

## **Handling a Global Pandemic and Bangladesh's Standpoint**

Sayere Nazabi Sayem

The novel corona virus has swept the globe over the year with over 7,86,74,527 cases and over 17,29,984 deaths (as of 23 December 2020). Countries like Vietnam, Taiwan, Iceland and Singapore are few such who dealt with the infections effectively. The countries followed different methodologies of travel permits and restrictions, lockdowns, fining upon not wearing masks, constant cleansing of streets and so on. On the other hand, countries like United States, United Kingdom, France and Italy are some of the bunch who has exceedingly high number of deaths, minimal precautions and lower recovery rate.

Renowned news portals and content creators were applauding how “women led countries” were remarkable in handling Covid – 19 infections. New Zealand and its Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern were one of the most searches of the internet because of its notable statistics of 2,030 cases, 1,953 recoveries with only 25 deaths. Tsai Ing-wen, first female president of Taiwan made headlines when there were merely 618 cases, 549 recoveries and 7 deaths. Germany was also highly regarded because of the outspoken Chancellor, Angela Merkel and her tactics that brought a seemingly great recovery of 612,000 people out of 932,000 cases; with a total of 14,000 deaths.

Moving forward to Bangladesh's scenario: Be it the constant urge of negativity against the government or the hunt for sensational gossips, the media or the public are disinterested towards identifying the proper policy making during a pandemic and the effective handling of the current situation. It is deeply engraved in mindsets to search for shortcomings and complain on specific petty issues whereas the picture is clear on a global scale. Starting off with the first three known cases reported on 8 March 2020 by the country's epidemiology institute, IEDCR; to the present day of November 2020 there has been whopping number of tests and cases. There has been 5,04,868 cases with incredible amount of recovery of 4,44,345 and only 7,359 deaths in a population of 161.4 million people. Despite such great figures, be it international politics or the lack of knowledge of media, Bangladesh has not been highlighted to the world as one of the best countries or woman led countries to handle the pandemic efficiently. Certainly, it is deeply saddening to witness Bangladesh not being acknowledged despite tremendous efforts in the international arena for pandemic handling.

However, Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received part of her due credits when the heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and World Health Organization (WHO), launched the One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) with our Prime Minister as one of the co chairs. The mandate of the group is to provide advocacy and advisory functions to ensure that action is taken to address the challenge of antimicrobial resistance.

This new platform has been launched around the world to take urgent measures to prevent pathogens from becoming drug resistant and to ensure the availability of all effective drugs that are important in the future. The platform was launched on Friday, 20th November 2020, in a joint venture of three specialized organizations at the international level. And our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been nominated as the Co-Chair of the One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance alongside Mia Mottley, the Prime Minister of Barbados.

The new group will harness the leadership and influence of these members who are world-renowned figures to catalyze global attention and combat to preserve antimicrobial medicines and avert the catastrophic consequences of antimicrobial resistance. Furthermore, FAO was going to launch a new Action Plan on AMR for 2021-2025, aimed at providing further support to governments, producers, traders and other stakeholders for the adoption of measures to minimize the use of antimicrobials and to contain the spread of antimicrobial resistance.

Sheikh Hasina, being extremely aware of the present situation and the probable future, has called for global efforts to fight antimicrobial resistance via coordinated actions to raise awareness against widespread use of antibiotics. “We are running out of available antibiotics and soon could face another global emergency, far severe than the current COVID-19 pandemic,” she stated. The four-time elected prime minister; Sheikh Hasina first drew an extra international focus when the UN honored her with its UNESCO Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize in 1998 (inclusive to the 37 international accolades she has received in total). Antimicrobial resistance is one of the greatest health challenges of this age and we cannot leave it for the next generation to solve. Thus it is a matter of pride that a responsible country head is a vocal world leader as well who understands the surrounding we live in and the fact of how prevention to any future pandemic or global emergency is better than the cure.

#