



Impact Of The Pandemic On Junglemahal (2020-2024)

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Abstract: In December 2019, an epidemic emerged in the youhn province of Chaina that brought life to a standstill across the world, including India. This pandemic had pushed people far apart from one another. The impact of this pandemic was so profound that many were forced to abandon their livelihoods that had been passed down through generations for years. The pandemic resulted in the deaths of a large number of people, while many others managed to survive after suffering from the disease for a long time. Through this research paper ,I shall try to discuss the impact of this pandemic on the people of Junglemahal. By Junglemahal I mean the vast area of South West Bengal where the Junglemahal district was created by East India Company according to the regulation of xviii of 1805. This district was lasting upto 1833, then it was abolished according to regulation of xiii. Currently, the districts of Bankura, Purulia, west Medinipore, Jhargram, Birbhum have been formed centering around this Junglemahal.

Key words: Pendency, Impact, Always, Covid.

Research Questions: In writing this research paper ,I encountered several questions, which I have discuss below-1) What is Covid 19 pandemic? 2) What impact did this pandemic have on the lives of the people of junglemahal? 3) How much were the changes brought about in people's lives by the coronavirus pandemic able to transform their lives and livelihoods?

Covid 19 Pandemic: The term COVID-19 was used for the coronavirus pandemic. However, it can be speculated that the reason for using the term "nineteen" is perhaps because it started in 2019.

Symptoms: According to the bulletins from health departments in India and around the world, various symptoms of this disease were mentioned, which were-

- 1)Felling cold, felling hot .As like as fever.
- 2)Coughing and sneezing.
- 3)Severe shortness of breath.
- 4) Dying due to lack of oxygen.

Although it originated in the yuhan province of Chaina, it later spread throughout the World. In India 45,035,393 people were affected and 5,33,570 people were death up to the date of 13th April ,2024¹. Most of the affected people have recovered and returned home, and they have been able to live their lives normally.

Sustainability: Although this pandemic began in Chaina in early December2019,its full impact in India was felt fromMarch15,2020.However in the case of India ,the prevalence of this disease is observed to be more or less consistent until December2024.

Doctor's Warning: Modern medical professionals believed that this disease was primarily contagious. In others words, contact must be stopped to prevent any infected or symptomatic patient from interacting with a healthy person and spreading the disease. Therefore, they suggested that both the Government and the public should come forward to ensure this system is implemented.

Quarantine system: The quarantine system originated on earth a long time ago. This measure was used in Europe around the fourteen Century to protect the public from the onslaught of the Pleague. That system was used in the case of this disease. It can be assumed that the doctor predicted that the disease could spread through contact between people, and therefore ,recovery would be possible if this contact was stopped. Therefore, arrangements were made for these types of patients to stay in one place. To implement this system, school building, club, open house etc, usually located away from residential areas, were declared as quarantine center. The locations of several such quarantine centers are given below:

Quarantine centre	Allotted bed	Address
Harmasara High School	500	Harmasara,Taldangra,Bankura.
Brahmandiha High School	300	Brahmandih, Taldangra, Bankura
Bibarda High School	500	Bibarda, Taldangra, Bankura
Sarenga M.S.High School	500	Sarenga,Bankura
Gopiballavpur High School	500	Gopiballavpur,Jhargram
Bagmundi High School	200	Bagmundi, Purulia
Ranibandh High School	300	Ranibandh,Bankura
Panchmura High School	250	Panchmura, Taldangra, Bankura

Source: Field survey investigation (10.08.2025 to 30.10.2025)

¹ www.worldmetrs.info

Lockdown: In this phase, the Govt. decided to impose a nationwide lockdown based on the advice of doctors. This was first initiated by Indian prime minister Narendra Modi through an address to the nation. The first lockdown started on March 25,2020. Subsequently ,this lockdown continued step by step for almost six months through lockdowns of varying duration.

