

Report

“COVID-19: Impact on Indian Politics”



FOUNTAINHEAD OF EXCELLENCE

Partners:



Live Event on ZOOM/MMA Facebook/Live IBC
Panel Discussion on
COVID-19: Impact on Indian Politics

Panelists:

Mr K Pandiarajan

Hon'ble Minister for Tamil Language, Culture
Government of Tamil Nadu

Mr N K Premachandran

Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha (Kollam Constituency, Kerala)

Mr PTR Palanivel Thiagarajan

Member of Legislative Assembly, Tamil Nadu

Moderator:

Mr Prime Point Srinivasan

Chairman & Managing Trustee
Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI)

held on **Sunday, 3 May 2020 at 6.00 pm**

Partners:

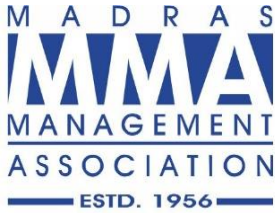
COVID-19: Impact on Indian Politics

Sunday, 3 May 2020

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Invitation for the event



You are cordially invited to Watch Live on
ZOOM/MMA Facebook/Live IBC
Panel Discussion on

COVID-19: Impact on Indian Politics

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COVID-19: Impact on Indian Politics

Synopsis

Just as geo-political and geo-economic situations are not going to be the same post-Covid, the impact of the pandemic on national and regional politics within the country too will undergo changes and correctives.

The key areas will be in areas of federalism and Centre-State relations, as the nation's cooperative handling of the current Covid situation has raised a lot of questions and a few answers.

So has it thrown up opportunities and challenges on all stake-holders, for which politico-administrative decisions are required and they cannot be taken in isolation, say, by the Centre or individual State or States alone.

Overnight, economic policy of the Centre and individual States, including fiscal issues and GST, and now labour, reforms starting with migrant labour policies, and salary payment and revisiting the age-limit for retirement in Government jobs are all going to be in greater and constant focus.

There is also the inherent election-driven issue of holding the incumbent Government(s), too, accountable, but that may have to wait for some more weeks and months before any meaningful assessment can be made.

Profile - Panelists

Ma Foi K Pandiarajan

Ma Foi K.Pandiarajan was born in 1959, April 26 in a small village called Vilampatti near Sivakasi. He lost his father, a match factory worker, when he was three months old. He studied through scholarships and completed his Engineering from PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore in 1981. He did his MBA from the world renowned XLRI Jamshedpur, where he studied Human Resources Management. He started his career in Kolkata after his MBA.



AS A SOCIAL ACTIVIST

- Active trustee of various Foundations, MaFoi, Ekam, Sornammal Educational Trust & CIOSA.
- MaFoi Foundation, through Disha has supported more than 4000 poor children through scholarships.
- Disha also supports children who are weak in academics through various mentorship programmes.
- Disha Sports Academy supports under privileged kids and trains them in boxing, athletics & football.
- More than 2000 children's lives have been saved through EKAM foundation which works heavily in the Healthcare sector.
- Sornammal Educational Trust works with more than 4000 women for the empowerment of women by training them in various activities & helping them with loans to create sustainable livelihood.
- 2000 widows have benefitted through the Sornammal Educational Trust and their children are supported through scholarships.

- Have motivated more than 1 lakh students through his leadership & entrepreneur speech.
- He has also authored motivational books in Tamil for youth.
- Has started & supported go green movement in his constituency in Virudhunagar.
- He is an active Rotarian.

AS A BUSINESSMAN

- Moved to Chennai & settled in Anna Nagar and started MA FOI, India's largest HR Services Firm with just Rs.60,000/- in 1992.
- Created employment opportunities for more than 3,50,000 professionals.
- Has been instrumental in starting various companies and has nurtured various entrepreneurs.
- Has actively involved in CII, FICCI and many other associations like Chennai Angels, Native Lead etc.,
- Recipient of the EISENHOWAR Fellowship awarded by the United States of America for his contribution to Human Resources & Consulting.

AS A POLITICIAN

- Has raised more than 60 questions in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly.
- Has been part of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and actively contributed.
- Has taken part in various debates pertaining to education, healthcare, social aspects & economic growth of the State.
- Has been awarded "Thiruvalluvar Award" for being an honest politician.
- Has Represented Tamil Nadu at GST Council.

Mr N K Premachandran

Educational Qualifications : B.Sc., LL.B. Educated at Fatima Mata National College, Kollam and Government Law College, Thiruvananthapuram.

Books Published:

"Oh Iraq" (Malayalam Book)



Positions Held:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1996 - | Elected to 11th Lok Sabha |
| 1998 - | Re-elected to 12th Lok Sabha (2nd term) |
| 2000 - 2006 | Member, Rajya Sabha |
| 2006 - 2011 | Member, Kerala Legislative Assembly |
| 2006 - 2011 | Minister in State Government, Cabinet Minister, Water Resources, Govt. of Kerala |
| May 2014 | Re-elected to 16th Lok Sabha (3rd term) |
| 1 Sep. 2014 - 25 May 2019 | Member, Standing Committee on Human Resource Development |
| 15 Sep. 2014 - 25 May 2019 | Member, Joint Committee on Food Management in Parliament House Complex |
| | Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of Labour and Employment |
| May, 2019 | Re-elected to 17th Lok Sabha (4th term) |
| 3 July 2019 onwards | Member, Panel of Chairpersons, Lok Sabha |
| 13 Sept. 2019 onwards | Member, Standing Committee on Chemicals & Fertilizers |
| 21 Nov. 2019 onwards | Member, General Purposes Committee, Lok Sabha |
| | Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of Home Affairs |

Other Information:

Elected to Gram Panchayat, 1987

Elected to District Council, 1991

Elected to Zilla Panchayat, 1995

During the tenure of Cabinet Minister for Water Resources was awarded “Best Minister” by Asianet Channel. Reforms in water sector and handling interstate water disputes like Mullaperiyar issue was widely appreciated.

