



ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

# NEWSLETTER

April – June 2020





**Anthropological Survey of India**  
**CENTRAL REGIONAL CENTRE**  
*Celebrates*  
**International Museum Day 2020**  
*One Day Webinar on:*  
**Anthropology and Pandemics: A Museum Perspective**

**Prof. Vinay Kumar Srivastava**  
Keynote Speaker

**Welcome Address By:**  
**Dr. Ratna Dhar**

**Speakers:**

**Sanjay Shukla**  
**Sudarshan Vaidya**  
**Banita Behera**  
**Sarabjeet Singh**  
**Siddharth Shit**

For Participation: <https://tinyurl.com/ybqz3ui>  
For any queries Email at: [imd2020\\_crc@gmail.com](mailto:imd2020_crc@gmail.com)

**18 TH MAY 2020**  
**10:30 am**  
**Onwards**

***Staying home and interaction with far distances-  
Observation of the International Museum Day, 2020***

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



*Dear Readers,*

I do not have the count, but in last two and a half months, beginning from May 2020, a large number of webinars have taken place all over the world on the COVID-19 pandemic, in which speakers from different academic specializations have made their presentations. I could attend some of them profitably. One of the observations of these speakers has been that in its wake, COVID-19 has popularized a battery of terms (and phrases) that earlier were not in currency. This certainly does not mean that they are newly coined – they are not as ‘novel’ as is the novel corona virus! These terms existed in our lexicon, but were used sparingly. Now they have become a part of our everyday conversations, discourses, and thoughts. I have in mind terms and phrases like lockdown, quarantine, face masks, social distancing,

isolation, Janata Curfew, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), thermal screening, sanitizer, and some currently less used but fast catching up, such as herd immunity, community spread, face shield, and super spreading. Information about the availability of appliances to be used for protecting one from the virus can be gathered from social media and newspapers, and so are the details about how some of these (such as face masks, sanitizers, even face shields) could be made at home.

Of vital significance is the difference between 'knowing a term' and 'realizing its implications, ground-level reality, and gravity'. The correctness of this distinction dawned on me in October 2009. Early morning of the day I was scheduled to leave for Indonesia on a lecture tour I was down with very high fever. Since it was a two weeks' demanding visit, expecting me to be in the pink of my health, I decided to seek the medical advice. The physician at the hospital, alarmed at my high temperature and clogged nose, directed me to the pathological laboratory for swine-flu and dengue tests. Incidentally, it was also the season when these fevers were rampant. When I told the doctor that I was booked on a late night flight to Jakarta, he advised me to cancel my ticket, lest I was prepared for a quarantine in a foreign country. He further told

me that since the current infection of swine-flu was taking an epidemic form, the airports had installed thermal scanners and the foreigners embarking on their lands were surveilled rigorously, so your febrile body would not remain undetected. He also warned me that my temperature was not going to normalize in few hours or even a couple of days. It would require sustained treatment and rest for quite some time.

What scared me was the possibility of being quarantined in a foreign land. I had heard of 'quarantine leave' as a type of leave, which was granted to an employee for a maximum period of twenty-one days on the recommendation of a medical board in case he had contracted an infectious disease, but I did not know the expectations from a 'quarantined sick'. What sent chill down my spine was the treatment I would be meted out in a 'quarantine home', away from home; and predictably, if I were to be quarantined, the duty for which I was flying to Jakarta would remain unattended. It was better, I thought, to incur the financial loss (the money spent on buying the air tickets) and tender an apology to the institution that had extended me invitation, than to face the ignominy of stigma and discrimination. The test report which came a couple of days later revealed



**Few words matter more**



that I suffered from influenza, which was resolved in a week, after recurrent episodes of fever (both high and low) and general malaise.

The inference I wish to draw from the above case is that the terms and phrases we now frequently use were known to most of us in pre-coronavirus days as well, but they did not have the same import at that time as they now have. The fact is that the term quarantine, for instance, did not judder the body then as it does now. Unforgettable were the shockwaves I had when after the health checkup in Asansol on way to Kolkata in June 2020, the health officer, after issuing me the entry pass, told me that I would be in quarantine for fourteen days, following all the protocols correctly, and I knew

the legal actions I was liable to face in case the norms were disobeyed, or I jumped quarantine. I had read in *The Hindu* (6 April 2020) that in Delhi, the health department had given the police the contact details of some 25,000 people who were home-quarantined, of whom 176 were legally booked for violating it. On surprise checks, it was found either they were not following the norms of social distancing and face masking, or had gone out of the house. Some were caught in the markets when the not so-easily washable home-quarantine stamp mark was noted on the back of their palm or forearm. Besides the date on which the skin was stamped, the mark read: "Proud to Protect. Delhiites, Home Quarantined." Throughout India, the matter of the stamp mark remained the same, what differed was the name of the place; suppose it was Mumbai, then was written "Mumbaikars". If it was a case of confirmed COVID-19 case, then the round stamp read "Patient under Home Isolation", and the date till when the patient would be in that state was also written. When the person was suspected to have been infected, he was 'quarantined', but when he was a confirmed case, then it was a case of 'isolation'.

I also knew that it was not just police that was keeping vigil on the home-quarantined and home-isolated, and the others (like security guards) tasked for enforcing the rules, but also the neighbours who kept an eagle eye on the others, checking who was stepping out of the house unmasked, who was infringing upon the mores of social distancing, or who was littering the area. Social policing, as I may call it, involved besides neighbourly reprimand, taking pictures of the infringers of rules and sharing these with the WhatsApp groups and the other social media sites. On certain occasions, these gentle strategies of public shaming, took a more formal turn. In one instance (reported in *The Times of India*, 24 April 2020), a resident of the Commonwealth Games Village Flats in Delhi moved the High Court complaining that the locals were violating the lockdown norms. The residents were regularly going out to walk in the park. Neither

**Annexure-I**

Undertaking on Self-isolation

I, Dr. P. K. Singh, Resident D-11/35 of Sector-3, Rohini, being diagnosed as a confirmed case of COVID-19, do hereby voluntarily undertake to maintain strict self-isolation at all times for the prescribed period. During the period I shall monitor my health and those around me and interact with the assigned surveillance team with the call center (22301014, 22301025, 22302441, 22307133, 22304565, 22307745, 22307135, 22307145, 22300012, 22300018) in case I suffer from any deteriorating symptoms or any of my close family contacts develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

I have been explained in detail about the precautions that I need to follow while I am under self-isolation.

I am liable to be acted on under the prescribed law for any non-compliance to self-isolation protocol.

Signature: [Signature]  
 Date: 5/4/20  
 Contact Number: 9810282610

Name of Care Giver: Kuldeep Singh  
 Signature: [Signature]  
 Contact Number: [Blank]

SHOT ON Redmi 11  
 AGAIN, COVERA

**Undertaking on self-isolation**

were they maintaining social distance, nor wearing the mandatory mask.

It was certainly heartening to note the people transcending their allegiance to neighbourly ties to repose their firm faith in rules. No more was an urban neighbourhood an epitome of anonymity; people were interested in knowing what the others were doing. If someone was having a gathering of friends or relatives in his house, he was cautioned of the consequences. A friend of mine who lives in Rohini (West Delhi) told me of an incident from his gated community that happened on one of the days (22 June) of the Unlock-01. A neighbour died of COVID-19, and his wife was admitted to the hospital with acute respiratory distress. The family members of the sick had not shared this information with the other residents. Soon the news spread. On hearing this, a man came to his balcony from where he started shouted, soon to be joined in chorus by his other kin, admonishing the entire neighbourhood for opening the gate, allowing the vegetable and fruit sellers to peddle in, and not keeping a check on the entry of outsiders. While it was interpreted by some as an instance of his grievance against those residents who had disallowed his milk vendor to come in early that month, but it was a sure case of social policing and active intervention in the free movement of outsiders in the block. A consequence of this was that the security guards became far more watchful about the enforcement of the norms and regulating the traffic.

The Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) have become extraordinarily active and responsible these days. From social bodies, playing the role of organizing festivals and cultural programmes, looking after the upkeep of the park, if any, and taking care of the issues of security, they have become assistants to law-enforcers, for they have grasped the scientific facts about the corona illness, disseminating these with its members and harping on them through WhatsApp that it is in the interest of all that the procedures for combating the corona virus are assiduously followed. At the entry gate

to the residential area, dispensers of sanitizer are being kept, and each entrant (whether an inmate or a visitor) is expected to use it before stepping in, and the guards note down the details (particularly the mobile number) of the visitors. The great contribution of this all-round policing, both internal and external, is making people aware of the fact that 'protecting one amounts to protecting the others' and 'protecting the others amounts to protecting oneself.' The 'others' may be one's family members; or they could be the anonymous crowd. As the medical activities of health professionals have been found to be germ-spreading, a medical condition termed iatrogenesis, in a similar way, provisions coming to the house or family members returning home after work might bring in the 'dangerous guest', to recapitulate the words of the Queen of Denmark (uttered on 18 March 2020) about the corona. The need of the hour, the RWAs have emphasized, is to be in a state of exemplary vigilance.

'The virus has to be exterminated.' 'Adopt all measures to burst it.' One hears statements like these in upper middle class colonies. The ideas that make rounds here are: the polythene milk or vegetable bags have to be cleaned and sanitized before scissoring them; the newspapers must be kept under sun for a couple of hours before reading; the clothes one wore while going out must be washed properly and the wearer of those should bathe immediately; food should be piping hot when eaten; social distancing must be observed within the household as well even when the members are well; all door handles, mobiles, bells, flight-railings, must be sanitized; in a nutshell, all-out efforts should be made to keep the 'corona out'. At this juncture, it is emphatically reiterated that we should not feel demoralized in this combat. With a positive frame of mind, we must collectively work towards creating a corona-free world. I remember the words of an Iraqi gentleman: "The way in which we fought the ISIS, in the same way we shall fight the corona" (NDTV, 24 July 2020).



To the scientific facts, people have added the contemporarily well-advertised cultural practices, such as: consuming *amla* fruit (Indian gooseberry, *Phyllanthus emblica*), the preparations from *giloy* (heart-leaved moonseed, *Tinospora cordifolia*) and *ashwagandha* (winter cherry, *Withania somnifera*), drinking hot water, avoiding fast foods, performing yogic asana, etc.; the main objective of having a recourse to these practices is to build immunity, for it is oft-repeated that those with high immunity have braved corona better without succumbing to it than those with feeble immunity. I have also noted that certain products added the word ‘immunity’ in their advertisements; for instance, the advertisement in a national newspaper (*The Telegraph*, 25 July 2020, Front Half Page) for one of the rice bran oils says: “Welcome, great immunity and a healthier heart.” At the bottom, an important line is: ‘Immunity up, cholesterol down.’ An interesting area of investigation, I think, will

be to compare this advertisement with the earlier, pre-corona, advertisements of this oil to check whether the word ‘immunity’ was used or given the sort of prominence which it now receives. A large number of preparations have flooded the markets purportedly to boost immunity. Because people are today over-consuming a lot of herbal preparations (particularly a local concoction called *karha*) and traditional Indian spices to enhance immunity, according to a report published in a Hindi newspaper (*City Bhaskar*, 25 July 2020), they are suffering from stomach ailments, including ulcers. The point I was trying to make earlier receives further support here – we knew that immunity resists illnesses, but in a conscious and diligent way, we never tried to build it up in a manner in which we trying to do it now. In other words, concepts which were peripheral to our thinking earlier have now come to the centre, engaging our attention and concern.



***Social distancing is communication without close physical proximity.***



Anthropologists would like to know how rural and tribal communities have handled the corona crisis. A security guard who works in Kolkata and resides in a village almost 120 kilometers away from his office told me that whenever a person returned to the village (his native place) from another state and could be a potential transmitter of the infection, his house was sealed on the advice of the Village Club, an informal body besides the council (*panchayat*), which has been established particularly on the initiative of the young people. All sides of the house were barricaded with bamboo poles so that none of the household members could go out. The family was provided with all provisions they needed, for which the Club spent from its corpus fund. Later, after the period of quarantine was over, the family could repay the expenses incurred on it in case it had the monetary capacity.

If the returnee or any one from his household fell ill with flu-like symptoms, the health workers were instantaneously informed, who arrived with an ambulance to transport the sick to the hospital. Since each house is equipped with latrines and the facility of tap water, and the food items were made available, the need to go out did not arise. Although people know, the guard told me, the Club considered its earnest duty to tell the family to wear masks, observe social distancing, wash their hands regularly for twenty seconds with soap, and refrain from picking their nose, or putting their finger in the mouth, or rubbing their face. Each day, one of the Club members would visit that household and enquire about the well-being of its dwellers. The entire process of quarantining (or what is locally called 'bamboo-barricading') was humanistic. My interlocutor knew of the cases from West Bengal where the people coming from outside were made to spend two weeks outside the village, make their own flimsy huts, or even live on trees, and arrange for their food, and thought this was against the *manusa dharma* (the 'religion of humanity'). For him, the experience of quarantining, shocking as it was, was destined to stay in the mind of the person forever, and if it was harrowing, it would fill him

with hatred for humanity. It would be injurious not only for him, but for the entire village community. 'Anyone can fall ill at any time, anyone could be bamboo-barricaded any time.' On listening to that I instantly thought that corona has made each one of us reflective, and also, an anthropologist!

These days I am speaking (on phone) to people (my friends and relatives, and those known to them) on their variegated experiences of the fear-saturated world. My conversations point towards the unevenness of the experiences – my domestic help feared suffering from 'hunger virus', because her husband who worked with a mason as a labourer was without work, because all construction activities had halted, and also, she was not getting any financial help from the houses where she worked. Her sole support came from my wife who arranged to send her money. The Delhi state had urged the employers to extend help to those who worked for them, but the economic rationality desisted them from making any payment for the days when the work was not done.

By comparison, upper middle classes were comfortably placed. Their worry was pivoted on corona infection. They did everything possible to protect them from the virus. These families saved money by staying at home, but spent generously on buying sanitizers, disinfectants, fumigants, infrared thermometers and digital thermometers, oximeters, and other protective equipment. In India, by contrast, where 84 million people are poor, according to a report of 2017, people do not have money to buy the things (face masks, sanitizers, soaps) that could protect them from infections. My submission has always been that while analyzing the responses of people to the present-day crisis, the reality of economic classes should not be missed out. Truly, some people can work from home, but some have to go out to seek work. Work from home is meaningless for them. My driver or domestic help cannot work from home; they have to come to my house to work. The rosy picture of what people did during the lockdown – they painted, learnt music,

wrote books and articles, did what they had been longing for, parked them before the television sets, or relaxed and recuperated their worn-out bodies – is class-bound. An anthropologist cannot ignore the marginalized communities, the plight of what has aptly been called the ‘walking class’, the hordes and hordes of people treading on foot to their native abodes, hungry and thirsty, bearing the scorching heat, being beaten *en route* and sprayed with disinfectants, and getting FIRs registered against them for violation of the protocols of lockdown.

What is mirthful for one class is a nightmare for the other. My discomfort is fathomless when I hear people (especially anthropologists) singing the paeans of staying at home, admiring the nature, getting excited on the return of lost birds, sighting of the hitherto eclipsed mountains, clearing of the murky pollution, in a nutshell, the process of the healing of earth. This is what we are able to see. What we are not able to see is the pile of miseries the poor are made to suffer. It has been correctly



**You are Marked, We will keep Watch on You.**

noted that pandemics bring to the surface the vast social inequalities, aggravate these, accentuate the discontent, and sow the seeds of new social movements.

COVID-19 is not the first pandemic, and certainly, it is not going to be the last. The history of pandemics is traced to the Athenian Plague of 430-426 B.C. With each pandemic, we have learnt fresh lessons. Among the many lessons that the COVID-19 has taught us is that much damage has been done by misinformation (and infodemic) about the disease and also the measures to control it have been presented in punitive terms. The result is before us. Lockdown has been seen as a curtailment of one's freedom, so are the practices of quarantining and isolating.

What is needed is a kind of ‘medical socialization’ in the new viral disease, so that its causes and treatments are crystal clear to us. Knowledge about illness should not be held esoterically, that is to say, only the specialists know and the others should remain rock-passive. Of course, the specialists would treat, they would put into operation the curative strategies, but knowledge about the diseases should be democratically and correctly available, in the easiest possible terms and should be comprehensible. The quackery has to be pitilessly purged, because this is a contrivance to make money by feasting on the vulnerability of people during pandemics, and to capitalize on their agony, or to promote a particular ideology or line of thinking.

If these steps are devotedly taken, then we shall be able to see lockdown, quarantine, or isolation, for instance, in a proper perspective, knowing its benefits, instead of being ensnared in a wide variety of emotions of fear, anxiety, perplexity, and anger.

**Vinay Kumar Srivastava**  
**Director**



## RESEARCH UPDATE

**T**he truth of human civilization is to maintain its own pace in spite of spinning around odd times. Those may be the periods of war or natural disaster or any period that is capable of hampering the usual rhythm of life in all spheres. The aim of our vocation is to understand the current pulse of our society, with keen observation as well as close interactions with people in order to understand the facts of people's life in coping with the hard times. Undoubtedly, the current pandemic situation of COVID-19 has affected the traditional anthropological practices of firsthand interactions with societies/communities.

During the last quarter, our scholars were engaged in finalizing the reports of studies among various communities under National Project,

“Anthropological Study of De-notified, Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic Communities”. In addition, we have finalized the reports on the De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic communities as desired by the NITI Aayog, Government of India.

