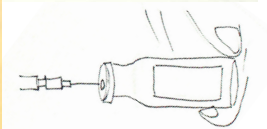


## THE PANDEMIC TIMES



# THE PEOPLE + THE PANDEMIC + THE PERSONAL

– Sahana and Poorvi



Image courtesy: Indiatoday.in

I got Covid once in the second wave. It was very severe and it feels like I've been granted a second life. I was on oxygen support for 18 days. When I initially took a test I didn't get my positive report for 5 days, so I had to stay home while I had the symptoms. Luckily we had two rooms in the house so I could isolate myself from my family. I got it treated at a private hospital for three weeks total and my relatives helped us out financially because my savings got wiped out. During the pandemic I hadn't worked at all except for ferrying a government doctor on his commute. After the pandemic, business has dulled but I can survive.

*AJ Rajesh, autodriver for 27 years*

I work at an apartment as cleaning staff, I worked throughout the pandemic. During the pandemic my pay was 3000 per month, afterwards they increased it to 4000. The government didn't help us (our community) during the pandemic, they should have provided us with monthly income of atleast 500 rupees. Vegetables were also getting costly during the pandemic. It was a hard time for me and my family. Life has been much better after pandemic. My kids are going to school and there are no online classes.

*Rajeshwari, cleaning staff for 4 years*

I am a security gaurd and I worked throughout the pandemic. The institute I work at let me stay at the institute because I could not find buses to travel to and from everyday. I was allowed to cook my meals here and sleep here. I worked a 12 hour shift and sometimes we would work overtime but we'd get paid for it. I'm a permanent employee here so I wasn't affected by the pandemic because I was paid a salary but my brother is a daily wage worker and he had to take a loan to pay rent, bills, etc. The government could have helped out the daily wage labourers find work and rations.

*Rajendran, security gaurd for 25 years*



I've been a gardener for 20 years and I visit both houses and apartments once a week to do gardening. During the pandemic some houses allowed me in to work, some didn't. They either had a lot of indoor plants or children/elders in the house so they were scared of catching Covid. The apartments I work at did not allow me in. When I was finally allowed to go back after the pandemic I saw that the plants had died or were barely surviving, because they didn't know how to take care of them. The apartments were also inconsistent in payments, so I stopped working for them. Even today, after 2 years of Covid, I am still not allowed in some houses.

*Suresh, gardner for 20 years*

I had worked in the Covid wards during the pandemic. We would give the patients steam, help them to use the nebulizer to clear up the phlegm, would change all the bed linen, etc. We would wear PPE suits for 6 hours at a stretch. Some of the staff were staying in the hostel, but I stay a 5 minute walk away from the hospital. When the pandemic started, I had bought a nebulizer and when my sister and her husband got Covid, I sent that to them and told them to take steam 3 times a day. They couldn't eat because they couldn't taste anything. I told them to drink hot water, and keep themselves warm, and to not let the body go cold. I had seen how they treated patients in the hospital and I tried doing the same at home with my relatives and they recovered at home.

*V Manjula, housekeeping staff at a hospital for 20 years*



I've studied BHM and I was supposed to go do my masters abroad but because of Covid it's been delayed by 1.5 years. My parents are scared that if I get sick abroad, I will be alone there. I will be going this September. To tackle boredom during the pandemic I used to read books on Krishna. But I changed a lot during the pandemic, before I used to meet a lot of friends, travel, I was rarely home, I'd always be outside. But the pandemic forced me to be alone, and to enjoy my own self.

