

## Impact of Lockdown on Rural Society

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**Abstract:** Covid-19 created terrific trauma in the entire world. This pandemic took place after 100 years when Spanish flu had killed thousands of people. If we look into human history, many epidemics and pandemics have killed thousands of people. If we look into human history many epidemics and pandemics had taken place in the past and millions of people had lost their lives. In the past, there were terrible diseases like chickenpox, smallpox, malaria, cholera, typhoid, plague, tuberculosis, etc. This disease has destroyed millions of human lives. In the 20th century, science, technology and medical science have undergone great change. Yet, covid-19 devoured millions of lives all over the world. This disease is highly infectious and its effects when the infected person comes in contact with others. coronavirus insects other through coughing, sneezing, etc. Virus enters the body in the form of droplets into the body of other people. to control it, and actions which contained curfew and lockdown. Religious and social gatherings were banned as social distancing became an important measure to prevent the spread of this terrible virus.

Even the developed countries like USA, Italy, France, Britain etc. failed to take required actions in time and therefore, they lost human lives in large numbers. When the Corona pandemic started in India, the Government of India declared lockdown as in highly populated countries like India, it would be almost impossible to control transmission of Covid-19 due to the large number of population and congested society. Millions of people would be victims of death as in comparison to other developed countries, medical and healthcare facilities are still less than required. Lack of proper medical treatment would result in thousands of deaths every day. That is the reason why to eradicate the effect of the Corona and prevent transmission, a lockdown was declared by the Central Government across the entire country on March 25, 2020.

Due to lockdown, vast countries like India stopped moving ahead in economy, trade, industries, education and other fields of life. It made a huge impact on the economic development in India. During lockdown, people experience multiple problems but the rural people face different kinds of difficulties. The purpose of this research paper is to search for the kinds of difficulties rural people face due to the lockdown.

### **Method of the study :**

For the present research, the questionnaire method has been used. A multiple choice questionnaire and some other open ended questions were prepared. A link was sent on WhatsApp about the research. The respondents could open the link and provide the responses and answers.

A fixed timeline was given to the respondents to provide their responses. During the timeline, I started receiving responses from the respondents. The main objective of the study was to know the impact of lockdown on rural society. responses from urban areas and incomplete responses were discarded. In the end I received 210 responses from rural people. These responses were scientifically analysed and the report was prepared. This study was undertaken during May, 2020.

In this study, 210 rural respondents from 22 districts of Gujarat have presented the responses. out of total respondents 69% respondents are postgraduates and 18.6% are graduates. In this research most of the respondents possess higher education and they have proper information and understanding. Responses have been analysed here minutely.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, lockdown, covid-19, social distancing, rural society, unemployment, Reduction in income, deprived community.

### **Objectives of the study:**

1. To know about the problems and difficulties in rural communities during lockdown.
2. To get information about the reduction or changes in the income of the rural people.
3. To receive information about the economic loss of the rural farmers.

**Analysis of Information and results:**

During covid-19 pandemic, the rural areas had to face the largest numbers problems and difficulties as in rural areas, sources of employment are quite limited. In rural areas agriculture and agricultural related businesses/ labour are the major sources of employment. Even today, rural agriculture depends on seasonal rainfall. In rural communities, a large number of poor and deprived people. During the lockdown, the entire country became stagnant in business and employment. In the entire country, all the activities, services and businesses were stopped except important services like health care, food and essential services. Transport was completely stopped and therefore the farmers could not supply their agricultural products to the markets. It is the most important thing to know how such situations impact rural communities.

In the study, questions were asked to the respondents about change in the income of the rural families during lockdown. The answer to this question said that a 68.8% reduction in income of rural people took place during the lockdown. Among the respondents, 61% of the people work connected with agriculture and animal husbandry. This study displays the fact that the maximum income of farmers was reduced in the time of lockdown. In agriculture, Those who grew vegetables and fruits were highly damaged as they could not sell the products or make them reach the agricultural product market. even in the market of fruits and vegetables the official prices were not available. The rural respondents said that the farmers in rural areas could not get enough money for vegetables and fruits. While in urban areas the prices were quite high.

Greatest problem about vegetables and fruits is that they are perishable. Within a few hours or days, they become useless. The respondents said that farmers do not have a large stock of products and therefore, they don't go to the market to sell them directly. Generally, farmers sell the products to local merchants who buy them and sell them in big urban markets. The urban merchants pay less price and sell the product with larger profits. They exploit farmers by forcing them to sell the products to merchants and through agents. As the production of agriculture has decreased during lockdown, their products could not reach markets. Due to the ban on transport, their products could not reach markets. very often, the products were spoiled and they had to be dumped. Under all these circumstances the farmers suffered economic loss. In rural areas, the farmers could not sell their products even at cheaper rates. On the other hand, in big cities, the prices of the products were high but the farmers could not supply them there due to lockdown. Farmers became the victims of economic loss in an extreme way.

