

Coping With Uncertainties : COVID-19 and Its Aftereffects

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Abstract

Human history is observing a very strange time fighting an invisible enemy; the novel COVID-19 corona virus. Initially observed in the Wuhan province of China, now fast spreading around the world. Various journals are offering to freely publish articles about Corona virus. As this pandemic is very new and very less scientific material is available on the topic, various paid journals and companies are offering free materials published about the Corona virus. Here in this short review, we will discuss the articles about Corona virus that are freely provided by various journals and companies around the world.

Introduction

Mankind has observed various pandemics throughout history where some of them were more disastrous than the others to the humans. We are observing a very tough time once again fighting an invisible enemy; the novel COVID-19 corona virus. Initially observed in the Wuhan province of China, now fast spreading around the world.

Carrying a mortality of approximately 3.7%,¹ compared with a mortality rate of less than 1% from influenza. There is an urgent need for effective treatment. Current focus has been on the development of novel therapeutics, including antivirals and vaccines. Accumulating evidence suggests that a subgroup of patients with severe COVID-19 might have a cytokine storm syndrome. The Acknowledged identification and treatment of hyper inflammation using existing, approved therapies with proven safety profiles to address the immediate need to reduce the rising mortality.

Current determinants of COVID-19 is supportive evidence which translates into respiratory failure from acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) is the leading cause of mortality. ² Secondary hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis (sHLH) is an under-recognized, hyper inflammatory syndrome characterized by a fulmination and fatal hypercytokinemia with multiorgan failure.

In adults, sHLH is most commonly triggered by viral infections and occurs in 3.7–4.3% of sepsis cases. This brings us to focus on the cardinal features of sHLH include unremitting fever, cytopenias, and hyperferritinemia; pulmonary involvement (including ARDS) occurs in approximately 50% of patients.⁵ A cytokine profile resembling sHLH is associated with COVID-19 disease severity, characterised by increased interleukin (IL)-2, IL-7, granulocyte colony

stimulating factor, interferon- γ inducible protein 10, monocyte chemoattractant protein 1, macrophage inflammatory protein 1- α , and tumour necrosis factor- α .⁶ Predictors of fatality from a recent retrospective, multi centre study of 150 confirmed COVID-19 cases conducted in Wuhan, China.

WHO's declaration that the global spread of corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a pandemic¹ has contributed greatly to clearing up confusion in the terminology in the professional literature and the media. Discussions on when the wide geographical spread of a disease becomes a pandemic tend to recur when the world is confronted with an emerging infectious disease.^{2,3} The debate around the terminology used for COVID-19 raises two important questions.

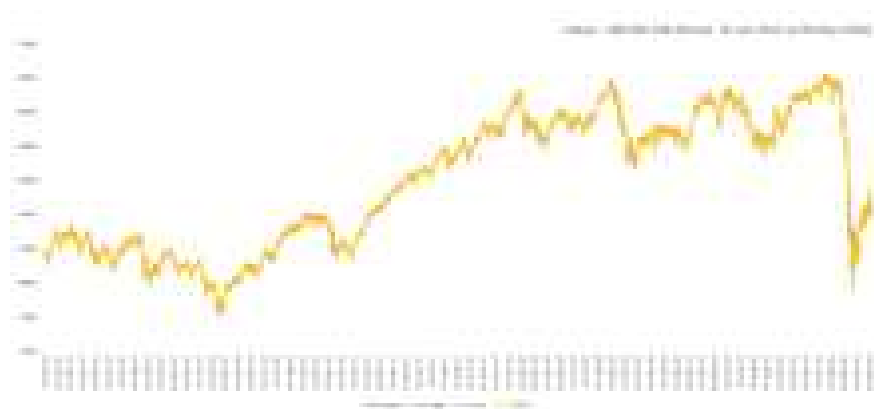
- Why was there reluctance to call the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic?
- Whether the terminology is of any practical importance?

