



Preliminary report Study on socio-economic aspects of Covid-19 in the Maldives

(Round two - June 2020)



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Preliminary report:

Survey on socio-economic aspects of Covid-19 in the Maldives

(Round two: June 2020)

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Executive Summary

The first community case of Covid-19 in the Maldives was reported on the 15th April 2020 which triggered the lockdown of Greater Male' area with travel restrictions between islands, closure of businesses, government offices, schools and other movement of the people was restricted. The lockdown lasted about 45 days before any ease of movement was given. This report presents the preliminary results of the second round of online survey launched on the 12th of June 2020 to explore the extent of exposure to Covid-19, prevention practices, perceptions on easing the restrictions imposed to contain Covid-19, quality of life, access to essential services and the impact on work and income during lockdown.

A quantitative online survey methodology was adopted targeting the whole population. To reach the population, the survey team partnered with the two main telecommunication providers in the country and survey link was sent to all registered mobile phones registered with the two providers. The response rate was 94%, with 2368 people completing the study out of 2517 who responded to the study invitation. The study was registered at the Maldives National University (RR/2020/S-02) and ethics approval was obtained from the National Health Research Council (NHRC/2020/006). The response distribution by gender was quite similar with 53.4% females and 46.6% males but the response rate from the atolls was lower than Male'.

Testing for Covid-19 was found to be considerable with 14.3% of the sampled population having tested for the disease. Exposure to the disease was low with 0.4% testing positive for the disease. A large proportion complied with HPA's advice on the prevention measures of Covid-19 such as hand hygiene (72.9%), wearing face masks (71%) and social distancing (60.4%). Many wanted ease of restrictions but felt the need for increased testing, monitoring of compliance, appropriate guidelines and community empowerment to reduce risk of contracting Covid-19. Findings on the exposure to covid-19 and prevention practices reflected the country's strategy of early detection, high level of testing capacity, peoples' health seeking behaviours and acceptance of the interventions adopted in the country.

The quality of life during the Covid-19 pandemic indicated a high level of health and wellbeing with an average self-reported score of health during the lockdown at 78.2 out of 100. Except for anxiety and depression suffered by 50% of the population, the other four dimensions of quality of life showed that more than 90% had no problem with mobility and self-care, 71% had no problem with usual activities and 66% had no problem of bodily pain or discomfort during the lockdown. The discrepancy observed between the proportion of population suffering from mental health issues (50%) and the demand for mental health services (9.8%) highlights the need to extend mental health education across the country, proactive screening and treatment for the people in need.

Access to essential services during the lockdown demonstrated that 29.8% of the sample needed health services, 9.8% required mental health services, 6.8% needed sexual and reproductive services, 1.4% needed child protection services and 34% needed financial support. The small proportion of people who needed essential

services were able to access these services, but majority of those who did access the services felt that their needs were not met. Despite the efforts to enable access to essential services during lockdown, it has highlighted that the quality of services was not adequate, which may be partly driven by the narrow focus of the pandemic planning to respond to the disease specific interventions, overlooking the wider social implications.

The lockdown measures put in place was found to have disrupted economic activity for many. Amongst the working population it was common to work both at home and outside but majority were working less hours. People earning income from home-based activities were more vulnerable with earning less than MVR 5000 per month (<\$10 per day). Majority who earn from home-based activities were women and were not able to continue their income activities during lockdown, mainly due to increased responsibility of domestic work and care of dependents while isolated at home. While only a third of the people were concerned about exposure to COVID-19 on return to work, majority were concerned about getting back their job, reduced pay, and social aspects such as no social support to look after dependents when they return to work. This suggests that economic concerns outweighed the risk of infection for a large segment of the working population which needs to be taken into account when planning risk communication as it poses significant risk of a resurgence of infection in the community.

While the government pandemic response is contemplating the ease of restriction, the risk of a second wave is real, and is heavily reliant on the compliance to the guidelines set out by the Health Protection Agency. The lessons from this pandemic needs to be incorporated into the pandemic preparedness plans and national emergency operational plan with innovative modalities to ensure that pandemic response does not leave the vulnerable behind. Stimulus packages will be helpful in the short run, but in the long term, sustainable safety nets, skill development and avenues for alternative income generating activities needs to be introduced, with a special focus on the informal sector and the women in the working population. Risk communications needs to target empowerment of the businesses and community to take actions on their own for successful suppression of the epidemic.

Introduction

Novel coronavirus or Covid-19 pandemic continues to spread across the world. As of 15 September 2020, 215 countries and territories were affected with 29,768,800 confirmed cases, 940,016 deaths and 21, 567,042 has recovered [1]. Maldives reported its first case on 7th March 2020 and as of 15 September 2020 reported 9328 confirmed cases and 7729 recoveries and 33 deaths [2]. The country reported its first community case on the 15th April 2020 which triggered lockdown of greater Male' area with travel restrictions between islands. Businesses, government offices, schools were closed and other movement of the people was restricted. The lockdown lasted about 45 days before any ease of movement was given.

While the pandemic is primarily a health issue, the measures to contain Covid-19 have wide social and economic implications. There are reports of economic

impact this pandemic has created globally [3] and a number of countries has taken measures to manage this economic impact [4-6]. Emerging literature on the social impacts of the Covid-19 have noted the huge psycho-social impact of this pandemic [5]. Studies conducted locally has focused largely on economic impact of Covid-19 including those specific to critical sectors such as tourism [7]. Maldives has announced a number of interventions to cushion the vulnerabilities that are emerging out of this Covid-19 pandemic. Considering the society wide impacts expected from the pandemic, this study was registered at the National Health Research Council (NHRC/2020/006) and the Maldives National University (RR/2020/S-02) that included periodic online surveys and interviews with key informants to assess the socio-economic effects of the containment measures.

This report presents the preliminary results of the second round of online survey launched on the 12th of June 2020 to obtain information of the socio-economic challenges the people experienced since the lockdown on 15th April and their views on easing the restrictions. The objective of the survey was to understand the extent of behaviours related to Covid-19 and its prevention, perceptions about easing the restrictions imposed to contain Covid-19, quality of life, access to services and social protection and the effect of Covid-19 on work and income during lockdown.

Methodology

A quantitative survey methodology was adopted targeting the whole population. For the sample size calculation, Raosoft sample calculator[8] was used to estimate the minimum sample size ($n = 384$) which was obtained on the basis of the following parameters; population size of 557,426 inclusive of resident migrants [7], 95% confidence intervals, 5% error margin and assuming a 50% response rate. The survey method adopted was online survey given the lockdown situation in the country. To reach the population, the survey team partnered with the two main telecommunication providers in the country and survey link was sent to all registered mobile phones with the two providers. The participant inclusion was all persons willing to complete the study and persons who declined were classified as non-response. The online survey was conducted for a period of 30days and a total of 2517 responses were detected by the tool.

The survey instrument was adapted from validated instruments used in previous studies locally and internationally, adapted to the current context [9,10]. The questionnaire was pretested with 8 people of different age and gender and adjusted according to feedback obtained. The survey used the online medium KoboToolBox [11] to implement the self-administered online questionnaires. The instrument was translated from English to Dhivehi, by a person fluent in both languages. The translated instrument was validated by another reviewer. Other languages were not chosen due to the low response rate from the previous round of survey.

