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# A Path of Bringing Positive Change in the Post-Covid-19 Era: Emphasis on Sustainable Environment and Growth in Economy

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## ABSTRACT

*The pandemic is a crisis that has affected every part of the world. The outbreak of virus has already caused unprecedented destructions of nature by human activity. Various webinars, articles, research papers has been published by focusing the problems faced during the crisis. As we are aware with the quote that “there is no use of talking about problems unless you talk about the solution for that”. Therefore leaders and experts around the world are calling for a profound systematic shift to more sustainable economy that focuses on both people and planet. The main aim of writing this article is to mention all those opportunities which we can carry in the post covid-19 era. We must ensure the lessons are learned during this pandemic should make us more sensible towards forming the policies for upcoming future as this pandemic has given a strong message to focus more about people and planet. Although we have seen significant challenges in the past few months therefore we need to grab these opportunities to get the country on the same track and make it more developed than before. We have discussed various constructive through which we can shift towards the sustainable economy system.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

As a result of this COVID 19 pandemic, India is sustaining an unparalleled crisis, with significant effect on **public health care, economic activities and social practices**. Though these are severe but temporary. What matters most about COVID-19, however, is not the virus itself, but that it may be a prelude to the future. Climate change, a challenge for ourselves, is about to turn into our time 's greatest crisis. More importantly, it exposes us to increased risk of physical and psychological health and its effect on the world economy due to unprecedented disasters. While the International Renewable Energy Agency reports the reduction in carbon annual emissions by 6-8%, it is temporary when we drive again the vehicle still emits the carbon hence even slight reduction in emissions would have no tangible

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impact on the global carbon concentration<sup>3</sup>. And yet, the healthy air, proliferate the citified fauna, and our drastic rapid change into a less carbon-intensive way of life demonstrate the scale of our accomplishment in just days. This must be adhered to as we pass through the two seas of COVID 19 and environment. Apart from climate change, the economy of the country is the worst affected. There is an unsettling calm across India as well as the world. As John F. Kennedy famously declared that **“The word crisis is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity<sup>4</sup>.”** One pivotal lesson to be learned from the COVID-19 crisis is that prevention is far preferable to any cure. We know that the environmental crisis won't stand by any longer; we must deal with it and the pandemic simultaneously. Now, a country seeking a \$5 trillion economy needs to relate its strategy and investment to the facet of sustainable growth<sup>5</sup>. Let's talk about solutions instead of discussing the problem.

## II. OPPORTUNITIES TO-PLAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The crisis offers an opportunity to oversee and rebuild the strategic environment and sustainable development as follows:

Achieving green energy goals: India intends to accomplish 175 GW of the sustainable power source by 2022<sup>6</sup>. India's 2022 goal is nearly halfway. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated 750MW power project in Rewa District of Madhya Pradesh<sup>7</sup>. The solar energy not only achieves green energy goals but also help in the achievement of self-reliant in energy, which is essential to 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. Solar energy is sure, pure and secure because the solar energy will never be depleted or exhausted and the sun is bound to shine forever and pure because they do not pollute the environment and to bring a massive reduction in import the government promoting manufacturing of batteries' PV cell and storage equipment, which is an assurance for solar energy. Sixty percent of Delhi Metro is

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<sup>3</sup> After the Covid-19 crisis, will we get a greener world? , <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/17/after-the-covid-19-crisis-will-we-get-a-greener> (Visited on July 24, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> “The word ‘CRISIS’ – In Chinese is composed of two characters, one represents danger, and the other represents opportunity”, <https://matthewmckinnonsite.com/2019/04/02/the-word-crisis-in-chinese-is-composed-of-two-characters-one-represents-danger-and-the-other-represents-opportunity/> (Visited on July 20, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> India Must Rebuild Its Economy Keeping a Green Focus, *available at*: <https://thewire.in/economy/india-must-rebuild-its-economy-keeping-a-green-focus> (Visited on July 24, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Transitioning India's Economy to Clean Energy, *available at*: <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/anjali-jaiswal/transitioning-indias-economy-clean-energy#:~:text=India%20plans%20to%20achieve%20175,to%20meeting%20its%202022%20target.> (Visited on July 24, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> The Hindu, “Sure power”, *The Hindu*, 13 July 2020, *available at* : <https://epaper.thehindu.com/> (last visited on 24 July 2020).

now operated by Madhya Pradesh Solar Power<sup>8</sup>. All these efforts will direct us toward green India.

