

3.3.3. Number of books and chapters in edited volumes/books published and papers published in national/ international conference proceedings per teacher during year.



UNMASKING THE FUTURE

**A Collection of Scholarly Essays on the
Impact & Aftermath of the COVID-19 Crisis**



Estd.: 1972

Reaccredited 'A' Grade in the 3rd Cycle (2016-2021)

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CHAPTER 1

The Pandemic Poetry: Echoing Voices from the Fragmented World

Dr. Rajshree Trivedi

In a world torn and fragmented by the outbreak of corona virus, poetry offered therapeutic measures to release emotions that got caged in minds agitated by lonely lockdowns and digital exhaustion. It voiced truths, shared experiences, nursed feelings and spoke minds that needed cathartic downpour from severe bouts of loneliness, quarantines and other forms of social/familial isolations. But what did poetry actually voice? And for whom? This chapter aims to read a few selected poems penned in India as a response to the pandemic. Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian Formalist critic, introduced the concepts of polyphony, dialogue and chronotypes in literature. An attempt to examine the pandemic poems in the light of these terms is made here to identify, understand and contextualise them, keeping the issue of 'whose voice' at the centre of the study.

Poetry, unquestionably and undoubtedly, has a healing impact on the poet as well as the reader. In the last two years, the world witnessed and experienced the catastrophic impact of Corona virus on millions of people who lost their lives in its first wave. Ignorance, illusions and idiosyncrasies thrived and multiplied with people frantically trying to find out what was happening to the world. Amidst the terrific loss of human lives, there evolved a whole new register of words and phrases that became the only reality people could live with. These terms- lockdowns, social distancing, masks, sanitization, digital dependence, virtual presences and a few others- became an integral part of existence that was itself left to a precarious and unpredictable condition. New medical terminologies

evolved and stayed back with us even after the pandemic slowed down and started losing its intensity.

It wasn't only about locking oneself in a small house, hut, slum, hospital, mansion or a plush apartment, it was about the mind that was locked where space did not at all matter. Human mind was at risk. Not less than a warlike situation, the COVID-19 Pandemic led to a severe state of psychological, mental and emotional crisis. Lockdowns resulted into unemployment, loss of income, economic crisis and other monstrous issues that were left unattended by authorities. Some of the basic survival needs such as food, medical aid and others were partially addressed by government and non-government welfare bodies. Commerce, business, education and a few other essential sectors were dragged to digital platforms. But the only area that was indeed very important but left unattended was that of mental health-individual as well as collective mental health. Loneliness, uncertainty, digital dependence, loss of kith and kin, media menace and other factors affected the personal, individual and collective mindsets leading to abusive relationships, suicidal deaths, violent outbursts and perverted behaviour.

Since time immemorial, poetry has been a powerful expression of emotions. During the lockdown, many resorted to it, trying it out in various forms – reading, penning, enacting, performing, singing and attempting various/multiple forms of artistic expressions. These expressions found their readers/ viewers on various digital and social media platforms that accelerated their outputs in large numbers. To borrow the term 'polyphony' from the Bakhtinian philosophy, the poetry written during the last two years and more is characterised by features such as 'multiple tellings,' 'monologic and dialogic conceptions of truth' and 'chronotypes.' In this chapter, a brief study of selected texts written by poets- amateurs as well as established ones- will be taken up to understand: the polyphonic voices these poems echo; the multiple layers of truth they unfold; and the 'essential connections between time and space they establish or question in the poems.'

Many leading newspapers, magazines, books and academic journals have published critical essays and articles on anthologies of poetic works, fiction and non-fictional works attempted during the last two years of pandemic. Pramod K. Nayyar's article 'What Humanities can Teach Us During the Pandemic' discusses how humanities "critically supplement the biomedical paradigm of reading

the disease." 'Writing as therapy: How 'found poetry' has resurged during the pandemic" by Ranjani Srinivasan introduces to the Indian readers the concept of 'found poetry' that helps the whole new lot of "instant poets" to rescue themselves from the lurking stress and gloom during the lockdown. Tabeeenah Anjum interviews poets like Ranjit Hoskote, Meena Kandasamy and others in her article 'World Poetry Day: The Pandemic Through the Poet's Eyes' to find out how fruitfully or productively they utilized their lockdown period. Critics like Salil Tripathi have politicised the writings of a few poets who targeted the Indian government and its failure in handling the crisis. His article 'The Pandemic Poetry of Indians has roused readers far and wide' as he justifies the anguish of an amateur Gujarati poet who was trolled as well as praised for her poem *Shab-Vahini Ganga*. One of the common functions among many others of poetry, as suggested by these articles, is that it came as a rescue to many who had been searching for an outlet for their repressed emotions. Poetry functioned as a therapeutic tool to overcome the anxiety, depression and frustrations people had been pushed into.

Since the COVID-19 Pandemic literature is too young and hopefully a short-lived one, more publications, both literary and critical ones, are awaited. Pandemic literatures, when compared to other literatures, deliberate upon contextual references and studies. If it was 'deaths and disease' that ruled the literature of the last pandemic in Europe a century ago, the literature of the COVID-19 pandemic talked of the "prolonged isolation" (Patel). Words synonymous with the term 'isolation' appeared on pages. Categorised into different lingos, they functioned as metaphors for loneliness, alienation, confinement and peripheral existences. In medical terms, the word 'quarantine' carries a benign connotation. At the centre of it is the purpose of prevention or precaution against spreading the infection. On the other hand, the collocative phrase 'isolation-ward' refers to a cohort of positively tested patients admitted to a medical ward for treatment. Ironically the cohort begot loneliness and alienation and not the feelings of mutuality or compassion for each other.

Poetic utterances and expressions during the COVID-19 Pandemic found their presence on various social media handles. Virtual communities offered promising platforms to the first-time, amateurs, seasonal as well as budding poets under the mentorship of seasoned poets. Of course, the digital platforms were flooded with

voices coming from many quarters of life but the real concern was that of the identity. Were the utterance, expression and voice the same or representative of the other? Elaborating upon Bakhtin's theory of polyphony, Linda Parker suggests, "the capacity of my utterance to embody someone else's utterance even while it is mine" (Parker) finds its relevance here.

Voices of grief, sorrow and despair are heard in multiple tellings. Naveen Kumar puts forth a hypothetical situation to his readers, "*Imagine then/ The melancholy of the wind* (Knotted Grief). Nadeem Raj, a young poet resonates the same amount of grief. He hears "singing through the window/ A melody of melancholy" (Lockdown Song). Himanshu Vyas sighs at "*a hundred rounds of ambulances*" and their lights outnumbering the light of the moon at night (Paper Lantern, MONK). The Pandemic poets, by way of their own distinct voices in their poetry establish what Bakhtin terms as "a dialogic relationship." Each one, within the peripheries of his or her own narrative discourse addressed the catastrophic effects of the virus on the mankind.

A major concern is about the source from where the voices entered the poetry. While the physical distancing was observed by the citizens, media (barring the print media) influenced millions of people watching the audio-visuals on their electronic gadgets. One is certain about the speaker narrating his or her own experiences of witnessing and experiencing an isolation ward as a patient when M. Hasan narrates a dream or rather a nightmare of "visiting crowded hospitals / overwhelmed by breathless patients/ [Beseeching] everyone and anyone / For saving their loved one's lives/ In my ears still ringing the helpless screams" (March of the Dead's 'screams' are polyphonic in nature as they are outcries of patients, victims, relatives, hospital staff, frontline workers and many more present on the site.

Upon a close reading of poems written during the first and the following intermittent lockdowns, one asks - where are the poems penned by the aggrieved? Or are their voices piled under the heaps of hunger inflicted upon them for days together? The missing poetry by the speaker who has actually experienced the pangs of it is yet to come. However, a 'close- to- near' experience has been captured by Ashwani Kumar, a professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai:

Grains are in short supply
 Salt and sugar in abundance
 I am the only hungry person
 Standing in this long queue, [like] an obedient ghost
 ('Zebras at the Ration Shop')

Road, the most coveted of all metaphors during the Pandemic, were metaphors of desertion and isolation. However, a few poets dichotomised them using images of trailing queues of migrants waiting for transportation to return to native places. Hunger caused by unemployment resulting into mass exodus of labours in the absence of public transport systems and the horrors of the journey of foot were captured, hyped or fictionalised by media. Gulzar, the well-known Hindi poet compares the catastrophe of the migrating labours with that of the refugees of Partition soon after the Indian independence – "Now too, there is a murderous Death around at/But it doesn't ask us our religion or caste or name/ It simply kills! ('Migrating, COVID-19') Ipsita Mitra, a poet writes lines in first person plural a narrative of empathy and concern for those 'locked out?/ Those walking endless miles /To reach their homes and stay with their loved ones[they sold our food and veg and washed our dirty linen ('Miles To Go'). While Gulzar invokes a rage for the dead, Ipsita raises an outcry for the living who are left lifeless for the want of food and water on roads.

Suparna Mali, a high school student based in New Delhi grieves, "The roads were silent, devoid of men/ People in their houses laughed, ate together..../ Hungry.....And with no one by her side/ she fell to death ('Hunger'). 'She' could be a metaphor of anyone -male or female or even a transgender. The outburst was the same everywhere, the voices were different. Social media platforms were flooded with voices of grief and sorrow because:

Lockdowns are not the same for all
 We are in the same storm but not in the same boat
 For some, quarantine is optional: a moment of
 reflection, reconnection, Easy in flip flops,
 With a whiskey or tea
 For others, this is a desperate crisis
 For others it is facing loneliness
 For some, peace, rest time, vacation
 for some, how a am I going to pay my bills?
 Some want to go back to work because they
 are running out of money (Anonymous)

For a poet like Manan Kapoor based in New Delhi, the experience of the lockdown was an “eerie” one. He opined “We must risk delight. Poetry may not cure us of the coronavirus, but it will heal us.” The statement is surely a solace seeking one but driving down the road not to buy groceries or necessary commodities but “just so, I could drive” (2020). Apparently a narrative that voiced the grief of not the ‘have-nots’ but the “haves,” the monograph discusses death, loss, separation, migration and economy from diverse viewpoints – business reviews, world history, global epidemic scenario and others.

A heart rending conversation between man and God swells up with rage when Manohar Shetty hints at the people with wealth and power, the self-proclaimed gods. He envies them: “Yes, you’re lucky you don’t need to beg or riot for food, your fridge still full with rarest cuts....vintage wines” (*The Art of Solitude: Quarantine Blues*). Death, however, did not discriminate between the class, caste, age or gender and hauled itself upon its choicest clan. Ranjit Hoskote, in his collection *Hunchprose* asks:

Did I ever think
Heaven would ripen its doors
Before their right season
Expecting me to arrive
Any day now my boots caked with mud
My coat weighted down with rain’ (*Hunchprose*).

There were neither answers nor justifications to those questions. Uncertainties prevailed, things fell apart and there was no centre that could hold the chaos – “People begin to die in such a way/ that they themselves don’t know/ they have died/ Dead men have no homes,” writes Kumar (*‘Official Deaths are a Superstition,’ in Singing in the Dark “A Global Anthology of Poems Under Lockdown”*). Sampoorina Chatterji announces:

I have been looking for nothing for days now
wondering when, at which unsprung moment,
it might engulf me utterly
all utterance would be shallowed
I succeeded in sweeping the verb away
Dumped it in the backlot where the rubbish was burnt
under the raintree where the crows usher in the dawn
with their cacophonous claim:
Now, sluggard humans wake up! It’s morning now! (*‘Nothing’*)

Chatterji is creating a "strategy narrative" (Vaara and Pederson, 593) in which she moves on from a "chronological perspective" or "cosmological time" to a more meaning based approach or "phenomenological time." Vaara and Pederson have borrowed Ricœur's concepts of time (*Time and Narrative*, 1988). Time and space, in Bakhtin's theory share an interdependent relationship. He assigns specific chronotopes for specific genres. For instance, the road for the genre – adventure of everyday life. Chatterjee's time is the everyday chronological time that the speaker uses in the background of the supposed self-quarantined house he or she confined to.

It is also the inner turmoil that Chatterjee faces when she is sweeping the verb away to the rubbish. She uses images that stand for death- crow, a bird that it a scavenger found near the rubbish. Streets and roads during the pandemic were turned into dump yards in absence of the civic amenities and the frontline workers diverted to medical units. The scenes were alarming and horrifying.

For a poet like Vinita Agrawal, 'Home is a Crusade' where she portrays the journey of the "walkers," the migrants who walk at night and rest by the day to avoid the scorching heat, pain and thirst so as to reach their hometowns before "exhaling the same last breath" that their fellow-travellers might have had experienced. The chronotope of migrants on the road struggling with the heat of the day and horrors of night is drawn in the backdrop of a suckling child "too tiny to leave the breast." The narrative points out the dangers of the lurking death and the uncertainties associated with the life of a new born on the road.

Poets have resorted to using regional nuances and words to express the horrors of death. For instance, the word '*doli*' (a palanquin that carries a bride to her groom's house) is euphemistically used to describe the last journey. Each nation, each region and state had its own sets of sad stories to narrate. Migration of labour who are otherwise migrants working on construction sites is not an unprecedented experience for people who are constantly moving in makeshift arrangements. The Bakhtinian term 'heteroglossia' where a discourse contains words from regional or diverse languages that denote utterances in everyday speech. The following lines carry a special slant on the Indian social custom of a bride leaving her parental home forever to set out for a new beginning of life at her groom's home:

How deadly this fever is
 Everyone is dying of it
 Men become lame with it
 And go out in *dolis* (Ahmed Ali quoted by Patnaik, 2022)

Ironically, a *doli* is exclusively a woman's vehicle but the helplessness against deaths of thousands of "men" is an image that describes the final journey. The title of Ravi Shankar's poem 'Love in the Time of *Karuna* Virus' where the word *karuna* (compassion) in place of 'corona' virus points out to the need of the hour in a world torn and fragmented by greed, power, selfishness, and other social evils that found their own ways amidst the horrors of the pandemic. In Bakhtinian terms, the social context and the use of language to suggest "multiple meanings" offers multiple perspectives to class, gender and many other contexts that the narrative aims to discuss.

For a poet, the journey within the possibility of access to the world outside is denied, comes as a great opportunity to revisiting narratives. "If I can't go out, why can't I go inwards?" writes Ayushi Agarwal. Poets like Meena Kandasamy, Ranjit Hoskote, Naveen Kishore and others have found solace in revisiting their favourite poets during the lockdown. Priya Sarrukai Chabria notes, "Writing poetry is a phenomenon akin to prayer." (2021). During the pandemic, the passion of poetry did not dampen the spirits of poets who turned online for reading and reciting their narratives. Voices, individual as well as collective, emerged to express solidarity and overcome the horrors of epidemic. A few poets resorted to going back to reading the classics. "The fickleness and unpredictability of life have become more pronounced. As has the urgency of doing what one has to do. I read poetry every day. TS Eliot, Sylvia Plath, Philip Larkins, Ted Hughes, Dylan Thomas are among my favourite poets. "The Oxford Book of Modern Verse always lies on my bedside table" shared Jagdeep Sharma in an interview to *Outlook*. Creating, compiling or revisiting poetry had been a shared, participatory experience that saved the world from the darkness of dungeons.

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Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Travel Industry – During and After

Ms. Pranaya Revandkar and Ms. Vaishali Ranadive

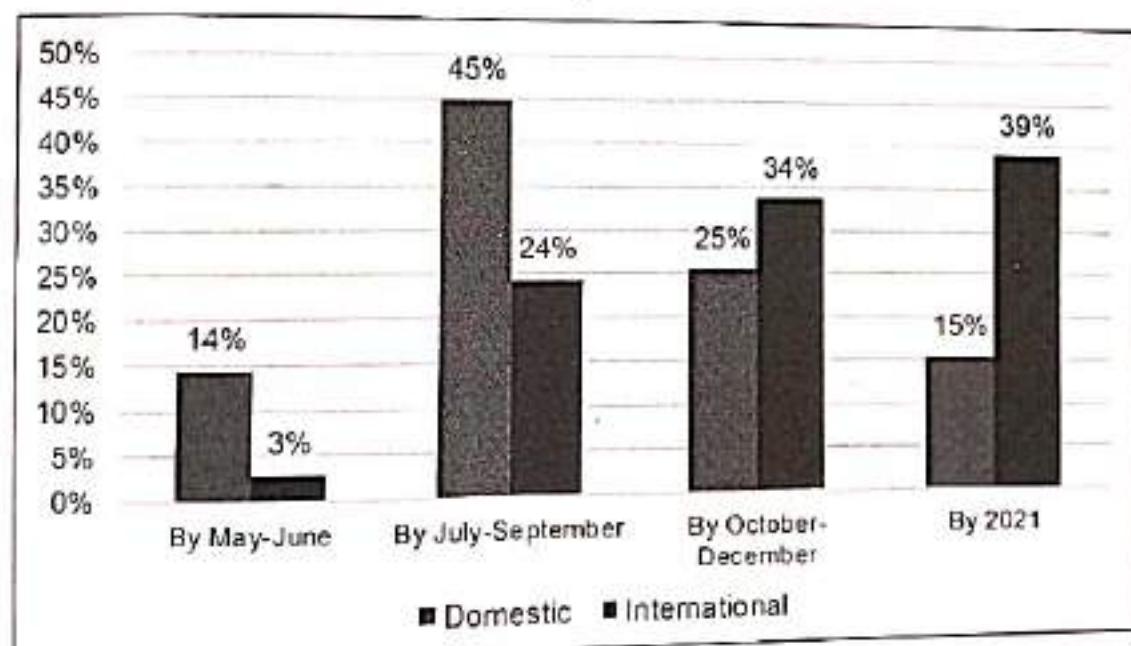
Introduction

India is a tourist destination noted for its heritage, architecture, cultural glimpses, plethora of monuments, religious sites and the oldest civilization. The tourism sector is a major source of employment globally, which is a labor-intensive industry. The umbrella of tourism comprises supporting industries like accommodation, transportation, food and beverages, retail, culture and hospitality. The tourism sector of our country provides benefits and opportunities for the people. Our country is a major tourist destination for many International tourists, creating many employment opportunities and generating taxes. Almost 87.5 million jobs, with 12.75% of total employment, has contributed INR 194 billion to India's GDP, (WTTC, 2018). India plays a significant role for the tourism industry with reference to Religious, Medical, Ecology, Adventure, Cruise, MICE, Responsible, Sustainable tourism and much more. The Covid-19 Pandemic hit our country when the tourism industry was at a high stage of popularity and demand. This sector had gained a growth of 3.2 % in 2018, 10.8 million foreign tourists have arrived in India contributing to foreign exchange earnings of USD 29.9 billion in 2019. But, due to this pandemic, it has been estimated that there will be around 40 million direct and indirect job losses in India, with an annual loss in revenue of around USD 17 billion (FICCI, 2020). The impact of the pandemic had adversely affected the tourists' behaviors and their mental wellbeing. Tourists cancelled their planned tours in fear of the disease infection. Tourists traveling from one place to another increased the risk of infection to other passengers in the absence of effective vaccinations.

