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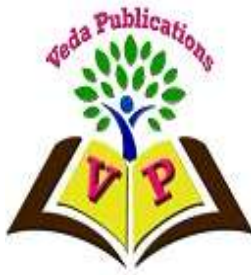


COVID-19: THE COMPLEXITY OF RELATIONSHIPS, FEAR, MENACE AND DEATH IN THE SOCIETY OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT



The research paper scrutinizes the distortion, absurdity, frustration and fear of death emerged during the pandemic. The second wave of covid-19 has impacted India with the powerful stroke of psychological, social and emotional breakdown. The research analyzes the struggle and conflict of lives that force the human race into the implausible circumstances. The complexity of relationship between life and death is well exemplified through Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, and Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. The literature artistically brings forth the inexplicable reality of absurd life where covid-19 is symbolic of hopelessness, menace, death and mundane world. The research demonstrates the powerful mechanism of corona-virus that proliferate the sense of fear, helplessness and depression in the world.

Keywords: Covid-19, Fear, Death, Relationship, Menace



The catastrophic phenomenon of corona-virus exemplifies the existential crises that people are helplessly suffering through. It is becoming difficult for the people to survive economically, socially and psychologically. The pandemic and lockdown measures have impacted the members of middle and proletariat classes of society the most are combating to satisfy the basic needs of the life. The economical crises in the families are disturbing the people on the large scale. The financial condition of people is deteriorating to the extent that they could not maintain their mental status and relationship. The corona-virus continues to impact human relationships within the families, communities, workplaces and societies. At social level people are restricted to their homes and this confinement is leading to isolation, disillusionment and fragmentation. The marital status of people played an important role in maintaining the solace and happiness in the life. The mental and emotional disturbances that people are dealing with are depression, anxiety, aggression and boredom. According to one of the research boredom leads to emotional distress that constitute fear, mood swing, isolation and depression. The research says:

Boredom was considered as one of the most relevant stressor in those who had experienced isolation during the pandemic. The tendency to experience boredom or boredom proneness might be one of the potential variables that explain emotional distress during lockdown time. [Yan, et al. 2]

The complexity of husband- wife relationship during corona-virus is well exemplified through John Osborne's work *Look Back in Anger*. The realistic play is about the marital struggles of young and educated couple Jimmy porter and Alison. Jimmy porter, an angry young man represents the frustration and boredom of working class emerging out of the distress of financial insecurity. The problem of unemployment is making his marital life more deadening also he is provoked to spread all his aggression and boredom in conflicting with Alison. The story of Jimmy and Alison is analogous to various other couples who could not find the space to vent their feeling of boredom and distress rather torturing each other. The monotonous and repetition of things during the pandemic not only disturb the adults but also distress the children's life. The children instead of spending their time with parents or other family members have created the more space for the gadgets. The regular online classes boost their tech-savvy nature and their proficiency in accessing the gadgets reduces the space for emotions and feelings. The virus is teaching us the true meaning of life and value of relationship. In earlier times, the most precious memories of people were with their family members. The relationships were given the top most priority but as the scenario changed the value of humans saw a throwback in one's life and technology took both time and relationship. But this virus has something else in store for us. Many sufferings, everyday losing loved ones, seeing people forgetting humanity breaks one to the core. The disastrous situation of corona-virus makes us remind Samuel Beckett's well known play *Waiting for Godot* from the movement of theatre of absurd. The movement of absurdity is about the helplessness and hopelessness that humans suffered after the Second World War. In current scenario there is similar hopelessness and darkness emerged in the whole world.

The play represents the absurdity of life through the character of Valadimir and Estragon. The continuous feeling of despair, death, fear and menace provoke the humans to commit suicide. The human beings lost the basic instinct of survival but they are so powerless and weak to take their lives. The fear of separation and death seem so dangerous that even nature failed to nurture because people could not find meaning in living such threatful life. The critical scenario of covid-19 makes us understand that human beings with all their innovations and technologies failed to have control over time and death. The character of Valadimir and Estragon spend their entire time for waiting someone who could provide them with some hope. Similarly, human beings on the earth are waiting for some messiah who could protect them from such hazardous disease.



