

ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOWARDS PREVENTING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Since the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak from Wuhan, in December 2019, we have witnessed constant peaks and troughs in case numbers and mortality rates. The dreaded virus, bearing its exponential contagious properties, has taken over 38,00,000 lives to date and has proven to be the most catastrophic outbreak of the millennium, leaving us helpless. Vaccination might perhaps be the answer, but despite vaccination drives, the World Health Organization recommends taking precautionary measures. After all, prevention is better than cure!

This report aims to summarize the general consensus about taking precautionary measures needed to prevent the spread of the virus. It is crucial to develop these suggested habits in order to bring an end to the virus. Through this report, we will learn whether the crowd follows protocols and takes preventive measures, and to what extent. As a community connect project, our aim was to reach out to people and understand their grievances, challenges and what are their biggest fears in this Covid -19 era.

Key Words: Covid-19, Protocols, Prevention, Awareness, Hygiene

Introduction

Covid -19 pandemic has played a pivotal role in affecting lives of each and every one in different ways. Irreplaceable losses of lives and long lasting sufferings from stress and mental trauma, job losses and disruptions in human lives is a new normal. This pandemic brings economic crisis and human crisis in all means which was never felt or seen before. It has put the whole world upside down. Home Schooling, online learning, parents attending seminars while attending their children's classes. Technology has been a boon to society in a rewarding way that the learning process will never stop but it also puts a lot of pressure on working mothers, as they have now to be on job and take on the household responsibilities simultaneously, because women are still considered to be the primary caregivers. While conducting the research, we found that people had faced innumerable challenges in order to find the beds, medicines, doctors and medical care facilities. There had also been some findings about dissatisfaction about the role of the government in regarding some of their policies.

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People are now more responsible and serious regarding the health and hygiene at their home and workplace. Some had shared the fear of what will happen to their family if they will find themselves positive for the test. How much cost does it incur? Will there be beds available? What if there is no oxygen available? All these questions and many more likewise were and now still going in their minds.

Third wave as the news channels are suggesting, will be targeted to the children majorly. All this news has instilled a fearful atmosphere among parents and they are unwilling to send their children to school or daycare. Women are also leaving the work in order to take care of their children, especially small children and elders.

Literature Review

The direct purchase of the vaccine by rich, developed countries have brought ethical distribution of vaccination dose into question. Covid -19 vaccine will be effective in the community when all sections of society (regardless of class) will be vaccinated with equity, else vaccination contingency will be ineffective. The biggest challenge in the pandemic in front of the government is to build trust among the people of all sections regarding fears and rumors about the vaccine. Widespread effective community engagement, promotional messages are required to reach the masses so that socioeconomic, cultural barriers and political hurdles can be defeated.

It is important for the government to build a strong trust and confidence among people, especially the marginalized, underdeveloped and ignored section of the society. It is also important to understand the function of how the mass drug administration works. The successful execution of Polio eradication programme by the Indian government and eradication of Rubella from America may also be taken as an example, in order to reflect the wide scale mobilization and new vaccination strategies that can increase the efficacy of the vaccine in the society.

One size does not fit all and Policy makers must realise in order to execute successful immunization in the local and regional environment, health literacy of different communities should be taken into consideration. Local youth leaders, teachers, universities, local channels who can voice out the local concerns should be encouraged to participate. (Burgess et al. 2020)

A study done (Kaushik ,M et al) to determine the awareness, knowledge and attitude about COVID-19 and relate the behavior of Indian society, especially when the country is restarting all its economic activities, after the complete lockdown.

Based on study of Daugherty et al, a 24-item questionnaire was designed using WHO course materials on emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. The study was conducted by distributing the questionnaire and collected relevant data of 21,406 adult participants of various sections of Indian society with different age groups between 18 and 80 years to introspect the level of public awareness with respect to cause, spread, prevention and treatment of disease caused by spread of COVID-19 viral outbreak, which will be automatically reflected in the societal behavioral response of rigorous precautionary measures.

It showed there was a need to extend the knowledge base among individuals to enhance their active participation in the prevention mechanisms with respect to the spread of the pandemic . Need to elaborate the Indian socio-cultural aspects, so that society starts appreciating and voluntarily following social distancing. This should improve the adaptability of people with livelihood resilience to let them protect themselves not only from the present pandemic but also from all other unforeseen infections, and to provide care to patients.

The first three cases of COVID-19 in India were in students returning from Wuhan, China, and 41 days after the first reported case on 30th January, the total cases had reached 50 (Rawat, 2020) .

The most stringent measure, a complete national lockdown for 21 days, was announced on March 24th with very little notice and eventually extended to May 3rd and has been applauded by the World Health Organization envoy Dr. Nabarro as “early, far-sighted and courageous” (Sharma, 2020).

This paper combines quantitative analyses of large-scale datasets with qualitative observations from news and media reports to assess the effectiveness and implications of the public health measures in the slums of India. It include (i) the

National Family and Health Survey 2015-16 (ii) the Census of India Housing Microdata Sample 2011 that provides representative sample of urban India, and (iii) the Housing Stock, Amenities & Assets in Slums Series of Census 2011 .

One-size-fits-all preventive measures against COVID-19 will not work, particularly for slums. Given high densities and inadequate services, handwashing and social distancing are luxuries that slum-dwellers cannot afford. Preexisting conditions in slums only exacerbate the vulnerabilities of already marginalized populations. We need to rethink public health measures that work in slum contexts and ultimately prevent spread of the disease without costing lives and livelihoods of slum-dwellers.

In view of a study (Singh et al) attempted to assess the awareness, threat, symptoms and its prevention among people of India about the COVID-19. A total of 522 responses from all over India were received. The respondents have enough awareness for COVID-19 outbreak and also its preventive measures, out of total, 98% (513) answered that the virus spreads from one person to another, 95% (494) answered that the disease is caused by a virus. People used to understand the importance of social distancing and other preventive measures led down by the government. People are having confidence to defeat disease but showed their concern for corona threat, are aware about the virus, its common symptoms and prevention, govt. testing and medical facilities. Principal component analysis was used to identify the latent dimensions regarding people's preventive measures and was found that they are majorly adopting three methods, that is, lockdown, naturopathy and social distancing. They adopted this sampling because, due to movement constraints during a lockdown, it was impossible to approach a common man in the population. A semi structured questionnaire was developed in straightforward, understandable English by using Google form. The questionnaire was disseminated to known through WhatsApp, e-mails and other social media platforms. The participants showed enough interest in giving their responses and forwarded it to their contacts, which resulted in getting responses from all over the country. Participants who possess smartphones with internet connectivity have participated in this study, which is very common in modern society. Participants above 15 years and comfortable in English filled the response with willingness. Total, 533 responses received , but some were filled incomplete, so they were eliminated. Finally, analyzed 522 responses to ^[1]draw the results. The respondents' socio-demographic profile was accessed by a questionnaire, which includes gender, age, education, place of residence, domicile, marital status and so forth.

