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INTERFACE

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DISCOURSE ON THE PANDEMIC



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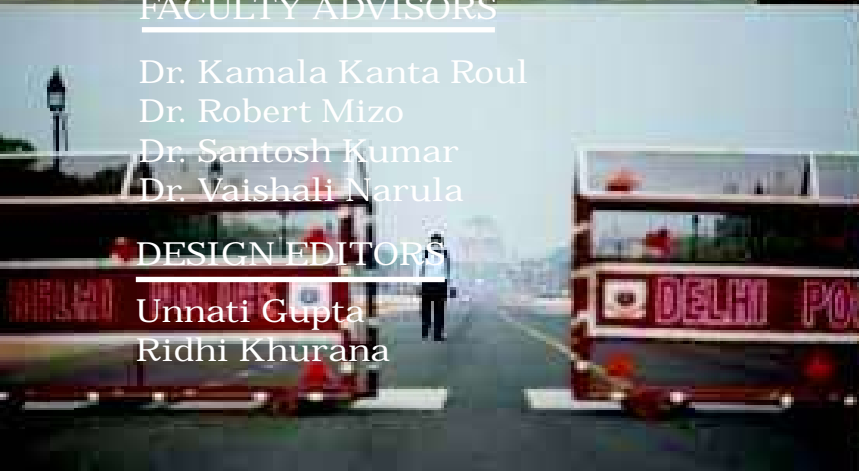
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Vaccine Diplomacy and the Politicization of Healthcare

Yashiba Sanil, 3rd Year

The international arena as it inches closer to a post-pandemic world is now hearing a buzzword that is making its rounds more than ever among people and political institutions across the world- Vaccine diplomacy. Now to be fair, the inception of vaccines or rather the politicization of it is hardly anything that is new within the understanding of global politics or healthcare. Vaccines have been around for now over a decade with the first vaccine presented being that of cowpox developed by Englishman Edward Jenner back in the 1790s. Interestingly, in 1800 the vaccine was developed in France under Napoleon at a time when France and Britain were at war. Jenner himself stated back then that “the sciences are never at war”. This sets an interesting context to today’s status quo with the COVID-19 pandemic and the way the process of obtaining and distributing vaccination has panned. The sciences truly came together regardless of borders and collaborated in various arenas to create vaccines that have ever been formulated in history- thanks to modern advances in science- but at the same time at the distribution level and policy-making level via political institutions, we are now facing the issue of vaccine monopoly.

COVID-19 has fast become one of the ultimate stressors on our already fragile international system that for a decade had managed to sustain itself under an illusion of growth which did not adequately address various issues like- lack of budget distribution in key arenas such as healthcare, demand and supply of production and the inequality in jobs and wages in the market. The pandemic exposed existing vulnerabilities, magnified weaknesses, and exacerbating long-festering issues. At the most basic level, this difficult moment has highlighted just how ill-equipped our global health systems are, forcing many countries to make devastating ethical decisions to determine who among their citizenry is most deserving to receive medical care. Furthermore, rather than build a renewed global coalition to fight this awful disease, many countries have instead relied on isolationist policies. This has resulted in piecemeal, ineffectual responses as cases once again spike wildly all over the world, the United States being one of the worst examples.

Need for vaccine equity in the world order

A huge issue that arose out of the massive demand in medical supplies and personal protection equipment was that a lot of countries burdened with the increasing number of cases(also due to lack of proper control in the initial stages) resorted to isolationist policies which could not adequately address the global need for cooperation and thus when vaccines were finally developed- the concept of “Vaccine nationalism” took the forefront with wealthier countries striking purchasing deals with pharmaceuticals leading to hoarding of vaccines. The consequences of this are extremely dire as it throws off the plans that international organizations like the UN set up

the COVAX program for example set up by the United Nations is struggling to purchase just 20 percent of doses for lower-income countries while wealthier countries purchase over 60 percent of the vaccine accessible. Even though countries like the US, Canada and organizations such as the EU have promised to help lower-income countries- a lot of their promises and commitments have not been adequately met.

Vaccine nationalism and monopolization is not just morally indefensible but also extremely counter-productive as according to Tedros Adhanom- Market-driven mechanisms alone are insufficient to achieve the goal of stopping the pandemic by achieving herd immunity with vaccines. Limited supplies and overwhelming demand create winners and losers. Neither is morally or medically acceptable during a pandemic.

Therefore, there is a need for vaccine equity and for a fair distribution of vaccines specially to lower income and developing countries.

Shift from the west?

Throughout the duration of the pandemic- the international arena witnesses a dismissive and dismal approach from the west. The USA virtually stepped away from even taking the pandemic seriously initially- with the Trump administration having been more focused on shifting the blame on China primarily- leading the UN and other countries into a deadlock over negotiations for co-operation and finally also withdrawing from the WHO. Even though Biden has been trying to do damage control- his policy also focuses on inoculating his country first and then focusing on sending surplus to other countries. All this while- countries like Russia, China and even India have been engaging in a high level of vaccine diplomacy where they are promising medical aid and vaccines to other developing nations. Every single one of these countries aim at pushing for their own domestic vaccine and have currently signed multiple deals with countries mostly from the Global south- filling the gap left by developed countries as they continue to evade responsibility. The west continues to lose credibility as the East not just focuses on better management but also fosters a sense of aid and cooperation. Even if certain countries look at vaccine rollout programs as means to push for power, they are still gaining credibility on a ground that the west is failing to accommodate to. With dominating eastern powers like China rising(while also trying to garner points for itself through its vaccine diplomacy in a way to make-up for the lack of information provided in the early stages of the virus spreading) and a weakened western nexus with an unstable US- undergoing transition still pending to remedy much of the last four years and the harms inflicted, there have been talks of a shift of power from the west to the east.

With new mutations in the virus reducing efficacy and issues in production and supply- the rich countries even after having to slash some of their previously promised doses are still in a moderately comfortable position- it is the developing countries; especially the ones that are yet to even receive their first shot that are facing massive problems. This sort of delay not just leads to further loss in human life but also deepens the economic burden that seems to be ever rising, making the propensity for countries to bounce back to pre- pandemic levels even more difficult.

In every paradigm for a tangible solution there is a need for a certain amount of co-operation and responsibility that the Global North would also have to shoulder because ignoring the South- allowing mutations to develop would only affect them more later health wise and economically. There is a need for multilateral regional cooperation- western countries can take suit of proposals raised by India and South Africa asking for waiving of intellectual property rights and overcome artificial scarcity. Manufacturing technology, sharing information, removing intellectual property barriers, and creating open sourcing would help developing nations to also

work towards formulating their own domestic vaccines thus increasing production supply. Building additional manufacturing bases—especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—which will be essential to meeting ongoing demand for COVID-19 booster shots and future vaccines. Expanding production globally would make poor countries less dependent on donations from rich ones. This is essential to achieve true health equality and global health security.

Therefore, it is extremely vital to understand that the virus does not discriminate and does not function through selective choice. Therefore, to fully win the war against the pandemic- countries across the world, especially the government leaders need to engage in positive and effective global health diplomacy that is community centred and is not unequal. Reiterating what Jenner established- sciences do not care much about war or borders- the nature of globalization and an interconnected world means that co-operation cannot simply just exist within scientific development but also in a political and policy-based level where healthcare is not politicized to be exclusive and is instead steered to be inclusive and accessible to populations across the world.

Enhanced Role of NGOs During Covid-19

Shreya Pawar, 3rd Year

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) all over the world have acquired a new dimension in the recent past, especially in the context of a multipolar global order. The outbreak of COVID-19 created the need for prompt endeavours on an extremely large scale at all levels. It took an unprecedented crisis for the world to recognise the indispensable role played by NGOs in dealing with the deadliest challenge in the entire history of humankind. The pandemic stumped the people and their governments alike. It was during these precarious circumstances that the NGOs spearheaded the enormous task of assisting the governments in carrying out relief drives. It is essential to note that even though many such organizations have been doing the same 'social work' for years now, it was the first time when this was taken seriously in a large number of countries at the same time over the same cause.

For the pupils and scholars of political science, an NGO is one of the most significant non-state entities and yet plays an imperative role in directing the functioning of various departments. Many NGOs also work as pressure groups to influence not just the government of a nation-state but also the global order. What distinguishes an NGO from other non-state actors is the fact that it works primarily to serve collective interests and to ensure the welfare of society. It is in this context that the United Nations defines a Non-Governmental Organization as "a not-for-profit, voluntary citizens' group, which is organized on a local, national or international level to address issues in support of the public good."

The NGOs are known to have a deep connection with the spatial and sectoral issues and their massive and effective reach among the locals. Due to this, these NGOs were a natural partner to the state in their endeavour of winning over this crisis. These organizations have the advantage of better relativity and close engagement at the grassroots level of communities. The NGOs worked on many things during the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown including setting up community kitchens, spreading awareness about preventing the virus through maintaining physical distancing, providing shelter to the homeless, the migrants, supporting the government's efforts in setting up health camps and in deputing volunteers to deliver services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, children, and others.

Various other NGOs also worked towards protecting women and children from domestic violence, providing basic sanitary products, ensuring basic education and even minimum employment at various places. Various efforts by the civil society were also supported, funded, promoted and initiated by the NGOs. Startups revolving around cheap effective medical solutions were actively promoted. They created a much-needed momentum throughout their networks and brought attention to the problems from the grassroots.

An important case that needs to be brought into the light, to substantiate the enhanced role played by the NGOs during the pandemic, is that of the Migrant Workers Crisis in India in April 2020. While the government and the legal machinery were struggling to manage the enormous flow of migrant

workers to their native places amidst the ongoing outbreak, it was the NGOs that managed to hold the situation in whatever ways they could. While some of them stood for the rights of the migrants and shed light on how the migrant workers were not only facing unemployment but also were without any shelter, the others tried to provide temporary relief to the workers during their journeys.

In India, close to one lakh NGOs were approached by the state administrations to partner with. This meant that the government strategically used the widespread network of NGOs to the advantage of speeding up humanitarian relief. Along with the government, these NGOs were then able to reach millions of people in shorter spans than either would have managed alone. Even the Supreme Court of the country recognized the work and appreciated the help of the government during difficult times.

It is also important to understand the fact that there were many constraints these NGOs faced and largely overcame. It is no big secret that there have been increased legal and

administrative barriers that NGOs face all around the world which makes receipt of funds domestically and internationally difficult for them. Even though the reasons behind the imposition of this legal strictness are valid, there has been no viable solution for the NGOs. The shrinking of the civic space that this pandemic brought for everyone made their task all the more difficult.

Overcoming most of the barriers, NGOs made an extremely significant contribution in providing humanitarian relief amidst this global pandemic that continues to make the life of everyone difficult and challenging. It is no exaggeration to say that many NGOs came as a ray of hope for many people around the world. They truly maintained their legacy of working towards social development, even as most of the world had shut down and came to a pause. It is expected that this enhanced role played by the Non-Governmental Organizations shall not cease even as things go back to normal. In fact, in the 'new normal' world, we can only see the capacity of NGOs expanding.

Covid-19 and Globalisation

Shivantika Rajee, 3rd Year

The pandemic that the world is collectively experiencing today has increased the relevance of national boundaries in unimaginable magnitude in an era where globalisation is celebrated. Covid-19 has the world and its functioning in its grip, affecting every dimension of vibrant global forces. Quite a paradoxical situation, indeed, for the virus has reached every corner of the globe and at the same time has rendered the global and domestic economy defenceless. The state's role in keeping the outbreak of the virus under control and within the confines of its boundaries emphasizes the fact that the Westphalian notion of the state as a territorially defined entity is here to stay. Protectionist sentiments are on the rise, thus favoring state interventionist measures and countries are looking inward rather than outward in the process. An apt question that can be posed here is whether Covid-19 has effectively diminished neo-liberal economic structural processes along with the various dimensions of globalisation and as a consequence has increased the importance of the state, or has it merely dented its penetrative abilities.

Globalisation

The territorially defined Westphalian conception of a sovereign state emerged only in the 16th-17th century, in specific with the aftermath of the 30 Year War. Contributions by Bodin and Hobbes on the sovereignty of the state highlight the important recognition of territorial integrity and internal and external sovereignty, meaning that its boundaries are impermeable and its violation unacceptable.

An all-encompassing role is played by the state today that also presents its essentiality and significance since its borders determine and dictate the social, political, cultural and

economic spheres of our lives. The transition from a Laissez-Faire to an Interventionist state in the West happened only in the first half of the twentieth century, only to be unraveled later in the 90s by what scholars call 'globalisation' that came with the disintegration of Soviet Union. Scholars differ in their conceptualization but to put it simply, globalisation refers to the emergence of a complex web of interconnectedness where events and decisions in one part of the world affect societies far away thus rendering space and time irrelevant.

These developments have paved the way not only to a more common relatable culture but also to a more serious discussion on global civil society and cosmopolitanism. In this way, globalisation has challenged the very idea of state boundaries, authority and sovereignty.

Globalisation during COVID

The outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020 has led to re-emergence and increased relevance of state boundaries that have become the primary barriers in curbing the spread of the virus. The world is witnessing a significant decline in inter-state travel and the flow of goods as a result of the government's closing borders and restricting air travel. Although a downward slope in the global economy was registered well before 2020, Covid-19 has exacerbated and aggravated trade deficiencies. Countries are looking inwards for goods and domestic suppliers to fulfill the needs of their citizens, a great portion of whom are unemployed due to the pandemic itself. This would explain the protectionist policies undertaken by various nations including India. Prime Minister Modi's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' draws on the need of making domestic

industries and companies robust rather than basing the country's dependence on others. Similar policies have been adopted by the United States (in former President Trump's 'America First' policy), the United Kingdom and the European Union that would enable governments to approve or decline investments in concerned states and also aim to restrict the inflow of immigrants. However, such a sentiment pre-dates Covid-19 that only intensified after the crisis.

