



EST. *the* 1970
POLITICAL SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT
राजनीति विभाग
MIRANDA HOUSE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

MIRANDA HOUSE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE राजनीति विभाग

VOX POPULI

2020 - 2021

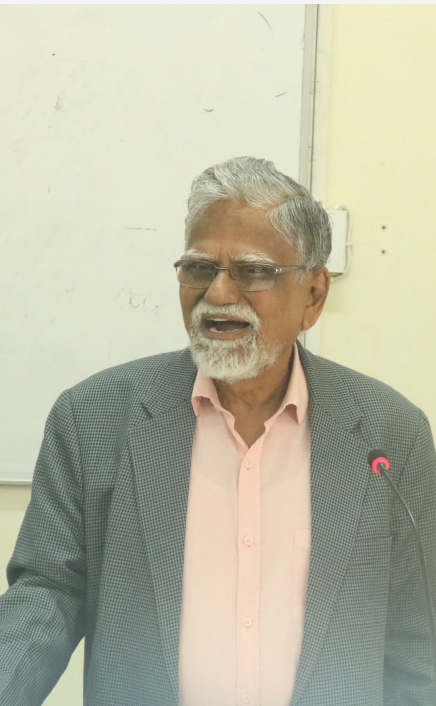




Parivartan:
**Re-forming India~
Public Policy, Pandemic & Change**

**परिवर्तनः
संशोधित भारत~
सार्वजनिक नीति, महामारी और बदलाव**





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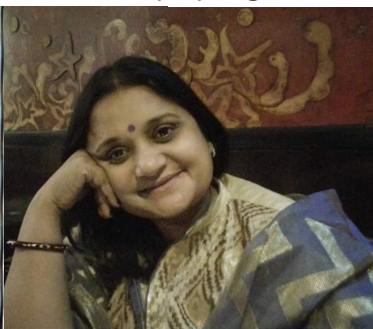
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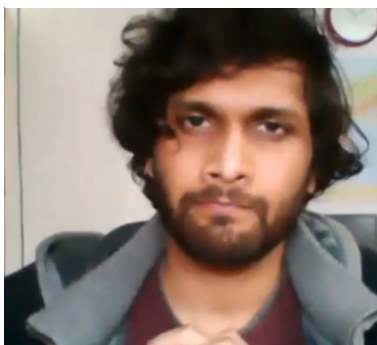
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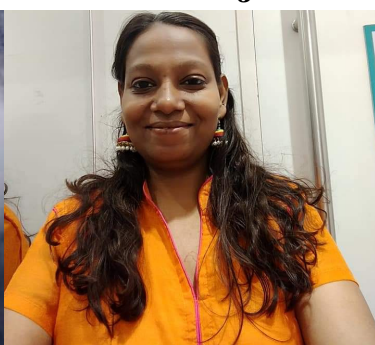
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VOX POPULI 2020- 2021

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From the Desk of the PRINCIPAL



The issue of Vox Populi this year is aptly titled. The significance of connecting the study of Political Science to policy-making especially in terms of management of health emergencies has been underlined very well in this issue .

The pandemic has taught us many lessons and has made us realise the priorities that need to be highlighted.

Bringing about a paradigmatic change in the way we study and do politics especially in terms of impacting policy is the need of the hour. The articles in this issue of the Vox Populi have examined the various facets and nuances of it. I would like to congratulate the teacher-in-charge Dr Namrata Singh and the dedicated editorial team of the magazine for their stellar efforts in bringing this issue to life. It is a wonderful idea to dedicate this issue to our doctors and frontline health workers for risking their lives to contain the pandemic and heal the sufferings of many.

Connecting the dots between the theoretical concepts of equality, rights and justice and the practice of it in has played out for all of us most visibly in the theatre of the pandemic.

The values of empathy, sustainability, equity and peace need to govern all ideas of policy-making in the global order. This is critical for the survival of the earth.

~ Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda

From the Desk of the TEACHER- IN- CHARGE



As the Teacher in charge of Department of Political Science, it is my immense pleasure to release *Vox Populi* 2020-2021

The last year has really been a challenging period for all of us. Classroom teaching got enmeshed in the wires of laptop, mobiles and internet. The smiles, laughters and beautiful faces of my students became one-dimensional, the screen of my laptop.

Against these odds the editorial team ably led by Diya Kirttania took up the challenge and worked upon tirelessly to bring this edition of *Vox Populi* to its fruition. Kudos to the team the tradition that started in 2006 continues! I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Teacher Coordinators, Dr. Pushpa Singh and Ms Shruti Sharma Sethi to assist the Editorial Board, and support them in every ways possible.

The theme for this year *Vox Populi Parivartan: Re –forming India – Public Policy, Pandemic & Change* took the perils of pandemic and converted it into challenges and opportunities. The COVID pandemic is, inarguably, one of the greatest crisis of the 21st century. It has inflicted a great toll in terms of lives lost and economic hardship and robbed us of all our hope. And just as the COVID-19 pandemic has upended our daily lives, it has transformed the college life landscape, with online teaching and open book examinations.

The different articles in this edition of *Vox Populi* talk about an actionable guide to policies that can harness ingenuity and foster a resilient society capable of meeting the challenges ahead. We are dedicating this edition to all our frontline workers who stood like rock against the waves and waves of corona virus. The pandemic is rewriting the rules and we have to keep up with them. COVID will not just disappear, it is here to stay. However, when we unite we can achieve the impossible. And now we have to come together inspite of our differences and fight for a better world. There is still hope for a better tomorrow.

~ *Dr. Namrata Singh*

Note of

PRESIDENT & VICE- PRESIDENT

‘Parivartan’. The testimony of the year gone by accentuates how change is the only constant in our lives. 2020 needs no description. The 2020-21 edition of *Vox Populi* has been the first of its league to have been coordinated and compiled online, entirely. Woven around the theme of ‘Parivartan’, it talks about the essentiality of striving towards change, both individually and as a collective, both within and beyond.

The department is proud to be a collective of individuals having diverse backgrounds, exemplary skill-sets, and set up in an institution that helps us further our potential. As students from the political science discipline, we realise what we do matters. This spirit shall be upheld in the batches to come, and will certainly take us to higher level.

The current academic year has been catapulted with various milestones. The students’ Union, all 18 members, deserve credit for the successes that unfolded and the activities that went with seamless execution. We kickstarted the session by creating an e-repository of resources for students that facilitated our shift to online learning.



The department has organised its highest number of sessions and events in this academic year, a feat given the uncertainties that initially clouded owing to the pandemic. Not only have we organised esteemed webinars spaced throughout the year, we held collaborative talks with other departments at Miranda, and also had a three month engagement with Civil Society Magazine to conduct a distinguished lecture series. The pandemic took us far, but it got us close. We initiated the first-student body led peer mentorship programme in the college, reaching out to students who could not attend online classes due to unavoidable circumstances. We also launched the ‘Samvaad’ series and the ‘Through our Lens’ series on our social media platforms to keep the PolSo family together and talking. The ‘Beyond the Classroom’ interactions deserve a special mention for it helped us forge real-time relationships in a reel-time world. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to those who motivated us in our journey. We would like to thank our principal, Dr Bijayalaxmi Nanda Maam, for having faith in the department and its students. We are grateful to our Teacher-in-Charge, Dr Namrata Singh Maam, for not just steering us through the entire process, but also for being equally engaged and tremendously creative with her ideas and her constant support.

We genuinely appreciate the guidance we received from the faculty members and their comforting and stimulating environment that they provided us all has been a considerable motivating factor for all students here at the department to grow beyond measures. To be loved and appreciated, has been our strength for continuing ahead on this journey.

The department is unarguably a centripetal force within the college. To a year that may have not sounded more than anything beyond the screens of our desktops, PCs and mobiles, this edition of *Vox Populi* strives to weave the lessons and accomplishments of the year that was 2020. It had been a privilege to serve as the President and Vice President of the department for the past year. The support and motivation we received from the faculty and the students has been incredible.

As we sign off, we take back the core essence of the theme for this year, *Parivartan*, the need for change and improvement. As young adults moving out to a bigger world, and to more challenging roles and untested terrains, we shall carry within us the vision of transforming and getting transformed in the process.



*Bhumika Nebhnani (L),
Deepshika Sangwan (R)*

*We hope you enjoy this journey through and
through the department that you take today. Best
regards,
~ Deepshikha Sangwan and Bhumika
Nebhnani*

Note of

EDITOR- IN- CHIEF

75yrs ago when Jawaharlal Nehru addressed the eager citizens of Independent India on the eve of Independence with his ever enlightening speech “Tryst with Destiny”, neither him nor his successors for seven decades could have anticipated the extraordinary situations in which India would rejoice and celebrate its 75th year of Independence. When Pt Nehru said in his speech, “a moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends and when the soul of a nation long suppressed, finds utterance”, his intentions mirrored the circumstances then, but the essence resonates even to this date. The moment when Indians had to shed their older lifestyles and adapt to the in-vogue “new normal”, and when the soul of every individual united in solidarity against the lethal Coronavirus which spread swiftly on the face of the earth- it was indeed a rebirth.

As I sit on my desk writing this address, I cap the 18th months of complete college closure, shifting education online, and attending classes from home, far away from college, my social circle, and a one-time college experience, thanks to the fatal



Diya Kirttania

Coronavirus Pandemic. But when on one platform we missed our physical socializing, on a different platform we discovered a community of students sharing the similar beliefs ‘online’- the youth has realized the newer dimensions of acquiring education, and experiencing social intermingling, to not stand still but to march ahead. Atal Bihari Vajpayee in one of his speeches addressing the nation said, “Education, in the truest self of term, is a process of self- discovery. It is the art of self-structure”, and he would have definitely been proud of today’s generation who’re sculpting newer methods of not only acquiring education, but also extending education to everyone in need, braving the extraordinary circumstances with their greatest mirth and accepting, and adopting the ‘change’ with fullest potential.

Parivartan is inevitable and many young individuals like me have had to confront this reality much early in life- the philosophy of ‘flux, or becoming’ of the Ionian Philosopher Heraclitus who postulated the theorem of ‘*Panta Rhei*’ which figuratively translates into “everything flows- nothing stands still”. His arguments on how the river always flows onward and we never step in the same river twice proves how life is constantly flowing, and changing, and how resisting the very nature of change would question our existence.

Heraclitus quotes, “there is nothing permanent but change”, which eventually Aristotle, in his book ‘Physics’, argues that the very principle of Nature is Change- hence hints on how change has been felt not just today but since time immemorial

Change is so intricately embedded within us that we often fail to notice how we evolve out of our older selves, tackling every hurdle for the very fight of our survival. 2020 and 2021 has been those two years when Parivartan was staunchly felt, in the international statecraft, political dynamics, public arenas, social spheres, and even personal relations- the very virtual launch of our Annual Department Magazine stands testimony to the change. Working in the magazine- to bring like minded individuals on the virtual platform together, and channelising our creativity, provided us the gateway to showcase our personal takes on the ‘Change’ we’re all experiencing. Ensuring holistic equitable Parivartan for the revival and reformation of India- adopting new regulations, and welfare strategies to eliminate the social stratification, protecting the social sensitivity and adopting everyone equally to ‘Change’ is what we’re all hoping, and aiming for. The incoming years would continue to witness significant changes in the surroundings- and I, as an individual, would continue to keep trying to adapt to these monumental changes.

*I would love to finish this address by quoting
Friedrich Nietzsche, the existentialist German
Philosopher,*

*“He who has a why to live for can bear with
almost any how”*

~Diya Kirttania

From the EDITORIAL BOARD

ऐसा पहली बार था जब मैंने डिपार्टमेंट की वार्षिक पत्रिका में काम किया। संवाद, विचार विमर्श के माध्यम से पूरी पत्रिका की कार्य शैली बेहतर होती रही। हिंदी में भी लेख, कविताएं आईं। ये एक हिंदी के लिए एक ठीक ठाक शुरुआत है। बाकी सभी साथियों के संग काम कर कर अच्छा लगा, विषय को भिन्न तरीकों से सोचा जो वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण पैदा करता है। कुल मिलाकर अच्छा अनुभव रहा।

~ आशिका शिवांगी सिंह (राजनीति विज्ञान, तृतीय वर्ष)

Working in the editorial board has been an enriching experience. This has been a wonderful journey of learning and working with the bright minds of the political science department. Getting to read articles from our department, each with a different perspective, has been an enthralling experience and has expanded my horizons of looking at things. I cherish the team spirit of our members and their zest to work for the magazine in the best way possible. I am grateful to our professors, editor-in-chief and editorial board members for their able guidance, and to every person who has contributed to the magazine. Vox-populi could not have been possible without the collective efforts from the department and making it possible when a pandemic is raging, is commendable. This virtue of teamwork, sailing through hardships together and achieving the collective goal is the most precious thing that I've learnt here which will stay with me forever. I am glad to have worked in the editorial board. It has been a wonderful experience of learning and growing.

~Aditi (*Political Science, First year*)

College life is all about experimenting and experiencing new activities and trying to make oneself developed and strong in his or her own fields of interests. My experience in being a part of the editorial board of Vox Populi gave me the opportunity to use and develop my interest in words and vocabulary. In spite of not being able to go to college, I feel more connected to the college now as I have worked for the past few months as a team and achieved what I believe to be an amazing and wonderful.

~Mahasweta Sarma, (Political Science, First Year)

I had joined this astounding team as a novice and now I seem to have learnt a lot more than my expectations. Working with this highly industrious team was a great experience and I am glad to have chosen to contribute a bit to this noble cause. Every member of this team is a true gem and the editor-in-chief is the driving force for all of us, a true inspiration. Her hard work and efforts as a true leader made me realize the great responsibilities and efforts that go into the making of a magnificent magazine as the "VOX POPULI". Also the constant guidance of the professors was a cherry on the cake. I got to learn something new with every google meet! The editorial team made me aware of the true dedication that goes into the editing of a magazine right from proofreading to improvising the articles. It was an amazing and insightful experience. I realized my capabilities in the process and also became more confident in terms of being able to read and edit

such educational articles.

I'm looking forward to learning more from all of the team members. Also looking forward to seeing the final look of the most beautiful VOX POPULI!

~Manisha Choudhry, (Political Science, First year)

Working for a college magazine was a very daunting element I brought in my life. Vox populi brought out the inherent authenticity in me as a writer, as an editor it made me learn newer perspectives which made a very thought provoking argument in their true nature. In the direness of the pandemic the magazine gave me structure which I longed for and strived to make me grow not only as a writer and editor but also a teammate. The editorial team was effortlessly amazing to get along and work with them. I'd like to show my immense gratitude to our Editor-in-chief and our professors for being incredibly patient and supportive at every step of the way. I'm grateful for this opportunity and the experiences it has brought in with it.

~ Nakshatra Verma (Political Science, 1st Year)

'Work and thought canst not escape the reward,

The reward of a thing well done is to have it done. '

These lines by 'Ralph Waldo Emerson' sum up my experience on the Ed Board of Vox Populi for he says that 'so only the work be honest, done to thine approbation, it shall earn a reward to the senses as we as to the thought' and so did my

experience at the Ed board mean to me in the real sense. From adding to my knowledge and experience in most wonderful ways to all the academic vibrancy to breaking the monotony and making me grow, being on the provided a wholesome experience in the best way possible.

~ ***Ravbeer Kaur Dhillon (Political Science, 1st Year)***

Every New experience brings with it moments of unlearning old things and learning new things. The experience of working in the editorial board has taught me to shoulder responsibility, innovate and exchange ideas and inculcated team spirit within us. It was no easy task to bring about this wonderful magazine in such hard times but the editorial team strived together to make it come true. Our seniors and teachers gave us the chance to show our talents and skills and instilled a new confidence in us which shall be very helpful in our future endeavors. I am looking forward to more such experiences here at Miranda House.

~ ***Shakshi Kundu (Political Science, 1st Year)***

Being part of the Vox Populi magazine is a great honour and it seems surreal but working with some amazing minds and various insightful perspectives helped me to explore and learn how to handle so many options at once, while making sure everyone is satisfied and heard. It was a privilege to work alongside my peers at Miranda House and offer the best of my capabilities to Vox Populi. Designing the magazine,

exchanging ideas and thoughts, and so many other tasks were handled with utmost coordination and the flow was amazing. I am glad to have been a part of this experience.

~ *Sayanti Majumdar, (Political Science, 1st Yr. {from CIC})*

My experience of working in the Editorial Board has been amazing. I learnt a lot. Starting from writing to editing to proofreading to grammar checks and plagiarism check, the Editorial team has not only improved my skills but also helped me learn a lot more. Helping with the magazine has also given me some insights into its design and structure. This experience has made me more confident with my writing and I hope that by the end of the year I will be able to create projects like the magazine even on my own. I hope I can contribute more to the Board and learn a lot more. I also hope that next semester I will be able to join the designing team as well to expand my skills in the designing area as well. The teachers have been very supportive. Also Diya Dii has taught us a lot and inspires us to work hard with dedication towards every little thing that we do. Being a part of this Editorial Board has been one of the very productive and enthralling experiences of my life. And I plan to continue being a part of this team as long as I can.

~ *Srishti Sonavane (Political Science, 1st Year)*

Working with the editorial board was really a learning experience. Overall it's been enriching for me. The kind of articles and pieces that I came across while proofreading really

widened my horizons to different styles of writing. The enthusiasm and coordination by team members headed by Diya was really noteworthy and laudable. Really excited for the final draft!! Hoping it comes out great.

~ *Shubhangi, (Political Science, 3rd Year)*

The editorial board of Vox Populi is always a vibrant one. This year was no different. The Ed-board 2020-21 led by Diya has incorporated so many new and creative features into the magazine. The teamwork displayed by the ed board is commendable. We always got everything done right on time, like clockwork! It was endearing to see the enthusiasm of all the members despite the raging pandemic. Working with the team has definitely been my silver lining this year!

~ *Sreelakshmi, (Political Science, Third Year)*

Being truthful, working with editorial boards and contributing my bit to such a prestigious magazine was something I always wanted to do. Every new experience brings a new lesson, and being a part of Vox Populi, I got to learn a lot more than I had expected. Starting from writing articles to proofreading others' works, the experience of being exposed to new thought processes was very insightful. I'm glad I could contribute my bit to the making of the magazine, and by then my horizon of thoughts and working patterns is much more evolved for which I'm grateful.

~ *Urvi Meena, (Political Science, First year)*

'Nothing ever becomes real till it is not experienced'

It is very true that until we do not experience something that can't be real. College is such a dream due to the present circumstances and a person like me can't think of working for college in this online mode. But the experience of working with the editorial board gave me such a sense of my college life. I am not that good at these kinds of things, especially with this online mode but I learned a lot and now I am feeling good. And this whole time was such an amazing time with my teammates. I have gained a lot and hope that I will get such a golden opportunity again.

~ *Varsha (Political Science, First year)*

I loved working in the department magazine team. I was really nervous when we started. Many things came to my mind how I will be help full, will students understand we, I don't want to disappoint anyone and many more things. But as soon as we started I found myself in the creative team of the magazine. And it is one of the experience I will never forget. My first few memories with my super talented juniors and dusting of my memories with by batchmates that we had made in our first year. It was fun working with all of them and I hope everyone like our work.

~ *Yamini, (Political Science, Third Year)*

Working on the Department's Magazine this year was a welcome distraction from the gloominess of the pandemic.

The enthusiasm of all members and the creativity of Diya, the Chief Editor, was a welcome surprise. I gained a lot of exposure in terms of opinions, editing and such while working for the magazine. Grateful to have this opportunity.

~ *Yukta Anand, (Political Science, Third Year)*



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE



MIRANDA HOUSE

celebrates

75 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

**AZADI KA
AMRUT MAHOTSAV**



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
MIRANDA HOUSE

presents



Department of Political Science,
Miranda House
presents
THROUGH OUR LENS
A pinch of 'political' attested in reels
THEME-
CINEPHILIA



Department of Political Science,
Miranda House
In collaboration with

OP Jindal Global University
Presents a webinar on

**Basic Human Right of Freedom of
Speech vis-a-vis Current Internet Shut
Down In Delhi & Kashmir**

by
PROF. ABHISHEK MISHRA
Assistant Professor at Jindal Global Law School



Civil Society
LIVE ON THE GO

The March Schedule
**CIVIL SOCIETY
LECTURES**

MARCH 5

S. Vishwanath, Civil Engineer
and water activist
Bengaluru and a
million wells: Catching
the rain in cities

MARCH 19

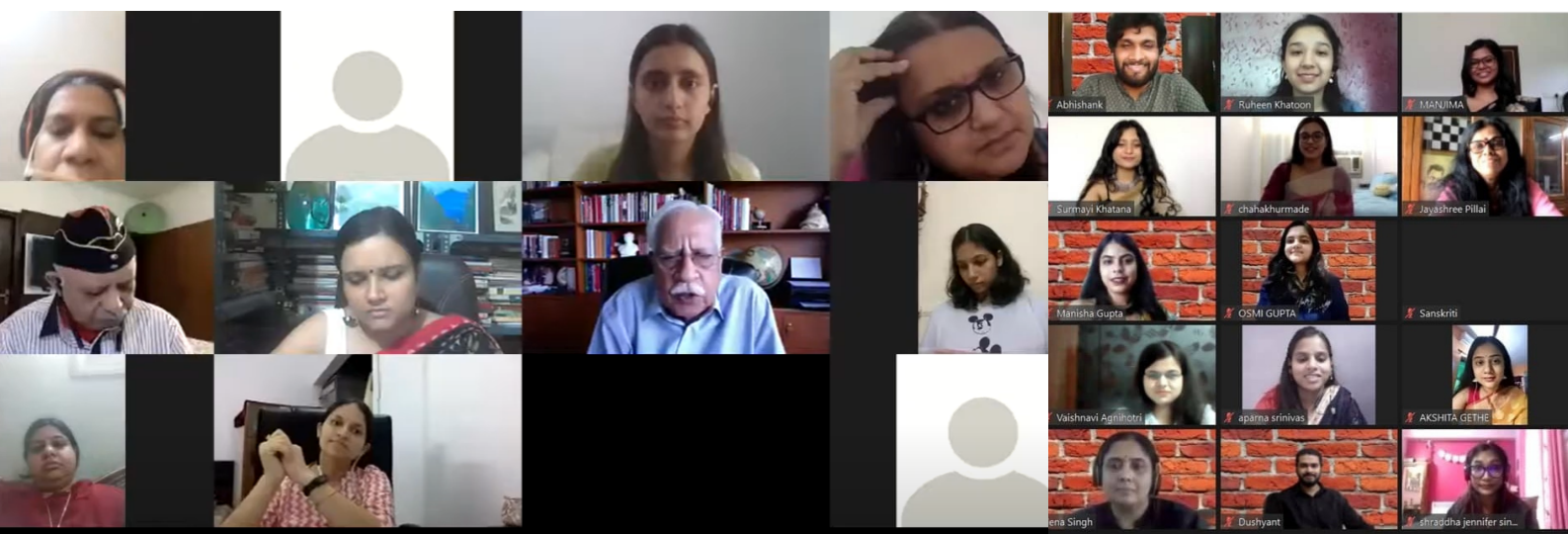
Latika Thukral, Co-Founder,
I Am Gurgaon
Gurgaon's urban forest:
Partnership in civic
governance

MARCH 12

Dr. C.R. Eisy, Professor,
Kerala Agricultural University
The Chengalikodan
banana: GI Rights
for farmers

MARCH 23

Geeta Wahi Dua, Co-Editor,
landscape architect
Green maps: Keep track
of cities as they change



DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT

The academic session of 2020-21 was unique in many ways. It was a year of resilience but at the same time a year of reaching new heights. The academic year 2020-21 began on August 10, 2020. First of its kind in the history of education, it was a new venture for students and teachers alike to interact via online mode. But nothing could deter the spirits and enthusiasm of our academic fraternity to continue the everlasting process of learning and growing. Be it education or co-curricular, the department of Political Science met every challenge head on and continued unimpeded on its path of excellence. Some of the shining glimpses of its online journey over the last year have been enlisted here.

