

‘Yoga’kshemam

Coronavirus situation continues to become graver. About 3 million infected, 200,000 died globally. India is slower, with 25,000+ infections, 800+ deaths. Many may remain unreported/uncounted. Scare is no longer with first infections. Scare is with second rounds. Scare is with crumbling lives and livelihoods for many amongst us, till vaccines come, clear medical solutions emerge, migrants settle and find some balance, hope. This is for a third of the world. For a half of India. This VUCA world becomes VUCA² world. Here life is more important than anything else. Rs.7500 per capita/month, for 3 months, as living stipend may be easily possible. i.e. a mere 50% of the budget of the year. Let us live. Let us be happy living. All of us. In sync with nature. A new portfolio of virtuous cycles have to be initiated, to build resilience against our fragility. Natural. Local. Small, Micro, Nano, Pico. E-friendly. E-ways. K-ways. Life ways.

My friend, Leesa reminded me: Master’s Plan. We got many chances. One more chance. “...To look at things afresh. Not to be prejudiced or arrogant. But, to be loving and humble. ... Many a time, I think it takes more than a life time to learn these. I will enjoy and cherish every moment of it. ... for making me a better person.....”

Towards truth, light, and life

Let us, all of us, go towards truth, light, and life.
Let us repurpose. Let us hear, see, feel experience

truth, light and life. Universe, World, Nature. Its ways, diversity, and variety. In situ. Let us go around. A million km. A significant sample of people, locations, macro-micro. Individually and collectively. May be in six layers – 7500 million ... 100 million active families (5%) ... 5 million deeksha takers (5% of 5%) ... 1 million learner-practitioners ... 25000 mentor-leader-entrepreneurs ... 250 lifeworkers.

We need many an enterprise that integrates and offers **LPRD Services**. Relevant to Poor, Vulnerable and Marginalized. It identifies, builds and links volunteer and consulting service providers to particularly small client organizations including Community Organizations, Grassroots Organizations, Support Organizations, Schools, Health Centres, Enterprises, and GPs and other PRIs. It may include individuals. Clients to enrol. Service Providers to enrol after pre-verification. Service providers, Resource Persons can be confirmed only after 3-6 months after active delivery of assignments. Some services may be free and some may be on cost. May be teleconsulting. Work from home consulting. Team consulting. Shared consulting. Piece by Piece consulting. E-consulting. Consulting with E-tools. Consulting with more locals, less/limited long-distance travel.

Service Areas include, but not limited to: Formation, Registration, Bye-laws, Articles, Trust Deeds, Governance, Setting up

‘institutions’, ‘enterprises’ etc., Visioning, Planning, Perspective Plans, Business Plans, Village Development Plans, Leadership, Management, Learning-Training-Capacity Building, Facilitating Implementation, Monitoring, Tracking, Assessment, HR Services, Proposals, Events, Rating-Grading, Documentation, Accounting, Audit, Annual Reports, Filing Returns, Statutory Compliances, Communication, Websites, Social Media, LEAPs, Value-chains, Tuitions, Coaching, Tests, Question Banks, Manuals. Primers, Videos, Material, Exposure visits, Selection, Apprenticeship, Internship, Performance Assessment etc. This list needs to be further expanded.

These Services to be enlisted, and mapped to service providers. Clients may have the option to choose. Web, Mobile Apps and Requests and payments form the core process elements. The Core Team may take responsibility for Linkage, Guarantee, Quality Control, Oversight and CB of Service Providers.

Life Matters. As I reflect on e-consulting service, a la Uber, RBI Governor, quotes projections of ‘Great Lockdown’ losses in the world in the vicinity of 10 trillion USD, greater than Great Depression. Indian growth may also turn negative this year. Crude oil rates are hovering near ‘zero’.

We do not know how the economy gets impacted by this. Globally, Economies are in vicious cycle. As the ‘vaccines and therapies’ are still away, virus ‘bouncing back’ in the individual, and resurfacing after a lull, and therefore W-curve(s) are discussed, the way forward is in local economies. Rural economies. Weather seems to be supporting. As the small and smaller enterprises, including self-employed, are hard hit, unemployment is rising. Transient poverty figures are increasing. They take longer to bounce back. And all may not. Governments’ ways and means limits have been raised significantly so that government can continue to spend in the wake of reduced inflows. To care the poor’s survival. To care the people’s health. In any case, business as usual does not happen, does not work.

As recent IMF’s Webinar indicated – We need to get ready for several lock downs as we go along, get ready for Rs.100 lakh Crore hit in India, and 20-30 Crore into poverty. India may and needs to attract capital; India needs to buy more oil and keep. People spend less, on less items, low-priced items; prefer safe retail. Small enterprises take time to get on tracks. We need to share the burden equitably. Customers may be ring-fenced. We have to focus on core and be frugal; and get future-centric. We see restructured entertainment, food, tourism, travel; low-cost small real estate; more work from home, e-work; rules for work away from office; new e-entities; e-economy acceleration; restructured value addition propositions; and hands-on leadership in the frontline. Gold may be preferred as an asset.

