



# COVID-19: IT'S GENESIS, SPREAD AND PREVENTION - A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

BY:

Dr.M.A.Malik, Associate Professor, Economics,  
Govt. Degree College, Chevella  
Rangareddy District, Telangana.

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC: GENESIS, SPREAD AND PREVENTION - A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

### Abstract

This study is done to realize certain objectives as to know the origin and spread of COVID-19, to analyze the factors to the failure of society in preventing COVID-19, to analyze the handling of situation created by COVID-19, and to suggest suitable ideas/tools for the better future. Secondary data and first six months experience of handling the situation of COVID-19 in India has been taken for the study. It is revealed that the gross negligence of life sciences especially during last three decades had a given chance to miss the opportunity to prevent the covid-19 like epidemics; and gross neglect of the study and research of/in social sciences led to the inefficient/insufficient understanding of suffering sections and led to a fallacy policy framing and implementation process which also led to the trauma of poor in general and migrant labourers in particular during COVID-19 too.

**Key Words:** Life sciences, Social Sciences, migrant labourers, Corona viruses, Pandemics.

### I. Introduction

Covid19 is a name given to a disease which occurs due to a newly discovered corona virus-2 in 2019-WHO, (2020). As the disease spread all over the world in course of time, India too effected from this pandemic. This paper focused on how the origin take place and how the steps were taken to prevent the pandemic and the effect and the missing elements in the prevention steps due to which the majority people especially poor and marginalized suffered a lot.

### II. Review of Literature/The History of Pandemics

Plagues and epidemics have ravaged humanity throughout its existence, often changing the course of history. Jarus Owen, (2020) in his study found out the 20 of the worst epidemics and pandemics, dating from prehistoric to modern times. The first pandemic the author mentioned is 'Prehistoric Epidemic: Circa 3000 B.C' which happened about

5,000 years ago, this epidemic wiped out a prehistoric village in China. The twentieth one that the author mentioned as pandemic is 'Zika Virus Epidemic of 2015.

### III. Objectives of the Study:

This study is done to realize the following objectives:

1. To know the origin and spread of COVID-19
2. To analyze the factors to the failure of society in preventing COVID-19
3. To analyze the handling of situation created by COVID-19
4. To suggest suitable ideas/tools for the better future

### IV. Methodology:

The study has been done on the basis of secondary data and the study period has been taken from December 2019 to June 2020 i.e., first six months period of COVID-19. For the study of genesis (origin), spread (development), prevention angle society is taken and for the handling of pandemic, nation i.e., India is taken.

### V. The Origin and Spread of COVID-19

Pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan, China was first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in China on 31 December 2019. The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020. By 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 it spread over 216 countries across the globe with total confirmed cases 9, 825, 539 and causing death to 495, 388. Region wise, 4, 933, 972 in America, 2, 638, 903 in Europe 1,024,222 in Eastern Mediterranean, 735,854 in South-East Asia, 278,815 in Africa and 213,032 in Western Pacific confirmed cases were reported. Country wise as on 28.06.2019 in United States 2,452,048, in Brazil 1, 274, 974 , in Russian Federation 627,646, in India 528,859 and in United Kingdom 309,364 cases were reported-WHO, (2020a).

### VI. Factors to the Failure of Society in Preventing COVID-19

Keeping the above facts in mind, why we as a society could not prevent the emergence of covid-19 is analyzed. Here society means, includes individuals, institutions, regions and nations. Though virus has para – life/physical feature (...Viruses, however, parasitize essentially all biomolecular aspects of life. That is, they depend on the host cell for the raw materials and energy necessary for nucleic acid synthesis, protein synthesis, processing and transport, and all other biochemical activities that allow the virus to multiply and spread. One might then conclude that even though these processes come under viral direction, viruses are simply nonliving parasites of living metabolic systems. But a spectrum may exist between what is certainly alive and what is not. A rock is not alive. A metabolically active sack, devoid of genetic material and the potential for propagation, is also not alive. A bacterium, though, is alive. Although it is a single cell, it can generate energy and the molecules needed to sustain it, and it can reproduce. But what about a seed ? A seed might not be considered alive. Yet it has a potential for life, and it may be destroyed. In this regard, viruses resemble seeds more than they do live cells. They have a certain potential, which can be snuffed out, but they

