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IMPACT OF COVID – 19 ON PEOPLE’S LIFE AND LIVELIHOOD

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Abstract

The global impact of COVID – 19 pandemic is increasing daily on the poor due to job loss and other shocks to income and reduced livelihoods. The most vulnerable portion of the society includes poorer households and those dependent on informal employment. It includes casual day labourers, small scale producers, and many more who have less access to social protection because of smaller amount of savings and limited alternative sources of income. In the rural areas especially, the poor people are at the risk of losing their primary income source as they cannot sell their products or go to work due to the pandemic. On the other hand people also completely dependent on income from labour and employment. The shocks and stresses of the COVID – 19 pandemic in worldwide are leading to devastating socioeconomic disruption of people and both lives and livelihoods. This article speaks on impact of COVID – 19 outbreak on people’s livelihood high to extreme, which indicates the lower income people are getting more marginalized than before and become hard core poor due to the pandemic.

Key Words: COVID 19, Pandemic, People’s life, Livelihood

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War Two. Since its emergence in Asia late last year, the virus has spread to every continent except Antarctica. The pandemic is moving like a wave countries are racing to slow the spread of the virus by testing and treating patients, carrying out contact tracing, limiting travel, quarantining citizens, and cancelling large gatherings. Educational institutions are closed. COVID-19 has the potential to create devastating social, economic and political crises that will leave deep scars.

Millions of enterprises face an existential threat. Nearly half of the world's 3.3 billion global workforce are at risk of losing their livelihoods. Informal economy workers are particularly vulnerable because the majority lack social protection and access to quality health care and have lost access to productive assets. Without the means to earn an income during lockdowns, many are unable to feed themselves and their families. For most, no income means no food, or, at best, less food and less nutritious food.

The impact of pandemic on food system in the country

The pandemic has been affecting the entire food system and has laid bare its fragility. Border closures, trade restrictions and confinement measures have been preventing farmers from accessing markets, including for buying inputs and selling their produce, and agricultural workers from harvesting crops, thus disrupting domestic and international food supply chains and reducing access to healthy, safe and diverse diets. The pandemic has decimated jobs and placed millions of livelihoods at risk. As breadwinners lose jobs, fall ill and die, the food security and nutrition of millions of women and men are under threat, with those in low-income countries, particularly the most marginalized populations, which include small-scale farmers and indigenous peoples, being hardest hit.

COVID – 19 Pandemic and Poverty

Millions of agricultural workers – waged and self-employed – while feeding the world, regularly face high levels of working poverty, malnutrition and poor health, and suffer from a lack of safety and labour protection as well as other types of abuse. With low and irregular incomes and a lack of social support, many of them are spurred to continue working, often in unsafe conditions, thus exposing themselves and their families to additional risks. Further, when experiencing income losses, they may resort to negative coping strategies, such as distress sale of assets, predatory loans or child labour. Migrant agricultural workers are particularly vulnerable, because they face risks in their transport, working and living conditions and struggle to access support measures put in place by governments. Guaranteeing the safety and health of all agri-food workers – from primary producers to those involved in food processing, transport and retail, including street food vendors – as well as better incomes and protection, will be critical to saving lives and protecting public health, people's livelihoods and food security. Immediate and purposeful action to save lives and livelihoods should include extending social protection towards universal health coverage and income support for those most affected. These include workers in the informal economy and in poorly protected and low-paid jobs, including youth, older workers, and migrants. Particular attention must be paid to the situation of women, who are over-represented in low-paid jobs and care roles. Different forms of support are key, including cash transfers, child allowances and healthy school meals, shelter and food relief initiatives, support for employment retention and

recovery, and financial relief for businesses, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. In designing and implementing such measures it is essential that governments work closely with employers and workers.

Need for global solidarity and support

Countries dealing with existing humanitarian crises or emergencies are particularly exposed to the effects of COVID-19. Responding swiftly to the pandemic, while ensuring that humanitarian and recovery assistance reaches those most in need, is critical. Now is the time for global solidarity and support, especially with the most vulnerable in our societies, particularly in the emerging and developing world. Only together can we overcome the intertwined health and social and economic impacts of the pandemic and prevent its escalation into a protracted humanitarian and food security catastrophe, with the potential loss of already achieved development gains.

