

MOTIVATION

Making the best of Covid Crisis

Equipping and assisting the students
of higher education



Dr Anamika Ray Memorial Trust



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Preface

'Motivation' is an attempt at creating an environment for holistic development of the student fraternity during the time of crisis. Though it has stemmed out from the severe educational crises emanating from the current COVID-19 scenario; it addresses situational crises that challenges or threatens mental strength. The mind is malleable, often it requires inspiration to carry forward and sometimes a sudden shift in the everyday life threatens its co-existence and many time students tend to give up or enter into an inactive state of mind.

'Motivation' tries to bring out the best in the students sometimes empowering the mind in endless ways possible. It spells out in simple words what could be done in the face of crises and shows them, ways to divert or invest their energies.

Indian higher education can boast of being one of the torch bearers among many developing nations with a rich plethora of dynamic content. The higher education architecture in the country has grown exponentially in the length and breadth of the country, particularly in the post-independence period, and has stealthily grown into the largest system of its kind in the world. The AISHE-2019 reveals the fact that Indian higher education comprises of 53,620 institutions with 3 crore 70 lacs students. There are total of 41,901 colleges, 10, 726 standalone institutions and 993 universities, out of which 394 universities are located in rural areas. A total of 2 crore 60 lacs students study in different colleges, followed by 70 lacs students in universities and 20 lacs in the standalone institutions. Total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 3 crore 74 lacs with 48.6% female enrolment. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in India is 26.3%, out of which distance education contributes 10.62%.

The basic objectives of preparing this document is to stimulate more than three crore students of higher education of the country about different prospects of activities even within the confinement of spaces owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

How to inculcate new habits and dispel boredom that may lead them to solitude of pain and miseries is another important area in this document. Motivation is prepared to prevent the human resources of higher education from becoming non-performing assets and convert them to performing beings during the time of lockdown. It also attempts to break down the stigma related to mental health by providing an environment for their holistic development. This brief but comprehensive document with 10 important concepts will enable human resources to foresee the new way of life that depends upon the mental strength rather than the physical one.

It sets a standard for itself as an accomplished communication agent for students during the period. This document will help eradicate all noises within one's mind rising out of isolation and stabilize them for future course of actions.

In conceptualizing the themes, Trust's Vice Chairperson Mr. Rajat Baran Mahanta, formerly Joint Secretary of the Government of Assam has lead the team forward. I am grateful to him and Dr. Anupa Lahkar Goswami for her valuable inputs and editing of the document alongwith Mr. Raja Das, research associate of the trust. Dr. Sanjib Bora has extended his special efforts in making the entire document attractive through his designs and illustration.

I am thankful to the chairperson Prof. M C Sarma and members of the Board of Trustees of Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust for their encouragement.

I hope, the students of Indian higher education will be benefitted from our effort extended through this document.

Teachers' Day
September 5, 2020

Dr Ankuran Dutta



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Meditate for your Mental Health

**Re-discover the 'Me' in you.
Re-discover your strength, weakness,
ability and interest**

During these trying times, it becomes extremely imperative for us to ensure that our mental health is in good stead. Mental health refers to cognitive, behavioural, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. It also helps to determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health has its implications at every stage of life, from childhood and through adolescence to adulthood. WHO says that India tops the list of countries with the greatest burden of mental and behavioural disorders.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated vices, the entire globe has been facing a health crisis situation. While there has been no declining trend in its spread, people are advised to stay inside the house maintaining physical distancing protocols. In India, due to all four phases of lockdown, the college and university students too are forced to be at home leading to uncertainty in terms of their future education and many have experienced bouts of depression.

