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Volume: 7, Issue 3 , 2020 (July-Sept)

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW, EDUCATION, SOCIAL AND SPORTS STUDIES (IJLESS)

A Peer Reviewed and Refereed Journal

DOI: 10.33329/ijless

<http://ijless.kypublications.com/>

ISSN:2455-0418 (Print), 2394-9724 (online)

2020©KY PUBLICATIONS, INDIA

www.kypublications.com

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Stigmatisation of Women's Bodies & COVID - 19 Pandemic in India: An Analysis of the "SILENCED" Sides

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DOI: [10.33329/ijless.7.3.52](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijless.7.3.52)



ABSTRACT

The Covid - 19 has influenced and changed the whole world from multiple points of view. For the greater part of us, this is the first (and ideally the main) season of seeing such a huge scope pandemic. But human life has been influenced by illnesses since the commencement, and films and books have caught stories around them routinely.

In his sonnet, 'The Abandoned Cemetery at Balasore, India' Jayanta Mahapatra invokes a climate of "ageless boredom" that anticipates a pandemic approaching over mankind. For the writer, the cholera plague typifies "a peaceful force" as it "moves effectively, quickly" through "over a wide span of time" into "the developing youthful, into the last bone", taking steps to wear out "all fact with ruin". The sonnet underlines the inconsequentiality of human life against an infectious disease's strong force.

As we battle with the episode of Covid 19, we should recall that the human tryst with pandemics is ancient. From the Antonine Plague (165-180AD), the Plague of Justinian (541-543 AD), and the Great Bubonic Plague in Europe (1346-1353) to the Spanish Flu (1918-20) HIV (1981-) and the Asian Flu (1957-58). It was Homer who initially utilized the term epidemios for the returning locals in Odyssey. The word was first supported as a clinical term in a composition by Hippocrates to signify "what flows or spreads in a nation." Writers over hundreds of years have investigated the effect of plagues in exposition and refrain.

This paper critically investigates the social stigma and the female body in this current pandemic scenario. How women in the COVID -19 contexts are birthing, how the partners of women are responding to them in this lockdown, how their bodies are stigmatised and how does it make them not doubly but triply marginalised in the society. I connect my idea to how illness has always been contributing to the formation of this "OTHERING". Women, given that how stigmatised their bodies already are in terms of fat, beauty standards, voluptuousness etc become victims to such pandemic situation and bear the burden even more intense, always.

Keywords: - COVID -19, Pandemic, Women, Bodies, Social Stigma, Victims, Otherness.

"The plague was posting guards at the entryways and dismissing ships headed for Oran," composed Albert Camus. For contemporary readers, the anecdotal assessment of a pandemic is

practically inseparable from Camus' *The Plague*. The original metaphorical work is an evaluate of "offensive realism" just as a realistic record of human showdown and co-residence with death.

How obvious these words ring today: "Many kept trusting that the scourge would before long cease to exist and they and their families be saved. Hence, they felt under no commitment to roll out any improvement in their propensities, up 'til now. Plague was an unwanted visitant, bound to accept it leave one day as surprisingly as it had come."

As expressed by Jayanta Mohapatra in his sonnet that nothing in this world is perpetual. Everything is transient in nature. This COVID 19 pandemic has caused us to understand this exercise so profound. Cash vocation and movement status nothing stays with us. Wellbeing is riches, this saying goes to its actual importance in the event that we consider the setting of this pandemic COVID 19. In any case, regardless of having some certain results as acknowledgment this pandemic like consistently has become a site for social shame. Shame with bodies, with patients, with infections. Susan Sontag in her work *Illness as Metaphor* says that Illness has fundamentally been utilized as an illustration in any culture anyway the most honest method of with respect to ailment is and the most beneficial method of being sick is to oppose such figurative reasoning. Anyway, this opposition is nearly denied in a general public where ladies actually play the oppressed "Other" position.

