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# COVID 19 – SHAPING OF A NEW LIFESTYLE & ANTICIPATING THE AFTER

By VERDE

31 March 2020, Soreze, Pailles

The coronavirus outbreak is first and foremost a human tragedy, affecting the lives of billions globally. The pandemic has discontinued the concept of the world being a global village, and commuting as the norm, a norm which has today gone from being normal to being almost obsolete. The situation is also having a growing impact on the global economy. This survey by VERDE was undertaken during confinement period via a panel survey which allowed for respondents to participate by using their smart phones and an online survey administered using VERDE's database. The report is intended to provide the population and business leaders with a perspective on the current situation and its impact on lifestyle, possible implications for retailers and how consumers are likely to behave in the coming months. The outbreak is evolving quickly, and some of the perspectives in this report may fall rapidly out of date.

While confinement and social distancing are the widely adopted methods in containing the spread of the Covid-19, the population remains highly to extremely afraid of getting infected (close to 74%). Close to 94% of the population are today concerned by the spread of the Covid-19 and have been sensitive to widespread campaigns undertaken on the virus. As most people are aware of the virus' symptoms, it seems that there is a perception by some 55% of the population that people may be infected and self-isolating today.

The population seems to have a common belief that it is only together that this virus can be defeated. The population in its vast majority believes that Government is taking appropriate measures against the Covid-19 and are confident that the Government will handle the spread of the virus. 91.3% of the population approve of the bold measures taken by the government so far to contain the virus,.

43.5% of the population are likely to cut their spending and buy important items only. Online platforms as we have seen, are likely to have significant traffic during and post Covid-19. Roughly one-third of the population stated that they do their purchases online to avoid going out, which is expected to have dire consequences on retailers through induced buying. There is nonetheless optimism in the population that the situation will be better (above 60%) in the coming month. While the impact of the crisis is different to predict, it is likely that the behavior of the population and their efforts to follow guidelines will guide the future of the country.

There is however the chance that policy innovation and agile execution may prevent a full-blown U-shape in our economy, keeping the shock's path closer to a deep V-shape than would otherwise be possible. But the battle is only in its early stage, and without the efforts of everyone, beating the odds will be impossible.

For more details on the survey, contact VERDE on 214 1900 or by email on [info@verdefrontier.mu](mailto:info@verdefrontier.mu).

## *VERDE identifies three personality traits during the confinement period.*

### PERSONNA 1 - THE RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN (Representing 38.3% of the population)

- Average age: 42
- Very well informed on the virus and global happenings
- Are taking all recommended measures to avoid being contaminated or contaminating others
- Believe they will be worse off financially after the crisis
- Avoid going out for groceries as much as possible, either by buying in bulk for 6 months or via online shopping
- Consume more bread and rice products, liquids and fruits and vegetables, and to a lesser extent meat and pulses
- Believe that it is unacceptable for people to still be going out today
- Want to know what they can do to support the government in these times, taking priority over obtaining information on infected people
- Their most utilised media channel is the TV
- They would call hotline if they believe that they may have caught the virus



### PERSONNA 2 - – THE SELECTIVE CITIZEN (Representing 46.8% of the population)

- Average age: 34
- Informed on the virus and global happenings
- Are taking most of the recommended measures to avoid being contaminated or contaminating others
- Mixed views as to whether they will be worse off financially after the crisis or not
- Are going out for groceries but at a lesser frequency than before
- Consume more bread and rice products, liquids and fruits and vegetables, and to a lesser extent meat and pulses
- Believe that people should stock up but be more careful
- Want to obtain information on infected people, taking priority over wanting to know what they can do to support the government in these times
- Their most utilised media channel is the online newspaper and social media
- Mixed reactions with either calling hotline if they believe that they may have caught the virus, or stay at home, self-isolate and self-medicate



## PERSONNA 3 - THE CAREFREE CITIZEN

(Representing 14.9% of the population)

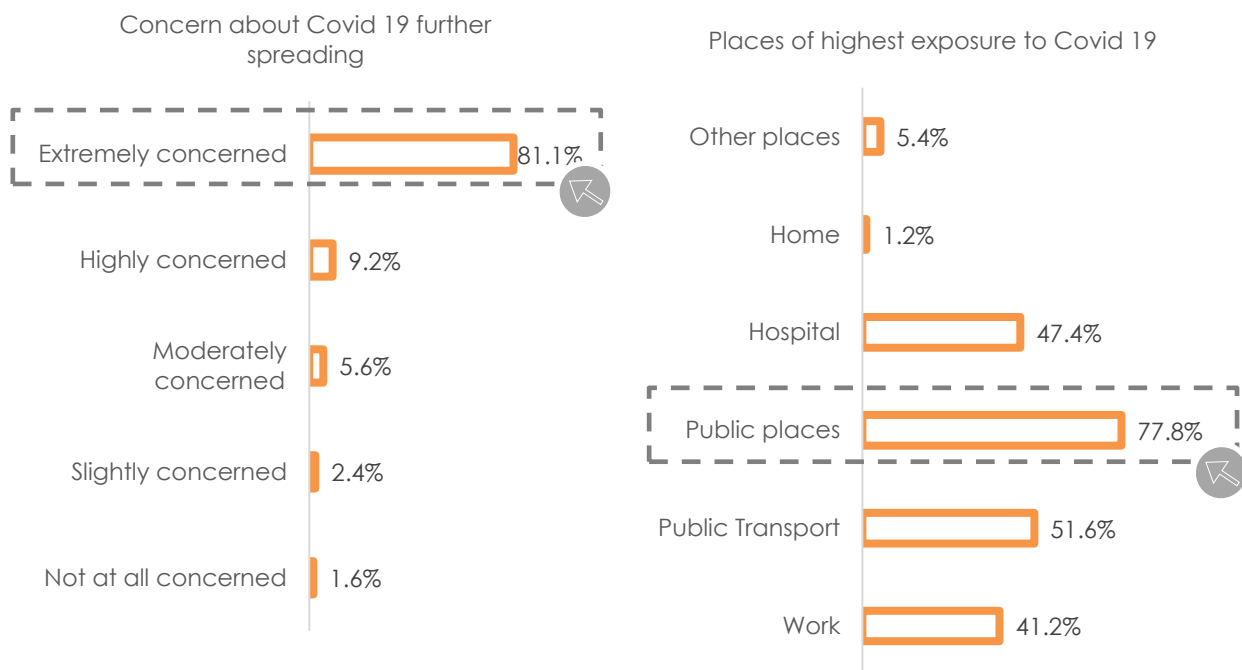
- Average age: 49
- Slightly informed on the virus and global happenings, or misinformed
- Are taking some of the recommended measures to avoid being contaminated or contaminating others
- Believe they will be worse off financially after the crisis
- Are going out for groceries but at a lesser frequency than before
- Consume more bread and rice products, frozen products, pulses and cleaning supplies
- Believe that people should stock up but be more careful
- Want to obtain information on infected people and also want to know what they can do to support the government in these times



Profiling and segmentation was undertaken across the sample obtained to understand the different personnas that have emerged from this crisis. These personnas will help provide leading and trailing indicators to those trying to understand how people will respond as developments continue to play out during the pandemic.

