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COVID-19 Wreaks Havoc Across The World

Editorial

Fr. J. Felix Raj, SJ

population of 1002, have reported cases of Corona virus.

As of April 26, the total number of people infected in the world was 29, 65, 286 with 2, 05, 627 deaths, which is 6.93 per cent of the total infected cases. On an average the global increase of the infected cases is 81,465 per day and of deaths is 6,717.

COVID-19 has compelled the world to come to an uneasy halt. It has hit all of us; it has levelled the world through an act of death. Things have changed in just a matter of days. We are all deeply concerned by the alarming levels of spread and its severity.

People experience fear and anxiety. The complete lockdown, besides being a measure to arrest the spread of COVID-19, has put all of us, particularly the poor at great financial risk. It has hurt the marginalized communities of the migrant workers and daily-wage earners, without proper livelihood, food, shelter, health care and other basic needs. Thousands have been left stranded with rail, bus and air services shut down.

Churches, mosques, temples and all other places of worship are closed. We have even quarantined God! Educational institutions, factories and all work places have been shut down. People have been forced to quarantine themselves within the four walls of their houses. We are afraid of each other; we maintain a safe distance of two meters from each other including our near and dear ones.

Outbreak of the Pandemic – Wuhan, China:

It all began in Wuhan, a city of 11 million people in China towards the end of December 2019. Li Wenliang, the whistleblowing 34-year-old Chinese ophthalmologist raised the alarm about the corona virus outbreak. He had

posted a warning on social media about the disease that had been treated at his hospital in December, 2019. He urged his colleagues to wear protective masks at work.

But the Chinese police targeted him and accused him of 'making false claims' that disturbed the social order. He was told not to discuss his concerns in public. He himself had contracted the virus while treating patients at Wuhan Central Hospital and died on 7, February 2020.

Li broke his silence from his hospital bed to give interviews. 'If the officials had disclosed information about the epidemic earlier, I think it would have been a lot better. There should be more openness and transparency,' he told the New York Times. The world is reportedly suspecting China as the source and cause of the disease.

The virus originated in central China's Hubei Province. The impact could have been lowered had China been more transparent about the virus outbreak in the beginning. Scientists claim that China's push of a 'zero' COVID is a myth. The Chinese regime's censorship and distortions are a threat to global public health as well as a violation of human rights. The bungled response of western countries is no answer at this moment.

China seems to have reportedly recovered. The death rate is almost nil. The number of new cases has decreased in China though cases of repeat infection are being reported.



Dr. Li Wenliang was a Chinese ophthalmologist at Wuhan Central Hospital who was the whistleblower of COVID 19 when his warnings were later shared publicly



All that we need to do is to remain courageous and have confidence in ourselves and in our God and march forward as we have done in the past. An anecdote comes to my mind: The legendary US President, Abraham Lincoln, was also a spiritual leader.

Developed Countries:

The Western and European countries have been badly affected. In Europe (Italy, Spain, France and the UK), the death rates compared to the rate of affected cases is much higher. Of late, both rates are found to be decreasing gradually.

In the USA, the affected cases as of April 26 are 9, 70,757 which is 30.70 percent of the total affected cases globally. The number of confirmed cases of deaths (54, 941 on April 26) is surging, hospitals are begging for help and entire cities have been locked down.

Indian Scenario:

The total number of affected people crossed 18,500 of which around 592 have died. Both figures have increased in just one week by 0.15 per cent.

For every 100 affected people, 3.48 are dying now. In India, the increase in the number of affected people is above 700 on an average per day. Compared to the western and European countries, the number of affected cases in India is low.

According to the experts, the number of detections of affected people is likely to increase with an increase in widespread testing. India is in a safe mode as of now. Thanks to our Governments, leaders, doctors, nurses and health workers for their prompt action and measures to combat the virus. What is it that awaits us?

The most affected state of India is Maharashtra with 1364 cases followed by Delhi with 898 and Tamil Nadu with 834 cases as of April 10. COVID-19 has spread to the far north of India in Jammu and Kashmir with 184 reported cases and Ladakh with 15 cases.

History:

We have had many crises of various types in the world; say for the last 100 years or so. None was predicted nor did they permanently stay on with the world. All have passed. COVID-19 is also one such crises.

During the terrible American Civil War, when his Secretary of State, Stanton, said, 'Mr. President, I hope God is on our side' Lincoln gently replied, 'My dear chap, it is more important that we are on God's side'.

As Sri Aurobindo describes, 'All depend on the spirit in which a thing is done, the principle on which it is built, and the use to which it is turned.'

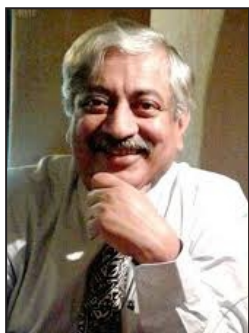
Every struggle/crisis teaches us something new. What is the lesson COVID-19 is teaching us? What will the post-COVID-19 periods be?

