



COVID-19 lockdown impact: Percentage of consumers unable to find essential products via ecommerce apps & at retail stores rises rapidly

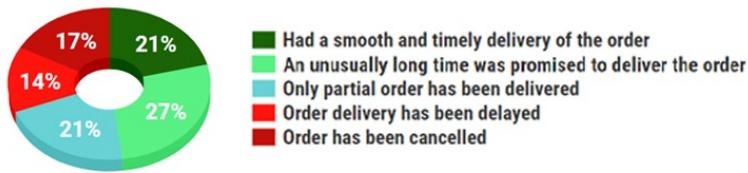
- **Percentage of consumers unable to get timely deliveries of essential goods rises from 35% to 79%**
- **Percentage of consumers unable to find essential goods in retail stores rises from 17% to 32%**

25th March 2020, New Delhi: The situation amidst the lockdown across 30 states and UTs is deteriorating quickly and a sizable number of people have reported facing problems in finding essential goods. Many consumers have also reported on LocalCircles that deliveries from ecommerce grocery apps like Grofers, BigBasket, Amazon, Flipkart etc. are not reaching them and a large number of products are now stocked out. Late last week, the Government via Department of Consumer Affairs, classified ecommerce and wholesale delivery as a part of 'essential services.' The letter from Secretary, Consumer Affairs to the Chief Secretaries of all states advised them to allow all the nodes of ecommerce activities like warehousing, logistics, their vendors & delivery partners etc. to operate during the lockdown so that a shortage of essential items does not occur. Another meeting was held via video conferencing with Chief Secretaries and State Consumer departments Monday, advising them to ensure smooth movement and delivery of essential goods, and operations of warehouses stocking and shipping essential goods.

Most ecommerce platforms have reported that their trucks carrying supplies, and delivery executives in many parts of the country are being stopped from operating by the police during the lockdown. In other cases, delivery personnel have been barred by local police from even reaching the warehouses.

To keep track of essential goods' availability, LocalCircles conducted a survey to get consumer pulse on how their experience has been in the last 2 days when trying to buy essential goods from retail stores as well as from ecommerce apps. The survey received more than 16,000 responses from consumers located in over 164 districts of India.

When you placed an order for essential goods (wheat, rice, pulses, salt, sugar, etc) from an eCommerce app in the last 48 hours, how was the delivery experience?



Votes - 8,270



Essential Goods eCommerce locked down during COVID-19 Oubreak: Only 21% consumers received orders for essential goods on time

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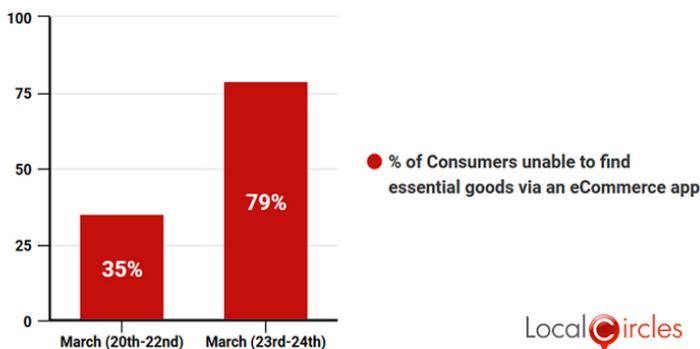
The first question asked consumers when they placed an order for essential goods (wheat, rice, pulses, salt, sugar, etc) from an eCommerce app during the last 48 hours, how was their delivery experience. 14% said their order has been delayed while 17% said their order was cancelled. 21% said only partial order was

delivered and 27% said an unusually long time was promised for delivery. Only 21% said they had a smooth and timely order delivery.

When compared with the data from March 20-22, the percentage of consumers who were unable to find essential goods via an eCommerce app, has risen from 35% to 79% in the last 2 days. This indicates that majority of the ecommerce orders for essential goods are not reaching consumers.

Percentage of Consumers unable to find essential goods via an eCommerce app rises from 35% to 79% in last 2 days

When you tried to purchase essential goods (wheat, rice, pulses, salt, sugar, etc) from an eCommerce app what was your experience?



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Consumers were also asked when they tried to purchase essential goods (wheat, rice, pulses, salt, sugar, etc) from a retail store during the last 48 hours, what was their experience like. 38% said they were able to get everything easily while 30% said they were able to get most items except a few. 12% said they were able to get only some items as stores were stocked out for

others and 15% said they were not able to get most of the items. 5% said they were not able to get anything.