The Canadian humanist Erving Goffman conjectured that social shame is a trait or conduct that socially dishonor a person by prudence of them being named the "unwanted other" by society.² There has been a long relationship of social disgrace with disease. Through the cycle of othering, social disgrace isolates the solid from the evil. It makes generalizations and bias. "Othering," initially a philosophical idea given by Edmund Husserl, portrays the reductive activity of naming and characterizing an individual as a subordinate regarding category. This produces a "we versus they" polarity that helps in the foundation of a financial chain of importance. During seasons of social emergency (pandemics for this situation), it can prompt segregation and fault. The individuals who have any relationship with the sickness are victimized and socially secluded, with their basic liberties being disregarded. The obscure components about ailment make dread, legends, and bits of gossip around them that elevate social shame. This can adversely influence the treatment and avoidance of the ailment. Particularly, pandemics of irresistible malady flare-ups have had a chronicled relationship with shame and bias. Mary Malon, in the eighteenth Century England, got notorious as "Typhoid Mary," blameworthy of spreading the contamination among wealthy families, however she was unaffected. The idea of "asymptomatic transporters" came very later; in any case, the reading material actually bear her name related with an illness. Transmission of contaminations has consistently been related with "neediness, foulness, and class," to keep up a misguided feeling of confirmation and security for the higher areas of society. The "diseases" of bubonic plague, Asiatic influenza and cholera, Middle East respiratory condition, and Ebola episode in Africa, all have been related with polarization, prejudice, fault against specific nationalities, and resultant mental distress. The idea of naming sicknesses by the nation or spot of cause has been named as "pandemic orientalism" and is viewed as a type of social labelling. Even (AIDS) had been named as the "Gay Plague," being speculated as a "divine discipline" for homosexuality. The convention is reflected in the enactment of numerous nations that actually keep gay men from giving organs and blood. Exploration has indicated that the dread and vulnerability of obscure contaminations influence human conduct altogether. Frenzy, nonsensical convictions, hostility, fault, and "othering" are a portion of the undesirable offshoots. The need to consider somebody responsible dependent on force and social order has been clarified by the social attributional theories. Through decades, people have taken care of being "social creatures" by encouraging disdain mongering as an inescapable backup of natural fiascos.

The flare-up of Covid ailment 2019 (COVID-19) has made social shame and biased conduct towards people who are seen to have any contact with the sickness. This is one of the most-huge scope

flare-ups known to the advanced world. It has influenced in excess of 10 million worldwide and executed almost 516,000 – the numbers ascending as we speak. Pandemics, for example, these are much past simply organic wonders. They make enduring psychosocial results that persevere longer than the disease itself. Other than the direct mental effect of pressure, dread, nervousness, and widespread panic, COVID-19 has prompted the development of noteworthy disgrace, “othering,” bias, and accuse that have stressed both between provincial and global relations. From the very season of its starting point at Wuhan, China, the contamination has been named as “Chinese infection” or “Kung Flu,” which later encouraged paranoid fears about organic fighting, which stressed global relations. Incidentally, social disgrace has spread quicker than the infection itself. This critique quickly looks at the resultant social shame of COVID-19 pandemic in India, the weak populaces, and the effect of it on the general public on the loose. It at that point features the ways forward to moderate this “social wickedness” related with the flare-up.

The Victims of Social Stigma during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The shame around COVID-19 stems from the way that a ton is obscure about it. Researchers, specialists, and clinical experts around the world are as yet working dangerously fast to make sense of the procedures to manage the curiosity of this infection. The dread of the obscure has overpowered mankind developmentally. Individuals will in general separation and isolate themselves from the obscure. Degenerate has been marked and defamed in all periods of mankind’s history, especially throughout the entire existence of clinical science. At whatever point there has been an absence of clarification, be it logical or heavenly, the influenced people have been isolated, marked, and criticized, and hence, alienated as a result.