The variables studied in the instrument include,

- Covid-19 testing, risk of exposure and perception on easing lockdown
- Behaviors to reduce exposure and prevention of Covid19 with ease of lockdown

- Quality of life during the pandemic
- Access to services: medical, health, financial support, and child protection services during lockdown
- Perceived impact on work, income and household support
- Demographic characteristics of participants

Findings

Demographic characteristics

The study had a response rate of 94%, with 2368 people completing the study out of 2517 who responded to the study invitation. The sex ratio was equally distributed among the respondents with 53.4% being females and 46.6% being males (Figure 1). Majority (59.2%) of the participants of the survey were from the age group, 18 to 35 years of age and 37.4% of the people were from 36- 64 years of age. A small percentage of minors (2.5%) and elderly (0.8%) participated in the survey (Figure 2).

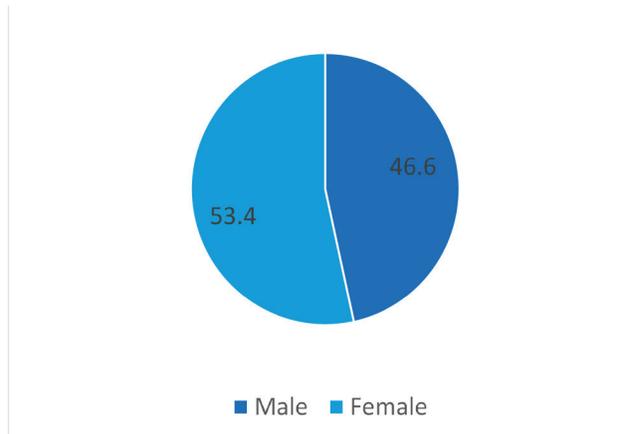


Figure 1: Participants by Gender

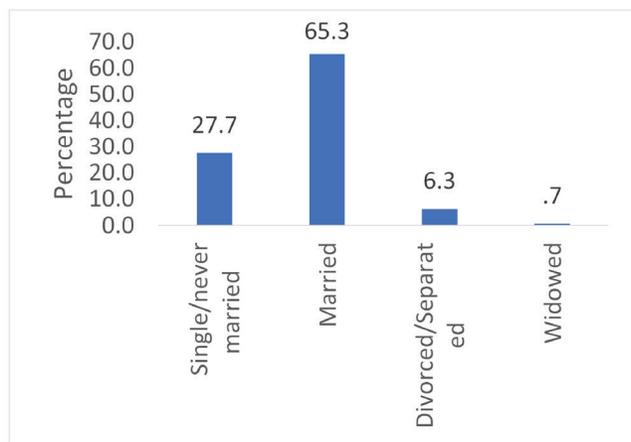


Figure 2: Participants by Age groups

A large percentage of respondents (48.3%) described their main social role as an income earner, 17% described them as parents, 12.6% were students and 10% were home makers (Figure 3). More than 65% of the people were married, 6.3% were either separated or divorced, 27.7% were single and a very small percentage of people (0.7%) were widowed (Figure 4).

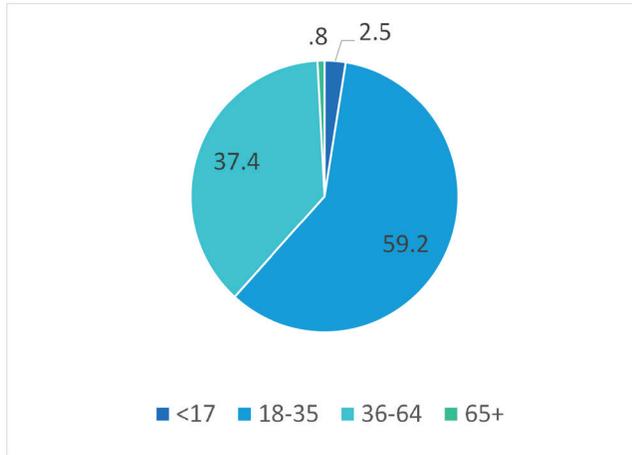


Figure 3: Main Social Role of Participants

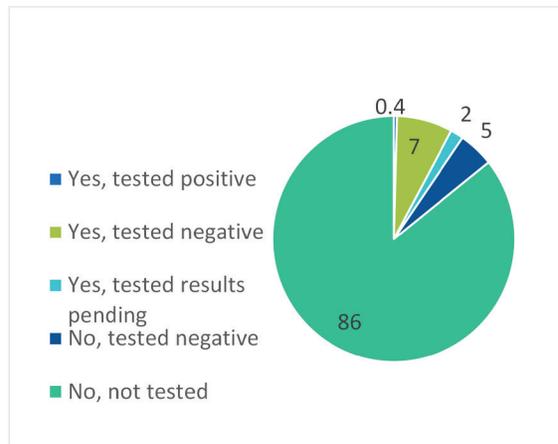


Figure 4: Marital Status of Participants

Majority of the respondents were located in Male' (69%) and there was a fair participation in the survey from every atoll. Table 1 shows the number of participants from Male' and each atoll.

Table 1:
Residential Area of Participants

Atoll	Number of Participants
HA	26
HDh	41
Sh	26
N	34
R	50
B	30
Lh	25
K	47
AA	14
ADh	21
V	5
M	10
F	15
Dh	27
Th	23
L	19
GA	20
GDh	40
Gn	35
S	103
Male'	1757

COVID-19 exposure and prevention behaviour

The uncertainty related to the pandemic was high in the country as is across the world. Risk communication was an integral part of the pandemic response making the community aware of the disease, risk and prevention behaviour. The round 1 survey of this research reported a high level of knowledge of COVID-19 symptoms and prevention interventions [11]. This section describes the findings from this round of the study related to COVID-19 exposure and prevention behaviour.

“Only a small proportion of the sampled population (0.4%) was exposed to COVID-19 at the time of the study”

As shown from Figure 5, 85.7% of the respondents have never tested for Covid-19, 12.1 % have tested negative for Covid-19, 1.7% have tested and the results were pending and 0.4% tested positive for Covid-19. When asked whether the respondents were isolated or quarantined, only 6% (n=141) responded affirmative. Out of this, 58.2% of the people were quarantined due to travel history, 27.7%

were quarantined due to contact with a case, 7.8% were isolated for treatment, 5.7% were isolated as a suspected case and 0.7% were under treatment of severe disease (Figure 6).

