Mobile Vaani Lockdown Survey: Saajha Manch - March 27th to April 14th

covid-response@gramvaani.org

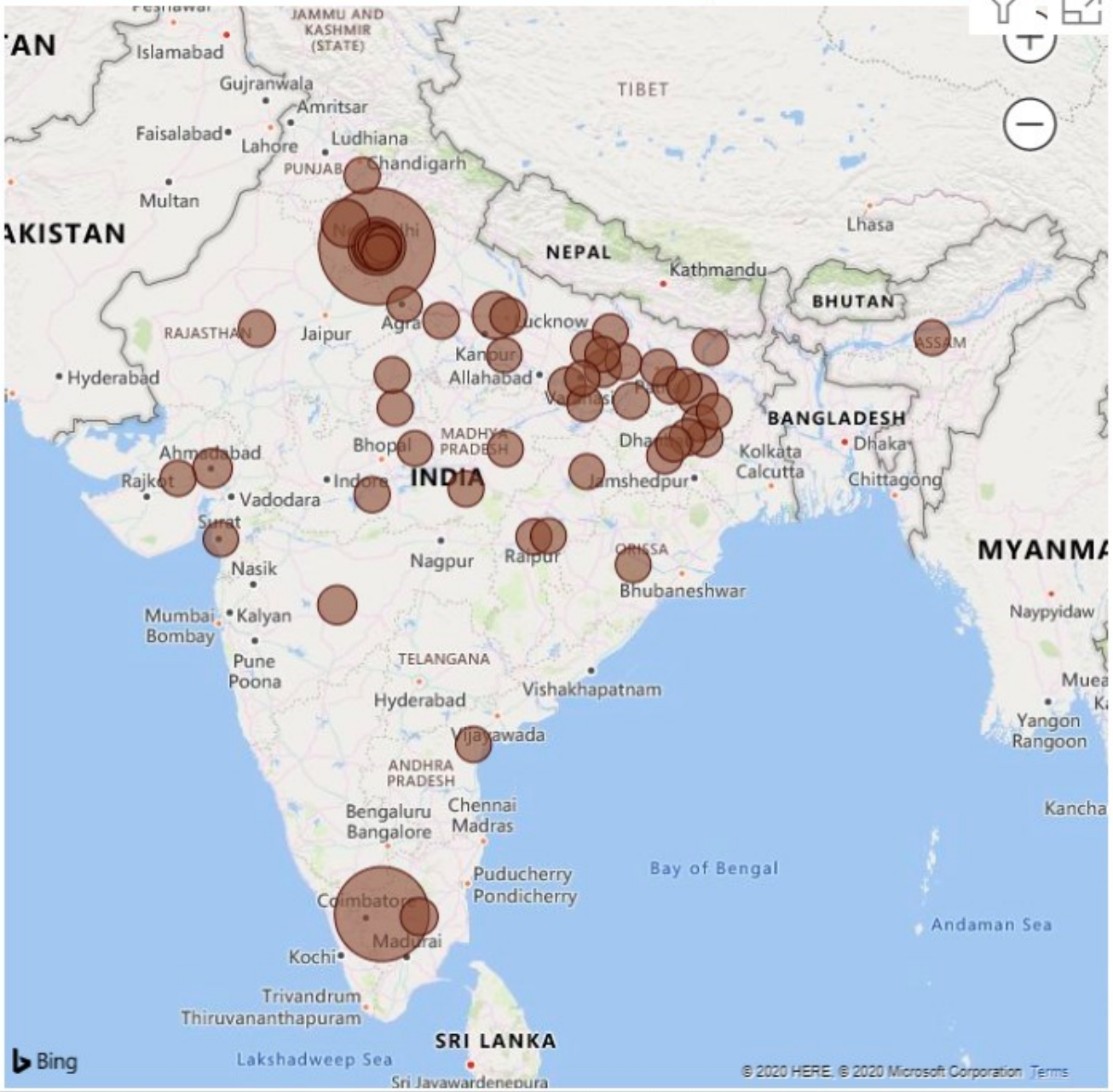
Introduction to Saajha Manch Mobile Vaani

- Hindi medium information platform for industrial and other inter-state migrant workers, to share news and awareness on labour rights
- Operational since mid 2017, incorporating multiple partners
  - Aajeevika Bureau in Gujarat
  - READ, TRLM and Vizhuthugal in Tamil Nadu
  - IYRC, GNEM, Mazdoor Ekta Manch, CITU and Safe in India in Delhi-NCR
- 5,000 unique users monthly, from across North, Central and Eastern Indian states
- Community media through mobile phone (IVR technology)
- Users dial **92111 53555**, the call cuts, then users receive a call-back
- Users can listen to audio content over the call, or also record their own messages

- Users listen to a variety of content (news, info bulletins, Q&A, entertainment) and easily send in their contributions by pressing 3 on their phones

State	District	Total Listeners	Items Contributed
Andhra Pradesh	Not Known	31	2
Assam	Not Known	24	1
Bihar	Aurangabad	58	3
Bihar	Jamui	292	16
Bihar	Not Known	79	4
Bihar	Patna	68	2
Bihar	Sheikhpura	7	1
Bihar	Supaul	34	1
Chhattisgarh	Not Known	25	1
Chhattisgarh	Raipur	35	1
Chhattisgarh	Surguja	13	1
Delhi NCR	Delhi	965	38
Delhi NCR	Faridabad	47	1
Delhi NCR	Gurugram	633	23
Delhi NCR	Kapashera	427	13
Delhi NCR	Manesar	3517	153
Delhi NCR	Others	118	7
Gujarat	Ahmedabad	191	5
Gujarat	Not Known	38	1
Gujarat	Surat	5	1
Haryana	Ambala	44	1
Haryana	Not Known	540	12
Jharkhand	Deoghar	14	1
Jharkhand	Dhanbad	69	3

Total Listeners and Items Contributed by District State



Saajha Manch

Source
- ALL
- FGC
- RGC
- SGC
- UGC

MonthYear
- Select all
- April, 2020
- March, 2020
- February, 2020
- January, 2020

State
- Select all
- Andhra Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chhattisgarh
- Delhi NCR

District
- Select all
- (Blank)
- Agra
- Ahmedabad

Item Title
- Select all
- 1526603 - गीत ...
- 1706831 - खीरु ...
- 1787672 - राहुल...
- 1992276 - कोरो...
- 1993338 - कोरो...
- 1994580 - कोरो...

