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## Fact Sheet

### Pandemic, Poverty and People- Reality of the Urban Poor of Ahmedabad city, Gujarat during the Lockdown

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**CHETNA**  
For Women Young people Children

## **Introduction**

Covid 19 a public health emergency was declared as a pandemic on 11th March 2020 by the World Health Organisation. Till now anywhere between four and eight million people could have died all over the world, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in recent history. In India till date more than 25 million people has been infected by the virus and nearly 280 thousand have succumbed to death. At the same time the country has also witnessed a huge economic shock due to the pandemic.

The country wide lockdown started on March 24, 2020 at just few hours notice and continued till 31<sup>st</sup> May. This situation has affected people's physical, economic, mental and social health. Millions of migrant workers had to deal with the loss of income, food shortages and uncertainty about their future. Many of them and their families went hungry. During the lockdown, CHETNA's implementation projects were also affected to a large extent.

In an urban slum of Ahmedabad where CHETNA has been implementing Maternal and Child Health project for two years. A survey was conducted in January 2021(478 women respondents) to understand, how COVID-19 pandemic has affected their lives especially during lockdown.

The survey tools were approved by the Ethics committee of CHETNA.

## **Survey Area and Methodology**

The survey was conducted in three wards Keshvaninagar, Ganeshnagar and Economically Weaker Section (EWS, blocks). Economically Weaker Section scheme was built in two phases by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation as a part of slum rehabilitation program. The three-story buildings have two room flats including toilet and bathroom. The blocks built 15-17 years ago are in extremely poor condition. The blocks built 12 years old are also poorly maintained. The area is deprived of basic facilities such as solid waste collection and safe drinking water supply.

Keshvani nagar slum has temporary huts made with reusable material. It lacks basic amenities like, toilet, electricity, and supply of water. It is situated next to "Pirana dumping station" (Waste dumping site of Ahmedabad city).

Close to about 1650 households with nearly 14, 000 people live in these two areas. Most of the households belong to Other Backward Communities (OBC) and Scheduled Castes who are engaged as daily wage laborers, rickshaw drivers, vegetable vendors and masons. Although there is an Urban Health Centre nearby, for minor ailments people prefer to access health services from the private doctors. They rely on the Municipal Hospital for major episodes of illness requiring hospitalization and for childbirth.

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Out of the around 1650 households, there were 650 targeted families with pregnant woman, or lactating woman and / or undernourished child. During the survey we undertook during 15 January-20 February 2021, we could contact 478 or almost 75 percent of women and sought information from them about employment or availability of work, access to health care and coping mechanisms before, during and after lockdown.

- The Indian Government announced complete lockdown from 25 March 2020 to curb the spread of corona virus pandemic, initially for 21 days but extended it up to 31 May.
- During the next six months until end of November 2020 lockdown was lifted in a phased manner that helped some people to earn livelihood.
- Since December 2020, although there are certain restrictions in place, there is freedom of movement and many services are available.

The respondents were asked to recall their experiences during these three phases. We acknowledge some possibility of bias and reporting error in the data presented since they are based on self-reports of respondent women interviewed.

### **Highlights of the Survey:**

- There was a considerable decrease in the family members earning during lockdown. Pre lockdown from 478 families, 730 members were earning which reduced to 107 during lockdown. Out of 105 women earning members only 11 women could continue earning during lock down and out of 625 male earning members only 96 continue earning during the lockdown.
- 80% families borrowed money. Majority of them borrowed against mortgaging their jewellery or taking loans with interest. Majority or 90% borrowed money for the household and medical expenses.
- Only 18% families experienced food insufficiency during lockdown partly because they received grain kits consist of cereals, pulses and oil, ration of three months of lockdown. However, there was a considerable decrease in intake of milk, vegetables and fruits during lock down.
- During lockdown 22% pregnant women did not receive ANC. Number of home deliveries was four fold higher during lockdown in comparison to post lockdown period.
- Only 9% of children below two years received immunization during lockdown.
- Between February and July 2020, percentages of underweight children between the age group of 2-5 years increased from 63% to 75% (14% increase). There was increase in 12% in severely undernourished children.