Apart from those scheduled research activities we took initiative on recording of personal experiences of lockdown, quarantining, cases of corona in neighbourhood, or any personal experiences of fear, feeling of lowliness, extending help to others, feeling of pain of others during the pandemic situation, under a perceptive feature, *“COVID-19: Experiences and Emergence Issues”*.

Here we would like to share some of these experiences:



*COVID warriors in armour*



## *The COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact on Human Life*

**T**he Coronavirus pandemic is the greatest health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge to humanity after WWII. Since its emergence in Asia late last year, the virus has spread to every continent except Antarctica. Along with health crises it also is a socio-economic crisis and affects every aspect of human life. Every day, people are losing jobs and income and are facing a bleak future. People are also succumbing to the disease in thousands every day and those who are Corona-positive are creating extraordinary stress on our health care systems with the shortage of infrastructure facilities, doctors, nurses, medicines, protective kits, etc.

### *Where did it come from?*

China initially blamed the US army for spreading the virus, but the world knows that Wuhan city of China was where the COVID-19 originated. China alerted the WHO about the cases of unusual pneumonia in Wuhan first on December 31, 2019, although the virus had already started spreading in November that year. On February 7th, Chinese researchers said that the virus could have spread from an infected animal to humans through illegally trafficked pangolins prized all over Asia for food and medicine.

### *Timeline*

December 31st 2019:	China alerts the WHO
January 7th 2020:	France confirms the first positive case
January 11th 2020:	China announces the 1st death due to Corona virus
January 13th 2020:	WHO reports COVID-19 cases from Thailand

January 30th 2020:	WHO declares outbreak of a global health emergency
February 2nd 2020:	Philippines reports the 1st death due to this virus
February 7th 2020:	Chinese doctor/whistleblower dies
February 11th 2020:	WHO names Virus COVID-19
February 14th 2020	Egypt confirms Africa's 1st case
March 11th 2020	WHO declares the virus a pandemic

### *Role of WHO*

The WHO recommended basic hygienic practices such as washing hands with soap and water, using mask and covering mouth with elbow when sneezing and coughing, avoiding touching face, eyes, and mouth with unwashed hands, maintaining social distancing at least six feet between yourself and others, avoiding unnecessary, unprotected contact with animals and making sure to thoroughly wash hands after contact.

### *Situation in India*

When our Prime Minister declared from national television channels a national lockdown for three weeks at 8 pm on the 24th of March 2020, most States of the Northeast India were not affected. The hill tribal States of the region were still returning zero COVID-positive cases even in mid-April. Some people had begun to think that tribal way of life might have something to do about the prevention of the spread of the pandemic because even the tribal states outside the Northeast like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh were hardly affected by this pandemic till then.



We were all quite shocked when, on the 15th April, the death of a famous doctor, called Dr. John Sailo, was reported by the local newspapers. His son-in-law who was an Air India pilot, was back from New York some days back but was asymptomatic and tested negative. So, it was a matter of wild guess about who might be the source of infection. This led to a kind of panic situation in the city and many city dwellers were scared even to pass through the area where the doctor's hospital was situated.

### *Impact on our lives*

When I look back the past five months or so of this year, it has clearly affected me and everyone around me in many ways. When the lockdown was first announced it was very scary and it seemed that the whole world came to a grinding halt suddenly. We were lucky that we were living in Shillong full of lush green trees and plants and a lot of open spaces for walking around. But before the spread of this pandemic we hardly appreciated the natural beauty and the opportunities that a campus living provided. We had no time for appreciating what we had. We never heard the chirpings of birds, sounds of insects, or the sound of the small rivulets formed by the monsoon.

The lockdown gave us a rare opportunity to appreciate nature and see it heal itself, which is evident from the return of squirrels, centipedes, butterflies, birds, honey bees, etc., to our campus. The lockdown also gave us the opportunity to rediscover our long-lost hobbies of reading, writing, cooking, gardening, etc. Even the children seem to be happy with a free access to their parents' mobile phones, as online classes became the new normal for them as well. This was also the time we understood the value of our maids and their services which we often took for granted.

Turning home into an office was another challenge. Adjusting to online work with a rather fluctuating internet connectivity in the Northeast needed extra effort, time and patience. Yet we could manage most of our activities online. Although



***Mask, hand-wash and sacred thread (taga) - comprehensive preventive measures against COVID-19***

life does not feel complete without meeting people, shaking hands or hugging them, sharing food with neighbours and friends, visiting people in houses and hospitals, etc., we slowly learnt how to cope with the new situation. Although we maintained physical distance, we did not let the social distance grow between us and our loved ones.

### ***Conclusion***

The future looks uncertain, what with contradictory statements even from authoritative sources like the WHO, but at the same time the news about the progress made towards developing anti-COVID vaccines and medicines keeps us hopeful and encourages us to look forward to travelling around the country and returning to the pre-COVID life once again. But will the life after COVID-19 be ever like the one before COVID-19? I can only hope so.

***Rip Roshina Gowloog***



## *Suraksha Kavach: The Amulet*

In its long trail, life has got experiences from different happenings. Disasters are cruel. They may not hit our life directly but teach us unforgettable lessons. Devastating flood in Bengal in 1978; earthquake and tsunami in Andaman in 2004, and the current COVID-19 pandemic are three examples of disaster, perhaps enough to teach us the importance of life.

In 1978, I was eight years old, staying in a low-lying village rented house. It rained incessantly for days. Those days, the All India Radio was the only medium of getting update. I remember, most of the villagers, particularly living in thatched huts were evacuated by neighbours, and provided shelter in nearby schools. The villagers, having double-storied houses, offered space to families to keep their belongings. Community kitchen services were initiated in schools. Though the village was

predominantly inhabited by Brahmins, there was no social barrier in helping out one another during the flood. Those days, neither NGOs nor local administrations were equipped with disaster management. For more than a month, the villagers appeared to be a single social unit in coping with the disaster.

In 2004, we studied several remote islands for assessment of the impact of tsunami on people. The administration ran tsunami camps. Each camp mourned the death of close kin. However, the society was powerfully alive. No one was alone. Erasing territorial demarcations, people engaged in healing the wounds of others. The message was: 'we are not alone'. Camps were dependent on doles for years, till they were rehabilitated. If someone's quota was exhausted early, another one unhesitatingly shared his portion.



*Spirituality and Practices- a canvas document on overcoming the pandemic situation*



I could remember our lives those days in the CPWD quarters at Port Blair. Everyone was scared. The residents of each building were living like a single unit: a common kitchen for few days, sharing garage space for sleeping and looking after the neighbours' children by the elderly. This made us realize that 'we are one', despite the differences of culture and rank.

By contrast, the present pandemic is forcing us in our pigeonholes, with more individualist approaches and practices. Panic buying, hiding facts, suspicious watch on next-door neighbours generate a new form of narrative, the 'neo-normal'. The norm of 'social distancing' builds barricades between families and individuals. People are scared for close contact, even extending Samaritan visits. Mask is now an essential preventive measure against disease contamination; simultaneously the pandemic situation is unmasking the fear of sudden uncertainty, which is pushing us to psychic numbing.

Under such suffocating circumstances, we are dependent upon our kin. Let me narrate some of my personal episodes, but before that, I would like to share one of my childhood experiences. I remember losing my amulet from the waist, when I was in standard three. In Bengali, it is called *maduli* with *kaar*; thick red or black cotton thread for tying amulet around neck or left arm or waist. I got that amulet from my mother. It was around her neck as a protective measure while I was in the womb. After my birth, I was made to wear it with

the same objective. When it was lost, my parents were anxious and scolded me for losing it. Everyone started searching it. Finally, a neighbour found it. Since it had broken, my grandmother repaired it. Then, I wore it around my neck so it was visible. My grandmother used to narrate the story of *kavach* and *kundal* of Karna. They were protective shields, being given by Surya on Karna's birth. During the great war of the *Kurushketra*, Karna's *kavach* and *kundal* were taken away by Indra with trick.

The story of *kavach* and *kundal* tells us about being safe and secure, which may be designated by the term *suraksha*. So any type of amulet like *maduli*, *taabiz* or *dhaga* is a *suraksha kavach* (a sacred object aiming to protect against dangers). Moreover, I also learnt about

herbs which prevent or cure illnesses, such as tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), vasaka (*Justicia adhatoda*), neem (*Azadirachta indica*), Aqua ptychotis, Arnica,

Prolonged pandemic situation has made us more sensitive to kinship relations. Each experience revolves round a single idea: Who would be my last support? Domestic provisions were almost exhausted, when country wide lockdown was imposed. We had to purchase at least the essential items, but I was prevented by my mother from going out. She is 72 years old, surviving with a plate-fixed broken leg and lost her husband a couples of months ago. My father was a pensioner. As per norm, after the death of a pensioner, some formalities are essential to convert that pension into family pension. However, she was reluctant to settling the things immediate to final rites of



**Different purposes with common practices**



my father.

By that time the city was trying to restore into her pace. I thought we could hire a vehicle and visit the bank. When I discussed it, my mother rejected my proposal. She said: “*babu tor baba kodin aage chole gelo. Banke esob korte giye kono bhabe jodi corona hoye jae. Amar kotha chhar. Jodi tor kichhu hoye jae!...*” (‘Just few months back I lost your father. By chance we would get infected during visiting the bank! Forget about me. If any miserable [thing] happens with you!’). I took her into confidence that we would take utmost precautions, but she said: “*amar bidhoba pension-r cheye tor sustho benche thaka boro dorkar. Tor kichhu hoye gele ei bhanga paa niye kothay jabo. Amar pension chaina babu. Tui amay duto bhate-bhat khaote parbina! Amar kichhu r chaina*” (‘Your healthy life is more precious than widow pension. If something happens to you, where I will [seek] refuge at this age with my broken leg! Won’t you provide me a square of meal with bare nominal arrangements? I don’t want anything else.’). While I am concerned about the conversion of my father’s pension into widow pension, for my mother, in current situation her son’s existence is more important than securing the monthly pension.

Corona virus has made its own portrait as devil and destruction. A micro-organism has overshadowed our daily living with ‘sustained fear’, as it was described in the jungle adventure of *Man-eaters of Kumaon* by Jim Corbett. The virus can jump on anybody indiscriminately at anytime and consequence may be miserable to the victim. Days are passing with recurring fear of virus infection. One morning my mother reminded me that on a particular day, *bipodttarini puja* would be performed at my in-law family and I should not forget to visit. *Bipodttarini* is a folk deity of Bengal, worshipped as one of the incarnations of *shakti* cult *durga* or *chandi*. She is worshipped either on Tuesday or Saturday of fifth day of waxing moon in the month of Ashad. This year it was observed on 27th and 30th June. Meanwhile I was also receiving consecutive calls from my mother-in-

law, asking me to attend the puja. I replied her I would try my best to come as I already had some other occupation on that day. I assured her that in case I failed to come on that day, I would visit her the following day. To this she said: “*baba dekhteito pachho, charpase shudhu coronar khobor. joto kaaj thak ei bartay tumi obosyoi niye jeyo. Barite choto bachha, maa, amra achhi. Tomar kachhe thakle amader moner shanti*” (‘My son! from everywhere we are receiving devastating news of corona. Please find sometime despite your preoccupation and collect that sacred thread. That will [give] solace [to us]).’ As I dropped the phone, my mother repeated the same sentiments: “*susthobhabe benche thakle anek kaaj korte parbi. Sanibar o bari giye taga ta niye asbi*” (‘If you would be alive healthy, you would get ample opportunities to do things as per [your] schedule. You must visit there on Saturday and collect it without fail.’). Responses of two elderly ladies threw me back to that incident of losing *maduli* (amulet). Recapitulating my grandmother’s narration on *kavach* and *kundal* of Karna, I did not want to ignore their advice.

I went and collected the *bipodttarini taga*. My mother-in-law was very happy to see me. I asked her, should I now avoid wearing mask or washing hands with ‘prescribed’ sanitizer, since I have already secured the *bipodttarini taga*. Her reply was: “*na baba, eta moner shantir jonye riti. Mask, hath doa ta chherona*” (‘No, my son! this ritual is only for mental satisfaction. Don’t discard mask and washing hands with sanitizer’). Her reply made me realize, how *dawa-daru-dua* has found its own space in socio-cultural life. A human being is not merely limited to its physical entity, but also a comprehensive identity of body-mind-soul, where we all need to be supported by medicines (physical substance), taboos/norms (belief system), goodwill (spiritual support), and that to be taken care of by our family and kinship relations, as the most admired and valuable *suraksha kavach* of life and society.

**Subhra Sankha Barik**



*Amidst uncertainty - life and livelihood*

## ***Reflections on Covid-19***

**T**he world has changed. The way we used to see the world has changed considerably since January 2020. The emergence of a miniscule virus has changed the entire world. Humans are being challenged for their very existence. And all of this is because of COVID-19, a virus originated in China from an unknown source.

It was in December 2019, the first case of novel coronavirus was reported in Wuhan, China, and thereafter it spread all over the world. At present more than 200 countries are battling with the virus pandemic and the hardest suffering countries are the US, Brazil and India.

In India the first case was detected in January 2020 and after six months it reached almost 7 lakhs. People of the country are now accustomed with the terminology 'lockdown', 'social distancing', 'home quarantine', etc., In India, the lockdown was first introduced on 22nd March 2020. Initially people were abiding by the rules, partly due to fear of unknown virus and partly due to administration's strict implementation of law and order. But gradually people started coming out of their homes due to various obligations, and the result of that is that the virus is now spreading in galloping speed.

COVID-19 has made a deep impact on the mindset



of the people. Total shutdown has made people more vulnerable, especially marginal communities. Initially people were shocked when all of a sudden everything came to stand still, starting from the railways to bus, airplanes, shops, shopping malls, theater halls, almost everything. As a result, we see how the situation turned violent in Gujarat and Maharashtra when the news broke that the special train would not run. People saw the news of the horror death of migrant workers on a railway track while they were taking rest on the track. People became scared, they wanted to shift to their safe houses in their village or town. This mad rush of migrant workers only shows the real situation of unorganized labour in India. They lose their jobs and shelter and with the shortage of food; making them more vulnerable and desperate. This creates 'the steep blow on the die' for the Indian economy which is already in slowing down stage in respect of industrial growth and Gross Domestic Product. To recover from this unwarranted situation, the Indian economy has to come out in leaps and bounds as soon as possible. Otherwise, especially the marginal people will suffer more in hunger than for virus.

In COVID-19 lockdown situation, apart from the marginal people, other most common sufferers are the children and old people. Both of them eagerly require company but they are not getting it due to 'social distance' norm. Children are unable to meet their friends and over and above they have to attend online classes. Constantly looking at mobile or laptop is creating eye problems to them. This makes their cases more strenuous and sometimes frustrating. Childhood all of a sudden has been imprisoned in their own homes. Old people, who generally do not like to use the technology and depend on others, are in great difficulty. Moreover, as reported, old people are the worst victims of the virus. As I can see in my parent's psychological stage, there is always fear about virus and they keep themselves in self-isolation. They are in a traumatic stage and very unlikely to come out of that stage anytime soon.

People by and large are very much suspicious and sometimes over-reactive when the news of virus affliction breaks in the neighborhood. Report has been published that neighbours are harassing the doctors, health workers and others who are associated with the fight with Corona virus. Even dead bodies are not allowed to be cremated in the cremation ground. These incidents only depict that people are not fully aware of the virus and the reason of its spread.

The opposite scenario also co-exists. People have become desperate while some are ignorant as well. The Government has repeatedly been warning everyone to wear masks to contain the spread of virus but we can see some people are least bothered about the warnings. As a result, society at large suffers. Government, doctors are continuously warning not to create crowds but people are enjoying in the bazars. Hardly one can distinguish that the lockdown is going on. People are gathering in the tea shops for gossiping and all this eventually defeats the very purpose of the administration to contain the spread of virus.

It is a paradoxical situation for the administration. Due to economic obligation, it is not wise to continue with complete lockdown situation for prolonged period. On the contrary, if people come out in large numbers then the fear of community spreading of virus will increase as we are going through some uncertain period where no one knows when this pandemic will be over. But maintaining few precautions we can come out of this adverse situation ultimately. It is important to maintain physical distancing. As in this challenging situation we need social support and not social isolation. The role of social media in this respect is very significant. Above all, humanity should not be forgotten. The battle for survival has begun and hopefully we all shall overcome it some day.

***Subrata Majumdar***

## *Experiences in Pandemic*

**I**n the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lockdown restrictions were put in force. Living in lockdown for months have brought about some inevitable changes in most of us. Now, we have started to observe our surroundings more conscientiously. While sitting down to jot down my experiences of the pandemic, I decided to write about the changes I observed in my neighbourhood and my inner resentment of accepting the 'new normal'.

