



Where the mind is without fear, and the head is held high.

**Learning to be resilient & staying strong
in a world affected by Covid 19.**

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Article courtesy - Drshtikon Talks

One day around the first week of March 2020, the world changed, forever! What had seemed like a mysterious illness, which had been springing up in and around Wuhan, China – took on a shape and size of terrifying proportions, and quickly grew to a global pandemic, wreaking havoc on the world, impacting health and the economy as no event had, in the last over 100 years.

The facts

As of 10th July 2020, Global count - over 12.5M affected, with over 560,000 dead.

US, the highest at over 3.2M cases and India in the top 5 at 820K+ cases & deaths, rapidly mounting, every day – the curve is yet to flatten, except in a rare few

countries like New Zealand, Taiwan, Vietnam and others.

The impact, so far

In a matter of 16 weeks, the Covid pandemic has taken an unprecedented toll – over 30% of organized jobs, worldwide - evaporated as both the Manufacturing & Services sector were struck by the double blow of a Demand and Supply shock. Tens of millions of daily/weekly wage temporary & self-employed workers were impacted as their livelihood came under risk as their businesses or the merchants, they worked for, were impacted.

Industries like Airlines, Travel, Hospitality, Construction, Retail & Restaurants – which employ millions of people were brought to

a grinding halt – with all forms of lockdowns being imposed on travel and movement, worldwide, millions of global citizens were forced to hunker down and shelter in place – away from their homes & families – the suddenness and the urgency of the action – in some cases, resulted in 3 day visits being converted into 3 month stays.

In India and much of the world, the most affected were the most under privileged, the guest workers – millions of them, who had moved from their villages and home towns to urban cities, in search of employment, staying in rented, modest accommodation, sending home, most of their savings, and living on a day to day basis, with their hard work. As their employers shut down, the wages stopped, the rents and living

expenses continued and that resulted in a deepening tragedy – of guest workers, desperately seeking to return to their home base & families, struggling to find any form of transport – opting to walk, cycle, beg – borrow to get rides back on any form of transport. This was one of the largest reverse migration in modern times – resulting in heart rending stories of suffering and death.

Governments via central banks across US, UK, Europe & Asia have pumped in Trillions of Dollars of liquidity into the system, to keep the wheels of business afloat, to support large and small business in retaining jobs and to ensure that the financial system does to grind to a halt and collapse.

Global and State agencies across the world, have also sparked a concerted effort, working in tandem with public health agencies, NGOs and philanthropists – to understand the “Covid beast” and to decipher its mysteries, to start working on a possible treatment and a vaccine, which will be needed to be administered to the entire global population of close to 6.5B in the next few months/years.

As the Covid pandemic began to spread, amidst the lockdown across most of the world, the heroes of the Covid world emerged, at the front line - bravely fighting this terrible scourge – the Doctors, the Health workers, the sanitation and community teams, the police and administration and the govt and private hospitals all across, stood shoulder to shoulder, risking their lives, working around the clock, to deal with the unending flow of cases, the demand for Intensive care and the most tragic, dealing with the thousands of deaths occurring every day, patients passing, in absence of

their loved family members, alone due to quarantine requirements.



What do we know about the origins of Covid 19?

The jury is still out on tracing the source of the Covid 19 virus. The moot point, is this important? or should we be focused on a coordinated international “all hands” effort to contain and manage this terrible pandemic?

Yes, we need to understand the origins, and also reflect on the most important aspect & learning for the world – from super powers like US, China, Japan and Russia – to the weakest countries across the world – How could we, in the modern world of technology and “playing god” – manage to be so weak, in our preparation for dealing with this pandemic ? how could we be so fragile ? how could we have been so cavalier in our treatment of public health investment in bandwidth and preparation ? that we fell, so easily – and the world paid such a crushing price (and we do not know – how much pain is yet to play out)?

Path ahead – what should we expect?

As they say, in the movies – “we do not know, what we do not know” – and that remains as the greatest overhang factor.

Are we in the first wave of the Covid infection spread? Is this the second wave? Will the potency of this virus weaken by itself? Did our global lockdowns help nations to strengthen their preparedness to deal with the millions of affected as they flooded the hospitals and ICUs, many of them, needing ICU / Ventilator support? Why was the fatality rate, much higher

in some countries? How did the social customs across different nations affect the most vulnerable, the silver living geriatric population, many of them, living in nursing homes, away from their families.

