



COVID-19 Pandemic: Health Impact and Social Responsibility

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/JPRI/2021/v33i38A32061

Editor(s):

- (1) Dr. Giuseppe Murdaca, University of Genoa, Italy.
- (2) Dr. S. Prabhu, Sri Venkateswara College of Engineering, India.

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- (2) Hemant Kumar, Pravara University, India.
- (3) Sruthi M V, Kerala University of Health Sciences, India.

Complete Peer review History: <https://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/71032>

Review Article

Received 16 May 2021
Accepted 12 July 2021
Published 21 July 2021

ABSTRACT

Background: COVID-19 is wreaking havoc all around the world and the containment measures are in progress. Vaccine news may cheer up but social vaccine must continue to be employed.

Summary: COVID-19 has affected almost every aspect of the life mostly adversely and profound effect can be seen. Vulnerable sections are worst hit and need some kind of stimulus and help. Social responsibility of every citizen who are capable to help is kicked in as there is the time of distress. Digital divide and vulnerabilities can be addressed through coordinated efforts between various agencies.

Conclusion: More coordinated examples need to be flashed so that more people can join these efforts. Huge amount of potential is still there as social responsibility needs to be taken by many of us. Social responsibility is the debt that we had taken from the society and we need to pay back it by various act of generosity. Even donating food and providing clothes to needy can be considered as act of kindness. Digital divide is increasing and socially responsible people can address it by pooling some resources from likeminded folks and easily tackle the digital divide and bridge.

Keywords: COVID-19; Mutation; Social Responsibility; Pandemic; digital Divide; hand Hygiene.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 is the evolving disease which recently completed one year after its discovery and inception in Wuhan city of the Hubei province in China [1]. It is continuously wreaking havoc and got the tag of most uncertain disease out of present known diseases. As of January 25, 2021, 99,283,370 infection cases has been registered all over the world from more than 200 regions of the world and 2,131,532 case fatalities have been registered [2]. Although the case fatality rate hovers around one and two percent the number converted is in millions which recently crossed unfortunate mark of two million. United States of America, India, Brazil, Russian federation, United Kingdom and France are the top countries accounting for more than half the case load and case mortalities around the world [3]. United Kingdom and South Africa has been reporting new mutated strain of the coronavirus which is a serious cause of concern [4]. Lockdown is lingering around and re imposition of that measure can be done if the situation goes out of control as the new mutated strain is supposedly seventy percent more virulent than the previous strain. Comorbidity is the biggest decided whether person will develop the severe outcomes or not [5]. The pandemic has affected almost all the aspect of life of human being which includes from economic to psychological wellbeing. Even the basic need such as food, clothing and shelter are being difficult to meet as pandemic had differential impact on rich as well as poor. Poorer and vulnerable sections got worst hit by the impact of the pandemic and they need special assistance to cope up the situation. Social responsibility is biggest factor that can play a positive role in the upliftment of the society. Also, even the donation of basic stuffs like food and excess cloths can make another person life. Therefore, one needs to be socially aware and its responsibility. In this article we have taken a holistic overview of different factors attached to it.

2. HEALTH

The coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 is medical disaster that almost no one had seen in their entire lifetime. The pandemic came with serious challenges in front of humanity and have differential impacts on the various strata of the society. People already struggling with COVID-19 induced job losses and loss of livelihood and the vulnerable strata of the society is in grave

