

# Critical needs during Covid-19 lockdown: Job, Food, Cash, Medicines – Who Needs What?

Government of India's 40-day national lockdown was a necessary step towards protecting people from getting the COVID-19 infection and breaking the chain of viral transmission. However, such strict lockdown brings halt to economic activities in any place triggering loss in livelihood and bringing some hardships to the population. Often, these effects are disproportionate and most marginalised feel the effects most.

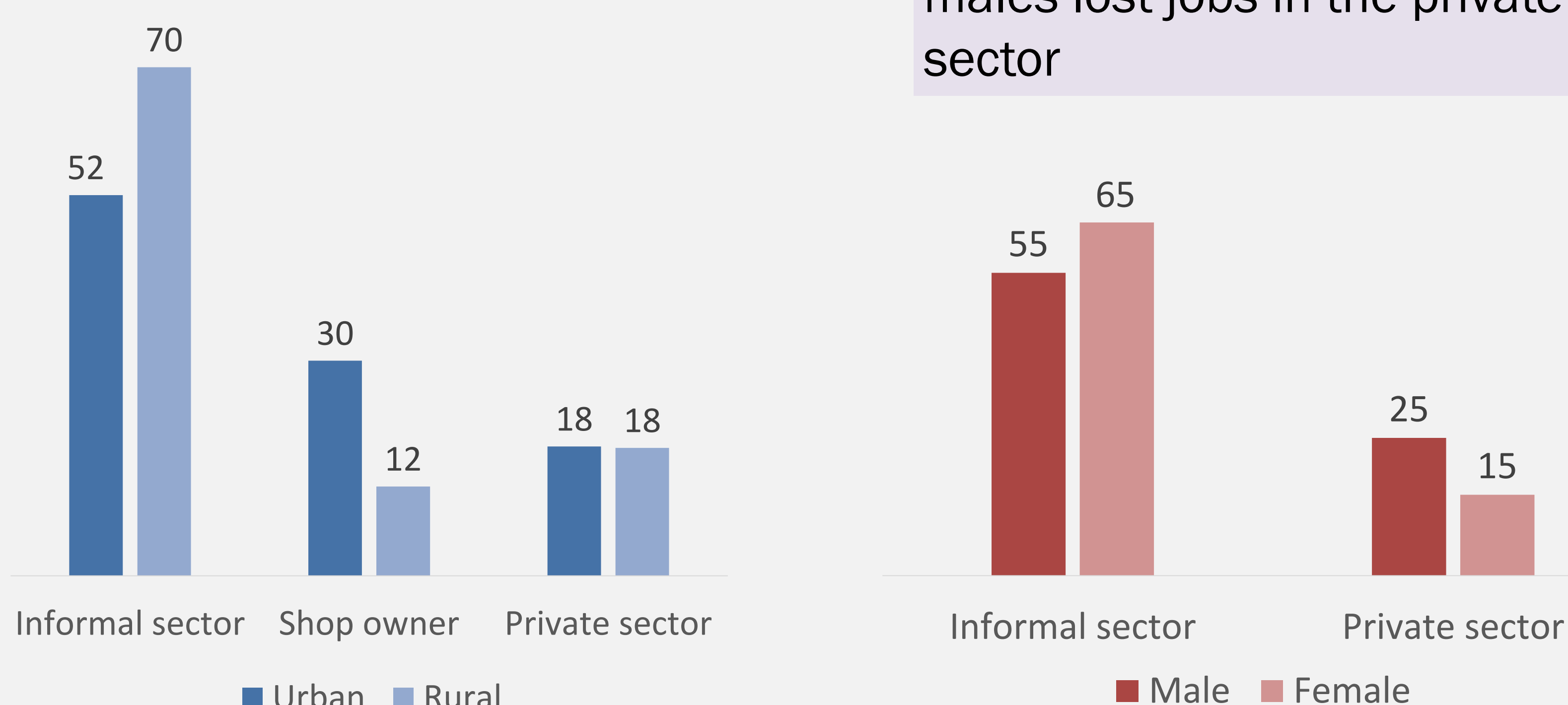
Population Council Institute's telephone survey with participants of longitudinal studies has helped understand critical needs of households and provides supportive data for Government of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.<sup>1</sup>

## Challenges

About two-thirds (Uttar Pradesh: 64% vs. Bihar: 67%) reported that either themselves or their family members lost jobs/livelihood due to lockdown.

More individuals from the informal sectors in rural areas reported loss of jobs, than those in urban areas.

Loss of jobs was higher for females than males in the informal sectors, while more males lost jobs in the private sector



Proportion who lost jobs/income by Type of Occupation

In the survey conducted in the first two weeks of April, 54% from UP and 61% from Bihar reported having resources that may last for less than 1 month and around one-third had resources to survive for less than 2 weeks.

