

**The Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic in the lives of Minority Communities in  
the US: A Review of the Psychological, Social and Economic Perspectives**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the global consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has wreaked psychological, economic, and social havoc in the US. This paper focuses specifically on the consequences of COVID-19 on minority groups in the US, such as loss of human life, as its impacts on these groups have been particularly strong. The principal causes of deaths resulting from COVID-19 are also highlighted in this paper. This study also examines how the COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in commodity shortages and price hikes including their influence on the everyday transactions and livelihoods of minorities and their impacts on businesses as a whole. This study emphasizes the hardships faced by minorities who have been affected by the pandemic's reign of terror, including unemployment, job loss and displacement. The impacts of COVID-19 on the lives of minorities in the US, such as a lack of social protection and access to high-quality healthcare in the informal economy, are also detailed in this study. Finally, this study addresses broader economic issues, such as lower salaries that have been caused by the pandemic.

*Keywords:* reign of terror, COVID-19 pandemic, minority communities, commodity shortage

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# **The Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic in the Lives of Minority Communities in the US: A Review of Psychological, Social and Economic Perspectives**

## **Introduction**

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which first surfaced in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, the world has suffered numerous psychological, social, and economic consequences which have in turn impacted the lives of people living in affected areas. Because of their lower income levels and lack of access to improved living conditions, minority populations throughout the world have been disproportionately affected by the consequences of COVID-19 (Blustein & Guarino, 2020). As of October 24, 2021, there have been over 243 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and over 4.9 million deaths globally and from January 3, 2020, to November 5, 2021, there have been 45,968,940 confirmed cases and 744,398 deaths in the US alone (World Health Organization, 2021). The consequences of COVID-19 have been particularly felt in rural and minority areas in the US (Blustein & Guarino, 2020). Latinos (including Puerto Ricans), African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Arabs and other Middle Eastern Americans, and Pacific Islanders (including Alaskan Natives) have been among the most affected communities (Tai et al., 2021).

Minority communities in the US are exemplified by a wide range of characteristics and face a similarly wide range of difficulties. Therefore, the COVID-19 containment measures put in place by various governments in the US to assist in controlling the spread of the virus have had a significant impact on the social and economic lifestyles of these minority groups (Taub, 2020). Containment measures such as the enforcement of border controls to limit cross border trade and restrictions on the number of people allowed at gatherings and meetings have affected both individual lives and minority run companies, even leading to business closures in isolated or

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minority regions. Additionally, the impacts of COVID-19 have been particularly visible in minority populations in the US because of high levels of poverty in these regions (Taub, 2020).

Minority communities typically contain growing populations, which can result in higher birth rates and thus greater numbers of children attending school. However, COVID-19 has caused countrywide shutdowns of schools throughout the US, which has significantly affected the education system and particularly the education of children in minority areas. These school shutdowns have forced many children to take on various odd jobs to help their families make ends meet (Blustein & Guarino, 2020). Minority communities have also seen an increased school dropout rate after schooling eventually resumed following the drop in the COVID-19 wave below its peak levels.

The elderly in minority communities have also been impacted in numerous ways, with many adults being compelled to seek alternative means of income to make ends meet. Minority populations have seen a move to illegal activities such as smuggling and drug trafficking, which has resulted in an increase in crime rates in minority areas. COVID-19 has also had a significant impact on minority populations' livelihoods, as transportation and travel systems have become hindered, resulting in restricted access to diverse markets and limitations on economic transactions and survival options (Blustein & Guarino, 2020). Limits on movement have particularly harmed vulnerable groups in minority communities, as they have been unable to quickly obtain food and other basic social amenities. Individuals from minority cultures have also faced difficulty in connecting with people from their community.

The central question that this paper seeks to answer is what are the major effects of COVID-19 Pandemic in the lives of minority communities in the US? This paper examines psychological, social, and economic perspectives along with an investigation of commodity

shortages, price surges, government actions, unemployment issues, displacement, and a lack of healthcare services in minority communities across the US. This paper's thesis, which studies the effects of COVID-19 on minority groups in the US, is covered in the web articles (Taub, 2020). Because the worldwide epidemic had such a significant impact, peer-reviewed sources are also used.

### **Literature Review**

Various scholars have been drawn to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and have been able to study the pandemic's implications on minority populations in the US. According to McKibbin and Fernando (2020), the effects of COVID-19 began in China, when the Chinese economy slowed as a result of fear from workers, thus halting production. As a result, numerous enterprises and organizations have become more reliant on Chinese commodities and goods regardless of regional size. Some countries, such as the US, have reduced production (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). Transport systems have also been disrupted by COVID-19, and the flow of economic activity in the US has been hampered by various travel restrictions.

The various waves of COVID-19 have caused widespread panic and fear among minority businesses and consumers, causing a shift in standard consumption patterns, and allowing for the emergence of a variety of market anomalies. Interruptions in the transportation, service and manufacturing sectors have also resulted in lower money circulation in the US economy, thus impacting small economies such as those in minority communities.

According to Haleem et al. (2020), COVID-19 has affected the lives of many individuals and has resulted in a slowing down of world economies. However, the effects have been most intensely felt by minority groups. For example, the pandemic has caused a loss of lives for many

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families. The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus has also led to the development of various safety precautions, including containment procedures, the use of masks, the maintenance of social distancing and the prohibition of social gatherings. According to Haleem et al. (2020) several countries have also implemented quarantine guidelines to prevent the disease's spread (Haleem et al., 2020). However, these precautions have not prevented the virus from spreading to new areas while also having a detrimental influence on many minority groups, such as hampering the ability to obtain necessities such as food and water. As a result of the virus's spread, many businesses and companies have been forced to close, resulting in a loss of jobs and rising unemployment rates in minority communities (Haleem et al., 2020).

The pandemic has also led to a loss of personal and multinational businesses that were previously crucial in providing job opportunities and income equality for minorities (Haleem et al., 2020). COVID-19 has also resulted in a decrease in cash flow both inside and beyond market sectors, forcing several potential and legitimate business prospects to close. The closures of many minority business operations have resulted in decreased revenue growth, particularly among the African American community (Haleem et al., 2020).