A survey of locked-down workers

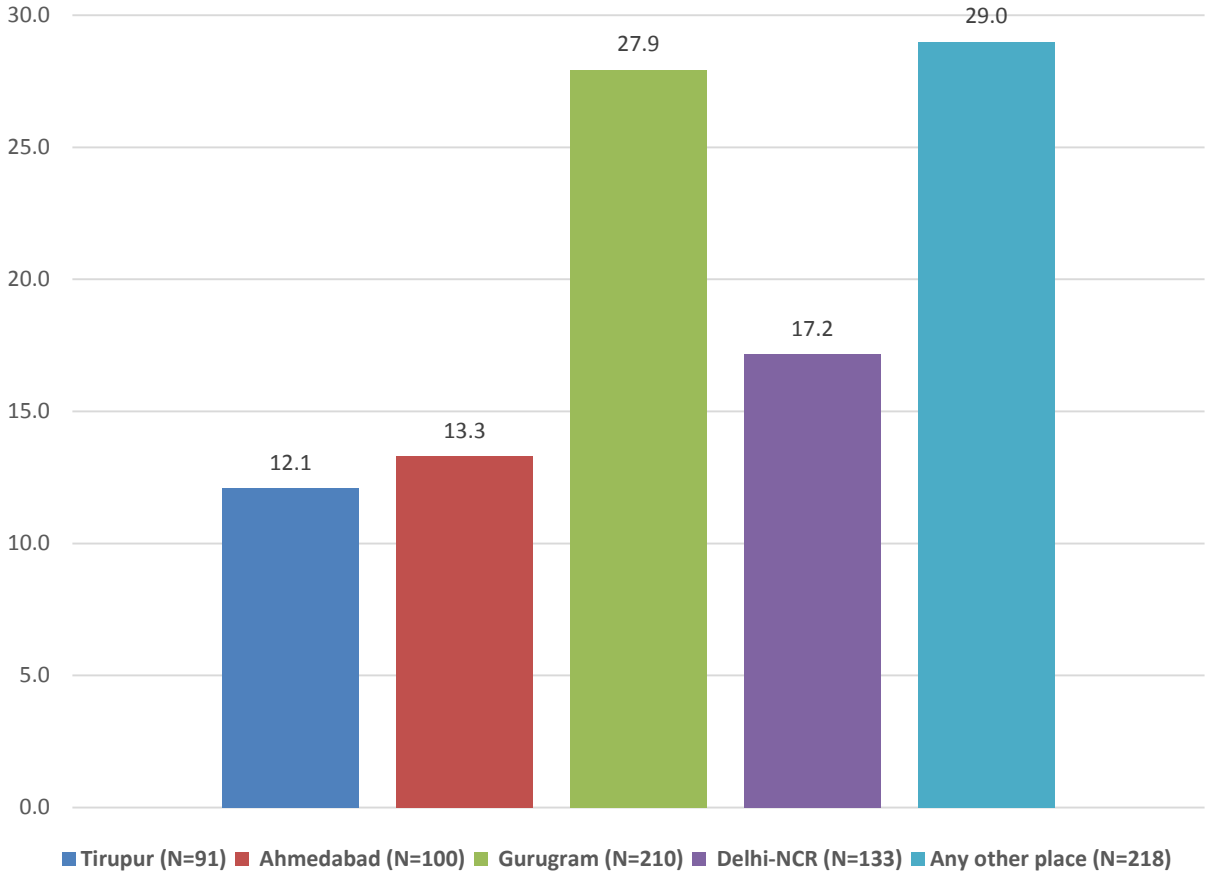
A survey was launched for Saajha Manch Mobile Vaani users, to understand how they were coping during the lockdown

8 questions, each offering multiple choice responses:

- No personal details were collected, only location
- Have they been laid off and did they get any assistance from employer?
- Do they have a running PF account?
- Are they staying with family members?
- Would they like to travel home?
- **Are they in need of emergency assistance and of what kind?**

We connected with those who answered ‘yes’ to the last point, with quick sources of assistance through providers on the ground

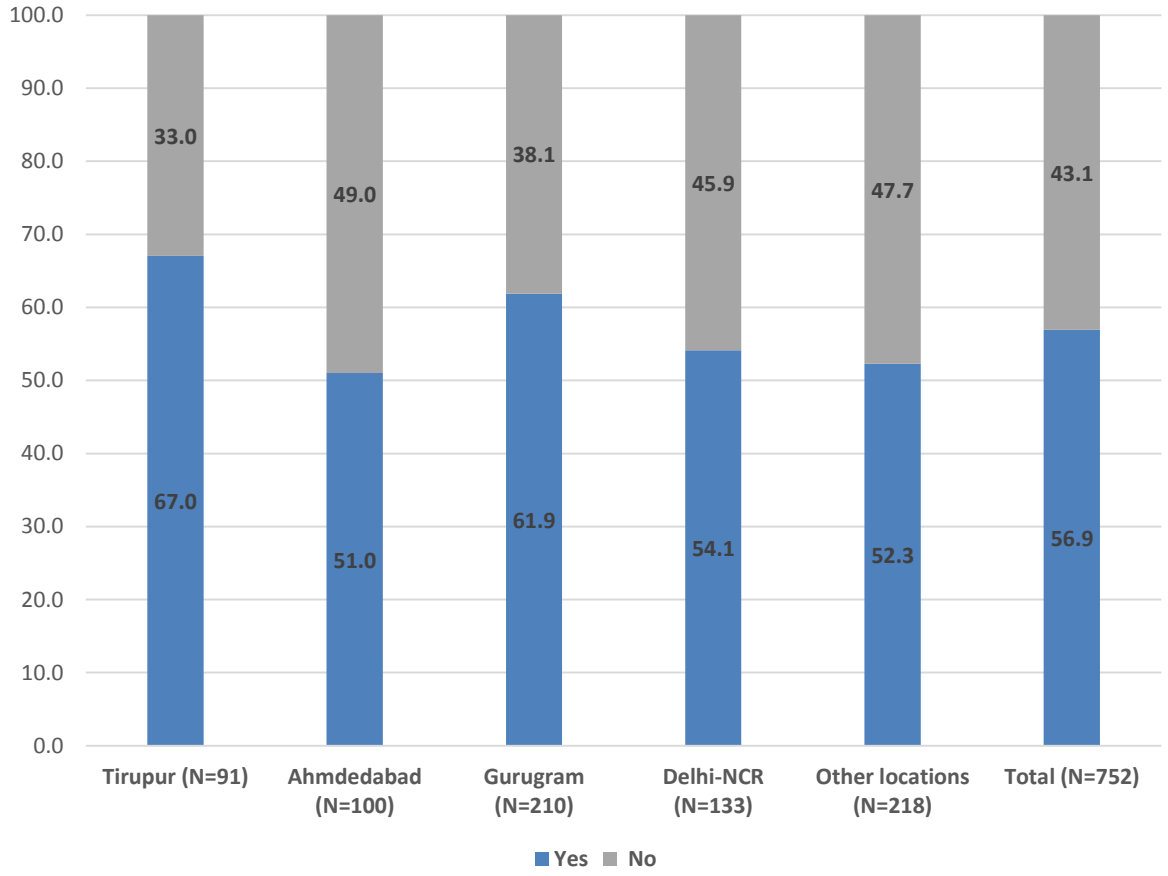
Location the respondent is calling from



752 users took the complete survey, and the results are analysed for only these users.

