

# IMPACT AND INNOVATIVE RESPONSES OF THE STUDENT COMMUNITY DURING COVID-19: ANALYZING THE NARRATIVES OF CONFINEMENT IN THE HOME-SETTING

—Sanjay Singh\* & Shailja Singh\*\*

*Abstract—Covid-19 has transformed how different social institutions respond to the crisis. The paper provides a portrait of the changes brought about by the pandemic and the Government's response in the form of lockdown. The article focuses on the challenges faced by university students during the lockdown period, which relate to work, studies, relationships and other socio-psychological aspects. The confinement for a more extended period in the family space has many engaging narratives. The present study incorporates second-semester students as a sample. The students provided their experiences during the lockdown period; sixteen such descriptions are included in the present paper. Before March 2020, things were normal, and the students were engaged in their studies for the second semester. Due to the Holi festival, they get a break from their academic routine. But the short holiday was destined for a difficult period where everything changed for them. The space they visited for a short Holi festival vacation extended for a long break, where they remained in the confinements of their houses. This new living space has provided increased interaction and opportunities for more frequent communication between the family members. However, the students also faced several challenges, including*

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\* Professor (Sociology), Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow. <ssocio@yahoo.com>.

\*\* Associate Professor (Sociology), Department of Sociology, Social Science & Social Work, Dr. Shakuntala Misra National Rehabilitation University, Lucknow, <shailjads-mru@gmail.com>.

*financial issues, the tension between family members due to sharing space, and a work-at-home lifestyle. The stress and depression from new living arrangements and engagements with the latest technology have created a new frame of a division of labour within the household space. The paper provides an assessment of the changes experienced by students and how these changes and challenges are represented through the narratives they offered during the lockdown period.*

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Corona, Lockdown, Students, Philosophical Problem

## I. INTRODUCTION

Change is a philosophical(intellectual) problem because it is challenging to understand the situation in its context. However, change is also a political problem that demands practical actions. The situation in India during the corona pandemic poses questions to the intellectual sector not being able to understand the genesis, process and treatments of the disease at one hand and questions posed to the political set-up for their mismanagement in dealing with the pandemic situations. The mass migration, unemployment, and proper food supply on the one hand and maintaining a growth rate, keeping industries and infrastructure in good health on the other were significant responsibilities on the part of the political set-up. Both the domains tried their best to contain the situation, but the people's expectations were still high, requiring a significant shift or change. However, certain other population groups, including the student community, were not provided attention during the pandemic situation. Whatever studies are available concerning the student community aimed at how it affected their studies and what measures to introduce to compensate for the damage done; in this process, the mass use of the online platform was very useful in engaging the student community. But, the question is whether the student community is only affected academically, whether the student community is isolated, or what other impact of COVID-19 affected the student community. The student community is not independent regarding the economic affair, nor are they the independent decision makers. That is why whatever impact they sustained directly, they were also subjected to the indirect effects of COVID 19.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The present study depends on the narratives provided by the students during the online classes held during the pandemic period. The students of B.A. LL.B second semester constitute the sample of the study. It was conscious to avoid the inter-class differences already existing in experiences. The assumption was that since the students belong to the same academic standard, the context of their narration may be the same. Still, contrary to that, the experiences are diversified and include pleasant and unpleasant narrations. Out of the hundred narratives, the researchers randomly selected sixteen narratives keeping in mind that both boys and girls get a proper representation in the sample. All the hundred narratives are part of the study; the sixteen are presented here in the present paper.

The purpose of narrative analysis is to unfold how individuals make sense of their lived experience and how its telling enables them to interpret the social world and their agency. More often, the focus is not on revealing the truth of the stories. Instead, research questions and the epistemological position determine the approach to analysis.<sup>1</sup> However, during the research process, we tried to engage the participants and discussed the other dimensions they did not mention in their narrative. The research has followed the Goodson (2006) model to understand the descriptions. First, the model consists of narration, where the participants shared and narrated the stories. Second, collaboration was a follow-up conversation where they were posed some questions to understand the told experiences. And finally, location, where the researcher contextualized narratives and dialogue exchange. It is also where the individual stories get connected to form a picture of a collective experience.<sup>2</sup>

The narrations were not very normal, and one may understand that this is made under abnormal conditions. However, the homogeneous classroom of more than a hundred students responded differently. Some were elated; some involved themselves in various household activities. A significant section utilized the bounties of technology by surfing different entertainment channels and other media sources to engage themselves. But others were the victims of technology who could not use the period to engage with the entertainment domains because the technology and the infrastructure available to them were insufficient to provide them with the opportunity to garner the benefits of this technology. It is the manifest advantage and disadvantages of technology that affect their lifestyle. Still, at the latent level, there are numerous challenges beyond our imaginations that these tender minds were facing. Can they remain