For some weeks, the COVID-19 epidemic, which had spread to over 100 countries, seemed to fit the classical definition of a pandemic. One could reasonably ask whether the use of the term pandemic would change any of the actions necessary to control the spread of the virus. There are several situations in which it could be helpful to use well defined terminology to control the spread of an infectious disease. The resources for controlling a pandemic are both different, substantially larger, and generally much more far-reaching than for a localized outbreak or epidemic. Thus the terms used for the different situations could be restricted according to the control measures that are necessary. Perhaps unique to pandemics, these include considerable international coordination and collaboration in providing aid to affected countries, recruiting the necessary resources for promoting research on medications and vaccines, and developing complex risk communication. In particular, travel restrictions become a major issue and, although these are guided by the International Health Regulations, countries have the option to adopt unilaterally their own barriers to international travel. This was clearly the case for COVID-19. If the term pandemic is clearly defined, it can communicate much more clearly the seriousness of the situation and help justify the extreme measures instituted. It can also provide the international health community with a common term to enlist the cooperation of the general public and convey the necessary sense of urgency to decision makers.

Magnitude (An Indian Subcontinent Perspective)

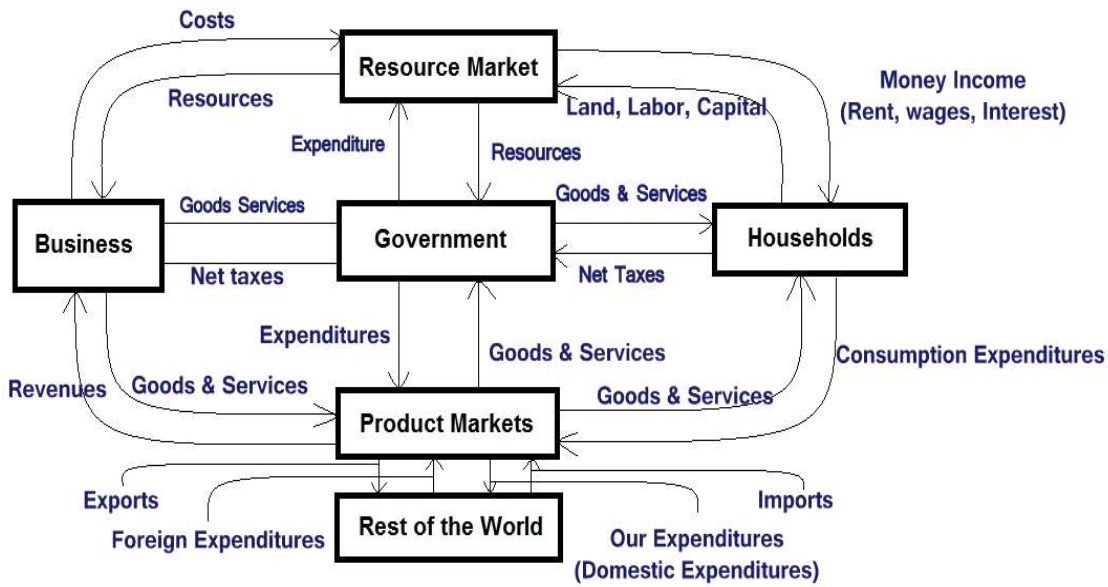
The economic impact of the 2019–20 corona virus pandemic in India has been largely disruptive. The World Bank and credit rating agencies have downgraded India's growth for fiscal year 2021 with the lowest figures India has seen in three decades since India's economic liberalization in the 1990s. The former Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India has said that India should prepare for a negative growth rate in FY21. However, the International Monetary Fund projection for India for the Financial Year 2021-22 of 1.9% GDP growth is the highest among G-20 nations. Within a month, unemployment rose from 6.7% on 15 March to 26% on 19 April. During the lockdown, an estimated 14 crore (140 million) people have lost employment. More than 45% of households across the nation have reported an income drop as compared to the previous year.