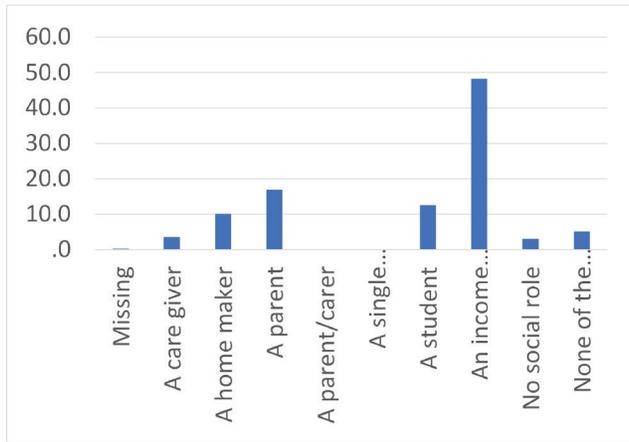


Figure 5: Exposure to Covid-19

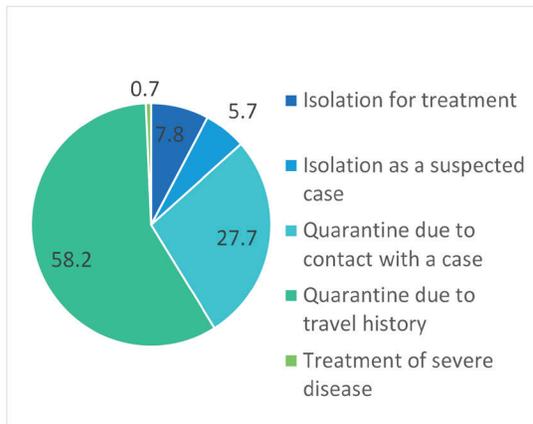


Figure 6. REASON FOR QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION

“A large proportion felt that they are able to comply with the prevention measures of COVID-19 such as hand hygiene, wearing face masks and social distancing”

As shown from Figure 7, when asked about the frequent hand hygiene (washing hands or using sanitizers), 72.9% said that they always follow this advice and 23.8% said they follow and do it to some extent and 2.1% said that they do not comply with the hand washing advice. When asked whether they comply with the advice on wearing masks in public, 71% said yes, always, 15.2% said sometimes and 8.2% said not at all. More than half (60.4%) of the respondents said that

they comply with the advice on maintaining social distancing and 32.5% said they only maintain social distancing sometimes. Out of the three advices most people comply with the advice on hand washing compared to wearing masks and social distancing. According to Figure 8, 49.6% of the respondents believed that it was time to ease up measures but in phases with guidelines. More than one third of the people also believed that it was not time to ease up the measure. There is a very small percentage of people who believed that it was time to ease up without guidelines or any restrictive measures. Most people believed that testing should be increased, compliance with guidelines should be monitored and families should be empowered with preventive measures before easing up (figure 9).

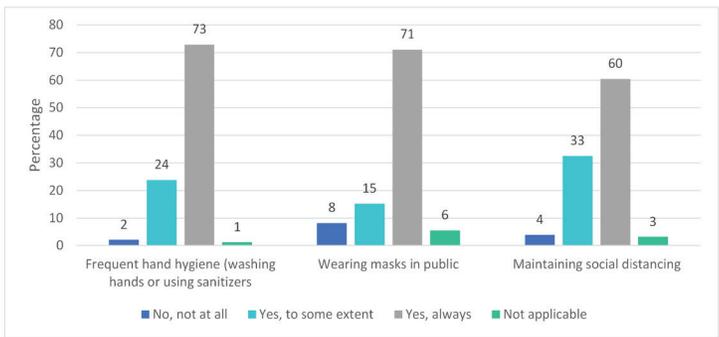


Figure 7: Compliance with HPA advice on prevention measures

“Many wanted ease of restrictions, but felt the need for appropriate guidelines and community empowerment to reduce risk of contracting COVID-19”



Figure 8: Perception towards easing restrictive measures

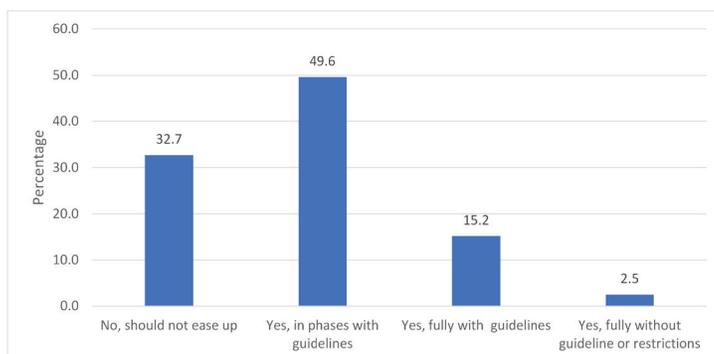


Figure 9: Interventions to be in place before the easing of restrictions

Quality of life

Measuring health is about understanding how a condition or a healthcare intervention affects a person's health by finding out if they have any symptoms or if their day-to-day functioning has been affected. In this study we used the Patient Reported Outcome Measure (PROM) questionnaire that asks patients to self-report about their own health. Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) focus on health-related quality of life (HRQoL). The EQ-5D [10] is a generic preference-based patient reported outcome measure of health-related quality of life. It can be used to generate utility values for use in economic evaluation. It is the most commonly used preference-based measure around the world. EQ-5D™ is a trademark of the EuroQol Research Foundation. Each of the 5 dimensions comprising the EQ-5D descriptive system is divided into 5 levels of perceived problems:

- Level 1: indicating no problem
- Level 2: indicating slight problems
- Level 3: indicating moderate problems
- Level 4: indicating severe problems
- Level 5: indicating extreme problems

A unique health state is defined by combining one level from each of the 5 dimensions [12].

EQ-5D Health profile

For the purpose of analysis, the frequency or the proportion of reported problems for each level for each dimension is dichotomized into:

- Level 1: No problems
- Levels 2, 3, 4, 5: Some problems

Table 2:
EQ-5D-5L Dimensions by Age group

EQ-5D-5L Dimensions	Problems (or not)	0-17	18-35	36-53	54-71	72-90	Total
Mobility	No problem	48	1271	699	114	3	2135
	Problems	12	131	77	12	1	233
Self-care	No problem	56	1347	762	123	4	2292
	Problems	4	55	14	3	0	76
Usual Activities	No problem	36	966	563	107	3	1675
	Problems	24	436	213	19	1	693
Pain/ Discomfort	No problem	35	918	529	87	3	1572
	Problems	25	484	247	39	1	796
Anxiety/ Depression	No problem	27	587	484	88	4	1190
	Problems	33	815	292	38	0	1178

“Health related quality of life was better than average during lockdown”

Dimension 1: Mobility

When combined the responses show that 2135 (90%) of respondents did not have a problem in mobility while 10% experienced difficulties in movement (Figure 11). Disaggregated data by age showed that problems of mobility was reported mostly by under 17 age group and the elderly population (>72 years of age).

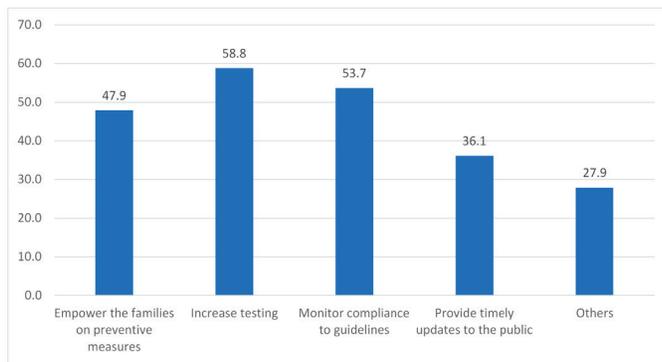


Figure 11: Status of Mobility during Covid-19

Dimension 2: Self-care

2292 (97%) of respondents did not have a problem in washing & dressing themselves while 3% experienced difficulties (Figure 12). This could be due to the fact that younger populations experience self-care issues.

