



GLOBAL REFLECTION ON INDIA'S FIGHT AGAINST CORONA

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Abstract

India's relative success in fighting corona pandemic makes the concerned observers inquisitive of global strategic canvas, positional strengths and implementation challenges that have emerged for India. An attempt to respond to the threefold query is made in this brief analysis.

Keywords: India, Corona, Public Health, *Ayurveda*, Ancient Therapy, Globalisation

Introduction

Spread of corona pandemic brings economic and human cost in a massive scale, raising a lot of anxiety and concerns across the world. India's relative success in containing COVID-19 evokes three pertinent questions. First, what is the global strategic canvas in which this menace has extended its influence? Second, how well positioned is India in containing it? Third, what kind of strategic challenge India is likely to face in its counter-corona operation? An investigation of global and domestic dimension of India's corona containment response provides an insight into the overlooked areas of public health debate.

Global Context

Steep decline in India's share in global distribution of economic resource since mid-eighteenth century led to the gradual surfacing of a world scenario that is characterized by inter-imperial contest between two great powers - Britain and France. With the end of Second World War, super power rivalry between the US and the USSR shaped the global landscape. Subsequent end of cold war has prepared the ground for emergence of the current world order dictated by the competitive quest for supremacy by the two global powers - the US and China.

Both the two powers have actively promoted and selectively used the process of economic globalization (free flow of trade, investment and fiancé) to their respective advantage. Advance in science and technology, more specifically in information and communication technology, has given momentum to this dominating stream of present human life. Two negative fallouts of it are 'globalization of terror' and

'globalization of disease.' While the former is clear to all, Corona gives the feel of the later.

China becomes the culprit in hushing up the human infection dimension of corona virus that originated in its territory, compelling the world to bear such massive economic and human cost. While public awareness of its complicit in this global crime gains its traction, Beijing starts waging perception war against Washington through misinformation campaign of the US army's alleged involvement in corona spread. Regrettably, China doesn't restrain itself in influencing the multilateral institution like the WHO's operation to its favour, putting the larger cause of global public health at risk.

The US has retaliated in its own way to Sino onslaught. However, it lacks the moral authority to counter the aggressive China. First, the US has a very murky record of developing the medicine and vaccine in the past by using its citizens of African origin afflicted with communicable diseases as objects of experiment. Second, American notoriety in misusing almost all the global institutions for the pursuit of vested interest is an open secret.

India's Response

There is a natural expectation from India, given its enormous potential, for giving a positive turn to the ongoing efforts of eradicating the menace and fixing responsibility for the spread. Indeed, a country of high aspirations has managed to present its relative success story of fighting corona as an exemplary case before the global community. The disciplined and pro-nature life style of its majority people, rich and sensitive tradition of ancient therapy, and timely preventive health care

intervention through state-society cooperation bring such rare achievement to the country.

India has proactively engaged in the bilateral, regional and global levels in terms of offering material and moral support, when it comes to waging the war against the pandemic beyond the country's territorial boundary. In this existential war, role and responsibility of the WTO attract everybody's attraction. However, New Delhi took a prudent march by not sticking to WTO's initial directive - massive scale testing with least communication-break-driven economic interruption - reflecting China's misinformation and influence. Global experience indicates that countries preferring this path are incurring a horrible extent of human losses, stirring up a social media refrain "China lied, people died."

Instead, India opted for drastic minimization in overseas travel, immediate physical distancing through rarest step of national lockdown and subsequent measure of targeted testing. What add to this preventive approach are Indian government's prolonged 'Clean India' campaign and current sanitization drive, which have ensured considerable success in containing the spread of COVID-19.

Significantly, Union Ministry of AYUSH guidelines, including regular consumption of hot water, *kadha* (Ayurvedic herbal drink), golden milk (*turmeric* with milk) and *chyanprash* (indigenous tonic), prove to be helpful for boosting people's immune system. Further, persuasion for increasing use of spices with medicinal ingredients in household food preparation and enlightening motivation for practice of *pranayama* (breath exercises) and *asanas* (yoga postures) among greater number of people add to counter-corona immunization process.

Country wide lockdown and consequent preventive health care success encourage the governments for going towards partial unlocking of critical production and related economic activities. Gradual reversing the economic interruption coincides with concentration of greater energy for curative targets by increasing mobilization of pharmaceutical products and clinical tools from domestic and overseas sources. There is scope for exploring clinical utility of Ayurvedic medicine for treatment of COVID-19 sufferers and possibility of its application as prophylaxis in quarantine patients. Essentially, India's judgment on timing and sequence of its counter-corona steps receives global recognition and inspires the powerful US policy response.

Hospital quarantine of the afflicted people, home quarantine of the affliction suspects and home confinement of rest population have resulted in enormous hardships to the daily wagers and the poor. Consequently, perception - "the virus came from

passport holders, but the affected were the ration card holders" - grips the country's suffering hearts and minds. In advance, Union and state governments have come up with several damage control schemes to reduce the exigency induced distress. Civil society groups have complemented this development security effort by filling in the crisis related gaps in human sustenance. Sincerity on the part of national leadership and well meaning cooperation by the provincial administrative set ups have enthused country's frontline corona fighters in pursuing the corona eradication mission, risking their safety and security in many instances.

India's counter-corona endeavor has suddenly faced a huge challenge posed by Tablighi Jamaat that has acted as a corona super spreader in the country. Detection of its clandestine religious congregation with participation of foreign nationals in its Delhi's Nizamuddin based headquarters amid government's declaration of national lock-down hits the meeting point between 'globalization of terror' and 'globalization of disease.' Coincidentally, administration's interface with affliction suspects of Jamaat connection has increased vulnerability of frontline corona fighters to harassment and assaults, necessitating promulgation of the health workers protection ordinance. So far, a selectivist secular ecosystem enables this pre-independence grouping evolve as a terror launch pad for Indian subcontinent and the world at large.

An evolving post-corona world tends to rethink on the predominant norms and consensus on public health, exposing limits of modern medicine's disease eradication capacity. Quest for an immune life path enhances the scope for *Ayurveda*, an ancient science of life guiding on daily and seasonal regimen, food habit, balanced diet, wholesome and unwholesome food, sleep pattern, and Yoga, an ancient method of enlightening consciousness. Redirecting interest and intellect into such ancient treasure of life saving art and science is likely to help and nurture a healthy India and, by extension a healthy world.

Conclusion

Steep decline in India's global prominence has led to formation of consecutive world orders underpinned by bipolar contest, with current juxtaposition of 'globalization of terror' and 'globalization of disease'. Acts of omission and commission behind current spread of corona pandemic manifest this cruel reality. India's judicious utilization of its energy and intelligence towards containing corona viral affliction draws global attention to its public health promptness and increasing relevance of its ancient lifestyle.

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