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If you have the power to make someone smile, do it. The world needs more of that.

# COVID-19 LOCKDOWN SURVEY REPORT

Sunaayy Foundation



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# The Lockdown

With close to 14 million migrants moving from rural to urban areas every year, combined with intrinsic population growth inside urban areas, India's explosive urban growth is expected to continue. The urban share of India's population was around 31 percent according to the 2011 census and is expected to cross 40 percent by 2030. While bringing a range of economic benefits, such rapid urbanisation has also exposed enormous challenges, most noticeably in the form of demand-supply gaps in housing, infrastructure, and services. One in six people in urban areas lives in slums; the proportion has

improved over time, but the absolute numbers have been increasing due to the rapid urbanisation described above.

It has been opined that the novel coronavirus crisis in India may disproportionately affect the thousands of urban poor households living in slums or informal settlements/clusters across major cities in India.

Efforts to stem the spread of COVID-19 through non-pharmaceutical interventions and preventive measures such as social-distancing and self-isolation have prompted the widespread closure of schools and educational institutions all over the country. The consequences of these school closures have not only been the interrupted learning of our students, but it also raised concerns regarding their compromised nutrition, the consequent economic cost to families who could not work, spread of the virus due to low awareness, and the continued training of our teaching staff.

While the health threat from the global coronavirus outbreak is undeniable, as is our obligation to follow the national lockdown directive, education practitioners and advocates such as Sunaayy Foundation, worry that the crisis will worsen the education gap for low-income and migrant households from where our students hail.

Most of our students come from migrant families who have settled in the slums or informal settlements in the primary catchment area for our operations. Their parents are mostly employed or engaged in the informal/unorganized sector. The lockdown to contain the virus's spread has hit these households the hardest, not only due to the consequent loss of incomes and livelihoods, but also due to the crowded and unhygienic surroundings in which they are forced live, which often have little to no access to municipal facilities such as running water, sufficient toilets, or adequate sewage lines.

## The Survey

**We have conducted a survey on the impact of the disruption due to the lockdown on the catchment areas in New Delhi that we service. We have interviewed a total of 200 households, comprising 965 individuals, from 8 informal urban settlements near the Vasant Kunj area in New Delhi, viz. Bengali Basti, Kishangarh, Rangpuri Pahari, Bandhu Camp, Dairy Centre, Harijan Basti, Masoodpur, and Palam.**



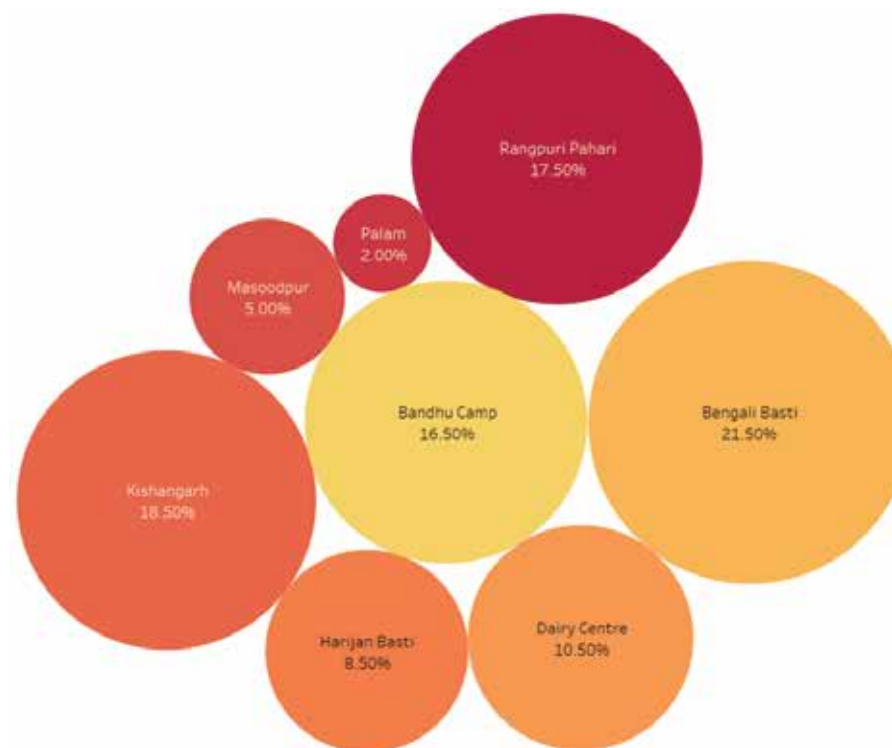
Our survey has been conducted with our partner, Dono Consulting, a boutique quantitative analytics firm which inter alia works in the field of data-driven policy.

As the government re-prioritises its spending to address the economic impact of the crisis, the ministries and departments for marginalised communities and for social sectors such as women and children, social justice, water and sanitation and education etc. will be best placed to benefit from the research-based advocacy of organizations such as the Sunaayy Human Welfare Foundation.


## Our Key Findings

In a nutshell, our survey has the following key inferences:

- ✦ A vast majority of households living in urban informal settlements or 'slum areas' in a major Indian city like New Delhi are migrant workers employed in low-paying, informal sector jobs, characterized by employment insecurity. The lockdown has negatively affected their job status, with only one-fifth of respondents reporting that they have been able to continue working full-time. It has also negatively affected household earnings, with a third of respondents reporting no payment during lockdown, and more than half reporting only partial payment. This has understandably, also adversely affected their expectations regarding future employment, and consequently household earnings. Material poverty leads to malnutrition, which affects health and education outcomes of children in the household, which in turn may impact a child's long term development. Furthermore, to address the lack of financial resources, children from poor households may be engaged in child labor which may negatively impact a child's cognitive and physical development by depriving the child from school.
- ✦ The lockdown has resulted in the temporary suspension or slow-down of supplementary nutrition programmes in educational institutions, such as mid-day meals. PDS coverage in urban areas is low thus leaving out many urban poor. Almost a third of the households surveyed had to rely on rations from Non-Governmental Organizations during the lockdown period, with over half our respondents reporting the lack of nutritional diversity, and an eight reporting that sometimes they did not have enough to eat during the lockdown. COVID-19 has exposed a harsh



reality in India: an inadequate and uneven safety net, which may leave many from economically vulnerable groups without sufficient access to food and other services. This struggle is particularly acute for large numbers of informal sector workers—including self-employed, subcontracted laborers, and migrant workers.

 A digital movement in education will hinder access to large number of students, especially our students who come from resource-poor households. If this mode of teaching is advocated at a mass scale can be inequalitarian and discriminatory. Despite many urban poor households having notional internet access, students from urban poor households have limited or no access to online education due to issues ranging from poor connectivity, erratic electric supplies making devices harder to charge, as well as unreliable access to the one phone owned by the household.

The lockdown has negatively affected the employment status, household earnings, and expectations of migrant workers living in urban informal settlements or 'slum areas', who are typically employed in low-paying, informal sector jobs characterized by job insecurity. Consequently, the health and education outcomes of their children are likely to be adversely affected. Another effect of the lockdown has been the temporary suspension or slow-down of supplementary nutrition programmes in educational institutions. COVID-19 has exposed the inadequate and uneven food security safety net in urban areas of India. A salient observation from our survey has been that urban poor households have, at best, limited access to online education despite the household having notional access to the internet. Hence a digital movement in education cannot be advocated at a large scale, without keeping in mind poor connectivity, erratic power supply, and unreliable access to the one phone often owned by urban poor households.

