

NSMC presents the mindful virtual infotainment

‘Great content comes in many shapes and sizes.’ With these words, Rita Bhimani, a well-known and well-respected media and communication specialist in the fraternity flagged off the event URL 2020 amidst on-line cheers and applauds.

It’s hard for me to imagine the way curators of URL 2020 have taken the event forward in an exciting new way in which students and professionals can engage, share talents, experiences, and valuable learnings. It was gratifying to see so much of talent from students who are, and I must say immensely musical and also to hear some of the stalwarts from industry, adds Rita Bhimani.

Infotainment is the balance of mindful information with fun-filled entertainment. From 19 -21 June, URL 2020, a three-day event organized by NSHM School of Media and Communication (NSMC), NSHM Knowledge Campus Kolkata succeeded in providing a perfect blend of entertainment and information in our locked down lives.

URL 2020, India’s first online ‘Infotainment’ proved to be the most beautiful example of evolving times and keeping up with the ‘new normal.’ The just-concluded event is created and curated by the final year postgraduate students of NSHM Media School and supported by ABP Education and the netizens.

The event grabs your attention from the start with every speaker and performer inspired by the theme of the event, Unity, Responsibility, and Learning. Amidst pop culture, folk music is fading away. Mohul, through their best attempts, keep our traditions alive and come up with the most beautiful folk compositions.

There’s light at the end of the tunnel and elucidated the fact better than Sumit Agarwal, a disability activist & storyteller. He imparts knowledge about how to hold on to positivity during the testing times. Lauding the event, Agarwal says, “Communication is changing rapidly, and there is a need to shift from ‘monologue’ to ‘dialogue’ and interaction.

URL 2020 is the ‘perfect beginning of a conglomeration of entertainment and education”, says Sumana Nag. Sumana Nag, an extraordinary dancer, while performing

redefined grace & versatility. ‘The Mask,’ a short film produced exclusively for URL 2020, establishes the fact ‘let your eyes do the talking.’ Co-creators Susmeli Datta & Aditi Bhattacharya stresses on the importance of wearing a mask in current times, especially to the fashionistas who flinches from wearing it.

Susmita Guha Thakurta, a singer par excellence, has enriched the event with her melodious voice, all the way from Amsterdam. Kalyani Mookherji gives an insight into how to act responsibly in this testing and tiring times, how to enhance our skills irrespective of the oddities. On asked about her views about the event, she says, “An interesting concept complemented with a stellar team

faculty at NSHM,” says Anandha Karthik. It is entirely my privilege that I got to be a part of such a fantastic event, truly a melting pot of information and entertainment, brimming from the various corners of the country, she adds.

With the creativity inherent with the talented students of NSHM, the event has provided a platform for the students to broadcast their work to a broader audience. Filmmaker, Sannidh Raychaudhuri, shot and edited a short film entirely during the lockdown. URL 2020 also the premiere of a short film ‘Roop ki Rani’ based on the skin color discrimination that often remains unaddressed among youth. Maverick photographer duo Deepro Biswas and Soumyajit Dev have a tête-à-

student engagements adding to the ‘new normal,’ says Dr. Krishnendu Sarkar, Chief of Strategy and Impact, NSHM Knowledge Campus, Kolkata and Durgapur.

“The results which you all witnesses; three hours of ‘mindful entertainment’ for three consecutive days that has crossed 10k views and still growing”, says Firoz Mohammed, Director of NSHM College of Management and Technology and Media and communication. I proudly call this event, “India’s first mindful infotainment online event” ever created and curated by the students,” adds Firoz Mohammed.

India’s first online ‘mindful infotainment’ event created and curated by students will continue to spellbound netizens; Firoz Mohammed, Director, NSHM School of Media and Communication.

“Not only the event, #URL2020 also performed its CSR by showcasing MARU MANI, the social media initiative of Lok Samvad Sansthan, a leading Jaipur based media advocacy NGO, to protect the richest Folk form of Rajasthan and helping these prolific talented artists in this difficult times” according to Debanjan Banerjee, HOD, NSHM School of Media and Communication and also the Eastern India Brand Ambassador of MARU MANI.



- that is what URL 2020 turned out to be for me. I not only enjoyed reaching out to a fantastic audience through the event but took away important tips on upskilling and innovation, that is the sign of the times.”

Fauj ki Daawat, with Anandha Karthik, a food and social media researcher, Baker and Culinary enthusiasts, brings us her famous recipe of Topsy Pudding and shares unknown facts about the traditions of food in Armed Forces. “This was a unique event curated so beautifully and carefully by an extremely professional team of students and

tête about the visual treats of life captured on the roll. The duo also had their photo published on National Geographic Traveller India.

Alumnus Samedutta elegantly graced the event with her soulful and affective voice, taking requests from the audience and embedding audiences’ ever emotional comments, making URL 2020 a truly memorable online event. Moinak Ganguly, a real theatre activist, paid his tribute to the pride month by giving a gut-wrenching monologue about the trans-genders in India and how are they are treated in India. His performance left everyone speechless and inspired people to be a little more kind towards others. In his words, “Thanks a million times to the entire TEAM URL to curate this amazing event and provide one of a kind and a silver lining experience amidst the pandemic. Congratulations and hope to see more of this sort in the future.”