Major companies in India such as Larsen & Toubro, Bharat Forge, UltraTech Cement, Grasim Industries, Aditya Birla Group, BHEL and Tata Motors have temporarily suspended or significantly reduced operations. Young start-ups have been impacted as funding has fallen. Fast-moving consumer goods companies in the country have significantly reduced operations and are focusing on essentials. Some defense deals have been affected/delayed due to the pandemic, such as the delivery of Dassault Rafale fighter jets. Stock markets in [India](#) posted their worst loses in history on 23 March 2020. However, on 25 March, one day after a complete 21-day lockdown was announced by the Prime Minister, SENSEX and NIFTY posted their biggest gains in 11 years, adding a value of ₹4.7 lakh crore (US\$66 billion) crore to investor wealth.



Indices: S&P [BSE 500](#) (1 January 2015 to 9 May 2020)

The Government of India has announced a variety of measures to tackle the situation, from food security and extra funds for health care, to sector related incentives and tax deadline extensions. On 26 March a number of economic relief measures for the poor were announced totaling over ₹170,000 crore (US\$24 billion). The next day the Reserve Bank of India also announced a number of measures which would make available ₹374,000 crore (US\$52 billion) to the country's financial system. On 29 March the government allowed the movement of all essential as well as non-essential goods during the lockdown. On 3 April the central government released more funds to the states for tackling the corona virus totaling to ₹28,379 crore (US\$4.0 billion). The World Bank and Asian Development Bank have approved support to India to tackle the corona virus pandemic.

