

Expressions



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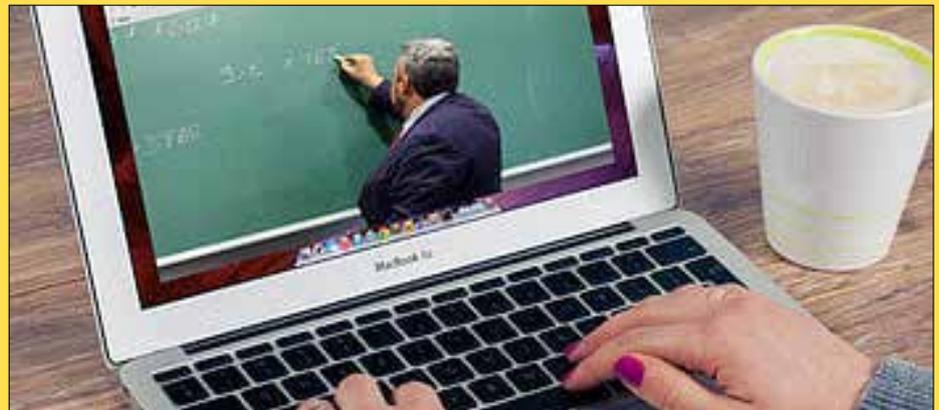
June 2020

Students cope with... **online education & uncertain future**

Sanjana Saxena

The temples of knowledge have been shut since March 16 to control the spread of the global pandemic COVID-19. All the examinations were deferred for the safety of students as well as faculties and the traditional classroom teaching classes were also discontinued for the time being.

This turned out to be a huge milestone for online education and E-classes as everybody turned towards the existing technology to deal with social-distancing norms amidst the crisis. At such a challenging time when everything came to a halt, new phase of education comprising online mode of examinations, lectures, webinars etc. came to the rescue helping all the educational institutes to continue teaching from home so that neither



health nor education suffered.

In the face of a crippling pandemic, technology has emerged as a major lifesaver yet people belonging to different sectors and classes became the victim of underlying challenges like limited resources, weak internet connection or absence of learning environment at homes during the online lectures.

For students it is very challenging as many are finding themselves at

the crossroads especially those taking board exams or final year graduates/post graduates who are stuck in a limbo as the examinations have been deferred even as the online modalities are being worked out by educational institutions/colleges/universities. There are also many who dropped a year to prepare for competitive exams and even they are now staring at an uncertain future.

Continued on P3

Editor's Desk

As we enter into the sixth edition of Expressions, it is heartening to see that students who were initially a little reluctant or unable to judge where they fit in with their writing are coming up in good numbers. You will find new contributors joining the team of reporters.



The focus of June issue is Unlock 1.0 and how life is gradually picking up with students contributing a variety of articles. Unfortunately, people in general are not following the health protocols and social distancing norms including compulsory wearing of masks – the most important measures to prevent from the risk of getting infection and saving others as well.

With the unlocking and large number of people moving out, there is a sudden spike in the number of Covid-19 cases. Mumbai, Tamil Nadu and Delhi are among the top 3 states with maximum number of Coronavirus cases in the country. Many other cities are also showing a sudden spike in Covid cases thus bringing pressure on hospital infrastructure.

Some articles in this issue raise these concerns and also discuss challenges being faced by the government and the people as the country gradually starts opening up.

In addition, ace photographer Mr. Trilochan S. Kalra has kept his promise and done a special photo feature page on Ikana Wetlands on Shaheed Path where a large number of migratory birds can be spotted during this time of the year.

Hope you like the issue. Your feedback will always be appreciated by Team Expressions.

Happy reading...
Cheers!

Prof (Dr) Sanjay M Johri

JUST A MATTER OF CHANGING THE TABLE...

Hey Amitian, This is Kiran Barai from M.A. film and television batch (2017-2019) from ASCO. It's too early to write about myself when I have just completed my first step or a year after passing out from Amity. From where to start and how to start is a big question?

I would say too filmy or roller coaster year that I have experienced. Believe me, writing this article is more difficult than describing it. I left Amity with a goal of enjoying a few months with family and friends back in Mumbai and thereafter started working at a corporate film company as an Assistant Director. It was a great learning experience, almost completing 3 corporate films with the company in 2 weeks. Here, my ideas and dedication were appreciated and I was promoted after two weeks. However, life had something else in store and due to some personal reasons, which resulted in an unwelcome situation, I resigned from the job after 2 months.

