

Impact of Pandemics on Cities and Societies

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Abstract : Purpose: The purpose of this study is to identify how past Pandemics shaped social evolution and cities. Methodology: A historical and comparative analysis of major historical pandemics in human history their origin, transmission route, biological response and the aftereffects. A Comprehensive pre & post pandemic scenario and focuses selectively on major issues and pandemics that have deepest & lasting impact on society with available secondary data. Results: Past pandemics shaped the behavior of human societies and their cities and made them more resilient biologically, intellectually & socially endorsing the theory of "Survival of the fittest" by Sir Charles Darwin. Pandemics & Infectious diseases are here to stay and as a human society, we need to strengthen our collective response & preparedness besides evolving mechanisms for strict controls on inter-continental movements of people, & especially animals who become carriers for these viruses. Conclusion: Pandemics always resulted in great mortality, but they also improved the overall individual human immunology & collective social response; at the same time, they also improved the public health system of cities, health delivery systems, water, sewage distribution system, institutionalized various welfare reforms and overall collective social response by the societies. It made human beings more resilient biologically, intellectually, and socially hence endorsing the theory of "AGIL" by Prof Talcott Parsons. Pandemics & infectious diseases are here to stay and as humans, we need to strengthen our city response & preparedness besides evolving mechanisms for strict controls on inter-continental movements of people, especially animals who always acted as carriers for these novel viruses. Pandemics over the years acted like natural storms, mitigated the prevailing social imbalances and laid the foundation for scientific discoveries. We understand that post-Covid-19, institutionalized city, state and national mechanisms will get strengthened and the recommendations issued by the various expert groups which were ignored earlier will now be implemented for reliable anticipation, better preparedness & help to minimize the impact of Pandemics. Our analysis does not intend to present chronological findings of pandemics but rather focuses selectively on major pandemics in history, their causes and how they wiped out an entire city's population and influenced the societies, their behavior and facilitated social evolution.

Keywords : pandemics, Covid-19, social evolution, cities

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