Restrictions:

- 1)Two or more people are not allowed to sit together anywhere under any circumstances.If it is necessary for more than two people to sit together in one place ,then they must sit at least four feet apart.
- 2)If someone in the family has a cold or cough ,they must stay separated from everyone else. Additionally ,if anyone in the household suffering a fever ,then he or she will be required to go to a quarantine centre.
- 3) Vehicles such as buses and trains were all shut down indefinitely. Here, some vehicles were granted exemption, including ambulances and vehicles used for essential transportation.
- 4) Separate hospitals were arranged for covid patients, and general patients were prohibited from entering those hospitals.
- 5)All types of school ,colleges, University, library, markets, shops, festivals, events etc everything else in nature had shut down. After a few days ,the shops were allowed to re-open on the condition that they would not be crowded.

Result: This pandemic had completely brought life to a standstill in Janglemahal, as it did in other parts of the world. An attempt has been made below to discuss the lives of the hardworking people of Janglemahal were disrupted ,addressing each aspect separately.

- 1) Education: Due to the closure of schools, colleges, university etc from march 25,2020 for an indefinite period, students classes were completely suspended. Subsequently ,arrangements were made for conducting classes and examinations through online for higher education. The secondary and higher secondary examinations of 2020could not be held. Although online examinations were implemented at the college and university levels, but research scholars at various levels faced the most problems with this system. The reason cited include the difficulties they faced in their studies due to the closure of libraries at that time ,and also problems encountered with practical subjects due to the closure of laboratories². This also created an obstacle for young children who were going to school for the first time in their lives causing them to lose interest in attending school.
- 2) Household : Families at home are suddenly feeling like they have been thrown into a cloudless storm due to this lockdown. Fearing this indefinite lockdown, they rushed to buy as much of essential commodities like rice, dal, sugar,oil, potatoes, flour etc as possible. Seeing the demand for the grocery products from the customers, some shopkeepers started black marketing in

² Personal interview collection from Dr.Srimanta Mahadani ,State Aided College Teacher,Panchmura Mahavidyalaya, Dated on 15/8/2025

Junglemahal³. Even those who had gone away on vocation were forced to return quickly. Many were forced to stay at relatives' homes for more than a month.

- 3) Poultry farm owner: In the early days of the lockdown, poultry, duck or cattle farms faced significant problems. Due to the disruption of communication systems, a shortage in the supply of food for birds was observed. Many farm owners were then forced to sell their ducks and chickens at nominal prices due to a shortage of feed. As a result, many businessmen faced significant financial losses. As a result, many are forced to abandon this profession⁴.
- 4) Dairy farm owner: Within the Junglemahal region, the Simlapal, Raipur, Sarenga police stations area of Bankura districts is particularly famous for milk production. Many people sell cow's milk worth over one lakh rupees per month. When the Kangsaboti Dughda Samabay Samity stopped collecting milk due to the lockdown, the farmers faced significant problems. Initially, many people sold milk at nominal or low prices, but later due to a lack of buyers, many were forced to shut down their milk production business⁵.
- 5) Cultivator: The farmers of Junglemahal faced several problems during this time. Initially, this was the time for harvesting oilseed crop, but labour were in Puba (Burdwan, Hoogly districts etc), they could not harvest the crop at the right time. Furthermore, due to a shortage of labourer during the summer rice harvest, a large amount of rice was wasted⁶. Although vegetables were produced in large quantities, they suffered huge financial losses due to a lack of buyers and the disruption of transportation system.
- 6) Pregnant women: During this pandemic, pregnant women faced the most difficulties. Due to the lockdown, most doctors were unwilling to provide treatment at that time. As a result, they did not receive regular medical care from a doctor. They were even deprived of services such as regular checkups and ultrasonography during their pregnancy. The reason for this was that most USG centers were closed indefinitely at that time. During this time, those who had babies in hospitals or nursing homes could not find the necessary staff to care for their babies. Furthermore, there were considerable difficulties in finding midwives or helpers to assist with postpartum care, even in rural areas⁷.
- 7) Transport workers: Many people in the Junglemahal region have been involved in various professions related to this transportation sector for a long time. Some of them transport goods, while others work as drivers or helpers of vehicles as buses, trekkers, ambassadors, ambulance