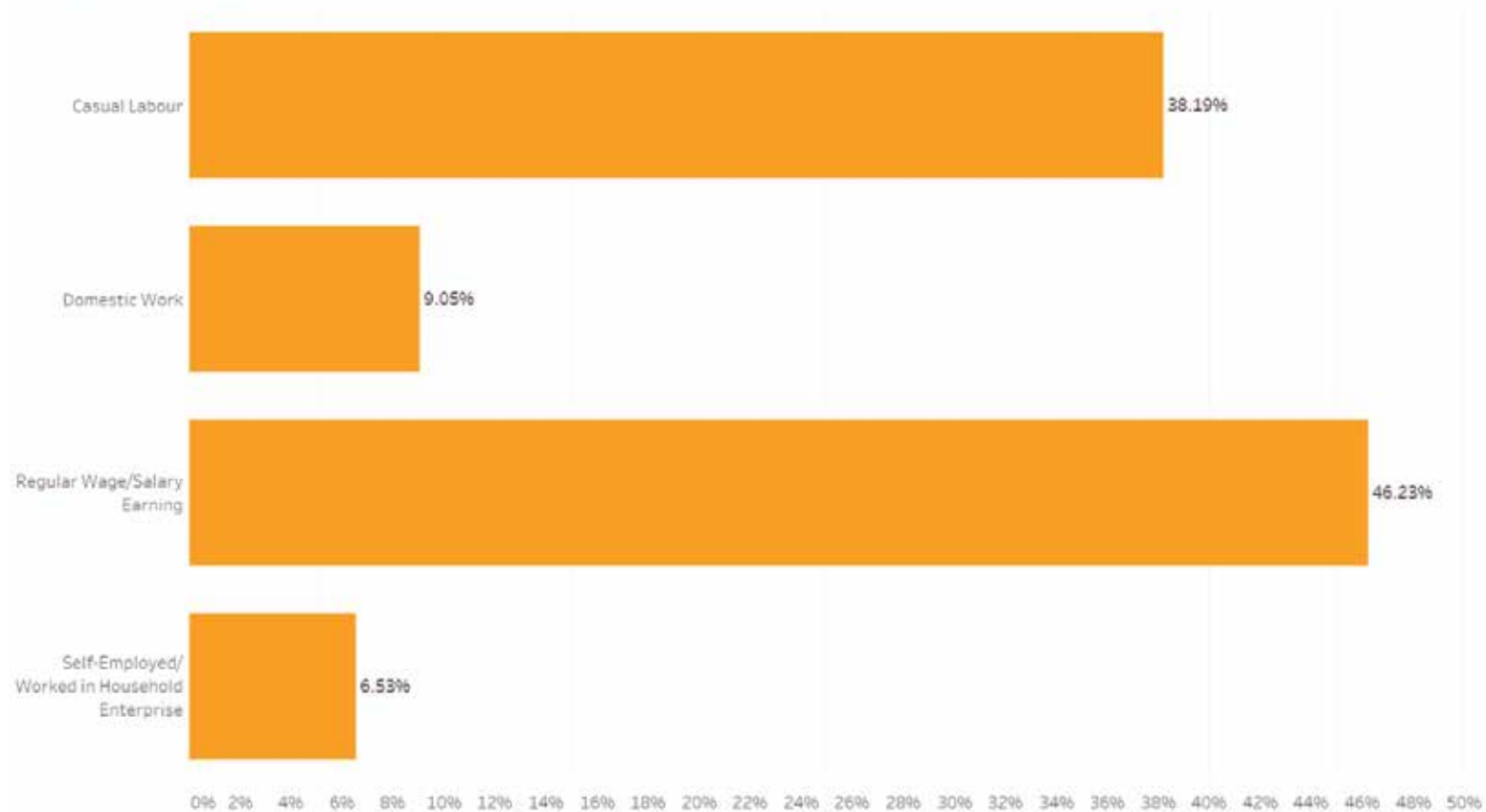
Now that we have provided our key findings from our investigation into how the lockdown has affected urban poor households in slum clusters in New Delhi, we can dig deeper in the data to provide the support for our findings in greater detail.



# Livelihoods

The occupation category of the principal earners of the households interviewed can be see below.

Occupation Category of Principal Earner

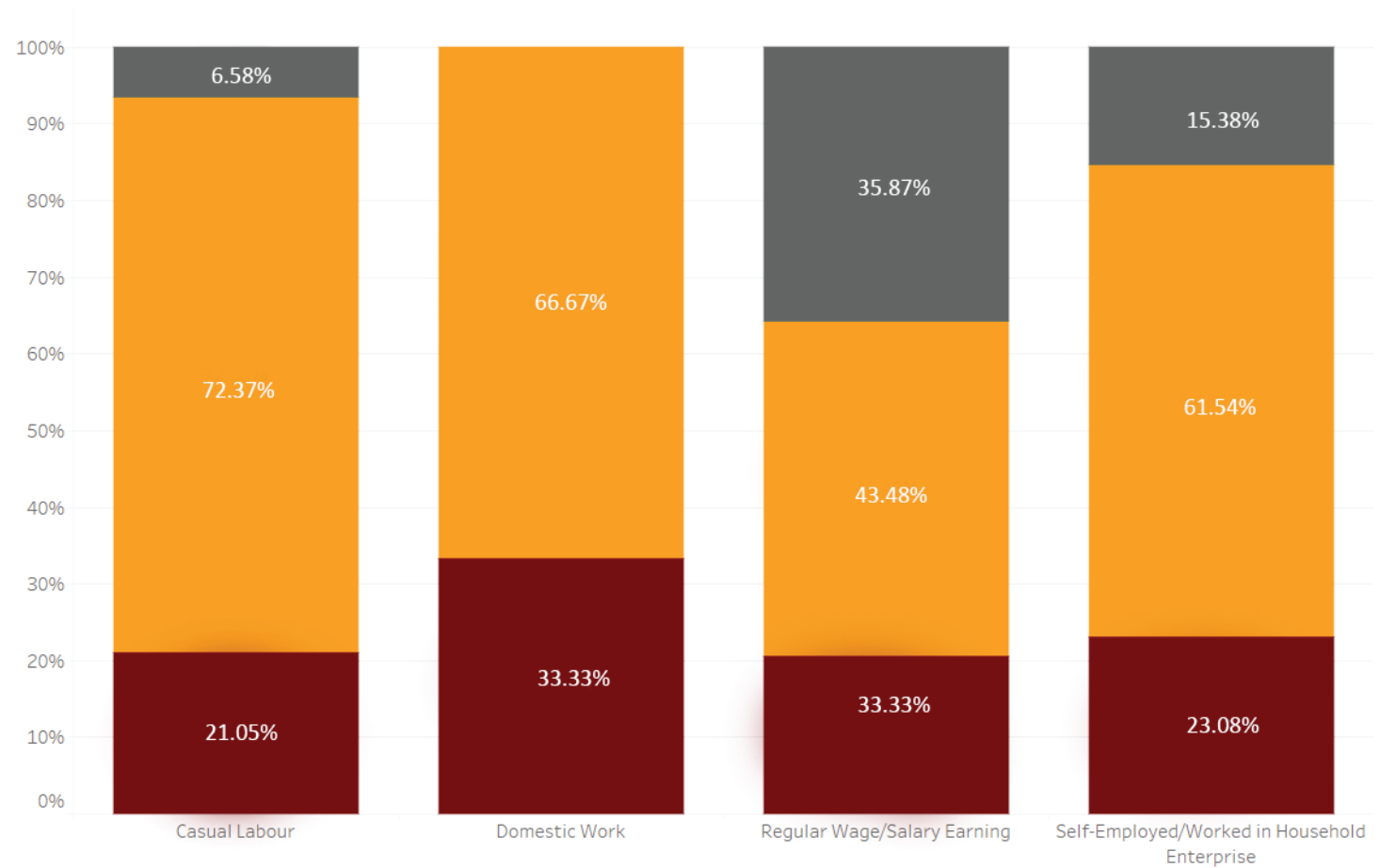


% of Total Number of Records for each Occupation of Principal earner. The marks are labeled by % of Total Number of Records. The view is filtered on Occupation of Principal earner, which excludes Null.



The International Labour Organization notes that in 2018, 81 percent of the India's labour force was engaged in the informal sector, also known as the unorganized sector. Furthermore, the proportion of informality in the formal sector, as contract or casual workers, is on the rise, bringing the total proportion of informal workers in the total participating labour-force to around 92 percent. While the 53.77 percent of respondent households in our survey who have principal earners who work either as casual labour, as domestic workers, or are self-employed or working in household enterprises, can be unequivocally be said to be part of the informal sector, the 46.23 percent who earn regular wages or salaries are likely to be informally employed through the growing use of contract labour.

