



DHARAVI'S Imminent Invisible Problem - COVID

19

Dr. Vinay P. Raut

Head – Department of Political Science

Vikas College of Arts, Science & Commerce,

Kannamwar Nagar – 2, Vikhroli(East),

Mumbai – 400083.

Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT

Our generation has witnessed amid a global crisis unlike any generation has seen. World economist describes as the biggest economic downturn since the 1920s. To the naked eye, the virus has been uncritical, but unfortunately, this coronavirus not only hit hard Asia's biggest slum designating it to be a prime hotspot of Mumbai city but also crowned it as a global role model forcing countries around the world to follow the famed ' Dharavi Pattern '.

This research paper discusses the aftermath of this COVID – 19 pandemic lockdown and few untold but serious issues. After coming across various News Articles, Special Editions of News Channels, Medical Experts Interviews, W.H.O Online Reports, and Analyst Debates I penned my research paper focusing on Hunger, Women & Sanitisation, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Other Illness & Education presenting the crisp of my detail findings.

This research paper represents the aftermath effects of the lockdowns and focuses on its long term consequences. Only with a ray of hope to win over this most difficult situation of our generation, we entreat rising of the new humanity, human life, and its fundamentals for better life of the people of impending ' Dharavi '.

Keyword :Dharavi, Covid – 19, Dharavi Pattern, W.H.O

At this moment when India is reporting 3,211,848 corona cases with the death toll reaching 59,305 the gleeful update is of 2,445,975 cases recovered, India still shivers with the thought of “ is this the peak ” or the worst is yet to come, India counts to be world's third-highest number of coronavirus cases for 18 consecutive days after the US and Brazil, but World Health Organisation (W.H.O) fears that India could soon surpass those countries. India's

Ministry of Health is of a firm opinion that the key to fighting COVID-19 was shaping the country's recovery rate, India carried out a million tests on a single day for the first time a week ago.

' Key to fighting COVID – 19 was shaping the country's recovery rate ' statement was influenced by the world-famous ' Dharavi Pattern ' which was praised by W.H.O and by many countries. An aggressive strategy that focused on " chasing the virus, instead of waiting for the disaster " this strategy implied in Dharavi which of course flattened the curve, the world not only applauded this but few countries adopted and followed this pattern.

Are eight million residents of Dharavi that are concerned about this world commended pattern or they do they bother this COVID – 19 was science or serendipity which they leave to the world media to judge. Dharavi residents are fretful about many teething troubles such as loss of job, redundancy, hunger, stigma, and shortage of the most needful necessities, which probably no media wants to report.

It's not only Dharavi, every lane, every city, every district, but every state in this world is also going through the same problem, loss of a job, unemployment rocked every part of India as COVID – 19 pandemics unfolded entire country. But it was a different story at Dharavi, Asia's largest slum which contributes billion – dollar economy to the country, here unemployment was caused not just because of coronavirus infection or lack of opportunities but because of stigma – of being a Dharavi resident.

Living in a shantytown, small rather very small rooms, and in which overpopulated family lives jam-packed, lack of sanitization, about 50 families share one community toilet and one water tap on an average a minuscule home houses 5 – 8 people, cramped lanes and high-density slums in which social distancing is nearly impossible.

HUNGER WATCH, Direct impact of this crisis has been hunger, whereas some families never got grains, others managed to get dry ration distributed by government and NGOs after the initial period of lockdown, but what became difficult to survive was the post-illness period. Stocking of food resulted in exhausting food grains from the ration shop in weeks. Lockdown, Poverty, No Income forced people to cut children's milk consumption, meat, fruits while few events cut down their number of meals. This indeed had a serious consequence on the fight against the virus as it lowered immunity levels, which in turn directly impact Dharavi's ongoing fight to keep the coronavirus at bay. Deficiencies of Vitamin, Protein, and Energy are associated with depressed immune function, increasing vulnerability to infection.

IMPLICIT TROUBLE, At first when ration kits were distributed so were the sanitary napkins too, but with the extension of lockdown and with fear of entering Dharavi which was declared to be the most infected camp and also because of government restrictions, Women in Dharavi started facing a shortage of sanitary napkins and factually were forced to use old clothes instead of napkins. The study even corroborated that Condom distribution by government and NGOs had stopped completely since lockdown which must have lead to many unwanted

pregnancies and too many sexually transmitted infections. International organizations had warned about COVID – induced lockdowns of hunger, domestic violence, unwanted pregnancies – all seem to have realized in Dharavi.

OTHER MISFORTUNE, treatment of other diseases had taken a beating during the lockdown. The report says that many Therapist and Doctors refused treatment to people because their home is in Dharavi. All DOTS distribution centers of government are closed, due to which consequences could be more disastrous for TB patients, who are found in large numbers in the slums of Dharavi.

MASKED EDUCATION, Schools closure have masked education facilities for the students taking away society’s greatest equalizers – the commitment of imparting quality education – and rendering it moot. Dharavi children are losing treasured learning time which, for them, is needed to succeed. Unavailability of smartphones, network connectivity, and illiterate family members, school is their only hope and access to effective learning. Experts predict that Indian children from slums like Dharavi will face the brunt of this lost time for years to come.

This catastrophic pandemic has forced the poverty clock to tick backward in Dharavi, symbolically stating, Dharavi stands back now where it was in the year 1896 when an outbreak of the bubonic plague withered Bombay. Though Dharavi must have emerged as a global role model for containing the spread of novel coronavirus, receiving loads of applause from all over the world, though the dream of Dharavi remained unfulfilled. A century later, another crisis brings with it an opportunity, on a positive note this is the time to reimagine Asia’s largest slum ‘ Dharavi ’ and resolve its fundamental questions of Housing, Sanitation, Healthcare, and Education.

References –

1. www.downtoearth.org
2. www.deccanherald.com
3. www.who.int
4. www.globalhealthnow.org
5. www.theconversation.com