This resurgence of borders also entails state responsibility towards its citizens, evident in instances of special flight rescue missions intending to bring back citizens stranded in other countries along with a need for safety nets, social security, state-monitored health care services and vaccination drives. This last point brings me to the idea of 'vaccine nationalism' which is just another reflection of states prioritising their citizens living within their territory. The race to procure vaccines has only begun and developed nations inhabited by only 16% of the world population, have possession of 60% of the vaccine supply. This is a serious blow to the vision of global society and the collective resolve to make the world Covid-19 free and an obvious sign of the resurgence of country boundaries and state politics. Nations have also been unable to come together because each of them is preoccupied with tackling their domestic problems.

What lies Ahead

Is Covid-19 a possible death knell for globalisation and a marker of re-established importance of state? It is too early to come up with such a conclusive statement and also perhaps a little risky because the world had been experiencing what some scholars are calling 'de-globalisation' before the onset of the pandemic crisis, therefore its decline cannot entirely be attributed to Covid-19. And despite the 'shrinkage of the world', states have continued to play, to this day, an instrumental role in providing stability and security as well as that of a regulator.



Preeti Yadav, 3rd year

Having said that, global forces have still found a way to function despite having been put in temporary paralysis. States are pooling in resources for production, supply and export of vaccine and medical equipment; the recent signing of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and China's decision to continue with its Belt Road Initiative to strengthen economic ties. Interaction between state leaders and diplomacy has shifted online. Even BRICs held its 12th Summit 2020 in virtual mode.

Contrary to the overwhelming rhetoric of the reversal of globalisation, we can safely state that globalisation is still somewhat robust in its functioning although its intensity has become lackluster over the years. At the same time, Covid-19 has provided a new life to the Westphalian conception of the state. The state has a renewed responsibility that cannot be abdicated or transferred to non-state entities. In conclusion, we can say that just as society is slowly coming to terms and is adapting to the 'new normal', so will the State and the phenomenon of globalisation.

Economic Consequences of Covid-19 in India: the need for crisis preparedness

Khushi Agarwal, 2nd Year

"The year 2020 could see the worst global economic recession fallout since the Great Depression, with over 170 countries likely to experience negative per capita GDP growth."

-Kristalina Georgiev

The global Covid-19 pandemic inflicted two kinds of shocks on the countries across the globe- a health shock and an economic shock since its effective containment required the economies of the world to stop their normal functioning. This abrupt halt led to dire consequences, brought social and economic life to a standstill, and triggered fears of a deep and prolonged global recession.

To curb the spread, the Government of India too announced a nation-wide lockdown starting March 25, 2020 that remained in effect till May 31. The lockdown restrictions which were imposed without any preparation and coordination with states, was one of the most stringent lockdowns enforced in the world, forcing 1.3 billion Indians to stay indoors. Except for some essential services and activities, the rest of India's \$2.9 trillion economy remained shuttered during the Covid period. As per news reports published in Economic Times on 23 March 2020, the economists are pegging the cost of the lockdown at the US \$120 billion or 4% of the Indian GDP. Despite the curve flattening and the development of new vaccines, many are still wondering what recovery would look like.

There has been a multi-sectoral impact of the virus as the economic activities of the nation slowed down. A 2019 joint report from the WHO and the World Bank estimated the impact of the pandemic at 4.8% of the global GDP. Let us now analyze the impacts sector-wise.

INFORMAL SECTOR

The unequal labour market in India witnessed a widespread loss of jobs and income after Covid-19 struck. India has a very high share of less-educated informal workers (self-employed, casual workers including migrants) engaged in low paying, precarious and unstable jobs that do not offer any social security in the sectors worst hit by the pandemic. Due to low, irregular incomes and a lack of social support, many of them were spurred to continue working, often in unsafe conditions, exposing themselves and their families to additional risks much in contrast to the organized formal sector employees. The lockdown led to large-scale losses of jobs and incomes for these informal sector workers, pegged at around 122 million in April 2020 according to the estimates from CMIE. With almost no economic activity particularly in urban areas, millions of migrant workers were forced to return to their native villages, thus creating a massive migrant crisis.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

The pandemic induced lockdown adversely affected the Indian agricultural sector by disrupting the necessary supply chains through several channels: input distribution, harvesting, procurement, transport hurdles, marketing, and processing. Closure of Mandis, restaurants, transport bottlenecks, etc. reduced the demand for fresh produce, poultry, and fisheries products, affecting both producers and suppliers. Agricultural growth is expected to be between 2.5% to 3% in FY21 as India had a bumper crop production due to normal monsoons this season. However, with the introduction of the new controversial farm laws, it is still not clear as to how the Indian agriculture sector will react to the intended shock treatment.

MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSME's)

The micro, small and medium enterprises that constitute the manufacturing sector in India had been worst hit by the pandemic due to reduced cash flows caused by the nationwide lockdown. Their demand, as well as supply chain, disrupted, and they had been adversely affected by the exodus of migrant workers, restrictions in the availability of raw materials, disruption in exports and imports, and also by the widespread travel bans, closure of malls, hotels, theatres, and educational institutions. As a consequence, hundreds of thousands of people employed in this sector ended up with job and salary losses. With all non-essential businesses closed, most industries witnessed a drastic decline in sales. Revenue losses will force businesses to either close down or opt for wholesale retrenchment of workers.

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

The tourism and hospitality sector has been badly damaged, with millions of jobs lost and many companies bankrupt. New variants of the virus, discovered in recent months, have forced many countries to introduce tighter travel restrictions. The CAPA assessed that the Indian aviation industry will post staggering losses worth nearly \$ 4bn this year. Railway freight was down by more than 35% in April and began recovering slowly since May. Billions of dollars have been lost in 2020 and although the forecast for 2021 is better, many analysts believe that international travel and tourism won't return to the normal pre-pandemic levels until around 2021.

BANKING AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The country-wide lockdown had aggravated the risk aversion of the banking system. As more and more firms struggle to stay afloat and are unable to repay their dues amidst the massive demand and supply disruptions, corporate delinquencies have gone up and the level of Non-Performing Assets in the already fragile banking system increased precipitously. With Covid-19 disrupting jobs and income sources of millions of people, defaults from the retail sector and individual loan defaulters are also likely to soar not only rise in the banking system but also in the NBFCs who lend to the MSME sector. Foreign investors have been pulling money out of the Indian financial markets and are fleeing to safe assets as stock markets crashed.

The unprecedented lockdown that was imposed due to the contagious nature of the disease adversely affected the stability of the economy. In this scenario, India would go into recession, jeopardizing lifestyle and assumption of common wellbeing which we had taken for granted. India's GDP was on a downward slope much before the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country, largely due to the demonetisation exercise, and the botched up implementation of GST that paralyzed the cash-dominated informal sector and small businesses. Coupled with a humanitarian crisis and muted policy response, the Covid-19 pandemic has brutally exposed and worsened existing vulnerabilities in the Indian economy.

It may take a long time for the economy to recover from this shock; recovery depends on the policy responses of the Government and the RBI. The Government of India has announced a 20 lakh crore 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' economic package, amounting to 10% of the GDP aimed at igniting the innovative entrepreneurial spirit of New India by focusing on strengthening the economy, infrastructure, system, demography, and demand. The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union budget for the fiscal year 2021 on February 1, 2021, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, largely based on six pillars- health and well-being, physical and financial capital and infrastructure, inclusive development for aspirational India, reinvigorating human capital, innovation, and Research & Development, and minimum governance, maximum governance. However, it is to be seen whether the government can help boost the economy after what has been a difficult year, due to the economic slowdown, followed by the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

DISSENT DURING PANDEMIC

Aditi Prakash, 2nd Year

‘Dissent’ is seen as a disagreement or precisely to have opinions, philosophy, or sentiment of non-agreement or opposition to a prevailing idea. The right to dissent is one of the most important rights guaranteed by the Constitution. As long as a person doesn’t break the law or encourage strife, they have the right to differ from any other citizen or those in power. The dissent attempts to weaken the existing unjust power structures so that a more just structure can be put in its place. At the end of the day, it gives hope to humankind to stand for what it is ultimately known for, to use its conscience, and to attain justice. People are driven towards dissent, and it is rightfully called ‘power of the powerless’. Countering the injustice, allows more people to live a ‘good life’, flourish, and make their tomorrows even better in the process.

Governments around the world are using the pandemic to close off all sources of dissent on the ground and online. Authorities have deployed heavy-handed security responses and emergency measures to crush dissent, criminalize basic freedoms, and silence independent reporting, leaving the essence of democracy compromised. Governments have used coronavirus to quash protests. What has happened over time in Hong Kong is pathetic. Hong Kong’s controversial national security law will aid China in silencing voices of dissent against the Chinese government, and it will give Beijing jurisdiction over “some extremely rare” national security cases in Hong Kong. This sparked massive protests where the police have responded with teargas and pepper spray and have even shot an individual. It has impounded and searched dozens of people at a time to effectively quash all expressions of dissent. Several pro-democracy activists were arrested and detained due to their involvement in the protests. Colombia saw the assassination of three prominent activists in the early days of the country’s lockdown. Armed rebel groups involved in drug trafficking are targeting activists they see as impediments to their profits. It clearly shows how a lack of scrutiny leads to an attack on Human Rights and leaves the actors more vulnerable to attacks.

In Russia, President Putin furthered a proposal that would keep him in power until 2036 and banned gatherings of over 5,000 people for the month of March 2020.

The report by Washington-based Freedom House said authorities in dozens of countries have cited the COVID-19 outbreak “to justify expanded surveillance power and the deployment of new technologies that were once seen as too intrusive.” This has led to increased censorship of dissent. Freedom House’s index of internet freedom assigned a score on a 100-point scale to 65 countries; this shows a consistent drop in internet freedom for the 10th year. China was the worst-ranked country for the 6th consecutive year. It said Chinese authorities “combined low-and high-tech tools not only to manage the outbreak of the coronavirus but also to deter internet users from sharing information from independent sources and challenging the official narrative.” The report cited notable declines in countries where authorities have imposed internet shutdowns including

Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan, India, and Rwanda for its use of “sophisticated spyware to monitor and intimidate exiled dissidents.”

In India, the ones with critical minds have been labelled as anti-national or a coward for speaking up for the right. One of the biggest protests going on in India is the farmers’ protests where it has become the case of farmers vs the government. Farmers are fighting against the violence inflicted by the policemen, being abducted, booked under unlawful charges, still, the beloved government is pushing for a round of talks.

Right from shutting down the internet in Jammu & Kashmir to booking students and activists under UAPA, for expressing their dissent and protesting peacefully during the CAA protests. Jamia Millia Islamia students Meeran Haider, Safoora Zargar, Pinjra Tod Members and JNU students Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita, and several other names are there who have been slapped with UAPA. Let’s not forget about the stand-up comedian who was arrested for the jokes he didn’t make. The government has come a long way in finding new ways to shut every mouth that tries to question its accountability.

How many arrests and how many atrocities will it take to call out this government, which has created a situation of ‘undeclared emergency’?

Because, let’s not forget, fascism is strengthened because people are silenced and made to believe that all steps whether right or wrong are in the spirit of nationalism.

But do we need that kind of nationalism? Witch-hunting against a particular section of citizenry. The feeling that the country and its government can do no wrong is what will lead to its destruction. Firstly, people need to understand that the country’s government is not equal to the country. Their responsibility is to serve us, but there’s no necessity to defend the government in the wake of a dangerous move. Climate Change Activists like Disha Ravi got remanded in police custody. Her Crime? Amending and sharing a toolkit for protests, which was seen as a move to destabilize India and to dismantle this powerful country! This government has clearly stated through its actions that it is intolerant towards dissent.

To question the government, to challenge and verify, and to ask for accountability from the government is the right of every citizen under the Constitution. Criticising the legislature, executive, or judiciary isn’t anti-national. Curbing dissent and denying basic human necessities isn’t what is desirable in a democracy.

People can be proud of their country. People can love it. People can honour it. But people should also understand that their country is not above human ideals. Patriotism and not nationalism is the need of the hour.

Dissent during the pandemic has shown us the true colours of governments across the world. However, the struggle for justice will continue as it has always, time and again.

Covid-19 Pandemic and the Digital Divide

Jasmine Nankani, 1st year

They say, “A gun would be too violent. A noose would be too ancient. And a knife blade to the wrist would be too silent.” So, the question in the milieu of Education Technology is, how could it be carried out smoothly and precisely, with minimum mess, yet maximum impact? The answer, as we all perceive it to be, lies in the question itself. A virtual and convenient mode of imparting education is believed to be the much needed ‘fuel’ to race the ‘carts’ of education.