'We are not human beings having a spiritual nature; we are spiritual beings having a human nature,' Teilhard de Chardin said. I am confident that our experience with COVID-19 will teach us to be enlightened spiritual beings with the human experience of global connectedness and mutual fellowship. 📖

COVID HAVOC

More than 213 out of 251 (as recognized by UN) countries and territories, including the smallest country in the world, Vatican, have reported cases of Corona virus. Vatican, with a total population of 1,002 (2019), has reported 4 cases so far.

As of May 7, the total number of cases infected in the world was 38, 22, 951 with 2, 65, 084 deaths which is 6.93 per cent of the total infected cases. On an average the global increase of the infected cases is around 88,400 and of deaths is 5,900 per day. The rate of increase of infected cases is 2.48 per cent and death rate is 2.36 per cent.



Corona virus Disease - COVID-19 (One World: Together at Home)

Dr. Purnendu Roy

The Corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to take a heavy toll on families, communities and nations throughout the world but it's also giving rise to incredible

acts of generosity, solidarity and cooperation. We have said consistently that we're all in this together, and we can only succeed together. We need an all-of-society approach, with everyone playing their part.

There is no black or white answer, and no silver bullet. Masks alone cannot stop the pandemic. Countries must continue to find, test, isolate and treat every case and trace every contact.

Mask or no mask, there are proven things all of us should do to protect ourselves and others – keep your distance from everyone, wash and clean your hands at regular intervals, cough or sneeze into your elbow or tissues or handkerchiefs and avoid touching your face, nose and mouth.

However, the best way to fight this battle against COVID-19 is to stay at home and be cautious against the unnecessary risks involved through frequent social interactions from close proximity. But, as human beings are social animals, it would be a challenge for a majority of the people to counter the psychological effects of a completely enclosed life. So, the consequent mental and psychological problems pose a newer and greater problem

as they are in turn affect the subsidiary health issues like obesity, diabetes, hypertension and so on.

Some of the ways in which this can be achieved are:

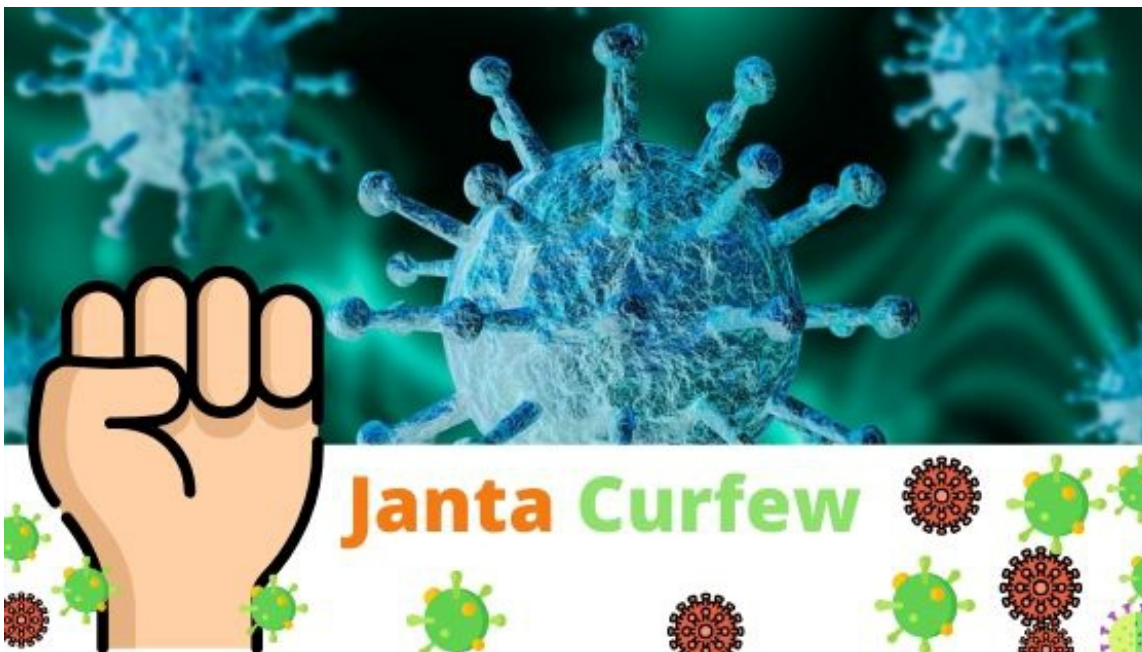
1. Talk to yourself and think positive - Talking to yourself can not only make you smarter, improve your memory, help you focus but can even increase athletic performance. The documentary *The Human Brain* claims we say between 300 to 1,000 words to ourselves per minute. The Navy SEALs and Special Forces use the power of positive self-talk as a way of getting through tough times.

