



UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE DAILY LIVES OF PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

The Pandemic COVID-19 has affected the whole world. As the corona virus spreads, nations have adopted social distancing and lockdown strategy to control. Every country is undergoing stress and economies are facing slowdown in production and consumption. The outbreak of COVID 19 Pandemic is an unprecedented shock to the already slowing down Indian Economy. With prolonged countrywide lockdown, global economic downslide, disruption of demand and supply chains, the economy is set ahead for a deep and pro-longed period of slowdown ever in history. While the world is undoubtedly going through the roughest patch in modern times, mankind is struggling to live and adjust in 'the new normal'. The lockdown strategy also came with a huge cost. Not only there is a huge impact on production, distribution and employment but also on the psychology of the people. While the need of the hour was to save lives, there also was the need for measures to help the displaced and the needy. Aim: The study is an attempt to understand the socio-economic facets of human behaviour during the corona pandemic and subsequent lockdown. Settings and Design: The study did a survey to gauge the extent of mental/psychological pressure amidst survival in the 'new normal'. Methods and Material: The survey results were analysed with the help of statistical tools to derive conclusion. Conclusions: Further, the study concludes that though it is a fact that forced confinement was a new experience for mankind but the instinct for survival seems to be beating the odds.

KEYWORDS: *Pandemic, COVID 19, Social distancing, Lockdown, work from home*

Key Messages: *The instinct for Survival can beat the odds of Life —that Adaptability is the basic nature of Mankind- has been proven time and again—including the COVID-19 times.*

INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 will be a year to remember. The world will never be the same again. At the dawn of the New Year, the present world had many great things to do as resolutions for the New Year 2020. Seems the resolutions will be taking a backseat as the pandemic Corona takes over the world.

Every country had its own story of achieving economic growth amidst their generic problems. There were matters for deep concern on rising unemployment, inequalities and falling growth. The world, in general seemed to be unanimous on an impending recession and was gearing up to device reform programs to reap the best. None ever thought that ever 'a virus' will so devilishly affect the whole world.

When globalization became a mantra in the 90s, nations were jostling to adopt the process sooner than later, lest they miss the bus. The mantra believed in 'world as a village' and thus the free movement of men, goods and capital. Little did they realize that by 2019, it would be rechristened as 'free movement of men, goods, capital and virus'. It seems the nations now need to realize that 'to be or not to be...' has

become a critical issue. The process of modernization and rapid industrialization as path to progress and growth is questionable now. Nations are cautious and lockdown strategy is adapted to tackle the pandemic corona.

As the corona virus spreads, nations have adopted social distancing and lockdown strategy to control. Every country is undergoing stress and economies are facing slowdown in production and consumption. It seems the existing knowledge of the mankind has no solution for the problems. It is, at this juncture when economists and policy makers are being sought after to explore the most appropriate solution for keeping the economy alive. While the world is undoubtedly going through the roughest patch in modern times, mankind is struggling to live and adjust in 'the new normal'.

Meanwhile, lockdown, social distancing, Work from home are the new buzzwords during the lockdown era. While during the normal times, the issue of prominence was the rising level of unemployment, the present attention is on the mode of working. The world is perhaps in the worst phase of its existence. All of a sudden the tools and



strategies for growth and development seem meaningless and perhaps directionless. For the first time, the whole world is unitedly fighting a war - not on political and economic issues but against a deadly virus. It seems the concept of globalisation has been redefined- globalisation as free movement of men, goods, capital and virus!

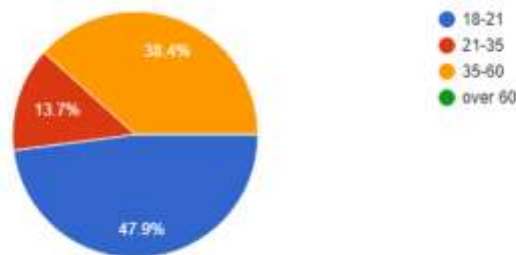
The loss of human lives has been growing exponentially and it seems the pandemic was destined to shake mankind in the most severe manner. The challenge of keeping the economy functional was the toughest one. The need of the hour was to keep the 'essential sectors' functional.

