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Management lessons from COVID-19

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Opinion Article

(non-peer review content)

It has been six months since the first COVID-19 case hit in India and thereby it has been three months since the first lockdown was held in our nation. A global pandemic that shook the foundations of the superpowers like that of China, America, Italy, and many more developed nations. Who would have otherwise thought that a country as flourished as the USA will have to bear the far-reaching consequences, A country like Russia will give up in front of the invincible demon of their lives, such massive was its destruction. Irrespective of the location and the financial stability of the country, it messed up with the lives of people so easily.

Basically, it was a slap on the faces of the nations who thought that they are invincible and that nothing can harm them. The global pandemic rightly showcased the mirror right on their face; it highlighted the fallacies of the systems and made the superpowers realize that they aren't the boss people on earth.

Thankfully, our country has been able to tackle the situation quite well; to manage such a huge population was indeed the toughest task! Hats off to our medical staff who stood by us all the time, and made us realize that *"ache din aayenge"* (*good days will come by*)!

Well, as a Management enthusiast, I have looked for the lessons that we should take from this situation as we cannot have control over what is bound to happen, but with effective strategies, decision making and leadership we can surely combat any of the deadly situations and yes even the global pandemic! The idea behind this opinion article is actually to address some things that are so basic that in nature that we tend to forget or ignore their dynamic implication. So let's start and revisit our basics:

- **Together we can save the world:** Our dearest "Henry Fayol" gave us fourteen principles of management and one of them was "Espirit De Corps" the nations who thought that they are self-sufficient and can handle any situation on their own fall back to their own prey. Thus, one of the major lessons from the situation was to have the mutual feeling of empathy and to thereby help each other in the need of the hour. I believe that most of the countries did so for example: India exported USA Hydroxychloroquine and tried to help them from whatever they had.
- **The importance of contingency planning:** No matter how good and smooth things are going contingency plans are of utmost importance and essential to run a business as well as a nation. The external environment is immensely dynamic in nature and no matter how well the planning has been, an unlikely event can spoil the efforts and the moral of the institution. Many nations had a very tough time in dealing with the effects of the virus only because of the reason that they thought that demons and evil bodies are only a part of the children's

storybook. Little did they know that the lack of contingency planning can worsen the situation?

- **Leadership and control is the key:** Leadership has been quite the talk of the town lately, the social media is full of applauding for the remarkable leadership style of Prime minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern whose leadership style has helped the nation to be amongst the very few who have been able to gain a speedy recovery from the global pandemic. Thus time and again, it has been proved that leadership has always been the key to survival in the darkest of times. With effective leadership and fine control, the situations and problems are comparatively easy to tackle. As the main question that toggles every mind in such a situation is that: - “Okay, what to do now?” and this is exactly the legendary moment of truth when leadership skills are most tested.
- **Unity of direction:** COVID-19 situation was exactly the time when this very famous principle of “Unity of direction” had to be followed; those who are from a management background might have precisely understood the reason why I am saying so. Actually, the main reason why we all have at some extent failed to control the situation is that there have been discord and differences of what is to be prioritized. Those who looked out for money or economy in this gloomy time have witnessed a very bad situation while those who prioritized the lives of the people, their wellbeing has managed to survive so far. So it is therefore very important to have a single direction in which everyone is supposed to put their efforts into else the situations that have witnessed can get even worse in a few years down the line.
- **People first:** Out of the five major factors of production that are land, labor, capital, machinery, and men; “Men” has always been the toughest factor to manage. Everything can be bought, sold, or acquired but it is only men or the people that are to be mostly taken care of and supposedly it is we the people who were at the risk. No matter if you are the world’s largest economy or are the world’s largest exporter of many things, but if the arrangement of basic amenities is not proper then other things are of no use. So it is at first very important to put people first and work upon the basic healthcare facilities the most rather than being extravagant about other things.

Tough situations like these help us to draw inferences, and help us in the analysis that what better could have been done to get a better hold of the situation. Although some things are often quite off the hand, but the best we can do is to look for improvement and cooperation. Management is a discipline that is both an art as well as science and the basics should be applied in every possible outlook as it is always the basics that matter the most but are mostly overlooked in pandemic situations.