

## Ladakh's Spring Caught Amid Corona

**Zakiya Banoo**

“It was beginning of the month of March and entire Ladakh was preparing to let go off the winter and start planning for the summer months. As the rays of sun started filtering in from the winter clouds, people of this cold desert learned about the spread of novel Covid-19 virus, also known as Corona.

On March 6, we were in for a shock when two positive cases of Corona were confirmed in Chuchot village. As naïve as children are, many expressed happiness about the lockdown that was implemented to ensure ‘physical distancing’ in the times of Corona. While some, who were looking forward to returning the college after winter slumber, felt disappointed. But with time, as cases of Corona grew in the country and in our Union Territory, the happiness subsided, and everyone started praying for the recovery of those affected while following the precautionary measures.

Appreciating the steps taken by our honorable Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi, people of Ladakh started following the lockdown instructions obediently. Nevertheless, one thing that started worrying majority of the residents of Leh district was the lack of awareness about what Corona is and how it can spread. To create awareness, the students and volunteers started helping the administration by providing information to the public about dos and don'ts during the pandemic.



*Family Working Together in the field*

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The real deal for us – the Ladakhis, is the crucial timing of this virus. This is the time that we look forward to resuming with our normal lives. People who do small businesses like running small shops have been caught completely off guard with no idea of how to manage their lives now. How will they feed their families? Because during the three months of winter they didn't earn anything and what they earned during the last summer, they have already spent it on the winter stock.

In these tough times, those who have the privilege to survive and stay safe inside their houses should utilize this opportunity to work on themselves. In Ladakh, people are not coming out of their homes and instead spending time with their children and parents. Interaction with neighbors has increased and one of the most important change that has happened due to the lockdown is that people are doing their own work without being dependent on laborers.



*Spending Time Reading by the Side of The Mighty Indus*

For me, these 'stay home' days have turned out to be that nostalgic trip down the memory lanes of my childhood. I am reliving things I have not done since childhood. Along with my family, I am working in the garden and field, spending time with animals and sharing our thoughts. We are just utilizing our day by learning new things like cooking different dishes, playing different games, learning name of wild plants, watching movies and exploring world through the eyes of our elders. Our grandparents share stories of their childhood days

making us realize how different their time was. During night, while sitting near the bonfire, we sing, dance and tell riddles.

Covid-19 has made us realize the importance of things that we always took for granted. Many lives have been lost in our country and around the globe. The times are tough, but we should not give up and be hopeful of a bright future where all of us will play our roles more responsibly. This is the time to prepare for a long journey of transformation.”