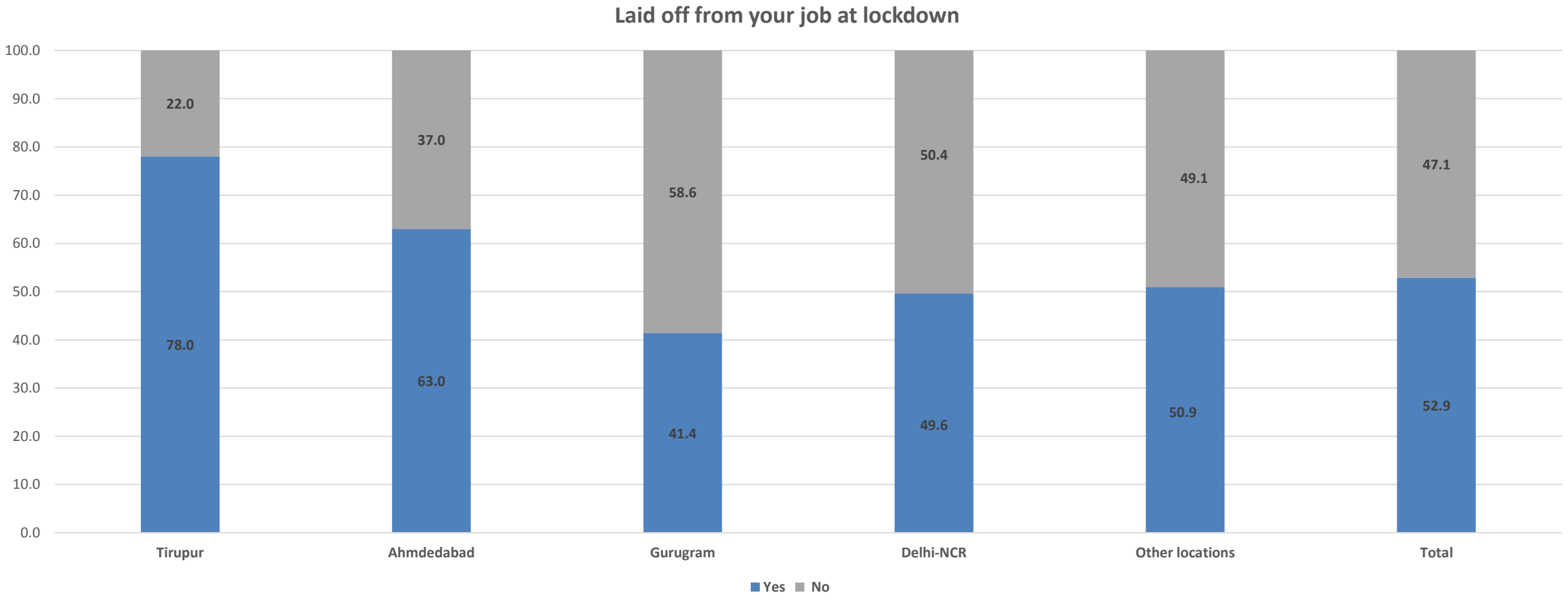
27.9 percent of respondents called from Gurugram, which includes industrial areas of Udyog Vihar, Sector 37 and Manesar. A further 17.2% called from other work destinations in Delhi-NCR. 29% called from home states or industrial locations spread across Maharashtra, Jharkhand,UP, Bihar and MP.

With family members stuck in lockdown



Tirupur reported the highest number of respondents who were with their families when they got stuck in lockdown, followed by Gurugram.

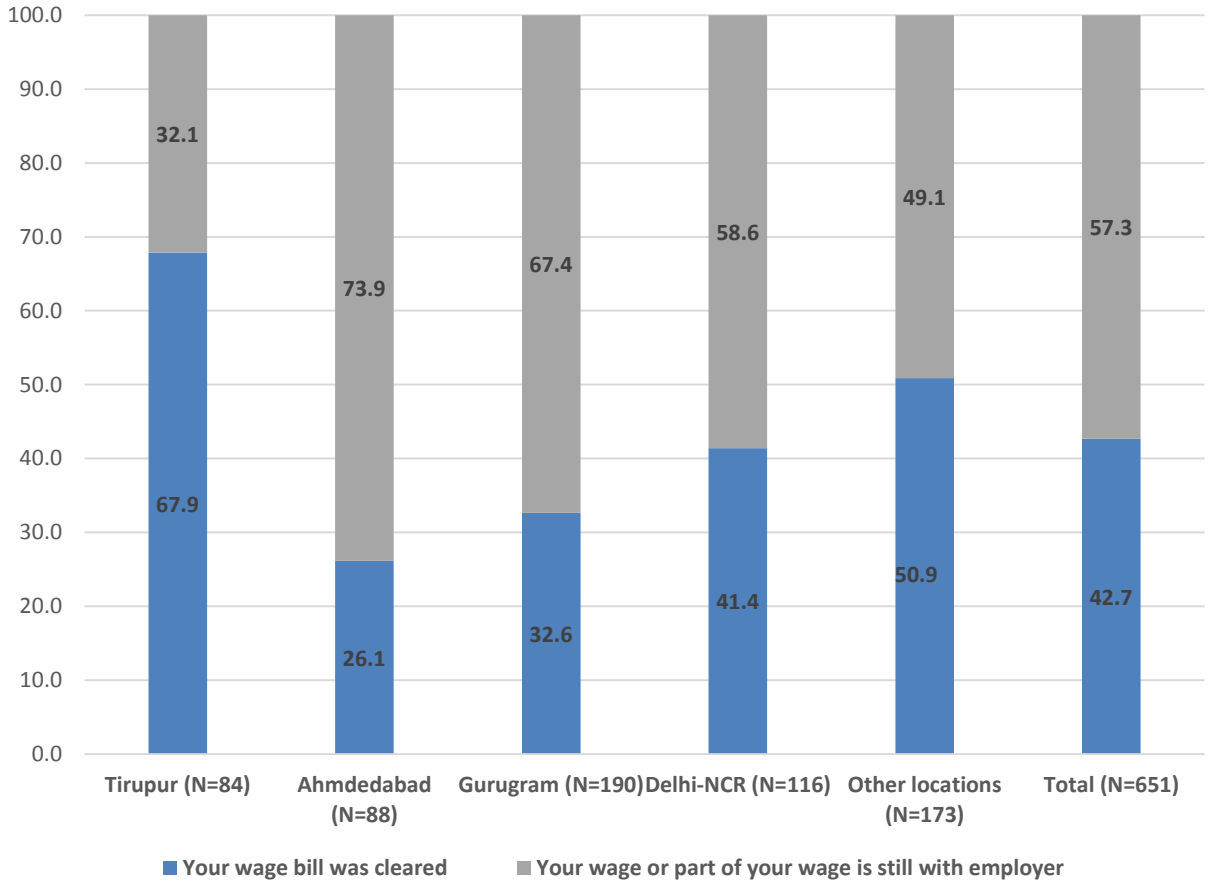
Overall, close to 60 percent of the respondents reported being stuck at work destinations with their families.



The vast majority of workers from Tirupur reported that they were laid-off at lockdown, followed by Ahmedabad. Comparatively fewer workers were laid off in Gurugram.

52.9 percent workers reported having been laid off at lockdown, despite clear instructions from the Government of India to the contrary.

