



PROJECTION OF COVID 19: PEOPLE, ECONOMY & ENVIRONMENT

Dr. Ridhima Sharma¹, Dr. Isha Narula², Ms. Kriti Dhingra³

¹Assistant Professor, VIPS

²Assistant Professor, VIPS

³Assistant Professor, VIPS

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra10454>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra10454

ABSTRACT

The episode of the Covid-19 pandemic is an extraordinary stun to the Indian economy. The economy was at that point in a parlous state before Covid-19 struck. With the drawn out nationwide lockdown, worldwide monetary downturn and related interruption of interest and flexibly chains, the economy is liable to confront an extended time of stoppage. The greatness of the monetary effect will rely on the length and seriousness of the wellbeing emergency, the term of the lockdown and the way wherein the circumstance unfurls once the lockdown is lifted. In this paper we depict the condition of the Indian economy & environment in the pre-Covid-19 period, evaluate the expected effect of the stun on the economy.

KEYWORDS- Covid19, India, economy, environment, society, policy

INTRODUCTION

The corona virus disease (COVID-19) first reported in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019 has spread in more than 210 countries and claimed lives of more than two lakh people. The researchers, doctors, and virologists across the globe are continuously working to decode the disease pattern, identify potential treatments, therapies, and develop vaccines. However, the genetic mutation of the virus overtime has increased challenge on scientists to come out with a concrete result. Further, despite the availability of advanced health care systems, there has been an escalation in the number of deaths. Also, the roles of doctors and nurses have become riskier as the probability to get infected has increased while treating patients. The COVID-19 has not only affected people but also has resulted in cessation of trade, business, and economic activities. The COVID-19 has drawn enormous attention of the research community, virologists, and medical practitioners to design mechanisms to combat the disease. Nonetheless, the speed of spreading and death rate has compelled the government to intervene to break the chain of human transmission. The government imposed lockdown,

which made 1.3 billion people of India under restrictions (Das, 2020), and took stringent action against people violating the rules and regulations. The government ensured all its functionaries to be active so as to streamline the movement of people and other activities during lockdown. The pandemic brought trade and business into halt and forced the breadwinners to stay indoors. This lockdown acted as a boon for the environment to revive. To this end, the paper reviews the current state of knowledge regarding COVID-19, the policy responses to it. In addition, this study discusses the impact of COVID-19 on the people, economy, and environment particularly in India.

CORONA VIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is a respiratory infection caused by one of the largest Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) virus. In human, corona viruses can range from mild to fatal. Mild illnesses include cases of common cold, while more fatal varieties such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) witnessed in 2003 and 2012 respectively. The disease is primarily spread through coughing, sneezing, physical contact or talking with



close contact within 1–2m (Stelzer-Braid et al., 2009). The medical procedures like intubation and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) may cause respiratory secretions to be aerosolized and thus result in airborne spread. It may also spread when one touches a contaminated surface using skin, and then touches, their eyes, nose, or mouth. The virus can survive on surfaces for up to 72 hr. The common symptoms of the disease include fever, cough, headache, myalgia, shortness of breath, dyspnoea, diarrhoea (Lai, Shih, Ko, Tang, & Hsueh, 2020) and loss of taste and smell. Doctors have identified asymptomatic cases, which are considered to be riskier as in such cases people are carrier of infection but show no symptoms (Wang, Horby, Hayden, & Gao, 2020). In addition, complications include pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome. The disease is mostly contagious during the first 3 days after the onset of symptoms, although spread may be possible before symptoms appear and in later stages of the disease. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms may range from 2 to 14 days. Currently, there is no empirical evidence of any vaccine available for COVID-19 and the primary treatment is based on symptomatic and supportive therapy only. The recommended preventive measures include frequent hand washing, covering one's mouth when coughing, maintaining physical distance from people, and self-isolation for people who suspect they are infected (Wang et al., 2020).

