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TABLE OF CONTENTS

S. No Title of the Paper/Author **Page No.**

1. Position of Colour Trademarks, Acceptability And Related Issues: A Comparative Analysis..... 1
Anuja Misra and Chitra Ahluwalia

2. Comparative Analysis of Corporate Governance in India and USA 18
Nikita Mittu

3. Right to Marry of Muslim Women on Divorce: An Analysis..... 39
Dr. Raghuvinder Singh and Arti Sharma

4. Syrian Refugee Crisis and its Impact on International Humanitarian Law..... 28
Jayanta Boruah

STUDENT SECTION

5. India's Call on Scientific Criminal Investigations 54
B.Yamuna Saraswathy and R.B. Rishabh

6. Copyrights in ebooks: A Tussle between DRM Technology and Principles of Copyright Law 62
Ananya Jain

7. Assimilating Intermediary Liability Regimes In India..... 74
Akanksha Badika and Pragya Mishra

8. Squinting at the Narco-Analysis and the Brain Mapping tests through 'Fluid" consent 86
Kanak Mishra

9. Changing Dimensions of Fantasy Games in India and its Legality..... 98
Akshit Bhardwaj

10. Little Red Riding Lawsuit: An Analysis into the Legality and Application of Single-Colour Trademarks in India, Highlighting the Dire Need for their Adoption with reference to Christian Louboutin S.A.S v. Abubaker and Ors. 112
Manan Katyal

11. A Shift to Inquisitorial Model: Assessing the Challenges to India's Criminal Justice System..... 132
Merrin Muhammed Ashraf

12. Analyzing the Enforceability of Force Majeure Clause in light of COVID-19 … 146
Rishabh Soni

13. Lockdown in India- A Major Setback? 156
Ananya Sanjiv Saraogi and Vallabhi Rastogi

14. Due Diligence Exercise: Demystifying the Duty of Merchant Bankers in Indian Securities Law Regime 171
Mansi Mishra

15. The Use and Misuse of Mercy Petitions: Its Growth as a Defence 186
Rupesh Sunil Dhengre and Omeshwari Pancham

16. A Surge in Domestic Violence: Manifestations of the Virus 198
Adiba Khan and Gunjan Kanoongo

17. Honour Killing: Preserving Honour or attracting Ignominy 213
Nidhi Chhillar and Ritika Sharma

18. The Biological Weapons Convention: Legal Lacunae and the way forward in light of COVID-19 223
Samavi Srivastava and Rounak Doshi

19. Marital Rape: Need for its Criminalisation in India 242
Manasvita Tejsi and Mridull Thaplu

CASE COMMENTS

20. Buyers' Cartels- Two Differing Opinions by the Competition Commission of India 258
Hartej Singh Kochher

21. Rathnayke Tharanga Lakmali v. Niroshan Abeykoon: Sri Lanka Supreme Court Recognises Custodial Death as a Violation of Right to Life..... 263
Raj Krishna and Kumar Mukul Choudhary

22. Dissecting the 100% Reservation Case: Case Analysis of Chebrolu Leela Prasad Rao v. State of A.P. 271
Jaideep Singh Lalli

LOCKDOWN IN INDIA - A MAJOR SETBACK?

Ananya Sanjiv Saraogi* and Vallabhi Rastogi**

Abstract

The current pandemic situation created an outburst in the whole world. The Indian Prime Minister had announced nation-wide lockdown on March 24, 2020 which continued for at least three months. During this period, there was a complete shutdown of industries and employable sectors; the economy of the nation was drooping down. The employment rate has fallen down which has in turn largely affected the migrant workers. These daily wagers had experienced a turmoil as they could not be transported to their hometowns. Apart from the less privileged population, the other sect faced the issue of job security. The motto, "Unity in Diversity" has tumbled under an exception; celebration of festivals and pilgrimages are forbidden.