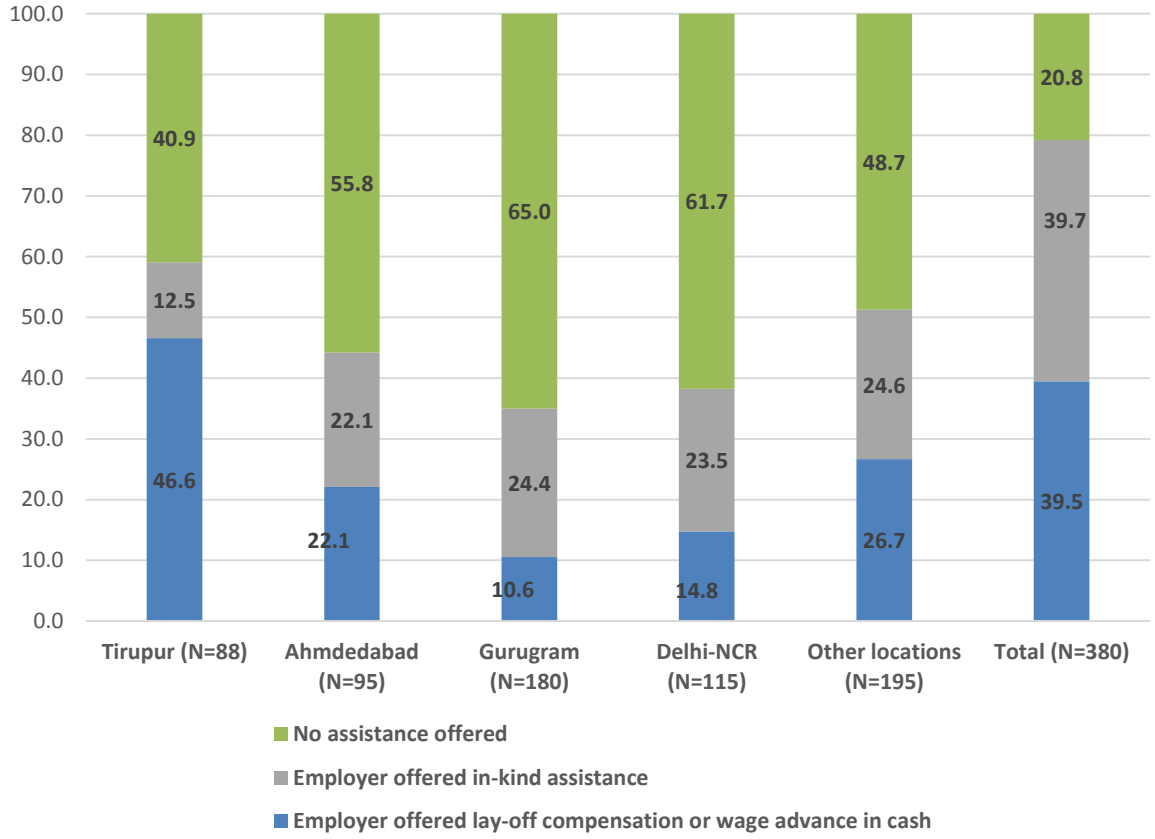
Did you get paid your dues when you were laid off?



While respondents in Tirupur were most likely to have been laid off, they were also more likely to have their wage bills cleared. Employers from Ahmedabad who also laid off many workers, did not clear their dues.

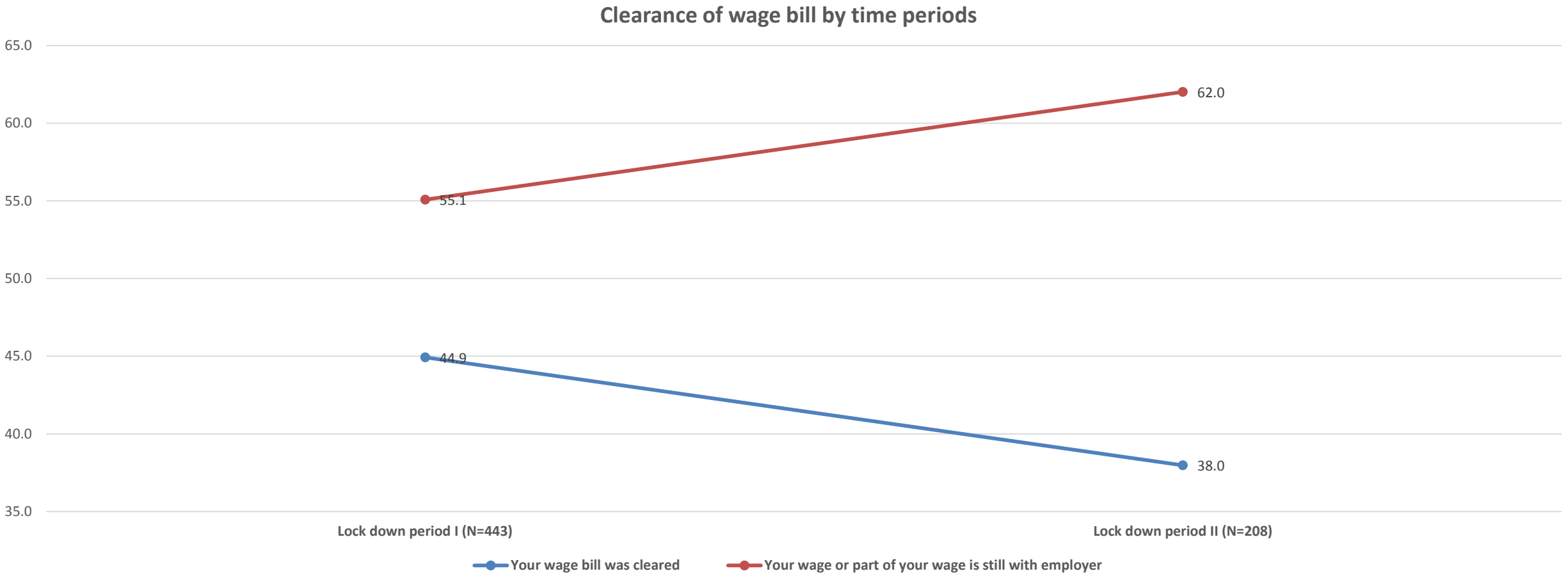
Overall, 57 percent workers reported not having received their full payment upon layoff.

Did the employer offer any help or compensation when you were laid off?

