



ODD AND EVEN PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS AMONG COUNTRY PEOPLE OF DISASTROUS PRESENTIALITY OF COVID-19

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ABSTRACT:

A pandemic is a disease that spreads over a whole country or the whole world. Turning the pages of history one could witness that the humanity has combated with pandemics beginning from the influenza epidemic dating 1200 BC affecting the population of Babylon, Persia, Central Asia. The destructive Black Death in 1346 devastated Europe, Asia and North America. In 1563, London fell prey of the Bubonic plague leading to the death of thousands. Epidemiologists Malik Peiris and Yi Guan write " 'nature ' remains the greatest bioterrorist threat of all." It is true too. Man and nature are inseparable. Human beings live in communities and it is a known fact that Man is a social animal. The more active the human interaction and civilization, the more is the possibility of spread of disease. From the discovery of new sea routes, to the introduction of airways the world is coming close resulting in the creation of global village. Thus the chances of pandemic disease is also very high. Ever since the 1918 Spanish influenza outbreak the scientists of the world are working in their laboratories to save mankind from mass destruction by the tiny microscopic organisms. The virus and bacteria are so powerful that they are able to destroy the most intelligent animal on the Earth, Man. They are not only destroying mankind but also their inner strength and confidence. The psychological impact of the pandemic on general public is discussed in this paper.

Key words: - pandemics, quarantine, social distancing, fear, anxiety, distress, Xenophobia

INTRODUCTION:

"Nature is the teacher" says William Wordsworth. Nature is the creator and destroyer of the world. Man is dependent upon nature for everything. Sometimes human beings manipulate nature for their greed. In turn nature has tested mankind by probing many challenges like natural disasters and epidemic diseases. Throughout the pages of history there are references of the outbreak of epidemic diseases that challenge the very existence of mankind. The year 2020 is one such year where the whole world is combating with Novel Corona virus or Covid 19. The WHO has declared Covid 19 as pandemic disease. Nearly one third of the world's countries are locked down and following social distancing to prevent the virus from spreading.

The outbreak of this disease has changed the very lifestyle of people. The lifestyle of people plays a very important factor in the spread of the disease. As the human beings are the

recipients of the disease and the transformation of disease from one person to another highly depends on the way one acts. One has to maintain some norms, one has to adopt some changes in lifestyle in order to control the spread of the disease. The Novel Corona virus has made most of the countries of the world to declare lockdown. The corona infected patients are kept in quarantine. People are requested to maintain social distancing and to wear masks while they are out of their house. These changes are not so easy to adopt. The disease has suddenly brought the lives of the people to a standstill. It is highly difficult to accept this stagnation. People are not allowed to socialize, not allowed to move out of the houses, these conditions are unimaginable. Many of the healthcare units and other institutional agencies require the people to change the lifestyle, maintain cleanliness, hygiene and other things. But they neglect the psychological effects on the

general public that plays a very vital role in the fight against the epidemic.

Sound mind in a sound body:

There is a saying Sound mind in a sound body. It is very true. If one has to be strong physically one has to be strong mentally also. They both go hand in hand. Many psychological issues are interconnected with the lifestyle of the people. The person affected with the disease has to be mentally strong in order to fight the disease. The infected patient will be put under quarantine for a particular period of time. This will be a crucial time for the patient who is already weak. The patient has to stay away from home, family and friends. This leads to helplessness and fear. Sometimes anger too. There are instances reported in journals and newspapers about the quarantined patients not co-operating with the nurse and health staff. The patients may refuse to take medicines and may refuse to stay in isolation. These adverse and abnormal behavior is due to the psychological impact of the disease. Anxiety fear distress are some of the emotional traits that one may undergo.

Many of the people suffer from the pain of losing their loved ones in the outbreak of the pandemic. Some behavioral changes also occur. Non adherence, avoidance, stigmatization out of group are some of them. Weak minded people suffer from Xenophobia. History shows the record of such kind of events. In plague raged Moscow, Russia, the terror of quarantined citizens erupted into violence. Riots spread through the city and culminated in the murder of Archbishop Ambrosius, who was encouraging crowds not to gather for worship.

