

Sociological

OUTLOOK

Volume – V
November, 2021



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
SHRI SHIKSHAYATAN COLLEGE

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EDITORIAL

The Department of Sociology has completed sixteen glorious years of journey in Shri Shikshayatan College. Beginning as a General Department in 2005, it had set a vision of inculcating **Sociological Imagination** in its students' minds. Today the Department can proudly claim to have achieved much success in doing so. This can be gauged from the increasing popularity of the Department reflected in its increasing student strength almost every year. With the introduction of the Honours course in Sociology in 2017, the glory of the Department has attained newer heights. Special lectures have been introduced, educational tour has been undertaken (though it is suspended for the time being for COVID 19 restrictions) and students actively participate in other departmental activities. The Department also takes pride in its students' consistent good academic records in the university examinations. The ex-students of the Department are well placed in post graduate courses in established and reputed universities in the country and abroad. The faculty members sincerely wish to continue this tradition of nurturing and fulfilling the bright aspirations of the young minds who join the Department every year. The Department respects the vision of the college and ensures that the students do not only pass out with good academic results but are also confident and self-respecting beings who can fight for their own rights and empowerment.

The Department trains the productive minds to engage in the analysis of the issues of the contemporary society and their expression find a channel in the departmental journal called **Sociological Outlook**. In the present volume, like all others, the pupils' concern about different social challenges have found a voice. Another very significant development is that the present volume has also been published online owing to the social circumstances we are in for the last one and half years. The pandemic has created new hurdles for us but it has not been able to deter us from achieving our goals. Along with the classes which are held online, the special lectures and students presentations are also being organized online, thereby opening up a new vista of inclusive education.

The Department takes this opportunity to thank the **Governing Body** of the college for its constant support towards academic excellence. We also sincerely thank our President Shri G.K. Khaitan, our Secretary Shri P.K. Sharma and our Principal Dr. (Smt) Aditi Dey for their support and patronage. Last, though not the least, the Department also appreciates the sincere efforts put in by the students and urges them to work together on departmental ventures in near future.

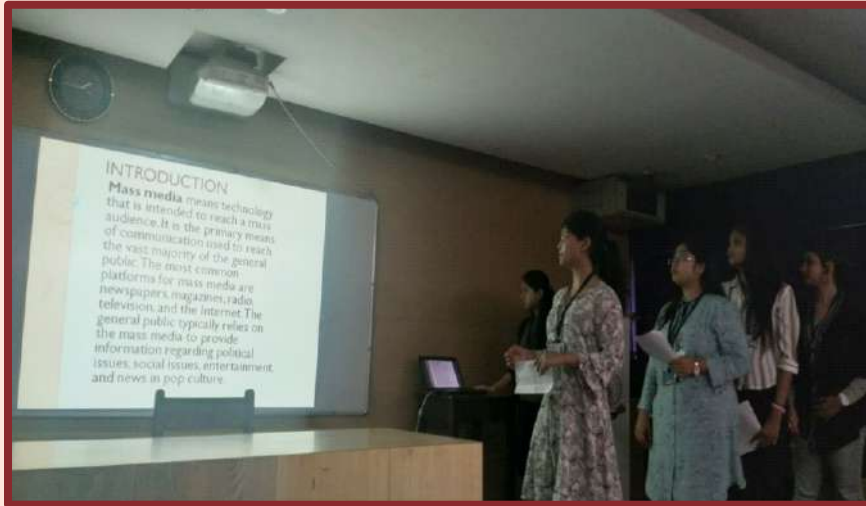
Udita Mitra

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ACTIVITIES IN THE DEPARTMENT



Active Learning Day Presentation by the Students



SPECIAL LECTURES



Prof. Abhijit Mitra and Prof. Dalia Chakraborty



DEPARTMENTAL EDUCATIONAL TRIP TO SHANTINIKETAN IN 2019



OTHER DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES



*Freshers' Welcome
& Farewell*



"IT IS DURING A CRISIS THAT UNITY IS SPARKED."

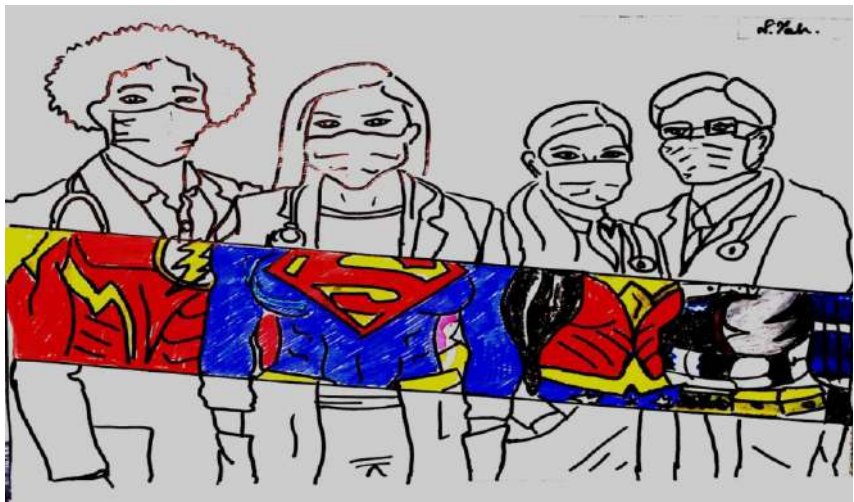
Debosmita Tah, 3rd Year, Sociology (Honours)

Not a single soul can be spotted in the Victoria Memorial, Kolkata. Not a single soul can be seen admiring the Eiffel Tower, Paris. The streets of Milan lie deserted. All over the globe, places and attractions usually filled with crowds bustling with joy, laughter and an array of emotions are empty. The entire human population saves for medical workers, about 7 billion people are being advised to meet no one. Countries have declared strict lockdowns. All of this trouble and danger to the creatures at the top of the food chain, only because of a tiny organism, about 20 lakhs times smaller than a regular football. This micro-organism of the Coronaviridae family causes "CO"rona "VI"rus "D"isease 2019 (COVID-19), also known as nCOV-19 or simply as 'Coronavirus'. First cases of the new respiratory disease were reported from the Chinese province of Wuhan in December of 2019. It is believed to have originated from the province's wet market, though theories stating that the virus was genetically engineered in the Wuhan Institute of Virology exist. This new disease swiftly spread across the globe; the infections growing at an alarming rate. It was not long before WHO declared the disease a pandemic. As of now, it has reached the remotest nooks and crannies of 210 different countries. This has resulted in what is potentially the greatest crisis of our generation. This tiny virus has killed an uncountable number of individual belong to the species which crowns itself as the ruler of the earth, and subsequently shown it it's actual place in nature. Just as much as it has affected in terms of infections and deaths, it has also affected all fields of life : work, education and everything else. Not to mention the burden on the economy, and the toll on it is tremendous. The World Bank has stated that it is "the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression." Global leaders are concerned with mitigating the disease. There are a number of things this pandemic has shown and taught us. Apart from the scientific developments, there are deeper cultural, ethical and even philosophical things, which we will have to dig a little deeper to understand. The infections patterns of COVID-19 have once again shown, like all other epidemics, that it affects people of all races, castes, creeds, religions and genders. The chances of someone getting infected by the virus do not depend on whether they wear the sacred thread or not, or whether they offer 'Namaz' or not. It attacks those who come in contact with it, and if they do not proper hygiene. This has once again proved that nature never discriminates. Neither should we. In spite of such an obvious deduction, people are sparking even more racial differences. Muslims are being accused of spreading the virus voluntarily as 'bio-terrorism'. Hindu monks are being lynched. We need to remember that we are all in the same boat, and need to put aside our differences. An international level projection of the same is required in the form of globalisation. Most South Asian countries have followed this ideology, take for example the donation of 15 million PPE kits to India to China. Basically, rich countries should distribute medical equipment like PPE kits and respirators to poorer and deficient countries instead of hoarding them. These are, however, only secondary factors in the prevention of infections. The primary weapon