Mentioning about the upcoming eBook of URL 2020, Ms. Rita Bhimani adds, “I always spoke about feedback in my profession of Public Relations, and I am so glad that this feedback is coming in the form of an eBook. I congratulate students who worked as curators, the professors who were the mentors, the moderators, the participants, all of whom will be putting their ideas together for the book URL 2020. Apart from social media, which has publicized this event very well, we need something concrete to hold. So, here’s to many more Interactive sessions during COVID 19 times”.

Saptadyuti Kar and Manjari Ray, PG Media, 2nd Year



It’s great to discover that we created and curated one of its kind virtual-fest initiatives, which got successfully culminated as students’ project. URL 2020” will open up new vistas for borderless and flexible



Change is the only constant



Speaking at the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai last year, Chinese Billionaire Jack Ma said that in future, people could work as little as three days a week, four hours a day with the help of technology advances and Artificial Intelligence.

He also argued for major changes in current education system, otherwise it would create major trouble and job crisis, as machines will outsmart humans in areas of memory and repetitive skills.

The Covid-19 outbreak has already pushed us a few steps ahead in this direction. According to the latest report of International Labor Organization, working hours have sharply declined globally and the situation is about to worsen further. Most of the organizations are coming up with one or the other measures for cost saving.

Need of the hour is not just to change the methodology of teaching, rather a significant change in overall education system, role of educators, objectives and outcomes.

Because of the Lockdown imposed due to the pandemic, technology has emerged as a key in imparting education and will play a major role in future. Another important change to shift from books to more practical and skills based education.

To fill the gap between education and employability, which may grow further, skill-based education is the only hope. Skills like creativity, communication & collaboration, presentation and interper-

sonal skills are the key to success and can help students be employable.

Another important skill or better to say attitude required is, of adaptive thinking or behavior. Technology will keep changing frequently and those who will be flexible enough to adapt to the changes will survive.

According to a research report by Dell Technologies 'The Next Era of Human Machine Partnership', by 2030, 85% of the jobs, which today's learners will be doing, will be completely new, jobs that do not exist at present. In such a completely changed work future, employability skills and adaptive attitude will be the key to success.

To make significant progress in shaping the future in this direction, it is a must to redefine the role of educators.

In a world having a pool of information readily available, the role of educators will have to be that of a 'facilitator' rather than a 'knowledge giver', who will ensure and facilitate development of young minds as life-long learners and shape them into responsible citizens.

"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself." – Andy Warhol

Sharad Seth, Asst. Prof., Media
NSHM Durgapur

The Earth Breathes the one and only profit



Earth breathes: Over the years the so called Super Powers and their allied forces, big multinational business houses across the globe, individual business tycoons, you, me and we all have used our beloved earth to extract profit ruthlessly. The land, sea, ocean even space have not been spared. All parts of this planet are atrociously tortured through testing and dumping bio, chemical and nuclear weapons by the super powers and allied forces. Multinational and national business houses across the globe are also using and torturing nature in the name of air, water and land pollution. We often become casual and irresponsible towards this planet. The #Covid19 pandemic has halted the humans for some time to do such.

Selfish, pseudo civilized humans have understood that without this halt they will be perished. As a result, the other living creatures of this planet are taking a breath. Birds are chirping, plants are growing, clouds are getting less poison emitted from atomic and industrial chimneys, animals are roaming freely as poachers are quarantined, and forests are laughing as no deforestation will take place for the time being. Lakes, rivers, bays, seas, oceans and mountains are breathing, as civilized humans are unable to dump solid and liquid waste into them. Even deserts and glaciers are happy as power mongers are unable to march through them for possession for the time being. Reports say that in almost all cities across the globe, pollution level has drastically decreased. Clear blue sky is distinctly visible, stars are becoming more prominent over the sky, galaxies and constellations with cupids are glistening. It is indeed a re-installation of the Earth.

No doubt the dreaded Chinese Virus #Corona has taken away many innocent lives, ransacked world economy and human civilization; almost two thirds of this world has been affected. The only positive part is that every worse has got some positive wonders. #Covid19 took almost 560000 lives worldwide till date, the toll may rise more. However pollution takes more than 5000 lives daily, 50,000 gets affected almost every day and all ultimately start their journey towards crematorium or necropolis sooner or later. All the Pollution Viruses have stopped due to this pandemic, saving many living creatures on this planet including humans. The rest of the Earth will rejuvenate the nature and will help to pile huge natural resources leading to the long term benefit of the creatures living on it. In terms of currency worth, it can be more than \$ 1000 trillion. The only sad part is that we humans are cunning and atrocious, and once we recover, we will forget everything, and start raping the planet and mutilating its body. Again revenge is inevitable. The #Tide (read nature) gives back what it gets.

Debanjan Banerjee, HOD Media, NSHM Kolkata

NSHM and URL2020 bring 'Maru Mani' to the forefront

NSHM Media School recently concluded URL2020, a three day virtual infotainment event from 19-21 June which was broadcast live on various social media platforms. Curated and executed by the final year postgraduate students of Media Science, the event was supported by ABP education and saw a mindful blend of information and entertainment. Rita Bhimani, a well-known media and communication strategist flagged off the three day extravaganza. Various artists and professionals graced the event with their presence in the following days and kept the audience hooked to their screens. From intense photographic sessions, to blissful songs and dance- URL had it all.



