

## The Hard Times of COVID 19 and Previous Major Health Emergencies for Speculating a Post COVID India

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### ABSTRACT

Human existence reminds of the hard times that every nation of earth has witnessed in the series of hostilities such as world wars, great depression, cold war etc. But in 2020 it is not wars that have led to halting the lives and mobility of mass in the era of globalization; an invisible enemy becomes the root cause of this. COVID 19 became the paradox of today's emergency. The situation reminds mankind of early preparedness and speculation of the invisible threat beforehand which needs an attention over improving daily behavioral practices, health care facilities and insurances, economic alternatives and boosting of science and technology in the field of research and medicine. The following article looks on to the literature of previous health disasters and what we should learn in combating such kind of emergencies in the future. The study becomes an important discourse for drawing inferences from previous major health emergencies the world has witnessed and in third world societies like India how the negativity of a tragic phase can be tackled as a responsive behavior. Case history of previous infectious diseases and literature reviews becomes the methodology for the manifestations of proliferating the measures to combat such instances in a developing country like India. The article would work on the measures for growing consciousness and alertness among the masses for generating unique behavioral advances which would demonstrate the importance of health education in times of crisis. Various insights such as online education, working from home, adequate importance for research and scientific temperament, behavioural changes in terms of social distancing, frequently washing hand, change and greeting habits, rejuvenation of ecology and environment becomes a positive factor for a new normal in today's tragic times.

**KEY WORDS:** COVID 19, EMERGENCY, INDIA, PARADOX, RESEARCH.

### INTRODUCTION

Canadian president's statement of the corona virus's hard times being the new normal depicts a path that shall be forsaken onto indulgence of a positive insight on digging up the word normal. The new normal seems to have horrifying effects of which the imagination does not

mentor thinking of the present reality. If reality sustains as it is, the very structure of mankind would be changed shortly without a possible vaccine being developed in the upcoming days. The disease COVID 19 originated in Wuhan, China of which pneumonia started among the mass whose cause could not be determined initially. This was eventually reported to the WHO by the Chinese on 31 December 2019 (Jiang et al, 2020).

Subsequently it gained recognition of a possible emergency on 30 Jan 2020, when it was declared a Public health emergency. The name of the disease as COVID 19 was announced on 11 February 2020 (ibid). From then onwards the disease has been spreading all across the globe like wildfire, killing hundreds and thousands of people. The specter of the disease has created a situation of the pandemic which frightens the existence of mankind

### ARTICLE INFORMATION

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after an accumulation of events such as world wars, great depression, etc. Human indulgence in certain areas of life emancipates tragedies of latent functions such as the paradox of GM crops relating to contract farming, the use of science and technology in terms of generating weapons of mass destruction (Specter, 2009; Jiang et al, 2020).

The Novel Corona Virus tends to hit the respiratory system hard that makes people difficult to breathe. The disease tends to spread through droplets of human beings and the governments and the World Health Organization is concerned for safeguarding the humans having provided guidelines from safeguarding oneself against the virus. The disease being unable to surpass by medicine has sustained for many months to date and this act of longevity creates an act of challenge for science to come with an antidote or medicine. The disease has brought scientists and researchers into a single unit for its eradication. This worldwide pandemic creates certain dialectical reasoning of behavior among the mass. These dialectics of the disease can be seen on the societal ground too for precaution and mobility. This involves frequently washing hands, maintaining social distance, wearing masks, isolating in house and being less mobile. These various social practices have created room for awareness among the mass, which would lead to profound impacts in the future (Prosser et al, 2020).

## METHODOLOGY

The following communication focuses on the existing literatures of health emergencies and draws a perspective on how to secure ourselves from threat such as diseases and looks onto the social structure that will be juxtaposed in a post COVID 19 India. This becomes a necessity study because the world has seen many such crisis and for the betterment of our future it becomes an important principle to learn from health tragedies such as COVID 19. Third world countries like India, where population becomes an important factor, health emergencies can be an act for rampant dissolution of the society with huge population and therefore various risks generated throughout should be taken into consideration and which would bring effective precautionary knowledge for tackling such kinds of crisis in near future. The use of case history in terms of previous health emergency is taken and with this the underpinnings of the societal behavioural insights are seen which lets us to understand Indian society in terms of health crisis. The emerging ongoing trends are taken from India during the lockdown to focus on the parameters of health, education, scientific temperament and economy.

