



Awareness of the preventive measures against Covid -19 spread among small shop owners

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ABSTRACT

COVID -19 is an infectious disease caused by the newly discovered strain of coronavirus. As there is no vaccine discovered, the only way to prevent the spread is through following the practice of social isolation. But prolonged isolation may also lead to psychological stress and problems. The objective of the survey was to assess the knowledge and awareness of preventive measures against Covid 19 amongst small shop owners. A web-based cross-sectional study was conducted amongst the small shop owners. A structured questionnaire comprising 15-17 questions had been put forth to assess the Covid 19 related knowledge and perception. The shopkeepers were contacted telephonically and responses recorded. The data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS statistics. Although the majority of the population had a positive perception about the preventive measures against the Covid spread, 36% of the shopkeepers were not aware of the preventive measures against the Covid spread. This study found optimal knowledge and perception of the preventive measures against Covid spread among the shopkeepers but misinformation and misunderstanding still prevailing. The shopkeepers are crucial in the prevention of the spread of Covid 19 and educating them might aid us in the fight against Covid- 19.

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INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 is the current ongoing pandemic across the world. This belongs to the family of Coronavirus, which are a group of viruses such as SARS

[Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome] (Lam *et al.*, 2020; Krishnan, 2018). AIDS [HIV Virus] etc. It was first identified in the Wuhan district of China in December 2019 (Cyranoski, 2020; Hannah, 2018; Palati *et al.*, 2019). Till today nearly 216 countries have been affected by this. Many people are getting affected as days go by. The death ratio also increases day by day. The virus is precisely spread by the contact of people, also through small droplets falling during the action of sneezing, coughing and talking (Gunasekaran and R, 2016; Sarbeen and Gheena, 2016). These droplets fall out from infected persons (Shetty, 2005). It is also spread by contamination by the touch of goods. The virus sticks on to the surface of any of the objects and can survive without its host for nearly 6 to 7 hours (Prasanna and Gheena, 2016) which lead to complications such as Pneumonia and Acute respiratory distress syn-

drome (Bourouiba, 2020). These symptoms may be shown from the onset of the infection from 5 days to 14 days. Recent studies show that infection (Ahad and Gheena, 2016) arises without the onset of the symptoms. Till today no vaccine has been found. So the only way is to quarantine yourself and follow social distancing (Xu *et al.*, 2020; Sukumaran and Padavala, 2018). The precaution mentioned in the study is to create awareness among the shop owners in order to help in preventive measures. (Manohar and Abilasha, 2019; Cahapay, 2020). The aim of the study is to create awareness among the shopkeepers on the preventive measures against the Covid virus, thereby aiding in the prevention of the Covid spread by the touch of goods by the consumers. (Singh, 2020; Sheriff and Santhanam, 2018; Manohar and Abilasha, 2019)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An online survey was conducted with a self-prepared questionnaire with a sample size of 75 participants' representative of the general population. The questionnaire consists of questions that help in increasing awareness among the participants and also helps in easy collection of data and is cost-effective. The participants were given a short introduction about the need for preventive measures against Corona spread. The questionnaire was validated in a standard manner. The questionnaire was circulated using an online platform via "GOOGLE FORMS". Descriptive Analysis was carried out using the statistical software SPSS Software version 20. The results of the survey were represented in the form of pie charts and few graphs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the present survey, out of a total of 75 participants, 40 were males and 35 were females. The results of the survey are summarized in the following pie charts.

