

## **IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN NAGALAND, NORTH EAST INDIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented shock to the world economy. The government of India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared a nationwide Lockdown on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and due to the prolonged lockdown, the state of Nagaland along with the rest of the country is facing many difficulties and challenges. With the first reported case of COVID-19 from Wuhan, China in December 2019, and as of 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020, globally 53.7 million confirmed cases and 1.3 million deaths have been reported as per World Health Organization (WHO), with India reporting 9.14 million cases, 8.6 million recovered, 134 thousand deaths and Nagaland with 10,674 cases, 9242 recovered, 57 deaths. Manipur was the first state in Northeast India to have detected with COVID-19 case as on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, with a 23 years old student returnee from UK, while Nagaland was the last of the northeastern States after Sikkim to report COVID-19 positive cases on April 12, 2020. Since Nagaland has no big or very few industries the major impact is on tourism, handicrafts and handloom industry, agriculture and rural economy and small business etc, especially festival like Hornbill festival where the states earns around 40-50 crores on revenue. In spite of the drawbacks of lockdown there has been a significant improvement in people's efficiency towards the use of technology. It is very important that people should realize the responsibility and the importance of maintaining discipline and abide by the rules even to fight against COVID-19 and also make it a practice to maintain hygiene to prevent ourselves from such pandemics in the future.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Amid the current atmosphere of uncertainty and unpredictability, where the debate about the Post-Covid world order has flared up time and again, the situation in the global economy hasn't proven to be any more promising. The year 2020 started with a very disastrous beginning to every mankind with a virus named COVID-19, which all

started at Hubei province, China, where a patient was detected with Pneumonia of unknown origin on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019. On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Corona disease to be a public health emergency of International concern and on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 announced the name of the disease caused by the new outbreak of corona virus as COVID -19. As on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020, Thailand became the first country to be confirmed of COVID-19 outside China.

As per the World Health Organization (India) report, Kerala was the first confirmed state in India to be detected by COVID-19, with a student returnee from Wuhan City, China on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020. As of 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020, globally 53.7 million confirmed cases and 1.3 million deaths have been reported as per World Health Organization (WHO), with India reporting 9.14 million cases, 134 thousand deaths, with Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh as the states with the highest number of cases. North East India was the last region to be infected by COVID-19, with Manipur being the first state in the region to confirm of COVID-19 on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, with a returnee from United Kingdom (UK). While, Assam was the first state in the region to have first COVID-19 fatality on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020, after a 65-year-old died in Hailakandi District. Assam recorded its first case on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 with a 52 years old man returnee from Delhi after attending Nizamuddin Markaz. Meghalaya reported its first positive as well as death case on 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2020 with a doctor hailing from Shillong. Tripura reported on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020, with a 45 year old woman returnee from Kamakya Temple, Guwhati. While Nagaland was the last of the Northeastern States after Sikkim to report COVID-19 positive cases on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Nagaland has now 10,931 COVID-19 positive cases, 9,291 recovered and 1,471 active cases with Kohima, Dimapur and Mon districts with the highest tally. The state has recorded 63 death cases and has a recovery rate of 84.99 percent as of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (Director of Health Department, Government of Nagaland). As of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Assam has the highest number of active COVID-19, followed by Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland among the Northeastern states.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1. To know what is COVID-19, how it has started and infected India and the entire world
2. To study the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic condition of Nagaland

### **HIGHLIGHT ON CORONA VIRUS (THE SARS COV-2)**

Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered corona virus. It is a RNA virus protected with a lipid layer whose surface is covered

with spiky crown known as CORONA. The virus enters the body through the droplet transmission from infected person. Corona virus belongs to a large family of viruses which can cause illnesses varying from common cold to severe respiratory syndrome like SARS and MERS. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. The novel Corona Virus is a new mutated strain of Corona virus which was unknown to human previously. The novel corona virus named as SARS-CoV-2 on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses as the virus resembles closely to the corona virus that lead to SARS outbreak in 2003. It is believed that, SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted to humans from the bats as many studies have suggested that bats are the common reservoir for Corona virus. Though the origin of the virus is still not sure but it is linked with the seafood market of the Wuhan city where bats are sold.