As countries and major cities re open – torn between the need to control the spread of Covid 19 on the one side, and the effort to revive the economy and businesses/employment on the other – the multi trillion dollar question swirling around is – will we see a U, V, L, W or a Z shape recovery ahead ?

The media and the experts are working at parsing through history/data points and a variety of signals to try and predict, but who knows? This is just one more grim reminder to the Human race – that Nature reigns supreme and while broadly benign, remains far above, any form of human challenge to tinker/damage/affect or to establish superiority over nature.

Like the laws of Nature, so in the world today, several industries have been grievously impacted, and several others have been catapulted into the limelight, growing at a blazing pace, as the world’s greatest social change management “experiment” plays out.



It is possible that the Bharat – the agri economy in India could benefit from multiple factors in the months and years ahead – policy changes in favor of higher prices to farmers via cutting down the middle men in the value chain, the sector could also gain from the availability of labor, which returned from the cities and some of whom, it is hoped will find gainful employment close to home.

“10 years of change has taken place in 10 weeks”. A leading hospital moved from 20 online consultations to 80,000 online consultations per day. A Tech averse judicial system, in India – moved with alacrity to Video conference-based hearings across the Courts, with judges and lawyers, adjusting to this new reality. Schools and colleges moved classes online, with educationists and teachers adapting to new models of online delivery.

The world, in its new “low touch & contact less” avatar has moved significantly online – Ecommerce, Retail, Education, Entertainment, Healthcare et al – The world moved in a few weeks moved to “Work from anywhere model” – managers who would frown at requests from team members – seeking a couple of days of work from home – have needed to live with a reality of 90% + of their teams, working from home – and not missing a beat, in the bargain. These are foundational changes, in the way, we live and work – it is possible that urbanization will go through a transformation – many knowledge workers, can now opt to “work from anywhere – even their hometown” – being close to their parents/grandparents, and working for global employers. The new skills needed to succeed in this world, will have a disproportionate focus on communication skills – both oral, and more importantly written – as face time and in person meetings, yield to online – from internships to onboarding every level, including CEOs to exit interviews – the full life cycle, now taking place in the virtual world. These changes, also have several adverse implications – they affect the most under privileged the most – a majority of blue collar and day wage workers are engaged in work, which does not allow them to work from the protection of home shelter, most students from the economically weak

sections of society, may not have access to expensive devices and high speed bandwidth to participate in the digital classroom. These folks, globally, have also been the most affected as their homes/dwellings rarely allowed them the luxury of social distancing, while sheltering at home, leading to a disproportionately high infection rates and thereby fatality rates also. *The people with the means, need to work towards building a more inclusive future, supporting models, which can bridge such disparities.*

A World Economic Forum (WEF) survey during June 2020 – reveals a comprehensive view of the nature of the risks ahead for the world, this is based on a crowdsourced opinion of over 300 global risk analysts.

It is interesting to also note that a contradiction seems to be playing out across the global financial markets – in terms of the stock markets – most mature global markets took a dive – losing 30 to 50% of market capitalization during March, only to spring back to near pre Covid levels by June 30, 2020 and some markets have hit new highs – the classic struggle between greed and fear continues to confound most market pundits.

Call to action – what should we prepare for ?

This is the new world ! When 10 years of change, happens in 10 weeks, this is a shakedown of unbelievable proportions – we will have to be alert to the changes and the fundamental tenet of Evolution kicks in – “the survival of the fittest” – those who can adapt to the changes, can survive and thrive, those who cannot, will be impacted.

For youngsters, who are in the first phase of life, the need is to acquire new skills, adapt to new learning models, build curiosity, and be prepared to quickly use new tools and technology.

For professionals, entrepreneurs, and administrators, the need is to be able to unlearn and relearn, be agile, and to be receptive to change. New equations around capability, positions, and compensation, will be driven and weighted, far more towards value and contribution.

Entrepreneurs/businesses will need to focus on embracing Digital, using hybrid sales channels – online & offline, new supply chains, delivering enduring value and delight to their customers. Businesses will have to learn to be more inclusive and build a work force which is taken care of, in ways which will ensure that they are fairly paid, provided support around housing and healthcare and social security – the time for the producers to be provided a fairer share has come.

