

Aftermath of the Pandemic - Psychological Impact Of Covid- 19 In India

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) has so far killed millions of people across the world. The disease spread across nations like a forest fire. Since its discovery, the virus has spread globally, causing thousands of deaths and having an enormous impact on our health systems and economies. Above all, this disease is having an adverse impact on the mental health of millions of people. Therefore, this paper provides in-depth information on the psychological impact of COVID-19 on human beings. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions. There is a pressing need for planning longitudinal and developmental studies, and implementing evidence based elaborative plan of action to cater to the psycho social and mental health needs of the vulnerable children and adolescents during pandemic as well as post pandemic.

Keywords: Severe acute respiratory syndrome, COVID-19, psychological impact

INTRODUCTION:

The pandemic is ripping through the country by acting as a destructive force which is affecting the lives of thousands of Indian people. It has also led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health and destructing the entire world's economy. A Pandemic is a large-scale outbreak of infectious disease that can greatly increase morbidity and deaths over a wide geographic area and causes significant economic, social, and political disruption. It is notable that most of these infectious diseases are influenza viruses that originate from animals. COVID-19 which is a novel corona virus caused by (SARS CoV-2) (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2) results in an acute respiratory syndrome in humans emerged during December 2019. However the origin of COVID-19 is still a controversial subject of many speculations.

Since the onset of the pandemic, different theories and stories about the origin of COVID -19 have proliferated in many countries. After tremendous efforts put forth by the researchers, through genetic sequencing, epidemiologists have suggested that the virus started in bats and consumption of bats resulted in the spread of the disease in humans. The first affected people were the ones who handled infected animals at a market in Wuhan, China. However there is still uncertainty about the precise origin of the Corona virus. Perhaps on the other hand information was circulated in some conservative media that the virus was accidentally or deliberately leaked from a research laboratory located near the Wuhan market in China where scientists believe the virus actually originated. The fact that the Wuhan research laboratory is a branch of the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and is located about 300 yards from the food market where scientists believe the outbreak started, is pointed out to cast doubt on the “official” conclusion. This has called for a global health emergency. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic.

This paper will throw light on the various psychological impacts of the Covid - 19 Pandemic in India. This disease which is infectious in nature is not only having devastating effects on the physical health but also affects the mental health of people. The pandemic can cause several forms of psychological distress, that includes fear of isolation, anxiety, depression, confusion, stigmatization, avoidance behaviors, irritability, insomnia, suicidal thoughts, mood swings and post traumatic stress disorder. Our country is the most affected because of the virus and people in different parts of the society may experience additional stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lack of public education regarding the disease, societal stigma, and baseless information on electronic media are the main stressor affecting mental health of the public. In a situation like this, the maintenance of the mental health of individuals is very important. Because according to WHO "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." An important implication of this definition is that mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities. Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. This pandemic is already causing immense suffering among affected people and will have serious repercussions on their future health and physical resilience.

LITERATURE REVIEW:**1. C.P. Chandrasekhar and Jayati Ghosh (2021), The Hunger Pandemic.**

The author in this paper explains about the current surge in coronavirus infections and mentions that it is because of policy failure and official callousness. The author attempts to elaborate about the brutal national lockdown imposed in March 2020 and the subsequent economic collapse and loss of livelihood among the people of India. Furthermore, attempts are made to analyse the “relief measures” taken by the government to help people overcome these tough times. **C.P. Chandrasekhar and Jayati Ghosh (2021)**

2. Dr. Michael Mosley. (2020) COVID-19 : What you need to know about the CORONAVIRUS and the race for the Vaccine.

The author in this book has tried to comprehensively explain the story of covid-19, the greatest public health threat of our time. This book charts the origin of novel corona virus and its rapid worldwide spread. He also reports on the battle to find treatments and explains that vaccines are ultimately the only way to defeat the virus. **Dr. Michael Mosley. (2020)**

3. Dr Chandrakant Lahariya, Dr Gagandeep Kang, Dr Randeep Guleria (2020) Till We Win: India's Fight Against The Covid-19 Pandemic.