Doubting my capabilities, talent and experience I went through a lot of stress. Hunting for jobs and even dealing with some personal problems for a month, I lost almost 8-9 kgs of weight. Soon I got placed in a sports event company 'Sportobuddy' under Anchor Group as a 'Video Editor' and 'Creative Designer'. It was just a matter of changing table.

It felt great to be the youngest and only editor among the team, handling all promotion in and out videos. Within three months I was made project manager for one of the biggest

sports event of Mumbai "MUMBAI GAMES-2019-20" and won the Elite cup for my company too.

All this was possible because of my two years of learning at ASCO where working in almost all the documentaries and films from ideation, managing the team to end product helped me understand the practical application.

I have been passionate about editing since my graduation. I experienced some interesting times in my editing classes at ASCO where Amit Massey sir, Shivanshu Pathak sir, or Rajan Mishra sir always encouraged, pinpointed and rectified my mistake. They also added immensely to my knowledge about everything and I still haven't forgotten their words.

When I was in ASCO, you could find me in two places classroom or Editing Lab, which was my second classroom. I learned to apply theoretical knowledge into practical applications that greatly enhanced my skills that I have been able to put to good use in my profession.

My journey would be incomplete without mentioning Prof. (Dr). Sanjay M Johri whose encouraging words in my Letter of Appreciation "Its only matter of time, when things move your way and will move", never fails to motivate me.

I always miss my institute as those were some of the best years of my life!



ALUMNI CORNER

Oh! the tribulations and trials of exams

Shikhar Mehrotra

As a student, one of the most feared moments in life, is the time when results are out. It is like a bi-annual event, when nothing else around you matters. Everything else comes to a stop. It is all about talking to your friends, speculating about their grades in the internal examination, exchanging notes among others. However, when the result comes out, suddenly it is all so quiet. The friend that was calling you repeatedly to seek some comfort might not pick up your phone now! Moreover, this is something that happens with everyone.

"I haven't scored so well in the internals this time!"

Now for some students and some colleges, this might be an end-of-semester thing. The teachers announce the 'submission date' and the whole flock just rushes together to get their assignments done. Thankfully, that is not what happens here in my college. It is more like a continuous assessment, where the students do tasks and assignments throughout the semester. In addition, most of them are practical jobs that not only provide us with experience, but also knowledge. Now, when you do something over a long period, there is a lot of space for improvement. Therefore, instead of getting our assignments photocopied, we actually do them, and let me tell you, it is fun!

"How much did you score?"

For some, this might be a proud question to answer. Nevertheless, for others, it is just a question that 'hurts them!' Remember the quietness I was talking about in the

beginning of the article? After the results come out, that is what prevails. Amongst all this activities, there is this one person whom nobody expects to score well. Believe me, that guy is more than scared to share the result with his friends. All of us might have experienced this at some point in our life. But then, competition is something that makes us go out of our ways.

"Dost fail ho jae to dukh hota hai, lekin dost first aa jae, to zyada dukh hota hai!" - Farhan Qureshi, 3 Idiots

The written exams are something similar. I always have that adrenaline rush when I am going to give an exam. And to be honest, that feeling is good. No one from the entire batch would have studied - 'the amount we do just 20 minutes before the examination'. It is like a crash course! It does bring us closer as friends.

"I could have done better if they held written examinations!"

I know, do not judge me for this. That is what I think. I am good at writing answers, so I feel that I would do better if I got a chance to write exams. Due to some 'unavoidable circumstances', the exams have stand cancelled. Am I a little bummed? Yes. Do I think it is something that is in favour of all of yes? Definitely yes. Most of you must be very happy about the same thing.

Exams are not only something that test us, but if we look at them with different perspectives, they do far more than that. Tell me how much happy your friends gets when you share your notes with them, or just explain to them the part they did not get or that feeling you have when you are leaving the examination hall and you know, 'you nailed it!'

Online education & uncertain...

Continued from P1

Moreover, several students went through excruciating mental pressure because of difficulty in adapting to the limitations, regulations, uncertainty about the academic year and threatening conditions due to lethal virus.