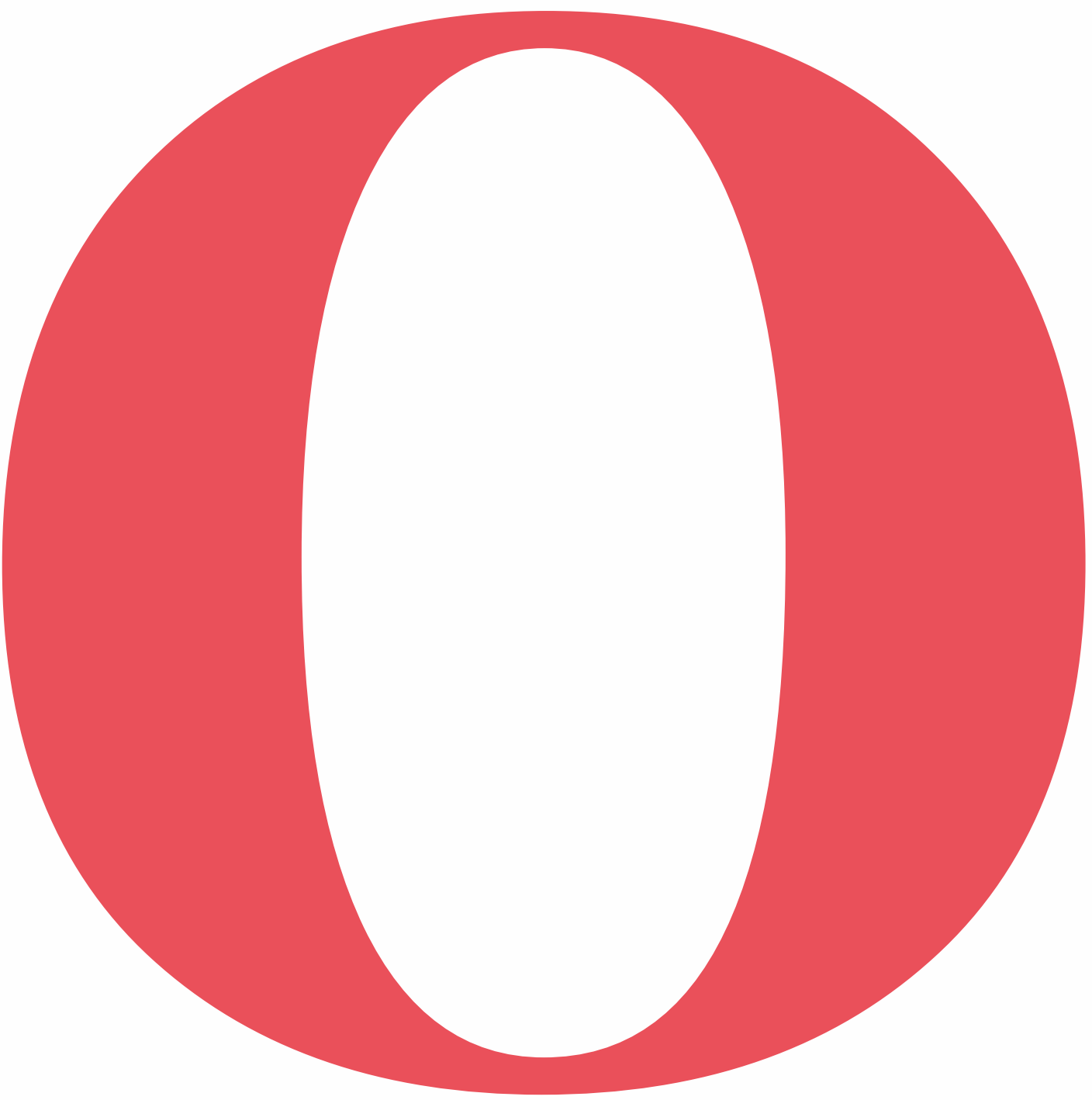


Mental health should get the first priority among all the students during this crisis situation. While many of them may recognise that what they are going through is related to a disturbed mental health, many fail to recognise this issue and refrain from sharing their feelings with others or taking professional help. This becomes worst with absence of social links as they are away from their friends, classmates, teachers and their favourite student or college environment.

One may suffer from mental health issues, such as Stress and Anxiety, Over-thinking, Depression, increasing inclination towards Addiction and Alcoholism, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Eating Disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Self-injury, Insomnia etc.

Besides taking professional help or undergoing counselling, students can adopt the 'POSITIVITY' approach. "POSITIVITY" is a mantra to remain mentally healthy and fit during this pandemic each letter of which represents as follows:- P : Performance oriented , O : setting Objectives and goals, S : Seeking a Support network, I :Identifying one's problem, T for TIPP-body chemistry, I : Interaction with counsellors and friends, V :Valuing oneself, I: staying Informed , T following Time-Table and Y: Doing Yoga. This "POSITIVITY" formula could surely help tackle mental health issues





Overcome an inactive state of mind through Online Resources

Be sincere with your Assignment works and continue your study with Online Classes, Open Materials and Open Educational Resources (OER).

Eventually the crises period will be over, so one has to understand that the continuation of the education is your first priority during this extra-ordinary situation. Formal education that has undergone a massive structural and operational change during this unprecedented lockdown for an unexpected uncertain period due to the pandemic may continue even after resumption of regular classes in the post COVID period. We are likely to face difficulties until antidote is discovered and provided to one and all. Online classes are being conducted in many places to provide continuation of your study in the same pace and spirit. One needs to be sincere in attending online classes and in doing one's assignments. If you are unable