LL.B. from Kerala University with First Rank (Gold Medalist) (1985)

Started political career from student movement

Central Secretariat Members of RSP and office bearer of several trade unions e.g. IRE, KMML, FACT, HMT, NTC Mill and TTP etc

Mr PTR Palanivel Thiagarajan

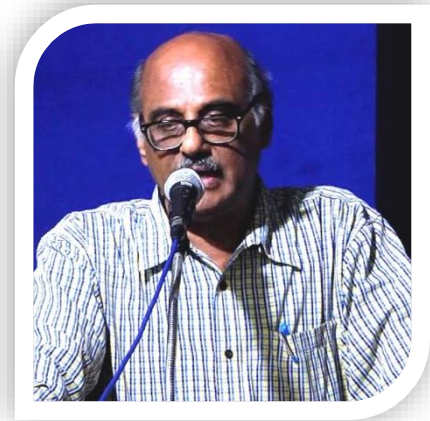
P. T. R. Palanivel Thiagarajan is an Indian politician. He is the son of the late P. T. R. Palanivel Rajan, also a politician. His grandfather, P. T. Rajan, was also a prominent politician. He was elected to the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly election in 2016 from Madurai Central. Thiagarajan graduated with a degree in chemical engineering from the National Institute Of



Technology, Tiruchirapalli. He obtained a master's degree in Operations Research and a Ph.D. in Human Factors Engineering / Engineering Psychology at State University Of New York, Buffalo. He then completed his Master Of Business Administration in Financial Management at MIT Sloan School Of Management. He began his career in 1990 as an independent consultant in Operations and Systems Improvement. He joined Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. in 2001 as Trader and Co-Portfolio Manager - Firm Relationship Loan Portfolio. He quit Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. as Head Of Offshore Capital Markets in the year 2008. He then worked for Standard Chartered Bank, Singapore in the Global Capital Markets division. He quit Standard Chartered Bank as Managing Director, FM Sales in the year 2014.

Mr Prime Point Srinivasan

Krishnaswamy Srinivasan (also known as Prime Point Srinivasan) (born in 1951) is a Communication strategist, Communication teacher, Digital Journalist, author and Social worker at Chennai. He is the founder and chairman of Prime Point Foundation, a non profit public trust promoting Communication awareness. He is also the Publisher and Managing Editor of National eMagazine PreSense.



Mr Peter Rimmele

Peter Rimmele is currently the Resident Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Office, India.

He has a First Law Degree from Freiburg University, as well as a Second Law Degree from the Ministry of Justice Baden-Württemberg, Germany and a M.A. in Geography.

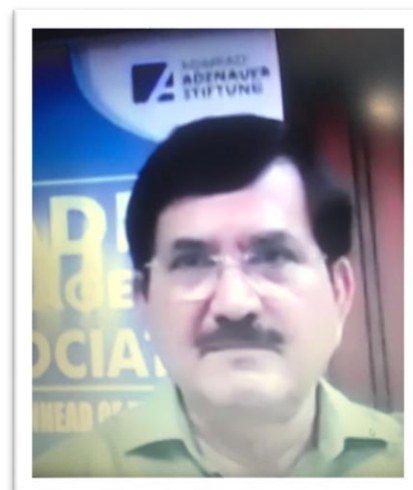
After working as a jurist, judge and lecturer, he took public office as Ministerialrat, Head of Division at the State Ministry of the Interior in Saxony, Germany, from November 1991 on until 2000. There he first served in the Police and Security and later in the Local Government Department. On behalf of the German Foreign Ministry he served in East Timor as Registrar General, Head of Civil Registry and Notary Services (UNTAET), and became later the principal Advisor for Governance Reform for GIZ (German International Cooperation) to the Ministry of Administrative Reform and the Anti-Corruption-Commission of the Republic of Indonesia, where he served for 7 years. He then moved to Rwanda, also as Principal Advisor Good Governance/Justice Program. Earlier he was Resident Representative Lebanon, Director of Rule of Law Program Middle East North Africa, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.



Report on Panel Discussion “COVID-19: Impact on Indian Politics”

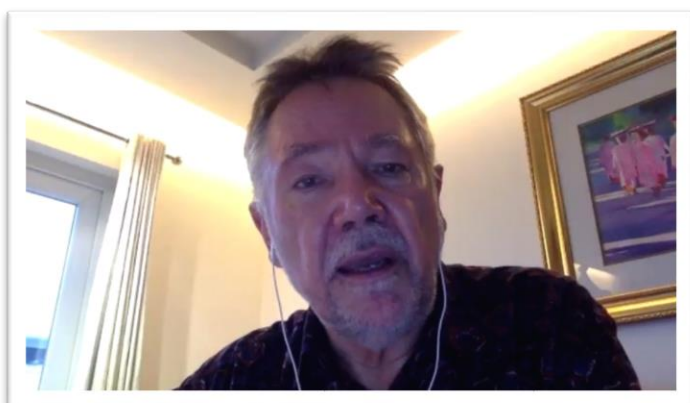
Group Captain R Vijayakumar (Retd), VSM, Executive

Director, MMA initiated the online panel discussion organised through webinar and live streamed on YouTube and Facebook. He listed out the series of MMA activities planned over the next few days to keep the members intellectually engaged, provide the policy makers with inputs for decision making and the society at large benefitted. He introduced the speakers Mr Ma Foi K Pandiarajan, Minister, Government of Tamil Nadu, Mr N.K.Premachandran, Member of Parliament from Kollam, Mr PTR Palanivel Thiagarajan, Member of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly from Madurai, Mr.Peter Rimmele, who is the current resident representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in India and the moderator Prime Point Mr Srinivasan.



Introductory Remarks

Mr Peter Rimmele, Resident Representative, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, India:



The Covid-19 crisis will undoubtedly leave its traces on the world politics. The influence of US and the Europe on the geo-political scenario will further diminish. Will China replace the US in its leadership role and if so, what impact will that have on Indian politics?

In the US, we have seen administrative lapses and the overburdening of the health system. As on date, the US accounts for one third of the Covid-19 infections in the world. In comparison, India's count is far lesser. Many European countries and their health systems are not performing much better. As a resident representative of KAS in India, let me offer you a German perspective of the crisis.