While Class 12 students of CBSE and ISC still wait completion of their examination; universities are planning to start the new academic session from July/August. While



MHRD has asked to promote all students except for final year batches who await their end-term exams to begin. Measures like maintenance of social distancing, reformed education system integrated with technology, pedagogy, sanitization facilities, and special COVID-19 cells to deal with emergencies remains a big challenge.

We have to cope up with the situations and prepare ourselves for a better future. The pre-lockdown conditions were the one we were familiar with but the post-lockdown condition is what the future beholds.

As the country enters the 'unlocking 1.0', the government has issued guidelines to be followed especially in the containment zones, despite which the virus continues to increase at an alarming rate with over 11,000 cases being reported across the country. The peak is yet to come in India and students need to brace for the challenges ahead.

Of population conundrum & unlock 1.0

Adeeba Lari

As the country slowly settles into 'Unlock 1.0' from June 1, while keeping in mind the norms of maintaining social distancing with even malls and restaurants opening at 50% capacity, the big question arises will it be possible to do so? Being world's second most populated country with 1.3 billion people, 'space' is a luxury for a few.

One look at the densely populated lanes and bylanes with several people crammed in one room— be it a Mumbai chawl, slum or any old area of cities across the country will leave one in no doubt about the situation. The population density in India is 464 per km.

So even as Coronavirus pandemic left most of us confined

to our homes during the 75-day lockdown, but as the economy crumbled, the Central government started 'Unlock 1.0' with the hope of easing the financial situation. Under the new restrictions, shopping malls, religious places and eating outlets are being opened with 50% of their capacity. A food court can only host upto 50% of its seating capacity while restaurants are adopting new one time use menus and religious places are allotting prayer shifts. Inside a shop, only 15-20 customers can enter at one time and no more than three sales persons are allowed to assist them. Mosques are calling for no more than 10 people at a time and prayers have been shifted to 15 minutes shifts now. And all these are for asymptotic people ranging from ages 11-60 years only.

However, the situation has only gone from bad to worse with over

11,000 Covid positive cases being reported every day. India is now the fourth most Covid-hit country in the world just behind The USA, Brazil and Russia. What's more the peak of the disease is yet to come with experts predicting mid-November as the likely time when the country will have maximum Covid patients. This is alarming but considering the demography this is not surprising. Now, in the current pandemic that requires a distance of six feet between two people at all times, the situation almost becomes impossible to maintain.

The new restrictions are still a matter of grave doubt for all who are familiar with the Indian demography. Only time will tell whether we will be able to combat the deadly virus successfully beating the odds? For the time being though it seems a bit far-fetched.

JioMart Vs Amazon: The battle begins for the biggest consumer market

Rahul Mohanto

On May 23, Reliance finally rolled out JioMart in major Indian cities after successfully testing it in various parts of Maharashtra. This e-commerce platform aims at delivering grocery items across India but the question arises: Will it be able to pull through the competition with the biggest e-commerce giant – Amazon, which has firmly established itself as the market leader.

Damodar Mall, CEO of Reliance Fresh & Reliance Smart, announced on twitter that JioMart will deliver groceries in more than 200 towns across the country.

Even Reliance claims that the greatest USP of JioMart is that it

offers all grocery items at 5% less than MRP with free delivery option. It's much cheaper than Amazon, Swiggy, Flipkart, and Zomato plus there is no limit on orders. The company has got a shot in the arm as Facebook recently announced to spend \$5.7 billion for a 9.99% stake in the company's digital unit, Jio Platforms. This partnership will help Reliance unveil service for Indian grocers by capitalizing on India's 400 million users' base for Whatsapp's messaging service.

In a video statement, Mukesh Ambani said that in near future, JioMart and Whatsapp will accredit nearly 30 million Indian kirana stores to digitally transact with every customer in their neighbourhood. Soon after the launch of JioMart, Amazon

signed a deal with Kishore Briyani's Future Group, which will combine its offline and Amazon's online presence to deliver food, groceries, general merchandise, personal care products, fashion and footwear within two hours in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad.

