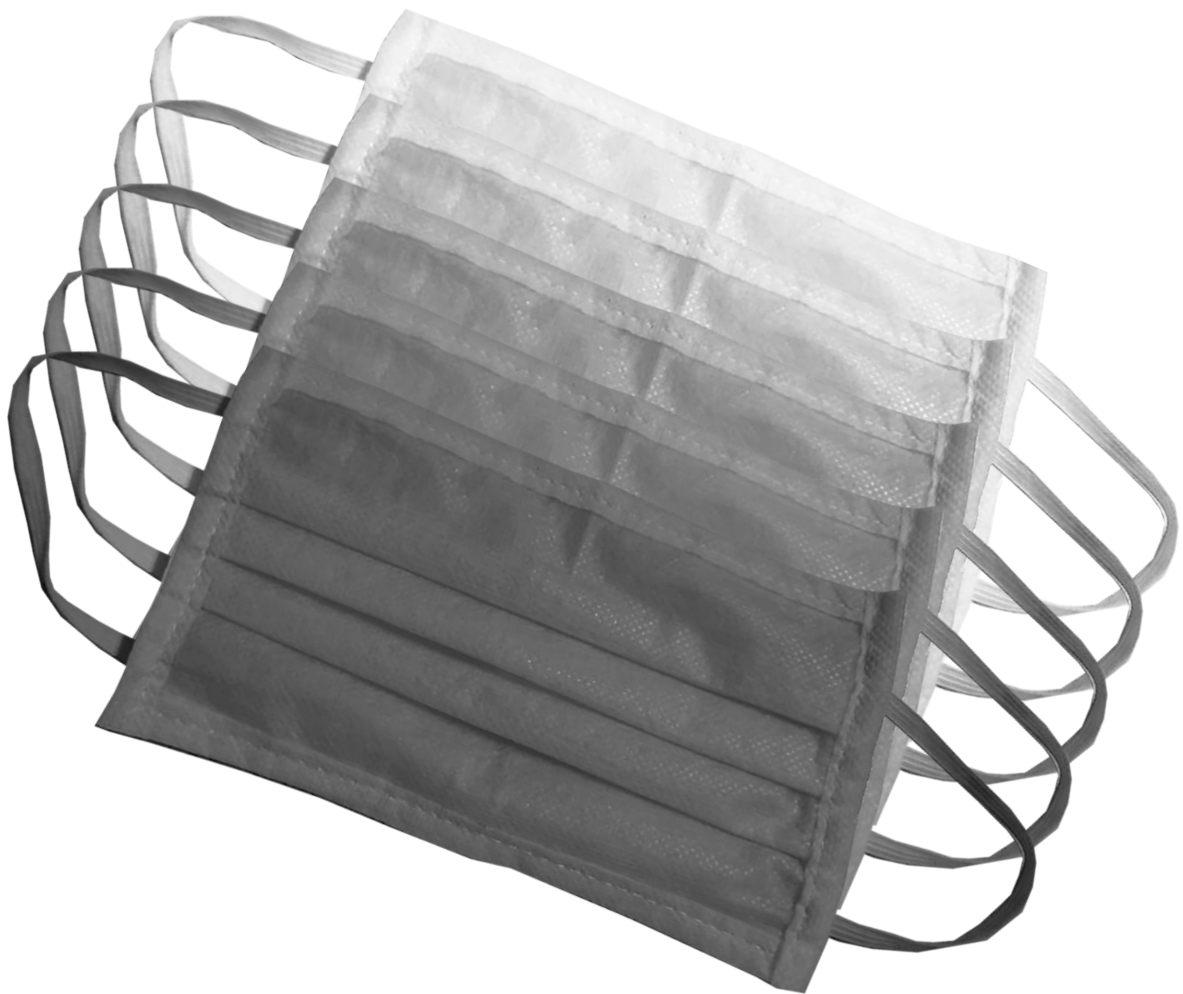


DHARAVI 2020

THE COVID-19 CHALLENGE

A collection of articles and research from urbz's work in Dharavi through the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020 - Nov 2020).



Preface

Ever since urbz set up its office in Dharavi, Mumbai, the neighbourhood has been a huge source of learning and inspiration, providing us with the best of everything that any urban practice could ask for; partners, collaborators, projects, sites, ideas, and services. Over the last decade, hundreds of architects, artists, planners, designers, social scientists and others have spent time with us, joining in our activities and working together on our projects. They made friends, enjoyed the food and tea, and learnt things beyond expectations.

When Covid-19 hit the world this year inquiries came pouring in from this network, about how Dharavi was faring. For us these pandemic months meant being physically away from our office - something that our teammates were just not used to.

Like everyone else, we were also worried. The challenges that Covid represented in terms of urban spaces that were dense and intimate - values that we cherished about Dharavi -- now became points of anxiety. Media reports were already predicting apocalyptic scenarios - both for Dharavi in particular and Mumbai as a whole.

However, we also knew, like others familiar with this neighbourhood - that crowds, density, and a lack of infrastructure are not stand alone features here. They are mediated by a strong sense of community, strong local leadership, and a proven ability in its inhabitants to manage their lives.

We continued having faith in the impressive human resources that this neighbourhood has. We developed a way of reaching out to our friends throughout the year, by using phones and the internet to connect with them. This communication became the foundation of the regular updates our team prepared over the months.

We present the entire pandemic related compilation over here and look forward to queries, feedback, and continued discussions.

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ARTICLES

Dharavi vs Virus | April 7, 2020



Awareness campaigns about wearing masks

March 24th, India went into a 21 day lock down to maintain social distancing. People were asked to work from home, only step out for essentials and wash their hands frequently. Prior to this announcement, the inter and intra state transportation was restricted. These were part of 'crucial' efforts to curb the spread of the novel Covid-19.

How is this top down mandate being followed by people living in high density settlements? What are the implications of these mandates on the ground? Our collaborators, friends and colleagues have been updating us about the ground realities.

There is no doubt that the lockdown was necessary, though the entire class-biased machinery that was initiated, was by no means sensitive to a majority of people. It is true that the urgency to respond to the spread of this dangerous virus, the lockdown, was maybe the only known and globally sanctioned solution. However, the instructions given during

the announcement and the four hour window before it took effect were inconsiderate to a large population of urban dwellers. Only people who could afford to stay 'home', maintain 'social distance' from others and manage to buy weeks worth of groceries all at once could follow the mandate.

In spite of all this, it was heartening to hear the stories of people from Dharavi fighting the spread of the virus. They took it upon themselves to help each other. Some residents pooled their resources to feed starving labourers. For many, the fear of death due to starvation is more real than the

threat from the virus itself. Local youth and leaders are organising food and other essentials for people as grocery stores are running low on supplies. Ration shops are being advised to take stock of listed mobile numbers and message ration card owners to come in allotted time slots. These precautions are being taken to prevent large gatherings of people in the narrow lanes outside these shops. Dharavi's multiple small scale manufacturing industries have diverted their resources to manufacturing masks that can be used during the crisis. These are all self-organized, local, user -driven responses to implement the mandate.

Of course, there are huge challenges as well. In Dharavi, the inside and the outside are coterminous. Living spaces and work spaces often overlap. People often only congregate to sleep at night. Day time is spent at an outdoor or indoor workplace. In houses of 10ft X 15ft there are often more than 5 people living, making it impossible to stay indoors



Masks manufactured in Dharavi



Packing of rations by local residents and NGO's

the whole time. Some rooms do not have proper light and ventilation depends on the availability of exhaust fans to provide some respite. These are not optimal conditions for a quarantine and lockdown which prohibits people from stepping outside. It is a huge challenge though several families manage to do it.

The impossibility of implementing a strict mandate in Dharavi has led to events whose outcomes defy the whole purpose of the lockdown. A few days ago, 7-10 boys had stepped out of their homes to go to the playground - much needed respite from poorly lit and ventilated spaces, this escalated into police control and retaliation that ended up shoving 50 young men into jail!

It's an accepted fact that, during difficult situations people depend on their social capital, which they have harnessed through social networks, especially the groups that are most vulnerable. Many people in Dharavi operate within dual household

networks, with homes and families back in their villages. The lockdown made them anxious because of the curtailed train service within the country. Some managed to go back to their village before the lockdown was imposed. The ones who couldn't are desperately waiting for the train service to resume and go back to their ancestral homes. Many of these people are mistakenly perceived as migrant labour, but in reality work seasonally, shifting between employment in urban centres and their villages. Returning home is routine and regular. The difference this time was that it was all at once for millions of such workers all over the city (and the country) complemented by restrictions on the main mode of mobility - trains - leading to a breakdown.

Dharavi has a huge number of tool-houses - spaces that double up as work and living quarters. In some cases this was super helpful as workshops could actually produce masks - something that even cities like New York found it difficult for some

time. This ability of Dharavi to be locally resilient through its internal arrangement is something that definitely needs to be highlighted! Besides, for many workers, the tool-houses also became their residences and helped them collectively manage some degree of social distancing in the way a family does.

Of course, working from home is not always an option for many other people. The vast number of women from Dharavi who work as domestic help in neighbourhoods outside, have been unable to work. While some of their employers can afford to pay them their monthly salary, most cannot. Many are worried that there could be a lasting backlash of vilifying Dharavi as an unhygienic settlement, making many people choose not to hire people from Dharavi due to a fear of contracting the virus.

Dharavi made it to international headlines when



Distribution of packed meals by residents



Tool-houses: live-work spaces

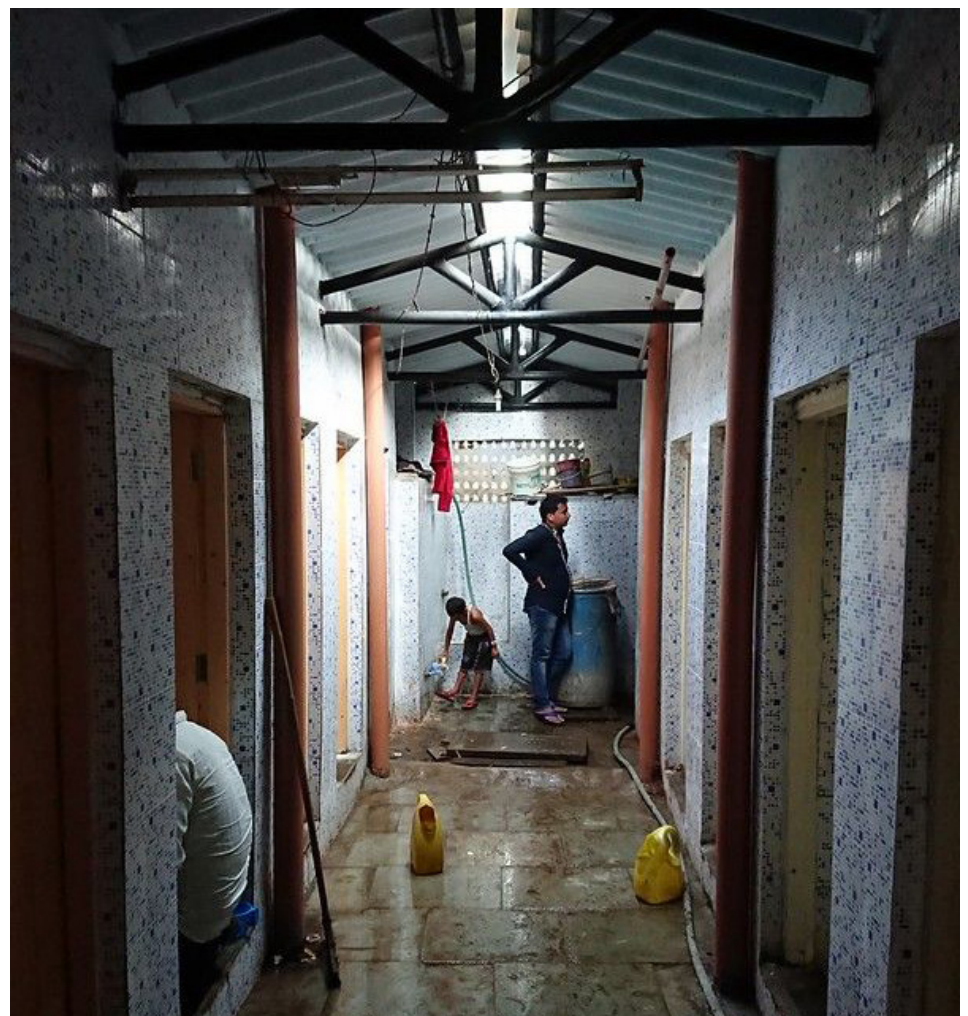
a resident tested positive and subsequently died. It is undeniable that access to preventive and palliative healthcare is in short supply for most residents of Dharavi, exposing the inequalities in our healthcare system. Medical experts and local residents had warned about the danger Covid-19 would bring to homegrown settlements (nearly half the population of the city). However, despite early warnings, it took the first death in Dharavi to sound the alarm. The neighbourhood is now being branded as a “ticking time-bomb” in the media. Understandably, this has spread more fear among the residents of the neighbourhood and the surrounding places. The authorities announced that they would deploy 4000 health workers to test suspected cases. On the ground though, it was reported that some civic workers were reluctant to visit the interiors of Dharavi and only ended up disinfecting buildings on the periphery.

The neighbourhood has other pressing health concerns which have been neglected for years. In the light of the lockdown

the most obviously contagious places in Dharavi are the public/community toilets. These toilets do not even have running water supply and each toilet caters to more than 300-400 people. While the lockdown requires people to stay in their homes, how can one stop the use of community toilets and deny people access to basic sanitation? In spite of

this, people have managed to self regulate, practice social distancing when waiting in queue and made sure a supply of soap was regular.

All of these emerging incidents are inevitable when a government announces a lockdown without a nuanced understanding of its population’s needs, behaviour and coping mechanisms. And, more importantly, without having adaptive strategies that can respond to ground realities of the millions of people without gainful employment. While many organisations have risen to the occasion, responding to the crisis in real-time, responses would have been more effective if there had been a thought out preparatory program with inputs coming from the neighbourhood itself. Dharavi



Public toilets in Dharavi

has a lot of self-organized networks and local leaders who could have been strong players in such a scenario - and helped reduce any extreme repercussions.

Residents in Dharavi know well that living in close knit communities, both spatially and socially, has implications on the spread of the virus. But some of them also point out that high density conditions can be found in other habitats as well. A crisis can just as well prevail in a crowded elevator of a high rise apartment. And anyway, global mobility and the relatively unregulated entry of infected residents from elsewhere need to be foregrounded in this particular health crisis as much as dense conditions!

Historically, we have seen how narratives of health have been used by urban planning discourses selectively. Many policies get justified using that discourse. It is a trap in which one should not fall. Roots of colonial urban planning lie in segregationist strategies. The traditional way of dealing with disease by colonisers has been to keep a safe distance from the local population considered to harbour all kinds of diseases. We need to question why health allows us to justify further segregation and firewalling rather than focussing on improvement of living conditions for all?

We cannot be selective about who is taken care of, everyone is in the same boat regardless of caste, creed or income. This current crisis has demonstrated

in heart-breaking ways the negative impact of a top-down mandate. Our learning is that we need to trust local networks, capacities and systems more as they are best equipped to implement and regulate realities on the ground - no matter how challenging and seemingly impossible. At the same time - we need to constantly strive towards improving the quality of life of neighbourhoods by partnering and working closely with exactly those local resources.



Deserted Streets of Dharavi



On the move, the Kule family from Konkan Nagar, Bhandup (2017)

Emerging visuals of millions of Indians walking for miles along highways are being increasingly compared to the chaos that followed the country's partition in the middle of the twentieth century. When the Indian subcontinent bi-furcated along religious lines, millions of people were forced to migrate across newly formed national borders. Lives uprooted at one place were hoping to be regenerated at another, unfamiliar one. In the process communal riots took tens of millions of lives.

From the images circulating today it is understandable that such comparisons get made. Both these historical events are man-made disasters resulting from bold and miscalculated

top-down decisions. On March 24th, 2020 in a matter of a few hours between 8 pm and midnight all the trains that carry a record number of 9 billion people a year along with buses, were immobilised. This resulted in a previously obscured multitude, hidden in the shadow of India's economy, to take to the road by foot in what appears to be the largest ever urban exodus. The crowd currently on the roads from cities to villages share a common underprivileged status. This is where we need to stop comparing the two events.

What the millions of exhausted, tired countrymen on the move are doing is exactly what they always did during moments of

uncertainty in their lives for the last several decades. Go back home to their villages till they feel secure enough to come back. They have always relied on long-established channels between the village and the city as their economic and social lifeline. Something that few authorities acknowledged. The difference is that they are all doing it at once, and in a manner that is severely handicapped by a lockdown of what they always relied on - cheap public transport - especially the railways. They are not refugees returning home as the last refuge. Their lives are organically connected to homes far away from where they work.

Hundreds of millions of Indian

families have always organized their lives around their ability to move back and forth from urban hubs providing economic and educational opportunities to their ancestral homes in the remotest parts of the country. These well-established patterns have for long been ignored by urban policy advisors, researchers, civic rights activists, the government and the middle-class at large. This mobile rural-urban proletariat, which services every level of the Indian economy, from domestic

work to driving rickshaws and ubers to producing consumer goods, is literally everywhere - though largely unrecognised. Even the Indian census can't identify individuals that are neither rural or urban, farmers or construction workers but both at once.

In a country with one of the largest and busiest train networks in the world, where journeys are routinely made across hundreds of kilometers at a fraction of what a similar journey would cost in Europe

or China, we are suddenly reminded of distances and borders. The returning millions are being called irresponsible and selfish with orders for the state boundaries to be closed to their movements. This is forcing them to take even longer and more perilous routes to reach their homes; or else they risk getting stuck for weeks or months in military camps that the central government now wants to set up along highways.

Awareness of a phenomenon that's neither new nor receding could have avoided the terrible hardship currently suffered by hundreds of millions of so-called "circular migrants" that have been ordered, along with every other Indian to "stay at home" and who are now stranded on their way there. Like millions of similar citizens in other parts of the Asian and the African continents, a good portion of urban India's working classes belong to dual household families which have connections to both villages and cities. This is what makes them survive and manage lives in an economic setting that is hopelessly geared towards increasing inequalities. Instead of finding affordable accommodation in cities they find themselves 'homeless' because they are disenfranchised thanks to their dual belonging.

In the city today, their precarious existence faces risks that are much more tangible than the virus. It's not just the lack of food and money to pay rent that drives them on the road, but also the impossibility



Konkan Nagar under lockdown



The Kule family in lockdown, Konkan Nagar, Bhandup

lives and money. But what is needed beyond any emergency measures, is a recognition of a demographic reality where the village and city are irremediably connected in vast urban-rural networks that are a safety net for those who make India function and who represent it's best hope for the future. If their lives and necessary journeys were recognized, then measures could be taken to look after their needs with decent urban accommodation, basic health care in cities and villages, then the spread of the pandemic would have been curtailed substantially.

of staying locked in for weeks with relatives or fellow workers in hyper crowded urban accommodations, often lacking ventilation, fresh air or running water.

They move not because they want to defy the government or as happened in Europe, because they prefer being locked in their holiday homes rather than city apartments, but because they have no choice.

The pandemic has exposed India's limited record of looking

after its urban-rural workforce which keeps its jumbo-sized economy going at subsidised rates. By scrambling to stop the spread of the virus through stopping millions of reluctant Indians from returning to their enclave of social security, it has only made it worse.

At a time when the virus has probably not yet spread out of control, providing the means for an orderly return to the village in trains and buses running at half capacity to make social distancing possible, could have saved



It is widely known that Dharavi is an active manufacturing hub. Industries, operating from thousands of tool-Houses, have been manufacturing goods for the local and global markets for decades. It supplies the leather industry with export quality goods. It supplies processed food and garments for sale to local and regional markets. Its well organised recycling industry ensures that most of the plastic produced by the city finds a new use.

The most obvious question in today's pandemic inflicted times is this; can't the potential of such a neighbourhood be harnessed to produce masks and other equipment and products that are in high demand at the moment?

The answer is both yes and no. Dharavi has the capacity. But it can't do this on a large scale without systematic support and a recognition of its capacity. Dharavi's home-scale manufacturing units have the potential to respond quickly to clients' needs. The neighbourhood can produce masks ranging from simple ones for personal use to medical grade ones for professional purposes, face shields, gowns, and gloves. It could even produce hand sanitizer and soap. They have proved this in the case of the present crisis. Diverting resources at hand to produce much needed masks for the local population did happen on a small scale. Unfortunately, the process was accompanied

by uncertainty, fear and prejudice.

The masks, a thousand of them, were made on an experimental basis by a family from Dharavi. They could not do this openly. Nor are they expecting a repeat order. The reason? They fear a backlash by the authorities in the absence of an authorised license for manufacturing masks. People from Dharavi have been harassed in the past for producing something they were not licensed to do. Even though they had the skills capacity and the tools. Even the thousand masks they made could not be easily transported to a key distributor in Dharavi - because of the fear of the authorities.

The masks may not be of a

personal protective equipment (PPE) standard, but would have been better than no protection at all for the general population. Families who make products such as school bags, sanitary napkins and other products can easily churn out much needed masks. Such businesses are willing to contribute to a national, even global effort to fight the pandemic. But they were not encouraged to do so - in fact quite the opposite.

Many families are in dire need of income to sustain themselves. Instead of giving them the opportunity to build on existing resources and directing it to produce masks, city authorities made it difficult. All they had to do was to encourage home-based, family managed units - which were already complying to the

needs of self-isolation and quarantines. Additionally, pick-ups and distribution networks could have been organised to deliver this essential commodity.

Such an immediate response to the need for masks is something that larger machineries of the state and even developed countries are struggling to meet. The USA is having to rely on large scale manufacturing units from China to supply masks for medical staff in bulk. European countries are trading masks within the EU as new hot-spots have emerged. Governments are now encouraging decentralized production systems to reduce the pressure on manufacturers of medical supplies. The USA has issued guidelines to make DIY masks. These can be made of recycled

T-shirts or other cotton cloth. In Switzerland, 6 handcrafted reusable triple cotton masks are sold for CHF 40 (Rs 3000). The masks made in Dharavi are highly affordable, with a manufacturing cost of Rs.10/ piece.

In India, the need for a mammoth production of masks is obvious, however, a centralised supply chain cannot cope with this demand. Immediately after the first few cases of COVID-19, cities started running out of masks and hand sanitizers. Even hospitals are running low on personal protective equipment. Relying on centralised, standardised mask production will not meet the needs of millions, it would be prudent to encourage people to opt for home based production of the masks for common use.



Masks - Made in Dharavi

In states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the government is supporting the manufacturing of masks at all scales. Self-organised women's groups, like Kudumbshree, are expanding their operations to produce masks. The state prisons are also being converted to mask manufacturing hubs, engaging prisoners to help make masks.



Recycled plastic from Dharavi's 13th Compound

Dharavi residents unfortunately, even those who are making masks on a small scale, are hesitant to be open about it. Besides concerns around licensing issues, they fear that their masks may end up being stigmatized, thanks to the pervasive vilification of informal settlements as unhygienic. They fear that people will refuse to buy masks made in Dharavi. This is not a baseless sentiment. A few well-intentioned manufacturing set-ups in the neighbourhood have actually had to shut down due to the stigma. But if we are willing to wear masks made by prisoners, why can't we get them from the same workshops that produce the Papadam we consume all over the city or the shirts that we wear?



Leather workshop

It is time we legitimised modes of production in Dharavi and asked ourselves why, even in times of medical emergencies, we refuse to recognize the potential and opportunities staring at us in our face?



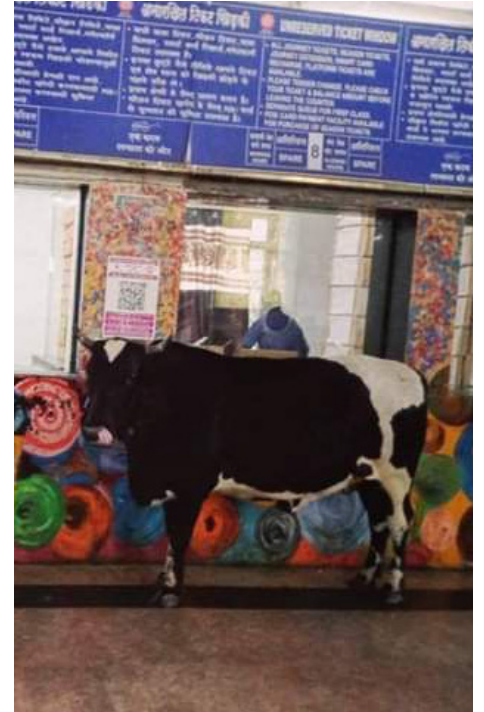
Display in a leather shop of Dharavi

Covid-19 In A Post Wild World | April 14, 2020

Amidst news of wildlife taking over various cities around the globe during this unprecedented lockdown, we find ourselves reacting enthusiastically by the 'takeover' of non-human species. We are collectively intrigued by this possibility. Movies like Jumanji come to mind that create a terrifyingly playful juxtaposition of wildlife in the city. Yet, we must be aware of using the word 'takeover'. While it implies a deep desire on behalf of animal lovers, it also belies the notion that cities are the sole realm of humans. This however, is not the case.

Animals have inhabited urban

these creatures living in and around our cities. Cities display varying degrees of human-animal interactions. Some animals are domesticated for different purposes – food, companionship or both. India has large populations of stray animals, like dogs, cats and cows who, unlike their domesticated counterparts, do not directly depend on humans. Some animals thrive on the waste from human settlements. In Mumbai, the ubiquitous crows and rats offer free food recycling services to the city. Then there are the wild animals, including predator species. Mumbai is home to 21 Leopards that live in and



A cow at a train ticket counter

However, to consider some of these animals as purely wild or misfits in the urban realm, is a facile reading of a reality that is far more complex. Boundaries between animal and human habitats are not impermeable or fixed. Species are directly or indirectly interacting with each other. There are no pristine habitats, just habitats with varying degrees of human intervention. Urban areas are created by the urbanization of Nature and urbanising contexts provide settings for novel, unprecedented interactions with animals. In species rich countries like India, this entails the urbanization of animals that now find themselves either surrounded by or pushed to the fringes of the city.

While stray or wild animals living in urban areas are not the direct responsibility of humans, they are always negotiating the urban



Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai (Photo by Nikit Surve)

areas since the birth of human settlements. Indian cities are habitats for a vast number and variety of animals that are part of Indian urban life. It has taken an extreme scenario like the pandemic, to spotlight

around the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, not to mention the Mugger crocodiles of Powai lake and the large populations of birds, bats, reptiles and insects that call the city home.



Horse for hire on Mumbai's streets

environment to minimise risks, obtain food and seek shelter. In the past few weeks, many stories have emerged of wild animals roaming freely on city streets usually dominated by humans and motorised transport. Some of these animals, like the deer of Nara park in Japan and the monkeys in Thailand are now compelled to move about the city in search of food. Normally, food is accessible to them as a result of human activities. In Mumbai, animal lovers are venturing out despite the lockdown to feed animals who are struggling to find food on streets devoid of humans. In other instances, animals usually associated with the wilderness are being spotted in city centres. After nearly three decades an endangered spotted malabar Civet was seen on the streets of Calicut. In more thrilling news, a

Puma has been 'exploring' the streets of Santiago, Chile. Even though these animals evoke the wilderness, in reality, they dwell in urban and peri-urban areas. Their territories and behaviour unavoidably linked to the project of urbanisation. It is evident that we live in a post-wild world.

But here is where human-animal interactions get inextricably linked to the genesis of the pandemic. COVID-19 is a zoonotic virus. The spectrum of coronaviruses, are zoonotic diseases- born of human-animal interactions. Bats are understood to be the hosts of COVID-19. This could have been transmitted from bats to other intermediate animal hosts. These hosts could be any of the species that were sold at the Huanan wholesale seafood market - the market in Wuhan China, from where the virus has spread all over the world.

Bats do carry coronaviruses, but humans are exposed only if they eat or handle them. The bats are more likely to transmit the virus if their own immune systems are compromised. Degradation of wild-life habitat compromises the health of



Neighbourhood cat

ecosystems, making animals, including bats, more likely to fall sick. There is a correlation between quality of habitat and health, and further between quality of habitat and type of human intervention. Negative human-nature interactions are responsible for the decline of global ecosystemic health.

Now more than ever, we are forced to acknowledge these interactions and try to mediate them. While there are evident dangers in the consumption of wildlife, it is probably more dangerous, if post COVID -19, we choose to systematically exclude animals from the urban realm. Ecological approaches to urbanism posit the myriad benefits of biodiversity, including economic ones. We cannot afford to see ourselves as isolated or separate from other sentient creatures. For

better or worse, we are all connected. With prejudice and panic running high, how can our cities continue to negotiate this vital kinship with other species? The aftermath of the pandemic can have a spectrum of outcomes for urban animals.

In an extreme scenario, we may be tempted to further exclude animals from the urban environment; this strategy could amplify biophobia and lead to a hyper-sanitised ideal for the built environment. This would be an urban imagination not only devoid of animals, but stripped bare of all biodiverse habitats, and consequently of the benefits of human-nature interactions. Stories of people abandoning their pets, due to fears of them being carriers of COVID-19 have already featured in the news. Reinforcing these fears is the case of the

cat in Belgium which was diagnosed with COVID-19, and more recently a Tiger in New-York's Bronx Zoo that has tested positive. What does this mean for the future of animals in human settlements - abandonment, evacuation or genocide?

On the other hand, if we continue considering animals as part of the urban, we must do so knowing that a place for non-humans does not mean that we minimize human needs, but, that we recognize the legitimacy of the non-human as part of urban communities and devise ways to co-exist. We already see this happening around us. The fisherfolk of Dharavi Koliwada, despite the high levels of pollution in Mumbai's estuarine habitat, have created safe havens for fish breeding. These are people whose livelihood directly depends on a healthy ecosystem and have the traditional knowledge and motivation to care for it. This is an exemplar of interdependency and inclusion of the non-human in the urban metabolic. Maybe it is time we re-imagine cities as inclusive for all species. While it is clear that anthropocentrism cannot serve us much longer, we can put our money on fostering a reciprocity with the non-human. This reciprocity could steer the evolution of ecologically and economically resilient urban habitats.



A fishing pond in the Mithi River

DHARAVI

WEEKLY

A REPORT OF HOW DHARAVI COPES WITH COVID-19

This is the first of a weekly report from our ongoing research in Dharavi as we speak to migrant labourers, factory owners, families and social activists about the current situation, the challenges they face and how they manage them.

This data has been collected through phone interviews with 30 people and will be updated every week .

BIGGEST FEARS

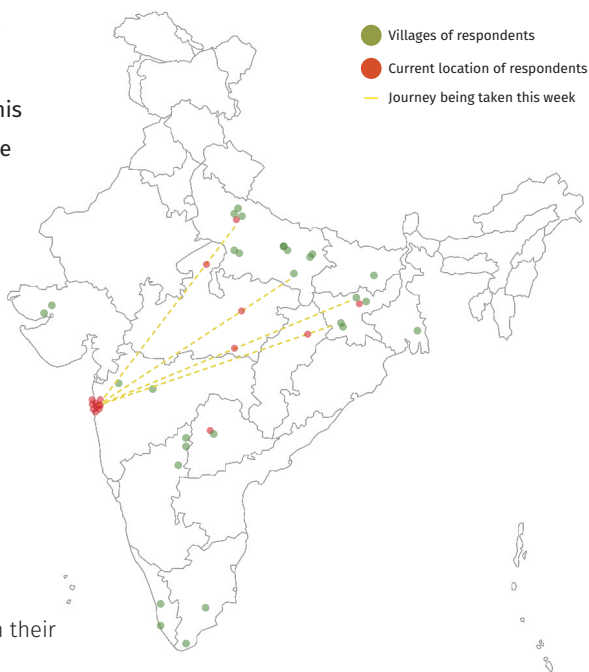
- #1 BEING HUNGRY
- #2 BEING MISDIAGNOSED
- #3 CATCHING COVID-19
- #4 POLICE
- #5 FINANCIAL LOSS

MOBILITY AND MIGRATION



Dharavi locals on the road

A large segment of the Indian urban population have strong connections with their homes and families in the villages. This connection is facilitated by the affordability of the Indian railway services which have come to a standstill in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving many families and workers stranded in a city that is providing them little comfort and security.



90%

Respondents are in touch with their families in the village.

66.7%

Respondents said they would return to their villages right now if given a choice. 20% said they'd prefer to stay.

56.7%

Respondents are currently with their families.

STORIES

What they say

The lockdown has taken a toll on the economy, small businesses having suffered the most. Many small scale entrepreneurs say that it might take at least 6 months to restart the system and get the wheels turning. Many workers will go back to their village as soon as they can leaving little workforce in Dharavi to keep the activity going.

“ Please provide us with some financial help and let us go home in a proper manner ”
- Stuck Migrant Worker

“Why not use ready vacant SRA buildings as quarantine centers rather than spending on building new infrastructure?”
- Community Leader

“We cannot afford to pay bills and taxes and EMIs. Forgive them at least till next year?”
- Small business owner

Wheels in motion

“I had no money to pay for private transport so I cycled for 15 days to reach home.”

Festivities checked

With current restrictions to curb the spread of Corona virus, religious buildings are closed and gatherings are banned. Many migrants are unable to visit their villages to celebrate with their families.

“We won't be celebrating Eid this year. We are fasting and in our daily prayers, we are asking for help and mercy for this world.”

Almost home

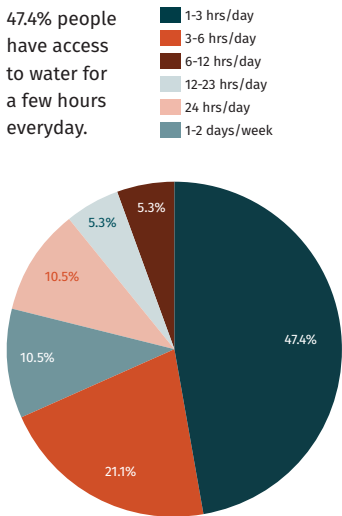
“I am on my way back home. I left Mumbai on Wednesday. This truck driver has charged Rs 4000 each and I am cramped up in this small space with 18 strangers. We are surviving on bananas but it will be all worth it. I will hopefully see my little girl tonight.”

ACCESS TO

The charts laid out below are indications of basic facilities that people have access to as long-term or short-term residents of Dharavi. Of the 30 people who we interviewed in total, 17 were workers, 5 were community leaders and 8 families/ small business owners.

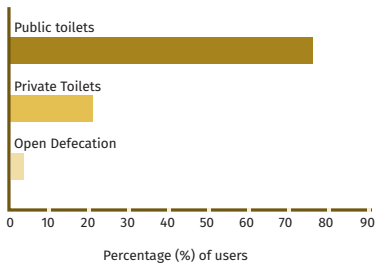
Water

47.4% people have access to water for a few hours everyday.



