



The Unseen Backbone: Diverse Roles of Warriors In COVID-19

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in late 2019, rapidly evolved into one of the most severe global public health emergencies in human history. It not only strained healthcare systems and impacted the economy, but it also changed the social dynamics of everyday life. Amidst uncertainty, fear, and isolation, a diverse group of people came together to fight the global battle against the coronavirus, collectively referred to as the "COVID Warriors." Although these healthcare workers have rightfully received acknowledgment for their front-line efforts, this paper aims to expand the focus to highlight the essential contributions of various other individuals who, despite often being overlooked in public discussions, played a very important role in maintaining societal functions during the crisis. This paper seeks to explore their diverse roles, the challenges faced by each group, and the collective spirit of duty, courage, and compassion that defined the global response by analysing secondary sources.

This paper uses a qualitative research approach to explore the diverse roles and contributions of COVID warriors. This includes peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and media coverage to collect insights into the experiences and challenges encountered by various groups, such as healthcare workers, essential service providers, law enforcement, educators, social workers, and mental health professionals.

Key words: COVID Warriors, Pandemic Response, Essential Services, Mental Health Support, Public Health Safety, Collective Resilience

Introduction

As a worldwide health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic challenged the resilience and adaptability of communities and individuals around the world. During the turmoil and fear, a varied group of people—collectively referred to as the "COVID warriors"—rose to become the foundation of the global response. These individuals came from various professions and backgrounds, united by a common goal to combat the virus and protect the community. Healthcare workers, law enforcement, sanitation staff, essential service providers, researchers, educators, social workers, and journalists all contributed to maintaining societal functions while navigating the physical, emotional, and psychological toll of the pandemic. Additionally, mental health professionals, spiritual leaders, and everyday citizens provided invaluable support through the crisis, fostering resilience and solidarity. The resilience of COVID warriors, despite immense hardships, underscores the necessity of recognizing and appreciating their contributions in

future public health emergencies. The lessons learned from their experiences offer important insights for preparedness and response strategies in tackling future crises.

From law enforcement officers and sanitation workers to teachers, delivery personnel, researchers, social workers, media professionals, and even ordinary citizens, each played a unique role in navigating the chaos. Their combined efforts formed an intricate web of resilience and service that upheld communities and mitigated the worst outcomes of the pandemic. In recognizing these contributions, we should not only honour their service but also highlight critical lessons for future crisis preparedness and community solidarity. Here's a table detailing different categories of COVID warriors, their roles, and the challenges they face:

Category	Role	Challenges
Healthcare Workers	Diagnose and treat COVID-19 patients; Provide medical care and support	High risk of infection; Long working hours; Emotional and physical exhaustion; Limited resources (PPE, ventilators)
Police and Law Enforcement	Enforce lockdowns and curfews; Maintain public order and safety	High exposure to the public; Risk of contracting virus; Managing public resistance and panic
Sanitation Workers	Disinfect public areas; Ensure waste management	High exposure to virus in contaminated areas; Inadequate protective gear; Stigmatization
Essential Service Providers	Supply essential goods (groceries, medicines); Maintain utilities (water, electricity)	Continuous interaction with the public; High risk of infection; Stress from increased workload
Researchers and Scientists	Develop vaccines and treatments; Conduct COVID-19-related studies	Pressure to expedite research; Limited access to resources; Need for rapid data analysis



Teachers and Educators	Transition to online teaching; Ensure continuity of education	Adapting to new teaching methods; Limited access to digital tools for some students; Managing remote classrooms
Social Workers	Provide support to vulnerable groups; Coordinate relief efforts	High exposure to virus; Emotional toll of assisting affected communities; Resource constraints
Journalists and Media	Report on pandemic updates Disseminate accurate information	High risk of exposure while reporting; Ensuring accuracy amidst rapidly changing information; Managing public misinformation

The table categorizes various groups of COVID warriors, detailing their roles and the challenges they faced during the pandemic. Healthcare workers, including doctors and nurses, were primarily responsible for diagnosing and treating COVID-19 patients, often enduring high risks of infection, long working hours, and emotional exhaustion due to limited resources. Police and law enforcement personnel enforced lockdowns and maintained public safety, grappling with public resistance and the risk of virus exposure. Sanitation workers played a crucial role in disinfecting public areas and managing waste, facing stigmatization and inadequate protective gear. Essential service providers, such as grocery store employees and utility workers, ensured the supply of necessities while dealing with increased workloads and high infection risks. Researchers and scientists were tasked with developing vaccines and treatments under immense pressure, often with limited resources. Teachers and educators transitioned to online teaching, navigating challenges related to digital access and remote classroom management. Social workers provided vital support to vulnerable populations, facing emotional tolls and resource constraints. Lastly, journalists and media professionals reported on the pandemic, contending with the risks of exposure and the challenge of managing misinformation. This table highlights the diverse contributions and interconnected challenges faced by these essential individuals during the crisis. Their roles are described thoroughly below:-

