

Covid-19 and a Dissection of Health Care System in India

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China will be marked in the history books not for its technology or Ephemeral products it used to serve the world but the serious threat related to Covid-19 Pandemic. Almost every one of us is now familiar with the word Covid-19 and facts related to the disease because of the lousy results it has shown over the couple of months, jeopardising the life of millions globally and crushing economy of masses.

The deadly disease had its outbreak in Wuhan city of China in December 2019 and gradually affected such a large number that the world Health Organisation (WHO) had to define it as a pandemic. The total figure of positive cases as of 18th May 2021 stands 163312429, while total confirmed deaths 3 386825 and also affecting as many as 212 Countries, areas or territories and total vaccine doses administered 1264630442 as per World Health Organisation (WHO) statistics. These stats are expected to get worse if not combated accordingly. Since, there is no known magic wand that may cure the disease, preventive measures like, Vaccination, Physical distancing, use of masks, frequent handwashing and use of alcohol based hand sanitisers are a few ways to prevent oneself from this disaster.

Like any other country India unfortunately got involved into this pandemic when three (03) students from Kerala, studying in Wuhan came back home tested positive for the disease and the rest is history. The Govt seemed to be clue less to the disaster unfolding and the callous attitude meant the toll of positive cases increasing on a regular basis without much of control. In a response to disease, PM Modi addressed the nation and called for "Janta Curfew"

on 22nd of March 2020 from 7 am - 9 pm which meant the country was under strict lockdown or self-imposed curfew or peoples curfew for 14 hours as an effort to combat corona virus pandemic in India and break the chain. The curfew saw exceptions of people of 'essential services' such as police, medical services, media, home delivery professionals and firefighters. At 5 pm (22nd March 2020), all citizens were asked to stand in their doorways, balconies or windows, and clap their hands or ring their bells in appreciation for the professionals delivering these essential services. The act of applauding the unsung warriors is understood as they put their lives at stake to deliver the best possible services to the general population and ensure casualties are minimized. The whole of Spain applauded in gratitude to corona health workers so did other countries across globe and India was no exception to it.

But why does this 5pm call (so called appreciation to the work of people dealing with essential services) sound very unfamiliar, illogical and unrealistic and you may add more synonyms to the nature of how this group (People dealing with essential service) has been dealt by the Govt till date. Pandemic of lies have been spread all over the country to applause this call by the PM Modi. However, the statistics say otherwise of how difficult is to be in this special group. Some of the points to ponder are as follows:

- Gloves, masks, eye protection, hazmat coverall suits- personal protective equipment's or PPE- are a mandatory requirement's for all health care workers testing or treating Covid-19 patients, as per world Health Organization's latest Guidelines. But India could take weeks, if not months to make them available even as experts ask the country to

prepare for a tsunami of corona virus cases. It's very unfortunate to see that we are clapping for the unsung heroes but we have not been able to provide them basic infrastructure and basic gears

- The data collected in the wake of corona virus is worrying as stats reveal the doctor population ratio stands 1:11,600 while that of isolation beds stands 1: 84,000, also one quarantine bed per 36,000 and one hospital bed per 1826 Indians - Indian Express.
- As per the report, India has about 0.60 doctors, 0.80 nurses, 0.47 midwives, 0.06 dentists, 0.56 pharmacists and 0.76 other health workers, respectively, per 1000 population in 2004-05. A recent study (Rao et al., 2012) finds that India had approximately 20 health workers per 10000 populations in 2001 and when adjusted for qualification the density falls to a little over 8 per 10000 populations. Further, the combined density of doctors, nurses and midwives (11.9) is less than half of the World Health Organisation's benchmark of 22.8 health workers per 10000 populations and when adjusted for qualification the density falls to around one-fourth of the benchmark - DIALOGUE Vol 18, No. 02.
- In Govt hospitals for the post of Staff nurse (now Nursing Officers), be it a diploma nurse, a nursing graduate or sometimes even a student with master's degree in Nursing is recruited for the same post, same salary and almost same rest of the features. This forces many of the pass out students to work abroad where his work is paid according to his qualification and experience which stands discriminated here in most of the Govt recruitments and hence country has one more reason to be short of a trained Nursing personnel.
- Data from the National Family Health Survey - III (2005-06) reveals that 65.6 per cent of households in India (70.2 per cent in urban and 63.2 per cent in rural areas) don't generally use government medical facilities, and of these households about 57.7 per cent reported that the poor quality of healthcare is the reason for not using government facilities, another 24.8 per cent cited the reason as too long waiting time, 13.1 per cent cited the reason as inconvenient timing of public facilities, and 9.2 per cent cited the reason as frequent absence of the health personnel (IIPS, 2007).

- The overall supply capacity of trained health management professionals was 3,463 for 2017. However, based upon a service target approach India requires 11,304 health management professionals in 2017. If India is to reach the normative standards of 2.97 health managers per 100,000 populations, the country would need 39,774 health management professionals in 2017. This need would increase to approximately 44,936 health management professionals by the year 2030 to maintain the normative standard of 2.97 health managers per 100,000 populations.

doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2018.00227 with only a few points highlighted and zillion other to be looked into with updated data figures yet to come out front, the health care workers and the situation in health care system seems to be compromised as whole to which so called "Taali and Thali Bajao" acts are going to do not much of a difference and needs more focus than any other sector, if India has to be among top regions with excellent health systems. We would rather hope with the years to come the situation of health system and its workers would improve to what it is really now. I could be an anti-national in the eyes a few but since the figures don't lie, many of you would definitely agree to my point of view.

"Health is a human necessity; health is a human right"

- James Lenhart.

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