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How the Pandemic has Changed the World's Socio-Economic Conditions: Special Reference to South Asia

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The infectious virus first appeared in late December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and this pandemic (COVID-19) quickly spread to other cities in China and over 200 countries worldwide by April 25, 2020 (2020, Chen et al.). This has impacted lives and livelihood all around the world, due to stringent lockdowns and other measures to contain Covid-19, the global economy has faced a serious breakdown. Although its negative effects can be seen worldwide it has impacted the South Asian region differently due to its unique socio, cultural, economic, and political conditions. In terms of health infrastructure, South Asian countries are lagging behind their western counterparts. And the impact of the pandemic was disastrous. Even the best countries in terms of health infrastructure (like Italy) were unable to withstand it and were helpless in the face of this virus, meanwhile, India produced a vaccine named “Covaxin” against Covid-19, again becoming a global leader in vaccine manufacturing. In general, we cannot say that there is a direct correlation between the better facility and low fatality against Covid-19. Another impact was seen on migration and migrants' livelihood, as a large chunk of the population of South Asia lives outside their homelands for better job opportunities began returning to their homeland. This was not seen only in inter-regional migration but also in intraregional migration but the whole South Asian region cannot be generalized into one due to many reasons as disparities can be seen in terms of geography, economy, political, culture, infrastructure, etc. In this context, this paper examines the impact, risks, and challenges of Covid-19 on key socio-economic sectors including agriculture industries rural and urban settlements, migration and migrants, tourism. And at the end, we will try to find out the best possible way to come out of this crisis.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Socio-economic, Migration, Agriculture, South Asia

Introduction

The expansion of COVID 19 poses the greatest threat not only for the world economy, but also for living and livelihoods. What started as a health shock has now grown into Global crisis. Strongly globalized and networked the world is in a state of unprecedented economic growth recession (Ozili and Arun 2020). COVID 19 has become a new global systematic economic risk as almost all economies are affected no

matter how small or big it is, it's in the world. The economies of the all the nation is connected to each other because of the advanced globalization, economic integration, network between different economic sectors of the Economy or country is currently affecting other sectors. So first thing we should know about the Coronaviruses and its effects.

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Coronaviruses are a kind of virus. There are many unique kinds and a few cause sicknesses. A coronavirus diagnosed in 2019, SARS-CoV-2, has induced an epidemic of breathing contamination, referred to as COVID-19. As of now, researchers recognize that the coronavirus is unfolded via droplets and virus debris launched into the air while an inflamed individual breathes, talks, laughs, sings, coughs, or sneezes. Larger droplets might also additionally fall to the floor in some seconds however, tiny infectious debris can linger in the air and acquire in indoor places, specifically wherein many humans are present and there's negative ventilation. This is why mask-wearing, hand hygiene, and bodily distancing are crucial to stopping COVID-19. The first case of COVID-19 become stated on Dec. 1, 2019, and the purpose become a then-new coronavirus later named SARS-CoV-2. SARS-CoV-2 might also additionally have originated in an animal and changed (mutated) so it may purpose contamination in humans. In the past, numerous infectious sickness outbreaks had been traced to viruses originating in birds, pigs, bats, and different animals that mutated to turn out to be risky to humans. Research continues, and greater research might also additionally display how and why the coronavirus advanced to purpose pandemic sickness.

Countries across South Asia are experiencing a new and deadly surge of COVID-19. The region, home to almost 2 billion people, now accounts for half of all new, known infections globally (<https://www.unicef.org/rosa/racing-respond-covid-19-crisis-south-asia>). The countries of South Asia include Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Maldives.

South Asia is one of the poorest regions in the world: about one-third of the World's poor live in this region with about 70 percent living in rural areas and primarily dependent on agriculture. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 649 million people in South Asia were moderately or severely food insecure and

271 million were severely food insecure. Similarly, 36 percent of the children were stunted and 16 percent were acutely malnourished. The situation is likely to worsen further due to the effect of COVID-19 (Rasul, 2020).

COVID-19 has left long-term scars on the region's economy, the impacts of which can last well into the recovery. Many countries experienced lower investment flows, disruptions in supply chains, and setbacks to human capital accumulation, as well as substantial increases in debt levels. The pandemic is estimated to have caused 48 to 59 million people to become or remain poor in 2021 in South Asia (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/sar/overview#1>) and the coming of new variants like omicron has started questioning the preparedness of upcoming situations.

In this context, this paper examines the impact, risks, and challenges of Covid-19 on key socioeconomic sectors including agriculture industries rural and urban settlements, migration and migrants, tourism. And at the end, we will try to find out the best possible way to come out of this crisis.

