**System Aspect of the Covid-19 Pandemic**

For the better part of the year, the whole world has been grappling to come to terms with the novel covid-19 pandemic that has had detrimental effects on the lives of everyone in the world. Not since the flu pandemic in 1918 (Taubenberger and Morens, 2006), had we seen a disease spread so far and fast in the world in the same way and infect so many people. In turn, the disease has affected the way we live and has forced people to take a different approach in their ways of life. This essay will attempt to analyze the effects of the pandemic using three of Senge’s Eleven Laws of the Fifth Discipline, Casual loop system and the Soft System Approach.

**Three System Effects**

According to Peter Senge, a learning organization is one that faces modern problems and pressures in its operating environment and allows it to remain relevant in its market (Senge 2006). In this specific instance, we try to look at the way the world has handled the covid-19 pandemic and what measures has the various countries of the world adopted to stay in operation despite the covid-19 pandemic.

***The Cure Can Be Worse Than the Disease***

The coronavirus is an infectious disease that is quickly passed to other people from an infected person. To minimize the spread of the disease, many countries have implemented lockdowns, curfews and closed down their borders in an attempt to reduce human interaction with other people (Peng et al., 2020). The move has been effective in reducing the infection rates making more countries adopt the measure. Some countries have also minimized or stopped huge public gatherings too. The move has seen some sectors of the economy being massively affected. The service industry, for example, has been hard hit. It requires the presence of people to operate. The seceding of movement and gatherings, some services have had to close down and terminate their staff due to lack of income that would have been generated from them.

The issue of mental health has also been brought up as a result of the movement of people getting restricted. In some countries, the movement has been reduced with people on being able to leave their places of residence for just a handful of hours in a day. For people who were used to interacting with people frequently, it can serve as the beginning of depression and loneliness that will deteriorate their mental health status (World Health Organization, 2020).

***Faster is Slower***

The tale of the hare and the tortoise has always been used to teach that moving too fast can make someone to be left behind. In this instance, making decisions hurriedly to avert a major catastrophe can cause further problems in the long run. In essence, discovering tenable solutions may consume time, and the people might require time to absorb and adjust to the changes. For example, when some countries decided to have curfews and lockdowns, there was the daunting task of providing food to the people since they could not go and look for it for themselves. This move meant looking for more funds to sustain such endeavours, meaning more debt and more burden to the taxpayers. In such instances, it would have been better to bring the stakeholders on board and discussed possible measures that could have been used to assist the people and cheaply instead of making rash decisions that bring more burden to the pre-existing ones.

***Dividing an Elephant in Half Does Not Produce Two Small Elephants***

The covid-19 pandemic has brought a lot of activities to a standstill, the most notable one being the education sector. Students have had to cope with the ‘new normal’ currently in place by avoiding places with huge gatherings and staying at home. Separating the aspects that make up a country and analyzing them independently is a colossal mistake (Billingham 2016). In this case, closing schools until further notice was a big mistake as some students could quickly drop out of school. In solving this problem, schools subsequently introduced online learning that helped the students to continue with their studies as they stayed away from school and crowded areas.

**Causal Loop Diagram**

A causal loop uses arrows to show how parts of a system affect one another. It assists in moving the focus from linear causing effect to seeing circular causing impact providing leverage. According to Donella Meadows, a leverage point bridges causal and teleological clarifications of changes in the system, such as change is presumed to emerge from variables determining each other and how the intentions of humans mould the direction of a system. (Meadows, 1999).

**Figure 1.**

A Causal Loop Diagram for the Closure of Schools.

Covid-19 Cases

**-**

**+**

Reduced the number of infection Closure of schools

During the covid-19 pandemic, as the cases continued piling up, the threat of infection was increasingly growing and highly affecting the vulnerable people in the society including people with heart and lung diseases, the elderly and young children (NHS, 2020). In this effect, the government opted to close down the schools to reduce the risk of school children to get infected. The learning institutions served as huge public gathering grounds that could prove challenging to manage the spread of the disease with the number of cases rising by the day. As a result, the schools had to be closed down to reduce infection rates. The measure helped to mitigate the looming danger of outbreaks once a large population was in a public space all at once.

**Soft System Approach**

Soft System Approach brings up a different perspective to which on which system ideas can be used to assists in decision making and solving of problems in the society (Burge, 2015). It brings within the scope the best way of dealing with messy and ill-structured concepts that are not incorporated within the strict methodologies that can be employed.

Soft System Methodology (SSM), is a cyclic system of learning that incorporates models of human activities to traverse the actions done by the people in real-life problems, their understanding of the particular situation and their preparedness to decide on a determined action that will incorporate the thoughts and views of the different people involved in the matter (Cox, 2010). It is people-oriented and seeks to build a relationship between people. It is presented by the use of rich picture in that it includes every member of the society. The assumptions present in SSM are; difficulties cannot be present yet independent to people, difficulties are connected and cannot exist separately of the other, the view of the entire world is similarly important as that of each individual and giving perceptions, persuasions and debates revamp the order. This method, in turn, provides a reasonable basis for understanding.

The SSM consists of seven stages. The first stage is the Unstructured Problem Situation. At this stage, the researcher is supposed to find as much information as possible and accept all views of the people. In regards to the covid-19 pandemic, it had forced a lot of closure of activities that were dealing with the gathering of people, especially in public spaces. Some people were in support of the measures, where others were not in support. Other people were not sure of what to make of the situation. In stage two, Expressed Problem Situation, we are supposed to draw rich pictures explaining the problem and relationships. The covid-19 pandemic having forced closure of activities, the economy had taken a slump not seen since the Great Depression due to reduced economic activities. The people could also not live their everyday lives, such as go to work, obtain food, recreation etc. due to the measures put in place to control the disease. In stage three, Root Definitions constructed description of human activity should be strengthened. The CATWOE technique (Pavel Kukhnavets, 2017) should be employed that describes the six elements that should be included:

* **Customer**: the entire population of the world affected due to covid-19 pandemic.
* **Actors**: the political class who make decisions that govern the people.
* **Transformation**: placing curfews and lockdowns that reduce human activities.
* **Weltanschauung**: some people see the findings as destructive, others helpful.
* **Owners**: the presidents of each country of the world.
* **Environment**: the overall risk that the disease still exists and can even spread.

The fourth stage, Build Conceptual Models, consists of a logical model of critical activities and processes to satisfy the root definition. The people are to keep a distance of not less than 1.5 meters from each other, wear masks in public areas and seek regular medical attention when they exude the symptoms of the coronavirus (WHO, 2019). In stage five, Compare Conceptual Models with Reality provides the space for comparison of different alternative models to reality. The members of the society should compare the effect of the measures that they would take and the effectiveness they would have in the real situation. In stage six, Accessing Feasible and Desirable Change, the changes that have been proposed are analyzed to find out if they are feasible. In this case, the steady reopening and use of the measures proposed to reduce the spread of the disease are useful in mitigating the spread of the coronavirus. In the final stage, Action to Improve the Problem Situation, the proposed model is applied.

SSM gives a more significant explanation in connecting people and systems, and it also offers solutions to drawbacks that have not been resolved. The strategy provides structure to problems that are not defined in detail and concentrates on the appropriate system, providing a chance for them to be managed in an organized way.

**Conclusion**

For the better part of the year 2020, the entire world has had to deal with the covid-19 pandemic, and it has affected everyone directly and indirectly and has gravely interfered with the previous way of life of people. Against all odds, the people have found ways of living with the coronavirus and to find measures in which a sustainable life can continue so that the problems already encountered can be averted for the greater good of the people and to have a sustainable society despite the prevailing conditions.

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