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Garbage: The dreaded Covid spreader



Sanaaz Fathima Khan

Prashantinagar, Bengaluru, October 4, 2021
Since the beginning of the pandemic the local civic bodies Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Pa-

like (BBMP) have failed to implement proper door to door garbage collection which has resulted in the residents disposing garbage at open sites. This garbage not only contains day to day waste but also the contaminated waste by Covid infected patients. The

residents of Prashantinagar have registered several complaints through BBMP Sahaya application and have tried contacting the BBMP office directly, but it resulted in no response. With the approach of elections there was some swift action taken such as daily door to door collection of waste, segregation of waste etc but post it, everything went back to how it was. The response from the (BBMP) has hence had a laid-back effect and mounted to a more severe threat. The rag pickers scavenge through the waste and become super spreaders amongst their communities due to lack of awareness

with regard to the safety precautions that have to be taken. The stray animals drag the waste from the dumped sites into the lanes and leave it lying in front of the residents' houses. Cleaning of dumped waste like this becomes a tedious and risky task even when the locals try to help. Therefore, planning and putting into action the proper means of waste disposal by the BBMP can contribute to Swachh Bharath Mission as well as help curb the spread of SARS Covid-19. Anand a resident stated "This is utter nonsense, the stench coming from all that waste being dumped there is extremely unhygienic."

Covid-19 casts a shadow over paddy farmers

Paddy farmers all over the country are struggling

Arathy MS

Due to the effect of Covid-19 the paddy farmers in Kerala are struggling with the lockdown and other restrictions. The cultivation and trading have come to a halt and the farmers are clueless on where they will sell their produce. Majority of the harvesting machines across the region have stopped working which has made a bad dent in the production. The inability of the farmers in arranging oil and other related components due to the lockdown



and other restrictions has made machines malfunction. Farmers are depending on the state government to sell their produce during the lockdown. Some of the farmers are having issues with the price of produce such as rice, and they raised their problems towards the government. The authori-

ties gave them a guarantee that they will take action pertaining to the problem. Another important issue faced by the farmers is the shortage of labour force in the villages and other cultivating areas. These farmers have permission to harvest during the lockdown, but there's no labor force avail-

able Furthermore, they worry about how to store the harvested produce during this extended period. In some places the crops have been abandoned, while in others places, the harvest is being collected more than a month later. The storage of these supplies is severely affected, especially at the beginning of lockdown when transport had been restricted. Markets eventually drained out of their supplies. Another issue that is a cause of concern is the availability and access to fertilizers and pesticides for the next coming seasons.



Businesses and educational institutes relieved post Covid

Leuwellyvn Rozario

Shivajinagar, Bangalore, There is a certain sense of relief and relaxation amongst the locals of Shivajinagar post second wave of Covid. Locals are venturing out in order to explore their favourite places that were shut down due the pandemic.

Apart from this, educational institutions and other businesses are opening up as well. Authorities stated that important sectors of the economy will likely be resuming, ranging from small scale to the big scale corporates. Reopening of educational institutions will likely resume after the Dussehra celebrations.

The corporate leaders have confirmed that 62% of the business firms were confident on getting back. With the lowering of rigid restrictions, that were implemented during the pandemic the daily wage workers have gotten back to earning their daily bread.

EDITORIAL

Nature's healing times

Kala Reddy Pujari

As much as everyone has struggled in these Covid times, we should all acknowledge the healthy changes they have brought with them. If we take a minute to realize the problems we have faced for decades, we would be able to connect these issues to our planet Earth. It needs our urgent attention. With the different issues at hand, for example, overpopulation, pollution and the current climate crisis, the planet has been suffocating. Man has been indifferent to the



pain he has been inflicting to his surroundings. He is the only culprit, and the Earth has been patient enough to give him several chances.

For decades, man has been responsible for taking of the lives of other living creatures. We have exhausted the Earth's resources and

polluted the atmosphere to a great extent. Unfortunately, man has turned a blind eye to all his actions and their consequences.