Study Area

South Asia is the southernmost part of Asia, characterized both geographically and ethnographically. The countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka make up the region. The Indian Plate dominates the topography, which is mostly defined by the Indian Ocean on the south and the Himalayas, Karakoram, and Pamir ranges on the north. The Amu Darya River, which springs north of the Hindu Kush, forms part of the country's northwest boundary. South Asia is bordered on the land (clockwise) by Western Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia.

South Asia spans 5.2 million km² (2.0 million sq mi), accounting for 11.71 percent of the Asian continent

and 3.5 percent of the global land surface area. South Asia has a population of about 1.891 billion people, or roughly one-fourth of the world's population, making it the world's most populous and densely populated geographical region. It is home to a diverse population, accounting for 39.49 percent of Asia's population and over 24 percent of the world's population. India has the region's largest economy (US\$2.957 trillion) and accounts for about 80% of the South Asian economy; it is the world's fifth-largest in nominal terms and third largest in terms of purchasing power parity (US\$10.385 trillion). India is a member of the G-20 major economies and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) from the region. It is the world's fastest-growing major economy and one of the fastest in the world, with a growth rate of 7.3 percent in FY 2014–15.

Bangladesh is the third-largest economy in the area, with a GDP of \$378.656 billion and a GDP per capita of \$2214. It boasts Asia's fastest GDP growth rate. It is one of the world's developing and fastest-growing economies, as well as one of the Next Eleven countries. It's also one of the world's fastest-growing middle-income nations.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the effects of this deadly pandemic (COVID-19) on the South Asian society, as the effects may be of economic, social, behavioural, infrastructural, etc. Here we will analyse the following:

1. To examine the economic conditions pre and post COVID-19.
2. To see the social conditions pre and post COVID-19

3. To see the infrastructural preparedness to fight against the pandemic
4. To see the migration pattern and effect of COVID-19 on Migrants' livelihood
5. To analyse how social security plays a role during the pandemic.

Data Source and Methodology

In this study data from different sources are used to analyse the effects of COVID-19 on economy, society, demography or we can say Humans' livelihood as a whole. For economic impacts which would include migration pattern and infrastructural preparedness, we use data on GDP, Workforce, Employment, as well as migration. This data would be collected from International monetary fund, World Bank, International Labour Organisation and from many reports which publishes authentic data on this premises. For societal change we would prefer journal articles along with some case studies and their stories.

Discussion

Economic impacts of covid-19 Pandemic in South Asia

To contain the spread of COVID-19 South Asian countries took various stringent measures like complete lockdown which includes closure of offices, restaurants, hotels, schools, colleges and education institutions, international borders, suspension of visas, imposition of complete international and domestic travel bans, and ban on public gatherings; these measures helped many countries to reduce the severity of the Pandemic but it adversely impacted the economy of the nation's specifically which are developing and underdeveloped ones and changed the whole economic scenario in just a year or two. This could be analyse from the table -1

Table 1: Important economic indicators of South Asian Nations

Country	Real GDP growth (annual % change)			Inflation (% change in consumer prices)			Current account balance (% of GDP)		
	Actual	Projections		Actual	Projections		Actual	Projections	
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Afghanistan	3.9	-5.0	4.0	2.3	5.4	4.8	11.7	9.5	7.8
Bangladesh	8.2	3.8	4.4	5.5	5.6	5.9	-1.7	-1.5	2.8
Bhutan	3.8	0.6	-0.5	2.6	3.6	4.6	-22.5	-21.4	-13.5
India	4.2	-10.3	8.8	4.8	4.9	3.7	-0.9	-0.3	-0.9
Maldives	5.7	-18.6	12.7	1.3	0.4	2.7	-26.0	-31.8	-17.0
Nepal	7.1	0	2.5	4.6	6.4	6	-7.7	-2.5	-7.0
Pakistan	1.9	-0.4	1.0	6.7	10.7	8.8	-4.9	-1.1	-2.5
Sri Lanka	2.3	-4.6	5.3	4.3	4.7	4.6	-2.2	-3.6	-3.2

Sources: Internal Monetary Fund, 2020.

From table-2, these following could be the results that we can make out

Declining GDP Growth:

Pandemic Still is there. The actual economic impacts are not yet fully understood, various forecasts are made by South Asian countries experience the worst economic performance in the last 40 years during COVID-19 pandemic. The magnitude of the economic effect Depending on the duration and severity of the health crisis. The duration of the blockade and the method of the situation expands when the lockdown is released. By International Financial fund forecast, South Asian countries are expected to be in the -18% range (Maldives). In the year 2020, GDP growth rate will be 3.8% (Bangladesh), and for the remaining 5 countries is expected to have a negative growth trajectory (Table-1). Sudden fall GDP or negative GDP growth means an important proportion of the population will lose income during 2020.