The dread and stigma generated by COVID-19 has also caused unnecessary stress among all populations but particularly among minorities. For example, COVID-19 has caused the closures of social facilities, including schools and churches, because of a need to control the virus's spread which has in turn affected people's social lifestyles. WHO regulations to restrict migration between afflicted countries have also reduced the availability of necessities for minority communities, thus making their lives miserable. Lockdowns have also had an economic impact on residents in minority neighborhoods, as they have become unable to engage in their usual economic activities.

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According to experts, federal and state lockdown measures have resulted in the suspensions of various modes of transportation, including local flights, bus transportation, truck usage and railways services, except for those involved in the transport of authorized essential goods (Darji & Brahmhatt, 2020). As a result, activities in small towns throughout the US have become marginalized, lowering the revenue earned by minority populations. The closings of many educational, sports and commercial venues have also had a profound impact on minority communities, as many rely on them for survival (Darji & Brahmhatt, 2020). The suspensions of various transportation sectors have also impacted the operations of multiple industries, leaving companies with no choice but to reduce their workforce. Many people in the tourism and transportation sectors have lost their jobs due to international restrictions that have halted international travel. According to the WHO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the COVID-19 pandemic has been the greatest threat to the world's economies since the 2008–2009 financial crisis (Darji & Brahmhatt, 2020).

According to Martins Van Jaarsveld's (2020) research on the effects of COVID-19, the pandemic has affected the daily lives of most people around the world, including minority communities in the US. The imposition of lockdowns in various states has increased individual isolation, affecting both large and small economies and limiting access to various mental and physical healthcare services (Martins Van Jaarsveld, 2020). This limited access has also created care issues for the elderly, as many have been unable to receive the daily healthcare check-ups that they previously received in the pre-COVID-19 era. Lack of healthcare for the elderly population has resulted in an additional loss of life.

The control measures and regulations put into place in response to the pandemic have increased anxiety and depression in the general population, particularly in groups subjected to

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more extended lockdown periods. However, these effects have disproportionately been felt by the elderly, many of whom have been forced to forego various essential services in their daily lives while facing more serious threats such as illnesses and a lack of social support (Martins Van Jaarsveld, 2020). Because the elderly in minority communities often have a higher rate of depression, lockdowns have exacerbated the difficulties they face in managing their depression.

Gray (2020) has observed that the effects of COVID-19's disruption of the transportation system has resulted in multiple disruptions to agricultural supply chains in minority communities in the US. COVID-19 has caused various restrictions and lockdowns to be imposed, limiting the availability of various goods and services (Gray, 2020). International border trade has also been cut, which has resulted in a reduction of agricultural supply. The effects of COVID-19 have also impacted the lives of minorities by causing a massive shutdown of the service sector (including hotels and restaurants), the retail sector and the tourism sector, causing mass job losses and the displacements of different minority groups (Gray, 2020).

The imposition of shutdowns has decreased revenue levels for minority groups as a result of job losses. The reduction in agricultural produce supply chains has also resulted in job losses and starvation among minority populations. According to Taub (2020), the emergence of COVID-19 has had various adverse effects on minority communities' social and economic lifestyles in many countries, including the US. Minority groups have been primarily impacted due to low-income levels and low levels of security which have led to an increase in social crimes and terrorism among marginalized groups in the US (Taub, 2020). The containment and regulation measures put into place in response to COVID-19 have also influenced the social lifestyles of much of the population in minority communities, resulting in the emergence of social crimes such as robberies, which have resulted in a further loss of lives.

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The US government's imposition of regulatory measures such as lockdowns and curfew hours has increased the number of cases of social abuse (Taub, 2020). The imposition of various lockdowns has forced families to stay together for more extended periods, increasing the chances of fights and other domestic crimes, which disproportionately impact minority communities. Local governments offices are flooded with reports of relationship abuse in 2020, it became clear that there has been an increase in the number of cases of social abuse among families. The effects of COVID-19, such as the loss of lives that has necessitated the imposition of lockdown measures, have given social abusers an edge in taking advantage of and terrorizing their victims (Taub, 2020). Cases of family fights and relationship abuses have particularly increased in minority communities in the US, causing victims of abuse to be forced to live in hardship or flee their homes.

The COVID-19 lockdown measures have also increased cases of intimate terrorism, particularly in low-income communities and primarily affecting women in these areas (Taub, 2020). Physical fights among and within families have also increased as a result of COVID-19 containment measures. Around November-December of 2020, the government's increased use of lockdowns as a control measure resulted in an increase in divorce cases among couples, particularly in minority communities, which often face an increased risk of domestic violence. According to Bradbury-Jones and Isham (2020), the increasing spread of the virus has also increased stress levels. This rising pressure and stress have been accompanied by psychological and physical health risks as well as a sense of loneliness and isolation, most notably in minority communities whose members have had a difficult time finding other sources of income (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020). Lockdown measures in minority communities have meant that

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family gatherings are no longer possible, leading to increased feelings of loneliness among many people in these communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also caused the closures of numerous businesses and schools, resulting in economic vulnerability and job loss, and increasing the exposure of children and their mothers to domestic violence (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020). The increasing containment measures, such as lockdowns, proposed by various governments have also contributed to the increase in domestic violence incidents (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020). Because of low-income levels and high levels of unemployment, marginalized communities, such as African American communities, have felt the effects of COVID-19 the most. In many minority communities, entire families live in a single compound and often having few potential sources of income, which has resulted in an increase in misunderstandings and therefore violence between partners during the pandemic.

