

## **India and Covid- 19**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

The first case of COVID-19 in India, which originated from China, was reported on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2020. India currently has the largest number of confirmed cases in Asia and has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of confirmed cases in the World after the USA. India currently holds the single day record for largest increase in cases, set on 17<sup>th</sup> September (2020) with an additional 97,894 cases. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March (2020), India observed a 14 hour voluntary public curfew at the insistence from the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was followed by mandatory lockdowns in COVID-19 hotspot and all major cities. Further, on 24<sup>th</sup> March (2020) the prime minister ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, affecting the entire 1.3 billion population of India. On 14<sup>th</sup> April (2020) India extended the nationwide lockdown till 3<sup>rd</sup> May and 17<sup>th</sup> May with substantial relaxation. From 1<sup>st</sup> June (2020), the Government started “unlocking” the country (barring containment zone) in three unlock faces.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January, India reported its first case of COVID-19 in Kerala. Which rise to three cases by 3<sup>rd</sup> February, all were returning student from Wuhan on 12<sup>th</sup> March, a 76-year-old man, with a travel history of Saudi Arabia, became the first COVID-19 fatality of India. A Sikh preacher, who had a travel history to Italy and Germany, turned into a “super spreader” by attending a Sikh festival in Anandpur Sahib during 10-12 March (2020). Twenty-seven COVID-19 cases were traced to him. Over 40,000 people in 20 villages in Punjab were quarantined on 27 March contain the spread. On 31<sup>st</sup> March a Tablighi Jamaat religious congregation event in Delhi, which had taken place earlier in March, emerged as a new virus super spreader event, after numerous cases across the country were traced back to it. On 18<sup>th</sup> April, The Health Ministry announced that 4291 cases were directly linked to the event.

The central surveillance unit, The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and experts from government hospitals, they are part of policy decisions to decide how Corona virus should be tackled in the country. As well as “breaking the chains of transmission 15 labs across India led by

National Institute of Virology” Pune, are testing for the virus, with more labs being trained, as of early March. On 14<sup>th</sup> March (2020), 65 labs were named capable for testing the virus. India became the 5<sup>th</sup> country to successfully obtain a pure sample of the virus after China, Japan, Thailand, and the US. In May (2020), National Institute of Virology introduced 2<sup>nd</sup> antibody test kit ELISA for rapid testing, capable of processing 90 samples in a single run of 2.5 hours.

Pune based Serum Institute of India announced that it would apply for clinical trials of certain trains from Drug Controller General of India (DCGI). In April (2020), as per company president Adar Poonawala says a vaccine for COVID-19 will be delivered within a year. However, it may not be effective on 20% to 30% people. Two other companies are also trying to develop a vaccine: Zydus Cadila, which is replicating viral factor and developing a DNA pyramid vaccine, and Hyderabad based Bharat-Biotech in collaboration with US based FluGen, which is expecting the first clinical trials of a nasal vaccine by late 2020. In September, India’s science minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan announced that the first vaccine for use will be available by first quarter by 2021.

### **IMPACT OF EDUCATION SYSTEM :**

COVID-19 brings extreme disaster to India’s education system. To prevent spread of pandemic, the Govt. of India has taken number of preventive measures. The Union Government declared a countrywide lockdown of all educational institutions on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. Central Board of Secondary Education postponed all examination of secondary and higher secondary schools on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 throughout India. UPSC postponed the civil service examination 2019. COVID-19 affects the education system in both positive and negative ways.

### **POSITIVE IMPACT ON EDUCATION SYSTEM :**

1. COVID-19 has accelerated adoption of digital technologies to deliver education. Educational institutions moved towards blended mode of learning it encouraged all teachers and student to become more technology savvy.
2. Rise in use of learning management system is opened a great opportunity for the companies those have been developing and strengthening learning management system for use educational institutions.
3. The pandemic has created a massive rise in tele-conferencing, virtual meeting, webinars and e-conferencing opportunities.
4. Improved the use of electronic media for sharing information. COVID-19 makes the education system much more modern.

### **NEGATIVE IMPACT ON EDUCATION SYSTEM :**

Education sectors has suffered a lot due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

1. Different boards have already postponed the annual examination and entrance tests. Admission process got delayed due to continuity in lockdown. Student suffered a loss of nearly 6 months of the full academic year of 2020-2021.

2. Most of the recruitment got postponed due to the COVID-19. The centre for monitoring shot up from 8.4% in mid-March to 23% in early April, and the urban unemployment rate is 30.9%. When the unemployment increases then the education gradually decreases as people struggled for food rather than education.

3. Some educated parents are able to guide but some may not have the adequate level of education needed to teach children in the house.

4. The closure of schools has serious implications on the daily nutrition of student as the mid-day meal schemes have temporarily been shut.