2. Raise your curiosity levels, read more, face your fears, don't doubt yourself - Curiosity is the foundation of life-long growth. If we remain curious, we remain teachable and our minds and hearts grow larger every day. We can retain our beginner's mind by always looking forward and discovering new experiences and uncovering new information. **Ask questions** and be curious because:

- It makes your mind active instead of passive.
- It encourages you to be **more observant of new ideas**.
- It opens up new worlds and possibilities.
- It creates an adventurous response that leads you in a new direction. Learning how to remain physically fit, is a bit of a challenge nowadays because of the necessity to stay indoors and, therefore, restricted movements. This in turn might lead to depression and depressed people are less likely to take their medications or practice healthy habits, for instance, so they get sicker. Sick people experience

pain and impaired function, which affects their emotional state.

For someone predisposed to a particular disease, factors such as lack of exercise, excess weight gain and poor diet can all affect the **severity of symptoms**.



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The COVID-19 Emergency – Mental Health Issues

Dr. Aniruddha Deb

In the last few months, the entire world that we have grown up in and have known so well, has changed dramatically, and everything seems topsy-turvy. Nothing we knew, seems to hold good anymore; we are unable to go out of our homes – without substantial risks to our lives; we are unable to host people at home – when the bell rings we look at each other in alarm wondering who the witless person standing without is, and why? Our daily routine has almost come to a standstill – yet, it has increased so much because of work-at-home and work-from-home. Every person is affected: entire definitions have changed.

Never in our wildest dreams, not even in the fervent imaginations of authors and film-makers, had we foreseen this lockdown. Life as we know it, has almost come to a grinding halt.

Given the scenario, to be able to maintain a semblance of sanity is becoming difficult for almost everybody. No way of life has been spared, not a single person in society remains unaffected either directly or indirectly. Job roles too have changed dramatically as we find senior administrative personnel managing COVID-19 control rooms and police having to enforce people to stay at home.

Even hospitals and doctors are now focussed on fighting the novel-Coronavirus or COVID-19, and other health treatments have taken a back seat. Almost every thriving business has come to a standstill.

We have to cope with this unprecedented assault on our normal day-to-day existence that is forcing us to behave in ways that are completely against our nature.

Given this scenario, we need to take a look at the mental health issues from various perspectives: Every individual of every family, has to cope personally as well as collectively, with the COVID-19 emergency.

Restriction of activity and reduction of celebratory events, individual personality (like hypochondriasis), mental disorders (e.g., pre-existing obsession, depression and psychosis), characteristics of the family; amount of social support available, etc. is contributing to the risk factors of psychological distress at the individual, family, interpersonal and societal levels.

Human nature and lifestyle doesn't allow us to live inside the house all day. We go out for our regular jobs, studies, household chores and we actually spend very little time of the day with our families. Inevitably we have to be in the company of other people all the time, especially when it is



SXUK student volunteers distributed relief materials to 1200 families in neighbourhood villages

expected that some of us have to work (more than we do at our office), study conduct business, practice sports and such other activities. This affects the familial bonding in many households, especially where three generations of people stay together, making them unhappy at times, leading to constant bickering. Continuous face-to-face interactions fray our nerves and we become irritable.



Coupled with this is the lack of understanding the surroundings, inability to plan our next moves and the uncertainty of the future. We worry about the presence of outsiders in our houses – imagine the plight of the homemaker who has a frozen shoulder with the other arm fractured and unable to do household work, faced with the situation where she has to get her grocery from the local grocers, and relying upon a cook or maid. If she then hears that the cook or maid has been suffering from fever for the last few days, which she had hidden from the homemaker for fear of losing that little income, her anxiety about her and her family members' well-being sky-rockets.

While we fight these internal demons, we are faced with the question as to why we cannot talk to our neighbours face-to-face and pop up for a cup of tea in the evenings as we always did. Our little locality was always been a peaceful place in the corner of the world, so why have things changed so much and so suddenly today? This is especially difficult for the elderly to comprehend. They feel they have seen the world enough and their children and grandchildren are unnecessarily being over cautious. Thus, they are feeling the need to visit the neighbourhood shops and marketplaces daily to find replenishment for stuff that they can easily do without. They, due to lack of understanding, are exposing themselves and their families to the dangers of novel-Corona virus infection.

Mass media and social media are strongly impacting our psychological attitudes and behaviours towards the COVID-19 emergency. There is no doubt that the facts are scary by themselves – coupled with this, the amount of falsehood being spread to cause needless panic beggars description.

Every health professional is undoubtedly at a greater risk during the epidemic. Coping with increased risk of exposure, poor protection due to lack of Personal

Protective Equipment (PPEs), the risk of getting infected and thus bringing the virus back home with them increases the emotional and psychological burdens, and chances of anxiety, traumatic experiences and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Similarly, people who work in sanitation, supply, food delivery and law enforcement sectors are almost equally exposed to such terrible risks with little promise for respite very soon.

The situation becomes more complicated when the neighbours become hostile and tend to turn out the same 'heroes' for whom they bang utensils and light candles from homes for fear, mostly unfounded, that they will bring the virus into the community.

In this situation, we all need to be constantly aware of the possible fall-outs of the COVID-19 situation in ourselves and the community and be ready to provide help through various platforms like clinical and tele-consultation based psychological interventions for the sufferers and their family members, other high-risk individuals, and those living in the worst-hit communities.