Deaton and Deaton, (2020), found that COVID-19 has massively affected food security in most parts of the world and particularly in minority communities across the globe. The scholars argue that the emergence of COVID-19 has led to sudden income shock in many households, thus causing food insecurity (Deaton & Deaton, 2020). Increased food insecurities tend to arise because the main breadwinner in the family is unable to find alternative sources of income, which is often the case in minority communities. This has been exacerbated by the loss of jobs, salary cuts and even closures of various minority-run businesses caused by COVID-19 (Deaton & Deaton, 2020). Such reductions in income have led to further difficulties in securing enough resources and have further decreased the purchasing power of minority groups. Furthermore, the lack of access to food in minority communities has been worsened as a result of the government's lack of response toward food insecurity.

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Deaton and Deaton also reflect on the increases in unemployment caused by COVID-19 in minority communities, such as in the Indian American community. They have experienced a massive loss of jobs due to government regulations intended to minimize the spread of the virus, many of which have caused businesses to be shut down (Deaton & Deaton, 2020). The increasing cases of food insecurity have proven to be more dangerous for individuals in low-income communities. Food insecurity often arises in families with a lack of earnings from other sources. The scholars state that increasing food insecurity leads to a flux in many factors across communities, including continuous increases in cases of sicknesses and death. Border closures and disruptions of transportation systems are some causes of food insecurity in most economies, both of which have increased under COVID-19 (Deaton & Deaton, 2020).

In addition, Roggeveen and Sethuraman, (2020), expressed that retailer of essential goods such as food, groceries, and healthcare are experiencing increased demand opportunities for serving consumers at home, while facing challenges of inventory, supply chain management, delivery, and keeping their facility a safe environment. However, they also state that the pandemic has had a different impact on retailers, who have experienced mixed effects. Some local retailers in minority communities have benefited from the lockdowns because they have increased their customer base. Retailers of essential commodities such as foods and health products have experienced an increase in sales because of the increasing demand for their products, as lockdowns have severely hindered the movements of people and thus their ability to shop (Roggeveen & Sethuraman, 2020). However, the increase in the need for essential commodities among residents has also led to increasing price levels of productivity.

Many retail businesses have achieved mass increases in their sales because of the rise in their goods' market. However, they have also been faced with some adverse effects. Most

retailers have faced constant challenges in accessing new inventory, maintaining an efficient supply chain, maintaining secure and safe deliveries, and storing their goods in safe environments (Roggeveen & Sethuraman, 2020). Safe storages have particularly been a concern because of increasing cases of social crimes such as robberies and theft that have become rampant in local communities. At the same time, COVID-19 has caused a great number of businesses to close, especially non-food businesses, because of a lack of customer flow despite the requirement to pay their expenses as usual. However, various companies operating in non-food industries such as footwear have been able to adopt other means of doing business by reaching out to and engaging with consumers through at-home shopping, which has allowed them to recover the drop in their sales and remain in the industry.

### **Perspectives**

Minority communities in the US have been particularly vulnerable to the severe impacts of COVID-19 because of the difficulties they have faced in managing and controlling the strong waves of the pandemic. The objective of this literature review has been to fill gaps in knowledge for the purpose of equal treatment, impartiality, and an improvement in the lives of minority communities during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The psychological, social, and economic perspectives recognize that minority communities have been affected by COVID-19 in extreme ways in each area.

#### **Psychological Perspective**

The emergence of COVID-19 in low-income communities in the US has negatively impacted many individuals, as many have lost their lives to the virus (Baig et al., 2021). The virus has proven to be dangerous and difficult to notice because of its ability to spread from one person to another through air droplets projected by an infected individual through sneezing or

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coughing, which are then breathed in by other individuals. The virus has also been found to be transmitted through contact such as shaking hands with or hugging an infected person or touching contaminated surfaces and then touching one's nose, eyes or mouth (Baig et al., 2021). One factor that has contributed to increased COVID-19 death rates in majority populations has been ignorance of COVID-19 rules and regulations meant to contain the spread of the virus.

Because the virus was difficult to identify in its initial stages, individuals could ignore slight symptoms without seeking medical attention, thus leading to an increased spread of the virus to minority groups (Sim, 2020). Individuals could contract the virus from another person but deny having symptoms or claim that it was typical illnesses, thus spreading the virus to their families and then to others. While this increased spread has affected people from all communities throughout the US, minority groups have tended to receive less information about how the virus is spread, particularly during the initial stages of the pandemic. As such, the increased spread of the disease has led to a disproportionately increased mortality rate among the residents of minority communities. Additionally, because of the unique nature of COVID-19, the virus could be relatively subtle for a few days after it is contracted and then quickly become fatal, particularly for those with existing medical conditions, leaving many patients with minimal chances of survival if they are not given urgent medical attention. However, many minority communities consist of low-income groups who are unable to quickly access the medical services that the virus requires, thus risking many individuals' lives.

Low-income groups in minority communities have also been faced with an inability to buy basic protective measures like mask, face shield, gown, gloves, and hand sanitizer that could help in securing themselves against the COVID-19. This has caused COVID-19 to run rampant in many minority populations, thereby increasing its devastating effects. Higher mortality rates in

low-income minority communities in the US have also been exacerbated by a lack of access to lifesaving support for patients because of the high costs of accessing medications and life-saving equipment (Baig et al., 2021).

Minority communities have also experienced delays in the delivery of COVID-19 medications, which have led to the further deaths of individuals who either could not wait or could not afford to wait for medicine and treatment. These issues have also been worsened by the existing lack of access to healthcare professionals in minority communities.

Additionally, state, and federal governments in the US have mainly invested into central US states, which are largely inhabited by majority groups, and have thus frequently overlooked minority communities, further contributing to higher death rates among minorities. Minority communities have therefore been faced with a lack of facilities that can effectively handle large numbers of COVID-19 patients, which has in turn slowed the rate at which these communities have been able to respond to the spread of the virus (Sim, 2020). The loss of lives in minority communities can also be attributed to other factors such as ignorance, chronic health conditions, unsafe living conditions, increased poverty levels, inadequate access to food, mental disorders, and stress.