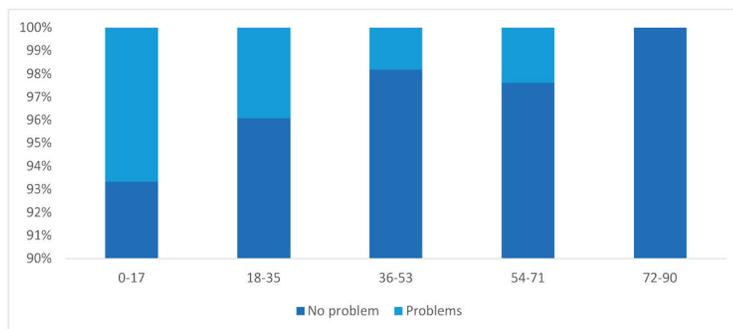


Figure 12: Status of Self Care during Covid-19

Dimension 3: Usual Activities

When combined the responses show that 1675 (71%) of respondents did not have a problem in carrying out the usual activities while 29% experienced difficulties (Figure 13). Similar to self-care, problems in usual activities is also problematic for younger populations.

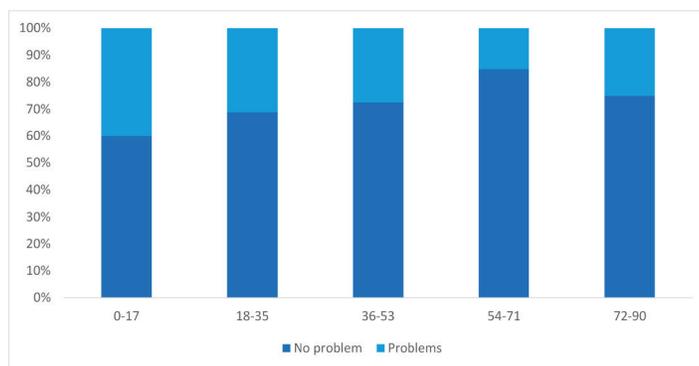


Figure 13: Status of the Ability to carry out usual Activities

Dimension 4: Pain or Discomfort

1572 (66%) of respondents did not have any bodily pain or discomfort while 34% experienced pains (Figure 14). Unlike other dimensions pain/discomfort is similar across all age groups.

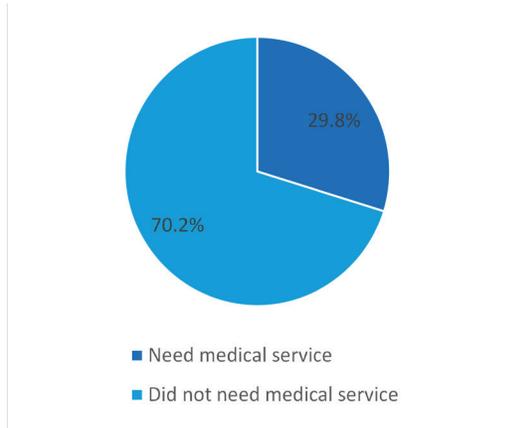


Figure 14: Status of Pain and Discomfort during Covid-19

Dimension 5: Anxiety and Depression

Responses shows that 50% of respondents did not experience anxiety/ depression while 50% experienced anxiety (Figure 15). Interestingly, the proportion of people suffering from anxiety and depression were more among the younger and the working population, during the COVID-19 lockdown.

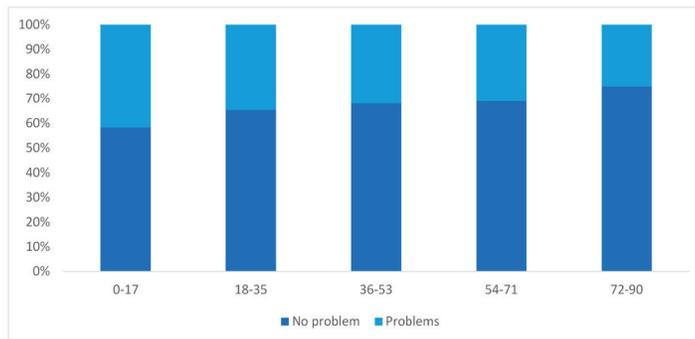


Figure 15: Status of Anxiety and Depression during Covid-19

EQ-VAS Score during COVID-19 lockdown

Respondents were asked to rate their health and 2363 respondents answered this question with the average score for health during lockdown being 78.2. This shows that most of the respondents reported full health or better than average health during lockdown.

Access to services

The lockdown resulted in a halt to a number of essential services, including regular

health care, mental health care, Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), child protection services, financial support announced by the government and relief in term of food. This section describes the participant’s experiences with regard to the need for these services and their perspective on whether the services were able to meet their needs.

“Only a small proportion of people sought social services during the lockdown, but a majority of them felt that their need was not met.”

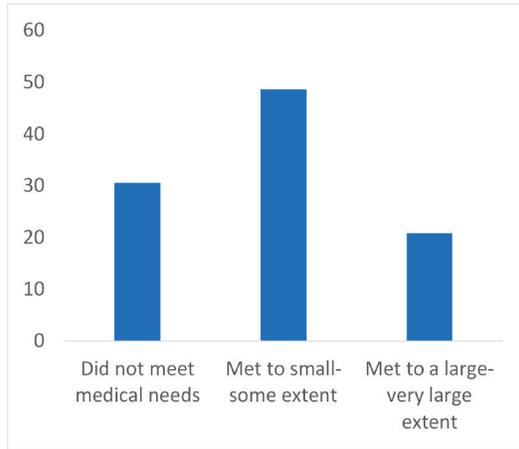


Figure 16: Demand for medical services during Covid-19

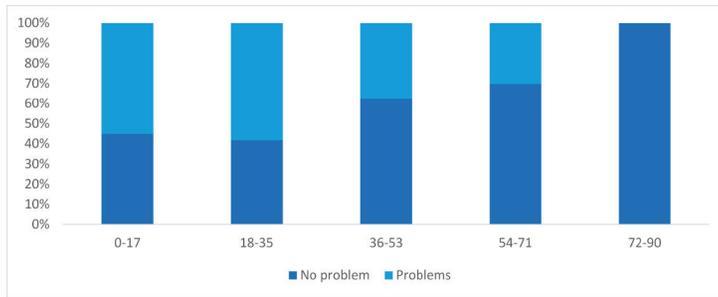


Figure 17: Extent Medical needs were met

Only a small proportion of people (29.8%) reported that they needed medical services during the past one month in the lockdown (Figure 16). From the respondents who sought medical services, 30.5% felt that the services that they sought did not meet their medical needs. On the other hand, while 48.6% of the respondents were of the opinion that the medical services met their needs just to a

small or some extent and only 20.8% of the respondents were of the opinion that the services met their needs to a large or very large extent (Figure 17).

