

## **Impact of Covid - 19 Pandemic on Urban lifestyle: A case study of Kolkata**

Somen Ghosh<sup>1</sup>, Somnath Mukherejee<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>State Aided College Teacher, Kishore Bharati Bhagini Nivedita College (Co-Ed.)  
Department of Geography

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Jadavpur University, Oceanographic Studies Department

---

### **ABSTRACT:**

In the two segments of lifestyle urban life is considered very fast, impetuous and dynamic in comparison to rural lifestyle in terms of technological uses, network and connectivity, services provided and many other aspects. But this speedy schedule of urban life has faced a complete pause of almost two months for complete lockdown as an outcome of covid-19 pandemic throughout the world. After a lockdown situation, some initiatives have taken keeping in mind the pandemic to bring back the normal lifestyle but it is elusive till now and we are in the new-normal situation. The urban life of Kolkata is not exceptional from that and lots of changes are there in between normal and new normal. Our present study emphasizes to trace out these changes in the overall urban lifestyle of Kolkata including shifting of occupation, income status, transportation mode and many others. For this research, an online survey has been done from a different group of peoples. Based on the online survey data tables are prepared after quantitative analysis. It has revealed after discussion; lots of transformations have taken place in the social, cultural, political, the economic lifestyle of urban people of Kolkata and accommodate new habits and practices in between the time period of normal and new normal. Lastly, this study also reflects the opinions made by to surveyed peoples towards the current scenario of urban life.

**KEYWORDS:** Covid-19, pandemic, lockdown, new normal, urban lifestyle, digital divide.

---

Date of Submission: 18-08-2021

Date of Acceptance: 02-09-2021

---

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

From the advent of civilization, human society is broadly divided into urban and rural. Each of them has its unique characteristics, standard of living, lifestyle pattern, economy. Industrialisation is the essence of urban society and urban people experiencing a lifestyle that is always in motion. The urban people keep them aside by their busy schedule of day to day life. Urbanization, concretization, developmental activities, well service facilities, good connectivity, education facilities etc. in the urban area act as employment generator and people of different background from neighbouring areas are attracted by these and aggravated the process of urbanization. Obviously, Kolkata is not exceptional, act as a growth centre with huge hinterland and also has a colonial legacy. But the normal urban lifestyle of Kolkata is also affected by Covid-19 pandemic and from its obvious measure- prolonged lockdown. Complete lockdown of almost 2 months (14<sup>th</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020) has brought a complete halt in city's day to day lifestyle. Like other cities, people of Kolkata have experienced cut down of salaries, joblessness, reverse migration from urban to rural, price hike of every commodity and many other adverse effects. Also, many of them have been forced to change their occupation. The sum of these has put great imprint upon the city's lifestyle which faces major transformation. Although in the unlock phases different initiatives have taken to bring back the normal condition the Covid-19 is not gone till now. As a consequence people have accustomed themselves in different habits, lifestyle, way of thinking and standard of living and this situation is termed as new-normal. This study emphasizes on the changes of urban life from the normal to new-normal in Kolkata.

### **II. STUDY AREA**

Kolkata is a metropolitan city of India with dynamic occupation structure along with verities of economic level. People of Kolkata go outside of the city for jobs and side by side population outside Kolkata came here for the same. So, Kolkata act as pull and push factor of migration from the Colonial Era. But this tradition is greatly affected as the outcome of pandemic and lockdown. Although, the effect of Covid-19 is worldwide yet, Kolkata is a high populous urban area and urban lifestyle is changed due to this. For this reason Kolkata is chosen as the area of study for random surveying.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This research has been conducted through a questionnaire survey through Google forms in online mode. This study is totally based on primary data. The respondents and research area were selected using non-probability and random sampling techniques. Observation has been made data reliable and realistic for the current scenario. Data, collected by questionnaire survey have been compiled to quantitative analysis and based on these analysis tables have been prepared. This total analysis gives out a clear picture of the impact of the covid-19 on urban life.

### IV. OBJECTIVES

1. The main objective of this paper is to study the changes in urban life during the COVID-19 pandemic and afterwards.
2. To study the effect of COVID-19 on urban life in Kolkata.
3. To study the responses of the people living in an urban area towards COVID-19 pandemic.