As a part of its CSR initiative, URL2020 also provided a platform to 'Maru Mani', an online campaign by Jaipur based NGO Lok Samvad Sansthan that aims to revive Rajasthan Folk music. Reputed artistes like Kusum Kachwaha, Sakoor Khan Langa, Irfan Khan Langa, Safi Khan Langa, and Hayat Khan Langa mesmerized the audience with their soulful performance on the finale evening. Viewers were also given the

option to contribute and help the artists run their livelihood in these testing times.

"URL2020 also performed its CSR by showcasing MARU MANI, the social media initiative of Lok Samvad Sansthan a leading NGO based in Jaipur to protect the most richest Folk form of Rajasthan and helping these prolific talented artists through crowdfunding in this difficult times", said Prof. Debanjan Banerjee, HOD of NSHM's Media Department who is also the brand ambas-

sador of Maru Mani's Eastern India campaign.

Firoz Mohammed, Director of NSHM College of Management and Technology and Media and Communication proudly addressed URL2020 as 'India's first mindful infotainment online event' ever created and curated by the students'. "The results which you all witnessed; three hours of 'mindful entertainment' for three consecutive days that has crossed 10k views and is still growing", he added.

Chief Mentor Cecil Antony lauded the event. The efforts and arrangements earned praises from Cecil Antony, Managing Trustee and Chief Mentor, NSHM Knowledge Campus, Kolkata and Durgapur. He applauded the curators online through his message, "... Very well done students, mentors and the audience. Great event and congrats to all."

Purbasha Pal, PG Media, 2nd Year

The Malediction of Corona in our life

If a year, that has the calibre to pen its autobiography dedicated to a pandemic, that hovered death worldwide, then its better referred to as 2020. As the name "Corona" suggests, please do not confuse it with your beer or the outer atmosphere of the Sun or another star Stellar Corona. According to a celebrity doctor, Mikhail Varshavski, there are different types of coronaviruses. The virus breakout in Wuhan China is referred to as Novel Corona. As the virus spreads orally, masks are our new, most dear piece of ornament.

The ruthless virus has expansively crippled the life of daily wagers who had to inter migrate due to passivity in their income flow.

It was a falter on the part of ruling parties of states who were unable to provide them the basics so that they could be with their families. They travelled miles after miles without food and water. The pathetic condition of a woman who was unable to bring the dead body of her diseased husband, crossed all boundaries of inhumanity. The virus has shunned many large and small scale business sectors and industries like travel and tourism, hospitality, entertainment, cosmetics, garments, etc and its revival depends on the

adaptability and ability to sustain. Corona has pushed the animalistic instincts of humans, who started collecting essentials like never before. Our new regular now consists of interactive platforms like Zoom, Google Classroom, and Virtual Classroom etc.

The cyber cell has asked the users to be vigilant before clicking any links, and texts. It is during this era of fake news that misinformation, disinformation or mal information has reached its climax.

There is no official vaccine for this pandemic yet. On practical grounds, India being the second largest populated country, it is not possible to provide every amenities but safety measurements and basic livelihood must be taken care of. The major impact is on individual mental health. How can a person cope with it? We sometimes tend to forget how little we need to sustain our life. It is okay to be vulnerable as we aren't robots. This pandemic has educated people to be sensitive and empathetic towards others and taught the value of life.

Priyadarshini Mukherjee, PG Media, 2nd Year

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The political implication of COVID-19



Picture source: Financial Times

clared a state of emergency in response to the pandemic, leading to fears about misuse of power.

'Reporters Without Borders' has claimed that 38 countries have restricted freedom of the press as a result.

Other examples include banning mass protests, postponing

elections or holding them while the opposition cannot effectively campaign, selectively enforcing lockdown rules on political opponents, handing out relief payments to political supporters, or scapegoating minorities.

Many countries have also unveiled large-scale surveillance programs for contact tracing, leading to worries about their impact on privacy.

The Indian economy is entering

a contraction phase after a prolonged slowdown.

Resources of both businesses and Government were already stressed. India's policy response will also be an exercise in distributing very scarce resources across practically unlimited demands.

In a democratic set-up, politics can be used to influence policy in the interests of the majority by collective mobilization.

India's farmers have very little bargaining power when it comes to prices. Anecdotal accounts of crops being abandoned due to price crashes are quite common.

A collapse in food prices due to poor demand cannot be ruled out. Real agricultural growth figures will not capture this development.

This is because it discounts for price changes. Nominal growth statistics will have to be observed carefully.

The Indian economy suffered a phase of collapse in nominal agricultural growth in the period

before the 2019 general elections.

It is often said that the sham-bolic Indian state rises to the occasion during emergencies. The response to the pandemic partly bears that out.

The lockdown might well have saved lives, but also had a disastrous impact on livelihoods, the extent of which is yet to be worked out.

The government, which so far has not announced any big stimulus package, will now have to deal with the economic fallout of the lockdown and the life-threatening impact on the poor.

Modi has shown that he is willing to disrupt or rewrite the traditional rules of politics in India.

The pandemic's aftermath will test whether Modi is capable of systemic changes to the Indian state to ensure better and equitable governance.

Adarsha Chatterjee, UG Media, 3rd Year

Some of the world's finest minds have begun contemplating the far-reaching impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While there is unanimity that the pandemic will have a disastrous impact on the global economy and will shake up the international order, there is less consensus on the kind of politics that the pandemic will spawn.

At least 84 countries have de-

How will development look post COVID-19?

A couple of years ago, strong reservations were expressed about the government's flagship project for transforming India with industrial corridors and clusters of smart cities.