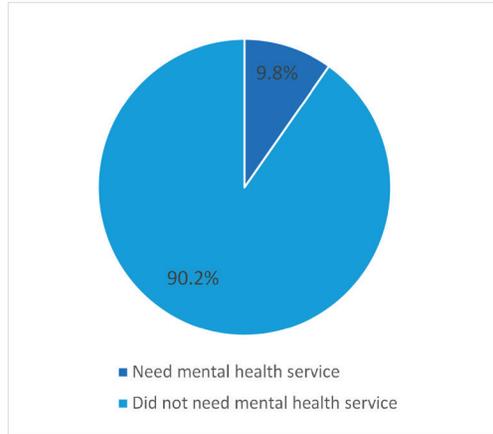


Figure 18: Demand for Mental Health Services

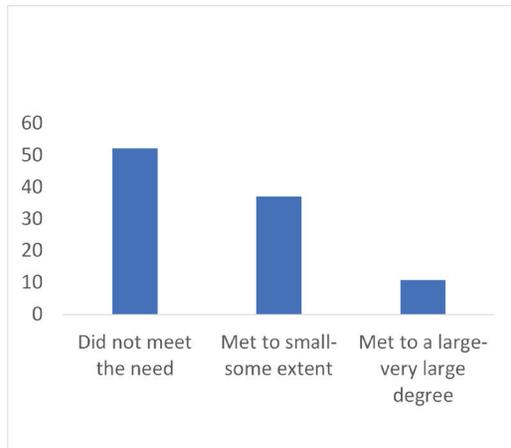


Figure 19: Extent that Mental Health needs were met

The pandemic and lockdown measures put in place are likely to have effects on the overall mental health of the population. The results showed that however, during the past month only 9.8% of the respondents reported that they needed mental health services as shown in Figure 18. Of the small proportion of people who accessed mental health services, more than half (52.2%) felt that the services did not meet their needs, while only very few were satisfied (only 10.8%). (Figure 19).

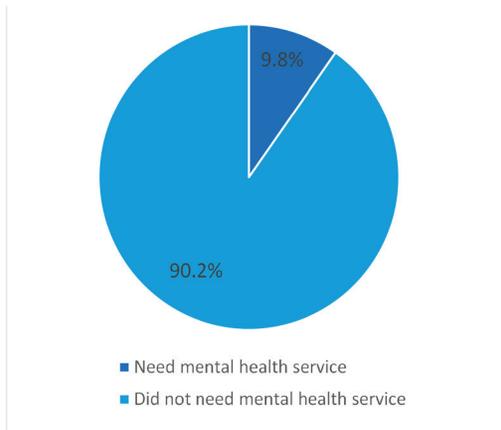


Figure 20: Demand for SRH services

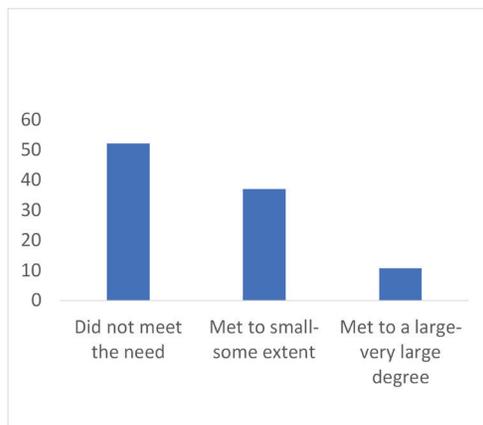


Figure 21: Extent that SRH needs were met

As shown from Figure 20, the participants who needed Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services during the lockdown period was just 6.8%. From the small proportion of participants who accessed SRH services during this period, 47.4% reported that their needs were met to small or some extent, while only 20.7% were satisfied with the extent to which their SRH needs were met reporting that it met to a large or very large degree (Figure 21).

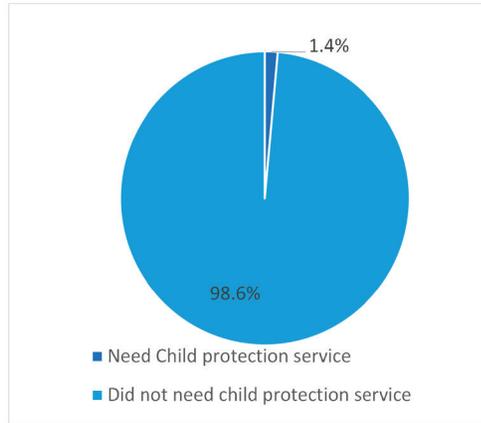


Figure 22: Demand for Child Protection Services

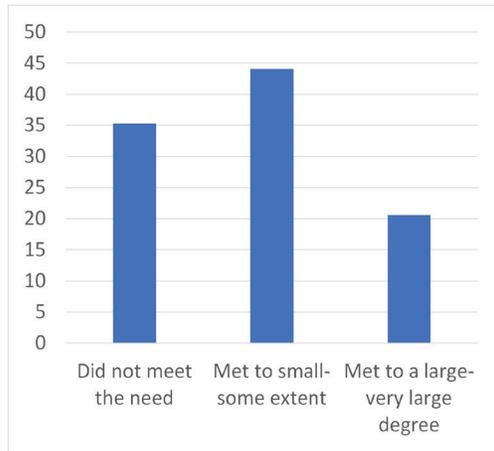


Figure 23: Extent that child protection needs were met

As shown from Figure 22, very few participants (1.4%) of the total respondents needed child protection services during this period. From the very small proportion of participants who did access child protection services, more than a third (35.3%) felt that their needs were not met, while only 20.6% were satisfied with the extent to which their needs were met reporting that it met to a large or very large degree. (Figure 23).

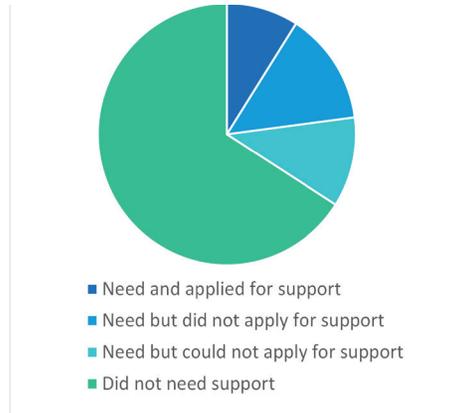


Figure 24: Demand for Financial Support

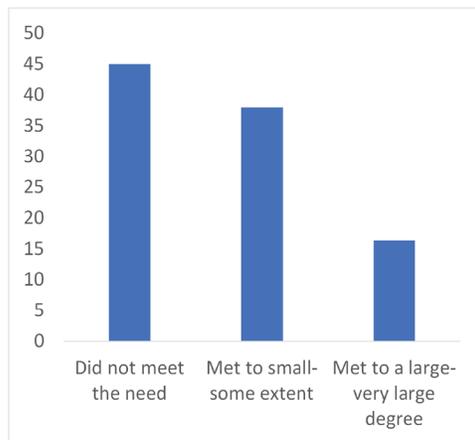


Figure 25: Extent that Financial support met needs

The pandemic and lockdown measures put in place are likely to have detrimental effects on the employment and income of the people. The results showed that while 34% of the respondents needed financial support, a majority (66%) felt that they did not. As can be seen in Figure 24, only 9% of the respondents applied for the Government income support scheme, while 13.9% reported that although they needed financial support they did not apply, and another 11.1% of participants could not apply due to various reasons during this period. From the small proportion of participants who did apply to the financial support scheme, 46% of the people reported that it was not adequate to meet the need, while 38% had their needs met to a small/some extent and 16% reported it being adequate to meet the need. (Figure 25)

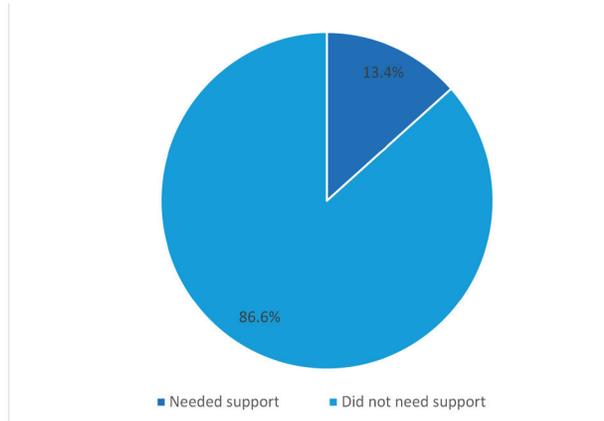


Figure 26: Demand for Food support

Due to the pandemic and lockdown measures put in place and the resulting movement restrictions and associated financial difficulties, some people needed relief in terms of food support. As shown from Figure 26, 13.4% of the total respondents reported needing support for food during the lockdown period, while 86.6% felt that they did not need any support in this regard.