### **SCENARIO OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The first corona virus started at Hubei province, China on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 and on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Corona disease to be a public health emergency of International concern. Thailand was the first country outside China to confirm about COVID-19 with its first case on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Slowly, countries like Japan, Korea, USA and European countries got affected due to immigration. Today 218 countries and Territories are already infected by COVID-19 ([worldometers.info](http://worldometers.info)) and altogether 9.14 million cases, 8.6 million recovered, 134 thousand deaths have been reported globally as of 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (World Health Organization report). Today the most affected Countries are USA, India, Brazil, Spain and Italy. The Trade and Development Report 2020 by U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said that the world economy is experiencing a deep recession amid a still-unchecked pandemic. India's economy is forecast to contract by 5.9% in 2020 (United Nation report) and stated that growth will rebound next year, the contraction is likely to translate into a permanent income loss.

Table 1 show that the epidemic has reached each and every corners of India and has expanded its footprint in all the States and Union Territories (except Lakshadweep). Though the Centre and state governments have been trying hard to check the Covid-19 spread by tracking, isolating and treating infected people but today over 93,92,868 lakh people (including deaths) has been infected since the first positive case was confirmed on January 30, 2020 in Kerala. Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are

**Table 1: States and Union Territories wise total number of confirmed cases and deaths in India**

<i>States and Union Territories</i>	<i>Cases</i>	<i>Death</i>
Andaman and Nicobar Island	4689	61
Arunachal Pradesh	16231	50
Assam	212483	980
Bihar	234553	1253
Chandigarh	17246	274
Chhattisgarh	234725	2830
Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu	3306	2
Goa	47689	686
Gujarat	206714	3953
Haryana	230713	2375
Himachal Pradesh	38977	613
Jharkand	108786	963
Karnataka	882608	11750
Kerala	593958	2196
Lakshadweep	0	0
Madhya Pradesh	203231	3237
Maharashtra	1814515	46986
Manipur	24749	263
Meghalaya	11704	111
Mizoram	3806	5
Nagaland	11115	67
Delhi	561742	8998
Puducherry	36902	609
Punjab	150805	4765
Rajasthan	262805	2274
Sikkim	4908	103
Tamil Nadu	779046	11694
Telangana	268418	1451
Tripura	32641	370
Uttar Pradesh	539899	7718
Uttarakhand	73951	1214
West Bengal	477446	8322
Odisha	317789	1730
Andhra Pradesh	867063	6981
Jammu and Kashmir	109383	1680
Ladakh	8272	114
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,92,868</b>	<b>1,36,678</b>

*Source:* Deccan Herald Web Desk, November 2020

*Note:* The tallies above include foreigners who have been infected with Covid-19.

the states with maximum number of covid-19 cases in India, while Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya are the states with maximum positive cases in northeast India. In spite of such a huge number of infected cases, India is doing much better than many of the developed countries when it comes to recovery rate with almost 87,18,517 people being discharged or recovered. India also have a very low Covid-19 mortality rate compared with many countries, which has been possible due to the timely measures taken up by government of India, starting with the first lockdown from 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

Figure 1: States and Union Territories Wise Total Number of Confirmed Cases in India

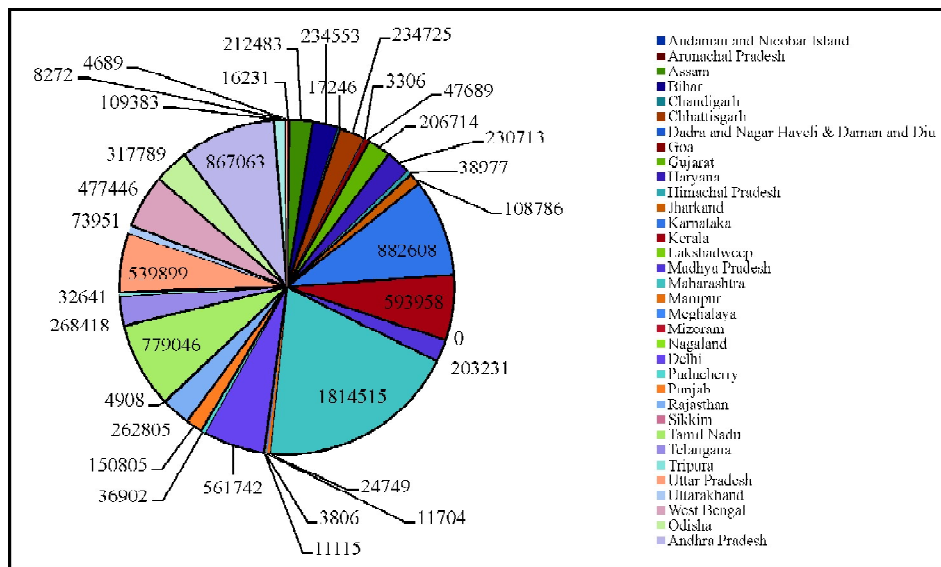


Table 2: District wise total number of Positive, Recovered and Dead Cases in Nagaland

