

Reflections on leadership practice during COVID-19 lockdown in India

This blog reflects on leadership practice during COVID-19 lockdown in India in response to the global pandemic. The reflections emanate from my experience of visiting India from March-May 2020 as part of an IPDA funded research scholarship. I draw on Schön's distinction between reflection in action and reflection on action (Schön, 1983) and Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) to analyse my observations and experience and relate them to professional practice. These theoretical tools provide a frame for professional learning and development of research-based practice. In this blog, I apply them to a point in time during an unprecedented global event to reflect on implications for leadership in diverse educational settings using insights from my research experience in India.

My project, *A comparative study of leadership practice in England and India* focuses on educational leadership in different national and local contexts. The lead partner in India is Professor Bawa, from Central University of Punjab and President (HQ) of the Global Educational Research Association. The project extends my work on stakeholder perceptions of outstanding leadership in England (Dhillon et. al., 2020) and investigates the impact of national and local contexts on leaders and leadership practice.

As I prepared for fieldwork in India, I was excited and really looking forward to exploring the effects of gender, ethnic group, class and caste on leadership development and practice. My collaborating partner had contacted university, college and school leaders who were willing to participate in the study. I had visited India before but this was the first time I was going for a research project so I was anticipating a different role and experience. As it turned out, it was quite an exceptional and somewhat traumatic experience. The contrast between the first week of my fieldwork in early March and the remainder of my forced stay due to the draconian lockdown in India (Biswas, 2020) could not have been greater.

On arrival in India I was struck by the noise, colour and vibrancy of the environment. This cultural experience never fails to hit you; it conveys the cheerfulness and relaxed practice which co-exist alongside chaotic adherence to rules and regulations that would be alien in a British context. Despite the apparent chaos, amazingly things still get done and without undue stress, something that educational leaders in other places might welcome. My reflection on this practice is that things get organised quickly due to professional trust amongst leadership teams and their willingness to put people before rigid organisational procedures.

As I was driven to different educational settings by Professor Bawa, her colleagues and IPDA (India) member Vijay Kumar, I reflected on the disparity of resources and learning environments available to school and college leaders. These ranged from one smart board in a state funded school, a reward for achieving outstanding results, to leading edge IT facilities in private institutions which exceeded those available in schools in England. The meagre facilities at the state school were a sharp contrast to an elite private school where we saw confident boys playing polo in the school grounds, immaculately dressed on well-groomed horses. In the distance security guards at the school gates vetted everyone coming into the school grounds. I felt a bit out of place, like an 'outsider' looking in but was made to feel very welcome by the headmaster. This is truly a reflection of 'two Indias with one at home doing yoga,...and the other...fighting for survival' (Sibal, 2020).

From 25th March a strict lockdown was imposed across India and disturbing images of police enforcing lockdown circulated widely. Noise and laughter were replaced by eeriness in streets, empty buildings and fear in people's eyes above the mandatory face masks worn during COVID-19

lockdown. I finally managed to get a repatriation flight back to the UK in May and reflected on the educational challenge for us all - re-imagining learning after pandemic experiences.

Professor Jaswinder K Dhillon, University of Worcester

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CORONAVIRUS DISEASE HELP Us To 'नोवल' कोरोनावायरस 'HELP YOU.... (COVID-19)