MACRO IMPACT OF CRISIS ON INDIAN ECONOMY

The countrywide lockdown has carried almost all financial exercises to an unexpected stop. The interruption of interest and gracefully powers are probably going to proceed much after the lockdown is lifted. It will require some investment for the economy to come back to an ordinary state and that being said social separating measures would proceed for whatever length of time that the wellbeing stun plays out. Henceforth request is probably not going to be reestablished in the following a while, particularly interest for unnecessary products and enterprises. Three significant parts of total interest utilization, venture, and fares are probably going to remain quelled for a drawn out timeframe. Notwithstanding the phenomenal breakdown sought after, there will likewise be across the board gracefully affix interruptions because of the inaccessibility of crude materials, mass migration of a huge number of vagrant specialists from urban territories, easing back worldwide exchange, and shipment and travel related limitations forced by about completely influenced nations. The flexibly affixes are probably not going to standardize for quite a while to

come. Effectively a few ventures are battling inferable from complete interruption of flexibly chains from China. The more extended the emergency endures; the more troublesome it will be for firms to remain above water. This will adversely influence creation in practically all local businesses. This thus will have further overflow impacts on speculation, work, pay and utilization, pulling down the total development pace of the economy.

POLICIES MEASURES INITIATED DURING COVID-19

Government authorities have responded to the pandemic at various levels. It has imposed travel restrictions, curfews, stay-at-home orders, and facility closures to check the movement of people. The government has opened quarantine centres and special COVID hospitals to provide proper treatment to the patients. Furthermore, it has provided special dress codes for doctors, nurses, and hospital staffs who are continuously involved in treatment of patients. At the state level, the government has engaged in sanitizing places, which are either infected or prone to infection. The government has cancelled and postponed various sports, religious, political, and cultural events through which transmission of virus can be restricted. It has suspended operation of manufacturing and service sectors, school and colleges, training and research institutes, places of worship, public and private transport where the chances of public gathering are huge. However, essential services such as pharmacies, hospitals, banks, and grocery shops are kept opened owing to their everyday requirement. Furthermore, the Prime Minister of India appealed the people of the country to install the “Arogya Setu App” to get better awareness of the disease and connect to essential health services. The Government of India with the financial support from the World Bank has identified measures to tackle the situation (Rajagopal, 2020). The central government has released Rs.28,379 crore to the states for effective handling of COVID-19. The government has opened shelter homes for displaced people, migrant labors, and people stranded in different states. The government with the help of NGOs and self-help groups are continuously providing food to the people residing in the shelter homes. In addition, it has been providing grocery and cash to people with low socio-economic status.

The government authorities have gone for a 30% salary cut for 1 year for the President, Prime Minister, and Members of Parliament. Also, many CEOs and management teams from big enterprises have gone for their pay cuts to ensure their workforce does not have to bear the pressure. The Prime



Minister/Chief Minister has appealed the citizen to make contributions to the PMCARES or the CM Relief fund. The amount collected from contributions can be used to feed and provide necessary requirement to the people with lower socioeconomic status, migrant workers, under-privileged, and to fight against this pandemic.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PEOPLE

The COVID-19 has multifaceted impact on lives of people. The corona outbreak in India was reported on January 30, 2020, in Kerala's Thrissur district. It gradually spread to almost all the states of India by April 2020 and claimed more than 600 lives. The government's imposition of lockdown made people mostly men to stay at homes. The prolonged lockdown has resulted in resource depletion without resource generation. This has led the people to undergo anxiety, depression, stress, lack of confidence, and state of confusion during this period. The people as a result are demonstrating increase in violence against women and children at home. Women are experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by any perpetrator known as intimate partner violence (Postmus, Hoge, Breckenridge, Sharp-Jeffs, & Chung, 2020; WHO, 2020). In India, The National Commission for Women (NCW) has reported twofold rise in gender-based violence complaints across the country during the lockdown period (Roy, 2020). The violence against women results in injuries and serious physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health problems, including sexually transmitted infections, and unplanned pregnancies. Predominantly, the activities of care rely heavily on women. The lockdown measures have increased the inequality of the care work, burdening women more than men, including looking after children, elderly, and sick members of the family. In addition to domestic violence, incidents of increase in child pornography and child abuse have increased in India since the outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown (Pandit, 2020). The school and college students are unable to learn and actively engage themselves due to the ongoing lockdown. In order to make the students involved in studies, there has been an increase in the enrollment of online classes for students. Technology companies are helping institutions smoothen their sudden transition to an online-only teaching format (Dasgupta & Singh, 2010). However, the students who are devoid of laptops, internet, and necessary technological equipment are still facing the challenge. The students in the final year of their study career example those appearing their 10th and 12th boards are stranded in middle and unable to make decision about career progress. Furthermore,