66% of shopkeepers reported that COVID-19 infection was spread by the touch of goods that are contaminated and 34 percent of shopkeepers were not aware of this fact (Figure 1). 68% shopkeepers believe that COVID-19 infection can transmit from one person to other and 32% are not aware of this fact. (Figure 3). 60% shopkeepers are sure about their stores that are free from COVID-19 contamination and 40% shopkeepers were not sure (Figure 5). 68% of the shopkeepers reported that their shops are open as per the time allotted by the government, the rest 32% of them does not follow the government rules. (Figure 7). 68% of the shopkeepers suggest that this lockdown can reduce the

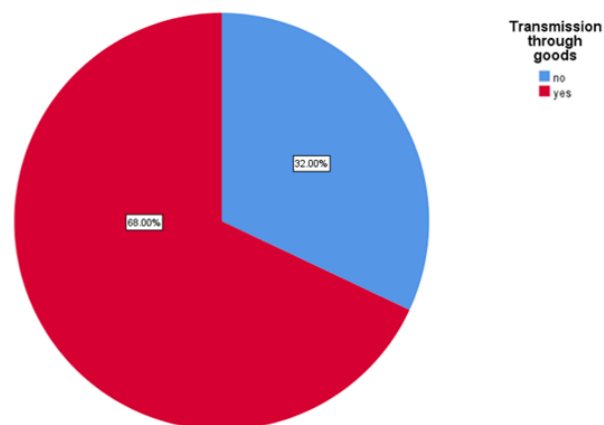


Figure 1: 66% of shopkeepers reported that COVID-19 infection was spread by contaminated goods and 34% were not aware

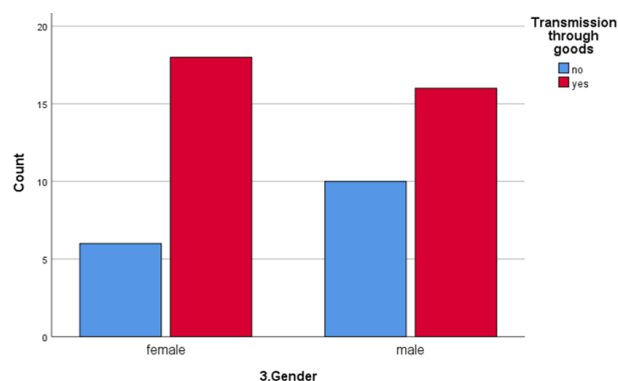


Figure 2: The association between gender on the X-axis and the percentage of awareness about transmission of COVID-19 through contaminated goods on the Y-axis

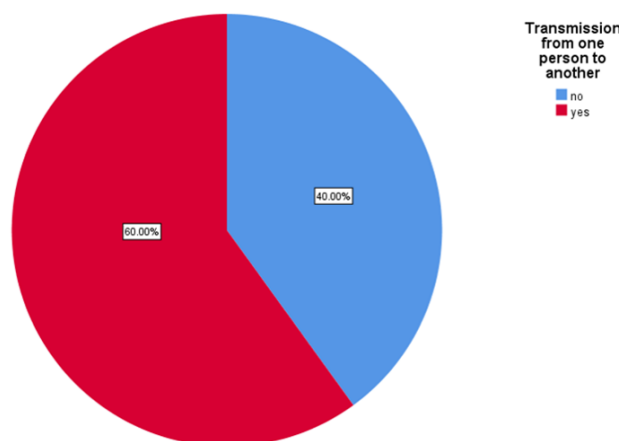


Figure 3: 68% shopkeepers believe that COVID-19 infection can transmit from one person to another and 32% are not aware of this fact

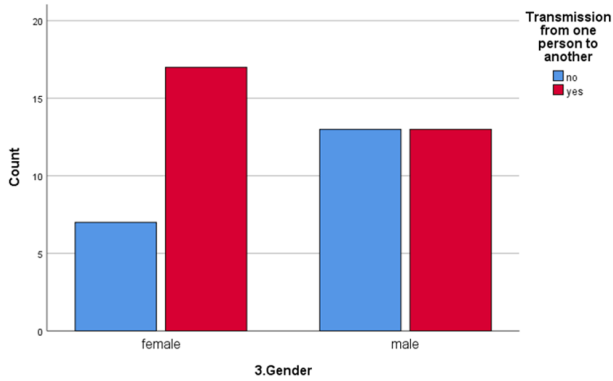


Figure 4: The association between gender (X-axis) and awareness about transmission of COVID 19 from one person to another person (Y-axis)

