

EDITORIAL

COVID-19 Pandemic: Lesson Learned and Next Plan of Actions

The whole world has witnessed one of the worst pandemic of the history with over 534 million cases and 6.3 million deaths due to COVID-19 globally, and the pandemic is still ongoing.

Pre-pandemic preparedness in countries with weaker health system was not adequate to combat with a disastrous pandemic like COVID-19. In fact, there has to be sustained and well-coordinated health care system from center to local level contexts ready for any public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).

A balanced media coverage on science behind such pandemic and prompt and proper message delivery to the community is another prerequisite to address the pandemic during its early phase. In many instances, misinformation, misconception, disregarding the authorized information remained 'clicking time bomb' in abruptly spreading the cases in an exponential manner.

Lack of public-private partnership (PPP) remained another limitation observed during the early pandemic when a perception deeply rooted among the stakeholders who assumed that government is solely responsible in a fight against pandemic. In reality, community and private sector involvement and ownership, coordination and reporting worked significantly. Effective implementation of public health and social

measures was not possible without these joint efforts from all sectors.

Open public database systems helped tracking the disease progressing and interrupting it at right point which often prevented the already weakened health care systems becoming non-functional due to over-burden.

On technological perspectives, availability of sequence data quite early in the pandemic and the knowledge obtained from the past Coronavirus outbreaks of PHEICs (SARS/ MERS) helped extra-ordinarily in the development of reliable diagnostics and, safe and effective vaccines. This pandemic has proved how rapidly a technology can be transferred from one corner of the world to another, one pertinent example is the 'realtime PCR based facilities' being available in resource-limited settings too.

With all these lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, each nation, public health agencies like WHO, R&D sectors, humanitarian organizations and philanthropists need to work on developing applicable plan of actions (not just a pre-pandemic preparedness!) to combat against the future outbreaks, PHEICs, and pandemics and safeguard the people worldwide.

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