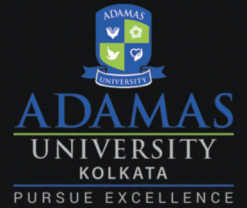


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Editorial	06	From the Desk of the Managing Editor Prof. (Dr.) Deependra Kumar Jha
	07	The Covid-19 Saga and the Way Forward Dr. Kunal Sarkar
'POSITIVE' Humanity	15	Africa, Then and Now – How It Is Fighting the Pandemic Somnath Mukherjee
	23	Covid Control: National Success Stories Worldwide Prof. Ujjwal K Chowdhury
	32	Public Relations Practice in Pandemic Times Rita Bhimani
	37	Not DC, not Marvel, not Anime but Real Superheroes Dr. Agniva Pal
	43	Shadows of Death, Some Flickers of Life Shantanu Guha Ray
	47	Amritasya Putra: Born of Elixir Dr. Sulagna Chatterjee
	51	Teachers: The Saviours of Education and the Light Bearers of a Nation Amal Sankar Mukherjee and Sanjoy Dutta
	55	We Cannot Eat Money Debanjan Banerjee
	61	The Magic Potion for Covid Cure and the Unanswered Questions Dr. Mrityunjoy Chatterjee



69

Red Volunteers Plays an Important Role in Combating Covid-19 in West Bengal

Asmita Kar

73

How Covid-19 Triggered Creative Women

Moumita De Das

Poetry

79

Pandemic Time

Saibal Ray

'POSITIVE' Psychology

80

Making It to the Life Raft: The Silent Pandemic and Mental Health

Dr. Soheli Datta



86

Que Sera Sera – Understanding Perpetual Positivity Syndrome, Adversity Quotient and Resilience

Jerry Almeida

91

Pandemic: A Story of Hope and Despair

Dr. Jhilli Das (Tewary)

95

Building Positive Strength during the Pandemic: Knowing and Implementing Positive Psychology

Dr. Sumona Datta

101

A Ray of Hope that Brings Sunshine

Debopriya Ghatak

Covid-19 Vaccine Update

107

Global Collaborations for Rapid Development of Vaccines Are on to Combat Covid-19

Dr. Arindam Mitra

Industry Affairs

113

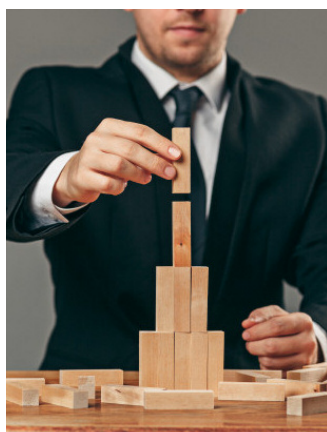
Beyond CSR Empathy at the Time of Covid-19

Prof. (Dr.) Naveen Das

119

A Story of Resilience

Nilayan Chatterjee



	121	#PositiveCovid: ‘Today’s Pain, Tomorrow’s Gain’ Moment for Advertising and Public Relations Industry Subhrajit Dutta
	125	Developing Compassionate Leadership during and after Covid-19 Joy Chowdhury
	131	Glass Half Empty or Half Full? Analysing the Role of Media in Spreading Hope during Covid-19 Nitesh Tripathi
Obituary	137	He Is Dead; His Legacy Isn’t Dr. Sunayan Bhattacharjee
Education	141	Clinical Legal Education during Covid-19 Pandemic Dr. Kama Raju Chitrapu
Book Review	149	The Covid-19 Pause Varun R Malavalli
Campus Stories	155	Adamas University Student Clubs: An Inspirational Tale Adrija Chattopadhyay and Rupanwita Das Mahapatra
	165	Adamas University Round-Up January – May, 2021 Subhajit Chakraborty
Post Editorial	178	From the Desk of the Executive Editor Prof. Ujjwal K Chowdhury

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From the Desk of the Managing Editor

Dear Readers,

Time flows in strange ways on a Sunday.

As I get older (crow's feet, melanin mapping the years on my skin), I realise time is *not* compartmentalised and linear; years of teenage rebellion, years of juvenile adulthood, years of salt-and-pepper hair, in that order. You don't get one year older at a time. It isn't like that. For most, it happens overnight.

There's a suffocating stillness in the air – summer comes too soon, all muggy palms, salt on your tongue, a punch to the gut (a little *Chernobyl* in my mind, fields of radiant, bioluminescent, awkward memories, an ugly *Frankenstein* of road trips and friendships and headiness of young blood – a bloodbath of nostalgia, a suffocating smoke; a reality we can't go back to). Between waking and sleeping, there's measured exhales and inhales (a murmur of habit), trickling time, food stuck in your teeth, eyes flitting across neon screens, toes curled against the cool tiles and *I wonder*.

I wonder, what does it mean to *live*?

The pandemic (*I hate the word, now*) isn't over. It's like the other half of your shadow now. It lingers, stifles, *burns* – there are ways of dying which don't end in a funeral. A death you can't smell. But how long can we sit and stare at our wounds? (We can wish for realities, we can run far – eventually, people can be nothing but themselves). Sometimes, when the absurdity catches up to me, it feels like a staged, Shakespearean tragedy – it also feels like gazing at a distant star. It's dazzling, befuddling – but the light is from tens of thousands of years ago. May be, the star doesn't even exist anymore. And yet, sometimes, the light seems more real to me than anything. There's this

helplessness – as if everything you know has been ripped away, there's no more gravity – as if you're adrift in outer space.

Time flows in strange ways on a Sunday.

I suppose our realities shift and slide all the time. They must meet, head on, somewhere – and perhaps the junction is a tragedy. It's a void of unsaid pleasantries, sodden laughs, mellow companionship. Time stands still, people hum and buzz – streets are

empty, towns are full of ghosts.

There is a reality where we're all the same person (who has lost, who has tasted defeat, who has *lost*) – and camaraderie is too shallow a word. There's a reality where we learn hierarchies mean nothing; there is no order. *You are me, I am you.*

What does it mean to *live*?

Perhaps living has nothing to do with biology and everything to do with us. Perhaps, this is how we learn we're alive – a shy, curious reflection of opinions and perceptions morphing into the mirror. It's acrid on your tongue and bitter on the way down – but perhaps we live through the lives we touch. Perhaps this reality is a mirror of your conscience. Perhaps the idea of *living* is arbitrary – *subjective*, even – and the jut of bones against skin, the mark of scars against age, the angle of jaws against cheek is all a made-up concept (a social construct, whatever that entails).

Time flows in strange ways on a Sunday, and I wonder, what does it mean to *live*?

It just means to hold on.



Prof. (Dr.) Deependra Kumar Jha,
Vice Chancellor, Adamas University
Former Vice Chancellor, UPES, Dehradun
and GD Goenka University, Gurugram



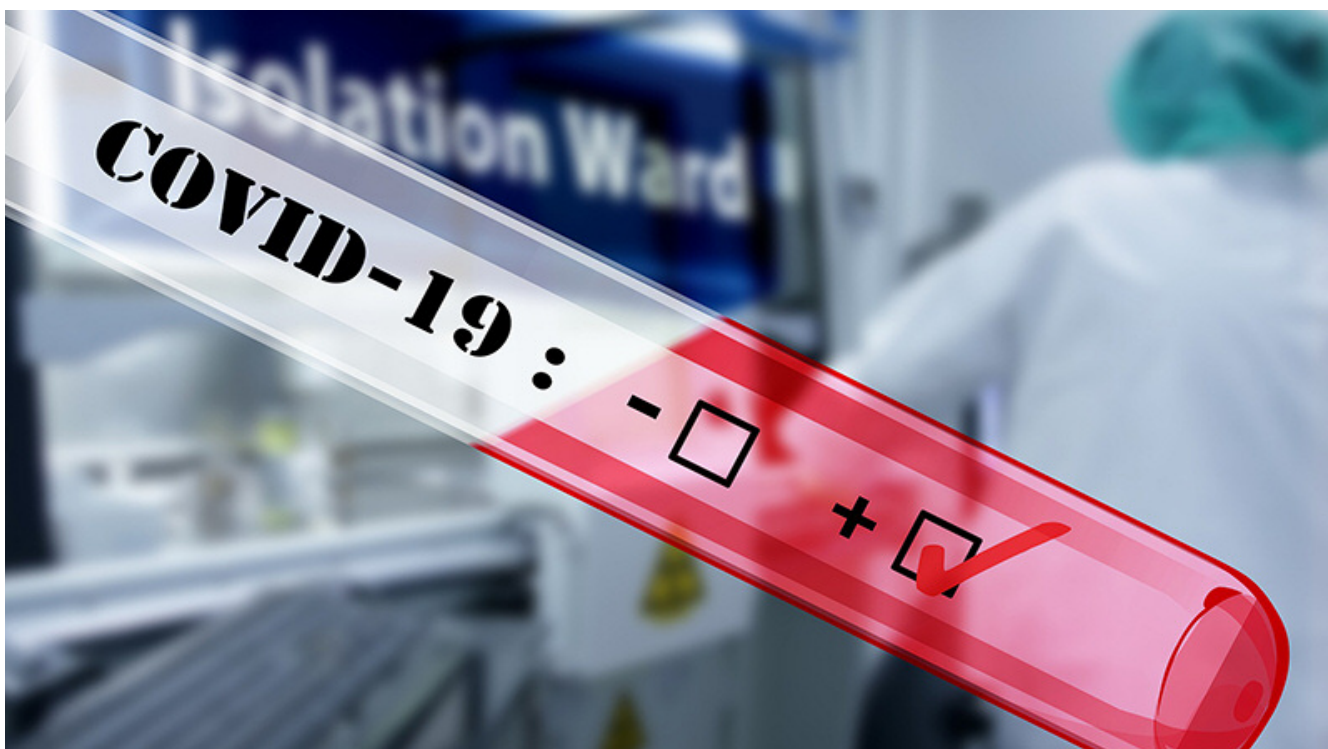
The Covid-19 Saga and the Way Forward

*This article has been extracted from the virtual lecture session by **Dr. Kunal Sarkar**, a legendary Kolkata-based cardiac surgeon. Dr. Sarkar was addressing the members of RICE Group and Adamas University in Kolkata.*



Today, we are inhabiting a world where there isn't even one of us who has been spared the heat of the blast

furnace considering the kind of carnage that India has been going through over the last two and half months. And, it is not just a matter of statistics. As a nation, we really have to understand and appreciate what we have been through. Already, in the life of this 74-year-old country, if you add the first and the second waves of Covid-19, in terms of lives lost and livelihoods dislocated, I think the experience probably has been four times worse than the partition of India. We have read and heard a lot of discussion as to why the second wave happened. This discussion is important as we don't need a third wave. We were completely mistaken to presume that Covid-19, which reached its peak in India





somewhere around the middle of September, 2020, was on its way out. But people believing it is one thing and people in power believing it is another. Therefore, let us look back as individuals and as institutions.

I think the first thing that we should have exercised was restraint – the education and realization not to have done certain things between December, 2020 and February, 2021. But during this period, there were many social gatherings, political rallies and the likes. West Bengal was witness to one of the most murderous election campaigns that persisted for more than two months. So, every little drop of our sloppiness combined to form an ocean of dismay.

This is a respiratory pandemic. It just needs two living people within about six to seven feet of one another in a state of carelessness. It does not spread through the Internet. It does not spread over long distances. At one time, we were very worried that if we touched something, we would get Coronavirus – we were desperately cleaning our door handles and table tops

50 times a day. But, now we know that Covid-19 does not spread like that. It doesn't travel if two careful people just happen to touch one another. Why did we think that way? It is because many of the habits and much of the information regarding Covid-19 constituted a legacy of one of the more recent epidemics of our times – Ebola that set in Tangiers and Congo. Ebola is actually a name of a river in the lower Congo Basin and not the name of a virus. So Ebola – very infectious and deadly – actually spreads by contact. Ebola is not a respiratory virus. This is the reason for our obsession with touch.

Only if two people in a state of low level of precaution are close to one another over a distance of say six to seven feet – without mask and without protection – it's calling for trouble. SARS-CoV-2 multiplies by the law of binary fission.

We also see in the press that in many places, the spread of pandemic is being calculated by the R Number. The R number is a way of rating Coronavirus or any disease's ability to spread. R is the number of people that one infected person will infect. For example, measles has an R number of 15 in populations without immunity. That means, on average, one person will spread measles to 15 others. Coronavirus would have a reproduction number of about three if no action was taken to stop it spreading.

We were caught off guard. It is important to understand two scientific blunders that we committed. I have repeatedly underlined the fact, at times very forcefully, that India is committing a big mistake by not creating an empowered epidemiological point of responsibility. India's Covid-19 campaign is being led by the National Task force for Covid-19, which has 21 members. But none of them is an epidemiologist. There are pediatricians, cardiologists, medical and biomedical people or physicists – all kinds

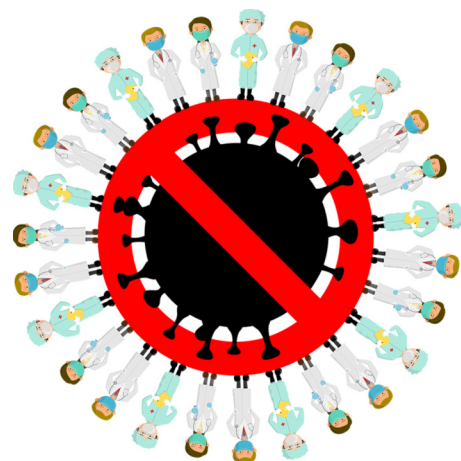
of people from unrelated specialties. By the time it was January, we had already picked up the presence of the variance. When it was dying down, this virus had already started to mutate, as viruses always do. As far as viruses go, this SARS-CoV-2, an RNA virus, looks a bit awkward. It does not look like a natural virus. It is actually a very stable virus. So many of us have this mistaken belief that this is a very unstable virus. It is like a photocopy machine – an RNA photocopier. The more it photocopies, the more we allow it to spread. Some changes in the amino acid sequences will happen, which is called mutation. Mutations give rise to variants. So, we had detected these changes way back in December, 2020 and definitely in January, 2021.

There is an association of very good scientists called INSACOG (Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia), who were given the responsibility of doing the genomic analysis from RT PCR test results. Ideally speaking, one out of 10 RT PCR tests should have a genomic analysis. In India we are far lagging in this matter and are currently doing genomic analysis to the tune of about 0.1 per cent. All the genomic pieces of information are extrapolated by INSACOG and if they pick up some funny variant here and there, they report to the government.

We were completely mistaken to presume that Covid-19, which reached its peak in India somewhere around the middle of September, 2020, was on its way out.

They had reported to the government. However, the government did not take a serious notice of the same. Secondly, the government, in trying to understand how this pandemic might behave in India, had initiated a Covid -19 Indian National Supermodel to help monitor the future transmission of infection. They were to study via mathematical modeling and simulations for the spread of Covid-19 virus and its impact, thus aiding decisions involving health system readiness and other mitigation measures. This super modelling committee sadly made a lot of mistakes. A lot of parallel models from the *University of Detroit*, from *John Hopkins University* and the *University of Cambridge* had actually predicted not to take the dip in the graph for granted as it might rebound. But technocratic indifferences and scientific miscalculations compounded the crisis. How are we doing with the variance? Yes, this is an RNA virus. Most living beings are made of DNA. But only in viruses, we find certain RNA particulates. It's difficult to call them living things. However, these have one or two living properties that are capable of multiplication. If we remember the photograph of the

India's Covid-19 campaign is being led by the National Task force for Covid-19, which has 21 members. But none of them is an epidemiologist.



virus, we shall remember it as a globular mass with the spike proteins attached to it. This spike protein is the center of all the attention, because this spike protein helps this virus to attach to a cell. And most of the scientific or natural manipulations happened in the binding of the spike protein to the set. Actually, there are few labs across the world and one such lab was the Wuhan Institute of Virology. We know of two other coronaviruses from earlier times – SARS-CoV-1 and the Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) virus. SARS-CoV-2 was thought to have come from the bats. From the bats, it probably went to these little creatures called civets and from the civets to the human. The virus was first detected in the Yunnan province of China, which is over 1,500 kilometers away from the Wuhan laboratory. Unless you are transporting bats through airlines, there is no way a bat is able to fly such a long distance. Still, no one has answered this question. How does a bat travel 1,500 kilometers? There exists no local population of bats there. Does it look like a very believable story? But there is ample evidence that we were fiddling with our scientific screwdrivers and tools with the Spike protein attachment site. The main template that was used here was the previous SARS-CoV-1 virus. That manipulation enabled

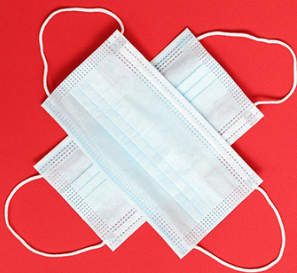
this virus to come and get fixed to the human cell. No, this experiment did not happen in humans. It is not necessary to have the experiment with humans. A few mice were cloned with human cells. These mice may be called humanized mice. A lot of these humanized mice were found in the Wuhan Institute of Virology. These mice will make a few respiratory cells, which are like human cells. All the experiments that happen on these cells happen with the mice.

There is a famous scientific writer called Nicholas Wade, who has been writing for *The Lancet* and *The New York Times* for 30 years. If one has read Nicholas Wade's last article, it is like revising entire undergraduate virology. And, the details in which he has described the points of probable manipulation is astounding. The other point of concern is that the Wuhan lab was supposed to be doing these explosive projects, which were all there in the academic domain. So, why is the world not jumping up and down on this? The world is not jumping up and down on this for the simple reason that this project was a joint project between the National Institute of Health in the United States of America and the Wuhan Institute of Virology. So, like many disasters in the world, this is probably a globalized disaster that we are looking at.

The government, in trying to understand how this pandemic might behave in India, had initiated a Covid - 19 Indian National Supermodel to help monitor the future transmission of infection.

Our problem lies with the variants of the virus. Some of the mutations will make the virus less effective and some will make the virus more effective. These variations make a virus more resistant to vaccination. So far, there has been, say, a factor of five to 10 percent differences because most of the vaccines that have been developed. The vaccines were based on the original strain. People who believe in conspiracy theories actually say that the Wuhan lab had already started making vaccines before the pandemic and that is why the vaccines came out as fast as they did. May be, may not be, but most of the vaccines were based on the original Wuhan strain and hence the difference in their activity vista. But that difference is not earth shattering. Around 5 to 7 percent difference is being detected. These vaccines will need to be updated all the time.

How are the vaccines working so far? So far, the vaccines are working reasonably well. The vaccines reduce the risk of infection to about .05 to .005 percent. Where the vaccine is really supposed to work very well is in prevention of serious disease by a similar factor of .02 to .005 percent. Yes, there are cases of deaths



even after being vaccinated. Yes, there will be some accidents. The percentage of such deaths, as already said, will be .02 percent, which means about two people in 20,000.

A vaccine is like a seat belt. We are driving a car. We have put on the seat belt but the seat belt does not prevent us from driving badly and having an accident. But because we had the seat belt on, we shall not get bad injuries. The vaccine is just like the seat belt. It is worth remembering that the highest death rate from Covid-19 has been 4,500 to 5,000 per day. India has a daily death rate of 30,000 people. And about 7,000 people die in India every day from traffic accidents. Another 8,000 die from cardiac problems and strokes. Yes, Covid-19 is causing incremental deaths. As educated people, we have to focus on not just deaths, but something very sensitive called incremental deaths. If the noting of incremental deaths is done, the vaccines will prove to be by and large successful. Indeed, India's vaccination policy leaves a lot to be desired. In 1985, India had a national immunization policy. There are 15 to 17 vaccines that the central government gives to the child and the

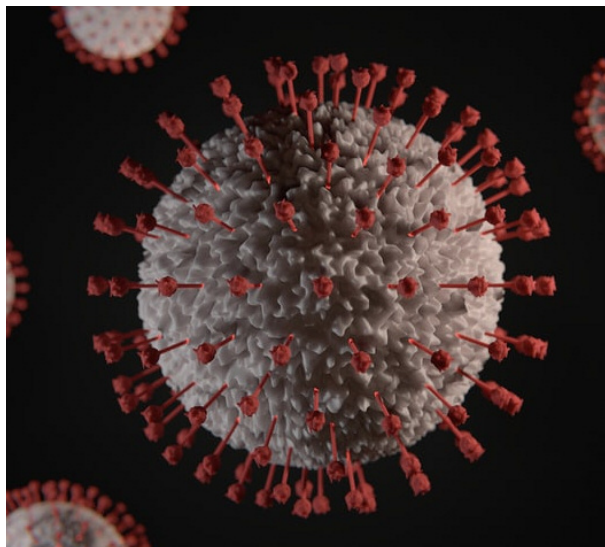
The third wave will actually be a function of the population and policy behaviour. A third wave is not a horror – it is in a way inevitable.





**Your safety and my safety
depends on ourselves and
depends on the ecosystem
around us.**

mother completely free of cost as part of a programme, which is completely managed and supported by the Government of India. But this time round, the Government of India took up the duty of vaccinating the health care workers, people who are above the age of 45. But the moment it came to the age group of 18 to 45, the vaccination distribution was trifurcated among the Centre, the states and the private sector. So, it is all looking a little bit chaotic at this point of time. Where do educational institutions move on from here? Educational institutions should really start active discussions and create forums of opinion. In India, our demography is such that the young in India have now got to be vaccinated with a real sense of priority. Everybody needs it. But educational institutions will find it very difficult to get back to the usual drill of academic programmes, classes and seminars. The school children will also find it difficult to get back to their normal lives. It has been seen in every country in the world, when public transport was opened, it did not have much of an impact. But the moment big universities and colleges opened up, there was a tremendous amount of cross infection between the young and the old – the supportive staff and the teachers.



There had been more than 30 instances where colleges were opened and shut. Vaccinating the young in India is going to be the topmost priority. Why is it slow? Why do the global popular vaccines like Pfizer, Covishield not stick their necks out and say, "Let us go ahead and start vaccinating 12 plus people?" It is simply because we do not have strong scientific recommendations and vaccine trials did not include two groups – the young people under 18 and pregnant women, or lactating mothers in the trial population. In pregnancy, we still have a grey area, because there have been a few retrospective studies, which have shown that in pregnancy you can have slightly more problems. But lactating mothers have no issues. Hopefully there will be some supportive data and based on that supportive data and with better availability of vaccines, all these problems we have at this point of time, will cease. So, where are we as far as the third wave is concerned? The third wave will actually be a function of the population and policy behaviour. A third wave is not a horror – it is in a way inevitable. But for an educated and empowered country to navigate itself, it has to repeatedly remind the people all the time that yes, we need

to work and we need to take up the activities which are important. However, non-essential work needs to be avoided as much as possible. My individual level of protection cannot be compromised. We shall not once again have gatherings of 400 to 500 people. We shall not have closed-door meetings of 25 to 30 people. And, in the background, the health care policy makers of the country have only one thing to aim for, and that aim is vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate. I have an appeal for everyone. The Government of India has really given a lot of the vaccines to the commercial platforms. So many of you, who are below the age of 45, will probably go out to some private vaccination camp in your buildings or in your locality. If you go to one of these private programmes, please remember to get yourself and your family vaccinated. And, please donate two or three other vaccines to get people around you vaccinated. Maybe your home-help, your driver or their families. There is no point in jumping up and down and banging our heads on the wall in the middle of a third wave and then listening to acidic programmes at 8:00 o'clock in the evening on what the government did and what the government did not do. Your safety and my safety depends on ourselves and depends on the ecosystem around us.

[Author's Introduction: Dr. Kunal Sarkar, one of the most iconic names in the Indian medical fraternity, is currently a Senior Vice Chairman & Senior Consultant – Cardiac Surgery at the Medica Superspeciality Hospital in Kolkata. Dr. Sarkar has performed more than 18,000 heart surgeries with the success rate being more than 98 per cent. Dr. Sarkar is also a debater, orator and writer. He is the President of the Calcutta Debating Circle (CDC).]



Africa, Then and Now – How It Is Fighting the Pandemic



Somnath Mukherjee, who works with the UN in Africa, writes a heart-warming piece on how Africa has so far been successful in thwarting the Covid-19 pandemic.

For most people, especially those from North America and Europe, Africa seems to be just a single landmass, relatively unknown. But Africa is actually a continent with 54 countries that are socially and ethnically diverse. Africa is also one of the most beautiful continents with abundant natural resources, huge forest lands and big rivers. It is a potpourri



of multiple cultures. Africa has witnessed brutal colonization and exploitation. It has also endured unstable and dictatorial regimes that were distinctly influenced by the colonialists. The result has been political conflicts, unimaginable violence,

terrorist activities, incessant military interventions, ethnic and religious cleansings, rampant corruption and greed. Despite all these, Africa has been witnessing some exemplary democratic practices over the last decade or so.

While in Somalia, our UN Missions team used to come under attack on a regular basis. Our vehicles used to be attacked with IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices).

Working with the United Nations Field Missions gave me a good idea about this vast continent. I explored areas, where ordinary people will never dare to visit. I worked in West and East African countries mostly but at times went on deputation to other regions as well. Despite so many hardships, the optimism and positivity of the people of this vast continent never ceases to surprise me. Let me recount a horror story from the civil war in Sierra Leone. The war lasted for more than 11 years and devastated the country. It was a war

for the control of natural resources of the country – diamonds, iron ore, bauxite and gold. The chief perpetrator was Charles Taylor, warlord and president of Liberia from 1997 to 2003. His terrorist militia was responsible for over 1,00,000 deaths. Their favourite method was to chop off limbs. Ordinary people used to be rounded up and given the option – half pant or full pant? Half shirt or full shirt? This meant chopping off the leg from the thigh for full pant and the knee for half pant and chopping hands from the elbow for

half-shirt and from the shoulder for the full shirt. People were left to die like that in the open. Our army medical units had hard times saving the lives of such people. Since the end of hostilities in January 2002, this country has had uninterrupted democratic rule. There has also been a massive infusion of outside assistance. Gradually, Sierra Leone is recovering. While in Somalia, our UN Missions team used to come under attack on a regular basis. Our vehicles used to be

attacked with IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices). Even our convoys carrying medicines and food for internally displaced people had to face attacks with mortars and rocket propelled grenades (RPG). Somalia now exports goat and camel meat and dairy products. Somalia does a lot of recycling of plastic bottles, transforming them into floor tiles, doors and other products. Once a war-ravaged country, it is now boosting trade ties with many countries.

Africa has witnessed brutal colonization and exploitation. It has also endured unstable and dictatorial regimes that were distinctly influenced by the colonialists.



The whole world knows about the Rwandan genocide that lasted between April 7, 1994 and July 15, 1994. Within a period of about 100 days, the death toll amounted to 11,00,000. More than 5,00,000 women were raped. Today, Rwanda is one of the fastest growing economies among developing nations and is being touted to be the Singapore of Africa.

UN Mission goes deep into disturbed territories in Africa to restore peace and make the rule of law prevail. Every UN Unit has multiple teams of specialists – army men, doctors, engineers and the likes. These teams set up camps and restore power supply, water and communication. Simultaneously, health, food and housing restorations were done. The UN army ensures security. The UNICEF and WHO teams started their programmes to check children and adults for health issues, and WFP (World Food Programme) officials begin distributing food. Small playrooms for displaced children, video shows and small FM stations were opened to broadcast standard awareness programmes.

The whole process helped us understand that different cultures react in different ways. Thus, we adopted a disarming

The rule of law has been established in Africa (if not completely) with multiple elections having taken place and the authorities have slowly brought life back to normal.



technique. We differently used verses of the Quran depicting the true meaning of *Jihad* and thereby countered terrorist versions of destruction. Then, we started the sentiment analysis programmes and surveyed the requirements to boost people's morale, bring changes in daily lives, open markets, increase trades, restore fishing and dairy markets, and get people to get the benefits of missions showing diaspora sustainable growth possible in the future of this region.

The rule of law has been established in Africa (if not completely) with multiple elections having taken place and the authorities have slowly brought life back to normal.

Then suddenly, early 2020, Covid-19 came in to destroy the world. Many people across the world predicted a disaster for Africa suggesting that the continent would not deal with the pandemic because of a weak health system and lack of civil infrastructure. After over a year of the pandemic, data shows that African countries have coped much better than the rest of the world – both in terms of containing the pandemic as well as in terms of the number of deaths. There was again a rush to justify Africa's success, attributing to facts like a young population, favourable climate, pre-

existing antibodies and even lack of road networks that prevented the spread. What the Western media has failed to comprehend was the swift response of most of the African countries. Africa's response to Covid-19 pandemic is a shining example of continental and regional collaborations. The first case of Covid-19 was detected in Africa on February 14, 2020. As early as February 4, the Africa Task Force for Novel Coronavirus was established under the aegis of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The principal objective of the Task Force was to monitor and coordinate the response to the pandemic across the continent. On February 22, 2020, Africa CDC convened an emergency meeting with all 55 ministers of health across the continent to discuss the Covid-19 pandemic and agree on a continent-wide strategy.

The African countries took to lockdown seriously and early. By March 15, 2020, most African countries had effectively sealed their borders, cancelled flights, and imposed strict lockdown measures to prevent the influx of cases.

This strategy relied on preventing transmission and mitigating community spread to prevent overburdening the already stressed healthcare systems



across the continent.

This continental approach was coupled with collaboration at the regional level. A prime example is collaboration within the East African Community (EAC). Given that the prime focus of African countries was to prevent the spread of the virus, the EAC invested in the creation of a Regional Electronic Cargo and Drivers Tracking System to track Covid-19 cases across borders. This yielded satisfactory results in containing cross-border contamination and helped countries to digitally share the Covid-19 test results of the truck drivers and consequently quarantine and treat those, who had the infection. The mobile phones of all truck drivers were tracked, which identified all locations where the drivers had stops. This plan helped protect communities and efficiently stop the spread.

The African countries took to lockdown seriously and early. By March 15, 2020, most African countries had effectively sealed their borders, cancelled flights and imposed strict lockdown measures to prevent the influx of cases. All non-essential travels were banned, crowded markets were closed and traders were relocated to smaller markets in less

Considered to be Africa's most "reliable partner", India has solidly stood with Africa amid the Covid-19 outbreak and supplied medicines, vaccines and health-related equipment to over 40 African nations during the crisis.





At the end of January 2021, the Lowy Institute – an Australian think tank, published ‘Covid Performance Index’, selecting countries that “provide complete, credible and verifiable statistics”.

populous areas. Through media channels, the citizens were asked to adopt preventive interventions such as hand-washing, mask wearing and social distancing. The community health workers were also asked to raise public awareness. This open communication channel and involvement of communities further increased the community's trust in the public health system. Hand-washing stations were provided at public places and because of the closing of schools, student volunteers were used to encourage people to comply with these guidelines. Most African countries began providing free testing, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine services as well as treatment.

At the end of January 2021, the Lowy Institute – an Australian think tank, published ‘Covid Performance Index’, selecting countries that “provide complete, credible and verifiable statistics”. The ranking includes only 98 countries, 20 of which are African. “Many rich countries were quickly overwhelmed when the virus appeared and the large number of flights back and forth between these countries facilitated its transmission,” explains the Lowy Institute's report. “By



comparison, the authorities in many developing countries had a little more time to implement the necessary measures, most of which did not require significant technical capacity." Across Africa, the political leadership is also taking into account the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19. In a country like Rwanda, where the informal sector accounts for 64 per cent of the economic output, the lockdown resulted in a high disruption of economic activities. The government used local leaders to identify vulnerable members of communities and provided them with food and financial relief. The Federal Housing Corporation in Ethiopia announced a 50 per cent reduction in housing rent due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some

countries provided water and electricity for free to vulnerable citizens and granted tax holidays.

Many African countries have also adopted technology to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. Robots were used to take individuals' temperature in public spaces and hospitals; drones were used for mass communication, surveillance and medicine delivery. From being cash-only societies, the Africans are quickly becoming habituated to cashless transactions. The private sector players like MTN Ghana, MTN Nigeria, Vodafone Ghana and Sonatel Senegal have all reduced mobile money transaction fees. A special note about India! Considered to be Africa's most "reliable partner", India has solidly stood with Africa amid the Covid-19 outbreak and supplied medicines, vaccines and health-related equipment to over 40 African nations during the crisis. India's support to Africa also encompasses providing medicines, health equipment, ambulances, books, vehicles and food grains. India also conducts digital education and health programmes with 17 African partners. Everywhere in Africa, in a team of various international workers, we Indians always receive special appreciation. Proud to be an Indian!

[Author's Introduction: Somnath Mukherjee, an engineer by profession, has been a part of the Indian contingent of United Nations and has worked in Africa for almost two decades. Presently, he is stationed in Nairobi in Kenya in the UNHQ of Africa, working with the United Nations Security Council under the Department of Peace Keeping Operations – DPKO. Before joining the UN Mission, he had worked with the Government of India in different capacities under the Ministries of Defence, Steel and Information and Broadcasting.]

Covid Control: National Success Stories Worldwide

*On the basis of 28 media and health journal reports, seasoned educationist **Prof. Ujjwal K Chowdhury** compiles a detailed account of how **Cuba, New Zealand, Vietnam and Japan** tamed the novel **Coronavirus pandemic**.*



Cuba: The Earliest Covid-19 Success Story

One of the great successes of the Cuban Revolution has been the Cuban Government's long-

standing commitment to health. Cuba has one of the lowest rates of child mortality, lower than the United States of America. Cuba is known for a number of medical breakthroughs – including the first vaccine to treat Meningitis B and the only effective treatment for serious diabetic ulcers. During the pandemic, too, Cuba snapped into action, producing as many as 13 different medicines to treat Covid-19 symptoms. Cuba is also known for exporting vaccines to treat Dengue fever to over 30 different nations.

Cuba's response to the Covid-19 threat was swift and effective. A 'prevention and control' plan, prepared in January, 2020, included training medical staff, preparing medical and quarantine facilities and informing the public (including tourism



workers) about symptoms and precautions. The country also has a very good contact-tracing and testing regime. As the Covid-19 pandemic disproportionately harms the underprivileged people globally, Cuba's "people over profit" approach has been saving many lives – both on the island and abroad. From the onset, Cuba's approach has been holistic and integrated.

Care in Cuba is universal, research and training is robust and disease and disaster mitigation is well-organized. The public healthcare system is coordinated across research institutes and centres of disease control, through to dispersed local neighbourhood clinics. Cuba also has a near 100 per cent literacy rate, with much attention paid to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

Cuba's achievements constitute the result of hard work and hard science in a not-for-profit system. The populace's confidence has been earned through science-based campaigns against the likes of HIV, Ebola, Dengue fever and the Zika virus.

Nations that have responded well to the pandemic have communicated clearly and factually with their people. Cuba has a tradition of multi-pronged public service messaging. In cartoons, angry "red meanie" viruses are drowned by hand-washing and blocked by face masks, animation heroes celebrate International Workers' Day from their balconies, youngsters stay home to protect their grandparents and families play inside together. The socially distanced 42nd International Festival of New Latin American Cinema featured animated doctor's orders in its promotional video. Ubiquitously stated, sung and danced slogans include "Cuba for life, with a new (masked) smile." Beloved cartoon characters participated in International

Workers' Day from home rather than in Cuba's annual parade at Revolution Plaza, courtesy of Animados ICAIC. Mask-wearing was mandated from March, 2020, and it was accepted and became popular.

Removed from the world's prevailing vaccine distribution network, Cuba is the only nation in the Latin American and Caribbean region that has developed its own vaccines against Covid-19. It now has four vaccine candidates despite the fact that the US blockade has hindered the country's vaccine efforts. Soberana-1, Soberana-2 and Abdala are injectable vaccines, administered intramuscularly, while Mambisa is a nasal spray vaccine. However, all four vaccines work in a similar way, even though each one has a different formulation.

Cuba's biomedical production sector has also created drugs for treating Covid-19 infection. Interferon, an antiviral agent developed in Cuba but produced in China, is useful in preventing many Covid-19-infected patients from becoming critically ill.

For Cuba, developing and exporting its own vaccines is not just about public health. It is also a way for it to show its force in the biotech sector, despite it being a small communist country that has long faced sanctions from the United States of America. This could be why Cuba chose not to buy Covid-19

Cuba is known for a number of medical breakthroughs – including the first vaccine to treat Meningitis B and the only effective treatment for serious diabetic ulcers.

vaccines from multinational pharmaceutical companies or sign up for the World Health Organisation's global COVAX vaccine sharing initiative

Cuba's commitment extends beyond its own borders. The nation is renowned for its medical diplomacy, with thousands of specialist staff – members of Cuba's Henry Reeve Brigade – regularly being sent abroad to help other nations tackle natural disasters, medical emergencies and other crises. This was seen in this case too as Cuban health-workers came to serve in Italy and Spain during their worst tryst with Covid-19.

Now Cuban scientists have announced that their vaccines will not be treated as private property but will be shared with the peoples of the world. This is the fidelity of Cuban medical internationalism. These medical workers believe in the twin missions of medical care and internationalism. It is a lesson that they learned from the teachings of Che Guevara, a doctor and an internationalist. It is a lesson that should be learned in Oslo, Norway, as they

adjudicate the Nobel Peace Prize.

New Zealand: Firm Decisive Leadership Firmly Committed to the Elimination of Covid-19

After controlling Coronavirus by and large, the New Zealand government led by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has declared now that the Covid-19 vaccine is free, voluntary and available to everyone in New Zealand aged 16 and over. It doesn't matter what your visa or citizenship status is.

Compared with the mitigation and suppression approaches of most Western countries, elimination strategy of New Zealand has minimised direct health effects and offer an early return to social and economic activity.

People under the age of 16 are not included for now. This is because the vaccines have not been tested on this age group yet. The vaccination drive comes after a keenly followed elimination strategy. Compared with the mitigation and suppression approaches of most Western countries, the elimination strategy of New Zealand has minimised direct health effects and offer an early return to social and economic activities. On March 23, 2020, New Zealand committed to an elimination strategy in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic. The Prime Minister announced that New Zealand would commence an intense lockdown of the country (the highest level of a four-level response framework). At the time, New Zealand had just over 10 Covid-19 cases and no deaths. So this, "go early, go hard" approach surprised many.

Until early March 2020, the New Zealand response to Covid-19 followed the existing pandemic plan, which was based on a mitigation approach for managing pandemic influenza. Most Western

countries across Europe and North America were following the mitigation approach. However, it was performing poorly with the Covid-19 cases overwhelming health services. These countries were then switching to a suppression strategy. Travel restrictions (lockdowns) to suppress virus transmission. A few countries were continuing with a version of mitigation labelled "herd immunity", by which they planned to manage the rate of

infection in such a way so as to avoid overwhelming the healthcare system and build up enough recovered and likely immune people in the population to ultimately interrupt virus transmission. This approach proved difficult to manage and was largely abandoned (except perhaps by Sweden). A watershed moment was the report of the World Health Organization joint mission

to China, which confirmed that the pandemic there had been contained even after widespread community transmission had commenced. There was also strong evidence for early success of the elimination approaching in Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea. There is no established definition for Covid-19 elimination. Preliminary thinking suggests that such a definition would need to include a defined period of absence of new cases (perhaps 28 days, which is twice the maximum 14-day incubation period). By late July 2020, New Zealand had experienced no instances of community-based transmission for more than 80 days and could be considered to have attained elimination. The net economic consequences of an elimination strategy were uncertain and extremely difficult to estimate. While an elimination strategy would have huge economic and social costs, the alternatives (suppression and mitigation) would almost certainly have been far more damaging because of the need to continue costly physical



distancing measures until a vaccine or other intervention became available. Neither mitigation nor suppression provide a firm exit strategy, particularly given major uncertainties about coronavirus immunity and the potential for ongoing epidemic transmission for months to years under some scenarios. As with all Covid-19 strategies, the ultimate exit path will depend on developing effective vaccines and therapeutics.

Covid-19 elimination requires a very strong emphasis on border management to keep the virus out. That intervention would usually be combined with case and contact management to stamp out transmission, along with highly developed surveillance and testing to rapidly identify cases and outbreaks. If started early, these measures may be sufficient for elimination without the need for lockdowns, as was achieved in Taiwan. An elimination strategy requires highly functioning public health infrastructure. Similar to many other countries, New Zealand has supplemented traditional approaches with newer tools, such as the use of digital technology to speed up contact tracing. The NZ COVID Tracer app is now operational, although it has yet to be used for contact tracing given the lack of community cases. Additional surveillance approaches are used to provide increased assurance of

Removed from the world's prevailing vaccine distribution network, Cuba is the only nation in the Latin American and Caribbean region that has developed its own vaccines against Covid-19.

elimination (E.g. sentinel surveillance, sewage testing).

Changing human behaviour to reduce transmission is challenging with a virus as infectious as SARS-CoV-2. This is why mandated extreme physical distancing and movement control (lockdown) may be needed. The intense lockdown carried out in New Zealand suppressed transmission and gave the country time to expand border controls, improve contact tracing and undertake large scale testing. Coming out of lockdown (which began progressively on 28 April, 2020) has been managed carefully, as the goal is to emerge into a country that is free from community transmission (unlike the lockdowns in countries pursuing mitigation or suppression).

Successful implementation of an elimination strategy requires early risk assessment, effective response planning, infrastructure, resources and political will. The global response to SARS-CoV-2 has been described as the "greatest science policy failure of our generation". An elimination strategy could potentially have been widely used to contain Covid-19 and protect populations in countries across the globe.

New Zealand and Australia appear to have joined a small group of countries and jurisdictions pursuing an explicit, or implied, elimination goal, albeit with different strategies. Others include mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Vietnam and a number of small island states and territories. It may be time for these countries to actively share knowledge and evidence about the approaches that are supporting them to contain and eliminate Covid-19.

