

## Indian Social Fabric during COVID-19 Lockdown

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*The global outbreak of coronavirus since a patient in the city of the wet market of Chinese city Wuhan reported pneumonia-like symptoms on December 8, 2019, had turned into a global pandemic in 3-4 months and threatened the lives of millions of people across the globe. This virus had put the world on standstill until for a long time in 2020, 2021 and even in 2022. It made human lives uncertain in future and led to realization that we won't return to a pre-COVID-19 life any time soon. This has proved true as WHO held on February 2, 2023 that it's not over yet. Although the pandemic is at an end-stage globally including India, its spread in China in recent past has made us worry. The world battled with COVID-19 during lockdown to save their citizens as well as economies. Hence, it becomes imperative to investigate the impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 at various levels. The present paper aims to analyze the Indian social fabric during COVID-19 lockdown. Empirical evidence collected from 750 respondents through*

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*the unrestricted self-selected online survey using google form in May 2020 from 19 states and union territories of India shows that the lockdown due to coronavirus has brought about a sea change in how we human beings have to live. These changes in a big way are likely to have a far reaching impact on almost every aspect of our living.*

[**Keywords** : COVID-19, Lockdown, Social fabric, Unrestricted self-selected online survey]

## 1. Introduction

Almost no nation has been spared as the novel coronavirus has swept around the world. But responses to the coronavirus have differed greatly from country to country. Preventive measures like self-quarantine in own homes, in hospitals or other places specifically designated for this purpose and lockdowns restricting people from coming out of their homes by shutting public places and commercial activities have become ubiquitous, but even then, there is great variance in their severity depending how people have responded to restrictions during lockdown. This is the reason that countries like the United States, Brazil, India, Russia, Spain, the UK, Iran, Italy, Peru, Chile, Mexico and Spain remain highly affected by this pandemic, whereas, countries like Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Dominica, Grenada, Bhutan, Mozambique and Zambia etc. are very less affected and more successful in curtailing the impact of this pandemic.

On March 25, when India had reported only 500 cases, the country went into what was one of the strictest lockdowns in the world. In fact, India was one of the first emerging economies to announce the total lockdown in spite of much lower mortality (may be because of our younger population or some innate immunity) and knowing fully that the country would have much economic loss due to slow down of economy. India's lockdown has been described widely as the most stringent in the world. This first set of curbs remained in place till April 14, 2020 and was extended four times, each time with gradual relaxations. Lockdown, as a preventive strategy, works in two ways : *first*, it slows the transmission of the virus by enforcing social/physical distancing by reducing day-to-day events. *Secondly*, it slows the geographical spread of disease by restricting the movement of positively affected and suspected cases. The Indian government argued that lockdown has successfully reduced the spread of the novel coronavirus epidemic, while some

critics argue that it has largely failed. Where does the truth lie? This is a question which can only be answered by empirical studies. It is here that crux of this paper lies.

## **2. The Focus of the Study**

The present investigation was exploratory in nature. It was an attempt to investigate the views of selected respondents about lockdown and to find out the impact of lockdown at individual, family and society levels. The specific objectives of this study were as follows :

1. To investigate the views of various sections of Indian society about lockdown due to COVID-19.
2. To find out the impact of lockdown at the level of individual behaviour.
3. To explore the impact of lockdown at family level.
4. To investigate the impact of lockdown at societal level.
5. To suggest possible measures to cope with such pandemic in future.

## **3. An Overview of Literature**

After the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic a number of studies started coming up. Some studies depicting psychological impact have been conducted at the initial stages. To cite a few, a study named "Initial psychological impact of COVID-19 and its correlates in Indian Community : An online (FEEL-COVID) survey", conducted by Varshney *et. el.* (2020) on a total of 1106 respondents from around 64 cities in the India, has shown that during the initial stages of COVID-19 in India, almost one-third respondents had a significant psychological impact as measured by IES-R scale. Almost one-third (66.8%) respondents had minimal psychological impact in reaction to COVID-19 outbreak, 15.0% had mild psychological impact, and 5.5% had moderate psychological impact. However, 12.7% reported severe psychological impact. As this was an initial study, authors have underlined a need for more systematic and longitudinal assessment of psychological needs of the population, which can help the government in formulating holistic interventions for affected individuals.

Khanna *et. al.* (2020), in their study of psychological impact of COVID-19 on Ophthalmologists-in-training and practicing ophtha-

Imologists in India, based on the responses of 2,355 ophthalmologists, have demonstrated that a significantly high proportion of ophthalmologists were affected psychologically by the COVID-19 crisis. There is a need for personalized mental health care from psychologists and psychiatrists, especially for those with moderate/severe depression. 1,244 (52.8%) felt that COVID-19 would impact their training or professional work; and 869 (37%) had difficulty in meeting their living expenses. In terms of psychological impact, 768 (32.6%) had some degree of depression; mild in 504 (21.4%), moderate in 163 (6.9%), and severe in 101 (4.3%). Multi-variable analysis showed that depression was significantly higher at young age.

