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Navigating Global Pandemic Impact: Insights from Bangladesh's Health Sector Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Shohana Siddique^{1*}, Shati Sarmin Rahman²¹Department of Business Administration, Fareast International University, Dhaka, **BANGLADESH**²Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Fareast International University, Dhaka, **BANGLADESH***Email for Correspondence: shohana.fba@fiu.edu.bd**ABSTRACT**

The global impact of COVID-19 on the world economy, societal systems, and healthcare has been profound. Developing countries, particularly Bangladesh, faced severe consequences, exacerbating humanitarian challenges. This article examines the disparities in national responses during the early stages of the pandemic, emphasizing the diverse influence on local and regional levels. Marginalized groups, especially those in poverty, bore the brunt of the crisis. Governmental levels grappled with extreme uncertainty. Employing secondary data analysis and a descriptive research design, the study delves into the regional effects of the COVID-19 crisis with a specific focus on Bangladesh's health sector. The primary goal is highlighting pandemic difficulties and proposing mitigation strategies, offering valuable insights for crisis management and public policy.

Keywords: COVID-19, Medicine, Pandemic, Public Health, Healthcare**Conflict of Interest:** Authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC) license lets others remix, tweak, and build upon work non-commercially, and although the new works must also acknowledge and be non-commercial.**INTRODUCTION**

In the face of the severe impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, particularly pronounced in Bangladesh among South Asian nations, this article aims to comprehensively examine the nation's health, social, and economic challenges. Employing the qualitative data from diverse sources, our analysis discerns critical factors contributing to the widespread transmission of COVID-19. Insufficient hospital resources, inadequate laboratory infrastructure, a lack of awareness, non-compliance with guidelines, poverty, and precarious employment emerge as primary contributors (Toda, 2020). The overarching goal is to shed light on the multifaceted issues exacerbating the crisis. In response to the pandemic, the Bangladesh government implemented early-stage measures such as lockdowns and quarantine to curb the virus's spread and mitigate its impact on public health and daily life. This study also delves into the broader effects of the COVID-19 epidemic on Bangladeshi citizens, encompassing disruptions to healthcare access, economic stability, and overall lifestyle. Moving beyond the descriptive landscape, the article outlines specific objectives, including an evaluation of public health initiatives promoting healthy habits and combating substance misuse. It seeks to identify the efficacy of novel approaches to public health service delivery, assess the implementation of interventions at the jurisdictional level, ensure accountability among entities responsible for public health, and explore the role of digital media in comparison to other communication mediums, emphasizing its benefits for public health interventions. Through this comprehensive examination, the article endeavors to provide insights that contribute to a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation in Bangladesh, ultimately informing strategies for effective public health management and intervention.

METHODOLOGY

This article employs a comprehensive research methodology, integrating qualitative techniques to provide a nuanced understanding of the COVID-19 situation in Bangladesh. A compilation of secondary source data from diverse outlets such as newspaper articles, the WHO website, WorldMeter, and the Institute for Epidemiology serves as a foundational element. Additionally, collaborative consultations were conducted with authoritative entities, including the Disease Control Research (IEDCR), Government of Bangladesh (GoB), and pertinent research institutes. Estimates of the at-risk population were meticulously derived from official sources and supplemented by insights from other surveys and studies. To capture qualitative nuances, personal observations and information on social behavior were gleaned from various sources, adding depth to the analysis (Desamsetti, 2016; Desamsetti & Mandapuram, 2017). A comprehensive attempt was conducted through PubMed and Google researchers' search, focusing on original research papers pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. This methodological synthesis ensures a robust and multi-faceted approach, enhancing the reliability and comprehensiveness of the findings presented in this article.

