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## **SOCIOLOGY OF CORONA VIRUS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

### ***Abstract***

*Discrediting the supremacy of technological hegemony, the whole world is spelling the word Corona virus with fear and uncertainty. The political economy of the world and tyranny of science and technology fails to justify such terrific unexpected calamity. Asian, Americans and Europeans are hearing the heart breaking noise of such a micro virus. Our Globalization has turned to 'Coronization' within few months. Loss of life, loss of jobs, loss of homes, loss of economy and the misery of huge human displacement has marginalized the ego and anger of human being as the exceptional creation of this earth and almighty. Further, the world is witnessing a catastrophic moment, blaming the made in China virus. The culture of consumption became brutal to understand as to how the world consumed such a deadly virus. We have to break or block the chain of such deadly virus Covid-19. The world cannot forget and forgive the ruthless wounds that infiltrated and duly impacted the world economy. It's really a matter of concern and introspection and we must ponder over the situation, whether we are living in a sick society or a risk society.*

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Globalization, Health, Family, Migration, Economy.

The outbreak of Corona virus and its associated health and social consequences should be considered as one of the most important social events in human life in the 21st century. What is even more baffling is the fact that the virus came with mutants changing their core and nature every few months, hence producing a wave effect wherein the second wave proved to be even more dangerous, especially for countries that could otherwise have sworn by their healthcare systems. Superpowers like U.S.A. and even developing countries like India, these saw the upsurge in cases even in the period of lockdown. The dissolution of myth occurred hastily across the globe and the truth emerged on the surface that even the most well reputed and well funded healthcare systems were not without loopholes. In the case of the second wave

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that hit the world mid March, many countries went on to decide a course of action that could benefit the majority. However, a multi-dimensional buffer system was not what most aimed to achieve. And the repercussions followed. What made this outbreak different is how it made us aware of the sense of worldwide fragility of human's biological life and their demand for "sterile society", safe from any hazards. The dream of "sterile society" is basically founded in human demand for eternity (Sadati et al. 2020).

This outbreak of Corona virus revealed how a biological and epidemiological issue can be transformed to a social, economic and political subject. The present scenario transcends the sphere of it being about just some disease. Now politicians, bureaucrats, policymakers, economists, doctors, entrepreneurs, intellectuals, all are putting their efforts and conscience in the same line of argument and forgetting their conflict and contradictions. Society and its institutions like Family, Economy, Migration, Health, Politics, Market and Media all could be relooked and revisited in the context of Coronavirus. The Darwinian idea of "Survival of the Fittest", cannot be denied and refuted when doctors, medical science and public health facilities provide no new solutions and instead choose to question the immunity system and blaming global human movement. Scientists have already begun their experiment to discover medicine or vaccine to confront the global crisis to eradicate such deadly virus. Merton's idea of Latent and Manifest functions can be appropriately enlightened with special reference to Corona virus or Covid-19. This paper is an attempt at a general sociological statement on the striking problems that large, fatal epidemics seem to present to social order; on the waves of fear, panic, stigma, moralizing and calls to action that seem to characterize the immediate reaction .

### **Corona virus and Family Relations**

Is the Corona virus pandemic bringing our extended family closer together? This question opens up with many answers and solutions. The doctrine of Social Isolation and Social Distance could be argued in a different way in this time of fear and uncertainty. The magic of science and technocratic rationality has reduced the human-human interaction. Social Media becomes a more dominant mode of communication and considered to be more democratic and synonymic with the idea of Habermas's public sphere. More than three months lock down in India has given a new direction to understand the family dynamics and relationship. As the authors of the *Generation M<sup>2</sup>* study point out, "a key reason young people spend more time consuming media these days is that there are ever-expanding opportunities for them to do so – more TVs and computers in their homes, bedrooms and cars, and more media-ready cell phones and iPods in their pockets" (Rideout and Roberts 2010:9).

Interestingly, many also called this period as the "Double Pandemic", the silence increasing on streets, and the violence curve sharpening at its

apex. This period saw a rapid increase in the cases of domestic violence and abuse and the data supporting the same was baffling across the globe. One in 4 women and one in 10 men experience Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), and violence can take various forms: it can be physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological. People of all races, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, socioeconomic classes, and religions experience IPV. However, such violence has a disproportionate effect on communities of color and other marginalized groups. Economic independence is a critical factor in violence prevention. Economic instability, unsafe housing, neighborhood violence, and lack of safe and stable child care and social support can worsen already tenuous situations. IPV cannot be addressed without also addressing social factors, especially in the context of a pandemic that is causing substantial isolation. It must be kept in mind that this is just one form of violence that has been brought under the microscope. Discontinuation of jobs leading to widespread unemployment of youngsters, discontinuation of education due to financial crunch, lack of social touch that acts as a stimulator for few, and many more, are topics that have shown relation to increment in domestic conflict given the state of pandemic (Megan 2020).

