

# A STUDY ON COVID-19: WAKE UP CALL

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## Abstract

Corona virus brought our lives to a standstill. Never was there a day, where humans were as puzzled as today. This pandemic has not spared any political leader, billionaire, celebrity, citizen, animal, rivers. We are still waiting for an approved vaccine and antidote to tackle this uninvited enemy. On one hand, we have our Scientists, Doctors, Researchers battling day and night to cure the infected. On the other hand, we have government, police, NGO's trying to break the transmission chain and help the vulnerable as much as possible. The so-called World powers like USA, Europe, China failed to contain the spread, while some African, Asian countries have successfully contained the spread of this deadly virus. But, none of the countries have won the battle, as the battle is not over yet. But then, we have many questions about this virus. How can a tiny virus cause such a havoc to humanity? We have nuclear warheads, cutting edge technology, satellites in space, flags on moon, we are the most powerful creatures on this planet and may be in this universe also. Then where did we go wrong? How did this virus enter 200+ countries within a few days? Is this virus more powerful organism than human beings? There are many more such questions, we need to ask in this hour of crisis. We are yet to receive replies to these questions from corona virus. But in this article, we will face few questions, posed by Corona virus to us humans. This article highlights those questions, mistakes, shortcomings of us humans and this article also tries to show a way forward.

**Key words:** Corona virus, Pandemic, Economic Crisis, Health Care, Vaccine and Sustainable.

## 1. Introduction

The year 2020 already came with many scars of 2019. There were continuing protests, trade wars, climate crisis, bush fires, fake news, worldwide economic slowdown, terrorism, etc. We all prayed for a prosperous 2020. In return we received the biggest curse ever faced by humanity. No thriving economy, no cutting-edge technology, no god's prayers has so far managed to thwart this enemy virus. SARS-CoV-2 has been the most challenging chapter in human history. Corona virus is the cause for this disease. If one looks carefully, corona virus is not the most powerful virus man has ever confronted. Infact, it belongs to one of the weakest families of viruses. Yet, it managed to pin down everything a human ever boasted of. Certainly, the secret of this virus does not lie in its efficiency, but it lies in our deficiencies. The blame of thousands of deaths is on human beings and not the virus. This virus is a wakeup call for every individual, nation, and entire world itself. Corona has its weapon on our throat, forcing us to see and act on all our wrongs which led to this day. It is throwing questions, challenging our answers, showing our ignorance, negligence and incapacity. Now, it is time to face them and we cannot ignore them anymore. Let us face atleast few of those questions-

## 2. Causes of this pandemic

### A. When zoonotic diseases are on rise, what steps did humans take?

(zoonotic diseases are those diseases which originate and transmit from animals to humans)

Humans and animals are in close contact since agriculture was born. The rise of Zoonotic diseases also started to emerge from then. We humans have good realization that animals can make a man sick. Today, 3 out of 4 new infectious diseases are zoonotic in nature. 65% of already existing infectious diseases are zoonotic in nature. We know all these stats. But did we take any step to make healthy choices or informed decisions? *The answer is NO. Nothing.!*

Today, we are prepared to eat every creature. Our current diet practices are very sickening and unapprovable. We even use chemicals to please our taste buds at the cost of our lives. As a result, we reduced our immunities on one side and brought ourselves nearer to the diseases on the other side. This deadly combination is further nurtured by our lack of physical exercise and lazy lifestyle, environment pollution, anemia, obesity, malnourishment. We are cooking our disasters for a while now.

### B. Do we humans realize the price of inequality?

Corona virus does not discriminate any person in the name of religion, race, class, caste, gender, sex, etc. But can anyone say that the impact of this pandemic is similar on everyone.

The answer is a clear NO.!

Reports say that, 60% of those died due to corona virus in USA and Brazil are black African- Americans. This high number of black deaths compared to whites underlines the huge socio-economic disparity in western world. In India too, the disadvantageous position of poor is clearly visible. Government is using social distancing through lockdown as

its strategy to break the chain of transmission. But it is beyond impossible to implement social distancing in poor clusters, like Dharavi (one of the world's largest slum, where there are 2,70,000 people per square kilometer). Social distancing is a privilege to these poor souls. Currently, countries are divided into two parts - A minority who have stocks of healthy food stored at homes, separate rooms to live, sanitizers on their desks, medicines stockpiled, secured jobs and then, there is a majority who need help for 3 square meals, have insecure jobs, only one room to live with entire family, unhygienic conditions, less immunity in body and hopelessness. Now, when the country must pull all their burden by supporting them all at once, we are feeling the heat of inequality. Clearly, inequality itself makes a country sick. If this is the case, these high numbers of deaths were anyway coming.

