

# EMERGING TRENDS OF SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES IN THE POST COVID ERA

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## Abstract

Society is made up of individuals so it can be said that the individual is at the center of society. Relationships, interactions, and behavior play a crucial role in forming society. Society is changing and changing society can not be analyzed from a particular perspective. There can be different fields and many dimensions to studying society. Sociology studies society. Sociology is functioning for macro or micro observation and analysis of society, social structure, or social phenomena. Various branches of sociology like urban sociology, rural sociology, sociology of health and medicine, tribal sociology, etc. are functioning to analyze social structure and social phenomena in a particular field. These branches of sociology broadly study a specific part of society. For instance, rural sociology studies the rural structure, rural phenomena, and rural change. However, sometimes some phenomena influence the various parts of society deeply. For example, war, economic crisis, or epidemic. Different branches of sociology examine the effects of these kinds of phenomena on different parts of society. The global pandemic COVID-19 that emerged in the 21st century has had a profound impact on the global society. This pandemic has affected human behavior, human relationships, patterns, and social institutions. This global pandemic has also affected global demography. It is a phenomenon of the 21st century that has opened up new directions of study for different branches of sociology. This qualitative paper has elaborated on emerging trends of studies in various sociological branches in post-COVID era.

**Keywords:** COVID-18, Sociology of Health, Leisure, Gerontology, Social Distance, Discipline, Crime and Deviance, Labelling and Prejudice.

## INTRODUCTION

Sociological analysis depends on the facts regarding social phenomena and their influence. Epidemics have played a crucial role in the history and transformation of human life which is the reason that we must develop a sociological glance towards it. A very contemporary branch of sociology called medical sociology and sociology of health is now conducting health and medicine-related studies in sociology comprehensively, it is needed to discuss and analyze it from a societal point of view. Discussing about COVID-19 pandemic, it has had profound and far-reaching sociological implications affecting various aspects of society. It should be analyzed through multiple lenses, considering its impact on Social institutions, inequalities, communities, and individual behavior.

Corona posed a threat to human existence before the world. It has largely created the socio-economic and psychological issues as it was against the unknown enemy of human life earlier. Initially, it was said that Corona would wipe out almost half of the world's population which has created fear worldwide. The lockdown was only seen as a precautionary step in front of all the governments globally. A large amount of people had to sit between the four walls of the house which created major economic issues for those who were working as laborers, and there was a fear of job loss for employees working in private companies. People belonging to the below-poverty line or low-income groups or economically vulnerable populations, and people with limited access to healthcare facilities have been disproportionately affected by this pandemic. This condition highlighted the socio-economical inequalities.

The second wave of Corona proved more dangerous than the first wave. It has largely impacted the vulnerable population. Especially those who are living in slums and within economically backward areas. Corona has changed the nature of the social order, and it will have far-reaching effects. The concept of 'social distancing' has become more prevalent in the CORONA era. It becomes inherent for those who live in apartments and bungalows but what about those who lives in small huts, slum areas and Chauls in cities of India? Sociology has come up with a new topic for study, how do families live in narrow streets and huts cope with Corona? Sociologists need to answer it methodologically and scientifically. Thus, Corona pandemic comes with many sociological questions to resolve scientifically. It is of utmost importance to develop a sociological glance at the social structure and social change during and after Corona. The pandemic has allowed various branches of sociology to develop, enhance, and explore. In this regard, emerging trends of sociology needed to be discussed in the post-COVID era. In this paper, we have discussed various branches of sociology in which sociological research can be done from a pandemic point of view.

**1) Sociology of Leisure:**

Corona has provided a path to sociologists who are working in the area of 'Sociology of Leisure'. Lockdown has created a condition in which people must have to live in their residence 24 hours. Some research questions were raised to analyze like what people are doing at home during lockdown? Impact of lockdown on families of various societies? What are the functional and dysfunctional impacts of lockdown on families? What are the Issues of Isolation? What are the Creative outcomes of lockdown? How do Family less isolated people spend their time during the Pandemic? What is the Influence and effectiveness of the means of entertainment during lockdown? How a person suffering from Corona spends his leisure time? What is the role and influence of media and social media on families and Corona-positive people? These were the major research questions can be considered in the sociology of leisure. Else, we can say that these questions may provide a sociological glance in the development of the branch Sociology of leisure.

**2) Gerontology:**

One of the most important branches of Sociology is Gerontology. Old age people are the important part of the Society. They not only guide the youth but also play a crucial role in sustaining the family system, especially in countries like India. The pandemic has firstly and largely impacted the old age people globally. In Italy, 23 percent of the population is over 65 years old and they are the most affected by Corona. This scenario has been seen in the first and second waves of corona in the world. Various health-related problems affect the old age population largely, they need isolation-companionship-cooperation, etc. In this regard, it becomes necessary to conduct sociological studies on the effects of Corona on their lives.

**3) Studies on Social Discipline:**

One major important discipline has emerged and developed due to the CORONA pandemic that is Studies on social discipline. CORONA has affected the public behavior of the people. Apart from this, people have affected the behavior of people by maintaining distance in crowded places, wearing masks, standing in queues while shopping, using sanitizers, giving importance to online payment, etc. Discipline has come into people's family life as well. Studies on social discipline should focus on how the Pandemic affects the public life and family life of people.