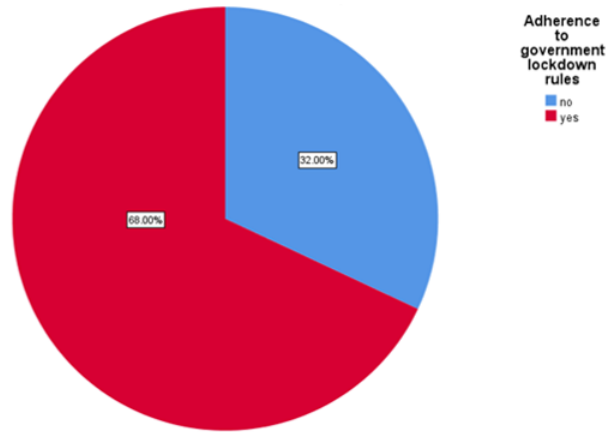


Figure 7: 68% of the shopkeepers say that their shops are open as per the time allotted by the government; the rest 32% of them do not follow the government rules

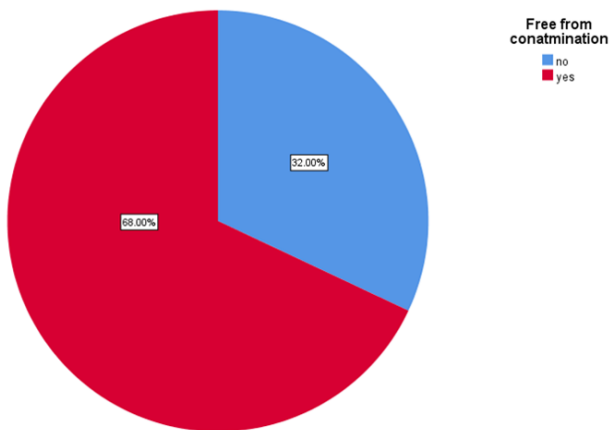


Figure 5: 60% shopkeepers are sure that their stores are free from COVID-19 contamination and 40% shopkeepers are not sure

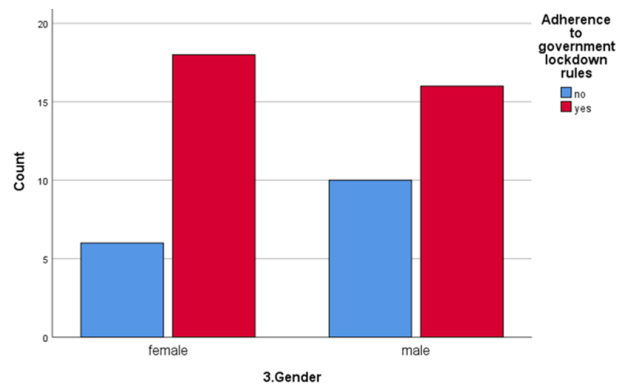


Figure 8: The association between gender (X-axis) and the level of adherence to government lockdown (Y-axis)

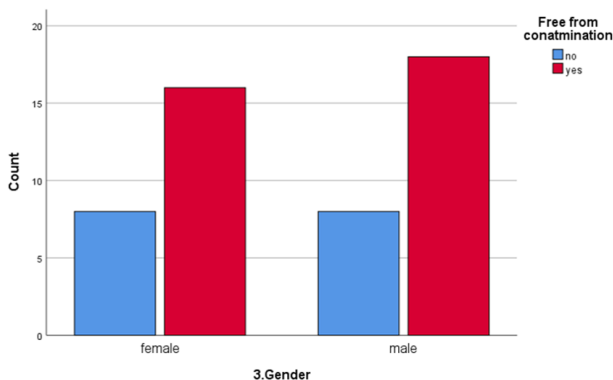


Figure 6: The association between gender (X-axis) and awareness about keeping shop and premises free from COVID 19 contamination (Y-axis)

