



Awareness of People on Covid-19 Prevention: A Study Based on Nintavur Moh Area.

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ABSTRACT

Corona virus disease (COVID-19) outbreak poses serious concern to Sri Lanka. While it's out breaking the health staffs and health organizations have the crucial role to prevent COVID-19. This study explores the Awareness of people on COVID-19 prevention activities. Relevant data for this study were gathered by qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Both primary and secondary data also used to collect data. Further, 150 questionnaire were distributed among the households of 25 Grama Niladhari Divisions. The obtained qualitative data were analysed by descriptive method (Thematic Highlighting). Quantitative data were analysed based on Ms-Access / Ms-excel. All the collected data were presented by graphs, tables and statements. Through the data collection, high level of participation of the people in the particular community and the knowledge of the people regarding the control of the COVID-19 and its related issues therefore, it was possible to prevent COVID-19 in this community. Finally, the results shows that, awareness of people in the study area in high level and also the level of peoples participation can cause to prevent COVID-19 in everywhere. All the people in the study area well known about the virus and mostly people in this study area have the awareness on quarantine, RAT and PCR, awareness on putting COVID vaccination ant etc. without the awareness and the corporation of the people we can't control the spreading of COVID-19. Through the participation theory closely interconnected with this study. Therefore, the researcher mentioned that people in the study area are still living without any fear of COVID due to the great knowledge of COVID-19.

Key words: COVID-19, MOH, Nintavur, Prevention, PCR, RAT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a world pandemic. Through this COVID-19 prevention activities are still happening everywhere. World health organization (WHO) reported that, the best way to control the spread of COVID – 19 is find out how that virus is spread. And also washing hands and wearing mask can help to control the spread of coronavirus to others in our community. According to the UN, COVID – 19 virus is spreading rapidly in many parts of the countries in the world. And loss of life. Further, more than two million people have died since its outbreak according to data from the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020).

It has reported that, 231.2 million COVID-19 cases and 4.7 million deaths in 222 countries and territories since china reported its first cases to the World Health Organization (WHO) in December 2019 (Patterson, Manley & Hernandez, 2021). As the epidemic spread around the world, the virus caused its death. Mortality is now higher in Europe and North America than in Asia. In Latin America, South America and Caribbean, the share of global deaths is still rising. Epidemics in different countries follow different paths. The disease has hit the United States particularly hard. About 42.9 million cases have been reported in the country and 687,084 patients have died (Peterson, Manley & Hernandez, 2021).

Globally, United States and the United Kingdom are mostly effected by the COVID-19. It is followed by Canada, France, Germany and India at the top of the effected list. The Morality is highest in United States almost 8.21 million. And Italy has a higher mortality rate than the United States (Giattino et al., 2021).

Although, the health sector is adopting various practices around the world to prevent the COVID – 19. But apart from that, it is currently tired of controlling COVID -19. Health service and health care workers in global level, are now completely exhausted (Aaron Oxley, Executive Director, RESULTS UK, 2021). In order, at the same time COVID-19 prevention activities are still in process. Khan et al., (2020) stated that, Compare with developed countries and the developing countries, emerging countries such as Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh have vaccination and treatment facilities, but the morality rate is high. But, the recent action of the United States of America hasn't encouraged a unified global response to the epidemic (McKeever, 2020). This is why there is a high prevalence of the disease and a high mortality rate.

Further, Sri Lanka's strong healthcare infrastructure was one of the main reasons the government was able to act apace to respond to the first wave of COVID-19. As soon as the first active case was reported in the country, the government mobilized health workers to closely monitor the movement of the epidemic, and they confirmed that most Govt-19 suspects would be found in potential hotspots (TRTWORLD, 2020).

Despite various initiatives being taken by government and Non- governmental organizations to control COVID-19 in Sri Lanka, it has not been able to fully prevent it. Especially the department of ministry of health and health related sectors is well versed in advancing issues related covid-19 prevention activities. Although, the awareness of people in COVID-19 prevention is significant. But so far, focusing on this area no study was included the awareness of people. Therefore, this study explores the Awareness of People in COVID-19 prevention in Nintavur MOH area.