खुद रहें सुरक्षित, दूसरी को रखें सुरक्षित
क्या करें और क्या ना करें

क्या करें ☺

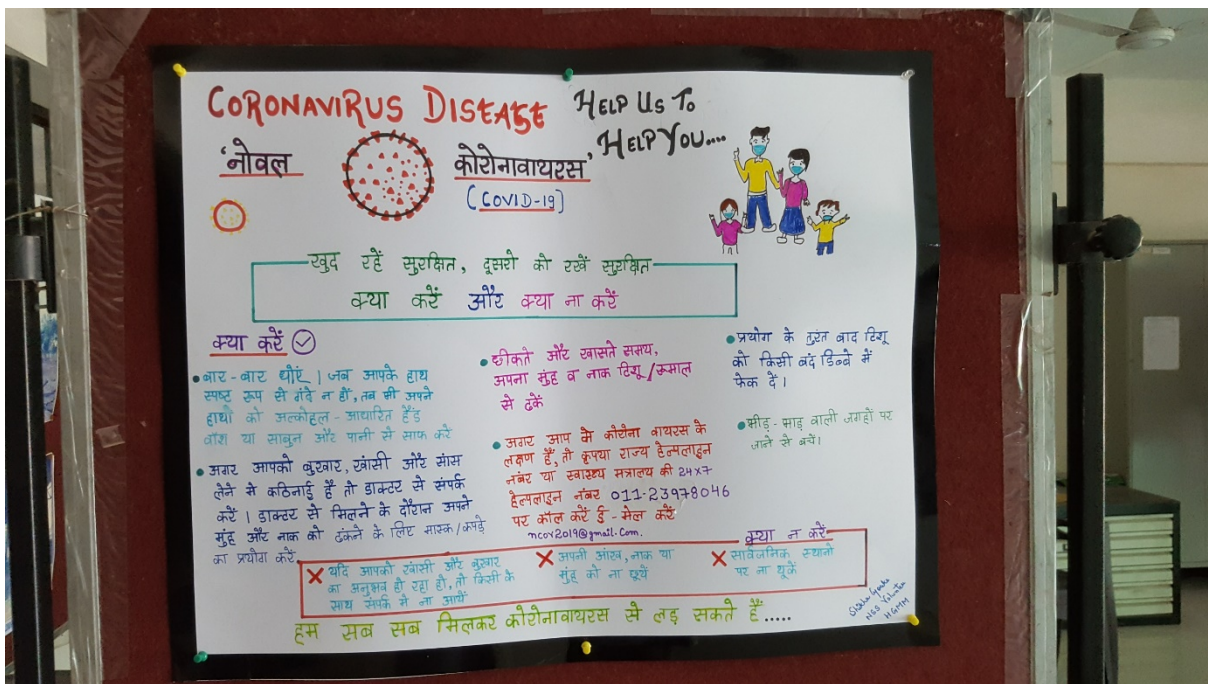
- बार-बार धोएं। जब आपके हाथ स्पष्ट रूप से गंदे न हों, तब भी अपने हाथों को अल्कोहल-आधारित हैंड वॉश या साबुन और पानी से साफ करें
- अगर आपको बुखार, खांसी और सांस लेने में कठिनाई हैं तो डॉक्टर से संपर्क करें। डॉक्टर से मिलने के दौरान अपने मुंह और नाक को ढंक्ने के लिए मास्क/कपड़े का प्रयोग करें
- छोको जैरे खासते समय, अपना मुंह व नाक टिग/कमाल से ढंके
- अगर आप में कोरोना वायरस के लक्षण हैं, तो कृपया राज्य हेल्मलाइन नंबर या स्वास्थ्य सत्रालय की 24x7 हेल्पलाइन नंबर 011-23978046 पर कॉल करें ई-मेल करें ncov2019@gmail.com.
- प्रयोग के ठुरत बाद को किसी बंद डिब्बे फेक दें।
- सीढ़-साइ वाली जग जाने से बचें।

क्या न करें

- ✗ यदि आपको खांसी और बुखार का अनुभव हो रहा है, तो किसी के साथ संपर्क से ना आरें
- ✗ अपनी ओख, नाक या मुंह को ना छूयें
- ✗ सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर ना थूकें

हम सब सब मिलकर कोरोनावायरस से लड़ सकते हैं.....

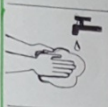




नोवल कोरोनावायरस (COVID-19)

खुद रहे सुरक्षित, दूसरों को रखें सुरक्षित
क्या करें और क्या ना करें

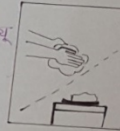
क्या करें ✓



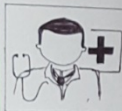
बार-बार हाथ धोएं। जब आपके हाथ स्पष्ट रूप से गंदे न हों, तब भी अपने हाथों को अलकोहॉल-आधारित हैंड वाश या साबुन से वा पानी से साफ करें।



खिन्ने और खाने के समय अपना मुँह व खाने दिखने से ढँके।



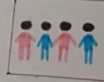
प्रयोग के बाद खाने के बर्तनों को साफ करने के लिए गर्म पानी में डाल दें।



अगर आपको बुखार, खाँसी और साँस लेने में कठिनाई है तो डॉक्टर से संपर्क करें। डॉक्टर से मिलने के दौरान अपने मुँह और नाक को टैपने के लिए किसी फ्लान या कपड़े का इस्तेमाल करें।



अगर आप में कोरोना वायरस के लक्षण हैं, तो कृपया राबर्ट डेल्टा नंबर या स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय को 24x7 हेल्पलाइन नंबर - 011-23978046 पर कॉल करें।



शेड - साइ.वाली जगहों पर जाने से बचें।



यदि आपको खाँसी और बुखार का अनुभव हो रहा है, तो किसी के साथ संपर्क में ना आएं।



अपनी आँसू, नाक और मुँह को ना छूएं।



क्या ना करें ✗

सामाजिक स्थानों पर ना जाएं।

“हम सब मिलकर कोरोनावायरस से लड़ सकते हैं”

~ अधिक जानकारी के लिए ~

रविवार 11-23978046 पर कॉल करें या

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