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Perception Study  
on **COVID - 19**  
Lockdown

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## 1. Context

COVID-19 was first detected in December 2019 in Wuhan (China) and since then it has spread globally. This is still an ongoing pandemic and several countries including India are facing the challenge posed by the pandemic. Seeing the rise in the COVID cases in the country and considering the wide spread intensity of the virus, Government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared a three-week (21 days) nationwide lockdown on March 24, 2020 as a preventive measure to combat the coronavirus pandemic in India. The lockdown was placed when the number of confirmed positive coronavirus cases in India was approximately 500.

It was noted that the lockdown had slowed the growth rate of the pandemic. Several state governments and other advisory committees recommended extending the lockdown. Therefore, on 14 April, PM Modi extended the nationwide lockdown till 3 May, with a conditional relaxation promised after 20 April for the regions where the spread had been contained by then. On 1 May, the Government of India extended the nationwide lockdown further by two weeks until 17 May. The Government divided the entire nation into three zones-green, red and orange, with relaxations applied accordingly.

The red zones are those with high coronavirus cases and a high doubling rate, orange zones are those with comparatively fewer cases and green zones are those without any cases in the past 21 days. Normal movement is permitted in green zones with buses limited to 50% capacity. Orange zones would allow only private and hired vehicles but no public transportation. The red zones would remain under lockdown.

## 2. Perception Study: Objectives, Methods and Sample Size

As the country has been under the lockdown for over 50 consecutive days, CMSR Consultants (Pvt.) Ltd, a leading research organization in the country conducted the 'Perception Study on COVID – 19 Lockdown' among people of various cities/states.

The ultimate goal of this exercise was to understand and capture public opinion about the nation-wide lockdown imposed by GoI due to the challenges posed by the pandemic. The study also tried to understand the impact of the lockdown on people's lives. Since the virus will be around for many more months or even years, it was important to know what people think about their future prospects in the era of COVID.

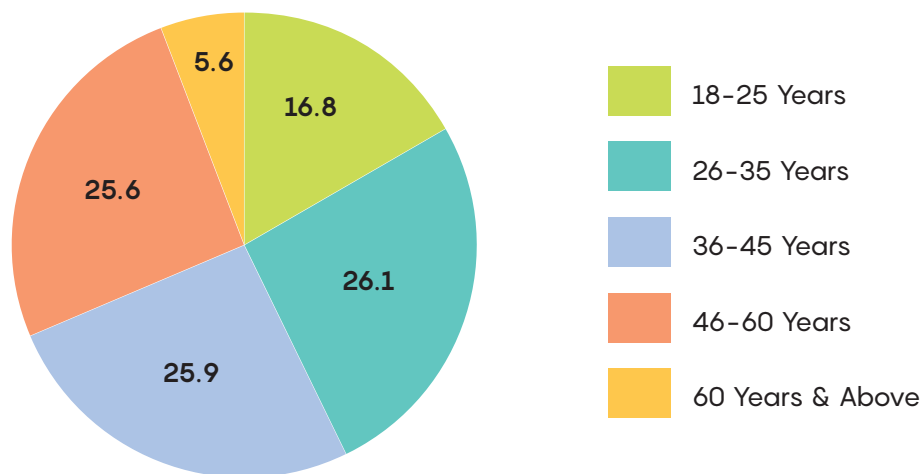
The study sought the opinion of 1000 people spread over in various cities/states. The perception of the participants was taken through online and telephonic methods of survey. The major cities represented in the study are; Delhi/NCR, Bangalore, Pune, Mumbai, Thane, Indore, Bhopal, Raipur, Patna, Muzaffarpur, Chennai, Bhubaneshwar, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Alappuzha, Calicut, Palakkad, Ranchi, Lucknow, Hyderabad and Vijayawada.

## 3. Key Findings

### Sample Respondents Features

The sample survey ensured the participation of both, male and female respondents. At aggregate level, women representation was found to be 40% of the total sample. The survey also had participation from diverse age groups, maximum respondents being in the 18-45 years age group (67%). Nearly one third of the sample belonged to the age group of 46-60 years. Those who were above the age of 60 years constituted about 6% of the total sample (Fig. 1). In terms of educational background, most of the respondents seemed to be well qualified as more than 90% of them were either graduates or above.