UNRAVELING THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON BANGLADESH'S HEALTH SECTOR

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic marked an unprecedented global crisis, with Bangladesh emerging as one of the nation's most profoundly affected in the South Asian region. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the intricate and far-reaching impact of the pandemic on Bangladesh's health sector. From the early stages of the outbreak, the nation faced a myriad of challenges that rippled across its healthcare landscape, presenting a complex web of issues that demanded urgent attention and strategic interventions.

Historical Context: To contextualize the current scenario, a brief historical overview delves into Bangladesh's health infrastructure and resilience in the face of previous health crises. Understanding the nation's preparedness and response mechanisms lays the groundwork for assessing the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Epidemiological Landscape: The chapter then navigates through the epidemiological landscape of the virus in Bangladesh, exploring the patterns of transmission, the evolution of the outbreak, and its impact on the population. An analysis of infection rates, fatality figures, and demographic vulnerabilities provides a nuanced understanding of the virus's penetration into the fabric of Bangladesh's society.

Infrastructure Strain and Resource Allocation: Central to the unfolding narrative is the strain on healthcare infrastructure. The surge in COVID-19 cases strained hospitals and clinics, revealing critical inadequacies in resource availability and allocation. Insightful discussions unravel the challenges faced by healthcare providers, shedding light on the shortages of beds, ventilators, and medical personnel (Reger et al., 2020).

Socioeconomic Disparities and Vulnerable Populations: The pandemic laid bare existing socioeconomic disparities, disproportionately affecting marginalized and vulnerable populations. Through an exploration of demographic data, the chapter dissects how factors such as poverty, limited access to healthcare, and precarious employment amplified the vulnerability of certain groups, exacerbating the overall impact of the virus (Al Jazeera, 2020).

Global Collaborations and Health Diplomacy: As Bangladesh grappled with internal challenges, external collaborations and health diplomacy emerged as pivotal aspects of the nation's response. Engagements with international organizations, collaborative research efforts, and the reception of aid and medical supplies all played a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of Bangladesh's battle against the pandemic.

The chapter concludes by summarizing the key insights into the global impact of COVID-19 on Bangladesh's health sector. It sets the stage for subsequent chapters that delve deeper into the specific challenges faced and the innovative strategies implemented to mitigate the fallout, ultimately aiming to contribute to a nuanced understanding of navigating through the pandemic's complexities in the context of Bangladesh's health landscape.

CHALLENGES AMIDST CRISIS: EXAMINING THE DYNAMICS OF BANGLADESH'S HEALTH LANDSCAPE

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, Bangladesh's health landscape became a battlefield, with numerous challenges surfacing in the wake of the crisis. This chapter delves into the multifaceted dynamics that characterized the challenges faced by the health sector during these unprecedented times. From systemic issues to on-the-ground realities, the examination seeks to unravel the intricacies that shaped the response to the crisis.

Healthcare System Strain: The chapter begins by scrutinizing the strain experienced by Bangladesh's healthcare system. Hospitals and medical facilities faced an unprecedented surge in patient numbers, challenging their capacity to provide adequate care. The strain on medical professionals, shortages of essential medical supplies, and the rapid depletion of critical resources became emblematic of the crisis (Islam et al., 2020b).

Public Awareness and Compliance: A critical component of managing the pandemic was the level of public awareness and compliance with safety guidelines (Lal & Ballamudi, 2017). The chapter explores how the dissemination of accurate information, public understanding of preventive measures, and adherence to guidelines played a pivotal role in controlling the spread of the virus. It delves into the challenges encountered in ensuring widespread awareness and fostering a culture of compliance among diverse demographic groups.

Economic Impacts on Health: The intersection of health and the economy became increasingly evident as the pandemic progressed. Economic hardships, job losses, and disruptions in livelihoods had direct implications for the health of the population (Baldwin et al., 2020). This section assesses how the economic downturn posed challenges to accessing healthcare services, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of those already grappling with financial constraints.