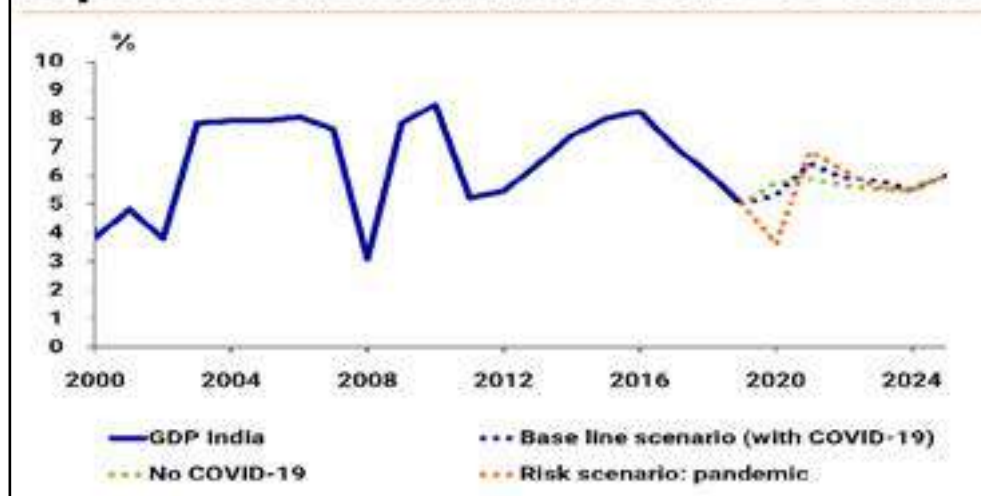
Animated by as passionate a concern for the future of our country that those promoting the flagship project claimed to be driven by, it had been opposed on the grounds that there was no surplus water in the country for it.

A lot has changed since then. Post COVID-19, India will have to deal with a situation where the global umpires sound real and false- alarms about catastrophes around the corner.

For instance, The UN World Food Programme Executive Director, David Beasley, has stated that he fears "multiple famines of biblical proportions" after the pandemic.

As we approach the limits to growth in a new global era, we are clearly not sure of what's coming. This was demonstrated recently in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Witness how we have responded to the

Expect A Rebound After COVID-19 Crisis



COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of us, scared, not knowing what we are up against, locked up in our personal coops, eyes closed and our heads in the sand, waiting for the danger to go away, our gaze averted from the unprecedented crisis being faced by migrant workers during the lockdown.

As things stand, we have no way of dealing with the uncertainties of the new global era that is upon us- be it pandemics, epidemics, global drought, crop failures, storm floods and civil strife caused by crises of mass hunger. Further, being on the perimeter of the global order, without a seat at the high table, India needs to be prepared for

any such eventuality- in a scenario where dozens of countries are in distress, not much help can be expected from international quarters.

So far, we have been busy scooping up the past and shovelling it in front of us as our future while, out there, the global system is reconfiguring itself into a world where we face the risk of becoming increasingly irrelevant. If we want to pull ourselves back from the edge, we will have to radically alter our socio-economic geography during the next decade.

The government is familiar with this concept since its grand project for industrial corridors also

intended to transform that geography. What is being proposed, however, is radically different from the grandiose plan shown by international consultants for industrial corridors and smart cities, which they based on the mantra of debt funding and industrialisation, peopled by massive population migrations.

We have not changed our socio-economic geography since the British left, the predatory settlement pattern still drains resources from the hinterland for the elite in and around the metro cities going back to the colonial era. India's rural base continues to be ignored.

Our macro-economy needs to be reassembled into a federal cluster of 28 independent and steady state economies. The continuing stranglehold of almost two centuries of colonial governance, which is incapable of addressing the issues of a veritable continent of 28 densely populated state, has to be prised open to make way for income redistribution, universal social welfare and local self-governance.

Ayan Chatterjee, PG Media, 2nd Year

The Magnificent Seven- best coronavirus response and women leaders

If we are seeking instances of true women empowerment in the real world, then these women should definitely fit into the place—Angela Merkel (German Chancellor), Jacinda Arden (New Zealand PM), Tsai Ing-wen (Taiwan President), Mette Frederiksen (Denmark PM), Katrin Jakobsdottir (Iceland PM), Erna Solberg (Norway PM) and Sanna Marin (Finland PM). These countries that witnessed a fast decline in coronavirus cases have a female leader at the helm of affairs. Although it can be argued that these are small countries, which make policy making and implementation a tad easier, but what comes into light is the power of these leaders, who have actually managed the critical situation. These leaders have taken various initiatives in order to fight the virus and set their countries as an example for others.

Globally speaking, Taiwan's response in handling the pandemic has been the best. And this is supported by core statistics- only 395 cases and 61 deaths. Taiwan, being only 100 miles away from China, was much prone to the risk and therefore the President of the country started taking immediate actions. For starters, she installed 124 measures to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus without imposing lockdown. Screening all passengers from Wuhan, banning travel from several parts of China, offering foods, masks, stipend and free gaming and movie packages to encourage social distancing were some of the other initiatives and measures taken by her. Transparency and calmness were the two things that made the people of German obey the rules that were imposed by their Chancellor Angela Merkel. Early lockdown, rational

decision making, social distancing measures taken by her proved that even being a big country it is possible to curb the spread of the pandemic if proper measures are taken and people follow it properly. German witnessed 134750 cases with 46 deaths per million. Jacinda Arden, the Prime Minister of New Zealand believed that valuing both the countrymen and the economy is important. She began taking precautionary measures even before there was a single death in the country. Conducting press conferences, live videos and answering queries of her citizens are just some of the unique measures that have worked wonders for the country.

