

CHAPTER-18

COVID-19 PANDEMIC CIRCUMSTANCES AND LOCKDOWN - A NEW CHAPTER OF LIFE



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INTRODUCTION

The suddenly and unexpectedly originated COVID-19 pandemic has divulged a radical transformation in society, economy of a nation, normal performances of human life but at the same time it has unlocked the ventilation to nature and environment which has fetched a fresh air propel towards it. The chirping of birds, dancing of butterflies, swimming of fishes, playing of adorable squirrels facilitated the nature to revivify; to restore to health. During this pandemic circumstance, for lessening the community spread of this disease, the victim countries declared lockdown whenever felt its utmost need.

During the lockdown phase, because of postponed of industrial activities, factory works, mining operations, transportation, tourism and a sudden break on construction works, huge pressure was created on nation's economy. Schools, colleges, universities, other educational institutions, restaurants, cinema halls, shopping complexes, market places were closed for long time, for staying away from social crowd; as a result of

that, massive hassle on socio-economic circumstances of world are being witnessed. A massive number of people are becoming unemployed. Students, academicians, service holders of different Govt. offices and corporate world at this time were forced by the situation to execute their official works from home through online mode. The jobless condition of a big number of people and sideways, work from home concept as well as the incarceration of people at their home to follow the guideline 'stay home stay safe' created gigantic current of alteration in society as well as domestic life. Sometime this change was proven good for family members but in few number of cases this unpredictably originated situation hastened domestic violence; caused several psychological or mental problems; increased number of suicidal cases or suicidal tendency, mood swing, gloominess; gave birth of earning uncertainty with job insecurity, problem of social recognition and many more.

The pandemic situation which I have faced for the first time in my life helped me to learn a lesson of

life. The period was full of incidences like a chapter of a book. Those experiences assisted me to acquire more knowledge and to achieve a philosophical sense of view that has enriched me and my family members. These most precious experiences and realization will help me to walk on the path in rest of my life. This article is the podium for sharing my experiences that are mingled with sweet fragrance and magnificent color of flower as well as the pain gifted by the thorn of roses.

Firstly I shall be depicting the glowing surface of the moon. This side of moon added crayons to my life; made me feel happy, peaceful and relaxed. I am serving as an Assistant Professor in a College and incidentally I am the HOD of my Department, so a burden of work pressure I have to carry on. My husband is in medical profession, he is a pharmacist, so he is also overburdened by his professional duties. We have two school going kids of 11 years and 5 years old. So besides our professions, we have to carry out duties as responsible parents as well as responsible son and daughter towards our parents in our family.

As a professor of a college I used to keep on my academic communication with my students through online manner. Most of them showed good ENDEAVOUR to take part in the online classes regularly; even we the Departmental teachers made an effort to engage them in their study through taking their class tests, viva and group presentation by e-learning method. It is a common proverb that 'necessity is the mother of invention' and also we can memorize the sentence 'if there is will there is way'.

Accordingly no one can erect a wall in front of the expedition of will-force. So bulk of students could involve themselves in online teaching learning process, webinars and online examinations. NSS volunteers carried out their doings like spread of awareness about pandemic COVID-19 among common people through social media and by uploading video in you tube under the supervision of us i.e, their programmer officers. Students even have completed their writing of final year dissertation work. We the teachers used to verify their writing on a regular basis through email. We have

accomplished online internal assessment also for our students. Celebration of world environment day this year also was done by posting the relevant videos, posters, paintings in social media so that a good number of people can be responsive of existing environmental problems or issues and the promising techniques to defeat those. Besides online teaching learning, for my personal academic progression, I took part in a number of webinars, submitted abstracts, presented papers; simultaneously I have completed writing of a number of full length research papers and review articles and communicated to respective books as well as journals.

Thus I could save time and perfectly used time for my academic enrichment all together with the teaching learning process without conflicting each other and at the least cost of my student's classes; even the students who are burdened with domestic responsibilities and work load, used to actively join in the online learning system from their home, besides their domestic responsibilities. These are the good sides

of online education, and it was realized from the inner core of our heart in this adverse situation.

During the first phase of lockdown I was able to give plenty of time to my kids; I spent quality time with them. As a mother I got the golden opportunity to play with my kids and to teach them their course outline as well as the topic outside their books. We used to enjoy virtual travelling and take the charm of not only the tourist spots of India but also the remote corners of other countries, which are simply beyond our imagination in real life.

I got a scope to discover my culinary art and also the high intrinsic energy level to do household work in absence of my helpers due to the effect of lockdown. I got the time to read a number of books, magazines; watched quality cinemas and serials like the epic Mahabharata, Ramayana, Upanishad Ganga and Bengali serial like Subarnalata which was based on the famous novel written by Ashapura Devi. These serials opened a new window of knowledge and information to me. It motivated me to feel the philosophy of life, the history

of our country, the misery, the worst situation and the struggle of women in our society few decades ago; these realizations helped me to be stronger than before, as a woman to face and to fight with the evils of society. I used to like to enjoy listening music like Rabindra Sangeet, Folk, Adhunik and after long gap I had much time to discover me as a singer. I was enjoying the poem writing in social media, and I have written almost 10-12 poems in Bengali language, in the tenure of this COVID-19 situation, highlighting the essence of nature, environment; portraying the current pandemic situation; weaving the present day problems faced by women; and this made me so glad. I enjoyed the melody of connection with my school, college and university friends through social media after a long year gap.

