

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON OUR LIVES

Dr. Priyanka Sharma*

ABSTRACT

The worst crisis being faced by the human population ever since world war II, has been created by COVID-19. Over 200 countries have been severely affected due to the outbreak of the aforesaid disease. The COVID-19 has once again proved the fragility of our life. The virus has largely changed the way in which we live, work, move around and perform our day to day functions. The virus is taking within its hold the entire activities carried on by human beings and its effects are being felt at multiple levels resulting in economic slowdown. Most of the workforce is confined to their homes and daily wage workers are on the verge of starvation. In recent times it has been noticed that people from lower income group are walking back to their villages covering thousands of kilometers and facing the toughest road condition without food for several days. Business operations have come to a standstill and the workforce has been rendered jobless. Children and the aged too have been confined in their homes over a long period of time. Thus the virus has impacted the lives of the entire population across the globe. An outbreak from China has gone everywhere. In the last few months, Corona's epicenter has been shifted from China to Europe to the United States. Till date, over 5.1 million people had been affected by COVID-19 and about 3.3 lakh people have died worldwide. Indirectly, billions of people have been suffering from the impact of the global pandemic caused by COVID-19. In India, various states have been exposed to a situation of complete lockdown which has led employers to ponder upon how they can keep their people safe, contain the spread of the virus and continue their operations effectively during this unprecedented crisis.

Keywords: COVID-19, Corona Virus, Economic Slowdown, Pandemic, Disease.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only caused a great risk to human life but has also ensured enhanced poverty economic distress and invisible emotional strain. The virus has caused the biggest global health calamity of the century and poses greatest challenge that the human face since II world war. The economist all across the globe predict that the growth in terms of percentile points is going to be in the negative during the fiscal year 2020-2021. The impact of the virus will shatter most of the vibrant economies of the world. The possibility that business is going to suffer the most as the demand for goods will reduce on account of decreased purchasing capacity of the people cannot be ruled out in the present scenario.

In December 2019, a new infectious respiratory disease emerged in Wuhan, Hubei province, China and was named by the World Health Organization as COVID-19 (Corona virus disease 2019). As is implied in the name COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'Corona', 'VI' for Virus and 'D' for disease and 19 represents the year of its occurrence. Corona Virus is a single stranded RNA Virus with a diameter ranging 80 to 120 nm. The first modern COVID-19 Pandemic was reported in December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China and most initial cases were related to source infection from a seafood wholesale market. (Huang et. al 2020). Till now there is no report of any clinically approved antiviral drugs or vaccines that are effective against COVID-19. It has rapidly spread around the world, posing enormous health, economic, environmental and social challenges to the entire human population.

* Associate Professor, Department of Home Science, Government College, Laxmangarh, Alwar, Rajasthan, India.

Effect of COVID-19 on Different Age Group

The COVID 19 outbreak has affected every strata of the population. The virus is particularly hazardous to those social groups living in poverty situation, older person and people suffering from other ailments like heart disease, diabetes etc. It goes without saying that the worst affected sections of the society are the people living below the poverty line who have no direct access to nutrition, medical facilities and sanitation etc. The situation which we have all witnessed during the period of lockdown is dismal. It is not only the people below the poverty line whose conditions are pathetic but the middle income group have suffered equally in so far as substantial number of persons have been displaced from their jobs which has led them to move back to their natives places. Thus, none have been left untouched or unharmed by the virus.

To reduce the transmission of virus most countries across the globe decided to close schools as part of social distancing policy. However, these closure of schools, has affected the education of more than 1.5 billion children and youth worldwide due to the corona virus (COVID 19) pandemic. We are aware that malnutrition amongst children is the primary cause of death in a country like India where major population comprises of children below 18 years of age. The virus has caused a severe shortage of essentials not only for children but for adults as well on account of the suspension of transport facilities during lockdown. Children have been regarded as the nation's supremely important asset. It is our responsibility to act and mitigate the hidden adverse impact that this pandemic threatens our children with their brighter future.

In developing countries like India, women are the primary caregivers at the household levels. Women have to take care of home staying children, extended family members and elderly which can make their situation more stressful. During the period of lockdown, entire family remains at home and work of women increased many folds, even for those who do not work outside their homes. For those who do, working from home will imply lower productivity. The intra household distribution of resources is always low for women in developing countries like India. Older persons are not just struggling with greater health risks but are also likely to be less capable of supporting themselves in isolation. Youth are critical to limiting the virus's spread and its impact on public health, society and the economy at large.

This virus is highly infectious and can be transmitted through droplets and close contact. The human to human spreading of the virus occurs due to close contact with an infected person exposed to coughing, sneezing, respiratory droplets or aerosols. These aerosols can penetrate the human body via inhalation through nose or mouth. (Phan et al. 2020; Riov and Althaus, 2020) COVID-19 is a major public health concern for the world's population and is a leading cause of hospitalization and death, particularly for middle and old age people in the affected countries.