### Major infectious Diseases of the 20th and 21st century:

**HIV:** The occurrence of HIV was found in early 1920 in a region to be now called the Democratic Republic of Congo. (Gao et al), 1999 in their study has found that the chimpanzees had the source of HIV-1 and this virus had at certain juncture has crossed species from chimpanzees to humans. In terms of human cases

related to HIV, it was classified as the first verified case in 1959, when a man's blood sample from the Democratic Republic of Congo was analyzed and termed to be the detection of HIV (Science, 1998). The disease as deadly as it is has created havoc across the world but to date no such medicine is discovered for its cure. But medicines have come in the limelight for delaying the probability of the virus. COVID 19 on the other hand is also a novel zoonotic disease that is caused by a corona virus from China in the year 2019 (Mackenzie et al, 2020). This virus has certain similarities and dissimilarities as compared to HIV. Both the virus can target the T lymphocyte cells (Wang et al, 2020). But this does not denote they are the same. Corona virus has a significantly lower spontaneous mutation rate than HIV (Wang et al, 2020).

HIV poses a serious ontological question to Sars Cov-2 for the probability of discovering a potential Vaccine and reminds us how unsafe we are if we look into the world through a futuristic lens. HIV has created a certain amount of consensus in the world that awareness about the disease in today's time seems to be more effective. Knowing that the disease spreads through blood and other bodily fluids, measures are to be taken in terms of blood donations where safe and hygienic sexual intercourse became habitual practice aftermath the spread of the disease. This reflexes the awareness that has been injected into the population to be able to halt the proliferation of the disease. Therefore on this account the corona virus implies a similar situation, where social distancing and washing hands should become a behavioral insight for the people across the globe, and this should be carried out through awareness. The dystopia of living in a world with viruses and diseases as a new normal must be something that people should be aware of and start reasoning for their wellbeing from this (COVID et al., 2020).

**H1N1:** The H1N1 influenza virus, S-OIV appeared in 2009 in April in Mexico (Gibbs et al 2009). The swine flu was also a zoonotic disease as compared to COVID 19. The disease had the symptom of fever, chills, cough, and headache which are also the symptoms of COVID 19. The disease tends to spread through coughing and sneezing. However anxiety and fear were created among the mass because of unavailability of Vaccine in the beginning, but later at the end of 2009, a vaccine was developed which would protect in the future flue seasons. Covid 19 in terms of H1N1 flu there was no immunity among the mass at the starting of the outbreak, and this led to a crisis of how fatalities in 2,84,000 death all across the globe were recorded (Dawood et al, 2012). The starting of H1N1 gave people a new platform in the form of the internet to know the doubts on the disease. The population started using the internet for logging into various online platforms for discussing issues relating to the disease. The outbreak of H1N1 saw demand for health and hygiene and this was generated through the sales of sanitizers, orange juice, thermometers, vitamins, cough and cold remedies, tea, soup (Todd Hale et al, 2009; Wang et al., 2020).

**Ebola:** Ebola had its origin in the year 1976 in Nzara Sudan and Yambuku, Democratic Republic of Congo (Mazid et al, 2016). These are the two regions where the disease has parallel origination. The virus had its largest repercussions during 2014, which was the optimum since 1976. The outbreak started in West Africa, which had the largest of all facilities including deaths. The virus had enormous socio-economic impacts on the society, where the GDP was hit very hard, impacting the trade and commerce in the continent especially Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, and Senegal. The tough times of African society in the nuances of Ebola justifies the fact that health is one of the important sectors, which if developed would stimulate the growth of other economic sectors. To restrict the outbreak from spreading to other parts of the world, the movement of people was restricted.

