

The Impact of Covid-19 on Family Relations

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Abstract: Corona virus disease, commonly known as Covid-19, is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered corona virus. Most people infected with the virus experienced mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying serious medical problems are more likely to develop serious illness leading even to death. The impact of the virus is varied depending on the physical condition of the person, the age, the living conditions, economic conditions and so on. By and large the virus has left its impact on the person and the community in some way or the other.

The article reflects the situation with Marx's theory of alienation that describes the social alienation of people from aspects of their human nature as a consequence of social structure in a society. Marxian analysis of estrangement, in fact, reflects the life during Covid pandemic. It is said Covid-19 is a magnifying glass; it has forced our attention to matters big and small. For some, along with many hard issues Covid-19 has brought to the heightened awareness of the family estrangement. During the pandemic many estranged people have become more conscious of not having family to support them. For some, it has brought the realisation that their well-being is not important to other family members, and compounded the feeling of being unloved and uncared for. Hence, lockdown restrictions have not brought estranged family members closer.

Covid-19 social isolation measures also have had a profound impact on the psychological and mental well-being of individuals across society. There has been an increase in domestic abuse incidents too. The social-distancing and sheltering-in-place measures are essential to minimising the spread of Covid-19; however, they are likely to increase the risk of domestic and inter-family violence. Further, the Covid-19 pandemic is posing unpre-cedented challenges to the mental well-being of healthcare workers.

There are some instances where those with estranged relationships reached out to the person they had a falling-out

with after a life-altering event. The pandemic had been that catalyst. This paper analyses the impact the virus had on the family life and the family relations. On the one hand, it has left a traumatic experience on the members, leading to estrangement, fear and anxiety; on the other, it has positive impact of reconciliation, resulting in bringing back the shattered members together and spending time and life together.

Key words: Corona Virus, Estrangement, Self-isolation, Family Relationships, Social Impact

Introduction

Corona is an infectious virus (Covid-19) causing disease that has spread pandemic in recent days. One of the major symptoms of the disease is difficulty in respiratory functioning; mild to moderate respiratory illness that can be recovered without requiring special treatment. However, it is detrimental to life chances to older people and those with underlying serious medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer leading even to death. The best way to prevent and slow down transmission of this virus is to be well informed about the virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. One has to protect oneself and others too, from infection by using hand sanitizer, washing hands frequently and avoiding touching the face area. The virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, hence, it is important to practice respiratory etiquette and wearing the face mask that would avoid the chances of virus moving out of us or reaching us.

The virus was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. Today, we need to be alert that it has become pandemic, caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome. The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in January 2020 and a pandemic in March 2020. As this paper is being written (December 2020), it is one year since the virus was identified and more than 75 million cases have been confirmed, with more than 1.65 million deaths attributed to Covid-19, and at the same time more than 52 million recovered. It can spread as early as two days before infected persons show symptoms (pre-symptomatic), and from

asymptomatic (no symptoms) individuals. People remain infectious for up to ten days in moderate cases, and two weeks in severe cases.

The Virus and its Management

Common symptoms of Corona infection include fever, cough, fatigue, breathing difficulties, and loss of smell and taste. Complications may include pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome. The incubation period ranges from 5 days to 14 days. Recommended preventive measures include hand washing, covering one's mouth when sneezing or coughing, safe physical distancing (social distance), wearing a face mask in public, disinfecting surfaces, and monitoring and self-isolation for people exposed or symptomatic. Authorities worldwide have responded by implementing travel restrictions, lockdowns and facility closures.

These responses have caused global social and economic disruption and global recession. It has led to the postponement or cancellation of events, widespread supply shortages exacerbated by panic buying, famines affecting hundreds of millions of people, and decreased emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases. Educational institutions have been partially or fully closed. Misinformation has circulated through social media and mass media. There have been incidents of xenophobia and discrimination against Chinese people and against those perceived as being Chinese or as being from areas with high infection rates (Agarwal 2020).