1.2 OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this study to investigate the awareness of people on COVID-19 prevention activities.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

Relevant data of this study was gathered by qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. primary was collected to achieve the objectives of the study. For the primary data collection the following techniques was used.

1) Data collection methods

Primary data collections technique was used for the purpose of obtaining data for analysis.

I. Observation:

The data was collected by the researcher through direct observation on the community for this study.

II. Questionnaire:

Out of 10,758 households in 25 Grama Niladhari Divisions in this study area and according to the average number of households in each division, 150 questionnaires were distributed among them.

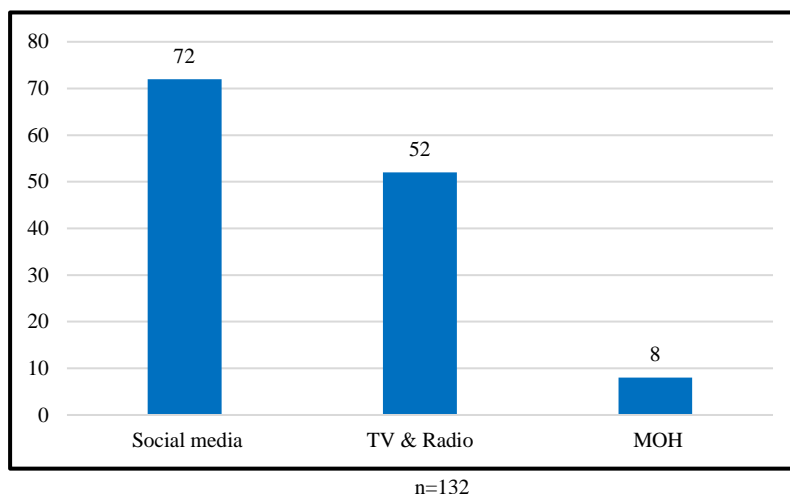
1.4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Public awareness is the level of understanding of the importance of a particular project or activity and its impacts. In that way, the youth should be made aware of the fight against the virus and the prevention methods needed to protect themselves in every villages (UNICEF, 2021).

1.4.1 Knowledge about the Corona virus

Based on the data obtained through the questionnaire, 132 responds were received. Through that, it can be seen the ways of people learnt about the Corona virus. The below chart 4.19 explained how people gained knowledge about the COVID-19.

Chart 1.1 The ways of people learnt about COVID-19



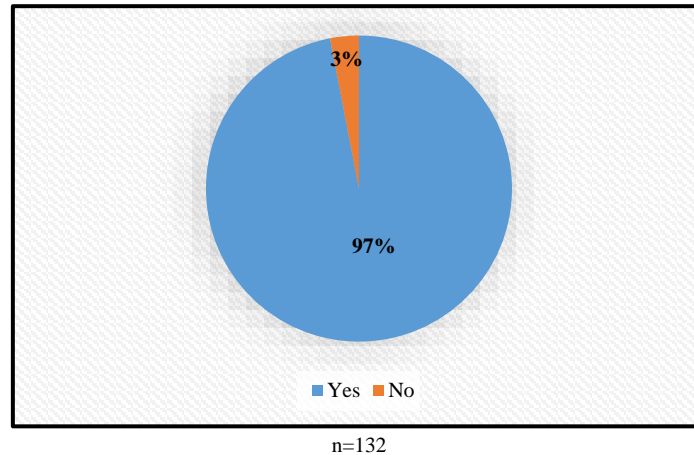
Source: (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

Based on the 132 responses received, it is seen that 72 people got a clear knowledge about COVID-19 through social media, 52 people have got knowledge about through television and radio, and only 08 people have got a clear knowledge about COVID-19 through MOH. Through that, they are 55%, 39% and 6% of their percentage. Due to the fact that more people are addicted to social networking sites in today's era, it is seen that more people are getting knowledge about this Corona virus] through social networking sites.

1.4.2 Knowledge about the symptoms

Based on the above chart 1.2 contains about the symptoms of the disease associated with the COVID infection is generally known. However, it can be observed that it varies from person to person and from community to community. That is, knowledge of the symptoms of the disease may be seen as a matter of common knowledge among the literate in a normal society. On the other hand, among the uneducated people, the explanations regarding the symptoms of this disease are seen in a narrow circle.