The questionnaire used for the survey have a separate section to know how they commute and interact to peoples, what are their trusted source of information, two questions were to evaluate the threat level of virus, one dichotomous question for awareness about health facility, six questions to estimate awareness level of coronavirus in society, 11 questions for accessing symptoms, 12 questions for perception about prevention from coronavirus. The process of data collection was held from April 11, 2020 to April 28, 2020.

Objectives

- How prepared are we for the 3rd wave of Covid-19?
- Are people following the norms and protocols regarding Covid-19?
- Are people aware of the government initiatives?

Methodology

This is a cross-sectional study, conducted with the Indian community during this COVID 19 pandemic period. The sample size of 164 was used in the study and this was done based on the number of participants conducting the study. One participant was responsible for collecting data from at least 20 people. All the people who participated in the survey were a convenience sample, but the study targeted adults of different age groups to provide information about their behavior, especially the means of prevention they use to avoid contracting Covid-19. The questionnaire was designed to capture qualitative data, but the study analyzed the results using quantitative methods and for the qualitative part; Data Cleansing and Analysis were performed using Microsoft Excel.

Qualitative Method -

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- **Conceptual :** Concerned with understanding human behaviors from the informant's perspective; Assumes a dynamic and negotiated reality.
- **Methodological:**
 - Data is collected through participants' observation and interviews; data is analyzed by themes from descriptions by informants;
 - Data is reported in the language of the informants

Quantitative Method -

- **Conceptual :**
 - Concerned with discovering facts about social phenomena;
 - Assumes a fixed and measurable reality
- **Methodological :**
 - Data is collected through measuring things
 - Data is analyzed through numerical comparisons and statistical inferences
 - Data is reported through statistical analysis

Tools Used During This Survey -

In the precise survey, the tools used are questionnaires and surveys. The questionnaires turned into cross-sectional, achieved with the aid of using a comfort, non probability sampling method in India. We followed this sampling due to the fact, because of motion constraints and to avoid going to crowded places at some stage in a lockdown. This method of comfort sampling, that's a non probability sampling method, lets us pick respondents immediately from the populace as in keeping with their comfort zone.

Data Analysis

This data is collected through our organizations' students from various places and this contains a total of 164 responses of the survey we did and people were kind enough to give us time to conduct our survey.

Q1. According to you, why is covid spreading so rapidly? We are reading out the options, please choose the options that you think are most relevant to the question that is being asked, if there is any other.

In this question, there were 5 options given,

1. People do not wear masks,
2. People do not maintain social distancing,
3. People do not wash hands,
4. People do not use hand sanitizers,
5. People go to mass gatherings.

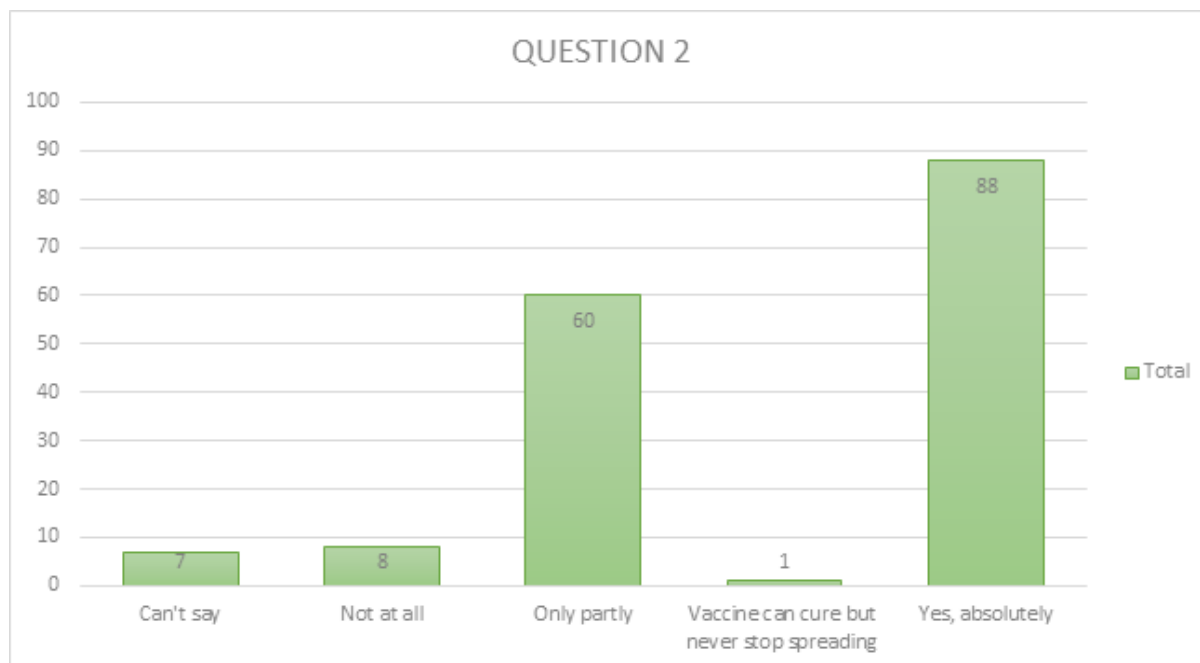
In this question, out of 164 people, **28** of them said all the 5 reasons were there, **20** of them said that only 3 options were :- people do not wear masks, people do not practice social distancing, and people go to mass gatherings.

16 of the people think that only people who are wearing mask are the reason for rapid spread of the pandemic, **14** of the people think that two options were the reason for the spread of virus which is people do not wear mask and people do not practice social distancing, also **14** people think that people do not practice social distancing and people who do not wash their hand regularly were the reason. **13** of the total population think that four options were the reasons why were people who do not wear mask, ie, people who do not practice social distancing, people go to mass gatherings and people who do not wash their hands regularly, **10** people think that people who go to mass gatherings were the reason for the rapid spread of covid. Also there were many other reasons, people stated that the government did not take any strict action, and also the adamant and ignorant behavior of people to follow the rules and regulations by the government.

Q2. Do you think vaccines can be effective in limiting the spread of the covid ? There were 5 options

1. Can't say
2. Not at all
3. Only partially
4. Vaccine can cure but never stop spreading
5. Yes, absolutely

Out of 164, 7 of the responses state that they can't say, 8 of them chose not at all, 66 of the responses says that only partially, only 1 response said that vaccines can cure but never stop spreading, and 88 of the responses said yes, absolutely, the vaccine can be effecting in limiting the spread of covid 19. Through this data we can see that 54% of the sample population think that vaccines can be effective in limiting the spread, 36% thinks that only a not fully it will be effective, 4% of the responses denied to say anything, 5% responses thinks that it will not be effective.



