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About All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG)

All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG), established in 1926 has been actively working in the field of urban development management and is a diligent partner in promoting the cause of local governance in India and overseas.

The Institute has been the steadfast friend, philosopher and guide to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across the Country. For more than eight decades it has contributed to the principles and practice of urban governance, education, research and capacity building. It has designed and developed a vast array of training literature and courses and trained more than 1.5 million stakeholders in diverse areas of urban governance and urban services delivery.

These activities of the AIILSG are practiced through 30 regional centres located in different regions of the Country. The Institute anchors the Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES) of the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India for Western India region. This Centre is actively involved in building capabilities of municipal officials, staff and elected members from the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and the Union Territories of Diu, Daman, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli by upgrading their knowledge and skills required for effective administration and implementation of various urban development programmes.

With a view to cater to the growing requirement of ULBs in regard to services, the AIILSG runs specialized capacity building institutions such as the National Fire Academy, the Nrupur Institute of Nursing Science and Research and the Centre for Environment & Disaster Management at Vadodara, PRUDA at Ahmedabad, National Resource Centre for Urban Poverty, International Centre of EQUI-T, the Disaster Management Cell and the Centre of GIS at Pune. It runs the Solid Waste Management Cell of the Government of Maharashtra. In recent years, AIILSG has ventured into rural and tribal capacity building and hand holding of rural institutions of self-governance.

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Contents

Local Government Quarterly

This pandemic could provide a boost to public healthcare

Authorities recently announced the allocation of 500 railway coaches to be converted into Covid treatment facilities in Delhi. Such conversion of railway coaches has been one of the innovative responses of Indian public health system to the Corona Virus during the last few months. These 500 coaches are expected to add to the existing bed strength of the State for Covid patients by another 8000, thus beefing up the capacity to fight the pandemic.

India's healthcare system, as in other parts of the world, has been under the spotlight during these challenging times. The developing countries of the world are encountering an uphill task faced with a largely unknown enemy, and constrained by limited resources, of both hard infrastructure and human resources. The strain has been felt across the value chain right from testing ability to hospitalization, treatment equipment, to patient management.

Good public healthcare is an essential input in our march towards more just, equitable and sustainable societies. Good health enables a citizen to partake fully of the economic opportunities that the world has to offer and thus provide better living conditions for himself and his family. A broken public health system could impede a person's progress right from the education stage, where his or her educational attainment is impaired due to ill-health. Therefore, a good public health care system is a vital tool in enabling us achieve the larger objective of poverty alleviation.

In an epidemic or a pandemic, it is the public health system that comes into play. However, the Indian healthcare system is dominated by private service providers. 60 to 70 percent of the population, both urban and rural, depend on private service providers for their healthcare needs. This is particularly so in services like diagnostics such as laboratory tests and radiological investigations.

The role of diagnostics has become evident in the current situation where testing capability is being considered as vital in management of the pandemic. The private labs while authorised to test have needed regulation.

Access, availability and affordability are often cited as essential features of an efficient health system. Nations strive to push up their public health budgets in order to beef up all these so that services are more easily accessible to people, all available elements of the system (equipment) are in place, and the services are delivered at affordable (or near zero) cost to the citizens. The role of public health care systems is central in the context of affordability. The National Health Policy 2017 acknowledges the *growing incidences of catastrophic expenditure due to health care costs, which are presently estimated to be one of the major contributors to poverty*. An earlier WHO estimate notes that out-of-pocket expenditures on health services push 100 million people into poverty every year. Here it is worth noting that in India, about 80 percent of the population is not covered by any health insurance and is thus greatly vulnerable to extreme hardship on account of high, unforeseen healthcare costs. Publicly funded healthcare must play a role in protecting large sections of our population from such catastrophe.

Key ingredients of an effective public health system

The National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 outlines one key objective among several, as follows: ***Reinforcing trust in Public Health Care System:*** *Strengthening the trust of the common man in public health care system by making it predictable, efficient, patient centric, affordable and effective, with a comprehensive package of services and products that meet immediate health care needs of most people.*

Realization of this objective will require committing necessary budgetary resources to create the hard infrastructure of hospitals and equipment so necessary. Alongside it will call for strengthening the human resource base right from the ward boy upwards; creating a cadre of well-qualified and more importantly, committed men and women for whom a sense of service to the nation is as important as earning a livelihood. We are seeing several examples of such high quality humanitarian work by the public system during the current pandemic. This attitudinal grain must become a central pillar of our public healthcare architecture.

The NHP proposes to increase government expenditure on health to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2025 from the existing 1.15 percent. The present Covid pandemic has highlighted the need for augmented public expenditure on health to

overcome any shortfalls and gaps in current infrastructure and to upgrade technological capabilities to meet emerging challenges. The emergence and growth of several non-communicable diseases which result in catastrophic out-of-pocket expenditures is a pointer to the need for funded health care. The NHP envisages decrease in the proportion of households facing catastrophic health expenditure from the current levels by 25% by 2025. The national drive to step up insurance could be a big step in this direction. The PMJAY and the Aarogya Sanjeevani schemes will take the proportion of insured persons significantly higher from the currently very low levels. The public health system must promote the use of digital technologies in the sector. A noteworthy beginning has been made with the Aarogya Setu initiative. The fact that the app crossed 100 million installs in 40 days points to the ready acceptability of digital technologies in healthcare. We must build on this fine start and leverage technology to provide timely, reliable, efficient and affordable services.

The Covid pandemic has, in several parts of the world, drawn attention to the need for improved public health systems to deliver reliable, patient-centric, effective, and affordable healthcare to all. The role of public health care, it is being realized, cannot be substituted for many reasons. Among them, public health care is equitous, promotes rational drug use and treatment protocols, prevents exploitation through market led promotion of diagnostics and drugs, and importantly health care is a powerful tool which can enable achievement of other objectives in areas including education, poverty alleviation, social justice and economic well-being.

Pandemic COVID-19: Levels, Trends and Change among WHO Regions and Selected Countries

M. V. Vaithilingam

Abstract:

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2, formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. It was identified as the cause of a disease outbreak that originated in China. People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. This study attempts to understand the pandemic COVID-19 situation in terms levels, trends and change of confirmed cases and deaths among the WHO regions and selected countries such as China, India and the United States of America using the data from WHO's Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Reports. The results reveal that both number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths were more in Americas followed by Europe, South East Asia, Eastern Mediterranean, Africa and Western pacific among the WHO regions and in the United States of America as compared to India and China. Globally there were 2,66,073 COVID-19 confirmed cases and 11,183 deaths by 21 March 2020 which increased to 1,45,62,550 and 607,781 respectively by 21 July 2020 during a span of 4 months. The percent increase in both confirmed cases and deaths was found more in South East Asia and India during the period of 4 months. There is an urgent need to take care of the health of the mankind with the help of all the possible initiatives and implementation by protecting the natural environment and adhering scientific health guidelines both at micro and macro levels.

Keywords: Change, COVID-19, Levels, Pandemic, Trends.

Introduction

Health is the foremost prominent aspect of human development. The national governments and World Health Organization have an obligation to provide healthcare to the people. Article 21 of the Indian Constitution guarantees protection of life (Mathikaran, 2003). The WHO's Constitution envisages that the highest attainable standard of health as a fundamental right of every human being. As states around the world adopt emergency measures to adopt the crisis, it is cited that they continue to uphold the rule of law, protect and respect intellectual standards and basic principles of legality, and the right to access justice, remedies and due process (United Nations, 2016).

The nationwide lockdown has been central to the government's strategy to combat the COVID-19 pandemic (Manuraj, 2020). It becomes necessary to monitor the COVID-19 situation and change so as to formulate policies and implement programmes for preventing and curing COVID-19- based health problems. This paper intends to understand COVID-19 situation in terms of confirmed cases and deaths with their levels, trends and change among the world regions and selected countries.

Literature Review

The coronaviruses can be explained in terms of their families and size. Coronaviruses (CoV) are the largest known RNA viruses. Their size varies from 65 to 125 nm (nanometres) in diameter and their nucleic acid genome is single-stranded RNA, size ranging from 26 to 32 kb (kilobases) in length (Shereen, et. al., 2020). They were found to cause diseases in the human beings with different symptoms. Since 1960, six coronaviruses had been found to cause diseases in humans; SARS-CoV-2 is the seventh one, after SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV(Zhu, et. al., 2020). Their nature and association with other kinds of viruses were identified. While HKU1, NL63, OC43 and 229E are associated with mild symptoms in humans, SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV, and SARS-CoV-2, belonging to the beta-coronavirus genus, cause severe to deadly pneumonia in humans (Corman, et. al., 2019). Some studies found various symptoms related to coronaviruses. Fever, dry cough, difficulty breathing and fatigue usually accompany this pneumonia (Chang, 2020; Huang, 2020). The fatality rates of SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2 are 9.5%, 34.4%, and 2.3% respectively (Petrosillo, 2020). COVID-19 shows some particular pathogenic, epidemiological and clinical features which are not completely understood to date as well as its wide and high transmission in the community versus nosocomial spread of SARS and MERS and its milder infection and low mortality compared to the severe phenotype and higher mortality caused

by the two others viruses (Munster , 2020). To date, no therapeutic options or vaccines were approved against any of the known human coronaviruses and only protective measures were put in place. Based on the current published literature, we summarize in this paper the origin of this novel virus and its life cycle, the clinical characteristics of the disease, the possible transmission routes, the pathogena, the prevention measures and the undergoing treatments of this emerging infectious disease.

The international alert about the COVID-19 infection has helped in the containment of SARS-CoV-2. At the date of writing, COVID-19 showed promising signs of ending. Many countries seem to be efficiently controlling this SARS-CoV-2 pandemic wave and have considerably limited the mortality rate thanks to knowledge garnered in the past from SARS and MERS epidemics, allowing for the rapid institution of more efficient preventive measures. However, SARS-CoV-2 is far from being eradicated and many researchers predict novel waves in the future. That is why research efforts on SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 need to be redoubled to discover efficienttreatments as soon as possible. Several promising competitive therapeutic options are currently under development all over the world but require time to for validation and commercialization. There is still much to learn about

COVID-19 and it is critical that scientists around the world collaborate and share information in order to face this new global threat and to develop a suitable cure to benefit all of humanity (Mbarka, et. al., 2020).

It is important to understand the beginning, trends and change of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths. On 31 December 2019, the WHO China Country Office was informed of cases of pneumonia unknown etiology (unknown cause) detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. From 31 December 2019 through 3 January 2020, a total of 44 case-patients with pneumonia of unknown etiology were reported to WHO by the national authorities in China. During this reported period, the causal agent was not identified. On 11 and 12 January 2020, WHO received further detailed information from the National Health Commission China that the outbreak is associated with exposures in one seafood market in Wuhan City. The Chinese authorities identified a new type of coronavirus, which was isolated on 7 January 2020. On 12 January 2020, China shared the genetic sequence of the novel coronavirus for countries to use in developing specific diagnostic kits. On 13 January 2020, the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand reported the first imported case of lab-confirmed novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) from Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. On 15

January 2020, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan (MHLW) reported an imported case of laboratory-confirmed 2019-novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) from Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. On 20 January 2020, National IHR Focal Point (NFP) for Republic of Korea reported the first case of novel coronavirus in the Republic of Korea. As of 20 January 2020, 282 confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV have been reported from four countries including China (278 cases), Thailand (2 cases), Japan (1 case) and the Republic of Korea (1 case); Cases in Thailand, Japan and Republic of Korea were exported from Wuhan City, China; Among the 278 cases confirmed in China, 258 cases were reported from Hubei Province, 14 from Guangdong Province, five from Beijing Municipality and one from Shanghai Municipality; Of the 278 confirmed cases, 51 cases are severely ill, which means severe illness according to any of the criteria such as- dyspnea, respiratory rate more than 30 bpm, hypoxemia, chest X ray with multi-lobar infiltrates or pulmonary infiltration progressed more than 50% within 24-48 hours; 12 are in critical condition, which means according to any of the criteria such as- respiratory failure, septic shock, other organ failure which requires intensive care unit admission; six deaths have been reported from Wuhan City (WHO, 2020a).