Districts	Positive	Recovered	Dead
Dimapur	6273	5983	40
Kiphire	29	24	1
Kohima	3498	3102	21
Longleng	18	9	0
Mokokchung	128	116	1
Mon	600	565	2
Peren	840	463	0
Phek	44	44	0
Tuensang	237	195	1
Wokha	35	28	1
Zunheboto	147	137	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,849</b>	<b>10,666</b>	<b>67</b>

Source: Department of Health and Social Welfare, Government of Nagaland (November 2020)

Northeast India has the highest Covid-19 recovery rate and Nagaland tops with an average of 92.95 percent. Out of the 11,849 positive cases, 10,666 have already been recovered and only 67 people have died so far. It can be attributed to the timely measures taken up by the state government along with various organizations, churches and also cooperation by the public. Dimapur and Kohima districts have the highest positive and death cases, while Longleng and Kiphire have the least infected cases as per Table 2. We can see that the recovery rate in all the districts is very high and most of the active cases are asymptomatic (91.7%), followed by mild, moderate and critical cases which are very less. In spite of such a good recovery rate the data depicts, the state of Nagaland like any other state in India has incurred huge financial losses along with various social and economic impacts during this few months, since the government of Nagaland on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020 declared all the educational institutes to be closed down as the first step of precaution against Covid-19 even before the first national lockdown was imposed by government of India.

Figure 2: District wise total number of confirmed cases and recovered rate in Nagaland

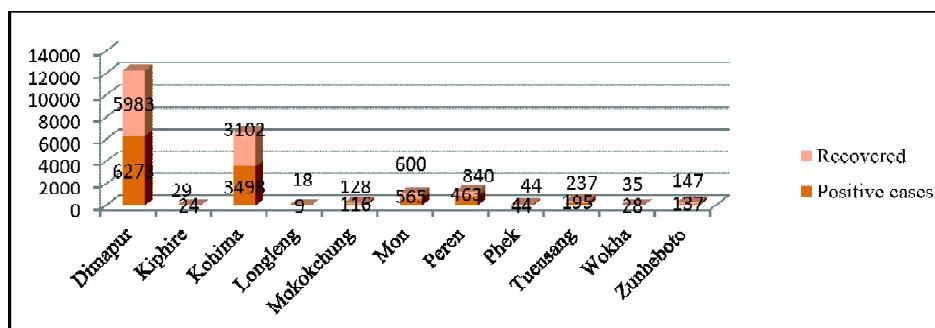


Table 3: Category of Confirmed Cases in Nagaland

Category	Total	Percentage
Armed Forces	4685	39.53
Returnees/Travellers	1860	15.70
Traced Contacts	4725	39.88
Frontline Workers	579	4.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,849</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Covid-19 War Room, Nagaland, November 2020

Table 3 indicates that majority of the Covid-19 cases in Nagaland are through contact tracing (39.88%), followed by armed forces and returnees and travellers with an average of (39.53% and 15.70%) respectively. However, infection through front line workers is very less with an average of 4.89%.

## **THE IMPACT OF CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19)**

The state of Nagaland along with the rest of the country was very quick in taking measures to prevent the infection of COVID-19 by declaring Lockdown on 24 March 2020 for 21 days which was later extended on 14 April 2020 for another 18 days till 3 May 2020. The state has witnessed 3 Lockdown phases along with the rest of the country and with certain relaxation it is now slowly lifting the Lockdown. Along with the rules and regulations laid down by the government of India, the state of Nagaland has been very cautious in preventing the spread of COVID-19 with various non-government organizations, churches, local bodies, and concerned individuals joining hands with government administrations. All this has resulted in protecting the state from this virus for a very long time by taking various adequate measures and because of this, Nagaland was one of the last states in India to be infected by COVID-19. The timely lockdown with smart measures has made huge difference in saving the lives of the people but in spite of all this it has created a huge impact on the life of the people.

