



Post – Pandemic Psychological Problems of the COVID 19 Orphaned Children

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Abstract

The Corona virus has infected individuals of all ages. The children have become orphans. 15 lakhs of children worldwide have lost a parent to cholera in 2019, including 1.2 lakhs in India. A child who has lost a single parent or both parents and suffers from a lack of love, affection, care, and concern is an orphan. The abrupt loss of a parent or both parents will result in numerous psychological issues, including stress, anxiety, depression, feelings of insecurity, and adjustment issues. This may also affect their mental health. This is a research paper based on secondary sources. This research paper incorporates previous studies and articles gathered from Google Scholar and other internet sources. Previous investigations were separated into international and domestic evaluations. This paper discussed the scope of the Children bereaved by covid 19 problem, as well as the psychological, social, and institutional requirements of adolescents. On the basis of the literature review, researchers attempted to identify the psychological issues exhibited by 19 bereaved children. On the basis of these findings, this research paper seeks to provide insight into how to identify the psychological issues of a covid 19 bereaved child, as well as Social Work implications and suggestions for long-term solutions.

Keywords: Pandemic, Post Pandemic, Covid 19, Children orphan, Psychological Problems.

1. Introduction

Covid-19 is the most painful pandemic the world has ever seen. It has killed 43,7 million people. Corona virus has affected more than 20 billion people (world meters, 2021). Each nation is employing its own methods and strategies for dealing with the corona virus. People infected with the covid-19 virus suffer from mild to severe respiratory symptoms and recover with special treatment. It becomes fatal for the elderly, and co-morbid diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are prevalent. The Corona virus has infected individuals of all ages. The children have become orphans. 15 million children worldwide have lost a parent to covid-19, including 1.2 million in India (India Today, 22 July 2021). Children have either become maternal orphans, paternal

orphans, or both. A child who has lost a single parent or both parents and suffers from a lack of love, affection, care, and concern is an orphan.

During corona, children's problems are invisible, and believed that are safe at home. School was the greatest location for children to discuss their problems with their instructors and peers, but the lockdown caused all schools to close and a sudden shift to online classes, causing children to face multiple problems. Isolation, abuse, dread of disease, separation and mortality of parents, family members, and neighbours will be obstacles for children. The Covid 19 bereft children are deprived of affection, care, and concern; they must contend with numerous economic insecurities and bear many responsibilities at a young age. The abrupt loss of a parent or both parents will result in numerous psychological issues, including stress, anxiety, depression, feelings of insecurity, and adjustment issues. This may also affect their mental health. These children will develop academic retardation, suicidal ideation, and may even commit suicide if their psychological issues are not properly identified and addressed. According to research, those affected by medical pandemics as survivors, caregivers, orphans, or health professionals caring for infected patients are more likely to experience psychological distress, sleep disorders, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

1.1 COVID-19 - Profile of the India

India reported its first COVID-19 case on 30 January 2020 from Kerala and ever since the numbers have increased each day. The current statistics from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as on (25 April 2020; 15:15 IST) reveal that there are approximately 18,668 active cases and 775 deaths from COVID-19 in 31 states and union territories (MoHFW, 2020). The states which are worst affected in India include, Maharashtra, Gujrat, Delhi, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. WHO a declared novel coronavirus disease a pandemic on 11 March 2020, it called the member states to take immediate actions and scale up response to disease which includes treat, detect, and reduce transmission. In order to contain the spread of disease, the entire nation was lockdown for 21 days from 25 March 2020 to 14 April 2020, which later was extended as a national response in view of growing number of cases till 3 May 2020. Indian response to the pandemic was quick as the country sealed its international borders and enforced an immediate lockdown, this judicious move was applauded by WHO as 'tough and timely'. The lockdown time has provided the government machineries to organise towards its preparedness for a likely upsurge in infection rate in subsequent weeks. At the same time the country combats with the unique pre-existing challenges, such as large population size of 1.35 billion across various states, broadening socioeconomic inequalities and health disparities.