Travelers were the key source of transferring viruses, epidemics, outbreaks, or pandemics between local communities and tourist destinations. The diseases spread through close contacts with infected people. The entire world was facing crisis communication which had adverse consequences due to COVID-19 in the travel and leisure industry.

Impact of Corona Virus

The Corona virus indeed caused a serious concern at a global level in early January 2020 & by March end, affected people all over the world. This Wuhan Virus spread to almost every part of the world and each and every State of India. This was a big loss faced by the tourism industry. Tourism is a source of revenue and employment generation for many countries. Due to lockdown, there was a decline in foreign tourist arrivals in India by 68% in February to March 2020, and hence fall in foreign exchange earnings by 66.32% which has a significant impact on the economy.

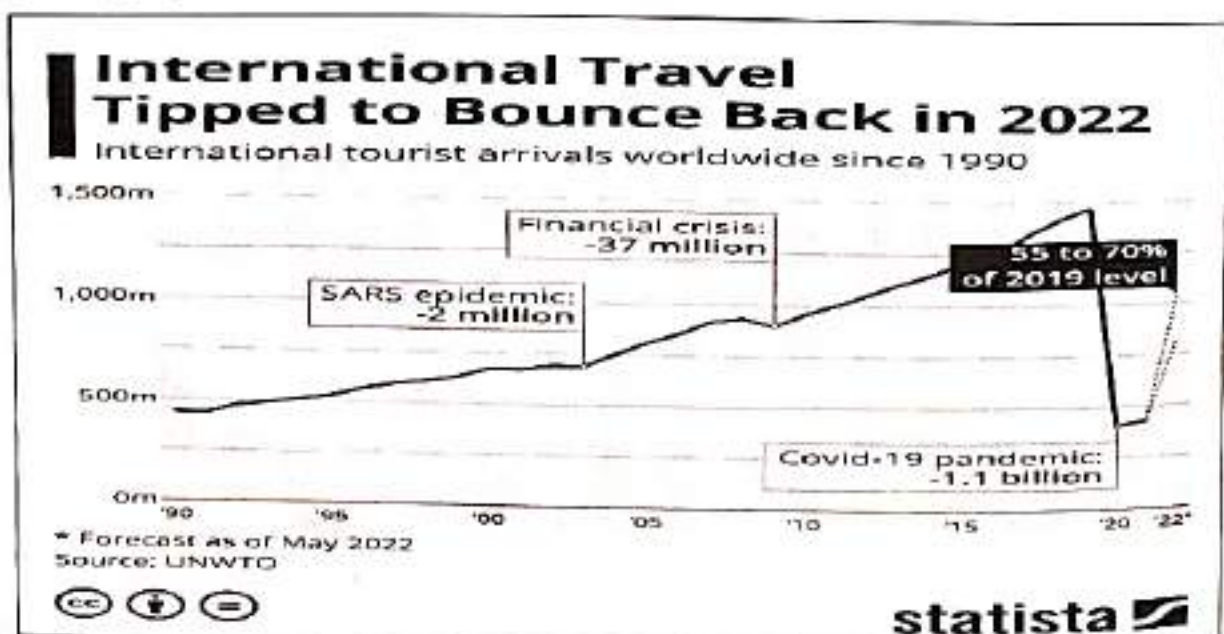


Graph 1: Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism Arrivals

Service providers have suffered direct and indirect job losses in our country, with an annual loss of around USD 17 billion in India (FICCI, 2020, Scroll, 2020). According to IATO (Indian Association of Tour Operators) the airlines, hotel and travel sectors have together incurred losses of about INR 8,500 crores due to restrictions on inbound tourists arrivals in India. No international flights operations, visas were not issued, bookings cancelled, lockdown at all tourist sites, closure of travel agencies and industry losing employment

According to WTTC, World Travel and Tourism Council, the Coronavirus pandemic has cut almost 50 million jobs globally in the travel and tourism industry. IATA (International Air Transport Association) expected loss of 113-250 billion US \$ or 3.1 % of the total revenue, which suggests even IATA's "best-case scenario" for 2020, which will not be bearable by airlines. In the case of service providers, the whole sector was valued at 254 billion US \$ for 2019, consisting of 1 million tour operators. 86 % of operators generated less sales than expected in 2019, which implies small businesses which could be hit the hardest, 28 % of tour operators were at a risk of closing business.

As the year 2020 began, there was another wave of coronavirus experienced all over the world. As the number of infected cases rose throughout India, implementation of certain measures like social distancing, community lockdowns among the host, work from home, stay at home, self or mandatory quarantine, curbs on over-crowding were taken. Tourism industry faced another year of losing business to the pandemic. The second wave started wreaking havoc, just when the industry had begun hoping for a normal season. For the second consecutive year, there was again a complete washout as advance bookings were cancelled once again due to increase of Covid-19 cases. The loss incurred by the industry ranged from INR 200 to INR 500 crores. India announced that all tourist visas would be suspended. This crisis impacted the industry longer and deeper than expected. Government imposed travel restrictions which stopped the opening up of International travel destinations.



Graph 2: International Travel Tipped to Bounce Back in 2022

New Normal – Paving the Path for Travel Industry

The New Normal has changed the style of travel. This has given rise to alternate ways of tourism. The second wave of pandemic has set many challenges. Cleanliness, hygiene and safety will be of utmost importance at tourist sites, hotels, entertainment outlets, pilgrim places and other public areas. Accommodation industry has also changed their ways of operations.

Domestic vacations are preferred by many which include domestic trips and short stays. Travel restrictions, mandatory covid testing and quarantine rules have forced people to plan domestic vacations instead of going for outbound destinations.

Also, there is an optimistic viewpoint of travel between domestic and regional destinations. A change from the traditional tourist to the local tourist has been observed. An increasing demand for rural, nature based, health and wellness tourism, over Urban crowded destinations will be preferred. Travel agencies are preparing to promote products which are target based and marked for safety and hygienic conditions. Virtual tourism has gained worldwide demand due to experiencing a holiday destination from their own comfort zone. Travel agencies are exploring virtual tours and exploratory and experimental experiences. The upcoming scenario will have more demand for intimate, self –driven tours, staycations and workations. The Tour Operators and other service providers will need to regain the confidence of people. The tourism industry will need time to recover and function towards sustainable development in future.

The Government of India came up with various campaigns to promote domestic tourism. A new initiative called DigiYatra, co-ordinated by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Digital India Vision has been launched. Covid-19 has brought forth an opportunity for industry players to come together, subside public panic and help each other to recover. Travel professionals should avail of this scheme. This will unite the travel fraternity under one umbrella enabling them to have a common platform to voice and resolve their issues. Many travel professionals haven't associated themselves with MOT, TAAI or any of the government recognized tourism organizations. This indicates a lack of awareness on the benefits of being a member of such

It is mandatory to adopt the IATA Vaccine Pass. Increasing the vaccination scale and speed is a sure way to quickly gain confidence to begin traveling amongst the tourists and also the stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. As businesses have come to a standstill, the Travel and Tourism industry could recover, if the government immediately adopted, the three point proposal made by FAITH(Federation of Association in Indian Tourism and Hospitality), i.e. waiver or compensation for Fixed statutory liabilities; Direct Benefit Transfer of Basic pay to all the employees involved in the industry and Credit of SIES dues for 2019-2020. Use of Virtual and interactive technology to detect, provide accurate information and aid the traveler and the other sectors in this industry. Covid-19 has brought forth an opportunity for the industry's players to come together to subside public panic and help each other to recover.

Rebuilding Tourism after Coronavirus

Rebuilding Tourism is going to be of utmost priority for the tourism industry. There is a lot of uncertainty regarding when things will come back to normal. But something is for sure, people will try to avoid crowded places until there is a vaccine in the market and they feel safe. Domestic travel will bounce earlier than international travel. Tours and activities will see a higher demand by locals rather than traditional tourists. An increasing demand in rural destinations over urban ones, travelers will prefer less crowded cities and places, until social distancing phases out. Outdoor tours, walking tours, open-air activities and experiences will generate higher interest from travelers. Tour operators and OTAs have explored going into virtual tours and experiences. E.g. Get Your Guide, Airbnb, Viator & Culture Trips. Virtual tours can be an opportunity for tour operators to engage with potential customers during the lockdown. (Loyal and MICE)

- *Holibob:* They provide a B2B gateway for tours and experiences globally, enabling airlines and travel partners to access unique products and incremental revenue via a wide variety of technology solutions.
- *Trip Admit:* This Company has developed an end-to-end solution for activity providers to sell online via their own website and distribute their activities via local and international distribution partners. Their solution will allow the majority of the activity providers (almost 80%) to sell via

their websites as well as distribution partners such as hotels and airlines

- *Secret City Trails:* They offer self-guided city discovery games for locals and travelers. The traveler follows the footsteps of the local creator, solving the riddles and unlocking the stories. Their games are unlike traditional walking tours, in 50 European cities take people off the beaten path.

Post-pandemic, industry had seen a demand for ecotourism to focus on conservation and local job creation. Countries like Costa Rica and Thailand have already shifted to niche markets, emphasizing on adventure travel, health and wellness tours. Technology will also play an important role. Social distancing, health and hygiene protocols will remain in the foreseeable future. Countries dependent on Tourism may need to work upon new strategies in order to diversify their economies. Private investors will also play a major role in the tourism sector to overcome setbacks caused due to Covid-19. Encouraging news about Covid vaccines has created hopes for rebuilding tourism. Domestic tourism has opened the gates for domestic as well as inbound tourists.

The industry will be revamped and survival of tourism businesses throughout the tourism ecosystem will be possible not only due to the contributions of the Stakeholders but also with the continued support of the Government and various National and International Tourism Organizations like MOT – Ministry of Tourism, TAAI – Travel Agents Association of India, ITDC – India Tourism Development Corporation, Tourism Development Corporations like MTDC – Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation, RTDC – Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation, WTO – World Tourism Organization, IATA – International Air Transport Organization, IUOTO – International Union of Official Travel Organization, ICAO – International Civil Aviation Organization and others.

The key emphasis post pandemic should be Regaining the Confidence of both domestic and International tourists. This can be done by Supporting tourism businesses including start-ups, Promoting domestic tourism, Promoting International Tourism which will contribute towards Indian Economy through Inbound tourist arrivals, Strengthening cooperation within the country and the countries in various continents, Encouraging tourism in the remote areas, giving priority to the concept of home stays, thus giving the

rural youth, an opportunity to generate self – employment, Building more resilient and sustainable tourism, Promotion of Pilgrimage tourism, Wellness tourism and Responsible Tourism, Providing adequate information to the tourists to reduce the uncertainty about the industry, Educating the Host community regarding allowing the entry of tourists in their region, post pandemic and moving towards a greener tourism system.

Covid-19 Pandemic should be seen as an opportunity to rethink tourism and revamp the industry to become more resilient in the future, thus contributing towards Sustainable development at National and Global levels.

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CHAPTER 4

Food Consumption Patterns during Pandemic

Ms. Shama Chavan

Introduction

A pneumonia-like sickness first surfaced in Wuhan, China, in the end of December 2019, also referred as COVID-19 caused by the coronavirus-2 which expanded globally leading to a pandemic situation (Hui et al., 2020). As the pandemic threatened both lives and livelihoods, the WHO (World Health Organization) had developed precautionary measures that humans should consider (Ghebreyesus, 2021). Border restrictions as well as quarantines, that influence all elements of human existence, involving food and agricultural systems, were among the measures used in practically all nations. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world's food and agricultural systems was already examined by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). They argued that, due to the extremely globalized nature of today's food production and supply, goods must be transported from the world's grain supply to where they are consumed (UN FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), 2020) (Faostat, 2011). Governments across the globe have enacted protective measures that limit people's right to use plentiful, diversified, and nutritiously adequate food sources. According to the FAO, the worldwide pandemic's multiple consequences would reduce total global consumption while bringing changes to global eating patterns. Almost all nations restricted and limited their access to food markets, while restaurants and venues remain closed. This had an impact on how individuals purchased and consumed food. These characteristics also had an impact on food consumption habits, preferring home cooking and eating. Furthermore, cargo restrictions may result in shortages of a variety of food items, like seafood and fish products, fresh fruit and vegetables and other perishable

commodities. Seasonal employees, such as those employed on farms, were also affected. As a result, the food manufacturing process had further hampered and slowed. Another economic concern was that many individuals would be forced to work for a short time during the epidemic, which might have an influence on worldwide food intake behavior.

After the advent of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) in January 2020, buyer's food purchasing patterns had varied dramatically. COVID-19 led to immobilized cities and villages, drove hasty purchases, leading in stockouts and purchasing limitations on a number of food items. These behaviors demonstrated a substantial lack of confidence as well as trust in the global food system (Schneeweiss & Murtaugh, n.d). Certain people believed that after getting back from COVID-19, habits will come back to normal, whereas others thought that behaviors will continue as well as establish a new course for the food business's opportunity. While most of the new studies focused on the retail sector for durable goods, there have been few empirical investigations on alterations in food purchasing and eating behavior during the COVID-19 epidemic.

The coronavirus epidemic is important because it demonstrates key characteristics of consumer buying behavior in the presence of uncertainty as well as danger. Unlike other severe experiences, like disasters (natural), that appear to be related on many aspects, the COVID-19 outbreak is characterized by three factors: its scope, duration, as well as amount of ambiguity about the virus's epidemiology. As a consequence, obtaining a greater knowledge of consumers' food purchasing as well as intake behavior might provide essential insights for food retailers and producers which must constantly adapt to a dynamic world. It would also be fascinating to see how consumers' consumption patterns evolved over the course of the crisis, like whether they turned towards (healthier) fresh and untreated items or toward (unhealthier) industrial goods. Furthermore, we investigated if other variables, like changes in buying habits, may impact these choices. When opposed to the early months of 2020 (January–February), consumer expenditure on certain home items increased considerably in the days coming up to shelter-in-place as well as social isolation orders that restricted consumers from shopping or dining out (Hobbs, 2020). The fear of an outbreak encouraged stockpiling tendencies. According to DecaData, panic buying began on March 10th, with purchases of

hand sanitizer, household facial tissue, cleaners, and toilet papers (in western countries) up to 30 times higher than in prior weeks. Sales of these items had levelled down by the end of March. However, rather than established processes, inventory stockouts (DecaData, 2020) (Okutan, Altunisik, Nart, Mert, & Bolum, n.d) may be at blame.

Food Consumption Pattern analysis using AI

The research evaluated recipes for food preparation released before or during the quarantine to see if COVID-19 affected food intake is readily available and may indicate people's food patterns throughout the isolation. It has gathered two sets of recipes from All Recipes (<https://www.allrecipes.com/>), the world's biggest culinary social network where anybody can find as well as share recipes (Eftimov, Popovski, Petkovic, Seljak & Kocev, 2020). According to the network's statistics (all recipes, 2020), it includes food from 24 nations, receives 1.5 billion visitors each year, and has a 68 percent female user base. The first set of data consists of a collection of recipes that were available before the quarantine began. It's a mash-up of recipes from the Health and Diet, International Cuisine, as well as categories of Cooking Style.