There’s no denying the fact that this pandemic enabled us to look for an alternative to the traditionally monotonous method of teaching, and replaced it with a rather innovative teaching and learning option - through Zoom, Google or Microsoft interfaces. It also exposed just how rooted the structural imbalances are - between rural and urban areas, male and female, rich and poor, even in the digital world. Be it pre or post-pandemic, this underscores the systematically structured economic discrimination which is flouted so conveniently although it requires considerable attention. Time and again, there’s a debate on whether virtual teaching and learning is a boon or a bane, and all I can say is that it is only a deliberation for the privileged because the underprivileged often get sidelined and unheard. Ironical as it sounds, this article, seeking to highlight the unequal access to education, can only be read by those who have the means to download a PDF on their device and read it to understand that they aren’t alone. We like to believe that we’re all in this together and that we will all come out of this together. The debate on Ed-tech is not who has the most of it and who has the least, but who gets it and who doesn’t, at all. The digital divide is evident across class, gender, region or place of residence. Among the poorest 20% households, only 2.7% have access to a computer and 8.9% to internet facilities. In the case of the top 20% households, the proportions are 27.6% and 50.5% respectively.

According to UNESCO, in September 2020, a staggering 850 million children and young adults, half of those enrolled in schools, colleges and universities worldwide, were not in education or training because of COVID-19. The agency has also been tracking closures of schools up to secondary level, and although schools were reopening in many regions, they remain closed in 52 countries. Most of these areas are in the southern half of the globe, encompassing many low and middle-income countries, which means that students are much less likely to be taking part in the online revolution. The optimum usage of the Internet in this area is low, and some 360 million young people do not have access to it. These figures imply that students from poor families, who do not have access to the internet, are more likely to be denied education, as compared to the richer families. This further widens the systemic educational inequalities.

Devika Chadha, an educationist says, “Students definitely gain from technological advances that enhance the learning process, but is it intimidating at the same time? We also deal with street children of the city and education for them is

something that happens across night schools, with ‘interrupted learning’ a common factor. During exams, it is the technology that helps them cope with the workload of studies.” To analyse her statement, we need to understand the nature of economic disparity among students as a major factor in determining whether the technology is really benefiting them or not. The equitable distribution of technology and resources is the most crucial determinant of the digital divide.

In universities, the transition to online education is enabling institutions to reach out to students from underserved areas and underrepresented communities. But if you notice the paradox, children from these communities already cannot access formal schooling, a struggle that adds to their plight. Due to this, very few students can reach high school or college. If broadband and laptops are equivalent to the teacher, the library, and the laboratory, then why should only a fraction of the students have access to it? What about the rest? Online education must become more inclusive. The public or the private sectors that fund it must do more to ensure that more learners can benefit from new Ed-Tech, including access to broadband, smartphones and laptops. It will only benefit the world, to have an educated and resilient population, decades down the line.

Shantanu Sharma, a 22-year-old B.Tech student from Meerut, who is also a social activist, expresses his concern over the deprivation of education in slum areas. He works with his team members to educate underprivileged children and urges the authorities to ensure the proper availability of the tools and devices required for the children to have access to learning. One such story is of an eighth-grade student in Faridabad, Haryana, Suchi Singh. There is only one smartphone between her and her three siblings. So, the four take turns to attend classes. This girl, who is a topper, is forced to miss classes, which troubles her father Rajesh Kumar, a newspaper vendor. But as he says, he has no option - a smartphone is a luxury when he is struggling to provide for his family. “E-classes have made life difficult,” he said, pessimistic about what the future holds for him and his children.

According to the 2017-18 National Sample Survey report on education, only 24% of Indian households have an internet facility. While 66% of India’s population lives in villages, only a little over 15% of rural households have access to internet services. For urban households, the proportion is 42%. In fact, only 8% of all households with members aged between five and 24 have both a computer and an internet connection. It is also useful to note that as per the National Sample Survey definition, a household with a device or internet facility does not necessarily imply that the connection and devices are owned by the household.

The aim of highlighting the digital divide in the country is with the hope that the resources required for online education reach students. Authorities and educational institutions, both government and non-government, should work more towards providing the facilities for this Ed-tech. Studies show that students who learn with technology-based platforms are tuned towards creativity and innovation, sharpening skills and talents as it ultimately morphs them into well-trained professionals. All of this is only possible if we collectively work by raising awareness towards accessible forms of education for the less privileged class of society. As per the Internet and Mobile Association of India report, in 2019, while 67% men had access to the internet, this figure was only at 33% for women. The disparity is more prominent in rural India, where the figures are 72% and 28% for men and women, respectively.

To conclude, one can say that irrespective of race, creed, or gender, education makes it possible for people to stand out as equals, despite being from different walks of life. Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. If we invest in education today, the return on this investment is certainly voluminous. As Mark Twain said, "A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read." What he implies by this statement is that it is us, the comforted, the fortunate, the wealthy and the educated who take education for granted and those who are less fortunate are the ones who need hope, security and an opportunity to thrive and learn. So why can't we elevate their position in society by pressurizing those in power to enable a basic right like education to be free and accessible to all, in practice and not just on paper? A little seed of effort sown by us today will definitely reap the fruit of righteousness tomorrow.

THE SHADOW PANDEMIC

Simran Dhawan, 3rd Year

Lockdown... what was it for? We don't have to think much to find an answer. Lockdown was to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This Hobson's choice came with the motto of 'Stay Home, Stay Safe'. But, was everyone really safe while at home? If we think deeply, we won't even have to look at the facts and figures and we will get the real answer. Just look around and if you are really keen to know the truth of this society, then the answer to this question will come as a 'NO'. Alas! Everyone was not safe in these 'safely locked spaces'. This proved to be a cruel reminder of the deep-rooted inequalities in our society that reeks of patriarchy.

The restrictions imposed for well being along with the exacerbated baggage of financial entanglement by job losses and unemployment led to different forms of abuse. Some abuses left a mark on the body while some left a scar on the mind and heart. Even what seem to be the most trivial tasks in times like this like not serving the food on time, not being able to procure ration and resources properly, etc. resulted in physical and verbal abuse. Increase in the workload due to the absence of domestic help added fuel to the ongoing fire. Hence, the shackles of the lockdown did not lead to the safety of all. This gendered nature of the disease reflected in the rapidly sprouting pre-existing inequalities earned it the moniker of 'The Shadow Pandemic'. Quarantine and movement restrictions served to further isolate many women trapped within the four walls with their perpetrators.

IS WORSHIPPING WOMEN ENOUGH?

Wilson et al. (1998) and Parkinson (2019) have revealed in their studies that there is a direct relationship between natural disasters or extreme national events and increased domestic violence. The rising number of domestic violence cases in India during COVID-19 testify these studies. Lockdown during COVID-19 led to decreased employment and the

resulting loss of income of men resulted in lesser economic security and in turn more assertive behavior toward their partners. Most of the women in India worked in the informal sectors and due to the swift nationwide lockdown were left unemployed with no economic security. They were left at the mercy of the perpetrators of violence and their avenues for help were left impaired.

India is infamous for gender-based violence with a world ranking of 4 as the worst country for gender equality. In this scenario, the hard-earned rights of women came under threat. Data of NFHS-4 (2014-15) show 71% of women encountering spousal violence. This only worsened during the lockdown. According to the National Commission for Women (NCW) data, a wobbling number of 13410 complaints of crime against women between March and September 2020 were received of which 4350 were of domestic violence. Thus, the domestic complaints have increased 2.5 times since the nationwide lockdown began.

'SANSKAARI' QUIET 'NAARI'

Although there is an increase in violence against women, the stats are just the tip of the iceberg as it widely an underreported issue. Even today, in our society, it is very difficult for women to raise their voices against men. Apart from this, the abused tend to report their atrocities through informal channels like their natal family, but due to the movement restrictions, their first source of help seems far away. They shy away from reporting it to the police because of the fear of a much worse abuse that lies on the other end i.e. societal shaming when their partner is jailed or taken away by police. Another problem that serves this underreporting is the lack of means of communication as only 46% of women in urban areas and 37% in rural areas have access to a personal mobile phone. They are just seen as child-bearers and care-

givers in the family who have to accept, all that is done to them is because apparently, they are a –‘Sanskari Naari’. This embedded thinking makes them accept the inferior position.

We live in a society where 52% women and 42% men believe that it is justified for a husband to hit his wife, according to a survey. In such a scenario, the prime motive of even the government sways away from protecting the ones who need protection inside their homes while cohabiting with their partners. The ‘Naari’ still is ‘Abla’ because the unavailability of formal support system machinery for their protection from violence is not an essential service, cutting them off of all the support which she could get to be actually ‘free’ and ‘safe’.

A LONG JOURNEY WITH NO HOPE

While talking of violence, the aspect of migrant women walking miles during the advanced stage of their pregnancy to find a safe haven amidst the pandemic cannot be ignored. In addition to the embedded gender divide, our society has a historical class divide as well which people don’t tend to challenge. When a woman comes from the lowest strata in society, the atrocities and the hardships double. For them, what is left is just the hope to survive by clutching a straw. While traveling miles every day with the hope to reach home, these women have been delivering babies on the roadside and as if this was not enough, they were left with no support when their family members died during this journey.

THE WAY AHEAD

The world of an abuse victim is characterized by loneliness, fear and alienation. It has serious consequences for those affected by it. In order to help them out, we ought to extend a helping hand towards them. Many organizations have set up helpline numbers to help the victims. Even United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres has called for measures to address a “horrificing global surge in domestic violence” amid the lockdown implementations throughout the world.

ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers prove to be a real difference-maker for the abused in the rural areas as they are the first ones to contact the victims of abuse. The state governments during the pandemic tried to make a difference. For instance, Uttar Pradesh police’s campaign, ‘Suppress corona, not your voice’, Odisha police’s phone-up programme, Kerala state commission for women’s tele counseling facility, Maharashtra government’s Akshara centres, special cell for women, children and the #LockdownOnDomesticViolence campaigns.

In a similar manner, sensitizing everyone through nationwide campaigns and improving the agency and financial independence can help in this situation as an assurance of support is created. Only then a woman can truly have the reins of her life in her hands and can speak strongly against what is wrong without any fear.

व्यक्तिगत स्थान का सिकुड़ना और मानव स्पर्श के नुकसान पर जोर

Rupam Mishra, 3rd Year

दिल ना उम्मीद तो नहीं नाकाम ही तो है,
लंबी है गम की शाम मगर शाम ही तो हैं
—फैज अहमद फेज

वर्तमान दौर एवं परिस्थितियों में शायद ही कोई व्यक्ति ऐसा हो जिसे फैज की इन पंक्तियों ने आकर्षित न किया हो, खासकर देश का युवा वर्ग। आधुनिकीकरण की राह में, सत्ता पाने की चाह में, सबसे आगे बढ़ने की होड़ और भीड़ में पीछे छूटने के डर के बीच अंधाधुन भागते हुए मानव को अस्तित्व का आईना दिखाने का काम किया वर्ष 2019 के अंतिम क्षणों में फैली वैश्विक महामारी “कोविड-19” ने किया जिसने पूरी मानव प्रजाति को सीखा दिया कि कुदरत के आगे न चल सकता है धन का जोर और नहीं रहता किसी प्रकार के प्रभुत्व का मोल।

धन, संसाधन, राजनैतिक समीकरण, सत्ता के बटवारे, स्वयं के भीतर चल रहे द्वंद और मानव को सिर्फ मानव संसाधन के रूप में देखने के परंपरागत दृष्टिकोण के इस क्रम में एक ठहराव आया। चिंता का विषय यह है कि यह ठहराव एक क्रांति नहीं,

अपितु एक त्रासदी के रूप में आया, जिसने मानव को, मानव इतिहास के 100 वर्ष पीछे ले जाकर कर खड़ा कर दिया। लगभग एक वर्ष हो चुका है उस वक्त को जबसे दुनिया भर के लोग घातक वायरस के प्रसार में कटौती करने के लिए सामाजिक दूरी और आत्म-अलगाव का अभ्यास कर रहे हैं। इस दीर्घकालिक अभ्यास ने बहुत से लोगों को स्पर्श अभाव के प्रभावों को महसूस करवाना शुरू कर दिया है जिसका प्रत्यक्ष प्रभाव अब दिखना शुरू हो गया है।

किसी करीबी को गले लगाना, अपने सहकर्मी या सिर्फ साधारण व्यक्ति से हाथ मिलाना अब एक प्राचीन प्रथा बन गई है। दैनिक आधार पर किसी प्रकार के प्लेटोनिक भौतिक स्पर्श के लिए मानव का उपयोग किया जाता है, लेकिन चल रही महामारी के कारण यह सब पीछे की सीट है और विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि यह मानव की मानसिक भलाई को प्रभावित कर रहा है और समय विशेष में यह एक कड़वा सत्य है जिसे संस्थाएँ जानते हुए भी मानना नहीं चाह रहीं, क्योंकि

मशीनीकरण के इस दौर में संसाधनों में सबसे प्रमुख स्थान मानव संसाधन का है। तत्पश्चात सरकारी हो या गैर सरकारी सभी का लक्ष्य मानव संसाधन को संरक्षित करना है।

चिकित्सकों के अनुसार, मानव स्पर्श का मानव पर व्यापक प्रभाव पड़ता है और इसकी कमी वास्तव में मस्तिष्क और शरीर को कई तरीकों से प्रभावित कर सकती है, जितना कि वे महसूस कर सकते हैं। चिकित्सक शालिनी शांडिल्य कहती है “मानव स्पर्श मानव कनेक्शन के लिए एक आधार है। कोई भी मानव बंधन या रिश्ता जो हम जीवन में बनाते हैं, भौतिक स्पर्श और कनेक्शन पर निर्भर करता है”।