“The extended family living arrangement appeared to have provided the required social support in the household and taking care of the dependents during lockdown”

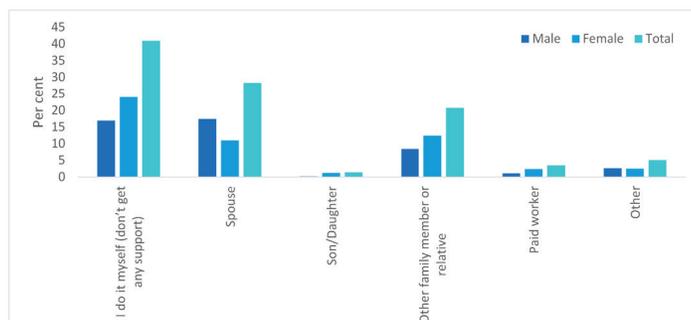


Figure 27: Household Social Support

The participants were also asked regarding their household social support during the last one month of the lockdown period. According to Figure 27, 40.9% of the respondents did not get any additional support and managed all the routine household chores such as cooking, cleaning and laundry on their own while 28.3% of the respondents acquired support from their spouses, and 20.7% of the respondents received support from other family members or relatives. It must be noted that only a very small proportion (3.5%) of the respondents had a paid

worker to provide the required social support in the household.

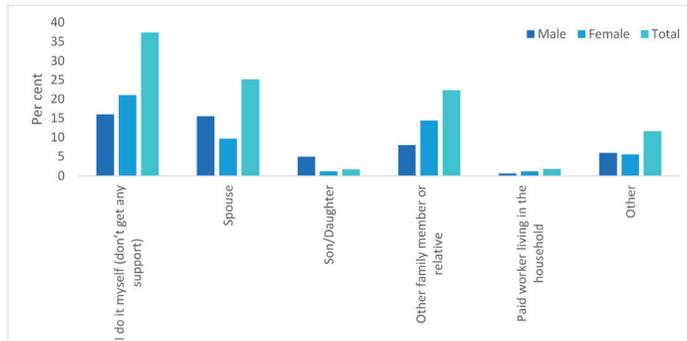


Figure 28: Support for the care of dependents

Additionally, the participants were also asked regarding their support for dependant’s care during the last one month of the lockdown period. According to Figure 28, 37.4% of the respondents did not get any additional support and managed to provide care for their dependents, while 25.2% of the respondents get support from their spouses, and 22.7% of the respondents received support from other family members or relatives. Similar to the trends observed for household social support, only a very small proportion (1.8%) of the respondents had a paid worker to provide the support required for dependant’s care in the household.

Work and income

The spread of COVID-19 is not only a global health pandemic, but it is also affecting the livelihood of everyone. This includes their employment and other income generating activities. The pandemic has taken a toll on our lives, mentally and economically. Many have suffered massive damages in their capacity to earn a living, sustain on their reduced income, to pay rent and to provide for household essential needs. This section focuses on income generating activities of the people and how they have been affected due to the pandemic, including their concerns over return to work in the new normal.

“More people work outside home – return to work in new normal would require health protection measures to be in place”

While we talk about easing measures and return to work in the new normal it is important to look at the usual working arrangement among men and women.

Table 3:
Employment status by sex

Place of work	Male	Female
At a workplace outside home	64%	52%
At home	5%	10%
Both – outside and at home	19%	12%
Do not work	11%	26%

The data shows that both men and women mostly work outside home. In the new normal, this would mean more than half of them would require to leave their home unless working from home arrangement is not viable. It is important that HPA guidelines and safety measures for work place are practiced in order to flatten the curve after reopening.

More women tend to work at home, and both outside and at home. At the same time, more than 26% of the women are usually not in the labour force.

“Those who work from home are more vulnerable - receive an income less than MVR 5000”

The results showed that among those who worked outside home, majority of them earn an income between MVR 5,001- 10,000. Those working from home are most vulnerable with majority of them receiving an income less than MVR 5,000. This group is most likely to be those working in the informal sector and to lose their income during this situation.

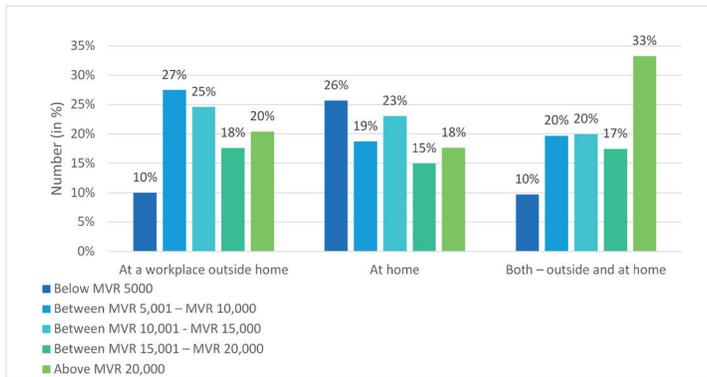


Figure 29: Usual Monthly Salary by place of work

Income segregated along gender lines showed that since most women are working at home and working in the informal sector, they earn less than MVR 5,000 per month (<\$10 per day). Women earn less than men while working outside home too.

“As a result of COVID-19 household resources are dwindling for everyone, the affect is more for women”

As a result of COVID, household income has been affected for many. Being jobless or reduction in salary is common across all the sectors. However, the worst hit is women working in the informal sector. For women working at home, about 33% reported that they are jobless now. Or do not have income to make ends meet. This would have an impact on household resources and the overall economy of the country. It is important that the government take into account to cover women in informal sector in their stimulus packages or in unemployment benefits.

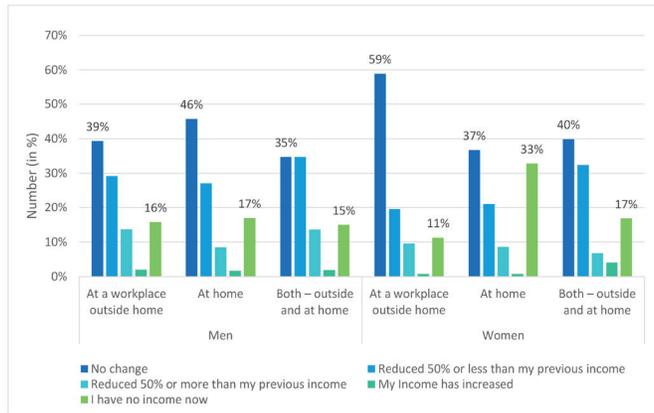


Figure 30: Change in income during the past month

“As a result of COVID-19, many are not working or working fewer hours”

The pandemic and lockdown measures put in place has disrupted economic activity for many. The results showed that during past month close to one third of those working outside home, at home and outside/at home worked in their usual working hours. Majority are working less hours or not able to work. For those who are working at home, 41% reported that they were not able to work. More women faced this situation than men. This might be due to loss of income generating activity or due to additional burden of unpaid care and domestic work that women have to juggle during this time. Studies have shown that women’s time spend in unpaid care/ domestic work has increased due to lockdown and this limits their time for an income generating activity. This has consequences on women’s health, leading to mental breakdown and other social issues.