Prior to the outbreak of corona, most countries of the world were already facing a slowdown. Across the world, Governments are taking tough decisions to contain the spread of corona. While lockdown strategy is used worldwide, there are serious concerns of further deceleration of the economies. . The pandemic situation has led to 'Lost Months' in the world calendar.

A. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is an attempt to understand the socio-economic behavior of people during the lockdown days. The COVID-19 pandemic is the first of its kind when the whole world came to a halt. While natural disasters like cyclones, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis have wreaked havoc on our country many a times in the past, the pandemic Corona has been one of its kind. It has spread across continents, across age

Q1. Age group



groups, across classes and hierarchy. People have no choice but embrace the 'new normal'. The new normalcy was not easy to accept. The freedom to live and breathe was suddenly under restrictions. As if pollution and other hazards were not enough, the corona virus came like a bolt from the blue. In such circumstances it is quite possible that people undergo a lot of psychological impact in addition to the financial and physical stress. The study is an attempt to understand the impact of the pandemic on the behavior of the people. How did the people try to deal with the stress while remaining confined to their homes? How did they spend time at home? Was there any change in their day today living pattern? The study also attempts to understand the impact of the pandemic on their families, the old parents at home.

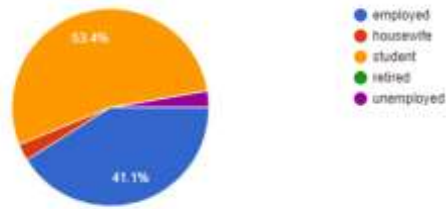
B. SUBJECTS AND METHODS

An online survey was conducted to understand the socioeconomic behaviour of people across different age groups during the lockdown period. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfF_qubvSYdYgKiiUujlGrAdF3tNWTgncXgMBVPR7L28I4ljA/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1

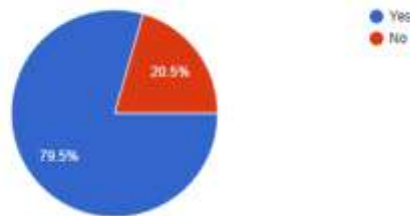
The survey was conducted through google forms and was spread across few metros of the country. The response was collected over a period of months. The responses were then analysed and broad conclusions were derived about the socio-economic behavioural changes during the pandemic.



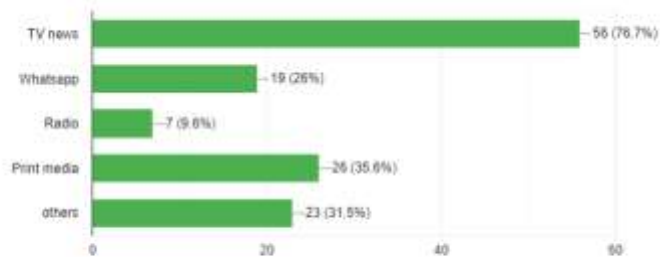
Q 2. Profession



Q3. Are you aware of the Aarogya setu App? Are you using it?

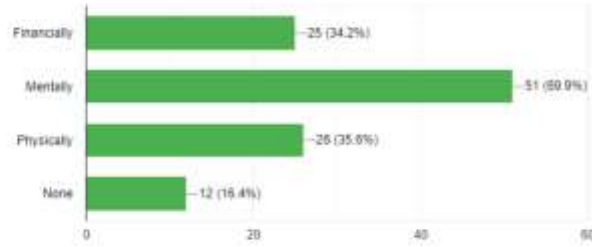


Q4. What are the sources of information you frequently access to get yourself updated about Covid 19 pandemic?

