

VOICE OF INDIAN YOUTH

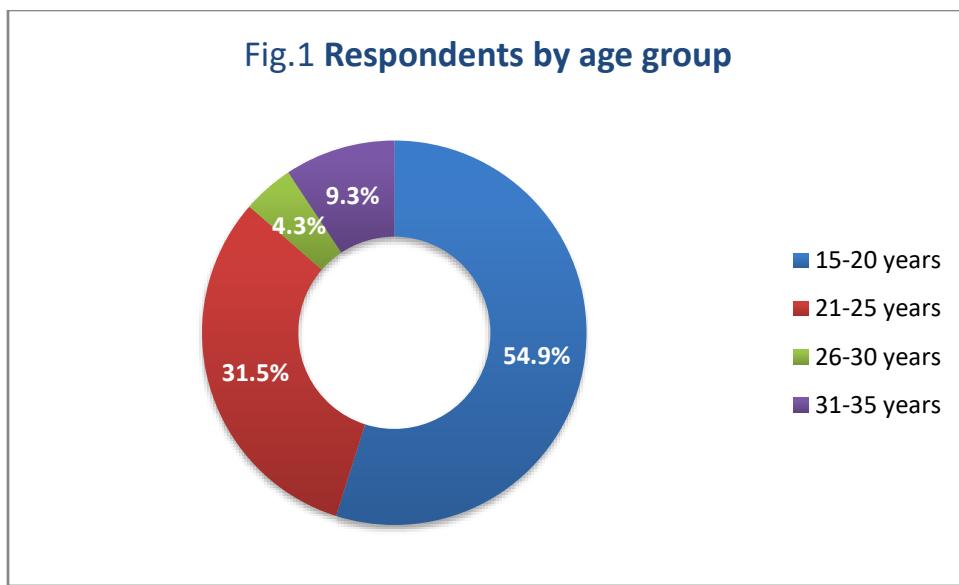
(An analysis of the online survey)

During the last week of May 2021, Vigyan Setu Foundation conducted an online survey to listen to the Voice of Indian Youth. The ongoing pandemic crisis and the resultant effect on the youth were to be heard, analysed, and understood. Through the questionnaire, four key areas were explored; education and employment, social and health security, mental well-being, and governmental initiatives. Based on the questions asked during online survey and the overwhelming pan-India participation, here is an analysis of the responses received.

Demographics:

Questions asked included about gender, age-group, and the place of residence of the respondents

The sample age bracket of 15-35 years was selected because this age group is likely to face differentiated challenges in the context of the lockdown imposed to contain ongoing pandemic. The education and employment implications of the COVID-19 crisis and the individual responses to it are of interest for this study. This age group, especially those at the higher end, are facing a second major economic crisis, since they are at the beginning of their careers. Figure 1 illustrates the respondents by age group.



The survey was administered online and promoted and shared primarily through social media platforms among the youth from the age group of 15 - 35 years. The gender distribution of respondents is as shown in the Figure 2.

Fig. 2 Respondents by gender

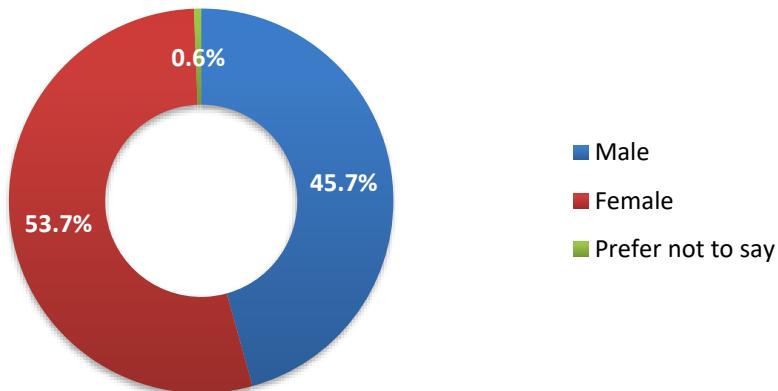
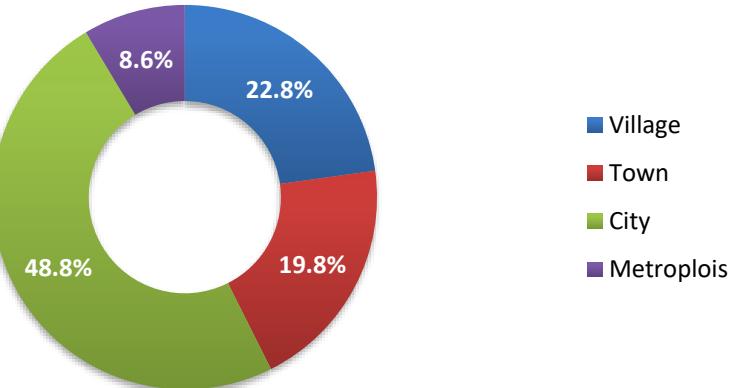


Figure 3 displays the respondent by their place of residence. Roughly half of the respondents are from the urban settings, followed by smaller towns, rural, and a small portion from the metropolitan area.