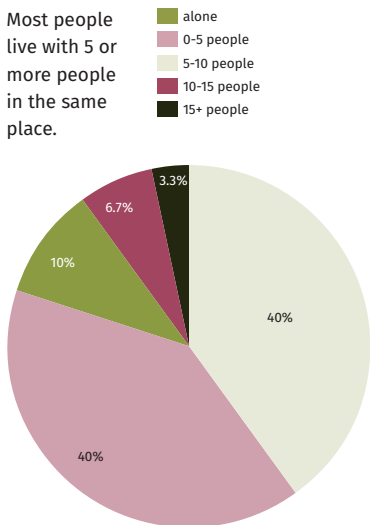
Toilets

The chart below shows what percentages of respondents who use public, private and no toilet respectively



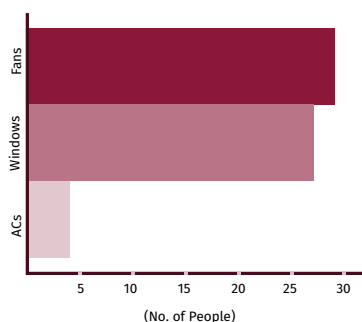
Living space

Most people live with 5 or more people in the same place.



Ventilation

In conversations we found that while most people had fans and windows in their homes; some live in homes of tin walls that have neither. On the other hand a small group of respondents have ACs. The bar chart shows the numbers for each respectively.



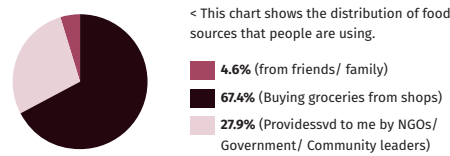
Food

30%

Respondents said they don't have enough food this week.

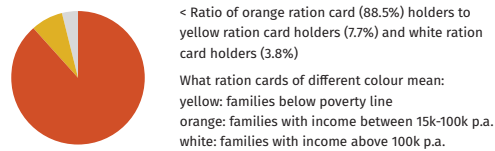
"I am buying food for now but I don't know if I will be able to afford it next month. I only have Rs 2000 in my bank account."

- Daily wage migrant worker



Ration Cards

46% respondents said they have ration cards, 36% said theirs is with a family member who is not with them, 3% said they use another family members card and 13% said they don't have one.



Information

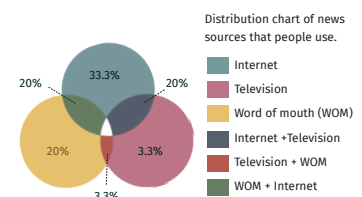
93%

Respondents said they have credit on their prepaid phones at the moment, but many are unsure if they will be able to afford it in the coming weeks.

News

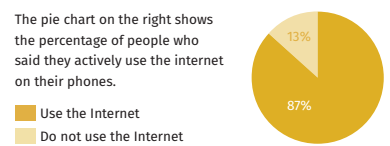
20%

Respondents said they do not have access to news from media sources.



Internet Use

The pie chart on the right shows the percentage of people who said they actively use the internet on their phones.



People receiving food from community leaders.

Many of the workers stuck in Dharavi sleep at their workplace. Ventilation and light is often lacking. The hot and humid summers of Mumbai are adding to their troubles. In some cases, the basic necessities like water and sanitation are not available easily either. Crowded public toilets are also creating fears amongst the people.

In these days of hardship, grassroots community leaders are on the field organizing and distributing food and supplies. Whereas small business owners are taking care of their workers who cannot go home.

"The main reason for the inequity in the distribution is the missing co-ordination between the NGOs - community leaders - government."

- Local Activist

A REPORT OF HOW DHARAVI COPE WITH COVID-19

This is the second weekly report on how Dharavi is dealing with the pandemic and the government's response to it. The information has been collated from 58 phone interviews with migrant workers, families, and community leaders from Dharavi.

BEING HUNGRY IS THE BIGGEST FEAR IN DHARAVI

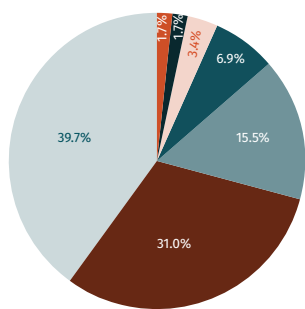
“Once we find the vaccine, the fear of Corona will go away but people will grow bitter”
- Community Leader

ACCESS To

Over the last 2 weeks, we have interviewed 32 migrant workers, 17 small business owners, 6 community leaders and 3 homemakers.

Water

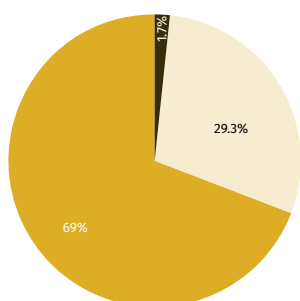
- 1-2 days/week Only 15% respondents said they have water 24 hours a day.
- 2-4 days/week
- 1-3 hrs/day
- 3-6 hrs/day
- 6-12 hrs/day
- 13-23 hrs/day
- 24 hours/day



Toilets

Percentages of people who have access to public, private or no toilets respectively.

- Public toilets 69.1% people use community toilets.
- Private Toilets
- Open Defecation

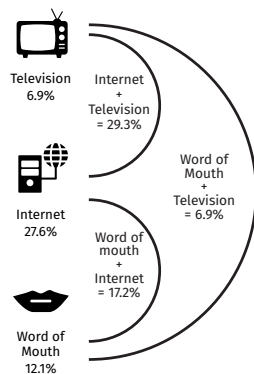


Food

24.1% Respondents said they do not have enough food since last week.

Information

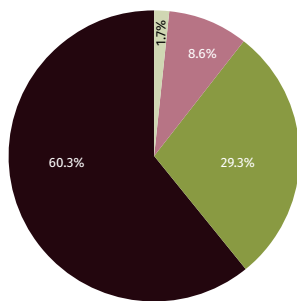
The chart below shows the percentage distribution of news sources that respondents use.



Living space

The number of people respondents share their home with.

- 0-5 people 60.7% respondents share a home with 0-5 people.
- 5-10 people
- 10-15 people
- 15+ people



STORIES

Quarantined

Some wait, some walk, some cycle, some travel cramped in small vehicles for more money than they can afford, just to get home where there is hope of comfort and safety. When they finally reach home, they have to spend another 14 days in quarantine.

Abhimanyu Modi drove his taxi for 2 days to Ranchi with his family. Along the way he offered a lift to a stranger who was walking back to Jharkhand. On reaching Ranchi, the stranger was tested and found to be positive for Covid-19. Now they're all quarantined in a local school and have been unable to go home.

What measures?

When asked what kind of help the people of Dharavi need right now, a local community leader answered saying "I pray before having my meal that as I am getting enough food, everyone should get the same. No one should sleep without food. I don't think anyone was hungry in Dharavi before the lockdown. They should be provided with enough food daily" he further added that "people won't die because of Corona virus as much as they will of hunger. A poor person won't sleep hungry because he doesn't hesitate to ask for help, same with the rich; they can afford food. The middle class can't ask for help or afford food. They will die of hunger. I am feeling bad for them."

Credit? You said it

A female respondent in Dharavi spoke to us about the difficulty in finding medical supplies. She was grateful to be able to take credit from the local pharmacy because she couldn't afford to buy some medicines she needed after her recent angioplasty and hysterectomy. She also told us about her cousin who has had to borrow money from friends to support his family.

On another instance, a tailor said he's been having to take credit from the local shop to recharge his phone as he's been out of work for many weeks now.

PLAN B - BACK TO THE VILLAGE

Cities like Mumbai have a large migrant population that are attracted by the job opportunities that the city offers. They contribute enormously to the functioning of the city while maintaining a strong connection with their ancestral village. This massive workforce came out of the shadows due to the distress caused by the lockdown.

For many workers and families, their village is their 'Plan B', their fall back safety net. In a situation where the city is unable to provide work, income, safety, food, or services; the only viable option is to go back to the village where they can be assured that the basic necessities will be met. The seasonal cycle of working in the city for a better part of the year and visiting village-homes once or twice is very common. But the way the current crisis has been unfolding for migrant workers, we cannot help question if our cities will continue to be desirable destinations to work in.

Rohit Nirmal has been working in Dharavi for the past 8 years. He manages to visit his family in the village at least twice a year but because of these difficult times which does not guarantee job security, he is considering not coming back to the city even after the lockdown ends. *"I don't think I'll come back. I'll go to my village and start farming. I have my brothers in my village. We own some land and we grow a lot of vegetables."* But on the other hand, for small business owners like Abbas, this is not an option. He is a 3rd generation migrant, His grandfather came to Mumbai in 1921. Even though he has connections with his village in Kutch, his family has grown stronger roots in Dharavi.

69%

Respondents said they would like to return to their villages today if given a chance.

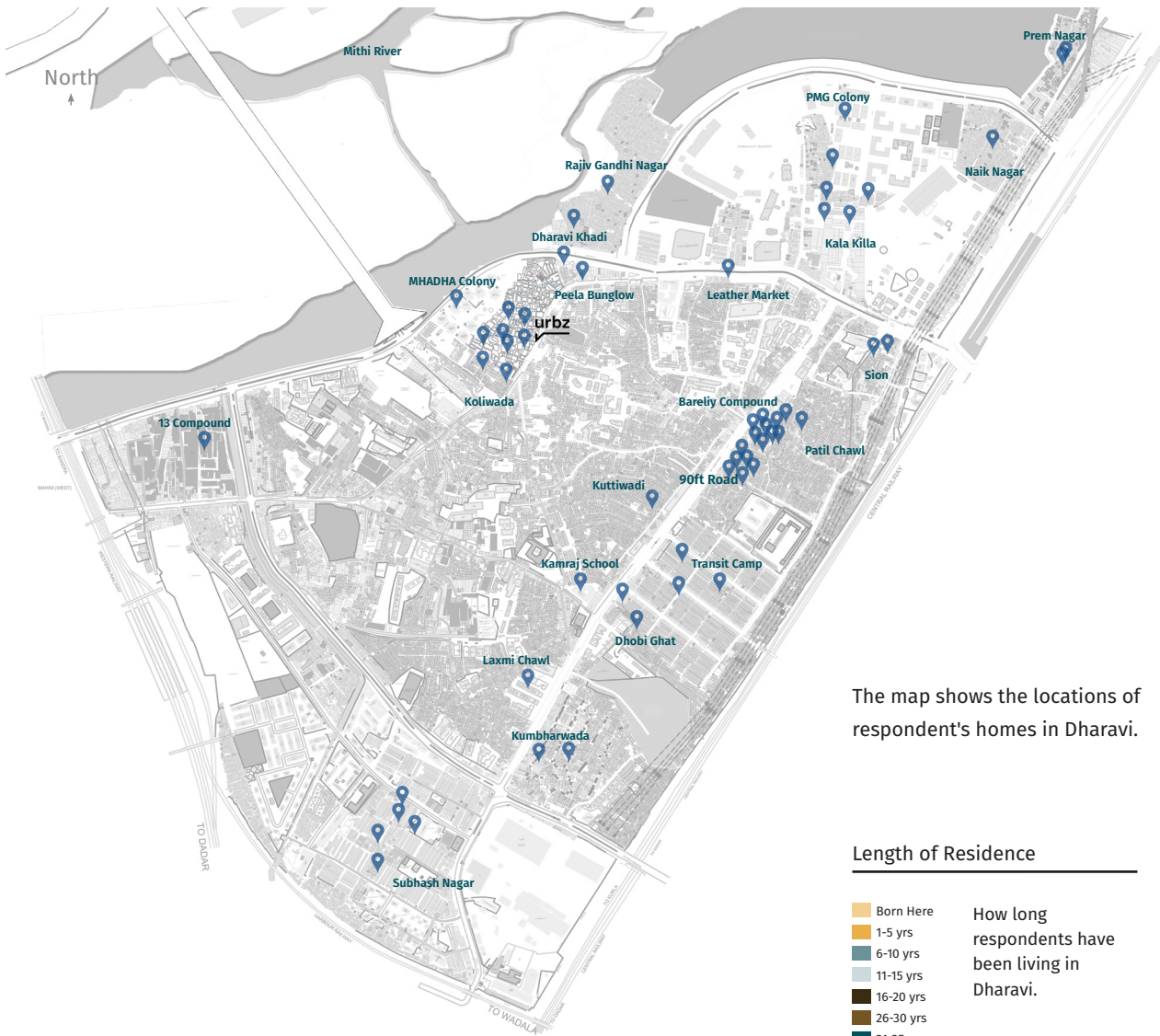
19%

Respondents said they would not like to return to their villages today if given a chance.

12%

Respondents said they had travelled to and reached their villages already.

"I don't think I'll come back. I'll go to my village and start farming. I have my brothers in my village. We own some land and we grow a lot of vegetables"



The map shows the locations of respondent's homes in Dharavi.

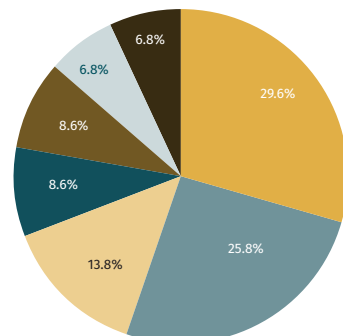
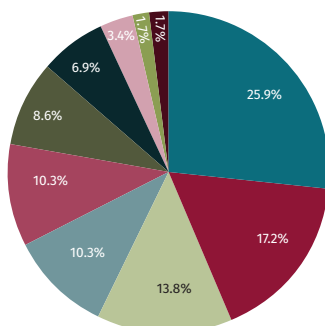
Length of Residence

How long respondents have been living in Dharavi.

Age

The age distribution of the people we have interviewed.

- 16-20 yrs
- 21-25 yrs
- 26-30 yrs
- 31-35 yrs
- 36-40 yrs
- 41-45 yrs
- 46-50 yrs
- 51-55 yrs
- 56-60 yrs
- 61-65 yrs



A REPORT OF HOW DHARAVI COPES AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

This is the third weekly report on how Dharavi is coping with Covid-19. We concentrate on the food distribution effort initiated at community level. This is a qualitative study collated from 13 in-depth phone interviews of community leaders.

THE COMMUNITY LEADERS FEAR A FOOD SHORTAGE IF THE CONFINEMENT CONTINUES

“*The people of Dharavi have stood strong against all odds. They have helped each other in the most vulnerable situations. They have collectively tried to fight the social stigma against Dharavi that prevails in Mumbai*” - Bhau Korde

How?

COVID - 19 and the lockdown had a greater impact on vulnerable and marginalised sections of society. In Dharavi, the lockdown sent the community into shock and disrupted daily lives. People instantly felt the lack of food and resources, as their work activities stopped. Troubled by the state of affairs, some people of Dharavi immediately rose to the occasion to take up leadership roles and help their community. They anticipated greater suffering if there was no access to food and monetary support. These community leaders started the task of food distribution.



The community leaders organised themselves and crowdsourced monetary donations. This funding is used to buy food in bulk. With the help of volunteers, they make and distributed food packets. These last each family for approximately two weeks. Their efforts were recognised by agencies like Asia Initiative, Bombay Rotary club, Mumbai Roti Bank, local elected representatives and other institutes, who showed their support for these leaders through making funds available or by supplying pre-cooked food.

The community leaders from the Mohalla Committee Movement Trust locally designed a distribution method with the contribution of over 60 to 70 volunteers from Dharavi. Their team is divided into 16 smaller groups that cover all the neighbourhoods of Dharavi. For easy communication, one team leader is assigned to each team. Ayub, Paul, Khurshid, Harshada, Tarun and Gulzar are the key people involved. They have ensured a well organised and hassle-free food distribution process. Each member works tirelessly to reach out to as many families as possible. Since the start of the lockdown, they have distributed over 5000 food packets and pre-cooked meals, so far.

STORIES

An egg a day

Harshada, a young woman, distributes food in various neighbourhoods. She recently started distributing boiled eggs to quarantined patients. She understood that the regular food served to these patients lacked nutrition. She utilised all her personal resources towards this. With her team of volunteers, she takes these boiled eggs to the quarantine centre and makes sure they are distributed to the patients.

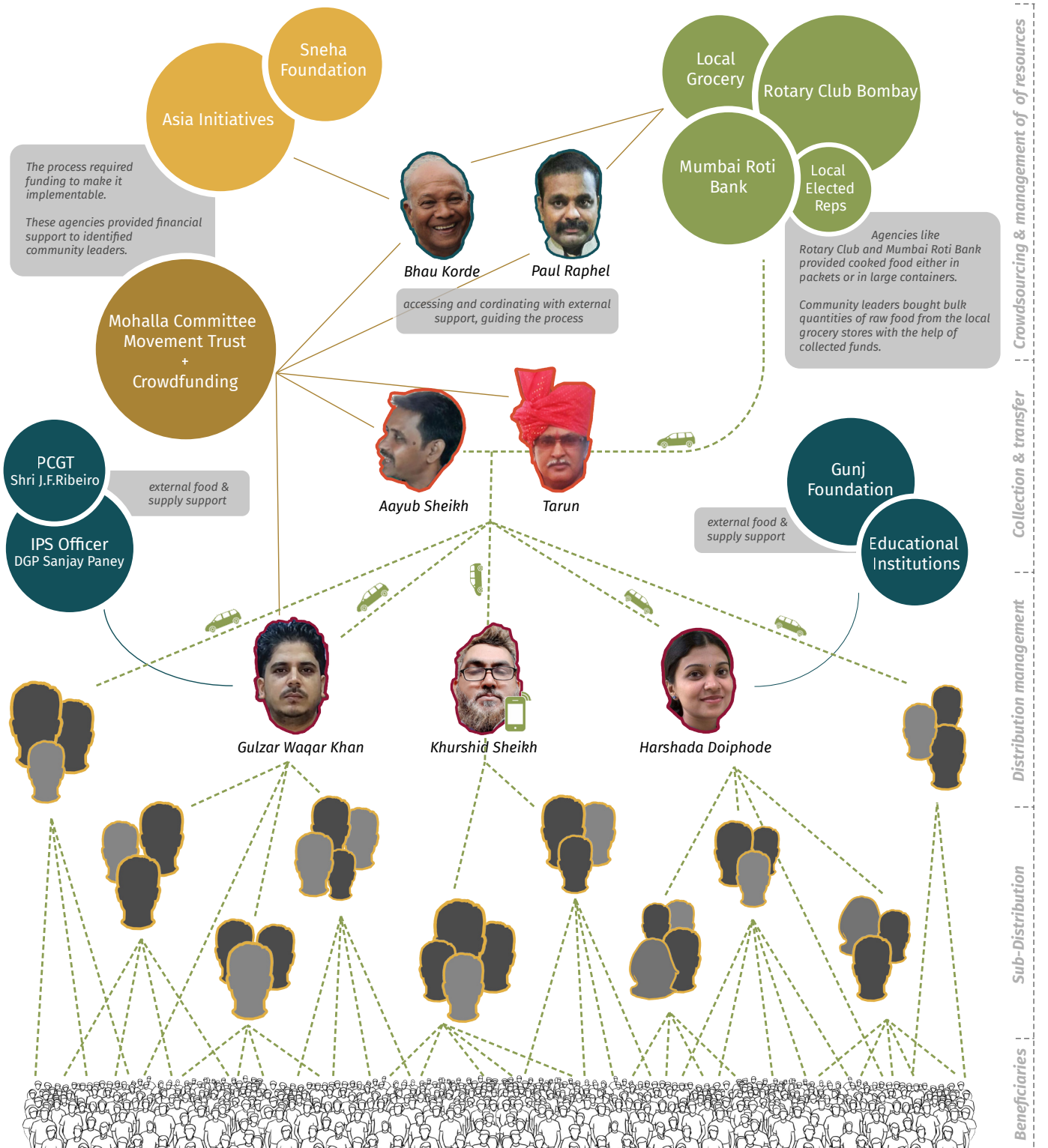
I am because I phone

Khurshid managed the food distribution in Dharavi despite being quarantined. He fell ill (not COVID - 19), during the initial phase of the food distribution process. He immediately isolated himself, to ensure a quicker recovery. He continued to manage the distribution process by phone, being constantly in touch with his volunteers and other team members.

UPDATES

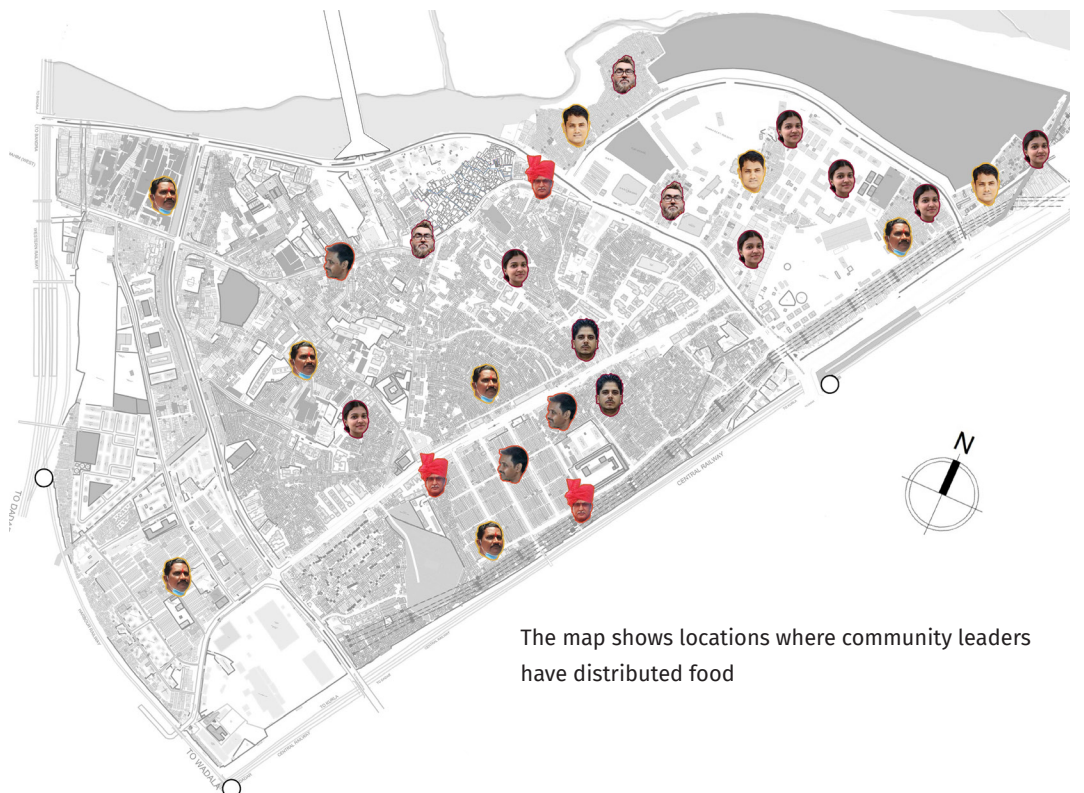
We conducted follow-up interviews with previous interviewees. Most of them had gone back to their villages. The ones who didn't are dependent on donations, loans, and community distribution services. From the 10 people we interviewed in Dharavi, 5 do not have ration cards and cannot access government subsidised food available under the Public Distribution System.

THE PROCESS



Beneficiaries

The community leaders followed certain criteria to identify the beneficiaries. They prioritised for migrant workers, daily wagers, families without ration cards, families with ration cards but unable to buy food, women who worked as domestic help, etc. The leaders, with the help of local volunteers, surveyed several neighbourhoods to reach out to these beneficiaries. A few members of the Mohalla Committee Movement Trust also helped in the distributions of food packets and pre-cooked meals.



The map shows locations where community leaders have distributed food

A REPORT ON HOW DHARAVI'S SCHOOLS ARE COPING

According to official records there are 10,400 students going in approximately 15 municipal schools in Dharavi. There are many more privately run schools that belong to local community trusts. This qualitative study is based on 41 in-depth phone interviews with teachers, headmasters, parents, and students.

"Why did it take a pandemic for people to ask questions about the condition of schools in Dharavi? I was going desk-to-desk in government departments for the past 24 years asking for help to support our schools."

-Ex Headmaster

Insufficient Infrastructure

The novel Coronavirus has impacted schools and educational infrastructure severely. In Mumbai, following the State Government's mandate, schools cancelled their annual exams and declared early vacations. The municipality run schools were transformed into quarantine centers to accommodate the rising number of Covid-19 infected people. Now, schools are opening again, hoping that students don't lose an academic year. However, most of the school teachers, principals, and affiliated staff think they have a tough year ahead. According to them, physical distancing will be impossible with the average of 50 students per class and lack of open spaces within school campuses.



H.R. English school, I.G.C Compound, Dharavi

Moreover, the principals and trustees face new challenges. They have to organize funds to sanitize school campuses, design new schooling techniques and even reduce their regular batches by 50%. There are some ex-headmasters like Mr Khan, who believes that these measures won't help much. According to him, the prevailing situation will force schools to reduce the syllabus which will have a negative impact on the education of the students. Schools are also experimenting with social networking platforms to circulate homework among students. On the advice of the government, many school teachers have started sharing teaching material through WhatsApp. However, they are skeptical of its efficacy as compared to teaching.

Schools in Dharavi have always struggled infrastructure. With limited access to resources and funding, they continue to operate out of inadequate spaces. There are examples where single classrooms are used for two different grades. Several school officials and local community members have been repeatedly voicing their concerns to address these issues for many years.

TEACHERS ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN ALREADY CROWDED CLASSROOMS

Helping hands

Many schools helped civic authorities in dealing with the pandemic. School staff joined hands with local community leaders to help distribute essential supplies. Classrooms are being used to store and manage food supplies for communities. Some schools have also been converted into quarantine centers.

Migrants

Many families with children have moved to their villages are not planning to return to the city.

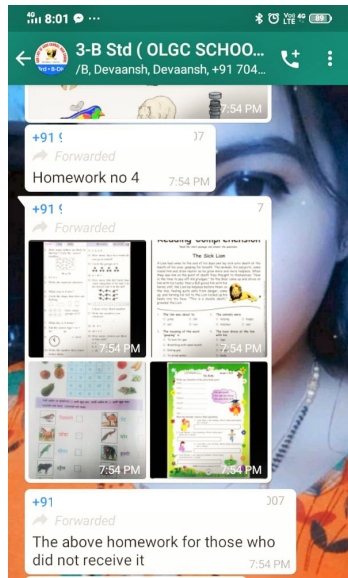
"I was not able to provide my family with sufficient food in the city. How can I send my kids to school?"

- A factory worker from Dharavi

How will our kids learn?

Online learning is riddled with challenges. Many students come from houses where both parents work. Their phones are not accessible to their children during the day. Besides, their living conditions don't allow them to study at home.

Is Dharavi ready for online teaching?



With the government announcing online classes, schools in Dharavi are also giving their best shot. Teachers are sending notes, videos, and other study material on WhatsApp. Some private schools are even able to conduct live lectures on zoom. However, attendance is limited.

A majority of students can't afford to pay for internet on a monthly basis. Subsequently, only a small number of students in Dharavi actually attend online classes.

"Online responsiveness tends to be very poor. I rarely get replies to my messages."

-A school teacher

What students and parents have to say..

Students are trying to catch up with the syllabus. They do this through online tutorials. However, according to the children, they hardly manage to use the phone for an hour at night when their parents return home. Parents, on the other hand, complain to us that children spend excessive time on mobile phones to play games.

"I don't understand much if I study on my own with just notes. Concentration is easier when I am in the classroom."

-8th grade student



This is a map of Dharavi which shows locations of the schools which participated in our study.

A REPORT ON HOW DHARAVI WORKERS AND FAMILIES ARE FARING AWAY FROM MUMBAI

We contacted 24 previous respondents and asked them about their current situation. Some of them are single migrant workers, others have lived in Dharavi for years with their wives and children. Some of them traveled alone, others with their families. This report highlights their journey and life back home in the time of Covid-19.

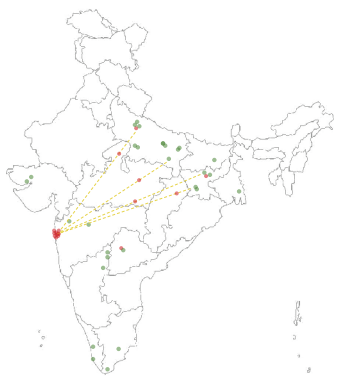
MORE THAN CATCHING CORONA, PEOPLE WERE SCARED OF THE POLICE STOPPING THEIR VEHICLES ENROUTE

How they reached their native villages; the problems they faced.



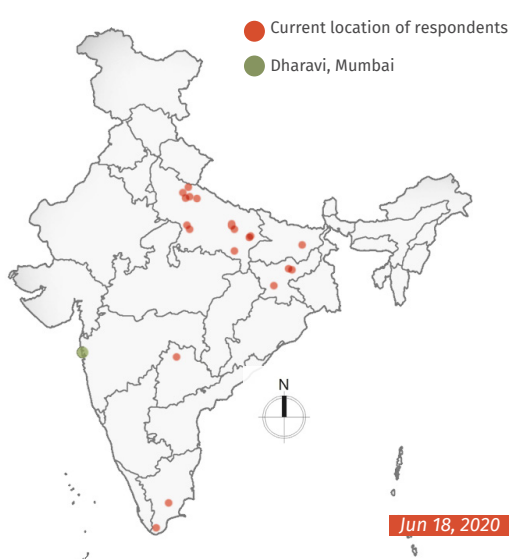
Testing before entering Uttar Pradesh

After a long month of waiting and trying, many stranded workers finally managed to leave Mumbai and go back to their villages. They used trucks, trains, buses, cars, and even auto-rickshaws, whatever they could manage. Their only goal was to reach home. On an average, 50+ people were crammed into a truck. For some, it was a safe and smooth journey, but for others, it was a struggle to get enough food on the road. Every state had a different set of rules and restrictions. Many of the vehicles were stopped and checked multiple times. In some cases, they were not allowed to enter a particular state. It was only after a thorough check, that the authorities arranged buses for people on the road to reach their respective villages. Many of them faced police brutality. The workers had to wait for 8-10 hours to be permitted to enter a particular state. In spite of these challenges there was hope and a sense of security because most of the travellers had been tested for the virus, before boarding.



May 18, 2020 (from Dharavi Weekly 01)

These maps show the movement of the respondents over a period of one month as they travelled back to their villages.



Jun 18, 2020

“ I was not scared of traveling with so many strangers. All of us were tested before boarding the train. I just wanted to reach home. ”

- Bhagirath Yadav, Uttar Pradesh

Living with a tumor

**follow up of 'Quarantined' from Dharavi Weekly 02*

Abhimanyu Modi has spent a better part of his work-life in Mumbai. After the lockdown, it was getting financially difficult for him to manage. Besides, the fear of rising corona cases in Dharavi brought him back to his village in Jharkhand. Abhimanyu has a brain tumor and is highly dependent on his weekly medicines. After being in quarantine for 15 days, he is finally resting at home. He is in touch by phone, with his doctor from Mumbai and has ordered medicines that will last him only for 10 days.

Tamil Nadu Beckons

"I am not coming back to Bombay. Life in Bombay is very expensive as compared to my village. I was paying Rs 4,000 as monthly rent for which I had to pay an additional Rs 20,000 as deposit. My landlords have debited 4 months' rent from my deposit. My brother-in-law in the village is asking me to join him in his new venture. I think I will. Once this lockdown ends, I am only going back to Bombay to pack up my remaining belongings. The TN government gives Rs 5,00,000 to build a house so I am planning to start my new life here. I will enroll my kids in the local school."

-Prem, Tamil Nadu

Food debt

Many workers who moved back to their village don't have any work. They were the sole bread earners of the family and because of a loss of income. It is getting difficult for them to manage basic necessities.

" We don't have enough money to buy food as I am not currently working. I've had to take a loan to sustain myself."

-Mehboob Alam, Bihar

Quarantined in the village

After many days of struggle, when people finally reached home, they were immediately quarantined. After entering the state, everyone was tested once again before being quarantined. Local schools, wedding halls, community rooms were converted into quarantine centers. In most cases, these quarantine centers didn't provide food or other basic facilities. Their families had to bring home-cooked food daily.

"My house is away from the main village so my sister-in-law had to travel 45 mins-1 hour to get me food."

-Shankar Mandal, Jharkhand



Sageer Khan and his family in home quarantine, Uttar Pradesh

Life in the village - Food, Shelter, and Services

The majority of the villages depend on their agricultural production. This means that for most people farming is the next resort. Their families have enough food to survive through the pandemic. Because of a relatively smaller density of population, the fear of catching coronavirus is limited. People are still following the government mandate of wearing masks and washing their hands or using sanitizers regularly. Unlike Mumbai which is starved for open spaces, villages

have the advantage of ample open space. Neighbors can still meet every evening for a cup of tea while maintaining social distance norms. Apart from this small social respite, the village also has other advantages. The most attractive one is the monthly expenses, which are highly affordable compared to Mumbai's basic living costs. Some of the respondents are now reconsidering their return to Mumbai, as they experience the benefits of embracing their lives in the village.



Village scenes in Covid-19 times. Open spaces and free time.

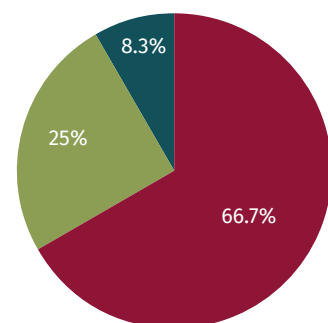


Coming back?

Even though village life gives security and comfort, for many staying behind is not a viable option. Their kids go to schools in Dharavi. Their work is based in Mumbai and sustaining without regular income is getting difficult every day.

"I don't want my kids to miss school. I will come back as soon as they start the trains and Mumbai is corona free."

-Stephen Raj, Tamil Nadu



- Will come back to Mumbai
- Not sure
- Won't come back

A REPORT ON HOW DHARAVI'S WOMEN ARE COPING

In this sixth weekly report we look at how women in Dharavi come with the pandemic and the lockdown. This information has been collated from 18 phone interviews with women from Dharavi.

GETTING SUFFICIENT FOOD AND SUPPLIES IS STILL THE BIGGEST FEAR AMONG WOMEN

Still working in-and-from home

The lockdown has stalled several work activities in Dharavi which directly affect women. In regular times, women are often working around the clock on the domestic front to support the family. Younger women had the opportunity to work from home. Many women ran small household businesses. Light snacks, miscellaneous household items, to daily tiffin services in many parts of Dharavi were a regular feature of everyday life. Everything has now come to a standstill because of the lockdown. These activities supported the family's economy, and sometimes they were even the sole source of income. Many families are now left with little or nothing.

Kavita Koli, a resident of Koliwada, Dharavi, ran a successful home-cooked food delivery business. After many migrant workers left Dharavi in the last month and factories were shut, businesses like hers have taken a big blow.