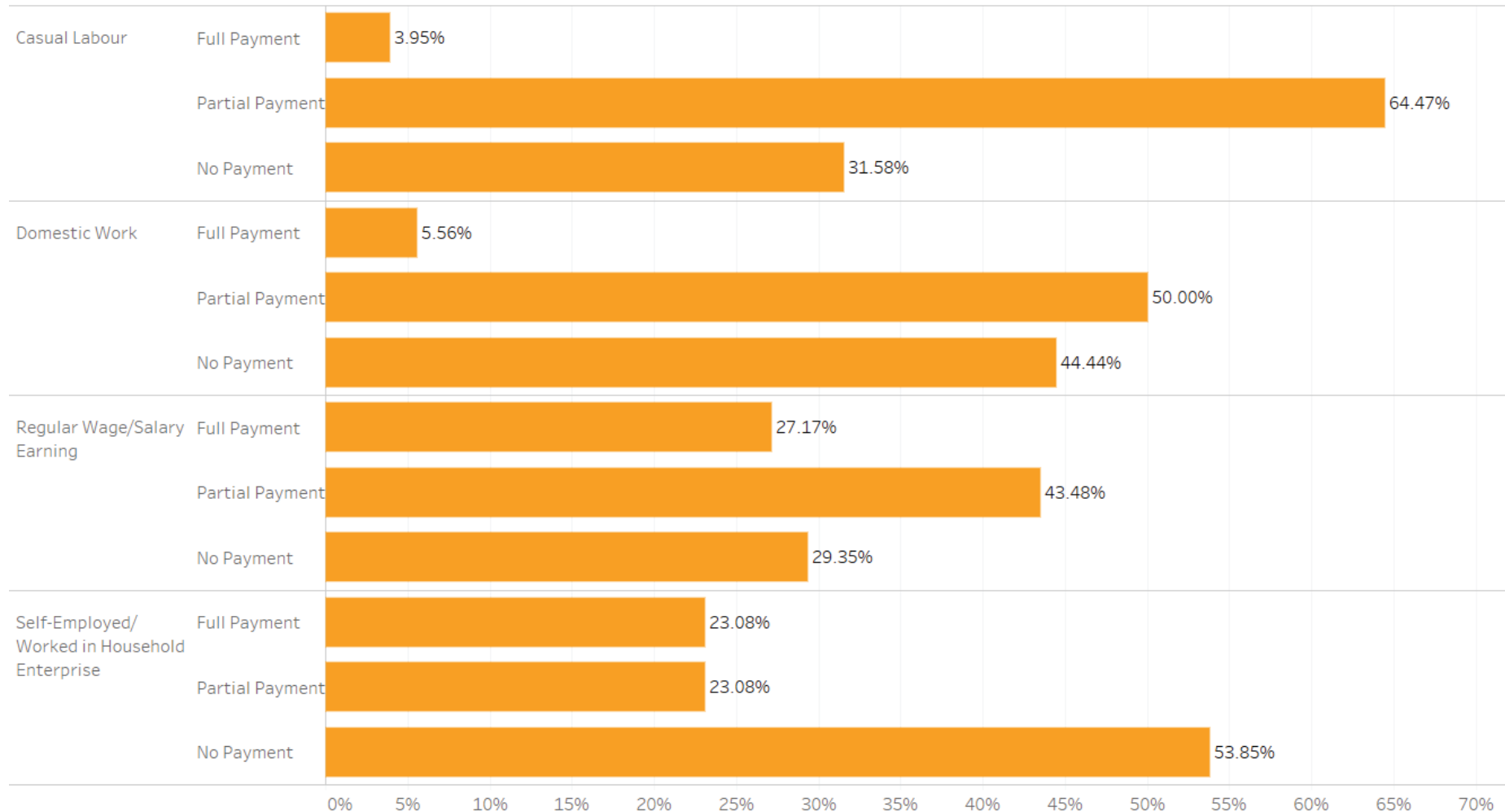
Job Status of Principal Earners by Occupation Category



Across all occupation categories, 57.79 percent of respondent households had principal earners who were partly working, while 22.11 percent were not working, and only 20.10 percent reported themselves as working full-time during the lockdown period.



## Payment Status of Principal Earners by Occupation Category



Across all occupation categories, 50.75 percent of respondent households had principal earners who had received partial payment, while 33.17 percent had received no payment, and only 16.08 percent reported themselves as having received full payment during the lockdown period.



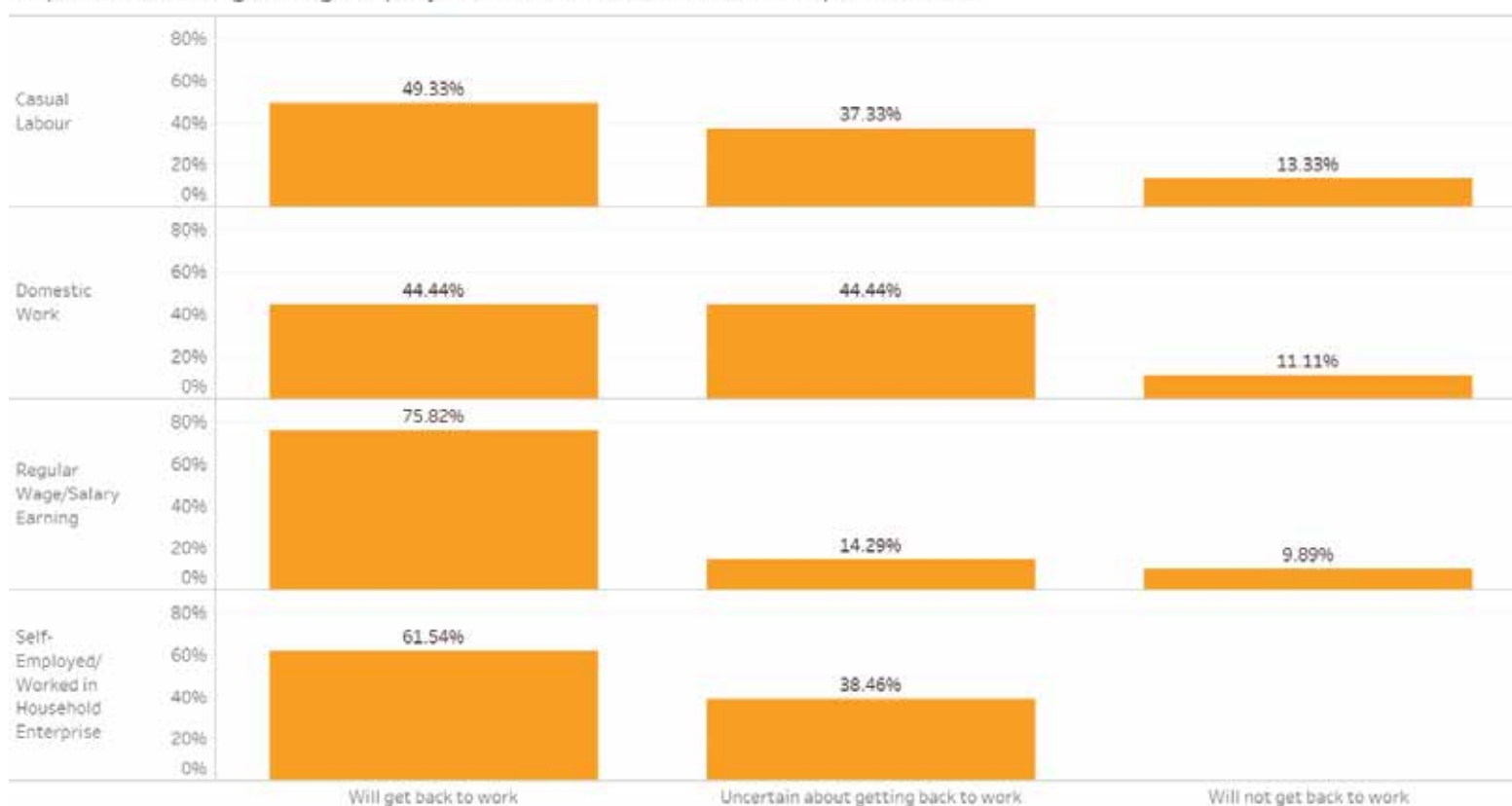


Urban poor across major cities in India have been deprived of both work and payments.

Even amongst the 20.10 percent of principal earners who were still working full-time during the lockdown period, 42.5 percent of them had reportedly either received no payment or only partial payment for their labour.