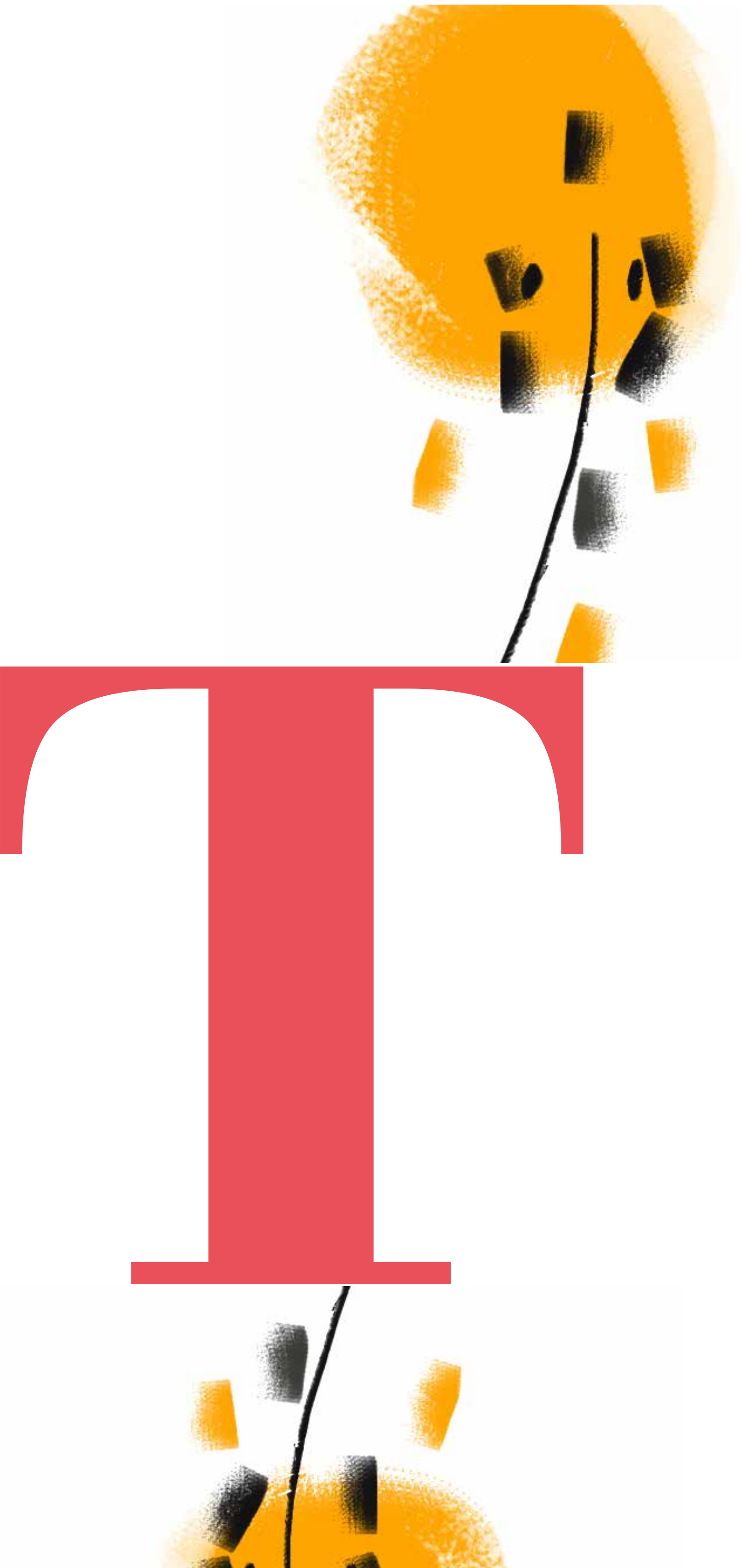


to attend the online classes due to poor network connectivity or technical glitch, you can access a wide range of open access materials or open educational resources that may aid your study.

An assignment is a task that is given to do, usually as a part of your curriculum. You must understand that assignments bridge the gap between what you are taught and what you have learnt. Among many other reasons, assignments are helpful in providing awareness and in-depth knowledge about technical issues; it helps in improving your writing skills. Assignments also help you learn time management and undertake other activities. You may make mistakes during the course of your assignments and then get it corrected by your teacher. Most importantly, you have suffered deficiencies due to your inability to attend regular formal classes but you shall not be spared of examinations. Here, assignments make up for these deficiencies to some extent. It indirectly helps you in getting prepared for your examination. So, be sincere about it.

Online classes are conducted over the internet with the help of preferably a Learning Management System (LMS) using different real-time audio video communication technologies like video conferencing systems. Millions of contents can be openly accessed in the internet. Open access refers to a set of principles and a range of practices through which research outputs, educational materials or skills practices are distributed online, free of cost or without any access barriers. Some materials may not be factually correct so you must be careful while searching for open educational resources (OER). The UNESCO has defined OER as, the teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.





Think objectively

Don't be easily influenced by others, maintain neutrality and avoid putting others down

You need to change your attitude during this crisis situation. Think objectively with an open mind, considering the facts rather than your personal feelings.

Objectivity is the key to finding a solution to any problem. After all, the best course of action in any given situation is to consider the facts and circumstances as they are to arrive at the best possible decision. The opposite of objectivity is “subjectivity,” which is personal bias or opinion.



We tend to be biased towards someone or something. When we are able to recognise and admit this inherent weakness, we can take necessary steps to correct ourselves. Objective thinking represents the capacity to read a situation or a condition created by external facts or circumstances without being subjective, that is, independent of our own will.

Agitated state of mind or pre-conceived notion shall not let you think rationally or objectively. That may be because you are emotionally invested in the subject or because you hold particular beliefs that aren't letting you clearly see other viewpoints. Youth is the time when emotions usually dominate our decisions. Hence it becomes important to never allow emotions to take over your rational thinking. This may be applicable for pursuing our hobbies, maintaining relationships as well as being focussed in our goals.

Here are some tips that may help you to think objectively.

First of all, avoid acting hastily based on your assumptions. Secondly, allow yourself to think through a few more possibilities for each situation or each issue. Thirdly, try to understand yourself and simultaneously understand others too.

Fourthly, build a network of people you respect whose viewpoints typically vary from your own and seek out their opinions on various matters.

By being explicit about your opinion and inviting others to share theirs in a nonthreatening way, you can compare points and see where you might be missing something. At the end, you should remember that balance perspective is the mantra for being objective in life.