against the virus remains public awareness and personal hygiene. Although it may sound trivial, the best thing we can do is wash our hands with soap or alcohol-based disinfectants, both of which destroy the virus's lipid membrane. Out of all the truths and important facts about this disease, the public has access to most, but is still fed mostly lies by the media and through various social media platforms. With false rumors circulating on popular social media platforms, it is hard to dodge the plethora of false facts. The TV news channels should help with this, but they too are creating unnecessary panic, in addition to presenting rumors in such a way that they appear like facts to the public. The most authentic information one can get is from the WHO website.

While on one hand people across India and around the globe are largely confined to their homes with businesses and educational institutions all shut down in an attempt to contain the virus, and on the other hand doctors, health-care workers, and medical staff members are leading the battle against COVID-19 from the front. Putting their own lives at risk with selfless determination for the sake of saving lives, they truly are our heroes in these challenging times. While they are putting their own health, families, and most importantly their own lives at risk, the least we can do is appreciate their efforts and cooperate by staying safe indoors. Doctors form an essential part of an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have critical roles in diagnosis, containment and treatment, and their commitment to treat despite increased personal risks is essential for a successful public health response. Frontline workers have been experiencing high work volume, personal risk and societal pressure to meet extraordinary demands for healthcare.

A heartfelt gratitude to the 'Corona Warriors' fighting the most severe global health emergency in history, who have been leaving no stone turned in working round the clock by risking their lives and their families amid the COVID-19 pandemic which has left lakhs of people dead across the globe. Salute to your unwavering spirit, unmatched contribution and confidence while relentlessly fighting an invisible enemy, which has created significant political, economic and social upheaval and has wrecked havoc around the world. The entire nation is thankful to you for your dedicated service to all the citizens of nation during this pandemic period, putting you and your family members at risk, staying away from your family members for weeks together, without sufficient rest and sleep.



Some superheroes don't wear capes, some Superheroes wear masks to protect their identities, shield their vulnerabilities, even reveal their powers – and during the past few months, perhaps also to help keep us all alive.

Now, this is all about what is going on in the present. The leaders are taking necessary steps, and all we can do now is stay at home. The question remains : what will happen to the world after this ? The answer is, it will be very different. Yes, and there are numerous concerns and speculations about the corona virus. But there is one thing we can be sure of. When this passes, and it will, the world will be a very different place. If there is anything good that has come out of this, it is the fact that humans will have to rethink, and possibly overhaul all its prevalent systems, strategies, attitude and most importantly, their actual place in the nature.



UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDIA DURING THE PANDEMIC

Dimple Surana, Sociology (Honours), B.A. Semester IV

Unemployment has been a serious social issue , which has taken a gradual rise in India. It has become a burning issue in India, since the pandemic of Corona Virus (Covid-19) has entered everyone's life, in the year 2020.

The implementation of a severe lockdown in the year 2020 due to the pandemic has brought a recession in India's economy which has ultimately lead to severe unemployment in our country. This pandemic has bought a temporary shut down in almost all the industries, companies, trade, and businesses in India, which has been a major reason for people to lose their jobs. The companies and industries have been unwillingly forced to remove their employees, and workers, since they are not being able to bear the employees salaries, when everything has been shut down. Thus, many employed men are losing their jobs. In fact, the daily wage earners have lost their certainty. They are unsure of how to earn livelihood, to feed their families and get basic necessities for their daily living. They have been facing sleepless nights, being unknown of the fact that when will the situation get back to normal. Unemployment has brought in a situation of instability in many people's lives, making them depressed and worried about their present as well as future. This severe anxiety and depression due to the unemployment has led people, lose their willingness to survive. Unemployment has become a major reason for people to commit suicide. Not just Covid-19, but unemployment has also contributed to the increasing death rates in India in the year 2020. India's unemployment rate in 2020 has been the highest since 1991.

However, 2021 seemed to be a ray of hope in people's lives , but with the entry of second wave of Covid-19 in India, lockdown has been implemented, yet again, in several states in India. This has lead to an increase in unemployment rate yet again. According to a verified source, employment has been falling since January 2021 and has seen a 10 million decline between January and April 2021. Thus, employment rate has been deteriorating day by day, and unemployment has indeed become a major social issue in India.

Seeing the current scenario, the future of Indian economy is still unprecedented and unpredictable. We are yet to overcome this pandemic. Let's hope that everything switches back to normalcy soon, along with an improved economy and employment rate.



BEING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE..

Nishita Dasani, *Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester VI*

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic brought in the application and use of the terms “**social distancing**”, “**isolation**”, and “**quarantine**”, a more intangible form of social distancing was widespread across India. The practice of untouchability that was brought in thousands of years ago, which brought in the theory of purity and pollution, the Covid-19 pandemic reflects on the same, except that now it is applicable to all regardless of caste and class. Once those who talked about this segregation and discrimination as wrong and awful are the ones who actually breed this behaviour. Below is an example to explain this from one of my own personal experiences. Recently around four months ago, I lost my father due to the novel corona virus. Losing a loved one is the most difficult thing to deal with, it is like having the floor snatched from under you, having your windows broken and the roof above the head stolen. However losing someone due to the pandemic is something more extreme, it makes you witness human nature at its worst which is permanently scarring. The damage one goes through losing a family member is already difficult, whilst the pandemic burdening the family with more difficulties. I still remember how we had cried for help to the neighbour beside us, who also happens to be a doctor for monitoring the oxygen saturation, and hearing the refusal instantly, or the nurses who had barred us from providing medicines to my dad and the hospital that had already removed my dad from the ventilator before our consent. Not only witnessing such harsh things, the calls from the society making us aware as to not bring dad's body at our residence, to get isolated immediately so as to not contaminate the building and spreading false information were as terrifying as it could be. Just like the untouchables were shunned and discriminated against, same behaviour was expressed by our so called society who was supposed to be standing with us in difficult times. Is this the kind of society we live in where the bereaved family is not even shown a speck of compassion but rather put in allegations ? It became even more a dreaded time when our near and dear ones couldn't come and visit us, when our domestic helpers weren't allowed to come, when we just received condolences over texts and no individual by our side. It has been 4 four months, and no amount of time seems to be healing, but we have people in our society who till date have been asking us questions on “were we able to cremate dad ?” and questions like “you don't seem to be grieving enough”. It is to this extent that instead of the condolences the calls were made only to get exact details of what were the Covid procedures and how in a Covid case we were able to do all the rituals. Kindness in this case doesn't even exist. Is this where we are heading towards as a society ? Where collective solidarity and cooperation are needed to overcome such traumatic situations, our society is becoming more intolerant, spreading hate, isolating individuals and spreading fake news. While individuals should have been sharing sympathy, communicating support, and should be speaking of how vulnerable families facing loss become, we promote