शारीरिक मानव स्पर्श की कमी ने आबादी के बीच अवसाद और चिंता की दरों में भारी वृद्धि में योगदान दिया है। इन महामारी प्रतिक्रिया प्रयासों को लागू करने के द्वारा, मानव मानस को सरल मानवीय अंतःक्रियाओं के दृष्टिकोण के बारे में परस्पर विरोधी संकेत मिल रहे हैं। मित्रों, परिवार और सहकर्मियों के बीच शारीरिक संपर्क, जिसे आमतौर पर अभिव्यक्ति प्रेम के रूप में देखा जाता था, उन अधिनियमों को अब लापरवाही और खतरनाक व्यवहार माना जाता है। उदाहरण के लिए, जब कोई व्यक्ति खुद के एक दोस्त को एक आलिंगन देने की पेशकश करने की स्थिति में पाता है, तो वे संभावित स्वास्थ्य परिणामों के डर से दो बार रुक सकते हैं और सोच सकते हैं।

जीवन जीने का यह नया रूप जहाँ मानव ठहराव के साथ आगे बढ़ना सीख रहा है वहीं उन्हें सामाजिक होने की मानव प्रवृत्ति से दूर भी कर रहा। “न्यू नार्मल का यह रूप शायद ही कभी लोगों के व्यक्तिगत जीवन के उन पलों की भरपाई कर सके जो उन्होंने विलाप में गवाया है, या फिर अपने लोगों को सांत्वना देने में।

कोरोना वायरस महामारी से दुनिया बदली है, जिसका प्रभाव समाज के प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के जीवन के हर पहलू पर पड़ा है, जिसमें मैक्रो इकोनॉमी से लेकर घरेलू आय तक काम करना, जीना और सीखना शामिल हैं। और सामाजिक सुरक्षा से लेकर व्यक्तिगत मानवाधिकारों तक। इस महामारी के बाद दुनिया और खासकर दैनिक जीवन कैसे अलग होंगे? ये सवाल सभी को घेरे हुए हैं। हालाँकि, महामारी का अर्थव्यवस्था की तुलना में बहुत अधिक प्रभाव पड़ा है। इसने राजनीति, समाज, संस्कृति, शिक्षा, मीडिया, स्वास्थ्य सेवा, सुरक्षा, विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी, यात्रा और व्यक्तिगत जीवन शैली को प्रभावित

किया है, शायद ही जीवन का कोई पहलू इससे अनछुआ रहा हो। महामारी के कारण हुए सभी परिवर्तन मानव सुरक्षा और मानवता की अन्योन्याश्रयता के महत्व को उजागर करते हैं। इस बदलती दुनिया में सभी मनुष्यों के सह-अस्तित्व के लिए सामान्य सहमति आवश्यक है, और यह महामारी से निपटने में एक रणनीति के रूप में काम करना और इसे व्यवहार में कैसे लाना है उसपर थोड़ा विशेष ध्यान देना चाहिए।

जीवन यापन के बदलते तरीके के बीच बदले हुए सकारात्मक मानव मूल्य भी दिखाई दिए हैं। एक तरफ जहाँ दूसरों के प्रति बढ़ते लगाव के साथ-साथ हमारी नैतिकता में एक सूक्ष्म बदलाव आया है। लोग सहयोग, विचार और देखभाल के सांप्रदायिक मूल्यों को प्राथमिकता देने लगे हैं वहीं प्रतिष्ठा, लोकप्रियता और शक्ति के व्यक्तिवादी ने अपने कुछ पकड़े खो दिए हैं। हमारे सांस्कृतिक आदर्श के अनुसार रूप जैसे कि संकट के समय में हम सकारात्मक सोचते हैं और उन लोगों को प्रमुख महत्व देते हैं जो साम्यवादी मूल्यों की सेवा करते हैं, दूसरों की मदद करते हैं, सामान्य भलाई के लिए अपने स्वार्थों का त्याग करते हैं, सहानुभूति और आदर्श मानवता का प्रदर्शन करते हैं के अनुरूप हमने व्यवहार करना फिर से सीख लिया है, सीख रहे हैं।

सारांश में, कोरोना वायरस महामारी के कारण जीवन बदल रही हैं, लेकिन क्या इसे हमेशा के लिए बदल दिया जाएगा या नहीं यह हमारी उभरने की रणनीति पर निर्भर करता है। कोरोना वायरस वैश्विकता का अंत नहीं है इसके विपरीत, सामाजिक और आर्थिक सहयोग और अन्योन्याश्रय के उच्च स्तर के माध्यम से स्थापित मानव सुरक्षा, इस बदलती दुनिया में कोरोना वायरस महामारी से निपटने और मानव जाति के लिए एक साझा भविष्य के लिए एक मानक आम सहमति की स्थापना के लिए हमारी रणनीति होनी चाहिए इस पर काम करने का एक मौका है। कोरोना वायरस महामारी के साथ मुकाबला करने के लिए हमारी रणनीति यह निर्धारित करेगी कि हमारी दुनिया कैसे बदल सकती है।

शायद यही तथ्य और फैज की शायरी की दूसरी पंक्ति हमें यह उम्मीद देती है कि हम मानव शक्ति को पहचाने क्योंकि सिक्के का एक खूबसूरत पहलू यह भी है कि “इंसान बहुत लचीला है, हम अंतरंगता के नए स्तर को जानेंगे। हम मानव कनेक्शन का नया तरीका सीखेंगे और हम विभिन्न तरीकों से आनंद लाना सीखेंगे।

कोविड-19 महामारी का महिलाओं पर प्रभाव

Riya Yadav, 3rd Year

कोविड-19 महामारी ने दुनिया भर में मानव जीवन को एक नाटकीय रूप से नुकसान किया है और सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य खाद्य प्रणालियों और काम की दुनिया के लिए एक अभूतपूर्व चुनौती पेश की है। महामारी से उत्पन्न आर्थिक और सामाजिक व्यवधान विनाशकारी हैं और दसियों लाखों लोगों को अत्यधिक गरीबी में गिरने का खतरा है जबकि कुपोषित लोगों की संख्या जो वर्तमान में लगभग 690 मिलियन है, 132 मिलियन तक बढ़ सकती है। दुनिया भर में महिलाओं और लड़कियों को महामारी के समय ने वायरस के प्रभाव से अधिक सामाजिक और आर्थिक रूप से प्रभावित किया है। यह महामारी न केवल वैश्विक स्वास्थ्य प्रणालियों को चुनौती दे रही है बल्कि समानता और मानवीय गरिमा के लिए हमारी प्रतिबद्धता को भी चुनौती दे रही है। महामारी को लैंगिक न्याय के लिए एक आपदा घोषित किया गया है। इसने मौजूदा लैंगिक असमानताओं को और गहरा किया है। लिंग समानता को प्राप्त करने की गति को धीमा कर दिया है।

महिलाओं पर महामारी का सामाजिक प्रभाव –

महामारी ने महिलाओं को अपने घरों में पहले से कहीं अधिक खुद को सीमित करने के लिए मजबूर किया है। महामारी के दौरान महिलाओं की देखभाल के कामों में वृद्धि के कारण उनके लिए अवकाश और व्यक्तिगत देखभाल के लिए उपलब्ध समय में गिरावट आई है। वैश्विक स्तर पर, महिलाएं और लड़कियां 75 प्रतिशत अवैतनिक देखभाल और घरेलू काम करती हैं। हालांकि दो दशक से अधिक पुराने, 1998-99 में राष्ट्रीय-स्तर के समय-समय पर किए गए सर्वेक्षण से पता चला कि भारत में लगभग 91 प्रतिशत अवैतनिक देखभाल और घरेलू रखरखाव कार्य के लिए महिलाएं जिम्मेदार थीं। पुरुषों द्वारा प्रति सप्ताह लगभग दो घंटे के विपरीत महिलाओं ने औसतन 25 घंटे प्रति सप्ताह देखभाल कार्य में बिताए। हाल के एक सर्वेक्षण से अनुमान लगाया गया है कि महिलाएं अवैतनिक देखभाल के काम के लिए एक असमान बोझ रखती हैं। 2004-05 में भारत में अवैतनिक देखभाल कार्य और घरेलू रखरखाव में पुरुषों द्वारा प्रति दिन 45 मिनट के मुकाबले महिलाओं ने पांच घंटे से अधिक समय बिताया। महामारी के दौरान महिलाओं के अवैतनिक काम को और बढ़ा दिया। कोविड-19 महामारी महिलाओं को घर वापस लाने में एक से अधिक तरीकों से योगदान देती है। इसके लिए समाजशास्त्री भ्रमरनदह बेनदा ने – "1950 की गृहिणी की वापसी" शब्द का उपयोग किया है।

ऑनलाइन शिक्षा की मांग है कि बच्चों को ऑनलाइन कक्षाओं, असाइनमेंट और आकलन की बारीकियों और मांगों से परिचित

होने में मदद करने के लिए माताओं को लंबे समय तक निर्बाध रूप से उपलब्ध होना चाहिए। यदि घर के पुरुष सदस्यों को घर से काम करने का विकल्प प्रदान किया जाता है, तो देखभाल कार्य की तीव्रता काफी बढ़ जाती है। देखभाल और घरेलू कार्यों के लिए महिलाओं के अनुपातहीन समय और ऊर्जा की मांग करके, महामारी ने उन्हें अपने घरों में पहले से कहीं अधिक खुद को सीमित करने के लिए मजबूर किया है।

संयुक्त राष्ट्र की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार विश्व स्तर पर 243 मिलियन महिलाओं और 15 से 49 वर्ष की लड़कियों को पिछले 12 महीनों में एक साथी द्वारा यौन और शारीरिक हिंसा का शिकार होना पड़ा है। महिलाओं के खिलाफ घरेलू हिंसा के मामलों में वृद्धि हुई है। संयुक्त राष्ट्र के आंकड़ों के अनुसार फ्रांस ने 17 मार्च को लॉकडाउन के बाद से घरेलू हिंसा में 30% की बढ़ोतरी देखी है, अर्जेंटीना में 20 मार्च को लॉकडाउन के बाद घरेलू हिंसा के मामलों में 25% की वृद्धि हुई है और भारत में भी तालाबंदी के दौरान घरेलू हिंसा के मामलों में वृद्धि हुई।

संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासचिव एंटोनियो गुटेरेस ने सरकारों से आग्रह किया है कि वे घातक कोरोना वायरस महामारी की प्रतिक्रिया में महिलाओं की सुरक्षा को शामिल करें और वे महिलाओं के खिलाफ हिंसा की रोकथाम और निवारण को उनकी राष्ट्रीय योजना का एक महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा बनाये।

महिलाओं पर महामारी का आर्थिक प्रभाव – महिलाएं बड़े पैमाने पर अनौपचारिक क्षेत्रों में काम करती हैं। महामारी ने इन्हें अधिक जोखिम में डाल दिया। महिलाओं के लिए बेरोजगारी का स्तर बढ़कर 17.1 प्रतिशत हो गया जबकि पुरुषों के लिए यह 10.9 प्रतिशत था।

यूएनडीपी के नए विश्लेषण ने कहा कि कोविड-19 संकट से महिलाओं की गरीबी दर में वृद्धि हुई है। महामारी ने गरीबी में रहने वाले पुरुषों और महिलाओं के बीच की खाई को चौड़ा किया है।

भारत में 176 मिलियन से अधिक गरीब महिलाओं के पास प्रधानमंत्री जन धन योजना बैंक खाते की कमी है और 70 मिलियन पर राशन कार्ड की कमी है। स्मार्ट फोन और इंटरनेट तक पहुंच की कमी के कारण अधिकारों और सरकारी कार्यक्रमों के बारे में जानकारी तक पहुंच को भी रोक दिया है। भारत में पुरुष और महिला इंटरनेट उपयोगकर्ताओं के बीच 50% लिंग विभाजन है। महामारी के मद्देनजर सरकार ने प्रधानमंत्री जन धन योजना और प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण



Archisha Madame, 1st year

रोजगार अभियान के तहत नकद हस्तांतरण और राहत पैकेज की घोषणा तालाबंदी के दिनों के भीतर की थी। आशा कार्यकर्ता, जो समुदायों में महामारी प्रतिक्रिया में सबसे आगे रहे हैं, को कोविड-19 से लड़ने वाले स्वास्थ्य कार्यकर्ताओं के लिए प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण योजना के दायरे में लाया गया और उन्हें हर महीने ₹ 1000 दिए गए।

निस्संदेह, कई मायनों में, COVID-19 ने महिलाओं की भलाई और स्वतंत्रता को कम करने और गृहिणी की प्रतिगामी घटना में योगदान दिया है। COVID-19 के शुरू होने से पहले ही, भारत की महिलाओं ने काफी हद तक अदृश्य, अंडरपेड, अंडर-प्रोटेक्टेड और अनौपचारिक कार्यबल के सबसे बड़े सेगमेंट का गठन किया गया था, जो इस साल के सबसे खराब हिट में से एक है। लेकिन 2021 में यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए कई अवसर मौजूद हैं कि भारत की महिलाएं इसकी वसूली योजनाओं में पीछे नहीं हैं।

Focusing on Gender Issues During the Pandemic

Mohini Vatsh, 2nd Year

“At any given moment you have the power to say this is not how the story is going to end.”

- Christine Mason Miller

The pandemic, as we all know, has affected not only each one of us differently, but has also had different impacts on different genders, both positive as well as negative. With various other issues, the most prominent has been the use of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence against women.

