Social Disintegration among People & Communities during COVID19

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1 Introduction

COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease 2019) is a highly infectious disease which has led to widespread lockdown in many countries. It has significantly resulted in a large number of psychological consequences. The uncertainty and low predictability of COVID-19 not only threaten people's physical health, but also affect people's mental health, especially in terms of emotions and cognition. According to Behavioral Immune System (BIS) theory [1], people are likely to develop negative emotions (e.g., aversion, anxiety, etc.) and negative cognitive assessment for self-protection. Faced with potential disease threat, people tend to develop avoidant behaviors and obey social norms strictly. This has led to disintegration among social groups and peoples. Moreover, after the Tablighi Jamaat incident, the COVID cases increased which spread the widespread fear among the people. The incident has sparked a fire of Xenophobia and has led to a stereotypical prejudice against the Muslims and led to national polarization against them [2].

2 Conceptual Mapping and Critical Analysis

The availability heuristic's influence on our fears: Heuristics are thinking shortcuts. The *availability heuristic* is our automatic tendency to estimate the likelihood of an event by how readily it comes to mind (how available it is in memory) [3].Lockdown has imposed irreversible psychological impacts and fear on human societies. For example, complete quarantine and commuting restrictions that prevent people from going out, fear of suffering from the disease, anxiety about losing loved ones, and more importantly, depression following losing friends and family are some of the issues people are dealing with.

Selective exposure to information: Selective exposure is the human tendency to prefer and seek information and news feeds that affirm rather than challenge our preexisting views [3]. A recent survey [4] found that "the threat of coronavirus" has been exaggerated by the media[3]. This has caused anxiety among the people and wrong information from the media about muslims is causing disintegration among communities.

Group Polarization: discussion among like-minded people tends to enhance their preexisting views that are more extreme than the initial inclination of its members [3]. These more extreme decisions are towards greater risk if individuals' initial tendencies are to be risky and towards greater caution if individuals' initial tendencies are to be cautious. Post the incident the media has hugely polarized the country against the entire community and has spread widespread hatred and bias (perhaps rightfully against the perpetrators) against the huge community. So, group

polarization has widely affected the social structures during COVID-19.

Deindividuation: is a concept in social psychology that is generally thought of as the loss of self-awareness in groups, although this is a matter of contention (resistance) [5]. This also played a major factor in the occurrence of the incident as the loss of self-awareness by people in the gathering and the group-feeling mental process led to people putting their own safety at stake and causing the pandemic. The decrease feeling of self-evaluation and the evaluation apprehension due to deindividuation led to the malicious leader spreading the blind faith and the eventual contraction of disease by the large majority.

3 Conclusion

Currently, at the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak, people are experiencing severe negative emotions due to the closure of schools and businesses and media targetting the muslim community has led to widespread fear and disintegration in the country. Though social platforms, video calling, etc are allowing people to connect with people in the times of lockdown and helping people to reduce mental strength. Groups may cause us to misjudge and misbehave, but are also the key to our happiness and well-being.

References

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