In Germany, a number of factors have kept the death rate relatively low. Epidemiologists recommend testing and treatment and this applies to India as well. To

be honest, Germany's initial response to the crisis was not exactly a glorious one. At the beginning of the year, Italy was the first EU country to be hit by Covid very badly. In March, the German Government announced an export ban on vital medical supplies. That has changed now and Germany cannot be blamed for not doing enough. It is not only sending medical supplies. The German defence personnel have airlifted more than 22,000 Italians to French ICUs. Despite its own Covid case load, Germany has donated 60 of its own ventilators to the UK and as we can see, UK is currently very hard hit in Europe. As on April 4, according to the German foreign ministry, Germany had treated 229 foreign intensive care corona virus patients. Berlin had donated and delivered 7.5 tons of **medical supplies including ventilators to Italy and France.**

Germany's Disease Control and Prevention agency, named after Robert Koch who identified in the early 20th century the causative agents of Cholera, Anthrax and Tuberculosis - that is a reminder of earlier pandemics- sent corona virus test kits to developing countries.

German doctors travelled to Spain for Corona virus duty taking 50 ventilators with them. This was done on a national level. The European crisis management based on a common strategy, was lacking initially. Germany has a very robust Public Health Care system and given the current scenario, it's expanding its intensive care capacities.

Germany spends about 11.5% of its GDP on health care while India spends around 1%. If we talk of the impact of Covid-19 on Indian politics, then we might rethink in the future, the level of contributions to the healthcare system in India, so as to strengthen it. Looking at the world level, the current pandemic has shown weaknesses in the reaction capacity of the global community concerning the outbreak of the virus diseases. So, this may also be addressed by politicians on an international level as a lesson learned for future pandemics.

When the corona virus first hit China, the Germans sent to Beijing many medical equipments. But we did not hear anything about that because Germany does not make a big propaganda like China did when it sent some equipments to Italy.

A few weeks ago, China was by far the biggest victim of the new corona virus and its government covered up the initial outbreak. Now China is trying to paint a new picture of itself as a model for taming the disease and as the world's saviour. Will China eventually be glorious?

Knowing about the relative weakness of its health care system, India has imposed some of the toughest measures worldwide to prevent the spread of the corona virus in its country. The pressure to lift the lockdown and other restrictions is increasing worldwide. Indians and Germans have been rather disciplined. Maybe the images of dead bodies removed from Italian hospitals by military trucks at night, had its shocking effects.

Now, protests in the form of citizens claiming constitutional freedom are increasing but I believe it is unthinkable for India as well as Germany that armed citizens will storm a State parliament like it happened in the US.

The tougher, the measures are and the longer they last, the more the governments need to explain to their citizens what they do and why they do them. Exceptional times require exceptional measures.

The corona virus and climate change not only threaten lives but our civilization. We don't want to go backward. We are moving forward. Indian politicians need to give a perspective to the Indian people about the Indian economy after Corona.

Despite all demands of the business sector and a whatever-it -takes approach, the State alone cannot save the economy. It still remains a long way to go for all.

Extract of the Panel Discussion:

Mr N K Premachandran, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha (Kollam Constituency):

(He is a 4th time MP in Indian Lok Sabha, an outstanding parliamentarian and a former minister in Kerala government) As Mr Peter Rimmele cited in his opening speech, the Indian political situation cannot be discussed in isolation because we are living in a globalised world. Each country depends on other countries. After the Second World War, such a disaster has not struck throughout the globe. When we discuss the Indian political situation, we have to analyze it in three periods: the pre-Covid, the present Covid-19 management and the post Covid periods.



In developed countries, the movement against the lockdown is picking up. In India, though we have different political parties with different ideologies and differences with the government policies and programs, our entire country is united in its fight against the covid-19. The people at large- that is 1.3 billion people of the country – abide by the rules and directions given by the government of India and the respective States. This is a unique political development, thanks to Covid-19 management.

But this should not lead to authoritarian governments at the Centre and States. The civil rights, political rights and even the fundamental rights are being infringed upon because of the pandemic situation.

We abide by the lockdowns but the pertinent question remains: How long will lockdowns continue? Each State has to focus on self sustainability through sustainable development. Post Covid, we need a very strong economy and political stability. We have learned a lot of lessons from our own practical experiences during the past two months. As Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation said, the soul of India lives in villages. So more attention needs to be given for agriculture and rural development.

Mr K Pandiarajan, Hon'ble Minister for Tamil Language, Culture, Government of Tamil Nadu:



Picking the trigger from Mr Peter Rimmele on the geopolitical transition, certain questions come to my mind. Where will China be and the rest of the world? Will China attempt a unipolar world and if so, how will it be met by the rest of the world, especially the US and Europe? Will they stand together or will there be deeper divisions? What would the coming together of

Russia and China, as some people have predicted, imply for the world? Will India matter, as much as it does today in the comity of nations? Will we emerge stronger or weaker from the covid-19?

The second dominant theme in my mind is the nature of jobs: What will happen to jobs, especially in the unorganized sector? We say India is highly entrepreneurial and almost 18% of the people here earn a living by doing something on their own. How much support, freedom and push can the governments give to different sections to engage in entrepreneurial activity? The former Finance Minister Mr P Chidambaram has recommended ploughing in 65,000 crores as re-monetization.

Next - how do we allow exit movement from the lockdown for the industry? This is coloured with the political orientation of the party in power. The Tamil Nadu government will be engaging with the industry on restoring normalcy. I've studied the Kerala model too. The welfare boards, which many State governments have put in place, need to become more powerful in the post covid time.

Tamil Nadu has close to 1.2 crores of unorganized sector workers from different disciplines. We have around 17 welfare boards to cover them and yet, we covered only about 17 lakhs of them. It's extremely difficult to even track and give them a modicum of support. We want to give them about a thousand rupees and some rations in addition to what each family will get. People talk about minting money and say that nothing will happen. The counter view is that the currency will really go down. I have multiple answers which confuses me.

