

PHILOSOPHICAL AND ETHICAL
ASPECTS OF COVID-19

Mintu Mondal

Assistant Professor of Political Science,
Panchthupi Haripada Gouribala College
University of Kalyani, West Bengal, India

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Abstract

The entire human society has been confined in a periphery by the tremendous attacks of Covid-19. Covid-19 that means Corona Virus Disease has been outbreaking in 2019 from the Wuhan province of China, many a commentator has said. It is the pandemic that creates a really hard time for humans. It has two implications: on the one hand, the pandemic has threatened us in terms of almost all the material accomplishments that have been shut down, and on the other hand, humans have learned from the pandemic that if we break the harmony of nature, then nature will retaliate. The two implications of the pandemic will guide us for a better future. If we do not rectify our notorious, greedy, and self-centric livelihood, our coming time will be very hard related to the present. At this juncture, some philosophical and ethical problems of humankind have been posted here. And it has been addressed through the conversation between the explorer and the speaker. The article has gone through the dialogue method that reveals different reflections on the ethical and philosophical aspects of Covid-19.

Keywords: Corona Virus Disease, pandemic, notorious, greedy and self-centric livelihood, philosophical and ethical problems, dialogue method

“We feel happy when you are happy, and we suffer when you suffer. Therefore, during these days of extreme adversity, we are striving and ceaselessly praying for your welfare and an easy way to save you from disease and the fear of an epidemic”. (Swami Vivekananda on the Plague Manifesto)

It was the month of December’19, the pestilence virus attacked the residents of the Wuhan area of China, and seemed to be a little hard Bio-anxiety of the residents and administration in that place. There are some reasons behind this behaviour of the residents and administration which are leading to the negligent way: a) they saw some epidemic diseases in recent past, but it did not create a panic situation; b) the virulence of the host did not shape as murrain situation, if we see somewhere the attacks are taking a threat to the people then our medical science cope with the situation and handling easily. But the thinking of mankind cannot make the same ambiance as creates by others resulting in the Covid-19 had shaped as the pandemic fence in which, however, the whole humanity has confined and trying to protect yourself. The objectives of the writing are to be depicted some reflections on the philosophical and ethical problems in Covid-19 through the conversations between the Explorer and the Speaker.

A brief history of the Epidemic/the Pandemic

We would like to convey to all of you, that the discussions on infectious diseases are not mere, not even testimony on the same, which was destroyed and utterly harried human civilization earlier rather it has tried to outline, the history of

epidemic/the pandemic diseases. We know, many an expert in that subject had written tirelessly, and yielded an ample number of testimonies. Therefore, we are not trying to overturn another testimony on the same. So, as to will go through the testimonies, which will help to set different thoughts of collection. Here we have mentioned various epidemic and pandemic diseases: the Covid-19(Coronavirus outbreaks in China and pandemics the world), Plague (Plague attacked in various times but its first outbreaks in Athens during the Peloponnesian wars), Cholera(It was an outbreak in the Indian subcontinent in the second decades of the nineteenth century), Typhus (during the Crusades, it had its first impact in Europe in 1489), Smallpox (The disease killed an estimated 0.4 million Europeans per year during the closing years of the 18th century), Leprosy (Leprosy has affected people since at least 600 BC), Malaria (Malaria devastated the Jamestown colony and regularly ravaged the South and Midwest of the United States. By 1830), Yellow fever (Yellow fever is one of the largest epidemics in the U.S.A in 1793.), Influenza (The Greek physician Hippocrates, first described influenza in 412 BC), Zika Virus (An outbreak of Zika Virus began in 2015 and strongly intensified throughout the start of 2016), HIV/AIDS (HIV originated in Africa, and spread to the United States via Haiti between 1966 and 1972)². Therefore, we will have to understand how far human civilizations were affected by these diseases through historical testimonies.

The Philosophical and Ethical Aspects of the COVID -19

*“Klaibyañ māśma gamah pārtha naitat tvayyupapadyate
kṣhudrañ hr̥idaya-daurbalyaṃ tyaktvotiṣṭha parantapa”.*
(*The Geeta, Chapter-02, Verse-03*)

The tenor: Do not cry but stand still.

