COVID-19 and Its Impact on Society

by

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Abstract

World Health Organization (WHO) announced Corona Virus which is also referred as COVID-19 as a disease on 11th February 2020. It is a respiratory disease which impacts the health of the individual as a whole. The first case of COVID -19 was first reported in China in December 2019. The WHO declared the novel Corona Virus as a Pandemic disease in March, 2020, which means that the new virus is spreading rapidly across the countries around the world. The symptoms of this virus include, fever, and cough, sore throat and difficulty in breathing. Man is a social animal and social relations and interactions are necessary to his existence. The novel Corona virus and the containment measures posed a challenge to the interpersonal and community interactions that with the social distancing measures and isolation, these social relations became severely impacted. From the human existence, these social connections, interactions and relations have become integral into our life. So, if there is an absence of such connection, definitely leads to stressful states of loneliness, anxiety, depression, mental disorders, health hazards, and many other issues which impact the life of the individual and the collective society as a whole. This paper is a Reviewed paper which is based on secondary information collected from various sources such as published and unpublished Journal Articles, Newspapers, Books, and Reports of various Government Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Commission. In this reviewed paper, the author has tried to analyze the impact of the COVID- 19 in the life of the individual as a whole.

Keywords: COVID-19, social, psychological, impact, health, society.

Introduction:

In March 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) referred Corona virus as a pandemic disease which means the deadly virus is spreading outside containment measures in most of the countries around the world. The symptoms of corona virus included fever, cough, tiredness, and difficulty in breathing. Initially, the individual shows mild symptoms and most of the time people treat this as mild flu. As it is a respiratory disease, it can spread by inhaling the droplets in the air. It can also spread by touching the infected person. Corona virus is affecting the social life of individuals as many of the school, colleges, universities, pubs, restaurants, cafe, etc. have been closed. Many festivals, religious and social ceremonies were suddenly cancelled or postponed. Even a conference on Corona Virus itself has been scrapped. UNESCO (2020) in their resent

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report revealed "Governments in 61 countries have announced or implemented the closure of educational institutions in an attempt to slow the spread of the disease" According to UNESCO, over 39 countries have closed schools, colleges and universities, which has impacted over 420 million children and youth .

Impact on Social Relations and Health:

Social distancing involves staying away from people to avoid the spreading and catching the virus. It is a new emerging terminology which means to avoid the crowd. This has forced people to work from home and avoid social gatherings and contacting even their near ones.

Eric Kleinberg, a New York University sociologist, stated that "we've also entered a new period of social pain. There's going to be a level of social suffering related to isolation and the cost of social distancing that very few people are discussing this yet."

Man is a social animal and social relations and the social interactions are integral to human civilization, but, due to the rapid pandemic spread of the virus and the increase of social distancing measures, this web of relationships was severely impacted. From the human existence, these social connections and relations have become integral into way of life. So, if there is absence of such deep meaningful connections it leads to stressful states of anxiety both in body and in mind. Loneliness, anxiety drives, depression, panic states, mental disorders, health hazards, and many other issues impact the life of the individual and the society as a whole.

The WHO report on China claimed that no one knows the accurate incubation period for this virus, but symptoms can show up anywhere from one day to two weeks after exposure. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention had issued its highest-level travel alerts for Italy, Iran, South Korea, and China, also advising other countries to restrict travel in these places for the moment. These are the countries with the largest known Corona Virus outbreaks. Corona virus is impacting the life of the individuals as a whole. It creates a sense of fear and also stress, anxiety and other mental disorders. According to Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "The outbreak of Corona Virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger."

Fig 1 Countries with confirmed Corona Virus Cases [2]

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[2] Source: ABC News

WHO Updated measures to protect the mental health of people which includes:

i.   Avoid watching reading and listening to news which creates a sense of fear.
ii.   Everyone to seek relevant information from relevant sources to protect themselves and their near and dear ones
iii. Take break from social media and the things which trigger your anxiety and fear.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also stated that "Everyone is telling to wash their hands and try to not to touch their face. But one should also keep in our mind is that keeping their phone sanitized is also a smart way to keep germs off their fingertips. Everyone has to consider their phone a "high-touch surface," which could make it a carrier of the virus."