Initial few weeks of the lockdown were quite unsettling, adjusting to a new lifestyle and systemising my daily schedule accordingly. With time, the things started falling in a pattern. With restricted movement, only household necessities

had to be prioritized. Unknowingly and definitely unwillingly, we have learnt to simplify our lives and live with the bare necessities. At leisure times, I began noticing my surroundings more and the changes that have come. The sky has become clearer and nature has revitalised. The ever-distressing vehicular noise and pollution have drastically reduced. Pleasantly, the number of birds has increased. Those days, sometimes I used to spend time watching the lush green surroundings and the birds, the number of which has visibly increased. My backyard is usually frequented by the common crow, pigeon, mynah and the nightingale; the newest additions were the woodpecker and *haldipakhi* (black-hooded oriole). It occurred to be that as if nature has reset the clock. It kindled in me



*A relief from unstoppable anxiety*



a new urge to give food-crumbs and water to these birds. This sudden urge became a habit and now, I often take time-off to stand out in my balcony and enjoy the chirruping of the birds and the beauty that surrounds us. In the evening, I always go for a walk to a nearby park. Though in the initial days of the lockdown, I restrained myself from going for such walks but slowly I regained my old habit. The park is usually infrequented and now it was more solitary. On my way to the park in the evening, I noticed how the streets have now been taken over by street-dogs. With no people and no vehicles, the dogs lay lazily throughout the roads, unhindered, with scant concerns, as if it were their own territory. This reminded me of a news coverage on how animals are coming out on the streets of large metropolitan cities as an outcome of our encroachment to their habitat for building our, thus affecting their well-being. On a brighter side, there are individuals who care for animals and even in these trying times, there people distribute food to them. Such acts of kindness and concern always need to be applauded, so that it is imbibed in more and more people.

Confined and with limited direct interactions, mostly with either the ones who are coming to office or with our family members, most of us resorted to virtual interactions. Calling each other and enquiring about their well-being or active sharing

over the social media, I realised that this was more of 'physical distancing' than 'social distancing'. Through neighbours and friends from various cities of India, I often heard stories of how doctors unwillingly saw patients, unavailability of beds in hospitals and ruthless ignorance from neighbours for patients. During such a predicament, isn't it natural to feel afraid and helpless?

It so happened that one day I had called an acquaintance, who stays alone in this city. As expected in this situation, the conversation began with enquiries of mutual well-being. His reply sent a chill down my spine when he mentioned that he has been suffering from fever accompanied by breathing issues. I got alarmed as the symptoms were similar to the COVID-19 symptoms. My worry was further compounded by the fact that he stays alone in the city and how the subsequent issues will be taken care of. Somehow concealing my worry, I enquired if he has consulted a doctor. Though he replied in affirmative, he mentioned that the medicines were not giving him any relief. Instead of raising his anxiety, I advised him to visit a government hospital hoping that doctors at the hospital would conduct the corona tests if required and admit him. He then confessed to me that going to a hospital might be difficult as the cabs might refuse to carry him seeing his condition. Subsequently, the situation was sorted out as I booked a vehicle

from the company that provides vehicle to our office and I asked him to tell the driver that he was going to see his friend at the hospital. Understandably, he agreed and he visited the hospital the following day. It was a great relief when he called and confirmed that it was just a common flu and my anxiety waned. This incident made me think repeatedly how fear of the unknown has gripped us all. It is not fear but situations like this, calls for awareness and small gestures of cooperation that will take us a long way.



*A free soul in lockdown*

**Umesh Kumar**

## *Memoirs from the Lockdown Days*

**T**he current precarious situation is something none of us had experienced before. One can perceive the response in a risky situation but all speculations and preparations fail when the risk is not remotely known to humankind.

Until 25 March, 2020, we did not perceive the consequences of COVID-19, even though other countries were already under lockdown. With the imposition of lockdown, we all were suddenly pushed to a state of alert and anxiety of the 'unknown'. Now, coming out of the four phases of lockdown, we have actually seen the transition from 'normal' to a 'new normal'. Through this transition, we saw the emergence of new policies, breaking of old regulations, drastic changes in the social life and lastly, serendipity.

In the present context, I felt appropriate to use the word 'serendipity' to define the sudden togetherness within each family. Thriving through the confinement, old bonds have renewed and have hyped our dependence on technology in every possible way.

When I was asked to bring together my notions of the current pandemic situation, I decided to pen down my recollections. When the first lockdown was announced by our Hon'ble Prime Minister, I had mixed feelings. The very first day I felt like any other holiday but inevitably, I was filled with apprehension in the following days. When news poured in about people stuck away from their family and home, I undeniably felt fortunate to be with my family. With each passing day, both the



*Humming, an ambulance and then pin-drop silence*



print and online media had updates of COVID-19 and continuous awareness broadcasts for the public. We comprehended that my mother, who is a cancer-survivor, is extremely vulnerable in such a situation and this further increased our worry. As the lockdown days progressed, with the change in daily life and social life alongside the work schedule, the feeling of apprehension was now accompanied by exasperation. During one of our visits to the hospital for chemotherapy, we had a bitter experience with a cab driver denied to give us a ride the moment he heard that there was a 'patient' with us. On similar lines, one of the news reported that a middle-aged lady was simply ignored in a busy area of Kolkata, when she fell ill. People did not go ahead to help her suspecting she might be suffering from corona. Ultimately she succumbed to her illness. H.P. Lovecraft was so apt in saying: "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown". In this situation 'fear' is necessary for mutual safety but again, some sense of duty is expected from each of us than just effortless ignorance.

Subsequently, a mishap happened in my family due to the sudden demise of my father. The pandemic-exigency situation was further aggravated by this loss. With the lockdown in place, we patiently strived to overcome this situation and completed all the funeral rituals as much as possible.

With a melancholic state of mind, we started to move on with our daily life. Through the second and the third lockdown, my occasional visit to the local market made me realize that there has indeed been a drastic behavioural change. Even with innumerable awareness campaigns and lockdown-violation rules in place, the markets were always over-crowded. Yet, I saw the mass wearing masks, gloves, washing their hands and asking others to do the same. This was indeed a huge behavioural change, given the daily habits of the population and the newly developed consciousness of keeping each other safe. A sprinkle of humour

sometimes crossed my mind observing the long queues and heavily-crowded Sunday market that the *khadyo-roshik* (foodie) Bengali will never compromise on their meals.

The lockdown was a blessing in disguise. Being home, allowed me to involve myself in household activities. When my mother was busy with other household chores, I cleaned through my old things. I had moments of reminiscence when I turned through the pages of my old diary. I started painting again and found time to read books that were long left unread. There were also times when I read out books to my mother.

By the time the period of 'unlock' began, I realized that we had slowly got accustomed to these changes and it was no longer exasperating. We have started to look at the future with the new normal in place. Time and again we kept hearing the words like 'lonely' and 'isolated'. But, there are many who stay home all alone for days together. Maybe, amidst all the bitter lockdown experiences, this pandemic situation ensured some quality time with our near and dear ones, for the ones who were otherwise lonely. When nature was healing, we have learnt how to hold ourselves accountable in taking an active part in slowing the spread. At this intersection, the very thought of a blissful future imbibes in me the positivity to stay healthy and hopeful, so that, someday we can look back and say that we have succeeded in thriving through the hard times.

**Poulomi Mitra**

## *A Journey to a 'Home' away from Home during Covid-19 times*

**T**ravelling from one corner of the country to another, which is not a part of the mainland of India, during the time of coronavirus pandemic, was indeed edgy for me.

I had to travel back to Port Blair in the first week of April, but I got stuck in New Delhi (where I was on an official tour) when the lockdown was announced. Living alone in these times can take a toll on your mental health. Though my hometown is only 250 kms from Delhi, it felt like a long distance during this unprecedented era of coronavirus travel restrictions. My family members tried to get the 'movement pass' so that they could come to take me back home but the request was denied by the local administration. So, I knew I had to stay in Delhi till the time the lockdown was over. In April, my husband got the permission to travel to Delhi to bring me back due to the sudden demise of a family member. On my way back to my hometown, I saw one of the busiest highways (the

Grand Truck Road) with heavy traffic congestion, all deserted and with eerie silence, though I saw many migrant workers travelling on foot to reach their homes. I felt like one as I was also travelling back home in these extraordinary times but with an exception that I was in my car. I felt safe and guarded till the time of my stay at home.

I decided to return to Port Blair after the domestic flight services resumed. As the coronavirus outbreak was rapidly gaining momentum in our country, the fear of getting sick was constantly making us all paranoid. Same was the case with me. Still, I started looking for direct flights to Port Blair from New Delhi but hardly found any. All the flights available were taking more than 20 hours with a connecting flight either from Chennai or Kolkata. So the mere thought of traveling by air and waiting at airports during the long transit time was terrifying.



*Trespassers will be enquired*

After searching for days, I found a direct flight taking the usual 5 to 6 hours to reach my destination from New Delhi, thus, I booked a ticket. But the flight got cancelled at the last moment, so I had no option but to travel by taking a connecting flight with more than 20 hours of halt at Kolkata. To my rescue, my office at Kolkata agreed to accommodate me in the official guest house for the transit time so I felt safe as I did not



have to wait at the airport which was riskier than the time spent in the aircraft.

It felt like 'being on edge' while undertaking the longest journey of my life which literally took more than 34 hours to reach my destination. I felt like it was an international flight. I travel pretty often but the journey I took in these exceptional times was indeed scary. It was a very different airport and flying experience than I'm accustomed to. While maintaining social distancing and wearing face-coverings and shields provided a certain degree of protection, the risk of exposure to infections lingered on. Thus, to make my travel safe, I bought PPE kits for myself. Before entering the airport, I wore the kit. I thought maybe I would be among the odd one out, but to my surprise, I saw almost every passenger wearing one. Though, wearing a face shield was a bit troublesome as it fogs up because of breathing. I wondered how long we can fly like this.

This is the 'new normal' to which we have to acclimatize. Plexiglass barriers have been installed at entry gates and check-in counters at airports. The luggage is sanitised before you enter the airport. Self-health declaration forms are to be duly filled before entering the airport. Temperature checks were carried out at the entry points. Self-check-in and remote bag drops is the new normal to avoid clustering of people. Every part of the process was free of [human] contact.

People in India are habituated to form long queues the minute boarding is announced and as soon as the plane touches down the runway. Unfortunately, a majority continues to do so even now forgetting about social distancing. However, there were many travellers who were cautious and followed the new norms of travelling.

In my connecting flight from Kolkata to Port Blair, out of the 40 passengers in the aircraft, I was the only one wearing the PPE kit. Some of the fellow passengers were looking at me like I was an alien. On reaching Port Blair, temperature checks were

done. I was scared that may be my body temperature would come out to be high as I hadn't slept for the past two days and was feeling tired because of the long hours of journey. But everything was fine. My temperature was in the normal range. All the incoming passengers were asked to fill in their journey details and the place of stay in the isles along with the self-declaration health forms. I was asked to quarantine myself for 14 days at home and my hand was stamped marking a '14-day self-isolation period'. After this long, terrifying journey, I reached home at Port Blair. Immediately, a feeling of security rushed in me. I felt like till then, I was in a battleground and finally in my safe abode where perhaps this virus could not enter. The officials from the local administration regularly called on me to check upon my health. My office was kind enough to deliver all essential supplies I needed during my self-isolation at home. I felt relieved that I didn't get infected during my travel.

I have realized that there is no doubt that in the coming times, our travelling patterns and habits are going to witness a major overhaul. When it comes to our own safety and that of those around us, the way we conduct ourselves in public spaces can no longer be taken for granted. Be it maintaining a safe distance from our fellow travellers and following high standards of hand and respiratory hygiene, we will need to cultivate new habits as a part of our lives to ensure good health and safety for everyone.

The coronavirus has affected every corner of the world. The way we live our lives now looks a lot different today than it did merely few months back. This situation reminds me how vulnerable we are. It has become easier than ever before to relate to other human beings across the world and that's something both essential and beautiful to recognize, even in trying times such as these. These are exceptional times with no certainty but one - they will be etched in our minds for years to come.

**Priyanka Airi Goyal**

## Covid-19: It Unites, It Divides

Clang clang clang, a unison of unmelodic tunes rang across the country at 5pm on 22nd March 2020; this can be compared to the wedding bells wherein India as a country and the whole world *per se* has been married to a global pandemic which is known as Covid-19, a virus, a voyager, a traveler which has breathed the air of the lands and seas of almost all the continents we call home, dear mother earth. A virus so small, something which can't be seen by the naked eye had brought the country into an abrupt halt with the announcement of a 21-day lockdown which commenced on 25th March 2020. It was something unprecedented and something unheard of in the recent past, the citizens of the country were struck by a jolt of lightning, lives changed overnight and a sense of emptiness beckoned amongst one and all. Questions started to spring up, what would one do for 21 days locked inside one's house? How will one get through such a phase in life? When one looks back at the first few days of lockdown, those days can be seen as a phase of self-recollection and family reconciliation as it brought people together, united they stood, if not together they'd fall. Slogan of "Stay home, Stay safe" echoed on various print and electronic media. The lockdown has brought families and loved ones closer; families which had a chance to stay together were fortunate, the ones who didn't were connected by the telephone and the internet; people became less busy, more concerned and compassionate and were happy with simple living as health was the utmost wealth and being safe is all that mattered. This reminded me of a phrase in *khasi*, *sawdong ka lyngwiar dpei* which means around the four sides of a hearth. A house becomes a home, with the positive energy and fire that burns from within, the warmth that resonates from the hearth in the kitchen wherein the whole family would gather during meals and inculcate the heat and share stories and incidents of the day.

On 13th April 2020, Meghalaya recorded its first Covid-19 case, Dr. John L. Sailo Ryntathiang, a renowned doctor and the Director of the Bethany Hospital, Shillong, was diagnosed with the novel

corona virus and breathed his last on 15th April 2020. Dr. Sailo, a man of repute, had devoted the best years of his life to the service of the people by taking care of the sick and the needy. It would be praiseworthy that a man of such stature be laid to rest in the most befitting and honourable manner but this was not going to be the case in the times of Covid-19. The virus has altered the ways in which a person is laid to rest, the *rites de passage* has been taken for a toss in relation to death rites and rituals. A person is taken straight from hospital bed to either a crematorium or a cemetery. The virus has created a divide, the fear of being infected by it has created a wall between those infected and the ones who were not. In the incident of Dr. Sailo's death, it can be said that the death rituals performed were less to none and to inflict more pain to the family members of the departed, who had just lost their pillar, the cremation of the mortal remains of the doctor in the crematorium at Jhalupara in Shillong city was opposed by the residents of the area who feared the air borne spread and transmission of the virus. The public also opposed his burial on the family's privately owned property at Umsning. Finally, his body was laid to rest in a Presbyterian Church Cemetery at Raitsamthiah, Shillong. An untimely death and the obstacles with the departed body's not being laid to rest can also be related to another Khasi saying in relation to death i.e. *sahnud* which means solicitous, uneasy and heavy hearted. Dr. Sailo was a man who saved lives and when he expired he left for heavenly abode with society's stigmatization on his mortal remains because of a virus.

In the times of Covid-19, the world is healing both spiritually and environmentally but it has also brought with it duplicity and divide among our fellow compatriots. It is to be kept in mind that if as unconcerned citizens we stand divided in our own egos, emotions and attributes; then together we'd have to succumb to the harsh physical and psychological effects of Covid-19.