Government Response and Policy Challenges: Examining the government's response to the crisis, the chapter sheds light on the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at mitigating the health impact of COVID-19. It critically analyzes the challenges faced by policymakers, ranging from the necessity of swift decision-making to the complexities of balancing health priorities with economic and social considerations (Guerrieri et al., 2020).

Vulnerability of High-Risk Populations: Certain populations, such as the elderly, those with pre-existing health conditions, and marginalized communities, faced heightened vulnerability during the pandemic (Islam et al., 2020c). This section explores the unique challenges encountered in safeguarding these high-risk groups, addressing disparities in healthcare access, and tailoring interventions to ensure equitable protection.

Technological Gaps and Healthcare Inequities: The chapter also addresses the technological gaps that became apparent in healthcare delivery. Telemedicine, while holding promise, faced challenges in implementation and accessibility (Ma et al., 2020). The discussion explores how technological disparities contributed to healthcare inequities and shaped the overall crisis response.

In conclusion, this chapter synthesizes the various challenges that unfolded amidst the COVID-19 crisis in Bangladesh's health landscape. It sets the stage for the subsequent exploration of mitigation strategies and solutions, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies involved in navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic.

COVID-19 IMPACT ON BANGLADESH

An outbreak of the novel coronavirus has occurred in Wuhan, China. China has spent **over** \$10 billion to stop the spread of the virus. The impact of the spread of this virus in many countries has been mitigated (Sirkeci & Cohen, 2012). S&P Global Ratings cut its 2020 growth forecast for China to 5% from 5.7%. Nine of the ten largest Asian countries, including India, are vulnerable to the virus. Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines. Bangladesh is one of the South Asian countries hardest hit by the COVID-19 outbreak. This article analyzes this country's health, social, and economic challenges. Qualitative information from various sources were used. Our analysis shows limited well-equipped hospitals, inadequate laboratory facilities, lack of awareness, lack of knowledge, lack of rule attitudes and enforcement, poverty, and precarious employment contribute to the spread of COVID-19 shown to be the main factor. Strict enforcement and people adhering to the rules will help prevent the spread of infection. Appropriate health care is essential for building appropriate medical care.

The epidemic is so rapid that nearly every country worldwide has taken non-therapeutic precautions such as travel bans, remote office operations, national lockdowns, and, most importantly, social distancing (Anwar et al., 2020). As one of the most populous countries in the world, Bangladesh faced enormous challenges and a low-middle income economy. Difficulties in social distancing in many parts of the country and a lack of awareness and resources make remedial action very difficult to implement. Mobile disinfection sites, temporary quarantine sites, and medical facilities can help reduce the impact of the pandemic at the local level (Orozco, 2020). Prompt, cooperative, and empathetic cooperation and international support between governments, citizens, and medical professionals will help the country minimize the impact of the pandemic.

Nearly all countries have taken aggressive non-therapeutic measures to stem the spread of nCoV-2, with Bangladesh in Southeast Asia following the same trend. However, debate continues on whether the measures were implemented correctly and effectively. The country confirmed its first case of novel coronavirus on March 7, but many experts believe nCoV-2 entered the country earlier but was not detected because of poor surveillance. I'm guessing. As of April 13, the country had reported 803 cases of COVID-19, with 39 deaths (Figure 1). However, concerns have been raised that many cases in the country may go undetected due to poor test results. In response to the virus's emergence, Bangladesh has restricted international flights, introduced thermal scanner testing, and closed schools. However, each office maintained its regular roster until March 26.