ACADEMIC EVENTS:

On July 14, 2020, the Department of Political Science, Miranda House, organized its first webinar for the session 2020-21 on the topic, '**Sino-Indian relations: Challenges and Possibilities Ahead**'. Being one of the most pertinent issues for India in particular and the world in general in contemporary times, the webinar provided the requisite insights into the various aspects of the India-China relations. The esteemed speakers for the session were *Major General Sashi Asthana*, *Mr. Jayadeva Ranade* and the session was moderated by *Dr. Rityusha Mani Tiwary*. Major part of the discussion was around the question - How COVID-19 shake the relations between two countries?

The Department of Political Science in collaboration with the

Department of BA Programme organized a lecture series in the month of September including three sessions on **‘The Dialogues on Comparative Politics’**. Colonel Rupinder Hayer felicitated the first session on 12 September 2020 as the speaker on the topic *‘India and Canada in a comparative perspective’*. *Colonel Hayerr* is a political analyst and a media personality based in Canada. The session was moderated by *Dr. Abhishek Chaudhary*, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. The Teacher coordinator for this series was *Mr Dushyant Kave*. The webinar garnered a considerable audience and gave interesting insights. Facts and information rendered to the audience was qualitative in terms of its ability to trigger the curiosity of students and critically question the political developments in their country.

The second lecture in the series was organized on September 19, 2021 on the topic *‘India and UK in a Comparative Perspective’*. The Expert *Mr. Kapil Dudakia* along with the Chair *Dr. Abhishek Choudhary* took the session forward with a thoughtful panel discussion. The audience got a sense of political scenarios of both the countries and outcomes of different systems.

For the third lecture of the series, organised on 26th September, 2021 we had *Dr. Rajiv Ranjan*, an Associate professor at college of Liberal Arts, Institute of Global Studies, Shanghai University as the keynote speaker on the topic *‘India and China in a Comparative Perspective’*. The session was moderated by *Dr. Abhishek Chaudhary*, Assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. We discussed in detail the various aspects of India-China relations pertaining to the ongoing border conflict and various bilateral issues.

Department of Political Science, Miranda house conducted a one day national webinar on "**Identity of Diversities and Inclusivity of Right**" on 22nd October 2020. The speakers were Prof. Ashok K Acharya and Prof Asha Hans. Dr Bijayalaxmi Nanda, Acting Principal of Miranda house felicitated the event with her presence. The discussion was around the concept of identity, its importance, crisis, awareness about rights and so on.

From 18th October 2020 to 10th November 2020, the Department of Political Science in collaboration with the Delhi state Legal Services Authority (DSLSA) organized an **Online Add-on Legal literacy course**. It was a certified course organised over the month of October and November. The course provided a boost to the students regarding knowledge of legal procedures, laws and constitutional provisions. It proved to be an exciting yet learning experience for all the students, with speakers from *Dr. K. B. Rai*, (Former Advisor, Administrative Reforms Dept.), *Sh. Harjeet Singh Jaspal*, (Secretary North East DLSA), *Ms. Neeti Suri Mishra*, Secretary East, DLSA, & many more

The Department of Political Science, Miranda House and TULA - Consumer Club, Miranda House jointly conducted a webinar to observe the "**Vigilance Awareness Week**" and to emphasize upon the importance of integrity in public life on 28th October 2020. The theme for this year was "*Satark Bharat, Samriddh Bharat*" (*Vigilant India, Prosperous India*). *Shri Shakti Sinha* (Honorary Director, Delhi School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Delhi) was the keynote speaker for the event. Series of events conducted included Integrity

Pledge, Poster Presentation, Speech by Shri Shakti Sinha and Online Quiz Competition.

'**Civil Society Lectures**' was a distinguished lecture series that engaged in discourse and discussion around issues of pertinent importance. The lecture series had been organized by Civil Society Magazine in collaboration with the Department of Political Science, Miranda House from 8th January 2021 to 23rd March 2021. It was a certificate course, consisting of 12 sessions. The purpose of the lectures was to connect innovators, social sector leaders and change makers in industry to students and teachers, thereby enriching learning. Students attending these lectures were exposed to cutting edge ideas which would help them understand an evolving India. Eminent speakers for the Lectures included, Mr Dileep Ranjekar (CEO, Azim Premji Foundation), Mr Osama Manzar, (Founder, Digital Empowerment Foundation), Dr Sunil Kaul (Founder, The ANT),

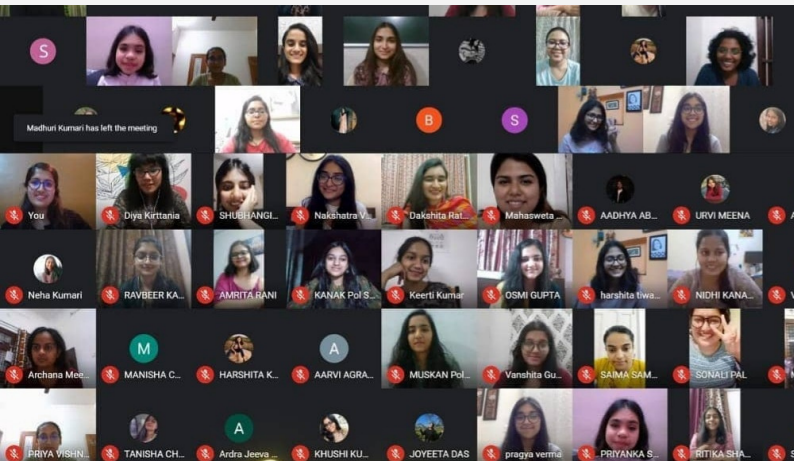
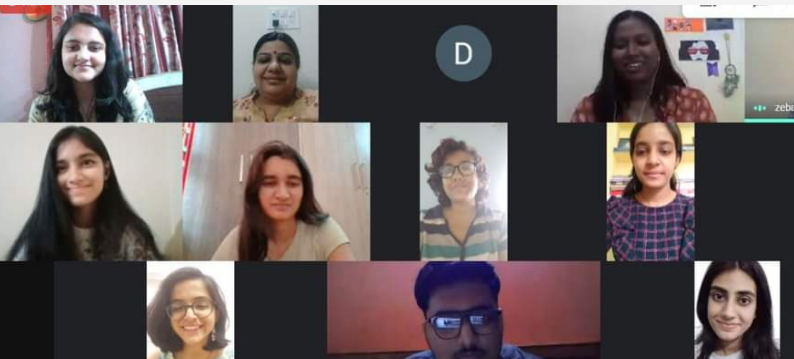
Mr R.A. Mashelkar (Scientist), *Mr P.D.Rai* (former Member of Parliament, Sikkiim, Founding Member and President of Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI), and many others.

On 17 February 2021, The Department of Political Science organized a webinar in collaboration with the O.P. Jindal University. The topic of the webinar was '**Basic Human Rights of Freedom of Speech vis-a-vis current internet shutdown in Delhi and Kashmir**'. The speaker for the session was *Prof. Abhishek Mishra*. He is an Associate

professor at the Global Jindal Law School. He is a prolific writer and his articles have been published in various reputed newspapers. The webinar was indeed informative as the speaker delved with the legal constitutional provisions for the curtailment of freedom of speech and expression that the citizens have been given under Fundamental Rights by Indian Constitution.

On 6th April with the vision to assess our policies in core sectors of the economy and espouse for future developments, the Department of Political Science, Miranda House, conducted a **Policy Conclave 2021, 'Policy Jenga - Deconstructing the Indian Public Policies'**. The conclave provided a platform for studying the policies generated in the sectors of education, healthcare, IT and employment. The Conclave consisted of Four Round Table Conferences (RTCs), each conference comprising 5 teams of two participants each.

The Department of Political Science, Miranda house organized its annual fest on the theme '**PARIVARTAN ~Re-forming India: A Public Policy Perspective**'. It was a two day event held on 5th and 6th April. It included various events and competitions. The two day long fest also comprised one panel discussion on each day surrounding the selected theme.



ECCLESIA 2021

Parivartan



On 5th April, first day of the fest, several events were conducted. The first one was the **Photography Competition** on the **theme "Capture The Change"**. The participants submitted incredible photographs that depicted heart touching changes that were brought about by public policies. The second event was **Just-A-Minute Competition** based on the very theme of the fest. The third event was the **Slam Poetry Competition- "Kavyanti"**. The participants beautifully expressed their opinions, passions and feelings through the art of poetry. The fourth event to which everyone looked forward was the **Session on the topic 'YOUTH IN PUBLIC POLICY- INNOVATION AND INCLUSION'** by a former *IAS Officer Mr Anil Swarup*, Founder Chairman, Nexus of Good and former secretary, School Education, Government of India. It was a big success. The last event of the first day was a **Panel Discussion on the topic 'India's Policy Landscape: Governance of Challenges and Opportunities'**. The eminent personalities that graced the fest with their presence in the panel discussion were *Dr. Aruna Sharma, Ms Yamini Aiyer and Ms. Kaushiki Sanyal*.

On 6th April, the second day of the annual fest, another panel discussion was organised on the topic **'Policy Relay: Seeking the common and uncommon ground on India's core policy sectors'**. The speakers who made the event absolutely intriguing were *Dr. Urvashi Sahni, Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya, Mr. Rakshit Tondon and Prof. Jayan Jose Thomas*.

The two day Annual Fest "Ecclesia 2021" of the Political Science Department, Miranda House was a grand success.

STUDENT ENGAGING ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES –

Covid-19 couldn't stop us from expressing our love for our beloved seniors.

The Department of Political Science organised an online farewell for the outgoing batch of 2020 on 1 June 2020. A number of online games for engaging the students such as Bingo, tag your buddies, Riddles etc. were put up on the Department's social media handles. Farewell was interspersed with soulful voices, mash-ups and dance performances. Teachers could not stay back from giving their blessings and expressing their love. Ending with the junior's love for their seniors we had messages spread across the online doodling board.

Samvaad is a monthly initiative introduced by the students Union (2020-21), Department of Political Science. This is an open platform, giving opportunity to the students across multifarious backgrounds and possessing a plethora of varied Political opinions to express their ideas and words before a larger audience. This initiative has been successful in getting good responses and entries have shown up from across the intellectual spectrum. The Samvaad edition of each month comes up with a new theme addressing current social and political events. This initiative tries to provide every opinion a platform.

"**Through Our Lens**" is the new initiative launched in the year 2021, month of January. The initiative deals with book reviews and visual media reviews. The theme for the book review was *Bookrazzi* and for the visual media review, *Cinephilia*. The purpose of this initiative is to provide an opportunity to the students to see and express the pinch of politics in lives around.

The Department of Political Science organized its **Annual Freshers** for the batch of 2023 on 1st March 2021. The session began with a welcome note from the Department President, *Teacher In charge* (Namrata Ma'am) and *Principal ma'am* (Dr. Bijaylaxmi Nanda). Our beloved teachers shared their pearls of wisdom which was followed by the ice-breaking session. Enthralling performances by our seniors followed. To entertain our juniors to their fullest we played numerous games like 'dumb charades' and 'never have i ever'.

POLICY CONCLAVE 2021: POLICY JENGA

The Department of Political Science, Miranda House conducted **‘Policy Jenga: Deconstructing the Indian Public Policy’**, a virtual policy conclave on the 6th of April 2021 from 1pm-4pm. The conclave involved round table conferences on four policy sectors namely Education, Employment, Information Technology and Health. Eleven colleges from different parts of India participated in the conclave.

BACKGROUND-

The policy making process is a complex one. It witnesses the participation of public and private institutions, media, and civil society. The Department of Political Science, Miranda House organised Ecclesia, its annual department fest, on 5th and 6th April 2021 on the theme *‘Parivartan, Re-forming India: A Public Policy Perspective.’* As a part of Ecclesia 2021, a panel discussion on ‘Policy Relay: Seeking the common and uncommon ground on India’s core policy sectors’ was organised on 6th April 2021. The panel consisted of experts on four core policy sectors- employment, health, education and information technology. In congruence with the discussion with experts, the department organised ‘Policy Jenga’ a policy conclave to augment the public policy process by facilitating discussions and critical perspective among students. Four policy sectors were chosen for the same - Health, Education, Information Technology and Employment. The criticality and volatility of these sectors came to light especially in the pandemic-hit year 2020.

SUMMARY-

The Department of Political Science, Miranda House organised a policy conclave on the topic 'Policy Jenga:Deconstructing the Indian public policy' on 6th April 2021. It was conducted virtually on zoom meetings with the participation of eleven colleges from all over India.

As part of the policy conclave, Round table conferences were held on four core policy sectors - education, health, information technology and employment. The conferences were held simultaneously from 1:30pm-3:30pm. The round table conferences were judged by mentor-judges Ms. Sakshi Srivastav, Ms.Soumya Pancholi, Ms.Devyanshi Dubey and Mr.Tarini Gupta and faculty judges Mr. Ashutosh Jha, Mr.Phureingam Hong, Mr.Abhisank Mishra and Mr. Dushyant Kumar. The participants analysed policy questions and presented their findings and recommendations. The winners of the conclave were St.Xaviers college, Daulat Ram college, Jesus and Mary college and Indraprastha college.

SESSION- WISE REPORT-

Round Table Conference on the Health Sector

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health sector of the country came into sharp focus. Health policies like the national health policy of 2017 needed to be re-examined. In this scenario, the round table conference on the health sector discussed rebooting the 2017 National Health Policy in the wake of COVID-19. The teams participating in this conference were from Ramjas college, Jesus and Mary college, Fergusson college and Miranda House. Shubhangi and Tanya moderated the session. The judges were *Ms. Soumya Pancholi*

and Mr. Abhishank Mishra. The colleges of the team members were not disclosed to the judges for unbiased result calculation. The teams discussed in length about the national health policy, universal health care and highlighted the importance of food security, mental health and accessibility to health facilities. The presentations were followed by a cross questioning and debate session where participants raised questions and relevant POIs. The session concluded with closing remarks from Mr. Abhishank Mishra.

Round Table Conference on the Employment Sector

Being potential job-seekers, students understand that they are stepping into an already competitive space and the unemployment and under-employment statistics substantiate it. So, it becomes important to assess the government's existing policies and the future plan of action to contain such an influx of employment seekers as India moves towards the high-end phase of our demographic dividend. Therefore, the round table conference on employment discussed rerouting the youth from knowledge oriented outsourcing to domestic employment and reworking India's policies for the same. Shyama Prasad Mookherji college, Hindu college, St.Xavier's college, Christ University and Miranda House participated in this round table conference. It was moderated by Osmi, Muskan and Sreelakshmi. *Ms. Devyanshi Dubey* and *Mr. Ashutosh Jha* judged this conference. The colleges of the team members were not disclosed to the judges for unbiased result calculation. The participating teams provided a brief history of the Employment Policies of the country and argued for the need of a holistic approach to the Development and Progress. This was followed

by a cross-questioning session and. The session concluded with closing remarks by Mr.Ashutosh Jha.

Round Table Conference on the Education Sector

As active stakeholders, students are directly impacted by any development in this sector. In the long run, any change in the education system will have a rippling effect on the nation at large. In the context of the union government rolling out the National Education Policy, the round table conference on the education sector discussed the employability of India's higher education system. Teams from IIT-Madras, Jamia Millia Islamia, Daulat Ram College and Miranda House participated in this RTC. It was moderated by Bharti Sharma and Kanak. Ms. Sakshi Srivastava and Mr. Phureingam Hong were judges of this round table conference. The colleges of the team members were not disclosed to the judges for unbiased result calculation. The teams discussed pertinent problems of education like the internal brain- drain of the students, limitations of educational infrastructures and hierarchy, marginalization and the importance of meritocracy. The presentations were followed by a cross-questioning session where participants raised questions and relevant POIs. The session concluded with closing remarks by *Mr. Phureingam Hong*.

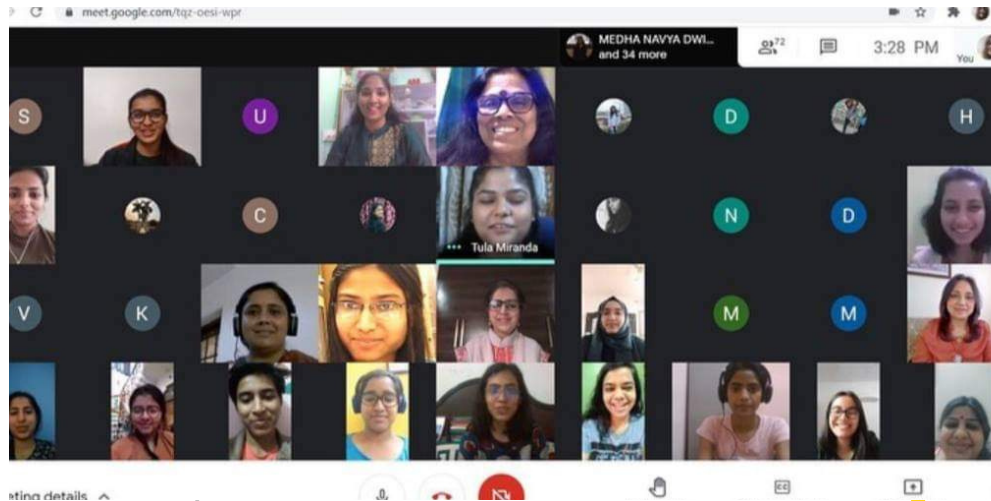
Round Table conference on the Information Technology Sector

The world has moved online and this trend started before the pandemic. With advancements like Artificial Intelligence, and growing reliance on the 'e-mode' for almost all sectors, including those of defense,

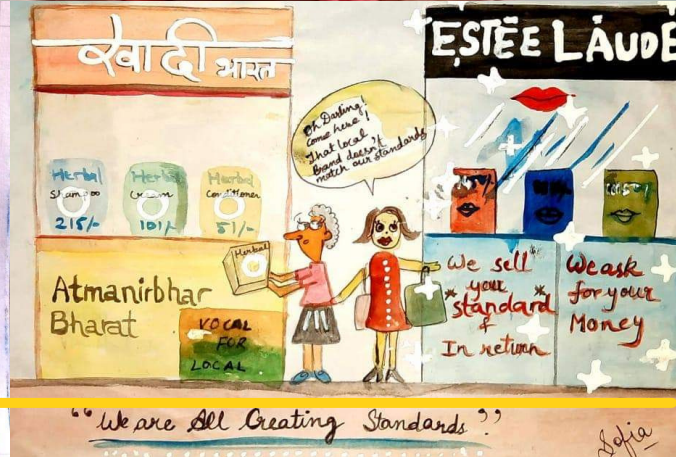
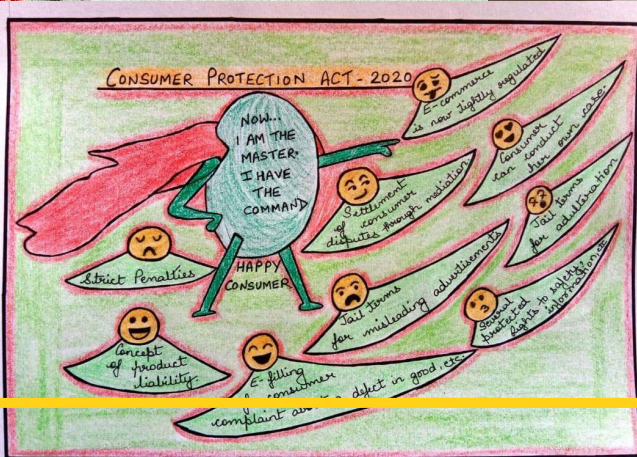
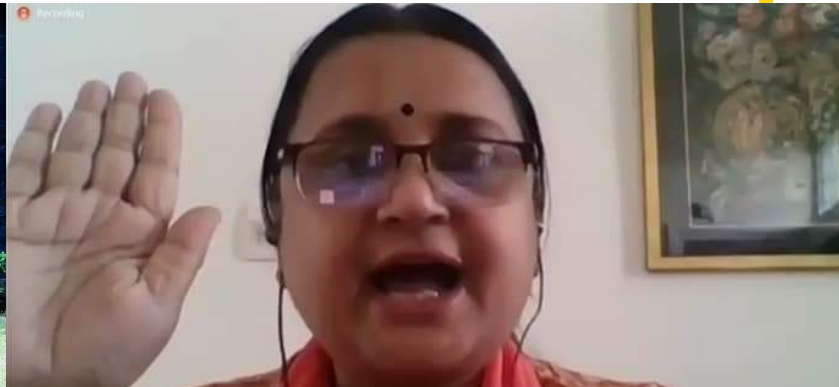
healthcare, foreign policy among others, it became pertinent to assess the policies in regards to the IT sector, specifically those accruing to data protection, cybersecurity and upholding privacy. The round table conference on the IT sector discussed India's position relating to rising cybersecurity concerns in the context of COVID-19. The participants were from Jamia Millia Islamia, Indraprastha college, Lady Sriram College and Miranda House. The session was moderated by Neha Kumari and Aakriti Jha. *Ms.Tarini Gupta* and *Mr.Dushyant Kumar* acted as adjudicators of the conference. The colleges of the team members were not disclosed to the judges for unbiased result calculation. The teams discussed ethical hacking and the need to update the Cyber Policies of the country. This was followed by a cross questioning and debate session where participants raised questions and relevant POIs. The session concluded with closing remarks by *Mr.Dushyant Kumar*.

CONCLUSION-

The policy conclave was successful in initiating discussions around the core policy sectors. It was a learning experience for the students and was an enriching experience for the judges as well as all the attendees.



TULA- MH CONSUMER CLUB



TULA - MH CONSUMER CLUB

TULA, Consumer Club Miranda House, was established in February 2007 by Dr Jayashree Pillai of the Department of Political Science with the aim to enlighten young scholars about their consumer rights. Over the years, TULA has established itself as one of the most active consumer clubs of the University of Delhi. The primary objective of TULA is to play a pioneering role in developing consumer awareness and underlining consumer rights and activities through talks delivered by distinguished speakers from various backgrounds, workshops, awareness weeks, plays, and many more.

All through the year, TULA organises various activities for the advancement of the young scholars towards becoming more informed citizens. Two activities of great significance conducted every year are the Vigilance Awareness Week and the Consumer Awareness Workshop wherein eminent speakers are called upon to enlighten the young minds about the different aspects of Consumerism. Apart from that, TULA organises activities like Nukkad Nataks, National Level Competitions, Mock Consumer Court and much more. The Club releases an Annual Journal every year called SANTULAN, which attempts to educate consumers about their rights and also make them cognizant about the present-day challenges faced as a consumer. The Covid-19 Pandemic could not dampen the spirit of TULA MHCC. All the events, competitions, awareness programmes were shifted to online mode. With the collaborative efforts of the student body and highly supportive professors, SANTULAN was released as an e-journal. Innumerable online meetings, emails, phone calls, brainstorming sessions and year's worth of work went into creating this amazing piece of writing. Despite the uncertain times, TULA had a highly productive 2020-21 session.



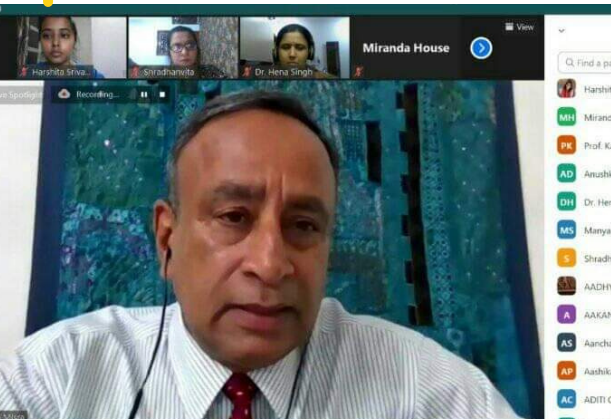
POLICY CENTRE & GENDER LAB
MIRANDA HOUSE
 presents
A SURVEY ON WOMEN'S EQUALITY

Do women have more, fewer or the same opportunities to advance career in their organisation as men?

