Healthcare system in India is battling on multiple fronts leading to leaks in COVID-19 response and general health-care response

Another publication from Lancet News desk highlights the overstretched public health care system grappling with scarcity of health care professionals and lower healthcare expenditure by government. The limited healthcare resource in low- and middle-income countries has estimated to decrease access to basic maternal and child health care service by 15% to 50% affecting antenatal care, postnatal care, and immunization services. Change makers for sustainable development.

COVID-19 has strained Health Systems across world with reports of delay in accessing to general healthcare services

COVID-19 pandemic has severe impact globally with seventy lakh individuals infected, four lakh deaths till 10th of June 2020 (1). Most of the health care personnel, infrastructure and medicine supply are diverted for management of COVID-19 cases by almost all the countries worldwide. COVID-19 had far worse impact on global economy, with lockdowns, ban on air transport and movement of people leading to halting of economic activities. While the effect on economy and mortality due to COVID-19 is clearly signalled out, the pandemic had wider impact on access and availability of general healthcare services across the world.

A comment published in the Lancet Global Health Journal, May 2020 (2) mentions the evidence reported, from across the world on impact of COVID-19 on maternal and child health due to disruption of essential preventive and curative support and supplies. Suspension of transportation systems, has constrained access clinics, home visits by healthcare workers.

Karnataka’s COVID-19 response is praiseworthy however the incidence of cases is projected to increase exponentially

Karnataka already suffers from 5% vacancies of Medical Officers across all its PHCs, the vacancy rate amongst paramedical staff is 25% at PHCs and 33% amongst ASHA workers. Public Affairs Center (PAC) and its analytical arm Center for Open Data Research (CODR) have been collaborating with the Department of Planning, Government of Karnataka and have predicted that the number of COVID-19 cases in Karnataka would reach around 12000 by the end of June (5). This will further strain the availability of general healthcare service, and the negative impact on health status of population would be worse than COVID-19.