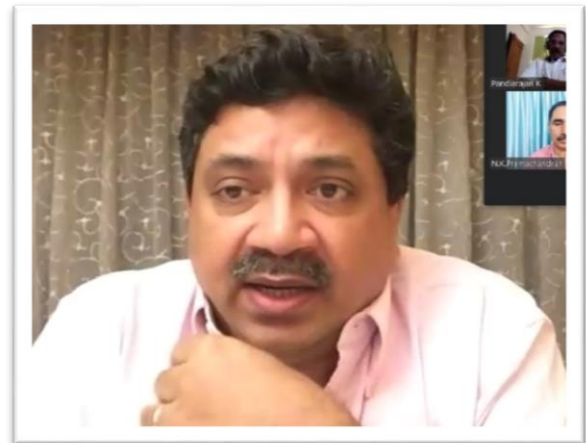
We are at the cusp of relaxing the lockdown in many states and we are not sure if there will be a Covid spike or not. Another question is about the political leadership both at the State and Central level. The way communication happens from the State and Central leadership put together is important. The decisions taken now will either reinforce or derail the faith and trust, people have in their leaders.

I'm delighted to say that the kind of relationship that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has built with Kerala CM has been an excellent model in managing Covid. There could have been serious disputes if those relationships have not been there in place. That's a very strong aspect of Indian democracy.

My intuition says that a month from now, we'll be back to normal politics. Parties will need to assert themselves, their identities and their relevance.

Mr PTR Palanivel Thiyagarajan, Member of Legislative Assembly, Tamil Nadu

We are all shaped by our experiences. I have experience of multiple kinds of seismic events. I was in the World Trade Centre when the planes hit on 9/11. I was a senior executive running through subsidiaries of Lehman while the global financial crisis started. I was part of India and the demonization that crippled our economy.



9/11 changed the nature of travel risk. Till then, people didn't check in with IDs when they got on planes. Now, we have to go through 50 screenings much like that. This crisis is a before-and-after kind of separator. The impact is only about 10% known to us now. The consequences of shutting down the economy even to 60 or 75% are going to be so humongous. This is an era of change or era of shifting events. I'll just leave you with five or six thoughts on what people should think about.

This crisis changes people's expectations of politics as opposed to governance. We are seeing a fundamental distinction between the kind of campaigning and sloganeering and rabble-rousing as opposed to actually governing. It changes the nature of people's expectations of the learnedness of their politicians.

Mr Peter Rimmele talked about Germany. One of the reasons that Germany has been such an effective handler of the crisis is that their leader is a scientist. She understands complex models and is able to use that in decision making. Also, the speed at which leaders react and the nature in which they react is going to shift after this crisis.

The notion of centralized versus distributed models of governance is going to become very starker. We can see the difference between Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In Kerala, the devolution has been all the way down to the panchayat level. The average panchayat level executive or committee or counsellor in Kerala is significantly more empowered than the one in Tamil Nadu and that is a fundamental component of the outcome that they've been able to achieve. These are the kinds of transitions.

How bad will this affect the economy? There is no chance that we can mathematically escape recession, after 1979, as the record shows. We will have actual contraction of growth this year.

In a growing country, population is increasing. Job seekers are increasing. This is going to be a huge problem and I don't think governments have figured out the scale of it and are not reacting aggressively enough to it. I second Mr Pandiarajan's points about the migrant labour. We have paid too little attention to them. I was impressed with the Karnataka CM Mr. Yedurappa who went out of his way to encourage migrant labourers to stay back.

The last thing I'd like to say is about FDI. I hear of people exiting China and about the scope for India and Tamil Nadu. I am an ex investment banker. I've run large trading business with hundreds of billions of dollars balance sheet and transactions a year and I find it hard to imagine a scenario in which we can attract FDI, with this much uncertainty in the world and the lack of execution skill that India has shown. How long will it take for FDI to have an impact on employment? This is not a realistic short-term solution.

The governments -both in Delhi and Tamil Nadu- have only one job – to find the poorest and weakest sections of the society and try their best to revive demand and bring back their balance sheets to some level of neutrality. If you don't do that, we are going to see consequences for years to come.

Mr Prime Point Srinivasan, Chairman & Managing Trustee, Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI):



Mr Thiagarajan has set the tone to the era of shifting. That's exactly what our magazine had put up in a recent editorial. A question to Mr Premachandran: Using the Covid-19 opportunity, how can we bring credibility to the institution of politics?

Mr N K Premachandran: Many of us have a notion that politicians are not educated and they do not have any system. But nowadays, so many educated and skilled professionals are coming to the Parliament. It is the strength of the Parliament that our political spectrum is getting good credibility. Definitely, the calibre and qualifications of the political leadership should be strengthened. That is gradually picking up.

Mr K Pandiarajan: In Tamil Nadu, our Government had created a range of institutions. The Amma Canteens are the ones which have provided food security at this time. We are taking care of the migrant workers. Regarding FDI, we have set up a task force at the instance of 5 countries- Japan, Korea, Singapore, US and Taiwan. We'll deliver results. I strongly believe that post covid-19, India will emerge stronger. We have a strong national identity today.

As Mr Premachandran said, there's been a qualitative difference in the people joining politics. There are many people coming in from different disciplines without much of the benefits of their family. It's very important that the centre of gravity of power migrates a little more from the Centre to the States and from the States to the local body. Over the last seven, eight years, there has been a lot of migration of authority from States to the Centre. This trend needs to change. If States are empowered, it will be easier to deal with situations like the present crisis and provide a quick response.

Mr PTR Palanivel Thiagarajan: Let me answer the question on bringing credibility to the institution of politics. There's a lot of talk about hereditary or domestic politician. I'm a fourth-generation politician. I came at the age of 50 with four degrees after earning millions of dollars a year and being worth millions of dollars. I came to politics to contribute. Above learning, politics is really driven by people who have compassion. Those who come to make a profession and a living of it are the root cause of the problem. Even people who come with the best intentions end up getting transformed by the system.

Going back to my personal case, I came at 50 and I have every intention of leaving at 60. I came to do service. I came to continue my legacy. I have other things to do with my life. I had career options that I turned down to come here.

A part of the problem is that the same old people do this for 30, 40 or 50 years and they are soaked in the system. When I was in corporate life, I always felt that one shouldn't sit in a seat for more than two to three years or maybe a year and a half if you're a fast, aggressive learner. Then other people with different talents should come in and I should go and do other things. We need constantly changing blood. We can't have the same people for too long who then block up the pipeline. This is something of a structural and systemic failure. We need more educated people who should be driven by compassion and wanting to make a difference.