Invert information disorder

**Filter ‘believed facts’ or ‘distorted facts’
to get ‘checked facts’ through media
literacy.**

A report of Council of Europe describes that there are three types of information disorder, namely, misinformation, disinformation and mal-information. Misinformation refers to the false or inaccurate information, deliberately created to deceive others. Disinformation is also about false information, deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organisation or country. On the other hand, mal-information is based on reality, but used to inflict harm on a person or an organization.



Study says **fake story** can reach **1500 people** six times faster than a **true story**

#CheckTheFake on #COVID19

Get your facts checked before the Fake story checkmate you

5D

- Discard unquoted stories
- Disbelief non-official stories
- Discourage #fakenews forward..
- Dismiss photos without verifying
- Develop critical thinking

5C

- Curtail excessive news content
- Contact near and dear ones
- Contain fear and anxiety, nothing is permanent
- Create new projects, new hobbies
- Curb fake news Infodemics

Fake news is the umbrella term that unifies all these types of information disorder.

With the increasing number of COVID cases across the globe, days are not far when the numbers will enter into the Crore Club. This coupled with fake news can be disastrous for the societal structure. A study on fake news by MIT, published in Science, shows that a fake story can reach 1500 people six times faster than a true story. That means Six times faster than Truth! Falsehood is 70 per cent more likely to get shared than the truth, said an analysis of 1,26,000 stories over ten years tweeted by 3 million users.

So as receivers of information, our task should be to filter fake news. The easiest way to get the rumour viral is to 'forward' and people do so because 'forward' is the easiest action in this social media world. The best way to stop this 'rumour' is to press any buttons other than 'forward'. You may ask your friend before forwarding it to groups or click on google to self-verify it or simply press 'delete' if you are so confused. Don't get instigated or swept by the 'rumour'; have patience to study it and then enjoy sharing once it is cross-checked.

5D's and 5 C's to curb fake news – In order to sanitise our minds
We need to Check the Fake with a few simple tips of 5D's and 5C's –





Value the core principles of life

Volunteer to help the needy or people in distress

Core values are the fundamental moral principles, which are universally accepted for survival of human civilisation. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is just not a quote from our ancient scripture. Think deeply and discuss with your friends. If you are able to understand and appreciate it, practise it but don't preach. Ponder, are you a single whole or a microscopic part of the whole universe? If you are a part of it, should your thoughts and actions be not in sync with the Nature? We all have the responsibility to maintain our eco-system. Whether this pandemic is the fall out of too much tampering with our Mother Nature shall be known later. But at this moment of global health crisis, we need to help the needy. Millions of people in the entire world have lost their livelihoods or lost their family members to the virus and are still struggling to manage their minimum needs or bring back the broken pieces of life. Many workers, who have come back to their own villages due to this crisis, are unable to feed their children. Many are mentally depressed due to the uncertainty created by the unprecedented situation. To make it worse, a panic situation has been created by the information pandemic, called "infodemic" or information disorder. Being a student, of course, you cannot assist anyone financially or with materials. But, you can help them in many ways. You need to decide what should be the core value of your life during this crisis?



You can endear yourself to the people with volunteering activities at this trying time. Do you know who is a volunteer? A volunteer is someone who does work without being paid for it, because they want to do it. It's human nature to feel good after helping someone out. Volunteering can also help you gain valuable new skills and experiences, and boost your confidence. More importantly, it will give you that pleasure, which you may not get, perhaps, in your entire lifetime.

You may think, giving your time and energy to the needy during this crisis without any financial reward – may seem an impossible task. Volunteering or 'Sewa' has a great role in Indian philosophy.

Volunteering will help you too in many ways like:

- it connects you with others
- builds self-confidence and self-esteem
- helps you forget your own problems
- it is also important for your physical health and mental health
- for a sense of purpose and it is also important for your career

Serve your neighbouring community as a volunteer, make them digitally literate, and make them aware of superstitious and the difference between belief and science and how to discredit rumours. Generate awareness about the new way of living by maintaining social distancing, being vigilante about other peoples' adherence to new norms and educating the uneducated on the maintenance of hygiene. You can also help the government departments and NGOs to help the needy find a sustainable livelihood. This experience will help you in your entire life. But, you should yourself maintain physical distancing and hygiene while extending your service. You need to be healthy enough to help others.





Acquire new skills

A new and value-added skill will not only help you in your academic programme, but help you in the long run.

At this stage of your academic life, it is pertinent to identify what new skills can help you in your career or the programme you are currently pursuing. Look for guidance from teachers or experts while choosing the required skill. Take a moment to think of all the things you want to know. You may be interested to strengthen your language command or your public speaking skills. A new technical skill may help you in life. You must be determined to utilize your time in more productive ways.

Why are we sometimes unable to learn a skill during this crisis? What are the obstacles?





- Most people are not committed to learn anything specific and they cannot decide for themselves why they want to learn or how it would help.
- Secondly, there remains a gap between what is mechanically memorised and in your understanding of the topic.
- You need to bridge that gap with your commitment. But commitment does not happen unless you have an urge to learn.
- So, learn a skill in which you have a knack, an interest. The mythological character, Ekalavya's commitment and dedication shall automatically develop within you.