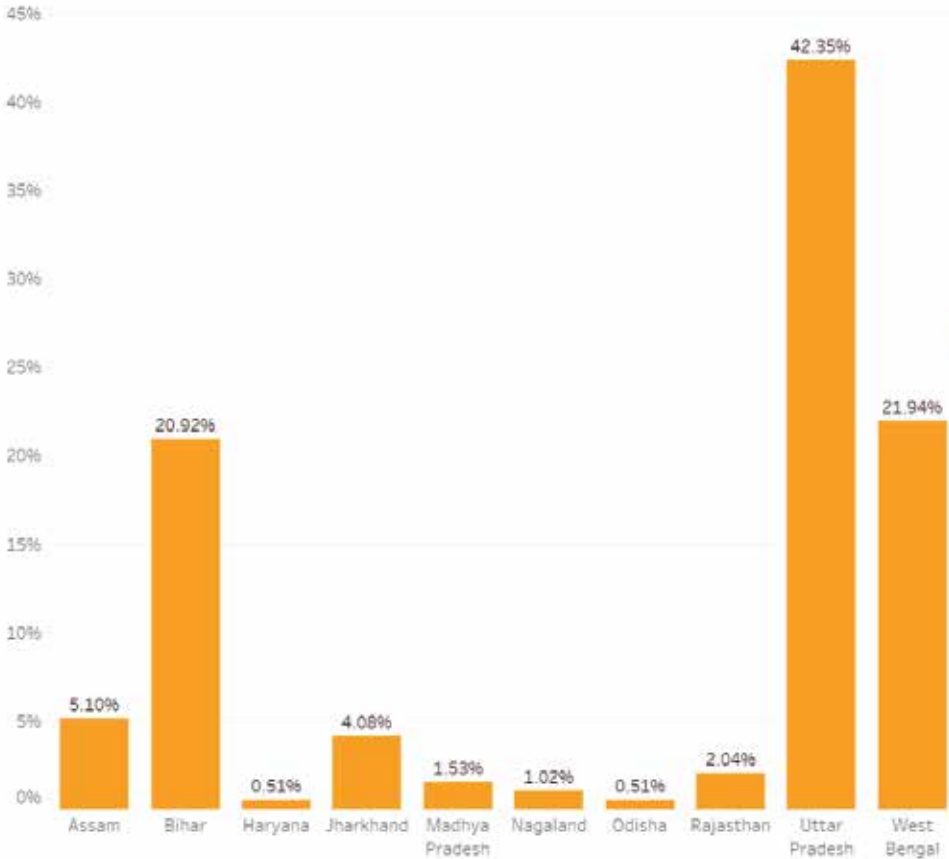
Across all occupation categories, 27.41 percent of respondent households had principal earners who were uncertain that they will be able to get back to working the same hours and under the same payment terms, as before the lockdown, while 10.66 percent of principal earners expected to not be able to return to work at all.

Expectations Regarding Employment After Lockdown: Principal Earners

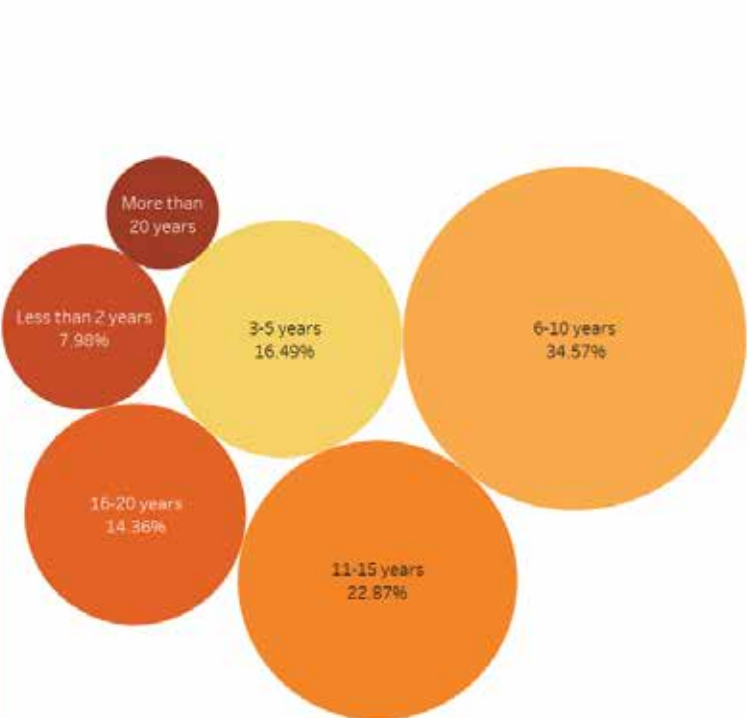


A vast majority of households living in urban informal settlements (99.5 percent of our survey respondents) are migrant workers who move to major cities like New Delhi for both shorter and longer durations in search of better wages and work opportunities. More than three-quarters of our respondents have lived in New Delhi for more than five years. The nature of their work in the informal economy is often characterized by irregularity, low-skill requirements, low wages, and job insecurity. The notion that principal earners of such households can 'work from home' is a ludicrous one. In fact, such households might not even have had the savings or disposable income to store food or basic amenities for the lockdown period, leaving them exposed to hunger and malnutrition. We cover this topic in the next section.

State of Origin of Migrant Households



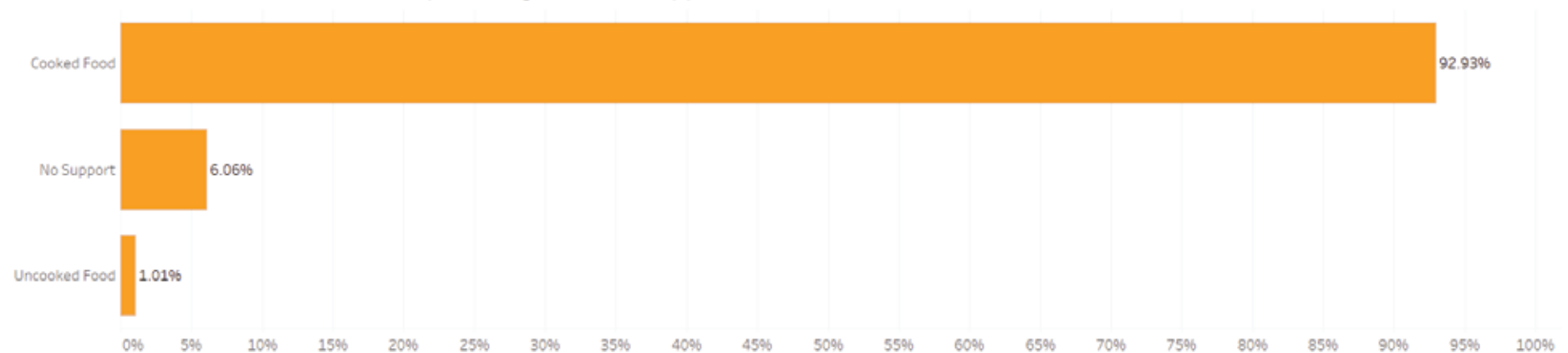
Years Lived in New Delhi



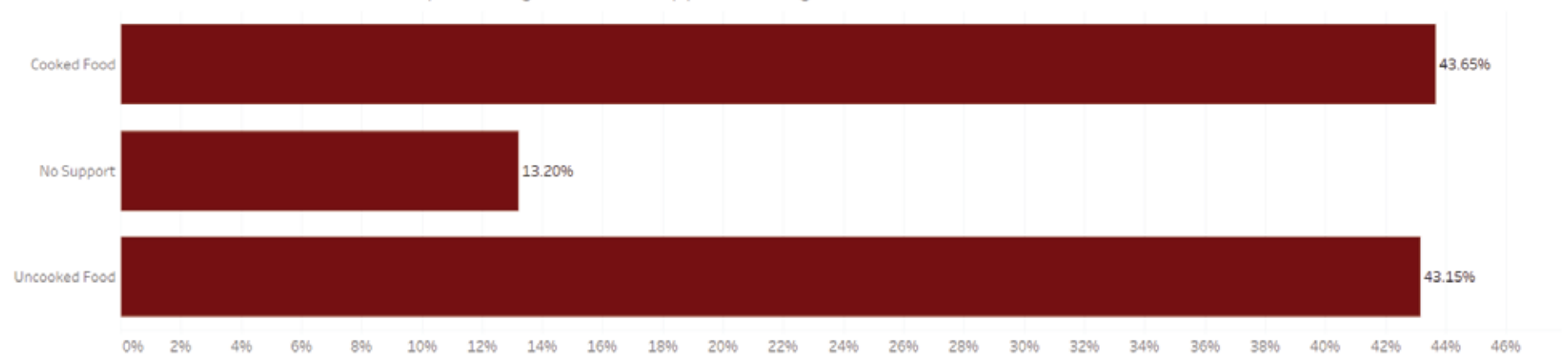
# Food Security

The lockdown and school closures has resulted in the temporary suspension of mid-day meals and supplementary nutrition programs, which can potentially have severe negative implications for the nutrition and food security of children across the country. Mid-day meals have been found to significantly improve enrolment, attendance, retention, learning outcomes, gender, and social equity and most importantly nutrition. For the children from urban poor households, mid-day meals are more of a substitute rather than a complementary meal, and interruptions in this essential social security programmes are likely to worsen food insecurity. As we can see from our survey results, children from an additional 7.18 percent of households failed to get any nutritional support during the lockdown.