Chart 1.2 People's knowledge about the COVID symptoms

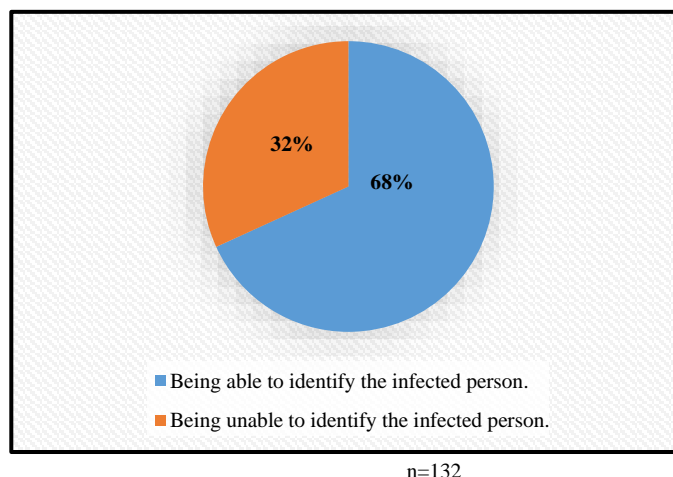


Source: (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

Similarly, the number of people aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 based on the 132 responses available for the study area is mentioned above chart 1.2 shows that, It can be observed that 128 people have sufficient knowledge about the symptoms associated with COVID-19 it is in 97% and only 04 people have no any idea about the symptoms of the disease and it is 3%.

Further, among the respondents in the study area, they are aware of common symptoms associated with COVID infection such as high fever, fatigue, dry cough. Some other symptoms like cough with phlegm, difficulty in breathing and stuttering are mentioned. However, it is noteworthy that more people in the study area are aware of common symptoms associated with COVID infection.

Chart 1.3 People's ability to identify a COVID infected person



Source: (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

However, identifying an infected person is not a trivial matter, even in the case of a person who is aware of the symptoms associated with COVID infection. This is because a person affected by COVID is seen to be socially interwoven with the community, making it difficult to identify that person as the originator. In other words, it can be observed in the study area that people who are aware of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 are unable to identify the infectious agents in the community.

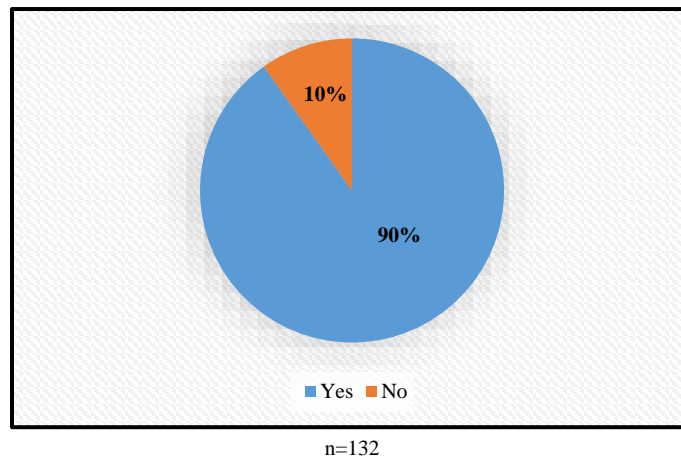
Further, only 90 people in the study area mentioned that they could identify the infected persons and it is 68% while 42 people mentioned that they could not identify them from the community and that is 32%. The chart 1.3 given above makes this clear.

“As far as the Nintavur MOH division is concerned, even in cases where more people have been exposed to COVID infection, we have faced various difficulties have been observed in identifying it. The reason is, when a person does not get clear explanations and knowledge about the symptoms of the virus, even in the event that the particular person shows the symptoms related to the disease, he does not consider it as a disease and normally his daily activities are integrated with the society and his daily social interaction was observed. So, Due to this reason we had a lot of difficult to separate the patient from the society” (Focused group discussion).