isolation, breeding stigma, fear and hate. We hear about people dying every day, it is only when we lose one of our own, when we are thrown to the other side of the table. Nothing is guaranteed. Today I face it, someday someone else might. No one is immune to loss and grief. We all are in the same journey awaiting the inevitable. Just like our behaviour once towards the untouchables, we now receive the same behaviour in return. It is just like **the circle of life**, what the society has sowed is now reaping it. While till date we stigmatize untouchability, forbidding them from sitting at our tables, sharing glasses, or even shaking hands, Covid has brought in such a situation where even the untouchables will not wish to come near or touch the bodies and graves of the covid positive individuals. In this case where Covid is concerned there is good reason for this but when it comes to SCs and STs, maids, drivers and other lower class groups, We as a society need to understand that Covid is a war with rules, strategies, disease and not caste. While earlier on the basis of caste people were segregated into pure and immure, Covid is a disease which no individual is immune to, it affects an individual despite of caste, class, religion, and nationality. Hoping that this virus will discipline mankind, and with all the experiences we start thinking like human beings and take a stand for humans irrespective of them being positive or negative, their religion, caste, and colour. I hope after this pandemic we become more thoughtful than judgemental.



GUIDELINES FOR STAYING FIT DURING COVID 19

Ritija Halder , Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester IV

Hello everyone, This is Ritija Halder from Semester IV .

I want to state that we all are living in a very difficult and harsh situation.

Yes, it is really hard for all of us to stay positive in this pandemic, it can be difficult but not impossible.

I want to share with you all some habits which you can practice to stay motivated and stay happy during this pandemic.

1. SET ROUTINES AND TIMETABLES –

It is important to get into the habit and mind-set of working, so it is necessary to set a timetable, prioritizing your activities and works that has to be done within this course of time.

2. PLAN YOUR DAY –

It is very important to plan your day and include other activities like rest breaks, exercise, sleep, Netflix and time to socialize. If you plan them effectively, not only will they pass by more quickly, but you will also take better advantage of them.

3. MAKE THAT PHONE CALL YOU HAVE BEEN PUTTING OFF –

Nowadays, distance is not at all an obstacle. You can stay in touch with your classmates, friends, teachers, etc through video call, phone calls, etc. It is very important to stay socially connected with your loved ones.

4. LEARN TO DISCONNECT –

Staying away from internet at home can sometimes be hard but too much of social media; can lead to anxiety and frustration. Staying connected with others, doesn't mean that you have to use internet for all day long.

5. DO SOMETHING NEW –

Try to do something new as well. Take this rare opportunity to do things that you always wanted to do.

6. DON'T WATCH NEWS TOO MUCH –

Right now, the news headlines are quite depressing and many of us are spending too much time watching the news, which will just make us psychologically anxious. Keeping in touch with news is good, but we should limit ourselves to just once or twice a day. Divert yourself by watching something entertaining or educational instead.

7. EXERCISE

Exercise is the best thing that you can do. Do some housework. It is also a very good exercise. You can take help from online videos regarding some exercise which you can do at home.

8. SPEND SOME QUALITY TIME WITH YOUR FAMILY OR "QUARANTINE PARTNER" –

Now, it is the best period to spend some time with your family, partner, children, etc. Pay more attention to them. Take care of this now, because when the quarantine is over, you won't get round to it again.

9. SELF-CARE –

Since you are practicing social distancing, you might as well take care of yourself. Invest some time for relaxing, taking care of your skin, hair and doing anything which gives you mental peace and happiness

To wrap up, yes, quarantine is not a good time. However, we can use this time to better ourselves and appreciate all the little things in our life. You will never have a time like this again. To Pause. To reevaluate. To change your life. Use this time wisely so that once it's all over, you will emerge stronger and better from it.



SOCIAL DARWINISM AND THE VACCINATION POLICY

Udita Chandra, Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester VI

Darwin's evolutionary theory has a greater relevance in our everyday life than we can imagine. Social Darwinism is the greatest example. It maintains that human groups and races are subject to the same laws of natural selection as Charles Darwin perceived in plants and animals in nature. It became popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and emphasized on the fact that the weak were diminished and their cultures delimited while the strong grew in power and cultural influence over the weak. Social Darwinists held that the life of humans in society was a struggle for existence ruled by "survival of the fittest," a phrase proposed by Herbert Spencer. In COVID affected India, the vaccination program of the Central government, reminds us of the relevance of this theory in real life.

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated our country and anguished its people. In the face of the catastrophic second wave, recent news tells us that people are dying due to shortage of oxygen supply, unavailability of hospital beds, cremation grounds are unable to cater to all and there are long queues. There is death and destruction all around. The only empowering aspect in this context is the phenomenal work that frontline government workers, medical professionals and volunteers are doing to compensate for what the State failed to do. The extraordinary mobilization of civic action whether in supplying oxygen or cremating the dead has been exemplary.

In such a situation, the vaccination policy adopted by the Government of India can be said to be portraying characteristics of social Darwinism, a ruthless exercise of power on behalf of the powerful – majorities against minorities, State against dissenters and big capitalists against small ones. There is an already existing scarcity of vaccines, on top of that there is a huge surge of cases in certain states. However, the scarcity and prioritization questions are being covered up by managing the headlines and controlling the social media platforms. A Darwinian competition has been unleashed between states for procurement of vaccines.

Additionally, probably to deflect the attention of the masses, vaccination has been opened up for all adults. This makes one wonder, if supplies are scarce, doesn't opening up vaccination for all adults only accentuate the problem? It hence becomes clear that now allocation of vaccines will be based on whoever can lay their hands on the vaccine first.

The government has further mentioned that there will be a differential pricing of the vaccines. Hence, those who can afford to get them at private sector rates will get them more easily than others. The Centre's response mirrors politics in which the strong do what they can while the weak suffer, hence 'survival of the fittest' stands true in this context.



PANDEMIC

Paulami Bakshi, *Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester VI*

It has been two years now, and we are still stuck in black, no white or red.
The world is still on halt, promises stagnant and words remain unsaid.
Years are cursed now, lucky were those yester years.
People could hug in times of fear now touch is what they mostly fears.
Nights are succumbed to hours of anxiety
Days are dusted in ruins of tragedy.
Air costs enough to let people breathe
Humanity is still not sold for free.
'Chaos' is now not just in our mind, it is expressed in every edge of society.
Lives are burning in the flames of time's conspiracy.
So, hope is what we hope to do
Nights can be long but believe in 'new'.



LETHAL RAMPANT

Jaenia Mukherjee, *Sociology (Honours) B. A. Semester II*

We are fighting day and night,
Fighting against the world;
Our lives filled with agony,
As the demons of the society
Continue to hunt.

We are surviving without humanity,
Killing each other at the cost of sanity;
Destroying the earth that gave us life,
We search for peace that's hard to find.

We build golden structures,
For the almighty to stay;
While his children lie on streets,
And for death some pray.

We find an escape,
From the cruelty we create;
We live in an illusion,
While our land of dreams break.