1. Healthcare Workers: The Frontline Defenders

Healthcare workers, including doctors, paramedics, nurses, and other medical staff, were at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19. Their primary role was to diagnose, treat, and manage patients affected



by the virus. They worked tirelessly in hospitals, clinics, and makeshift medical facilities, often putting their own lives at risk to save others.

Doctors were responsible for diagnosing the disease, formulating treatment plans, and performing critical medical procedures. Nurses provided continuous care, monitored patients' conditions, administered medications, and offered emotional support. Paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) were the first responders, transporting patients to medical facilities and providing urgent care.

Healthcare workers faced immense physical and emotional stress. The long working hours, coupled with the constant risk of infection, took a toll on their health and well-being. The shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies further exacerbated their challenges. Many healthcare workers had to make the difficult decision of isolating themselves from their families to prevent the spread of the virus, leading to emotional and psychological distress. Additionally, the high patient load and the severity of cases meant that healthcare workers often faced the heartbreaking reality of losing patients despite their best efforts. The mental health impact of witnessing such loss and the pressure of making life-and-death decisions cannot be overstated.

2. Essential Service Providers: Keeping Society Functional

Essential service providers, including grocery store employees, delivery personnel, utility workers, and sanitation staff, played a crucial role in maintaining society's functioning during lockdowns and restrictions. Grocery store employees ensured that people had access to food and essential supplies. Delivery personnel facilitated online shopping and home deliveries, minimizing the need for people to venture out and risk exposure. Utility workers maintained critical infrastructure, such as electricity, water supply, and telecommunications, ensuring that people could stay connected and access necessary services from their homes. Sanitation staff were responsible for maintaining cleanliness and hygiene, which was vital in preventing the spread of the virus.

Essential service providers faced numerous challenges, including exposure to the virus due to their interaction with the public. Many of these workers lacked adequate PPE and were not initially recognized as high-risk, leading to delayed implementation of safety measures. The stress of working in high-risk environments, coupled with the fear of contracting the virus and spreading it to their families, was a significant burden. Moreover, many essential service providers faced financial challenges. The economic impact of the pandemic led to job insecurity and wage cuts for some, while others had to work extended hours without corresponding compensation. Despite these hardships, their dedication and resilience were instrumental in keeping society functional.



3. Law Enforcement and Security Personnel

Law enforcement officers and security personnel were tasked with enforcing lockdowns, curfews, and other public health measures. Their role involved maintaining order, preventing panic, and ensuring that people adhered to the guidelines set by health authorities. They also assisted in contact tracing efforts and facilitated the movement of essential goods and medical supplies. In addition to their regular duties, law enforcement personnel often provided support to communities by distributing food and supplies, especially in areas where movement was restricted. They played a critical role in disseminating information about the virus and educating the public on safety measures.

Police officers, security personnel, and first responders played a critical role in enforcing public health measures and ensuring safety during lockdowns. Police officers enforced curfews, monitored public spaces for adherence to social distancing guidelines, and intervened in cases of panic buying and hoarding. Security personnel ensured the safety of healthcare facilities, critical infrastructure, and quarantine zones. These guardians of law and order faced the challenge of balancing public safety with individual freedoms, often encountering frustration and resistance in enforcing unpopular measures. They ensured the smooth functioning of societies under immense strain, allowing healthcare and essential services to operate effectively. Law enforcement and security personnel faced the dual challenge of maintaining public order while protecting their health. The nature of their job required close interaction with the public, increasing their risk of exposure to the virus. Ensuring compliance with public health measures often led to confrontations, adding to the stress and danger of their work. The enforcement of lockdowns and restrictions also posed ethical and logistical challenges. Balancing the need for public safety with respecting individual freedoms and addressing the socio-economic impact of restrictions was a complex task. Additionally, many law enforcement personnel had to work long hours with limited resources, further straining their physical and mental well-being.

