

Individual Social Responsibility: Life in times of COVID-19

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INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus also popularly known as COVID-19 is a virus that started spreading in the month of November 2019. The first case in India was reported on 30th January 2020 and since then it has been spreading rapidly. The count reached above 2 Lakh by the first week of June 2020 in our country even when the lockdown was announced at an early stage. The pandemic has forced the world to come to a complete standstill.

In these trying times, many underprivileged members of our society have been badly hit and are bearing the brunt of the crisis. The impact of the lockdown is turning to be immense, robbing daily wage workers of their earnings and threatening to take away everything they had managed to save.

While the government has announced a sufficiently large economic stimulus package with the aim of building an Atmanirbhar Bharat, or self-reliant India, there are additional 3 major metrics which the world seems to be undertaking to deal with the ongoing Pandemic - Corporate Social Responsibility, Institutional Social Responsibility and Individual Social Responsibility.

Corporate Social Responsibility commonly known as CSR refers to the social responsibilities undertaken by corporates and businesses. This is mandatory to be undertaken by most of the companies to contribute towards societal problems and give back to the society in a positive manner. Institutional Social Responsibility

is undertaken by educational institutions to act as a socially responsible entity and give back to the society in terms of solving prevailing societal problems. Another form of social responsibility is Individual Social Responsibility which recognizes the duty of an individual and helps them to understand and undertake actions that will help benefit the society as a whole.

While quarantines and lockdowns have become ubiquitous, many are volunteering their time and resources, finding ways to lend a hand during the outbreak and assuming their Individual Social Responsibility in one way or other. It's clear that the Pandemic is likely to have long lasting economic and social impact and that we all have a part to play.

A survey was conducted to discern how the privileged section of the society is extending hands to help the needy in such a crisis, be it our own housemaid, driver, society watchman and other needy people, in monetary or non-monetary ways. Another survey was conducted to know about the lifestyle changes people adopted in order to help with the household work because as the saying goes 'help begins at home' like helping your mother with household chores, helping your younger siblings with studies, teaching your parents to become tech-savvy, and many more. Each effort counts as a help, as it is rightly said 'no work is big or small' or 'no donation ever goes waste'.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are summarized as follows:

1. The main objective was to access the social role performed by various individuals around us akin to CSR/ISR in the face of crisis due to COVID-19.
2. To know the various forms (monetary and non-monetary) in which individuals are extending help to the underprivileged section of the society.
3. To gather information about how the lockdown brought changed the day-to-day routine of the male population at their home and how much are they able to help with the household chores now.

Relevance of The Study

The study for this research revolved around the social responsibilities individuals were undertaking during the first two months of the lockdown period. With the advent of COVID-19 in India, the Government took several measures for the safety of the citizens of the nation along with trying to contain the spread of this deadly virus. The main and most important step taken by the government was implementing a nationwide lockdown and restricting the movement of all the citizens to implement social distancing.

With this lockdown being implemented on a short notice, the movement of people got severely curtailed. No citizen was allowed to leave the house other than for medical reasons or buying essentials. People were not allowed to call their part time household helpers like maids, drivers, gardeners, car cleaners etc. Businesses were forced to exercise work from home option. Schools and colleges

were shut and e-learning was implemented by all the educational institutions. Daily wagers, rickshaw pullers and people like junk dealers were the ones who were badly hit because of the lockdown with meagre savings and being miles away from their hometowns. Factory gates and markets of non-essential goods were ordered to shut down, rendering casual laborers and workers jobless. The Government appealed to the employers and households not to fire their workers and continue to give them their salaries and wages. The Government also announced schemes, distributed food packets and provided other help to the needy but the problem was of such a volume that it required help and support from the public in general too.

A research was thus undertaken to know the role of Individuals in the first two months of complete lockdown with no relaxations available. Besides, when the household helpers stopped coming to work and children with their continuous demands at home especially with restrictions all around, it became imperative to know whether the male members of the family gave a helping hand towards the various household chores and discharged their responsibility at home.