Mr Prime Point Srinivasan: Recently we made a study of our Parliament. We were surprised to get the average age of our present Lok Sabha as 56. Can we call it a bunch of highly mature people? Can we reduce this age? It all depends on the individual political parties. We have also started an initiative to equip our next-gen political leaders of all political parties with knowledge and leadership skills.

Now, I have one more question. We are going to get migrant labourers from foreign countries. This is believed to affect the job market in India. I would like to have the views of the Kerala MP Mr Premachandran.

Mr N K Premachandran: It's a very important question as far as Kerala is concerned. Around 35 to 40 lakhs of people are working in foreign countries, especially the Middle East region. Now we have started bringing them back because the demand is coming from the Parvasi community. They want to come back because of the covid-19 and the conditions prevailing there. It is reported that the community spread has already

started there and people want to come back. 3.7 lakh people have already registered to come back to their home State of Kerala.

What would be the implication? We are facing a very delicate problem because more than three million migrant labourers of various states working in Kerala have started going back to their homes since yesterday.

On the other hand, non- resident Indians (NRIs) or the workers from foreign countries are coming back. Most of them will be above 40. Whether they will be able to work here is a very delicate issue. Definitely we have to find some ways to rehabilitate the foreign returnees. Last year's remittance in Kerala alone from NRIs was more than 1 lakh crores of rupees. We are not seeing their real potential. At least now, we have to think about how to rehabilitate the returning NRIs.

Mr Prime Point Srinivasan: Kerala will be losing out on NRI remittances.

Mr N K Premachandran: You are right. In Kerala, even in covid-19 management, everything is managed by the local bodies; the government of Kerala is not spending a single rupee in providing food or shelter. The panchayat systems are really very good. So if we are having strong units at the ground level, they can address most of the issues.

We talked about the Kerala model but it is based on raising the standard of living in Kerala and that was possible because of NRI remittances. Surely, that's a big issue which we have to manage.

Mr K Pandiarajan: Many semi skilled and skilled people returning from abroad would want to go back at the right time. I don't see them coming for good. But there will be alternate areas which will open up for them and linking the needs has to be done by the government. Philippines and Sri Lanka have institutions for relocating people who are coming from one place to another place.

The migrant labour issue is coloured with a lot of cultural aspects. If all the States start really valuing the people who migrated from other states into their states, then it can be a very important and positive by-product of the covid crisis.

Mr Prime Point Srinivasan: This question is for Mr. Thiagarajan. Mr. Peter Rimmele mentioned about the national spend on health. Do you think that India can improve on the health sector? Now, health is in the state list. Do you suggest that it has to go in the concurrent list?

Mr PTR Palanivel Thiagarajan: We have a Central Government that usurps more powers and tries to tell each State when a shop should open there. What is the value of that? What do they know sitting in Delhi? Devolution of power is the need of the hour. In this crisis, the Central Government left the migrant labourer issue to the States. In fact, that is the only issue, they should have taken care of.

We have 1.3 billion people across 32 administrative units and each of those units is big enough to be a country. Even the GST dues to the States are pending. We need to have devolution of power to the place where it can help.

Gp Capt Vijayakumar: Thank you all for sharing great insights. I request Mr Pankaj, to give his thoughts on the German model of governance.

Mr Pankaj Madan: First, my compliments to all the panelists. The German model or the German Constitution talks of federalism. It talks of the basic principle of subsidiarity. That precisely says what can be done at the State should not be attempted at the Central. That is how the German model worked even in the Covid case. It has worked much better than anywhere else in Europe.

Gp Capt Vijayakumar: We have questions from our online viewers. This question is to both our honourable Minister and Mr Thiaga Rajan. Do you foresee any possible structural change coming up in the State politics and political administration? Will Covid-19 be a major issue in Tamil Nadu assembly polls next year?

Mr K Pandiarajan: It's a tough question. Till now the general people have been with the government in whatever decisions we have taken - on lockdown or whatever- and we will continue doing this transparently. All ministers and the entire bureaucracy have been working with one force to handle covid-19 crisis and I would only see a positive impact of it in the elections.

We are sincere in the efforts that we're making, even owning up our mistakes and doing course corrections. These were not done keeping electoral dividends in our mind.

Mr PTR Palanivel Thiagarajan: I differ with Mr Pandiarajan. He talked about the Kerala model. Tamil Nadu has not given as much importance to the local bodies as of Kerala for three and a half years. The local body polls were held even now only for some subset of districts in the rural areas and they have not been held at all, in the cities.

Mr Pandiarajan says that Tamil Nadu's success rate in Covid management is close to Kerala. But Kerala is near to zero cases in the last two to three days. In Tamil Nadu,

every day, the cases are mounting. The success lies in how you're doing testing, tracing and tagging, how many people are going door-to-door, checking and validating all the foreign returnees and making sure they're not showing symptoms, how quickly they are taken and given testing and how strong the local bodies are financially resourced.

Gp Capt Vijayakumar: This question is to Mr Premachandran. How do you think Covid will influence and shape national politics in the short and medium terms?

NK Premachandran: The Government of India is determining the guidelines for the lockdowns, what is to be done and what is not to be done. The state governments are following the guidelines. It's a big experiment. If we are able to mitigate the pandemic effects, definitely it would be helpful for the government. The image of the honourable Prime Minister has improved and political differences have disappeared, especially in the Covid management. He is addressing the nation regularly and has made an impression that everything is being managed. But unfortunately, the state governments are suffering for want of funds. We were all expecting another economic package. These issues will shape the future of Indian politics. The major political thing which will be discussed in the next election could be how the Covid-19 is managed.