Inflation: South Asian countries

Due to the slightly higher inflation rate in 2020 is the impact of COVID-19. Except for Pakistan (10.7%), all other South experienced lower inflation in Asian countries (0.40% in Maldives and 6.4% in Nepal) in 2020, which is comparable to the inflation rate in 2019 (Table 1). Currently all account balances (% of GDP) are expected to be negative for South Asian countries in 2020, except Afghanistan. But it is expected to be slightly lower than 2019 because of the many reasons some of them are the collapse of oil prices and the disruption of the global economy supply chain, imports are expected to decrease even more exports are lower than most countries. South Asia is a net importer of oil, with oil accounting for the largest share import bills. Imports goes down but that does not mean improvement in our economy that is because of the global restrictions on the movements of goods due to COVID-19 pandemic, this actually slow down the economy as it did not provide momentum to increase in exports.

Manufacturing sector gets a triple hit

1. Direct stock interruptions impeding creation since the infection is centered around the world's manufacturing heartland (Asia), and spreading quick in the other modern economies –the US and Germany.
2. Supply chain contamination will intensify the immediate stock shocks as assembling areas in less-impacted countries think that it is more diligently or potentially more costly to gain the vital imported modern contributions from the hard-hit countries, and thusly from one another.
3. Demand interruptions because of (1) macroeconomic drops in total interest, for example downturns, and (2) preparatory or keep a watch out buy delays by purchasers, what's more speculation delays by firm.

Social distancing keeps individuals from working and consuming-through in nearness to one another. Three kinds of exercises are quickly impacted: aggregate high-thickness creation, which is a part of many assembling manufacturing plants where labourers need to work intently together; aggregate high-thickness utilization, which is a part of numerous administrations exercises, similar to diversion (sports, music, and films), cafés, and travel, where purchasers need to get together; and general creation and utilization, which includes providers meeting buyers, which is a part of individual consideration, medical services, cafés, and a few kinds of retail, in all this impacted the economy as a whole.

Impact on Migration

Migration and the subsequent remittances is one of the significant wellsprings of jobs for a large number of vulnerable families in the region (KNOMAD, 2020; World Bank, 2020c). The remittances from migrant workers fills in as a life saver for their families and as a significant wellspring of foreign currency, which contributes essentially to the public economy. For example, in Nepal, remittances contributes around

27% of the public GDP (2019). India is the biggest recipient of worldwide remittance, not just in the area however internationally, with US\$ 83 billion out of 2019. Remittances is additionally a significant wellspring of family pay in other South Asian nations where the settlement GDP proportion was 8.2% in Sri Lanka, 7.9% in Pakistan, 5.8% in Bangladesh and 4.6% in Afghanistan in 2019 (World Bank and KONOMAD, 2020).

Inadequate Social Security Coverage

South Asian countries are more susceptible to the unknown communicable disease which was spreading at a rapid pace. Nobody knows how to tackle it and in this scenario health infrastructure was also not so good which leads to a helpless situation. From the given table-2 we can analyse the public health spending which is a very crucial part of imparting health infrastructure to the common people of the society.

Table-2: Basic facilities in health sector and Social Security Coverage in South Asian countries

Countries	Public health exp (% GDP)	Basic sanitation services	Employment with social security	Employment without social security	Potential job losses (million)
Afghanistan	0.49	38.75	3.7	96.3	12.37
Bangladesh	0.47	43.78	2.5	97.5	
Bhutan	2.49	65.67	14.00	86.00	
India	0.91	50.48	10.3	89.7	112.8
Maldives	5.21	96.2			
Nepal	1.00	51.28	3.4	96.6	2.27
Pakistan	0.72	54.45	3.9	96.1	11.71
Sri Lanka	1.62	93.41	24.1	75.9	0.92
World	5.8	69.94	41.3	58.7	

Sources: ESCAP, 2020.

Table 2 explains that there is very less amount of expenditure of GDP is done on public health along with the social security which says that very few percentage of people is covered under social security this makes the situation more vulnerable and people are more prone to job loss. Without social security

people stake their life at stake in this pandemic situation and this could be seen with the following table-3 which shows the ranking and score of South Asian countries on the global health social security front.

Table-3: Health security ranking and score of South Asian countries.