students in the final year of graduation and higher academic career will undergo a tough time because after the pandemic period the economy will be in a downward phase for which the students even if they pass out might have to struggle to get placed. Migrant workers from India's various cities and towns are also heavily affected due to the lockdown. With factories and work places shut down, they were left with no livelihood. In the first few days of the lockdown, television screens captured long processions of migrant workers walking miles to go back to their native villages, often with families and young children on shoulders. With no work, no salary, and unable to reach their villages owing to the restrictions the life of the migrant workers have become miserable. The cases of racial discrimination and xenophobic attacks have been reported in India (Karmarkar, 2020). The people in the North-east mostly having mongoloid appearances have increasingly faced racism and discrimination since the outbreak of the COVID-19. These people were forcibly quarantined despite showing no COVID-19 symptoms because of their looks, denied entry into the apartment complex, forced to leave the apartment, threatened with eviction from their apartment, forced to leave a restaurant and many more.

The pandemic made people to stay indoors, contrarily the services of doctors, nurses, medical staffs, policemen, and sweepers doubled during this period. Their services went beyond the mentioned job description and specifications so as to save life of people. Where the health workers stayed inside the hospitals and separate from their families, the policemen stayed outdoors to ensure smooth functioning of external activities. The job role of cleaners which has been mostly been undervalued has garnered high appreciation and respect during this period. Despite of the various critics of the nationwide lockdown, probably it was one of the apt decisions taken to safeguard lives of common people as "loss of life is irreparable". One of the plausible implications of lockdown could be the lower spread and death rate in India in comparison to the developed counterparts like the USA, Italy, France, Germany, Spain etc. The lockdown paved way for the government to improve healthcare facilities, develop quarantine centers, shelter homes, and cater to the need of people across the length and breadth of the country. The lockdown helped many people to refrain from unhealthy habits like smoking and drinking. In addition, it provided the people a common "WE" time or "family time" which people were lacking due to escalation in work pressure particularly in January, February, and March. Staying indoors has made men to involve in household chores, inspired people to learn and cook new recipes, and



helped to increase family bonding to some extent. Furthermore, the lockdown provided scope to the research cells and engineering units across the country to come up with novel ideas to tackle the issue. The researchers, scientists, and bio-medical engineers got opportunity to design low cost and effective ventilator, personal protective equipment (PPE) outfits, design masks, and testing kits. With COVID-19, India can foresee improvement in medical research. The ongoing pandemic has helped the farmers to learn to take orders related to grains, pulses, and vegetables over whatsapp and make them reach to people.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ECONOMY

As a result of the spread of COVID-19, production and consumption are being drastically reduced. As a result of external shocks, economic growth in developing countries like India is likely to decelerate. The Indian economy slowed due to demonetization and the installation of GST. The administration was searching for ideas to revive the economy (Kapur, 2020). In contrast, the COVID-19 has thwarted any chances of a rapid economic rebound. During the epidemic, the primary contributors to the economy and employment creation, like as tourism, hospitality, aviation, textiles, agriculture, construction, gems/jewelry, and start-ups, suffered losses in the billions of rupees (Seetharaman, 2020). Overall, the tourism industry anticipates a loss of 5 lakh crores and the loss of employment for 4 crore people who are directly or indirectly connected to the industry. Particularly, hotel chains anticipate revenue losses of Rs 30,000 crore, which could result in the loss of 15 lakh employment. It is anticipated that the aviation industry has lost more than Rs. 8,200 crore in income as a result. Given the significance of human capital in the textile sector, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) are prevalent. Predicts the loss of one million jobs as a result of the lockout's financial restrictions, decreasing demand for textiles, and ongoing logistical difficulties. (Business Standard, 2020) Additionally, COVID-19 has had an impact on the agricultural industry. In the middle of the epidemic, the demand for wheat, vegetables, and other products has increased. However, restrictions in the supply chain prevent agricultural outputs from reaching consumers. Consequently, farmers are compelled to reduce their prices. The inability to harvest the first flush has resulted in an 8 percent decline in tea exports. The agriculture industry has been impacted by a lack of migrant labour and disruptions in the supply chain. In addition, the closure of hotels, restaurants, sweet shops, and tea shops has affected the sales of crops, pulses, vegetables, and milk. In the meantime, misinformation,