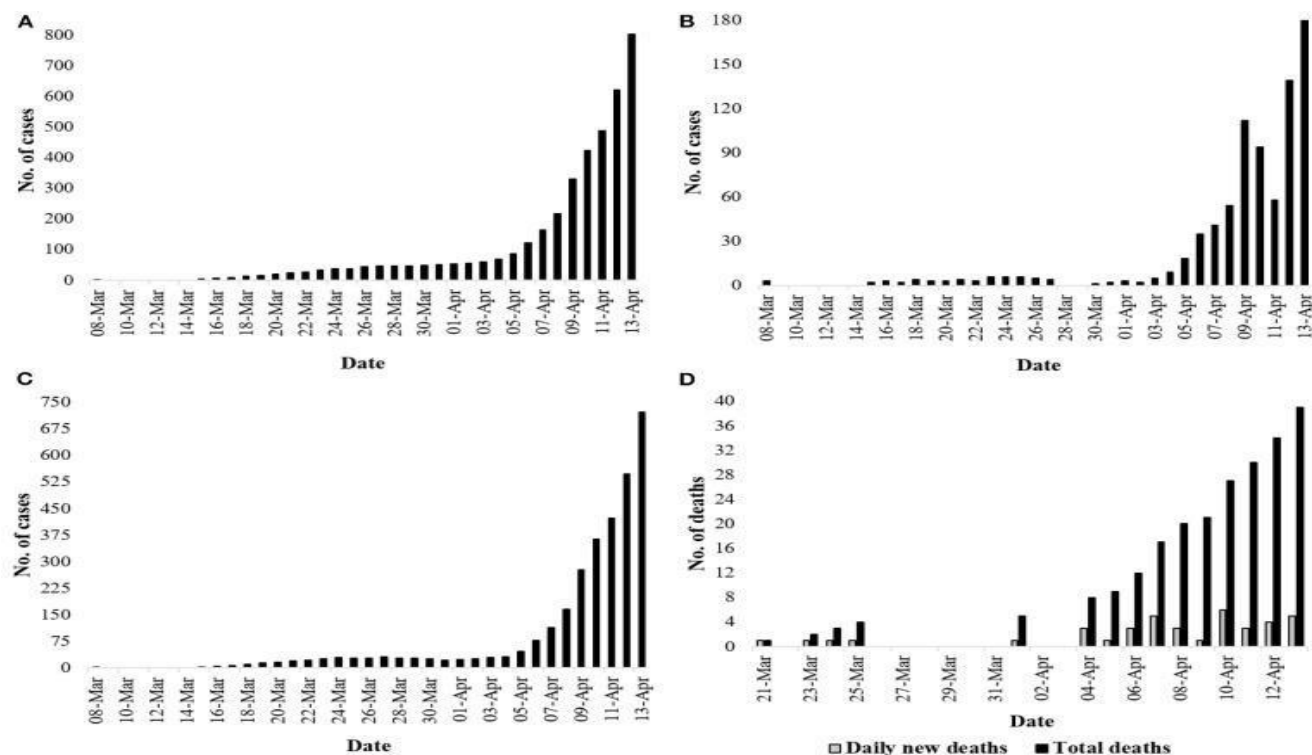


Figure. Current situation of novel coronavirus infection in Bangladesh (April 13, 2020).

- (A) Total number of confirmed infections in Bangladesh.
 (B) Number of cases identified each day.
 (C) Number of active cases per day.
 (D) Number of deaths per day and total number of deaths.

COVID-19 precautions include rigorous case and contact tracing, isolation and screening, and education to promote good hand hygiene practices. There are some clear priorities for the future. Protecting our frontline workers is our top priority to improve and ensure safe and immediate access to healthcare facilities for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients. Bangladesh's healthcare system needs long-term regulation to make it more resilient to future disasters like the pandemic. We need doctors in both rural and urban areas while improving governance and management of the health sector. This is all the more important now that the government plans to start some activities on schedule, and risks will arise if risk mitigation measures are not taken (Sumner et al., 2020). In addition, there is a need to improve the quality of services in health care and strengthen coordination between the public and private sectors to improve the standard of care.