More[26%] Less[26%] Same [48%]

"An overwhelming majority of 97% reaffirmed that it is erroneous to assume that career breaks taken by women are used as a tool to underrate the value of work done by them"

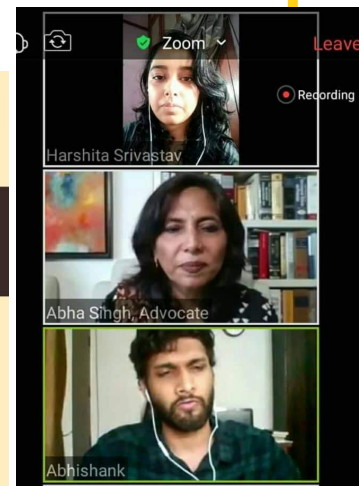
POLICY CENTRE & GENDER LAB



POLICY CENTRE & GENDER LAB
MIRANDA HOUSE
 Presents

DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE SERIES
A Conversation With Richard Jolly

Sir Arthur Richard Jolly
 Honorary Professor and Associate Researcher
 Institute of Development Studies
 University of Sussex



POLICY CENTRE & GENDER LAB
Miranda House
 Presents

International Mother Language Day

WOMEN

- ALLOWED TO WORK FROM HOME
- FLEXIBLE HOURS -8 IN
- CAREGIVERS

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

HIGHER EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE NEED TO BE TAUGHT ALONG WITH SKILL DEVELOPMENT

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN POST COVID -19 ERA

SSCS

NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

DIGITAL SERVICES

GREATER DEMAND FOR -CLOUD COMPUTING

DATA ANALYTICS
 DATA SCIENCES
 GIG ECONOMY
 DATA LITERACY
 DATA VISUALISATION
 NEW OPPORTUNITIES

POLICY CENTRE & GENDER LAB
MIRANDA HOUSE
 presents

RESEARCH INFOGRAPHICS
 on
HUMANITARIAN SERVICE

POLICY CENTER AND GENDER LAB

Motivated by the idea - "Beneath the skin of social structure lies the narrative carved by research"; Policy Centre and Gender Lab is the platform which aims to bequeath to the society, young researchers equipped with multitude of perspectives and acute analytical abilities; their skills honed under the guidance of proficient faculty at Miranda House. In view of nationwide lockdown and motivated by the desire to keep the learning process going, Policy Centre & Gender Lab initiated the process of research paper writing on the theme "impact of lockdown on women". A group was constituted which conducted preliminary findings on this theme.

PCGL in collaboration with other organizations, societies hosted various online seminars centered around diverse issues of importance including COVID-19 to spread awareness. Some prominent ones are a webinar on "Gender in the Times of Covid-19 and the Impact of Covid-19 on Global Consumer", "Gendered spaces in lockdown". PCGL's members spread awareness by publishing blog articles on plethora of themes and launched a series of articles on the topic "impact of covid-19 lockdown on women". Policy Centre and Gender Lab also conducted two online surveys - One on challenges of online education and another on women's equality day awareness.

Along with these, PCGL also conducted some major events like PCGL'S first ever online debate competition, workshops on Research paper writing, webinars in collaboration with Her World and posting informative content around gender for PCGL'S YouTube channel. With the constant support of our members and faculty PCGL celebrated it's one year anniversary on 4th February' 2021, and we are wishing to extend the base of PCGL across Miranda House.

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya

“The last 15-16mos has been so physically, mentally, socially taxing to each and every one of us, but this will be over and we comeback, and bounce back to normalcy” said Dr Chandrakant Lahariya, the highly professional medical doctor, epidemiologist, vaccinologist, Public Health, and Policy Expert affiliated with the World Health Organization. He has co-authored the bestselling book “Till We Win: India's Fight Against The COVID-19 Pandemic”, and writes regularly for India’s top news network, such as The Hindu, Hindustan Times, Times of India, the Indian Express, Economic Times, and many others.

While speaking with Diya Kirttania, the Editor in Chief of Vox Populi, Dr Lahariya not only responded to all the questions in depth, addressing all the dimensions of it, but he also shared his logical justifications to his statements supported with examples.



Dr Chandrakant Lahariya

1. With the incoming 3rd wave in Aug/Sept, would India be able to tackle it at the rate at which the vaccination drive is conducted?

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya: One of the key methods for tackling the 3rd wave would be to increase the pace of the vaccination and religiously following the COVID appropriate behaviour. With the newer discovery of the different variants, it is important to develop the immunity of the citizens. So yes, keep following the appropriate behaviours, and continue maintaining social distances, and avoid large gatherings

2. In your article titled 'A Cardinal Emission in the Covid-19 package' you have pointed out the neglect of health human resources. What in your opinion are the major hurdles in human resource development in the health sector?

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya: Policy makers ignore the dire conditions of the Health Sector, the vacancies within the Health Sector- the competitive nature within the sector is lacking majorly. And to abate such a situation, career progression of the health sector workers is necessary, an increase in funding, and a justiciable review of the various policies, both financial and non-financial fundings.

3. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the real state of health infrastructure in India. When even the most developed nations faced difficulties during these times , do you think the health infrastructure in India is sufficient? How do you think

we can bring a change in the trend?

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya: India as a developing nation enjoys a very poor health infrastructure, and malevolent policies in place- the infrastructure is not even close to the complacent infrastructures of the developed countries.

For developed states in India, like Kerala and Goa, the life expectancy rate (the age to which a person is expected to live, or the remaining number of years a person is expected to live) has increased in comparison to developing countries like Assam and Madhya Pradesh. Infant Mortality Rate (number of children dying before the age of 1 per thousand live births) varies from developed states of Goa and Kerala having around 6 per 1000 live births, to developing states like Assam and Madhya Pradesh having around 47 per 1000 live births, with a national trend of 30 deaths per 1000 live births. Maternal Mortality Rate (the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births due to pregnancy or termination of pregnancy, regardless of the site or duration of pregnancy) ranges from 120 deaths per 1000 in developing states like Assam and Madhya Pradesh, to 10 deaths per 1000 in developed states like Goa and Kerala.

Therefore, it isn't that the medical system failed pan- nationally, and the individual state govts are also responsible to a great extent. Proper investing and sanctioning better parameters would be more useful in the long run

4. Some of the most showcased strategies of the present government are Ayushman Bharat, the newly launched Cowin

website and the Arogya Setu app. Has it really helped the vulnerable groups during the crises, or has it increased the bridge?

Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya: No, these strategies have failed to prove themselves. The Arogya Setu App has not been helpful- these technology-based applications are only helpful where they're accessible. But they can be unable to respond to the greater masses. Instead increase in public services, and grassroots engagements would prove more beneficial- sustainable health initiatives by the govt reaching to the greater community would be more sensible in nature. Because you see, PM Jan Dhan Yojana wasn't as successful as it was anticipated, and hence to make the health infrastructure more accessible to all they need to look for sustainable solutions and methods.

5. The pandemic may be seen as a blessing in disguise as we have the chance and a reason to reform the whole system and eliminate the existing discrepancies. What do you think should be the first step towards this direction and which areas need to be prioritized first?



Dr Chandrakant Lahariya: Honestly, the Pandemic has been more of a curse than a blessing from a social perspective, and I am yet to see a change. There have been no opportunities, no job generation or employment, rather everyone was busy showcasing the election campaigning that was taking place. If there have been some blessings for the Pandemic, we're waiting to see it in the next months to come. The only layer improved is the National Health Budget increase from 1.1% to 2%

6. The pandemic has unleashed the potential and possibilities in the Ayurveda - which has been well popularized throughout the world during these times. How can we utilise this opportunity as a nation rich in Ayurvedic knowledge?

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya: When we say "Healthcare", we say 'health' and 'care', right? Meaning caring, and maintaining our personal health- which largely depends on us as well, to promote better health. Living a healthy lifestyle, consuming health beneficial food, daily exercises, proper sleep, et cetera. In such cases, traditional health boosting techniques, Pranayama, Yoga, Ayurveda becomes beneficial, and easily available to everyone. The idea of these traditional healthcare techniques is for maintaining a basic and holistic personal health of any individual.

7. Does the delay of time limit between the two vaccines have any scientific backing? Or is it due to the logistical concerns?

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya: Of course, there is a scientific backing to the delay- scientists from all over the world have

come together to develop a vaccine to potentially fight against this virus, there has to be a scientific reasoning to it. There was apprehension within the citizens initially related to the vaccine doses, particularly Covidshield since it has the longest delay in doses. However, it has now been widely accepted. In fact, the longer the delay, the better the efficacy- the efficacy of the vaccine increases from 56% in 4 weeks, to 79% in 12 weeks, with 71% efficiency after a single dose. The vaccine is now also used in USA.

8. If India is to come to us with a 'Systemic Pandemic Mitigation Framework' to deal with future exigencies, what will be the core principles from which it ought to derive it's force?

Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya: If India is to postulate any 'Systematic Pandemic Mitigation Framework', it must have five core principles for the same. The first being 'Effective Disease Surveillance' Mechanism by the govt for proper understanding the extent to which the disease has spread. The second pointer being 'Capacity Building' with focus on building human resources and proper epistemology. The third necessary step being proper 'Reporting and Data Recording' ensuring accountability to the citizens, and the concerning stakeholders. The fourth principle being 'Equipped Laboratory' for scientific discoveries, health necessities, and technologies. And lastly, 'Sufficient Funding' for Primary Health sectors aiding the rural and remote pockets of the countries. A holistic association between these five principles

would make a beneficial Pandemic Mitigation Framework

9. How do you think we can bridge the Vaccination Gap and ensure there is no Gender Discrimination in Vaccination?

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya: Of course, there exists social stratification when it comes to national policies like Vaccination Drives, and the only ways in mitigating these gaps are proper Data Collection and Analysation of the population to manage equity within the different stratus, mostly the Tribal groups, the slum dwellers and the religious minorities. However, the willingness of the Govt in funding these analyses is equally important when it comes to eradicating the discriminations.

10. Is online mode of education as the alternate education method for COVID 19 advancing National Education Policy?

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya: No, Online Learning can never be an alternate method of learning. School Education, and for that matter, any form of education is much more than just books, it is about physical health, mental health, social life, it is about meeting and interacting, and discussing and maintaining social life. Besides, the online method of learning deprives the underprivileged section making education more elite in nature than universal. So no, an online mode of education wouldn't ever suffice for proper education. Unless the education is following a scientific technique, and involves family members engaging the students in education scientifically.

11. Do you think the Coronavirus and the vaccine Diplomacy will affect the National “Foreign Policy of India”? If yes, how?

Dr Chandrakant Lahariya: It is highly unlikely that it'll affect the National Foreign Policy in anyways. However, it'd be more beneficial to India if they follow more inward-looking approaches to outward looking approaches, and move global eventually. Maitri Policy was highly applauded by every nation, and when in need India too received help from other nations during the second wave.

In conclusion Dr Chandrakant Lahariya talked about the exceptional circumstances in which the students of this generation are surviving having missed most of college and senior school years. He particularly focused on more incentives assisting the betterment of our health, and that taking care of one's health is the best way to prevent the transmission of the virus and further fatalities. The virus has adversely affected the underprivileged poor section of the society, and hence as individuals we must address our actions, and come in solidarity as a united society with those who have been the worst affected by it. He extended his heartfelt congratulations to the team for coming up with such an important topic of discussion, and equally engrossing questions.

Disclaimer: The conversation between the parties have been justly edited to maintain the privacy of the cases

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Dr Archana Dhawan Bajaj

“Rationality and social responsibility over religious- political biases, and going forward with conditioning others can avert the incoming third wave” said the Delhi- based famous IVF & Fertility Expert, Obstetrician and Gynecologist, Dr. Archana Dhawan Bajaj while talking with Diya Kirttania, Editor in Chief of Vox Populi.

In conversation with Vox Populi, Dr. Bajaj threw enormous light over questions pertaining to the health and well being of the women during the Pandemic, and the curtain over the vaccination drive. She candidly responded to all the questions prepared for her by the team of Vox Populi and she even shared her anecdotes of tackling the subsequent waves of the Pandemic.



Dr Archana Bajaj

Q: Will the mutation of the Coronavirus affect the fetus, and increase the risk in pregnancy?

Dr. Archana Bajaj: The answer to this question is rather retrospective since each case varies according to the differences with mutation of the virus, besides very little data is available to the medical sciences regarding the consequences of the variants of the virus. However, the trend is it'll affect the fetus and increase risks more, but there is no such evidence available yet. And we can assume it'll affect the younger girls more.

Q: Does the virus in a long run affect the sexual health of the virus affected individuals, eg. risk in pregnancy, erectile dysfunction?

Dr Archana Bajaj: So there are two types of challenges that was faced, first being the Medical wing or pathological effect, and second being the mental or psychological health

Talking particularly about the mental health, many people lost their jobs, faced recessions, house confinement and immobility, they've become anti socials which is affecting them psychologically and the very reason why they're facing libido, intrauterine growth restriction, higher miscarriages, placental accidents, preterm labour, and much more. Reproductive health of individuals have definitely taken a toll, and the trend has been more visible in the second wave than the first

Q. How challenging has it been to deliver the babies of Covid positive mothers while ensuring the safety of the child?

Dr. Archana Bajaj: There have been multiple cases with

asymptomatic mothers having the virus and delivering perfectly healthy babies. And there were several cases with severely affected lung, multi- system involvement leading to difficult delivery, ventilator assistance, neonatal intensive care, maternal and fetal losses. The number of young pregnant women was 20folds more in the 2nd wave than the 1st wave. Many women faced stormy postpartum periods where they would not breastfeed, some were not physically available because they were in the ICU with severe morbidity. There was no help available because of the lockdown.

Q. Has the pandemic impacted post birth care and examination process for mother and child, given the restrictions and lockdown during the pandemic?

Dr. Archana Bajaj: As is the trend in Indian families, after the birth of a baby, relatives visit the family and often stay back to help the mother in the early newborn days, there are several caretakers for the mother and the baby, and often the mothers don't have to worry about any household work per say. But with the Pandemic and the lockdown, the influx of relatives other than close family members have reduced manifold, restricting the family members from visiting, and helping the new mom. The social distancing measures discouraged the family from hiring a househelp/ caretaker. Majority of household work therefore fell on the mother leading to her tiredness and exhaustion postpartum.

Q. Was there an increase in the rates of Postpartum depression

among the covid positive mothers? Has there been an increase in Postpartum Depression in general within the mothers because of the Pandemic?

Dr. Archana Bajaj: Postpartum Depression has definitely increased, one can't go out, for buying clothes, avail food services, or even medicines. Maintaining social distancing, reducing the social life, the lack of caretaking and house help collectively led to physical and psychological effects in new moms, which increased more in the 2nd wave

Q. How did the fathers react in this period? Was there any trend of more involvement of the fathers?

Dr. Archana Bajaj: Involvement of the fathers definitely increased in the pre and postnatal care of their wives and newborns. They are abiding and accepting the social responsibilities and the COVID appropriate behaviours. The fathers are very careful with the restrictions, they're proactive, apprehensive and concerned, and is definitely spending quality time with their partners and newborns

Q. It has been observed that expecting mothers all over India are hesitant to take the COVID vaccine. Are vaccines safe for pregnant women? If yes, what can the government do to encourage more intake of vaccines?

Dr Archana Bajaj: Vaccination is now allowed to pregnant and lactating mothers, but still they're very apprehensive and dismissive of the idea of vaccinations. The vaccines are safe, yes, but a lot needs to be done to increase the trust of the women into it. Increased use of electronic and print media for increased

acceptances, and to increase the understanding of the importance of vaccination. But apart from just vaccinations, the new mothers can work towards modifying their lifestyle, intake proper exercises and breathing methods, regularly take their vitamins and medicines, avoid crowded places- the onus of taking better care of themselves falls on them. On the other side, the medical workers have also become more careful and extra productive, they're improving their infrastructure, increasing the capacity of ICU beds and ventilators in hospitals to serve the needs.

Q. Have you witnessed any discrimination of the in-law family towards Covid positive expecting mothers, more so if the baby born is a biological female? Do you think a similar discrimination exists?

Dr. Archana Bajaj: There was definitely an increase in discrimination with COVID positive female borns, which was anyways known. The baby girl and her mother were not taken care of properly as much as baby boys were looked after. There was scepticism regarding COVID positive females, be it an expecting mother or a lactating mother. Discriminatory behaviour towards female borns is anyways very high in the Indian context, which did increase partially when the mothers, and their newborn daughters were covid positive.

Q. What is your take on the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill, 2020? Do you feel it's violative of autonomy of women over their body?

Dr. Archana Bajaj: No no, the MTP Bill 2020 is a very liberal

bill, it has increased the date of gestation from 20 to 24 week supported with a valid medically endorsed reason, the confidentiality of the pregnant woman is properly maintained and in no ways revealed, the number of healthcare worker present during the termination has also been reduced from two to one, and with updated technology and scientific developments it has become even more safer at hospitals

Q: Do you see the present legal framework for regulating IVF and surrogacy matters as inefficient and gender biased? What do you think should be the regulations and to what extent these regulations are needed?

Dr. Archana Bajaj: There is no law in the Parliament that is there to regulate IVF and Surrogacy, and it is repeatedly venged in the parliament by the medical workers. However, certain regulations are available which have been carefully framed, these are medical friendly ensuring congenial atmosphere between the doctor and the patient. As for sex selective abortion is concerned, the Govt, and the medical staffs ensures that such acts are discouraged and prevented in any form of conception- the PCPNDT Act in place strictly adhere to this pledge, and abriding the same is liable to punishment

At the end Dr. Archana Dhawan Bajaj extended her gratitude to the younger generation for being practical and rational, to uphold social responsibility over personal beliefs. Upon asking about the next wave, she asked the Indians to continue maintaining the COVID appropriate behaviour and coantinue with social distancing

and continue being responsible and united in this Pandemic together

Disclaimer: The conversation between the parties have been justly edited to maintain the privacy of the cases



FROM THE COVID HELPDESK

While the entire country was grasping for that last breath of oxygen and the medical infrastructure failed every single citizen- while all the remaining hospital beds, ventilators, ounces of hopes vanished in thin air and the burning grounds spilled with burning pyres and their howling relatives, Shristi Sensarma, along with her group of friends from Miranda House have stepped in and took over the colossal task of setting up a COVID Helpdesk and help the estranged, in the most grassroot level. While talking to the team of Vox Populi, Shristi has remembered the bedlam of emotions she and her friends felt during the ascent, the apex, and the descent of the second wave of the Coronavirus in India- there has been rage, anger, stubborn individuals, there has been multiple nervous breakdowns and psychological breakdowns, helplessness, death experiences and mostly they would get wrong leads of the resources in the start. On the wee side, they have faced sexual harassments, derogatory slurs, blames for deaths, rape threats and even threats of murders. But with all these waves of emotions, the MH Helpdesk has continued to provide their support to everyone in desperate need.

Srishti Sensarma, and her team of friends Vitti Joshi, Tavissi Jain, Vaishnavi Nandkumar, Falek Khatana, Gauri S. Kumar, Akshita Sharma, Eshaa Wahie, Shyenika Upadhyay, expressed why and how they came up with something so groundbreaking in its own ways

Shristi Sensarma



As a socially and politically active individual, Shristi has been always motivated to help others and do good to the society, to help the poor and make food more sustainable and accessible to all. So when she found Instagram stories and highlights looking for medical leads soon after the second wave hit, she reached out to the Principal of Miranda House, Dr Bijaylaxmi Nanda and placed the proposal of curating a college help desk to help the students, teaching and non- teaching staff in need. Under Dr. Nanda's leadership, the COVID Helpdesk was setup. Within two days of creating a Whatsapp group, an excel sheet with verified leads, and with over 300 volunteers, the news and numbers of the Helpdesk spread like a wildfire across the length and breadth of the country. Shristi recalls getting calls from UK, USA, Germany, even Tanzania, Peru, Mongolia with relatives looking for verified leads for their family living in India. While narrating the instances to the team she recalls the utter helplessness, medically and monetarily, in the voice of the callers desperately looking for oxygen, beds, ICU, oximeters, medicines, plasmas and so much more. When the wave hit the peak Shristi received over 3000 calls a day, lasting not more than 40 seconds because the other caller would continue ringing. Amidst all these sleepless services, giving up eating and resting, Shristi and her friends have found a young clinical psychologist, Aman, who extended his helping hand in providing free psychological and counselling support to her and her friends, at any hour of the day. Shristi has also found help from her Muslim friends who'd take calls and send verified leads in the early hours of sehri during Ramzan, so that she could rest for a couple of hours. Her parents have been a source of great support to her who'd serve, and at times feed her food while she was busy attending the calls.

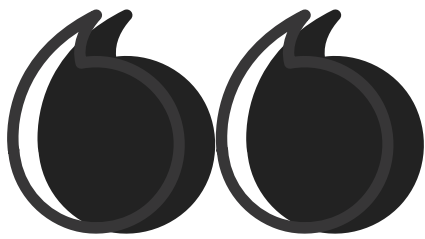
Shristi recalls taking a couple of days off for herself in between this mayhem when all her calls were attended by her close friends- the day she could finally lie down and take some time for herself, but she felt nothing, a stark darkness, emptiness, lack of emotion washed over her, and what has happened next was her tough battle with PTSD, and nervous breakdowns. She often played her piano in times of ‘questioning the existence’ and her piano has helped her ground her mind, and set the next intention. As her closing statement for her interview with Vox Populi, she mentions a beautiful quote, “there’s light at the end of the tunnel”, and that reality is morbid and there will be challenges, and issues, but there is hope too, and there is love, and friendship, and solidarity within individuals- how everyone set aside everything, from religion, to politics, to family, only to help the most vulnerable and susceptible. Shristi sees herself as a new person, a different person, a person who’s capable of self love, and capable of looking at life with a completely different perspective.

Shristi Sensarma wrote her final papers merely 2 weeks after the retreating of the wave. She is a recent Philosophy graduate from Miranda House, and is an incoming Post Graduate student at the New York University. And Shristi Sensarma is excited about her future.

The team of Vox Populi hails and honors the tireless work conducted by the entire team of volunteers of the MH Helpdesk, and wishes Shristi and her group of friends all the very best for their upcoming future.

Disclaimer: The conversation between the parties have been justly edited to maintain the privacy of the speaker

VOICES OF YOUTH



“If you have the human resources, properly channelize it - try to help the others”, said Ms Suzzane Zerín to the team of Vox Populi in her conversation about her experience as a COVID Volunteer.

Suzzane Zerín is a Postgraduate student at Delhi University, hailing from Northeast India. She’s also working full time as the Project Manager at BRICS Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Since a very young age Suzzane has actively participated in various extracurricular activities, and community services, having served positions in various such youth organizations, and individual volunteering.

In conversation with Vox Populi, Suzanne told how her COVID Volunteering started as a “random idea” through social media leads, but it soon developed into a proactive volunteering service of her towards the community.