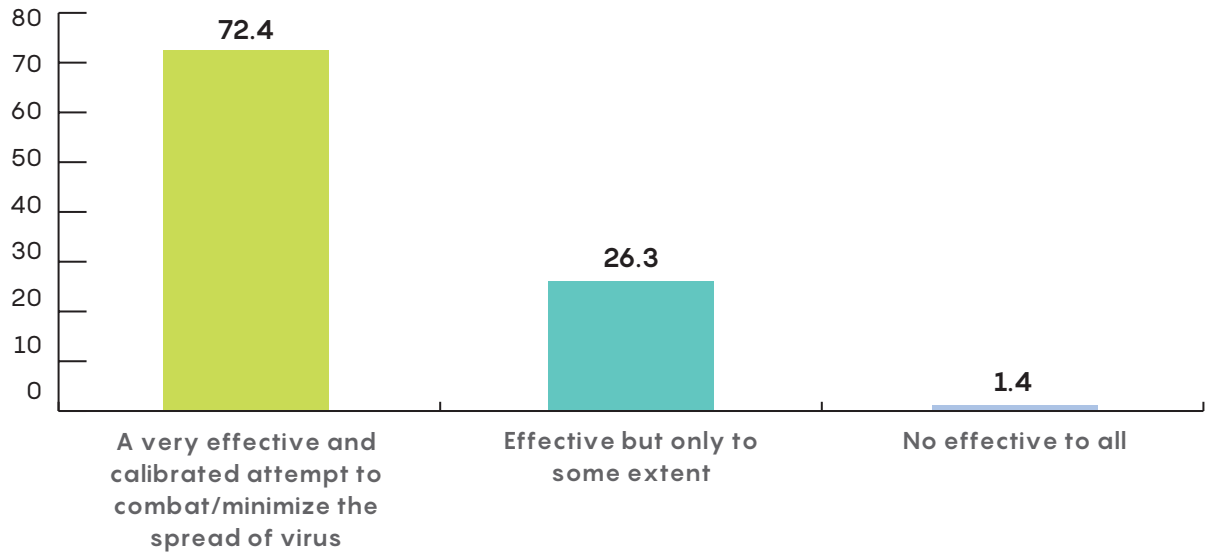
Fig 1: Age-group



## Nearly 72% respondents perceived lockdown as a very effective measure to combat the virus

Lockdown appeared to be well taken by the people of the country although it has also caused a lot of discomfort. Nearly 72% respondents considered the lockdown a very effective and calibrated attempt by the government to combat/reduce the spread of the virus while one fourth of the population viewed lockdown as an effective tool but only to some extent. A little over 1% of the sample respondents opined that imposing nation-wide lockdown is not at all an effective step to battle against the spread of corona.

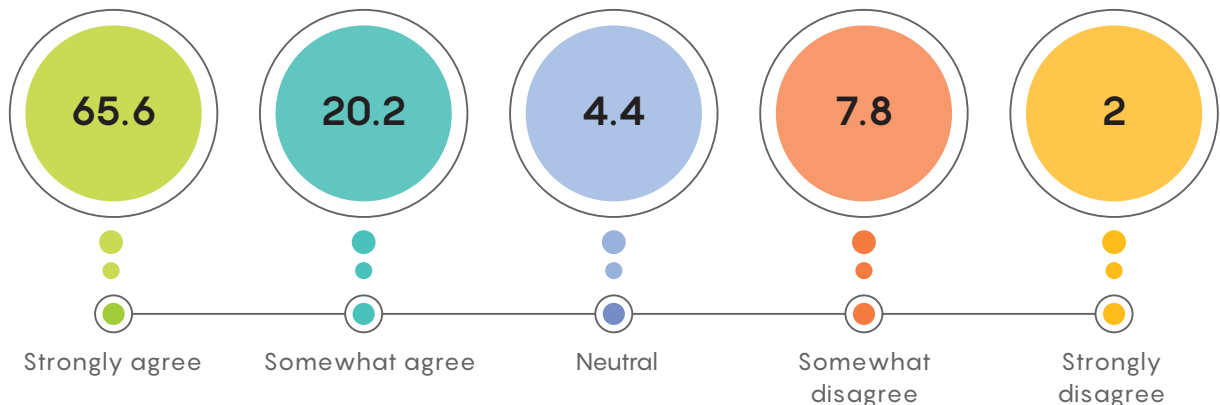
Fig 2: How do you perceive the nation-wide lockdown announced by the government?



