



**ACTIVISM'S PROPOSAL FOR INVESTIGATION ON
SPREAD OF COVID19 AND THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN FUNCTIONALITY:
LESSONS FROM WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

ABSTRACT

The outbreak of corona virus perhaps brings about the biggest catastrophic effects on human lives since the world war-II. The pandemic threatens the biological security of human civilization on an unprecedented scale where the question of survival predominates over the issues of wellbeing. The spread of Novel Corona has a huge impact upon the everyday living of the people across the globe. It thwarts the daily activity and ruptures the normalcy of being seized of the panic of fear. It makes citizens terribly anxious of sustaining life on earth and exposes the vulnerability of the public health system to combat the crisis everywhere in the world. In this context the primary strategic response to arrest the spread of corona taken worldwide are quarantine, physical distancing, hand washing, coughing etiquettes and maintaining basic hygiene etc.

The pandemic affect all most all frontiers of human life and seems to fabricate both the micro and macro conditions of human existence for now and the years to come. It raises plenty of questions on concepts and mechanisms of humans' interactive praxis with themselves and nature on which the edifice of modern system of governance was built. Broadly it nudges to the two opposite, however, often complementary systems of governance; the governance of self and the way self is governed by the structure of power. The latter banks upon the larger problem of the structure and functioning of polity and can be conceived as the problem of governance from outside whereas the former points to the everyday problem of individual's functionality in managing self at risk and can be conceived as the problem of self governance. Keeping in view the highly contagious character of corona virus and the simultaneous absence of appropriate vaccine the individual self has been placed into the functioning core of the mitigation strategies at the global level. The crux of the argument for effective self governance relies on the altruistic principle that infectious diseases are a notable exception as individual decision making is no longer self-contained and personal but rather, becomes a community matter where protection of self implies protection of others and vice-versa. The further justification behind the communal responsibility of the self emerges from the discourse of 'emerging infectious diseases' which has transformed the notion of self as essential and bodily

self-contained and conceived, instead, as a radically open, integrated and responsive category to the socio-economic and molecular world of chaotic change that at once precedes and transcends the human body. However, it does not mean that the entire responsibility of the management of risk could be individualized and entrusted upon the individual's self-responsible behavior alone. It simply indicates that the individual self has certain specific species responsibilities to intervene and adopt appropriate strategies conducive to the larger practice of protecting life on earth in the time of big crisis.

At the foremost level this self-governing strategy to combat the risk is to look beyond the veil of common sense and subsequently rely upon the expertise knowledge which prescribes for home quarantine and physical distancing coupled with frequent hand washing, maintaining coughing etiquettes, basic cleanliness and hygiene. The panic of pandemic coupled with the strict administrative measures and media propaganda is primarily thought of as prime mover behind the adoption of strategies by self. However, the task is not so easy since it demands for changing the two most difficult things of everyday consciousness and daily habits. The things becomes more complicated as the time elapses and the panic of fear loses its stronghold over individual's mind and the overwhelming forces of old habits and lifestyles regain its power of assertiveness to breakdown the rules of crisis. Consequently it may leads to the considerable failure of the basic combating strategies of self to stay at homes. In the context of India it sounds far worse where daily bread earners and homeless people have to pay the huge price for physical distancing and remaining in physical isolation if they are not adequately supplied victuals and resources needed for their family maintenance. However, in spite of the primary measures and in-home capabilities of a section of people the state initiative for keeping quarantine for long may often fail to penetrate the individuals to adopt combating strategies while bringing necessary changes in the pattern of self governance. However, the situation is grave and worsening day by day which demands to manage oneself at home while following other combating strategies at any cost for the sake of humanity. In this context taking clues from the earlier research the proposed study aims to uncover the critical components of functionality requires to adopt the best practices of physical distancing, health disciplines & etiquettes for the best outcome. The purpose is to develop a generic functional guideline for appropriate self governance for the different subset of population constructed on the basis of a matrix including age group, gender and occupation. In doing so, the study will take the necessary inputs particularly from the available examples of failure in managing self may be intended or unintended for different reasons to combat the very crisis of survival.

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