The government and other institutions should be prepared with emergency protocols to manage mental health problems, depending upon evidence-based suggestions and indications.

Stricter behaviour-change methods ought to be planned to improve adherence and compliance with preventive regulations and guidance.

Interventions that utilise the internet to provide psychiatric and psychological management, apps and computer programme-based treatments should be tried out with greater intensity during this COVID-19 emergency. 📖



COVID-19 and the Global Economy: Back to the Future

Dr. Jebamalai Vinanchiarachi

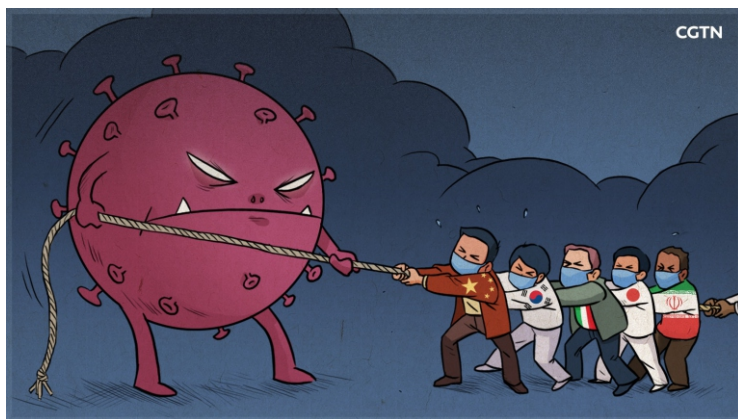
In the interest of drawing insights from the past crises, an attempt is made to list the preceding global economic downturns and the lessons learned. The world economy witnessed intermittent cyclical upturns and downturns. Eighteen economic crises were hitherto witnessed by the 20th and 21st centuries: Panic of 1901, a U.S. economic recession that started a fight for financial control of the Northern Pacific Railway; Panic of 1907, U.S. economic recession with bank failures; Wall Street Crash of 1929 and Great Depression (1929–1939), the worst depression of modern history; The First Oil Shock (1973); Secondary banking crisis of 1973–1975 in the UK; Japanese asset price bubble (1986–2003); Bank stock crisis (Israel 1983); Black Monday (1987); Savings and loan crisis of the 1980s and 1990s in the U.S.A.; Finnish banking crisis (1990s); Swedish banking crisis (1990s); 1991 Indian economic crisis; 1994 economic crisis in Mexico; 1997 Asian financial crisis; 1998 Russian financial crisis; Argentine economic crisis (1999–2002); Late-2000s financial crisis; and Covid-19 and Global Economic Downturn. No one predicted the above 18 crises, and whatever Economists predicted after those crises went wrong. I would like to pick up selected crises from the above list of 18 crises in order to deduce implications for the future.

COVID-19 and the Current Global Economic Downturn

The current crisis was also not predicted by anybody. Nor should one try to predict the aftermath, as forecasts will not address emerging issues. Amidst falling output and sales, the rapidly falling oil price is not a blessing. Rather it would further exacerbate the demand constrain as the world market will lose Gulf demand for goods and services. While things do not seem to augur well for global economic recovery in the near future, firms are being moved from cremation grounds to the intensive care unit, where most of the firms are in business coma. When they slightly recover from coma, they are all asking for vitamin M. Granting money to firms in the form of grants and subsidies with the false hope to revive the economy is tantamount to committing business suicide. Most firms may use the money to repay loans and accumulated interest amount. Increasing the supply response as a potential source of recovery will be ineffective if the demand constrain continues to persist. We learned this lesson several times. Unfortunately, the only lesson we refuse to learn is lesson itself.

In the absence of preventive and curing medicines, causing continued befogged state of affairs related to the extent of the Coronavirus-induced ramifications, it is better not to predict the possible future. Rather, it is important to learn from signals we get from Coronavirus-induced changes which affect the style of living and working, and changes in the patterns of production and consumption. Self-imposed and mandatory isolation seem to work, triggering new ways of living and working. People seem to get themselves acclimatized. Indications are that the virtual world is going to rule the patterns of production and consumption. Given these simple emerging facts, refusing to learn from signals will be tantamount to refusing to accept the emerging ground realities. Eventually, those developments would call for everybody's participation in the emerging open innovation and value creation network in the virtual world. This is indeed most likely be the future. In response, educational institutions should reorient the systems of education to enhance the adaptive capabilities and skills of the students to participate effectively in all that is happening in the virtual world.

A number of research institutions world-wide have discovered new means of preventing and curing diseases based on traditional knowledge and practices of rural population. Unfortunately, those research findings remain as dead investment for want of funds to get the patents registered and of technical assistance and business support services to commercialize those findings. For example, the National Institute for Research on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Khartoum, Sudan, invented the essence of the leaf of a wild plant as an effective medicine to cure the open wound of diabetic patients. For decades, the research finding remains as a dead investment for want of assistance to get the patent registered and for commercializing the research finding. Many who practice traditional medicine make optimistic claims about the possibility of herbal-based ingredients curing patients suffering from



coronavirus. There should at least be a professional review of those claims by duly recognized experts to examine the reliability and validity of those claims.