G Muralidhar

We need to balance saving lives without hitting the poor during lockdowns and 'distances'. About 15 Crore families (half of us) need stipends, may be Rs.5000/month, for 2 months, may be 3 months, in a tapering manner; ration to all who ask; and work, under MGNREGS soon. We need to care the migrants insitu, wherever they are. In the place of migration, in transit and at home. We need to localize the containment and open up all activities in a slow haste. Small local entities can open first. Travel has to happen, but with care. Working capital for these entities has to be made accessible. They may also need 2-3 month pay to workers as 'support grant'. We may have to reskill our workforce to new demands, options. All this may mean some 10-20% of the budgets of the union and state budgets. **Eminently affordable**, Budgets can be recast.

We are still optimistic that we get back soon. The soon may mean 100 days. Lockdown till May 3-7 (may get extended fully, or in containment zones), lifting of Lockdown may last 30-40 days, social distancing may have to last another 100 days. Early vaccines and therapies may come in September. Till then, we will be limping towards bouncing back. All this with the assumption that we weather these 100-200 days with discipline and rigour of 'distance' and 'washing' collectively. Flattened curve with stricter containment, coupled with increased health infrastructure, agility and worker 'experience and expertise', would take us forward with hope, faith, promise and love. For this to happen, we need to have clearly spelt out actions in the government policies and orders, with no space for imaginative interpretation; we need to involve all dealing with life systems, including civil society, local governments and community institutional architecture; we need to communitize responsibilities; we need to use volunteers and technology; we need to screen all, quarantine (28+ days) the suspected, test the ones with symptoms, and double test before 'release'; we need to provide 'nutritious' ration and survival stipends to poor; we need to be open about changing the course of actions, and guidelines; we need to have regular communication, using various channels; we need to keep women in lead; and we need to localize the 'issue'.

We need to understand Novel Coronavirus (severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2, SARS-CoV-2, causes Coronavirus Disease 19, COVID 19) more deeply. Spotted and reported in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, seems to be mutating fast. It may not give immunity to the ones who got infected and recovered once. It is getting reactivating too. It also appears asymptomatic in many a case. CoV2 particles are spherical and have mushroom-shaped glycoproteins (spikes). These spikes bind with ACE2 receptors and fuse to human cells, slowly moving into lungs. Its affinity to human cells is 10-20 times the affinity of SARS virus. Mutation and recombination is higher and faster. It spreads primarily through the respiratory droplets of infected people directly or through indirect surface contact. Old,

and people with pre-existing health conditions have higher infections and higher fatality rates. COVID-19 may present with mild, moderate, or severe illness; the latter includes severe pneumonia, ARDS [Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome], sepsis and septic shock. Bacterial co-infection is possible. Fever, cough, and breathlessness are the likely symptoms. Symptoms may present over 2-10 days after infection. The virus can be detected using reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction test (RT-PCR), a DNA-based test. There are 50+ labs in India for the same. SARS treatment is not effective against CoV2. There is no specific viral treatment procedure yet, except for symptomatic treatment. Anti-HIV drug combinations Lopinavir and Ritonavir are being tried, in case of high severity. Plasma and other treatment therapies are also being tried. Genome sequence-based and isolate-based vaccines are at various stages of development. Clinical trials have begun in a few cases.

Till such time, we get vaccines and therapies, we only have to reduce incidence of infections, and flatten the curve. We need to augment our health and medical capacity. We need to boost our generic immunity through nutritious food including fruits, citric acid et al. We need to identify the people who acquired silent hypoxia (reduced oxygen saturation in lungs, with/without COVID pneumonia), using pulse oximeters and treat without the need for ventilators. Handwash with soap, or alcohol-based hand rub, face mask, avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth, maintaining a distance (at least a metre) from the suspected/infected, and practicing respiratory hygiene (covering mouth and nose with bent elbow/tissue while coughing/sneezing, and disposing the tissue safely immediately) are critical in reducing incidence. The research so far suggests that CoV2 survives even at 60 deg C for a long time. Remember the helpline number 1075 in India. While we do all these, we need to keep poise and calm, and use the time available to invest in relationships that matter the most, and reflect on our ways forward. We know that virus mutates and hope that it mutates to our advantage.

We have **migrant workers** and their families – returned, returning, stayed back (stuck in migration sites). They need to survive this period. And after survival, some of them may not like to get back to migration sites. We need to rehabilitate them locally. In the migration sites, the works may have 'evolved' and require different skillsets. Survival support now, and immediately thereafter Skilling for and supporting self-employment and small enterprises in the new paradigm require our action. MGNREGS needs to be tailored to 'building themselves' through wages for the same.

