

COVID - 19 AWARENESS ASSESSMENT AND IMPACT OF LOCKDOWNS:

A Survey Study of few Villages of Yamunanagar District of Haryana in JUNE 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The world is passing through unprecedented tough time due to COVID-19. The WHO declared the corona virus outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. But now, Covid-19 is no longer a global health crisis. It is much more than that, it is a human, economic and social crisis. Never seen such loss of lives, livelihoods, sufferings, disruptions and the collapse of economies. The impact of invisible enemy is quite visible. The economic, social, behavioural, emotional impacts are widespread and enormous. During lockdowns and even after opening of lockdowns, We all are thinking too much. How to Survive? Person next to me is having corona or not? Am I going to give illness to my children and parents? Will there be sufficient beds and ventilators at the time of peak of infection? How to increase immunity to remain healthy? People are facing family illness, potential loss of household income, non accessibility to digital education, increased domestic care responsibility, loss of jobs, loss of loved ones and restrictive movements. The lockdowns has led to shrink in the demand, steep fall in consumption, broke the supply chains and the result is quite visible...poverty, starvation, hunger and widening inequalities. The worst hit are the poors. COVID-19 has ravished each and every country across the globe. It has impacted the lives of each and every single individual. All this has led to the flood of thoughts and strong emotions. It has created and increased confusion, fear, worries, anxiety, sadness, uncertainty and responsibilities considerably among them during this crisis. The COVID- 19 pandemic has sparked a global realization that our current way of life does not work. An attempt has been made by the DAV College For Girls Yamunanagar to collect first hand information in the form of survey to study the level of **COVID-19 Awareness Assessment and Impact of lockdowns in the Villages of Yamunanagar District of Haryana.**

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this survey were to;

- To assess the level of awareness amongst villagers regarding the COVID-19.
- To analyze the widespread impact of lockdowns on the Indian villagers.
- To find out the strategies adopted by the villagers to handle COVID-19

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted in seven villages of Yamunanagar district of Haryana namely Dharamkot, Laxibass, Fatehpur, Lalchappar, Silikalan, Kishanpura and Ramgarh. Total 106 villagers from these villages were randomly selected to assess their level of awareness regarding COVID-19, steps taken for its prevention, impact of lockdowns on them and strategies adopted by them to curtail this disease. This survey was conducted using a questionnaire (google form link) which was disseminated via the social media by the teachers of the college, keeping in view the protocol of physical distancing and stay at home. This questionnaire contained 15 questions with multiple choice and open ended questions. The students, housewives, land lords, shopkeepers, teachers all were included in this survey to make it inclusive. Out of 106 respondents, 52 were males and other 54 were females. Figure no 1.1 tells us about the number of responses of male and female respectively and Figure no 1.2 tells about composition of sample respondents. In our sample, 33 percent were students, 27 percent labourer, 4 percent housewives, 13 percent farmers and 23 percent were in the other category like teachers, shopkeeper etc.

Figure No 1.1 Number of Reponses given by Male and female respectively to this survey

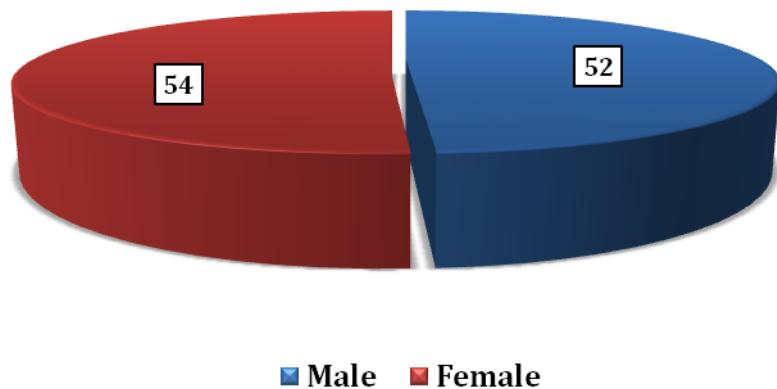
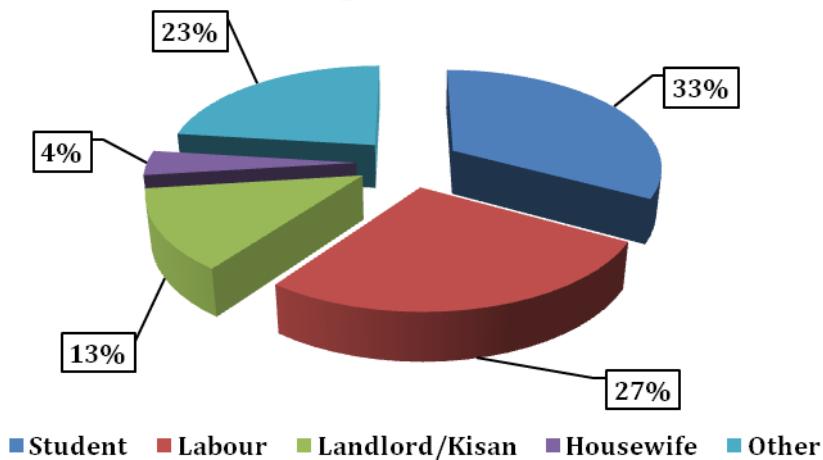