### V. DISCUSSION

This study mainly deals with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on urban life. The people respond to this pandemic very seriously as they were forced to stop their entire daily works. Since the starting phase of lockdown peoples was restricted go out of their houses and all transport systems were in holding position. The speedy lifestyle of urban life is on the halting situation for two months of the lockdown phase. After the beginning of the unlock phase, it has started to run on a very slow motion. As all the transport facilities are not available and the activities are still restricted in various means. The main focus of this paper is to study the changing of job profiles, nature of daily lifestyle and habits, changes in transport systems and many other aspects of urban life.

**TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS IDENTITY**

<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>NO OF RESPONDENTS(F)</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b><i>NO OF RESPONDENTS</i></b>	151	100
<b><i>AGE GROUP</i></b>		
<15	0	0
15-30	139	92.05
30-45	11	7.28
45-60	1	0.67
>60	0	0
<b><i>SEX</i></b>		
MALE	65	43.05
FEMALE	86	56.95
<b><i>RELIGION</i></b>		
HINDUISM	149	98.68
MUSLIM	1	0.66
CHRISTIAN	0	0
JAIN	0	0
SIKH	0	0
OTHERS	1	0.66
<b><i>PLACE OF LIVING DURING COVID PANDEMIC</i></b>		
OWN HOUSE	126	83.44
RENTED HOUSE	15	9.93
URBAN COMPLEX	7	4.64
URBAN SLUM	0	0
OTHERS	3	1.98
<b><i>LIVING STATUS</i></b>		
ALONE LIVING	1	0.67
IN HOSTEL	0	0
WITH FAMILY	130	86.09
WITH FRIENDS	4	2.65
JOINT FAMILY	14	9.27
LARGE JOINT FAMILY	2	1.32
<b><i>NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS</i></b>		

2	9	5.96
3	43	28.48
4	48	31.79
5	24	15.89
>5	28	18.54

Source: Primary data collected through online survey

This study has been done over 151 people living in an urban area during the covid-19 pandemic condition. Among these peoples, almost 99 per cent are from the working population group. There are almost 56 per cent of female and 44 per cent male respondents. In the pandemic living place is very important as it has an impact on hygiene maintenance. As well the closeness with the family is also very important in the situation, so 86 per cent of the peoples are living with the family and almost 83 per cent are living in their own house. Only 10 per cent have been forced to live in a rented house and maximum are doing so due to their job location is extremely far from their own house.

**Table 2 : JOB PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS**

<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>NO OF RESPONDENTS(F)</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b><i>MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME DURING PANDEMIC</i></b>		
<5000	22	14.57
5000-10000	45	29.80
10000-25000	44	29.14
25000-50000	28	18.54
>50000	12	7.95
<b><i>OCCUPATION BEFORE LOCKDOWN</i></b>		
SKILLED WORKER	24	15.89
SEMI –SKILLED WORKER	5	3.31
DAILY WAGE LABOUR	4	2.65
SALES AGENT	5	3.31
SHOPKEEPERS	4	2.65
SERVICEMAN	4	2.65
RELATED TO TRANSPORT ACTIVITY	1	0.67
NON-WORKING STUDENT	97	64.24
NON-WORKING	6	3.97
<b><i>LOST WORK DUE TO LOCKDOWN</i></b>		
YES	25	16.56
NO	126	83.44
<b><i>CHANGED JOB PROFILE AFTER LOCKDOWN</i></b>		
YES	12	7.95
NO	139	92.05
<b><i>FACED ANY SALARY CUTDOWN DUE TO LOCKDOWN</i></b>		
YES	46	30.46
NO	105	69.54
<b><i>TAKING A NEW JOB AFTER LOCKDOWN</i></b>		
YES	11	7.29
NO	140	92.71

Source: Primary data collected through online survey

During the pandemic mostly affected part of human life are their job-related issues. Due to lockdown various farms, private companies, small business holders, hawkers, are mostly affected as they are not able to continue their job physically. In some cases there is a new option as work from home is included, but this is very much technically depended as many people have been forced to change their job profiles and some of them

have lost their jobs. Income standards of any urban area are very high usually but due to pandemic, many persons have faced salary cut down as almost 44 per cent having only below ten thousand rupees as monthly income. Even 16 per cent of people have lost their job during the lockdown and was not able to feed their families. 7 per cent of them have changed their jobs after the beginning of unlock period and 7 per cent have new job profiles as they have been forced to do so. Another alarming situation is that 30 per cent of the people have gone through salary cut down due to this pandemic condition. So it can be easily seen from the study that, Covid-19 pandemic has hit the urban economy drastically and almost took it to a severe condition that will effect in long run.