This book manages to succinctly deliver every piece of information about the ongoing pandemic. The authors have tried to explain the concepts for better understanding of how the health eco-system works. This book also focuses on the measures to strengthen the health system and proper health planning suggestions can be implemented at the state and central levels. **Dr Chandrakant Lahariya, Dr Gagandeep Kang, Dr Randeep Guleria (2020)**

4. Trikha. (2021) COVID-19 Comprehensive Review.

The author provides a comprehensive yet concise description of the various aspects of COVID-19 and not only that this book also uniquely includes structured text on basic to complicated concepts in a very understanding manner. **Trikha. (2021)**

5. Vikram Patel, Harry Minas, Alex Cohen & Martin J. Prince. (2013) Global Mental Health: Principles and Practice.

The scope of this book is to trace out the importance of Global mental health. The authors have tried to figure out what are the drawbacks in the mental health system and how it can be solved effectively. The authors explain that treatment includes providing basic necessities to the people who are suffering with mental illness. **Vikram Patel, Harry Minas, Alex Cohen & Martin J. Prince. (2013)**

6. Frances Owen, Dorothy Griffiths (2008), Challenges to the Human Rights of People with Intellectual Disabilities.

The author has combined historical, psychological, philosophical, social, educational, medical and legal perspectives to form an unique and insightful account of the subject. Initial chapters explain the historical context of rights for people with intellectual disabilities, including the right to life, and propose a conceptual framework to inform contemporary practice. Then the authors explore many theoretical and practical challenges that people with intellectual disabilities face, in exercising their civil rights, educational rights or participatory rights, for instance. The implications arising from these issues are identified and practical guidelines for support and accommodation are provided. **Frances Owen, Dorothy Griffiths (2008)**

7. Ahmed A. Moustafa(2021), Mental Health Effects of COVID-19.

The author traces out that the impact of Covid- 19 on Mental health is not addressed yet by the people and the government. The author further explores the impact of people suffering from the disease followed by worldwide lockdown, children who are out of schools, millions who lost their jobs which, in turn, would result in causing irreparable damage to mental health. The author charts how these factors would affect mental health and cause issues such as anxiety, depression, insomnia and distress. The book includes chapters detailing the impact of COVID-19 on the family's well-being and society dynamics. The author also has discussed family dynamics, domestic violence, and aggression, psychological impact on children and adolescents due to COVID-19. **Ahmed A. Moustafa(2021).**

8. Steven Taylor. (2019), The Psychology of Pandemics (Preparing for the Next Global Outbreak of Infectious Disease).

The author in this book provides the first comprehensive analysis of the psychology of pandemics. He describes the psychological reactions to pandemics, including maladaptive behaviors, emotions, and defensive reactions, and reviews the psychological vulnerability factors that contribute to the spreading of disease and distress. **Steven Taylor. (2019).**

9. Dr. Joel Vos.(2021), The Psychology of Covid-19: Building Resilience for Future Pandemics.

The author in this book has described how COVID 19 has impacted a broad range of domains, including self-perception, lifestyle, politics, mental health, media, and meaning in life. This book will guide the readers on how we can improve our psychological and social resilience, to safeguard ourselves against the psychological effects of future pandemics. **Dr. Joel Vos.(2021)**

10. Duffy, R. M., Kelly, B. D. (2020), India's Mental Healthcare Act, 2017: Building Laws, Protecting Rights.

The authors of this book comprehensively discuss the background to the enacting of India's revolutionary Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, this book offers a detailed explanation of the Act itself and a rigorous analysis in the context of the CRPD and the World Health Organization (WHO) standards for mental health law. Further the book covers important aspects such as key issues in mental health, identifying potential competing interests and exploring the difficulties and limitations of international guidelines. **Duffy, R. M., Kelly, B. D. (2020).**

11. S.K Schafer. (2020), Impact of COVID-19 on Public Mental Health and the Buffering Effect of a Sense of Coherence.

This research paper aims to study the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on mental health and to investigate the ability of pre-outbreak SOC levels to predict changes in psychopathological symptoms. **S.K Schafer. (2020)**

12. Anna Gladka (2020), The SARS-CoV-2 and mental health: From biological mechanisms to social consequences.

The author explains about the impact of SARS-CoV-2 virus on the central nervous system (CNS) and mental health. This paper provides a review of studies investigating the impact of the SARS-CoV-2 on the CNS and mental health outcomes. The author of this paper describes neurobiology of the virus, highlighting the relevance to mental disorders. Furthermore, this article summarizes the impact of the SARS-CoV-2 from the public health perspective. **Anna Gladka (2020).**

13. Narayanappa Amruta. (2021), SARS-CoV-2 mediated neuroinflammation and the impact of COVID-19 in neurological disorders.

This research paper explains about COVID-19-associated complications observed in older people with underlying neurological conditions like stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease. The researcher also briefly discusses the current therapies available to treat patients, as well as ongoing available treatments and vaccines for effective cures. **Narayanappa Amruta. (2021)**

14. S.Singh (2020), Impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents: A narrative review with recommendations.