**4) Studies of Social Distancing:**

'Social Distancing' has now become an important subject for the study of sociology. Corona has invited a new subject in the studies of sociology. How to understand social distance? Or how should social distance be defined? That should be regulated by sociologists. How has social distance affected social order, family system, and other institutions of society? It should be discussed and studied in sociology. The role of the sociologist in the epidemic is crucial. A blueprint should be prepared for social distancing in society and related studies. This type of study can become more important and interesting because as per Census 2011, 37.1% of family members are living in one room and 31.7% of family members are living in two-room houses. 4% of households in India do not have separate rooms for living. Thus, total of 78.8% percent of people are living in such kind of circumstances where separate rooms and social distancing are difficult for those who are living in joint families.

'Slums' are a major problem in Urban India. Slums can be seen as an important aspect when studying social life. The risk of epidemics is greater in slums due to its physical structure and living patterns. According to State, of Slums in India (2013), 41% of the population in Mumbai, 32% in Hyderabad, 31% in Kolkata, 28% in Chennai, 14% in Delhi and 8% in Bangalore live in slums. Population density is high in slums. In such a situation it is very difficult to maintain social distance in the family and even in the neighborhood. One more important issue regarding slums and population density is issues of clean water and toilet facilities. However, Swachha Bharat Abhiyan has impacted positively regarding that, though the issue regarding toilets and clean drinking water. Population Congestion is another major issue regarding slums and even city areas. If the family is large and the house is small, more problems arise in terms of maternity and sickness, and the question of how to take care of young children and old age people in a small house becomes critical.

**5) Studies on Migration and issues of migrants:**

The issue of migration has become very serious due to Corona. Migration of laborers increased during the lockdown. As a result of the lockdown, the number of people going back to their hometowns. It is worth mentioning that during the lockdown, the problem of going back to the native place increased for the laborers as transportation was also stopped. On the other hand, the question of employment for laborers increased. People who earn their livelihood through daily labor have to face many problems due to the cessation of sources of income. Studies should be done regarding labor migration during an epidemic which can present a blueprint before the government to fight against the issues of laborer.

Notably, reverse migration has been seen in India due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a crucial point needed to analyze in Indian Pattern of resident, family, and migration.

**6) Sociology of Crime and Deviance:** One more important subject that emerged to study deeply during COVID-19 pandemic is regarding Crime and Deviance. It is well known that Corona has deeply affected the global society and human behavior. The first wave of Corona created an atmosphere of fear in the global society. Isolation, concern for employment for the poor, economic crunch due to lockdown, concern for health facilities, social distance, etc. have serious effects on social and human behavior. It is important to explain and study this topic because, due to increasing materiality and modernity in the future, it is needed to prepare a blueprint to fight against such kind of serious epidemic. Moreover, CORONA brings the conditions like Anomie globally. CORONA gave a hint to conduct studies regarding anomic condition in epidemics.

Many cases of suicide have come to light due to Corona not only in the poor population but also in the rich. There were many reasons behind a notable number of suicides that came to light during the pandemic like fear from CORONA, fear from employee retrenchment, psychological causes, etc. On the other hand, incidents of robbery or fraud were also seen during this time. In epidemics, it is also necessary to study the deviant behavior prevailing in the society. CORONA has affected human habits as well. These are all the concern subjects needed to study in the contemporary post-COVID era.

**7) Studies on Labeling, Prejudice and Discrimination:**

Discriminations have continued even in the time of Corona epidemic. Not only that, but because of this, the collective fight against Corona became weakened. Discriminations occur to many extents due to labeling and prejudices in society and labeling and prejudices are seen as causes of discrimination. Social media exposes discrimination caused by labeling and prejudices in society. For Instance, during the time of CORONA a renowned badminton player Jwala Gupta was trolled because her look was Chinese as her Mother was from China. So, It is inherent to have physical characteristics like Chinese people. Because of her appearance, she used words like Chinese, half-Chinese, etc. on Twitter and Facebook. All know that CORONA emerged in China, but due to this, several people from northeast India have faced labeling on social media due to their looks during CORONA Pandemic.

Prejudice and labeling have played an important role in social discrimination and behavior in the time of Corona, such prejudices and labeling must be studied, along with that the role of media in this matter should be scientifically analyzed.

**8) Sociology of economics:**

Corona created a serious impact on the global economy. We discuss Durkheim and Robert Merton's concept of anomie in sociology. The impact on the economy due to CORONA can also be called economic anomie. In the private sector, the 'workplaces' were closed due to the lockdown and the rapid spread of the coronavirus. The message of STAY HOME, STAY SAFE spread all over the world and even in India. People have to stay at home. Almost every type of economic activity was stopped. Then economic issues arose for private employees, businessmen (including shopkeepers and lorry drivers, small industries), laborers, etc. Small- and Large-Scale industries were closed which influenced the employees of daily wages. Sensex were down even markets of all over the world's leading economy were down. This condition has influenced the global society. Sociology and sociologists have to focus on studies regarding the economic condition and influence on society during the Pandemic. The effects of Corona are being seen seriously on the global economy today. 'Epidemic – Economy & Society' can be an emerging field for sociological studies.

