

A REPORT OF HOW DHARAVI COPEs 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.

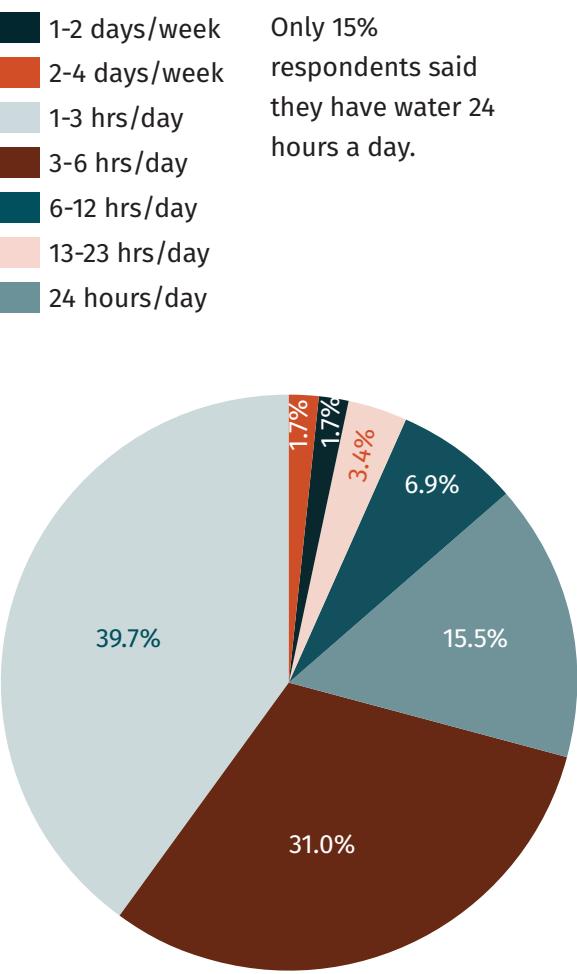
BEING HUNGRY IS THE BIGGEST FEAR IN DHARAVI

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

ACCESS To

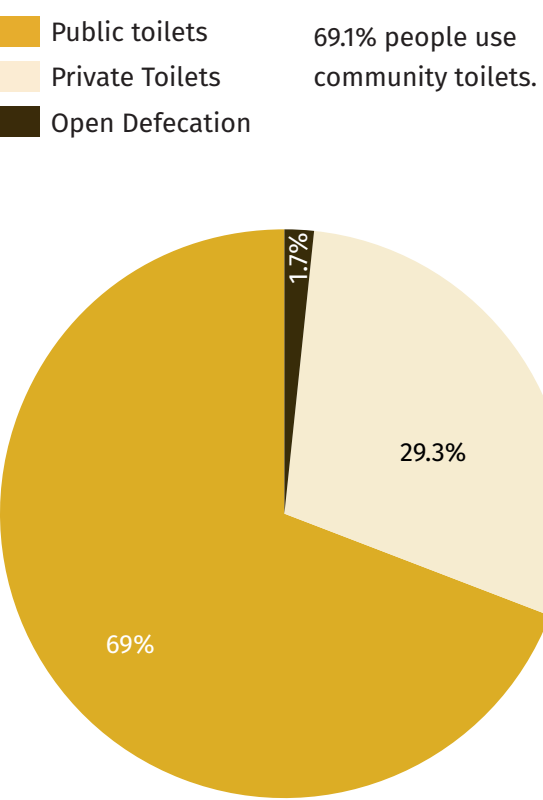
Over the last 2 weeks, we have interviewed 32 migrant workers, 17 small business owners, 6 community leaders and 3 homemakers.