Kavita preparing lunch

Some of the respondents from Dharavi mentioned that the circumstances would have been better if they had been able to move back to their villages. The situation is making them anxious. They feel that being with more people and having the liberty to move around would have made it easier to deal with the situation. Being in Dharavi where people are confined to their homes, makes it a difficult situation.

This is what one of the respondents, who managed to go back to her family in the village, had to say:

"We came back home. The living conditions are harsh back in Dharavi. With no job to pay for the food and the number of cases rising, we decided to come home. We've been told that the rent will be eased for 3 months in Dharavi. We are counting on that for our decision to return. We are looking forward to going back to Dharavi."

- A mother of 4 in her early 40s who has been in Dharavi for 26 years

STORIES

Scattered

"My husband left for work 15 days ago to a place close to Mumbai but could not return due to the lockdown. We speak on the phone and I'm in a constant state of worry, now that it's just me and my son here in Dharavi. My elder son and his wife live in Karad, our hometown. Every day is a struggle here in Dharavi and we do need money to survive."

- A mother of 2 in her early 50s who has been in Dharavi for 11 years

Clean water

"Since the lockdown, we are getting better quality water than before. Previously, the water used to stink. We had to bath and even cook our food in dubious water."

- A 52 year old mother of 3 who has always been living in Dharavi

Medical aid

"I've gone through angioplasty and hysterectomy (surgical removal of the uterus) and I need medicines. I am unable to find all the required medicines. I am taking some on credit from the local pharmacy."

- A 47 year old mother of 2 who has been in Dharavi for 10 years

One day at a time

"We've been in Dharavi for 2 years and we don't have a ration card here. With no work to earn an income, it's difficult to feed ourselves. I have a one-and-a-half-year-old daughter. We are not able to score 3 meals a day, instead, we are surviving on 1 meal and sometimes 2 if we're lucky."

- A mother of 1 in her late 20s who has been in Dharavi for 2 years

Food

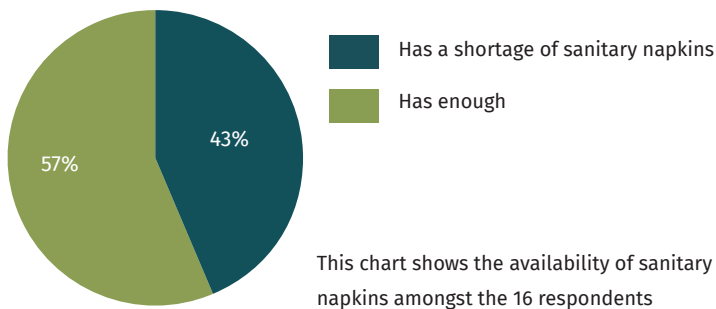
Another major concern is the availability of daily supplies. The price of regular items like supplementary food packages and toiletries have spiked after the lockdown. Women who have the responsibility to cook and feed the members of the house, feel that the biggest concern is the availability of food. They are struggling to provide a healthy meal to their families. There are individuals and organizations trying to help these families, but it isn't enough to feed every household. Families with adequate food are sharing with others.

“Many of us have not been taking the food provided by the NGOs to ensure that it can be used by people who need it more.”

- A mother of 2 in her mid 30s who has been living in Dharavi

Sanitary Napkins

Hygiene and proper sanitation in Dharavi are crucial in times of the pandemic. Most of the respondents do not have washrooms in the house and are dependent on public washrooms. This is certainly taking a toll on their personal hygiene. Many women stocked some sanitary napkins before the lockdown but with the medical shops being closed it is difficult to acquire more. Few women managed to get sanitary napkins from supermarkets through their personal contacts, while some are getting help from community leaders. Others are using a cloth, which is not an ideal choice.



Neighbours helping each other with equal distribution of food and supplies

Domestic Violence

According to one community leader, there is an increase in domestic violence cases during these times. Lockdown at home combined with anxieties around income and food has led to incidents of violence. It was reported that with women expecting help from their husbands at home, there were cases of conflict. This takes place on a regular basis and it changes the dynamic of the house.

Community leader at work *continuation of 'An egg a day' from Dharavi Weekly 03



Harshada distributing sanitary napkins in the community

Like many others, Harshada, a local social worker, is doing her bit to help the community. Being a part of the food supply chain, she was also covering a large area of Dharavi on an individual level. With her team of volunteers, she has been providing cooked food and ration to many needy families.

The food provided by the government lacks nutrition which is essential for people in quarantine for better recovery. When she realised this, Harshada started cooking food by herself on a large scale. Along with food, she also manages the supply of sanitary napkins. She is approaching organizations like Gunj, Educational institutions, and Mahila Bachat Gat (Women saving groups) for help. She also uses social media platforms to spread awareness and crowdsource necessary supplies. Public toilets are a major subject of concern when it comes to hygiene. Harshada and her team have provided sanitizers to many neighborhoods and also installed them outside of public restrooms.

“When I was distributing food, few ladies came to me and requested for sanitary napkins. There is no stock in the local medical stores. The government should address this issue along with food.”

- Harshada

This is the seventh weekly report on how Dharavi is recovering. This information has been collated from newspaper reports and phone interviews with locals residents.

MORE THAN CORONA, ITS FEAR SPREAD RAPIDLY THROUGH THE BYLANES OF DHARAVI.

Claps and credits

Community leader and life-long Dharavi resident, Bhau Korde - now in his mid-80s - expresses his happiness transparently, when asked to respond to the spirited resistance that Dharavi gave to the virus. As of today, the number of reported cases in Dharavi is lower than the rest of the city. Newspaper reports have already begun talking about how the example from Dharavi is something worth emulating in similar contexts around the world.

According to Bhau, it is the residents who must be feted first, in their attempts against all odds to stand tall and face difficulties and challenges that the virus brought. The biggest asset Dharavi has, is the confidence that locals have in themselves, to tackle any situation.

Organizations, community leaders, local residents - all joined hands with the civic authorities, medical teams and non-governmental organizations to fight it out. Selflessly working around the clock, trying to reach as many families as possible, creating quarantine spaces in very challenging conditions, have now clearly shown their efficacy. In spite of huge challenges connected to proximity of people and spaces, the compact nature of the neighbourhood, combined with its intricate local organization, allowed for testing, outreach and checks for nearly half of the entire population of the neighbourhood. A major contributor to the success of the resistance.

In the initial months, there was unrest within migrant workers because of misinformation. Many community leaders tried their best to serve them and meet their needs, so they could survive in the city without hardships. However, nearly a 100,000 residents returned to their villages, which in a way also provided relief to the infrastructure of the neighbourhood. Our studies showed that this return is intrinsic to the cycle of living for many workers in any case. And for them, dealing with the density of the neighbourhood is connected to the freedom of mobility they also enjoy.

So in a way, even in their absence, the Dharavikars who chose to go back to the villages, helped the neighbourhood cope. Many informed us that they were waiting to return when things are under control.



A typical scene of monitoring and distributing supplies in one of the neighbourhoods

STORIES

"I don't want any risk"

Mrs. Mane a local resident, took the initiative to call government officials with a medical team in her neighborhood and test each individual from all 7 buildings in her housing complex. When asked why she did this on her own, she smiled and said, "What if my neighbors have corona? My family will be in danger. It's better to be safe. And as I was doing the testing of my neighbors, I thought let me follow this checkup routine in all buildings."

Self-care

"Many Dharavi locals took prescribed medication diligently. Building immunity is the name of the game and we've been taking care of our immune system for a long time now. Local doctors are also helping us with immunity boosters. We cannot risk getting admitted to a hospital for a cold or cough. The hospital environment is hazardous and we don't plan to risk our lives"

- Paul, Community leader

Mismanagement

"An old lady from my neighborhood fell in the washroom and got her leg fractured. She had a mild fever and was immediately admitted to Sion hospital to fix her broken leg. She died in 2 days but the hospital didn't allow the family to take the body home and the death report said the cause was Corona. This mismanagement is inducing more fear in the masses."

- Aayub, Community leader

The Police, which has an active relationship with local residents, including leaders like Bhau Korde, worked closely with community leaders. This helped organizations and volunteers to distribute supplies in a more efficient manner.

Community leader Giriraj, continues to arrange medical camps for COVID-19 testing to make sure Dharavi remains completely corona free. These camps are a powerful tool to track the spread of the virus. Initiatives like these boost confidence among the locals, one of the most important ingredients in tackling the situation.

Both residents and the media acknowledge the major role of the civic authority, BMC (BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation) and other government bodies in their swift response to the situation. Individual practicing doctors also helped with regular checkups and prescribing medicines to improve immunity. Community leaders like Paul Raphael and his team stood at different crossroads of the neighborhood to spread awareness using a loud speaker - encouraging the wearing of masks and washing of hands.

This convergence of local leadership, huge endorsement of official action by residents, concrete steps taken by civic authorities and selfless service by medical staff from private and public hospitals - helped contain the excesses that the virus could have created in Dharavi.

“Individuals came out to help the community irrespective of religion or caste, this boosted the confidence of the locals. This is the greatness of Dharavi - pure brotherhood”
- Bhau Korde, Community leader

Dharavi’s Encounter with the Virus - a brief history.

Dharavi was under scrutiny after the death of a 56-year-old man who was tested positive for Covid-19. It was reported that with a population of over 1 million people (speculative figure), where a huge portion consists of migrant workers, keeping the contagion from spreading was going to be an impossible task.

Dharavi is reputed to be an overly crowded area with poor sanitation facilities, which would make isolation in case of catching the virus difficult. Along with that, it was reported that the people of Dharavi avoided telling the truth due to fear of being punished for breaking the lock-down or generally due to the stigma of being affected. This would make tracking the outbreak a strenuous task.

Yet, in the past month, Dharavi has been reported to have flattened the curve. According to the media, the BMC has been rigorously tracking and isolating people who had the virus or had been in contact with someone who was infected. The residents have been staying indoors to the best of their ability, struggling to survive economically in these unprecedented times. Local NGOs and individuals have been trying to help these people as much as they can. The BMC set up teams to go door to door and local private practitioners were employed so that people would be comfortable in approaching them. Eventually, the combined efforts of all the BMC and the people of Dharavi have worked. The number of recoveries is on the rise and the number of fresh cases is on the decline.

Dharavi is now portrayed as a success story. Headlines are encouraging other cities like Delhi to look up to the case of Dharavi and the BMC’s efforts.

Reasons behind the success - according to Dharavikars

In the past 2 months, the summer was unbearable. With 40 degree celsius temperatures outside, it was difficult to stay indoors in cramped rooms that had minimum ventilation. Now as the air has become cooler because of the monsoons, people are staying indoors comfortably, and maintaining physical distancing in the neighborhood.

Many of the community leaders believe that because a large number of migrants and long term residents were eventually allowed to leave the city, it became easier to maintain discipline and keep track of neighborhoods in a more systematic way.

The spread of the virus was contained in Dharavi itself. Quarantine centers and testing camps stationed in Dharavi helped the locals have easy access.

Local activity, local leadership and community involvement in everyday life is already very high in Dharavi. This played a major role.

NEWS transition

- **March 29** *Mumbai's packed chawls gear up to keep coronavirus at bay, TOI*
- **April 01** *Mumbai on edge as Dharavi reports first COVID-19 death, The Week*
- **April 6** *How Mumbai is racing to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Dharavi, The Print*
Mumbai Races to Keep the Virus From Asia's Most Crowded Slum, Bloomberg |Quint
- **April 8** *What is turning Dharavi into a COVID nightmare of such magnitude, The Economic Times*
- **April 12** *4 deaths & counting: Asia's biggest slum Dharavi has Mumbai's fingers crossed, The Economic Times*
- **April 15** *Mumbai's Dharavi cases rise steadily, hunt for quarantine centers, TOI*
- **April 23** *The impossible task of keeping Dharavi locked down, TOI*
- **May 04** *Dharavi tally crosses 600-mark, The Hindu*
- **June 14** *How COVID hotspot Dharavi, Asia's largest slum, fought against all odds to flatten the curve, The Print*
- **June 15** *Dharavi's unexpected COVID success story has lessons for Delhi, other crowded cities, The Print*
- **June 22** *Dharavi turns the corner with a steep decline in COVID-19 cases | Centre lauds Dharavi efforts, The Hindu*
- **June 23** *How Asia's biggest slum contained the coronavirus, BBC*
- **June 25** *Sena hails 'victory' against coronavirus in Dharavi, The Hindu*

Questioning Action

Ground realities inevitably contradict official information that gets circulated about the neighbourhood and the virus. Our respondents constantly questioned the risk of coronavirus and the system which was dealing with the lockdown. Perhaps this vigilance helped in its own way.

In a place like Dharavi where the density of population is at its peak, and where physical distancing is virtually impossible, the number of deaths should've been higher. How come the death toll is less than most of the other parts of the city?

I've been working on the field daily to provide food and supplies since April. I've seen very few cases and some days none. Then how has the media come up with numbers on a daily basis?

And now if numbers are reducing in densely populated Dharavi where many are stepping out, why are the number of cases from apartment buildings from other parts of the city still increasing?

My volunteers and I were covering most parts of Dharavi from door to door. How come we were not affected by the virus?

I've not seen a major number of patients in the quarantine centers. Some of the quarantine centers are about to shut. So where are the patients?

Why do we see the news reporters coming to Dharavi only when a minister is on a visit? I've not seen many news reports asking questions or having a conversation with the locals, the community leaders who know the situation better, the NGO officials, on-duty police officers, then on what basis are they reporting Dharavi's situation?



Community leaders continue to conduct weekly medical camps

Media Matters

In the global media-scape - Dharavi remains Asia's largest "slum" and continues to be perceived as a dangerous place unfit for living. After the first virus-related death which happened on April 1st, many news channels highlighted the issue. Dharavi started receiving negative global attention. Media sources kept pointing out the difficulty of controlling the virus and headlines like 'COVID hotspot' and 'Corona nightmare' added to the distressing situation. But now the positive news flowing from the same media - sources over the last couple of weeks is helping build more confidence in the local community.

"It was exaggerated in the beginning. There was no way to find the exact number of positive cases and the numbers shown on the news differed from the actual cases in Dharavi."

- Gulzar, Community leader

Misinformation about the spread

COVID positive numbers kept increasing in the last two months but many Dharavi residents kept questioning the medical reports. Many believed there was confusion in the reported number of cases - and felt strongly about it. When people with basic cold and cough went to the doctors, they were immediately admitted without being tested for COVID-19. Sion hospital became a feared space. Lack of cleanliness, over flooding of COVID-19 positive patients, and an unhealthy environment caused fear among patients with minimal or no symptoms. Many preferred staying indoors and treating themselves with home remedies. In some cases, a discharged patient with no corona history was handed over a final report which stated COVID-19, while others didn't get a proper diagnosis in the first place.

Many Dharavi residents had their own views about the city outside their neighbourhood. They felt that in high-end apartments, neighbours did not help each other as much. There seemed to be some sort of disconnect in these multistoried housing neighborhoods. In contrast, they felt that their own neighbourhood responded as one entity. Individuals took an initiative of working day and night during these trying times to support their families and communities irrespective of any discrimination.

The current situation, unlocking the future

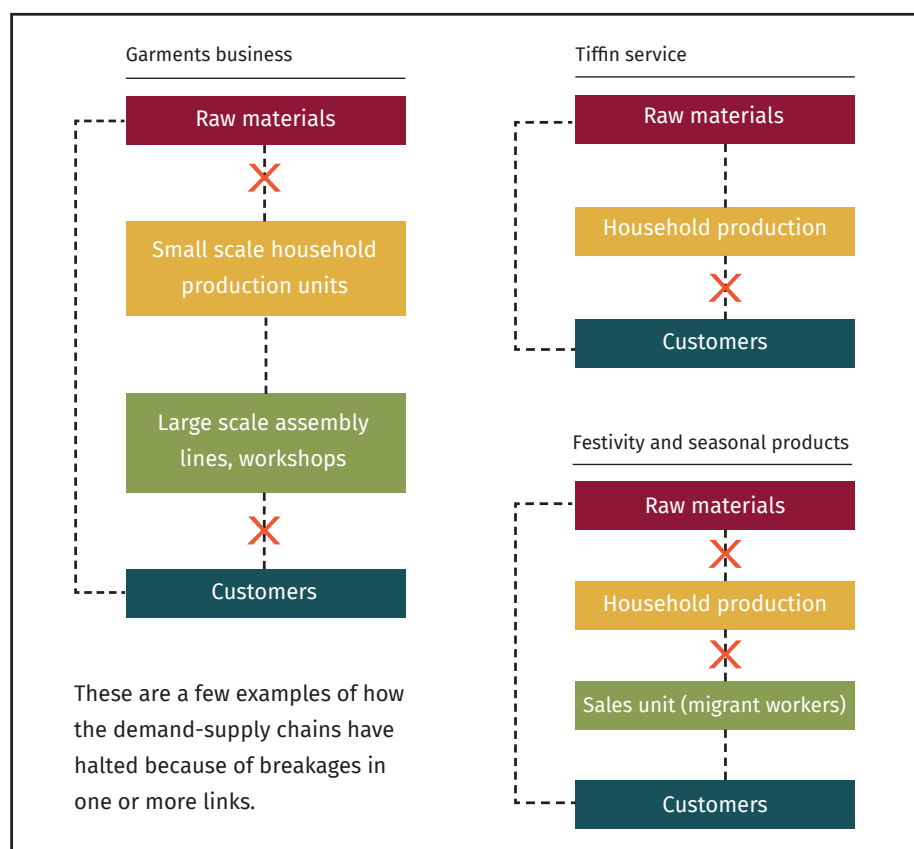
Even though the number of cases is still increasing in the city, Dharavi is a bit more optimistic and is cautiously opening up. After all it is also a site for livelihood and survival and there are hundreds of thousands of people dependent on its economic activities. There is still shortage of foodgrains and basic necessities for a number of poor people. Small shops and restaurants have already started working. Small business owners and factory managers are hoping that the migrant workers will come back to the city soon. The hardship caused by the policy response to the COVID-19 crisis will be felt for many years to come. Though people have started roaming the streets in a relatively more relaxed manner, they maintain physical distancing and remain particular about wearing masks. Two quarantine centers are now shut because of a lack of patients and another one is on the verge of closing. Still everyone has fingers crossed.

As Dharavi enters Unlock 2.0, we conducted 47 interviews with its residents to understand how the myriad forms of businesses and individuals have been impacted during the lockdown, how they have coped with the situation, and how they are preparing to resume their economic activities.

THE FEAR OF FINANCIAL LOSS HAS TURNED INTO REALITY.

Demand - supply cycle

Apart from the essential services in demand, all forms of commerce have halted, facing a roadblock either from supply-side or demand-side. Dharavi is known for its fast production of goods and services, with the supply line stakeholders ranging from material providers, small-scale household producers, daily-wage workers, factory and workshop workers, and transport systems, weaving into delicate symbiotic relationships. A break in one or more links brings the entire process to a halt. The demand for luxury goods like branded clothes or leather bags has dropped exponentially and understandably, in times when people are barely able to afford essential supplies. This fall in demand translates into nominal sale of pre-existing stock, and no resources to purchase or requirement for fresh raw materials. Earlier, transactions with regular suppliers who accepted credit up to a month now require immediate cash payments. Due to multiple transport restrictions across international, inter-state, inter-district borders and/or intra-city movement, the supply of materials and goods has been severely impacted or comes at escalated costs. Reduced frequency of public transport has also impacted the movement of employees/labour from their homes to their place of work. The cost of raw materials has increased due to several manufacturing constraints, thus producing fewer goods, subsequently creating a competitive market. Additionally, labour is expensive due to the lack of their availability, resulting from the recent out-of-state migration. The cumulative increase in the cost of the end product/ service is ill-received by the few customers on the demand side expecting original rates, which is resulting in loss of business or lower profit margins. Online services, like the Dharavi Market, are being questioned about the sanitary precautions at the workshop, customers demanding photographs. Since the owner is unable to go to the workshop to get the proof, they are losing some customers as well.



STORIES

Behind the scenes

Since 2006, Tarun has managed an electronics and toy store. *“My shop has been infested with rats, and since the shop was closed during the lockdown, a lot of boxes are now damaged. Nobody wants to gift a damaged box.”* Additionally, Tarun’s business is bearing the brunt of the trade standoff with China, since most of his goods were Chinese imports.

Issues faced by service providers

The common belief that essential service providers are thriving while the economy is collapsing has another side to it. Girish, a small pharmacy store owner says, *“There’s a lack of stock and we don’t have a full staff. Because of this, we keep the shop open only for 3-4 hours a day. This has reduced our income to 50%. People think we’re earning as usual or more, which isn’t the case.”*

Medical emergencies

Laxman, an electrician for the last 15 years, says, *“My wife got a heart attack during the lockdown and needs bypass surgery. There is no way we can manage that kind of expense. I am borrowing money and taking up all sorts of odd jobs to afford her treatment, even if it offers minimum wages. My kidneys are damaged, so I cannot take up physically laborious jobs. The operation is not happening due to lockdown, so the doctor has told her to eat medicines for the past 3 months, but her condition is deteriorating.”*

International relations affecting the business

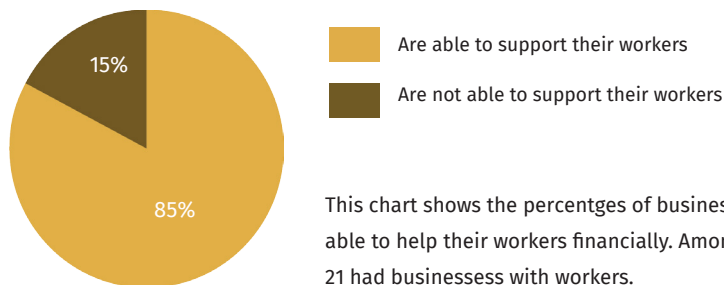
The supply of raw materials and finished goods have been hampered due to the closure of international borders as well as recent disruptions in relations with China. Tarun, an electronics and toy shop owner has predicted a spike in prices because of the switch from Chinese to Indian products. He has also witnessed a decrease in demand for Chinese goods due to the stigma. Overall, this has impacted businesses significantly. Business owners have started looking for alternate cheaper sources of raw materials and finished goods but of comparable quality, such as Taiwan and Korea. Kudanji told us of a potential trip to Taiwan next month by the Make in India group to assess viable alternatives to Chinese goods, for which the government is bearing 75% of the travel expenses.

Business owners taking care of their workers

Without a source of income, employers and employees are struggling alike. However, some business owners consider their workers an extended part of their family, helping their workers as much as their financial capacity allows them. Workers have received cooked food, ration kits, shelter, money for weekly and travel expenses, and, in some cases, salaries too. While the employers are still keeping in touch with their workers who have returned to their villages, they are not sending any money to them due to financial limitations. Discussions regarding future work prospects and plans for their return are in progress.



Tarun in his electronics and toy shop



This chart shows the percentages of business owners who are able to help their workers financially. Among 47 respondents, 21 had businesses with workers.

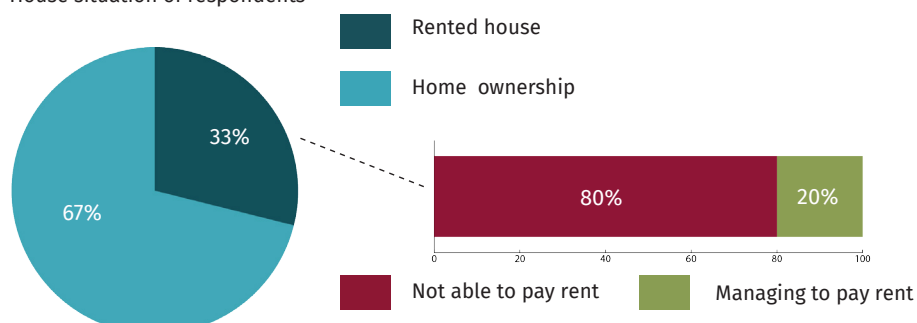
Mounting Debts and Bills

For all the residents who have taken a house, a shop, or a warehouse on rent, the majority have been unable to pay rent for the past 2-4 months. Some have managed to pay in installments from their savings or as business resumes, while some have arranged for the rent to be deducted from the deposit amount. Even though none of our respondents are being evicted, the landlords have not reduced the rent in any case as they are still getting electricity and water bills.

Mounting electricity and cable bills pose additional pressure on the residents, the majority of whom have not paid their bills since lockdown began. In many cases, even though workshops and showrooms have been closed for the last 4 months, electricity bills based on the consumption in March have been calculated for every month of the lockdown, drastically adding to the fixed cost of local businesses. While local cable providers such as Raju Koli are accepting credit arrangements from regular customers, giving 20% of his services on credit has pushed his income to drop by 60%.

Those with exhausted or no savings have been borrowing money in small amounts from family and friends. No one can afford to lend a large amount of money since they all belong to similar income groups. This leaves the borrower indebted to more people. These personal loans have to be repaid soon too, as their sources are facing economic hardships as well. A leather bag manufacturer in Dharavi has sunk into a Rs 90,000 debt, and with no income in the foreseeable future, the situation looks very grim for many like him.

House situation of respondents



Fear of COVID-19 v/s Doing What Needs to be Done

Rajubhai has been a carpenter since he was 20 years old. Yet, he is now taking up any and every opportunity to earn and feed his family. He took up a job at the Sion Hospital, knowing full well the high chances of catching COVID. His mantra includes being self-reliant, not expecting any help whilst appreciating whatever help is provided by the government and the people and his faith in God.

Mrs. Gade, a home-based worker who used to make food products, has started working in Sion hospital as well. "I am not scared of COVID-19. After my business orders stopped coming, I took up a job at the hospital. I am also doing it as a service to my community. Media has defamed Dharavi residents, but in these tough times, we Dharavikars are coming forward to help."

Savings, dependency and upcoming plans

Predominantly, those with any form of savings have been owners of small businesses. While the sample of our survey has not been exhaustive, it has indicated the inability of the informal working sector to accumulate savings which would last more than a few weeks at best, without any income. Those with savings have shown concern about its depletion within the next 1-3 months if the economy doesn't resume. Savings have been used for purchasing food and basic necessities, sending remittances back to their village, taking care of their workers till they reach home, and in unavoidable conditions, paying electricity bills, school fees, and loan payments. It is safe to say that the majority have more than their mouth to feed, and their inability to earn has a domino effect in both their place of work, their home in the city, and their village. Many have resorted to drastically cutting down on expenditures and consumption.

Some business owners have already exhausted their savings during the lockdown, and have been borrowing money and depending on NGOs and Nagar Sevaks for food. One respondent planned to get his workers back from Bihar by 8th July and resume work, which didn't materialise due to the lockdown extension till July end. He now plans to return to the village himself, in the hope of reducing lifestyle costs, saving his electricity bill and living in a house that is not cramped and congested.

How the government can help business and households

There has been a general disappointment with the government about the economic management of the lockdown. While most have expressed that the government should step up and extend support to the poor in multiple sectors, some believe that the onus is now on the public to take care of themselves, having been either satisfied with the government's mitigation policies or given up any hope of assistance.

The most common demand from our responders has been to relax or waive electricity bills. Relaxations of school fees, loan payments, and removal of additional charges on late loan payments have also been requested. Business owners have expressed a need for relaxation of GST tax and travel restrictions, which could allow them to resume their work by relinking supply chains of their goods and getting their laborers back. Many of our respondents running essential services such as medical shops and cable services have expressed that better support should be extended to essential service providers such as relaxation of rent, taxes, and GST. While a Rs 20 lakh crores package under the Atmanirbhar Bharat has been promised to support the nation, Sheikh Abubakar claims that none of the help is coming to the public. The government should make policies that provide immediate economic support directly to its people, and not through loans since no one would not take a loan during such unstable times. Additionally, a businessman who tried applying for a loan for Rs. 2 lakh was told that it was only for businesses that were currently allowed to open. Businesses dependent upon the supply of raw materials and finished goods from China would like the government to source materials at similar rates from Korea or Taiwan or start production in India before banning Chinese goods. The founder of the Dharavi Market would like the government to revive demand by directing government projects towards the crafts industry so that there is cash circulation that can kickstart the supply chain. Workers who are on the brink of starvation and businesses who are struggling to take care of their workshop demand an overall change in policies. Workers need immediate support in the form of food and subsidies.

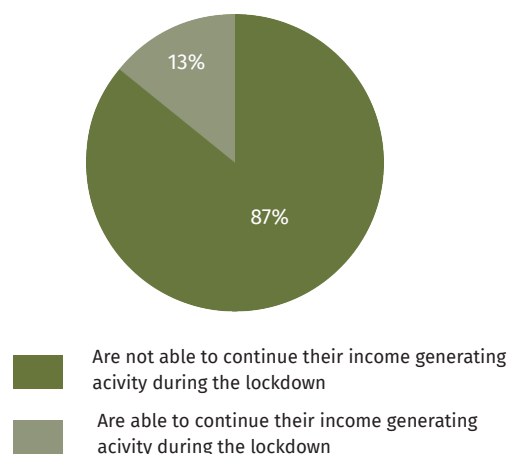


Empty lanes of 13 Compound, Dharavi

New economic opportunities because of the pandemic

Businessmen and workers have this to say, on exploring new ventures in these turbulent times; many of them have spent years building their capital, customer base, accumulated knowledge and experience without much support. They are hesitant to switch due to a lack of capital in these fragile times. One respondent reasoned that many businessmen have ventured into making and selling masks or PPE kits, but now we have 80% sellers and 20% buyers. This has led to a drop in the selling price of goods and higher competition. A few household businesses have started selling daily essentials to meet their financial needs. Workers are more willing to take up jobs of any kind to make ends meet.

This chart shows the percentages of respondents who are able to continue their income generating activity during the lockdown.



Things cannot return to normal, and it will take substantially longer to recover from the impact of the lockdown. People are gradually gearing up mentally and economically for the coming months of hardship. The recent announcement by the PM that free distribution of food grains will be extended till November seems to substantiate these worries.

We have conducted 19 interviews with community leaders and civil society organisations of various scales who have worked tirelessly during the last 4 months of the lockdown to provide relief to those worst affected by the pandemic in Dharavi. Being a hotspot with high density and poor sanitary conditions, WHO recently lauded this collective action and community engagement that was crucial to flatten the curve.

LACK OF FUNDS REMAINS THE CONCERN FOR ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



Distribution of food packets by Girirajbhai, Aapatkaleen Seva Samiti

Civil Society Movement

The lockdown has seen active involvement from local heroes such as community leaders and residents, Dharavi-based organisations, Mumbai-based, national as well as international organisations, working in tandem and each forming a crucial link to the chain of humanitarian aid. While many of these organisations have been previously involved in various sectors of social work before the COVID pandemic, Dharavi has also witnessed a rise in proactive residents, many of which have no prior background in social work but felt their contribution to this fight was imperative. To name a few, Giriraj Bhai, who ran a construction business and Asgar Bhai, who ran a gym, foresaw the hardships of their community in the coming few months and began many self-initiated relief activities. Much of the work at the community level required an on-ground presence, which the COVID fighters executed while following all norms of social distancing and personal protection.

STORIES

Emerging heroes

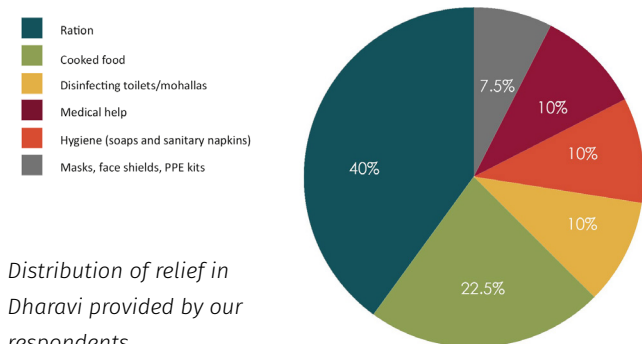
Giriraj Bhai, who began with distributing face masks in a personal capacity, shifted to providing food packets supplied by the collectorate. To receive government assistance, he and his friends had to set up Aapatkaleen Seva Samiti. Once the collectorate support stopped, he organised several medical camps in Dharavi as the cases began to surge. He recognised people's fear of seeing medical officials clad in PPE kits and the 14-day quarantine period and provided a humane touch and guidance to testing and check-ups that he felt essential.

Sustainability of aid

While most of our respondents have been focusing on providing immediate relief assistance, community leader Bhau Korde and Drona Foundation foresee the need to shift focus to more sustainable forms of assistance such as employment support. People need to begin earning money to tackle mounting debts and other necessities, and the relief strategy must transition to an approach that empowers the affected communities. A representative of Drona Foundation noted a prevalent stigma that everyone belonging to Dharavi is COVID infected, due to which jobs of many domestic workers have been affected.

Fields of intervention

Each stakeholder adapted to restricted working conditions in their own innovative ways and rose to address the need of the hour, which changed frequently throughout the lockdown. Relief included provision of ration kits, cooked meals, grocery kits, sanitary pads, medicines, protective equipment such as masks, sanitizers, handwash, PPE kits for police officials, organising medical camps, disinfecting residential and public spaces, awareness campaigns, and COVID helplines and quarantine guidance. All our respondents have worn more than one hat, and have adapted their relief strategies according to changing needs.



Distribution of relief in Dharavi provided by our respondents.

How has the system been working so far

Large NGOs and corporates who have provided relief in the form of material supplies and funding in Dharavi, have typically reached out to community leaders and local NGOs for on-ground support. The former tend to have greater outreach and bigger capacities for funding and management. The latter has a better understanding of the on-ground reality and relief required, are better placed to conduct surveys and needs assessment, ensure even and wide-spread distribution, mobilise community support and coordinate with local government officials and police. In some cases, local leaders identified the problem/ focus area of aid and reached out to larger organisations for help. CSOs that have directly worked on-ground are either based in Dharavi itself or have been working here for many years and have established networks. Some proactive residents have also formed their own organisations, either to receive external funding or government assistance. There have been many collaborations amongst these stakeholders, primarily in the form of monetary, material, volunteer, and distribution support. Organisations located outside Dharavi faced transportation issues. Some managed to get help from the retail distributors or Nagar Sevaks, but many faced barriers in making sure that the food reached on time.

Many community leaders have corroborated active youth participation in relief activities. Pre-established volunteer networks have grown, and many new ones have emerged as a result of an active community-driven approach.



List of relief providers in Dharavi

We are providing a list of all the CSOs and local actors contacted by us who have been working in Dharavi, along with their area of focus. We hope that this newsletter can bring out their exemplary work, and connect them to potential donors and well-wishers like yourselves. If you wish to contact any individual or organisation and extend your support, you may contact them through the details provided below. Funds and any other form of support are welcome by all listed below.