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<sup>1</sup> Gill Scherto & Ivor Goodson (2011). "Life History and Narrative Methods." In Bridget Somekh & Cathy Lewin (eds.). *Theory and Methods in Social Research*, p. 160. New Delhi. Sage Publications Pvt Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Goodson, I. (2006). In Bridget Somekh & Cathy Lewin (eds.). *Theory and Methods in Social Research*. p. 162. New Delhi. Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd.

aloof from the dynamics of the family in which they are living? If they are part of that dynamics, they face a social-psychological trauma different from what other family members are facing. The challenges are different; the parents realize they are only taking up the challenges and providing a safe and sustainable environment for other family members. It is true, but at the same time, they must understand that their sons and daughters are worried about not only their challenges but also their parents' challenges. It is visible in the narration of the students.

### III. CASE STUDIES

The narratives provided by the students during the lockdown period are represented as case studies. Each case study is unique and familiar as well. It is unique because the context of the student's experiences is different. However, the experiences are common because they had to react to a similar situation, and the responses emerge from the confinements of the home setting.

#### A. CASE-I

'Just after the Holi holiday was declared I was in chill mode; I spent the first few days like there was no college ever after. I watched a lot of YouTube videos. I also restarted playing Computer, which I didn't do for a long time. Soon after, the lockdown was extended till mid-April, I decided to start working out, but the gym was closed. So I started researching home workouts, read articles and watched many YouTube videos where I came across callisthenics, which is building muscle through your body weight. So I downloaded a callisthenics workout routine and started working on it. As a result, I put on some muscle mass and feel a lot better because of it. It sounds weird, but something I put down just because I didn't have enough time. So I restarted playing PUBG and played it 2 hours a day. I miss restaurant food; it has been more than a month since I ate only homemade food. My parents didn't allow me to eat outside food, nor was I allowed to order food online. So within a short time, I tried out many dishes. I am still determined to continue improving my cooking and eating throughout the lockdown and post-lockdown'.

#### B. CASE-II

'Since 23 March, we have been on lockdown for more than 90 days. It is the longest time that many working professionals and students have been in their homes without going anywhere. My experiences made me reflect on many beliefs and thoughts I had previously. During the initial phase, I was a bit anxious due to the shift to online classes, fear of contracting the virus, the way forward and much more. However, as the days went by, the tension surrounding the virus remained, but I got used to other things. I started writing again,

spent a lot of good time with my family ( which I had cribbed for so much after starting college) and started re-learning a language that I had left mid-way months ago. However, things were not pleasant all the time. My grandfather fell severely ill, and we had to take a road trip of 750 kilometres since the flights and trains were not operational then. On the way, I saw hundreds and thousands of migrant workers travelling to their homeland in whatever mode they could. While I still was anxious over my grandfather's health, I was grateful that I at least had amenities that made me think about this issue and not the issue of "How do you survive without jobs and money? "And while at that thought, I was upset over the sorry state of the marginalized sections of the society. During the beginning of the lockdown, I was so anxious and worried. Later, I acclimatized, re-thought things, and realized that one does not need much to survive. However, a thought haunted us: we have placed our priorities wrong all this while.'

### C. CASE-III

'I enjoyed this time. I got a lot of time to spend with my family. I was excited because I managed to persuade my father to buy PS4. So I ordered from Amazon. It was coming four days later. I was sad because I could get significantly less time to play PS4. The Government order came the same day, which stated that the colleges and schools would be closed for up to three months due to Covid - 19. After this news, I felt very excited, enthusiastic and energetic. During this time, I enjoyed playing PS4. I played good games like PES 20, Fortnite, Apex legends and Uncharted 4. As I am a fan of the football game, I loved playing it more (PES 20). This game is so realistic that I am playing it, and I never feel bored. I can assure you that there was another type of feeling I experienced while spending time with my family. I can't express it in words and learn valuable things and experiences from them. During that time, there was a myth that by eating Chicken, you would suffer from Coronavirus. Suddenly this news became top of the highlights. People started avoiding Chicken. I am a huge chicken lover. So I ate during that time so much. I enjoy sleeping during the day because I watch movies and play PS4. But after some time, the slogan "Stay home, Stay safe" became a part of depression. Looking back, I wasted a lot of time in entertainment. But sometimes, I use it, like doing projects and giving presentations on academic subjects. One fear was that the exams of will going to be conducted online. That was a significant loss for those studying hard to get good marks in the semester. There was a considerable loss to the big companies and industries. Many small companies have become ruined during this time. The most significant loss is to the farmers and landless because they depend on daily wages to meet their two ends. I will say that I would have used that valuable time in doing something like reading articles or reading various books. I wasted that time. It is bitter that people learn from "loss and experience'.