Similarly, the PMs of Iceland, Finland, Denmark and Norway (Katrin Jakobsdottir, Sanna Marin, Mette Frederiksen and Erna

Solberg) have fought the virus with unique and sustained efforts. Free testing for all in Iceland and awareness through social media in Finland are just a few things that yielded positive results.

Truthfulness, decisiveness, technology, love, care, concern and female empowerment—when these factors combine, the result is likely to be favourable, as can be concluded from the above instances. These women have stepped up when it mattered the most, and have conveyed a strong message to the world- no matter how challenging the circumstances are, effort, intellect and empathy can resolve rise above all to bring a tomorrow filled with hope and joy.

Soumi Pyne, PG Media, 1st Year

Towards a Cure: The COVID-19 vaccine story

Corona virus disease-2019 (Covid-19) has been confirmed in 11.2 million people across the globe. Even as we speak, the numbers continue to rise with each passing minute. In India, the number of affected people is about 637K with about 3.3% mortality rate, not varying much from the global mean mortality.

When India is setting records every day in the spike of corona patients' number, the recovery ratio has gradually crossed the 50% mark also. It all started from its first detection in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and has set off a global pandemic now.

This particular virus made its introduction to human body from one of the Wuhan's wet market. The wet markets are famous for selling fresh meat and fish of different species. Regular intake and some other anthropogenic factors allows the virus modify its genes so much that it can start to infect and spread among people. After entering the human body, this virus binds with human respiratory cells and hijack them to replicate its genetic material and ultimately results in more and more virus. After infecting the human body by fever, dry cough, headaches etc., in some cases, mostly among elderly people, it can cause acute respiratory problem, multi organ, ultimately failure leading to fatal consequences. Till now, the management of COVID-19 is supportive only, different drugs that would stop the replication of virus are currently being tested. There is no effective clinical drug that can block that interaction available worldwide. Several researchers are currently working on development of a vaccine that can resist the virus from replicating in hu-

man body. Developing either drugs or a vaccine is a very challenging task due to complex nature of the virus.

Even as the wait for an effective vaccine continues, experts have stated that it may be only the summer of 2021 when an effective vaccine will hit the market. Having said that, several countries like England, Australia, India and Italy are actively implementing human trials to test potential vaccines. Here is a quick summary of how things look so far:

- **Moderna.** In March, the company began testing its messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine in a phase I clinical trials in Seattle, Washington. In mid-May, the company announced the vaccine had produced antibodies in all 45 trial participants in this initial clinical phase. The study included 45 healthy volunteers, ages 18 to 55, who are getting two shots 28 days apart. The company has developed other mRNA vaccines before. Those earlier studies showed that their platform is safe, which allowed the company to skip certain animal testing for this specific vaccine. In early May, the company received permission from the FDA to start a phase II study of its vaccine. The company expects to begin a phase III clinical trial in July. The FDA also agreed to fast-track regulatory review of this vaccine if it succeeds in a phase III clinical trial.

- **Inovio.** When COVID-19 appeared in December, the company had already been working on a DNA vaccine for MERS. This allowed the company to quickly develop a potential COVID-19 vaccine. Company officials announced at the end of April that it had enrolled 40 healthy volunteers in its phase I clinical

trial. It's preparing to start a phase II/III clinical trial this summer.

- **University of Oxford in England.** A clinical trial with more than 500 participants began in late April. Oxford officials said the potential vaccine has an 80 percent chance for success and could be available as early as September. The vaccine uses a modified virus to trigger the immune system. The university has partnered with pharmaceutical company Astra-Zeneca. The company reported in mid-May the vaccine was effective against COVID-19 after it was given to six rhesus macaque monkeys. The company expects to begin a late-stage clinical trial by the middle of this year. Officials said in mid-May that if the clinical trial is successful, they could deliver 30 million doses by September.

- **University of Queensland in Australia.** Researchers are developing a vaccine by growing viral proteins in cell cultures. They began preclinical testing stages in early April. The phase I trial in people will begin in early July.

- **Pharmaceutical companies.** are both working on a vaccine of their own. Johnson & Johnson announced it will begin early stage human clinical trials in July. Pfizer has also teamed up with German biotech company BioNTech to develop a vaccine. In early July, Pfizer announced that the vaccine produced an immune response in people during an early stage clinical trial. They added the vaccine did cause side effects such as fever at higher doses.

- **Italian scientists** have claimed to develop a

vaccine that has successfully generated antibodies in mice that work on human cells. The vaccine has been tested in the Spallanzani Hospital hospital in Rome. It is said to be one of the most advanced stages of testing of a potential vaccine in the country as the vaccine neutralizes the SARS-CoV-2 in the human cells.

After a single vaccination, the mice developed antibodies that can block the virus from infecting human cells. The researchers selected the two best candidates after observing that the five vaccine candidates generated a large number of antibodies.

- **At the Israel Institute for Biological Research,** a single dose of a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine has been developed which provides protection against SARS-CoV-2. It proved to be effective against Covid-19 in Syrian golden hamsters, according to a paper published on June 19.