*Naveen Kumar Katta, chain restaurant employee for 1 year*

## Tracing the migrant labour resettlement - a timeline

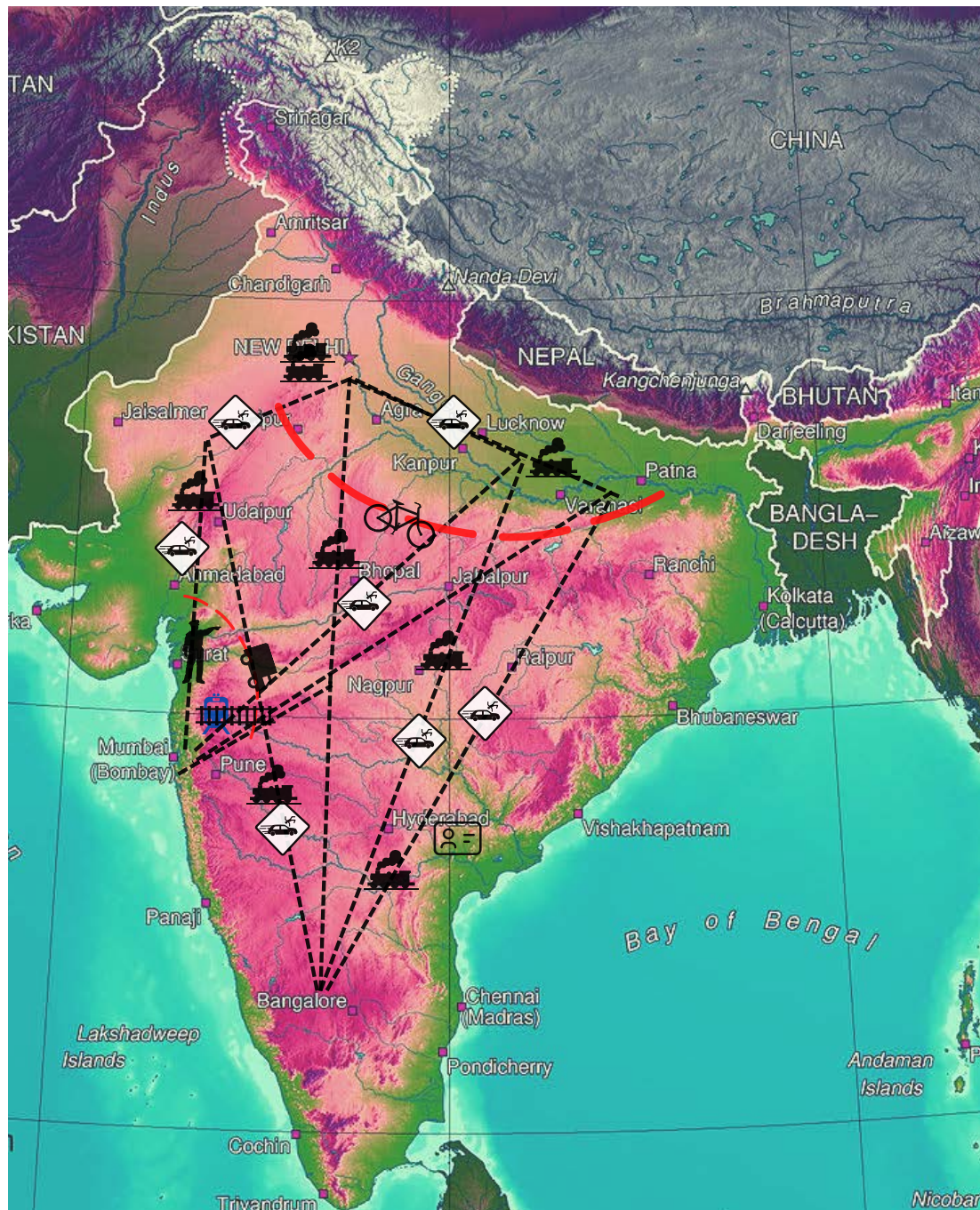


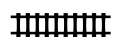
Image courtesy: Wikipedia Commons

----- Where a majority of the migrants are originally from and where they migrate to work

----- 27 March - The Home Ministry ordered the states to ensure that migrants would not move during the lockdown, permitting the states to use the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for providing food and shelter to the migrants. Maharashtra state government imposed a lockdown on in Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Nagpur, leaving the migrant workers with no work.



31 March - As many as 120 migrant workers were allegedly beaten up by the police in Gujarat and forcefully rounded up in a single lorry and dropped in Maharashtra, despite being wounded.