Scope of The Study

The survey was mainly for the privileged section of the society it was divided into 2 categories:

1. Firstly, the main segment of the study was focused on the earning members of the family who were in a position to extend financial help to the needy people in the society.
2. For the second part of the study was based on responses from the male members of the family.

Proposition of The Study

After conducting the survey, following statements could be inferred:

1. People discharged their social responsibility wholeheartedly and helped the needy people around on a regular basis.
2. Male members assumed an extended role at home and helped with the household chores regularly.

Methodology

Keeping in mind the core objectives of the study, it required us to use the primary data. The data was collected with the help of two Google forms through a non-random sampling procedure hoping that those selected for the study bear likeness to the larger group. Thus, a convenience sampling procedure was used, that is, using whatever was immediately available.

The main and first Google form was based on the Individual Social Responsibility discharged by the privileged section of the society and thus the form was to be filled up by the earning members of the family, male or female, who were in the position to have their own resources to provide help to the needy.

Second form was largely focused to cater to the third objective stated above and focused only on the male members of the family of all age groups. They were required to fill up with a premise that they do not indulge in or help so much with the household chores during normal times.

Questions in the Google form designed were majorly of three types:

1. Open ended questions allowing respondents to provide the response in his/her words. This information was expected to be complete and accurate.

2. Restricted questions with ordered alternatives.
3. Partially open ended questions in which the last alternative was open ended wherein the respondent could record the answer, if necessary.

Statistical Tools : Data so collected were arranged as frequency tables with absolute numbers (count), percentages and pie/bar charts for a visual display.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

(A) Individual Social Responsibility

Number of respondents (n) = 154

The survey was taken by earning members from various households.

1) Sample Characteristics

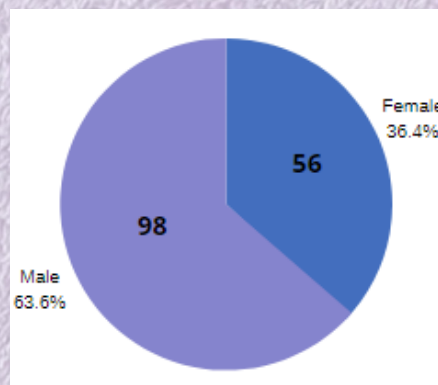
a) Age of Respondents

| Age (in years) | Count | Percentages |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Below 20 | 15 | 9.7 % |
| 20 - 30 | 31 | 20.2 % |
| 30 - 40 | 27 | 17.5 % |
| 40 & Above | 81 | 52.6 % |
| Total | 154 | 100 % |

Table 1

The majority of respondents- 52.6% (81) were of age group 40 & above.

b) Gender Classification



Graph 1

The survey consisted of both males and females as respondents.

c) Employment Status

| Employment Status | Count | Percentages |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Currently Employed | 119 | 77.3 % |
| Not Employed | 35 | 22.7 % |
| Total | 154 | 100 % |

Table 2

The majority of the respondents- 77.3% (119) were currently employed and 22.7% (35) were unemployed.

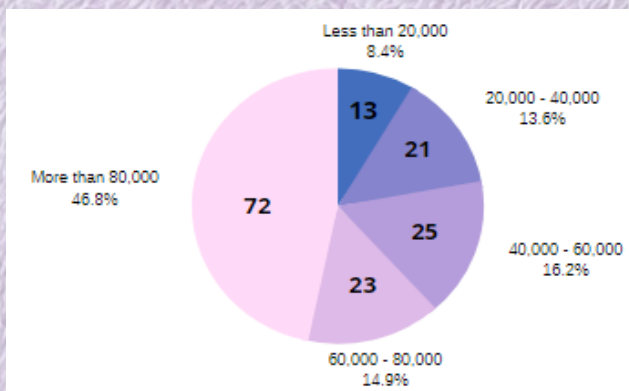
d) Marital Status

| Marital Status | Count | Percentages |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Single | 42 | 27.3 % |
| Married | 111 | 72.1 % |
| Divorced | 0 | 0 % |
| Widow/Widower | 1 | 0.6 % |
| Total | 154 | 100 % |