The author explains that COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown has brought about a sense of fear and anxiety around the globe. In addition, the author adds that this has led to short term as well as long term psychosocial and mental health implications for children and adolescents. Further this paper briefs about the quality and magnitude of impact on minors is determined by many vulnerability factors like developmental age, educational status, pre-existing mental health condition, being economically underprivileged or being quarantined due to infection or fear of infection. **S.Singh (2020).**

15. Vanessa E Cobham. (2016), The Role of Parents, Parenting and the Family Environment in Children's Post-Disaster Mental Health.

The current paper critically evaluates the post disaster, children's mental health and its impact. The researcher in this paper also explains about the role of parents in helping the growth and development of children. **Vanessa E Cobham. (2016).**

16. Dimple Rawat, Vivek Dixit (2021), Impact of COVID-19 outbreak on lifestyle behaviour: A review of studies published in India.

The purpose of this paper is to summarize the effect of pandemic COVID-19 on lifestyle behaviour among the Indian population, focusing on changes in dietary or eating behaviour, stress, sleep pattern, and level of physical activity among the Indian population. **Dimple Rawat, Vivek Dixit (2021).**

17. Thomas W. Grein (2000), Rumors of Disease in the Global Village: Outbreak Verification (Emerging Infectious Diseases)

The researcher in this paper explains how increasing numbers of outbreak reports must be assessed rapidly so that control efforts can be initiated and unsubstantiated reports can be identified to protect countries from unnecessary economic damage. **Thomas W. Grein (2000).**

18. S. Gupta.(2020), Pandemics, Covid- 19 and India.

This paper analyses India's health sector by focusing on infrastructure, personnel, financing and governance, to enable a better understanding of the extent of resilience in India's health system. **S. Gupta.(2020).**

19. Jeffery K. Taubenberger.(2006),1918 Influenza: the Mother of All Pandemics.

The author describes about the origin of the Spanish flu and the three waves which hit millions of people. This paper also focuses on the multiple preparedness measures that could be followed by the governments in protecting people from the same virus in the future. **Jeffery K. Taubenberger.(2006).**

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The study focuses on the psychological factors that influence the spread of pandemic infection and the associated emotional distress and social disruption. Psychological factors are important for many reasons. They play a role in how people cope with the threat of infection and associated losses. Psychological factors are important for understanding and managing societal problems associated with pandemics, such as the spreading of excessive fear, stigmatization, and xenophobia that occur when people are threatened with infection. The prevalence of impact on mental health due to the COVID 19 pandemic in India is not a

well addressed aspect. Health is comprised of the composite union of physical, mental, spiritual, and social dimensions according to WHO. Henceforth it is predominant that every person suffering from any kind of mental health issue has the right to be treated with proper care and attention.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- The study would like to trace out the various psychological impacts of the Covid- 19 pandemic on the Mental Health of millions of people of India.
- The researcher would like to chart the outline of the aftermath of the pandemic, preparedness and collective response guidelines for the future.
- The study would examine the modus operandi and techniques to battle the after effects of the Covid - 19 pandemic on the mental health of individuals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study follows the Non-Empirical/Doctrinal type of methodology in research to fulfill the data collection. Basically research means investigation of a new thing. The researcher uses first-hand experience by reviewing legal literature. For this study the researcher has adopted the Secondary data collection method which are sourced from such as Articles, Journals, Books, Government published materials and other online materials.

THE PANDEMICS THAT HAUNTED THE PAST:

Pandemics are no new phenomena, this chapter deals with pandemics during the 20th and 21st century which mankind had fought in the past and are still fighting now.

MAJOR PANDEMICS DURING 20th and 21st CENTURY:

1918 Spanish Flu

The 1918 influenza virus or the Spanish virus is considered to be the mother of all pandemics since it was the most severe pandemic in recent history. The Spanish flu was caused by the H1N1 virus. It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population were infected with this virus. It still remains uncertain about the emergence of the virus. Our country is believed to have suffered at least 12.5 million deaths during the pandemic.

1957 Asian Flu

The outbreak of influenza was first identified in February 1957 in East Asia and subsequently spread to the rest of the world. The virus that caused this flu is H2N2 influenza virus that is a reassortment between avian and human genes.

1968 Hong Kong Flu

The 1968 pandemic was caused by an influenza A (H3N2) virus comprised of two genes from an avian influenza A virus, including a new H3 hemagglutinin, but also contained the N2 neuraminidase from the 1957 H2N2 virus. It was first noted in the United States in September 1968. The estimated number of deaths were 1 million worldwide. The pandemic occurred in two waves.