Our physical condition may be jeopardized by variations in our habits of eating and way of life. Keeping appropriate nutrition is critical, particularly at a time when the immune system may be under attack. In fact, those with obesity (BMI 40 kg/m²) are one among the categories at risk for COVID-19 problems (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d). Obesity causes adipose tissue to expand, which generates cytokines as well as contributes to a proinflammatory environment (Hauner, 2005). According to pulmonary physiology obese people have lower expiratory reserve volume, functional ability, as well as respiratory system compliance. Reduced diaphragmatic excursion in people with excessive belly obesity compromises pulmonary function in the supine posture, making inhaling more problematic (Dietz & Santos-Burgoa, 2020). In COVID-19, the inflammatory condition is also one of the most critical variables in the severity of lung illness, leading to the well-known "cytokine storm" linked with ARDS as well as multiple organ failure. In this complicated circumstance, the inflammatory state characteristics of obese individuals might increase inflammation in patients of COVID-19, showing them to greater amounts of

proinflammatory cytokines than normal-weight people (Muscogiuri, Pugliese, Barrea, Savastano, & Colao, 2020).

Lifestyle Transformation

When it comes to variations in lifestyle during the COVID-19 lockdown, the majority of the subjects in a study done in Italy said they haven't modified their behaviors (46.1%), while 16.7% as well as 37.2 % believe they have better or worsened, respectively. Sleep hours were enhanced and smoking habits were decreased during the lockdown, equally in the North, Center, as well as South of Italy.

In terms of physical activity, there was no meaningful variation in the proportion of those who did not train before (37.7%) or during (37.4%) the COVID-19 lockdown. When compared to the preceding time, there was a greater frequency of learning during the emergency (Di Renzo et al., 2020).

Increasing economic access to food has long been a top objective in India's quest to maintain food security. Household income, a significant predictor of food availability, has grown steadily, with national per capita income rising 5.64 times from INR 16,836 in 1965–66 to INR 94,954 in 2019–20 (in 2011–12 prices). The food basket's level and composition have changed significantly over time (Srivastava et al., n.d). The outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic prompted the Indian administration to enact a 21-day lockdown statewide on March 24, 2020, in order to stop the virus from spreading further; the lockdown was subsequently prolonged. Economic activity was hampered, and most families' income levels suffered as a result of the lockdown. This is seen by the 23.9 percent decrease in GDP in Q1 2020–21 (April to June) at constant (2011–12) prices, matched to the 5.2 percent rise in Q1 2019–20. The drop in salary is projected to cause a shift in downward curves of demand for non-food and food goods, resulting in economic instability. Understanding consumer behavior throughout the pandemic and drawing consequences for demand-push strategies to recover the economy necessitates a study of income-induced changes in consumption patterns. In this context, this chapter looked at consumption patterns as well as modelled consumer behavior to predict the impact of income changes on the amount and composition of expenditure spending in India under various circumstances. It studies Indian household consumption patterns, models consumer behavior and calculates spending elasticities for

various food categories and non-food costs, and creates probable income scenarios for 2020–21, simulating the expected consequences of income shocks on consumption patterns.

The lockdown had two significant effects: self-quarantine and the inaccessibility of consumer products. Activities-related stress may be exacerbated by remote working or the interruption of professional work. Furthermore, working from home has been connected to an increase in screen time, which has been associated with a sedentary lifestyle, excess weight, as well as poor sleep quality. Sleep deprivation has serious consequences for the human body (Wilmot et al., 2012). The population's sleep pattern is projected to improve as a result of social disengagement and if professional demands were reduced. People who engage in regular physical exercise get both physical and emotional health advantages, which may have been harmed by geographical limits. Furthermore, limits on consumer goods transportation are projected to impact the availability and, as a result, the use of items like cigarettes, alcohol, as well as fast food. There have been numerous instances in the past where imposed restrictions on the public as a result of natural disasters (like tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes) or disasters caused by man (like war-like situations) had major consequences, such as scarcity of resources as well as lifestyle changes, which had a negative impact on the population's overall health (Miller, 2020; Ghosal, Sinha, Majumder, & Misra, 2020).

The Impact of Income on Consumption behavior

The COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant influence on food consumption: income has reduced; the range of food products has shifted to cereals, as well as eating behavior has shifted (Eftimov et al., 2020). Supply shocks exacerbated the effect, since manpower was unavailable for harvesting the crops during the lockdown, transportation was halted, and access was limited (OECD, 2020; Amjath-Babu, Krupnik, Thilsted, & McDonald, 2020). Although the COVID-19 outbreak is anticipated to have long-term effects on food systems, including structural changes in the supply chain as well as changes in food consumption behavior, this research concentrates primarily on the short-term effects. The effect route depicts the short-term effect of the COVID-19 epidemic on Indian family food consumption. The effect was categorized based on revenue flow uncertainties as well as delivering shocks. Revenue movement



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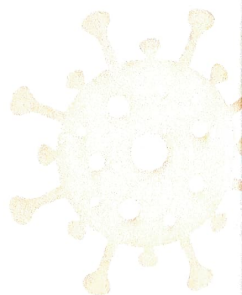
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CHAPTER 11

Adolescents' Substance Use during Covid-19 Pandemic

Ms. Darshana Kulkarni and Dr. Solomon Renati

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all the walks of life and adolescents are no exception to that. The government of India has acknowledged the major demographic shift that the country is going through, with adolescents comprising one fifth of the entire population. The National Youth Policy defines adolescents as people aged between 13 to 19 years of age (National Youth Policy, 2014). Adolescence is an age marked by curiosity, exploration, experimentation and an intense urge for independence. It is a period of important physical, emotional, moral and educational growth. The rapid changes in hormones bring drastic behavioral changes, often presenting a challenge in front of not only the person themselves but in front of their teachers and parents as to how to adapt to these changes.

Unlike the popular belief, a teenager's brain is still developing and acquiring higher cognitive capacities. According to one of the most influential psychologists, Jean Piaget, individuals develop capacity for abstract reasoning known as formal thought only after the age of 12 (Piaget, 1936). Another eminent psychologist, Eric Erickson (1950) considers identity vs confusion as the main conflict to be resolved during these years of life as search for self-identity, the urge to find out 'Who am I?', becomes crucial. As such, it becomes extremely important for them to be surrounded by an intellectually nourishing environment. This phase is also characterized by pivotal social development, with friends and romantic partners gaining more importance than parents. At times, peer acceptance is preferred over parental approval. Often, these young people want to try out new things, especially the ones deemed 'cool' by their peers including

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CHAPTER 9

Paradigm Shift in Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education during Covid-19 Pandemic

Dr Swati Partani

Introduction

Early childhood Education (Henceforth, ECE) is crucial for overall development of the young children. In July 2020, the Ministry of Education, India, released the new National Education Policy, where schooling begins with the inclusion of Early Childhood Care & Education (Henceforth, ECCE) from age 3. The policy stated "Universal provisioning of quality early childhood development, care, and education must thus be achieved as soon as possible, and no later than 2030, to ensure that all students entering Grade 1 are school ready (UNICEF, 2020).

Considering the complexity of the ECE sector in India, based on its operation across the public & private sector, facilities differ accordingly. Absence of harmony to this access for ECE is already creating a gap in learning for these children and COVID-19 pandemic has worsened this learning even more. Covid-19 pandemic broke in India in January, 2020 and lockdown was announced by the government of India on 24th March, 2020. It led to closure of all the facilities including all the educational setups, even the preschools. Many migrants shifted back to their villages with their children and the rest of the young children were in house arrest. In early years, children need to be stimulated for their social-cognitive development but due to lockdown, scope of face to face communication with other significant adults was lost. Most of the young children did not receive any educational intervention as the current infrastructure of education was not ready to face this adversity. Even families were in trauma to lose people in and around the family and young children

were witnessing this whole situation without understanding the causal factor. Knudsen et al. (2006) demonstrated that the effects of adverse early childhood environments persist over a lifetime.

Challenges in Parental Involvement and effect on Preschool Children during Covid-19 Pandemic

There was complete disruption in the ECE sector due to pandemic, as most of the stakeholders were not prepared for these inevitable challenges. According to a United Nations report (2020), "The COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents. Closures of schools and other learning spaces have impacted 94 per cent of the world's student population, up to 99 per cent in low and lower-middle-income countries".

In India alone, the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown have impacted 247 million children enrolled in elementary and secondary school education, besides 28 million children who were undergoing pre-school education in Anganwadi centers (UNICEF, 2020). CARE India did a Rapid Survey (2020) to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the marginalized community, their children's education and well-being in the rural areas. Parents (70.2%) felt that children's education was a challenge during the lockdown. Additionally, (82.8%) of parents stated that they were worried about the loss of learning this year for their children due to school closure.

The major challenge was lack of in person interaction in offline mode between teachers and children and their classmates. Therefore, schools started to function in online mode or using digital tools. Supporting this, Dawadi et al., (2020) mentioned that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many businesses, schools, and different places have suddenly closed, and online education was being provided. With online education, preschool children started learning activities through online methods, and working parents and other parents were taking time out and getting involved in their education.

Shifting to online mode and using digital tools was neither easy for schools nor for parents and their children. Teachers needed to unlearn and learn new techniques to engage young minds in online settings and parents were forced to create and sustain the educational environment for the children. On similar background, Alonzo et al. (2021) did a study which mentioned that due to the Covid-19

pandemic, the education system was carried out with the help of remote learning, in which many challenges had to be faced by teachers, parents, and children, i.e., new skills and roles had to be adapted. In this learning method, the child faced problems due to online technologies, which also increased the stress on the parents. Every parent was required to master all subjects so that it can be said as if the school moved to be at home (Hapsari et al., 2020). Working parents have adopted both the responsibilities i.e. child care and homeschooling which was challenging for them, this challenge with the Corona virus in the surrounding increased the anxiety of the parents. This further added responsibility on parents compelled them to find the ways to interact with the children so that early stimulation and development couldn't be compromised. As the pandemic extended, parents started to feel that burnout of this added responsibility as they were not trained enough to execute the dual role. Lack of self efficacy was observed and stated by researchers. Roskam et al., (2018) proposed that when these ordinary stresses intensify, they result in parental burnout, characterized as exhaustion in one's parental role, emotional distancing from one's children, and loss of parental efficacy and sense of accomplishment.

Though children stayed with their parents in lockdown, lack of extended social adjustment led to behavioral change in them. Lee et al. (2021) reported the parent-child dynamic, which was at the beginning of COVID-19, in that 34.7% of parents said that their child's behavior had changed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, like being sad, depressed, and living alone. Whereas, Novianti & Garzia (2020) concluded that many parents were more engaged in the learning activities of the child but still there were some difficulties like giving time, explaining the lesson to the children, paying attention to them well, etc. Spinelli, et.al. (2020) stated that dealing with the lockdown was a stressful experience for parents who had to balance personal life, work, and children's upbringing, without other help. This situation potentially impaired their ability to be supportive caregivers and is consequently detrimental for children's well being.

The challenges faced by parents in the education of young children were enormous due to lack of competence, work life balance, lack of support from outside the family, their own personal physical & mental health, ailing family members, infrastructure & other facilities at home, etc. Thus all these reasons had an adverse

effect on teaching learning mechanisms for young learners, especially with the parents. Though, developmentally appropriate involvement of parents was a question mark, still many of the parents started to home school their children, whether educated or not. They were supported by the school authorities and government to run programmes. Parents partnered with preschools, NGO (Underprivileged sections), and available virtual platforms to maximize learning during pandemic.

Implications of Theoretical Framework in Parental Involvement in ECE

Parental involvement in the education of young children can be best understood with existing pedagogies. Albert Bandura theory of social cognition precisely describes the role of observation and imitation in young children. Nabavi (2012) indicated that the SCL by Bandura revolves in-depth around three factors; Behavior (Young Children learn from someone else's behavior), Cognitive (Self-Efficacy is the context of an explanatory model of human behavior, in which it affects the expected outcomes of behavior) and Situational factors (The environment around, where the action takes place, affects the ability of the child to adapt and learn it). Proficiency in academic or social work brings a growing sense of competence to the child as an individual. SCL theory takes into account the individual's interactions, physical and psychosocial environment and the task or behavior to be learned (Dixon & Stein, 2006). During Covid-19 pandemic, young children stayed with their families, which was the situational factor for which children adapted to. Their behavioral and cognitive attribute to learning was majorly decided by parental involvement as they were the key resource to build learning.

Second approach which made parental involvement meaningful during covid pandemic was Vygotsky's ZPD. The ZPD is the gap between what a learner has already mastered (actual level of development) and what he or she can achieve when provided with educational support (potential development). It is the level of a child's development which displays itself in collaborative activity with an adult but not in the child's individual activity (Podolskij, 2012). Constructs of the ZPD and scaffolding were useful frameworks for investigating early gifted development and caregiver influences on that development (Morrissey and Brown 2009). Throughout pandemic parents and children collaborated to build knowledge and

engage meaningfully. Digital tools and home related hands-on activities created the opportunities for ZPD.

Utilizing these frameworks, parental involvement can be understood and used efficiently in the absence of a trained professional or teacher and similar age children in the classroom set up. As children learn from imitation and scaffolding, parents took this responsibility to understand their children and maximize learning in the pandemic. Parents tried to bridge the gap of teaching learning at home, still they faced many challenges to create the conducive environment for the young children to make them school ready and addressing their developmental needs. Pandemic situations led to the scope of training parents in these concepts to efficiently deal with the crisis, especially education in a developmentally appropriate way, which was a radical shift to educate young children.

Shift in Parental Involvement during Covid-19 Pandemic

There were many challenges faced by the parents to engage young learners meaningfully, still many of the parents found multiple ways to promote learning in a contextual way. This was a time when the child was completely in the custody of the parents, no direct participation of any outside agency, even no similar age mates to interact with. Parents tried to conduct activities as simple as sorting beans, arranging kitchen utensils, cleaning green leafy vegetables, working in the kitchen garden, and singing along rhymes while doing household chores etc. both in the urban and rural sector of India. Parents started assisting children in online classes, using digital tools to enhance learning etc. During these activities, young children experienced secure attachment with their parents who spent time with them. Vural & Altun, (2021) have stated that parent participation makes children feel happy and belong to the school, and supports their development of self confidence, responsibility, social expression, motivation, and effective learning.

Sari & Maningtyas (2020) determined that parental involvement in distance learning during COVID-19 was in a good category. Sad & Gurbuzturk (2013) stated that many schools involved parents in school activities, and parental involvement is the best teaching strategy for better development of education and care of children. They stated that parents must be considered a constant and principal component of the curriculum. The Government of India along with private agencies tried to reach out to the parents of young children in

a multifold way in urban as well as rural sectors. Private schools extended their support to parents in the teaching learning process. Further, parents utilized these services to get involved in the education of young children irrespective of their own educational status. As per CARE INDIA (2020) report, in rural India, parents reported that different modes of delivery were used by the government school/government to support the education of children during the lockdown. Parents (24.6%) informed about materials i.e., video and homework shared through WhatsApp as a key approach used by schools followed by educational materials/messages shared through text message (18.6%) and running of education programs on TV (6.5%). Very few parents are informed about radio programming, indicating that programs run on radio have not reached parents. Even Ribeiro et al (2021) revealed that Portuguese parents supported their children during the pandemic mainly through the monitoring of attention in classes and task realization. Specific educational measures were implemented to mitigate these learning losses and different forms of online education and educational resources were mobilized to assure teaching and learning continuity. Consequently, during the pandemic, requirements for digital technology intensified significantly, despite the challenges that this intensification meant for teachers, families, and students to ensure the continuity of learning from home.

During this pandemic time, parents and caregivers were more engaged with children, trying to create the foundation of Early Childhood Education for their wards. In the context of COVID-19, the importance of the role of parents in supporting the early learning of young children has emerged as a critical area for supporting families. This increased engagement of parents in playful activities needs to be sustained (UNICEF, 2020).

Bartolome et al. (2017) have mentioned that success in education is guaranteed when parents are involved in the child's activity or homework even at home. Parental involvement gives a positive outcome as the child's social, cognitive, and emotional development is better. Young children are well prepared for formal education, which leads to better academic outcomes, fewer discipline problems, and better confidence levels when parents encourage children.

Child development pedagogies have laid emphasis on parental involvement right from the young age but due to lack of interest, parental incompetence, less availability of the time, financial

constraints, and poor environment at home has always hindered the appropriate parental involvement. Covid-19 Pandemic has forced parents to be in charge of the teaching learning process, one of the most crucial factors for the higher achievement of the children in later part of their life.

Researchers have suggested that the learning environment becomes more conducive when parents are open to new ideas and acquiring new skills. This pandemic caused the entire education system to take the radical shift relying majorly on virtual platforms to provide hands-on experience in absence of real time classroom experiences. Parents partnered with the teachers so that they can fill the loss in ECE. Parents got an insight into the child's learning environment and also the opportunity to enhance and rework on the home learning environment. They started to frequently communicate with the teachers and took feedback for the overall development of their children. Many of the parents mastered the use of digital tools to augment the process of learning. This also led to improved parent teacher coordination as teachers could guide & trust parents for implementing the curriculum.

Parents utilized the pandemic period to take hold of teaching & learning among young children, overcoming the barriers that existed prior. They used multiple digital tools, tried to create experiences, involved more in discussions, read stories, played with children, assigned responsibility for household tasks (Life skills) and children were securely attached with their parents. Parents understood the nature of the curriculum, which evolved gradually while working with the children. Though activities were directed by the schools, parents started to personalize and add developmental perspective to it for better understanding. Initiated with the anxiety of loss of learning for young children they started to gain mastery as they worked with children. Education became more democratic in nature as parents understood the role of teachers. There was a complete shift in the understanding of the teaching learning process as parents participated in implementation of the activities. To work on social development of the children, parents engaged in more discussion, having family group video calls, arranging video calls with peers of the children. They arranged online group games where parents became the facilitator to add cognitive elements too. In the rural sector, children still interacted with each other in person but in urban India majorly the shift was in virtual mode.