Chakraborty and Chatterjee (2020) have attempted to find out psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic on general population in West Bengal. Results based on a total of 507 respondents from general population included in the study showed that about five-seventh (71.8%) and one-fifth (24.7%) of the respondents felt more worried and depressed, respectively. Majority (69.6%) of the respondents were worried about the financial loss they were incurring during the period of lockdown. One-fourth (25.6%) and one-third (30.8%) of the respondents found that COVID-19 pandemic had threatened their existence and they found it difficult to adjust to the new routine during the initial 21-day lockdown period, respectively.

Dubey *et. al.* (2020) have shown that along with its high infectivity and fatality rates, the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused universal psycho-social impact by causing mass hysteria, economic burden and financial losses. Mass fear of COVID-19, termed as “corona-phobia”, has generated a plethora of psychiatric manifestations across the different strata of the society. So, this review has been undertaken to define psychosocial impact of COVID-19.

There are few studies on impact of coronavirus on education in India. A study of 341 teachers of higher education institutions of Ghaziabad region of Uttar Pradesh by Arora and Rathi (2020) has shown that among those who adopted virtual mode, the mean of actual benefits was significantly less than the mean of expected benefits. Network issues, lack of training, and lack of awareness were stated to be the major challenges faced by them. Lack of awareness was stated to be the most important reason by those who did not

adopt virtual classrooms followed by lack of interest and doubts regarding the usefulness of virtual classes. Less attendance, lack of personal touch, and lack of interaction due to connectivity issues were found to be the significant drawbacks of virtual classes.

Gupta (2020) suggested that online classes are not capable of substituting classroom lectures. The former is very seldom able to generate the interaction that is needed in a class. Moreover, the teachers' body language, which is a part and parcel of the classroom lectures and is imperative for their success, is also missing in online classes. The use of technology will not only lead to more discrimination, but also will create some practical problems. It will also lack the desired interaction in the class. The interaction between the teachers and the students is a crucial component of teaching and cannot be replicated in online classes. Research has been severely hampered due to the lockdown, and hence the sooner normalcy returns, the better.

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis and lockdown related rules and restrictions have forced most older persons to live in isolation, with life of 69% of them affected adversely during the current situation, as revealed in a survey report by an NGO Agewell Foundation (Sharma, 2020) on over 5000 elderly respondents in different parts of the country during the first two weeks of June, 2020. According to the report, 71% elderly respondents said that cases of elder abuse have increased during lockdown period. Amongst them, 58% claimed that strained interpersonal relationships were responsible for fast increasing incidence of elder abuse in families. Most common ways of elder abuse were found to be disrespect and verbal abuse, silent treatment (not talking to them), ignoring their daily needs, denying proper food, denying medical support, financial cheating, physical and emotional violence and forcing them to work. In the study it was found that 63.7% elderly respondents were facing neglect in their lives. More than half (56.1%) elderly respondents said that they were suffering abuse in their families and society. It has been observed that due to coronavirus, a negative atmosphere has been created around older persons, who are termed as soft target of coronavirus.

Kamble (2020) conducted a survey in the month of April on 273 respondents from 22 states & UT and 82 cities of India through a purposive and convenient random sampling technique, has shown the following results :

- ▶▶ Majority (87%) of Indians are buying grocery and food items from local vendors and the frequency of visit was twice a week (58%).
- ▶▶ Few (18%) have mentioned that they have not received their income and majority of them were employer or businessman.
- ▶▶ Expenses, workload and pursuing hobbies have been increased for female.
- ▶▶ Time spent with family, online meetings, use of mobile, television, Internet and social media has increased during this lockdown.
- ▶▶ People in age bracket of 31-40 have recorded that their time spent on online meeting has increased and most of them are private sector employees.
- ▶▶ Use of internet and social media has increased for everyone except those who are above age 50.
- ▶▶ People in age bracket of 20-30 are missing hangout, weekend parties, trekking/adventure/nature walk.
- ▶▶ People in the age bracket of 20-40 are missing eating food outside, watching movies outside, playing outdoors.