### **Economic Perspective**

#### ***Shortage of Commodities***

The emergence of COVID-19 has led to the imposition of regulations and restrictions on various economic activities, thus increasing the chances that communities will face shortages of food and other commodities (Sim, 2020). The pandemic has affected both international trade and domestic business across US, as many businesses have been required to close to limit the spread of the virus.

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Border restrictions have reduced the importation and exportation of commodities, many local businesses and companies have been forced to close and manufacturing has either been significantly limited or shut down entirely, all of which have affected the supply of products in minority communities (Park et al., 2020). Business closures have also affected the accessibility of various raw materials, which many local producers rely on to their produce their goods. In particular, the COVID-19 restrictions have affected commodities that heavily involve transportation, such as metal and energy. The agricultural sector has also been affected, as its supply chains have been significantly disrupted by COVID-19 restrictions, thus further limiting the distribution of food into minority communities (Park et al., 2020).

The concept of commodity shortages can be explained through the theory of supply and demand. This theory works by considering exchange between sellers and buyers. It examines the number of commodities that various sellers wish to sell in the market at different distinct price levels to willing buyers at the same price offered by the sellers. The effects of COVID-19 and subsequent business closures and government restrictions have led to substantial decreases in the supply of commodities in the US (Park et al., 2020). This has led to a decline in the money supply in low-income groups in the US, particularly in minority communities, which has in turn resulted in a reduction in demand for goods from existing suppliers. This fall in demand from minority communities has led to further commodity decreases and ultimately a commodity shortage in the markets of these communities.

### ***Price Surges***

The effects of COVID-19 have become so widespread that they have even begun to affect the economic activities of global markets. The pandemic has initiated the tightening of border restrictions, which involve international trade. Exportations and importations have been greatly

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affected, increasing the shortage of commodities in rural and urban residential areas in the US. This decrease in the supply of goods has led to a deficiency of products, thereby causing a potential rise in the prices of existing goods in the market (Darji & Brahmhatt, 2020). During the pre-COVID-19 era, there was a free flow of commodities across borders, leading to an efficient and effective supply chain because of the absence of various restrictions. The efficient transportation of people and goods allowed businesses to efficiently operate across multiple communities. However, the emergence of the pandemic has led to closures and shutdowns of multiple transport systems and the enactment of border restrictions.

Border restrictions have affected the supply chains of various products in local markets, thereby affecting the accessibility of commodities in local communities and increasing the prices of available products (Darji & Brahmhatt, 2020). Many firms and retailers have increased their prices to compensate for supply decreases, and these price surges have ultimately hit low-income groups in minority communities the hardest. Price surges during the COVID-19 pandemic have also arisen as a result of various firms and businesses enjoying monopoly power after the closures and shutdowns of certain companies in an attempt to survive the pandemic period. Monopolistic firms and retailers have frequently taken control of the market and imposed higher prices to increase their profits, therefore putting further strain on already struggling communities (Taub, 2020). Many small businesses in minority communities have been unable to effectively sustain their business, both as a result of supply shortages and competition with these monopoly companies and have thus been forced to raise the prices of their goods as well.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to increases in healthcare provision costs because of increased demand for healthcare services. The pandemic has naturally seen an increase in hospital visits, but the necessity of testing for the virus has caused the costs of care to rise even

more (Darji & Brahmhatt, 2020). Additionally, as more significant waves of the pandemic have hit local communities in the US, the number of patients requiring urgent medical care has increased significantly, often overwhelming available healthcare facilities. Thus, many institutions have been forced to increase the cost of attending to COVID-19 patients to control the number of visits. These price increases have greatly affected the lives of many minority populations because of their inability to pay for the higher costs of care.

### ***Government Actions***

Government actions helped address the problems of price surges which provided some relief to members of minority groups. Government actions positively affected prices since they helped lower prices of essential commodities, leading to great relief. They included COVID-19 loans, grants, and debt relief that helped small enterprises continue operating and remunerating their employees (USAgov, 2021). For instance, the Small Business Administration (SBA) and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) provided coronavirus relief alternatives for businesses. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) distributed more than five million loans all over the country (Liu & Parilla, 2020).

Nonetheless, the distribution lacked fairness and equality since racial and ethnic prejudices dogged it. Access to PPP loans differed considerably due to factors like neighborhood demographics. For instance, small businesses in white neighborhoods dominated by whites received PPP loans faster than those located in Black Latino/Hispanic dominated neighborhoods. PPP loans program offers cash-flow support through loans to businesses who retain their payroll during this emergency (ACCD, 2021). This was a major government action that helped people from minority communities employed in various organizations across the country.

*Reduction of Income Levels*

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the imposition of various containment measures and economic shutdowns, which have resulted in a loss of jobs and increased absenteeism from work by a large number of employees (Martins Van Jaarsveld, 2020; Singh et al., 2021). This has been accompanied by massive losses in income as many companies and businesses have adopted methods of reducing the costs of operating their businesses. The income losses have mainly been felt through three significant transitions, in which workers lose their jobs, are unable to renew their work contracts or are be subjected to temporary layoffs. Additionally, many workers have remained employed but only work for a fraction of their regular hours. The loss of jobs resulting from the inability to renew employee contracts in particular has greatly reduced individuals' income levels (Martins Van Jaarsveld, 2020). Most individuals in this category were previously involved in the production of non-essential products and were already part of vulnerable sub-groups, so this new loss of income has drawn them even closer to poverty.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, most businesses and companies had access a broad labor force, and employees were therefore less likely to suddenly lose their jobs or have their contracts terminated. During the pandemic, however, many workers have been forced into unemployment as a result of a company's attempts to minimize its number of employees in accordance with regulations and directives implemented by the governments to combat the spread of the virus. Many companies have also attempted to prevent the loss of their own labor force to competitors by subjecting their employees to temporary layoffs by cutting their incomes and keeping them attached to the businesses. These temporary layoffs have also reduced the income levels in minority communities because minorities are often the first to be laid off. This

has led to situations in which employees remain tied to a business but are subject to reduced hours of work, thus lowering their daily income (Martins Van Jaarsveld, 2020).