Covid-19 Pandemic has been instrumental in equipping parents to facilitate the teaching of learning in young learners. Altogether parents understood the process of education as they became the important stakeholders in imparting learning among young children. This accounted for a major shift in the way the education was imparted to the children using virtual tools, blending them in the context the child is living and setting up the connection with the educational institutes. Further scope of the study emerged from this shift is home schooling in the urban sector. Parents who were hesitant to take up the home school model of teaching got an opportunity to get hands-on experience during the pandemic, hence paving the way towards different educational pedagogy in a secured home environment.

Conclusion

Covid-19 Pandemic imposed some inevitable challenges in early childhood education and especially for the parental involvement for young children. Along with the controlled environment, changing family dynamics & stressors, children are losing out the social interaction and cognitive stimulation which is very important to build a strong foundation for learning in future. Challenges were faced by the parents both in rural & urban sectors. Demographic profiles, geographic locations, availability of resources posed many constraints for parents to get involved in the education of their children. Yet many of the parents adopted the strategies to maximize the use of digital tools and spending quality time with the children to create an apt learning environment for the children both in rural and urban India with the help of schools and Government. This pandemic has not only compelled parents to be involved in educating children in early years, but also to take care of their other developmental needs, which is an integral part of most of the pedagogies, hence contributing to the major shift in parental involvement in young child's education.

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CHAPTER 7

કોરોના પછીનું સામાન્ય જનજીવન અને પ્રદુષણ સંબંધી
પર્યાવરણીય પડકારો

(Environmental Challenges Post Covid (Gujarati))

Dr. Rekha Kaklotar

પ્રસ્તાવના

દર વર્ષે પમી જૂન પર્યાવરણ દિવસ તરીકે ઉજવવામાં આવે છે. તો ૨૨મી એપ્રિલ પૃથ્વી દિવસ અને પર્યાવરણ સંરક્ષણ દિન તરીકે ઉજવણી કરવામાં આવે છે. કોરોના મહામારીનો સામનો વિશ્વ લગભગ બે કરતા વધારે વર્ષથી કરી રહ્યો છે, જેની વિપરીત અસર વિવિધ સામાજિક તથા આર્થિક જનજીવન પર જોઈ શકાય છે. આ મહામારીના સમયમાં એક ફાયદો થયો હોય તો તે આપણા પર્યાવરણને છે. ઔદ્યોગિક વિકાસના પથ પર આગળ વધતા દેશે ઉત્પાદનક્ષેત્રે તો સિદ્ધિ મેળવી જ છે, પરંતુ તેની સાથે વાહનો તથા ઉદ્યોગોમાંથી હવામાં પ્રસરતા કાર્બન ડાયોક્સાઇડ અને કાર્બન મોનોક્સાઇડનું પ્રમાણ વધ્યું છે. પરિણામે પર્યાવરણ સામેના પ્રશ્નો ઉભા થયા છે. કોરોનાના ફેલાવાથી વિશ્વ વ્યાપી થોડા સમય માટે ઔદ્યોગિક પ્રવૃત્તિ બંધ થવા પામી હતી તેમજ વાહન વ્યવહારની અવરજવરમાં ઘટાડો થવાથી પર્યાવરણના પ્રદુષણમાં નાટ્યાત્મક ઘટાડો થયો છે. વૈશ્વિક મહામારી તથા કટોકટીના સમયમાં કુદરત સાથે માનવીય ક્રિયાપ્રતિક્રિયા પર્યાવરણ માટે આશીર્વાદરૂપ નીવડી છે. આ મહામારીના સમયમાં હવાની ગુણવત્તા તથા નદીના પાણીની સ્વચ્છતામાં નોંધપાત્ર સુધારો થયો છે અને વન્ય જીવન ખીલી રહ્યું છે. ભારતમાં વિશાળ વસ્તી, શહેરી વિસ્તારમાં ગીચતા તથા ટ્રાફિકના પ્રશ્નોને લીધે પર્યાવરણ પ્રદુષિત રહ્યું છે. ભારતમાં કોરોનાના સમયમાં લોકડાઉનની જાહેરાત કર્યા બાદ હવા તથા પાણીના પ્રદુષણમાં સકારાત્મક સુધારો જણાયો છે.

કોરોનાએ માનવજીવનના તમામ પાસા પર અસર ઉભી કરી છે. આ મહામારીના પ્રસરણને રોકવાના આશયથી લોકડાઉન લગાવવામાં આવેલ તથા આર્થિક પ્રવૃત્તિ ધીમી પડવા પામી હતી. પરિણામે પર્યાવરણ ઉપર તેની મહત્વની અસર દેખાવા લાગી હતી. પરંતુ હવે કોરોના પછીનું સામાન્ય જનજીવન ચાલુ થઈ ગયું છે.

આ પ્રકરણમાં કોરોના પછીના સામાન્ય જનજીવનને લીધે ઉભા થતા પડકારોની ચર્ચા કરવામાં આવી છે. તે સાથે પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી માટે વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે તેમજ ભારતમાં સરકાર દ્વારા હાથ ધરવામાં આવેલા પ્રયાસોનું વિશ્લેષણ કરવામાં આવેલ છે. આ ઉપરાંત સામાન્ય જનજીવનના સમયમાં પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી માટેના કેટલાક સૂચનો રજૂ કરવાનો પ્રયાસ કરેલ છે.

પર્યાવરણનો અર્થ

સામાન્ય અર્થ મુજબ પર્યાવરણ એટલે પૃથ્વીની આસપાસનું આવરણ. માનવીની આસપાસ રહેલી ભૌગોલિક પરિસ્થિતિ તથા સજીવો વચ્ચેના પારસ્પરિક સંબંધોને પર્યાવરણ કહેવામાં આવે છે. આમ માનવીની આજુબાજુ રહેલા તમામ પ્રાકૃતિક તત્વોનો પર્યાવરણમાં સમાવેશ થાય છે. બીજા શબ્દોમાં કહીએ તો... ભૌતિક, રાસાયણિક અને જૈવિક પરિબલોનું મિશ્રણ કે જેમાં માટી, આબોહવા અને જીવંત વસ્તુઓ વગેરેનો સમાવેશ થાય છે. જીવવિજ્ઞાનની વ્યાખ્યા મુજબ જે સ્થાને જીવો રહે છે તે પર્યાવરણ છે. આમ, પર્યાવરણમાં જીવનની આસપાસના તમામ તત્વોનો સમાવેશ થાય છે. પૃથ્વી પર રહેલા તમામ જીવો પર્યાવરણ સાથે ક્રિયા-પ્રતિક્રિયા કરી અનુકૂળન સાધે છે.

પ્રદૂષણનો અર્થ

પ્રદૂષણ એટલે વાતાવરણમાં રહેલા નુકસાનકારક તત્વો જે માનવી દ્વારા ઔદ્યોગિક વિકાસને લીધે કારખાનાઓ દ્વારા ઉત્પન્ન થાય છે, તો ક્યારેક કુદરતી ઘટનાઓને લીધે હવામાં ફેલાય છે જેમકે જ્વાળામુખીની રાખ, સુનામીની રીતે ઉત્પન્ન થયેલા રજકણો વગેરે. પ્રદૂષણ જમીન, હવા તથા પાણીની શુદ્ધતાને નુકસાન પહોંચાડે છે. વિવિધ પ્રકારના પ્રદૂષણ જોવા મળે છે જેમ કે પાણીનું પ્રદૂષણ, જમીનનું પ્રદૂષણ, હવાનું પ્રદૂષણ, અવાજનું પ્રદૂષણ વગેરે. હવાનું પ્રદૂષણ ઘન, પ્રવાહી તથા વાયુ રજકણોને લીધે ઉદ્ભવે છે. આ રસાયણો ધૂળ, જ્વાળામુખી તથા જંગલી આગમાંથી આવી શકે છે. માનવીની ઔદ્યોગિક વિકાસની આંધળી દોટમાં પ્રાકૃતિક સાધનો સંયમપૂર્વક ઉપયોગ

કરવાને બદલે પોતાની ઈચ્છા અનુસાર ઉપયોગ કર્યો પરિણામે પર્યાવરણીય પ્રદૂષણનો ઉદભવ થયો.

કોવિડ-19ની પર્યાવરણ પરની હકારાત્મક અને નકારાત્મક અસર

પર્યાવરણ શબ્દ આજકાલ પ્રખ્યાત બની ગયો છે આજથી ઘણા વર્ષ પહેલા ગ્રીન હાઉસ ઇફેક્ટ, ઓઝોન લહેર, ઝલોબલ વોર્મિંગ જેવા શબ્દ વિશે સામાન્ય રીતે લોકો અજાણ હતા. આજે આ શબ્દ ખૂબ જ પ્રચલિત જણાય છે

કોવિડ-19ની હકારાત્મક અને નકારાત્મક એમ બન્ને પ્રકારની અસરો વિવિધ અભ્યાસોમાં દર્શાવવામાં આવેલ છે. લોકડાઉનમાં ઉદ્યોગો બંધ થવાને લીધે ગ્રીન હાઉસ ગેસીસ એમિશન ઘટ્યા છે તથા માનવીની સાથે વાહનો ઘરમાં બંધ થવાથી હવાના પ્રદૂષણમાં ઘટાડો થયો છે. વાતાવરણમાં કાર્બન ડાયોક્સાઇડનું પ્રમાણ વધવાથી તથા તાપમાનના પ્રમાણમાં પરિવર્તન થવાની ઘટનાને ગ્રીન હાઉસ ઇફેક્ટ કહેવામાં આવે છે. એક અંદાજ મુજબ N₂O અને COના પ્રમાણમાં ૫૦ ટકા જેટલો ઘટાડો થયો છે. આ મહામારીને લીધે ૭૬% વિમાની સેવા વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે બંધ રહેવા પામી હતી. કોરોના મહામારીના સમયમાં લોકડાઉનને લીધે શહેરોની પ્રદૂષિત હવા શુદ્ધ થઇ છે. વન્ય પ્રાણીઓ બહાર વિહરતા થયા છે. પંજાબના જલંધરથી હિમાલયના દર્શન શક્ય બન્યા છે. સમુદ્ર તથા નદીના કાંઠાના વિસ્તારમાં પક્ષીઓનું ગુંજારવ સાંભળવા મળ્યો છે. જેની અસર પર્યાવરણ ઉપર સકારાત્મક જોઈ શકાય છે.

કોવિડ-19ની નકારાત્મક પર્યાવરણ પરની અસર વિશે વિચારતા કહી શકાય કે હોસ્પિટલમાંથી નીકળતા કચરાનું પ્રમાણ વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે વધવા પામ્યું હતું તથા તેના નિકાલ સંબંધી સમસ્યા પડકારરૂપ બની હતી. સુરક્ષાની જાળવણીના ભાગરૂપે વધુ પ્રમાણમાં પ્લાસ્ટિક, હાથના મોજા, માસ્ક વગેરેનો ઉપયોગ થવા લાગ્યો હતો. કેટલાક લોકોની અજાણતાને લીધે તેઓ આ કચરો ખુલ્લી જગ્યાએ ફેંકતા હતા જે વાસ્તવમાં આજુબાજુના વાતાવરણ માટે હાનિકારક સાબિત થયું હતું. મ્યુનિસિપાલિટીના આ કચરા એ હવા, પાણી તથા જમીનનું પ્રદૂષણ વધાર્યું હતું.

કોરોના પહેલાની પ્રદૂષણની સમસ્યા

ભારત લાંબા સમય સુધી વિકાસશીલ રાજ્ય ન રહેતા એક વિકસિત રાજ્ય બનવા તરફ જઈ રહ્યું છે. દરેક ક્ષેત્રમાં વિજ્ઞાન અને ટેકનોલોજીનો વિકાસ, ઔદ્યોગિક વિકાસ, ખેત ઉત્પાદન, અનાજનો પુરતો જથ્થો, સમાજના વિશાળ સમુદાય માટે પાયાની

ચીજોનું ઉત્પાદન, બજારનો વિકાસ, વધુ ને વધુ રોજગારીનું સર્જન, વિદેશ પરના પરાવલંબનમાં ઘટાડો, મેડિકલ તથા એન્જિનિયરિંગ ક્ષેત્રનો ઝડપી વિકાસ, સ્થિર અને મજબૂત ખેતીક્ષેત્ર વગેરેને લીધે મજબૂત રાજ્ય બન્યું છે. પરંતુ દરેક સિક્કાની બે બાજુ હોય છે. જેમાં વિકાસની નકારાત્મક અસર વિચારીએ તો, આપણે વિકાસની કિંમત ચૂકવીએ છીએ તેની પ્રતીતિ પર્યાવરણની ક્ષતિમાં જણાય છે. ઝડપી ઔદ્યોગિકરણ, ઝડપી શહેરીકરણ, ડેમોનું બાંધકામ, રાસાયણિક ખાતર, જંતુનાશક દવાઓ અને સુધારેલા બિયારણનો ખેતીક્ષેત્રે વધુ પડતો ઉપયોગ, વસ્તી વધારાને લીધે જંગલોનો નાશ આ તમામ પરિણામે પર્યાવરણમાં પ્રદૂષણનું પ્રમાણ વધતું જાય છે.

વર્લ્ડ એર ક્વોલિટી રિપોર્ટ અનુસાર દુનિયાના સૌથી વધુ પ્રદૂષિત 30 શહેરોમાંથી ભારતના 21 શહેરોનો સમાવેશ થાય છે. વિશ્વના અન્ય દેશોની સરખામણીમાં ભારતના લોકો પ્રદૂષણને લગતી સમસ્યાનો સામનો વધુ પ્રમાણમાં કરી રહ્યા છે. ભારતમાં પ્રદૂષણને લગતી સમસ્યાની વાત કરીએ તો મોટેભાગે ઉત્તર ભારતમાં દિલ્હી, નોઈડા વગેરે પ્રથમ ક્રમાંકે આવે છે. દિલ્હીને તો દુનિયાની સૌથી વધુ પ્રદૂષિત રાજધાની નો ખિતાબ મળ્યો છે. આ રાજધાનીમાં 3૯ ટકા ધુમાડો, વાહનો દ્વારા, 22 ટકા ધુમાડો ઔદ્યોગિક એકમો દ્વારા હવામાં ભળે છે. જ્યારે 18 ટકા પ્રદૂષણ હવામાં ઉડતી ધૂળને લીધે જોવા મળે છે. વાહન પ્રદૂષણ માટે ખાસ કરીને ઘણા જૂના વાહનો હાલ સડક પર દોડે છે તે જવાબદાર છે. નોઈડા, ગાઝિયાબાદ અને ફરીદાબાદમાં ઔદ્યોગિક વિકાસ સારા પ્રમાણમાં થયો છે પરંતુ અહીં પ્રદૂષણ સૌથી વધુ છે. જેમાંના કેટલાક ઔદ્યોગિક એકમો રહેણાક વિસ્તારમાં હોવાથી લોકોના આરોગ્ય પર તેની વિપરીત અસર થાય છે. દેશમાં ઉત્તર ભારતમાં હવાનું પ્રદૂષણ સૌથી વધુ છે. કોરોના મહામારીના સમયમાં ખાસ કરીને પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી કરી પ્રદૂષણને અંકુશમાં રાખવું ખૂબ જરૂરી બન્યું હતું.

કોરોના પહેલા ઉદ્યોગીકરણ ને લીધે શહેરોમાં તેમજ અમુક ગામડાઓમાં પણ ઉદ્યોગોની સંખ્યા દિનપ્રતિદિન વધવા પામી હતી. જેને લીધે હવાનું પ્રદૂષણ વધ્યું હતું. પરંતુ બીજી બાજુ આ પ્રદૂષણને અંકુશમાં રાખતી વનસ્પતિનું પ્રમાણ ઘટ્યું છે. શહેરીકરણ થવાને લીધે વાહનોની સંખ્યા વધવાથી પ્રદૂષણ વધે છે. ઉપરાંત નવી ઇમારતોનું બાંધકામ થવાથી આજુબાજુના વાતાવરણને ધૂળના રજકણો પ્રદૂષિત કરે છે. પાવર પ્લાન્ટમાં વપરાતા કોલસાને લીધે ઉદભવતું પ્રદૂષણ તો માપી ન શકાય તેવું જોવા મળે છે.

હવાની ગુણવત્તા માપવા માટેના અનેક માપદંડોમાંથી PM 2.5 અને PM 10 વધુ પ્રચલિત છે. PM (particulate matter) નો અર્થ થાય છે કે હવામાં રહેલા સુક્ષ્મ કણોનું પ્રમાણ. PM 2.5 અને PM 10 એ કણોની સાઈઝ દર્શાવે છે. સામાન્ય રીતે આપણા શરીર પરના વાળની સાઈઝ PM 50 હોય છે. આના પરથી અંદાજ લગાવી શકાય કે PM 2.5 અને PM 10 સુક્ષ્મકણો ઘણો કેટલા પ્રમાણમાં નજીવા હશે. સામાન્ય સંજોગોમાં PM 2.5 નું પ્રમાણ 60 માઈક્રોગ્રામ પ્રતિ ક્યુબિક મીટર હોવું જોઈએ તથા PM 10 નું પ્રમાણ 100 માઈક્રોગ્રામ પ્રત્યે ક્યુબિક મીટર હોવું જોઈએ. જો હવામાનમાં આ કણોની સંખ્યા આના કરતાં વધી જાય તો તે આરોગ્ય માટે નુકસાનકારક છે. આ સુક્ષ્મ કણો માનવ સ્વાસ્થ્ય માટે ભયજનક છે. સામાન્ય રીતે ઔદ્યોગિક વિસ્તારમાં આ સુક્ષ્મ કણોનું પ્રમાણ વધારે જોવા મળે છે.