## 85% respondents agreed with the statement that 'lockdown was announced timely in our country'

People who took part in the survey were asked to state their level of agreement/disagreement with the timeliness of announcement of the lockdown. Close to 66% respondents strongly agreed with the fact that lockdown in our country was announced on time while another 20% somewhat agreed to it. About 10% respondents were in disagreement with the statement while 4% remained neutral in their response.

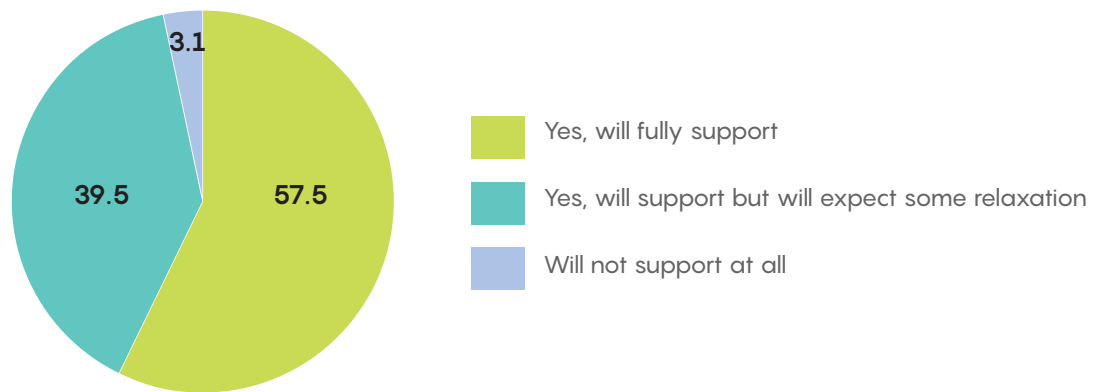
Fig 3: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the lockdown was announced timely in our country?



## Majority will stand with the government if the decision being taken to extend the lockdown further

Around 93% respondents considered the lockdown extension for the third time as highly necessary to curb the virus spread in the country. When asked if they will support the government if lockdown extends further, around 97% respondents stated their whole-hearted support to the government if extended further. Of those who echoed in support of the lockdown, 39% sought some relaxations with the lockdown restrictions. Nearly 3% respondents did not want the lockdown to be extended any further (Fig.: 4).

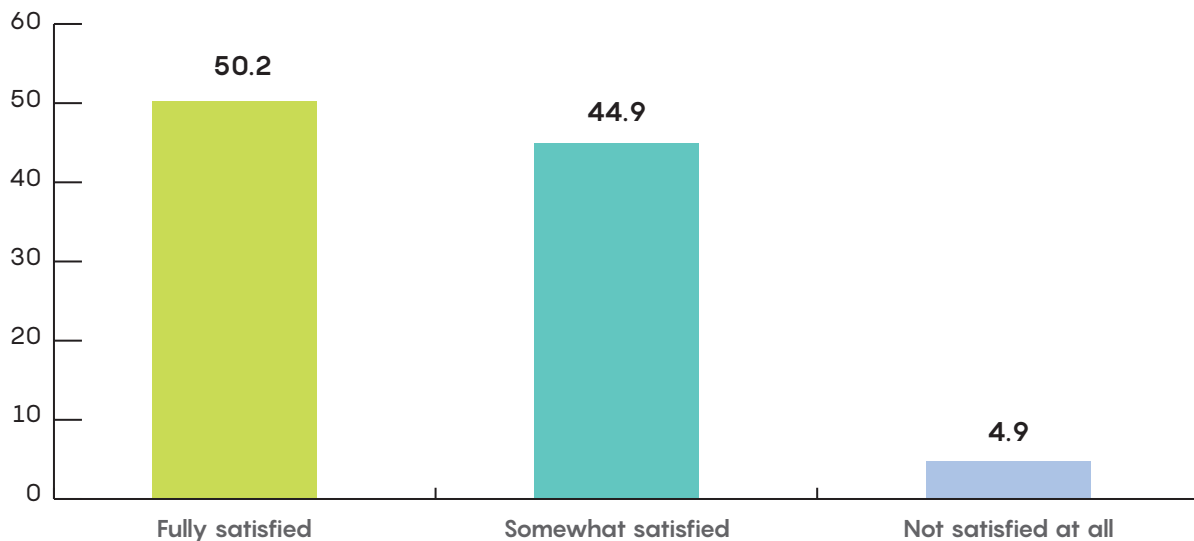
Fig 4: Will you support the government move if at all they choose to impose the lockdown restrictions further?