The first case of Covid-19 in India was reported on 30 January 2020. India currently has the largest number of confirmed cases in Asia, and has the second-highest number of confirmed cases in the world after the United States, with more than 8 million reported cases of Covid-19 infection, more than 1.44 lakh deaths and more than 9 million recovered. On March 22, 2020, India observed a 14-hour voluntary public curfew. It was followed by mandatory lockdowns in Covid-19 hotspots and all major cities. Further, on March 24 a nationwide lockdown for 21 days was ordered. On April 14, India extended the nationwide lockdown till 3 May which was followed by two-week extensions with substantial relaxations. From 1 June, the government started "unlocking" (barring 'containment zones') in three unlock phases (Withnal 2020).

Within this short period of time the pandemic has left a severe impact on Indian economy, leading to a negative growth rate for the first time in decades. Corona pandemic has had its wide and varied impacts; on economy, social life, health, polity, and many other areas. One prominent area of impact is assessed on the family relations generally observed as estrangement; from people, from relations, from close relatives and also from one's own self due to seclusion, loneliness and stress.

What is Estrangement?

Estrangement is a situation or a period when I am estranged from someone; a feeling that I do not understand someone or something, or refuse to understand or do not have any connection with. Similarly, family estrangement is losing previously existing relationship between family members, through physical and/or emotional distancing, often to the extent that there is negligible or no communication between the individuals involved for a prolonged period. It may result either from direct interactions between those affected, including traumatic experiences of neglect.

Therefore, family estrangements are marked by broken relationships between members. The fear created by Corona is such that a person with corona positive is rejected in his own house; person is taken away from the family; sometimes never to come back. Any association with the infected person was suggested as detrimental to one's own life. There are alarming incidents that the infected person was totally isolated from the house as if the person is an untouchable; sometimes literally the person was sent out of the house. It was shocking to hear that the (dead) body of the person was rejected for cremation or burial in the graveyard.

The rejected individual, or estrangee, may try a number of strategies to repair the rift. However, if the estrangement is the result of the virus infection it is doubtful that the relationship would survive in any meaningful form. Perhaps, a person with AIDS may not have had such experience. This social rejection or family estrangement is a form of exclusion which undermines four fundamental human needs: the need to belong, the need for control in social situations, the need

to maintain high levels of self-esteem, and the need to have a sense of meaningful existence. Such people suffer adverse psychological consequences such as loneliness, low self-esteem, aggression and depression.

Marxian Alienation and Estrangement

In the Economic and Philosophic manuscripts, Karl Marx discusses four aspects of the alienation of labour, as it takes place in capitalist society. One is alienation from the product of labour; second is alienation from the activity of labour; the third is alienation from one's own specific humanity; and the fourth is alienation from others, from society. Alienation can be thought of as a surrender (of control, power and will) through separation from an essential attribute of the self, and more specifically, separation of an actor or agent from the conditions of meaningful agency.

The first level is that workers experience estrangement from the product of their labour. The commodities that workers produce through their labour are not their own but ultimately belongs to another and is produced for another. Here, alienation is manifested in the lack of ownership. In making the produce as a commodity I not only lose control over the product, I produce something which is hostile to me. The more the workers produce, the more productive power it gives for someone else to own and control. As a result society gets wealthier, but the individuals themselves do not. They do not own or control a greater proportion of the wealth.

The second level is the lack of control over the production activity. This emerges due to the lack of control over the means of production and the work activity that one is involved in. The workers do not have a say in how production is organized and what is produced or how something is produced (Simon 1994: 62). My activity is not self-expression. The only relation that the activity has with me is that it is a way of satisfying my hunger; the means of self-preservation and survival. Humans are reduced to the level of an animal, working only for the purpose of filling a physical need; producing under the compulsion of direct physical need. My life-activity is directed by another; somebody else, the foreman, the engineer, the board of

directors, the market, the government agency and the very machinery which is functioning. Perhaps, very many had this experience during Covid-19 situation. Individuals were not given freedom to decide, especially in the case of migrant labourers; innocents were at the mercy of people who decide for them.

The third level is estrangement from our human nature. Labour is our 'conscious life activity'. Humans are by nature creative conscious beings and that we objectifying ourselves in the products that we produce. By being alienated from our creative conscious life-activity, we alienate ourselves from our human nature to create what we want at will and from the potential that our human potential provides us (Simon 1994: 64). At a deeper level, it is the sense of loss of identity, of our real loss of humanity, alienation from the human 'species-being', meaning dehumanization. We are less able to perceive and appreciate the intrinsic qualities of anything, even including ourselves. This dehumanization of the senses, and of perception and of judgement, is not something accidental to the dehumanization of humans.