PM એ હવામાનમાં જોવા મળતા સુક્ષ્મ કણો છે. જે દૃશ્યતાને ઘટાડે છે. જ્યારે PM 2.5 નું પ્રમાણ હવામાં વધી જાય છે ત્યારે વાતાવરણ ધૂંધળું બને છે. ગેસ, તેલ, ડીઝલ તથા લાકડાના સળગવાથી PM 2.5 ઉત્પન્ન થાય છે. જે હવાનું પ્રદૂષણ વધારે છે. PM 2.5 પર કરવામાં આવેલા વિવિધ અભ્યાસ મુજબ જો હવામાં PM 2.5 નું પ્રમાણ 12 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ નીચે હોય તો જોખમ વિના તંદુરસ્ત હવા માનવામાં આવે છે પરંતુ 24 કલાકના સમય દરમિયાન આ પ્રમાણ 35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ કરતા વધી જાય તો તેને બિન આરોગ્યપ્રદ માનવામાં આવે છે. જેને લીધે અસ્થમા જેવી બીમારી થવાની સંભાવના વધે છે. PM 2.5 એકદમ સૂક્ષ્મ હોવાથી જલ્દીથી શ્વાસમાં શરીરની અંદર પ્રવેશ કરે છે અને લીવર તથા આંતરડાં ને લગતા રોગોને જન્મ આપે છે.

કોરોનાના સમય દરમિયાન પ્રદૂષણમાં આવેલ પરિવર્તન

કોરોનાનું નામ સાંભળતા જ આપણા મનમાં એ જ વિચાર આવે છે કે આ મહામારીએ લાખો લોકોના જીવ લીધા છે. પરંતુ આ સમયગાળા દરમિયાન આપણે જે મેળવ્યું છે તેનો કોઈ વિચાર કરતું નથી. હા, આપણે આ મહામારીના સમયમાં કંઈ પ્રાપ્ત કર્યું હોય તો તે આપણી પ્રકૃતિ છે. આ સમયગાળા દરમિયાન વાહનો દ્વારા હવામાં ફેલાતા કાર્બન મોનોક્સાઈડનું પ્રમાણ ઘટ્યું છે. હવામાન શુદ્ધ થયું છે. એટલું જ નહીં પ્રાકૃતિક પર્યટન સ્થળોએ પોતાની સુંદરતા પાછી મેળવી છે. પ્રકૃતિને સારી રીતે માણવાનો અને જાણવાનો આપણને સૌને હીરો અવસર પ્રાપ્ત થયો છે. લોકડાઉનના સમયમાં પ્રકૃતિના સાનિધ્યમાં લોકોને મનગમતી પ્રવૃત્તિ કરવાનો મોકો મળ્યો છે. ભારતના મોટા શહેરોમાં પ્રદૂષણ સંપૂર્ણ અંકુશમાં આવી ગયું છે. દુનિયાના મહાકાય શહેરોમાં

પણ પ્રદૂષણ ઘટી રહ્યું છે. નિષ્ણાતોના મત મુજબ ન્યૂયોર્કમાં કાર્બન મોનોક્સાઈડ તથા મિથેનના પ્રમાણમાં ૭૫ ટકાનો ઘટાડો થયો છે. ચીનમાં કોલસાને લીધે થતું પ્રદૂષણ જબરજસ્ત રીતે ઘટ્યું છે હવામાન કાર્બન ડાયોક્સાઈડ કાર્બન મોનોક્સાઈડ જેવા ઝેરીલા વાયુનું પ્રમાણ ઘટ્યું છે.

નાસા અને યુરોપિયન સ્પેસ એજન્સીએ વાતાવરણમાં પરિવર્તન પર કરેલા આજ સુધીના સૌથી મોટા અભ્યાસમાં જણાવ્યું છે કે અનેક દેશોમાં નાઈટ્રોજન ડાયોક્સાઈડનું પ્રમાણ મહદ અંશે કાબુમાં આવ્યું છે. આ ઝેરી વાયુ મોટેભાગે કાર એન્જીન, પાવર પ્લાન્ટ અને ઉદ્યોગોને લીધે ઉદભવતા હોય છે. જે અસ્થમા જેવી બીમારીને જન્મ આપે છે. ગંગા અને યમુના જેવી મોટી નદીઓના પાણી શુદ્ધ થયા છે. પેઢીઓથી પંજાબના જલંધર થી હિમાલયના દર્શન દુર્લભ હતા તે આ સમય દરમિયાન શક્ય બન્યા છે. હિમાલય જાલંધરથી માત્ર 213 કિલોમીટર દૂર છે.

કોરોના મહામારી વચ્ચે એક સુખદ પરિણામ પ્રાપ્ત થયું હોય તો તે છે પર્યાવરણમાં આવેલું પરિવર્તન. પ્રદૂષણને લીધે પીડાતા ખાસ કરીને ઉત્તર ભારતના રાજ્યો શુદ્ધ હવા અને પાણીનો સુખદ અનુભવ પ્રાપ્ત થયો છે. કુદરતની જાણવાની અને માણવાનો અનેરો અવસર પ્રાપ્ત થયો છે. પૃથ્વી પર વૃક્ષોની સંખ્યા ઘટવાથી હવા તથા પાણીનું પ્રદૂષણ છેલ્લા દાયકામાં વધવા પામ્યું છે. આવા સમયે અચાનક પર્યાવરણમાં શુદ્ધતા અનેરો આનંદ અપાવે છે. સામાન્ય રીતે ભારતમાં ઔદ્યોગિક કચરાનો નિકાલ કોઈપણ પ્રકારની પ્રક્રિયા વિના નદીમાં ઠાલવવામાં આવે છે જેથી પાણીનું પ્રદૂષણ ઉઠ્ઠે છે પરંતુ કોરોના મહામારીના સમયમાં તે સદંતર બંધ થયું છે ગંગા અને યમુના નદી તેની શુદ્ધતાના ઉચ્ચ સ્તરે પહોંચી છે.

કોરોના બાદના સમાજના સામાન્ય જન જીવન અને પર્યાવરણ સામેના પડકારો

સામાન્ય રીતે ગરીબી, આવકની અસમાનતા વગેરે સમસ્યા પર વધુ ધ્યાન કેન્દ્રિત કરવામાં આવે છે. પરંતુ પર્યાવરણ પ્રદૂષિત થવાથી ઉભા થતા જોખમો માટે આંખ આડા કાન કરવામાં આવે છે. દેશમાં સ્વચ્છતા અભિયાન તો ચાલે છે પરંતુ હવાના શુદ્ધિકરણ માટે પગલાં લેવાતા નથી. કોરોનાના સમય દરમિયાન થયેલ હવા અને પાણીનું શુદ્ધિકરણ કેટલા સમય સુધી ટકી શકશે તે એક મોટો પ્રશ્ન છે. ફેક્ટરીઓ, વાહનો તથા સામાન્ય જનજીવન ધમધમવા લાગ્યું છે. આર્થિક વિકાસની ગાડી પાટા પર આગળ વધી રહી છે. ઉત્પાદન, વ્યાપાર તથા અન્ય સામાજિક પ્રવૃત્તિ રાબેતા

મુજબ ચાલુ થઈ છે. આવા સંજોગોમાં લોકડાઉનના સમયનું વાતાવરણ જાળવી રાખવું મુશ્કેલ જણાય છે.

કોરોના પછીનું જીવન સામાન્ય બની ગયું છે. ઉદ્યોગો તથા વ્યાપાર દરેક ક્ષેત્રમાં ચાલુ થઈ ગયા છે. આવા સંજોગોમાં એક પડકારરૂપ પરિસ્થિતિ જણાય છે તે એ છે કે પર્યાવરણની શુદ્ધતા જે લોકડાઉનના સમયમાં પ્રાપ્ત થઈ હતી તે પાછી છીનવાય ન જાય. ઔદ્યોગિક ક્ષેત્રમાંથી નીકળતું ગંદુ પાણી ફરી પાછું નદીઓ અને સમુદ્રમાં ન ઠલવાય તેની તકેદારી રાખવી ખૂબ જ જરૂરી છે. વાહનમાંથી નીકળતો ધુમાડો અને ઝેરી વાયુઓ ફરી વાતાવરણને પ્રદૂષિત કરશે તથા માનવી પ્રકૃતિથી ફરી વિમુખ થઈ જશે તેવો ભય સતાવી રહ્યો છે. એક બાજુ કોરોનાના સમય દરમિયાન માનવીની રોગપ્રતિકારક શક્તિમાં ઘટાડો થયો છે તથા બીજી બાજુ સામાન્ય જનજીવન તથા ઉદ્યોગ ધંધા ચાલુ થવાથી વાહનો અને કારખાનાના ધુમાડાને લીધે પર્યાવરણીય પ્રદુષણ વધવાની સંભાવના વધી જશે તો હૃદય તથા ફેફસાને લગતા બીમારી વધવાના સંજોગો ઉભા થવાની શક્યતા નકારી શકાય નહીં.

પ્રદુષણ ઘટાડવા માટે શું કરી શકાય?

વસ્તીનું પ્રમાણ વધવાની સાથે માનવીની જરૂરિયાતો સંતોષવા કુદરતી સંસાધનો દુરુપયોગ વાતાવરણને પ્રદૂષિત કરે છે. આ પ્રદુષણને લગતી સમસ્યા દૂર કરવી એ આપણી સામે મોટો પડકાર છે તે માટે માત્ર સરકારી પ્રયત્નો પૂરતા નથી તેની સાથે કેન્દ્ર સરકાર, રાજ્ય સરકાર, સ્વયં સેવાભાવી સંસ્થાઓ, બિન સરકારી સંસ્થાઓ, પર્યાવરણ એજન્સીઓ એ બધાએ સાથે મળીને પ્રયત્ન કરવાની જરૂર છે.

કોરોનાને કારણે અકલ્પનીય એવી સામાજિક તથા આર્થિક પરિસ્થિતિનો અનુભવ થયો છે. તેની સામે આપણે પ્રકૃતિની વધુ નજીક પહોંચ્યા છીએ. આ સમયને આપણે લાંબા ગાળા સુધી જાળવીને ભવિષ્યની પેઢીને તેને ભેટ આપીએ તે જરૂરી છે. 5 જૂન વિશ્વ પર્યાવરણ દિવસ તરીકે ઉજવવામાં આવે છે તેનો અર્થ પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી એક દિવસ માટે જરૂરી નથી પરંતુ તે માટે સતત જાગૃત રહીને તેની કાયમી ધોરણે જાળવણી કરવા દર વર્ષે યાદ અપાવે છે. જંગલો અને પર્યાવરણ વચ્ચે એક પ્રકારનો સંબંધ રહ્યો છે. પર્યાવરણના મહત્વના ઘટકોમાં સુક્ષ્મકણો, જમીનનું બંધારણ, પ્રાણી તથા જંતુઓ વગેરેનો સમાવેશ થાય છે. જમીનનું તાપમાન જંગલના પ્રમાણ પર આધારિત હોય છે તથા જંગલો તાપમાનને સંતુલિત રાખવામાં મદદ કરે છે. કુદરતી સંસાધનોનો ઉપયોગ આપણા વર્તમાન અને ભવિષ્યના ઉપયોગ માટે જરૂરી છે.

જેમાંના કેટલાંક પૂનઃ સ્થાપિત કરી શકાય છે જેમકે વૃક્ષોમાંથી પ્રાપ્ત થતું લાકડું, અનાજનું ઉત્પાદન, સૂર્યની શક્તિ વગેરે. જ્યારે કેટલીક કુદરતી સ્ત્રોતો વારંવાર પુનઃસ્થાપિત કરી શકાતા નથી જેમાં કોલસો, પેટ્રોલિયમ પેદાશ, ખાણ અને ખનીજ વગેરેનો સમાવેશ થાય છે. આ કુદરતી સ્ત્રોતોની જાળવણી તથા તેમાં વધારો વર્તમાન તથા ભવિષ્યમાં માનવ, પ્રાણી, પક્ષી તથા અન્ય જીવોના અસ્તિત્વ માટે અનિવાર્ય છે.

પ્રદૂષણનું પ્રમાણ ઘટાડવા માટે નીચેના ઉપાયો સૂચવી શકાય.

૧. આપણી અગ્રિમતાઓ, વ્યૂહરચનાઓ તથા વિકાસની પદ્ધતિમાં આમૂલ પરિવર્તન કરવાની જરૂર છે. જે સમગ્ર જીવસૃષ્ટિના અસ્તિત્વ તથા પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી માટે જરૂરી છે.
૨. કુદરતી સાધનો ઉપયોગ પર્યાવરણનું શોષણ કરીને નહીં પરંતુ પર્યાવરણનું પોષણ કરીને કરવું જોઈએ જેથી ટકાઉ વિકાસ દર પ્રાપ્ત કરી શકાય.
૩. સ્કૂલના અભ્યાસક્રમમાં પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી અંગેનું માર્ગદર્શન પુરું પાડવું જોઈએ તથા શિક્ષણ સામગ્રીમાં પોસ્ટર, ઓડિયો-વિડિયોઅલ સામગ્રી, પિક્ચર વગેરેનો સમાવેશ કરી અભ્યાસક્રમને વધુ આકર્ષિત અને રસપૂર્વક બનાવવો જોઈએ. ઉપરાંત શિક્ષણ પદ્ધતિની અસરકારકતાનું સમયાંતરે મૂલ્યાંકન પણ થવું જોઈએ.
૪. પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી અંગેની જાગૃતા સામાન્ય માનવ સુધી પહોંચાડવા રેડિયો, ટીવી, છાપાઓ, મેગેઝીનો વગેરે જેવા સાધનોનો ઉપયોગ કરવો જોઈએ.
૫. પર્યાવરણ સુરક્ષા માટે સરકારે કાયદાનો કડક અમલ કરાવવો જોઈએ.
૬. સરકાર દ્વારા મંજૂર કરવામાં આવેલા પ્રોજેક્ટની પર્યાવરણીય અસરનું સમયાંતરે મૂલ્યાંકન કરી તે માટેના પગલાં હાથ ધરવા જોઈએ.
૭. ઈકોસીસ્ટમનો પુનઃવિકાસ કરવો જોઈએ.
૮. ગ્રામ્ય ક્ષેત્રોમાં ખેત આધારિત, ગ્રામ્ય કલાકારીગરી આધારિત, સ્થાનિક તથા કૌશલ્ય પર આધારિત ઉદ્યોગો વિકસાવવા જોઈએ.
૯. ઇકો ફ્રેન્ડલી ઉત્પાદન વ્યવસ્થા વિકસાવવી જોઈએ તથા પ્રદૂષણ ફેલાવતાં ઉદ્યોગો પર પ્રતિબંધ મુકવો જોઈએ.

૧૦. થર્મલ પાવર સ્ટેશનમાં થતી વીજળીનું ઉત્પાદન ઘટાડીને દરિયાના મોજા, પવનચક્કી તથા સૂર્ય ઉર્જા દ્વારા વીજળીનું ઉત્પાદન કરવા માટેનું આયોજન કરવું જોઈએ.
૧૧. પેટ્રોલ - ડીઝલથી ચાલતા વાહનને બદલે ગેસ તથા ઇલેક્ટ્રીક વાહનોનો ઉપયોગ વધારવો જોઈએ.
૧૨. આપણી જીવનશૈલી પર્યાવરણનું સંવર્ધન કરનારી હોવી જોઈએ એટલે કે પર્યાવરણને પોષનારી હોવી જોઈએ નહીં કે પર્યાવરણનો નાશ કરનારી પ્રાચીન ભારતીય સંસ્કૃતિ, પર્યાવરણીય સંસ્કૃતિ તથા જીવન પદ્ધતિનું પુનઃ સ્થાપન કરવું જોઈએ.
૧૩. સાદુ જીવન અને ઉચ્ચ વિચારનો અમલ કરી પર્યાવરણને નુકસાન ન થાય તે માટેના પ્રયાસો કરવા જોઈએ.