Another lesson we have learnt during this period is proper practice of sanitization, personal hygiene and to develop healthy way of life. Necessity of situation taught us the proper way to wash our hands frequently, especially before taking our food and after coming from outside of house. Use of hand sanitizer, hand wash, soap;

wearing mask, hand gloves, shower cap, social distancing and consumption of strong immunity growing diet can break the chain of COVID-19 spread. Regular and appropriate cleaning of our houses, toilets, surrounding area as well as washing our clothing, and consumption of impurities free water and immune system building food habits also helped us to become free from frequent attack of other diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid, dengue, malaria, cold cough, fever.

We shall be far away from these diseases in future also, if we continue these health and hygiene practices. We believe that social distancing is highly solicited to combat with this circumstance but we should not raise the man to man mental remoteness. We must show good care, love and affection through giving mental support to others. That shall build a strong bonding between human beings. During this period we could feel the noble role of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, cleaning staff, policemen who are the frontline COVID 19 warriors and at each moment they are trying to protect common people from this disaster.

I feel proud for my husband also who is a pharmacist. I have rediscovered his good and brave soul from new angle in this worst situation and this respect is helping me for keeping us far away from domestic violence and disrespectfulness which is a very common incidence in this time. Some good habits like yoga, regular exercise to keep our body healthy and disease free are also being developed. More to the point, the atmosphere was so pure, clean and bright. Atmospheric visibility was also improved. We got rid of the pain of noise. We could listen the resonance of nature.

One more face is also there. The dark side of the moon was also viewed from the inner core of heart. As a teacher of a college, first of all, the problem I met was the physical nonattendance of my beloved students in the classroom teaching and learning, I missed their company as well as eye to eye contact and direct interaction with them. They are like my children; they share their every kind of problems whether those are educational or personal, with me. I always try to sense their gladness as well as pain. I also share experiences of

educational journey of my own life with them; always seek to make a good attempt to evoke their intrinsic energy. Besides, a lot of trouble we faced regarding the dissertation, survey work, field study, educational tour, laboratory work, board work in class room. Student could not use the required books from library. The students of remote areas having poor network connection faced enormous difficulties during the time of online classes. Few of them could not join the classes due to poor network problem.

Another negative side is also there; few of the students were not very sincere; they frequently used to become unconscious and engage themselves in net surfing, Whatsapp checking during class time. These are the dark sides of online teaching-learning mode. In addition with that, it is well-known that the radiations emitted from smart phones may cause detrimental changes in the physical health of human beings, especially on kids and young; furthermore causes unusual changes in behavioral attitude. Therefore use of smart phones for long time, should be avoided. Moreover few of them

habitually become attracted to other irrelevant sites which are harmful for them at their immature mind set up. Sometimes unwise use of online method may initiate the chain of cyber crime.

Due to lockdown I and the NSS volunteers also could not physically visit the adopted village regularly; so a big gap was created among the villagers and volunteers in this period. I am missing the warm and healthy interaction with other academicians, scholars and students in seminar and conferences as well. Webinars and web conferences can fulfill the need but simultaneously create a barrier in front of face to face interaction between academicians.

Lockdown had put us in the imprisonment at our home for long time; COVID-19 pandemic have forced us to shift from physical travelling to virtual mode. We could not feel the wild fragrance of nature of the tour spot; could not enjoy the divine beauty and mesmerizing view of snow capped mountains; this disease deprived us from taking the charm of dancing in the wave of ocean; could not dip into the enchanting beauty of dense forest;

could not hear the melody of rhythmic waterfalls. We love travelling madly but the sudden outbreak of this disease snatched the pleasure of our life. Our children were getting bored due to lack of outdoor plying, travelling and the company of their friends. Although my kids can fulfil their demand of classes through online teaching mode but they are always missing their class room teaching, sweet interaction with their teachers, outdoor playing in their school ground and Tiffin sharing with their friends.

It was furthermore painful to us to keep ourselves physically detached for long time from our old parents, living alone in the countryside. Above all we are the silent and helpless spectator of a radical change in our society; many of our known persons have been suffering from jobless state or the insecurity of job condition; they are now facing huge economic problem. We have known the reality of the extremely pitiable and troublesome situation of hawkers and the migrant workers during this time period, from news paper, and other media; it gave us so much pain. I could feel the

trouble and anxiety as my husband also is in non government organization where uncertainty of salary and salary reduction are becoming very common and harsh words in the present day, but still we are consoling us that we all are the victim, either directly or indirectly, of a global problem. A gigantic number of people are in most horrible situation. So the difficulty of my husband is not the exceptional one. Moreover the effect of lockdown period will show long-term impact on socio-economic status; so for how long shall we all, the common people put aside us from the flame of fire?

We all have to be isolated in terms of physical distance but united by inner strength to battle with this pandemic. The people who are being attacked by COVID-19 disease are also being undergone a phase of trauma. This too portrayed the grey shade of this pandemic situation. We are always wearing mask, cap, hand gloves, face shield while step out of our home or come in to contact or interaction with other persons; these create a barrier as well as a burden to us. We can't freely move or freely respire a peaceful breath. We

are anxious to see when the dark night will end and the new sun will rise. On that day we will be able to get pleasure of free life again. But really the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us how to protect and safeguard ourselves in the future while facing such type of unfavorable circumstances and complications. It also trained us how to live a balanced life connecting with nature.

We should show extreme respectfulness to our mother earth and also have to be compassionate and kind-hearted towards other living creatures and animals. We have to keep in our mind that without their direct and indirect support we are nothing, we can't live here alive alone, this is simply impossible from the view point of an environmentalist. If we love nature, cherish nature and protect nature from extreme pressure of technology and adverse events made by man; then nature will return back us immense love, affection and shelter in her lap and will keep our life safe from all kinds of undesirable incidences.