

## Coronavirus Pandemic

# Lockdown is an effective ‘vaccine’ against COVID-19: A message from India

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### Abstract

This communication stresses the importance of the complete lockdown of a developing nation as a powerful tool against COVID-19 acting as a ‘vaccine’. India has been under complete lockdown since 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 in addition to other measures emphasized by the Indian Government such as promoting hand washing, social distancing, and use of face masks. A strict lockdown is suggested as an effective measure for containing the novel Corona virus infection transmission worldwide.

**Key words:** Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2; COVID-19; lockdown; India.

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The highly contagious novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 has rapidly spread to the entire globe. Till date, there are about 7.8 million COVID-19 cases and over 431,192 deaths across 213 countries and territories [1]. It is more than 130 days when the first COVID-19 case was reported in India. India has more than 153,106 active cases of COVID-19 and 9,520 deaths have been reported all over the country till 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 [2]. The number of cases and mortalities per million population is far less than those reported in the more developed countries including the USA and European nations [1]. The first lockdown (phase 1) was announced in India on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 for a duration of 21 days. Considering the success of the lockdown in containing the spread of the novel Corona virus, the lockdown was further extended in its phase 2 for 19 days, phase 3 and 4 phase for 14 days each with certain relaxations. Thus, India remained in a lockdown status for more than 2 months until the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, 2020. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of June onwards, the lockdown continues to be enforced in the containment zones, while in the other parts of India, the services are gradually being restored in a phased manner. The relatively lesser number of cases and mortalities per million population thus, is attributed to the stringent lockdowns applied in India, apart from the other measures taken up by the Government of India.

India is the largest democracy in the world. It is a highly populous nation with a low literacy rate, and it has a unique demographic structure [3]. Community transmission in India could have disastrous

consequences, especially considering the limited health care resources and low doctor - healthcare workers patients’ ratio. Besides, India has a large population of people aged 60 years and above who are considered vulnerable to COVID-19. The presence of co-morbidities in the Indian population is very likely to make the matter even worse. The prompt and proactive approach of the Government of India under the leadership of the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi has played a vital role in the containment of COVID-19 to a large extent. Apart from the timely nationwide lockdown, the Government has undertaken measures such as stringent airport screening, quarantining, and contact tracing of those who are found infected with the virus. Besides, emphasis is laid on public awareness about hand washing and promoting the concept of social and physical distancing, and mandatory use of face masks in public places. India did exceptionally well in an assessment based on “OxCGRT” (Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker) tool, developed by the University of Oxford for systematically tracking and comparing different nations’ common policy reactions towards coronavirus outbreak [4].

It would not be incorrect to say that the timely and complete lockdown strategy adopted in India, acted as a powerful ‘vaccine’ for limiting the spread of COVID-19. A strict lockdown is thus, suggested for other countries, to contain novel Corona virus infection transmission worldwide.

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