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Dr. Shobha Misra
Associate Professor,
Department of History,
Navyug Kanya
Mahavidyalaya, Lucknow,
Uttar Pradesh, India

COVID period: Opportunity and drawback in country

Dr. Shobha Misra

Abstract

The first confirmed case was found from Wuhan, a city in China in December 2019. It spread at a very fast pace affecting the whole world. It was further taken seriously by declaring it to be a pandemic on 11 March 2020. India was one of the worst affected countries as it as second highest number of confirmed cases and third highest number of covid19 death cases. The first case of covid19 in India is reported from Kerala state. Government of India (GOI) took steps to curb the menace of the pandemic. Countrywide lockdown for 21 days was ordered, limiting the movement of the whole population. Due to this announcement, biggest mass movement was seen since the partition of India in 1947.

Positive effects of covid19 are seen as reduced road traffic and road traffic accident, lowered level of air pollution, decrease level of heart attack rates and rejuvenating environment. The period of pandemic had its impact on the social and economic structure of the society. There was an economic slowdown, supply side shortage, it hit hard the vulnerable section of the society like the old age, pregnant women, disabled, children.

Keywords: COVID-19, opportunity, drawback, environment

Introduction

China in 2019 and later spreading to the whole world. World Health Organization (WHO) initially declared public health emergency of international concern on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Lockdown was announced in Kerala on 23rd March. Later, GOI announced complete lockdown on 25th March 2020 of 21 days which was further extended again and again as the number of cases were growing. There were a lot of safeguards taken by the government and at the individual level like compulsory wearing of mask, social distancing, shut down of the crowded hotspots like mall, cinemas, public gathering halls, railways, ban on domestic and international flights. Union Health Ministry's war room and policy making team made policies and strategies like cluster containment and breaking the chain of transmission.

Drawbacks during COVID Period

Displacement of Migrant Workers

Due to lockdown, the factories and industries was shut down which left tens of millions of migrant workers unemployed and left with no livelihood. As per the official records, most of the migrant workers belong to the states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, so the burden on these states increased of providing them with the livelihood opportunities, health care facilities and nutrition requirement. Protecting the rights of the migrant workers became the priority of the central and the state government. The pandemic effected their wages and even food requirements, the unorganized sector was the worst effect.

Essentials Things: The pandemic worsen the scenario of the already burdened health sector, human resources like medical staff were burdened and there was loss of the human resource due to contamination, isolation, illness. The pandemic showed the loopholes in the health sector of the country.

Education: This closure of the physical education centers were given support by shifting to online platform. But this also made a digital divide as a large part of the country couldn't make use of the online education due to the resource crunch Socio economic indicators like power demand, labor participation and railway freight traffic also fell drastically.

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Shobha Misra
Associate Professor,
Department of History,
Navyug Kanya
Mahavidyalaya, Lucknow,
Uttar Pradesh, India

All the major sector of the economy was badly hit except agriculture. The agriculture or the primary sector is the backbone of the country especially developing country like India. The impact of the pandemic was comparatively low as government announced it in essential category. Free movement of the food items were allowed, although the online food groceries got impacted due to unclear restrictions.

These two industries were dealing with cash flow issues, nearly 70% of the workforce was impacted. A lot of innovation can be seen in these sectors to improve and cope with the new normal, it includes contactless boarding and travel technologies.

But the increase in price of API that is active pharmaceutical ingredients from China affected the price and supply of the generic medicine. These also got impacted due to disrupted supply chain and labour unavailability in the industry. The industry also suffered due to government-imposed bans on the export of critical drugs, equipment and PPE kits, to maintain the supply demand for the country. The sector needs tax relaxation and addressing the labour force shortages to work more efficiently.

Freedom of Expression

These posts were believed to be spreading misinformation, inducing panic among public. Use of social media saw an increase and supply of knowledge about the pandemic globally. But there was a situation of panic due to spread of fake news, lack of knowledge, disinformation and rumors circulated through digital media.

Opportunity

The emission of carbon, nitrogen, sulfur and other particulate matter reduced in the lockdown period. Also, the level of ozone in the stratosphere increase, mainly due to decreased level of nitrogen. The water resources especially underground water which was getting depleted day by day and the increasing level of pollution was the major concern because it is the source of drinking water, its quality also improved due to the lockdown and slow down of the human activity. This improved quality of the natural water resources is a big relief for the people living nearby.

Traditional Medicine System

Around 80% of the world's population is estimated to use traditional medicine. The traditional medicine describes the total sum of knowledge, skills and indigenous practices and different cultures have used over time to maintain health and prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental illness. Ministry of AYUSH issued advisory on the basis of expert panel to recommend the use of some herbs and other measures which were already in use in Indian society.

People's Interaction with Family and Friends

During the lockdown when the family got more time to interact, increase level of cooperation and closer family bond was found. Children got time to encourage their independent behaviour in hobbies like cooking, painting. The lockdown created the opportunity to discover the benefit of closeness and a new understanding between generations.

Healthy and Hygienic Lifestyle

More focus of eating nutritious diets, plant-based foods and maintaining hygiene became part of life. There was a sharp increase in the consumption of multivitamins, stress relief, meditation and yoga. There has been focus on mental health, people tried to find new and innovative ways to deal with the issues like anxiety, depression and stress. People are engaging themselves in daily physical activity, hobbies, music, safe travelling and interacting with friends and family.

Conclusion

Rapid urbanization and our intrusion into the forest land have created new interface between humans and wildlife. As per UN Environment Chief Inger Anderson Covid19 disruption is different from earlier recessions. The sudden downturn and increased unemployment is going to alter business landscape. New principles like shift towards localization, cash conservation, supply chain resilience and innovation will help business trending new path. At this time India's position as a global leader got a boost as the country supplied nearly 150 countries with the medical needs. The SAARC summit organized by the country set the precedent for G20 and other such initiatives. World Economic Forum sands with India's effort to assume its leadership role and help to propel the world into brighter and better place.

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