Globally, there were found 2,92,142 COVID-19 confirmed cases and 12,783 deaths by 21 March 2020. These figures have increased to 1,45,62,550 and 6,07,781 respectively by 21 July 2020 during a span of 4 months. The USA accounted for 25.7% of COVID-19 confirmed cases and 23% of deaths as compared to India (7.9% and 4.6% respectively) and China (0.6% and 0.8% respectively)(WHO, 2020b).

The COVID-19 pandemic in India is part of the worldwide pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first case of COVID-19 in India, which originated from China, was reported on 30 January 2020. India currently has the largest number of confirmed cases in Asia (Hindustan Times, 2020). The first confirmed case of local transmission was recorded in 21 January 2020 (Ghinai, et. al. 2020), while the first known deaths were reported in February (Moon, 2020). By the end of March, cases had occurred in all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and all inhabited U.S. territories except American Samoa (CDC, 2020; Smith, 2020).

Objectives

The specific objectives of this paper are: (1) to understand the situation of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths among the WHO's

regions and selected countries namely India, China and the United States of America; (2) to examine the trends of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths among the WHO's regions and selected countries; and (3) to demarcate the change in the COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths among the WHO's regions and selected countries during a span of 4 months during 21 March 2020 to 21 July 2020.

Data And Method

This paper uses the data from:

World Health Organization's Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report 1 (21 January 2020);

World Health Organization's Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report 32 (21 February 2020)

World Health Organization's Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report 61 (21 March 2020)

World Health Organization's Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report 92 (21 April 2020)

World Health Organization's Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report 122 (21 May 2020)

World Health Organization's Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report 153 (21 June 2020)

World Health Organization's Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report 183 (21 July 2020)

Bivariate analysis is carried out to capture the levels, trends and change of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths among WHO regions and deaths.

Results and Discussion

The results of the paper are discussed under the following sub-heads such as COVID-19 Confirmed Cases and Deaths: Levels; COVID-19 Confirmed Cases and Deaths: Trends and Change.

COVID-19 Confirmed Cases and Deaths: Levels

Globally, there were 282 COVID-19 confirmed cases including 258 in China- Hubei Province, 14 in China-Guangdong, China- Shanghai Municipality, Japan and Republic of Korea, 1 in each and 2 in Thailand by 21 January 2020, according to WHO's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Report 1 (Figure 1). Globally, the COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths increased to 76769 and 2,247 respectively, 75,569 and 2,239 respectively in China, and 1200 and 8 in outside China respectively by 21 February 2020, according to according to WHO's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Report 32 (Figure 2). The data on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

confirmed cases and deaths were available by March 2020 onwards. Globally, there were 2,66,073 confirmed cases and 11,183 deaths. Among the WHO regions, Europe had more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (1,28,541 and 5,999 respectively) followed by Western Pacific (94,037 and 3,426 respectively), Eastern Mediterranean (23,355 and 1,466 respectively), Americas (94,037 and 235 respectively), South-East Asia (979 and 38 respectively) and Africa (572 and 12 respectively). China had more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (81416) and deaths (3261) as compared to the USA (15219 and 201 respectively) and India (195 and 4 respectively) by 21 March 2020, according to WHO's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Report 61 (Figure 3).

By 21 April 2020, there has been an increase in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths in the leading regions and countries. Globally, the figures increased to 23,97,217 and 1,62,956 respectively. Africa had more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (11,87,184)and deaths (1,06,342) followed by Americas (8,93,119 and 42,686 respectively), Western Pacific (1,34,507 and 5685 respectively), Eastern Mediterranean (1,34,470 and 6185 respectively), South-East Asia (31,670 and 1,341 respectively) and Africa (15,555 and 704 respectively). The USA

overwhelmingly had more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (751,273) and deaths (35,884) as compared to China (84,250 and 4,642 respectively) and India (18,601 and 590 respectively), according to WHO's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Report 92 (Figure 4).

By 21 May 2020, the figures increased to 48,93,186 COVID-19 confirmed cases and 3,23,256 deaths globally. Americas overwhelmingly had more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (21,66,003) and deaths (1,28,649) followed by Europe (19,46,610 and 1,70,283 respectively), Eastern Mediterranean 3,76,379 and 10,468 respectively), Western pacific (1,70,910 and 6,793 respectively), South-East Asia (1,64,225 and 5,140 respectively) and Africa (68,347 and 1,910 respectively). The USA continued to have more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (1,501,876) and deaths (90,203). India started to have overwhelmingly more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (1,12,359) and deaths (3,435), and China with 84,507 and 4,645 respectively, according to according to WHO's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Report 122 (Figure 5).

Figure 6 demarcates that globally, the figures of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths have increased to 87,08,008 and 4,61,715 respectively by 21 June 2020. Americas continued

to have more number of confirmed cases (42,79,854) and deaths (20,19,144) followed by Europe (25,27,618 and 1,93,086 respectively), Eastern Mediterranean (8,97,403 and 20,075 respectively), South-East Asia (5,80,553 and 17,213 respectively), Africa (2,16,999 and 4,874 respectively) and Western Pacific (2,04,860 and 7,310 respectively). The USA continued still to have more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (22,08,829) and deaths (1,18,895). India continued to have more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (4,10,461) and deaths (13,254), and China's figures have further increased to 84,997 and 4,646 respectively, according to according to WHO's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Report 153.

Globally, the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths have increased to 1,45,62,550 and deaths 6,07,781 respectively. Americas continued to have more number COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths (77,02,075 and 3,11,569 respectively) followed by Europe (31,03,674 and 2,07,958 respectively), South-East Asia (14,78,141 and 35,121 respectively), Eastern Mediterranean (1,400,544 and 35,145 respectively), Africa (6,11,185 and 9,898 respectively), and Western Pacific (2,66,190 and 8,077 respectively). The USA continued to have more number of COVID-19 confirmed cases

(37,48,248) and deaths (1,39,964) as compared to India (11,55,191 and 28,084 respectively) and China (86,152 and 4,653 respectively), according to according to WHO's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Report 183 (Figure 7 and Figure 7a).

COVID-19 Confirmed Cases and Deaths: Trends and Change

The number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths have been more in Europe followed by Western Pacific, Eastern Mediterranean, Americas, South East Asia, and Africa among the WHO regions and China as compared to USA and India as far as the levels are concerned. However, it is remarkable to state that there has been a constant increase in the confirmed cases and deaths during the period of four months (Figure 8 and Figure 9).

Globally and in all the WHO regions and the selected countries, both the confirmed cases and deaths have increased during the period. However, the increase is more in South East Asia followed by Africa, Americas, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe and Western pacific and the regions and India as compared to USA and China.

Conclusions

The outburst of coronavirus (COVID-19) is a life-threat to the whole humanity spread over more or less all the countries of the world,

which was first found in China on 17 November 2019. The first case was reported in India on 13 January 2020 and in USA on 21 January 2020. The World Health Organization started having a formal database on COVID-19 since 1 January 2020, the first situation report, recording and disseminating on daily basis. Globally, the COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths increased in China and outside China since 13 January 2020. The number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths have been more in Americas followed by Europe, South East Asia, Eastern Mediterranean, Africa and Western Pacific among the WHO regions and the USA as compared to India and China. There has been a constant increase in the confirmed cases and deaths during the period in all the regions and countries. The percent increase was more in South East Asia followed by Africa, Americas, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe and Western pacific among the regions and India as compared to USA and China. The number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths is expected to decrease over the coming years depending on the discovery of suitable medicine and its efficiency to save the humanity. The health crisis like COVID-19 warns and reminds people and the governments to protect the natural environment and emphasises its equilibrium with the growing population and increasing needs so as to ensure sustainable development and universal peace for the whole mankind. Every individual of the family and citizen of the country need to take care of themselves in all the possible ways to sustain and improve their health by sincerely following the health guidelines including cleanliness and hygienic. The national governments and international governmental and non-governmental organisations have a greater role to strive against COVID-19 through various innovative health policies and programmes.

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Fig. 1: Number of COVID-19 confirmed cases by China regions and selected countries, 21 January 2020

Category	Value
China-Hubei Province	258
China-Gunangdong	14
China-Beijing Municipality	5
China-shanghai Municipality	1
Japan	1
Republic of Korea	1
Thailand	2

Fig. 2: Number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths, Globally, China and Outside China, 21 February 2020

Axis Title

	Globally	China	Outside China
Confirmed	76769	75569	1200
Death	2247	2239	8

Fig. 3: Number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths by WHO region and selected countries, 21 March 2020

	Globally	Europe	Western Pacific	Eastern Mediterr anean	Americas	South East Asia	Africa		India	USA	China
Confirmed	266073	128541	94037	22355	18877	979	572		195	15219	81416
Deaths	11183	5999	3426	1466	235	38	12		4	201	3261

Fig. 4: Number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths by WHO region and selected countries, 21 April 2020

	Globally	Europe	Americas	Western Pacific	Eastern Mediterr anean	South East Asia	Africa		India	China	USA
Confirmed	2397217	1187184	893119	134507	134470	31670	15555		18601	84250	751273
Deaths	162956	106342	42686	5685	6185	1341	704		590	4642	35884

Figure 5: Number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths by WHO region and selected countries, 21 May 2020

	Globally	Americas	Europe	Eastern Mediterranean	Western Pacific	South-East Asia	Africa		China	India	USA
Confirmed	4893186	2166003	1946610	376379	170910	164225	68347		84507	112359	1501876
Deaths	323256	128649	170283	10468	6793	5140	1910		4645	3435	90203

Fig. 6: Number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths by WHO region and selected countries, 21 June 2020

	Globally	Americas	Europe	Eastern Mediterranean	South-East Asia	Africa	Western Pacific		China	India	USA
Confirmed	8708008	4279854	2527618	897403	580533	216999	204860		84997	410461	2208829
Deaths	461715	2019144	193086	20075	17213	4874	7310		4646	13254	118895

Pandemic COVID-19: Levels, Trends and Change among WHO Regions   17 and Selected Countries

Fig. 7: Number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths by WHO region and selected countries, 21 July 2020

	Globally	Americas	Europe	South East Asia	Eastern Mediterranean	Africa	Western Pacific		China	India	USA
Confirmed	1456255	7702075	3103674	1478141	1400544	611185	266190		86152	1155191	3748248
Deaths	607781	311569	207958	35121	35145	9898	8077		4653	28084	139964

Table 7a: Percentage distribution of COVID-19 confirmd cases and deaths, WHO regions and selected countries, 21 July 2020

	Americas	Europe	South East Asia	Eastern Mediterranean	Africa	Western Pacific		China	India	USA
Confirmed cases	52.9	21.3	10.2	9.6	4.2	1.8		0.6	7.9	25.7
Deaths	51.3	34.2	5.8	5.8	1.6	1.3		0.8	4.6	23.0

Figure 8: Number of COVID-19 confirmed cases by WHO region and selected countries, 21 March-21 July 2020

Axis Title

	Globally	Europe	Western Pacific	Eastern Mediterranean	Americas	South East Asia	Africa		India	USA	China
21-Mar-20	266073	128541	94037	22355	18877	979	572		195	15219	81416
21-Apr-20	2397217	106342	134470	134470	893119	31670	15555		18601	751273	84250
21-May-20	4893186	1946610	170910	376379	2166003	164225	68347		112359	1501876	84507
21-Jun-20	8708008	2527618	204860	897403	4279854	580533	216999		410461	2208829	84997
21-Jul-20	14562550	3103674	266190	1400544	7702075	1478141	611185		1155191	3748248	86152

Figure 9: Number of COVID-19 deaths by WHO region and selected countries, 21 March-21 July 2020

