

Original Research Article

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The Indian lessons to be learnt from COVID-19 pandemic

Abstract

Emerging pandemics indicate that people are not infallible and that communities need to be prepared. Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak was first identified in late 2019, and has now been declared a World Health Organization pandemic. Countries around the world are reacting to the virus outbreak differently. On the other hand, several other nations have put in place successful measures to control the virus, reporting a relatively limited number of cases since the pandemics started. Restrictive steps such as social distancing, lockdown, case identification, isolation, touch monitoring and exposure quarantine had shown the most effective acts to monitor the spread of the disease. This review will help readers understand that this invisible and ‘omnipresent’ virus has taught a lesson for the first time in human history that whatever human power might have, it could not subjugate every living being in this world. This has been confirmed once again by the recent invasion of this human virus. Difference in the answers of the different countries and their outcomes, based on that country's experience, India responded accordingly to the pandemic. Only time will tell how well India comes up against the outbreak. We also propose the potential approaches the global community will take in handling and minimizing the emergency.

Keywords: COVID-19, One Health, pandemic, lessons

Introduction

COVID-19 has already sounded a alarm bell – that we are seriously unprepared to cope with a pandemic, given our scientific statements and achievements.¹

The pandemic has been viewed as a [global](#) epidemic, as it will be and will stay until it can be contained, and ideally viewed and cured. Infectious diseases, especially those such as COVID-19, are reminders to society that health and medical research remain as important as ever. They serve as a reminder that we as a society are not invincible and have a long way to go in understanding not only the human body but also how it reacts to and manifests various diseases. In these circumstances, it [is](#) an important time for our community to analyze and reflect on the present situation.²⁻³

Infectious disease pandemics such as this can occur either once in a lifetime or perhaps every few years — they are unpredictable — and it is important to realize that meanwhile the way it works will change on a daily basis with the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴

[Some fundamental lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

This Coronavirus [infection](#) tells us how terrible it is to waste our lives, embroiled in endless fights for money, rank and influence, how awful it really is not to recognize the value of the people around us, not just our family and friends, not just colleagues and fellow citizens, but complete strangers too. How awful it is not to give [concern](#) to our lives every hour of every day by respecting the sacredness of life and the love, compassion and care they deserve according to all living things.⁵⁻⁶

The Covid-19 pandemic shows us the importance of freedom, the freedom to travel, to be with those we love, to live in dignity and comfort, from our loved ones to the refugees and the downtrodden.⁷⁻⁸

We are interdependent in most of our endeavours, [without](#) the cooperation of others one individual can't succeed. We cooperate on a variety of scales; local, regional and national. The pandemic of the COVID-19 highlights the danger of overlooking our interdependence and the value of global cooperation.⁹⁻¹⁰ With crystal clearness, it tells us that all of humanity is in the same boat. Since the virus can only be defeated wherever it is [possible](#), it shows us the terrible folly of thinking that we can achieve security in isolation within our country , culture, class or religion.¹¹⁻¹²

COVID-19 stresses the need for vigilance, for new narratives and reformed institutions of governance. As nation states address national problems effectively, they build national identities and institutions that are consistent with local identities and institutions. Inside effective nation states, people recognize when they will cede their individual sovereignty to groups of larger size.¹³⁻¹⁴

The pandemic of COVID-19 lays bare our lives and forces us to appreciate our most essential needs and our highest values.¹⁵⁻¹⁶ It forces us to appreciate the true value of many people who tend to undervalue their roles in society - the nurses, the ambulance clerks, the people sitting in store check-out queues, the delivery staff, the other nameless strangers who unexpectedly give support. In our communities around the world the pandemic has revealed a vast sea of kindness and benevolence.¹⁷⁻¹⁸

It has contributed to numerous selfless acts of courage in hospitals and nursing homes. It has prompted many of us to use our greatest strengths to serve our greatest purposes, suddenly giving new inspiring meaning to our lives.¹⁹⁻²⁰

From the pandemic of COVID-19, we learn how to develop a strong healthcare system, a stronger economy and a prosperous nation overall that takes care of all its people.

