



"It's poverty, Covid"

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My opinion

In 1990s, James Carville said that it is all about economy whichever way one looks at it [1]. Essentially, economy has evolved as a guise for food energy because food energy for individual's survival requires individual's society's economic growth. Now the question arises whether food energy availability is modifiable and if it is modifiable whether it can be equitable [2]. Domestication of plants and animals followed by agricultural and technological revolution may have ensured that food energy availability can be modified by humans. However, this acquired human control over increasing the food energy availability may have led to acquired human control over inequitably distributing the abundantly generated and abundantly available food energy. Herein, the guise of modern economy comes to represent current and future food energy availability and current and future food energy distribution among modern human populations. Summarily, it is all about control of economy among humans to exercise control over food energy for humans.

This lays the ground for understanding why appropriate understanding and appropriate interpretation of demographics is most important when humans are dealing with pandemic/epidemic/endemic diseases. For example, while pondering on obesity epidemic, opioid epidemic or COVID-19 pandemic, the stark highlighter is often racial/ethnic differences among the prevalence of these diseases. However, this highlighted truth leaves a hole in the hearts of those disproportionately affected by these diseases when they assume this to be the fact of life with race/ethnicity being a non-modifiable factor. Herein lies the paradox because this presumed fact blinds not only those who feel frustration at being comparatively higher risk due to their race/ethnicity but also those who feel security at being comparatively lower risk due to their race/ethnicity. Moreover, while suffering due to race/ethnicity may strengthen bonds within the racial/ethnic groups, this shared experience over a non-modifiable factor like race/ethnicity may tend to overlook the shared experience over a modifiable factor like poverty [3-4].

The message can be simplified. It is true that socioeconomic differences lead to different prevalence of poverty among various racial/ethnic groups [5-7].

However, race/ethnicity itself being non-modifiable, poverty itself may be the primary target for modifications and corrections after overcoming the socioeconomic limitations induced by perceptions around race/ethnicity. It is important to remember that obesity, opioids and viruses may not be biologically targeting racial/ethnic/minority groups but these modern-day menaces may be socioeconomically targeting poor and underprivileged individuals irrespective of their racial/ethnic/minority status despite poverty having evolved over years to be differentially concentrated among individuals depending on their racial/ethnic/minority status.

Summarily, fighting with pandemic/epidemic/endemic diseases is primarily about overcoming poverty and secondarily about overcoming the underlying racial/ethnic/minority prejudices hindering eradication of poverty from the world. The call out should be about unifying the poor to collectively ask the rich for survivable and livable opportunities for themselves rather than getting divided over their racial/ethnic differences because it may appear self-serving to the rich and privileged to let the poor and underprivileged believe and blame it on their non-modifiable race/ethnicity rather than creating and allowing opportunities for the poor and underprivileged to evolve as the rich and privileged just like their own selves. Æ Æ

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