Q3. According to you, which age group should definitely go for vaccination?

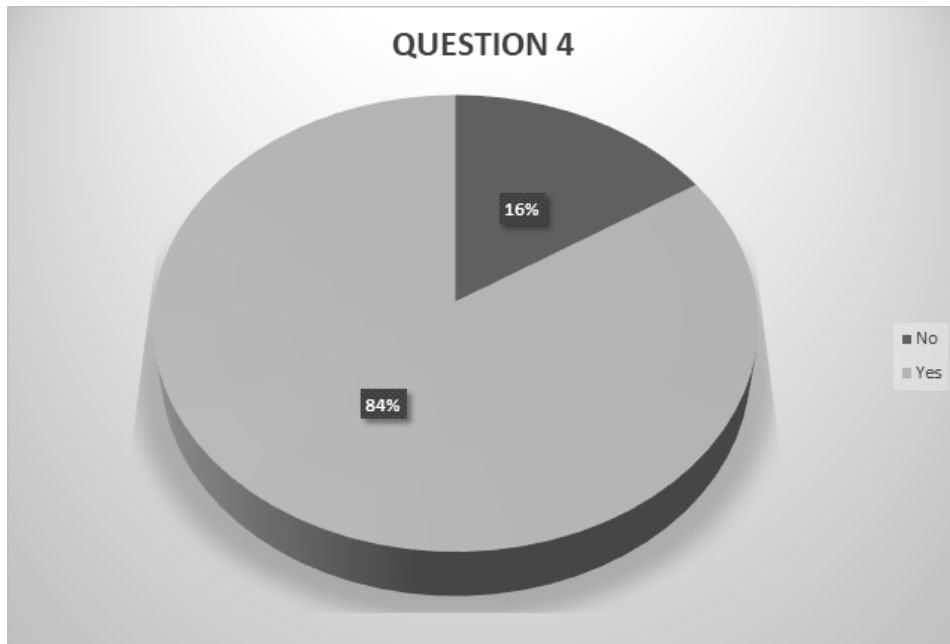
The age groups were

- 18-24,
- 24-34,
- 34-44,
- 44-54,
- 54-64,
- 65 and above.

47 of the total responses selected every age group should get vaccinated, 13 other responses also said that every age group should get vaccinated. A few of them said that only the 18-24 age group should get vaccinated. Few responses said 65 and above and 54-44 age group, few other responses said that only 44-54 and 34-44 should get vaccinated.

Q4. Have you heard of the latest government campaign for spreading awareness about covid called "Safai bhi, Dawai bhi, Kadai bhi"?

Out of 164 responses, 138 people heard about the scheme "Safai bhi, Dawai bhi, Kadai bhi", and 26 of the responses said that they did not hear or know the scheme.

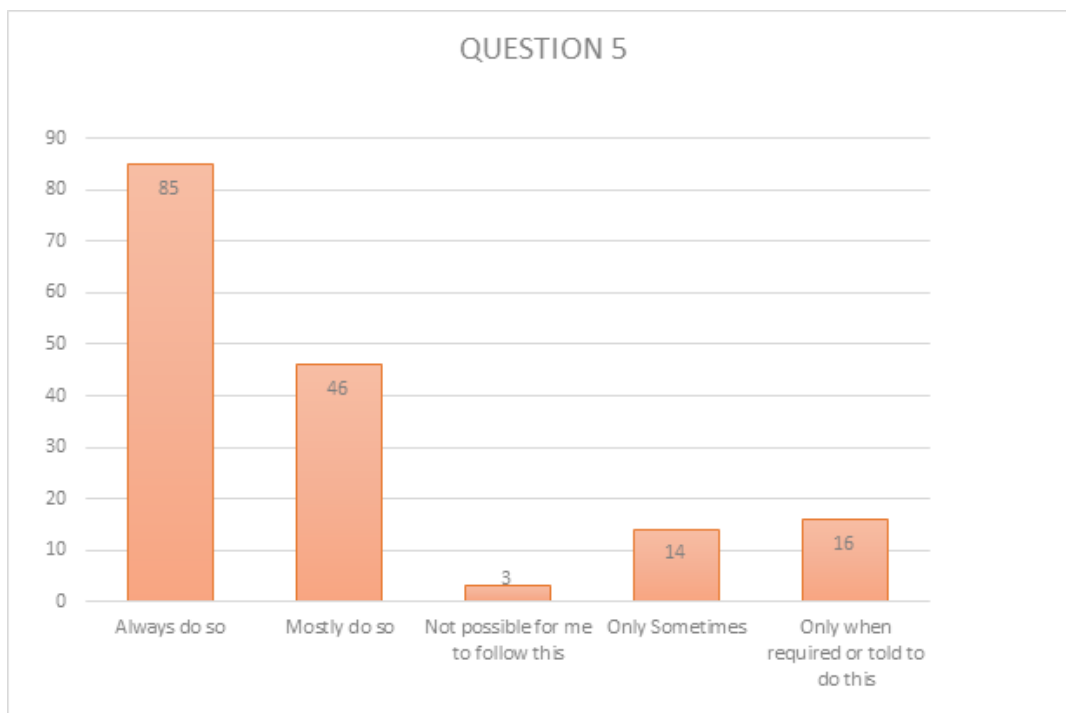


Q5. Which of the following statements would best classify your behavior? I wear a mask properly covering my nose and mouth in all public places?

This question consists of 5 options :-

1. Not possible for me to follow
2. Mostly do so
3. Only sometimes
4. Only when required and told to do so
5. Always do so.

85 of the responses choose the 5th option that they always cover nose and mouth in public place, **46** of the responses chose the 2nd option, Mostly do so, **3** of the responses chose 1st option, which is, not possible for me to follow, **16** of the responses chose 4th option, only when required to and when told to do so, **14** responses chose that they wear mask properly only sometimes.