PROPOSED PRODUCT OR SERVICE: AFFORDABLE PHARMACY CONCEPT

In response to the pressing need for affordable medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic, we propose the introduction of a Discount Pharmacy concept. This innovative approach aims to make essential pharmaceuticals more accessible by offering them at affordable prices. Discount pharmacies, operating both as brick-and-mortar establishments and through mail-order services, specialize in providing prescription drugs at lower prices compared to conventional pharmacies. The key strategy involves leveraging operational efficiencies and streamlining services to reduce costs for self-paying customers. Unlike traditional pharmacies, discount pharmacies do not accept insurance payments, ensuring smoother cash flow. By predominantly conducting business through mail order, The Discount Pharmacy seeks to achieve economies of scale, selling pharmaceuticals in large volumes with reduced labor per order (Perera, 2020). As more people in Bangladesh continue to rely on prescription medications, the concept anticipates rapid growth, allowing customers to order their required medications in bulk over extended periods.

Market expansion will be driven by targeted advertising, attracting customers who seek to save on essential expenses. The primary focus is on addressing the prevalent dilemma faced by many Bangladeshis, who must allocate their limited income between groceries and medicines.

The Discount Pharmacy commits to delivering key benefits to its customers:

1. Selection: Offering a broad range of both original and generic drugs to cater to diverse medical needs.

2. **Accessibility:** Products will be available in conveniently located physical stores or can be efficiently shipped within the country.
3. **Customer Service:** Acknowledging the value of exceptional customer service, The Discount Pharmacy aims to surpass customer expectations, fostering repeat business and referrals.
4. **Pricing:** The cornerstone of the concept, the pharmacy pledges significantly lower prices compared to local pharmacies, ensuring affordability for a wider demographic.

By addressing the critical issue of medication affordability, The Discount Pharmacy endeavors to play a crucial role in providing accessible healthcare solutions for the people of Bangladesh during these challenging times.

CHANNEL OF DISTRIBUTION: ENHANCING PHARMACY SERVICES FOR RESILIENT HEALTHCARE AMID THE PANDEMIC

In the backdrop of the global pandemic, optimizing healthcare services has become paramount, necessitating innovative solutions within the pharmaceutical sector. This chapter delves into strategies aimed at enhancing pharmacy distribution channels, specifically addressing challenges faced by Bangladesh's health sector amidst the pandemic.

Prescription Pickup Reimagined: A Digital Revolution: One significant challenge in the pharmacy landscape is the timely pickup of prescriptions, a process entailing review, labeling, and authorization. Acknowledging the strain on the health sector, we propose a digital solution (Ballamudi, 2019). By introducing a web-based or mobile app platform, clients can conveniently pre-order prescriptions, transforming the in-store experience. This not only expedites the process but aligns with global trends shifting towards electronic prescriptions.

Online Accessibility and Health Product Procurement: Beyond prescriptions, the chapter emphasizes leveraging digital platforms for the procurement of health and beauty items. An integrated online system enables customers not only to order prescriptions but also to explore and purchase a range of health products. This approach caters to evolving customer needs, particularly in a competitive and loosely regulated market.

Bridging Online and In-person Transactions for Customer Centricity: The proposed distribution channel seamlessly integrates online and in-person transactions. Customers, through user-friendly interfaces, can explore product catalogs, access comprehensive information, and make online purchases. The strategic fusion of online pre-ordering and in-store collection addresses challenges posed by the pandemic while ensuring a holistic and customer-centric approach.

Contributing to Resilient Healthcare: By adopting these strategies, pharmacies contribute to building a more resilient healthcare system. The digitization of prescription processes enhances accessibility, reduces in-store wait times, and aligns with global health trends. The integration of online platforms for health product procurement further enriches the customer experience, making healthcare services more responsive and adaptive in the face of ongoing global challenges.

This chapter serves as a guide to navigating these enhancements within the broader context of Bangladesh's health sector challenges and mitigation strategies amid the global pandemic.

