

Covid 19 Pandemic: Record of Human Response towards diseases from Historic Times

^[1] Nasreen Iqbal Kasana. ^[2] Dr. Balkar Singh
^{[1][2]} Humanities and Social Sciences, Lovely Professional University

Abstract: - The history of plagues, epidemics and pandemics is the foretellers of human affliction. Perhaps Covid 19 wake up all the 21st century's generation to know the entire history of deadly diseases which end up an entire lineage of certain region or civilization. For example the Hamin Mangha is an archaeological site in the northeastern China where due to an epidemic the population of that entire region was burned down regardless of the age. Thucydides, a Greek historian opines, " people in good health were all of a sudden attacked by violent heats in the head, and redness and inflammation in the eyes, the inward parts, such as the throat or tongue, becoming bloody and emitting an unnatural and fetid breath" when Athens suddenly got attacked by a pernicious epidemic. Such deadly diseases shift the course of habits from bottom to the top level i.e. from single individual to society, from a wagger to a government employee, from the store house to big malls, and what not else. Between all these points a change occurs which is fluent in nature. So the researcher while keeping current Covid 19 Scenario in front seeks to highlight what kind of meanings society add to the outburst of pandemics. Along with the researcher will show the various social reactions of society in reference to the outbreak of contagious diseases. Further, the researcher will apply the Deleuze and Guattari's concept of Rhizome to the nature of viruses and Bacteria.

Keywords: epidemic pandemic civilization contagious Rhizome

1. INTRODUCTION

Leprosy was an implacable disease of 14th century. Breathtaking symptoms appear in an individual suffering from this disease like the legions destroy the facial skin and hence nerve tissues. The reference of this disease is mentioned in a book Leviticus 13 and 14, the third book of Torah and Old Testament according to Medieval Europeans. This religious text addresses a particular disease namely *tasarth* "repulsive scaly skin disease" to which Greeks translated as leper, it guides the priest to check on the people who are suffering from this disease and hence announce them unclean as it is a major offence. Now this notion as expressed in the book brings wreath havoc on the people suffering from Leprosy because medieval Europeans believed that it is the same disease which is mentioned in Leviticus. The sufferers of Leprosy were asked to close themselves inside the cell and return back until they get clean. On the contrary, the Christians believed that this disease is the punishment straight from God for man's wrongdoings. But the years 1000 and 1250 were more harsh and tough for the leprosy sufferers as there were lawful interventions in their life. It was in the year 1179 when spiteful laws were imposed on the lepers. The leper was supposed to fell down on his kneel before the priest in fully black clothes in the church where in

the Priest denounces him in following words:

I forbid you to ever enter the church or monastery, fair, mill, marketplace, or company of persons. I forbid you to ever leave your house without your leper's costume, in order that one recognize you and that you never go barefoot. I forbid you to ever wash your hands or anything about you in the stream or in the fountain. . . . I forbid you to touch anything you bargain for or buy, until it is yours. I forbid you to enter a tavern I forbid you to live with any woman other than your own. I forbid you, if you go on the road and you meet some person who speaks to you, to fail to put yourself downwind before you answer. I forbid you to go in a narrow lane, so that should you meet any person, he should not be able to catch the affliction from you. I forbid you, if you go along any thoroughfare, to ever touch a well or the cord unless you have put on your gloves. I forbid you to ever touch children or give them anything. I forbid you to eat or drink from any dishes other than your own. I forbid you drinking or eating in company, unless with lepers (J Hays William 21 – 24).

There was a time when Kings were supposed to owe some magical powers for retaining their kingship. Two kings i.e. Robert II „the pious“ of France and Edward „the confessor“ of England were known as the saint with healing powers. The French and English Kings claimed their power over a disease

called Scrofula which was initiated by the Philip I of France and Henry I of England. The sufferer was cured with the royal touch of King's hand over the infected region (blotches on facial skin and face). The former discussed two diseases took the form of epidemic only but Black Death appeared as a Pandemic lasted till three centuries. This plague changed the entire scenario of Western Civilization like Italy focused much on advancing itself in the Medical area unlike during the Leprosy and Scrofula times. In Venice an Ad hoc committee was set up which focused on „preserve public health and avoid the corruption of the environment“. (Hays 54 - 55). They actually believed in the Doctrine of Contagion which stated two key factors in the direction of controlling plague i.e. quarantine and distancing the victim (Hays 53 – 54).