Regarding the reduction of farmers monthly income, the respondents give the following details:

1. Due to lockdown, monthly incomes of farmers reduced from 500 - 50000 rupees.
2. Farmers suffered the loss of Rs. 5000 are 35.70%.
3. Those who lost from 5001 to 10,000 rupees are 16.26%.
4. Those who suffered the loss of rupees 10,001 to 15,000 are 8.13%.
5. The farmers whose monthly income was reduced between 15,001 and 20,000 are 9.90%.
6. Those who lost more than 20 thousand per month at 30%.

In short, it can be said that lockdown had an adverse effect on rural areas and farmers immensely. The main cause of reduction in farmers income was lack of transport facilities which were banned during lockdown. This was the reason for farmers' inability to supply the products to the market.

However, 1.5 % of rural people's income increased during lockdown. The reason is necessary to understand. The study shows that farmers could not receive proper prices from merchants. Some

farmers sold products directly to consumers. Due to direct sale to consumers, the farmers did not have to give any commission to merchants and agents.

Therefore, they could earn more and their income increased. All other farmers also need to be free from exploitation by the merchants by selling their products directly to consumers. Both farmers and consumers will be benefited. It is necessary for the farmers to be aware about it.

According to this study 31.7% people had neither increase nor decrease in the income during lockdown as there were salaried people and connected with stable business. There are some farmers also who grow such products that can be guarded and sold later such as sugarcane, rice etc. Even in lockdown, the income of the people remains stable.

However during the corona pandemic, both urban and rural people face multiple problems and their problems are different from each other. Our focus here is about the problems of the rural people, their major problem is their inability to supply and sell their products in markets. Due to the ban on transport, their products remained unsold and so the farmers suffered from economic loss. The farmers produce their products with great labour day and night and yet lockdown creates the use problem of unsold products. Farmers suffer a lot as their products either perish or get spoiled. In our country, we still don't have the resources to preserve agricultural products for a longer time. In developed countries, there are resources and modern technology that preserve the products for a long time. In this field, our country is still undergoing the primary phase. Therefore if the farmers cannot supply and sell their products in the urban markets. They don't get enough price for their products and suffer from economic loss. Farmers are the cold father of the world but in such circumstances, they face economic loss and many other problems.

The problems of the farmer are limited and fixed. If they don't reach the market in time, they get spoiled and wasted. We had asked a question in our questionnaire about what kinds of difficulties and problems rural respondents faced. We received different and relevant answers. Out of 210 respondents, 45.1% responded that they don't get essential commodities like oil, grains, soaps etc. In villages, they are not available and therefore, they have to go to big towns or cities to purchase their things. Due to lockdown, transport was ceased and so people faced great difficulties in buying essential commodities.

The study also showed that out of 210 respondents 30.80% families also faced lack of schooling and education for their children. Because of lockdown schools, colleges and universities had been closed. Teaching and examinations were also stopped. No admission for new terms could be arranged. These educational problems affected urban as well as rural people. At present rural people are concerned about the education and career of their children and therefore, they are worried about their future.

Healthcare of the people is the most important responsibility of the government and society in general. In our country, healthcare facilities are still in the primary phase, particularly in rural areas. In the context of a large population, the medical facilities are scarce. For medical treatment, the rural people had to go to taluka or district places. Lockdown had made life of the people stagnant and transport facilities were stopped. Most of the private dispensaries were closed and the administration said that for ordinary medical problems, people should avoid visiting dispensaries or hospitals as Corona-Virus could be transmitted in the hospital where covid-19 treatment prevailed day and night. The biggest problem in Corona was transmission of virus and being affected by lung infection. Out of 210 respondents 16.20% of respondents faced this problem related to the availability of the medical facilities in rural areas.

Lockdown stops everything suddenly which was probably the first global experience at the moment. Many infected people were quarantined in the room. They were not allowed to move out of the room and no family member came in touch with him or her. It is a different kind of imprisonment

which was like a trauma for many patients. Many members of the families had to live in different cities or towns where they worked. Their work stopped but they could not move to their native place, home and family. Many lived like exiled people in other far off places due to lockdown.