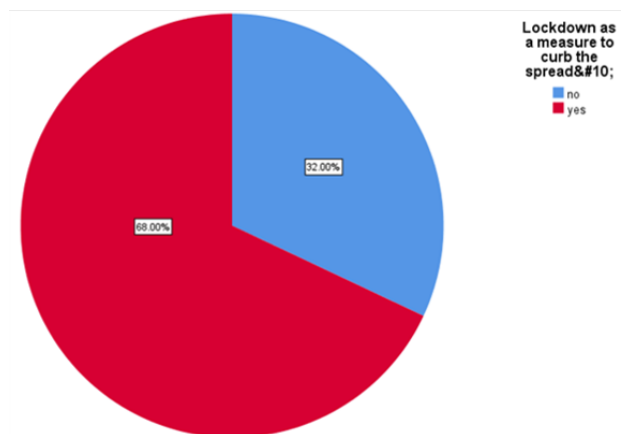


Figure 9: 68% of the shopkeepers suggest that this lockdown can reduce the spread of covid infection; the rest are unaware

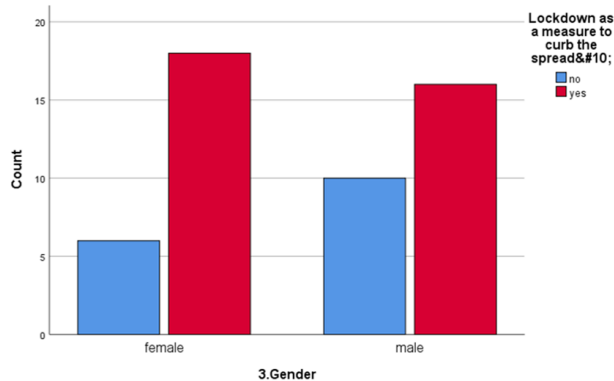


Figure 10: The association between gender (X-axis) and awareness on the effectiveness of lockdown to control Covid-19 transmission (Y-axis)

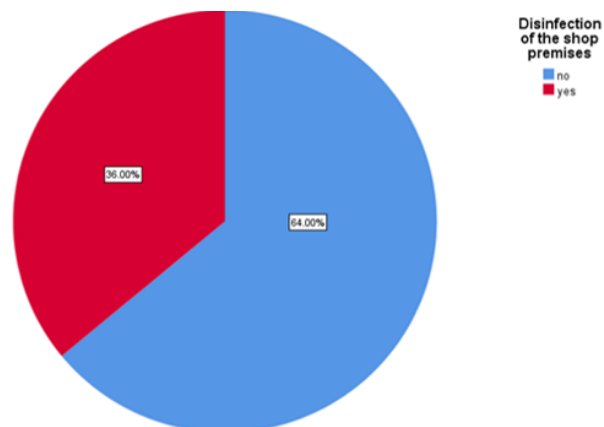


Figure 13: 64% of the shopkeepers clean their shop before and after closing and 36% shopkeepers do not clean their shop

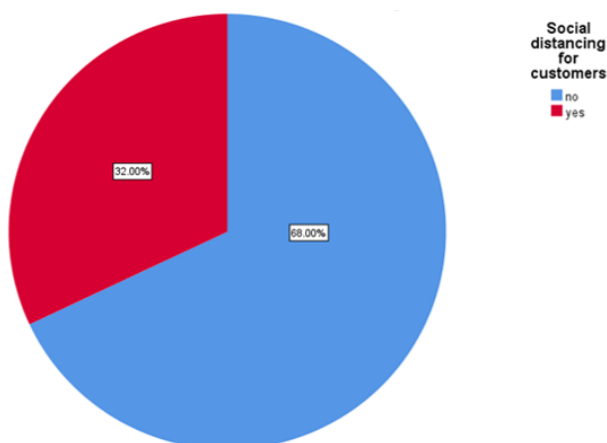


Figure 11: 64% shopkeepers insist their customers stand in a queue and 36% shopkeepers do not