Jio Mart is all set to revolutionize E-Commerce Industry. It will be interesting to see how JioMart establishes itself in the market and how these E-commerce giants come up with prudent marketing strategies to combat it. The Confederation of All India Traders announced that it will soon curate an e-commerce platform, bharatemarket.in, for retail traders across the country. The biggest E-commerce race is about to begin. Long way to go!

Self-employed meet speed breakers

Low earnings, less customers

Anjali Singh

Covid 19 has dealt a blow not only to the salaried class but also the self-employed. According to a report, India registered a huge spike in the unemployment rate at 27.1% during the time and it was the self-employed section that was the worst hit.

Many people who were earning their livelihoods by setting up small food carts to roadside vendors, saloon owners and even small shopkeepers faced the brunt of lockdowns. Even those who were doing

UNLOCK 1.0

odd jobs like plumbing, electricians, catering etc lost their source of livelihoods for the 75 odd days when the country was under the lockdown in the wake of Covid 19. This year is a challenging one both for public health and economic stability.

Hence the government's decision of 'Unlock 1.0' came as a much welcome move even as the experts warned of unprecedented spike



in entertainment zones yet 'Unlock 1.0' has come as a breather for many.

Ramesh Sharma, a saloon owner, says, "Unlock 1.0 has given me a new lease of life for my work. Though I am not getting customers like earlier as my regular customers are still afraid but this is my only source of income".

Similarly Kamlesh Arora, owner of a small cloth shop said, "Opening

down". He hoped for the situation to get better."

For plumber Raj Verma, a migrant, leaving for his village was not an option as the family relied on his income. "I have seen my family go to sleep without dinner, what can I do?" he asked. He waited for the withdrawal of lockdown and is now getting work although not like before but it is enough to feed his family.

However, for Radhika Soni, who used to take home tuitions, the situation has not improved despite 'Unlock 1.0'. Before the lockdown she used to take tuitions at her home for class 6-8 students and would earn Rs 7000 but now it has gone to nil. "Even though 'Unlock 1.0' is underway yet parents are not ready to send their children for tuition due to spike in Corona cases", rues Radhika. When asked about the online option, she cited poor data connectivity in her residential area.

So even as the country starts limping back to a semblance of normalcy it is still a long way to go for the self-employed to start earning as they did in the pre-Covid era.

Opening shop for only 3 days in a week with Sundays off is at least better than the lockdowns. Although I am getting only 2 to 3 customers in a day but I cannot afford to keep the shop shut for more days as I have already incurred heavy losses during lockdown

Kamlesh Arora, owner of a small cloth shop

on Coronavirus cases as the country gradually started opening. So while the state governments fixed the number of days for shops to be opened and how the markets will function. Although there are still several restrictions in place for con-

shop for only 3 days in a week with Sundays off is at least better than the lockdowns. Although I am getting only 2 to 3 customers in a day but I cannot afford to keep the shop shut for more days as I have already incurred heavy losses during lock-

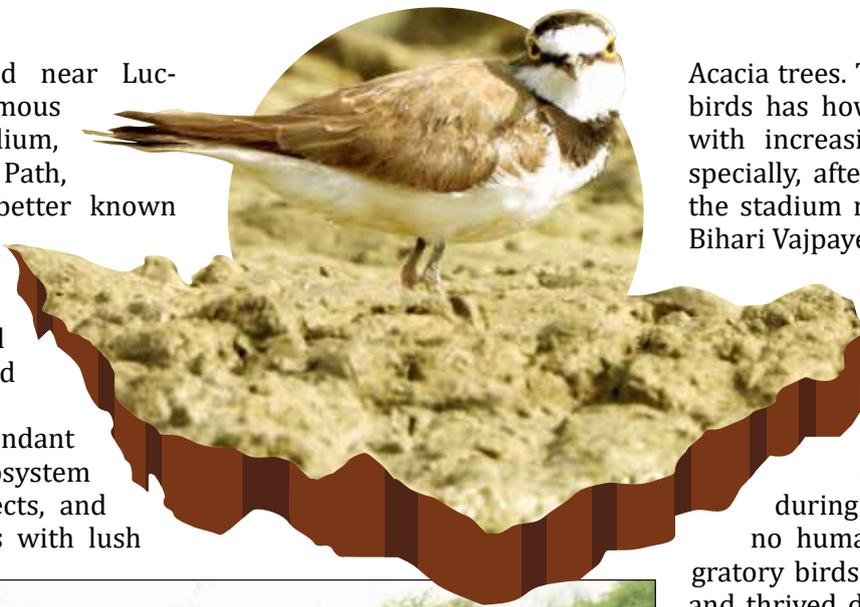
MIGRATORY BIRDS



A TREAT AT IKANA WETLAND

The wetland near Lucknow's famous Ikana stadium, Shaheed Path, Lucknow better known as *Mini Bharatpur* in Uttar Pradesh, has become favorite destination for bird watchers and avid photographers.