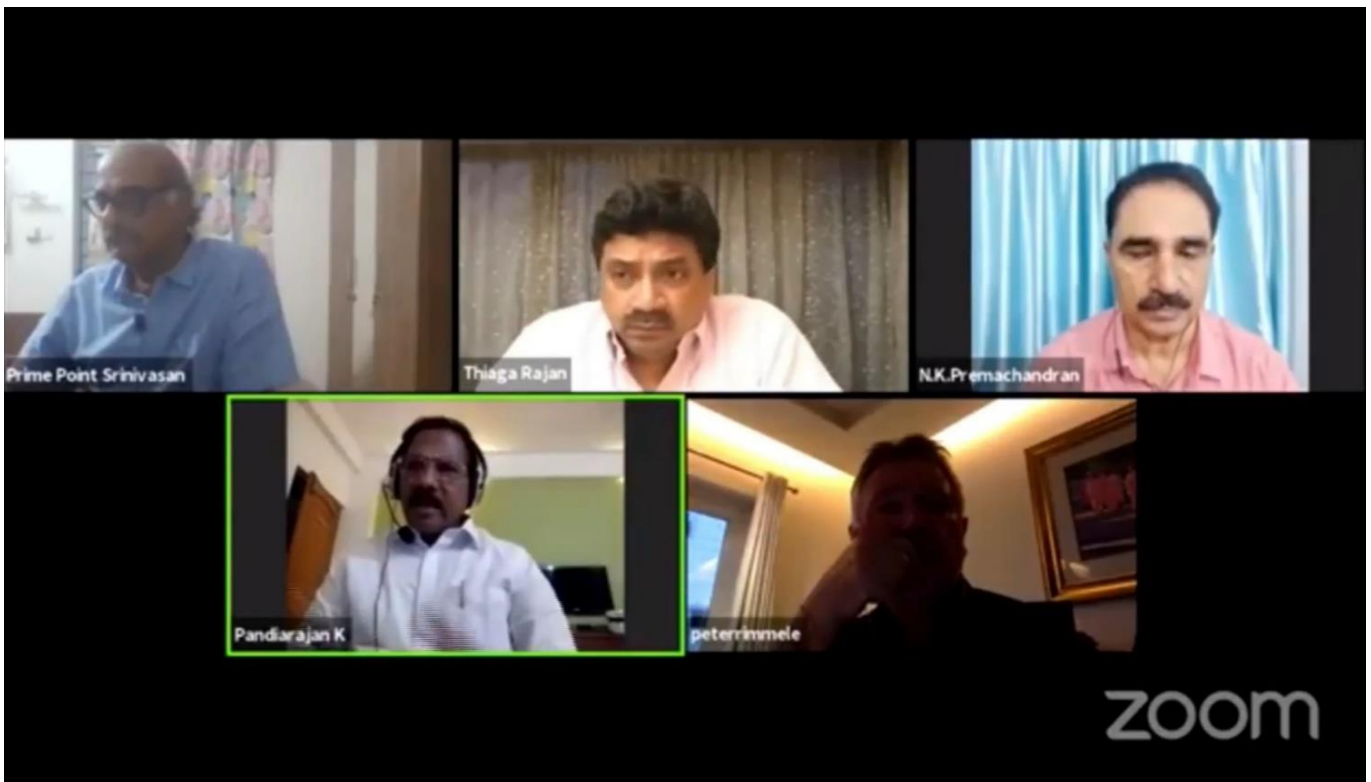
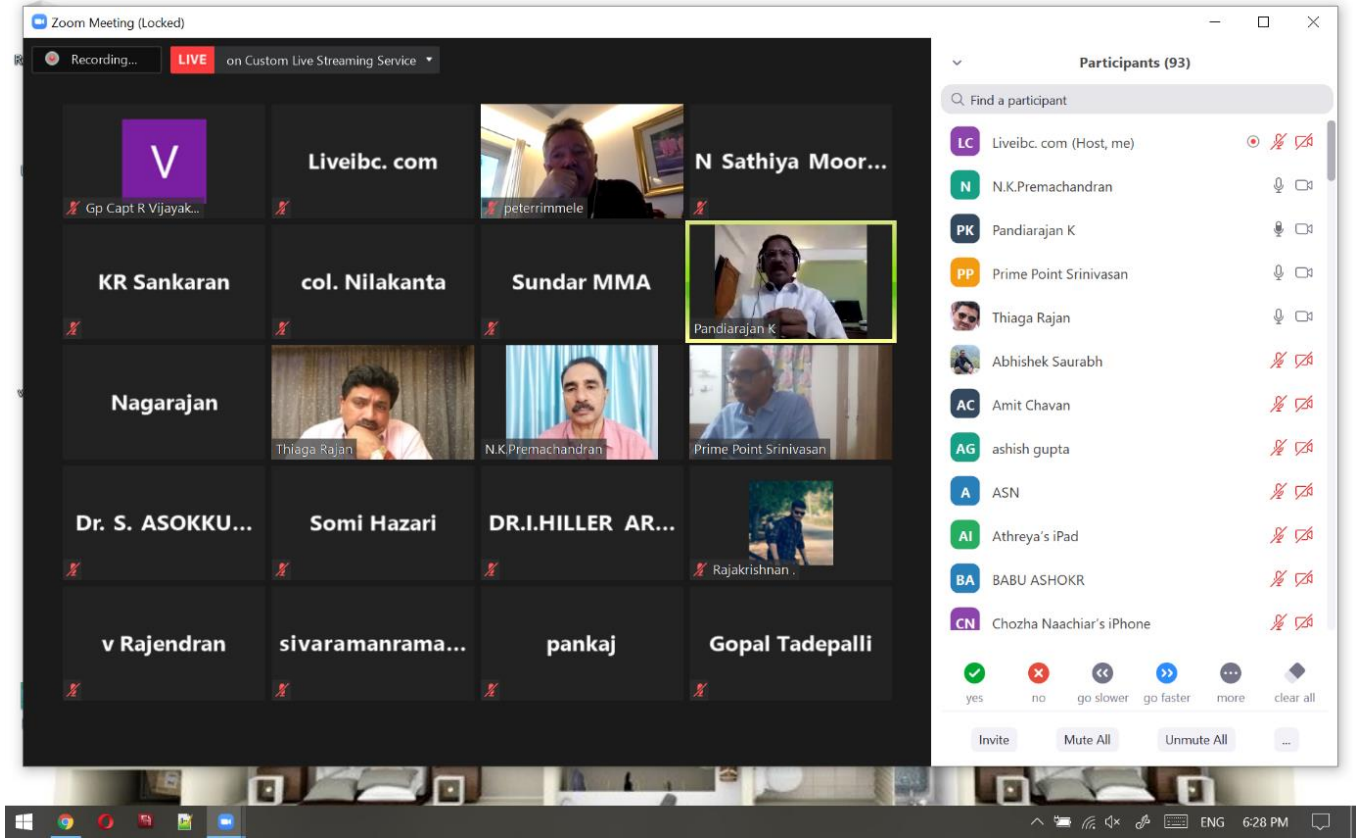
Gp Capt Vijayakumar: One more question. Getting FDA is now going to be a very difficult task. Indians in other countries are also coming back. What are your views on this?

