

— —

DOI: 10.4103/0971-5916.286494



Quick Response Code:

### Author's response

Saikia *et al*<sup>1</sup> have reiterated my contention that the public engagement through efficient, trustworthy and comprehensive risk communication is the key to contain pandemic<sup>2</sup>. So long, an efficient vaccine is elusive, only the non-pharmaceutical interventions and hygienic measures can mitigate transmission of infection of SARS-CoV-2. It has been emphasized that risk communication should be appropriate to the local needs and in alignment with the local customs, faith and beliefs.

The survey by Saikia *et al*<sup>1</sup> among neo-Vaishnavites of Assam further proves the fundamental principle of utilizing and promoting the traditional practices that are rooted in basic hygiene and cleanliness, thus preventing or mitigating the transmission of infectious agents. Similar practices are prevalent in different parts of India since ages. The traditional practices have deep meanings which can easily be validated by modern scientific methods. It is hence essential to understand these practices and utilize them in further promoting the public health actions to reduce impact of infectious diseases, in general, and COVID-19 pandemic, in particular.

**Rajesh Bhatia**

Former Director, Communicable Diseases,  
World Health Organization South-East Asia  
Regional Office, New Delhi 110 002, India  
drrajesh.bhatia1953@gmail.com

**References**

1. Saikia B, Tamuli RP, Sharma D. Community engagement in times of COVID-19: Lessons from neo-Vaishnavite practices. *Indian J Med Res* 2020; 151 : 499-501.
2. Bhatia R. Public engagement is key for containing COVID-19 pandemic. *Indian J Med Res* 2020; 151 : 118-20.