**Wanpli Coelho Synnah**



## मानसिक और सामाजिक जीवन पर कोरोना वायरस २०१९ में तालाबंदी का प्रभाव

**म**हामारी कोविड -19 बड़ी तेजी से दुनिया के एक कोनेसे दूसरे कोने में फैल गई है। इसके संक्रमण से लगभग सभी देशों के लोग पीड़ित हो गए हैं, लेकिन हमारे देश में इसकी आमद होने से पहले ही हमारे देश की सरकार ने जरूरी कदम उठाए। सभी देशवासियों को महामारी से बचाने के उपाय बताए और महामारी से बचने के लिए देश में तालाबंदी की गई। इस महामारी में देखा गया है कि लॉकडाउन ने वयस्कों और उनके परिवारों के लिए तबाही मचा दी है क्योंकि उनके पास अपने घरों को चलाने के लिए और बच्चों की बेहतर शिक्षा के लिए जिम्मेदारी है, लेकिन लॉकडाउन ने वास्तव में उनका भार बढ़ा दिया है। भारत में तालाबंदी ऐसे व्यक्तियों के लिए बेहद खतरनाक हो जाती है। वयस्क अपनी आजीविका कमाने के लिए घर से काम कर रहे हैं और संगरोध (Quarantine) के माध्यम से अपने प्रियजनों की रक्षा कर रहे हैं। लॉकडाउन के कारण परिवार एक-दूसरे के अधिक निकट होते हैं और अच्छी गुणवत्ता के समय के लिए शानदार अवसर प्रदान करते हैं। सबसे बड़ा बदलाव उनके लिए आया है क्योंकि वयस्क अपने बच्चों को अधिक बारीकी से समझते हुए, उन्हें खेलते हुए देखना पसंद करते हैं, जिससे उन्हें अपने होमवर्क में मदद मिलती है लेकिन हर चीज के दो पहलू होते हैं। वयस्क अपने परिवारों के साथ राज्यों के विभिन्न हिस्सों और प्रवासियों के सामूहिक पलायन में फंस गए हैं। बड़ी हुई चिंताएं। वयस्क अपने मूल स्थानों की ओर भाग रहे हैं और जो लोग घर पर रह रहे हैं, उन्हें अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से लॉकडाउन द्वारा अपनी जीवन शैली में कई संशोधनों को अपनाने के लिए मजबूर किया जाता है जैसे कि उनके खाने की आदतों में बदलाव आया, वास्तविक आय व्यय पैटर्न, समय प्रबंधन और बच्चों और परिवारों के बारे में भविष्य की नीतियों को बदल रहे हैं। कामकाजी माता-पिता पर पूर्णकालिक कर्मचारी और पूर्णकालिक होम-स्कूल शिक्षक होने का नया दबाव जबकि वयस्क अपने परिवारों को महामारी और इसकी थकावट से बचाते हैं।

माता-पिता और बच्चे एक अभूतपूर्व स्थिति से निपट रहे हैं। परिवार तालाबंदी के दौरान बच्चों की परवरिश की अतिरिक्त लागत और वित्तीय और सामाजिक समर्थन के बाद के नुकसान से जूझ रहे हैं। लॉकडाउन के कारण माता-पिता भावनात्मक और संज्ञानात्मक बर्नआउट की कगार पर हैं। यह देखा गया है कि कुछ वयस्क संगरोध (Quarantine) कर रहे हैं अनिद्रा, तनाव, चिंता, अवसाद, क्रोध और पोस्ट अभिघातजन्य तनाव के लक्षणों की समस्या ला रहे हैं। लॉकडाउन मनोवैज्ञानिक प्रभाव ज्यादातर माताओं पर थोप रहा है, वे उच्च जोखिम में

हैं क्योंकि वे घर और परिवार चला रही हैं, महिलाएं आय, परिवार के मूल्यों आदि का प्रबंधन कर रही हैं, जो लॉकडाउन के कारण अपने जीवन और परिवार के प्रति रवैया बदलने के लिए मजबूर हैं।

मई 2020 के अंत में, कम उम्र के बच्चों के कई माताओं और पिता ने कथित तौर पर तालाबंदी के दौरान मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को खराब कर लिया है। तुलनात्मक रूप से तीन हफ्ते पहले की घटनाएँ इस संदर्भ में बहुत कम थीं। निम्न आय वर्ग वाले माता-पिता और जिनकी नौकरियां या भुगतान लॉकडाउन के कारण काट दिए गए हैं, उन्हें उच्च मनोवैज्ञानिक संकट का अनुभव होने की अधिक संभावना है। अधिकांश माता-पिता महामारी के दौरान नौकरी खोजने के तनाव से निपटने के लिए चिंतित हैं। वयस्क अपने बच्चों की इच्छा को पूरा कर रहे हैं ताकि तनाव और जलन से बचा जा सके जैसे कि नए व्यंजन सीखना और नए व्यायाम और मजेदार गतिविधियों के साथ मदद करना। एक बच्चे के सामाजिक-भावनात्मक कौशल में उनके मानसिक स्वास्थ्य और व्यवहार शामिल हैं; माता-पिता समझते हैं कि उनके बच्चों का व्यवहार पूरी तरह से उनके घर के वातावरण पर निर्भर करता है। माता-पिता कई चैनलों के माध्यम से एक साथ कमाने के लिए कड़ी मेहनत कर रहे हैं और दूसरी तरफ अपने बच्चों के भविष्य का निर्माण कर रहे हैं। लॉकडाउन ने वास्तव में वयस्कों को एक दर्द दिया, लेकिन अपने प्रियजनों के प्रति उनके व्यवहार और कर्तव्यों को भी समझने में मदद की है। समझदार माता-पिताओं ने “टाइम इन्वेस्टमेंट” की अवधारणा को विकसित किया, उन्होंने बच्चों को उत्पादक या शैक्षिक गतिविधियों पर समय बिताने के बारे में समझा, वे बचपन के विकास के महत्वपूर्ण निर्धारक हैं, समय के निम्न स्तर का निवेश तनावपूर्ण घरेलू वातावरण का निर्माण करता है और बच्चों के बीच विद्यमान सामाजिक-भावनात्मक विषमताओं को दूर करता है। दूसरी ओर, इन असमानताओं को अपने बच्चों के साथ पर्याप्त समय बिताने वाले घरों में पैतृक समय के निवेश में वृद्धि के साथ देखा जा सकता है।

इसके अलावा इस महामारी ने हमें यह सिखाया है कि हमारे समाज के माँप दंड ही सही है जीवन जीने के लिए जेसे किसी को अभिवादन करना है तो हाथ जोड़ कर नमस्ते करना तथा साफ सफाई का ध्यान रखना और सभी से दूरी बना के रहना। ये ही हमारे जीवन के मूल मंत्र है और ये सदा ही रहेगे।

हर्षवर्धन

## ***Covid-19 and Emerging Issues***

**I**t was around mid-week of March 2020, India had reported its early cases of COVID-19, but the country was not in a lockdown then. My cousin sister in Delhi had called me up frantically. As usual, she had gone to get vegetables from the neighbourhood vendor. On reaching there, a middle-aged woman buying vegetables, on seeing my cousin, immediately distanced herself and scolded the vendor to 'stop selling things to such people, they bring all sorts of virus'. My cousin confronted her, but the woman said something in Hindi and left. I was furious listening over the phone; she was not alone, and it was not

the first time either. One of my colleagues from Arunachal Pradesh had also told me how she was called 'Corona' by some children when she went for fieldwork in late February 2020, in the interiors of Madhya Pradesh. In the coming days, there were more news of incidents of people from North-Eastern states, Ladakh, north Bengal, Nepali and anyone who has 'Mongoloid feature', or in common parlance, 'Chinese-looking', facing incidents of humiliation and discrimination. Some were spat on, verbally abused, physically assaulted, asked to vacate their rented houses, or denied entry to super-markets, detained and many



***Lockdown: a passage between two edges-sword***



more, merely because of how they looked.

With every such news on social media, I get the mandatory call from my mother and relatives back home in Manipur. More than the virus, I was asked to be cautious of the surrounding people -- 'do not respond if anyone says anything bad', 'try to be as discreet as possible' and to 'cover up your face' - not only for protection, but so that 'other' people do not notice your 'different' look. As my mother always reminds me '*eikhoidishak-chu khetnabanina, khara henna chekshinntaare*' ('We must be extra cautious as we look different'). How much ever I assured her that I was fine and being cautious, I had my own fears of not only getting infected by the virus but also of what if people misbehaved or worse, attacked! It did not help that there were also incidents of health-care professionals being harassed. The constant thought was 'if all those who are risking their lives can be treated like that, I am just Chinese looking, anything could happen'. I guess this anxiety and insecurity would always follow me.

Having lived outside Manipur for more than a decade, I have learnt to get used to the stares, the usual question of 'Can you really see through those tiny slits?', 'Do you eat dogs?'; being laughed at my Hindi accent, being asked to pay 'entry fee for foreigners', to ignore the calls of 'Chinki', 'Momo', 'Chow-Chow', and now Corona. The list goes on. Any confrontation means inviting more humiliation to oneself, any 'attempt' to make the 'ignorant' 'aware' is often met with further chiding of 'being extra sensitive' and I should never forget for the unfortunate ones, violent assault.

Covid-19 has brought out the best and worst of human beings. It has also created a fear psychosis amongst people which has manifested into different forms. With the origin of the virus commonly attributed to China, anyone with 'Asian', 'Mongoloid' features in different parts of the world has become the target of assaults,

categorising them as 'carriers of the virus'. India is also not far behind, as already mentioned. On 23rd March, the Ministry of Home Affairs had to come out with an 'advisory' asking 'all law enforcement agencies in states and union territories [to] be sensitised to take appropriate action in cases of harassment when these are reported'. In few cases the accused were arrested but many were not. After all it was just an advisory, one can take or ignore any amount of advice.

The pandemic has once again brought into spotlight 'racism' in India, which many refuse to accept. In India, the term seems to be confined to the academic sphere. Whenever the term comes up, the focus is more often drawn to the issue of people of African-Americans or 'brown Indians' abroad. When incidents of discrimination have happened against people from the states of North-East, Ladakh, Tibet or Nepal in India, it is conveniently not considered to be racism. The fear or anxiety of the 'different other' is natural and such incidents are taken to be outcomes of this very fear, in the garb of 'ignorance'. We cannot afford the continuing normalisation of racial discrimination in the country. We need to accept and acknowledge the fact that it exists in India - 'the land of unity in diversity', then only can we think of moving forward and getting rid of this malice. We do not need another pandemic or catastrophe to realise this.

**Aheibam Preetibala**

## *Social Implications due to Covid-19*

A tiny microscopic virus named 'Corona' has changed the entire global scenario with its hidden tentacles by creating a pandemic. Few months back nobody could imagine even in nightmares what might happen in near future. How this virus has created disaster in every sphere of life need not be explained at the time of the 'neo-normal' situation. Under a large spectrum of adversity, two aspects may be highlighted. These two aspects are 'relevance of sociological meaning of social distance' and 'onset of nationalism and pandemic' which are discussed below.

Against the backdrop of pandemic of 'Corona Virus', the term 'Social Distance' is a popular connotation. The social scientists may raise the

question of common use of this term 'Social Distance' to understand physical distance between two people in the context of sociological theory. The sociological meaning of social distance is the distance between two sets of people on the basis of ethnicity, language, religion, gender and so on and so forth. Emory Bogardus in 1925 defined social distance by using a scale. He developed the concept of social distance by measuring the degree of closeness or acceptance of one social group towards another. The relationship could be measured geometrically or symbolically. The geometric relation is the physical distance which may be measured, while symbolic distance is the state of mind. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall explained social distance on the basis of technological



*A serpentine queue for collection of provisions from the Fair Price Shop*





***The show must go on with COVID-19***

advances such as telephone, television, internet, etc., whereas the other sociologists have explained social distance exponentially. There are two facets, one is physical distance which is required to be maintained when people are in shops or railway station, bus stand or ration shop. The people in queue have no relation but assemble for a common cause. Another situation is the gathering of people for socio-religious or political purpose. In this case the people assembled having a state of mind which indicates closeness. Thus, two different aspects, one is the gathering for a common cause and other one is the social gathering whether attributed in same definition or not, may invite an academic debate under the context of social distance for pandemic of Covid 19. Social isolation is privilege for those classes who could avail big apartment or house, higher income, work from home office, having opportunity to afford good education to their children from home. Social isolation is a curse for downtrodden working class.

The second important facet is the emergence of the spirit of nationalism as an outcome of the new trend due to socio-economic crisis propounded as trajectory of impact on Covid-19. One write up said that the Muslim communities in France and Germany have accepted the shutdown of mosques, while the same restrictions generated an internal

controversy within the Muslim groups in UK, Iran and Pakistan. Similarly, some ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel and orthodox Christians in Greece have resisted the lockdown. Emphasized localism and protectionism are the pre-Covid phenomena in the world. Covid-19 has created multiple effects in the entire society, for instance the Covid patients are stigmatised with a fear psychosis. This reflects in creating barriers or isolation within the closed groups. One religious doctrine distrusts the other religious faith with a doubt of spreading this virus for non-obeying protocols due to their religious gathering. The reverse migration is not only due to sudden lockdown but with a fear due to helpless condition far away from own society. This is a unique condition. While on the one hand, people distrust their own people due to the fear of propagation of this virus, on the other hand, it encourage strong solidarity within one's own family or kin. If we look critically into two these opposite phenomena two distinct locations are found. In cities, people repel because of the fear of propagation of virus, whereas the rural people try to unite for economic need while crisis gradually worsens day by day. Under the current situation the polity cannot be a silent spectator, the schools which are in favour of the emphasized localism and protectionism take chance to improve their doctrine with the help of propaganda on nationalistic tune not only for economy as 'vocal on local' but inviting the people for strong nationalist feeling to fight this disaster. One strong point in favour of nationalism in the present scenario is to strengthen the country or nation by reconciling society to segregate due to the unprecedented crisis. Majority of social scientists are of the opinion of tremendous economic damage and health crisis in near future for this pandemic, while few sociologists express optimism that this crisis would allow to develop better non-geographically based networks, for example telemedicine and online coaching classes may cover a wide canvas cutting across a small territory which was prevalent in the pre-Covid situation.

***Arup Ray***



## प्रथम लाक डाउन का मानवीय स्वभाव पर प्रभाव



*Vegetables are farm-fresh but virus is in the air*

इक्कीसवीं सदी के दूसरे दशक के अंतिम चरणों में कथित तौर पर चीन देश से उत्पन्न हुआ कोरोना विषाणु चीन से होकर विश्व के विभिन्न देशों में फैल गया। परिणामस्वरूप इसके फैलाव पर नियंत्रण हेतु हर देश में हर प्रकार के मानवीय गतिविधियों पर प्रतिबन्ध लगाया जाना उचित समझा गया। प्रारम्भ में यह विषाणु एक सामान्य फ्लू के रूप में समझा गया लेकिन इसके प्रसार की तीव्र गति और परिणाम स्वरूप हो रहे मृत्यु के तीव्र गति के कारण इसे एक महामारी समझा गया और इसलिए इस पर नियंत्रण प्रत्येक देश के लिए एक चुनौती बन गयी। यह चुनौती मात्र इसलिए नहीं थी कि इसका विस्तार तीव्र गति से हो रहा था बल्कि इसका प्रसार लोगों के परस्पर संपर्क में आने से होना भी था और साथ ही इस बीमारी के लक्षणों की पहचान करना और इसके मरीजों

को उचित चिकित्सा उपलब्ध कराना भी किसी चुनौती से कम नहीं था। तीव्र गति से बढ़ रहे मरीजों के इलाज के लिए अस्पतालों में उचित व्यवस्था, जाँच के लिए संशोधन, और इसके प्रसार के लिए नीतिबद्ध योजना का अनुपालन कराना भी किसी चुनौती से कम नहीं था। इन अनिश्चिताओं के बीच और कोरोना विषाणु के प्रसार में विराम के लिए अनुसन्धानकर्ताओं और W.H.O. ने त्वरित निदान के रूप में सामाजिक दूरी को एक प्रभावशाली यंत्र के रूप में अपनाने हेतु सुझाव दिया जिसे लागू करने के पश्चात् कई देशों में अपेक्षित परिणाम भी देखने को मिले।

विश्व के अन्य देशों की भांति और W.H.O. के निर्देशों के अनुसरण में इस महामारी के फैलाव को रोकने के लिए भारत में भी सामाजिक दूरी को एक प्रभावशाली यंत्र के



रूप में न केवल अपनाया गया बल्कि इसे एक प्रभावशाली रूप में लागू करने के लिए पूरे देश में एक समय में 24 मार्च 2020 से 21 दिन के लिए लाकडाउन लागू किया गया ताकि सामाजिक दूरी को सुनिश्चित किया जा सके। लाकडाउन के अनुक्रम में हर प्रकार की गतिविधियों पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया गया, आवागमन से लेकर बाजार तक, सामाजिक गतिविधियों से लेकर आर्थिक गतिविधियों तक हर एक पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया गया जिससे लोगों के आवागमन पर रोक लगाकर सामाजिक दूरी की संकल्पना को साकार किया जा सके। यद्यपि इस लाकडाउन को लागू करने से पहले 21 मार्च 2020 को एक दिन का कर्फ्यू लगाया गया जिसे एक परिक्षण के रूप में देखा गया और इसे जनता कर्फ्यू का नाम दिया गया। इस कर्फ्यू का लोगों ने न केवल अनुपालन किया बल्कि पूरा समर्थन भी किया। परन्तु इसके एक दिन बाद 21 दिनों का तालाबंदी लोगों के लिए एक अलग एहसास रही। इस दौरान हर प्रकार की गतिविधियों पर रोक के कारण लोग इस अनिश्चितता की स्थिति में पहुँच गए कि आने वाले समय में क्या होने वाला है। इस दौरान किसी भी भीड़ की संभावनाओं पर रोक के उद्देश्य से धार्मिक स्थलों आदि को भी पूरी तरह से प्रतिबंधित कर दिया गया। अतः ऐसे वातावरण में लोगों में असुरक्षा और अनिश्चितता का भाव व्याप्त होना प्रासंगिक था। आवागमन बंद होने के कारण खाद्य सामग्री के अभाव का डर लोगों के चिंता का विषय बन गया जिसके (भय और चिंता) प्रसार की गति कोरोना वायरस के प्रसार की गति से भी अधिक रही। इस लाक डाउन में जो लोगो को सबसे अधिक चिंतित किया वह था खाद्य आपूर्ति। लोगो के मन में यह भय व्याप्त होना शुरू हो गया कि आने वाले समय में खाद्यान्न जैसी आवश्यक वस्तुओं की कमी हो सकती है, जिससे उनके मूल्य में अप्रत्याशित वृद्धि हो सकती हैं, दवाओं की उपलब्धता भी प्रभावित हो सकती है। इसलिए आने वाले संभावित आपदा से निपटने के लिए हर व्यक्ति जरूरी सामानों की खरीददारी कर अपने घरों में संग्रह करने लगे जिससे अभाव की स्थिति में भी कम से कम खाने की व्यवस्था बनी रहे। जबकि खाद्यान्न आपूर्ति शासन की प्राथमिकता में था और ऐसी सभी दुकाने प्रतिदिन कुछ निश्चित समय तक खुली भी रही जिससे इसकी आपूर्ति बाधित न हो। फिर भी लोगों के मन में व्याप्त डर की प्रबलता को दुकानों में लगी हुई लम्बी-लम्बी पंक्तियों से आसानी से लगाया जा सकता था। इसके साथ ही दूसरी समस्या चिकित्सा व्यवस्था के उपभोग की रही। इस महामारी में अस्पतालों को कोविड-19 मरीजों के लिए आरक्षित करने की आवश्यकता ने अन्य बीमारियों से ग्रस्त

