



bachpan  
bachao  
andolan



SATYARTHI

KAILASH SATYARTHI CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

# C<sup>COVID</sup>-AFFECTED CHILDREN IN INDIA

RESULTS OF THE  
TELEPHONIC SURVEY

2021

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## Children who lost one of the parents



## Children who lost both parents



Number of families about which complete information was obtained during the telephonic survey



**27**

(MP, Bihar, UP, Delhi, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat)

**9**

(MP, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, UP, Delhi, Rajasthan)

Number of complaints forwarded to concerned Govt. authorities and child protection agencies



**19**

**5**

Number of COVID-affected children identified in surveyed families



**58**

**20**

Number of children infected with COVID at the time of the survey



**1**

**0**

Average age of the youngest COVID-affected child in surveyed families



**8** years

**9** years

Number of children currently enrolled in schools



**41**

**10**

The top three supports requested by the respondents for the COVID-affected children and their families



1. Education of children
2. Financial assistance for the family
3. Ration

1. Education of children
2. School fees
3. Financial assistance for the family

Number of families which received any kind of support from the Government or local bodies or private agency



**0**

**0**

Number of families who sought educational support for COVID-affected children



**18**



**5**



Number of families who sought financial support for survival



**8**



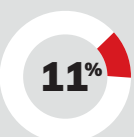
**3**



Percent families requiring legal assistance to claim assets of the deceased parent



**11%**



**11%**



Percent orphan children whose custody and guardianship was taken by the caretaker legally



**NA**

**0%**



**Note:** In this survey, the children who lost one or both parents due to COVID irrespective of their infection status are defined as the 'COVID-affected' children.

## Analysis and Findings

Out of the 400 plus calls received by the complaint cell of the Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), between 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021 it was found that 105 calls were relating to children who lost either one of the parents or both the parents due to COVID-19 infection. Using the database of the complaint cell it was decided to carry out a telephonic survey with the complainants who reached out to BBA with the information about the child. This exercise was undertaken to understand the immediate and urgent needs of these children. A team of six researchers called the complainants and collected information with the help of a short questionnaire. The telephonic survey was carried out during 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The response was received only from 36 respondents (34%) with a complete set of answers. Out of these, 27 calls (26%) were relating to a query to provide support to children who lost one of their parents, while 9 (9%) were for providing support to an orphan child who lost his/her parents to COVID.

**Table 1 Response rate**

	Results of the phone calls	
	No.	%
Regarding children who lost one of the parents	27	26%
Regarding children who lost both parents	9	9%
Regarding adoption-related queries	7	7%
Other queries	1	1%
Duplicate entries	2	2%
Numbers could not be contacted	59	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>

To fulfill the study objective, the respondents were asked to provide detailed information about the children and their immediate and urgent needs. State-wise distribution of families about which the information was provided by the complainant is presented in Table 2. The distribution of surveyed families indicates that the extent of the problem is not limited to one or two States. The 36 interviews were found to be spread across nine states, though a majority (86%) of them are from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh Chhattisgarh, and Delhi. The Government of India data reveals that as on date in these nine states 1.3 Cr. persons were infected with COVID and almost 2.0 lakh persons lost their lives due to it. The distribution suggests that out of 36 families about whom information was

collected, in 27 family's children lost one of the parents, and in the rest of the nine families children lost both the parents due to COVID.