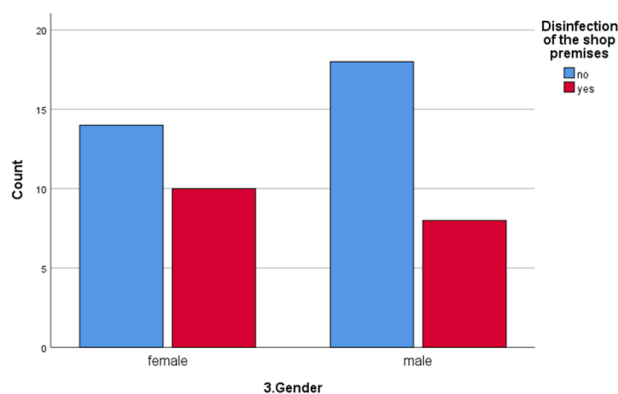


Figure 14: The association between gender (X-axis) and awareness on disinfection of the shops (Y-axis).

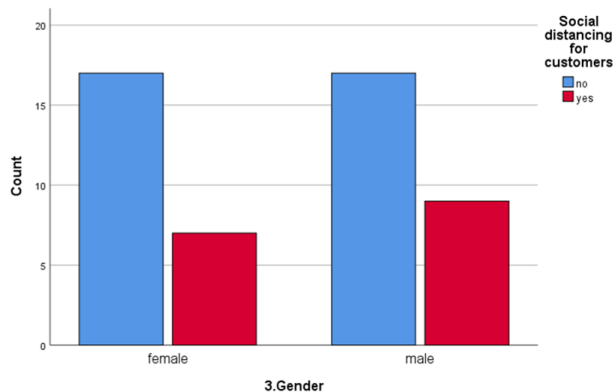


Figure 12: The association between gender (X-axis) and awareness on social distancing for customers in the shop (Y-axis)

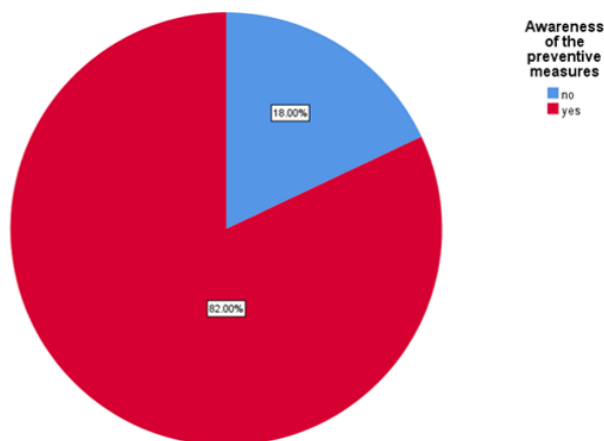


Figure 15: The survey helped almost 82% shopkeepers know about the COVID-19 contamination and 18% shopkeepers are already aware of it

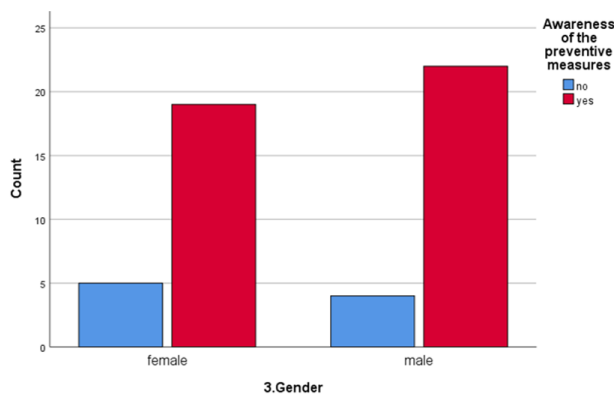


Figure 16: The association between gender (X-axis) and awareness on the preventive measures against COVID-19 (Y-axis)

spread of Covid infection; the rest are not aware. (Figure 9). 64% shopkeepers insist their customers stand in a queue and 36% shopkeepers do not (Figure 11). 64% of the shopkeepers clean their shop before and after closing and 36% shopkeepers do not clean their shop (Figure 13). The survey sorted out almost 82% shopkeepers to be initiated about the preventive measures to be undertaken to combat the COVID-19 contamination and 18% shopkeepers were already aware of it (Figure 15).