Social shame towards the isolated seems, by all accounts, to be typical conduct to the regular mass. It increases social acknowledgment in the midst of the bedlam of the obscure. Institutional isolation of the individuals who are influenced by an infection, at present COVID-19, further reinforces the disgrace. We know about the social disgrace experienced by the individuals who are admitted to foundations for psychological instability, uncleanliness, HIV Aids, or tuberculosis, even today. Even the avoidance of COVID-19 requests isolation; terms like isolate, social separating, and segregation have become a basic aspect of the family unit jargon. Emergency clinics have been designated especially for the treatment of COVID-19, separate research facilities been allocated, isolate zones been set, regulation zones have been made, and the nation has been partitioned into shading zones relying upon the frequency rate. For sure, these are steps to straighten the ever-rising diagram. Nonetheless, since a pandemic is considerably more than a biomedical marvel, every one of these means have their own social ramifications too. For instance, the Air India team individuals who brought several abandoned Indians back home experienced being vilified by their neighbors when their homes were stepped “quarantined.” Similar encounters have been accounted for by home-isolated people when the Delhi Government chose to set up sees outside their home.

Episodes of social vilification towards the individuals who are influenced with COVID-19, including their relatives, have been wild. People who have surrendered to the ailment have been denied their last customs. Much of the time, the families have would not acknowledge the bodies, and the state governments have played out the incinerations instead.^{14, 15} As an activity towards such shunning practices, a few conditions of India even gave requests to bring criminal accusations against anybody discouraging the exhibition of the last rites.¹⁶ Many episodes have become known where the survivors have been disconnected by the area, compelling them to carry on with a day to day existence that is a long way from customary. Being marked with numerous labels like “super-spreader” just exacerbates their suffering. The clinical manifestations of COVID-19 die down, deserting the general public to segregate the survivors for quite a long time countless.

The shame is coordinated not just towards the individuals who have recouped from COVID-19, the individuals who are going through treatment, or who are dared to be influenced or who have capitulated to it or their families. The brunt of social disgrace is additionally looked by bleeding edge laborers, clinical professionals, medical caretakers, police faculty, and so forth. They have been driven away from the area and denied admittance to their homes and the families have been undermined. The unconquerable barbarities that they have been going through to dominate this race against the infection have been disregarded. Rather, social shame has overwhelmed the generosity of those for whom they are fighting. The manner in which emotional well-being experts are named as paagolon ka doctor (for the distraught individual), the bleeding edge laborers who are keeping an eye on those influenced by COVID-19 are being generalized against.

Social disgrace towards certain minimized gatherings like the destitute or the transient workers has additionally been seen. On getting back following quite a while of being abandoned in different pieces of the nation, the laborers and their families have been singled out, scoffed at, and bothered by the network individuals. At certain spots, they have been pushed off even subsequent to finishing the required 14 days' quarantine. Similarly, in the wake of the spray of cases following a strict get-together in Delhi, the web-based media was overwhelmed with communalistic and provocative sentiments. In a nation like India, with a background marked by numerous collective mobs, such disparagement may bear critical outcomes. The Government of India gave a warning on April 8, 2020, requesting that its resident's demonstration all the more dependably in such a crucial time and to cease from criticizing any network or area.

COVID-19, Obstetric Violence & Indian Women: A Challenge Yet Not Resolved

The forceful and abrupt lockdown has left pregnant ladies helpless against dehumanized consideration. An ongoing report on institutional conveyance in Jharkhand describes a pregnant lady's understanding of being asked by an administration medical clinic's staff to tidy up her blood, and afterward being dismissed because of a paranoid fear of "spreading Covid". Subsequent to enduring this disgraceful treatment, the lady kept in touch with the main priest that she was manhandled on the grounds that she was Muslim and that the experience finished in the loss of her infant.