Media plays an integral role in the lives of children and, consequently, in family life; one might even say that media is a necessity in the culture we live in. The amount of time that both children and adults spend using media devices is an indicator of the role that media plays in life. Now the odd time i.e. lock down time locks the public space and open the keys of private/personal and family life. The crisis transformed the family life and time, a blessing in disguised. Who gets the credit, coronavirus, lockdown or fear of death or nature? But the family members got to spending immense quality time with each other after almost two generations. The time, parents spend with their children, especially “quality time” spent on educational activities or play, rather than caring duties, significantly affects children’s skill formation and their future life outcomes, employment opportunities and incomes. Its role has increased over the past years, with parents spending more ‘quality time’ with their children than they did in the past decades (Sayer, Bianchi and Robinson 2004 for the US, Dotti Sani and Treas 2016 for European countries). An undeniable part and parcel of the modern day workforce is the amount of time one can chose to sacrifice on the company they work for. Many times and for a lot of people it comes with the price of neglecting the same time with their own family. The pre-lockdown period is a stark contrast as to what the companies adjusted with and finally allowed to practice as. Before this lockdown people were so busy in work and profession, they had forgotten the fact that family time is an important factor to understand each other and building relationship.

This importance of parental time devoted to children for fruitful outcomes for the child has long been recognized in the literature, both its social and economic strand. During childhood, family influence and

environment significantly affect skill formation and adult incomes, and parenting and parental time play a crucial role (Dotti Sani and Treas 2016, Francesconi and Heckman 2016, Carneiro and Ginja 2015), which can even be more important than formal education (Fiorini and Keane 2014). When measuring parental time investments, much of the existing recent evidence is based on maternal employment or hours worked, taken as proxies for the time mother does not spend with their children on care activities (Francesconi et al. 2016). However, not all the time mothers do not spend working is actually allocated to their children and the “productivity” of this time varies. Moreover, this “productivity” may only weakly be correlated with other parental variables, such as their employment decisions and occupation (Gayle, Golan, and Soytaş 2015). We must take this lockdown experience of family life and time further, though the crisis and lockdown is temporary but it will leave permanent mark with all of us regarding the quality time we spent with our family members. The social distance reduced the public space interaction but increased the family life interaction. The digital family life and interaction transformed to a real physical face to face interaction time with lots of food and fun. The kitchen and dining table became important after a long time because the virtual life or digital age used to define such spaces in different ways. Lockdown may be celebrated in the context of quality time with family members and compensated such crisis period caused due to coronavirus.

### **Corona virus and Health Issues**

The outbreak of coronavirus and its associated health and social consequences should be considered as one of the most important social events in human life in the 21st century.

This collection moves beyond the classic sociological focus on societal reactions and the social construction of disease. The reappearance of infectious disease in an intensely globalised arena, marked by supra-national as well as national and local actors, has raised many other issues, including the impact of scientific modalities on uncertainty and risk, the interplay of public health and national security, the dynamics of health governance, and the gendered division of caring labour. It goes without saying that each of these, in turn, raises provocative questions for policy and implementation. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a focus on pandemics and emerging infectious disease gives new insight into evolving social structures and processes. This collection challenges sociologists to contribute further to the public and policy agenda – and questions the narrow thinking that would seek to ‘leave it all to biomedical science’.

The sociological relevance of new diseases was identified for readers of *Sociology of Health and Illness* by P.M. Strong’s (1990) paper on ‘Epidemic Psychology’. This title is rather ironic since the paper concerns neither epidemics nor psychology. With the brio for which he was justly celebrated, Strong explored the parallels between what would now be defined as pandemics

caused by two emerging infectious diseases: HIV in the 1980s and the Black Death of fourteenth century Europe. Although, subsequent research has established that HIV originated in transmission from simian to human populations in West Africa during the early twentieth century (Sharp and Hahn 2011), its emergence and rapid spread across the developing world during the 1980s generated a profound sense of public alarm, particularly in the absence of any effective therapy. This response, Strong argued, resembled that of European populations to the virulent form of bubonic plague that raged across their continent around 1350 (Haensch et al. 2010). As institutional memory of an earlier outbreak, Justinian's Plague (541-542 CE), had long been lost, this disease also appeared as a new affliction, with no history, no explanation and no remedy. Both pandemics seemed to threaten the very survival of the societies in which they emerged.