**Table 3: TRANSPORT SYSTEM AFFECTED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>NO OF RESPONDENTS(F)</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b><i>TRANSPORT SYSTEM USED BEFORE LOCKDOWN</i></b>		
BUS	112	74.17
TRAIN	71	47.02
METRO	77	50.99
AUTO	99	65.56
OLA BIKE/RAPIDO/UBER BIKE	33	21.85
RICKSHAW	49	32.45
TAXI OR CAB	57	37.75
OTHERS	27	17.88
<b><i>TRANSPORT SYSTEM USED BEFORE LOCKDOWN AND UNLOCK PHASE</i></b>		
PUBLIC BUS	38	25.17
AUTO	54	35.76
TRAMS	0	0
METRO	9	5.96
CAB / TAXI	43	28.48
BIKE	53	35.10
PURCHASED OWN VEHICLE	20	13.25
RAPIDO/OLA BIKE/UBER BIKE	15	9.93
OTHERS	10	6.63
<b><i>DUE TO THIS PANDEMIC, TRANSPORT COST INCREASED</i></b>		
TWO TIMES	76	50.33
THREE TIMES	35	23.18
MORE THAN THREE TIMES.	40	26.49
<b><i>TRANSPORT SYSTEMS ARE SPREADING VIRUS AMONG THE PEOPLES</i></b>		
YES	132	87.42
NO	19	12.58

Source: Primary data collected through online survey

In the urban area, the transport network is one of the most important elements of society. Because of its dynamic nature urban area needs more options for transport facilities. But due to lockdown the transport system has been hampered and the peoples depending on transport system also affected directly and indirectly. As the bus, auto, private taxi, cab, rickshaw drivers have lost their income due to holding of the transport system. Hawkers are indirectly depended on the transport system and got affected as they don't have any income since the lockdown. Commuters from various suburban and rural areas were not able to travel to their workspace due to this massive incident. After commencement of the unlock phase the transport systems have been affected in another way. Due to maintaining the government regulations for controlling the pandemic sitting arrangement in various transport systems are restricted. So the common peoples were forced to take the extra burden of the transport cost on their shoulders. Even there are fears of getting infected by the virus common peoples are forced to change their transport means. There is a drastic fall in using the public busses, metro and autos. Using bikes and purchasing of own vehicle percentage have been increased due to safety purposes. The common peoples were forced to take the extra burden of the increased transport cost as almost 50 per cent are paying double and 27 per cent more than thrice. After all these changes one main fear is to get infected by the virus by

using various means of transport is at an alarming situation and no one can control this. Almost 88 per cent of people thought that they will get affected by these activities.

**Table 4: DIGITAL DIVIDE**

CHARACTERISTICS	NO OF RESPONDENTS(F)	PERCENTAGE
<b><i>USING DIGITAL TRANSACTION DURING PANDEMIC</i></b>		
YES	121	80.13
NO	30	19.87
<b><i>USED DIGITAL TRANSACTION BEFORE LOCKDOWN</i></b>		
YES	95	62.91
NO	56	37.09

Source: Primary data collected through online survey

The digital transaction is one of the ways of controlling the spreading of virus infection. As a developing country, the peoples are not totally accustomed to digital transactions. As before lockdown, 62.91 per cent peoples are using the digital transaction medium. But after lockdown and during the unlock phase this number got up to 80 per cent as they are using digital transaction mediums. So it can depict the consciousness of the peoples of getting infected by the virus and their turn towards this digital movement. But still, some part of the population is not able to cope up with these digital transaction systems and creating the digital divide.

**Table 5: CHANGES OF DAILY LIFE**

CHARACTERISTICS	NO OF RESPONDENTS(F)	PERCENTAGE
<b><i>MAIN CHANGES HAVE BEEN DONE IN DAILY LIFE DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC</i></b>		
WASHING HANDS	119	78.81
USING MASK	137	90.73
SOCIAL DISTANCING	126	83.44
SHOPPING MORE ONLINE	72	47.68
WORKED FROM HOME	66	43.71
CANCELLED GATHERINGS OR ANY OCCASION OR ANY TOUR	87	57.62
USED-VARIOUS ONLINE PAYMENT APPS TO AVOID CASH TRANSACTIONS	52	34.44
READING BOOKS	60	39.74
HELPING IN VARIOUS WORKS RELATED TO HOUSEHOLD	60	39.74
MORE USING THE ONLINE APPS	74	49.01
MORE TIME SPENDING ON TV	34	22.52
DOING EXERCISES	40	26.49
HAVE NOT DONE ANY CHANGES DUE TO LOCKDOWN	10	6.62
<b><i>MAIN WORRIES IN COVID-19 SITUATION</i></b>		
YOUR HEALTH	85	56.29
YOUR FAMILIES HEALTH	115	76.16
FAMILIES ECONOMY	98	64.90
COUNTRIES ECONOMY	54	35.76
MENTAL HEALTH	62	41.06
PHYSICAL HEALTH	88	58.28
FOOD ISSUES	59	39.07
COUNTRIES PEOPLE'S CONDITIONS	64	42.38
POLITICAL CONDITIONS	23	15.23