Such people suffered from psychological problems like stress, anxiety, loneliness and alienation. Out of 210 respondents, 15.70% of respondents faced these problems. Many family members from rural areas seek employment in towns and cities. To earn a living, they often move to other districts, cities or even states far from their native land. As they lost their jobs but they could not move to their homes, they experienced great stress and depression.

Around 18.10% people said that they not did not face any serious problem as most of them could not themselves from Corona infection. Out of 210 respondents, some of them have faced quite different physical problems due to some kind of addiction like pan, marva, tobacco, bidis, cigarettes, gutka alcohol etc. Around 31.90% who do not get pan, marva, tobacco, bidis, cigarettes, gutka alcohol etc. and they face quite a lot of stress and sickness. Some people said that these things were sold at high prices like black marketing. The shopkeepers exploit people and cheat them. The government should take strict action against them. One of them said that such things should be sold online or in government grain shops at lower prices.

Of Course, addiction creates many other problems also but those who are addicted need to be provided these things at cheaper rates.

Out of 210 people 7.20% people do not like to live at home day and night. They cannot move out due to lockdown and so they become stressed. Even in rural areas such problems are faced by the rural people. Out of 210 people 7.20% are such people whose jobs are lost and they have become unemployed. They are deeply worried about how they would nourish their family. When the lockdown will be opened, they will have to search for new jobs. Their economic situation has worsened terribly.

Because of the pandemic, out of 210 respondents 13.4 40% students are worried about the examinations. The teaching process is over but they are not sure when their examinations will be conducted. They try to prepare for their exams but they always think about Corona and often get panicked. Fail to focus on the studies and do not remember what they have read.

Other problems due to lock down are about the purchase of fertilizers, pesticides, cattle feed etc. 20.70% respondents express their problems about it. This problem during the first phase of lockdown was solved by the government by providing these things at cheaper rates.

weddings were also stopped during lockdown which created social problems. It became a matter of anxiety and stress for parents of the bride and bridegrooms. 99.5% respondents said that They were worried about the health of their families. They remained in stress for their elders and children. Many people suffered from psychological diseases. Even in rural areas Cases increased destroying lives of many people.

### **Conclusion:**

The following are the conclusions of the study:

1. The central government of India announce lock down across the entire country to stop coronavirus transmission which was highly fatal
2. In this study 210 respondents from 22 districts of Gujarat give the responses.
3. Out of 210 respondents, 69% are postgraduate and 18.6% are graduates.
4. Totally, 60 8.8% families suffered from reduction in income. 61% people are connected with agriculture and animal husbandry
5. 31.7% people had no increase or decrease in their income
6. 63.7 80% people informed that they had experienced economic loss as they could not supply the products to the markets.

7. Out of 210 respondents 45 point 10% respondents said that they could not get essential commodities.

8. Out of 210 respondents 34.8 80% people said that the children's education was spoiled and so they were all concerned about the career.

9. After the lockdown, many people had to be confined in any town or city away from their native place. they could not travel to their homeland.

10. Out of 210 respondents 18.2% said that he did not face any problem in lockdown.

11. 17.30% of people did not like to stay at home day and night. they became mentally depressed.

12. 7.20% people became jobless and they were deprived of employment and income.

13. 13.40% students believe that offline teaching was stopped and therefore they were completely bored by online learning. In rural areas, deferred due to lack of internet facilities, smartphones, etc.

14. 20.70% respondents said that in lockdown they could not buy fertilizers, pesticides, cattle feed and it caused damage to agricultural and dairy products.

15. 99.5% respondents said that they were deeply worried about Corona impact on members of their families. Many people lost their lives and the family were completely despaired and unhappy.

**Suggestions:**

1. India is a vast country with legs of villages. Maximum number of people live in the village only. Problems are different and it is the duty of the government to focus on the problems and solve them.

2. Healthcare facilities need to be enhanced in village and rural areas.

3. Employment and self employment opportunities should be provided to rural youth and people.

4. In rural areas, cleanliness and health care awareness also needs to be focused more so that people can live healthier lives.

5. In the rural areas, electricity, fertilizers, and agricultural tools should be available to the farmers. Modern technology should be added to the agriculture sector.

6. Farmers should avail enough prices for the agricultural products. agents and brokers should be removed so that farmers are not exploited by them.

7. When farmers yield damaged or no crops, they should be provided compensation by the government.

8. During a pandemic, social, religious and political gatherings should be banned as they create serious problems like viral transmission.

In short, if people follow the protocol related to covid-19, lockdown in future will not be required. The government is worried about the economy but unfortunately, people are not disciplined and careful like people of many developed countries. It is a matter of anxiety for all. People need to learn many important lessons from covid-19 to save human life and economy, both.