*The fear of getting infected, concerns of the virus spreading further and change in daily living sums up the last two weeks of Mauritians.*

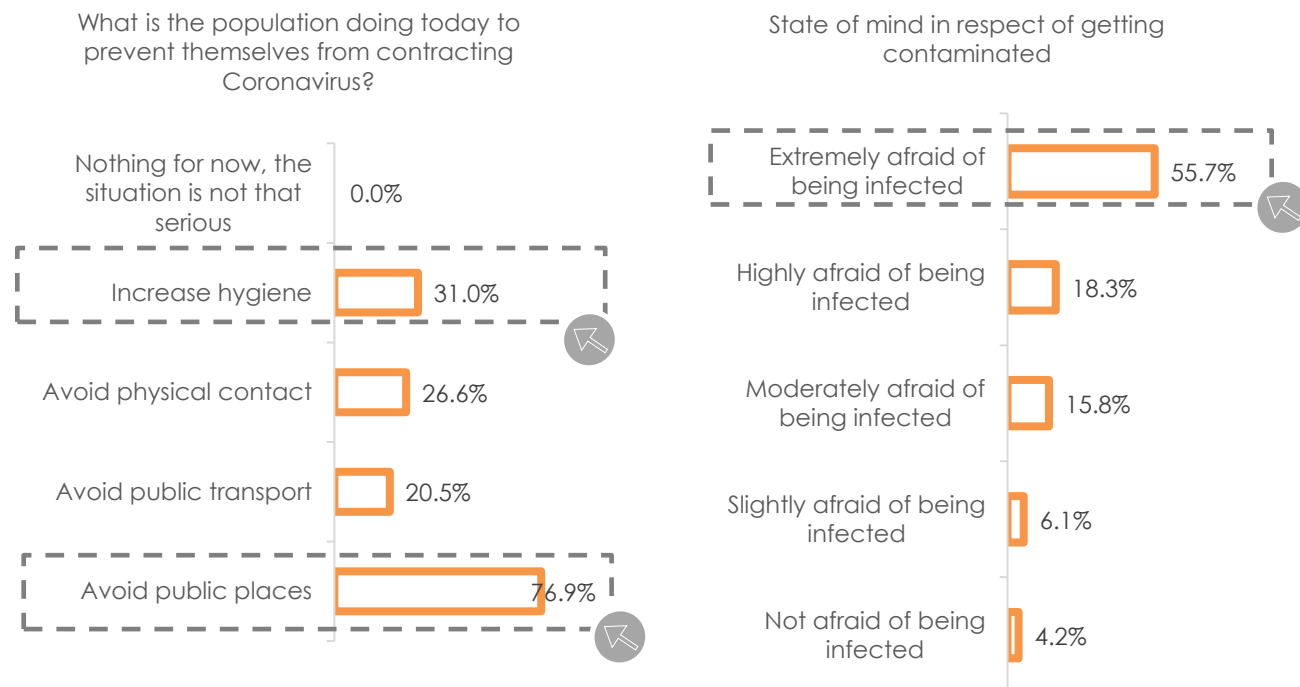
Public spaces are the most unwanted by people today, as they remain extremely concerned by the spread of the Covid-19. Two main behavioural adjustments, which the population is facing today, is avoiding public spaces as they live in the fear of getting infected by the Covid-19, and increasing their hygiene by adopting frequent washing of hands and use of hand sanitiser.



*Multiple responses allowed, which means that percentages will not add to 100.*

Clearly the Covid-19 is now completely redefining the lifestyle of the population. Most of the population (close to 91% are highly to extremely concerned about the covid-19 spreading further). Whilst being in confinement, there seems to be a clear fear of being out in public places (with 77.8%) of people fearing exposure to Covid-19) and in using public transport. This state of mind is likely to remain in people minds, until there is confidence and certainty that the Covid-19 is no longer spreading and that it no represents a danger to the country. Until then, with the psychological barrier that the virus has caused across the world, public spaces will no longer be the same. This also means that businesses will

have many months of very challenging times ahead. The IMF stated that we are today in a state of global recession, and that there may be sizeable rebound by companies with a projected recovery in 2020, but only if the world succeeds in containing the virus and prevent liquidity problems from becoming a solvency issue.



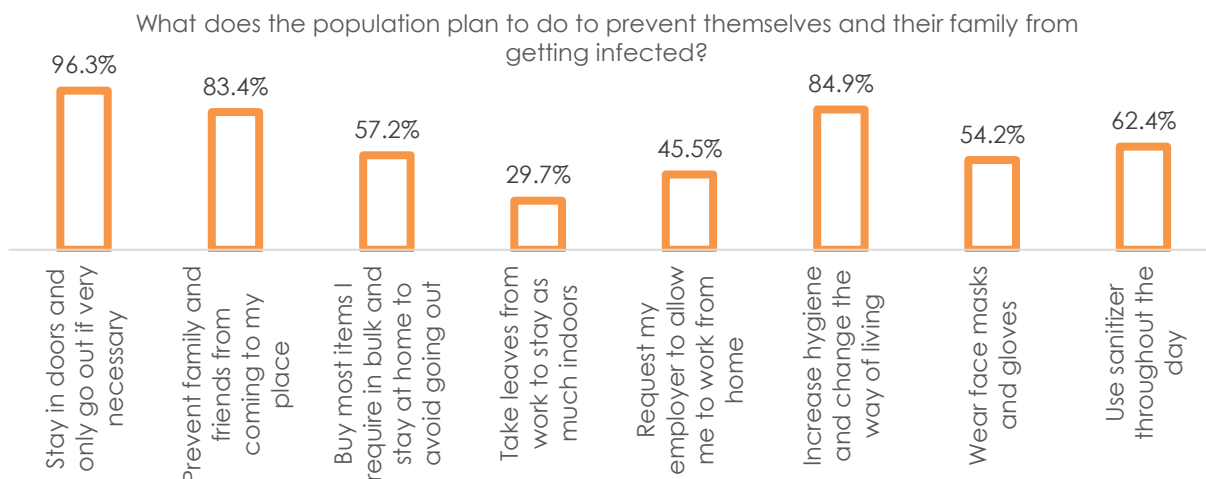
Multiple responses allowed, which means that percentages will not add to 100.