On the off chance that past encounters of irresistible sickness pandemics are anything to pass by, the blow-back of COVID-19 will be far more prominent than the quantity of individuals contaminated by it. A terrifying however relevant case of this was as of late cited in extraordinary rules delivered by the World Health Organization (WHO) to assist nations with keeping up basic wellbeing administrations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fundamentally with regards to three African nations, the report expressed that "during the 2014-15 Ebola flare-up, the expanded number of passings brought about by measles, jungle fever, HIV-AIDS and tuberculosis (TB) owing to wellbeing framework disappointments surpassed passings from Ebola."

Up until now, COVID-19 is ending up being a famous exercise in 'gain from your mix-ups' as reports of weakened admittance to medications for TB and HIV patients in India have surfaced. India's forceful proportion of an abrupt and not well-arranged lockdown has exacerbated the issues of its powerless and deficient general wellbeing framework. Especially for ladies during this pandemic, wellbeing on a continuum has been undermined with sharp ascent in instances of abusive behaviour at home, obstructions to utilizing safe premature birth administrations, and serious difficulties in admittance to and nature of maternal and youngster wellbeing administrations.

By all appearances, the Jharkhand episode adds to a few different occurrences of public scorn in India in the quick wake of COVID-19. Nonetheless, a fundamental issue in this record is a particular and standardized type of viciousness against ladies during work, differently known as 'insolence and misuse', 'abuse', 'dehumanized consideration', and 'obstetric brutality'. It is a universally naturalized wonder going with institutional birth inside an over-medicalised setting, drawing upon power

progressive systems between the patient and suppliers. It has been conceptualized as seven thorough classes, which incorporate audacious types of physical and obnoxious attack of ladies, just as the nuanced issues of a lady's loss of self-governance during work and absence of educated assent for unindicated clinical techniques.

As per this arrangement, the disregard and deserting showed in the report from Jharkhand would fall under 'inability to fulfil proficient guidelines of care'. Simultaneously, the classification of 'shame and segregation' would incorporate the religion-based, partial abuse distributed to the lady.

In another occurrence, a nearby paper in Madhya Pradesh has announced an instance of carelessness where a pregnant lady arrived at an administration clinic in Indore however the specialist wouldn't approach the patient and endorsed prescriptions without a registration. The lady was then taken to a private clinic where they requested Rs 25,000 however upon the spouse's get back with the cash, they alluded the patient back to the administration medical clinic. This pointless to and from, including the deferral because of a muddled and extravagant charge, brought about the lady's demise and is another type of 'obstetric viciousness', classified as 'wellbeing framework conditions and limitations'.

India's wellbeing strategy and projects have perceived the presence of this type of savagery against ladies and reacted with rules to improve nature of care around birth (LaQshya) and an activity zeroed in on guaranteed conveyance of maternal and infant medical care administrations (SUMAN). As we fighter on through the COVID-19 flare-up, a direction notes delivered by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has included maternal, infant and youngster wellbeing inside basic wellbeing administrations. In particular, 'guaranteeing safe institutional conveyance' has been perceived as the privilege of each lady.

Regardless of this acknowledgment and authority government warning, the ground the truth is dreary. Absence of transportation to wellbeing offices, which was at that point a significant worry for ladies in provincial territories, has been disturbed by the lockdown, as orchestrating a pass is a benefit and ladies are rather falling back on home conveyances. In any event, when ladies arrive at foundations, the absence of appropriate offices and sufficient HR puts ladies in danger of maternal mortality, a significant general wellbeing worry for India. The weak time of pregnancy should be treated with a similar direness as we do the novel Covid episode.

As India moves well into the third phase of the spread of the illness, and is an all-inclusive time of public lockdown, the nation needs to forcefully increase testing by effectively looking for cases and detaching suspected cases in metropolitan and provincial zones the same. The cutting-edge laborers from specialists and medical caretakers to ASHAs and ANMs should be provided with individual defensive hardware and empowered to spare lives without bargaining their own. At the same time, contact following should be embraced without the weight of shame and segregation, a training which will urge medical services experts to react delicately to patients with other medical problems.