NOTHING	4	2.65
<b>AGREED TO CUT DOWN YOUR NEEDS DUE TO REGULATIONS OF COVID PANDEMIC</b>		
YES	40	26.49
NO	111	73.51
<b>SECTORS WHERE PEOPLES ARE FORCED TO CUTDOWN THEIR NEEDS</b>		
FOOD HABITS	69	45.70
TOURS	71	47.01
HEALTH	38	25.17
LIBERTY	24	15.89
SALARY	30	19.87
WORK	25	16.56
FAMILY	27	17.88
PROPERTY	7	4.64
HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITY	11	7.28
EDUCATION	40	26.49

Source: Primary data collected through online survey

Covid-19 has affected the daily life of the people in every part of the country. Urban life is also going through this phase. Even the daily lifestyle of every people has been changed and some additions were forcefully done to handle this situation. Changes like wearing masks sanitize hands frequently; use of hand wash is most common amongst all. Due to lockdown, people are locked in houses and for this they have more time spending on reading books, using the online application, watching television and most importantly spending time with family members. Even the lockdown affected tourism heavily as peoples are forced to cancel their tours. This pandemic situation is a big worry for everyone as their life is at a stake. But the aspects of worries vary from person to person. Peoples are worried about families' health and the economy. With the effect of lockdown, most of the people were forced to cut down their basic needs as like food intake, outing, occasions and education sectors also. From the study, it can be said that the urban lifestyle has been affected by the pandemic highly.

**Table 6: RESPONSES REGARDING COVID MEASURES**

<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>NO OF RESPONDENTS(F)</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT ACTIONS DURING THIS COVID-19 PANDEMIC</b>		
YES	120	79.48
NO	31	20.53
<b>GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ABLE TO CONTROL THE SITUATION</b>		
YES	71	47.02
NO	80	52.98
<b>PERFECT MEASURES TO CONTROL COVID-19 SPREADING IN URBAN AREAS</b>		
LOCKDOWN	84	55.63
UNLOCK	7	4.64
ISOLATION	57	37.75
QUARANTINE	78	51.66
PREVENTION MORE FROM THE GOVERNMENT SIDE	57	37.75
PREVENTION MORE FORM PUBLIC SIDE	73	48.34
TO GROW MORE CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THE PEOPLES	81	53.64