Effect of COVID-19 on Economy

Economy of many so called powerful countries are now facing the threat of high rate of inflation and increasing unemployment as a result of lack of productivity and excessive expenditure for treatment and rehabilitation of the COVID-19 victims and their families (OECD Interim economic assessment, 2nd March, 2020). Lockdown will directly affect GDP of each country in the major economies. Some of the experts are even saying that human civilization has not faced such an unprecedented emergency after the World War II. So, COVID-19 has undoubtedly put forth a remarkably bad affect on the day to day life of the entire human society and also on the world economy.

Industrial production ever since March, 2020 has reduced to unimaginable levels which has direct impact on the GDP of the country. The service sector had virtually come to a grinding halt and as industry and service constitute the major chunk in the GDP of a country, therefore, there is every likelihood that the country's GDP may drop down to unprecedented levels which will further aggravate the pathetic condition of our people. Another important sector of our economy is tourism and as the movement of people nationally and internationally has been restricted on account of lockdown imposed by the government, therefore, industries associated with tourism including hotel, cafes, restaurants etc are likely to suffer in the times to come.

Effect of COVID-19 on Environment

All local and central administrations worldwide have literally put a ban on free movement of their citizens outside their homes in order to avoid community transmission. Due to non functioning of industries, industrial waste emission has decreased to a large extent. Vehicles are hardly found on roads resulting in almost zero emission of greenhouse gases and toxic tiny suspended particles in the environment. In spite of all effort to restore the nature during the last few decades, human could only move a few steps forward. But during the last few months, consequences of the pandemic have

successfully recovered the environment to a large extent that should definitely set positive impact on global climate change. We have seen that humans have exploited nature to a great extent. Over exploitation has led to depletion of resources and has also caused environmental pollution. If natural resources are not used by human cautiously, a time will come when the reserves would be used up. Thus, to maintain a balance amongst human and nature, it is necessary that the resources made available by nature should be used wisely. Like all the previous disasters on earth, let all be optimistic enough, that human beings will definitely win over the pandemic in due course of time, but they should know the limits to which they can thrust nature before it is too late.

Effect of COVID-19 on Education

COVID-19 has also affected all levels of the education system from pre-school to tertiary education. Some of the impacts include lack of proper nutrition due to the lack of free school meals provided in many countries to children from low income families, increase in social isolation and dropout rates in students less likely to return once closures are ended etc. Furthermore, the impact continues into the tertiary sector, as well as, on undergraduate education. The most significant impact is on the post graduate research community with research into many non COVID-19 related topics paused or suspended. Outside of the health care research setting, many humanities, social and other research has stopped completely with Harvard University closing all laboratories in the faculty of arts and science (Corona virus Harvard University 2020).

Additionally, concern has been raised about the number of scientific conferences that have been cancelled or postponed (Impey C, 2020). These conferences are the key to scientific research in many disciplines, allowing dissemination of research as well as providing networking opportunities for collaboration and job seeking. Many conferences have moved online, however "Virtual conferences" are often not as amenable to networking and more informal means of scientific communication.

Effect of COVID-19 on Food Markets

Millions of people are earning a living by selling cheap food items on the street. Small shop keeper selling snacks or sweets have been forced to shut down on account of lockdown. Moreover even when the lockdown is removed over a period of time, the people will always be apprehensive of purchasing food item from street vendors, shop keepers and restaurants etc, therefore, the impact of COVID-19 is going to last for a long period of time and if this happens, the street vendors and small shop keepers will be completely out of business with no means to earn a living. As a result, many of these food stores have been put at risk of permanent closure and many of employees have lost their jobs.

Effect of COVID-19 on Psychology of People

The corona virus pandemic is an epidemiological and psychological crisis as well. The enormity of living in isolation, changes in our daily lives, job loss, financial hardship and grief over the death of loved ones has the potential to affect the mental health and well being of many. Due to seniors debilitated physical quality and feeble immune system and often associated with chronic underlying disease, decrease psychological capability, fragile information receiving and processing ability, most of the deaths in this crisis were of seniors, whose are 60 years of age patients, with poor physical condition. The society needs to pay attention to the seniors when major public health emergencies occur, providing them more human care and psychological interventions (Li et al.,2003). Large number of people have kept in isolation and the implementation of unprecedented strict quarantine measures affected many aspects of people's lives. It has also triggered a wide variety of psychological problems (J Qiu et al,2020). Even in this time of physical distancing, it's critical to seek social support and connection with others. It's also important to know the signs of anxiety, panic attacks, depression and suicidal tendencies so that we can easily identify them, not only among our family, friends and neighbors, but for ourselves as well.

Conclusion

The Indian Government has taken numerous measures to minimize the risk of socio economic breakdown along with its continuous measures to control the spread of corona virus. The Indian tradition has always underlined the importance of physical as well as mental health and well being. Whatever may be the danger, you will be able to face it only with a healthy body and a strong mind. As of May 15, the health ministry confirmed a total of 78,003 cases, 26,235 recoveries (including one migration) and 2,549 deaths. The infection rate in India is reported to be 1.7 which is quite lower than the worst affected developed countries. To be on the right track, it's very important to do as much testing as possible, surveillance of high risk zones, maintaining a transparent corona tracker programme, building public awareness programmes etc. If these actions are taken, then fight against COVID-19 would be much easier and effective.

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