do not attain the more autonomous state of life- Luis Villarreal,2008) does its impact on life or has interaction with life to be studied as part of life sciences. Human life in the process of its evolution encountered many diseases and able to found cure medicine for most of the diseases. Not only cure medicine/techniques to cure but even preventive medicine that is in the name of vaccine is invented by this great human mind.

Unfortunately/fortunately with the emergence of Industrial revolution in 18<sup>th</sup> century (Editors, Encyclopedia Britannica,2020) and emergence of information and communication technology (ICT) revolution especially since 1985 (Kaino,2008) has underscored the study of life sciences as well as social sciences. The research, invention and innovation largely confined to production of machinery, tools of physical or software. In this process, as employment opportunities are mostly generated in these physical and software fields, the individuals, institutions including governments mainly concentrated and confined to this area. Most of the individuals preferred it to get a handful of income earning jobs in this field only. All most all highly inculcated minds drained to this employment oriented area and the consequence is life sciences faced a dearth of handful of genius minds. Of course medical field has been giving competition, it largely confined to medicine/techniques to cure but the study/research in pure sciences took a back-side. This can be observed through the enrolment in life sciences at under graduation, post-graduation and research level. Individuals searched for employment institutions including governments encouraged the industrial and ICT fields with funds and policies grossly ignoring the study of existence. The result is COVID-19 like pandemics. As we would have given first priority to the study/research of existence, there was a scope to prevent the COVID-19.

## VII. Handling of Situation Created by COVID-19

Handling of COVID-19 is analyzed by taking India's experience in first five months. The COVID-19 pandemic in India is part of the [worldwide pandemic of corona virus disease 2019](#) (COVID-19).The first case of COVID-19 in [India](#) was reported on 30 January 2020. As of 7 July 2020, the [Ministry of Health and Family Welfare](#) (MoHFW) has confirmed a total of 719,665 cases, 439,947 recoveries (including 1 migration) and 20,160 deaths in the country and India has the largest number of [confirmed cases in Asia](#) and has the third highest number of confirmed cases in the world after [United States](#) and [Brazil](#). Three Indian states, Maharashtra with 211 987, Tamil Nadu with 114 978 and Delhi with 100 823 have crossed the 1 lakh mark by the said date-GoI, (2020).

On 24 March 2020, the [Government of India](#) declared a nationwide [lockdown](#) for 21 days, limiting movement of the entire 1.3 billion population of [India](#) as a preventive measure against the [COVID-19 pandemic in India](#). It was ordered after a 14-hour voluntary public curfew on 22 March, followed by enforcement of a series of regulations in the country's COVID-19 affected regions. The lockdown was placed when the number of confirmed positive corona virus cases in India was approximately 500. As the end of the first lockdown period approached, state governments and other advisory committees recommended extending the lockdown. On 14 April, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended the nationwide lockdown until 3 May, with conditional relaxations after 20 April for the regions where the spread had been contained or was minimal. On 1 May, the [Government of India](#) extended the nationwide lockdown further by two weeks until 17 May. The Government divided all the districts into three zones based on the spread of

the virus—green, red and orange—with relaxations applied accordingly. On 17 May, the lockdown was further extended till 31 May by the [National Disaster Management Authority](#). On 30 May, it was announced that the ongoing lockdown would be further extended till 30 June for only the containment zones, with services resuming in a phased manner starting from 8 June. It was termed as "Unlock 1". The second phase of unlock, Unlock 2.0, was announced for the period of 1 to 31 July, with more ease in restrictions-Wikipedia, (2020).