Meanwhile, the education system has adopted the advanced methods of teaching the students at the primary and secondary level. Technology is the new mode of transmission of knowledge, whether the mode is easily accessible or not is the current question. The efficiency of the teachers and students has been affected along with the comfort level shared between them. Currently, India is a developing nation where there are various districts and villages which lack the basic resources like electricity and network towers to avail the facility being provided by the country.

The source of information, in the current situation, is the media which has taken undue advantage of being in power to impart the information. The ethical and moral principles including unbiasedness has seemed to be washed away with the pandemic. Unnecessary detailing on areas of lesser concern and direct comments without authentication of data has become the main agenda of the media. This paper has tried to elaborately explain the above-mentioned issues and discuss the consequent sub issues.

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Keywords: COVID-19, migrant workers, media, education, travel, lockdown

Employment

Novel Coronavirus created a line of tension across the globe followed by the lockdown in nations including India. The Lockdown has created a great fall in the economy of the world and created a space of recession. The IMF had recently reported the future of Lockdown being worse than the Great Depression.

India has reportedly been handcuffed in a similar situation – complete lockdown has caused a big crisis for industries including MSMEs in this period of confinement. The non-functioning of various sectors which involve the workforce has thrown up a bigger question of the issue of employment. The economy of the nation has drooped and so has the rate of employment. According to reports by CMIE, there has been a great shoot up in the rate of unemployment in India from March 2020 to April 2020 by an approximate difference of 14.77%.[1]

Automobile, Aviation, Tourism and Hospitality sectors have witnessed major setbacks in economical graphs. The research would mainly be confined to the various kinds of employees affected by the pandemic and the future prospects of employment specially for the upcoming graduates.

Migrant Workers

The most affected in this lockdown period have been migrant workers – the vulnerable cult. The nation-wide lockdown had created a rift among the workforce; the lot was eager to return to their homeland. March 24, 2020 was the beginning of the series of lockdown and on March 29, 2020 the Ministry of Home Affairs had passed an order citing all the employers from the "*industries, commercial establishments or shops*" to pay the wages to the employees till the continuation of the shutdown. Several companies had approached the Supreme Court against MHA's order.

Meanwhile, upcoming weeks of first lockdown noticed a rush of migrant workers on the streets of Bandra (Mumbai). Similar events were witnessed in Gujarat and Delhi. The main demand of workers was to be transported to their hometowns, the reason being loss

1 Unemployment rate in India, CMIE Report
March 2020 – 8.75 % (India): 9.41% (Urban) and 8.44 % (Rural)
April 2020 – 23.52 % (India): 24.95 % (Urban) and 22.89 % (Rural).

of livelihood of these people, no food or shelter. Another reason was that the harvesting season had begun and these migrant families act as labour at minimal rates. State borders were closed and farms located on the borders faced problems related to workforce [2]. Due to shortage of labour, transportation of essential goods had become a major issue for the farmers.

India is the second most populated country in the world thereby, the majority of the work is dependent on man labour. Migrant workers belong to the labour force and form the backbone of the Indian economy. Transportation had been prohibited during lockdown thereby stalling them. Workers had adopted other means of travel i.e. by foot. These workers are the ones who either work on contractual basis or without contracts. Manufacturing industry, Tourism industry, or restaurants – workers are required in every form. But with reduction in demand of certain goods from the given industries due to the pandemic, requirement of labourers would also reduce.

Various events and government policies for the migrant workers are worth mentioning. Bengaluru had witnessed the most heart-melting incident. Post the announcement of lockdown, approximately 200 to 250 huts were burnt down and few days later 60 huts were set on fire in the district of Kalaburagi[3]. These huts belonged to those migrant workers who had departed before the lockdown.

Kerala had a positive impact on the migrant workers. The state comprises a larger population of this labour. '*Apna Ghar* project' has provided relief to the workers while *Roshni* has been helping migrant children to stay in school and also educate them [4]. Kerala has been the first state in the country to provide relief in the form of food and shelter to the workers in such dire situations.