We, the humans have been confined by the hard attacks by the pandemic since December’19. India is going through different forms of confinements like the full lockdown, partial lockdown, new normal, etc since the 24th of March in 2020 for the bio-anxiety Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, there are two different images of the different shutdown periods that have been appeared before us. On the one hand, there are fighting against the Covid-19 through social distancing and health endeavours, hand to mouth people and others are falling in the economically disastrous, and the student progression is almost stopping, on the other, the world is falling in the material disastrous, no developmental continuance is prevailing, and the supply lines are almost falling apart for gathering. Under these circumstances, some philosophical and ethical problems during hard time Covid-19 that has been reflected through the conversations between the Explorer and the Speaker. The conversations are not going through the mere juggling of questions and answers. But it has expressed the different issues of civility and examines a lot as to how it is working, which results are producing, how the different issues are confronting each other and how to cope with the different problems, so on.

Philosophical Aspects

*An unexamined life is not worth living.
One thing only I know, and that is that I know nothing.
To find yourself, think for yourself.
(Socrates)*

Tenor: Life is a challenge; talk to yourself, be humble.

Explorer: You are commenting that the lockdown and social distancing allow thinking yourself through which one who can explore the philosophical aspects of his life but how it is possible when the people are facing problems in terms of lack of basic amenities?

Speaker: I agree with your explorations. But have you ever thought as to when the scarcity of basic needs occurs? I have a very simple observation. When some people gather material ingredients and occupy the mode of material continuance, then the scarcity of basic needs occurs. They think that a self-centred life is good for them, but to me, they are weak-minded, because as regards when a pandemic occurs, they will not survive from the perilous situation, when the natural disasters destroy the civilization, then they will not stay beyond the happenings. When the pandemic confines us when the infectious disease will outbreak the society, then the hoarders will try to black marketing at a hard time, resulting in the exploitation will increase, exploitation makes the people frustrated, and the frustrated people will not be proceeding humanity. Under these circumstances, my suggestion is that it would have to be our very duty to break the mechanism of the gatherings for the betterment of civilization.

Explorer: I do not agree with these philosophical observations. If so, as to when famines occur, then the stock of material ingredients plays a great role to cope with a hard time, and help poor people. Mr. Speaker, you are forgetting, why the ancient people were starting the process of gathering after hunting. I reminding you. The gathered materials will help in a hard time, and on the other hand, it will give the leisure to think great ideas. But you are suggesting to break the gathering mechanism, how do you think so?

Speaker: Slow my fellow, slow. To me, your intellectual capacity is great but you have a little endurance. It is not fair. I do not have any deficiency to think about the utility of the gathered ingredients in a hard time. But still, as regards have you ever thought that in the name of gathering, leisure, and thinking great ideas, the downtrodden people were exploited from the very beginning of the human civilizations. Therefore, I have suggested above, as to why it would be our very duty to break the gathering processes. It leads poor people to be impoverished and rich people wealthy than in the past.

Explorer: I get your points. I am observing the two images of society. The images are relating to the lockdown and social distancing situation through which we can cope with the pandemic situation. One image express, as to what is the actual purpose of lockdown and social distancing. On the contrary, the

other image reveals the opposite. To me, the two opposite images are the result of the lack of consciousness of the happenings. It is manifesting that many people have thought that life is gambling. How do you feel?

Speaker: Your observation is true, my fellow. Many a time, however, the downtrodden people are not obeying the rules of the lockdown and do not maintain the processes of the social distancing completely. But have you thought that, as regards why they are disobeying the rules of the lockdown when they seriously know that the lockdown and the social distancing are one of the primary instruments through which we can survive from the peril condition? Despite these facts, they disobey because they have no option to survive the lockdown situation. If they follow the regulations of the lockdown completely, they will fall in die because they have little amenities to live in that situation.

Now, come to the term consciousness. What do you mean by the very term, my fellow? To me, the term consciousness bears a relative meaning. For example, a self-centred person believes that “to me, self-satisfaction is the only meaning of life”, on the other hand, one who thinks, that survival of the fittest is the primary idea to live in nature. Many a person thinks that public good is the fundamental motto of life and for the public good, he/she led the life in this way. It is the one sort of consciousness, and to me, it should follow all for the welfare of society. Despite all this thinking, no idea has borne the complete meaning of consciousness. Consciousness means, absence of fundamental believes in a particular means of living or the absence of dogmatism, which is to say, no fundamental belief or dogmatism does lead to the term consciousness because it leads to self-centred thinking. For this very cause, when we use words like "lack of consciousness", we have to be cautious otherwise, it will direct the wrong way.