Vietnam: How "Overreaction" Made Vietnam a Virus Success

Most low and middle income countries could do very little to manage the pandemic except by applying limited mitigation measures. Vietnam was a

notable exception, implementing stringent control measures including quarantine, contact tracing, border controls, school closures and traffic restrictions while case numbers were still low. A number of island states, such as Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands, adopted an exclusion approach, primarily by closing their borders to incoming travellers.

Despite a long border with China and a population of 97 million people, Vietnam has recorded only just over 300 cases of Covid-19 on its soil and not a single death. Experts say that unlike other countries now seeing infections and deaths on a huge scale, Vietnam saw a small window to act early on and used it fully.

Recognising that its medical system would soon become overwhelmed by even mild spread of the virus, Vietnam instead chose prevention early, and on a massive scale. By early January, 2020, before it had any confirmed cases, Vietnam's government was initiating "drastic action" to prepare for this mysterious new pneumonia, which had at that point killed two people in Wuhan.

When the first virus case was confirmed on 23 January, 2020 – a man who had travelled from Wuhan to visit his son in Ho Chi Minh City – Vietnam's emergency plan was in action. Vietnam enacted measures other countries would take months to move on, bringing in travel restrictions, closely monitoring and eventually closing the border with China and increasing health checks at borders and other vulnerable places.

Schools were closed for the Lunar New Year holiday at the end of January and remained closed until mid-May. A vast and labour intensive contact tracing operation got under way. By mid-March, Vietnam was sending everyone who entered the country – and anyone within the country who had had any contact with a confirmed case – to quarantine



centres for 14 days. Costs were mostly covered by the government, though accommodation was not necessarily luxurious.

Everyone in quarantine was tested, sick or not, and it's clear that 40 per cent of Vietnam's confirmed cases would have had no idea they had the virus had they not been tested. This localised containment – which is likely to be used again if the virus reappears.

Regular SMS messages sent to all phones from the very early stages told people what they could do to protect themselves. Vietnam made use of its ever-present propaganda machine to run a vigorous awareness campaign, drawing on wartime imagery and rhetoric to unite the public in the fight against a common enemy.

The government's data is so strikingly low that there are inevitable questions about whether it's accurate, but the overwhelming consensus from the medical and diplomatic community is that there is no reason to doubt it. In spite of no cases, Vietnam is preparing

for free universal vaccination. The military has got involved in the preservation and transportation of vaccines. Vietnam has set up eight vaccine storage facilities, of which one is located at the High Command of the Hanoi Capital and seven others in seven military zones nationwide. An online vaccination network is established that makes public the number of people to be vaccinated and the number of doses to be administered.

The lessons learned from Vietnam, a country that the world acclaimed for its management of the fight against Covid-19, could stand out as an example of how to do more with less. The Vietnamese government has acted swiftly at the very early stage of the pandemic with a focus on containment efforts and extensive public health measures, particularly (1) the commitment from the government with a multi-sectoral approach; (2) a timely, accurate, and transparent risk communication; (3) active surveillance and intensive isolation/ quarantine operation, case management with tracing all new arrivals and close contact up to three clusters; and (4) suspension of flights, shutting schools, and all non-essential services.



Despite a long border with China and a population of 97 million people, Vietnam has recorded only just over 300 cases of Covid-19 on its soil and not a single death.

Japan: Healthy Hygiene Culture Has Saved the Day

When Covid-19 deaths soared into the tens of thousands in some European nations and over 100,000 in the United States of America, the count was less than 1,000 in Japan as of early July, 2020, a remarkably low number among the Group of 7 countries, despite Japan's aging society and the large high-risk ratio of its population. The country's low numbers of cases and deaths are puzzling and theories abound as to the cause.

Japan is very densely populated, with the world's highest density of senior citizens. And it's in close contact with nearby China, where the disease originated. In January, 2020, some 925,000 Chinese people travelled to Japan, while another 89,000 made the trip in February. Responding to the coronavirus pandemic, the Japanese government closed all schools two weeks before the spring holidays at the end of March and cancelled all public events. But shops and restaurants could remain open, and few Japanese employees decided to work from home.

The 2020 Olympic Games were postponed for one year.

Japanese greeting etiquette – a bow instead of a handshake or a kiss on the cheek – has also played a part in slowing the outbreak, as has basic hygiene education taught from an early age.

Washing their hands, gargling with a disinfectant solution and wearing masks are part of their everyday lives. As a result, it was easy for the society to switch to anti-infection mode in February, 2020 when the virus first began to spread. Shops and businesses set up hand sanitizers at the entrance, and it became a civic duty to wear a face mask. The country typically goes through 5.5 billion face masks every year – 43 per person. Sales of face masks skyrocketed as the virus took hold. Masks have been rationed, and people stand patiently in line waiting for shops to open. Other shops sell strips of fabric and coffee filters, along with instructions for DIY versions.

The widespread use of face masks appears to have slowed down the spread of not just Covid-19, as indicated by the sharp drop in the number of flu patients in the seven weeks since the outbreak of the coronavirus. A recent study by five Western physicians, including Fabian Svara from the Caesar Research Group in Bonn and Matthias Samwald from the Medical University in Vienna,

found that masks “decrease the transmission of droplets or aerosols containing viral particles by mask wearers.” Apart from physical distancing and hand-washing, the experts concluded that face masks could play an important role in slowing down the spread of the virus, pointing out the low infection rates in Japan.

Because Covid-19 spreads through respiratory droplets from the mouth and nose, maintaining physical distance is an effective means of avoiding infection. In extreme cases, physical distancing is enforced through lockdowns and by prohibiting people from going out. Japan, however, never enforced a lockdown with penalties, even when a national state of emergency was declared on April 15, 2020, in an expansion of the state of emergency for Tokyo and six other prefectures declared earlier on April 7, 2020. Instead, the government “requested” that people refrain from going out and that restaurants and bars suspend their business, without ever forcing them to



Japan never enforced a lockdown with penalties, even when a national state of emergency was declared on April 15, 2020, in an expansion of the state of emergency for Tokyo and six other prefectures declared earlier on April 7, 2020.

close down. This soft approach was enough to achieve a de facto lockdown as people practiced risk aversion rather than bearing responsibility for spreading the virus, and those who feared social sanctions bowed to social pressure. The “requests” to practice risk aversion helped to accelerate a decline in new infections that had already started before the declaration of a national emergency, but there is no doubt that there was another factor in play as well and this was the call to avoid the ‘Three Cs’ – closed spaces with poor ventilation, crowded spaces open to the public and close-contact settings putting people in range of flying droplets from speaking, coughing, and sneezing.

The national state of emergency has been lifted, but heightened awareness of the danger of the three Cs remains and this has helped to curtail any major increase in infections even after the end of the “soft” lockdown.

Japan early on decided not to aim for eradicating Covid-19, choosing instead to keep a close watch on the spread of the disease and to take a cluster-based approach in which efforts are directed at detecting and isolating infection clusters. Rather than eliminate the risk of infection, the objective is to stop the spread of the

disease to keep the number of patients to a minimum. This helps to alleviate the demand for medical care, maintaining sufficient hospital resources to take care of the most serious patients, and prevents death rates from soaring. The strategy appears to be working and so long as there is not an explosion of cases, will continue to be implemented even as daily infection numbers continue to go up. Interestingly, coming to vaccination, the government adopted a policy to strengthen support for foreign residents, who may face hurdles in getting coronavirus vaccinations. The government, together with local municipalities, is ensuring that vaccination vouchers are sent without fail to foreign nationals living in the country and promote multilingual Covid-19 consultation services via telephone. As of late 2020, Japan had around 2.89 million foreign residents in total.

[Author's Introduction: A leading media academic and an internationally acclaimed speaker and writer, Prof. Ujjwal K Chowdhury is currently the Pro Vice Chancellor and the Dean of the School of Media and Communication at the Kolkata-based Adamas University. He has spearheaded some of the finest media institutes in the country and taken them to newer heights. Formerly the Dean of the School of Media at Pearl Academy and the Director of Ramoji Krian Universe (RKU), strategically located within the Ramoji Film City (RFC) in Hyderabad, Prof. Chowdhury has also been a Dean at Symbiosis International (Deemed University) in Pune and Amity University in Mumbai. He also acted as the Dean of Whistling Woods International in Mumbai. Earlier, Prof. Chowdhury has been a Media Advisor with the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India and the World Health Organization (WHO), India. Prof. Chowdhury is widely believed to have introduced the concept of convergence in media education.]



Public Relations Practice in Pandemic Times



*Iconic public relations practitioner **Rita Bhimani** deliberates on the empathetic face of public relations during the pandemic times.*

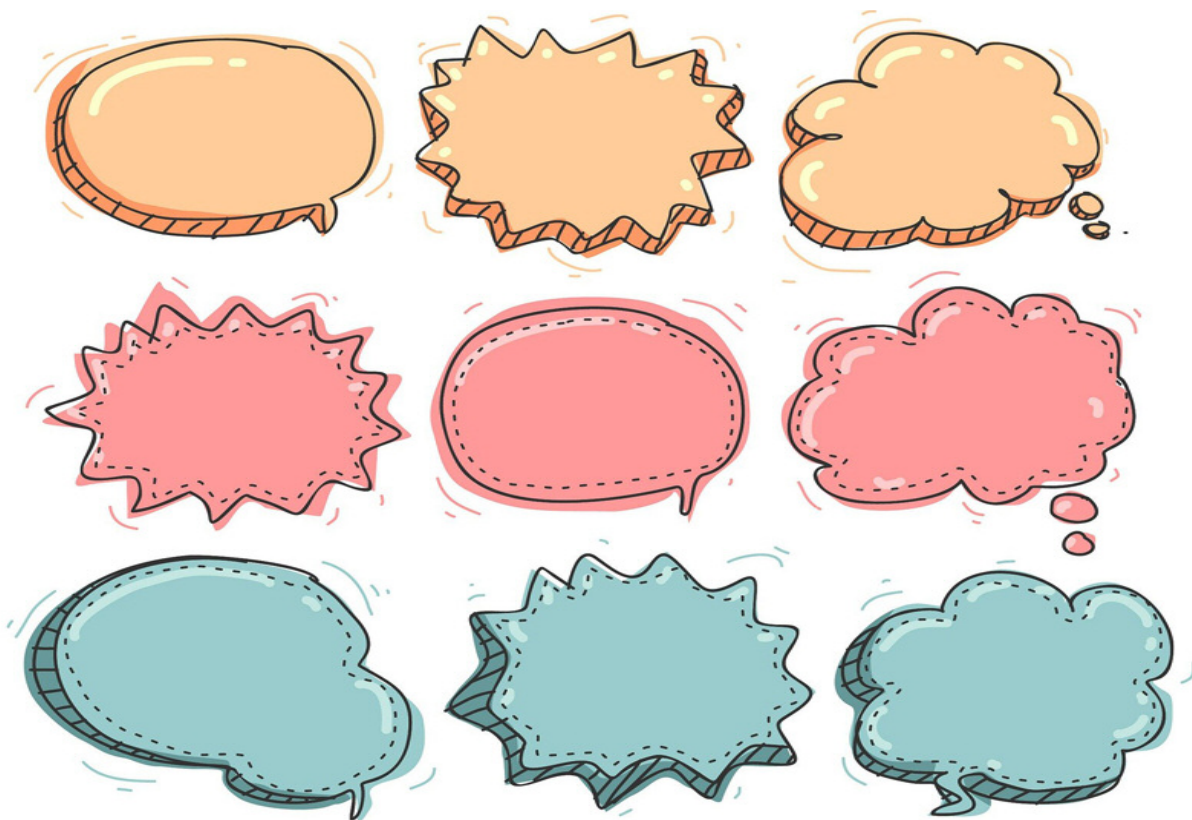
Our PR capabilities are finally being put to a major test! So far, over the decades, we have covered a

lot of ground on approaches to crisis communication and companies have reacted and re-envisioned their policies for the fire fighting required. These measures were done to protect the reputation of the company, and disaster management got woven into corporate manuals as anticipatory behaviour. We have talked at museum about the crisis communication workbooks of airlines, which have had to anticipate the aftermath of plane crashes. And, it is these very airlines which have

gone all out to give a new dimension to caring in Covid situations. We have seen how Singapore Airlines deployed a large number of their cabin crew who could not be flying, to be re-trained for becoming care ambassadors in hospitals and transport ambassadors at public transport hubs. Our own low cost airlines have been flying in oxygen concentrators, with the equipment strapped into passenger seats. At Etihad, since the beginning of the pandemic, over 3,000 employees volunteered to support government entities and initiatives. Many started working at call centres; others went on to distributing masks and gloves and even physically cleaned the streets as part of the government's sanitisation programme. So, from being a routine crisis mitigation activity, our capabilities as communicators have come under the scanner. We are now proactively plunged

Singapore Airlines deployed a large number of their cabin crew who could not be flying, to be re-trained for becoming care ambassadors in hospitals and transport ambassadors at public transport hubs.

into playing a significant role for our companies and for those institutions we represent to alleviate fear and panic on the one hand, and on the other, to find practical solutions to push corporates and individuals into CSR commitments for the Covid-related tasks that they could key into.



The coming together of several companies in a united action has also been a new spurt in medically focused activities.

I have personally come across CEOs, who have sprung into action to communicate with employees in a host of creative ways. Over these past months, there have been layoffs, employee salaries being halved, the structuring of work from home, and the general climate of downturn in business, which has had an impact on staff morale. This is where heads of companies have started to actively keep their employees in the loop. The transparent sharing

of information has been at the top of their minds. One of the companies set out initially by sending out a CEO letter to all employees. Soon the CEO found that he had to be seen by those he was addressing and he started a videoed communication that was full of reassurances and suggestions on how not

to panic and how the company was taking measures to ensure that no one was seriously affected. Other videos followed on how to manage stress and anxiety. This motivation also led to employees being encouraged to jump into CSR activities that looked beyond themselves. A



slew of measures has shown how companies, NGOs, those in the service industry and educational institutions have made for a structured commitment to focusing on areas of food and clothing distribution, vaccination and health related issues. Corporate communicators have led

the activity through sensitizing their top management, sending out the right messages, internally and later publicizing some of their work. This has gained traction for the companies, of course, but has also given out signals to others who have tried to replicate measures they could not

The Ambuja Neotia group have set up the Vinod Neotia Covid Care Centre in New Town, supported by ICICI Lombard.



ideate themselves. The coming together of several companies in a united action has also been a new spurt in medically focused activities. I am talking about the Entrepreneurs of Kolkata (EOK) initiative where a group of business individuals has aimed to bring quick thinking and crowd funding to combat Covid's second wave swiftly. They call it *Breathe Again*, and have partnered with leading government and private hospitals to facilitate the setting up

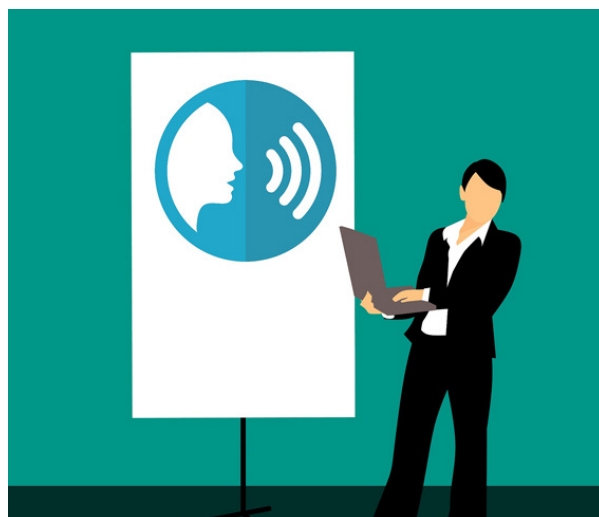
of over 500 beds and assisting in procurement of oxygen concentrators, medical infra support like ventilators, fast-tracking BiPAP machines from abroad. The idea is to create an eco system to give back to our own city in these trying times.

Another facet of compassion is how individuals have organized across the board Covid patient meals without charging for it. The effort in some cases is not without its physical drawbacks, but the passion and commitment have remained undiminished.

At the time of writing, I came across an initiative which is heart warming. The Ambuja Neotia group have set up the Vinod Neotia Covid Care Centre in New Town, supported by ICICI Lombard. Being in the real estate and hospitality segment, the company has not been without its share of setbacks. But notwithstanding, it has gone on to create a first-field hospital of its kind – housed in state-of-the-art “tents” that are air-conditioned, which comprises 48 oxygen-aided beds for mild or moderately affected Covid-19 patients and 10 High dependency unit (HDU) beds. They are in the resolute space to serve, without wanting to profit by the venture. As a matter of fact, they feel they might incur losses. However, the reach-out will be meaningful.

There is one aspect though where we, as corporate communicators, have a huge responsibility. And, that is in halting the spread of misinformation. We have to encourage people not to forward negative news on WhatsApp groups, and we ourselves should put out more positive stories and garner greater space in the media to push out the overriding dark reportage.

These are challenging times which will not go away in a hurry. But the power of the pen and the speaking tools which we have command over should be used in our individual and collective societal



At Etihad, since the beginning of the pandemic, over 3,000 employees volunteered to support government entities and initiatives.

responsibility techniques to counter negativity and give out positive vibes.

[Author's Introduction: Rita Bhimani is a Corporate Public Relations veteran who has completed 50 years in the practice of PR as a writer, speaker, and educator of the subject. She has five books to her credit, has been teaching Media Relations to scores of students, and in her capacity as Founder-CEO of Ritam Communications, a PR consultancy firm, she grabs every opportunity to advise corporates and individuals on reaction and interaction during the pandemic which is here to stay, but must be dealt through positive action.]



Not DC, not Marvel, not Anime but Real Superheroes!

Researcher cum academic Dr. Agniva Pal talks about the contributions of doctors in combating the Covid-19 pandemic.



Once upon a time, we used to happily sign off by writing, "Stay Positive! Stay Strong!" But times have changed and the quintessential semantic bearing of the word 'positive' has drastically changed over the past couple of months. Sars-Cov-2 has been a major dampener changing the way we live, we breathe, we work, we eat, we shop, we talk, we study, we take exams and so on.

Once upon a time, people used to get tired of social gatherings and post Covid-19, people are craving to meet their friends, family and loved ones. Times have changed. And in these testing times, the healthcare infrastructure of India, even if it was brought to its knees at the onset of the disease, successfully saved millions. Healthcare professionals have also inspired millions of others like Sonu Sood, an actor donning mostly antagonistic roles while saving thousands in real life; Shri Shrinivas B, the president of the Indian Youth Congress and the most searched and hash-tagged person in Twitter last month, in India.

But today, we are going to focus on the



real superheroes of today – the doctors. Doctors and healthcare professionals have in unison made sure that we at least get a surviving chance and though things might look grim now, they assure that we must not fail to discern the silver lining amidst the sea of negativities that stare at us. Let us look at a few stories and testimonials from doctors from all over India.

Dr. Rita Barai, a doctor at Chandannagar

Hospital (converted into a Covid hospital) claims that although the virus has mutated and we are facing a mysterious and powerful invisible enemy, doubling the surgical masks and our will to survive would help in the long run. She has also been an eyewitness to the deaths of both patients and colleagues from the service. Although she cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that some could not be saved, she is positive that eventually mortality rates will show a slight sign of decreasing, and things are going to be better. She further adds that the health department has made a helpline available for all patients, which helps them search for hospitals, ambulances, oxygen and medicine in their vicinity and while this helpline is being managed by the local collectorate (DM Office), it is also worth mentioning that thousands of people have found this service helpful. It is a welcome sight to see patients leave, on their feet and go back to their families. "Patients are being brought into hospitals when they have already reached a critical state. Patients need to be brought in when they are first detected. Cases are

Dr. Naveet Wig, the HoD Medicine at AIIMS in Delhi, says that we as Indians can help bring down the mortality count of the Covid-19 pandemic if we simply abide by the Covid-19 related norms.



Dr. Rita Barai

deteriorating quickly and we have a higher death rate this time around because family members and patients are administering medicines themselves or are at home by themselves, without medical advice, waiting for themselves to heal. Google will not heal you. You need a doctor. We have seen rapid deterioration in multiple cases due to this. Doctors are not Gods. Patients can be saved, only if their families bring them in when they are first detected. Not everyone needs medical support but everyone should consult a doctor if they are detected. We do not need them to thank us, but to go back to their families as soon as possible, still able to do everything they were doing before Covid", claims the Dr. Barai. At her leisure time, she tends to her terrace garden which she wants to turn into her retirement investment, in a few years. She is one of those helping faces who turn desolation into hope, no matter how little that hope is.

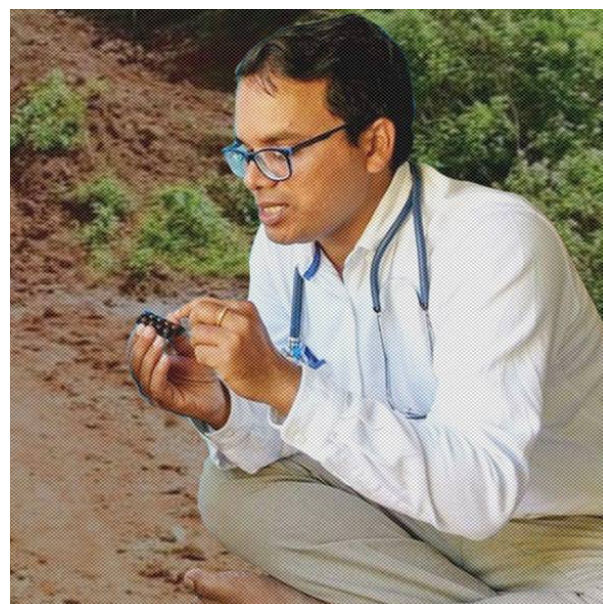
A doctor (name withheld) at a government hospital in Delhi states that despite Delhi having been the center of

the Covid infection for a month, the mortality rate has dipped now, indicating better days ahead. She says that the doctors have seen shortages of beds, oxygen, medicines and even pyre wood. Right now, they have enough supply of oxygen, medicines and there is nothing in short supply. The second wave can be attributed to the fact that we became very callous and insensitive to the fact that masks can save lives. She ends the conversation with us stating that in the end, it's the masks and vaccines that would save lives; no amount of worship would. She urges that the common population places a bit more trust on the real doctors.

Dr. Naveet Wig, the HoD Medicine at AIIMS in Delhi, says that we as Indians can help bring down the mortality count of the Covid-19 pandemic if we simply abide by the Covid-19 related norms laid out by our health concerns. "We can bring down the positivity rate to less than five per cent in India, in the next three weeks if we all take responsibility and abide by Covid appropriate behaviors."



Dr. Naveet Wig



Dr. Chittaranjan Jena

He further adds, "If we have to defeat the disease, we will have to save healthcare workers. Many of them are testing positive. If we save healthcare workers, they will be able to save patients. If we save both, only then will we save the economy." He further adds, "We will have to bring down the number of patients. Our only goal should be to break the

Once upon a time, people used to get tired of social gatherings and post Covid-19, people are craving to meet their friends, family and loved ones.

chain." (Courtesy: ANI)

Dr. David Ashish Manchala, a pediatrician by profession reiterates something, that we Indians should have done at least six months back. "Get vaccinated". Not only him but many doctors have taken to Twitter, to voice their opinions on the vaccination drive and how it is probably the only protective layer against the Covid-19 pandemic. (Courtesy: Twitter)

There are yet others who have instead decided to step up the groundwork being done in rural India. One such doctor, Dr. Chittaranjan Jena is catering to the tribal population in Koraput and has made the following line his title line. "If they cannot come to the hospital, we will bring the hospital to them". He has reached places which no roads lead to and has made it his life's goal to help those people who have no other healthcare authority to look forward to. (Courtesy: The Logical Indian)

At a webinar conducted by Adamas University, Dr. Kunal Sarkar, the Senior Vice Chairman and a Cardiac Surgeon at Medica Hospital, reiterates that we are



Dr. Kunal Sarkar

Doctors and healthcare professionals have in unison made sure that we at least get a surviving chance.





Dr. Aashiket Sable

**Healthcare professionals
have given us strength,
positive strength, vigour and
renewed our hopes that we
can survive.**

presently seeing four times the amount of deaths that we saw during the partition of the country. India is a 73-year-old country and we have seen two catastrophic events that can very well shatter the foundations of the country. But this virus is stable, unlike what all of us think. This virus is mutating, true; but all viruses mutate. We just need enough people in the country following Covid protocols. The vaccine is like a seat belt and not an absolute save-button. A seatbelt decreases the chance of fatality but does not keep you scratch-less when your car meets with an accident. He ends his discussion by endowing the audience with words of wisdom. He said that probably in the next few months, we will surely look at a new India and this new India will be oblivious to the fact that the Covid-19 second wave even hit the country. Masks are not fashion statements. "Wear a mask", he said. Stay positive, stay home, vaccinate yourself and your loved ones, donate a few vaccines to people who cannot afford them and keep everyone safe. "Do whatever makes you happy. Eat as much as you need; weigh yourself and don't smoke. There are enough problems. Do not add on to them!" Dr. Aashiket Sable created a beautiful video collage and posted it on Instagram and it went viral later. It was an inspiring video with patients smiling at the camera,

inspiring hope; all these patients being Covid survivors. This video was later Re-Tweeted, Instagrammed and YouTube'd. While posting the video, he wrote, "Hope. Trust. Faith. Positivity. One smile can't change the world, but all these put together can definitely change ours! Tried to catch a few heartwarming glimpses of these warriors, who presented with severe symptoms, but defeated the virus and bounced back stronger than ever! I understand that there are a lot of issues going on in our country, which need to be addressed as soon as possible. A lot of negativity, depression, and chaos all around. But let's promise ourselves today, to be a little more positive, to be a little more hopeful, than what we were yesterday! Like these people here, let's smile a little more!" (Courtesy: Instagram)

Doctors and related healthcare professionals have tried their best to make us laugh, giggle and gift us with that extra bit of positivism. Some have made TikTok, Instagram reels and YouTube short videos to inspire others to think positive by dancing for us, in the miniscule amount of free time they have found, while others have agreed to quick and free counselling over the internet, either

through WhatsApp video calls or through other IM services. Some have started recording short videos with information regarding how to protect oneself from the infection and while doing that, not forget that we are still vulnerable to other infections which are still out there. Once upon a time, we used to denominate events in history by using the terms 'Before Christ' and 'Anno Domini'. A few years down history, we will be timing history with 'Before Covid' and 'After Covid'! Nonetheless, healthcare professionals have given us rigour, positive strength, vigour and renewed our hopes that we can survive. I guess, we should all take a moment and thank all the doctors, touching our lives, risking their own, to save us all.

[Author's Introduction: Dr. Agniva Pal is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English Language and Literature under Adamas University in Kolkata. When he is not teaching Linguistics and Language, he indulges in writing and voicing his opinion about things that matter. Agniva is otherwise interested in storytelling through videos, music and writing brief travelogues about his travels.]





Shadows of Death, Some Flickers of Life



**Journalist turned writer
Shantanu Guha Ray**
paints an interesting tale
about how a young
photographer went about
capturing human
resilience in Delhi amid
the pandemic.



For over a year, Parul Sharma has used her handset to capture the Indian Capital, which has largely remained in *rigour mortis*, taking photographs of people trying hard to combat a lethal Chinese virus. Sharma found many who died combating the pandemic, it was an

enemy like no other, and raised questions anew about people's trust in the country's medical systems. It seemed to her that people took solace in the unity around them, despite the long shadow of

Sharma travelled across Delhi and found very few people on the streets of the Indian Capital.



death, injustice and joblessness they were railing against. Her images reflected the sudden chaos that blanketed India, and the world. For India, and Indians, the shift in mood wasn't just disorienting, but destabilizing. It was no longer a choice between violence and non-violence, it was a choice between life and death, existence or non-existence. "I saw hope and death in the same street,

in the same room, in the same building, and in the same shop," says Sharma. Sharma travelled across Delhi and found very few people on the streets of the Indian Capital. Those she met did not talk about their fascination over a temple or a mosque, they were trying to end divisions within a billion plus nation. It seemed to Sharma that New Delhi was made up of two nations, two peoples with entirely





different wants for their way of life. One lived in condominiums and got everything through a single call from their handsets. The other lived in the streets and struggled hard, and hard, and hard. The painful messages were written in paint on the walls of the city, they could have just as easily been written in blood. Sharma, who calls herself an essential witness in all corners of life, says she allowed her images to take measure of

what India was before the pandemic, and what it turned post Covid-19. She witnessed Delhi's collective level of rage, destruction, political disunion and wariness of neighbours in various colonies.

Sharma found some grim signs of the times. "For me, 2020 and parts of 2021 was a tour through jeopardy of one kind or another. I found impoverished children



Sharma says she was genuinely tired of getting boring, second-hand accounts of the harsh reality that had set in Indian Capital.



Parul Sharma

of the lesser Gods, kids belonging to the future generations, making full sense of so much bitterness and suffering in India." For her, it was quarantine content, images of cramped apartments, pets surprised by their owners' sudden ubiquity, uncannily deserted street scenes and cautious supermarket shoppers wearing dresses looking like beekeeping suits. Everyone seemed to be careful, sorry extra careful. Sharma felt death was ready to come home without warning all over Delhi. "I even shot some historical architecture and blossoming trees outside my window. There were times where I was angry and disappointed, there were times when there was hope," says Sharma. The hand sanitizer and social-distancing propaganda looked to her like a balm amid corona claustrophobia.

"The mood was not like the past years. Delhi looked like a dead city. There were some queuing for the supermarket, detached and solitary, like statues in barren squares. The sky was filled with dark clouds, a bleak portent, blistering heat redeemed by a flock of migrating birds. I felt my work was topical. I was dealing with people, who were suffering from pains of isolation and having to stay home."

Sharma says she was genuinely tired of getting boring, second-hand accounts of the harsh reality that had set in the Indian Capital. So, she decided to walk out of the comforts of her home, dropping her regular sessions in the gymnasium and kitchen.

Sharma has over 10,000 images in her files. She has haunted vistas of the walled city, migrants leaving the city, Covid-19 patients at the All India Institute of Medical Science, and grim scenes at the crematoriums and graveyards.

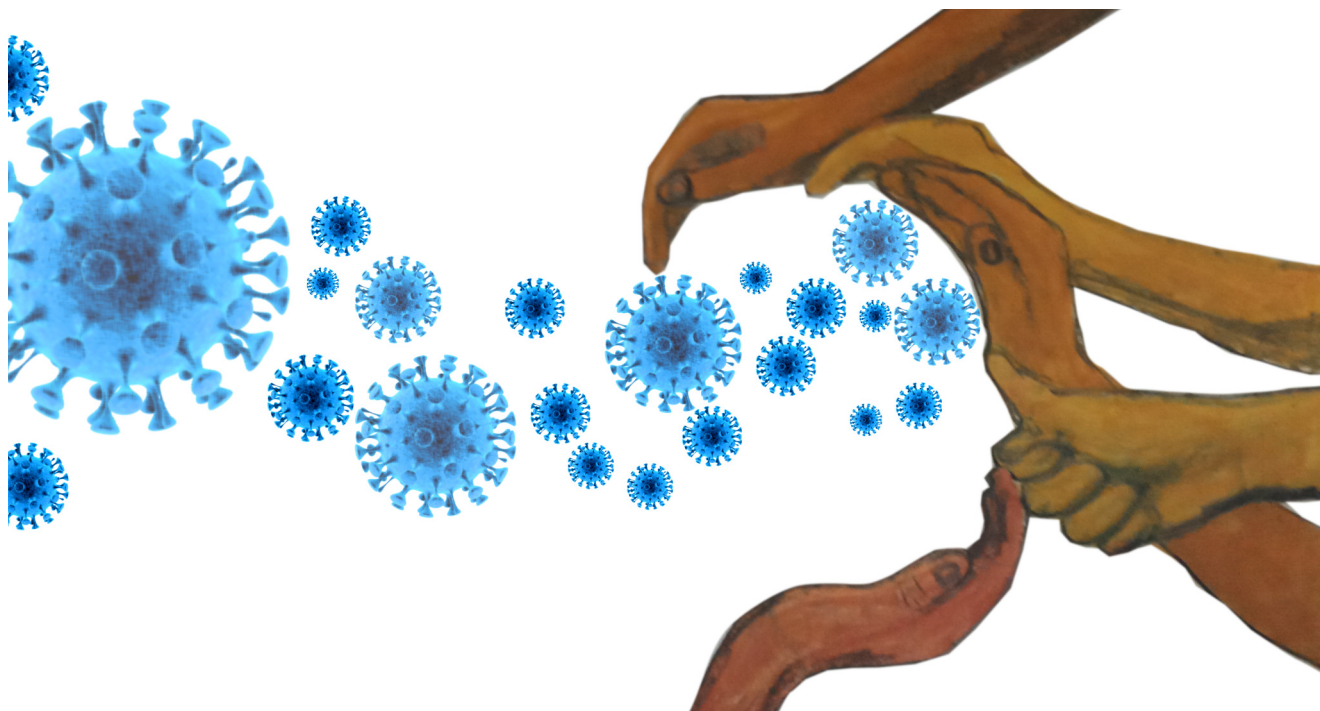
Sharma says that there was this emotional toll of capturing grief, fear of being exposed to the lethal virus and the guilt of potentially risking her family. But she still continued shooting. She remembered how Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* photograph – shot during the Great Depression – travelled all over the world and became relatable to both India and the United States.

A selection of these photographs have been published by Roli Books, titled *Dialects of Silence: Delhi under Lockdown*.

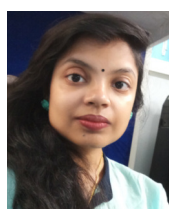
[Author's Introduction: Wharton-trained Shantanu Guha Ray is an award-winning journalist, who lives in Delhi with his wife, daughter and two pets. He is the India Editor of Central European News (CEN), a Vienna-based feature news agency. He is much-acclaimed for the award winning book – 'Target', takes a closer look at the NSEL payment crisis]



Amritasya Putra: Born of Elixir



Researcher and academic Dr. Sulagna Chatterjee writes a perceptive yet soothing piece on how art and its ingrained philosophy can help people deal with the global coronavirus crisis.



“**A**tma sanskriti barba shilpani...
.” – The Upanishad.

“Roso boi swa” – The Aitareya Brahmana.
Art is refinement of soul. Attainment of that refinement results from both negative and positive feelings. At times, when our soul encounters unprecedented darkness, as are the times now, our natural spirit craves for light and positivity. And, art is the imperial source that shows such light

upon our souls and as always remains a perennial source of positive vibes. In the rich cultural heritage of India, “shok” or tragedy has given birth to “shloka”, the first poetry ever. Through such cataclysm, the human soul attains a state of “beeto shok, beeto spriho, beeto monyo” i.e. bereaved of grief and lust. It is at such delicate state of mind that art offers an unwavering stability of mind and unperturbed peace. This, in turn, unleashes the cocoon of “magna chaitanya” i.e. submerged consciousness and liberates the human mind to “chaitanya” i.e. supreme consciousness. That is intrapersonal communication. We are in the darkest of times now, fighting a pandemic. And therefore, now is when we are craving for positive vibes as never before. Music is the supreme healer. Music brings forth intrapersonal communication. The soothing or joyous or reviving effect of music on an injured human soul works miracles. That can

console the central nervous system and offers an excellent healing process for a disturbed mind. In Indian music, there are seven “sur” i.e. notes and 22 “shruti”. Each such note is associated with specific human feelings and evokes their corresponding colour in sense in the mind’s eye. These are:

- **Swaroj (Sa):** Red
 - **Rekhab (Re):** White and Green
 - **Gandhar (Ga):** Gaura, Crimson and Saffron
 - **Madhyam (Ma):** Sap-Green and White
 - **Pancham (Pa):** Chrome-Yellow and Black
 - **Dhaibot (Dha):** Shyam-Peet i.e. Yellow-Green
 - **Green Nishad (Ni):** Shyam i.e. Sky-Dark
- These seven colours can evoke hundreds of emotional applications of colour as is evident from the name of the popular accompanying instrument “saurangi”. Therefore, a perfectly composed harmony develops a sense of unperturbed peace and security in the human mind. It has been observed that listening to Raaga Pilu and Khambaaj will create a sense of joy in traumatized minds. The sound of Bhairav Raaga tunes the weak and tormented mind to feel that the darkness is about to end and dawn is close by. Things will improve, the world cannot come to an end due to this terrible virus. Music imparts tremendous positivity and has the power to console

the agitated soul. It is widely known that music therapy has successfully cured anxiety, depression and insomnia, which are direct impacts of this devastating pandemic on the human race. This is widely known as demonstrated by the revered scientist Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose that even plants feel positive under the influence of music and flourish remarkably better than the ones without such support. The vibes of music are therefore revered as “Naad Brahma” in ancient Indian culture. Art is the purest form to commute one’s feelings to all, since the days of cavemen. With the first stroke of his meagre supplies that may be a piece of a bone or stone, the ancient caveman initiated the history of communication. He conveyed his feelings to his fellow men by painting on the walls of the cave. Therefore, art forms are capable of transcending all barriers of languages, since the nascent days of



In the rich
cultural heritage
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first poetry ever.

human civilization. Art forms have the supreme power of spreading feelings amongst mankind, that too positive vibes. In concurrence to this it deserves mention that several modern-day paintings have an unfailing soothing effect on all beholders. These include:

- 'Poppies' by Claude Monet in 1873 that is an embodiment of hope in a two dimensional frame.
- 'Sky Blue' by Wassily Kandinsky in 1940.
- 'Moon Rise over the Sea' by Caspar David Frederick in 1822.

These paintings and a lot more have reportedly treated several anxiety and depression patients all over the world. Another genre of painting the "psychedelic art" is immensely popular for its vibrant joyous effect on the human mind. These art forms are widely accepted as visual treat and are very powerful potential medicines for treating a traumatized mind. Such art is capable



Art forms are capable of transcending all barriers of languages, since the nascent days of human civilization.

of imparting positive vibes to depressed and anxious people.

Coming home to our Indian culture, the sculptures of Lord Buddha prevalent in Mathura art and Lord Shiva in Ellora and Elephanta Art are embodiments of peace of mind, mental composure and power of meditation.

Speaking of Lord Buddha and emotional effect of art, definitely 'Bharat Natya Shastra' deserves mention. Lord of peace, Buddha himself is the divinity of 'Bharat Natya Shastra'. In Indian classical art, all the feelings that are experienced by human mind are associated with their effective visual representation in the form of colours. These are:

- **(Smile) Hasya:** Shwet (White)
- **(Enthusiasm) Utsaha:** Gaura (Fair)
- **(Funny) Odbhut:** Peet (Yellow)
- **(Peace) Shanto:** Kundendubhaati (The colour of star jasmine) (Courtesy: Bharat Natya Shastra)

Amongst various forms of art, literary works deserve immense applause for their inspiring and encouraging effect on sensitive human minds. They have the power to equip the human soul with sufficient energy to overcome all odds, this pandemic and its subsequent devastating effect on human mind being no exception. Being an Indian, the most brilliant heartfelt positive vibes offered by literature are from Bishwa-Kobi Rabindranath Tagore and A. P. J. Abdul



Kalam. We remember Tagore's 'Mukta Dhara'. The words that pen the depiction of the dam-barrier that symbolizes unprecedented obstacle being transcended by the free flowing "mukta dhara", causes the doubtful human mind to throb with an unwavering sense of mighty positivity that is powerful enough to win over the toughest of battles. Most welcome is the unmistakable positive vibe in 'Rakta Karabi' that fills our grieving minds when Nandini emerges over the dead Ranjan and ensures the victory of

Amongst various forms of art, literary works deserve immense applause for their inspiring and encouraging effect on sensitive human minds.

new life over devastation and death, in this deadly pandemic scenario. No matter what we suffer, no matter how strong constraints bind us, no matter how poorly equipped we are, we have the power to pave the way to success and move on to a better future, to create a better world, once we have enough faith and endeavour as necessary to spread wide our wings of hope and self-determination.....our "Wings of Fire". Therefore, let us move forward to a better world

"Charaibeti, charaibeti, charaibeti" – The Upanishad.

[Author's Introduction: Dr. Sulagna Chatterjee obtained Ph.D. from Calcutta University. She won prestigious fellowships namely, CSIR-SRF, DST-INSPIRE, I.I.T.-Institute-Fellowship, National-Merit-Scholarship etc. She did M.Tech., where she stood 1st Class 1st and was awarded Gold Medal and Outstanding Academic Excellence Award from Calcutta University. She has delivered several invited lectures in UK, Italy etc.]



Teachers: The Saviours of Education and the Light Bearers of a Nation



Educationists Amal Sankar Mukherjee and Sanjoy Dutta recount some heartening stories of teachers going the extra mile to continue the delivery of education.

Many people talk about going the extra mile, but very few people actually do it. Going the extra mile is one of the things that distinguish the go-getters in education from those who just mark time. The go-getters go to

work early and stay late. Education has been on the frontline of combatting Covid-19. For the last one year, teachers from around the world have been navigating education systems affected by school closures, adapting and improvising to keep their students learning. Even as many countries usher their students back into the classrooms, with all the fresh challenges that entail, inspiration can be found in the examples of teachers, who rose to the occasion. They remind us that teachers are more than just conduits for knowledge. They constitute a vital lifeline for their students, now and during whatever is next.

Have you ever gone the extra mile for someone? Yes, the teachers have done. They have overcome their limitations,

moved forward and done remarkable job for the survival of their students and education. Let us meet four such teachers, who have become the messiahs of education for their learners amidst the Covid-19 crisis.