MORE NEWS SPREAD ABOUT ITS EFFECTS	49	32.45
MORE STRICT ADMINISTRATION	73	48.34
OTHERS	18	11.92

Source: Primary data collected through online survey

Different measures are very much important to fight against this type of pandemic which affects health sector and as well as the economy for a long period. For that different initiatives have been taken by the government. Majority of respondents are pleased with the government initiatives but there is no unanimity regarding the control of the pandemic situation. Beside government initiatives, self-consciousness, personal hygiene self-isolation etc. are also needed. From this point of view, different opinions have been emerged from the survey to control the spreading of the virus. Some of them opt for more strict administration; some of them prefer isolation which as a whole transforms the urban life from normal to new normal.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Covid-19 pandemic has affected urban life very much. It has changed the dynamics of urban society. This study upholds the condition of society and the impact of this pandemic. It has slowed down the speedy lifestyle. Mostly it has done the damage to the economic, transport, health and education sector. The economy has been dragged down and the health structure is at a stake. But the peoples are trying to live life with these bumps. This pandemic has a global impact as it has broken all the international relations, as well as activities between various states, have also been affected. To control this situation governments are forced to call a lockdown all over the country. The income levels have fallen; peoples are scared about their health, transport facilities are stopped, educational institutions are forced to lock down the gates for the last 9 months and the total lifestyle of every person having a turn of the century. Despite these things, peoples are trying to cope up with the difficulties and run their lives. But they have been forced to make some changes to their daily lives. As they have to protect themselves by getting infected, change their job profiles, food habits, transport usage, use of digital transaction and many more. The lifestyles are also changed in terms of leisure time management as they are now focused within the indoor activities like watching television, spending more time with the family, cooking, daily exercises, reading books etc. The new dynamic has emerged as work from home has a positive impact on people's lives as they are now having more time to spend with the family. The education system has a large impact as the educational institutions are closed since the lockdown period and still going on, so the learners from every level of education have been facing a huge loss. Due to lack of facilities, maximum institutions are not able to start the online learning process. Even the students are also not supporting these online systems as they think offline is a better medium of learning practically and physically. Transport systems have been affected by the whole process of lockdown. Due to this urban life have been facing a huge loss economically as many people, directly and indirectly, get their income through this systems so they are forced to take a new job that is another difficult matter at this condition. Peoples are forced to cut down their basic needs and follow the restrictions depicted by the government. But the peoples are also responding to the situation and trying to control the impact of this pandemic. In some part, they have been successful but in other cases, there has to be an absolute failure. From the above-said discussions, the impact of the covid-19 pandemic over urban life has been lifted. It gives a clear view of the pros and cons of the new normal lifestyle in an urban area also.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To complete this study, the respondents have taken an important role. They gave their full consent for using their opinions. The respondents being unbiased helped the researchers to get a perfect result about the study. The researchers would like to acknowledge them for helping to develop a study about changes of urban life due to Covid-19 pandemic.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Mandal, R.B. (2000). *Urban Geography: A Text-Book*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company
- [2]. Sharma, A. & Lal, N. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic in daily life. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 8(2), 2348-5396. DOI: 10.25215/0802.219
- [3]. Bera, B., Bhattacharjee, S., Shit, P.K., Sengupta, N., Saha, S. (2020). Significant impacts of COVID-19 lockdown on urban air pollution in Kolkata (India) and amelioration of environmental health. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-020-00898-5>
- [4]. Schäfer, S. K., Sopp, M. R., Schanz, C. G., Staginnus, M., Göritz, A. S., Michael, T. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on Public Mental Health and the Buffering Effect of a Sense of Coherence. *PsychotherPsychosom*, 89, 386–392, DOI: 10.1159/000510752

- [5]. Chakraborty, I. &Maity, P. (2020). COVID-19 outbreak: Migration, effects on society, global environment and prevention. *Science of the Total Environment* , 728, 138882.<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138882>
- [6]. Haleem A-n et al., (2020). Effects of COVID-19 pandemic in daily life, *Current Medicine Research and Practice*.<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmrp.2020.03.011>
- [7]. Bhatia, V. &Kamble, R. U. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic: Saving lives and livelihoods and human existence. Retrieved from <http://www.ijcfm.org> on Sunday, November 29, 2020, IP: 10.232.74.22
- [8]. Karunathilake, K. (2020). Positive and negative impacts of COVID-19, an analysis with special reference to challenges on the supply chain in South Asian countries. *Journal of Social and Economic Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40847-020-00107-z>
- [9]. Sharifi, A. &Garmsir, A. R. K. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic: Impacts on cities and major lessons for urban planning, design, and management. *Science of the Total Environment* , 749, 14239. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.142391>
- [10]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_lockdown\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_lockdown_in_India) viewed on 25/11/2020
- [11]. Malik, S. & Naeem, K. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Women Health, livelihoods & domestic violence. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24350>.
- [12]. Everyone Included: Social Impact of COVID-19, (2020). United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Social Inclusion, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyoneincluded-covid-19.html>.
- [13]. Sharma GD, Mahendru M (2020) Lives or livelihood: insights from locked-down India due to COVID19. *Soc Sci Humanit Open* 2: 100036.
- [14]. Kochhar AS, Bhasin R, Kochhar GK, Dadlani H, Mehta VV, et al. (2020) Lockdown of 1.3 billion people in India during Covid-19 pandemic: a survey of its impact on mental health *Asian J Psychiatr* 54.
- [15]. Sharma P, Kaur M, Narwal G (2020) Other side of the COVID-19 Pandemic : A review. *Pharma Innov* 9: 366-369.

Somen Ghosh, et. al. "Impact of Covid - 19 Pandemic on Urban lifestyle: A case study of Kolkata." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 26(08), 2021, pp. 01-08.