

**IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SOCIETY AND NEED FOR SOCIAL WORK
INTERVENTION**

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ABSTRACT

The corona virus pandemic has made a huge impact on the every aspect on our life. Be it our daily life, be the long term goals, the livelihood or the financial adventures in terms of economy and industry. Everything has its own impact. The pandemic management crisis has pushed the people on to the edge of trying new things. Lack of proper guidance and understanding often has made the wrong ways of practices in effect. The current situation has never been same and each day it has been changing and people are learning their own ways of dealing with the situation, The situation being unavoidable to run our daily life, its always been easy to choose an alternative to survive, be it the hard way or be it the easy way, putting one behind the walls for long resulted in frustration more than educating them. The government has been proposing and imposing strict and followable rules every day. As citizens we need to follow them to overcome the crisis. Are we failing the government or are we failing ourselves in handling the crisis are the very big challenge which the pandemic made us to think and put everyone in a dilemma.

This conceptual paper is descriptive in nature and both qualitative and quantitative methods used to collect the data from the secondary sources to discuss the impact and challenges of covid-19 on society. The social work is multifaceted and plays a vital role in the sustainable development of the society with the help of its primary and secondary methods which deals with the individual, groups, community and society. In many countries social workers are supporting communities that are affected or fearful of the Covid-19 Virus. Social work has an essential frontline role in the fight against the spread of the virus through supporting communities protect themselves and others through physical distancing and social solidarity.

To support this

- Impact of pandemic on different sectors of the society
- Need of a social work intervention during pandemic

In the final analysis it is reality that the pandemic has its effect on every corners of the society so it's very important identify the most vulnerable groups and provide a assistance to them through the intervention of the social work as the main principle of the social work "HELPING PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES".

Key words: Pandemic, social work, intervention, vulnerabilities, crisis management

INTRODUCTION

The society can be defined as a group of people a community a system, who share a common social, economic and industrial infrastructure. The society is an organization of people who share common cultural practices and social background. The term society stands to be the most fundamental one in Sociology. The people in the society are the agents who carry out the social relationship between the communities. But the sociology defines and refers the term society as the complex pattern of the norms of interaction that arises among the communities.

The society is often grounded with the meaning of process rather than people in it. It is not just the structures, it's a connection of networks and relationships which are inherited by the group and are followed by themselves.

Social workers are often at the forefront of crisis intervention, offering social structure and support through crisis resolution. During this pandemic, social workers are not only responding to the health crisis but also offering skills and resources that will restore individuals' normal patterns of functioning. They are capable of providing solutions for issues, such as lack of financial resources or limited access to food, with a special focus on vulnerable populations. Social workers are also able to help promote disease prevention and provide individuals guidance through the abundance of COVID-19-related information.

THE MAJOR IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON SOCIETY

The impact of the pandemic has been in a huge scale. Every aspect of ones life in the society is impacted. And the very first impacts of process which people are not used to. The measures and the rules that were imposed on society was a sudden full stop for a new beginning.

Every coin tossed teaches you two things, one the positive side and the other as negative. In the same way every impact the society has received has its positive and negative impact.

➤ **Lockdown**

The act of central government to stop spreading of coronavirus in India. The act was imposed to mitigate the wide spread and sudden damage it may cause to the society, the lockdown necessitated the suspension of all the activities across the nation except that ones that were considered and classified as essential services. The very major impact of it was reflected on our economic activity and economy. All the activities that were considered as non-essential were the major contributors to the economy. My be it the industry, may it be entertainment sector, the tourism, travel and shopping.

➤ **Impact of Lock Down on Common people**

Common people are the one who always stay under the blankets of rules and regulations of a government, where there is a change in policy or any situation that needs the common people contribution; it disturbs the regular running process of the society. Some stay for short time and some drag longer than expected. One such huge impact is the Pandemic crisis of COVID 19 lockdown. The sudden imposing of lockdown was a very needy and strict measure of the government. The society had lot of questions on what next and how long this would go. Let us list of the key sections of society that was affected

- Daily wage workers
- Migrant workers
- Household workers
- Shops which are non-essential
- Cinemas and shopping complex
- Road side vendors
- Transportation
- Autorickshaw and Taxi services

- Tourism
- Restaurants

And still we can list 100s of sections that are impacted and stranded because of the COVID 19 lock down.

➤ **The Daily Wage Worker**

The daily wage worker is someone who works for the day to get paid for the same day. His job may not be a permanent; it can be seasonal and will be paid only if worked. They are the workers who work in small and cottage industries and small enterprises hired for building construction works; they can be the one who cleans the drainages on the basis of requirements or some one who sells fruits on streets.