8 May - In Aurangabad, 16 migrants were killed after a freight train ran over them while they were sleeping on the tracks, exhausted from walking, the Supreme Court stated that it could not have been prevented.



A 15-year-old girl carried her ailing father on a bicycle for 1,200 kms from Bihar to Gurugram over the course of a week. She was later approached to try out for the National Cycling Academy by the Cycling Federation of India.



19 May - In Telangana, many could not avail of the ration due to a lack of Aadhaar cards. As such, many were left without food and money due to the lockdown.



2 June - According to data collected by SaveLIFE Foundation, an NGO working in road safety, 198 migrant workers were killed in road accidents



1 May - the central government permitted the Indian Railways to launch "Shramik Special" trains for the migrant workers and others stranded.

Additionally, this service was not free, with additional charges over the normal fares. The central government then faced criticism from the opposition, with the Indian National Congress promising to sponsor the tickets of the migrants. The government then announced that the Railways would offer an 85% subsidy on the train fares, with the state governments funding the remaining 15%. However, the migrants were still forced to pay an undisclosed amount in some cases. The central government initially declined to share the details regarding this with the Supreme Court, but later confirmed that it was not paying for anyone's fare.

Further, migrants faced many hardships while travelling by these trains. Many reported to have no food and water arranged for them while they traveled. A train from Goa to Manipur reported a 58-hour delay, no proper food or sanitation facilities on the train, and stone pelting. Others who received food packets and water reported that the provisions were simply dumped at the entrances, leaving workers fighting with each other for their share. Some migrants also died during the train journeys, but the Railways stated that most of them had existing illnesses. According to Railway Protection Force, there have been almost 80 deaths on board the Shramik Special trains in May. In addition, these trains spread the coronavirus around the country.

June - Some migrant workers began going back to the cities due to lack of employment in their hometowns, as lockdown restrictions were reduced as part of Unlock 1.0 in June.

There is no publicly available data on the current state of the migrants and their economic and living conditions.

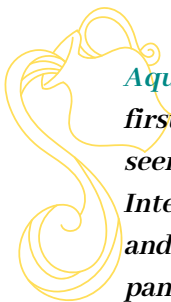
- Sahana

# HORRORSCOPE

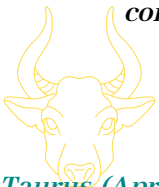
## A retrospective of the Pandemic through the star signs



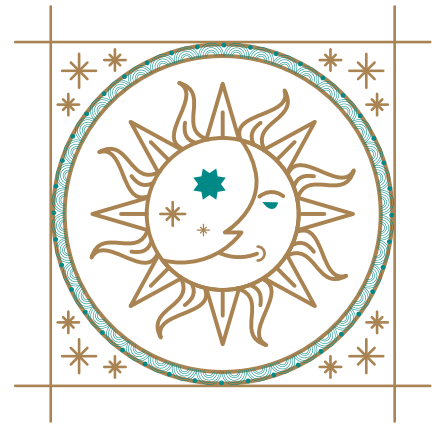
**Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)** - Capricorn were barely recovering from New Years' eve celebrations. Bush fires ravaged Australia. Meanwhile, a sleeping giant awakened in the form of a microscopic virus. Whether the creature was inside a bat or made in a lab we will never know. Conspiracy theorists will debate this one till the end of time. The virus made contact with a human. As it made its way through the subterranean chambers of the body, it felt an ancient instinct to reproduce. The human host made contact with other humans. What happens next is nature and the modern history of the pandemic.



**Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)** - The first recorded case of the Coronavirus is seen in Kerala on January 27. Internationally China recorded 200 cases, and the WHO convenes an emergency panel on the coronavirus. Other countries record their first cases, and Aquarians, optimistic as always, thought India could contain the virus.



**Taurus (April 20 - May 20)** - The second lockdown had started on April 15, nicknamed Lockdown 2.0, as if we were all stuck in some kind of version control universe. 100 million migrants left their dusty cities to go back to their villages and lands, starting the largest movement of people since the Partition. 'At least we'll find something to eat in our village' one such worker said to a reporter. Businesses were reeling and almost 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy faced an immediate danger of losing their livelihoods, the International Labour Organization said.