India's Infrastructure needs a green boost- Over the years, Indian cities have experienced tremendous growth in infrastructure, but it ties up with a problem of air, water, and sound pollution because of haphazard planning and unplanned structure. Investments in building sustainable, resource-efficient, reliable green infrastructure, urban design, the greening of the local economy, efficient waste management are need of the hour. The green building should be mandated. According to the IFC, the building sector employs half of the electricity in heating and cooling activities, and lighting electrical power, which results for 28% of greenhouse gas emissions from these energy sources<sup>9</sup>. Investment in green buildings thus helps market players to manipulate upcoming menaces arising from the universal transformation to moderate level carbon and pollution free economies. The Indian Railway Finance Corporation Ltd (IRFC) has recently launched a Green Bond Fundraising Platform for Funding, Freight Corridor and Railway Electrification projects. India should also pursue the establishment of a Green Finance Organization for the country's renewable and green infrastructure projects<sup>10</sup>.

More digitalised work in the form of work from home, online conferences, webinars etc which is more economical as well as eco friendly.

Making Agriculture Climate-resilient and organic boost -Climate change is one of the most extreme challenges Indian agriculture is dealing today. Improved climate-smart agriculture techniques, acquisition of advanced technologies and zero budgeting techniques, investment in R&D and watershed management are therefore needed. And similarly, promotion of organic fertiliser farming, which improves soil texture, facilitates non-toxic food etc. Even the government has initiated under National Project on Management of soil health and Fertility, which, promote organic fertilizer by selling it at Rs.500/- per hectare, assistance is also available for an organic fertilizer under Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> 60% of Delhi metro now powered by solar energy from Madhya Pradesh, *available at*: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/06/05/delhi-metro-goes-solar> (last visited on 23 July 2020).

<sup>9</sup> IFC Report, *available at*: <https://mercomindia.com/an-estimated-24-7-trillion-investment-potential-green-buildings/> (Visited on July 24, 2020).

<sup>10</sup> India Must Rebuild Its Economy Keeping a Green Focus, *available at*: <https://thewire.in/economy/india-must-rebuild-its-economy-keeping-a-green-focus> (Visited on July 24, 2020).

<sup>11</sup> Support from Government, *available at*: <https://vikaspedia.in/agriculture/agri-inputs/bio-inputs/support-for-promotion-of-organic-fertilizers> (Visited on July 21, 2020).

The Need of a Green highway's – green highways are important to reduce the impact of air pollution, hence care should be taken while cutting or uprooting trees and wherever possible, trees should be translocated. Also, proper care should be taken not to harm wildlife.

Waste water Treatment – The effect of sewage on the environment as well as a human is hazardous. It needs to be properly treated before it can be disposed but due to leaking, flooding, it leads to the untreated sewage to enter rivers and other water resources leading for killing aquatic lives in the river.

Innovation in solid waste treatment - solid waste management is a significant problem in cities with high population density. India generates approx. 62 million tonnes of waste every year as per Press bureau of India. This waste not only deteriorate the environment but also affect human health due to the emission of carbon caused by burning these wastes. The legislation that regulates such as e-waste rules of 2011, plastic waste regulations of 2011 etc. is numerous; perhaps it is the most significant block in the successful implementation of one comprehensive legislation with a system of governing bodies<sup>12</sup>. In handling solid wastage and revamping policies according to changing lifestyle, civic bodies have to reshape their long-run insight. Community participation involve strong impact on efficient waste management system, need of an efficient route planning for waste pick-up system, strict regulation and encouraging the recycling of waste on a large scale to tackle the problem.

Terrace gardening for a green future- government and business alone cannot tackle growing environmental challenges. Civil society must be performing their responsibility at their own will. Terrace with gardens adds an essence of mother nature to the house. Helps in reducing pollution, hence “environment is no one's property to destroy; it's everyone's responsibility to protect”<sup>13</sup>.

### III. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMY

**Opportunities arising from Work from home:** Employees aren't the only ones benefiting from working from home; a company will benefit just as much from a remote worker. Telecommuting workers can limit absences, improve efficiency and save money. It is most common in the business sector because tech firms have the infrastructure to keep remote employees alive. Employers can hire the best employees without restricting.

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<sup>12</sup> How Can India's Waste Problem See a Systemic Change?, *available at:* <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/institutional-framework-implementing-solid-waste-management-india-macro-analysis> ( visited on July 24, 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Good reads, *available at:* <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/8482733-environment-is-no-one-s-property-to-destroy-it-s-everyone-s-responsibility> (Visited on July 22, 2020).

