

Pandemic - A Changing Facet of Human Living

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Abstract

Pandemic is a new spread of world-wide disease. For most Indians, the corona virus pandemic represents an entirely extraordinary circumstance, as novel as it is life-changing. No event in recent history has affected us as profoundly and pervasively. This paper throws the lights on the people who should be aware of the pandemic that claim many lives. It also show cases how literature continues in writing the issues and deliver the message to the people with maximum efforts. Writers like Daniel Defoe, London Jack, Mary Shelley etc... have taken their incredible efforts in bringing this issue as a world epidemic. Further, this paper delivers the message of devastating relationships, love, death, economy of the nations and so many critical issues. The readers will be able to well understand the pandemic situations.

Key words: Pandemic, family situations, economic deviations, critical life, casualties.

Pandemic - an Introduction

Pandemic claims our physical weakness, reveals economic security, disturbs daily routines, destroys our plans and separates our relations and friends. A Kruglanski, Distinguished University Professor in Psychology, University of Maryland, College Park in his essay states, "I am a psychologist who studies human motivation and its impact on what we feel, how we think and what we do. I see that little by little, the stressful external forces this pandemic unleashed are exerting a deep internal effect. Little by little, they are changing who we are and how we relate to people and the world".

The pandemic affects our psyches three ways: It influences how we think, how we relate to others and what we value. This is completely uncertainty. One cannot make heads or tails of these strange situations. In such moment we have lot of questions such as, Who will be affected? Will our loved ones? How quickly? Will tests be available? Will we survive? How long will this last? What about our work? Our income? etc...

This pandemic is a mixture of uncertainty and danger which is a recipe for severe anguish. Surely it desires for certainty. Psychologists in simple way say that it is the need for cognitive closure. If once it starts spreading, the need for closure fosters the craving for reliable information, the acute desire to dispel the paralyzing ambiguity that engulfs us. We long for clarity and guidance, a "light at the end of the tunnel" – a tunnel that at this moment appears without end.

Literature support

Shelley Walia Senior Editor, News and Podcasts at The Quint, in her essay 'Chronicles of death foretold: What literature tells us about pandemics' states that

"In this period of isolation, one turns to literature and art to come to terms with reality, and place it in the context of history. As I continue to stay indoors because of the pandemic, spring has given way to summer. I follow the turn of seasons with elation — I look out of my window and see flowers blooming and the changing shades of green on trees. Yet this tranquil radiance invites dark thoughts as scenes of pandemic recorded in literature — bodies piled sky-high waiting for burial, cries of pain searing through the London smog — crowd the mind".

In his work *The Plague*, Camus bleak parable illustrating the human condition. Like the French army marching into Algeria, the plague descends on the Algerian town of Oran, where one "never hear[s] the beat of the wings or the rustle of leaves." The plague "rules out any future, cancels journeys, and silences the exchange of views". Although people "fancied themselves free", the novel tells us that "no one will ever be free so long as there are pestilences."

But *The Plague* is not merely an allegory; it is also the tale of a devastating natural calamity. Dr. Bernard Rieux decides to stay back in Oran to tend to the sick, accepting a life of “exile and imprisonment” that is the inherent fallout of every pandemic. Camus writes at the beginning of the novel that “everybody knows... pestilences have a way of recurring in the world; yet somehow we find it hard to believe in ones that crash down on our head from a blue sky.” Indeed, the initial response to any pandemic has always been denial, with the state machinery playing down the number of fatalities to conceal the seriousness of the situation. This happened in the early days of the Great Plague in London in 1664 — Daniel Defoe’s *A Journal of the Plague Year* testifies to the common practice of the state spreading misinformation and manipulating the media to suit its interests. From our own experience of the way some states round the world have reacted to the COVID-19 crisis, we know this all too well by now. One can trace a few patterns: the U.S.’s recent denunciation of China echoes the efforts of the KGB to hold the U.S. responsible for the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s. Nearly two millennia ago, Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius held the Christians culpable for the smallpox affliction in his empire. During successive plagues, Jews were accused of poisoning the wells of Europe. Defoe underscores the bigotry and xenophobia that underlie this tendency. Racist bias is apparent in the haunting figure of a hooded man surreptitiously contaminating public places.