The fourth level is that we are alienated from our own human nature which is social. We are alienated from ourselves and in turn from each other. This is also reflected in other areas of our social relations. Once the traditional community is broken down, human beings become essentially potentially useful or threatening objects. One can now have enemies in a new sense. We live in a society in which every other becomes an obstacle to me, a customer, a client, a creditor, a debtor, an employer or employee. With all this experience individual becomes estranged to others and to oneself, lives only for survival.

As a result of all this, my work is not service. Now, I work for money, which I will spend any damn way I feel like. My freedom is largely only in appearance. In reality my life-activity is still given up to a superior who is a superior, even though he is formally and by law my equal (Horowitz 2011).

Karl Marx's theory of alienation describes the social alienation of people from aspects of their human nature as a consequence of living in a society of stratified social classes. The alienation from the self is a consequence of being a mechanistic part

of a social class, the condition of which estranges a person from their humanity. Marxian analysis is on product and in a system of capitalism. In fact, his premises reflect in other phases of life, if we analyse the life during Covid pandemic.

Varied Experiences with Covid

It is said Covid-19 is a magnifying glass; it has forced our attention to matters big and small. In so many ways and with so many subjects, it has forced our focused attention to issues that, in life before Covid we may normally have pushed aside, the content we could postpone and ignore with the day-to-day movement and vigour of activity that life allowed. For some, along with many hard issues Covid-19 has brought to the heightened awareness of the family estrangement. Therefore, moving through the times of Covid-19 has been a complex, multifaceted experience.

Major life matters may test the boundaries of our estrangements. Similarly, Covid-19, like other challenging life matters, brings our reality of family estrangement vividly back into our awareness. Often, those who have estranged themselves from a parent, a sibling, a grandparent, or other family members, can go about their lives aware of the pain of the estrangement. Concrete and abstract life events like aging, illness, etc. can also challenge the boundaries we have set not to have contact with certain people in our lives. The boundary that once set now can be tested if we discover the person is more vulnerable and more exposed. We may have raised many questions as a result of Covid-19. This global pandemic pressure has tested many of our boundaries and caused us to question and revisit them. In addition to pressure testing and challenging boundaries we have established, another facet that Covid-19 may be bringing to our unique experience is - feeling further isolated within an isolation experience.

When we face this experience with the actual isolation that Covid-19 is imposing, it is possible that we are more acutely aware of our loneliness than before. We might feel terribly sad and jealous as we watch or hear about other people and their families making efforts to bridge the physical distance through virtual birthday parties,

committing as a group for playing, etc. Learning what others are doing to stay connected to families that seem to be more functional, close, and connected than mine can feel so terrible. To live with family strain and estrangement is one thing. But to live with it through an unprecedented global pandemic may be harder.

Impact on Individual Self

Covid-19 social isolation measures have had a profound impact on the psychological and mental well-being of individuals across society. Many of the anticipated consequences of isolation measures themselves are key risk factors for mental health issues including suicide, self-harm, substance misuse and domestic and child abuse. Social interaction has been widely interlinked with psychological well-being, social opportunities and employment; hence, restrictions of these measures are suggested to be profoundly distressing to those experiencing strict isolation. Covid-19 is inducing similar effects as the previous epidemics have induced; widespread fear, loneliness and psychological consequences. It has been reported that over 4000 arrests for domestic abuse offences have been made in the United Kingdom (UK) since the 9th of March, equating to roughly 100 a day; highlighting the potentially fatal impact of social isolation policies. The rise in domestic abuse cases are alarming and bring to light concerns surrounding the collateral psychological and mental health impacts of social isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic (Alradhawi 2020).

The implementation of a nationwide lockdown disrupted the day-to-day lives of the general public. The pandemic has caused an unprecedented shrinkage of the country's economy and the closure of businesses across the country. Those in low-paid, self-employed or insecure occupations experienced the greatest impact due to loss of work or the temporary closure of their business. Therefore, there have been reports of heightened feelings of anxiety and depression, with some fearful of post-lockdown anxiety and paranoia; the largest stressor being an overarching feeling of loss (loss of income, routine or social interaction). Other at-risk groups include children and students who have experienced closure of schools and universities causing significant disruption to daily routines, such as exam postponement

and accommodation expulsion. Furthermore, there has been a significant detrimental impact to those suffering from ongoing mental health conditions, due to decreased access to support and resources.