**Table 2 Distribution of surveyed families**

State	Lost one of the parents	Lost both parents
Bihar	6	1
Madhya Pradesh	8	1
Uttar Pradesh	5	2
Chhattisgarh	1	3
Delhi	3	1
Maharashtra	2	-
Jharkhand	1	-
Rajasthan	-	1
Gujarat	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>

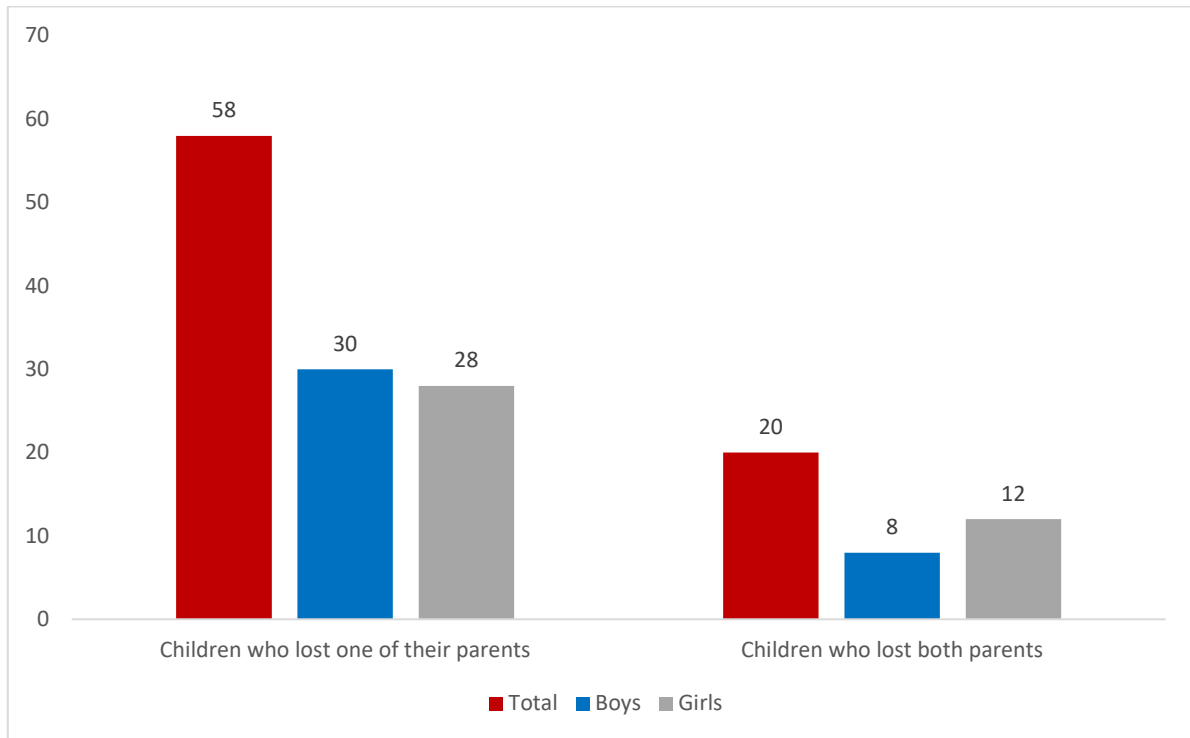
In all 27 families where children were reported to have lost one of the parents, it was their father, the primary breadwinner of the family, who died during this pandemic. Further probing about the occupation of the deceased father reveals that nine were working either with Govt. or with a private firm. Another six were working as a driver and five had their small businesses.

## Total Number of COVID-Affected Children

In this survey, the children who lost one or both parents due to COVID irrespective of their infection status are defined as the 'COVID-affected' children. An effort was made to find out the total number of children in the families about which the information was received by the compliant cell of BBA. Results show that 78 children (38 Boys and 40 Girls) are affected due to the COVID. On average 2 children per family are getting affected due to the loss of life of their parents. Only one child from Uttar Pradesh was reported to be infected with COVID who is currently under treatment.

To assess the kind of need and support such children may require, the respondents were asked about the age of the youngest child of the family. Data shows that the average age of the youngest child in the family where children lost one of the parents and families where children lost both of their parents was found to be 7.8 years and 8.5 years respectively.

**Figure 1 Number of COVID-affected children**



Further, information on the current enrolment status of the children reveals that 71% of children who lost one of their parents and 50% of children who lost both of their parents are currently enrolled in schools and pursuing their studies.