Work of medical doctors and frontline health workers has also been presented in some studies like that of Tanne *et. al.* (2020). It was found that in India, the role of health workers was less stressed as the spread stage of coronavirus was still in phase two or the phase of local transmission rather than the community transmission as compared to other nations like Italy, Spain and USA. They have argued that the world's second most populous country seems to have avoided the worst of the pandemic so far. However, if wider "community" transmission occurs, the worry is that India doesn't have the healthcare infrastructure to handle it. The country has only 1.3 hospital beds for every 1000 people, against a WHO recommendation of 3.5. Intensive care beds and mechanical ventilators, needed for treating severe COVID-19 cases, are also in short supply.

Al-Jabir *et. al.* (2020) have analyzed the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on surgical practice - Part 2 (surgical prioritization). They concluded that all surgical specialties have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have had to triage the urgency of their daily surgical procedures and consider non-surgical management options where possible. The pandemic has had ramifications for ways of working, surgical techniques, open versus minimally



invasive, theatre workflow, patient and staff safety, training and education. With guidelines specific to each specialty being implemented and followed, surgeons should be able to continue to provide safe and effective care to their patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this comprehensive and up to date review, changes to working practices have been assessed through the lens of each surgical specialty. However, it was also claimed that Indian health-care infrastructure is not very strong as per the WHO guidelines and in case of community spread, the Indian government may find it difficult to manage the spread. Some detailed discussion on the nature of the coronavirus was also presented by some studies (Singhal, 2020).

Shadmi *et. al.* (2020) have stressed that the COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting the poor, minorities and a broad range of vulnerable populations, due to its inequitable spread in areas of dense population and limited mitigation capacity due to high prevalence of chronic conditions or poor access to high quality public health and medical care. Moreover, the collateral effects of the pandemic due to the global economic downturn, social isolation and movement restriction measures, are unequally affecting those in the lowest power strata of societies. To address the challenges to health equity and describe some of the approaches taken by governments and local organizations, compilation of 13 country case studies from various regions around the world : China, Brazil, Thailand, Sub Saharan Africa, Nicaragua, Armenia, India, Guatemala, United States of America (USA), Israel, Australia, Colombia, and Belgium have been done. This compilation is by no-means representative or all inclusive, and researchers are encouraged to continue advancing global knowledge on COVID-19 health equity related issues, through rigorous research and generation of a strong evidence base of new empirical studies in this field.

It is evident that still there are no full-fledged empirical studies on the impact of coronavirus on individual behaviour, family and society at large except some newspaper write-ups and articles. Hence, this study is an important one and is likely to provide impetus to all those concerned with the impact of coronavirus on Indian society to undertake such investigations after the pandemic is over.

#### **4. The Methodology**

As the universe of this study was cross sections of Indian population residing in various states and union territories of India

and was very large and vague in nature, it was not possible to draw an appropriate sample. Hence, it was decided to use unrestricted self-selected survey which allows the use of convenience sampling. Such surveys are open to the public for anyone to participate in it. They may simply be posted on a website so that anyone browsing through may choose to take the survey, or they may be sent via social media platforms to different persons and groups. Regardless of how the people are promoted to participate, the key characteristic of these types of surveys is that there are no restrictions on who can participate, and it is up to the individual to choose to participate or not. It may be mentioned here that as all educational institutions, religious places, government and private offices, factories, markets, malls, courts, banks and other work places were closed due to lockdown and all citizens were advised to remain inside their homes, there was no option for any other tool than the web-based survey using a Google form.

Hence, a questionnaire containing all close-ended questions was constructed and transferred as Google form. Before finalizing this form, it was pre-tested on 50 respondents of various sections of society easily available on online platforms and known to the researcher. Seven hundred and fifty (750) respondents from 19 states and union territories of India (Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal) who sent the form back formed the basis of interpretation. The data were collected in the month of May 2020 and were subjected to analysis using SPSS package.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

Results and discussion based on the analysis of data collected through an unrestricted self-selected survey of 750 respondents have been presented under the following sub-heads :

### **5.1 Characteristics of the Sample**

The findings of the study show the following characteristics of the sample :

1. The percentage of female respondents (55.9 percent) was comparatively more than those of male respondents (44.1 percent).



2. A little less than two-third respondents (63.9 percent) were young (less than 35 years) and one-third (30.5 percent) middle-aged (36 to 58 years). Remaining (5.6 percent) were the aged ones (more than 58 years). Thus, the sample had more youth than the middle and aged persons.
3. As regards the profession of respondents, a little less than half (45.5 percent) of them were students, followed by private and government employees (34.4 percent). Remaining one-fifth were housewives, retirees, doctors, health care workers, police personnel and unemployed people (21.1 percent).
4. Respondents have been classified in three broad categories on the basis of their monthly family income : low income families (less than ₹1,00,000), middle income families (₹1,00,001 to 2,00,000) and high income families (above ₹2,00,000). Their proportions were 58.9%, 22.1% and 18.9% respectively.