Suzzane Zerín

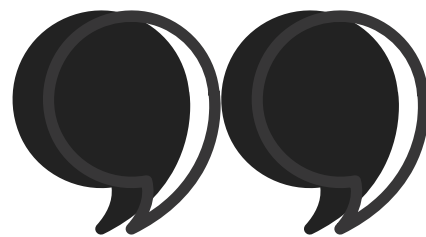
leads, and within a week, she started receiving SOS Calls from people in need. Suzzane, at this time, has returned back to her home state Assam before the wave hit the Northern states completely, so even though she was sheltered in her home confinements, she kept reaching out to others tirelessly. She also remembers how even in the hours of her Sehri and Iftar during the Ramzan, she'd attend calls, verify leads, and keep checking up with individuals which somewhat affected her personal spaces. However, having supportive parents, and friends around, she continued to render her services. Alongside her personal volunteering, she was also working with Plasma Aid India and Seva International which also had set up their helpdesks, and in fact, with Suzzane being one of the key volunteers, BRICS too opened their chambers for volunteering and setting up a Helpdesk. As a Political Science Graduate from the prestigious Hindu College, Suzzane expects the youth, and young generation to not remain apolitical or aloof, that if an individual has the privileges and resources they should try to help - there are uncountable problems, and one should try to bring some changes, more when the Government and the institutions are subsequently failing the citizens. The Government, and the various Government stances require to be questioned and criticised. The Vaccine Policy, and the vaccination drives conducted by the Government, political leaders using

*Zerin in Food
Distribution
Drive conducted
in Northeast*



slogans, “we have tackled COVID”, without acknowledging the deaths, and the failure of medical infrastructure - these elite attitudes should be questioned by the citizens, politicians and the Government should be questioned on individual levels, rather than just on community levels. The Northeast is however facing a complete different challenge- the second wave hit the northeastern states a little later than the northern states, the cases were initially less, and so were the death rate, but now the virus has seeped into the pocket areas of the states, where the medical services aren't the best, and hence the rate of susceptibility and death has increased manifold. However, no political leader is making a note of it, and rather with the opening of tourism and mainland Indians flocking to the rural areas are increasing the chances of transmitting the virus to the locals. While these privileged tourists return back to their posh, multi member earning families, with proper medical services and economic stability, the small business owned locals remain behind with zero medical services, or financial security. The situation is particularly “scary” with stringent lockdown measures, over-hoarding of essentials and shortages of medical goods. When asked about her experiences, Suzzane candidly responded about all the challenges she felt on a more personal level, starting from nervous breakdowns to feeling of helplessness, and constant self doubt. It was hard to cope, but she constantly reminded herself to try her best. This she believes to be one of the worst experiences of her life, and it was definitely difficult. However, she also talked about seeing light at the end of the dark tunnel, she believed in humanity, and this time, when the COVID crisis was at its peak and there was an anarchy in the society and the Government apparatus literally failed everyone, the Indians were united in solidarity sans any

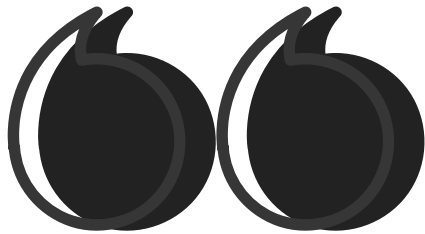
discrimination, and this was a learning experience for her. She also learned to let loose sometimes, and take challenges face front - as a person who used to plan and sketch out everything meticulously, from the experiences Suzzane learned it's okay to not plan sometimes, or sketch out everything, because one can never be sure of what to expect. As her closing remarks, Suzzane reminded the team of Vox Populi how the virus is mutating more complexly, and how the government isn't prepared to tackle another wave, and so the citizens should be more aware, and responsive, instead of stupidly putting themselves and others into danger. But she's also hopeful of changes, where the world would get back and better to a happy place.



Suzzane Zerín is a Political Science Graduate from Hindu College, University of Delhi and is presently pursuing her Masters degree from University of Delhi. She's working full time as the Project Manager at BRICS Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and hails from Assam

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VOICES OF YOUTH



"Collectively we can create a change and save lives"

Well If you are reading this, then I am sure that you have witnessed or won over the Second Wave of COVID-19. Since last year, the pandemic has taken a blow all over the world, taking many lives. Similar to the Spanish Flu of 1918-20, the second wave of COVID-19 was more devastating than the first.

The supplies of Essential medicines, oxygen, scarcity of beds and increasing number of COVID-19 positive patients were the highlight of the Second wave.

As a matter of fact, we all were very much aware about the second wave, but were

unaware of its extent and the aftermath. From my own perspective, I believe that the second wave somehow managed to deal with the combined efforts of the whole medical

fraternity, the COVID volunteers and the Government. It was the first week of April, 2021, when the second wave impact could be seen.



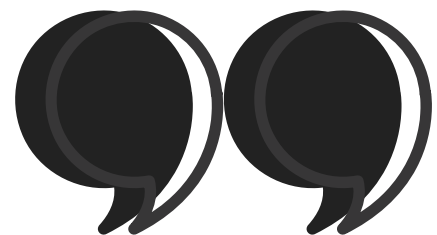
But WERE THERE ENOUGH RESOURCES? The answer to it is NO. And let us not get into the blame game of it. Due to a few personal losses in the second wave and how bad its impact was, I felt uneasy and thought that it was about time that I should step up too.

I stumbled upon two groups on Telegram, named as, “COVID INDIA - Helps The Needy” & “COVID India - For The People”, while searching for a vial of *tocilizumab*. I joined these two groups in order to get help, in which I was successful in getting it. But the efforts put in by the Owner and the volunteers in the groups was something which is way beyond commendable. In a matter of 3 hours, I voluntarily started looking for verified leads for Oxygen, medicines, ICU/Ventilator beds, Oxygen beds, so that I was able to help the volunteers and the people in dire situations. After joining in as a Volunteer, there was no going back. Both the groups had more than 1000 members to it, and the need for leads was constant. Twitter became our source of major lead providers.

Gradually with the Owner of the group, I started taking the lead for verifying the leads first hand by calling the oxygen suppliers, the hospitals to check for the bed updates, the vendors, the pharmacies etc. We used to get the numbers from twitter and verify it by ourselves and then we used to provide the information on Telegram, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp. We were giving out Pan India leads, but due to the scarcity of the essentials, the leads used to get exhausted really quick and the leads used to become invalid. So in order to help the patient/ the family, we used to find the alternatives as soon as possible by reaching out to big personalities on twitter or other COVID Leads groups on WhatsApp, Telegram or Twitter.

What really amazed me was the selflessness of every volunteer, who worked relentlessly 24x7, verifying and helping people be it even 4 am in the morning. There were times when people weren't really kind to the Volunteers and the sole reason was the exhaustion of the resources and it was a task to really explain how the verified leads were getting exhausted because the cases were increasing by the hours. The whole situation was such that the strangers on the internet were helping each other, in order to save another stranger's life and that is where I presume we all witnessed pure Unity.

On the concluding note, I would like to say that we all are aware of the fact as to how dreadful the whole COVID Scenario is currently. We all need to take utmost care of our families and ourselves and we all shall help in our own ways if possible in order to save a life.”



Sudeshna Singh is a BBA LLB student at Amity Law School, Amity University, Maharashtra. She's hailing from Guwahati, Assam, and is presently interning as a Legal Intern with A&P Partners, Mumbai



नीर, नीति और परिवर्तन

ग्रीष्म ऋतु के आगमन पर एवं अखबार की कुछ रोज़ आने वाली खबरों ने मुझे चिंता में डाल दिया है। चिंता का विषय कोरोना, बढ़ती महँगाई, बेरोज़गारी और चुनावी राजनीति तो है ही लेकिन मुझे इसके अलावा सता रही है मेरे शरीर के 70% हिस्से की चिंता जिसके बिना जीवन संभव नहीं है। शायद आप समझ गए हैं कि मैं जल की बात कर रही हूँ। अब आप आप सोच रहे होंगे कि कितनी बार पढ़ चुके हैं, "जल ही जीवन है", "जल संरक्षण करो" इत्यादि। इसमें नई बात क्या है? नई बात है कि कोरोना महामारी के चलते हम अपने सामने खड़े एक बहुत बड़े संकट को देख और समझ नहीं पा रहे हैं। वह संकट है जल का। आज जब हम परिवर्तन की बात कर रहे हैं तो सबसे पहले परिवर्तन जल संरक्षण व प्रबंधन की नीति में होना चाहिए। हम जानते हैं कि हमारी भूमि के नीचे का जलस्तर अत्यधिक गिर चुका है। नीती आयोग के 'कंपोजिट वाटर मैनेजमेंट इंडेक्स 2018' में यह दर्शाया गया था कि 2020 में चेन्नई, दिल्ली, बंगलुरु, हैदराबाद समेत 21 महानगरों में जलस्तर अत्यधिक कम हो जाएगा। एवम् 2030 तक देश भर में 40 प्रतिशत जनता के पास पीने लायक पानी तक भी पहुँच नहीं होगी। इन्हीं खतरों को देखते हुए जल व्यवस्था से जुड़ा नया मंत्रालय बनाया गया ताकि देश में हर घर तक स्वच्छ पेयजल पहुँचाया जा सके एवं जल प्रबंधन सुचारु हो सके। इसके लिए कई नीतियों को अपनाने पर ज़ोर दिया गया जैसे वर्षा के जल का संचयन, वाटर शेड का निर्माण, नदियों को जोड़ने के लिए नहर;

जैसे- केन बेतवा लिंक प्रोजेक्ट, आदि। ये नीतियाँ एक बेहतर जल संरक्षण नीति साबित हो सकती हैं अगर इन पर पूरा प्रशासन ठीक ढंग से, समय रहते अमल करे। इसके अलावा इस पूरी प्रक्रिया में हम देखते हैं कि हितधारकों को उपेक्षित किया जा रहा है। बिना हितधारकों की सहभागिता के इस समस्या से निपटना असंभव है। जल संरक्षण की ज़िम्मेदारी किसी एक व्यक्ति या वर्ग की नहीं है बल्कि सब की है। दिन-प्रतिदिन बढ़ती जनसंख्या व घटते पानी के स्रोत से यह संकट गहराता जा रहा है। पानी की किल्लत ही समस्या नहीं है बल्कि प्रदूषित पानी उससे भी बड़ी समस्या है। यह अनेक बीमारियों को जन्म देता है जो स्वास्थ्य के लिए हानिकारक है अर्थात पानी की व्यवस्था हमारे स्वास्थ्य की व्यवस्था को भी प्रभावित करती है। वर्तमान महामारी को ध्यान में रखते हुए इसका महत्व और बढ़ जाता है। यमुना नदी में बढ़ती अमोनिया की मात्रा व घटता जलस्तर निश्चित ही चिंता का विषय है परन्तु शासन व प्रशासन इस ओर ज़्यादा ध्यान देता नज़र नहीं आता। यह समस्या केवल यमुना तक सीमित नहीं है बल्कि कई नदियों-नालों की यही दशा है। इसका अर्थ है कि उद्योगों द्वारा उपयोग किए गए जल का निपटारण करने हेतु बनाए गए नियमों का उल्लंघन हो रहा है। इसकी हमें बहुत महँगी कीमत चुकानी पड़ सकती है। इसके अलावा हम हर वर्ष देख रहे हैं कि एक तरफ़ बाढ़ आती है और दूसरी तरफ़ सूखा पड़ता है अर्थात जो पानी वर्षा के रूप में आता है वह भूमि तक नहीं पहुँच पाता और ना ही

उसका संग्रह किया जाता है। भारत का इतिहास गवाह है, किस प्रकार वर्षा के जल का उत्तम से उत्तम रूप में संग्रह कर उपयोग किया जाता था। चाहे वह बाउली हो या जलकुंड। यदि हमें पानी के संकट को हराना है तो वर्षा जल संग्रह व प्रबंधन ही सबसे बड़ा उपाय है परन्तु शासन और प्रशासन यह जानते हुए भी इसे लागू करवाने में असक्षम हैं। इसे पूर्णतः अपनाने के लिए कोई नीति नहीं बनाई गई है। जल हमारे लिए अत्यधिक आवश्यक है इसके पश्चात भी यह आज तक एक राजनीतिक मुद्दा नहीं बन पाया। परन्तु इस महामारी के बाद हम कहीं न कहीं पर्यावरण के प्रति अधिक सचेत हुए हैं।

हम न केवल वर्तमान स्थिति में बदलाव के इच्छुक हैं बल्कि उसके लिए कार्य करने हेतु तैयार भी हैं। आवश्यकता है कि हम शासन का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित करें। वर्षा जल संचयन को लोकप्रिय बनाने के कदम उठाए जाने चाहिए। जल-पुनर्चक्रण, तूफान-जल संचयन आदि प्रौद्योगिकियों और फसल की खेती में सूक्ष्म-सिंचाई तकनीकों का निवेश करना और बढ़ावा देना भी पानी की कमी की समस्या को हल कर सकता है। अतः यह उपयुक्त समय है कि सभी हितधारकों के सहयोग से जल संरक्षण के लिए उचित नीतियाँ बनाई जाएँ। यह एक बड़े परिवर्तन की ओर पहला कदम होगा।

साक्षी कुन्डु

(बी०ए० ऑनर्स राजनीतिक विज्ञान) प्रथमवर्ष





प्रिचेट से परिवर्तन

परिवर्तन संसार का नियम है। यह अपरिहार्य है। यदि आज भारत की स्थिति देखी जाए तो लैंट प्रिचेट के फ्लेलिंग स्टेट में कोई खास परिवर्तन दिखाई नहीं देता। कल भी हम अपनी नीतियों को लागू करने में असक्षम थे और आज भी हैं। आज भी एक तरफ़ तमाम ऊँचाइयों को छूता हुआ भारत है और दूसरी तरफ़ मूलभूत सुविधाओं के लिए तरसता हुआ। एक तरफ़ विश्व का सबसे बड़ा लोकतंत्र होने का गौरव तो दूसरी तरफ़ लोकतांत्रिक आचरणों का बढ़ता अभाव। एक तरफ़ विश्व की सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में से एक और दूसरी तरफ़ गरीबी, बेरोज़गारी और महँगाई। हमारे देश में 'आयुष्मान भारत' जैसी विस्तृत और अभूतपूर्व नीति को बड़े ज़ोर शोर से लागू किया गया परन्तु यहाँ मूलभूत स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं जैसे चिकित्सालय, डॉक्टरों, दवाइयों एवं चिकित्सा तकनीक का घोर अभाव है। यह इस महामारी के समय में प्रत्यक्ष रूप से दिखाई देता है। हम अंतरिक्ष में आधुनिक से आधुनिक यान बनाकर भेज सकते हैं, अपनी वैक्सीन बनाने पर गर्व करते हैं परन्तु उसे हर घर तक पहुँचाने में असक्षम हैं। हमारे प्रधानमंत्री को 'चैंपियन ऑफ़ अर्थ' की उपाधि से सम्मानित किया जाता है परन्तु विश्व का सबसे प्रदूषित शहर भारत में स्थित है। न केवल विकास की गति रुक गई है बल्कि इस स्थिति में सुधार के दूर-दूर तक कोई आसार नहीं है। जब लैंट प्रिचेट ने फ्लेलिंग स्टेट का दर्जा भारत को दिया था तब यू० पी० ए० सरकार शासन कर रही थी और भ्रष्टाचार कुशासन व विकास को

भारत के हर नागरिक तक पहुँचाने में अक्षमता जैसे कारणों के चलते उसके लिए ऐसा दर्जा उपयुक्त प्रतीत हुआ। इसके पश्चात सरकार बदली पर हालात वही रहे। बदलाव का दम भरा गया पर अर्थव्यवस्था डगमगाती रही। 2020 में सांख्यिकी और कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी आंकड़ों से पता चला है कि अप्रैल से जून तिमाही के लिए भारत के सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में 23.9% की कमी आई थी। सकल मूल्य वर्धित शर्तों में, अर्थव्यवस्था ने 22.8% अनुबंधित किया था। और ऐसा 24 वर्षों में सबसे खराब आंकड़ा था। विश्व स्तर पर भारत को एक नई ताकत के रूप में पेश करने की पूरी कोशिश हुई जिसमें कुछ हद तक सफलता भी प्राप्त हुई परन्तु इसके साथ ही एक लोकतांत्रिक देश के रूप में भारत की छवि भी खराब हुई है। डेमोक्रेसी इंडेक्स में भारत ने 53 वां स्थान पाया और भारत को इलेक्टोरल ऑटोक्रेसी कहा गया। व्यक्ति विशेष की छवि सब पर हावी हुई जिसपर लोगों ने पूर्ण रूप से भरोसा दिखाया। केवल एक चीज़ इतने वर्षों में परिवर्तित हुई है कि पहले सरकार शासक वर्ग यह स्वीकार करने को तैयार था कि उनसे चूक हुई है और सुधार होना चाहिए। इससे भविष्य में सुधार की गुंजाइश बच जाती थी परन्तु अब शासक वर्ग को कोई कमी नज़र ही नहीं आती वह निरंतर ही प्रत्याख्यान की अवस्था में रहता है। इससे संशोधन व उन्नयन की गुंजाइश भी समाप्त हो जाती है। जितनी तत्परता से शासक वर्ग विदेशी संस्थानों द्वारा दी गई ऊंची (सकल घरेलू उत्पाद) व अन्य श्रेणियों, तथ्यों को

स्वीकार करता है उतनी तत्परता से उन्हें विदेशी संस्थानों द्वारा दिए गए गिरते लोकतांत्रिक स्तर और नागरिकों की घटती स्वतंत्रता जैसे तथ्यों को स्वीकार नहीं करता। वह समस्याओं को देखते हुए भी नज़रअंदाज़ करता है। इस शूतुरमुर्गी प्रवृत्ति का नतीजा यह है कि भारत आज भी लैंट प्रिचेट के फ्लेलिंग स्टेट का औचित्य सिद्ध करता है। ऐसा नहीं है की इस समस्या को पहले नहीं उठाया गया बल्कि हम सभी भली भाँति इस समस्या से परिचित हैं परन्तु आज तक भी इसका निवारण नहीं कर पाए हैं। हमारे पास विश्व की सबसे समर्थ नौकरशाही व नीतिनिर्माण करने की व्यवस्था है जो उत्तम से उत्तम नीतियाँ बनाने में सक्षम है परंतु उनके निष्पादन में हम असफल हो जाते हैं। महामारी जैसी विषम परिस्थिति में भी हम चुनाव करवाने में सफल हो जाते हैं परन्तु हर नागरिक तक टीकाकरण पहुँचाने में असक्षम हैं। भारत इसी

दोहरेपन का शिकार है । क्या यह वाकई में असक्षमता है या राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति की कमी? यदि राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति हो तो पूरी व्यवस्था को बदला जा सकता है। लेकिन राजनीतिक इच्छा शक्ति स्वयं नहीं उत्पन्न होती बल्कि उसे उत्पन्न करने के लिए नागरिकों को जागरूक होकर अपने पास मौजूद बैलट की शक्ति का उपयुक्त प्रयोग करना होता है। आवश्यकता है तो बस नागरिकों के बीच सही एजेंडा बनाने की। धर्म व अन्य गैर-ज़रूरी मुद्दों को छोड़कर, मूलभूत मुद्दे जैसे नीतियों का निष्पादन, मानव संसाधन विकास व सतत् विकास पर ज़ोर डालने की है । तब ही शासक वर्ग अपनी ज़िम्मेदारियों का सही निर्वाह करेगा जो असल परिवर्तन का आधार बनेगा और लैंट प्रिचेट द्वारा दिए गए फ्लेलिंग स्टेट के दर्जे से भारत मुक्त होगा।

साक्षी कुंडू

बी० ए० ऑनर (राजनीतिक विज्ञान) प्रथम वर्ष





विश्व महामारी से हुए परिवर्तन को फिर से परिवर्तित करना

कोरोना महामारी चीन के वुहान शहर से शुरू हुई और धीरे-धीरे इसने सभी देशों को अपने चंगुल में ले लिया। 2019 में, अखबारों में खबरें छप रही थीं कि कोई नया वायरस आया है चीन में, उस समय ना मैंने सोचा था और ना ही आपने कि यह वायरस इतना विकराल रूप धारण कर लेगा कि लोगों का घर से बाहर निकलना भी दूभर कर देगा। परंतु इस वायरस के विकराल रूप के बारे में अनुमान ना लगाना ही हमारी और विश्व कि सबसे बड़ी भूल थी। यदि उस समय ही हमने अनुमान लगाया होता और सभी देशों की सरकार ने इस ओर ध्यान केंद्रित किया होता तो शायद आज हमें यह दिन ना देखने पड़ते कि बच्चों के दो साल घर बैठे-बैठे ही निकल गए, लोग रातों-रात बेरोज़गार हो गए, देश में ऑक्सिजन, अस्पताल में सुविधाएँ, दवाइयाँ कम पड़ रही हैं। परंतु अब इस पर विचार करने का कोई लाभ नहीं। इस समय सरकार को इस बात पर विचार करना चाहिए कि अब क्या करना होगा?

योजनाएँ बनाना ही इस समय सरकार का कार्य होना चाहिए। परंतु “क्या केवल योजनाएँ बनाने से काम चलेगा?” इसका उत्तर हम सब जानते हैं कि नहीं, केवल योजनाएँ बनाना पर्याप्त नहीं है बल्कि उन योजनाओं पर कार्य करना और उन्हें बेहतर परिणाम पाने के लिए बेहतर तरीके से लागू करना,

यह भी आवश्यक है। यदि सरकार ने उस पहले केस के समय '27 जनवरी 2020' के दिन ही योजनाएँ बनाकर इस महामारी से बचने की कोशिश की होती तो हमें आज यह ना सुनना पड़ता कि भारत जैसे देश में जहाँ पर कभी आर्थिक आपदा की घोषणा नहीं कि गई वहाँ पर यह सुझाव दिया जा रहा है कि केंद्र सरकार को इस महामारी के प्रकोप का निवारण करना है तो सबसे पहला कदम 360 अनुच्छेद के तहत आर्थिक आपदा की घोषणा करनी होगी ताकि देश पर आ रहे आर्थिक संकट के प्रभाव को कम किया जा सके। परंतु हमारी सरकार ने तो अब तक इस बात का ज़िक्र ही नहीं किया है बल्कि सरकार अभी भी केंद्र और राज्यों के झगड़ों में ही पड़ी हुई है। अखबारों में हर दिन अनेक विचारकों, लेखकों और विशेषज्ञों के सुझाव आते हैं, इनमें से कुछ आर्थिक स्तर का सुझाव देते हैं, कुछ राजनैतिक मुद्दों पर टिप्पणी देते हैं और कुछ सभी पहलुओं को देखते हुए अपने विचार अपने पाठकों से साझा करते हैं। ये सब लेखक भी अनेक योजनाएँ बताते हैं। परंतु “क्या सरकार इन पर गौर करती है?” मेरा मानना है करती है लेकिन फिर भी योजनाएँ क्यों नहीं बन पा रही? उन पर काम क्यों नहीं हो रहा?

इसका मुख्य कारण यही है कि सुझाव देने वाले, अच्छी योजना बनाने वाले और उन्हें सफल बनाने वाले तो हैं, परंतु मंजूरी देने वाले बहुत कम लोग हैं। इसलिए **परिवर्तन** के लिए, महामारी से बचने के लिए और देश के उज्ज्वल भविष्य के लिए योजनाएँ की प्रक्रियाओं में परिवर्तन की बहुत आवश्यकता है ताकि बेहतर योजनाओं का निर्माण हो सके।

भारत में इस महामारी के दौरान अनेक परिवर्तन हुए- स्कूल बंद होने की नौबत आना, भारत में आर्थिक आपदा की नौबत आना, भारत में दवाईयों की कमी पड़ना और वो भी उस भारत में जो पिछले वर्ष स्वयंम् अमेरिका तक दवाइयाँ निर्यात कर रहा था। और ऐसे परिवर्तन हुए। जब देश बंद था तब पर्यावरण का स्वच्छ रहना और भारत के लोगों का अपने ही देश में बने उत्पादों पर

निर्भर होना और अनेक ऐसे परिवर्तन हुए। परंतु भारत की स्थिति फिर से बिगड़ गई और यह परिवर्तन किया दूसरी लहर ने – हर दिन कोरोना के केस में बढ़ावा होना। परंतु अंत में बात वहीं पर आ जाती है कि अब ‘क्या योजना बनेगी?’ भारत की स्थिति में कैसे परिवर्तन होगा? कब वो दिन आएँगे कि हम फिर से कतारों में, भीड़ में कहीं पर जा सकेंगे? यह स्थिति कैसे परिवर्तित होगी यह सब अब योजनाओं और उनके लागू होने पर ही निर्भर करता है। जब सरकार ऑक्सीजन उपलब्ध कराने, वैक्सीन लगवाने आदि के लिए योजनाएँ बनाएगी और वो भी बेहतर ढंग से, तभी परिवर्तन हो सकेगा। अतः देश में कोरोना महामारी से हुए परिवर्तन को फिर से परिवर्तित करना ही हमारा और सरकार का लक्ष्य होना चाहिए।

अंशिका

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चलो आज कुछ नया करते हैं

चलो आज कुछ नया करते हैं
अतीत की बातें छोड़कर
उससे कुछ सीख कर
वर्तमान पर काम करते हैं
चलो आज कुछ नया करते हैं

हाँ देखे हैं लोग मैंने
धर्म-जाति की लड़ाई में
अपनी जान गँवा देते हैं
यह जंग छोड़कर
आओ इंसानियत का पाठ पढ़ते हैं
चलो आज कुछ नया करते हैं

बहुत हो चुकी महत्वाकांक्षी राजनीति की बातें
आओ किसी के उत्थान की बात करते हैं
चलो आज कुछ नया करते हैं

है कविता यह बहुत छोटी-सी
पर आशा है
बात शायद की है मैंने कुछ काम की

पढ़कर इसे तुम कुछ सीख लो
क्योंकि क्या पता यही बातें
तुम्हें जीना सिखा दें
वही जोश कुछ नया करने का
तुम्हारे अंदर जगा दें

KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA

India has been familiar with policymaking since Kautilya's Arthashastra (400 BCE-200 CE). Policy-making plays a pivotal role for a developing country like India, which is propelled by the forces of reformation. India's path to development has been driven by policies in various sectors, making us one of the most promising nations in the 21st Century. Today, as we stand at a very crucial juncture, it is imperative for us to assess our policies in the Healthcare sector now.

