

Humanity and health over wealth and luxury in times of COVID 19

-Adrija Chatterjee

We are living in a world which is facing a very critical crisis of a dangerous pandemic. The past couple of months have been very difficult for the world. India too has been equally hit by an unknown virus which has created havoc in each and everyone of our lives. This virus doesn't spare any of us, be it the rich of poor, black or white, upper caste or lower caste. No one. We are all going through a tough phase which non of us know who to tackle.

There is a vast majority of wealthy individuals who own and/or operate a business, or atleast hold a significant stake in a publicly owned business which in the current economic tumdown are looking to cope up with the large scale shocks to their businesses. Governments and central banks of developed nations possess deep enough pockets to keep business and citizens afloat temporarily, but those in emerging and developing countries will likely struggle to provide the same kind of safety net.

With key luxury markets around the world now affected, brands are doing everything they can to protect the well being of their employees and customers. GDP, employment and financial markets are under severe strain. Amongst all these, the travel and tourism industry is the one which is most adversely affected. There is a lingering fear of possible contagion on planes and cruise ships.

Amongst all these, there remain some unsung super humans who are tirelessly working day and night and continuously grappling with the virus to ensure our safety. Standing against all the agony are our essential workers who are working against all odds to shield us. Their service to mankind is beyond any social barriers of caste, creed, religion, etc. Their sense of their call of duty, the selfless devotion and martyrdom deserve a heartfelt salute from all of us to say the least.

COVID-19 has slowed down global economy. The World Trade Organization has forecasted that goods trade would shrink more steeply this year than in the global financial crisis a decade ago before rebounding in 2021 as the COVID-19 pandemic recedes - if countries worked together.

For a community of professionals who see travel as essential to their work, COVID 19 is making a significant cultural and operational shift in their humanitarian sector. It has added extra difficulties onto humanitarian access, contact with vulnerable populations and operational capacity and led to travel restrictions for many countries.

The global pandemic COVID 19 seems to have left no industry spared, but the luxury industry will be the one that would be affected in 2021 and the years to come. As the virus spread throughout China, a country whose population accounted for 90% of local market growth last year, brands and executives were quick to feel the economic repercussions, soon reaching Italy where some of the world's top brands are headquartered.

By the grace and mercy of the Almighty, most of us have been blessed by a four square meal, a roof, our loved ones by our side and the likes. Hence, we cannot fathom the pain of the situation and what it is to watch one's children go to beds with empty stomachs. As citizens, we cannot do much for the unfortunate, but we all should be eternally grateful to the Police Personnels, health care workers, doctors, nurses, people who ensure our cleanliness, Municipal Corporation workers, providers of electricity, water, gas, etc. They have sacrificed their own family and put themselves in the harm's way with a smile so as to keep us smiling.