Thus, the sample represents both male and female of various age groups and professions and different income bracket of families.

## **5.2 Views about Lockdown**

The experience of the lockdown has been quite unique for all of us. Views of selected sample about lockdown are as follows :

1. An overwhelming majority (95.6%) of selected respondents agree that the first phase of lockdown (from March 25 to April 14, 2020) has been the right decision by the government irrespective of their age, sex, profession, type of family and financial position of the family.
2. Similarly, almost all the respondents (97.6%) do agree that second phase of lockdown (from April 14 to May 3, 2020) has been the right decision by the government. Here also, like the first phase of lockdown, this view is independent of respondents' age, sex, profession, type of family and financial position of family.
3. A little more than three-fourth (76.4%) selected respondents agree that third phase of lockdown (from May 4 to May 17, 2020), with easing out restrictions for the parts of the country where the situation was less severe, has been the right decision by the government. Respondents' differences in terms of sex, profession, type and financial position of family cut across in shaping this view. However, comparatively more proportion of

young and the middle-aged respondents has shown disagreement than the aged.

4. More than half of the selected respondents (56.8%) agree that the guidelines/advisory by the government for lockdown period has not been followed by most of the people. In other words, there were more violations in lockdown. Differences in age, sex and profession play important role in shaping these views, whereas, type and the financial position of the family cut across this view.
5. Less than half of the selected respondents agree (46.0%) that lockdown in India was a hasty decision as it created many problems for daily workers, labourers, students etc., whereas, nearly one-third disagree (34.8%) with this view. The proportion of middle-aged respondents is much more in agree category as compared to young and the aged ones, whereas, it is more than the aged in disagree category than that of young and middle-aged respondents. Like age, differences in sex, profession, type and the financial position of family also play important role in shaping this view.
6. A little less than two-third (62.7%) selected respondents agree that strict curfew could have been more effective than lockdown as people do not cooperate voluntarily in India, whereas, a little less than one-fourth (23.3%) show disagreement with this. Differences in age and profession seems to be significant in determining this view, whereas, sex, type and financial position of the family do not play any role in shaping this view.
7. A little less than two-third (59.5%) respondents agree that the affected/doubtful cases have co-operated to self-quarantine in their homes in containment zones, whereas, a little less than one-fourth (22.3%) disagree with this view. Differences in age and financial position of the family have no role to play in shaping this view, whereas, the sex, profession and type of family seem to be significant in determining this view.
8. An overwhelming majority (95.5%) of selected respondents have shown agreement with the view that mostly, health workers, police/ para-military personnel and other COVID-19 warriors have done remarkable job during lockdown in India.

This view cuts across the differences in age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family.

9. The selected respondents seem to be divided so far as the view that administration has not been able to keep adequate supply of essential commodities during lockdown encouraging people to come out violating the norms is concerned, as 41.1% have shown agreement while 39.3% disagreement. Like age, this view is definitely influenced by the profession, type and financial position of the family. However, sex of the respondents does not seem to affect this view.

Thus, the empirical evidence shows that the lockdown has been a tough period, but the overall majority of the respondents are appreciative of the government's decision taken for the welfare of all the citizens to restrain the spread of this pandemic, irrespective of their age, sex, profession, type of family and financial position of the family. It is really appreciable that almost everyone did cooperate with the decision of government by staying at home. Respondents are divided on the issue as to whether imposing lockdown was a hasty decision and majority of Indian citizens followed the restrictions and guidelines or not.

### **5.3 Impact of Lockdown on Individuals**

Lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has widely affected all of us at individual level. This impact has been analyzed as under :

1. A little less than three-fourth (72.9%) selected respondents agree with the view that the lockdown has completely changed their way of life. This view cuts across the differences in age, sex and profession as there is no significant difference in the proportions in different categories of these two variables. However, type and the financial position of the family do play a role in shaping this view.
2. Nearly nine out of every ten (89.2%) respondents agree with the view that lockdown has made them more aware about water, sanitation, hygiene, waste management and cleanliness. This view cuts across the differences in age, profession, type and financial position of the family. This indicates that this view is similar irrespective of age, profession, type & financial position of the family of respondents. However, the sex of the selected respondents do contribute in shaping this view to some extent.