Whether educational institution was providing nutrition support before the lockdown ?



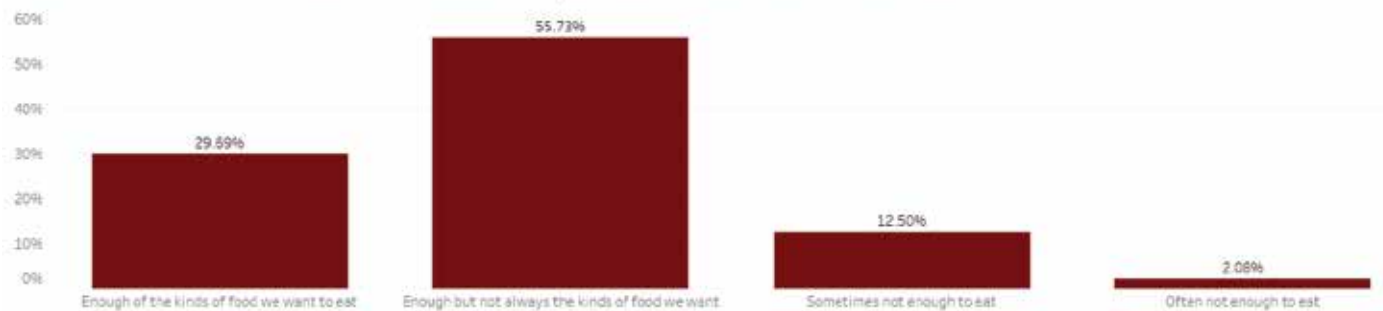
Whether educational institution was providing nutrition support during the lockdown ?



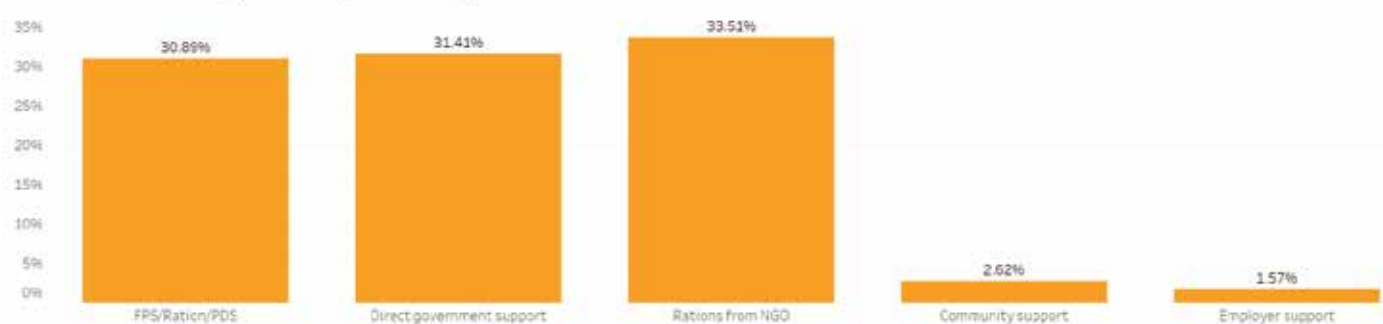
Local food systems are fragile in a country like India. A vast majority of the workforce is engaged in the informal sector, where they depend entirely on daily or weekly wages as a mode of earning. These vulnerable groups and their families will be the hardest hit during these unprecedented times. It must be noted, however, that as compared to those of other countries at a similar income level, India's social safety net is extensive. An elaborate array of programs exists to assist the poor, including the world's largest food-based social program, the Public Distribution System (PDS), covering 800 million people. That being said, PDS coverage in urban areas is low thus leaving out many urban poor. Given the stresses of the emergency, there is a high likelihood the programme will have high exclusion errors. PDS ration cards are neither portable across locations nor can rations be divided, allowing family members to pick up portions at different locations, making them potentially useless for seasonal migrant laborers.

Almost a third of the households surveyed had to rely on rations from Non-Governmental Organizations during the lockdown period, with over half our respondents reporting the lack of nutritional diversity in their household food consumption, and an eighth reporting that sometimes they did not have enough to eat during the lockdown.

Which statement best describes the food eaten in your household in the last one month?



Households' Primary Food Support During Lockdown



The Food and Agricultural Organization has noted the larger impact of lockdowns and quarantines that disrupt food supply chains and limit consumer spending and purchasing power, on households with low or irregular incomes. They have opined that, in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, good health would be elusive without access to nutritious food for those who need it the most.

As highlighted earlier, many of our students hail from migrant households, who might not have the proper documentation to access Fair Price Shops under the Public Distribution System. Even when a system exists such as in Delhi, it is complicated to the point of being restrictive, due to these households having limited ability to access the internet and mobile phones, and low mobility to reach government volunteers who can help them fill forms. Realising that it will not be feasible to continue the large-scale distribution of cooked food and that resource-poor households needed to be equipped to prepare their own meals we organized the distribution of dry rations. With active support and permission of local police, we are distributing ration bags in the informal settlements which form the catchment area to our centres.



Sunaayy is working tirelessly to bridge the gaps in safety nets affecting migrant labourers, as well as marginalised communities such as the urban poor. We are also using our food relief program as a medium to communicate key messages about the epidemic, including on social distancing and other public health and safety measures. We have intensified our efforts to spread awareness on how people can access to health information and services.

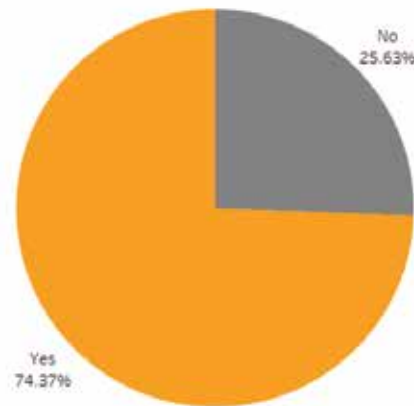


# Education

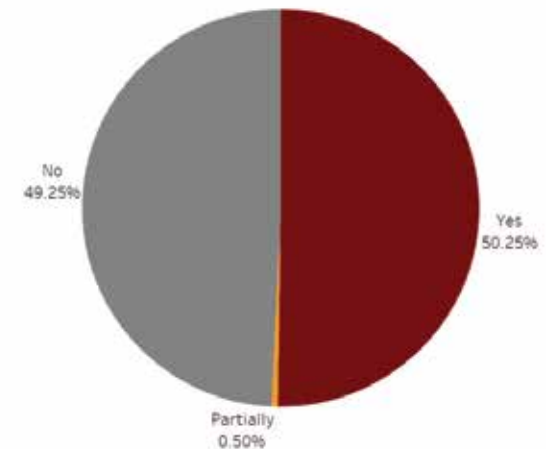
## Online Learning & Gender Considerations

As vocalized by many educationists, we at Sunaayy are also extremely concerned that a digital movement in education will hinder access to large number of students, especially our students who come from resource-poor households. Online material is often inaccessible to students who are not comfortable with spoken or written English. We are also cognizant of these concerns with digital education and recognize how if this mode of teaching is advocated at a mass scale can be inegalitarian and discriminatory.

