

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON INDIAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

A novel coronavirus (N-COV) is a new strain of corona virus that has not been previously identified in humans. COVID-19 pandemic has affected people social life and life style both positively and negatively. Infection increasing day by day more than 6 million reported worldwide. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown on socio-culture, economic, political and environmental and ecological aspects and how they changed our lifestyle? Friends and families are avoiding social contact with each other in lockdown. Family is such a strong basis of Indian culture, which has also stood as a strong pillar with every member in the struggle with pandemic. Due to this pandemic negativity increased among people, social and mental stress increase due to loss of work. Daily wage laborers lost their work and migrant workers started migrating to their homes on foot in lockdown. They are worried about their future but now instead of being afraid of this pandemic, we are learning to fight with it and moving ahead.

Keywords: *Pandemic, Social Distancing, Community Spread, Lockdown, Quarantine, Isolate, Sanitize.*

Introduction

Corona virus is not the name of a single virus. The name corona virus has been assigned to a family of viruses. The common cold- the cough and cold that you catch during winters that too, is a type of corona virus and what is affecting the people right now is a new type of corona virus. There's a place in china called Wuhan it was found there on 31st December 2019. The cluster was initially reported on 31st December 2019, when the WHO (World Health Organization) China country office was informed. The Chinese authorities identified a new type of corona virus (novel corona virus, ncov), which was isolated on 7th January 2020. The first case of COVID-19 in India, which originated from China, was reported on 30th January 2020.

This new strain of corona virus has been named N-COV-Novel corona virus, Novel means new. This strain is so new that they could not even think of a name. So they named it novel corona virus. The scientists have named it as SARS-COV--2 because this virus is very similar to the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) virus that had spread in 2003. The disease caused by this virus has been COVID-19.

The original source of most of the viruses is mostly some animal which affects a human and them later through human to human contact and through human to human transmission, these viruses spread amongst humans. For example, in the case of SARS, the original source was a bat. MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) is another similar corona virus which spread in the Middle East (Saudi Arabia) during 2012-13, the original source of that was a camel. The exact original source of the new virus which has not been yet discover. Some scientists suspect that the original source might be snakes. But some scientists believe that they might be bats.

The symptoms of all these corona viruses are very similar to each other for example, dry cough, cold, fever, shortness of breath. All these happen, when we catch a cough and cold normally or when we

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catch a seasonal flu and these are symptoms of the new corona virus too. This is an unfortunate thing because due to this, it is very difficult to recognize. When we have contracted a normal seasonal flu and when we have contracted the COVID-19. Generally, on average, it can take 5-6 days for symptoms to show up in our body but you are contagious in 5-6 days. In many cases symptoms are not visible. You've contracted the infection while you assume yourself to be healthy, fit and you have no disease but then too, you can spread infection to other people. This is what makes COVID-19 extremely dangerous. The symptoms are not visible in the people and they go out interact with other people and spread the disease.

A lot of treatment and cures have gone viral on social media to treat the COVID-19. For example, a whatsapp forward reads- corona virus can be cured by one bowl of freshly boiled garlic water. Some say that consuming bleach will treat the corona virus. Some say that consuming organic oil will cure it. A Hindu Mahasabha President says that consumption of gaumutra and cow dung can cure the corona virus. Some people say that the spread of virus will be contained due to the heat. The truth remains that all of these are fake. Nobody has any cure available with them. As of now, no vaccine exists against the COVID-19 neither does any treatment exist. Only if your immune system, will-power is strong, then you can fight and recover from it. The vaccine is currently under development it has been estimated that it might take around a year to introduce its vaccine. When SARS broke out in 2002-03, then it took 20 months to introduce its vaccine. The governments across the world are working towards the containing the spread of this virus and I feel that they have been successful to a large extent by applying quarantine, isolation, social distancing, lockdown and janta-curfew, The quarantine and social distancing measures are being undertaken so that our health care system is able to sustain the infected number of people so that care is available to all those who need it at the proper time. It might take a year for the COVID-19 vaccine to arrive so until then, efforts are on to control its community spread.

The total number of infected people in India until now is 2, 16, 919 out of these, around 6,075 people have died and 1, 04,107 people have discharged after becoming infected. So looking at the total number infected people and the total number of deaths as a proportion, then this comes out to be approximately 2.8% and the total number infected people and the total number of discharged as a proportion, then this comes out to be approximately 47%. This 2.8% is the fatality rate and 47% is the recovery rate. An interesting fact about viruses is that, the virus that spreads more easily and is more contagious in general, its fatality rate is automatically less and the viruses that have a higher fatality rate are less contagious.

Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths	Total Confirmed Cases
106737	104107	6075	216919

Source: Ministry of health and family welfare government of India (As on: June 4, 2020)

Socio-Culture Impact

COVID-19 has affected people's social life and life style both positively and negatively. Infection is increasing day by day more than 6million reported worldwide. Friends and families are avoiding social contact with each other in lockdown. People remain imprisoned in their homes. The spread was so colossal that the WHO had to declare it as a pandemic. The only way to control and defeat this mammoth pandemic was to make people follow social distancing and also to restrain them from moving out to avoid social connect.