- Recently, the first **made-in-India** coronavirus vaccine may be launched by August 15, with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) fast-tracking efforts to develop "Cov-axin" in partnership with Bharat Biotech International Limited. A dozen institutes have been selected for clinical trials of the indigenous COVID-19 vaccine (BBV152 COVID vaccine), the government's top medical research body has said. However, experts have questioned the deadline, since the clinical trial is yet to begin.

Shubro Mukherjee, PG Media, 2nd Year

Shifting perspectives in Covid era

At this point we can all agree that 2020 is not the finest year for humanity. Subjectively it's the worst in the post-millennium world. When people suffer together one expects togetherness, love and compassion towards one another. We must, however, talk about certain areas where humanity has failed to be more humane.

Let's have a look at the Social aspects:

Due to the lockdown, statistical analysis shows that people are spending a lot of time with their families, and productivity has improved for employees due to

work-from-home. What's not so good are the findings of another study, which implicitly shows a sharp rise in domestic violence cases by at least 2.5times, attributed directly to the lockdown. Lack of Social bonding, colleague-to-colleague interaction, peer-to-peer bonding for children and young adults has resulted in problems like sleep deprivation, anxiety and frustration. To end on a good note some Societal Positives of the lockdown include healthier food habits, homecare, personal and family time.

Economic:

India's growth in Q4, of the fiscal year 2020 went down to 3.1% according to the Ministry of Statistics. India's overall economic package was announced as 20,000,000,000,000 (10% of GDP). As per the FICCI survey, in India, up to 53% of businesses have specified a certain amount of impact due to COVID-19 on operations. By 24 April the unemployment rate had increased to 26% unemployment across India, according to the 'Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy'. Not too many positives in the economic front, however newer business models and business concepts are likely to emerge post lockdown.

Finally, let's talk about politics:

Several pre lockdown failures are being attributed to this Act of God, which include amongst other things the plunge in the GDP. Local politicians are gaining more importance. The issue of migrant labor is one of the top focus issues. Several international causes are being used as a dangerous diversion from internal politics as usual.

Ritwika Dey, UG Media, 3rd Year

Migrant Crisis amid COVID-19 and the “Journalism of Misery”

As the Government shuttered a nation of 1.3 billion practically within hours, and then extended the lockdown three times (we are in the middle of lockdown 4 now), millions of migrant workers in India are facing an uncertain future.

With no work or wages, thrown out of their dwellings and with no roof over their head, they were forced to come back home, covering thousands of kilometre on foot.

Even as the concerned authorities organised flights to bring back Indians from other countries, it paid little attention for arranging buses or trains within its borders. Millions of migrant workers had no other option but to hit the highways on foot.

Unsurprisingly, experts have rightfully called this situation ‘the largest migration’ since Partition of India. The pandemic outbreak has turned India into a hub of humanitarian crisis, where stories of misery have unfolded everyday over the past few months.

Talk about Jamlo Madkam, the 12-year old girl, who died just short of her home in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh, after walking for nearly 150 kms, or Priya and her three young daughters walking with tears in their eyes from Delhi to Kanpur. And then there is Virendra Singh Gond, the only survivor from a group of 17 men who were run over by a train in Aurangabad, as they retired on unused tracks.

Despite implementing relief measures, the misery didn't meet its happy end.

Those who could finally avail some form of transport after weeks of discontinued inter-state movement were squeezed for money by the middlemen.

It is nothing if not a story of misery, unimaginable wretchedness and heart-breaking despair. If India woke up to this, if the government is nudged into action, it's because some journalists relentlessly focused on these stories.

Much to Mr. Vempati's discomfort, the CEO of Prasar Bharati, this is “journalism of misery, because misery is the story here. Pain, despair and uncertainty of millions of Indians greatly overwhelm all else, this is who we are as a nation right now.

You cannot Control- alt- delete it or over write it with journalism of hope. Even if you did, it cannot simply lift the entire masses of India to normal.”

If journalism did not tell this story, it would be less than journalism. We need this journalism of misery so that we can do something, even if it means donating money for a single ration kit.

When journalism records misery, it's only doing its job, fulfilling its purpose. At its barest minimum, journalism is a record of the society at a given time, a mirror to the society.

When millions of Indians face pain

and despair, to deliberately focus on stories of hope would mean a renunciation of the core purpose of journalism. It isn't that journalism has not captured stories of hope and resilience, but the focus has been on stories of misery, which is the need of the hour.

It's one of those rare instances where primetime debate and dramatic news bulletins have done some actual good.

The tales of pain and extraordinary hardship have forced action, no matter if it's by choice or by compulsion.

And even as we continue to despise the ‘constant coverage of negativity’, it's a tale for the ages to come- one that narrates how journalism walked the path of serving its true purpose amid one of the largest humanitarian crisis.

Snigdha Bakshi, PG Media, 1st Year

COVID-19 and its effect on India's crafts sectors

As the coronavirus pandemic had resulted in the lockdown throughout the globe, it affected almost all the business sectors and that includes the Indian craft sector as well.

Handicrafts, as we all know acquires a very precious place within the cultural heritage of India and also closely connected to people's sentiment because nowhere, except India, can we find such diverse craft ideas.

But the crisis caused by the pandemic disrupted it all.

Maximum of the craftspeople in India run a small business of their own and do not have enough financial capability to hold on to such a crisis.

Apart from that, these artisans, not being a part of formal economy are also not able to access on loans from banks or any other financial institutions.