Immediate. Let us feed all our Poor, Vulnerable and Marginalized. We have stocks. Let us shelter the transit migrants and homeless in the infrastructure, not used right now. Let us buy up the

G Muralidhar

produce from farmers in a big way. We need to let farmers do farming, farming food crops. Let us give work and pay wages to wage workers everywhere. Let us fully equip sanitation system including HR. Let us regularise sanitation, health and nutrition workers.

We need to augment **health** infrastructure and reduce health expenditure of people. About 100 million people move up and down the poverty line, because of this. COVID 19 and related economic distress may bring 400 million into poverty, albeit temporarily. We are going to see more of these. Our incursion into fragile ecosystems have triggered not just changes in climate but potential health disasters as wildlife-human contact increase the potential for the spread of infection, of viruses we know little or nothing about. Therefore, can we increase the government spend on health, can we double from the current 1.2-1.3% of GDP? If required, nationalize medical facilities, for a while. Can we establish eldercare (including palliative care) centres for 60/70+? Can we invest in '1000 days' fully, truly, equitably and universally?

As the lockdowns lift, as the economy receives stimulus to get back into action, we need to appreciate the possibilities of more such pandemics and disasters, more frequently. We need to appreciate **when the crunch comes, what matters most is life** - air, water, food-nutrition, shelter, entertainment and relationships. Nothing else matters. We need to get to the basics. We need to work on these life systems. We need to work on the major livelihoods – farming and related; weaving and related; and backward-forward linkage services and products.

Slowly, the farmers find it difficult to take their produce to the 'consumers'. Considerable crop goes waste. Ease restrictions on purchase from the farmer. Government may pick up the produce. And/or Government may finance the entire value-chain operations till the produce reaches the consumer through the community-producer organizations. E-NAM transactions and e-NWR transactions have to be facilitated in a big way. All this is for this Rabi harvest.

Criticality is to take farming in the direction of **regenerative agroecology**. Across. Universally. Over the next decade or so. Regenerative Agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services. Regenerative Agriculture aims to capture carbon in soil and aboveground biomass, reversing current global trends of atmospheric accumulation. At the same time, it offers increased yields, resilience to climate instability, and higher health and vitality for farming and ranching communities. The system draws from decades of scientific and applied research by the global communities of organic farming, agroecology, Holistic Management, and agroforestry. All land. All days. No fallow.

Integrated with birds and livestock.

Can we take this agroecology across the country, this year? A quarter of the states. A decile of districts. A 5% of the blocks. Can we work through Civil Society-Community Institutions architecture? Resource NGOs. National, Regional and State Networks and Coalitions. NRLM. SRLMs. SHGs. SHG Federations. FPOs. Can we build on them further? Can we build more of them? Can we work with consumers? Their institutions. Can we build custom models suitable macro-micro agri-eco zones? Can we build practitioners into resource persons quickly? Can we saturate model villages, panchayats? Can we initiate bio-villages? Can we establish direct producer-consumer linkages? Can we show significant portion of the consumer rupee goes to producer? Can we show improvements in health? Human health. Soil health. Water health. Can we show better productivity per unit of land, per unit of water? Can we show farm and related income of more than Rs.25,000 per month or Rs.300,000 per year really?

Currently, methane and nitrous oxide are two major Green House Gases from agriculture sector. Methane emission depends on anaerobic degradation of plant residues et al under submerged conditions. Rice-fish cultivation can lower the methane and other GHG emission. It also restores soils and soil fertility. It also offers 50%+ higher income. We get rice and fish to eat.

G Muralidhar

We work for co-culture systems overall. Multiple crops, Multi-layered cropping, intercropping and bund crops, integrated farming with birds and livestock including desi poultry, small ruminants – goat and sheep, livestock, ducks, pigs, bees (for honey), dairying, processing-value-addition-storage-transport, input enterprise, outlets, farming enterprise, collectivization, packing and packaging, small packs, branding, etc., form part of this effort. The idea is to work on a web of value-chains, and as much of the value-chain(s) as possible, and achieve higher proportion of consumer rupee.

We as consumers can finance farming at the beginning of the season. The farmers may pay back by the produce. Farmers also retain some produce for their consumption.

Other larger group is **weavers, crafts persons and related workers**. Can we pre-book orders? Can we have fund to finance the work? Can we have a medical fund? Can we provide essentials against future supplies by weavers? Can the state buy the stock? Does e-ways work for them? As the world goes frugal, we need to redesign our product lines. Silver lining is that handlooms seem to be part of the sustainable lifestyle. Meanwhile, as this restructuring happens, weavers and crafts persons need living stipends and ration.