3. More than three-fourth (80.3%) selected respondents agree that lockdown has affected studies of students adversely at various levels. As the schools, colleges and universities remain closed; such concerns among all are obvious. The sex, profession and financial position of the family cut across this view showing no role in shaping them. However, age and type of family have some impact in determining this view as indicated by significant association.
4. Nearly three-fourth (76.9%) selected respondents agree that online classes are not that effective as traditional classroom teaching for the students. The selected respondents think similar so far as the effectiveness of traditional classroom teaching for the students vis-a-vis online classes are concerned, irrespective of their age, sex and type of family. However, the profession and financial position of the family do make a difference in shaping this view.
5. Almost three-fourth (75.3%) respondents agree that the lockdown has made the routine monotonous in absence of any physical work for most of the individuals. Age and financial position of the family do play significant role in shaping this view. However, this view cuts across the differences in sex, type of family and profession of the selected sample.
6. Less than two-third (61.2%) selected respondents have shown agreement with the views that lockdown has made individuals restless and agitated leading to mental trauma due to isolation, closure of schools/colleges/universities, workplaces and business establishments. This view is largely shaped by the age, sex, profession and financial position of the family. However, the type of family cuts across this view.
7. A little less than three-fourth (73.6%) selected respondents agree that lockdown has increased social insecurity among individuals about their future. Age, profession, type and financial position of the family cut across this view about increased social insecurity indicating that the respondents think similar about this impact. However, this view is shaped by the sex of respondents.
8. Nine out of every ten (89.9%) selected respondents agree that various social media platforms have become more popular to spend time during lockdown. The impact of social media

platforms not only cuts across the differences in age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family, but they also do not contribute to shape this felt impact about social media platforms, which have become more popular to spend leisure during lockdown.

9. An overwhelming majority (86.0%) of selected respondents agree that lockdown has given ample time to individuals for self-introspection to become more responsible citizens. This impact of lockdown also cuts across all the differences not only in age, but also in the sex, profession, type and financial position of the family.
10. Nine out of every ten (89.2%) respondents agree that lockdown has made individuals more aware about advanced technology which enables to work from home. Here also, this impact of lockdown cuts across all the differences in age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family clearly showing that the respondents think similar about this impact of making use of advanced technology to work from home, irrespective of all these variables.
11. Almost three-fourth (74.7%) of the selected respondents agree that lockdown has proved a blessing for individuals as it provided ample time to pursue hobbies and relax for future busy schedule. This impact of lockdown also cuts across all the differences not only in age, but also in the sex, profession, type and financial position of the family.
12. Four out of every ten (40.4%) selected respondents agree that lockdown has proved a curse as it is very boring and difficult to spend time in social isolation as against a little more than one-third (36.5%) who have shown disagreement. Age, profession, type and financial position of the family contribute significantly towards shaping this view. However, this view cuts across the differences in sex.
13. Nearly nine out every ten (88.9%) respondents agree that lockdown has made them aware about *Jaan Hai to Jahan Hai* than anything else. This view is shaped by the age, sex, profession and financial position of the family. However, there does not seem to be any impact of type of family on this view.
14. Six out of every ten (59.7%) respondents agree that *Aarogya Setu* app gives them the confidence that they are safe from

coronavirus infection. It is surprising that more than one-fourth (27.1%) respondents have shown neutrality towards this app. It seems they are either not aware about this app or have not downloaded this in their mobile phones inspite of instructions from the government. This view is shaped by the age, sex and financial position of the family. However, it cuts across the differences in profession and type of family.

It may be concluded that our life at individual level is not going to be the same as before the global spread of COVID-19. A big change would be seen in our lifestyle and habits. Our social life will have many new norms, especially in our social functions or outings. Social distancing, use of masks, sanitization and washing hands repeatedly are going to be part of our life. Even going to schools/colleges/universities, during journey by bus or train, morning and evening walk, shopping and thronging market places and malls, going out for lunch and dinner in famous hotels and restaurants, joining wedding or birthday ceremonies/parties etc. will not be same due to so many precautionary measures for our life in future. The COVID-19 scare will continue to haunt our social life in times to come as grand celebrations will be reduced to low-key affairs. The ban on spitting and littering in public places would help in maintaining cleanliness in our surroundings and definitely will have a very positive Impact. How we shall be able to learn new way of life and customize ourselves, only time to come will validate. However, it is certain that the habit of washing hands, learnt during the lockdown, will continue, at least for some time. It will help prevent many other tropical diseases like conjunctivitis, cholera and typhoid with slightly enhanced immunity. All said and done, it will alter our lifestyle for the better.

#### **5.4 Impact of Lockdown on Families**

Lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has also made far reaching impact at family level. This impact has been summarized under the following points :

1. An overwhelming majority (84.5%) of respondents agree that the financial burden on families has increased due to fall in family income because of no work in the lockdown period. Though there is slight variation in the proportions in agree category, this seems to be statistically significant as is evident from association. In disagree category, the proportion of



single-parent families is comparatively less and in neutral category the proportion of nuclear families is more. Like type of family, the financial position of the family also shows significant association. This impact seems to be more on nuclear and lower income group families.