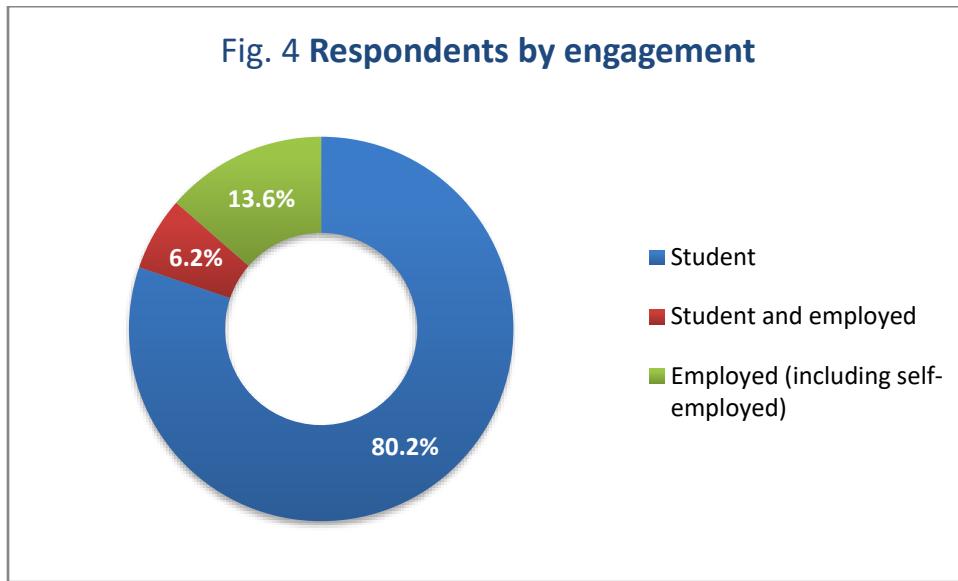
Fig. 3 Respondents by residence



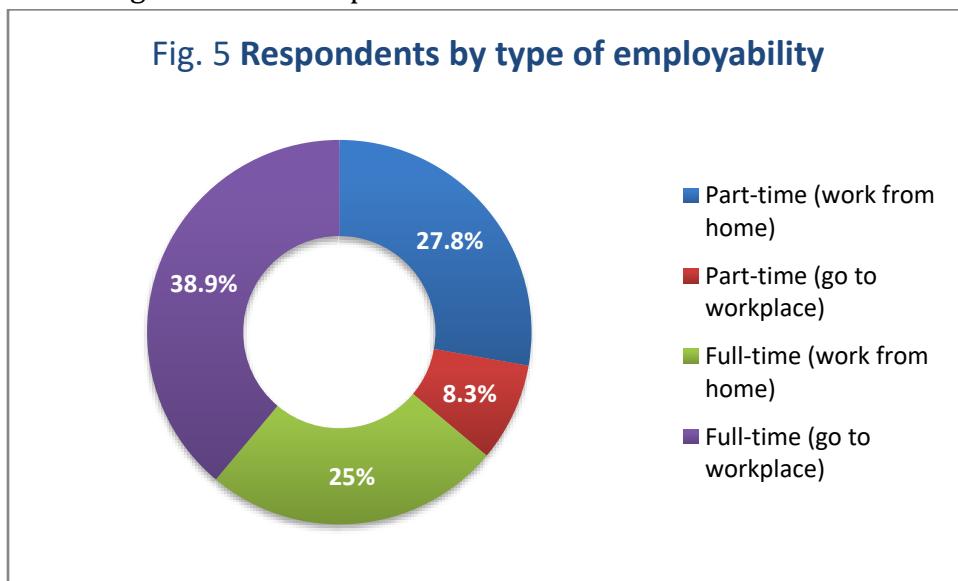
Education and employment:

Questions explored their engagement, support and provisions made by the institutions for the students and those employed, and the impact on employment

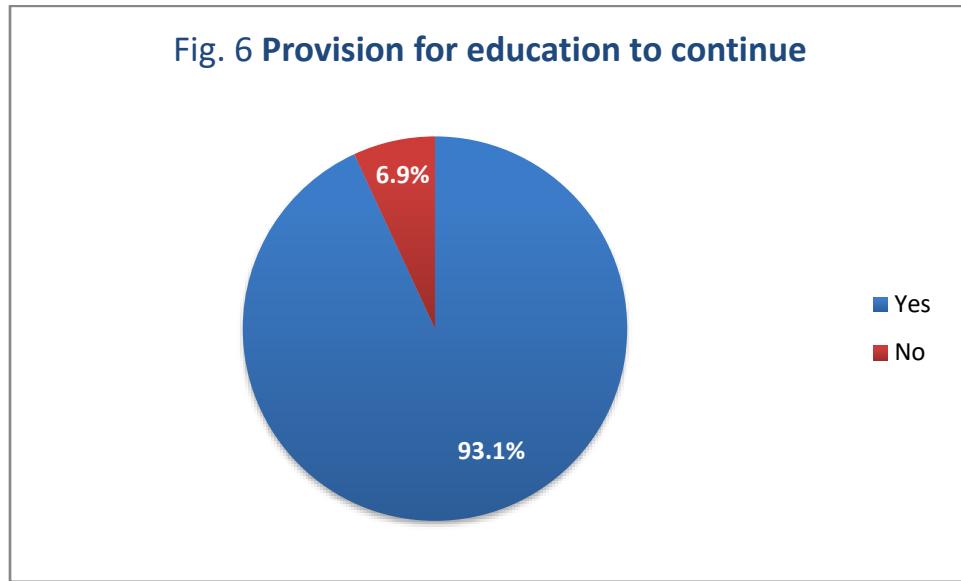
A major portion of the survey respondents are students followed by those employed, and a small portion is student-cum-employed. The distribution of respondents with respect to their engagement is as shown in Figure 4.