The challenge faced by Fransiskus Xaverius Faimau, a teacher from Indonesia, is a familiar one. How can teachers and students connect if many are not connected to the internet? The internet coverage in Indonesia is fairly high – around 66 percent of people have access – but connectivity rarely stretches beyond urban hubs. While schools are closed, students in remote communities like Faimau's may not be getting any education at all. Faimau from the Kecil Fatutasu Elementary school in East Nusa Tenggara now travels for hours each day to set up small learning groups. He takes a few students at a time through lessons, gathered around his single laptop. In West Papua, teachers are working with education consultants to design offline curriculum, printing and distributing materials that creatively integrate students' home surroundings into their lessons. A simple pot of boiling water, for



Fransiskus Xaverius Faimau with a Student

example, can teach a student much about physics and mathematics. For Faimau, all this extra effort is simply part of a teacher's duty. Education, he understands, works best when it is consistent. He says, "Children have to keep learning because if we just leave, they will go back to square one." His ad-hoc classes may not be able to offer his students everything they would get in a traditional classroom, but, for now, keeping them engaged is enough.



Zane Powels

For the last one year, teachers from around the world have been navigating education systems affected by school closures, adapting and improvising to keep their students learning.

Aware that many of her pupils cannot get online or even have books, Nay converted her truck into a mobile classroom and travelled for hours a day to sit with them in person.

Whilst widespread internet access in the UK has encouraged a national transition to online learning, the Covid-19 pandemic has presented challenges of a different sort. The Western Primary School in Grimsby is situated at a deprived part of the town, where four out of ten students receive free school meals. For many, it's the only good meal they're guaranteed all day. Zane Powels, the assistant head teacher at Western Primary, recognized the impact lockdown



Nay



Subrata Pati

could have on these students. Five weeks after schools in England closed, Powels had already delivered more than two thousand meals to students, walking door-to-door, laden with lunch packages containing sandwiches, fruit and snacks. This also allowed him to check up on the children's wellbeing whilst locked-down at home. Five weeks into lockdown and Zane Powel has walked over 125 miles delivering nearly 2,000 school meals with a combined weight of over 1,100kg. Western Primary is not unique – the centrality of teachers and schools to students' lives has been thrown into sharp relief during the pandemic, and Powels exemplifies the sense of responsibility felt by teachers everywhere.

In Guanajuato, Mexico, a teacher known only as Nay recently won widespread praise on Twitter after a picture emerged of her holding a makeshift lesson in the back of her red pick-up truck. She and a student, both masked, sat around a small table, pouring over school work. Nay is an elementary school teacher who specializes in working with children with disabilities such as autism. Just over half of people in Mexico have access to the internet. Aware that many of her pupils

cannot get online or even have books, she converted her truck into a mobile classroom and travelled for hours a day to sit with them in person. While Nay is insistent that her extra efforts are nothing special, her story does highlight how the pandemic has hit vulnerable students the hardest. In these difficult times, it's those students who occupy their teachers' thoughts the most.

As the novel Coronavirus brings most of our lives to a halt, some brave teacher are not ready to cave in. Subrata Pati, a History teacher of two educational institutes in Kolkata (Adamas University and RICE Education) residing at Ahanda village in West Bengal's Bankura district, placed himself perched on a Neem tree trying to catch signals to teach his students. He did not stop when facing internet woes and climbed a tree to cross the hurdle and be able to properly teach his students. He couldn't have shrugged off his responsibility as a teacher. He made himself a platform on top of the tree using bamboo, gunny sacks and hay. He often took multiple classes at a stretch and carried food and water with him when he climbed up.

These four stories highlight what all teachers know – nothing beats being there in person. The situation with Covid-19 continues to evolve, and the promise of a return to 'normality' may be on the horizon. But until then, let's take inspiration

Subrata Pati, a History teacher of two educational institutes in Kolkata, placed himself perched on a Neem tree trying to catch signals to teach his students.

from those teachers who are doing everything to be there for their students. Teachers persevere. They continue to be ardent and dedicated bearers of light. They continue to share their meals with children, who do not have. They continue to buy classroom learning aid from their meager earnings. They give extra lessons for no other reason than the love of being a light bearer. They continue to drink from the fountain of knowledge and share it passionately with our children. These teachers are leading in crisis and reimagining the future. These teachers are the light bearers and saviours of education and learners keeping the promise that learners will not suffer, education will not stop amidst any type of crucial crisis.

[Authors' Introduction: Amal Sankar Mukherjee is a teacher and educator for the past 24 years. He is also a distinguished author in the field of teacher education and is a Life Member of 'Scholars Academic and Scientific Society'. He is the winner of 'International Scientist Award 2021'. He is presently teaching as an Assistant Professor at the School of Education under Adamas University in Kolkata. He has penned 7 books until now.

Sanjoy Dutta is currently an Assistant Professor at the School of Education under Adamas University in Kolkata. Sanjoy is a versatile teacher having six years of teaching experience and diversified areas of interest. The areas of his expertise include Pedagogy of Teaching Geography, Education, Teacher Education and Geography. Currently, he is pursuing his Ph.D. under the West Bengal University of Teachers' Training, Education Planning and Administration. He is the recipient of the prestigious award 'Teaching Excellence Award' as Best Teacher of School of Education from Adamas University in 2020.]



We Cannot Eat Money

Seasoned academic and political commentator Debanjan Banerjee writes about the contemporary ecological challenges and their possible solutions.



“Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last

fish has been caught, will we realize, we cannot eat money.”

Unfortunately not, perhaps we will not! We, the so-called civilized humans living inside closed walls, have been pouncing over this planet for centuries. We have been spewing poisonous and unending evil for our greed, injuring the very womb wherefrom we have all taken birth – planet earth.

The torment is terrific and multifaceted. No part of our mother's body (read environment) have been spared. Almost everything is being destroyed, devastated and mutilated. Air, water, soil – we indeed

look determined to ruin this beautiful system. We are eventually dragging it silently and systematically towards the grave.

Amidst such gruesome realities, there are many rays of hopes. Numerous nations, innumerable sensible people, uncountable NGOs, nature activists and organizations like World Wide Fund for Nature, Greenpeace, The Nature Conservancy, UN Environment Programme, European Environment Agency, Global Green Growth Institute etc. are coming up to protect the environment globally and we are looking at some promising results.

In 2020, amidst the frightening Covid crisis, the world witnessed some very positive changes pertaining to the environment. There were nine promising developments that ushered in a new ray of hope.

1. Carbon Emissions Are Down

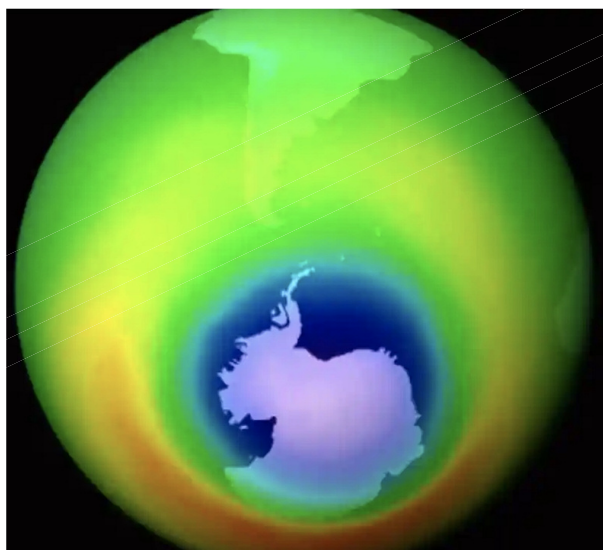
While social distancing has definitely resulted in social and economic challenges for many, it also seems to be improving our air quality since travel has decreased significantly. Researchers in New York are claiming that carbon monoxide levels produced by cars has decreased 50 per cent in comparison to the same time previous year. China and



Italy have also reported significant air pollution decrements since the outbreak.

2. Pablo Escobar's Invasive Hippos Are Helping the Planet

The famous Colombian drug lord, Pablo Escobar was known to have owned many non-native exotic animals, which he would allow to roam around his compound in Colombia. Animals such as wild hippos, which over the years multiplied from four to eighty, roamed about free. Due to similarities in diet and grazing habits, scientists are now researching to find out if these hippos are filling the ecological holes the extinct



The environmental movement in many parts of India has been often identified with the Left-of-Centre; but to have an impact, you sometimes need icons and leaders who command respect across the entirety political spectrum.

Only when the last
tree has died and
the last river has been
poisoned and the
last fish has been
caught, will we realize,
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llama-like animal, the *Hemiauchenia paradoxa* left behind.

3. Wales to Plant a Huge National Forest

Wales announced that it would come up with a government-led, \$5.9 million project to create a National Forest in order to preserve nature, improve biodiversity and sequester carbon from the atmosphere. Other goals include their "commitment to tackling climate change." The plan is to afforest 5,000 acres of land each year and eventually increase to 10,000 acres per year in order to hopefully meet their mark of reducing



carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2050.

4. Dutch Man Cleans Rivers in Addition to His Ocean Cleanup Efforts

The young engineer Boyan Slat made history when he removed two shipping containers containing garbage from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. He has now set his sights on going to the source of water pollution, the world's most polluted rivers. Along with his organization The Ocean Cleanup, Slat decided to include polluted rivers in his mission after factual research revealed that, "1,000s of the world's rivers are responsible for depositing 80 per cent of all the trash that is currently swirling in the ocean."

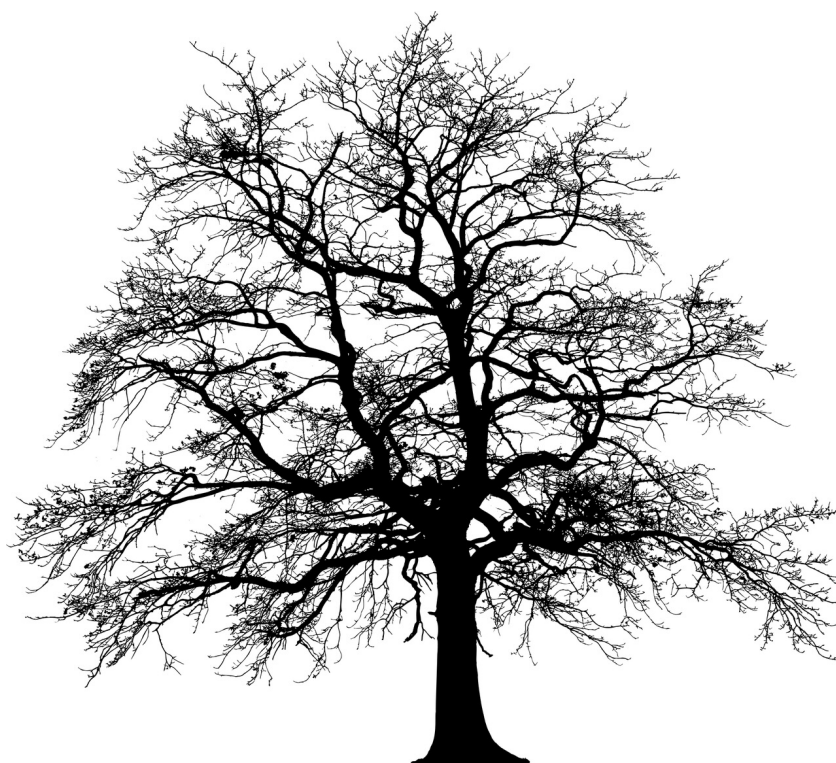
5. Scientists Close to Creating Artificial Photosynthesis

Scientists are on the cusp of being able to use artificial photosynthesis to generate renewable energy from the carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. If created in large amounts, this could be a crucial step towards mitigating climate change.

6. New Research Finds Human Ancestors Lived in Trees

The ancestors of the human race are believed to have lived 3.67 million years back. Nicknamed Little Foot, this ancestor of ours was believed to take shelter and sleep in trees in order to avoid run-ins with





saber-tooth cats and other predators. A new discovery was made this month with regards to how Little Foot was able to move their head and how the movements are different from how we as humans move it today.

7. Restoring Soils Could Remove 5.5 Billion Tonnes of CO₂ a year

Like trees, soil health has been starting to get some much-needed attention. And, of course, the two go hand in hand. A new study concludes that restoring and protecting our soil could remove the equivalent of the United States' annual greenhouse gas emissions from the

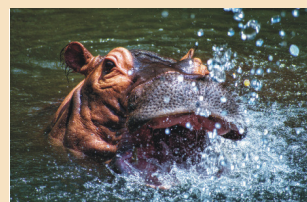
atmosphere. The benefits gained from soil restoration includes water regulation, increasing water quality, stabilizing production and resilience in ecosystems.

8. Global Efforts on Ozone Help Reverse Southern Jet Stream Damage

Due to international cooperation in phasing out ozone depleting chemicals, the southern jet stream is returning to its normal state. This is great news because it is evident that some climate systems are capable of healing when governments agree to make positive environmental changes.

9. UK Plants a 'Tiny Forest'

The United Kingdom has planted a tiny forest, which is said to be the first of its kind in Oxfordshire. The little forest will consist of 600 trees and will be about the size of a tennis court. The forest is intended to not only benefit the environment but to inspire others to plant their own little forests



This link between healthy agriculture and healthy forests, and between healthy forests and healthy hydrological systems is something that we learnt from the Chipko Movement.

around the world. "We hope to inspire individuals, businesses and government to take environmental action, by supporting a tiny forest in their local area."

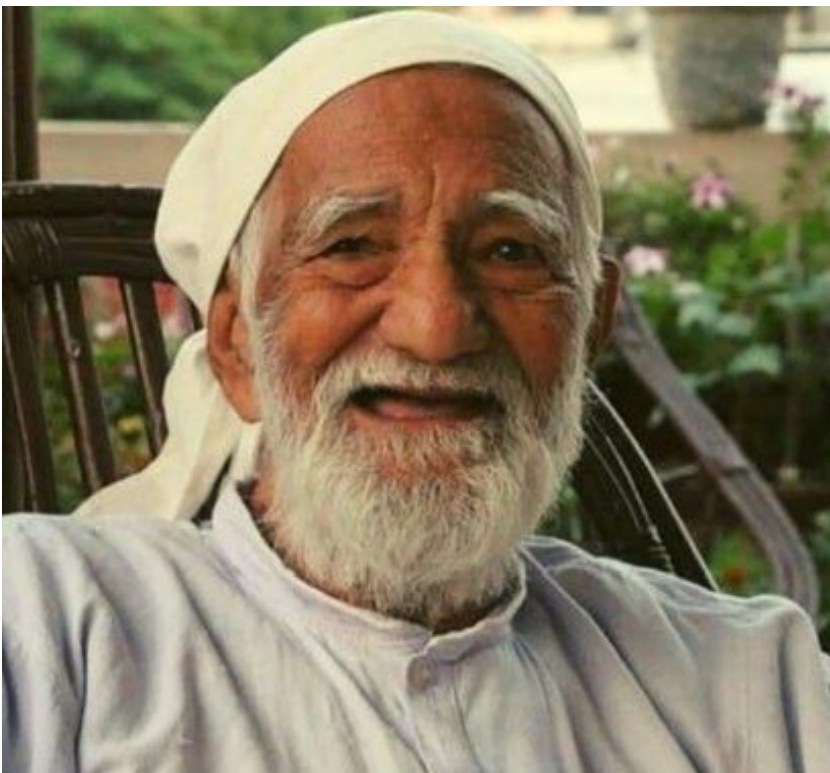
Episode of Hope in the Indian Perspective

Now, this is a story from the world's most populated democracy and the land blessed with extreme natural diversity. The story of a great son of Mother India, who relentlessly fought to save and protect environment until his last snuffle is well known all over the world. He stood as a saviour of environment and

outnumbered the inflictors, despite all kinds of intimidations. The saga of Sunderlal Bahuguna – the largest figurative banyan tree, the pioneering and inspiring leader of the environmental movement in India, was an irreplaceable jewel, for very diverse reasons. With his Gandhian background, frugal lifestyle and a grounded as well as cultural base in the Garhwal Himalayas, he was a contrasting figure when compared to other environmentalists or wildlife conservationists of that era, who were



While social distancing has definitely resulted in social and economic challenges for many, it also seems to be improving our air quality, since travel has decreased significantly.



Sunderlal Bahuguna (Courtesy: The Print)

often from urban and privileged backgrounds. During his struggle against the Tehri Dam, controversies and criticisms for and against him were in plenty, which were somewhat misplaced. The environmental movement in many parts of India has been often identified with the Left-of-Centre; but to have an impact, you

sometimes need icons and leaders who command respect across the entirety political spectrum – Bahuguna was one of those figures.

In 1979, during the Chipko Movement, one of the slogans of the movement was from a folk song *Kya hain jungle k upkar? Mitti, paani aur bayar* (Translation: What are the gifts of the forest? Soil, water and air). Today, we have terms like 'ecosystem services' that carry the same meaning. These terms didn't even exist back then. Bahuguna was a pioneer with respect to moving away the focus from a wildlife-centric approach to conservation, which was at that time the norm amongst many of us. He also made it directly relevant to larger environmental aspects and issues, as well as the livelihoods of people around.

In fact, when nobody even dreamt about environmental pollution, his so-called clairvoyance clicked, and he started working as a doctor to eradicate the environment's main ailments – saving soil, water and air from venomous pollution. Bahuguna drew our attention to the importance of the Himalayan forest, especially oak-dominated forests, and the role the greens played in maintaining the health of local agriculture and water resources for local communities. This link between healthy agriculture and healthy forests, and between healthy forests and healthy hydrological systems is something that we learnt from the Chipko Movement and in Bahuguna's company, has left an impact.

Sunderlal's long march from Kashmir to Kohima, the march across the Himalayas was an attempt to make his local struggles and discourse heard pan Himalayas. His focus, however, remained in the western Himalayas in the region now called the state of Uttarakhand. His ashram in Silyara is an inspiration to so many people who visit the place and learnt about the Chipko Movement.

Bahuguna referred to the fragility of the Himalayas saying that we probably shouldn't have conventional roads in Himalayas the way we have elsewhere. He believed smaller villages should be connected with very well-made footpaths linked to fewer roads. What he said with respect to the hazards of road-building, which include cutting through mountain slopes is now so relevant. Case in point would be the Char Dham project and the widening of the roads and repeated hazards that the Himalayas are facing, like extreme rainfall events and landslides, due to that. He was probably among the earliest voices that warned us against these dangers. He instead tried to make his voice heard specifically in relation to conservation and sustainable development in the Himalayas and of the Himalayas.

This greatest Padma Vibhushan warrior, who fought against all kind of environmental cruelty, lost his battle to Covid on May 21, 2020 at the age of 94. He ushered a new era of hope and positivity. He made us aware that we have to save our mother at any cost from these greedy people and make them realize "We cannot eat Money"! Finally, amidst this negativity, let us commit ourselves to something positive. Let us take an oath; an oath to stop Pollution because, "*Stopping Pollution Is The Best Solution.*"

[Author's Introduction: With more than 22 years of combined experience in media and academics, Debanjan Banerjee is presently the HoD, Media, NSHM Knowledge Campus in Kolkata. He is also a Visiting Professor at SRFTI in Kolkata under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. He is also the Head Examiner, Media and Board of Studies member, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology in West Bengal.]



Borige Anandaiah with Officials (Courtesy: The Hindu)

The Magic Potion for Covid Cure and the Unanswered Questions

**Seasoned journalist
turned academic
Dr. Mrityunjoy Chatterjee
writes on the importance
of traditional medicines
in combating the Covid-
19 crisis.**



As the dreaded Covid-19 virus rages the world over affecting and killing millions of people as scientists

continue to burn midnight oil to find an effective answer, life in a remote area in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh has changed since the word spread like wild fire that a cure for Covid-19 has been found.

Borige Anandaiah, a self-acclaimed Ayurveda practitioner, in the Krishnapatnam area of Nellore claimed to have found a medicine to counter the Covid-19 virus.

And to support his claim, locals in the area vouched that the medicine given by Anandaiah had "cured the village of Covid-19" and that the medicine



“genuinely works”. News channels picked up the story and social media made the claim viral.

The result is that every day thousands of people are queuing up since the wee hours to get a dose of the “miracle potion”. The situation has come to such a pass that the administration had to make huge police “bandobast” to control the mad rush.

India is known for its traditional medicinal systems – Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani. Medical systems are found mentioned even in the ancient Vedas and other scriptures. Ayurveda or the “science of life”, as a concept, appeared and developed between 2,500 and 500 B.C. in India. Ayurveda is also called the “science of longevity” because it offers a complete system

Borige Anandaiah, a self-acclaimed Ayurveda practitioner, in the Krishnapatnam area of Nellore claimed to have found a medicine to counter the Covid-19 virus.



to live a long healthy life. Hence, Ayurveda offering a solution to the most dreaded problem of today’s world was not the twist in the tale. But, as the crowds and resultant madness swelled beyond limits, the administration had a real problem. Should they allow people to consume Anandaiah’s medicines? For, Anandaiah is neither a qualified professional in Ayurvedic medicine nor the formula developed by him form part of any standard practice. Officials were also baffled to find three queues converging at a point in the village. After enquiry, they found that the three queues were for three different groups – people who have tested positive for Covid-19, people who have fever and other symptoms and people looking to boost

immunity.

Speaking to the media, the self-proclaimed Ayurvedic doctor said that four medicines have been prepared, each with an alphabetic code. 'P' for clearing lung infections, 'F' to remove toxins, 'L' to strengthen liver efficiency and 'K' to help cure critical cases. Anandaiah said among other things, he uses pepper, green camphor, nutmeg, honey, black cumin and cinnamon to prepare the magic potions.

And sure enough – to cash in on the sudden development and the mad rush for the potion – the politicians moved in. Soon, Kakani Goverdhan Reddy, the MLA from Sarvepalli, announced that the state government was making arrangements for the distribution of the ayurvedic medicines



In terms of universality of use, Ayush guidelines for trials do not include those with unstable comorbidities (who are also the highest risk category for Covid) and pregnant women.

creating a hype amid locals about the effectiveness of the medicine as an MLA was pushing for it.

Subsequently, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy ordered a comprehensive study into the medicine to find out if the medicine being given by Anandaiah has any scientific evidence to support it.

The call for a detailed study of the medicines was also raised by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, who also hails from Nellore district. The vice-president has asked ICMR to conduct a study.

Goaded by the Government – representatives from different agencies – Centre's Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)



Ministry converged at the lab of Anandaiah to test various samples of the medicines.

Meanwhile, both the crowd and the resultant unrest among people craving for the medicine kept growing. It was increasingly becoming difficult for the administration to control the situation. After days of dilemma and checking by multiple agencies and the report that the potion was "Safe and Harmless", the government allowed Anandaiah to make and distribute the potions.

Andhra Pradesh Ayush commissioner Ramulu Naik said that the study conducted by a team of experts from the department has revealed that there were no harmful substances in the medicines distributed by Anandaiah. He said 18 herbs were used in the preparation of the medicine and all were safe with proven medicinal qualities. "So far, 80,000 people have consumed this medicine. We spoke to some of them and there were no complaints from anyone," Naik said. He, however, said that the medicine could not be certified as an ayurvedic medicine, as it should be decided based on the rules of Drugs and Cosmetics Act. "As such, we cannot call it an ayurvedic medicine for the cure of Covid-19. The

government will look into the possibility of allowing it for distribution in some other form," Naik said.

An AIIA Case Study

Earlier, a team of doctors from the Delhi-based All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) under the Ayush Ministry had found that Ayurveda interventions like Ayush Kwath and Fifatrol tablets can be effective in mild to moderate cases of Covid-19 infection in a "very short period" with "complete regression of symptoms."

Use of four Ayurveda interventions – Ayush Kwath, Sanshamani Vati, Fifatrol tablets and Laxmivilas Ras not only improved the condition of Covid-19 patients but also turned the rapid antigen test negative within six days of treatment, according to a case report published in the journal of AIIA – Ayurveda Case Report – in October, 2020.

Citing the case of a 30-year-old male health worker infected with coronavirus, the report said that his infection was managed with Samshamana therapy that included oral administration of Ayush Kwath, Sanshamani Vati, Fifatrol tablets, and Laxmivilas Ras.

The patient after testing positive for Covid-19 was advised home quarantine. "The mentioned treatment plan was



Despite a wealth of anecdotal and written knowledge, India has never tested Ayurveda in large clinical trials before.

Use of four Ayurveda interventions – Ayush Kwath, Sanshamani Vati, Fifatrol tablets and Laxmivilas Ras not only improved the condition of Covid-19 patients but also turned the rapid antigen test negative within six days of treatment.

effective in the symptomatic relief (fever, dyspnea, anorexia, fatigue, anosmia and dysgeusia) as well as in the resolution of viral load, as the patient tested negative in the RAD for Covid-19 within six days of intervention and RT-PCR test was also done on day 16, which was reported negative," the study said.

Herbal drug Fifatrol developed by AIMIL Pharmaceutical helps fight infection, flu and cold. It has immunity strengthening herbs like Guduchi, Sanjeevini Ghanvati, Daruharidra, Apamarga, Chirayata, Karanja, Kutaki, Tulsi, Godanti (Bhasma), Mrityunjaya Rasa, Tribhuvan Kriti Rasa and Sanjeevani Vati.

Ayush Kwath is a combination of four medicinal herbs commonly used in every Indian kitchen – basil leaves (tulsi), cinnamon bark (dalchini), Zingiber Officinale (sunthi) and krishna marich (Piper Nigrum).

Sanshamani Vati (also called Guduchi Ghana Vati) is an ayurvedic herbal formulation used for all types of fevers. Laxmivilas Ras is a traditional herbomineral medicine that mainly contains Abhrak Bhasma and cures cough, cold and rhinitis. It soothes the throat and sinuses.

The report, authored by Dr. Sisir Kumar



Mandal, Dr. Meenakshi Sharma, Dr. Charu Sharma, Dr. Shalini Rai and Dr. Anand said, "The present case study proved the efficacy of Ayurveda interventions in mild-to-moderate cases of Covid-19 infection in a very short period with complete regression of symptoms."

"The treatment was personalised, holistic, and purely based on Ayurvedic principles, and no conventional medicines were used. With this case study, it can be inferred that Ayurveda has vast potential to address Covid-19 and such other pandemics; a large sample-sized, multi-center randomized and controlled clinical studies are the need of the hour," the report said

[Paper in NCBI](#)

There is an interesting paper 'Outcomes of Ayurvedic care in a Covid-19 Patients with Hypoxia – A Case Report' on the website of the National Center for Biotechnology Information.

This is a part of the United States National Library of Medicine, a branch of the National Institutes of Health. Written by Jyoti Anand Joshi and Rammanohar Puthiyedath, it reports the outcomes of Ayurvedic intervention in a Covid-19 patient with severe hypoxia requiring supportive oxygen therapy.



The case involved a 26-year-old housemaker who complained of severe breathlessness while it was found that all the people she had come in contact with during her travel from Panvel to Alibaug, had tested positive for Covid-19. On opting for Ayurveda treatment on the second day of her hospitalisation, she was administered medicines. The report states that 'Sadharaacura' was discontinued to prevent it from inducing Rukata (dryness) after seven days when breathlessness was completely relieved. Sukshma Triphala was discontinued after four days when the patient was taken off oxygen support and there was no indication of any lung infection like pneumonia which is a known complication in Covid-19. Sagangapaniyam with Guduchi, as well as Kanakasavam and Indukantham Kashayam was continued up to the point of being discharged from the hospital to support immunity, kindle digestive fire and to keep the pranavahasrotas (airways) patent. After discharge, the patient has been advised to drink guducipaniyam

(water medicated with stem of *Tinospora Cordifolia*)."

Discharged on the 11th day, the patient after five days repeated the RT-PCR test for Covid-19, which was negative.

The Magical Four

Yashtimadhu, Ashwagandha, Guduchi Pippali, and Ayush-64 are currently being studied. These will be tested in three phases of Covid infection – prevention, treatment and recovery phase.

Need for Clinical Trials

Despite a wealth of anecdotal and written knowledge, India has never tested Ayurveda in large clinical trials before. Seen in this light, the current trials by the Ayush Ministry and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) with technical support from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will go a long way towards gaining a modern and scientific understanding of Ayurvedic remedies.

An renowned Ayurvedic expert says, "To promote Ayurveda, it has to be developed as an evidence-based science. The clinical trial is a big step towards this".

Dr. Sanjay Jain, a senior orthopaedic surgeon at Anand Hospital in Meerut, has similar views. "We have neglected Ayurvedic science for many years. Germs are everywhere but only those with poor immunity fall ill. Ayurvedic medicines can boost immunity to stop the coronavirus from entering our body."

In terms of universality of use, Ayush guidelines for trials do not include those with unstable comorbidities (who are also the highest risk category for Covid) and pregnant women. Plus the treatment has to be stopped if a patient has to go on ventilator support.

Commenting on this, Dr. Bhushan Patwardhan, chairman of the Interdisciplinary Ayush Research and Development Task Force, says, "There is a protocol (inclusion and exclusion criteria)

Only when the last
tree has died and
the last river has been
poisoned and the
last fish has been
caught, will we realize,
we cannot eat money.





in every clinical trial even if they are related to other medical sciences. Once it gets approved as a medicine, it will be used as an add-on therapy to help patients recover faster. Standard treatment would continue as usual." While critics argue that medication has to be tested universally, it is important to recognise that Ayurveda has very specific rules on treatment and medicines. Remedies are adjusted based on a person's dosha, symptoms and time of the day. Some even rely on the season. Last year there was a report in Zee News which said that the clinical trial conducted at three hospitals with the combination treatment of an Ayurvedic remedy called 'Immunofree' by Corival Life Sciences, and a Nutraceutical called 'Reginimmune' by Biogetica have shown better results than the conventional medicines approved by the government for coronavirus treatment.

Will Anandaiah's Potions be the Miracle Cure

The government has given the nod to Anandaiah to both make and distribute the four potions and thousands are

consuming them hoping to get cured. However, In Ayurveda's rules for administration lie certain inherent limitations for comparing it with allopathic science. Ayurvedic treatments are more accessible, cost-friendly and natural, but they are also not fast-acting, nor can they be given when a person is suffering from severe Covid symptoms, such as hypoxia or thrombosis. Their promise largely lies in being able to halt the progression of Covid from mild to severe symptoms. With the race to find treatments to mitigate the impact of Covid on the immune system still far from over, any positive results from Ayurvedic drug trials will certainly come as a relief to many. We have to wait for the answers.

[Author's Introduction: Journalist turned Academic administrator, Dr. Mrityunjay Chatterjee has over 35 years of experience in mainstream Media and Education industries. Widely travelled, he has held coveted positions across Media and Academia. Mrityunjay is presently the Dean, School of Liberal Arts & Culture Studies, Adamas University.]



Red Volunteers Play an Important Role in Combating Covid-19 in West Bengal



Asmita Kar, a student and activist, writes about the stellar role played by the Red Volunteers in neutralizing the Covid-19 pandemic in West Bengal.

With the onset of a global pandemic that has affected millions, we have seen various groups of social workers coming upfront to help make the struggle easier. Among those numerous groups, the name of one organization has outshone many others – Red Volunteers, a group that has given a fresh lease of life to the residents of West Bengal.

The Red Volunteers is a group of approximately one lakh young, sprightly, extremely courageous, dedicated and conscientious activists, who have literally taken the state by a storm by their selfless services. This group mostly consists of youth and student workers.

Whilst political campaigning continued across poll-bound states, the sheer number of Covid-19 affected patients and deaths increased rapidly, putting the entire nation at stake.

However, the appearance of the Red Volunteers, who identified themselves as





frontline workers along with healthcare workers and professionals, significantly helped the fight against the pandemic. "The patient's father was on the verge of sobbing. He was anxious as the oxygen

The Red Volunteers is a group of approximately one lakh young, sprightly, extremely courageous, dedicated and conscientious activists, who have literally taken the state by a storm by their selfless services.

supply was available for about 30 minutes only and afterwards, there was no back-up. I assured him that we would arrange something within 30 minutes and we were able to live up to our word," said Nandy, a member of Red Volunteers.

Red Volunteers have been arranging oxygen cylinders, hospital beds, both cooked and uncooked food, blood donors, groceries and medicines to those affected across the state. The volunteers have also donated blood on a massive scale. They have provided services regardless of time. Volunteers, who were themselves down with fever or were sick from exhaustion, had still provided services forgetting their limitations. These are absolute acts of selflessness, with an abundant sense of responsibility and love for the citizens.

Srijan Bhattacharya, the State Secretary of SFI, pointed out the changes that have



The appearance of the Red Volunteers, who identified themselves as frontline workers along with healthcare workers and professionals, significantly helped the fight against the pandemic.

afflicted the Covid-19 patients during the second wave of the pandemic.

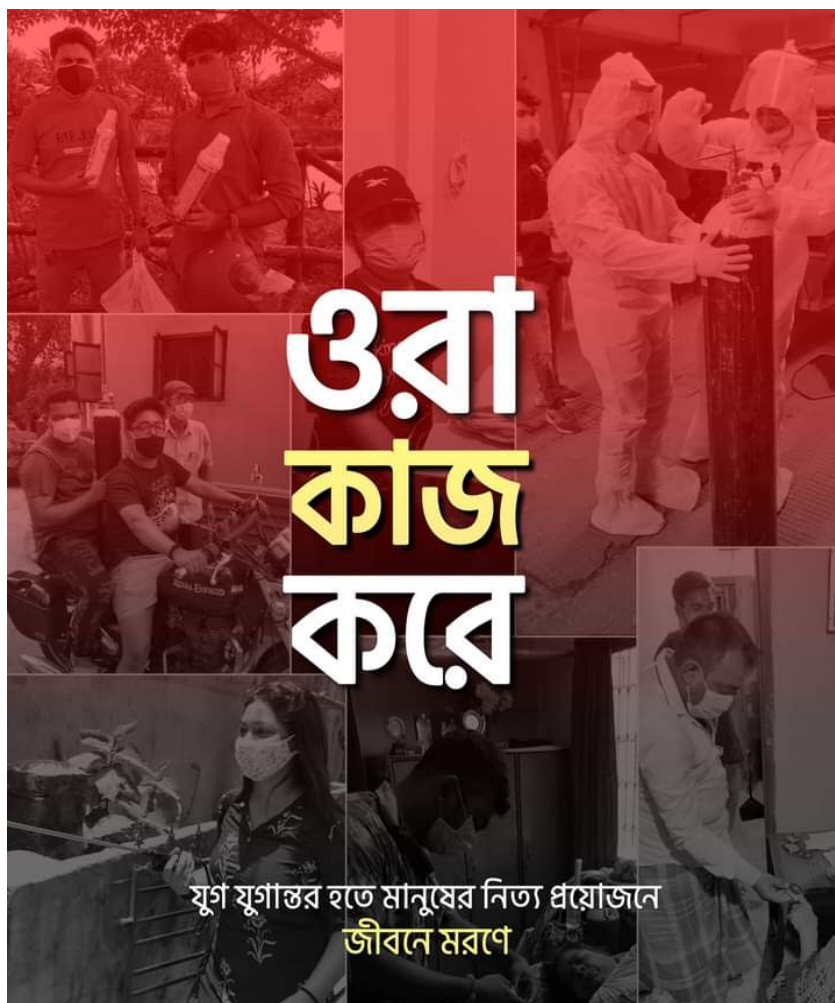
"A year ago, there wasn't such a scarcity of oxygen. Our job then used to be mainly arranging food and medicines. This time, the cry for oxygen and hospital beds is alarming. This is why the nature of our work has changed," he said.

He added, "As far as I remember, the name Red Volunteers was suggested by our leader Samik Lahiri. In a year, the network has grown so wide that I won't be able to tell you how many teams are actually working at this moment."

Local committees have been formed to accommodate local needs with efficacy. Online portals have been created for the convenience of people.

Now, a force of about 80,000 red volunteers are across the nooks and corners of West Bengal, breaching the gap between demand and supply in services being rendered to Covid-19 patients.

However, it is not a complete success story. There have been several setbacks and disappointments. Oxygen cylinders are in low supply, many medications are in low supply and black-marketing rules the roost. The Red Volunteers are facing and overcoming each hurdle defying all



odds. Nothing seems to be able to stop them. Red Volunteers were the butt of ridicule and violence. They were severely beaten up and grievously wounded on many occasions. At the same time, the people of West Bengal have come out in support of them, saluting them and acknowledging their selfless services. The volunteers had to face some obvious hurdles after the election results were declared in West Bengal. The

members received phone calls from unknown numbers, which were made only to harass them and demean them because of the election results. Female volunteers were approached with sleazy innuendoes and male volunteers were insulted and sometimes threatened for being such great helps. Nevertheless, that being said, another bright side to this was the numerous social organisations that came out to help the

Red Volunteers financially and by providing moral support in order to encourage them to keep up the act. Not only social organisations but many individuals ranging across all age groups donated money, PPE kits, masks, gloves, sanitizing machines, sanitisers, etc. to help this group grow and be of larger help during these trying times. West Bengal would have been subjected to even more agony and fatalities if the Red Volunteers had not intervened in time. These selfless youth made up for the problems that accompanied the second wave. In times like this, a famous saying of Vladimir Lenin can be remembered – “Give me just one generation of youth, and I’ll transform the whole world.”

[Author’s Introduction:
Asmita Kar is a student of M.B.A. in Communication Management at the Kolkata-based Adamas University. Asmita completed her schooling from Christ Church Girls’ High School and did her graduation in Political Science from the University of Calcutta. Asmita has been working as a red volunteer in West Bengal.]



How Covid-19 Triggered Creative Women

*Teacher and storyteller
Moumita De Das writes a
pleasant piece on how
the pandemic motivated
scores of women to
explore their creatives
sides.*



ndians woke up to a new reality on March 22, 2020. The twin terminologies – Covid-19 and lockdown – transformed

our outlook towards life in entirety. As people were advised to stay indoors, they began to appreciate smaller things in life. Experts believe that being confined within the four walls of a home has its adverse impact. However, at the same time, there were efforts undertaken to beat the Covid-19 blues.

Last year, when the country went into a lockdown, people took to making Dalgona coffee, cooking and reliving childhood hobbies. From dancing to painting, people from across the country started using various forms of art to restore their sanity. While on one side, people



Catherine Parker with Her Students

found the lockdown a blissful break from their otherwise busy lives, there were others who took it as an opportunity to explore their creative sides. Unfortunately though, amidst the lockdown, many artists struggled with the loss of income and finding ways to reach the audience. Dance, paintings, songs, poems and cooking proved to be stressbusters for people, who found their lives mundane, and looked for a release. This article shares some stories of women, who triumphed over this pandemic and added dashes of colours and mirth to our lives.

We start with the story of Catherine Parker, an Australian visual artist, whom I met on a moon-lit *Dol Purnima* (the festival of colours) night in a dense forest range of Kapilash in Odisha in 2016. During that brief encounter, she made me realize the importance of spiritualism and artistic pursuit through the fact that she came all the way to India for the same. Parker has been travelling to India since 2005, when she first engaged with the Indian culture through an Artist in Residence programme in New Delhi. Since then, she has journeyed nearly 30 times to India both as an artist making 'on the road' works, setting up makeshift studios and now leading artists on Sketchbook – Cultural Immersion



Small 3x5cm Painting on Aventurine Crystal



Acrylic and Ink on Wood

Programmes. Unfortunately in 2020 and 2021, as an artist whose second home is India and who conducts art tours every year, Parker's plans were cancelled. However, as indomitable as her spirit is, she said, "The most profound thing has been staying home and painting. I am still teaching but I am happy to be focused more on my internal world rather than the external. I appreciate intimacy in small things and not so interested in socializing. It feels like the things that fed me are not that important anymore. I have found a greater appreciation of nature and the bigger picture." Some of her creations are shown through photographs. The second story is about Swagata Majumdar, an international voiceover

From dancing to painting, people from across the country started using various forms of art to restore their sanity during the lockdown.



Swagata Majumdar at Her Home and Her First Boyaam Concert in Bangalore



Boyaam's Online Concert Poster during Pandemic

artiste and emcee for over 17 years. However, I remember her as a bubbly girl and my colleague at one of the reputed newspapers in Kolkata, whom I met in 2004. However, the real twist in her life came in 2005, when she won the Ibda'a Award for a documentary film on communal riots in Dubai. The rest is history as she became a popular radio jockey in Kolkata. After marriage, she settled in Bangalore and started Boyaam, a

We start with the story of Catherine Parker, an Australian visual artist, whom I met on a moon-lit Dol Purnima (the festival of colours) night in a dense forest range of Kapilash in Odisha in 2016.

performing art curation platform to promote new performing artistes and voiceover artistes and their artforms. In Bengali, Boyaam means a glass jar. The name signifies Swagata's approach toward filling her own glass jar of life with happiness, music and performing art. Swagata said, "Boyaam has conducted several home concerts, with the first event being featured in Outlook India magazine. In 2019, we also hosted a large outdoor event before the pandemic began." During the pandemic, Boyaam experienced similar challenges as any other businesses. As people started to practice physical distancing, the concerts and big events hosted by Boyaam saw a huge decline and eventually became nil. While going online was an option, it did not fare well, and many times artistes went on without any pay. Yet, Swagata endured the time and kept the platform going, recovering from the ongoing pandemic.

Now, we shall meet my childhood friend, Amrita Girish, who is based in the United States of America, who will share her journey from being an IT professional to a baker in her own words.

I was always the nice girl at home helping my mom, listening to dad, doing my homework – on time and then sometimes

I shall end my discourse with a book that saw the light of the day only because of the pandemic. 'Henty's Heroes' is by an author named Yvonne Booth.

..... try out some recipes from one of those monthly magazines, or bake a plain vanilla cake in our newly bought oven, which boasted of mostly making non-veg dishes for parties. That was my only encounter with baking, and it was just baking the same cake, which might not have been the softest or the tastiest, but was a family delight.