પ્રદૂષણ ઘટાડવાના વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે હાથ ધરાયેલ પ્રયાસો

અત્યારે વિશ્વ વિવિધ અનેક પ્રકારના પ્રદૂષણનો સામનો કરી રહ્યું છે. જેમાં પાણી, હવા, જમીન તથા થર્મલના પ્રદૂષણ ઉપરાંત રેડિયો એક્ટિવ પ્રદૂષણ અવાજનું પ્રદૂષણ, પ્રકાશ પ્રદૂષણ વગેરેનો સમાવેશ થાય છે. પર્યાવરણને લગતી સમસ્યા એ વૈશ્વિક સમસ્યા છે. આથી વૈશ્વિક પ્રયત્નો દ્વારા તે હલ કરવી જરૂરી છે. વસ્તી વધારાને લીધે વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે ગીચતા વધી છે. કુદરતી સંસાધનોના ઉપયોગ સાથે વાતાવરણમાં પ્રદૂષણનું પ્રમાણ વધ્યું છે. હાનિકારક વસ્તુઓના ઉત્પાદનને લીધે સૂક્ષ્મ ઝેરી તત્વોનું પ્રમાણ વધ્યું છે. WTOના એક અંદાજ મુજબ હવાના પ્રદૂષણને લીધે વિશ્વમાં દર વર્ષે સાત મિલિયન લોકો મૃત્યુ પામે છે. પર્યાવરણની સુરક્ષા તથા જાળવણીએ માત્ર કોઈક દેશની સમસ્યા નથી પરંતુ એક વૈશ્વિક સમસ્યા છે. આ માટેના પ્રયાસો પણ વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે થાય તે જરૂરી છે. પર્યાવરણની સુરક્ષા માટે ઇકો ફ્રેન્ડલી અભિગમ અપનાવવાની જરૂર છે. આ પ્રકારના વિકાસને પરિણામે જૈવિક સૃષ્ટિનું સંરક્ષણ અને સંવર્ધન થાય છે. બીજા વિશ્વયુદ્ધ પછી સંયુક્ત રાષ્ટ્રસંઘ દ્વારા પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી માટે વૈશ્વિક જાગૃતિ લાવવાના પ્રયાસો હાથ ધરવામાં આવ્યા છે. પર્યાવરણની સુરક્ષા માટે હાથ ધરવામાં આવેલા આ પ્રયાસોમાંથી કેટલાકની ચર્ચા નીચે મુજબ કરી શકાય.

૧. ૧૯૭૨માં સંયુક્ત રાષ્ટ્રના અધ્યક્ષ પણ હેઠળ સ્વીડનમાં એક પરિષદ યોજવામાં આવી હતી તેનો હેતુ પર્યાવરણના રક્ષણ માટે ઉભા થયેલા પડકારોને દૂર કરવાનો હતો.
૨. ૧૯૮૦માં કુદરતના સંરક્ષણ માટેના આંતરરાષ્ટ્રીય સંગઠન દ્વારા કન્ઝર્વેશન વ્યૂહરચનાનું ઘડતર થયું હતું.
૩. ૧૯૮૭માં પર્યાવરણ અને વિકાસ વૈશ્વિક કમિશન દ્વારા એક રિપોર્ટમાં આપણું સહિયારું ભાવિ એવો અહેવાલ પ્રગટ કરવામાં આવ્યો હતો તથા પર્યાવરણની સુરક્ષા માટે સહિયારા પ્રયાસો પર ભાર મુકવામાં આવ્યો હતો.
૪. ૧૯૯૨માં બ્રાઝિલના રિયો ડિ જનેરો ખાતે સંયુક્ત રાષ્ટ્ર સંઘ દ્વારા પર્યાવરણની સુરક્ષા માટે આંતરરાષ્ટ્રીય પરિષદ પૃથ્વી પરિષદનું આયોજન કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું.
૫. ૧૯૯૭માં જાપાનમાં પર્યાવરણીય સંમેલન યોજવામાં આવ્યું હતું જેમાં દુનિયાના ૧૭૨ દેશોએ ભાગ લીધો હતો આ સંમેલનમાં ૨૦૦૭ થી ૨૦૧૨ દરમિયાન વિશ્વમાં ગ્રીનહાઉસ ગેસનું પ્રમાણ ઘટાડવાની રૂપરેખા નક્કી કરવામાં આવી હતી જેમાં યુરોપિયન યુનિયનના ૩૭ દેશોએ ગ્રીનહાઉસ ગેસમાં અમુક લેવલ સુધી ઘટાડો કરવાનું લક્ષ્યાંક નક્કી કર્યું હતું.
૬. ૨૦૦૭માં ૩ થી ૪ ડિસેમ્બર દરમિયાન ઇન્ડોનેશિયાના બાલી ખાતે ક્લાઇમેટ ચેન્જ સંમેલન યોજવામાં આવ્યું હતું જેમાં ગ્રીનહાઉસ ગેસનું પ્રમાણ ઘટાડવા માટે એક રોડમેપ તૈયાર કરવામાં આવ્યો હતો અને તે અંગેની સંધિ પર હસ્તાક્ષર કરવામાં આવ્યા.
૭. ૭ ડિસેમ્બર ૨૦૦૭ના રોજ ડેનમાર્કમાં માનવ સર્જિત પ્રદૂષણને ઘટાડવા માટે ક્લાઇમેટ કોન્ફરન્સ યોજવામાં આવી હતી જેમાં ૧૯૨ દેશોએ ભાગ લીધો હતો જેમાં માનવ સર્જિત પ્રદૂષણને કાબૂમાં લેવા સહિયારા પ્રયાસ કરવા પર ભાર મૂકાયો હતો.
૮. ૧૯૯૨ થી ૨૦૧૨ દરમિયાન વિવિધ સંમેલનો વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે યોજવામાં આવ્યા હતા તે દ્વારા વિવિધ દેશો સહિયારા પ્રયાસ કરી ચોક્કસ પરિણામ મેળવવા પર ભાર મુકવામાં આવેલ હતો.

આમ પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી માટે વિશ્વના મોટાભાગના દેશો સજાગ બન્યા છે વિકાસની આંધળી દોટની સાથે માનવ અસ્તિત્વ ભંસાઈ ન જાય તેની કાળજી લેવી ખૂબ જરૂરી છે તથા તે માટે સહિયારા પ્રયાસ કરવા જરૂરી છે.

પ્રદૂષણ ઘટાડવાના ભારતના વિવિધ કાયદાઓ

પર્યાવરણના રક્ષણ માટેના કાયદાઓ નીચે મુજબ દર્શાવી શકાય.

- જળ સંરક્ષણ અને પ્રદૂષણ નિયંત્રણ કાયદો 1974
- વન સંરક્ષણ કાયદો 1980
- હવા સંરક્ષણ અને પ્રદૂષણ નિયંત્રણ કાયદો 1981
- પર્યાવરણ સુરક્ષા કાયદો 1986
- અવાજ પ્રદૂષણ નિયંત્રણ અને નિયમન કાયદો 2020

પ્રાચીન ભારત અને પર્યાવરણીય સંરક્ષણ

એવું કહેવાય છે કે ત્રીજી સદીમાં પર્યાવરણના રક્ષણ માટેના નિયમો તથા શિકાર પરના નિયમોનું ઘડતર મહાપ્રતાપી રાજા અશોકે કર્યું હતું. ભારત એ ઋષિ સંસ્કૃતિઓનો દેશ છે. પ્રાચીન સમયમાં ઋષિઓ જંગલમાં કુદરતના સાનિધ્યમાં રહીને પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી કરતા હતા. આપણી પ્રાચીન સંસ્કૃતિમાં નદી, વૃક્ષો, પક્ષીઓ, પહાડો વગેરેની પૂજા કરવામાં આવે છે, તે આડકતરી રીતે ધાર્મિક અને સામાજિક રીતે પર્યાવરણની જાળવણીને ટેકો આપે છે. પૃથ્વી એ બધા જ જીવોનું ઘર છે તે સુરક્ષિત અને સલામત રહે તે માટે પ્રયત્ન કરવા જોઈએ પૃથ્વી અને પાણીની મદદથી વૃક્ષોનો ઉછેર થાય છે. વૃક્ષો આપણને પ્રાણવાયુ પુરો પાડે છે. માનવી પોતાના જીવન દરમિયાન 10 વૃક્ષોનો પ્રાણવાયુ વાપરે છે. આથી દરેક માનવીએ ઓછામાં ઓછા 10 વૃક્ષોનું વાવેતર કરવું જોઈએ. વૃક્ષોનું અસ્તિત્વ દરેક પ્રાણીમાત્રની જરૂરિયાત છે. પૃથ્વી પર વૃક્ષોની સંખ્યા ઘટવાને લીધે પાણી તથા હવાનું પ્રદૂષણ વધવા પામ્યું છે જે માનવી તથા પ્રાણીમાત્રના અસ્તિત્વ માટે ભયજનક છે.

ઉપસંહાર

ભારતમાં કેન્દ્રીય પ્રદૂષણ નિયંત્રણ બોર્ડ ઓફ ઇન્ડિયા પર્યાવરણની સુધારણા માટે પ્રયત્ન કરે છે. કુદરતી સંસાધનોની જાળવણી તથા પ્રદૂષણને અંકુશમાં રાખવાથી લાંબાગાળાનો સાતત્યપૂર્ણ વિકાસ હાથ ધરી શકાય તેના ભાગ રૂપે વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે જે

સંમેલનો યોજવામાં આવે છે તેમાંથી પ્રેરણા લઈને ભારતે પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી માટેના પ્રયાસો ચાલુ રાખવા જરૂરી છે. લોકડાઉનને લીધે લોકો ઘરમાં બંધ થવાથી રાષ્ટ્રીય અભયારણ્ય તથા વન સરક્ષણ આ સમયમાં ખીલી ઉઠ્યું હતું. લોકડાઉન ના સમયમાં માનવ માનવ વચ્ચેનું આદાન-પ્રદાન ઘટ્યું હતું. પરંતુ માનવીનું પ્રકૃતિ સાથેનું જોડાણ વધ્યું હતું તેમ ચોક્કસ કહી શકાય. તેની જાળવણી કરવાથી કોરોનાના સમય દરમિયાનની હવા તથા પાણીની શુદ્ધતા જાળવી શકાશે. સૈદ્ધાંતિક રીતે જોઈએ તો પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી એ વિકાસના એજન્ડામાં ઉચ્ચ પ્રાથમિકતામાં હોવું જોઈએ જોકે હકીકતમાં સાતત્યપૂર્ણ વિકાસ માટે પર્યાવરણની જાળવણી માટે પ્રયત્ન જરૂરી છે.

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UNMASKING THE FUTURE

**A Collection of Scholarly Essays on the
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CHAPTER 2

Coping with Covid-19 Crisis: Creating Social Bonds with Physical Distancing

Dr. Twinkle Sanghavi and Ms. Prerna Ramteke

Introduction

The current buzzword “social distancing” has gained much importance after covid-19 hit every nook and corner of the world. The meaning is as explicit as the term, it states that people should avoid being in contact with the crowd. This physical distancing phenomenon was introduced to reduce the frequency of being in contact with each other. Covid-19 induced lockdown and government SOP's compelled everyone to maintain a 6-feet distance from other people. However, the term “social distancing” literally suggests being socially distanced from other people, which is not possible because of an obvious cause, i.e., humans are social animals. Thus, the term social distancing is not appropriate in this context (Fura & Negash, 2020). Social distancing has somehow ruined the lives of people in several ways because social pain is much like physical pain. Medicine such as paracetamol that cures fever or headaches can also cure mental pain because the activity occurring inside the brain is similar to physical pains. This has been confirmed by a social neuroscientist named Matthew Lieberman, who mentioned that people are rejected by society, and not allowed to participate in social activities the brain get distressed and suffers something similar to physical pain. The medicines work out on such beans because the brain is likewise engaged in circuitry to cure the pain. The Covid induced lockdown aggravated the social pain in many people yet many of them still found productive ways to engage themselves during such a tumultuous time. At the very beginning of the pandemic, people tried to cheer their friends and neighbours by

gathering on their balconies or playing songs for them. The government as well realised that humans need a touch of social groups around them, so they requested people to support each other in solidarity and boost everyone's morale in difficult times (Li, et al., 2020). This pandemic caused a lot of stress and anxiety among people because the disease was deadly and uncertain at the same time. Nobody knew how long the pandemic would sustain and distress people on economic, physical, and social levels. The most important thing in this pandemic was social bonding in which people were keeping in mind to avoid getting close contact physically. A doctor gave another statement that suggested people must be careful with each other, therefore the word "social distancing" was changed to "physical distancing" (Király, 2020). During the pandemic there was huge unrest because of the global health crisis that occurred suddenly depriving people of basic necessities as well as love and care from their dear ones. Coping with such a disastrous situation, was a big task and required behavioural changes from everyone (Tabernero et al., 2020). There was a huge burden on each individual as the behaviour of humans had to be aligned with the suggestions and recommendations given by experts in the public health domain.

2. Consequences of Social / Physical Distancing

Maintaining a sanctity in the relationships during unprecedented times is highly beneficial for people and it was really difficult for most people during the covid-19 pandemic. The lockdown imposed by the government brought in the need for maintaining strong and healthy relationships with close family, relatives as well as neighbours. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, it is imperative that a human has social needs or needs of belongingness which has to be fulfilled for remaining motivated throughout. The relationships that humans have with other individuals or groups help in building self-esteem as well. This self-esteem has a big role to play in people's lives. For instance, a person who has high confidence invariably portrays that they are socially acknowledged and connected with a bond. However, dismissal or negligence demonstrates disappointment and anxiety among people for laying out such social norms regarding social distancing. As opposed to serving fundamentally to keep an internal identity, the quest for confidence urges individuals to act in manners that are helpful for keeping up with their associations with

others. Fear is an essential human feeling in a survival reaction to expected risk. It initiates pressure reactions and is great for staying away from dangers. It could have mental well-being perils and fosters a few psychosocial messes, in the event that not treated as expected. COVID-19 has been causing several serious emotional well-being issues including tension, stress, sadness, despair, panic, and different mental problems. The number of patients with psychological and mental issues has been increasing in number because of COVID-19 related issues including vulnerability to future, social disengagement, employment loss, long term illness and death as well as gaps in social groups and relatives. In the entire lockdown period, something that each human being has learned is to keep human interaction alive while maintaining physical distancing. In any human society, having relationships with people and maintaining connections is of prime importance (Polizzi, et al., 2020). Whenever life has to offer some hiccups and there is a more amount of stress in anyone's life, they look out for human interaction so that they can ease their pain by merely sharing it with others. The connectivity and healthy relationships act as a shield which protects people from harming themselves mentally or physically (Dvorsky, et al., 2021). Therefore, people engage in groups for staying in their well-being zone. This philosophy has been challenged by Covid-19 and it has taught us to be innovative in finding ways to make human interaction stronger and intact even though people have to face restrictions. Apparently, there happen to be two different ways of keeping human interaction intact, i.e., internal, and external approaches. There are several ways to use the external approach. It can be done via electronic means such as voice and video calls, sending instant messages, or even talking to friends and neighbours from a distance, for instance, through the windows (George et al., 2021).

3. Social Restrictions of Covid-19 and their Impact

Everybody had to adjust on everyday basis because of their lifestyle, as schools, universities, cinemas, cafés, and restaurants close; sporting events, music shows, dance presentations, graduations, and proms were dropped; and in house celebrations and events were turning into a lifestyle. These general well-being measures have been fundamentally essential to safeguard people's social needs, lessen the unrealistic expectations and excessive burden on the existing medical services framework, and reduced the number of covid deaths.

Simultaneously, questions have arisen about whether the lockdowns imposed because of covid-19 have impacted the other aspects of people's lives and the measures taken for limiting such inhibitors. Moreover, it is indistinct whether any of these choices have included youth voice and cooperation. It is perceived that there is no simple answer for adapting to the worldwide pandemic. These unprecedented times require a planned, comprehensive general well-being approach that cautiously balances expenses and advantages to guarantee the wellbeing and prosperity of the entire population. Individuals live in an interconnected world. The well-being and prosperity of people around the globe are altogether influenced by social, economic, political, monetary, natural, and underlying variables. While many efforts have been taken by the respective authorities to forestall further COVID-19 transmission, it is imperative to check on the measures that are helping people maintain their social bonds while not obstructing the standard operating procedures. People likewise utilize an instrument for coping with the pandemic and its destructive impacts globally. This tool is about maintaining a close connection with other individuals and getting rid of the passing uneasiness. From a verifiable or rather developmental viewpoint, framing and keeping up with connections and bonds have become indispensable pieces of human social orders that have settled the endurance problem and therefore, humanity has flourished. These bonds or affiliations lead to the idea of couples as well as nuclear families. Our predecessors, apparently, had a good sense of safety in shaping and keeping up with relationships among groups and were more ready to replicate and safeguard their posterity till their development. Having connections with individuals evidently have different endurance benefits like doing various activities together such as matting, gathering food, building safe houses, and watching out for the natural threats that may arise at any point in time. However, because of its different existential and regenerative advantages, a good and healthy relationship with people is a product of regular interaction as well as building a society.