It's a place with abundant food chains and ecosystem like fish, snails, insects, and snakes to nest birds with lush



Acacia trees. The natural habitat of birds has however been impacted with increasing human activities specially, after the construction of the stadium now renamed as 'Atal Bihari Vajpayee Stadium.'

However, the 75-day lockdown due to Covid 19 provided a much needed reprieve to the feathered guests as they did not leave the site during the time as there was no human activity. Many migratory birds came to the wetland and thrived during their stay with clear sky, clean air and no noise.

Bird watchers also enjoyed watching their feathered friends and clicked some of the best shots of Kingfisher, Bittern, White Throated Sparrows, Oriental Darter, Grey Heron, Knight Heron, Pond Heron, Purple Heron, Silver Bill and three species of yellow, black and Cinnamon

Bittern. There are more than 125 species of small bird, such as Scaly-breasted Munia, Baya Weaver, Nilkanth Bill, Lal Munia, Peacock Bushert, Venkatel, Bee-Eater, Bird, Sun birds, Raptors that could be seen at the wetland much to the delight of bird lovers and lensmen.





Lensman: Trilochan S Kalra



White collar workers facing a bleak future

Akarsh Bajpai

Who can forget the visuals of labourers attempting to reach their homes and a few dying by the roadside in the process? Or for that matter pregnant mothers giving birth to their baby during the journey back to their village. It is too dark an image to imagine or to forget but there are many more people migrating back to their home towns that are a bit luckier and with more money in their bank accounts. The white collar workers in the IT/Tech sector are returning in masses after the flights and train services have resumed partially.

For these white collared workers, the work from home scenario comes with all the trappings that most salaried class are going through during the current pandemic. Aditya, a software developer shares, "The work from home facility is more burdensome than working at the office. When offices were open the work period was restricted to the time we spent in office. Once home then there was no office work but now personal and professional life is mixed due to the work from home (WFH)".

PANDEMIC FALLOUT

Most of these workers live in shared apartment or rooms in towns where they are employed. Ayush Mishra, a Bangalore-based IT worker says, "Due to the pandemic, maids and house keepers have taken leave and now we have to take the double load of house and office work".

This is the story of many such tech workers. The sudden shift of everyone on digital mediums whether teacher or journalists and even government officers. Even as the country enters Unlock 1.0, the work from home scenario continues for most people with only 30-35% staff being called to office on rotation basis. Many companies have found it a cheaper option rather than the traditional brick and mortar set-up.

Hence white collared workers have decided to return to their home town and work from the comfort of their homes. For them it was not logical to pay rent and stay there when they can now work from home.

The pandemic has also rendered several people in this sector jobless and there are many who are returning home due to unemployment. Hence fear of losing jobs also looms large among these workers so they are returning home to save monthly expenses if the axe falls on them. Times are tough be it for the white collared workers or migrants.

LAURELS AT DADA SAHEB PHALKE AWARD

Short film by ASCO alumni wins best background score

Aakriti Mathur (Alumni)

Holudh Cheethi, a short film made in collaboration with few ASCO alumni and some creative people from their respective fields, has recently bagged the 10th Dada Shaheb Phalke Film Festival Award for the 'Best Background Score.' It has also been recognized at several prestigious film festivals across the country. The film was released on Youtube on 7 June, 2020 and ever since it has been winning accolades.

The idea of the movie started with a story written by Shivargh Bhattacharya, ASCO alumni (2014-17). With his roots set in West Bengal, Shivargh decided to merge his love for Bengal and art in the most cinematic way. A story set in the 70s in a small town of Bengal, flows like a poem leaving the audience with a thought to ponder upon.