## Majority seemed to be satisfied with enforcement measures taken by the states to implement lockdown

Around 95% respondents seemed to be satisfied (fully satisfied-50%, somewhat satisfied-45%) with the enforcement measures taken by their respective states to implement the lockdown. Only 5% respondents did not appear to be pleased with the measures adopted by the states to enforce the lockdown.

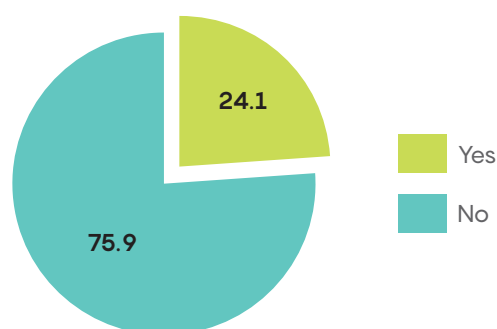
Fig 5: To what extent are you satisfied with the enforcement measures taken by the states to implement the lockdown?



## Less than one third of the respondents experienced problems in accessing/delivery of essential goods

In the sample, 76% respondents did not encounter any problems in accessing and getting delivery of essential items. Only one third of the sample population had experienced some problems in getting essential goods. It is noteworthy to mention here that in spite of the difficulties encountered by some people in getting essential items, majority had taken the lockdown in a good spirit and were willing to support the government, if lockdown is imposed further.

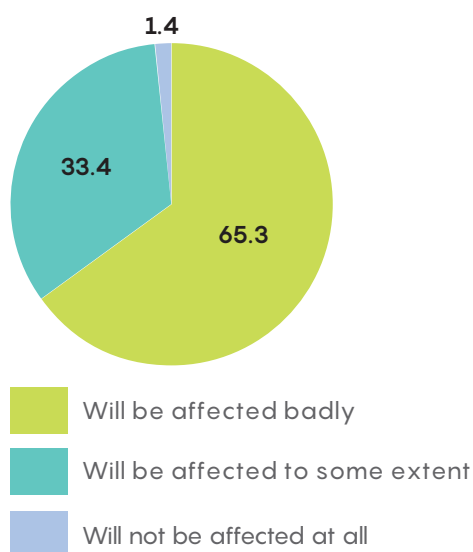
Fig 6: Have you encountered any problems in the delivery of essential goods?



## 65% respondents felt that job market will be affected badly

Majority (65%) sample respondents were of the view that lockdown will affect the job market badly while there were another 33% respondents who felt that job market will be affected but only to some extent. Those who believed that there will be no impact of the lockdown on the job market were less than 2% of the sample (Fig. 7).

Fig 7: What impact will the coronavirus outbreak have on the job market and economy in India?

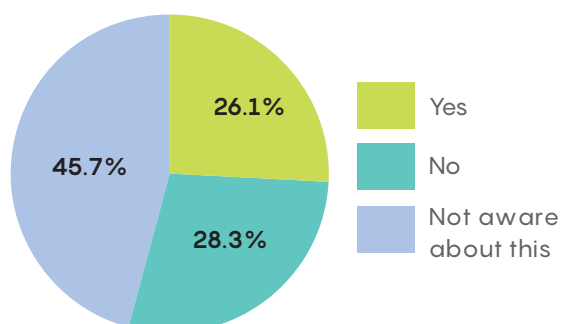


Of those who stated the effects of the lockdown on job markets, a little over half of the sample respondents felt that it is the manufacturing/production units that will bear the maximum brunt of the lockdown, followed by the service sectors (25%). Nearly 9% respondents believed that construction field will also be affected by the lockdown. Only 6% respondents opined that the lockdown will negatively impact the agriculture sector.

## 46% respondents considered 'Social relief package' inadequate

When asked about the adequacy of the social relief package offered by the government, 46% respondents felt it was inadequate considering the needs of the people. According to 28% respondents, the relief offered by the government was sufficient to meet the needs of deserving people. Around 26% respondents had no clue about the package offered by the government.