मरीजों के इलाज को प्रभावित किया। यही नहीं कई ऐसे भी लोग रहे जिनमें यदि खासी या जुकाम जैसे लक्षण दिखे तो उन लोगो ने कोरोना वायरस से ग्रसित होने की आशंका में गरम पानी, काढ़ा आदि का सेवन करना उचित समझा। इन सब चिंता और भय के कारण जन-मानस मनोवैज्ञानिक रूप से प्रभावित हुआ जिसको सामाजिक दूरी बनाये रखने की आवश्यकता ने बल प्रदान किया। इस सामाजिक दूरी के कारण लोग एक दूसरे को संशय की दृष्टि से देखने लगे। पास पड़ोस में रहने वाले लोग भी एक दूसरे के यहाँ खाना पीना अनुचित समझने लगे। यद्यपि यह बदलाव अस्थायी रहा लेकिन इसका प्रभाव सामाजिक व्यवहार की प्रकृति में स्पष्ट दिखाई दिया। साथ ही घरों से दूर रह रहे परिवार के अन्य सदस्य भी अपने लोगो की सुरक्षा के लिए एवं उनके घर वापसी को लेकर भी चिंतित रहे।

इन सब शारीरिक और सामाजिक अनुकूलता के बीच एक सकारात्मक प्रभाव पर्यावरण की स्थिति पर दिखाई दिया। दशकों बाद लोगों ने दूर दराज से हिमालय की चोटियों का दीदार किया, नीले आसमान की सुन्दरता से परिचित हुए। इसलिए कई बुद्धजीवियों ने ऐसे लाक डाउन को उचित और स्थाई स्वरूप देने की भी वकालत की।

कुल मिलाकर, लाक डाउन की प्रथम अवधि लोगो के लिए एक नया अनुभव रही जिसके कारण उनकी जीवन शैली में बदलाव आया। हर समय सैनिटाईजेशन का उपयोग करना, मुँह और नाक को मास्क से ढककर रखना जैसी आदतें डालने को लोग अभ्यस्त हुए। लोग पुरानी सांस्कृतिक संरचना और व्यवहार को अपनाने की वकालत भी करने लगे। अंततः, यह अवधि भय और आशंका के बीच कई प्रकार के शिक्षा का श्रोत रहा है जिसका अनुसरण भविष्य को सुरक्षित रखने में सहायक हो सकता है।

**करुणा शंकर पाण्डेय**

## Brief Write on Lockdown

Folk narratives speak how in the past people used to lead a life of isolation during epidemic situation especially in village India. Confinement to the houses (*tatipadiba* in Odia) used to be the usual practice. But in the contemporary fast moving world where survival solely depended upon the economic activities, lockdown was a big shock to all. Agony of the lockdown would have been unbearable to pen down had the technological revolution not given us the companionship in these difficult times, but then there are countless issues to counter such claims. The story of a lady narrating in her mobile before committing suicide in rural area of Odisha speak of the stigma of the disease that has been created at every level which includes literate and illiterate masses, personnel in the Government machinery, and lastly among the near and dear ones. The strong message of social distancing linked to the fear of pandemic (COVID-19) has created a

dark atmosphere of uncertainty. For many who live in nuclear families and are technologically savvy it was theoretically an opportunity to be happy, but in reality it was a different experience. The fear of contamination, isolation from domestic help, poor health care delivery systems enhanced their feeling of insecurity. This was more so among those who were serving away from their native places. Predicting the consequences of sudden declaration of lockdown was not visualised even by many educated masses. Innumerable stories of such happening from all parts of India speak of the precarious environment which we are passing through till today. In an instance, a mother had to travel in her scooter from Hyderabad to some remote parts of Andhra Pradesh to get back her stranded son. Aged pilgrims from Odisha were stranded at Dwarka as the weekly train from Dwarka to Bhubaneswar was cancelled. Students, working executives, government servants on tour,



*Civil society on salvation to the poorest of the poor*





***Rakshabandhan- a ritual to ensure safe life***

etc., were held up wherever they were. Shutdown of religious centres was a big jolt to orthodox religious practitioners. Differences of national and regional political parties had its impact at the ground level. Even good intended national administrative directives failed to operationalize due to a lack of consensus. People who were not so advanced in the technological sphere and having the continuity of leading a life of joint family, especially in rural areas, were not so much mentally affected. But then ignoring caste, creed or religion, people serving in the informal sector in urban areas were badly affected. Migrant workers who were ignorant of sudden happenings were caught amidst lockdown scenario and its after effect still continues in a pathetic condition. Social gatherings like birthday party, marriages or even death ceremonies were strictly curtailed to maintain social distance, resulting in a gloomy social atmosphere. Shut down of film halls, gym, bar, liquor shops, etc., was a difficult time for many. There are instances of domestic violence in Tamil Nadu due to closure of liquor shop.

Sometimes excessive bureaucracy coupled with untimely decision made things worse. Established traders turned out to be vegetable vendors in

many parts of Rajasthan to earn their livelihood. It was survival first and anything else later. In West Bengal, sweetmeat shops were opened to prevent any loss to the dairy units and traders. Slowdown of economy coupled with the need to provide job opportunity to people in informal sector or trading, etc., compelled the government to rethink on lifting up of lockdown though it was essential. Density of population also accounted for deteriorating situation in urban centres, like Mumbai, New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, etc. Interestingly the tribal-dominated states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, etc., have a lesser number of COVID-19 patients which is better understood due to low in and out

migrations and the kind of settlement pattern. But in a state like Kerala where in and out migration is very high curtailing the rise in number of patients is due to better health management system. Added to it are the alert neighbours ready to report to authority on suspicious cases. But wise literate masses utilised their time in attending to their professional activities by working from home. Students especially from English medium school attended to their classes from smart phones/tab, etc. Academicians attended to Webinars, etc., to keep pace with their activities. The social stigma in rural and urban India associated with the disease has caused immense agony, especially among the migrants serving outside as they faced the trauma of non-acceptance in their society due to the impact of the disease. This social stigma needs to be changed through various dissemination programmes from the minds of population. Finally, the fear of COVID-19 hangs like a sword on one's head by a feeble thread leading to a fearful and suspicious environment all-around.

***Bibhu Kalyan Mohanty***



## ***Masks, Sanitizers and Lockdown: Experiencing the New Normal***



***Transformation - mask, sanitizer and hand-wash are inclusive items in a street aagarbatti (incense sticks) corner***

**W**e have just crossed the middle of this year and have almost adapted ourselves with masks, sanitizers and social distancing which now is our new normal. My journey with the face masks began on 18 February when I was on official duty to Shajapur in Madhya Pradesh to visit the field area of one of the teams working among the de-notified communities. My colleague from the field instructed me to wear the face mask while on board to Indore flight from Nagpur as two or three suspected cases were rumored to have been found in Indore among the students who had returned from Wuhan in China. While boarding

the flight, I found none of the travelers with masks, but while deplaneing found most of them using the masks as protective strategy. Though in Shajapur, I was moving without any face mask but my return journey was almost the same as earlier. While in Nagpur we did not feel any kind of change in our life till 11 March. Though while returning from an official workshop from Kolkata on 9 March, I took all sorts of precautions by using mask and carrying sanitizer with me as there were indications of a surge. Though social distancing was not possible either in the flight or in the airport but in comparison to earlier days, Kolkata Airport



was less congested.

Lockdown has returned to some places even after the Unlock-02 as a number of new cases have emerged. My city, Nagpur, is also expecting a full lockdown again soon as there is a huge surge in the positive cases for last few weeks. The city officials have again warned the citizens to maintain all the preventive measures suggested for the virus. A drastic action would take place, if the protocol is not followed. Though initially the cases have largely been confined to a few of the containment zones but after the Unlock-01 and 02, situation is not bright and a large number of cases have emerged from other areas which earlier remained free from COVID-19 virus.

Though officially, the lockdown was declared in the country from 25 March, for the state of Maharashtra, the lockdown officially began from 23 March, 2020, as the cases were surging alarmingly. The situation was becoming tense for the officials as the first positive case was found as early as 11 March, and soon curfew was clamped in the city, and we were in a near-lockdown state before the official declaration with the closure of road-side food joints/stalls and only vegetables and fruits shops were allowed in a restricted way. Even the stand-alone shops were opening on alternate days, pattern which has continued till date.

Initially I was panicking and was more concerned as I am living alone in my flat in an apartment. But I was not dreading the virus *per se*, but was more concerned that if I fell sick, then there is no one to look after me. Almost everyone in my office had the same kind of anxiety and all kept contact with each other through the mobile phones and advising each other how to keep ourselves immune by taking proper protein-rich food, fruits and Ayurvedic medicines. I was lucky to have stocked all the essential items including the groceries for a month just before the declared lockdown, and my visits to the shops were less frequent. I made it sure that there were very few persons in the shops

while purchasing anything. At one point of time even the stocks in the shops became limited due to overstocking. I was particularly careful that my medicines were well stocked and suggested all my neighbours and dear ones to stock medicines and first-aids for at least a month. Though I have resumed my office duties after lockdown, now for me keeping a physical distance, wearing masks, sanitizing my spaces, washing my clothes and taking bath soon after return from office, connecting and keeping contact with people through mobile has become a part of my new normal which I think will continue for long.

But I am really worried that some of my neighbours are not maintaining the proper measures as a precaution. In the initial days of the pandemic, I was quite worried as the need to maintain the precaution was the priority. I had asked my domestic help to stop coming to my place from the day of 'Janata Curfew'. She was allowed only after the Unlock-1 was announced and she was happy as her monthly salary was not stopped. Later I found that even on the 'Janata Curfew' day, one of my neighbours could not spare her domestic help and she continued availing her services throughout the lockdown period. I have a feeling that either they were unable to understand the seriousness of the situation or just did not bother about any kind of health hazard. Another family which has elderly parents in their house, but every morning the old man would take his scooter and go out for some time to meet his friends. The only precaution was his masks and he seemed not worried about his age, neither his family members. After the Unlock-01 and 02, this family has become more careless and I hardly find any member of the family wearing mask and taking precaution. I have a fear that in near future, my area would soon be sealed and made a containment zone. In fact, very few are maintaining the precautions of physical distancing and wearing masks, except in the offices where it is made mandatory.

**Ratna Dhar**

## *Few Days Long*

**T**he pandemic created due to novel corona virus has affected lives of millions of people throughout the world but its impact on society seems to be far deeper and catastrophic. Different countries and different societies are fighting tooth and nail in their own different ways that may be observed with keen interest, for it may give birth to a new form of understanding in future.

It were the days of early March this year. We were in the midst of the cultural heritage affinities of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, where more than thirty communities that speak Tamil, Tulu, Kannada, Telugu, Urdu, Konkani, Marathi, Gujarati, Kutchi, Marwadi, Rajasthani, Haryanvi, Hindi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Punjabi and English apart from Malayalam, the language of Kerala, have been coexisting for decades. Besides, uncountable series of sea waves were coruscating like diamond studded fringe of a fashionable gown that strikes the coasts of sea beaches of Fort Kochi every now and then as ever. Any traveller with some interest in the heritage of our great country would surely be illuminated like those bright sea waves observing the heritage symbols scattered in every corner of Fort Kochi.

There was almost no sign of tsunami like fear that engulfed the whole area, but within few days the news of detecting COVID-19 patients in greater Kochi area started to occupy the headlines of the news. But things started to change rapidly. The body language of the locals towards the outsiders especially who were from abroad was in fact of unwelcome gesture. Shops, eateries started to shut down their daily business. Street vendors just disappeared. Ever crowded streets were waiting for commuters. Thin presence of autorickshaws and cars was justifying the need of the roads along with few cautious passers-by. Everyone was waiting to watch and observe (like graffiti painted over a wall in Fort Kochi). On our way back to Kolkata we came

across almost deserted Kochi Airport.

We returned to West Bengal just before the announcement of the nationwide Janta Curfew followed by Lockdown. The new term of the new era appeared in loud stalk to engrave its name permanently in the history. The dark cloud of panic from unknown enemy pervaded every sphere of our subsistence. It was a strange situation. Roads were empty. Regular clamour of livelihood that started from early morning was missing. Even children seemed to keep them refrained from natural waywardness. Already some of our neighbours were ruminating with their huge stocks of necessary items at least for three months over phone mingled with tone of fruition and also trying to assess what they missed.

Cautious days were passing on with possible preparedness and guidance at every level from the television and social media. News of death with horrible descriptions were pouring in. A residence of our locality, health staff by profession, was prevented by the neighbours to enter her flat after duty. An elderly lady was suffering from other temporary illnesses. The doctor advised her to take treatment staying at home considering the pandemic situation. But her son, being perturbed by fidgety condition of her mother decided to shift her to nearby personally known nursing home where she was found to be COVID-19 positive case. Suddenly the whole situation changed dramatically. That lady was transferred to Beliaghata Infectious Diseases Hospital, and the nursing home was shut down. Other family members of the lady including her son were transferred to the isolation centre in a whisk and that their residence was barricaded from outside.

In a moment the whole world around them made them untouchable, enemy. People with whom



they lived for so many years made them 'others'. Ironically, afterward it was proved by the test result from the government laboratory that she was not affected by the COVID-19. But it was too late because she succumbed to the treatment of disease from which she was not suffering. The pandemic overwhelmed the logical decision of the responsible physician and made this family outcast in the eyes of the temporarily insane society.

Within the period of decree of Lockdown our locality faced another disaster caused by Amphan cyclone. Vast area of West Bengal fell prey of this ferocious, cruel devastation. Being urban, the magnitude of loss was certainly less than

rural Bengal except the disruption of power and communication for fifty to sixty hours. In urban area, without electricity, the survival became difficult; water supply was also stopped.

Interestingly all the people of the locality extended their helping hand to resolve the water necessity in each house by hiring generator, maintaining the distance code. It seems that the cohesive forces in the society became active when suffering touched everyone.

**A.J. Biswas**



***Watch and Observe: A graffiti painted over a wall in Fort Kochi.***

## कोविड-19 महामारी का जीवन में प्रभाव

**को**विड-19 जिसका अभिप्राय कोरोना वायरस डिजीज (रोग) वर्ष 2019 को 19 से दर्शाया गया है। ऐसी मान्यता है की कोरोना वायरस कोरोनावायरस रोग 2019 (कोविड-19) एक संक्रामक बीमारी है जो सीवियर एक्यूट रेस्पट्री सिंड्रोम कोरोनावायरस 2 (SARS-CVO-2) के कारण होती है जो नजदीकी संपर्क के कारण हवा में एक व्यक्ति से दूसरे व्यक्ति में तेजी से फैलती है। इसकी पहचान सबसे पहले दिसंबर 2019 में चीन के प्रान्त हुबेई की राजधानी वुहान में हुई थी। देखते ही देखते इस वायरस ने महामारी का रूप धारण कर लिया। विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन ने 21 मार्च 2019 को इसे महामारी घोषित कर दिया। तब से लेकर अब तक 188 देशों में 13,500,000 से अधिक लोगों के इस रोग से संक्रामित होने के मामले सामने आए हैं, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप 584,000 से अधिक मौतें हुई हैं। 7,590,000 से अधिक लोग स्वस्थ हो चुके हैं।

भारत सरकार ने केरल राज्य में 30 जनवरी 2020 को कोरोनावायरस रोग 2019 के भारत से पहले मामले की पुष्टि की, जब वुहान के एक विश्वविद्यालय का छात्र वापस अपने राज्य में आया। फिर धीरे-धीरे भारत में संक्रमण के मामलों बढ़ने लगे, विशेषकर देश के विभिन्न महानगरों में जो प्रत्यक्ष तौर से यातायात के अन्तराष्ट्रीय साधनों द्वारा जुड़े थे। प्रारम्भ में भारत में इस वायरस जनित रोग को उतनी गंभीरता से नहीं लिया गया जितनी गंभीरता से इसे लिया जाना था। विभिन्न सोशल माध्यमों जैसे व्हाट्सएप्स, ट्वीटर इत्यादि द्वारा भ्रम की स्थितियाँ पैदा की जाने लगी। कोई कहता भारत में गर्मी का मौसम आने वाला है, गर्मी में तापमान में बढ़ोतरी के साथ-साथ यह वायरस स्वतः ही नष्ट हो जायेगा, और भारत पर इसका कोई प्रभाव नहीं पड़ेगा। तो कोई इसे धर्म से जोड़कर अपने-अपने तर्क देने लगा, कुछ लोगों ने तो इसके लिए तरह-तरह के घरेलू नुस्खे भी सोशल माध्यमों में देना प्रारंभ कर दिया।

मार्च 2020 जब कोरोना वायरस से संक्रमण के मामले तेजी से बढ़ने लगे, तब हमारे माननीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेंद्र मोदीजी ने 19 मार्च को राष्ट्र के नाम संबोधन में आकर देशवासियों से दिनांक 22 मार्च 2020 को जनता कर्फ्यू लगाने का आह्वान किया, जो शत प्रतिशत सफल रहा। यह कोरोना के विरुद्ध लड़ने के लिये देशवासियों को तैयार करने का एक सफल प्रयास रहा। 21 मार्च 2020 को विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन

द्वारा इस रोग को महामारी घोषित कर दिए जाने के पश्चात भारत सरकार द्वारा इस महामारी के प्रसार को भारत में रोकने के लिए दिनांक 25 मार्च, 2020 से 14 अप्रैल, 2020 तक सम्पूर्ण भारत देश में लॉक डाउन-1 लागू कर दिया गया। जिसे देश में महामारी के बढ़ते प्रकोप के कारण पुनः दिनांक 15 अप्रैल, 2020 से 03 मई, 2020 तक लॉक डाउन-2, दिनांक 04 मई, 2020 से 17 मई, 2020 तक लॉक डाउन-3, एवं दिनांक 18 मई, 2020 से 31 मई, 2020 तक लॉक डाउन 4, लागू किये गये। देश में अचानक से कोविड -19 के कारण लॉक डाउन लागू कर दिए जाने के कारण इसका हमारे सामाजिक एवं आर्थिक जीवन पर कई दूरगामी प्रभाव देखने को मिल रहे हैं। इनमें से सभी प्रभाव नकारात्मक नहीं कहें जा सकते हैं, कुछ प्रभाव मानव जीवन के लिए निश्चित रूप सकारात्मक भी रहे हैं, विशेषकर पर्यावरण संरक्षण की दृष्टि से इनकी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रही है, इसे नकारा नहीं जा सकता है।

कोविड-19 ने हमारे जीवन में प्रवेश कर हमारे सामाजिक जीवन एवं हमारे जीवन व्यापन तौर तरीके एवं परंपराओं को छिन्न-भिन्न कर रख दिया है। कई नयी – नयी शब्दावली जैसे लॉक डाउन, सामाजिक दूरी, संस्थागत कार्रवाई, होम कार्रवाई, प्रवासी मजदूर, आइसोलेशन इत्यादि शब्द प्रचलित हो गये। कोरोना वायरस के तेजी से बढ़ते प्रभाव को नियंत्रित करने के लिए दिनांक 25 अप्रैल 2020 से भारत सरकार द्वारा आकस्मिक रूप से लॉक डाउन लागू कर दिया एवं सार्वजनिक परिवहन माध्यमों जैसे हवाई सेवा, रेल सेवा, बस सेवा के साथ-साथ व्यक्तिगत परिवहन माध्यमों पर रोक लगा दी गई। जो जिस जगह था उसी जगह पर फंसकर रह गया। सभी धार्मिक एवं सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियों पर तत्काल प्रभाव से रोक लगा दी गई। समस्त आर्थिक गतिविधियों पर भी रोक लगा दी गई। प्रथम लॉक डाउन के दौरान सभी चीजें नियंत्रण में लग रही थी। केन्द्र सरकार आयुष मंत्रालय एवं राज्य सरकार के विभिन्न मंत्रालयों के मध्य आपसी सामंजस्य देखने को मिला। केन्द्र एवं राज्य सरकारों ने देश में आर्थिक गतिविधियों पर रोक लगाने का उत्पन्न हुए हालातों को नियंत्रित करने के लिए के तरह-तरह के पैकेजों की घोषणाएं कर उनका कार्यान्वयन भी सुनिश्चित किया। लॉक डाउन की वजह से बेरोजगार हुए परिवारों के लिए राशन, भोजन एवं ठहरने की व्यवस्था की गई। किन्तु इस दौरान भी कुछ धार्मिक संगठनों द्वारा सामाजिक दूरी



की गाइडलाइन की पूर्णतया उलंघन करने के कारण कोरोना वायरस को भारत में पैर पसारने का मौका मिल गया। धीरे-धीरे देश के हालत खराब होते चले गये।

मार्च-अप्रैल माह का समय भारत देश में शैक्षणिक गतिविधियों के लिये अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण काल होता है। इस दौरान शैक्षणिक सत्र के फाइनल परीक्षा का समय होता है। किन्तु लॉक डाउन के कारण बोर्ड परीक्षाओं को छोड़कर सभी परीक्षाएं रद्द कर जनरल छात्रों को प्रमोशन दे दिया गया। नए सत्र में प्रत्यक्ष तौर पर विद्यालयों में शिक्षण कार्य अबतक जारी नहीं हो पाया है। शिक्षण के क्षेत्र में भी परिवर्तन परिलक्षित हो रहे हैं। अधिकांश विद्यालयों द्वारा आजकल ऑनलाइन शिक्षा प्रदान की जा रही है। किन्तु यह सुविधा का लाभ मध्यम से उच्च आय वर्ग के परिवारों से संबद्ध छात्र-छात्राएं तो आसानी से ले पा रहे हैं, परन्तु निम्न आय वर्ग के परिवारों के छात्रों के लिए इस हेतु साधनों का जुगाड़ कर पाना आज की परिस्थितियों में आसान जान नहीं पड़ता। इसलिये इस दिशा में और प्रयत्न किये जाने की आवश्यकता प्रतीत होती है।

लॉक डाउन के दौरान मार्च माह में लगभग सभी कार्यालयों के वित्तीय वर्ष का समापन काल होता है। लॉक डाउन इसी दौरान लागू होने के कारण विभिन्न सरकारी- गैरसरकारी, निजी कार्यालयों में कार्यों के तरीकों में परिवर्तन देखने को मिला। अधिकांश कार्यालयों में वर्क फ्रॉम होम को कोविड 19 की गाइडलाइन के अनुसार लागू किया गया। वर्क फ्रॉम होम की भी अपनी कुछ सीमाएं होती हैं। जिसके कारण कार्यालयीन कार्यों के निस्तारण में असुविधाओं का सामना करना पड़ा। विशेष तौर पर विभिन्न अनुसन्धान कार्यों से सम्बद्ध कार्यालयों जो फील्ड में जाकर डाटा संग्रहण का कार्य करते हैं, उन्हें लॉक डाउन की वजह से अपना मूल कार्य कुछ दिवसों के लिए स्थगित करना पड़ा। इसी तरह के कार्यों से भारतीय मानवविज्ञान सर्वेक्षण जुड़ा होने के कारण इन

समस्याओं से सर्वे को भी गुजरना पड़ा। किन्तु सर्वे ने इस समय का सदुपयोग परियोजनाओं से जुड़े विषयों पर वेबिनार का आयोजन कर अपने कार्यों को धीमे नहीं पड़ने दिया, यह क्रम अनवरत रूप से जारी है।



*Washing of market returned currencies-  
an emerging load to panic mind*

कोविड-19 वायरस के कारण लॉक डाउन के चलते देश के औद्योगिक प्रतिष्ठानों को भी समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ा। सामाजिक दूरी बनाये रखने के लिए लॉक डाउन के दौरान इन्हें बंद कर दिया गया। जिससे कई लाखों मजदूरों के सामने बेरोजगारी की समस्या खड़ी हो गई। देश में अधिकांश मजदूर स्थानीय नहीं होते वे दूसरे राज्यों से जीविकापार्जन हेतु बड़े-बड़े महानगरों का रुख करलेते हैं। उन्हें उनका रोजगार छीन जाने के कारण उनके समक्ष रोजी-रोटी की समस्या

उत्पन्न हो गई। कोविड-19 के कारण ऐसे मजदूरों को प्रवाशी मजदूर के नाम से जाना जाने लगा। सार्वजनिक परिवहन के साधनों की बंदी होने के कारण उन्हें अपने मूल निवास स्थान तक लौटने में अत्यधिक दिक्कतों का सामना करना पड़ा। यह एक ऐसा क्षेत्र था, जिसमें सभी राज्य सरकारें मजदूरों से जुड़ी समस्याओं के समाधान हेतु असहज लगी। इसी वजह से लॉक डाउन के कारण कोविड 19 को नियन्त्रण में रखने योजना पर पानी फिरता दिखा।

कोविड-19 वायरस के कारण सभी नकारात्मक बातें हुई हो ऐसा भी नहीं है। कोविड-19 की वजह से जारी लॉक डाउन का सकारात्मक प्रभाव हमारे पर्यावरण पर देखने को मिला, देश के वायु मंडल की हवाएँ शुद्ध हो गई। इस दौरान उत्तर प्रदेश के सहारनपुर जिले से हिमालय के ग्लेशियरों को आसानी से देखा जाने लगा। हमारे देश की प्रवित्र नदियाँ जिनकी शुद्धी हेतु बड़ी-बड़ी योजनाएँ बनाकर उनके शुद्धिकरण का कार्य किया जा रहा था, वे भी इन दिनों अपने आप शुद्ध हो गई।

*सुदर्शन वैद्य*

## *Shifting Needs, Sifting Culture and Covid-19*

I shall describe my personal experience on Covid-19 and consecutive lockdown under the functionalist school of anthropological thought. This can be taken as a good example of how human aspirations change over a period of crisis. As an individual, to fulfil my physiological and instrumental needs, there were two most important spheres where my immediate responsive environments were interacting with this pandemic situation. My first immediate responsive environment was my family of procreation where I share most of my responsibilities with four of my dependents. I am more than 3,500 km away from my family of orientation, hence my immediate responsibility for them has been relaxed by my kinsmen. My second responsive environment was my workplace which was being transformed from

natural to online in an unprecedented way.

When our basic physiological need of food is threatened, it is natural for people to panic and respond by hoarding. I experienced and reacted the same way to this situation as I was not alone to decide upon the emotional reaction. I saw people hoarding most of the essential items in spite of the government assurance that the shops of the essential items won't close. Here, I observed my personal morality being subjugated by the fear of food scarcity. This has an innate relation with my belongingness, as people from my home state Assam have intricate behaviour of hoarding food articles due to its perennial flood condition. In another instance, my sleeping hours exceeded automatically which may be a self-perceived



***Corona, Community and Communicators – A group of Santals in awareness programme at Deberdanga village, Bankura District, West Bengal (Courtesy: Prof. S.B. Roy, IBRAD)***



measure to use optimum functioning of my immune system. Insufficient sleep catalyses anxiety and can elevate the stress hormone cortisol which can weaken the immune system. I automatically opted out from several social media as it might have facilitated consumption of news to prolong my sleep deprivation.

I have felt great fear during these days because I have in my house my grand mother-in-law who is nonagenarian and my mother-in-law nearing 70 years of age. My nine-year old daughter also comes under the vulnerable category. Hence, my first responsibility was to take special care of these members. Complete home isolation, extensive use of mask and hand sanitizer obviously made sense to combat this anxiety, even if it affected my regular morning walks or outdoor physical activities, eventually resulting in little increase of my body weight. For me, the situation didn't last for long as I had other administrative assignments which compelled me to join my official duty within fifteen days.

The next immediate response was my sense of belongingness. The bonding with my wife increased to a certain level as I discovered her new role in sharing most of my anxiety. But the importance of close relationship was quite important in such a pandemic scenario. Here I found virtual sphere of life sharing its own importance. This obvious truth became more germane in this event of contagion. I had to devote much of my time to my little daughter as she might have undergone the psychological trauma resulting from the discontinuation of her school and the introduction of online classes. I have different storylines for taking extra effort and making the gadgets available for online classes. Needless to say, in terms of gadgets from pin to plane, Indian market is full of Chinese products. As the lockdown coincided with sudden tendency of Chinese aggression to India, the local market refrained from selling these gadgets. For the first time, I sensed the difference between shortage and scarcity in market economy.

I have seen many of my contacts contributing scientific knowledge to the society whereas there were many who contributed significantly to their ability to cook, sing, dance as well as write stories. The updated technology kept me in touch with my near ones. Through mobile, online chat, video call, social networking sites, I kept on interacting with them.

I wonder whether human society was already equipped with the technological innovation to combat such pandemics? May be, by speaking so, I qualify to be very selfish. As I am not showcasing the grief of the marginalised people who are not technologically elevated. But I can't deny the fact that animal kingdom stands on gradation and a population always strives to showcase its fortune or misfortune to sustain in this world. I saw many people, who earlier denied digital payment due to various issues, happily doing the same in the COVID-19 scenario. I had already equipped myself with this technology, so I never faced any issue in the online apps like BHIM, PayTM, etc. The first thing I bought during the pandemic was N95 mask. In 2004, Facebook was started by Mark Zuckerberg to connect the Harvard students with one another. But everyone could understand its applicability in terms of social connections under pandemic times. During these days, I could attend some of the webinars. In fact, webinars were in use since late 1990's, but I did not know that this platform was going to be used extensively. I enjoyed 12 webinars within one and half months sitting in my own place. Though the number of the webinar matters less, the opportunity to attend and learn different things makes all the difference. I remember, in one of the seminars, "Agrarian situation in India: Issues and Prospects" conducted by the Anthropological Survey of India, Central Regional Center, Nagpur in 2016, I said that the world would be under severe pandemic-crises of infectious diseases in years to come. I did not know that it would have taken only four years to climb from epidemics to pandemics.

**Mithun Sikdar**

## Lockdown

With return flight to Port Blair being cancelled and the imposition of nationwide lockdown, it was initially a period of happy family time for me, until my father was given the charge of managing a quarantine center for the migrants in his school. We were quite scared for him being exposed to the potential infectants. Every time he sneezed, we used to get quite cautious about him. Because of his sinus and bathing twice or thrice a day, he eventually got fever, cough, flu and other symptoms quite conforming to those of COVID-19. Luckily, he was tested negative and we took a sigh of relief.

I would like to share an incident from my lockdown days. We all know the haul around corona being originated in China. Many of us would have witnessed people around us despising Chinese eating habits. One day, I was talking to my

grandmother who was expressing her contempt over corona and lockdown because of which she had to bear the loss on the sale of her crops. For the sole purpose of making her furiously react to the eating of bats, I remarked, “You know it is said that we have to go through all this because some Chinese ate bats from where this virus came”. She laughed at my statement and said, “Could be, but even your great grandfather used to pay the bird catchers to ensnare bats for its blood to treat children with earache.” I was spellbound to hear it as until then I was sure that my culture had nothing (good) to do with birds like bats. That information made me realize the fact that a good knowledge of one’s own culture does enrich our worldview and also makes us considerate towards the differences of others.

Finally, amid the growing cases, I had to leave for Kolkata which is around 14 hours of journey

from my hometown, to take flight to Port Blair. All train services being suspended and private bus being scheduled only at the whims of the operators, I had no option other than booking a cab. Expectation of smooth journey met with long traffic jams (almost whole night the cab was stuck amid heavy vehicles carrying goods) in a rainy night. Hence, the journey was covered in 25 hours. I reached Kolkata airport by 6 PM. Reaching

The image shows a close-up of a hand filling out a COVID-19 screening form. The form is titled "RESEARCH ASSOCIATE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA". It includes several sections for data entry, including "Suspect / Not Suspect" and "Signature of the officer conducting screening test". A red stamp with the text "COVID-19" is visible at the bottom of the form. The form also contains questions about health conditions and contact with COVID-19 cases.

*Are you infected? Surveillance on arrival*



there I ordered some food and waited outside. It was a hot and humid night. Airport was not operating in its regular disposition. Entry inside was prohibited until 1 AM. It was obvious that most of the passengers were not habituated to the new norms of distancing. Majority of the people were in masks, some in elegant PPEs. While I was in queue at the entrance of the flight, a woman who was in the same queue created ruckus because a family with kids standing in front of her was not complying with the standard distancing norms. As much I appreciated her endeavour to protect herself from any potential threat, her desperate attempt to maintain distance seemed brash.

Flight landed in Port Blair. Here, during the thermal scanning at the airport I was marked as a COVID-19 suspect. I was scared to see the red stamp reading SUSPECT on my health form as I didn't know what would happen next. I feared if they would allow me to go home. I had water, wet my handkerchief to wipe my face. After about

15 minutes there was a rescanning where I was marked Non-Suspect. But they insisted on taking the specimen of nasopharyngeal swab from me for further probe. Finally, I left the airport with the seal of 'quarantine' on my hand. Two auto-drivers refused to give ride soon after they saw me with my tagged luggage. I asked them the reason. One of them said, "Madam, you have come from mainland. And that is the problem. All the cases have come from mainland only. It's better to earn less than to get into troubles. I'm sorry." I could only applaud him for taking precautions and I went back to book a prepaid taxi, and was finally home after around 53 hours of journey. Now it was a time for home quarantine for 14 days. There were daily calls from DC office to know about my health status. Neighbours were considerate enough to get me the daily essentials. Being alone in quarantine was quite difficult and sailing through all this was a feeling of complete victory.