The Impact The daily wage workers who worked for that day to earn some minimum profits for their daily meals, may not have savings for future as the salaried and business class has. Their basic needs are met only if they are working for that day. On a sudden announcement of lock down they go puzzled. Not puzzled of the situation of the country, but the situation how to be faced when they are hungry tomorrow. We believe this section of the people is the one who suffered the highest.

➤ **Migrant Workers**

The Migrant workers almost fall in the same as the above category of daily wage workers; instead they may have a steady job. They are impacted in a way economically, where they are depended on the owners who have hired them for the job. They are paid monthly or weekly and some on daily basis. This again in turn brings the same situation as daily wage workers. The additional burden comes when they are in a situation to pay rents for their rental homes. Even though the govt regulated the rent should not be forced by the owners, the ground reality is quite different. They cannot leave the town because of the lock down situation and they cannot bare the expenses of city life if salaries are not awarded in time.

➤ **Household Workers**

The section of people who work in another house for cleaning and cooking, escorting their owners children to school and any daily activities fall in this category. Most of the owners who have availed their services were advised to pay them their salaries even if they are not working. But the situation of the owners too has fallen down and again the ground reality pushed them with out job and salaries. Some have to manage the lockdown period with out salaries and a job that gets them a source of income.

➤ **Non-essential Shops**

The shops that we see in every street, which sell clothing, utensils, bakery products, electrical shops etc come under the category of non-essential services. The biggest challenge of this section of people is the rent that they are forced to pay. The situation of lock down was for two long months. For the two months with no business and turnover, they will have to pay the rent out of the pocket. This has stranded many to quit the shops and close down as the reason they cannot maintain the loss.

Another section is the training institutions like gym, dance coaching and art schools for children are also on the same boat as above. The current pandemic situation defines the future of these extra-curricular activities as long closed. Because all these coaching centers cannot follow the social distancing and safety to the 100%. They cannot hold the possession of rented commercial centers for long with out a source income. Many people are forced to quit in this section.

➤ **Cinemas and Shopping complex**

The cinema halls and the shopping complexes like shopping malls and multiplexes are also impacted as there is no incoming traffic for their sales. Again the question arising for the situation is the rentals and the loans that they need to meet. The entertainment industry has been suffering from the current situation. These involve infrastructure investments they have put in, simple abandoning them is a great loss too. The point that needs to be considered is how far a person will be willing to come in to shop and watch movies after the lockdown is released. The question leaves them with only one answer to find an alternative source of income.

➤ **Road side vendors**

India is huge country and the majority of daily needs are met on road sides, small vendors and small shops. The lock down has pushed them to stay indoors which has left them with no income. The section of families are not empowered to sustain the lockdown to meet their needs. Many have their own shop but they cannot sustain for longer because of the small business they run, and the income they generate.

➤ **Transportation**

The transportation industry covers a broader section as in Aviation, Road transport and Shipping. All the sections were closed and the worst hit was for the private enterprises and the owners. Indeed the companies are capable of handling the loss, but the small players like the drivers and the cleaners who work for monthly salaries may not be as good as the big sharks.

➤ **Autorickshaw and Taxi services**

The service of autorickshaw and taxis were not included in essential services. Same like most of the people, they were affected to their source on income. The source of income was not generated because of the lock down and they didn't have or options. Will people still prefer to use public and private transport after the lock down is lifted. The question remains unanswered. Again the challengers are in the case of rent and auto maintenance. For those who own them had to wait for the source of income and for those who drove as part time have lost their jobs.

➤ **Tourism**

With the restrictions, the tourism industry is the own hit worst in terms of the scale of economy. The local in the tourist spots are only depended on the tourist for their source of income. The situation says it will take longer time for all the tourism industry to fall back in place. The tourists will make choices interm of safety. This would ask many to upgrade their services to ensure the tourists safety.

➤ **Restaurants**

Lockdown has defined the restaurants are the place where people would gather more and more chances of the infection. The lock down had temporarily closed the services of restaurants but in a longer run, the situation of restaurants has to be more affected. The

emotions of people towards the restaurants have to change back to the old days. Until then the restaurants have to be very innovative in showcasing the safety first sign all the time.

WHAT HAS THE PANDEMIC TAUGHT US

- To maintain hygienic
- To be learn technology
- To find multiple source of income
- To help people in Need

Many of the above mentioned negative impacts have poured in the positive things too. As above mentioned very few pick points is maintain hygiene all the time, people are more aware of the safety then ever before. The people have to be innovative and find a constant source of income from multiple sectors. One source may again push them back to the same situation on another lock down.

One best use the people have learned is the technology. The schools and colleges have shifted to the technology to carry out the routines. This will have a continued effort to educate students and children. People have learnt to upgrade their skills to adopt to current situation. This may have provided opportunity too many foe find a job too.