With quarantine or stay-at-home measures during the pandemic, gender-based differences have been thrown into sharper relief. Vulnerable women exposed to the public sector such as the labour force or paid jobs are now unpaid and exploited. With negligible to zero social or institutional support, it exposes these women to their abusers. A looming recession during pandemic times led to the loss of job and income for many people, leading to financial instability. This further led to mental stress and drugs or alcohol consumption as a coping mechanism. Draining out all the anger, frustration on the women of the house, mentally and physically abusing them, making it even worse for women and children who live with violent and controlling men.

Women face both mental and economic pressures as their personal spaces have been taken over completely, isolating their thoughts and having zero space to express their ideas. For the pandemic, women were an easy target affecting their means of livelihood negatively and making it less secure.

There has also been a huge health gap between urban and rural women, as basic healthcare and sanitation facilities were not accessible to rural women.

Women in professions such as sex work were also inadvertently affected by the pandemic due to issues related to lack of hygiene and sanitation. They are also further exploited, as they have nothing to prove their identity, with no ration card to even feed themselves.

Focusing on the healthcare industry, like women with different health issues and needs, pregnant women, or those women facing terminal illness, were not provided with enough facilities as most of the hospital facilities and care were reserved and devoted to the COVID patients. Thus, sexual as well as physical health care facilities took a backseat on the priority list. Another issue was of women working at the front line during pandemic like providing for hospital care, nursing, etc. They make up for 70% of the workforce and need to be given immediate care as they provide care for their household at home and for the infected family members at work, which puts them at a greater risk. However, according to facts, since women have a higher life expectancy and a higher likelihood of facing health problems, women are more likely to need long-term care, which was insufficient during COVID times.

This is now further complicated as older people, and especially women who are living alone and depend on care from family, friends or neighbours can no longer rely on it to the same extent. For older people living in residential facilities, social distancing measures can increase their chances of social exclusion as visitors are denied entry. During the pandemic, there was also an increase in parental physical abuse where parents started beating their kids at home for

trivial matters, on the pretext of concern for the child. During this time, they expected the girl children of families to cater to the family's needs and do household chores, taking care of the family alongside their career and education, making the already difficult pandemic even more difficult for them.

There also emerged an issue for people in vulnerable situations like refugee camps and migrant workers. Women and men living in refugee camps are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 and other diseases as a result of living in overcrowded areas, lack of sanitation, and lack of access to decent healthcare or vaccination programmes, making physical distancing and constant handwashing simply impossible. Migrant women and men also face barriers to accessing healthcare, such as language, financial costs, legal restrictions and lack of awareness of services.

Another major issue is the problem of women or men with disabilities, it's hard to maintain social distancing as many of them depend on another being to eat, dress up or take a shower. Even with domestic violence, women with disabilities are more endangered as they hardly have any access to shelter facilities, and hence choose to stay in violent situations.

Recent facts stated by the United Nations on covid-19 crisis exacerbating gender equality:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic is aggravating economic inequalities faced by women. Specifically, about 740 million women around the world work in the informal economy sector with a less secure job, less pay. In developing economies, informal work makes up 70% of women's employment, and informal jobs are the first to disappear in times of economic uncertainty.
2. Women and girls have unique health needs, but they are less likely to have access to quality health services, essential medicines and vaccines, maternal and reproductive health care, or insurance coverage for routine and catastrophic health costs, especially in rural and marginalized communities. In Latin America and the Caribbean, about 18 million additional women will lose regular access to modern contraceptives because of the pandemic. The UN report adds that restrictive social norms and gender stereotypes can also limit women's ability to seek or benefit from health services, even when there isn't a widespread health crisis and certainly amid one.
3. The COVID-19 global crisis has made starkly visible the fact that the world's formal economies and the maintenance of our daily lives are built on the invisible and unpaid labour of women. Globally, girls and women on average do three times more unpaid care work than men, a number that is likely to skyrocket as all household chores have to be managed. Further, most single parents are women, which increases their burden, and this unpaid labour leaves women less time for paid work, education, and career advancement. And, as the UN cautions, violence against women is taking on a new

complexity: exposure to COVID-19 is used as a threat. "Abusers are exploiting the inability of women to call for help or escape and women risk being thrown out on the street with nowhere to go."

4. Evidence across sectors, including economic planning and emergency response, demonstrates unquestioningly that policies that do not consult women or include them in decision-making are simply less effective, and can even do harm. Beyond individual women, women's organizations who are often on the front line of response in communities should also be represented and supported. Occupational segregation by gender in the health sector is both deep and universal, with women health workers concentrated in lower status, lower-paid or unpaid roles. Men decide, women do the work.
5. Globally, even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, 1 in 3 women experienced physical or sexual violence mostly by an intimate partner. Emerging data shows an increase in calls to domestic violence helplines in many countries since the outbreak of COVID-19. Sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women continue to occur on the streets, in public spaces and online. Survivors have limited information and awareness about services and limited access too. In some countries, resources and efforts have been diverted from violence against women response to immediate COVID-19 relief.

While these are some negative impacts, there has been a myriad of positive impacts on gender during the pandemic. There have been outstanding achievements by women in healthcare and the scientific sector, contributing to important decision-making in vaccine creation, production and its regulations. This pandemic also enabled a lot of women to achieve advancement in their careers in innovation and entrepreneurship. Women have set-up small business companies to live their dreams and achieve greater heights. Some women and men spread awareness about the effects of the pandemic on mental health and even encouraged survivors to share stories and speak against their abusers.

However, there's still a long way to go for a gender-equal and gender-neutral society, especially in times of crisis. Gender-based issues need to be treated as a priority during such vulnerable times, alongside other issues. Government organisations should provide helpline numbers for people to reach out to.

Additionally, society and its players such as NGOs, civil society bodies, family, friends and neighbours should be vigilant in case they come across violence and should report them immediately. The world will not prevail over COVID-19 by acting alone, we must work to ensure that we build our solutions on solidarity and partnership. We know that gender-equal societies are much more prosperous and sustainable than those with deep disparities. The world's decision-makers have an opportunity to make gender equality a top priority.

Covid- 19 And Domestic Violence

Nimisha Dutta, 1st Year

As Covid-19 cases surged in the United States in March 2020, stay-at-home orders were put in place. Schools were closed, workers were furloughed, laid off, or told to work from home. With people confined to their homes, their personal movement became limited. Due to these reasons, advocates have expressed concern about a potential increase in intimate partner violence (IPV). Stay-at-home orders, intended to protect the public and prevent widespread infection, left many IPV victims trapped with their abusers. Domestic-violence hotlines prepared for an increase in demand for services as states enforced these mandates, but many organizations experienced the opposite. In some regions, the number of help calls to these hotlines dropped by more than 50%. Experts in the field knew that rates of IPV had not decreased, but rather that victims were unable to safely connect with services. Though restrictions on movement have been lifted in most regions, the pandemic and its effects rage on, and there is widespread agreement that areas that have seen a drop in caseloads are likely to experience a second surge. This pandemic has reinforced important truths: inequities related to social determinants of health are magnified during a crisis, and sheltering in place does not inflict equivalent hardship on all people.

That is to say, there's the pandemic you know about, and all too well. It's rightfully crowding the headlines of your newspaper and occupying the minds of government leaders. It's taking loved ones, imperilling heroes in scrubs, threatening neighbours at the cash register, and suddenly turning parents everywhere into teachers.

Then, there's the shadow pandemic which is rapidly unravelling the limited but precious progress that the world has made towards gender equality in the past few decades. As summarized by a new UN report about COVID-19 and girls and women, this shadow pandemic can be seen in a spike in - domestic violence as girls and women are sheltering-in-place with their abusers, the loss of employment for women who hold the majority of insecure, informal and lower-paying jobs, the risk shouldered by the world's nurses, who are predominantly women, and the rapid increase in unpaid care work that girls and women mostly provide already. The current emergency is poised to deeply exacerbate a stubborn one. While early reports suggest that men are more likely to succumb to COVID-19, the social and economic toll will be paid, disproportionately, by the world's girls and women.

Economic independence is a critical factor in violence prevention. For many people who experience IPV, the co-owning of wealth and financial resources or dependence on an abusive partner is too convoluted to serve without an alternative source of economic support. The pandemic has exacerbated financial entanglement by causing increased job loss and unemployment, particularly among women of colour, immigrants, and workers without a college education. Additionally, due to the public health restrictions put in place to combat the spread of the virus, the access to alternative sources of housing such as shelters and hotels have also reduced, since they have had to partially and in some cases, completely shut down. The travel restrictions have limited people's access to safe-havens. Shelters have made valiant efforts to ease crowding and to help residents move into hotels, extended-stay apartments, or the homes of family members and friends. Though some restrictions have been lifted, many shelters remain closed or are operating at reduced capacity, which creates challenges for people who need alternative housing arrangements.

Closures of schools and child care facilities have added to the stress at home. Virtual learning often requires the involvement and supervision of parents and guardians. Some families do not have access to a reliable internet connection. Additionally, child care obligations may fall to friends, neighbours, or family members while parents work or attempt to find work. Some parents are considered essential workers and cannot work from home, and others are required to work virtually. The added stress of balancing work, child care, and children's education has led to a rise in child abuse. Mandated reporters, such as teachers, child care providers, and clinicians, also have fewer interactions with children and families and fewer opportunities to assess, recognize, and report signs of abuse than they did before the pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on numerous ongoing public health crises, including violence within the home. As state mandates relax and people begin to live, a new version of normal, clinicians, public health officials, and policymakers cannot stop addressing the layers of social inequities in our communities and how they affect people's access to care. The pandemic has highlighted how much work needs to be done to ensure that people who experience abuse can continue to obtain access to support, refuge, and medical care when another public health disaster hits.

लॉकडाउन और घरेलू हिंसा

Akanksha Tanwar, 3rd Year

कोरोना वायरस से बचने के लिए वैश्विक स्तर पर सरकारों ने तरह तरह के कदम उठाये हैं उनमें से लॉकडाउन भी एक था जिसने लोगों को चौबीस घंटे घर पर रहने को बाध्य किया, जिसके चलते घरेलू हिंसा में काफी बड़ी संख्या में वृद्धि दर्ज की गयी है, यह केवल भारत में ही नहीं अपितु विश्व स्तर पर देखा गया है। घरेलू हिंसा के वैश्विक स्थिति की गंभीरता का अंदाजा इसी बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि जब संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासचिव एंटोनियो गुतेरस ने ऐसे हालात में महिलाओं एवं बच्चों के प्रति घरेलू हिंसा के मामलों में श्रमयानक बढ़ोतरी दर्ज किए जाने पर चिंता जताते हुए सरकारों को ठोस कार्रवाई का आह्वान किया।

घरेलू हिंसा के कारण:

लॉकडाउन में घरेलू हिंसा बढ़ने का सबसे बड़ा कारण, घरेलू हिंसा पर शोध कर रहे विशेषज्ञ यह बताते हैं कि जब पुरुषों और महिलाओं को रोजगार मिलता है, तो घरेलू हिंसा में गिरावट आती है क्योंकि पति-पत्नी के बीच बातचीत कम हो जाती है। लॉकडाउन के कारण दंपति के सामने रोजगार की असुरक्षा का प्रश्न उठ खड़ा हुआ है जिससे महिला और पुरुष, दोनों ही तनाव ग्रस्त हो गए हैं, तनाव के कारण पारिवारिक कलह बढ़ जाती है जो अंततः घरेलू हिंसा में परिणत होती है। घरेलू हिंसा बढ़ने का दूसरा कारण, लॉकडाउन के कारण बच्चों के स्कूलों में भी अनिश्चितकालीन अवकाश कर दिया गया है और पार्कों में खेलने पर भी प्रतिबंध लगा दिया गया है, जिससे बच्चे घर में ही खेल-कूद करते हैं, परिणामस्वरूप अनावश्यक शोरगुल होता है जो बच्चों व महिलाओं के प्रति हिंसा का कारण बनता है। तीसरा महत्वपूर्ण कारण, लॉकडाउन के दौरान सामाजिक स्तर पर लोगों का मेल-मिलाप प्रतिबंधित हो गया है, जिससे लोग अपना समय व्यतीत करने एवं अपने परिजनों व मित्रों से बात करने के लिये सोशल नेटवर्किंग साइट्स व मोबाइल फोन का अत्यधिक प्रयोग करने लगे हैं जो दंपतियों के बीच कलह का प्रमुख कारण बन गया है। घरेलू हिंसा में बढ़ोतरी का चौथा कारण, लॉकडाउन के बाद से महिला पर परिवार, बच्चों की देखरेख, घरेलू कार्य के अलावा पति की यौनाचार इच्छाओं की पूर्ति की अतिरिक्त जिम्मेदारी से दबाव बढ़ गया है। इस अवसाद में वृद्धि होने से पारिवारिक कलह बढ़ गया है।

घरेलू हिंसा के प्रभाव :-

1) यदि किसी व्यक्ति ने अपने जीवन में घरेलू हिंसा का सामना किया है तो उसके लिये इस डर से बाहर आ पाना

अत्यधिक कठिन होता है। अनवरत रूप से घरेलू हिंसा का शिकार होने के बाद, व्यक्ति की सोच में नकारात्मकता हावी हो जाती है। उस व्यक्ति को स्थिर जीवनशैली की मुख्यधारा में लौटने में कई वर्ष लग जाते हैं।