- Sahana



**Pisces (February 19 - March 20)** - There are talks of a vaccine. Trump tells the US that the risk of the virus is slow. Elsewhere in Japan, schools close. Offices declare temporary work from home orders, to be reviewed within two weeks. Little did they know that those two weeks would turn into two years and would change the way we work forever in the workplace. Strict travel rules were imposed on countries with high rates of Covid and people cancel travel plans. Plane tickets drop to record low rates.



**Aries (March 21 - April 19)** - On 24 March, the Prime Minister called for the first of many lockdowns in the country for 21 days. Rules about social distancing (by 3ft which was then revised to 6ft) and the initial mask guidelines were announced. Some people took to wearing masks as reluctantly as the helmet mandate, leading to an increase in cases. Panic buying of Maggi confirmed Indians' love of instant noodles. Abroad, toilet paper wars kicked off. Whole cities became ghost towns as the roads emptied, the birds came back to claim the airspace as planes remained grounded and pollution was at an all-time low. Nature was healing while Aries made elaborate plans to spend all their extra free time in lockdowns productively. India crossed 1 million active Covid cases and Oxygen became a scarce commodity.



**Gemini (May 21 - June 20)** - Urban neighbourhoods were colour-coded into green, red and orange, and it was ground Zero at the red zone, with the most lockdown measures. WHO records the highest number of daily cases worldwide (106,000) and global coronavirus cases pass 6 million. Meanwhile, lockdown restrictions were lifted everywhere except the containment zones from May 30. Gemini could finally pursue their 101 interests in peace or Gemini chaos.



**Leo (July 23 - August 22)** - The tide turned, India reported over 1 million Covid recoveries. A 19-year-old girl from Odisha helps rescue 6,000 migrant workers trapped in kilns in Tamil Nadu. Unlock 3.0 was announced for August, with state governments removing night curfew and Sunday lockdown. Covidshield, a promising vaccine got the nod for trials. Covid-19 recoveries cross 2 million, and the fatality rate declines to 1.91%.



**Libra (September 23 - October 22)** - New cases are below 4000 every day, a cause to celebrate and India's total recoveries hit 48 Lakh. The tourism industry, battered after 7 months of lockdowns seeks relief from the government. The covid vaccine gets a release date of early 2021. Petrol and diesel consumption rises to pre-covid level as things open up. Theatres open to poor response. Libras hoped that this would all be over soon, but little did they know.



**Cancer (June 21 - July 22)** - Coronavirus cases pass 10 million worldwide. Cities felt the economic impact of losing their migrant workers. Unlock 1.0 was announced in the country and Cancers retreated into their houses, overwhelmed by the sudden crowds in public places. Vaccine production began in Pune.



**Virgo (August 23 - September 22)** - In the vaccine trials, the volunteer signs are vital. A UK study said missing school is worse than Covid-19 for kids. International flights are still banned, making Virgos plan weekend staycations in meticulous detail. Many private hospitals are reported for cashing in on the pandemic. Weddings move online as many couples virtually tie the knot.