Shramik Special Trains, Indian Railways initiative, was introduced to deport migrant workers since lockdown. Surprisingly, certain media reports have stated that migrant workers have been charged an amount they could not afford for which they had to take loan from their relatives but the news has not been confirmed yet. The current report that has been affirmed to is that more than half of the fares are being borne by the Central Government and the rest by the State.

2 Lola Nayar, Jyotika Sood, Yagnesh Kansara & Salik Ahmad, *100 Million and More Indian Jobs Are at Risk After COVID-19 Lockdown. Is Your Job Safe*, Outlook.

3 Mustafa Plumber, *Burning Huts of Migrants Taking Advantage of Lockdown Unfortunate: Karnataka HC*, Live Law.

4 Dr Jamon Mathew & Jose M A, *Political Interference for Migrant Welfare: An Evaluation of Kerala Model,* PKP., at 657, 660.

The Supreme Court has recently passed the MHA's order by stating that the payment of wages need to be paid to the employees after settlement with employers. If employers are unable to come to consensus with employees then the two parties may approach the requisite labour authorities. This has been a relief for migrant workers as their travel would be curbed in lieu of being paid thereby maintaining their safety and reducing the spread of virus.

Government might provide relief which may not be a permanent solution to unemployment and recovery of the economy.

Uncertainty in Jobs

Lockdown had caused a complete shutdown including workplaces. Assured by the extension of lockdown for a longer period, companies, enterprises adopted work from home concept. Various commercial and industrial establishments have also adopted the concept but there are no specific guidelines on the method of working for employees. In the whole chaos, employees currently are not assured of their job security. There are chances that the companies may sack employees as the current situation is worse than the recession period.

Even if there is job certainty, there has been salary cut for the employees. Most of the private companies have reduced income by 15% to 25% for the individuals earning a certain amount. The security or cleaning staff or lower income groups have been saved from the cut. But the recipients have suffered a backlash as they are facing multiple problems. While their food and shelter has been taken care of, rest of the income has to be spent for payment of fees or loan payment for the rest of the family specially if the individual is the sole breadwinner.

Salary cuts, work from home are some of the issues which do not guarantee job security but act as factors of job stagnancy. Untimely requirement from client's needs to be entertained by employees. There are no specific hours of work and various companies have also warned of laying off employees. In such scenario's individuals have been forced to think about changing their job but they are unaware of the unavailability of new jobs. Although new jobs may be provided but the joiners are required to stay on a standby period till the situations have not settled. This further creates grave concern for these individuals and the ones searching for a new job as they are unable to live on their savings.

Sectors that have barely been affected by the pandemic are the e-commerce platforms, medical including pharmacy, hospitals, telecom industry which have been functioning in the

crisis. While the e-commerce platforms faced difficulties in supplying goods to consumers due to lack of workforce, the healthcare sector has evolved with the maximum employment rate. Individuals working under this sector have not faced the wrath of unemployment or recession.

India has been in a dire situation in terms of economy and economists believe that V-shaped recovery is difficult to attain. Even though analysts have mentioned in a promising note that closing of the lockdown will flock to fresh demands for which workforce is required, the achievement of the same seems like a far- fetched dream.

Future Prospects

Rate of unemployment has been growing steadily thereby raising various questions in regard to the employment. Every year universities produce new graduates – the final human products for placement in best companies or firms. The lockdown period has proved to be a barrier for the graduates to present their skills as the placements of these students are currently on hold. Complexities would arise once normality comes into form as these graduates would have to prove their worth in the market which already consists of the players who have better experience and abilities to build the company. Inviting newcomers would involve high risk as every industry sector would require analysts, individuals with the capability to lift the economy.

India has adopted the policy for utilization of the local products so as to build the SMSEs. The campaign of Make in India has strengthened further due to pandemic.

Also, the graduates who have been looking forward to foreign education would have to search for various other online platforms to build their skills. Universities like Stanford and Harvard have introduced certificate courses for aspirants. The future of the upcoming generation is under question, their education is dependent on the income of the current generation and the economic growth of the nation.