1.4.3 Knowledge about the impacts of COVID-19

In case of any type of communicable disease in the society, it is a normal thing that the social economic impact of the society due to the infection is caused. It is a well-known fact that the socio-economic impacts of this type of COVID-19 infection have occurred. UNDP (2021) reported that, the UN framework for the quick socio & economic response to the COVID 19 crisis warns, “The COVID-19 epidemic is far greater than a health crisis, it affects communities and economies at their core.

Chart 1.4 People’s knowledge about the impacts of COVID-19

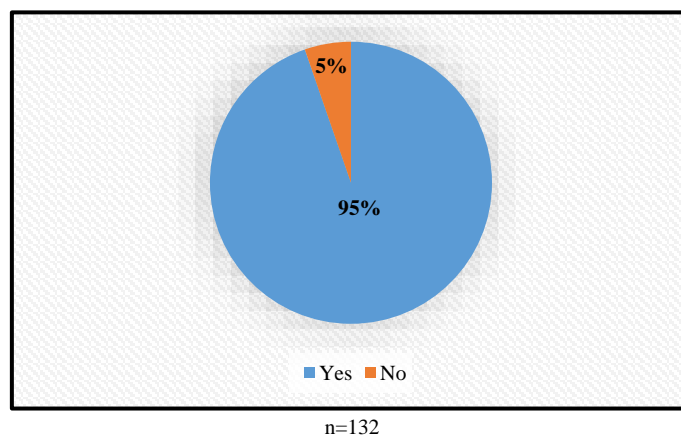


Source: (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

In this way, based on the data obtained through the questionnaire distributed in the study area, 119 people have sufficient knowledge about the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 infection at a level of 90%, and 13 people and it is 10% lack sufficient clarity about economic and social issues. The Report on the Socio and Economic Impact of COVID-19 in the Asia-Pacific Region calls on regional countries to avoid reversing the path of sustainable development to the pre-epidemic environment and to seize the opportunity to create a better future (UNDP, 2020). However, only a person who is sufficiently aware of the socio-economic issues can realize the extent to which the society is affected. It will also be possible to remove the consequences and build the society.

1.4.4 Awareness of people in COVID-19 prevention activities

Chart 1.5 Awareness of people in Quarantine



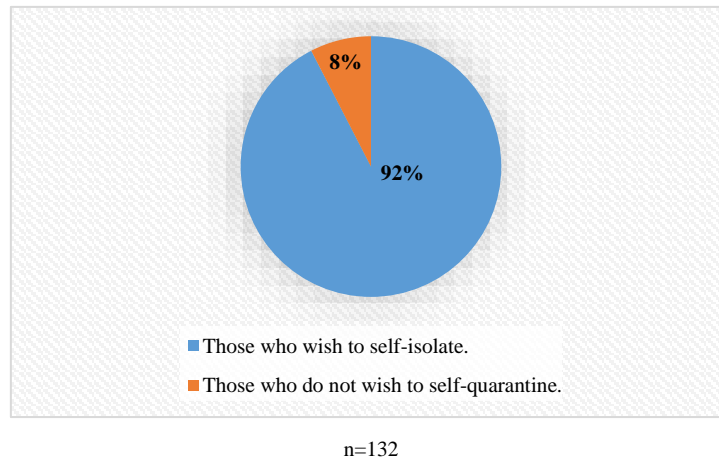
Source: (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

Isolation remains the primary disease prevention method for COVID-19 infection. People's disease awareness means knowing about the preventive strategies related to a disease and acting accordingly. In that way, the information about the knowledge of the people regarding isolation in the study area is clearly explained by the above Chart 1.5.

Based on the specific responses of the people to the question asked, it can be observed that 125 people have sufficient explanation regarding quarantine and only 07 people do not have any clarity regarding quarantine. It has been observed that even the people who are aware of the issues related to isolation are not clear about the procedures that are followed or implemented during the isolation operations.

Also, it is a rare thing among people to engage in self-isolation activities when they are exposed to COVID infection. Thus, it is evident from the available data that the people of the study area showed more interest in self-isolation activities. Among the respondents, 122 people those who wish to self-isolation, and 07 people those who do not wish to self-isolation.