#### **D. CASE-IV**

‘The Covid-19 pandemic has been a tragic and unpredictable deadly virus affecting people worldwide. This experience of mine that our life is so uncertain has left me unquestionable. At first, I wasn’t serious about it and thought everything would get to normal within a few weeks or a month, but now with time, I have understood that this Coronavirus is, in some way or the other, going to be a part of our life. At the beginning of the lockdown, I had just passed my time doing nothing except helping my mom in the kitchen and doing other household chores like we usually do during our holidays. However, after a month of realizing that nothing would be normal too soon, I started working on my academics, attending webinars, doing projects and presentations and doing an online internship to improve my CV for the upcoming year. I have also started cooking new dishes we can’t eat or order from outside as it would be foolish to risk our own health in a crisis. Altogether I won’t ever be able to forget this time when we humans were in a cage that was locked in homes, and animals were free to roam around fearlessly.’

#### **E. CASE-V**

‘This Corona time frame started for all of us since Holi holidays, till then nobody had any idea that it gone that long. Sir, I belong to Jhansi UP. My home, situated on the city’s outskirts, has no proper internet connection, and even we face issues with call connectivity. It made my lockdown period worse. I have only a monthly connection to the phone network. Most of the books are left at the hostel, so it is difficult to keep studying. I just passed these four months and keep engaging myself in project submission, presentation, etc. Due to a lack of research, my projects may not be up to the mark. I have a serious concern about how teachers are going to evaluate it. For the last few weeks, I think I have had some depression issues. This lockdown affects my mental health very severely. When I saw people posting about new internships, papers and publications, I might feel backward. I have concerns regarding everything. I have nothing further to do. Every day I pray that this will end soon. Let’s pray together for the betterment of the world.’

#### **F. CASE-VI**

‘It has now been nearly four months from the first day of lockdown, and it’s striking me hard as I had wasted entirely and still wasted my time except for all these project tasks because somehow it forced me to engage myself. I have mainly two reasons to waste my entire four months; the first one is my psychology which might be appeared to be absurd or childish as I think that this world is going to end or our Dooms day is very near. Secondly, the social status as I live in a rented house which only has two rooms for a family of

seven members and its unmanageable to get free space or the time for a study because due to this lockdown my all siblings who used to study and stay in different cities are here on the same time by following the guidelines of Mr. Modi” stay home stay safe.’

## **G. CASE-VII**

‘If I get to the point, apart from meeting my friends and enjoying with them like going different places, having parties, talking and interacting with them daily, not much has changed in my life. Nowadays, our social life is more online than face-to-face interaction. Being online on social media platforms is very important. So, since COVID-19, our activity on social media platforms has increased even more. I chat with my friends by texting on WhatsApp or Instagram, and on certain occasions or quite often, we call each other or enjoy our company through video calls. We even celebrate the birthdays of each other on group video calls. I also interact with my friends through games like PUBG or Ludo, which can be accessed online through our mobile devices. Many of my friends have taken this opportunity to create social clubs and pages on online platforms for people who share similar interests like art, music, etc. Apart from the online social life, I have noticed a change in myself and others around me; I like to spend my evenings on the terrace with a cup of tea. For that fact, my neighbours want to do the same. People interact with each other at a safe distance and usually don’t have the time to even talk to their neighbours as they are usually very busy in their lives and spend quite a time in the evenings talking and sharing stuff. Many have picked left-up hobbies like gyming and playing guitars. Still, in the end, people want to share the day-to-day things that they do with the people they used to spend most of their time with when life wasn’t affected by COVID-19, like office colleagues, fellow students, the people who were friends as they spent most of their time with them. They did not have time to interact with their neighbours because of their busy lives, but now they are all familiar with the neighbour.’