The present study reports a statistically insignificant level of difference in awareness about transmission of Covid-19 through contaminated goods among the genders (P-Value =.308) (Figure 2). The present study also reports a statistically insignificant association of gender with awareness about the transmission of Covid-19 from one person to another. (P-Value =.133) (Figure 4). A statistically insignificant association of gender with awareness about contaminated goods in their shops was noted. Chi-Square test was done and the association was found statistically not significant. (P-Value =.846 (>0.05)) (Figure 6). A statistically insignificant association of gender with a level of adherence to government lockdown was noted. Chi-Square test was done and the association was found statistically not significant. (P-Value =.308 (>0.05)) (Figure 8). Also, the study reports a statistically insignificant association of gender with awareness on the effectiveness of lockdown to control Covid-19 transmission. (P-Value =.308 (>0.05)). Chi-Square test was done and the association was found statistically not significant (Figure 10). The present study reports a statistically insignificant association of gender awareness on social distancing. (P-Value =.680 (>0.05)). Chi-Square test was done and the association was found statistically not significant (Figure 12). The present study reports a statistically insignificant association of gender awareness

on disinfection of the shops. (P-Value =.423(>0.05)). Chi-Square test was done and the association was found statistically not significant (Figure 14). The present study reports a statistically insignificant association of gender with awareness on the preventive measures against Covid-19. (P-Value =.616 (>0.05)). Chi-Square test was done and the association was found statistically not significant (Figure 16).

The Covid 19 virus is a pandemic affecting both economic and health-wise. The recent studies conclude that the novel coronavirus infection is spread not only from pre-infected persons but also through the goods which are contaminated and as this virus is capable of living on its surface for more than 6 to 7 hours, there is a greater risk of spread through goods that are sold in shops. (Hadjar and Samuel, 2015; Samanta and Samanta, 2018; Harrita and Santhanam, 2019). It is clear that the majority of the participants are aware of the preventive measures against Covid virus (Agrawal et al., 2020). 66% of the participants are aware that corona spread is caused due to the touch of goods and it is similar to the study of (Bourouiba, 2020), 58% of the respondents of this study are aware, rest of the participants are not aware of the fact that covid spread is caused by the touch of goods (Alhajji et al., 2020). Nearly 68% of the shopkeepers are aware and they are particular in asking their customers to wear masks when they come to their shops and make them stand a one-meter distance from each other. The rest 32 % of them do not care about following these steps. This is in contradiction to the work done by Agarwal et al., as the majority of the participants are aware of the use of masks and gloves. 68% of the shopkeepers welcome the idea of lockdown as they think it can effectively reduce covid spread, and they keep the shop open only during the allotted time by the government (Prasanna and Gheena, 2016; Abitha and Santhanam, 2019; Shree, 2019). This is in accordance to the work of (Alhajji et al., 2020) where nearly 705 of the population welcome the idea of self-quarantine and lockdown as they fund it as an effective way for the prevention of covid 19 spread. The limitation of the study is that minimum articles are included. Also, due to lockdown at the time of the study, the limited study population is included. The variables may vary with possible outcomes when done on a larger population. In the future, the awareness of the preventive measures against covid 19 can be studied in detail (Alhajji et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020; Palati et al., 2020). In a study, the novel coronavirus was renamed as COVID-19 by WHO. Infection from the virus has since increased exponentially

and has spread all over the world in more than 196 countries. WHO has declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The virus is highly infectious and can cause human-to-human transmission. Every 24 hours, cases of COVID-19 increased several-fold. The WHO is monitoring the SARS-CoV-19 spread very closely via a global surveillance system. The current situation demands the enforcement of strict laws which would help in inhibiting the further spread of COVID-19. Social distancing, international travel restrictions to affected countries, and hygiene are three important ways to nullify SARS-CoV-19.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the majority of the shopkeepers were aware of the preventive measures to control the spread of COVID-19 infection, majority of them agree with the government's rules to curb the spread of the infection, gender differences in the level awareness about various aspects of COVID-19 transmission and preventive measures were not significant. The population who were unaware are crucial in that they need to be educated to prevent the spread of COVID- 19.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest for this study.

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