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen the incidence of domestic abuse dramatically increase globally because of reduced options for support, increased exposure to exploitative relationships and disaster-related instability within the household. Consequently, there has been an increase in domestic abuse incidents. The social-distancing and sheltering-in-place measures are essential to minimising the spread of Covid-19; however, they are likely to dramatically increase the risk of domestic and inter-family violence (Alradhawi 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic is posing unprecedented challenges to the mental well-being of healthcare workers due to various factors including increased societal pressure, lack of adequate safety provisions such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and being in an emotionally strenuous environment with numerous patients dying suddenly, alone and scared. The rise in anxiety, depression and self-reported stress are associated with sleep disturbance which catastrophically impacts the well-being of workers even further, especially whilst on ever-longer, more draining, shifts.

With governments encouraging some of the measures of social distancing and self isolation, including encouraging institutions and companies to work remotely where possible, a number of people find working from home or being at home more often than usual. For many, there isn't an end date on when they can expect to physically return to work or be told they can stop social distancing or self-isolating.

Everyone's experience of working or staying at home is different and thus, the impact that this could have on any one person might be different for another. Some people had a support system around them including friends, family and pets, whereas others were more alone. The latter feels very bizarre, as the feelings of loneliness and isolation can be heightened. For individuals who struggle with mental health issues this is a scary situation as they are likely to struggle more during this time and feel more isolated. Thus, people with mental illnesses experienced worsened symptoms from self-

isolation but also, it could spark the onset of mental health issues for individuals who haven't encountered them before (Salt 2020).

For those who are far away from home living and working in another country, this raised concerns for families and friends owing to the uncertainty as to when they will be able to see them again. All of this added to lower morale and might also lead to a physical and emotional sense of withdrawal from the world and people around. Taking care of the mental health is of extreme importance and is especially imperative during the Covid-19 outbreak. There are many other avenues in which the corona virus pandemic can impact mental health such as working from home, job loss and unemployment stress.

Impact on Societal Life

The Covid-19 changes the human activity and we are not sure whether the normal life would be the same as it was before corona; or when will the world be overpowered by the deadly virus (Bárcena et al. 2009). After the end of the Corona virus crisis and when life returns to normal, all of us may need skin therapy and see a dermatologist because of the widespread use of disinfectants and chemical conditioners, because now we have to constantly disinfect most devices to prevent infection with the virus. Increasing disinfection of tools such as handles, elevator buttons, and cell phones have made people obsessed with cleanliness. Frequent washing of hands, quick washing of clothes after going out once and taking a shower every day with hot water, has become a daily habit. The growing importance of health in society has led many stores to place disinfectants at the entrances of shops to relieve customers' worries, so that people can use them when entering and leaving, and their concerns about the possibility of contamination reduce viruses.

Social experts believe that the need for continued health care will have a profound effect on human lifestyles, and that as long as the corona-virus threatens, people will become so accustomed to health issues that they will no longer be able to reduce their use of hygiene products (Chen et al., 2020).

There is no doubt that quarantine and distance from society can have many negative effects, and not attending school for long

periods reduces students' ability to learn. The closure of companies, factories, and department stores have serious economic consequences, especially for employees and workers who do not have job insurance and a fixed salary and it is difficult for them to stay at home economically.

On the other hand, following the escalation of the Corona epidemic, travel and tourism restrictions, and the closure of many passenger companies, the economies of many countries are becoming increasingly vulnerable, and people working and investing in this area are facing difficult challenges. The prevalence of virus causes people to reconsider many aspects of life; special measures in the field of transportation and shopping and livestock sales will be applied to prevent the spread of viruses and infectious diseases (Drexler et al., 2010).

The corona crisis has dealt with the fact that the lives and security could be seriously endangered on earth (Gralinski & Menachery 2020). These conditions, which endanger the security of human beings in the world, do not have the slightest role and value in ensuring the health and mental security of human beings, and human beings feel helpless against this disease.

The consequences of corona in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres and, consequently, its psychological state will be widespread (Imai et al., 2020). Various countries around the world have incurred huge economic costs to deal with the crisis, and according to forecasts, the world will face an economic recession in the post-corona-virus era; although, the economic capabilities of different countries are different.