Community leaders

Asgarbhai distributes rations and cooked meals, and as a part of Dharavi Foundation, is involved with disinfection drives in community toilets and Mohalla Committee. The foundation is planning to set up spaces for medical professionals in Dharavi. They are currently looking for funds.
aewk157@gmail.com

Bhau Korde has been coordinating with local actors and organisations to procure material supplies and financial support. His focus is on helping domestic workers living in dharavi, widows, and the differently-abled.
+91-98925 75255

Giriraj founded Aapatkaleen Seva Samiti, which distributes masks, cooked food, and ration kits and organises medical camps. They plan to distribute notebooks and stationery as schools reopen. They are willing to receive any form of help. +91-97684 28550

Gulzar Waqar Khan is a part of Hum Sab Hai Ek foundation. They provide cooked food, ration, sanitizers, and soaps to the people of Dharavi.
gulzarkhan22@gmail.com;
9930405257

Harshada cooks and distributes food in Dharavi. And helps the women receive sanitary napkins. She's willing to receive monetary and material help.
+91-79775 13841

Suryakant and his brother have been distributing dry ration kits in Dharavi.
+91-93231 93212

Vidya Mane launched the Bhoomi Swachta Foundation which provides food support for the differently-abled, clean public toilets and organise medical camps. They now want funds to provide children with notebooks.
vmane4273@gmail.com;

Zubairbhai and Siddharth Madge are distributing grocery kits in Dharavi, and proactively spread awareness about COVID.

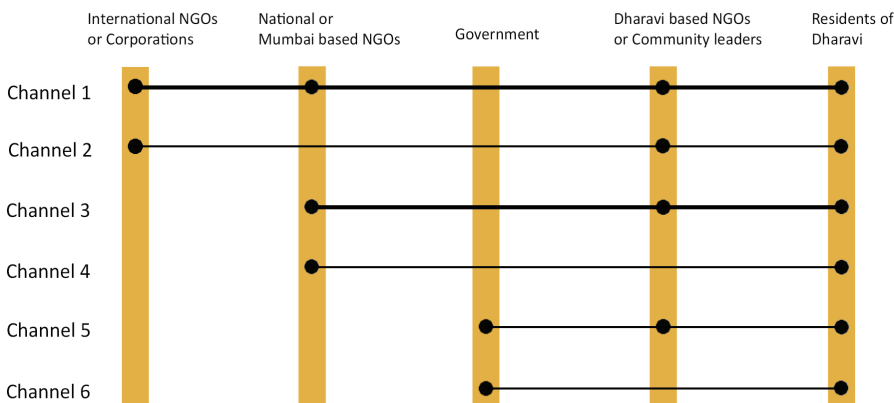


Delivery of ration kits

Government assistance

There has been mixed feedback from our respondents regarding the government assistance they received during the lockdown. In general, the government and law enforcement have been supporting the NGOs with the required permissions for movement and distribution activities. While some community leaders and local NGOs were given food packets and ration kits to distribute by the collectorate, some claimed to have been repeatedly turned away, with officials citing reasons such as lack of funds and supplies. Praja, a Mumbai-based NGO working on urban governance, successfully used the manpower of local governance for distribution activities. They were given the NSCI venue for 10 days to coordinate ration support across Mumbai. Roti Bank used the local police station in Dharavi to coordinate local distribution.

Nagar Sevaks are the last rung of urban governance and responsible for the last mile government assistance. They received funding to distribute essential supplies and often collaborated with the locals for distribution support. However, some respondents claimed that the political leanings and religion of residents had an impact on the support they received from the government. Ration kits were largely considered insufficient for a family of 5 for 1 month, and some has leakages as well.



Relief activities in Dharavi taking multiple channels of aid distribution and involving stakeholders or various capacities.

This visual emphasizes the vital link that Dharavi-based NGOs and community leaders form in the process. Scenario 1 and 3 have been the most common with our respondents

Funding- Stretched capacities

Funding has been a recurring concern for all our respondents. While the well-established foundations have long-standing individual donors and additional corpus, smaller organisations and activists have been using personal funds, contributions from friends, and approaching individuals/ organisations/corporations for additional funding. The latter faced problems procuring funds, as people tend to question the unknown or new organisations and their intentions, taking up crucial time and effort. While the first few months saw an exponential rise in donations, the extended lockdown has reduced everybody's financial capacity over time due to a decline in income, supplemented by a 'Donor's fatigue'. A few local actors have been unable to continue their relief work due to dwindling donations and personal savings. A representative from YUVA claimed that nowadays people are under the impression that migrants have travelled back and everyone is doing better, and thus don't feel the need to donate anymore.

contd.

Organisations

ACORN Foundation distributes food and dry ration to the communities where their members belong.
022-26428618

Brightfuture set up community-led 'Mission Rahat' under which they are distributing ration kits and hygiene kits. They want to provide laptops and internet connections to their students, for online education and counselling. Bright Future India – Bright Future India
022-25274628

Drona Foundation distributes dry rations and conducts disinfection drives in Dharavi mohallas. They've organised health camps and provide mobile health facilities. They need help in providing employment support for their students/trainees.
<https://www.facebook.com/dronafoundation>
+91-9702082012

Goonj has been providing ration kits and sanitary pads in Dharavi.
022-28453034

Mumbai Roti Bank is providing cooked food in Dharavi.
+91-8655580001

Need Vikas Sanstha has provided face shields, masks, and water bottles to the police and bus conductors. They also distribute grocery kits to women-led families and families without ration cards. They have also distributed snacks to migrants traveling back and food support for the affected or quarantined families.
<https://www.facebook.com/NeedVikasSanstha/>
+91-70453 18989

Praja has been distributing ration kits in Dharavi and other areas. They also provided masks, gloves, PPE kits, sanitisers, and acrylic screen separators to the police.
022-65252729



ration provision setup by local organisations

A consortium of NGOs and a planned response

The need for a network of stakeholders working in Dharavi was voiced by many respondents. The primary reason cited was to prevent overlaps in aid receivers and avoid communities being left out. Very few CSOs conducted a systematic survey and needs assessment of the community to identify the genuinely needy and their requirement. Good practices such as this, experiences, and other learnings could be shared on this network to prevent the repetition of past mistakes, along with a chance for the new actors to receive guidance from the experienced players. A strategy for distributing aid, along with parity in the kind of aid given would also address the issue of accumulation of supplies by the people. It would also enable smaller organisations and local actors to tap into collaborations and shared resources. A body of CSOs would streamline coordination and collaboration with government officials of multiple levels as well. A combined vision for Dharavi for the next few months of hardships to come could strengthen the collective community action, discuss potential issues and device solutions.



Cooked food provided by the community leaders

contd.

Organisations

SNEHA has provided ration kits, vegetables, and fruits, along with door-to-door checkups and quarantine guidance. Society for Nutrition, Education & Health Action (SNEHA)
022-24042627

SPARC provides dry ration and is currently trying to arrange livelihood support. They need donations to continue their work.

SPARC - Society For the Promotion of Area Resource Centers
022-6555 5061

Triratna Prerana Mandal provides cooked food, dry ration kits, and conducts cleanliness drives of public toilets.

Triratna Prerana Mandal
> Enhancing Excellence in Environment, Education & Enterprise
+91 9322844054

YUVA provides residents and police on duty with dry ration kits and cooked food. Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA)
+91-9152051717

The list of relief providers is not exhaustive, and there are many more heroes in Dharavi doing their bit to help the community get through these hard times. We intend to release more information on the CSO movement in Dharavi, so if you are a part of an organisation that has been missed from the list, please contact us at [urbz](https://www.urbz.in)

Interviews with our 18 respondents this week underscores a parallel narrative; non-COVID health issues pose a concern as important, if not more, than the COVID pandemic. Interviews were conducted with families of Dharavi, community leaders, medical volunteers, doctors, nurses, NGOs and workers at BMC hospitals. During the lockdown, families already stressed due to lack of income have faced additional problems due to pre-existing medical conditions or those emerging during the lockdown.

**PRIMARY FOCUS
ON COVID
CREATES OTHER
PROBLEMS.**

Medical Infrastructure during the Lockdown

In a country with a deficit of medical infrastructure, all of the existing local private clinics, small nursing homes, BMC hospitals, and private hospitals are necessary to provide medical treatment to India's large population, who present a myriad of medical conditions and belong to various socio-economic classes with different financial capacities. BMC hospitals are run by the Municipality, and government hospitals in Mumbai are run by the State government. They offer medical treatment at highly subsidized costs, to make health care accessible to all economic classes. Due to their affordability, these hospitals are always in very high demand. On the other hand, private clinics and smaller nursing homes are relatively smaller setups run by private doctors. They are highly variable in their quality and treatment costs, and tend to be more expensive. The number of such setups are far more in number than government setups, and thus making it easier to receive quick treatment. There are large private hospitals in Mumbai as well, but none in Dharavi.

During the lockdown, Dharavi witnessed the closure of the majority of smaller nursing homes and private clinics. Doctors were unwilling to practice due to the rampant fear, and nursing homes, being small spaces, eliminating the possibility of running with adequate social distancing and ventilation. Only two BMC hospitals in Dharavi were functioning and converted into COVID hospitals. Over time, a few smaller setups have resumed business. A respondent claimed that many clinics had been notified by the BMC multiple times to reopen. A few medical practitioners affirmed a reduced but steady flow of patients, practicing with all the safety precautions, and having online consultations when possible. Some private doctors in Dharavi who want to be in touch with the latest developments, COVID or otherwise, attend regular webinars as well.

In general, all our respondents claimed that for medical ailments other than COVID, it has been very difficult to receive medical care. Due to mounting pressure on already-stressed and meagre medical facilities, many non-COVID related procedures, treatments, tests and checkups have either been denied or delayed. A few respondents said that they could be treated at BMC hospitals only because of personal contacts and by pulling a few strings. The additional pressure on the BMC or government facilities is also due to the inflation of the cost of medical treatment in private hospitals and small clinics. This leaves little choice for people with low income. Many deaths due to heart attacks or other reasons have taken place in Dharavi due to a lack of immediate medical care. Pregnancy cases are being looked after normally at the hospitals. Their wards are far away and well isolated. However monthly or weekly check-ups have stopped.

Knowing the difficulties Dharavikars face while accessing non-COVID medical help, many NGOs and community leaders are organising medical camps for regular treatment as well.

Chronic Medical Conditions

We spoke to families with patients of diabetes, heart conditions, high blood pressure, cancer, TB, polio, arthritis, malaria, dengue, thyroid, cholesterol, and fractures. Many such illnesses require regular treatment, checkups, and procedures that need to be done, all of which have been called off during the pandemic. One of our respondent's wife who is suffering from dementia requires regular acupuncture treatment to control her condition. Another respondent suffers from cancer and was in the middle of her chemotherapy

STORIES

Medical side of "Dharavi Pattern"

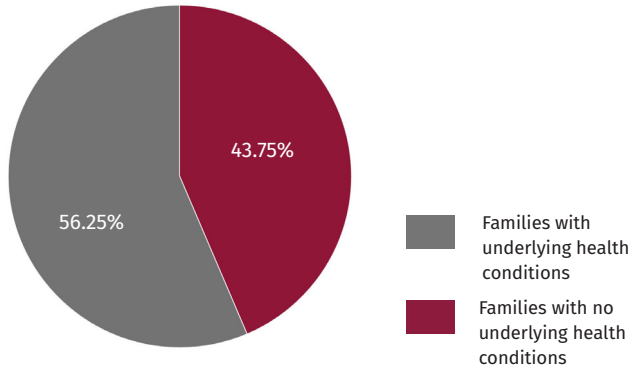
The 'Dharavi Pattern' has been a BMC-led initiative to tackle COVID in Dharavi. BMC has collaborated with private doctors and head nurse Angha with her team, which has been going door to door to conduct tests, check temperatures, and oxygen levels. The suspected cases were then sent to quarantine centers. They have also been guiding families, especially the elderly, on how to stay safe and take precautionary measures. Regions covered include Koliwada, Mahim, Mukund Nagar, and more.

Hospitals are providing employment opportunity

In these tough times, hospitals are not only helping the people recover from the virus but are also providing employment opportunities for the fearless. Rekha Gade, who used to make papads and Rajubhai, who was a carpenter have now taken up work at the BMC hospital in Sion to earn an income. After a general briefing about the precaution measures, they now clean COVID wards. Being empathetic and caring was a part of the job description for Rekha, knowing that the patient cannot be with their family.

sessions. None of them have been able to receive treatment.

People are scared to go to government hospitals right now due to COVID fear, and resorting to physical checkups only in cases of mortal danger. Many with pre-existing or recently-developed ailments during the lockdown are using home remedies, self-medicating, trying other quick fixes, or suffering in silence. Lack of medical facilities, inflated costs, no savings or income, and unaffordable medicines are some of the main reasons.



This chart shows the distribution of respondents with and without underlying health conditions



Medical camp in Dharavi during lockdown

Medical Expenditure

Families with chronic illnesses have to invest regularly in medicines for longer durations and tend to be more expensive than regular medicines. With high chances that the earning member's job has been brought to a standstill during the lockdown, in many cases, even those who have been treated are often physically unfit for manual labour and most jobs that are accessible to low-income groups. Sankaramal's husband underwent a major operation last April for throat cancer, after which he has been greatly weakened. To take care of him, Sankaramal's bhajiya business had to stop. The family's only income now is Rs 3000 per month from renting out a room in their house.

Instances of spiked rates by medical professionals have been corroborated by many of our respondents. To exemplify, a doctor in Dharavi was charging Rs 5000 for a death certificate, and another one operating a clinic raised his consultation fees from Rs 150 to Rs 250. When travel arrangements were being made for migrant workers by the State, many workers seeking a medical certificate had to pay up to Rs 350. On the other spectrum, there have been some sincere doctors too, one charging not more than Rs 70 for treatment.

Even during non-pandemic times, quality health care is available to select few in India. Low-income families and senior citizens depend on programmes and schemes that provide

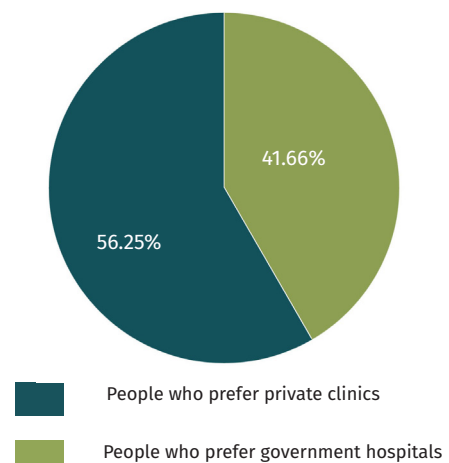
medical and financial support. Jansirani and her co-mother-in-law are senior citizens with ailments such as thyroid, cholesterol, and diabetes. Their monthly medicines were provided by Helpage India for a sum of Rs 10 per month upon the show of membership papers. TB patients in Dharavi were supported by government dot clinics, providing all treatment for TB for free. These services have been suspended during the pandemic, causing additional pressure on the families. In light of this, one respondent's claim of there being more TB patients in Dharavi than COVID shows the gravity of the situation.

In general, procedures and operations for ailments such as cancer can amount to lakhs, well beyond the spending capacity of many in Dharavi. Two of our respondents have received generous amounts from various trusts in Mumbai as well as Rajiv Gandhi's funds. However, it usually doesn't cover 100% of the expenses, forcing them to borrow large amounts of money from family and friends.

A medical professional, foreseeing the future, advises people to get medical insurance. He believes that the cost of medical treatment is going to increase or stay inflated for some time now.

Private clinics of Government Hospitals?

Regular visitors at private clinics attribute their choice to its proximity, known doctors or relations developed over time, and ease of the treatment process. All small ailments, whether it be toothache or fever, a small fracture to body pain, are usually treated by the same doctor unless it is a serious case that needs specialised consultation. There is a range of types and quality of practice at private clinics. While some run on low fixed costs for medicines and injections, some have developed a reputation of being shams and money-making businesses, making it unaffordable to many. One of our respondents receives medicines at Rs 50 and injections at Rs 100 from a private clinic near her house. However, the primary reason for not going to Sion hospital is the language barrier, as she only speaks Tamil.



This chart shows the preference of respondents for government and private healthcare.

On the other hand, many strongly propagate treatment at government hospitals. Its affordability makes it a better choice for those suffering from chronic illness due to sustained medical costs that need to be incurred. Many put greater trust in the fairness of treatment at the government of BMC hospitals.

Reliance on community ties

It is common for residents in Dharavi to return to their native place to undergo a serious operation or treatment, reasons being family support and security. Many families also rely heavily on their social networks for monetary support during medical emergencies. For families steeped in medical expenditures, like Meharaz's family, ration support has come from neighbours and sometimes even doctors at Sion hospital.

CSO medical support in Dharavi

CSO support for medical treatment has not been limited to only medicines or monetary support but extends to providing help in any part of the process of procuring medical treatment. For all those families from travel to Mumbai for medical treatment, Harshada also provides all-day meals to the relatives of the patient or uses her contacts at Sion hospital to reduce treatment costs in some cases. With a focus on women's health, she has also provided up to 4500 sanitary napkins to women of low-income communities.

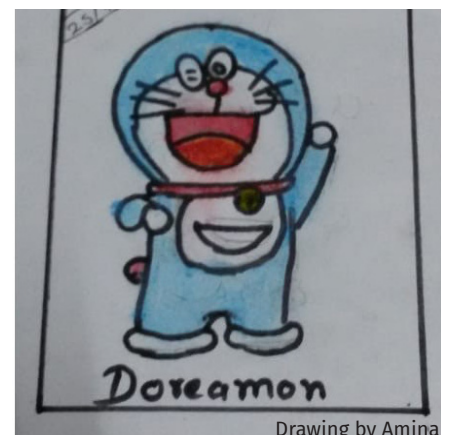
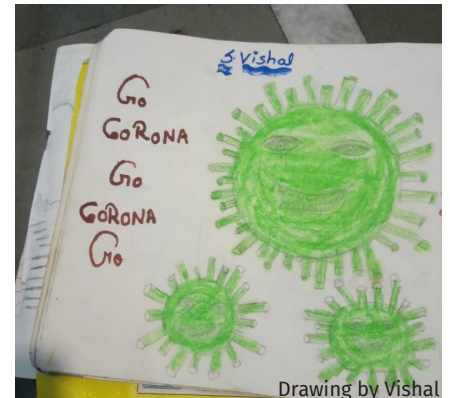
Ancillary infrastructure for improving health

While basic medical infrastructure has to be improved in both quality and quantity, wash facilities need to be maintained to curb the spread of COVID and other illnesses as well. According to a respondent, BMC has suspended its regular maintenance of community toilets, with all its resources directed to fighting COVID. Harshada is one of many CSOs involved in conducting sanitization drives for community toilets and upkeep of general hygiene in Dharavi

Our 43 young respondents for this newsletter range from ages 6 to 16, each providing us with their unique perspective of the lockdown. While the newsletter shows how the children have adapted to the conditions in the last four months, an understanding of the various ways in which the pandemic has impacted them could pave the way for holistic policies integrating their input.

HOW DO THE YOUNGEST RESIDENTS OF DHARAVI COPE WITH THE LOCKDOWN?

ARTWORK



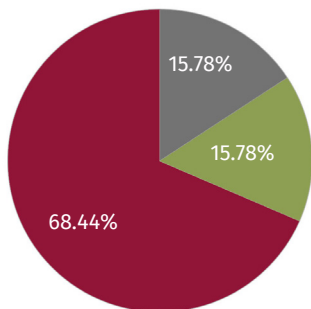
Being aware and being safe

All the children we have spoken to are very knowledgeable of the pandemic and the lockdown. While an underlying fear of getting the virus was expressed by many, even the youngest of our interviewees have been religiously following safety measure. Standard instructions by parents to not step out of the house, wash hands every 20 minutes, wearing masks, and keeping a distance of three feet from people have been proudly respected by the children. While they may not fully understand the logic of these safety measures, such simple instructions have been easy for them to follow, making them realise the gravity of the situation at the same time. In many families, the elder children constantly remind their parents and younger siblings to follow the precautions as well.

Lockdown's impact on studies

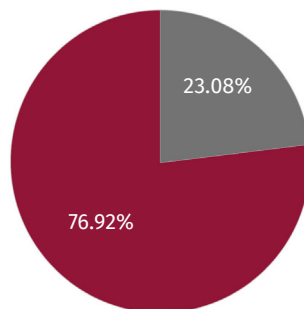
Online classes are now a part of the new normal, but unfortunately, the logistic is not always sufficient to meet the needs. Most of the children we spoke to have been attending online classes for a while now, taking place either on zoom calls or WhatsApp groups. The new teaching method has led to an overall increase in homework. In some schools, the younger children (6-9 years) are being closely monitored by asking for regular submission of homework over Whatsapp. On the other hand, some schools, have not been able to implement online teaching for all children, and were forced to limit them only to 9th and 10th standard students. Children who have not been able to study online during the lockdown, either don't own a smartphone or in one case, their teacher traveled back to her village.

Many children claim to struggle with following online teaching. Though the majority of teachers are ready to provide additional help, children often need in-person attention. This is sought from their siblings, parents, or in the case of Loretta, a 14 year old resident of Dharavi, private tuitions, which help them understand the lesson and do their homework. In many households, the onus now falls on the parents to ensure quality education for the child, and this is particularly difficult when the parents are illiterate. Borrowing notes from friends and copying from them have become a necessary routine. The quality of online teaching, along with their child's attention span and grasping abilities has been matters of concern for many parents.



Attending online classes
 Not able to attend online classes
 School isn't conducting online classes

The pie chart shows the division of students who are able to attend online classes and who aren't.



Getting help at home along with online classes
 Relying of online classes only

This pie chart is to demonstrate the percentage of the respondents getting help with their academics at home.

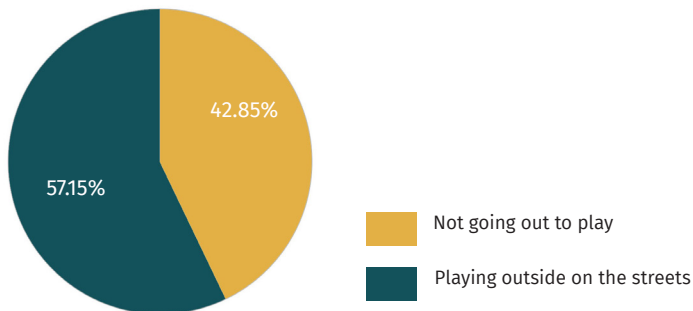
These are some of the drawings done by the kids during the lockdown.

Help with household work

The lockdown has forced families to spend an increased amount of time together, which has resulted in the division of household chores. While some of these kids have always helped with these chores, there are many who have been helping only because of the lockdown. Some children are pretty sure that housework has increased since everyone is stuck at home. Activities such as sweeping, mopping, cooking, washing utensils, filling water containers, etc. are divided according to the age of the child, but even children as young as 6 have been involved in some form or another. They have become more aware of the difficulties and financial situations in the house.

Spending time

On the upside, this ample amount of free time from school has forced children to find other activities to occupy themselves. Those with creative leanings have taken to drawing, singing, or dancing. Family play times have become common, with indoor games such as carrom and ludo. TV and phone screen time have generally increased in most households since the lockdown. It has been difficult to keep the younger ones engaged, especially since they are unable to go out, say some parents. Some children play out on the streets close to home with restricted timings, proudly claiming to follow all safety precautions and choosing to play non-contact sports such as hide-n-seek.



The pie chart here shows the percentage of kids going out to the streets outside their houses to play and the percentage of kids strictly staying indoors.

Kindred Spirits

Friends are a very important component of a child's life, growth, and development. This lockdown has curtailed interactions with other children almost completely, school environments being the biggest facilitator. Seeing their friends every day on video calls during classes is a welcome respite for many. Rules change from household to household: some parents allow their children to play in the streets with neighbours, while some impose a strict outdoor ban. Children, especially between 6-9 years have been most eager to go out and play, and tend to have more neighbourhood friends. For those with friends living far away, they have been exploring the digital world, using Whatsapp and online games to spend time together. However, many don't have their friend's phone numbers, don't have a phone, or have limited access to their parents' phones.



Kids pursuing indoor activities and spending time with their friends from the neighbourhood.

STORIES

7 and out of her childhood

Akhila, a 7 year old girl from Dharavi has matured past her age. Akhila's father is away, her mother is suffering from cancer and needs to go for chemotherapy frequently. During her mother's absence, she is the one holding the fort down. She manages to do the household chores, takes care of her younger and goes to the store run by her mother. Her brother has also been helping with the smaller tasks during the lockdown, but Akhila is the one her mother trusts with most responsibilities. Along with these tasks, she also makes sure to study and do her homework on time.



The images above are a few examples of how the kids are coping with the lockdown while taking necessary precautions.

In urban centers like Mumbai, phones are an essential commodity, almost similar to an identification number used to identify digital accounts and to use a plethora of digital services. The lockdown has increased everyone's dependency on smartphones, while further excluding those who can't afford the device or the recharge costs. Our 30 respondents spoke about the importance that phones and devices have taken in their everyday life.

ONLINE ACCESS DOES NOT HELP OVERCOME BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE.

A smartphone each

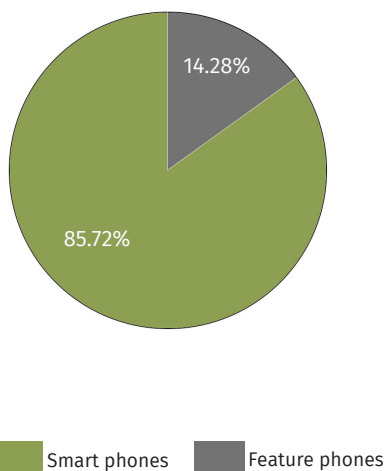
Aligning with the vision of Digital India, this lockdown has pushed multiple sectors to work in the realms of the virtual world. The restrictions imposed by the lockdown on physical movement has made the common man view mobile phones as a lifeline. Our interviews have shown that the few families who own only one phone are also those sustaining on daily-wage labour. Moreover, the phone tends to belong to the man of the house, increasing the dependency of the wife on her husband for everyday tasks that are now done via digital communication. The lockdown brought with it a growing need to own more devices, as one device could no longer meet the family's growing digital needs. When a fundamental necessity such as education is moved online, it seems imper-



Need for outdoor respite during lockdown

ative to develop online systems that cater to the length and breadth of the society, especially the low-income population who look to education as a tool for upward social and economic mobility. Hilda, a school teacher in Dharavi, had to make a personal investment in a smartphone due to the online teaching requirements. The advanced device specifications required for applications such as Zoom brought the cost up to Rs 15,000, which she took on an EMI. It was a significant financial burden on her during the lockdown.

Though the government has released multiple mobile apps and online portals to combat the collateral damage of COVID 19 and the lockdown, it leaves anyone without a smartphone outside the blanket of security. With transactions, registrations, applications, information dissemination and feedback mechanisms of vital government and private services moving online, the choice of one-person-one-phone soon transforms into a requirement.



This pie chart shows the extent of how smartphones have replaced feature phones.

STORIES

Increasing digital dependency

Rizwana, the wife of a daily wage electrician, is struggling to meet the online academic requirements of her 3 children using one smartphone. Rizwana is unable to resume work due to restricted travel on local trains, and her husband's work came to standstill during the lockdown.

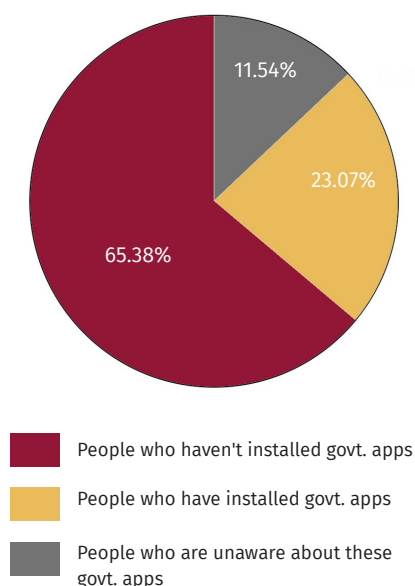
Nevertheless, she bought a phone for her eldest college-going daughter in May to cope with online studies. However, her daughter is solely responsible to meet the recharge costs, and has been borrowing from her friends in the last few months. The younger ones are unable to use the phone for their studies, due to excessive use by the eldest one and the fear of them damaging it. Additionally, the children are unable to follow online instructions, thus greatly impacting their academic learning in the last two months. They demand phones with larger screens, another prerequisite for the long hours of online studies. Their parents have made great sacrifices to ensure quality education for their children, and the experience with online learning has left them very disheartened.

Rizwana's husband has a feature phone purchased at Rs 200 on the second-hand market. He stretches his Rs 50 top-ups for many months by making limited phone calls. For a family whose need of the hour is to ensure food on the table every day, providing a suitable device and a studying environment at home for online learning is well beyond their means.

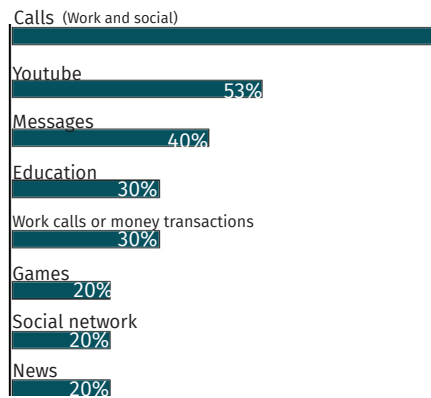
Why do you use your phone?

With the plethora of functions now added to the mobile phone, the main purpose of it remains to contact people, for either personal or professional reasons. A few of our interviewees have also been using their phones actively to coordinate relief work during the pandemic. Whatsapp has been an age-old all-purpose communication app, recently used for online teaching as well along with Zoom. The lockdown has seen an increase in screen time, especially for entertainment purposes, using platforms such as Youtube, TikTok, social networks, offline and multiplayer games, news, web series such as Hotstar, amongst others. Phones have taken over the role of TV in many households and this is reflected in the rise in data usage during the lockdown. Fortunately, that has not impacted most people's wallets due to unlimited data and calling packs or Wifi plans. However, many have corroborated a spike in their regular telecom service plans.

While most people have taken to various digital platforms, the numerous applications launched by the Central and State governments during the lockdown for health and employment support, including the AarogyaSetu application are not as popular. A large number of our interviewees claimed to have neither knowledge nor trust in such applications and hence don't use them. This raises a pertinent question regarding the success of information dissemination of government policies and schemes within the most affected populations.



This chart shows the division of people based on their approach towards government apps.



The graph here shows the diversified use of a smartphone based on the responses from the interviews.

Children and Phones

Phones and education became synonymous during the lockdown. A couple of years back whenever a child was seen using a phone, it was usually for entertainment purposes. With schools gradually introducing tablets in school, the role of technology in a child's life has been changing, but so far this was limited to the affluent.

The lockdown imposed the use of smartphones for academic learning on every section of society. Overlap of teaching instructions and homework on Whatsapp adds to the already burdened minds of young children who are unable to follow online instructions and course material, and some are losing out on attendance as well.

While most of our respondents have affirmed to letting their children use their phones to study, there is restricted to negligible play time on the phone, primarily due to fear of damage. This leaves the children with little entertainment respite, especially due to restrictions of playing outside and meeting friends.

No phone?

While many of our cases said they had neighbours without a phone, they all returned to their native places due to unbearable living conditions in the city. This indicates that many out-state migrants, mostly employed in the daily wage sector, are still without a device that was considered an essential service during the lockdown. From our respondents, we learned that they would usually borrow their neighbour's phones for emergencies, otherwise relying on PCO (Public Call Office) operators for regular calls.

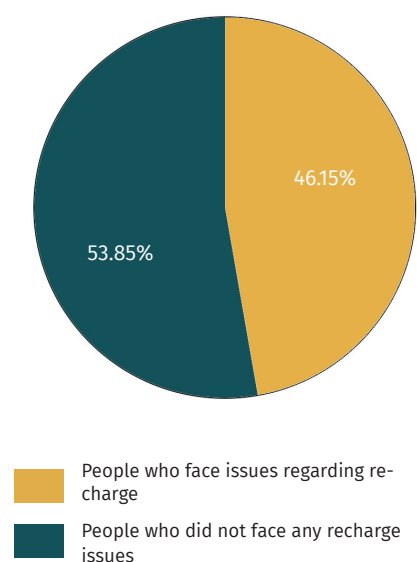
Unfortunately for them, PCOs have been on a steady decline in India, with 50 lakhs in 2009 to 5.7 lakhs in 2015.

The combined cost of the device and regular recharge keeps mobile phones out of reach for many.

Burden of recharge and repair

The lockdown has turned the monthly mobile recharge into a significant financial investment for the majority of our respondents. Many who wait for a call to bag a trickle of work need to have a service pack to receive incoming calls. With a negligible source of income, this regular expenditure has been affordable only to a few, the rest turning to family and friends in Dharavi or their native place for help. People have also been getting help from various organisations.

It has been a financial and logistical nightmare for those who have faced problems with their phones during the lockdown. From the repair shop owners interviewed, we learned that most people have trouble with the phone's display or charging slots. Due to the recent ban on Chinese products, along with a limited supply of repair parts, the costs have almost doubled for common repairs. This has led to higher costs for the customer, and loss of business and lower profit margins for the repair shops. Moreover, repair shops were shut for the initial months of the lockdown and now operate only three days a week from 9am-5pm. All these factors have not only made their repair services scarce to the customer but have taken a substantial toll on their business, resulting in the closure of one of our respondent's shops.



The chart shows that almost 50% of the people interviewed faced problems regarding recharge.

Mumbai is a city with a complicated relationship with water. It's annual rainfall should ideally suffice for everyone. Unfortunately, the reality on the ground is more complicated. Distribution systems remain uneven across neighbourhoods. Systems in place are fragile. Their quality is tied down to varied degrees of civic legitimacy for each locality. Poorer neighbourhoods face shortages regularly.

**WATER
EVERYWHERE - BUT
NOT WHEN YOU
NEED IT.**

The ultimate source of water supply for the city - like for most of the country - is the annual monsoon. Which brings its own issues. The city witnesses downpours that are getting increasingly severe and floods becoming more and more vicious as last week's media coverage of the city's tryst with the downpour showed.

The drainage system of Mumbai was constructed to handle rainfall at the rate of 25mm/hour. The city is actually subjected to approximately 100mm/hour which already stretches the existing capacity. Besides this, building over natural water flows by disregarding the monsoon shaped geography has produced a catastrophic scenario - which only gets worse every year. Landslides and flooded homes have become increasingly frequent. Added to this, lack of a comprehensive waste management system leads to clogged drains and garbage blocks throughout neighbourhoods.

