

Lockdown-4: Impact of Lockdown on COVID-19 Scenario in India

Dear Editor

It has been nearly 2 months since India has announced lockdown, owing to the rising number of COVID-19 cases across the country; on 24th March 2020, the Government of India ordered a nationwide lockdown-1 for 21 days, limiting movement of the entire 1.3 billion population of India as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic in India. On 14th April 2020, extended the nationwide lockdown-2 till 3rd May 2020; on 1st May 2020, the Government of India further extended the lockdown-3 period to 2 weeks beyond 4th May 2020, with some relaxations; and on 17th May, lockdown-4 was further extended till 31st May 2020 by NDMA. District wise geographical areas were classified during lockdown phase as containment zone, buffer zone, red zone, orange zone, and green zone. A containment zone is defined as a geographic area, where the disease is contained by early detection, breaking the chain of transmission, and thus preventing its spread to new areas; buffer zone is the area which located near to containment zone, wherein additional and focused attention is needed to ensure that infection does not spread to adjoining areas; red zones contain high COVID-19 cases and high doubling rate; orange zones contain comparatively fewer cases; and green zones contain any cases in the past 21 days.

Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Centre noted that the lockdown had slowed growth rate of pandemic in India as of 6th April 2020, with cases doubling every 6 days instead of 4 days, and by 18th April 2020, to a rate of doubling every 8 days. Toward the end of the initial period of lockdown, the rate of growth of COVID-19 infections in India had significantly slowed, from a rate of doubling every 3 days prior to the lockdown and at its highest, India's R0 was estimated at 4 on 23rd March 2020 by ICMR. The R-Naught or R0 estimates that the infection rate in India has fallen to 1.55 on 11th April 2020 from 1.83 on 6th April 2020, indicating that the restrictions imposed under the 3-week hard lockdown could be helping. Indian government was assuming the lakhs of cases without the lockdown, it would have been an uncontrollable scenario. Although the Tablighi Jamaat event and migrant workers derailed the containment to some extent, the country continues to have benefited greatly from the lockdown. The growth rate has shown an encouraging decline since the lockdown but COVID-19 cases are raising daily as shown on Aarogya Setu App 19th May

2020, a total of 101139 active cases, 39174 cured/discharged and 3163 deaths have been reported.

If the Government of India had implemented social distancing without any exemption in a hard way through Lockdowns-2 and 3, then lockdown-4 would not be necessary. It is expected/ believed that the implementation of hard lockdown 4 and social distancing without any exemption, active search for COVID 19 cases through physical door to door surveillance by peripheral health workers in all types of classified zone areas, may prohibit the Government of India from extending the lockdown after May 31, 2020.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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