**POSITION PAPER**

**Committee: All India Political Parties Meet (AIPPM)**

**Topic: Discussing the process of opening the lockdown and stabilizing the economy.**

**Portfolio: Ghulam Nabi Azad**

Corona virus is a pandemic, first seen in the country China in October, 2019. This is a virus which can spread with being in contact with the infected person directly or indirectly. Therefore, in order to prevent the spread of the virus, countries placed lockdown to promote the factor of social distancing. The first case in India of corona virus was found on 30 January, 2020 in the state of Kerala. He was a university student who travelled from Wuhan (China) to the state. And gradually the corona cases started increasing in India. So, India placed the first lockdown from 25 March, 2020 to 14 April, 2020 (a total lockdown of 21 days). It basically decreased the rate of coming cases but it wasn’t a good deal for the economy of India. India is currently on approximately 3 lakhs confirmed cases and gradually unlocking the country, keeping in the mind-the economy of the country.

India is an unprivileged country. In India, every medium of people live. Some are very rich, so some are very poor. It’s very hard to maintain lockdown nationwide for a long time. People from very poor family were dying because of starving. Almost 350 deaths were reported as of 10 May, with reasons ranging from starvation, suicides, exhaustion, road and rail accidents, police brutality and denial of timely medical care. Among these reported deaths, most were among the marginalized migrants and labourers.

India so far placed lockdown in 5 different phases. And all this was started with lockdown of a day named as ‘Janta Curfew’ on 22 March, 2020. After Janta Curfew PM Modi stated-“Janta Curfew is just the beginning of a long battle against COVID-19.” Former Union finance minister P. Chidambaram, who has always been highly critical of the Modi government, has not only supported the lockdown, but observed the ‘janta curfew’ too. “As desired by the PM, I am observing Janta Curfew strictly,” he tweeted on 22 March.

On 24 March, 2020 the government of India ordered nationwide lockdown for 21 days. The lockdown was placed when the number of confirmed cases in India was approximately 500. Observers stated that the lockdown had slowed the growth rate of the pandemic by 6 April to rate of doubling every six days, and by 18 April to a rate of doubling every eight days. All this was good, but delay in the vaccine and problems faced by migrants and poor people and especially for the economy was not leading in a good way. Azad asked the government that the ‘Government decisions during lockdown must be discussed in parliament’.

Henk Bekedam, WHO Representative to India praised the response describing Lockdown as “timely comprehensive and robust.” Whereas, Economist Jean Dreze stated that “The lockdown had been almost a death sentence for the unprivileged of the country. The policies are made or influenced by a class of people who pay little attention to the consequences for the underprivileged”.

Therefore, India after getting recommendations from the advisory committees started giving conditional relaxations from phase 2(15 April, 2020 to 3 May, 2020).

In phase 3(4 May,2020 to 17 May, 2020) the districts were divided into three zones based on the spread of corona virus- green, orange and red-with relaxations applied accordingly. In this all regular shops were opened, various services were ordered to start and public transports were started with 50% of the passengers. Phase 3 was titled as economy boost. After total lockdown of 40 days the liquor shops boosted the economy. Uttar Pradesh registered sale of over Rs. 100 crore from the sale of liquor in a day, reported by news agency IANS. “Around 3.9 lakh litres of beer and 8.5 litres of Indian-made liquor was sold” stated by IANS in Bengaluru. After this many states increase the cost of liquor with 50%. Delhi increased the rate of liquor with 75%, but yet the sale of liquor didn’t stopped.

Although this proved to be a headache for the law enforcement agencies as cops tried to enforce social distancing norms outside liquor shops, the states themselves appear to have gained by it in terms of revenues. "Maintaining social distance and gathering of not more than five people outside a liquor shop at any given time was violated with impunity after the shops opened today. People jostled outside liquor shops to buy booze, which forced the police to intervene and down the shutters at many places," Delhi Congress President Anil Kumar said. The government should have done a proper planning before allowing the liquor shops to open, as otherwise, the move will lead to a "sharp spike" in COVID-19 cases in the city, he added.

The economy of India cannot only stand on the sale of liquor so, there was necessity to open up various shops and unlock the country because there were no signs of vaccine yet. Therefore, the country came up with phase 4(18 May, 2020 to 31 May, 2020) only for containment zones with more relaxations. And then Phase 5 named as ‘Unlock 1’. On 30 May, 2020 government announced that the lockdown will be extended till 30th June, 2020 in containment zones, with services resuming in a phased manner starting 8 June, 2020. Government is also working for the Unlock 2 or further.

On unlocking the country, the government gets lot of criticism and Azad also said "Without the functioning of Parliament and its committees, the maximum pandemic and minimum governance would get multiplied and health, economic slowdown and human security would be endangered. There are a number of other countries where Parliament sessions are being held in one way or the other,"

Government is gradually opening all the services, with a phased manner and respecting the factor of social distancing. People from privileged society and who can are also helping in this pandemic by donating in PM Care fund. And many others are helping with association or NGO’s.

In order to give stability to the economy, the government has injected a bailout package. It is a provision of financial help to the country’s industries which otherwise would be on the brink of failure or bankruptcy. It has help almost all the sector of economy as well as it improve the current crisis situation.

In this pandemic, government had made changes to the definition of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The changes are now a micro enterprise is 25 lakh, a small enterprise is 25 lakh to 5 crore and a medium enterprise is 5 to 10 crore. Government defined MSMEs in a new way and also injected packages which will help them to the regenovate them and establish themselves again.

Government has announced different schemes for startup with different norms. This scheme will provide assistance to innovative startups that have demonstrated ability to adapt to economic impact from Covid-19 and ensured its employees’ safety and financial stability. Due to COVID -19 Pandemic many migrant labours and different small and medium industrial unit has lost their job. But now with these schemes government is injecting fuel which will give a boost to them to re-establish the industrial unit as well as it also helps the migrant labours to start their small business or to get through this crisis situation.

Government has ease out the business and provided single window clearance for establishing a new industry. The India customs single window allows importers and exporters facilitating to lodge their clearance documents at a single point only. Many companies who have requested to establish their unit in India were given single window clearance and many tax benefits so that they can easily establish their unit and help the economy to stabilize.

PM Modi on 12 May, 2020 announced ‘Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ package of Rs 20 lakh crore to revive Indian economy, to help farmers, migrant workers, etc. and to revive the industrial sector. This package is 10% of India’s total GDP. Aatmanirbhar Bharat is to promote the ‘Swadeshi’ products. With the help of Aatmanirbhar scheme government want to increase the use of local manufactured products. Government has given many benefits to promote the local manufacturing and swadeshi products. On this Rahul Gandhi appreciated the government and tweeted ‘The Government announcement today of a financial assistance package, is the first step in the right direction. India owes a debt to its farmers, daily wage earners, labourers, women & the elderly who are bearing the brunt of the ongoing lockdown.’

Government is practicing various different schemes to stabilize the economy and re-establish India. Citizens of India are supporting and should support the government as much as possible. This is a pandemic from which no one can win individually. It is a hard time in which we need to be together and stand for each other.

In conclusion, the delegate of portfolio Ghulam Nabi Azad believes that everything should be done according to the constitution and for welfare of all.

Our goal is to be united and fight with this disease. In this, whole world need to be together and work for the welfare of all and work on the vaccine.