Now, let us discuss how you can learn a new skill. You have to set a concrete, specific target performance level. Breaking down the skill into smaller parts is the first step in figuring out which sub-skills are critical. Make practice in a very deliberate way. Anything that gets in the way of focused, deliberate practice is an enemy that needs to be destroyed. At the beginning, it may be boring, but if you go into it for a while, you will get the interest. It's almost like watching a good cinema. If you enter into the story once, it's difficult to come out, however the beginning might be boring.





T

Take therapeutic care

Stress on physical fitness and boosting your and your family members' immunity

As young people, it is extremely pertinent to make your health a priority. A sound health is the key to sound mental growth. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, you have to be physically fit to fight with the virus before it affects you.

Physical fitness refers to the ability of your body systems to work together efficiently to allow you to be healthy, strengthen your immunity and perform activities of daily living with vigour. Regular exercise and physical activity promotes strong muscles and bones. It improves respiratory, cardiovascular health, and overall health. In



addition to these reasons, physical fitness helps you manage stress and tension and also curb insomnia. It promotes a positive attitude and outlook that improves your self-image and self-confidence. During the lockdown period and post lockdown period your sleep might be affected, if you follow a strict regime of exercise or meditation it could help you in getting sound sleep. Physical fitness helps you fall asleep faster and sleep soundly. However, avoid outdoor exercise if it is crowded. Many online instructional videos are available for free on Yogaasanas as well as free hand exercise.

Besides exercise, maintaining a strict diet is equally important. The Ministry of AYUSH of the Union Government has given some self-care measures to boost your immunity. Ayurveda, being the science of life, propagates the gifts of nature in maintaining healthy and happy living. Under the general measures, the Ministry advises to drink warm water throughout the day. If you cannot tolerate warm water in warm weather, try or, at least take normal water (of room temperature) to keep you hydrated. And practice Yogaasana, Pranayama and meditation for at least 30 minutes. The commonly available spices like Haldi (Turmeric), Jeera (Cumin), Dhaniya (Coriander) and Lahsun (Garlic) are recommended in cooking.

Consumption of whole plant foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and legumes are rich in nutrients and antioxidants that may give you an upper hand against harmful pathogens and also eat more fermented foods as well as healthy fat. Some of you might be facing huge financial crisis. In this case try to include locally produced and seasonal vegetables that are easy to find and lighter on the pocket.