4. Means and Solutions for Social Connectivity Alternatives during Covid

Coronavirus affected the life of all in different ways. People confronted difficulties and COVID-19 has been influencing the mental, social, and actual working individuals. The discoveries from a

few studies, likewise, showed that people have been using some survival methods including mental conduct exercises, looking for needy people and helping them with necessary aid and giving social help and reinforcing social associations. Especially, building positive connections and upgrading social associations with companions, family, experts or truly with individuals deprived during the COVID-19 emergency through email, web-based channels for instance as *Facebook and Instagram or Whats.App messages are esteemed to improve social associations that work with everyday life, wellbeing, and prosperity*. In the later-half of the Covid restrictions the online things started and it was seen that social needs of people were being fulfilled through online interaction, meetings, chit-chats etc (Mittal, 2021). Since the COVID-19 has been influencing a few parts of individuals' regular routines and their ordinary work however they are utilizing some methods for dealing with especially difficult times to deal with its adverse consequences, including medical services experts, educators, clinicians, government as well as non-governmental associations, and the public authority, by and large, were endeavouring to stifle the adverse consequences of COVID-19 on the entire population. The deadly COVID-19 is a very serious pandemic that is deeply impacting society and economies across the globe. However, in a study it was also found that online learning, meetings etc. were just a temporary arrangement and not sustainable (Mittal, 2021a)

The connections can be made by teaming up and playing together indoors, for example, carrom, ludo or other indoor activities. During the lockdown, people learned to make and have meals together which enhanced their relationship with each other. The other approach, that is internal strategy, helps to maintain the bonds by creating a sort of value and meaning that a society or a community will cherish together (Ameis et al., 2020). People do not live in quarantine or isolation in general, their choices or actions affect other people in several ways. Finding ways to volunteer and help the neighbours through various deeds or actions was another important aspect that enhanced the relationships despite having physical distance. The ones who had been admitted to the hospitals because of Covid issues were helped by people living in the same society, helping them by donating blood, finding oxygen cylinders, and taking care of their families was definitely a social bonding. The individuals living in a community found their loved ones who needed to be taken care of in such unprecedented times. Everyone wanted and tried their best to protect

other people in the community, which was seen as an act of love, and a feeling of brotherhood (Lippke, et al., 2021). Despite following the strict government guidelines for stopping the spread of the virus, people came together, by all means, to help each other in bad circumstances. This portrays the true nature of humankind where people crave social belongingness and at the same time give out their hands to those who are in need of help.

While many businesses lost revenue, and workforce and shut down during the pandemic, others saw an opportunity to flourish (Okabe-Miyamoto & Lyubomirsky, 2021). Many home-grown businesses were in the picture after the Covid-19 lockdown was imposed. Men and women gathered together within the four walls to create the best out of the resources they had and sold products online. Fortunately, many small businesses and start-ups did fairly well with limited resources. Innovative and creative businesses earned huge revenues. One very common industry was the textile business which started making masks and sold them in huge numbers to incur large profits (Akkermans, et al., 2020). The sale of hand sanitisers was also seen on a large scale. Many entrepreneurs started producing and selling such items in their homes themselves and got them delivered via delivery partners both locally as well as to far off places. IT and other Tech companies made employees work from home so that their work won't stop, and their productivity would remain the same. They organized virtual meetings and events which served the purpose of creating social bonds just like when people meet other colleagues during breaks (Buheji et al., 2020). The concept of maintaining physical distancing while at the same time having a perfectly balanced social environment was being practised in almost all the corporate offices. The authorities realised the importance of social and human interaction; thus, they made several efforts to keep it intact while following the guidelines. Individuals got accustomed to the setup, and it is observed recently that most of them have adapted well and wish to continue in the same manner for years to come. The scholars have figured out after analysing the covid-19 situation that social associations are vital to individuals, especially in times of misery, and contemplations, thoughts, feelings, and activities can be upgraded through encountering of sensation of closeness to other people, commitment to deliberate exercises, laying out care and warmth of affection, really focusing on others, giving value to others, and shaping relational connections for a long term (Faulkner et al.,

2020). Individuals can do this through on the web or potentially direct associations maintaining a physical separation as well.

Conclusion

This study has brought together most of the facts related to Covid-19 induced lockdown, and the guidelines for keeping people six feet away from each other. The cultural effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been expansive and exceptionally tested. No part of typical cultural working has been saved. Quarantine and social distancing are fundamental measures to keep the infection from spreading yet additionally lead to raised levels of depression, dejection, and social disconnection, which thus produce physical and emotional wellness related repercussions. Embracing fitting strides to keep social and familial associations, keeping up with healthy exercises, and dealing with feelings and mental side effects can assist with letting the antagonistic results free from despair and anxiety. The pandemic has enlightened the previously existing fear that most aged people or grown-ups often have to go through a situation of uneasiness because of lower levels of social interaction. They have to deal with social segregation and depression as and when they grow old and helpless. This gives a chance to utilize this opportunity to concede tending to these awful situations in life for more of the old guardians and grown-ups of the house in the post-pandemic period, for instance, creating virtual medical care, new innovative ways to spend more time with them, take care of them in whichever way possible and get, and government aid as well so that they get the love and care they deserve. However, most importantly it has highlighted the underlying aspect that human interaction and social bonding are of prime importance and though following a physical distance guideline, people can still root in other means of connecting with each other.

People have faced many challenges regarding Covid-19 and it has directly or indirectly impacted the mental, physical, and social well-being of all people. However, on the brighter side, people have come closer to families than they were earlier. They had to travel across states and countries to work and financially support their families which now after the lockdown and remote working was possible doing at home. This being an instance serves as the right message that maintaining social bonds with each other is undeniably a form of support to human beings. In difficult situations when people share

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their atrocities with friends and families it not only helps them gain some regular help but also moral support and good wishes from their close ones. This may seem unimportant at times, however, with Covid-19 taking a toll on people everywhere around the globe, it was quite evident that the need for social interaction is highly important.

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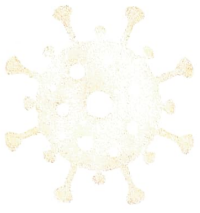
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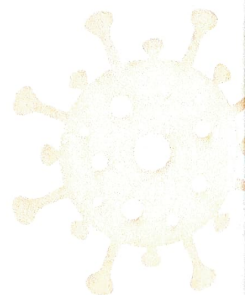
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CHAPTER 6 Tendency of People towards Doomsurfing and Doomscrolling during COVID-19

Dr. Anuja Deshpande

1. Introduction

In mid-2020, the COVID-19 pandemic arose as a worldwide danger to well-being and social steadiness, almost overshadowing political unrest or seething rapidly spreading fires in the titles of the international news plan. Over the following year, every minute of everyday news inclusion was overwhelmed by reports of imploding medical clinics. It shut down urban communities, grave government authorities reported radical counter-pandemic measures, moving expectations for an inoculation timetable, and measurements of contaminated, hospitalized and perished in different nations all over the planet.

A pandemic is a worldwide cultural emergency that individuals experience daily. News use is crucial for how individuals relate their encounters to such an emergency and get a handle on what is happening on the planet (Cherian et al., 2018). Suppose news shows progressively alarming and significant simultaneously. In that case, the circumstance calls for investigating how individuals explore clashing parts of information use, relating to data overflow as profound responses. Pandemic news use could appear as "doomscrolling," a famous term characterized as "the demonstration of consuming a perpetual parade of negative web-based news, to the weakness of the scroller's psychological well-being." Social media has also given wings to people to search and discuss a variety of material and do many-to-many communication (Kudeshia and Mittal, 2015). Similar to the term "home surfing" for internet media, this term refers to the usage of cell phones as the primary news source. An

“eternal line” of bad news, on the other hand, can refer to 24-hour daily television coverage of a global crisis or the experience of following “complete” stories at various phases (Liu and Ma, 2019). Our research looks at how the concept of rotating destiny reflects the consumer side of pandemic news and an open, customer-centric approach to reporting in the media. The need to examine the critical mental dispositions that contribute to the specific emergence and maintenance of doom surfing and doomscrolling during the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic was emphasized in this study (Anand et al., 2018). There is a human drive to remain in the data stream in the essence of an unsure world circumstance. It is challenging to plug even though one winds up feeling more regrettable. In artistic examinations and reasoning, this is similar to “the mystery of loathsomeness”: the way that individuals are drawn to ghastly fiction; however, it creates feelings that appear to be unfortunate. Clarifications for this mystery have been looked for in various ways. However, the essential qualification between the imaginary universe of a beast film and the case of accurate portrayal in the news stays focal. It does the act of room scrolling an alternate peculiarity.

2. Health Effects of Doomsurfing

There are several health effects of Doomsurfing; hence it cannot be taken as lightly as many people think. It has a direct impact on the brain, and the researchers have identified that its Impacts can be divided into two major categories, namely – Psychological Effects and Physical Effects. Both the types of effects are essential to be studied. Figure 1 has highlighted the extent of health issues that the Doomsurfing may cause. To address the mental tendencies that have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need to provide the general public with internet-based programs that focus on increasing awareness of cognitive biases, their role in Doomsurfing and Doomscrolling, avenues for developing feelings of sadness and nervousness, and planning tests. Social media provides less compromising interpretations and more promising results (Anand et al., 2018). In addition, projects must remember to include training on how to use technology effectively, such as using virtual entertainment platforms and computer-based news channels and reducing time spent on mobile phones while increasing time spent on excluded activities.

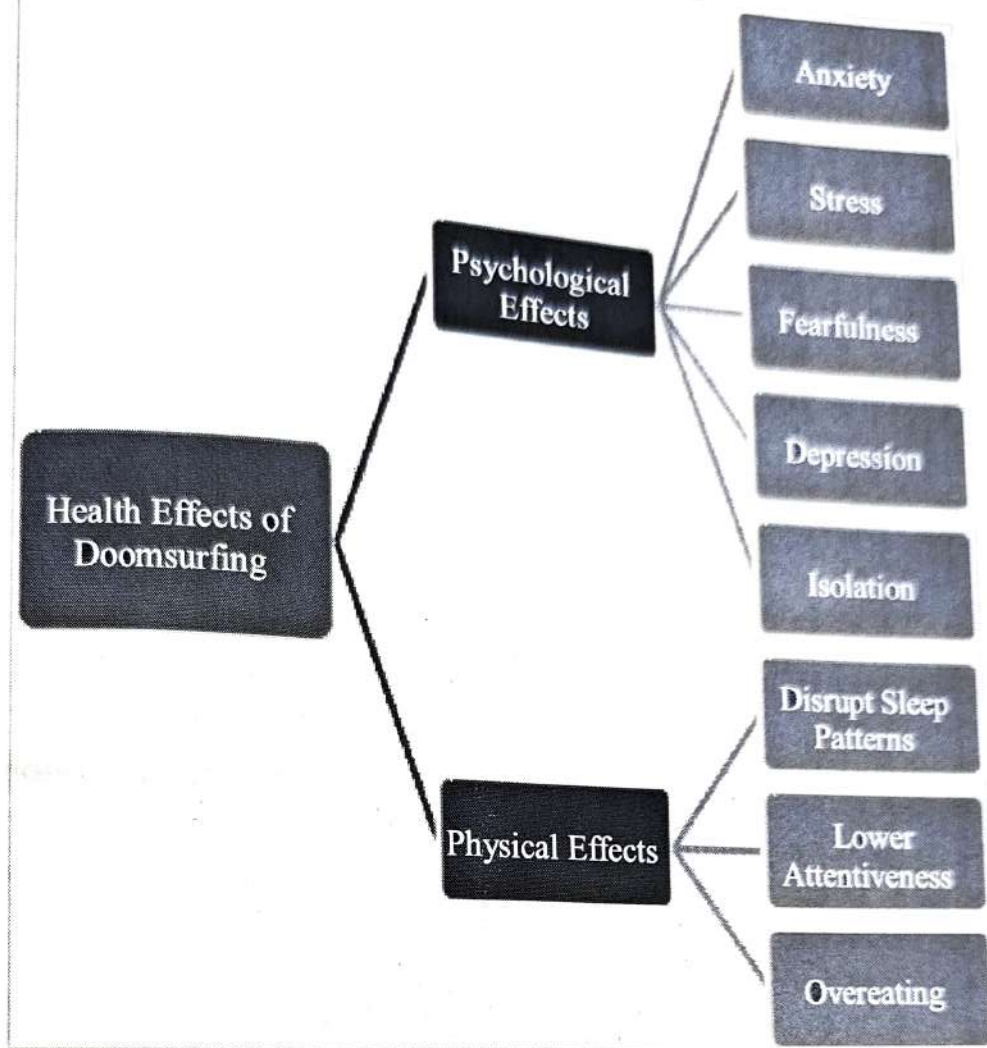


Figure 1 Health Issues of Doomsurfing

3. Psychological Impact of COVID-19

Because of COVID-19, there is an expanded utilization of the web modalities for scholastics, work, teleconsultation, web gatherings, and relaxation time exercises. The requests (abstract or ecological) for all time being on the web are related to the high degrees of physiological initiation, sensations of strain, saw assumptions, uneasiness, and nervousness. It was being accounted for that even defers on the telephone or online gatherings adversely shape our perspectives on others. This correspondence has featured the impacts of over-the-top utilization of innovation also the possible pathway to computerized wear out. This report states that there is a need to investigate experimental proof of the intervening cycles that make the web's advanced innovation gainful versus inconvenient to its clients (Anand et al., 2018).

Individuals would then generally connect further in the peculiarity of doomsurfing or doomscrolling with the presumption of getting some sure data or points of view about the COVID-19 pandemic, so their uneasiness, dread, and misgiving diminish to overcome the data hole in the COVID-19 pandemic and the related gloomy sentiments. Either way, they fall in search of encouraging or positive news or through a series of skeptical information that amplifies feelings of tension, fear, vulnerability, and anger, and this ends in an endless cycle in which people seem to be trapped in a stupid surfing web with emotions and stress, which is not fun. This search for cheerful news or data during COVID-19 is hampered by a bona fide disposition, in which the person underestimates the possibility of a positive event in the COVID-19 pandemic occurring tomorrow, the week after, or in the next two weeks and overestimates the likelihood of side effects (Sharma et al., 2020).

4. Addiction to Electronic Gadgets

Turning off cell phone notifications, only using essential apps on phones, not using the phone as a morning timer, keeping cell phones as well as computerized gadgets out of bedrooms, not using 2 hours before nap time, and trying to frame organized seasons of brief spans in the day for obtaining to internet stages rather than ensuring a constant presence via digital entertainment stages or microblogging can all help direct the time spent on internet stages. Alongside the obtaining of computerized cleanliness, more disconnected exercises should be grown, like taking part in playing indoor games, games, morning or on the other hand evening strolls, drawing, outlining, and taking part in various leisure activities with loved ones (Aharoni et al., 2020). Fletcher and Nielsen (2018) propounded that "doomscrolling" was used to describe a new customer experience that did not begin with the pandemic but is, by the way, particularly suited to it. Doomscrolling was declared a "word to monitor" for an appropriate future passage by Merriam Webster in 2020, citing COVID-19: "doomscrolling or doomsurfing are new terms alluding to the inclination to keep surfing or looking at awful news, although that news is disheartening, unsettling, or discouraging." (Merriam Webster 2020). Recorded starting places are "destruction" to mean haziness, insidiousness, judgment, and destiny, "surfing" as adjusted from TV slot trading to web use, and "looking" to allude to the unmistakable quality of cell phones. Individuals are going through your web-based

entertainment news channels, perusing all you can find about COVID-19. Individuals really can't stop themselves. Ends up, there's a term for that. It's classified "doomscrolling" or "doom surfing."

Furthermore, it probably won't astonish you to find that it's genuinely not great for you. In addition to other things, getting oversaturated on COVID-19 data can exasperate the tension you may, as of now, be feeling. That is the discoveries of another study, Trusted Source, led by scientists in the United Kingdom and Canada. The researchers checked out the close-to-home results of even concise openings to COVID-19-related news on Twitter and YouTube in two examinations with a sum of around 1,000 members. The scientists found that just 2 to 4 minutes of openness prompted "quick and critical decreases" in members' good faith and good sentiments (Nixon, 2020).

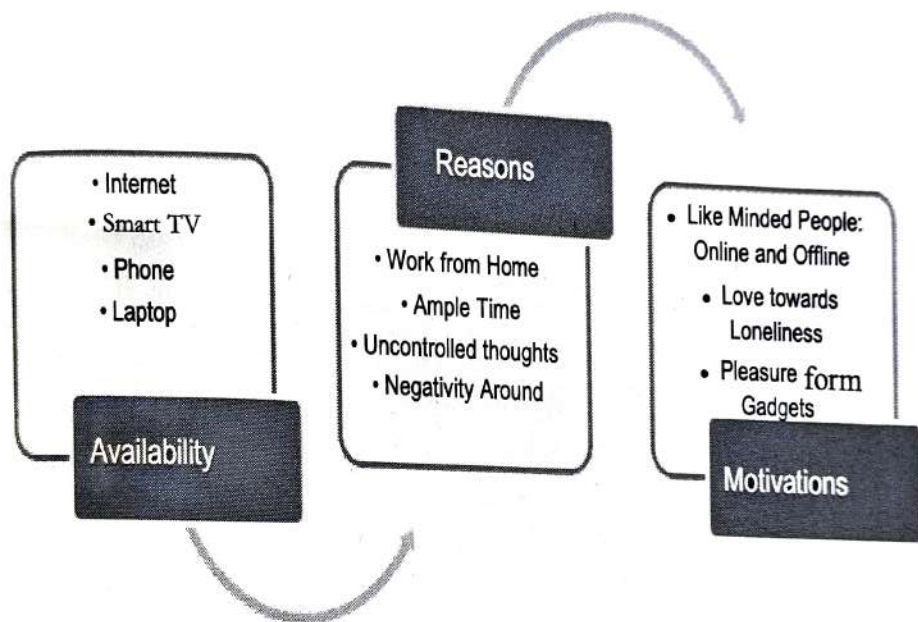


Figure 2 Factors Motivating towards Use of Gadgets during Covid-19

5. Media Connectivity Effect

In isolation, customers rely on the news for urgent data. However, they are overwhelmed and utterly exhausted by the volume and tone of pandemic news. The government's strategy is to move away from the ever-revolving destiny and develop a new daily routine emphasizing increasing news consumption with scheduled breaks. Such people turn out to be very vigilant residents, paying more attention to the news than expected, avoiding the information, and seeking escapism and distance. First, examine how well the relevant

common word “doomsday scrolling” corresponds to more general ideas such as news viewing and news avoidance to construct a mathematical approach for assessing news usage during a pandemic. Then we establish our research plan and provide findings from our subjective poll before concluding with a discussion about what’s next for the concept of information aversion (Baym et al., 2020).

