

Learning from Covid Pandemic:

People Solidarity

ery and

Sustainable Development

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Health of one depends on the health of all

Recovery of one depends on the recovery of all

And yet, above lesson ignored, for what do we see --

“Vaccine nationalism”: rich countries cornering vaccines

**TRIPS of WTO prevents developing countries to
manufacture vaccines, denied by Big Pharma**

Escalating debt & debt service of poor

**countries ignored by G20 (allows only debt service
postponement)**

**Token assistance given to the poor (health, food,
etc.), especially the jobless. No wonder –**

resurgence of Covid in poor communities surge &

Survival of the working people during Covid times

With limited government support, working people, esp. the poor, have suffered and continue to suffer.

But many have managed to survive because of people solidarity, revealing innate goodness of people and natural tendency of people to live, work and survive as a family, as a tribe, as a community, as a nation

Three forms of solidarity:

Damayán – helping one another in crisis times

Bayanihan – helping one another to start anew, to build a home or launch a business undertaking, etc.

Tangkilian – helping one another sustain growth of a group enterprise, cooperative, etc. leading to shared prosperity

Responses to Covid
show clash of development frameworks

Neo-liberal framework – weak stand on health for all, upholds TRIPs despite public health need, insists on debt & debt service payments, defends privatization of public services and hopes that economy can go back to “business as usual” (BAU). Based on FW of market fundamentalism.
But what is pre-covid BAU? Unequal. Conflict-ridden.

Solidarity framework – family & community matters, blends individual and collective interests, people sharing whatever they can to support survival of all, search for new platforms of growth in a collective way (example: strengthening of farmer-led agri supply chain), developing holistic community resilience, etc.

Inequality & Neo-liberalism in Asia

Top one (1) per cent of population monopolized 25 per cent of GDP in 2010

Income of top one (1) per cent grew by 275 per cent from 1979-2007 while the whole population grew by 62 per cent (from US Congressional Budget Office)

Meanwhile, neo-liberal policies in place:

Market fundamentalism (worshipping on the altar of free trade), austerity (depriving citizens of needed assistance), deregulation, privatization, financialization, environment exploited/neglected, etc.

**Inequality & Neo-liberalism
clearly revealed by Covid**

- **public health care system missing (due to austerity, privatization & reliance on FDI), and yet rich no problem accessing medical services (sometimes monopolizing critical items, e.g., ventilators)**
- **public transport & people's mobility hit hard, and yet rich able to travel freely**
- **digitalization zoomed as survival instrument, yet the poor w/o gadgets & internet excluded (situation of poor school-going children bad, very bad)**
- **lockdowns w/o assistance, adjustment, transition assistance to affected or displaced people**

Challenge:
Building Back Better by
Putting People Solidarity at the Center

Building Back Better (BBB) of many governments contradicted by their call for a “return to the old normal” or BAU, w/c means continuity of inequality, austerity (‘coz debt/debt service payments), public health care undeveloped, hunger facing the many, & no readiness to pandemic and climate change, etc.

We need BBB through whole-of-society approach and all-out participation of the people in addressing health, economic, social problems facing each country. In this regard, economic solidarity as practiced by ASEC can serve as an alternative pathway on how this can be achieved.

SE and Social Movement for Reforms go together

SE is a platform for economic societal change at community, regional, national and global levels

(yes, still a long way to go – but this is the way forward for global economy)

SE supports social movements seeking to assert human rights, people's rights (land, resources, etc.) and voice rights (to have a say on governance at all levels and on issues affecting people's lives)

SE is for empowerment for all.