danger of falling into poverty trap [6]. Many Asian countries such as India, China which benefitted from the growth and diffusion of the wealth from west to east are now experiencing the danger of again falling into poverty trap as medical expenses are the single biggest taker of the wealth. Almost half of the earned wealth has to be spent of the disease control and coronavirus disease 2019 made it worse. The poverty reduction progress was in progress and achieving slow but steady gains lifting millions of people out of the vicious cycle. But the COVID-19 pandemic may again push these people in vicious circle of poverty and poor health. According to world economic forum, as many as 88 to 115 million people are on the verge of falling into extreme poverty and this may increase up to 150 million till the end of the 2021. The middle-income countries like India will be among hardest hit and can see many new poor people sections. Urban dwellers especially will see huge fall in their standard of living [7]. This affects the surrounding environment and overall mental and physical health of the dwellers. Low income means low expenditure on health and sanitization which can lead to many diseases. COVID-19 initially itself cost them a lot as private hospitals charges massive money from everyone. These group of people are already crumbling and needs support. Governments of different countries announced free treatment of the COVID-19 and medicines too which has been already helping to relieve some of the burden. But the society as a whole has lot to contribute towards upliftment of the people. The treatment of the COVID-19 is made free by the governments to give some relief to the people but the COVID-19 has some long-term implications attached to it which are not yet fully uncovered, these are some serious impact on the body which can be treated in health care facility only. Now governments have already overspent their budgetary allocations and now the society and corporates need to kick in to fulfill this need of rehabilitative infrastructure for the long-term implication's scenario of the COVID-19. In various countries like India corporate social responsibility (CSR) fund has been institutes and certain percentage of the profit of the industry, company or conglomerate needs to be spent on the welfare of the people. This can be effectively used in constructing or enhancing the present infrastructure and cooperation with public authorities would ensure best utilization of CSR funds. Pooling of resources to form a monolith then distributing to the various agencies for action might be the best route to deal with the

COVID-19. Also, donations to central mitigation funds to contain COVID-19 can also be done apart from CSR and wealthy individuals may also come forward to resurrect the society from its lowest point.

3. EDUCATION

Multispectral impact of the lockdown has been felt on the many aspect of the human life. It also includes education. As the COVID-19 induces lockdown induces from around last week of the March post declaration of the WHO as pandemic, almost all the activities concerning to the human life were affected. Schools were shut down; classes were closed colleges and universities remained closed till few days ago. Some schools and colleges are still closed where spurt of cases is still registered. Whole academic year has been disturbed and not yet started. The brick and mortar classes are not yet fully open and where opened they are getting low response due to COVID-19 scare [8]. Although the option of online classes of many students as the schools were closed. Various social media networks and streaming sites were used to upload the videos and notes in various printable document format so that student can learn wherever they are on their mobile phone and laptops or personal computers. But in many countries particularly least developed countries and underdeveloped countries along with some developing countries, these digital gadgets like mobile phones laptops and personal computers are still a luxury items they cannot afford it. If these gadgets are available then there are connectivity issue in far fetched areas. Students and folks living in remote areas are already cut off from the mainstream life. Also, connectivity issue is faced by many as they cannot afford high speed internet which is required for the seamless connectivity and responding purpose. The pandemic induced lockdown has already taken away millions of jobs and the added expense of these electronic gadgets and internet connectivity is severely taking toll on the financial condition of the poor. They want to educate their children and they do not want their children to lag behind others due to circumstances which are not in their hands. Many families are so poor that their studios children are not even asking as they are quite aware of their current economic situation and then they decide to quit this journey on the earth by committing suicides. These heart wrenching stories gives goosebumps and one needs to think about unfair disadvantages of the pandemic on tis students who do want to study

and make their futures. While their well-off counterpart is enjoying the fruits of technology by learning seamlessly in the pandemic induces school closures and aching their preparation for their brighter future. Some anti-social elements are taking advantage out of these situation and lending loans on massive interest rates. Also, online loan scammers provide small amount of short duration of time which is taken by these people who want to purchase essentials and then they started to abuse the people to give it back with greater interest rates and threaten to malign their image as loan dupers. These aggravated impacts also taking mental toll on the child as well as parents as they are unable to cope up with the situation. This great anomaly can be addressed by coordinated social action along with public participation. These students are future of the world, and seeing them wasting their lives by either doing contraband activities or taking their own lives is so much painful even when the demand is mere to be able to learn in the times of pandemic. It is our social responsibility to come forward and help these students and help them achieve their dreams which will create a better world of tomorrow. This can be achieved through coordinated and organized efforts like through non-governmental organizations and from civil society groups which are already working in raising education related awareness. Individuals who saw certain students who want to study and needs these machines may donate them individually also. Many computers are on resell and these can be a great low-cost option which can fulfill the need of the digital learning. The digital divide which is increasing that is growing day by day creating educational inequality by restriction of access can be addressed through this method. This is our social responsibility and one should not think it as they are doing any favor because they are what they are because of society and they are indebted already [9].