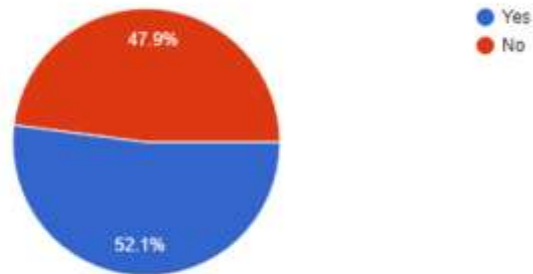




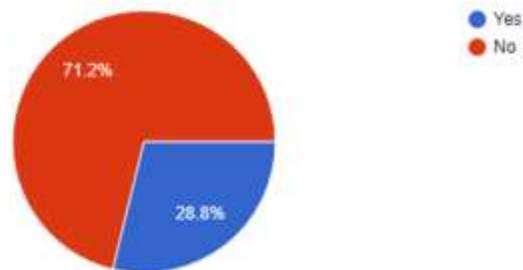
Q5. On what aspects has Covid 19 affected your life?



Q 6. Do you have any elderly people staying with you?

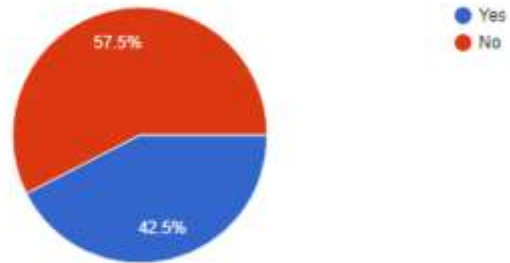


Q 7. If yes, did they exhibit any behavioral changes as a result of being confined to home?

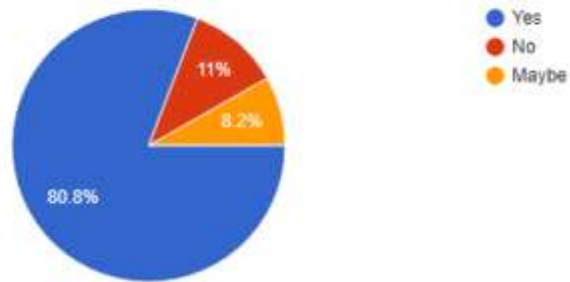




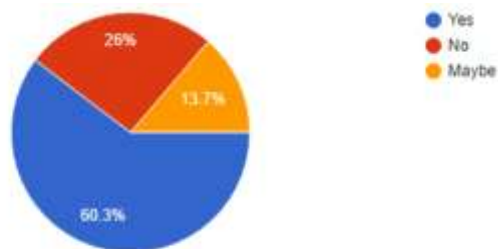
Q8. Have you enrolled yourself into any skill improving online course?



Q 9. Has your screen time significantly increased during this period?

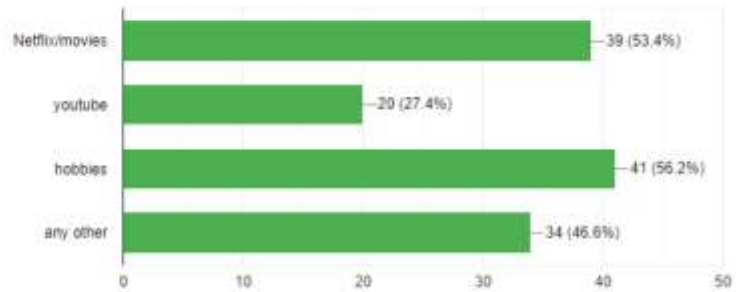


Q 10. Did you develop /learn a new hobby during the lockdown?

