



While The World Talks About China, How Safe Are Indian Wet Markets?

Research has pointed at China's wet market as the origin of the novel coronavirus. But are wet markets in India safe from such incidents?

By: [ABP News Bureau](#) | 06 Jul 2020



Representative Image- (Photo by Anthony Kwan/Getty Images)

New Delhi: The evidence collected so far suggests that the novel Coronavirus, the pandemic creating deadly virus started from a wet market in Wuhan China putting wet markets worldwide under the spotlight. Raising the question are Indian wet markets safe? In India, some wet markets especially in the North East also sell wild animals such as Nute Bazar and Churachandpur markets in Manipur.

There is a growing voice asking for the ban on all types of wet markets around the world as it is considered to be the Petri dish for disease-causing microbes to breed and spread. The close interaction between animals and humans can make viruses and other microbes to jump from animals to humans, which is how COVID-19 virus is believed to have spread. In the past as well, such jumps have occurred including Ebola, Nipah, H1N1 (swine flu) which all have zoonotic origins. In fact according to a report by IANS, the Indian unit of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has sent a letter to the ministers of Health and Family Welfare, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Animal Husbandry, Dairying, and Fisheries urging them to shut down these spaces.

It is not to say that the consumption of animals causes the transmission of these diseases but the fact that these animals are stressed, stored in small cages which can weaken their immune systems, thus being more prone to pathogens hence mutating and even spilling over to human population because they are stored near humans during the slaughtering process.

To keeping a check on the food markets, the legislation Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSSA) was formed which keeps regulations on the food industry at par with international standards. The Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Business)

Regulations, 2011 require the registrations and licensing of any food business including the meat market. This valid license is necessary for any food-related operation and to ensure safety, sanitary and hygienic conditions. All animals must be certified by a veterinarian as healthy and disease-free before slaughtering under the Cruelty to Animals (Slaughter House) Rules, 2001.

In India, only goat, sheep, pigs, bovine or cattle, poultry, and fish are allowed to be slaughtered. Animals such as sea turtle, porcupines, lizards, etc. are species that are protected by law, and slaughtering of these animals is illegal.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was set up to provide the licenses and see that the guidelines and measures are met. But according to a DownToEarth report, the organization is ill-equipped and underfunded to properly carry out the work.