He says, "Being my debut film, it was a completely new learning experience for me. Emphasis was on bringing the idea from paper to the screen and the entire team has incorporated it really well. My batchmate Bhasha Rajput has been with me since the inception of this project. Her work as an art director is commendable. We have been fortunate enough to seek guidance under our teachers and mentors from ASCO, who gave us all the right kind of training to pull off this movie so confidently." A Hindustani classical musician, Shivargh is also the man behind the soothing and enchanting music of the film.

Aakriti Mathur, ASCO alumni (2013-2016) and the leading female cast says, "When Shivargh approached me to act in his short film, I was a little surprised. I have mostly worked behind the camera, and was not sure how I'd perform in front of it, but with the common love for filmmaking and faith in our training received from the faculties of ASCO, I decided to give it a go ahead."

Similarly, D.O.P Navneet Shukla and Som Prabh, both ASCO alumni, have done a commendable job in capturing the essence of West Bengal on screen. Pranjal Varshney, the sound designer says, "Because there were few dialogues and a major chunk of the movie depends on sound, it was important for me to feel the ambient sounds in the scenes." Shivargh says, "The post production took a good 10 months as we are young working professionals and Holudh Cheethi was a project, which came out of love for our respective art."

Rishabh Tripathi ASCO alumni (2015-18) and leading male cast says, "The entire process has been a great learning experience. The team bonded really well and it shows on screen too. We were mostly ASCO alumni from different batches and everybody's art was respected."

NAINITAL TOURISM INDUSTRY HITS ROCK BOTTOM

Kanika Singh

With an incredible assembly of oak and pine trees dotted with picturesque houses, Nainital—the lake city has been one of the favourite hotspot of tourists from all over India. May and June see the maximum footfalls in Nainital every year but this time the hills are 'silent' as the country continues to grapple with Covid-19.

Not only travel plans of the visitors are hit but all those who earn their living from the booming tourist season are facing a bleak future. The usual hustle-bustle on Mall Road is absent as it wears a deserted look with only locals being seen

COVID FALLOUT

on the road. Normally it was difficult to find space in and around Mall Road situated around the picturesque Naini Lake.

"I had never imagined such a thing will happen to me. It's been more than two months since all my shops have been shut. Having lost the only source of income I had, life has now become really tough" says



President of Redi Patree Hawkers Association, Nainital.

As travel plans were called off, hotel and resort bookings were cancelled after March 23, as per the government's orders, said the manager of a hotel situated at Mall Road. The hotel is waiting for further instructions from the government to start bookings again. With very little staff as most have gone home, the hotels wear a deserted look.

Similarly, local photographers who would click pictures of visitors in traditional pahadi attire and make a decent amount during the peak tourist season are now left at their wits end. Jagdish Arya, a local photographer who used to make Rs 300-400 at the end of the day rues, "Mobile phones had already hit my business yet I could fulfill my family's basic requirements during tour-

ist season, however, Corona has left me in a dire situation.'

Waiting for things to get back to normal, several boatmen and rickshaw pullers tell their dismal conditions during the lockdown. Arun Kumar, a boatman who took tourists for sightseeing on the lake, sums up the situation, 'Sailaniyo se hi to humara ghar chalta tha; lock-

I had never imagined such a thing will happen to me. It's been more than two months since all my shops have been shut. Having lost the only source of income I had, life has now become really tough

President of Redi Patree Hawkers Association, Nainital

down ne humara rozgaar cheen lia hai. (Corona has taken away my livelihood).'

Hills have been hit hard by the lockdown especially when the summer tourism has come to a standstill.



Another life gone too soon; RIP Sushant Singh Rajput

Nitin Kumar

Suicide in the entertainment industry is not new. From actor Silk Smitha to Jiah Khan, Kushal Punjabi the list is endless of those who took their own lives for one reason or another. The glamour world has its dark side but for an established actor like Sushant Singh Rajput, who was doing well, to commit suicide was a bolt from the blue.

Sushant hanged himself from a ceiling fan in his Bandra (west) home on 14 June 2020, leaving no suicide note behind. As soon as the news broke, messages of shock, disbelief and grief poured on social media even as the media went into a tizzy.