What planning on the healthcare front requires: Potential healthcare systems should be prepared to combat pandemics if they break out. We have almost complete knowledge of dealing with major killers such as heart disease , cancer, lifestyle diseases, AIDS, but not a virus infections.²⁰ We do need to look critically at our healthcare environment, in particular the critical care section. Therefore, before a pandemic occurs, there should be an action-plan that can be implemented in the shortest possible time period, one that will swell our healthcare system by eliminating bottlenecks and building more critical care units and isolation centers without negatively impacting critical care patients that are not pandemic. This can be achieved by involving the private sector, which can become isolation units in both the healthcare segment and the hospitality sector.²¹⁻²²

Social distancing should become a norm, part of our regular habits; social distancing is the third lesson for the future. When a new virus knocks, social distancing should be self-imposed to break the chain. Also if an infection is not present, it is best to experience social distancing as a part of life. Intimacy may be nice and may represent part of one's community, but it is better to separate without upsetting the other.²¹

Swachh Bharat should become a norm for 100 percent Indians: India has to evolve a mechanism to maintain hygiene and cleanliness. The desire for this should come from inside. Parts of the towns and cities are buried with garbage and filth to the nose. This must end, and so must our unbridled push to pollute and achieve economic success with air and water.²²

A Protocol for at-risk people — the elderly and co-morbidity patients — should be in place and in practice. When there are signs of a pandemic, India should be able to isolate the aged, co-morbidity patients and children who are either underweight or malnourished. What is of paramount importance for this is a robust state-level health surveillance system, and a constantly updated national population registry. Unless the vulnerable sections are pre-identified by good data collection, states and nations will not only call for trouble but also leave the doors wide open for the virus to join.¹⁷

The need to further promote and enhance our Drug & Vaccination Development Programme: COVID-19 infection has also had a positive flip side. It has demonstrated the strength of our pharmacy segment to the world. India, including the developing world, could export life-saving drugs to major countries. Nevertheless, India can not rest on its laurels. Our Drug & Vaccine Development Plan needs to be improved further by speed-tracking vaccine production and drug creation when a pandemic occurs.¹⁸

Pushing our manufacturing of indigenous diagnostics equipment to make it sufficient for Indian needs: COVID-19 has exposed India's unpreparedness in having quick test kits and PPEs. The lesson COVID-19 has taught along with the creation of front-line vaccines is the need to provide millions of test kits. It is because research is the only way to confirm Community spread when a pandemic hits. India should look inward with respect to PPEs. Massive export units of clothing in Tirupur (Tamil Nadu), Karnataka and elsewhere can become PPE manufacturing units and even eye exports.¹⁹

In the event of these calamities [in future](#), our Govt needs to make appropriate arrangements to help the BoP population: [Infection](#) pandemics that often hard-knock and down economies all over the world, COVID-19 shows no exception. 2020 could be the worst year in nearly a century for the global economy. According to the International Monetary Fund, the global economy is predicted to fall by 3 percent this year because of economic damage from the [COVID-19](#) pandemic — the steepest decline since the Great Depression of the 1930s. But India should have a strong mechanism in the future to take care of the people at the base of the pyramid who are actually oiling and running the wheels of the nation's economy. They can only place the economy in a position.²⁰

Nobel laureates Amartya Sen and Abhijit Banerjee and former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan recently published a piece in 'The Indian Express' saying [that](#) as it becomes apparent that the lockdown will continue for a long time, the greatest concern right now is that a large number of people will be forced into extreme poverty or even starvation by adding the loss of their livelihoods and interruptions. That's a tragedy in itself and; we need to do what it takes to reassure people that the care about the society and that their minimum welfare should be safe.²¹

Lessons we must learn from [COVID-19](#) crisis

Pace, and the confidence. Too obviously, we know from climate change or pandemics how much we need an early warning system for future crises. Future environmental disasters may not only be triggered by illness – which is why a alert system like the Epi-Brain introduced by the World Health Organization provides a robust model. It is critical to have a system that we can trust; it is only through confidence that citizens will act as they did to isolate themselves. In reality, we behaved by staying separate together.²²

Broadband Internet Access. Digital exposure is now like oxygen, as illustrated in tele-health. Our social workers have been educating patients with cancer for years about how to access their own electronic health data and care plans. Now all of our patients with financial problems need the advice. Without broadband [internet services](#), students around the world could not use online learning resources. The Forum's research on access to emergency spectrum was critical. Digital access, like electricity and plumbing, needs to be seen as a utility.