How did these societies react? Although Strong refers to 'social' or 'collective' psychology, his intended audience is sociological: psychology here is used in the sense of Tarde (1901), Park (Elsner 1972) or Blumer (1971, McPhail 1989) in their studies of collective behaviour. Strong proposes a sociological study of societal responses to an existential threat. In his own words:

Societies are caught up in an extraordinary emotional maelstrom which seems, at least for a time, to be beyond anyone's immediate control. Moreover, since this strange state presents such an immediate threat, actual or potential, to public order, it can also powerfully influence the size, timing and shape of the social and political response in many other areas affected by the epidemic (Strong 1990: 249).

### **Coronavirus and Migration**

The history of migration tells about how homo-sapiens became homo-migrants? The relationships between migration and health are multiple. There is growing evidence, that the process of migration and health of individuals and communities are inextricably intertwined in complex ways, with implications for those who move and those who are left behind. (Jatrana Graham and Boyle 2006). Epidemiologists have traditionally hypothesized the health consequences of migration in terms of exposures experienced in the home country; exposures acquired in the new country; health or disease selection of those who migrate; and, exposures due to the process of migration itself. The cost of international migration has gone beyond the control of human being, what exactly the world is confronting today. The powerful became powerless, the technology became helpless, the economy is crying, the digital society is now a risky society. There is no limit in risk, how to face and how to recover or revive from this global risk due to the corona virus is now a matter of concern and introspection. The world is watching and witnessing the risk with fear and uncertainty. The scientists and technocrats could have worked

for the antivirus for corona but alas failed to do so. Migration is not a mere physical or biological but also it carries other socio-cultural elements and now it is more than that. It carries the infected virus from one to another, one community to another community, one country to another country and finally one to many. This proves that the number of migrants is directly proportionate to number of infections. This infection increases in a geometric progression rate.

Before March 2020, settled in abroad/ in a foreign country used to be considered as status symbol also simply visiting countries like U.S.A, U.K., Italy, France etc. considered to be special. Relatives, kin shared to others as a matter of pride about the above, now another type of new untouchability replaces the metaphorical meaning of Foreign Land or mega cities of the world. International migrants became untouchable for all because of current Coronisation phenomenon. Today international migration became a distress phenomenon unlike the success stories of migration of success and huge remittances.

As Shields and Shields (1989) argue, migration begets migration; one migration leads to another. Once migration reaches a certain level, fast migration itself will be a major cause of future migration. There may be several factors behind a migration process; the presence of these factors alone may not constitute, however, sufficient cause for migration to take place. But what will happen by looking at current scenario of Corona Virus. There is a strong fear and uncertainty attached to the idea of migration because of such pandemic Covid 19. Whole world is suffering from the crisis and it proved that the technocrat, scientific, positivistic, rational modern human being is not the master of this world rather they are the mere creation like any other creation of this nature. For the migrants, the arrival of the virus has generated an extraordinary state of what Ghassan Hage has termed 'stuckedness' (Hage 2009). Hage proposes that the migrant seeks 'existential mobility' to avert 'existential immobility', or stucked-ness. For Hage, this stuckedness, especially in the case of migrants, has been nor-malized. This means, the ones who are stuck have to simply 'wait it out' – or wait for the crisis to blow over. What does this stuckedness mean for the migrant worker embarking on her/his perilous journey in the age of Corona?

For the migrant workers, staying on in New Delhi was *not* an option, since their wages had stopped and there was no work to be found. The lockdown proscribed all movement. As one report put it, 'fearing the spread of the infection, police officials asked many workers not to make the journey'. In short, the workers were being told to wait out the crisis, and their mobility would put the nation at risk – by spreading the infection. One such worker said, 'either we stay and die, or leave and die' (Slater and Masih 2020).

The paradigm of heroic shackling that frames the conditions of the

migrant workers expects them to endure and prevail in the most horrific of conditions – no wages, no food, no jobs and a virus *on the move*. That is, to endure immobilization in these conditions is to adapt to a loss of agency. Further, the law-and-order machinery's insistence on staying put with no resources at their disposal implies an extreme govern mentality itself. Hage points out: enduring the crisis becomes the normal mode of being a good citizen and the more one is capable of enduring a crisis the more of a good citizen one is. As usual this takes on a racial, civilizational and class dimension: the ones who do not know how to wait are the 'lower classes', the uncivilised and racialised others. The civilised, approximating the image of the hero, are those who get stuck in a class way. They know how to endure (Hage 2009:105).

It is in the face of such shackles and its loss of agency that the migrant workers have enunciated *their* version of agency: walking 600 miles to their homes with no money in their pockets and a marauding virus spreading across the nation. If, as Hage proposes, the very act of enduring stuckedness is treated as a sign of agency, then the act of setting out on an improbably long walk with non-existent resources may easily qualify as extreme agency. Unlike the migrant crisis of 2020, covered extensively in the media, little attention has been paid to the provision of relief and social protection to migrant workers during state lockdowns, the study found. Since the restrictions this year were partial, some migrant workers chose to return home in the early days of the wave. But many chose to stay back in the hope of a quick revival.

