

We Hear From

Samir Ghosh

COVID-19: Social Distancing[†]

I have been asked to deliver the Prof. Dr. Murali Mohan Biswas Memorial Lecture. I could never imagine that I would be delivering Memorial Lecture on our Muralida whom I knew since 1965 when he was a research scholar at Cosmic Ray Laboratory of Presidency College. Since then till his death we were closely associated. Even when he was at Max Planck Institute at Heidelberg, I was at Max Planck Institute at Frankfurt. Throughout my life he was a real friend, philosopher and guide to me. He was the perfect embodiment of all the best human qualities possible in a man. He was the apostle of truth and the living example & follower of Indian ideal 'simple living and high thinking'. He never compromised with anything which he thought wrong and that at any cost.

His family hails from Joyrambati and next door neighbor of Ma Sarada's residence and has gifted all his belongings there to Mission. True disciple of Ramakrishna Culture, he is no more present among us which a great personal loss to me.

The name of the journal Indian Science Cruiser was his selection and his idea was to foster the current problems of the time. Hence I choose the most important problem of novel corona infection. I am neither a clinician nor an expert of the medical approach to this problem. But I only want to concentrate on the social aspect of this problem.

I have just come out of the corona +ve infection and know not how far Justice I can make in dealing with this aspect. Social distancing as suggested by the authorities seems somewhat an imagination for the cities like Kolkata, where population density is 24000 people per sq.km. Can

we expect to maintain 6 ft. minimum distances amongst ourselves?

Our world has already experienced number of pandemics and epidemics over many many centuries. The last pandemic of Spanish flu took a toll of 1% of world population and we know not what percentage the present Covid 19 would take. But the question is whether there is a remedy. The present suggestion from the top experts like Dr. Fuei is if even the vaccine is found out in a couple of years that may reduce the infection to 50 to 60% at Max. What remain else is to acquire hard immunity which amount to creation of Antibodies in all people by exposing them to this virus in controlled ways. What happens to street dwellers sleep in the footpaths of the cities with all the dearth and infection all around and they do not get ill easily. Similarly we would have to fight this virus with all our efforts. Simply speaking we would have to face this boldly whatever may be the risk. Simply speaking we cannot avoid this. Right precaution we would have to take of course, as far as possible. The world show will go on. In fear of corona infection people cannot give up their all activities. They will have to earn to feed themselves and their families at any cost. Manufacturing must be continued. Agriculture must go on as usual; business must start which has come to a standstill.

We are not only suffering from pandemic but the whole world is in a pandemonium. No respect

For human being, whole world is controlled by a few autocrats. No control on environment. Human greed is the only criterion.

[†]Based on the 4th Dr. Murali Mohan Biswas Memorial Lecture-2020

The most inhuman, brutal and unplanned lockdown on 25th March in 4 hrs. Notice thrown out 52 lakh migrant workers, out of them job and shelter who has to walk through thousands of kilometers to their villages without any food. On the other hand they were tortured all along the routes. This one action has sent the corona infection even to farthest corners of this country.

This is to that we have faced in our country and now people realize that they use to take care of themselves with no help from authorities. Hence they must venture out ways to keep them living at any cost. This is like going toward field with all risks. Whatever we come, we will have to curve out a living for us.

At the very beginning I told you that I cannot and not entitled to speak about the medical aspect of this disastrous worldwide problem of Covid 19 virus. Only the social aspect can be dealt with here. And this is the real social problem. I usually do not like to deliver lecture proposed but I like to speak extempore and when there is interaction with audience, which I am very much missing here.

As I mentioned before we still do not know what a toll this Covid 19 along with its mutations will ultimately take. We have no idea of the world population of 700 billion how many would ultimately survive the onslaught of this virus. But this may be noticed even if half of the world population is destroyed, till the world will go on.

In this respect I cannot but quote a few words from our mythology. In the eleventh chapter of the Gita on Biswaroopdarshan Episode, Lord Krishna mentions, আমি লোকক্ষয়কারী প্রবৃন্দ কাল এবং এই সমস্ত লোক সংহার করতে এক্ষণে প্রবৃত্ত হয়েছি। ধৃতরাষ্ট্রের পুত্রেরা, তাদের মিত্র সমস্ত রাজন্যবর্গ এবং ভীষ্ম, দ্রোণ, কর্ণ এবং আমাদের পক্ষের সমস্ত সৈন্যেরা তোমার করাল দস্তবিশিষ্ট মুখের মধ্যে দ্রুতবেগে প্রবেশ করছে এবং সেই দস্তমধ্যে বিলগ্ন হয়ে তাদের মস্তক চূর্ণিত হচ্ছে। নদীসমূহ যেমন সমুদ্রাভিমুখে প্রবাহিত হয়ে সমুদ্রে প্রবেশ করে, তেমনই নরলোকের বীরগণ তোমার জ্বলন্ত মুখবিবরে প্রবেশ করছে। পতঙ্গগণ যেমন দ্রুত গতিতে ধাবিত হয়ে মরণের জন্য জ্বলন্ত অগ্নিতে প্রবেশ করে, তেমনই এই লোকেরাও মৃত্যুর জন্য অতি বেগে তোমার মুখবিবরে প্রবেশ করেছে। হে বিষ্ম! তুমি তোমার জ্বলন্ত মুখসমূহের দ্বারা সকল লোককে গ্রাস করছ এবং তোমার তেজোরশির দ্বারা সমগ্র জগৎকে আবৃত করে সন্তপ্ত করছ। (The sons of Dhritarashtra, their allies, all the