Axis Title

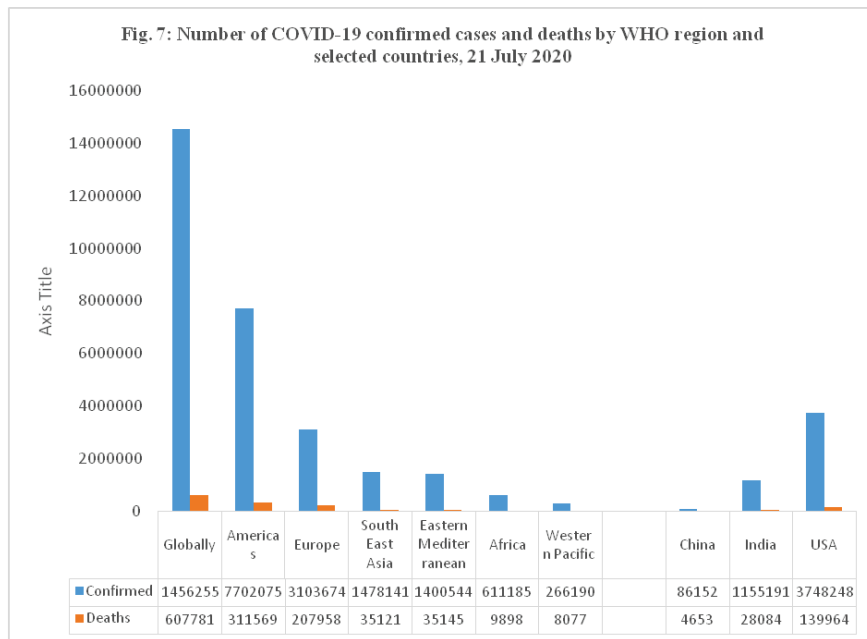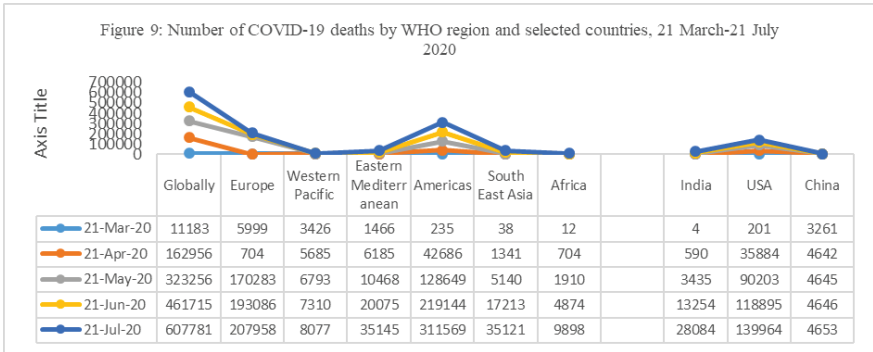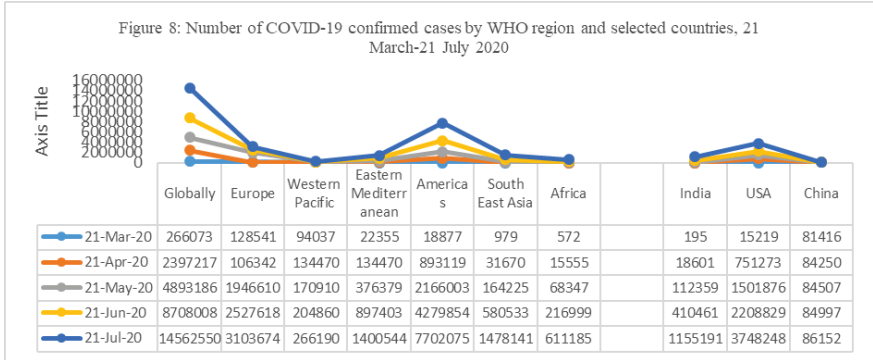|	Globally	Europe	Western Pacific	Eastern Mediterranean	Americas	South East Asia	Africa		India	USA	China
21-Mar-20	11183	5999	3426	1466	235	38	12		4	201	3261
21-Apr-20	162956	704	5685	6185	42686	1341	704		590	35884	4642
21-May-20	323256	170283	6793	10468	128649	5140	1910		3435	90203	4645
21-Jun-20	461715	193086	7310	20075	219144	17213	4874		13254	118895	4646
21-Jul-20	607781	207958	8077	35145	311569	35121	9898		28084	139964	4653

School Leadership - Challenges

Meera Jindal

Introduction:

"LEADERSHIP' is the most indispensable ingredient of any productive activity. Looking at the prolific use of the term, it is a challenge to summarize and understand fully. Furthermore when it comes to "School Leadership" the challenges are just multiplied and it demands extraordinary qualities to implement and pratise. Yet this article is an effort to provide a summary of the most important sources in a form which is intended to be accessible for practitioners and policy-makers.

In this article the theoretical literature which describes different concepts and elements of school leadership has been included.

Definition

Leithwood et al (1999) contend that there is no agreed definition of the concept of leadership.

Yukl (2002) adds that "the definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective. Some definitions are more useful than others, but there is no 'correct' definition."

Cuban (1988) says that "there are more than 350 definitions of leadership but no clear and unequivocal understanding as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders".

As one can see, there are various definitions and interpretations for the term leadership but when it comes to school leadership then the term implies that the person whom one may call 'leader' must know a great deal about the curriculum and instruction methodology in order to be able to provide guidance to staff and teachers and also be able to research best practices and look for the most innovative ways for teachers to engage students productively.

A great leader must possess a clear vision, be courageous, and have

integrity, honesty, humility and clear focus. School leadership must further help students reach their goals. Such leaders are not afraid to hire people that might be better than themselves. In fact they are always in search of best teachers with excellent delivery skills.

Leadership refers to

"People who bend the motivations and actions of others to achieving certain goals; it implies taking initiatives and risks". And further when it comes to School Leadership, it demands high level of motivation, lot of innovation, good initiative but calculative risk.

The National School of Leadership states

"Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision"

Leadership as Influencing

Leadership is many times taken as the act of influencing others. It could be exercised by anyone in an organization.

It is something that flows throughout an organization, spanning levels and flowing both up and down hierarchies.

Leadership then refers to people who bend the motivations and actions of others to achieving certain goals; it implies taking initiative and risks. This definition shows that the process of influence is purposeful in that it is intended to lead to specific outcomes.

Leadership and values

Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) add that leadership begins with the 'character' of leaders, expressed in terms of personal values, self-awareness and emotional and moral capability.

Leadership values are concerned with the respect for the individuals who are accompanying you in the journey of education. It comprises caring, being fair in one's dealings, behaving ethically for the holistic development of the students, the teachers, the staff and other stakeholders with complete honesty. Leadership can be further understood by the process of analyzing the 'Core Values', the 'Vision' and the 'belief' pattern of the school culture.

Leadership and Vision

Vision is considered as the most important component of leadership. The primary need for any Leader is to have a clear vision of the role he is going

to play. The entire success of the project, or the specific activity could depend greatly on how clear this vision is.

The vision statement must be clearly formulated and appropriately communicated so that it is correctly interpreted by the end user. Any gap in this process may distort the whole idea and concept of leadership and may end up completely ineffective.

Further the Vision laid down must be validated from different angles. Sometime an overambitious vision or vision laid down by underestimating the capacity, may both lead to delayed results and little success.

A further problem relates to the relationship between vision, goals, activities and school outcomes. Mintzberg (1994) suggests that poor strategic implementation may inhibit the attainment of the Vision. The Vision of the school is articulated by the leaders with a commitment to fulfill the dreams of the students, their parents, staff, teachers, stakeholders and the society at large.

Leadership, Management and Administration

The primary purpose of School Leadership is to ensure academic success through process, material and training improvements. This is mainly accomplished through collaboration with different individuals, such as educators, parents, students, policy makers, and the public. And to fulfill this purpose the School Leadership requires both management and administration. Irrespective of how these terms are defined, school leaders experience difficulty in deciding the balance between higher order tasks designed to improve staff, student and school performance, and the routine maintenance of present operations that is Management, and lower order duties that is Administration.

Leadership and Management

Leadership can be described as influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. They initiate change to reach existing and new goals. Managing is maintaining current organizational arrangements efficiently and effectively. The overall intent of the function is towards maintenance rather than change.

The role of the School Leader is primarily to: collaborate with educators and provide direction to the curriculum; support educators to effectively implement the plans for enhancing programs and practices; and to lead the development and implementation of an effective educational program.

A typology for Leadership

The vast literature on leadership has inevitably generated a plethora of alternative, and competing, models.

Leadership is categorized using eight broad theories, using a typology adapted from Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999), who identified six 'models' from their scrutiny of 121 articles in four international journals.

Instructional leadership

The emphasis had shifted from managerial to the concept of instructional leadership. The instructional leader was viewed as the primary source of knowledge for development of the school's educational programme. A large number of processes need to be documented which required extraordinary skills and high levels of understanding and knowledge. Quite a few limitations were encountered in doing this effectively. The limitations of knowledge did not allow the Principals to make the required improvements in the school. The process of instruction plays a vital role in the success of leadership in education. The subject for focus by leaders is the behavior of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students.

Instructional leadership involves school culture, which may have important consequences for teacher behaviour: Often, instructional leadership is misinterpreted as an administrative function. In fact it is totally separate from administration. On the contrary, instructional

leadership is defined as those actions that are directly related to teaching and learning observable behaviors such as classroom supervision.Broadly, instructional leadership entails all leadership activities that affect student learning.

Geltner and Shelton (1991) appear to advocate a broad view in claiming that "effective instructional leadership... is... characterized by a strategic perspective which leads to the integrated linkage and deployment of all resources available to the school to achieve its purpose and mission".

Instructional leadership is a very important dimension because it targets the school's central activities, teaching and learning. Instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and on the behaviour of teachers in working with students. Leaders' influence is targeted at student learning via teachers. The emphasis is on the direction and impact of influence rather than the influence process itself.

Transformational leadership

To overcome the drawbacks of Instructional leadership the new concept of Transformational leadership emerged which primarily is the team work of all the participants in process of development of the school. The responsibility of innovations is no more only with the principal. The team

consist of the people from management, the principal, teachers, and to some extent parents. In this view, transformational leadership is the vehicle for promoting and developing the instructional leadership capabilities of classroom teachers and those leaders with direct responsibility for promoting learning.

An integrated model needs to start with a contingent approach because a specific vision for the school, a hallmark of the transformational model, cannot be independent of this context.

Transformational leadership provides the basis for articulating and working towards this vision. Instructional leadership is compatible with a transformational approach because it indicates, in broad terms, what the main priority of any learning organization ought to be. Managerial leadership remains important because it is necessary to ensure effective implementation of policies arising from the outcomes of the transformational process.

Gunter (2001) says that transformational leadership is about building a unified common interest between leaders and followers.

Leithwood et al (1999) provide a detailed definition of this model of leadership:

This form of leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organizational members. Higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals and greater capacities for accomplishing those goals are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity.

Transactional leadership is leadership in which relationships with teachers are based upon an exchange for some valued resource. Transformational leadership is more potent and complex and occurs when one or more teachers engage with others in such a way that administrators and teachers raise one another to higher levels of commitment and dedication, motivation and morality.

In transactional leadership, leaders and followers exchange needs and services in order to accomplish independent objective. In transformative leadership, the leaders and followers are united in pursuit of higher-level goals that are common to both. Both want to become the best. Both want to shape the school in a new direction.

Moral leadership

Moral leadership assumes that the critical focus of leadership ought to be on the values and ethics of leaders themselves. According to the author

this model includes normative, political/democratic and symbolic concepts of leadership. An alternative moral perspective is political in origin and focuses on "the nature of the relationships among those within the organization and the distribution of power between stakeholders both inside and outside the organization" (Leithwood et al 1999). Sergiovanni (1984) says that "excellent schools have central zones composed of values and beliefs that take on sacred or cultural characteristics". Subsequently, he adds that 'administering' is a 'moral craft' (1991). The moral dimension of leadership is based on "normative rationality; rationality based on what we believe and what we consider to be good".