Fast forward 20 years, after becoming an engineer, landing an IT job, marriage, two kids, continuing on that IT job for 12 years, and moving a country, here I was at



Amrita Girish





Amruta Deshpande, an Artist, with Her Creation



Artist Chaitu Majgaonkar Bhandari with Her Unique Creative Art

home, managing it, with whatever best skills I had. I could not join work because of VISA issues.

On my husband's birthday of 2016, I had my first proper bake, with filling, frosting and outside decoration too. It tasted great, looked not so great, and collapsed after the first slice was cut. This event motivated me to try more and more until I got it perfect.

During the pandemic, my baking increased more for friends, as they avoided shops, bakeries etc., but felt safe when it came from my kitchen. I also volunteered and got associated with an NGO, which ensured all the kids registered with them (foster care, domestic violence cases etc.) have a cake for their birthday. All kids MUST have a cake on their birthdays. I hope and wish to join many more such causes. It gives a real joy and pleasure to bake for such a cause.

I dream of having my own place someday, where I would have a small set-up, where people could spend a relaxed time with their loved ones, where people could try a hand at frosting their cake, or put that last bit of decoration on their cake for their loved ones. Someday perhaps!! My daughter has listed out 20 odd names, which we could keep for our dream place.



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JOIN US FOR OUR TALK

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: HOW TO START YOUR JOURNEY & DEALING WITH PANDEMIC



Sipping Thoughts is a forum run by two most creative ladies, Sukirti Gupta and Meeta Gutgutia. Since its inception, it has been working across platforms to create awareness of women-centric issues. It was set up with the tagline 'Real Women, Real Thoughts'. 'It's a space for Real Women to share Real Thoughts & be heard! We are a No Judgement platform' were the lines that they used and were able to connect over 2.5 million women monthly during

this pandemic. I shall end my discourse with a book that saw the light of the day only because of the pandemic. 'Henty's Heroes' is by an author named Yvonne Booth. For five years, a box gathered dust at Yvonne Booth's home shed in Henty, in south-western New South Wales. Booth found time to write the stories of Henty's 167 WWI soldiers during the coronavirus lockdown. She collated together their stories using letters, diaries and newspapers.

She says many things about the war and how the returned servicemen coped in the years after it were "hushed up". So, from morning to night between March and October 2020, she poured over the letters and diaries families had given her so she could piece together the stories of the town's 167 soldiers.

[Author's Introduction: Moumita De Das is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Journalism under the School of Media and Communication at Adamas University in Kolkata. She is also the Editorial Consultant for International Justice Mission in Kolkata. She did her M.Phil. from the Department of International Relations under Jadavpur University in Kolkata. She has 15 years of experience in teaching, reporting and copy editing. She has worked across multiple prestigious organizations including Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Exhibit and Electronics For You Group. She was also associated with MAKAUT as an Examiner and Scrutinizer of Media Science between 2012 and 2019.]



Pandemic Time

Saibal Ray

A child becomes nervous
Since her parents are ill
Due to the pandemic and
They are trying to heal.
She goes to her grandma
And grandma consoles her.
Grandpa tells her a story
About the red volunteer.
The child becomes spirited
And tells her grandparent
That she also wants to help
The people in torment.
Now they prepare food for
The ill to bring a boon.
The child writes on each packet
'Get well soon!'

A young man loses job
As the virus brings pandemic.
He stays home frustrated
With a sense of panic.
Days pass, months pass –
No job till date.
Only his mother tells him
To create something great.
So, he picks up pen and paper
And scribbles from his mind.
The untold words sparkle
As if stars of mid night.

The virus hits a girl
And she fights against it.
After a month she comes back
Beating the disease.
Now she stares outside
Through her small window.
She sees the birds flying
On a piece of rainbow.
Now she paints colourful

Pictures to forget pain.
On the terrace now she stands
To get soaked in rain.

These people are scared indeed!
And they stay home.
The news of deaths keeps coming.
The minds roam alone.
But they do get the time
To rethink about life.
This virus questions us
And pinches to revive.
This is the time to heal
And rethink anew.
The time has come again
To recreate and redo.



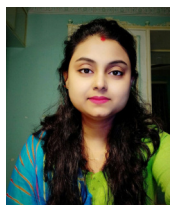
[Poet's Introduction: Saibal Ray is an alumnus of SRFTI (Sound) and a fellow of AFA, Korea. He worked across multiple organizations including SRFTI, DOLBY, ACE ACOUSTICS, RAFT, AMITY, RKU, PFT, CU and AU. He has also been an audio consultant and freelancer. He completed B.Sc. in Physics from the University of Calcutta.]



'POSITIVE' Psychology

Making It to the Life Raft: The Silent Pandemic and Mental Health

Clinical psychologist and academic Dr. Soheli Datta deliberates on multiple ways to keep the mind healthy amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.



“Long hours of work, lack of resources, a mounting death toll, risk of infection and no rest”... sighed, the young doctor. She is a microbiologist at a super speciality hospital in Kolkata, who has been handling Covid-19 test reports of patients. She has been suffering from chronic wakefulness, that leads to impairment of concentration, deficient short term memory, reduced retention capacity, poor vigilance, impaired motor skills and difficulty with clinical judgement during



this pandemic. Chronic stresses lead her to fatigue, headache and anxiety. She cannot resist obsession of contamination and compulsively washes herself and her belongings after returning home. She herself got Covid-19 infection last year. Healthcare workers (HCWs), during this unparalleled crisis of Covid-19, have been facing challenges treating patients with Covid-19. One in 10 health workers are infected with the Covid-19 virus in some countries as per WHO. Healthcare professionals, who deal with Covid-19, are under psychological pressure and experience high rates of psychiatric morbidity. Due to the increased risk of exposure to the virus, nurses, frontline

doctors and healthcare workers fear that they may get Covid-19 infection. They experience emotional exhaustion, which may lead to medical errors, lower productivity and higher turnover rates. They worry about bringing the virus home and passing it on to their loved ones and family members – especially elderly parents, new born babies and immune compromised relatives. With time, my client benefitted with progressive muscle relaxation practices and mindful experiential breathing that created an essence of confidence in her along with affective vitality. She is now able to recognize the nuances of respiratory diseases, increased use of personal protective equipment and understands that every healthcare system has gaps. Throughout the world, an essential modus

of prevention from Covid-19 infection has been isolation and social distancing strategies. In this backdrop, one of the principal measures taken during the lockdown has been the closure of schools, educational institutes and activity areas. Globally, the pre-lockdown learning of adolescents predominantly involved one-to-one interaction with their mentors and peer groups. Unfortunately, the nationwide closure of schools and colleges has negatively impacted over 91 per cent of the world's student population. These inexorable circumstances, which are beyond normal experience, lead to stress, anxiety and a feeling of helplessness among adolescents. During my online psychotherapy sessions, a 17-year-old boy, studying in class XI in a



renowned school of Kolkata, presented with the complaints of inability to focus attention on studies, easily getting distracted and enraged, verbally abusing parents and engaged mostly in watching pornographic videos on mobile phone along with frequent masturbatory experiences during online classes and when



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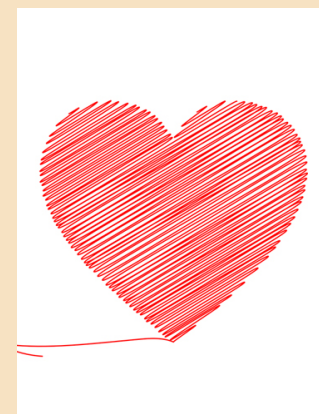
he is not preoccupied with other activities for the past one year. He reported of distress at times as he is not able to go out from home for his school or football and cycling during the lockdown. He has become anxious about postponement of examination as well. Psychotherapy was aimed to increase psychological flexibility in him, along with the ability to contact the present moment as a conscious human being, and to change or persist in behaviour to meet the valued ends. He was made to foster willingness to experience

these difficult thoughts and feelings, and to take steps towards life goals. He was made to lessen his power over overt behaviour by making him live more in the present. Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown has brought about a sense of fear and anxiety in him. He was made to link his goals to values and take small steps, unhook the self from excessive expectations and harsh self-judgments, anticipate obstacles coming in his way, confronting the costs and commitments, in terms of health, wellbeing and

relationships, cultivate willingness to change by enhancing his link to his values, enlisting support, like, mother, father and friends and using reminders and activity scheduling.
"If the pandemic continues, I won't be

able to save my marriage"....complains a 28-year-old wife of a businessman, who has been facing marital discord and sexual maladjustment for the past few months. Her husband has faced a huge loss post lockdown

and is not able to meet the financial needs of the family, leading to marital disharmony. There has been difficulty in their sexual relationship as well due to his unwillingness to engage with her. He has been depressed, with weeping spells, suicidal wishes and apathy. Confined between the four walls of his room, he is preoccupied with the



One may feel unfocused and unproductive as stress uses up a lot of mental energy and she/ he might be unsure about how to navigate to the next task.

gloomy state of affairs all around.

Businesses around the world have taken a halt, with operations shut and no backup plans, the pandemic has increased pressure on all businessmen. People are caged inside their own homes, as, that is the only way to remain protected from this infectious disease.

People are surrounded by loads of uncertainties and risks that are ultimately affecting their mental wellbeing. Other than worrying and having distress about the safety of their families and loved ones, they have stress regarding the company and the staff's survival in times of no salary. All of this can take a toll on their mental fitness. The future of many businesses is at stake due to the impact of the suspension of activities such as sales, which usually require in-person meetings and travel. There is a considerable rise in stress, anxiety, frustration, helplessness and worthlessness. In such cases, it is advisable to go for a walk, and spend time in nature to further reduce anxiety and rumination, getting involved in donating to a Covid-19 relief fund or assisting in your local



Every possible human effort is being made today to pull this world out of the Covid-19 quagmire and we must have faith that we will emerge victorious.

community or if they have elderly neighbours, offer to pick up their groceries, which is an act of compassion and kindness. It's okay to cry sometimes, to scream into a pillow, to be sad or depressed or upset. Dating back to our earliest times, human beings have experienced the psychological impact of

a wide range of catastrophes like famines, floods, earthquakes, wildfires, windstorms, wars and outbreaks of potentially deadly infectious diseases. We are certainly no exception today as people try to figure out how to cope and how to help others cope with the grief, stress, worry, and anxiety caused by the biggest health challenge of our time – Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about changes in most areas of human lives, which may bring stress, anxiety and fear. The real foundation of humankind may feel unstable and the grasp and sense of control may feel tenuous. It has been months since the beginning of this pandemic and no one knows how much longer it will last. In such a global scenario, it is advisable to try to actively manage stress as it is important to notice when you are stressed and to acknowledge it. Just doing that helps us to relax and start thinking of what we want to do about it. One may feel unfocused and unproductive as stress uses up a lot of mental energy and she/

he might be unsure about how to navigate to the next task. It is okay and normal to flicker around as you try to adapt to the new circumstances of attending classes or working virtually. Going for a walk or a run is highly recommended. Exercise and movement is a great way to relieve stress, notice the big wide world, and get fresh air. Sleep restores us like nothing else. By preparing a sleep schedule to wake up about the same time every day, can add some structure to the day and help regulate the circadian rhythm, to make feel more stable throughout the day. Being mindful helps us to slow down and reduces anxiety. A few deep breaths and relaxation practices can reduce stress at large. Notice nature, notice what you're eating and notice whom you are with. Being mindful for one minute can bring a change from worries, and can help us to focus on what is truly important. Social connections can mean the world to some. This is the time to stay in touch with others and supportive of each other. Check in on others – family members, friends, partners, classmates, colleagues, etc. Ask how they are doing and let them

know you also care. Plan what you can do virtually, in pairs or in small groups. Every night, the world plunges into darkness, but we have the hope that a new dawn awaits us. This hope is contagious and keeps us going. Waves of the coronavirus pandemic have been challenging humanity as never before. But this spirit of hope has helped human beings cope through the ages, since long. Hope is the strongest emotion, not only among humans, but among all sentient beings. In this dark time, it is this hope that will give us the strength to carry on. Every possible human effort is being made today to pull this world out of the Covid-19 quagmire and we must have faith that we will emerge victorious. We must keep persevering and never lose hope.

[Author's Introduction: Dr. Soheli Datta has done her M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology, has been a Doctorate Researcher and is currently working as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Applied Psychology under the University of Calcutta. She is also the Core Faculty Member in M.Phil. (Clinical Psychology) and in Clinical Psychology Centre of University of Calcutta.]

A primary teacher in Netherlands knitted her entire class during lockdown because she missed them so much! (Source and Photograph Courtesy: Tank's Good News)



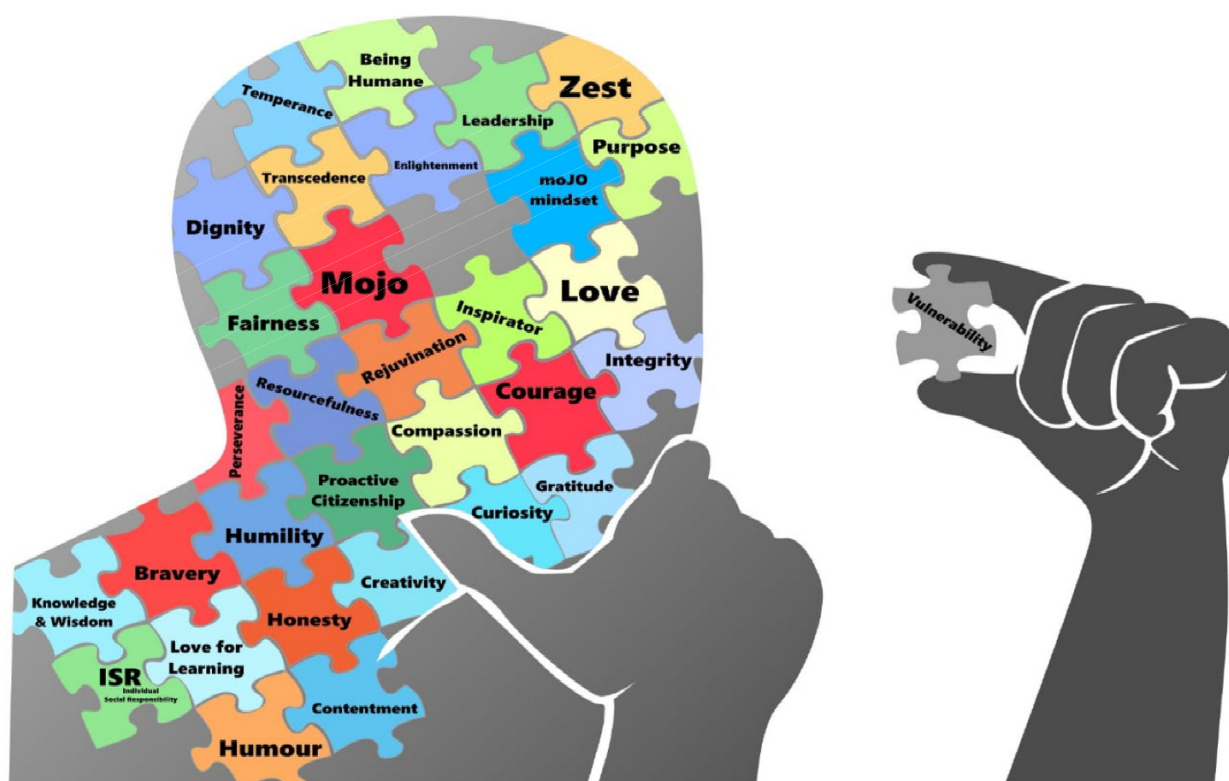


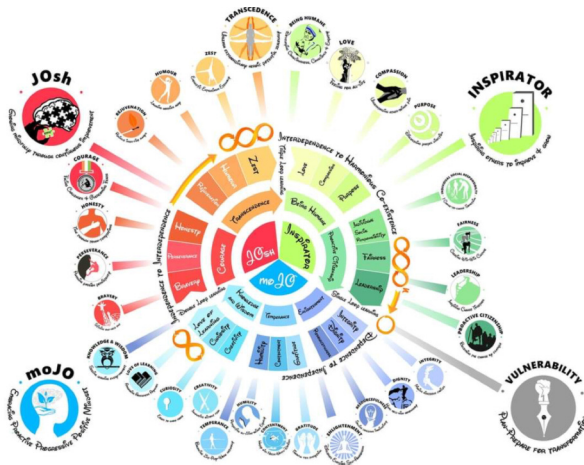
Que Sera Sera – Understanding Perpetual Positivity Syndrome, Adversity Quotient and Resilience

*Leadership trainer and
author **Jerry Almeida**
writes about the
importance of coping
with distress and
practicing resilience in
life.*



In these times of pandemic and isolation when many are battling mental/emotional health apprehensions, it is essential to understand Adversity Quotient (Science of Resilience) with simple, compelling and true stories of resilience to celebrate our human spirit. In 2014, we created a unique Oratory Experience called *the moJOsh Magnificent 7 (TMM7)*, where we listen to





seven people who are broken (not just physically but emotionally, mentally, spiritually and even morally), but refuse to break down and persevere with coping and resilience.

We have a person who, lost mobility of the entire body after an accident and yet inspires people by saying, "I am the positive man, I am possible, I am happy." This invariably makes people wonder as to what they are whining about all the time. We have a man, who has served a long prison term for being a gangster and was arrested for narcotics trafficking and abuse. However, he is now a reformed man, who helps other addicts to rehabilitate. We have women, who are survivors of trafficking, rape, domestic violence, marital rape, harassment, who tell their stories of resilience, breakthrough and transformation and inspire other

Of course, optimism is not a scourge on society – far from it, especially over the past year. But, what is bad is the belief that it should be a permanent state of mind.

women, who are facing similar issues at home or work. We have people from the LGBTQ+ community (transvestites, who were ostracised and thrown out by their parents, a young man who was raped from the age of 8 to 15 by his maternal uncle and gang raped by his uncle and his intoxicated friends when he was 13), who have faced severe issues but refuse to break down and have broken through. We have cancer, HIV-AIDS survivors, who have all gone through pain and sufferings and today broken through and inspire us with their stories.

Over three million people, who have attended *the moJOsh magnificent 7* events from 2014 (live and online), have dubbed it as "The most engaging, energising and entertaining experience of their lives." In life, no one is bereft of pain, hardships, struggles, adversities, obstacles, grief and sufferings. All of us break at some and many points. While some feel helpless, give up and break down, there are others, who persevere, show great resilience, rise again and break through. Each and all of us have the power to break through. That is the miracle within each of us! All heroes are featured in the *Karma Kury Karishma – The Miracle Within* bestselling book series.

TMM7 is a therapeutic, holistically healing experience, where each hero brings alive his own personal life story. TMM7 not only inspires people, but also guides them with the simple Science of Resilience and Adversity Quotient techniques for overcoming their fears, anxieties and old paradigms (mental maps or patterns) towards making monumental shifts in their thinking and emotions.

So, what is the Science of Resilience? Resilience scientists define resilience as the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize so as to retain essentially the same function, structure and feedback. Put simply, resilience is the ability to cope with shocks and keep

functioning in much the same way as before.

In my talks for parents and educators across schools and colleges, I always tell them that the biggest disservice and damage, parents at home and educators at educational institutions are doing towards students, children and our youth is that they are preparing children and students to gain livelihood for a life of luxury, comfort and wellness. We never prepare them for adversities, hardships, pain, struggle and sufferings. For many parents, even acknowledging that they or their children may have mental illness is a taboo. Preparing children only for good times and not for adversity is poor parenting and a definite flaw of the education system. And, for heaven's sake, stop telling people to be positive at all times. That's stupid and in psychological studies, it is called the Perpetual Positivity Syndrome or Toxic Positivity. So, let's understand that first before we understand the Science of Resilience and Adversity Quotient. Perpetual Positivity Syndrome (PPS) is the addictive need to be positive under any and all circumstances. One of the most common obstructions along the healing path, PPS prevents maturation. It means playing the glad game 24/7, regardless of

how you, or someone else, really feels. The person dishing it out most likely means well, but guess what! Getting told "At least you've got your health" when you've just lost your job isn't helpful. Nor is hearing "Negative thoughts attract negative things" when you're feeling down or having a bad day. We do it to ourselves, too.

Pamela (name changed), a teacher and parent, admits that she regularly berates herself for feeling worried or anxious. "I'll think, keep it to yourself and put on a brave face". It's like none of us can give ourselves permission to remove those rose-tinted glasses even if they break or are hurting like hell.

Of course, optimism is not a scourge on society – far from it, especially over the past year. But, what is bad is the belief that it should be a permanent state of mind. In a talk, *The Gift and Power of Emotional Courage*, top psychologist Susan David called this "A tyranny of positivity" and referenced a survey she'd conducted with 70,000 people, in which, shockingly, a third of them judged themselves for having so-called "bad" emotions, such as sadness, anger and even grief. "Normal, natural emotions are now seen as good or bad," she added. Being positive is a new form of "moral correctness".

Think that's too harsh? Then know this. Not

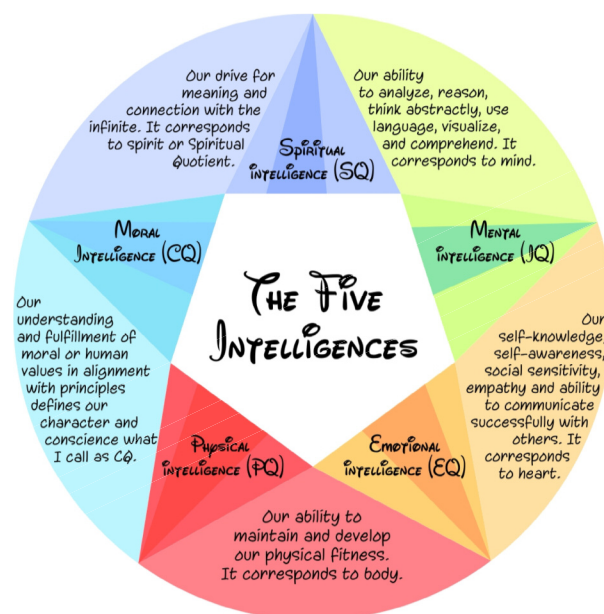


When winds of change blow, most hide behind walls;
few choose to harness the wind to build windmills

In life, no one is bereft of pain, hardships, struggles, adversities, obstacles, grief and sufferings. All of us break at some and many points.

acknowledging that we have a wide range of emotions has implications for our mental health. A study by the *University of California* in Berkeley, found people who reacted to negative emotions with self-criticism, rather than acceptance, just piled additional stress on themselves. But, those who accepted these emotions ended up with better mental health and more emotional resilience. Yet another study found that suppressing grief can manifest itself in physical or mental terms. Even worse, suppressing your emotions could actually decrease your life expectancy. So, living life like it's a positivity meme can actually be dangerous.

Coping and resilience is strengthened when we understand the power of vulnerability. Most people think of vulnerability as weakness. Yes, vulnerability is weakness in the Oxford or Webster's Dictionary but in the human space, it is power – the power of vulnerability. In my personal discovery, I have explained this as the 0 mindset. Virtue and power along with three mindsets, seven virtues and 21 powers have to be practiced the right way to rewire our brain to build on our holistic wellness and well-being – all rooted in vulnerability. In one of my talks, I had explained that apropos to psychological research studies, these are the five most



essential intelligences and skills for the future (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and moral intelligence). What these five intelligences and vulnerability help us to build on is the Adversity Quotient (AQ) paradigm rooted in the Science of Resilience. AQ is the measure of our ability to go through a rough patch in life and come out without losing our mind or balance or strength. AQ determines as to who will give up and break down in the face of troubles and who will persevere and break through. Here is a simple suggestion to parents and educators, who always protect their children and students from adversities and hardships and only prepare them for luxuries and comforts. Expose children to other areas of life apart from academic affairs. They should adore manual work (never use work as a form of punishment), sport and art. Develop the five intelligences and they should become multifaceted human beings, who are able to do things independently by understanding interdependence and harmonious co-existence. Simply put, do not prepare the path for the children. Prepare the children to create their own

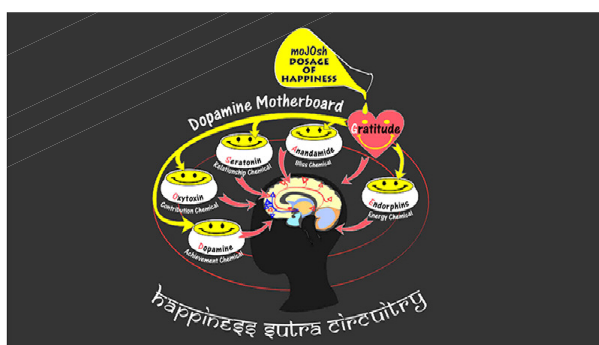
Resilience scientists define resilience as the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize so as to retain essentially the same function, structure and feedback.

paths.

To conclude, most of us learn to avoid pain and adversity or suffering and many of us even go to churches, temples and mosques to pray to God to spare us from any hardships and suffering. That's foolish. No pain no gain! Helen Keller had said, "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through the experience of trial and suffering, can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved." In simple words, what it means is what individuals go through in life makes them what they are. Individuals have to go through good and bad times to learn love and strength that inspire solid character.

People use the word passion lightly without understanding the meaning of it. If you are really passionate about life, you will embrace the suffering and not avoid it. Buddha had said, "Life is suffering". No suffering means that there is no life anymore. We are dead or just walking around and existential. If we are alive, there will be pain, hardships, adversities, struggles and sufferings. So, enjoy the journey and be grateful that you are alive.

To paraphrase Friedrich Nietzsche, "To live is to suffer, to survive and come alive is to understand and find meaning in the suffering." Passion comes from the Latin root Pathe or Passio. Pathe is the root of the English word Passion. Pathe simply means suffering and pain. All pain has huge value for humanity since no human



TMM7 is a therapeutic, holistically healing experience, where each hero brings alive his own personal life story.

being is bereft of suffering and pain. The few people who understand and learn from their own pain and the sufferings of others, know its fundamental purpose. So friends, remember all struggles, pain, sufferings, adversities and hardships help us to sharpen our saw and become more stronger. Here's funny but compelling thought by Hunter Johnson, "Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body. But rather, to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming Wow what a ride." Die Empty... Use all your gifts while here in the journey of life. Be alive, don't just survive.

[Author's Introduction: Jerry Almeida, who is empanelled as a leadership subject matter expert with global leadership organisations like Franklin-Covey, Right-Management, McKinsey, BCG and Ivy-league institutions, is a mentor to mentors having mentored several trainers/ coaches, CEOs/ CXOs in over 90 per cent of Fortune 500 companies, Unicorn-Ventures and their founders/ entrepreneurs, school/ college owners, principals, educators and several young politicians and celebrities. Jerry co-authored a book with the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, which is also a huge bestseller and has sold a few million copies.]



Pandemic: A Story of Hope and Despair

*Psychologist and academic **Dr. Jhilli Das (Tewary)** deliberates on the psychological damages caused by the pandemic and the ways to handle the same.*



Have you ever walked inside a tunnel or maybe imagined yourself in one? You walk and walk for hours all alone engulfed in darkness. With each step, you get a sinking feeling like this is it. No going back to the past, no future in front of you, uncertainty all around. This feeling is what is called despair. Everyone who has depressive spells or has suffered from clinical depression can relate to this experience. But this is not how the story ends. This is the beginning because if you find within yourself the courage to move on, the belief that at the end of this tunnel there will be light, the silver lining in the cloud you have what is called hope. The pandemic has turned our world upside down. Industries are crumbling, small businesses have gone bankrupt, people have lost their jobs and lost their lives. Humanity is facing existential threats from the failing economy to failing health. "What is the point in living when we are going to die anyway?" "Is there any meaning of life?" Questions like these start coming up as the pandemic draws on and on. If you are still reading this article, you must



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mental health
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have gone through these same questions and faced similar existential crisis. However as mental health professionals, we are lucky in this respect as we have found our meaning of life making others' life better. Some people travel down the tunnel alone as they are fortified by loving relationships, optimistic thinking and resilience. Others need someone to hold their hands and pull them to the end of the tunnel.

Let me tell you two stories which reflect two different ways of dealing with this crisis.

Story of Despair

Anil had just completed giving his board examinations in 2020 when coronavirus started spreading like wildfire. Being an avid reader, he started following the news and reading up on the impact of this virus. His first-year college was spent in online classes, where he was bombarded with assignments. Like other youths of his age, he had wished for a freshers' welcome, hanging out in the corridors with friends sitting and having coffee in the cafeteria. However, in reality, all his wishes and dreams was buried within his room. Since the June of last year, the fear of coronavirus has tormented and played havoc with Anil's mental health. He became

overwhelmed by anxiety over the prospect of infecting at-risk friends, parents or his old grandparents. Then, as the lockdown continued, that anxiety gave way to numbing isolation. He had to put greater effort to attend to his classes. His concentration reduced. At times, a feeling of restlessness would come over him. Frequently, he would lie down for hours staring at the ceiling thinking nothing, feeling nothing. He drifted off from his friends whom he perceived as selfish as they would hang out at parties increasing their risk of catching the virus and infecting the older people living at home.

The story of Anil is universal. We have seen students battling with anxiety, depression and loneliness, suicidal thoughts and substance abuse. Many of them do not reach out to any mental health professional or take any other help .

Story of Hope

This story starts on similar lines as before. Shalini is yet to give her I.S.C., which seemed to be never happening. As a result of constantly preparing for examination and having it

postponed, she has lost her complete motivation for studies. Shalini already had a diagnosed mental health issue. The first few months of the pandemic she spent sleeping late and waking late. She did not want to stay awake for long. This continued until disaster struck for her. Her parents were infected with Covid-19. As a result of this, she and her brother were removed and put at the home of a distant relative. While for any other children, this would be a momentary disruption in their lives, for Shalini with her already pre-existing mental health issues, it was the most challenging situation she faced. She felt isolated, missing her family and felt her world closing.

It is at this juncture that she discovered something. Randomly searching YouTube videos, she saw a site which showed her how to make jewellery. She bought some raw materials from a local shop nearby and started making jewellery.

After her parents recovered, she went back home and developed her hobby further.

Then, she decided to start a small business through Instagram. She started having followers and day by day the

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numbers of orders she received increased until she could hardly cope with it. This gave an enormous boost to her self-confidence. In a span of a few months, she gave several interviews and talks to youth groups. She even appeared for online college admission interviews, where she got selected for admission. Life transformed for her. Despite constantly having to deal with her mental health issues, she did not let it overcome her. This reminds me of a theory by Albert Bandura, the Canadian-American psychologist, where he talks of human agency, which referred to the human capability to influence one's functioning and the course of events by one's actions.

Coming back to our tunnel, the path remains the same, the darkness is still there but the choice remains yours. Whether you would hold on to hope and move on towards the light or stay suspended and isolated in darkness, the decision lies with you.

Positive Psychology Interventions

During Covid-19, positive psychology factors has played a huge role in buffering against mental illnesses, bolstering mental health and building positive processes and capacities that may help to strengthen future mental health. With positive



psychology, came positive psychology interventions (PPI). PPIs constitute a combination of scientific strategies and tools, which focus on increasing the wellbeing happiness, and positive emotions and cognitions among individuals (Keyes, 2002). PPIs are defined as psychological interventions that mainly focus on enhancing positive feelings, thoughts and behaviours, and comprises of two essential components – a) concentrating on happiness enhancement through positive thoughts and emotions; b) sustaining the outcomes of positive effects for long-term (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009).

There are seven types of PPI, which are followed:

Savouring: Focus on a specific experience and aim to enhance their effects for maximizing happiness (Peterson, 2006).

Gratitude: Evoke strong feelings of positivity in the person, who gives it and the person who receives it (Schueller & Parks, 2013). They are classified as a) Self-reflective practices (e.g., writing a gratitude journal as too for self-expressions); b) Interactive methods, which is the active expression of our gratitude to others (e.g., saying 'thank you', giving small tokens of appreciation).

Kindness: Unpretentious acts like buying someone a small token of love, offering for a noble cause, contributing something, or helping a stranger in need. (e.g., prosocial spending).

Empathy: Strengthen positive emotions in interpersonal relationships to develop healthy social bonds (Diner & Seligman 2002). (E.g., selflove meditation, mindfulness practices) (Fredrickson et al., 2008).

Optimism: Create positive outcomes by setting realistic expectations.

Optimists tend to view hardships as learning experiences or temporary setbacks. Even the most miserable day holds the promise for them that "tomorrow will probably be better."

Strength: Focus on internal capacities and values (Parks and Biswas-Diener, 2013). (E.g., awareness and acknowledgement of power within).

Meaning: Helps in understanding in life what is meaningful to us and why, and what can further be done to achieve the things that matter in life. (E.g., realizing meaning in our everyday activities, forming realistic goals and engaging effective means to attain them, or just reflecting on our emotions & thoughts) (Grant, 2008).

You don't need to be a mental health specialist to enhance positivity in your life. Ultimately it all comes down to your choice. Life is full of paradoxes. You cannot have happiness without suffering. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr. "Only in darkness can you see the stars." So choose to enhance positivity in your life and accept suffering as a part of life.

[Author's Introduction: Dr. Jhilli Tewary is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Adamas University in Kolkata. Dr. Tewary did her Ph.D. from Calcutta University. Her research interest lies in clinical psychology, spirituality and positive psychology.]



Building Positive Strength during the Pandemic: Knowing and Implementing Positive Psychology

Academic and psychologist

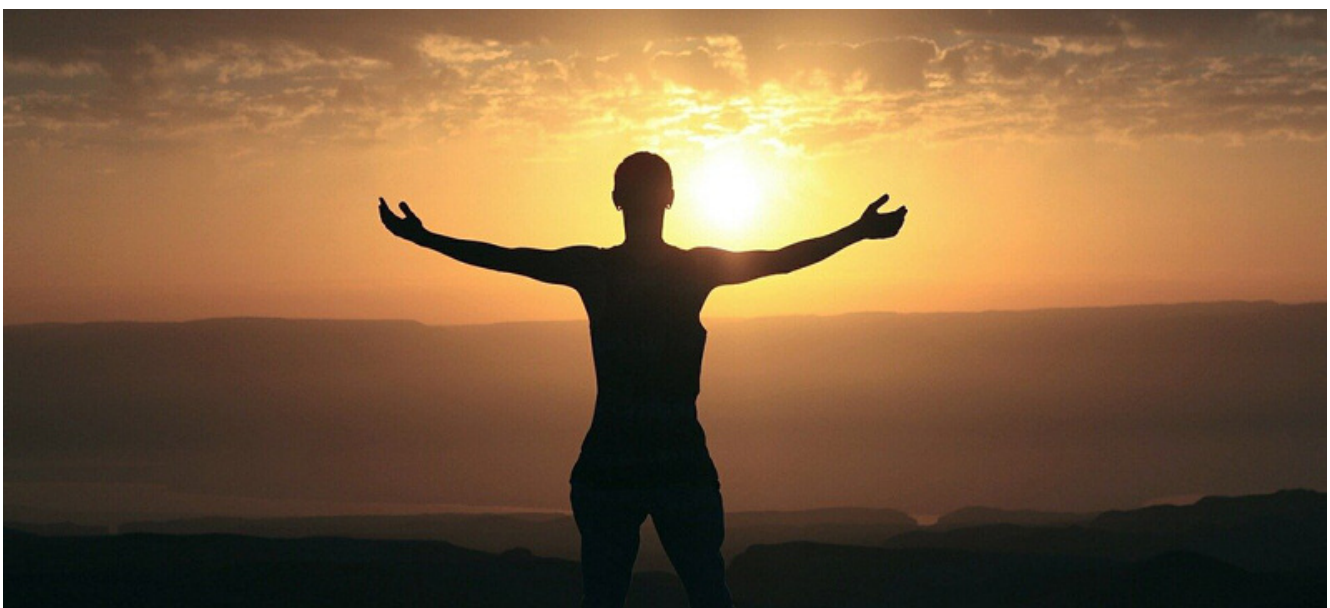
Dr. Sumona Datta

discusses the benefits of practicing positive psychology amidst the raging global pandemic.



The Covid-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc for the past one year and now with the second wave hitting us, we

are hardly adapting to the situation. With the number of cases reaching new heights with each passing day, the fear of an uncertain future is engulfing our minds even more. Needless to say that the pandemic has done more damage to the human mind than the body itself. Reported cases of anxiety and depression during the pandemic have been on the rise and mental health workers are having a tough time providing psychological first aid to all these people. However, it is not only the people suffering from anxiety and depression, who need psychological aid. Continuous lockdown



for a very long time as well as the resultant economic crisis, job crunch, career uncertainties and social isolation for the past one year have deranged our everyday activities, leading us to the verge of insanity. Hence people with no diagnosis of a psychopathology, also needs psychological intervention to remain functional in the face of such adversity. Thankfully, we have an entire branch of psychology dedicated to help individuals recognize, acknowledge and nurture positivity even in the extreme negative situation.

From the Darks of Psychopathology to the Light of Positive Mental Health

The journey of knowing the human psyche had begun more than a century ago, when the focus was on the aetiology of dysfunctionality of the human mind. The last few decades of the 20th century witnessed how psychology interpreted depression, violence, psychopathology, addiction and dysfunctions, completely ignoring how the positive attributes of human beings influence our lives. Metaphorically saying, the discipline learnt to bring up people from negative to zero but had no understanding of how to push them from zero to positive. Towards the end of the 20th century, psychologists identified the imbalance in the discipline and refused to keep

The journey of knowing the human psyche had begun more than a century ago, when the focus was on the aetiology of dysfunctionality of the human mind.

“

...since World War II, psychology has become a science largely about healing. It concentrates on repairing damage within a disease model of human functioning. Such almost exclusive attention to pathology neglects the flourishing individual and the thriving community. True, our emphasis on assessing and healing damage has been important and had its important



victories....But these victories have come at a considerable cost. When we became solely a healing profession, we forgot our larger mission: that of making the lives of all people better.”
– Martin Seligman, Founder Father of Positive Psychology, Presidential Address at American Psychological Association, 1998.

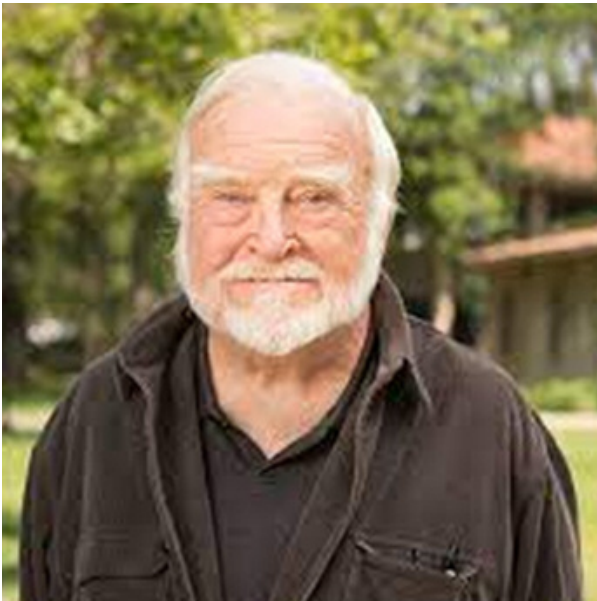
Martin Seligman

Founder Father of Positive Psychology

ignoring the study of the positive attributes of the human mind. The movement on positive psychology gained momentum with the impetus received from the works of Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who are considered the founder fathers of positive psychology.

What is Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology is defined as the “scientific study of optimal human functioning that aims to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). According to Seligman's conceptualization of the three pillars of positive psychology, it operates



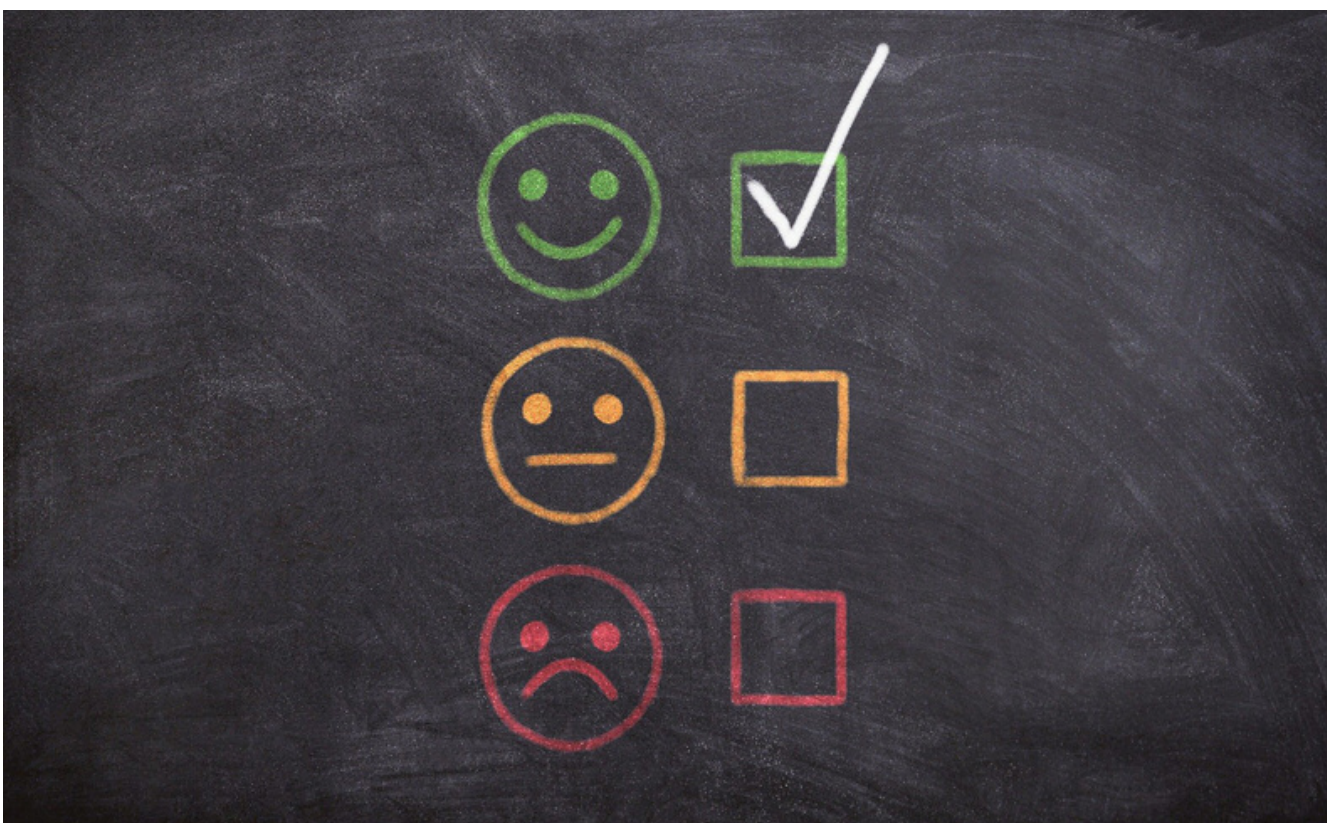
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

within the positive subjective experiences (joy, happiness, contentment, optimism and hope), positive individual characteristics (personal strengths and human virtues) and positive social

communities facilitating individual growth and happiness. At the subjective level, the emphasis of positive psychology is on the person's positive subjective feeling of happiness, joyfulness and life satisfaction. On the contrary, at the individual level, the focus is on how a person can become a good human being and hence the thrust is on virtues like forgiveness, courage, wisdom and others. Finally at the group level, the focus is on how civic virtues, for instance, social responsibility, altruism and tolerance can facilitate growth of the community.

