

what changed?

stories from the year gone by

What Changed? - Stories From the Year Gone By

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September, 2021

Landscape Environment Advancement Foundation (LEAF), is engaged in research and publication in the areas of landscape design and environmental planning. It supports research programs of varying durations every year. Over the years, LEAF has increased its areas of exploration to developing city management matrices, governance and administration studies, urban generation and open space outreach efforts. It has also worked on a country wide exhibition on landscape design -Tracing Narratives: an exhibition that explored the various facets of landscape design and its history in India. Material produced by LEAF may be freely reproduced. LEAF and the author should be acknowledged while doing so.



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Preface

The book *'What Changed? - Stories From the Year Gone By'* is a collection of narratives that outline how everyone was impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. India was hit by COVID in March 2020 and went into immediate lock-down. Since then, the country, and indeed the world, has witnessed a dramatic loss, and alteration of lives. It has also brought to the fore unprecedented flaws in food systems, public health systems, discrepancies in various sections of society, governance, and economy. As of August 2021, the country witnessed a total of 438,592 COVID related deaths, of 32,768,880 COVID cases.

Something that seemed like a temporary phase that would soon pass has persisted longer than expected. There was a common sentiment amongst everybody that this shall pass however, it can be said that the world changed overnight and things have not been 'normal' since.

This graphic book documents real, personal instances of people, and how they dealt with everything that they were required to plunge into during the pandemic. There is absolutely no doubt that the pandemic has affected all aspects of living - including those nuances that are not always a part of our day-to-day purview. Billions of stories, each with unique experiences, and this book brings out a few such stories that show the impact of the pandemic in each aspect of life through the lens of different people from all walks of life.

More than anything, this book is an invitation for the reader to ponder over the impact of the Pandemic and the challenges it has brought on. The roller coaster ride that we have been riding for the past year and a half has made us more aware about oneself and also one another. The book is an attempt to highlight the many changes that have demonstrated themselves due to the pandemic; changes that otherwise may not have been exhibited.

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We are not all in the same boat, we are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts, some have just the one oar.

- Damian Barr

We interviewed a diverse set of individuals, and asked them to think about their memories surrounding the pandemic. We asked them to narrate any positive or negative experiences that they went through during this time.

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Following is a graphic translation of these stories that highlights things that changed for them during this time. The aim of documenting these stories is to illustrate personal experiences that reflect different emotions and struggles that each individual went through.

1. Re-prioritising road safety

Ahmedabad

3

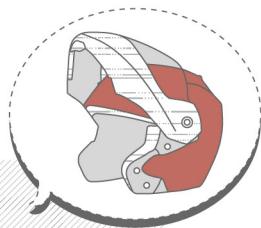
Meet was driving his two-wheeler back home from tuition classes. On the way back home, his mask ripped off, and he didn't have a spare one to use. At Shah-e-Alam cross roads, he was stopped by a traffic policeman for not wearing a mask and was given a *challan* for the same. Later that day, he realised that he wasn't wearing a helmet either, and even so he wasn't fined for that. He wondered that night whether the pandemic had re-prioritised the idea of safety – shifting, very evidently, from the individual to the larger community. The impact of the pandemic was extended to aspects which seemed relatively unchangeable.

**OH NO! MY
MASK'S
ELASTIC
RIPPED OFF!**

Where do you
think you're
going mister?
Without a
mask?