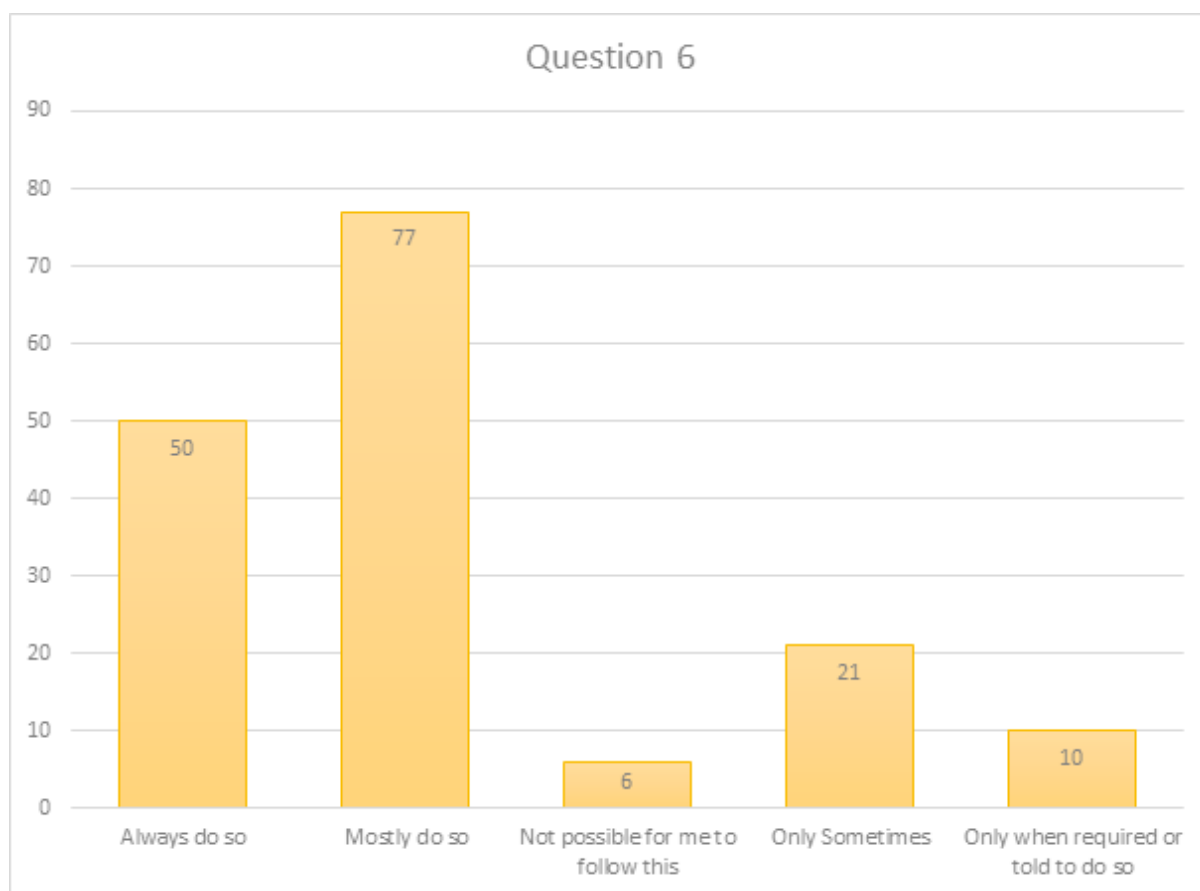


Q6. Which of the following statements would best classify your behavior? I wash my hands with soap and water frequently (at least 6-8 times in a day)?

This question consists of 5 options :-

1. Not possible for me to follow
2. Mostly do so
3. Only sometimes
4. Only when required and told to do so
5. Always do so.

77 responses were that they mostly wash their hand with soap and water frequently, 50 responses said that they always wash their hand with soap and water frequently, 21 responses were that they sometimes wash their hands with soap and water, 10 responses were, they wash their hands with soap and water when they were asked to do so.



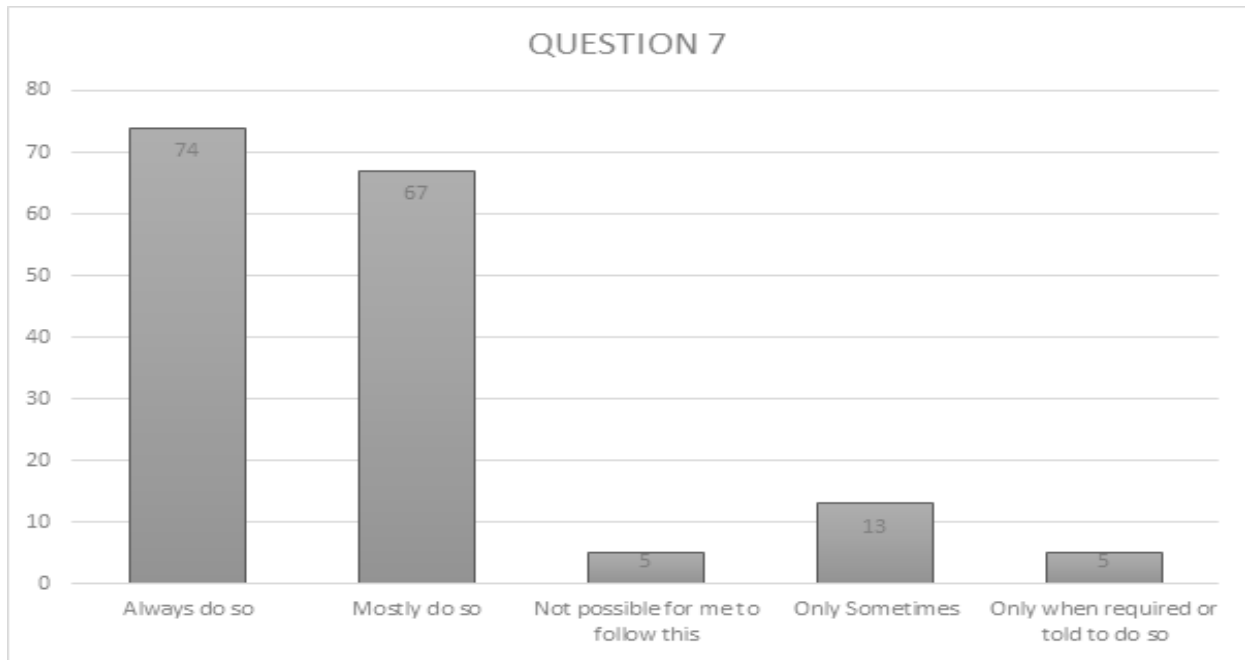
Q7. Which of the following statements would best classify your behavior? I wash my hands with soap and water whenever I enter my home and office, go to the washroom, and before my meals.

This question consists of 5 options :-

1. Not possible for me to follow
2. Mostly do so
3. Only sometimes
4. Only when required and told to do so
5. Always do so.

In this question, 74 responses were that they do wash their hand when they enter the home, office, washroom or before eating any meal, 67 responses were that they mostly do wash their hand when they enter the home, office, washroom and before any meals, 5 responses were, this is hard to follow for them, 15 of the responses say that they sometimes follow this rule, and 5 responses said that they follow this rule only when they are told to do so.