Moral Leadership is the combination of equal opportunities, justice, fulfillment of the expectations, co-operation, teamwork, understanding and above all is commitment. Moral leadership is required to develop a learning community. Schools must run effectively if they are to survive. But for the school to transform itself into an institution, a learning community must emerge. Moral leadership is based in the values and beliefs of leaders. The approach is similar to the transformational model but with a stronger values base, that may be spiritual. Moral leadership provides the school with a clear sense of purpose.

Participative leadership

"Participative leadership assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group" (Leithwood et al 1999). This is a normative model which is based on three facts:

- participation will increase school effectiveness

- participation is justified by democratic principles

- in the context of site-based management, leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder (Leithwood et al 1999).

In participative leadership the head or principal is expected to adopt strategies which acknowledge that issues which may arise from different parts of the organization and be resolved in a complex interactive process. Running any organization, industry or the school is and should be a team work. Principal or the head of the organization alone cannot run the activity efficiently. Here the participative approach plays a vital role. This not only brings brains and hands together but also develops 'bonding' among the staff and brings them together which eases the pressures on school principals. The burdens of leadership will be less if the leadership functions and roles are shared.

Managerial leadership

In the 13th Five Year Plan of the government, a few initiatives were established. These categorical programmes and curriculum reforms represented innovations conceived and introduced by policymakers outside the local school. The major role of the principal was limited to managing the implementation of the reforms and handle the social or educational problems. Managerial leadership assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviours and that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the organization will be facilitated.

The Bush description is:

Formal models assume that organizations are hierarchical systems in which managers use rational means to pursue agreed goals. Heads possess authority legitimized by their formal positions within the organization and are accountable to sponsoring bodies for the activities of their institutions.

Traditionally, the principal's role has been clearly focused on management responsibilities. Global and societal influences have increased the span of responsibility. The additional responsibilities are said to include interpersonal leadership, such as motivating others, sensitivity and communication skills, and contextual factors, including philosophical and cultural values, and policy and political influences. Managerial leadership focuses on functions, tasks and behaviours. It also assumes that the behaviour of organizational members is largely rational. It is similar to the formal model of management which gradually faces quite a lot of issues as some sort of rationale is missing and flexibility of decisions is absent.

Post-modern leadership

This is a relatively recent model of leadership which has no generally agreed definition. Keough and Tobin (2001) provide a definition as a starting point for linking post-modern leadership to educational policy: "current postmodern culture celebrates the multiplicity of subjective truths as defined by experience and revels in the loss of absolute authority". This view has certain similarities with subjective or interactionist perspectives, which also stress the notion of individual experience and interpretation of events (Greenfield 1973, Bush 1995).

Keough and Tobin identify several key features of post-modernism:

- language does not reflect reality
- reality does not exist; there are multiple realities
- any situation is open to multiple interpretations
- situations must be understood at local level with particular attention to diversity

Leaders should respect, and give attention to, the diverse and individual perspectives of stakeholders. They should also avoid reliance on the hierarchy because post-modern leadership focuses on the subjective experience of leaders and teachers and on the diverse interpretations placed on events by different participants. The leaders acknowledge the importance of the individual.

Interpersonal leadership

Interpersonal intelligence is a key component in any sort of leadership.

West-Burnham (2001) stresses the importance of collaboration and interpersonal relationships, a theme taken up by Tuohy and Coghlan (1997):

Much of the teachers' day is taken up in an intensity of relationships. Understanding the changing nature of relationships with young students, the changing context of their lives and developing appropriate and effective responses to both their personal and academic needs requires constant reflection and adjustment.

These pressures are even more evident in the work of school leaders and suggests a requirement for high level personal and interpersonal skills (Johnston and Pickersgill 1992). Interpersonal leadership focuses on the relationships leaders have with teachers, students and others connected with the school.

Contingent leadership

The contingent model provides an alternative approach, recognising the diverse nature of school contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' stance. Leithwood et al (1999) offer a definition of this model:

Fidler (1997, p.27) takes a similar view, arguing that "the choice of conceptualisation will depend on the situation and on the purpose for which understanding is being sought". Subsequently, he argues that "a contingent approach should take account of both the internal situation in the organization and the external context in which the organization operates" (Fidler 2000, p.403).

Contingent leadership focuses on how leaders respond to the unique organizational circumstances or problems they face. Leaders need to be able to adapt their approaches to the particular requirements of the school, and of the situation or event requiring attention. Contingent Leadership is the quality that should be acquired by each and every leadership irrespective of the field he is dealing with. And when it comes to school leadership where the interests of students are at stake, then this approach becomes a very important one.

Other Typology of Leadership

Leadership and excellence

It is important to note that many other writers have chosen to conceptualize leadership in different ways. Among them is the well-known writer Thomas .J Sergiovanni, author of more than 30 textbooks , journals, and articles,. He was an international scholar in educational leadership, particularly schooling. He has mentioned 5 forces of excellence in school leadership which should be noted when we talk about the school leadership and their challenges.

Sergiovanni (1984) identifies five 'leadership forces':

1. Technical

   This is derived from sound management techniques. The technical leader assumes the role of 'management engineer'. This category is the same as Leithwood et al's (1999) 'managerial leadership'.

2. Human

   This is derived from harnessing available social and interpersonal resources. The human leader assumes the role of 'human engineer'. This links to both participative and interpersonal leadership.

3. Educational

   This is derived from expert knowledge about matters of education and schooling. The educational leader assumes the role of 'clinical practitioner'. This is closely aligned with instructional leadership.

4. Symbolic

   This is derived from focusing the attention of others on matters of importance to the school. Purposing is of major concern to the symbolic force. This links to overall definitions of leadership and has certain similarities to transformational leadership.

5. Cultural

   This is derived from building a unique school culture. The cultural leader assumes the role of 'high priest', seeking to define, strengthen and articulate those enduring values, beliefs and cultural strands that give the school its unique identity. This links to contemporary conceptions of leadership and, specifically, to moral leadership.

Elements of leadership-

Dimmock and Walker (2002) recognise eight interrelated elements of leadership. They claim that "the

eight provide a convenient and manageable way of encapsulating school leadership" (p.72):

- Collaboration and partnership
- Motivation
- Planning
- Decision-making
- Interpersonal communication
- Conflict management
- Evaluation and appraisal
- Staff and Professional development

The authors claim that these can be regarded as "key operational areas of leadership" suggesting a managerial approach.

Apart from the abovementioned ones there can be more elements which are as below

- Strategic direction and development of the school
- Teaching and learning
- Leading and managing staff
- Effective and efficient deployment of staff and resources.
- Accountability

Significance of School Leadership and the right approach-

All the above mentioned elements of the leadership describe the importance of leadership quite elaborately.

Leadership and school context

Each school is unique in its combination of situational variables. The focus is to review the evidence on the impact of school context on leadership. The most important variable may be that of culture, both societal and organizational. Globalization has led to simplistic assumptions that leadership styles may be universally applicable. Dimmock and Walker's (2000, p.144) warning that policies and practices should not be imported without "due consideration of cultural and contextual appropriateness" may be sound advice for all school leaders and is particularly significant for cross-border initiatives.

School size

Leadership success is largely influenced by the size of the school also. Small sized schools have less challenges compare to the big schools. Small schools are more likely to nurture a sense of belonging and community, engaging active student involvement through a positive and caring atmosphere. Interpersonal relations are more positive in small schools.

Meier (1996) points to one of the advantages of leadership in small schools: A school's total faculty should be small enough to meet around one common table. Whether it's hammering out a solution to a crisis or working through a long-range problem, sustained attention over time is required of everyone... once you have more than 20 people in a group, you've lost it.

These authors conclude that the leadership style for small schools should be described as "situational management – a style based upon a realistic assessment of context, tasks and available resources".

Other contextual factors

There are several other factors which are likely to be significant in influencing approaches to leadership in schools. Some of these other variables are-

- school type; early years, primary, secondary, special, etc.
- school location; inner city, suburban, rural, etc.
- socio-economic factors
- governance, including the nature and level of activity of governors
- parents; the nature and level of activity of the parent body
- staffing; the experience and commitment of teachers and other staff

More research is needed in understanding the relationship between school culture and leadership and it is recommended that further desk research is undertaken to explore these links.

Conclusion

Comparing the models

Leadership can be understood as a process of influence based on clear values and beliefs and leading to a 'vision' for the school. The vision is articulated by leaders who seek to gain the commitment of staff and stakeholders to the dream of a better future for the school, its students and other stakeholders.

Each of the models discussed provides distinctive but uni-dimensional perspectives on school leadership. The eight models adapted from Leithwood et al (1999), and summarised in this report, show that concepts of school leadership are complex and diverse. They provide clear normative frameworks by which leadership can be understood but relatively weak empirical support for these constructs.

A tentative conclusion on what are probably the three most important models; managerial, instructional and transformational are derived. These are:

1. Managerial

These categorical programmes and curriculum reforms represented innovations conceived and introduced by policymakers outside the local school. The principal's role, though apparently crucial, was limited to MANAGING the implementation of an externally devised solution to a social or educational problem.

2. Instructional

The emphasis had shifted to the 'new orthodoxy' of instructional leadership.

"The instructional leader was viewed as the primary source of knowledge for development of the school's educational programme. We noted earlier that this model is primarily about the direction rather than the process of influence. This view is reflected in two contemporary criticisms of instructional leadership:

• inability "to document the processes by which leaders helped their schools to become instructionally effective".

• principals did not have "the instructional leadership capacities needed for meaningful school improvement".

3. Transformational

Principals sought to enlist support from teachers and other stakeholders to participate in a process of identifying and addressing school priorities.

Hallinger (1992) follows Sergiovanni (1992) in stating that instructional leadership should not be the predominant role of principals:

The legitimate instructional leaders... ought to be teachers. And principals ought to be leaders of

leaders: people who develop the instructional leadership in their teachers.

In this view, transformational leadership is the vehicle for promoting and developing the instructional leadership capabilities of classroom teachers and those leaders with direct responsibility for promoting learning.

Transformational leadership then provides the basis for articulating and working towards this vision. Instructional leadership is compatible with a transformational approach because it indicates, in broad terms, what the main priority of any learning organization ought to be.

Managerial leadership remains important because it is necessary to ensure effective implementation of policies arising from the outcomes of the transformational process.

Comparing the typologies

The eight typologies discussed here show a large measure of agreement about models of leadership. The Instruction typology develops the good platform for education, whereas the transformational typology symbolizes the concepts; it's a symbolic form of typology. Further the participative typology emphasises more on team work. It encourages collaborations and follows the partnership pattern of executing the activity. The Managerial

typology is a formal kind of pattern wherein the structural framework is laid with technical realities and executed. Proper planning is the key aspect of managerial typology and decision making is the most crucial factor. Post-modern is a rather subjective kind of pattern to execute.

Inter-personal typology emphasizes highly on human resources. Interpersonal communication is the key aspect of this typology. Lastly the Contingent typology is the combination of Cultural pluralism and Political Conflict.

Implications for leadership development

The leadership models featured here provide powerful normative explanations of leadership behavior in schools. There is also some empirical evidence to support most of these concepts. The insights from these models provide helpful guidelines for those devising and implementing leadership development programmes:

• Given the significance of instructional leadership, these programmes should have **a clear focus on learning**, the main purpose of schools, and on the teaching required to promote effective learning. This inevitably means training to ensure that leaders at all levels are able to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and are willing and able to implement strategies such as classroom observation as part of the evaluation process.

• The continuing endorsement of transformational leadership in the literature, and in formal policy statements, suggests a need for programmes to develop the portfolio of skills required to 'transform' schools. These include **developing an explicit vision** for the school which inspires teachers and other stakeholders to work towards a better future.

• To avoid the problems that may be associated with transformational leadership, including the potential for manipulation of followers, it is important for leaders to develop **a participative, or team approach** which enables staff and others to contribute to the process of visioning rather than simply accepting the leader's personal vision.