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### Livelihood:

<b>Earning members</b>	<b>Pre Lockdown</b> (Before 25 March 2020)	<b>During lockdown</b> (During 25 March-)	<b>Post lockdown</b> (After 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2020)
Number of respondents	478	478	478
Total Earning Persons in families	730	107	710
No. of earning Females	105	11	102
No. of earning Males	625	96	608
Reported ability to save from earnings	89	10	60

### Borrowing during Lockdown

<b>No of families who had borrowed money against Mortgage, taken loans with or without interest</b>	<b>382 (80%)</b>
Average Rupees borrowed	15950 (INR)
<b>Reason for Borrowing</b>	
Household expenses and medical expenses	343 (90%)

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### Food Sufficiency during Lockdown

Food and Nutrition <sup>1</sup>	Pre Lockdown	During lockdown	Post lockdown
	No of Families 478		
Families reported having sufficient food	454 (95%)	369 (77%)	442 (92%)
% reported consumption of:			
Grains	383 (80%)	340 (71%)	385 (81%)
Pulses	290 (61%)	353 (73%)	219 (46%)
Milk / Milk products	270 (56%)	182 (38%)	261 (55%)
Vegetables everyday	290 (61%)	83 (17%)	312 (65%)
Weekly Vegetables	16 (3%)	125 (26%)	15 (3%)
Fruits everyday	53 (11%)	8 (2%)	50 (10%)
Weekly fruits	64 (13%)	84 (18%)	83 (17%)

### Morbidity and Death

Illness and Death	During lockdown	Post lockdown
	No of families 478	
Any Illness in family members	72	44
Average medical Expenditure	5878	5605
Death in family	4	10

### Maternal care

Antenatal care (ANC) and delivery	During lockdown N= 129	Post lockdown N= 163
ANC received	101 (78%)	150 (92%)
Deliveries of pregnant Women	25	111
In government hospital	10 (40%)	45 (40%)
In private clinics	11 (44%)	61 (55%)
At Home	4 (16%)	5 (4%)

<sup>1</sup>The families had received grain kit as a ration for three months of lockdown consisting of cereal, pulses, oil and spices.

**Childcare**

<b>Immunization of Children<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>During Lockdown N= 337</b>	<b>Post Lockdown N= 337</b>
Immunization of children from birth to 2 years	29 (9%)	208 (62%)
<b>Nutritional status (2-6 years of age)</b>	<b>Before lockdown, February 2020 N= 158</b>	<b>Post lockdown, July 2020 N= 137<sup>3</sup></b>
Normal weight	61(39%)	34 (25%)
Moderately Underweight	71(45%)	62 (45%)
Severely Underweight	26 (18%)	41 (30%)