Countries	Global health security rank and score*	
	Rank	Score
India	57	46.5
Bhutan	85	40.3
Pakistan	105	35.5
Nepal	111	35.1
Bangladesh	113	35.0
Sri Lanka	120	33.9
Maldives	121	33.8
Afghanistan	130	32.3

Source and notes: Higher the score better (lower) the rank. Score is 0–100. 100 is the best health security condition. The rank and scores are based on the following criteria: **A)** Prevention of the emergence of release of pathogens; **B)** Early detection and reporting for epidemic of potential international concern; **C)** Rapid response to and mitigation of the spread of an epidemic; **D)** Sufficient and robust health system to treat the sick and protect health workers; **E)** Commitment to improving national capacity, financing and adherence to norms, and **F)** Overall risk environment and country vulnerability to biological threats. source: Babu et al (2020)

The following table (Table 3) shows the average score of Global Health Security (GHS) index for South Asian countries. The global average of the GHS score is 40.2. Among the South Asian countries, India and Bhutan are above the global average while the remaining countries (Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives and Afghanistan) are below the global average score. This shows the global position of South Asian countries on the global health security status in the global context which imparts that we as a South Asian nations are very much behind many nations of the world.

Impact on Agriculture

The susceptibility and vulnerability of agricultural value chains to COVID-19

- Factors that make farm households, food enterprises and value chains more vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19, particularly short-term episodes of large numbers of prime-age adults being unavailable for work; this might apply to time-critical agricultural tasks like planting or harvesting.
- In South Asia, majority of the rural population depend on agriculture and agri-related activities. Agriculture in this region is labor intensive and employs over 50% of the respective countries' labor force. Because of its high labor intensity, agriculture based rural economy and livelihoods are disrupted by COVID-19
- Most affected sub-sectors are fruits, vegetables, poultry and dairy.
- Similarly, dairy farmers could not sell milk; beekeepers could not migrate their bees for spring blooms or get buckets for collection/storage of harvested honey and perform honeybee colony multiplication work/ queen rearing, and people could not collect/harvest non timber forest products (NTFPs) either

Socio-Cultural Impacts

- Physical isolation caused by the lockdowns has impacted social relationships, social interactions and shed light on deep-rooted social norms.
- The negative psychological impacts of the pandemic and measures to contain it are raising concerns about mental wellbeing, especially that of senior citizens, frontline healthcare providers, and individuals with existing health problems.
- Many students whose campuses are closed find themselves stranded, often very far from their homes and many express a sense of hopelessness.
- Closure of schools has also denied to children of poorer households, access to mid-day meals which could have adverse effects on nutrition, resulting in increased rates of stunting.
- It is also reported domestic abuse of women has sharply increased during the lockdown period in many parts of South Asia.

Infrastructural hurdles

- The South Asian nations do not have robust national plans, guidelines or laws that account for the surveillance and control of multiple zoonotic pathogens of concern for public health.
- Most nations in the region have a poor allocation of resources to health security.
- Although laboratory systems test some pathogens of importance, they cannot test them all.
- The South Asian countries have a shortage of health workers and have less than one field epidemiologist per 200,000 people.

Measures to contain the epidemic

South Asian nations started mediations as soon as February and March 2020 to handle the COVID-19 pandemic. All nations set up measures to limit approaching outsiders, did not license unfamiliar travel, air travel was suspended, and the people who gone to different nations were relied upon to isolation

for the number of days determined by the country. The subtleties of the course of events what's more degree of early reaction in the locale are given in Table 4. Regardless of helpless pandemic readiness, South Asian nations mounted a sensibly decent reaction against the COVID-19 emergency.

Table-4: Response against COVID-19 in South Asian countries.

Timeline and extent of early response against the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in South Asian countries.

Country	Airport screening initiated	Quarantine initiation	Lockdown initiation	Duration of lock
India	31 January 2020	26 January 2020	25 March 2020	75 days
Pakistan	24 January 2020	28 March 2020	No national lockdown	-
Bhutan	6 March 2020	16 March 2020	24 March 2020	21 days
The Maldives	26 January 2020	10 March 2020	16 April 2020	-
Bangladesh	22 January 2020	9 March 2020	26 March 2020	50 days
Sri Lanka	27 January 2020	13 March 2020	18 March 2020	52 days
Nepal	End of February 2020	Mid-February 2020	19 March 2020	-
Afghanistan	25 January 2020	-	28 March 2020	-

This table shows the timeline of when various interventions were adopted in each country as a measure to reduce the number of people contracting COVID-19, nation internationally.