The pandemic is deepening inequalities, and millions more women and girls now risk losing the ability to plan their families and protect their bodies and their health. Countries must address the fragilities, inequalities and gaps in social protection that have been so painfully exposed, and place women and gender equality front and centre. The pandemic has resulted in mass unemployment, depleted social safety nets, starvation, increase in gender-based violence, homelessness, alcoholism, and millions slipping into poverty. This will lead to an increase in chronic stress, anxiety, depression, and overall rise in morbidity, suicides and the number of disability-adjusted life years linked to mental health. For developing economies this is the perfect storm. Workers around the world will want to be able to feel safe in their workplaces, reassured that they are not exposed to undue risks of the virus, and more.

Impact on the life of the deprived

During the pandemic treatment suffers. Patients with diseases like cancer, diabetes, renal failure, CAD and pregnant women need special attention. As the pandemic pushes up levels of hunger among the global poor, governments must prevent devastating nutrition and health consequences for children missing out on school meals amid school closures. A structured and well-coordinated approach is critical for tackling this global crisis.

India declared a sudden, severe and absolute lockdown with 4 hours' notice on 24 March 2020. Millions of migrant workers rendered jobless and unsafe. Group upon group of terrified, starving, exhausted people leave the cities they built, carrying with them precious items packed into sacks. Cell phones to reach out to relatives at home in villages they were born, hundreds of miles away. Some clothes, biscuit packets, bread. They flee on foot, bicycles, hitch a ride on goods-laden trucks - hungry, thirsty and tired - to rest under the shade of a tree or a school converted into a shelter for

migrants. Stick around. These have gone silent in the nationwide stay-home order to stop a contagion from spreading. What is required is burying dead with dignity, giving human face to lockdown, citizen-state engagement, creating a social-security net for poor. Moreover, this is the time of reason and science not rhetoric.

Pandemic and its effect on Children

As schools remain closed during the pandemic, the education of many children for whom long distance learning is unavailable stands at great risk. Nations must do everything in their power to protect children from the dire consequences. Teens are feeling lonely and anxious in isolation. Poor children with limited access and illiterate/semi-literate parents are in serious trouble. They are losing out. This will impact them severely. According to UNICEF, nearly half of the schools around the world do not have basic hand washing facilities, affecting 900 million children.

COVID-19 is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. There is an urgent need to speed delivery of accurate, easy-to-use, scalable tests, speeding innovation, development and commercialization of COVID-19 testing technologies, a pivotal component needed to return to normal during this unprecedented global pandemic. Researchers should come together to advance diagnostic technologies to bring the best and most innovative technologies forward to make testing for COVID-19 widely available. While diagnostic testing has long been a mainstay of public health, newer technologies offer patient-and user-friendly designs, mobile-device integration, reduced cost and increased accessibility both at home and at the point of care.

We must recognize this opportunity to build back better, as noted in the *Policy Brief* issued by the United Nations Secretary-General. We are committed to pooling our expertise and experience to support countries in their crisis response measures and efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We need to develop long-term sustainable strategies to address the challenges facing the health and agri-food sectors. Priority should be given to addressing underlying food security and malnutrition challenges, tackling rural poverty, in particular through more and better jobs in the rural economy, extending social protection to all, facilitating safe migration pathways and promoting the formalization of the informal economy.

Conclusion

We must rethink the future of our environment and tackle climate change and environmental degradation with ambition and urgency. Only then can we protect the health, livelihoods, food security and nutrition of all people, and ensure that our 'new normal' is a better one. World is facing such an unprecedented global crisis. Every day, refugee and migrant children, and those affected by conflict face major threats to their safety and well-being. Nations must keep food supply chains alive and protect the most vulnerable. What the world needs right now is solidarity along with bold

& courageous leadership guided by science, data, ethics and empathy. Recovery from COVID can steer the world toward a safer, healthier, more sustainable and inclusive path. Both life and livelihood are important. Deprivation is unacceptable. Shelter, food, healthcare and subsistence for poor are the key challenges faced during this pandemic.

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