Figure no 1.2 Composition of sample respondents



Results

1. Level of Awareness

- In the case of the coronavirus pandemic, the virus is SARS-CoV-2, and the disease is called COVID-19. This disease causes severe acute respiratory syndrome. To know the level of awareness about COVID-19 among villagers, it was asked what is COVID-19. According to our sample, around 68 percent of villagers responded that COVID-19 is a respiratory virus but around 17 percent respondents responded that COVID-19 is a throat infection and 8 percent thought it as a syndrome and for rest 7 percent villagers believed it simply as a cold as shown in Figure No.1.3 It means around 32 percent were not knowing exactly what is covid-19.
- This virus spreads through droplets of sneeze/cough/saliva of infected persons, by close contact with infected person and spreads through from the infected surfaces to persons. Around 90 percent of respondents were aware of it as shown in Figure No1.4.
- Villagers are aware of covid-19' symptoms or not. To know this it was asked what are the symptoms of this pandemic. Around 90 percent villagers knew about all its symptoms like high fever, dry cough, difficulty in

breathing, tiredness, sore throat, change of taste as shown in Figure No1.5

- There is a need for awareness in absence of a cure and the presence of common symptoms. All we need is to know how to protect ourselves from the virus by taking some precautions like frequently washing of hands, wearing face mask and keeping physical distancing. In our sample, 51 percent wear face mask and maintain physical distancing most of times. Around 45 percent wear face mask and maintain physical distancing whenever they step out of their house. Around 4 percent people were wearing facemask and keeping physical distancing sometimes. There was no one who does not wear mask and maintain physical distancing as shown in Figure No 1.6. It shows that most of the respondents were following WHO and government guidelines in order to fight against Covid-19.
- The Indian government has launched its official coronavirus tracking app which is mandatory for every citizen to download it. The survey showed that around 37 percent received information regarding Arogya setu App through TV/ Whatsapp /social media, 16 percent through Govt / panchayat and 29 percent through teachers and around 3 percent through neighbours. It was found that 15 percent villagers have not downloaded as shown in Figure No. 1.7
- Since no vaccine/medicine has been derived to counter COVID-19, it is better to counter this pandemic with boosted immunity. Ministry of AYUSH has recommended self- care guidelines for preventive health measures and boosting immunity which were followed by 92 percent in our sample as shown in Figure No1.8.
- In case of emergency ,immediate medical help is required Therefore it was asked how far is the nearest medical facility. Around 8 percent villagers were not having medical facilities nearby their houses, 20 percent were having within one km, majority of villagers 46 percent were having the same within 5 km and 28 percent within 10 km as shown in Figure no 1.9

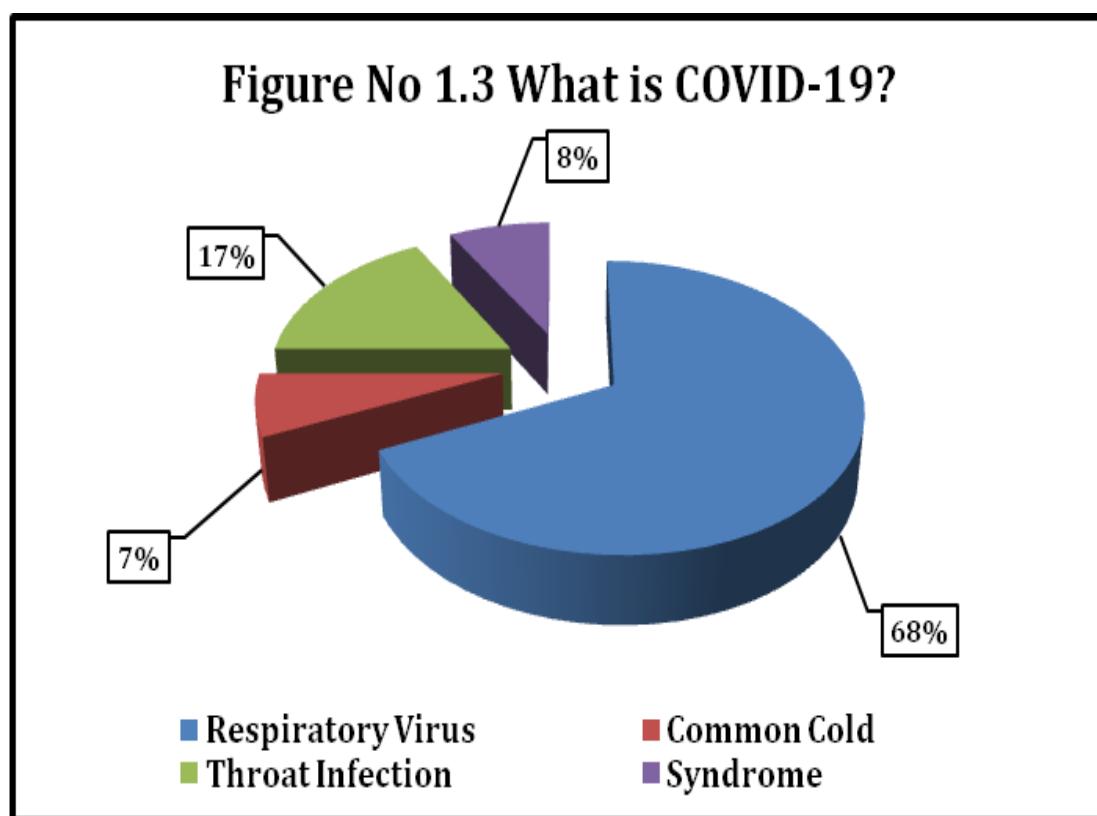


Figure No 1.4 How does Covid-19 spread?