## **Social Perspective**

### ***The Fear of Unemployment***

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating outcomes in various areas of life, including the social, environmental, and economic sectors. With the rapid spread of the virus to multiple corners of the world, many economic activities have been affected, leading to mass job losses and rising unemployment (Fana et al., 2020). The mass closures of businesses and companies have led to a significant portion of the US population becoming unemployed, which has had further effects on low-income groups because of their lack of income or savings to help them survive. The closures of businesses as a result of COVID-19 have also led to a reduced labor force, which has particularly impacted men, less-educated workers, and Hispanic communities (Fana et al., 2020).

In addition to increasing unemployment rates, falling wages resulting from decreased work hours and a smaller labor force, the COVID-19 pandemic has also forced companies to enact measures to control the number of people in a given organization or business location to comply with bans on gatherings and social distancing measures (Cassells et al., 2020). Many personnel have also opted to remain at home out of fear of contracting the virus, thus causing further shortages, and leading to structural unemployment.

Social distancing measures have particularly affected businesses such as hotels, restaurants and other service-industry businesses as well as those in the arts and leisure industries, thus leading to increased unemployment for individuals in these areas. The confinement measures enacted in response to COVID-19 have also disrupted the daily activities

required to run particular programs and business activities, thus creating strain for companies and a further loss of jobs (Blustein & Guarino, 2020).

The increased unemployment caused by COVID-19 has led to a number of societal problems, including increased poverty levels among minority communities and increases in social crimes. Healthcare professionals have often been forced to work long hours in healthcare facilities and have been frequently affected by various levels of stress and exhaustion. Care providers from low-income communities have been hit particularly hard, as they have been subjected not only to long working hours but also to a lack of security while not at work because of the aforementioned increases in social crime. Many individuals, especially women, have received various forms of harassment and abuse, which have often caused them to view their employment as a place of safety, therefore exacerbating their sense of fear in relation to their employment status.

### ***Food Insecurity***

Since the emergence of COVID-19, food security has proven to be a significant concern for many people because it is among the essential social and public health issues that the increasing pandemic has exacerbated. The problems of food security have shifted focus onto resource-poor minority communities such as Asian Americans and Native Americans. However, food insecurity has become a concern among all low-income communities because of the difficulties they have faced as a result of COVID-19 (Gundersen et al., 2021). Most families from minority communities in the US tend to have low-income levels and rely on daily wages and remittances; therefore, they are more likely to experience the most frustrating cases of food insecurity. Many minority communities, such as Asian American communities, tend to

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experience a lack of access to enough food for both individuals and families due to various constraints, such as financial constraints and those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Various COVID-19 policies have led to mass food insecurity because most individuals have been unable to access outer markets to purchase food. The closures of both markets and borders have placed limitations on the ability of many families to access food continuously. The lockdowns imposed on local communities in the US have also affected people's access to markets, thereby increasing food insecurities in these communities. Additionally, the disruptions of the transport sector have limited access to markets and other sources of income, thus limiting large groups of individuals to only a few local sources of food, thereby exacerbating already existing food insecurities (Singh et al., 2021). Food insecurity has become a particular issue among minority communities because of decreased income levels caused by business closures, decreased wages and potential job loss.

The fall in income levels among low-income groups has increased their potential to experience food insecurity because of a lack of enough food for backup and upkeep. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has argued that increasing food insecurities are multifaceted phenomena that occur because of various disruptions in food availability, access, stability, and utilization in minority populations (Singh et al., 2021). The increased prevalence of food insecurity among low-income communities in the US can also increase various healthcare issues and social consequences. Such consequences could include increased risks of malnutrition, chronic diseases, infections, poor mental health and well-being, societal conflicts, learning impairments in students and developmental issues in children.

COVID-19 has also increased the occurrence of food insecurities in low-income areas by increasing the prices of commodities (including food products), altering food environments, and

creating economic inequalities that pose a significant threat to one's ability to obtain daily food and nutrition requirements (Singh et al., 2021).

## **Analysis**

### **Supply and Demand Theory**

The theory of supply and demand provides economic concepts with which to understand the occurrence of commodity shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this theory, the demand curve indicates the relationship between the quantity of a commodity that is demanded and its relative price in the market, while the supply curve explains the relationship between the amount of a commodity that is supplied and its prevailing price in the market (Singh et al., 2021). Therefore, the law of demand states that higher prices cause a decrease in market demand; in other words, consumers tend to shop below their purchasing power because prices are raised. However, the law of supply holds that, even at higher prices, a greater quantity supplied into the market will increase the possibility of accumulating larger profits by suppliers. Therefore, achieving equilibrium in the market, wherein the market reaches an equilibrium of quantity and prices, occurs when the demand and supply curves cross.

A reasonably competitive market occurs when the quantity that is supplied equals the quantity that is demanded, thus avoiding the occurrence of surpluses or shortages in the market. If a price is below the equilibrium levels, the amount supplied will become less than the quantity demanded in the market, thus creating a shortage. The existence of various deficiencies in the market due to the less supply often results from excess demand; therefore, the supply of commodities must be adjusted to meet this extra demand (Singh et al., 2021). However, for prices above the equilibrium level, the quantity supplied in the market will exceed the amount demanded, thus leading to a surplus. In this case, it would be necessary to bring the price back to

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equilibrium levels. The emergence of COVID-19 has led to various border restrictions that have resulted in decreases to the supply of multiple products. This reduction in the supply of goods has therefore caused shortages in their respective markets.

Border restrictions and transport restrictions are two forces that have caused a fall in market supply without the need for an increase in demand (Martins Van Jaarsveld, 2020). This has caused shortages in the market, which have thereby created an increased demand for commodities. To offset scarcity in the market, the supply must be increased to meet the demand and thereby achieve equilibrium. In normal situations, market forces could depend on the government to ease border restrictions to allow for increased trading between countries and thereby increase the exchange of various goods in the market. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the government to impose various restrictions, including the closure of border trade, which have severely limited the transfer of commodities across borders.