EFFECTS OF PANDEMIC ON DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA APPS, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON DISCORD

Urvi Jaiswal, Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester IV

In the midst of a pandemic we have encountered many events, some are intentional still many are unintentional. Governments all around the world have taken several unique approaches to combat this situation, one of them being lockdowns. In India, for example, there have been an immense increase in the usage of many applications. Working individuals are working from home, and students are attending online classes and a large population has a lot of free time as they are obliged rather forcefully asked to stay within their houses. Human being a social being, has a unsatisfiable need of making relations and communicating to their fellow being, and this has led to a booming trend in the usage of media apps like Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, Youtube, Discord, Clubhouse, Netflix and Amazon Prime.

Devices like Smartphone and Laptop which was once the commodity of luxury is now a product of essentialism, moreover after the “Jio revolution” wherein internet packages were sold at a cheap rate, gave the power of internet in the hands of everyone. The existence of the television is at crisis, because of the cheap net and so much of idle time, made the public shift to watching web series in Netflix and Amazon Prime. This process is popularly also called as ‘binge watching’. People who never used to post their pictures on instagram have now started collabing with their friends and making instagram “reels”, which is like short video where they lip sync an previously used audio or may create some original content with imitating any ongoing trend. What is surprising is that their has been an increase in making lip syncing video even after the controversial dispute between youtube community and the tiktok community. This is pure deviation.

Discord is an application previously made for a population who were enthusiastic about e-sport. Players can interact with other gamers around the world and play with them both at the same time. A drastic change came during this population especially for the Asian population, people from different profession, age group and fields came to join the discord community. From a \$1.65billion organization in 2018 to a drastic increase income to \$7 billion in the year 2020 is a huge jump. Moreover, because of pandemic, people has increased their screen time and many youtubers got a huge increase in popularity, and so also as the fans increased we find an increase in the member count over the youtuber's servers.

Though discord is like any other media app, but still we see exactly the same behaviour as we see in real life. It breaks all the belief that virtual life is aloof from the reality. For instance, what Emile Durkheim talks about the “weness” in communities, the same trait is observed in those servers which raid the other servers in a group. This behaviour intensifies when even when one group member is abused, the whole clan jumps over that server to rescue and support their member. Each member

has to have the initials of the server's name or symbol before their name to proof their relation with that clan. There are narrowly specialized communities according to a person's liking and interest, which also helps them to grow. And recently in this huge time of medical need ,we also see how people help people from their community in their adverse situations.

What is interesting to see that the phenomenon of power politics is also seen over here. Just as people in reality try to create their relations with higher powerful authority to gain certain privileges, exactly we find here in discord where we see servers member approaching and buttering the server moderators for gaining special permission which bring them to a superior position from an average server member. If we look more closely to this theme, we also see server members going to any level to gain attention to their comments, they go to such an extent as to abuse any popular member or a member at power. This is clearly seen in reality, where celebrity get trolled by random people to gain reacts, and if even a small reacts, others also react finding it amusing, which brings us to the herd behaviour in economics.

Discord also comprises those people who face social anxiety, they feel secured and safe behind a screen. Because these are the ones who only use discord don't really have a masked self for the real world. They are exactly the way they are in real life. These are ones for whom their real life and their discord life have merged together, and they really don't find them as two different things. There are also those kind of person who can't express themselves in reality or fear of being judged in real life, who flush their toxic version here, because their identity is in disguise. We find frequent disputes where people of young age group to feed their ego, which they might have not done in the bona fide world.

Discord has become like a “social pornography”, one has the convenience of social interaction with minimum effort and obligations, one can talk/type/reply to people whenever one wants, and leave the person or community they want, there are plenty of options present, a bit like how porn offers a quick release without having to put in time or effort or money to court the girl or guy.

Also to give my observation, there has been a “simping culture” here after the pandemic which was previously absent here. Things which have been happening in dating apps like Tinder and Bumble, is now present in a gaming app. Online dating is now a trend between the youths, and they flirt around with everyone just because they want to date or maybe they like doing it, again the herd behaviour is seen here, where humans mimic what others do. Plus, because of patriarchy, the consent of women is not paid any heed, the respect element for other gender comes to the least amount, and simping, flirting, passing uncomfortable comments, abusing, and objectifying is a normal scenario over here as more and more people are coming from different environment are gathering here after the pandemic.

Being a gamer's app, previously people from only the gaming genre assembled, but after the pandemic, the demography has become really diverse. Not only you have people from Technical fields like engineering and IT but also from social fields. One day you be sitting with a group of professional gamers and another day sharing your music taste with an advocate and a therapist.

I would like to conclude that discord is like an escape from the tragedy of our reality. Its like a group setting, something similar to a college club but at a larger scale, what we forget that it's vicious cycle, which is addictive and toxic at same time, it works like a slow poison seeping into our reality, merging us with it forever. ■

SOCIAL MEDIA

Ankita Saha, *Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester IV*

“Transparency may be the most disruptive and far-reaching innovation to come out of social media.”

– Paul Gillin, journalist

The first social media platform was known as SixDegrees.com which was developed in the year 1997. Now, the number of social media platforms are increasing with each passing year. Some of the most famous social media platforms are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram and so on. Increase in the number of social media has also caused an increase in the rate of communication. We are now able to find our long lost school and college friends through Facebook and Instagram. We post pictures, comments and inform our friends about our life status, which helps us to understand each other's likes and dislikes better. Social media has now come up with social media influencers who influence their followers to buy certain products by reviewing it. Many people have recently started vlogging their personal life and sharing it on various social media platforms to earn money. People also use social media sites such as Tinder, Bumble and so on, to find their life partners. Any incident that happens in a person's life will be updated on their social media accounts, whether it be a death in the family, marriage, birth of a child, first day of the child at school and the list goes on and on. People use social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, to voice their opinion fearlessly. Needless to say that social media has made things much simpler than they were previously. We can now send emails or even WhatsApp texts to each other and get a reply in a minute or two. Searching people is at the tip of our fingers with the help of Facebook and Instagram. In the current pandemic situation we have realised the importance of social media all the more. Since the Corona virus calls for a physical distancing from other human beings, it is only through social media that we could stay connected to each other. Schools and colleges are able to send study materials to the students via email or WhatsApp. We can video call our friends, family members and acquaintances through social media and stay away from loneliness. We can also consult the doctors over a phone call or on WhatsApp. All the above stated points confirm that social media has probably become an inevitable part of everyone's life.

Social media has become a necessary evil that this generation is stuck with. No matter how much we benefit from social media, we can never ignore the amount of disadvantages it has. Most recently the Indian government has banned a few Chinese applications and social media platforms such as Tiktok which were apparently collecting all the personal data of its users. It is true that social media connects us with our loved ones. However, there are many other unknown users present in the same platform in which we share our information and life updates so fearlessly, who can use these as a weapon to harm us. There have been instances when children have been kidnapped from their

schools. Parents would post about their child's first day of school, the food which they like or dislike, the school bus in which their child travels and so on. The kidnapper would keep a track of those information and on getting the best opportunity would kidnap the child. Opening up accounts on any social media site requires sharing some personal information such as name, age, email id or even phone number. Although many people use fake personal information, there are a lot of other people who put their actual information on display. This leads to a breach of privacy in the future. There have been instances where many accounts have been hacked and the information and pictures provided in the account have been misused by the hacker. Pictures of people have been photoshopped and used for evil causes of which the concerned person may not be even aware of. The hacked accounts are used for unethical practices.