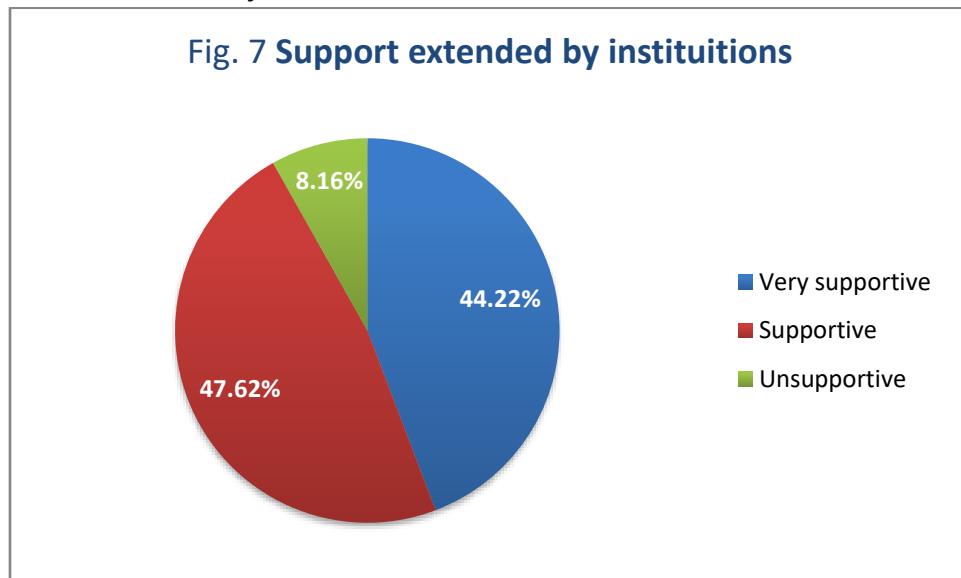
Of all the employed respondents, Figure 5 shows the type of employability based on the time period (part-time or full-time) of their engagement. Those working part-time, majority of them are working from home, while most of those engaged in full-time employment are to go to their workplace.



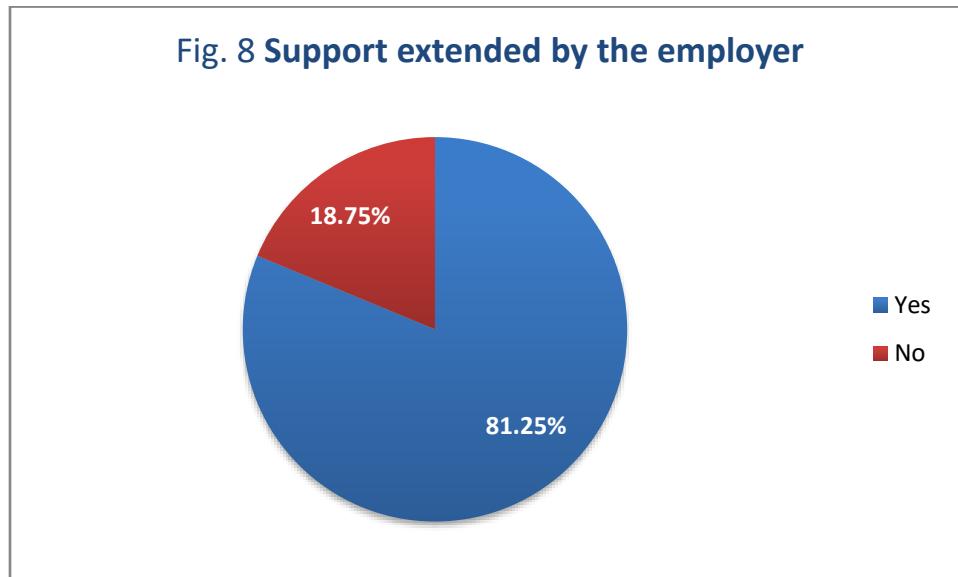
Lockdowns everywhere have changed how education and learning need to be approached. In this context, teachers and students are facing a number of challenges including student health and well-being, the continuity of learning and teaching, equality, accessibility and connectivity, student engagement, and the lack of preparedness and capacity of teachers. Under such situation, the response to whether educational institutions provide facilities for education to continue is depicted in Figure 6.