• Training should include **management as well as leadership** to ensure effective implementation of the vision.

• The contingency model suggests a requirement for leaders to develop **a portfolio of leadership styles.** They need to be able to carry out

effective situational analysis to show that they are able to adapt their approaches to the specific context.

Implications for research

There is considerable scope for new research and the following suggestions are intended to be illustrative rather than comprehensive:

• The current interest in transformational leadership suggests a need to examine what constitutes a transformational approach. How do successful leaders develop their visions and to what extent are these shared rather than imposed?

• How are the visions translated into actions likely to produce the intended outcomes?

• Do successful leaders adopt a contingency approach, choosing the most appropriate tool from a range of strategies honed from a combination of experience and professional development?

• Given the rapid and multiple changes facing schools in the 21st century, how and to what extent do leaders adapt their styles to new events and changing situations?

• What is the impact of different contextual factors on the nature of school leadership?

• Do leaders operate differently according to school type, location and socio-economic factors? How do leaders adapt their approach to cope with stakeholder variables, such as the nature and level of involvement of governors, parents and staff?

• What is the impact of school culture on the nature of leadership and how do new leaders seek to change school culture?

These suggestions provide a basis for a programme of research which could make a significant contribution to our understanding of the nature of school leadership and to differentiating successful and less successful leadership styles. Given the established link between leadership and school outcomes, such research could make a valuable contribution to school improvement.

Now it's time to put the right things at the right place. And the right things have to do with assuring comprehensive quality educational program in each and every student. Such leadership ensures when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.

Brilliant leadership ultimately transforms and becomes 'MORAL' and boosts the stakeholders at large.

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Appraisal of Rural Local Governments in India

Gopi Madaboyina

Abstract:

Democratic decentralization is the main philosophy upon which the edifice of the Indian Panchayati Raj system stands. No democratic system can survive unless it takes some positive measures to satisfy the basic requirements of the rural community through the local efforts of the people who are directly concerned. When local decisions are being taken locally, a sense of pride in one's own community and a sense of responsibility in the public mind are increasingly developed. Mahatma Gandhiji always advocated the introduction of Gram Swaraj or village republics. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has characterized these as 'grassroots of democracy and a factor for national integration'. The dawn of independence lent new urgency to the movement for empowering the panchayats. The makers of the Indian Constitution stressed the need to revitalize and rehabilitate them. The Constitution of India has incorporated the concept of Mahatma Gandhi regarding panchayats, the basic units of democracy. Article 40 of the Indian Constitution lays down "the state shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government". The aim of this article is to elucidate about the importance, types and functions of rural local government in India.

Introduction:

Democratic decentralization is the main philosophy upon which the edifice of the Indian Panchayati Raj system stands. No democratic system can survive unless it takes some positive measures to satisfy the basic requirements of the rural community through the local efforts of the people who are directly concerned. When local decisions are being taken locally, a sense of pride in one's own

community and a sense of responsibility in the public mind are increasingly developed.

In order to understand the philosophy of 'democratic decentralization' as the base of local self government in rural India, one should analyze the two terms 'democracy' and 'decentralization'. Usually, 'democracy' implies the rule of the people, by the people and for the people. It means a belief in the benefits that can accrue from involving the polity at the lowest of levels in the process of their own governance. This is essentially the western concept of democracy which surely is regarded to be a positive step towards the introduction of universal adult suffrage. But according to the socialist thinkers, true democracy can never be established only through the active and direct participation in the political and socio-economic affairs of the state. **Lenin** expounded democracy on a 'scientific' level viewing it in the context of social relations. Lenin believed that so long as there are different social classes, there can be no pure democracy. What seemed to be really important to him was the actual participation in the management of the State by the majority of the population. Politics without masses is 'adventurous politics'. Hence, the essence of democracy is administration by the grass-roots population.

On the other hand, 'decentralization' means dispersal of authority among a number of individuals of units. When the central authority in any complex and large-scale organization divests itself of certain powers which are subsequently given to the local units of the same organization and these units, as a result, become autonomous, organizational decentralization takes place. In the words of **L.D White**, 'the progress of transfer of administrative authority from a lower to a higher level of government is called 'centralization', the converse decentralization'.

The combination of these two principles – democracy and decentralization in the context of rural India means active participation of the Indian ruralites in the administration of their own areas. When the State operated as a mere polis state, the notion of popular participation in the rural development had a narrow connotation. But with the emergence of the concepts like welfarism and , the State has come to inspire and institutionalize a large number of activities covering the lives of its citizens. Thus, the conventional dichotomy between the State and its citizens was replaced by a relationship of complementarity. Popular participation in the decision-making process, having an autonomous character, came to be advocated as an

important tenet of democratic decentralization. It would be wrong to combine popular participation of the western political ideology alone. Today both socialist and western philosophies advocate the need for politics to incorporate the individual as a political force. The most important context of popular participation in rural India, as identified in the plan document, was the Community Development Programme (CDP). Its specific operational mechanism was the establishment of (a) the village panchayat bodies and (b) the cooperatives. Community Development Programme thought of associating people with the following three stages – those of plan formulation, plan implementation, and plan evaluation.

But unfortunately, by the end of the first plan period (1951-52 to 1955-56), it became evident that the disparity between the rich and the poor in rural India was increasing. The poor started considering themselves to be helpless, and this thought alienated them from the ongoing process of planning. As a result, in the Second Plan Document (1956-57 to 1960-61) the anxious framers of this plan clearly pointed out to the relatively less privileged classes of society, and that there should be a progressive reduction in the concentration of income, wealth and power.

Balwantrai Mehta Committee and Ashok Mehta Committee:

Under these circumstances, the Government of India constituted a Committee – popularly known as the Balwantrai Mehta Committee in 1957. The study teams made by the Committee visited all over India and finally came to the conclusion that the failure of the Community Development Programme might be attributed to the fact that it was basically a programme which was sponsored, directed, implemented and even financed by the bureaucrats who, not being elected, were not responsible to the people and even tried to maintain some sort of distance from the people. Hence, people could not get any chance to associate themselves with the planning process. Besides, the Balwantrai Mehta Committee also suggested that in order to introduce popular participation in the planning process, the establishment of democratic decentralization was a must. The Committee envisaged five broad principles relating to the concept of democratic decentralization which are:

1. There should be a three-tier structure of interlinked local self governmental bodies from the village to the district level, the Gram Panchayats operating at the village level, the Panchayat Samithi operating at the block level, and the Zilla Parishads operating at the district level.

2. There should be a genuine transfer of powers to these bodies to enable them to discharge their responsibilities.

3. Adequate resources should be transferred to these bodies for their effective performance of functions.

4. All welfare and developmental schemes and programmes up to the district level should be channeled through these bodies only.

5. The Panchayat Raj system should facilitate further devolution of powers and responsibilities in future.

Gradually, even after following the measures prescribed in the Balwantrai Mehta Committee report, the functioning of the Panchayati Raj system in India had unfolded certain difficulties like over-bureaucratization, financial non-viability and concentration of benefits in a few persons only. These shortcomings led some political thinkers to remark that it was not inappropriate to say that "…… India is on the way to having a strong rural administration but no rural government." Under these circumstances, the Central Government in December, 1977 appointed another committee on Panchayati Raj institutions under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta. The Ashok Mehta committee submitted its report in August, 1978.

The most significant recommendation of the Committee was for creating a two-tiered system of the Panchayati Raj – instead of the usual three-tiered system. It regarded the revenue district as the first point of decentralization below the state level. The Zilla Parishad, according to the report of the Committee, should be the executive body below which there is to be a Mandal Panchayat constituted by grouping a number of villages. The Ashok Mehta Committee in its report also favoured open participation of political parties in Panchayati Raj affairs. This was a somewhat pragmatic and desirable recommendation, because the political parties serve as the principal channel of communication between the people and their rulers and the latter also become accountable to the mass while being directly involved in the Panchayati Raj affairs. Thus, these two committees – the Balwantrai Mehta Committee and Ashok Mehta Committee are regarded to be two cornerstones in the history of the local self Government in India. While the first committee shaped the existing pattern of the Panchayati Raj institutions in India, the second one tried to revitalize them according to the changing situations.

Local Self Governmental changes at the National level:

In the mean time, some local self governmental changes took place at the national level. The Rajiv Gandhi

Government constituted a committee under the chairmanship of L.M Singhvi to prepare a concept paper on panchayats. The Committee observed that 'the institutions of panchayats have become moribund….". The Committee further felt that the panchayat institutions in India should be viewed 'as institutions of self-government which would naturally facilitate participation of the people in the process of planning and development following from and as a part of the concept of self-government. Thus, while the Balwantrai Mehta Committee had favoured non-political panchayats and the Ashok Mehta Committee stood for political panchayats, the L.M Singhvi Committee strongly pleaded for constitutionalization of panchayats. Again, while the first two committees had largely conceived panchayat bodies primarily as instruments of rural development, the third committee emphasized the need for developing panchayat bodies primarily as units of self-government.

This was followed by the introduction of the controversial Constitution (64th Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha on May 15, 1989 by the Late Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. The bill provided for the establishment of three-tier panchayats, filling up of all seats in panchayats by direct elections, reservation of seats in panchayats for women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, fixed tenure of five years for panchayats, etc. The bill failed to become an Act as it could not get the required support in the Rajya Sabha. It raised a lot of controversy. The (then) ruling party hailed it as the Magna Carta of democratic decentralization. The opposition parties launched severe attacks on the Bill arguing that it was the destroyer of the very foundation of the federal polity and a surreptitious attempt to forge a direct link between the Centre and the localities by side-tracking the State Government.

The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1993 is a revised version of the earlier Bill. It is an improvement on the previous one in the sense that some of the provisions such as dismissal of panchayats by the Governors have been deleted. This Constitutional Amendment has brought about what may be called the 'third generation panchayats in India'. Many states have by now amended their respective legislations to bring them in conformity with the requirement of the Constitutional Amendment. It is noteworthy that states like Karnataka and Kerala which along with those of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, were able to install the 'second-generation panchayats', have later taken backward steps. Bureaucracy is being reinstated in both the states. In Karnataka, the elections to the panchayat bodies were postponed on weak grounds. The Minister-in-charge of panchayats

resigned taking upon himself the moral responsibility for not being able to hold elections on time.

Local Government in Rural India:

In this section, a general profile of the local government existing in the rural sector of India including the various tiers of the government is sought to be clarified.

Gram Sabha:

Gram Sabha is the bottom most level institution of the panchayati raj system and even finds a mention in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Article 243(a). It is through the gram sabha that a local governmental representative is made accountable to the villagers. As the Indian Constitution says; "A gram sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the legislature of a state may, by law, provide." Gram sabha is an organ of direct democracy. Its members are all adult residents of the village. It is not made up of the representatives of the people. All states invariably provide for the institution of gram sabha; but functions entrusted to the body vary from state to state.

Gram sabha's members include all the voters whose names are included in the electoral roll in states like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh,

Telangana, Gujarat and Punjab. But states like Rajasthan, Bihar and Karnataka confer membership of the gram sabha to all their residents. The membership of the gram sabha varies from state to state, ranging from 250 to 5000. Gram sabhas in West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh meet once a year, those in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala meet twice a year, those in Tamil Nadu meet thrice a year, and those in Bihar and Assam meet four times a year.

Functions of Gram Sabha: The following functions were given to the gram sabhas of the states:

1. To examine annual statement of accounts and audit report

2. To discuss the report of the last year

3. To review the programme of work for the year or any new programme

4. To consider proposals for new taxation or for enhancement of existing taxes

5. To select schemes, beneficiaries and locations

6. To mobilize voluntary labour and contributions of community welfare programmes

7. To undertake programme for adult education and family welfare

8. To seek clarification from the Sarpanch and members of gram panchayat about any activity, scheme, income or expenditure

9. To examine audit notes and replies

10. To scrutinize the completed work and all types of activities of the gram panchayat

On the question of the relationship between a gram sabha and a gram panchayat, two broad views exist. One view is that gram sabha is the parent body and gram panchayat is its executive committee. There is another view that both these bodies should operate as two separate entities and should function independently of each other.