Fig 2 Cases of Corona Virus in India till 16th-03-20[3]

The first confirmed case of the Corona Virus infection in India was reported on 30 January 2020 in the state of Kerala. The affected had a travel history from Wuhan, China. Government of India also issued an advisory for voluntary home quarantine (self-isolation). They are asked to self- segregate in the home-settings to evade contact with others in order to avert spread of the virus at the initial stage of infection. As per Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Government of India, there are total 114 confirmed cases of COVID-19 till March 16-2020. Protective self-separation is recommended for a person who is at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 which includes old- persons, sick people, and children. Voluntary avoidance of crowded places is recommended for a person who is asymptomatic and who is considered to have less risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. Masks should be used by a symptomatic individuals, if available, to provide a physical barrier that may help to prevent the spread of the virus.

Impact on Economy:

There is a big shift in the world economic market and the share market has witnessed crashes day by day. Factories, Restaurants, Pubs, Markets, Flights, Super Markets, Malls, Universities and Colleges etc. were shut down. Fear of corona virus has limited the movement of

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[3] Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

the individuals. People were not even going to buy the daily essentials and these all were somewhere impacting the economy of the world as a whole. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also revealed that they cut their expectation for global growth to 2.4% from 2.9%, and warned that it could fall as low as 1.5%. According to Economic Times, India faces a huge decline in government revenues and growth of the income for at least two quarters as the Corona Virus hits economic activity of the country as a whole. A fall in investor and other persons which also impacts privatization plans, government and industry.

Coronavirus impact on global stock markets since the start of the outbreak

Nikkei -25%
Dow Jones -26%
FTSE -28%
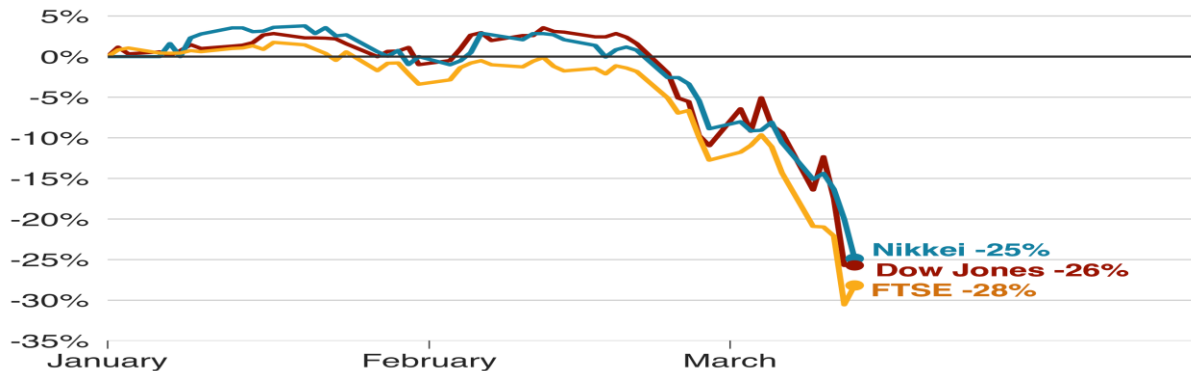
Source: Bloomberg, 13 February 2020   BBC

Fig 3 Impact of Corona Virus on Global Stock Market[4]

Conclusion:

The Pandemic of Corona virus is severely impacting the life of the individuals on the whole. Everyone in the world is directly or indirectly facing the severe consequences of this disease. Many countries have declared unprecedented lockdowns and emergency. The Schools, Colleges, Universities, Pubs Market, Mall, Shopping Complex etc. are shut down by the Governments. It has created an environment of fear, anxiety and stress among the developed and developing societies. WHO and all the member nations have issued advisories related to the impact of the Novel Corona Virus. But this disease due to its extreme isolation and lockdown measures, creates several other issues including social anxiety, panic states due to uncertainty, economic recessions and extreme mental stress. To contain this virus, coordinated efforts are required and people need to make uncomfortable yet necessary changes in their daily routine in accordance to the advisories and suggestions by the Government and WHO. This will provide for more opportunities for the medical staff to intervene effectively with the limited resources at their disposal and buy significant time to place additional resources for controlled management of this novel Pandemic.

Limitations of research:

The purpose of this research is to analyze the impact of the COVID- 19 in the life of an individual as a whole. The data is based on secondary information which is available on the internet. As this research paper is written at the very early stage of the problem, it is quite

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[4] Source, BBC

possible that the data might have contradictions and there may be a dearth of the data, research and much information related to the research topic.

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