## **H. CASE-VIII**

‘We all have been left strictly confined to our four-walled tiny homes compared to mother nature. I have been thinking of doing many things since I completed my 12th, but with little luck. And to some extent, I am grateful for this series of lockdowns imposed by the Government that have left me with enough time to devote almost to everything. For starters, I started doing yoga for 45 min daily in the morning and believe me when I say this; yoga is what our generation needs to stay fit and away from all the stress. In addition, I have long wanted to read the history of modern India by Bipin Chandra, and I finished it at last. Quite an exciting way in which our historical events have been portrayed, plus it also gives deepened general awareness. As for

political awareness, I started reading editorials and opinions on the site of Hindu. Knowing the plight of the stranded labourers, I urged my locality to donate some amount of money to various authentic organizations working for the plight of the labourers. I learned that even after more than 70 years of independence, the lower class of this country is still dependable on the rest of the country at times for even the most necessities of life. Also, I started writing papers and have written one book review of SHIVA TRILOGY series of books and two research papers, one on Impact of Pandemic on the Political Situation of India and the other on Sino-Indian Relations. Writing these papers has taught me various skills. Lastly, I started interacting more with my family members and bonded with my family even more.'

## **I. CASE-IX**

'When Mr. Narendra Modi first announced 'janta curfew', I took it as a task and thought, "Let's do it; what's so big deal about staying home just for a day even though it was Sunday which meant that I would have gone out somewhere for sure. When the next day lockdown 1 was announced, I again thought that its not that difficult and it was for our safety only. Our domestic help was asked not to come, so I helped my mother clean the house, helped my sister study, read articles and learn new things about Corona. But soon, I started missing my daily routine. There were many plans about college, projects, and exams, and it all halted. I missed junk food and chocolate. Eventually, I made my peace with it. Now I read novels, watch movies, sometimes go to meet some relatives, and help my mother try new dishes. We were waiting for the corona vaccine and adapting to online learning.'

## **J. CASE-X**

I have confined myself inside my home for the last three months. The overcrowded city has converted to a still village. The crammed markets no more exist, the joyous and rather sweaty journeys of Indian trains are no more to enjoy. The Sabjiwala vendor doesn't allow us to touch his vegetables without sanitizing our hands; the police officers wouldn't catch a thief but a man-without-mask. My mother wouldn't ask me bring milk from market, though there is home delivery of "essentials," walking is no more an essential pursuit. My dad would not encourage me to enjoy cricket, he is satisfied with the video game. But there is something I feel good about- I am not a labourer, I am not dying on the streets, it's not my blood. Atleast I am not coerced to sleep on railway tracks! O, Corona, You have changed us, changed us completely. A crown suits you, indeed!



## K. CASE-XI

‘On 24 March 2020, the country’s Prime Minister announced a nationwide lockdown due to the outbreak of a new virus, the Coronavirus in India. Since the lockdown, I have been isolated in my home. Earlier I tried to play video games and watch movies, but in due course of time, I ran out of things to do; thus, I started reading books. I read The Harry Potter series, Little Women, Two gentlemen of Verona and the Tale of Two cities. I developed the habit of going out and feeding stray dogs and cats everyday. I was doing it in college, too, but I couldn’t continue it because of the mid-semester holidays and the lockdown. I joined the People for Animals association (PFA) headed by Smt Maneka Gandhi. I also help out with all the domestic chores that I can. I have realized that one’s busy life has deprived him of the solace of peace, which has detached him from the moments he can spend with his family. Often people feel stressed because of the complicated life that they spend without having an option to take a break. This lockdown has presented itself as an opportunity for many to finally spend their time doing the things they always wanted to do during their free time.’

## L. CASE-XII

‘I have been at home since 23rd March. When I left the hostel on the night of 22 March, all trains across the nation were cancelled. I had an option to board one of the last trains running that was yet to complete its journey. When I reached Lucknow Charbagh Railway Station, hardly people were there to be seen. That was my first encounter when I realized the fear of Corona. Luckily I arrived home. Since then, I have been at home for more than three months. I’ve always hated coming back home during vacations. Cause I’ve never lived with my parents since 2008. So, I have hardly any friends here. The only outsiders I’m familiar with are the shop owners of eateries and outlets. Before this lockdown, whenever I was at home during vacations, I lived alone in the house during the daytime because my parents worked. But this time I have all of them present except my father who has to go to his office. So, this time I came home with seven books comprising three textbooks and four fiction books. Till today, I have read five of them. The unfinished ones are boring. During these vacations, I found a Telegram channel which provides all the newspapers and magazines published across the globe. Telegram is a social networking application that can be downloaded from Google Play Store for Android phones. After coming across this channel, I filtered the magazines and decided which one to read. Most of them are English magazines published in UK and US. So, I download them and try to finish them in a day or two. It has kept me engaged, and I think it has inculcated a reading habit in me. A few days back, I also wrote down a blog on the topic, “Covid-19 & its impact on the educational Sector,” which is yet to be published. I submitted it to many blogs, but all of them have rejected it. I’m still waiting for the Indian Journal of Law on