4. Sanitation Workers

Sanitation workers played a crucial role in maintaining public health and safety amidst the crisis. As the coronavirus spread rapidly, sanitation workers became the first line of defence against contamination. Their primary responsibilities included disinfecting public spaces—such as streets, parks, transportation hubs, and hospitals—in ensuring proper waste management in urban. By sanitizing high-touch surfaces and frequently used areas, they helped reduce the transmission of the virus in communities, playing an essential role in limiting its spread. In the face of widespread fear and uncertainty, sanitation workers worked tirelessly to maintain hygiene standards, helping prevent further outbreaks and easing the burden on public health systems.



According to **Bhattacharya, S., & Sharma, R. (2021)**, despite their essential role, sanitation workers faced significant challenges throughout the pandemic. The nature of their work exposed them to high risks of viral contamination. Cleaning and waste management tasks often took place in crowded or potentially infected areas, where personal protective equipment (PPE) was not always sufficient or readily available. Many sanitation workers were forced to carry out their duties without adequate protective gear, which placed them at heightened risk of contracting the virus. In addition to the physical dangers, many workers faced stigmatization from the public due to fears of contamination. This societal bias, coupled with the emotional stress of working in high-risk environments, added a layer of hardship for these workers, who were already labouring under exhausting conditions. Moreover, sanitation workers were largely overlooked in the early stages of the pandemic, with limited recognition of their risks or contributions. They often lacked access to protections afforded to frontline workers, which further contributed to their vulnerability. Despite these challenges, many sanitation workers demonstrated extraordinary resilience and commitment to their tasks, working long hours in hazardous conditions to ensure the continued functioning of society. The increased workload and emotional toll of their work compounded the strain on their mental and physical health, but their dedication never wavered. In urban centres, where the spread of COVID-19 was particularly severe, sanitation workers became essential in maintaining sanitation infrastructure. The increased volume of waste, driven by the surge in disposable masks, gloves, and personal hygiene products, presented new challenges for waste management.

Sanitation workers were tasked with handling an elevated amount of potentially hazardous material while maintaining the cleanliness of public spaces to ensure people could continue with daily activities safely. Their work not only ensured hygiene and cleanliness but also contributed to social stability by allowing businesses and public services to continue operations. The role of sanitation workers during COVID-19 underscored the vital importance of public health infrastructure and the often-overlooked labour that sustains it. Their contributions highlighted the intersection of environmental health and the broader fight against the pandemic. The pandemic has reminded us of how essential sanitation is to public well-being, and the dedication of sanitation workers will be forever remembered as a cornerstone of the collective effort to combat COVID-19.

5. Researchers and Scientists

Researchers and scientists were at the heart of the effort to understand and combat COVID-19. Their work involved studying the virus's characteristics, developing diagnostic tests, and researching potential treatments and vaccines. Epidemiologists and public health experts analysed data to track the spread of the virus and advised governments on effective containment strategies. The rapid development of COVID-19 vaccines was a monumental achievement, made possible by the tireless efforts of



researchers and scientists. They conducted extensive clinical trials to ensure the safety and efficacy of vaccines, facilitating their approval and distribution. Researchers and scientists faced immense pressure to deliver results quickly. The urgency of the situation demanded accelerated timelines for research and development, often requiring them to work around the clock. The scientific community had to navigate the complexities of a novel virus, with limited initial data and evolving knowledge. Securing funding and resources for research was another significant challenge. The global scale of the pandemic necessitated unprecedented collaboration and resource allocation. Researchers also had to contend with misinformation, which sometimes hindered public acceptance of scientific findings and recommendations. The ethical considerations of conducting research during a pandemic, such as ensuring equitable access to treatments and vaccines, added another layer of complexity to their work. Despite these challenges, the contributions of researchers and scientists were pivotal in the fight against COVID-19.

6. Teachers and Educators

According to Chatterjee, R., & Chauhan, V. (2020), Teachers and educators played a crucial role in maintaining continuity in education during the pandemic. With schools and educational institutions closed, they had to quickly adapt to remote learning platforms to ensure that students could continue their studies. This involved not only delivering lessons online but also providing emotional support to students navigating the challenges of isolation and uncertainty. Educators developed innovative teaching methods, created digital content, and leveraged technology to engage students. They also worked closely with parents to facilitate home-based learning, especially for younger children. In many cases, teachers went beyond their professional duties to ensure that students had access to the necessary resources and support. The transition to remote learning presented numerous challenges for educators. Many teachers had to quickly familiarize themselves with digital tools and platforms, often with limited training and resources. Ensuring that all students had access to the necessary technology and internet connectivity was a significant hurdle, particularly in underserved communities. Maintaining student engagement and participation in a virtual environment required creative and adaptive teaching strategies. The lack of face-to-face interaction made it difficult to assess students' progress and provide personalized support. Additionally, educators faced the challenge of balancing their professional responsibilities with their own family commitments and well-being. The prolonged period of remote learning also had implications for students' social and emotional development. Teachers had to address these concerns while managing their own stress and anxiety. Despite these challenges, educators demonstrated remarkable resilience and dedication to their students' learning and well-being.