**Covid related awareness<sup>4</sup>**

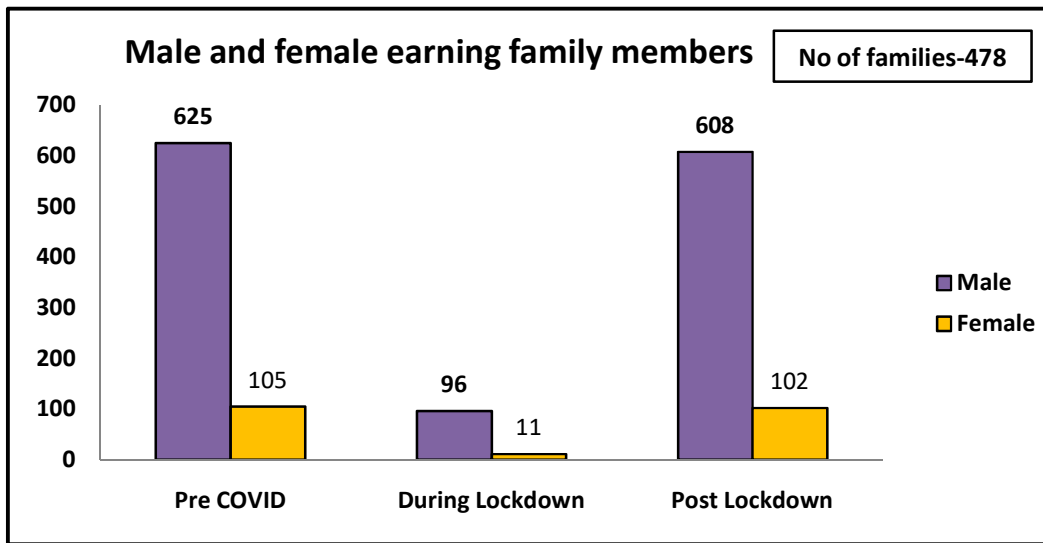
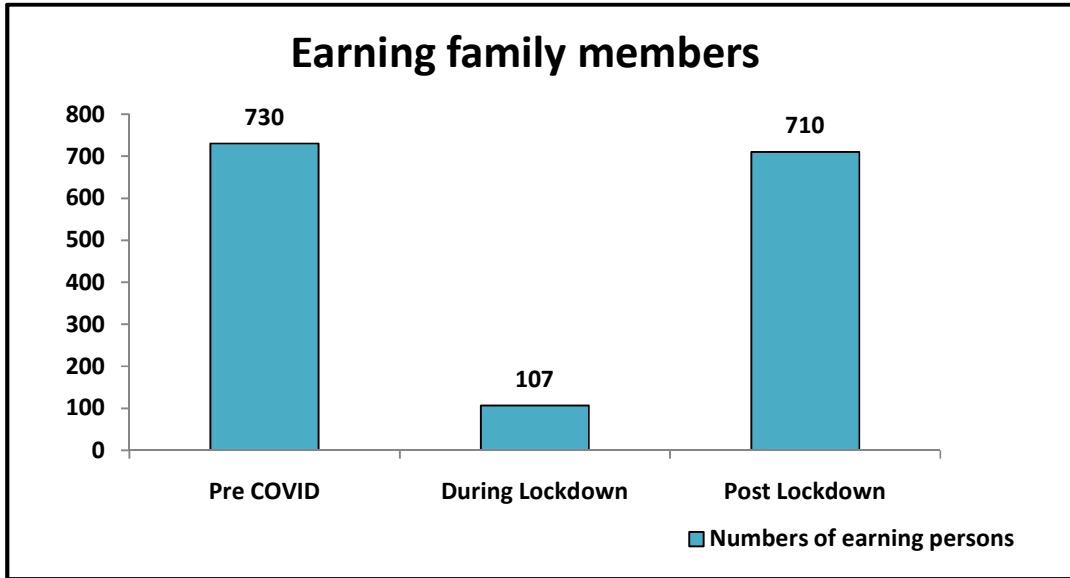
<b>Source of Information</b>	<b>N=478</b>
Number of families received information about Covid 19	319 (66%)
<b>Source of Information</b>	
From Health care workers	87 (18%)
From CHETNA (NGO)	179 (37%)
Others	53 (11%)