We must also realize that *"historically, every pandemic occurred when inequalities were at its peak"*. When poor becomes more poorer, they will be forced to live an animal life. They will be forced to approach insects, reptiles, wild animals, etc. to fill their hunger, they drink polluted waters, live in filthy areas. It is here, the silent viruses, bacteria's, open their fangs to poison the humanity with deadly diseases. These people cannot be blamed for their lack of education, as they never received it enough. They cannot be blamed for their indecent life, as they were never supported by any. They cannot be blamed for their lack of immunity, as they cannot afford a healthy life. Ultimately, the humanity suffers.

**C. Why are the healthcare arrangements so weak?**

Clearly, there was no preparedness and capacity to face this disaster. Many countries neglect their healthcare system. India has never spent more than 2% of its GDP on healthcare. We do not have enough doctors, ventilators, PPE's, robust healthcare access mechanism, quality medication, etc. We have nothing. We do not have adequate doctors. There is one doctor per 1,445 patients in India.

One dare does not reject this question by calling these pandemics as "once in a century". They are new diseases rising in every 2 to 3 years. We saw Ebola, Zika, H5N1, SARS, MERS and now SARS-CoV-2. Luckily none of them are air-borne. The main hypocrisy lies in the fact that we ignore these tricky problems on one side and on the other side we have every nation ready to go to war at any moment. We now have technology to fight from land, air, water, and space too. We manufacture number of weapons every day. There are thousands of warheads, nuclear missiles and cutting-edge weapon technology and research to compete with one another. We have annual military drives between friendly nations. When we have this compulsion for mad arms race (as if we are going to war tomorrow), then why not care for real threat? Why not have the medical researchers at an army footing, why don't we have annual Intergovernmental Pandemic control drives? Why is World Health Organization (WHO) toothless?

Clearly, it takes so much negligence and ignorance on our part to commit these lethal mistakes. Humans are the only creatures who can make sensible and responsible decisions on this earth and yet, we are doing the worst things to this planet and to every creature living here. Our activities are, thus, inhuman.

**Solutions for this pandemic**

**A. Do we have a solution? If yes, what is that?**

We are still lucky. We still have a chance to change our methods and practices. We need individual action, National action and Global action. Because, an individual acts according to nation and a nation acts according to world order. We all are together in this solution plan as we are all interlinked and we influence one another.

**i. Global action:** Now, there are few obvious things which were always stressed but least implemented. They are-

- ❖ Strengthening of World Health Organization (WHO) than ever before. It must be funded well, should be powerful enough to restrict global activities for the sake of health, should be made truly democratic and accountable, more power to researchers and scientists, independent from influence of any government. WHO should be a strong guiding light to nations.
- ❖ We must have Annual Intergovernmental Pandemic drives, Mass health educational drives.
- ❖ Targeting historically vulnerable areas of the world. People belonging to those clusters which are breeding grounds of new diseases must be educated and prevented from doing unscientific practices.
- ❖ Internationally we are very behind in achieving these goals. We must bridge this gap as soon as possible.

**ii. Special mention: "One Health Concept":** World Organization of Animal Health proposed this concept of "One Health", where we treat health of humans, animals, and environment as one and interlinked to one another. May be, this is an inevitable part of our future journey for a sustainable life on this planet. Our future generations should be made to live this life, right from their childhood schooling and at the same time, true efforts must be made internationally.

**iii. National action:** Kill all kinds of Inequalities:

- ❖ Let health, prosperity, education & rights reach every nook and corner of nation. Let no one stay in Darkness.
- ❖ Malnourishment, illiteracy, income inequality are very much linked to worsening of these pandemic disasters. Evil anywhere is a threat to peace everywhere.

**B. Educational changes**

- ❖ Job based education has alienated us from all other aspects of our humane life. A human has to know what is good for his health and what is not.
- ❖ Why can't we have a cheap and simple diagnosis kits at our homes for simple health problems and first aid? Every person should be made capable of treating himself in basic primary healthcare issues, diet issues. Leave important primary healthcare, secondary and tertiary healthcare treatments to professional doctors. This will reduce the burden on doctors.

- ❖ Education should teach us some strict personal hygiene, cleanliness of surroundings, also learn about how to educate our own family members in these matters.
- ❖ Spend more funds on research and education.

These steps will atleast stop us from performing ‘avoidable mistakes’ and helps us in averting a man- made disaster.

### **C. Healthcare industry changes**

- ❖ Balance the Doctor: patient ratio. Have at least 1 doctor per 1000 patients (WHO recommended).
- ❖ Governments and people must stick to this Golden rule-“Prevention is better than cure”.
- ❖ Affordability and Accessibility of hospitals should be increased. Every village/cluster should have a hospital within its 5kms radius. A large hospital should be available for tertiary healthcare within 50km radius. If these things are not achievable, then have a mobile hospitals/clinic for every 10kms area.
- ❖ Ayurveda and Yoga are the most doable and available to an individual. They are available and approachable, all the time. Then why not revive their lost charm. Ayurveda and Yoga has lost its credibility due to unapproved practices and products circulating in markets. Ayurveda and Yoga still have potential to prevent and cure many diseases.
- ❖ If most of these are achieved, we can implement healthcare as a fundamental right.