The society has always jumped in to help the needy people. We found many examples of people helping the families that are in need of groceries for daily basis. Many opened helplines to help the poor. Local communities formed a group to supply food essentials for the elders and old age homes. The list goes on.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND PROGRAMS BY THE GOVERNMENT TO HELP THE IMPACTED SECTIONS

The government policies that help to upbring the impact of the current pandemic crisis. The Department of Medical research has issues the set of guidelines that are essential for handling the COVID 19 and the tests related to the pandemic.

⇒ **The Guidelines include**

- Procedure to be followed
- Risk assessment and mitigation measures
- Guidelines for isolation
- Lab waste management and shipment

⇒ **The guidelines are briefed as below**

- Appropriate personal protective gear as determined by the detailed risk assessment team should be used by all the personals handling Covid patients
- The suspected and the confirmed source of specimens from the patients should be transported as directed by WHO guidelines on Regulations for Transport of infectious substances 2017-2018.
- Isolation of patients and the necessary treatment guidelines should be followed
- The clinical and hospital waste should be handled responsibly as directed by the guidelines of Department of Biotechnology
- Waste disposal should be in followed as guided in biomedical waste treatment and disposal facilities.

⇒ **Advisory issues for ensuring the safe drinking water during the lock down**

The ministry of Jal Shakti ha issues an advisory to all the state governments to ensure the safe and portable water to be made available to all the citizens. The advisory is in compliance of Supreme Court order on provision of clean water to all persons in the country to fight against COVID-19

⇒ **The advisory can be enforced with below highlights**

- Taking necessary measures to ensure the expanded supply of water in all the areas and to expand the supply area through various means. Special care granted to relief camps, hospitals, quarantine facilities, old age homes, slums and the poor strata pf the society.
- Ensure the treatment of water to enhance the safety of portable water
- Making arrangement to keep a check on the water supply process and ensure the source and delivery points are covered as planned
- Provide the basic necessity items like masks and sanitizers to all the officials working round the clock to ensure the safe of water and its treatment.

⇒ **Extensions and relaxations of financial liabilities**

The ministry of finance has issue regulations for loan repayment and relaxations of norms to collect the loan balances. The measure are taken to all the banks that are under RBI guidelines, and ensure to be followed by the other cooperative and small banks that still do not come under the policies of RBI

⇒ **Relaxations in terms and conditions for industrial workers**

The relaxation is considered in terms of the employees who all are able to carry out the daily work from their respective homes - Work from Home. These terms are mainly for the sector of employees that can provide serves from local workstations facilitated at their home like laptops, desk tops and data collections. The part of the beneficiaries is the IT employees who can carry out the work through the computers and laptops at home. The key relaxations were allowed in terms of prior permission and the security deposits to perform the activities through company assets. Few IT companies have facilitated the computers delivered where they were not having enough laptops for all the associated to work from home.

SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

It is important to incorporate social workers at all levels of intervention stage like health care response, economy, environment protection and rehabilitation. Social workers are needed to

navigate the uncharted territory of a global pandemic and assist with individual and community experiences of grief, anxiety, trauma, and confusion. Social workers are also needed to better understand where systems are breaking down, what community resources are becoming available in a rapidly changing environment, and how policies can be changed or modified to improve public health and safety. Moreover, social workers will be vital during the recovery process when the immediate threat of COVID-19 has passed.

Not only can social workers help as individuals try to rebuild social connections and adapt to life after the outbreak, but they can also support political and health care systems better prepare for future public health crises by ensuring that people have access to basic needs such as income, food, housing, and health care.

Key functions of social work at this time include

1. Ensuring that the most vulnerable are included in planning and response.
2. Organizing communities to ensure that essentials such as food and clean water are available.
3. Advocating within social services and in policy environments that services adapt, remain open and pro-active in supporting communities and vulnerable populations.
4. Facilitating physical distancing and social solidarity.
5. As a profession, advocating for the advancement and strengthening of health and social services as an essential protection against the virus, inequality and the consequent social and economic challenges.

CONCLUSION

With all the impact the current COVID-19 has left us teaching multiple lessons. The impacts are inevitable in the situation like the current COVID. But what we need to focus more is to overcome the impacts that affected us in a positive way. Be innovative and be adoptive to situations, Stay safe and make the best use of resources you have. A better lesson to learn is doing not buy what you cannot afford. Do save for your future crisis times. Let us learn from the negative impacts and imbibe the positive impacts and contribute to the fight in a better way. Support the every action towards the better society. And the social work professional having a responsibility to balance between the community resource and actual needs to bring the

sustainability in the society. With this there is need of Building trust and awareness, supporting government response through innovative partnerships

This type of innovation and flexibility in responding to the crisis can play a key role in the fight against the pandemic and support the vulnerable communities, providing access to the assistance and support by the government so community with the support of its stakeholders can build a strong nation to fight with any pandemic crisis.

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