Pandemic Impacts - a Literary Over view

Pandemics spare no one, rich or poor. “The vast cities of America, the fertile plains of Hindostan, the crowded abodes of the Chinese, are menaced with utter ruin,” writes Mary Shelley in her dystopian sci-fi novel, *The Last Man* (1826). This is the story of the plague in Constantinople in 2092, lasting a year and returning in spring in a more virulent avatar. People rush to churches and mosques to appease the gods. While legislatures vacillate on taking suitable action, human achievements in the fields of arts, commerce and agriculture gradually decline. At the end, wandering in the ruins of Rome, the narrator comes across a manuscript in Italian and decides to write a book, *The History of the Last Man*, dedicated to the dead. It will have no readers. Modelling his plot on Mary Shelley’s, Jack London wrote the post apocalyptic novel, *The Scarlet Plague*, in 1912.

The protagonist here a professor of English literature, is among the handful, who lives to tell the tale. Looking out across San Francisco, he says, “Where four million people disported themselves, the wild wolves roam to-day.” His grandsons have no idea what money is: he finds it difficult to explain to them how, as the plague arrived in the world run by capitalists, trains stopped, stores were looted, and huge swathes of population starved and died while the wealthy fled to their farms or islands.

If we come through this pandemic, many would perhaps be inspired to write about their personal tragedies and future fears. Camus in his point of view says, “All a man could win in the conflict between plague and life was knowledge and memories.” History repeats itself, with none growing wiser with experience. Only literature continues to fight for a more equitable world, where healthcare is a right not a privilege and transparency in governance is a justified expectation not a pipe dream.

COVID19 in India

India reported the first confirmed case of the coronavirus infection on 30 January 2020 in the state of Kerala. The affected had a travel history from Wuhan, China. Since the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak in China, the first case of coronavirus in India, the second most populated country in the world, was reported in the state of Kerala. New confirmed cases are being reported in multiple cities such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Patna. Thousands of suspected cases have been tested resulting in more than 2,000 confirmed coronavirus cases in India. The regions with the highest number of cases include Maharastra, Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. Two cases were reported in Nagpur, Maharashtra, on 13 March. An employee of Google in Bangalore tested positive on 13 March, while a COVID-19 positive case was confirmed in Noida on the same day.

First death due to coronavirus in India was reported in Karnataka on 12 March. A total of 52 deaths have been reported in the country. India is witnessing a surge in confirmed coronavirus cases after people who attended the TablighiJamaat religious congregation at NizamuddinMarkaz in Delhi started testing positive for the virus. Held in

mid-March, the meeting is estimated to have been attended by more than 5,000 members including foreigners. The Indian government has traced approximately 95% of the members and contact tracing is ongoing on a war footing. Coronavirus is expected to present both opportunities and challenges to Indian pharmaceutical manufacturers, while trade with China is expected to be hit. Initial estimates of the impact of coronavirus on India's trade were \$348m, but likely to increase given the global spread.

Impact on India's trade with China

With China under lock-down, India is expected to witness a major impact on imports and exports in various industries including pharmaceuticals, electronics, mobiles, and auto parts. China is the biggest exporter to India, followed by the US and UAE. In 2018, China exported goods worth \$90.4bn to India and accounted for 14.63% of the exports. In 2017, telecom instruments, electronics components, computer hardware and peripherals, industrial machinery for dairy, and organic chemicals were the top five items imported by India accounting for 46% of the imports from China.

Impact on public livelihood in India

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year.

Millions of agricultural workers – waged and self-employed – while feeding the world, regularly face high levels of working poverty, malnutrition and poor health, and suffer from a lack of safety and labour protection as well as other types of abuse. With low and irregular incomes and a lack of social support, many of them are spurred to continue working, often in unsafe conditions, thus exposing themselves and their families to additional risks. Further, when experiencing income losses, they may resort to negative coping strategies, such as distress sale of assets, predatory loans or child labour. Migrant agricultural workers are particularly vulnerable, because they face risks in their transport, working and living conditions and struggle to access support measures put in place by governments. Guaranteeing the safety and health of all agri-food workers – from primary producers to those involved in food processing, transport and retail, including street food vendors – as well as better incomes and protection, will be critical to saving lives and protecting public health, people's livelihoods and food security.

Conclusion

We must rethink the future of our environment and tackle climate change and environmental degradation with ambition and urgency. Only then can we protect the health, livelihoods, food security and nutrition of all people, and ensure that our 'new normal' is a better one.

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