The effects and consequences of the Covid-19 virus on lifestyle including cultural, economic, political, educational, environmental, psychological and religious, can be referred to cultural changes in society. There is the transition from individual fear to collective fear; the transition from individual concern to collective concern; the transition from a materialist to a spiritualist attitude; the transition from extreme extremism to humiliation and the transition from a sense of security to a sense of insecurity. The world is getting closer to the pain and suffering caused by the outbreak of the corona-virus, witnessed in the simultaneous efforts by countries to detect the

corona-virus vaccine; in fact, the sense of revival of the human conscience in the form of a common human spirit (Peiris et al., 2003).

The Corona virus is changing the lives of individuals and the coexistence of many. Social distance is regarded as the highest civic duty. Solidarity is demanded of the fit and young in order to protect the weak and elderly. In fact, the pandemic is not just a challenge for the natural sciences; it affects all of society. The Covid-19 pandemic has had far-reaching consequences beyond the spread of the disease itself and efforts to quarantine it, including political, cultural, and social implications.

The world is undergoing a process that some have called "covidisation", or the unravelling of the manifold, far-reaching medical, economic, and social impacts of a global health emergency. There is no dearth of analyses of the many health and economic dimensions of this first massive global civil emergency of the 21st century. There are two perspectives: one is that of a representative patient; and second, that of a medical doctor. The aim is to portray the impact of Covid-19 on patients and healthcare providers - both of whom are components of a wider community that is reeling under the weight of an unprecedented health crisis that has taken a massive toll on lives and livelihoods across the globe.

Economic effects

In addition to the unbearable suffering and loss of life another negative dimension is that the virus has affected the world economy and damaged the global market share. Business owners around the world are feeling the effects of these behavioural changes and economists predict that all of this could lead to economic losses of about hundreds of billions of dollars. The marginalized neighbourhoods and the center of the poorer economic strata of cities are more prone to infection due to lower health, more need to work outside and not being able to stay at home, lack of access to private cars, etc. This leads to the phenomena of highlight the ominous phenomenon of poverty and highlights the ominous phenomenon of unemployment and damage to small and unstable jobs, daily wages, and seasonal (Amiri et al. 2020).

Corona seems to be the real phenomenon of globalization (Yin & Wunderink 2018). What is certain is that living in the world and the post-corona space requires a rethinking of the biological and intellectual system. This should be considered an opportunity to make great changes in future life. At the same time, it can be a factor of social solidarity and empathy, cooperation, morality and rationality. There is no other way but peaceful interaction and coexistence with one's fellow man and the environment. Thus, along with all the negative consequences, corona can strengthen world peace and unity and be the beginning of a peaceful and virtuous lifestyle (Zhao et al., 2020).

If corona continues to spread around the world, the poorer the population are more likely to be infected with the coronavirus. In low-income areas, people are forced to leave their homes due to low financial means and seek to provide for themselves and their families. As economic constraints continue to mount in the face of the corona, economic poverty may spread, and families today, who are financially mediocre, may be added to the weaker economic classes in their community.

Stress, Fear and Worry

Fears about Covid-19 can take an emotional toll, especially if an individual is already living with an anxiety disorder. It's a frightening time. We are in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, with many places are partially shut down, others struggling to reopen safely. Some of us are in areas where the Corona virus infection rates are getting worse. Others are invigorating for what may come next. And we are watching the headlines and wondering, "When is this going to end?"

For many, the uncertainty surrounding Corona virus is the hardest thing to handle. We still don't know exactly how we'll be impacted, how long this will last, or how bad things might get. And that makes it all too easy to catastrophize and spiral out into overwhelming dread and panic (Help-guide 2020).

Heightened fears and the stress of social distancing and isolation may negatively impact the health of millions who are already feeling burdened by the effects of the pandemic. And health experts believe that such impacts might even leave certain people more

susceptible to infection by the Corona virus. Research in the emerging field of social genomics has found that chronic social isolation and loneliness can alter gene activity in ways that inhibit an individual's antiviral response while increasing their risk of diseases such as arteriosclerosis, cancer, and dementia over the long term (Ibid).