Healthcare, as we can see, is a game-changer and the COVID-19 pandemic stands testimony to it. In India, the number of cases rose exponentially from 470 in March to over 4 lakhs, within a span of three months. Despite the implementation of lockdown measures including travel bans in India and worldwide, there has been an increasing incidence of COVID-19. Furthermore, the number continues to rise as lockdown measures are being relaxed in varying capacities across countries. While public policy measures have been implemented to contain the spread of COVID-19, the measures have resulted in significant operational disruption for many companies including those in the Indian Healthcare industry.

Staff quarantine, supply-chain failures and sudden reductions in customer demand have generated serious complications for companies across a wider range of sectors than initially anticipated. For most people,

the revenue lost in this period amounts to a permanent loss and has put sudden pressure on working capital lines and liquidity. Despite the current crisis being a healthcare issue, the private healthcare system in the country continues to reel under the negative impact of the virus. There has been a significant drop in both in-patient and out-patient footfall for private hospital chains- be it a single speciality, multi-speciality, tertiary-care hospitals or even diagnostics and businesses during this lockdown. This sudden decline in business has had an immediate effect on hospitals' ability to sustain fixed costs.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

With no immediate sign of the pandemic regressing, the situation has become tense. Hospitals across segments big or small, have limited reserves and require support from the government. The authorities need to step in big time and rectify the loopholes.

- Through faster payments for treatments under government schemes;
- Speedy TPA claim processing and settlement;
- GST rate reduction on Covid-19 related supplies such as testing kits, drugs and consumables;
- Faster GST refund to manufacturers on accumulated tax credit due to inverted

duty structure;

- Cheaper credit facilities for larger hospitals (akin to the scheme offered to MSMEs);
- Standardisation of Covid-19 costs across the country.

The government has enough potential to

nip the effects of the pandemic on an already fragile healthcare system. The unprecedented pandemic not only made us realize the need for strengthening this vital sector but also how long term and sustained investments are the answer to improving our health indices and standard of living.

Vaishnavi Agnihotri

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st YEAR

1) <https://main.mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/Annual%20Report%202020-21%20English.pdf>

2) <https://www.biospectrumindia.com/views/59/16700/covid-19-impact-on-the-indian-healthcare-industry-deloitte.html>

3) <https://www.expresshealthcare.in/blogs/guest-blogs-healthcare/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-indian-healthcare-industry/422352/>

COVID POLICIES

"What it is & what it should be"

India, the second largest country population wise is going through its second though, most devastating wave of SARS COVID 19, keeping lives on the threshold of death. People are dying of lack of oxygen, medicines and even for a bed. Irrespective of being rich or poor, educated or uneducated, or say to be living in small villages or mega metro cities the situation counts for the same. At this juncture we are not lagging in resources but in planning, coordination and policy making.

The "First Wave " was not any better, but the only reason behind India being able to overcome that wave was perhaps some "wise decisions and coordination" among people, Centre and State and within the Government. In this pandemic, we have lost a lot and have learned too. This catastrophic event is aiming to diminish not just one region or perhaps one country but the entire human kind.

The first wave has taught us that "nothing waits for you to come and look over it". Hence, we should be cautious enough to handle an emergency and each one of us should be responsive enough to at least prevent ourselves from being infected. Then, "What led India to suffer from a much more devastating wave? Why could not India control the second surge of SARS Covid 19 in the months of March, April and May? And where did India lack?"

MISCONCEPTIONS/AFFECTS "PUBLIC POLICIES"

When a Government takes decisions or forms policies, it never affects only one person, Either it affects a large "community or an entire Nation". Hence, the decisions taken or the policies made by the government in the months of February and March have not affected one

person but perhaps the Country as a whole. The results of those are visible now as India is stumbling over the stone of life. Even treasures have become useless now. What we need now is just one bed and oxygen. Somebody has said and it is worth quoting it here "Oxygen Oxygen all around but not even a single breadth to inhale".

The Health Minister of India Dr. Harsh Vardhan, had said in the month of February that "India is in the End Game of Covid 19" and had applauded PM Narendra Modi for his excellent leadership. Having said this, Mr. Vardhan was indicating the fact that India has been observing ten to eleven thousand cases only daily after reporting up to 99, 000 in a day in the month of September. Many virologists in and outside of India have been quoting that a (A comparatively less number of Covid positive cases never meant that we have overcome this pandemic). Probably, this misconception among people has led India to suffer a second surge.

At the end of February, India's election

authorities announced key elections in five states where 186 million people eligible to vote for 824 seats. Beginning on 27th of March, the polls would stretch over a month, and in the case of the state of West Bengal, be held in eight phases. Campaigning had begun in full swing, with no safety protocols and social distancing. Regular public rallies were held in massive scales; however this could have been done in a virtual form not in a physical one. Were these elections more significant than people's lives? Neither the attender nor the organizer felt a need to maintain some social distancing, to use sanitizers or even to wear a mask. Thousands of people gathered in the state of Bengal to attend rallies and public speeches by prominent leaders, including our Prime Minister, and none of them even cared to follow any norms as set up by the Election Commission of India. When other states like Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Union Territory of Delhi were facing a deadly surge in Covid cases and people there dying for a single bed, lakhs of money was being spent in election campaigning in all the five states. Maybe we could have used this money to develop the medical

infrastructure or to increase the production of beds, oxygen plants etc. Hitherto, these were few of the reasons as to Why India suffered this second surge of Covid 19, as of my interpretation. As in the current situation, elections have ended, the cricket matches which were to be held or had already started have been either suspended or ended. Few of India's states have crossed the peak of second strain and some are still fighting over it. So, can we say that India is half way to winning this battle? No, it will be really early to make any claim. Experts have said that the third "

wave is to come and don't know if more. So, "How can we overcome it? What reforms can be made to at least reduce the effect of the third wave?

REFORMS "A NEW INDIA"

India's Literacy rate stands at 72.93 % as per the census 2011-2015. In India a person being literate meant the one who can read and write their name. "As per the census of 2011 only 8.15% (98.615 million) people are actually Graduated", out of 136.64 crores. One of the major reforms that India should seek is in the 'Education Sector'. Yes, education is not a mandatory factor for India to grow but yes of course it is one of the most important among all. The highest percentage of vaccines are being wasted in the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh with 37% and 30% respectively, both of them are known as tribal states and the experts are of the view that this wastage is due to the lack of awareness among the people and this lack of awareness is due to the people being uneducated. Hence, Education does play a major role in the development of a country, and now it is the time when India should definitely take required steps ahead.

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These reports say, once admitted they have no clue about their loved ones,

suddenly when the action is taken, hospital staff says the patient had died a while ago, hospital staff does not allow the loved ones to have even a single talk over call and again declare them dead when complaints are filed, etc. So, why is this happening?

The answers to all these questions have been laid under surveillance. The lack of 'Surveillance' is letting all these questions arise, none of the hospitals have proper surveillance systems, the concerns of the general public are not wrong or myths they have a truth inside them and are still searching for an answer.

So, one of the other reforms that India should undergo, is to "Set up a proper surveillance system in all the hospitals. This system of check will also make the hospitals "Responsible and Accountable" to the general public and to the Government.

CONCLUSION

I began this article with a question "THE COVID POLICIES - What it should be and What it actually is' ' and the answer to this is "No", India could have been in a better position. Though, reforms have been made and India is in a better position than what it was in the beginning. In the beginning people were hesitant in getting vaccinated, but now as it seems people are much more aware and are willing to act responsibly. Hence, "Every day the clock resets", and soon it will reset for India too.

So, let's take a pledge to be more responsible and cautious, let's take a pledge that we will not let the third wave harm us, let's take a pledge that we together as "INDIANS" will end this war and let's please be united this time.

Aarvi Agarwal

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st YEAR

1) <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-indias-second-covid-surge-is-so-much-worse-than-the-first/>

2) <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56771766>

COVID- 19 AND REVIVING INDIA

One of the most extraordinary situations in the history of humankind that has engulfed the entire globe and disrupted the life of every individual in an unprecedented manner is the COVID-19 Pandemic. The newly discovered coronavirus has the capacity to spread at a ferocious rate and infect large numbers if come into contact. Affecting the health of millions, the virus has been the focal point of the whole world since the last months of 2019 and is going on till now. Among many countries affected by this virus, India is one and is being crippled by the horrendous implications of COVID-19.

The wild spread of coronavirus can be attributed to a lack of awareness. First of all, making people aware of the disease is the need of the hour. Making people aware of the need for a mask is important which we can see is still lacking as many people are not wearing any. Awareness about the importance of vaccination is necessary as well. People will only become mindful about the things mentioned if the government organises special awareness programmes at all levels and enlightens the people to know about these important things in the simplest way possible.

Although it seems as if the world has stopped, there is nothing we can do except for waiting, praying, hoping and trying to look at the silver lining. Keeping up with sanity is an extremely important thing to pay attention to as well. Individuals are dealing with panic, anxiety, grief and

depression, yet India has specifically shown a lack of mental health facilities and awareness. The second wave of COVID-19 has also uncovered the weak areas of the health infrastructure of India. For a population of about 136 crores, the beds and the facilities available presently are not enough which is proved by the horrific situation of the last couple of months.

Now that we have seen the worst-case scenario, the wise thing for the government to do now would be to learn from its mistakes. As Henry Ford said, “The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing.” Hence, India must give more importance to improving the public health sector in all the ways possible and appoint a special team of health workers for any kind of emergency situations. Moreover, the matter of mental health should be given more importance by removing the stereotypes attached to it and making the public aware of its significance. Among all the problems that the pandemic has brought in, the most important according to me would be the task of reviving the failing economy which is evident by the low GDP rate. My suggestion would be to follow the policy of resilience, readaptation and recovery. The sectors which were hit hardest should be given priority, and new employment opportunities must be created right away. People should be encouraged to make small investments in any

vocational talent they have. If any area (specifically at the grass-root level) is not aware of the different vocations or ways of earning, special awareness centres should be established for both men and women to acquaint them with the different opportunities available. Moreover, for future cases like these, instead of giving different subsidies to the people for different political gains, an emergency fund should be raised and kept for the time of any kind of disasters. These crucial times

s have made the responsibility of the government more than ever, but along with that, it is also the responsibility of the general public to take care of themselves to the point possible. To fight this pandemic and survive through these trying times, the need is to join in global solidarity and support and help specifically the most vulnerable ones. No matter how strong the pandemic is, every individual should be responsible enough to build back what they have lost and be stronger than ever.

Mahasweta Sarma

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st YEAR

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN VACCINE DRIVE

Comprehending the ravages of the first and the second waves of the Coronavirus, the government of India sanctioned the urgent administering of the Coronavirus vaccination to every Indian citizen above the age of 45 in the second phase (1st April 2021), and then reducing the age bar and intaking everyone above the age of 18 in the third phase (1st May 2021), across the length and breadth of the country.

The first phase of the vaccination drive however started much early in January 2021, administering to anyone above the age of 60 years old, and 45 years old with morbid diseases, and in these 6 months of vaccination drive in India only around 48 crore of 138 crore Indians have been vaccinated, single and double doses included. Looking at the figures available to us, the stark rift in the vaccination drive could be easily perceived with around 65% of the population still waiting to be vaccinated. With the impending third wave and the discovery of various variants of the virus, the vaccination disparity is becoming even more worrisome.

The one facet that keeps escaping the interest of the individuals is the alarming difference between the female vaccinated adults as against the male vaccinated adults, and the vaccination of the LGBTQIA+ community. According to government registered reports, around 22 crore females have been vaccinated against 26 crore males, with zero data available in regards to the vaccination of the

LGBTQIA+ community, therefore hinting towards the gendered discrimination of the vaccination drives, starting from the vaccination registration itself. In mid-April, the vaccination gap between males and females was 12% which doubled to 24% in the start of May, and the gap continued to dwindle since then.

Dr. Princess Nothemba Simelela, Assistant Director-General on Strategic Programmatic Priorities, WHO, commented while speaking at the 65th Commission on the *Status of Women*, “With the over 500 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines already distributed, the inequity is obvious. Very few of these vaccines are reaching the most vulnerable”, thereby annotating the trend of biased administering of the coronavirus vaccines around the globe with the marginal gender facing the brunt of high risk. Researchers in India could also note a similar pattern with women of all social stratus either barred from the vaccine jabs, or questioning the affectability of the vaccine and tallying the post vaccine side-effects. Until July, pregnant women were not allowed to vaccinate themselves, and hence a questionable atmosphere was looming large of whether expecting and lactating mothers should vaccinate themselves keeping in mind the health of their unborn and newborn babies, and their future fertility. Despite the government launching grassroot programmes with local health

workers to reach out to women for eliminating fear of the vaccine, the stark difference is still there. In a bold move, the Health Minister launched a communication strategy, “sustain vaccine confidence” in an attempt to reach out to the women. But even if the Government launches programmes to communicate with women, the deep-rooted patriarchy and discriminatory practices of cis-men would still underestimate the health risks of the women. Dr. Soumitra Ghosh, Professor at TISS, in a press interview said, “The gendered nature of health care access hurts women. For example, within the family, male members often get a higher share of food and nutrition. It was therefore surprising that the vaccine policy was gender neutral, not gender sensitive”. Ghosh’s comment clearly highlights the gender stratification of the society, and the focal reason why women are deprived of vaccines. A nation bordering geographies of every kind from north to south and east to west, and housing people of every stratum of the society, the Government should have taken all these diversities in count while rolling out the vaccines. Many individuals, mostly women and gender minors, cannot register themselves or travel to the health centres for their vaccinations - there’s the limitation of finances, technological gadgets and even their mobility to longer distances, pertaining to their age, and even the conditions at their houses. These practical reasons topping with the generic fear of infertility and spreading of misinformation like death is preventing women from vaccinating. The in-vogue “Drive In Vaccine” is only limited to certain metropolitan cities aiming only the privileged class of the area, and so most of the women, gender minors, and even men in this case, are not able to avail the vaccines- the sanitation workers, slum dwellers, sex workers, majority of

Dharavi, and such like places, is facing the most repercussions. Therefore, the argument of vaccination disparity, and the impossibility of attaining them at the earliest could be understood from the Primary researches conducted.

Very few researches have been conducted regarding the plight of the LGBTQIA+ community, and their vaccination, however a recent study revealed only above 20,000 transgender people have been administered with their first jabs. No data recorded in the official COWIN website notifies the huge bias prevailing in the vaccine registration, which again classifies the LGBTQIA+ community under one umbrella term, “Others”. Primary researches reveal that majority of Trans people have been mocked or looked down upon while the administering of the vaccine, there’s a generic fear of their life, and since most of the Trans people are not tech savvy and financially secured, the online registration of the vaccine acted more as a bane to them, than a boon. Shreen Hamdani, a research scholar at the Central University of Kashmir commented, “(LGBTQIA+ people) are stigmatized due to their appearance and sexual preferences. They aren't even considered to get vaccinated. Their mental, economic and health conditions are at stake and prone to worsen due to ongoing pandemic.”

The Coronavirus Pandemic when hit the world population in late 2019, it didn’t affect just the privileged group of people, it neutrally affected every section, from every class of every corner of the world, and so when the vaccines started to roll out in late 2020 the Governments in-charge should have made it a point to look into the equitable administering of the vaccines, to ensure that the vaccines

are reaching everyone without any biases or the gendered vaccine disparity, the Indian prejudices, and should have exceptionally Government has a long way to go before it looked out for the vulnerable classes more. could claim a 100% vaccination of the Despite the recent narrowing in the bridge of entire population.

Diya Kirttania

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2nd YEAR

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/there-is-a-gender-gap-in-india-s-vaccination-coverage-101623060093797.html>

[India's transgenders 'left out' of Covid vaccination drive \(rfi.fr\)](#)

[Expanding reach: Addressing gender barriers in COVID-19 vaccine rollout \(who.int\)](#)

COVID 19 & THE DEEPENING DIVIDE

The ongoing crisis that began about a year back has really brought all our lives to a standstill. Covid 19 has affected millions of lives and shattered our healthcare systems. Causing anxiety, fear, stress, financial burden; it has been the reason for all miseries humankind is facing right now.

The most detrimental effect of this global crisis is the deepening of the pre-existing inequalities. Putting it through the perspective of India, since the first lockdown in 2020, about 12.2 crore people have lost their jobs. This clearly states that these many people indeed are having a hard time surviving through the pandemic.

Due to schools, colleges and other educational institutions being shut, students were forced to go back home and continue their studies through an online mode. Only 8% of Indian households have proper infrastructure to avail online classes. This was the source of anxiety and fear for a lot of students as they went through the horrors of missing out on their education.

The working class and the informal sector of the country's economy already faces a lot of problems and this global crisis was another catastrophic addition to them.

When most of us were worrying about being at home, they still had to figure out a way to reach out their homes safely. Their everyday sources of earning were completely gone and the biggest challenge was - SURVIVAL.

The most horrifying experience was the second wave and its consequences. With the number of Covid positive patients suddenly increasing in the month of April 2021, the country realised that its healthcare infrastructure is still not prepared to handle such a pandemic in future. People were constantly struggling for medicines, oxygen supplies and food. Some inhuman people were caught selling the essentials at unfair and hyped prices. This made the underprivileged feel helpless and miserable. The ever existing sharp divide amongst the rich and poor, West and East, Global North and Global South saw an increment during these tough times. From witnessing a decline in the levels of development to people losing their lives, these times have once again brought up the INEQUALITIES of our society, which are somehow becoming inevitable.

Gargi Singh

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2nd YEAR

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2) <https://scroll.in/article/960939/indian-education-cant-go-online-only-8-of-homes-with-school-children-have-computer-with-net-link>

ONLINE EDUCATION IN A DEVELOPING WORLD

March 2020, Indian schools, and universities which had their foundations built on student-teacher interactions, analog mediums and consistent testing had to undertake a massive transformation in the way they approached teaching and learning.

Education thus was forced to transition online in a matter of a few weeks. Indian infrastructure was not prepared to handle this transition, with teachers unfamiliar with online platforms and several students without access to a proper internet connection or a quiet place to study, Indian education hit a roadblock.

Several problems present themselves with the advent of online education. Firstly, students from low-income backgrounds could no longer access these online platforms due to the potent digital divide. This coupled with financial constraints on their parents resulted in them feeling massively disconnected from their classes or wanting to drop out and take up jobs. This was corroborated by UNICEF and World Bank estimates that showed that almost 10 million students across the globe may not return to their classrooms.

Online education has thus, transformed education back into a luxury good with individuals having access to certain resources being able to keep up and benefit while others are left behind. There are several precarious impacts of the same.

Firstly, students who are dependent on schools for their meals are now at the risk

of malnourishment. Secondly, the financial constraint on parents means that they are less enthusiastic about tertiary education which has resulted in fewer applications to Universities across the globe.

Thirdly, the World Banks' learning indicator that shows the percentage of children who can't read and understand at 10 years of age was 55% for India in 2019. This shows how Indian education was quite inequitable to begin with, however with the advent of online education it is likely to get worse. The halting of education isn't unique to the pandemic. The halting and transitioning of education simultaneously in such a magnitude across the globe is, however, unique. This allows for comparisons between different countries and their approaches towards education reform. For instance, the German Government has put 5 billion euros towards digitalizing their classrooms and moving away from analog means. This indicates that while developed countries haven't seamlessly transitioned to online platforms, they still have had an upper hand over their developing counterparts due to their developed infrastructure and capital.

Developing countries, the likes of Peru while lacking the infrastructure of their developed counterparts have still come up with creative methods to improve the quality of education. They've designed a structure where additional resources incentivize local governments to complete their

administrative work based on certain standards and time. Several developing states thus, are trying to adapt to the current times and adhere to certain standards through their creativity and collaboration with other individuals across the globe.

INDIAN INITIATIVE

Online education had become a looming crisis due to the possibility of setting Indian education system and the increasing attendance back a few years. However, several initiatives were taken by the state and the Union government to bridge the gap especially for students from low-income backgrounds and in areas where educational institutions didn't have the means to transition online.

The union ministry of skill development firstly, completed their training programs for about 9 Lakh students through its online portal, Bharat skills.

Secondly, state governments are also adopting certain means to level the digital divide. Andhra Pradesh for instance, is launching around 10,000 smart classes and introducing e-learning in government schools. Telangana on the other hand, has introduced an e-learning program that airs on Door darshan so that students without access to a stable internet connection can learn too. Thirdly, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) along with MHRD launched the Diksha Platform in 2017. It is a national platform for school students of grades 1-12th and is being used to supplement classroom learning.

Lastly, All India Radio is also being used to broadcast virtual classes and other educational content throughout regional channels across the country. The platform

is being used specifically for students in primary school in remote areas without access to online resources.

While uninterrupted access to the internet is a distant dream for tier 3 and remote cities in India, creative alternatives like radio and television allow for students to not feel disconnected from learning.

THE WAY FORWARD

The Pandemic is not going to be a temporary and unannounced guest. Social distancing is here to stay which means that our educational institutions need a long-term reform. While television, radio and skill-based programs are good methods to allow for students to not feel disconnected from learning, they can't be long-term substitutes to classroom learning and teacher guidance. Thus, we do need efforts towards building infrastructure specifically in rural areas perhaps by working with telecommunication companies.

We also need to develop policies aimed at improving the conditions at student's homes either by expanding connectivity, expanding the use and availability of technological resources, or providing printed learning material at home.

Thirdly, we also need to set up campaigns especially amongst students from low-income backgrounds to maintain their connection with schools.

Lastly, we need to simplify the curriculum while we work upon long-term education reforms and building a socially distant education system. This would allow for teachers to work for longer periods of time upon minimum targets with students who are having difficulty learning online.

In conclusion, the Indian education system has a long way to go, but perhaps the pandemic will nudge the education system towards creative reform and equitable digitalization.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

Policy Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Education is a treasure trove of emerging ideas, a nursery of human potential, and a universe of knowledge and enlightenment. The geo-politics of today are intertwined in a web of meticulous economic underpinnings, path-breaking technological interventions, tantalizing discoveries in the sciences, and an enormous corpus of classical literature and philosophy that introduces us to the grandiose past of this planet and guides us on the path to unparallel success in the future. Within this humongous web of social, political, economic, technological, religious and philosophical calculus of human existence, what drives humans to keep evolving themselves in this ever-changing global scenario is a flexible education system that meets the demands of contemporary times. A system that provides quality education to all, ensuring equitability, social and economic justice, ignites political activism, and reinvigorates moral and intellectual capabilities is a prerequisite to every developing nation.