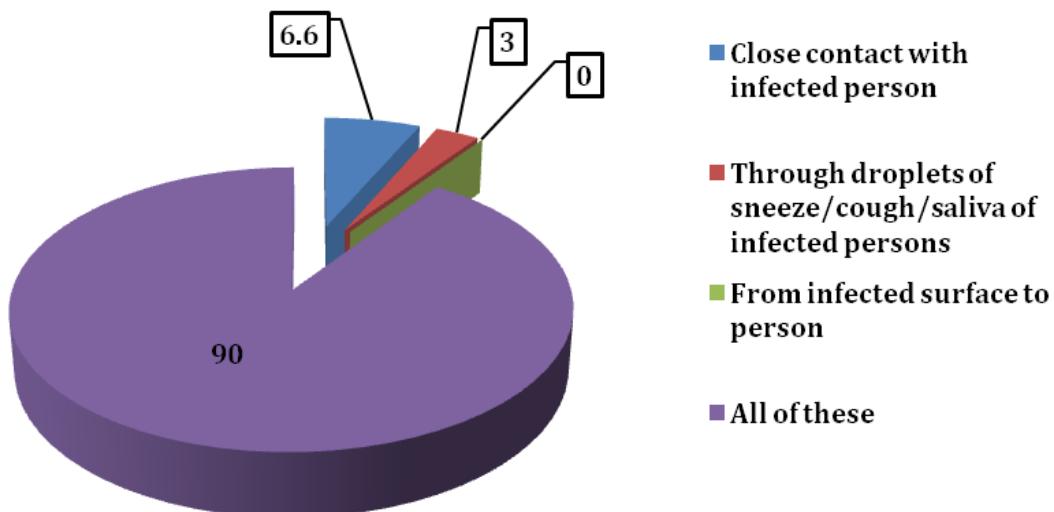


Figure No 1.5 What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

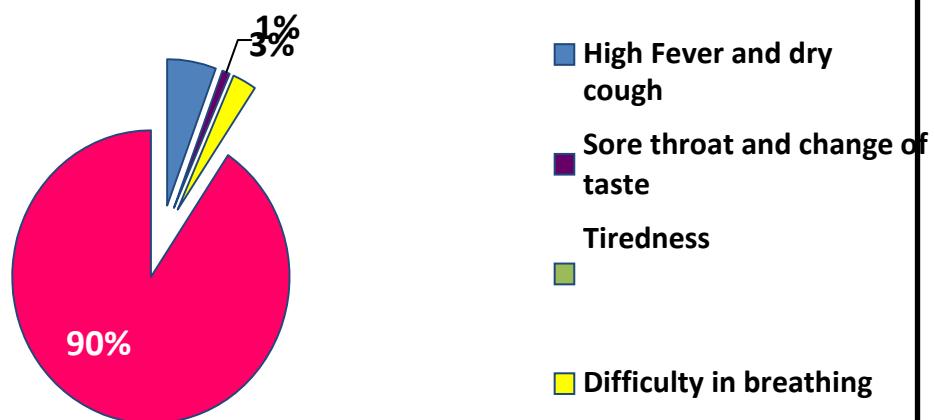


Figure No 1.6. Do you always wear a face mask and maintain social Distancing?

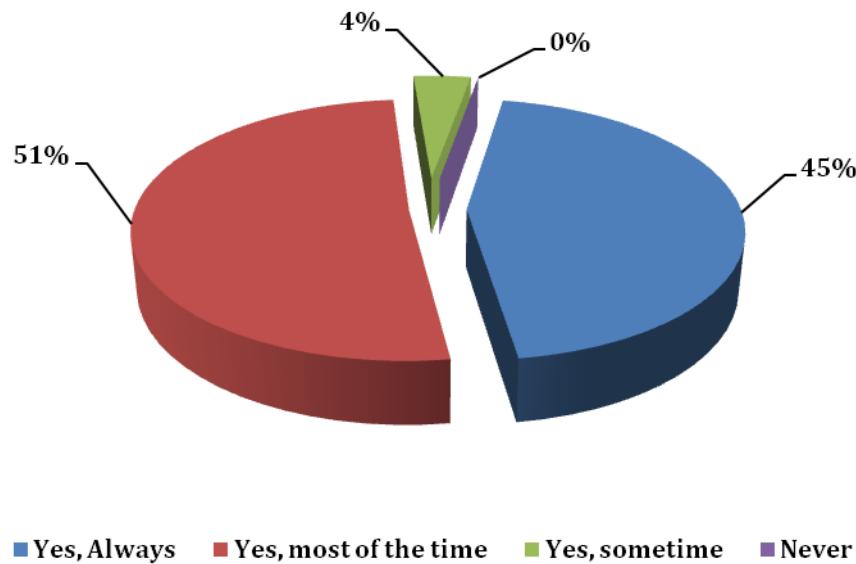


Figure No 1.7 Name the source of information about Aarogya setu App (downloaded in your phone)