### **VII.1: Sudden Lockdown- Sufferings a Lot**

WHO declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 regarding covid-19, on the same day a first case of Covid-19 was reported in India too. In India, a normal atmosphere was there till March 22<sup>nd</sup> when first time 14 hours voluntary public curfew was declared and from 24<sup>th</sup> March general lockdown came in to force. Mean while (From January 30 to 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2020) many large gatherings took place including Donald Trump, president of United States visit to India during which a large gathering (nearly about 2 lakh people) took place at Ahmadabad in Gujarat State- [Ellis Hannah and Petersen](#), ( February 24,2020).

Lockdown in India was declared without any adjustment period even for four days. Though it was surprise to all sections of people, it was not only surprise but an agony to the poor in general and to migrated workers in particular. As soon as lockdown declared regarding covid-19, migrant labourers wanted to go to their home town as the end of lockdown is in question and their lively hood source of work was stopped. At the beginning of first and second lockdowns, Union Government did not announce any special measures of lively hood package or funeral process (If death of migrant labour is occurred) to the migrant labourers. Though one state Government of Telangana announced some relief package for migrant labourers, it was neither adequate nor practically implemented on the ground due to lack of genuine data regarding migrant labourers.

### **VII.2: The Agony of Migrant Labourers**

In the absence of any particular assurance from the Governments, the migrant labourers started going their native villages by walking as all transport means were suspended. Many stories and pictures of walking migrant labourers were reported in print- (Priyam Manisha and Mridusmita Bordoloi, May 29, 2020) and electronic media- The Wire, (May 21,2020). Even pregnant ladies along with luggage and other small children walked along the road for kilometres together. Deliveries on road- (India Today, May 13, 2020), deaths on road- (Anisha Dutta, June 03, 2020) and railway tracks- (Banerjee and Ajeet, May 8, 2020) were reported. Thousands of kilometres by young children- (Falah Gulazar,May 19 ,2020) on cycle and by women on scooter- (YouTube, April 10, 2020) were reported. Even after walking thousands of kilometers to reach their village, at the end they did not get relief from suffering as the other resident villagers did not give them a happy welcome moreover over they were treated with ambiguity. They were put to quarantine at their own village and during quarantine and after quarantine life became misery as no source of income was available. The misery was continued till the physical labour work under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 was provided.

### VII.3: Agony of Migrant Workers is Due to Lack of Concern by Governments

Wonder to notice that neither the Union Government nor the State Governments maintained a data of accuracy regarding migrant workers. Neither the governments kept the migrant workers in mind, while announcing the lockdowns. Even after the splint of blood of migrant workers on India roads and railway tracks, the first measure announced by Union government is running shramik trains. Even running shramik trains without proper arrangement put the migrant workers in high zone of COVID-19 risk as the thousands of migrant workers gathered at railway stations.

### VII.4: Missing Concern is Due to the Missing of Philosophy of Poor

As mentioned earlier, the study and research of social sciences under which the sufferings of various sections of people in general poor in particular are studied is took a back-seat after Industrial revolution in general and after ICT revolution in particular. Not only Social sciences in general neglected, the philosophies regarding poor are grossly ignored and most of them were removed from the syllabus by most of the Universities. The philosophy of Poverty by Karl-Marx, philosophy regarding depressed by Jyotirao Phule and Dr.B.R.Ambedkar were never given proper attention especially during last three decades of ICT evolution.

### VIII. What is Road Ahead?

Individuals in general institutions including governments in particular shall re-frame their mind-set from purely production/manufacturing of physical commodities and software variables to the study of life and social phenomena. The gross negligence of life sciences especially during last three decades had a given chance to miss the opportunity to prevent the covid-19 like epidemics; and gross neglect of the study and research of/in social sciences led to the inefficient/insufficient understanding of suffering sections and led to a fallacy policy framing and implementation process. Therefore, the road ahead is to change our plans and priorities to give proper place to the study and research to life-sciences and social sciences including inclusive ideas of all categories which shall and must include the idea/philosophy for the poor and vulnerable sections of society.