It is time we work seriously on our **education** system. Particularly for 2-18 years, beyond '1000 days'. In the mother tongue surely. English medium can be an option. As the children grow, one can

go into English, may be at 11/12 yrs. Can we have universal, free education? Can we have our schooling budgets double up? Can we have Ashrams, Gurukulams, and Navodayas for all? Can we handover schooling management to local community? Can a student be worked upon to realize one's potential for 15 years, 35,000 hours, may be in 3-stages: warming up and foundation, 3R Skills – early childhood (10,000 hrs); Core and Life skills, 7R skills, competencies – pre-teens (10,000 hrs); Equipping for realizing the potential, seeing the world, work skills, practice – Teens (15,000 hrs). Can they devote 10,000 hours on must know, must see, must listen, must read and must try to read et al, by the time they take up responsible agenda? Will they take up responsible agenda? Can we and the state invest on them well? Finally, can each education participant devote dedicated 10,000+ hours to achieve mastery in something s/he is passionate about? Can they become and be human beings truly? Can the 'neck' of the funnel disappear? Can the rights to education, employment livelihood and life are equally and truly endowed to all? Can the high potential participants supported with care and nurtured to realize their potential?

Can we restore norms on maximum pay one can take, maximum interest one can earn, maximum surplus one can make? Can we take social responsibility seriously, linked to turnover? Can we insist for the same for the individual? Can we seek pay back? To society.

Can we work more on the ground? Can we seek at least Panch **Panches** [women and men, elders, young, farmers etc.), in every Panchayat or for every 500/1000 families. 10-20 million, and build them up as servant leaders – management workers – mentors – social entrepreneurs servicing 100-200 families on average? This may cost Rs.10,000 Crore/year, may be for 3 years. Can't we afford? Of course, they need to be selected with care, rigorous testing and competency and value screening, followed by assessment in internship/apprenticeship over 6-12 weeks.

We talk about **relief** on one hand and we talk about **rehabilitation and readjustment** on the other. Governments, Donors and People are pouring 'help' but the pot is huge. Funds are diverted and would be diverted to this in a big way. Budgets have to be recast. Civil Society and Community Institutions need to get together to form coalitions a la Rapid Community Response to COVID (RCRC). Many an organization has joined forces with RCRC. These include: AKRSPI, ABSSS, Arunodaya, CARD, DSC, FES, Goat Trust, Hartika, Harsha Trust, Ibtada, JSS, Kabil, Kaivalya, Keystone, Manjari,

Nirantar, PEDO, PRADAN, PRAYAS, SPS, Samarthan, SRIJAN, SesTA, Sir Syed, Trust Consulting, Unnati, WASSAN, WOTR et al. This list would increase. RCRC would work with migrants and support to Government's efforts. Philanthropies like Omdiyar Network are funding this under their Rapid Response Funding Initiative to serve the 'Next Billion' Indians. Many donors have articulated their commitment and are unveiling such initiatives. Quick back of the envelope calculations reveal some Rs.20,000 Crore is on the table. CSR Funds directed to this could be another Rs.20,000+ Crore. This is apart from PMCARES Fund and Funds of the CMs. These could easily reach Rs.50,000 Crore. Bi-laterals and Multi-laterals are also making commitments for India. They could easily touch Rs. 20,000 Crore. State sponsored stimulus can be another couple of lakh Crore Rupees.

All these directed funds reduce funding to existing LPRD programs. Here lies the catch and here lies the intelligence.

We need to sync post-COVID rehabilitation and readjustment agenda and LPRD agenda. We need to scale-up, deep, diverse and out. We need to showcase and mentor. We need to have more customized examples locally. We need networks, alliances, coalitions, movements and aandalans at various levels around the new paradigm(s) – Natural Farming – Farms and related; Weavers, Artisans, Crafts; Migrant Support; Health; Education; E-works, services, platforms; Self-employment and Enterprise Support; Leadership-Management-Mentoring et al.

Let us not forget children who own the future. Let us not forget PVM, the bulk of us. Let us demarginalize. Let us not forget inequity. Let us lose arrogance. Let us be humble, for we cannot afford anything else. Let our egos give way to co-existence, love. Let us reinforce hope. Let us have faith in the universe and its intelligence and its ability. Let us promise ourselves to be with the world in its healing and handing it over to her. Let us love and care ourselves and our world. Let us surrender fully. Let her take charge. Let her take us forward. Mentally. Emotionally. Physically. Spiritually. **Let us flow forward in N.** Else. She and her friends act decisively.

As N opens up, let us see her on the ground. Fields. People. Micro-sites. Let us listen her. People. Groups. Teams. Leaders. Workers on the ground. Let us touch. Smell. Taste. Feel. Intensely. Deeply. N shows the way, from within us.

Join us in the world of yoga – sat-chit-aanandayoga for 7L. We can co-exist flowing in N, else world exists without us. ❖

G Muralidhar