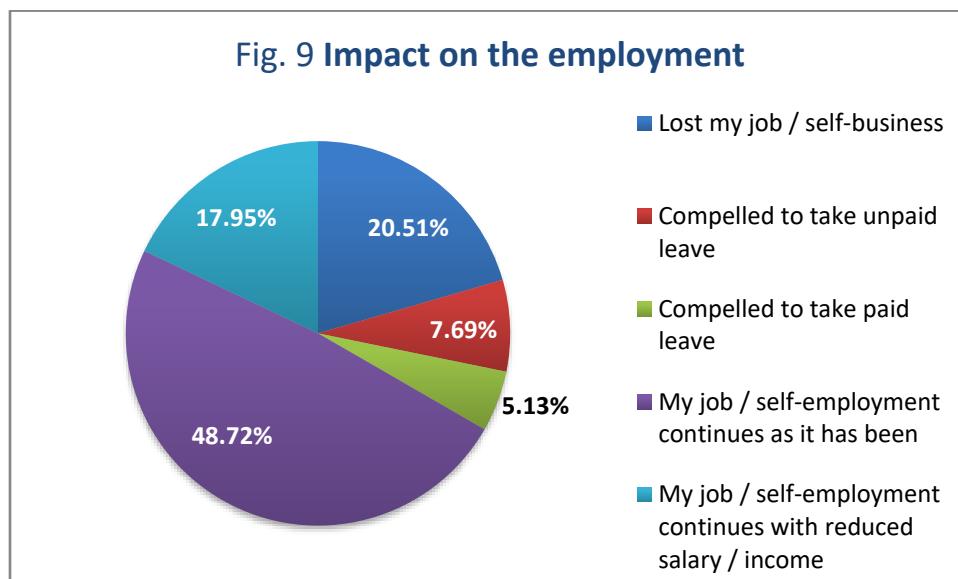
Apart from providing facilities for education to continue, it is also of significance, whether these educational institutions are extending support, and if yes, then to what extent? Figure 7 shows how far educational institutions had been supportive to the student respondents during the lockdown and beyond.



Similarly, the challenges faced by employers and employees alike are unprecedented, but some employers have been better at meeting the needs of their employees during this uncertain time. Majority of the employed respondents feel that they are getting adequate support from their employer during the lockdown. This is being shown in Figure 8.



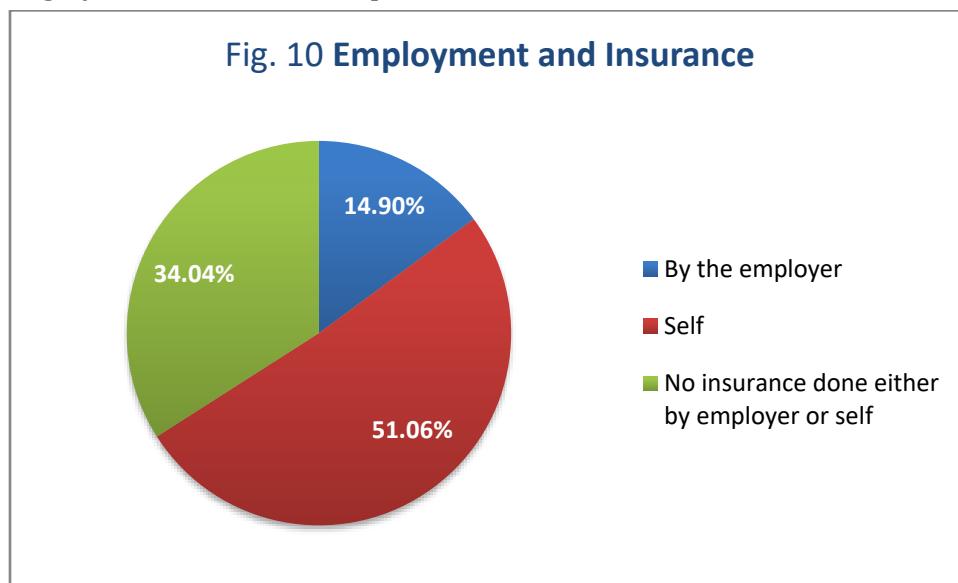
The lockdown in India closed businesses, offices, transportation, and confined people to their homes. Only essential workers and industries were permitted to continue operations under the lockdown. Across the world, the disruptions caused by confinement measures have led to substantial impacts on both employed and self-employed sector. The impact of the lockdown situation owing to the pandemic is represented in the Figure 9.



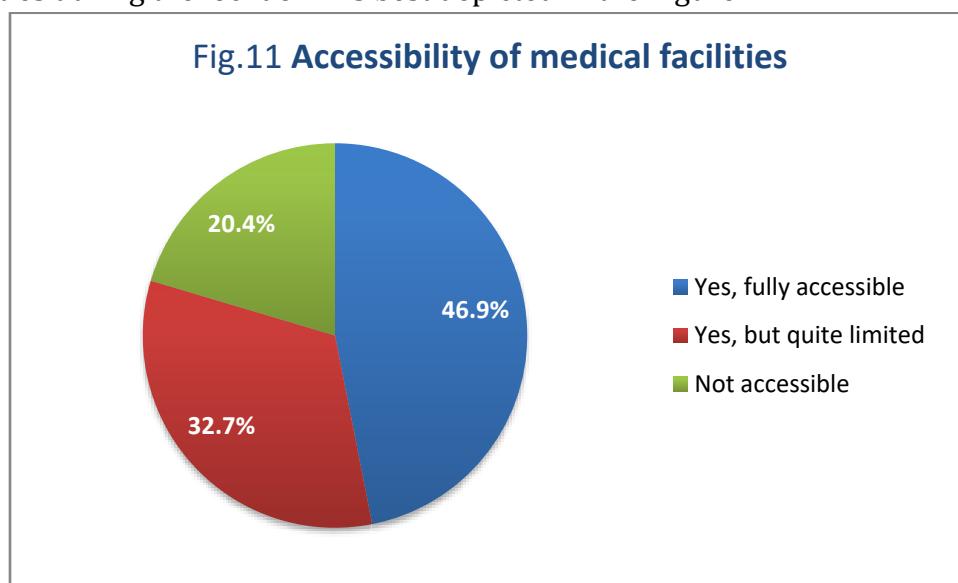
Social and health security:

Questions explored the availability of health insurance and accessibility to medical facilities

Health insurance is of great significance in such critical times, when loss of employment causing economic losses add health care burden on an individual. In light of the fact, that during widespread job loss in India, many people are at risk of losing their health coverage, the status of health insurance of the respondents is as shown in the Figure 10. Still, the health of roughly one-third of the respondents is not insured.



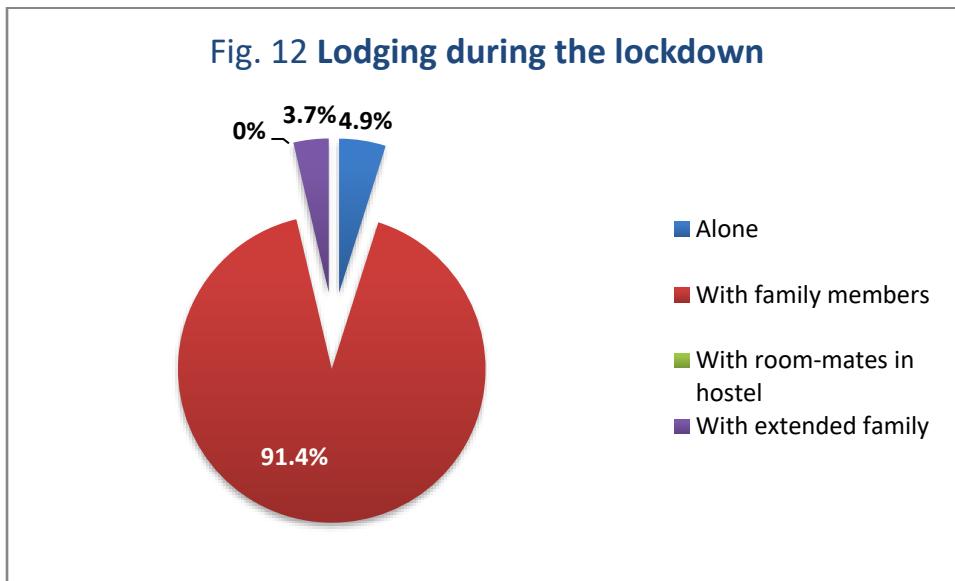
Global supply chains have been disrupted as firms, travel, trade and borders have closed around the world, and countries have real concerns about shortages in necessities such as medicines, food staples, and PPE. The respondents' reaction to their accessibility to medical care facilities during the lockdown is best depicted in the Figure 11.



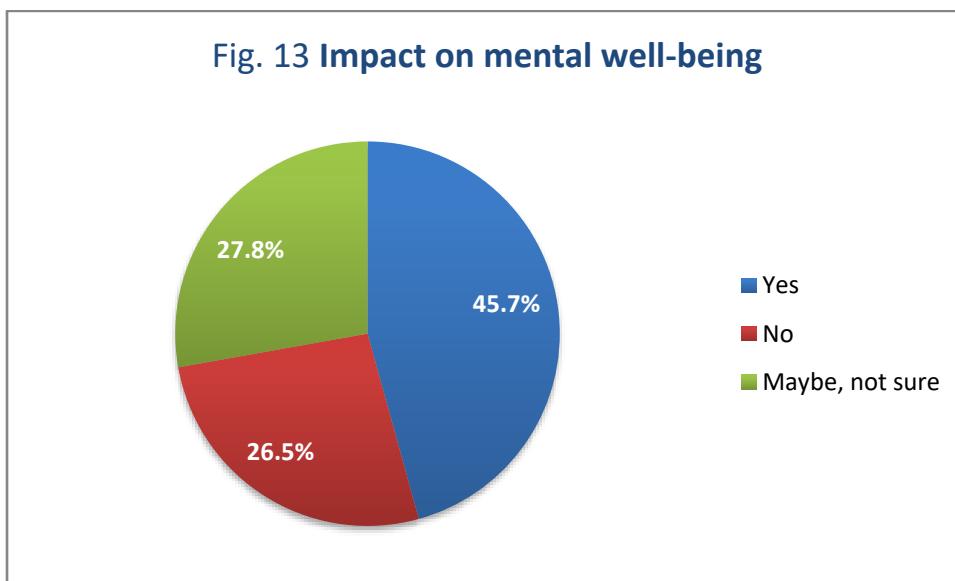
Mental well-being:

Questions explored the impact on mental health and well-being, avenues of keeping oneself busy during lockdown, feeling loneliness, and the biggest worries and challenges thought of