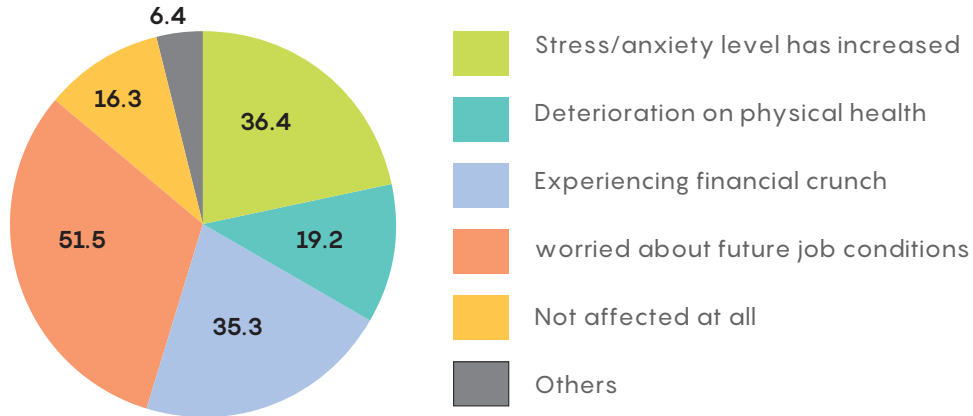
Fig 8: Is the social relief package offered by the government enough?



## More than half of the people are worried about their future jobs

An attempt was made to know how the lockdown has impacted the human beings psychologically, mentally, physically and financially. More than half of the population raised concern about their future job conditions, followed by 36% respondents whose stress and anxiety levels had increased after the lockdown. It was disheartening to note that 35% respondents have started feeling the financial crunch. Deteriorating physical health was reported by 18% of the respondents.

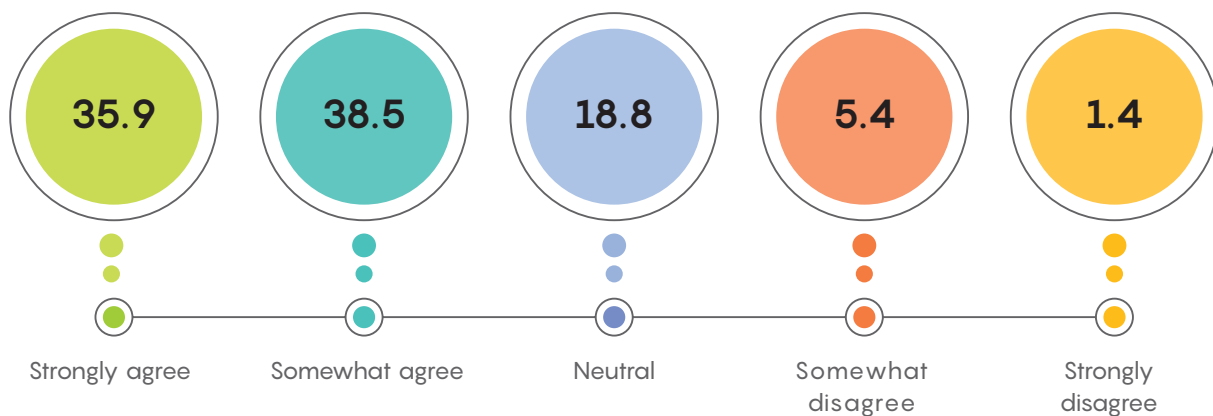
Fig 9: How do you feel affected by lock down?



## 'Work from home' emerged as a viable option for the industries/ companies

The one positive side of the lockdown is that both, employers and employees have realized that 'work from home' is also a viable option which we would have not known/tried in the absence of lockdown. The realization of this fact was echoed by 74% of the respondents. Those who disagreed with the statement constituted 7% of the sample. Nearly 19% respondents were neutral to the statement.