### **D. Special mention: curb vaccine hesitancy and drug resistantviruses**

- ❖ Vaccine hesitancy is refusal to accept vaccination. This is dangerous trend and whatever is needed to revive people’s belief over vaccines should be taken.
- ❖ Drug Resistant bacteria/viruses comes from bad medical/health practices. Viruses/bacteria are growing more stronger, more capable of fighting drugs than ever before. This is very dangerous. Individual education about healthy medical and diet practices are the only way forward. More research is required in this area of virology.

### **E. Town/cityplanning**

- ❖ Assuming that the future holds more surprises for us, we must plan our towns, cities in such an away, so as to curb the crowd movement with least damage and inconvenience.
- ❖ Planning should be in such a way, that, it reduces the distance between people and their workplace. This reduces movement of diverse crowd .
- ❖ Have almost every essential commodity within our community.
- ❖ Move dump yards, factories, and other hazardous works far away from living areas of a city.
- ❖ Community led cleanliness: Let government concentrate more on slums and less on medium to wealthy communities. Decentralize the powers and responsibilities of creating a clean city to people of a community. This also builds a sense of responsibility within citizens to have clean surroundings. Healthy practices naturally build up if they are held responsible for their lives. Diverse methods in maintaining clean community area will also rise.

### **F. Studentclubs**

- ❖ Government programs have failed to reach every person. We must change these age-old methods of implementing plans.
- ❖ Why not have student clubs in every school, college, university. Students can divide themselves to reach the disadvantaged people in their cities/towns/villages.

**i. The Plan:**Every school,college,university will divide themselves into different clubs for different works.They can dedicate Saturdays for these activities.They can have their minor targets to be achieved in a month/year.They can work together with guidance of NGO’s.

- ❖ *Health club:* By medical students to spread awareness among people, perform seminars for crowds, educate people in diet practices.
- ❖ *Technological club:* Recently, in the hour of CoViD crisis, IIT-Roorke and other institutes have produced low cost ventilators. This shows a lot of capability in students. Why not do these works in a more enhanced club environment, where we can share our ideas, bring more innovation.
- ❖ *Environment club:* To do all environmental activities in our towns.
- ❖ *Cleanliness club:* To work with local people in spreading awareness and work on cleanliness drives together.
- ❖ *Social Equality clubs:* To help reduce inequalities among people through awareness drives, seminars, giving people a world view of diversity, etc.

### **ii. Advantages**

A student life is full of talent,energy,motivation, and innovation.We can use this unused potential.

This also pumps fresh youth,every year,into service of people and help government in achieving minor targets.

Builds a sense of discipline and responsibility in our youth.

Students can even use these experiences and achievements in their job resumes.

### **G. Pandemic reliefforce**

A disaster relief force like NDRF or civilian police or army personnel cannot be used to tackle pandemics.It requires a different skill and attention.So we need a separate pandemic relief force to fight our future battles with diseases.

### **i. Individual action**

- ❖ Food: Individual’s right to choose his/her diet should not be without any limitations. A human centric idea of this world should be removed. We must respect the limits put forward by nature.

- ❖ Mere cravings of tongue shouldn't be the reasons for loss of immunity, bad health and ultimately birth of pandemics
- ❖ Government can support food innovation, food globalization, research on healthy food to satisfy the thirst for exploration in food and to avoid food adventurism.
- ❖ Tribal community should be frontline protectors of wildlife, they should be drivers of research in wildlife, but not violators of nature's limits.
- ❖ Malnourishment, diabetics, anemia, obesity are all very much avoidable with minor healthy practices.
- ❖ Physical activity: Food alone cannot shield a person. Physical activity should be part of education and work.

## ii. Way Forward

Virus, bacteria, parasites, etc. are pretty much going to evolve. We must be vigilant enough to foresee this threat. Victory over corona virus cannot be achieved by bringing CoViD deaths to zero. Victory can only be claimed when we are ready for future pandemics.

We have 2 types of future awaiting us-

Unsustainable lifestyle which will trigger bigger pandemics, which can become airborne as well. High rates of pollution of air, water and food which makes our existence impossible. Allowing global warming to rise and opening of ozone layers which kills every person in contact with sunlight. Killing our immunities and living a hopeless life.

Or

A sustainable lifestyle which thrives as a part of nature, which blossoms everyday with less fear and more motivation. An environment which makes breathing easy and fragrant. A diet habit which recharges our energies and never makes us lazy. An equal world where one's lifestyle doesn't lead to poverty of others. Eventually, it all depends on us.

Realizing that "we humans need one another, and we are part of nature" itself will go a long way. Let's act together and live together.!

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