Media

Media regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy was once restricted under the Vernacular Press Act, 1878 due to the criticism of the British. The Indian Constitution enabled these rights through Article 19(1) but the present media has been misusing these rights.

In the current pandemic situation, especially during the lockdown, the media was the bridge between the citizens and actions of the State. This further build responsibility on the

broadcasting channels, editors and journalists to be accurate and unbiased in their speech and written material. Publishing articles or reports require information and various media platforms have been unable to find the source due to the situation.

Due to COVID-19, monotony has befallen on the news. The reason could be the unavailability of resources, approaching well-acknowledged individuals who could throw light upon the issue. Technology has bridged the gap but the analysts or researchers providing data are unsure of the accuracy. The news related to society has all been based on mere instances and not proven facts and figures.

Neutrality

The fundamental principle in mass media and communication is neutrality – in research, speech and articles. Opinions are to be formulated by the readers, listeners or authors who are not employed by news publishing houses or media houses.

Presentation of the daily events have included media reporters; writers being biased in their display. News is to be portrayed on the basis of facts and figures or the major decisions taken by the government. The span of time the news is depicted is for a short while. While the figures on coronavirus have been regularly displayed due to the government guidelines, the rest of the information has always been biased i.e. in criticism or favour of the government. Only one side of the story is presented thereby hampering the construction of opinions in an individual's mind.

Reports on the reason for the spread of coronavirus had mainly targeted the religious cult which had arrived in Delhi for a meeting. The other factors like the infusion of people from infected countries and lack of awareness program among masses were not given due attention. Also, the cover over the plight of migrant workers were not being discussed during the initial days of lockdown.

Indian media has begun to lose the basic ethical standards to be followed to represent particular news. Usage of jargons have become common which has further degraded the quality of news and aroused misinterpretation among the masses.

This has led the media to the doors of law due to the misuse of their right. Alongside the fundamental right to speech are reasonable restrictions which involve not to defame an individual. Arnab Goswami, an Indian journalist and television news anchor, was charged for defamation for questioning one of the politicians from the opposing party over silence on the lynching case. Recently a legal notice of defamation was issued against a media

house for portraying an actor's death as an act of cowardice [5].

Questions raised on the appropriate use of right and negation of duties while dealing with presentation of current events.

Social Media

Misinformation is never welcome in this field as media is the medium through which the individuals are informed. Social media is the current hub of the tech-journalism. News about Uttarakhand forest fire were doing rounds until the authorities confirmed the pictures were previous years and that the fire was not of that intensity as reported by various social media platforms.

The new-age of journalism, social media has covered the generation of all times, especially in the pandemic situation. It has created an obstacle for the news channels as this platform tends to fabricate the news. But apart from this social media has played a role in raising questions that the broadcasting channels have unable to publish. Questions on the employability rate, the conditions of migrant workers and views of the public on the ongoing events. 'Bois Locker Room' was one such incident which had reached the court due to the reports filed against it on social media.

The platform has been passing certain statements which are not verified by the authorities and due to the coronavirus, there is no policing on the statements. The platform enables individuals to attack each other without realizing their duties as a citizen of India. There have been various cases that have been reported on defamation, stalking and use of indecent language through comments or personal conversations with the users. This has led to lack of sensitivity among the users. Statements that could mentally affect another individual as a virtual conversation does not depict the personality of the person. The political comments and direct attack on the government without any authentic data has created a doubt on the awareness of the parliamentary privileges these individuals do not possess. Since direct comments on the stature of an individual could only be made in the Parliament as the parliamentarians are given the privilege to do so.

In a population of almost a billion and a smaller number of employees in cyber security to control the misuse of the platforms, awareness about proper conduct on social media is mandatory.

