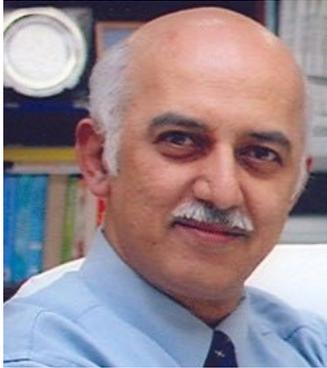


GUEST EDITORIAL

The Countless deaths due to Hunger and Starvation pandemic



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The Countless deaths due to Hunger and Starvation even in the normal days is much higher than one can imagine compared to that situation now along with COVID 19 Pandemic in Africa and other regions of the world is beyond one's imagination.

The Pandemic has struck all of us equally and we are aghast of its consequences. We are all in the same SEA of TROUBLE but in different boats!!! All are having the same risk. We are Locked down in individual boats perhaps. This is very complicated to imagine as in many low-income countries more people will die of Hunger, Starvation, and no food reaching them than Corona / COVID related deaths What is the answer to this? Vaccine is far away. Food Systems have Failed to deliver to the Jobless in Urban areas due to affordability. Subsidy of Meals to the Hungry suffering with support and philanthropy and many places shortage of Volunteers. This sets us into a thinking motion which needs an urgent solution.

Many countries are not slowing down the COVID infection rate by lockdown and so far, the spreading of the Gaussian Distribution is what is attempted to prevent all critical cases coming together to the Hospital and the system cannot take it whether it is a poor or rich country. It is where the medical infrastructure collapses. The world has, many affected and some who were in the acute stages were saved and the rest have recovered. Many died as even the best medical help could not save them. So, what is the Option till Vaccine reaches the farthest and poorest village in the world is the other question?

As you know FOOD is the only thing that has to reach them and India has done this marvelously well through the intervention of the government schemes, helped by NGOs and Voluntary organizations taking the lead for Migrant labor and many other ways to reach the most vulnerable. This comes from India's long experience with Noon-meal to nearly 120 million children spread across the country day after day and also many selfhelp groups coming to the fore immediately at the risk of their life in the frontline.

Food habits of each country, the immunity pushing habits of traditional wisdom and practices, along with the exhausting mental and physical strength after fighting hunger and starvation in the African continent is a challenge indeed; apart from Plant-based indigenous medicine, all add up to push the self- immunity. This can vary from region to region. Many countries have this rich tradition and the human body has mostly seen one vaccine or two like smallpox or BCG. Individual immunity is what boosts the natural immunity provided good nutrition is met on a daily basis on food-based approach. In the absence of any known medicine for COVID prevention, building body immunity is the only way.

Ultimately all have to be infected in a mild or moderate or severe way (hopefully a vaccine will reach earlier than that) and the dose of the infection will determine whether our internal resistance i.e. Immunity can fight or not. If we cannot, then medical support is needed. Of course, many in the population will not even know they were affected. Then the herd Immunity is what is talked about in some of the smaller countries but the problem is different in highly populated and low-income groups of countries. This needs to be recognised. Talking of Herd immunity, it is a wishful thinking that this particular virus Corona has nobody else to infect and we say it is all over, but it will stay with us

afterwards and visit from time to time as an uninvited Guest very similar to SARS, MARS, Influenza and Dengue and other Viral diseases. The whole world is hoping that in about 2 Years Vaccine will reach our arm provided phase three is successful if some vaccine comes by July 2021. Of course, the richer the country the faster the vaccine will reach the people through logistics and affordability! Slowly this situation is changing and most needed countries and populations must be the recipient first.

But the question remains: where is the Vaccine for hunger and starvation deaths for the poorest of the poor in these most difficult times?

I feel there are three sets of people in any population. One set will see and get the vaccine as the vaccine is made, the next set will not live to get one, and the third category will see the Vaccine but will not be able to afford it. So, the only way is to boost one's immunity multiple fold by FOODS in the region, that are traditionally well established with epidemiological evidence. That is what many groups of people away in the deep forest use to build immunity from 1000s of years. This is our best bet if one does not die of Hunger and Starvation still and fighting to exist. I only wish just like the Corona statistics logged on every three to four hours, I am sure there is a way to tag the number of people who are dying of hunger and starvation in the present crisis and in these times too, perhaps the deaths by COVID 19 will look much smaller. Can we start now at least such a clock? Visionaries like Hon Ruth Oniang'o can take a lead on this Clock to set it ticking so that world knows the real Pandemic 24 x 7 and 365 days a year and no Vaccine for it but only human -Human not distancing but coming closer for help for the NON COVID situation of undernutrition, poverty and Hunger. What a shame on this World to allow this to happen and continuing for decades after decades.

Perhaps the new way of life will emerge such as to avoid Crowded areas and no Travel for next year and to ensure not to fall ill by carelessness and to visit the hospital, which will expose to many other diseases which complicates the situation! But the only agenda the world has now is to ensure Food reaches all First and vaccines later as without food, Vaccine will be of no use as the person is not there to receive it. But the search for a viable vaccine must go on at high speed and Scientists are putting all efforts to make it happen at an early date. Till that time, we need to fight with our Immunity and Protecting the Older generation is a challenge and also including the nursing and pregnant women and children and those who have other NCDs (non-communicable diseases), which complicate the issues and are more vulnerable with Co -morbidity.

I would end by saying

" If Hunger and starvation deaths matter to us we shall matter more to it by Networking the Networks through modern Communication technologies and prevent it 100 percent as we are doing to Ward off Corona COVID Virus 19. It is only in that spirit if the world moves there is hope. COVID 19 Virus has made us realize how insecure we are hour to hour and day to day, with home, money, and food available in plenty for the rich. But the story on the other side is the pangs of hunger and starvation are worse than COVID, as it is not known when is the next meal tomorrow or never?"

The World came together to fight COVID 19 but never has it come together ever to fight hunger and starvation deaths which are conquerable, of course. Why this apathy??? I am Optimistic as, if COVID 19 can have a vaccine by Global Networking to save Humanity in about 18to 24 months, humanitarian networks must join hands to have Zero hunger and NO Starvation deaths in this World of haves and have- nots, perhaps earlier than the vaccine in about a Year? Is it too early to expect it to happen?

But the question remains: where is the Vaccine for hunger and starvation deaths for the poorest of the poor in these most difficult times and also in normal days? Let us begin today! My Confident Optimism says this can be done provided we act locally and think Globally and also Global action to come at Local levels and Local Problems to be hosted on line for rapid communication and solutions.

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