1.2 Extend of the Covid – 19 Orphanhood Problem

According to the Global COVID 19 Orphan Crisis Report, it took 10 years for 5 million children to become orphans due to AIDS, but only two years for the same number of children to become orphans due to COVID 19. We begin to understand the scope of this pandemic's impact on the world's most vulnerable (Global Covid orphanhood report, 2022). The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights informed the Supreme Court that 9,346 children under the age of 17 have been bereaved or abandoned since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in January 2020 (The Hindu, 2020).

The British Medical Journal, The Lancet, reported that the Covid 19 pandemic has caused an estimated 1.5 million children to lose a parent or caretaker, such as a grandparent or other

elderly relative, with over a million children losing one or both parents. The Lancet reports that approximately 119,000 children in India have lost a primary caregiver, including one or both parents or one or both custodial grandparents. 116,000 of them lost one or both parents. A daily publication in India reported that the number of newly bereaved children increased by 8.5 times in April 2021 compared to the previous month. It was reported that 43,139 children were bereaved in April, up from 5,091 in March. This is a result of the high mortality rates during the pandemic's second phase, which began in April and ravaged the entire country for nearly three months (Lancet, 2021).

1.3 Adolescent Development - Areas and Needs

The development of adolescent age is a wide-ranging area of exploration and extension of personality and habits. Those development direction involved with self-confidence, motivation drives, desires, goals, stress coping strategies, anxiety management ability to make decisions, the recognition from society and personal experiences. In this angle experiences gained by them as children is very relevant. Regarding the covid 19 orphaned children, those are on wheels of adolescent stage, their needs can be categorized into three components. They are psychological needs, social needs and institutional care needs. Adolescents have variety of psychological needs such as

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love • Emotional bond • Affection • Care and concern • Sibling support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to love and to be loved by the surrounding people • Autonomy • Privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independence • Career guidance • Motivation • Encouragement
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When those kinds of psychological needs not to be facilitated it will turn as psychological distress. This psychological distress may reflect as behaviour changes such as frustration, anger, sadness, aggressiveness, poor trust feels and violent actions.

Social needs are the basic needs of human being as a social being. The need for love, companionship, friendship, belongingness are the core social needs. These needs promote all human interactions. These social needs are connected with psychological needs and problems. According to American Psychologist Abraham Maslow Hierarchy of Needs theory social needs listed as third tier of hierarchy. Maslow described it as love and belonging needs, which covers friendship, intimacy, family and sense of connection. These needs are highly connected with family whereas it should be converted into according to the atmosphere of Covid 19 orphaned children. Social Needs of adolescent group Covid 19 orphaned children can attain through providing opportunities for enhancing social skills such as

- Self-expression
- Self-assertion
- Making friends
- Inter personal problem solving
- Adaptive/ self-help skills

If, the social needs of Covid 19 orphaned children are not addressed they may find as indifferent in their behaviour, disturbance to others, no close friends, distress, smoking, drug addiction, stealing, lying, disobedient, aggressiveness and truancy.

Institutional care needs are the balancing need care management of Covid 19 orphaned children. Each institution has their own time table and work pattern related to handling covid 19 orphaned children. Even though it can be considering some specific points for their personal problem reduction and coping with the parents' death or separation related trauma, stress, anxiety and depression. The points are noted below

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love and care by care givers • Nutrious diet • Homely atmosphere • Guidance • Moral support • Training in life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House management training • Indoor and Outdoor Recreation opportunities • Mental Health Enhancement programs • Monthly Regular Child guidance Counselling Clinic
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1.4 Cognitive Impact of Orphanhood on Adolescent Period

Cognition is a thought process which mainly focuses on an individual ability to perceive things, store the ideas and analyse the ideas and reflect the ideas in the behaviour. Adolescent orphan has a lot of distraction in their thought process due to the death of their parents and may not be able to concentrate fully on the work they do especially in their studies such as lack of concentration in class, unable to think clearly, do not have the interest to continue their studies, develop low self-esteem, feel inferior about themselves, exhibit poor performance in the class, exams, tendency of drop out the school and flee from the orphanages. Sometimes they may have poor verbal expression also.