Happiness as the Central Concept of Positive Psychology

Happiness has been often considered to be the most important goal of a person's life, as also a central component of a "good life" and a "good society". Even the assessment of a nation's growth is incomplete if only the economic and social indicators are taken into



The secret to build positive strength therefore, lies in fostering positive subjective experience, nurturing positive individual traits and developing positive social institutions. Fostering positive subjective experience includes attaining subjective well-being, life satisfaction and positive emotions. Positive individual traits on the other hand, can be categorised into six virtues like wisdom and knowledge (open-mindedness, curiosity, and creativity), courage (bravery, authenticity), humanity (kindness, love), justice (fairness, leadership), temperance (forgiveness, prudence) and transcendence (gratitude, hope, humor, appreciation of beauty and excellence). Finally, developing positive social institutions encompasses developing positive family life, educational institutions, communities and societies.

consideration, ignoring the happiness index of the people. In the literature of positive psychology, happiness is mostly linked to positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, wellness and meaning in life (Seligman, 2018). This can be explained under the PERMA Model of happiness.

PERMA Model of Happiness

- **Positive Emotion:** Experience of subjective positive experience.
- **Engagement:** A sense of engagement where the track of time is lost, leading to excitement.
- **Positive Relationship:** Having a deep,

meaningful relationship with significant others.

- **Meaning in Life:** Dedicating ourselves to a bigger cause can give meaning to life.
- **Accomplishment:** Without the drive for accomplishment or achievement, sense of well-being is deficient.

Building Positive Strength

Beethoven at the age of 31 years was in great despair and wanted to end his own life. Yet almost five decades later, he composed the "Ode to Joy". What can possibly explain this transition in a man's life from the depths of desolation to the heights of happiness? As has been rightly pointed out by proponents of positive psychology, a greater number of "normal" people, not suffering from any mental illness, also require the support of psychology in order to live a happy and enriching life.

Needless to say, the implication of the principles of positive psychology is huge, not only for fostering mental health but also physical health. This comprises of developing intervention strategies for developing positive strength and providing trainings to foster positive traits and virtues among individuals. Such curricula includes programmes like train-the-trainer modules aimed at enhancing resilience, well-being and positive attitude, family fitness programmes,

Happiness has been often considered to be the most important goal of a person's life, as also a central component of a "good life" and a "good society".

Towards the end of the 20th century, psychologists identified the imbalance in the discipline and refused to keep ignoring the study of the positive attributes of the human mind.

counselling programmes for terminally ill patients and psychotherapeutic modules. Implementation of these modules can be found in different organizations, schools, universities as well as at the community levels to promote civic engagements.

Staying Positive during the Pandemic

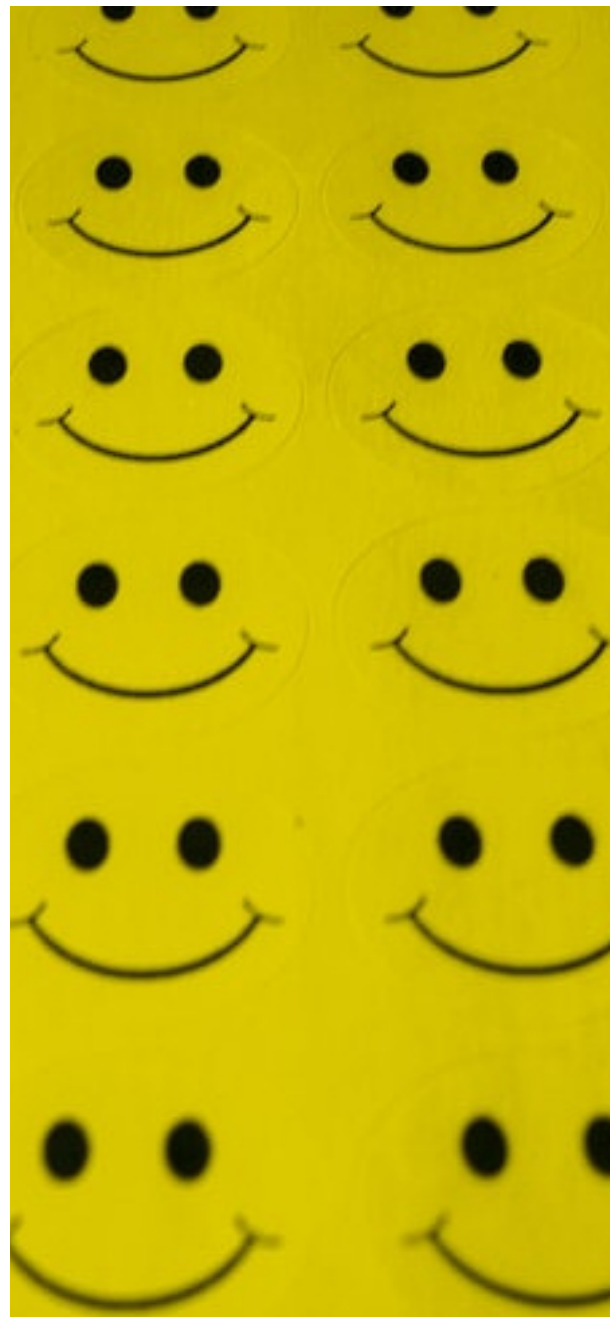
They say that, "Everything happens for a good reason". Well, it is probably an overstatement, especially under such an overwhelming situation when thousands of people are dying every day. However, one can surely have a good future by creating it today. Hence, the key to live a happy life tomorrow definitely lies in finding positivity today.

Positive psychology focuses on building people's efficacious beliefs about them being able to cross this hurdle by themselves and nurturing their hope and optimism about having a bright day tomorrow. Hence one might choose to follow any of the following best practices to find positive strength in their everyday life.

- **Finding Flow:** To achieve flow, clear goals must be set, distractions must be eliminated, adding a challenging element and pursuing something enjoyable.
- **Practicing Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is the state of maintaining a minute-by-minute awareness of one's thoughts,

feelings, bodily sensations, and the environment. It can be achieved by accepting oneself without judging the thoughts, feelings and sensations.

- **Implementing PERMA Model:** Happiness can be found in experiencing positive emotions, engaging in a passionate work, building positive relationships with others, finding a greater cause in life and accomplishing something worthwhile.



From the Horse's Mouth: Tips by Martin Seligman

Put it in Perspective: A Simple Exercise to Refocus the Mind during the Pandemic

Concluding Remarks

Step 1:

- Ask yourself, what is the worst possible situation? (e.g. "I might die").

Step 2:

- Then force yourself to think about the best outcome. (e.g. "I might get infected").

Step 3:

- Next, consider what's most likely to happen. (e.g. "I might do well if I maintain all the Covid-19 protocols").

Step 4:

- Finally, develop a plan for the most realistic situation. (e.g. "It's best to get the vaccine now for my own protection").

Activate V

- **Focusing on Positive Strength:** Positive strength will develop if the individual can be trained to focus on his/ her positive strengths, and not the weaknesses. This can be achieved through well-being therapy and positive attitude training. The Positive Psychology movement started barely two decades ago. Yet the implications of positive psychology

principles have already become indispensable in fostering mental health. This is because positive living is the only path to a meaningful, engaged and joyful life. As has been observed by Carl Rogers, "The good life is a process, not a state of being". It is true that the pandemic has cast a deep shadow in our lives. But this is just a phase and "this too shall pass", if and only if we hold on to the light and positivity in our lives.

It is true that the pandemic has cast a deep shadow in our lives. But this is just a phase and "this too shall pass", if and only if we hold on to the light and positivity in our lives.

[Author's Introduction: Dr. Sumona Datta is an Assistant Professor and the Head of the Department of Psychology at Adamas University in Kolkata. Dr. Datta did her Ph.D. work at the Indian Statistical Institute as a Research Fellow of Psychology Research Unit and was awarded her doctorate degree by the University of Calcutta. Her research interest lies in cognitive psychology, clinical psychology and psychometry.]



A Ray of Hope that Brings Sunshine



Academic and psychologist Debopriya Ghatak talks about the importance of empathy and positivity amidst the raging pandemic.

I am a psychologist and I have been seeing patients for quite some time now. Most of the time, we try to cater to the needs of our clients, we try to understand their problems, try to empathize with them and then decide on the line of treatment and therapy, which will be most beneficial in their respective cases. But, there are times when we feel hopeless when we cannot eradicate psychological misery from someone's life. We feel defeated.

During the Covid times, when people were in dire need of oxygen and we saw people dying all around, could we

really expect them to lift their spirits and stay motivated? It's not always important to stay motivated, strong and cheerful. It is important to stay beside each other and activate the power of resilience within each one of us.

My client, R.S., who was a resident of Mumbai, donated plasma being a Covid survivor. She lost her parents and her own sister in an accident. They were travelling to some place for some emergency work, while she was confined in her room as she tested positive. She heard the news of the death and even after that, she could not go out to see her dying parents and sister. Rather, she was hospitalized and was on ventilation for 20 days. When she revived from that state, she was unable to feel anything. There were sessions where she just sat and wanted to express a lot of things, but failed to do so.

For a long time, this client of mine went through trauma and she was diagnosed with PTSD. But one thing was clear from her struggle. She never learnt to quit. She wanted to live, she wanted to cope up in this situation through her positivity. After a few sessions, I could see her improving and that is the time when I understood that she wanted to live along with other's wellbeing. She contacted many places where she could donate plasma and she



eventually donated it. Apart from plasma donation, she did many other things for Covid sufferers and even for their families. When I asked her, "Why are you doing so much for others when you have not yet recovered well by now?" Her answer was, "I know the pain of losing someone close. I don't want someone else to feel this pain. That is why I go to greater lengths so that they can be benefitted by that." The power of empathy, humanity and social support has gone a long way in overcoming a crisis situation at any point of time. As Maya Angelou said, "As soon

as healing takes place, go and heal somebody else", we somewhere have to use the inner potential, the immense power that is within us to heal ourselves and also to heal others. What does we benefit from living for self? It will only give us multiple sufferings and miseries. There are many ways we can cultivate empathy for others. Here's one activity to try – identify someone who bothers you, who you are having a difficult time with. This could be a student, a colleague or a boss. Discreetly, attempt to take a photo with your phone of the person's shoes. If you can't do

this, then pay attention to their shoes and make a mental note of them, or even create a sketch. Throughout the course of the day, imagine being in this person's shoes. Use whatever knowledge you have about them to imagine them putting on their shoes in the morning, getting to school, going through their day, leaving school



During the Covid times, when people were in dire need of oxygen and we saw people dying all around, could we really expect them to lift their spirits and stay motivated?



To build hope, point to specific, accurate, and positive facts about the event and discuss next steps that are realistic and predictable.

at the end of the day, going home, and so on. At the end of the day, record your reflections. What was the experience like? How did you feel? How did your thoughts and feelings about the other person shift? Feeling empathetic helps us make connections with others and understand them


better. It's different from having sympathy for someone, which means to look at their sufferings from the outside and feel sorry or sad for them. Empathy is feeling someone else's pain or seeing through their eyes. It's also a precursor to compassion, which is empathy in action – a commitment to doing something that relieves someone else's suffering.

Why Is Resilience Important?

Resilience is a trait that we all possess within ourselves. But we do not really use this trait all the time. In a study conducted with North Korean refugees living in South Korea, it was found that the relationship between family cohesion and depression was fully

mediated by trait resilience (Nam et al., 2016). In particular, trait resilience was not only significantly correlated with depression, but also decreased the power of family cohesion in predicting depression from -0.41 to -0.19 . Upon conducting a logistical regression, the association between the independent and dependent variable was nullified once trait resilience was controlled.

A client of mine who lost his wife and son due to Covid, stated, "I don't know what I could have done if it did not happen in such a pandemic time. When I see people suffering all over, they are losing their loved ones, it gave me the strength to overcome



What Is Empathy?

- Affective Empathy**
The ability to respond to other people's emotions appropriately
- Somatic Empathy**
The ability to feel what another person is feeling
- Cognitive Empathy**
The ability to understand someone's response to a situation



this psychological pain and stand beside them." Here comes the power of social support in healing self and healing others.

Social Support and Humanity

Social support has also been found to be associated with better mental health and wellbeing during outbreak situations throughout the world (Tam et al., 2004; Pan et al., 2005; Rabelo et al.,

2016; Xiao et al., 2020). Social support has the potential to moderate the association between risk perception and mental health, yet was relatively less considered by existing studies. Social support means both psychological and material resources to individuals, and was believed to be essential for mental health protection. According to the stress-buffering model, social support may reduce adverse psychological effects of negative life events on individuals' mental health. Social support can come in many forms. These include emotional support, social connection, feeling needed, reassurance of self-worth, providing material and physical assistance. When we try to heal an individual and we are helping them to come out of a crisis, one of the very important techniques is cognitive reframing. It is used to shift our mindset so that we are able to look at a situation from a different perspective

**The power of empathy,
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If we are caught in a negative thought pattern, it is used to identify the dysfunctional thought patterns and engage in cognitive restructuring. It helps us to understand the alternatives that can help us to see things from a different view. Another important technique is psychological first aid, which can be given by any individual at any point of time to save a trauma survivor. It can be done by engaging in reflective listening and being compassionate. In such trying times, we really cannot wait every time for a psychologist to provide us mental support. We all can be with each other if certain steps are to be followed.

Create a Sense of Safety

Creating a sense of safety means you communicate to the brain's fight or flight system that the stressful situation is over. You can do that by shielding the patient from a disturbing scene or explaining to the individual that they're safe.

Create Calm

**With the help of
immense social
support and activating
resilience within ourselves,
we can fight with this
situation.**

This is important both before and while responding. Speaking and acting calmly can show your patient they're in a safe place and can start calming themselves. If you're struggling to calm yourself or your patient, use simple tools like taking a deep breath, counting to four, then letting your breath out slowly, and coaching your patient to do the same. It's hard to calm someone else when you



COVID-19 & Psychological First Aid (PFA)



don't feel calm yourself, so it's important check your own composure before helping your patient.

Create Self and Collective Efficacy

Efficacy is your ability to produce a desired result. You can help your patient foster self-efficacy by making them an active part of their own rescue. Remind your patient of their existing strengths, allow them to care for themselves or help their companions, and involve them in decisions about their care. This helps them overcome the feeling of helplessness that sometimes comes with a traumatic event. They're no longer a victim, but a part of the team.

Create Hope

Hope in this context means the belief that, although the current situation may be grim, it can get better. To build hope, point to specific, accurate, and positive facts about the event and discuss next steps that are realistic and predictable. Maintaining hope is as important for the individual patient as it is for your team as you provide care.

These are some of the techniques, which

may help us and others to deal with this immense crisis that we are going through every day. Perceived uncontrollability of Covid-19 risk appears to be more strongly associated with mental health symptoms, followed by perceived severity. However, with the help of immense social support and activating resilience within ourselves, we can fight with this situation. It is very important to remind ourselves that good days are temporary and bad days are temporary too. Hope is the only thing that has to remain constant as Martin Luther King rightly said, "We must accept finite disappointments, but we must never lose infinite hope."

[Author's Introduction: Debopriya Ghatak is an Assistant professor of psychology at Adamas University in Kolkata. She has done her masters from the Department of Applied Psychology under Calcutta University. She has also been trained in graphology, and is also a mental health practitioner. Her research interest lies in clinical psychology and forensic psychology.]



Global Collaborations for Rapid Development of Vaccines Are on to Combat Covid-19



**Scientist and academic
Dr. Arindam Mitra
updates on the
continuous development
of Covid-19 vaccines
across the world.**

Even though no approved vaccine is available even after 17 years after the SARS-COV outbreak and six years after the MERS outbreak, yet it was possible for multiple vaccines to be developed in the fight against Covid-19 within a relatively short period of time. This rapid development of vaccines and therapeutics was made possible due to increasing collaborations among scientists around the world and also with lessons learnt from previous coronavirus outbreaks.

All these vaccines demonstrate high protective efficacy and enhanced safety profile. This is in sharp contrast to the traditional process of vaccine development, which is both expensive and lengthy. The developments in technologies, particularly sequencing, genomics, recombinant DNA technology and structural biology have made such advances in vaccine development. It



took only six months for many Covid-19 vaccines to enter into clinical trials and only 10 months for approval of conditional use with collaborations from more than hundreds of companies and academic institutions. Multiple approaches were employed to develop vaccines

against Covid-19. These strategies were adopted to determine if some of them could be used to develop a safe and efficacious vaccine against Covid-19 in a time-efficient manner. Very few vaccine candidates entered into the human clinical trials based on laboratory and animal testing of



It took only six months for many Covid-19 vaccines to enter into clinical trials and only 10 months for approval of conditional use with collaborations from more than hundreds of companies and academic institutions.

potential vaccine candidates. Yet, only a few candidates from clinical trials were eventually successful. These multiple approaches increase the chances of developing a safe and effective vaccine in a time-bound manner, particularly during an emergency situation. Broadly, these three major types of

Table 1: Rapid Vaccines Developed against Covid-19

Name of the Vaccine	Description	Manufacturer	Countries that Developed/ Collaborated
Covishield	Non-replicating viral vector	University of Oxford/ Serum Institute of India/ AstraZeneca	UK, India
BBV152/ Covaxin	Inactivated Whole Virion	Bharat Biotech	India
BNT162b2/ Comirnaty	mRNA	Pfizer/ BioNTek	USA, Germany
mRNA-1273	LNP-Encapsulated mRNA	Moderna	USA
Ad26.COV2.S	Recombinant, Replication Incompetent Adenovirus Type Vected Vaccine Encoding the (SARS-CoV-2) Spike (S) protein	Johnson and Johnson (Janssen)	Netherlands, Belgium, US
BBIBP-CorV	Inactivated, Produced in Vero Cells	Sinopharm	China
Sputnik V	Human Adenovirus Vector-based Covid-19 vaccine	The Gamaleya National Center	Russia

vaccines can be developed either using whole virus, parts of the virus or just the genetic material of the virus. Some of these approaches for many of current vaccines are summarized in Table 1 and discussed next.

Viral Vector-Based vaccines

This is a popular strategy to develop vaccines against infectious diseases. Only a part of the virus is taken and delivered by the viral vector. Covishield, a viral vector-based vaccine, has been developed at

Never before have so many different types of vaccines developed at such a lightning speed.



the University of Oxford in collaboration with AstraZeneca and Serum Institute of India. The vaccine is a recombinant, replication-deficient chimpanzee adenovirus vector which encodes the SARS-CoV-2 Spike (S) glycoprotein. After administration, the genetic material of parts of the coronavirus is expressed, which stimulates an immune response. Both the primary and booster doses of Covishield vaccines are identical and may be given at a

gap of 12 to 16 weeks for optimum protection. Sputnik V is also a viral vector-based vaccine and demonstrated an efficiency of 91 per cent in Phase III clinical trials. Sputnik V is administered in two doses with 28 days gap between the doses. Johnson and Johnson (J & J) vaccine – Ad26.COV2.S – is yet another viral vector



Very few vaccine candidates entered into the human clinical trials based on laboratory and animal testing of potential vaccine candidates.



vaccine with an exhibited efficacy of 71 per cent. Only one dose is required for J & J vaccine.

Whole Inactivated Viral Vaccines

Whole inactivated or killed viruses provides a stronger immunity against viruses. However, they should be completely inactivated to ensure safety. Inactivation of the virus can be done by employing gamma irradiation, heat or chemicals. Handling of

whole viruses would require special laboratory setup and require a long production time. This type of vaccine harbours viral epitopes to elicit a strong immune response. Bharat Biotech's Covaxin is an example of an inactivated or killed viral vaccine. Duration of the first and second dose is around 28 days to elicit protection for extended duration of time.

DNA Vaccines

Nucleic acid-based vaccines are relatively



newer and provide alternatives from conventional vaccine development and exhibits similar efficacy as compared to other types of vaccines. DNA sequences encoding a specific antigen from the pathogen are introduced often with nano carriers to specific cell types. Upon entering the host cell nucleus, the host cell translates the sequence and appropriate immune response is triggered. For development of DNA

vaccines, growing the virus is not required.
mRNA-Based vaccines
 mRNA vaccines are new-generation vaccines, which can be developed at a very fast pace making it a choice for combating emerging pathogens during an outbreak or pandemic. Being mRNA, they don't integrate with the host genome and are directly translated and eventually degraded. mRNA vaccines also require lesser dose as compared to DNA

vaccines to induce immunity. Both humoral and cell mediated immunity is stimulated by mRNA vaccines like live attenuated vaccines. mRNA vaccines also exhibit exceptional safety with mild to moderate symptoms post vaccination. RNA vaccines are highly efficacious, safe, and can be also developed



Covishield, a viral vector-based vaccine, has been developed at the University of Oxford in collaboration with AstraZeneca and Serum Institute of India.



rapidly in an economical manner. These attributes make mRNA vaccines a game changer for vaccine development. mRNA vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech introduces mRNA of a gene encoding Spike glycoprotein. Production of this immunogenic protein inside the host stimulates an immune response and triggers development of antibodies against this protein. These vaccines have been shown to confer high levels of effectiveness at about 95 per cent, according to the studies. Duration between the doses are 21 days and 28

The rapid development of vaccines and therapeutics was made possible due to increasing collaborations among scientists around the world and also with lessons learnt from previous coronavirus outbreaks.

days for mRNA vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna respectively. Never before have so many different types of vaccines developed at such a lightning speed. All these Covid-19 vaccines are safe and efficacious and rapidly developed due to the speed at which clinical trials were done, regulatory approvals acquired and even mass vaccinations implemented in many parts of the world. Many vaccines are still in clinical trials and would be approved in the near future.

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Beyond CSR: Empathy at the Time of Covid-19

Leadership professional turned academic Prof. (Dr.) Naveen Das writes an enlightening piece on the contributions of the corporate sector in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.



“To give pleasure to a single heart by a single act is better than a thousand heads bowing in prayer.” – M.K. Gandhi

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.” – Helen Keller

A New Twist to the Old Debate

Companies' responsibilities towards shareholders, in particular, and stakeholders, in general, are well-documented, and constitute a fiercely debated issue. However, it is in recent times, in the backdrop of the prevailing pandemic situation, that their responsibilities towards the society at large have become a major topic of debate. The pandemic has impacted certain sections of the society in disproportionately adverse manners, in some cases, much beyond the loss of



livelihood or income. Therefore, a problem of such magnitude demands that companies do more than the perfunctory CSR activities that they engage in during normal times. Social, economic, class, caste and gender inequities come to the fore in these trying times, and government initiatives alone can't bring about a quick remedy, when each passing day might mean the difference between life and death for these vulnerable sections. The disheartening picture of the migrant families on their thousand kilometre treks from their below-subsistence yet stable sources of daily bread to uncertain yet friendlier homes still linger in our collective memory. In spite of great strides made in gross terms, this also leaves unquestioned the role of capitalism in producing populations vulnerable to global crises, as we are witnessing now. Unfortunately, it is this vulnerable populace that suffers the most. Repetitions in history have this aura of timelessness. As an example to set a context, let's have a relook at the 1918 influenza pandemic – the last global phenomenon that hit India with a similar magnitude. When the first cases of the virus were observed in Europe, it was still in

The pandemic has impacted certain sections of the society in disproportionately adverse manners, in some cases, much beyond the loss of livelihood or income.



the throes of World War I. Battle trenches across Europe proved to be especially lethal spaces for the spread of the flu as soldiers were in close proximity to each other. Some estimates suggest that while approximately 2.3 million people died in Europe, the flu was especially deadly in British India, causing a staggering 18.5 million deaths. However, its mortality rate was starkly differentiated and uneven. The mortality rate among upper caste Hindus and Muslims was more than double the rate of Europeans in Bombay. Even more shocking was that lower caste Hindus had over seven times higher mortality rates compared to Europeans. But the apathy of the administration was abominable.

From Apathy to Empathy

In his official correspondence in early December of 1918, the Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces, now Uttar Pradesh, did not even mention influenza, instead noting, "Everything is very dry; but I managed to get two hundred couple of snipe so far this season." In an interview on his book, *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company* (Bloomsbury, 2019), William Dalrymple rightly points out that the government servants believed their

duty was not to the people, but to their masters overseas. It is, however, this vulnerable population that must be the target for any government or corporate largesse during such widespread crisis. Thankfully, in contrast to the general apathy of the colonial masters and the business entities controlled by them, this time around, the administration and India Inc. were empathetic. The corporate entities, in particular, came forward on their own to help the most adversely affected populace. Several major global companies are also taking wide-scale measures to help respective governments tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. Just as several automakers famously shifted to making tanks and planes during World War II, today's corporations are retooling their production lines to make everything from hand sanitizers (LVMH) to respirators (Ford, GE) to ventilators (Dyson). In India too, business houses have unleashed a raft of measures that have goodwill hunting written all over it, earning the trust and loyalty of their employees and a marked departure from the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic last year, when redundancy and furlough by some of the companies became the new normal.



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Now, many more large and small companies are extending financial, medical and educational support to the bereaved family members of their employees, who fell victim to the pandemic.

The Good Samaritans

Arguably, it all started with Borosil Ltd., the pioneer glassware company in India. It offered two years of salaries to the families of its four employees, who died of the pandemic. In addition, the education of the children of these employees would be paid till graduation. "These are trying times and we at Borosil have stepped forward to do everything in our capacity to lend support in fighting this pandemic. As conscientious and responsible citizens, we must join hands to help our doctors, police officers, and all those on the frontline who are working tirelessly to keep everyone safe. I pray everyone comes out of this stronger and that our joint and united efforts will put a quick end to this crisis." said Shreevar Kheruka, MD, Borosil Ltd.

Reliance Industries Ltd., a Fortune 500-listed conglomerate, has ramped up production of medical-grade liquid Oxygen from near-zero to 1,000 MT per day, which would hopefully meet the



needs of over 100,000 critically ill patients per day on an average. Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital in collaboration with the BMC has set up a dedicated 100-bed centre at Seven Hills Hospital in Mumbai, the nerve-centre of corporate India.

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Reliance Foundation would provide free meals to people across various cities in partnerships with NGOs during the crisis. Reliance also announced free fuel for all emergency service vehicles in the country. Nita Ambani, Founder-Chairperson of Reliance Foundation, said, "Our country is going through an unprecedented crisis. We at Reliance Foundation will continue to do everything we can to help. Every life is precious. Our plants at our Jamnagar refinery have been repurposed overnight to produce medical grade liquid oxygen that is being distributed across India. Our thoughts and prayers are with our fellow countrymen and women. Together, we will overcome these difficult times."

L&T's Corporate Technology and Engineering Academy (CTEA) at Madh has been converted into a Quarantine Facility for employees and their family members in Mumbai. The facility is

supported by a visiting doctor, full-time nursing staff, a 24x7 ambulance facility, Oxygen Concentrator and cylinders, relevant medical equipment as well as basic medicines. Tata Steel, a part of the salt-to-software Indian conglomerate Tata Group, having a long history of contribution towards welfare programmes, announced social security schemes for the family members of employees affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The deceased employee's family would not only get the last-drawn salary till the superannuation age of 60 years but also medical benefits and housing facilities. It would bear all the expenses of their children's education till they obtain a graduate degree in India. Pankaj Munjal, Chairman and MD of India's largest bicycle maker Hero Cycles, said, "As an organization that stands for the principles of business with a humane approach, we are allocating Rs. 100 crore (1 crore = 10 million) as a contingency fund to help the entire ecosystem around our organization survive this crisis. We are also reaching out to different state governments to offer all possible help." Mahindra Group started working on

Social, economic, class, caste and gender inequities come to the fore in these trying times, and government initiatives alone can bring about a quick remedy.

making ventilators for Covid-19 patients. Anand Mahindra, the chairman of the group, also announced that Mahindra Holidays resorts would be offered to government as temporary care facilities. Besides announcing his decision to donate 100 percent of his salary to the Covid-19 fund, the chairman also encouraged his colleagues to voluntarily contribute to the fund. Auto major Maruti Suzuki India and Zydus Group, a prominent pharma company, started a



multi-speciality hospital in Ahmedabad, made with total expenditure fully funded by the Maruti Suzuki Foundation, which has been converted into a Covid-19 care centre. ITC airlifted 24 cryogenic ISO containers of 20 tonnes each from Asian countries in collaboration with Linde India. ITC is also setting up three facilities in three states with total 600 beds for the treatment of Covid-19 patients. The Gautam Adani-helmed conglomerate, Adani Group, donated Rs. 114 crore to central and state governments until April 14, 2021, which includes Rs. 100 crore to PM CARES fund. Coal India Ltd, a major PSU, donated Rs. 221 crore to the same fund.

Every Act Counts

Even smaller companies and start-ups are offering masks, sanitizers and other essential supplies to prevent shortages in a large country, with a whopping 1.35 billion population. From making masks and sanitizers to contributing funds, many smaller Indian companies have united to help citizens and government fight the virus, which had spread across the country by the first quarter of 2021. Diageo India pledged to produce around 3,00,000 litres of bulk hand sanitizers across 15 of its manufacturing units in the country to help cope with the demand for the

product. It also planned to donate 5,00,000 litres of Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) to the sanitizer manufacturing industry to enable the production of more than two million units of 250 ML bottle sanitizers. Diageo India is also planning to support the hospitality sector with Rs. 3 crore as health insurance cover for bartenders. Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma announced that the company was going to commit Rs. 5 crore for development of medical solutions to fight Covid-19. Walmart, Flipkart and the Walmart Foundation announced to provide Rs. 46 crore worth help that would focus on personal protective equipment (PPEs) including N95 masks and medical gowns for medical staff, and other necessities for vulnerable communities.

The Enabling Catalyst

The Government of India has also been inspiring the companies to provide social support in this age of Covid-19. As per report of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs dated March 23, 2020, all expenditures incurred on activities related to Covid-19, will be added as the permissible avenues for CSR expenditure. It was further informed that the funds may be spent on activities relating to promotion of healthcare, including preventive healthcare and sanitation and disaster management. This was a big boost to corporates and helped them come forward with their best philanthropic foot forward, and show solidarity with the government in its fight against Covid-19.

The Government of India has also been inspiring the companies to provide social support in this age of Covid-19.

[Author's Introduction: Prof. (Dr) Naveen Das is the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) and the Dean of School of Business and Economics under Adamas University in Kolkata. An alumnus of IIT Kharagpur and IIM Calcutta, Prof. Das has substantial leadership experience in the corporate and academia. He's a passionate teacher, meticulous researcher and an assiduous institution builder.]



A Story of Resilience

Composer and radio professional Nilayan Chatterjee delves on pandemic-induced alternative platforms available for artists to express themselves.



Life is unpredictable. We've heard and then we truly faced it. All of us, together fighting for existence. One goal..... Too heavy? Let's lighten up. When was the last time you spent so much time with your family? It's an everyday thing now right but before the pandemic it was kind of all like a memory. See, we always had a choice. Even now we do. The negativities live in groups and in abundance but positivities are lone wolves. We need to look for them nowadays. They're not hard to find.

When you see an old lady trying to fiddle with her

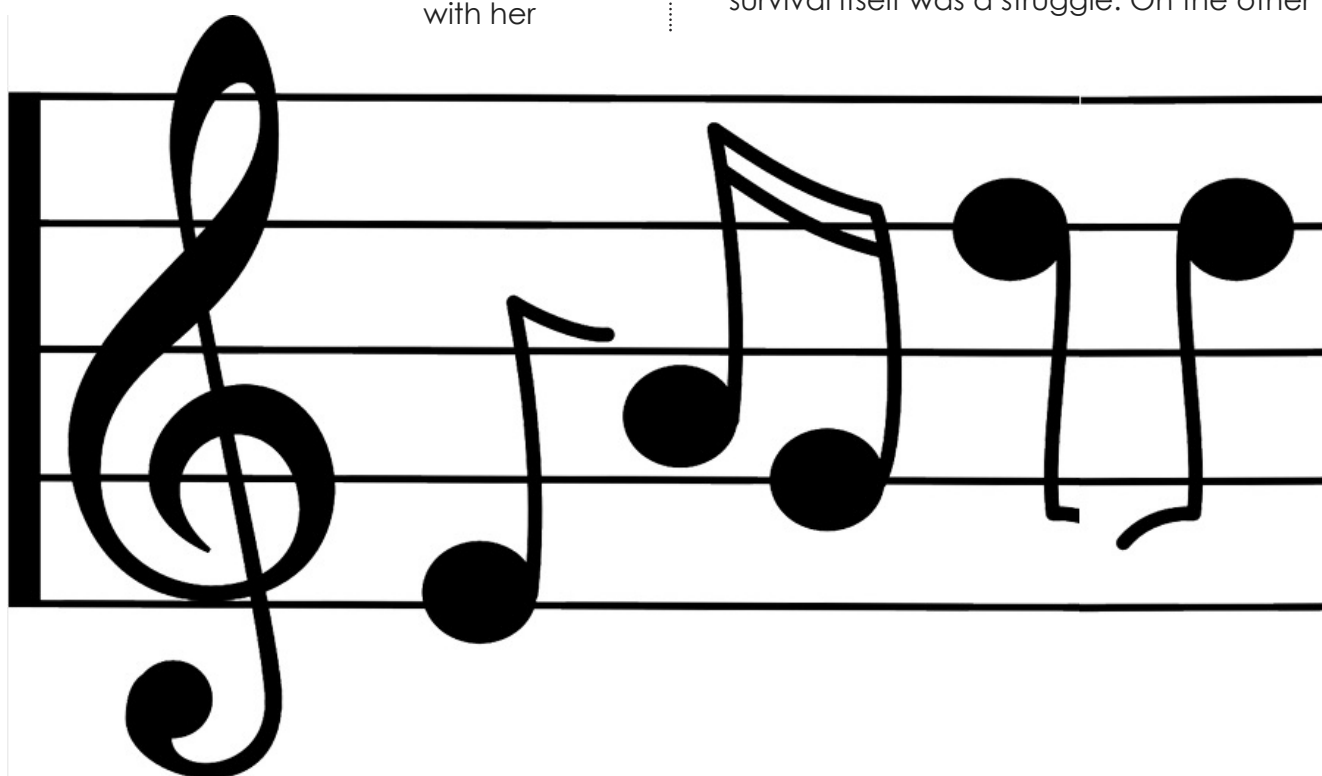
grandchild's piano, you see the revival of a positive dream.

Being into the profession of connecting with people I have had ample such opportunities to celebrate.

Apart from getting the time for personal nourishment of dreams, we've even seen this pandemic has got the best out of so many human beings. Maybe the neighbour you didn't like and thought to be weird has helped so many during Covid-19 and you never expected that. Maybe the artist you thought didn't deserve to be in the profession showed humanity in best form. Maybe someone stole your heart by reaching out during such times even when your own family or relatives backed out when you truly needed them.

That's what this pandemic has showed. Everything lives in duality. While we are losing lives, we also have seen heroes being born.

We artists have had a real tough time though with so many projects, films being pushed indefinitely. For a lot of people, survival itself was a struggle. On the other



hand, we got time to introspect, rediscover and create so many untold stories by now. Just because we got time, we got the much-needed reality check. All the brains we see around us might have just got rewired. I do not know whether things would be back to normal if you ask me but I'm sure we're heading towards a new world.

Whenever I went
live with my music or
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so many hearts
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what they
were feeling.



Now let's talk about how it has been for me or my co-artists in the industry. As we know, the art we release on different mediums be it theatres, television or radio, that is our release of creativity. This helps us to connect and earn as well. Financially though, this isn't the complete aspect for an artist. Live shows have constituted a very vital part in our lives. However, with the pandemic and both aspects being affected, it has been really difficult for all the artists out there including those connected with the art forms. Financially it has been a total washout. Survival has been a question for many. Yet that has not stopped us from spreading our art form. Social media has played a very vital part in relieving some of the inner storm. Many have resorted to sharing their unreleased work online. The independent scene has come up. As if everyone is trying to create a bank of memories for the future. Thanks to online shows, a lot of artists have found a new way of survival. Though it doesn't give that level of satisfaction what a stage show gives but at least enough to spread positivities. Enough to share love and art. The new world we're heading towards will now very well have these alternatives that kept us going through these times. Like whenever I went live with my music or thoughts at least so many hearts and minds connected to share what they were feeling. Trust me, every time the conclusion was, "we're all into this together."

Positivities are lone wolves we need to look for them nowadays. They're not hard to find.

[Author's Introduction: Nilayan Chatterjee has been a radio professional for 14 years. He is currently taking care of the evening Prime Time show on Red FM Kolkata. He has also been an independent songwriter for 18 years now, working as a music director for films and OTT series, set to release soon.]



#PositiveCovid: 'Today's Pain, Tomorrow's Gain' Moment for Advertising and Public Relations Industry

Corporate professional turned academic Subhrajit Dutta talks about how the advertising and public relations industry has transformed due to the global pandemic.

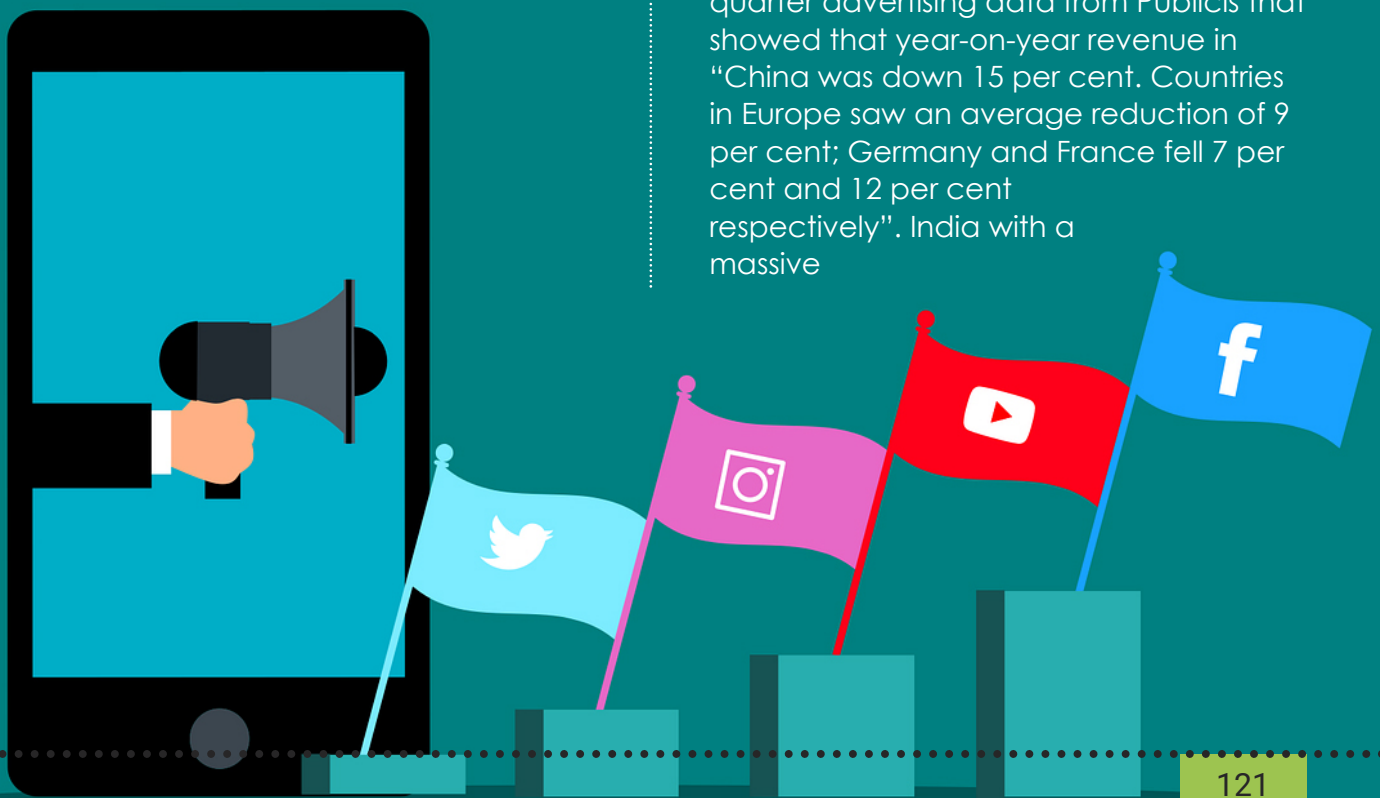


Whenever I used to go on a road trip and 'Today's Pain, Tomorrow's Gain' signage was

visible, I knew instinctively that I was indeed up for a bad patch. Today the Ad and PR industry is going through a similar situation. Let's explore a few insights on what's changing and how we can leverage the gain going further.

