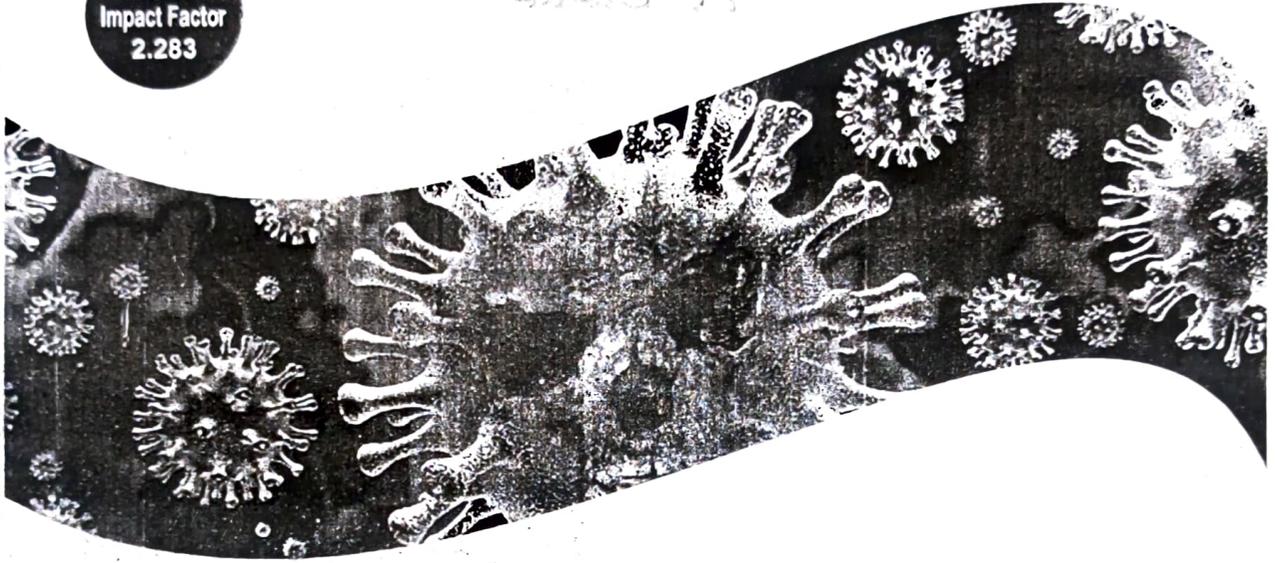


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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of human life and the global economy. The number of new cases and deaths is increasing at an alarming rate with no signs of control yet, making the estimates of its economic and other impacts uncertain. Depending on the level of COVID-19 impact in each country, as well as country-specific situations and capacity, the world's Governments are adopting different levels of interventions, including travel restrictions and lockdown to contain the spread of the highly contagious virus. December 2019 in Wuhan city, in China, an unusual pneumonia was noticed with a link to an animal market that sells poultry and other animals to the public. This event was soon reported to the World Health Organization (WHO). The causal microorganism had been identifying end as a novel corona virus that was named COVID-19. COVID-19 soon spread to other parts of the world. The World Health Organization has declared the situation a pandemic.

COVID-19 and its Impacts on the Environment

Due to the COVID-19, almost every big and small city and village in the affected countries like China, Taiwan, Italy, USA, France, Spain, Turkey, Iran, Germany, S Korea, U.K, India, Australia and many more, is under partial or total lockdown for a long period of time ranging from a few weeks up to a few months. The major sectors contributing to air pollution are transport, industries, power plants, construction activities, biomass burning, road dust resuspension and residential activities. In addition, certain activities such as operation of DG sets, restaurant, landfill fires, etc. also

contribute to air pollution. Under the nationwide lockdown, all transport services, road, air and rail were suspended with exceptions for essential services. Educational institutions, industrial establishments and hospitality services were also suspended. As a result, air quality improvement has been noted in many towns and cities across the world. Due to non-functioning of industries, industrial waste emission has decreased to a large extent. Vehicles are hardly found on the roads resulting in almost zero emission of green-house gases and toxic tiny suspended particles to the environment. Due to lesser demand of power in industries, use of fossil fuels or conventional energy sources have been lowered considerably. Ecosystems are being greatly recovered. In many big cities, the inhabitants are experiencing a clear sky for the first time in their lives. The pollution level in tourist spots such as forests, sea beaches, hill areas, etc. is also shrinking largely. Ozone layer has been found to have revived to some extent. The pandemic has displayed its contrasting consequence on human civilization, in the sense that, on one hand, it has caused worldwide panic situation, but created a very positive impact on the world environment on the other.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the environment raised attention from the very beginning of the crisis, consisting of (a) observations and analysis of the immediate effects and (b) estimations related to long-term changes. Qualitative assumptions prevail, while consistent quantitative research must wait for relevant data sets and additional knowledge. Most facets of the environmental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have not directly resulted from the virus itself. The consequence of