Public Policy to reply on whether they will publish my article. If this one gets published, I'll start writing another one. I have two contemporary issues on which an article can be written. During this lockdown, I'm also binge-watching a few TV series. Watching TV shows makes me realize that for me, it's too tough to glue my eyes to a digital screen continuously. I've friends who finish 9hour long shows in a single day. I don't know how they do it. On weekends I travel to my native place 5 km away to visit my grandmother. There I enjoy the scenic beauty of lush green fields. Now, people have sown paddy seeds which will turn into a plant by the beginning of next month. No doubt, days are passing quickly. But, every morning, eyes still search for news that says there is a drastic decrease in Covid-19 cases across the nation. I hope that day isn't far. I can't wait to be back in Lohiya land. I miss it more than anything.'

### **M. CASE-XIII**

'I believe society is going through so much change, with many issues coming up daily. As an individual, I encountered many such problems, starting right from the initial times when the pandemic had just started ravaging countries and stifling economies. It began with how the minorities such as the LGBTQ Community and the Rohingyas, for instance, faced a large amount of scrutiny and discrimination from the society. In many countries, the LGBTQ Community members were refused treatment, and hospital facilities stating that the COVID-19 patients were of utmost priority. Many were laid off from jobs without financial assistance to support themselves. Rohingyas in Bangladesh are being deprived of COVID tests and are on the verge of mass exodus because they aren't living in sanitized areas and are not self-aware. We recently came across the Black Lives Matter Movement in the United States of America. The movement sparked when a black man, George Floyd, was killed in custody, following no specific procedure, by a white policeman. This movement spread across boundaries, with many individuals speaking against racism or skin colour-based discrimination meted out against them. A few days later, news came up against violence against animals, with people having varying opinions regarding the issue. Lastly, as we thought things couldn't go downhill from here, a young talented actor from Bollywood committed suicide. As a 21-year-old, I don't understand how to process so much change when all we should worry about are assignments, good grades, health and the relationships we invest in. This time is indeed going down in history, and I feel mixed feelings about being a part of history now. On the one hand, when we come out of this, we will feel a sense of liberty, but at the cost of what? There have been deaths, numerous failed attempts at preparing a vaccine, children have been left orphaned, men and women have lost jobs, and the youth have lost out on time they would have otherwise spent looking for job opportunities to broaden their career prospects. I also believe this time has been the only instrument that has played in our favour. It has given us ample opportunities to do everything and nothing, and it depends on how we decide

to utilize this time. I tried bettering at the skills I already felt I was okay at. I did some painting and cooking, which are considered a way to therapy. I have read about so many things and at an extensive length. I feel more responsible and aware now that I've tried investing time in subjects I felt were too lengthy to fit into my previously-busy schedule. I have realized the importance of time and how it makes or breaks us as individuals. I won't disagree; there have been days when all I wanted to do was curl up in bed and stare at the ceiling cause I felt deficient; I have allowed myself to breathe and take things one day at a time. There are still days when I get extremely rude or cranky, cause honestly, we are tired of doing and re-doing the same things repeatedly, and we humans are craving for some change for the better. All that I know, the greatest lesson we take from the COVID times is that strength and patience are best tested when we are forced inside a box and doing better than expected. We are holding up just fine. Holding on, we've got this.'

## **N. CASE-XIV**

'The Coronavirus has infected a large percentage of the global population and caused death to millions of people and yet spreading rapidly. The invisible virus had seized the movement of everyone, including the most arrogant and affluent people. One of the positive sides of the virus is that it didn't discriminate between the rich and the poor, spreading equally amongst them. And the situation has proved that the poor are more immune than the affluent. During the lockdown period, I am staying in my village, doing all the farming activities which I, as a member of a farming background, was missing for a long time. Of course, the lockdown period had attracted my attention towards myself, which I had forgotten with my busy life. I had put my concentration on myself and started meditation and exercising daily to increase my willpower and energy. I had given my time to my family members and the village people and tried to understand their problems. Throughout the lockdown, I had done all the farming activities, including harvesting the wheat, storing it into my house and preparing the field of the paddy crops. With my farming experiences, I also tried to understand the problems the farmers face as an insider of the farming culture. I learned that the main issues encountered by the farmers are danger from wild animals, irrigation problems, and bad quality of seeds which decrease crop production. Also, inequality in the distribution of the land; some have acres of land, and most work in their fields as labourers. I had come to know that the leading cause of the migration of people is inequality in land distribution. The majority didn't have agriculture which is the cause of their departure toward cities. If the Government somehow provides agricultural land or employment in the local area, the migration problem may end. I would also like to somewhere thank CORONA for teaching me the lesson that human is just tiny particle when it comes to nature. Let us not play with it and make it a pollution-free, livable planet.'