Capacity for medical surge. COVID-19, like the refugee crisis, showed us that the globe lacks the ability to assemble a powerful, intensive health-care capability. That is now a clear challenge for leaders of the world.

Health assurance. COVID-19 showed that a modern age of health insurance can be funded by the "Internet of You", I call it, "non-address healthcare," where advanced medication can be provided to people at home. People want to live happy, productive lives without getting in the way of healthcare. We now know that we can. This is the future in many countries, particularly India. As futurist, Vinod Khosla observed, providing traditional hospital support for every person on the globe would take infinite amounts of money. Instead, digital health needs to do so.

Ethics and equity. The future of digital medicine is the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where all occupations are changed by the tools of artificial intelligence. Around the same time, healthcare is the main reason for the hard lesson, that the digital future literally can not make the wealthy healthier. Digital medicine provides us with an unprecedented ability to tackle health social determinants and provide access to everyone in their own neighbourhoods.²³

COVID-19 pandemic lessons to tackle the climate crisis

We all need to play a part: Climate change and COVID-19 are two very different threats but they have in common some main issues. They are both global, they do not respect national boundaries, and they both allow countries to work together to find solutions. In reaction to the pandemic, the global community has shown that it can intervene to resolve a crisis, with governments, companies and individuals taking action and modifying behaviors. When we work together, even small personal acts when brought together can make a big difference, like physical distancing, helping us solve huge challenges.⁷

Secure the neediest: We have to protect those most vulnerable in a crisis. Young people around the world have raised their voices on an unprecedented scale in the last few years, asking adults and leaders to protect them from climate change. Now, by staying indoors and taking their climate marches online, young people show solidarity with the older members of society who are more vulnerable to the virus by helping to stop the spread.

It is this sort of inter-generational unity that addresses crises. As climate change's influence intensifies over time, it is today's children and young people that will suffer its worst consequences. Young people have told us that they fear climate change with the same urgency that people are feeling about COVID-19 right now. This is a time for kids and young people to talk to parents and grandparents about what kind of world we want to create when the pandemic has gone through.⁸

Bounded together behind science.

Both climate change and the pandemic of COVID-19 allow us to listen to scientists, to unite behind science and not to play politics with the lives of people. This means reacting to the challenge on a suitable scale and coping with a crisis like a crisis with the urgency required.²¹

Keep learning for the better tomorrow.

COVID-19 outbreak had deprived about 1.6 billion children of their education. This risks creating a generation less prepared to take action on the climate crisis, or to deal with its impacts. But, to keep learning, children and families try their best. All children should be provided with the tools to pursue their education, including remote learning and technology, even if they are not physically in school.²²

Effective education is one of the most important resources we need to combat climate change, as it offers the skills and information that children and young people need to create a better tomorrow. We will help them develop their strengths, their imagination and their ability to face every obstacle, using this time at home.²³

Conclusion

It is true that diseases do not know boundaries. That is more important now than ever to understand and remember. Millions of people are looking in their everyday lives for solutions, therapies, changes and care. This is the lesson to be learned in the post-COVID-19 world. The time has come to unleash this goodness in our midst, rather than forcing it out of the way through institutions and incentive mechanisms that reward selfishness and aggressive competition. The time has come to re-evaluate the relevant business objective, the purpose of our economic activities, the purpose of our ideologies and social conventions, and the aim of our governance structures at local, national and international level.

The pandemic shows us that the objectives of all these domains must always be the same, to contribute to the fulfillment of human needs and ends. This requires us to work together locally when faced with local challenges, nationally when faced with national challenges and globally when faced with global challenges.

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