**Rakhi Kumari**



***Enthusiasm is the power of triumph***

## “कोविड-19 महामारी एवं संग्रहालय”

**को**विड-19 महामारी ने सम्पूर्ण विश्व के लगभग 188 देशों में संक्रमण फैलाकर भयावह वातावरण बनाया हुआ है, यह घातक बीमारी है, जोकि दिसम्बर, 2019 में चीन के वुहान (हुबई प्रांत) में पहली बार सामने आई थी। धीरे-धीरे बढ़ते हुए एक बहुत बड़ी वैश्विक महामारी के रूप में हम सभी को संक्रमित करती प्रतीत हो रही है। सामान्य जन-मानस में कोरोना संक्रमण को लेकर भय, भ्रम और अनिश्चितता की स्थिति बनी हुई है। विश्व स्तर पर अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार, सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक संबंध, और अर्थ-व्यवस्था में एक ठहराव की स्थिति उत्पन्न हुई है। विश्व समुदाय में एक गतिरोध का आभास हो रहा है, कोविड-19 महामारी के प्रभाव के सभी पहलुओं के गहन अध्ययन के लिए हमें समय को दो काल खंडों में विभाजित करना पड़ेगा, एक कोविड-19 के पूर्व का कालखंड, एवं दूसरा कोविड-19 के बाद के कालखंड की स्थिति को देखकर, अध्ययन करना पड़ेगा।

कोविड-19 महामारी का देश में प्रवेश होने के पहले से ही भारत सरकार ने महामारी के वैज्ञानिक पहलुओं को समझकर एक उचित कार्य योजना तैयार की और उसको तुरंत अमल में लाया गया, जिससे देश में संक्रमण की कड़ी तोड़ने में काफी हद तक सफलता मिली। केन्द्र सरकार ने अतिशीघ्र ही निर्णय लेते हुए 24 मार्च, 2020 के मध्यांत से ही लॉकडाउन घोषित किया, जो कई चरणों में चलता हुआ 31 मई, 2020 तक अविराम जारी रहा। इसके बाद अन-लॉकडाउन की प्रक्रिया

भी जारी हुई, जोकि, 1 जून से प्रारम्भ होकर अभी वर्तमान में अन-लॉकडाउन 2.0 का दौर चल रहा है। केन्द्र सरकार और राज्य सरकार के गृह मंत्रालय, स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय, सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्रालय और अन्य मंत्रालय के अथक प्रयासों और जन भागीदारी के सहयोगात्मक रवैये के कारण कोविड-19 महामारी के प्रभाव, और मृत्यु दर की तीव्रता को कम करने में सफलता मिली। भारत सरकार द्वारा समय-समय पर मार्गदर्शिकाएँ जारी की, और टेलीविजन पर आकर आम जनता को उनके बारे में जानकारी देकर, भ्रम और असमंजस के वातावरण को दूर किया, हेल्पलाइन और कॉलसेंटर्स का उपयोग कर वायरस सम्बन्धित शंकाओं का और समस्याओं

का समाधान भी किया गया। विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन, स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय और सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्रालय द्वारा समय-समय दी जा रही जानकारी जैसे हाथ का धोना, मास्क का उपयोग, सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग, स्वच्छता, ओर आरोग्य सेतु ऐप को अपनी जीवन शैली में शामिल करने के लिये पूरे देश में व्यापक स्तर पर अलग-अलग माध्यमों से जागरूकता अभियान चलाये जा रहे हैं, जिसके सकारात्मक परिणाम प्रत्यक्ष रूप से हम सभी लोग अनुभव कर रहे हैं। कोविड-19 महामारी से प्रभावित मानव है, इसलिए इसमें सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक आयाम

**SCIENCE MUSEUMS FOLLOW SUIT**

Museum	Visitors per month
Victoria Memorial Hall	3 lakh
Indian Museum	50,000
Science City	1.2 lakh
SITM	25,000

Special panel exhibition on coronavirus at SITM

Private security personnel wear masks at Victoria Memorial Hall

Visitors being briefed by CSF at Indian Museum

**Museums in pandemic situation-  
a media (The Times of India, Kolkata) document**

भी है, जो संक्रमण की गंभीरता को समझने, विश्लेषण करने और इसकी कड़ी को नियंत्रित करने के लिए सार्थक होंगे। स्थानीय, क्षेत्रीय, राष्ट्रीय, अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर विभिन्न-विभिन्न भौगोलिक उप-खंडों में निवासरत जातीय समुदाय



अपनी सांस्कृतिक विभिन्नताएँ से परिपूर्ण है, इस कारण महामारी से जल्दी निदान पाना अत्यंत जटिल है, इस दिशा में मानव वैज्ञानिक जन-मानस के मनोवैज्ञानिक पहलू, परस्पर संबंधों, सामाजिक सहभागिता, और किसी भी प्रकार की मानवीय पीढ़ा को वैज्ञानिक ढंग से समझकर कोविड-19 की समस्याओं को कम करने में सहायक हो सकते हैं।

कोरोना वायरस संक्रमण की कड़ी को रोकने के लिये सबसे महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग अर्थात् व्यक्तिगत तौर पर या सामाजिक तौर पर आपस में दूरी बनाए रखने, और लॉकडाउन जैसे उपाय से देश-दुनिया की सम्पूर्ण जन-मानस की जीवन शैली बाधित हो गई है, अधिक समय तक घर के भीतर रहकर और सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग के पालन करने के मापदंडों से विभिन्न आयु समूहों के जन-मानस में मानसिक एवं साधारण व्यवहार में मनोविज्ञानिक प्रभाव परिलक्षित हुये। त्रोगों के सीखने, खेलने, अध्यात्मिक और सांस्कृतिक कैलेंडर से सभी अलग-थलग पड़ गये हैं, जिससे समाज के सभी वर्गों में असंतोष व्याप्त है।

विवाह समारोह में अधिकतम 50 व्यक्तियों की उपस्थिति एवं मरणोपरांत कार्यक्रमों में 20 लोगो की उपस्थिति अनिवार्य कि गई, सामाजिक स्तर पर इसके प्रभाव देखने को मिले। व्यक्तिगत रूप से मुझे विवाह समारोह में सम्मिलित होने का अवसर मिला, जहाँ पूरे समय अजीबोगरीब वातावरण बना रहा सीमित संख्या में भी सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग, मास्क का उपयोग करते हुए भी सभी एक दूसरे को संदेह की स्थिति में देखते रहे, ऐसा प्रतीत हुआ मानो मजबूरी में लोग अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज कराने आये हैं। विवाह कार्यक्रम के आयोजक भी रीति रिवाज और रश्मो कि अदायगी जल्दी से जल्दी करते हुए, कार्यक्रम समाप्त करने का प्रयास करते रहे। इसी तरह मुझे लॉकडाउन के दौरान निकट परिजन के मरणोपरांत अंतिम संस्कार में केवल 20 लोगो के साथ शामिल होना पड़ा हम सभी जानते हैं, कि अंतिम संस्कार कि प्रक्रिया लम्बी है, जहाँ अधिक से अधिक अनुभवशील व्यक्ति सम्मिलित होकर अपना-अपना सहयोग देकर पीड़ित परिवार के दुःख को कम करता है। लेकिन सीमित संख्या होने के कारण पीड़ित परिवार अपने आप को अकेला महसूस करते हुए सभी अंतिम संस्कारों का निर्वाह करता रहा। नोबल कोरोना वायरस महामारी के कारण देश-दुनिया कि अर्थव्यवस्था लड़खड़ा गई, और विकास दर में लगातार गिरावट आती जा रही है। भारत सरकार और रिजर्व बैंक ऑफ़ इंडिया ने काफी प्रयास किये, और वित्त मंत्रालय की ओर से 20 लाख करोड़ रुपए के पॅकेज की घोषणा कि जिसके तहत अनेक वर्गों को राहत देने का प्रयास किया गया। सूक्ष्म, लघु और मध्यम उद्यम मंत्रालय के लिये भी इस राहत पॅकेज में काफी प्रावधान किये गये, जिससे

कि अर्थव्यवस्था में सुधार के लिये बहुत अच्छे परिणाम की संभावना बनी हुई है, भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था को पुनः पटरी पर लाने के लिये केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा आत्म निर्भरता और लोकल से लोकल पर अधिक केन्द्रित होने की बात कही।

भारतीय सामाजिक एवं सांस्कृतिक परम्पराएँ मर्यादित रहते हुए गतिशील हैं, और यह महत्वपूर्ण है, कि संग्रहालय भी परिस्थिती अनुसार अपना वर्चस्व निरंतर बनाए है, विशेषकर कोविड - 19 महामारी के प्रभाव में भी रहते संग्रहालय शिक्षा, प्रेरणा, संवाद और सह-भागिता के साथ उन स्थानों से अधिक संवेदनशील है, जहाँ मानवता की विरासत का संरक्षण, प्रलेखन और प्रदर्शन किया जाता है। कोरोना वायरस काल में जब देश-दुनिया के हजारों-करोड़ों लोग एक दूसरे से अलग होकर संवादहीन हो रहे हैं, तब संग्रहालय हमें एक साथ एक प्लेटफार्म पर ला सकते हैं। इन विपरीत परिस्थितियों में अपनी कार्यप्रणाली को और अधिक लचीला, संसाधन और अधिक तकनीकी युक्त बनाना होगा, जिससे व्यक्तिगत रूप से दर्शकों के नहीं पहुँचने के कारण संवाद और असुरक्षा की भयावह परिस्थिती से निपटने के लिये तुरंत वैकल्पिक व्यवस्था की जाना चाहिये, जैसे ऑनलाइन प्लेटफार्म, म्यूजियम एवं संग्रहित वस्तुओं की वर्चुअल यात्रा एवं सभी दीक्षाओं प्रदर्शनी की वर्चुअल विजिट निरंतर कराते रहना अति-अनिवार्य हो गया है। कुछ विशेष महत्वपूर्ण दिवसों जैसे अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय संग्रहालय दिवस, पर्यावरण दिवस विज्ञान दिवस और संकल्प पर्व इत्यादि दिनों में विशेष आयोजन जैसे वेबिनार, चित्रकला प्रतियोगिता, प्रश्नोत्तर प्रतियोगिता, ऑनलाइन टेराकोटा, धातुशिल्प लोककला साहित्य संवाद इत्यादि विषयों पर वर्कशॉप आयोजित किया जाना चाहिये, जिससे संग्रहालय और दर्शकों विशेषतः छात्रों से संवाद बना रहे हैं, और सभी वर्चुअल कार्यक्रम सेतु की तरह संग्रहालय को जोड़कर रखे। कोरोना महामारी को पराजित करने के लिये समाज का जुड़ना बहुत जरूरी है, समाज के सभी वर्गों की सहायता के बिना कोरोना को हराना असंभव है। हमारा स्वास्थ्य ही हमारी सबसे बड़ी पूंजी है, किसी भी वायरस के ख़ात्मे के लिये नियमों का पालन करना बहुत आवश्यक है, कोरोना जैसी महामारी की वजह से आज सभी ने स्वच्छता को अपनी जीवन शैली में अपना लिया है, और आगे भी इस पर अमल करते रहना चाहिए। अंत में यह कहना बहुत प्रासंगिक होगा, कि जब तक इस भयावह बीमारी का वैक्सीन ना खोज लिया जाए, तब तक इससे मुक्ति मित्रना संभव नहीं होगा, और देश को संगठित होकर एवं सरकार द्वारा जारी सभी दिशा-निर्देशों का पालन करते हुए इस अभूतपूर्व चुनौती का मित्रकर एवं डटकर सामना करना चाहिए।

संजय कुमार शुक्ला

## Lockdown and Life-altering Loss: My Experiences

The “Covid-19 Pandemic”, a crisis situation faced never before, resulted in lockdown in different forms in different contexts sometimes in the nature of “curfew”. In India, in the evening of 24th March 2020, the Prime Minister announced “Nationwide Lockdown” which was further extended subsequently. Vast section of the nation experienced new consequences where large number of people lost jobs and income, migrant labourers forced to return home by walking miles after miles and many of them died of hunger, tiredness, road accidents, few also committed suicide.

Like others I also came to the edge of the new world of “social distancing”, covering my face with mask, staying indoors, keeping small bottle of hand-sanitizer and looking around with a fear of

getting infected not only by not-so-known but by close ones too. I also have my own narratives of experiences of this lockdown which came early to me on the afternoon of 17th March, 2020, when my mother left for her heavenly abode. Sudden demise of my mother stopped my mind working;

she left behind a tremendous vacuum. We would never see her again. Silence was killing, it suffocated our entire house.

I felt writing the experience of unspoken dimensions kept in my mind, for it may help me better understand my grief; share my experiences with others and to reconnect with the world. It took four months to write about the gruesome experience of losing my close one who cared and nurtured me most – my mother. The advent of COVID-19 issue

Story Title: The Lockdown, Hello...Hello... Hello...Am I audible

Name: Amrita Ahmad

School: DPS, Bagum, Jammu & Kashmir

In an average Kashmiri kids' life there are more hantals than the number of national holidays. Hantals are part of normal routine for us. Hantal days are copy. At least for kids it is. Getting up at one's own pace, munching food all day, playing candy crush on special occasions and if time be, flipping few pages of books as fresh as a daisy is a singleton plan as which my life runs during hantals. At times, I wondered if this was normal for everyone. Hantals had taught many kids like me to be confined to four walls of the house. I often craved to relive the school days of jumping on the window seat of the bus, holding hands in recess and walking the corridors of school talking about trivial issues like “Why is XYZ so mean?” or “Did you see, I got a new watch” and running wild into the playground behind innocent helicopters (that is what we call the butterflies here). There was a strange excitement to go to school when the lockdown, which was imposed after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, was lifted.



It is very recent to hear about lockdown due to a virus. The day Lockdown 1.0 was announced, we received an e-mail from our school saying: “The schools are shut till further notice”. Lockdown is the biggest accomplishment of Corona virus. It appeared they came hard in hand. But then just like an upgrade to my father's new phone, lockdown was upgraded. Lockdown 1.0, Lockdown 2.0, Lockdown 3.0 and right now we are living in Lockdown 4.0. These are not some software models but phases of Lockdown implemented by the government to break the deadly chain of Corona virus. I imagine Corona virus as CHET from Rajnikant's movie Robot. It can duplicate itself using humans as the agent. It all appears like science fiction movies which today is happening in real. Lockdown 1.0, the eldest of all, was the strictest. Except essentials, everything was shut all over India. It was just like twin brother to hantal. But then just like notorious siblings Lockdowns 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 were relaxed, late back and easy going. Essential items were available, medical and health care facilities kept functioning and so were opening of schools announced. The device which was my favourite hangout out place became the new centre of school. Yes, Samsung mobile phone of my mother started blaring class schedules. The video chat apps and more advanced innovations of I.Tech graduates cheered me. They were no more fun. Fousia Ma'am, Aashiq Sir, Sadeef Madam are now on my mother's friend list. The school was working from my mother's phone. There were no classrooms and just home works. I wonder what will happen to kids who wrote of desks “Superman”. My mother enjoys parent-teachers' meeting. Even though the teachers will say your ward has done well, she will push them to speak my short comings. Then my class teacher says “Yes, she could have done better in Mathematics. She just got 96”. This gives my mother an opportunity to look at me from the corner of the eyes and all the way to home complain about my poor performance in Mathematics which is 96 percent. But the lockdown seems to have locked a deal between parents and teacher. My mother can chat with them anytime. The lockdown opened up opportunity for my mother to meet my teachers every day. This new model is online teaching. I am expected to sit in front of a 5 inch phone screen and get myself schooled. It is funny. At times, we get echoes like kashkash before the teacher starts the lesson something similar to school bell. The introductory lines to all classes are

“Hello...Hello... Hello...Am I audible...Am I audible... Yes Ma'am Yes Ma'am Yes Ma'am...”

There are times when my urchin sister comes feeding herself Cinnamon Strawberry cream, prying on me what I am doing on phone for so long. Most of the time, she eats my share of chocolate knowing I am in an online school and won't be able to hang her upside down. Similar things happen with other classmates. Whistles coming from kitchens, parents shouting in the background, and the video going on a long pause are common scenarios in online school. Don't mind we at times are put on low supplement internet speed. It is amusing to be at school like this. I miss my teachers and friends. Seeing them face to face is my next wish. Neither hantal nor lockdown is good. Just like the end of winters promised spring the end of hantals assured a ride in a bus to school. But as long as the Corona virus thrives, lock down thrives and so does online school. But with optimism, I wish the entire scientific community in the world to be able to find a solution to end Corona and its friend lockdown. I hope this virus will come to an end one day and we all will be back to school, then we must keep in our minds that “prevention is better than cure”.

**Hello! Am I audible? a Student's journey in lockdown (National Story Writing/Telling Competition organized by the Southern Regional Centre, Mysuru)**





***Social distancing cannot be a cause for social exclusion***

and lockdown process made it crueler and more painful. Her untimely death in such a phase pulled an obvious question, “How it happened?”, actually the query was obviously related to whether it was due to COVID-19, such is the paranoia that COVID-19 has created in the minds of people. It was a life-altering loss hard to believe and move on. Being a Bengalee Hindu, I had to perform certain prevailing customs followed by observing a mourning period, had certain restrictions in day to day life ranging from dietary limitations to worshipping God. At the end of the period, Shradha was performed wherein generally relatives and guests came to gather to offer homage to the deceased. This lockdown made it more troublesome for me to compose myself from a distressed emotional state and at the same time it was difficult for us to arrange for religious rites. Only closest kin were allowed to attend the funeral prayers; and rituals have been to quick implorations for salvation. Lockdown made restrictions on gatherings, with ‘shuts downs’ in the markets and restrictions on the movement of local transports in our area. I felt terrible, sleepless nights have made me more vulnerable to accept the reality of loss. COVID-19 has upturned my understanding of how to mourn and handle death. As social distancing became new normal, the trends of presence and

human touch for consolation have also been radically altered, I felt suddenly. Grief due to death can no longer be shared with people through their physical presence, must be processed in isolation. Every day when I see death reports in different channels and newspapers, pain starts behind my eyes, thinking about the relatives who are not only dealing with the loss but the agony of loneliness as crowds of mourners gather to pay their last respect to the dead not only induces a sense of hope in survivors but also has been the normal way to console. There is a sense of helplessness as age old death rituals across religions, traditions are being upturned to fit “together apart” and accommodate the new reality of virtual

mourning. I never had dreamt of leading a private Shradha ceremony with very limited relatives and well wishers. It made me see death as more of an interlude than an end. While dying may be a source of mental anguish, grieving alone could be harder; loss remains, the connections change, the space for reconsideration shrinks.