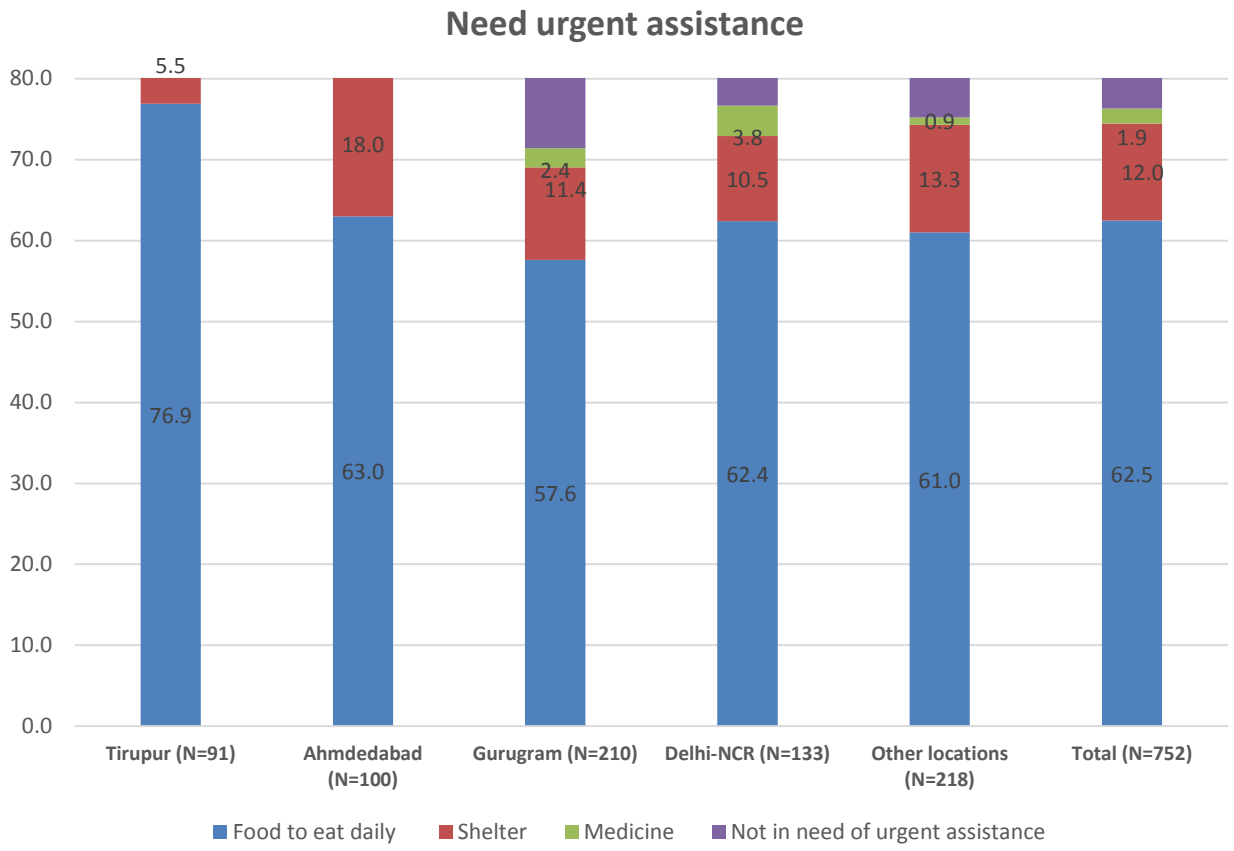


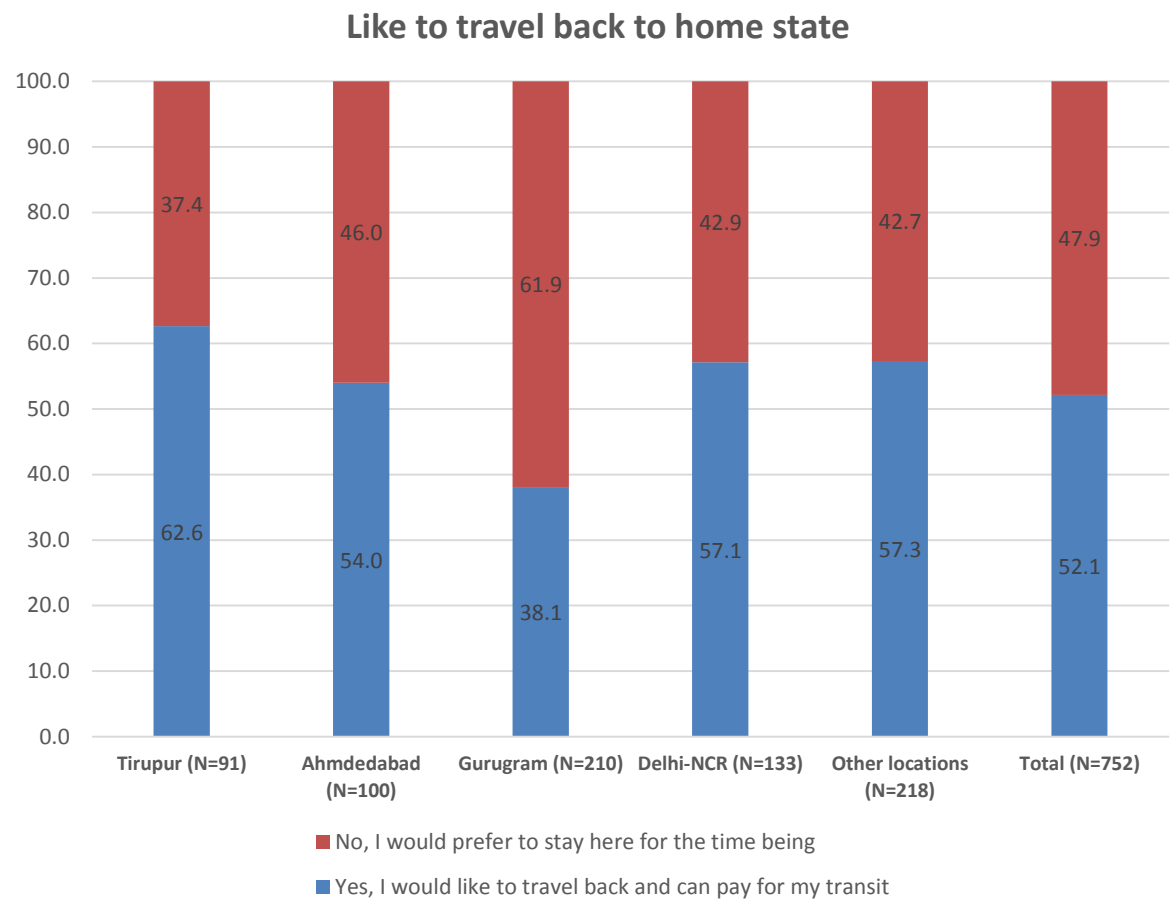
46.6 percent of Tirupur respondents said their employers offered compensation or advance wages. Fewer of the respondents from Gurugram and elsewhere in Delhi-NCR reported they were laid off, but most were not paid their dues and most also got no support from employers.

Overall, only 40 percent of the workers reported having been paid some kind of lay-off compensation or wage advance.