However, the families that chose to stay back in the city struggled to survive, showed Aajeevika's rapid telephonic survey of 195 migrant workers in Ahmadabad conducted in May. Up to 75 per cent of Ahmedabad's migrant workers chose to remain in the city or returned soon after leaving, it found. The city employs over 13 lakh migrant workers and is a popular work destination because of its construction, textiles and pharmaceutical industries, and the domestic work sector. During Gujarat's partial lockdown, lasting from April 28 to June 11, little or no work was available, workers said. Weekly earnings fell by 30 per cent and 60 per cent of the migrant households interviewed said they were left with cash and dry ration for less than 15 days. Up to 27 per cent of the respondents said they had health problems, including Covid-19 infection. Access to vaccines remains a constant worry too.

### **Corona virus and Economic Crisis**

The world economy passing through a danger time, the economists, bankers and policy makers are taking the issue quite seriously. Are they able to recover? It's going to be one of the most critical periods after Second World War. The long time inevitable world over lockdown, hurdles the process of production and consumption. If developed countries like U.S.A, Italy, Spain, Japan, Chin etc. are pondering over the situation then what will happen to developing and under developed countries? Social distance is leading towards

economic distance and that may turn towards a disastrous condition. A social calamity is giving a sense of economic calamity as well. World Bank is trying to find its perfect role to save different country's economic crisis. Donation, sacrifice, salary cut, altruistic attitudes are very much relevant in such socio-economic calamity. Can we ensure such process can resolve the crisis both in short term and long run consequences of Corona calamity. The impact of the coronavirus is having a profound and serious impact on the global economy and has sent policymakers looking for ways to respond. India's experience so far shows that the right policies make a difference in fighting the disease and mitigating its impact—but some of these policies come with difficult economic tradeoffs. Starting from preparing drugs, sanitizers, masks and ventilators, all these are urgent need to combat corona but the story does not end here rather crisis of job, production, hunger, poverty, unemployment etc. are going to harm the developing countries like India. RBI taking its stand with strong determination to resolve the crisis with consultation of other Financial Institutions, Policymakers and Economists.

India is arguably facing world's most severe health crisis since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of new cases is breaking historic global records each day. While numbers are stunningly high, they probably represent only a part of the total infections since testing facilities are overwhelmed. The enormous flood of newly infected citizens is putting the healthcare sector under severe pressure, with shortages in hospital beds and oxygen cylinders. These shortages further exacerbate the crisis because people of all ages have no access to much-needed healthcare. The result is not only higher mortality rates but also a much higher risk of a fatal Covid-19 infection among people who would likely otherwise survive. Governments of other countries have sent medical supplies in order to help India. Nonetheless, this does not solve the logistical challenges that are currently part of the problem. At this point it is all about crisis management, and the healthcare situation is far from stable.

More restrictions and a higher penetration of the virus leads to lower mobility among the population. This limited movement will translate into lower private consumption. We saw this happen across the globe last year. This is important because private consumption represents more than half of India's economic performance. Consumers and businesses are probably better able to deal with movement limitations due to the experience of the last year. Nonetheless, particularly service goods will suffer as people limit their movements or are simply forbidden to use these services to avoid getting infected. To prevent an economic collapse similar to last year's most of the lockdown measures are now more targeted. For example, the state of Maharashtra allows continued production from companies that produce essential goods and services, have in-house accommodations or need to fulfill export obligations. This means that people working in these factories continue



to receive income, and essential goods and services are still supplied locally and internationally. Economic data confirms that the impact on the manufacturing industry remains small (Eijkelenburg 2021)

### Conclusion

It shall not be wrong to consider that the impact of this pandemic has been multifold and profound. The global forum has had to address many novel questions and approaches have been devised to arrive at a solution in due time. Some have been successful, some not. But the degree of penetration this situation has shown on different arenas of life of an ordinary citizen and on world economies has posed different challenges and brought to light the departments that need immediate attention. The global corona has hugely affected all the institutions of whole world, having said that the effects created for human being may reduce the fear of war, missiles, terrorism with the idea that corona has no religion, no caste, no race, no class, no barrier. It's class less, casteless, secular then of course the whole world is bound to believe in one line of thought that we all are one and we must ensure each other's equal responsibility to save this earth from the danger of corona pandemic.

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**RECEIVED:** 27<sup>TH</sup> NOV 2020

**REVISED:** 15<sup>TH</sup> AUG 2021

**ACCEPTED:** 25<sup>TH</sup> AUG 2021



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