For the seniors, a much higher focus on preserving good health during these difficult times, ensuring that the right insurance coverage has been taken to deal with contingencies. The steep drop-in interest rates, worldwide, are affecting the returns on retirement savings substantially. This is a time to take advice from professionals and re balance the portfolios to preserve capital, while seeking returns which can beat inflation. High quality stocks, Bank bonds and an allocation to gold in the portfolio may also be warranted.



In conclusion - Immunity, Frugality & Agility

We can all gain by focusing on building up an approach of Immunity, Frugality and Agility.

Covid 19, could be the first of many pandemics, which may hit us in the future – the most affected are those who have co morbidities, whose immunity is low – we need to be disciplined, moderate and take care of our most valuable asset – our health.

In life or profession or business, the focus needs to be on profitable growth – scaling, while managing costs entails a *strong understanding of the financial levers and living with dignified frugality*. Conscious consumption is the future.

Agility is the key attribute in a VUCA world – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. Stay light on your feet, pivot as needed, be curious, keep learning ! I quote an extract from an inspiring poem by the late William Ernest Henley “Invictus” which Mr. Nelson Mandela is reported to have drawn strength from during his 27-year imprisonment.

Invictus’ is Latin for ‘unconquerable’. Henley wrote this poem about stoicism, courage and refusing to accept defeat while enduring a severely testing time in hospital.



**It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.**

This applies beautifully to the situation faced by the world today – The night will end, we have to stay strong !



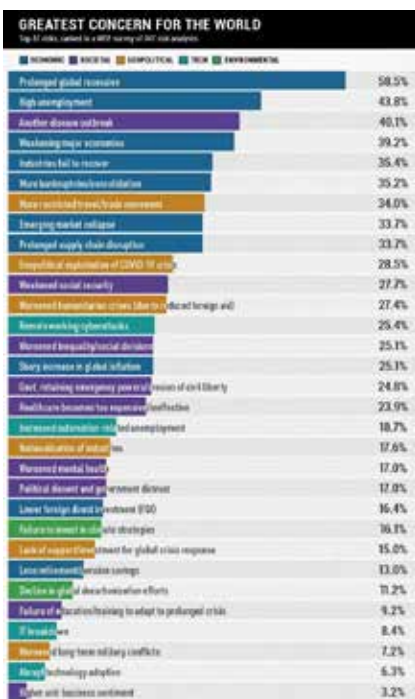
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Go North is an angel investment and advisory firm, focused on investing in & mentoring Startups. It also provides Strategy inputs to high growth Early stage companies and SMB's moving to their next orbit.

Sanjay, an active member of the Indian Angel Network, the premier national group of Angel Investors – has investments in startups across the Healthcare, Education, Impact, Consumer and FinTech sectors.

A Charter member at TiE, Hyderabad (The Indus Entrepreneurs), he is also a member of the Executive Council at the IIIT Hyderabad Foundation and an independent Director on the board of Unimed Health (Star Hospitals). A TEDx speaker, he has covered new perspectives around Startups & Finance for Women.



Drshstikon Talks

Talks/Webinars by acclaimed Bhatia personalities

“The recent Covid pandemic in the country has brought about social-distancing and ensured that we all cannot get together. There are also restrictions on travel and all these may apply for the next few months. Should we let this dampen our enthusiasm? Should we let this restrict our interaction? Hinder our quest for knowledge? Definitely not ! Let's start doing things a bit differently”. These were the thoughts behind starting “Drshstikon”.

Drshstikon – a point of View, an outlook, a perspective, an approach... The Core Team of Drshstikon - Rajen Jesrani, Dhaval Bhatia and Prashant Morparia, all from Hyderabad, decided to take the cyber-route to connect the community across the world for sharing knowledge, opinions and success stories, through the medium of Webinars.

The aim of Drshstikon Talks :

1. Sharing Views and Experiences by acclaimed Bhatia Personalities
2. Expand Horizons – Knowledge, Information, Strategy
3. Easily accessible to All



For any other information on Drshstikon, you can write to drshstikon.talks@gmail.com