They mainly rely on retail sales and direct orders. But due to the lockdown the retailers themselves are closed and there is even no sign of immediate recovery from this situation as the crisis increases.

Cash flow have

stopped and it resulted in the buyers inability to make payments and permit sales.

Due to this cash crisis, the artisans are not even receiving any orders. According to them, they will be unable to clear the stocks they have and this will cause not only a decrease in production but also in debt.

“The corona epidemic has broken our back” said Aarti Patra, one of the sabai-grass basket-makers in Odisha.

These people are hugely suffering from the fact that they have no work, they are helpness and in need.

They are somewhat in a dilemma that whether the virus or hunger will cause their death.

Moreover, these retailers often prove themselves as the exploiters.

They cheat the poor craftspeople by buying the craft pieces at low price and seeling them to the customers at high price.

The artisans are generally creative people, they invest their full strength and time to make the products. They dont understand the tricks

and turns needed in a business and therefore the retailers can easily fool them.

Despite of the fact that Indian crafts captures a special place, we cannot deny that it has a limited spread like exhibitions (organised by various governmental or non-governmental organisations), fairs etc.

It is also noticeable that these crafts are also failing to keep pace with the crafts of modern genre—urbanisation, digitisation, behaviour of the customers, change in taste are all affecting in its slow downfall.

Infact, the youth of the nation, has very little or no time to look into and appreciate the effort that actually goes into handicrafts.

However, in order to rise from these critical situation, various NGOs, designers, crafts cooperatives, merchandisers, entrepreneurs and artisan families had come together and are introspecting.

They are connecting with one another and creating new collaborations and discussions.

A number of webinars, whatsapp groups, zoom meetings are created and

through these the crafts and the craft-people are getting a platform like never before.

They have, it seems, quite well understood the proverb “united we stand and divided we fall”.

By acknowledging the seriousness of the ongoing crisis they understood that how important it is to work together if they are keep alive both their art and themselves.

Another fact had also been noticed—retailers who kept their business secret normally, designers, and even entrepreneurs are sharing the details of the artisans, naming their karigars and providing them with direct donations and orders. They have known the fact that if their karigars fall down, so will their business.

No matter what the crisis is, may it be the previous demonitisation or unplanned imposition of GST or the now persisting coronavirus pandemic, it is their creativity and hard work that will keep them going through the rough.

Subhashri Dutta, PG Media, 1st Year

COVID-19 and its implication - a roundup

The widespread impact of the novel coronavirus has been devastating. From social to political, from economy to development, it has spared none. While the catastrophic consequences of the epidemic are being felt across the globe, its effects on the marginalized class, especially women, have several implications.

As such, it may be viewed as particularly calamitous for the most vulnerable sections of the population, viz., the poor, the elderly, people with disabilities, youth and indigenous people. Below stated, we find some of the most prominent repercussions across different domains of the society.

□ Increased domestic violence across the sector

Gender-based violence exacerbates tensions surrounding security, finance and health situations. In confined spaces, living in certain families is not even healthy and can lead to violence against vulnerable family members. So many women are stuck with their perpetrators in forced lockdowns to contain the virus and helpline numbers are limited in scope due to restrictions on relocation or mobility.

□ Economic regression

Women are generally earning less than men, and most of them are employed on a contractual or temporary basis. Furthermore, various unorganized and unsafe jobs have below par nominal pay, that too according to the availability of jobs in the market. Experts have predicted that in the post-pandemic world, female employees are more likely to be laid off than their male counterparts.

□ Insufficient awareness

According statistics of a leading online delivery application, pregnancy kits, condoms, contraceptives and sanitary napkins are the top four products to be ordered and delivered during the lockdown period. Rural and backward areas of the country draw a grim picture, where women neither have the sufficient awareness or knowledge, nor do they have access to these services.

□ Women in politics during the pandemic - the silver lining

Women leaders around the world are at the forefront of the battle against COVID. Denmark, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Iceland, Norway, Taiwan - the countries that have been able to flatten the curve and reduce the spread of the virus have one thing in common; female heads of the state. So-called world leaders and politicians such as Bolsonaro, Trump, Xi-Jing-Ping, Modi, Putin, Netanyahu have given examples of ignorance, misinformation and information suppression, late action and arrogance or irresponsibility. As a result, the apparent models of development are yet to show significant improvement in controlling the spread.

Priyanka Chatterjee, PG Media, 1st Year

Changing gender roles – when MEN embrace the MOP

The average Indian man is no longer seen lounging on the sofa with the T.V remote in his hand. You can now spot him waging a battle with the ladle and the lentil soup in the kitchen or peeking under the table armed with the glorious mop and bucket. The COVID 19 pandemic, which has turned our lives upside down, achieved what the feminists couldn't. The men, most of them reluctant, have now entered the unknown territory of household chores. This has marked a dynamic change in the working process of the average Indian household. With the unfortunate absence of domestic helps, most families have experienced a brutal reality check. It was becoming exceedingly stressful for even the multitasking women to juggle

the pressures of work from home and house chores simultaneously. In such a situation, the men had to step up in shining armor armed with multifarious weapons ranging from the mop to the chef's hat. In this context, Indian film and T.V personalities are leaving no stone unturned to influence men to help out their spouses by glorifying house work. Popular soap actors like Karanvir Bohra and Arjun Bijlani are seen imparting such advices through their charismatic social media posts.