The pandemic has affected only the human race, sparing every other life form. The virus is coincidentally built to only affect us humans. Could this be nature's

way of getting back at us? Hence making us question the decision that we make.

It has almost been two years into the Covid era, and technically this has been like a vacation for the nature. There have been automatic changes to the amount of pollution we create with the use plastic, chlorofluorocarbons etc. These are good times that will help nature to heal and rest. Let's hope that it rejuvenates completely. When it does, let's embrace it. We've had enough viruses to warn us about the danger Earth is in.

(Photo Courtesy: Jack Joy)

Ganga- A bed for the dead

Sheba Ann Santhosh

The recent second wave has come as a devastating situation for the people of India, and it has brought about many issues in the system. One of the main issues that we face is the lack of proper cremation of the dead. There have been reports of corpses floating in the river Ganga and have washed up in the banks of the river. The people living close to the area in the Northern state of Uttar Pradesh fear that there are virus infected bodies. The bodies are cremated and buried at the banks of the river with no proper care or concern for the environment. This carelessness could lead to even more catastrophic health related diseases to which we could never find a cure. The river is a source of drink-

ing water and a home to many marine lives, and this reckless action of the citizens could lead to a large downfall in the balance of life and ecology. The news of Uttar Pradesh first came to light on May 10, when 71 corpses were washed up on the riverbank in Bihar's Causa village.

Ganga is said to be one of the holy rivers of India and it is given a lot of respect but the downside to this is the absurdity of the people of India who act without any fear or understanding to the consequences of their actions. Ganga has become the last resting place for dead bodies. It has been mistreated and has lost its cleanliness. It is dangerous for the people now.

As the monsoon has struck the nation and the water levels of Ganga has risen,

the cemeterial grounds have been affected and the bodies of the deceased that were buried have come out into the open. There are many bodies that have been left unattended in Payara, Uttar Pradesh. This is a major crisis for the officials of India, and they must take immediate action on the issue. The supreme court said in an observation that this is a serious problem, while hearing a petition on framing of policies to protect the rights of the dead. The two-member bench however directed the petitioner to approach the NHRC which has already issued some directions in this regard. This is not only an issue of the present but also might be an issue for the future. The health of an entire community has been put into jeopardy and this

issue must be resolved as soon as possible.

This is a crisis not only for the sterility of our nation but also for the health of the people living in that area. The government is yet to act and though there have been complaints about the government not taking any effective action, there can be a few solutions to the problem and that is to reduce the fees taken to bury a body so that everyone can afford a proper cremation, proper recognition of the problem and a proper plan in giving spaces for the cremation of the bodies. A proper cleaning of the riverbanks and vacating the bodies to a different area is also another solution. The issue must be dealt with effectively to find the best ways to change this crisis.

Staying relevant during Covid

Sheba Ann Santhosh

Covid has been a tough time for all. It has brought many changes and has negatively impacted the lives of many. During the pandemic there are people who managed to stay relevant and work towards their dreams and aspirations.

22 year old Rini Johnson, a resident of T-Dasrahalli is one such exception who



has been running her business "The Johnsons" where she sells handmade products, mainly hair accessories like scrunchies, hair-clips, etc. She started the business in 2017 and has been running it successfully. When the pandemic hit, she admits that there were problems with sales however she was able to overcome it by continuing her business through on-

line platforms. Rini Johnson worked and expanded her business even during the hard times and it was a stepping stone to design and market her products.

She says that she got more free time to experiment and learn new ways of running the business. "Covid was a realization to learn new ways to ship the products and keep my dream alive."

A platform for senior citizens to reduce mental stress

Jack Joy

Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant mental health impact on senior citizens. Due to which the government of Kerala is introducing a new platform for the senior citizens to reduce the isolation occurring due to the Covid pandemic.

The mental status of these individuals are deteriorating due to the lack of interaction with their children and grandchildren. People were concerned about the emotional impact of losing their loved ones. Many people struggled to deal with their sadness and solitude.