Gram sabhas, regarding their functioning, suffer from several weaknesses after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1993), namely:

• Gram sabhas are not taken seriously both by panchayats and by people. They are treated as mere advisory or suggestive bodies.

• Gram sabhas are expected to carry out important functions like consideration of the accounts of gram panchayat audit reports, and so on. But in reality, they hardly perform such functions.

Gram sabhas have not altogether been a great success in India. Yet, it has the potential to emerge as a powerful forum for participatory democracy.

Village Panchayat or Gram Panchayat:

The term "Panchayat" literally means a council of five. The principle of the panchayat is 'panch parameshwar' which means god speaking though the five. The institution of panchayat has existed in India since ancient times. The village was an autonomous republic and its affairs were governed by the panchayat. It was usually a democratically constituted body as its members were chosen by the people. Mahatma Gandhi who identifies Panchayat Raj with Ram Raj says that just as Rama was the ruler-servant of Ayodhya so was the Sarpanch the ruler-servant of the village. As such, Gandhiji always advocated the introduction of Gram Swaraj of village republics. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has characterized these as "grassroots of democracy and a factor for national integration'. The dawn of independence lent new urgency to the movement for empowering the panchayats. The makers of the Indian Constitution stressed the need to revitalize and rehabilitate them. The Constitution of India has incorporated the concept of Mahatma Gandhi regarding panchayats, the basic units of democracy. Article 40 of the Indian Constitution lays down "the state shall

take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government"

On the basis of the guidelines provided by the Balwantrai Mehta Committee report **Rajasthan** was the first state to adopt the three-tier system on 2nd October, 1959 and Andhra Pradesh followed it. Now almost all the states have adopted the system. Under the scheme, the adult population of the village forms the Gram Sabha. It is a sort of village 'Parliament'; it elects a body of about five persons called the panchayat. It is the cabinet of the village government. It is guided and advised by higher body called the Panchayat Samithi which is at the block level. The Samithi, which is an intermediary body between the village panchayat and the Zilla Parishath, is composed of representatives of the panchayats within the block area. Government officials working in the block are placed at the disposal of the Samithi. The block is the unit of development, and the Samithi, its policy making and implementing body. The Samithi prepares and executes development plans for the block. It also supervises the working of the Panchayats in its area.

Organization of Village Panchayat:

Members of the panchayat are called the Panchas/Sarpanch and are elected by the Gram Sabha by secret ballot in all the states except Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh where the mode of election is by show by hands. For purpose of election the entire Gram Sabha area is divided into territorial wards, each electing one member, the exception being Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, Haryana and Punjab. In Bihar, the panchayat consists of nine members including the president, out of which four are directly elected.

The presiding officer of the panchayat is known by a variety of names – he is called Sarpanch in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab and Rajasthan, President in Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Pradhan in Uttar Pradesh, Mukhiya in Bihar and Orissa and Adhyaksha in West Bengal. All the states provide for reservation of a specified number of seats for women as well as members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. As per the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, all the states reserve one-third seats for women in the panchayat. The tenure of panchayats is five years.

Functions of Gram Panchayat:

The functions of a gram panchayat are usually classified into two broad categories; obligatory and discretionary. The principal obligatory functions, i.e. the functions which the panchayat must perform are as under:

Obligatory Functions:

➢ Construction, repair, maintenance, cleaning and lighting of public streets

➢ Sanitation and taking curative and preventive measures to remove and to stop the spread of epidemic.

➢ Construction, repair and maintenance of public wells, tanks and ponds for the supply of water for drinking, washing and bathing purposes

➢ Registration of births, deaths and marriages

➢ Regulation of places for the disposal of dead bodies

➢ Upkeep, protection and supervision of any building or other property belonging to Gram Sabha

➢ Regulation of markets and fairs

➢ Establishing and maintaining of primary schools for boys and girls

➢ Regulation of the construction of buildings

➢ Assisting the development of agriculture, commerce and industry

➢ Maternity and child welfare, medical relief

➢ Allotment of places for storing manure and for training and curing hides

➢ The administration of civil and criminal justice

Discretionary Functions:

➢ Planning and maintaining trees on the sides of public streets and in other public places

➢ Filling in of insanitary depressions and leveling of land

➢ Organizing volunteer force for watch and ward, and 'for assisting gram panchayat and Nyaya Panchayat in the discharge of their functions and for the service of summons and notices issued by them

➢ Assisting and advising agriculturists in the obtaining and distribution among them government loans and in the repayment thereof and in the liquidation of old debts

➢ Establishing of improved seed and implements stores

➢ Relief against famine, floods and other calamities

➢ Establishment and maintenance of places of recreation and games

➢ Arranging for public radio sets and gramaphones

➢ Making arrangements for the seizure and disposal of stray cattle, stray dogs, wild animals and monkey etc.,

Panchayat Samithi or Mandal Parishath:

The panchayat samithi represents the intermediate level in Panchayat Raj system. It functions at block level. There have been a number of variations of this institutions in various states. Comparable organizations have been Mandal Parishath in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Taluk Panchayat in Gujarat, Mandal Panchayat in Karnataka, Janapad Panchayat in Madhya Pradesh, Panchayat Sangh in Tamil Nadu, Kshetra Samithi in the block panchayat board in Jammu and Kashmir, and Anchal Committee in Arunachal Pradesh until recently; the tenure of a panchayat samithi being five years in all states of the country.

Size:

In Maharashtra the panchayat samithi consists of an area equivalent to two or three blocks. The average area covered by block works out to be 566 sq. miles though the usual range varies from 105 sq. mile to 2,837 sq. miles. The number of panchayats per block also varies from state to state e.g. from 8 per block in Kerala to 80 in Uttar Pradesh.

Composition:

The constitutional pattern of the panchayati samithi varies from state to state. Co-option of scheduled castes and tribes and the female members is a common feature. Special representation to cooperative societies, cooperative banks and progressive farmers is also accorded. The M.L.A and M.P are ex-officio members of the panchayat samithi in most states except Maharashtra. They are associate members having right to attend samithi's meetings but are not allowed to exercise right to vote or get elected to the office of Pradhan or Chairman of the standing committee. In Karnataka M.L.A and M.P are full-fledged members of the samithi.

Methods of Election:

The members of Samithi are directly elected by the people. Direct election method ensures direct responsibility of the elected representatives to the electorate and safeguards samithi from local pulls and pressures. The system has its defects too. It snaps the organic link with panchayats and creates the problem of coordination. All the elected members of the samithi will elect the pradhan or president. The tenure of the panchayat samithi is five years.

Functions of the Panchayat Samithi:

The functions of the panchayat samithi may be classified into two broad areas:

1. Provision of civic amenities
2. Fulfillment of development functions

The first **i.e. Provision of civic amenities** category comprises the following functions:

- ✓ Construction and upkeep of roads within the jurisdiction of the samithi but other than purely gram panchayat roads

- ✓ Supply of drinking water

- ✓ Opening of drains and soakage pits

- ✓ Establishment of primary health centers and maternity centers

- ✓ Provision of medical and health services

- ✓ Provision of primary and basic schools, adult literacy and education centers

- ✓ Assistance to village roads which serve as feeders

- ✓ Establishment and popularization of libraries

- ✓ Establishment of youth organizations, mahila mandals, farmers clubs, etc.,

- ✓ Encouragement of physical and cultural activities

The following may be considered a representative list of functions which fall within the **development programme:**

- ✓ Execution of all programmes under community development

- ✓ Multiplication and distribution of improved seeds

- ✓ Procurement, distribution and popularization of improved manure and fertilizers

- ✓ Reclamation of land and conservation of soil

- ✓ Providing credit for agricultural purposes and providing irrigation facilities

- ✓ Planting of trees and introducing improved fodder

- ✓ Introducing improved breed of cattle, sheep and poultry

- ✓ Prevention and cure of disease among cattle

- ✓ Dairying and milk supply

- ✓ Opening and development of cooperative societies in various fields

- ✓ Development of cottage, village, and small-scale industries

- ✓ Establishment and maintenance of production-cum-training centers

Zilla Parishath:

Zilla Parishath constitutes the apex in the Panchayati Raj system of rural

local government in India. As the name itself signifies, the Zilla Parishath is a rural local government body operating at the district level. The Zilla Parishath is mainly an advisory, coordinating, fund distributing and supervisory body. It is equipped with executive functions like health, education, and social welfare. The nomenclature is not the same in all the states. It is called Zilla Parishath in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal; Mohkuma Parishath in Assam; District Development Council in Tamil Nadu.

Composition of Zilla Parishath:

Broadly speaking, a Zilla Parishath consists of the following members:

- Chairman and the elected members of Zilla Parishath

- Presidents of panchayat samithis/mandal parishaths in the district

- All members of Parliament, representing constituencies falling within the district

- All members of the State Legislature returned from constituencies within the district

- A representative of cooperative society, usually the president of the district cooperative society

- Certain specified number of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes

- Some co-opted members having some experience in administration, public life or rural development

Functions of Zilla Parishath:

- It examines and approves the budget of the panchayat samithis

- It issues directions to panchayat samithis for performing their functions efficiently

- It coordinates development plans prepared by the panchayat samithis. It also coordinates the inter-block activities

- It advises the State Government on all matters relating to the development of the district

- It informs the District Collector and the Divisional Commissioner about irregularities committed by the panchayats and panchayat samithis in the district

- It collects statistics relating to the activities of local authorities in the district

- It advises the State Government regarding the allocation of work to be made among panchayats and panchayat samithis in the district

- It exercises such powers and performs such functions as may be conferred by the State Government

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Impact on Business and Addressing Challenges Faced due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Anthony Rose, Prabhat Kumar

Introduction

The novel corona virus (COVID-19) has severely disrupted business organisations globally bringing the economy throughout the world on its knees. The whole world is under tremendous uncertainty due to massive spike in spread of the pandemic, thereby exacting a terrible toll on the economy globally. The governments of countries had imposed lockdowns, which had prohibited conduct of business, educational institutions, public facilities. etc. (Gostin & Wiley, 2020). These steps, no doubt, were taken with a genuine intent to mitigate the risk of the corona virus outbreak, but have however resulted in economic consequences globally (Fernandes, 2020; McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). This has caused disruption in business activities, which may have repercussions unfathomed as yet.

The economic lockdown has led to decrease in buying power and consumption in the society (Muellbauer, 2020). If the effect of the pandemic continues, it could lead to bankruptcies and layoffs (Loayza & Pennings, 2020) thereby causing further erosion of consumer demand and spending. In this backdrop, we discuss the impact of the outbreak on business at large and the steps that are required to be undertaken as an attempt to overcome the foreseen challenges.

Impact on Business

Though the pandemic is primarily a health problem, it has had serious implications for business and economy. The pandemic has wrought havoc on the economy, business organizations and society affecting day-to-day conduct of normal course of operations. Business models have been rendered unviable which include even those that depended on the same model for decades or so (Nicola et al., 2020; Reeves et al., 2020). The impact of the corona virus outbreak has been

unpredictable having ripple effects on the entire vertical of business operations leading to negative impact on both the demand and supply side. Until just before the onset of the pandemic, the entire world economy thrived on the benefits of globalization, which was brought to a standstill and instilled fear in procuring either raw material or finished goods from any region or country.

Having observed the impact of the outbreak on industries at large, several reports have pointed out that demand in industries such as healthcare and retail has gone up, whereas demand for sectors such as tourism, travel, and restaurants has gone south. This indicates that the outbreak has thrown different challenges for different sectors. For some sectors, the challenge is about mere survival, while for the others it means maintaining operations at a certain minimum level.