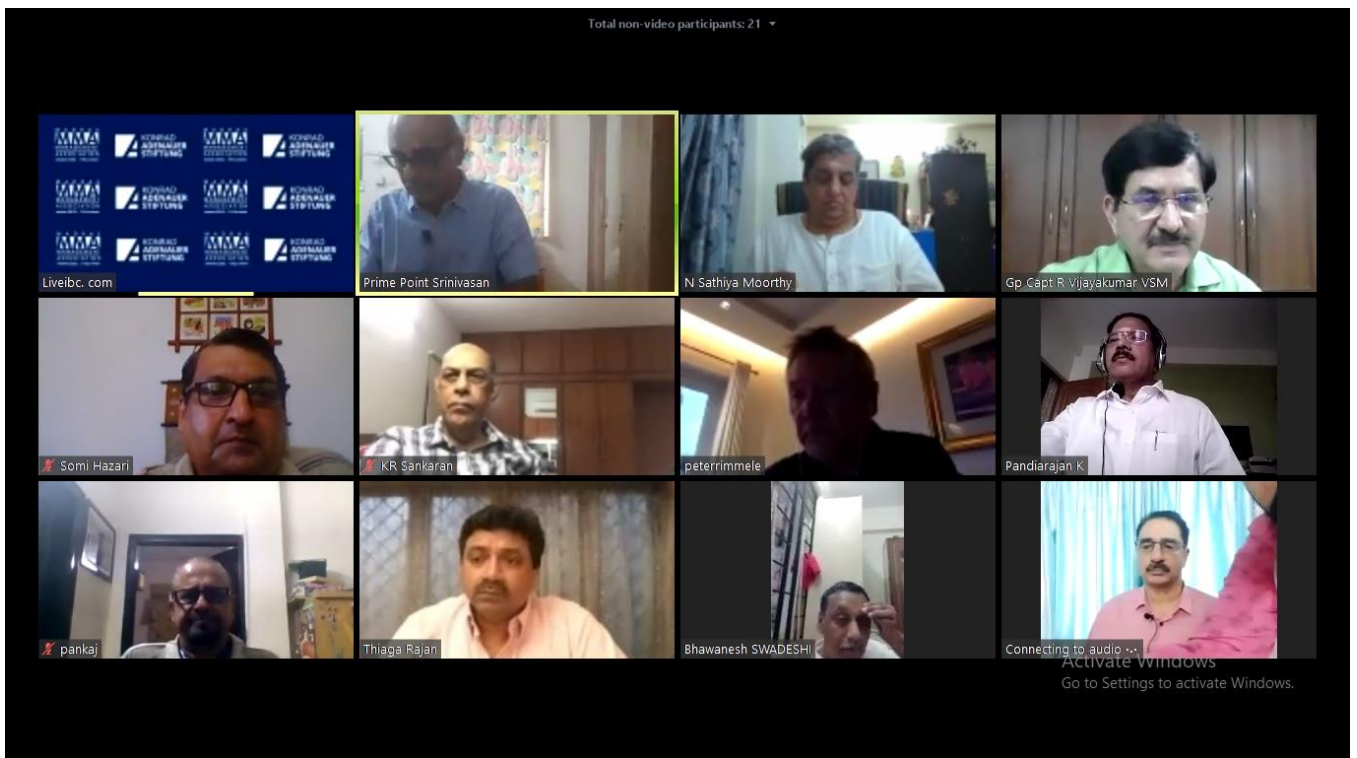
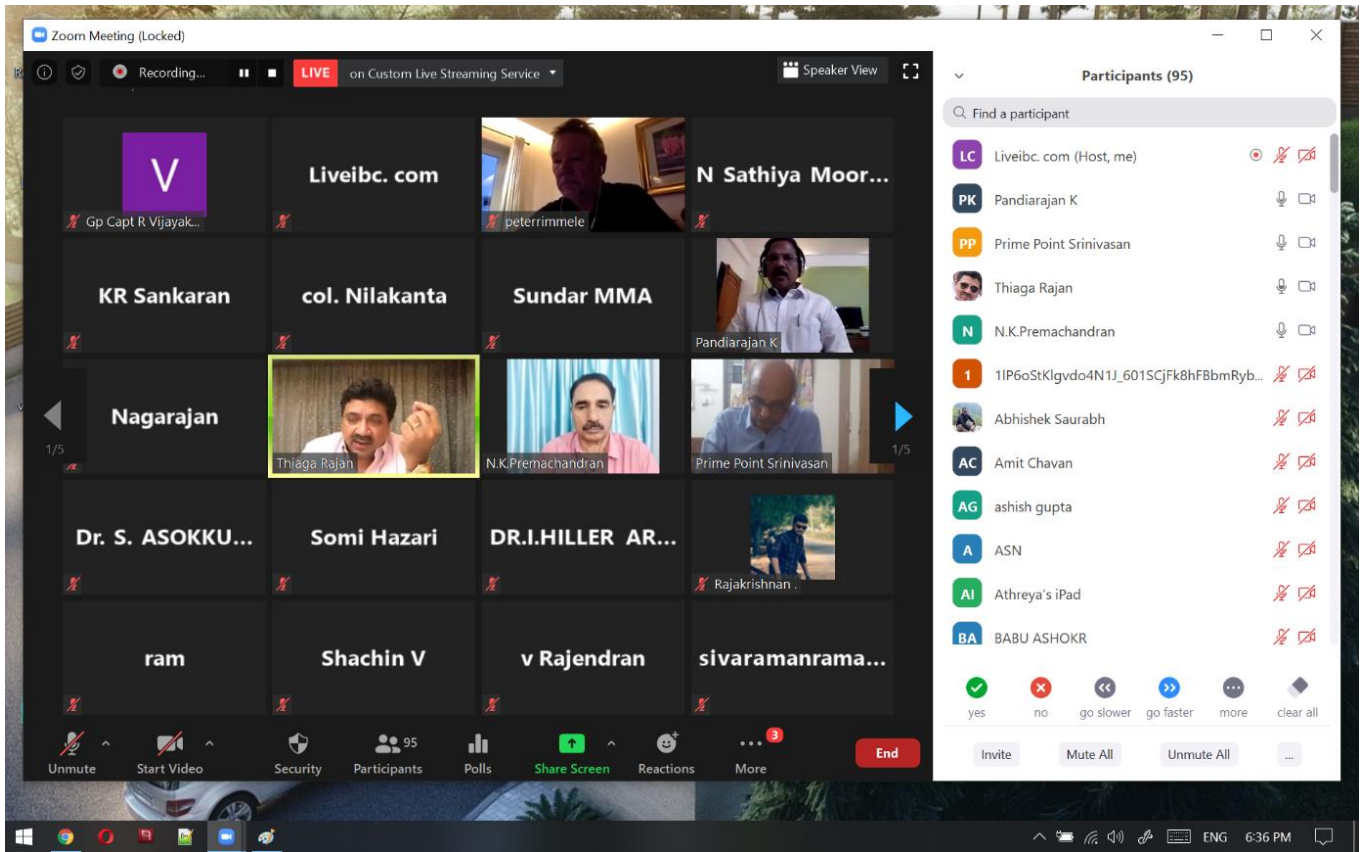
Mr N K Premachandran: The main focus of the government's economic reforms is ease of doing business. I had to appreciate that India's position in the global scenario has improved. But two main issues remain- unemployment and poverty which the government has to face immediately after Covid-19. Now we are simply focusing on the GDP growth rate and FDA. But why are there no employment job opportunities? Whatever be the investment, whatever be the industry, without addressing these two issues of unemployment and poverty, the investment comes will not do wonders for the country.