The discussion about the ill effects of social media would be incomplete without the mention of the psychological distress that social media causes in our lives, especially in the lives of teenagers. There have been numerous instances of social media bullying which causes anxiety and depression among the youth. Children who feel shy to talk about their experiences have even attempted suicide. People may even trust random people they talk to over social media and share their photos and personal information with them, which may be misused by the latter. This again, may cause serious mental health issues and serious privacy related concerns.

Therefore, it goes without saying that unless we learn to value the power which social media has given to us and handle it responsibly, we will some day or the other fall prey to its harmful side effects.



GENDER STEREOTYPING

Sneha Maity, Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester IV

Gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by men and women, whereas gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. Gender stereotyping is wrongful when it results in a violation of human rights and fundamental freedom.

Standing in the 21st century, gender stereotyping still impacts the major part of our lives which enforces gender role to such an extent that it leads to the violation of the fundamental freedom of expression.

Here is a short story to prove the point;

Sunita and Raghav are best friends who loved to spend time with each other. Raghav belonged to the LGBT community and Sunita was a girl who strongly opposes feminine roles of a woman in the society. It was the time of Durga Puja when both of them decided to hang out with their friends. But this time they thought of wearing something which "they liked" in spite of wearing something which is "coded by the society".

In the day of their meeting Sunita wore a nice white dhoti and Raghav wore a beautiful yellow saree. This was enough for the people around them to laugh at them. Even their friends ignored their existence because they were bringing "shame" to them. As a result, both of them decided to return home.

Upon knowing this matter both Sunita and Raghav's family were very angry with them and scolded them for bringing unnecessary attention from the public. Both Sunita and Raghav tried explaining their families how it is their "right" to wear anything they want. But sadly, they both have been accused of wearing such dresses in the public which was not "gender coded". Seeing their condition, the rest of the LGBT in their community dared not to go against the societal norm and tried to suppress their feeling.

This story proves how society is strict enough about maintaining gender norms which strongly leads to the propagation of gender stereotyping. Both Sunita and Raghav had been unable to express their right of wearing anything due to this stereotyping. Although it should be noted, things are taking a turn and there are many who are supporting people like Raghav and Sunita. For example, a man like Pushpak Sen who wore saree and put makeup, got viral in the social media in 15th April, 2021 (Source : News18). Many people appreciated his braveness and praised him in the social media. This proves that change is gradual but hopefully one day this gender stereotyping will not affect our lives any more and everyone can live their life as they wish. ■

“SUBORDINATION OF WOMEN” — A RESULT OF PATRIARCHY

Aparajita Dutta, *Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester IV*

The word “Patriarchy” means rule of father or the patriarch. It is a social system where the father or male member of the family hold power over women. The women are considered inferior in patriarchal societies. The consequences of patriarchy leads to suppression, exploitation and subordination of women. Men exercise power and authority on women. Patriarchy leads to gender inequality and gender discrimination.

We know that during the early vedic age in India, women enjoyed an honoured place in the society. They were also educated and there was no inequality among men and women. Women during that time had respect and freedom and they could choose their spouses during their marriage. Some of the most important women rishis of that time were Gargi, Maitreyi and Lopamudra.

But, during the later vedic ages, with the emergence of Brahmanical ideas and Manusmriti, the position and status of women started to decline. Child marriage started with the rise of Sati pratha. The women had to depend on the male members of the family.

In Medieval era, the status and position of women declined. Like Sati, there was Purdah system where women were confined within enclosures. During that time boys were more preferred than girls. There were practices of female foeticide and female infanticide. There was also restriction in education for girls. They had no say or wish as they were the property of their fathers, brothers and husbands.

During mid-eighteenth century when the British came to India, they banned all the social evils and practices that were prevalent in India like Sati, child marriage. They also encouraged widow remarriage and education for girls. However there were some social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar who have contributed to the upliftment of the status of women.

After 1947, that is the post-independence era, the Constitution makers encouraged equality between men and women. There were some rights for women like right to education, right to employment and also right to freedom. Women started participating in politics. Seats were also reserved for womens. Many laws were also amended for women. They were allowed to work equally like their partners. Many acts were passed for women like Dowry Prohibition Act, 1984.

In contemporary India, women are protected by laws, fundamental rights. New policies are enacted against discrimination of women and gender inequality. This led to the rise in the concept of Feminism. Women are provided with education so that they can built their own career. Nowadays, women are free to do what they want. A woman can become a doctor, teacher, lawyer, IPS officer and even pilot.

But in my opinion, still patriarchy is prevalent in India. There are some families who are not liberal and do not prefer their girls to get educated. They want their sons to get educated and become the breadwinners of the family. Sometimes, freedom is not given to women. Some families do not encourage their girls to work at night. There is still a notion that women have to look after their family and children even they work outside and they still depend on their fathers or husbands to take a decision. Women also face sexual harrasment in public places as well as in their families though there are laws and amendments for women. Though people say that men and women are equal but the mindset of the people has not changed yet. Even now men have more priority than women and women are subordinated by the patriarchal society.



SUMMERS ARE BLUE

Paulami Bakshi, *Sociology (Honours), B. A. 3rd Year, Semester VI*

It was half past 2 p.m. Walking down a narrow lane, tolerating the scorching heat right above my head, I was returning to home. The lane seemed lonely, void and silent, until my eyes rolled over the corner. I don't know why but for awhile I just wanted to wait, amidst the silence. In that 'lifeless' narrow lane, I heard 'life'. It sounded like a beautiful laughter of a girl, of 5 year or so. Though distant but soothing, heartfelt. A laughter warm enough to welcome me and welcome life itself.

I heard murmurs and noticed three human figures a bit blurry. So I closed my umbrella and few steps ahead. The frame seemed perfect with beautiful smiling faces, stroked with innocence, yet unprotected to the cruelty of life. Under the amber sky a woman in her mid 30's was playing with her new born baby boy, and feeding him. Also the girl of 5 years or so, of that known laughter, was helping her mother to prepare food, and constantly caress her baby brother's forehead gently, smiling.

I was stuck by the frame and touched by an unnamed happiness. Happiness and peace that reflected on their face, was actually held in their heart and mind for the moment. It's not that they ignore the hardship of their reality d. But it seemed perfect to me the way they snatched few moments from their life, the life that snatched a lot more peace from them. The way they snatched few moments from time to laugh, talk and play together. Creating and cherishing memories holding on to each other, amidst every hardship of their life.

Maybe those soft little tender fingers of the girl, feels heavy to hold the iron spatula. Maybe those restless eyes of the woman couldn't sleep for many night, in the fear of a dark I, bleak future. And maybe the innocent new born baby is completely unaware of a curse, of poverty, turned into a 'god gifted lineage'. But among all and every uncertainty there's a sense of unity amidst them, in the moment. A 'family' standing still amidst every odd. So, the saying that, "happiness is in moments, in small things", is somewhere true. That day I realised, standing under the scorching heat, "it is just a matter of perspective. But Summers Can Also Be Blue".



MY SEXUALITY, MY BODY, MY RIGHT

Tanshi Walia, *Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester II*

I came across a post online very recently which was really disturbing and gut-wrenching : bullying, casteist slurs, abuse, rape threats, homophobia, transphobia, slut shaming. A dalit-homosexual who tried advocating body positivity in his own way was caught up with hateful comments. He who was self-expressing was slut shamed. Now who knows what's the right way of self-expression ? "This is a reclaim of my sexuality which was snatched away as a 7-year-old and as a 16-year-old who went through numerous accounts of sexual abuse and body shaming", he said.

