

Positive impacts of COVID-19 on social life and environment

Dear Editor,

COVID-19 has emerged as a pandemic disease and caused 6,713,093 fatalities till 23.01.2023. Initially, lockdown was imposed in most parts of the world to reduce its impact on the health of people. During the lockdown, markets, public visting areas, public gatherings, transports, and educational institutes were closed. Although, the lockdown condition was not accepted/appreciated by people/governments, however, it has a positive impact on the social life of people and the environment.^[1]

Lockdown has caused a great number of birds to appear including vultures. The insect pollinators have proliferated in great numbers on crops and other plants. Animals that were killed on the roads due to road accidents and their population were greatly increased by the reduction in road traffic. Amphibians migrate for breeding purpose. Before the lockdown in 2019, 408 common toads and 16 agile frogs were found dead. However, after the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, 38 common toads and no agile frogs were found dead. Indian authorities have successfully collected critically endangered olive ridley sea turtles on several occasions. These findings were positive indicators of ecological balance and biodiversity.^[2]

Particulate matter (PM) present in air travels from lungs to blood and causes respiratory diseases, lung cancer, and heart attack. According to World Health Organization (WHO), 4.2 million deaths were caused worldwide by PM in 2019.^[3] During the lockdown, PM levels dropped sharply; thus, thousands of lives were protected from its severe impacts.^[4] Inflammation of the respiratory system is caused by nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from industries and motor vehicles. However, because of the lockdown, NO₂ levels in the air dropped from 5.6 ug/m³ to 0.2 ug/m³. The CO₂ emission decreased; thus, about 77,000 lives were saved. Pakistan's lockdown has resulted in a sharp drop in pollution levels around the country.^[5] On March 12, 2020, the amount of ozone across the Arctic parts of the world was about 240 Dobson units, which was lower than its amount as recorded on March 12, 2019. Unprecedented ozone hole melting was also observed during the lockdown time (March and April 2020).^[6]

In most regions of the world, crime rates were dropped. Community involvement, family communication, behavior, sanitation, cleanliness, online learning, and distance learning all are good impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resources were used in a limited way because of the COVID-19 pandemic. People now understand that they only need to survive, yet they are wasting resources to gain social standing. Another positive impact of the lockdown was the reduction of traumatic brain injury cases due to no or less mobility and sports and recreational activities.^[7]

How to accomplish sustainable development goals is taught to us by lockdown. Government should take necessary measures and impose short-term lockdowns in different areas. It would not only reduce pollution and also increase biodiversity, forestation, migratory birds, and human health.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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