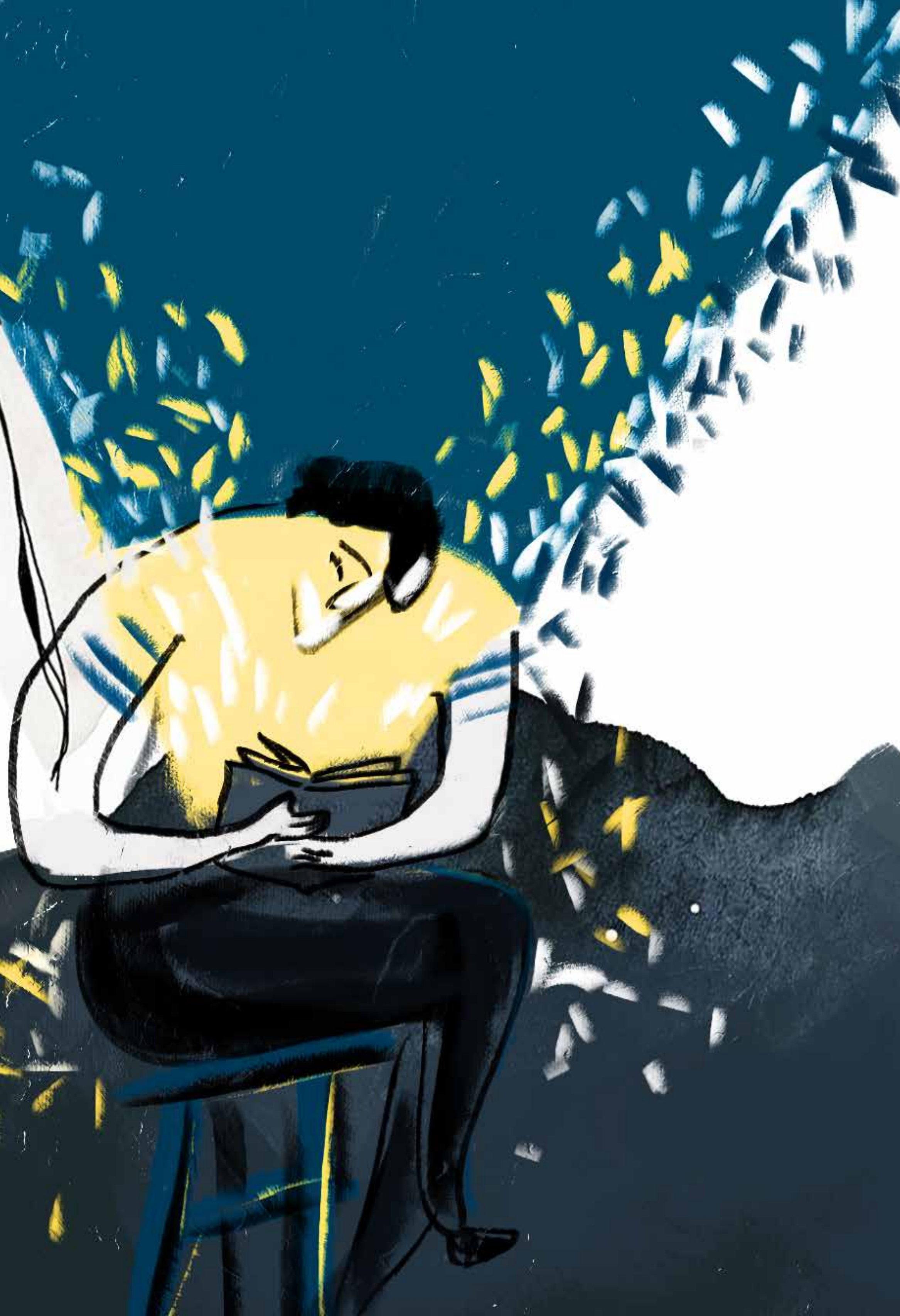




Inculcate a new habit

Habit of reading, writing, listening to music and watching movies helps a lot. Try anything creative- writing, drawing, sculpting, planting or creating appliances

Habits maketh a man, goes the saying. In this new environment, you need to build new habits, which is essential for making progress in your health, your happiness, and your life in general. Until first half of March, 2020, your hobbies might have been different, like spending time with classmates, playing outdoor games, watching movies in the cinema halls, and many more. But, you need to change your habits by adapting to the new normal. You should grow new indoor habits, like reading, writing, listening to music, watching movies etc. You can also do some productive and self-satisfying creative works. At the beginning it may be difficult to develop interest in these habits. Start with an easy one that does not take much of your effort towards reorientation and soon becomes a healthy part of your coping mechanism.