4. BASIC NEEDS LIKE FOOD, CLOTHES AND SHELTER

The COVID-19 has left no stones of disaster to be returned and even basic needs like food, clothing and a place to live has been adversely affected. This has been the case in most of the vulnerable section of the society. The people lost their jobs especially daily wagers, industry laborers, hawkers, street vendors and many more whose daily business earn them there that day's food. But the pandemic has left them with no means of livelihood and the basic question of

hunger arises in front of them. Also, beggars and street people who are homeless along with mentally disturbed people who generally live their lives on roads and streets have left with no food and clothes as the pandemic induced lockdown closed down every business and industry where people used to come and give these people some food. Civil society members and non-governmental organizations were unable to take care of these people as the movement restrictions were imposed. They were left in despair and hunger [10]. Many evictions during and after lockdown were seen as there was no money to pay the rent. Especially students who earn and learn were forced to vacate the rented place. All these people were at the junction of their life where they need some helping hands to uplift from the situation. Food security in general is in danger in various middle- and low-income countries and this needs to be addressed as the food is the basic necessity of the human being. Also export restrictions were placed and this induced artificial food shortages in various countries as they are dependent on other countries for food supplies although global markets saw no significant reduction in supply of grains. Many expatriates were expelled from host countries as the industries were shut down. This mainly includes labor intensive sectors of gulf countries which harbors millions of expatriates from south Asian countries like India, China, and Bangladesh and so on. The remittance was the sole earner and bread winner for many families which left with no livelihood now as they are currently expelled from their work country. Also, high food prices and rising inflation adding only to the woes which needs to be addressed. In 2020, 137 million more people would experience the acute hunger situations and pandemic is progressing and marking its anniversary. This 82 percent more than the pre COVID-19 times which is a serious cause of concern. The nutrition security was already not met in many low-income families as it was considered as luxury. Mere affordability of the staple food was ensuring and pandemic struck that too. Supply disruptions was on all time high as the movement restriction along with various measures like export restrictions and supply chain break has affected in prices as prices shot many times. Difficult and conflict-ridden areas such as war-torn areas are already under tremendous pressure of meeting the basic needs of the residents and this pandemic made all worse. All these problems need to be tackled by not only governmental efforts but also societal responsible efforts which may help in creating

better world or otherwise the anarchy would be brewing shortly. Food banks can be installed at various places where one can easily take foods free of cost. Spots can be identified where the slum population or vulnerable population resides and their food fest can be organized daily to help these people. Also, the humanity wall concept can be revived in which one can donate his or her clothes which he or she wants and vulnerable sections and needy people can approach this wall to collect the clothes donates for subsistence. Use of technology can be done in order to geo tag these people. Temporarily schools and colleges and public institutions which are currently closed down can be made as temporary shelter for needy people as they are more vulnerable to catch COVID-19 on streets. Also logging of these individuals can be done to tell them about various schemes run by various governmental agencies to rehabilitate them. If these vulnerable people have necessary skills they can employed at various firms as worker and it will help them get their life on track. At our personal level it is our responsibility not to waste food as there are so many people starving without food all over the world and COVID-19 has only increased that number. Beggars demanding food should be given one so that they can eat one and they met their basic needs. Maintaining the dignity of the person is in your hands and it must be maintained.