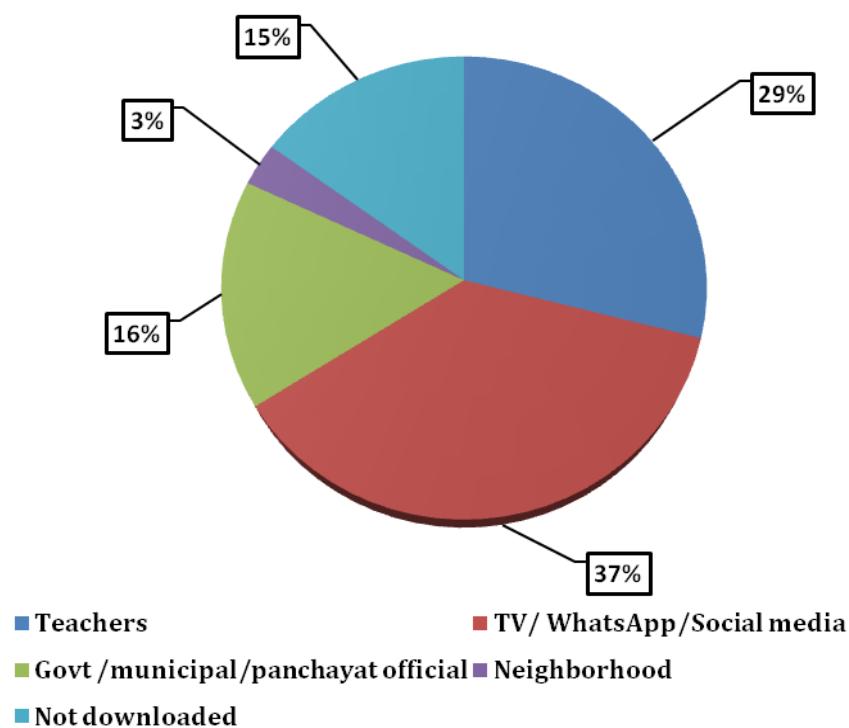


Figure No 1.8 Did you follow the guidelines of Ayush Mantralaya to enhance immunity during this pandemic?

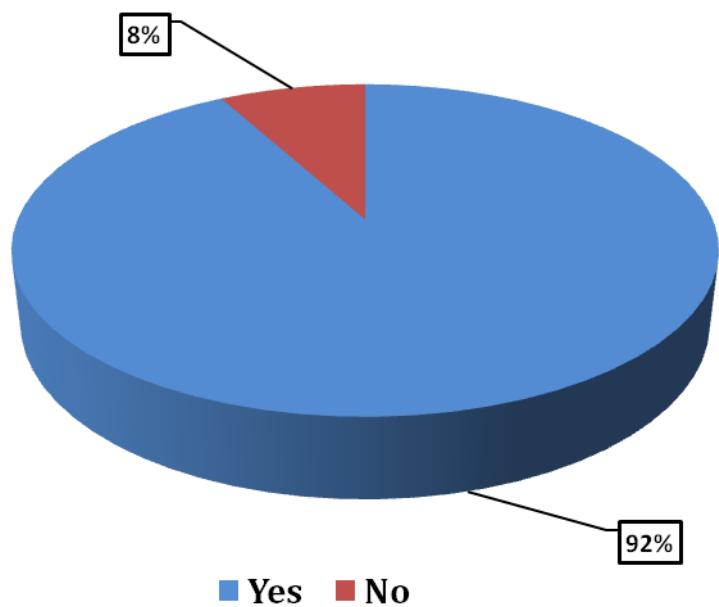
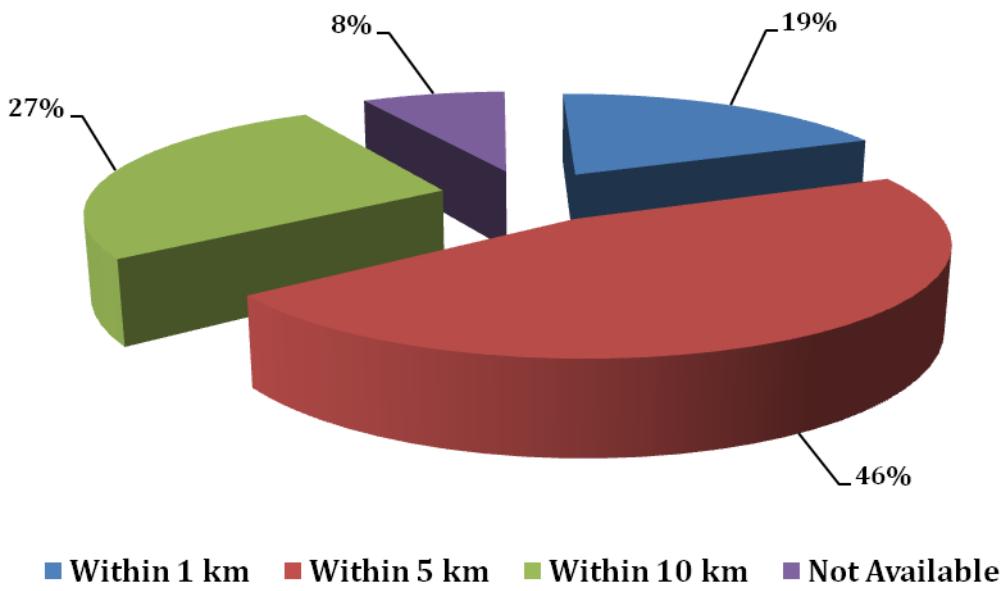


Figure 1.9 In case of emergency, how far are medical facilities in your village?



2. Impact of Lockdowns

- Cleanliness and sanitization are two important aspects which cannot be ignored in the present scenario, thus to see if any special attention has been given to the cleanliness and sanitization of the village we asked our respondents. On the basis of our survey we can say that people understand its importance not only for individual but also for the village as 44 percent said that along with the regular cleanliness village has been sanitized thrice. 29 percent said sanitization has been done only once in their village. 16 percent said it has been done twice during lockdown

period while 11percent respondents said sanitization has not been done in their village as shown in Figure No1.10.

