



Science for Society

Science for Man

Science in Thinking

BREAKTHROUGH SCIENCE SOCIETY

All India Committee

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A Voluntary Organization Committed to the Cause of Science, Culture and Scientific Outlook

To
The Prime Minister of India

30 April 2021

Dear Sir,

At the onset of the pandemic in India, we had sent a letter dated 20 March 2020 to the President of India, in which we suggested a few concrete steps that the government should take to avoid a catastrophe. Subsequently, another letter, reflecting similar concerns and expectations, signed by more than 600 scientists, was sent to you on 20 April 2020 by the March for Science Organizing Committee.

These letters, among other measures, suggested the creation of an adequate number of COVID beds using the facilities available in government and private hospitals and health centres in the state, district, and subdivision levels; turning all stadiums and similar public facilities into COVID hospitals; creating facilities to conduct RT-PCR tests on a very large scale; quickly recruiting educated unemployed people to serve as COVID warriors and training them; creating facilities to produce adequate supplies of oxygen, ventilators, PPE kits, and required medicines on a war footing, conducting genomic sequencing of the virus on a large scale to obtain region-specific information about the mutants affecting Indian population; and providing food and essential commodities to daily wage labourers and poor people to enable them to stay home. We also suggested that the government raise the necessary financial resources for the above measures by taxing the super-rich and pooling the CSR funds and the PMCare fund.

We found the government not paying the slightest heed to these suggestions to bring the Covid-19 pandemic under control. Many other scientists, medical experts, and science and medical bodies and concerned citizens have repeatedly echoed the necessity of the above measures.

The country now finds itself in the grip of a second wave of COVID-19, deadlier and much more severe than the first spell. With the present crisis in the availability of oxygen for the patients who need them most, we see more deaths because of the government's negligence than the ravages of the virus—scenes of queues waiting outside hospitals, bodies stacked outside. There is severe shortage of space in cemeteries and corpses of COVID victims being burnt en masse in some states, scenes that are viewed on social media across the world.

In this situation, we again urge you to take up the unfulfilled measures suggested in the two letters mentioned above and attached with this present letter, as well as act on suggestions given below on a war footing.

1. Take effective steps to manage the oxygen produced and the logistics of distribution so that there will be no shortage of medical oxygen to any patient in any treatment facility, government and private. Use the oxygen plants available in many industries to produce medical oxygen to tide over the crisis. Set up new production facilities urgently in states and areas that most need them. Together with the oxygen, ensure the availability of appropriate cylinders, regulators, etc.
2. Increase the number of vaccine production facilities and provide them with adequate financial support and purchase guarantee so that the country does not suffer from vaccine shortage. Vaccines should be provided free to all people, with the government subsidising the actual costs that the hospitals, government or private, would incur.
3. Take strict action against hoarding of vaccines, oxygen and any medicines needed for the treatment of Covid-19.
4. If gatherings are permitted, they should be limited to a stipulated number. It is to be seen by the concerned authorities that COVID protocols are strictly followed, including keeping track of those attending the gathering. Enforce wearing masks and physical distancing in all public places without exception, starting with all political leaders and government functionaries.
5. The government itself and politicians must desist from creating situations where people gather in large numbers, making it challenging to follow COVID safety protocols. That will enhance the risk of the uncontrolled spread of this second wave of the coronavirus.
6. Strictly deal with the practice of promoting fake drugs as medicines for COVID.

Thanking you,

Truly yours,

Dhrubajyoti Mukhopadhyay
President

Soumitro Banerjee
General Secretary