Professor Nick Bloom, from Stanford, performed a report to determine the benefits of operating from home. He found employees to be more successful, to get more done, to have worked longer hours, to have taken fewer breaks and to have used less sick days than their colleagues in the office. Such workers, too, were happier and left fewer than those who frequently went into the office. He projected the business would benefit on average, the company saved \$2000 per employee who worked from home.

**Opportunities arising by investing in Energy Technology and allowing “Made in India” for the growth of Economy:** The government is working through a plan to attract global companies in India to develop solar photovoltaic, lithium batteries, solar charging facilities and other advanced technology. The government is stepping up its research efforts in a wide range of areas including cooling, electricity mobility, smart grids and advanced energy production. India’s special innovation policy the funding is crucial for developing the energy technology. Across a number of initiatives, the government adopted a mission based approach areas as part of its climate change strategy, like air, water and energy.

India has also been a leader in a project technology and other multilateral collaborations, including the joint projects on IEA technologies. Recent years saw a marked rise in support for RD&D for clean energy, particularly as India is working may double its investments on project growth over five years. India can benefit from the alignment of RD&D objectives with broader energy policy objectives. The introduction of policy for RD& D will include an operational structure of specific ministry activities involving the management, execution, and financing of money to RD& D. It would also private and public actors to participate such an initiative will assist the effective collection of management of RD& D capital and would boost the country’s economy.<sup>14</sup>.

**At the heart of development, Public health can turn into an economic opportunity:** India certainly needs to invest a lot more on public health, not just on repaying the poor, which would inevitably yield temporary results. Preventing primary health, which relies on clean water, clean air, green spaces, adequate housing, drainage systems, etc., should be a priority. India could be a major vaccine manufacturing hub and could provide facilities and training to many developing countries, and set up R&D to detect and monitor these possible situations early on. At this point, the broad pharmaceutical base would also benefit and benefit if all steps are taken to reduce pollution. States must develop comprehensive public health strategies and

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<sup>14</sup> India 2020 Energy policy review, *available at:* <https://www.iea.org/reports/india-2020> (Visited on July 24, 2020).

equivalent services with investment in the growth of administrative infrastructure and human capital.

**Working towards Agriculture:** Social stability is of the utmost importance in times of crisis and is sustained through the cultivation and distribution of food grains. India in general, and some of the countries like Telangana in particular, have done very well in producing much-needed food grains. In the next year, there will be enough for all, at least, before the economy starts to recover. So, agriculture expenditure is crucial. India needs to focus on the Post-COVID agriculture market, but in different directions such as –

(a) organic farming to meet the increasing demand for quality food in urban areas. There is enough demand, but the government needs policies to encourage, approve and streamline efficient organic food markets. Citizens are prepared to pay a massive premium for organic products;

(b) steering subsidies for agricultural inputs;

(c) Emphasis on value-added and rural agri-processing industries to create jobs in rural areas and rising urban pressures. Sustainable agriculture should be at the core of the cycle and now mature and available solutions and technologies. India needs to adopt a clear policy and programmatic approach to exploit these methods.

**Lesser Reliance on China** India has plenty of sunshine during the year but without Chinese apparatus it can not be converted to grid electricity. Solar power parks rely on imports from China. Almost 80 percent of solar cells and modules used in India to use sunlight for electricity generation are imported from manufacturers in China, including Trina Solar, Jinko Solar and China Solar. Recently the last 8-10 years, low price Chinese imports have made Indian solar panel makers uncompetitive and forced many local players to shut down<sup>15</sup>. Besides these, China depends on a wide variety of industries, such as toys, furniture, computers, cars and white goods. Besides these, China depends on a wide variety of industries, like toys, furniture, computers, cars and white goods. If the government makes good long-term policies and leaves the execution to Indian firms, who are still supposed to finance the whole thing themselves, it is possible to have less reliance on China over time.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> India imported solar power equipment worth \$1,180 mn from China in Apr-Dec FY20, *available at:* <https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/renewable/india-imported-solar-power-equipment-worth-1180-mn-from-china-in-apr-dec-fy20/74493914> (Visited on July 24, 2020).

<sup>16</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-growing-economic-reliance-on-china-may-be-tough-to-break/articleshow/76742026.cms>

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Covid19 is a global catastrophe completely unprepared for by the world. But the world and India must draw some important lessons from this negative experience and make it a meaningful one. How the things can be turned into an economic opportunity in the upcoming future is the hot issue which is needed to be focused.

Let us hope that a new thought process will lead to improved policies and more stable economies and health systems that will enable us to emerge even stronger. The economy is not just numbers; it needs real change and social stability that's the biggest lesson from this Covid-19 debacle.

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