## Current Place of Stay

Most children who lost their parents are supported by their family members only. Seven children from three families who lost both parents appear not to have any support system as they are staying alone at their home. Such children are in immediate need of care and protection.

**Table 3 Place of stays and accompanying person**

	Lost one of the parents	Lost both parents
Mother	25	-
Grand Parents	-	3
Relative	2	3
Alone	-	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>

## Action Taken by BBA Upon Receipt of Information about Children Who Lost their Parents

Apart from counseling and providing immediate possible help, the details of the children who lost their parents were shared by the Bachpan Bachao Andolan with the concerned Government authorities for necessary action for ensuring their protection. By the time of the survey, 67% of the complaints were forwarded to the concerned Government authorities. Of the cases forwarded to the Government authorities, 62% of them were sent at least seven days prior to the survey. However, the survey findings suggest that none of the 36 families where children lost either one of their parents or both parents received any kind of support from the Government or local bodies, or private agencies.

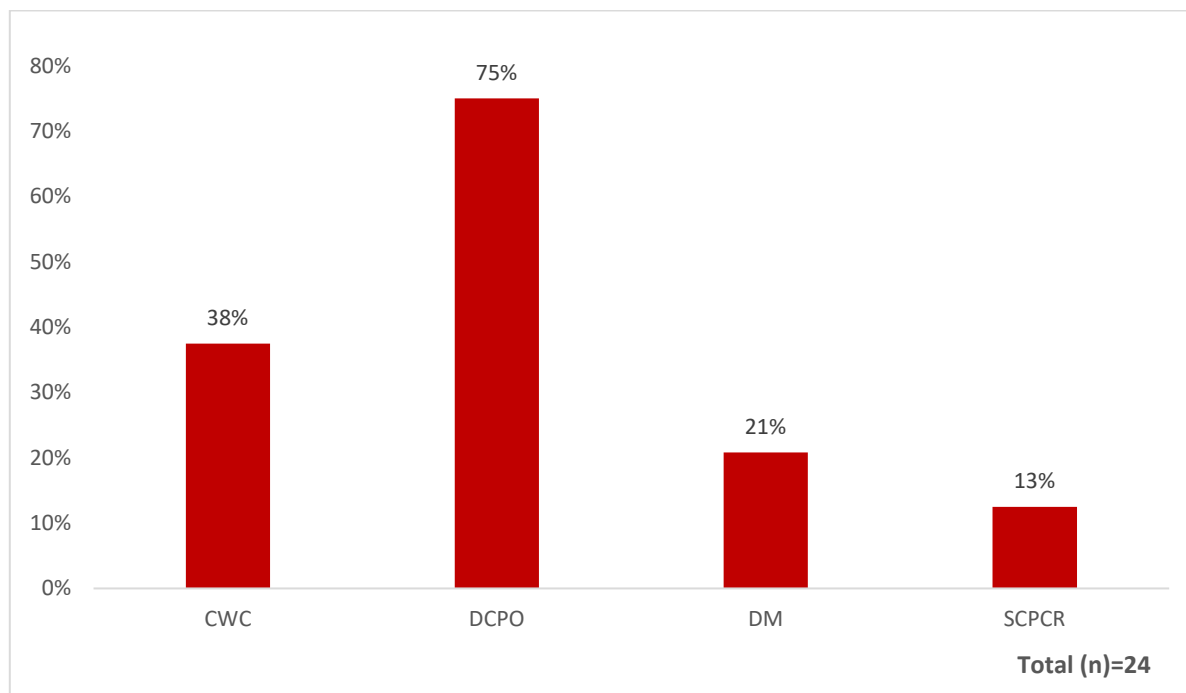
**Table 4 Details of the complaints forwarded to Government authorities and child protection agencies for further action**