1.5 Emotional Impact of Orphanhood on Adolescent Period

The adolescent period is the foundation age of emotional resilience capacity of any person. The adolescent orphan may undergo a lot of traumas of coping. The emotional loss due to parent's death creates constant worry about their future which may leads to them as emotionally silent. Those pain in mind will affects educational opportunities. They may experience lack of adult love, guidance and protection. Sometimes they may negatively affect by isolation, neglect and abuse. Later these kind of interaction forces to develop fatalism, behaviour problems and low self-esteem. Stress will be normal in orphanhood. Those stress can evoke feeling of frustration, fear, conflict, pressure, hurt, anger, sadness, inadequacy, guilt and loneliness. Adolescent orphans those who are under stress often are unable to concentrate or perform effectively and efficiently. Another important feeling of orphanhood in adolescent period is insecurity feeling. The symptoms of insecurity feelings are chronic anxiety, scrupulosity, excessive timidity, social inadequacy and perfectionistic idealism. Insecurity feeling among adolescent orphans may cause shyness and social withdrawal.

2. Methodology

This is a study paper based on secondary sources, like previous studies and papers found on Google Scholar and other websites. The previous studies were divided into international reviews and national reviews.

3. Review of literature

Researchers comprised eight international and seven national studies for preparing this review paper.

Inter National Reviews

Chiro Islam Mallik & Rifat Binte Radwan (2021) studied about Impact of lockdown due to Covid19 pandemic in changes of prevalence of predictive psychiatric disorders among children and adolescents in Bangladesh. Lockdown, isolation, quarantine, and social distancing are proved to be only effective measures to prevent and tackle COVID-19. Unfortunately, these measures have caused physical, economical and mental health problems. Children and adolescents are not immune to the adverse mental health effect due to the new changes. Research around the globe shows children and adolescents are suffering from an increased number of depressive symptoms, clinginess, inattention, irritability and worry. This cross-sectional online-based survey type study was aimed to get a snapshot of the prevalence of predictive psychiatric disorders in the child and adolescent population in Bangladesh before and during lockdown. Validated Bangla parent version of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was used to assess the psychopathology among subjects. Total sample was 552 aged from 4–17 years. Boy-girl ratio was 1.3:1. Prevalence of any predictive psychiatric disorder before lockdown was 20.5 % and within lockdown was 39.7 % and the difference was highly significant ($P < 0.001$). Prevalence of emotional, conduct disorder and hyperactivity were also increased significantly during the lockdown period than before. Conduct disorder and hyperactivity were more prevalent among boys both before and within lockdown. In contrast, prevalence of emotional disorder was higher among girls before lockdown but within the lockdown period, the boy-girl prevalence was almost the same. This study shows the new extreme measures to tackle COVID-19 has a disaster impact on mental health of children and adolescents. Subsequent studies and support should be developed to prevent conditions getting worse.

Alosio Antonio Gomes de Matos et.al (2021) conducted a study on social inequalities and extreme vulnerability of children and adolescents impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. Children have been impacted by the pandemic in different ways – including by the psychosocial burden of having lost their parents or caregivers, in addition to the secondary adversities resulting from such loss (for example, poverty, abuse, and institutionalization). Given the risk of negative outcomes among children who mourn the death of their parents, governments and organizations worldwide should focus on identifying and supporting this population of vulnerable young. In Brazil's North and North eastern regions, we observed that the integrity of orphaned children and adolescents is at imminent risk, especially because they introject fear.

Zhongren Ma et.al (2021) Conducted a study on mental health of Chinese children during pandemic. This study noted that emerging of psychological problems triggered by Covid 19 particularly in children have been widely emphasized. 7.2% children report experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depressive symptoms due to the Covid 19 pandemic. PTSD and SMFQ-P scores are significantly higher in middle school and boarding school students compared to primary and day school students. Multiple logistic regression analysis revealed that school system and province of origin are factors significantly associated with developing PTSD symptoms. It is found that 1 in 14 children have depressive symptoms. In summary, Covid 19 epidemic has caused PTSD and depression symptoms among Chinese children aged 7 to 15 years.