## O. CASE-XV

‘The coronavirus situation has been mentally debilitating. It has been a harrowing experience filled with uncertainty, which only seems to worsen with time. It has been a complete departure from what we usually consider to be the ‘normal’. The harrowing visuals and stories of the not-so-fortunate dying from starvation and disease and the ever-increasing number of cases and deaths have been anxiety-inducing and nightmarish, especially when your mother is a cancer-surviving diabetic patient. She is in the highly high-risk category of individuals. Furthermore, knowing her condition, the Chairman of her Tribunal decided that perhaps the middle of a deadly pandemic is the best time to transfer her from Lucknow to Jodhpur, a completely alien place to her where she knows no one and has no place to stay. Thankfully, she had been allowed to hold e-court till 30 June, but that date is fast approaching, and we don’t know what to do. My father’s office had temporarily reopened, and every day he went to and returned from office was a ritual involving myriad precautions, incessant sanitizing, bathing and constant fear, especially considering my mother’s condition. As cases shot up, his office was suspended until 30 June. These two factors have single-handedly been the most stressful aspects of COVID-19. Keeping my mother’s conditions in mind, not wanting to risk her life, I haven’t stepped foot out of home for over four months now, and its beginning to show its effects in the form of muscle atrophy and a complete loss of understanding of what the outside world felt like. I have lost track of time and date and don’t even care to do so anymore. However, that proved to be an unwise decision when I forgot to wish my mother her birthday, as despite remembering her date of birth and having plans to celebrate her birthday, when the day finally came, I simply wasn’t aware that it was had actually arrived. Therefore, quite a lot of effort went into normalizing her mood and making her happy. Thankfully, social media and Whatsapp exist and have allowed for some communication. My parents and I are suddenly forced to cohabit for months with little distraction or outlet. That’s led to a lot of disagreements, arguments and an emphatic realization that the concept of the ‘generation gap’ is brutally genuine. My elder brother, who usually is my honest company at home, is the more sensible and reasonable of the two siblings, often protecting me from the tirades of my parents, is stuck in Budapest and can’t return. He had gone there in late December on behalf of his company to further his career prospects and tour Europe. We were supposed to visit him this summer, our only second and first foreign trip in over 15 years. The journey, of course, got cancelled, and he’s stuck working from home. We don’t know when he’ll even get to return. Meetings and conversations have been reduced to video calls. It helps, though, that, unlike me, he’s an introvert and can happily keep himself occupied and focused with his work, completing multiple online courses and degrees. We all are proud of him. I must admit that this situation has also had its positives for me, as I had my first legal article published, followed by the publication of multiple

other articles, all on reputed and respected law blogs and websites. I have also engaged in legal research and writing papers and have successfully submitted a paper for publication in a reputed journal. This situation has given me a lot more time to be relaxed, introspect, learn, research and write more than what would have otherwise been possible. I look forward to using this time to further my knowledge and skills. Unfortunately, though, for not any particular reason that I can identify, but probably from all the pent-up stress and anxiety that has built up over the past four months, and the multiple commitments of what I honestly find uncalled for project submissions and presentations; the constant worry of being left behind in the competitive race during this pandemic situation. The constant flux and uncertainty regarding the status of our academics, the stress of not knowing whether exams will be held or not, and if held, how will they possibly be held in these circumstances with the syllabus not covered and the cases going up by the day, my recurrent insomnia is once again back. Insomnia is perhaps the worst thing I have ever experienced. In the past, it was usually onset months ahead by the stress and anxiety of exams when they would come near, especially the competitive ones. Earlier, in the 'normal' times, I was fortunate enough to consult my trusted psychiatrist whenever insomnia would strike. The right dose and combination of medicines would usually do the job until the anxiety-inducing situation was tided over. Unfortunately, I am unable to reach my psychiatrist over the phone; the previously prescribed medicines, even in higher doses, do not seem to be working, physically visiting a doctor is entirely out of the question, and my insomnia is worsening by the day. Thus my corona time appears to be going from worse to worst. After not having slept in almost a week, my days are mostly reduced to a haze of video gaming, television and trying to get the pending work from college and other commitments somehow done while negotiating parental expectations and scrutiny. My parents have suggested praying to god and asking him for help and strength, pointing out how my atheism maybe a cause of all my worries and lack of conviction and strength. Somehow, all the misery around me further strengthens my absolute lack of belief in god and religion, and for better or worse, I can't bring myself to still believe in a god, any god, or religion. I do not know how or when this corona thing will be resolved, and now I have also almost given up thinking about it as it almost seems futile to do so. I just hope things return to normal soon, hope that my insomnia sorts itself out and that was going out stops becoming an elaborate ritual; although funnily, many studies have pointed out how ritualization helps us attach more significance and meaning to simple acts. The ritualization of going out is what we all needed to appreciate the freedom many of us had enjoyed unthinkingly for so long. So I hope things return to 'normal' or result in a better and happier normal. In the end, I would like to end with the golden phrase the legendary Mr. Ramdas Athwale, Member of Parliament, has helped popularise- "Go corona, corona go!"