Police sources said that the actor was under medication for depression for the last six months and found several medications, prescriptions from his residence. The post-mortem report confirmed the cause of the death as asphyxia due to hanging. State home minister ordered a detailed inquiry into the suicide on account of professional rivalry as accused by his acquaintances. While police has begun recording statements of people known to the actor and filed an accidental death report (ADR), which is customary in cases of suicide.

Nonetheless, what dragged him into committing suicide is a million dollar question? After Sushant's death, a raging debate on 'nepotism v/s outsiders' began with many attributing the actor's drastic step to this controversy.

Shekhar Kapur, an acclaimed filmmaker, whose dream project Paani starring Sushant under YRF banner was shelved after six months of preparation, tweeted, "I knew the pain you were going



through...so bad that you weep on my shoulder."

Whereas, Saif Ali Khan, who appeared in a cameo in Sushant's final film Dil Bechara told TOI "... a day of silence or introspection would be a little more becoming than this outpouring of love."

Even as the controversy rages, one thing is undeniable the actor's love for his craft and going for the unconventional route. Sushant Singh Rajput was a sincere, enthusiast and focused actor whose craftsmanship was visible from that iconic shot of Dhoni hitting six, which he managed to do with absolute perfection in the 2016 biopic film M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story. Sushant had prepared for almost a year for the movie and also watched Dhoni's iconic shot nearly 100 times to portray it perfectly on screen.

Born in Patna, Sushant studied engineering during which he discovered his love for acting. He joined Bary John's drama classes and from there the journey to filmdom began. Sushant moved to

Mumbai and worked as a backup dancer till he got his first break in a TV soap. The role of 'Manav' in Pavitra Rishta (2009) made him a well-known face among the family audiences. Here he also found his first serious romantic relationship with co-star Ankita Lokhande. The duo was a couple for six years before breaking off.

While personally he was going through a tough time due to the break-up, Sushant was making giant strides professionally. He did 12 films in his seven years of short career with his debut role in Kai Po Che (2013), MS Dhoni, Shuddh Desi Romance, Byomkesh Bakshi among others. He was a very curious and diligent actor whose dedication was seen in his films like Sonchiriyaa, Kedarnath & Chhichhore.

Sushant described himself as a shy and introvert boy during his visit to IIT Bombay. He was fond of astrophysics. Police found telescope & lenses at his home.

Sushant's father, K.K Singh, told police that his son often felt "low" but was unaware of why he was depressed. Sushant's last call to actor Rhea Chakraborty and friend Mahesh Shetty went unanswered. On 8 June, his manager Disha Salian too committed suicide. His latest Instagram post for his mother showed the low phase he was going through. Sushant visited his maternal village 'Borne' in Bihar after 17 years in 2019 & attended his 'mundan' ceremony with all rituals in 'Mansa' temple, to fulfill his mother's wishes.

His sudden demise was shocking for all and in the end he went against his own words, "...Safalta ke baad ka plan sabhi ke paas hota hai. Magar galti se koi kahin fail ho jaye...toh khud ko khatm karna kisi samasya ka hal to nahi hai."

LGBT appeal: Live and let live

Triyanshi Parihar

Ever heard anyone accuse Adam and Eve for being straight or liking one another? But you must have heard of people being harassed, assaulted and even killed for being homosexual. This social disparity one still has to face in the 21st century.

In a country where sex education in itself is a taboo topic, the conversation on sexual orientation seems too far-fetched. For that very reason, the month of June is declared as Pride Month worldwide so that the self-affirmation, dignity, equality, and increased visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people as a social group can be celebrated and talked about.

Any such social breakthrough is certainly faced with a lot of resistance by the orthodox majority. Likewise, homosexuality too is considered inappropriate, unholy, contagious, bad influence and what not by the vast majority. Though, somehow the need for change is debated upon only when some member of the LGBT community has paid a heavy price for their choice. That is when people start to talk, empathize, debate, protest to seek basic human rights.

Sharon (20), younger sister of Stella says, "When my sister came out (with her sexual preference) to my orthodox Christian parents in



her teenage, it got really hard for her. Her phone was taken away; she was beaten and taken out of school. Few years later, she was forced into a marriage with a guy and was made to settle abroad in order to save family's name. She got separat-

PRIDE MONTH

ed with her husband soon after and currently lives all by herself in a foreign country where she struggles to make ends meet. All of this struggle just because she is a lesbian. We barely speak now."

