Psychological Plan Of Action To Combat The Impact Of Covid-19 By Frontline Police Workers Managing Lockdown In India

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Abstract
The lockdown to restrict the spread of COVID-19 has meant an increased workload for police officers for whom there is no 'work from home' option. An average shift runs from 12 to 14 hours but can go on for longer, and as part of COVID-19 duty, police officers are on the front lines of tackling the disease. In India the Police forces have played a major role in implementing social distancing, quarantine rules, sealing the hotspot areas and colonies, sealing the borders of states and districts. Despite huge and multiple challenges; India has been demonstrating unwavering commitment in its fight against the pandemic. The role of the Police force in containing the deadly pandemic cannot be overlooked. In view of the strictness laid by the policemen of the country, the results are very clear. In comparison, India has crossed the five-lakh tests-mark and found over 20,000 positive cases while, Italy had recorded one-lakh cases, United Kingdom 1.2 lakh cases, while the USA and Turkey recorded 80,000 cases each.

Keywords: Covid-19, Role of Police, Pandemic, World biggest lockdown.

Highlights
- The role of the Police force in maintaining the smooth functioning of the lockdown, keeping in mind the medical and other daily needs of the citizens of the country along with the strict law and order.
- In view of the strictness laid by the policemen the number of reported cases in country are less as compared to the USA, Italy, France, UK and Germany.
- The awareness program among public regarding preventive measures for COVID-19 infection.
- There is a positive attitude of public towards the real warriors in the fight against COVID-19, and the country will always remember their sacrifices

Introduction
On March 11, 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic and recommended aggressive action by all countries in the world, warning that most countries were

not prepared to handle the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (WHO, 2020a). Among all other measures taken one of the most important measures was social distancing, and quarantine measures, followed by directing people to wear masks in public places. In a country of 1.3 billion people, India's lockdown on all non-essential businesses is proving to be tough for almost everyone (Barkur et al., 2020). The lockdown to restrict the spread of COVID-19 has meant an increased workload for police officers for whom there is no 'work from home' option. In India the Police forces have played a major role in implementing social distancing, quarantine rules, sealing the hotspot areas and colonies, sealing the borders of states and districts. As of 12 June 2020 there are 2,97,535 cases in India, with 8,498 deaths. (WHO, 2020b)

How is the police helping in containing the spread?

From being strict, to sensitive, the Indian police are upholding its duties in every possible way. At times the authoritarian face of our police is forcing people to do squats, sit-ups, pushups, violently cane those who flout the restrictions, while police at various other places have also turned to draw chalk circles, on walkways, each two meters apart and ordering people to stand in them, while waiting in lines for essential services, like groceries, vegetables, and fruits, banking, etc. The various strategies employed by the police personnel have drawn both praise and criticism from the public (Barkur et al., 2020).

Indian police are using innovative methods to create awareness. Recently, a police constable in Madhya Pradesh's Indore dressed up as Yamraj (The Hindu God of Death**)**. He also made lockdown violators do sit-ups as punishment (Anon, 2020a).

In Bengaluru, police utilized the power of street theatre to highlight the danger of the virus and breaking quarantine rules. Policemen from Ulsoor Traffic station wore Coronavirus shaped helmets and confronted bikers who were violating the lockdown norms. They stopped the bikes and transferred the helmet onto their heads, depicting how the virus spreads (Anon, 2020b).

In Chennai, the policemen adopted a new strategy. They intercepted violators who were roaming on their two-wheelers and made them wear masks that were cut out in the shape of the Coronavirus and hung placards around their neck (Anon, 2020c).

In a developing country like India, where poverty remains a serious concern, a major role of Police is also emerging in assuring the distribution of ration and food to the poor. The Police have also set up mobile patrol vans (MPVs) to assist people facing medical emergencies. This includes providing transport services to pregnant women, heart attack patients, or any other person in need of medical attention.(Anon, 2020d).

But at times policemen are also facing the anger of the mob. At some places of the country, a thousand-strong crowd suddenly starts pelting stones at the police and damages several vehicles and causing injuries to the cops (Anon, 2020e).

Though cops remain vulnerably exposed to rising COVID-19 infections, still they are guarding containment zones, enforcing the lockdown. Our policemen are also losing their lives to COVID-19 in serving the people of their country in the fight against the deadly virus. A senior police official from Punjab's Ludhiana, who had tested positive for the novel Coronavirus, died at a hospital due to multiple organ failure. A 59-year-old in charge of a police station in Ujjain died of COVID-19 on Tuesday morning while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Indore. He had

contracted the illness during the course of his duty (Anon, 2020f). These are just a few examples of what the cops are doing to protect the country from the viral illness.

The policemen are also sacrificing their family lives, as they are exposed to the illness, as they have to remain in isolation or quarantine from their family members, and kids. The WHO praised the Indian Government "timely and tough" decision to extend the Coronavirus lockdown across India.

Conclusion

India has been demonstrating unwavering commitment in its fight against the pandemic.The role of the Police force in containing the deadly pandemic cannot be overlooked. We truly acknowledge their role in maintaining the smooth functioning of the lockdown, keeping in mind the medical and other daily needs of the citizens of the country along with the strict law and order, which sometimes becomes necessary to handle certain conditions. We consider the cops of country, as the real warriors in the fight against COVID-19, and the country will always remember their sacrifices.

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