Twenty first century will certainly be a new golden age of traditional medicine amidst the state-of-the art medical practices. It is worth revising the scientific underpinnings of traditional medicine and medical treatment to cure diseases and to offer reliable medical treatment at incredibly low price in the era of technology-induced high cost of medical treatment which is often beyond the means of the poor. Given today's technological marvels, a patient is freely at ease in learning everything about the relevance of traditional medicine related to a particular disease from which he suffers. He is at a loss to know whether to prefer the traditional medicine to modern medicine. The patient seldom finds a source which explains the complementarities between traditional medicine and modern medicine. The need of the hour is to go back to traditional medicine to examine the viable avenues of dovetailing the complementarities between traditional medicine and modern medicine in order to ignite a new course of medical practical practices.

When we go back to define the future, the recovery of individuals and the global economy will be in the offing. Like the preceding economic crises of the 20th and 21st centuries, each challenge is an opportunity. Our personal and professional response to convert challenges into opportunities and opportunities into sustainable sources of fostering a healthy pace of economic expansion is a discovery process. Drawing on lessons from the past experiments and experiences, we will discover the process.

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Relief materials donated by Snegam being carried by Genesis Hospital volunteers to Sundarban Tiger victim widows.

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Corona virus Disease - COVID-19 (One World: Together at Home)

My advice to all of you would be to do these things regularly to be healthy:

1. Exercise should be a regular part of your day, like brushing your teeth, eating, and sleeping. It can be in the form of yoga, aerobics, freehand exercises or simple activities like skipping, spot jumping, jogging or brisk walking in your balconies or on your terrace.

2. Stay positive and have fun - A good mental attitude is important. Find an activity that you think is fun. You are more likely to keep with it if you choose something you like. Learning how to increase your ability to manage stress will help you to stay healthy. Let's do all we can to avoid serious chronic disease, manage chronic disease better when it occurs, and increase the likelihood of

staying healthy as we age. I consider that a blessing. Playing indoor games with our family members not only helps strengthen our bonding but also gives us happiness and a sense of belonging. Besides one can utilise time to read, listen to music, watch films, do some gardening, painting, home decoration, repairing electrical items and a plethora of activities.

3. Eat 3 healthy meals a day, keeping in mind that the quantity of food intake be reduced in the view of markedly reduced physical activities.

4. Make sure you drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after any exercise (water is best) as well as because of the fact that the summer season is here. This will help replace what you lose when you sweat.

5. Get 9 to 10 hours of sleep every night. 📖



COVID-19 - the 21st century global menace has unsettled human lives in a way that seems unfathomable, going by our current standards of medical facilities and infrastructure. Millions have been rendered jobless incapable of affording even a square meal per day. GDP growth rates are expected

to plunge from the next quarter or so, accentuating the existent economic recession to such an extent that in India alone – one-third of the country's 25 crore households could be facing a livelihood crisis.

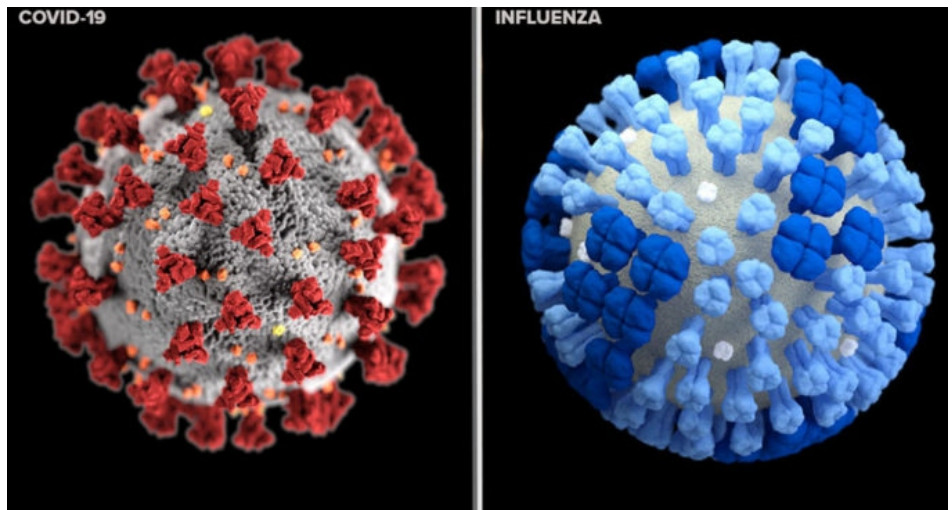
It is in such a predicament that I, like millions of other students across the globe, have been forced into living life in sort of a 'house arrest' in order to stay safe from the pandemic whose lethal clutches have ravaged countries like China, Iran, Italy, Spain, UK, France and USA- one after the other. A substantial part of my day is spent in coursework and reading articles regarding economic disasters that the cessation of economic activity is likely to cause in the coming days. Being an avid reader of fiction, I am also giving the 2014 Pulitzer prize-winning novel 'The Goldfinch' by Donna Tartt, a read.