7. Social Workers and Volunteers



Social workers and volunteers played a vital role in supporting vulnerable populations during the pandemic. Their work involved providing essential services, such as food distribution, mental health support, and assistance with accessing healthcare and other resources. They worked with marginalized communities, including the elderly, homeless, and those with pre-existing health conditions, to ensure their needs were met. Volunteers also supported vaccination campaigns, helping to organize and manage vaccination sites, and assisting with public education efforts. They provided critical support in contact tracing, quarantine management, and delivering supplies to those in isolation. Social workers and volunteers faced numerous challenges, including the risk of exposure to the virus due to their close interaction with vulnerable populations. The increased demand for their services, coupled with limited resources, often led to burnout and stress. They had to navigate complex and rapidly changing regulations, ensuring that they provided accurate information and support.

Addressing the diverse needs of vulnerable populations required a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic and cultural factors affecting these groups. Social workers and volunteers had to advocate for their clients, often facing bureaucratic obstacles and systemic inequalities. The emotional toll of working with individuals experiencing severe hardship and distress was significant. Despite these challenges, social workers and volunteers remained committed to their mission, providing invaluable support and care to those most affected by the pandemic.

8. Media and Journalists

Journalists and media professionals played a crucial role in disseminating information about the pandemic. Their responsibilities included reporting on the spread of the virus, public health measures, government policies, and scientific developments. They provided a critical service by keeping the public informed and educated about the evolving situation.

The media also played a role in combating misinformation and promoting accurate and reliable information. Journalists conducted interviews with experts, covered press briefings, and produced in-depth analyses to help the public understand the complexities of the pandemic. Public information officers, journalists, and educators served as a crucial link between the scientific community and the public. Public information officers translated complex scientific data into clear, concise messages for the public, dispelling myths and promoting evidence-based practices. Journalists relentlessly pursued stories, investigating outbreaks and holding authorities accountable, ensuring transparency and informing public discourse. Educators adapted their teaching methodologies to remote learning environments, ensuring continuity of education while safeguarding the health of students and teachers. These communication warriors faced the daunting task of combating misinformation in a landscape saturated with social media and constantly evolving information. They strived to deliver accurate and timely information, building trust and fostering public cooperation with public health measures.



Journalists faced numerous challenges, including the risk of exposure while covering events and conducting interviews. The fast-paced nature of news reporting required them to work under constant pressure, often with limited resources. The rise of misinformation and the polarized political environment further complicated their work, as they had to navigate the challenge of maintaining credibility and trust.

The ethical responsibility of reporting accurate information while avoiding sensationalism was a constant balancing act. Journalists had to ensure that their reporting did not contribute to panic or fear, while still conveying the seriousness of the situation. The emotional impact of covering a global crisis, witnessing human suffering, and dealing with the uncertainty of the pandemic also took a toll on their mental health. Despite these challenges, journalists and media professionals continued to provide essential information and insights, playing a critical role in the collective response to the pandemic.

9. Transportation Workers

Transportation workers, such as public transport operators, truck drivers, and logistics personnel, were essential in maintaining mobility and supply chains during the pandemic. Public transport operators ensured that essential workers could commute to their jobs, while truck drivers and logistics personnel facilitated the movement of goods, including medical supplies, food, and other essentials. Their work was crucial in supporting the functioning of healthcare facilities, grocery stores, and other critical infrastructure. Transportation workers also played a role in distributing vaccines and medical equipment, contributing to the overall pandemic response.

Transportation workers faced significant challenges, including exposure to the virus due to their high level of interaction with the public and frequent travel. The implementation of safety measures, such as sanitization protocols and social distancing, added to the complexity of their work. Many transportation workers had to work long hours and deal with the uncertainty of changing regulations and travel restrictions. The economic impact of the pandemic also affected the transportation sector, with fluctuations in demand leading to job insecurity and financial strain for many workers. The stress of navigating these challenges, coupled with the responsibility of maintaining critical supply chains, was immense. Despite these difficulties, transportation workers demonstrated resilience and dedication, ensuring that essential services and supplies continued to reach those in need.