According to Medical News Today, 38 percent of participants said they were exhausted or lacking energy, 36 percent said they were having sleep problems, and 25 percent said they were feeling sad, depressed, or hopeless. More than 35 percent of senior citizens are suffering from psychological defects. As this is a major issue, the health department of Kerala is organizing and forming a team of senior citizens across the state.

This team of senior citizens will be helping the others in order to decrease the feeling of being isolated by setting up a proper community space. Activities such as meditation, breathing exercises, taking up a new hobby etc will be included.

This platform is formulated for the people of age groups sixty years and above. In addition to this the platform will also provide counselling sessions to all the senior citizens who are facing depression and anxiety issues.

In Kerala almost 98% of senior citizens are vaccinated due to which the government can function seamlessly.

Super heroes in disguise

Arathy MS

COVID-19 has spread all over the country, and we faced major lockdowns. Till date, medical workers, scientists, health department officers and all other covid related members are working very hard to provide good facilities and health-care to us. Through this tough period our country has undergone very serious issues like rising rate of infected patients, lack of hospitals, financial crisis etc. Following is an interview with one such hero

Mr. Rajesh- Health Inspector

How has covid 19 affected your locality, and what was people's reaction?

It was a devastating experience and an unforgettable. Everybody across the world was terrified at that time. Our locality includes small villages also, so it was a task to give them

proper awareness. Another issue was an increase in the number patients, who were affected by the virus in a very short time period. There was also a time when things were out of control, but with the help and cooperation, we were able to bring it under control.

Like you said, so many people were affected at the same time. How did you overcome that situation?

The first wave of Covid 19 spread very fast. The people were also in fear due to the high positivity rate. At that point the only thing we could do was provide proper awareness and some vitamin tablets as well as the treatment. We concentrated in the awareness part more, because it is the only way to prevent the virus. That strategy helped us to overcome this situation very much. Also, the enquiry was very strict about the covid restrictions. The most difficult job was to control

the mob. But after some time, people realized the seriousness and cooperated with us. It helped us a lot.

How did you arrange the quarantine spaces for the patients, who didn't have any facilities at home?

In the beginning 58% of patients preferred some other places for quarantine, in order to save their family members from the infection. At that time the TPR (Test Positivity Rate) was increasing tremendously, and we were in a shortage of accommodations. We used every government hospital, schools and other government places to accommodate as many people as possible. Government also allowed more places afterwards and it made the situation easier.

Do you think the strategies adopted to prevent Covid is effective in our state? If yes, how?

Kerala model was very ef-

fective during first wave, our government coordinated everything very well. Isolation, testing, quarantine and everything was clear. We did our best and it worked, everything was under control, and we were able to bring the rate of affected patients down. During second wave the situations changed a little bit, but we all tried our best to bring things together.

Do you have any special incidents that happened during that time to share with us?

The first wave was always an unforgettable experience. So many bad and good incidents happened at that time, but I always want to stick with good memories. So, I want to share a good one. At the time of the second wave, a two-month-old baby tested positive, and the condition was severe. The baby was admitted in a private hospital in our locality and stopped responding to all the treatments

and medicines. We were helpless and we couldn't do anything more. The next day, miraculously the baby started to get back to normal. As a health inspector, I witnessed so many incidents like this, but this one was different. I got an opportunity to safely return the baby back to its parents. I won't forget those tears of happiness in their eyes, which is priceless.

Do you have any message you would like to share to the people as a health inspector?

The first and most important thing is about vaccination. Get vaccinated as soon as it's your turn and follow local guidance on the same. Protect yourself and the people around you. Make sure your mask covers you nose, mouth and chin. Outdoor gatherings are safer than indoors ones as you will have more space and air. Clean your hands regularly and stay safe.

The hands that save are always at risk

Sanaaz Fathima Khan

“A hero is someone who has dedicated their life to a cause greater than themselves.”