When you tried to purchase essential goods (milk, wheat, rice, pulses, salt, sugar, etc) from a retail store in the last 48 hours, what was your experience?



Votes - 7,868



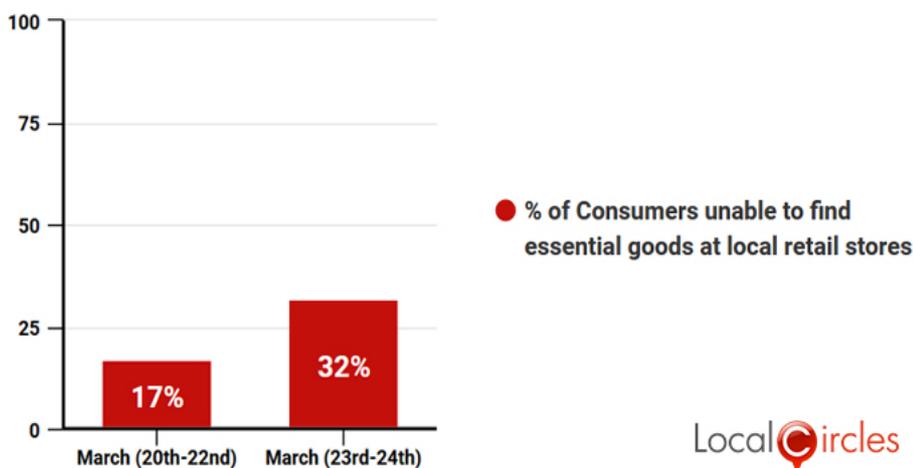
Availability of Essential Goods in Retail Stores during COVID-19 Outbreak: 32% consumers unable to find most essential goods in their local retail stores

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When this is compared to the survey conducted for March 20-22, the percentage of consumers unable to find essential goods at their local retail stores has risen from 17% to 32%

Percentage of Consumers unable to find essential goods at local retail stores rises from 17% to 32% in last 2 days

When you tried to purchase essential goods (wheat, rice, pulses, salt, sugar, etc) from a retail store what was your experience?



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Both of these numbers regarding availability of essential goods via ecommerce and at retail stores are very concerning as they are indicative of the struggle faced by consumers.

Last week, LocalCircles wrote a letter to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, suggesting that the super stockists, distributors and whole sellers of essentials should be directed to tie up with



ecommerce platforms and organised retailers at a local level to list and supply their products through these channels. According to LocalCircles, the ecommerce platforms and the organised retailers should also be directed to deploy their staff on site at the super stockists, distributors and whole sellers to on board them as a seller or supplier and assist with processes as needed. Such a move will lead to better findability for consumers and will optimize timely fulfilment of consumer demands.

In the same letter, LocalCircles also suggested that during this time of COVID-19 outbreak, the supplies in these Government warehouses could be made available, wherever feasible via organised retailers and ecommerce platforms. If re-packaging as a step is required, local entities may be designated to provide this value-added service and make the supplies available via these two channels.

Yesterday, LocalCircles Chairman, Sachin Taparia wrote to Chief Secretaries of all states apprising them of the situation and ensuring that trucks carrying essential goods and personnel engaged in warehousing, retail and delivery of the same are not stopped by law enforcement officials during this lockdown.

Basis the survey findings, it seems that the message from chief secretaries has still not reached the law enforcement officials on the ground and the lockdown is being enforced unilaterally in most states regardless of essential goods and services.

LocalCircles reached out to one of the leading grocery delivery ecommerce platforms to understand the on ground situation and the CEO of the platform confirmed 8 out of 10 of their top cities facing operational shut down by local law enforcement.

It is critical that the state leadership sensitises district administration and police leadership such that the municipal and police officials at local levels do not create bottlenecks in the supply of essential goods to wholesale and retail stores and homes of people. The last thing we as a country want in this COVID-19 outbreak is long queues outside stores or scuffles for who gets to buy that last sugar packet in the store.

LocalCircles will be sharing the findings of this report with various stakeholders in the Central Government, Chief Secretaries of all states, and all the state DGPs.

About LocalCircles

LocalCircles takes Social Media to the next level and makes it about Communities, Governance and Utility. It enables citizens to connect with communities for most aspects of urban daily life like Neighborhood, Constituency, City, Government, Causes, Interests and Needs, seek information/assistance when needed, come together for various initiatives and improve their urban daily life. LocalCircles is free for citizens and always will be!

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