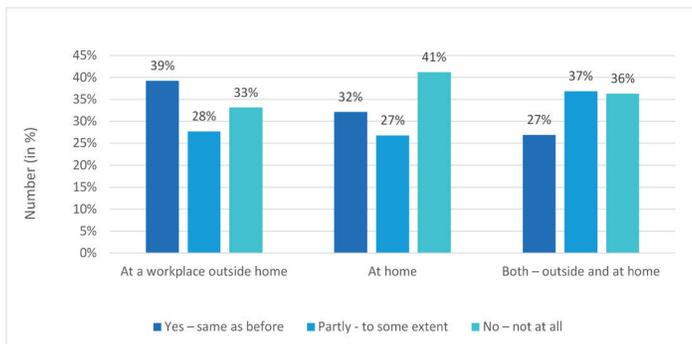


Figure 31: Continuity of income generating activity during the past month

“Many are concerned about being exposed to COVID-19 on return to work”

As lockdown measures are eased and the government has opened its borders for tourism on 15 July, the economy is returning to 'business as usual'. However, the results of the survey showed that 37% of the income earners are concerned about being exposed to COVID in their daily work. This includes their commute to work, working in compact spaces in the offices, and for those who are working outdoors. Some were indifferent to going back to work (26%) while low pay was a concern for 15% of the respondents.

Gender differences also showed interesting findings. Men are mostly concerned about being exposed to COVID infection and unable to get better pay. Women on the other hand were more concerned about being exposed to COVID, unable to get better pay and no one to look after the dependents at the home.

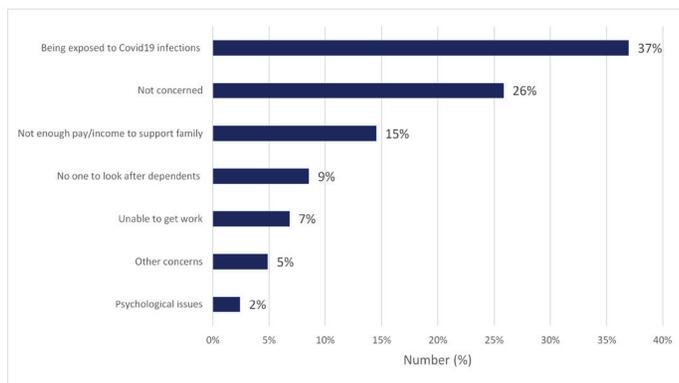


Figure 32: Concern regarding return to work

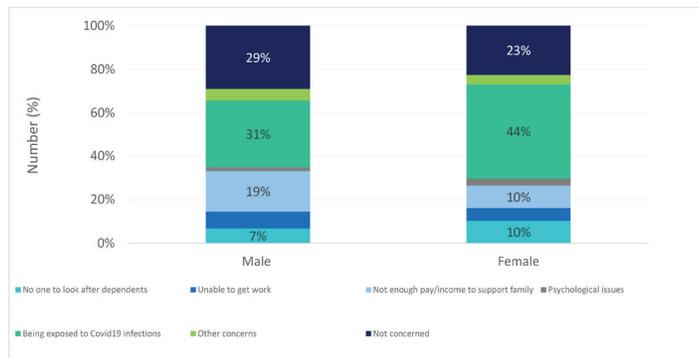


Figure 33: Concern regarding return to work by sex

Discussion

The population that has been tested for COVID-19 is considerable, given that the average secondary attack rate of populations at household level of 16%, with 4% children and 17% adults [14]. This high level of testing points to the country capacity to test and its strategy of early detection. Furthermore, it also reflects people's healthcare seeking behaviour and acceptance of the interventions adopted in the country. The evidence around the community's perceived ability to take preventive measures, specifically hand hygiene, wearing masks and physical distancing, though not as high as the level of awareness that was observed in the earlier round of the study is an encouraging sign. A lower adoption level compared to knowledge is expected given that behaviour change dependent on the individual's sense of risk and the environment's conduciveness to enable adoption of the behaviour [15,16]. Given the study participants are mainly from Male' area, that is highly densely populated, the observations are likely to be influenced by the environment.

Though the restrictive measures adopted infringed on people's freedom, majority of the people were cautious in their perception about easing restrictions as indicated by the preference to ease measures with guidelines. However, given that about a third of the people were not confident of their ability to practice preventive measures, raises concern about possible impact of easing the restrictions. As such the pandemic needs to be closely monitored with ease to avoid catastrophic impact on human lives of a possible second wave of the epidemic in the country [17,18]. The quality of life of the population during the Covid-19 pandemic indicated a high level of health and wellbeing, which is consistent with findings of research in other countries [19]. This status is influenced by continuous update of the situation through multiple media, arrangements to obtain basic commodities and alternative mechanisms to obtain health care complemented with the extended family living arrangements for most of the families and access to technology that allowed social interactions during lockdown [20]. Others have observed that mental and psychological health is mainly affected during lockdown, followed by pain and discomfort [21]. The discrepancy observed between the proportion of population suffering from anxiety and depression (50%) and the demand for mental health services (9.8%) highlights the need to extend mental health education across the country, proactively screen and treat people in need.

While quality of life was good and the small proportion of people who needed essential services were able to access services, majority of those who did access the services felt that their need was not met. This shows that despite the efforts to enable access to essential services during lockdown, the quality of services is not adequate. This is partly driven by the narrow focus of the pandemic planning to respond to the disease specific interventions, overlooking the wider social implications. Studies in other countries have also observed that social services were not adequately integrated in pandemic planning putting vulnerable populations such as victims of domestic violence and persons with disabilities at greater risk [22, 23]. This has been attributed to the fact that lockdown requires families to remain in their homes which result in intense and continuous social contact among members within the households while disrupting other family and community

based social networks that support families at risk [24]. The lessons from this pandemic needs to be incorporated into pandemic preparedness plans and national emergency operational plan with innovative modalities to ensure that pandemic response does not leave the vulnerable behind.

Amongst the working population it is common to work both at home and outside, however those earning income from home-based activities are more vulnerable with earning less than MVR 5000 per month. It is significant that most people who earn from home-based activities were women and were not able to continue their income activities during lockdown, mainly due to increases in responsibility of domestic work and care of dependents while isolated at home [25]. It is noteworthy that only a third of the people were concerned about exposure to COVID-19 on return to work, with concerns around exposure during travel to work and in the workplace [26]. Majority were concerned about getting back their job and reduced pay, and social aspects such as no social support to look after dependents when they return to work. This suggests that economic concerns outweigh the risk of infection for a large segment of the working aged population and needs to be taken into account when planning risk communication as it poses significant risk of a resurgence of infection in the community.