- 2) घरेलू हिंसा का सबसे बुरा पहलू यह है कि इससे पीड़ित व्यक्ति मानसिक आघात से वापस नहीं आ पाता है। ऐसे मामलों में अक्सर देखा गया है कि लोग या तो अपना मानसिक संतुलन खो बैठते हैं या फिर अवसाद का शिकार हो जाते हैं।
- 3) घरेलू हिंसा की यह सबसे खतरनाक और दुखद स्थिति है कि जिन लोगों पर हम इतना भरोसा करते हैं और जिनके साथ रहते हैं, जब वह हमें इस तरह का दुख देते हैं तो व्यक्ति का रिश्तों पर से विश्वास उठ जाता है और वह स्वयं को अकेला कर लेते हैं। कई बार इस स्थिति में लोग आत्महत्या तक कर लेते हैं।
- 4) प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के जीवन की गुणवत्ता पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ता है क्योंकि हिंसा की शिकार हुई महिलाएँ समाजिक जीवन की विभिन्न गतिविधियों में कम भाग लेती हैं।



Image Source: My Mental Health

लॉकडाउन के बाद घरेलू हिंसा की वैश्विक स्थिति :-

- 1) इस महामारी के कारण अपनी आर्थिक व सामाजिक चुनौतियों और आवाजाही पर पाबंदी लगने से लगभग सभी देशों में महिलाओं व बच्चों के साथ दुर्व्यवहार के मामलों में भारी वृद्धि दर्ज की गई है।
- 2) संयुक्त राष्ट्र के मुताबिक बवअपक – 19 महामारी के शुरू होने के बाद से लेबनान और मलेशिया में 'महिला

हेल्पलाइन' पर आने वाले फोन कॉल की संख्या दोगुनी हो गयी है= जबकि चीन में तीन गुणी हुई हैं।

- 3) लॉकडाउन के बाद ऑस्ट्रेलिया में घरेलू हिंसा के मामले में 75 : तक की बढ़ोतरी दर्ज की गई है। ऑस्ट्रेलिया के न्यू साउथ वेल्स प्रांत में सर्वाधिक घरेलू हिंसा के मामले रिपोर्ट किए गए हैं।

भारत की स्थिति :—

- 1) राष्ट्रीय महिला आयोग द्वारा प्रस्तुत आंकड़ों के अनुसार, जहाँ एक ओर मार्च के पहले सप्ताह (2-8 मार्च) में महिलाओं के विरुद्ध होने वाली हिंसा के 116 मामले सामने आए वहीं मार्च के अंतिम सप्ताह (23 – 1 अप्रैल) में घरेलू हिंसा हेल्पलाइन को 92,000 से अधिक कॉल प्राप्त हुए।
- 2) इसके अलावा महिलाओं की शिकायतों के प्रति पुलिस की उदासीनता के मामलों में भी लगभग तीन गुना वृद्धि हुई है, आँकड़ों के अनुसार, मार्च के पहले सप्ताह में ऐसी शिकायतों की संख्या 6 थी जो अंतिम सप्ताह में बढ़कर 16 पर पहुँच गई।

- 3) इसी प्रकार 'गरिमामयी जीने के अधिकार' (अनुच्छेद-21) से संबंधित शिकायतें भी 35 से बढ़कर 77, अर्थात् लगभग दोगुनी हो गई है। ऐसे मामले लिंग, वर्ग अथवा जाति या उनमें से तीनों के आधार पर भेदभाव से संबंधित हो सकते हैं।

समाधान के प्रयास :—

- 1) ऑस्ट्रेलिया की सरकार ने घरेलू हिंसा की बढ़ रही घटनाओं को रोकने के लिए 15 करोड़ की राशि नियुक्त की है जो घरेलू हिंसा को रोकने में जमीनी स्तर पर कार्य कर रहे संस्थानों के प्रयासों को प्रभावी करेंगे!
- 2) ऑस्ट्रेलियाई सरकार ऑनलाइन मानसिकता स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं, टैलिफोनिक चिकित्सीय परामर्श, आपातकालीन भोजन सेवा आदि जैसी सुविधाओं में निवेश बढ़ा रही हैं।
- 3) इटली ने घरेलू हिंसा से निपटने के लिए गैर – सरकारी संगठनों का उत्तरदायित्व दिया है।
- 4) भारत की सरकार ने श्वन स्टॉप सेंटरश जैसी योजनाएं प्रारंभ की है।

Quarantine Diaries

Privilege Check

Shreya Pawar, 3rd Year

One person I'd almost forgotten about from college during this lockdown was the jewelry stall aunty. This aunty used to put all her things on neatly laid plastic sheets on the ground and wait for the girls to get in or out of college hoping an earring or a bracelet would catch their eyes. I'd usually talk my way into getting a discount of at least 10 rupees every time I bought something from her, which would be almost every week. I still remember the last thing I bought from her was a septum ring because I'd often lose those.

“parso hi vapis aaye, beta. gaanv chale gaye the. yaha toh kuch tha hi nahi biwi bachho ko sambhalne ko.” So when I was talking to this fifty-something man, with my fingers lingering on some random jewelry at a stall outside a metro station, my mind wandered back to that jewelry stall aunty.

I don't know where she is.

I don't know if she's back with her stall now that the students have started visiting the campus again.

I don't even know whether she exists anymore.

This old man who was probably making his first 90 rupees of the day was someone I had met for barely 5 minutes. And that aunty, whom I haven't even heard of for the past ten months is someone I can't stop thinking about.

But there is another thing I can't stop thinking about. It is the point about how easy my life in a cage-like but luxurious lockdown was. My dad didn't lose his job. My mom didn't, either. I was surfing through the internet and enjoying my 'vacation' for most of it while my jewelry stall aunty and this old uncle lost almost everything they had. While I was analyzing the government's moves to manage the efficient movement of migrants, these were two of those migrants physically but helpless, probably risking their lives traveling in those jam-packed Inter State buses. When I was busy making perfect delicacies after watching ten YouTube tutorials, these two, along with a million other people, were struggling to ensure another meal.

Perhaps, as this old man had put his stall back, I hope the aunty has too. I hope and that is all I can do. Hope for the things to get normal, and hope the lives of tens of millions to get at least a little better as this world adapts to a new normal which doesn't really care for them. And hope that as you read this, you too get a subtle but pain-filled reminder to check your privileges!

My Enigma Journey: From Dawdle to Drive

Chitra Nathawat, 1st year

Instagram posts, Facebook feeds, and Snapchat stories probably had my mind engulfed in the vicious soup of envy and weird intrinsic guilt for still being where I was even a week ago, automatically eliciting the perpetual circle of procrastination. I did initiate every task I thought of and made infinite schedules, set targets but could not gather the willpower to achieve those targets. Blaming and self-loathing came next. There were days when suddenly motivation peaks and the determination was infinite but then, everything returns to normal the next day.

About a week ago, this normal seemed to have changed by novel coronavirus, the herculean power of such a tiny virus proved the ancient saying that size does not matter.

My inveterate habit of procrastination or dawdling was at its highest peak during the lockdown, I was in my cave, and there was not anybody to interrupt me. I did not have any academic pressure either since the schools were closed. All I would do was scroll down the screen and listen to my playlist.

On one such day, I was surfing online when I came across a seven-minute video titled – Dawdle to Drive featuring the Quarantine period. Initially, the video seemed an enigma to my mind, but a sudden intrinsic motivation to see that video came over me. The

video highlighted how “The greatest amount of time wasted is the time not getting started.” It is rightly said, “the smallest words have the biggest ramifications” that seven-minute video changed my perspective towards procrastination. Before watching the video, I wanted to change the situational and personal factors, but now I want to change myself as a procrastinator.

The quarantine period allowed me to work on myself. I set small goals every day and planned accordingly. Initially, it was difficult for me to work on a tight schedule. But my regular efforts made an immense impact on my overall performance, both mentally and physically. My constant efforts, dedication, and hard work shaped me into a more confident person. Enigmatically, my quarantine journey has been positive and productive, it felt relieving to complete tasks on time, and since then, my journey towards the right path has been engaging. I can see beyond the ocean, beyond my imaginations, and now it is the time to fly high.

Movie Reviews

Outbreak

Hiya, 2nd Year

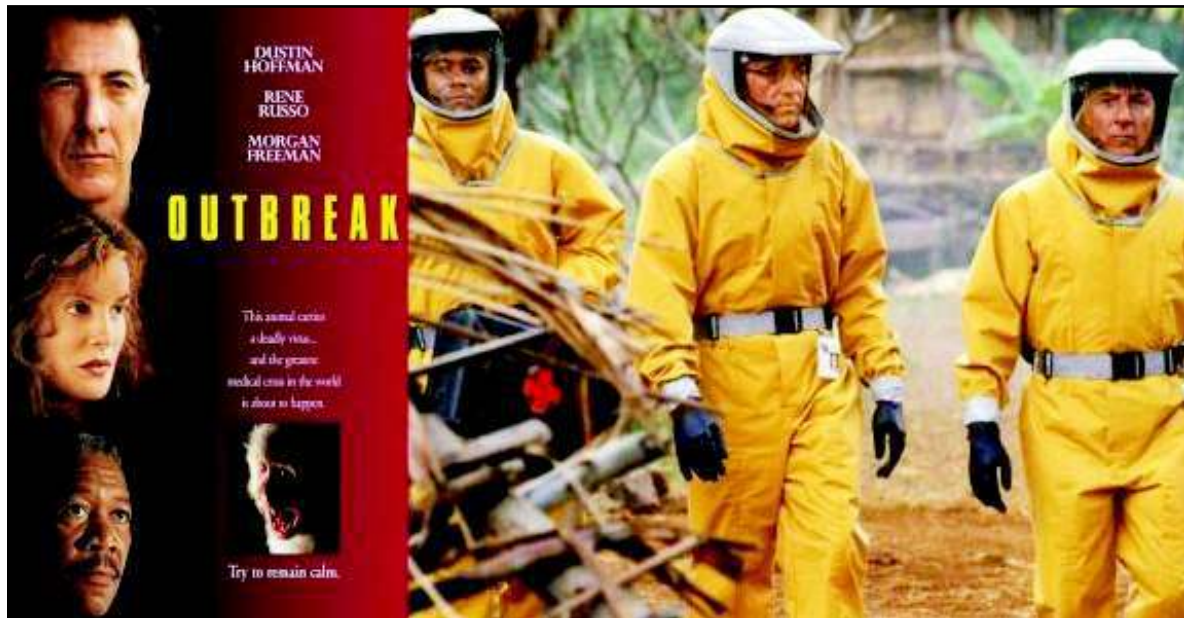


Image Source: Onmanorama

Plot: *A deadly virus spread from Monkeys. A team of scientists and doctors fight to prevent it. But how? The single biggest threat to man's continued dominance on the planet is the virus.*

Spoiler: *Expect a political thriller with huge explosions, jealousy, and pursuit. Wolfgang Petersen's & 'Outbreak' is a clever, action-suspense-thriller about humans, animals, and viruses.*

The storyline shows how a deadly virus kills humans within a day of exposure by liquefying their internal organs. Not a pretty sight for the eyes agreed. It can be called one of the greatest movies, in how it is a perfect example of 'art imitating life'. The theme of the movie revolves around the deep African rainforests, where if the deadly diseases that are hidden ever manage to escape their jungle homes and enter human settlements, there will be a pandemic, on a scale that has never been seen before. This movie is fascinating in its own way, designed to perfectly inform, as well as keep the sensitivity when dealing with animals in the wild. It was engaging from the start and kept the audience filled with anticipation. The movie cleverly aligned its personal, military, medical, and scientific plots into four simultaneous countdowns, leaving me absorbed in my thoughts.

The thriller, although is similar to the premise of science fiction movies about deadly invasions, it displays the ability of knowledge and skill. Here, an "Outbreak" occurs 28 years ago in Africa, as American doctors come down on a small village, which has been wiped out by a deadly new virus. The villagers asked for relief but instead, got bombarded. The reason being, that there simply was no other escape to deal with this deadly virus. With no clue about where it came from, why, and how it layered over a remote area, the village doctor believes that it is a god-given punishment seeing how they cut down all trees. "It is not good to kill the trees," he said.

After 28 years, in the present, the camera focuses on Dustin Hoffman and Rene Russo as a former couple and experts in disease-causing microorganisms. The scene then cuts to an African monkey being illegally imported into the United States by a smuggler. This monkey turns out to be the carrier of a deadly virus. Now the smuggler, being unable to sell it, releases it in a nearby forest, letting the monkey escape into the wilderness. The filmmaker then displays a montage of the disease being spread from one person to another which starts when the first carrier who was the smuggler, takes a plane to Boston.

Personally, I liked the scene where the smuggler takes one bite of a cookie and a little kid, referring to the rest of it, asks him if he's going to eat his cookie anymore. Then right when he gets off, he starts shivering, develops a high temperature, gets bloody eyes, is sweating and almost too weak to stand, still he meets his sweetheart and goes in for a deep kiss. Classic. This scene is impactful because the chain of events just lets us know that he is infected. It makes you think of the little boy. Then in town, an infected person coughs in a movie theater spreading the spit particles on the surrounding people in slow motion, and thus the chain goes on.

This way the virus travels and causes an outbreak in California. Hoffman is assigned to take lead on this case by his Head Officer General. As he and his partner in charge, played by Kevin Spacey carry on with their mission, we encounter a new teammate, played by Cuba Gooding Jr and an evil Officer General played by Donald Sutherland.

The US Army holds some confidential information as well as the antidote for the virus. Since the virus mutates and changes itself with time, only the original host i.e the monkey - can serve as the source of an antibody and cure for all.

There are medical work, military schemes, and peak action where Hoffman and his brilliant helicopter partner, Cuba Gooding Jr. fly all over California crossing towns, over the sea to the ship, and escaping a crazy bomb drop. "Outbreak" is a type of movie where you thoroughly enjoy the well-acted roles, and among them, of course, Morgan Freeman, who as a dedicated General, juggles with his thoughts, and is caught between obeying the commands of the officials and his own instincts.