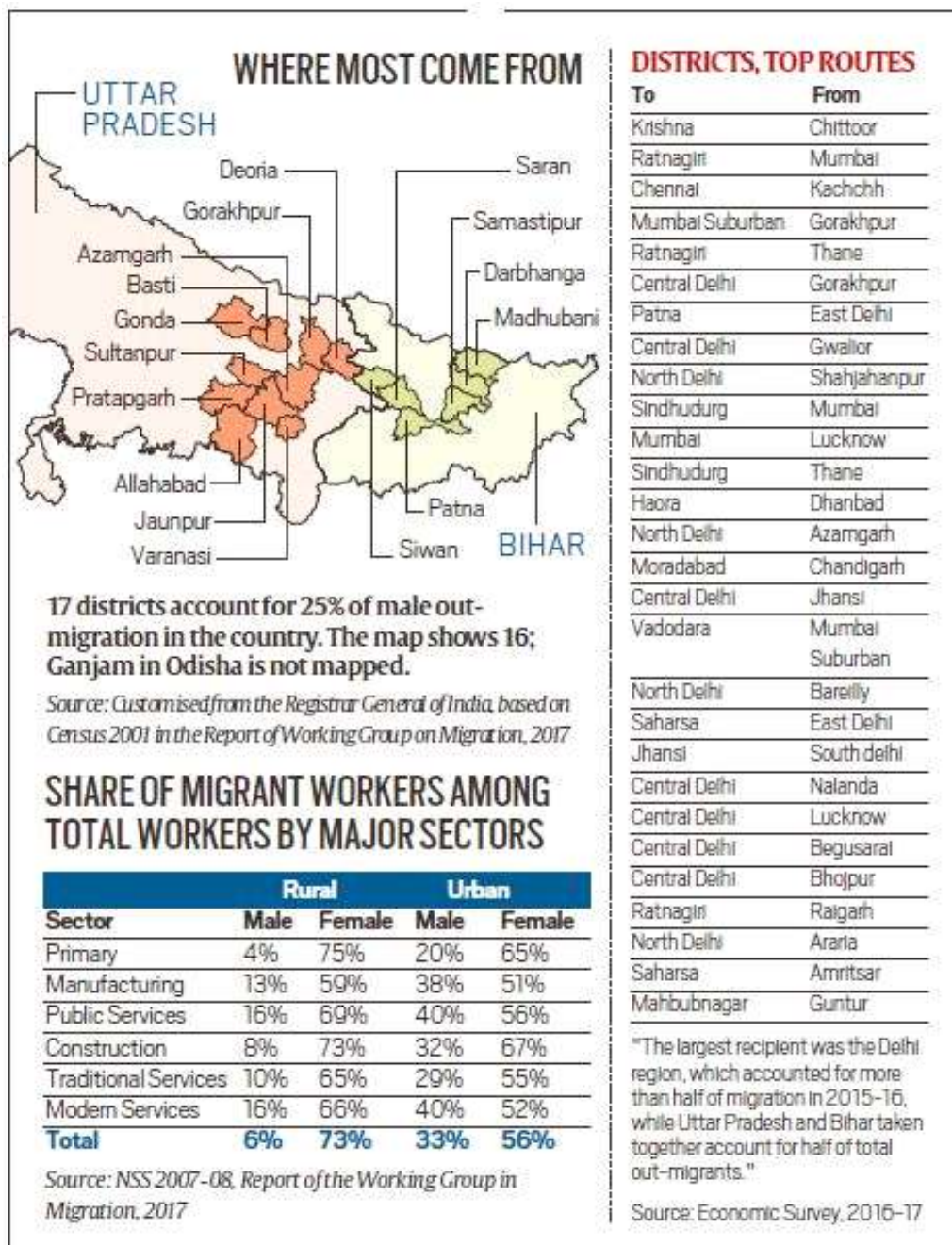


The impact has trickled down to the micro level as well which has impacted the circular flow of economic activity. A few examples which shook the government's plan to tackle the situation are :

1.Migrant movement

The exodus of migrant workers from the cities following the announcement of the 21-day lockdown threw the spotlight on the vast number of Indians who live outside their home states.

The total number of internal migrants in India, as per the 2011 census, is 45.36 crore or 37% of the country's population. This includes inter-state migrants as well as migrants within each state, while the recent exodus is largely due to the movement of inter-state migrants.



PM Cares

A state of Medical emergency was declared in India in March during the first stage of lockdown. A fund to cope with the uncertain times was instituted by the name of PM Cares (Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situation)

The fund will also enable micro-donations. The minimum donation accepted for the PM CARES Fund is ₹10. The donations will be tax exempt and fall under corporate social responsibility.[6] The Prime Minister had said that the PMO had received many requests to help in the war against COVID-19. Accordingly, the fund was set up and will be used for disaster management and research.

This was used by many influential members of the country to join hands in fighting the virus. Despite facing opposition at its inception, the supreme court ruled out against any claims for dissolving the fund.

Economic slowdown

Due to a state of medical emergency which was applied across the country on March 21, 2020 after the Prime Minister's Address led to widespread panic buying before the lockdown was enforced at midnight.

A typical human response to prepare for future inconvenience was seen on a national level. Though the decision was a well planned one, keeping in mind the contraction rate of the disease and the effects which could have entailed in case of mismanagement. However, a massive surge in sanitizer purchase and protective masks disturbed the equilibrium of demand and supply making these goods go out of stock in the early stages of the lockdown.

This led to widespread hysteria which gave rise to fake products flooding the market making it harder for the government to cope with this situation in an effective manner.

In the coming versions of the lockdown, this surge had a downward slope with people realizing that goods and services were being made available to them with tireless efforts.

By the Third phase of the lockdown, people had accepted the lockdown fully and understood the importance of social distancing making the curve of contraction of the disease flatter.

Another Case which became the highlight was the mass exodus of daily wage workers from cities. This created a massive state of unrest in cities and states pan India. To tackle these problems, government measures were taken promptly.

Change in Media Strategy

A major change in media consumption patterns has surfaced during this period. As the standard of living and quality of life across cities improved initially due to less spending on travel / party culture / Lifestyle, people started seeking avenues for a fulfilling time to get through the social distancing period. This has led to a massive surge in online entertainment avenues being adopted by millennial and GenZ.

For Gen X, re-cast of famous shows like Byomkesh Bakshi, Mahabharat, Ramayana etc with Ramayana breaking records for viewership shows the active adoption of Entertainment to cope with monotony.

A lot of UGC threads posted about Lockdown triggered depression which has become another major point for companies to focus on content which is engaging, conversational and uplifting.

A rise in platforms for online content has been seen. The quality of content has risen to a point where influencer and YouTube trends show more consumption of Indie Series than foreign adaptations.