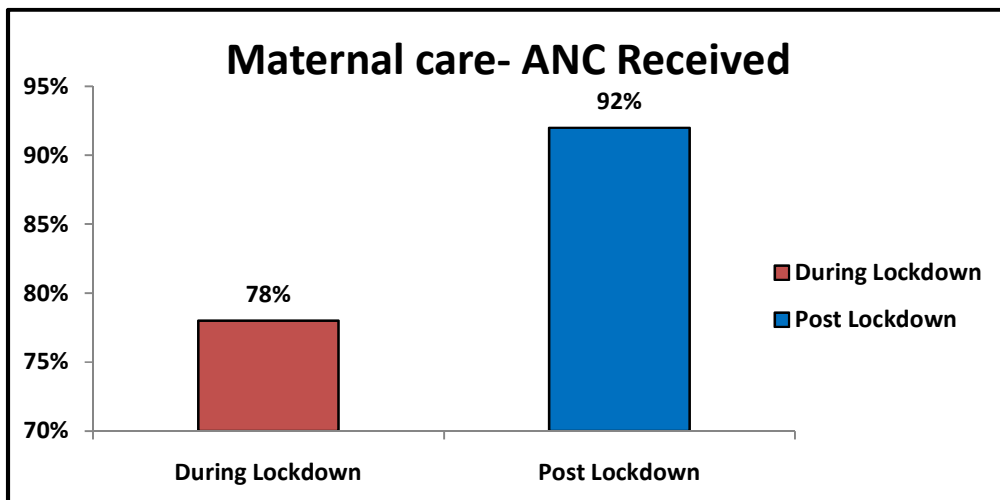
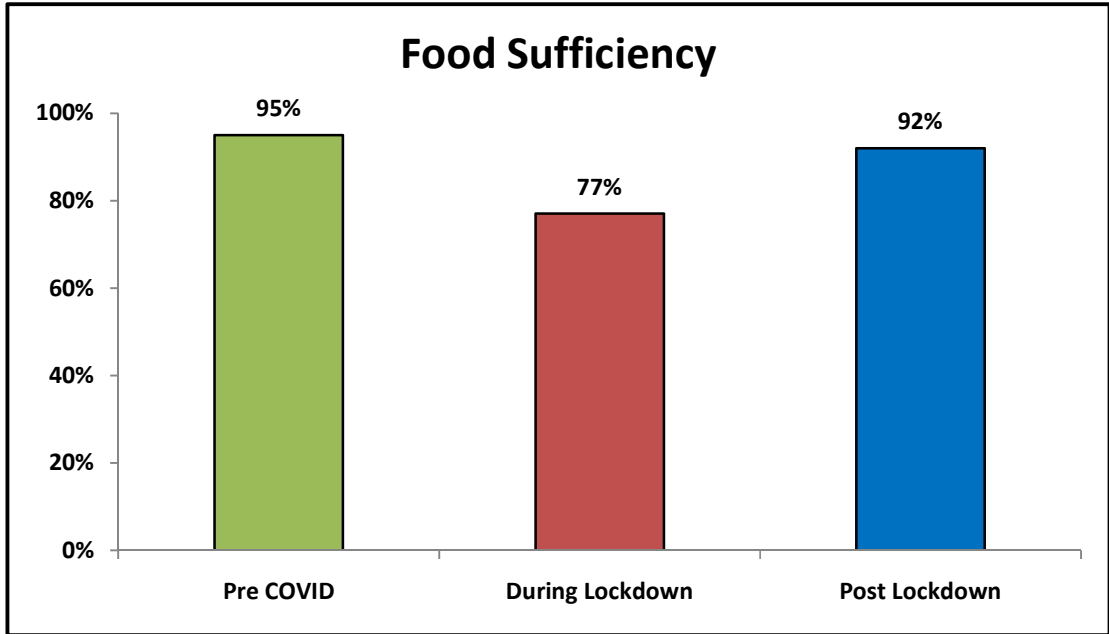
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<sup>2</sup> Children from birth to 2 years