Business closures and curtailment of activity will lead to rising debt as fixed and other expenses on resources to continue minimum momentum need to be incurred. This is practically true for smaller organizations as they have less cash reserves as compared to larger organizations. In turn, the larger organizations will not be spared from the effect as small business organizations either are a part of their supply chain or are customers to larger business organizations. This will lead

to business trying frantically to secure funds and loans. The banking system may hesitate to provide loans as they foresee high risk of the ability to repay and in time.

Another impact of greater significance is the high unemployment caused due to low sales by business organizations or their closure. Small business organizations are a great source of employment, but sudden closures have been catastrophic to the economy and society. This high level of unemployment erodes the ability of consumer to buy essential goods and repay debts.

Facing Challenges – Way forward

It is difficult to comprehend the severity that the crisis presents for the economy. However, it is also difficult to predict the actual impact on a certain business as some may emerge to benefit, while others may not. To face these trying situations, businesses will have to rework strategies to be resilient and emerge stronger from the crisis (Sethi, KPMG, 2020). Some strategies that need to be adopted, may be considered by business organisations, however, bearing in mind that a certain plan of action may augur well with one and may not with another.

Business organisations should effectively manage activities, which is well within their control. All efforts must be directed towards better

customer retention through enhancement in product and service quality (He & Harris, 2020). Expenditures may be curtailed to ensure that enough reserves are available. Growth and revenue plans need to be relooked at due to current pandemic effect. The outbreak has affected business firms that depended on physical interaction; however, the use of digital technologies must be utilized and should be continued even if the situation gets back to normal. Business firms should look out for new opportunities to grow and diversify because the crisis that has made firms vulnerable, also presents newer opportunities.

Business organizations are preparing contingency plans in order to adapt to the current scenario so that they navigate the crisis in order to reduce expenditures or losses (PWC, 2020). Organisations need to create crisis management teams by spelling out accountability to each member and to detail so that the execution of the contingency plan is done meticulously through a cohesive cross functional group. This will enable and ensure achievement of outcomes. While doing so, it is important to source vital information from reliable sources and draft a well thought of information flow process which will ensure accuracy and veracity of implementing the plan. This will help organizations undertake multiple scenario planning

to measure impact on the business in the short and medium term, mitigate the impact, and improve resilience.

Another key step that needs to be undertaken is collaboration (Liu et al., 2020), both externally and internally. The internal operations teams of various departments and domains along with the communications and public relations team, must ensure development of messages, both for internal and external purposes, that reflect an orchestrated response that aims to build confidence among all stakeholders and the positive steps undertaken. Equal emphasis must be placed to inform all stakeholders (Chen et al., 2020) and not just narrowing focus on few important stakeholders such as investors only. This will build the confidence in the organization from the entire ecosystem within which it operates. As supply chains are affected due to the crisis, identifying alternative supply chain strategies must be formulated so that product offerings reach consumers and this will enable keep the wheels moving.

Remote work, though forced out of compulsion, must now be continued and enhanced. To enable its success, investments in strong Information technology infrastructure is a sin qua non. It is important to address the issues of digital skill development, and eradicating pain points to accelerate digital transformations and have

seamless remote access to technology platforms. Due care needs to be taken to address the issue of data security of critical business operations as these may be vulnerable to security breach attacks or fraud. Reinforcing code of conduct among employees is essential as they are the most important form of defence that an organization can create to stop risks of such cyberattacks. Providing training to employees about such IT based attacks and ways to mitigate them will send a clear signal as to the expected behavior from employees.

One of the most crucial decisions that organisations must do is to focus on the workforce who are an integral internal resource necessary for business continuity. Protection of the employees during these trying times is a critical need (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Pickup, 2020) as it signals wellbeing for both the employees and the organization. Given the fact that employees will continue working from remote locations, timely communication will eradicate despair and send a strong message that their efforts are valued and matter to the success of the organization while it faces the pandemic situation.

Conclusion

While it is important to have a crisis management plan, it is imperative to state that agility in decision making in all fronts is a key to immediate action and executing it with speed may help organisations to steer away the effects of the outbreak. It is also clear in the midst of the pandemic that ensuring employee and customer safety is a crucial aspect of business continuity.

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Effect of COVID-19 on Academics of College Students

Hansika Parwani, Gurpreet Singh

Abstract:

The Novel coronavirus pandemic has affected the normal functioning of the world. One aspect being academics. Academics all around the world have been disrupted due to lockdown of cities following social distancing norms. University and college campuses are shut down amid the lockdown and various activities of college students like classes, exams and internships have been disrupted. This research aims to see the effect of COVID-19 on academics of college students of India. An online survey was undertaken with a sample of 293 students across fifteen states of the country, to see the students' perspective of the pandemic. The results revealed the dissatisfaction of students regarding online classes and towards the alternatives provided due to internship cancellation. It also revealed worries of students regarding lack of internships and future placements.

1. Introduction

The 2019 Novel corona virus (COVID-19) is a viral respiratory illness that came into notice in December 2019 since its detection in Wuhan city of China [1]. Since then it has caused stress and panic all around the world. India is also among those countries affected by COVID-19. This pandemic has impacted various systems across the nation and one of them is education. Educational institutions around the country were shut down on March 16th and India is in lockdown situation since 24th March 2020 [2]. The shutdown has resulted in cancellation of examinations, internships, and disruption of regular teaching pattern. A limited body of data suggests that the careers of this year's university graduates may be severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic because of major teaching

interruptions and as they are likely to graduate at the beginning of major global recession [3]. Another survey of college reaction said that internships or jobs secured by the students had been cancelled, moved remote or delayed amid the COVID-19 pandemic [4]. The benefits of internships include increase in practical knowledge, gain in work experience and exposure to various networks which help in further progression of careers; now the lack of which will result in some impact on overall academics of students. The study aimed to see the effect of COVID-19 on academics of college going students across the country, to assess the alternatives provided to students amid the pandemic and to see the satisfaction of students with the same.

2. Method

2.1 Design

An online, cross-sectional survey was undertaken with a convenience sample of 293 college students enrolled in undergraduate and post-graduate courses across fifteen states of India. The web-based questionnaire was distributed on various thematically different forums (ranging from known classmates, public forums, etc.). The survey was conducted between April 2020 and May 2020. Informed consent for participation was obtained on the first page of web survey.

2.2 Participant eligibility

A total of 305 students across fifteen states responded to the survey. The inclusion criteria of the respondents were that they should be (a) enrolled as a UG/PG student; (b) in the age group of 18-30 year; (c) Should be in first to last year of college. These criteria were selected as the survey aimed to see the effect on college students which are generally in the age group of 18-30 years. The final sample size became 293.

2.3 Measurements

The survey consisted of 20 questions. Five questions were related to demographic data: age, sex, place of study, name of college, degree of program, and year of study. One question was related to knowledge about prevention of COVID-19. Then the questionnaire was divided into 4 sections - first asking about closure of college, whether online classes were taking place and level of satisfaction pertaining to online classes. Second section was related to examination; whether they were delayed, what alternatives were provided and how satisfied were they with the alternatives. Third section was related to internships; whether they were cancelled, if yes, what alternatives were provided, are they satisfied with the alternatives and how do they think delayed internship will affect their

academics. The last section contained question regarding the effect of COVID-19 on placements. The satisfaction was sought on a 5-point Likert scale.

2.4 Data Analysis

Coding and cleaning of data was done using Excel 2016 software and further analysis was performed on SPSS version 22.

3. Results

3.1 Participant Characteristics

The socio demographic characteristics collected were age, sex, place of college, level of degree, year of study and name of course. The data contained 135(46.1) males and 158(53.9) females. The average age of the candidates was observed to be 22.5 years. Most of the participants came from engineering (n=70;23.9%) and management (n=121;41.3%) stream which includes both graduates and postgraduates. The data comprises 44.7% (n=131) students pursuing graduate programs and 55.3% (n=162) pursuing post graduate programs. When it comes to year of program 159(54.3%) students were found to be in first year of study, 53(18.1%) in second year, 14(4.8%) in third year, 6(2%) in fourth, and 61(20.8%) in final year. The state from which majority of the respondents were from was Delhi (n=109;37.2%), Rajasthan (n=76;25.9%), Madhya

Pradesh (n=25;11.9%). Additionally, knowledge about prevention of COVID-19 was asked. The results also showed that 55.5% claimed that their parents were worried about the loss in academics, while 19.8% claimed that they are not worried, and others were not sure. See Table 1.

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of participants

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
AGE		
>20	69	23.5
21-22	78	26.6
23-24	80	27.3
25-26	49	16.7
27-28	11	3.8
29-	6	2
GENDER		
Male	135	46.1
Female	158	53.9
NAME OF THE COURSE		
BE/B tech	70	23.9
PGDHM	121	41.3
PGDM	16	5.5
BA	8	2.7
LLB	8	2.7
Bsc	6	2
BPT	5	1.7
BDS	4	1.4
MBBS	6	2
M.com	1	0.3
BBA	12	4.1
MBARM	5	1.7
MBAPM	5	1.7
M.DES	3	1
M Pharma	7	2.4
B.com	8	2.7
Msc	4	1.4
Interior Designing	2	0.7
MICA	1	0.7
BJMC	1	0.3

LEVEL OF DEGREE		
Graduate	131	44.7
Postgraduate	162	55.3
YEAR OF COURSE		
First year	159	54.3
Second year	53	18.1
Third year	14	4.8
Fourth year	6	2
Final year	61	20.8
STATE		
Delhi	109	37.2
Madhya Pradesh	35	11.9
West Bengal	2	0.7
Maharashtra	17	5.8
Karnataka	11	3.8
Rajasthan	76	25.9
Haryana	7	2.4
Chhattisgarh	7	2.4
Uttar Pradesh	13	4.4
Tamil Nadu	4	1.4
Jharkhand	3	1
Odisha	1	0.3
Telangana	1	0.3
Gujarat	6	2
Uttarakhand	1	0.3

3.2 Online classes

According to the survey data analysis, 67.18% undergraduates said online classes were conducted out of which only 25% seemed to be satisfied with the online classes. A majority 38.64% UGs were unsatisfied with online classes whereas 35.23% remained neutral. In postgraduates 22.84% said online classes were being conducted, among which majority (43.25%) were satisfied with the online classes, 21.62% remained unsatisfied whereas 35.84% were neutral. Shown in Figure 1

### Figure 1: Satisfaction level of participants
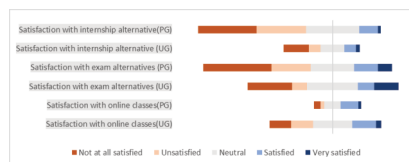
3.3 Exam cancellation

91.47% (268) respondents said that their exams were cancelled due to the pandemic. Out of which assignments (44.40%) were the most common alternative provided, followed by online examination (7.09%), while 45.90% students said there has been no alternative yet. There seemed to be a general trend among students that most of them were unsatisfied with the alternatives provided as shown in Figure 1.

3.4 Internships

Of the total respondents 69% (204) said their internships were cancelled due to this pandemic. The most common alternative provided was research project (followed by online course and report writing). The other alternatives included assignments, work from home and mock interviews (Figure 2). While only 26% of the students were satisfied with the alternatives, 39% remained unsatisfied and 35% were neutral see figure 1. Participants were asked how the change in internship would affect them; the results are shown in Figure 3.
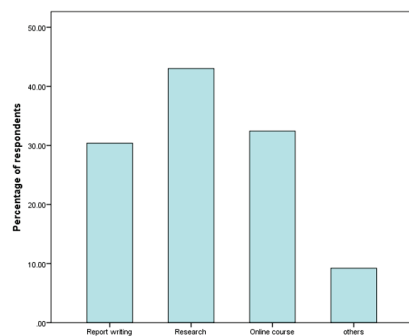
Figure 3: Effect on internships
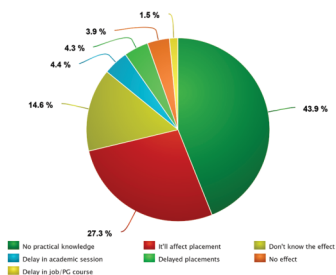
3.5 Placements

83% of the total respondents think that COVID-19 will influence the placements of the student. Out of which 30.77% think that due to economic losses suffered by the company they will downsize the currently present staff and will hire less as compared to previous year's placement record. While 26.92% think that the cancellation of internships this year and lack of practical knowledge will cause problems in placement.