### **1. Impact on Employment, Business and Industry**

India has recorded a spike in its unemployment rate in both urban and rural sectors in October. India's unemployment rate rose to 6.98% in October from 6.67% in September, according to the CMIE data. Approximately 16,000 migrant workers from Nagaland have returned to the state due to the corona virus pandemic. This has added up to the ever increasing problem of unemployment in the state. Nagaland has any or very few industries that can be able to provide employment to such returnees. Apart from Government jobs, due to the lack of industries most of the Nagas are self employed. Many have lost their jobs even within the state due to the closure of shopping malls, hotels, restaurants, transportations services like taxis etc. The state government, with support from the North East Council, has taken up the initiation to initially train around 100 returnees under the "Livelihood Generation Programme for Returned Migrant Workers". The programme is an outcome of the state government's efforts to ease the issues of unemployment and displacement caused by the pandemic. But this cannot solve the problem of ever growing unemployment problem unless the government tries to accelerate development of infrastructures and setting up industries as today Nagaland has the highest unemployment rate of 21.4 percent among the states as stated by the government in the Parliament.

### **2. Impact on Agriculture & Tourism**

Nagaland is an agricultural economy with almost 71 percent of the population under agriculture. Like the rest of the country, the state has also witnessed huge losses under



agriculture due to delay in harvesting and inability to market the produce due to lockdown that has resulted in crops getting rotten as the farmers have no proper storage devices, effecting the agriculture and rural economy of the state. Like the entire Northeastern States, Nagaland is also known for its rich biodiversity and a large amount of revenue of the state comes from tourism every year. But due the lockdown tourism industry has been badly hit. The Hornbill Festival, an annual function showcasing the culture, arts, handicrafts and food of Nagaland, is a major tourist attraction of Nagaland which is held in December every year and in 2019 it had a record 2,69,811 visitors (3015 foreigners, 55,584 domestic tourists and over 2 lakh locals) earning a revenue of around 45 crores. However, with a budget deficit of 123.96 crores (2020-21) shown by the government, it will be a great loss for the revenue of the government if hornbill festival is cancelled for the year 2020. The lockdown has drastically brought down the Tourism Industry.

### **3. Impact on Education**

Lockdown has badly affected all the educational Institutes across the world. The introduction of online teaching and learning is not only a disadvantage for the students but also for the teachers as well. Developing nations like India where technology is not advanced and the access to technology is very limited for majority of the population. More than 30% of the country's population is not technology literate. Some of them even don't know how to start a phone. Not everyone can afford a computer, laptop or smart phone. Some sections of the society such as farmers, maids, housecleaners, sweepers and waiters may face difficulties purchasing smart phones or laptops. Some of the teachers are also not familiar with the new format of education and are not trained for online education classes. Besides this, it is not necessary that a good classroom teacher will be a good teacher in the online classroom. There are a limited number of resources available to conduct an online examination in India. Certain type of subjects and courses such as science and performing arts cannot be taught in the digital education space. The online education system is more of a type of screen-based learning system which restricts the students to perform practical. The internet connectivity is not good everywhere, where some still use 2G or 3G internet connections. A good concentration and self-motivation is required for online education and students below the age of 17 years may lack these skills. To tackle the situation Government of Nagaland has taken many initiatives apart from following the guidelines of UCG and Government of India but all these has not been as effective since we lack resources (Technology) for online classes.

### **4. Impact on Mental status and social change**

The outbreak of COVID-19 has had significant psychological and social effects on the population. Study shows that it will have more impact on psychological well-being of



the most exposed groups, including children, students, and health workers, who are more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and other symptoms of distress. The social distance and the security measures have affected the relationship among people and their perception of empathy towards others. There are some elements related to the pandemic that affect the population, such as separation from loved ones, loss of freedom, uncertainty about the advancement of the disease, and the feeling of helplessness. Studies of pandemics faced over time, such as SARS, Ebola, H1N1, Equine Flu, and the current COVID-19, show that the psychological effects of contagion and quarantine is not limited on the fear of contracting the virus (Barbisch *et al.*, 2015). (Li and Wang, 2020; Cao *et al.*, 2020). These aspects might lead to dramatic consequences (Weir, 2020), such as the rise of suicides (Kawohl and Nordt, 2020). Suicidal behaviors are often related to the feeling of anger associated with the stressful condition widely spread among people who lived/live in the most affected areas (Miles, 2014; Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, 2020; Mamun and Griffiths, 2020). The fear of the spread of the virus among people is on high rise and it has been observed that, there have been emotional and behavioral changes in the people specially children, students and aged people during the quarantine: symptoms related to difficulty concentrating, boredom, irritability, restlessness, nervousness, sense of loneliness, uneasiness, and worries.