Research by Steve Cole, Professor of medicine and bio-behavioral sciences at the University of California, examines how psychological experiences - including prolonged social isolation, a lifetime of poverty, and constant fear for one's safety - can influence our immune systems and, in turn, our health. (Cole has examined the immune-response genes of socially isolated and chronically lonely people, exploring why they got sick and died faster when they contracted HIV, the virus that causes AIDS). The research found that the fight-or-flight stress response is highly activated among chronically lonely people.

Sustained fear and insecurity also trigger the fight-or-flight stress response. The body doesn't care what we are afraid of - fear of the virus or fear of rejection by others, as is common in lonely people. Either type of fear will still stimulate our inflammation system, suppress our interferon system, and mess with a wide range of other physiologic systems we need to keep us healthy (Help-guide 2020).

Estrangement from the Close Relatives

Stigma of broken family relationships is compounded by lockdown. Lockdown restrictions have not brought estranged family members closer together, and recent focus on the importance of family support has made dealing with the pandemic even more difficult for those with challenging family situations. A study at the University of Cambridge reports, over half of the respondents felt more isolated now than they had before lockdown. During the pandemic many estranged people have become more conscious of not having family to support them. For some, it has brought the realisation that their well-being is not important to other family members, and compounded the feeling of being unloved and uncared for (Bland et al. 2020).

There is a lot of stigma around estrangement, and people in this situation have experienced it in a heightened way during lockdown.

Many have become more aware that they have smaller support networks than others. The importance of family relationships has been highlighted repeatedly throughout lockdown in television advertising, news headlines and social media. But for those who were already estranged from family, the pandemic and the messages surrounding it have compounded feelings of stigma and social isolation. Since lockdown began there has been a lot of talk about what family members should be doing to support each other at this time of crisis. People have been encouraged to keep in touch with relatives through communication network. But this has really compounded feelings of isolation for those who don't have close family relationships (Ibid).

The assumption that family members will be a source of support during the Covid-19 crisis is not always the case. A few families have no contact with an estranged family member, and very little has changed for them during the pandemic. Hence, we see different people are being affected differently by the lockdown.

Many have lived rejection from own people; and from the society. Migrant labourers returning to work allege 'inhuman treatment' by State officials. Driven by desperation, thousands of migrants have been returning to their home districts, crossing inter-State highways, fleeing not only the virus but also poverty, hunger and death. Packing their pots, pans and blankets into rucksacks, they walk in groups or alone. While people fear the disease these migrant labourers fear poverty and hunger more than corona. More than corona, the pain is of rejection by own government. Stories of pain have come in from quarantine centres, too. The migrants complained about lack of amenities and worm-infested food (Bland et al. 2020).

Researchers have investigated deeper into the roots of rejection and found evidence that the pain of being excluded is not so different from the pain of physical injury. Rejection also has serious implications for an individual's psychological state and for society in general. Social rejection can influence emotion, cognition and even physical health. Ostracized people sometimes become aggressive and can turn to violence. Humans have a fundamental need to belong. Just as we have needs for food and water, we also have needs for

positive and lasting relationships. This need is deeply rooted in our evolutionary history and has all sorts of consequences for modern psychological processes (Weir 2012).

Social rejection increases anger, anxiety, depression, jealousy and sadness. It reduces performance on difficult intellectual tasks, and can also contribute to aggression and poor impulse control (De Wall and Brad 2011). Physically, rejection takes a toll. People who routinely feel excluded have poorer sleep quality, and their immune systems don't function as those of people with strong social connections. People often respond to rejection by seeking inclusion elsewhere. Excluded people actually become more sensitive to potential signs of connection, and they tailor their behaviour accordingly. Yet others may respond to rejection with anger and lashing out. If someone's primary concern is to reassert a sense of control, he or she may become aggressive as a way to force others to pay attention. When people act aggressively, they are even less likely to gain social acceptance (Ibid).