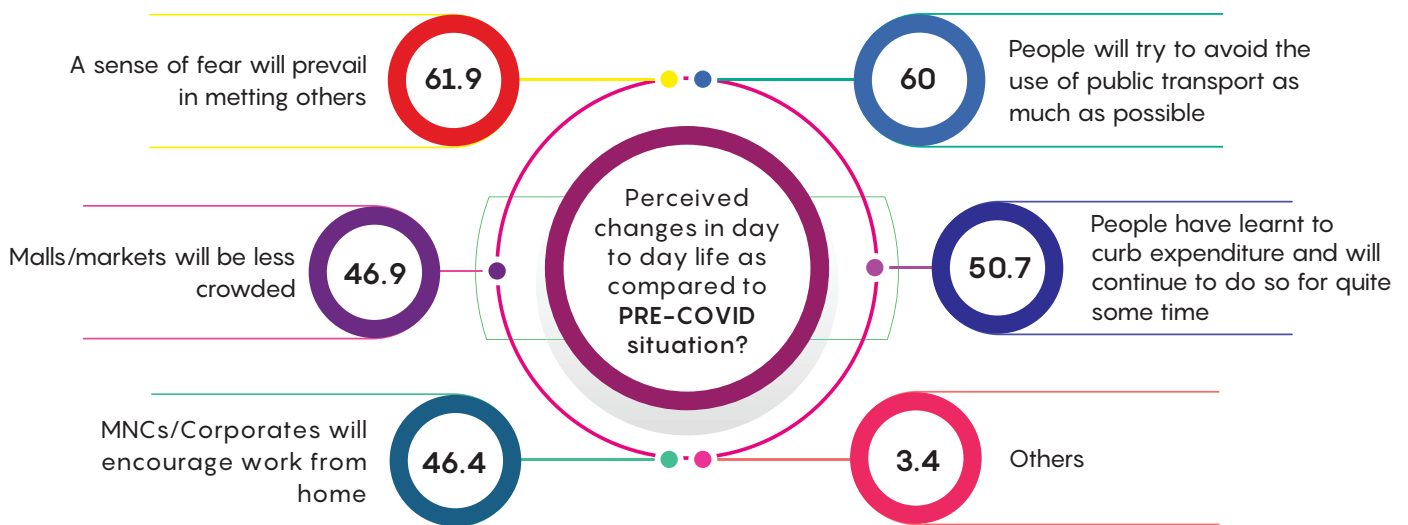
Fig 10: What is your level of agreement/disagreement with the statement "Work from home has emerged as a viable option which many organisations would not have known/tried if lock down was not imposed"?



## A sense of fear will prevail among people while meeting others

Respondents were asked to state the kind of changes they perceive in their day to day life as compared to pre-COVID situation. Most of the respondents (61%) believed that a sense of fear will prevail while meeting people. About 60% respondents felt that people will try and avoid public transport as much as possible. Nearly 51% respondents opined that lockdown has taught people that survival can be possible with minimal expenses also and they will continue with this learning for quite some time. Around 47% of the respondents felt that malls and restaurants will be less crowded. Around 46% believed that many organizations will encourage 'work from home' as it has emerged as a feasible option.

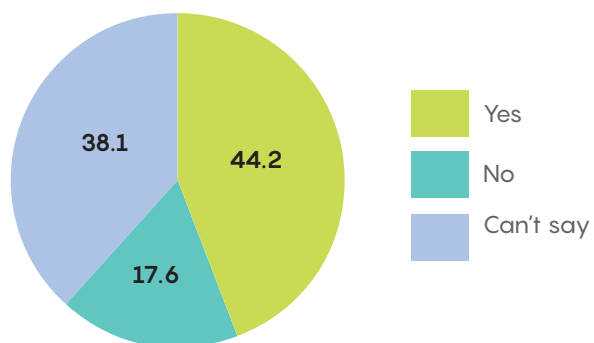
Fig 11: What kind of changes will you see in your day to day life as compared to pre-COVID situation?



## 'Social distancing will be in practice after lockdown' was perceived by 44% respondents

Those who perceived that people will follow the norms of social distancing and wear a mask even after the lockdown were 44% in the sample while another 38% respondents were not sure about this. Nearly 18% respondents opined that people will soon forget the norms of social distancing and they would not wear a mask once the lockdown gets over or if any ease is given in the lockdown.

Fig 12: Do you think that people will follow the norms of social distancing and wear a mask even after the lockdown gets over?