particularly on social media, that chickens are COVID-19 carriers has gravely damaged poultry farms. Approximately 51 million people are employed in India's construction industry. The COVID-19 earthquake has a significant impact on a scale of this magnitude. Migrant workers have been compelled to abandon their places of employment because to their fear of the disease, the cessation of ongoing projects, the loss of money, and the lack of food. The effects of lockdown and cessation of public transportation on the nation's manufacturing sector are significant. Automakers, smartphone manufacturers, consumer electronics companies, and a multitude of other industries have halted production, resulting in incalculable production losses and enormous income losses. The COVID-19 has forced startup units to close because to a lack of work, money, and the inability to connect and commute with clients. The COVID-19 outbreak is reported to have reduced gem and jewellery sales in India by 80 percent. The decline in the number of individuals visiting shopping malls and movie theatres has significantly damaged the retail business. Due to the current condition of affairs, which includes the closure of all merchant services, the jobs of employees are in peril. Throughout the outbreak, demand for FMCG products such as milk and hygiene products has increased significantly. Lockdowns will have a direct impact on the lives, careers, and overall economy of employees who are unaware of the situation. The corona virus pandemic in India has significantly harmed the country's economy. As a result of countries closing their borders, plunging stock markets, and a lack of activity in the service sector, India's exports have decreased by 34.6% and imports have decreased by 287%. These reasons have prompted some to question India's ability to rebuild its economy. The World Bank and credit rating agencies have cut India's fiscal year 2021 growth to its lowest level since 1991, following three decades of economic freedom. However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) prediction for India's GDP growth in the fiscal year 2021–22 is the highest among the G-20 nations, at 1.9%. (India Today, 2020).

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ENVIRONMENT

The lockout has led to a number of positive results, including a reduction in carbon emissions and cleaner air for inhabitants to breathe. When enterprises, institutions, and economic activity cease to exist, the environment will almost certainly benefit. The Indian blockade has enhanced the quality of the air and water. This year, Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata, and Lucknow all reported significant decreases in air pollution levels. According to the Central Pollution Control Board



(CPB) of the Indian Environment Ministry, nitrogen dioxide levels dropped by 71%. (Wright, 2020). Significant improvements have been made to waterways such as the Yamuna and Ganges as a result of the lockdown. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, the Ganga's water quality has improved, with an average of 27 water quality points suitable for swimming and wildlife and fisheries reproduction (CPCB). COVID-19 has, for the most part, assisted in the recovery of the ecosystem. On the other hand, the pandemic has resulted in an increase of biomedical and hazardous waste. In addition, as the usage of plastics has increased, so has the amount of recyclable waste, a trend that may present concerns in the future. The focus of governments has changed from the economy to the well-being of individuals. As a result, funds have been dedicated to sectors such as healthcare and the distribution of essentials. Even after the conclusion of the epidemic, a focus on reducing unemployment and growing economic activity could detract from the go green concept, climate change, and environmental development in the near future. In order to ensure that the demands of the population, economy, and environment are addressed, the government must design an appropriate plan.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM COVID-19 FOR THE FUTURE GENERATION

The COVID-19 pandemic may impact the mental health of people. It will increase fear and insecurity due to the probable loss of livelihood. It can increase the stigma towards people with symptoms such as cold, cough or sneezing, which might just be a simple flu. The people may out of compulsion have a tendency to hoard food, medical supplies such as antibiotics, analgesics, anti-allergic medicines, facemasks, and sanitizers. The healthcare workers, paramedics, volunteers, virologists or media persons may be over tired, feel fatigue, burnout, and may have fear of getting infected with the disease. People might get scared of using public transport, contacting other people, walking on the road, even in following their daily routine. There can be increased focus on health and hygiene products, healthy organic food, medical needs, fitness, mediclaim, education, and financial investments. The pandemic gives us a learning that people should become careful and cautious while dealing with people around them and maintain proper hygiene. People rather than confining to themselves should show altruistic behavior, try developing healthy habits, and maintain work-life balance. With increase in work pressure the people should engage in doing yoga and meditation and refrain from involving into unhealthy activity such as smoking and drinking that