Susan D Hillis et.al (2021) studied about the Covid orphaned children with effect of the death of their caregivers. In this study noted that the Covid -19 pandemic priorities have

focused on prevention, detection, and response. Beyond morbidity and mortality, pandemics transfer secondary impacts, such as children orphaned due to the death of their caregivers. Such children regularly face antagonistic consequences, as well as poverty, abuse, and institutionalisation. In this study they used mortality and fertility data to model minimum estimates and rates of Covid -19-associated deaths of primary or secondary caregivers for children younger than 18 years in 21 countries. They considered parents and custodial grandparents as primary caregivers, and co-residing grandparents or older kin (aged 60–84 years) as secondary caregivers. As per this study Worldwide, from March 1, 2020, to April 30, 2021, it is estimated 1 134 000 children (95% credible interval 884 000–1 185 000) experienced the death of primary caregivers, including at least one parent or custodial grandparent. 1562 000 children (1 299 000–1 683 000) faced the death of at least one primary or secondary caregiver. According to this study country wise data says that the primary caregiver death rates of at least one per 1000 children included Peru (10.2 per 1000 children), South Africa (5.1), Mexico (3.5), Brazil (2.4), Colombia (2.3), Iran (1.7), the USA (1.5), Argentina (1.1), and Russia (1.0). Numbers of children orphaned exceeded numbers of deaths among those aged 15–50 years. Between two and five times more children had deceased fathers than deceased mothers. Orphanhood and caregiver bereavements are a unseen pandemic consequential from COVID-19- related deaths. Hurrying impartial vaccine distribution is key to prevention. Psychosocial and monetary provision can help families to raising children orphaned of caregivers and help to ensure that institutionalisation is avoided. These data show the need for framing detailed well-being plans and policies for Covid 19 orphaned children.

Laura Rawling, Susan Hills (2021) points out that one child is make an orphan by every 12 seconds due to a covid- 19 connected death and the toll is increasing. Most recent evaluations reveal that for every 2 adults that die from covid 19,1 child is leftward deprived of a familial caregiver. **Forbes (2021)** suggests that there is a need of establish domestic and global associations to collect data and distribute resources to deliver evidence based psycho social and economic support to children, who have orphaned by caregivers covid death.

Liubiana Arantes de Araújo et.al (2020) researched on the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on child growth and development. This was a systematic review of studies that examined the impact of epidemics or social restriction on mental and developmental health in parents and children/adolescents. The PubMed, WHO Covid-19, and SciELO databases were searched on March 15, 2020, and on April 25, 2020, filtering for children (0---18 years) and humans. The tools used to mitigate the threat of a pandemic such as Covid-19 may very well threaten child growth and development. These tools ---- such as social restrictions, shutdowns, and school closures ---- contribute to stress in parents and children and can become risk factors that threaten child growth and development and may compromise the Sustainable Development Goals. The studies reviewed suggest that epidemics can lead to high levels of stress in parents and children, which begin with concerns about children becoming infected. These studies describe several potential mental and emotional consequences of epidemics such as Covid-19, H1N1, AIDS, and Ebola: severe anxiety or depression among parents and acute stress disorder, post-traumatic stress, anxiety disorders, and depression among children. These data can be related to adverse childhood experiences and elevated risk of toxic stress. The more adverse experiences, the greater the risk of

developmental delays and health problems in adulthood, such as cognitive impairment, substance abuse, depression, and non-communicable diseases.

Debora Marques de Miranda et.al (2020) reviewed on How is Covid-19 pandemic impacting mental health of children and adolescents. The coronavirus disease affected virtually all countries. Uncertain about the health risk and an increasing financial loss will contribute to widespread emotional distress and an increased risk of psychiatric disorders shortly. Posttraumatic, anxiety, and depression disorders are expected during and aftermath of the pandemic. Some groups, like children, have more susceptibility to having long term consequences in mental health. Herein, we made a comprehensive and non-systematic search in four databases (PubMed, Scopus, SciELO and Google Scholars) to answer the question: What are children's and adolescents' mental health effects of the pandemic? Furthermore, which features are essential for mental health in a pandemic? Results: Seventy-seven articles were selected for full text read, and 51 were included. Children answer stress differently, depending on the development stage. High rates of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic symptoms were identified among children. Discussion: Symptoms were as expected. New supportive strategies have appeared during this pandemic, but there is no measure of its effectiveness. Some groups seem to be more vulnerable to the mental health burden of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the mitigation actions should prioritize them. The school's role appears to be revalued by society. This review seems to pick good targets to prioritize mitigation actions aiming to spare children not only from the severe cases of Covid-19 but also to help them to deal with the mental health burden of the pandemics.