Chart 1.6 Awareness of people in self-isolation process

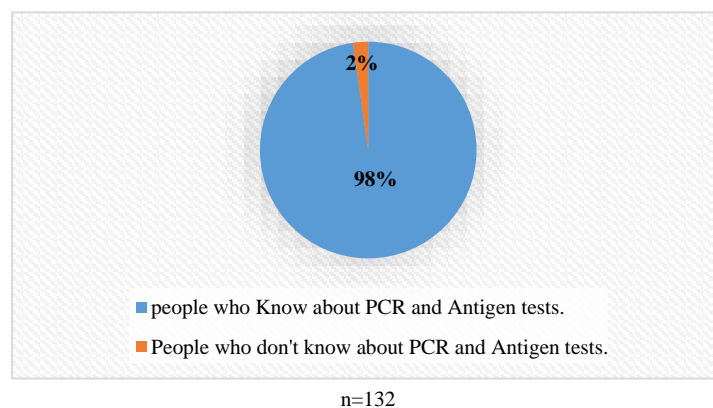


Source: (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

92% of the respondents mentioned that they would initiate self-isolation activities in that, they become infected and mentioned some reasons for self-isolation. Especially in order to prevent the spread of infection to the community, to get relief from the disease, to prevent the spread of the disease to the children due to the presence of small children in the house, to control the impact of the disease and prevent the spread of the disease, not only this, some others have mentioned such reasons as getting the COVID relief products. Meanwhile, the remaining 8% of respondents mentioned that they were not willing to undergo quarantine operations due to excessive fear, fear and reluctance to go to government quarantine camps (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

1.4.5 Awareness of people in PCR and RAT

Chart 1.8 Awareness of people in PCR and RAT



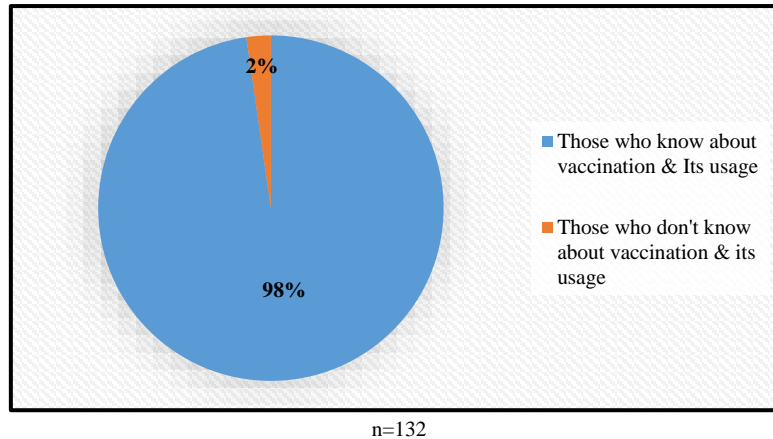
Source: (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

Based on the above chart, According to the request for the details of the people who are aware of the PCR and Antigen tests carried out during the unusual circumstances of the COVID infection, according to the study carried out in the study area, it is known that 129 people have learned about the PCR and Antigen tests and only 03 people are not aware of these test methods. Based on this data, the staff of the MOH also discussed related with these things.

1.4.6 Awareness of people in putting COVID vaccine

According to the World Health Organization, Equal access to safe and effective vaccines is critical to ending the COVID-19 infection, so it is highly encouraging to see so many vaccines being proven and progressing. Based on the information obtained from 132 respondents in the study area, 129 people said that they are aware of the COVID vaccine and its benefits. Whereas only 03 persons expressed their opinion that they are not aware about the vaccine and its benefits. That means 98% of people are aware of vaccination and its benefits whereas only 2% are not aware of it. This can be explained by the chart 1.9 given below.