	Lost one of the parents	Lost both parents	Combined
<b>Whether Complaint forwarded to Government authorities</b>			
Yes	19 (70%)	5 (56%)	24 (67%)
No	6 (22%)	-	6 (17%)
Fact-finding in process	-	3 (33%)	3 (8%)
Other reasons	2 (7%)	1 (11%)	3 (8%)
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>No. of days passed since the date of forwarding the complaint to Govt.</b>			
< 3 days	3 (16%)	4 (80%)	7 (29%)
3-6 days	2 (11%)	-	2 (8%)
7-10 days	7 (37%)	1 (20%)	8 (33%)
> 10 days	7 (37%)	-	7 (29%)
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5*</b>	<b>24</b>

Note: \*to be interpreted with caution due to low base

Of the total complaints forwarded to the Government authorities for further action 75% of them were sent to the District Child Protection Officers (DCPOs) followed by 33% to the Child Welfare Committees (CWCs). More than one-fifth (21%) of cases were also sent to the concerned District Magistrates.

**Figure 2 Government authorities to whom complaints were forwarded by BBA**



**Note:** Total may not add up to 100% due to multiple-choice response

## Immediate and Urgent Support Needed by COVID-Affected Children

During the survey, an attempt was made to understand the immediate and urgent support required by the COVID-affected children. The top three supports requested by the respondents are 'education of children', 'their school fees' and 'financial assistance for the family'. This is true for both categories of children. Two-thirds (66%) of children who lost one of their parents require support to continue their education. All respondents who reported about orphan children also made this request for children. Few families also stated the need for financial support to pay the school fees of their children. During the survey, the respondents who mentioned 'education of children' as an immediate and urgent requirement were asked whether they would be interested to send the COVID-affected children to Delhi for continuing their schooling in a fully residential facility. However, none of the respondents agreed to send them.

About one-third of families (30% where children lost one of the parents and 33% where children lost both parents) require financial assistance for survival.

**Table 5 Type of support required by children and their family members**

Type of Support	Lost one of the parents			Lost both parents		
	No. Families	No. of Children	No. of Children enrolled in School	No. Families	No. of Children	No. of Children enrolled in School
Education	18 (67%)	37 (64%)	27 (66%)	5 (56%)	13 (65%)	8 (80%)
School fees	1 (4%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	3 (33%)	8 (40%)	1 (10%)
Financial assistance	8 (30%)	18 (31%)	NA	3 (33%)	6 (30%)	NA
Job support	1 (4%)	3 (5%)	NA	-	-	NA
Ration	3 (11%)	6 (10%)	NA	-	-	NA
Food and Shelter	-	-	NA	1 (11%)	3 (15%)	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>9*</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10*</b>

