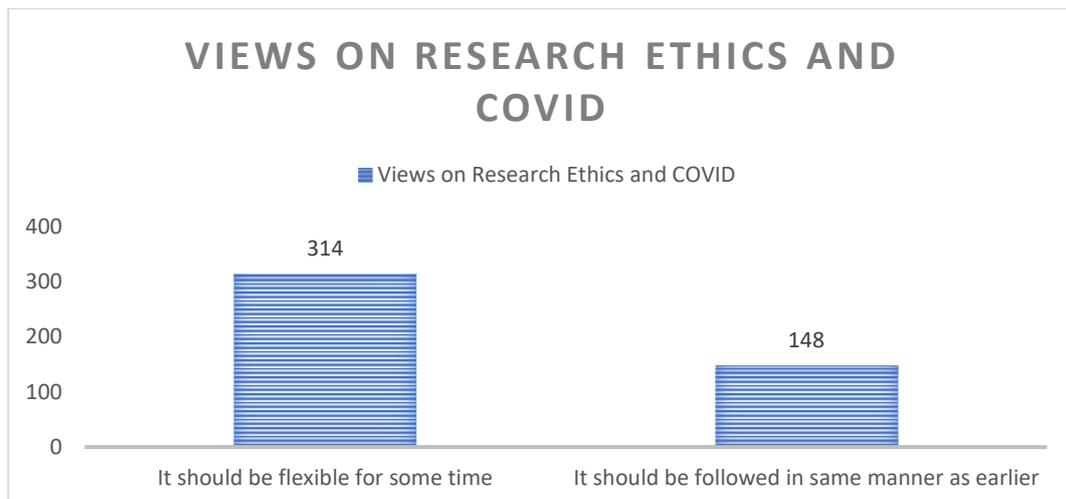


The respondents ranked first to the attending online webinar/ conferences for the measure taken by them to conducted the research work ethically. Second rank was given to the statement that they are taking help of their respected supervisor to conduct research work ethically.

Table 14: Views on Research Ethics and COVID

Views on Research Ethics and COVID	It should be flexible for some time	It should be followed in same manner as earlier
Response	314	148

Figure 14: Views on Research Ethics and COVID

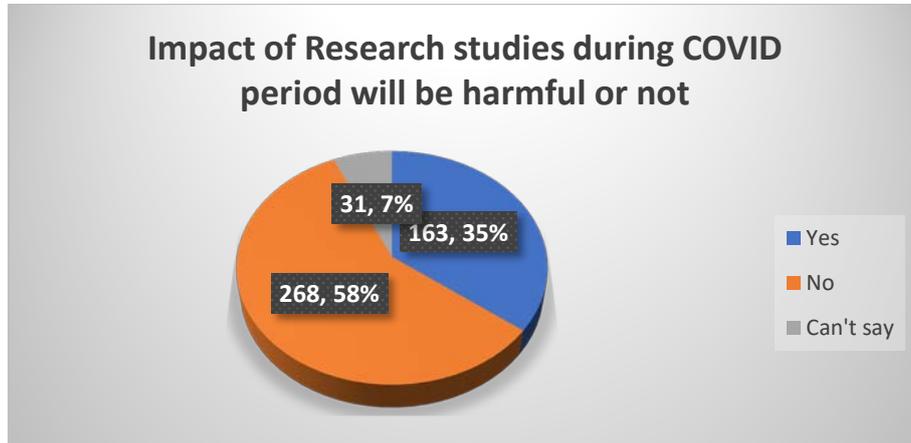


The table 14 and figure 15 is showing the views of the research scholars regarding COVID and Research ethics. Out of 462, most of the respondents i.e. 314 were in favour to that the Research ethics should be flexible for some time. 148 respondents were in favour that it should be followed in the same manner as it was earlier.

Table 15: Research studies during COVID period will be harmful or not

Research studies during COVID period will be harmful or not	Yes	No	Can't say
Response	163	268	31

Figure 15: Research studies during COVID period will be harmful or not



In the above table 15 and figure 15 the views of respondents are interpreted. It shows that the in opinion of 163 researchers, the research studies that are conducted during the COVID period may produce more harm than the benefit. But most of the them says that it is not true that the research studies will cause more harm. While 31 respondents were not confirmed about this.

Findings

The finding of the study that is conducted among the research scholars of higher educational institutions of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India keeping in view the impact of COVID-19 pandemic is as following-

- Most of the respondents that have taken part in the study were at middle stage of their research work.
- Out of 462, 112 respondents were highly aware for the various aspects of research ethics. 167 were aware, 182 were partially aware and only 01 among them was not aware.
- All of the respondents were aware from the basic knowledge of COVID-19 virus that it primarily affects lungs of the human body.
- Most of respondents feel that Research ethics was acting as difficulty amid COVID while conducting research.
- Study reveals that COVID has appeared as hurdle for the research.
- The researchers have transformed the pandemic into opportunity by taking various measures.
- Among the total respondents, only 122 were extremely satisfied, 149 were satisfied and 76 were not satisfied from the role of their institutional library amid and post-COVID.
- The studies conducted in COVID period will not result in harm than the benefit.

Conclusion

The research is carried out keeping in the centre point the welfare of the human being and the society. For this there are some guideline that should be followed while conducting the research work. The COVID- 19 has affected the smooth functioning as its effect ranges from was lockdown to physical distance and loss of various opportunities. The libraries are the only organization that were supporting the research activities by providing quality resources via remote access. From the study it can be concluded the overall role of the libraries were satisfactory but still there is need of improvement. The study reveals that the COVID has appeared as hurdle and also brings some opportunities along with.

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