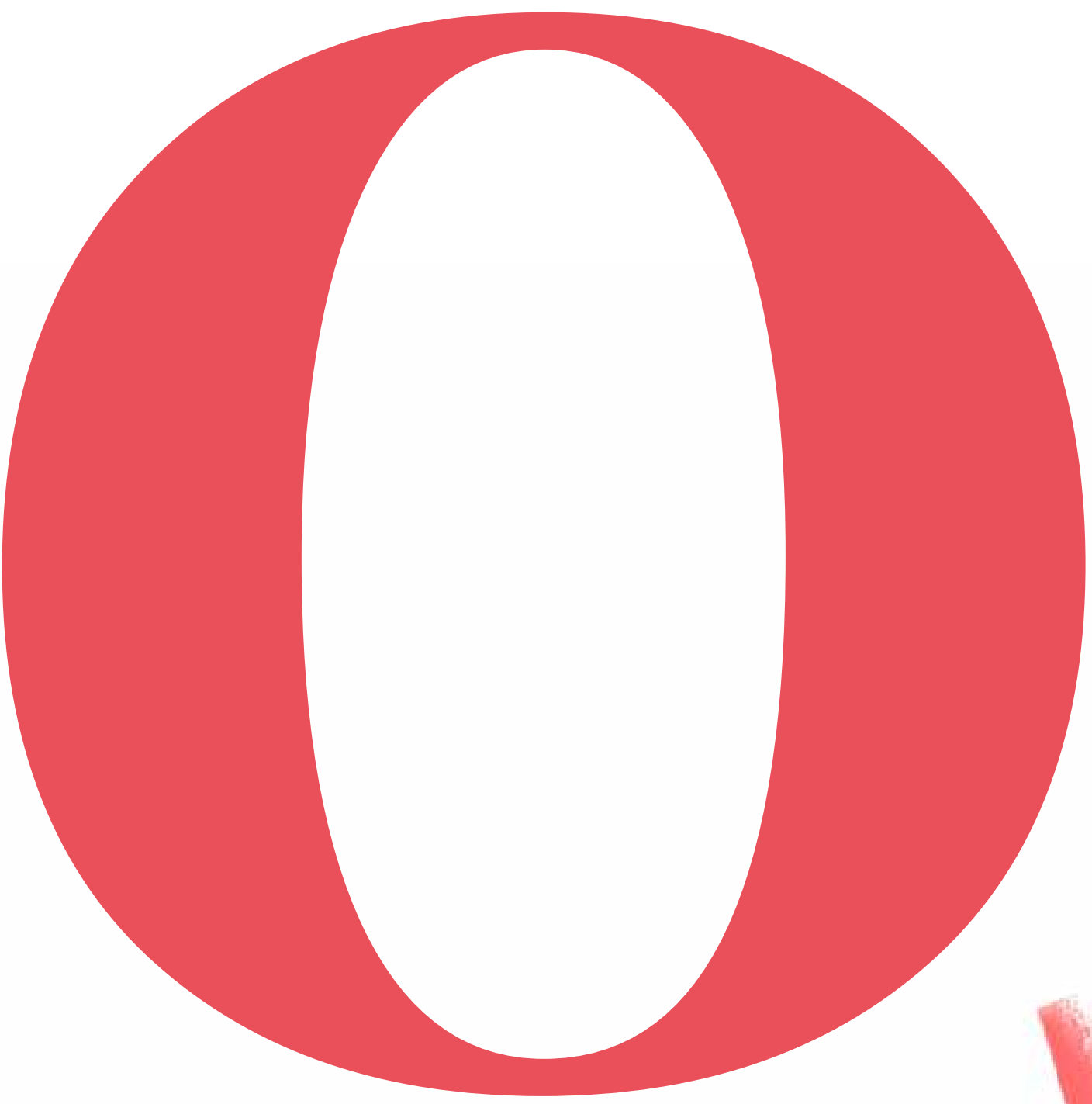


As research shows willpower like muscle gets fatigued when used for longer duration. Same is also the motivation that has its ups and downs, which is described as “motivation wave” by Professor B J Flogg. So, slowly increase your habit in a very small way. As you build up, break habits into chunks. Be patient. Stick to a pace you can sustain.

There are lot more hobbies, from which you may choose any. Here are a few indoor hobbies, that you can try- Dancing, Singing, playing instrument, Cooking, Sewing, Knitting, Embroidery, Weaving, Making stuffed toys, Scrapbooking, Drawing, Painting, Making sculptures, Woodworking, Furniture restoration, Quilting, Calligraphy, Typography, Felting, Origami, Paper making, Jewellery making, Illustration, Creative writing, Blogging, Journaling, Online/ computer Gaming (in a limited way), Making e-cards, YouTubing, Podcasting, Run a virtual event, Volunteer online, Weightlifting, anchoring, computer programming, building apps, repairing household items, creating music in the computer and many more.

COVID-19 has instilled fear and uncertainty in your mind. But at the same time, it has introduced you to another self within you that had been dormant. You can now identify a new person within yourself. So, allow this personality also to develop alongside your regular self and at the end of the day, you will never regret it.

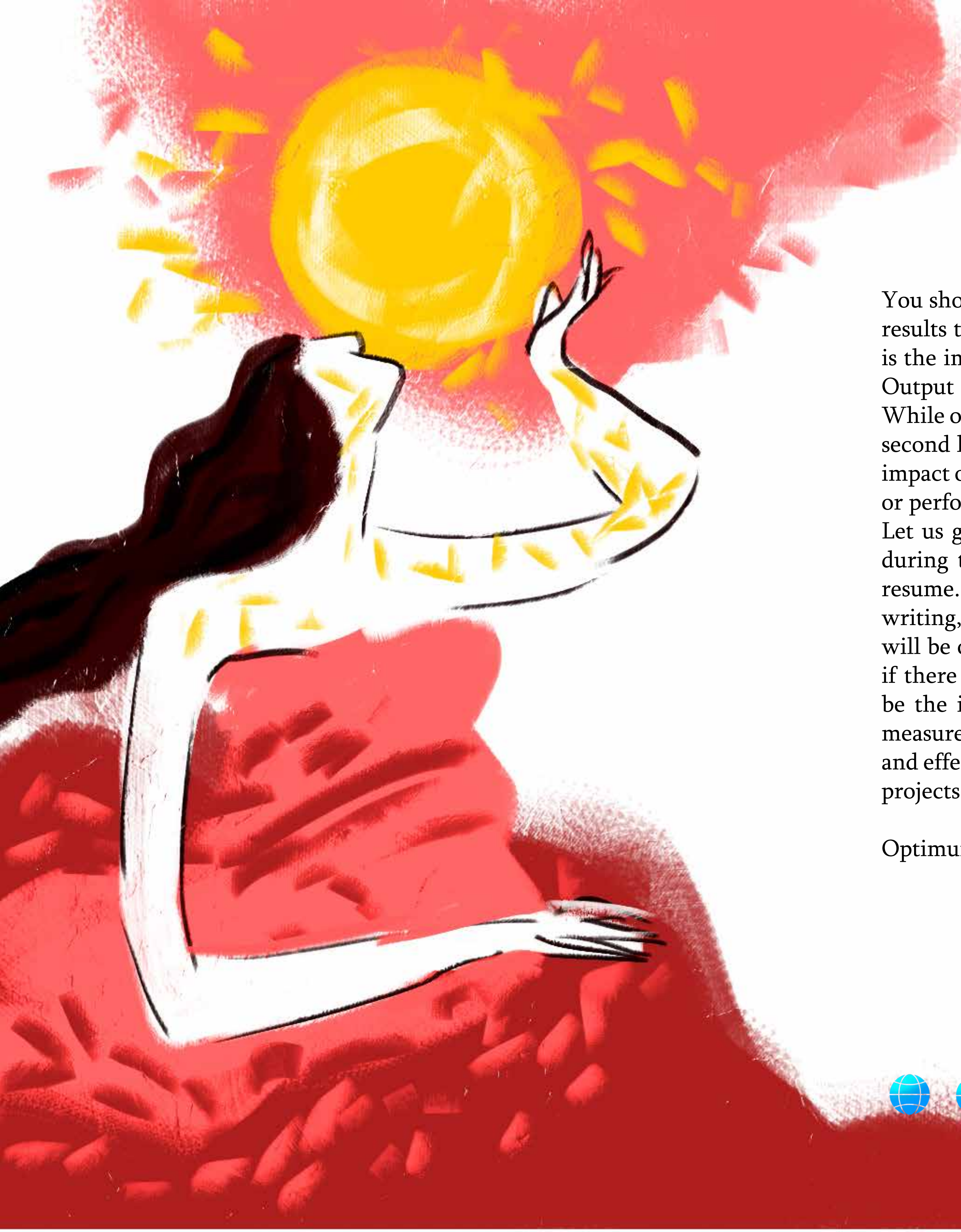




Occupy yourself with outcome based work

Optimistic nature can help for outputs and outcomes. Navigate your mind through emotional distraction towards impact-based work for your future.