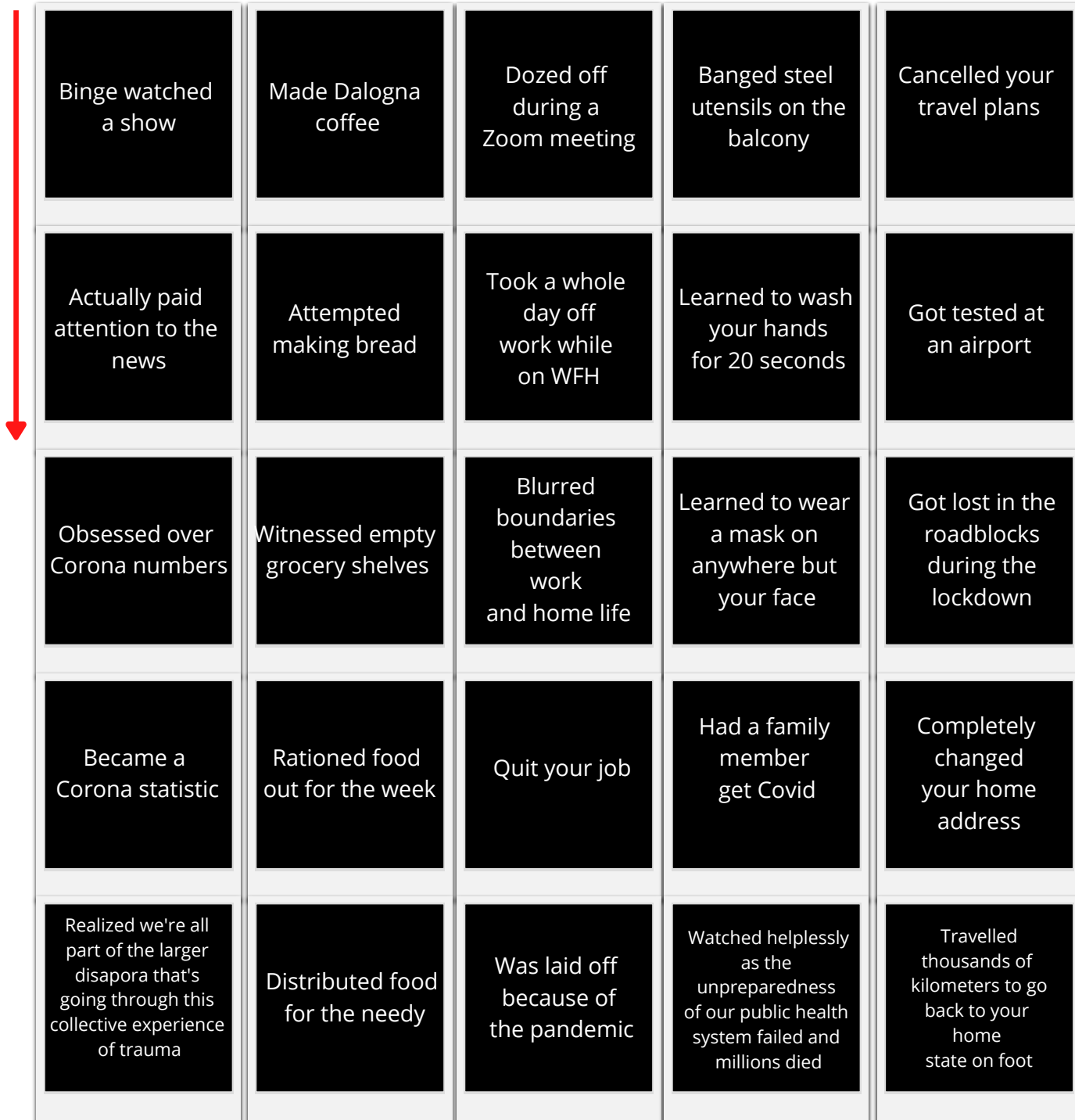
**Scorpio (October 23 - November 21)** - The government plans an immunisation programme for the vaccine. Global coronavirus cases rise by the single-day record of half a million. Scorpions are hopeful for the year ahead, and cautiously make plans for Christmas and New year. Some even pre-book their 2021 yearly planners. Meanwhile, Covidshield completes enrollment of phase 3 clinical trials.



**Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)** - Globally countries are engaged in diplomatic battles over vaccine supplies. News channels slowly push coronavirus news to the background, giving importance to other issues that were neglected during the wake of the pandemic. Sagittarius believed that things were slowly going back to normal and restarted their adventure planning that was stalled during the pandemic. But little did they know that a second wave of Coronavirus mutant spawn would come for their plans in little less than 3 months.