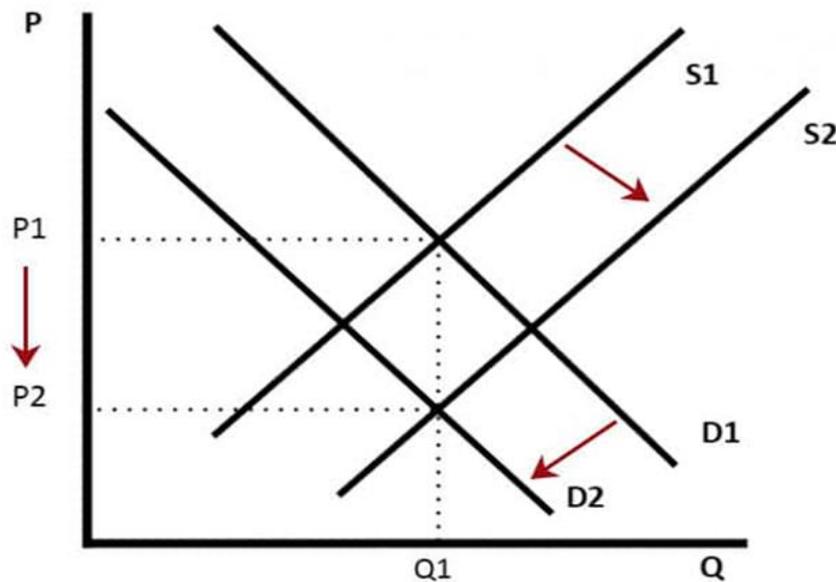


Figure 1 Interplay of Demand and Supply showing quantity demanded and quantity supplied, and price of goods and services during the pandemic: Pettinger (2021)

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During the pre-COVID-19 era, the quantity supplied ( $S_1$ ) was equal to the amount demanded ( $D_1$ ) at the equilibrium price ( $P_1$ ). However, after the imposition of COVID-19 regulations, the supply fell significantly ( $S_2$ ), leading to an increase in the quantity demanded, thus causing mass shortages in the market. The only way to attain equilibrium in the market while there exists an excess demand and while the prevalence of COVID-19 still prevents the lifting of restrictions to increase supply would be for the demanded quantity to fall, causing a drop in the prices of the commodities (Singh et al., 2021). This would lead to the attainment of a new equilibrium level in which the demanded amount equals the quantity supplied in the market.

### **The Classical Economic Theory of Unemployment**

The classical theory of unemployment states that the labor market involves the supply and demand of labor, through which the factor of production is achieved. It also states that the demand for labor gets to arrive at from the declining marginal product of labor; thus, any increase in the wage rate in the market will cause a demand for labor (Martins Van Jaarsveld, 2020). Labor supply depends on workers' decisions to work and is therefore directly related to real wages. Therefore, market equilibrium is achieved when the supply and demand for labor curves cross, indicating full employment and the real wage. In this equilibrium, workers are willing to provide their labor services at the prevailing wage rate. However, the occurrence of full employment does not mean that unemployment cannot exist, as there may still be frictional unemployment (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020). The existence of frictional unemployment has become evident during COVID-19 because many companies have opted to reduce the incomes of individuals to manage their operational costs in response to the fall in demand for non-food products.

It is likely for workers to feel dissatisfaction with wage cuts and decide to quit their jobs when they realize that the amount of work they put in is greater than the real wage they are offered, thus leading to voluntary unemployment. During COVID-19 some workers from minority communities have been subjected to pay cuts and have thus decided to quit their jobs because of the decline in value for their labor. Frictional unemployment has become evident in many minority communities because various businesses and companies have chosen to respond to certain measures by reducing workers' wages (Martins Van Jaarsveld, 2020). The provision of temporary layoffs to employees or reductions to wages or work hours have prompted many employees to look for better-paying jobs or consider other methods of earning money. Therefore, wage reduction has been a significant cause of frictional unemployment among minority populations.

### **Efficient Market Hypothesis Theory**

The efficient market hypothesis theory focuses on the relationship between the financial market and the stock price of products, stating that new factors in the market can affect the future price of products. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, most products have been supplied to minority groups in the US. Additionally, most companies that have supplied households with food or pharmaceutical services have been blocked from moving out of the house to observe the quarantine directives from the WHO. Most members of middle-class and lower-class have had limited resources with which to access the essential resources they need.

According to Sundarasan et al. (2020), investors are typically only prompted to invest when there is the possibility of an excellent market for their goods and services. However, many investors have decided to instead take losses during the pandemic. The lack of interest of investors due to fear of failure has also resulted in a loss of employment opportunities for

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middle-class communities and has forced many businesses to adopt a work-from-home strategy or lay off many of their workers. Additionally, a lack of information on the effects of the pandemic on the economy has led to a deterioration of the lifestyles of the rich.

### **Keynesian Theory**

The effects of COVID-19 have led to a significant drop in the demand for many goods and services, causing a decrease in consumption levels. Keynes states that demand generates supply in the short term. However, in the case of tremendous shock, a decrease in demand can be treatable through monetary and fiscal policies. The pandemic has influenced supply in many markets through various border restrictions. In addition, containment measures such as social distancing have tended to reduce working hours and overall productivity, thus causing a reduction in the capacities of community restaurants and stores. An increase in marginal costs has also driven contractions in demand. This has been further exacerbated because COVID-19 has affected both demand and supply, raising disturbing uncertainties about the future of the market in relation to prevailing prices.

In an economic view, the decreases in demand cause a fall in price. In contrast, decreases in supply increase price levels, thus the emergence of future uncertainties in the economy for occurrences of inflation, deflation, or experiencing steady prices (Keynes, 2019). Future price uncertainties can greatly affect minority communities in both the short term and the long term. Decreases in the income levels of minority communities affect the Gross Domestic Product of the US as a whole, thus reducing the national income. Decreases to the national income are in turn likely to decrease the consumption of goods and services in areas such as the tourism and hospitality industry. Therefore, it can be argued that decreases in both demand and supply in the market reduce individual revenues and thus change consumption patterns.

