



Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic and Role of Social Worker

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Abstract

Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic, which broke out in 2020 in the Wuhan city of China has directly affected people across the world. Coping with this pandemic was very tough but more difficult part is fear about death and getting infected with other people was challenging. It got affected mostly to the poor people. Women are mostly the victims of such sensitivities. The rise of fear and anxiety among people due to uncertainty of the disease are coupled with socially disruptive measures like lockdowns and quarantines. These can lead to significant psychological and economic disturbances such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, panic disorders, and behavioural disorders caused staying away from family, loneliness, shutting down of industries, loosing of job and misinformation on social media, financial insecurity and stigmatization. Healthcare workers, too, have a high risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder. Therefore, it is important to understand and research the economic and psychological impact and find out some ways to prevent and manage such problems.

Key Word: COVID-19, pandemic, impact, social work

Introduction

Corona virus is known as COVID-19. This virus had a very bad effect on the human being. In January 2020 the World Health organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new corona virus disease, COVID -19 to be a public health emergency of international concern. In March 2020, WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 characterised as a pandemic. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic

respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. The virus can lead to pneumonia, respiratory failure, septic shock, and death. However this is generating stress throughout the population. It also affected economic and psychological behaviour especially poor, migrant people, lower middle class people. Though Government has taken lots of initiatives to feed the masses still many People were under the stress of losing their job as if there is no job then there will not be any income so how they will fulfil the needs of the family members. Even Due to this COVID-19 many people had to stay without their family, their parents or their children if they were far away from their home for their studies or job. Many could not see their family members for the last time and also so many cannot stand with their family in this tough situation affecting their mental health and ceasing their peace of mind.

Impacts of COVID 19 towards most affected target groups

Migrant people: Migrants are less familiar in their new environment in which they temporarily live. They are prone to various

social, psychological and emotional trauma in such situations, for fear of neglect by the local community and concerns about wellbeing and safety of their families waiting in their native places. Migrants are forced to leave their native places in search of better opportunities and earnings, sometime leaving behind their families. In many instances, the families in native places depend partially or entirely on the money sent by the migrant earning members of the family. During COVID pandemic, many migrant workers used all possible means to reach their destinations. Many of them are however stuck at borders, including state, district and at national border areas. These are the most marginalized sections of the society who are dependent on daily wages for their living, and in times of such distress need sympathy and understanding from the people of society. Immediate concerns faced by such migrant workers relate to food, shelter, and healthcare, fear of getting infected or spreading the infection, loss of wages, concerns about the family, anxiety and fear. Sometimes, they also face harassment and negative reactions of the local community.

Farmers: They are seasonal worker sometimes they work throughout the year for harvesting. With strict lockdown enforced and lack of movement, landless labourers remained without any work for their livelihood. Without covid19 the present season would have been an ideal situation for landless labourers specially those actively engaged in harvesting.

Labourer: Daily wage labourers are mostly engaged in diverse activities in the organized and unorganized sector. In case of labourers, it pains our hearts when we hear many labourers saying "Hunger may kill us before corona". Daily wage labourers are mostly engaged in diverse activities in the organized and unorganized sector. But with the shutdown of industries and manufacturing sectors along with shops, their services got terminated.

Women: Physical distancing, self-isolation, fear, uncertainty, and a prolonged period of working from home has led to a large number of people suffering from mental health issues. Women are often the main caregivers in their homes, communities, and health facilities, which puts them at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19. Although so many

women are working on the COVID-19 frontlines. Working women have to face a major effect as their working hours now seem to have no end. The whole family is always in home, so they have the added pressure to provide time at home and in profession. Working from home has resulted in an increased workload for most women, especially those who do not have help with household chores or child-rearing.

Student fraternity: School children with the colleges and universities are closed, the students were left with no option but to move to their homes. In most cases it was mandatory to leave the hostel while in some other cases the students were allowed to stay with requisite permissions. These sudden changes have brought immense anxiety and tension for the students. At this situation children have less opportunity to be with their friends and get that social support that is essential for good mental well-being.

Old people: Older people also facing health issues. Psychological impacts for these populations can include anxiety and feeling stressed or angry. Some older people may already be socially isolated and experiencing loneliness which can worsen mental health.

Children: In the context of lock down and restriction of movements, children have difficulty to play, to be with friends and socialization resulting psychosocial problems.