- Four lockdowns were implemented in India as a result of preventive measure for Covid-19 which is an effective method to control corona virus, it has also given rise to many problems. Watching news and listening to the severity of Covid-19 led to depression and frustration among many. Even Unlock-I which was started from 1st June 2020 has its own implications thus to know how villagers felt during this period we took their reactions in which we found 44 percent were O.K. with it while 30 percent were quite optimistic that situation will improve soon. This shows that 74 percent of our respondents had positive attitude towards it. While 22 percent felt scared that situation might deteriorate and 4percent felt lonely in the present condition of society as shown in Figure no1.11.
- Lockdown played an important role in curtailing corona-virus but it also led to many social problems. It gave rise to problems like alcoholism, domestic violence, increased pressure on women, financial problems, child labour etc. Thus it becomes imperative to ask them about the problems they faced. According to our survey we found that most of our respondents i.e. 74 percent had financial problems due to loss of jobs, daily wagers work stopped because of complete lockdown, they were out of work as a result of industries, factories shops closed which gave rise to financial crisis. They were unable to look after their fields which gave rise to loss in production. While 16 percent said more than financial loss they were scared and depressed as for Covid-19 there is no medicine available as shown in Figure No 1.12. 7 percent found it difficult to live at home due to lack of space as all members of family came back from their work places, schools, colleges. The environment did not remain conducive at home as it was difficult to cope with all the family members for so many days.
- Covid-19 has not only affected socially but also financially. In the bigger scenario there is economic depression all over the world. We tried to know its impact on villagers and what they were expecting in near future. Majority of them i.e. 54 percent were not sure about their future income as they believed nothing can be estimated in times of uncertainties. 28 percent felt their financial income will/might decrease in the present scenario due to closure of factories and low demand by the consumers. While 14 percent said as they are agriculturist so it is going to remain same. They are not expecting any major ups and downs in their income. As shown in Figure no 1.13, around 4 percent felt it might increase as now health is being given more importance so dietary habits will change and by growing organic food they can improve the income. Some said technology based businesses like internet, computer, phones will help them to increase their income.
- Government of India has announced lots of packages to sustain the economy. Lots of other people/agencies/NGO have also come forward to help the people in need. Thus through this survey we tried to gauge the extend of help which has reached in their villages. According to our survey 72 percent of the respondents did not receive any type of help from anyone as shown in Figure No 1.14. Though 14 percent claimed getting help through their village panchayats. Around 7 percent of the respondents said food, pulses, grain and soaps were distributed by the government. 6 percent of the respondents got financial help from administrative agencies through the schemes launched by the government. It also indicates that general people have not received much help from the policies announced by government.
- Lockdown has resulted into various types of problems as it was announced suddenly. Moreover it restricted the movements of people as well as goods.. Thus to find out types of problems faced by the villagers, we asked them about it. According to our survey 38 percent respondents were not able to fulfill their social obligations like attending and arranging marriages/funerals/religious functions etc. which is in fact an integral part of our culture. 33 percent of total respondents did not get even essential goods like grocery. These were not available in few small shops of villages as supply chain got disrupted due to lockdown. Around 24 percent had to face lot of problems because of non-availability of transport facilities as a result of which they were stuck at different places, away from their homes. Only 5 percent of our respondents treated non-availability of internet or network as a problem as shown in Figure No 1.15.
- Lockdowns had also created some positive effects like decline in pollution, families getting together, people trying hand on skills like cookery, painting. They got time to pay attention to their spiritual growth, physical and mental well being. Thus we wanted to know which type of activities agrarian society has involved themselves. According to our survey maximum i.e. 35 percent enjoyed the nature. They said that though they live in villages, close to nature. It was the first time they observed and enjoyed a clear blue sky, birds chirping. While 32 percent said they were busy in household chores as all the family members were at home. Rather during lockdowns, it was an extra pressure on women and girls preparing extra dishes, cleaning of the homes, washing of clothes etc. The male members didn't help in household chores though this might be the case in cities. Around 17 percent of the respondents learnt new skills and got time to pursue their hobbies. In fact online classes also helped them a lot to do various things for which they never got the time. Around 9 percent of the respondents spent most of the time chatting on phone and social media while 7 percent were not specific how they spent their time as it was simply spent on routine activities.

Figure no 1.10 How many times did your village get cleaned and sanitized during last three months?