Chart 1.9 Awareness of people in putting COVID vaccine

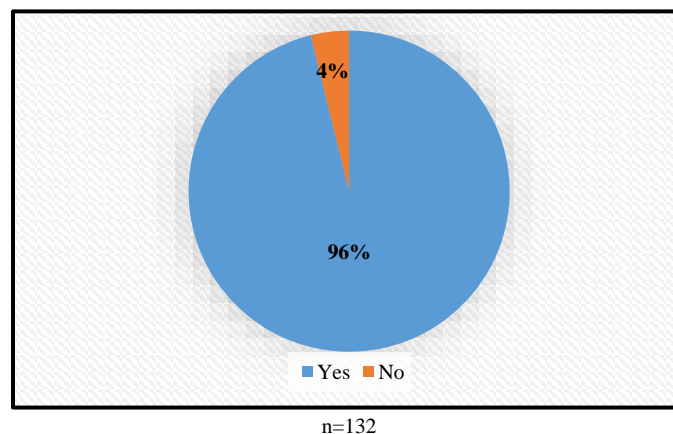


Source: (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

Apart from this, the respondents who were asked about the reasons for getting the COVID vaccine in the study area and the reasons for not showing interest in getting the COVID vaccine gave the following reasons. They said that they got the vaccine because of the fear of not being able to travel if they don't get the vaccine, protecting their family members and relatives from infection, increasing immunity by getting the vaccine, and fearing that they will be able to pay for the vaccine later. Also, it is evidence that certain people in the study area are not interested in getting the vaccine due to fear and reluctance to get the vaccine, lack of confidence in the vaccine, fear of death of the people who got the vaccine, and rumours spread at the community level about the vaccine (Questionnaire).

1.4.7 Level of public understanding regarding MOH's COVID control measures

Chart 1.10 Level of public understanding regarding MOH's COVID control measures



Source: (Questionnaire survey, 2022)

The MOH office is the main actor in the COVID prevention activities as far as the study area Nintavur is concerned. That is why various programs and activities have been undertaken and implemented at the community level to control the spread of COVID. According to the data received from 132 respondents in the study area, 95% of the people said that sufficient efforts were made to control COVID by the Nintavur MOH office and 7% of the people said that sufficient control efforts were not made.

According to chart 1.10 given above, 125 persons have stated that adequate efforts are being made by Nintavur MOH to control the spread of COVID and 07 persons have said that they are not. However, it cannot be said that the MOH has not fully implemented the COVID control measures and relatively many people have expressed their support.

1.4.8 People's views on controlling the spread of COVID-19

In response to a question asked of a respondent in the study area about the measures the country intends to take or is taking to control the spread of COVID-19, they expressed their views as follows. This means that disease can be controlled by following proper hygiene measures and getting vaccinated. At the same time, some others mentioned ideas such as avoiding gathering in public places, wearing a face mask, using sanitizer, maintaining social distance of two meters, engaging in self-isolation measures when showing symptoms of COVID, taking hot water and steam as much as possible, and following medical advice (Questionnaire survey, 2022).

However, during the interview was conducted with MOH staff, they said that, "whatever prevention programs are carried out by former MOH officer Dr. Farooza Nakbar, People were seen as having animosity towards her. This also led to her transfer (Interview-04).

This being the case, some of the human respondents in the study area mentioned that Ayurveda medicine can boost their immune system and protect themselves from COVID infection by using more Ayurveda medicine and that Ayurveda medicine has better response to COVID than Western medicine. As the district Ayurveda hospital is located in the study area, some types of medicines were given free to the people to boost immunity. By consuming it normally, people were given the opportunity and hope to increase their immune system. This is why many people have mentioned that by following this method of treatment, the COVID epidemic can be completely eradicated from the society.

1.5 CONCLUSION

Further, the Participatory approach implies that it is impossible to achieve anything without the cooperation of the particular community. Thus, the role of the people of the study area was seen as the main one to bring the COVID infection under control and eliminate it completely in the case of the study area. In cases where COVID control measures were implemented by Nintavur MOH some persons were found not heeding MOH's health instructions and not following proper hygiene norms. However, it cannot be mentioned that all the people found in the entire territory based on a few people have not contributed enough to the MOH's activities related to COVID control.

Also, people are not properly following the instructions of the Ministry of Health regarding COVID, and the challenges seen in relation to poor-corporation in primary contacts tracing and the unsatisfied health seeking behaviour of the people were all seen as massive challenges. When the data collection activities were carried out for the study, the present fuel shortage and travelling expenses found in the country were seen as the limitations of the study.

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