5 Tanurag Ghosh, *Aaj Tak Served Legal Notice for Spreading Misinformation On Sushant Singh Rajput's Death*, LAW STREET JOURNAL, (Jun. 05, 2020, 08:00AM), https://lawstreet.co/crime-police-and-law/aaj-tak-legal-notice-spreading-misinformation-sushant-singh-rajput-death.

Forsaken Data

The pandemic had restricted the movement of individuals due to lockdown. In such occasions the public was to be made aware of the ongoing events. The international treaties or policies, India's take on their relations with other nations, the funding scheme, government's schemes for the financial stability of the public and most important the current situation of the pandemic-- these events were brilliantly landscaped by the media as the information was government authorised. But such information was available only to the financially growing media houses, the local media houses in different parts of the country were facing grave issues. The local media centres are unable to display the news as the data collected would require government's approval which would be ineffective without it.

Issues being faced by the prisoners in the cells; the concern has not been showcased by the media. The Maharashtra government released certain prisoners on temporary bail to reduce the spread of COVID19. But are the prisoners being provided proper sanitation or are their basic rights being protected? – such questions have rarely been raised by the media. Women are being subjected to domestic violence and every day such cases are being reported but there is no debate in the media about the same. Is the media restrained from questioning or is it neglecting these issues considering it to be trivial?

Need of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence has been a ray of hope in relation to technology. Its adoption has benefited sectors and researchers. AI has been collecting data to distinguish between the behavior of a human and machine through machine learning. While the AI can be misused in commission of crimes, it can also be used for assistance in finding the culprit through the data of such individuals or through DNA.

AI in the media could be used in eliminating fake news through its processed data. AI has the capability to adjust in accordance to the situation and give solutions related to the situation. The adaptability and decision-making power are quicker due to its algorithm. Recently WHO had also taken the aid by collaborating with Facebook so as to eliminate misinformation [6]. Humans are bound to get misguided from the ethical values required in the field of media.

AI could in future hold flags of neutrality, equality, peace which the human race has been debating on, if utilized in a proper manner.

6 Geetika Sachdev, *Artificial Intelligence: A shield against 'fake news'?*, India AI, at 2.

Education

The education system in India has been in a crippled and debatable state for quite some time. Education is a privilege which is still denied to the majority of the population. Education is the key which can socially elevate the poor, restructure the society, free it from its prejudiced and intolerant norms and boost the economy of the nation. Despite making education free for children of 6-14 years of age under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education [7], India still comprises a huge fraction of the illiterates in the world.

The UNESCO while releasing its Global Monitoring Report in the year 2015-16 revealed that India has the largest population of illiterate adults in the world and that the country ranks 106th out of the 127 countries. Though this report was based on 2001 census statistics but the reason behind such low ranking has not changed much. Most of the aggrieved individuals, generally the rurals, that are able to make it to educational institutions are burdened to pursue only those fields that help in money making. Higher education suffers due to poor infrastructure, untrained teachers, lower government incentives, unjust public funding, unplanned curriculum for growth [8]. Adding on to the issue, government school teachers remain absent most of the time majorly due to their full time election duties or for several other excuses which goes unnoticed. However, these loopholes were trying to be reduced by awareness, night schools in villages and several other improvement measures. By the time results of such measures were to be analyzed, the outbreak of COVID19 deepened the crack of these loopholes. COVID19 outbreak has been deemed a global health emergency [9]. This pandemic has increased the inequality and intensified the breach in the education system.