Dustin Hoffman and Morgan Freeman manage to shine throughout the movie. Apart from some excellent performances, this movie elucidates many important focus areas as well. It does not simply give out a message but leaves it to the interpretation of the viewer. It is a well-made film, offering some well-timed bouts of entertainment and excitement. Peterson was ahead of his time. This movie does not feel like it's 25 years old because it completely resonates and mirrors the scenarios.

We all are facing today. It had a unique foresight and if one were to watch it back in 1995 they would've thought it to be a bit far-fetched. However, now, one will be able to relate it to almost everything. It teaches us what viruses are, what they're capable of, and how they easily adapt to the surroundings and protect themselves by mutating.

Most parts of the movie echo the reality of 2020, like quarantine, lockdowns, people not following the procedures, loss of loved ones, anger, anxiety, panic all around, uncertainty the future beholds, the love-hate relations between government workers, officials, doctors and scientists, and the manufacture of the virus by the US government as a bioweapon in the movie, although we are unsure of that in real current scenarios. Moreover, it highlighted the importance of nurses, health workers, medical practitioners and their commitment towards their people during such times. This also introduced us to the idea of how some governments can go to elaborate lengths to destroy and dissipate any population that may pose a credible threat. The film progressed well and had a successful conclusion. The joyful cries and moments of cheer in the movie represent the bright light I hope to see soon in our world as well.

Unpaused

Ridhi Khurana, 2nd Year



Image Source: ONMANORAMA

Crafted with sheer beauty and elegance, "Unpaused" is an anthology presenting five stories that mirror kaleidoscopic angles and a plethora of emotions revolving around "pessimism and optimism," "sorrow and joy," "helplessness and strength." The movie was a bliss that somehow managed to delve into the irreparable sufferings of people amidst the global crisis. It was successful in imparting hope in one of the direst situations facing mankind today.

The first story "The Glitch" was woven around the theme of loneliness, isolation, and love. The story leaves one thinking, "How long does it take to fall in love at first sight?" About the same time, it takes one to catch a virus! It was a conventional love story involving a boy and a girl in an odd situation with the touch of prevailing conditions and persistent fear of catching the virus. But as it is said that love transcends everything, the same holds for this story. The vehement and intense emotion called love transcended the fear and the crisis, leaving one to wonder, what if the COVID vaccine is not made even after ten years?

"The Apartment", the second in the anthology, explores the uncomfortable emotional ride and the breakthrough. It reflects the moment when one is on the threshold of giving up on everything, most importantly life, and how a minute ray of sunshine is just enough to get oneself out of the situation and emerge to be more determined than ever, to face every challenge gracefully and courageously. The story immensely celebrates the ones who come in life as that ray of sunshine and true blessing which urges to continue. It can be seen in the context of the pandemic wherein everyone faced a breaking point but endured it with more strength than ever.

The third story, Rat-A-Tat, brought a warm feeling with it. The story was about an ambitious girl who was chasing her dreams, leaving many important things behind. She had to live with an old, single grumpy neighbour who lost important things in her journey. Pandemic and the subsequent lockdown lead to their encounter, and a rat brings them together. They strike a bond in their quest for life. The story captures the essence of human relationships in the direst conditions like lockdown when there is nothing above what we call "Family."

Vishaanu, the fourth one was heart-wrenching as it captured the plight of migrants. The story was about a couple and their child who got stuck in the city, with nowhere to go. The bureaucratic inefficiency and insensitivity made the lives of daily wage earners worse, so much so that they had no option but to leave the city they called home. The unprivileged sections undoubtedly remained neglected and were the hardest-hit by the pandemic with no food and shelter. The ending was heartbreaking, but it offers a much-needed perspective.

The last and the most wholesome one was 'Chand Mubarak.' It focused on subtle moments shared by two strangers- an elderly lady and an auto-rickshaw driver. It fills one's heart with warmth to see a lonely old lady find solace with the stranger who goes out of his way to make things smooth for her. It highlights the theme of pride and independence associated with being alone and the feeling of love and care linked with having a family. It captured how thousands of people were denied the joy of meeting their families and celebrating festivals together. The end showed the human heart to help and care for one another. It justifies the saying that "humanity should be one's race and compassion should one's be religion."

The anthology soothes one's heart and fills one's soul with much-needed hope, which briefly disappeared somewhere. It reaffirmed that with love, empathy, generosity, and compassion, things may not be resolved, but can become bearable. It makes one pause for a bit and enables them to overcome lonely, gloomy, and dark winter nights. The story emphasizes that with companionship, it becomes easy to sail through problems and dire situations. It may change or alter the thinking negatively, but life moves on while reinstating faith in humanity.

POEMS

Covid-19 - A Nightmare

Akanksha Kumari, 1st year

Remembering 2020, my heart sinks and my spine chills,
15 lakh plus deaths and still counting, never thought cough kills.
Where to start and where to finish, life's been uncertain for almost a year,
The schools, the shops, and the traffic nothing but notices of covid were all left to hear.
Starting from Janata curfew to quarantine,
Everything came to a halt, some had nothing left to dine.
Chaotic surroundings, worries, melancholy and fear,
Isolation from family, is this a social behaviour, we cheer?
Felt like a captive in my own home, what about all those who don't even have a room?
Nothing's left for labour now, migrants thought these days would lead them to doom.
Education stuck, people losing jobs and prices rising,
Even toilet paper bought up, never knew what next would come up.
Rise in domestic violence, all burden on one,
The cook, the cleaner, the caretaker but respect given is none.
The economy declined but depression and anxiety advanced,
People asking for privacy, now fed up being alone.
Suicidal tendencies rose, drowning individual senses,
All so messed up, the world witnessed helpless governments.
In between this horror, the scientists gave hope,
Vaccines seemed elixir, but they too had a little scope.
After trials and errors, we finally got a few of them here,
But the area of distribution went into the political sphere.
In the wake of these tremors, Covid now seems a new normal,
With masks and sanitizers, handshakes are no longer formal.
Keeping a distance, avoiding crowds, we all learned the queuing,
Like cholera and flu, Covid will now be a part of our living.

“कोरोना का दौर”

Ankita Pandey, 1st Year

सीख लो उस कोरोना से जिसने मनुष्यों को डराया,
हर किसी की जाति भूल कर एक समानता का पाठ पढ़ाया।
ना ही कोई अमीर उसके लिए ना ही कोई गरीब हैं,
सभी को समान मानकर करता कार्य वही हैं।
परिवर्तन का परिचय वही हैं, सुख— दुख की घड़ी है, दो हजार
बीस को नई परिभाषा देने वाला वही हैं।
मनुष्यों पर पाबंदी, पशुओं पर आजादी लगाने वाला वही हैं,
जीवन जीने की कला को आसान करने वाला वही हैं।
आधुनिकता के इस नए दौर में, भौतिकता के सागर में,
दिखावे को पलभर में नष्ट करने वाला वही हैं।
आत्मपरीक्षण— अंतरदर्शन सिखाने वाला वही हैं,
खुद का स्वरूप खुद ही से याद कराने वाला वही हैं।
धरती माता को दूषित कर जो गंदगी मचाई हमी ने,
आज उसी को स्वच्छ करने का कार्य किया उसी ने।
पाखंडियों का नकाब हटाकर पर्दाफाश किया उसी ने, डॉक्टरों की
अहमियत को बढ़ावा दिया उसी ने।
जिस विज्ञान पर, जिस शस्त्र पर गर्व किया हमी ने,
आज उसी मिथ्या के साए से बाहर निकाला उसी ने।
आओ सीखें उसी कोरोना से जिसने बचाव का पाठ पढ़ाया, पुनः
हमारी संस्कृतियों को जिसने आगे बढ़ाया।



Preeti Yadav, 3rd year

“कोरोना काल में युवा बेरोजगार की व्यथा”

Ankita Pandey, 1st Year

पथ पर चलते हैं पैर कई,
कुछ उम्मीदों से भरे, हैं हताश कई,
बंजारे से जो दिखते हैं वो,
हृदय में अग्नि लिए हैं जो,
कहलाते जो बेरोजगार हैं,
कहते हैं सही, हम हैं वही।।
आरक्षण ने जगह ली ज्योंहिं,
काबिलियत के पंख कटे वहीं,
परिवार का दामन छोड़ चले जो,
परिवार के लिए ही रुख मोड़ चले वो,
कहलाते जो बेरोजगार हैं
कहते हों हैं सही, हम हैं वही।।

अखड्बारों पर तलाशती आँखें कई,
सरकारों पर गरजती जुबानें कई,
रिज्यूमे की फाइल लिए दर – दर भटकते हैं जो,
खून – पसीना एक कर भी निराश सोते हैं जो,
कहलाते जो बेरोजगार हैं
कहते हों हैं सही, हम हैं वही।।
मजबूरियों से भरे हैं हाथ कई,
अपराध को तलाशती हैं नयन कई,
अपराधी से जो दिखते हैं वो,
अपराध का दामन लिए हैं जो,
कहलाते जो बेरोजगार हैं,
कहते हों हैं सही, हम हैं वही।।

शिक्षित हो कर भी अशिक्षित कई,
डिग्री पर डिग्री लिए कई,
पेट भर रोटी के तलाश में वो,
नौकरी के मोहताज है वो,
कहलाते जो बेरोजगार हैं,
कहते हों हैं सही, हम हैं वही।।

क्या सोचा था कभी

Rachana Kathait, 3rd year

क्या सोचा था कभी
कि साँसों पे भी पाबंदी होगी
कि खुली हवा महसूस करना भी दुश्वार हो जाएगा
क्या सोचा था कभी
कि बाहर जाना एक जंग बन जाएगा
अपनो से मिलना एक सपना बन जाएगा
कि सबसे बेखौफ इंसान भी खौफजाद होगा
कि किसी का किसी को प्यार से छूना भी गुनाह होगा

क्या सोचा था कभी
रातों रात न सिर्फ तारीख बदलेगी
बल्कि जिंदगी जीने का तरीका भी बदल जाएगा
कि मास्क अपना नया पहनावा बन जाएगा
कि आप भी एक पंछी की भाँति पिंजरे में बंद होंगे
कि सबसे सुकून की जगह भी काटने को दौड़ेगी
की ये घर की चार दीवारी भी जेल सी लगेगी

क्या सोचा था कभी
एक दिन ऐसा भी होगा
जब दुनिया का सारा शोर बंद होगा
जब जानवर सड़को पर मदमस्त घूमेंगे
और नीले नभ में तारे दिखेंगे
क्या सोचा था कभी
कि वुहान से निकले एक वायरस की गति इतनी तेज होगी
कि आपके बाहर निकलने पर सेंध होगी
कि मिनटों में करोड़ों जिंदगी तबाह होंगी
निन्ही जिन्दगियाँ सड़क पर विलाप रही होंगी

क्या सोचा था कभी
की चंदा का उजाला भी फीका होगा
कि जीना इतना कठिन हो

“मुश्किल भरे दिन”

Bushra Malik, 3rd Year

मुझे याद है वो सभी किस्से और कहानियां,
जब मुश्किल भरी वो हालात चल रही थी।

उधर कोरोना के खत्म होने का नामों – निशा तक नहीं था,
तो वहीं लॉकडाउन और बढ़ाने की बातें चल रही थी।

किसी ने फेंक दिए पत्थर देश के रखवालों पर,
तो कहीं डॉक्टरों पर फूलों की बरसात चल रही थी।

वहां विदेशों से अमीरों को उड़ा लाए जहाज हिफाजत से,
तो कहीं देश के मजदूर घर लाने पर सियासत चल रही थी।

कहीं सोते हुए मजदूरों पर चल गई रेल रातों – रात,
तो कहीं मजदूरों के लिए श्रेश्ठ चलाने की इन्तेजामात चल रही थी।

कोई निकल पड़ा सड़कों पर, पैदल ही अपने घर को,
तो कहीं बसों में जगह लड़ दृ भिड़ाकर मिल रही थी।

कोई मर रहा था सड़कों पर अपने घर जाने को,
तो कहीं घर बैठे – बैठे बोर होने की शिकायत चल रही थी।

कोई नई – नई रेसिपी बनाकर डाल रहा था फोटो स्टेटस पर,
तो कहीं राशन लेने को जुटी भीड़ में लातें चल रही थी।

किसी ने काटे बड़ी मुश्किलों से ये मुश्किल भरे दिन,
तो किसी की जिंदगी हस्ते दृ मुस्कुराते चल रही थी।

कोई रह लिया इस बुरे वक़्त में अपने के साथ,
तो किसी की अकेले ही अस्पताल में सांसें चल रही थी।

खुदशानसीब थे वो, जिनके जनाजे को मिल गया कंधा अपने का,
वरना गैरों के हाथों लोगों की लाशें जल रही थी।

कब खत्म होगा ये सब, और कब हालात ठीक होंगे,
हर किसी के मन में बस यही ख्यालात चल रही थी।

A Footnote at the Edge

Diya Shrivastava, 1st Year

“Me with my sons, my little daughter, and my beautiful wife,
were living in a small thatched house, not permanent as my
life,
But not so bad as people described”.
crying.....
She is my daughter,
Small but, as loud as the court could hear,
And justify her cry.
On the day, it declared a standby,
I was on the site, doing my job as usual;
I earned 50 rupees a day and could make a living out of that.
My wife had earned less as she parted equally, as I did,
But her willingness not to listen to me was strong, as she was
scared to lose everything at the cost of her dignity.
But the standby had costed our lives forever,
I couldn’t applaud the warriors or light my house with a lamp,
As I did not have that 50 rupees,
To fulfill the demands of the authority.
I was hungry and desperate for life, my children were too
small to understand the situation but still tried.
I was sad, hiding my face from everyone,
I know they were hungry too as their stomach spoke the
words they couldn’t do.
For days there was no light and I couldn’t wait for years, as I
had to do something for my family who was dying of hunger,

That day I thought of going back to our village but now, the
borders were sealed as the mouths of many intellectuals were,
At that moment no one came up, many from my village were
recognized, but I was neglected.