Universities, as instructed by the Central Government and the State Governments, have resorted to online classes during this Lockdown period. Professors have gone out of their way in preparing necessary study notes and mailing them to students, along with organizing doubt- clearing sessions on Skype. However, I am a little too skeptical about this entire procedure. I feel that under no circumstance online classes can ever replace classes in universities. Online classes are not even remotely close to delivering the kind of content and satisfaction that a class taken while being physically present in the university can deliver. For me, even the thought of classes in universities getting replaced by online classes seems palpably outrageous.

The very fact that online classes can be accessed at will, i.e., depending on whether the student wants to put on the computer and get connected with the professor online – takes away the fundamental virtue of regularity that classes in universities instill in students. Students lose the 'personal touch' with the professors and somehow no online doubt-clearing session, however arduous it might be, seems

satisfactory. Moreover, such online classes are exposed to the risk of technical failures and snags that might inadvertently develop and disrupt the complete process.

Students, by and large, are all in favour of attending classes in universities instead of connecting with professors over the numerous video-conferencing apps that are trending nowadays. Barring a few theoretical ones, a majority of the subjects especially Statistics, Mathematics and Econometrics can never be explored by means of online classes. The captivating essence of the subject that keeps each and every student riveted in class is entirely lost when the same subject is taught over a video-conferencing app. Students are regretting the general lack of interest that is being created due to the delivery of online lectures. There is profound fear and uncertainty among students with regard to the safety features of the various video-conferencing apps. Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued a 16-page advisory cautioning users against the use of the Zoom app, which was growing increasingly popular among university students all around the world. The app is believed to have significant weaknesses 'which can make users vulnerable to cyber attacks, including leakage of sensitive office information to criminals'. This is all the more reason for students to shy away from the prospect of online classes and revive the quotidian process of attending classes in universities.



Parents are getting fretful at the typical dissipation of solemnity and earnestness among students in the Lockdown period, owing to the online classes. The atmosphere of seriousness is gone and for quite a significant number of students the Lockdown period is similar to the post-exam break. Moreover the cyber security issues are making parents panicky and apprehensive regarding the use of video-conferencing apps. Needless to say, parents would highly appreciate it if the university resumes the classes at the earliest. 📖



The COVID-19 And The Trembling Indian Economy

Dr. Saswati Chaudhuri

In the wake of massive wide-reaching lockdown in India, we need to ponder a bit and try to put things in the right perspective. In fact, the experts have been forecasting mid-May as the time when India's curve might flatten out. So we might be staring at a 49 day lockdown which had started on 25th March and might end in mid-May. The economic ramifications of this lockdown which ensued with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in China in December-end, 2019 is obviously huge.

The third quarter of 2019-20 of the Indian economy was slowly witnessing a ripple effect of a slowdown as its real GDP was at its lowest in as many as the last six years. The COVID-19 was an additional shock that has the potential to send shivers and chills across the backbone of the Indian economy. A containment effort like lockdown is bound to bring the economy on its knees – impacting consumption, investment and trade. Let us delve deeper into the emergent crises:

An Asian Development Bank (ADB) Brief reported COVID-19 to be less dangerous than SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) which has a mortality rate of 10% while the former's mortality rate varies among various age cohorts. Today China contributes to around 16% of the global GDP while it was only 4% during the SARS outbreak. Hence, the integration the Chinese economy has with other world economies would accelerate any sort of recessionary cycle that sets in. The intensity of such recession would obviously rely on how dependent the industries of other countries are on Chinese suppliers.

How is India positioned in this respect?

Among all the COVID-19 affected nations, China is the largest source of imports for India comprising 13.7% of its total imports. India mainly imports electrical machinery and equipment, plastic and fertilizers, and organic chemicals from China. However, it is heartening to note that the foreign value-added component in India's gross manufacturing export is much lower – 27.3% compared to other Asian countries like Vietnam (48.2%) and Malaysia (44.6%).

Still, there is no denying the fact that a disruption in economic activity in China could adversely impact some Indian industries, but the rest of the Indian economy would remain relatively insulated because of its low reliance on intermediary goods from China. The only silver lining

Dr. Biswajit Mandal



visible across the horizon is the declining oil prices as 80% of the country's oil requirement is met through imports. Since the Indian government has not passed this fall in oil prices to consumers, it might improve its fiscal position.

The sagging Indian economy can also expect some sort of cushion from the agricultural sector. The prediction of a good harvest and a good rainfall has already given some relief to the farmers. The afflicted sector in the current scenario is the industrial sector which has been severely blemished, with the RBI flushing funds to the banks to help them but to no avail.