While confinement and social distancing are the widely adopted methods in containing the spread of the Covid-19, the population remains highly to extremely afraid of getting infected (close to 74%). This fear factor has resulted in many psychological adjustments such as not touching the eyes, mouth and nose, and constantly washing hands or using sanitizers.

Few other observations made with respect to social disruption include:

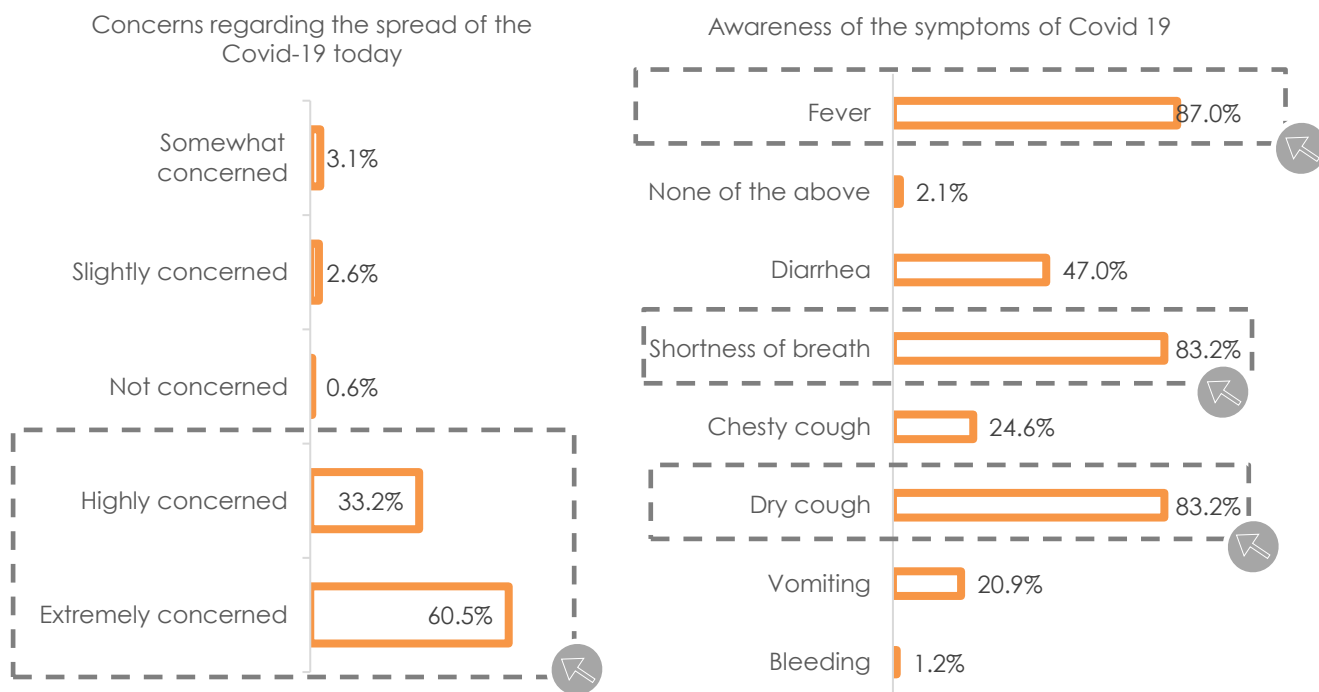
1. Prevent family and friends from coming to my place
2. Buy items in a way so as to avoid going out again
3. Take leaves from work so as to stay indoor as much as possible. This may linger long after confinement, as people re-adjust their lifestyle and overcome their fear of being infected
4. Employer may have no choice than to maintain working from home arrangement after the confinement period as people remain concerned and fearful of getting infected

After confinement and containing the virus, the situation will be delicate with widespread cleaning and disinfecting probably required in public spaces before people regain confidence in going out.



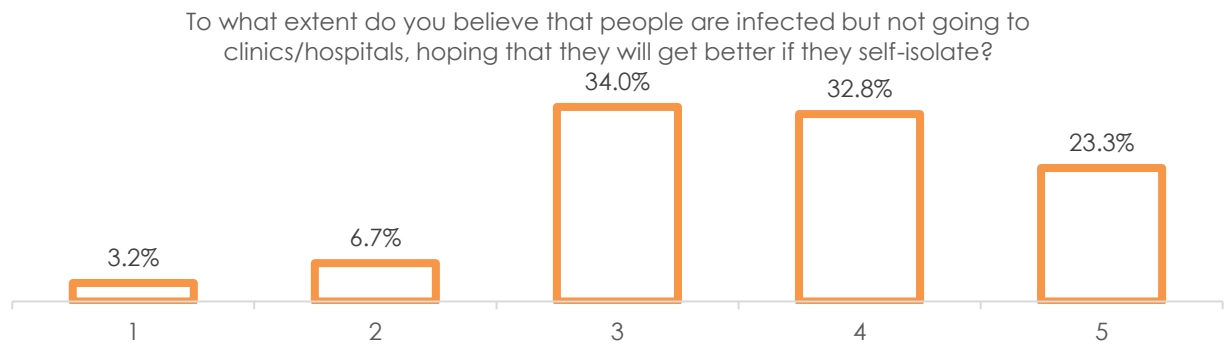
Multiple responses allowed, which means that percentages will not add to 100.

Close to 94% of the population is today concerned by the spread of the Covid-19 and have been sensitive to widespread campaigns undertaken on the virus. The majority of Mauritians are aware of the symptoms of the virus.



Multiple responses allowed. A respondent could for instance answer that he thinks Shortness of breath, Dry Cough and Vomiting are, according to him, symptoms of Covid-19. Percentages not add to 100.

As per WHO, the symptoms which usually appear after 2-14 days after exposure are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Above 85% of Mauritians are aware of this and it seems that they have been well sensitized on this matter.