Along with the lockdowns, guidelines on social distancing, compulsion on wearing of mask is also made to contain the spread of the deadly virus.

Developing Countries: An Example to look upon Europe has been one of the worst-affected regions in the early phase of the outbreak. European countries accounted for ten of the top twenty countries with the highest death rate per million population. The remaining ten are located in the Americas. This includes the United States, which has the world's largest number of confirmed cases and deaths.

On the other hand, most of Africa and Asia appeared to have been spared. These were the ten countries with the lowest COVID-related death rate per million among those having documented COVID-related deaths. At the same time, much of the developing world's success has gone unnoticed.

Different techniques to documenting mortality, Africa's young demographic profile, more usage of outdoor places, or possibly even high levels of potentially protective antibodies developed from previous illnesses could all explain lower disease incidence in the developing world.

Senegal began developing a ten-minute COVID-19 test that costs less than \$1 to conduct and does not require complex laboratory equipment early in the pandemic. Similarly, Rwandan scientists devised a sophisticated technique that enabled them to test a large number of samples at the same time by pooling them together. This resulted in lower costs and faster turnaround times, resulting in more people getting tested and a more accurate picture of the disease in the country.

In Latin America, governments have embraced technology to monitor COVID-19 cases and send public health information. Colombia has developed the CoronApp, which allows citizens to receive daily

government messages and see how the virus is spreading in the country without using up data. India also developed Aarogya Setu app which is COVID-19 "contact tracing, syndromic mapping and self-assessment" app. Chile has created a low-cost, unpatented coronavirus test, allowing other low-resource countries to benefit from the technology.

India developing Covid 19 vaccines and is on its way to full immunization. South Asian countries not only have followed stringent lockdowns but have also stood with each other with solidarity.

The pandemic has shown why we need global solidarity. Globalisation has made countries interdependent, not just economically but also biologically.

Yet the efforts or local knowledge is not appreciated. It's not that there isn't information and competence outside of the developed world; it's just that, given the structural distinctions between developed and developing countries, such knowledge isn't viewed as important. Consider the following last example.

Between the start of April and the end of June, the Rural Development Foundation based in Sindh province in Pakistan on its own decreased the spread of infection in the region by more than 80%. It did this by engaging communities through information campaigns and sanitation measures. Community-level approaches have also been successfully deployed in the DRC and Sierra Leone. During these countries' Ebola outbreaks, rather than relying on tech and apps, authorities trained local people to do in-person contact tracing instead. And there are many more examples to look at. And hence it is important not only to incorporate the local knowledge but to also appreciate the efforts of developing countries the way it has responded to pandemics despite being economically weaker than developed countries.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a huge risk and brutally impacted the monetary condition and business of people in South Asia. The COVID-19 is at this point spreading and it is difficult to anticipate when it will be completely contained. The remarkable test introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic calls for especially sincere and conclusive exercises to ensure that people's lives are saved, occupations are gotten and the economy recovers. The Covid-19 eruption has caused direct massive costs on human prosperity and money related activities, and addresses the most negative effects on positions of needy individuals and the feeblest organizations. This survey discusses a part of the critical key centres that may help with aiding feeble social event of people who are encountering this pandemic. Since the incorporation of government upheld retirement system is inconsequential or missing overall in most of the South Asian countries, the public authority should sort out some way to give a kind of government managed retirement workplaces to the most appalling people, even more expressly when they lose their relaxed work openings. Dealing with saving affinities for needy individuals and giving permission to banking organizations would, for instance, give security nets during periods of crisis. As prosperity, environment and social issues are interconnected, facilitated attempts are expected to direct and recover from the damages brought by the COVID-19 on our social orders and economies. State run organizations need to zero in on their activities for short, medium, and long stretch. Nearby and overall coordinated effort is moreover essential to address the step by step extending impacts of COVID-19 on different social orders. The countries of South Asia should act overall to address their troubles and to make positive conditions for money related recovery. Basically, inventive frameworks and approaches are relied upon to address the Covid challenges. The state run organizations of the South Asian countries should seriously think about the going with approach measures to reduce the unfavorable outcomes of the

pandemic on needy individuals and most powerless sections of the overall population and to progress monetary recovery. And these could be the possible suggestion to contain the pandemic and overcome from the impacts of it:

- Plan for a monetary recuperation from COVID-19
- Create guide for accomplishing short, medium, and long haul objectives to rejuvenate the public and sub-public economy.
- Organize the financial, money related and advancement intercession
- Improve the endeavours of social security
- Reinforce the current destitution mitigation program and designated neediness decrease programs in resource building and financial recuperation.

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