Only 1.71% think there will be an increase in job opportunities due to COVID-19. As shown in figure 4.

Figure 4: Effect on placements
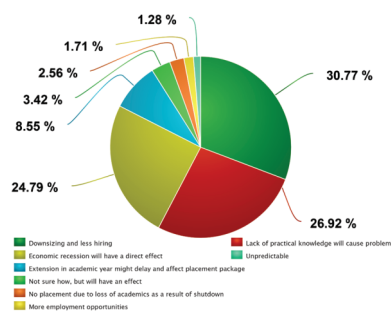
4. Discussions

The study aimed to see the effect of COVID-19 on academics of students across fifteen states of India, to assess the alternatives provided to students amid the pandemic and to see how COVID-19 affected placement and internships.

Dissatisfaction among students regarding online classes was the most common trend seen which may be due to network issues or unavailability of required devices. The same issues were reported by students of Delhi and Hyderabad. The network connectivity was a major issue along with geographical area where the student lived [5].

Exam cancellation was another issue faced by the students due to the pandemic. Majority of the students were not satisfied with the alternatives

provided for regular exam. A study done by students of University of Delhi shows that students are not in favor of giving online exams which is an alternative to regular pen and paper examination. According to them online classes are not that effective in providing learning. Also, the lack of study material and the material provided online by teachers is not up to the mark. Students in remote areas have internet connectivity problems so it would be difficult for them to attend a three hour examination [6].

Internship cancellation had a major impact on the regular pattern of learning of college students. The results of our study suggest that cancelled internships will lead to no work experience and practical knowledge about the subject which in turn will have long term career implications. One article on internship cancellation shows that almost every company has cancelled the summer trainings and some have come up with the alternative of work from home but students think differently as many of them say that work from home is less efficient mode in providing practical knowledge and also students will not be getting pre placement offers which is a great loss with regard to their career and a major disadvantage in terms of placements [7].

According to the survey, the effect on placement maybe direct - because of recession and economic crisis or indirect - due to cancelled internships, less work experience and delayed academic session. Another finding is that the companies are downsizing which will affect future placements in terms of reduced hiring and low packages. In total, five companies — Uber India and South Asia, Ola, Zomato, Swiggy and Cure Fit — have togther announced the reduction of around 4,441 jobs in the last one month [8]. While an article reports that although Goldman Sachs and World Bank have anticipated the world economy could witness negative growth of up to 3 percent, and India to develop at a mere 1.5-1.6 percent, the latter might not be true, as India is less dependent on exports as compared with China and Japan and has a huge domestic demand—so growth may "remain static" around 4-5 percent [9]. There are uncertainties associated with the current situation but newer kinds of jobs might also increase. With COVID-19, Healthcare and wellness sector will get a tremendous boost and create more jobs [10]. This brings positive hopes for some sectors of the economy.

5. Conclusions

The study provided students' perspective about the effect of COVID-19. It has identified several ways how the pandemic has affected their future and career goals. The study also highlights the fact that now

colleges will have to come up with newer ways to overcome the loss suffered due to lack of internships. Although the number of participants was limited, the study was still able to generate a variety of responses from all demographics.

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**Sample Registration System
Statistical Report 2018**
By
Office of Registrar General &
Census Commissioner, India

Read the full report at https://censusindia.gov.in/Vital_Statistics/SRS_Report_2018/SRS_Statistical_Report_2018.pdf

The Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India released the Statistical Report 2018 of its Sample Registration System in India recently. The aim of the Report is to provide reliable annual estimates of birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate and various other fertility and mortality indicators. SRS is one of the largest demographic surveys in the world covering about 8.1 million population. It serves as the main source of information on fertility and mortality both at the State and National levels. These data are being reported from 1971 onwards. The present Report is the fifth in the series that has been prepared based on data collected from new SRS sample units selected from 2011 Census frame.

The data on population growth, fertility and mortality is an important input for the study of populations and to enable reasonable projections. Such data also enable proper evaluation of programs in the health sector, such as those pertaining to family planning, child, maternal and reproductive health, and immunization programmes. The sample registration of births and deaths or Sample Registration System (SRS) was put in place in 1964-65 on a pilot basis and on full scale from 1969-70.

The Executive Summary of the Report summarizes the 'salient features' or key findings of the Report. Some of them are:

- The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) at the National level during 2018 stands at 20.0 showing a decline of 0.2 points over 2017. Bihar has reported the highest (26.2) and Kerala the lowest (13.9). There has been a decline of 1.4 points in the CBR for the country from 2013 to 2018. The corresponding declines in rural and urban CBR are 1.3 and 0.6 points respectively.

- The Crude Death Rate (CDR) for the country is 6.2 in 2018. Chhattisgarh has reported the maximum (8.0) and Delhi the minimum (3.3). During the last five years, the decline in National CDR has been to the tune of 0.8 points. The corresponding declines in female and male CDRs are 0.7 and 0.9 points respectively.

- The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has also registered 1-point decline to 32 in 2018 from 33 in 2017 and from 40 in 2013 at the National level. The maximum IMR has been observed in Madhya Pradesh (48) and the minimum in Kerala (7). Both genders have shown decline during 2013-18. Despite this decline, one in every 31 infants at the National level, (one in every 28 infants in rural areas and one in every 43 infants in urban areas) still die within one year of life.

- As regards under 5 mortality rate, there is a decline of 1 point in 2018 over 2017 (decline of 2 points for female and no change for male).

- Sex Ratio at birth nationally has gone up to 899 in 2016-18 from 896 in 2015-17

- Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is stable at 2.2 in 2018 over 2017. Bihar has reported the highest (3.2) and Delhi and West Bengal the lowest (1.5)

Thereafter the report is divided into four chapters and then a number of very detailed tables.

The first chapter is titled Introduction and details out the methodology followed in the collection and compilation of the data. Here it makes special mention of the Dual Record System which is noteworthy. It states "The SRS in India is based on a dual record system. The field investigation under Sample Registration System consists of continuous enumeration of births and deaths in a sample of villages/urban blocks by a resident part-time enumerator, and an independent six-monthly retrospective survey by a full-time supervisor. The data obtained through these two sources are matched. The unmatched and partially matched events are re-verified in the field to get an unduplicated count of correct events. The advantage of this procedure, in addition to elimination of errors of duplication, is that it leads to a quantitative assessment of the sources of distortion in the two sets of records making it a self-evaluating technique."

There are some statements in the form of tables under this chapter. Statement 1 gives the rural/urban number of samples during different replacement periods between 1969-70 and 2014 (6 periods).

Statement 2 gives number of sample units and population covered All India and States/UTs.

Chapter 2 titled Population Composition discuses percentage distribution of population by age, sex, and residence for all broad age groups for India and bigger States/UTs. It also includes data on percentage distribution of population by marital status for total population, 10+ and 15+

ages by sex and residence. The State-wise variations in female age at effective marriage and their corresponding proportions have also been presented in this chapter.

It analyses the data to say there has been a gradual decline in the share of population in the age group 0-14 from 41.2 to 38.1 per cent during 1971 to 1981 and from 36.3 to 25.9 percent during 1991 to 2018, whereas, the proportion of economically active population (15-59 years) has increased from 53.4 to 56.3 percent during 1971 to 1981 and from 57.7 to 66.0 percent during 1991 to 2018. The percentage of elderly population (60+) has gone up from 5.3 to 5.7 percent and from 6.0 to 8.1 percent respectively during the said periods.

Chapter 3 titled Estimates of Fertility Indicators considers Crude Birth Rate, General Fertility Rate, Age Specific/Marital Fertility Rates, Total /Marital Fertility Rates and Gross Reproduction Rate. It also includes sex ratio at birth. To examine the changes in the levels of fertility during the last decade, the average values of these fertility indicators for the years 2016-18 are compared with that for 2006-08.

The crude birth rate (CBR) at all India level had declined from 36.9 in 1971 to 33.9 in 1981. During 1991-2018, the decline has been about 32 percent, from 29.5 to 20.0. The rural-urban differential has also narrowed over these years. However, the CBR has continued to be higher in rural areas compared to urban areas in the last three decades. The total fertility rate (TFR) has declined from 5.2 to 4.5 during 1971 to 1981 and from 3.6 to 2.2 during 1991 to 2018. The TFR in rural areas has declined from 5.4 to 2.4 from 1971 to 2018 whereas the corresponding decline in urban areas has been from 4.1 to 1.7 during the same period. In 2018, around 82.5 percent of the deliveries were institutional which includes Government as well as private hospitals. The percentage of institutional deliveries in urban areas is 94.7 as against about 78.1 percent in rural areas.

Various statements and charts present the data for All India as well as bigger states/UTs.

Chapter 4 is titled Estimates of Mortality Indicators. This chapter covers mortality related data and analysis. India's National Crude Death Rate (CDR) level has declined from 14.9 to 12.5 during 1971 to 1981 and again from 9.8 to 6.2 during 1991 to 2018. The infant mortality rate, has shown a considerable decline from 129 per 1000 live births in 1971 to 110 in 1981 and from 80 in 1991 to 32 in 2018. The child mortality rate has also declined from 51.9 in 1971 to 41.2 in 1981 and from 26.5 in 1991 to 8.9 in 2018.

In addition to national numbers, this chapter presents mortality data for bigger States/UTs by sex, residence (rural/urban) and broad age-groups. It covers infant mortality, and its components viz., neo-natal mortality and post neo-natal, peri-natal mortality and changes in mortality over the last decade.

Thereafter, the rest of the Report contains very detailed data presented in tables for various indicators – national as well as for states. This makes up a large part of the Report.

The Report will prove to be a rich source of not only data, but incisive analysis and lucid presentation and thus of good value to students, researchers and others in the field and will constitute a treasure to be preserved atleast until the next edition of SRS is released.

V. Vijaykumar

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An Invitation

The Local Government Quarterly invites contributions in the form of articles and research papers from its readers and well-wishers.

Contributions may be e-mailed to us in digital form as a Word file.

Articles could normally be between 3000 and 4000 words, though we do not wish to limit the size. As we print in black and white, tables, charts, graphs, images, etc. need to be compatible. We reserve the right to edit for sense, style, space, etc.

Contributors may e-mail their articles to:
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OBJECTIVES

The main emphasis of the Institute's work is to see that the local bodies can contribute more effectively to the development process and provide the citizens with better living conditions by meeting their aspirations in terms of required amenities, infrastructure and better environmental conditions, thus contributing to social and economic development of the society as a whole by better management of the human settlements. While these are the long-term objectives, the immediate ones are:

❖ To advance knowledge of the principles and practices of Local Government by conducting research and by organising training courses and programmes at various centres in India for officials and elected representatives in the local bodies.

❖ To strengthen and improve Local Government Institutions by improving their performance through education, orientation and bringing them together for common endeavor by organising specialised conferences, conventions and seminars.

❖ To make available a platform for members of local bodies and officials for exchange of views and ideas related to urban development and administration.

❖ To represent the views of local authorities supported by research work to the concerned higher authorities from time to time.

❖ To publish bibliographies, articles, books and other literature on matters of interest to local bodies.

❖ To publish journals, bulletins and other literature on different aspects of Local Government and on the working of Local bodies in different states.

❖ To undertake research studies in public administration, problems of local bodies and also in related topics of urban and environmental factors and arrange for their publication etc.

❖ To establish and maintain an information-cum-documentation service for local bodies.

❖ To undertake consultancy assignments in various areas of urban development and problems of local bodies with a view to improve and develop organisational, managerial and operational efficiency.

In view of the above, the Institute has been collaborating with the relevant government departments, Central and State, Universities, Organisations and Research Institutions. The work of the Institute covers several aspects involving a multi-disciplinary teamwork.