

Research Article

# Corona: Our Weakness Proved to be Our Strength

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## I N F O

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## A B S T R A C T

Corona virus crisis affected almost every country in the world. Different countries are trying to handle in different ways. As suggested by experts, social distancing is one of the major tools to contain the spread of pandemic. Lockdowns and shutdowns are imposed by many Governments to enforce social distancing. Thus people are facing double problems. One is to remain safe during pandemic and other one is to ensure smooth supply of necessities. The present Paper compares situation of India with other developed countries and try to analyze how age old Indian practices, life style, social structure is helping Indians to fight with the crisis.

**Keywords:** CORONA, Migrants, Lockdown, Jugad

## Introduction

We have witnessed people opposing lockdown in many so called developed countries like UK, USA etc. despite huge number of corona virus infections and deaths. They don't want to compromise with their civil liberties. In India, even after 2 months of lockdown people are not demanding its withdrawal. Govt. is giving relaxations in lockdown because of economic reasons not because people are finding it difficult to remain indoors.

People of India are religiously following the guidelines issued by Govt. to fight the Corona pandemic. From downloading the Arogya-setu app to closing of the Business / shops no one is complaining. Everyone is wearing mask, carrying sanitizer and washing hands regularly. Public transport including Metro Trains, Railways, Buses, Cab etc. are not running.

## Observations

Following observations are made that authors feel, help Indians to overcome lockdown blues:

- Everyday People face hardships in various fronts. They are habitual of standing in queues for Ration, Petrol,

Kerosene oil, LPG etc.

- No matter, which social strata you belong to people face traffic jams, delays, power cuts, slow internet speed, server crash of Govt. websites etc.
- A huge proportion of our population including women, elderly are used to stay indoors for most of the times. So remaining indoors during lockdown is not new to them.
- Last but not least, Indians are warm and friendly people. They talk to their friends, relatives on regular basis that take care of their mental health in times of crisis. The cases of depression are far less as compared to developed western world.

We have seen huge queues before super stores in Developed and rich nations like America. We have also seen people fighting for a pack of tissue paper. However, In India people easily get their daily needs. Govt. left no stone unturned to maintain smooth supply chain. Special measures were taken to check hoarders, overpricing and black marketing. But this must have been done by American Govt. too. Ancient social structure of India stood as guard in times of crisis. Following observations are made in this paper to support this assumption:

- Indian households usually buy monthly grocery instead of weekly.
- Almost all Indian cities have a system of hawkers for selling fruits and vegetables. This proved very handy as people can get fresh fruits and vegetables without stepping out of their homes.
- India has very old system of milkman delivering milk and milk products.
- India has different kinds of shops. From road side vendor to a big mall. Each of these shopkeepers have separate source of procuring goods, unlike America or USA where you are dependent on two three mega stores like Walmart, Tesco, Sainsbury(UK) and Costco (USA). These shopkeepers offer different varieties at competitive prices.
- Believe it or not, Indian social functions like marriages; birth and death ceremonies are one of the biggest causes that made shopkeepers to have huge stock of groceries and other food items. Especially in a marriage season these shops are flooded with supplies. The first lock down was announced in the month of March, which is considered as "marriage season" in India. To meet the sudden need almost all shopkeepers have a network of resources.

Life in Indian subcontinent is not easy as in Europe or North America. Droughts, flood, cyclones taught these people to adjust in adverse conditions. People devise new ways to manage problems; Indians called it "jugad". We have seen same jugad by Indians to survive in corona crisis:

- People are making masks of all different materials one can think of -clothes, plastic sheets, leafs etc.
- To overcome insufficient supply of sanitizers and surface disinfectants, people use salt, vinegar, washing powder, petrol, kerosene.
- To boost immunity people are trying age old Indian remedies consisting primarily of spices and herbs, easily available in any Indian house hold
- To earn livelihood, people are trying different kinds of services. People started mobile shops for selling fruits, vegetables and other daily need items.
- In absence of proper wholesale market or export facility, farmers are selling their crops directly to the consumers. In Bangalore, Alphonso mango producers from Ratnagiri (Maharashtra) are contacting housing societies to sell their truck load of fruits. The wheat growers of Uttar Pradesh are selling their grains loaded in tractor trolleys in residential areas.
- Global economic crisis are inevitable and India is no exception. As the formal sector of employment is reducing, it's the informal economic sector (small shopkeepers, stall owners, street vendors) which is multiplying and offer employment.

## Conclusion

The experts from WHO are suggesting to follow "Namaste" (folding hands) instead of handshake, burning dead bodies instead of giving them burial, Washing hand with soaps etc. These practices are new to world but not to India. These are part of Indian culture. We are hopeful and confident that we will come out of this corona crisis with minimal Damage.

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