Table 3

Majority of the respondents- (111) 72.1 % were married. The mean family size was 5.

e) Family Income:



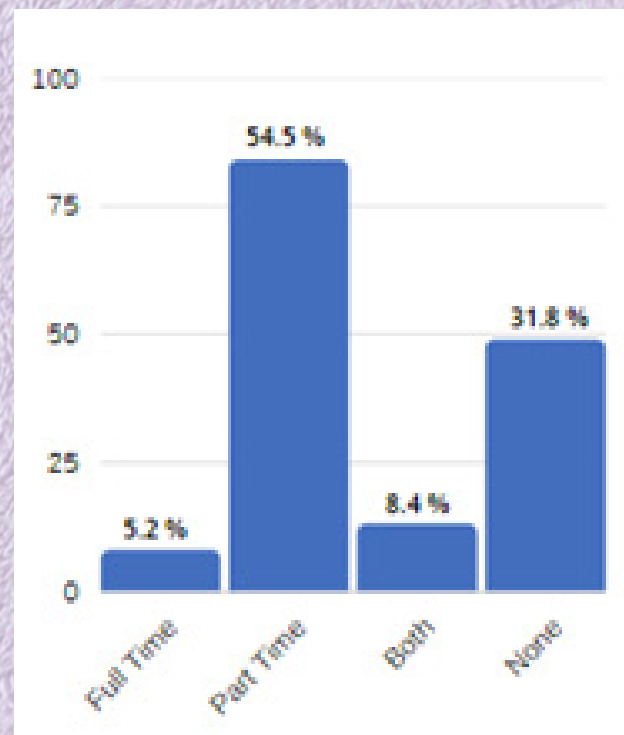
Graph 2

Majority of the respondents - 46.8 % (72) belong to the high income group (more than 80,000 per month).

2) Domestic Help before lockdown:

| Nature of Domestic Help | Count | Percentages |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Full Time | 8 | 5.2 % |
| Part Time | 84 | 54.5 % |
| Both | 13 | 8.4 % |
| None | 49 | 31.8 % |
| Total | 154 | 100 % |

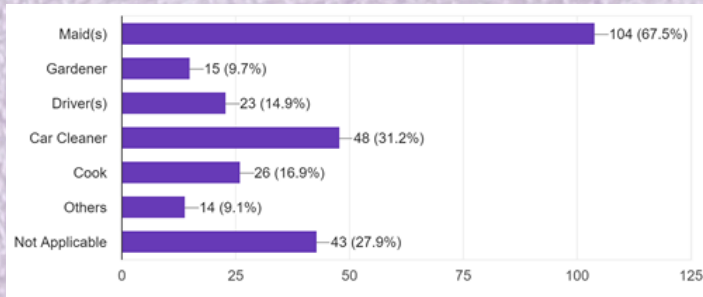
Table 4



Graph 3

5.2 % of the sample size employed full time domestic help only, whereas with the highest percentage i.e. 54.5 % of people employed part time helpers. 31.8 % had no domestic help at all and only 8.4 % had both part time and full time domestic helpers.

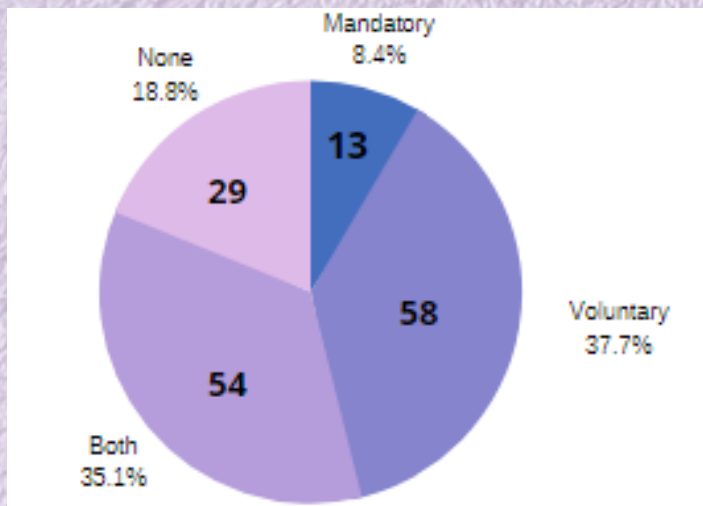
3) Types of Domestic Help employed:



Graph 4

Majority of respondents - 67.5 % (104) respondents employed maids, 31.2 % (48) employed car cleaners and 16.9 % (26) employed cooks.

4) Help provided by the households:



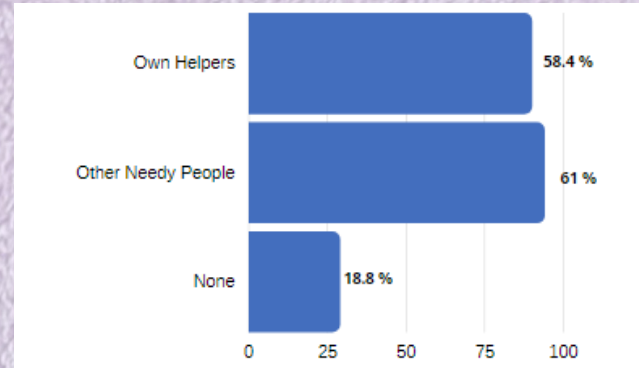
Graph 5

Respondents were asked to disclose which type of help they extended:

- **Mandatory:** under a mandate/ directive/ appeal from the employer
- **Voluntary:** If the help extended was not of mandatory nature.
- **Both:** Includes both mandatory and voluntary help.
- **None:** No help was provided at all.

Majority of respondents – 81.1% (125) provided help in some form while 18.9 % (29) respondents did not provide any help.

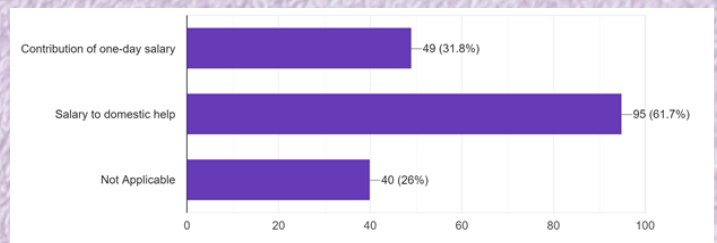
5) Individual Social Responsibility beneficiaries



Graph 6

Majority of respondents - 58.4 % helped their household helpers and 61 % of respondents helped other needy people also while 18.8 % didn't extend in any kind of help.

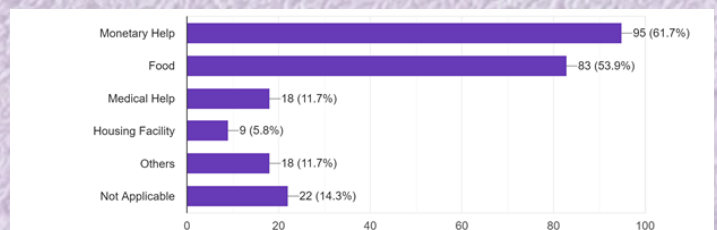
6) Nature of Mandatory help:



Graph 7

Responses showed that 49 respondents out of 119 employed made their contribution in the form of their one-day salary. A wide majority (95 respondents out of total sample of 154) gave salary to their domestic workers even when they were not working. For currently not employed or not employing domestic help (40,26%) this question was not relevant.

