

CSR Proposals of Social Relevance

1. Title of Project: Sanitization practices in India and their effectiveness in the time of COVID-19

2. Background/Motivation: The recent COVID-19 crisis has raised a whole new discourse about the central importance of sanitization to maintain good health and hygiene individually and in the community. Given the worldwide damage caused by the viral contagion, Coronavirus, in terms of health and economy, there is increasing fear of infection in society. What is also important in the current situation is the emphasis on hygiene and sanitation for the community as a whole. Thus, sanitizing becomes a moral necessity, to contain the pandemic in the present and avoid such calamities in the future. At the same time, issues of sanitation and hygiene are a complicated territory. In the wake of the current unprecedented pandemic, sanitizers have come to be seen as a magic solution of sorts. Yet, what is interesting is that prior to the pandemic hitting the planet, scientific opinion was increasingly concerned about the harmful effects of antibacterial soap, namely, the creation of resistant superbugs. Various types of disinfection methods are practiced in each household, which is further complicated by diversity in terms of economy, availability, access, etc. Some of the examples include the usage of ash and soil for washing hands, or lemon as a cleaning agent. At the same time, there are also several practices and beliefs which are being followed even though they have not proven to be reliable and effective. We are also concerned about the long-term sustainability of different practices, given antimicrobial resistance is also an important threat globally. We believe, therefore, that a kind of research that brings together social science knowledge with scientific expertise is essential in the Indian context.

3. Objectives of the project: a) Document the changing notions about hygiene and sanitization (in different classes and communities) especially post-COVID b) Test efficacy on various microbes involving bacteria and fungus; we will collaborate to test on virus c) Determine and recommend what key changes in practices (both in terms of habits and in terms of materials) can be followed sustainably to maintain good health and hygiene

4. Brief Methodology: The study would include two components: a qualitative exploratory component on the social practices around hygiene and sanitization, and an experimental component on their scientific disinfectant properties. Interviews and questionnaires would be used in the qualitative component to obtain information on people's sanitization practices, both pre- and post-COVID. This would be followed by experiments on effectiveness of different practices and materials.

5. Target population/Beneficiaries: Two of the important goals of the research project are: public engagement and outreach. Public engagement: We seek to engage in social science research that would actively engage the public in health and sanitization and make an impact on society. The above goal also implies the need for wider dissemination of the research findings in multiple creative forms and modalities which would have wider reach beyond academic publications, which, while certainly valuable and necessary, have poor reach, are often behind paywalls and located in institutional contexts. Our goal in this project is to take the data back to society in ways that would have positive impact.

6. Expected Outcome/Deliverables:

- a) Documentation various disinfection agents and practices used in households across India and their effectivity
- b) Determination of relative effectiveness and limitations
- c) Dissemination of results as media, paper, presentations, webinars and white papers

7. Timeline and Budget:

| | Year 1 | Year 2 |
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| Budget (in Rs lakhs) | 7 Lakhs | 8 Lakhs |
| Milestones | 1. Household practices 2. Understanding of their perception and limitations | 1. Quantification of efficacy 2. Dissemination of information |

8. Proposer Name & Designation:

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