Extended COVID Warriors

The COVID-19 pandemic was not merely a health crisis—it was a test of human resilience, compassion, and collective strength. While frontline healthcare professionals received much-deserved recognition, there existed a broader, often underappreciated cohort of warriors who worked silently and selflessly to keep society afloat. These everyday heroes—mental health counselors, sanitation workers, spiritual



leaders, delivery personnel, and even ordinary citizens—whose roles, though less glorified, were equally critical in navigating the storm. These warriors ensured emotional stability, maintained essential services, upheld social morale, and stitched communities together during times of deep isolation and uncertainty. Their stories of sacrifice, courage, and dedication reflect the true spirit of service and underscore the need to recognize every hand that held society together during one of the gravest global emergencies of our time.

1. The Mental Health Warriors

Psychologists, counselors, and social workers played a vital role in supporting the mental health of individuals and communities. As fear and uncertainty gripped the world, mental health professionals provided invaluable support to healthcare workers facing burnout and trauma, to isolated individuals struggling with loneliness, and to those grieving lost loved ones. They adapted their practices to deliver remote therapy sessions, ensuring continued access to mental health services during lockdowns and social distancing measures. These mental health warriors faced the challenge of addressing a surge in mental health issues – anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – with limited resources and amidst a rapidly evolving pandemic landscape.

2. The Pillar of Hope: Spiritual and Religious Leaders

Religious leaders, spiritual healers, and faith-based organizations provided emotional and spiritual support to communities during times of crisis. They offered guidance and solace to individuals struggling with fear, loss, and uncertainty. Faith-based organizations mobilized volunteers to deliver meals and groceries to the elderly and vulnerable, bridging the gap in social support during lockdowns and social distancing. These spiritual warriors faced the challenge of adapting religious practices to a pandemic reality, while ensuring the continued availability of spiritual guidance and fostering a sense of community. They instilled hope and resilience, reminding individuals of their inherent strength and the importance of compassion during difficult times.

3. Everyday Citizens

The collective response of everyday citizens was very crucial element in mitigating the spread of the virus. Individuals who practiced social distancing, wore masks, and adhered to public health guidelines played a vital role in breaking the chain of transmission. Those who volunteered their time and resources to support frontline workers, vulnerable populations, and overwhelmed healthcare systems embodied the spirit of community and shared responsibility. Everyday citizens faced the challenge of adapting their daily routines, forgoing social interactions, and coping with the psychological and economic hardships brought on by the pandemic. Their unwavering commitment to collective well-being played a significant role in containing the virus and fostering hope for a brighter future.

**Conclusion: The Collective Battle**

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the crucial roles played by various categories of COVID warriors. From healthcare workers and essential service providers to law enforcement, researchers, educators, social workers, journalists, and transportation workers, each group made significant contributions to the fight against the virus. Their roles were diverse, but their common goal was to protect and support their communities. The challenges faced by these individuals were immense, encompassing physical, emotional, and psychological stress, risk of exposure, and navigating complex and evolving situations. Despite these obstacles, their unwavering dedication and resilience were instrumental in mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

As we move forward, it is essential to recognize and appreciate the contributions of these COVID warriors. Their efforts have not only helped us navigate through the crisis but have also demonstrated the power of collective action and solidarity in the face of unprecedented challenges. The lessons learned from their experiences will be invaluable in preparing for and responding to future public health emergencies.

The fight against COVID-19 has been a collective effort, with each category of COVID warrior playing a unique and indispensable role. From the frontline healthcare workers battling the virus in overwhelmed hospitals to the scientists tirelessly searching for solutions in laboratories, the unwavering dedication of these individuals has been instrumental in saving lives and mitigating the pandemic's impact. The essential service providers ensured the smooth functioning of societies, while public health officials and mental health professionals addressed the physical and psychological well-being of communities. Communication warriors bridged the gap between science and the public, while law enforcement personnel and spiritual leaders provided essential support. Finally, the commitment of everyday citizens to public health guidelines served as the bedrock of the collective response. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a stark reminder of our interconnectedness and the importance of collective action in the face of global challenges. The unwavering spirit of the COVID warriors across the globe serves as a testament to human resilience and our capacity to overcome adversity.

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