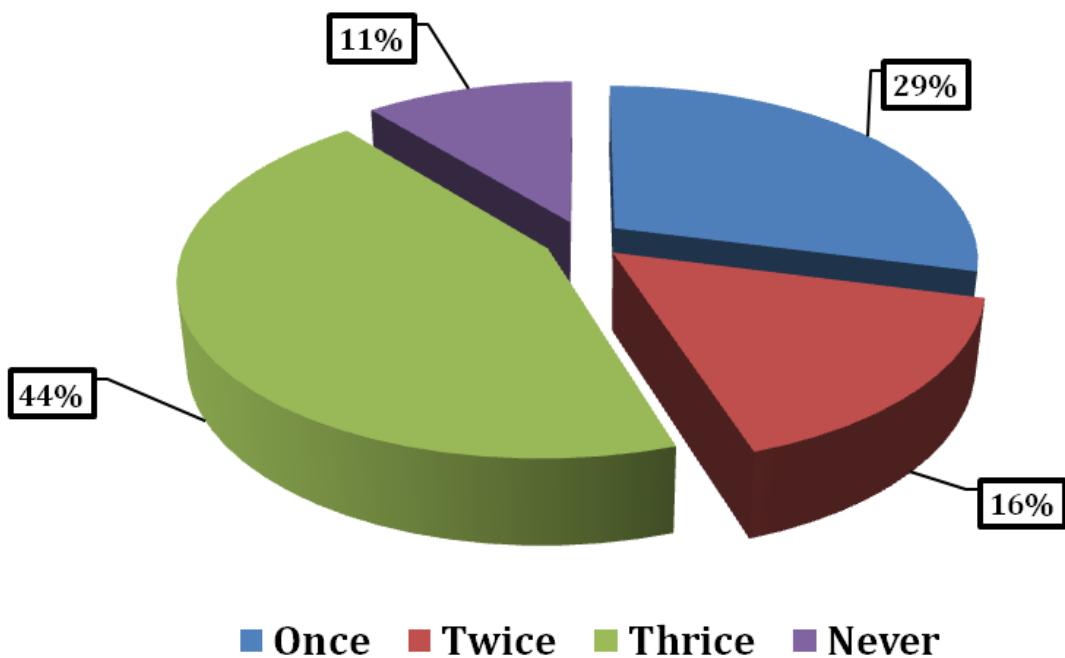


Figure No.1.11 How did you feel during lockdowns and after opening of it?

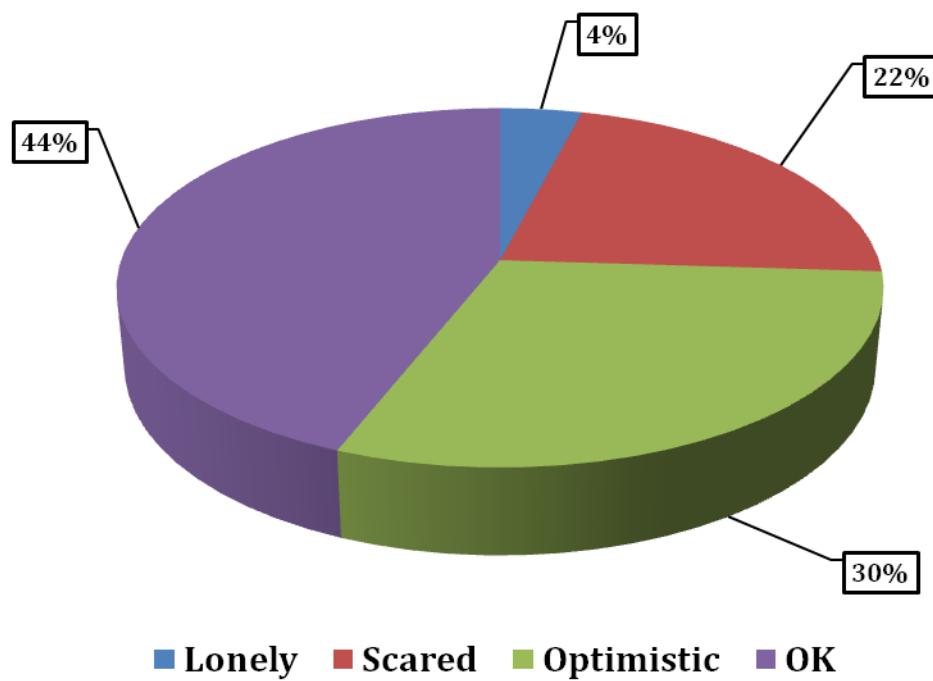


Figure No 1.12 What problems did you face during the lockdowns?

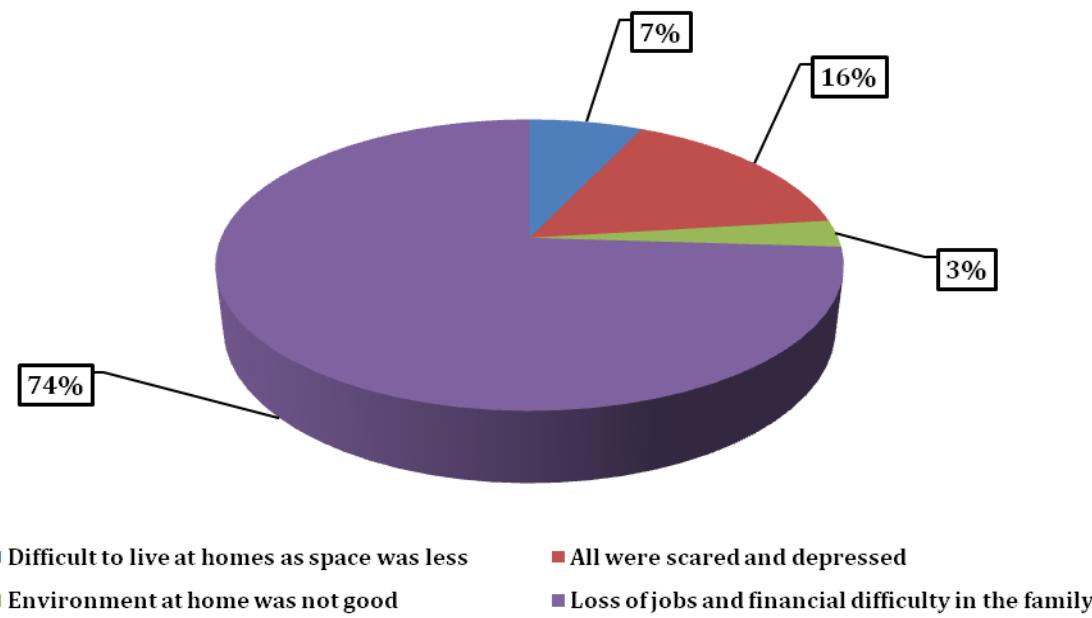


Figure No 1.13 Due to Covid-19, in near future, the income of family will:

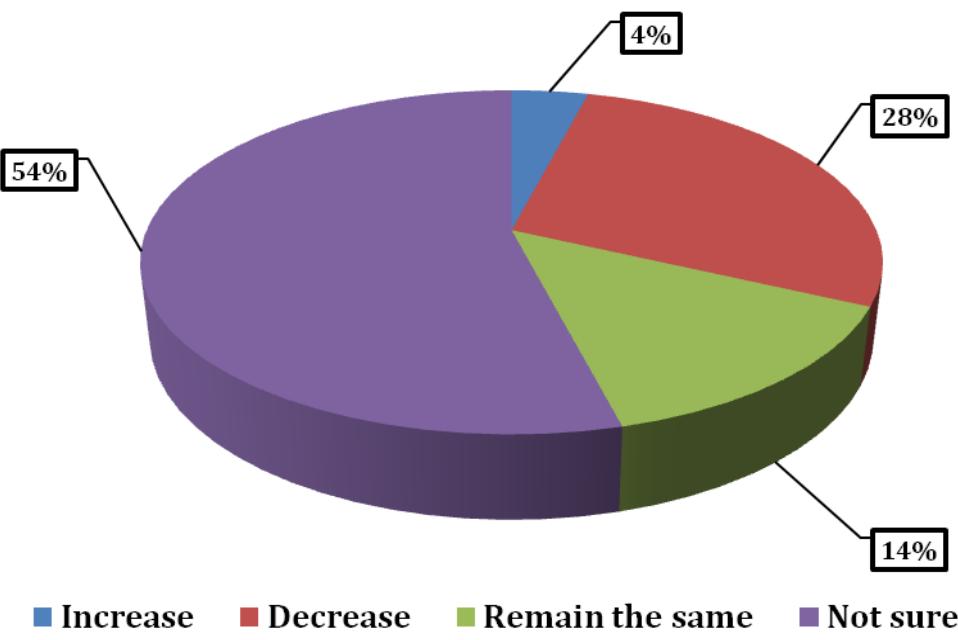


Figure 1.14 Did you get any benefits due to Covid -19?

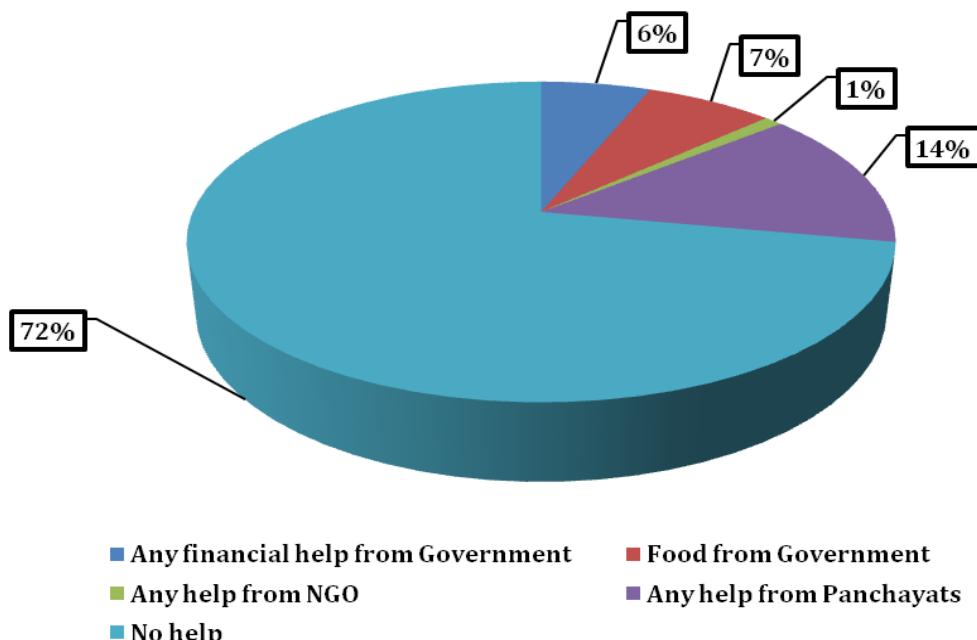
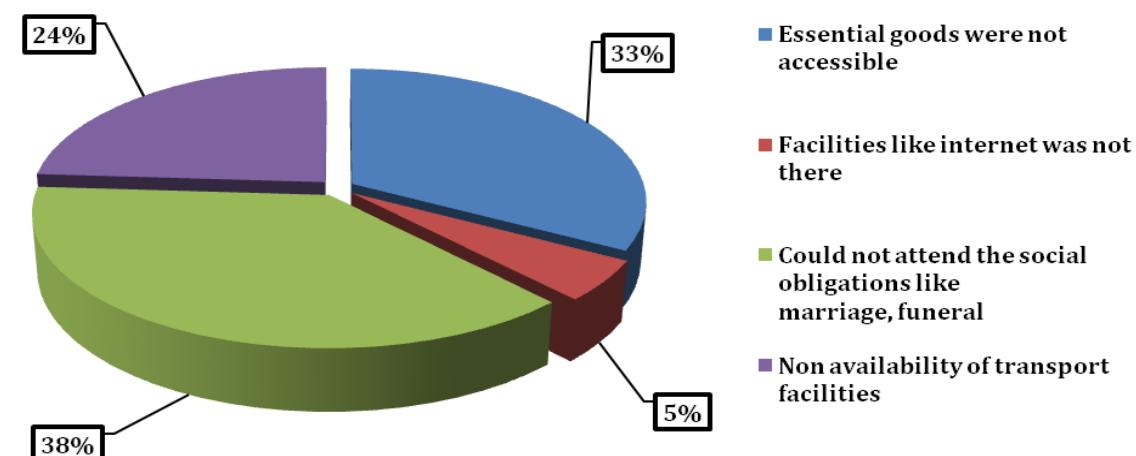
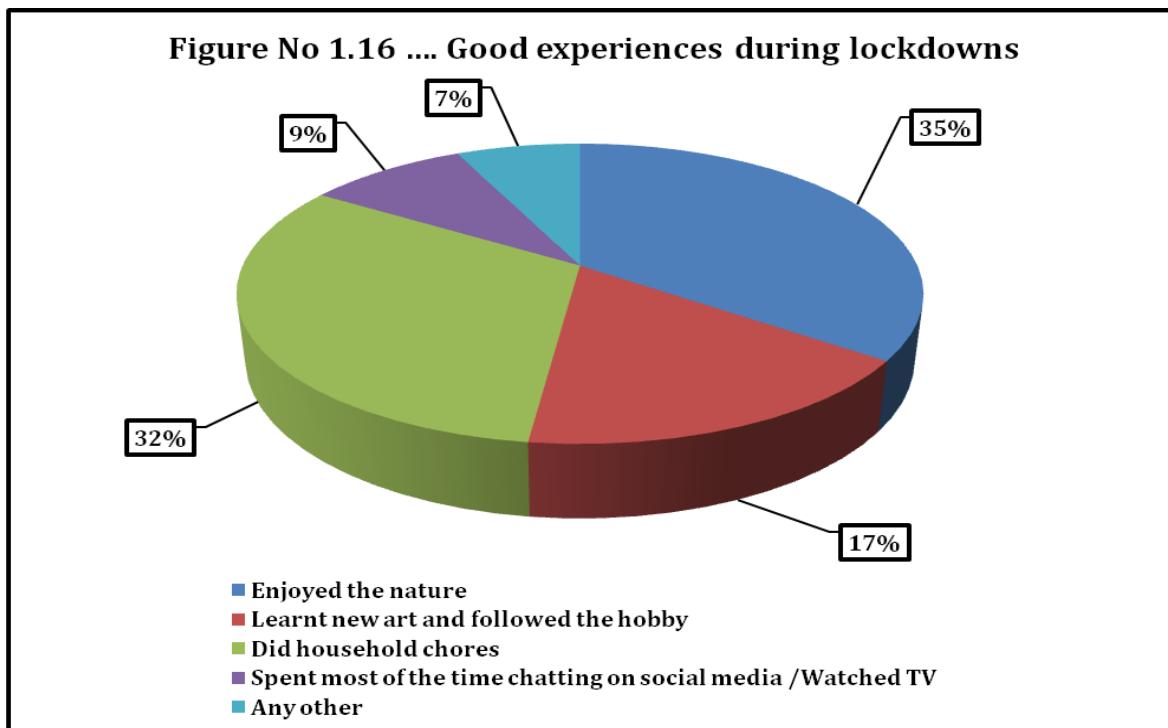