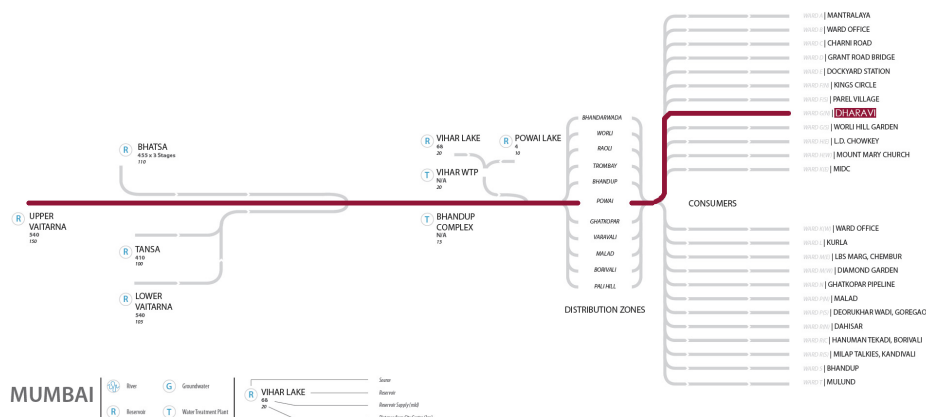
Dharavi sits in the heart of the city and experiences all of this at close quarters. This week's issue explores the story of water as it falls onto the neighbourhood from the heavens above, the water pipes that come from the city's municipal supply and the flows through the streets drains and gutters back into the sea.

Limited access to water

Dharavi has come a long way in providing shelter to hundreds of thousands of Mumbaikars. Most of our respondents in this small study this week had spent approximately 20 years in the neighbourhoods. From the 24 respondents 8 mentioned sharing a water line between neighbours or borrowing water from their neighbour's line. It is common in Dharavi to share water sources and split the bill.

People with and without individual water lines face one issue which is common to both; shortage of water. There are fixed times at which different areas receive supply. That is when they fill up their storages which are usually in 300 litre drums or more. Sometimes water comes at 4 am. If one misses that slot of 2 or 3 hours they need to plan their day without or with minimum water.

There are days when residents are informed about a total cut off a day in advance. This is a regular part of their lives and people have found ways of dealing with it. They store extra water. They resort to quick showers, avoid washing clothes that day, use the minimum possible amount of water for cooking, and try to use fewer utensils. One of our respondents, Shivaji Bhosle falls back on buying drinking water while Mehraz Kureshi goes to her mother's place in Kurla whenever a water cut is announced.

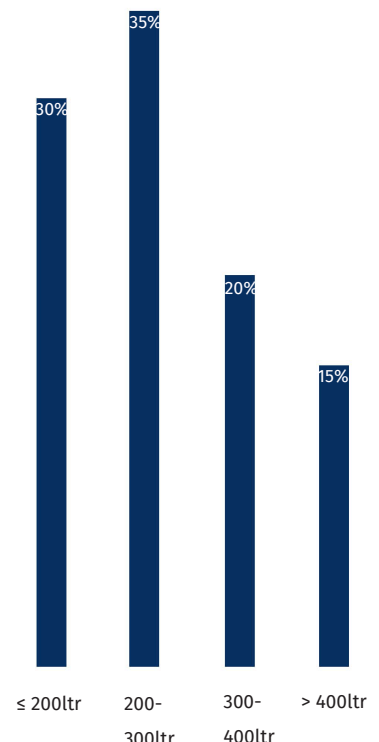


STORIES

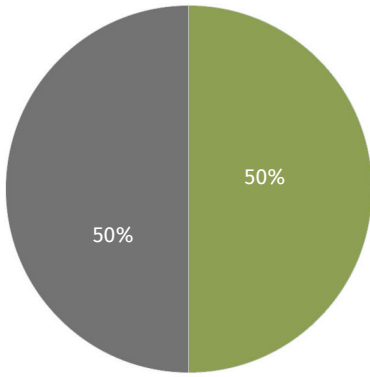
Forced recreation

One of the respondents, Shyam Kanle has a water storage of almost 700L. His own immediate family requires approximately 400L/day. He shares the tank with his brother. The waterline that is owned by him is shared with 5 other families.

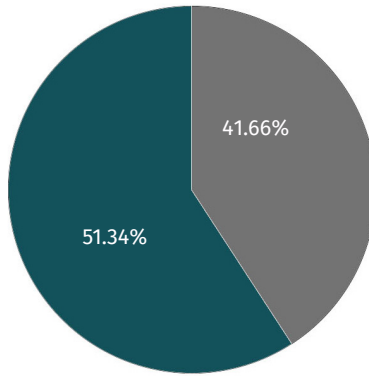
When it comes to planning their water - cut off day, the family goes one extra step. Members go out to eat breakfast. They do this to avoid dirtying more vessels. They also bring back lunch and use paper plates. They made it out as if it was a fun thing to do to break the monotony of everyday cooking but on a more serious note, they acknowledged that it is actually borne more out of necessity. It was forced recreation actually.



The graph shows the amount of water consumed in a day against the number of respondents.



People having individual water lines
 People having shared/borrowed water lines



Shares or borrows the line from landlord
 Shares or borrows the line with neighbours

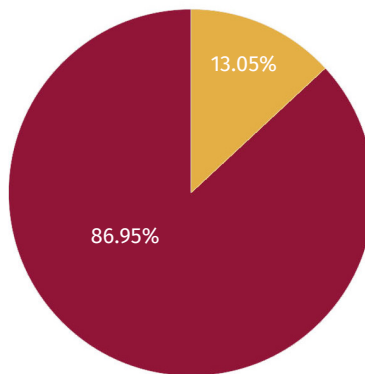
The charts above show that 50% of the respondents either share a water line or borrow a water line. Out of these 50%, the second chart shows who do they share their water lines with.



State of a kitchen during monsoon and after using up the first storage of water i.e. buckets and handis.

Quality over facility

While many of the respondents have clean water, there are people who aren't lucky enough. Our respondents mentioned letting go of some water in the beginning to avoid the murky flow. Sometimes though, the murkiness does not stop. Especially in the monsoons when the quality of the water supply becomes uncertain. After filling tanks, most people filter it. Either using a fine cloth or by boiling. From our respondents only 3 homes had electric filters. If the quality of the water is bad, then the hours of supply doesn't matter. A lot more expense is incurred just to make it usable.



People who own a filter
 People who use a cloth or boil the water

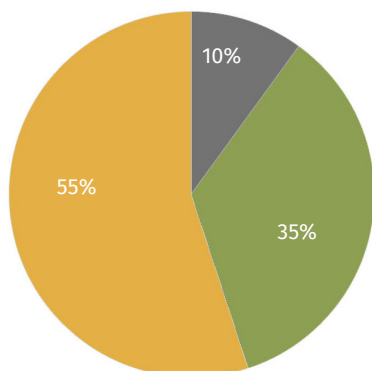
Out of the 24 respondents, this chart shows the no. of people who own a filter.



The quality of water at Ali Sheikh's house.

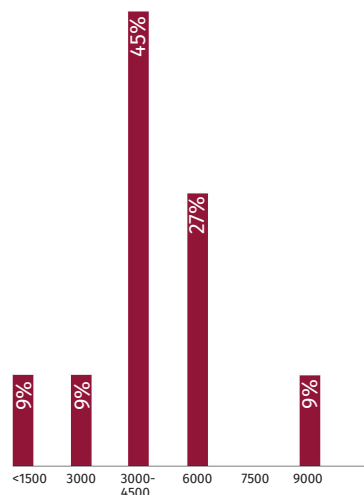
Methods of payment

There are different ways in which people pay for their water connections. Based on the answers of our respondents, there are 3 main methods of payment. Respondents like Shalini and Meena have spent a certain amount once to get the connection while the other respondents are either paying monthly or quarterly bills or the rent of their house covers the water bills.



People who've paid once for their connections
 People whose rent covers the water bill
 People who pay on monthly/quarterly basis

The pie chart shows 3 different ways in which the respondents pay for their water connections. The graph shows the amount spent annually by the people who pay monthly/quarterly bills.



Amount of money spent annually against the percentage of respondents spending it. This is based on the answers of 11 respondents.

Water for a price

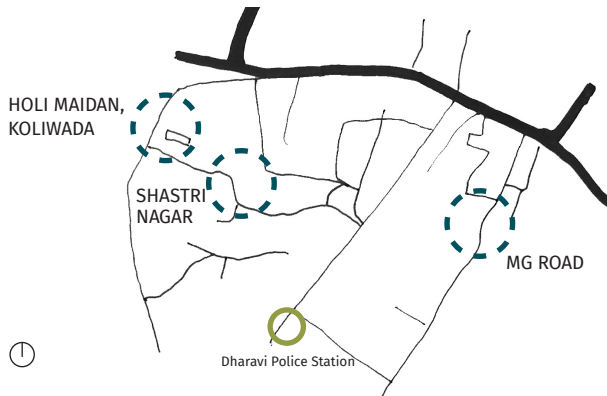
Zubair Kureshi, a resident of Dharavi, has to purchase drinking water almost everyday. The Kureshi family is one of those who receive murky water no matter how long they let the tap flow. In spite of the fact that they filter the water with a fine cloth and boil it, the water often remains undrinkable. Their complaint of the quality of water includes stinking water. There are kids in the family and the parents are particularly concerned, which makes them have to buy bottled water almost every other day.

Even though Zubairbhai, as a community leader, has helped a lot of people during the lockdown, he says he needs help too from the municipal authorities to take action on the quality of drinking water.

Surviving floods

This week Mumbai experienced heavy rainfall for 2 consecutive days. Many areas were brutally hit but Dharavi seems to have survived just fine. Most of our respondents did not mention any major damage or loss. This was also verified by a general overview of the locality. It was, like it has been, during several monsoons over the years. People this year did whatever little they could do to deal with the intensity of the monsoons. This includes using plastic sheets to cover windows and over roofs. Some people had their switch boards or cupboards close to walls ruined because of leakage, but nothing particular connected to flooding or water logging. At the same time, the previous years have taught people to be cautious. Most had transferred their belongings either to the floors above if they had an extra floor or even a neighbour's houses on a higher storey. Even though these downpours occur suddenly, nobody mentioned any major damage to any of their possessions.

Even though Dharavi didn't have major floods this time, people did point out that clogged drains and poor flow of rainwater made it difficult to wade through the streets - even short distances - especially to the community toilet in the neighbourhood.



According to our respondents, these are the 3 areas which were flooded during this week's downpour.

The use of Community toilet during monsoon

Sanjyoti is a young adult who lives in a chawl. Her family has an individual tap whose line is shared with other families of the chawl. They have adapted to water cut off days but are yet not accustomed to the rains - having recently moved to the city.

Sanjyoti doesn't have a toilet in the building and uses the community toilet, which in the monsoons means going out with an umbrella, on most mornings. The toilet is plagued by water logging which also causes a massive breeding of mosquitoes - becoming a health hazard in its own right. The issue is pervasive throughout the year but during these times - falling ill is particularly dangerous, given the lack of accessibility of hospitals and doctors.

Reasoning and awareness

All the respondents we interviewed seemed to be aware of the reasons why Dharavi does not suffer the floods as much as other parts of the city. According to them the areas they are in - mostly around the older habitats such as the fishing village of Koliwada - are built on a higher level allowing the water to flow downhill.

At the same time they also had an idea of why rainwater still became a nuisance for most of them. There are uneven levels of constructions and garbage blocked in drains that trap the water and make it a pain to wade through. Those who are at the end of a slope face most of the brunt.

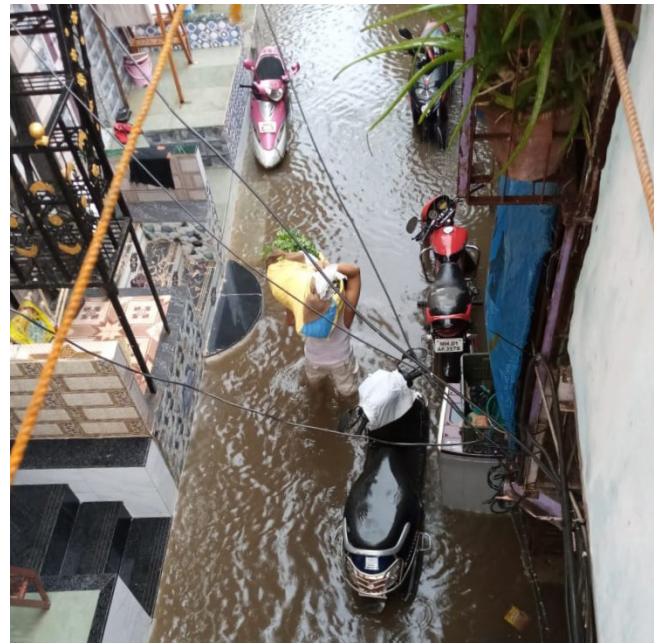
Our respondents pointed out that there isn't enough open ground for the water to seep in which delays the retreat of water collected during rain. Most agreed that it was the lack of maintenance of gutters and drains that caused major obstructions to water flows.

Respondents acknowledged that they themselves are also responsible for littering the open nallas. However, they also pointed out that the municipal authorities are not doing their job properly. They are supposed to clean the drains before each monsoon but rarely manage to do so. They suggested that it is important for the public and authorities to work together to battle the monsoons.

Neighbours save the day

Water logging or shortage of water, residents of Dharavi are able to ward off these issues with the help of each other. The neighbours have always stepped up whenever they can to help their next-door friends. Our respondents mentioned cases of being helped by their neighbours when they didn't have enough water and vice versa. One of the respondents, Shalini had helped her friend for over 2 months until her water line was fixed. Also during rain, people whose houses are lower or are on the ground have been welcomed to keep their belongings at their neighbours' house which are higher or even stay over.

It is only when there is a sense of community can one face the adversities. Dharavikars are a prime example of that.



These are the pictures captured during heavy rains this week. Images are shared by Dilip Khandare.

Staying indoors and doing nothing has never been a young adult's ideal choice in the best of times. The pandemic-lead lockdown has imposed this involuntary decision for this age-group to nightmarish proportions. For this week's update, we spoke to 27 young adults from Dharavi, aged 18-25 years, about their experience in the lockdown and how they deal with it. We confirmed that this age group from Dharavi are no different from their counterparts in other cities.

WITH PLANS ON HOLD, YOUNG ADULTS FIND CREATIVE WAYS OF STAYING ENGAGED.

Transition of the lockdown routine

Everyone experienced an unexpected halt with the lockdown. While some people enjoyed this much needed break in their busy lives, it turned into a forced reality very soon. The youth of Dharavi have until now kept themselves busy with the million things that youth keep themselves busy with: studying, working, socialising, playing games, watching movies and of course house chores. Being young they managed to do these with many other things like meeting their friends, watching movies and playing games. The lockdown's first phase provided time for recreational activities from within the home and relieved them of academic or livelihood related work. This free time was spent substantially on the phone. Some of the respondents mentioned a disturbance in their sleep cycle due to the amount of time spent on mobile and other screens, while others spoke about challenges in their routines.

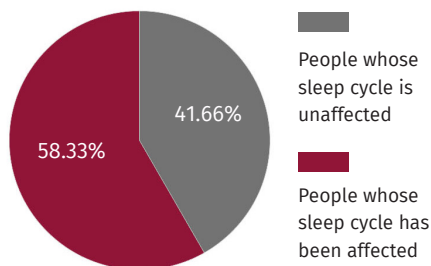
Towards the end of the first three months of the lockdown, most respondents had resumed their work or education related activities. Students who have recently graduated from high school have been able to go through college admission processes and currently attend lectures online through zoom or google calls. Recent graduates began working by grabbing every opportunity that came their way. For those who are waiting for college admission processes to be completed or are having fewer classes than usual are trying out different things on their own, learning courses of their interest from youtube and other platforms.

Another emerging concern is health. When speaking of their routine, many mentioned doing some form of physical exercise in the morning to keep themselves fit. They added that this was a good way for them to beat the blues.

80% interviewees reported they have experienced a notable increase in their usage of screens.



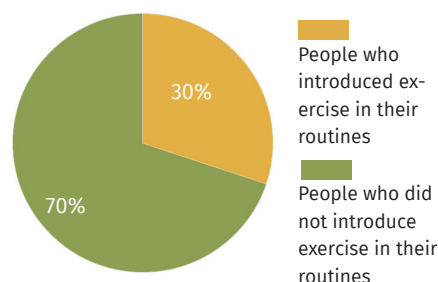
How affected are sleep cycles?



This charts show the number of people whose increased use of phones' affect on their sleep cycles.



Exercise: a coping mechanism



The chart shows the percentage of young adults who have inculcated working out as a part of their routines during the lockdown.

STORIES

Silver lining

Gyaan is a 22 year old working adult who couldn't pursue further education after 12th grade because of certain circumstances at home. He has been taking up odd jobs now and then in the field of event management, even being part of the logistics of the famed Kumbhmela - one of the largest religious fairs that happens in the world. He has been helping his mother at home and going on calls to fix ethernet cables during the lockdown. He volunteers to distribute rations for various NGOs who are helping people in need. Gyaan is someone who has been told off by his father for not having a 'permanent' job. However, for him it is a personal choice as he feels he can earn more doing multiple smaller independent jobs like supervising events than by working in an office. In the course of the lockdown, he has been busier than ever and has ensured that his family has enough to eat. His father didn't have to buy food rations even once. In fact, his family was even considering moving back to the village for a while. It was Gyaan who convinced them to stay back. He handled his family financials very well and now his father does not insist on his getting a permanent job any more. On the contrary, his father says with pride that the son managed to take care of the family on his own. Gyaan is proud to have gained his father's trust. The experience turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Gyaan's mental health. He used to be anxious about not having a permanent job, due to his temperament and choice, and disappointing his father. This is not the case any more.

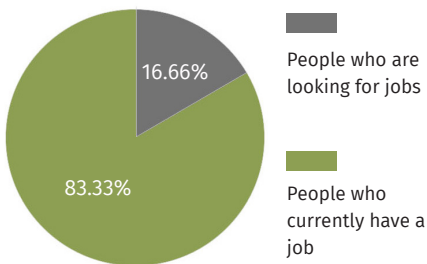
Realisation of responsibilities

In ordinary circumstances, many young adults didn't really have time to help their parents with household chores. Most parents didn't really force them on this either. Many respondents said that this lockdown provided an opportunity for them to understand the importance and effort that goes into running various errands. They spoke about helping their mothers with household chores for the first time. Some of the respondents' joined their parents who were volunteers, in serving needy families to get ration and food. So the families did community work together.

We also had respondents who decided to make the most of their free time and independently joined other organisations that were involved in doing community service.

As soon as the strict lockdown was eased, youngsters who were not studying started to pursue various jobs and began earning once more to at least manage their personal expenses so they could relieve their parents of some financial responsibilities

50%
interviewees are students.



Out of the 12 people who aren't students, 2 are seeking out job opportunities and the rest already have a source of income.

Keeping in touch.

While our respondents understood the importance of staying indoors, they also reported the value of keeping in touch with friends - which was also a way of not becoming socially isolated or being overwhelmed by the presence of the family. The need to carve out personal space within the constricted and constrained home-environment was a major concern. They managed to keep in touch with their peers and friends during the lockdown mostly by phone but also in person by following all the health protocols.

Stimulus

A respondent, Vikas, is a 21 year old resident of Dharavi who works at Bombay Burger in Sion. Vikas has studied till the 12th grade. He told us about how he ignored studies and focused on having fun and wasting his time with friends in the past. However, a few months ago he resumed studies.

During the lockdown, he saw one of his friends start a vada pav centre. The small business had grown rapidly and had now started to serve many other dishes as well. Vikas felt inspired by this. During the lockdown he and a friend Aditya noticed that some joints had shut down in the neighbourhood as workers had left the city to return to the villages. They took the initiative and reached out to the owners of Bombay Burger. They asked the owner if the outlet could reopen with them taking the place of the workers. It worked and now the two of them have an income. More importantly- they are happy that they don't have to stay at home doing nothing - as that would only lead to negative thoughts!

Put on ice

Atul is another 22 year old who couldn't study past the 12th grade. He used to work with an event management team before switching to a job as a driver to bring in income for the family. Something that became a pressing need after his father's illness. During the lockdown, he volunteered at NGOs to distribute rations. For a certain period during the lockdown, the family even had to move back to the village where his mother lives. However he is now back in the city and for the time being lives with his aunt.

His days as an event manager saw him developing many associations in the field. He sees driving as an aberration and wants to go back to organizing music events. His real plan is to start his own business for supplying and assisting with musical arrangements at social events. At the moment he and his partner are saving up for laptops, speakers and bass instruments hoping to get opportunities once the pandemic is over. They feel this is the best time to start saving money to invest in their future business.



Adarsh is a 21 year old resident of Dharavi who has traveled back to his village during the course of lockdown. He likes to dance and is eager to come back Mumbai and socialise with his friends.

As much as they appreciated the time they got to spend with their families, they also realised the need to start earning as financial challenges would only increase and compound in the coming years. The need to keep in touch with friends and acquaintances was linked to the possibilities of starting new ventures and bouncing ideas to collaborate and start working with each other. Some of the respondents mentioned feeling depressed as a result of staying put at a place for so long, but staying in contact with their friends, who were also a window to the outer world helped them get through the lockdown.

Strengthening of bonds

Life before the pandemic was rushed at all times, for most families in Dharavi. Every member is involved in some livelihood related activity or the other. Typically this means the only time a family gets together is during dinner or even later. While this may have been enough - respondents feel that such time constraints rarely came in the way of the families having a strong bond with each other - the lockdown proved to be an opportunity for the family to strengthen those bonds further. All our respondents spoke about spending more quality time with their family members compared to before the pandemic. It gave them space to spare. One of the respondents spoke how he would usually have lunch alone or at the most with his brother as both parents would be at work. This lockdown gave them a chance to have lunch together everyday.



One of our respondents, Sonal, helping her father distribute ration.

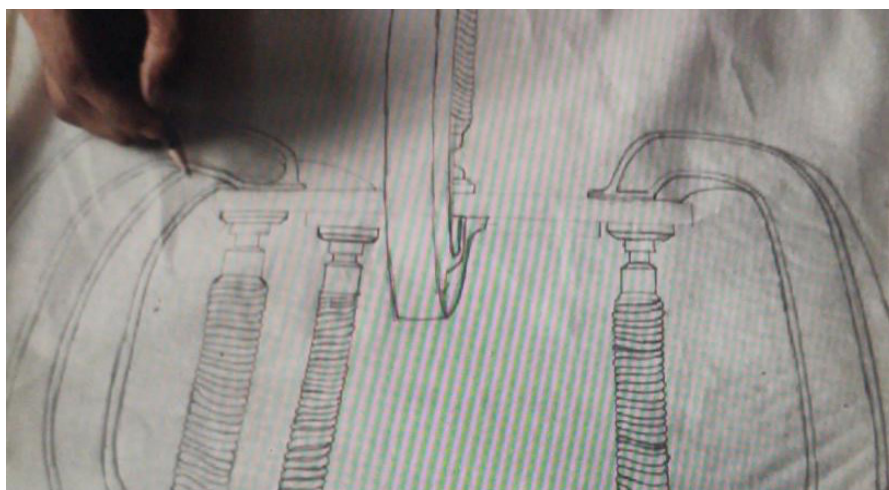
Plans post pandemic



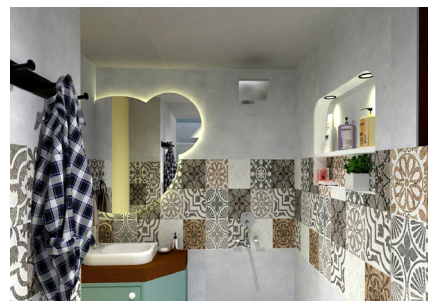
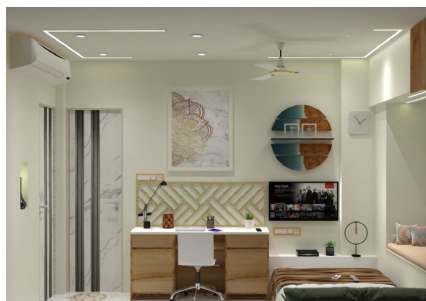
Ganesh working in a workshop.

When we talked of the immediate impact of the pandemic on our respondents' plans, most spoke of the problems connected with cancellation of all the trips that had been planned. Many also had long term future plans which were adversely affected. Though many respondents spoke about being bored of the study-from-home set-up, they acknowledged the importance of staying home and reported being well aware of the fact that it would indeed take a long time for things to get back to normal.

Students who have recently graduated or are in their final year - reported being concerned about how much their plans were affected by the pandemic. These fresh graduates had plans of pursuing their dream jobs and some of them also had concrete plans of starting small business ventures with their friends. All these now needed a second thought and more time to build the capital that would be needed post the lock-down.



This is an image of Ganesh's college assignment.



Ganesh is our 22 year old respondent who is recent graduate of Interior design. He joined a design office as a site supervisor right before the lockdown and has his own freelance projects that he works on. Ganesh has appreciated the time he saved by working from home and not travelling. He's been constantly working on enhancing his skills. These are some renders he has developed.

This issue of the Dharavi Weekly takes you through 11 personal accounts of religious and cultural celebrations from the people themselves, as a culmination of our now, 15-week long endeavour to document their lives. Moving forward, The Dharavi Weekly will transition into a fortnightly issue wherein we hope to give to you, our readers, a much more in depth ethnographic representation of these communities.

The 2.1 meter square settlement of Dharavi is home to a large population of Indians from all over the country. Being at such close proximity to one another, families exchange and imbibe each other's deep rooted values and customs, thus making each family in Dharavi unique in their religious propensities.

Many important festivals have come and gone in the lockdown, namely the Narli Puja, Eid, Easter, Janamashtmi

and Sawantsari. These festivals often mark auspicious times for people to make large financial investments such as buying a car or a house. Restrictions on public gatherings, along with the collateral damage of the economic lockdown on financial capacities, has altered the scale of all festivities. While the lockdown's impact on household celebrations vary from family to family, public celebrations have been severely dampened, following strict guidelines periodically released by the State and Central Governments.

In the process of conducting these phone interviews, we came across stories of how the community has come together in support of one another to ensure collective safety and good health. Some families who admitted to living luxurious lifestyles before the lockdown feel a new determination to live humbly and frugally.

A Tale Of Multiple Cities In One Place

Bhau shares an origin story of Dharavi from approximately 113 years ago. It used to be a barren piece of land on the banks of the river Mithi. Families would bring their cattle here to graze. The village of Thirunavelli in Tamil Nadu, was facing an acute drought at the time.

Belonging to the Adhi Dravid Samaj, there were many families from the scheduled caste living in extreme poverty and were subject to many forms of discrimination. They were not allowed to enter any temples, or even step out of their houses as it was considered unholy for their shadow to be seen on the ground.

Their fate turned when a generous Muslim man offered to take them to Bombay. The community migrated



Holi celebration in Koliwada before lockdown.

in hundreds, and started a rawhide business in the region of Mumbai, now called Dharavi.

Being mostly uninhabited, except by the Kolis, Dharavi proved to be the perfect choice for the incoming Tamilians. The community felt free for the first time, with nobody to berate, question or oppress them in their new neighbourhood. They belonged to the Hindu community, but had for thousands of years been denied entry into a temple. In Bombay, they would never be asked their caste on entering a place of worship. As an expression of freedom, a public installation of the Ganpati deity was conducted under a peepal tree.

Further along, a nomadic tribe - the Konchikars - also found a home in Dharavi and have been residents of Dharavi for generations. The Konchikars' business involved the selling of coconuts and other fruits. This has changed with people pursuing various other businesses. The 70s saw the cobbler community of Rajasthan migrate to Dharavi. According to Bhau the reason for their migration is a mystery. They had a strong foothold in Rajasthan, and he doesn't know what motivated them to

A Coconut Offering

"Dharavi Koliwada is one village. We celebrate 1 Holi festival, 1 coconut festival and have 1 Dahi Ma deity's temple. Often villages have many deities based upon which they divided. We have not done this. In Koliwada, the Christians and Hindus all live together in peace as one united community"

In conversation with Digambar Koli, a history teacher from Dharavi, Koliwada, we hear about the various religious practices that his community takes part in throughout the year. Two festivals of importance for the Koli community are the Holi festival and Narli Pujan. During the Holi festival members of the community, especially newly weds, pray to the Holika fire to expel the darkness from their lives. They pray for forgiveness for any sins that they may have committed and ask to be blessed with happiness and wealth. This festival lasts through the night, people putting aside any anger or enmities towards one another. Luckily for the Koli community, they were able to celebrate this festival

before the lockdown began at the end of March.

The other important festival for the Kolis is Narli Puja. Here, the community worships the sea. As fishermen, they rely on the waters for a source of livelihood. Together, they go to their creek and make offerings of coconuts to the God of the Sea. Then, on returning they have a ritualistic competition. A person will tap their own coconut on another person's coconut to see which one breaks. The person whose coconut breaks must hand it over to the other person who is then declared the winner.

Through the lockdown, the Koli community have come together to organise food and rations for fellow members. They've held several awareness campaigns to ensure people are taking correct precautions to remain healthy and have come to amicable understandings with the local police station to ensure that they may continue necessary rituals smaller scales while maintaining social distancing protocol.

The Mass, A Movie?

Dominic Keni is a resident of Dharavi, Koliwada, an age old village that speaks English and the Koli dialect of Marathi. His community was one of the first people to populate the seven islands that came to be Mumbai. Members of this community are both Hindu and Christian, with Dominic being a Christian

member. He is even the president of the Dharavi Koli Trust the local organisation that plans and organises the local community gatherings for both the Christian and Hindu members of the village.

His family is religious and prays regularly. Because of the lockdown, they've been attending the weekly Sunday mass and prayers at home, which are being streamed live on YouTube. All places of worship within Dharavi currently only allow 5 people in at one time, including the priest himself. Dominic has thus, only once through the lockdown been able to physically visit his local St Anthony's Church.

His family is pleased with the ample time they now have, which allows them to pray more often during the day. They are also now able to watch and attend masses conducted by other churches, in and around Mumbai. They feel however, that all these advantages do not add up to the experience of being able to be physically present at church. "It feels almost like watching a movie or an advertisement", he says, thus leaving him unsatisfied with the quality of his prayers. He says he doesn't feel as connected to God and that the many disturbances in his home environment add to this feeling.

This year, his family had only a small Easter celebration at home with their close family and friends. The usual festivities were not carried out. Dominic doesn't feel very hopeful about Christmas either, though he understands the gravity of the current situation.



This picture is of the Cross near St. Anthony's Church

Community Development Through Religion

Siddharth Medge, a 58-year-old resident of Dharavi, comes from the village of Jalgaon Bhusawal. He is a devout follower of Buddhism and the president of the Panchsheel Budh Seva Samiti (PBSS) and of the Dharavi Nagrik Seva Sangh (DNSS). The PBSS is responsible for the celebrations of their main festivities namely, Ambedkar Jayanti, Budh Purnima and Maha Pari Nirvaan. They are also responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the Buddha Viharas and disseminating the teachings of Lord Gautham Buddha.

During the lockdown, their regular prayers on Sundays and Thursdays have come to a standstill along with the weekly sessions for children. The temple grounds are being used as a space for storing grains, making and distributing ration kits during the lockdown. These activities have been conducted in collaboration with the Mumbai Roti Bank and Dharavi Police.

Every year for Ambedkar Jayanti, the PBSS organises a 3-day long event wherein they invite ministers to speak, have cultural exhibits for women and children and decorate the surrounding locality. They also help maintain the roads and organise regular cleanliness drives in their neighbourhood as well as at the beach. This year, their usual 3-day event was reduced to a 1-day event. Basic decorations at the temple and distribution of kheer was done in a ground with due social distancing. Budh Purnima too was celebrated in a similar manner, as opposed to an elaborate panel of ministers that are usually invited to speak. Maha pari Nirvaan, which is on the 6th December, witnesses a large scale distribution of cooked food in Shivaji Nagar, with ingredients and manpower coming from the Budh community in Dharavi. Siddharth was moved by the communal harmony between Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians in their neighbourhood, each helping the other to inclusively celebrate festivals.

Though a non-religious group, DNSS, under the presidentship of Siddharth, collected about 3.5 lakhs from the community and constructed a Police Chowki for the police in their neighbourhood without any assistance from the government.



This is an image by Siddharth Medge from Buddh Vihar, Dharavi.

An Agnostic's View of Religious Celebrations

Annappa Kunchikor belongs to one of the Nomadic tribes of India and speaks their native Kaikadi language, a mix of Telugu, Kanadda and Marathi a language born of their nomadic lifestyles. He is the 7th or 8th generation of his tribe to live in Mumbai. He runs a plastic product business which has been affected by the lockdown, but this has not disappointed him nor does he completely rely on his faith in God.

He tells us about how he was the first amongst his peers and community to support his wife in running a business, while everyone else limited their wives to household work. He was taunted by his peers but he never let that affect his ideals, instead he tried to propagate the same within his family. His daughter-in-law started selling fruits during the lockdown to earn an income and keep herself busy. He goes on to say that he is proud of what she's doing because she is self-employed and getting by solely on the strength of her beliefs. Despite her strong faith, she did not leave it upto higher powers but decided to do something about the situation on her own.

Annappa preaches the same thing, he believes that one needs to do things in their own capacity and then have faith in god. Not the other way round.

A spiritual but non-religious person, he implores his community and his friends to invest in educating their children or a long-term business plan rather than spending money on religious extravaganza, advice he lives by very strictly. He believes the government's protocol during the lockdown - to keep smaller idols, do visarjan locally, avoid large public gatherings and reduce spending on decorations is welcome and should become the new norm.

Islamic Practise through the lockdown

Gulzarbhai is a resident of Dharavi, originally from Awla in Bareilly, UP. During the lockdown, Gulzarbhai's religious rituals underwent many transformations.

With no directives for mosques to reopen, Gulzarbhai has calmly adjusted to homebound namaz, and shared some of the ways the mosque might function post-lockdown. People might also be asked to wash their hands and feet at home rather than at the mosque.

Unfortunately for the Islamic community, Ramzaan, Eid, Bakr-eid and Muharram fell either during or after the lockdown, the severe restrictions have resulted in more subdued celebrations. Ramadan saw an acute shortage of food for many needy families, whom Gulzarbhai helped by providing them with ration kits, food packets and fresh fruits. Some leeway from the government's side was provided to transport fruits in trucks and keep select few hotels open all night in certain localities. Prior to Bakri-Eid, there was a catastrophic mismanagement in the sale of goats. With all mandis closed, purchase of goats was shifted online making it difficult to inspect the goats before a purchase. The prices also skyrocketed due to demand-supply issues and transportation blockades, causing great inconveniences for customers and suppliers alike.

The recent festival of Muharram was a low-key event as well. Usually, takirs would be held in the mosque and on the streets in large gatherings. Water pots would be kept in public places for all to use. This time though, the government only allowed distribution of sealed water packets.