National Reviews

Anuja S Panicker & Chandana Nedungottil (2021) analysed a paper on the unseen suffers of the Covid – 19 pandemics and mental health belongings on children and adolescents. This study narrates on the context of psychosocial development, adolescents which is crucial stage of development of a personality. This study described that adolescent age as a interim period, between 12-19 years of age, of the resolution of ambivalence in role confusion and identity formation, paves the way for future self-acceptance and social adjustment in adulthood. This is also an age where adolescent have bigger energy levels, curiosity and desire for innovation and investigation. The grouping of puberty- related hormonal changes, end to end with adolescent social dynamics, brand them highly in harmony to social status, peer group and relationships. From a biological viewpoint, the parts of the brain like prefrontal cortex which is the armchair of insight, judgment and decision constructing matures to the adult level in adolescence. Though, even slighter levels of stress during adolescence can damage the cognitive development of the adolescent. Adolescents gain an opening through participation in social activities, sports and other team activities and interactions with friends and relatives. A lack of opening for these internal urges due to the current pandemic-related boundaries in such activities, as well as the burdens of social distancing and home isolation, outcome in a sagacity of frustration, which adolescents can present as recurrent anger outbursts, nervousness, disconnected, boredom. and impulsive decision making.

Rachel A Kentor & Amanda L Thompson (2021) in an article titled as “Answering the call to support youth orphaned by Covid 19 noted that when linked with the overall occurrence of worldwide orphan hood (140 million total orphans), the 1 million children orphaned by Covid-19 could appear underwhelming on a relative scale; though, on an complete level, this

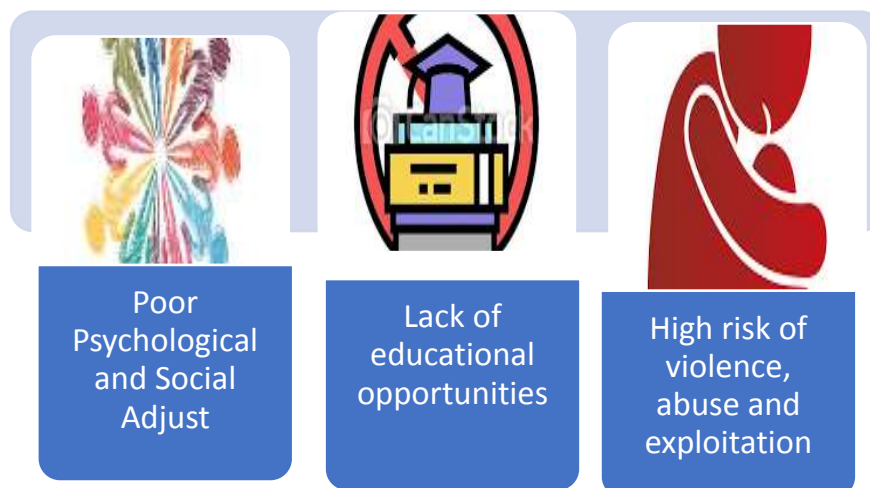
number signifies a considerably large group of children in need of support. By answering the authors' call to expand the worldwide pandemic response to embrace caring for children, the global community can capitalise on this motion. This article suggests systematic support to orphaned youth around the world.

Vyjayanthi & Debanjan Banerjee et.al (2020), in their study on the Silent victims of the Pandemic: Children and adolescents during the Covid-19 Crisis, the children from the disadvantaged or marginalized sector of the society like migrants, slum-dwellers, homeless children, orphans, children diagnosed with mental illness, disabilities, children living in institutional or residential care are at a greater risk of succumbing to mental health consequences. **Shweta Singh et.al (2020)** attempted to review on impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents. This narrative review paper revealed a pressing need for planning longitudinal and developmental studies, and implementing evidence based elaborative plan of action to cater to the psycho social and mental health needs of the vulnerable children and adolescents during pandemic as well as post pandemic. There is a need to ameliorate children and adolescents' access to mental health support services geared towards providing measures for developing healthy coping mechanisms during the current crisis. For this innovative child and adolescent mental health policies with direct and digital collaborative networks of psychiatrists, psychologists, paediatricians, and community volunteers are deemed necessary.