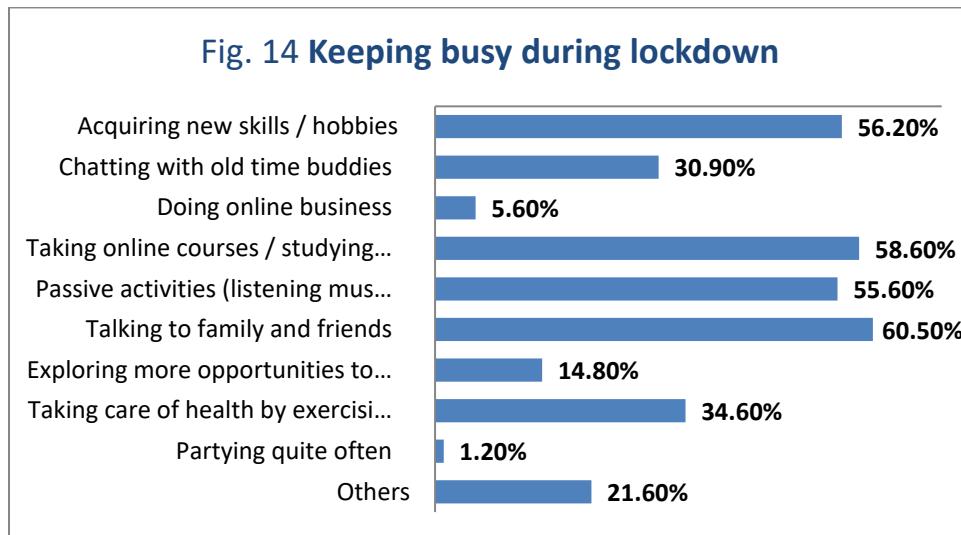
Indeed, it is very pertinent that during any emergency situation or crisis, where and with whom an individual is staying. Looking at the present scenario, respondents felt safer, physically secured, since majority of them were with their family members. Distribution of their lodgings is as shown in the Figure 12.



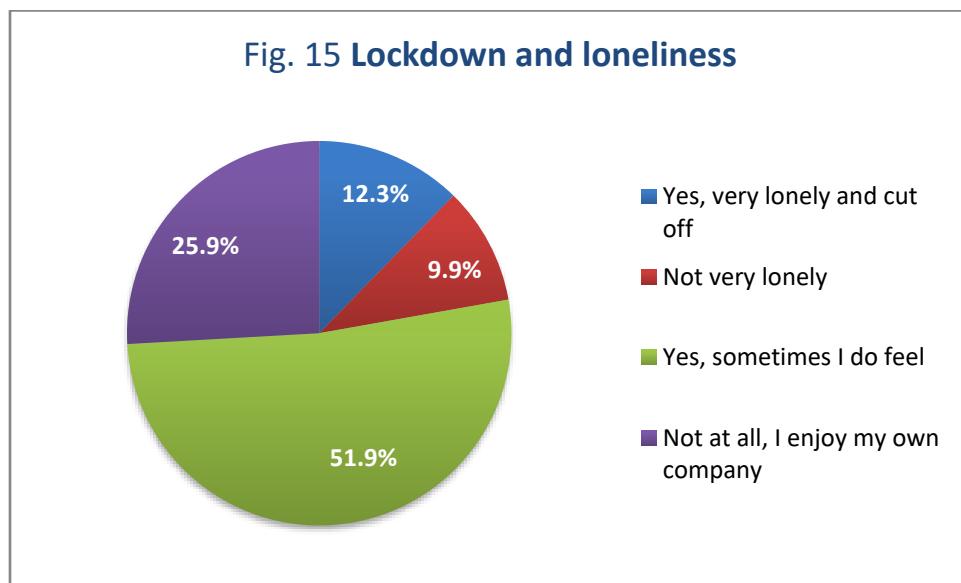
Though the respondents felt physically safe and secure being at home but whether there is an impact on their mental well-being, is seen in the Figure 13.



The survey asked respondents what activities they have been doing during the lockdown. Figure 14, best describes their engagements during the period of lockdown.



Young people are at a higher risk of suffering from the psychological and emotional stress of the outbreak. Being separated from friends, colleagues and normal everyday activities has left many young people feeling lonely. Figure 15 shows the different levels of loneliness felt by the respondents.



Due to ongoing pandemic crisis, physical, mental, economic, and even on social front, the youth experienced tremendous disturbance. More and more worries begin to surface as challenges in front of them, with every day passing by.

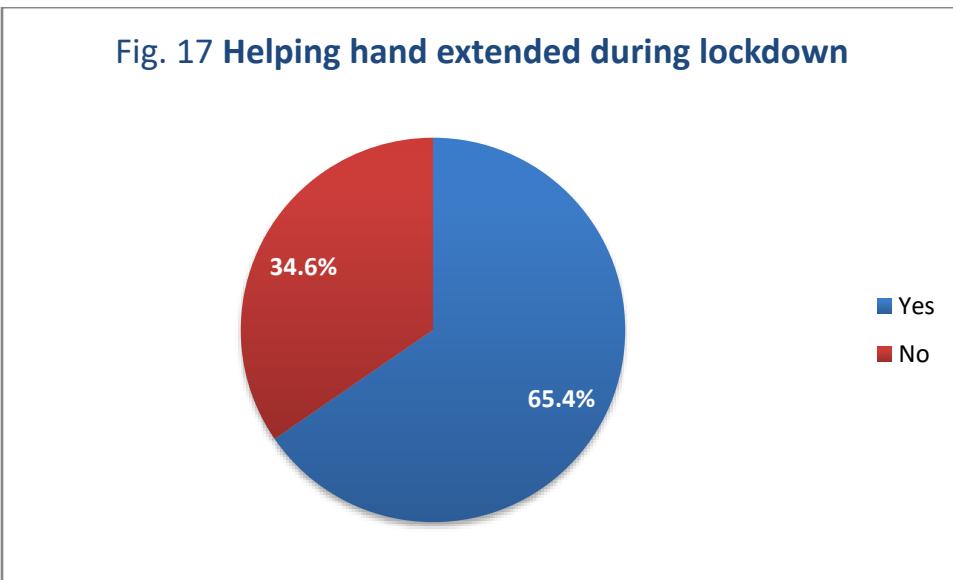
Figure 16 depicts some of the worries felt by the Indian youth during these trying times. More than half of the respondents, whether students or employed, are concerned about the competitive examinations for their career; its growth and enhancement.