This phase surely is a break from your regular life, which many also refer to as pre-COVID days now. But this is not a vacation, instead, you should utilize the time to the maximum. Needless to say that the time that passes never comes back again. You may often wish for more time but that shall remain always as wish only. 24 hours of the day cannot be elongated. Nature is unbiased. It gives equally to all. But we are biased for ourselves. You cannot manage time; you can only manage the events in your life in relation to time. First of all, you must know how you spend your time, then set your priorities in an organised way and schedule your time appropriately. Don't be over ambitious, be rational with your work and stay healthy.



You should also know the difference between output and outcome. Outcomes are results that are not seen immediately after the end of the project activity. Output is the immediate result. It tells the story of what you produced or your activities. Output measures do not address the value or impact on your future life or career. While output is the first level of results associated with a project, the outcome is the second level of results associated with a project. While outputs do not address the impact or value of the services, the outcome is reflected by the level of achievement or performance that occurred due to the activities or services provided.

Let us give you an example, if you have attended a webinar on creative writing during the lockdown period, you can definitely add your participation in your resume. That's an output. But, if you learnt something from the webinar on creative writing, if you can write a short story and if it's published in any magazine, then it will be outcome of attending that webinar. And, after publishing that short story, if there is any change of behaviours of a section of people of the society, it will be the impact. So, don't count your outputs, think for the outcome. There are measures which can be used to evaluate outcomes. These are efficiency, efficacy, and effectiveness. Try to utilize maximum of your valuable time for outcome-based projects and activities.

Optimum utilisation of time is the key to success of all great people in the world.





N

Navigate yourself to the New Normal

**Adapt new social norms- maintain
hygiene and physical distance**

It's confirmed that it will take some time to get the antidote for COVID-19 and until then, we have to adapt new social norms, which can be coined as the 'new normal', which means previously unfamiliar or atypical situation that has become standard, usual, or expected.

Only in the beginning of this year 2020, you as students were very happy entering in a new semester, lots of new topics learnt, new issues encountered and new skills perfected. The final semester students were also prepared to enter into the industry or pursue higher learning. But, suddenly you had to vacate your hostels or confine yourself to your home. And unexpectedly you had to shift your mode



of learning from regular classes to online classes. Of course, it took some time to adjust you to this technology enabled learning scenario. Many of you may be away from this scenario due to lot of issues. You may also be uncertain about the completion of your semester, enrolling for internship, or getting placed in a job etc. For the college, university and other institutions, the main challenge is how to reach all the students with this new technology, a sizeable section of whom are economically, socially and geographically far away from this technology enabled teaching learning pedagogy.

As long as the world has not found a cure or a vaccine for Covid-19, we may have to adjust to a “new normal”, meaning a new way of living and going about our lives, work and interactions with other people, which will be very much difficult for India and South Asian region in comparison to many western countries due to the humungous population and other tradition and rituals that have been practised over for ages. So, please bear in mind that we may have to live with the “new normal” condition for a longer time.

“New Normal” maintaining physical distance, washing hands frequently, avoiding unnecessary travel, wearing masks in a crowded place, staying at home and growing more indoor habits could be the way of life. But New Zealand and seven other small countries have shown that it may be a temporary phase in your life. Nobody knows; that again may be temporary, if the dreaded virus bounces back. Remember, nothing but change is permanent in this world.



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MOTIVATION

Knock COVID-19 Down

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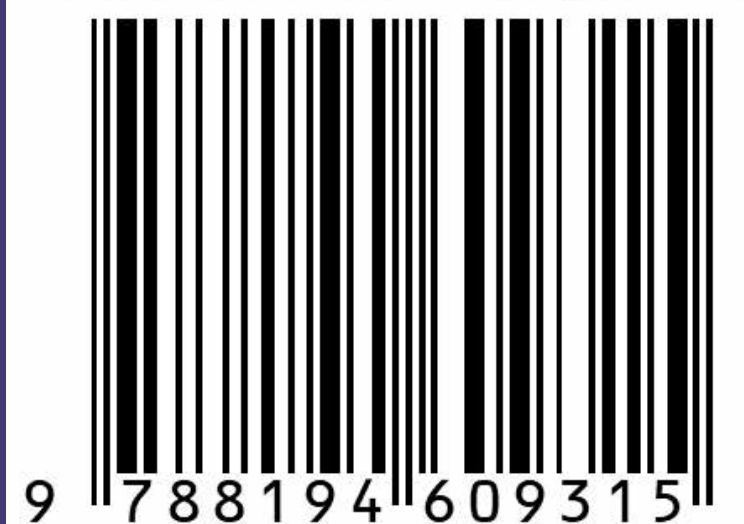
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