1977 Russian Flu

The 1977-1978 influenza epidemic or Russian Flu was not a natural event, and the genetic sequence of the virus was nearly identical to the sequences of decades-old strain. While there are several conspiracy theories that could explain its origin, perhaps it is believed that the 1977 epidemic resulted from a laboratory accident. The USSR was the first to report the outbreak to the World Health Organization (WHO).

1997,2003 and 2018 Avian Flu

The avian influenza A(H5N1) virus occurs mainly in birds and is highly contagious among them. The virus was first detected in 1996 in geese in China. Asian H5N1 was first detected in humans in 1997 during a poultry outbreak in Hong Kong and has since been detected in poultry and wild birds in more than 50 countries. The virus re-emerged in 2003 and 2018. Human infections with Asian H5N1 viruses have been associated with severe disease and death.

2002 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

The severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) is a viral respiratory disease caused by a SARS-associated coronavirus. It was first identified at the end of February 2003 during an outbreak that emerged in China and spread to 4 other countries. It was the first severe and readily transmissible new disease to emerge in the 21st century and showed a clear capacity to spread along the routes of international air travel.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF COVID 19 IN INDIA:

1. Fear caused by the spread of the disease

Fear is a kind of responsive feeling towards apprehension of danger. Perhaps, when this fear or threat continues for a longer time it becomes a stressor which would leave an adverse impact on the mental health of people. Psychological factors such as intolerance of uncertainty, worry, anxiety can sometimes lead to severe mental health issues such as Phobias and Panic Attacks. Due to lack of information or misinformation people tend to assume things on their own which further fattens the uncertainty level. While Covid -19 creates a lot of physical complications, fear, worry, phobia can result in catastrophic reactions. These psychological impacts are something to be taken seriously, because these will confuse and affect the calmness and sanity of the people at large.

2. Anxiety due to misleading information

The increase in the amount of misinformation on social media platforms is faster than the spread of Corona Virus. Misleading information can cause a lot of psychological unrest among the people. There is a huge increase in the speed of spreading rumors, hoaxes, and misinformation, regarding the origin, outcomes, prevention, and cure of the disease. Such misinformation is increasing the erroneous practices such as believing in superstitious beliefs, refusal to take vaccines, self medication etc. In order to tackle this the WHO came up with the “STOP THE SPREAD ” campaign, which was fueled to spot the spread of misinformation and to stop them from going viral. One year has passed since the advent of this disease, but we are not able to curb the circulation of misinformation. People are more exposed to threat information such as reading news bulletins about death rates, corpses floating on rivers, lack of beds in hospitals, organ trafficking etc and this would stimulate more fear about the virus. The state should take measures to disseminate only authentic and authorised information. The stakeholders should take steps to stop sharing misinformation because this might cause sudden panic attacks, fear, anxiety among people.

3. Covid-19 patients and isolation impact

The Covid-19 virus spreads easily from one person to another person when they are in close contact with each other. That is why health experts are advising the people not to form groups or go near anyone. It is therefore advised by the health experts to maintain social distancing.

India suffered a lot due to Community spread. The Covid-19 virus can be predicted by diagnosing the symptoms but also there can be carriers of this virus who are asymptomatic. People who are tested positive should isolate themselves, not leave the house or hospitals for any errands or chores. While people are isolated or kept in quarantine they must follow all the precautions that are necessary to prevent the further spreading of disease. However staying in isolation or quarantine could be really hard. Isolation is required when a person is infected with the virus and is contagious. When a person is in isolation not only physical activities are curbed but it also affects the mental health. Several research done in the past has proved that pandemics which lasted long resulted in mental health issues such as depression, boredom, stress, irritability, insomnia, anger, frustration etc. Some of these issues have long lasting effects. People are separated from their loved ones, their freedom of movement is curbed, sometimes they also face discrimination because they are infected. Isolation is an unpleasant and distressing experience for people who are infected with the virus.