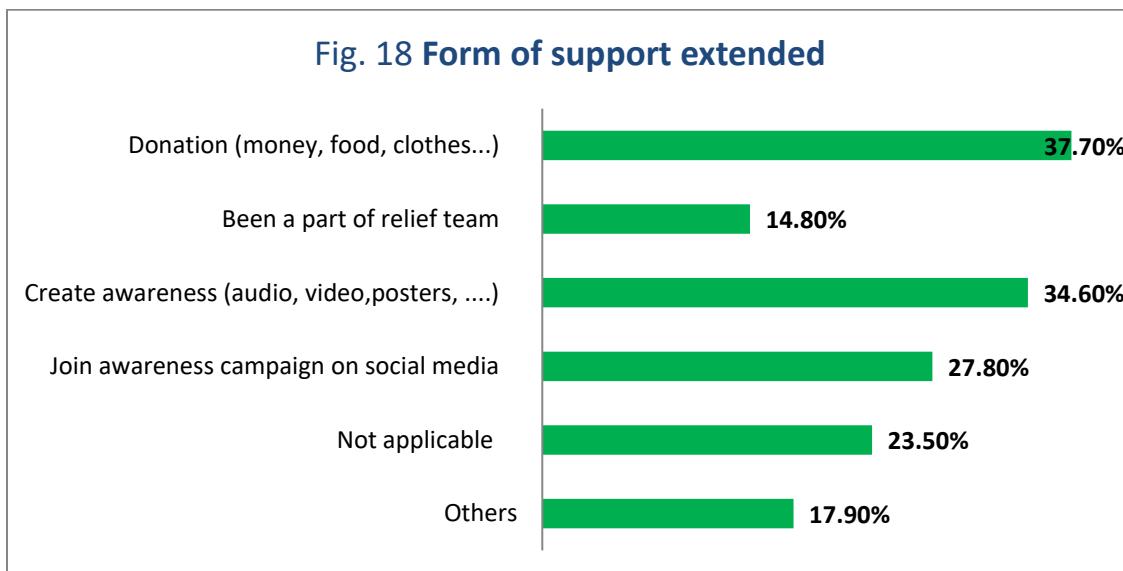
Initiatives and trust:

Questions explored initiatives taken and support extended by the respondents, their trust in advisories issued, sources of accurate information, and finally those restrictions were for good or not.

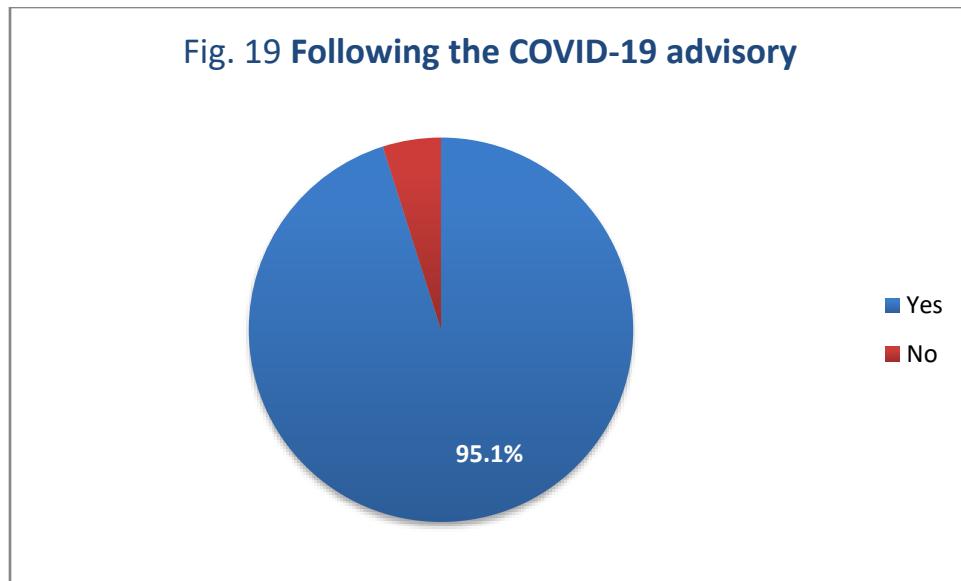
Crises often inspire people to contribute. How many of the respondents extended their helping hand can be seen in the Figure 17.