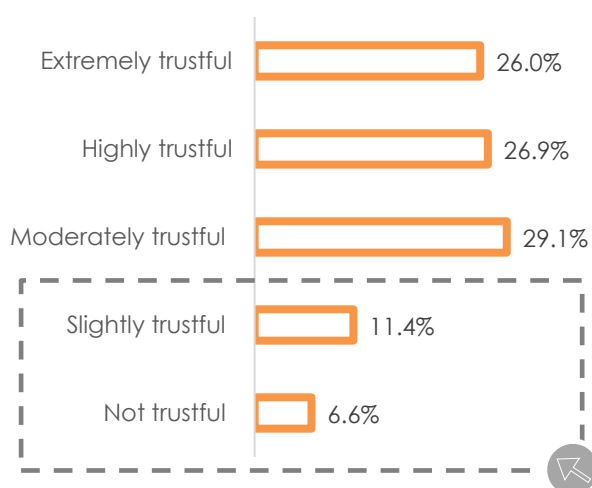


As most people are aware of the symptoms, it seems that there is a perception from over 55% of the population that people may be infected and self-isolating today. This perception may exacerbate the possible number of cases of the virus in the country.

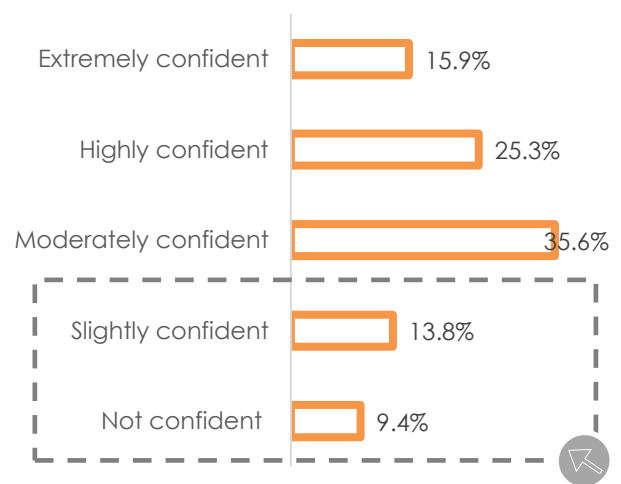
# Mauritians stand in support of Government and brace themselves for difficult economic challenges in the coming months.

The country is at war with an invisible enemy, the Mauritian PM said in a televised message to the nation. While there have been calls for unity in the country and pleas to set aside political barriers, the population seems to have a common belief that it is only together that this virus can be defeated. The population in its vast majority believes that the Government is taking appropriate measures against the Covid-19 and people are confident that the Government will handle the spread of the virus. 91.3% of the population approve the bold measures taken so far to contain the virus.

To what extent does the population trust that the government is taking the appropriate measures to contain covid 19



How do you feel about the Government's ability to handle the Coronavirus outbreak?

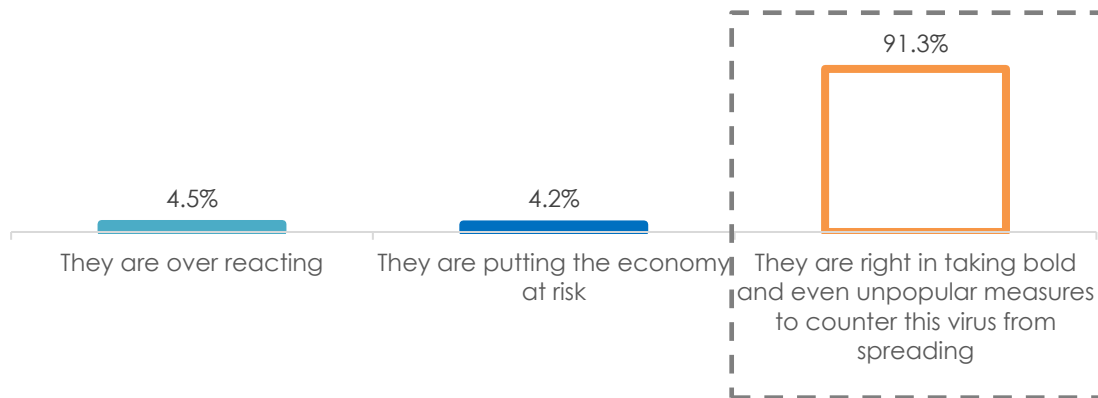


Only 6.6% are not trustful of the Government's measures to contain the Covid-19 and 9.4% of people are not confident in Government's ability to handle the present situation. This comes as a challenge to the Government which was elected only a few months ago. As they were preparing to propel the economy from middle income to high income, dire repercussions to global and local economic prospects are very likely in such circumstances. In these difficult times, containing the effects of the crisis and mitigating economic fall-out are vital. The number of requests by countries seeking help from the IMF has been rising rapidly. 50 low-income and 31 middle-income countries have approached the IMF



for emergency financing as at 28 March 2020. As per publicly available reports, Mauritius is one of them.

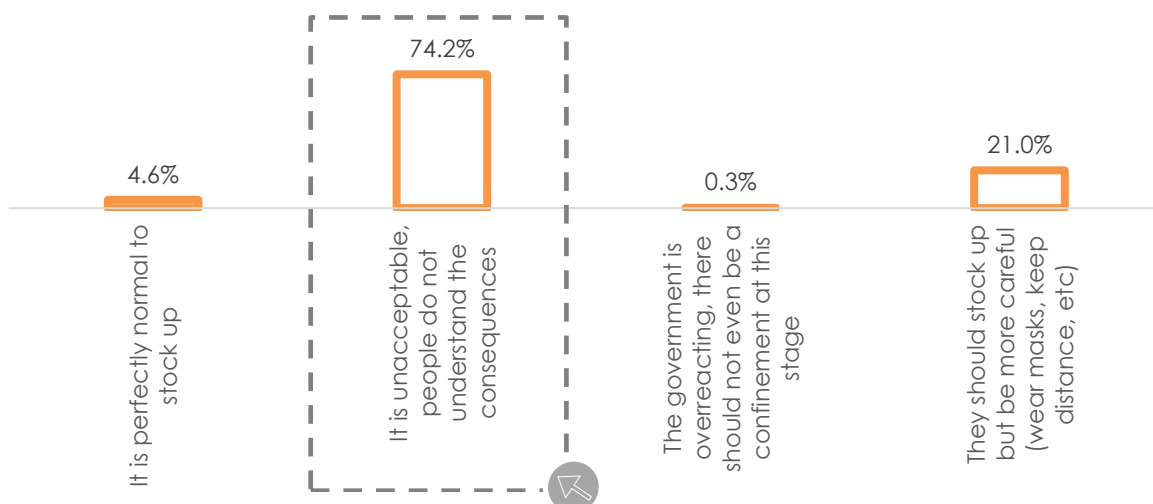
Views of the population on drastic measures taken by Government (lock down, curfew, etc.)