Gulzar Bhai also owns a garment shop, which suffered great loss in sales during Ramzan, one of the peak business seasons. He hopes that he can make up for it in the coming Diwali shopping season. He says that even if shops do resume business as usual, people will take many months to recover from their personal economic losses, and that shopping for clothes will be their last

Being 1 Of Only 4

Tarun is a second generation migrant whose father moved to Mumbai from Madhya Pradesh in 2003. His hometown was close to the Narmada dam and was one of the many villages that was cleared out to build the dam. It is now filled with water. This was the reason his father moved to Mumbai.

Tarun is from a Hindu family but is proud to have many friends from other religious backgrounds. He follows Dadupanth, a religious minority of which there are only 4 families in all of Maharashtra. The deity they worship is Lord Kuldevath. He feels that being spiritual helps one serve other people as well as the community, and makes one more empathetic towards other people's struggles. Although a strong believer in his religion, he doesn't feel that this is the most important part of his or anyone else's identity. He adds that often the most spiritual and generous people are the ones who have the least wealth.

His community has an annual 8 - day celebration in Jaipur, Rajasthan which they attend every year. The Mela, which is important to Dadupanth, takes place in February. This year it was difficult for them to be able to attend this festival with the complicated formalities around travel due to the pandemic. They therefore conducted the rituals at home in the company of close family. Tarun and his friends also celebrate festivals of other religions with the same enthusiasm.

Tarun feels that the indoor celebrations are more traditional and are a better way to mark auspicious days. He likes to follow the ancient rituals which is difficult to do when we turn these festivities into large public celebrations. This year, when people are forced to celebrate Ganapati and Janamashtami at home, he feels that the rituals and customs will be more meaningful. He sees this as a silver lining and has no complaints.



Tarun Swami with his grandchild, on the day of Janamashtami.

Being Somewhat Religious

Abbas is a Kutchi Muslim whose grandfather moved to Mumbai in 1921 from Anjar, Kutch. According to Abbas being religious is a way of life, but he says he feels embarrassed to call himself that, as sometimes he is unable to complete the 5 daily namaz prayers. He does love and respect his religion, however and tries to follow it as thoroughly as he possibly can.

Weekly prayers are part of his routine. Since the lockdown commenced, Abbas and his family have been praying from home. He says *"It is believed that gaining more blessings if you pray at the mosque, but that does not mean praying is forbidden or not accounted for"*. Most of their festivals, starting from ramadan to moharam have been affected by COVID-19.

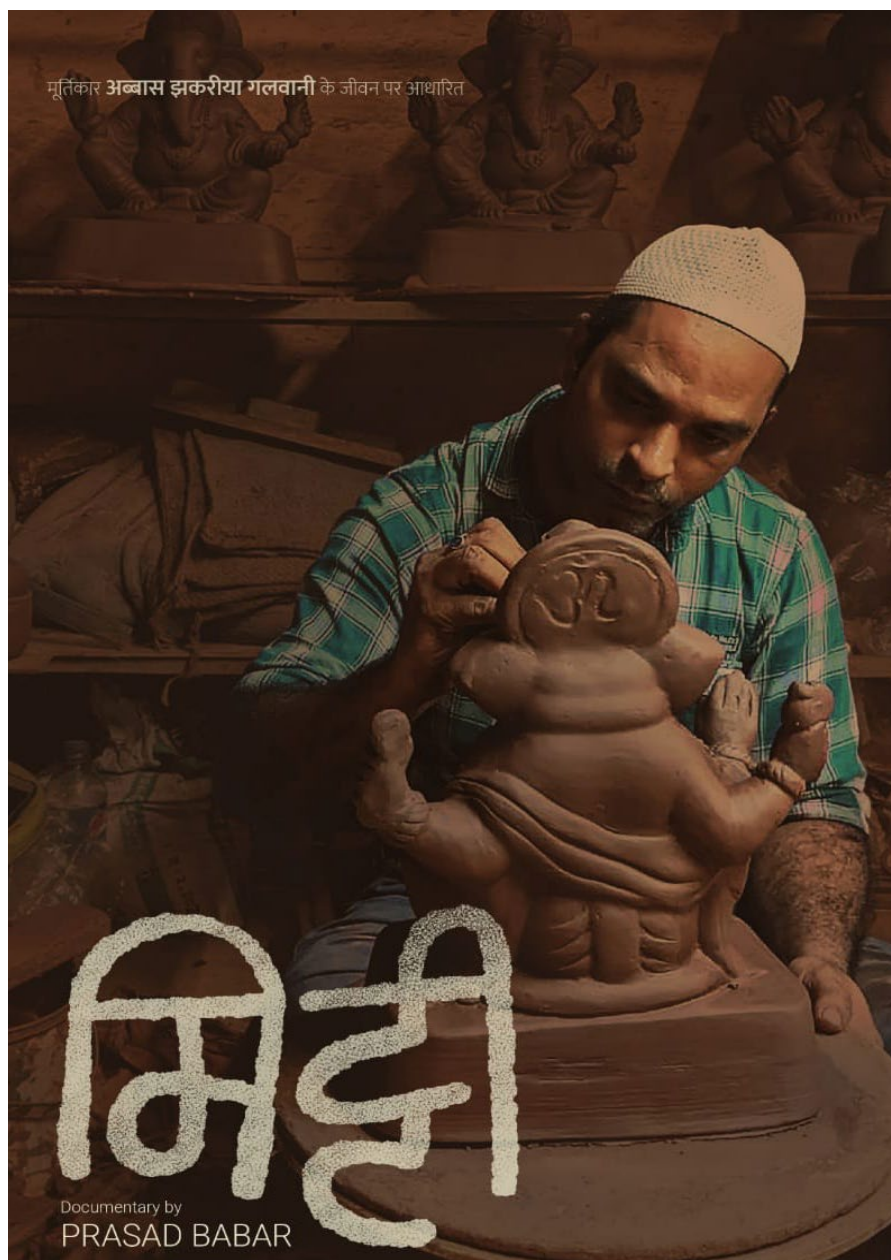
All celebrations and rituals have been limited to their own home. But given the circumstances, everyone understands

the responsibility. He says that Allah never asked one to spend a lot of money and celebrate these festivals, a simple prayer with a smile will suffice, your intentions are what matter the most.

The only drawback for not following the usual celebrations is that the kids are not excited and they didn't get any gifts this year. He says that each family's celebrations depend on their own capacity.

His grandparents had more traditional and simpler ways to celebrate festivals whereas today's generation celebrated more extravagantly.

Although having absolute faith in God, Abbas does not depend completely on Allah. He says *"if you're praying and an insect comes to bite you, you have to fend for yourself, you cannot expect Allah to protect you when you are being careless"* thus, one needs to take precautions against the virus and be careful, the rest can be left to God. One's belief must give them comfort but is not an excuse to be careless.



An image of Abbas' workplace for the mentioned documentation.

Humanity Above All

Our interview with Mr Paul Raphel was particularly insightful as he shared with us his humanitarian understandings of challenges we currently face as a country. Having worked to ease communal differences, Paul believes his identity is first that of an Indian. Although coming from a Roman Catholic family, he says he is understanding, accepting and respectful towards all communities and their religious practises. He often encourages his children to have diverse experiences of different cultures to help them increase their tolerance towards other people. He feels strongly that history has often been misrepresented and misunderstood to instigate communities against each other. An example of this is the Bhima Koregaon battles that are often spoken about in a way that frames the lower caste community as troublemakers who started the war whereas in actuality, they were merely defending what truly belonged to them. On similar lines he spoke about the city of Mumbai, the way it has been colonised and still continues to be run for the most part by people of superior ethnicities, namely the Parsis, the Goan Catholic and Hindu Brahmins. The Koli, who although being natives to the city, were given no importance whatsoever.

Another example he gave was of the way we understand Mahatma Gandhi's relationship with Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Often we highlight the differences in their thoughts, but fail to recognise that at the end of the day they worked together for the same purpose and cared deeply for one another. He even quoted Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in saying *"If a political party gets larger than the country, the country won't progress. And if a religion grows larger than a country, it won't progress."*

A Kumbhar's Faith

Ranchod Das is a resident of Kumbharwada who claims that his forefathers along with the Kolis were the founders of Dharavi. Although his family has been in Dharavi for over a 100 years, they still have family back in Gujarat and make sure they visit them once in a while.

Ranchod Das is an optimistic person with absolute faith in god. He prays regularly and believes if a person is 50 years old, he should pray for 50 minutes,

his thumb rule being that you pray for as many minutes as your age.

They have their ancestral god and their temples, called Madh. Before the lockdown, everyone visited these madhs regularly and went to temples for bigger celebrations.

"If God doesn't wish it, you won't live an extra day" is his belief. He mentioned organising health camps for the residents of Kumbharwada and is proud of the zero case statistic. This has allowed them to get back to their routine with necessary precautions. They have a community hall, where they have held important gatherings such as weddings or death ceremonies. They did this while making sure there were no crowds and everyone followed social distancing.

Since the community is tight knit and enthusiastic, they have been celebrating all the festivals. For Janamashtami they went to the temple while following the precautionary protocols. Ranchod Das says that one should not leave the temple unattended, that is why they kept visiting the temple. Even for Ganesh Chaturthi they have kept a Ganpati at their place and will celebrate keeping protocols in mind.

A Small Price For Safety And Health

When asked about how his belief in God has helped him get through these challenging times, Jagdish Jain said he believes that God comes as messengers to us. He says that for him, God takes the form of a helpful policeman who gave him instructions as well as the doctors who helped ensure his family's good health. Being of the Jain faith, Jagdish and his family are currently fasting for Padushan though they will not be able to visit the Mahavir temple as they usually do at the end of this period.

Although he firmly believes in his religion, he is accepting of other Hindu Gods and even makes periodic visits to the Siddhivinayak temple, the Babulnath temple and the Ganpati temples in Bombay. Even nowadays, on his way to work, Jagdish stops outside the local Mahavir temple to pay his obeisances to God.

Jagdish's grandfather migrated from Rajasthan to Bombay more than 150 years ago. Since then, their family has been based in Mumbai and they only visit their village on a yearly basis when there is a

family wedding. Jagdish, his sister and his brother have all built their lives in Dharavi and live at close proximity to one another. Jagdish's children study at a local English Medium School.

When asked about the struggles of the ongoing pandemic Jagdish compares the times to those of his grandfather who had to hustle for work in order to educate and raise his children. Today, we are in similar times as people struggle to find jobs. "I myself had to shift from having a saree business to a cut piece business" He says. He believes that in times like these one must make adjustments and keep their priorities straight. Having no large celebrations is a small price to pay in order to safeguard himself and his children from the spreading illnesses.

DHARAVI

FORTNIGHTLY



As the new normal sets in, and Dharavi gears up to resume business as usual, its vital workforce is on their way back or have been here for some time now. With various discourses about India's lockdown policy claiming an exodus of workers from cities, our first issue of Dharavi fortnightly attempts to present a parallel narrative through the lens of circulatory urbanism.

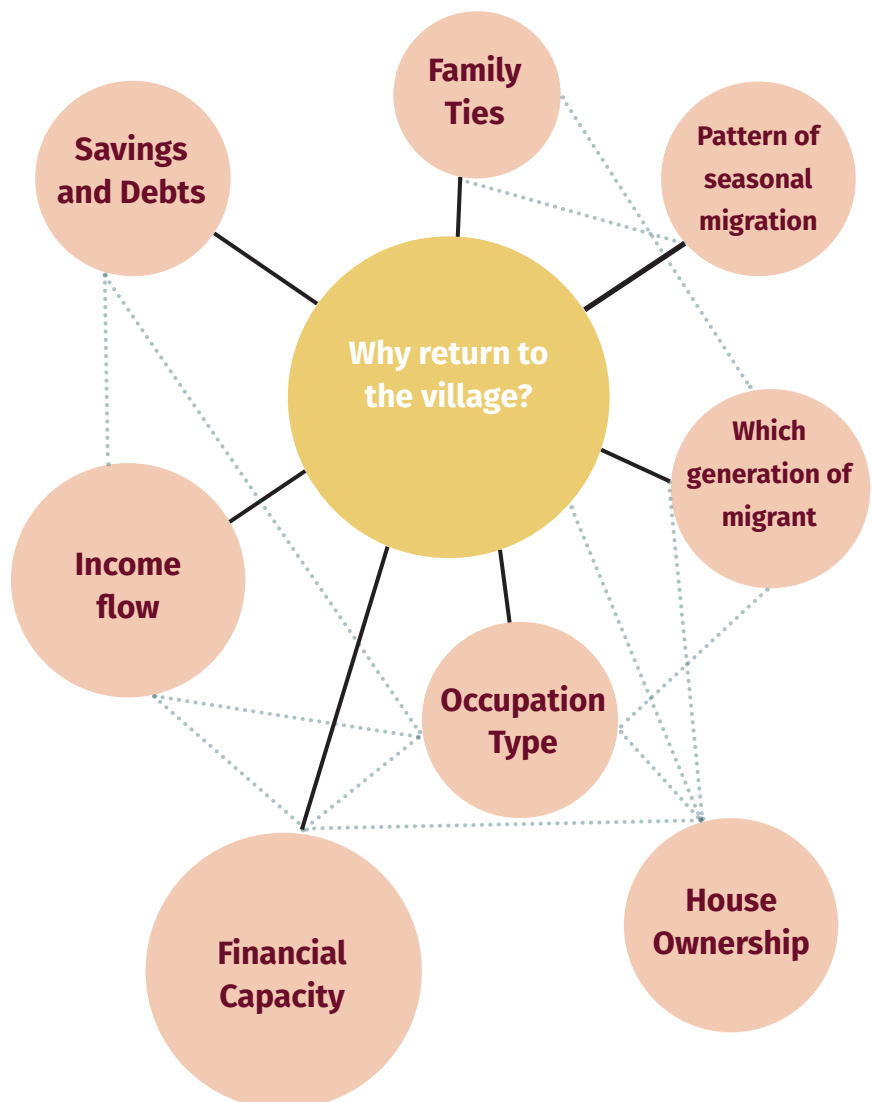
Elicited from a comparative study of those who went to their native place during the lockdown and those who didn't, we revisit their last few months keeping in mind age-old patterns of circular migration. Based on parameters gauged from our 15 Dharavi Weeklys, we highlight trends between the decision to go to the native place and various avatars of socio-economic and financial security which a city like Mumbai boasts about.

Our respondent group of 33, where 36% of the people went back to their villages during the lockdown, prove that the journey to their villages was not a rare phenomenon, but rather a frequent one. It ties back to the concept of circulatory urbanism, which shows the existence of interconnected habitats, dual household mechanisms and families having a presence in two places at the same time i.e. the city and their native place.

Why return to the village?

While the lockdown may have changed the movement patterns for many, all our respondents seasonally migrate for various reasons such as familial ties, festivities and family events, farmwork, income opportunities, vacation etc. Cities such as Mumbai are economic powerhouses that attract crores of Indians from across the country, and root people by providing economic security through livelihood opportunities and the networks built around them.

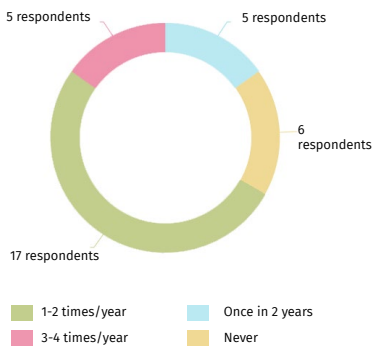
Studying people's decision to return to their native place during lockdown may provide insights about how circular urban systems and seasonal cycles respond to people's needs when faced with the uncertainty of a pandemic and the resultant economic condition. It will also help distinguish between the journeys undertaken to cope with the pandemic or ones that simply aligned with the patterns of circulatory urbanism. The trend which emerged during our survey requires further analysis.



The next few pages show data that we have collected and generated to compare the effects of various factors on Dharavi residents' decision to return to the village during the lock down.

12 respondents went back to their village during lock down.

21 respondents didn't go back to their village during lock down.

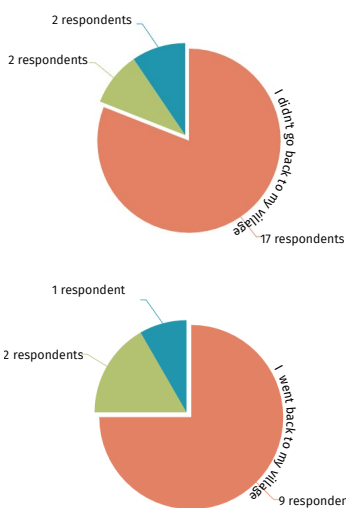


The chart shows the no. of respondents and their frequency of visiting their village.

Most of our respondents visit their village regularly, frequency ranging from once in 2 years to 3-4 times in one year. There is no direct correlation between going back during the lock down and no. of visits to the village, which makes the case for an already strong dual household system.

Ration Cards

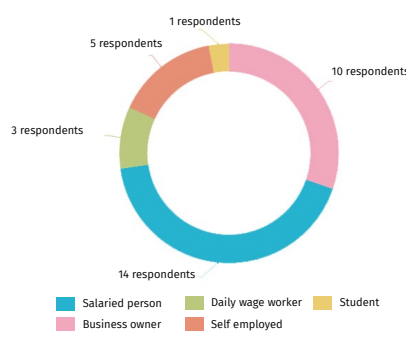
The following pie charts indicate that a proportionally equal number of people of all ration card color groups had decided to go to the



These charts show the distribution of ration cards owned by the respondents.

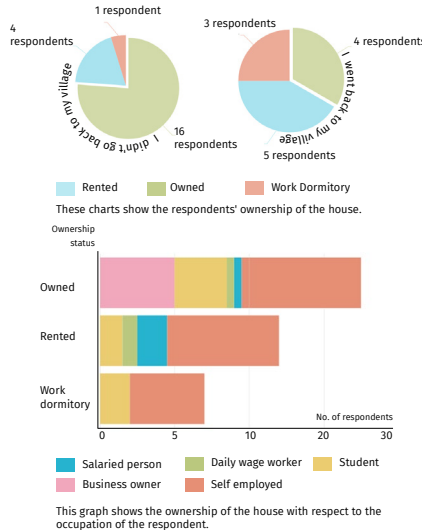
village during lock down versus staying back, indicating a weak correlation between going back during the lock down and the income group. It may also indicate that the colour of ration cards may not be an accurate method of inferring people's income groups due to an outdated system of categorisation, and an inefficient system of upgradation.

Occupation type



The pie chart shows our respondents' occupations.

House Ownership

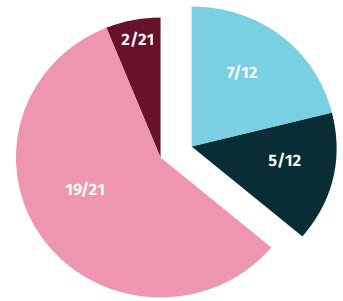


This graph shows the ownership of the house with respect to the occupation of the respondent.

The status of house ownership seems to have a strong correlation to the decision to stay in Dharavi. It is also interesting to note that most business owners, which if migrants, tend to be the second, third, and fourth generation, all own houses. This increases their sense of rootedness in a location, providing shelter and financial security and thus a reason to stay put. Similarly, for most salaried workers living in work dormitories, with homeownership in their respective village decided to leave during the lock down. The city offers accommodation and not

housing for most seasonal migrant workers.

Immediate family in Dharavi



12 people who went back to their village. 21 people who didn't go back to their village.

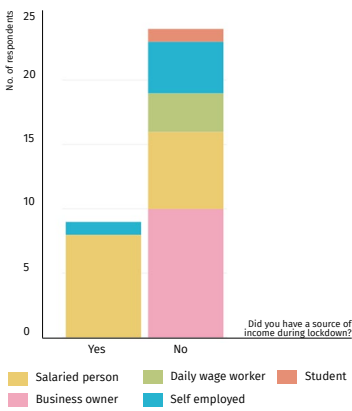
7/12 have families in Dharavi
5/12 didnt have thier families in Dharavi

19/21 have their families here
2/21 dont have thier families here

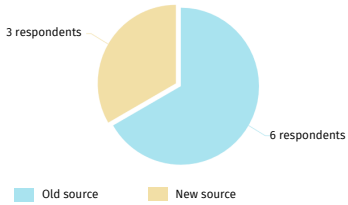
While those who had a family and home back in the village traveled back as and when they could, there were some who longed for the same. "We feel it would've been better if we had an immediate family member in the village, we could have gone back to the village. This pandemic made us consider a family member moving to the village." -Vidya Mane

Those who have their immediate families in Dharavi and who didn't go back to the village are almost equally proportional to those who have families in Dharavi and went with their family to their native place during the lockdown. This shows that the population going to their villages were not primarily single working migrants, and our respondents have stated multiple reasons such as financial insecurity, fear of the virus itself, the burden of feeding the entire family with no income, lack of food and supplies in the city, lack of proper living conditions and strong family ties in the village.

Source of income during the lockdown



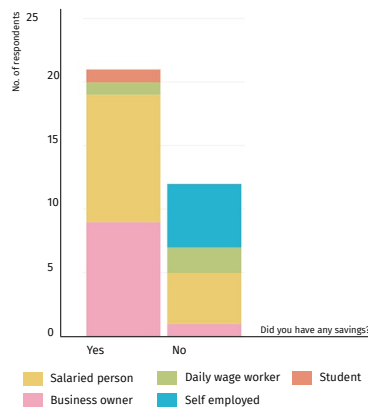
The graph shows the respondents who could/could not earn an income during the lockdown wrt to their occupation



The chart shows if the respondents who were able to earn an income during the lockdown earned from an old source or a new one.

The pandemic saw the closure of the informal sector of Dharavi, a \$1 billion economy (Mint, April 2020). In this context, 72% of our respondents had zero income for almost 5 months. Many respondents belonging to the salaried group and without income claimed to be working during the period without any pay, even with jobs such as a school teacher and a hospital nurse. However, out of respondents who earned an income during the lockdown, 3 out of 9 moved to a new source of income, either in the city or their respective native place. A papad seller took up a job at the Sion hospital as a caretaker in a COVID ward. Shubham Shukla, a door-to-door salesman, and Ashish Kadam, a light designer technician, started to deliver milk to survive through the lockdown. 11 out of 12 people who went to their village during lockdown are confident of returning to the city, primarily driven by the desperate need for money. Two-third of our respondents have savings, primarily belonging to business and salaried groups. 7 out of 21

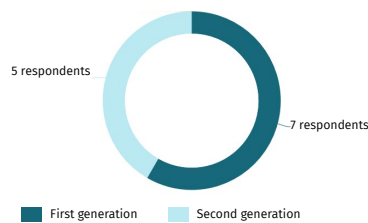
Do you have any savings?



The graph shows if the respondents had any savings wrt to their occupation

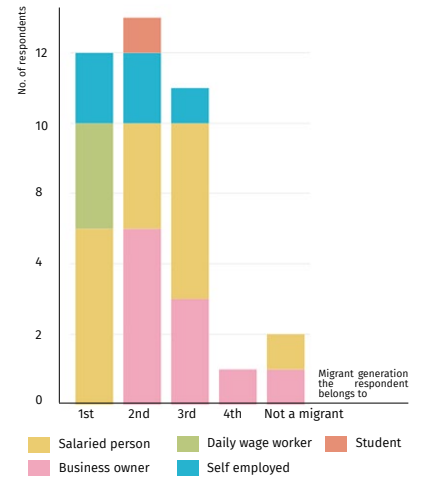
respondents with savings claim to have exhausted all of their savings during lockdown. 90% of our respondents without savings went into debt. Out of the people who have debt, 50% went back and 50% stayed in Dharavi. So debt collection was irrespective of going back, since the main reasons for it were house rent, bills, school fees, food supplies, medical bills, amongst many others.

Migrant generation



The chart shows that the 12 respondents who went back to their villages during lockdown were first and second generation migrants only.

75% of the first generation migrants chose to go back, which might indicate strong familial ties and a strong dual household system in the village, vis-a-vis the third and fourth generation migrants whose familial and native ties may have gradually weakened over time or migrated out of the village. Amongst our pool of respondents, no first generation migrant is a business owner, indicating that it may be essential to live for a few generations in Mumbai to develop a form of livelihood security and financial confidence.



The graph shows the respondents' generation of family migration wrt their occupation.

Employer - Employee relationship

During the lockdown, the dependency of the worker on his employer increased multifold. All of them attest to hiring the same employees back, demonstrating strong employer-employee relationships. 9 out of 10 businesses owners corroborated to helping their employees through the economic hardships till they went home. Help includes providing food grains, cooked food, monetary support, and travel fares to and from the village. All of them attested to hiring the same employees back.

Dharavi Stigmatised

Our respondent, Rekha Gade worked as a household help in Bandra where she lost her job because she was from Dharavi. The stigma and fear was so deep that Rekha's previous employer suggested to her daughter's employer to discontinue her job as well. Lucky for her daughter, her employer was not an easy sway and retained her, and paid her during the lockdown as well.

Another instance of stigmatisation revealed itself when Vidya Mane, a social worker in Dharavi, referred her friend for a job in the bank. The applicant was rejected as she belonged to Dharavi.

A void in Dharavi felt by the residents

With many leaving for their villages during the lockdown, those left truly felt their absence in their professional and day-to-day inter-personal transactions.

Broken Supply Chains

Arbaz helps his father run a carton business. When he was asked about the absence of workers and its effect on their business, Arbaz said “ we only have two people and we didn't have any work during lock down, but recently we're getting some work and only one employee has returned. So we hire labour from others for night shifts, which becomes more expensive.”

“I run a business whose main clientele are daily wage workers who are migrants. The clothes i sell are not what a salaried person would wear. The price range is most suited for daily wage workers.”

-Gulzar Khan, garment trader.

Habib Tepu corroborates this, adding that essential links such as transport machinery and loading-unloading, are also migrant-driven. It is difficult to hire local manpower for laborious tasks.

Giriraj is a contractor from Dharavi who has experienced the void not only in day-to-day essentials but in his profession as well.

“ In addition to all the workers being in their respective villages, my work is also affected by the kinks in the supply chain as migrants also run the supply of construction materials. I am unable to get materials required for my work since those are closed as well.”

“Most of the vegetable vendors and small convenience-store owners were migrants, that it made it difficult to get vegetables and other essentials”.

-Kavita Koli and Savita tai.

For those who stayed, what helped?

Ashish Kadam is a member of the Panchsheel Baudhya Samiti, a religious community organization which has collectively provided food, health and monetary support for all its committee members. Members pay an annual sum of Rs 3,000, and receive a plethora of benefits, one that has proven very important during the pandemic. Though Ashish was running low on savings, he was not worried due to this community support. When we asked about mounting debts or having to borrow essentials on credit, our respondent from Kumbharwada, Dharavi, Ranchoddas said “Dharavi is a huge community and under that kumbharwada is a tight knit community. We do not need to get things on credit notes, everyone is like a family to each other and consider it a help.” -Ranchod Das

“The only problem in Dharavi was that everyone had small houses, close to each other, without proper ventilation. It was not healthy for people to sit inside the house all day long during the lockdown. In villages, people have big houses and space to roam around.”

- Habib Tepu, welding workshop owner in Dharavi



Family in their home in the city.

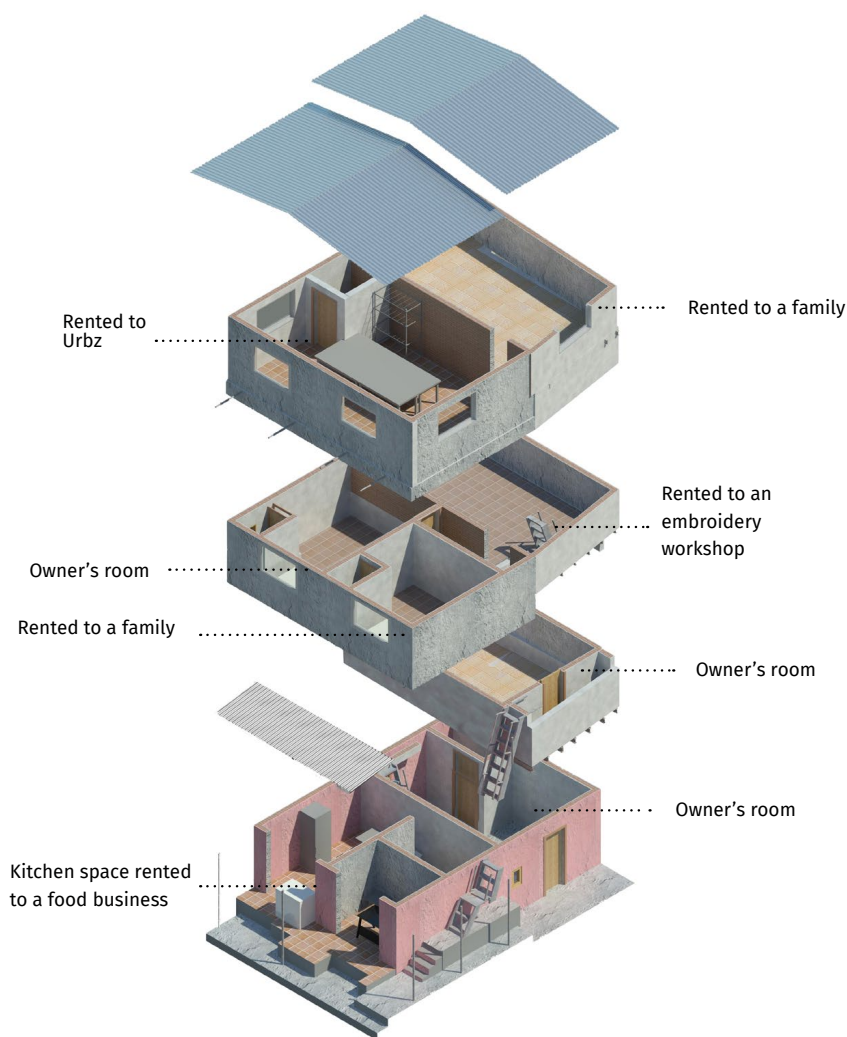


1st October 2020

One month after the extended lockdown ended on August 31st, we speak to our randomised sample set of 38 respondents once again to know how they

are coping. Based on their responses, and first hand observations of our very own team member in Dharavi, it seemed like life

had bounced back to normal. A few respondents went to the extent of saying, "It seemed like the lockdown never happened". Our line of research in this newsletter attempts to understand the idiosyncrasies of Dharavi that allowed it to bounce back so quickly, while the rest of the city and country are still recuperating.



The Tool-house ^[1]

Dharavi is home to approximately 20,000 factories and small businesses, ^[2] while being home to more than 8,50,000 ^[3] residents. It is a hyper-mixed use settlement, with a hyper-linked network of economic and production chains. The concept of a tool-house embodies the smallest unit of this system; a house as a space for residency as well as economic activity. In Dharavi, the tool-house exists within a network of thousands of tool houses which amass a scale of production that satisfies the basic tenets of business economics and profitability, while fostering a sense of kinship and locality.

Picture illustrating the tool-house concept observed in the building which housed the URBZ office in Dharavi from 2010 to 2013

¹ <https://www.urbz.net/homegrown>

² <https://time.com/5892712/india-economy-covid-19/>

³ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/inside-dharavi-india-s-largest-slum-and-a-major-covid-hotspot/story-Zbx5VOngcJlmsK9F4ohBvM.html>

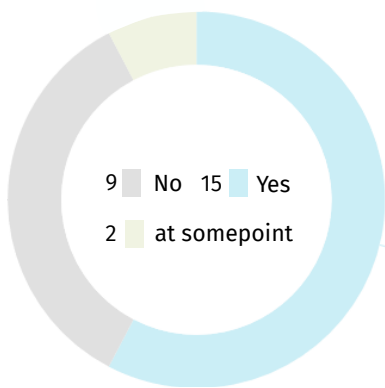
This network also satisfies the basic tenets of individual economics.

26 respondents have workspaces in Dharavi

9 respondents don't have workspaces in Dharavi

3 respondents have mobile workspaces

Thus the tool-house is an embodiment of a mixed-use structure as well as a mixed-use settlement. It is a character so intrinsic to the built fabric of Dharavi, and allows for an economically viable way for small production houses to sustain amidst the rising urban costs, while adding to Dharavi's \$1 billion economy.^[4]



The chart shows number of respondents who have their workspace in Dharavi and if their workspace is in the same building they live in. It also shows people who used to work from home at some point.

A Potter In Dharavi

Abbasbhai who belongs to Kumbharwada, began his workshop on the ground floor and home on the first floor. As his family expanded and needed more space, Abbasbhai moved his workshop next door. Most of his employees live in Kumbharwada or in Dharavi. "In a pottery business, people are hired based on specific jobs, following a specific sequence of activities. Workers are needed at specific times, and living in the very next lane allows that," says Ashwin Wadhar, who has resumed work at Abbasbhai's workshop and is producing stock for the upcoming festival of Diwali.

26 out of our 35 respondents have a work space in Dharavi, indicating a particular live-work setup prevalent in Dharavi. Out of the 9 with

jobs outside of Dharavi, 6 are salaried employees and only 3 ran entrepreneurial ventures. Our survey indicates that most respondents involved



Abbasbhai at his workshop in Kumbharwada, Dharavi

⁴ <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/dharavi-s-economy-goes-down-the-tubes-11587152095394.html>

DHARAVI

FORTNIGHTLY

ISSUE 03:
DHARAVI ON THE MOVE
(IN A PANDEMIC)



14th October, 2020

While public transport is slowly resuming in the city, it is still inadequate to meet user needs. For many people, the lockdown has brought several challenges in mobility as they have had to find alternatives to the affordable local train services that transported both goods and people. This issue of the Dharavi Fortnightly

seeks to explore how restricted mobility due to the lockdown has affected the movement of people and goods with and around Dharavi. We interviewed 33 people that included local business owners, transport service providers, and daily commuters based within Dharavi to understand how they are coping.

Distribution of our 33 interviewees:

19 respondents are business owners

11 respondents provide transport services

3 respondents are salaried people



The illustration shows different modes of transport and bus/train stations in and around the span of 2.16 sq.km covered by Dharavi

Morphed Mobility

We asked people how they have adapted to all the restrictions in mobility and what has changed while on the move during the lockdown. Affordability and good connectivity are the two most important features of mass public transport in Mumbai. Discontinued or disrupted services, to maintain social distancing, is putting unrealistic demands on people's time and pockets.