2. A little less than three-fourth (71.2%) selected respondents agree that the lockdown has increased difficulties for the family members who have to do all the household chores themselves in absence of any external domestic help. Single-parent families seem to be more affected than the joint and nuclear ones. However, the financial position of the family shows insignificant association with this view.
3. More than three-fourth (78.7%) respondents in three types of families agree that in the lockdown, the family members have evolved a better understanding amongst themselves by dividing household chores so that no one person feels overburdened. Here also, both, type and financial position of the family do not seem to contribute in shaping this view.
4. A little less than three-fourth (72.7%) respondents in three types of families agree that the roles of male family members have drastically changed as they now provide more help to womenfolk in domestic/household work. Differences in type and financial position of the family cut across this view as the proportions do not show significant variations in agree or disagree categories.
5. An overwhelming majority of respondents (84.9%) agree that the lockdown has proved to be a blessing for the family members to spend quality time with each other and improve mutual relationships. The proportion is almost the same for three types of family indicating the fact that it has no role to play in shaping this view. However, the financial position of the family shows significant association with this view.
6. More than three-fourth (80.4%) respondents in three types of families agree that the bond of love between the family members has strengthened due to staying together and not going outside and meeting others in the lockdown period. However, this impact seems to be more among lower income families than those on the middle and higher income ones.

7. The respondents in three types of families are equally divided on the view that the conflict between family members has increased in the lockdown period due to limited availability of resources like television, mobiles, laptops, internet facility etc. as 40.9% show agreement and 40.7% disagreement. However, this type of conflict between family members is more in families of lower income bracket who really do not have many resources.
8. Again the respondents in the three types of families are equally divided on the view that incidences of domestic violence have increased in the lockdown period as 35.1% show agreement and 36.3% disagreement. The role of financial position of the family seems to be significant in shaping this view as there is more proportion of lower income families in disagree category as compared to families having high income brackets.
9. The respondents in the three types of families do not have consensus about the difficulty in the lockdown to get regular supply of essential commodities like milk, vegetables, fruits, groceries etc. as 41.1% show agreement, while 45.7% disagreement. Single-parent families show more proportion in agree category, while nuclear families have more proportion in disagree category indicating that the impact is felt more by single-parent families than joint and nuclear ones. However, the financial position of the family shows significant association with this view.
10. An overwhelming majority (84.1%) of respondents in three types of families do agree that the family expenditure has come down in the lockdown period due to less spending on clothes, accessories, partying and going outside. Both, type and financial position of the family do not seem to contribute in shaping this view.
11. An overwhelming majority (88.1%) of respondents in three types of families agree that all the family members have developed better hygiene habits during the lockdown period. Both, type and financial position of the family do not seem to contribute in shaping this view.
12. An overwhelming majority of respondents (91.9%) in three types of families agree that the social media platforms helped the family to try new recipes for dishes which they never made. Single-parent families have felt this impact less than those of

joint and nuclear ones. However, the financial position of the family does not seem to have any impact in shaping this view.

It may be concluded that overall impact of the lockdown on family is mixed one as it is both positive as well as negative. Families had more of a positive impact in terms of building sound relationship amongst each other and providing a moral support to handle the hard time of crisis. It gave a chance to the family members for not only staying together, but also spending quality time with each other for better understanding. Drastic change in the role of male family members who provided more help to womenfolk in domestic/household work is also commendable. Far-reaching changes to our routine have forced us to alter our social habits and reevaluate our relationships, the affect of which could continue into our lives even after lockdown. Not only this, developing better hygiene habits by all the family members during the lockdown is also likely to have long-term impact in fighting the spread of COVID-19 in India. After the pandemic has run its course, we will develop more emotional proximity towards our family, the bonds may become stronger and intolerance for petty differences in interests may end. The consumption pattern will certainly change in favour of simplicity & restraint.

But, the negative implications of lockdown especially for those lower income families who faced financial burden due to fall in income are not less. Increased difficulties for the family to do all the household chores themselves in the absence of external domestic help, increase in conflict between family members due to limited availability of resources in the homes, increase in incidences of domestic violence, getting regular supply of essential commodities are some of the other negative implications which probably families have never seen before. What one can do in this sensitive hour is to pray for one and all so that all families remain safe and comfortable to face increasing global crisis due to COVID-19 in India as well as in other countries.