The most important thing regarding the contemporary Indian economy is 'Digitalization'. Digitization has been highly promoted in India. But after Corona, digital payment, and online payment have grown in proportion. Today, India is at the top globally in terms of online payments. 89.5 million digital transactions have been made in India in the year 2022. India is now becoming a cashless society. Online banking and the shift to a cashless society are not becoming core in the Indian economic system. Common people started preferring online transactions to buy petrol, vegetables and other day-to-day needs. 'Digitalization' has influenced society largely and people believe in digital payment due to clear-cut transactions. Moreover, the CORONA pandemic has changed people's perception regarding online payments. Sociologists have another option to think and studying about the Cashless Society, people's perceptions regarding digital payments, digital economy and influence of digitalization on society.

**9) Sociology of Health and Medicine:**

The Pandemic has underscored the strengths and weaknesses of healthcare systems globally. Sociologists have analyzed how variations in healthcare infrastructure, access, and policies have influenced the spread of the virus and the ability to manage and mitigate its impact.

Sociology of Health and Medicine is also addressed as Medical Sociology. The major areas to inquire in Medical Sociology are the social determinants of human health and health-related behavior, the social organization of health care, health professions, and their interaction with patients. Ultimately, it includes all the aspects regarding health, illness, and Health Care Practices along with the patients' relations and interactions with the medical practitioners. As the sociology of health works on a variety of issues related to health, the importance of studies underpinning the sociology of health increases greatly during pandemics. Studies based on aspects

such as human behavior and discipline during communicable disease pandemics are important to society. Communicable disease pandemics like Bubonic plague, Spanish flu, COVID-19 pandemic, Swineflu, influenza pandemic, HIV/AIDS, etc. are the epidemics noted globally that reported at least 1 million deaths globally. Notably, more than 34 million people have died in the world due to Corona alone. Such rumors have spread regarding the COVID-19 Vaccine in India due to which awareness campaigns have been conducted by the Government institutions. Beliefs of some communities were also exposed regarding vaccines. For instance, impotence, early death, the possibility of heart attack etc. Moreover, What were the social effects of corona vaccine? What were the post-corona conditions and effects on people affected by corona? What effect did his lack have on his lifestyle? It has now become necessary to conduct global level studies on topics like etc. When WHO has expressed the possibility that other infectious diseases like Corona may spread in the near future, it becomes inevitable to discuss the individual, social and collective effects of the diseases. In the rush of material life, there is a possibility of an outbreak of many communicable disease pandemics like corona in the future. These epidemics refer to an increase, often sudden, in the number of cases of an infectious disease above what is normally expected in a given population in a specific area. Medical Sociology invokes that kind of study which directly focuses on human and social behavior, action, and interaction during pandemics. These kinds of studies are crucial for the development of medical sociology and action sociologists as well. epidemiology is a science and epidemics have a history globally. Medical sociology should be studied by including both of these things.

## CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has influenced the global society but sociologists need to identify major influencing factors. This is a common objective of this paper. Scopes in sociological studies is increased and various branches of sociology got new dimensions to trace transformation in society after Corona pandemic. In sociology, the impact and influence of the pandemic on society should be analyzed. For Instance, the pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated existing social inequalities, People from below the poverty line and living in low-income settlements found limited healthcare facilities in the early stage of CORONA, and living pattern and high population density is playing a crucial role in spreading diseases, etc. sociologists can identify the pre-existing disparities which can contribute to differential outcomes during the pandemic. Moreover, Corona has also had significant impacts on travel, trade and communication in globalization. The international exchange of globally discovered vaccines has also had important implications for global relations. Moreover, subjects like the social effects of vaccines can also be covered in the study. Social institutions like education, family, etc have undergone significant transformations during the CORONA pandemic. For instance, online education and online economic transactions have become more prevalent, leading to shifts in the dynamics of these institutions. Sociologists have studied how these changes have affected social interactions, social relationships, and the comprehensive functioning of institutions. Furthermore, media and communication have a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and responses to the pandemic. Sociologists have to analyze the role of mass media and communication along with social media. Most importantly, one more significant study needed by sociologists is to scrutinize government responses to the pandemic, evaluating the effectiveness of various measures and policies. A global pandemic has a very serious impact on the global society and brings about huge transformation. It influences society, social relations & interactions, human behavior, and entire social structure. It is the moral responsibility of sociologists to study the post-COVID impact on society scientifically. It is necessary to conduct these types of studies under different branches of sociology, so in this paper, there has been a detailed discussion about what kind of studies can be done in sociology after the coronavirus pandemic. The ongoing nature of the pandemic ensures that sociologists will continue to explore its multifaceted impact on society. On the other side, while Corona has not been completely eradicated, the 'Sociology of Corona' is also emerging as a distinct discipline with specific goals.

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