³ Personal interview collection from Dibakar Patra, Bibarda, Bankura, grocery shop owner, Dated on 12/8/2025

⁴ Personal interview collection from Rabindranath Kisku, Dangjuri, Bibarda, Bankura, poultry farm owner, Dated on 12/9/2025

⁵ Personal interview collection from Debdas sinha Maha patra, Mukundapur, Bankura, poultry farm owner, Dated on 10/9/2025

⁶ Personal interview collection from Sunil sinha Maha patra, Pithabakra, Midnapur, land owner, Dated on 5/9/2025

⁷ Personal interview collection from Samapika sannigrahi, Kar Rampur, Bankura, land owner, Dated on 20/9/2025

etc. Many people here have also been employed as assistants or porters in goods transportation for generations⁸. Due to their work being suspended for a long time, their source of income was also cut off. As a result, many transport workers abandoned their previous profession and began trying to earn living through other occupations.

- 8) Repairman: Those who were involved in various types of vehicle repair have also not had much opportunity to work due to the prolonged suspension of this transportation system and the vehicles idle. As a result, many garage owners and helpers who were involved in this work lost their jobs. Its greatest impact was observed in various garages of Bankura town, Bishnupur, Purulia town, Raghunathpur, Jhargram etc. Although nearly ten thousand people were associated with these professions in about one thousand garages across these three districts, they had become almost unemployed⁹. As a result, many of them have been forced to leave this job and move to other profession.
- 9) Migrant labour or worker: The impact of the coronavirus pandemic was most severe on migrant labour. Their work had stopped because the place where they were working went into lockdown. Due to the communication system being completely shut down or disrupted, they were unable to return home. As a result, they had to spend their earned money on food and drink. As a result, even though they did not return home, most of their earned money was spent while they were staying there. On the one hand, there was no income and on the other hand, having been away from their families for a long time, many were desperately longing to return home. Those who were nearby, such as those who had gone to Hoogly and Burdwan for agricultural work, mostly returned home by hiring cars¹⁰. But those who had gone to work in the south Indian states like Karnataka, Tamilnadu etc. walked some of the way and hired vehicles for other parts of the journey, and returned home after much hardship. Many had even fallen into debt after hiring cars to get back home. Many, while undertaking this long journey, have died either in train accident or due to exhaustion¹¹.
- 10) Bricklayer or Rajmistri: Most of the Rajmistri who worked in the Junglemahal are residents of Murshidabad district. They are known as Murshidabad mistri in the local area. But when the lockdown suddenly started while they were working, their work also stopped. As a result, when their source of income was cut off, they took out loans from the local market to get by for a few days, and then they return home¹².

⁸ Personal interview collection from Bikash sinha Mahapatra, Amjhore, Bankura, driver, Dated on 5/10/2025

⁹ Personal interview collection from Subhas Acharyar, Sk Sarif, Ranjit Bhakat, Mechanic Bankura Busstand, Dated on 5/12/2025

¹⁰ Personal interview collection from Sadhan Duley, Karrampur, Bankura, labour, Dated on 22/10/2025

¹¹ Personal interview collection from Bikash sinha Mahata, Hura, Purulia, migrant labour, Dated on 17/10/2025