I opt to start this exploration with a tribute to John Wanamaker, a US merchant often credited with a very famous quotation on the efficacy of advertising. The quotation goes like "Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half."

More than a century later, Covid-19 has changed the game altogether. An article on World Economic Forum quoted the first quarter advertising data from Publicis that showed that year-on-year revenue in "China was down 15 per cent. Countries in Europe saw an average reduction of 9 per cent; Germany and France fell 7 per cent and 12 per cent respectively". India with a massive



During the pandemic, we have seen audience responding more to the messaging that revolves around the corporate culture and vision rather than the product only.

lockdown and resultant economic woes too suffered unparalleled loss. The pandemic did not hit everyone equally hard. Out-of-home advertising, cinema advertising and print advertising were hit quite bad. In-home media and television viewership did quite well.

Pleasantly though, social media, over-the-top (OTT) platforms and gaming witnessed an exponential increase in usage.

However, this disproportionate distribution of the media consumption and distribution pie will change as soon as the lockdown is eased and people are back on the streets. Cinema ads may make a steady rebound once the cinema halls reopen. Sports ads may again be the flavour of the season as more and more stadiums open up for audiences. The Tokyo Olympic Games can be a game changer too.

Let us agree on the point of the rise of digital advertising and marketing. The success of digital marketing includes data accuracy and precision in targeting a brand's audience. Right now and more so in the future, digital Ads will be on an all-

- For appreciation of the readers on how advertising industry will fare, let's quote a few figures from econsultancy.com, where three top global agencies predict potential growth of the global Ad market in 2021.
- **Magna:** Global Ad spend is set to rise 7.6 per cent in 2021 to \$612 billion total.
- Digital media may see a growth of 10.4 per cent. Linear media will see a very modest growth of 3.5 per cent. There is good news of rebound for India though as it is projected as a leader of total Ad spend growth across the globe, up by 26.9 per cent year-on-year.
- **Zenith:** Global Ad spend will reach \$634 billion. A small growth in Ad spend in the US will be around 3.3 per cent, while Latin America and the Middle East/ North Africa can clock 10 per cent to 11 per cent.
- **GroupM:** \$651 billion will be the Ad



spend with Latin America (24.4 per cent) and APAC (14.1 per cent) doing very well. There will be a 14.1 per cent total rise to \$396.8 billion, which is projected for digital media.

This is a great story of rebound indeed if we compare these figures to the peak of the sad Covid days. However, are we on the right track for becoming an Ad market that is projected to grow to \$865 billion by 2024? The next course of pandemic and how prepared we are to tackle the same will indicate that.

Source: "Stats Roundup: The Impact of Covid-19 on Marketing and Advertising" <https://econsultancy.com/stats-roundup-coronavirus-impact-on-marketing-advertising/>



time high as customers continue flocking to online market stores for everything, starting from groceries to dresses and from electrical and electronics to personal shopping. Offline channels will increasingly shift to the digital platform. The standard methods and practices of the advertising industry will change in measuring the "return on investment across different media, devices and platforms". What is the benefit of the clients? They will know the utilization stats for their money. None of the 50 per cent (again recalling John Wanamaker) is wasted without them knowing about it. After advertising, let's focus on Public Relations. How are things changing in the given domain? During the pandemic, we have seen audience responding more to the messaging that revolves around the corporate culture and vision rather than the product only. The element of honesty,

tone of voice, regular communication, flexibility etc. are now communicated more. Employees and customers need to trust the brand more than ever. We may ask for the reasons. For many companies, with the adoption of "work from anywhere", work has become largely

The disproportionate distribution of the media consumption and distribution pie will change as soon as the lockdown is eased and people are back on the streets.



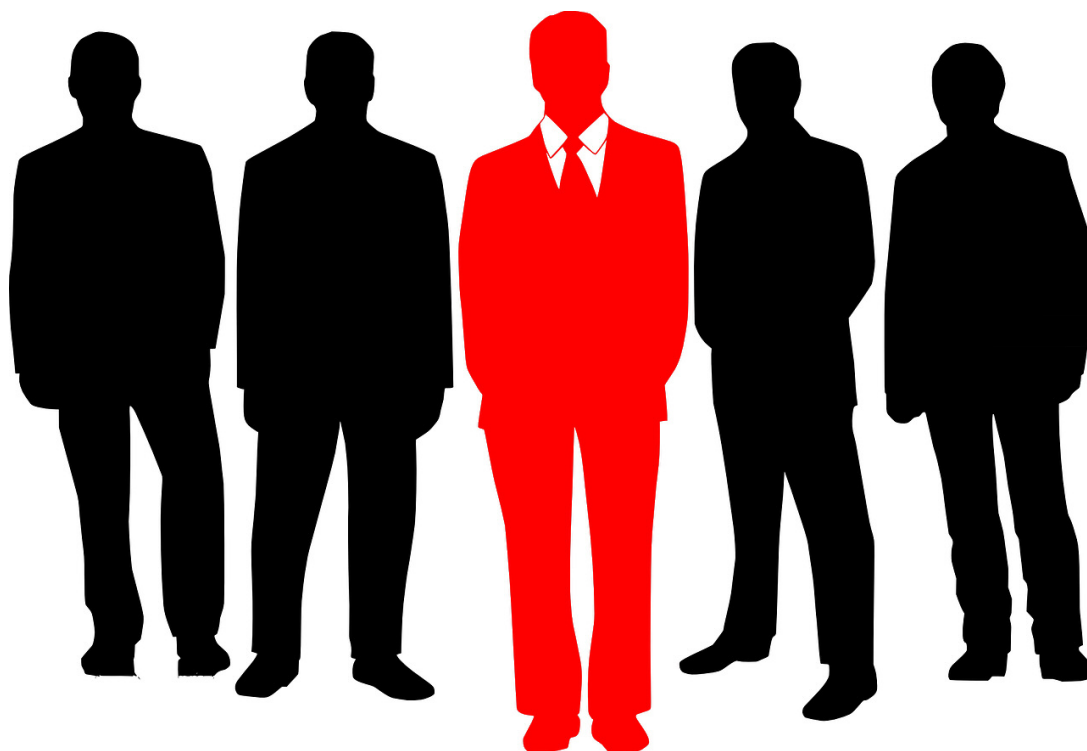
decentralized with everyone doing their part.

In the absence of a structure, both physical and human that we are so accustomed to, people may feel disconnected or overwhelmed. Trust issues may set in. Hence, we need empathetic communication more than ever. In the Public Relations domain, companies need to appreciate the changes and needs. Media Relations can be an effective way to bridge the gap. During times of crisis and fake news, the audience is looking for validation and credible news. This is the time for consistent and honest messaging. The consumption of media is very high amidst a depressed job market, uncertainty and closure of many small to mid-size companies/ brands. Instead of trying to “manage the media”, let's try and forge a win-win situation with media houses. Media industry is going through a crisis of its own – dwindling revenue, attrition, crisis of credibility and unprecedented competition. Can we collaborate with the media in these tough times and create something wonderful out of it – a win-win for both?

For both advertisement and PR, there is a common denominator – creativity in

messaging. The world is changing very fast. Geopolitical alliances are changing. The exploration of Mars is going to bring in additional complexity of multi-planetary existence. Artificial Intelligence (AI) will replace a lot of regular day to day jobs. “Certainty” and “guarantee” will be rare. In this context, we need to creatively assure people to change gears. It will be hard as many get uncomfortable in uncertainty and experimentation. An example can be education. Today, teachers need to be visible on audio-visual platforms – create materials likewise and connect the dots in students' lives. Information is found in abundance – a teacher needs to create appropriate messaging in order to convince young students to adopt those in their lives. Covid-19 is often compared with the world war as it has changed the ground situations dramatically. Many of those will remain even post pandemic. Interesting times ahead! Charaibeti Charaibeti! (Keep progressing).

[Author's Introduction: Subhrajit Dutta (Subhro) has 16 plus years of experience in internal and external communications, strategic marketing and digital and social media. Subhro had been engaged with top companies like Accenture, Ogilvy, Haldia Petrochemicals, DuPont and Mahindra & Mahindra. He is a first-rate communications trainer and has conducted workshops for reputed banks and corporate brands. He has also taught communications and digital marketing in Nepal, Bangladesh and India in a number of leading institutions and universities. He has been awarded the Public Relations Professional of the Year (2020) by Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), Kolkata Chapter. Subhro is currently associated with Adamas University as an Associate Professor and HoD – Communication Management at the School of Media and Communication.]



Developing Compassionate Leadership during and after Covid-19

Leadership Development professional turned academic

Joy Chowdhury deliberates on MOOCs, one of the newest entrants in the field of higher education.



The Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant restrictions have impacted our daily lives and our work sphere over the last one year. However, now, as

the restrictions are being lifted, our thoughts are all directed towards what the new normal may look like with a lot of unknowns and uncertainty. It would be safe to assume and without any iota of doubt that it is highly unlikely that the world would move back to 'business as usual'.

With the pandemic, came in restrictions, and when the restrictions were first imposed, every organization had to pause, look back and transform the way they do business, their modus operandi and the working locations of their employees overnight. So, for all the organizations, it became imperative to accelerate the existing plan to become more digital and create a remote



workforce. For some organizations, however, it was the beginning of an uphill task – and the pain and difficulty of making those transformations overnight. Organizations have this real opportunity to take the right step in writing their own fortunes and to determine what they want their 'new normal' to look like, from the business, workforce and skills perspective. We know that a "landscape-scale crisis" such as Covid-19 strips leadership back to its most fundamental element of making a positive difference in people's lives. It is imperative for leaders during these testing times to demonstrate compassion and to embrace the unfolding human tragedy would be the first priority. For all the leaders, the challenge of guiding people through this uncertainty and into the new normal brings in the timeless needs into sharper focus. Empathy and flexibility are two key leadership qualities of all times. As business leaders as well as everyday people, practicing empathy is imperative today. At times of such crises, when employees experience a sudden and radical change,

The Edelman Trust Barometer for 2020 shows that 58 per cent of the respondents' fear losing their jobs due to lack of training and skills. 84 per cent cited that it is important for them to have their CEO or leader speak out on training for jobs of the future. People really are putting trust in their employers to help them navigate the future.

such as the need to work remotely or under highly restricted conditions for an extended period, the leadership skills become even more essential in order to keep the teams together, engaged and motivated.

In the current environment, we need to understand the importance of unstructured connections that bring more opportunities for spontaneous compassionate leadership, which can give the team a clearer view of who you are as a person, your core values as a leader and your strategic leadership. It's not only about getting things done, it's also about sincerely connecting with employees, partners and customers, especially with so many of them meeting for the first time over a computer screen. Today, it's very crucial to have bounded conversations to find ways to connect on a

very personal level. It is imperative to understand that everyone we come in touch in our working life is a human being, and that they have similar challenges and concerns as others

during this time, including safety, stability, family and all others. Empathy is a first-level attribute that requires you to change the way you think as a human being and consequently therefore as a leader.





Empathy is one of the most powerful tools at the workplace. It can clear misconceptions and make way for positive interactions and boost the morale of everyone. The ability to understand and step into the perspective of someone

We know that a “landscape-scale crisis” such as Covid-19 strips leadership back to its most fundamental element of making a positive difference in people’s lives.

else can drastically change the way others think about you and set people free from their own judgements and negative thoughts.

Empathy's importance at the workplace is non-debatable, especially in the post-pandemic work scenario or hybrid setting that a majority of companies now operate in. The connections you make and relationships you build in the new normal have to be intentional. While this might take time and effort that would go beyond the job description, it would also go a long way towards establishing firm ground for collaborations and uninterrupted high performances. There are many benefits to empathizing with others, which may help you feel less alone and more connected with your loved ones and your community. In times of uncertainty, empathy allows us to reach out and help others that need it the most.

Empathy allows us to:

- Boost our social connectedness in our communities so that we may increase helping behaviours.
- Improve our ability to regulate our emotions during times of stress.
- Better manage our anxieties and stress without feeling overwhelmed.

Some people are naturally empathetic by nature, but many need a little help to remember what empathy means and how they can cultivate their own empathy skills. The good news is that this emotional skill can be learned – here are some ways to build empathy:

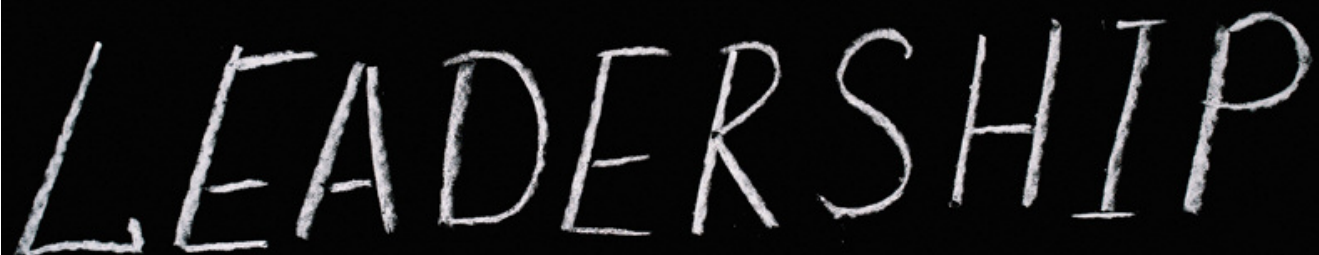
- Listening to others.
- Engage in acts of service.
- Put yourself in another person's shoes.

Be Kind: It's okay if your routine is ever changing and what your 'normal' was is no longer possible. If your kids are watching too much television or are playing video games longer than you'd like, that's okay. Everyone, all ages, are trying to cope with the unknown. This is a lot to deal with and everyone copes with fear, stress and anxiety differently. Focus on being kind to one another. Seek the positives in your new 'normal' and

For all the leaders, the challenge of guiding people through this uncertainty and into the new normal brings in the timeless needs into sharper focus.

practice self-compassion by becoming emotionally flexible, navigate through your emotions and give yourself and your family a break.

Be Considerate: Sometimes, we are quick to criticize others without knowing their circumstances or understanding their situations that may impact their choices. Some people may feel overwhelmed with an overload of conflicting information from various outlets. While you cannot control how others behave, you can





For all organizations, it became imperative to accelerate the existing plan to become more digital and create a remote workforce.

control your own actions by sharing only the facts by reliable sources. You can also gently remind others to kindly wash their hands, practice social distancing and stay home if they show any symptoms of Covid-19.

Building a culture of empathy begins at the hiring process and continues throughout. It cannot be a short-lived activity. While building a long-term and multifaceted culture of an organization, one cannot opt for a magic solution. Artificial empathy will result in transactional work relationships, which, in turn, would lead to a short-term work culture. Like it is observed, empathy is not difficult. Everyone we know has a story to say – good or bad – that shapes the individual and how other people relate to us. It simply takes one small step to be interested in those stories. That is all empathy is!

[Author's Introduction: Joy Chowdhury is an eminent Leadership Development professional, a motivator and an emotional intelligence coach. Currently, he is the Director of Center for Professional Studies at Adamas University in Kolkata. He is a learning and development professional with a rich experience of more than 18 years in the training industry. He has two postgraduate degrees in English Linguistics and Management along with a masters' degree in Psychology. He has been awarded an honorary doctorate in Psychology by the University of Swahili Foundation in Panama. His professional experience spans across multiple global organizations including Amazon, Infosys, IBM and Cerner Corporation. A strategic leader and project management consultant in areas of learning and development, Joy had been a Guest Lecturer with multiple universities across Europe and the US.]



Glass Half Empty or Half Full? Analysing the Role of Media in Spreading Hope during Covid-19

Academic and researcher

Nitesh Tripathi writes an optimistic piece about how the consumption of media has transformed subject to the Covid-19 pandemic.



To begin with, let's talk about a typical superhero film with an apocalyptic scenario. You will see that when the villain starts the carnage, people start running out of panic, cluelessly in the path of the destruction instead of trying to hide somewhere or at least take a U-turn. (Facepalm to the portrayal in films!) But was this the truth when Covid-19 arrived? No! People locked themselves inside their homes and froze wherever they were. Most of them followed what the Covid-19 guidelines dictated. We all know that the pandemic has been a



devastating experience for all as there were millions of deaths. It was the most fatal pandemic since the Spanish Flu. No words are enough to describe how much humanity has been affected. Still, I'll go out on limb and highlight some positive things that happened during the pandemic, which kept the hope alive among humans just like a candle flame

We all know that the pandemic has been a devastating experience for all as there were millions of deaths. It was the most fatal pandemic since the Spanish Flu.

keeps darkness at bay. While the urban life had kept people busy and always moving, with Covid-19, people were forced to halt, reflect and bring necessary changes in their lives. Earlier mindfulness, detoxification and mental health used to take the back seats due to people's busy schedules but during lockdown, it took precedence. Also, due to the pandemic, people started eating healthy. Apart from these general changes, I would like to enlist several changes that media brought in people's lives and also how it changed itself for the better.

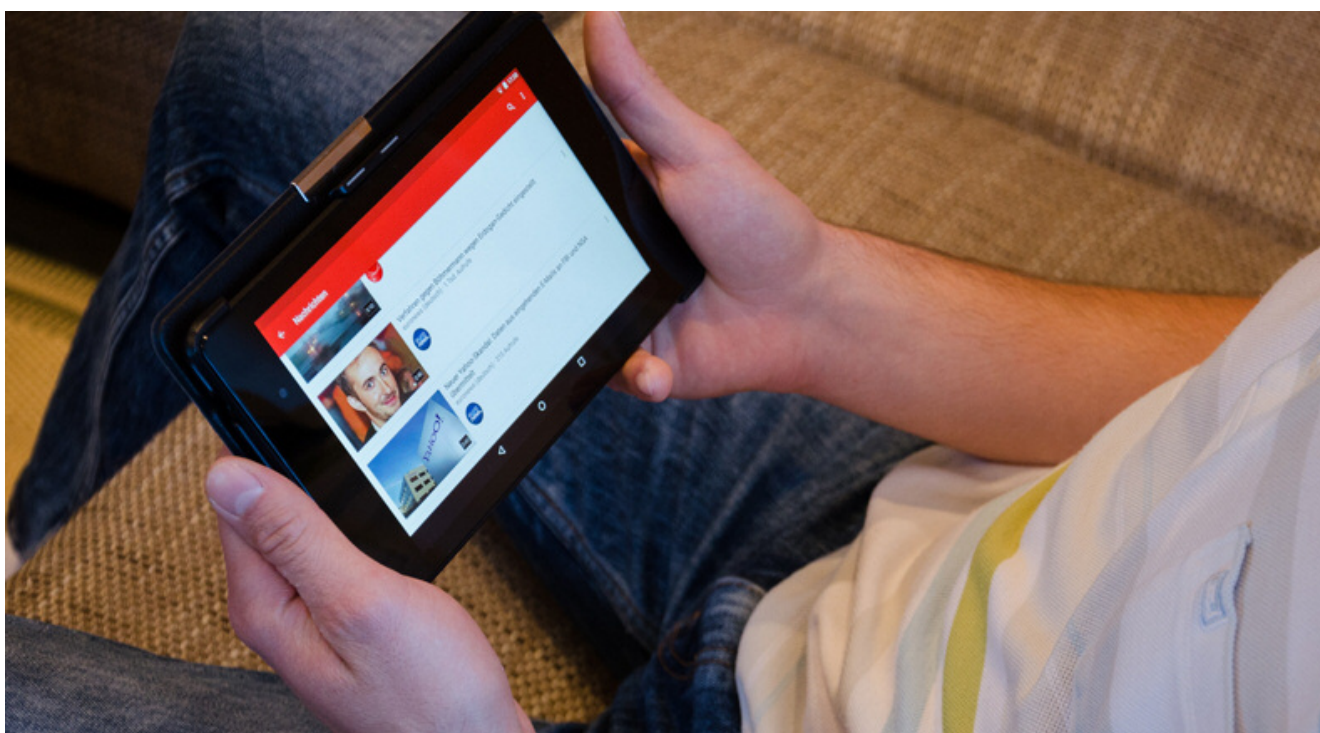
Losing the Frills: Imagine your favourite Superhero Superman (I know its Superman. Oh, Come on!! It's Henry Cavill!!!) sans his cape. I mean it's still Superman. That too with less frills. Isn't it? Same way, even media organizations had to lose frills to become more relevant, stay profitable and most importantly survive. When it comes to the media industry, the pandemic turned out to be a gamechanger. Be it bundling, collaboration, mergers, acquisition, or

cost cutting, the pandemic ensured that media organizations were left with only two choices – fall in line or fall by the wayside. The Covid-19 outbreak proved that even people can do without printed newspapers and can watch news on screen (which is more environment-friendly). The films which couldn't get distributors or theatre releases due to lesser star values moved to the OTT platforms and were met with wide reception. I mean, who needs a theatre for a film release, right? Also, why would someone go to the theatre when she/ he can watch the latest film on her/ his screen at the comfort of her/ his home?

Resilience and Positivity: You might have noticed that the surface tension doesn't allow water to fall from the glass even when it's more than the height of the glass. In a similar way, the human resilience didn't allow them to get frantic or be panic-stricken. The fact that there was no mass hysteria and majority of the people practiced social distancing show that people kept their calm. Even

When the situation was alarming and people were tensed, scared, and were uncertain about the future, the memes came as a saviour and helped people lighten their mood and ease their tension.

mainstream media played a constructive and responsible role by not indulging in sensational and unverified coverages, which could have led to mass hysteria. (Past instances such as *Choti Katwa* or *Muhnochwa* show that media is infamous for creating mass hysteria). Not just this, the media organizations debunked fake news related to the



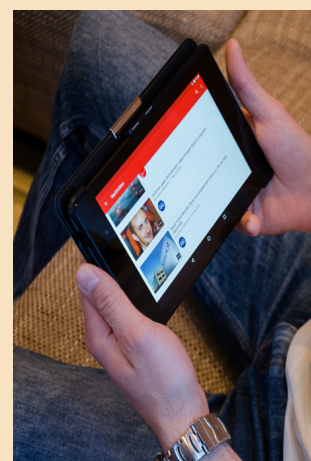
pandemic and extensively covered the government's handling of Covid-19, which ultimately made the government more diligent. They also showed positive stories (like doctors dancing with patients or old uncle's birthday being celebrated by the police) to uplift the mood of the viewers and also instil hope in them. The coverage on the lives of doctors, nurses, cleaners, migrant workers and other essential workers made people more empathetic towards them.

Memes Emerging as a Cathartic Force: You walk into the office and stub your toe. What do you do? Laugh on it with others or get angry on those who dare to laugh? I think you would prefer the former, isn't it? Memes exactly did this. When the situation was alarming and people were tensed, scared, and were uncertain about the future, the memes came as a saviour and helped people lighten their mood and ease their tension. Be it the *Thaali* beating, *Man ki Baat*, Modi's beard, Ramdas Athawale's *Go Corona*, uncertainty on Board Examinations – a meme



fest erupted on Social Media every time something unusual or important happened, which made people chuckle and also share those memes with others.

Phone as a Mediation Device: The Diffusion of Innovation theory demonstrates how people adopt a particular innovation. The infamous category among this theory is of laggards, who rarely buy new innovations and are reluctant to change. The pandemic ensured that the laggards, who were slow in adopting digital technology embraced it as it left no options for them. For instance, I had aversion to online transactions due to safety concerns. But the pandemic changed all of this. I took a leap of faith and now I am doing



Media organizations had to lose frills to become more relevant, stay profitable and most importantly survive.

online transactions regularly – be it buying groceries, shopping clothes, recharging and the likes. The pandemic didn't just turn laggards into digital tech adopters but it also made them media/ tech savvy. While the use of smartphones was already at its peak, it touched new heights when due to restrictions people were unable to go out. And, hence work from home, online classes, grocery and food delivery, and almost all aspects of life went online and were executed through mobile phones. According to eMarketer in 2020, people were spending nearly four hours on television and around two hours on digital media. Also, there was a 7.2 per cent increase in smartphone usage during the lockdown. For the people, the use of digital devices for the purpose of internet access climbed the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to become a priority (instead of just being a luxury) during the pandemic. Work from Home was declared across the world, which made online connectivity a must. The closing down of educational institutes led the way for online

classes to come in. Few years back, many parents were not willing to shell out money on smartphones for their kids lest they get spoiled. During Covid-19, the same parents realized that another pandemic in future might lead to work from home and so they also started liking the idea of kids learning coding so that they could earn sitting at home (After seeing WhiteHat Jr's Chintu off course!).

Phasing Out the Unnecessary: The pandemic made people good at multitasking. One of the reasons was a shift from rigid working hours to flexible timings that demanded the call for work/ meetings throughout the day. Thus eating, talking, sometimes even sleeping



The fact that there was no mass hysteria and majority of the people practiced social distancing show that people kept their calm.



(who can forget naps during webinars?) while engaging with digital devices became common. One may point out that this passive listening is not good. But, I beg to differ. During the pandemic, people were bombarded with torrents of negativity stemming from too much information (media coverage and Social Media posts/ messages on casualties) and thus it was necessary for the people to learn how to phase out excess information. It was the only way to filter and ignore unimportant information. Plus, it's good for mental health in the long run and also prevents compassion fatigue.

Big Shout out to Social Media: During the pandemic with the help of Social Media, several people, who needed help, treatment, shelter and food were taken care of as many social workers, netizens and celebrities reached out to them. Social Media was filled with instances of such acts of kindness. Celebrities, influencers and other personalities used Social Media to organise fundraisers and also donated generously to help out the needy (one of them was Sonu Sood who became a saviour and a messiah). Several stories on the plight of affected people (such as *Baba ka Dhaba*) came into the limelight once they became viral and later were covered by the

The pandemic ensured that the laggards, who were slow in adopting digital technology embraced it as it left no options for them.

mainstream media as well, which ultimately helped in resolving their situations. Not just this, during the pandemic, Social Media made people more “woke” (many were already woke before the pandemic though). Instances such as debates on nepotism during Sushant's death; asking brands not to endorse racism (Dove advertisements) and colourism (*Fair and Lovely* becoming *Glow and Lovely*), gender stereotyping (detergent and dishwasher advertisements showing women), boycotting Swiggy for fat shaming Rohit Sharma (although I'm not a big fan of Cancel culture!); using hashtags to support a cause/ campaign; and asking Bollywood celebrities not to put tone-deaf pictures of vacation on Social Media during the pandemic, proved that netizens are becoming more sensitive and aware.

Am I being too optimistic? May be. But I'm not a goat wearing green spectacles, who sees everything green. I do feel that the pandemic has changed people for the better, making them more careful, resourceful and efficient. When you hit the rock-bottom, the only option is to rise. Be it nuclear bombing, earthquake, flood, or cyclone; time and again humanity has shown its resilience by recovering and rebuilding. I'm sure, we shall do this again. In the end, I'll say for sure that this pandemic has prepared humans to embrace the future and also survive possible apocalypse (At least, they are not going to run clumsily in the street as shown in films!!)

[Author's Introduction: Nitesh Tripathi is an Assistant Professor at the School of Media and Communication under Adamas University in Kolkata. He is a graduate in mass communication and a post-graduate in media research. Apart from regular teaching, he is also pursuing his Ph.D. in media psychology from Banaras Hindu University.]



He Is Dead; His Legacy Isn't

Teacher-cum-journalist

Dr. Sunayan

Bhattacharjee writes a heartfelt piece on the untimely demise of scientist and litterateur Prof. (Dr.) Anish Deb.



A few personal encounters remain etched in memory forever. The beauty of such encounters is not in their professional relevance but in their capacity to remind us as to who we fundamentally are. It was the 12th of February, 2021. The 4th Convocation of the Kolkata-based Adamas University was about to commence. Although the ubiquitous Covid-19 somewhat limited the usual hustle and bustle that accompanies any convocation, the administrative block of the university was still chock-a-block. Expectant students, ready to be conferred their long-awaited degrees, and their proud parents were to be seen everywhere. Indeed, a moment of mirth and a moment of accomplishment. As an Academic Council member of the university, I was trying to figure out as to how to wear the blue convocation gown that I had just received at the University Green Room. While I was fiddling around with the intimidating attire, I saw this elderly calm man with long grey hairs,



Prof. (Dr.) Anish Deb

patiently waiting for his turn to get his gown. As a matter of fact, I knew this man, who was heading the *Department of Electrical Engineering* at *Adamas University* at that time. An accomplished and respected academician and a retired professor of applied physics at the iconic *University of Calcutta*, this introvert man was someone, who everyone respected.

Prior to the convocation day as well, I had the fortune of interacting with him over WhatsApp and online meetings as both of us were members of the editorial committee of *#IdeaPlus*, the quarterly magazine of *Adamas University*. In every meeting, he spoke less. However, when he spoke, nobody could counter him. Such was his demeanour!

Coming back to the day of the convocation, I was a little tensed as I was to be a part of the first convocation procession of my life. It was quite a moment in my otherwise insignificant life. A few hours later, the procession was over and the conferment of the degrees was also done. I found myself in the common lobby and again saw this elderly man

Prof. (Dr.) Anish Deb was not only a successful academician and scientist, but also one of the finest exponents of Bengali Science Fiction literature – so much so that he is counted along with the likes of such legendary writers as Adrish Bardhan and Satyajit Ray.



working on his mobile. This time though, I went ahead and asked him if he had a couple of minutes to talk to me. He accepted with glee and there I was talking to him. We even agreed to have a small informal meeting with him at his office. I was elated as one of my childhood dreams was about to come true. Alas, the second wave of the Coronavirus played spoilsport and we kept on postponing our proposed meeting. While I still believed that I would one day have a tête-à-tête with this man, one dark morning in April (April 28, 2021 to be precise), a devastating news came that he was no more! Covid-19 had snatched away yet another jewel of West Bengal, I mean India! Well, if you are thinking that I am writing about a successful academician and scientist, think again! I am talking about Prof. (Dr.) Anish Deb, not only a successful



academician and scientist, but also one of the finest exponents of Bengali Science Fiction literature – so much so that he is counted along with the likes of such legendary writers as Adrish Bardhan and Satyajit Ray.

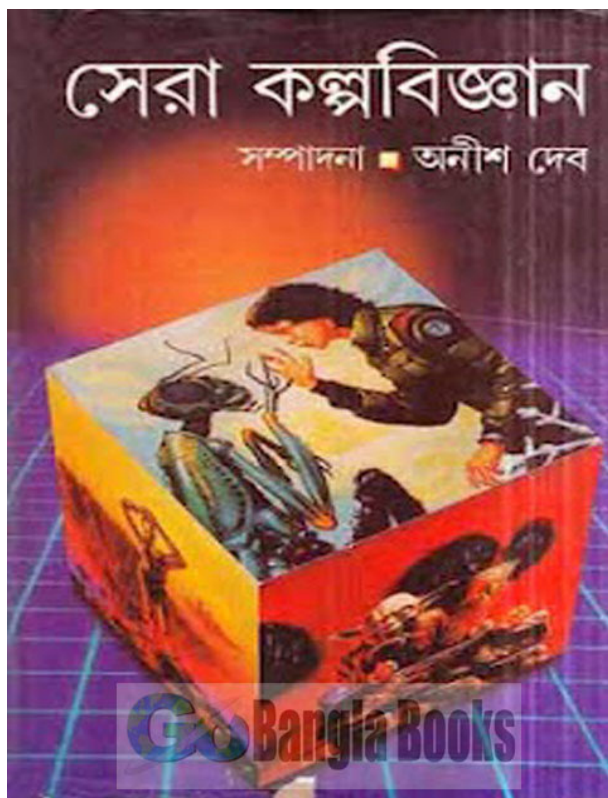
Born in 1951, Anish Deb started writing at the tender age of 17. A recipient of the coveted *Vidyasagar Award* in 2019, Deb is known primarily for his simple yet lucid style of writing.

It is interesting though that Deb started his professional career as a design engineer. He completed B.Tech in 1974, M.Tech. in 1976 and Ph.D. in 1990 – all from the *Department of Applied Physics* under the *University of Calcutta*. It was the same department where he started his academic career in 1983.

As versatile as Deb was, it was the penning of science fiction stories that propelled him to the literary limelight. It

needs to be effectively remembered here that Bengali literature, albeit being vastly rich, always suffered from a substantial shortage of science fiction pieces. Anish Deb along with Adrish Bardhan can be largely credited for filling that gap. Even though Satyajit Ray wrote *Professor Shonku*, the series was more fiction and less science. While the likes of Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, Issac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke had created purely scientific works like *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas: A World Tour Underwater*, *The Invisible Man*, *Nightfall* and *The Sentinel* respectively, Bengali science fiction stories were more like fairy tales. This trend was partly broken by Anish Deb, who started producing fairly realistic works such as *Saper Chokh*, *Teish Ghanta Shat Minute*, *Hate Kalome Computer*, *Bignyaner Dashdiganto*, *Bigyaner Horek Rokom*, *Jibon Jakhon Phuraye Jay*, *Teerbiddho* and *Ghaser Shish Nei*. He also edited multiple anthologies like *Sera Kolpobigyan* and *Kishor Kolpobigyan Somogro*. Anish Deb would be remembered for his immortal literary contributions, he would also be remembered for his outstanding

Anish Deb started producing fairly realistic works such as *Saper Chokh*, *Teish Ghanta Shat Minute*, *Hate Kalome Computer*, *Bignyaner Dashdiganto*, *Bigyaner Horek Rokom*, *Jibon Jakhon Phuraye Jay*, *Teerbiddho* and *Ghaser Shish Nei*.



contributions to science and engineering. However, what would always set him apart is his matchless humility, something that marked his very presence. Despite receiving the laurels that he did and despite scaling the heights that he so nonchalantly did, Deb was an extremely affable teacher and a fantastic human being.

When I came to know about his untimely demise, I compulsively opened my WhatsApp window to see the multiple conversations that I had with him on various occasions. His 'Last Seen' was still visible. He had quietly passed on to the next room. But, it seemed like he would immediately respond if I texted him. I controlled my urge and made peace with the fact that his works would continue to delineate his presence. I remember the first time I read *Saper Chokh*. I was mesmerized with the unbelievable storytelling capacity of the master writer. I know I shall continue to devour the wide array of his works and so would a significant number of his diehard admirers, who know that Anish Deb isn't dead, he has just gone out of our sight. People come and go while some of them leave their marks. However, a stalwart like Anish Deb keeps his imprints in the hearts of his countless fans. Stay well Sir wherever you are!

[Author's Introduction: Currently an Associate Professor with the Kolkata-based Adamas University, Dr. Sunayan Bhattacharjee has a Ph.D. in Film Studies from Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University in Gandhinagar and a MMC degree with specialization in Journalism from Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication in Pune. A UGC-NET qualified scholar in Mass Communication and Journalism, Sunayan studied the surrealist works of renowned American filmmaker David Lynch for his Ph.D. thesis. Sunayan has a cumulative experience of more than a decade in the creative and academic domains. He was earlier an Assistant Professor at Pearl Academy in Delhi. He also has the distinction of having worked with leading organizations such as Reuters News, The Times of India and Ramoji Film City. Additionally, he has worked as an Associate Editor with The Cinemaholic and has edited edInbox, an educational news portal.]

Clinical Legal Education during Covid-19 Pandemic

*Academic and legal researcher **Dr. Kama Raju Chitrapu** deliberates on the challenges in delivering clinical legal education and the probable solutions.*



The sudden closure of educational institutions throughout the country has impacted students immensely on their health – both mental and physical, education and job prospects. Students from pre-school to the higher secondary, undergraduate degree courses to postgraduate degree courses and doctorate to post-doctorate programmes have been barred from physical interactions with their peers and mates. Until March 16, 2020, all institutions of higher education in the country were focussed on conducting the academic session at the graduate, postgraduate, and doctorate levels while completing half-done formal evaluation of their examinations until then. The rest 50 per cent also could have been covered by the end of May 2020 but due to the sudden spread of Covid-19 pandemic in the country, it was not covered by most of the institutions.

All the institutions tried completing the academic session by conducting virtual teaching, where a lecture method of teaching in the virtual mode was practiced. The students of law specifically lost their grip on clinical papers. Students'



active participation in moot courts, mock trials, trial advocacy, ADR activities etc. were put on hold initially and as the coronavirus spread and the nationwide lockdowns continued, such practical-oriented teaching-learning practices

automatically stopped throughout the country. The moment, courts stopped hearing matters physically and turned into the virtual mode, the students pursuing law courses had to be content with the online process of e-courts. At the same time, law firms, corporate houses, etc. too stopped allowing law students to join them as interns, though these law houses were having active e-lawyering and legal matters in hands but due to the spread of virus, as a preventive measure, they too did not allow the law students to undergo training.

Even the senior lawyers closed their offices for internship for the senior students. As we understand that the society is the laboratory of a lawyer where she/he can see the application of a judgment and its impact on the members of the society; these budding lawyers were not taken to the society under the banner of social outreach activities of the institutions imparting legal education during these unprecedented times. Hence, no social interactions and learnings were there. In such circumstances, practical learning, i.e.,



clinical-based learning suffered a lot. From July 1, 2020, most of the law schools – public and private – started the academic session in virtual mode while teaching mandatory and optional papers. Again, they started in virtual teaching-learning pedagogy, where teachers couldn't care about clinical learning such as practical/ skills-based learning, training and real-life problem-solving skills of the students. The teaching-learning pedagogy was only the normal lecture method in online mode. But, due to the

pandemic, nationwide lockdowns, closure of educational institutions, social distancing, etc., clinical oriented activities have become a matter of academic discussions, where teachers and students feel a sense of loss in their learning. There have been attempts of online/ virtual moot court, trial advocacy and essay writing activities by some institutions, but they too do not carry the same value as that of regular learning due to technical glitches. Further, during virtual teaching-learning process, mediation, negotiation and



conciliation/ reconciliation skills constitute another area where students have lost their grip and teachers could not train their students well. Visiting courts, tribunals, chambers of senior advocates, law firms, corporate houses, government offices, child homes, old-age homes, prisoners etc. could only be done virtually these days. Consequently, learning activities such as moot court competitions, mock trials, ADR activities, legal debates, essay writing, deed writing, memorial

drafting, general legal documents drafting, judicial clerkship, summer schools, policy review, research centres, and legislative drafting – all are have become herculean tasks for the teachers and the students.

The former Honourable Chief Justice of India, Justice S.A. Bobde, said during a virtual event, where he launched the book *Judiciary, Judges, and the Administration of Justice*, authored by former Supreme Court Judge, Justice R. Bhanumathi, "The Covid-19 pandemic would present a 'huge

pendency of cases' in courts and a lot of emphasis has to be placed on utilising mediation for resolving many of these matters". He believes, "This is the time when a lot of emphasis has to be placed on utilising mediation, pre-litigation and post-litigation mediation to resolve many matters."

This message, though was in the light of pendency of cases and expected number of cases post pandemic, is likely to come before the courts. However it casts a shadow on the whole legal system including the administration of justice system, timely and accurate disposal of cases, justice education, and the way centres of legal education are preparing the budding lawyers and the kind of professional skills that are imbibed in them. Honourable Chief Justice of India is also the chancellor of some of the law universities. Hence, his words/ messages are to be taken seriously by these law universities and other centres of legal education.

In recent times, the Honourable CJI has requested all the law universities and the Bar

Council of India (BCI) to deliberate and start offering of mediation and conciliation courses besides the existing Alternative Dispute Resolution course as part of law courses. The courses could be mandatory or optional or elective, through which students can be trained to become future arbitrators, mediators and conciliators so that a considerable number of cases may be settled amicably, where both the parties feel happy and there is a win-win situation. Further, the BCI on August 13, 2020 issued notification along with guidelines on offering of a course on 'Mediation Conciliation and Arbitration' with due care and caution. The BCI on August 24, 2020 made the same course with some modifications making this course as a major compulsory subject. Therefore, law curriculum must cater to the needs of litigants as 'Access to Justice' and 'Justice to All' are key concerns of clinical legal education. Hence, clinical legal education must be promoted with all seriousness to meet its core objectives.

Role of UGC and BCI

In tune with the University Grants Commission (UGC) directives, on May 27, 2020, BCI, based on the resolution passed by the General Council of the body at its



meeting held on May 24, 2020, issued guidelines with regard to online examinations. The guidelines were in the light of detailed guidelines for conducting examinations issued by the UGC on April 27, 2020.

Further, on June 9, 2020, the BCI in continuation of its earlier communication dated May 27, 2020 released the revised guidelines. All the centres of legal education were guided by the BCI on time and they took care of terminal and final year examinations accordingly. However, in these evaluations too, clinical papers were the most affected ones as they were put in the normal evaluation pool, where practical learning was missing.

The matter relating to the conduct of examinations was brought by the students, NGOs and political leaders before the Supreme Court of India in July 2020. On August 28, 2020, the Supreme Court pronounced its judgment in the *Praneeth K. vs. University Grants Commission (UGC)* case on conduct of examination

At the same time, the BCI, the sole regulating body of legal education, did not provide any guideline towards evaluation of law courses with specific focus on clinical-based evaluation. In fact, as far as legal education is

The moment, courts stopped hearing matters physically and turned into the virtual mode, the students pursuing law courses had to be content with the online process of e-courts.

concerned, there have been general guidelines issued by the BCI, but the clinical legal education and particularly the evaluation of the same remained unattended during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

On behalf of the BCI, there is no other body that would see whether the minimum class-hours per week, per semester or per trimester including tutorials, moot court exercises and seminars for mandatory, specialised or honour courses are conducted, and how clinical papers are dealt with.