Some experiences that are common to those who have fallen ill of the disease are (Bhattacharya 2020):

- o Sense of isolation and despondency
- o Social ostracism
- o Perceived neglect by healthcare workers due to fear of getting infected
- o Overload on doctors and other healthcare professionals, who are at a very high risk
- o Intensification of physical distress: primary disease and Covid-19.
- o Challenges in the diagnosis, quarantine and treatment of suspected or confirmed cases
- o High burden on the functioning of the existing medical system
- o Patients with other disease and health problems are getting neglected
- o Increased need for medical supplies
- o Domino effect on health, healthcare and nutrition - The entire health care system works as a single entity; hence, if one component falls, all the others fall

Common socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 are (Bhattacharya 2020):

- o Financial distress.
- o Social distancing and self-isolation; Travel restrictions.
- o Reduced workforce across all economic sectors; Job loss.
- o School closure; Disruption of normal life of children; Postponement of exams.
- o Decreased demand for commodities and manufactured products.
- o Increased demand in food sector; Panic-buying and stock-piling of food products.
- o Infodemic (excessive amount of information): spread of panic and fear through social media
- o Xenophobia against specific ethnic/geographic groups
- o “Covidization” of academic research: undermining other areas of research and scholarship.
- o Poor people, homeless people, refugees, migrants are disproportionately affected by the health and economic impacts of Covid.
- o Cancellation or postponement of large-scale sports and tournaments.
- o Avoiding the national and international travelling and cancellation of services.
- o Disruption of celebration of cultural, religious and festive events; Closure of the hotels, restaurants and religious places.
- o Closure of places for entertainment such as movie and play theatres, sports clubs, gymnasiums, swimming pools, and so on.
- o Slowing of the manufacturing of essential goods; Disrupt the supply chain of products.
- o Losses in national and international business; Poor cash flow in the market; Significant slowing down in the revenue growth.

Psychological impact

- o Acute panic attacks
- o Significant positive statistical correlation between self-reported social media use and the spread of panic related to Covid-19

- o Stress, fear and anxiety during physical distancing seen in children and adults
- o Obsessive behaviours
- o Hoarding
- o Paranoia
- o Depression
- o Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the long run.

Therefore, Covid-19 has rapidly affected our day to day life, businesses, disrupted the world trade and movements. This virus creates significant knock-on effects on the daily life of citizens, as well as about the global economy.

Covid 19 and Reconciliation

After years of fighting, lockdown has brought my estranged father back into my life. Although I'll never forgive him for the years of neglect, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of accepting him for who he is, even if it is not who I want him to be (Jasmine 2020). A minority in a survey who were estranged from family said that they actually felt more connected during lockdown. They hoped this might help others understand their situation better (Bland et al. 2020).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, headlines have given us some strong messages about family and its place and purpose in our lives. As a global pandemic takes hold, the notion of who is there to look out for us and care for us becomes more acute. It is these family ties become very important and significant. The closure of schools, universities, and other institutions to prevent the spread of virus, in many cases, has caused people to spend a lot of time at home, which can lead people to acquire skills and hobbies such as reading, painting, music, sewing, cooking, entertain and so on, and discover a lot of hidden talents.

As our lives turned upside down in the days of the lockdown, the media have suggested that family members rushed to share time together before social distancing measures separated them. Although family relationships are often assumed to be life-long, loving and supportive, and shelter from a global pandemic, in the context of

Covid these are challenging, distant and inactive, and can make a pandemic more difficult. Some people might have no contact with their estranged family member, whereas others have minimal or limited contact.

A study in this regard reported that during the pandemic, 55 percent felt more alone and less connected 33 percent reported no impact on their feelings of loneliness and 12 percent felt less alone and more connected. Those who felt more alone described feeling a heightened sense of isolation when they heard others talk about their families, how much they missed them and how frequently they were keeping in contact (Bland et al. 2020). 45 percent agreed that the Covid-19 pandemic changed feelings of stigma that is felt around family estrangement. Many described how the focus on family during the Covid-19 pandemic on television, social media and in advertising, led to feelings of being different. In terms of contact with estranged family members, most respondents (78%) had maintained that the same amount of contact or non-contact with their estranged family member/s during the Covid-19 pandemic, 16 percent had experienced an increase in contact and the rest had experienced less contact (Ibid).

Impact of Social Isolation on Family Relations

Some of the opinions expressed by people are summarised below:

- 1 Less social connections:** Many described feeling more alone and more aware that they had fewer social connections and opportunities for social interaction than other people. Not being able to see friends also contributed to feeling alone.
- 2 Sense of loneliness:** people described feeling a heightened sense of loneliness when they heard others talk about their families, how much they missed them and how frequently they were keeping in contact. The focus in the media on families connecting and supporting each other also added to these feelings, with some respondents comparing this to the sense of isolation they felt.
- 3 A feeling of no one cares:** Some felt more isolated because the crisis had emphasised to them that their family members did not want a relationship, with some feeling that their family did not care how they were faring. When adult children don't contact you during a pandemic, it certainly feels as if they don't care whether one is alive or dead.