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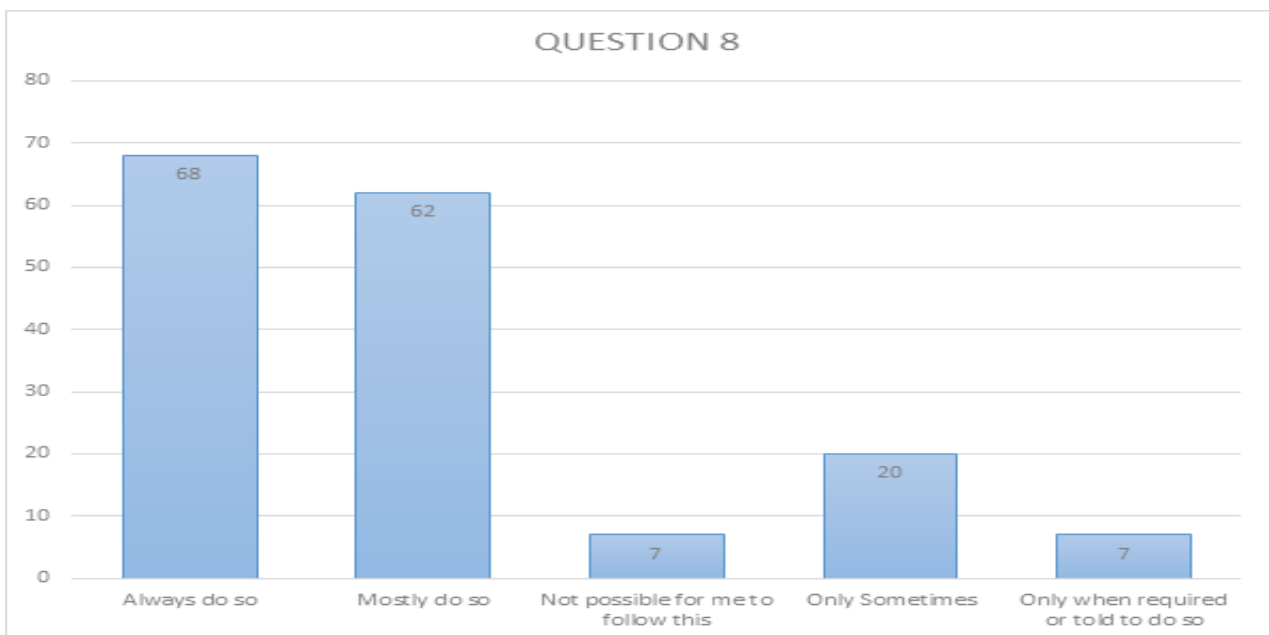
Q8. Which of the following statements would best classify your behavior? I use a sanitizer to clean my hands whenever I touch any public surface or need to shake hands.

This question consists of 5 options :-

1. Not possible for me to follow
2. Mostly do so
3. Only sometimes
4. Only when required and told to do so
5. Always do so.

In this question the difference was not that much as in the earlier question.

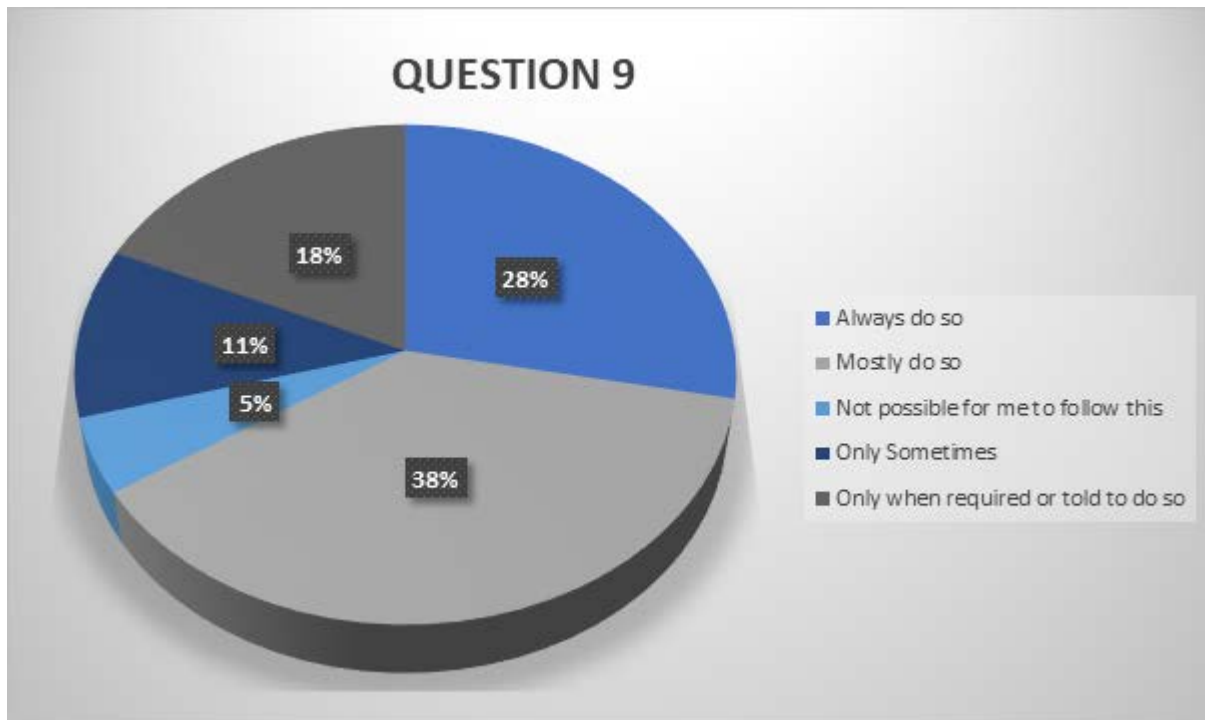
68 responses said that they always sanitize their hands whenever they touch any public surface or need to shake hands, and **62** responses were that they mostly do so, that they sanitize their hands after they touch any public surface, **20** responses said that they only sanitize their hand sometime after they touch any public surface, only **7** responses were that said it is hard to follow this routine and **7** responses said that do this routine when they are being asked to do so.



Q9. Which of the following statements would best classify your behavior? I avoid going to crowded places such as marketplaces, religious places, gatherings etc. This question consists of 5 options:-

1. Not possible for me to follow
2. Mostly do so
3. Only sometimes
4. Only when required and told to do so
5. Always do so.

To this, **46** people responded to always do so, **62** responses for mostly do so, **8** responses for Not possible for me to follow, **18** respondents for only sometimes and **30** respondents for only when required and told to do so.

