



## EDİTÖRE MEKTUP / LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Envisaging the involvement of the private sector in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

Özel sektörün devam eden COVID-19 pandemisine katılımını öngörmek

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To the Editor,

The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in massive interruptions in the lives of everyone and the impact of the disease has been multi-fold. It is indeed an alarming fact that since the start of the outbreak, the disease has accounted for 65.8 million cases and death of more than 1.5 million affected individuals till 7 Dec 2020<sup>1</sup>. The infection has been reported across 219 nations and territories<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the outbreak continues to increase in many parts of the world, with American, European and the South East Asian Region being the most affected. The global case fatality ratio of the novel viral infection has been estimated as 2.27% and it is worth noting that none of the individuals or nations can stay assured that the infection has been contained forever<sup>1</sup>.

As the effect of the infection has been multi-dimensional, it is very much obvious that any nation which is working towards the effective containment of the infection should aim to involve all the concerned sectors<sup>2</sup>. These sectors can range from health, education (for prevention of outbreak in school settings), trade (to avoid transmission of the infectious agents), tourism (to ensure safety of the passengers and airport personnel), commerce (to ensure safety of the employees in the workplace and also to sustain the economy), information technology (for strengthening of the risk communication and to avoid prevalence of myths & misconceptions in the community), etc., and each one of them have to play

their part in a sustained manner to bring about a significant difference<sup>2-4</sup>.

Amongst all the developments pertaining to the disease in different parts of the world, it is important to note that the contribution of the private sector in the containment of the outbreak is indispensable<sup>2,5</sup>. The first and foremost area which attracts utmost attention for the private sector is the need to safeguard the health of staff, clients, and community. This has to go hand in hand with protecting the jobs and livelihood of the employee, especially the financial situation which has resulted due to the impact of the disease on the economy<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, the private sector has to take necessary steps to safeguard their business by giving adequate emphasis on infrastructure and services (viz. sanitation, hygiene, waste management, etc.)<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to this, the private sector has to extend their support towards maintaining an uninterrupted supply of essential products, such as personal protective equipment, hand sanitizers, and ventilators<sup>2</sup>. Owing to the sudden rise in the number of cases, ensuring constant supply of essential logistics has emerged as one of the major challenges for the health sector, and any kind of assistance offered towards either production or technology or expertise or transport of the essential supplies deserves remarkable significance<sup>2-5</sup>. Moreover, the private sector can even play an important role in expansion of research activities or by extending financial assistance for all the ongoing emergency response related activities<sup>5</sup>.

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In conclusion, for the effective containment of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is a must to involve the private sector in each and every domain. The involvement of the private sector will not only bridge the existing lacunae, but will also help in strengthening the public health response.

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