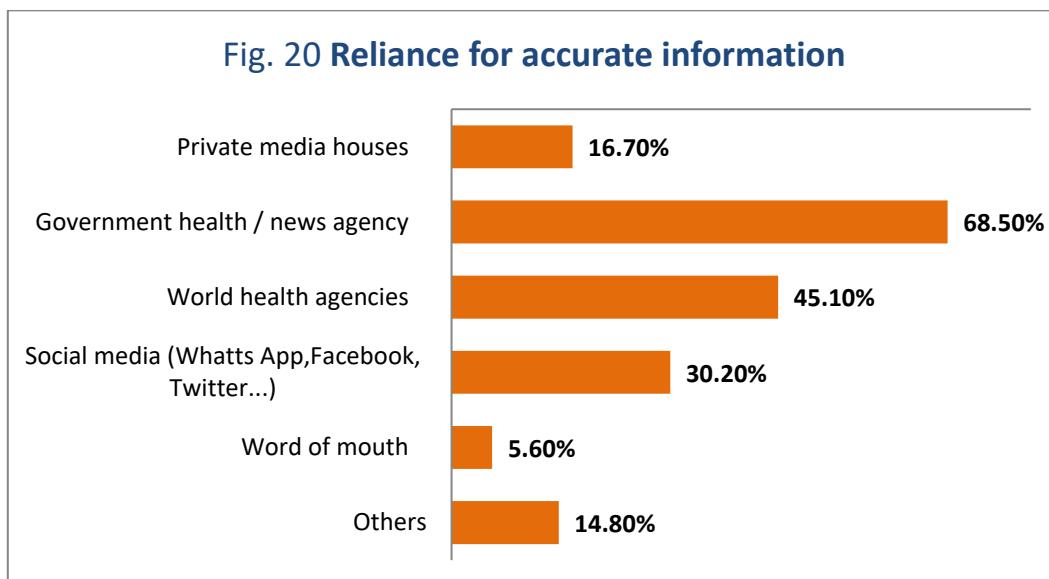
The most common contributions that youth have made in response to COVID-19 is in the form of relief efforts, which is as shown in the Figure 18.



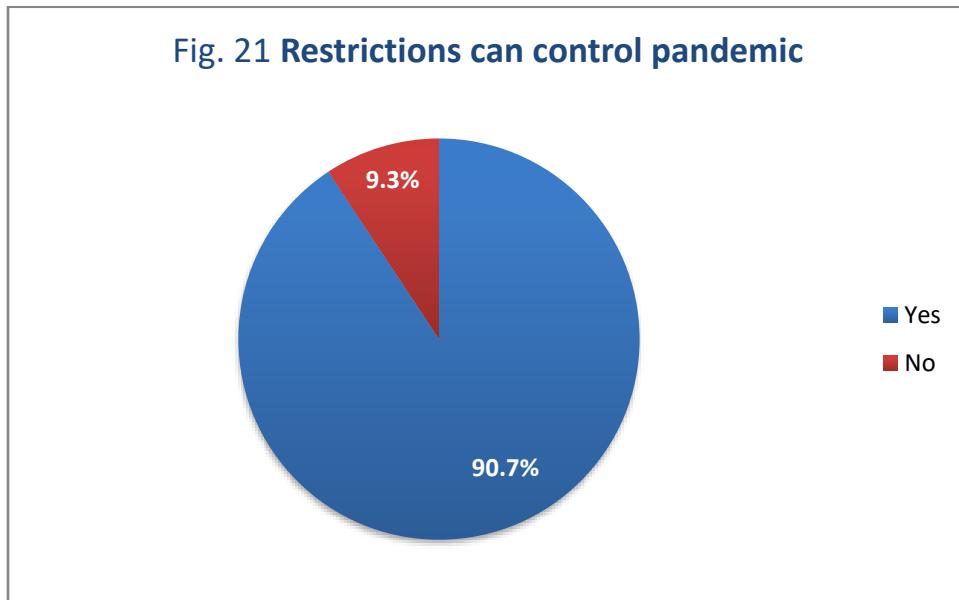
Youth are worried about many aspects of the pandemic and its impacts on their lives and society. Unsurprisingly, their greatest worry right now is that they or someone they care about will contract the virus. Already the over-strained health system in the context of the pandemic and the fact is that many healthcare providers have closed their doors. Under these circumstances, how the respondents felt about following the advisory is shown in the Figure 19.



Along with the pandemic, there was infodemics going on all around, super-flowing information about the COVID-19 crisis. To filter out the accurate information, on whom the respondents depend is depicted in the Figure 20.



Trust in the government's ability to respond effectively to the crisis, by its initiatives, release of timely guidelines, advisories or even imposing restrictions are being judicious or not has been explored from the Indian youth through this online survey. Figure 21 shows the opinion for every one of us to see.



Conclusion: The pandemic and the control measures have brought down the life at standstill. India is recognized as a youthful country since major portion of her population is the youth. The present online survey tried to hear the voice of Indian youth while coming out of the series of lockdowns and imposed restrictions on various aspects of the lifestyle of the young India. The questionnaire tried to explore the impact on the education and employment status, their physical and mental health and well-being, their engagements during the home-bound period, and the challenges they face. The analysis of their responses that has been presented hereinabove is to give a quick glance on what and how they feel. However, in-depth analysis is being submitted for publication elsewhere.