# PANDEMIC BINGO

Mark X the square if you relate, take a photo and share your results on Instagram - tag us [@thePandemicTimes.in](https://www.instagram.com/thePandemicTimes), we will repost it so you can see how many people share your experience of the pandemic!  
- Sahana



Binge watched a show	Made Dalgona coffee	Dozed off during a Zoom meeting	Banged steel utensils on the balcony	Cancelled your travel plans
Actually paid attention to the news	Attempted making bread	Took a whole day off work while on WFH	Learned to wash your hands for 20 seconds	Got tested at an airport
Obsessed over Corona numbers	Witnessed empty grocery shelves	Blurred boundaries between work and home life	Learned to wear a mask on anywhere but your face	Got lost in the roadblocks during the lockdown
Became a Corona statistic	Rationed food out for the week	Quit your job	Had a family member get Covid	Completely changed your home address
Realized we're all part of the larger diaspora that's going through this collective experience of trauma	Distributed food for the needy	Was laid off because of the pandemic	Watched helplessly as the unpreparedness of our public health system failed and millions died	Travelled thousands of kilometers to go back to your home state on foot

IVSRU



UUEQE



ESTST



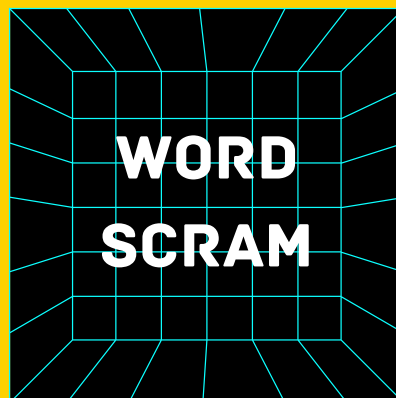
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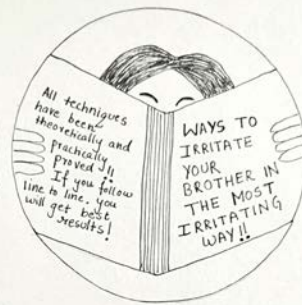
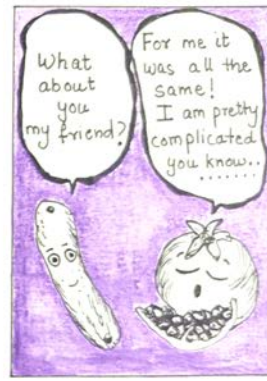
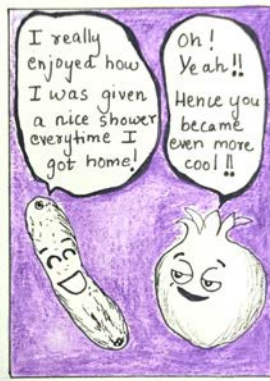
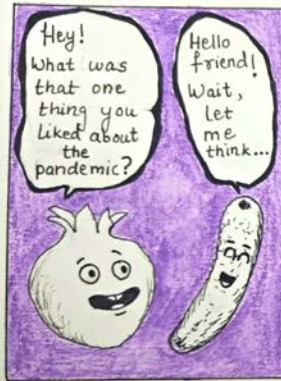
**Find the word: Unscramble the five letter words. The letters within the circle will then need to be rearranged to find the final word.**

**Hint: The World Health Organization describes this word as "the absence of avoidable or remediable differences among people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically."**

*Answers on the last page*



## Cucu and Pomo



Conversations in time



Don't forget to sanitize the sanitizer

PANDEMIC  
COMIC  
BY  
POORVI  
NAHAR



baarbaar\_dekho

## ((pandemic)) EVENTS

**Covid Art Museum**  
An Instagram only  
art gallery



**The Lockdown Garden**  
A video



**Boxed**  
Dance performances



Just scan the QR Codes and  
enjoy!



# The COVID Bias:

## Women during the Pandemic

Nearly 175 years after the first Women's Rights Movement, the world is still at the infant stage of understanding and accepting gender disparity. While we grapple with ideas of equality and equity, the UN conducted a Rapid Gender Assessment over the socioeconomic impacts of Covid-19. The research spanning over a year, in 52 countries, focused on economic activities, domestic work, access to services, physical & emotional well being, and relief measures. This survey confirmed that men and women were experiencing the pandemic differently, and led to a series of surveys on women during the pandemic. Right from housewives to entrepreneurs, from academicians to migrant labourers, surveys unearthed shocking statistics and details of the lives of women.