Whether the Household has Internet Access



Whether Children Can Access Online Education



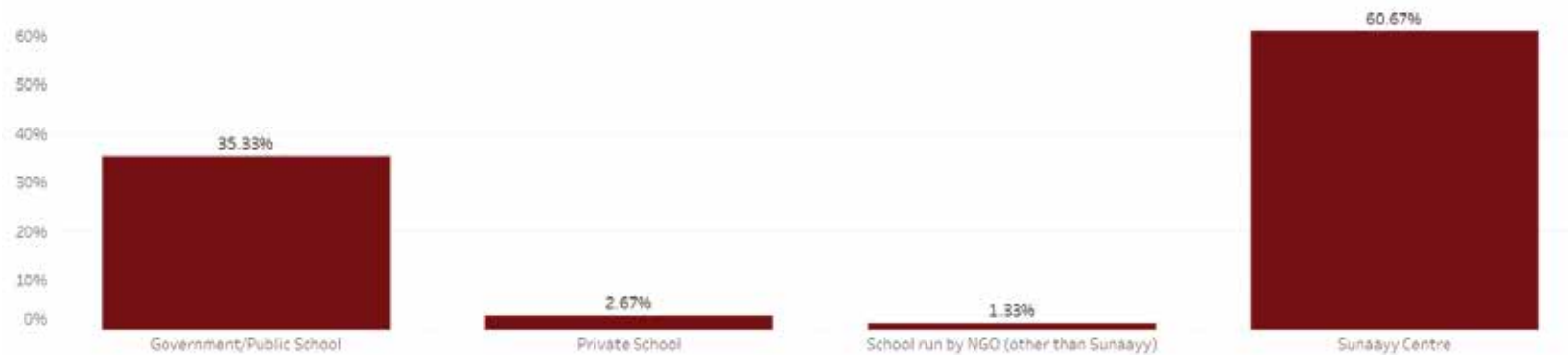
With more than 630 million subscribers, India is home to the world's second-largest internet user base. But connectivity is still an issue, especially since mobile data, rather than fixed line internet, is the main source. The signal is often uneven, making it hard to stream videos smoothly, and electricity supply is erratic, which means devices often run out of charge. Furthermore, the internet device most Indians use is a mobile phone, resulting in students trying to follow classes on cheap phones rather than laptops. Many poor households have only one phone, and access to it is unreliable. This is borne out by our survey data. Despite close to three-fourths of our survey respondents reporting household access to an internet connection, close to half of them also reported that their children did not have access to online education. Despite three-quarters of our respondents reporting household access to the internet, close to half the respondents report that children are unable to access online education.



So that the digital disparity in accessing online education by resource-poor households does not become even more stark, we have started online classes for our students who have access to smartphones and an internet connection. We have a responsibility towards our students to ensure that as many of them are prepared for future disruptions, and not just pandemics. We will continue to explore all means at our disposal to further the education outcomes of our students.

Sunaayy already has a pilot project rolled out in Delhi, Bihar and West Bengal, where we have set up Wi-Fi enabled knowledge hubs at our centres, which act as interactive platforms, connecting skilled professional teachers to our students. Further iterations of social distancing phases might have more relaxed restrictions which allow us to phase out online education to our students through our smart classrooms in batches. It is unlikely that online education will replace learning centres in our service delivery model because migrant parents need to go to work, and children need monitoring. Also, our centres also ensure that children get to socialise, learn to sit in one place, listen to the teacher, etc.

### Educational Institutions Attended by Girls



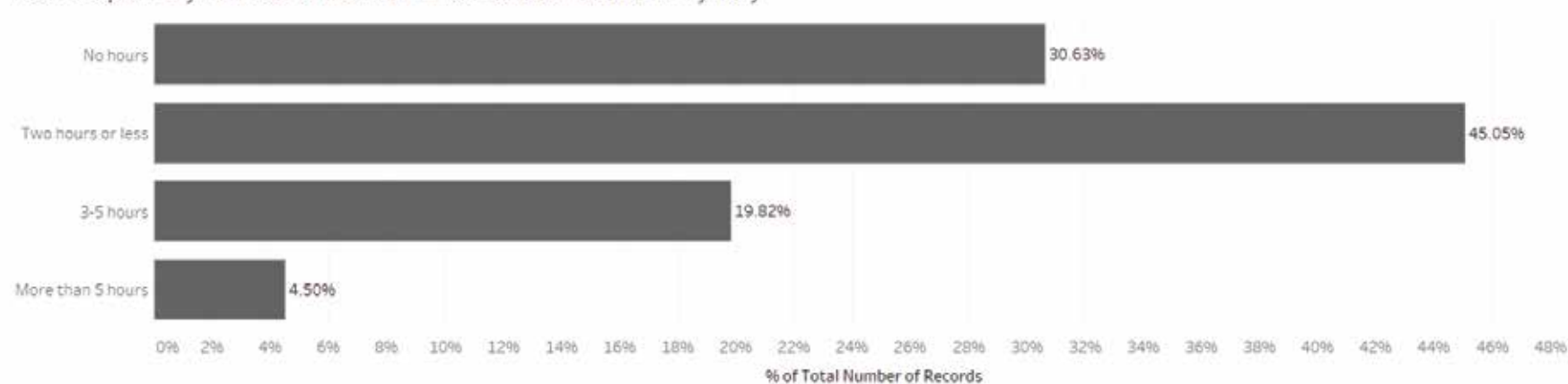
### Educational Institutions Attended by Boys



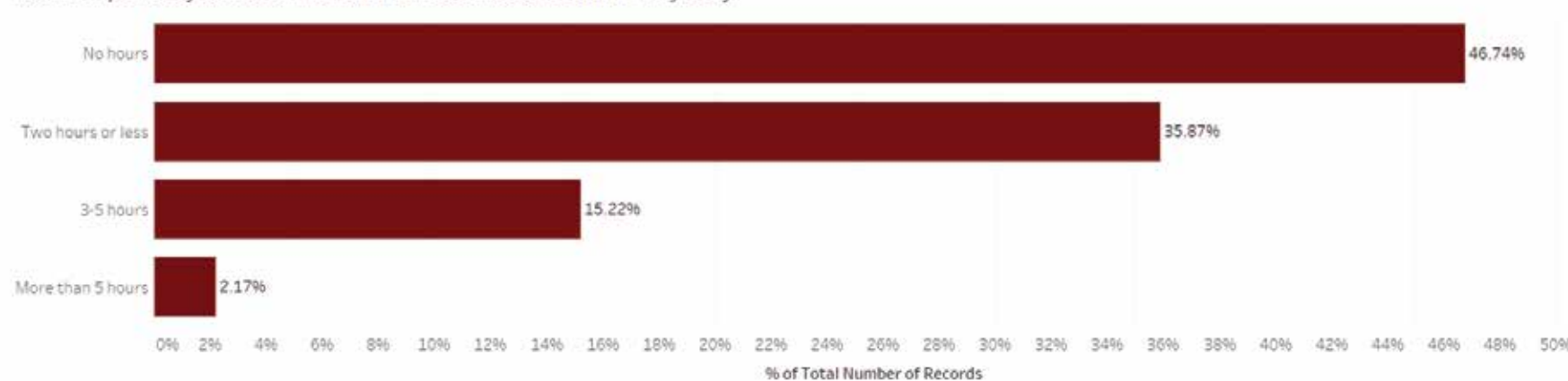
According to UNESCO, approximately 0.32 billion students in India have been affected by school closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Short term interruptions in schooling can lead to permanent dropouts for students from poor households. A possible reason behind this is the loss of parents' livelihood security, in which case child labour is leveraged as a substitute.

Dropout rates could be higher for girls who maybe required to undertake additional household work as their parents increase their own labour hours to cope with the economic strain. According to an Oxfam report, Indian women and girls put in more than three billion hours of unpaid care work daily. Our survey shows this gender divide in division of household work between girls and boys, with girls getting the disproportionate share of household work.

