

BOOK REVIEW**The Post-Pandemic World and Global Politics**AKM Ahsan Ullah and Jannatul Ferdous (Springer: Singapore, 2022)¹

The very title of the book itself invites attention not only of the readers but also those who just have a glimpse of it as we know the entire globe has seen the quick spread of Corona Virus, its icy touch, post effect and the local and global politics centring around it that still reigns. And the curiosity holds my attention and impels me to read some of the chapters of the book thoroughly while other chapters received less reading. The book contains five chapters under the heading (i) The Pandemic and Global Politics (ii) Underlying Conceptual Approach: An Era or a Crisis? (iii) Politicization of Pandemic and the Ramifications (iv) Pandemic, Predictions and Propagation and (v) Choosing to End the Pandemic: Conclusions and discussions, respectively. I see it as a living document of the world's global health, hygiene, and education situation that experienced a quite unexpected and demurred face when COVID-19 shook all the continents. The authors of the book say that the primary goal of this book is to help readers make sense of unpleasant events and build a discourse that leads to a future that we all desire. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on people's lives across the globe, touching every aspect of society, and the book tends to record this evidence as documents. It has had a significant impact on domestic politics, affecting most countries' governance and political systems, suspending legislative activity, isolating or killing politicians, rescheduling elections and prohibiting protests due to fears of the virus spreading. However, several governments exploited the outbreak as an excuse to prohibit political activities. As a result, the pandemic has spawned broader political debates regarding the relative merits of democracy and autocracy, as well as how governments respond to crises. The book reveals how assumptions regarding the origins, consequences, and reactions to the COVID-19 outbreak are addressed via the prism of politics and the diverse perspectives of experts in this field. It aims to generate recommendations for more research into critical components of global politics in the COVID-19 era as it develops and advances from and for scholars studying global politics. Hence this group of readers must have enough food for thought spreading in the pages.

Pandemic preparations and responses have been impacted by politics since it was a public health and political crisis. Nevertheless, a connection between global health issues and political issues is still being established. There have been many system-level

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connections between governments and health epidemics and infectious diseases since the eighteenth century. The majority of the world powers seemed to be concerned about the origin of the virus. Some politicians instigate conspiracy theories and disseminate fake information regarding the virus's origins. Such speculative assertions may serve only to divert attention away from researchers and policymakers working to contain the virus spread, and that objective might be political. Politicizing the epidemic has resulted in the emergence of anti-vaxxers. Vaccine refusal is a significant factor in the continued rise in COVID-19 infections. The bulk of these folks belongs to the right-wing political parties. Despite health professionals' urge that vaccination is an issue of public health, not politics, they continue to say COVID-19 is a scam.

Zoom has abruptly occupied the position of our traditional way of communication in the nations and across the globe during COVID-19, did not escape the notice of the writers as keen observers. They say Zoom achieved a daily meeting participants peak of over 300 million, up from 10 million in December 2019. Their annual field meeting minutes estimate has more than doubled, from 100 billion in late January to more than two trillion in April 2020. The global crisis brought on by the coronavirus outbreak has driven us even more into a digital environment, and behavioural alterations are likely to have long-term effects when the economy recovers. However, not everyone is prepared to embrace a digital lifestyle. UNCTAD investigates how certain people profit more than others from a technologically advanced world and found that the coronavirus outbreak has accelerated the usage of digital solutions, tools, and services, hastening the global shift to a digital economy. It has, however, showing the wide disparity between the connected and the unconnected. Emily and her colleagues in their study found that some 21% of homebound children's parents fear they won't be unable to complete their schoolwork because there is no computer at home, or because they would be forced to use public Wi-Fi because they do not have a reliable internet connection at home (22%). Low-income parents have additional concerns about their children's education. When their children's schools close, many low-income parents worry that their children will be forced to complete schoolwork using only their cell phones. Forty percent of parents worry that their children will be forced to use public Wi-Fi because their home internet connection is unreliable. We notice here that zoom has appeared as a positive aspect in the field of communication, health, technology and education; the authors have also noticed the digital divide created by it.

In page 75, the book describes the fact that during a global crisis, the governments of various nations stifle the voice of the press to hide the actual message at the cost of citizens' suffering and death. The governments of these nations think it to be a credit not to let the outside world know about the magnanimity of the crisis. Human Rights Council expressed grave concern over new policies blocking and punishing the free flow of information. People have died due to governments lying, concealing facts, detaining journalists, failing to notify the public about the magnetite of the threat, and criminalizing individuals with the pretence of spreading false information. People have

suffered because some governments would prefer to avoid criticism than allow people to share information, learn about the outbreak and understand what officials are or are not doing to protect them. I think the book will serve as a warning signal for the future generation, governments, politicians and the global community about what really happens inside a country and what the governments do in response to a big crisis.

Another important fact has been uttered in this book to remind humans how helpless they are before the mightiness of God. Humans are just helpless toys at the forces of nature. Still, the complicated web of political games developed by humans does not stop. People are dying, and we appear to be so helpless and powerless to stop the continuous crisis. We are so tiny as compared to the might of the virus. Lockdowns shut down facilities and forced large segments of the workforce to work from home. It comes to the books through the lines “The COVID-19 pandemic is caused by one kind of Coronavirus for which science and technology found no immediate cure and this virus has already had a tremendous impact worldwide and has altered human history, it has influenced worldwide collaboration making it a focal point of global politics. The definition of a superpower has evolved as they appear impotent in the face of the Virus. All of this has fuelled fears of a new Cold War, with China and the US playing prominent roles this time. The last cold war was centred on the USSR and the United States, but today COVID-19 seems to be changing the course of international politics. As a reader or reviewer, this utterance has impressed me.

A virus is an excellent equalizer since no country is immune to it, even if not everyone is equally exposed to or damaged by it. Because the connection is only as strong as its weakest link, the crisis would focus on efficiently assisting the most vulnerable individual and countries. Because of our interdependence, if the vulnerable are endangered, everyone is endangered. The book's stories begin with the advent of COVID-19 and stretch until the outbreak of Russia and Ukraine wars. COVID may have infected Russian troops stationed near the border or participated in military manoeuvres in Belarus. Ukraine's health ministry has reported 43,778 new cases since the outbreak began, the most in a single day since the outbreak began. There were almost 4,000 increases over the previous day. Russia has also been heavily affected by the Omicron variety, with 168,201 new infections, which is an all-time high on February 25th, 2022. Global politics has replaced the global pandemic in news headlines. Not all of our concerns about the global politics-pandemic nexus have been answered by this book, but it does highlight how politicians may explain away the reality and hence tend to perpetuate the pandemic-the authors clandestinely declare the limitation of the book through this statement that I appreciate. Being an individual attached to education, I had some more appetite and expectations to see at least one chapter dedicated to education as this sector has seen tremendous loss, and the developing world is struggling to get out of it. I like to conclude with the lines - COVID-19 outbreak will have far-reaching consequences for the planet. Our domestic and international responses will determine

whether we can learn from this catastrophe and establish a more sustainable and long-term globalization policy.

Reviewed by Masum Billah