Limitations of the Study:

Similar to Round 1 of this survey, representativeness, reliability and validity of the methodology of Round 2 was ensured. Yet, findings from this study must be generalised taking into account the limitations of the study. The use of online tools limits the participation of certain important population groups, including the elderly and disadvantaged population groups such as migrants in the country. However, attempts were made to access these population groups through informal networks. Maldives has a high utilisation of mobile phones of mobile phones and internet utilization rate with 246.9 mobile subscriptions per 100 people (27). Nevertheless, as expected the participation of these groups were low in the study. The fact that the questionnaire was available in 2 languages (Dhivehi and English) may have limited the representation of foreign residents in the country which makes up 16% of the population. The responses are self-reported and there was no other mechanism to double check the responses which may affect the reliability of the responses and may have skewed the distribution of some of the variables studied in the survey. As a high proportion of the responses were from respondents located in Male', the findings are more applicable to urban settings than the rural context, and generalisations to the atolls and islands must be made with restraint.

Conclusion

The population has faced numerous social, psychological and economic challenges during the lockdown and are looking forward to return to work with caution. While the pandemic response is contemplating the ease of restriction, the risk of a second wave is real, and is reliant on the compliance to the guidelines set out by the Health Protection Agency. Stimulus packages will be helpful in the short run, but in the

long term, sustainable safety nets, skill development and avenues for alternative income generating activities needs to be introduced, with a special focus on the informal sector and the women in the working population. Risk communications needs to target empowerment of the businesses and community to take actions on their own to enable successful suppression of the epidemic.

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To a very large degree

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Not applicable

ހިމާރުކުވާ ވަނީ ނުވާ ނެތެވެ

2.4 Did you perceive the care/treatment as adapted to your situation?

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Not at all

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To a small extent

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To some extent

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To a large degree

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To a very large degree

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2.5 Were you involved in decisions regarding your care/treatment?

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Not at all

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Not applicable

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2.6 Did you perceive the facility was well organized?

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Not at all

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To a small extent

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To some extent

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2.7 Did you have to wait before you were taken to the facility?

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Not at all

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To a very large degree

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2.8 Overall, was the help and care/treatment you received at the facility satisfactory?

ވަނީ

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regarding your quality of life today:
Under each heading, please tick ONE
box that best describes your health
TODAY.

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(ނާރ)

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9. MOBILITY

- i. I have no problems in walking about
- ii. I have slight problems in walking about
- iii. I have moderate problems in walking about
- iv. I have severe problems in walking about
- v. I am unable to walk about

10. SELF-CARE

- i. I have no problems washing or dressing myself
- ii. I have slight problems washing or dressing myself
- iii. I have moderate problems washing or dressing myself
- iv. I have severe problems washing or dressing myself
- v. I am unable to wash or dress myself

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)
ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)
ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)
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ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)
ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

11. USUAL ACTIVITIES (e.g. work, study, housework, family or leisure activities)

- i. I have no problems doing my usual activities
- ii. I have slight problems doing my usual activities
- iii. I have moderate problems doing my usual activities
- iv. I have severe problems doing my usual activities
- v. I am unable to do my usual activities

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް) | ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް) | ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް) | ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް) | ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް) | ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް) | ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

12. PAIN / DISCOMFORT

- i. I have no pain or discomfort
- ii. I have slight pain or discomfort

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް) | ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް) | ހަދަނީ ގަދަ ގޮތެއްގައި ހުރި ގޮތެއް (ސަލާމް)

- b. Bangladesh ދިވެހިރާއްޖެ
 - c. Nepal ނެޕާލް
 - d. India ހިންދުސްތާން
 - e. Sri Lanka ދިވެހިރާއްޖެ
 - f. Philippines ފިލިޕްޕީންސް
 - g. Other އެހެނިހެން ގައުމެއް ނަމަ، ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ؟
- If others, please specify? ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ

21.2 What is the gender of the hired worker?

- a. Male މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ (މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިން)
- b. Female ފިރިހެނެއް ނުވާނެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ؟

21.3 How much do you normally pay (in MVR) per month for the hired worker?

މަދު
މަދު

21.4 Did he/she worked for you / came to work for you during the last past month?

ފަތުރުވެރިން ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ ފަތުރުވެރިން ފަތުރުވެރިން ފަތުރުވެރިން؟

- a. Yes އެހެނިހެން ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ
- b. No ނުވާނެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ

21.5 Did you pay her/him last month?

- a. Yes – same as before މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ
- b. Partly - to some extent އެހެނިހެން ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ
- c. No – not at all ފަތުރުވެރިން ފަތުރުވެރިން/ފަތުރުވެރިން

22. Who normally provides support for looking after family members (E.g.: baby-sitting, looking after elderly or persons with disabilities)?

- a. I do it myself (don't get any support) މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ
- b. Spouse މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ
- c. Son/Daughter މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ
- d. Other family member or relative މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ
- e. Paid worker living in the household މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ
- f. Paid worker who visits daily މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ
- g. Other އެހެނިހެން ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ

If a paid worker provides support for looking after family members

22.1 What country is the worker from? މިހާރުގެ ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސަލާމަތުގެ ބަޔާންކުރާށެވެ

- a. Maldives ދިވެހިރާއްޖެ
- b. Bangladesh ބަންގްލާދޭޝް
- c. Nepal ނެޕާލް
- d. India ހިންދުކުޅިގެން
- e. Sri Lanka ސަރިލަންކާ
- f. Philippines ފިލިޕްޕީންސް
- g. Other ފަތުރުވެރިން

If others, please specify?

އެހެނިހެން ފަތުރުވެރިން ބަޔާންކުރުމަށް ފަސޭހަވާނެ (ދަފުޅާ ފޯމް ފުރިހަމަކުރުމަށް)?

22.2 What is the gender of the hired worker?

ފަތުރުވެރިންގެ ސެކްސް ބަޔާންކުރުމަށް ފަސޭހަވާނެ (މި ފޯމް ފުރިހަމަކުރުމަށް)?

- a. Male މިހިންދު
- b. Female އިމްރަން

22.3 How much do you normally pay (in MVR) per month for the hired worker?

ފަތުރުވެރިންނަށް ސެކްޝަން 22.2 ގައި ބަޔާންކުރި ފަތުރުވެރިންނަށް ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ?

22.4 Did he/she worked for you / came to work for you during the last past month?

ފަތުރުވެރިންނަށް ސެކްޝަން 22.2 ގައި ބަޔާންކުރި ފަތުރުވެރިންނަށް ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ?

- a. Yes ހިތްވަރު ފަސޭހަވާނެ
- b. No ފަސޭހަވާނެ

22.5 Did you pay her/him last month?

ފަތުރުވެރިންނަށް ސެކްޝަން 22.2 ގައި ބަޔާންކުރި ފަތުރުވެރިންނަށް ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ?

- a. Yes – same as before ހިތްވަރު ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ
- b. Partly - to some extent ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ
- c. No – not at all ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ

Section 4: Work (including return to work)/occupational health

ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ

23. Where do you normally work?

5000 ރ. ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ

- a. At a workplace outside home 10000 ރ. ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ
- b. At home 10001 ރ. ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ
- c. Both – outside and at home 15000 ރ. ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ
- d. Do not work 15001 ރ. ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ

24. What was your monthly income before the COVID-19?

20000 ރ. ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ

- a. Below MVR 5000 20000 ރ. ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ
- b. Between MVR 5,001 – MVR 10,000 50% ފަސޭހަވާނެ ފަސޭހަވާނެ