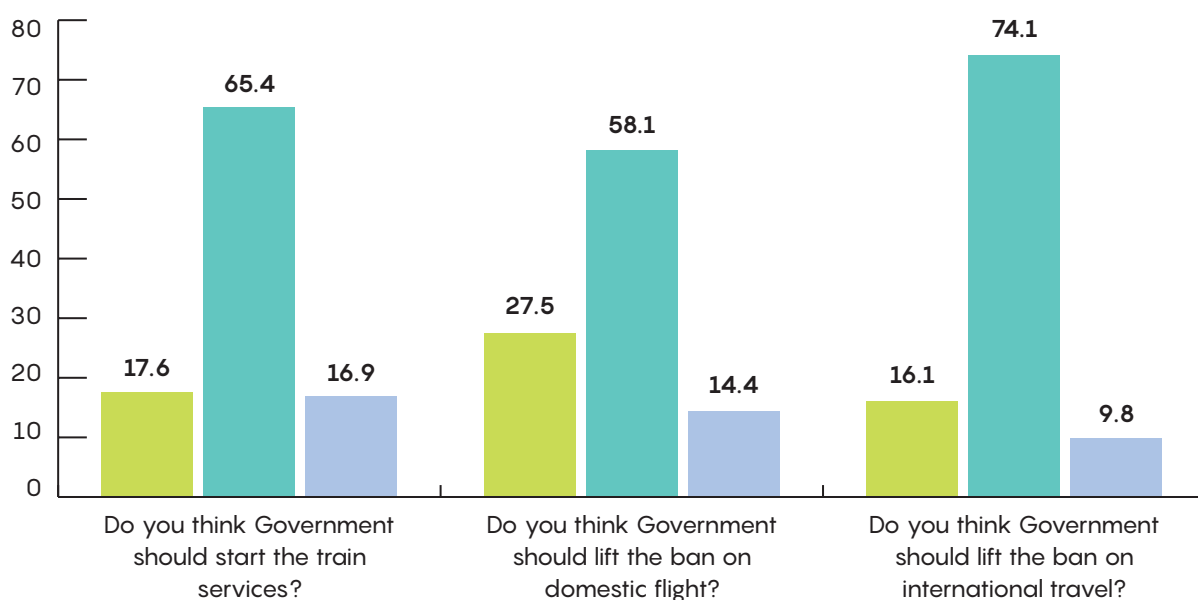
## Majority of the sample population were not in favor of easing out travel restrictions

Perception of the participants were also taken on what they think about easing out the rail and air travel restrictions. With regard to resuming train services, only 18% wished that government should lift the ban on train services while 65% respondents did not want the rail service to start anytime soon. Rest 17% respondents took a neutral stand.

Likewise, around 58% respondents stated that the ban on domestic flights should continue for more time while 27% respondents wanted the ban on domestic flights to be lifted. Remaining 14% respondents did not share their views on this.

In terms of lifting the prohibition on international air travel, only 16% respondents wanted the ban to be lifted while around 74% were in favour of continuing the ban. Nearly 9% respondents did not have a say regarding the ban.

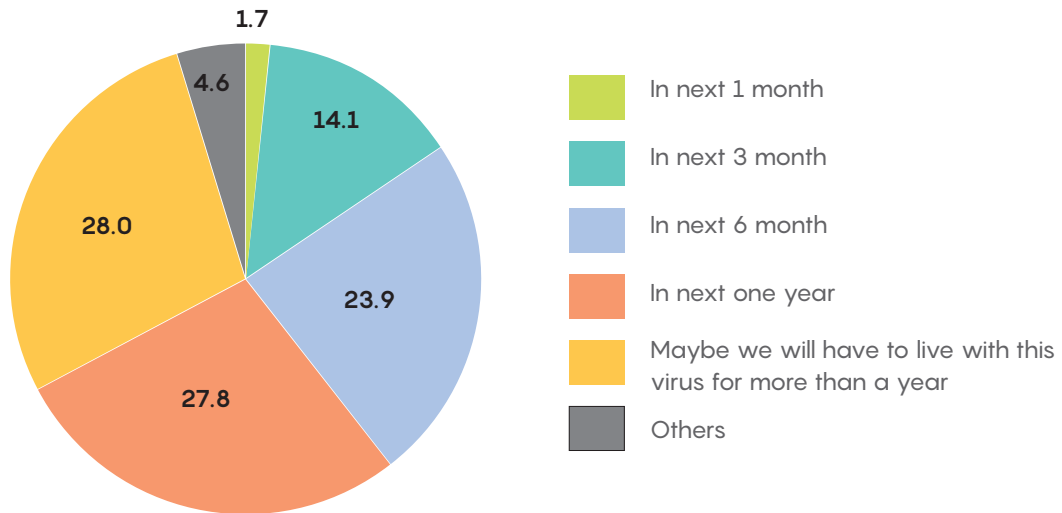
Fig 13: Feedback on easing out travel norms



## Most of the people do not see life returning back to normal at-least before a year

Since people are living under the lockdown for over 50 days, it was pertinent to know what they have in their mind about life returning to normal. It appeared that most of the people have made up their mind and have adjusted to the current situation. In the sample, more than one fourth of the respondents stated that we will have to live with the virus for more than a year or so. Another 28% respondents felt that the virus is here to stay for at-least a year while 24% were optimistic that life would be back to normal in the next six months.

