



Pandemic: Living In Fear And Faith, India's Past And Future - A Review

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Abstract

India has seen a variety of epidemics and pandemics right through history. Therapeutics and efficient researches have gained a significant potential over time. India have fought every disease like a battle and learned. Pitfalls and Potholes in our society has exposed our healthcare system. Ironically, there are still no health emergency provisions in our Indian constitution. Are we really prepared for next pandemic? Is our health care infrastructure developed enough? Answer lies in our hand.

Keywords: Pandemic, Covid 19, Epidemic, Preparedness, India

Introduction

India being the 3rd largest country has encountered several epidemics and pandemics throughout history. An epidemic is a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time and a pandemic of a disease is prevalent over a whole country or the world. We have seen many outbreaks of deadly diseases such as influenza, cholera, dengue, small pox etc. two main significant ones were cholera in the 19th century and influenzas in the 20th century. presently we are facing covid19 and Monkeypox. These incidents over the years due to increase global travel, urbanization, changes in land use and exploitation of the natural environment. This has cause significant morbidity and mortality. the most recent pandemic is covid 19 pandemic, which has been the center to the world attention since 2020. It has not only caused chaos in the health system but affected the whole world both mentally and socially. effort has been made to compile the epidemics and

pandemics in India throughout history and how the community and government has been trying to deal with them, are discussed in this article.

India has seen several epidemics and pandemics throughout history and we Indians have tried our best to stand strong and deal with it, with whatever limited resources we had at each time. Good medical care and efficient researches have gained a significant potential over time. India have fought every disease like a battle and learned from the ones they lost. Luckily, we have been able to eradicate a few diseases and still struggling to eradicate the ongoing pandemic. Sanitation, ignorance, lack of awareness and climate are contributing to several infections' outbreaks. Government has taken many steps in this direction but is yet to take some serious actions in many ways. This article is written in an attempt to point out the potholes that has been occurring in dealing the outbreaks. it is sad truth that we still have

to question ourselves whether we are ready to deal with pandemic or not.

Approach On The Pandemic Situation

Healthcare emergencies on the topic of pandemic and epidemic has always been a matter of debate. It has been seen that the plans made by the government or any healthcare facility and their execution are way different and hence their success rates. This led to social disruption caused by the pandemic leading to extreme poverty while the no. of undernourished people increased up to 132 million. Even though the government tried its best to implement strict rules such as lockdown, wearing of mask, hand sanitizer cleaning of public toilets etc. still the virus managed to spread like a wild fire.

Healthcare administration has proven that no matter how hard the situation is, they give their best to provide a safe and leading environment to the affected individuals. New isolation rooms were created with oxygen cylinders, pharmaceuticals were made available, doctors worked day and night, dead body cremation teams were put up, yet we saw many cases on the news and social media about ignorance, profit making, very high charge, lack of availability of beds and people dying on roads.

One might wonder why so many people were unsatisfied by how the government responded even after so much hard work. The reasons are as follows:

1. **Lack of awareness:** People kept procrastinating about hygienic methods until and unless someone from their own family was affected. People kept avoiding masks because it made them suffocate and people who wore them kept wearing them again and again even if it was contaminated. Lockdown was not taken seriously. Daily earners had no other choice but to go out. People walked for miles to reach their homes as they had no where to stay.
2. **Ignorance:** Many people ignored the fact about how deadly the disease was, people kept roaming around and inviting other people such as maids and drivers into their homes.
3. **Making profit:** People made profits from other people vulnerability, ambulance,

oxygen cylinders, beds prices increased to a huge amount which the poor couldn't afford to pay.

WHO has played a major role in the pandemic, it has shown flexibility in funding in the areas which required in the most. It has helped countries to prepare and respond. In the era of internet, many false and misleading information which people had faith in. WHO also brought together 400 of the world leading researchers in search of vaccine.

Ironically, there are no health emergency provisions in our Indian constitution even after facing tremendous backlashes. Government is yet to make some serious changes in the constitution regarding such emergency situations. Even we can thank to the pandemic that because of it our healthcare system saw a boom in progress and we Indians got more aware about healthy habits. So, the question remains "Are we ready for the next?" "Is our healthcare system developed well enough?" "Is awareness about vaccine and healthy living habits properly instilled in minds of people?" "Do we need another pandemic in 100 years to make humans understand the Importance of health?"

Basic sanitation, healthy lifestyle and preventive measures can decrease the incidence in such health calamities in future. So, let's focus our mind in the development of Indian health care system and our aim to sensitize the people about basic measures of prevention like hand washing, good sanitation and proper hygiene practices.

Still many questions remain unanswered,

Maybe a Poem by my student "Nandita Shaw" may best describe it:

"The Pandemic taught us to survive,

But mostly it made us thrive.

We all passed through thick and thin,

The sufferings made us mentally lean.

Some of us were fighting like a warrior,

Some people died as martyr.

The whole Health System was shaken up,

Since the responsibility was huge,

*Political inclination was awful.
Towards patient's health it was constant negligence,
All they could do is to keep patience.
They could see the world going into depression,
They needed rest but were entangled with reliability
and complications.*

*Pause for a while,
Turn around,
Take a deep breath,
And try to understand,
What's the meaning of one's life.”*

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