The pandemic due to Covid-19 has had a significant impact worldwide. The impact can be seen through high infection and death rates, along with financial difficulties that are being faced by many individuals. This in turn leads to a significant amount of stress, as the fear of uncertainty lingers around. Among these are the healthcare workers who are constantly facing challenges of treating patients who have been infected with

Covid-19, planning out various long-term and short-term strategies to contain and reduce the spread of this virus. While doing so, the health workers must also successfully treat non-Covid-19 patients and carry out other personal responsibilities such as taking care of their families as well as themselves. Therefore, the psychological, as well as overall wellness of health care workers, has brought itself to attention. The research in this field shows high rates of psychological stress, burnout, loss of appetite, sleep paralysis, hypertension, hallucinations and sleep, etc.

The healthcare workers get physically and emotion-

ally exhausted, which can lead to errors, low productivity, lack of empathy in their treatment. Apart from that it also leads to higher rates of turnover and absenteeism. It is extremely necessary and important for healthcare workers to effectively cope up with stress as it directly affects their families as well as their patients. Before this pandemic, there was a wide range of research that had established the nature of stressors in the field of healthcare such as insurance and billing issues; patients' dissatisfaction; balancing of work-life, etc.

Healthcare workers must continue to balance out obstacles to their health and

wellness while facing these challenges of a pandemic. The stress, psychological morbidities, sleeplessness, trauma from the impact of Covid-19 on healthcare workers keep evolving day by day alongside the virus. The healthcare workers who are known for their emotional resilience have to now combat themselves from mental and physical hardships. Therefore, individual and organizational strategies aimed at the healthcare worker's overall wellness are very important. Few such plans that can contribute to this are good quality accessible Personal Protective Equipment (PPE suits) for the healthcare workers. Opti-

mize wellness for them in the areas of; mindfulness, sleep quality, nutrition and exercise. In addition, providing immediate access to mental health resources, developing support groups to reduce the feeling of isolation, etc. Furthermore, short-term and long-term plans to recognize the emotional and physical toll that takes on the health workers can also be implemented.

In conclusion, there must be a continuity in providing quality care and support to the healthcare workforce who are also human beings that must be encouraged to take care of themselves and avoid any sort of negligence which can put them at risk.

Kerala immigrants affected by the pandemic

Irin P.P

October 4, Thrissur
Kerala immigrants faced a lot of problems due to Covid-19. Most of the people lost their jobs and had to come back to their home

land. Victims of this problem were found in the village of Nadavaramba.

People are suffering at their job places as they have more working hours than usual and at the same time, they don't get paid for the work

they do. These workers are mentally disturbed as they are the sole bread winners. Being tested Covid positive was another problem, as the whole procedure of quarantine brought a full stop to their daily income. Talking

to Mr. Poulouse, an immigrant who worked in Dubai as a shopkeeper, told that he lost his job. He is now into agriculture back in his hometown to meet his daily needs. He said "Life got so difficult during Covid 19

and its very heart-breaking that we lost our jobs after dedicating ourselves for many years. Anyways life should go on".situation and become happy one day for sure. These too shall pass."

The rise of India's pharmaceutical industry during Covid-19

Mansi Saha

Indian biotechnology industry comprises biopharmaceuticals, bio-services, bio-agriculture, bio-industry, and bioinformatics. According to the Indian economic survey 2021, the domestic pharma market is expected to grow three times in the next decade, whereas India's domestic pharmaceutical market is estimated at US\$ 42 billion in 2021 and likely to reach US\$ 65 billion by 2024.

With a large pool of brilliant scientists and engineers, India is now known for its huge production capacity generic drugs provider with the third rank in terms of pharmaceutical production by volume glob-

ally. During the pandemic, the Indian pharmaceutical sector supplies over 50% of the global demand for various vaccines. As per the survey 2021, India has supplied a total of 586.4 lakh COVID-19 vaccines, comprising grants (81.3 lakh), commercial exports (339.7 lakh), and exports under the



COVAX platform (165.5 lakh), to 71 countries. India has a huge contribution towards the success of Covid responses and vaccination drives of several countries. From a geopolitics standpoint, vaccine diplomacy has generated strong goodwill and has strengthened India's for-

eign relations, which can pave the way for economic growth for the country. Covid experience has changed the perception of advisors of countries who have realized that the spread of infectious diseases is a matter of national security.