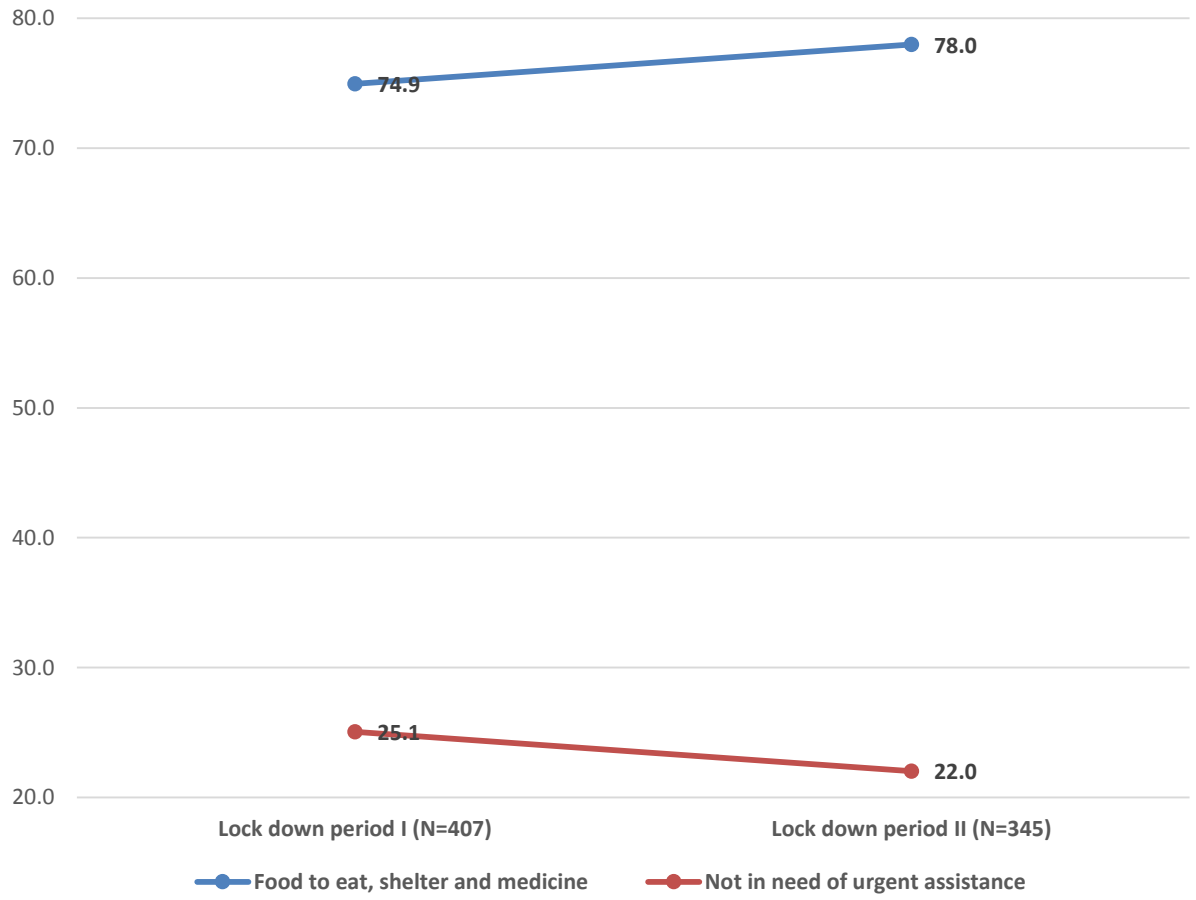
Since our survey was active over 2.5 weeks of the lockdown, we checked if those who participated in the survey on or after April 10th (the deadline for previous month's wage payments) were more likely to have got paid. Sadly, a significantly larger proportion of workers in the later period reported that their wage bill hadn't been cleared.

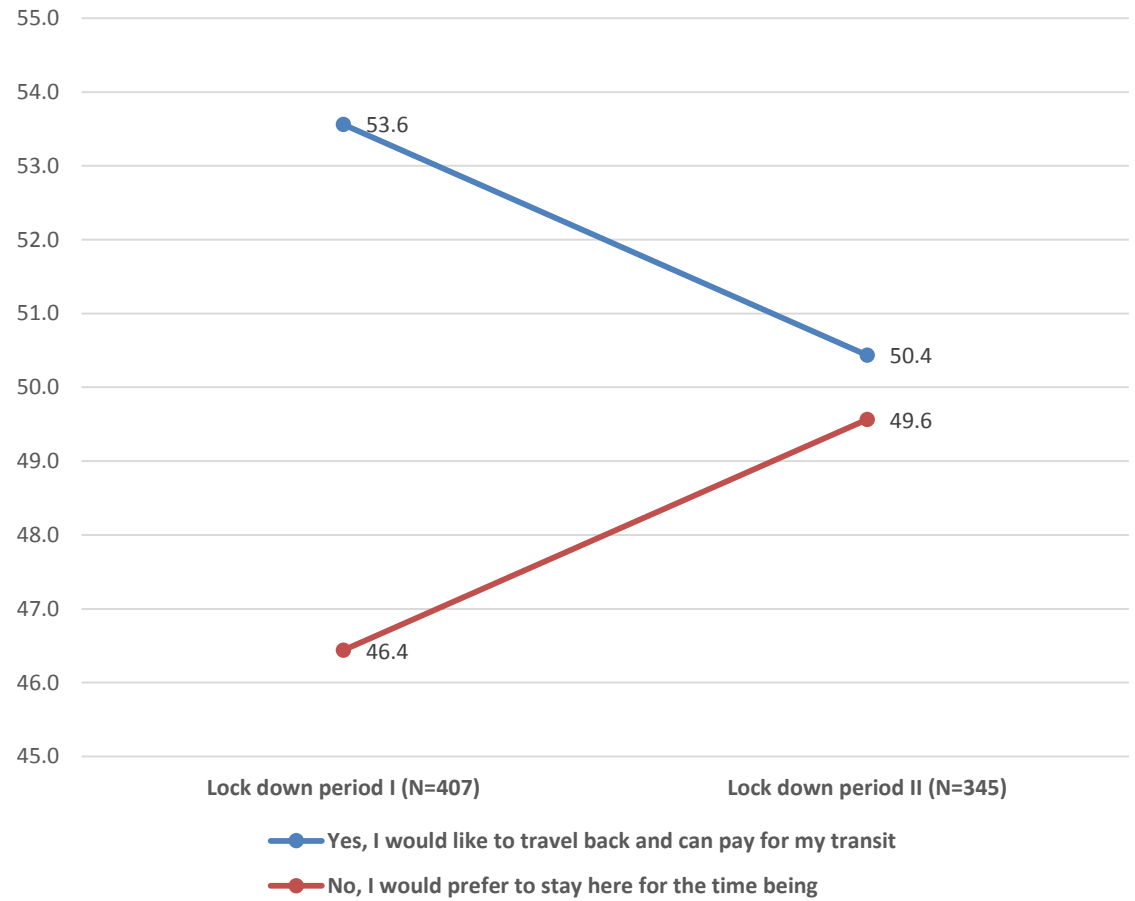




Workers in all locations reported an urgent need for assistance with food. As far as possible, Saajha Manch and its partners have facilitated the distribution of rations and cash to needy workers. Throughout this period, requests for assistance have not decreased, they have only increased along with reports of police action forcing people to stay indoors and even to not collect food kits being distributed by NGOs.