PROPOSED PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN: STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE AMIDST CRISIS

In navigating the global pandemic's impact on Bangladesh's health sector, a comprehensive promotional campaign is essential to bolster the initiatives proposed. Our discount pharmacy employs a strategic blend of traditional and digital tools to effectively promote healthcare solutions. This chapter outlines various marketing communication strategies tailored to address the unique challenges faced by Bangladesh in containing the spread of the virus.

Advertising for Affordable Healthcare: Utilizing a mix of traditional and digital advertising platforms, we aim to convey our commitment to providing discounted medicines to the market. From print and broadcast media to online platforms, our advertising initiatives are designed to drive the overall marketing plan, fostering engagement with key market segments.

Sales Promotion and Consumer Incentives: Implementing sales promotion strategies, such as samples, coupons, and prizes, our campaign encourages the trial and purchase of discounted pharmaceuticals. These short-term incentives extend to consumer promotions, commercial promotions, and incentivized sales representatives, fostering a dynamic marketplace.

Events and Experiences for Community Connection: Engaging in company-sponsored events, our promotional efforts extend beyond conventional marketing. Sponsorship of sports, arts, and charity events fosters connections with consumers, creating brand-related experiences that resonate in both customary and unique ways.

Public Relations and Reputation Management: In the face of a health catastrophe, maintaining a positive reputation is crucial. Our campaign incorporates public relations and publicity programs, targeting internal and external stakeholders, governments, and the media. These initiatives aim to enhance and safeguard the company's reputation and specific product messages.

Direct and Interactive Marketing for Targeted Outreach: Direct marketing, encompassing mail, telephone, fax, email, and online channels, ensures targeted communication with specific customers or prospects. Interactive marketing leverages online platforms to raise awareness, enhance brand image, and promote our products and services directly to current or potential clients (Islam et al., 2020a).

Word-of-Mouth and Personal Selling for Trust Building: Recognizing the importance of person-to-person communication, our campaign embraces word-of-mouth marketing. The personal touch is further emphasized through direct engagement with potential customers, ensuring a transparent exchange of information, inquiries, and orders.

As Bangladesh grapples with the challenges of the global pandemic, this promotional campaign is not just about advertising discounted medicines; it's a call for coordinated efforts. Beyond government interventions, individual initiatives, the expertise of national health professionals, and international support are urgently required. The campaign underscores the collective responsibility to handle the health crisis effectively, emphasizing that the world is closely observing Bangladesh's response to this unfolding catastrophe.

MITIGATING THE FALLOUT: STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING BANGLADESH'S HEALTH RESILIENCE

This chapter delves into the proactive strategies and innovative solutions implemented to address the myriad challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh's health sector. Focused on building resilience, the exploration spans interventions at various levels, from policy and infrastructure to community engagement, highlighting the adaptive measures that played a crucial role in steering the nation towards recovery (Deming et al., 2018; Desamsetti, 2020).

Policy Innovations and Adaptive Governance: The chapter begins by examining policy innovations that shaped Bangladesh's response to the health crisis. It explores how adaptive governance facilitated swift decision-making, enabling the government to implement dynamic policies that responded to the evolving nature of the pandemic. Case studies and analyses of key policy shifts illustrate the nation's agility in navigating the complex landscape.

Strengthening Healthcare Infrastructure: Central to mitigating the fallout was the enhancement of healthcare infrastructure. The chapter assesses how strategic investments and mobilization of resources contributed to strengthening hospital capacities, ensuring an adequate supply of medical equipment, and fortifying healthcare facilities. Case studies spotlight successful infrastructure initiatives that bolstered the healthcare system's resilience (Dekkati et al., 2016).

Community Engagement and Public-Private Partnerships: Recognizing the importance of community involvement, the chapter explores how public awareness campaigns and community engagement initiatives played a pivotal role in mitigating the impact of the pandemic. Additionally, it investigates the collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors, showcasing how partnerships were leveraged to optimize resources and implement effective interventions (Thaduri, 2019).