### **5.5 Impact of Lockdown on Society**

Impact of lockdown on society, as felt by the selected respondents, is summarized as follows :

1. Nearly half (49.5%) of the selected respondents agree that the social/physical distancing in the lockdown has an adverse effect on social relations, as against a little more than one-third

- (37.6%) who disagree. Age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family do contribute in shaping this view.
2. An overwhelming majority (91.5%) of respondents agree that the lockdown and absence/decrease in human interference has made the nature to heal itself. Except sex, differences in other four variables, *i.e.*, age, profession, type and financial position of the family cut across in determining this view indicating that they have no role in shaping them. However, sex of the respondents shows significant association with this view indicating its impact in shaping them.
  3. An overwhelming majority (95.7%) of respondents agree that no work in the industries and less vehicles on the roads have decreased air and noise pollution making the society a better place to live in. All the respondents, irrespective of their age, sex, profession, type and financial position of the family, think similar so far as this impact is concerned.
  4. An overwhelming majority (94.4%) of respondents agree that the lockdown period has resulted in cleaner surroundings due to no or less human activity. This view cuts across all the differences in age, profession, type and financial position of the family. However, sex plays significant role in shaping this view as the proportion of females is more in agree category as compared to that of males.
  5. Selected respondents are divided on the issue of lockdown playing no role in teaching humans about their social responsibilities towards nature as half of them (50.5%) disagree against four out of ten (41.6%) who agree. Age, profession and type of family contribute significantly in shaping this view. However, the differences in sex and financial position of the family cut across in determining this view.
  6. The selected respondents are not unanimous that there is going to be no long time effect on people due to reduction of GDP rate in India. Less than half of them (45.2%) show agreement, as against little more than one-third (35.3%) who disagree. This view about the perceived impact is shaped by age, sex, profession and financial position of the family. However, type of family has no impact in shaping this view.
  7. The selected respondents seem to be almost equally divided in the impact of social isolation due to lockdown resulting in more

incidences of problems amongst people as more than one-third (38.3%) agree and little less than this (34.8%) disagree. This view is shaped by the age, sex, profession and financial position of the family. However, type of family cuts across this view indicating no role in shaping it.

8. More than three-fourth (85.5%) respondents agree that the lockdown has resulted in simple weddings without huge gatherings providing a positive indication for the future society. This positive impact of lockdown is not shaped by age, sex, profession and type of family. However, the financial position of the family shows significant association with this impact.
9. Nearly two-third (92.3%) selected respondents agree that the increased use of technology during lockdown has a positive impact on society. This view cuts across all the differences in age, profession and financial position of the family indicating that these variables do not shape it. However, the sex and type of family show significant association with this impact.
10. An overwhelming majority (64.3%) of respondents agree that the services provided by medical and para-medical staff in hospitals to cure COVID-19 affected patients neglecting their own families have made everyone proud and they now command more respect. This view cuts across all the differences in age, sex, profession and type of family. However, the financial position of the family does contribute in shaping this view as is evident from its significant association.
11. An overwhelming majority (95.2%) of respondents agree about the new role of police and para-military forces in providing relief material and helping to maintain peace during lockdown. This view cuts across all the differences in age, sex, profession, type and the financial position of the family as all these variables show insignificant association. Thus, it is clear that the selected respondents think alike so far as the new role of police and para-military forces is concerned.
12. An overwhelming majority (93.3%) of respondents agree that the lockdown has given a message to all citizens of India for being united to fight against the common cause. This view also cuts across all the differences in age, sex, type and financial position of the family as all these variables show insignificant association. However, profession shows significant association

with this view as the government employees have comparatively less proportion in agree category as compared to other professions.

13. More than three-fourth (83.7%) respondents agree about the enhanced image of Indian government and the Prime Minister globally during lockdown. Age, sex and the financial position of the family do contribute in shaping this view. However, the profession and type of family do contribute this view.

Thus, it can be well concluded that undoubtedly lockdown had a brighter side relating to self-realization and up-gradation of people, well-being of the community and healing of Mother Nature, new role of police and para-military forces, positive impact of increased use of technology as well as simple weddings without huge gatherings. However, the darker side also covers painful pictures of lower sections striving for essential commodities, difficult & very painful exodus of migrant labourers to their homes in native states, loss of income and jobs for so many people due to the slowdown of economy, more problems like heated arguments, quarrels, divorce, depression etc. due to social isolation and an adverse effect on social relations due to social/physical distancing in the lockdown. Hence, it has to be ensured that a secondary epidemic of burnouts and stress-related diseases may not pop up in the latter half of 2020. The pandemic has left an indelible impression on many of us, making us to maintain cleanliness habits and follow good discipline in our life.