Hours Spent by Female Children in Household Work Every Day



Hours Spent by Male Children in Household Work Every Day

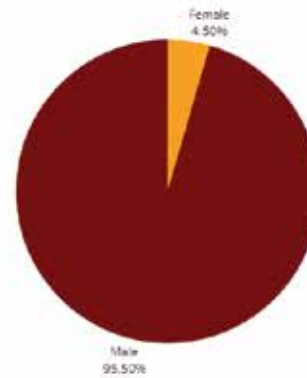




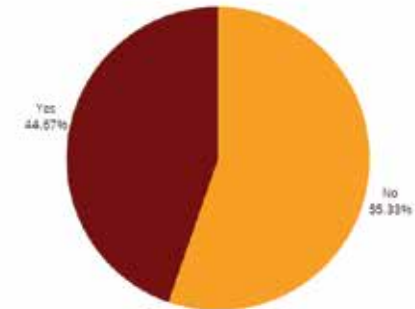
# Gender & Employment

A recent World Bank Group policy note, mentions that women are likely to experience a significant burden on their time given multiple care responsibilities as school closures and confinement measures are adopted, which might possibly lead to reductions in working time and permanent exit from the labour market. They are more likely to be engaged in informal work and other vulnerable forms of employment (e.g. self-employment in small subsistence businesses, domestic work), which will further exacerbate their employment vulnerability.<sup>xi</sup>

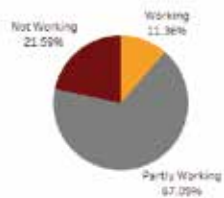
Gender of Principal Earner



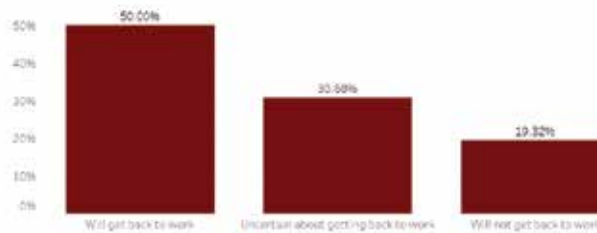
If Male Principal Earner, Whether Adult Female Members of the Household are Secondary Earners



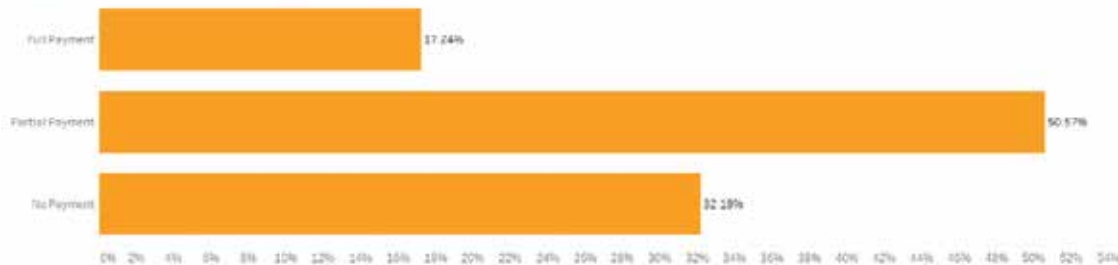
Job Status of Secondary Female Earners



Expectations Regarding Employment After Lockdown: Secondary Female Earners



Payment Status of Secondary Female Earners



Despite less than five percent of surveyed households having female principal earners, we find that close to half the surveyed households have secondary female earners, when the principal earner is male. The job status, payment status, expectations of future employment rates for secondary female earners are broadly comparable to those of principal earners.

A United Nations policy brief notes that the projected impacts of the COVID-19 global recession will result in a prolonged dip in women's incomes and labour force participation, with compounded impacts for women already living in poverty.<sup>xii</sup>



# Voices from the Field

Our survey has been conducted with our partner, Dono Consulting, a boutique consulting firm specializing in financial modeling, investment and economic research, machine learning, data science, data engineering and artificial intelligence, which also works in the field of data-driven policy. The survey was designed and the report was authored by Swastik Das, Head -- AI and Data-Driven Public Policy Research, Dono Consulting. Aanchal Sharma and Shiv Kataria, who also work with Dono Consulting worked on many of the visualizations and charts. Aanchal personally interviewed our frontline fighters, namely our teachers and staff, and recorded their experiences and observations, to compile the 'Voices from the Field' section of this report. Shiv worked on training our staff in enumeration, data-collecting, and data-entry to enable them to administer the survey. Swagata Bhattacharya, our long-time collaborator in graphic design, lent her expertise and created the design template for the survey report. Reetam Dutta worked on our outreach and social media campaign around this survey report. Khalid Masood and Tanmay Dube of Bangalore Data Engineering Consultants took up the technology implementation of the dashboard and report in a single day and we are deeply thankful for that.

The main contributors to this report has been our staff, who have always been the bedrock on which Sunaay Foundation has based its growth. Their motivation and enthusiasm to undertake new tasks and training, which were previously outside their traditional skill sets, has been humbling and inspiring at the same time. During the lockdown period, our teachers who were in constant touch with the families of many of our students, ascertained their essential needs and requirements over the phone. This information was crucial for us in formulating our strategy and response at an organizational level.

## Meet the Team



**Nisha** stays in Rangpuri, New Delhi, with her parents and two sisters. She is described as a woman of few words but a teacher who is extremely responsible and caring.



**Sandhya** stays in Masoodpur, New Delhi with her family of four, including her husband and two children. She is described as a respectful colleague who doesn't waste any time and is proactive and consistently focused on teaching the students.



## Meet the Team



**Rekha** stays in Rangpuri, Mahipalpur with three family members, her husband and one child. She has been a teacher at Sunaayy for the past six months. She is extremely happy and satisfied at her workplace due to the sense of comfort she feels and has also learnt how to be confident and clear in her communication. She is missing her students due to the lockdown.



**Sakshi** is 19 years old and lives in Kishanagarh, with a family of five. She has been working with Sunaayy for one and a half years as the main teacher for the Mandir centre. Others describe her as someone who is very soft spoken, sweet, confident, sincere but extremely strict in class, and has learnt to take so many responsibilities even though she is so young. She is currently pursuing B.A. through the open learning method while working side by side. She says she really enjoys teaching as had seemed out this opportunity to work with Sunaayy.



**Neelam** lives in Masoodpur with her family of seven. She has been the coordinator of one Sunaayy centre, done administrative and system related work for the organisation since the past five years. Her colleagues describe her as the responsibility taker and one who always finishes her work before the due date. Being the most talkative one, Nazrul said that "one can often hear more answers from her than the number of questions asked." For her the main change in working with Sunaayy has occurred in her communication skills especially with strangers. Her earlier nervous and shy demeanour has changed to confidence. She is also learnt work on scheduling, computers and tracking of donations.



## Meet the Team



**Puja Kumari** has been working for Sunaayy for the past four years as teacher and coordinator at the Dairy Centre. She lives close by in Masoodpur with her husband and child. She has seen a personal improvement in herself with a new found confidence and change in thinking after working with the organisation. She has completed an honours degree so she brings experience through knowledge and awareness to the field, and is described as a dedicated and sweet teacher in the classroom.



**Pooja Singh** is originally from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh but is currently living in the Arjan Basti, Vasant Kunj with her family of three. She has been a teacher at Sunaayy for the past one year and additionally engages in routine visits to the different slums. She is the funny one of the team who loves to imitate others to make everyone laugh. The major transformation for her has been from living in a village in Uttar Pradesh where women were asked to stay at home to stepping out of her home by herself in New Delhi, and working with such an organisation giving her the belief that she too can achieve.



**Rano** is originally from Lucknow but currently lives in Mahipalpur, New Delhi. She has been working for the past six years as a teacher, centre coordinator involving class work and meeting with the students' families. Since she is originally from a village, moving to a city and working led to a lot of development. This was mainly through learning how to communicate well giving her both confidence and independence. She is described as the most genuine and innocent teacher of the group, which reflects in how she conducts her classes in the centres as well.



## Meet the Team



**Shobha** has a family of five, including three kids who are all students of Sunaayy. She stays with them in the B5/6 basti called the Bandhu camp. She has been working with Sunaayy for the past 8 years as a teacher and coordinator of the donations. She loves working here, is happy and her life has changed for the better, since she is able to help so many kids and at the same time is able to balance her household work as well. She is the most frank teacher, who always is honest and upfront in her conversations and is known to give the best feedback and critiques.



**Uma** has been associated with Sunaayy for the past five years and has been a teacher of the Level -0 children of the school. She lives with four other family members in a house in Palam. She gets a certain happiness from teaching the kids. Earlier she had never gotten out of the house alone and that would make her nervous but today as a working woman she has gained this confidence and sense of independence through this work.



**Bhawana** is originally a native from Uttarakhand but she currently lives in Mehrauli, New Delhi. She has a family of four. She has been associated with Sunaayy for the past 4.5 months and mainly joined for teaching but has also been doing data entry work and coordination of online classes. She is not new to the field of teaching, she has a B Ed. and has been working for the past 10 years as a teacher in various organisations mainly private schools. With Sunaayy she has learnt many new things mainly to interact with non-school going children and learning about their lives and families. Her colleagues describe her as the most honest working teacher, who brings a lot of experience from the same field to the table.