The disease had worked in a latent function for encompassing integration and solidarity among the African nations to fight against the disease with unity through deploying military and humanitarian missions by the member states. To restrain from the disease unambiguous consensus has been built among the mass as the days passed on. Washing hands frequently became a habitual practice that persisted in the human consciousness aftermath of the disease, (Contezen et al, 2015). In places like Haiti and Ethiopia, washing hands became a matter of educating and socializing the children. (Gamma et al, 2017; Wang et al., 2020).

**Lessons learned from previous health disasters:** The various health disasters and pandemics such as Spanish Flu, Ebola, and H1N1 etc. are zoonotic diseases and humans getting more proximity with wild might lead to situations of viruses travelling from the wild. And to this from the various health disasters we see that human history and natural history is encompassed within the same realm of existence. And this is to say that the rampant anthropocentric effects on the environment and wild may lead to devastating outcomes for the human health and wellbeing.

Threats such as these speak of a global collaboration. These are some things that can't be halted in the borders within the nation, but these are something that tends to spread. And therefore there is requirement of the whole global community coming together to combat in such situation and help each other through necessary requirements, living aside the political and ideological affiliations and differences. Another important dimension that health disasters such as this show that scientific temperament is very important for every nation. And scientific research should be boosted through investment in research and development to fight against an invisible enemy of virus (WHO, 2004; Wang et al., 2020).

Health crisis such as these shows that the more we adapt towards behavioral changes for staying away from the virus the more positive results this portrays. In terms of Ebola we have seen the more the people followed the measures of social distancing and new habits of greetings such as subtle bow or rub of the palms to the more

flamboyant gestures of bumping bottoms or throwing your hands in the air in a star shape, or the gentle foot-pat half-greeting, half-dance, rubbing left foot to your counterpart's right have seen to be a positive gesture in stopping the spread of the disease (Prosser et al, 2020).

**India- on a post COVID 19 world:** The COVID 19 as deadly as it is not the first pandemic to have affected the world. In India the plague outbreak of 1898 and the Spanish flu of 1918 illustrated how disease and policies around it are never just medical but are embedded within the politics of socioeconomic fabric of the economic and social order we live in. Both the crisis brought out a sharp critique against the then British colonial government and its negligence of the medical structure of the country. At great the human costs of the pandemic provided a momentum to rebuild solidarity to reevaluate alliances. Living from how the state responded during the crisis, crafted new dimensions in the critique of colonialism and imperialism. This moment of crisis is the neoliberal unending consumption-led world that might once again lead us to question the tenants of economic organizations of such capitalist growth with minimal attention to basics necessity parameters of health and education (Kickbusch, 2001; Prosser et al, 2020).

The COVID 19 saga started in India by late January 2020. In the initial phase, the Indian Council for Medical Science Research on 15 February 2020 started the sentinel surveillance for COVID 19 and on March 11, 2020 the process of universal screening started and the travelers who came to India would be in the purview of 14 days quarantine. On 17th March 2020, closure of all educational institutions, theaters, museums took place. Eventually lockdown was implemented all across the nation to stop the proliferation of the disease. This subsequently led to drastic changes in the habitual life of the people. Everything including all social and economic activities came to halt in a brink of a second. The lockdown resulted in an adverse effect on the economy which led to submerge growth.

The sectors which affected India and will continue to affect in the future are the tourism sector, aviation sector, manufacturing sector. But the COVID 19 saga could boost certain sectors like the digital and creative sector encompassing a diverse range of activities from telecommunications to advertising and computer programming to broadcasting. Economically drastic alterations would occur as demand subsumes all over the world and India too. And hence production process comes to pause with low production across the nation. The falling rates of crude oil can be beneficial for the government in procuring crude at a lesser price and stocking in the reserves. The government on the other hand must look into it and provide aids and loans for sustaining the SMEs. People would now consider the risk of traveling and in the upcoming days they would emancipate entrepreneurship and farming in their local places. Local trade and commerce for local consumers through local markets could be boosting the market economy (Kanitkar, 2020).