Now, if a cis-heterosexual chose self-expression and body positivity it would be termed as 'bold'. Is our system this faulty ? The LGBTQIA community has literally spent their entire life conforming to the standards of this society and the society has failed them rigorously. Almost everyone in this spectrum when try to do something for themselves, something to feel good about their body after years of struggle are gulped in by the hideous homophobic and transphobic people of the society.

If you advocate self-love and body-positivity and still hate on queer bodies, you are part of the problem. "My sexuality, my body, my right", he said. If you advocate self-love, don't be gender biased, be gender neutral.



FALSE GODS, REPLICAS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS : THE STORY OF CARGO CULTS

Debosmita Tah, 3rd Year, Sociology (Honours)

“ Misunderstood goals often lead to splendid creations.”

Performing activities without understanding them is nothing uncommon. We all may try to imitate actions without fully understanding their significance. The example of ‘cargo cults’ is a very intriguing one. In modern times, the idea of cargo culting is a general concept in anthropology and sociology, referring to the adoption of technology or practice based on observation, without fully understanding the motivation behind its uses.

The earliest recorded cargo cult was the ‘Tikka Movement’ in Fiji in 1885 at the height of the colonial plantation era. Minor alterations to priestly practices were undertaken to attempt the recovery of some kind of ancestral efficacy. Cargo cults also occurred periodically in many parts of the island of New Guinea, including the Taro cult and Vailala Madness. The most widely known cargo cult activity occurred in Melanesia, a subregion of Oceania in the Pacific ocean. The indigenous Melanesian islanders witnessed the arrival of the Japanese, and later the Allied forces. The vast amount of military equipment and supplies impacted the lifestyle of the islanders drastically. Soldiers often shared manufactured clothing, medicines, canned foods, tents and weapons with the islanders. The John Frum cult was one of the most widely reported and longest-lived ones. The cult members worshipped certain unspecified Americans having the name ‘John Frum’ or ‘Tom Navy’.

With the end of the war, the airbases were abandoned. Cults were developed among the Melanesians. In attempts to get the cargo which was airdropped earlier, they tried to imitate the practices they had seen the military performing. They performed parade ground drills with wooden or salvaged rifles. They carved headphones from wood and wore them in fabricated control towers. They made life-size replicas of planes and used torches as landing signals.

In recent years, the term ‘cargo cult’ has come under scrutiny. It is being cited as deeply problematic because of its connotation of backwardness since it refers to a goal (which is cargo) obtained through the wrong means (cult). Whether the term is derogatory or not, this incredible tale of misunderstood practices and elaborate craftsmanship is definitely intriguing.



A LETTER TO MOM

Senjuti Das, *Sociology (Honours), B. A. Semester II*

Dear mom,

Hello I am Mickey.

I was born on 28th May 2002 in Kolkata. I know that, you do not know how I came on the streets and finally to your house and how I became “Mickey”. Oh mom I would love to tell you the tale. One day two people came to and took me home. They called me Pluto. They fed me, played with me, cuddled me and showered all the happiness they could on me and I never ever felt lonely. Sometimes they used to leave me alone but I knew that when they will come back they will make up for it. They spent ample time with me and the belly rubs were excellent. After I grew up, they took me out on a long drive one day – when they stopped I was astonished to see so much of water around me. I was ecstatic. I saw real happiness around me. I did not know what to do. I jumped and played and enjoyed the day to the fullest. After that day they used to take me to that place often and we played there till our tongue came out ,and then we went to eat a puppachino. Yummy !

One day they went out again as they usually used to go, I was waiting impatiently for them to come back but time passed they did not come home. None of them. I was scared, I was anxious. Days passed but neither mom nor dad returned. I was hungry but there was no food which I could eat. A few more days later I heard footsteps at the door at first I was happy but when the smell was unknown, I automatically crouched. My floof told me that there was something mysterious in those steps. It was not of mom and dad. Two people came in, I growled at them and tried to warn them but they beat me and forced me to move out. I did not know where to go or what to do. It was raining heavily at night. I had to walk a long distance, I was hungry but no one was there to whom I could have asked for food. I felt deserted and lost. I took shelter in a bush that night, but to my utter sadness it was a thorn bush and I hurt myself badly but I could not go out because of the rain and a chilly wind. I was hungry and crying and soon felt asleep. The next morning when I woke up, the bruises were painful but I must search for food. While thinking of what I should do next, I heard a soft whimper, I sniffed and traced the place from where the sound was coming and to my surprise there was a baby dog. I felt it to be my responsibility to take care of the little one but first I had to search for some food for both of us. I was scared to go on the streets but those who came by never even looked at us. I was about to go to the streets in search of some food, a woman came near me. She looked at me with love and warmth. My tail automatically wagged when I saw her. She herself fed me with biscuits but then I took her to the little one, she fed her too. She saw the cuts on my legs which were bleeding badly, she put something on it, and the pain was lessened for the time being.

After sometime that woman came back with a collar and a leash. I was scared about their intentions but my heart said that they would not harm us, still I made sure that they did not harm the

little one. They put a collar around me, I could barely walk, those bruises were hurting but still I had to. They took the little one also wrapped in a towel. They took us to a home. There were so many dogs and cats. They were so happy; they welcomed us with all their heart. The very first thing that woman did was to put something around the cuts which lessened the pain and gave the little one a bath. After bath she looked like an angel. The woman fed us. After a few days my pains vanished and I was able to jump and play with my friends.

Then one day; you, dad and Lina came to take me home. I was scared at first but later my heart told me that you were the best person in this world. You came to take me to a new home but I had decided not to leave baby one alone so you had to take both of us. Err, thanks for that. When you took us home, in spite of being tired after a long drive, when I saw the big yard I was unable to hold my excitement and ran like a mad dog almost knocking you and dad down. You were laughing so much that I felt much happiness in a single day. Then you gave us chicken and treats and I could not hold my happiness. The toys, balls and most importantly the smile on your face was worth all the things. That was the day we experienced happiness after a long long time. When you took us inside and I saw grandpa and grandma, they named us Mickey and Minnie. The beautiful smile on their face was worth a million treats. I saw Minnie to wag her tail and I felt comfortable that Minnie was happy too. Slowly you started to teach us tricks and I purposefully would not show the tricks, so that you give me more chicken (Sorry ! But it was fun). The next morning we went out in the yard for a sunbath and you clicked beautiful pictures of us. You taught us so many tricks, I can say that you are the perfect 'Teacher' mom. I love you so much.

After I mastered the tricks, you took me to a show. I was a bit shy but then, the people over there gave treats and they won my heart. I think I competed with four legged friends and I got beautiful gifts, they tasted beautiful. (though they were hard and I was not able to chew them properly, and you took them away from me saying that these are treasures and I have come first in the competition.)