kingdoms, and Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and all the soldiers on our side, are rushing into your gritted teeth and crushing their heads. Just as the rivers flow towards the sea and enter the sea, so the heroes of mankind are entering your burning mouth. Just as insects rush into the blazing fire to die, so these people are rushing into your mouth to die. O Vishnu! You swallow up all people with your burning faces and cover the whole world with your energy.)

This is the real pandemic of today in the world, whole world has forgotten the human ethics, and people are not treated as the creation of Almighty. Whole world is only full of greed and jealousy. No care for environment. As far as global warming is concerned only long seminars and discussion were held, nothing fruitful came out. All were sacrificed at the greed of us the brutes. Once Gandhiji said World has enough to meet the need of the population but not to satisfy this greed.

Regarding the intermittent lockdowns declared by the authorities the idea behind this is beyond my comprehension. Of course, I am not excepted to understand everything.

Hence we are sure whatever may happen the world will go on. Even with much reduced population over the whole world, another society will come up and with time we would forget the present mishaps.

Perhaps we would not be able to leave a rosy picture for our progeny but still the world would exert and a new society would come up. My respected audience please let us remember over billions of years earth has experienced great disastrous but ultimately overcome these all. Social distancing as suggested now-a-days means nothing but annihilation of societies. This would never happen. God's creation human being would be there in their new societies.

Perhaps I have not been able to do justice to this memorial lecture and I may kindly be excused for that.

After all said and done now let us think about the future. Is it really so that all is going to end. After so many disastrous events the world has witnessed over billions of years, still the world exists. From the age of Nandekrats human beings do exist.

About the fantastic idea of social distancing which America with a population of only 36 crores could not do properly and with their population density of 2700 persons per sq.mile, how do we in

India aim to achieve the same with a population of 130 crores and in cities like Kolkata with the population density of 24000 persons per sq.km. Will any mathematician calculate out the space required for maintaining 6 ft distance in between. Even the sky won't be able to accommodate.

But let us now look to the future. Perhaps we may die; new human civilization will again come up among the persons who may survive the onslaught of this corona attack. Even if the toll may be more than 50% of 700 billion persons, but still there is hope.

New society would come up with the remaining. That society may be different but would still exist. This would go on till the Sun becomes cold spending out all its energy and that would be in astronomical scale.

Resurrection is the rule, something end, but future generation appears and again I hope the world show will go on.

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Founder Member, ISEC

(A friend of Late Professor Murali M Biswas)

Gautam Kumar Das

Tropical Cyclone Naming - New List (2020)

People have a great curiosity about naming of Amphan on that very day when the Super Cyclone Amphan devastated West Bengal and Bangladesh. They asked whether the name of cyclones is a social customs that differ from one country to another or it is simply customary to a country. In reply to their queries, after wandering in quest of truth, it is to be stated that the Super Cyclone Amphan is the last name from the original naming list published in 2004. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) in their 27th session held in 2000, approved to assign names to the tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. The practice of naming tropical cyclones helps in quick identification of storms in alarming both the administrations and the people of the affected areas because names are supposed to be easier to remember than any technical terms or numbers. Tropical cyclones are named by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) within North Indian Ocean between 45^oE and 100^oE when they are judged to have intensified into cyclonic storms with 3-minutes sustained wind speeds of at least 34 knots (63 km/h). Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand are the part of panel for naming in 2000, later in 2018, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE

and Yemen are added to the list for naming of the tropical cyclones. In 20 May, 2020, the naming of cyclone Amphan exhausted the original list of names established in 2004. A fresh list of names has been prepared and will be used in alphabetical order for cyclonic storms after Amphan. Nisarga is the first name from the new naming list published in 2020. The current list has a total of 169 names including 13 names each from 13 WMO/ESCAP member countries. The proposed names should be neutral to politics and political figures, religious believes, culture, gender, sentiments of any group of population over globe, rude or cruel in nature and it should be short and easy for pronunciation. Nisarga, brewing from the Arabian Sea and devastated Maharashtra on 3rd June, means nature is termed by Bangladesh in the new list of naming cyclones. The name is accorded in a list formulated by a group of countries. After blowing of the Super Cyclone Amphan on 20 May, 2020, Nisarga is picked up for the cyclonic storm. For the ground level work of naming cyclones, in the recent year, Dr. Mrityunjay Mahapatra, Director General of India Meteorological Department (IMD) acts as a Rapporteur to coordinate among the panel member countries and to finalize the list of names following standard procedures and suggest the implementation plan. The report of the Rapporteur was initially presented by India