Disparity in Resources = Difficulty in Access

While the country continues to fight against the perils of COVID-19, a gradual but relatively equal issue is posing a threat to this nation's progress. The teaching environment has completely changed. Online classes and tutorials are being conducted to educate the children, that is, virtual classes are being conducted instead of physical ones. This pattern of imparting education can be said to be a trial and error method as it has not been analyzed and examined earlier. One does not know whether it would prove to be a success. This can also be a medium that can give way to greater problems due to unequal distribution of

7 INDIA CONST. art. 21 A.

8 Pawan Agrawal, *Higher Education in India: The Need for Change*, ICRIER, June 2006, 5-7.

9 Catrin Sohrabi, et al., *World Health Organization Declares Global Emergency: A Review of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19),* 76 Int. J. Surg., 71-76.

wealth and resources across the nation. Mission Antyodaya, a nationwide survey of villages conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2017-18, showed that approximately 16% of India's households received one to eight hours of electricity daily. For most of the parents, considering their income, sending their child to school is the maximum they can spend. Further expenditure on renting/buying computer devices and affording internet facility is not an option. The lower strata of the society do not have resources to avail the privilege of online classes for their children. It is also to be noted that some students of an institution, who can avail such devices, may be living in remote areas where the network connectivity is poor or negligible. They have no option but to miss those classes since they cannot leave their houses to get a network range, otherwise, it would have induced them into risking their lives when the entire nation was in a lockdown. Poor connectivity can be an issue on either end. Even the teacher may be a resident of a place where signal failures are common. According to the 2017-18 National Sample Survey report on education, only 24% of Indian households have an internet facility, while 66% of India's population lives in villages, only a little over 15% of rural households have access to internet services.

Self-Evaluation

Furthermore, several teachers have to be trained to operate online portals. They may not be accustomed to using such technological devices for imparting education. They may not be comfortable when it comes to virtual teaching. Few might be conscious with their pronunciation, voice modulations, intonations and may experience difficulty in speaking without an actual, physical audience. While physically present in class the students adapt themselves according to the teacher's dialect and expression. Generally, a teacher comes to know when a student is mentally absent though physically present in class. However, this changes when it comes to virtual education. Students know that even if they don't pay attention to what the teacher shares, they would not be pointed out and scolded. Therefore, most of them may take this method of teaching as unserious. With such lack of concentration, it is not the teacher who is at loss exactly but the students. In this pandemic situation, many might opine that only the education of high school (class 10) and intermediate level (class 12) are a concern since the primary classes do not have much to lose. Even the Government has laid relatively greater emphasis on higher levels by discussing their problems. However, the primary classes form the roots and fundamentals of any education system. The primary levels hold equal importance with the senior levels. Without primary education, which teaches the basics that form the prerequisite of higher levels, focusing on the latter would be a waste.

Imparting Knowledge - An Issue?

Other than online classes, parents are also a source of educating their children. Under lockdown, primary schooling is parents' responsibility. However, this will only be applicable when the parents, themselves are literate and educated. The parents, who are uneducated, are unable to teach and impart knowledge as far as syllabus is concerned. This also makes way for inequality as literate parents are at an edge whereas the illiterate lag behind. The measures taken by Government and various Non-Governmental Organizations to run rural schools and night education camps for the rural workers prior to this pandemic have also come to a standstill. Internships and student volunteer programs are other areas adversely affected by COVID-19. To illustrate a few, medical and law students require internships, since online classes would not suffice them. Practical experience and observations are a must for specific professional courses and the students cannot only rely on theory and watching online videos.

Admission Process- A Dilemma

Many private universities are enrolling students on the basis of interviews only rather than aptitude tests or merit basis. This might not be an issue where such practice was prevalent prior to lockdown. However, it might be unfair in cases where prior to the lockdown, private colleges conducted aptitude tests and interviews both or only aptitude tests or enrolled on merit basis. Candidates who are uncomfortable with interviews or had put in several hours of practice to prepare for aptitude tests are now at a disadvantaged position since these universities are enrolling students through interviews. Candidates might lose their opportunity to study in their dream college. Whom do they have to blame? They cannot blame themselves for working hard and putting in efforts. There might be students who have shortlisted colleges on the basis of their admission procedure, long before the start of their class 12^{th}. However, now the candidates have to either miss their opportunity or put in further efforts to prepare for the interview in such a short span which would not have been the case, had it not been for this public health emergency.