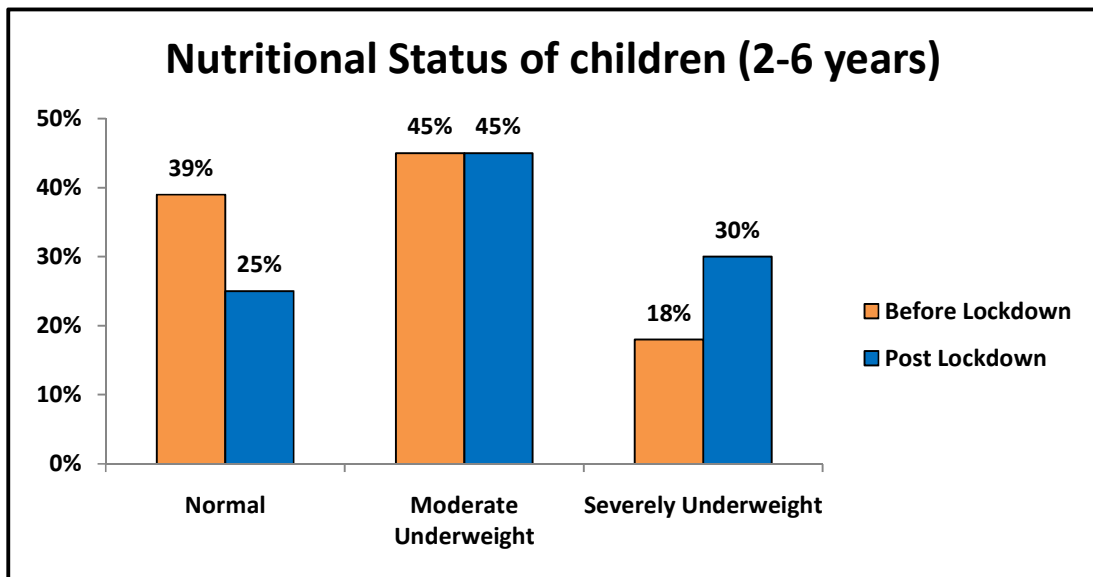
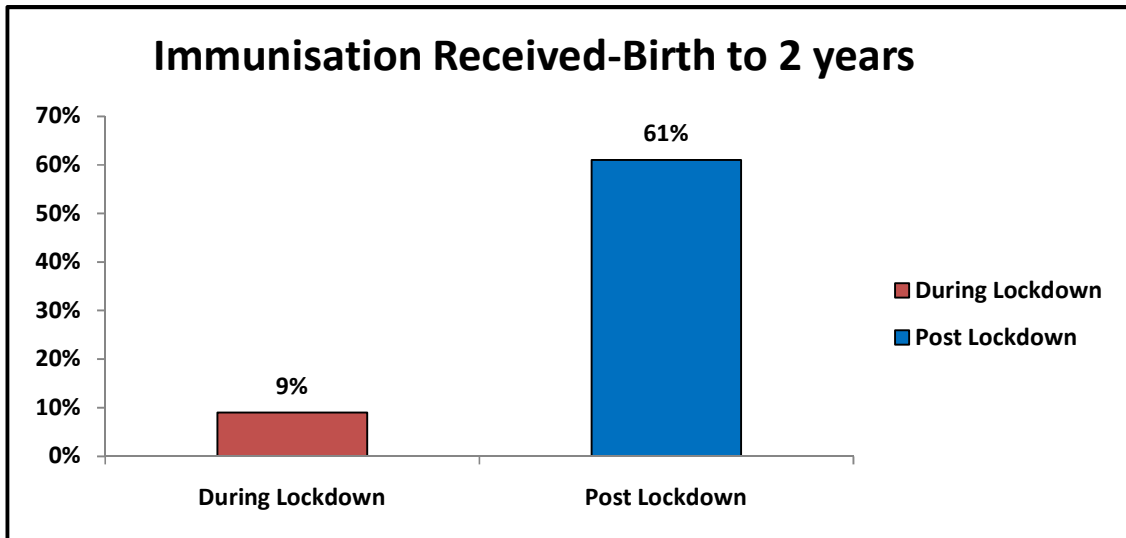
<sup>3</sup>21 children migrated

<sup>4</sup>Multiple answers









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