

Pandemic Effect in Bichaya Block, Madhya Pradesh

Ms. Patil Tejashree Balaso*

Abstract

COVID-19 is a pandemic disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2. The virus was first originated in China and through human transmission it has slowly spread across the nations. Though the world was blind to the Wuhan death toll, now no country is exempt of deaths due to corona virus. India is no exception from the world, which resulted in announcing a 21-day lockdown across all the states. This report made an attempt in understanding the corona virus spread and the consequences of lockdown in Bichiya block of Mandla district, Madhya Pradesh.

Introduction

Corona virus being a respiratory virus, transmitted through the saliva droplets. According to Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), person-to-person contact believed to be the main mode of virus transmission. Imagine sitting next to the person who contracted the virus. Suppose the individual sneezes or coughs without covering his nose and mouth, then the respiratory droplets will be out from the individual. The droplets have a range for almost two meters. Everyone in the two meters' vicinity is likely to have droplets on them.

On 11th March 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) declared the

disease as 'pandemic.' The word pandemic is defined as 'a disease that is prevalent over the world. Yet Chinese officials are using the term epidemic while discussing about corona virus.

Scientists and researchers working day-in and day-out to invent the vaccine, and as of now, the only possible way to contain the spread is 'social distancing and lockdown.' The various preventive measures which curb the contamination are washing hands regularly for at least 20 seconds; avoiding touching face, mouth and eyes; using protective masks and gloves while going out.

Madhya Pradesh

Out of the 100 cases recorded in Madhya Pradesh, eight people died. As of now, no person has recovered. The 92 active cases in Madhya Pradesh has been spread across Indore, Jabalpur, Ujjain, Bhopal, Shivpuri, Morena, Gwalior, and 16 cases in remote places. As of now, Indore is the most affected area in the state with 63 active cases.

Bichiya Block

Bichiya is one of the tribal blocks (with 100% tribal population) in Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh. It is surrounded with Kanha wild reserve. People depend on agriculture and forest products like Mahua, Tendu patta and

* Ms. Patil Tejashree Balaso, PDM19 batch, The DHAN Academy

firewood. They migrate to Nagpur, Hyderabad, Jabalpur, Raipur, Kerala, and other major states for livelihood.

Ground Reality

Ms. Tejashree: “I visited the Bichiya block on 29th February 2020. In the first 15 days of field visit, I’ve visited more than 25 villages, participating in the cluster meetings. In all these 25 villages, people are completely unaware of the corona virus and its effects. People started guessing something went wrong when the Kerala and Nagpur migrants didn’t return to celebrate the Holi festival. When the nation announced its lockdown then the tribal people realized about virus and its effects to a certain degree.”

From the news, it was evident that states are transporting the migrated till their state boarders. From the state boarders, people are finding their own ways and

means of transportation to reach to their native places. In this scenario, there is a possibility that migrants returning from other states might be virus carriers. In 80% of the households at least one person in the family is a migrant, working in other states.

The lockdown and social distancing in tribal and remote parts of the villages is a daydream. Even if one person returned from other states is affected with virus, it is very likely that the whole village will be contracting the virus in no time. In Bichiya block, healthcare facilities are very menial both at village and district level. For any major health issues, people visit Jabalpur, Raipur and Nagpur distanced at 174 kms, 207 kms and 274 kms respective from Bichiya block.

Zila Tola, one of the hamlets in the block, reported that many people are showing fever and other flu symptoms after Holi



celebrations. The people were home quarantined. It has been more than 15 days by now. Reportedly there are no positive cases so far.

False beliefs

People in these areas are strongly believing cow urine and cow dung will prevent the virus spread. Few people are believing consuming more alcohol will likely kill the virus in the body. Few believe the virus is God's curse on humans and people having strong God belief won't be infected with virus. These all false beliefs subsequently leading people not to take any precautions. Until 30th March, all the grocery and vegetable shops were open throughout the day. Now, to some extent due to strict police intrusion, the shops are operated between 8 AM and 12 PM.

Economical Activities

After police intrusion shops are being operated at the specified times. Though the district administration gave clear dictum to keep the prices nominal and must be displayed in front of their shops, no one is following the rules. In fact, the prices of vegetables skyrocketed unlike the usual times. Whereas fruit vendors are undergoing the financial crisis, since a fake news being circulated among the people that fruits are likely to contain virus.

Bichiya block celebrates Navratri during this month, wherein women will be fasting and survive on fruits alone. The demand for fruits will always be usual high during Navratri season but due to the fake news, people are not buying fruits and fruits are left to rotten. Bakeries, hotels, chicken and mutton shops are completely closed. Eggs shops are permitted to be opened and for sale.

SHG:

Few SHGs of MPSRLM have started making sanitizers and masks. They are being supported by the Chemistry department in a nearby college. In Bichiya block, SHGs yet to start producing masks and sanitizers.

Awareness Programme

From Bichiya Nagar Panchayat, every day a vehicle operates creating awareness through announcements: How the disease can be stopped from spreading? What preventive cares people should take? The covid-19 current status and new initiatives and schemes of the government are also announced.

Way Forward

'Prevention is better than cure,' is the only slogan for this pandemic until vaccine is invented. Preventive measures include: washing hands, wearing masks, social distancing and staying at homes. To make the people adopt to all the preventive measures, administration

must facilitate minimum financial assistance and basic needs to all the vulnerable sections.

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