



drishti

Social Recession due to Covid-19

 drishtiias.com/printpdf/social-recession-due-to-covid-19

Why in News

As the **coronavirus pandemic** threatens to cause an economic recession, it **may also cause a “social recession”**.

Key Points

- **Social Recession:** It is a collapse in social contacts.
Just after a few weeks of social distancing and self-isolation because of Covid-19, we have noticed the **decline in our social interactions** and **might have felt the change in our mental and physical health**.
- **Possible Impact of social recession (Flight or Fight Response):** Human beings thrive on social engagements and are wired to stay connected. When these connections are threatened or unavailable, the nervous system may out of order and many negative effects on the body follow:
 - Both loneliness (the feeling of being alone) and social isolation (physical state of being alone) can **trigger a cascade of stress hormones** that produce **physiological changes like increased heart rate, increased muscle tension and thickening of blood**. Together, these physiological changes are called the **fight-or-flight response**.
 - **Fight-or-flight response:** In response to stress, the body's sympathetic nervous system is activated and it **stimulates the adrenal glands** triggering the release of adrenaline and noradrenaline.
 - These hormones, together with direct actions of autonomic nerves, cause the heart to beat faster, respiration rate to increase blood vessels in the arms and legs to dilate, digestive process to change and glucose levels (sugar energy) in the bloodstream to increase to deal with the emergency.
 - Fight-or-flight response has evolved as a **survival mechanism enabling us to cope with physical and psychological threats**.

- Different **Studies related to Social Recession**
 - A recent meta-analysis published in Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews revealed that people who are more socially isolated have higher levels of C-reactive protein (CRP) and fibrinogen
 - CRP is a **protein made by the liver**. CRP levels in the blood increase when there is a condition causing inflammation somewhere in the body.
 - Fibrinogen is a soluble protein that helps blood to clot.
 - Both of these are associated with chronic inflammation and poor physical and mental health.
 - Another study in Perspectives on Psychological Science indicated that lack of social connection and living alone can be detrimental to a person's health, respectively **increasing mortality risk by 29% and 32%**.
 - They also pointed out that social isolation can lead to several chronic conditions like **hypertension, increased heart rate, increased levels of stress hormones and even accelerated ageing**.
- **Coping with isolation**
 - Usually when things get tough, people tend to lean towards personal relationships to seek their advice and support. But, this cannot be done during lockdown.
 - There are no quick solutions to deal with increasing anxiety due to social isolation. However, some approaches can help:
 - People have to begin by acknowledging that these are situations unlike what they have seen before and it is quite **normal to feel anxious and lonely**.
 - It is important to know that the whole world is in the same state as them, and **everyone is together**.
 - People have to use this time to **establish forgotten connections** via technology and catch up with friends and family..
 - Most importantly, they should put the focus back on **self-care, eat well, exercise regularly, find ways to calm and focus on themselves**.

Source: TH