Considering all these issues, one might say that COVID-19 has adversely affected the education sector and most importantly, the future of the youth which will eventually, mould the progress and growth of this nation.

Travel and Transport

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, India's Tourism has contributed Rs. 16.91 Lakh Crore that is 9.2% to India's GDP in 2018. It provides 8.1% of its total employment. On the contrary, this Council had projected that travel could fall by 25% in 2020 putting at risk 12-14% of the jobs in the sector, which implies 50 million jobs at risk, globally, but the global pandemic outbreak might further worsen these figures. According to estimates from CMIE's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey, travel and tourism accounts for five per cent of total employment in India (nearly 20 million jobs).

Unplanned Agenda

Travel is the single most important contributor to disease transmission [10]. The first steps to prevent transmission to others include taking precautions (mask and sanitizing equipment), avoiding close contact and ensuring adequate isolation. At the community level, people were asked to avoid crowded areas and postpone non-essential travel to places with ongoing transmission [11]. With having several people in its grip, several nations have imposed travel restrictions not only within their boundaries but have also denied people to enter their borders. Indian Government was astute enough to suspend travel and impose shutdown strategies to avoid cases of transmission and curb the spread at an early stage. This abruptly announced lockdown across the nation, though done to prevent the spread, was perceived as a hard hit by a few since there was no planned agenda for recovery and the people were not prepared with sufficient resources.

Religious Inadvertence

India, being a nation where religions like Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism trace their origin, had to intervene in the religious affairs due to this global outbreak. With travel bans, people were unable to celebrate festivals including Eid-al-Fatr, Easter, Baisakhi and travel to holy shrines and other religious institutions. Some had to let go their age - old traditions and customs while some were unable to go on pilgrimages. Such inability to fulfil their divine and sacred beliefs has caused resentment among the orthodox followers. Saudi Arabia suspended the year round Umrah pilgrimage to curb the widespread, however, Iran witnessed large regional outbreaks since it did not intervene in the religious pilgrimage [12].

10 Shahul H Ebrahim, et al., *Covid-19 And Community Mitigation Strategies in A Pandemic,* BMJ, at 368.

11 Tanu Singhal, *A Review of Coronavirus Disease-2019 (Covid-19),* 87 Indian J Pediatr. 281-286 (2020).

12 Ebrahim, *supra* note 11, at 368.

State of Abandonment

With state borders being sealed, international flights being banned, buses and trains stopped, several people who were away from their hometowns or migrated to different states for work were left stranded, away from their families and friends and some even in a completely unknown place. With no work for the daily wagers, going home was a better choice but since no mode of transportation was available, few succumbed to their misery when walking hundreds of miles to meet their family while some were subjected to the police brutality on their way back home [13]. During the lockdown, few of the poor migrants had to stay in quarantine camps outside state borders with no clue as to when would they be allowed to travel to their native districts and live with their family. The Economic and Political Weekly stated that this situation was "reminiscent of the partition era, when refugees were forced to shift their entire household within the span of a few hours, the groups of migrants can be seen walking on highways, with the entirety of their belongings on their shoulders". Several newspapers reported that many labourers were so desperate to return to their villages that they hid in tankers and trucks, defying the lockdown and social distancing orders and travelled to their respective hometowns once the state borders were opened. Few succeeded to reach their destination without being noticed by the authorities while the others were stopped when the vehicles were inspected.

Livelihoods at Stake

With people following the lockdown and containment orders, livelihoods were at stake. Not only were there production halts, but also offices, business chains, outlets and stores remained shut allowing only a marginal fraction of essential services owners to provide for the basic amenities. Another reason for the stores being shut was that they received no supplies from the manufacturers with the ongoing travel restrictions. Inhabitants of remote areas are some of the people who were majorly affected due to the lockdown, since they had limited access to essential necessities including food and medicines. Some people are practicing work from home during the lockdown while some who are without any work have become lethargic, less productive and lost their workflow. This has psychologically and mentally strained them.

