Title: Perceived risk and Wellbeing during the COVID-19 crisis in India

Authors and affiliations and contact emails: Debayan Pakrashi, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur; Asadul Islam, Monash University; Liang Choon Wang, Monash University; Chitwan Lalji, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode.

Abstract:
COVID-19 has paralyzed the world over the last few months and has sent millions into complete lockdown. Residents from developing countries such as India who suffer from widespread poverty and inequality and reside in regions with high population density and lack job and food security face high risk of contraction and rapid transmission of COVID-19 as maintaining social distance under the isolation guidelines proposed by the Government is nearly impossible for them. With a total of 42,836 confirmed cases and 1,389 deaths as of the 4th of May 2020 (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, 2020) India is currently one of the largest countries under complete lockdown since the 24th of March. This has put many in a very vulnerable state. The adverse effects of such a countrywide lockdown, therefore extend beyond just income shocks and food insecurity as residents are under constant fear of contraction, which may also affect people’s mental health, overall wellbeing and change their attitudes due to high perceived risk.

Data description
From our ongoing and recently completed research projects related to affirmation action and discrimination (funded by IIT Kanpur Initiation Grant and Monash University) we have detailed baseline data from about 3,000 households from 40 different locations in Kanpur from the state of Uttar Pradesh. The proposed project (Randomized Controlled Trial) will follow these households over next six months or beyond with periodic calls to provide some additional information and capture socio-economic outcomes and psychological stress.

JEL codes for the project: I14, I18, I30, J16.

Key-words: attitudes, mental health, wellbeing, impact.