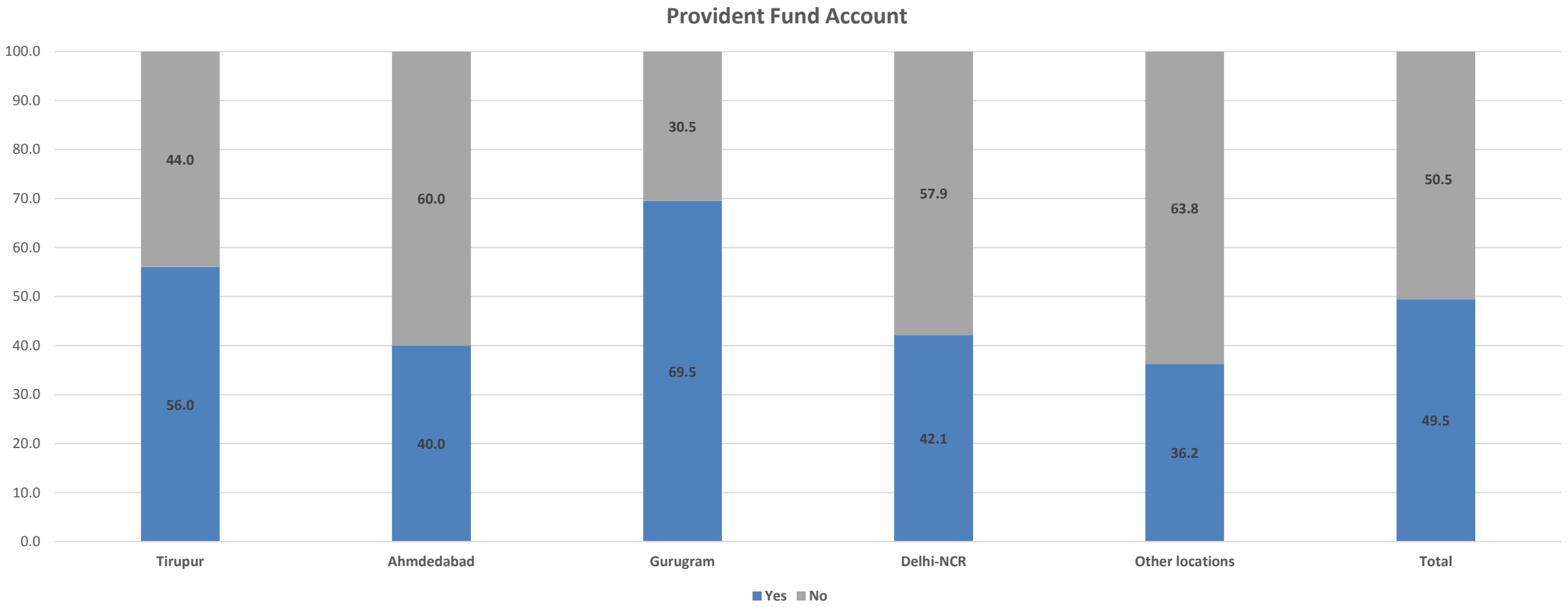
Without wages and living in such harsh conditions, it is to be expected that more than 50 percent of workers reported wanting to travel back to their places of origin and were willing to pay for their transit. Most workers in Gurugram wished to stay back, indicating that they were long-term migrants or simply hoped to re-join work as soon as possible.





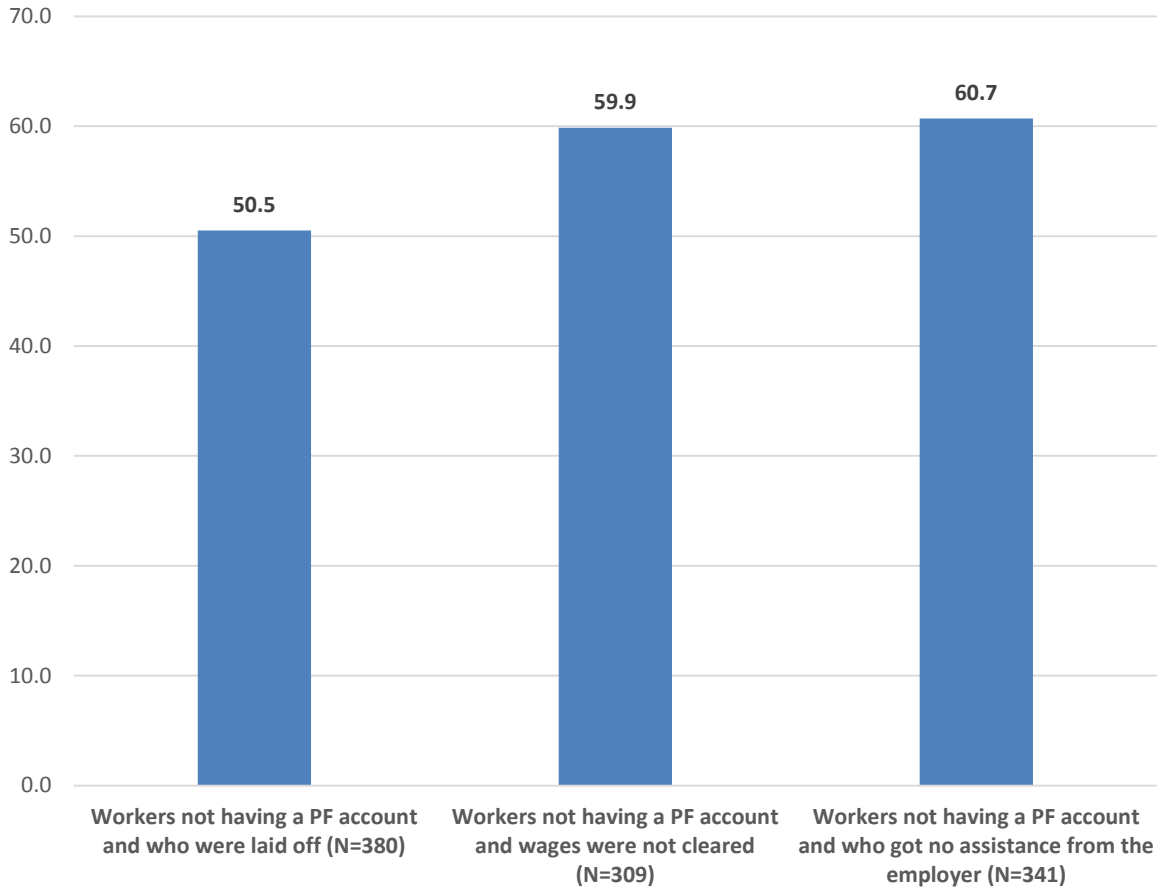
We divided responses into two time period, to understand whether the need for urgent assistance (particularly food) had settled over time. Respondents in the later time period, 8th-14th April, had even more demand for urgent assistance, than respondents in the earlier period, 27th March to 7th April.

The desire to go back home has only marginally decreased, from the earlier to the later time period, perhaps reflecting the small fraction of workers who may have managed to go back home during the initial days of the lockdown.