Rapid urbanization has slowly shifted the front line of many crises to cities, rather than rural areas. India is not an exception in this regard. Cities have gone for lockdowns, but for residents of crowded slums, they are faced with a miserable choice – a greater risk of contracting the infection or the certainty of hunger. Social distancing and self-isolation are terms and norms which cannot be practically practiced by them, mainly because of population density as can be seen in Dharavi which has 850,000 people per square mile. On top of it, most of them are informal workers whose livelihood is in the verge of being terminated as the cities shutdown. Hence, their quality of life has not only diminished but we might witness huge numbers of starvation deaths in days to come.

The Road ahead:

Given the upcoming economic crisis the prime question boils down to what India can do to minimize the upheaval. Since the problems are manifold, probable solutions cannot be unidirectional. We need to address the situation from both demand and supply sides. Before adopting such

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SXUK students distributed food items to poor people from St. Francis Academy, Kathalberia village.



Treading along the Silent Times

Dr. Manodip Ray Chaudhuri

'Morning shows the day' is quite a well-known aphorism that runs as a protruding maxim in many minds. This has become a misnomer at this present hour of crisis. It has been rather each wearisome day leading

to yet another monotonous and droning morning as the sun rises again along the silent skies of lock-down. Yes it is a hard time indeed; a national lock-down for COVID-19, in place, for quite a long time now. However, as humans we should not lose hope; rather, we should try our best to have triumph over this dreadful pandemic of the hour. Our mission should be on the firm affirmation that the contagion must die.

One cannot deny that this period of lock-down is an open window to be with family, with some good time for honest self-reflective exercise that would keep us moving with gaiety and jauntiness and keep us in good spirits at this hour of crisis. Challenge is another name for life; let us all take this as a challenge to survive along these trying times.

Personifying myself both as a professional full time Associate Professor in Management of Xavier Business School, St. Xavier's University, Kolkata and as a family man, I have tried my best to keep no stones unturned to strike an effective and fruitful balance and a worthwhile mark between the two roles I play, during this period of lock-down. To me, these days are days of critical involvement and a cautious connection with no idle time, whatsoever. As an academician in the university, I have been spending my days during lock-down in online teaching and learning interventions for my students of my university MBA program; with an eye to my research work and outbound international on-call initiatives as well. I have been imparting lessons to my post-graduate management students in various areas of learning, such as Human Resource Management, Strategic Human Resource Management and Environment and Business

Sustainability. The teaching is being communicated using online sources based on focused study notes, lecture video links and structured presentations and case discussions. Each module or topic has been carefully drafted with an end-assignment towards benefitting the student-learning initiative as a holistic act of profound academic penetration for the learning minds. The approach adopted is of a reflective paradigm so that students can continue to be insightful and contemplative in their academic pursuits even while learning online, as against face-to-face during this vexing hour of lock-down.

Yet another interesting means of a fruitful and engaging academic survival during this hour is my penchant desire and honest predilection to work on research papers to publish in academic platforms, nationally and internationally. Not only am I spending these days in contemplative reading, but also crafting exhaustive academic writing for proposed publications. Fundamentally, I am connected with my former PhD student and some of my current MBA students who are keen on research publications and similar initiatives. With them I am penning down papers in the areas of Servant Leadership, Work Life Balance, Corporate Social Responsibility, and some such, thereby enhancing and augmenting the faculty-student interface in research work within our business school in particular and within the university more generally.

Working in the field of academics in the international sphere, has been my forte since quite some time now. I have taken up this time during the lock-down hours to evaluate PhD theses and subsequently write examiner-reports for Ph.D. candidates for universities in India and abroad where I am associated as Ph.D. examiner. Further, I am writing review reports on research papers for peer reviewed journals and also laying my hands in joint paper publications with my colleagues from other universities abroad. I am honestly glad that during this time I could

blissfully come up with two research paper publications in peer-reviewed journals – one on 'Employee Creativity and Innovation for Global Business Sustainability' published in the Indian Journal of Sustainable Development - IJSD from the Central University of Rajasthan and the other on 'Sustainable Development and University Social Responsibility' accepted for publication in the IIMS-Journal of Management Science from IIM Shillong.

More to say, true to my heart, these lock-down days have brought me in a position where I have been able to clearly feel the needs and aspirations of my family



SXUK students packing relief materials for distribution

towards me. Work life makes a person quite much robotic in nature over time. Such a window during lock-down has made me witness silent reverberations of what aged parents aspire from their children in their old age and what teen-aged youngsters seek from their parents and what a doting spouse fondly desires. It is all about one – time – time to be spent with them in their own special ways, hearing out and listening to them and celebrating life with them in the real sense of the term. Yes, the days of lockdown have gone deep in our senses to feel our family and familial needs for the first time where we are able to hear tunes of soundless pain,

agony and loneliness of family in particular and humanity in general. Perhaps this is the hour of unification, confederacy and fusion with those broken pieces of life that had remained unseen, unheard and quavered all this while.