7) Nature of Voluntary help:



Graph 8

It was found that respondents provided help in a variety of ways, most important being monetary help (61.5 %) and food (53.9 %)

8) Frequency of help:

| Frequency of help | Count | Percentages |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| One Time | 57 | 45.6 % |
| Regular | 48 | 38.4 % |
| Occasional | 20 | 16 % |
| Total | 125 | 100 % |

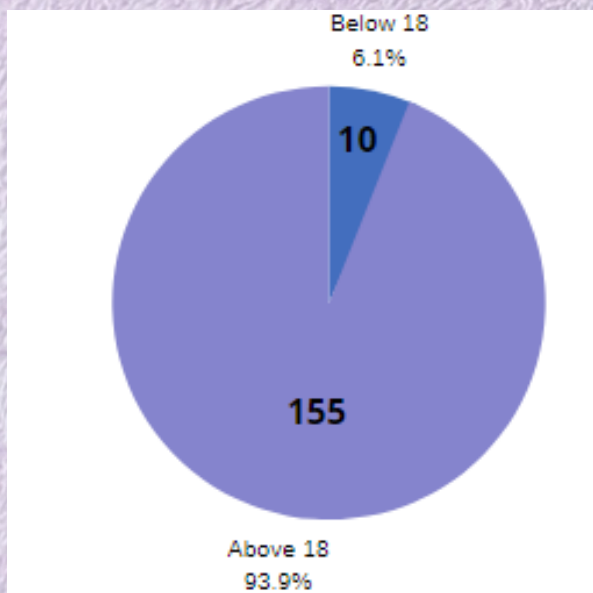
Table 5

Majority of the respondents- 45.6 %(57) indulged in this kind of help one time only but 38.4 %(48) regularly helped. Only 16 % (20) of respondents helped occasionally.

(B) Quarantine Activities

In this survey, focus was on the male members of the family to know how much they helped with the household chores during this lockdown and discharged their duties in their own house. No. of Respondents for the survey was 165

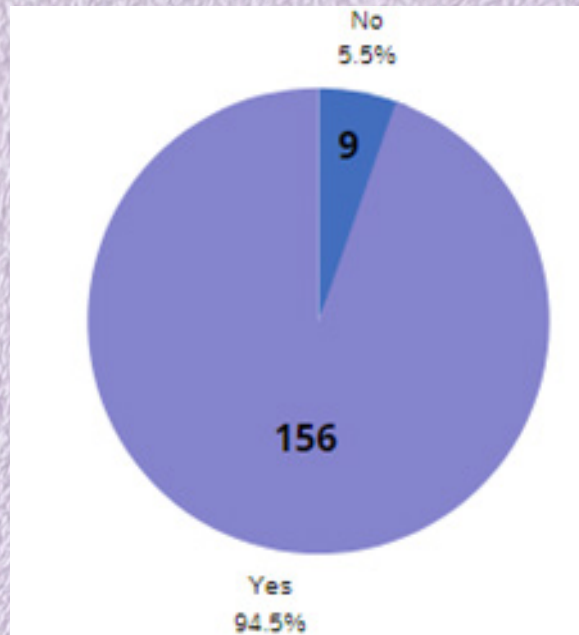
1) Age of Respondents



Graph 9

6.1%(10) respondents were below 18 and 93.9 % (155) were above 18. In this survey, the composition was only of the male population completely

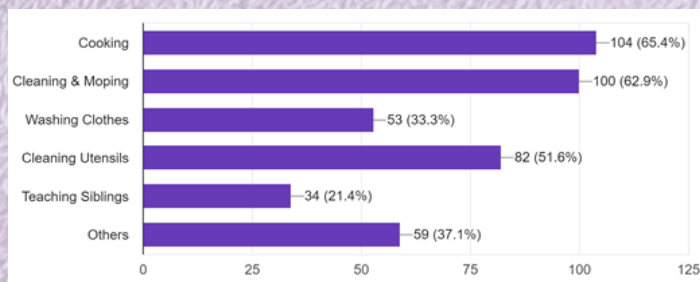
2) Contribution towards household chores



Graph 10

Respondents were asked if they tried to help with the household chores or not. 94.5 % (156) of respondents helped with the household chores in this lockdown with no domestic helpers around. Only 5.5 % (9) disagreed with contributing towards household chores.