## **6. Conclusion**

India has a fragile socio-economic fabric compared to advanced countries of the world. This is the reason that many critics in India and abroad have been blaming strict measures like complete national lockdown by shutting down all schools/colleges/universities, workplaces and all offices, cinema halls, parks, public places, religious places, markets, malls, public conveyance like rail and state/private buses, business establishments, all types of industries etc. and confining all the citizens within four walls of their household. But, the Indian government took a bold decision and declared national lockdown on March 25, 2020 to flatten the curve and contain spread of the disease, thus giving priority to save human life in the country rather than bothering about slowdown in economic growth. Empirical evidence validates the fact that first two lockdowns were very successful in containing the spread of virus.



Knowing well that the prolonged lockdown is neither foolproof nor costless measure, the government of India started giving relaxations for economic activities in phases in areas which were so far less affected by coronavirus. These relaxations, along with exodus of millions of labourers from affected areas/cities like Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Indore, Ludhiana etc. to their villages in home states increased the virus's geographic spread and aggravated the situation. The result is that India has surpassed Russia in first week of July, 2020 to become the third worst-affected country by the coronavirus pandemic. This has happened largely by reopening the economy, which has brought a surge in infections, and the country's southern states emerge as new hot spots. The worry of government at the centre and states is not just the number of COVID-19 cases, but the pace of increase which is now one of the highest in the world. However, a little compensation is the recovery rate of 61.53 per cent and the rate of patients testing positive is 8.66 per cent.

COVID-19 has triggered a deep economic crisis and as a consequence India's recovery trajectory is going to be weak as the country is struggling to get past the peak of the pandemic. The World Bank released its Global Economic Prospects report in first week of June 2020. It expects India's gross domestic product (GDP) to contract by 3.2% in 2020-21. There will be a moderate recovery to 3.1% growth in 2021-22. This means that 2021-22 GDP will be less than what it was in 2019-20. Contraction in GDP is likely to lead in dropping of incomes and losing jobs leading to unprecedented unemployment. Ratings agency Moody's slashed India's credit ratings to the lowest investment grade level. Recently, an industrial survey that was jointly conducted by industry body FICCI and tax consultancy *Dhruva* advisors and took responses from about 380 companies across the sectors and concluded that businesses are grappling with "tremendous uncertainty" about their future.

To mitigate the economic fallout, the government of India had announced a \$266 billion support package containing both fiscal and monetary measures, said to be worth around 10% of India's GDP which includes an emergency credit line of collateral-free loans worth \$40 billion to "resume business activity and safeguard jobs" in the wake of India's lockdown to curb coronavirus. This is the largest economic relief effort that India has ever seen and will "give a new momentum to India's development journey and has put India on the road to self-reliance", to use the Prime Minister's own words. Not

only this, the *Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana* (Food scheme) announced for three months covering about two-thirds of population has been extended till the end of November, 2020. Thus, the government is taking various measures to contain the economic impact of lockdown due to COVID-19.

However, the lockdown due to coronavirus has brought about a sea change in how we human beings have to live. These changes in a big way are likely to have a far reaching impact on almost every aspect of our living. It is here that we have to behave as responsible citizens to supplement the efforts of the government. COVID-19 has taught all of us how we have become minimalistic in our approach to manage food and supplies etc. with available resources. The behavioural change on the individuals is going to be in no way less significant. Though we have been taught many things since childhood, but we never paid any heed to them. Now, COVID-19 will make sure that we pay attention to them and make them a part and parcel of our life. Hygiene, wearing a mask, use of sanitizers, and social/physical distancing will be the biggest behavioural changes we will have to practice. Other trends will be less travel (both domestic and international), less dining in hotels and restaurants, less shopping with precautions in crowded markets and malls, more use of digital platforms, digital transactions, reducing the western tradition of handshakes and hugging in this pandemic period. If we are unable to deal with these, then we must get ready to welcome the virus back into our life, family, neighbourhood and the community.

In the concluding remarks, it may be mentioned that various sub- systems of our society, *i.e.*, polity, economy, education, family and kinship as well as religion are adjusting with each other very well at this critical crisis created by un-curable COVID-19. Nobody could have ever thought that not only all educational institutions at different levels will remain paralyzed for such a long period, economy will be at stand still during the period of lockdown, all places of worships will be closed, family members will remain indoors (within the four walls of their households) without welcoming relatives or bothering kins by going to their homes and only the polity (government) will take all initiatives to come out from this crisis. The only requirement at this time, though a difficult one, is that we all have to be united and keep adopting suitable measures at all levels to revive at a faster rate and find amicable solutions for the left burnt-outs of lockdown. Though the lockdown due to coronavirus seems to have emerged as a binding

force to knit together India with the gossamer thread of social harmony and has taught us to increase social/physical distance and decrease mental distance, still we as citizens of India are far behind in our social responsibility to think about well-being of all citizens and to follow guidelines/instructions issued by competent authorities from time to time.

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