Explorer: “Consciousness means the absence of fundamental believes to a particular means of living or dogmatism”, by this comment many confusions is raising. Fundamental faith or dogma to a particular thought is the way through which a person leads a life in a certain direction. He/she feels without a belief in a particular thought life will not be able to pursue the best way of life, resulting they will fall in a decline. For this very cause, we search particular teaching. Please make it clear.

Speaker: When we do think a matter fundamentally, then the lack of clarity begins. The lack of clarity leads to confusion, muddle, and disorder. We assume the fundamental beliefs or dogma to a particular thought make a person ignoramus, mindless, and brainless. An ignoramus, a mindless, and a brainless person will less consciously be resulting in a person lie far beyond justice. The dogma makes a lack of confidence, and without confidence, we do not fulfil our goals. When we lead our life with less confidence, then our entire endeavour will be in vain. Because, it makes the lack of consciousness and without consciousness one who we do not know as regards what is our goal, what is our meaning of life. What meaningless life will play a great role in the public good?

Explorer: A different connotation of consciousness has been expressed here. That's good. But now a question will have to pose at that time as to how one person will have to approach the consciousness?

Speaker: As above we have mentioned that all the fundamental belief or dogma is against the approaching consciousness. Because no fundamentalism or dogmatism has not to lead the way of justice. So, the issue, as regards how to approach consciousness? I have a very simple idea about this issue. This is, however, to maintain harmony and consistency in life make a balance by which a person feels joy and mental satisfaction. One who feels joy and mental satisfaction then lead to the way of consciousness. A conscious person can do social good, and social good maintains social trust.

But the question, as to how to approach the balance in life. To me, it has another solution to makes balance in life. We follow, even nature does work every time and maintains a balance doing at works. As a human being, one who has dissatisfied in his life because they have a lack of balance in his life. The two instruments conjointly will play to maintain balance in our daily life which are 'inducement' and 'deterrent'. So, if we follow the rules of inducement and deterrent, then we will maintain the balance of work, which leads to the approach to consciousness.

Explorer: I catch your point, but please makes it in detail for our better understanding as to what is 'inducement' and 'deterrent', Mr. Speaker?

Speaker: The term 'inducement' is an instinct by which one can led to the way of emergence. On the other hand, the term 'deterrent' denotes one who dissuaded from the instinct. The first one makes continuance, and others maintain pause to work for material continuance, and it should use positively. For example, we will try to impassion for material continuance, along with following the rules of abstaining from the augmentation. Because without this practice, we will fall in dissatisfaction. A dissatisfied mind makes sorrow, nothing else.

The terms inducement and deterrent denote the centrifugal and centripetal force of an individual respectively. If the consciousness is the centre of an individual, then the inducement of a person leads by the centrifugal force yielding a lot of material things, and by deterrent, the material continuance will pause and makes a person good. So, the two terms are very useful conjointly for developmental activities through which human beings can touch the apex of achievement.

Ethical Aspects

Practise righteousness, not unrighteousness.

Speak the truth, not an untruth.

Look at what is distant, not what's near at hand.

Look at the highest, not at what's less than the highest.⁴

(Vasishtha Dharmasutra- 30.1)

Tenor: Practice truth, think great.

Explorer: I have a little confusion about the lockdown decision taken by the government, as to whether it is ethically correct or not.

Speaker: The medical experts have suggested to us, that the lockdown is inevitable to resist the Covid-19. So, we are supporting the inevitable decision taken by the administration to cope with the perilous condition. Despite this fact, some questions that you have raised at that point, which are not avoiding for me and is seeming that your confusion as far as possibly valid. Especially, the issue of the students and the laborers, who are suffering a lot, in terms of the teaching and learning activities, and primary needs. To me, any administrative decisions should have moral bases, because no authoritative decisions cannot trouble the citizens. A great deal of preparation in terms of availability of logistic facilities and homework should be the primary conditions for implementing any kind of authoritative decision, as if, the people of a nation do not fall in a dangerous situation.