### Proportion of participants who reported that resources would survive only for less than a month

	Uttar Pradesh	Bihar
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	41.7	48.6
Female	59.5	66.5
<b>Place of residence</b>		
Urban	60.3	61.0
Rural	48.1	60.8
<b>Number of rooms in the house</b>		
1	75.6	79.7
>=2	50.1	58.5
<b>Number of people who slept in the house last night</b>		
1-2	67.4	59.1
3-4	52.7	58.3
>= 5	53.2	61.9

## Critical needs

Mask  
Toilet  
**Medicine**  
LPG/Cookingfuels  
Food  
Nothing  
Sanitizer  
Fodder  
Money  
Water  
Talktime/data  
Electricity  
Cloth

Food (88%), money (44%) and medicine (17%) were the three most critical needs, irrespective of gender, state and area where the respondent lived.

Food items most needed were: rice, pulses, fruits, vegetables, milk.

### Money needs by household CONDITIONS

Households with job/income loss

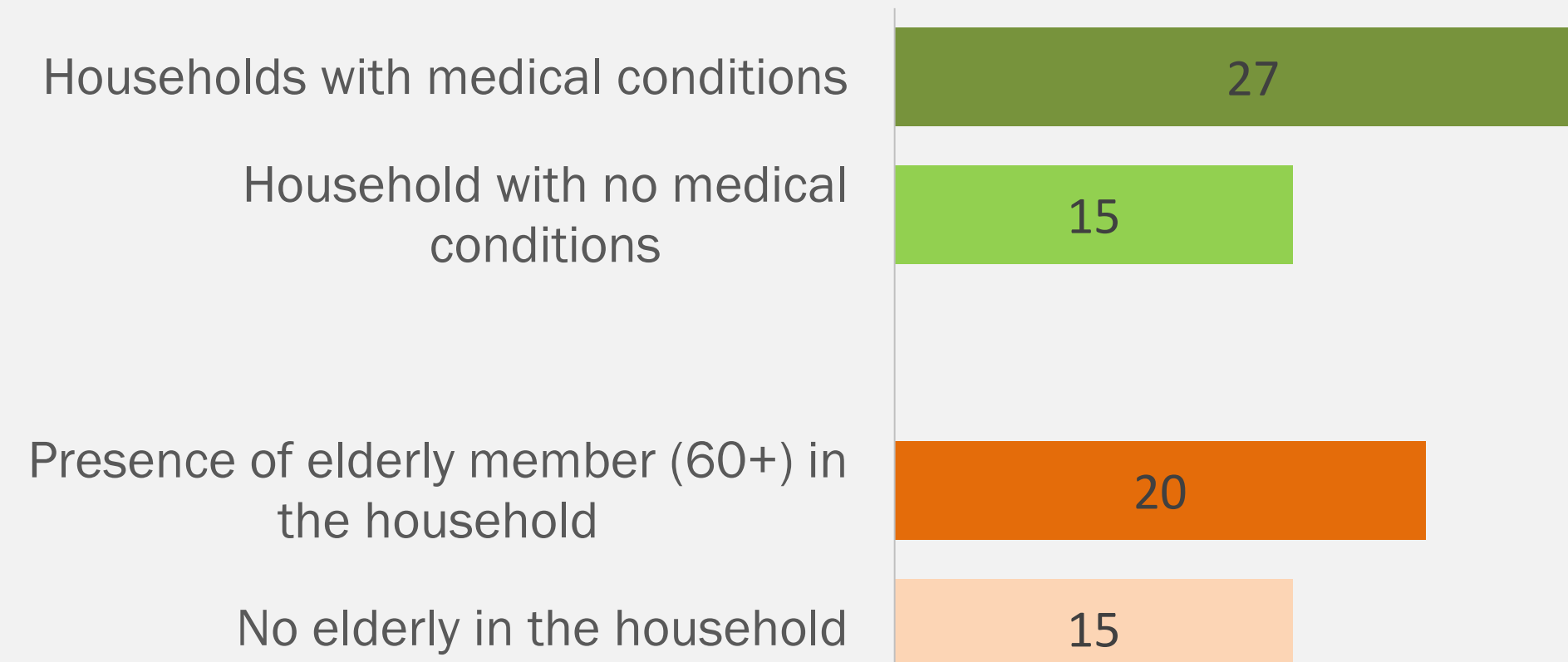
Households with availability of >1 month resources

Households with family member stranded elsewhere



The cash needs were greater among households where family members lost jobs/livelihood, households with non-availability of >1 month resources at home, and households where family member is stranded elsewhere.

### Medicine Needs



Similarly, households with elderly members and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions reported greater needs of medicine.

## Call for those providing supportive service during COVID-19 lockdown – What can the private sector, volunteers, NGOs, and governments do to meeting critical needs besides food?

### Support those in informal sector

Most females, primarily in the informal sector lost their jobs. Provide wage-subsidies or ensure opportunities which also help maintain social distancing in the work place.

### Provide medicines to those who need them

Households with elderly, with pre-existing medical conditions require medicines for survival. Provide cash or free supply of prescribed medicines.

### Pay special attention to households with family members stranded elsewhere and facilitate support through respective local governments or private sector

As social distancing also demands limited mobility of people, the needs of households as well as their (stranded) family members call for special attention, by sharing information on local support systems through Apps like Arogya Setu.