Life has begun once again afresh with this lock-down; perhaps we will become more humane in the days to come. Let us fathom the tunes of a silent treading with the words of Roy T. Bennett, *'Be the reason someone smiles; be the reason someone feels loved and believes in the goodness in people.'* Indubitably, this is the most essential and most indispensable chord of life. 📖

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The COVID-19 And The Trembling Indian Economy

remedies, the Indian government must ensure the supply of basic necessities by means of cooperative farming and a well-designed public distribution system such that the majority of the workforce, both skilled and unskilled, remains safe and healthy to contribute in the domestic production system in coming months. Already the declared fiscal stimulus package is a step taken in right direction. And once the relentlessness of COVID-19 dies down we have to spotlight two things: One is trade, and the other is health.

Now it's apparent that import demand of various foreign countries would not be very encouraging, at least, in coming years which indicates a move in the direction of self-reliant economies. This contradicts the basic principle of comparative cost advantage argument as well. Thus we must figure out those countries where Indian goods are appreciated and India has cordial bilateral relations. India must capitalize on the rift between USA and China which has already taken a serious turn during COVID-19 crisis.

So the recent decision of lifting ban on the export of Hydroxychloroquine to other countries is a brave step forward. We should also not forget that India did not join RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) in the recent past in anticipation of being one of the important global leaders. So we must not let this prospect go in vain. India should appropriate the first mover advantage in this case. This would also help our unemployment ridden economy, which would be already overstrained by the return migrants in both domestic and international fronts. To take advantage of this unforeseen situation and make it beneficial, we need to make public investment our top priority at this crossroad since private investors may not find the environment very lucrative to work with. Another encouraging dimension of the Indian economy is its strength in the service sector which does not necessarily require physical movement of labor.

On top of this, India trades in services with some countries which are located in different time zones allowing both of them to work continuously without augmenting the



Shri Debashis Sen, Chairman cum MD, HIDCO distributed relief materials to construction workers at SXUK

unemployment snag. Hence virtual trade in services is another area of importance in such trying times.

Concurrently, government must be very careful about the basic health infrastructure of the country. Because it goes without saying that the niggling question coming to the fore is who is going to substitute human capital? Is it necessary to be compassionate, sympathetic, and socially acceptable? What would happen to mental health, happiness, social capital etc.?

At the end, however, other humungous task researchers would be exposed to is to analyze the quality of health condition and work ability of all the Corona survivors. Economy can't have healthy individuals can never exist. Health has a sustaining long run effect on human capital and productivity in general. Thus the possibility of second round productivity shock should not be ruled out.

And if the global lockdown, which is in force across the globe, is the only way to contain the ruthlessness of Corona virus, this again may pilot us to an age old debate of liberalization versus protectionism entailing the efficacy of a self-reliant economy which we cannot embrace again because of specialized nature of modern factories and division of labor. 📖

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Readers' Responses:

1. Congrats for bringing out an excellent and timely issue of GN. I appreciate your courageous initiatives in the field of education, especially for setting up and running efficiently SXUK. I am sure that all of us are pondering over ways and means to face the sudden national crisis and the pandemic.
Edward Mudavassery SJ
Pune

2. We're in the second day of lockdown here in London, with everyone still trying to work out the details of what it means in practice. Fortunately here the community house and the Curia offices are all in the same building, so the Provincial and I are able to continue with much of our work. Let us continue to hold each other in prayer in these challenging times.
Fr Paul Nicholson SJ
London

3. Thank you for the magazine Goethals that features your article about Pope Francis. The whole issue is quite interesting. I also noted, in the Herald, that you won a special award from Rotary; congratulations!
Pierre, SJ
Jesuit Curia, Rome

4. Thanks for the greetings. I have read your article on the seven years of Pope Francis and I find it very interesting. Congratulations.
All the best for your work.
Giuseppe Bellucci, SJ
Rome

5. Thank you Rev Fr, for sending me your wonderful tribute

to our late beloved Rev Fr Hincq. He was the Headmaster of the school and gave my brother and me direct admission. My father had been transferred from Mumbai and we came from Campion School to St. Xavier's. My brother in class 7 and I in class 6. Though the class was quite full Rev Fr kindly made it a special case and I became a proud Xaverian.

Rev Fr, there are so many things that you and Rev Fathers do that influence lives and perhaps destiny itself. Xavier's gave me the luxury of growing up at my own pace and in my own way in an atmosphere of calm, safety and great care. Perhaps more than anything else I appreciate the values that were taught to me, gently by showing the way through example and not by lectures.

Thank you Rev Fr Hincq for the embrace of Xaveriansim and for welcoming me into the Xaverian family.
Noomi Mehta

6. Thank you for sharing the fond memories of Rev Fr Hincq, SJ. Many of his students visited him in Belgium whence he would fondly reminisce about the time spent in Kolkata. We are glad that you could meet him so many times. We shall pray that his soul finds eternal peace.
Nihil Ultra!
Sidharth Dudhoria

7. Thank you for sharing your article which was interesting. Stay well and healthy. We live in perilous times in too many ways.
Vivek D'Souza
Tokyo