

SALIENT FINDINGS

The Elder Story: Ground Reality during Covid 19

Impact & Challenges

A HelpAge India report (June 2020)

PARAMETERS:

- **Sample Size:** 5099 elder respondents (Urban: 2639, Rural: 2460).
- **Age Groups:** 60 - 69 years (Young Old), 70 – 79 years (Old Old) and 80 years & above (Oldest Old).
- **Gender:** 57% Males and 43% Females.

FINDINGS:

- 91% of the respondents were aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID 19, while 9% were unaware.
- The hard reality that most elderly in India still have to work in order to survive, is brought out by the fact that 65% elder respondents stated that COVID 19 lockdown impacted their livelihood, and they had no Work or faced a drastic loss in their wages. Of these, 60% were from rural areas, while 40% was from urban areas.
- Of those elders whose livelihoods had been impacted, 67% were in the age group of 60-69 years, a stark 28% in the old-old category (70 – 79 years) and 5% in the oldest-old age group (80 plus). That's more than 30% of elders over the age of 70 years whose livelihoods were impacted.
- 71% elder respondents stated that the livelihood of the breadwinner of their family was impacted (*loss of work /wages*) by the lockdown. Of these, 61% were from the rural areas, while 39% were from urban areas.
- A disturbing 62% of the elder respondents reported suffering from chronic diseases such as asthma, hypertension, diabetes, cancer etc. Of these, 53% were from rural, and 47% from urban areas.

- 42% elders reported worsening of health condition during the lockdown. Of these, 64% respondents were from the rural areas as compared to 36% from urban areas. 61% were young-old, 31% old-old and 8% oldest old.
- 78% elders faced difficulty in accessing essential goods and services due to the lockdown nationally. Amongst the total rural respondents, 84% elders faced difficulty in accessing essential good & services and amongst the total urban elderly it was 71%.
- The top 3 essential goods & services elders had difficulty in accessing during the lockdown, were in clusters of the following common responses: Access to Food, Groceries & Medicines, followed by Access to Domestic Help/ Household Maid and the third being Access to Banking / ATM services.
- 61% respondents felt confined & socially isolated in their homes during the lockdown. Here the rural-urban distribution was equal. Interesting to note, was that 62% of those who felt confined were the Young Old between 60-69 years, where the feeling of frustration & confinement might have been higher, as this section of the aged are more able bodied and active, as compared to the Old Old, those between 70-79 years (31%) and Oldest Old, those above 80 years (7%).
- The top 3 major Fears elders had during the lockdown were in a cluster of 3 categories: 38 % had the Fear of getting infected by Covid 19, Fear of its spread through Socializing & Loss of Income, 34% feared Economic loss, fear of Starvation & No Work, and 12% had fear of Travelling, fear of Community Spread and their Low Immunity levels.
- In major Suggestions for the Government, more than 60% elder respondents mentioned Social Pension as their top need, while 50% wanted Medicines & Healthcare needs to be addressed.