The hardest blow to commuters, local businesses and transport service providers alike was the Mumbai local train service that came to a grinding halt at the start of the lockdown. While some trains have resumed service for essential service providers, it is not even 1/3rd of the 3000 train trips that ferried millions of people and goods in the city before the lockdown.^[1]

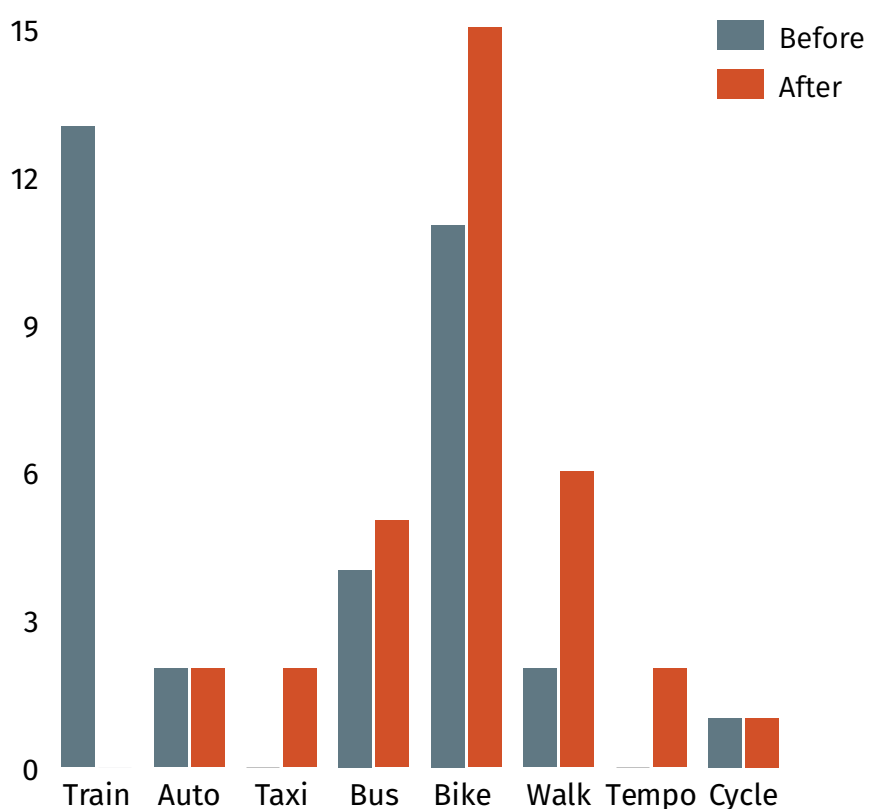
One respondent has changed his weekly routine in order to ease his commuting woes. Most respondents claim an increase in the use of motorbikes as well as a preference to walk. In general, people are not venturing out unless it is to buy essential supplies or to earn a livelihood. Recreational trips were rarely, if not ever, made during the lockdown. Dharavi

Adapting and re-routing

Chandra Yadav is a resident of 90 feet road. He sells fruits in the neighborhood by lugging his cart around. He recently returned to Mumbai after spending a couple of months in his village. Before the lockdown, he would take the train from Sion to Vashi. He would fetch his fruits from the APMC (Agricultural Produce & Livestock Market Committee) in Vashi and then take a train back to Sion. Now that the trains aren't running, he has to wait for an empty bus early in the morning that takes him to Vashi. The return journey is much more difficult as the buses get extremely crowded by then and he cannot get on with his fruits, compelling him to hitch a ride from fruit trucks which are coming into the city.

is a walkable neighbourhood and this has ensured that household supplies can be easily procured. Not much has changed here since

access to supplies became consistent and dependable. The sourcing of perishables, like fruits and vegetables, however has become more



The graph shows mode of transport opted by the no. of respondents before and after the lockdown.

¹ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/local-train-services-to-remain-suspended-in-mumbai-rlly-ministry/story-Xv9QnlgwHupyiHLqIEF7L.html>

cumbersome as we were told by Chandra Yadav, a fruit seller from Dharavi.

Some transport service providers have observed a change in the profiles of commuters. In conversation with a local auto driver, we found that most of his customers are only people who

are traveling to and from work. He said

“older people are hardly [to be] seen; I’ve probably seen [only] 2 or 3 old people”

According to Sagarbhau, the auto driver we interviewed, people are only stepping out for essentials and to earn a living, making sure that the

elderly and children remain at home.

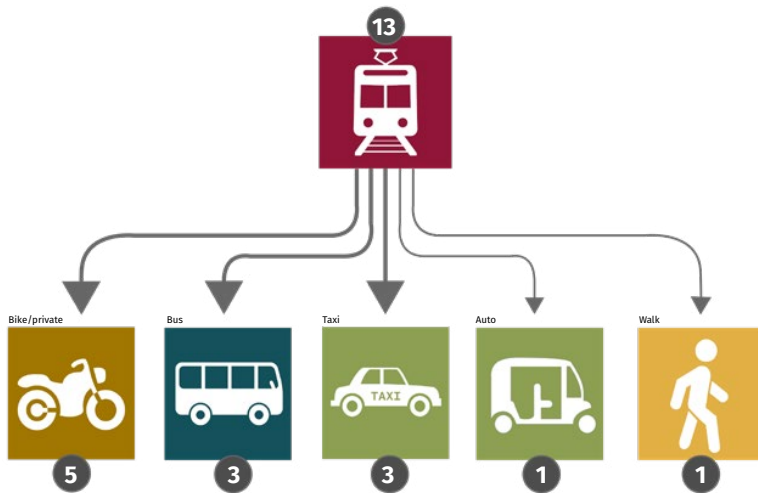
Mass transit systems of Mumbai

While Dharavi is opening up its businesses and work, the ongoing restrictions on the local train service have continued to cause hindrances. Dharavi is surrounded by three main train stations, resulting in a high dependency of daily commuters, small and medium scale entrepreneurs and other suppliers on the train service.

Mumbai local trains are one of the busiest and cheapest transport services in the country, becoming a ‘life-line’ for the people of Dharavi along with other commuters in the city.

About 7.5 million people in Mumbai use the local trains for their daily commute.^[2] However, the extended temporary termination of the service has forced people to shift to other means of mobility which are comparatively expensive and time-consuming.

For Dharavi, the suspended train service has much inflated commuting costs and hours, especially for those working outside the neighbourhood. They are paying higher fares for buses, taxis and autos, which



The illustration shows the distribution of the 13 respondents to other modes of transport in the absence of trains.

No local trains? Change house

Murtuza Malik is a resident of Mira Road, he runs New Raj Medical in Dharavi Koliwada. He also has a house in Dharavi. Murtuza would use the trains to commute daily from Mira Road to Dharavi, getting off at Bandra station. Before the lockdown, he would only use the trains for commuting and never private transport. Murtuza now predominantly uses his bike and only occasionally uses the bus. His daily travel time has increased significantly as there is a lot of traffic. As a result of this, he now spends one night in Dharavi and one night in Mira road. He does this as he does not want to spend his entire day travelling, and to save on commuting costs as petrol is more expensive now. He hopes the trains start soon, as he would like to go home more often.

² <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/mumbai-rail-officials-study-feasibility-of-restarting-local-trains-for-essential-workers-6456395/>

is adding to their monthly expenses. Local businesses have been affected because they now find it more difficult to procure raw materials from within and outside of the city. Rekha Tai, a respondent from our last fortnightly,^[3] has discontinued her *papad*-making business since trains were the primary mode of transportation of goods to Dharavi. The prolonged closure of the trains has also increased the stress on the overstretched

bus system, adding to the inconvenience caused to people who have begun commuting for work. Although the bus services are a relatively cheaper option, respondents say that they are strained, often take longer time and can transport fewer people due to social distancing protocols. Regulations on both of the mass transit systems - buses and trains, have aggravated people's difficulties.

Post-lockdown conditions escalate travel costs

Tahir bhai lives in Naik Nagar in Dharavi, and commutes to Grant Road where he runs a fabrication business. Before the lockdown, he would travel to Grant Road using a BEST bus, which would cost a maximum of Rs 20 to travel to any area of Mumbai. Sometimes, he would take the local train from Sion to Byculla station and then take a relatively inexpensive share-taxi from there to travel back to Dharavi. Since restarting work on the 11th of June, his operational costs have increased substantially. Waiting for a bus these days takes upto 3 hours, so Tahir bhai and his employees have to commute to the workplace by taxi, which costs between Rs 350-400 one way, a significantly more expensive journey than it used to be. These travelling expenses coupled with the rising costs of raw materials (up by Rs 30/kg) have resulted in losses to his business and are even eating into his savings.



The image shows traffic on road caused by private and public modes of transport

³ <https://urbz.net/articles/dharavi-fortnightly-02-toolhouse-story>

“The buses aren’t stopping at bus stops to avoid more people boarding the bus. Instead, they’re stopping the buses a little distance away from the stop.” - Chandra Yadav

In a previous study^[4], we found that most residents of Dharavi found the upcoming Mumbai metro unaffordable and not convenient to transport goods as large packages and containers are not allowed on the metro. The study concluded that people would prefer to continue travelling by local trains instead of the metro.

Following up on this, we asked a couple of our respondents if they would prefer travelling by local train or the metro during the pandemic. Most of the interviewees who said that they would prefer travelling by the metro, said they would prefer it only if the stations were located close to their destination and not because it would be safer during the pandemic. Girirajbhai, a local contractor said,

“I would prefer to use the metro as long as it drops me close to my destination, otherwise the metro wouldn’t be of any use to me”.

Among those who replied they wouldn’t use the metro, two people cited the higher price, and one person said that the metro used to be packed just like the local trains. The lack of

appropriate ventilation makes it more dangerous than local trains during the pandemic. Many of our respondents had never used the metro before and were unable to speculate whether they would prefer it over local trains until they have had a chance to use it.

Transport service providers

For most commuters, auto and taxi services are generally not affordable for long-distances but provide last mile connectivity, ferrying them to

and from local train stations. With trains out of action, auto and taxi drivers are seeing a major loss in their income. Shared autos and taxis, an otherwise perfectly logical way to reduce costs, are now a big no-no for fear of catching the virus. Moreover, pandemic induced economic recession has led to people avoiding travel for non essential purposes, minimising auto and taxi trips and choosing to wait for buses instead. On better days, auto and taxi drivers are reporting a 50% loss in income.

Private transport services take a hit

Sagar bhau drives an auto rickshaw and is a resident of Dharavi Koliwada. Sagar bhau informed us that before the lockdown he would earn Rs 1200 a day on average, but ever since the Unlock process has started he earns only about Rs 300-400 on average, and is very rarely able to earn more than Rs 700. On some days he ends up running at a loss, as he is driving around the entire day and is unable to find a hire. Before the lockdown, he would get most of his passengers from Sion station and ferry them as far as Dahisar and Borivali. Most of his customers now are from within Dharavi and his recent trips are largely in and around neighboring areas such as Sion, Kurla and Bandra. He has observed people on the highway waiting for BEST buses for hours on end, but refusing to take an auto or taxi. He believes that people cannot afford taking these modes of transportation as their salaries have been reduced due to the pandemic induced recession. He has noted that people are only making trips if necessary, causing reduction in his earnings.

⁴ <https://urbz.net/index.php/articles/exclusively-unaffordable>

Entwined interstate-local transport networks

Abdul Kalam is a respondent who uses a haath-gadi (handcart) to load and unload threads used for stitching up wounds and cuts after medical operations. He loads them from Kurla station and unloads them at hospitals in and around Dharavi. These threads are made in Gujarat and transported to Mumbai. Abdul is now helping local garment business owners in transferring goods as the threads coming from Gujarat are currently restricted due to the limitations of mobility, the scarcity of raw materials and people's altered eating habits, he says, *"The threads are made from the intestines of goats. These days goats are quite expensive and people are not earning enough to afford the increased price of mutton (goat meat)...this is another reason why the business won't pick up pace anytime soon."*



Abdul Kalam with his haath-gadi.

Door-to-door services sold more

Iqbal*, a bread delivery person, is a resident of Dharavi. He sells bread in the neighbourhood by driving around on his cycle. He gets his bread from Matunga-Dadar and sells it to households in Dharavi as needed. He was working during the lockdown and was able to earn a lot more than usual as most shops selling bread were closed. Since the unlock process has begun, he feels that his business has reduced by 50%. In our studies so far we found a few cases that showed a surge in profits during the lockdown, we suspect that there may be more such stories of hyperlocal enterprises or delivery services doing better business during the lockdown.

**an alias has been used since the respondent wanted to remain anonymous.*

An indefinite halt on tourism

Anilbhai is a resident of 90 feet road. He runs a travel business, where he would drive tourists from Mumbai to places such as Kolhapur, Sholapur, Rajasthan, and Goa. During the lockdown, he drove migrants back to their villages in the interiors of Maharashtra. He helped arrange buses for migrants from other states during the lockdown. Anilbhai told us that despite the Unlocking process, nobody is travelling for tourism anymore. He says most bookings he gets now are for people going to meet their families or for weddings, and most are travelling only short distances to Pune or their villages in the Konkan. He has not received any bookings in the last 15 days and his business has reduced by more than 80% since the lockdown started.

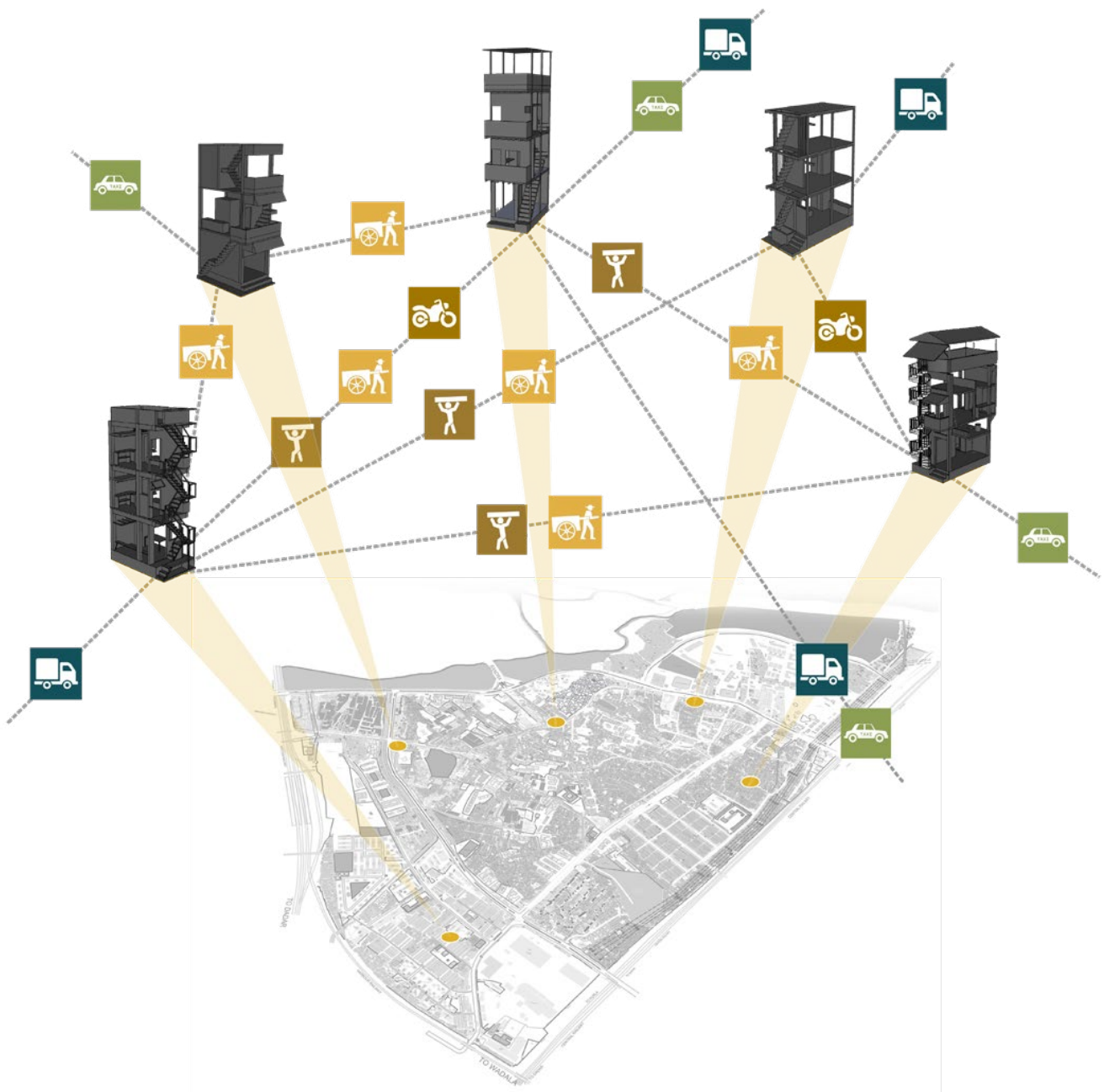
Since Dharavi is part of the larger production and supply chain and is involved in transportation of goods across the country, the tempo drivers that help transport these goods have been affected due to lower demand and kinks in the nationwide supply chains. Sonu is a tempo driver who used to make multiple trips to different parts of Gujarat every month. Now the frequency of his trips has dropped drastically.

“Pre-covid I would make around 10-20 trips to Gujarat every month, now I hardly manage 4 trips a month.” -Sonu

One fortunate respondent only offered transport services to clients whose goods and materials were all sourced and supplied within Dharavi. It seems that these hyper-local systems operating within Dharavi were not badly affected.

Business as usual?

While many people operate in a tool-house set up and thus are not required to travel for work, they may still be dependent on different forms of neighbourhood and city level transport, from cycles and haath-gadis (handcarts) to autos, trains and buses to deliver their services and goods to their customers, and to procure raw materials. Mustaq Bhai, an embroiderer who



The illustration shows the mobility networks around some of the tool-houses in Dharavi.

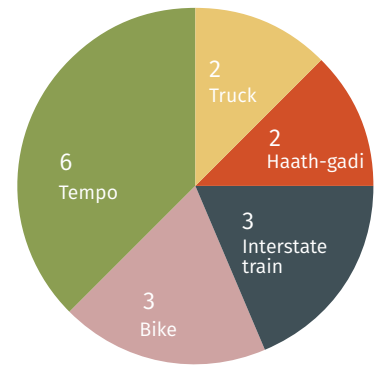
works out of a tool-house in Dharavi says that the larger retailers in the area send him clothes and garments to embroider which he then sends back to them once done. He thus becomes part of a network of buyers and sellers who collaboratively keep the local markets running.

As we found in the last Dharavi Fortnightly,^[3] the toolhouse is a live-work typology that predominantly exists in Dharavi and can be said to have been instrumental in enabling people to restart their work. No tool-house exists in isolation but exists as part of a larger network of economic activity. The typology has emerged thanks to the interdependent and hyper-local nature of various services and skills. The post-fordist system of production and manufacturing in Dharavi allows for the smallest of components to be manufactured here and supplied to national and global markets making mobility an important facet of the smooth functioning of tool-houses.

Within Dharavi the transportation of goods between tool-houses is often done manually through

hand carts or carried by people through the streets and alleyways of the neighbourhood. However, the goods, services and materials that need to be imported or exported from outside Dharavi depend on forms of mobility that were unreliable during the lockdown. Our study confirmed the resilience of hyper-local systems, which remained, for the most part, unaffected during the lockdown. This is in contrast to our respondents who depended on national and international supply chains, that saw a slump in business.

“People are really waiting for local trains to start, as supply chains and businesses will profit from increased and cheap mobility.” - Zia Bhai



The chart shows modes of transport for the respondents who run a business which requires transportation of goods.



Local transport of garments for a factory at Koliwada, Dharavi

Gaps in transportation amplifies costs for all

Kundan runs a leather business. He manufactures leather products and sells them to wholesale dealers. Due to the pandemic, Kundan has found it difficult to acquire raw materials. He would usually get the raw material from Chennai by train. There were two trains coming to Mumbai from Chennai everyday, but now there is only one train in four days. This has increased the price of raw materials. Because of this increased cost, he has to sell his goods at a higher price to wholesalers. But since there is no major demand for luxury leather goods at the moment, Kundan is finding it difficult to make profitable sales.

³ <https://urbz.net/articles/dharavi-fortnightly-02-toolhouse-story>

Severed international mobility affects local businesses

Tarun Swami owns a shop in Masjid Bandar where he sells electronic products and toys. Most of his supplies used to come from China via ships at Nehru Port in Mumbai. Because of the pandemic, the international shipping industry is facing various issues, this combined with the restrictions on Chinese products, has made Tarun Swami's normally dependable supply of goods highly uncertain. He now manages to get his stock from elsewhere, namely Musafir Khana. He would stock up frequently before, but these days he re-stocks only once in a few days. Moreover, his own commute has become stretched as he has to travel longer distances on his bike due to the unavailability of trains.

The environmental cost of being mobile

"Traffic on the road has increased since people are travelling by bikes and taxis as the trains aren't running"

- Salimbhai, Taxi driver

An unexpected outcome resulting from the enforcement of the nation-wide lockdown was the improvement in air-quality in Indian megacities. The abrupt reduction in the functioning of vehicles meant lower levels of pollutants being emitted into our atmosphere- specifically nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter. Less traffic and clearer surroundings did not go unnoticed by the general public. Across the world people are hoping for sweeping changes that would encourage better air quality. Habib Tepu of Transit Camp, Dharavi talks about having an easier time travelling during the lockdown because of lower traffic congestion and pollution levels on his routes. Meanwhile, other residents of Dharavi brought up how traffic levels have now resumed to normal, or even higher than before because most people who travelled by trains are now commuting by autos or private vehicles.

The temporary albeit significant decline in air pollution during the lockdown offered a much-needed reality check that makes evident the correlation between mobility and air pollution.

So what does this mean for mass public transport, private mobility, and their relation to the environment as we adapt and proceed post-covid?

Dharavi is largely a walkable neighbourhood, and while it's inhabitants may aspire to own private cars there is also great potential to turn it into an exemplar for sustainable transport. This can be achieved by facilitating non-motorised transport infrastructure in alignment with people's needs but without altering the human scale of it's streets to accommodate larger vehicles.



Pedestrians on Dharavi main road



Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Dharavi has received much attention from the media, first for a steep increase in the number of Covid-19 cases and then for its commendable strategies to control and deal with its spread. Since the beginning of the unlock process, migrants have been returning to Dharavi, and the neighbourhood is seeing a rising number of cases once again. In this issue of the Dharavi Fortnightly, we interviewed 30 people including members of NGOs and beneficiaries to understand people's strategies to deal with in-migration, the unlock process and the new rise in Covid-19 cases.

The locality is no stranger to the occurrence of devastating epidemics or natural disasters. Infectious diseases have made comebacks in Mumbai since colonial times. The bubonic plague in the late 19th century, the influenza pandemic in 1918, and other outbreaks such as cholera and malaria have been well documented.^[1] Studying Dharavi's history in relation

to bio-emergencies can play a crucial role in helping us understand the conditions that have made Dharavi's "chase the virus" model so successful.

Spread of diseases has been influenced by factors such as public health policies, socio-economic contexts, and environmental conditions.^[2] Historically, diseases have spread in India through port cities and trade centres like Bombay, which were and are well connected to the rest of the country and world. Similarly, we see that the Covid-19 pandemic has spread across international borders catalysed by increased connectivity and air travel.

Responding To A Spike In Cases

According to our respondents, approximately 60% migrants from Dharavi have now returned. With the reported new rise in Covid-19 cases, we asked our respondents how they feel about the new rise and if there were any cases in close proximity. 25 of 30 reported not having heard of any increase in cases within the proximity of their neighbourhood.

During the initial phase of the lockdown, we saw many community based organisations, NGOs and individuals taking initiative to help with food and ration distribution.^[3]



Resumption of activities at Dharavi T-junction

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2763662/>

² https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/modern-asian-studies/article/urban-development-and-death-bombay-city-18701914/3854A57D4CE0CC226B1AA37B8F78120F&sa=D&ust=1603778210678000&usg=AOvWaw1guMobH2rjDrjbQSnABVy_

³

Over the course of the lockdown, they formed links with each other and even managed to set up medical camps for Covid-19 tests. The importance of local leadership and the work of non-governmental organizations holds true in the current pandemic and past ones due to their role in direct outreach to residents and implementation of community driven approaches.^[4] According to a November 1918 issue of The Times of India, volunteer work and community participation with local municipalities was the “highlight of the emergency” and provided a glimpse to what improvements the city needed.^[5]

While everyone was proactively involved with helping their fellow neighbours during the lockdown, after the unlock phase 1, there has been a steady decrease in the activities of local initiatives. Our interviewees tell us that most of the smaller organisations or individuals who helped with food and other essential supplies have not been able to continue the social work. We received two plausible reasons from our respondent pool of 20 social workers and 10 beneficiaries.

There is a general assumption that because work is slowly resuming, people are able

to earn for themselves and there is not an urgent need to distribute food since the government subsidies on ration are still applicable.

All the smaller organisations/ individuals have exhausted their funds and do not have enough monetary resources to support others. Active organisations are now working on distributing masks and sanitisers once again, along with also gently reminding people of the precautions and social distancing protocols that they should and need to maintain.



The chart shows 29 respondents' take on the unlock.

Returning migrants are struggling to recover from the large amounts of debt that they have accumulated over the past few months. People are concerned about the oncoming rise in Covid cases, a decrease in the number of quarantine centers as well as the lack of rapid testing for incoming migrant workers. One of our

Health Checking Along with Ticket

Mushahid Ansari works as a tailor in a workshop in Dharavi. During the lockdown, he traveled to his village but he is now back in Mumbai and is working. He says that all his co-passengers were checked for temperatures when they reached Mumbai and were advised to home quarantine themselves. All people entering the city were inked and stamped on their hands as a method of tracking the spread of cases.

respondents stated that, other than a temperature check, people travelling to and from villages have to undergo no other precautionary measures when boarding a train.

Comparative Study with Cazuca in Soacha, Columbia

Dharavi and Cazuca are both homegrown economies and have a strong community presence. A large portion of residents in Dharavi are migrants who travel back and forth from their hometowns or villages for work.

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7437383/>



Residents of Cazuca building structures to create a resilient community against the pandemic.

While migration in Dharavi is influenced by economic motives, Cazuca has seen immigration of people affected by violence and political instability from surrounding nations.

During the pandemic, the Cazuca neighbourhood of Soacha did not receive adequate amounts of aid and support. A major issue Cazuca faced was the unavailability and lack of resources to buy food. Cazuca is not considered part of the formal city and its residents have had to come together to implement projects that would help them with daily sustenance. Examples are immediate response projects such as ‘Community Pantries’ and longer term initiatives such as ‘Granja VIVA’ or ‘Proyecto Escape’.^[6]

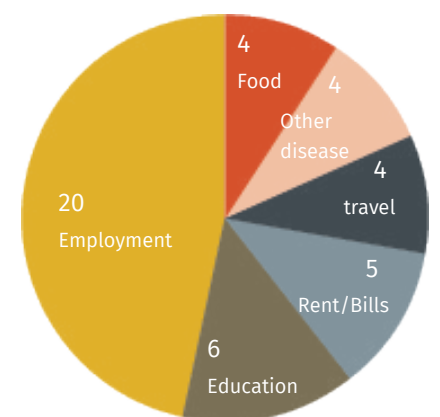
Dharavi and Cazuca are both very resilient localities that are doing their part to increase the resiliency of their communities from future crises. Self-management and community action are effective tools that have helped both localities to cope with stresses of the pandemic. While the residents of Cazuca have the plans and intent to continue with their projects to supplement for the lack of aid provided by their municipality, the community response in Dharavi can be seen as a more temporary, immediate, and resource-limited response.

Other problems

The residents of Dharavi are fighting with many problems other than the virus, albeit most of them are a repercussion of the virus.

A most common and widely experienced problem is lack of employment. People have lost their jobs or are working for half the amount of their old pay. The lack of a source of income gives rise to many other struggles like not being able to pay for rent and electricity. People returning from their villages who had discontinued their agreements with former landlords, are struggling to accumulate enough money to pay rent deposits for new homes to live in.

Most of our respondents reported that they know of no organisations that can help them with procuring funds to re-setup their homes. Though there are people who are trying to help returning migrants, there are no solid plans or schemes in action to help them. 12 of the 20 social workers we interviewed acknowledged that they have been unable to extend much help to these people.



The chart shows concerns other than COVID mentioned by the respondents.

⁶ <https://www.archdaily.co/co/943239/autogestion-en-tiempos-de-pandemia-al-sur-de-bogota>

Much of the workforce in Mumbai commute via trains to and from their workplaces. Since the lockdown started, the trains have not been functional. This is posing a major challenge for the people especially those in Dharavi, because of which people have to travel by bus or find other means of private transport. Travelling by road is often expensive and time consuming.

Parents are concerned about the quality of education their children are getting as classes are online and for shorter periods of time. Often children do not even have access to mobile phones on which to attend online classes as families may share one or two devices amongst themselves. Children thus have to share and schedule classes according to the availability of a device. Another issue with online learning is the environment



*Mahim Railway Fatak Road (before and after)
Pictures provided by our respondent Irfan Topiwala.*

An Act Of Charity

One of our respondents Jyoti Chawla is a broker from Dharavi. While all our respondents empathise with the struggles of people who are living on rent, few of our respondents like Jyoti, have been helping her clients avail lower rates. She has been taking smaller percentages of brokerage fees and because of this has been struggling with finances herself. She even had to discontinue her youngest daughter's education as she was unable to pay the tuition fee. Jyoti is of the strong opinion that we can and must help each other in whatever way we can when such situations present themselves.

in which the child studies and the attention with which they attend the classes. Children are unable to stay focused on their screens and do not like to study from a home set-up as compared to going to school. While the children may even enjoy learning processes, parents are even concerned about having to pay school fees, and other education related expenses.



While this was not a common observation, 2 of our respondents have noticed multiple cases of malaria, dengue, and pneumonia in their neighbourhoods in Dharavi. The reason expressed for malaria and dengue cases is clogged gutters and the unhygienic state of the neighborhood. While nobody is actively helping, people like Lakshmi from ACORN foundation are making sure at least the gutters near their workplace/house are cleaned.

This observation corresponds with issues faced in past outbreaks. A 1986 study cites "overcrowding, environmental decay, and poverty"^[2] as the key reasons that contributed towards a high death-rate in the ordinary population. Environmental decay can be understood as

² https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/modern-asian-studies/article/urban-development-and-death-bombay-city-18701914/3854A57D4CE0CC226B1AA37B8F78120F&sa=D&ust=1603778210678000&usg=AOvVaw1guMobH2rjDrJbQSnBVy_

Education and Employment

Vijay Basak from Drona foundation is currently working on organising offline classes for children in a manner that follows social distancing protocols. The foundation has been working to provide employment to women by starting a small scale mask production project. Their vision was for women to earn enough to be able to buy themselves food and other rations.

Half the Rent

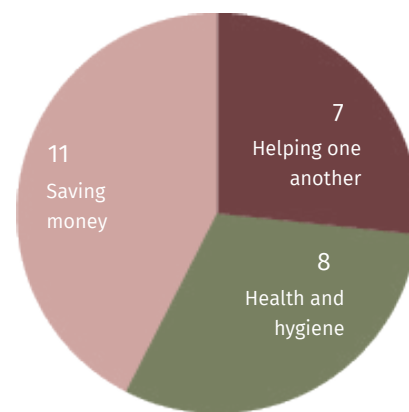
Tabrez Farooqui runs a local organisation called 'Farooqui organization'. Since the Unlock process began, they have been helping migrants with food and travel but they have not been very active recently. They do not get as many calls for requests but he has been helping whoever reaches out to him. Recently he helped a worker negotiate the pending rent with the landlord where the landlord eventually agreed to accept only half the rent for the time being.

unsanitary environments and environmental degradation such as water-logging and

pollution of groundwater sources. Low living standards and malnutrition also played a part in amplifying the impacts of the pandemics.

The bubonic plague in 1896 had resulted in the development of various strategies to improve the public health system of the country. The Bombay City Improvement Trust is an example of a plan to combat infectious diseases. Infrastructural development and better quarantining and sanitation structures were to be implemented to combat the soaring mortality rate and contain the spread of the disease.^[7] The British government also eventually introduced the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 and gave authorities more powers to act upon the containment of epidemics. Similarly, a Plague Research Committee, Cholera Committee, and Malaria Investigation Committee were also set up.^[1]

Another related concern is the treatment of diseases other than Corona. Corona cases are prioritized at hospitals and other patients are not looked after or diagnosed with the same sense of urgency.



This chart shows the respondents' learnings from the lockdown.

For diseases which do not require immediate attention, people have been avoiding going to the hospital because of the fear of getting infected by Covid and which in turn might worsen their condition.

What is the Government not doing?

Paul Raphael is a part of the Dharavi Nagrik Seva Samiti who work to help the people of Dharavi. Paul says that one very useful takeaway from this pandemic is that our government should expand their services in the medical sector. The government was able to help with food and ration but medical aid and awareness is something that needs to be worked on to be better prepared against any other unknown health calamity we may encounter.

⁷ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/mumbai-then-and-now-city-s-encounter-with-epidemics/story-4dluDD7spOr3Ti57VSdDLI.html>

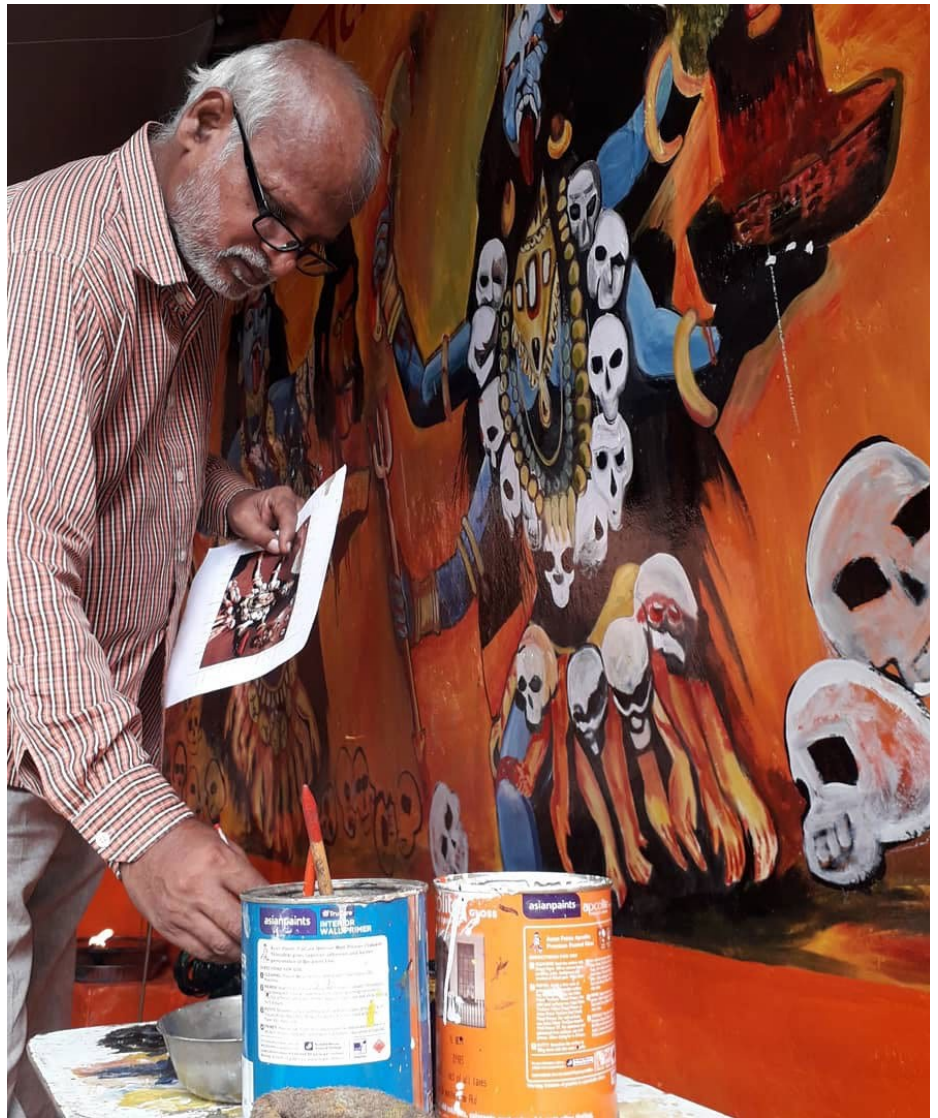
¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2763662/>

Learnings from lockdown

People all over the world have been fighting Corona and its repercussions for a while now. But every calamity has a silver lining.