At the same time, there have been no directions/ guidelines from the BCI or its legal education committee as to how the universities/ colleges should impart quality legal education while promoting clinical legal education, nor any compliance report is being asked from institutions imparting legal education, nor the way forward is shown to conduct quality legal education in these unprecedented times. But in reality, during these unprecedented pandemic period, no inspection by the expert committee of BCI is happening and the universities or colleges are running the courses as usual. The legal education committee of the BCI met during these days but did not consider the conduct of clinical legal education as an important component of legal education,

The faculty members and the students of final-year law degree can be empanelled with the District Legal Services Authorities to represent cases of marginalized sections in various judicial and quasi-judicial forums.

which is suffering the most during these days, nor did it direct the BCI to find out the ground reality about quality legal education and clinical legal education. Nowadays, the higher education sector of the country is working hard on effective execution of the (New) National Education Policy 2020 with effective governance and leadership, and transforming the regulatory system of higher education. In this background, the BCI need to come forward with phased manner plan to re-skill legal education with more effective practical-oriented legal education where clinical learning will play a vital role.

Through such social-outreach activities, there can be a lot of learning for the students of law, where they connect themselves with the people or society and understand social demography of the region, religion and the local folk. Some of the institutions have connected with district legal service authority, state legal service authority and so on. While having such kind of associations, the students get double learning benefits and feel connected with profession and society. But, during this Covid-19 pandemic period, such kind of learnings



are not happening and no one is bothered about such kind of loss of learning of the students. Hence, the BCI and the universities/ colleges must associate themselves with the district and state legal service authorities and facilitate clinical legal education to the budding lawyers.

A Way Forward

Clinical legal education is an integrated part of contemporary Indian legal education. It is a useful teaching method and it provides a wide range of choices to law teachers to design their programme in a manner so as to meet the students' learning needs more comprehensively. Also, in India, millions of people still have limited access to justice due to various socio-economic factors. Clinical legal education can serve their legal needs. The students enrolled with the clinic can play a vital role in meeting the justice needs of the marginalized citizens.

However, clinical education in India is still at its very nascent stage. There is a dearth of literature in clinical teaching. Various other challenges also exist in implementing a clinical curriculum e.g. supervision guidelines, determining the



appropriate assessment system, financial and infrastructural issues etc. Further, the restriction on law teachers and students in India to present clients in court is considered as a constraint in development of clinical teaching. At the same time, inviting experts from the bench, bar and industry, during these unprecedented times, has become next to impossible. A unique source of experiential learning could also be used especially in clinical teaching-learning pedagogy from human libraries. Since all centres of legal education have opted for virtual teaching during the pandemic, they are procuring virtual platforms for online teaching, and the service providers are conducting training sessions for the users (teachers, students and IT personnel) while making them ICT user-friendly. If the law teachers explore these features of virtual portals to undertake the stimulation exercises in the online classes, they will prove to be instrumental in increasing the interaction within the class and making classes more engaging and fruitful. It is also important to note that the

In tune with the University Grants Commission (UGC) directives, on May 27, 2020, BCI, based on the resolution passed by the General Council of the body at its meeting held on May 24, 2020, issued guidelines with regard to online examinations.

legal aid clinics of law schools in India can play a vital role in sharing the burden of the courts due to the increased case load in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. As observed earlier, the Chief Justice of India has predicted that the administration of justice will come under a severe strain of pendency and arrears of cases due to loss of valuable judicial working hours and other limitations presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. The increased use of mediation or ADR methods wherever possible and augmenting resources is a way-out to secure timely delivery of justice. In the report titled Processual Justice to the People, 1973, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer had observed, "The law school clinic is indeed a visible and effective instrument for community education and a wide variety of far-reaching preventive legal services programmes." Further, the faculty members and the

For all organizations, it became imperative to accelerate the existing plan to become more digital and create a remote workforce.

students of final-year law degree can be empanelled with the District Legal Services Authorities to represent cases of marginalized sections in various judicial and quasi-judicial forums. But, in the present circumstances of Covid-19 pandemic, when the pendency of cases



is feared to be on rise, it is both timely and necessary that the BCI revisits this position. After analysing the current situation on clinical legal education in the country amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the author makes some suggestions into two-fold formula: (i) During Pandemic – first, the teachers, who are involved in offering clinical papers must device formula in such way that they involve students into their virtual teaching-learning pedagogy; secondly, the centres of legal education, especially the law schools, must bring experts from the bar, bench, and industry virtually to the students for practical oriented teaching.

Thirdly, academic activities having interface with clinical papers must be organised virtually on regular basis engaging students in their skill-based training/ learning by all the centres of legal education. Fourthly, the BCI and state bar councils must come forward and extend their support in providing clinical-based learning to the students, especially the final-year students.

(1) Post pandemic, first, the legal educationists and regulators must make it mandatory for all the centres of legal education to have legal aid clinics as part of the infrastructure and the academic curriculum, without which no approval shall be granted by the BCI. Let there be a separate pool of teachers for teaching the clinical courses as recommended by the BCI. Following the footsteps of other countries, in India too, we need to have dedicated clinical teachers, who are meant for advocating, promoting and disseminating teaching on clinical courses.

The legal education regulators and the statutory bodies of the universities must allow appointment of retired judges (district court, high courts and supreme court) as eminent professors, guest professors, professor emeritus etc. so that these experts having abundant life-long

practical experience may be shared with the budding lawyers. Additionally, practicing lawyers/ advocates must be allowed to be invited to the classroom for practical teaching-learning and life-long experience sharing with the students.

(4) The Regular Class size may be permitted to split into small groups so that the teacher-student interaction becomes direct and practical oriented teaching-learning becomes easy for both the parties. As referred earlier, clinical method of teaching should not be combined and compared with teaching mode, techniques, course evaluation and learning outcomes because in clinical courses, these parameters are different than the other methods, modes, and techniques of law teaching.

(5) The legal aid clinic must be provided separate financial assistance by the universities/ college's authority with term of reference of activities to be undertaken in an academic year, which shall be supervised by the teacher/s and students registered with the clinic.

Lastly, legal aid clinic shall be allowed to forge partnerships with district and state legal service authorities, other centres of legal education, community service providers, NGOs and gram panchayat etc. so that the students get wide range of exposure to understand society and offer their services to the needy.

[Author's Introduction: Dr. Kamaraju Chitrapu is currently the Officiating Dean of School of Law and Justice under Adamas University in Kolkata. He is a certified and trained professional with a considerable experience of 26 years in the field of clinical practice of law, legal education and entrepreneurship with institutions like NALSAR University and Indian School of Business (ISB) Hyderabad, Thames Valley University Slough, UK, UNHCR, WIPO, DFID, DoPT, MSME-GOI and the likes.]



The Covid-19 Pause

**Writer and speaker
Varun R Malavalli
reviews a masterful
book on the impact of
Covid-19 on the human
race.**



Among the books published in the wake of the first wave of the pandemic, *The Covid-19 Pause – Uncommon Tales of Common Folks* holds the pride of place. It is a compendium of 45 articles creatively written by individuals

across age groups, nationalities and backgrounds. Each story is pregnant with poignant emotions. All the tales stand out by virtue of the hands on experiences of the writers as they spill out their deep thoughts and feelings, reminding us of the prophetic line, “Yes, *oh dear*, yes, *the novel tells a story*.” It is true, this book is no novel and yet E M Forster’s words would be quite apt in the context of these uncommon tales of common folks. Let us take a sneak peek into some of the interesting titles and stories which might whet your desire to get hold of the book. In the past one year, the word positive has been maligned. Dr. Rashmi Jeta writes, “Never before in the history of



Among
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pride of place.

mankind, had the fear of positive threatened the people so negatively". He writes about the cleanse that was long overdue – of the society, nature, our lifestyles and our collective consciousness. He smoothly traverses from the transformation happening in the society to the one within us when he says, "A new life was breathing within – from the maddening scramble outside to the inner voice of sacrosanct spiritualism inside". A curiosity-inducing title *The Positive Negative Paradox* armed with a

wealth of experience and an enriched vocabulary, this story is a training manual for an ideal life.

The pandemic challenged people's faith globally. Dr. Dilip Abayasekara, a pastor in Pennsylvania, points that the most remarkable thing about the pandemic was that it happened without warning. Thus, everyone was forced to focus on

solutions. He underlines the fact that "one's faith is not just for good times" in a clear and simple manner, akin to an engaging sermon. Despite all his experience in public speaking and ministry, he too continues to adapt to newer ways of "doing church". Thanks to his light-hearted quips like "Church has left the building, but God is still present", the story



The

COVID-19 PAUSE

UNCOMMON TALES OF COMMON FOLKS

The COVID-19 PAUSE-UNCOMMON TALES OF COMMON FOLKS

is a unique initiative of GiantStep to bring to light - global perspectives on COVID-19, the pandemic that shook the world's foundation, fortune & faith!! The book delves into the collective conscience of humanity through the insights, sentiments & sensibilities of intellectuals across the world providing a panoramic view of the plight of people during this pandemic predicament. Each of their stories testifies to the indomitable spirit and courage of common men and women, as well as their fortitude in the face of untold human misery.

About the Editor – The story of **Braj Kishor Gupta** is marked by a meteoric rise from a small hamlet Tarapur of Bihar to the Global village. He is driven by passion to create a common platform for the thought leaders and educators of the world, where their ideas and vision integrate in a bid to forge global perspectives on every important socio-cultural issue, confronting society.



As a leading Social Scientist, Braj inspires the youth and professionals alike to contribute towards creating a more equitable social system, where all can grow to their potential.

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Unexpected Discoveries, Unprecedented Times makes you introspect while you chuckle. Have you wondered what some of the inanimate objects around you think when you take them for granted? Sumol, a young literature student, does as she navigates the world of 'objects' that are all around us. With an ease that many experienced writers take

years to master, she makes the pen, notebook, skipping rope, basketball and language learning app cry their heart out as they wonder why the young kid doesn't spend time with them. In her inimitable style, she even questions the aimless consumerism. Read the tale *What They Think* to learn if those objects actually serve their purpose as you ponder

Dr. Dilip Abayasekara, a pastor in Pennsylvania, points that the most remarkable thing about the pandemic was that it happened without warning.

about some of your own choices.

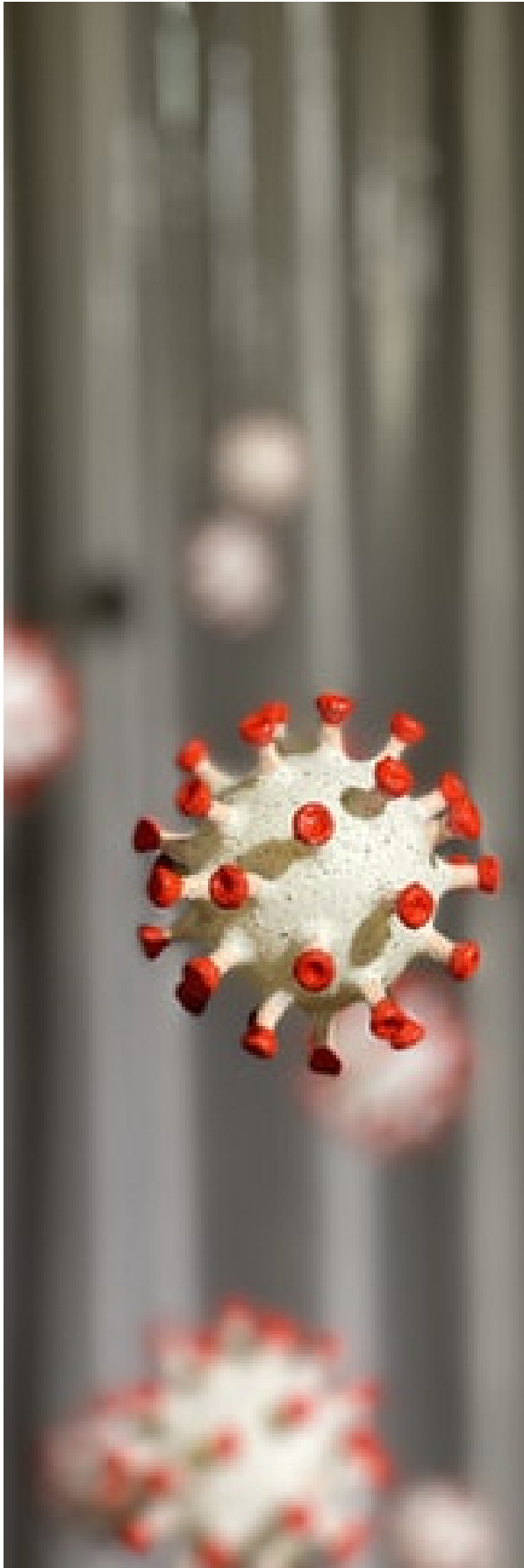
At a time when each one of us is waging a battle, we seldom think about the actual 'have-nots'. We barely *tch tch* when we read the news on migrant labourers and their struggles in lands far from their homes. In *The Benefactor*, Dr. Sanjeev Gandhi narrates the tale of Shekhar, a poor labourer from Eastern Uttar Pradesh, who along with his family worked for the progress of a city in Haryana. Dr. Gandhi's writing is so simple that it reminds me of the English



The COVID-19 PAUSE

UNCOMMON TALES OF COMMON FOLKS

**EDITOR
BRAJ KISHOR GUPTA**



translations of the rustic tales weaved by Munshi Premchand. Read on as “the dispenser of India’s destiny” will leave you teary eyed through the reflection of a humane mirror.

“They move most quickly who stand still”. These words of W. H. Auden stress on the importance of ‘pause’. In our tryst to conquer our worlds, we take the smaller pleasures like a cup of coffee with a friend or a high five from a colleague for granted. Dr. Amitha Ruth Gone brings poetry in motion as she celebrates her freedom from “running the race of (my) life in circles with single mindedness and myopic-focus”. Her afternoon stroll to Lake Michigan is only a muse in the literary feast of the changes in the world and herself “Lost in the Labyrinth of Life”. Despite everything that it has brought upon us, Corona has brought us closer to our families. In *Corona – I Owe You*, Dr. Shubha Mukherjee addresses her fear and concerns about ailing parents, her daughter stuck in a far-off land and of the importance of familial bonds. The saying “jaan hai toh jahaan hai (If we are alive, we can conquer the world)” has hit home. The author talks about finding solace when we lose a loved one. With so many uncertainties gripping her, she still gathers herself around the family to exhibit the importance of gratitude. I am

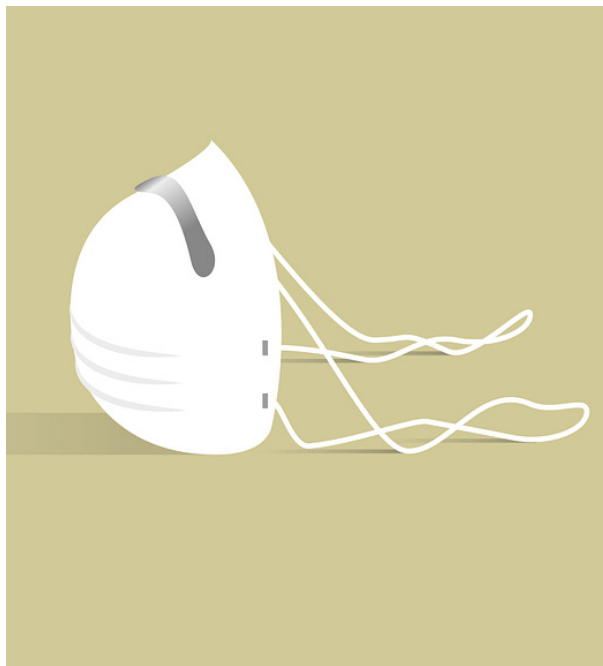
**More than 40 crore
(4 million) people have been
pushed below poverty line
due to the Covid-induced
lockdown.**

grateful to have read her story. No doubt that Covid has altered life as we know it. People haven't come to terms with the psychological impact that the pandemic has gripped us with. Ishita Chaubey pens a psycho-Covid thriller where a highly disturbed individual runs amok, terrorizing an unsuspecting budding psychologist! The virus has become a real nightmare for all of us. Ishita talks about how it has taken over every aspect of our lives right from the media to our unconscious selves. As harrowing as the tale can be, it also serves as a stark reminder to keep our minds alert and not fall prey to all the negativity around us.

More than 40 crore (4 million) people have been pushed below poverty line due to the Covid-induced lockdown. The pandemic has not only impacted the livelihood of unskilled labour but also snatched jobs from highly skilled professionals. Despite a journalistic experience of 27 years, Rajeev Ranjan Roy highlights the lack of empathy exhibited by many employers in very dire times. He also underlines the fact that the haves or the conscience-keepers could have extended the helping hand. In his story *Perform or Perish*, he states that "the flow of sympathy and empathy was not in consonance with the magnitude of the

People haven't come to terms with the psychological impact that the pandemic has gripped us with.





challenge, which only kept worsening with each passing day." This story hits hard but motivates you to overcome your obstacles.

If there is one thing that has differentiated this pandemic in terms of its intensity is actually the misinformation or the lack of knowledge among the masses. Creating awareness regarding the disease, the precautions and the remedies is a great service that few people have taken up. Purnima Jadav mentions how a band of six heroes joined hands to educate the rural folk in Netherlands through skits and door-to-door outreach. No matter where you go, people do not open up to strangers. Armed with persistence and wisdom of *Bhagavad Gita*, learn how the band of six spread the message to sanitize, mask and social distance in *Corona – The Virus Coaster*.

Mental health and well-being are emerging as points to be discussed in the recent times. Otherwise, as CS Lewis quips, "It is easier to say 'my tooth is aching' than to say 'my heart is broken'". An International trainer and motivational speaker, R. K. Chopra, gives a beautiful

analogy between computer software and our minds. He gives tips to strengthen our minds, think beyond pre-conceived notions and how not to develop limiting beliefs. Most importantly, he stresses on the need to accept people without judgement. Read his story *Happiness in Covid Time* to understand IQ, EQ and SQ where he blissfully states, "We are on a vacation on this earth where the visa is open and the date is uncertain". Stay happy. There are many more riveting stories like *The Web of Light*, *Start Where It Ends*, and *Light @ the Pandemic Tunnel* and *Tangible Metamorphosis*...

However, all the 45 pearls were weaved into a beautiful garland called the *Covid-19 Pause* by the erudite editor and founder of *GiantStep*, Braj Kishor Gupta. As a fitting finale, he writes "Human life is being perceived as priceless today, as never before". His story, *Beyond Human Suffering*, glorifies how beautiful truly mankind is! He questions T.S. Elliot for describing modern men as "The Hollow Men". He also reminds us that the pandemic rightly serves as the wake-up call and an opportunity to introspect. This book *The Covid-19 Pause – Uncommon Tales of Common Folks* will be remembered for the historical significance as it captures the mood of the world battling against a tiny virus. Unmask your emotions, don't sanitize your dreams. Stay safe and get hold of the book before long! Book is available on Amazon and Flipkart.

Title: The Covid-19 Pause – Uncommon Tales of Common Folks

Editor: Braj Kishor Gupta

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Year of Publication: February, 2021

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Price: Rs. 499/-

[Author's Introduction: Varun R Malavalli is a Motivational Speaker and a seasoned content writer.]



Adamas University Student Clubs: An Inspirational Tale

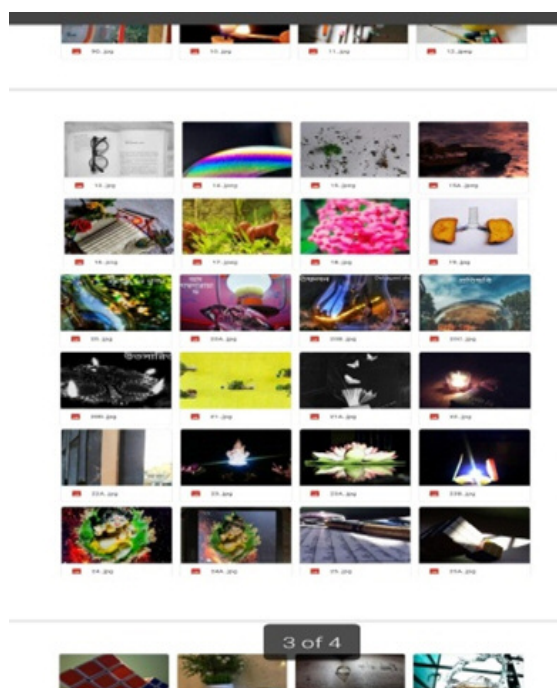
Adamas University, rated as one of the best private universities in Eastern India, is nestled in Barasat on the outskirts of Kolkata. It has a rambling green campus spread over 120 acres. It endeavours to create a academic environment through

various curricular and co-curricular activities aimed at increasing student participation. 16 student-led and student-initiated co-curricular clubs are actively committed to shape up a generation of promising future leaders.

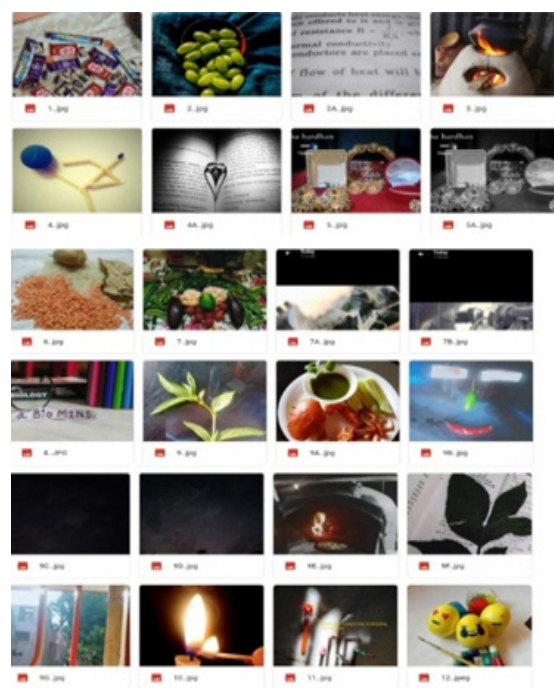
Biotechnology Club

Adamas Biotechnology Club is a perfect entrepreneurial platform for providing opportunities to implement innovative ideas. An initiative to prepare cost-effective hand sanitizers in accordance with WHO guidelines was taken up by the club. It is composed of 70 per cent isopropyl alcohol in addition to aloe vera gel, glycerine, vitamin E and rose water. In order to develop a safe and friendly Holi atmosphere, the students were actively engaged in preparing herbal Abir from abundantly collected fresh flowers. Even during the lockdown period, this club arranged an Indoor Photography Contest, where five best entries were awarded.

Glimpses from the Activities of Biotechnology Club



Photography Contest



Photography Contest



Photography Contest



Making Hand Sanitizer



Herbal Abir Preparation

Robotics and AI Club

Robotics and AI Club was initiated with the objective of enriching young minds with world class research ideas. During the time of the pandemic, the School of Engineering and Technology and the School of Medical Science jointly developed an Automatic Hand Sanitizer Machine with a touch-free dispenser. This device was developed through the usage of sensor-based smart electronics. It dispenses the alcohol-based hand rub sanitizer from a 20-liter tank using a small yet powerful pressure-pump. The software controls the dispensing volume of about 3 ml in one go through the nozzle. Non-contact Human Body Infrared Thermal Scanners were also developed to check the human temperature by sensing the infrared energy radiated by the body. This particular club also became one of the pioneering hubs for developing a prototype of self-protective glass using distance measurement and molecular vibrations. Few members virtually participated in the Agri-India Hackathon organized by the Government of India on the 3rd and 4th days of March 2021. They secured the 60th position out of 3,000 students.

Glimpses from the Activities of AI and Robotics Club

Automatic Hand-Sanitizer Machine



RICE Sealdah



RICE Haute Street



RICE Dishari



Adamas International School

Non-Contact Human Body Infrared Thermal Scanner



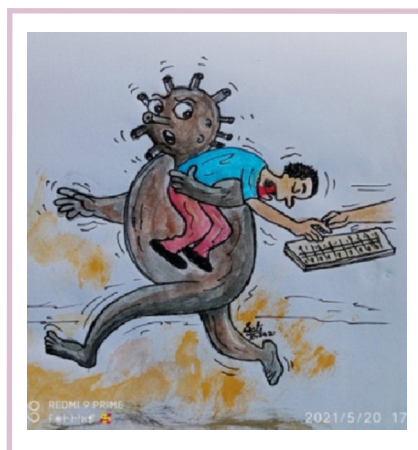
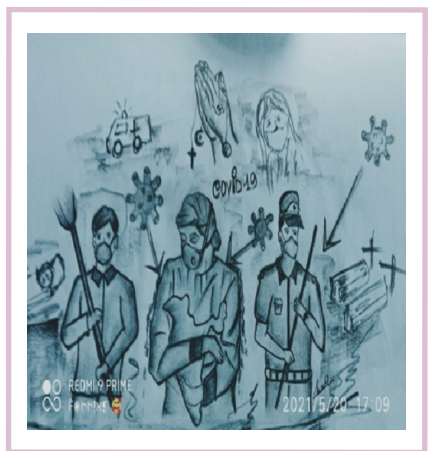
Self-Protective Glass and Non-Contact Body Temperature Detector



Artsysm Club

Artsysm Club intends to provide a platform to encourage young talents in the fields of photography, painting and sculpture. Through a perfect bonding of creativity and modernity, various art forms have been developed to provide positive vibes among the students during the devastating pandemic. Various modes of defeating the demon named Coronavirus were depicted by multifarious art forms.

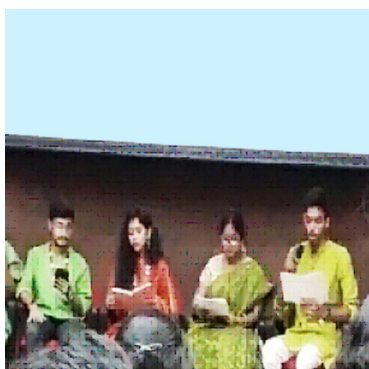
Glimpses from the Activities of Artsysm Club



Katha Kolaaj Family (Recitation Club)

Katha Kolaaj Family (Recitation Club) stands and welcomes all with a medley of different knacks and skills. In the time of the super spreading pandemic, the team extends its warm heart to provide all a fresh air of culture. Mahalaya, the Birth Anniversary of Kabiguru, Celebration of Independence Day, the Death Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, Celebration of Birthday of the poet Joy Goswami, Celebration of Basanta Utsav, Celebration of International Women's Day were organized by the club through both online and offline modes. This club was also actively engaged in Adinova 2021. To increase the participation and to develop the positive zeal within students, an online magazine was successfully created by the club members with a collage of poems to provide a happy glance.

Glimpses from the Activities of Katha Kolaaj Club



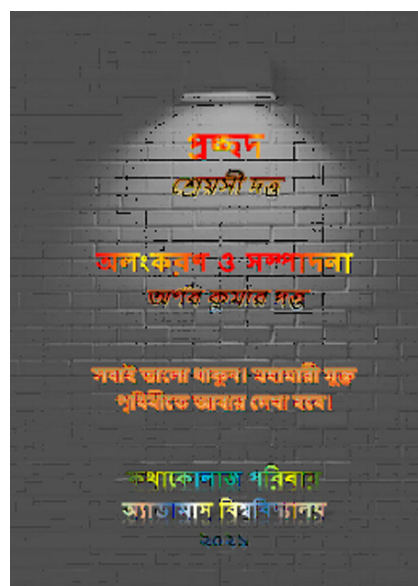
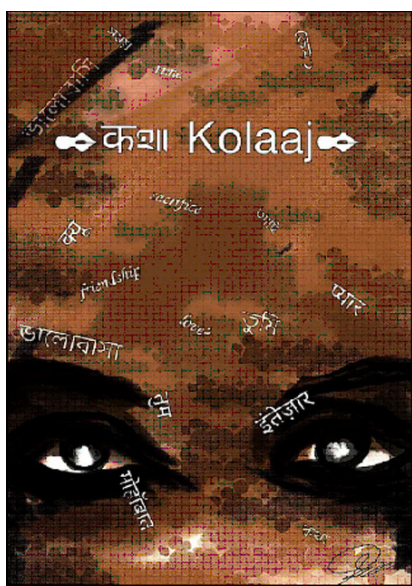
International
Mother Tongue Day



Adinova 2021



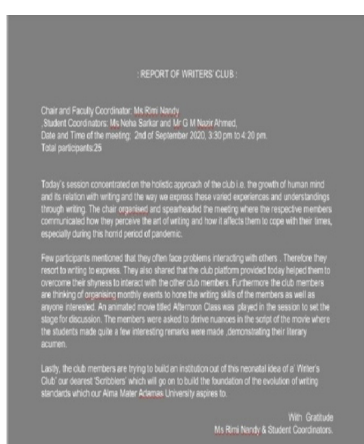
Winners of Adinova



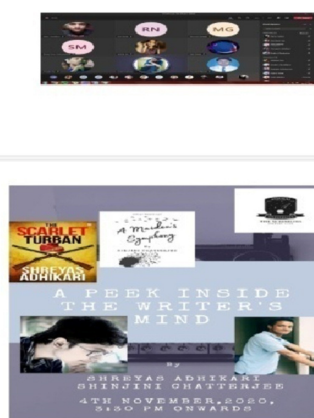
The Writers' Club

The Writers' Club (The Scribblers) is encompassed with a group of artistically and politically like-minded participants filled with the zeal and talent of writing. The Scribblers Club has organized many events every week on Wednesday to share their works including poems, stories, articles and narrations. A workshop was organized in collaboration with the department of English Language and Literature. As a resource person, there was Dr. Torsha Ghosal, an Assistant Professor with the State University of California. She was also a Presidential Award Winner. This event emerged as a grand success. In their pre-scheduled classes, they have to write about their thoughts listening to the music played to evoke their thoughts.

Glimpses from the Activities of Writers' Club



Report of Writers' Club



Peeping into the Mind
by Writers' Club

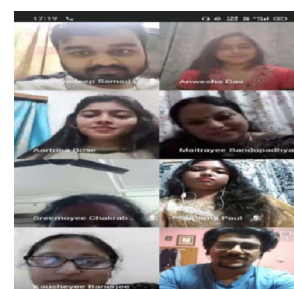


Event of Creative-Writing

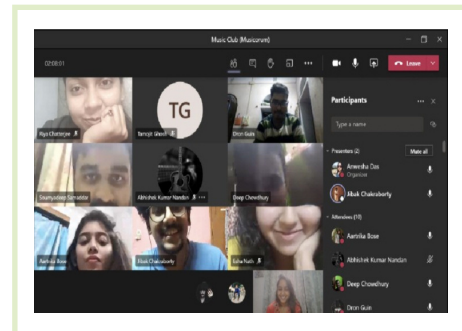
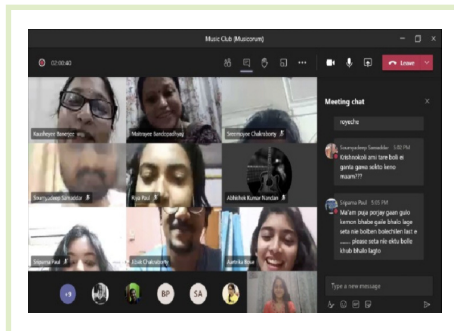
Musicorum (Music Club)

Musicorum (Music Club) was primarily established with the idea of inculcating the habit of singing and practicing instruments. It can be a great help for developing self esteem, essential skills and for preparing a bright future. Various cultural programmes like the Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, 22nd Shrabon and Bhasa Diwas were celebrated by this Club in online mode to keep the light of life ablaze even in such pandemic situation. Music Club members were actively engaged to prepare a video of Shasththi, 2020 which was put up in the university website.

Glimpses from the Activities of Music-Club (Musicorum)



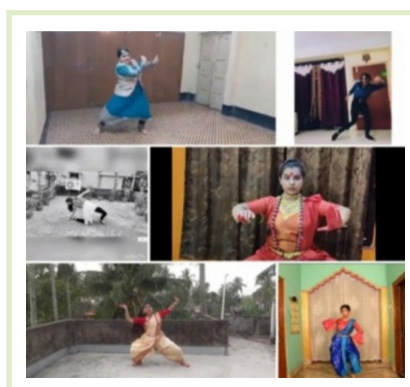
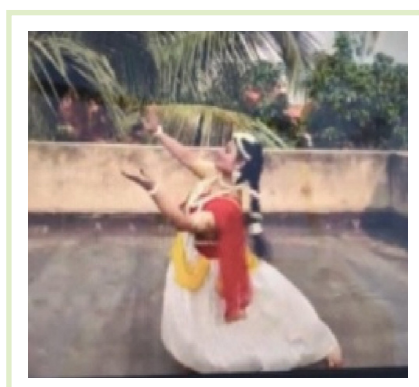
Glimpses from the Activities of Music-Club (Musicorum)



Jhankar (Dance Club)

Jhankar (Dance Club) was established with the motto to get relaxation from the monotonous activities of everyday life. Dance is actually the hidden language of the soul. In the severe condition of Covid-19, the members arranged an online competition and it was a grand success with huge participants. A musical Dance Drama on Women Empowerment named 'Kahini' was arranged by them and was successfully completed with innovative ideas and grandeur. The countrywide lockdown to curb the surge of the Covid-19 could not halt their enthusiasm and as a result Rabindra Jayanti and International Dance day Celebration were developed and accomplished with magnificence and splendor.

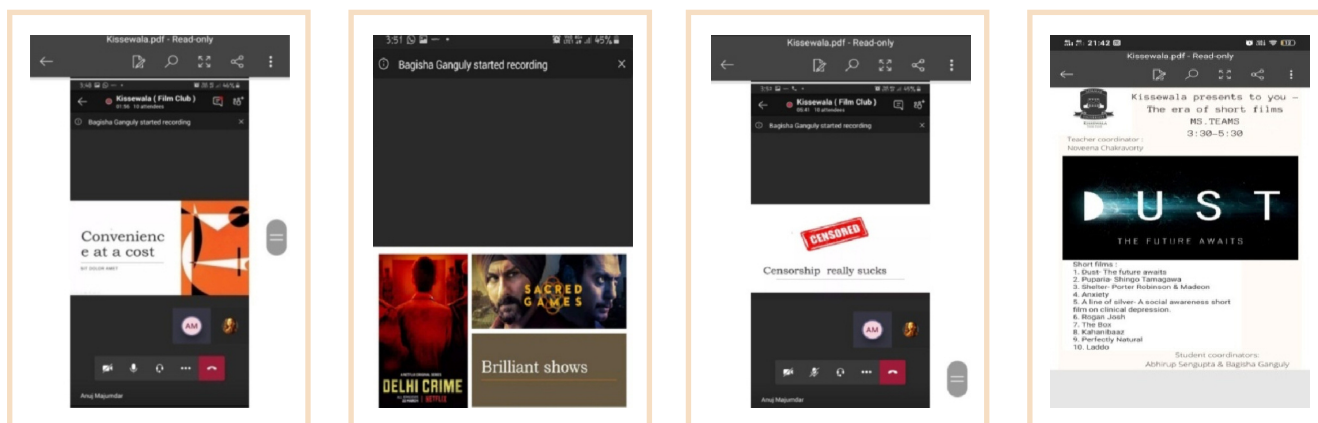
Glimpses from the Activities of Jhankar Club



Kissewala (Film Club)

Kissewala (Film Club) was initiated with the aim to nurture and encourage students' mutual passion for film and filmmaking. This club generally organizes events with industry stalwarts to hold insightful master classes on specific niches. This club continuously tries to create an atmosphere of creativity and brainstorming so that the best can come out even in such a tough situation. There were creative discussions on various issues related to film like What Other Directors Should Get a Chance for Their Films without Studio Interferences? Snyder Cut Case Study and 2010s/ 2020s best TV/ Web Series.. There were screenings of four short-films like Bombay Mirrors, Little Terrorists, HP's The Wolf and Save Ralph. An analysis session of the Nocturnal Animals (2016) was arranged by the club after the screening and it emerged as a productive session. There was a presentation and discussion of filmmaking techniques succeeded by the discussion on colour theories and their psychology.

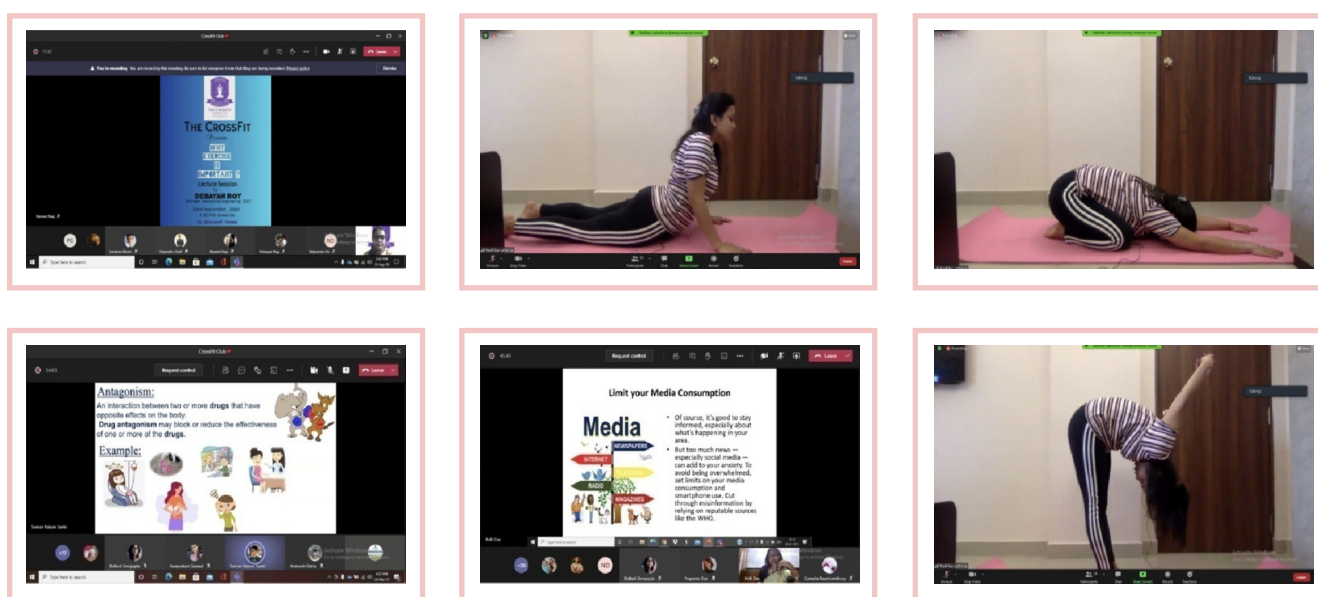
Glimpses from the Activities of Film Club (Kissewala)

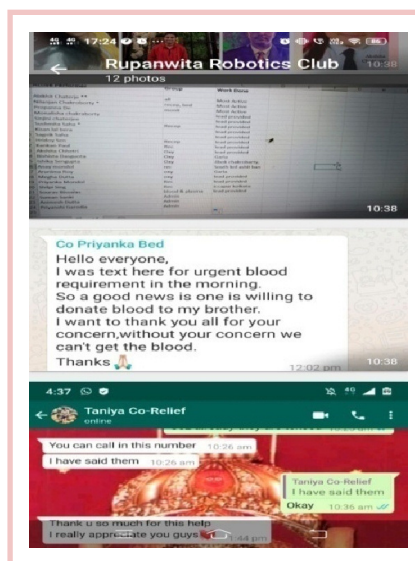
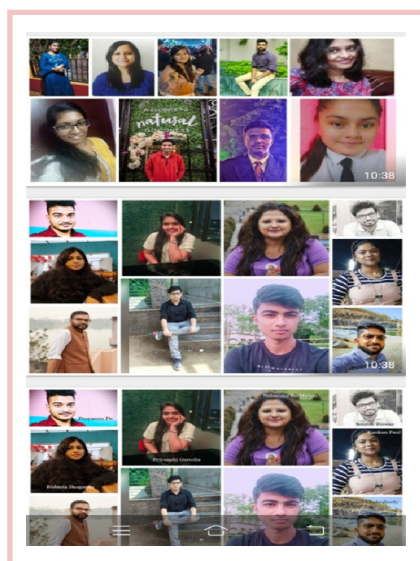


The Crossfit Club (Health Club)

The Crossfit Club (Health Club) started its journey with a motto to "Stay Fit, Stay Sharp" amidst the devastating effects of Covid-19. Various sessions were arranged by them on various physical and mental disorders and alcohol and drug addiction among teenagers. World Health Day as well as World Mental Health Day were observed by this club online. One invited speaker spoke about different health issues at a programme organized by the PYMA Institution of Kolkata via the Zoom platform. It has organized many programmes like awareness about Arthritis, Cancer Awareness Day, Personality Enhancement etc. with invited speakers. In the present situation, an initiative has been taken by the members in association with other club members of Adamas University. A group was formed to distribute bed, ventilation, oxygen, blood and plasma to the patients. The posters were distributed on various social media for making easy connection. The team has almost covered the whole of the 24 Parganas, Kolkata, Howrah and Hooghly. The team is apt enough to be prepared for extending their help to the distressed one.