## **5. Impact on Infrastructure and Technology**

Even though Nagaland has a very poor infrastructure and technological development but COVID-19 pandemic has opened the eyes of the government as well as the people for a need to have an efficient and effective infrastructure and internet technology. Amidst all the losses, technology companies all over the world have earned huge revenue and gained opportunities to improve their technology. As work from home is highly initiated and the students are also studying from home, most of the people are bound to depend on technology. It has also helped to improve the efficiency of people in using technology and has significantly changed the way people use technology. Amidst the corona virus outbreak, several companies have understood the economic benefits of work from home. They may continue this policy afterwards also. This has fueled the electronics market to experience a 40-45% increase in the demands for laptop, tablet, smart phones, etc. Even monitors, Wi-Fi routers, laptop tables, surge protectors, and spike guards are in huge demand in the market and it will continue after the pandemic is over. The stay-at-home and social distancing policy around the world during this period has enforced people to work remotely and online learning in full swing where the only requirement is the high-speed internet connectivity. COVID-19 has forced the telecom industry to strengthen the existing broadband capacity and availability to support

its consumer demands. One of the positive outcomes of this pandemic is the stronger demand for better technology. So it may be expected that post-Covid19 period could be a significant period for 5G build-out progress in telecommunication industries along with the demand for skilled Communication Engineers to tackle this new technology.

### **MEASURES AND CHALLENGES**

The novel corona virus disease (COVID-19) pandemic first struck the world's wealthiest countries, likely as a result of their global interconnectedness, involving trade and tourism. Though no country is safe from this deadly virus but still, wealthy nations are more capable in fighting against COVID-19 because of lower population, good and cheap basic amenities, adequate sanitation and good internet connectivity that enables them to reduce the physical contacts with people, which is found to be a major measure in protecting against virus such as COVID-19 and also the effective implementation of public health interventions which has resulted in reducing viral transmission and preventing healthcare systems from being completely overwhelmed by a surge of COVID-19 cases. However, it is very difficult to implement such measures in developing countries like India and a state like Nagaland in particular. Most of the developing countries have large population and due to this they are often found living in crowded areas and multigenerational households. They lack most of the common necessities of life such as, access to running water, lack of adequate sanitation, poor or no internet connection for home schooling or work at home, and little or no savings to back up a loss of income. They hardly have ready access to food refrigeration at home, requiring them to go out daily for food as well as basic necessities, which easily makes them more exposed to harmful diseases and viruses, like COVID-19. The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, its causes and how it spreads. We need to protect ourselves and others from infection by washing our hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching our face. Since COVID-19 virus is spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that we need to practice respiratory etiquette (Coughing into a flexed elbow). Maintaining physical distancing, use of face masks, staying at home and work-at-home where possible are some of the measure that should be followed by everyone.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is clear that COVID-19 has badly affected the global economy and the state of Nagaland in particular. In spite of all the measures and advancement in technology the world cannot be safe from such pandemics. There is an urgent need to establish industries,

encourage and develop agro-based industries in Nagaland that will not only generate employment opportunities but also will help sustain the people who are mostly importing all the essential food items from other states and who have faced enormous problems to get essential commodities during this lockdown. There is also a need for development of efficient health infrastructure in the state, so that we can be able to tackle unseen pandemics like now where we have found ourselves totally unequipped even with basic medical facilities. Awareness about natural disasters and various pandemics is also another area where we need to educate the people that can help them overcome psychological and social effects which has caused lots of problem during this COVID-19 pandemic. Human resource development is also another important area that the state needs to focus so that we can have well trained personals during natural disasters and pandemics, who can handle the situations and equipments. Improvement in internet and other modern technology is also very important to make our life easier, so that we can do work from home without much contacts with people during such pandemic. It is very essential that people maintain discipline and abide by the rules even after lockdown. It is very important that people practice hand hygiene, maintain etiquettes by covering mouth and nose with handkerchief, tissue etc, and seek immediate medical attention as it is not only the duty and responsibility of the Government alone to fight and beat pandemics like COVID-19. Finally, the data from COVID-19 War Room, Nagaland indicates that for every 1000 people in Nagaland, 58 samples are being tested, which is very less when compared to other states. So, there should be an increase in testing for every district which can give a proper result and can help in taking proper and effective measures on time.

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