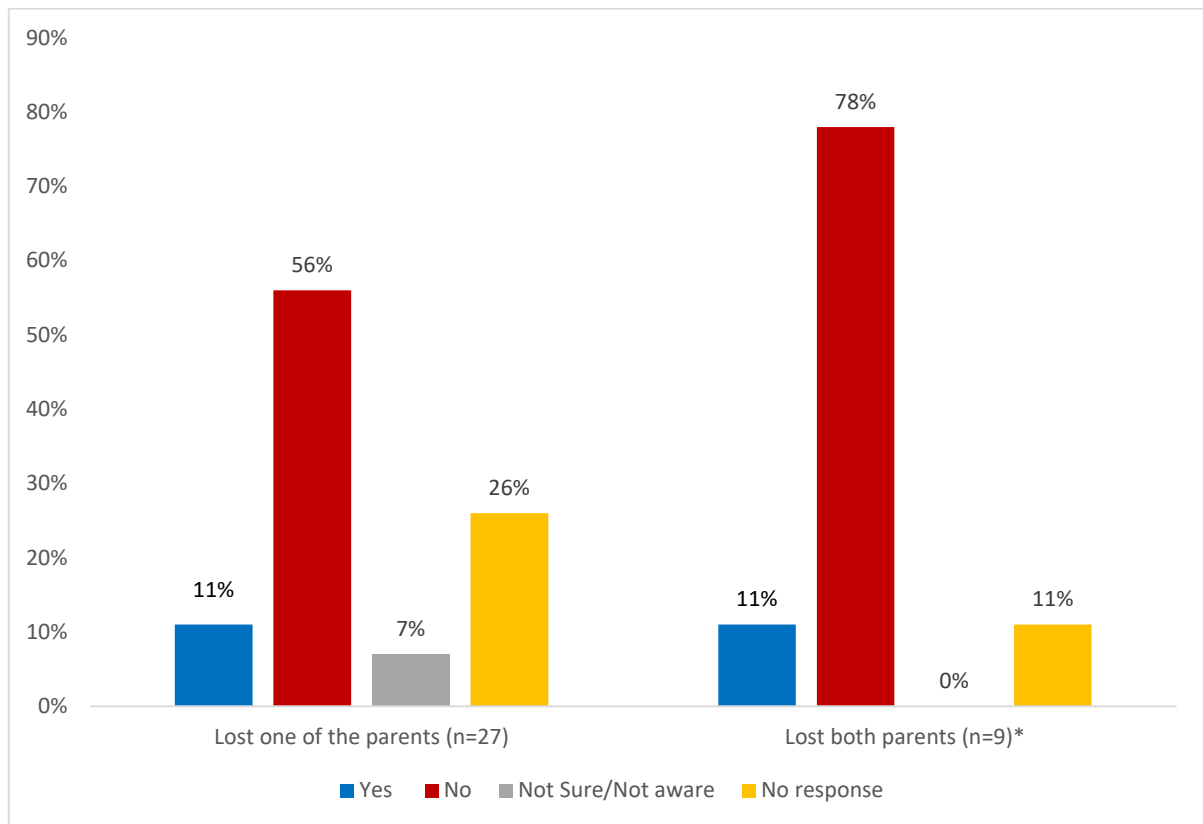
Note: Total may not add up to 100% due to multiple-choice response; \*to be interpreted with caution due to low base

## Requirement of Legal Support

The unexpected and untimely demise of parents due to COVID not only leaves the children and other family members in a state of sadness and shock but also forces them to go through the cumbersome legal formalities for the succession of assets and properties. To ease their problem and provide required legal support, the respondents were asked whether the children and/or their families need any legal assistance to claim the assets and properties of the deceased parent. Only four out of 36 families expressed the requirement of legal support for claiming the bank account balance of the deceased parent.



**Figure 3 Requirement of legal assistance to claim assets of the deceased parent**



**Note: \*to be interpreted with caution due to low base**

The respondents were further probed to find out whether the legal formalities relating to custody and guardianship of the child had been completed. Results show that in all cases the legal formalities relating to the transfer of guardianship were not completed till the time of the survey. Ignorance about the law and legal procedures could be the main reason behind this. The legal division of BBA is willing to provide them legal support but here it is imperative to mention that the process of transferring the legal guardianship may be a little long.

## Conclusion

Undoubtedly the devastating pandemic is taking a heavy toll on children and families who are from poor socio-economic strata. The COVID-affected children who lost their parents are in urgent need of care and protection. The central, as well as concerned State Government's, must work in close coordination with each other to

- locate all children who lost their parents and maintain records
- rehabilitate them as per the provisions under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children), Act.
- ensure smooth transferring of the custody legally to the immediate relative taking care of children who lost both the parents
- devise effective, and result-oriented solutions urgently to deal with the problem and ensure the protection of all children
- putting a strong monitoring mechanism in place to reach out to every child who is distressed and is in need of support, care, and protection
- implement the programmes and schemes with a greater level of compassion and honesty
- ensure all legal support to children and their families for the succession of assets and properties of the deceased person



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To complain about child abuse,  
please call 1098 or Bachpan Bachao Andolan's  
Helpline number **1800 102 7222**