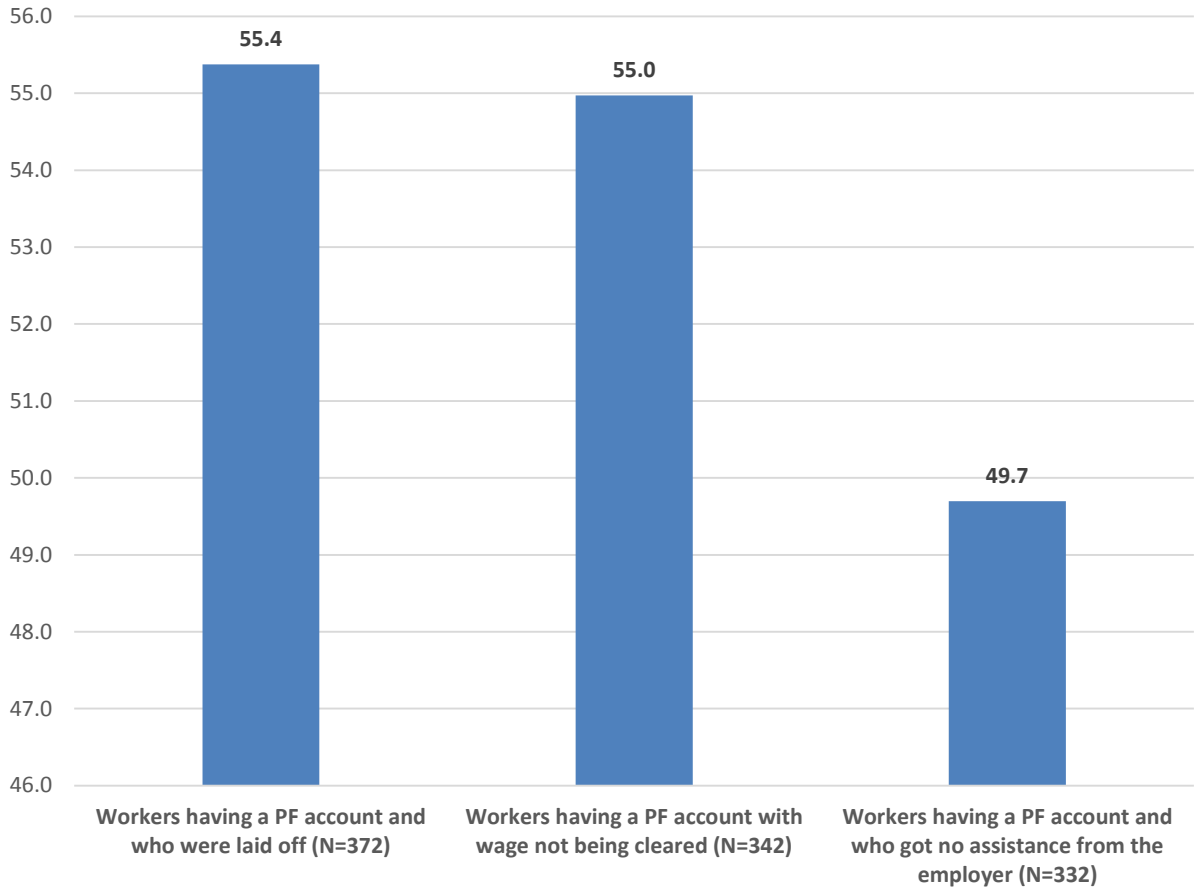
The government has announced a waiver on contributions and special withdrawal facilities for PF (Provident Fund). However, the majority of respondents across all locations excepting Gurugram, report that they do not have PF accounts. Even in Gurugram, Saajha Manch has learned that a huge proportion of account holders are barred from access to their accounts due to registration errors which cannot be addressed without employers' intervention. Relief measures via PF, then, are not accessible to most workers surveyed unless these issues are resolved.

Vulnerabilities of workers not having a PF account



For those workers not having a PF account, we analysed whether they were laid-off, whether their wages were cleared or not, and whether they received any assistance from their employer. Out of a total sample of 380 workers who did not have a PF account, 50.5 percent said that they were laid off, 60 percent said that full wages had not been paid, and a similar percent claimed having not received any support from their employers. This represents the most vulnerable workers who lost wages and do not have any social security either.

Vulnerabilities of workers having PF account



Even among those workers who had a PF account, many reported not being paid their full wages or other forms of assistance.

Voices from the ground: These links are clickable

I am from Madhya Pradesh, my factory in Tirupur has been closed, I want to go back to my place but because of lock down, trains are not running, I am facing great difficulty in arranging for my food.
A worker from Madhya Pradesh stranded in Tirupur

I am from Bihar. We are almost 150 to 200 workers from Bihar. We are all stuck here due to lock down. We are neither getting any facility from company nor from anywhere else. Our problem has increased now. We are not getting any help from Government. We do not have any facility to go back to our native place.
Sanjeev Kumar from Tirupur SIDCO

8 labourers are stranded in one room in Surat. We have made lot of SoS calls but to no avail. There is no ration left and all the savings are over. We are staring at starvation and we might have to commit suicide.
Anil Kumar Yadav, a labourer from Bihar stranded in Surat

5 of us are stuck here in Ahmedabad. We have not received any help from the government.
Labourer stuck in Ahmedabad

Me and my family of four are stranded here in Delhi, We have not received any ration or any other provision from the government.
Manoj Prasad, a labourer from Bihar stranded in Delhi-NCR

Me, my wife and three children are stuck in Maharashtra, I am out of work from 21st March and we do not have any money left to sustain ourselves.
Luvkush Saini, a labourer stranded in Maharashtra

I am not able to go back to my native place.
Uttam Sahu, a labourer from Madhya Pradesh stranded in Chhattisgarh

Over 26 labourers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are stuck in Jharkhand. They were working as construction labourers on National highway 2. Post lock down the situation is grim as the work has stopped and they are left with no money or enough food to sustain themselves
Labourers stranded in Jharkhand

Voices from the ground: These links are clickable

Because of the lock down, I am stranded, and my landlord is harassing me for the rent. I also do not have much food to sustain myself.
A labourer/worker

I am stuck in the lock down along with my children. children are ill and I do not have food. I do not know what to do
Female worker, Gurugram

Buses are not plying because of the lock down, people have no option but to travel on bike to their native places
Sanjha Manch reporter from Aaya Nagar, Delhi-NCR

Shopkeepers are not giving any ration or commodity on credit. Presently, I do not have money to buy ration.
A labourer/worker from Manesar, Gurugram

The government is doing great injustice to people by continuing this lock down without a break. Workers/labourers must be allowed to go back to their homes before extending the lockdown after 14th April.
Vishal Kumar, Bihar

The extended lock down is great injustice being done with the poor people. Poor people who are stuck should be allowed to come back to their native places and they must be provided Rs 10,000 in their accounts.
Lankesh Kumar, Uttar Pradesh

Overcrowding in workers' colonies while being forced to stay inside
Saajha Manch reporter from Gurugram

Inflation of essential medical supplies adds to laid off workers' distress, prompt action taken by the police
Saajha Manch reporter from Gurugram