One must not overlook that even before the novel Covid emergency, ladies were at that point experiencing brutality and misuse, absence of admittance to contraception or safe foetus removal administrations, young pregnancies, among numerous different issues. Consequently, any push to handle COVID-19 can't side-line general medical problems which will stay in any event, when this infection has been brought down. It is vital that India's overseeing bodies and medical services experts encourage a situation which permits ladies to get to quality consideration on a continuum on the grounds that while the battle against this infection proceeds, the eventual fate of ladies' wellbeing remains in a critical state. Violence in the Female's Perspectives: the shadow pandemic.

Women bearing the brunt of Covid-19 lockdown

Expanded maltreatment is an example rehashed in numerous crises, regardless of whether strife, financial emergency or during sickness episodes. Nonetheless, the isolate rules represent a grave test. Being limited to home is hard for everybody, except is a bad dream for female survivors of sexual orientation-based savagery. As the pandemic proceeds, their number is probably going to develop with impacts on women's psychological and physical wellbeing and health and their capacity to take an interest in the recuperation of society and economy.

Increased threat: Men at home are taking out their frustration on women

More than 33% of the total populace is under lockdown. The ongoing UN Women's Report named 'Coronavirus and finishing viciousness against ladies and young ladies' has announced that since the flare-up of Covid-19, savagery against ladies, and especially abusive behaviour at home, has expanded in a few nations as security, wellbeing and money related concerns make pressures and strain emphasized by the confined and restricted everyday environments of a lockdown. Billions of individuals are presently shielding at home from the worldwide effect of Covid-19.

In France, instances of aggressive behaviour at home have expanded by 30% since the lockdown on March 17. Expanded instances of abusive behaviour at home and interest for crisis covers have likewise been accounted for in Argentina, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, the UK and the US. In Cyprus and Singapore, helplines have enlisted an expansion in calls by 33 percent. In Argentina, crisis calls for aggressive behaviour at home cases have expanded by 25 percent since the lockdown. All the countries have found a way to assist ladies with contacting the specialists to enrol their cases.

As per the report, the monetary effect of Covid-19, coming about because of the boundless conclusion of organizations and businesses, has put an expanded budgetary strain on networks, especially in portions of individuals that are now powerless. Ladies excessively work in unreliable, low-paid, low maintenance and casual part, with next to zero salary security and social insurance. Lost pay for them in oppressive circumstances makes it harder for them to get away.

In India additionally, the Covid lockdown is having a comparable impact, yet additionally maybe, more intense aftermath. The National Commission for Women, which gets objections of aggressive behaviour at home from the nation over, has recorded a more than twofold ascent in sexual orientation-based savagery in the public lockdown time frame. The all-out grievances from ladies rose from 116 in the primary seven day stretch of March (2-8) to 257 in the last week (March 23-April 1). That is, instances of aggressive behaviour at home have nearly multiplied during this short time of lockdown.

This expanded danger to ladies and kids was not an erratic reaction of the Covid lockdown, as spousal viciousness in India regardless is known to be genuinely far reaching. As indicated by the latest National Family Health Survey-4 distributed in January 2016, there was state wise proof highlighting the seriousness and various nature of brutality that ladies in Indian culture face. Greatest maltreatment was accounted for from Manipur where 53.1 percent of wedded ladies experienced physical, enthusiastic and sexual brutality. These disturbing figures identify with just those situations where ladies can look for help. Numerous ladies can't settle on decisions since they dread being caught by oppressive accomplices, or are halted from venturing out from home.

