

# Living the Challenges of a Pandemic Through the Succour and Strength of Science

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At the outset, on behalf of the editorial team, we falter at words to express our deep sense of solitude and grief on the catastrophic events of the world-wide pandemic. Millions of precious lives have been lost, maiming a larger grim number, with no signs of relief since the last two years. We pray to the Almighty, to give us the strength to bear this universal calamity and come up with long lasting fortitude to eradicate it soon.

As all pandemics in the past have shown signs of wearing off in due course of time, we expect and pray that the COVID-19 will also wane, if not disappear totally. Since the virus is asymptomatic, and has the capability to cross barriers of animal and human species, it will not be reasonable to label its death so soon. We will have to live with it, at least for a few years, till our immune systems acclimatize the emerging viral mutations, as nothing but bouts of colds and flus. Science and Technology has the power to do it, and God willing, soon this great news will greet us.

The preceding year has been much brighter than its predecessor, we have seen a surge of scientific response beyond comparison by any means. Since the beginning of the pandemic till 2021, we have seen unprecedented scientific innovations, researches and developments. As many as 26 effective vaccines are in use, and several hundred in the pipeline, this outstanding fast track developments have made it a year of vaccines, chasing the equally populous mutations, beta, the delta and now the omicron, trying to have a date with almost every one of us. The Lancet in its 18th December 2021 editorial, for all its peaks and troughs, has rightly heralded it as a year of extraordinary COVID-19 science, (The Lancet, 18th Dec 2021).

Biosc.Biotech. Res. Comm. is in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of successful publication, and it has been indeed a privilege for us to be associated with it. The journal amidst the waves of pandemic, since its issue of Jan-Feb-March (2020), has also published several interesting articles on various aspects of COVID-2019 since the dawn of the viral onslaught.

A large number of well written contributions were received from distinguished authors, few to be mentioned here: Miraj (2020) described the Coronavirus Disease-2019 and its Public Health Challenges and Preparedness, an interesting write up, which has figured in WHO's data-base on COVID 19 Literature. Miraj (2020) stressed on how to be prepared for such catastrophic events at all times and especially for huge country populations, where it is necessary for the respective governments to allocate special funds for such crisis management. This must be without the maladies and stigma of corruption, dishonesty, procrastination and irresponsibility, which are new obstacles in saving humanity. She focused on the fact that if we have to protect ourselves, it will be the out-of-pocket expenses, which as usual will give succor from such health-related emergencies, including the recent pandemic. Global collaboration devoid of politics, seems to be another plausible solution to repair the world's biggest damage. There is no dearth of funds for the humanity, but effective management is, (Miraj 2020).

Yunus (2020) showed a significant growing attention on the topics of novel coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) by way of large number of international publications on the pandemic. Her analysis showed that, authors from USA and China are more active than other countries, followed by England, Italy, Canada and India. The number of publications on novel coronavirus (COVID-19) increased rapidly in April-May, 2020 as the threatening disease spread throughout the world. The analysis also revealed information on the best keywords used, co-authorships, co-occurrence, citations and the journals, among

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others. The study has included number of publications on novel coronavirus from around the world along with keyword analyses, co-authorship analyses, co-occurrence, and citation analyses. The analysis has also recognized the best writers and journals in the field, and it nicely attempted to determine the future proposals for monitoring such vital areas of research.

John (2020) highlighted how the virus staggered the public health aspect of human life. With its far-reaching repercussions having overwhelmed the health care systems due to increased demand and grave under-preparedness, how the pandemic disrupted the global economy causing millions of enterprises to face an existential threat. The article summarized a careful review of literature focusing on how the pandemic has impacted public health, hindered health care delivery and imposed new behavioral and business mandates upon us in the future. As the tragic scenario unfolds, it has become imperative for agencies and stakeholders, worldwide to come forward and take initiatives to restore the health systems and formulate well-thought-out and inclusive strategies.

Alshrari (2020) reported about the preparedness in containment of Coronavirus Disease-19 in the African Continent, observing that most infection spread is attributed to improper hygiene / protective measures, for example, hand washing and social distancing. Accordingly, the large-scale advertisement and conduction of the COVID-19 educational programs are highly recommended. The African countries lack appropriate numbers of biosafety levels, 3 and 4 research facilities, trained personnel / emergency units, and funding resources to combat COVID-19 and, similar pandemics. It is advisable to build up more biosafety research facilities, trained emergency response units, isolation units, and substantial funding agencies in every African country with clear rules to combat outbreaks like the COVID-19. The African countries may also ask support from other countries with successful experience against COVID-19. The implementation of the suggested strategies will be helpful to African countries against COVID-19.

Similarly, Das (2020) described how human existence in this pandemic 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. Various insights such as online education, working from home, adequate importance for research and scientific temperament, behavioral 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.

Another article of Swaminathan (2021) mentioned the environmental effects particularly, on air and water by assessing the conditions before and after the outbreak of the pandemic COVID-19. The study showed that the purity of air and water improved during the pandemic period when compared with

the period before the outbreak of COVID-19 virus. As, waste generated from self-quarantine houses, hospitals and self-hygiene practices followed by people posed an enormous effect on waste management sector, its effective disposal along with municipal solid waste has created a warning to people for effective handling of the waste and the environment. Based on the environmental analysis performed on air, water and waste management, solid guidelines have been provided in treating the waste. This paper recommended the need for improving the waste-treatment using better methodologies in developing countries and the significance of related policy framework to face such pandemics in future. Indeed it is the sanitary condition which plays a big role in any disease containment.

On an endnote, we in these two years had a hard time handling a large number of good manuscripts, regretfully many of them had to be returned, owing to space and priorities. A 'big thank you' to all of our reviewers who with their magnanimous co-operation and help, carried out their job so efficiently, we are immensely grateful to them. Last, but not the least, our valuable readers, contributors and of course the indexing agencies, need a word of appreciation for their consideration of the journal, to enable it carve a niche of its own, despite the odds. We got listed in the Journal Citation Reports (2021) (JCR, 2021) as a Q4 publication of Web of Science, Clarivate Analytics, USA.

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