These trends which have showcased the evolved audience and the behavioral difference from the predicted patterns leaves us with a major question about the evolution of these trends into consumer behaviour post lockdown and crisis.

Change in Consumer Ethos



The COVID-19 pandemic has altered consumer behaviors permanently and caused lasting structural changes to the consumer goods and retail industries, according to findings of an Accenture [survey](#) of more than 3,000 consumers in 15 countries across five continents.

The survey, which was conducted between April 2 and April 6, after many countries had implemented stay-at-home orders, found that consumers have already begun shifting their purchasing priorities. For instance, consumers overall said they were currently buying more personal hygiene and cleaning products, as well as canned and fresh foods than they had been two weeks prior — while purchasing fewer fashion, beauty and consumer electronics items.

More importantly, however, the findings indicate that many of the changes in consumer behavior are likely to continue long after the pandemic. In addition, the crisis is also causing consumers to more seriously consider the health and environmental impacts of their shopping choices. For instance:

- 60% of respondents are spending more time on self-care and mental well-being, with about six in 10 consumers (57%) saying they have started exercising more at home;
- 64% of consumers said they're focusing more on limiting food waste and will likely continue to do so going forward;

- 50% of consumers said they're shopping more health-conscious and will likely to continue to do so; and
- 45% of consumers said they're making more sustainable choices when shopping and will likely continue to do so.

Not surprisingly, the survey found that the pandemic is causing more people to shop for groceries online. In fact, one in five respondents who said their most-recent grocery purchase was done online were first-time online grocery shoppers — for older consumers, this was one in three. And while 32% of consumers' current purchases of all products and services have been online, that figure is expected to rise to 37% going forward. “The realignment of purchasing priorities, personal lifestyles, and working practices is mandating significant changes to retail and commerce,” said Jill Standish, senior managing director and head of Accenture's global Retail practice. “Groceries were, until recently, one area in which many people were reluctant to shop online, but COVID-19 has quickly changed that. The findings show how people who haven't been as comfortable with e commerce and other digital technology have been pushed to overcome their hesitancy — and this shift is huge. As organizations adapt, their watchwords must be trust, relevance and convenience.”

This Phenomenon is correctly depicted in the Info graphic above. The Initial Fear of Lockdown which was witnessed by trending hash tags such as #locked down, #gharparraho, #gocoronago among others with trending conversations around quarantine life which led to people seeing positive change in the environment around them. Eg , Low Pollution Levels, Happier Families, More Self indulgence, Space to grow as an individual etc. This Sparked the self awareness process in the consumers and the velocity of the conversations took a turn towards a constructive, self actualization self introspection scenario with people posting photos of hobbies which they started to develop. The consumer then due to abundance of time started evolving towards a more growth centric approach which could be personal growth or career growth in recent times. A significant rise in Blogs, Blogs, Pod-casts, E books etc has been seen as people have started seeking growth from their hobbies which has led to rise in the digital penetration in the country.

With Content being curated, Created and consumed like never before, the scope and trajectory for UGC, Collaborative Media and Traditional Content can be immense in the coming future.

A conclusion on the Recovery - post crisis

India , being a unpredictable country brings up questions for following :

Economic implication

With economic activities being paused due to the medical emergency, the implications have been hard hitting for migrant workers. Once, the situation eases up and opportunities in each sector begin to correspond to the needs , a

massive change in the way of conducting work can be expected. A sustainable approach towards business problems might be taken. A major rise in medical related companies can also be expected.

Paradigm shift in Communication

With a massive rise in online meetings, a new avenue of meetings , meet ups and casual catch ups can be seen. With people now understanding the need and importance of connecting only when necessary. Brands are also focusing more on story- telling instead of brand push through Ads / Campaigns.

Communication is evolving towards a more immersive and conversational side which has invoked conversations around brands which makes it more approachable and adaptable.

The way brands are responding to complaints and the importance of word of mouth (WOM) is more than ever.

A trend of immersive , experiential and conversational communications in all spheres can be predicted taking current communication trends pan-India.

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