Explorer: Your last statement allowed setting a question on the lockdown decision at the nation. As to when there is an ample number of testimonies show the lack of preparations in various issues, little availability of logistic facilities and less co-ordination in the federal system to cope with the lockdown situation, then as regards how far it should wise decision to incorporate lockdown in the nation. How do you think?

Speaker: I have two different observations from the home arrests: a) administrative authorities are trying to fight against the pestilence disease through the various instruments with a little moral practice; b) on the other hand, many people have less ethical support to the emergent decision taken by the authority that has resulted in dissatisfaction in both of them. Dissatisfaction is the disease through which one could be fallen into a doom situation for pursuing satisfaction but to the people, social trust is the only solution to dissatisfaction. Social trust makes a society balanced, coherent, and consistent. So, the proximity of social trust and authoritative decisions is inevitable for the implementation of the order.

Explorer: Sometimes, we forget that the government is a trusted body of the people that engage for the service to the nation. But many a time, the dissatisfaction occurs from both sides and make blames to each other. Why does it happen?

Speaker: To me, it is a very good exploration of your part. Every conscious being has a struggle for satisfaction with yourself. The acquainted follows this art of living with great endeavours, which are leading to subjugation thus life revolves around in his path. Therefore, our entire material and mental exertion are in vain by the false consciousness. Though, we should follow a way of life through which we can be free from our ascribed subservience. The way, religiously, to me, is to remove fundamental views of touchiness, pride, and self-imposed values from our introspection but think about the good for all. It is

happening to the authority and the citizens that have resulted in frustration, dissatisfaction which leads to the way of death.

Explorer: You have made a statement, “every conscious being has a struggle for satisfaction to yourself”- please make it details....

Speaker: As above have I stated, that every conscious being has imposed value upon them, causing struggle to yourself, as to which leads to the frustration, and distraught mind. He/she think that as regards how to get imposed value from nature that is resulting in a lack of balance, and consistency occurs in life. He/she confines yourself in a self-made periphery composed by huff and puff, as to from which free to impossible. Consequently, we are assuming every conscience bind in itself. But therefore, I argue, we should be free from ourselves with the help of great willpower and confidence.

Explorer: I understand your point. You have expressed how a conscience binds in itself, resulting in dissatisfaction rather than being free from the self-made periphery. Despite this unavoidable fact, we have to see, that as for how to secure ethical supports to the authority and the citizens during the crisis period. Ethical support is essential to cope with the turmoil situation because it makes to builds confidence and helps to plan chalk out by the authority. On the other hand, the people of a nation think reciprocally moral support will help to build social trust. What are you thinking?

Speaker: I am feeling immense pleasure in your observation. If the administrative authorities and civil societies do not support them in terms of physical amenities and mental boost, then our social trust will not be materialized. And without social trust, all the authoritative decisions and initiatives will be in vain.

Now, come to the issue of the students of our nation, who are mentally shocked and less confident in the situation. For this very cause, if they will not try to make up their lost confidence, then the entire nation will be in the face of danger. We have to think, that about how the students overcome mental anxiety because it will lead to their mental hardship. Immediately, they should be engaged in the learning and evaluation process in any means, then they get back their self-confidence gradually and counselling would help to overcome the mental hazards. These words are used for all the students of the nation, those who do not avail of the modern facilities basically in rural and remote areas, and for the affluent families, who reside in the urban areas, and metropolis afford to the latest facilities.

Concluding Words

The article deals with the philosophical and ethical aspects of Covid-19 that has made some reflections on the pandemic that will help to rectify our daily life. Thanks to the administrative authorities for taken various initiatives, commencements struggle against the virus attack and to all segments of the civil society, those who all support the administrative compartments. It has been said many a time that “*Jeevan hain to Jehan hain*” means “life makes earth”, the

statement is fabulous but is it morally acceptable? To us, the statement “*Jeevan bain to Jehan bain*” will not be ethically accepted. Because the statement has raised a negative approach to the pandemic resulting in the people will feel anxiety, and mental stability will lose. Despite this fact, we will say as to our administrative works are all set to great leap for coping with the perilous condition.

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