Anbarasu & Bhuvaneswari (2020) research shows that the children and adolescents of rural and urban community struggle with different psychosocial problems such as fear, stress, anxiety, depression, emotional, conduct problems and hyperactivity during this outbreak of Covid-19 Pandemic. In this cross-sectional descriptive study, the non-Governmental organization was selected from rural area of Vellore district, Tamil Nadu. The socio demographic data sheet and in-depth interview were administered to the respondents. Convenient sampling technique was used for selection of rescued children and adolescents. A total of 124 male adolescents participated in the study. Through in-depth interview it was found that majority of the urban adolescents suffered with fear, worry, stress, anxiety, depression, lack of coping skills and poor mental health. Other hand, the respondents from rural part did not suffer with any severe mental health problems. Thus, the appropriate psychosocial care programme needs to be developed to strengthen the coping skills and promoting the positive psychological and emotional wellbeing of children and adolescents. **Satyajeet Mazumdar (2020)** Orphanages in India have not received adequate support from the government regarding Covid -19 and the lockdown. **IANS (2021)** The District Child Protection offices of Tamil Nadu have identified about 1400 children in the state who have lost either one or both parents to the covid-19 pandemic since the first wave hit the state.

4. Discussion- Post – Pandemic Psychological Problems Faced by Covid Orphaned Children

Covid 19 orphaned children are facing lots of psychological problems. It can be categorised into three areas. They are illustrated below



4.1 Poor Psychological and Social Adjust

- Stunted emotional intelligence
- Poor life skills like communication skills, coping skills
- Feel of fatalism
- Constant fear about future
- Insecurity feelings
- Feel isolated
- They not have any role model to follow
- Lack of care and concern
- Bitter child experience leads to psychological problems
- Issues with shaping the personality
- Poor formation of attitude
- Expression of anxiety and depression
- Concentration issues
- Memory problems
- Feeling of helplessness
- Strain of stigmatization
- Feel lonely
- Do not interested in developing relationship
- Adjustment issues
- Confusion mind state
- Fear and frustration

4.2 Lack of educational opportunities

- Not able to put their heart and soul
- Huge changes to daily routine
- Constrained access to socialization, play and even physical contact, critical for their psycho social well-being and development
- Increased chance of school dropouts

4.3 High risk of violence, abuse and exploitation

- High stress in family due to social isolation, economic hardships and loss of livelihood increase risk of domestic violence and child abuse including spanking, beating children and harsh language.
- Especially from care takers, family members, neighbours
- School closures and movement restrictions means children are forced to spend much more time at home with adults and caregivers who are already stressed and worried.
- There is high chance of sexual abuse.
- Children spend more of their time online and face risk of exposure to online sexual abuse and grooming for sexual exploitation, cyber bullying and other online threats.
- Children in quarantine or isolation may be away from adult supervisor which may also increase protection risks.
- Children with disabilities have great threat of violence, abuse and exploitation.

5. Social Work Implications in Rehabilitation of COVID 19 Orphans

With regard to children left without parents as a result of COVID 19, there is a broad scope for social work practice. Social casework and social group work are fundamental methods of social work that may be utilized as an intervention tool for restoring and minimizing those children's psychological difficulties. There are just a few numbers of empirical studies available on social work study on COVID's 19 orphaned children. As a result, the forthcoming research findings are required and important for the development of policy concerning COVID's 19 orphaned children. Assessment and counselling of their behaviour on a more regular basis may offer further remedies to the psychological problems they are experiencing.

6. Conclusion

As a pandemic in and of itself, the situation is a catastrophe that calls for immense bravery as well as learning and working together as a team. Orphanhood will cause a vortex of repercussions such as child displacement, separation of siblings, newly formed households, institutionalization, child marriage, school dropouts, hunger, and so on and so forth. In every instance of this kind, there will be an emergency issue regarding the mental health of COVID youth. There is a critical need for long-term solutions to treat these mental health challenges.

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