

HEALTH DIGEST

E-Publication

EXCLUSIVE NEWS

Disease of Inequality: Covid-19 has drilled deep holes in an already unequal world, making life for the underprivileged unlivable

– Richard Mahapatra dated 1-15 August 2020,
Down to Earth Magazine, p.no. 38-39

In this article Richard Mahapatra argues that the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic as the ‘Pandemic of inequality’. He alerts us on its implications on hunger, poverty and inequality throughout the world. He quotes from the lecture of Antonio-Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and notes that “the COVID-19 pandemic has played an important role in highlighting growing inequalities. It exposed the myth that everyone is in the same boat, while we are floating on the same it is clear that some are in the superyacht, while others are clinging to the drifting debris”

According to him, COVID-19 has set off the “sharpest decline in per capita income”. He draws insights and quotes from a variety of



sources including Oxfam, The Non-Profit and World Food Programme (WFP). The former one says that “As many as 12, 000 people could die every day from COVID-linked hunger” and the later denotes that “The frontline in the battle against the coronavirus is shifting from the rich world to the poor world”. The crux of his argument is that the geography of hunger remains the same and, in his words, “Inequality makes any recovery difficult for the already poor and disadvantaged”

He concludes the article by highlighting two specific concerns expressed by the High-level Political Forum on sustainable development-2020. With its argumentative style, this article pleads for a more humane approach in dealing with the asymmetry of the disease burden. >>>> [Read Article](#)

This issue of **Health Round-Up** brings together latest articles that all seem to focus on the bane of an over-medicalised health care system, model and approach and seeks to urge readers to question such a model while considering the healthier alternative. This issue of Health Digest collates a few of the current health affairs taking place across our nation this month (July). These relate to health system management and accountability, ethical considerations in human-first vaccine trials, awareness of the scale of drug usage and addiction in youth, health impact of city traffic on public transport service providers, and the importance of considering ‘social determinants’ that influence and connect population size, availability of natural resources and sustainability.

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IDSP is not what we need?



-Down to Earth, 1-15th August 2020 edition. Pg. 36

Few excerpts from the Interview conducted by the author with T Jacob John, Virologist and former professor at Christian Medical College, Vellore who has closely monitored mysterious disease outbreaks over the decades. He said that the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme

(IDSP) cannot be held responsible for not any of the disease outbreaks and that many times even common diseases do not get identified in time, because of the inexperienced and investigators to carry out research and also lack of accountability with outbreak investigating agencies. Due lack of experience and training they fail to reach a conclusion in investigating outbreaks. Thus, to improve situation getting worsened, insisted on the need of a Public Health system in the country.

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Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities -Report



It is a report collated by Rajive Raturi for NHRC to assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on human rights of persons with disabilities. This report briefly talks about the policies and frameworks issued by various entities like UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, GoI) and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to protect the rights and reduce risk among people with

disabilities in wake of COVID-19 pandemic. A desk review of reports by various organizations like National Centre for Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities (NCPEDP), partners of Collective Action for Basic Rights Foundation etc. was conducted by the author and gaps were identified in implementation of the above guidelines. Based on this review advisories are suggested in detail in this report and will be of importance to organizations and people who work with persons with disabilities. >>>> [Read Article](#)

Who is tracking India's Health? The burden of mysterious ailments mounts in India as its disease surveillance system lies in a shamble

Vibha Varshney - Down to Earth, 1-15th August 2020 edition. Pg:24-32

India has an elaborate arrangement for early detection of disease outbreaks under National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), with a dedicated wing called Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP) for early detection, systematic reporting of emerging or re-emerging infectious diseases and for timely response since 1997. The author of this report found many discrepancies and gaps in the reporting done by IDSP. The weekly alerts sent by IDSP in 2019 were analyzed for this purpose. This report informs that only 16% of the outbreaks followed a proper NCDC's 10-step outbreak handling methodology and it was found there were 49% of districts without any mandatory disease surveillance committees. Out of 43, emerging and re-emerging viral diseases in India, 23 were zoonotic in nature, but IDSP was not accounting zoonotic diseases. This report elaborates on many such discrepancies and gaps with multiple examples.

These gaps lead to lack of information about infectious disease, because of which many healthcare practitioners in several rural pockets of India are fighting a battle against mysterious diseases, blindfolded. So, there is an alarming need to strengthen the Public Health Surveillance systems to provide quick medical support to control the damage caused by outbreaks, but the question remains how? >>>> [Read Article](#)

Voices from the Field'- Community Assessment of Food and Nutrition Security

- HFM- Jan to March 2020 edition

Voices from the Field'- Community Assessment of Food and Nutrition Security is a study undertaken by Voluntary Health Association of India with objectives like assessment of awareness and gaps in utilization of the government programmes for addressing malnutrition by the community and to understand the perspective of frontline workers and healthcare providers on utilization of government programmes addressing malnutrition. The study was conducted in states of Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Assam in the period between December 2019 and January 2020. This study provides insights into the scenario at the grassroots and community's opinion on government's on-going programs for addressing malnutrition.

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Covid-19 Management And Control: The Kerala Story

- A report Dr. Aarathi Ajayakumar, Dr. Ayesha Mehar Shagufta, Dr. Roselet Josephains

It is to review the strategies that Kerala undertook to manage the burden of Covid-19 disease. This report was done as part of an internship in collaboration with SOCHARA and Dr Thelma Narayan guided them in this endeavor.

This report discusses how Kerala has followed an inter-sectoral approach in its efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic in which Kudumbashree, Sannadha Sena, the media, Kerala police along with community members played an important role. It divides the Kerala experience into 4 broad categories, political system, health system, general public and community participation to explain the transdisciplinary and participatory aspects of COVID-19 management.

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FOOD AND NUTRITION ARE CRITICAL TO THE CURRENT AND POST-COVID-19 RESPONSE

<p>IMMUNITY</p> <p>Beating the curve, including decreased spread and reduced severity of infection and hospitalization from COVID-19</p>	<p>FOOD INSECURITY</p> <p>Addressing the tremendous rise in food insecurity from lost jobs and closed schools</p>	<p>CO-MORBID RISKS</p> <p>Rapidly improving metabolic risks like diabetes and cardiovascular disease, from which the great majority of US adults suffer and major risk factors for poor outcomes from COVID-19</p>
<p>SENIORS</p> <p>Addressing hidden hunger, poor access, and nutrient deficiencies which contribute and/or increase to COVID-19 infection and death</p>	<p>DISPARITIES</p> <p>Understanding and tackling the intersections of risk among the most vulnerable</p>	<p>SUPPLY CHAINS</p> <p>Ensuring stable production and supply chains from farm to table of medicines and foodstuffs, while reducing food waste and protecting food system workers</p>
<p>JOB & THE ECONOMY</p> <p>Improving the economic resilience of our farmers, small businesses, and restaurants</p>	<p>PUBLIC OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Developing and disseminating timely accurate information on such of these issues through effective communications and engagement approaches</p>	<p>SCIENCE</p> <p>Accelerating discoveries on each of the issues above</p>

It's time for a national "moonshot" to fix our food system. We must leverage food as medicine, incentives and shift to real food, build a strong public health and food infrastructure, and rapidly expand critical nutrition research. A massive campaign on diet would save lives and change the course of our nation's health forever.

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