

# Impact of Changed Life Style on COVID-19 in India : Teachings of Sanathana Dharma (The eternal truth)

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## ABSTRACT

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COVID-19 has come as a sharp caution to humankind to introspect and rectify. With values on the decline and humans seeming to have lost empathy, one feels a need to recharge and reconnect. The Indian way of living has many scientific principles natural in it to fight infectious diseases. We follow the Sanatan Sanskriti thoughts traditionally, sometimes not even grasping the rationale behind it. This article tries to explore the correlation between the preventive measures and some of our traditional Sanatan practices. There is a need to promote our cultural practices and avoid running behind the ultra-modern ways of living so that the world learns to combat and live with the COVID 19.

**Keywords :** Sanathan Dharma, Lifestyle, Traditions, Philosophy.

## I. INTRODUCTION

When the globe was heading towards conquering Artificial Intelligence as an inherent tool for virtually doing everything in 2020, the dream line trajectory was deviated by a Virus[1]. Originating from China in December 2019 the novel Corona Virus reached to about 19 Countries by end of January when the WHO declared it a Public Health Emergency of International concern (PHEIC) [2]. The simple good personal hygiene measures and physical distancing were declared as most effective protections for the COVID 19[3]. Old age traditions and Customs have been the core of Indian culture. The Indian way of living - Sanatan sanskriti has many scientific principles inherited in it, to prevent infectious diseases [4]. We follow them traditionally sometimes not even realizing the foundation behind it. This

article tries to explore the correlation between preventive measures and some of the traditional practices of Sanatan principles of life. These principles were capable of preventing infectious diseases, major killers in ancient times like Ramayana duration. They tell us to realize the importance of our Traditions and Customs by visualizing it from the scientific lens. Many measures are coherent with the Modern Public Health approaches of handling infections and there is a need to realize this reality [1.]The impact of measures taken to contain COVID-19 on lifestyle-related behaviour is indeterminate in Indian population. The current study was undertaken to assess the impact of COVID-19 on lifestyle-related behaviours: social distancing, consumption, physical activity and sleep behaviour.

### ***Role of Customs, Culture & Traditions of “Sanatan way of life” in Disease Prevention***

India is the most ancient civilization and has its own way of living; the scriptures mention it as Sanatan way of living. It talks about your daily routine, type of diet, Yoga-asana, and rituals. It is not a religion but rather a way of living [1]. It is based on the tenets of achieving Moksha or salvation and thus restricts to its followers to speak truth and follow the correct path. It has customs, traditions and culture which define the different code of ethics, behaviour, lifestyle and every aspect of human life. The Sanatan Sanskriti is above the religion and based on experiences rather than blind teachings. This Sanatan way of living is much ancient to Hinduism, which was the religion being practiced by majority of people in this geographical area[1].

### ***Indian Vegetarian food: Sanatan Dharma's Satvic Bhojan:***

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ ८ ॥[5]

**Foods dear to those in the mode of goodness increase the duration of life, purify one's existence and give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. Such foods are juicy, fatty, wholesome, and pleasing to the heart[5].**

**Sattvic diet** is a diet based on foods that contain one of the three yogic qualities (guna) known as sattva [6]. In this system of dietary classification, foods that decrease the energy of the body are considered *tamasic*, while those that increase the energy of the body are considered *rajasic*. A sattvic diet is sometimes referred to as a **yogic diet** in modern literature.

*Sattvic* is derived from *sattva* (सत्त्व) which is a Sanskrit word. A sattvic diet is thus meant to include food and eating habit that is "pure, essential,

natural, vital, energy-giving, clean, conscious, true, honest, wise"[6,7,8]

*Sattva* is a complex concept in Indian philosophy, used in many contexts, and it means one that is "pure, essence, nature, vital, energy, clean, conscious, strong, courage, true, honest, wise, rudiment of life"[9]

*Sattva* is one of three *gunas* (quality, peculiarity, tendency, attribute, property). The other two qualities are considered to be *rajas* (agitated, passionate, moving, emotional, trendy) and *tamas* (dark, destructive, spoiled, ignorant, stale, inertia, unripe, unnatural, weak, unclean). The concept that contrasts with and is opposed to *sattva* is Tamas.[10,11] .

### ***Concept of Swacchata:***

The concept of cleanliness (“Shaucha” in Sanskrit”) is vital in Sanatan traditions. The cleanliness or purity of anything decides if it is usable or not. The importance given to hand washing, cleaning of body, surroundings and objects to be used is such that your work will be fruitful only if everything is clean. The use of unclean object was rather a sin in ancient traditions[1]. In Sanatan concepts it is essential to wash hands before eating and performing any ritual. It was also essential to wash hand with water and fly ash or clay or Lona (having detergent properties) after use of Toilets.

The environment is given utmost importance in Hindu philosophy. This becomes clear if one goes through the Bhoomi Sukta of Atharva Veda that considers the Earth as a Mother, a Living force and praises her beauty and existence. It describes her as having many slopes and plains and bearing various plants with healing powers[12].

Therefore, a thorough reading of Hindu scriptures will not only make it clear that Shaucha or Swacchata establishes an important principle of Dharma, but it also expands the concept of cleanliness from being just limited to defecation practices of people to a

broadened concept of purity that addresses purity at all levels of human existence- ecological, physical, verbal, psychological and spiritual.

### ***Physical activity :***

The conceptual background of yoga has its origins in ancient Indian philosophy. There are numerous modern schools or types of yoga (i.e., Iyengar, Viniyoga, Sivananda, etc.), each having its own distinct emphasis regarding the relative content of physical postures and exercises (*asanas*), breathing techniques (*pranayama*), deep relaxation, and meditation practices that cultivate awareness and ultimately more profound states of consciousness. [13] .The application of yoga as a therapeutic intervention, which began early in the twentieth century, takes advantage of the various psychophysiological benefits of the component practices. The physical exercises (*asanas*) may increase patient's physical flexibility, coordination, and strength, while the breathing practices and meditation may calm and focus the mind to develop greater awareness and diminish anxiety [14], and thus result in higher quality of life. Other beneficial effects might involve a reduction of distress, blood pressure, and improvements in resilience, mood, and metabolic regulation [15].

## **II. CONCLUSION**

Most of us are today inclined towards modern and advanced culture of the west without even exploring or realizing what all we have in Sanatan Culture. Sanatan Sanskriti has many preventive measures essentially required to fight COVID 19. Either it be the importance of cleanliness, regular practice of Yoga or utilization of natural medicine in Ayurveda, We have to realize the importance of our Traditions and Customs by visualizing it from the scientific lens. Indian civilization has been one of the most ancient and biggest one. This was the place of learning for scholars all around the world. We never thought that

we are following physical distancing while bowing for a Namaskar and that the classification of society is probably to prevent disease spread. The pandemic is here to change our behaviour, social structure and also the thought process. The nature has shown us that we were on the right path decades back. Our local food and traditional rituals for even the last rites were all coherent with the scientific rationale [1]. There is definite need of more research to create evidence for the hidden scientific foundations in favour of our traditional practices so that it is well accepted by the scientific community. Let not others takeaway the ownership of these customs and traditions like the patent of Neem and Tulsi. The four major pillars are satya (truth), tapa (austerity), shauch (cleanliness) and daya (compassion), and each can help people move towards a dharmic way of life. Our rich Cultural practices have everything required for our wellbeing, it is time tested. We are now at a junction to decide and move to the correct path. Let the World learn from us how to live with COVID 19

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