

Pandemics have changed the world in the past. They have triggered the collapse of superpowers, change the world order and the recent coronavirus outbreak is just doing the same especially in reference to the United States. In the early months after the coronavirus outbreak was first detected in Wuhan, China almost half of the planet was subjected to lockdown necessitated by COVID-19. Countries that rigorously followed measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 are in a better situation today. The rest are battling hard against the virus especially the United States.

Unfolding of coronavirus pandemic in the United States

With more than six months into the pandemic, relief is nowhere in sight for most of the countries as they report a hike in the daily cases of COVID-19. United States bows to the top of the list with the highest number of cases of COVID-19 accounting for more than half of the cases worldwide. In the next couple of months, the United States will find itself in a much more critical situation with looming economic, testing, political crisis.

Although the US ramped up its testing capability, conducted nearly fifteen million tests in June, it faces a new testing crisis with the demand for testing going high as the state's record an increase in COVID-19 cases. It was in March that Washington DC reported two deaths, the first in the US. US finds itself far behind countries in Asia as far as conducting COVID-19 tests is concerned. There is a great shortage of masks, disposable gloves that protect the Frontline workers. What is also shocking is a research study conducted by John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health points to a high number of COVID-19 cases in US prison than the general population. A new study conducted by the University Of California- San Francisco found that one in three young US adults were vulnerable to severe COVID-19. COVID-19 curve was flattening in May with some states rolling back the restrictions put in place to contain the spread of COVID-19. But a sudden surge in the total number of cases has made matters difficult. Anti- racial protests following the death of George Floyd, an African American contributed to a possible rise in the total number of daily cases in the US.



FILE - Pedestrians wear masks as they walk in front of a sign reminding the public to take steps to stop the spread of coronavirus, Thursday, July 23, 2020, in Glendale, Calif. Los Angeles/ Image source: AP Photo/Chris Pizzello, File

The response of the leadership

The post-COVID-19 period will be remembered especially by Americans as how the leadership responded in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak. For the President of The United States, Donald Trump who is seeking his second term, matters are getting worse as he faces criticism for his handling of COVID-19. First, he disagreed with Mr Anthony Fauci, the top medical advisor to the US government, did not follow the advice of medical experts and now he is making attempts to politicise a pandemic and now is invoking the China factor. As he made attempts to reopen the borders even though the cases continue to mount, Mr Fauci warned that focus should be on shutting down the borders. President Trump came up with vague ideas as injecting disinfectants that would probably help the COVID-19 patients and even announced that he was taking regular doses of hydroxychloroquine. Infighting in the White House over handling COVID-19 outbreak has gone public.

President Trump's abject and mishandling of the pandemic has created a situation in which the economy of the United States is headed further south, although the relief bills as COVID-19 aid, Relief and Economic Security (Cares) Act did act to prevent an upsurge in

poverty. 1 trillion dollar virus aid package announced by Senate GOP has nothing in actual for the Frontline workers and contains only very limited relief to the states. Mr President has stepped up his attacks on WHO for toeing China's line and then decided to halt WHO's funding. He has put the blame on travellers crossing the US-Mexico border and the protesters taking to the streets following Floyd's murder for the sudden hike in cases. He shifted his tone, encouraging the Americans to wear a mask and event appeared in the public for the first time wearing the kind of mask recommended by the health officials for containing the spread of COVID-19. The common clashing of tone between Mr President and local officials has made it difficult to sketch a national plan for fighting COVID-19. The president has even acknowledged how bad the problem is. As the cases mount top GOP leaders are locking horns with the U.S. President over handling COVID-19. Senator Mitch McConnell said it straight that it is not going to be normal until we get a vaccine.

Conclusion

Inability to accept the truth has been central to US leadership be it Mike Pence, the Vice President who blamed the media for reporting dubious figures in reference to COVID-19 or Mr President himself. COVID-19 is extracting a human and financial cost from the Americans. With a negligent President and a divided response, the coming months will deepen in the crisis. Whether President Trump's change in tone has been driven by the disagreement with his own party members over everything related to handling the pandemic or is it a result of the upcoming Presidential elections is hard to understand. U.S. President's wits are gone a wool-gathering. The fate of Americans is entirely in his hands. The Americans need rigorous testing and need to strictly follow stay-at-home orders, wear masks and observe social distancing norms. Although what has been done cannot be undone all that can be ensured is that the situation does not worsen.

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