## P. CASE-XVI

‘Such times of distress and problem have created havoc worldwide. It would seem weird, but this time has brought my world back into place. I have regained my potential and creative instincts, which I had lost in pretending to love the new ‘so-called cool’ but entirely useless lifestyle during the first year of college. All thanks to the location of my home in Dehradun, the nature and wildlife I got to witness from my balcony ensured my sanity during this lockdown. I have realized the importance of living in the present moment and not just anticipating and planning the future. And I am also living with my family and understanding them as individuals apart from the relationships we share. Now, I have concluded that working upon myself, honing my skills and elevating my mental capacities are the things most worthy of my time and energy. Only these hold the ability to ensure my future is prosperous, stable and lively rather than just planning on what degrees to own. This time has been productive; I completed two internships, participated in an online mediation competition, published my articles, improved my physical and mental health, improved my reading habit, and worked on my artistic painting and calligraphy skills. As a result, I am enjoying this time thoroughly. Also, I am unapologetically thankful for this time, as now I know what things matter to me and how I would like to build my life.’

## IV. CONCLUSION

The whole of the narrative research created a thematic story, and it initiates some essential questions. The one is about the emotions that engaged both the participants and researcher. The students who were the participants expected his side of the story. Therefore, the researcher and the participants bring emotions to the research encounter.

Secondly, the researcher derived meaning from his narrative and tried sympathizing with the participants’ narratives. The participants’ expectation was also imposing pressure upon the researcher to act as a therapist; if he is not in a position to provide a solution, it was expected that at least the researcher is a good listener.

The confinement at home was challenging as there was no space for the workouts, so they engaged in computer gaming and experimenting in the kitchen. The outside food was not available, and neither did the parents allow that. The fear of infection by the virus and the shift to the online learning mode was also a challenge. The ill-health of a family member provides an insight regarding the rest of the population, who are devoid of resources. There is also a realization that our priorities are somewhere wrong. The online games, eating and getting enriched by the experiences of elders was the earlier reaction. Later on, the confinement of the home created a depressive feeling

where things looked tedious and difficult. However, the sensitivity was there to relate to others and accept that despite all the resources, they could not utilize them properly. Participating in the household chores, helping the mother in the kitchen and experimenting with new dishes were common phenomena.

Covid-19 was a challenging period, where there was always a fear of loss, particularly in studies. The worry and anxiety of submitting the projects correctly and within time was a challenge. The challenge got augmented due to a bad internet connection. It created a depression because the books and study material were lying in the hostel, inaccessible to the students in a remote area. In addition, the feeling that the world is no more sustainable and everything is liable to end very soon created psychological depression.

Moreover, since the middle class sustains only a small family structure, the space crunch was always there, which is why personal space was missing. It also created a feeling of deprivation where the academic domain is disturbed and no proper guidance is available. The online platforms and the various means of communication compensated for social life. Through the medium of video calls and other interactive platforms, the students celebrated their birthdays etc. The lockdown created a space for the new group where for the first time, people came to know about their neighbours in a very intimate way. Reading, doing yoga and spending time with family members was the regular affair during the pandemic, particularly during the lockdown. A section of students completed book reviews, prepared the draft for the articles and learned new writing skills. However, the emotional ties with the family members became all more strong. Domestic workers were not allowed to work for safety reasons, which is why the household chores became the responsibility of all. The junk food and chocolates were absent from the menu. The new routine was challenging, but they acclimatized to this later. Reading and trying new dishes was the new norm.

The rules and etiquettes of social interaction changed a lot and required an effort to adjust to a new milieu. Parents who encouraged outdoor activities were motivated to stick to computers and remained in the confinement of the house. The changes and challenges were complex, but it was more challenging and tortuous for the resourceless. This lockdown had presented itself as an opportunity for many to finally spend their time doing the things they always wanted to do during their free time. Initially, video games and other sources of entertainment provided an opportunity, but later, reading and writing helped a lot to sail through this difficult period.