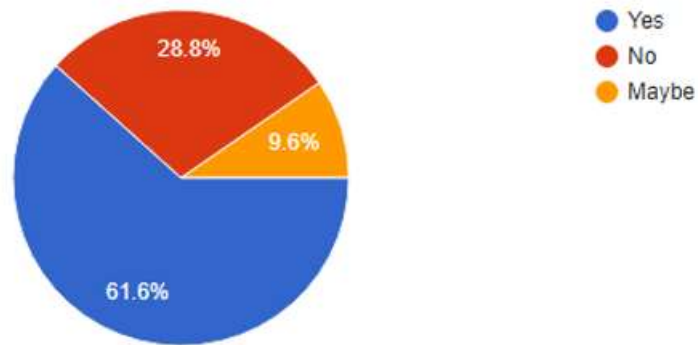




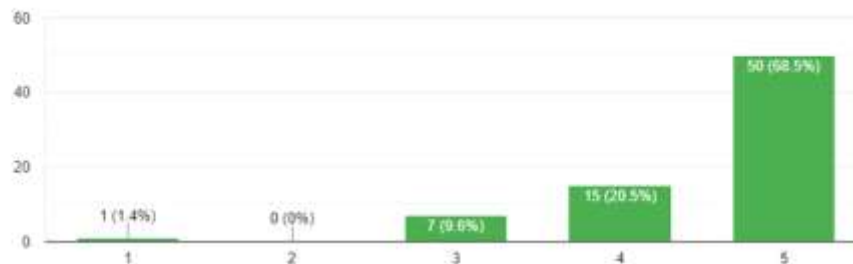
Q 11. How do you spend your time at home these days?



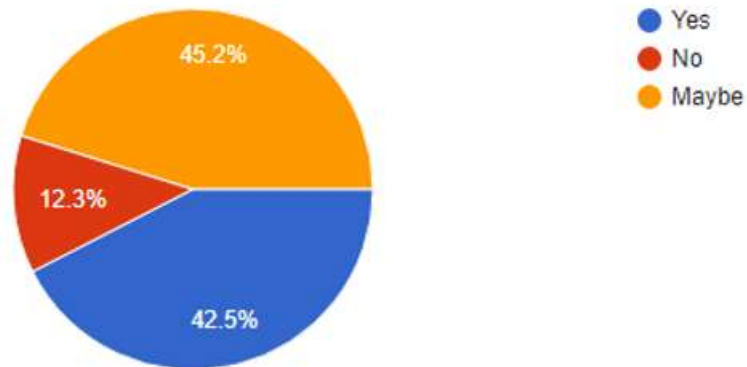
Q12. Is the quantity of groceries and vegetables you purchase is affected during this period?



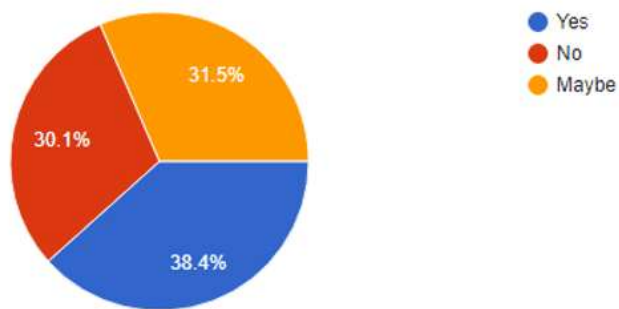
Q13. How significant is social distancing as a tool to reduce the spread of this deadly virus?



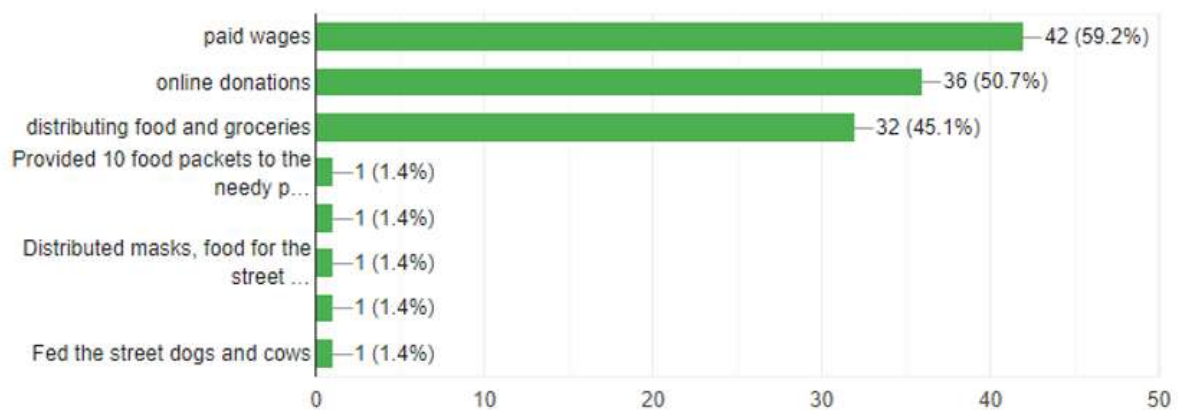
Q14. Do you feel work from home can be used as a tool of sustainable development strategy?