Digital Health Solutions and Telemedicine: In the era of social distancing, digital health solutions emerged as a key component of the crisis response. This section delves into the integration of telemedicine, digital platforms, and health technology to enhance healthcare accessibility. Case studies illustrate successful implementations and highlight the role of technology in bridging gaps and ensuring healthcare equity.

Innovative Health Communication Strategies: Effective communication proved paramount in managing the crisis. The chapter explores innovative communication strategies employed to disseminate accurate information, educate the public, and promote adherence to safety guidelines. It analyzes the role of various mediums, including social media, in shaping public perception and behavior during the pandemic.

Capacity Building and Training Initiatives: To empower healthcare professionals and frontline workers, capacity building and training initiatives were instrumental. This section evaluates the effectiveness of training programs, skill-building initiatives, and knowledge dissemination campaigns. It sheds light on how investing in human resources contributed to a more resilient healthcare workforce.

Lessons Learned and Future Preparedness: Drawing insights from the experiences documented throughout the chapter, the conclusion reflects on the lessons learned from navigating the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It sets the stage for discussions on future preparedness, emphasizing the importance of incorporating these lessons into sustainable strategies for building enduring health resilience in Bangladesh.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The exploration of Bangladesh's health sector challenges and mitigation strategies amidst the global pandemic has revealed crucial insights, shedding light on significant findings pivotal for understanding the multifaceted impact of COVID-19 on the nation's healthcare landscape.

- 1. Pandemic Disparities in Developing Nations:** The study underscores the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on developing countries, with Bangladesh emerging as one of the hardest-hit nations. The health sector faces unique challenges, exacerbated by economic limitations and a dense population.
- 2. Health Inequities Amplified:** Health inequities have been magnified during the pandemic, particularly affecting marginalized and impoverished communities. Limited well-equipped hospitals, inadequate laboratory facilities, and a lack of awareness contribute to the spread of COVID-19, emphasizing the urgency for targeted interventions.
- 3. Resilience of Healthcare Systems:** The study highlights the resilience of healthcare systems in the face of unprecedented challenges. Proposed strategies, such as a discount pharmacy concept and enhanced distribution channels, demonstrate innovative approaches to ensure accessibility and affordability of healthcare services.
- 4. Digital Transformation in Health Services:** The digital transformation of health services, encompassing online prescription orders and interactive marketing, emerges as a key mitigating factor. These initiatives not only streamline processes but also bridge the gap between online and in-person healthcare transactions.
- 5. Promotional Campaigns for Community Engagement:** The proposed promotional campaign integrates traditional and digital tools to not only advertise discounted medicines but also foster community engagement. It recognizes the importance of collective efforts beyond government interventions, involving citizens, healthcare professionals, and international support.
- 6. Preparedness Imperative for Low- and Middle-Income Nations:** The study emphasizes the need for preparedness, particularly in low- and middle-income nations. Immediate, timely, and coordinated measures are crucial to effectively combat the virus. The findings stress the importance of individual efforts, engagement of national health professionals, and international support in handling health catastrophes.
- 7. Watchful Global Scrutiny:** The study concludes by highlighting the global spotlight on Bangladesh's response to the pandemic. The world observes the country's handling of the health crisis, emphasizing the urgency for effective strategies and cooperation at various levels to minimize the impact and navigate the challenges posed by the global pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused anxiety and stress among Bangladeshi citizens. Respondent stress can interfere with healthy sleep, cause irritability, disrupt home life, and even lead to suicide. However, several statistical applications were employed in this study to reveal the causes and factors controlling human stress. Financial hardship and food insecurity are related, while disruptions to formal education and future planning have led to stress among job seekers. Overall, the socio-economic situation of most of the population, enforced lockdowns that do not ensure basic human needs, weak governance, communications, infrastructure, and medical facilities have created public fear and disrupted human life. Increase. Therefore, time-sensitive policies are urgently needed, and careful implementation of surveillance will help manage the pandemic and promote public health.

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