The economy doesn't function without the inadvertent but unrecognised contribution of the 'care economy', also called the 'core economy', it is the invisible, unpaid work that goes into tending family relationships and the overall care of the family. Though women constituted a major portion of it, the pandemic has led to a dramatic rise in this percentage. The irony lies in the fact that most women participate in both the core and paid economies, without expecting or requesting help from men. Additional care responsibilities during the pandemic meant less productivity, and hence a greater chance of being passed over for a promotion. This also meant that more women lost their jobs as compared to their male counterparts.



Image courtesy - asyousow.org

Past studies have shown that exposure to natural calamities or unprecedented events leads to an increase in the number of cases of domestic violence. Loss of income during these stressful times makes people feel financially unsafe, leading to a more controlling attitude towards their spouse, especially if the husband is unemployed and the wife is working.

Lack of domestic help added fuel to the ongoing friction. There was a sudden upsurge in substance use disorders, and alcohol consumption, both of which are likely to inflate domestic violence.

The impoverished domestic workers, migrant labourers and the poor were most affected by the pandemic. Here too, women are more negatively affected as they are considered to be less productive and thus rank lower in the society.



Image courtesy - Getty Images

Amid nation wide stress, these women labourers had to flee to their hometowns, lost jobs, and many starved to death in the process.

Covid 19 denied access to basic health care facilities and menstrual products. This vulnerable part of the population was forced into debt and they led lives of compromise. Mobility restrictions threw them to captivity, and the generally wandering lives were obligated to stay home. The gendered nature of social activities and limited entertainment options taxed their physical and mental well-being.

Not even the academicians and entrepreneurs escaped the horrendous effects of the pandemic. Merging the avenues of professional and personal life during the lockdown



brought down the amount of focused time that female scientists were putting into their research, and surveys prove that with the same access to equipment, their male parallels were able to produce more results. Some women scientists who were able to complete the work weren't able to document their work, owing to the demands of family.

Stats show that more businesses run by women entrepreneurs were shut down than men run businesses. Dwindling finances and labour requirements only widened gender unequal economies.

To reverse these ill effects of the pandemic, the response must not be gender neutral.

The discrepancies between the suffrage of men and women must be cross examined and judicious assistance must be provided.

The pre-pandemic world was itself lacking in many gender aspects.

Now, all that work and more is needed to bring stability to this topsy turvy post pandemic world.



Image courtesy - Asian Development Blog

- Hemashree

# Coronavirus and Climate :

## Impact of the global pandemic on climate.

**W**ith the world about to mark three painstaking years of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the relationship between the rapidly changing climate and the pandemic is being brought to light.

Despite the fact that multiple studies have been published on the subject, there is no persuasive evidence analyzing the impact of COVID-19 by and on climate change.

However, there have been numerous comprehensive studies to factor in the relationship between climate change and the pandemic based on anthropogenic factors, emission levels, ocean submesoscales, etc.

At the onset of the global pandemic, there appeared to be positive effects on the environment.

With fewer to no people outside, India's smog cleared up, China's air pollution improved, rivers in Italy cleared up, and global carbon emissions decreased.

(Kumari & Toshniwal, 2020).

There was a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, outdoor air pollution, environmental noise level, and land and wildlife pressure .

(Patrcio Silva et al., 2021).

This brings to light, how our daily lifestyles are the primary contributors to the climate change crisis.

(Emmy Scott, university of Northern Colorado, 2020)



Image courtesy - Cui Meng/GT

In March 2020, India went into a nationwide lockdown, where all places of social gathering, including restaurants, cinemas, schools, retail malls, and educational institutions, were shut down.

Employees were asked to work from home, students asked to attend classes online, and most public gatherings were suspended. All modes of transportation, including rail, road and aviation travel were halted, with exceptions for essential services.