India has a huge advantage in terms of existing pharmaceutical production capacity and supply of low-cost labour. Indian companies are aware of these opportunities and multiple business deals like one's by Sun Pharmaceuticals with AstraZeneca. Lupin Limited's announcement of entering the digital health care space in India indicate a rising trend of companies expanding their services.

Psychological effects of Covid -19 on young adults

Ashmita Adhikari

The downfall of the economy due to Covid-19 has taken a huge toll on the mental health of the people all around the globe. People that were already diagnosed with various mental illnesses have yet another barrier in front of them due to the pandemic. In the US, about 4 out of 10 people have been reported with anxiety and depression. There was a huge rise in the number of people that have been victims of insomnia, increased appetite and consumption of alcohol. There has also been increased reports of people suffering from chronic diseases due to high levels of stress and anxiety caused due to the coronavirus.

The Covid norms, particularly home quarantine led to individuals feeling isolated, which directly led to deterioration of their mental health. The widespread of Covid also triggered the state of loneliness in a lot of individuals that is said to affect their lifespan and

physical health.

There has been an increase in the number of reports of young adults experiencing suicidal thoughts



and causing self-harm. The consequences of the pandemic like the shutting down of schools and colleges, work, loss of jobs and low income is a major contributing factor that has taken a toll on people's mental health. People have also been emotionally distressed as their fear of losing a loved one has peaked. The grief of losing a family member or a friend is almost impossible to overcome.

A study conducted by researchers from Har-

vard, North-Eastern, North-Western and Rutgers Universities showed how the pandemic affected people of different age groups

differently. The graph stated that a whopping 42% of young adults aged between 18-24 suffered from moderate depression at the least. Only about 10% of people over the age of 65 were reported suffering from depression.

"Younger adults have lives that are more dynamic than older adults," said David Lazer, a researcher, he also added, "they're finishing school, getting a job, starting a family, all things that are more likely to be disrupted by the pandemic."

It is very important to understand the ways COVID-19 affected the lives of people of different age groups. Having a healthy relationship with oneself, one's family, and acquaintances is always encouraged in trying times like this. Doing everything that is needed to take care of oneself is necessary, that also includes taking healthy breaks from social media, indulging in self-care, and meditating as often as you can. This directly helps keep the body and mind healthy. In addition to this nourishing, one's own body and immunity is extremely important. Spreading public awareness through campaigns about how to improve mental health in situations like these should be a priority. Even though many people have been vaccinated, schools have been reopening and implementation of lockdowns have been increasing. We have to remember that the trauma that it has left behind will be imprinted.

(Photo Courtesy: Abiya Annie)

Kerala to re-open colleges for the vaccinated students from November 2

Many people raised concerns on their wards that they will be the carriers of the virus

Jack Joy

Kerala: The government of Kerala organized a vaccination camp for students and soon after this the government plans to reopen colleges from November 2 for the students who have taken at least one dose of covid vaccination.

The experts say that vaccinated students are less prone to getting the virus as they have a good immunity. As the schools are re-opening there will be health checkups conducted by the health department to the faculties and students. A medical room will be given priority in every school to monitor the health status, making sure that they aren't infected. These daily health reports will be submitted to the local health department of the area.

Many people raised issues whether the students would be the carriers of the virus which could spark the third wave of pandemic. Therefore, protocols will be strictly followed by the authorities. Two students will be allowed to sit per bench and instead of mid-day meal they will be given midday meal allowance. The classes will be held in two shifts.

Covid-19: A set back to Bengaluru's development

Hrishikesh M J

The Phase II of the Bengaluru metro network was given approval by the state cabinet on March 1, 2017, after which the labor work commenced in the month of September 2017. The estimated time frame for completing this task was dated for the year 2021 but due to COVID-19 the BMRCL is still in the process of laying the line works for the metro rails to run through.

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Staff Editors:
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Layout and Design:
Jack Joy
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Arathy MS
Irin P.P