7th April, 2021

To,
Shri Narendra Modi Ji,
Prime Minister of India,
Government of India.

Subject: Swift action needed to fight COVID-19

Respected Sir,

Greetings on the occasion of the World Health Day from Health Parliament – A Think Tank on Evidence-Based Policymaking.

You have given the world, the biggest health insurance scheme – PM-JAY. You have done things which have raised the stature of India before the world, and this gives us the confidence to believe that we will come out of COVID-19 should the message reach you.

Now, we are faced with a formidable challenge -with India recording an all-time high of 1.07 lac cases of COVID-19 in just 24 hours. We are sure you will rescue the nation with your decisive and innovative approach.

Last week, our founder and Chairman Prof. Rajendra Pratap Gupta wrote an article on 2nd April 2021 in Outlook (https://bit.ly/3sZxReC) and has submitted a few action points. We decided to write this note directly to you as this issue is time-critical, and every hour of delay would make the challenge bigger. I am reiterating the points mentioned in the article again for your kind consideration:

1. Vaccination should be based on 'Exposure' and not just on 'age' or 'co-morbidities. Those who are with the widest exposure like the house-helps, drivers, shop floor attendants, factory factors, security guards, public office workers, vendors, etc. should be accorded a high priority. Else, these 'super-spreaders' will heighten the risk of COVID-19. Senior citizens who are not working should be asked to stay at home, practice physical distancing and sanitation, and should be taken off the priority list and be put on the 'optional' list with immediate effect.

2. Vaccination should be made available for all 24 x 7 in association with the Private sector and mobile vaccination units maintaining a cold chain.

3. Instead of lockdown, we request that restriction on shop opening timings be lifted till COVID-19 is there. Lockdown creates an artificial barrier and a limitation, and people rush in the last hour to run errands, thereby exposing and infecting more people due to rush and congestion due to limited hours of operation for shops.

Hence, we submit that lockdown, night curfew, weekend curfew should be taken off from the strategy. On the contrary, let the markets and shopkeepers open 24x7, should they want to. Lockdown is something we cannot afford, and it will tear apart the economy and society, and crimes are bound to increase besides the drastic increase in the cases of COVID-19.

4.   Instead of halting trains and restricting other forms of public transport, increase the 'time' for halts so that people can comfortably alight and board the trains, metro, and locals. So that people don't brush past each other.

We believe that COVID-19 growing at the current pace may touch three to five lac cases a day, and our healthcare system is not in a position to cope up with such a high caseload, and this situation which can pose a serious challenge. Every hour right now is precious, it is about saving or losing lives and we need to have a robust and fool-proof plan to tackle this pandemic. We cannot afford to lose any time or any life. Right and timely communication coming from you will help compliance, and we hope that you will impress upon the Election Commission to cancel all political rallies given the seriousness of the situation.

We also requested that this is high time to have a dedicated Minister for State for Public Health and Digital Health.

COVID-19 is spreading, and the world is watching India's situation and our leadership to handle this moment of crisis. Out of box innovative ideas will save India.

We at Health Parliament wish to submit the above suggestions and request your kind self to consider the above.

We remain at your disposal for any further details or clarification and support.

Best regards,

Ms. Mevish P Vaishnav
For,
Health Parliament

CC:
Union Health Minister
Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman- NITI Aayog
Chief Minister of States
Chief Election Commissioner