4. Depression due to loss of life and livelihood

a. Right to decent burial :

The right to a decent burial falls within the ambit of right to life guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution and even in such a pandemic situation this right cannot be taken away from any person. There is a famous quote by Oscar Wilde which is "Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no tomorrow. To forget time, to forget life, to be at peace." Every man born on this planet has the right to be treated with dignity whether he is dead or alive. Hence, it is important that the people who die due to this Corona Virus deserve to be cremated decently. Seeing their dear ones burn into ashes without the final rituals being completed is a kind of unbearable emotional pain. This could possibly hurt the religious belief of many across the country.

b. Rise in unemployment rate:

The biggest impact of the Coronavirus outbreak in India is loss of employment. Many Multinational Companies are laying off their employees due to the pandemic. India is still not out of the woods as far as unemployment is concerned after a year when the lockdown was imposed to contain the spread of deadly COVID-19. The government imposed nation wide lockdown to curb the spread of the pandemic but this impacted economic and

commercial activities and resulted in job loss of lakhs of people. Education, a salaried job, sustainable living is all a vicious circle, and without a job there won't be enough money to buy the basic necessities. This break in the cycle leads to starvation followed by death.

c. Hunger Crisis:

This pandemic has caused a food shortage in India like never before, the food stress existed long before the start of the pandemic and it is now becoming worse. India ranked 102 out of 117 countries in the Global Hunger Index in the year of 2019. Many have lost their jobs and one meal a day has become a big dream for some families to achieve. Hunger and Starvation would induce people to involve in petty crimes. Surviving this pandemic is a big goal, but the situation looks like more people will die due to starvation.

d. Increase in Violence, Exploitation of vulnerable group:

There is a high rate of increase in the risk factors for violence, exploitation and abuse on vulnerable sections of people living under restricted movement. At the same time, these vulnerable groups of people may begin to suffer the additional stress and stigma that befall families struggling to make ends meet. Governments must prioritize critical violence-prevention and response services. They must maintain and adapt these services, accounting for the unique risks of girls and the most vulnerable children, when planning for social distancing and other COVID-19 response measures. We must also support children who may be temporarily separated from their parents due to illness, as well as those deprived of their liberty and work together to prepare for a surge in young people seeking remote protection and mental health solutions.

5. *Impact on mental health of the children*

Stress can be caused even when the child is inside the mother's womb. The wellbeing of the child depends upon the mental state of the parent. During these pandemics and lockdowns there is adverse impact on the mental health of young children and adolescents. If we compare the impact of these pandemic on children and adults, the children suffer more. Children are dependent on their parents and peer group. Hence they are likely to manifest symptoms of clinginess and dependency on their parents. The nationwide closure of schools and colleges have caused a lot of mental stress among the younger generation. The pre-lockdown scenario was different, students went to schools, colleges and they had face to face

interaction with their teachers and professors. The pandemic has now confined the children at their homes which has resulted in disruption of education, physical activities and opportunities for socialization. Children might find it difficult to return back to school, change their routines and establish rapport with their teachers. Cancellation of examinations, exchange programs and academic events will have a negative impact on the growth of children. There is an adverse impact on the children with special needs and children who are underprivileged. This vulnerable group of the society is undergoing a huge psychological imbalance when it comes to losing parents and education.

7. Post Traumatic Stress:

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a common mental disorder caused by major psychological trauma experienced by a person. It could result in serious distress and mental health issues. Exposure to infectious disease results in a particular type of psychological trauma, which could be categorized into three groups. The first is directly experiencing and suffering from the symptoms and traumatic treatment. For example, dyspnea, respiratory failure, gatism, alteration of conscious states, threatening of death, tracheotomy, etc. are major trauma of patients with severe COVID-19. The second is witnessing patients who suffer from, struggle against and die of the infectious disease, which has a direct impact on fellow patients, family members of patients, or people who directly provide aids and care for the patients. The third is experiencing the realistic or unrealistic fear of infection, social isolation, exclusion, and stigmatization. This directly affects patients, family members, care and help providers, or even the general public. There needs to be attention to early intervention and prevention of PTSD among huge numbers of COVID-19 survivors, their family members, health care professionals and other first-line helpers.

CONCLUSION:

The Covid - 19 pandemic has triggered a line up of emotional, physical, and economic issues but in the midst of this crisis, nations have shared and learned from each other's experiences. It is urgent to provide mental health service targeted at survivors and other people exposed to COVID-19. Possible strategies include, health education, psychosocial support and counselling service to the general population, as well as early intervention, including psychosocial support, psychotherapies, and pharmacological treatments to vulnerable and high-risk groups. Since the emergence of this deadly pandemic scientists have made great efforts to understand the characteristics of virus for detection as well as for the development



of drugs. However, early identification of this novel coronavirus helped us to promptly investigate antiviral compounds and to try to develop vaccines. This virus has changed the world, changed its people. We are all in this together, only then we could fight this battle.