Covid- 19, the virus that converted the entire world into the complete disaster. The people who used to run with the speed of wind for money are now spending thousands to sustain their health but nothing is saving their lives. The capital of India, Delhi is at high risk where people are losing their lives not only because of pandemic outbreak but lack of medical facilities. There is no oxygen beds available for the patients, if there is bed there is no doctor, if there is doctor, there is shortage of medicines or oxygen cylinders. The corruption in the medical field is mushrooming rapidly for instance some doctors are charging thousands of rupees for basic medical facilities. The black marketing of injections and oxygen cylinders has tortured the people financially and psychologically. The pandemic is creating existential crises as for the people there is no hope, life and sustainability. The business of doctors, injections and medicines remind one of the most valuable novellas of Franz Kafka- *The Metamorphosis*. It is about the ordinary salesman George Samsa who overnight turned into the huge insect. The transformation of human being into the monster represents the fundamental assaults on the secular, rational and sensible nature of human race. The animalistic nature of George Samsa depicts the lusty and greedy attribute of human race where they failed to value the notion of others. The metamorphosis of Samsa is symbolic of lost sensibility and value system broadly rotting the entire world with hatred, violence and corruption. It is important to understand that humans are not only struggling against the pandemic but also against the various social evils at the same time, here lies the complexity of life. It is critiqued that the human beings have stepped into the Kafkaesque world. A critic Fredrick Robert Karl well explained the world of Kafka analogous to the current phenomenon of corona-virus. He says:

“If we view life as somehow overpowering or trapping us, as in some way undermining our will to love as we wish, as malevolently for human endeavor to flatter then we enter Kafka’s world of Kafkaesque.” [Frederick 758]

The above quotation well explained the condition in which human beings are trapped and overpowered by the covid-19. During the perilous outbreak of corona-virus the farmers protesting on the borders cannot be ignored. There are various reports that acknowledge the condition of their hard survival on the outskirts of Delhi. They are not only dealing with disastrous disease but also with political agendas clearly demanding the defenestration of current government as miserably failed to help those who feed the entire nation. Mayank Bhardwaj’s report on farmer’s protest from Reuters’ news vividly exemplified that how strategically the farmers from various states join their hands and united to fight for their rights. There are some extremists who tried their best to divide the movement at several levels but failed. For instance first, these farmers are considered ‘Khalistanis’ who want to divide the nation. Afterwards some fraudulent were caught spreading the rumors about Hindu-Sikh communal disturbances in the protest. The farmers are symbolic of true serenity and communal harmony peacefully protesting on the borders and bravely facing the second wave of corona-virus. The above references from farmer’s protest illustrate the complexity of relationship between the government and peasants. Another social issue that our developing country is fighting against during the pandemic is unemployment. It is becoming difficult for the people to fulfill their basic requirements. Such financial, social, political and emotional breakdowns create more frustration, depression and stress in the society.

It seems that world war third is taking place where people are dying on large scale, children are becoming orphan and crematoriums are full of dead bodies. The humans are fighting the battle without bomb and weapons. It is analyzed that nature is destroyed to the extent that now it is the nature’s time to play its’ cards. Humans for materialistic development cut the forests, destroyed the wildlife and cover the mountains with plastic waste as the result nature has wrapped the human beings into plastic i.e. covid shield protective gears. The tremendous sufferings of human race demonstrate the potential of corona-virus as powerful as the weapon used in the war for mass destruction. During the pandemic the condition of women is miserably suppressed. The gender disparity exists in the nature of Indian society and roles are determined by the conventional division of genders. There is increase in the workload of women as she held the responsibility of



children's upbringing and their online classes. The domestic workers are not available so, she is over burdened with the domestic chores. The confinement to homes is bothering the health of various women who are managing domestic life and office work from home. The complexity of relationship during the covid-19 is critiqued in the context of tussle between man- woman, parents and children, peasants and government. The fear of death emerges the notion of awe and menace in the society.

Looking into the flip side many unexpected helps have starting flowing in creating goose-bumps in entire body. People without bothering about themselves or their loved ones are volunteering to give lives to unknowns. Humanity still exists. The organization named Khalsa Aid provided the hundreds of oxygen concentrator to India where government failed to cope up with the medical resources. According to Sky news Jas Singh, one of volunteer of Khalsa Aid piloted the flight full of oxygen concentrators free of cost to help India. In such monstrous situation Delhi Sikh Gurudwara inaugurated the biggest Kidney hospitals where dialysis patients have to pay no huge amount for medical treatment. Also Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, Delhi is providing door to door langar services discarding all the barriers of cast, color and religion. Gurudwara Rakabganj Sahib has made the arrangements of four hundred oxygen beds for the patients finding no space in the hospitals of Delhi. No doubt our society is grappling with corruption and bribery but still there are doctors and nurses who are dedicated to their medical profession and left their own families to save the lives of others represent the humanity in its' true sense. The sense of togetherness, unity and harmony can help individuals to overcome such hazardous pandemic.

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