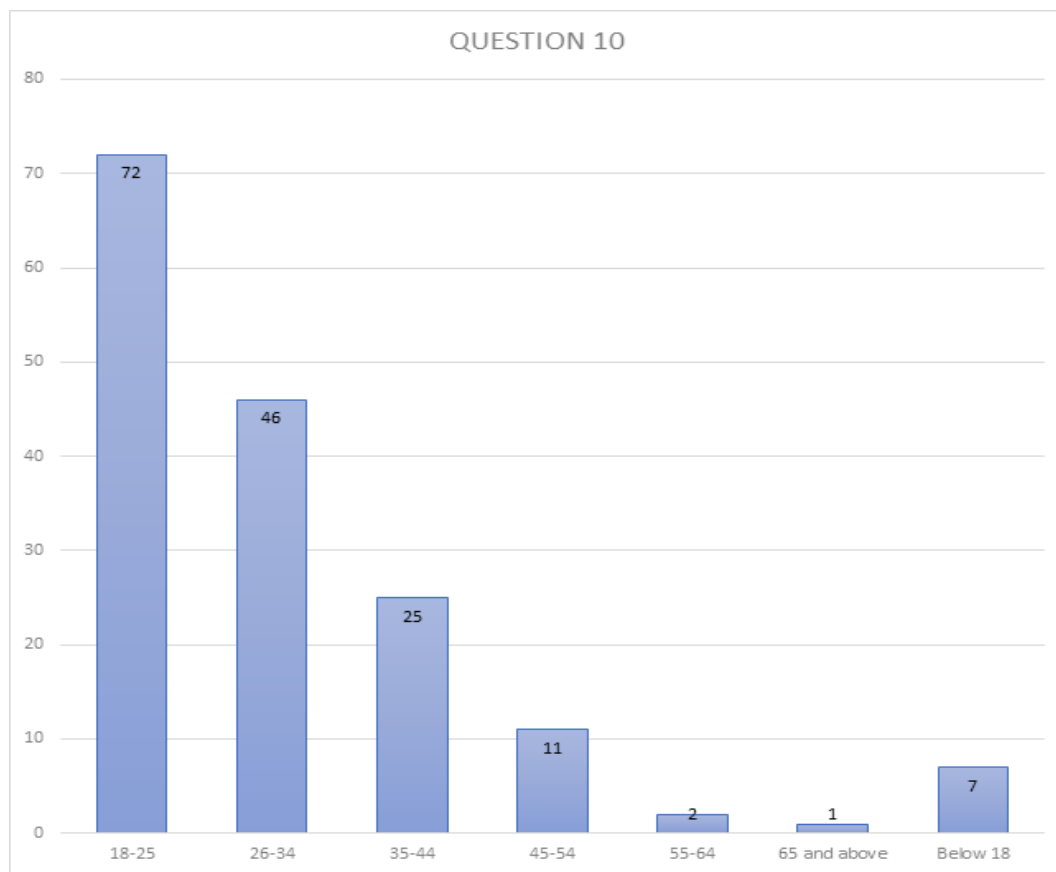


Q10. Which of the following age brackets would you be in?

Options:-

- below 18,
- 18-25,
- 26-34,
- 35-44,
- 45-54,
- 55-64,
- 65 and above

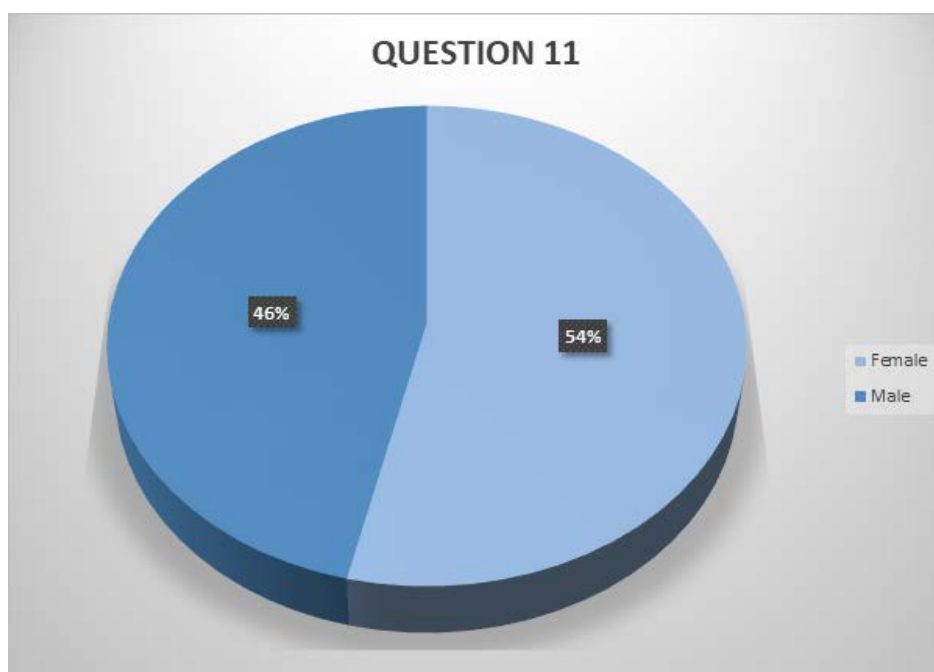
To this, **72** people belonged to the age category of 18-25, **46** people belonged to the age group of 26-34, **25** people belonged to the age group of 35-44, **11** people were from age group of 45-54, **2** people belonged from 55-64, **1** person from 65 and above and only **7** people were below 18.



Q11. Your Gender is?

- Male,
- Female,
- Third Gender &
- Prefer not to say.

The record of females is **88** and male is **76**. In this, we can clearly see the ratio of total sample population, in which females are more than male.



Q12. What is your outlook towards vaccinating yourself?