CONTEXT & BRIEF HISTORY

The Government of India unveiled a ground-breaking, progressive and comprehensive National Education Policy on 29 July 2020, one that seeks to revamp and transform the education system in a

way that redefines the tone and tenor of our traditional, custom-driven educational framework. The policy proposes noteworthy reforms that have been much awaited and would nip the problem in the bud, subject to effective implementation. The policy is one-of-its-kind, and indeed, the first in the twenty-first century, a successor to the National Education Policy of 1986. The ideas presented in the overarching framework of suggested changes are laudable and praiseworthy, much for the kind of vision they encapsulate. A closer look at the key takeaways from NEP 2020:

HIGHLIGHTS:

School Education:

- Universalization of education from pre-school to secondary level with 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030.
- The current 10+2 system to be replaced by a new 5+3+3+4 curricular structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively.
- Emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, no rigid separation between academic streams, extracurricular, vocational streams in schools.
- Vocational Education to start from Class 6 with Internships.

- Teaching up to at least Grade 5 to be in mother tongue/regional language. No language will be imposed on any student.

Higher Education:

- Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education to be raised to 50% by 2035.
- Holistic Undergraduate education with a flexible curriculum can be of 3 or 4 years with multiple exit options and appropriate certification within this period.
- M.Phil courses will be discontinued and all the courses at undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD level will now be interdisciplinary.
- Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), at par with IITs, IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country.
- Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up as a single umbrella body for the entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards. Also, HECI will be having four independent verticals.
- Affiliation of colleges is to be phased out in 15 years.

Other Changes:

- It also paves the way for foreign universities to set up campuses in India.
- It emphasizes setting up of Gender Inclusion Fund, Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups.
- National Institute for Pali, Persian and Prakrit, Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation to be set up.
- It also aims to increase the public investment in the Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest.

- Currently, India spends around 4.6 % of its total GDP on education.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

Section 27 of the policy draws a detailed description of the government's vision in achieving the stated goals through effective implementation. While the steps to implementation appear extremely well-thought out and pretty much achievable, there is a tepid response to the context in which this policy is aimed at being institutionalized. The policy is seemingly silent on how the planners will implement it in the backdrop of wide disruptions that have crept into the education sector owing to the pandemic. Section 27.3 talks about possible future consultations with relevant ministries, both at the Central and State levels. However, post policy consultations (that too with the functionaries of the govt itself) would do little benefit in that case. Less attention has been given to the multiplicity of stakeholders in this juggernaut of institutional development. A wide array of professors, teachers, scholars, public policy experts and professionals from diverse fields (doctors, engineers, architects, historians, scientists, accountancy experts, etc.) haven't been consulted while framing the policy. Their opinions of other professionals would have invariably added to the broadness and forward-looking approach of this policy.

Talking about centre-state cooperation, states have also vociferously voiced their concerns regarding under-consultation with state governments by the centre in framing the policy.

Education is a concurrent subject- reforms need to be operationalized only collaboratively. Funds also depend on both- sufficient funding is crucial for efficacy. The policy aims at increasing the overall GDP expenditure on education from 4.43% to 6%. However, there is little stress on the policy as to how the funds will be shared between centre and states.

The policy proposes to encourage and incentivize higher education institutions (HEIs) to use local/regional languages as the medium of instruction. While this is a welcome move, However, It would also deepen inequalities among those not studying in English as their prospects of finding jobs depends a lot on the preference given to English as a medium of instruction. Fate of students undertaking inter-state movement has also not been addressed adequately by the makers.

Proposal to collaborate with foreign universities is fraught with difficulties. An Indian Express survey reported that a sweeping number of global universities, including Yale, Cambridge, MIT and Stanford, University of Edinburgh and Bristol, were disinclined towards collaborating with Indian universities. There are complexities with regards to the contradiction between provisions of Right to Education Act 2009 and National Education Policy, 2020 (eg, age of starting school etc.). Its proposal to gradually phase out the need for affiliation for colleges will open the doors to privatization thereby hitting hard on social justice to citizens, especially to students from rural and backward classes. Bringing early (pre-school) education within the ambit of anganwadi would reinstate the informal workload on anganwadi workers. The state of their functioning, especially the recognition awarded to their work, so far, has been largely abysmal.

It must look into shaping a cogent environment at students' homes by making provisions for

reaching out to parents, building intellectual capabilities with regards to their wards' education and sensitize them about the need for educating their children (particularly girls). Focus should be on preventing student-suicides especially among high school and college going students, which happen primarily owing to extreme levels of study-related pressure or in some cases, lack of opportunities and economic support for education. Parental pressure has become a serious issue in the present times, and parents must be sensitized about this too.

Section 2.3- teacher vacancies will be filled at the earliest and brought to under 30:1. But, how the government strategies to achieve and how it looks forward to encouraging more people to undertake the profession of teaching is quite unclear. Section 26.7 discusses the strategy to curb commercialization of education. However, it does not take into account the position of private educational institutions viz. commercialization of education and the over-commercialized nature of current educational discourse. While the policy is definitely forward-looking, it also needs to be retrospective to the extent that it hammers out solutions to the pre- existing problems of corruption, commercialization and monopolization of the education sector. All these factors deeply impinge on the principles of 'equitability, inclusivity, equity, social and economic equality and justice', that NEP 2020 so fervently espouses.

CONCLUSION:

After performing an intense analysis of NEP 2020, one can conclude that the policy is indeed progressive, thought-provoking and realistic in its goals. How far it panders to the current requirements of the country's socio-political-economic landscape would

After performing an intense analysis of NEP 2020, one can conclude that the policy is indeed progressive, thought-provoking and realistic in its goals. How far it panders to the current requirements of the country's socio-political-economic landscape would depend on the vision of the makers, responsible for its effective implementation.

And the test of its implementation lies in the synergy between potential stakeholders, technical and adequate financial wherewithal with the government and an active participation by the citizens concerned (teachers, professors, scholars, policy makers, etc). Whether the promises are fulfilled both in letter and spirit will be seen in the due course.

Tanya Sood

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2nd YEAR

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EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEED?

MGNREGA during the lockdown

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world as we know it. The daily life of common people has undergone drastic changes with several countries imposing lockdowns and international trade and commerce coming to a standstill. India managed to avert a disaster during the first wave of COVID-19 that started in January 2020. A nationwide lockdown was imposed on 24 March 2020 to prevent the spread of the virus. Although the lockdown resulted in nominal decrease of positivity rate and death rate due to the virus, it was grossly mismanaged. The lockdown period saw reverse migration on an unprecedented scale, soaring unemployment rates, poverty and subsequent deaths. As production shut down, the already critical unemployment levels soared. Unemployment rate in India as of April 2020 was 23.5% as compared to 9% in March 2020. The brunt of this was disproportionately borne by workers in the unorganised sector, the self-employed and low-income, daily wage labourers. Several studies show that the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been the only source of survival for several people rendered jobless due to the pandemic.

The MGNREGS saw a spike in demand as unemployment rates soared. 31.5 million households sought jobs under the scheme in July 2020 as opposed to 18.4 million in July 2019. People from all walks of life took refuge from the scheme as the

lockdown extended from May to later months. Several graduates and postgraduates have sought work under MGNREGS as unemployment started to rock the organised sector. Union government data shows that 88842531 households were given employment under the scheme from March-September 2020. The states which have seen the sharpest jump in the number of households availing the NREGS are Assam, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Gujarat, and Jharkhand. The pattern of rise in demand for work indicates that the main cause of this is the reverse migration caused by job loss due to the lockdown. The high demand for work in the months of April - July was also partially due to the seasonal unemployment in the agricultural sector. In the months following June, the demand for work reduced upto 38% as labourers got work in farms. The Union government allocated Rs 1,01,500 crore to MNREGA for the financial year 2020-2021, which is an unprecedented amount.

Despite a high degree of success, MGNREGS continues to be plagued by several shortcomings. The government has succeeded in generating a 43% increase in Person Days as of November 2020 compared to the preceding year. However, the fund was allocated for only 324 person days as opposed to the 379 person days generated. This shows significant budget constraints. Approximately 13% of

applicants were not provided with work at one point of time or the other. 45.6 lakh households that applied for a job card were not issued one. The 'NREGA Tracker' devised by People's Action of Employment Guarantee (PAEG) showed that 0.2 million households had already exhausted the 100 days of work, intended for the whole year, by the month of July 2020. Lack of awareness, corruption, delay in payment of wages and strategic deficiencies were roadblocks in the efficient disbursement of the scheme.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of the need to build a sustainable welfare state structure. Social security measures of the government like the Public Distribution System and the MGNREGS have acted as the safety net to many who would have otherwise fallen into absolute poverty and starvation. As a deadlier second wave has struck, all social security measures need to be upped to help the country out of a looming recession. Equitable and sustainable policies have to be the way forward if India is to avoid a catastrophe.

Sreelakshmi

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2nd YEAR

THE INSECURE LABOUR

- The State of Labour in India

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has been more than just an eye-opener. It has highlighted, in ways more than one, the volatile state of major Indian sectors. Despite the growth trajectory showing positive trends in the past few decades, the pandemic has shown how these figures remain just numbers in the absence of a robust social security structure. The beginning of the crisis was marked by scorching images of thousands of migrant workers moving back from the urban to the rural, indicating high rates of reverse migration amidst an unplanned and ill-managed nationwide lockdown in March 2020. The mass exodus of labourers during the first wave was the largest case of displacement of individuals in India, second only to the number of displaced during the partition of India in 1947.

With the gradually eased guidelines, many returned. However, the respite was short-lived with the second wave of the pandemic hitting by late April 2021. Many states started imposing state-wise lockdowns, leading to a resurgence of fear in the minds of the labour group. With similar images of migrants waiting for busses and on foot leaving for their homes back village. The question here is: Why the fear? Why have we not been able to provide even basic safety and security for our workers?

THE INFORMALITY IN INDIAN LABOUR MARKET

The ILO estimates that the informal economy still accounts for more than 80 percent of non-agricultural employment in India. The estimate validates the duality in the Indian labour market, where at one end there is a small proportion of workforce that has relative job stability and some level of social security and the other end, that looms in the informal sector (Kapoor 2020). Informality is found in traditional informal sectors or new found informal contracting within formal sectors.

Santosh Mehrotra, identifies three reasons as to why the informal sector in India grew; he firstly talks about the Import-substitution- industrialization, due to which labour absorption was limited only to the capital industry and the surplus labor switching from agricultural to non-agricultural sector was forced to work for small scale industries that offered zero social security. Secondly, he blames the policy-induced pattern of growth that gave no incentive to the small scale industries to grow and absorb more workers. Thirdly, the stringent labour laws made the entrepreneurs shift

to capital intensive techniques. Ironically, the laws in place for social security hardly reaped benefits to the workers due to the presence of corrupt officials.

The informal sector continued to grow due

to lack of education and vocational training. Most of the casual workers and self employed are untrained and uneducated. Given the lack of employment opportunities, and abundance of individuals seeking work, most workers end up in exploitative, low paying and unsafe work environments.

In the report, by Azim Premji University, “State of Working India- One year of COVID-19”, it is noted that almost fifty percent of formally employed people have moved to the informal sector, A shift like this is likely to have negative repercussions and a rise in number of workers in the vulnerable state.

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN?

India’s real wage rate growth has observed a gradual decline from a growth rate of 2.8% in 2015 to 2.5% in 2017, to being flat in 2018. According to reports by ILO, other South Asian countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal had all fared better than India. It is expected that the country will observe a negative trend in the post pandemic period. The current statistics suggest a 22.6% fall in wage rates of the informal sector.

Undoubtedly, the pandemic has affected the formal sector too, but the major brunt has been faced by the informal unorganised sector. Relatively richer households lost less than a quarter of their pre-pandemic incomes, while the poorest 20% lost their entire income.

On one hand, when masses of the country grappled with needs of sustainability, around 40 Indians became billionaires. The concentration of wealth points towards a structural flaw. The reduction in corporate taxes on the pretext of increasing production seems vague when the conditions of

employment remain as dismal.

WHAT NEXT?

The need is for a rights based approach to labour policies, and effective implementation of existing policies such as The Unorganized Sector Workers Social Security Act, 2008 under which the National Social Security Funds for India’s Unorganized Sector was set. The NSSF hasn't received adequate funding since its inception, in the years following 2016, the funding virtually stopped. Only ten states established Workers Welfare Boards. Since 2019, the government has introduced four new labour codes: Code on Wages, Code on Social Security, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code 2020 and Industrial Relations Code Bill. The implementation of these codes have been deferred since several states are yet to finalise rules. Since labour is a part of the concurrent list it's essential for states to notify rules for implementation in their jurisdictions. The effective implementation might lead to an increase in minimum wages for workers. Moreover, the National Employment Policy must take into account the needs for investment in social infrastructure, including the promotion of education and vocational training. The national policy should also constitute an urban employment programme.

Strong labour unions with assertive leadership will put workers at a better bargaining end, however, these unions and movements must be all inclusive of different identities and must stand for the rights of informal workers too.

Lastly, labour rights must be identified as human rights. Workers must reap the benefits of their efforts.

Rusha Chatterjee

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2nd YEAR

LABOUR MARKET

Framework & Changes required

The economic hit received from the coronavirus pandemic in India has been substantial enough to reverberate for the next few years. In such a situation of disturbed demand and supply chains, it is easy for the economy to go in a recessionary spiral of decreasing output and increasing unemployment. Moreover, with the wave of digitalisation seen during the pandemic, the replacement of labour with technology has become likely, the possibility of technology replacing labour has become more pronounced and visible. Therefore, it is of prime importance for the government to tackle the rising unemployment through policy measures aimed at reviving the economy and simultaneously strengthening the rights of employees including their job opportunities.

The Labour Reforms of 2019-20 were introduced to promote industries to hire more workers and increase output, but the context of a pandemic puts various provisions of these reforms in question. For instance, Government's permission is required for retrenchment or lay-offs of employees, or shutting down of units by organisations hiring 100 or more workers. This threshold has been increased to 300 or more workers through the reforms, making it easier for companies to retrench or lay off employees during this economic downturn. Moreover, mandatory compensation required in cases of

retrenchment or closing has been maintained at 15 days of wage, despite the National Commission of Labour (2002) having recommended an increase to 30/45 days for closure and 45/60 days for retrenchment.

The plight of migrant workers, which was on global display during the first national lockdown, is heavily due to the contractual nature of their work. Under the new reforms, contract labourers are to be provided social security and related work benefits by their contractors, who are often small, struggling parties. Their principal employers, primarily large corporations, are not liable to provide the same even when the contractors fail. Additionally, it is an observed fact that contract workers cannot unionise for better bargaining power, and they are often paid less than their counterparts who are permanent workers. There has been a growing trend of casualisation of the formal workforce in the past two decades due to companies hiring cheaper, contract workers instead of permanent employees. The labour reforms have not tried to discourage this trend.

Apart from contract labourers, another working section facing job insecurity and low bargaining power is fixed-term employees. Previously there were restrictions on which sectors and which job profiles could be filled by fixed-term employees, but these sectoral restrictions have been eased by the labour reforms.

This further compounds the issue of casualisation of the workforce. While these decisions can be explained by a difference in views regarding what path the government should take for economic development, current labour laws lack other fundamental aspects too. For instance, India has shown its support for mandatory social security measures of workers through ratification of multiple ILO conventions³. However, implementation of these measures and working condition standards have been poor in India due to the multiplicity of labour laws. These divide the task of compliance assurance and inspection between various central and state agencies. Simplification of these laws is necessary to ensure compliance to occupational conditions and social security measures which are legally mandatory.

There may be disagreements over how economic development can be promoted in the post-pandemic period, but the bottom-line remains that workers, especially casual ones have been hard hit in the pandemic and will require protection going forward. This can be provided by proper implementation of existing laws, such as those of social security. Additional measures for the resolution of the current migrant labourers' issue could include creation of a sizable wealth fund, with contributions from sending and receiving state governments, to provide healthcare and other basic needs. In the long term, casual labourers and fixed-term workers need to be focused upon during policy formulation to ensure that casual and contractual workforce exploitation does not become the norm of large corporations.

Vanshita Gupta

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st YEAR

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DE- DEMOCRATISATION OF PUBLIC POLICY

- The COVID Impact

Public Policy is a mirror as well as a linchpin to a nation's democracy.

From Aristotle to French Philosopher Auguste Comte, English Philosopher Herbert Spencer and French Sociologist Emile Durkheim, political philosophers, since ages, have described society as a living organism and if we consider democracy as its life-blood, public policy can rightly be described as a thermometer that measures the well-being of this living organism i.e. The Nation.

A public policy is not merely a set of intellectual formulations and scholarly principles, rather it's much more than that; it's a precious amalgamation of the core ideas that democracy holds, dear- people's aspirations, national needs and ambitions, future visions and most crucially a lucid reflection of the social, economic, political and cultural values that a nation aspires to behold and achieve in future. Thus, public policy carries much greater relevance in philosophical, socio-political and democratic terms than the general perception of it being a mere official document of national importance. Given such deep symbolic significance, the making of a public policy right from the birth of its idea to its formulation is the second-best test of democracy after elections. It is so because the practices involved in its making are reflective of the strength of democratic mechanisms at play. And a mass response to it is a measure of its core intents, and a test of its true inclination towards a democratic approach which must involve consensus,

consultation, cooperation and deliberations with the target groups. It is the public accountability and democratic oversight in form of detailed scrutiny, dissent and criticism, popular mobilizations and additional insights by the intelligentsia which grant public policy its essentially democratic character.

However, as much as the COVID-19 induced clampdowns have impacted the economy and society, they also have had a huge impact on democratic practices guiding policy-making. Thus paving the way for 'De-Democratization of Public Policy' aided by misuse of chaos created by the pandemic, limited means and resources for detailed scrutiny, government arbitrariness, and narrowed space for democratic expression. All this is accompanied by a manipulative narrative created by vested political interests aimed at suppressing healthy debates and self-corrective mechanisms in public policy during the pandemic.

With media houses and information platforms excessively absorbed in COVID-19 coverage and severe lockdowns hampering public protests, the highest debating platforms like Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas suspended or shortened their sessions and the governments resorted to ordinances on the pretext of health crises. Under such circumstances, major policy decisions were taken while compromising on their quality

without much evaluation, public consultation and democratic participation, thus damaging the democratic nature of public policy at a gigantic scale.

The virus proved detrimental not only for humans but also for the public policy health of the country on account of the most unfavourable, stifled and undemocratic environment created under the garb of a huge 'political' battle of 'Man Vs The Virus'.

Labour Codes Bill, The Farm Bills, New Environment Impact Assessment Guidelines, Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill, UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, to name a few, can be observed as huge digressions from sound policy-making practices. Given the fragile circumstances, the grievances of the target groups could be easily overlooked, public consultation and evaluation mechanisms overstepped and decisions hastily taken.

The pressure networks and negotiating forces inevitably found it difficult to activate their mobilizational chains, which in the past have acted as huge bargaining forces in securing mass interests and mitigating vested political interests detrimental to the nation's social fabric. Given such circumstances, a narrative of general consensus could be created to convince the masses of the limited political policy choices they can afford while presenting a façade of helplessness and dismay.

Public policies, in addition to serving immediate goals and targets, also play a deeper symbolic role in determining precedents for the future course of the democratic forces at play. They either

suppress or strengthen them by the means of core ideology and intents embraced, central formulations and final implementation. There are greater long-term visions and meanings attached to them than apparently visible to the naked eye. The true test of public policy is to remain loyal to its democratic commitments even under the most fragile and unfavourable of circumstances. For if it crosses this bridge, not only does it gain greater acceptance and respect but it also becomes an indomitable torchbearer of the highest ethical standards and principles.

The existing policy changes harboured by the pandemic dominated political atmosphere can also be viewed as a 'blessing in disguise' as they have brought to light the in-built weaknesses and setbacks of the existing mechanisms to cope with drastic external changes. Intelligentsia, opposition and policy-makers, thus, need to seize the challenges as an opportunity to undergo self-evaluation, reformation and a reality check so as to compensate for the existing damage caused by dominant forces at play and derive means to escape the invasion of sacred public policy spaces by them.

'De-Democratisation of Public Policy' is a fact today that needs to be accepted, dealt with and transformed to preserve the sanctity, public trust and belief in it by the diverse range of social groups ranging from the most intellectual class to the most ignorant masses.

Public Policy is an intellectual journey through the past and present that needs to change in order to champion the illiterate, poor, ill and vulnerable.

-Amartya Sen

Ravbeer Kaur Dhillon

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st YEAR

PREREQUISITES FOR PARIVARTAN

Acknowledgement, Responsibility & Accountability

Change...reform...parivartan...what is it that it implies?

When we talk about reforming something, we, somewhere in the back of our mind, acknowledge the fact that there are some problems or faults in the current structure that we intend to change, to make it better. But is reforming possible when we are adamant on the fact that everything is 'okay'? Because when everything is just 'fine', what is the need to change it? to reform it? to make it better? Therefore, the very basic prerequisite for making a change or bringing about reform is-'acknowledgment'. Acknowledgment of failures and of the fact that problems exist. Because when you accept that there is a problem, only then can the solution be found and room made for improvement.

When these requirements are met, we can further think about bringing reforms or parivartan as we will then be receptive to address the issues and problems to work on them. Therefore, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that this formula can also help us to discern the concern of the said authority in bringing parivartan and making conditions better. Also, when we acknowledge our failures and problems and start taking responsibility for the same, we become accountable. We become accountable to the people whom our decisions have affected and the changes that we'll bring would affect in the future.

Therefore, we can infer that in order to bring about a change or to work in trying to reform the current structures, the prerequisites required are- 1) need to acknowledge and accept that there are problems and faults in the current structure and 2) take responsibility for the same and 3) be accountable. In short, the Acknowledgment, Responsibility, and Accountability (A.R.A) formula. Let us try to apply the same formula to one of the largest democracies in the world, India.

India, a democracy, where several policies are formulated to bring about reforms, it becomes imperative to talk about how well the government accepts its failures and how much is it accountable to the masses who brought it to power. Especially in the current scenario, when the COVID-19 pandemic is raging and devastating the country and has taken a toll on numerous innocent lives, this becomes all the more important.

When we try to apply the ARA formula to governments, one more factor joins in when it comes to accepting failures i.e., criticism. When a government in a democracy fails at something, it is subjected to criticism by the people. Therefore, when we check how well the Indian government has accepted its failures, taken responsibility and had been accountable to people, it is also important to check as to how it handled the criticism directed towards it for mishandling the

situation and its failures during the pandemic. All this will help us to discern the Indian government's willingness to work for the citizens and their resolve to bring parivartan.

During the period from March 2020, when India observed its first lockdown, to May 2021 when it is suffering from the raging second wave, India has witnessed several political and policy failures. But has the Indian government accepted those failures? How did it handle the criticism pertaining to the same? Did it take responsibility for failing the people? Did it answer people's questions? All in all, how much was it accountable?

When 'The Australian' newspaper criticized the Prime Minister for mishandling the pandemic, in an article titled- "Modi leads India out of lockdown... and into a viral apocalypse", the government's reaction was noteworthy. Instead of accepting that the second wave was ravaging the country, they instead went on to write a letter to the newspaper's editor describing the article as "completely baseless, malicious and slanderous" and asked them to issue a 'rejoinder'. It was when India recorded more than 3 Lakh new cases in a day¹. This is just one instance. Such an attitude of a duly elected government towards criticism and its failures is highly deplorable. Not only such a behaviour is indicative of the government that is only concerned about its image but it also shows their incompetence to work for the people who elected them as well as their lack of interest in making the situation any better that is already worse. Not only this, tweets critical of the government's handling of the pandemic were taken down from Twitter at the government's request.