Despite the early lockdown, our respondents portray what is going on in vivid news that couldn’t be supported over the long haul. Under what we have shown as ideal cultural circumstances, in a prosperous Nordic government assistance state similarly appropriate to handle a pandemic, the news was terrifying, exhausting, sincerely depleting, and all over the place. The day-in and day out news surges of live TV, online news destinations, and web-based entertainment refresh address, for clients, a consistent chance to follow the news, incredibly open when the lockdown broke down standard work hours and rhythms for daily exercises. Simultaneously, the developing COVID-19 circumstance’s desperation drove clients into a troublesome stream to split away from. We find that individuals expected to counter data over-burden as well as close to the home channel, underscoring how much pandemic news caused compelling close-to-home reactions (Kuntsman and Miyake, 2019).

The rise in well-known references to “doomscrolling” reflects the societal relevance of this oddity, as well as its intertwined mental and inventive perspectives. We’ve suggested a definition based on our research, to confirm the probability of cross-pollination between dim content, considerations of economy-driven news streams, and coincidental deep reactions. Despite the fact that the phrase doomscrolling refers to a cell phone, they discovered that the intense pandemic scenario made news on a variety of platforms, including live television, as part of a continuous news stream. The situation also highlights how news designs with clearly defined endpoints can help clients plan approaches for the most effective way to screen without getting stuck in the stream. Our review catches what is going on in which clients were figuring out systems to split away from doomscrolling while at the same time remaining informed about the pandemic Myllylahti (2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a huge increase in the use of the internet for work and leisure activities around the world. During the COVID-19 pandemic and associated global lockdowns, the use of information through digital means increased by about 35

percent and the use of virtual entertainment by almost 47 percent. In the ongoing COVID-19 emergency that increases anxiety 1 and fundamentally vulnerability, most people end up spending a lot of time setting up, researching, or browsing COVID-19 news networks, which is demotivating or distracting and makes them restless, anxious, and insecure about the future. Makes them displeased and angry even though they can't help themselves, and it's called Peculiar.

There are different variables adding to this peculiarity of doom surfing, one of them being the human propensity to comprehend what is going on and fill the data hole. Individuals would then generally connect further in the peculiarity of doom surfing or doomscrolling with the assumption of getting to some specific data or viewpoints about the COVID-19 pandemic so their uneasiness, dread, and fear diminishes in order to overcome the data hole in the COVID-19 pandemic and the related gloomy sentiments. Nonetheless, in this hunt for hopeful or good news, they wind up looking over or riding through a great deal of critical news, which prompts further compounding sensations of nervousness, worry, vulnerability, and frenzy, and this turns into an endless loop where the people seem to become caught on the web by means of doom surfing with disagreeable feelings and stress. The search for positive news or data during COVID-19 is hampered by the tendency of idealism that causes individuals to overestimate the possibility of positive events during the COVID-19 pandemic tomorrow, in a week, or in the next two weeks while evaluating the possibility of underestimating bad events.

Conclusion

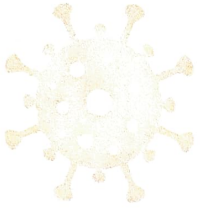
Finally, let's talk about our findings, taking into account the discussions around information avoidance and beyond the pandemic, including the need to understand news consumption as a set of distinct and seemingly inconsistent practices. There are some limitations to our review, a contextual inquiry by a country conducted under disturbing conditions and therefore employing an unusual strategy of subjective inquiry rather than an encounter, which would leave more doors open for further action. Nonetheless, we accept that certain seconds captured by respondents' subjective reasons provide insight into significant changes in the pandemic news experience. If staying away from the news is (over time) important to our approach to news, we want to understand this type of avoidance

of information as meaningful and organized, therefore human, as opposed to inherent risk.

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UNMASKING THE FUTURE

**A Collection of Scholarly Essays on the
Impact & Aftermath of the COVID-19 Crisis**



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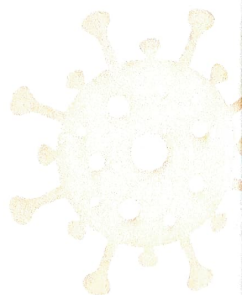
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CHAPTER 3

Neurological Impact of Coronavirus

Dr. Cicilia Chettiar

Introduction

The journey from a pandemic to finding a panacea is an ambitious one that requires us to understand that not all diseases can be understood only through the body. COVID has thrown up some very important questions, more about the lives we live and the lifestyles we've chosen. It is a physical illness, it affects the body, and it is viral. There is no one who has been untouched by this pandemic, either experiencing it themselves or knowing someone very close who has experienced it. Many may have been through this disease and have come out feeling victorious. Many may have experienced very mild symptoms or may have been asymptomatic. This leads to an assumption that we have beaten the disease and we walk around feeling mighty strong and brave. We have a disease to which we have a reasonably decent fight back with our vaccines and our herd immunity, herbal mixtures and medicines. And we have all the numerous tests that tell us when the virus is in us and out of us. In all the experiences, descriptions centered a lot about what happened to the body, not many people spoke about what happened to the brain as an organ and its consequent psychological effects. Either they experienced nothing or were unaware that they experienced problems, or perhaps it resolved itself quickly enough.

Firstly, does the brain get affected at all? Yes, it does. Individuals afflicted by COVID – whether mild or severe – do show an impact on the brain. Here's the first uncertainty. We don't know what percent of COVID patients show brain symptoms. Statistics are varied in terms of the spread, intensity and impact when it comes to the brain. The most common symptom which is neurological in nature is the headache. (Ousseiran, Fares & Chamoun, 2021). Cerebrovascular complications like stroke, haemorrhages and microbleeds were

reported by the authors of this systematic review. Neuropsychiatric symptoms (NPs), seizures, delirium, altered mental states are some of the symptoms that reflect the neurological impact of COVID. The more common symptoms of lack of smell and taste are also dysfunctions of the brain but are not recognised by the general population as a neurological problem. The brain could be affected due to two reasons. One, the infection could reach the brain. Two, the immune system battling the viral infection is overstimulated and impacts the brain. There is a possible three, which is too early to judge, and which may play out over time and that will only be observed with the passage of the years.

The most basic mechanism through which the brain could get affected would be the leakage of the blood-brain barrier. A technical term which means exactly what it says – a barrier that prevents the blood from reaching parts of the brain that it mustn't reach. It is primarily made up of a network of blood vessels and tissue that is made up of closely spaced cells that helps keep harmful substances from reaching the brain. The blood-brain barrier lets some substances, such as water, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and general anaesthetics, pass into the brain. The brain has blood vessels. Some substances can access the brain and that allows us to provide treatments. Alcohol is one of the substances that can breach this barrier too. In COVID patients with NPs, this barrier becomes leaky allowing for strokes and hemorrhage in the brain. Depending on which part of the brain this happens, symptoms will vary.

Another possible route through which COVID impacts the brain is through the olfactory bulb where in the nose has shown up as affected in quite a few studies. We talk about losing the sense of smell in COVID-affected individuals and this could be one of the reasons. The mucosal cells in the lining of the nose become infected and die, leading to the death of nearby neurons as well (Meinhardt, J., Radke, J., Dittmayer, C. *et al*, 2021). The authors were also able to detect the virus in some brain areas that had no connection to the olfactory mucosa, such as the cerebellum. This leads to the conclusion that there could be other routes to enter the central nervous system

The third way through which the virus affects the brain is due to the immune system response that can cause inflammation. The immune system launches an attack against a virus or another invader, inflammatory cells circulate through the bloodstream like foot

soldiers. With COVID-19 and other conditions, those immune cells may permeate the normally protective blood-brain barrier. If inflammation gets out of hand, the process may kill neurons. The virus causes inflammation in the nervous system, which puts pressure on blood vessels. Those blood vessels then become damaged and start to leak blood products into brain tissue, which then triggers an immune response.

A deeper understanding of how the virus infects the brain can be understood through the role it plays in infecting astrocytes. Astrocytes are the most numerous cell type in the central nervous system, with the primary roles of support and upkeep, maintenance of the blood-brain barrier, and control of blood flow. Nothing much can happen in the brain without astrocytes. So basically, astrocytes are protectors, providers, waste disposers, communicators, repairers and formators. Neurons may run the show, but these star-shaped cells are the back-stage artists or the supporting actors without whom any main actor cannot carry out his/her role. And COVID chooses to attack these cells over all others. COVID has a preference for astrocytes over other brain cells. Fatigue, depression and ‘brain fog’, which includes confusion and forgetfulness, can all be attributed to infected astrocytes. They are also all commonly found in COVID.

Consequences of neurological impact

Post-COVID fatigue

A “physical” component of loss of energy and heaviness as well as a “mental” component, with “brain fog,” memory loss, impaired attention, and concentration, and word-finding difficulties. Post-COVID fatigue has been recently defined by a group of experts as a condition in which fatigue is the dominant symptom, persistent for at least 6 months after a definite diagnosis of (COVID-19) infection and disabling to the extent that it prevents most normal activities (Moriguchi, T. *et al*, 2020).

Brain fog

An inability to think clearly that can turn up in multiple sclerosis, cancer or chronic fatigue. Headaches, anxiety, depression, hallucinations and vivid dreams, not to mention well-known smell and taste anomalies.

The term Brain Fog has become quite common with COVID. These are some of the symptoms:

Headaches	Forgetfulness	Mild depression
Low energy or fatigue	Trouble concentrating	Trouble sleeping, insomnia
Impaired cognitive function	Low motivation, lack of ideas	
Mood swings	Excessive absences	

Brain fog is not a medical term. However, it has been used in common parlance often enough for people to recognize what it means. An inability to think clearly can turn up in multiple sclerosis, cancer or chronic fatigue. So, it is not exclusive to COVID.

Imagine going through life functioning like this, where the image is almost there in your head but you don't quite get it. Visualize looking through a thick piece of glass that distorts images to such an extent that all you see are fuzzy shapes in some light. Try working with this level of clarity every day for a long time. Since not enough time has elapsed for us to conclusively say when brain fog will end. The frustration, sense of inadequacy and incompetence will get overwhelming and unbearable. Now think of people around you who seem to be displaying such levels of inadequacy and consider the possibility that they are not faking or being insincere, they just are not able to function. The fall out both personally and professionally is immense.

Stroke, brain haemorrhage

Blood vessels in the brain rupture or blockages in the blood supply to the brain are commonly referred to as strokes (Paterson, 2020). Loss of neurons from the hippocampus, can explain brain fog. Studies provide evidence of tissue damage, a thinner cortex, and loss of grey matter in people who had tested positive for the virus (Douaud, Lee, Alfaro-Almagro, F. *et al.*, 2022). It also leads to starving the brain of oxygen and was often related to low oxygen levels and low blood pressure.

- Some cognitive symptoms that often show up include delirium, confusion, disorientation, agitation, a serious disturbance in mental state wherein a patient is unable to think clearly. Patients with delirium tended to be sicker, with more comorbidities like hypertension and diabetes, and appeared to have more severe COVID-related illness as well.

Care teams often were unable to perform standard delirium reduction techniques, such as exercises designed to get a patient moving or allowing visitors or objects from home to orient patients while in the hospital. This was largely because the focus was reduced disease transmission. Lack of PPE's and no vaccine in the early stages meant that limiting COVID exposure was more important.

- Altered mental states, such as confusion or prolonged unconsciousness – It is fully reversible. Documented cases range from 8 days to 31 days of being in a comatose state without any devastating brain injury.
- The direct effect COVID seems to have on EEG power is similar to mild cognitive impairment, which can develop into Alzheimer's disease and related dementias – Dementia is essentially inability to think, reason and remember. A single episode of delirium can increase your risk of dementia, and delirium is quite common in COVID. Hence the chances of COVID affected developing Alzheimers or other such dementias is quite high.
- New-onset anxiety, depression, psychosis, seizures within three months of diagnosis. The cytokine-storm caused by inflammation is one of the key reasons why depression can show up in COVID (Roman M., Irwin M.R., 2020).
- Neurocognitive deficits are more often seen in COVID patients who have been hospitalized. Common deficits in short-term memory, attention and concentration were observed. (Marcel S. W, Malsy, J., Pöttgen, J., et.al., 2020). Young patients who recovered appeared to show sustained neuropsychological deficits that were only identified with specific screening tools. Such deficits are also unrelated to fatigue and mood alterations and need not be used to explain the cognitive changes.

Behavioral Symptoms

Many behavioural alterations are found in individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID. They are found to be similar to people with brain injuries. Normally brain injuries are due to an impact to the head due to accidents, military duty, violent sports etc. People

suffering from long-COVID are especially likely to show such behavioural challenges

The frontal lobes, the part of the brain behind the forehead, are responsible for executive functions as organising, planning, and multitasking. Often unaware that they are showing a decline in these areas, patients end up feeling overwhelmed due to their inability to function as before. Patients' memory and self-awareness may deteriorate, and they may be unaware of what they've lost.

Behavioral changes can also occur due to being locked up inside the home, fear, etc. For social scientists, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a unique opportunity – a natural experiment that “cuts across all cultures and socio-economic groups. Differences in national identity was reflected in people's likelihood to support public-health policies (Van Bavel, J. J., Cichocka, A., Capraro, et.al., 2020, September 2). Countries in which people were most in favour of precautionary measures tended to be those that fostered a sense of public unity and cohesion.

Methods of Treatment

The ways of treatment recommended have some commonalities irrespective of the nature of the neurological damage.

- Establish sleep hygiene.
- Fix a routine, no screen time an hour before sleep.
 - At least 2 hour gap between last meal and night's sleep
 - Wear comfortable clothing
 - Do some deep breathing to calm yourself before you sleep
- Reduce stress in healthy ways. Distracting from sources of stress is not stress reduction and can prove harmful in the long run. A healthier alternative is to find coping mechanisms that engage personal strengths and chip away at weaknesses.
- People have begun exploring the meaning of life. Living from paycheck to paycheck or from one goal post to another is no longer appealing. It is reflected in the choices that people have begun making once the lockdown is lifted. Accepting jobs with lower salaries just to ensure they can work from home or commute less are examples of the changing priorities. This leads to

- Gradual cognitive gains to establish your old levels of cognitive functioning is possible. Indulging in brain building activities, and caring for physical and mental health are also ways to repair the neurological damage caused by COVID
- Memory Exercises like forming verbal associations or categorization have proven to help build neural connections & networks. Word-based games measurably improve brain function
- Reducing disruptive stimuli through distracting visual and auditory means usually via screens can also be neurologically beneficial.
- Instant gratification received from scrolling a screen leads to addiction. The brain loves novelty and the various devices constantly bombard our senses in novel ways. De-addict the brain from novelty is not an easy task and requires attention and focus. This de-addictions has to be made a priority for all age groups as no one is immune.
- Work in smaller chunks, incorporate more breaks for instance in hour long lectures. Avoid non-stop lectures. That kind of attention does not exist anymore.

Some therapeutic techniques that help are patients using acceptance and commitment therapy, which teaches them to work on improving the cognitive problems that they have and to accept them, which can help them deal with the challenges psychologically. Practicing mindfulness can also help people learn to pay attention better,

There is an additive effect of COVID on top of the fatigue and the mood and cognitive insults of being socially isolated, under financial stress, and threatened by serious disease. In urban centres, more than social isolation it was social invasion. Large families in little homes, everyone getting into everyone else's space led to more frustration. People ended up longing for isolation. So many jobs lost, businesses shut, relationships cracked and we all know the other challenges of migration and going back to home towns. Migrant workers and their sufferings were a high point. COVID is not just about the respiration and lungs and body and brain. The differences in the way the disease plays out makes us question our existing beliefs about immunity, safety, social protocols. For instance, sedatives were always commonly used for delirium. But with COVID, it was found

that reduced sedatives had greater advantages in the long run. Generally, the adult brain produces about 700 new neurons in the hippocampus daily (Spalding, K.L. Bergmann, O., Alkass, K., et al, 2013) which means one can work towards building neurons with some training.

Conclusion

COVID is a phenomenon that will haunt us for decades to come. We can't even begin to understand the medical, social, economic and psychological effects. It needs to be understood more holistically and not just as a symptom disease phenomenon. It is a respiratory infection that starts affecting patients from the top of the head to the tips of their toes. Remembering that the top the head houses the brain, the data processing centre, and therefore caring for the brain with the right nutrition of diet, exercise and psychological care, will help prevent long-term damage to those who have experienced the disease.

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UNMASKING THE FUTURE

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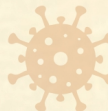
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