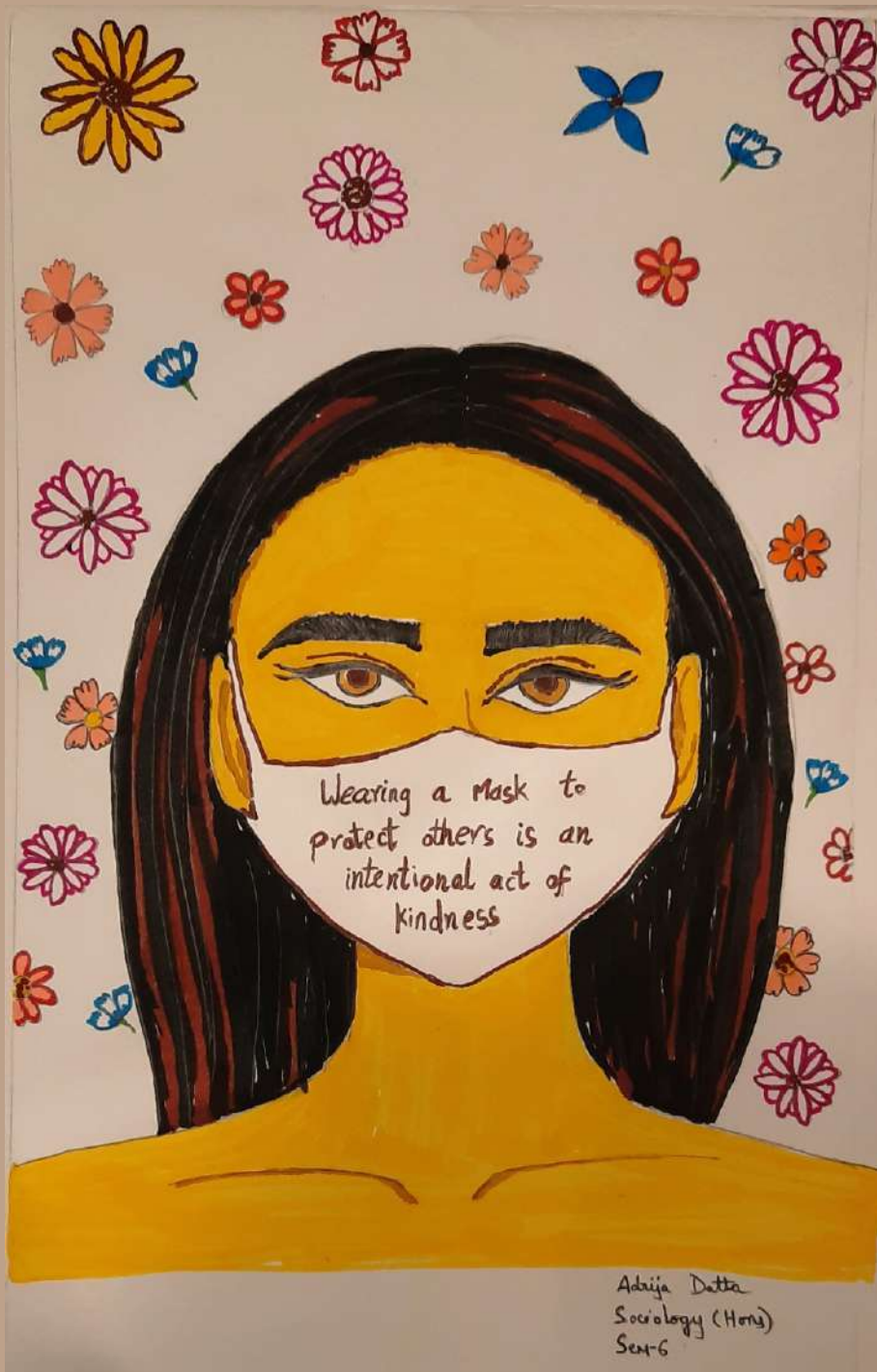
Well mom, thank you for everything you have always given me. I always loved you and I saw you cry for the first time when I ate the butter and I was having acute diarrhea, but after that I was cautious and made Minnie cautious too that we should not eat anything that we are not permitted. I will always love you mom and cannot really live without you. You are the best gift God has given me.

I WOOF YOU MOM.

Yours pawtiently,

Mickey.