Glimpses from the Activities of Crossfit

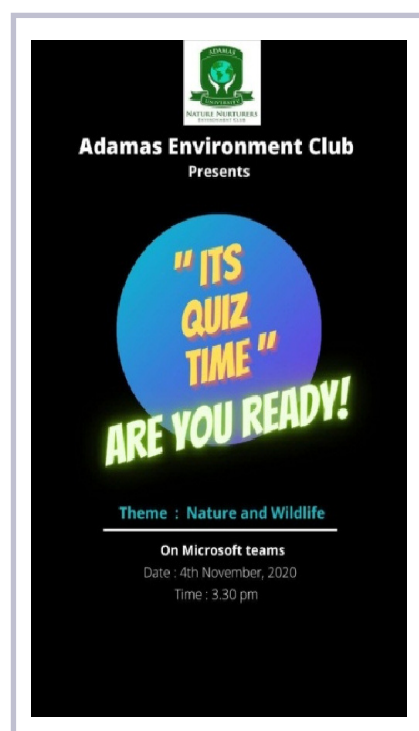
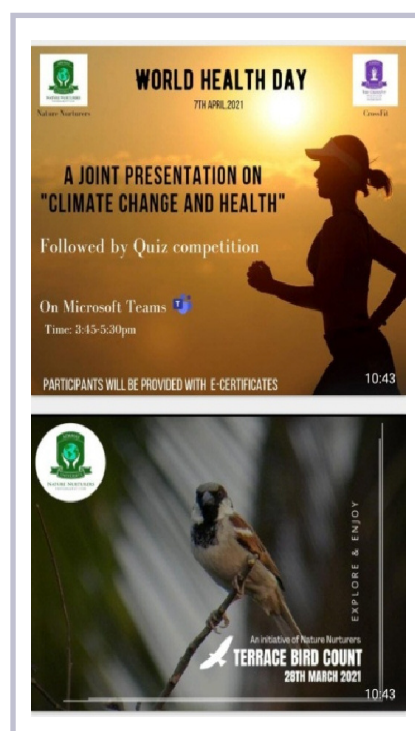


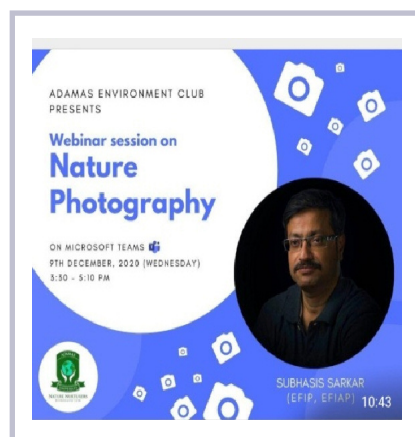
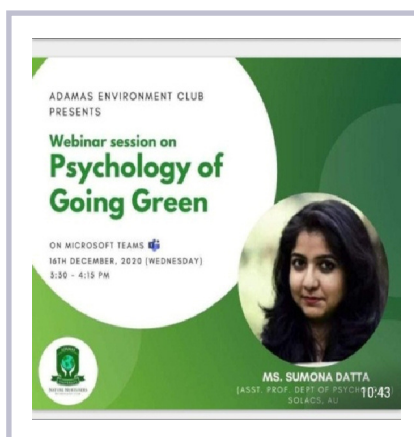
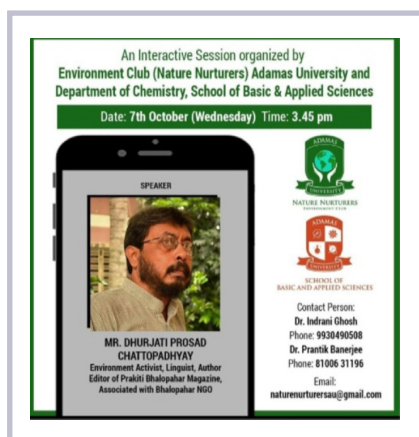


Nature Nurturers (Environment Club)

Nature Nurturers (Environment Club) was created with the vision of inculcating sensitivity mingled with a sense of responsibility among future citizens. This club has organized an interactive session in collaboration with the Department of Chemistry with an environmental activist Dhurjati Prosad Chattopadhyay. They also organized a quiz on nature and wildlife and webinars on Nature-Photography and Psychology of Going Green. Under their initiative World Health Day was observed and events like Terrace Bird Count and Bird Watching Event also supervised as air of relief from devastating pandemic situation.

Glimpses from the Activities of Nature Nurturers





Entrepreneurship Club

University students are part of a critical generation that will promote our economic recovery. In the post-Covid-19 era, the foundational role that will be played by start-ups in our economy makes the Entrepreneurship Club a crucial asset for any college campus – large or small, state or private. The AU E-Club offered variety of sessions for the motivation of entrepreneurial ideas and consumer goods, Entrepreneurial challenges in setting social businesses and skill upgradation on the broad areas were the focus areas throughout the year to prepare the young minds for the new challenges.

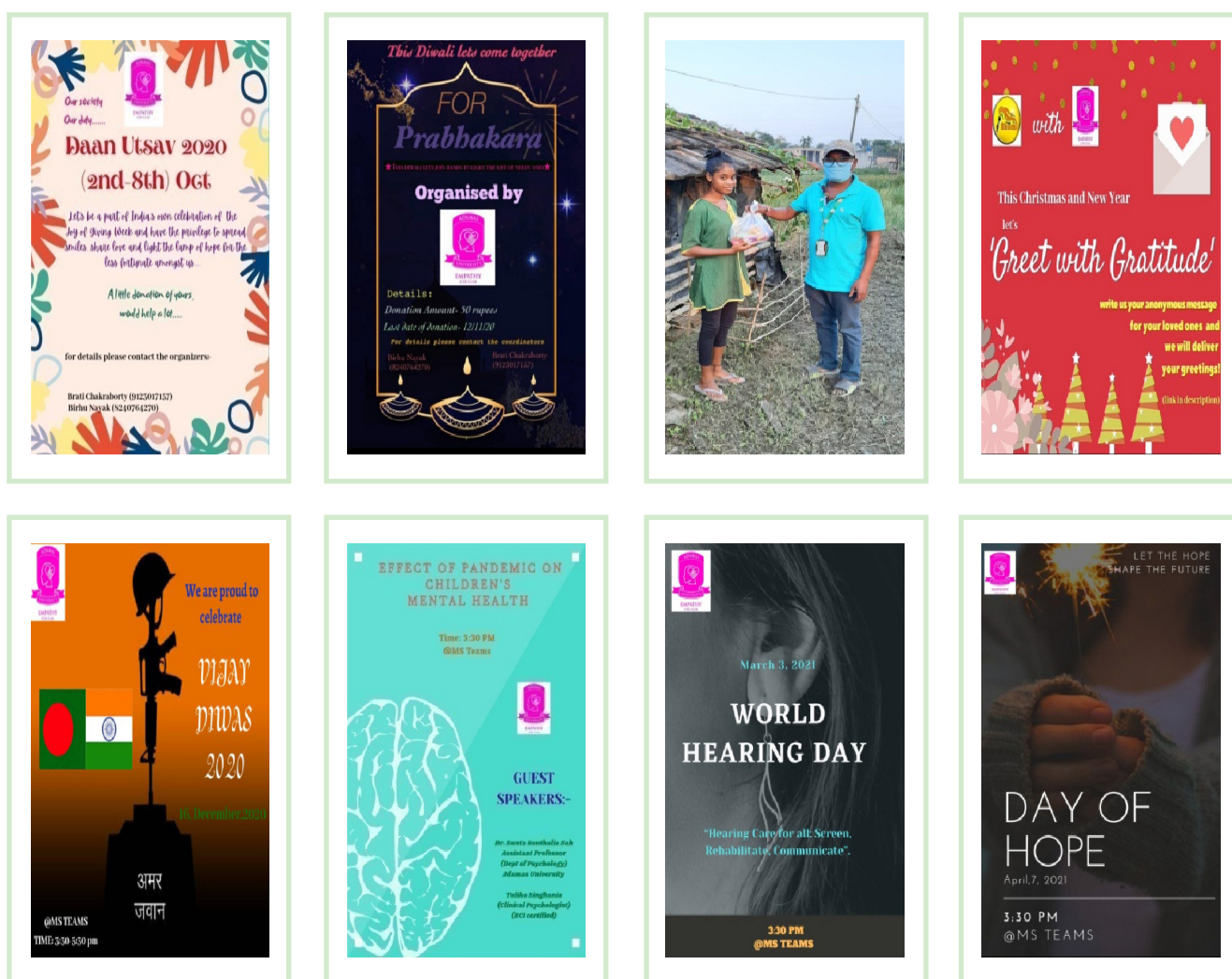
Glimpses from the Activities of Entrepreneurship Club



Empathy Club (CSR)

Empathy Club (CSR) arranged a week long Daan-Utsav Event before Puja last year to provide ration to an orphanage in Belgharia. On Diwali, they observed Prabhakara 'Lighting up the Darkened Lives' by distributing gift packs to the slum areas. They celebrated 'Greet with Gratitude' by writing gratitude notes for their loved ones. 'Vijay Diwas', 'Human Rights Day', 'World Hearing Day', 'World Happiness Day' and 'The Day of Hope' were celebrated by them beautifully. A group named 'Peer-Mediation' has been created by them to provide emotional support to others when needed.

Glimpses from the Activities of CSR Club



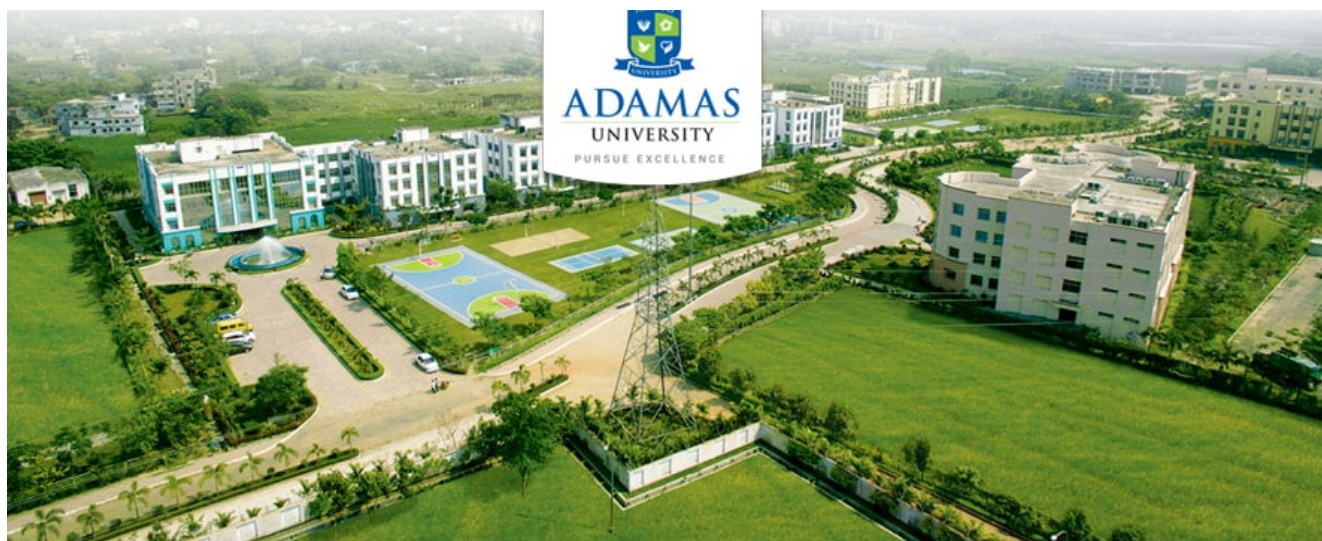
Compiled by:

1. **Adrija Chattopadhyay**, Assistant Professor, School of Education, Adamas University and Faculty Mentor, Writers' Club (The Scribblers).
2. **Rupanwita Das Mahapatra**, Assistant Professor, Department of Electronics and Communications Engineering, School of Engineering and Technology, Adamas University and Faculty Mentor, Robotics and AI Club.



Adamas University Round-Up January – May, 2021

The Adamas University Round-Up is aimed at providing a glimpse of all the works and initiatives done by all Schools and Departments of the University.



Adamas University has been given 'The Best University in India for Creating Social Impact in Education' by FWA and Education Post

Team Administration

The University round-up must ideally begin with a mention of the herculean task that Team Administration does each day, every day. The Team is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the 120-acre campus. In its daily operation, Team Administration not only has to use all methods to recover or maintain the facilities and functions, but also to ensure that each facility achieves its highest value within the environment.

In an atmosphere of all-pervading fear due to Covid-19, Team Administration is doing its best to keep up the morale of all in-campus staff and faculty members. The recently organized Adamas Premier Cricket League was under the aegis of

the Administration.

Team Administration is ensuring that all the staff get vaccinated. The process has started with all those residing and working on campus being vaccinated first. The Team is in communication with government agencies and private nursing homes for a steady supply of the vaccines. For the staff to receive first-hand guideline of dos and don'ts during these times, a talk by the renowned Cardiologist, Dr. Kunal Sarkar was recently arranged.

Chancellor's Initiatives

In the year 2020, when the first wave of Covid-19 hit the world, Honourable Chancellor Prof. Samit Ray was foremost in offering relief and rehabilitation work.



Vaccination Camp at the Campus

Under his initiative, Adamas University became the first University in India to offer its campus for setting up of a quarantine centre for Covid-19 affected patients. This gesture was applauded throughout the world.

Relief for Staff and Students: Quite a few staff and students of Adamas University and their family members were affected by Covid-19. The Honourable Chancellor came forward personally to offer them some relief.

Free Vaccination at Nearby Localities: The Honourable Chancellor has taken a personal initiative for free vaccinations for villagers residing in the vicinity of the campus. Coordination with government authorities are on and very soon, vaccination camps will be organized at the campus.

Chancellor to Receive Doctor of Education Degree: Prof. Sue Rigby, the Vice Chancellor of Bath Spa University in United Kingdom confirmed the decision of the Academic Board of Bath Spa University to award Doctor of Education to Prof. Samit Ray, the Chancellor of

Adamas University.

Pan-University Events

Vijay Diwas: December 16 holds a huge significance in the shared history of India and Bangladesh. On this day, in 1971, after 13 days of bitter battle, the war between India and Pakistan ended with Pakistan's Army General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi surrendering with his 93,000 Pakistani troops before the allied forces of Indian Army and Mukti Bahini. In India, this day is celebrated as Vijay Diwas, paying tribute to the brave soldiers of India and Bangladesh, who laid down their lives in the line of duty and those who took part in the Liberation War. December 16 is a national holiday in Bangladesh and is celebrated as the Independence Day. On this occasion, a virtual meet was organized by the University where all students, especially the ones from Bangladesh participated.

Republic Day: Adamas University celebrates all National days of India. This year, the Republic Day celebration was organized by the Office of the Registrar

and attended by all the staff members and their families at Adamas Knowledge City. The tricolour was hoisted by the Chief Guest for the occasion, Dr. Sanjay Mishra, the Registrar of Adamas University. This was followed by short speeches on the significance of Republic Day and India's struggle for Independence. Patriotic songs were sung by the ladies present.

Saraswati Puja: Saraswati Puja, dedicated to the worship of Goddess Saraswati, the deity of knowledge, language, music, and arts, was celebrated at the campus like every year, with a lot of pomp and grandeur. Despite the restrictions imposed due to Covid-19, the enthusiasm of the university members could not be dampened. The puja commenced sharp at 10.00 a.m. on February 16. After the rituals got over, a cultural programme by in-house talents was organized at the Adamas University Auditorium. This was followed by a lunch service for all.

International Mother Language Day: With Covid-19 protocols in place, the University digitally organized the International Mother Language Day of Bangladesh, which in India, especially in the state of West Bengal, is celebrated as 'Bhasha

Diwas', or "Language Day". Students and faculty members from Adamas University participated. The guest speakers were Prof. Soumitra Sekhar from Dhaka University, Prof. Niaz Majumder from American International University in Dhaka and Dr. Tapan Bagchi, the Deputy Director of Research at Bangla Academy in Dhaka. A musical programme with songs and recitations, was also virtually performed by the students.

Adamas Premier League: A limited overs' cricket tournament, christened as Adamas Premier League (APL) 2021, was organized for all the staff of Adamas University between February 24, 2021 and March 05, 2021. A total of eight teams were made, covering each and every department of the University – both teaching and non-teaching. Each team was given an attractive name – Adamas Risers, Adamas Gladiators, AKC Green Fields etc. The matches were held in a round-robin league format and the best four teams went up to the semifinals. Subsequently, the winners of the semifinals clashed in a befitting final match on March 5. Despite the matches being played largely in the spirit of friendliness, there was no dearth of professionalism.



Republic Day Celebration at the Campus



Adamas Premier League while a Match Is on



Adamas Premier League



Women's Day Celebration



Saraswati Pratima at the Campus

The grounds were as per the ICC standard and certified Umpires officiated in the matches. The players ranged from fairly young to middle-aged people and the matches once again proved the adage that age is just a number. The tournament reached its culmination during the final, that was attended by all the members of Adamas family and presided by the Honourable Chancellor. The Chief Guest, Akhlaque Ahmed, ex-Ranji Trophy cricketer and ICL and KKR player, gave away the prizes.

International Women's Day: The official International Women's Day theme for the year 2021 is *#ChooseToChallenge*. It's a call-to-action to challenge the status quo by raising awareness against bias, celebrating women's achievements and acting for equality. Adamas University celebrated International Women's Day with the Officiating Vice-Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Naveen Das honouring all women members of Adamas University – amongst them, women achievers, Heads of Departments and Directors, with certificate, and addressing their hard work and diligence. He also added that any organization can only work and progress if both the sexes work in tandem.

Some women leaders of the University shared the stories of their struggles to inspire all to achieve and excel in their respective fields.

Basanta Utsav/ Holi: Like every year, the Holi celebration at Adamas University witnessed a riot of colours – both literally and in terms of the variety of cultural events that were put forward. For the first time, the families of the residents at the campus enthusiastically participated. Unlike every year, this time, the festivities were held in open air, at the newly developed Yoga Centre, beside the New Ladies' Hostel. The programme was held on March 15, 2021. There were post-programme refreshments as well.

Boishaki Adda: With the surge of the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, it was thought wise to take the 'Poila Baishakh' programme online. Accordingly, the whole plan had to be re-drafted. It was decided that all the Schools and other non-teaching functional departments will be performing on their own and make videos of not more than half-an-hour of the performance. All performances will be aired via Zoom platform to all at the University to enjoy. A panel of judges were

also selected for judging the three best group performances. Therefore, as per decision, Adamas University witnessed for the first time a virtual 'Poila Baishakh' celebration. Called the 'Online Baishakhi Adda', it was aired on April 13, 2021.

Special Initiatives

The School of Engineering and Technology (SOET), in association with the Career Development Cell successfully conducted an Aptitude Contest named APTiThon 2021 on March 3, 2021. A Degree Distribution Ceremony named SOET Accolade 2021 was organized on March 19, 2021.

The school also started an initiative named 'Care to Cure' – a virtual chat session with SOET fraternity to support each and every person to accept the changing reality amidst this pandemic situation.

The School of Basic and Applied Science (SOBAS) initiated 'Ask Your Teacher' – where all the teachers and students of the school were meeting online every Saturday for formal and informal queries and curiosity of students. Special classes for preparation of competitive exams were organized.



Cultural Programme during Saraswati Puja



Generation Z Adamas Members, Drenched in Holi Colours.

Adamas University, School of Education
organizes a Webinar on

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR STUDENTS' WELL-BEING

Speaker

Ms. Mansi Dholakia
CEO, Global Mental Health Association,
USA & World Peace Ambassador

Date : 09-04-2021 (Friday)
Time : 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm

For further details please contact
Dr. Apurba Biswas @ 9038383191 or
Ms. Shrinini Nag @ 9836268898

Registration Link : [CLICK BELOW](#)

Panelists:

- Dr. Shaoli Mukherjee**, Director, School of Education & Dean, Students' Affairs, Adamas University
- Dr. Prarthita Biswas**, Associate Professor & Head of the Dept., School of Education, Adamas University
- Dr. Apurba Biswas**, Assistant Professor, School of Education, Adamas University
- Ms. Shrinini Nag**, Assistant Professor, School of Education, Adamas University

School of Education Webinar on 'Emotional Intelligence for Students Well-Being'

'SOBAS Care' was launched as a single-window support for students for examinations, administrative matters and any help that they required at the professional and personal levels. 'পাশে আছি' (We Are With You) was also launched to provide emotional support to students during the pandemic. Mentors were in regular contact with their students and their parents and trained counsellor was contacted wherever needed by students and their families.

The School of Business and Economics (SOBE) organized an Online Debate Competition on the topic 'Union Budget 2021: Growth and Employment Oriented' on February 3, 2021, for the postgraduate and undergraduate students to help them develop an understanding of the implications of budget on the economy and specific Industries. The School also organized a Virtual International Students Conference on 'Contemporary Management as an Art in Digital World' in association with Kyiv National Economic University, Ukraine, on May 14, 2021. The Department of Microbiology tied up with Biocon. SS Easwaran, the Dean of

International Conference
on
**Geospatial Science for Digital
Earth Observation (GSDEO), 2021**

Organised by
Indian Society of Remote Sensing Kolkata Chapter
and Department of Geography,
School of Basic and Applied Sciences,
Adamas University

Website:
<http://science.adamasuniversity.ac.in/gsdeo2021/>
Date: March 26-27, 2021
Time: 9:30 am -5:30 pm

Speakers:

- Dr. P. Chakrabarti**, Former Secretary, ISRS and Former Chief Scientist, ISRO, ISRO
- Prof. Gerald Mills**, Department of Geography, University College Dublin
- Dr. A.K. Raha, IFS (Retd)**, Former PCS, IAS, IAS and Emeritus Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur
- Prof. R.B. Singh**, Department of Geography, University of Delhi
- Prof. SP Agarwal**, Scientist, Indian Institute of Remote Sensing
- Prof. Soumya Kanti Ghosh**, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur
- Prof. L. N. Satpati**, Professor of Geography and Director, GIS, Remote Sensing Development Centre, University of Calcutta
- Prof. Ashis Kumar Paul**, Professor of Geography, Vidyasagar University
- Prof. Sugata Hazra**, School of Oceanographic Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata 72

Platform Zoom

Contact:

- Dr. Tahin Bhadra, Convener** (+918420064480)
- Dr. Kishori Mukherjee, Organising Chair** (+919874354996)
- Dr. Anindita Lahiri, Convener** (+91288001227)
- Dr. Debabrata Das, Organising Secretary** (+919874406668)

Email:
gsdeo2021@adamasuniversity.ac.in

Conference proceedings:
IGP Conference Series:
Earth and Environmental Science (EES),
Scopus Indexed

International Conference on Geospatial Science for Digital Earth Observation

Biocon Academy, agreed to provide curriculum-related guidance to the department. The department has plans for several industry face-offs, scientific talks, and is organizing an 'antimicrobial resistance' awareness programme and 'healthy microbiome' awareness programme in 2021.

With the active support of the Career Development Cell, the final year B.Pharm. students of the School of Pharmaceutical Technology received internships at various reputed GMP-certified pharmaceutical companies. Some of those companies were Lupin, Zuentus Healthcare, Mankind Pharma, IPCA (Sikkim Units), Pure and Cure (Guwahati) and Caplet Pharmaceuticals (Kolkata).

The Department of Psychology is developing a psychometric assessment tool to match students' intelligence, interest and personality with their choices of career.

A project entitled 'Genius Hour Passion Project' has been conceived to churn out the creativity and zeal of students by the School of Education (SOE).

From May 21 to May 27, a week-long

Faculty Development Program (FDP) was organized by the School of Education (SOE) on the theme 'Innovative Pedagogical Approach in Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Process' with international panel discussion entitled 'Interdisciplinary Teaching Learning Approach in Higher Education' and a valedictory session on the theme 'Changing role of the Educators in the New Normal.'

An advantage of Adamas University is the presence of a very active Career Development Cell (CDC). A Management Development Programme on Health and Nutrition with 65 student participants was successfully completed. The CDC has so far undertaken 52 such industry-academia initiatives with industry leaders for a better understanding of industry requirements and for feedback. Memorandums of Understanding for industry-academia partnerships have been inked with Mazars and BioCon. Interactions with Far Eastern University at Manila in Philippines on collaborative activities have been conducted. Despite these testing times, the Centre for Professional Studies has been working on multiple facets of finishing programmes for the students. The WBCS training programme is being continued, after a

successful migration to the virtual mode of teaching and training. A new batch for the WBCS Foundation Course for Adamas University students has also commenced. As part of the Finishing School, preparatory programmes for CTET (applicable for all B.Ed. students), GRE, GMAT, IELTS/ TOEFL (for all students looking for higher education abroad) and Foreign Language Course (Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced Level) are also being offered.

The Research and Development Cell has continuously encouraged the faculty members and research scholars to get their valuable research work published in high impact factor journals. At present, there has been a total of 64 Scopus-indexed publications. There has also been an extramural project sanctioned with the DRDO under the Government of India. One patent filing has also been done. For the year 2020-2021, under the Adamas University Internal R&D Seed Funding Scheme, the total seed fund projects sanctioned is 38.

The Governing Body of the University, on January 15, 2021, ratified the establishment of 10 inter-disciplinary centres for research, with well-defined Charters of Duties and Scopes of Research, under a Research Coordinator



2-Week Training and Development Session Exclusively for All the Technical Assistants of the School of Engineering & Technology



Class at the Centre for Professional Studies

for each centre. Out of them, five centres were mandated to function with immediate effect. These are

- Centre for High-End Computing and Research – Prof. (Dr.) Sujoy Bhattacharya, Professor and Head, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Director – Consultancy & Outreach, Adamas University.
- Subhash Mukhopadhyay Centre for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine – Dr. Maharshi Krishna Deb, Associate Professor and Associate Director, Centre for Research and Innovation, Adamas University.

- Centre for Research in Business Analytics – Dr. Nilanjan Ray, Associate Professor, Department of Management, Adamas University.
- Centre for Education, Research and Development – Dr. Prarthita Biswas, Associate Professor and Head of the Department, Department of Education, Adamas University.
- Centre for Material Research – Prof. (Dr.) Bimal Kumar Sarkar, Professor, Department of Physics, Adamas University.

The Department of Social Responsibility, created with the aim of increasing the social footprint of the University has undertaken a

number of activities.

Some of them are:

- Functional Literacy Camp for Women.
- Enterprise Development Programme.
- Clean Village Drive.
- Skill Development for Rural Youth.
- Skill Development for Rural Women.
- Awareness Drive for Toto Drivers and Van Pullers.
- Training on Basic Hygiene.
- Pilot Work on Women Literacy.

With governmental collaboration,

- Self-Financing Unit of NSS Programme has commenced.
- Five villages were adopted under the Government of India's 'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan'.

Under the aegis of the University's Internal Quality Assurance Cell, Adamas University is participating for the first time in National Institutional Rankings Survey 2021 and in in QS I gauge International Ratings – one of the most prestigious ratings in the world by Quacquarelli Symonds – QS and in in IIRF – Indian Institutional Ranking Framework. The Internal Quality Assurance Cell has designed and executed TLFQ – Feedback on

Course Design and Structure from faculty members, students, employers and alumni and also published Student Brochure cum Handbook for Adamas University AY 2020-2021. The Cell has signed a MoU with Ariel University in Israel and rolled out PWC Survey and is in the process of signing a MoU with CII.

The Internal Quality Assurance Cell, along with the other support offices of the University has successfully framed Policies and Reports on (i) Disabled Students; (ii) Green Audit Report; (iii) Academic Integrity; (iv) Course Code Policy; (v) Energy Conservation Policy and (vi) Waste Management Policy. With an aim of creating an infrastructure to convert innovative ideas to actionable programmes, Students' Innovation Chapter has been formed, that actively focuses on engaging students. An Intuitions Innovation Council, as per as the IIC norms, has also been formed, that plans and executes activities every quarter. A proposal for AR/ VR Lab has been submitted and the work of a Tinkering lab is in progress. When completed, these will add to the innovative

infrastructure of the University. Under active planning from the Department of Product and Innovation, the University has launched the School of Smart Agriculture (SoSA) from the academic session 2021. A Center of Excellence is being planned that will offer co-branded programme in Media Technology (undergraduate and postgraduate) with Adobe. New pedagogical tools like Smart Question Bank, aligned with the OBE initiative, has also been formulated. The Centre for Incubation of the University has gone ahead with a number of activities during the last six months, including

mentoring sessions for student groups to participate in Agri India Hackathon, orientation and outreach on Innovation and Entrepreneurship at several places to orient teachers and students. The Young Entrepreneurship Summit conducted by the Centre over three days attracted more than 15 business ideas. Dr. Saptarshi Chatterjee, the Associate Director, Incubation, received a grant of 2.5 Lakhs from NRDC, Government of India to conduct Entrepreneurship Development Programme on Technology at Rural India. The Centre for Incubation of the



Social Responsibility Team Conducting Entrepreneurship Development Training amongst Village Women

University has been successful in forming Industry Academia Collaboration Centre with BOSCH. The Physical facility developed by BOSCH at the Collaboration Centre (BOSCH-AU) is fully functional. The Industry Academia Collaboration Lead (IACL) Training provided by BOSCH India Ltd. was completed by Dr. Saptarshi Chatterjee. BOSCH is presently in the process of providing 'Train the Trainers' training to the IACL through Skill India, NSDC, Government of India.

The International Relations Department has inked MoUs and Agreements with Omsk State University in Russia. Those in process are Study-Abroad Agreement with Yuan Ze University in Taiwan, MoU with Széchenyi István University, and Agreement for Summer Programme with the University of California in Berkley in USA.

Student Exchange Programmes with Sapienza University of Rome in Italy and online exchange programme with Far Eastern University in Philippines and Yuan Ze University in Taiwan have been agreed upon. Adamas students will also be able to avail online courses at the University of California in Berkley and the University of Illinois at Urbana Campaign in USA. Three international Erasmus Plus project activities are going on – 'Tuning India' Project, 'RISHII' Project, and the Mobility Project with Bath Spa University where 12 University members have been selected.

National/ International Conferences and Webinars

The International Relations Department has organized joint international Students Conferences with partner universities, such as Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in Bangkok in Thailand, Kamchatka State University and Omsk

State University in Russia, Kiev National Economic University and National Aviation University in Ukraine and Mohammad V University in Morocco. On January 21, 2021, the School of Engineering and Technology organized a lecture series on Frontiers in Multidisciplinary Research and Industry Transformation for Engaging Students for helping them to be industry ready, develop knowledge, insights, problem solving skills, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and a passion for learning.

The Department of Computer Science and Engineering organized an Expert Talk Series on Recent Trends in Robotics and Automation. A total of 23 papers were published by the CSE faculty members in international journals/ conferences during this period.

The IETE Students' Forum (Adamas University) along with the department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, jointly organized three Webinars – on Stability Analysis of a 2-DOF Helicopter Model, on Antenna Design for Smartphones – An industry prospective and another on Current and Near Future Trends in the Semiconductor Industry.

The School of Business and Economics, in association with the Faculty of Economy and Business Administration under National Aviation University and Ukraine School of Business and Economics, organized an International Scientific Online Seminar on 'Competencies of the Future: What the Employer Expects and How to be Effective in the Modern Labour Market' on April 14, 2021.

The School of Business and Economics, in association with Omsk State Agrarian University named after P.A. Stolypin, Russia, jointly organized a Virtual International Students Conference on May 15, 2021, to discuss the 'Competencies of Graduates for Securing Jobs in the Digitalized World'.

The Department of Management and the



Prof. Jacob Anglister, Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, Giving the Plenary Lecture in BIONEXT 2021

Department of Commerce organized a National Level Webinar on 'Data Visualization Using Excel Dashboard' on May 11, 2021 and 'Opportunities and Challenges for Startups in Recent Times' in association with the University's Innovation Council and Center for Incubation, on May 21, 2021.

The School of Basic and Applied Sciences organized an international conference on Geospatial Science for Digital Earth Observation (GSDEO), 2021 (Virtual) on March 26 and 27, 2021 where more than 230 national and international students, research scholars and academicians participated. Proceedings of the conference will be published in Scopus-indexed proceedings by IOP journal.

The Department of Chemistry (School of Basic and Applied Sciences) organized a two-day international seminar on 'Transformation of Chemical Sciences from Academy to Industry', where 12 leaders from various industries throughout the world shared their working principles

to bridge two domains – academia and industry.

The School of Life Science and Biotechnology recently organized BIONEXT2020 – a three-day online conference from April 24 to April 26, 2021, where 21 renowned speakers from various universities, research institutes and the industry spoke on the advancement of biological sciences. Also, 28 papers were presented at the conference by the researchers.

The Department of Microbiology under the School of Life Science and Biotechnology, celebrated immunization week with a talk by Dr. Mridula Bose, former HoD, VP Chest Institute, Delhi University on May 4, 2021. Dr. Bose briefed on the fundamental concept of immune response and different modes of immunization and their impact mentioning the recent developments in vaccine research. She also explained the significance of immunization as a prophylactic measure for different deadly infectious diseases with an emphasis on

fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. The webinar was attended by 150 attendees. The Department of Biochemistry under the School of Life Science and Biotechnology organized a webinar on January 27, 2021 on 'Cross-Species Virus Transmission: Responsibility as Human Being', which is a very relevant topic in the past and current year situation. Dr. Nirmalya Dasgupta from Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute in San Diego in the USA, was a speaker at this webinar. On February 4, 2021, a webinar was organized by the School of Pharmaceutical Technology, on 'Pharmaco Informatics-Based Screening of Chemical Databases for Lead-Like Molecules: Application in SARS-COV-2.' The School of Pharmaceutical Technology also organized the first international e-conference on 'Changing waves in

Healthcare Research: Focus on Post-Covid Era' on April 5 and April 6, 2021, in collaboration with the Association of Pharmaceutical Teachers of India (APTI), Bengal Branch and Pharmatutor. There were five international speakers and more than 600 participants from around the globe.

The School of Liberal Arts and Culture Studies organized a Professional Development Programme on 'The Digital Disconnect: Global Citizens, Privacy and Democracy' by Saadia Azim, Policy and Public Affairs Specialist, US Consulate, Kolkata on April 6, 2021.

The School of Liberal Arts and Culture Studies celebrated Women's Day with a discussion on the topic – Women in Leadership Achieving an Equal Future in Covid-19 World by Nick Low, British Deputy High Commissioner, Kolkata; Prof.



Pharmacy Students at Mankind Pharma

Sushma Yadav, Vice Chancellor, Bhagbat Phool Singh Mohila Viswavidyalaya, Haryana and Ms. Sophie Ross, Deputy Head, Political and Bilateral Affairs the Policy Lead for Human Rights, British High Commissioner, New Delhi.

The Department of Sociology (School of Liberal Arts and Culture Studies) held a Webinar on 'The Future of Religious Studies' by Dr. Clemens Cavallin, Associate professor of Religion, Worldviews, and Ethics at Nord University, Norway, and Associate professor of Religious Studies at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, on March 30, 2021. The Department of History (School of Liberal Arts and Culture Studies) organized a One-Day National Webinar on Dr. Ambedkar and the Making of Indian Constitution by Professor Yagati Chinna Rao, Professor, Centre for the Study of Discrimination and Exclusion, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi on March 15, 2021. The School of Media and Communication (SOMC) partnered with SMX Network to organize the two-day-long India Communication Summit 2021 on March 4, 2021 and March 5, 2021. The summit aimed to explore the post-pandemic future for the media and entertainment industry. During the event, more than 40 eminent personalities from the industry joined and spoke in their respective fields.

Parag Gopale, a renowned photographer, educator and marketing professional – conducted a photography seminar for the students of School of Media and Communication (SOMC) on March 11, 2021. Parag delved on the dual aspects of photography and marketing. On April 9, 2021, a webinar under the aegis of School of Education was conducted by Mansi Dholakia, CEO, Global Mental Health Association, USA and World Peace Ambassador, on 'Emotional Intelligence for Students Well-Being'.

The School of Education, on May 14, 2021, organized a Workshop on 'Visual Thinking

Strategy' with the resource person being Pragati Sharma, Founder and CEO, EdMonger Consulting.

The School of Law and Justice organized a three-day Webinar on IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) in collaboration with university's Innovation Council and Centre for Incubation.

The School of Law and Justice organized a two-day Virtual International Conference on Global Ramifications of International Human Rights: Challenges and the Way Forward, on April 10 and April 11, 2021. The Conference had Honourable Justice Dipak Misra (Former Chief Justice of India) as Chief Guest, Honourable Justice C.K. Thakkar (Former Judge, Supreme Court of India), Honourable Justice Roshan Dalvi (Former Judge, High Court of Bombay) and Honourable Justice Manju Goel (Former Judge, High Court of Delhi) as Special Guests.

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Cell of the University initiated Academic Benchmarking Lecture Series with Dr. Mousumi Mukherjee, Deputy Director and Full Bright Scholar – Higher Education Expert on 'NEP 2020: Opportunities and Challenges of Internationalizing Higher Education in Postcolonial India' on February 24, 2021 and by Dr. Pratibha Sharma – Advisor NAAC on 'Impact of NEP 2020 on Accreditation and Rankings' on May 5, 2021.

On June 9, 2021, the Inaugural International Research Methodology workshop was organized by the Centre of Education, Research and Development under the aegis of the Centres of Research. It was organized jointly by Prof. (Dr.) Moumita Mukherjee, Dean (Research and Development) and Dr. Prarthita Biswas, Associate Professor and Research Centre Coordinator, Education, Research and Development.

Compiled By:

Subhajit Chakraborty, Assistant to the Vice Chancellor, Adamas University, Kolkata

From the Desk of the Executive Editor

The Last Word

Ten Positives of Covid-19

First, the Climate Is Changing for All Times

Delhi summer this month once had temperature as low as 17 degrees, the lowest in the century. Air pollution suddenly dropped all over the world. This is one of the major positive effects on the environment because of the coronavirus outbreak. Water is clean once again. The change in the quality of water has been amazing for marine life. As the economic activities have halted, so this also drives down the greenhouse gas emission. In the whole world, more and more people are at their homes due to the lockdown. So, in this situation, the use of domestic energy is increasing. This also becomes one of the major effects of lockdown on the environment. This will eventually save energy as the rise in domestic use is more than recompensed by the huge drop in



Healthcare concerns and focus on safety and digital medical-care have come to stay, also giving a fillip to investment in healthcare infrastructure, both by public and private sectors.

educational and commercial building uses. Although, the

opening up of the economy will bring many of the pollutants back, the positive part of the story is that people have understood the use of work from home, using less fuel, producing solar energy in every home, reducing greenhouse gases, etc.

Second, Formal and Informal Education Will Never be the Same Again

There is a tectonic change in education, both informal, which has largely gone online, and formal, which now is digital, but will eventually become blended. The blended one also will reduce travel to campuses, use less real estate, finish part education remotely and reduce wasteful expenditure. The coming in of video, audio, infographics in education content, rise of flipped classroom practices and social media use for education will also increase engagement of the learners and better internalization of education.

Third, the Focus of the Economy Will be the MSME Sector for a Long Time

An economic recovery is now expected from micro, small and medium enterprises spread across geographies and less from large businesses and multi-national corporations. Larger organizations will depend upon MSME for the supply of components and services as well. This will bring in a new era of entrepreneurship and search of better quality production at lesser costs.

Fourth, News and Entertainment Have Become Personalized and Digitized Majorly

Netflix in India grew eight times in the last 15 months. There has been a spurge of talent online. Even mainstream Bollywood and Hollywood films with A-list stars are being released online. Blockbusters will return to cinema theatres, but many small to medium budget films will have digital releases. Media revenues shall be much more rationalised with the use of analytics

and AI-enabled focused targeting of audiences. Personalized web-based media and entertainment will be more engrossing, engaging and creative in the ultimate analysis.

Fifth, People Have Finally Learnt to Operate Digital Payments to a Large Extent

Banking is changing for ever. Net banking, online financial transactions, the use of various digital payment options, buying and selling online are now commonplace. While urban India is expectedly catching up, rural India is also surprisingly taking it up, though digital divide prevents this transition in some places. It is the unavailability of stable digital connectivity that's hindering the process in rural India, and that is just a question of time.

Sixth, People's Healthcare Concerns Are Prime Now

Healthcare concerns and focus on safety and digital medical-care have come to



stay, also giving a fillip to investment in healthcare infrastructure, both by public and private sectors. Every nation's healthcare budget has gone up and private concerns and families are spending more on health and being more conscious about the safety of people. Sanitation drives across India, vaccination campaign today and the rise of digital healthcare will all contribute to this further.

Seventh, Business and Economic Priorities Are Changing Rapidly, and for a Long Time Now

The planet and people are have adapted to a new reality. The quality of life is defining development more than merely financial growth and GDP or stock market figures do not necessarily explain the economic health of a nation. Surely pharma, tech, food, wellness products and enterprises will go up the stock ladder in the times to come.

Eighth, Even Judiciary Is Evolving Fast for the Digital Age

Judicial hearings are going online. People are filing cases and responding digitally, and there is evidently pace in the process of justice, where the wheels have always been slow. Visionaries will now come and radically change the judicial systems

Banking is changing for ever. Net banking, online financial transactions, the use of various digital payment options, buying and selling online are now commonplace.



ahead. The ground is laid.

Ninth, Travel and Hospitality Will Have Paradigm Shift

While travel and hospitality will reduce in times of health scare and safety concerns, the quality and value of both will enhance and there will be an evolved model of travel and stay. People will focus more on eco-friendly travel, essential travel and healthy living more going ahead.

Tenth, More Leisure in Hands Will Give Rise to Better Quality of Quest and Life

With restricted lives and new digitally driven consumption patterns at large, there will be more research, product development, creation of art and culture, and better quality human resources. Family ties and relationships will gather steam, which will bring in a newer dimension in mental health and the quality of life.

Prof. Ujjwal K Chowdhury
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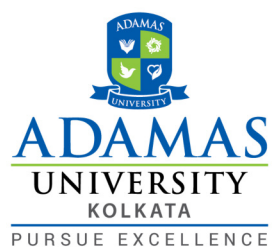
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