Another challenge was adjusting to the parents with whom a section of students would live after several years. The friends were also not there in the vicinity, so technology was the only solution to keep in touch with others. Reading books was their favourite pastime as it was challenging to focus on the screen for an extended period. They missed the campus life and wanted

to come back soon. The students connected well to the issues of the LGBTQ community and the cause of Rohingyas during the pandemic. According to them, these communities have suffered a lot. Cooking and painting were the hobby and acted as therapy during tough times. They realized the importance of time and how it makes or breaks us as individuals. The greatest lesson they learnt from the COVID period is that strength and patience are best tested when forced inside a box and perform better than expected. According to the students, Covid-19 treated all equally irrespective of status and resources. This period also showed that the poor developed better immune due to their low mobility and complex life challenges.

One of the students, who belonged to a farmer's family, narrated issues related to farming and farmers in the villages. As an insider, he described the issues and problems of the agriculture sector. He believed that the unavailability of land is the leading cause of labour migration from rural to urban industries. This lockdown has allowed him to introspect himself and the situation in his village.

The pandemic period, particularly the lockdown, had been mentally debilitating. The institution of family was the only support system. Therefore the narratives initiated with the issues and problems of the family members. A majority did not disclose the personal trauma they faced. The concern for the family members was the foremost priority, whereas the well-being of self was secondary. While residing in confinement, the students did not step out of the house to protect their family members. It was traumatic to see when the working members returned from the office and maintained a physical distance from other family members. The technology came in handy and helped the family members conduct business affairs efficiently. Remaining in confinement had disoriented the thought process, and the problem of insomnia has added to this trauma. One student forgets to wish her mother her birthday because there was so much disorientation with time and space. Therefore, it took a lot more effort to normalize the situation on the home front. Residing with their parents after a long period was challenging for most of them, and the siblings who could understand them were not with them during that time. However, later realization came, and they invested their time in creative pursuit to produce some good writings and blogs. The lockdown period provided ample time to spend with the family members and to understand their feelings and aspirations. Therefore, the realization to accept the present and work accordingly went in their favour. The introspection during this period has helped them to chalk out a work plan that has produced results.

The summary of the case studies suggests two crucial issues that were essential to understanding the effect and responses of the students to counter that. First, their engagements very well opposed the suffering of home confinement through information technology. Therefore family set-up, the dynamics of



family relationships and technology, particularly communication and information technology, were two important areas which were talked about by all the students. The family again became necessary, and the various discourses were interwoven around the family; it was again the revival of the family emotions. All the age groups used information technology, and the students were the natural beneficiaries. But one can not ignore the quotient of discrimination and deprivation in the use and utilization of technology.

The case studies suggest that the household was the prominent space, where the dynamics of the family members created a new family life and relationships. These weeks of confinement have tested the family relationships between those who live together and those living far away. Family relationships between members outside the home have shifted from physical to virtual contact. The university students have seen their family relationships most affected. There was the problem of adjustment as well as space to share. Similar results are reflected in the studies done on Spanish families during Covid-19<sup>3</sup>. Confinement has led to the strengthening of internal family ties and augmented family solidarity. But the generation gap is significant, and most students have to cope with this. Due to lockdown, the students have had no physical access to friends and relatives for nearly three months. It had also impacted their socialization, though they tried to balance this through technology. According to Kim & Zulueta (2020)<sup>4</sup>, ‘the pandemic increased opportunities for more interaction between family members for the students living at home. They spoke of eating more frequently together compared to the past and having more opportunities to speak to their parents. However, not all students were happy with their new found social situation at home. The presence of all family members in a small space was a source of stress.’ Similar results are derived from the present study, signifying that the students faced the challenges and adjusted to these challenges in the same way across the globe.

The confinement has also shown the importance of information and communication technology in the domestic sphere. It is a possibility that the phenomenon will stay and includes all generations. The crisis has accelerated the use of new information and knowledge and involved students in a meaningful way. Information technology has played an essential role in the family setting. Online shopping has experienced significant growth, and many families have accessed food and other products through this medium. The technology has helped disseminate knowledge and engage the students during hard times. However, the manifest advantages are there, but technology is also a class phenomenon, and those who are devoid of resources cannot utilize it properly.

<sup>3</sup> Ayuso Luis et al., (2020). “The Effects of COVID Confinement on the Spanish Family,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol. 51 No.3/4. Toronto, University of Toronto Press. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26976650>>.

<sup>4</sup> Kim, Allen J. & Johana O. Zulueta( 2020). Japanese Families and Covid-19. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 3/4, p. 365. Toronto, University of Toronto Press.