The current time and space have created a paradigm for hyper usage online social networking sites and online media sites such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and this hypothesizes a situation of movies of regional and Bollywood getting released in these online platforms rather than theaters in the purview of COVID 19. Again the situations of learning and teaching through internet access can become an opportunity for alternative measurements in terms of education in which the open and distance learning is best known from years as such type of learning and teaching mechanism could be considered as a safe working strategy for managing mass aspirations for higher education without necessarily affecting large congregation (Menon, 2006; Prosser et al, 2020).

The process of lockdown has also boosted localism within the country, where family time is seen to be given much importance by the population. The school-going children are to be provided special care amidst their family by their parents and the parents would also get to know their children effectively and would understand their problems and trauma because of being too intimate in the hours of lockdown and will result in necessary care and nourishment. A shift in the pattern of mobility is seen during the starting of 2020, where there was an increase in globalization of trade and commerce and movement of people across the globe (ibid). But in the aftermath of the disease this pattern has changed into negligence mobility of the mass and confining themselves in their respective residences and moving in and around only for essentials. This scenario has led to the betterment of the environment and ecosystem where the wild is rejuvenating implying that nature is healing.

The carbon immersions dipping can lead to a better scenario for the cities such as New Delhi, Kanpur etc. The real issue that the nation faces during the times of pandemic is the issue of unemployment. The unemployment crisis would however uproot many of the migrants to lose their jobs in the cities and move to their respective native places. But this can also benefit the rural economy if the workforce ventures into the small and medium enterprises in their respective villages. The present situation puts the demographic dividend into a state of jeopardy, where the working-age population instead of working is into lockdown mode. Behavioral practices such as washing hands frequently, covering faces with masks could become a regular practice and may become part of a normal life. Greeting without shaking hands with Namaste may become a regular practice (Singh et al, 2020).

The COVID 19 saga in India now sets back importance for the health sector, in which research and development, as well as treatment and medical resource, becomes important in certain tough times. Thus this pandemic not only challenges the global health system but our commitment to equality and human dignity. The poor must be looked upon by the government because they are the ones most affected and to tackle this there should be the implementation of universal basic income. The

consensus of compulsory health insurance becomes important in certain tough times which the government must be keen upon in the future. But this can also be turned to an asset by learning new things and upgrading skills through the internet and other digital modes. People might get themselves involved in reading, writing, poetry, music, dance, yoga, farming eventually leading them to generate new ideas, and thus these ideas could be used in terms of generating income for sustenance. During a crisis like this, India needs to invest in education and most certainly community education and community participation. This can be carried out through media, guiding people towards betterment (Khongsai et al, 2020).

The paradigm of pandemic determines the element of risk perpetuated in India. The risks have greater repercussions in terms of gathering food, medicines, and has confined to the lockdown itself the poor and weaker section suffers. The affluent classes are the ones which possess the potentiality to tackle the risk or get rid of the risks, whereas the weaker sections of the society including pregnant women, children, old aged population, and physically disabled ones are seen to have risks within themselves to mitigate the upcoming risks (Marshall, et al 2020). The phenomenon of risk becomes asynchronous to society. Modernization has introduced such risks in the society where proximity with humans towards animals has led to an imbalance in the ecosystem and catastrophes in the form of risks (Beck, 1992).

Modernization and globalization as a product of Science and Technology become the forefront in times of pandemics as such. Thus when the probability of finding a vaccine in a certain period becomes slim to none questions the manifestations of scientific temperament across nations (Alsop et al, 2020). Thus the iron cage rationality phenomena portrayed by sociologist Max Weber prevails in the discourse of modernization in the eyes of Beck known as reflexive modernity, where the very fundamental functions of modernity come at stake, where unintended and unforeseen side effects of modern life backfire on modernity (Wimmer et al, 2006). Development without investing much on research might lead to latent consequences. Therefore the need of the hour demands stimulation of scientific research. A new normal can be built upon what we have discovered under lockdown, about making a living and living well (Prosser et al, 2020).

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