Hopelessness, alienation are some of the other psychological effects of the disease. The pandemic disease has destroyed the very hope of human beings. There is no guarantee of tomorrow. There is no hope of existence. This has led the man to develop the feeling of estrangement. Man has lost the ability to love

the life. Moreover the plight of the patients is very pathetic. They are kept away from society. They are marginalized. They are seen with contempt. They are no longer received with open arms by his fellow men. Because they to fear of their death. The life after the recovery of the patients is unimaginable. Definitely it is not going to be the same easygoing life. One has to face the contempt of the people around them. They may lose their confidence completely. If this happens then it is going to be a very dangerous scene.

Science and religion

The outbreak of Novel Corona virus has led to the revival of Hinduism. The rituals and practices of the ancient Hinduism was actually scientific. The maintenance of cleanliness is given utmost importance in the Hindu religion. Religion plays a very vital role in shaping one's personality. From the birth of the child, it is influenced by the social atmosphere around it. Religious practices, social norms and other things facilitate in the development of one's personality. The spread of disease can be controlled by maintaining cleanliness and hygiene. As it is said Cleanliness is next to godliness, religion and life go hand in hand. Doctors and scientists also suggest the same. Use of hand sanitizers, masks are the modern means of maintaining cleanliness that was already taught by religion. The harmonious culmination of science and religion help in the eradication of the pandemic from the world.

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" says William Shakespeare. Like it is said in Sanskrit "Yadbhavam Tadbhavathi" the way we perceive makes all the difference. It is the way we think, we understand and act makes all the change. There are both odd and even effect of the pandemic on human psyche. As far as our county is concerned, it is very difficult to control the spread of pandemic in such a highly populated country. Lockdown is

the call of the day. One has to make the best use of time. People have got enough time to spend with their loved ones, have enough time to eke out the hidden talents in them. Many of the people have completed many of their incomplete work, fulfilled their unfulfilled dreams which were hidden under the pressure of their hectic life. Many are doing art work, cooking, drawing, reading books. Technology has further made life easier. E Books, online channels have brought entertainment to the finger tips. The lockdown period has watered to the creativity of many.

Carpe diem

The Carpe Diem philosophy says cease the present time. Andrew Marvell writes in his poem *To His Coy Mistress*:

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

Time gallops like a horse and destroys everything. Thus it is just to make the best use of time. Maintaining mental wellbeing and happiness is of utmost importance. The present situation of the world has proven this philosophy right. It is the right time to adopt these norms in our lives.

Pandemics in literature

The Plague by Albert Camus is a thought provoking novel and is very apt to the situation too. The novel stresses the powerlessness of the individual characters to affect their destinies, the very pith of absurdism.

Daniel Defoe's novel *A Journal of the Plague year* still has the power to unsettle — like when he writes about families forced into quarantine due to an infected family member: “[I]t was generally in such houses that we heard the most dismal shrieks and outcries of the poor people, terrified and even frightened to death by the sight of the condition of their dearest relations, and by the

terror of being imprisoned as they were.” *The Psychology of Pandemics, Preparing for the Next Global Outbreak of Infectious Disease* by Steven Taylor speaks of the psychological traits of the disease outbreak and the preparation man should do to survive with the disease. Charles Darwin's theory says Survival of the fittest. Man has to be prepared mentally to live with the disease. Life should move on. Man has to struggle hard to save his life and to survive on this earth. That's the rule of the nature too. Change is the essence of life. Be it physical, mental or psychological one has to change to suit to the changing environment.

This is a weird situation where man is acting opposite his nature. Man is no longer a social animal. The present situation has made us to avoid socializing with our friends and family. But one has to keep in mind that this is because the safety of our loved ones is of utmost importance. This can be achieved only when we stay away from each other. It is the best method to control the spread of epidemic and to break the chain.

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