5. SOCIAL VACCINE

As the vaccines are in last stage but it is far from distributing it to all. Vaccination of almost seven billion people will take considerable amount of time. Therefore, it is important to protect oneself from the pandemic of COVID-19. As the pandemic is progressing, many cases of long COVID-19 have been emerging in various parts of the world. People are reporting various long-term symptoms which includes fatigue, reduction in physical capacity and various medical anomalies like weakening of cardiovascular muscles and so on. Therefore it is important that we have to safeguard ourselves from this impacts [11]. This can be only possible with the help of social vaccine which needs to be deployed. The social vaccine includes wearing masks, maintaining safe and minimum distance, washing and sanitizing hands regularly, avoid going out unnecessarily, wearing personal and protective equipment's when necessary, sneezing etiquettes and maintaining the hand hygiene. The list may be expanded as new ways to tackle the virus spread evolves. These are

tried and tested methods and ready to be deployed on the grounds. Previous outbreaks severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome (MERS) along with Ebola outbreaks have already shown the efficacy of these measures. It is our social responsibility to obey and apply these measures in day-to-day life and contribute in arresting the spread of the virus. These measures can be promoted through private efforts so that their credibility can be enhanced and more and more people become aware about the benefits of these efforts. Use of social media responsibly to educate others about these measures also comes under the social responsibility and which is much needed especially in these times of pandemic [12].

6. INFODEMIC AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Along with this deadly pandemic which is among the most lethal events of the human history in almost past one hundred years, there is brewing some silent storm which is doing comparable damage to the wellbeing of the people. The Infodemic as it is termed by World Health Organization (WHO) is the combination of two term that is information and pandemic [13]. Huge transfer of information whether true or false which might have bad effect on overall wellbeing is termed as Infodemic information. This includes false messages and rumors, fake therapies claiming the cure of COVID-19, misleading claims which deflects the efforts of mitigating agencies are all covered under the term Infodemic [14]. This can derail the efforts of the preventive agencies as the people might be taking or behaving in certain way that it is harmful to them as well as society. So, it is our social responsibility to not to forward such misleading claims and messages that increases the enmity between any group of people. Following digital hygiene and thinking before forwarding are the social strategies that must be followed and are responsibility of every citizen. Awareness by non-governmental agencies and competent students and people who are well capable of spreading truth can done and it would have greater impact on the society as a whole. It is our responsibility to educate the people surrounding us about the digital hygiene and safe and constructive usage of the social media and internet connectivity. This can be immensely beneficial as huge loss of resources can be averted with our social action [15]. Related studies were reported by Mujbaile et al. [16],

Padole et. al. [17] and Phansopkar et al. [18]. Prasad et al. reported about effect of covid pandemic on the care of patients with kidney diseases in India [19]. Thomas et. al reported on Medical Laboratory Prosecution of COVID – 19 [20]. Bakshi et. al. reported psychosocial effects of covid-19 pandemic on health care professionals and medical students [21]. Kaple et. al. addressed the social aspects and safe behaviors [22]. Nanotkar et. al. emphasized on importance of social distancing [23]. Shrivastava et. al. addressed the issues of strict actions regarding facade of media and social media during Covid-19 [24]. Similar study by Nisargandha et. al. addressed the prevention related issues for COVID-19 [25-28].

7. CONCLUSION

COVID-19 pandemic gave human being a hit to rethink about its nature as man or human is asocial animal. We have to help out our fellow human being when they are in distress. We have to remember that our progress is always dependent on our surrounding and society as a whole and wellbeing of the society is wellbeing of ours. Social responsibility is the debt that we had taken from the society and we need to pay back it by various act of generosity. Even donating food and providing clothes to needy can be considered as act of kindness. Digital divide is increasing and socially responsible people can address it by pooling some resources from likeminded folks and easily tackle the digital divide and bridge. Finally, a friend in need is a friend indeed can be modified as human in need is a human indeed as this pandemic highlights the social responsibility factor is pushed by the pandemic than never before.

CONSENT

It is not applicable.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

It is not applicable.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
<https://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/71032>