Here, the government failed at the two prerequisites that we discussed above- 1) acknowledging and accepting failure and criticism, 2) it failed to be accountable as rather than being answerable to the people, it chose to suppress the dissenting voices. The union health minister, Dr. Harshvardhan went on to blame ordinary citizens for the second wave for 'lack of commitment and sincerity' when his party held huge election rallies and promoted Kumbh. He blamed people for not following the protocol when his party's actions and ministers say otherwise. Here again, by not taking responsibility for their failure and leading the country to catastrophe, the government failed to fulfill the third prerequisite i.e., taking responsibility.

The Indian government failed at meeting the prerequisites that were discussed in this article. This clearly indicates the Indian government's attitude and willingness towards bringing reform or parivartan. The devastating time that India is going through has come under the international gaze and is not hidden from anyone. The appalling condition of the health system and mishandling of pandemic corroborate the fact that when the authorities refuse to accept that problems exist and that they have failed, bringing parivartan or reform becomes a secondary concern for them. Thus, I'd like to reiterate the fact that in order to bring parivartan, it is imperative to meet the prerequisites of it i.e., Acknowledgement, Responsibility and Accountability.

Aditi

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st YEAR

REFORMING INDIA-

Public Policy, Pandemic & Change

To quote Mahatma Gandhi when he gave words to his perception of change, " You must be the change you want to see in the world ." Change is the law of nature. It is indispensable for humans to adapt to the changing social conditions to enhance or ensure the betterment of human life in the future.

Parivartan is Hindi synonymous with positive change or reform. There is no denying the fact that in the current scenario when the entire world is grappling with the coronavirus pandemic, there is an urgent need to bring about the required changes in the formulation of the public policy to combat the pandemic effectively. This is because we should not forget that an effective public policy is people-centric, shaped by public demands, opinions on a collective basis.

The pandemic has brought to the surface many loopholes, inadequacies prevalent in the formulation of public policy in our country whether economical, political, social, environmental or even in the cultural aspect. The media in the context of the present scenario is playing a vital role in highlighting all those arenas, sectors or issues which are in a dire need of a viable public policy to accordingly address the problems the common public is facing particularly in the wake of the second wave of COVID-19 and also tackling those problems they are more likely to confront amid the third wave. A sustainable public policy must be futuristic enough.

To begin with the impact of the pandemic on the Indian economy and what all necessary changes need to be brought in to reform our economic sector to make it more productive and sustainable and most importantly how a responsive public policy can be formulated to address major economic issues exposed by the pandemic. Firstly, the lack of adequate and unresponsive public health system or infrastructure of our country which failed to timely respond to the rising caseload, several deaths due to Covid- 19 during the first wave and too much of our despondence not even now when the people of our country particularly are struggling with the second wave of coronavirus. Secondly, massive unemployment caused by pandemic particularly due to the formalisation of the workforce, lack of adequate social security measures for migrant workers, lack of robust data which resulted in a migrant exodus a few days after the nationwide lockdown was imposed last year.

Thirdly, the adverse impact of the pandemic on the education sector and its ramifications on the academic and vocational future, career prospects, better life of students who are confronting the worst of this pandemic with the introduction of the online mode of education and subsequent uncertainty looming largely particularly amid the second wave and more likely to persist for

quite some time with the arrival of the third wave after a few months. Online classes are causing a heavy toll on the physical, mental, social, emotional health and well being of students all over the country. It is worth mentioning the fact that poor children particularly in the rural areas have dropped out of schools, unable to exercise their fundamental right to education, mainly as a consequence of the increasingly widening digital divide.

This underpins the fact that the policymakers need to formulate an inclusive policy to focus on ensuring and facilitating quality, adequate and much-needed infrastructure in the rural areas as well. Various schemes which the government rolled out and put into practice such as the Direct Benefit Cash Transfer scheme, MGNREGA scheme in rural areas, distribution of ration at subsidized rates to poor, vulnerable sections of people is highly commendable but the lack of effective implementation of these schemes, excessive corruption rampant at the ground level do not allow these policies to bring about well-intended and desired results or outcomes.

Amid this pandemic, we have been compelled to adapt and adopt the new normal as our response to the pandemic. It becomes, thus, indispensable to emphasize the formulation of public policy in a manner that it corresponds to the needs of the people while they are adapting themselves to the new normal whether it is concerning wearing a mask, using sanitisers wherever necessary, social distancing, other necessary precautions, revamping the public health infrastructure of our country, addressing the digital divide, rural-urban gap, online mode of education, job creation and employment to all, giving a boost to all the sectors of the economy -

agriculture, industry, service, and reaffirming our nation's commitment to combating global problems like climate change, protecting and improving our environment and striking a balance between our developmental and environmental goals.

Not to overemphasize but just to underscore the fact that despite all successes the government has indeed failed on many fronts particularly due to its complacent and apathetic attitude particularly since the onset of the second wave because of which people were compelled to wander from place to place for oxygen cylinder and amid all that chaos. Therefore, to conclude, reform, positive change or parivartan has become the urgent need for our country to overhaul and embolden the entire system of policymaking taking into account the benefits, advantages, prosperity and happiness of the people as a whole. A democratic state is very responsible for the wholesome development and welfare of its people or citizens whether the executive, legislature or the judiciary and should leave no stone unturned to bring about a reformation for the larger good of our country. People are the wealth of a nation and it is their contribution that sustains that nation, therefore their welfare cannot be compromised at any cost and in a democratic country like ours where the "government is of the people, by the people and for the people" as Abraham Lincoln puts it, it is the entrustment of the state, policymaking, robust, inclusive public policies which are necessary to bring about a change.

Sunidhi Verma

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st YEAR

Dialogues on **DEMOCRACY**

**What is your opinions about
the present Democratic
Standpoint of India in
reference to the Pandemic &
vaccination drives?**

**I believe the country is doing a
good job in handling the crisis
given the population, financial
condition and immense diversity.
Vaccination needs to be**

**prioritized by each of us.
It's about standing together
& fighting against the disease**

G A R G I S I N G H

**From a Marxian perspective of
democracy, the COVID 19
pandemic has altered the
domestic and international
scenario against democracy**

**and the ideals it stands for.
Management of the pandemic
and vaccination policies around
the globe demonstrate unequal
treatment and unjust practices**

**due to excessive
intervention of market
forces.**

S R E E L A X M I

**Right, that's well
said**

Well I think there's a lot of political instability in India. Eg. WB and Uttarakhand. There's a total mismanagement of the pandemic despite there being

enough time in one and a half year past the pandemic. India is the corruption-captain for Covid vaccine scams. False data is being served to the central

Government and the judiciary about the number of people being vaccinated. There's ruckus in dealing with purchase of vaccines, and it's different prices for the centre and the

state. No slots, no corona tests being taken without forgery, no correct data.

Yes.

It's a huge failure at the end of the central govt and in the implementation of policies at the state and district level also.

KANIKA DASAUNI

Yeah, it's not up to the mark as I think that the government deals with pandemic-like situations. They're trying their best but unless and until people

do not cooperate how can we assure that all things become better.

DIKSHA CHOUDHARY

Very rightly said

There's distress among the general public. Fear of lockdowns, fear of loss, fear of deaths, fear of financial crisis and what not. The govt could

have done a lot better given the time span of the pandemic and considering the fact that since day one, when the first wave came out hit the west prior to India.

The very same happened during the second wave where India was well aware of the fact that soon the wave will hit after Europe but unfortunately steps were taken.

KANIKA DASAUNI

If only the accessibility of vaccine was more convenient and the authorities are sincere in the application real good could be done to the society but usually

usually it's the system at the local level where the true scam begins

ANONYMOUS

True

Because you see people with great approach are sitting home vaccinated while the poor are standing in long queues waiting for their turns.

ANONYMOUS

It's as if the government is really laid back about the pandemic and is not interested in making things right only.

KANIKA DASAUNI

The disasters of the 2nd wave was clearly unanticipated

And all we can do is follow the COVID appropriate behavior

and hope that the 3rd wave doesn't hit the country.

VOX POPULI

HOW IS SCIENCE SPELLED?

Kanak

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st YEAR



We talk about Spurring AI-based innovation and establishing AI-ready infrastructure in India. On the one hand, where the finance ministry approved the expenditure of ₹7,000 crore (\$1 billion) for NITI Aayog's AI programme that was proposed in 2018-19, the situation on the other hand might be of unawareness about what even basic science is. As a developing nation with a lot of aspiring dreams, reaching the moon by leaving a lot of people under the mud would actually be called development? I highly doubt that. A few days ago, I came across a government school student of fifth standard who was studying BASIC SCIENCE, and shockingly I discovered that she didn't know how to spell the word science. In the 21st century, coming across such a mishap was truly heart-wrenching.

Here comes the dire need to question what we are actually doing as a nation and what we are doing, is it enough? When we talk about the kids becoming the future of the country, don't we consider these kids? I came across one but I am sure there must be many others like her. We are mistaking ourselves if we aspire to get future astronauts and scientists without giving them what they need to become the astronauts and scientists we need. There are kids who want to study, who want to learn, who want to explore but sadly they don't know how to do that. We as a country are letting a lot of human resources go into vain. After seeing that child, when I look at the NEP or any other education-related policy, I can't help but question, is this what we really need? Is this the only need of the hour? Is this the way ahead? Maybe not because what we are focusing on is waiting for the flower to bloom and not realising that the roots are left unwatered. When we talk about creating a new India, why do we forget the old India that exists in the villages and slums? Sometimes it does feel like we are talking about a parallel ideal utopian world where the policies can actually be implemented. But what about the world we live in? Just talking about a change won't actually bring it, the need of the hour is to look at the policies, scrutinize them, change them and most importantly check their applicability. During these pandemic times, it has been clearly visible that the policies have miserably failed us. Whether it be the requirement of a concrete policy regarding vaccination or it be a policy regarding the education system; when we come out of this pandemic, we'll see ourselves in very deep waters and the only possible escape would be a change in the public policy- A Parivartan, a true one.

HOW PANDEMIC STRUCK A CHORD WITH TECHNOLOGY

Shubhangi Gupta

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2nd YEAR

Daily living has changed immeasurably since the world was introduced to COVID-19. The global pandemic has not spared a single geography around the globe. Now, nearly one year later, most of us are at home, using tools like Zoom, and other technologies to stay in touch with family and colleagues. We are buying almost everything online and having it delivered to our door, including groceries and prescriptions. There's certainly a new normal in place and anxieties about the transmission may stay for a while. People all over the globe may go through serious lifestyle changes and it is highly unlikely that they may go back to working around things the way they did before the pandemic. E-learning, including CME and Webinars has gained exponential traction. A number of Scholars or speakers that could not be invited as guests due to geographical constraints and time limitations are now roped in through video-conferencing mode, all thanks to the pandemic. It's not that these facilities/technological capabilities were haywire or not available before, it's just that they became apparent in this global epidemic. Technology also brought forth virtual meetings that offer versatility for busy, overwhelmed clinicians. This may reduce the risk of transmission both for the patient as well as the health clinician without any postponement or loss. Collaborations and group assignments are all being conducted remotely without face to face interactions from the comfort/discomfort of our homes. Work from home is the most discernible new normal. It is believed that communication and collaboration drive innovation. However, this has taken a slump as face to face interactions are not a near time possibility. Virtual brainstorming sessions can never drive innovation and reap benefits as positively as in-person meetings where accountability is maintained and each person motivates another. Countries that have maintained low COVID-19 per-capita mortality rates appear to share strategies that include early surveillance, testing, contact tracing, and strict quarantine. The scale of coordination and data management required for effective implementation of these strategies has—in most successful countries—relied on adopting digital technology and integrating it into policy and health care.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN FIGHTING COVID-19

Some points that India could incorporate to put across a better fight in future.

Chinese authorities made use of tools such as migration maps, GPS in mobile phones, social media as well as mobile payment technologies to track the people who visited the Wuhan market, the epicentre of the pandemic. These data were further used to trace regional transmission rates and oversee the border areas and contain the epidemic.

Taiwan has been using high performance infrared cameras for detecting signs of high temperatures at the spot, among its citizens. Countries such as Singapore are checking temperatures at the threshold of schools, workplaces as well as recreational spots. This helps in maintaining data, tracing sources of transmission and clusters of infections where testing could be initiated.

Iceland seems to have the highest per capita testing rate among lowest mortality at.

For contact tracing, countries like **South Korea** have implemented tools such as facial recognition technology, CCTV footage, detailed GPS records, bank card records etc. to identify people who may have come in

contact with an infected individual. South Koreans also receive a text from the authorities in manifestation of a case in their region and are requested to report or self-isolate.

Singapore launched an app that sends signals when two individuals are in close enough proximity. This data stays for around 21 days. In cases of Coronavirus victims this data is extremely helpful for contact tracing. Both South Korea and Singapore have maintained extremely low mortality rates among its citizens. China seems to be using drone borne cameras,

AI based surveillance and portable digital recorders to monitor and restrict gathering of people on a large scale. In Hong Kong, people in self-isolation are required to wear a wristband linked through cloud technology to a database that alerts authorities if quarantine is breached. Overall, IT seems to be providing a soothing touch and only coping mechanism for dealing with this unprecedented and unannounced epidemic. These changes are going to take roots in our lives one way or the other. All we could do is either to make changes with time or keep on running, trying to cope up and make sense.

THE PARADOX OF VACCINE DIPLOMACY

Nakshatra

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2nd YEAR



As India is at the forefront of the global pandemic it was also at the forefront for its multilateral vaccine diplomacy efforts with the surging rise of 3 lakh cases per day. The world reputes India as a stealthy Global pharmaceutical industry due to the results of the HIV epidemic that consequently gave India the reputation by producing and distributing quality and affordable medicines. The current landscape of India has decidedly played an important part in Geopolitics. India took the initiative to publicly put efforts in the vaccine exports as ‘vaccine maitri’, this had made India a significant player on the global forum.

India’s initiative of the vaccine exports program distributed 66 million doses to 95 countries, along with sending healthcare workers to neighbouring nations. The doses were sent across the world in the form of 10 million grants from the government and 20 million were sent to the Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) office of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI) and the remaining accumulated for the trade exports. Other initiatives taken up include the quad plan started to support South East Asian countries by the production of one billion vaccines as well as the alliance of India and South Africa to have vaccine patents waived off.

With the sharp surge in the second wave of the pandemic, India has been blindsided which according to most professionals was inexorable but manageable. The government faces harsh criticism internationally as well as from the domestic base due to the collapse and failure of the healthcare infrastructure with the incredible rise in the number of cases. Moreover, the government’s deniability continues as it makes no efforts to put a stop to religious events like the Kumbh Mela and strides on with their election rallies for the state elections. The devastating and monumental damage which the nation suffers through can be synonymous with the recklessness of launching the vaccine maitri program before vaccinating the domestic population. Though the vaccine maitri program was a well-placed effort in terms of vaccine diplomacy it should have been restricted to neighbouring nations. In the efforts of being Atma Nirbhar or self-reliant the government as in the need of the hour, India seems to be grasping for medical oxygen, vaccine, and healthcare supplies.

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS: An Appraisal

“We cannot stop natural disasters but we can arm ourselves with knowledge: so many lives wouldn’t have to be lost if there was enough disaster preparedness.” -Petra Nemcova

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the world witnessed what can be called the ‘Biggest Threat’ of the 21st Century—the outbreak of an infectious virus declared as a ‘pandemic’ by the World Health Organisation on March 11, 2020. (1) According to WHO, a ‘pandemic’ is defined as the worldwide spread of a new disease. (2) The COVID-19 health crisis is like an ever-rising tide, testing patience, energy, and forcing individuals to distance themselves from their day-to-day regular routines.

To contain this pandemic and the adversely evolving eventualities, governments across the globe needed (and still need) greater mobilisation of resources and stricter health policies. Given the wide scope of the theme—Parivartan: Re-forming India - Public Policy, Pandemic & Change—I shall present an analysis of the archaic and arrived legislation and policies.

HOW INDIA DEALT WITH EPIDEMIC SO FAR

Epidemic Disease Act, 1897

The EDA was enacted by the then imperial government of India after the outbreak of the Bubonic Plague. The epidemic conditions required extraordinary measures and hence the legislation was enacted to give extraordinary powers to the government. The age-old statute was the only effective remedy available during the onset of COVID-19.(3) So, the Government sought to resort to the Act. It empowers under section 2, that a state government can prescribe temporary regulations if the ordinary provisions are insufficient. The Rajasthan Covid Regulations 2020,(4) among others, was promulgated under the Act.(5)

Disaster Management Act, 2005

Section 69 read with clauses (1) & (2)(i) of Section 10 provides that the National/State Executive Committee may delegate its power and functions to respond to any disaster and give directions to any chairperson/member/officer by an order, who shall assist the National Authority for

(1)<https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>

(2)https://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/frequently_asked_questions/pandemic/en/

(3)https://indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/10469/1/the_epidemic_diseases_act,_1897.pdf

(4)https://www.manupatrafast.com/covid_19/Rajasthan/Govt/Rajasthan%2520Regulation.pdf

(5)<http://health.delhigovt.nic.in/wps/wcm/connect/146af7004d87f91c96a2f7982ee7a5c7/Epeditmic+Act.pdf>

implementing policies and ensuring compliance of directions for disaster management. Accordingly, the Ministry of Home Affairs (Disaster Management Division) delegated powers (6) to the Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to enhance the preparedness and containment of the virus and other ancillary measures. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) decided to direct Ministries/Departments/Authorities (7) to take measures for ensuring social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

Essential Commodities Act, 1955

The Act is “in the interest of the general public, for the control of the production, supply and distribution of, and trade and commerce, in certain commodities.” Accordingly, if the Central Government opines that it is necessary to do so in the public interest to ensure equitable distribution and availability at fair prices, it may provide for regulating or prohibiting the production, supply and distribution thereof and trade and commerce therein. (8)

Receiving reports of the same, the Central Government ordered a regulation in the retail prices of Melt Blown non-Woven Fabric, masks and hand sanitizers

Indian Penal Code, 1860

The Indian Penal Code (9) is an exhaustive set of legislation that has stood the test of time and provides for sections 188, 269, 270, 271 which makes spreading diseases a criminal offence and effectively prescribes punishment for it.

Section 269 provides for “Negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life” and deals with how a person will be treated who acts carelessly to endanger public health and life.

Section 270 which provides for “Malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life” deals with how a person will be treated who acts maliciously to endanger public health and life.

Further, Section 271 provides for “Disobedience to quarantine rule” which states that if any person knowingly violates the orders promulgated for the purpose of quarantine will be punished with imprisonment up to 6 months or a fine or both.

Criminal Procedure Code, 1973

The Government has further invoked section 144 at various places to ensure that the virus is not spread through community transmission. (10/11/12) The section has time and again helped the government to maintain law and order in all adverse situations.

(6)<https://mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/MHAorder%2520copy.pdf>

(7)<https://mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/ndma%2520order%2520copy.pdf>

(8) <http://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A1955-10.pdf>

(9) <http://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A1860-45.pdf>

(10)<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/section-144-imposed-in-delhi-until-31-march-amid-coronavirus-fears-11584874378416.html>

(11)<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/section-144-imposed-in-rajasthan-after-couple-2-year-old-test-positive-for-coronavirus-1657192-2020-03-19>

(12)<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/haryana-imposes-section-144-to-tackle-coronavirus/articleshow/74737338.cms?from=mdr>

LEGISLATIVE LACUNAE IN INDIAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Epidemic Disease Act, 1897

The major legislative cavity in the EDA is that no definition for an epidemic is given to enable the Government to pass any notification under this act. Further, the state government is empowered to pass only a temporary notification without any mention of a stipulated period. Accordingly, the restrictive rules enacted during the COVID crisis raise serious constitutional challenges regarding the curtailment of Fundamental Rights.

The state governments under its ambit have enacted regulations to ensure the safety of public health; however, it provides wide powers to the state governments without keeping a check on such powers.

Disaster Management Act, 2005

In such times, when the country doesn't have a dedicated Health law, invoking the Disaster Management Act becomes all the more necessary since it provides for an exhaustive administrative setup for disaster preparedness, mitigation and capacity building. It also gives the government considerable liberty to expedite decisions and allocate resources to a Disaster Relief Fund. However, the Act lacks provisions for management systems and therefore, cannot work in isolation. The Government may be justified in using a

combination of laws to deal with the situation, but there are multiple problems in its application. The Disaster Management Act, 2005 was never designed to cater to health emergencies Management Act becomes all the more necessary since it provides for an exhaustive administrative setup for disaster preparedness, mitigation and capacity building. It also gives the government considerable liberty to expedite decisions and allocate resources to a Disaster Relief Fund. However, the Act lacks provisions for management systems and therefore, cannot work in isolation. The Government may be justified in using a combination of laws to deal with the situation, but there are multiple problems in its application.

The Disaster Management Act, 2005 was never designed to cater to health emergencies because India had been closely associated with occurrences of only natural hazards.

The definition of disaster management has been concerned with the 3 Rs viz. Rescue, Relief and Recovery. Unfortunately, it does not receive much attention when it comes to what not to be done to effectively mitigate a crisis. Hence, there is an urgent need of incorporating two more R's, making it Rescue, Relief, Recovery, Restriction and Refrain. (13)

PENDING DRAFTS AND FAILED EFFORTS

(13) <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/covid-19-pandemic-pandemonium-need-for-a-more-holistic-idea-of-disaster-management-64348/>

Model Public Health Act, Central Bureau of Health Intelligence - Draft 1987 (14)

This was brought in force to establish a decentralised network of structures and boards to look after public health. Further, the bill also intended to regulate private clinical establishments.

National Health Plan, National Institute of Communicable Diseases - Draft 2002 (15)

The act incorporates a provision for the establishment of a National Board of Public Health and several State Boards of Public Health. These boards were to be given roles of providing administration, planning, technical support; along with coordinating, monitoring, review and supervisory roles.

National Health Bill, MoHFW, Task Force on PH Act - 2009 (16)

This was brought in force to establish a decentralised network of structures and boards to look after public health. Further, the bill also intended to regulate private clinical establishments.

It refers to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights set up under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [ICESCR] which authoritatively interpreted health from Public Health Act to Health Act, the bill said; “health is today legally understood to include--

but is not limited to—public health, the first option could be a more internationally consistent title, called Health Act”.

The Public Health (Prevention, Control And Management Of Epidemics, Bio-Terrorism and Disasters) Bill, 2017 (17)

It is an attempt to deal with epidemics and health predicaments, while also providing clauses for situations of Bio-Terrorism. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare [MoHFW] issued a notice dated 13 February 2017, inviting comments till 25 March 2017, on its draft prepared by the Ministry. However, even after a lapse of 3 years, nothing is heard about the bill.

INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO MANDATE BETTER VIGILANCE

The Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (1994), was the first major international framework for disaster risk reduction, that recognised the interrelation between sustainable development and DRR.

(14)[https://www.cbhidghs.nic.in/WriteReadData/l892s/Draft%2520Model%2520Pubilc%2520Health%2520Act%2520\(1\).pdf](https://www.cbhidghs.nic.in/WriteReadData/l892s/Draft%2520Model%2520Pubilc%2520Health%2520Act%2520(1).pdf)

(15)https://nhm.gov.in/images/pdf/guidelines/nrh-m-guidelines/national_nealth_policy_2002.pdf

(16)https://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Draft_National_Bill.pdf

(17)<https://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/draft/Draft%2520PHPCM%2520of%2520Epidemics,%2520Bio-Terrorism%2520and%2520Disasters%2520Bill,%25202017.pdf>

Ever since, global agreements—from MDGs to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002), to the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015) and the Future We Want (Rio, June 2012), to the Sendai Framework for DRR (2016) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)—have sought to strengthen this interdependence.