affects the immunity. India's management of the COVID-19 outbreak has been well appreciated by the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and also the advanced economies like the US, UK, Italy, Germany, Spain, Japan. The post-COVID-19 world is going to look quite different from what it has been so far. The business entities and decision makers are working under tremendous pressure during this uncertain time. India needs to be innovative in the coming months to have a V-shaped recovery (Economic Times, 2020). Government needs to ensure that all the measures which are taken during the outbreak are effectively utilized. This will contribute towards minimizing the damage to the economy. India should focus on providing proper platform to foreign investors so that foreign investment can increase. The outbreak of pandemic in China has increased fear among the manufacturing units operating in China. Many industries are rethinking of shifting their business base to India. This probably could be one of the opportunities for India to grow, deal with unemployment, and enable the economy to revive faster post-COVID-19. However, India needs to be prepared to develop adequate infrastructure and necessary facilities to operate smoothly. Furthermore, the government should provide scope to start-ups with funds, resources, and tax benefits that can lead to employment generation and progress in economic activities. The current pandemic has inspired service-based organization to encourage employees to work from home and academic institutes to adopt a blended approach, that is, conventional as well as web-based learning. Thus, the people and students need to keep necessary resources such as laptops, internet connections, and other gadgets to smoothly carryout day to day activities. The aftermath of COVID-19 is going to force companies to accelerate their focus on massive production and mitigate the loss that occurred during the lockdown period. Furthermore, as the restriction from lockdown is removed the environment can observe an escalation in pollution due to vehicles, industries, and discharge of effluents into water bodies and excessive use of plastic which may again affect the ecosystem. Therefore, the current situation can act as a wakeup call for the government, policymakers, businessmen, and environmentalists to come together and handle ongoing climate change issues and design a cleaner and greener future for the generations to come.

REFERENCES

1. *Business Standard* (2020, April 13). *Lockdown: 1 crore job cuts likely in textile industry without govt support, says CMAI*. Retrieved from: <https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/lockdown-1- crore-job->



- cuts-likely-in-textile-industry-without-govt-support-sayscmi-120041301063_1.html
2. Das, G. (2020, March 31). 136 millions job at risk in post-corona. Retrieved from: <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/136-million-jobs-at-risk-in-post-corona-india-11585584169192.html>
 3. Dasgupta, I., & Singh, S. (2010, March 29). Coronavirus impact: How tech companies are helping institutions smoothen their sudden transition to an online-only teaching format. Retrieved from: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/coronavirus-impact-how-tech-companies-are-helping-institutions-smoothen-their-sudden-transition-to-an-online-only-teaching-format/articleshow/74866612.cms?from=mdr>
 4. India Today (2020, April 17). IMF projection for India's GDP growth highest in G-20, says RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. Retrieved from: <https://www.indiatoday.in/business/story/rbi-governor-shaktikantadas-indian-economy-covid19-imf-projection-gdp-growth-1667889-2020-04-17>
 5. Kapur, R. (2020). Social and economic impact of COVID-19 on India and recovery potential. Retrieved from: <https://www.india-briefing.com/news/social-economic-impact-covid-19-india-recovery-potential-20202.html/>
 6. Karmarkar, S. (2020). Coronavirus outbreak has increased racial attacks on people from the Northeast: NGO report. Retrieved from: <https://www.deccanherald.com/national/east-and-northeast/coronavirus-outbreak-has-increased-racial-attacks-on-people-from-the-northeast-ngo-report817899.html>
 7. Lai, C. C., Shih, T. P., Ko, W. C., Tang, H. J., & Hsueh, P. R. (2020). Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and corona virus disease-2019 (COVID-19): The epidemic and the challenges. *International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents*, 55(3) Retrieved from, 105924. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijantimicag.2020.105924>
 8. Pandit, A. (2020, April 14). ICPF report warns of sharp rise in demand for online child pornography during lockdown. Retrieved from: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/icpf-report-warns-of-sharp-rise-in-demand-for-online-child-pornography-during-lockdown/articleshow/75127399.cms>
 9. Postmus, J. L., Hoge, G. L., Breckenridge, J., Sharp-Jeffs, N., & Chung, D. (2020). Economic abuse as an invisible form of domestic violence: A multicountry review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 21(2), 261–283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838018764160>
 10. The Economic Times (2020, April 17). RBI Governor expects a V-shaped recovery for India in 2021-22. Retrieved from: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/rbi-governor-hopes-india-will-stage-sharp-v-shaped-recovery-in-2021-22/articleshow/75196698.cms>
 11. Wang, C., Horby, P. W., Hayden, F. G., & Gao, G. F. (2020). A novel coronavirus outbreak of global health concern. *The Lancet*, 395(10223), 470–473. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30185-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30185-9)
 12. World Health Organisation (2020, April 7). COVID-19 and violence against women. Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/vaw-covid-19/en/>
 13. Wright, R. (2020). Coronavirus lockdown is having a dramatic impact on India's air pollution. <https://7news.com.au/lifestyle/health-wellbeing/coronavirus-lockdown-is-having-a-dramatic-impact-on-indias-air-pollution-c-947259>.