Option1. I am planning to vaccinate myself

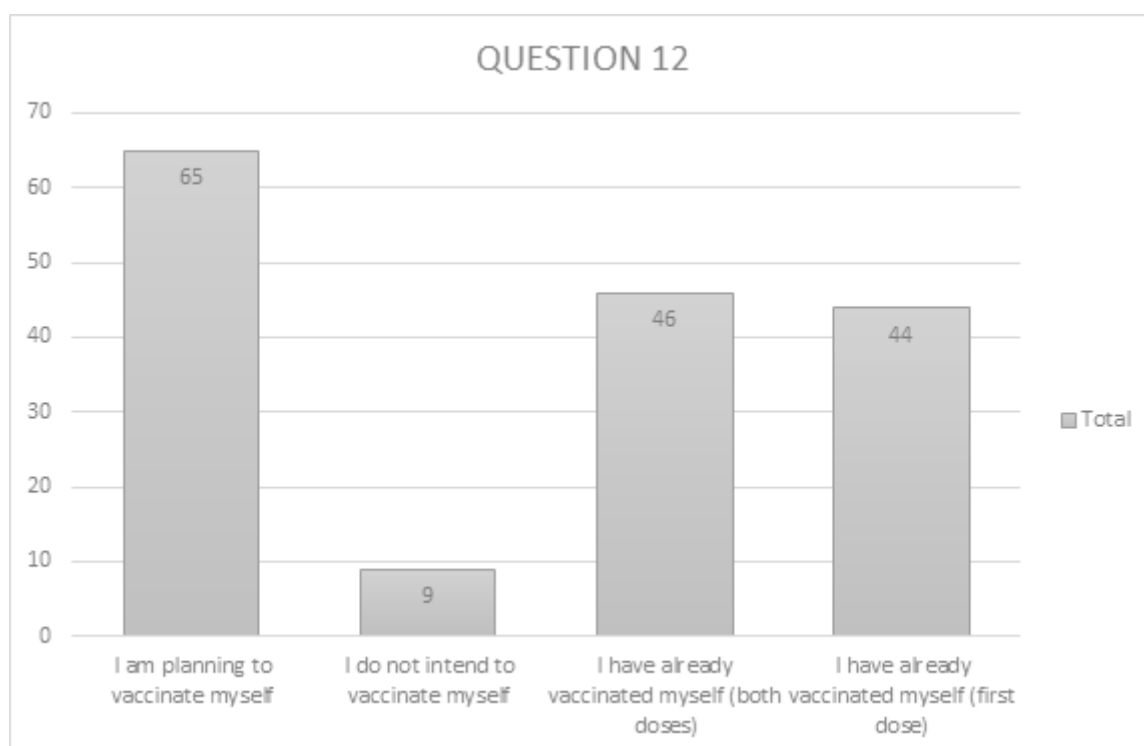
Option2. I do not intend to vaccinate myself

Option3. I have already vaccinated myself (both doses)

Option4. I have already vaccinated myself (first dose)

To this, **65** people selected option 1, I am planning to vaccinate myself; **9** people selected option 2, I do not intend to vaccinate myself;

46 people selected option 3, they have already vaccinated both doses; and **44** people selected option 4, they have been vaccinated 1st dose.



Q13. What are some of your biggest concerns regarding the current covid crisis? Please let us know? [the student is free to ask any additional questions from the respondent if he or she chooses to]

To this, **22** people responded to NA, **10** responses for help others, rest all responses for Extending healthcare, facilities, Education, Availability of jobs, fake news, anxiety, getting covid positive during the pregnancy, job scarcity, Domestic Violence, Don't take it for granted take it seriously and vaccinate first if you are in that age group, going to school and college, Lack of experience due to online classes, Mass Gatherings, False Information & Mental Health.

Their biggest concerns were, what should people do to end this pandemic in India, when this covid will end, Business downgrade, cannot meet friends, Death rate, Economic collapse, Mental Health & Safety, follow all the norms. Loss of life not traveling. The unavailability of vaccines and no awareness regarding pandemic, growing inflation, economic instability and bad health care facilities, inconsiderate and irresponsible rules and policies of government, lack of hospital beds, medicines, vaccines in the society, so if any one at home gets infected, how would it be tackled.

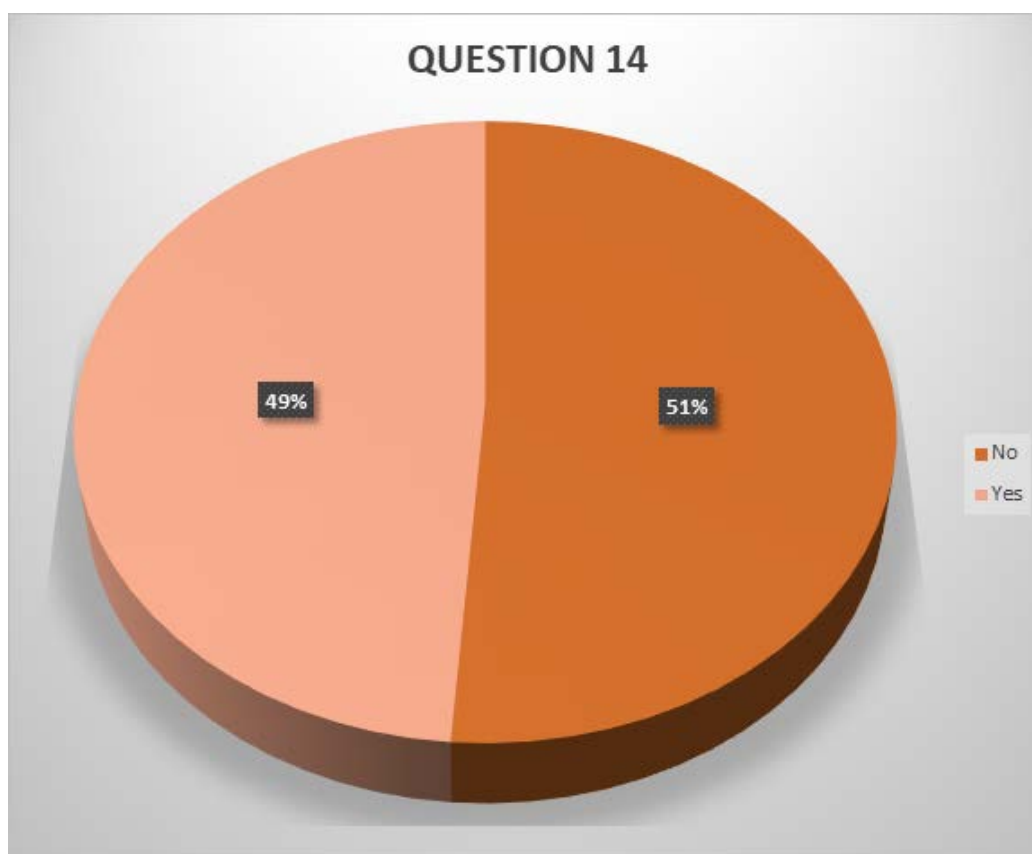
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1. Poor health infrastructure is the major concern in the current scenario and Travel restriction, Job market in bad shape, people losing jobs and those who have jobs find it hard to cope up with rules of Covid -19.
2. Change of education system : Due to online system which is in very amateur phase of education, a high percentage of youth generation will be unskilled and uneducated in the society or job market in next five years and situation will be scary if they will hold the sensitive and responsible job position (professional examples such as doctors, engineers where practical education and offline education is essential).
3. Travelling norms : Due to strict travelling norms, people who are living abroad find it hard to cope up with mental stress, far from their family, and are unable to meet, which has caused a lot of trauma in them.
4. Disappearance of Social Essence : Due to Covid -19, people are locked in their own homes, even could not meet their relatives if any death occurred, this kind of acceptance is changing social relations of the community, thus community feeling is losing and apathy is acceptable.