## **Ethical Implications of the Effects of COVID-19**

Various ethical considerations will be tested to ensure an effective recovery from COVID-19 in the years to come.

### **Pressures from an Uneven Economic Recovery**

During the most recent stages of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become apparent every company and nation will respond differently to the pandemic because some countries are still waiting for vaccines, while others have reported that 60% to 50% of their population has been vaccinated (Martins Van Jaarsveld, 2020). As a result, professionals and government officials must be aware that they are serving entities at various stages of recovery. For example, it may take a year or more for the economy of one country to fully reopen and catch up to the economies of other countries. As a result, many professionals and stake holders may be put under a great deal of stress during these periods of unequal success. Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis has created numerous opportunities for unethical behavior, which is reflected in the uneven recovery.

### **The Demands for Greater Support and Efficiency**

Many professionals and stake holders should be on the lookout for changes that could impair their capacity to make critical decisions and judgments or demonstrate the ethical duties of management. However, it is unlikely that the pandemic will have put so much pressure on professionals, employers, stake holders and concerned authorities that they cannot identify, evaluate, and resolve potential challenges to independence. All professionals should become autonomous and vigilant in regard to incoming information and changes in circumstances and facts to sustain higher standards of ethical conduct.

### **The Risks of Rapid Digitization: cybercrimes alertness**

The increased speed of technology application and digitization has eventually raised concerns about the increasing cases of cybercrimes and fraud, which has taken advantage of the new ways to exploit various organizations in the United States (Okereafor, 2021). The growing trends of cybercrimes would continue most likely abate during the recovery phase. Therefore, minorities in the Covid-19 pandemic need to work in a more technological world where various workers would decide to work from home and others would move to their offices. Hence, they need to have efficient skills to enable them to operate most efficiently and ethically in more digital environments.

### **Burnout and the Mental Health of Teams and Talent**

Because the COVID-19 pandemic has widely influenced the cognitive thinking capacities of individuals, concerns about mental health have grown. It has been a year since the pandemic's impacts began to be felt by individuals, with the majority of people experiencing extreme stress and emotional distress (Sundarassen et al., 2020). According to reports, the bulk of the working class, who were unable to work from home and were thus forced to report to their various workstations, have exhibit signs of depression and anxiety.

### **Policy Recommendations**

The Covid-19 pandemic has extensively shown massive threats to various essential sectors of the economies globally. The most affected is the health care sector because of its direct relevance during the pandemic. However, more other sectors, such as transport, manufacturing, industrial, and service, have experienced Covid-19. In addition, various governments have adopted various ways and measures against Covid-19 that can be recommended for applications by multiple individuals and organizations. However, the adopted measures could have hazardous

and discriminatory impacts, inflicted both intentionally and unwittingly (Bachelet, 2020). It is suitable to include various strict emergency controls to be prolonged and purposed after the crisis while various associated health risks start to reduce. Therefore, various policy recommendations have been put forward to help combat the pandemic and post-pandemic recovery period. To curb the effects of COVID-19, various policy recommendations have been developed, as highlighted below.

**Ensuring that Emergency Measures are Accountable, Proportionate and Time-Restricted**

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the necessity of emergency responses and thus emergency teams. However, the enacted emergency responses should still provide individuals and organizations with a level of freedom. Emergency restrictions that tend to affect fundamental rights, such as the freedoms of assembly, association, and internal movement, should be somewhat limited to allow individuals to recover in their own ways (Repucci & Slipowitz, 2020). It would also be appropriate for emergency restrictions to be subject to independent oversights and extensions based on various transparent criteria. With the effective implementation of emergency restrictions, all people should be granted the opportunity to seek compensation and remedies for inappropriate or unnecessary rights violations committed during the crisis period. However, the emergency restrictions and regulations should promote freedoms and expressions among the individuals to enable the restoration of the pre-Covid-19 social freedoms.

**Provision of Technical Support and Training for Online Duties**

Companies should support online training to equip their employees with online skills that will enable them to effectively work from home and thereby comply with directives to implement work-from-home guidelines. Civil groups should also engage in active collaboration

with local and international partners to identify acceptable best practices for local projects and should offer related training. However, such training capabilities should also be improved to ensure that governments and donors can fund efforts to train people in the use of digital platforms (Repucci & Slipowitz, 2020). Because the majority of many people's responsibilities are now carried out online, the most appropriate training area would be the use of communications platforms, which would entail conducting and supplementing various remote or global seminars and conferences.

### **Ensure a Free and Independent Media**

During times of emergency, as demonstrated by the prevalence of COVID-19, the government should safeguard press liberties by improving freedoms of expression and access to critical information. Typically, the media serves as a public informant. As a result, individuals who work with the media should be given numerous forms of aid, including financial assistance, technical assistance, mentorship programs and skill training (Kharas & Dooley, 2020). Financial support would strengthen their journalism efforts, assisting in the collection of information for the public and raising public understanding of the country's position in the COVID-19 recovery process. Financial support for media sites is also critical to combat the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. Such support can enable journalists to improve their day-to-day tasks, such as providing fact-based information and data about COVID-19 infection and treatment rates. The effectiveness of media platforms allows them to identify and investigate misinformation and disinformation that may lead to public misperceptions.

### **Provision of Emergency Funding and Condemnation of Human Rights Abuses**

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the activities of several notable civic organizations and campaigns and has limited their usual revenue streams. As a result, emergency

money is required to restore and continue their operations. Certain civil rights organizations play crucial roles in enforcing restrictions on various fundamental rights and effectively addressing judicial and electoral reforms to reduce political division (Sundarasan et al., 2020). As a result, the government should ensure that civil society organizations, particularly those operating in restrictive circumstances, are given support and donor funds to help them expand their operations and effectively carry out their tasks. Strengthening democracy and governance and the effective protection of human rights are among their major tasks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen an increase in reports of relationship abuse in the US. It is therefore important that the government keep a close eye on all forms of misuse and act swiftly to reduce such cases (Repucci & Slipowitz, 2020). Many different groups of people have reported an increase in cases of abuse, particularly minority populations and marginalized people who are more vulnerable to social abuse. Women, people of color and other marginalized groups have been the most affected largely because of their potential to be denied access to various important services.