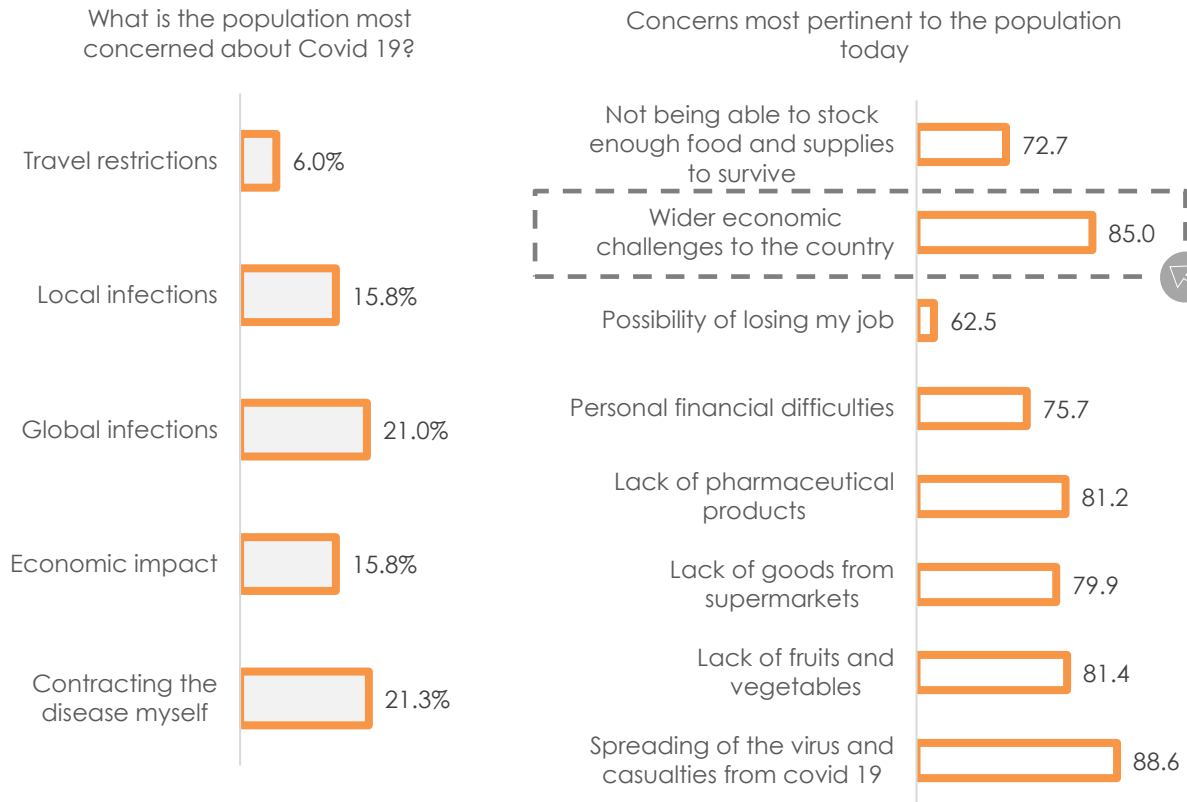


The population today shares mixed views on what most concerns them, with 21.3% mentioning being infected, and 21.0% concerned about the global propagation of the virus. In a more granular point of view, Mauritians feel that they fear for further casualties from the virus locally, and they brace themselves for consequent economic challenges to the country.

There also seems to be a significant part of the population who feels that those who are not respecting the confinement and are uselessly going out, do not realise the consequences of their actions. 21% feel that people who really do not have food and have no option than to go out to get their basic necessities need to be more careful when they do. However, the population is condemning those who are not abiding to rules which include social distancing.

Opinion of the population on people going out through the confinement and not abiding to restrictions





Rebased on 100.

Respondents today fear that they may contract the virus (mentioned by 21.3%) and they remain concerned by the global spread, which is now hitting the US big time. As the NY Times recently put it "... the world's richest country — armed with some of the most highly trained scientists and infectious disease specialists — squandered its best chance of containing the virus's spread. Instead, Americans were left largely blind to the scale of a looming public health catastrophe... The statement of President Trump "It's going to disappear. One day — it's like a miracle — it will disappear." has not helped either.

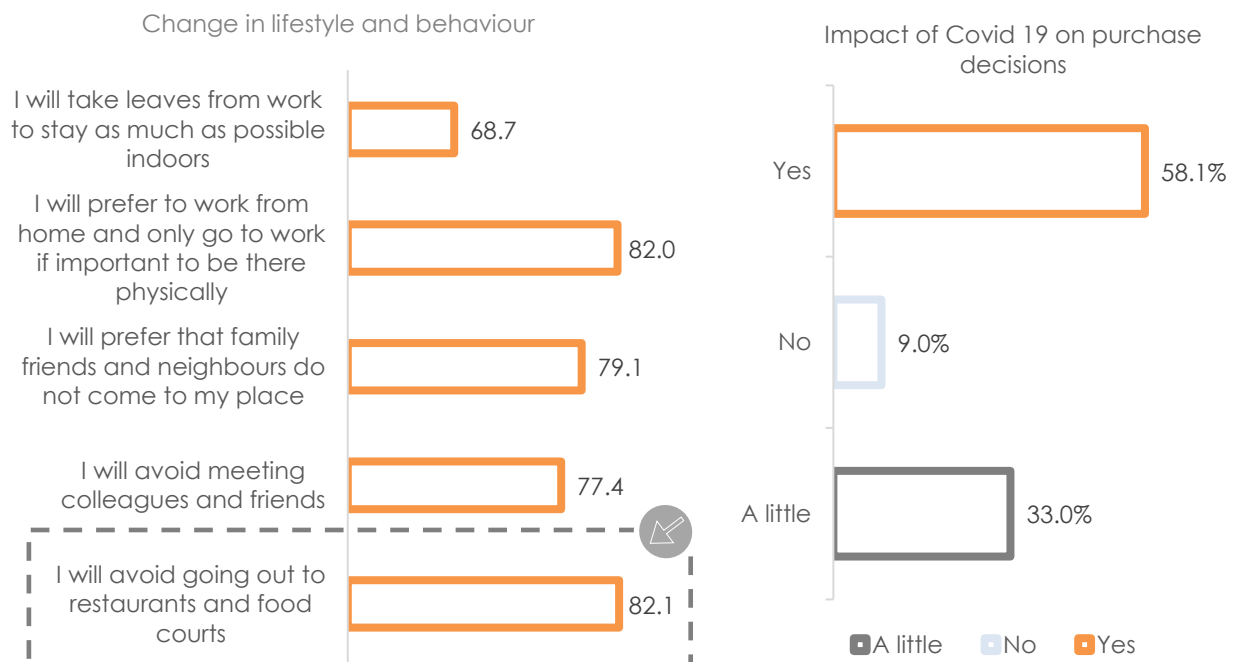
In Mauritius, despite the odd critics here and there, the consensus is clear that the public remains supportive of Government actions/measures in this fight. The population nonetheless retains concerns on:

1. Lack of fruits and vegetables, with a score of 81.4 on 100
2. Lack of pharmaceutical products, 81.2
3. Lack of goods from supermarkets, , with a score of 79.9 on 100

More importantly, the population is bracing themselves to economic difficulties and challenges. They worry that social distancing has severed the flow of goods and people, stalled economies, and is in the process of delivering a global recession. Economic contagion is now spreading as fast as the disease itself. The sectors which are the most vulnerable to the pandemic and are expected to be severely hit include tourism, businesses in oil and gas, airline, and retail sectors.

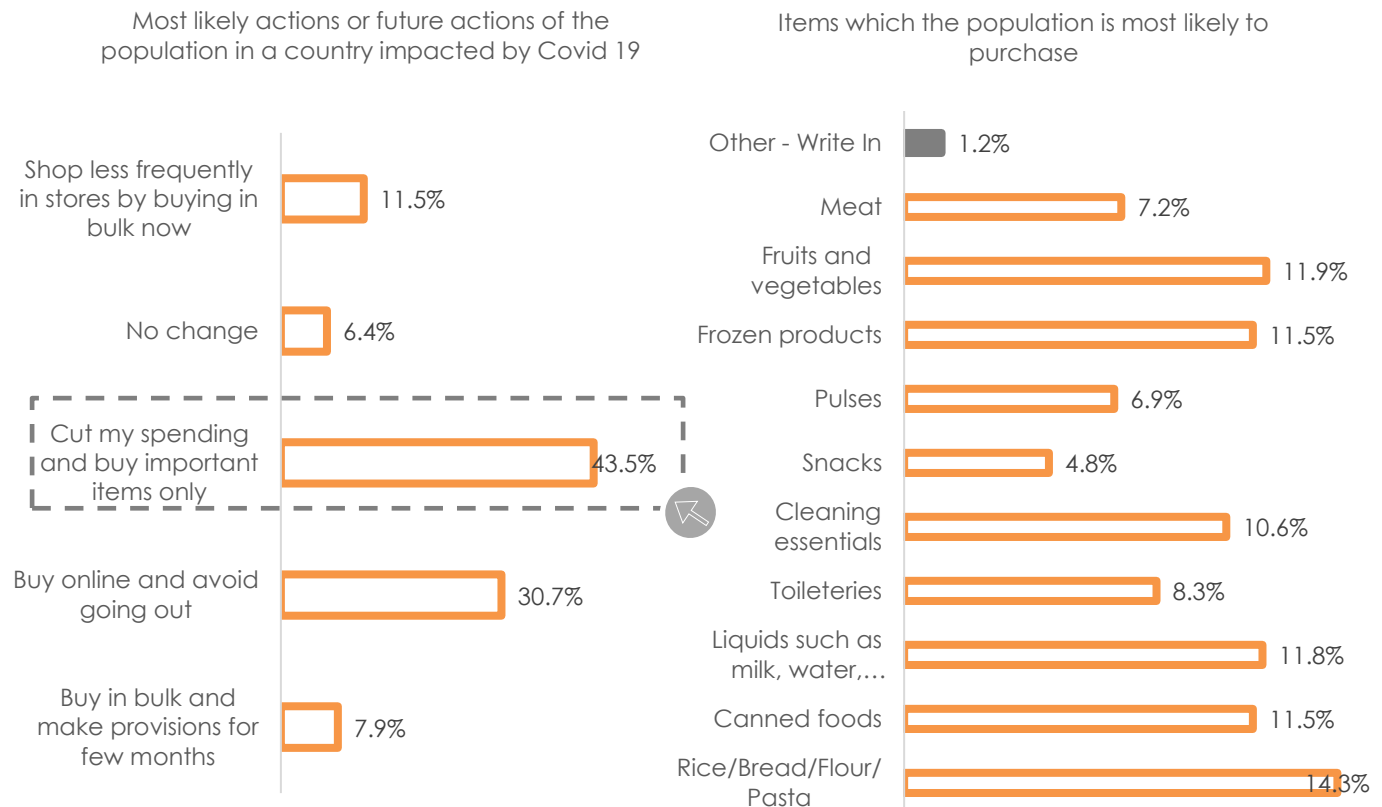
*The vibrant out of home eating, induced buying, and pre-pandemic lifestyle will not come soon. Retailers and other businesses should brace for difficult months.*

The change in lifestyle is even more pronounced with 'I will avoid going out to restaurants and food courts' obtaining a score of 82.1. There remains the possibility for another wave of infections, even amongst countries that acted relatively quickly and are today nudging their economies back to life. Indeed, we have seen some resurgence of the virus in Singapore and Hong Kong. Lifestyle pre-covid-19 is not likely to be seen in the country in the near future, with the population remaining mostly indoors and avoiding meeting family members, neighbours, colleagues and friends, forsaking public places such as restaurants and food courts, and dodging work as much as possible.



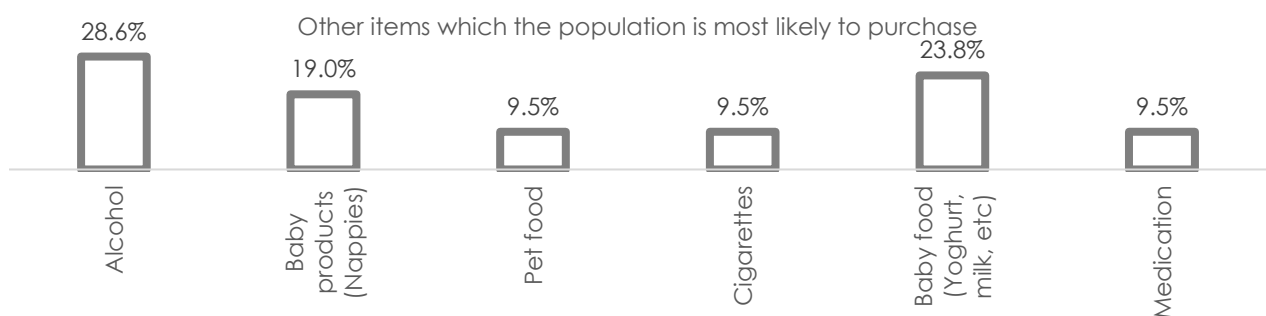
Purchase decisions have already been impacted with only 9% of the population claiming that they have not changed. The after-Covid 19 purchase decisions are likely to be different as well with more and more businesses and jobs at risk. Understanding and anticipating those behaviours may provide businesses with the tools to face the present and upcoming months and overcome this unprecedented crisis.