Q14. Have you or any of your immediate family contracted covid?

Options are:- Yes Or No

The respondents responded with **84** No and **80** people with Yes. Through this question we can see that the most population of the survey's family has contracted Covid 19.

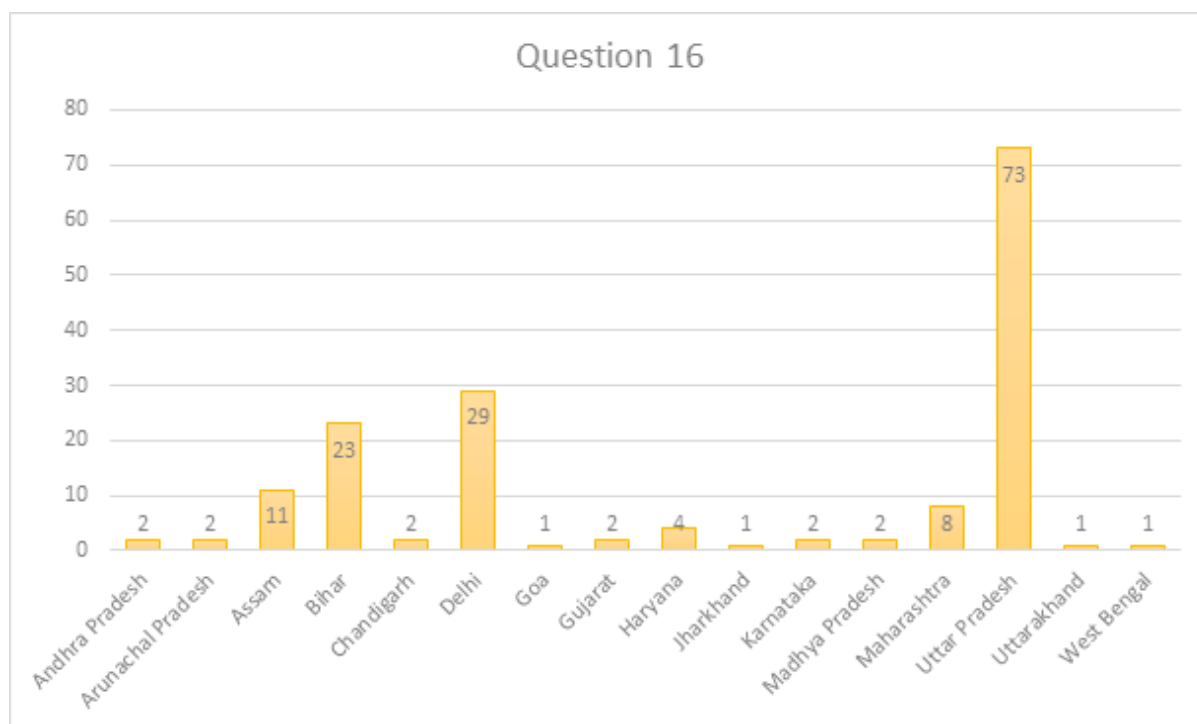


Q15. Have you lost any of the following members to covid in the last one year?

To this, **76** people responded that they lost no one, **10** people responded they lost their Grandparents and In-laws, **8** people responded that they lost their parents and in-laws, **19** people lost their siblings, **24** people lost their Uncles and aunts, and **26** people lost their colleagues and friends.

Q16. You are a resident of which state/UT of India? If you are a resident of another country, choose the option of resident of another country.

Mostly people were from Uttar Pradesh with 73 responses, 2 responses were from Andhra Pradesh, 2 from Arunachal, 11 respondents from Assam, 23 responses from Bihar, 2 responses from Chandigarh, 29 from Delhi, 1 from Goa, 2 from Gujarat, 4 from Haryana, 1 from Jharkhand, 2 from Karnataka, 2 from Madhya Pradesh, 8 responses from Maharashtra, 1 each from Uttarakhand and West Bengal.



Findings

- Few people still need to follow the norms of Covid 19 given by the government and WHO.
- There is still a need to be aware of the vaccine and its benefits.
- People are scared to go out but due to job and work they have to go out.
- People are still thinking about getting vaccinated and few do not intend to get vaccinated because of the rumours associated with it .
- Due to Covid -19, people are locked in their own homes, and could not even meet their relatives if any death occurred. This kind of acceptance is changing social relations of the community, thus community feeling is lost and apathy is acceptable.
- People are taking precautionary methods for Covid-19. For example kada, golden milk(turmeric milk), herbal medicine (Patanjali), etc.

Conclusion

We all know, Covid-19 comes from Wuhan, China, and now this dangerous virus affects the whole world. We adopted this survey technique because during a lockdown it is impossible to approach a common man in the population. This technique of convenience sampling method because of this survey, we know the protocols they follow during covid as they know this is the most dangerous virus that affects so many lives and the whole world faces this difficult situation. This non probability sampling technique allows researchers to select respondents directly from the population as per their convenience. This technique was time saving and cost saving also. The questionnaire we sent through the survey, we took interviews and discussed the questionnaire with them about what are the measures to adopting this. The participants showed enough interest in giving their responses to give the idea to move to further, which results in getting a huge response. Participants are above 18 years of age. Total we received 167 responses but some of the responses were not submitted properly so we eliminated them.

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The questionnaire used for the survey had a separate phase to understand how they go back and forth and have interaction with peoples, what they are dependent on supply of information, questions had been framed to assess the risk degree of virus, and how prepared are we for the third wave of COVID-19. Our questions were mainly focusing on the involvement of people and measures described by the government are followed on what scale. Some of our questions were related to the vaccination drive and whether people are engaging themselves in the same.

So this research report will help common men to understand the intensity of infection and its symptoms and precautions. It will help common people to understand the threatened level of virus in society and counsel them that it's with everyone, rather than only with one person. They will adopt the necessary precautionary measures to avoid infection from illness by getting proper and reliable information from time to time. The government will also get an idea of common man psychology, problems and worries of ordinary people to formulate a better and effective strategy.

Recommendation & Suggestions

- Government needs to distribute vaccines equitably so that all sections(especially marginalised ,lower income, socially outcast) of the society would avail the facility in their nearby home area with ease .
- Faith leaders, teachers, universities and regional political leaders could be included in the social awareness program on a daily basis.
- People should be educated regarding fake news by posters ,radio channels and TV ads.
- Volunteers should be encouraged and supported by the government agencies who are helping people in the crises.
- Pace of building health infrastructure and development of health facilities should be increased .
- Opportunities for students and graduates to get enough skill to get a job or and they can take admission in universities for the future.

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