There is a resilience in the people of Mumbai to face any given situation and come out of it victorious. While the social workers now feel they are better prepared for any unforeseen calamities, our entire pool of respondents agree about the importance of saving money and managing it wisely along with taking good care of oneself and others in terms of health and hygiene. This pandemic taught everyone the value of good money management, and had people not have had savings, they may not have been able to maintain themselves for so long.

Historically, Indian cities such as Bombay were affected by plagues so devastatingly because of the Western-style development models that they had adapted which did not adequately protect the city or the common people^[2]. Governments then failed to take effective action in a timely manner, but today the case is very different. Albeit appropriate preventive strategies were implemented



Krishna resuming his painting profession.

and precautions were taken, there is still work to be done to improve living conditions, strengthen the public health care system and build the local economy.^[4] Many respondents noted that they weren't aware of any provisions made for workers returning to Mumbai after the Unlock process, such as quarantine facilities. A community-focused approach can play a very important role in mitigating the effect of such emergencies, especially where the government may fall short.

One of our respondents, Balwant also pointed out that everyone has developed some good habits because of this virus. People are now more aware of the importance of personal and public hygiene and cleanliness. Washing their hands thoroughly and sanitizing things are now a part of their daily routine.

² https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/modern-asian-studies/article/urban-development-and-death-bombay-city-18701914/3854A57D4CE0CC226B1AA37B8F78120F&sa=D&ust=1603778210678000&usg=AOvVaw1guMobH2rjDrJbQSnaBVy_

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7437383/>



11th November 2020

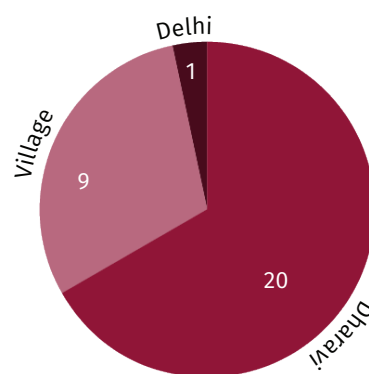
The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic compelled a large number of Dharavi's residents to travel under difficult circumstances to their villages and hometowns. We are now seeing a lot of them returning back to Dharavi, whether it is to resume their work or to return to their homes and resume the new normal. What makes Dharavi so unique is that it is a diverse and dense home-grown settlement that not only is home to millions of people but is also a hot spot for commercial and industrial activity. The locality is also an excellent example to illustrate the concept of Circulatory Urbanism^[1], a theory that aims to explain the dynamic and ceaseless connection between various parts of the country, both urban and rural, developed and developing. In this issue

of the Dharavi Fortnightly, we interviewed 30 people who either travelled back to Dharavi or are planning to. We also interviewed one bus driver to understand the perspective of the service providers.

Dharavi has developed a very distinctive identity from an influx of residents and workers from far reaching parts of the country. For many of these people, Dharavi is not a final destination or ending point but an integral part of their life as they make journeys back and forth from their hometowns. In itself, the neighbourhood is a blend of cultures and communities having developed from sharing spaces, but it is also a significant point on a continuous loop or network that connects individuals and

communities, as well as rural and urban areas to one another.

Our aim was to understand the experiences of people now returning or seeking to return to Dharavi, the connections they have to their hometowns, and ways in which they are keeping these connections alive in the fast-paced world today.



This graph shows the number of respondents in the village compared to those back in Dharavi or elsewhere.

[1] <https://urbz.net/circulatoryurbanism>

The Flow is not Unidirectional

An important question we addressed in our survey was whether people wanted to return to Dharavi, and if so what the primary reasons for their return were. A large majority of our respondents stated that they wanted to return to Dharavi, there were only two respondents who preferred to remain in their villages. For the people returning to Dharavi, the two main reasons they provided were that their homes were in Dharavi, or that they were returning to resume working. One of the respondents who did not want to return explained that the city was much too expensive and life in the village was more stable and relaxed.

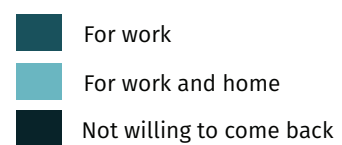
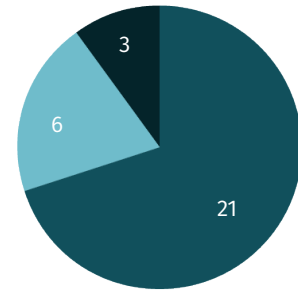
While many of the respondents were compelled to travel to their villages or hometowns during the lockdown, they usually visit their hometowns for a variety of reasons. Some of them return annually, while others

only go for vacations or special occasions such as festivals and weddings.

Answers from our respondents verified and illustrated a crucial tenet of Circulatory Urbanism- that the flow between rural and urban areas is not unidirectional[2]. People may travel to Dharavi in Mumbai and other megalopolises for a variety of reasons, but they do so without cutting off ties with their hometowns or ancestral villages.

Due to the fact that their livelihoods are divided between their

villages and cities, dual-household families have contributed a great deal towards the urbanization or development of their villages or rural homes[3].



The above pie chart illustrates why people are choosing to or choosing not to return to Mumbai from their villages.

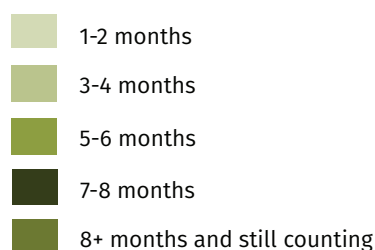
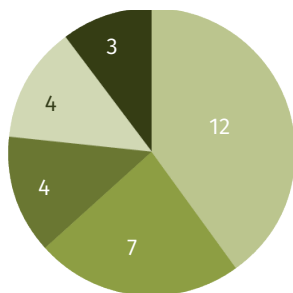
Life between two places

Stephen Raj works as a driver and is originally from Tamil Nadu. He visits his village once every three years, but his children visit every summer. He lost his job immediately when the lockdown was imposed. As a response to this unforeseen challenge, he decided to go back to his village and stayed there for three months. A strong sense of home along with the need to find a new job brought Stephen Raj back to Dharavi. His journey back to the city was almost the same as what it used to be during pre-Covid days. He underwent a basic testing before leaving for Mumbai. He made it a point to mention that washrooms were particularly clean on his journey back.

[2] <http://www.brokennature.org/circulatory-urbanism/>

[3] <https://www.thehindu.com/society/history-and-culture/our-lives-are-5050/article17442248.ece>

In Dharavi today, there are many residents who live there and travel seasonally, while others are second or third generation families with links to their respective villages[2].



This chart shows the number of months respondents spent in the village and those who are planning to stay back longer.

Mobility, Expenses, and Experiences

The journey to the city was much less of a hassle compared to the one to the village. Back in the months of April, May, and June, the country at large witnessed a massive movement of people from the city to its hinterlands by road as the aftermath of the nation

wide lockdown. Although it was wrongly termed as an “exodus”, these people have always been moving between cities and villages with the help of the well connected railways. In the Dharavi Weekly 01, we talked about the people from Dharavi who travelled to their native places and tried to shed some light

on their hardships[4]. This time to continue the loop, we asked our respondents about their experiences of the journey back to Dharavi.

*“Since there were no trains (from Bareilly), I came till Mathura and first paid Rs.1200. I paid an extra Rs. 1200 from my village to Mathura railway station”
- Shabbu*

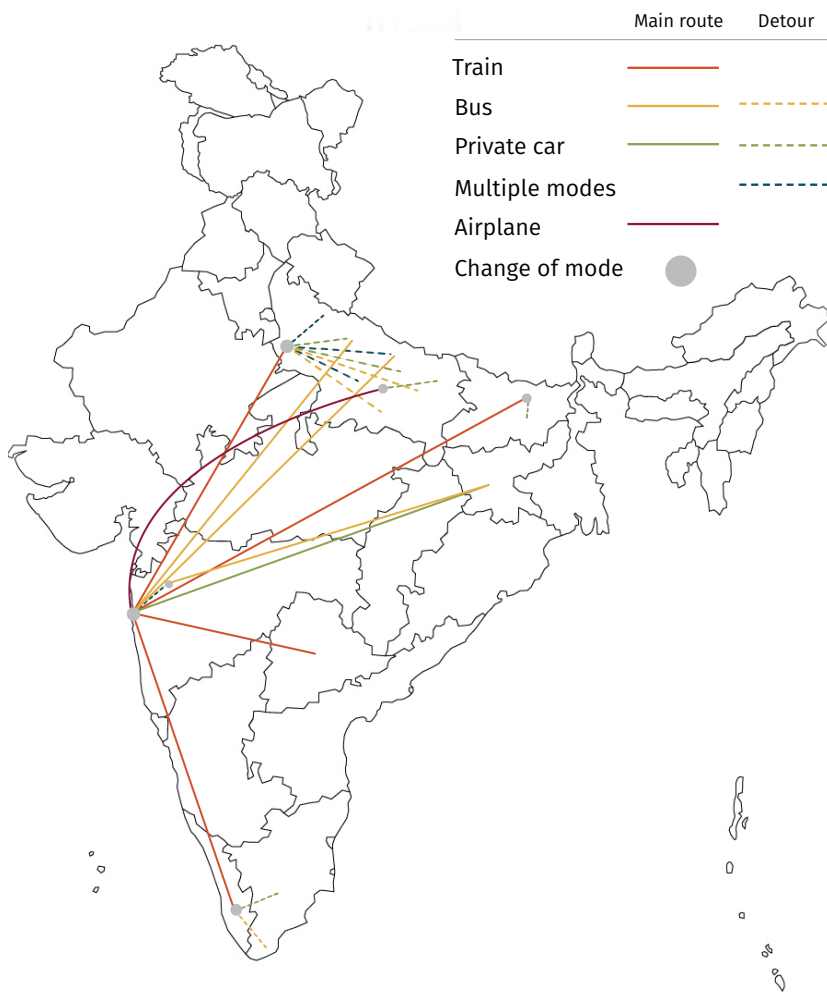
Ticketing mess

Sanjay Chaturvedi had to travel to Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh due to an emergency when his uncle passed away. He had difficulty acquiring train tickets which were either twice the original price or were being sold on the black-market. As of June, the number of trains running from Mumbai to Uttar Pradesh had also significantly reduced. In order to avoid paying extra, he and his family ended up taking a flight after booking tickets online. The travel company he used to book his tickets was not functioning fully and he had trouble while trying to change his travel dates and ended up incurring a huge loss due to booking issues.

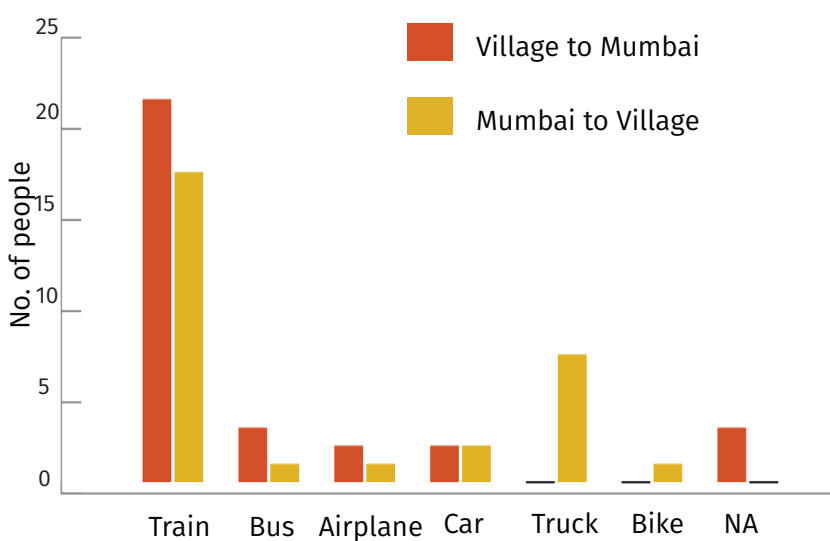
Sanjay is back in the city now and has been working remotely throughout the lockdown at a non-governmental organization. He observed that the airports had now become more cautious as well.

[2] <http://www.brokennature.org/circulatory-urbanism/>

[4] <https://urbz.net/articles/dharavi-weekly-01>



This map shows the journey of our respondents from their villages to Mumbai and the irregularities within their travel routes



This chart shows the different modes of transport used during Covid19 lockdown

**Note : NA for respondents who are still back in the village*

Most of our respondents experienced a trouble-free journey back to Dharavi in comparison to the journey to their villages. However, there were some irregularities within their travel routes compared to the pre-Covid times. Our respondents from Uttar Pradesh (northern province in India) had to travel to Mathura train station to come to Mumbai. In normal circumstances, they would have to catch a direct train from the nearest train station in Uttar Pradesh (Bareilly, Kanpur, or Lucknow) to Mumbai. Our respondents from Tamil Nadu (southern province of India) also had similar experiences, who travelled via Trivandrum, Kerala to Mumbai. Trains were the primary means of transport for 21 respondents and the others opted for buses or air travel. However, from the village to the train station, people took connecting means of transport which was either a bus, hired car, auto rickshaw or in some cases they even carpooled.

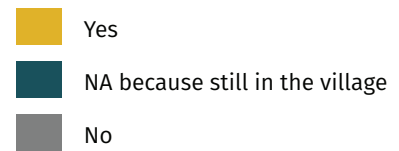
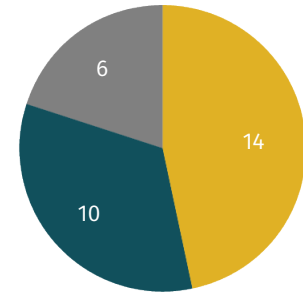
Altogether, the journey back to Dharavi turned out to be an expensive one compared to pre-Covid times. People paid higher fares for whatever means of transport they opted to complete their journey. The train tickets were almost double the fare than the pre-Covid time. The train journeys within past months were smooth and special care was taken with regard to sanitary conditions and social distancing norms. Unlike regular times, only one person was allowed per seat. Our respondent Shanti talked about her train experience -

“It was clean. One could go to washrooms as and when needed. The compartments (of the train) were kept shut; one could not cross from one to the other. Passengers were not allowed to step out of the train at any station. Food, breakfast, and other snacks were provided in the train (and) policemen were in charge of distribution”.

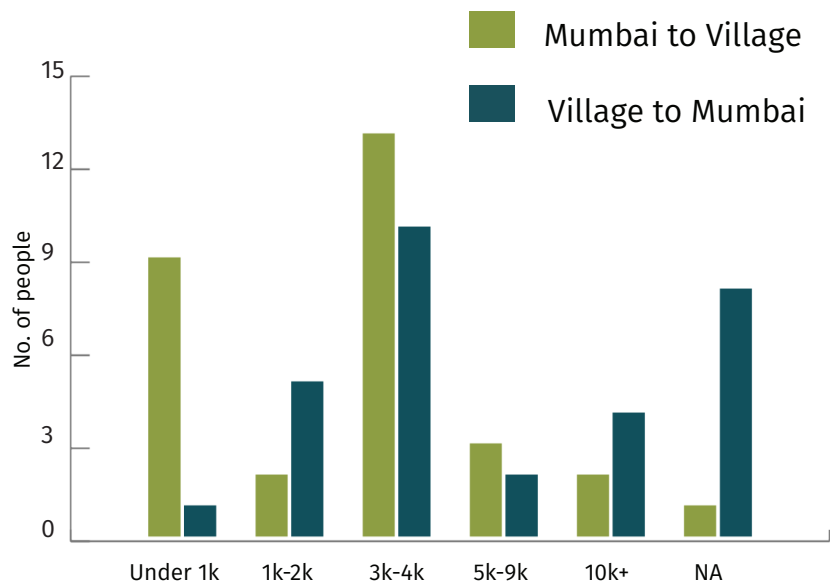
As we spoke in our third issue of Dharavi Fortnightly, the functioning of local and inter-state trains is crucial to people’s livelihoods[5].

With regard to Covid precautions, we received mixed reviews. These depended on when and where people were travelling from. Some respondents answered that they were tested at state borders or their temperature was checked, however the rest answered that no testing procedures were implemented.

However, none of the respondents were asked to quarantine after their arrival in Mumbai.



This chart shows the number of respondents who went through a temperature check during their journey.



*This chart shows the change in travel expenses during Covid19 lockdown
Note : NA for respondents who are still back in the village and who made the journey just before the lockdown

[5] <https://www.urbz.net/articles/dharavi-fortnightly-03-dharavi-move-pandemic>

The detour

Our respondent Shabbu had a difficult time getting to his home town when the lockdown was first announced. His journey to Aonla in Bareilly consisted of walking long distances, paying large sums to trucks, an unpleasant encounter with the police, and quarantining at two different locations. It took him a total of twelve days to get home in Aonla, when usually it takes him two to three days. While the trip caused him and his family a great deal of stress, he also received help on the way from various individuals, such as his village chairman who provided his wedding hall for quarantining. Shabbu told us about the hardships faced by a lot of people, where individuals had to worry about their next meal and subsequently sold their livestock and gold or mortgaged their houses in order to cope with the difficult times. His journey back to Dharavi was substantially different from what he was used to. He came back by train via Mathura, which is not the usual route. He found the journey extremely comfortable with few passengers and a very clean environment.

Night journey

Shanti is a second generation migrant in Dharavi and only visits her village in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu for special occasions and festivals. Being the only earning member of her family, she faces many hardships when it comes to expenses. She went to her village with her pregnant daughter, thanks to a free bus service was arranged by a social worker. She travelled with a few other community members who belong to the same village as hers. In order to return to Dharavi, she had to first go to Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, to catch a 7 am train to Mumbai. Since there was no bus that would get them to Thiruvananthapuram on time, she had to arrange for a private car which left at



Shabbu's story in a local newspaper

midnight. She had to pay Rs. 500 per person for the private car to Kerala from where they took a direct train to Mumbai. She was travelling with her parents but received no concessions on their train tickets like they usually do. She noted that the journey on the train was comfortable and convenient. She came back to Dharavi to a flooded house and higher rent than normal.

Through the bus driver's lens

One of our respondents, Anil, owns a private bus and makes regular trips within Maharashtra. He and his friends noticed the difficulties people were facing in order to get back to their hometowns. They procured permissions to run their buses during lockdown and transported people both in and outside of Maharashtra. They were able to earn extra money by transporting people to their destinations but would return to Mumbai with empty buses. In the few instances that there were passengers returning to Mumbai, the drivers would be fined Rs. 5000 per passenger. The drivers themselves struggled while doing their jobs since restaurant

and store-owners did not want them making stops at their establishments and treated them disrespectfully. For this reason, Anil would have to stock up on food and water beforehand. Anil's own family in Dharavi would worry for him, but Anil believed the work he was doing was important. Now that travel in and out of the city has resumed and things are relatively normal, some passengers still call Anil to express gratitude for the aid he provided them during a time of crisis.

"We were not doing these trips to earn extra money. For us, it was a public service."

- Anil Trimurti

Settling Back in the City

Returning to Dharavi and resuming their normal lives in such turbulent times has not been an easy task for many. Many respondents said that they were paying rent and electricity bills for their homes in Dharavi even though they stayed in their village. One of our respondents, Meena Jaiswal, spoke about her distress regarding the spike in price of her electricity bill for the months that her Dharavi home was empty. Another of our respondents, Shanti, is struggling to pay her children's school fees and was forced to withdraw one of her sons from his school. Being a single mother and the only earning member of the family, she is desperately in need of some income sources. Both Meena and Shanti, along with a few other respondents, are currently looking for new jobs.

Follow Up Story : Abhimanyu Modi

Abhimanyu Modi returned to his village in May and came back to Mumbai only in October. He was not planning on visiting his village, but the pandemic threw off his plans and his children were bored in Mumbai. He returned to Mumbai along with three strangers in his taxi, however the fare they paid him was not enough to cover the costs of the travel and he had to pitch in Rs. 3,500 as well. His family arrived a week later in a sleeper bus that cost him Rs. 8000. The bus dropped them off 50 km away from Dharavi from where they took another local bus and taxi to get home. Modi struggled in his village during lockdown because his doctors were unable to send him medicines for his brain tumor. His earnings in the city aren't substantial either. Even though his family supports him from time to time, his health status makes it difficult for him to work more than 5 to 6 hours a day. He was able to work for a short while in the village once he received his medicines in July, but even back in Dharavi now he is earning less than half of his pre-Corona earnings.

On the other hand, there are also new doors opening up for some residents of Dharavi, aiding them to cope with the challenges the pandemic and lockdown have brought on. Some respondents had to search for new sources

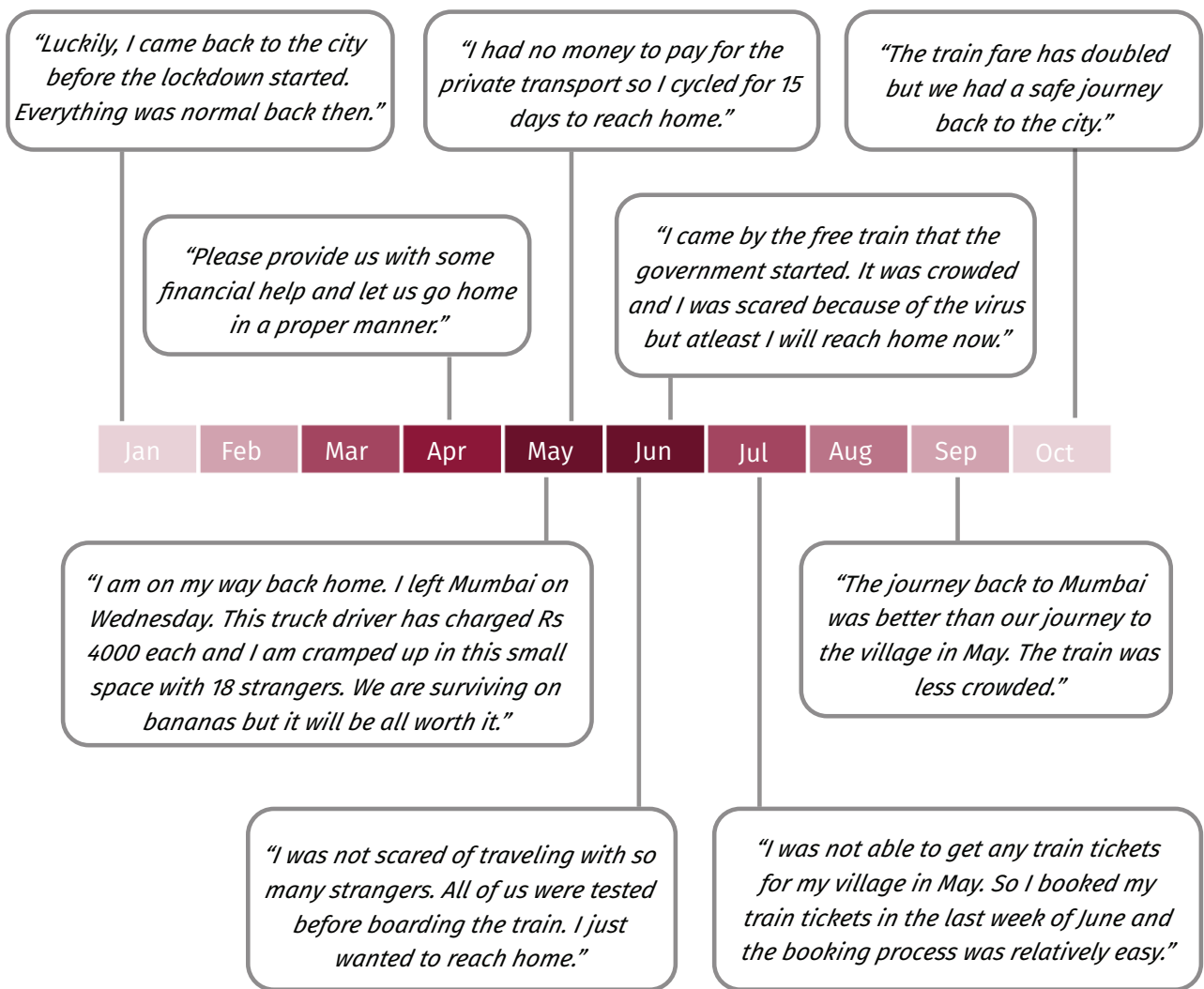
of income, while others saw a shift in their family dynamic in terms of responsibilities where members who didn't earn previously have begun working. Some of our male respondents shared how their homemaker wives had begun looking

for work or were now employed in professions such as exports business, embroidery, making beedis, or were waiting to hear back from prospective employees.

Plan B

Taufiq was our only respondent who moved to a new city looking for work. Taufiq, who is a tailor by profession, is originally from Bisoli in Uttar Pradesh. He did not return to Dharavi, but instead moved to Delhi recently.

He plans on returning to his village soon, but before that he will travel solo to Mumbai. Taufiq was able to receive some work through government schemes but noted that it was not rewarding work.



A timeline showing the progression of people's thoughts on their travel experiences between the city and villages during the pandemic.

List of our respondents:

Mallappa Kotam, Manojkumar Vishwakarma, Muna Ansari, Sabbu Ansari, Mustaqibhai, Bhagirath Yadav, Bhagirath Rajat, Bangali, Ganesh, Hanumantha, Narsppa, Devraji Negi, Laxmikar Yadav, Vijayshankar Yadav, Dayaprsad, Shankar Mandal, Ashwinbhai, Tahir Suddhiqui, Ayyub Shaikh, Sandeep Yeole, Abbas Gilwani, Paul Raphel, Rashid Ansari, Irshad Ansari, Gulzar Ansari, Mani, Mohmd Khurshid, Mushahid Ansari, Stephen Raj, Juliet Raj, Mangal, Antony Raj, Shubham Shukla, Dilip , Pawan, Sanjay, Karam Ansari, Santosh Banwar, Abhimanyu, Mahadev Saw, Mohammd Alam, Fareed Khan, Ziyauul S, Jangbahdur, Sunder Raj, Mohmad Aamir Ansari, Rohit Khaire, Ashish Rajk, Mehboob Alam, Pravin Kumar Gupta, Palini, Sahenaj Begaum, Ramesh Sutar, Amit, Rohit Kumar N, Mangala Sonawane, Vijamala, Ratan Singh, Shyam Kanle, Manali Hendlekar, Kavitha Pardesi, Shafiquebhai, Balaji Palkar, Vinit Kumar, Asif Ansari, Shabe Alam, Kadeerbhai, Mohmd Parvez, Larson, Salim Khan, Harshada Doipodekar, Meri Koli, Ribeca Koli, Manju Keni, Nargis Sayyad, Ram Milan, Ashok Vishwakarma, Mr. Bhangre Sir, Niranjan Nandapalli, Narsingh Kamble, Arothe Sir, Shinde Sir, Rajesh Khandare, V. Deshpande, Mohite Sir, V. Ashok Kumar, AA Shinde, Sharda Mojar, Nimse Sir, Dumbare Snehalta, Priti Karnde, Priti Bhodan, Pawan S, Prshant Igale, Omkar N, Payal Gumare, Ritika Shere, Medha Vatkar, Sneha Jagtap, Michael Raj, Pawan Shriman, Divesh

Sonawane , Ashu Dhadke, Sanjay Shinde, Jyoky Koli, Loreta Koli, Minal Manu, Comal Manu, Ritik Rajesh, Yuraj Salunkhe, Yash Salunkhe, Yanesh Salunkhe, Israil Mangesh Randive, Mariya Mangesh Randive, Mr. Khan, Riyan D' Silva, Shadrik Koli, Janice Koli, Alisha Koli, Alex Koli, Sabamma, Ravi, Das, Jovial, Tarun Swami, Bhau Korde, Siddharth Medhe, Gyan, Mohd Parvez, Sherik Ansari, Amir Ansari, Sageer Khan, Pappubhai, Shankar Mandal, Prem Kumar, Joseph Koli, Irfan Topiwala, Gulzar Wakhar Khan, Habib Tepu, Girish, Atmaram Redkar, Abhay Miti, Raju Koli, Sunil Kadam, Chulbul, Shankarbhai, Rajubhi, Kundan, Laxman, Ravindran Kodam, Balraj, Yusuf Khan, Megha Gupta, Akbar, Maqbul, Ganesh, Suresh Chandolkar, Azam, Bhushan Shege, Gurfran, Abubakar, Kavita, Sushma, Prakash, Dighmber Koli, Prajot, Issacbhai, Sagarbhai, Dharavirkar, Gaurishankar, Krishana, Himanshu Kemka (Goonj Foundation), Laxmi (Acron Foundation), Vidya Mane, Balawant Kirar (Praja Foundation), Jayendra Tambe (Mumbai Roti Bank), Asgarbhai (Dharavi Foundation), Abdul Ansari (Happy To Help), Sarika (Need Vikas Sanstha), Vinod Shety (Acron foundation), Dr. Rama Shyam (SNEHA), Sitharth Madge, Mohite (Triratana Perna Mandal), Yagn (Vacha), Vijay Basak (Drona Foundation), Priti Dabhade (Niramay Foundation), Vinod (Sankalp Foundation), Marinha Joseph (YUVA Center), Suryakant, Vikas Kadam (Prayas), Maria Lobo (SPARC), Anand Vidya (Disibility.org), Rakha Gade, Shankarm

Aadipirmal, Jhansirani, Meharaz Kureshi, Dr Kadir Shaikh, Dr Esther Patil, Dr. Rajesh Jathar, Magesh DS, Ravindra, Sumit, Anagha, Deepak, Moin, Akhila, Nickson, Alisha, Vaishali, Shweta, Swati, Divyajyot, Vishal, Sanjit/Sanjay, Rekha Gade, Uday, Tanushree, Ravi, Suraj, Tejasvi, Sharifa, Shabnam, Arbaz, Ashish, Sameer, Moh. Ansari, Amina, Payal, Lakshmi, Saima, Sujata, Manisha, Azhar, Ashle, Vakar Fatima, Soni, Priya, Swati, Ishwar, Ayesha, Vijaya Laxmi, Alyabanu, Pooja, Siana, Rizvana Mauls Ali Shaikh, Sadikbhai Aqbool Ahemad, Hilda, Nandini, Arun Kunchikurve, Laxmi, Prajot Kamble, Rebeca Koli, Mangesh, Deepak Kunchikar, Jaya, Jagdish, Akram, Mohammad, Anjappa, Sageerbhai, Saleem, Taufiqbhai, Manoj, Naresh, Vandana Gaikawad, Savita Shinde, Dilip Khandare, Ishwar, Mohd Ali, Jyoti Chawla, Kiran/ Govial Koushik, Shiv Kumari, Habibbhai, Chandrabhan Patil, Tebrezbhai, Meena Keni, Alike, Krishna Eknath Bhagat, Shalini Ghule, Saritatai/ Sanjyoti Sawant, Shivaji Bosale, Arun Kumar, Nafis Khan, Devan, Raju Tope, Ayyub Sheik, Jyocy Koli, Sandesh Koli, Krishna, Harshal, Aniket, Aditya, Vikas, Sheetal, Arbaz, Amit, Sudarshan, Deep, Atul, Sonal, Sahil, Nirant, Tejas, Ankur, Yakir, Pooja, Abhishek, Pratik, Sakshi, Adrash, Simon, Akash, Annppa Kunchikor, Domnik Keni, Jagdish Jain, Anthony, Ranchod Das, Giriraj Sherekhan, Mehraz Kureshi, Habib Khan, Kavita Koli, Ganesh Kodam, Prince Koli, Shankaramal Aadipirmal, Ashish Kadam, Vandana Shejwal, Lakshmi Yadav, Aadrsh Singh, Shubham Sharma, Sean,

Saritatai/ Sanjyoti Sawant,
Shivaji Bosale, Arun Kumar,
Nafis Khan, Devan, Raju Tope,
Ayyub Sheik, Jyocy Koli,
Sandesh Koli, Krishna, Harshal,
Aniket, Aditya, Vikas, Sheetal,
Arbaz, Amit, Sudarshan, Deep,
Atul, Sonal, Sahil, Nirant, Tejas,
Ankur, Yakir, Pooja, Abhishek,
Pratik, Sakshi, Adrash, Simon,
Akash, Annppa Kunchikor,
Domnik Keni, Jagdish Jain,
Anthony, Ranchod Das, Giriraj
Sherekhan, Mehrnaz Kureshi,
Habib Khan, Kavita Koli, Ganesh
Kodam, Prince Koli,
Shankaramal Aadipirmal,
Ashish Kadam, Vandana
Shejwal, Lakshmi Yadav, Aadrrsh
Singh, Shubham Sharma, Sean,
Mohd Pervez, Mohd. Ali, Sagar
Vaity, Saleem Ansari, Taufiq
Ansari, Sandesh Koli, Ashwin
Wadhar, Shanthi, Gyan Rao,
Vijayshankar Yadav, Krishan N,
Ganesh Kondave, Daya Prasad,
Laxmikar Yadav, Manju Keni,
Sonu, Yousufbhai, Kundan,
Ziyabhai, Salimbhai, Rajendra,
Abdulbhai, Rebecca,
Mustaqbhai, Prakashbhai,
Sandeepbhau, Papubhai,
Anilbhai, Murtaza Malik, Mohd
Hussain, Chandra Yadav, Abdul
Kalam, Dharma Budhivant,
Irman, Suryakant Nath, Chaya
Tai, Vaishali Tai, Shyambhai,
Balawant, Ravindra Kodam,
Rakeshbhai, Tabrezbhai,
Jansirani, Fatima, Shagir,
Mohammad Sheraj, Deepak
Nirmal, Suresh Nirmal, Shabbu,
Janbahadur Jaiswal,
Mohammad Azam Ansari,
Pappu, Subham Shukla, Parvez,
Shanti, Ramu Kori,
Subashchandra Jaiswal, Arjit
Jaiswal, Meena Jaiswal, Sanjay
Chaturvedi, Kamran, Manigiri