### **IMPACT ON WOMEN :**

Women have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, especially those who are part of the work force. Women employees and entrepreneurs continue to suffer the impact of lay-offs and business losses to a greater extent than men. As per a recent analysis by McKinsey Global Institute, women are more vulnerable to COVID-19 related economic effects because of the already existing gender inequalities. The magnitude of inequality is striking high. Using data and trends from unemployment surveys in the United States of America and India.

Where gender disaggregated data is available, the study estimates that female job loss rates owing to COVID-19 are about 1.8% times higher than the male job loss rates globally. Confirming the trend Ishita Sen, founder of the NGO Engendered, which helps women in their mid-cares, said studies in India show that four out of every ten working women have lost their jobs in the lockdown period. Similarly, 90% of the women entrepreneurs have reported a significant decrease in their sales revenues. As per McKinsey report, women make up 39% of global employment, but account for 54% the overall job losses, indicating a skewed gender scenario which could be true around the globe. Women across all professions -ranging from fashion designers and those in the under pressure. Invariably all these jobs are dominated by women and most of these jobless, added Mr. Murthy. As per World Bank, India's female labour force participation rates, usually calculated the share of women that are employed or are seeking work as a proportion of the working age female population, stand distressingly low, at a mere 23.413 % (2019). Our neighbouring countries fared better- Bhutan 58.3%, Nepal 81.6%, China 60.63%, Bangladesh 36.14%, Myanmar 47.54% and Sri Lanka 34.75%, slightly more women work in Pakistan female labour force participating rate is rising while India is flagging. Such a trend is disturbing.

### **IMPACT ON HEALTHCARE SYSTEM :**

COVID-19 has brought a massive catastrophe on the healthcare system of third world citizens like India. Experts say that the lockdown slowed the speed of the transmission to meet the challenge posed by the pandemic. However, they are worried that the numbers will rise exponentially in the time to come. As we are moving towards unlocking the country, I can clearly see that the situation is going to worsen. In our country at 22 % of the population lives below the poverty line. It's very difficult to expect them to use sanitisers, soaps and even freshwater. Many of them cannot afford to do so. They also wear low quality masks which hardly save them from the disease but merely

give them false sense of security. Not only uneducated but even educated people don't know to wear a mask. They continue touching it from the fronts. Hospitals are preparing themselves but there are also loopholes. There should be a provision that the samples must be collected at the someplace where the patient reported the disease. They sent the infected persons from one centre to another, meanwhile the persons infect others. They need to expedite the diagnosis procedure. In May 2020, the prime minister called upon the Indian people to be self-reliant.

### **IMPACT ON UNORGANIZED LABOUR:**

As India braces for an extended lockdown to rein in the transmission of the Corona virus, the lower rung of the society also braces for its battle with hunger and poverty. While some migrants have managed to reach the safety of their homes. Braving thirst, hunger the heat and the cold, some are still stuck in cities in with no jobs and no shelter; some others who are lucky to have a roof to live under have been rubbed of their jobs that earned them their daily wages and thus, their daily bread. The fight against the COVID-19 in India created a new problem of hunger in poor's, unregistered labourers, migrant workers and street beggar's. The situation of labour in unorganised sector was very much difficult in the phase lockdown. The unorganised sector comprises midwives, domestic workers, fisherman, barbers, vegetable and fruit vendors, today tappers, scavenger's, carriers of head loads, drivers of animal driven vehicles, loaders and unloaders, agricultural labourers, those engaged in animal husbandry, beedi rolling, labelling, packing, building construction workers, leather workers, weavers, artisans, salt workers, workers in brick kilns and stone quarries, workers in saw mills and oil mills. According to repost of National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in 2009-10, the total employment was of 46.5 crore. Out of this, 94% are unorganized workers and only 6% was organized workers. Soon after the lockdown, the unorganized sector labourers became workless. Thus, they are also facing the problem of money for livelihood and their family survival. Moreover, they are constrained to leave the work places and cities in their villages. Due to lockdown, all public passenger transports are suspended Unorganized Sector Laborers (USL) are subject to travel by feet over thousands of kilometres to reach their villages. In some cases, the peoples are taking the help of good carriers, lorry, truck, and goods trains to reach their destination. Many of them are constrained to live in tents behind road in with of food which may be supplied by Govt. or others good helping individuals number of media reports indicates the hunger problem. In USLs and migrant workers due to lockdown. BBC Hindi news is also reported for this situation and said, "Hunger will be died us before Coronavirus".