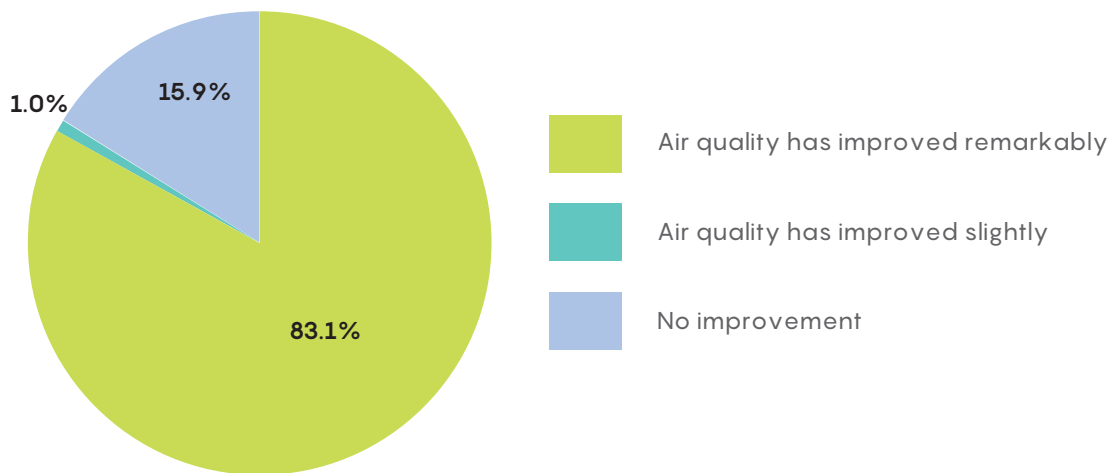
Fig 14: When do you think life will fully return to normal?



### Majority have noted remarkable improvement in air quality

When asked about the environmental consequences of lockdown, 83% respondents stated that air quality of their respective city/state has improved significantly post lockdown while 16% felt it has slightly improved. Only 1% respondents did not see any change in the air quality after the lockdown.

Fig 15: What kind of changes have you observed in the air quality of your city after lockdown?



## 4 Key Takeaways

- Lockdown is the only wide scale preventive method which will work and help people to stop the virus and it was well taken by most of the people in the country. Lockdown has shown a tremendous result in battling against corona, though it has badly impacted the country' economy. Hence, while lockdown may continue, some relaxations in green and orange zones could be considered so that economic activities can be revived.
- Red, orange and green zones could be redefined and instead of the whole district being declared under any particular zone, smaller area within the district could be identified and categorized under the zones. By doing this, economic activities could start in the unaffected areas.
- Most affected class due to the lockdown are the daily wage earners/migrant workers and the homeless. As a nation, we should make sure these vulnerable sections do not starve and should be given more care. Distribution of free ration may be implemented strictly.
- One of the biggest takeaways is the realization of the fact that 'work from home' can also be a feasible option and this could be encouraged to avoid the rush on roads.
- Another important takeaway is the increased awareness among people about social distancing and the usefulness of wearing mask.
- States may enforce the lockdown more responsibly so that the desired outcomes of the lockdown could be achieved.
- Close to one third of the sample population had experienced some problems in accessing and getting delivery of the essential goods. More emphasis to be given on the smooth delivery of essential items so that people do not have to suffer.
- Majority of the people had shown their concern and worry over job losses due to the lockdown and ultimately, fear of financial crunch. Government may take some confidence building measures to help eliminate this fear.
- The impact of the lockdown is not just financial but psychological also. Hence it is advisable that some relaxations could be announced in those areas where cases of COVID is limited.
- Most of the sample population are still not in favour of lifting the ban on rail and air travel. If at all government decides to lift the ban, it should be done cautiously.



## **About CMSR Consultants**

Established in 2011, CMSR Consultants is a multi-disciplinary research and communication consultancy group. In a short span of time, CMSR Consultants has evolved as an organization of repute and credibility with specialization in Social Research, Communication Research, Policy Research, Monitoring & Evaluation, Development Communications and Outreach Programmes. The organization has a pan-India presence and a strong network of regional partners and business associates. CMSR Consultants has undertaken several large-scale projects across the country and is widely known in the sector for its focus on various domains like; Health, Nutrition, Livelihood, Agriculture, Rural Development, WASH, Education, Skills Development, and Child Rights.

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