With the lockdown being lifted in orange and green zones, certain industries, offices, firms and shops were opened. However, labourers, workers and employees continue to face inconveniences with the inability of local trains, metros and buses. Those who have their

13 Bhupen Singh, *Media in The Time of Covid-19,* 55 EPW. 1 (2020).

workplace at far off places are either unable to turn up or report late. Moreover, even if these public transports start, people might fear travelling to avoid congestion and ensure their safety.

With all these increasing concerns, it is quite evident that a planned and well-structured agenda for recovery is necessary to reinstate, if not improve, the nation back to where it was prior to this public health emergency.

CONCLUSION

The novel coronavirus outbreak which was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organization has adversely affected innumerous sectors across the globe. Not only has it suspended their operations but has also put them in a state from where revival is quite strenuous and distressing. This global outbreak has magnified the complexities and initiated novel challenges. With India still falling under the category of Third World nations, it would require effective measures for a favourable and satisfactory retort. Normalcy has become a long-lost dream! People have given up their conventional habits and usual comfort zones in order to survive and adjust in these extraordinary circumstances. New procedures have been adopted for sustenance.

Travel, tourism and education were the first set of sectors being severely hit by the pandemic. With no vaccination or effective solution available, the Government's strategy of imposition of lockdown and travel ban was more than necessary. However, taking such restrictions into consideration many businesses have taken a backslide and some are even on the verge of extinguishment. With no transportation and distribution of goods to retail stores, shops are devoid of the products and customers are returning empty handed. Moreover, in the near future people will have to self-regulate their travel. Instead of leisure travel, people will have to choose to confine themselves to their homes except for purposes which are essential. An article published by the Business World reported that social distancing has become the prevalent norm and sectors like travel, tourism and entertainment are not expected to recover soon.[14]

The increasing slope of unemployment and stumbling income levels have widened the extent of impact, COVID-19 has had. With travel regulations, revenues in the

14 Ishwinder S. Suri, *Impact of Covid on Indian Economy and Road Ahead for corporate Sector,* BUSINESS WORLD, (Apr. 30, 2020, 11:00AM), http://bwdisrupt.businessworld.in/article/Impact-of-COVID-19-on-Indian-Economy-and-Road-Ahead-for-Corporate-Sector-/30-04-2020-190322/.

transport industry have experienced a slump. Many employees might have to be sacked if similar scenarios continue to disrupt the revenue generation. This can be for other sectors as well. As a result of which another issue of job security props up. One can anticipate that people would be employed on a contractual basis rather than full time in the coming months. Work from home may be the new normal concept. With being confined at homes, most of them will have no choice but to shift to digital and internet economy- online education, online groceries and shopping, online jobs. Businesses which cannot be carried on without the internet will be forced to restructure their marketing strategies.

Educational institutions will have to identify and create a comprehensive way that is easily accessible for both the students and the teaching fraternity. Until then, virtual classes over the internet have to serve the purpose. Both the students and the faculty need to understand the gravity of the situation and act cooperatively. Helping one another will pave the way forward.

With everything getting digitalized, people might shift from print media to digital media in the upcoming phase. Though, much of the media which is corporate-owned has surrendered, a small section is still courageously following journalistic ethics [15] to highlight what news is actually all about. Instead of becoming a tool regulated by the 'Big Corporate Houses', the media must focus on outlining the actual concerns which have been neglected or otherwise overlooked. There are some vulnerable aspects which require urgent attention of not only the Government but also the people. However, the media has failed to bring such susceptible and sensitive situations to light. The escalation of misinformation through fake news has been another alarming issue during this critical phase which needs to be taken care of.

The citizens need to remain poised to understand and survive these grave circumstances. Being panic stricken and blaming others for the global outbreak is not the solution. At this time, India as a nation requires its people to cooperate with the measures adopted by the Government and form a recovery plan which might alleviate the perils and help in restructuring the society back to where it was prior to this public health emergency.

15 Singh, *supra* note 14.