

# Leadership in Healthcare during Pandemic Situation

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Mrs. Indu Taneja  
Research Scholar

Dr. Shruti Tiwari  
Principal- School of Education

Suresh Gyan Vihar University, Jaipur

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## ABSTRACT:

At present situation in May'20: Since Mar'20 we all are living in a different world which we never expected before. Our lifestyles have changed because of pandemic situation all over the world. Everyone is surviving and fighting with an unknown virus. Many of us are also worried about wealth because lockdown had a massive impact on economy.

In this scenario, Health Care institutions are only the hope to save the human life and people are looking to these institutions for help. But other side of the story is very critical as these health care institutions especially in private sector have their own challenges and this is another burden from government and humanity.

In this article, I am trying to evaluate leadership challenges in healthcare with mitigation strategy in pandemic situation.

*[Keyword: Pandemic, Hospital, Laboratories, PPE, N95 Mask, COVID-19]*

As we know this pandemic situation has arisen due to Coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Symptoms of COVID-19 infection are very common like Flu, Cold, Cough, Congestion etc. Due to these symptoms we need to be very careful and avoid contact with everybody. In this context, all healthcare institutions like Hospitals, Laboratories, Medical Colleges etc. have a very critical role to face this situation.

In reference of the above context first we will discuss about challenges of Leadership in Healthcare.

## **Challenges:**

- **People Management:**

First and most critical challenge is manpower management especially for Frontline workers like Doctors, Nursing, Housekeeping and Supportive staff. As of now, we know that the best weapon to kill this virus is “Social Distancing”. Despite of awareness about this fact, these frontline workers needs to fight for treatment and save the human life which seeks help from healthcare institutions. Every individual’s life is at risk during their duty but whole responsibility of any miss-happening lies with head of the respective Institution.

Factors of this challenge

- a. Duty Roaster-Employee hesitation
- b. Safety & fitness of Individuals
- c. Social distancing at workplace

- **Financial Crisis:**

Government had announced strict lockdown in the country and all movements are restricted except emergency services, due to this restriction Hospital footfall has fallen down drastically and regular patients are hesitating to visit the hospital except for die-hard emergency. As a result, hospital revenue is severely affected but fixed expenses like Salary, Power, AMC, Housekeeping expenses still have to be undertaken. So these financial crisis also need to managed by the Head of the Institution.

- **Infrastructure:**

This is practical problem because infrastructure cannot not be designed in an ideal manner. Small institutions are facing more challenges in this case.

Factors of these challenge are:

- a. Management of social distancing
- b. Entry/Exit area for staff and patients
- c. Negative Pressure for infected areas
- d. OPD and Lab infrastructure for Doctors & Staff

This challenge also lies with Leadership of the Institution.

- **Associated Impact:**

Apart from the above challenges, some more associated challenges are as follows:

- a. Supply Chain Management: Shortage of essential products like PPE, N95 mask, Triple layer mask, sanitizer, disinfecting material etc. Procurement of these material at high cost.
- b. Compliances: In This pandemic situation government body has also imposed many regulations on healthcare sectors like demand of manpower; reporting; auditing; regulations about drug usage etc.

After studying above challenges, we know the importance of leader in this pandemic situation, but we have to live in this world and need to face these situations because this is a question of life & death. Job of healthcare does not allow you to make excuses because solution maybe discovered only through their skills with experience.

Furthermore, we will discuss about mitigation strategy for above mentioned challenges.



### **Mitigation strategy**

- **Minimum Exposure:**

When we put frontline manpower on duty, which is very risky, we should think about every individual in their family. So in that case, management should prepare a roster for staff and assign duty with minimum exposure, for eg- three shifts within 24 hours (8 hours each); we can reduce it into two shifts for 12 hours each. In that case, one shift of employ can take break from infected area.

This type of practice can be applied across the departments.

- **Cash Flow management:**

To cope up with financial crisis, leaders can schedule following activities:

- Cost optimization at every level
- Deferred sales & marketing expenses
- Take advantage of govt. policies about rent waive off
- Negotiate with specific vendors for late payment
- Saving in power & fuel by using of limited area due to less footfall
- Deferred payment of AMC/CMC

- **Restructure of Infra:**

Infrastructure can be managed by usage of temporary basis structure on rental mode, for eg- rent out porta cabin; tent for waiting area; increasing of fumigation cycle etc.

- **Future Business:**

Disaster can be turned into opportunities. In healthcare, this is the time to show maximum contribution to the society by providing following services to the community at **FREE of Cost**;

- Tele/Video Consultation
- Patrolling of ambulance in residential area on rotational basis
- Webinar by Doctors through Social Media campaigns
- SMS/Whatsapp campaigns about awareness of disease with prevention techniques
- Providing free medication to needy and poor people
- Blood Donation Campaigns
- Circulation of successful stories of COVID patients

These small efforts will be beneficial after the pandemic situation.

### **Conclusion:**

Before concluding; I would like to pay my gratitude to all the healthcare workers who are showing great dedication towards saving mankind.

We have till now discussed the challenges of leaders in healthcare during COVID pandemic. In these challenges we can feel the pain of leaders because we have never expected this situation. However, experienced leadership can cope-up with these challenges with mitigation strategy. Mitigation strategy should be real and doable because in this scenario micro level leadership is required to walk with employees, society and government.

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