Advocators of feminism however refrain from praising men doing house work, claiming that it should have happened long ago to bridge the stereotypical gender norms. But, men are not to be blamed alone for their inactivity towards domestic chores. Most women, including the 21st century independent ones, have always prevented their male counterparts from entering the area of house work. They claimed that the men are not as swift and efficient as themselves. However, the nationwide lockdown has formed both the

genders to review the social perspectives that shape their lives.

Now, the question arises whether the current trend of the man with the mop will prevail in the post pandemic life. Is this extraordinary social change here to stay or will it remain as a mere post on Instagram by open minded individuals? While the answers to these questions remain uncertain, the women can for the time being, bear witness to the historical sight of their spouses cleaning dust bunnies from underneath the sofa and embracing the mop as an essential lifestyle item.

Rapti Mukhejee, PG Media, 2nd year

Being 'resilient' during Pandemic: snippets from my self-help rulebook

We are living in the most unprecedented and challenging times. The pandemic has shattered all spheres of human lives. The future is never as uncertain as it's now. My friends call me a 'Malang' meaning a nomad, but I certainly believe that the future never arrives; waiting for the future is a dysfunctional way of living. Instead, it induces persistent anxiety, uncertainties, and discontent amongst us. Life was never as dismal as today. Till now, we have been losing the 'small joys' in the hope of the big. Where is it?

This lockdown I got an opportunity to read a lot. Here I would like to quote Elif Shafak, a celebrated author. In her landmark work, The Forty Rules of Love, she writes, "It is easy to be thankful when all is well. A 'Sufi' is thankful not only for what she/he has been given but also for what she/he has been denied.

Elif Shafak in a chapter One minute in her book 10 minutes 38 seconds in this Strange World, she writes, "... a fact she had often be reminded: Be thankful. When you came here, you had nothing. She still had nothing; all her possessions were as ephemeral and rootless as dandelion seeds. One stiff breeze, one torrential downpour, and they would be gone, just like that."

Many say this (pandemic crisis) shall too pass. And this will. Nothing is as powerful as our positivity and our inherently innate and acquired resilience. But in a given situation, what more we can do to make ourselves more resilient. Here are a few quick tips.

Can we worry our way to empowerment, enlightenment, and happiness? Of course,

not. Why do we ponder so much? Over-thinking has never helped anyone. Believe that the problems aren't here forever. Practice the underlying ethos of happiness: accept or let go. One of the major realizations of this crisis is that happiness is relative. And let's be happy with whatever little we have.

Sleep is the best possible human habits but



the paradox is humans are the only ones who compromise with their sleep. Good sleep is the ultimate recipe for healthy, stress-free, productive, and mindful living. In recent years nothing has harmed us as much as the 'herd communication.'

This has not only led to low self-esteem in the youths but

most, unfortunately, led to lynching. Too much of 'media' can disconnect us from our own self.'

Thus, it's essential to self-regulate our daily media and, more importantly, our news diet. Instead, listening to music is a great option. Music is a stress buster, and we can always reclaim our cherished memories with and via

music. Or else, indulge in a mindful communication and an intimate conversation to feel the magic of togetherness.

Information overload is detrimental. We must surround ourselves with 'positive' people and 'responsible' media. And judge our 'information neighborhoods' well. How can I proceed without quoting Opening Stanza of T. S. Eliot's Choruses from the Rock: Where is the Life we have lost in living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

I have been doing, and I advise others to do it. It's meditation. It's simply magical. Many of us find meditation difficult. For me to meditate is to 'sit in silence.' And silence is 'golden.' And if we can add regular early morning breathing exercises to reclaim our Life.

Last but not least: it all begins and ends with the 'self. We alone have the potential to make our surroundings beautiful. The honest and straightforward answer we owe to ourselves only: Are we doing? Are we at least trying?

Firoz Mohammed, Director, Media, NSHM Kolkata

The Silver Lining of it all

Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we look at the world. The world has turned upside down. Covid-19 has challenged the normal norms of life. Social, economic and political sectors have changed a lot due to the pandemic.

First and foremost are the front-line warriors like doctors, nurses, healthcare staff, cleaning staff, police, reporters and others who have been working day and night to serve the nation in this critical time, with full sense of responsibility.

Social distancing has become a part of the daily routine for human beings. Many professionals have volunteered to serve patients by risking their own lives. Many people have pledged to donate and serve food to the unprivileged and the ones in need. Non-profit organizations are working day and night to help people in distress.

Many economic changes are being noticed. Medium and small scale sectors have realized the power of digital media. Industries and businesses had to shift to work from home mode. There has been a dynamic shift in the business sector.

No one had ever imagined the importance of sanitizers, masks, face shields, hand gloves before this. These products are like a

new opportunity to the health care industry, entrepreneurs and business persons.

Citizens of India would have never imagined in their wildest dream that a nation of 136 crores would go under lockdown for more than three months.

It was a tough decision made by the government at the right time, despite difficulties faced by the low income groups. Many people faced hardships while

returning to their native places. A breach in unity was seen between the State and the Central governments who should have worked together in these testing times to serve the nation and its citizens.

Many political parties were just working on their selfish political agendas instead of working for the benefit of the citizens. Political leaders have been working hard though many are not in dealing with the situation created by covid-19 pandemic correctly.

Covid-19 pandemic has forced all sectors to think out of the box to deal with the uncertainties. Covid-19 pandemic seeds have grown into saplings of new innovations, opportunities and threats.

Aditi Jain, PG Media, 1st Year