Family is such a strong basis of Indian culture, which has also stood as a strong pillar with every member in the struggle with pandemic. In this corona period, people got an opportunity to spend quality time with their family away from the worries related to professional life. Working men and women play dual roles office work from home and family responsibilities. Doctors, nurses, policemen, scavengers, media workers etc are performing their duties as corona warriors. The closure of the office, company encouraged culture of work from home. In the field of education, online education granted to the students through various apps like- cloud zoom, Google meet, shikshavani apps etc and akashvani on radio. In lockdown, the high court heard urgent cases through video conferencing, video calling and video chat. People have become more aware of increasing immunity, health, sanitation, hygiene example- washing hands very frequently in the proper manner, wearing mask, washing fruits & vegetables. The other side, cases of domestic violence against women increased in lockdown. The number of guests has been reduced by government in marriages and funeral. According to government guideline, in lockdown only 50 people are permitted in marriages and 20 people in funeral. This type of culture prohibited culture of appearances and extravagance. In this way in lockdown people understood the importance of savings. People made their monotonous life of corona period splendid by performing their creativity and hobbies. Due to this pandemic negativity increased among people, social and mental stress increase due to loss

of work. They are worried about the future but now mental state of people changing, instead of being afraid of corona. They will become more careful and working with positively and taking corona as an opportunity rather than a disaster and learning to live with it.

Economic Impact

Economically, it might have deleterious effect not only on India but also the world economy. At the rate at which this virus is spreading, cities worldwide have been locked down to contain its spread. Schools, Restaurants, Shops, Industries, Cinemas, Gyms, Air travel- all have been shutdown. IPL and Olympics also postponed. This shutdown affects on each class of the society but the most affected middle and lower classes. People lost their jobs. Daily wage laborers lost their work and migrant workers started migrating to their homes on foot. Absence of labour force & transportation problems has serious implications. This resulted- subdued demand, supply shock, production slowdown and supply chain disruptions. Unemployment rates increased. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) rate 5.3 was already low after COVID-19 came lowest level 2.5. (Source: Moody's Investors Service) A Financial emergency has never been imposed in the history of India as yet. Former RBI chief Raghuram Rajan said that the corona virus pandemic in India may just be the "greatest emergency since independence."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced to boost economy a- 20 lakh crore (which is the equivalent of a little below 10% Of the GDP) economic package to help individuals and businesses deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown enforced to combat its spread and to as he put it, turn the "crisis into an opportunity". The Prime minister said the package- Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-reliant India Mission) - would cover "Land, Labour, Liquidity and Laws", industry and businesses of all sizes and farmers entrepreneurs and the middle class. And he repeatedly stressed on the theme of self-reliance and the importance of keeping manufacturing, markets and supply chains local. "When India speaks of self-reliance, it does not advocate a self-centered system. In India's self-reliance there is a concern for the whole world's happiness, cooperation and peace". Modi said, adding the local suppliers have met India's demands in this hour of crisis and now "Indians have to be 'vocal about local' and buy products from them".

The Prime minister said the country will stand on five pillar of self-reliance:

- **Economy:** An economy that doesn't just bring about incremental change but makes quantum jumps.
- **Infrastructure:** An infrastructure that gives India its modern identity.
- **System:** A 21st century system that is based on technology-driven facilities.
- **Demography:** In the world's largest democracy, a vibrant demography is our strength
- **Demand:** We need to fully utilize the potential of demand and supply chain.

PM Narendra Modi said, "This is an unprecedented crisis, we have to protect ourselves and move ahead as well. Becoming self-reliant is only way to make the 21st century belong to India".

Environmental and Ecological Impact

Across the whole world, air pollution has been decreasing drastically. Air and the water in rivers have been getting cleaner and the pollution levels have fallen. Due to this lockdown the number of cars plying on the roads have become less factories have shutdown and hence, in the cities all over the world. The concentration of nitrogen dioxide and carbon dioxide in the air has fallen drastically. The air has become so clear that the Himalayan peaks are visible from Jalandhar in Punjab, situated 140 kms away. Due to the stoppage of the industrial waste has definitely caused a positive impact on the water quality of the Yamuna and the Ganga rivers. This lockdown has probably also caused some effect upon the wildlife and animal life because a lot of videos are becoming viral in which rarely seen animals has come out on the streets because the streets are so deserted.

If the government constructs sewage treatment plants in the right manner and makes strong regulations for the companies and industries to treat their waste themselves, then this can happen and our rivers can appear this way. These show nothing but the future potential. Maybe we should ensure such lockdowns every year for one month & at least one month so that the entire population of the country realizes and sees how clear can the air and water become. They can catch a glimpse of the potential of where our country can reach. But all the positive effects are all temporary effects for a short term. The entire situation is going to revert to the same as soon as the lockdowns are withdrawn; the pollution and squalid conditions are going to increase again.

Conclusion

The corona pandemic has affected many aspects of our life such as socially, economically, politically, culturally, environmentally etc. Despite many efforts, reducing its spread remains challenging for state and center governments. Social distancing, hand washing, wearing mask, sanitizing, self-quarantine etc have become part of life style. Now with these changes, we have to make a habit of living life. The mindset of the people has improved, now instead of being afraid of this pandemic, we are learning to fight with it and move ahead.

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