The Hyogo Framework for Action :

HFA was the global outline for disaster risk reduction efforts between 2005 and 2015. It was adopted in 2005 at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. The goal was to substantially reduce disaster losses (18/19) — in lives, and the social, economic, and environmental assets of communities and countries. (20)

The HFA identified five priorities for action: (21)

- Making disaster risk reduction (DRR) a priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;
- Identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks and enhance early warning;
- Building a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;
- Reduce the underlying risk factors;
- Strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels. (22)

The HFA was a milestone in catalysing national and local DRR efforts and in strengthening international cooperation through the development

of regional strategies, plans and policies. However, progress in managing underlying disaster risk remained limited in most countries. Member States recognised that efforts had not led to reduced physical losses and economic impacts. They concluded that the focus of attention must shift to transforming growth and development to manage risks.

This conclusion formed the basis for the development of the Sendai Framework, its successor framework, which was adopted in 2015.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 provided the Member States with concrete actions to protect development gains from the risk of disaster. (23)

It highlights the role of improved disaster resilience of infrastructure as a cornerstone for sustainable development.

It includes four specific targets:

- Reduce global disaster mortality;
- Reduce the number of affected people;
- Reduce direct disaster economic loss; and
- Reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure.

The SFDRR outlines four priorities related to disaster risk:

(18) https://www.wfo-oma.org/wfo_news/wfo-awarded-a-grant-with-undrr/

(19) <https://www.eird.org/regional/hyogo-framework.html>

(20) <https://www.preventionweb.net/sendai-framework/hyogo/>

(21) <https://mmun.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/ga-2-b-final-pdf.pdf>

(22) <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201501/20150113ATT96032/20150113ATT96032EN.pdf>

(23) <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>

(i) Understanding; (ii) Strengthening governance to manage the threat; (iii) Investing for reduction for resilience and; (iv) Enhancing readiness to Build Back Better.

The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

CDRI is a multi-stakeholder global partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and knowledge institutions. (24)

It aims to:

- Promote resilience of new and existing infrastructure; and
- Achieve a reduction in losses of lives, livelihoods and health.

The Prime Minister of India launched CDRI on 23rd September 2019; it is of considerable significance for India since it provides a platform for emerging as a global leader on climate Action and Disaster Resilience. CDRI boosts India's soft power, most significantly, as synergy between disaster risk reduction, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Climate Accord provides for sustainable and inclusive growth.

Urvi Meena

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st YEAR

Currently we view India, as an
instrument of change
Public policy acts as our means
And we re-form India to prepare it as it
enters into a new era

Reform begins with oneself
Whether it be the youth or the old
Whether small children or the bold
Reformation starts from within us

Whatever may our caste be
Whatever may be our religion
Whatever is our race
We will always be an INDIAN
No matter what we choose or do not
No matter whether a fanatic or atheist,
We will always be a citizen

Being a citizen makes us a part of our
country
If we are ready to change, we can
reform

Well, how are public policies related to
us?
How are they not is the question!
Policies transform our lives for the
better
Moving our country forward

The pandemic has hit us hard
The country had begun to weep
But we picked ourselves
Dusting off the virus
And now a vaccine we seek

We created public policies
To help adapt with the change
We reformed to adapt to the horrid
pandemic
And we created change

We started with locking down major
cities
And slowly reached the towns
The villagers were provided
sustenance
As they lost their jobs



PARIVARTAN- REFORMING INDIA

Public Policy, Pandemic & Change

The virus hit us hard
Affecting the kids and old
And death became inevitable
So, healthcare policies ensued

We created awareness
Sharing precautions
Sanitizers and knowledge too
One by one we became immune
But 'all is right', said so soon

So, we gave it all we had
Protecting our people
The frontiers fought bravely
Many perished
But we never stopped

We invested our heart in our people
And our mind in Research and Training
Enabling foreign investment in medical education
Earmarking a budget for disaster management

Increase public health spending
All from Rural to Urban
India in financial crisis
But RBI takes control
Fiscal Stimulus, An expansionary monetary policy
ECLGS and MNREGA steps in too
Schemes enforced from
Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana
PM-KISAN and more
EPFO and social security looked into
And immigration

Aiming for a self-sufficient economy
Planned urbanization and resilient Infrastructure
Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana
As Employment Measures

Incentives and subsidies and everything possible
To help the unemployed and regain confidence
We brewed up vaccines competing with the West
We can prove the world that even we can be the best

Now variations come and strike our roots
We must be strong
We battle with our masks and hospitals
And provide food and medicine to all

People's care, always first
India nudges to contain the Covid-19 Pandemic
We created supplies
Now even, students have joined the fight
Sharing resources, reaching out
Helping in any way possible, with all their might

Starting from Yoga we started a Health India Journey
We use Digital India to take our system online
Supply meets demand
And we push aside our differences
United we face this infamy

We trust our country mates
And internationally WHO we follow
States and Centre's bond remains firm
As citizens we rise through the shallows,
All India Services work with a new found force

Now we are on a full-fledged mission
To rid India of Covid once and for all
Vaccines and plasma, all in action
Knowns to the unknowns
Lives and Livelihoods
Mixed Results, paradoxes and all
The days have been cold and hard
But now we are steady and ready
To fight back even more hard....

People's care, always first
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DAYS OF MY WEEK

Pandemic Edition

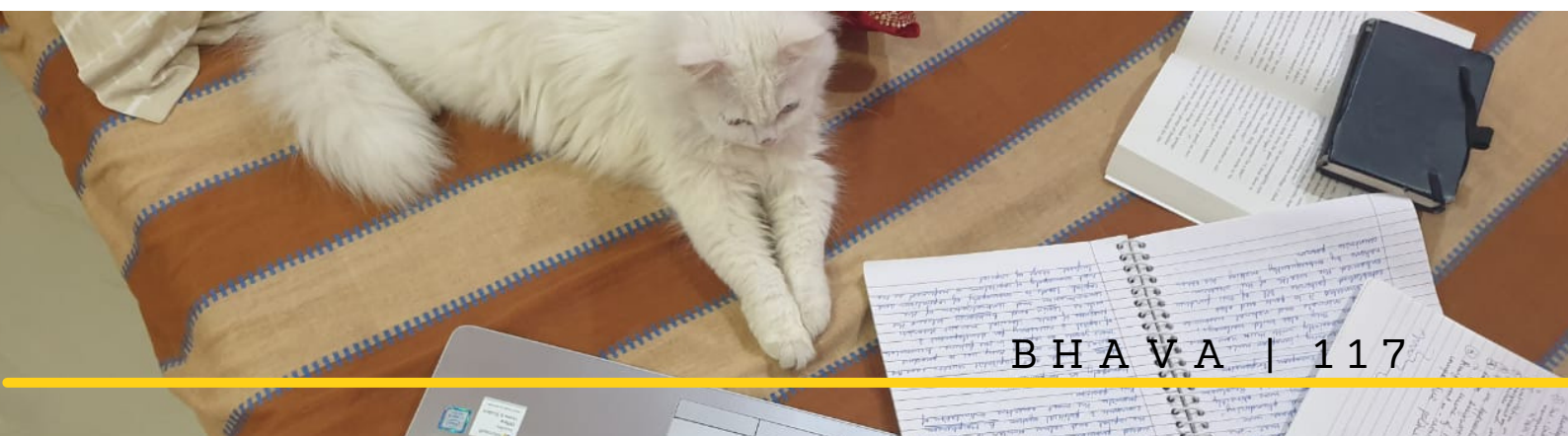
On Mondays I no longer feel my form and begin to think of myself as a half-eaten biscuit--too sweet and all out of my crispiness--lying alone and trying to figure out the cosmic space above and beyond. The place where I work tells me that it is looking for a mature voice and no longer needs me. I tell the place, even when I'm old and white hair grows out of my nose, I'll still be a kid looking for a glass of milk. The place frowns and watches me sleep. Every day I'm big and small and take different shapes. On Thursdays, you might see me as a sunbeam--bright and big--while on Fridays I become an old friend, the one you forgot to call but miss every day. Meet me soon, I say as you laugh at the failed possibilities of your promises and remember forgotten kisses on your cheek. On Tuesdays, I live in memories; the ones that haven't been made yet but you can somehow taste them. Am I sweet or do you wish to push me far, far away?

On Saturdays, I'm sleep-deprived and try to make sense of the abundance of time. Amidst

the cold indivisibilities, I try to stick to the certainties. The smell of my hair, the bottle cap stuck under the fridge and my brother's resting head on the pillow reminds me that beautiful things need not always be in motion. So, on Sundays, I take a breath and smell the warm tea before tasting it, and stare at the wall for so long that it takes the shape of my face. I finally trim my nails and watch the girl on the screen scream from rooftops, as if saddling everyone with her hate. I remind myself of the fire within me which burns brighter than everything else, whilst feeling powerful and sheepish at the same time. So, on Sundays, I take a breath and smell the warm tea before tasting it, and stare at the wall for so long that it takes the shape of my face. I finally trim my nails and watch the girl on the screen scream from rooftops, as if saddling everyone with her hate. I remind myself of the fire within me which burns brighter than everything else, whilst feeling powerful and sheepish at the same time.

Apra Mishra

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2nd YEAR



SUMMER HAVEN

It is 6 pm. What day it is, does not matter because time is endless and we are all in a state of perpetual limbo.

No, it's not that!

Since the lockdown started, I haven't been exactly keeping track of the dates and days. I can see the city through my window.

The sun is going down, coloring the sky in shades of red and yellow.

The Roads are vacant except for the occasional police vehicles.

I open zoom meetings on my laptop and say a silent prayer to BSNL for blessing me with 3/5 bars of internet.

BSNL has outperformed itself today.

The next thing I hear is a shriek and a laugh. I was in a zoom meeting with my cousin sisters. All five of us were meeting after ages, having been busy with college and boards and adulting in general.

The conversation descends into screams and shouts and tears as our eldest sister informs us

she is getting married. The details pour out. The marriage would take place next summer, in the family home backyard, we are all to wear colour coordinated clothes and we are to throw her a party before the wedding where she wants to have 'the time of my whole bachelorette life.' My eyes cloud with happy tears. I have known this was coming but actually hearing it has taken the wind out of my lungs.

Going back to the family home together has excited all of us, I can see it in everyone's eyes. That's where we all became best friends as well as sisters. That place was our childhood summer haven. Every summer, all our parents dumped, sorry dropped off, their children with the grandparents. Our grandparents, who were siblings, had settled next to each other post-retirement, in a place called Thillankad.

Thillankad is a village dotted with lush green paddy fields, long winding roads lined with trees on both sides, ponds and



rivers - a long way from the hustle and bustle of the city and cellular network. We have spent countless summers there. Summer vacations were in April and May, the hottest months of the year. Surprisingly it did not deter our determination to go full out. Our grandparents always complained that we spent half of our vacations on top of trees, which is partially true. I have 15 odd cousins who come in all ages, shapes and sizes. Since summer was also the mango season, our days were spent climbing trees and picking mangoes. In the evenings, we would take out a procession to the Ayyappan temple nearby, all of us clutching our 'thorthumundu' (thorthumundu: bath towel). The majestic temple also had an equally majestic pond. Our evenings were spent swimming and playing in the temple pond. A 20 feet bamboo pole stood in the middle of the pond. The more 'daredevil' ones would climb it and dive, sending all the younger ones screaming to the bank. The walk back home has always been one of my most cherished memories of childhood. Someone would start a song and everyone would join in, mixing up lyrics and laughing at each other's singing. A big old tamarind tree stood halfway on the route. We would pick all the fallen tamarinds and munch on them on the way back. The next stop would be the 'bajji kada' (bajji : a snack similar to pakoda, kada : shop). We ask for 2 packets of ulli bajji (ulli : onion) and make small talk with the shopkeeper as he artistically sprinkles his trademark masala on top. We march back home. This was 6 years ago. So much has changed since then.

My summer plans have been different since I turned 16. They were spent preparing for entrances, studying for the boards and after I got into college, interning. No more mango trees, ponds or bajjis. My summer 2020 calendar is already full. I have taken up a foreign language course and an internship. I sigh and close my laptop. Like one of those people on the 'Paper Boat ads', I drink mango juice and drown the nostalgia in it. My phone rings and I am reminded that I have to submit today's report. I have changed. One look out of the window tells me the world has too...

Sreelakshmi

B.A (H) POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2nd YEAR



SHADES OF THE SKY

In my 20 years, I hardly took out time
to watch the sky
I was too consumed in being one of the
stars that shine in the outside world
But as I sat on the rooftop today
With Adam Levine's Lost Stars playing
in the background
I lost my gaze to the infinity above
The evening sky.
I remembered how you love the amber
sky so much
And in midst of my rants, you would
say "Look up"
The capital's sky had something
spectacular to offer
The same capital that has now run out
of breath.
The evening sky kept changing its colors
Just like we do, the personified
chameleons.
The evening sky also had two different
shades on two different sides at the
same time
Just like we do, the living Januses.

The evening sky ultimately kept losing its colors
Just like we do, the weeping mortals ultimately realizing their tiny
place and fleeting time on earth.
Suddenly, it was all grey, turbid grey
That looked like despair.
I like to think that if despair had a color, it would be gray like
unrequited love
I like to think that if hope had a color, it would be like the silver of the
crescent moon trying to find a space in that gray sky, just like the same
lover's longing for affection.

I like to think that if indifference had a color, it would be like your
stony black eyes
I like to think that if care had a color, it would be like the genuine
glisten that glows in those eyes only in times of crises.
The gray of the evening sky had to slip into nightfall
To be illuminated again by the humble moon
Perhaps, we have to get through despair
To welcome the hope that would be there on the other side of the
black.
It is a challenging wait
But waiting is still an occupation
That stems from hope and leads to hope.
Maybe we can be more appreciative of the moon that shines when all's
asleep
Maybe we can be more appreciative of beings around with or without
the new normal.

Dear Diary,

As everyone wishes, it would have been great, if we could go to college as it is the first time we are entering into college life, but I think everyone is coping with the 'new normal' now and there is nothing we can do other than trying to be positive.

~ *Mahasweta Sarma*

Letters of LOCKDOWN

Dear Diary,

It's been very challenging to adapt towards the new normal, that was online mode. Being a fresher I had a lot many aspirations to do in college but those are dreams yet. Teachers and colleges are trying their best and putting effort in making this learning easier.

~ *Ruheen Khatoon*

Dear Diary,

This lockdown has changed our lifestyle to a large extent but I feel it was in a way positive also like I was able to explore myself more, creative ideas etc. This new normal taught people adjustments, generosity etc. This also alarmed people about saving our resources and cleanliness.

~ *Vaishnavi Agnihotri*

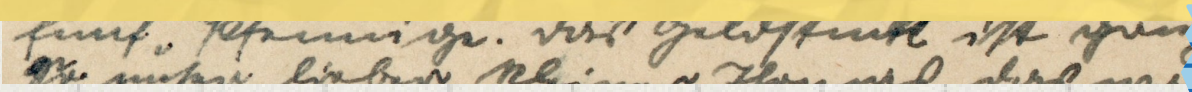




Dear Diary,

Though the lockdown has shattered my dreams to live my college life to the fullest, it has also given me moments that I'll cherish forever! I surely miss not being able to travel in the metro, interacting with people coming from diverse backgrounds, exploring the campus, going on trips, sunbathing in the Miranda Gardens, but I think I have found my happiness and have adjusted to the online life which is filled with Whatsapp chats and GMeet video calls, getting up at 8:30 for a class which begins at the same time, online soc meets etc. Though the lockdown has shattered my dreams to live my college life to the fullest, it has also given me moments that I'll cherish forever! I surely miss not being able to travel in the metro, interacting with people coming from diverse backgrounds, exploring the campus, going on trips, sunbathing in the Miranda Gardens, but I think I have found my happiness and have adjusted to the online life which is filled with whatsapp chats and gmeet video calls, getting up at 8:30 for a class which begins at the same time, online soc meets etc.

~ Aadhya Abbhi



Dear Diary,

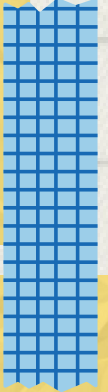
Coming fresh out of school, I was really excited. I had planned so many things and was looking forward to a lot of dreams. In March the Lockdown fell and the Pandemic loomed over our heads. Everything turned Gloomy. I applied to Miranda House under these lockdown times but the excitement still persisted. And so, though virtually, my college life, thus my classes started and I became a Young University Student, without even going anywhere! In the beginning it was really sad knowing that I may never see the campus, but though we are miles apart, my classmates, seniors and teachers made me feel like I am actually there. We lived through pictures but felt every emotion. And slowly and gradually, my Lifestyle changed and this became my New Normal. Now, I have somewhere accepted the fact that whatever I had hoped for, I might not get everything when I want it. But eventually it will come. Though not as extravagant as you expect it to be, it always comes. In tiny things, in little feelings, slowly spread across time. My dreams still persist. And I still strive to achieve them. Because this is not the Universe plotting against me! This is just life

~ *Srishti Sonavane*

Dear Diary,

As a freshman university student who hasn't experienced campus life, the routine has been limited to waking up, attending classes, chasing deadlines and hardly getting any sleep. Burnout for me has become the new normal now. But on a more positive note, friendships have been working well and helping each other has by far made the journey more tolerable.

~ *Urvi Meena*



Dear Diary,

Grappling with this strange reality one straight out of a dystopian book, it might've been a sad state of affairs but online interaction from the comforts of our homes has been an experience that we would always remember.

~ *Nakshatra Verma*



Dear Diary,

Our lives during the lockdown have changed drastically. It gave us immense time to introspect ourselves in a way we have never done. From our daily routine, activities, leisure work to our constant time everything changed in a moment as if they were never a part of our lives. We get to spend delightful time with

our closed ones, we have learned the importance of our families, the importance of Present and how each moment of our life is to live not to pass. Life is still the most beautiful experience as it was before the lockdown, the only fact is that life has taught us during the lockdown that change is constant, for our good we must adapt to the new world.

~ *Aarvi Agrawal*





Dear Diary,

The new normal lifestyle is very different , unexpected and damaging to our academic excellence.it has denied us a very precious phase of our life where we were to be prepared to be leaders of tomorrow.it has left us underconfident, self doubting, unclarity about our plans and goals.it has given us more and more free time which has now become a monster killing us from inside and outside.it has snatched away our a stage of life where we were supposed to dream and dream only ,free from all the tensions and responsibilities of real world, exploring our talents, exploring the possibilities ..but things are totally opposite now. I, personally, feel that i have all the free time in the world but nothing to do .. nowhere to go . nobody to talk to and nothing to be happy about.. caught up within four wall of a room. I just wake up in the morning, wait for afternoon , evening and night and the same thing the next day ,next week and next month .i am totally devoid of any feelings I don't feel happy, sad, hateful, or even angry about anybody or anything. I just wish one fine day this hopelessness turn into hopefulness for me and everybody

~ Madhuri Kumari

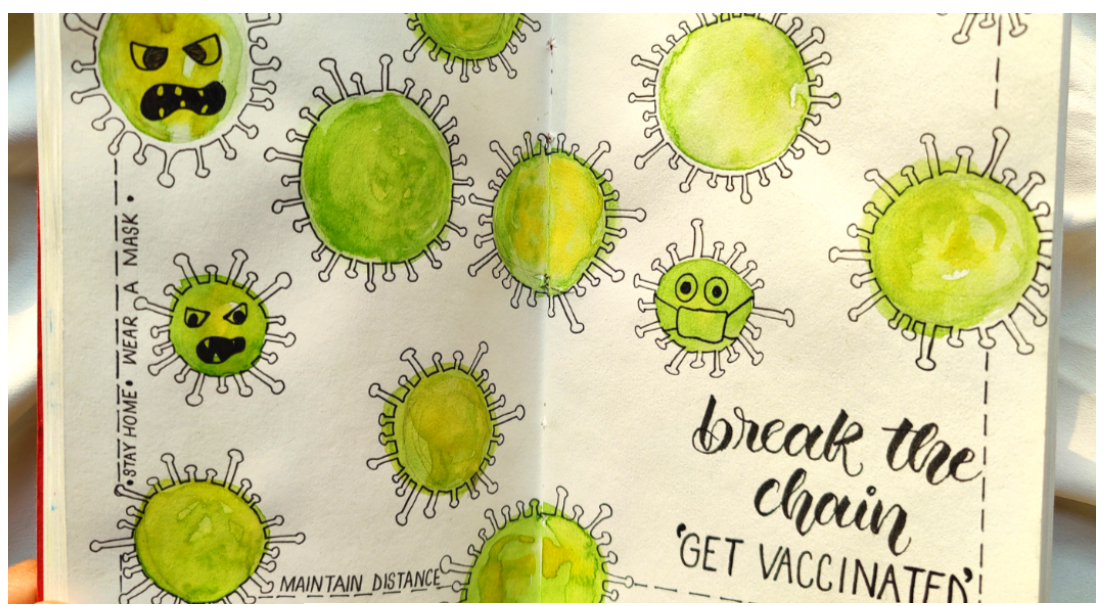
Dear Diary,

The experience of this pandemic was very different for every individual. As a student, I believe for some students who were waiting for their 12th boards results last year, the pandemic was a blessing in disguise because they wouldn't have to give exams for the remaining subjects and for others it was the worst possible scenario as they weren't sure of their results which could have been improved with the exams. This lockdown period too had its pros and cons. On a personal level, I got to experience many changes within myself and the people around me. Perhaps it was the first time that spending time with your family, sleeping for unlimited hours, watching news channels, Ramayana and Mahabharat became a daily routine for thousands of people. But sadly, this was not the case with people who were fighting for their or someone else's life during this pandemic. It feels like the world has suddenly taken a pause button and everyone is stuck in the present. Too much of anything is harmful and the same goes with the lockdown period. Even though it was enjoyable to get some unexpected rest, it was becoming annoying with time. Especially as a school passed out student waiting for admission in college, this wait was unbearable. Now as a college student, online classes have become the norm and we have no other choice but to accept it. It's annoying that we have to meet our new friends, attend classes, experience the campus life and get a glimpse of this new phase of our lives through a virtual screen. It was awkward in the beginning to get comfortable with people whom you haven't even met and also the fact that offline classes are not the most productive ones is frustrating. But even though it's not what most of us want, the fact that we are able to continue our studies even in this kind of environment shows that nothing can stop us from achieving what we want if we try. The efforts by students and professors are praiseworthy who are trying to make this period as an opportunity in disguise and make the best out of it. One of the things that I have understood is that this pandemic has given people some of the most important lessons in their life in one way or another. Finally, I think we should not forget that we are not alone in this and remember to help each other out in the best possible way because: Alone We are strong... together we are stronger!

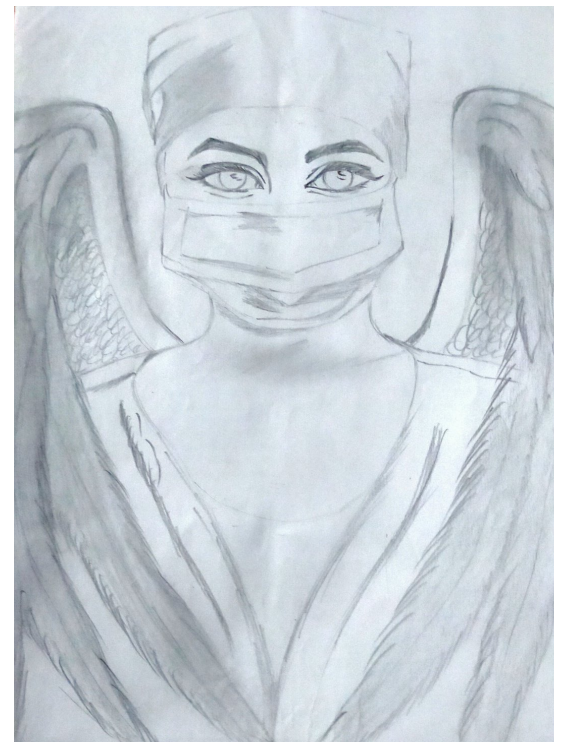
~ Deeksha



Art Booth



~ by Diksha Gautam



~ by Varsha Yadav

~ by Manisha Choudhry M



1st Years



2nd Years



3rd Years