Restaurants, food courts, shopping malls, shops, and the vibrant lifestyle which the population has been accustomed to, will be completely redefined as the Covid-19 remains in people’s minds. Many businesses thriving on consumer spending are likely to be severely hit as it is not soon that the situation will improve.



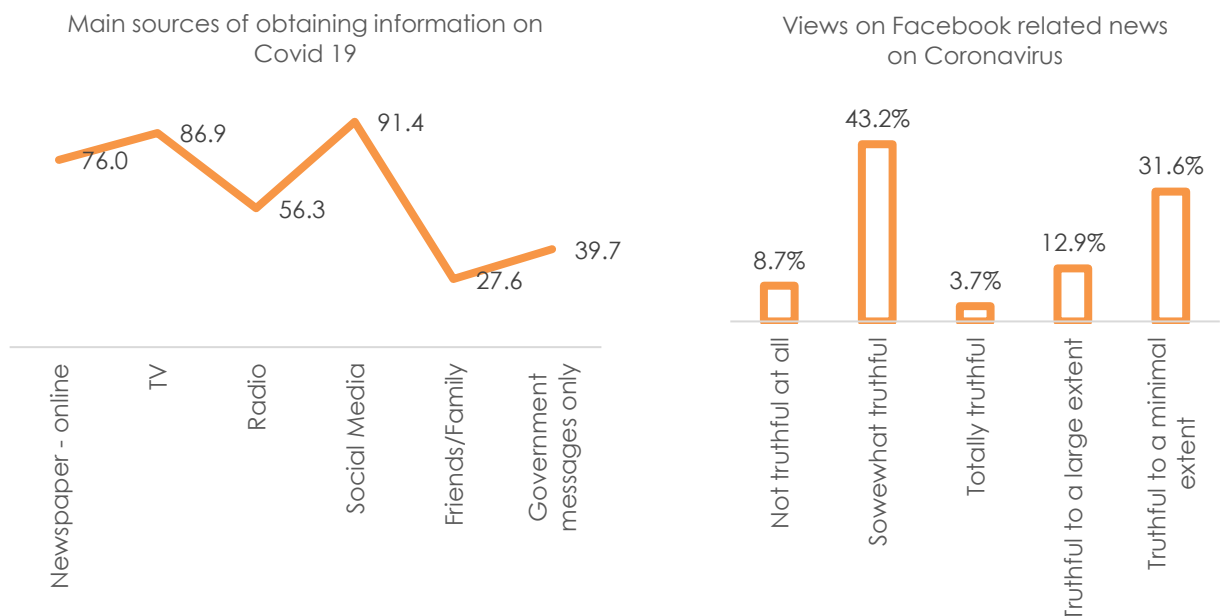
The above provide interesting inferences on purchase considerations by the population. 43.5% of the population have cut their spending and only buy important items. Online platforms, as we have seen, are likely to have significant traffic during and post Covid-19. Roughly one-third of the population are doing their purchases online to avoid going out, which will have dire consequences on retailers and induced buying. 19.4% of the population however seem to favour bulk buying to (1) shop less frequently and to (2) make provisions for longer periods of time. Items which are the most favoured vary with most mentions relating to essential goods.

Among other items, alcohol was the highest mentioned followed by baby food and products.

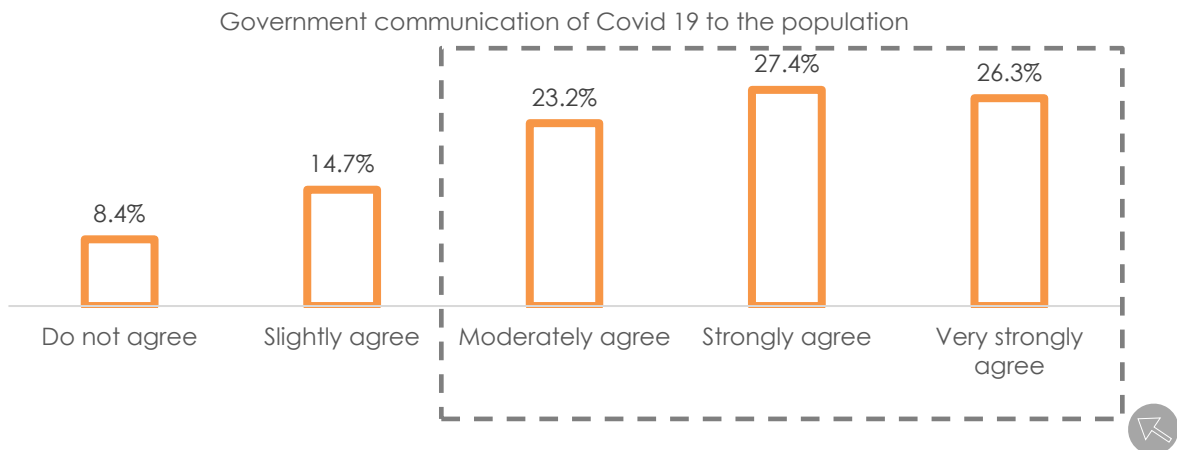


*National television is now widely followed, expectations for slight improvement in the situation, and not much optimism observed on future outlook.*