Even social media and dating sites are hard platforms to be on for LGBTQ community. Lokesh (25), content creator shares, "I often receive hate comments on my pictures and account for being effeminate. I am called by sleazy names. I block many people when I see such a petty thing. But at the same time, I am also a content creator and as

my profile is growing, it is hard to weed out such people. The thing that shocked me the most was a comment that I received a while back which said 'I saw your profile on dating site and I reported and blocked it because we don't want such virus there.' With everything going on in the world right now, I am considered to be a walking VIRUS by many low heads."

There are many such comments, abuses and harsh incidents which LGBT people face but avoid sharing for fear of more such rebuttal. All they ask for is equal treatment and the basic right to "let them be" with judging them. It is not a choice. Rather it is a biological factor. Alice (21), supporter of LGBTQ community says, "I am bummed that there won't be a Pride March this year but my support for the community remains the same. It's high time that homophobia leaves our lives. Let's live and let live".



HOW TO GET HIRED POST COVID-19

Sonia Singh

‘What now?’ This question is haunting final year students across the country. Students who will be graduating during the COVID-19 pandemic are under tremendous stress when it comes to their employment prospects.

As the economy of the country is suffering along with its workforce losing jobs, hiring will be slowed down in 2020.

Although many sectors like tourism, entertainment, etc. are currently not hiring but sectors like online retails, logistics, communication, digital media among others are booming. These are the industries to be focused on during this hiring season.

Using this unplanned time-out to their advantage, students should focus on broadening their skill-spectrum by learning new and current courses available online.

One big question that every student should expect is ‘What did you do in Lockdown?’ from their future employers. They will be interested in your activities performed during lockdown. So, whatever you choose to do during such crucial time should focus on adding some value to your resume.

Enlisted below are some focus areas that can build-up your resume:

ATTENDING WEBINARS AND PURSUING ONLINE COURSES

Every student is home bound and waiting for the situation to get better, this time can be used to learn. There are numerous industry-mentors partnering with educational institutes for webinars. Attending as many of them will provide an insight into your future employing industry’s thoughts and will clear out what they will be looking for while hiring.

Institutes like Amity Future Academy provide industry-specific courses, designed to upgrade one’s

skills according to the latest industry standards. The certificates provided on completion of such courses can strengthen your resume and reflect upon your dedication towards continued learning.

AFFILIATE MARKETING

As businesses are rapidly switching to online platforms for retail opportunities, social media has started to replace traditional advertising. Marketing on social platforms show results, which can be quantified and can be used to make necessary

Proper planning and focused approach will make sure employability this hiring season



changes in the product’s marketing strategy.

Students can learn how to bring influencers on board, how to leverage on industry experts and how collaboration can work wonders for a brand. All these key points make Affiliate Marketing an essential skill required in today’s time.

VIDEO PRODUCTION

Short videos have become advertiser’s favourite means to hit the target audience with strong and impactful message.

Advertising through social media platforms require good creative and technical knowledge of video/ad production.

If you didn’t get a chance to put your hands on these softwares, now is the time to add this to your to-do list.

If you have already acquired video production skills, it’s time to make short video productions on current topics, which can be add-

ed to your portfolio reflecting your creative and technical skills.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WORLD ISSUES

The virus is the main issue around which every news story revolves nowadays. But at the same time there are numerous news-worthy happenings going on around the world which are crucial. Understanding current world issues is very important. Employers are now looking for people who are highly aware of the world around them and not just area-specific knowledge.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The key learning from this pandemic is the importance of good communication skills during a crisis situation. Every organisation is looking for people who have good communication skills. People, who are mindful of their environment, can communicate with fellow employees and clients while being respectful yet assertive. Now is the right time to brush up your written and oral communication skills. Command over English or any other language required for your future role is important.

ADDING READING TO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

As we all scroll all day, a habit of focused reading on a daily basis is vanishing from our routine. Whether it is reading a newspaper, magazine or book of your choice, one should include reading in their schedule.

It is very important to be a good reader. The focus required to read, understand and analyse the matter using common sense backed by facts wherever necessary.

By using this time judiciously, one can move forward with more skills at hand than before. Proper planning and focused approach will make sure employability this hiring season.