Furthermore, almost all manufacturing and industrial operations were halted.

An unexpected but welcome consequence of the first nationwide lockdown seemed to be significant improvement in climate.

In a case study conducted by Kumari and Toshniwal, 2022, published in the International Journal of Environmental Health Research, it was found that implementing the lockdown had significantly improved the air quality in the country. A significant reduction in emission levels were observed during the lockdown phase as compared to pre-lockdown phase in the same period of 2019.

According to the International Energy Agency, average activity on the world's roads fell by almost 50% compared to 2019.

The improvement in air quality was clear to see.

Among all the quips and jokes that were being made about the air being so significantly clear that one could see across the city, the gravity of the climate crisis was brought to light.

While outdoor air pollution was decreasing, additional pollutants began to affect the environment.

The extreme increase in personal protective equipment is one of the main pollutants created by COVID-19 (masks, gloves, face shields, etc.).



Image courtesy - Photograph: Anushree Fadnavis/Adnan Abidi/Reuters

The enormous surge is due to the products being used by first responders and common people, and there is no sign of slowdown in sight.

Personal Protection Equipment is usually made from synthetic fibers such as nonwoven synthetic polymers and microplastics, a common evil known to cause harm to the environment.

(Emmy Scott, University of Northern Colorado, 2020)

Claims suggest that to provide PPE for residents worldwide, we would need around 129 billion face masks and 65 billion gloves monthly.

This has caused a great deal of harm to not just the environment, but to multiple flora and fauna species.

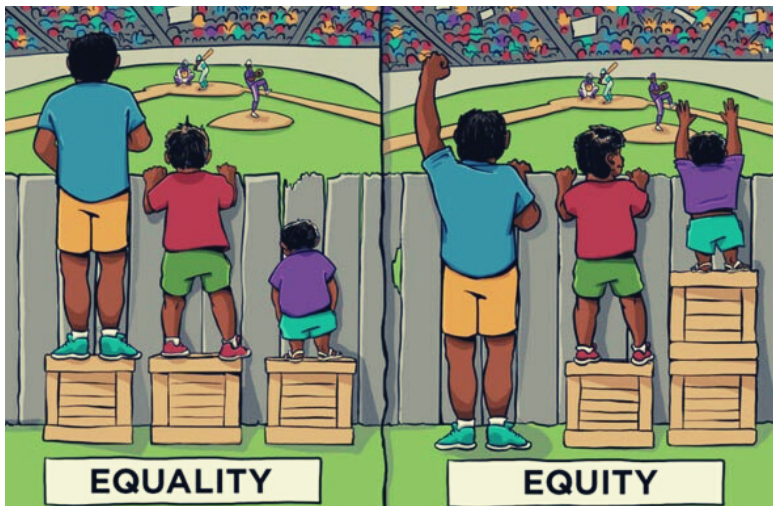
The improper disposal of face masks has brought a great deal of harm to multiple bird species, stray animals and flora.

These incidents not only show how climate is interlinked to the global pandemic, but also how it is due to us humans, and our everyday lifestyle that the climate crisis is worsening.

With the dynamic world, and rapid modernisation, it is time to act now before it's too late.

It is our responsibility as humans and residents of the world to protect and preserve the environment and minimize this threat of climate crisis.

# EQUITY IN SOCIAL JUSTICE



The answers to Word Scram are Virus, Queue, Tests and Daily, the final answer being EQUITY



## ORGANISATIONS TO DONATE TO/VOLUNTEER WITH



**Hasiru Dala**

Works with waste pickers



**Aajeevika Bureau**

Works with migrant workers



**Swadhar IDWC**

Works with children of sex workers



The Pandemic exposed great inequality in our societal structures, hence the need for equity is greater than ever. Equity in social justice is recognising that different communities need appropriate levels of resources, welfare and relief. Disadvantaged communities need greater assistance and consideration during a disastrous situation because they tend to be particularly adversely affected. The universal concept of equality and generalized welfare guidelines will not suffice in social justice when we all don't start at the same place.

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