The restricted last rites of my mother made me sense the grief of the kin of deceased due to COVID-19 who couldn’t even see their loved ones for the last time, neither they are able to perform the last rites. The ‘new normal lifestyle’ comes with a new normal passage of death. Altogether, Corona virus is sometimes grief-leveler to accept the reality of death, share memories and discuss ways to live life towards with meaning and purpose. But with breaking down of a habitual structure and the collective loss of normalcy, how do we then reconcile grief and closure? As hard as it may be to find meaning after devastating loss, meaning itself could be the key to post-traumatic growth – a positive psychological change experience due to a major life crisis or a traumatic event.

***Koel Mukherjee***

## *Feelings of Family Members in Covid-19 Pandemic*

I am Amitava Dinda, aged 51. I reside in Krishnapur (Kolkata). Covid-19 pandemic has impacted terribly both my day-to-day family life and the workplace. Pandemic changes a lot of normal household activities of daily life, relationship among family members and others, social bonding, etc. Family is a network of relationships and is at the centre. If the network of relationships breaks due to Covid-19, it becomes impossible to maintain equilibrium of society as well in family.

1. **Change of normal household activities and division of labour in family:** In morning we generally depend on the domestic help for cleaning utensils and the flat and washing clothes. Now I am doing the work of cleaning of utensils and washing of clothes. Pandemic breaks up division of labour in family. It also hampers academic activities and leisure time. Procurement of vegetables and non-vegetable articles from market is a problem. We generally collect most of the daily needed items such as vegetables, fishes, milk, grocery items, etc., from our 3rd floor balcony by hanging rope with bag though in normal situation we don't do this type of arrangement.
2. **Home as workplace:** Covid-19 pandemic turns us to do office work from home. Mobile and laptop are the part and parcel of life. It exposes our office dealings in front of family members though it is not desirable. But now in new normal situation of pandemic, the family members adjust with it.
3. **Feeling of insecurity of life:** It is deadly without proper medicine. Fear of death also once appeared in my mind as I am a cancer, insomnia, neuro, hypertension, etc., patient

though I am mentally strong and bold throughout my life. Death of two known people in my neighbouring area created mental pressure. My wife, daughter, and sister suffered with fever which stressed me.

4. **Tension for losing jobs and change of occupation** of various kith and kin was another factor.
5. **Non-desirable expression at home:** Sometimes I lost temper before my family due to work pressure.
6. **Relationship with kith and kin:** I was unable to visit my hometown and not able to attend the marriage of my close relative.
7. **Influence of media:** Both print and electronic media played an undesirable role.
8. **Influence of some of the close friends** created mental pressure in this pandemic period.
9. **The neighbours expressed their suspicion whether some** of the flat owners and their family members visited infected areas.
10. For not availing **regular medical checkup**.
11. **Fear for father's activity** during this pandemic as he is involved in supervising Covid - 19 quarantine centres.

My wife is a home maker now. She was once a staff nurse in Ramakrishna Mission Hospital, Kolkata. Now she follows news channel more than earlier for following Covid – 19 pandemics. She feels comfortable as now she abstains from dropping our daughter (Class X) in car pool for school and also for tuition. Now our daughter mainly depends





***Pandemic, Propagation and Imagination - a child's perception of lockdown (National Drawing Competition organized by the Central Regional Centre, Nagpur)***

on online classes. But she believes that there is no alternative to normal school classes. But the situation of Covid -19 compels them to follow new rules and schedule of daily life. Before pandemic she was busy throughout the week due to daughter's education and household activities. She has now time for walking on the terrace. She is a follower of local religious Guru as well as disciple of Kali, Shiva, Durga, Saraswati, Lakshmi, etc. She believes that she will not suffer in this pandemic.

Our daughter does not go out without urgent work and also uses mask and sanitizer. Before this pandemic she used to clean her hands in school

with sanitizer. She also feels comfortable during Covid – 19 pandemic as there is no physical stress for attending school. Most of the time she is busy with online classes. She informed that it is impossible for teachers to clarify homework of schools as well as in tuition for all the students as it is online. Before lockdown she had no time to go to the terrace for physical exercise and now she does.

**Amitava Dinda**

## EVENTS

### Webinars

A series of Webinars have been organized by different Regional Centres of the Survey during the lockdown period.



**Digital banner - new destination of programme announcement**

- In the month of May 2020, the Central Regional Centre, Nagpur, organized four consecutive Webinars on different topics: “Status of Women among the Gujjars of MP”, “Field Experiences of Kathodi of Dadra & Nagar Haveli”, “Field Experiences of Bharwad of Dadra & Nagar

Haveli”, and “My first Fieldwork in CRC: A Case study on Bijoria Community”. These were the attempts where the Research Fellows of this Centre shared their field experiences as a part of in-house activities. This was intended largely to acquaint them with the nuances of the presentation of research findings.

- The Western Regional Centre, Udaipur, organized a Webinar on “World Environment Day” on 5th June, 2020. Prof. Vinay Kumar Srivastava, Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Dr. Ramesh Chandra, Former Deputy Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Prof. P.K Singh, Professor & Principal Investigator, Department of Soil & Water Engineering, MPUAT, Udaipur, and Dr. Dipak Kumar Gupta, Scientist (Environment Science) CAZRI, Jodhpur participated in this Webinar. Around 60 participants from different regional centres and ex-colleagues of An.S.I. along with other scholars participated in this webinar.

### International Museum Day

- On the occasion of International Museum Day, the Central Regional Centre, Nagpur observed the ‘International Museum Day’ on 18th May, 2019 by organising a webinar on “Anthropology and Pandemic: A Museum Perspective” wherein the Research Personnel from the Survey along with experts from various organizations and students participated.

The webinar was welcomed by Dr. Ratna Dhar, Superintending Anthropologist (Culture) and Head of Office, Central Regional Centre, Nagpur; she spoke of the current scenario and lockdown, and the role of museums to fight with the situation. Dr. Dhar shared a glimpse





### ***Webinar - a virtual medium of discussion and dissemination of knowledge***

of the scenario that the world is facing and how different museums are victimized. The keynote address was delivered by the Director, Anthropological Survey of India. He talked on the role of museums during the pandemic situation. The Webinar began with deliberation by Shri Siddharth Shit, Assistant Keeper, North-Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong. He explained the methods to be adopted by anthropological museums to overcome the new normal maintaining the guidelines to be laid by the government. Various aspects and modes of museum communication and their significance as per the post-COVID-19 pandemic strategy for anthropological museum, education and awareness point of view were discussed keeping in mind the changing perspective of museum communication.

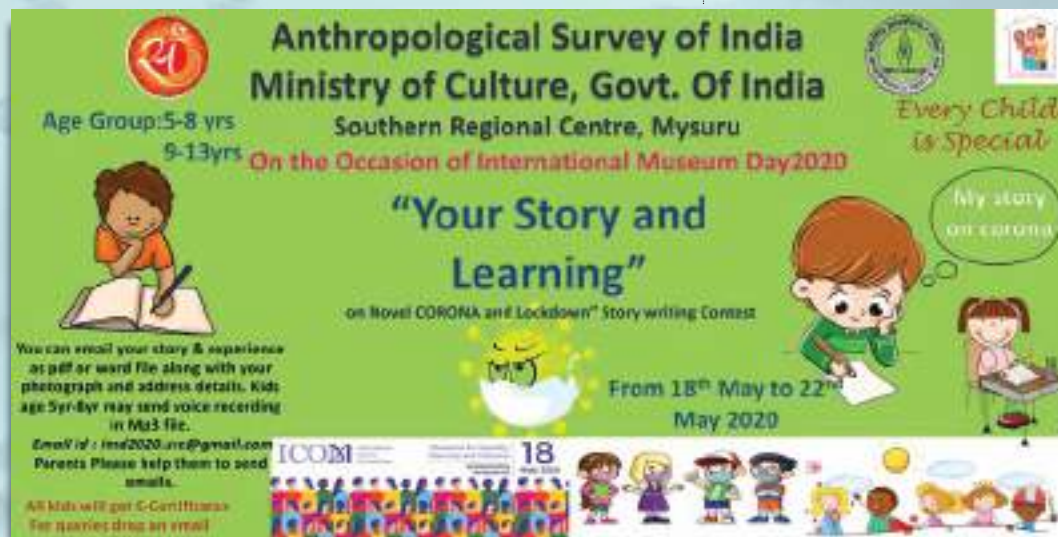
Taking the webinar ahead the senior-most Assistant Keeper of the organization, Shri Sanjay Shukla portrayed the disruptions in the normal life of general public, brought about by the corona virus in the form of COVID-19. Pandemic is unprecedented at the global level. The disease has created fear, confusion and uncertainty among the general public, the health care professional, and the managers of public resources, development activists,

the Government, International bodies that oversee intergovernmental dealings in trade, economy and cultural ties for such a long time. All this has brought the whole world to a virtual standstill. Henceforth the world time line will probably be divided into pre-Covid-19 and post-Covid-19. Shri Shukla emphasized how Anthropological Museums can plan an exhibition dealing with all those aspects giving a rational and scientific understanding of these issues. Some of the aspects they deal with can be as under historical, biological, management of the disease and socio-cultural perspectives.

Miss Banita Behera, Assistant Keeper, Southern Regional Centre, Mysuru, took us to the historical journey of pandemic and a virtual tour to the situation that prevailed at a point of time whenever this world experienced pandemic. She has also emphasized how different pandemics left significant marks on our civilization and how this Covid-19 created a whole new game where the entire world is in into the pitch and ultimately the entire community is leading to psychiatric illness. This globe has faced several pandemic incidents and it is nothing new, it is just that adapting to something that requires awareness.



### ***Electronic Certificate- a new mode of acknowledging the recipient***



## *Lockdown cannot isolate us from Citizens*

Miss Behera presented few pictures and explained how different museums of the world took active participation in pandemic situations, starting from utilizing the museum spaces as Quarantine Centres to mounting exhibitions to make people aware of the situation. Pointing to the objective of the International Museum Day she elucidated how museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of culture and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among people. Now the museum anthropologists and museums will have an important role to play to express our concern regarding the future of museums and the invaluable cultural heritage they hold as an essential part of the identity of the peoples and nations and a vital element for the communities they serve.

The final speaker for the webinar was Shri Sudarshan Vaidya, Assistant Keeper, North-Western Regional Centre, Dehradun. His deliberation in Rajbhasha added a unique flavour to the whole Webinar. Sri Vaidya beautifully reflected how COVID-19 and pandemic situation due to lockdown has affected the museums at large not only financially but also their education level and the personal interests

of the visitors. He also emphasized on how the rules and regulations laid by government of India can be helpful to modulate new ways to fetch visitors to the museums.

The webinar gathered various comments and appreciation from the participants. The Director congratulated all the presenters for their thought provoking

deliberations. The whole webinar was conducted by Dr. Abhishikta Ghosh Roy, Anthropologist (Physical) of the Central Regional Centre, Nagpur. Smt. Sunumi Changmi, Assistant Anthropologist (Cultural), delivered the vote of thanks to the participants.

Apart from the webinar on that occasion, an online drawing and elocution competition was organized on the theme “When the World is locked at Home”. E-certificates were given to all the participant students. This event received wide media coverage and the news was published in leading newspapers of the city the next day.

- The Southern Regional Centre, Mysuru organized online writing and storytelling competition among children on their experiences of visiting museum to mark the occasion. It was highly appreciated in civic circles.



## NEWS

### Rajbhasha

मध्य क्षेत्रीय केन्द्र, नागपुर में अप्रैल से जून 2020 की तिमाही के अंतरगत 18 जून, 2020 को ऑनलाइन तिमाही हिन्दी कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया गया। यह वेबिनर केंद्र के अधिकारियों तथा कर्मचारियों तक ही सीमित था। इस कार्यशाला की अध्यक्षता कार्यालय प्रधान डॉक्टर रत्ना धर ने की। कार्यालय की कनिष्ठ अनुवादक डॉक्टर नंदिता साहू ने कोविड-19 : सतर्कता एवं अनुपालन इस विषय पर हिंदी में व्याख्यान दिया। उन्होंने इस वाइरस के संक्रमण से बचने के लिए किए जाने वाले उपायों पर विस्तृत चर्चा की।

इन दिनों विश्व व्यापी इस महामारी के चलते सभी देश कठिनाइयों का सामना कर रहे हैं। लगभग सभी देशों का आर्थिक ढाँचा प्रभावित हुआ है जिसके चलते मायूसी व हताशा का माहौल बन गया है। ये प्राकृतिक महामारी ना होकर मनुष्य द्वारा बनाए गए वाइरस के होने की पुष्टि होने के बाद लोगों के मन में डर समा गया है। अतः इस व्याख्यान में मुख्य रूप से इस बात को बताने का प्रयास किया गया कि इस के संक्रमण से बचने के लिए क्या उपाय किए जाए। आयुर्वेद इस देश की प्राचीन औषधीय परम्परा है और उसके द्वारा मिले निदान हमारे बहुत काम आ सकते हैं। गरम पानी और कुछ आयुर्वेदिक काढ़ों के पीने से हमारी रोग प्रतिकारक क्षमता बढ़ती है और आज जब तक इस पर कोई वैक्सीन नहीं आ जाती हमें अपनी रोग प्रतिकारक क्षमता को सुदृढ़ रखने की आवश्यकता है। व्याख्यान में कई अधिकारियों एवं कर्मचारियों द्वारा भी इस विषय पर चर्चा की गई। कार्यक्रम की परिचालिका डॉक्टर अभिषिक्ता घोष राय थी व धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव श्री संजय शुक्ला, प्रभारी राजभाषा ने दिया।

### World Environment Day

On 5th June, 2020 the World Environment Day was observed by several Regional Centres and Head Office of the Survey with several activities.

➤ Maintaining social distancing norm, a talk on



**Observation of World Environment Day by An.S.I. Kolkata with maintaining social distancing norms**

“World Environment Day” was organized at the Eastern Regional Centre, Salt Lake City, Kolkata.

➤ The Western Regional Centre organized a Webinar and conducted plantation programme in the office premises.

➤ Dr. R.R. Gowloog, Superintending Anthropologist (Cultural) and Head of Office, North-Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong delivered a speech on “Celebrate Biodiversity”.

### International Yoga Day

The staff members of the Survey participated in the International Yoga Day on 21.06.2020. They participated online, individually from the confines of their own homes.

A webinar on ‘Namaste Yoga’ organized on 21st June, 2020 through Cisco WebEx to commemorate the International Yoga Day. It was attended by all the staff members of the Central Regional Centre, Nagpur.

## नमस्ते योगा : योग दिवस का आयोजन

भारतीय मानव विज्ञान सर्वेक्षण, मध्य क्षेत्रीय केंद्र, नागपुर में दिनांक 21 जून, 2020 को योग दिवस का आयोजन किया गया। इस वर्ष कोविड-19 महामारी के चलते हुए देश व्यापी बंद में इस कार्यक्रम का आयोजन वेबिनार के माध्यम से किया गया जिसमें केंद्र के सभी सदस्यों ने भाग लिया। “नमस्ते योगा” विषय पर सभी अधिकारियों एवं कर्मचारियों से अपने विचार रखने को कहा गया। कार्यक्रम का आरम्भ कार्यालय प्रधान डॉक्टर रत्ना धर द्वारा नमस्ते योगा पर दिए गए वक्तव्य से हुई। जीवन में योग के महत्व को आज हम सब जानते हैं और ये भी जान गए हैं कि योग ना केवल हमें शारीरिक रूप से सुदृढ़ करता है अपितु हमारे शरीर के अंदरूनी अवयवों की भी देखभाल करता है। योग व प्राणायाम नित्य करने से हमारी रोग प्रतिकारक क्षमता अच्छी हो जाती है। इस महामारी की वैक्सीन जब तक बाज़ार में नहीं आ जाती तब तक अपनी रोग प्रतिकारक क्षमता को व्यवस्थित करने हेतु योग एक बड़ा सहारा है। हम जब नमस्ते करते हैं तो हम अपने सामने खड़े व्यक्ति को आदर तो देते हैं साथ ही उस व्यक्ति के साथ सम्पर्क में भी नहीं आते। ये आज इस महामारी के समय अत्यंत आवश्यक है कि हम एक दूसरे से दूरी बनाए रखें। इस वेबिनार में कार्यालय के लगभग सभी अधिकारी कर्मचारी सहभागी थे। सभी ने अपने विचारों को प्रस्तुत किया। डॉक्टर अभिषिक्ता घोष राय इस वेबिनार को होस्ट थीं। लगभग दो घंटे चले यह वेबिनार अत्यंत रुचिकर और उत्साहवर्धक माहौल में समाप्त हुआ।

### Others

“Sankalp Parv” was initiated by planting trees at the Head Office, New Campus, as well as at various Regional Centers of the Survey with great enthusiasm.

### New Recruitment/ Promotion/Superannuation

➤ Shri Vikram Singh, Junior Statistical Officer, joined the Survey on transfer from some other department.

➤ Shri Gunwant Balwant Ghatwai promoted to the post of Office Superintendent and Shri Palela Papa Rao of the centre promoted to the post of Assistant.

➤ Dr. M. Rajendra Prasad, Assistant Anthropologist (Cultural), Shri Manbodh Kashyap, Multi-Tasking Staff and Shri Jitendra Kumar Sharma, Driver-cum-Mechanic (Grade-III), superannuated from active services.

### Scholastic imprints

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