Figure No 1.15 Which problem did you face during lockdown?





STRATEGIES: Changing Behaviour. Corona -friendly

On the basis of responses received it can be concluded that villagers actively participated in sanitization of the village. They made each other aware of the information pertaining to COVID-19 spread and containment like washing hands frequently , wearing face masks, not touching face and mouth with contaminated hands and maintaining physical distancing. People also helped gram panchayats in the distribution of free masks and sanitizers and thus contributed towards Haryana government's efforts to stop the spread of disease. Villagers remained vigilant during lockdown so that unnecessary entry of outsiders into the village could be stopped. Some villagers distributed food among needy people. Asha and Aganwari workers played an important role By giving time, information, services, resources, as we believe it, villagers made a critical difference in the villages to curtail this pandemic. Steps should be taken to reduce social stigma so that all can discuss openly, honestly and effectively.

CONCLUSION

This nice-sounding year 2020 would remain in our living memory due to the Covid-19 pandemic -- the deadliest outbreak. Though pandemics have occurred earlier but it was long back ago. So none of us has ever experienced anything like this before. We were not even prepared for it. It has resulted into many problems, social as well as economic. But on the other hand it had led to digitization, change in social behaviour and gathering, a significant increase in online sales, shift toward localization, more automation, flexible work force and work from home. One nation, one ration card was also introduced.

The survey concluded that majority of villagers are aware of covid-19, its symptoms, how it is going to affect, how can they protect themselves by maintaining hygiene and physical distancing. No doubt during lockdowns and even after opening of these lockdowns, villagers faced a lot of problems. They are trying to make balances between lives and livelihood in this new normal. In the times of crisis, setbacks, uncertainties and unpredictability, what is required is presence of mind, compassion, happiness, resilience. These qualities increase our capacity to recover, to spring back, to rise, to bounce back, and to come back in life. Majority of respondents are hoping for the optimistic scenario. They were of this view that strong health care infrastructure is needed. More safety nets – cash support and food is also needed for villagers.

Having lived through plague and small pox, wars and the partition, have made Indians resilient. The economic engines would re-start; workers would go back to work; human activities would start in the factories and fields ; people would go for social obligations, villagers would return to towns, schools, colleges, all would reopen. Same hustle and bustle but with a difference – with the face masks and physical distancing. We all would learn to live with this corona. We will reach our full potential and would build a better future in new normal.

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WASH YOUR HAND FREQUENTLY , WEAR FACE MASK AND KEEP PHYSICAL DISTANCING