

The Overarching Impact of COVID-19: Reimagining Perceptions in the Post Pandemic World and Embracing the New Normal

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 is a stark reminder that humans have so little autonomy. One would arrogantly think that this is to the very least applicable to our bodies. But the matter of fact here is that, a pandemic like these forces us to reimagine a constructed belief system. In fact, every once in a while, or as we say in the turn of a century, we are meant to shift our perceptions of what happens around us. This re-imagination is multidimensional, and in case of COVID-19, it affected the way we travel, work, study, or live our basic life. The new normal was a reconstruction of realities that were taken for granted. Take for instance, wearing a mask and using sanitizer have become very “normal”. For the people who experienced the lockdown, it is also a re-imagination of lifestyles. The impact of COVID-19 has been all encompassing and it has startled all sectors, and when the world settled down, we were a slightly changed species. A generation that witnessed a lockdown, a generation that lived through the boons and banes of global connectivity.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Dystopia, Mental Health, Education, Economy, Social

Even though, the pandemic called COVID-19 has not been eradicated, we can safely earmark two worlds, the pre pandemic era and the post pandemic era. It is indeed an observation in spheres of science, psychology and other domains to see, how our lives were impacted and moulded. Pestilence, plague and diseases, are much dreaded words that can wreak havoc on humans, and sometimes wiped off a significant percentage of population. Indeed, references from Oedipus Rex rekindles into the mind how the public pleaded to a King, how they prayed that they may be saved from clutches of unknown. COVID-19 has been a very similar nightmare for many of us. The worst part has been not knowing how to react and how to retaliate.

The Joke that became too real

It is indeed ironical that in the beginning, COVID-19 infection was treated as a joke and the threat only became evident when real lives, lives that mattered were lost. It is only then, we stopped saying lightly, "You will catch the COVID-19 Infection". It is amusing how dystopian this crisis has been in its essence and impact.

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The Curse of Connectivity

COVID-19 started as a mere threat in a foreign land and slowly spread throughout to cause havoc and a helplessness. The global connectivity once celebrated became a curse, and to add to our woes, there was no vaccine for a very long time. Slowly and steadily, the death toll and infected toll surmounted to numbers that became a cause of distress and proactive action.

The sudden loss of autonomy and mobility

The impact of lockdown cannot be neglected in the slightest. At first, it was a few days indoor, but pretty soon, it assumed draconian measures and engulfed our personal lives. The lines between personal freedom and safety of all became to region of contention. This sudden snatching away of personal freedom has impacted the human minds and made us question about our own sense of autonomy and freedom. In essence, it raises a question, are we really sovereign, autonomous bodies. The myth has all but been shattered to pieces. The social relationships and common entertainment was also compromised that had a very drastic effect on the overall mental health of the people all over the world.

Plight of the Poor

The narration of poverty struck people is a different genre altogether. It has shown poor countries an ugly side that leaves many questions unanswered. This pandemic was a wakeup call for many government that were not prepared to deal with such a crisis. In India, for example, hundreds of people walked barefoot to their hometowns. These desperate measures show us our acute lack of infrastructure. The migrant crisis is a tale of woes on feet. The difference between the haves and have not's has never been so acute and so prominent [1].

The mess of crime

The pandemic was all a mirror to a lot of undercover criminal activities ranging from rape to molestation, organ trafficking to unethical medical practices. In fact, there is a reported steep rise in cybercrimes as well in the guise of fund raising, marketing and unimaginable gimmicks of the sort.

This calls for a very deep research in the realms of human ethical concerns and where the world has lacked where the abstract concept of profit was more important than saving our species from collapsing. This short sightedness of humans is sometimes really appalling.

Psychological collateral of the pandemic

While the predominant discussion on COVID-19 has always been about physical health and immunity, we all miss out on the aspect of mental health. The pandemic has wreaked havoc on mental health of so many of us. The triggers can range from actual threat of the disease, loss of loved ones, isolations, unemployment or just the unavoidable impending of doom.

The statistics on the rise of domestic violence and other assaults on minors, and related cases were on the peak during COVID-19. It is natural that, all these events would have a natural impact on everyone as stress and reactions are closely correlated. Infact there are elaborate researches going on the post COVID-19 stress disorder. Even though there have been worst pandemics, this pandemic had more mental impact due to news and internet. People could never disengage themselves from the constant barrage of information[2].

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The recent case in Telangana where a couple killed their two children was a disturbing incident to say the least. The couple believed that they can revive the dead daughters and Corona has been inflicted on the world by them. There are several such instances of paranoia and hallucinations. This is mostly a result of clouded thinking in the face of an unexplainable event. Corona has triggered many latent and apparent fears in minds of people adding to the anxiety of the modern world.

Remote Working

Remote working has become the new normal and earlier, the companies that could never imagine a workforce not operating from their corporate offices is doing just fine. This has increased the employability of women workforce and other marginalised sections for whom mobility was a problem due to various factors.

Education online and the challenges

The rise of online education has been both a boon and a bane. COVID-19 has impacted more than 1.2 billion students of school going age. Though this has given rise to innovative digital platforms, not everyone has reaped the fruits[3]. The best of teachers have been available to many students sitting in the lap of luxury of their homes. But the same internet penetration was invisible in the rural hinterlands. This has created a massive gap in the learning of students.

More importantly, students across all ages, specifically, the younger ones, have lost the golden years to socialise, fraternize and form long lasting friendships.

Economy

In a capitalist world that is driven keenly by number the greatest casualty has been the economy. The sheer impact on unemployment has been stark. It has forced to close a number of budding start-ups and left many jobless. COVID-19 has undone many established businesses as well. The economy was impacted in a big way by COVID-19. It has left share prices in a downward flux and also impacted the pension and life savings of many[4]. The economy has directly been linked to mental health and the basic sustainability of people. It is also important to point out that not all businesses have been adversely impacted, some businesses have done very well as well and garnered great profits.

CONCLUSION

It is going to take a long time to grasp the complete impact of COVID-19 in its totality. But, for now, it has called to taking into account a plethora of never existing concerns. This also calls for a robust policy formulation on all fronts[5].

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Conflict of Interest

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