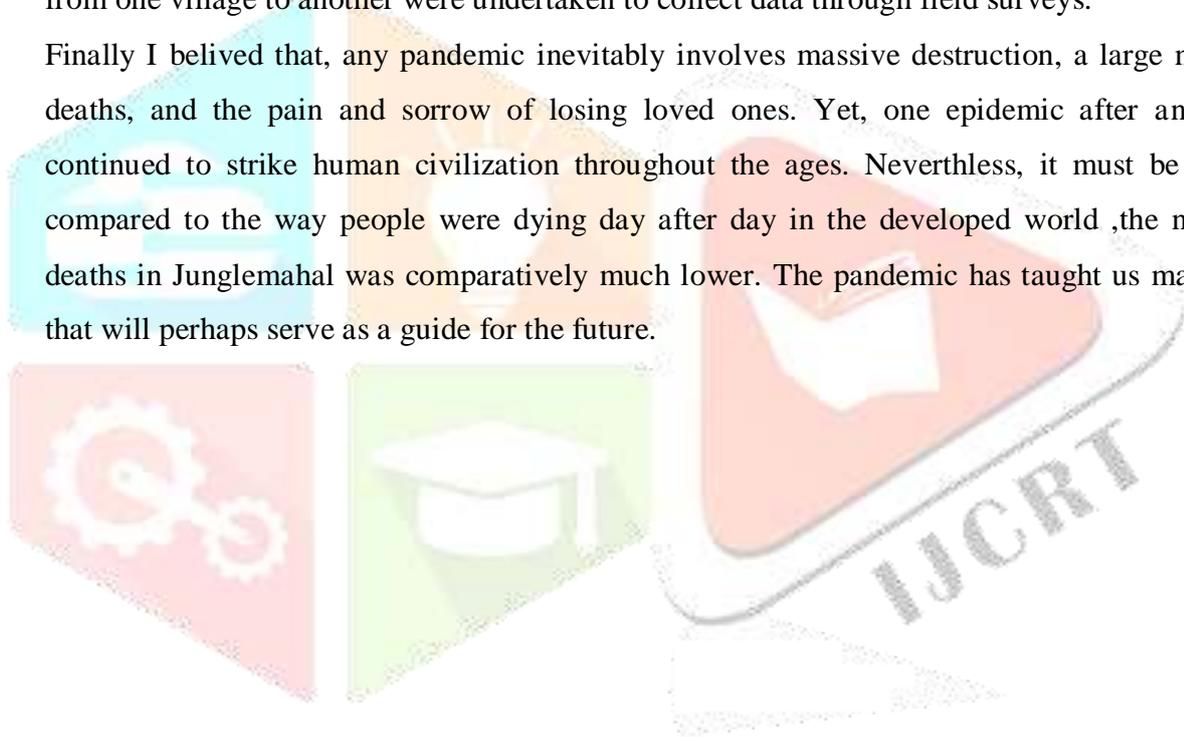
¹² Personal interview collection from SK Jamrul, Rajmistri, Murshidabad, Dated on 27/10/2025

11) Village Haat: Rural haat is an important part of rural society. However, due to the haat being closed for a long time because of covid ,a large amount of grass had grown in the land .These marketplaces quickly became a breeding ground for various venomous reptiles ,including snakes¹³. Additionally, where as previously the market was open all day for buying and selling, due to the pandemic it was open only until 11 A.M. according to Government regulation. Although the time was changed but has not yet returned its previous position.

12) Businessman: Due to the Govt. regulations imposed as a result of the pandemic, many small business had to close down. These small scale business including tea stalls,chop stall,fuchka stalls etc. Many others had abandoned their previous shop business and taken up jobs in other people's shop. But big businessmen were not affected in the same way, on the contrary ,their profits increased steadily. Among these businessmen were grocers, mill owner ,etc¹⁴.

The entire research work is primarily based on personal interview. In many cases these journey from one village to another were undertaken to collect data through field surveys.

Finally I belived that, any pandemic inevitably involves massive destruction, a large number of deaths, and the pain and sorrow of losing loved ones. Yet, one epidemic after another has continued to strike human civilization throughout the ages. Nevertheless, it must be said that compared to the way people were dying day after day in the developed world ,the number of deaths in Junglemahal was comparatively much lower. The pandemic has taught us many things that will perhaps serve as a guide for the future.



¹³ Personal interview collection from Ratan Mahata,Hura ,Purulia , Haat owner ,Dated on 13/11/2025

¹⁴ Personal interview collection from Kundan Singh ,Hura ,Purulia ,rice mill owner ,Dated on 13/11/2025