As concluding remarks, all the three panelists from the sphere of politics sounded a note of optimism that the future of India and Indian democracy will be bright. Gp Capt R Vijayakumar, ED, MMA thanked the panelists, the moderator, Mr Peter Rimmele, resident representative of KAS in India and all the viewers before signing off.

The event concluded at 7:45 PM.

Photographs taken during the Online Panel Discussion on the theme
“COVID-19: Impact on Indian Politics”





Link for the recording of the event COVID-19: Impact on Indian Politics

We are pleased to share that the recording of the event is available for viewing pleasure through the links indicated below:

www.liveibc.com/mma/

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/mmachennai/videos/174762077080758/>

Youtube: <https://youtu.be/5gdtDsUzSb0>



The response to the event has been excellent and we had larger number of viewers logged in live through Zoom, MMA Live webinar, Youtube and Facebook.

Total Number of Participants:

Zoom: 100

Youtube: 251

Facebook: 804

MMA Webinar: 206

Total number of participants at the event - 1361



About Madras Management Association (MMA)

Madras Management Association (MMA) was established in 1956 with the prime objective of promoting management education, training and development activities in this part of the country. The vision of MMA is “To be the Fountainhead of World class Management Excellence in India”.

Over the past six decades, MMA has striven for development and nurturing management expertise, combining Indian ethos with International Management thoughts and practices. MMA has contributed immensely to the enhancement of management capability in this part of the country, and in particular Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. MMA has over 7000 corporate houses, industries, professionals, academics and executives on its rolls as members. MMA annually organizes about 725 executive development activities, including seminars for top management with a total participation of fifty nine thousand executives and entrepreneurs.

MMA is the largest affiliate association of All India Management Association (AIMA) in the country and has been adjudged as the Best Management Association in India by AIMA for ten times in a row including the “National Excellence Award” for the year 2017-18.

The activities of MMA are planned to achieve managerial excellence in the functioning of industries and professional managers in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. In this direction, MMA chapters have been established at various towns in Tamil Nadu mainly to cater to the needs of SMEs. Nine such MMA Local Chapters at Ambur, Attur, Erode, Hosur, Namakkal, Salem, Sri City, Trichy and Puducherry are functioning effectively.

Apart from corporate leaders, MMA has, in its Managing Committee, the Vice Chancellors of Madras University & Anna University, the Directors of IIT Madras and IFMR and the Chief Secretary, Government of Tamilnadu, as members.

OUR VISION

To be the Fountainhead of Worldclass Management Excellence in India

OUR MISSION

- Synthesise Indian Ethos with international management thought
 - Be a reservoir of expertise in management
 - Inspire individuals to actualise their potential
 - Nurture creativity and originality
-

About Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a German political foundation, with a strong presence throughout Germany and all over the world. Freedom, justice and solidarity are the basic underlying principles of the work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

With more than 80 offices abroad and projects in over 120 countries, it makes a unique contribution to the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and social market economy. To foster peace and freedom KAS encourages a continuous dialogue at the national and international levels.

Human beings in their distinctive dignity and with their rights and responsibilities are at the heart of its work. KAS is guided by the conviction that human beings are the starting point in the effort to bring about social justice and democratic freedom while promoting sustainable economic activity. By bringing people together who embrace their responsibilities in society, KAS develops active networks in the political and economic spheres as well as in society itself. The guidance it provides on the basis of political know-how and knowledge helps to shape the globalisation process along more socially equitable, ecologically sustainable and economically efficient lines.

KAS cooperates with governmental institutions, political parties and civil society organizations building strong partnerships along the way. In particular, we seek to intensify political cooperation in the area of development cooperation at the national and international levels on the foundations of our objectives and values. Together with our partners we make a contribution to the creation of an international order that enables every country to develop in freedom and under its own responsibility.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has organised its program priorities in India into the following working areas:

1. Foreign and Security Policy
2. Economic and Energy Policy
3. Rule of Law and local Self-Government
4. Social and Political Training and Development
5. Indo-German Parliamentary Dialogue programmes

In implementing its project and programs, the Foundation cooperates with Indian partner organisations, such as think tanks, apex bodies, Government and Non-Governmental Institutions.
