

# **Social Work in Emergencies**

## Learning from the COVID-19 Pandemic

*Editors*

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# COVID-19 and the Vulnerabilities of Persons with Disabilities in India: Implications for Social Work

Shazia Manzoor and Tania Farooq

## INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has affected the countries disproportionately. Tardy (2020) argues that 'COVID-19 is the most destabilizing event the world has witnessed since the Second World War'. The current estimates (as of this writing) WHO (World Health Organization) runs the global confirmed cases at 128,540,982. Further as reported by WHO Coronavirus Dashboard the confirmed cases In India from January, 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 are 12,221,665 with 162,927 deaths. In India, the challenges coming with this pandemic increase manifold as it is a developing country. India was among the few countries to enforce and lockdown and close its international borders. Still, given the 1.3 billion population that India has, 'health inequalities, widening economic and social disparities, and distinct cultural values present unique challenges' (The Lancet, 2020). The said article exposes the vulnerabilities that India as a country is facing. It notes how difficult it is to implement the public health measures in places with overcrowded living conditions and inadequate sanitation and hygiene. It also notes how the migrant workers faced immense problems due to the sudden lockdown (The Lancet, 2020). The pandemic has instilled a sense of fear among the common people and with it are associated the psychological issues like anxiety, depression and elevated stress (Kazmi *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, in their study Tiwari *et al.* (2020) describe how participants in their study felt extreme anxiety, palpitations, head-ache, breathing problems, lower social support and increased reliance on religious activities as psychological distress in times of the current pandemic. There