3) Type of household help:



Graph 11

Majority of respondents - 65.4 % engaged in cooking, 62.9% helped in cleaning, 51.6% helped in cleaning utensils while 33.3% helped in washing clothes.

Discussion

COVID-19 is far more than just a health crisis. Economists around the world are calling it the biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression. Almost no country has been spared and it has had a catastrophic effect all around the world. It has also brought huge personal, economic, social damage and has upended countless lives.

While the pandemic has overwhelmed the entire world, the poor and vulnerable class seems to be badly hit, facing a hard time even for basic survival resulting in a lot of chaos and panic. Government relief measures have fallen short because of the scale of distress. With such a situation arising, it is evident that as global citizens we all have a role to play. The world is coming together to fight the pandemic bringing governments, organizations, industries and individuals together. It is inspiring charity among millions and the outpour of support sparked by this shared challenge has been exceptional. This lockdown has helped a great number of citizens to understand their social responsibility and fulfilling it by giving back to the society they live in.

Thus, to know how the citizens of this country are helping their fellow citizens in times of need, two different kinds of surveys were conducted.

Keeping in mind the objectives of this Research Project, following inferences are made:

1. The first survey was solely based to know about Individual Social Responsibility undertaken by families to help the needy around them. It was filled by 154 respondents. The main points analyzed by this survey are summarized as follows -

- a) It is evident that a large number of families extended their help and contributed to the individuals and communities affected by the outbreak.
- b) It is also seen that the respondents helped not only the domestic helpers or workers who worked for them but also other vulnerable individuals and who had no basic means to survive. The contribution was in both monetary and non - monetary terms. It involved help of all kinds from giving salary regularly to their workers even during lockdown times or giving food, medical help, housing facilities and many others. It was also observed that the help was extended not only once but many times, repeatedly.
- c) Another observation is while most of the respondents tried to help and contribute in one way or the, there were still a few families who didn't make any contribution at all.

Thus, it is evident that the first survey fulfilled the first two objectives of the research.

2. The second survey was undertaken to understand how the lockdown has changed the daily routine of the male population and their inclusion in household chores, keeping in mind that a majority of male population in India don't usually help with the household chores. It was filled by only the male members of various families and the sample size was 165. The following inferences were made:

- a) It is seen that the respondents of almost all age groups were willing to help with the household chores.
- b) The respondents helped in all kinds of activities from cleaning, cooking, washing to teaching their siblings/ children and many others.

The pandemic has increased the amount of domestic work needed at home. Because of the risk of bringing infection into the home, the workload cannot be outsourced. Quarantine at home can perhaps be a time to understand and distribute tasks more equitably. The survey shows us that the burden is being shared to some extent. The silver lining of the lockdown is the male help with household chores and other responsibilities like cooking, cleaning utensils, teaching siblings etc. Most partners and sons are helping out more than usual. Many of them are seeing this as a new opportunity to learn. That is how the third objective of the research is concluded.

While data have focused on infection rates, market losses and unemployment rates, COVID-19 has highlighted the

importance of our contribution to the society and the burden of unpaid work. So many things that we have taken for granted have now changed. And although the 'new normal' has created various limitations and inconveniences, we're all in this together. Aren't we?

End Note

Despite their increase in work force, women around the world take on majority of the unpaid labor at home including child care and household chores. With the Covid-19 lockdown, gender equations have taken on new dynamics. The wall between the world and home is crumbling and status quo is being redefined. We are all slowly becoming aware that survival in this grim time depends on cooking, cleaning, and care tasks as much as it does on making money. With the domestic help gone, families are finding themselves locked up indoors, compelled to face the reality of everyday chores that have been conveniently assigned to women for decades. Creating value for unpaid care work must begin at home, with families and individuals. Maybe this lockdown is our best bet to undo the lockdown on gender roles. The important question is- when all of this is over, what will a post-COVID world look like for both men and women? Will it be different than what it already was? Will people still lend a helping hand to the needy? Will men go back to their jobs and stop contributing to household chores? This calls for an introspection and opens up further scope for research.