List of problems: Numerous problem have been faced by the people. These include the following:

1. Loneliness and isolation.
2. Outbursts, irritability, or frustration over small matters.
3. Loss of interest over activities enjoyed.
4. Insomnia or irregular sleep schedules.
5. Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort.
6. Food cravings leading to obesity, or no hunger at all.
7. Anxiety, agitation, and restlessness.
8. Trouble in concentrating, making decisions, and remembering things.
9. Physical problems such as back pain or headaches
10. Avoiding socialising altogether.
11. Psychological stress growing panic due to reinforced messaging in all forms of media.
12. In terms of private job holders people are fearful for loss of job, some have already seen pay cuts and appraisals are getting

delayed almost for everyone make them anxious and worried about their future.

Social Work intervention

- 1) Social workers are in a unique position to disseminate accurate information from trusted sources and to address anxiety, depression arising as a result of this public health crisis.
- 2) Social workers are often at forefront of crisis intervention, offering social structure and support through crisis resolution. During this pandemic, social workers are not only responding to the health crisis but also offering skills and resources that will restore individuals' normal patterns of functioning. Social workers are also able to help promote disease prevention and provide individuals guidance through the abundance of COVID-19-related information.
- 3) Organizing communities to ensure that essentials such as food and clean water are available.
- 4) During this pandemic, social workers are not only responding to the health crisis but also offering skills and resources that will restore individual's normal patterns of functioning.
- 5) Social workers can also help by facilitating effective communication between health care professionals and clients to reduce mental frustrations or anxieties.
- 6) This pandemic is generating lots of negativity around the people, at this time, a social worker can help them uplift their mental strength, cope up with it and come out of it by motivating them with proper counselling.
- 7) Social workers in hospital-based settings or community organizations directly dealing with COVID-19 patients may hold the responsibility of calming distressed patients, supporting caregivers through teletherapy.
- 8) Social workers can make the people understand that this is an unusual situation of uncertainty and reassure them that the situation is transient and not going to last long, normal life is going to resume soon.
- 9) Instead of reflecting mercy, Social worker should seek their support in the spirit of winning over the situation together.
- 10) Clear guidance is critical on both an individual and community level. Social workers are essential in offering support to those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but every member of a community has an important role in helping others and to follow the guideline of government recommended for safety precautions.
- 11) Social Workers are working very hard as a telecounselor and trying to make people understand about the disease and to linking the affected people in hospital those are actually needy such as old people and non-ambulatory groups.
- 12) Social worker should prepared with all the information about possible sources of help and support being extended by Central Government, State Governments/ NGOs/ health care systems etc. and inform the community people.
- 13) If somebody is afraid of getting affected, social worker is trying to tell them that the condition is curable, and that most recover from it. Regarding quarantine Centre, social worker should inform community people if anyone is in quarantine there are no such a way to take stress, because it is also one another way to recover.
- 14) Social Worker can make a small group in every locality and can approach those who are highly stable of that area to come forward with proper monitory power.
- 15) Due to Pandemic, in upcoming days job market will be broken, so social worker can prepare the students fraternity according to the present situation and also gives counselling to motivate them because in future many students will face the problem of losing their self-confidence.
- 16) It is too much important to generate awareness among those backward place where people have very little information about this disease. People do not even care about the do's and don'ts which is definitely not their fault. They are basically not well informed that's why they don't follow the rules.
- 17) While helping individuals and families, it is also essential to educate the community at large.
- 18) Social worker must manage equitable distribution of food and basic necessities among the lockdown, 'Charity starts from

home'. We need to collaborate with helping hand and provide them something or anything by that they can feed the needs.

Counselling tips

Build a routine - When we organise our tasks and outline our goals, we should mentally prepare our self for what to expect during the day. Then it's easier to work towards achieving the goals we set out.

Get on the move – Some physical workout routine for the day. We can also opt for yoga or meditation. It's all about doing away with the tension or stress.

Socialise – We should talk to our favourite people or visit them and discuss the issues we have faced or are facing, this will bring in relief.

Talk to a professional - After working on all options available, if we find our self into anxiety and panic, it may be time to talk and discuss further strategy with a mental health expert.

Saying "NO" is okay - One cannot take all responsibilities and tasks. We can politely deny a request from office or if it's a demand from home.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic is a threat to human Society, both for risking human life ensuing economic distress, and for its invisible emotional strain. During the initial stages of COVID-19 in India, many people have started to face psychological problems because of tension, fear and anxiety. Ever since Covid19 invaded this globe, people across the world are in fear. This global health pandemic has touched every human person's life in some way or the other, forcing isolation, uncertainty of life, anger, and hopelessness and along with this economic problem has also increased like anything. For better dealing with these psychosocial and economic issues of different part of the society, government and policy maker should find some intervention where both affected

and non-affected persons' problems should be looked into matter.

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