My family suffered day-by-day,

I had no choice but to break laws, which was unfree to provide
me with some aid to go back to my hometown.

There were hurdles,

I had to do this so, I started from one milestone and reached
the other,

Camped the night and early morning, went all the way again
on foot;

The slippers burned and got torn, I had to do this for my
people (my family).

Many people asked my problems, many people had put some
focus but the unnecessary one,

I was hungry, my wife worked equally but did not get proper
pay,

My pay was too less to survive on leftovers.

Now, I think the real problem of our country is not poverty
but,

the way people think we are,

and still, they can’t understand why we are the way we are.

I am a migrant worker, barring all caste or class bounds,

A human at first who is satisfied with at least,

a little consideration or recognition.....

[Interpretation- this poem emphasizes the migrant crisis, as the lockdown in the country, had created havoc. But, there is also an emphasis on the lives of these workers day by day worsening. Many people even neglect them by saying it is harmful to become pro-poor. But the real question is not that where are we heading towards. Is it ok to see our lives flourishing at the cost of these people? There are soldier’s martyrdom, who died of valor on the borders, but these people die within the boundaries. Is it ok to let them suffer for our satisfaction? The point is not being pro-poor but, actually not willing to help the poor.

This is a story of a man, who is a migrant worker, who has a family, he is fighting a case in the court for land from brothers, he is not paid well, but is exceptionally good, his wife has faced harassment from her senior manager she is also paid less as she is a woman, (gender bias). It also tells how unfree these people are, the constitution was made for the people but these laws are not for them. It tells how hard it was for these people to reach their hometown. And at the end, died of hunger, heat, thirst, and basic needs.]

“जिंदगी बड़ी खूबसूरत है”

Preeti Yadav, 3rd Year

जब सब साथ रहते थे एक जुट होकर
मिलकर बाँटते हर सुख दुख सब के संग
होता था हर दिन कॉलेज में जाना
थोड़ा अपनी मटरगस्ती करना
और थोड़ा क्लासेज में फेमिनिज्म पढ़ना

जिंदगी है खूबसूरत बड़ी
इसमें देखेंगे इंद्रधनुष जैसे रंग कई
दौड़ भाग की इस रेस में
मानो एकदम से कहर आ गया
जब सब के मन में डर और
भारत में कोरोना आ गया

कोरोना आया अपने संग मुसीबतें लाया
आजादी छीन कर सबको घर में बैठाया,
महामारी ने नया रूप दिखाया
चारों तरफ अपना खघैफ फैलाया
कोरोना आया उसने सब बंद करवाया
लेकिन परिवार का सही मतलब समझाया
जो करते थे दिन रात काम
उन्होंने भी परिवार संग समय बिताया,
थोड़ा रामायण—महाभारत देखकर तो
थोड़ा बच्चों के साथ अपने बचपन को जी कर
वही जो भूले थे गाँव का रास्ता उन्हें भी गाँव याद आया

कोरोना आया लोगों की जान पर संकट लाया
परिवार के हर सदस्य ने एक दूसरे का साथ निभाया,
माँ ने दिन रात काढ़ा बनाकर पिलाया
कोरोना आया पापा को घर में बैठाया
जो जानते नहीं थे घर के काम
उन्होंने भी माँ का हाथ बटाया
फिर पापा का अलग—अलग हुनर सबके सामने आया,
लगे हाथ हमने पापा को नारीवाद का पाठ पढ़ाया

कोरोना आया स्कूल कॉलेज सब बंद करवाया
महीनों तक बच्चों को दोस्तों से मिलने को तरसाया

इसी बहाने ही सही, सबको सच्ची दोस्ती का
मलब समझ आया
जो करते थे बातें घंटों फोन पर
उन्होंने एक दूसरे का चेहरे देखने को बड़ा तड़पाया

कोरोना आया शिक्षा का नया माध्यम साथ लाया
एक ओर प्लैट और ब्लैक से प्यार करवाया
तो दूसरी तरफ ऑनलाइन क्लासेस ने ₹1075-109 बढ़ा
याद दिलाया

जब प्रोफेसर आकर रखते थे अपने ज्ञान का
समरूप सामने हमारे
और हम कक्षा में देर से थे आते
कोरोना आया यह सब बहुत याद दिलाया

कोरोना आया हमें मानव मूल्य समझाया,
प्रकृति का संरक्षण सिखलाया
हम हो चुके पर्यावरण को लॉकडाउन ने सुधारा
कोरोना आया अपने संग कुछ सीख भी लाया,
जब लोग बैठे थे घर में
सभी के अंदर का कलाकार बाहर आया
सबने अपना हुनर दिखाया

कोरोना आया उसने सब कुछ बंद करवाया
लोगों ने जीवन यापन का नया तरीका निकाला
लॉकडाउन में भी आर्थिक उन्नति का रास्ता निकाला और
घर चलाया

जिंदगी बड़ी खूबसूरत है कोरोना ने और भी अच्छे से
समझाया,
ना खोजों सही वक्त खुश रहने का
जियो जो पल है अभी तुम्हारे पास
पल यही है सही
खुश होने, और खटुशियाँ बाँटने का
क्योंकि सफर खूबसूरत है, मंजिल की तरह

“लॉकडाउन के वो दिन”

Bhumika, 3rd year

लॉकडाउन के वो दि न
मुझे जब भी याद आते हैं,
इकझोर देते हैं मुझे
और मेरी रुह को कोढ़ जाते हैं।

जहाँ छाई चारों ओर घनघोर उदासी,
कुछ पल ऐसे भी याद आते हैं मुझे
जो आँखों को नम कर जाते हैं।।

कही ख्यालो मे डर
तो कभी घर के बाहर निकलने पर पाबंदियां,
बि ता ये साल कु छ ऐसा ही,
जहाँ सिर्फ यादों में ही रह गया था,
कॉलेज व ऑफि स जाने का इरादा ।

वह दि न लॉकडाउन के
जो याद दि ला देते हैं कि
है वो एक वर्ग ऐसा जो,
इन बड़े – बड़े शहरों की
इमारतों के छोटे – छोटे कमरों में रहता है।

लगा जब लॉकडाउन , निकल पड़ा वो वर्ग
जिसे हम मार्क्सवादी सिद्धांत के तहत,
कहते हैं मजदरू , ऐसे ठिकानो की ओर
जि से वह हक से अपना घर कहता है ।

जहाँ जाना होता था साल मे एक बार
बस यही सहारा रह गया था इस साल द्य
वो दि न लॉकडाउन के
मुझे जब भी याद आते हैं,
इकझोर देते हैं मुझे
और मेरी रुह को कोढ़ जाते हैं

“दुनिया की बेड़ियाँ”

Arti Kumari, 1st year

“क्या सुनाएँ, क्या बताये या क्या लिख पाए,
चार दीवारों के अंदर, नारियों के अपमान का वास्ता,
ये खुले आम लड़कियों के रेप की दास्ताँ,
फर्ज बोलते हो, धरती को माता बोलते हो
शर्म नहीं आती खुले आम लड़कियों के चीरहरण देखते हो ।

जन्म से पहले ही मार तुम डालते हो,
इस तरह से खुद के मर्दानगी पर लांछन लगाते हो,
उड़ने से पहले ही पंख तुम काटते हो,
तुम सब मिलकर बाद में ‘लड़कियाँ कमजोर हैश इसका
हवाला देते हो।

शांति की प्रतीक भौकाल भी मचा सकती हैं ।
अफसोस ये दुनिया अपनी जन्नी को ही दुतकारती हैं ।
शक्ति, काली की प्रतीक वो सब को मिटा सकती हैं
देखते हैं दुनिया के तोहमतें (दोषी) कब तक बेड़ियाँ
डालते हैं ।

The Shadow Pandemic

Aditi Kushwaha, 2nd Year

It may have the word 'domestic' in it
But it is the beast in women's lives
It's a cruelty done by the spouse or his relative
It's a crime that women suffer as wives.

Domestic violence never stopped
Even when the world stopped
A crime that reflects society's patriarchal nature
Shouldn't become 'new normal' in any nature.
68 day period reported more cases than ever
Many that never get reported whatsoever
Sad to see this unusual upsurge
Guess what this is only the tip of an iceberg.

This under-reported crime forces women to keep their lips tight
Financial dependency, fear of retaliation, victim-blaming
And convoluted bureaucratic procedure
All tell us the reasons why
It has been aided by the government's apathy
It becomes worse when there is only sympathy
This 'shadow pandemic' will never get over
Even when long-awaited 'a shot of hope' takes over.

Section 498 A of IPC is there as a choice
But still, victims stand without a voice.



Artwork by: Medha Srivastava via Reddit

Corona Caging The World

Bhumika Nagpal, 1st Year

Who knew one day the whole world would be caged,
Not in the jail but due to the environment being raging.
Nobody knows what the actual reason was,
And no one could imagine what Corona could cause!

Zoom became the platform for social interaction,
Preventing our lives from entering total inaction

The earth got time to heal,
From human exploitation and ordeal.

Social distancing became the new normal,
Nevertheless, made relationships more cordial.
Wearing masks became a worldwide trend,
Sanitizers are now the new birthday gifts we send.

Survival demanded no more outings or going to work,
But being with family was the biggest perk.
Life became as still as a glass lake on a windless day,
And all we did was play and pray.

Unemployment forced many people to weep and scream, to get their family one single meal.

People were dying like leaves falling off a tree,

Nobody could save their loved ones even after paying the heaviest fee.

Doctors, nurses and the police became frontline warriors, Who sacrificed their lives just like real fighters.

At the end, following norms is necessitated,

Until the whole world gets vaccinated.



Adreeja Gupta, 2nd year

GALLERY



Webinars on

'Eurocentrism in International Relations and Interventions from India' & 'Madrasas and the Making of Islamic Womanhood'



Farewell Batch of 2020 & Freshers Batch of 2023



Politik 2021

Annual Report

Department of Political Science

March 2020 – March 2021

This was an unusual year. The outbreak of coronavirus (Covid-19) led to a shift towards online teaching-learning. In these unusual times and under the new normal, the departmental activities and events were held online through different platforms such as Zoom and G-meet.

On 3 July 2020, the department organised a webinar on Zoom to familiarise students with the Open Book Examinations (OBE). Professor Sunil K Choudhary from the Department of Political Science, DU, interacted with the students and shared the modalities of OBE. This was followed by a Question-and-Answer session in which the concerns of the students were addressed.

On 26th September 2020 students participated in a colloquium titled 'Reclaiming Republican democracy in the 21st century'. This was organized by the Foundation for Creative Social Research in association with the Raza Foundation and IIC. Dr. Nupur ray was the teacher coordinator.

On 15-16th September 2020 students of the third semester attended a national webinar on 'Migration and the Pandemic Problematique' organized by the Department of Political Science, Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi and Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata. Dr. Ritambhara Malviya coordinated the event.

On 21st October 2020, a book discussion on the title 'Madrasas and the making of Islamic Womanhood' was organised. Dr. Hem Borker is Assistant professor at the Centre for Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. The author of the book brought the complex realities of Girls' in Madrasa, their education, and how it is a space of empowerment for them. The book discussion was followed by a question-and-answer session.

On 28th October 2020, the students of the third semester attended the webinar on 'Central Information Commission & RTI'. The webinar was organized by Pranab Mukherjee Foundation as a part of Samanvaya series. This was coordinated by Dr. Vaishali Narula.

On 6th November 2020, the department organised an International Webinar on Eurocentrism in International Relational and Interventions from India on zoom. Professor Turan Kayaoglu from the University of Washington and Professor Navnita Chadha Behera from the University of Delhi debated the question of Eurocentrism in the field of International Relations Theory. The session was chaired by Professor Jayati Srivastava from Jawaharlal Nehru University. The session focused on why the Westphalian Treaty sustains and what kind of ideas it empowers and disempowers. The discussion was followed by an interactive question-and-answer.

On 24th February 2021, the Department organized its Annual Department Day, Politik 2021 on the theme 'Women and Violence in Contemporary India'. Professor Krishna Menon (Professor of Gender Studies at the School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University) spoke on 'Women and violence in Contemporary India'. Dr. Menon brought forth the different forms of violence directed against women. The lecture focused on different spaces within the society itself where women experience different forms of violence which limits the availability of safe spaces for women and curtails their free will as a citizen. The event was organized on Google meet and was streamed on discord for the same purpose. This was followed by Question-and-Answer. This was followed by various inter-college events: Lafziat- The Conventional Debate, Let It Out- The Slam Poetry Competition; 'Popcorn and Politics -Quiz, Masquerade -The Face Painting Competition and Izhaar- The Art Competition.

On 10th March 2021, the department organized an in house lecture on Understanding Iqbal's Philosophy'. Dr. Talim Akhtar from the Department of Political Science, Hindu College, University of Delhi conducted an interactive lecture.