### IX. Source/References

1. Anisha Dutta, (June 03, 2020): *198 migrant workers died in road accidents since Mar 25: Report*, Hindustan Times ; New Delhi. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/198-migrant-workers-died-in-road-accidents-since-mar-25-report/story-WnllgmaHkOOnO7zAEJv1fl.html>
2. Banerjee Shoumojit and Mahale Ajeet, (May 8, 2020): 16 migrant workers run over by goods train near Aurangabad in Maharashtra; The Hindu. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/16-migrant-workers-run-over-by-goods-train-near-aurangabad-in-maharashtra/article31531352.ece>
3. Editors, Encyclopedia Britannica, (2020): Industrial Revolution, Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Industrial-Revolution>
4. [Ellis Hannah and Petersen](#), (February 24, 2020): 'Namaste Trump': India welcomes US president at Modi rally, The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/24/namaste-donald-trump-india-welcomes-us-president-narendra-modi-rally>;

5. Falah Gulzar, (May 19, 2020): Corona virus in India: 15-year-old girl cycles 1,200 km to get migrant worker father from Delhi to Bihar; Gulf News. <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/india/coronavirus-in-india-15-year-old-girl-cycles-1200-km-to-get-migrant-worker-father-from-delhi-to-bihar-1.1589898422328>
6. Government of India,(2020); COVID-19 Dashboard: <https://www.mygov.in/covid-19>
7. India Today web desk, (May 13, 2020): - A pregnant woman, who was walking home from Maharashtra to... <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pregnant-migrant-labourer-delivers-baby-while-walking-home-1677374-2020-05-13>
8. Jarus Owen, (2020): 20 of the worst epidemics and pandemics in history: [Live Science Contributor, All About History](https://www.livescience.com/worst-epidemics-and-pandemics-in-history.html), March 20, 2020. <https://www.livescience.com/worst-epidemics-and-pandemics-in-history.html>,By [Owen Jarus - Live Science Contributor](#), [All About History](#) March 20, 2020
9. Kaino L. Muganyizi,(2008); Information and Communication Technology (ICT) developments, utilization and challenges in ICMI history: Umige.ch,Rome. <https://www.unige.ch/math/EnsMath/Rome2008/WG4/Papers/KAINO.pdf>
10. [Luis P. Villarreal](#), (2008): Are Viruses Alive? , Scientific American, August 8, 2008. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/are-viruses-alive-2004/>
11. Priyam Manisha and Mridusmita Bordoloi, (May 29, 2020): Documenting the story of India's migrant distress | Analysis; Hindustan Times. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/documenting-the-story-of-india-s-migrant-distress/story-sVC8sCHFetXYBPKLa1OhZM.html>
12. The Wire, (May 21, 2020): Watch/ the story of weeping man who has become the symbol of migrant worker crisis. <https://thewire.in/video/watch-the-story-of-the-weeping-man-who-has-become-symbol-of-migrant-worker-crisis>
13. Wikipedia,(2020); COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in India: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_lockdown\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_lockdown_in_India)
14. World Health Organization, (2020): COVID-19 Quick Links, Questions and Answers, Q&A on corona viruses (COVID-19). <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>
15. World Health Organization, (2020a): Corona virus dash board(COVID-19). [https://covid19.who.int/?gclid=CjwKCAjw-D3BRBIEiwAjVMY7IH2cLlk-tHI3rd1R6rEKA9TT\\_MXep-6LsCNna5Mh6akWmwtnn7EfoCLisQAvD\\_BwE](https://covid19.who.int/?gclid=CjwKCAjw-D3BRBIEiwAjVMY7IH2cLlk-tHI3rd1R6rEKA9TT_MXep-6LsCNna5Mh6akWmwtnn7EfoCLisQAvD_BwE)
16. YouTube, (April 10, 2020): Watch: 50-year-old woman takes 1,400 km scooty ride to bring her son back home. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTZSCTmqxCI>