### **UNEMPLOYMENT:**

The COVID-19 crisis has led to a spike in the countries unemployment rate to 27.11% for the week ended by 3rd May (2020), up from the under 7% level before the start of the pandemic in Mid- March, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) has said. The Mumbai based think tank said the rate of unemployment was the highest in the urban areas, which constitute the most number of the red zones due to the Coronavirus cases, at 29.22%, as against 26.69% for the rural areas. Analysis have been warning about the spectre of unemployment ever since the country was put under a lockdown on 25<sup>th</sup> March by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to stop the spread of the Corona virus infections. The Govt. has so far announced income and food support to the vulnerable people as part of 1.70 lakh crore rupees fiscal stimulus to the economic, financial and

possibly humanitarian crisis, and is also mulling a second round of measures soon. As of the end of April, 2020 Puducherry in South India had the highest number of unemployment of 75.8%, followed by neighbouring Tamilnadu 49.8%, Jharkhand 47.1%, and Bihar 46.6%. Maharashtra unemployment rate was pegged at 20.9% by the CMIE, while the same for Haryana stood at 43.2%, Uttar Pradesh at 21.5% and Karnataka at 29.8%. Hilly states had the lowest incidence of unemployment as of April, the think tank said, pointing out that the rate in Himachal Pradesh stood at 2.2 %, Sikkim at 2.3% and Uttarakhand at 6.5%.

### **FOOD SECURITY :**

COVID-19 pandemic is threatening the long-cherished Food Security of India (FSI). It has impacted all four aspects, namely- availability, access, stability and utilization of food. The availability of food grains does not seem to have been adversely impacted so far. As of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the had sufficient buffers of food grains 58.4 million tons and pulses 3 million tons. However, it is not so far other commodities such as fruits and vegetables, eggs, meat, milk and sugar that constitutes 78% of the total food consumption. Disruption in supply chains and a decline in demand had caused a huge loss of production and income to the farmers, traders and access will depend on how soon the contagion is controlled to allow free movement of goods and persons to restore food supply chains. As of now, 67% of the NFSA, recently the number has been increased to 800 million people. The care for the poor and most vulnerable populations was perhaps the most arduous task. The Govt. had to entrance social safely programs including direct benefit transfers such as cash transfers under PM Kissan, more liberal financing under MGNREGA advance disbursement Social security pensions; direct cash grants to construction workers; and release of free and subsidized food grains under PMGKY to about 800 million people to ensure food for all.

### **IMPACT ON COMMUNICATION SYSTEM:**

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created havoc across the world, putting extraordinary pressure on not just public health systems, but also on crisis communication. With social media being the primary medium for information consumption, clear end to end crisis communication with diverse target groups becomes key in dealing such a pandemic. With about 736 districts in 28 states and eight union territories and varied shades of dialects and cultures within the states, crisis communication in India becomes a complex exercise. The situation of migrant workers is very bad due to the closure of vehicles. On the one hand the loss of work of the migrant workers in the factories and on the other hand, the closure of vehicles, these two situations make their lives miserable. A number of well-wishers extend a helping hand to the helpless people during this time. Among them, the name of Indian actor Sonu Sood is particularly noteworthy.

### **ROLE OF NGO:**

NGOs or Non-governmental Organisations are actively involved in combating various socio-economic issues. They include relief agencies, charities and community organisations, tackle countless challenges related to the environment, education, health, poverty, women empowerment, child protection social justice, human rights, relief work and much more. Also referred to as non-profits, these organisation in India work independently, in cooperation with the government or in partnership with national or international organisation. Though India has always had a tradition of

social service and volunteering. NGOs formally emerged after independence when voluntary agencies were set up to work with the govt. on social as well as issues these agencies have since worked for the betterment of the weaker social groups and disadvantaged communities including the rural poor, tribal displaced, children etc. at a micro level with limited resources. Today there are over three million NGOs working in a variety of fields ranging from disaster relief to advocacy for marginalised sections and play an important role in bringing social transformation. In this ongoing scenario where India is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, NGOs across the country are working relentlessly to combat the situation. The lockdowns that followed the pandemic have created an economic crisis on top of a public health emergency. It has taken away the livelihoods of many and put them in dire straits unable to afford food or essential Covid-19 related hygiene items such as soaps, masks, sanitizers, etc. The Indian govt. also appealed to nearly 92,000 NGOs for assistance in identifying the Coronavirus hotspots and providing critical services to vulnerable groups of people including the elderly and children, persons with disabilities, transgender persons, the homeless, daily wage workers, migrant workers and urban poor families.

## **CONCLUSION:**

We hope that the world will recover from the horrific experience of this COVID-19. It will make public life more active than before with new education from here. If we want to get rid of this disaster, we need to develop strategies, make preparations, plan and create reserves. But all efforts will be in vain, if government continues to waste money by fuelling arms race. We hope that the COVID-19 vaccines will make human life normal one. COVID-19 has not only devastated the India socially, politically, and economically but it has also taught people some positive lessons. Emphasisation on the environment is especially an important matter. At the same time, the disaster has taught people that industrialized countries like United States have failed to protect their citizens from natural disaster. On the other hand, backward third world countries like Bhutan are much more successful in protecting their citizens from natural disaster from the Corona virus. We can mention two lines of a song by Nachiketa (famous Bengali singer) in this context.

“One day the storm will stop again  
The world will calm down again”

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