## Meet the Team



**Madhavi** lives in Mangolpuri in a large joint family consisting of 16 total members in the household. She has been working with Sunaayy for the past 5 months, as mainly a coordinator and conducts online classes and does report writing, and other administrative work. She describes her experience working with as that of working with a family, the bonding in her workplace, with extremely sweet, helpful and nice staff always made her feel welcome and at home. She is often described as someone who is very sweet, who sometimes confuses instructions but works very honestly. Her dedication is also shown in her daily 3 hour travel time to work.



**Nazirul** stays alone in a flat in Delhi. He has been working with Sunaayy for the past two years and mainly has data entry work, data operations, and coordination for teachers and distributions. Others describe him as someone who constantly jokes around, is childish in nature, moody but sweet and helpful. The main change for him with Sunaayy was the interaction with education, which inspired him to start a similar school in his village back in West Bengal.



**Bharti** has been working with Sunaayy for the past one year. She resides in a rented house in Kishangarh, New Delhi with a family of six. She mainly has been a teacher in the school and more recently started doing data entry work as well. The most young and knowledgeable one of the team, she is currently also pursuing an honours degree and is in her first year of college. She believes that the friendship of sharing mutual knowledge and respect that they form with their students takes them a long way. And in her journey with Sunaayy she has been able to learn as much as taught, maybe even more.



# How Sunaayy is investing in Upskilling

For most of the team, survey and data related work was new and challenging. Sunaayy, in many ways, has empowered them to juggle their various diverse responsibilities even while working from home with the focus being investing in upskilling our staff towards professional development and technological competence.

The organisation made efforts to ensure that the necessary skills were imparted to the survey enumerators who carried out the administration of the survey, something that was new for most of them. The surveys were conducted through the phone to ensure safety of the teachers. There was regular and continuous teacher training involving English skills, communication skills, writing skills and learning how to comprehend information and questions of the survey etc. The staff support was extremely helpful, since everyone helped each other based on their own learnings making it an overall good experience in grasping these new skills. The foundation helped the teachers' households as well while they were engaged in this work. They learnt how to extract data from the ground, scan documents, work with data processing software such as MS Excel.

The benefit of such an exercise was the realisation of the difficulties that families face during the lockdown and hence ration distributions were planned in accordance with those needs. The survey enabled them to understand their problems and troubles better and at a personal level. It allowed us to coordinate distributions that cater to the local issues.

## Challenges in conducting the survey

Considering the survey method was a first-time experience, learning the new skills would have posed certain challenges for the teachers. Learning the survey conducting techniques was a challenge for most of them which they had to spend time learning. One essential skill was learning how to communicate with the participants of the survey and to motivate them to share their problems. It was also difficult to manage their different new and old responsibilities at the same time.

The major problem faced by teachers in the conduction of the survey was convincing these families regarding the need of such a survey. Many parents had questions and doubts of their own which they wanted to be clarified first. There were additional language barriers, not understanding questions correctly and many parents even avoiding calling back or were impatient, moody which hindered the process. These challenges in the survey process were overcome by re explaining the questions and explaining the benefit and purpose of such a survey that would be directed towards their needs and concerns. They were made aware of how this information will be sent ahead and used, showed them pictures of actual donations conducted by Sunaayy in the past and their social media pages as well.



Many families had or were in the process of migrating back to their villages, so it was difficult to contact some of them. Some families were unwilling to talk and would shout at teachers for interrupting their day. This was overcome by expanding the respondent pool of the survey towards families in the area whose children did not necessarily attend Sunaay centres, some of whom were more cooperative. Nonetheless, the prior relations of many families with the organisation helped and encouraged many families to be more comfortable with sharing.

Many teachers reported developing a greater sense of empathy and understanding their pain through the personal interactions with these families. They also felt empowered by understanding how important their role was and learning how to write and learn about these families in a formal format. Bhavna said, "They nevertheless accept and live through this struggle and continue to strive for something positive in the future." Shobha reported many families that would personally come to her and share their issues which then she tried to resolve through Sunaay by taking it up directly. Pooja Kumari said that, "they felt personally associated with so many lives that they learnt about."

## Major challenge for communities

The major effect of the lockdown locally as observed by the enumerators, has mainly been the loss of jobs, with companies shutting down and salaries being reduced that has made it extremely difficult for daily wage labourers to earn. Unable to sustain their livelihood in the city, many families have migrated back to their villages. Despite having many local ration distributions, families are unable to pay the daily household bills especially the rent, leading to them having to leave or be evaded from their homes. There is no food security due to the lockdown and problems in obtaining daily ration other than essential goods. All the savings for these poor families have been used up. Bhavna says that, "in general families are experiencing financial and physical weakness".

## Suggestions for government

The team reported the government measures they have seen being implemented in their localities. The main step that the government is taking is daily distributions of ration in localities which was observed by many and the provision of water and toilets. Local policemen also patrol the common marketplaces to enforce social distancing norms. Families that have ration cards have been able to get supplies, but many do not have ration cards so have not been able to get food.

The government distributions in some areas stopped after the first two months, but almost all enumerators believed that the help is still required from their end since many still need financial help.





In addition to this they believed that there are certain issues which the local municipalities and governments need to tackle to ensure the survival of many low-income families. The Delhi Government has provided internet connectivity near the slums, which was somewhat helpful for online classes. However, the connectivity does not always reach the inner areas of the slums. A suggestion for the government from Nazirul is the provision of sanitation measures in these slum areas, like the spraying of virus-killing chemicals etc. Sakshi feels the main efforts must be towards the livelihood of the affected people, and that help is required to access more medical and health facilities. Pooja Singh believes in addition to rations, even internet connectivity provisions should be there so that at least the children's education can be continued. Neelam feels that the government help is at the surface level, which does not address the deeper issues of the slums, so the connectivity and engagement is low. The government needs to provide everyone with a ration cards and focus on creating jobs.

## Role as Educators

With the imposition of the lockdown and the schools being mandatorily closed, the teachers have been unable to conduct classes in person and have had to adapt to the concept of virtual classrooms. Hence, the roles of the teachers have shifted towards more online work, involving development of computer and technological skills for both the teachers and the students. There is also an increased realization of how many things and work that each one can do from home. They have also been engaging in a lot more relief work and distribution related work also equipping them with new skills. Neelam said that, "the teachers have become a source of information for these students. This is not only regarding the reopening of schools but also about the kind of hygiene and sanitation measures they need to follow. She herself designed posters to show the children how to wash hands, to avoid touching etc." There has been a lot of interaction with trainers, other staff, and teachers through digital means.

Adapting to online classrooms can be difficult because most of such families have access to one or two devices resulting in very few students actually being able to attend. Like Bhavna herself left her phone at home on the day of the interview since her kids had to take a class. Feasibility becomes the main issue with administration of online classes since many students who want to learn may not be able to. Also, it is more difficult to gauge if the children are actually understanding what is being taught. Many do not even have access to devices or constant internet connectivity which becomes a barrier in their learning. An important concern would be that parents would usually leave their kids in the school without having to worry about their safety etc because they were taken care of so that method and relationship with the family has changed. The personal feeling and relationship with the students does not exist in online classrooms.

In the future online classrooms are likely to become essential since it is time saving for everyone involved. It is a convenient and easy method for everyone. This method is new, different, and interesting even for teachers to adapt to. Sakshi finds that her students are now even more interested in learning and so the online method helps with that, and this change is visible in the community since many private school children also want to be associated with the school. Pooja Singh says that, "online classes are especially important for smaller kids, students living far away and those in con-



tentment zones so that their education isn't halted." It helps keep the children busy as well.

Bhavna believes that in general NGO help is less in her area as observed, but organisations like Sunaayy that work at the grassroots level play a bigger role since they involve the community and cater to the direct needs of the community. Sunaayy is one of the NGOs that has not left its students since the beginning of lockdown and is continuously providing for them and their efforts will take them a long way in their impact. The role becomes even more important in bridging the gap for those people who the government is not able to reach. The provision of basic ration by Sunaayy is of utmost importance in these challenging times. Some method of online work is better than nothing. Madhavi says that, "Sunaayy is the only organisation that has been doing continuous, regular, physical groundwork and the only place where a hundred percent of the donations received are immediately distributed." Rano says that, "By word of mouth, Sunaayy has built its reputation in these localities by feeding their families throughout the past few months."

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