Recently Covid 19 stormed the world with its unique occurrence which is now declared as a Pandemic. This pandemic didn't affect the people physically but psychologically as well. It raised the anti Chinese sentiments among the people as Times of India stated, “There's a surge in antic China's sentiment and nationalist upswing in the country, according to a Delhi University survey on psychologically impact of Covid 19 pandemic on citizens (Jain). It has also given air to the Starvation crisis regarding which New York Times said, “The coronavirus pandemic has brought hunger to the millions of people around the world. National lockdown and social distancing measures are drying up work and income, and are likely to disrupt agricultural production and supply routes- leaving millions to worry how they will get enough to eat” (Dahir). But despite all these changes the corona has exposed the grave inner of humans in India especially a large of migration is happening across the world. Migration in India appeared in the image of communalism, jingoism and inequality as Ramasubramaniyam through the medium of a print newspaper opined, “Prevailing political conditions in India already unstable prior to Covid 19 and the government has been ill equipped to deal with public health crisis” (J)

From the above discussion it can be concluded that society at large believed in the magic, healing powers and thereafter it jumped to medical ailments. This is how society reacted to the diseases. The researcher argues that diseases are Rhizomatic in nature according to Deleuze and Guattari's Rhizome concept. The diseases flow in nature beyond the limits of its occurrence and past constraints. Even though vaccines are discovered from time to time but the same disease appears in other forms. Recently, the entire world is choked by the virus Covid 19 which is equal to Rhizome as its transmission is continually flowing rapidly. The virus deterritorialize its host afterwards the host gets in touch with another random fellow, the virus further reterritorialises it

(Deleuze and Guattari 28 – 32). The doctors advised the people not to go outside without wearing mask. If anyone feels symptoms, should be self quarantined for 14 days.

Face Mask, Sanitizers and Humanity: A wave of face mask and sanitizers appeared in the corona times. WHO reached out to the door of the different countries to announce the use of Face Masks and Sanitizers to control the spread of virus through touch and breathing. A fearful atmosphere grappled the humanity. Doctors became the soldiers during such insecure times. The Humanity came to stake when the China became the epicenter of racist remarks as the Mexico actress Carman Salinas expressed, “ How I am gonna make fun of them? This is a terrible disease. This is what happens to *Chinitos* for eating doggies and kittens. They were not punished by God: life punished them for gorging, gorging and those things.” (Rivera Sanchez 35). This statement was a direct attack on their habits of eating food which opened the doors of trolling for them.

Human Intervention and the Climate: The globalization in some way has taken the world into a large matrix of climate crisis. It is rightly said that what we sow shall we reap. This Covid 19 no doubt is the result of unstoppable human interventions in the climate field. We build the skyscrapers at the cost of green lands, convert the natural water resources into the commercial project, exported the mammals for the sake of its skin and taste and hence there are so many such cruel history of our behavior with environment Fall in the climate poured the whole world into a battle of fighting a virus. Economic crisis are surging day by day as The Guardian, a leading newspaper of USA stated, “The pandemic has forced governments into a difficult balancing act between ensuring public safety and well being maintaining profit margins and growth targets. Ultimately, the prospect of a large death toll and the collapse of health system have forced countries to put millions of people on lockdown” (Kolinjivadi 2020)

Conclusion

From the above discussion the researcher has reached to the conclusion that the diseases are manmade more than their natural occurrence and the theorists Deleuze and Guattari are much relevant in the contemporary scenario of Covid 19 because it is being supposed that another prototype of Covid 19 is yet to re appear in 2030 again. So it is up to the entire human race on the earth to protect its environment from the reoccurrence of such deadly virus

Work Cited

- [1] Dahir, Abdi Latif. “Instead of Coronavirus, the hunger will kill us.” The New York Times, nytimes.com. Accessed on 18 May, 2020.
- [2] Deleuze, Giles and Felix Guattari. “Introduction.”

- A Thousand Plateaus*, translated by Brian
- [3] Maussami. vol.2, London. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2005.
 - [4] Hays, J.N. *The Burden of Diseases: Epidemics and Human response in Western History*. Rutgers University Press, 2009.
 - [5] Jain, Isha. "Covid – 19 pandemic leads to boycott – China sentiment, nationalist upswing, says DU study." *Times of India.com*, timesofindia.com. Accessed on 21 April, 2020.
 - [6] Kolinjivadi, Vijay. "The Coronavirus is the outbreak is the part of climate change crisis." AlJazeera, Aljazeera.com. Accessed on 10 April 2020.
 - [7] Ramasubramaniam, J. "India's treatment of Muslims and migrants put lives at risk during Covid 19." *The Conversation*, the conversation.com. Accessed on 23 May, 2020.

