



President's Message



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It is not often that another life-form shows invulnerability at the hands of humans as evidenced by our driving huge numbers of both floral and faunal species to extinction at an alarming rate. But finally humans may have met their nemesis in the form of viruses, more specifically Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome – Corona Virus-2 or SARS-CoV-2. COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus has as of April 21, 2021 caused 143,859,017 infected cases and 3,062,136 deaths throughout practically every country of the world. COVID-19 has re-shaped our lives, diet, thinking, movement, and even socio-cultural and religious habits. And there is no end in sight.

Even a month back there was euphoria in the air. The arrival of vaccines was thought to be the panacea to this viral disease and a sense of optimism prevailed in the air “that the arduous journey has ended and we have reached the Holy Grail”. The euphoria is on the verge of disappearing as new unwanted guests appear as ‘variants’ of SARS-CoV-2 and packing more punches, which current vaccines may not be able to stop. So, what happens if we enter the cycle of vaccines-mutations-newer vaccines-newer mutations? And in the meanwhile, the death toll will keep rising. And this is only one virus. Ebola is occasionally peeping at the doorstep, and the dengue and chikungunya season is looming in front of large swathes of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asian countries. And what about non-communicable diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, or even metabolic syndrome, which as per the World Health Organization are all on the rise. And while the majority of the people in the world are looking into the future, which increasingly is appearing as a void to them, a small segment is merrily cutting trees and burning forests (the same trees may be holding the keys to cure these various menacing diseases) and adding to global climate disruptions.

So what do we do? Accept the changes as inevitable, viruses are inevitable, cutting and burning forests are inevitable, global climate change is inevitable, waking up to a dawn bereft of singing birds is inevitable, dying miserably is inevitable? Or do we take a stand? It is up to all of us to wake up and decide. But how many more deaths and sufferings are needed to wake us up?