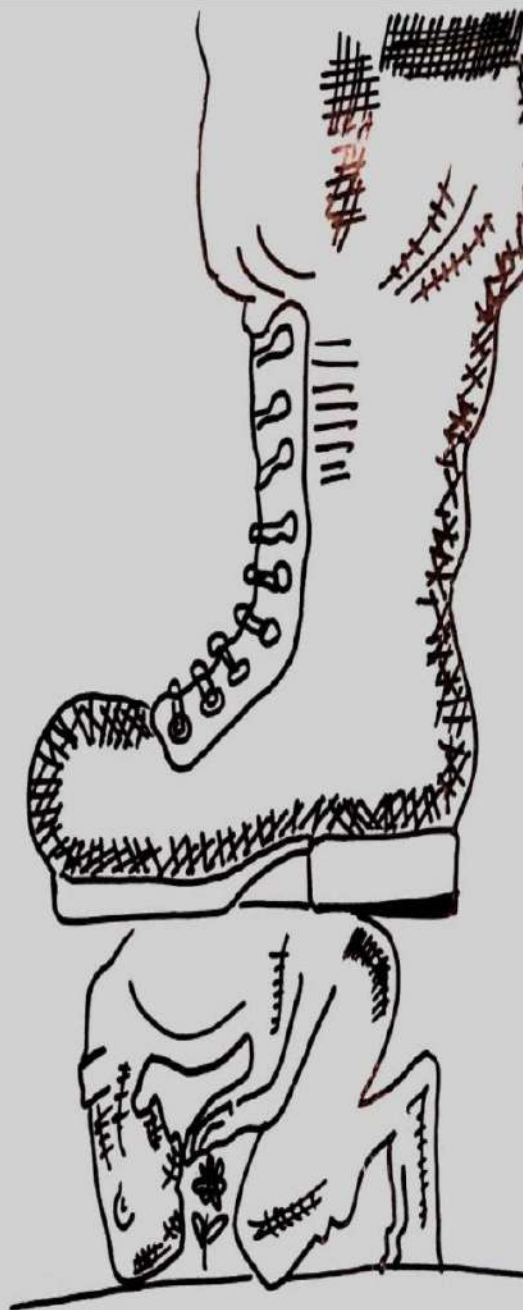


Adrija Datta, Sociology (Honours) B. A. Semester-VI

Capitalism - An oblivion



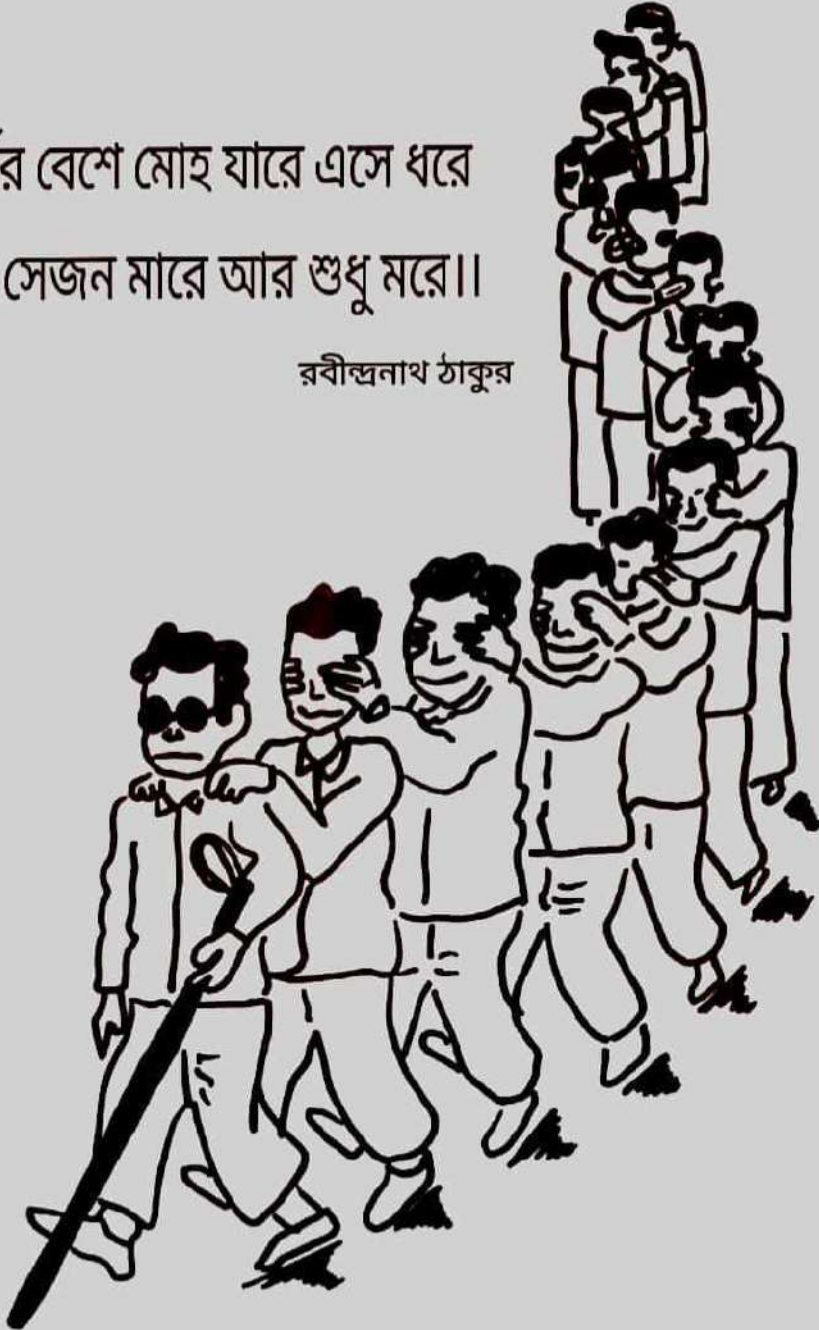
D. Tah.



Debosmita Tah, Sociology (Honours) B. A. 3rd Year

ধর্মের বেশে মোহ যারে এসে ধরে
অন্ধ সেজন মারে আর শুধু মরে।।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর



Debosmita Tah, Sociology (Honours) B. A. 3rd Year

GENERATION GAP



Oishanee Chatterjee, *Sociology (Honours) Semester II*

**THEME : BECAUSE IT IS POSSIBLE TO CHANGE THE WORLD
AND MAKE I T A BETTER PLACE FOR CHILDREN**



Debosmita Tah, Sociology (Honours) B. A. 3rd Year



R. Biswas

*Mother-love is the great, surging,
divine current that plays forever
through humanity.*

Ratnottama Biswas, Sociology (Honours) B. A. Semester VI

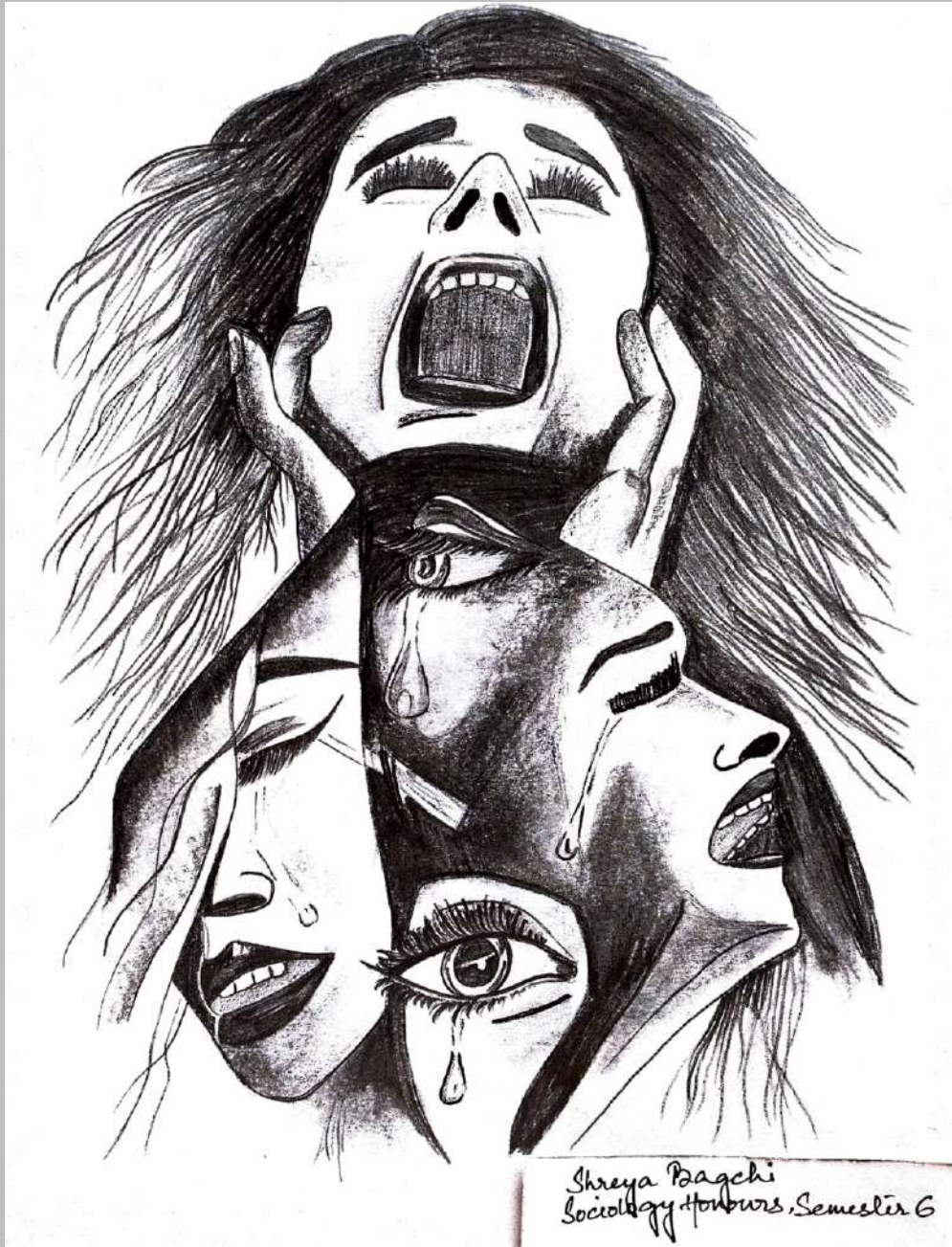


R. Biswas

*The unheard screech hidden
behind the smile.....*

Ratnottama Biswas, Sociology (Honours) B. A. Semester VI

THE PAIN OF BEING WOMAN



Shreya Bagchi, *Sociology (Honours) B. A. Semester VI*

WEAR A MASK



Suniti Gangwal, *Sociology (Honours) B. A. Semester VI*