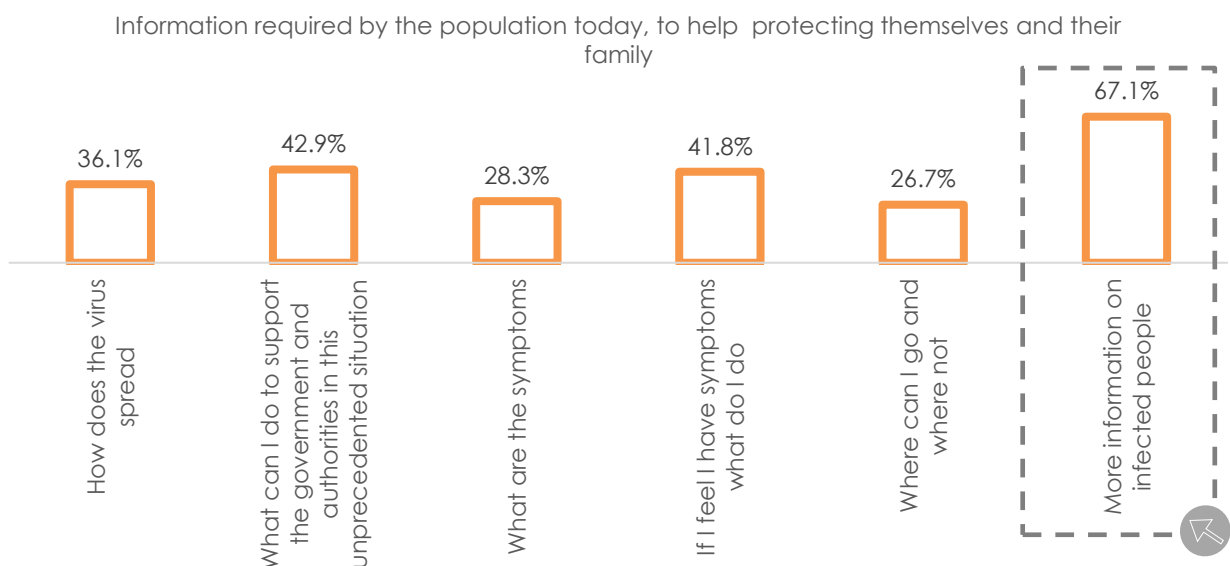
TV and social media are the main sources of information today, as confinement has resulted in media agencies stopping the printing and distribution of newspapers. In this period, the national television is among the most watched, especially for news related to the Covid-19 and its evolution. Online newspapers obtained a score of 76 (ranked third), with possibly a surge in online subscriptions and those having access to free PDF versions as circulated on Whatsapp these days.



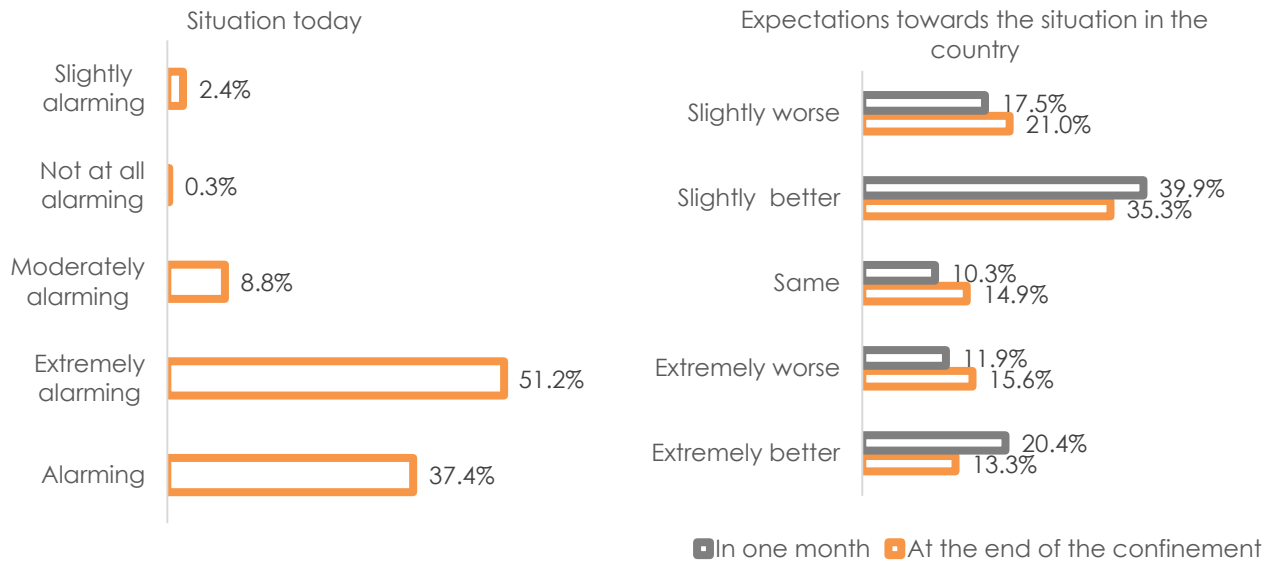
With the number of fake news being circulated during the confinement, the population remains relatively skeptical as to the authenticity of what is circulated on social media and most specifically Facebook. The most responses (43.2%) refer to Facebook news on Covid-19 as somewhat truthful and 31.6% of respondents refer to the news as truthful to a minimal extent.



Close to 77% of the population agree moderately to very strongly on Government's communication of Covid-19 to the population.



In terms of information, details on infected people is what the population is today seeking. 'What I can do to support the Government and authorities in this unprecedented situation' ranked second. Case studies and human stories relating to infected people could be interesting and impact on the population's commitment to respect confinement guidelines. Whilst the population still feels that the situation is alarming to extremely alarming (roughly 90%), the crisis remains in its early stage.



There is nonetheless optimism in the population that the situation will be better (60.3%) after 1 month. 48.5% believe that the situation will be better after the confinement period. While the impact of the crisis is difficult to predict, it is likely that the behavior of the population and their efforts to follow guidelines will guide the future of the country. Many observers around the world are looking at the bigger scenario revolving around the shape of the shock of the pandemic and how different countries will face the impacts. V, U, L shocks can come in different intensities. A V-shaped path may be shallow or deep. A U-shape may come with a deep drop to a new growth path or a small one. In those scenarios, how is Mauritius likely to see out the coronavirus shock fitting in? The intensity of the shock will be determined by the underlying virus properties and evolution in the coming weeks, policy responses, as well as consumer and corporate behavior in the face of adversity.

The population finally had a message to give to all those who will access this exclusive report. The word cloud below summarized the respondents of some 400 people, when asked what is the one thing that the population should do in this fight against the Covid-19. 'STAY HOME' stands out.



The sample of 400 people surveyed was representative of the population by age, gender and district. The data collection was undertaken from the 23rd to the 28th March 2020, during the confinement period. The survey was administered by using VERDE's (1) panel of respondents with phone survey capabilities and (2) online, using an extensive e-mailing database of industry leaders, professionals and business people.



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