4 More time to think: For others, feelings of social isolation had increased because the crisis had prompted older feelings about estrangement to re-emerge. Being in lockdown meant that they had more time to think about their estrangement and family relationships; reliving the experiences increased the feeling of estrangement.

5 Worry about family: Some felt more isolated during the crisis because they were worried about their estranged family member(s) but were not able to find out how they were.

6 Lacking support: Some also described feeling more isolated during the crisis because they were aware that they had less practical support than others, and that they would have no one to help them should they become ill.

7 Expectations were stronger: Some described that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the expectations and assumptions about families were stronger than ever, and that they felt more judged.

8 Feeling of Shame: Some described that they had experienced feelings of shame and embarrassment about their estrangement during the Covid-19 pandemic.

9 Pressure to Reconcile: Others described the feeling that the Covid-19 pandemic brought with it a pressure to reconcile with estranged family members.

Distancing lead to think about family relations; during the pandemic, people had thought about their estranged family member(s) differently.

- 1 The crisis had led them to reflect on their estrangement, and confirmed that this was the best way forward for the relationship.
- 2 The Covid-19 pandemic led them to think about reconciliation.
- 3 Made contact with their estranged family member/s.
- 4 Wanted reconciliation with their estranged family member/s.
- 5 The Covid-19 pandemic had led people to wonder what would happen if estranged family member die, or they themselves were to die.
- 6 Worrying about their estranged family member and being concerned about them, wondering how they were doing and if they were ok.

Having less human interaction has been the biggest change many have had to grow accustomed to amid the Covid-19 pandemic. There are some instances where those with estranged relationships might reached out to the person they had a difference of opinion. The pandemic had been that catalyst. Re-connecting after years of estrangement can be both a traumatic experience for both parties, particularly to the one that receives the message. The pandemic helped some identify the people they want to keep in their lives (Lopez-Martinez 2020).

It tells us a lot about our relationships and the people that are precious to us. Before, life was busy and stressful and there was so little attention paid to those quiet times and the enjoyment of spending time with the people closest to us. This is really hitting home to think, Who are the people that are really precious to us.

In some cases, pandemic has succeeded in bringing the estranged family members together. They reconciled because of the crisis. For these individuals, the pandemic brought about renewed contact with a relative after years, and sometimes decades, of estrangement. A daughter whose rift was caused by bitter arguments; unable to avoid arguments with her father in particular, she cut him off and stopped visiting. Her concern about her parents prodded her to reach out when the crisis began. She called them and told them that she was worried about them. She just said to her dad: ‘Let’s help each other now; and he agreed (Pillemer 2020).

Siblings, too, have been pulled back into family networks. A brother who was cut off by the family after traumatic events two decades ago; was included on the family email round-robin about coping with the pandemic and, joined in. Similarly, two sisters who had grown apart since leaving the parental home called one another and compared their experiences—and made plans to get together. There is another factor that promotes the urge to reconcile during this crisis. When people perceive the time horizon as short, they place a higher value on interpersonal relationships, including those with family members. Therefore, an unexpected result of the pandemic can be families coming together who have suffered through painful rifts.

Conclusion

Corona pandemic has had its wide and varied impacts; on economy, on health, on polity, and many other areas. However, on sociological point of view, its impact on family and the relations within its structure is prominent. A very significant factor here is estrangement that is observed from familiar people, close relatives and other social connections. At psychological level, people have reported estrangement from one’s own self due to isolation, seclusion and loneliness. A gentleman known to me had his good habit of visiting his close relatives frequently, especially those in their old age. The pandemic restrictions had closed him all doors. A few attempts on his side were discouraged denying him the entry to houses. He regrets to feel that he has become an untouchable to many for no reason that he would understand. Restrictions on travel and public functions have further isolated families. This has reflected in two trends; one, family members have had enough time to spend together and strengthened the family bond; secondly, in contrast, communication between families has weakened and hostile attitude within the family is expressed through domestic violence and exploitation.

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