Expanded maltreatment is an example rehashed in numerous crises, regardless of whether struggle, financial emergency or during ailment flare-ups. Notwithstanding, the isolate rules represent an especially grave test. Being kept to home as a result of Covid is hard for everybody, except it turns into a genuine bad dream for female survivors of sex-based viciousness. As the Covid-19 pandemic proceeds, their number is probably going to develop with different effects on ladies' prosperity, their sexual and regenerative wellbeing, psychological well-being, and their capacity to partake in the

recuperation of society and economy. The activists feel that they hope to see a 'hazardous increment' in the quantity of reports of homegrown maltreatment once the lockdown limitations are backed out.

The principle purpose behind the ascent of abusive behaviour at home is that men at home are taking out their disappointment on ladies. Besides, a great part of the homegrown work actually gets the chance to be finished by ladies, as men will avoid homegrown work. Occupation misfortune, pay cuts and a dubious future emerging out of the lockdown has everybody on the edge. It isn't limited to the lower classes, yet additionally pervades the centre and upper-working class working people, who see their confidence being squashed each day. Ladies limited to the four dividers of the house can't impart their pain to anyone.

Similarly, kids can't go to class, which adds to the issue as there is no outlet for them. The casualties are additionally frightened of grumbling to the police since they dread that provocation will increment. Notwithstanding physical savagery, regular apparatuses of misuse incorporate segregation from companions, family and work; consistent reconnaissance; exacting, nitty gritty guidelines for conduct; and limitations on admittance to fundamental necessities, for example, food, garments and clean offices. The confinement has likewise broken the encouraging groups of people, making it unmistakably harder for the casualties to find support or getaway.

A significant explanation behind this is the place casualties recently discovered breathing room, regardless of whether at work or socially, they are presently investing all their energy at home with their victimizers. In India, yet governments everywhere on the world, as the UN report shows, are accepting an ever-increasing number of calls for help, as survivors of aggressive behaviour at home dread for their own and for their youngsters' wellbeing and prosperity.

The expanded danger to ladies and youngsters, actually, is an anticipated reaction of the Covid lockdown. The current conditions make revealing more diligently, remembering restrictions for ladies' and young ladies' admittance to telephones and help lines and disturbed public administrations like police, equity and social administrations. These interruptions may likewise be trading off the consideration and backing that survivor's need, as clinical administration of savagery, psychological wellness and psycho-social help. They additionally fuel exemption for the culprits. In normal occasions, the ladies can move toward free guiding and utilize the online office for announcing the wrongdoing as additionally approach a neighbour, companion or relative or sanctuary, recognized to go to on the off chance that they have to go out promptly for wellbeing.

Notwithstanding, as the lockdown and restricted development outside the house seems, by all accounts, to be a since quite a while ago drawn undertaking, the best response for casualties of physical maltreatment is to report the wrongdoing and look for help. It is basic, along these lines, to organize the requirements of ladies through the endeavours of the legislature just as common society associations and other deliberate offices.

Truth be told, as per activists, there is required to be a touchy increment in the quantity of reports of homegrown maltreatment once the lockdown limitations are facilitated. It is, subsequently, basic to be completely braced to have the option to react to the expanded interest for help.

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A Brief Bio of Corresponding author: **Dr. Smita** was awarded the prestigious Fulbright Fellowship to teach at the University of Kansas, USA. She holds a PhD that titles *Anorexic Bodies and Sexuality in Select Victorian Texts: A Critical Study* from Patna University. Her other works, *Anorexic Bodies and Their Desires: The Emerging trend within the popular culture in Contemporary India* and "Oh! It's Delicious: The Symbolic Functions of Food, Eating and Hunger" investigates a nuanced portrayal of how the victorian conceptualization of female appetites, her health and well-being and anorexic body were infused with contemporary notions of sexuality and gender; also, in what ways women's relationship to food was gendered. She is currently working on her book tentatively titled *Fasting Girls: Fiction, Sexuality, and Modernity* that seeks to explore the literary and cultural mediations of a distinctively new sexual persona. Her research specialization includes - Literature and Gender, Bodies, Sexuality Studies, Early Modern & Victorian, Health & Illness Narratives, Literary Theory
