

Covid – 19: Pakistan Unavailing Comparison

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In the contemporaneous pandemic, world media played an appreciable role of conveying the impact of the virus and to a larger extent spreading appropriate awareness to the people of safeguarding themselves and their families. Gradually as the entire world was locked down, everyone grounded before their televisions to get neck to neck updates of the situation.

With passing days Lanes, Areas, Cities, Districts, States & Nations came face to face with regard to comparison of rising infection cases and various debates, discussions were aired on how nations Statesman are taking timely measures on curtailing the infection. As it's an open secret to the world from where the Corona virus originated, yet the entire South East Asia and World Media eyed on the covid status of two opponent nations India and Pakistan.

Certainly the two nations are staunch opponents but comparison of rising Covid cases between these two nations was the biggest analysis blunder without considering the geographical dimensions, the size of nations, lifestyle of people, their culture and the prominent argument standstills on the mass population difference.

Few months back, the corona virus was seen spreading like fire in the poor, conventional, and disorganised Pakistan, comprising approximate population of 20 Crores. Nation with a fragile health – care system was seen heading towards a disaster. In such a situation Pakistan was compared with Brazil, a developing country with almost alike population, which was too trapped in the disease. In between when world was busy analysing India, Pakistan and Brazil, shockingly Pakistan vividly recorded flattening of its peak curves. Hospitals which were overflowing with Covid cases unexpectedly reported freeing of beds. The commercial hub of Pakistan, Karachi which was hard – hit by the virus, which recorded the highest infected cases, patients on ventilators and death tolls saw a sharp down fall of the cases. Whereas Pakistan's neighbouring countries India and Iran were still reporting highest infected cases.

Viewing heavy rush of people, their careless attitude, their negligence towards SOPs drawn by the government, post Chand Eid, experts from Imperial College, London had predicted about 30,000 deaths per day in early August.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan's resistance following World Health Organisation declaring a complete and strict lockdown concerning the poor and reopening of the country's economy. Still Chief Ministers of few provinces took their independent decision of locking down their state. The situation was alarming and precarious, world media even started reporting of Pakistan going towards herd immunity following Sweden. About 2,80,000 positive cases reported with a death toll of about 6000, Pakistan government was even blamed on hiding the actual figures and the Health Ministry was even accused of slowing down on tests resulting lesser patients to be registered.

International pressure and compression from the opposition who in past blamed Imran Khan government of being confused and not being firm on its decision, brought the ruling party to its knees and forced for a Smart Lockdown in specific infected areas of the country. Still a dangerous situation was foreseen of the two Muslim weekend holidays Eid – al – Adha(Bakri Eid) and Muharram which in a conservative nation like Pakistan involves huge public gatherings.

Post Ramadan (Chand Eid) which unleashed a burst of virus and its uncontrollable rapid spread ,forced people to change their attitude and behaviour towards the virus which was hitting hard, people who were negligent started wearing mask, hand washing and maintaining social distance, the public awareness campaigns too increased by the government and NGOs.

Smart lockdown was enforced where a cluster of cases had arisen. Like many other nations Schools, Wedding Halls, Malls, Restaurants remained closed and also long distance travel was restricted. Despite the blame games and illogical conclusions of nation going towards hard immunity, hiding of figures, slow down on tests etc., the drop was real, as the health system was easing and no new cases were reporting or being admitted in the hospital.

A different angle was too probed to know the reason behind the sudden sharp down fall of corona virus cases in the country, during the analysis Pakistan’s health expert disclosed that the nation has a unique characteristics that has hit back the virus, the conventional male dominated young Muslim population had limited exposure to the virus.

- The analysis further reveals the facts that compared to India, Brazil, US and Italy only 4% of Pakistan population is over 65 as per United Nations data.
- Average age of a Pakistani is 22.
- Pakistan is a very conservation, orthodox Islamic country, there are no Bars & Nightclubs for socialising.
- The country does not have traditional Old Age Homes which are the most vulnerable sites for the virus.
- Majority Muslim women don’t go out of their home for work.
- Only men go out for work who are mostly young.
- Karachi is the only mega city in Pakistan and not a high – rise city.
- Social circles in a conservative country like Pakistan are limited to only family.
- Larger social networks are smaller in poor countries like Pakistan.

The virus after hitting small pockets of the cities must have run out of places to go, though it far difficult for the virus to spread in smaller towns and rural regions. Without delaying a second Imran Khan government shouldered the credit success of its Smart Lockdown formula for decreasing corona cases and so did the Pakistan Army and its Health Ministry. Though the people have eased down on corona virus, the Imran Khan government and its Health Ministry is on red alert, because from time to time the world has warned them on the behavioural changes of the virus. So it’s not the time to announce winning over the situation but to self – analyse and plan ahead to eradicate the virus permanently from the world.

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