Water



Toilets

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

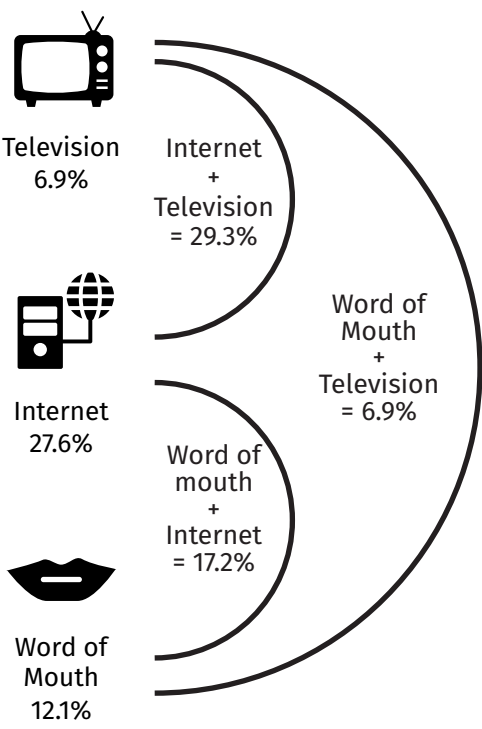


Food

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

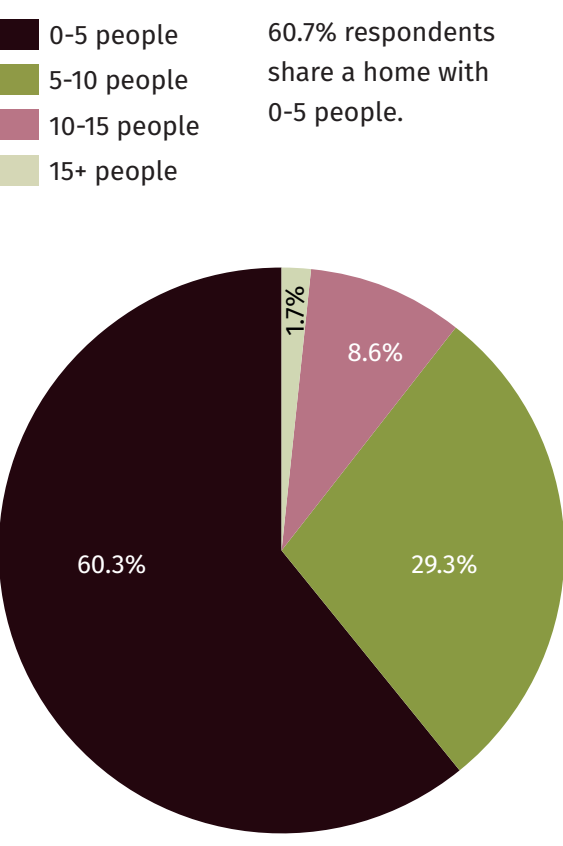
Information

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



Living space

The number of people respondents share their home with.



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.

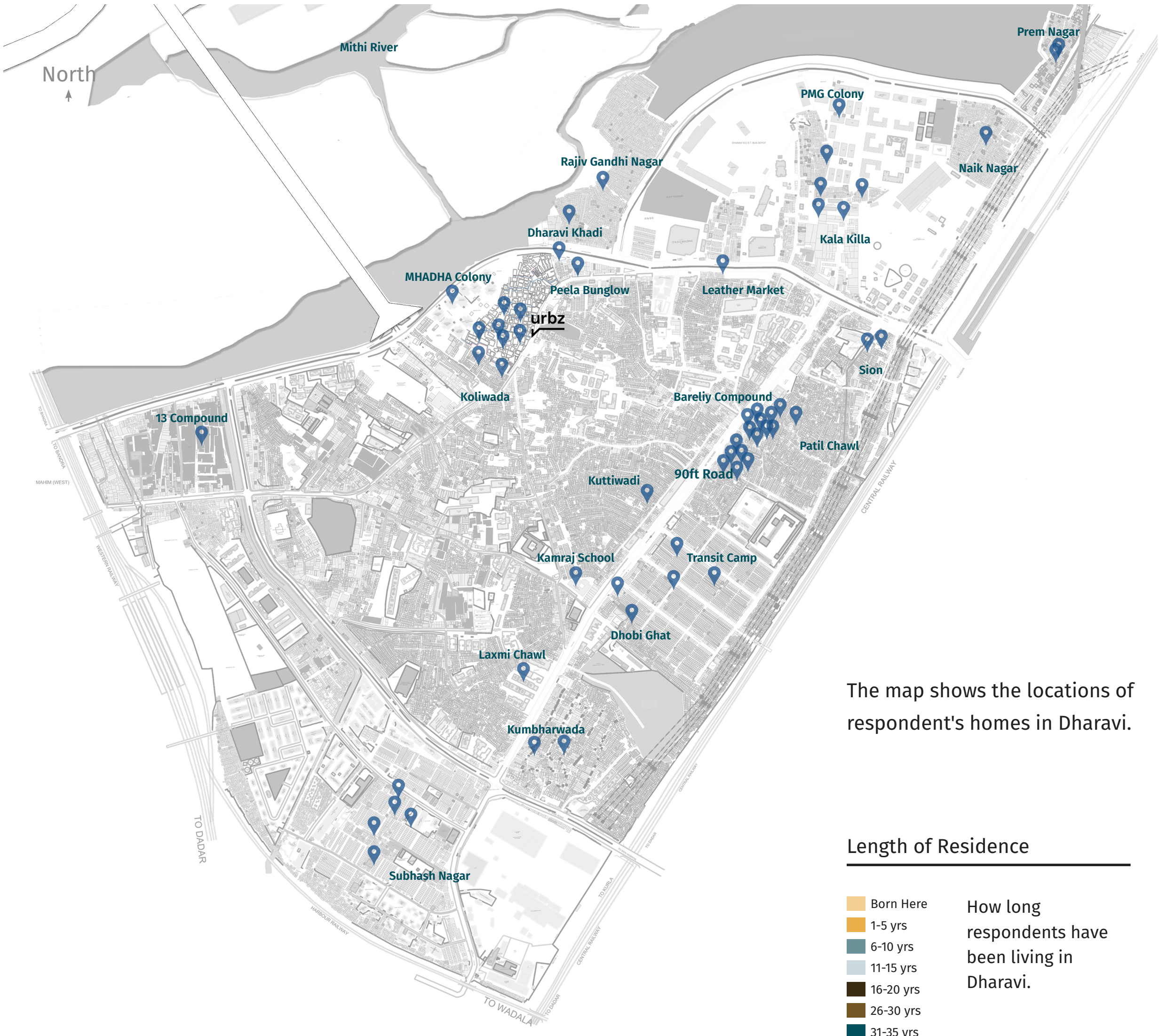
19%

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

12%

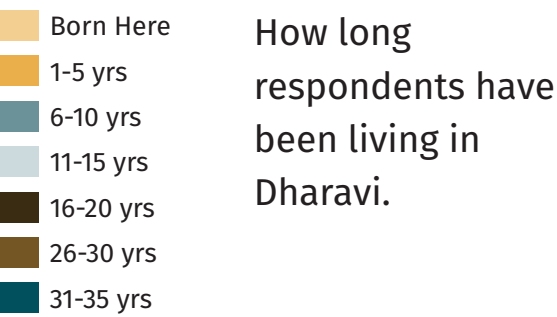
Respondents said they had travelled to and reached their villages already.

“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



Age

The age distribution of the people we have interviewed.