Q15 .Did you develop a fear/ psychosis when you got to know about the severity of this pandemic?



Q16. How did you extend your help to the poor and the deprived around you during this difficult period?





C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY

The survey results point out interesting findings about the socio-economic facets of human behaviour during the corona pandemic and subsequent lockdown. It is a fact that forced confinement was a new experience for mankind but the instinct for survival seems to be beating the odds.

The Awareness and usage of Aarogya Setu App was found to be impressive. Around 80% of the respondents are using it. While television is the most important source of information on corona, WhatsApp and other social media channels also served as sources of information.

The majority of the respondents reported that corona had caused more of a mental and fear psychosis though physical and financial stress was also there.

About sixty percent of the respondents enrolled in skill improving online courses and also learnt a new hobby. This trend speaks volume about the positive temperament of the young population. It is admirable that the time spent at home led to development/inculcation of some new past times which may not have been otherwise inculcated.

About 62% of the respondents reported that the pandemic and subsequent lockdown had impact on the quantity of groceries and vegetables purchased. Perhaps, the need for sanitising, the restriction and non-availability of vendors/hawkers, restrictions on interstate transport movement were the factors hindering normal buying and consumption.

An important analysis of the socio-economic behaviour of the young population is the acceptance that social distancing is best tool to reduce the spread of this deadly virus and implementing it by staying at home. About 70% of the respondents belonged to this category.

Regarding Work from Home (WFH) as a tool of 'Sustainable Development strategy', there was a good acceptance among the respondents. About 42.5% reported 'yes', 45.2% said 'may be'. The WFH came as a saviour during the lockdown phase when the world came to a standstill. Both employers and employees found it economical and made work continue.

The survey found that the philanthropy angle of the people is alive and ruling roost even during the most challenging phase of our lives. While people were mentally, physically and financially stressed, they still care for the poor and the deprived. Extension of help in some form or the other, cash or kind- speaks volume about the 'spirit of brotherhood'. This aspect of the behaviour of the people certainly speaks about the culture and ethos of India.

CONCLUSION

The lockdown and social distancing are the strategies to contain the spread of the virus which has wreaked havoc across countries, across ages and across all strata's of societies. The study is an attempt to understand the impact of the pandemic corona on the lives of the people. The extended stay at home, was no doubt a tough and challenging task but as the saying goes 'time is a great teacher' was proven correct once again. The study found that people stayed updated on the latest on corona virus and took precautions to stay safe. Awareness and use of the Aarogya Setu App is a sign of a responsible public.

The study finds that despite the lockdown, people stayed affirmative and indulged in developing new hobbies, online skill enhancement courses to utilise the time. The pandemic seems to have affected mankind in different ways. The fear psychosis, the mental stress, the uncertainty of future affected the daily lives but the 'basic instinct for survival' kept the spirits alive. Thanks to internet and the 'spirits of mankind' for providing an extra set of wheels while the whole world came to a standstill.

The study finds that even older people coped up with lockdown and social distancing. About 71% of the respondents reported no such behavioural changes in the older people at home, probably explaining our strong value system and the 'adaptability nature' of our old generation.

The study also found that while people struggled to adopt the 'new normal', they did not forget their duties towards the poor and deprived. Many continued paying the monthly wages to their domestic helps. Many extended their help through online donations too. Distributing food and groceries, masks, sanitisers etc. was done by large number of people. These gestures were really helpful for a large number of people who were rendered jobless and homeless when lockdown was announced suddenly.

The pandemic is still ruling large and the signs of vaccine is still far away but humans continue to adopt to the circumstances with the hope that 'this too shall pass'. The unlock phase in India started from 8th June and presently it is Unlock 5.0, the economy has opened up in gradual phases. The intervening period between lockdown and unlock down was a challenging time both for the individuals, the country and the world. With passage of time, the virus has taught many lessons to mankind and hope we accept 'the new normal' as the mode of life till the vaccine comes to the market.

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