### **Provision of Direct Wage Subsidies and Temporary Suspension of Taxes**

Because the pandemic has forced the closures of many firms, many employers have mandated paid time off for their employees to avoid layoffs, putting employers in a difficult position. As a result, the government should set aside various forms of assistance, such as subsidizing various sectors, to assist in the rapid recovery of economies through the extension of employment bases and the increased purchase of production elements (Moreira & Hick, 2021). Subsidization of various economic sectors will support the economy in the post-pandemic period by assuring a speedy and balanced economic recovery in all sectors.

The government must also legislate various methods of investing back into the systems, such as providing subsidies and tax breaks to various important sectors of the economy, to achieve a more quick and successful recovery from COVID-19. Tax holidays would enable diverse businesses to recuperate and circulate funds within the economy. The circulation of money in the economy can be increased by avoiding tax collections from businesses and individuals, such as payroll taxes, sales taxes, property taxes and income taxes. Tax relief would allow businesses to develop and improve their production, resulting in a more efficient approach to economic recovery. Tax holidays would also encourage enterprises and firms that had previously closed to reopen and would attract new businesses to expand production in the economy.

### **Provisions of Support Packages and Health Supplies**

The government should use various methods to ensure the economy's complete recovery, including making practical policy proposals that would have an equal impact on the lives of all people. For example, assistance packages such as health packages should be used to construct hospitals and community clinics (Furman et al., 2020). Health packages can expand the country's healthcare facilities, making healthcare services more accessible.

The administration should also focus on suspending various tariffs on vital healthcare products to reduce reliance on imported pharmaceuticals. As a result of the reduction in overdependence on foreign products, local domestic manufacturers will be required to increase their production capacities (Sundarassen et al., 2020). Increased domestic production would help countries worldwide respond more quickly in a crisis, and many countries grow their local production through partnerships. The reassessments of the supply and the value chains should shift focus to various demanding commodities for priorities to be given to the critical supplies.

### **Support of Research and Innovations**

The government should invest more into the formation of research platforms and provide support to existing platforms to ensure an effective exchange of ideas and enhance effective collaborative research (Autin et al., 2020). The support of research and innovation platforms would help in ensuring that the country is properly prepared for the emergence of crises, thus reducing the devastating effects of emergencies.

### **Summary**

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in the Wuhan district of China in 2019, people worldwide have been severely impacted psychologically, economically, and socially due to the virus' catastrophic impacts. COVID-19 has had a significant impact in the US, particularly among minority groups such as African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. COVID-19 has resulted in many deaths, which is widely regarded as the virus' most heinous effect because the loss of loved ones and families produces not only emotional but also social and economic damage. Furthermore, due to numerous constraints meant to contain the virus, the pandemic has resulted in major commodities shortages in both domestic and foreign markets. The pandemic has triggered an upward trend in price increases, resulting in higher living costs for many people but particularly for minorities.

Because of the widespread closures of many industries and businesses in minority communities and the economy as a whole, fears of unemployment have grown. As a result, there has been an increase in job losses, as many businesses have been forced to close or reduce production components such as labor, resulting in a drop in income for many people. The loss of work has also led to an increase in social crimes such as robberies and a surge in relationship

abuse. Minority groups have been particularly affected by these issues because of an already existing lack of social protection and decent healthcare.

Various economic theories have been used to explain the effects of COVID-19 and the correlations between them. The theory of supply and demand can be used to describe how various COVID-19 control strategies have resulted in commodity shortages, price increases, food insecurity and even income reductions. The classical theory of unemployment states that the labor market involves the supply and demand of labor, through which the factor of production is achieved, whereas hypothesis theory focuses on the relationship between the financial market and the stock price of products, stating that new factors in the market can affect the future price of products. Keynes states that demand generates supply in the short term. However, in the case of tremendous shock, a decrease in demand can be treatable through monetary and fiscal policies. This has been further exacerbated because COVID-19 has affected both demand and supply, raising disturbing uncertainties about the future of the market in relation to prevailing prices. Various ethical implications must be imposed to bring openness to the accountancy of COVID-19 money as part of recovery from the pandemic.

As most economies recover from the pandemic, various policy recommendations, such as providing financial packages to speed up the recovery processes, should be implemented to effectively respond to the crisis. Governments would also grant tax breaks to businesses and corporations to boost money circulation and help businesses recover. Firm subsidies would also encourage the formation of new businesses, which would help to speed up the recovery process. The government should also make an effort to fight corruption and abuse in affected families by taking legal action against perpetrators.

### **About the Author**

Narad Pokhrel is a President and CEO at Neoly Home Care, LLC. Neoly Home Care, LLC is a home health care agency which is operating in couples of States and several cities in Pennsylvania. Mr. Pokhrel was a former refugee from Bhutan but now a proud citizen of this great nation. He is the founding president of Bhutanese Community in Scranton. He is associated with many social organizations as a community leader. His leadership skills, multi-language endowments, community services competence and social attachment is highly regarded in Bhutanese communities and the larger communities in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Mr. Pokhrel's social connections, leadership quality and professional experience to date have provided him with an excellent background in community services especially in home health care areas. He educates and supervises dozens of directors, administrators, managers and hundreds of CNAs, care aides, and care givers. He was a teacher in Nepal. Mr. Pokhrel earned his master's in health service administration degree from Marywood University in 2014 and is now a doctoral candidate seeking his PhD in Strategic Leadership and Administrative Studies also from Marywood University. In his free time, he loves writing poems and songs. He lives in Harrisburg, PA with his parents, wife and three children.

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