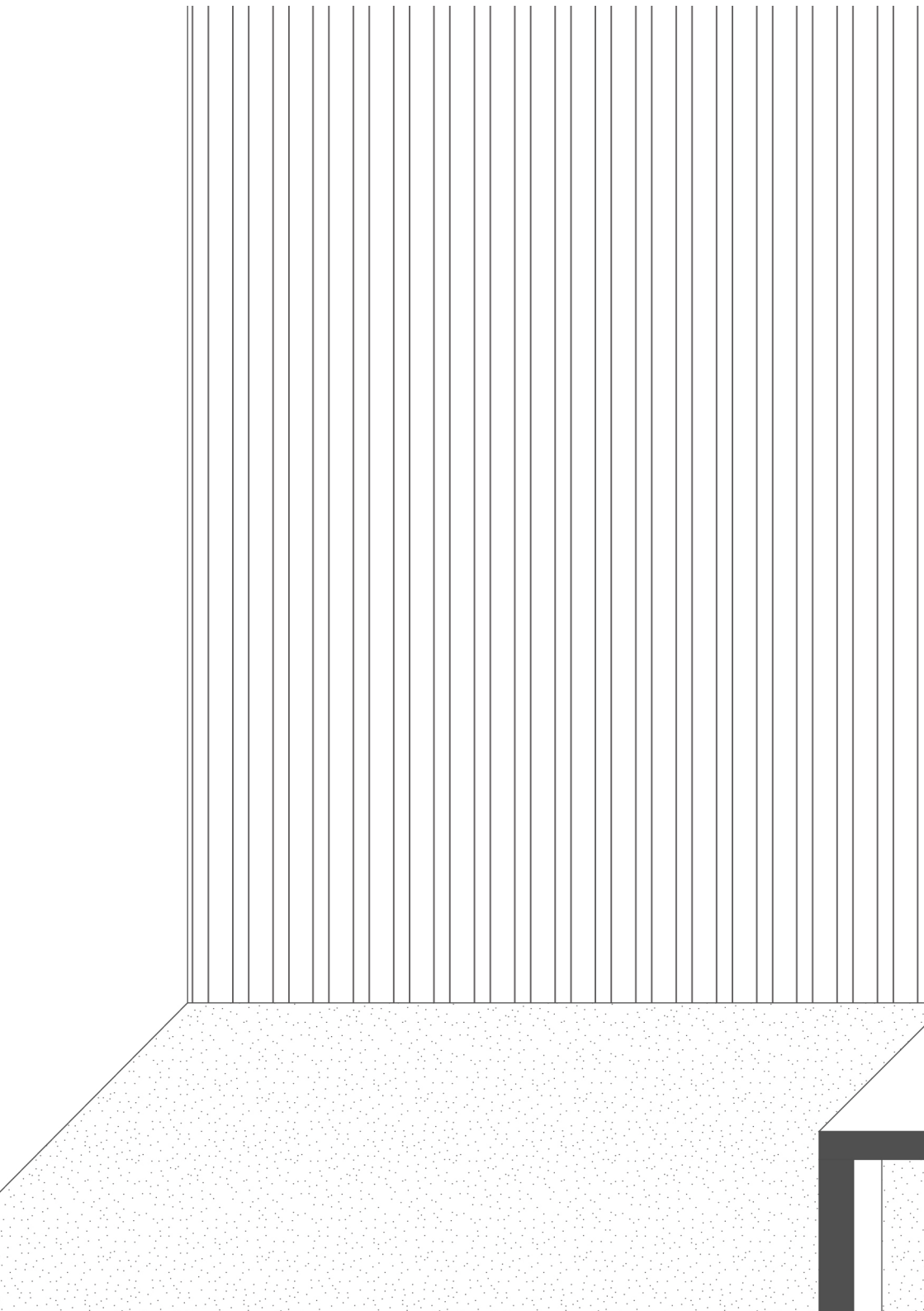


**IT'S TOO
LATE TO BUY
A MASK, I AM
JUST GOING
HOME.**



**I WASN'T EVEN
WEARING A
HELMET... BUT
HE ONLY FINED
ME FOR THE
MASK.**







**CHANGE IN WHAT
IS CONSIDERED
'ESSENTIAL'.**

2. Bringing generations together

Ahmedabad

7

Meena ben lives with her son and his family. Initially the lock-down was a mental distress, with constant fear of being isolated and the risk of death and illness. But then, she got a chance to spend time with her children and grandchildren, who otherwise would have been busy all day. Her children being at home gave her comfort, and being with her grandchildren gave her the opportunity to adapt to new technology. Spending quality time together as a family helped them to understand each other better.

There was a perceptible shift in the family unit, with each member taking on new roles in the household, bringing the family together.



**WHAT IF I GET
INFECTED AND DIE!**

**WOW.. JIYA ! YOU ARE
A BORN CHEF!**

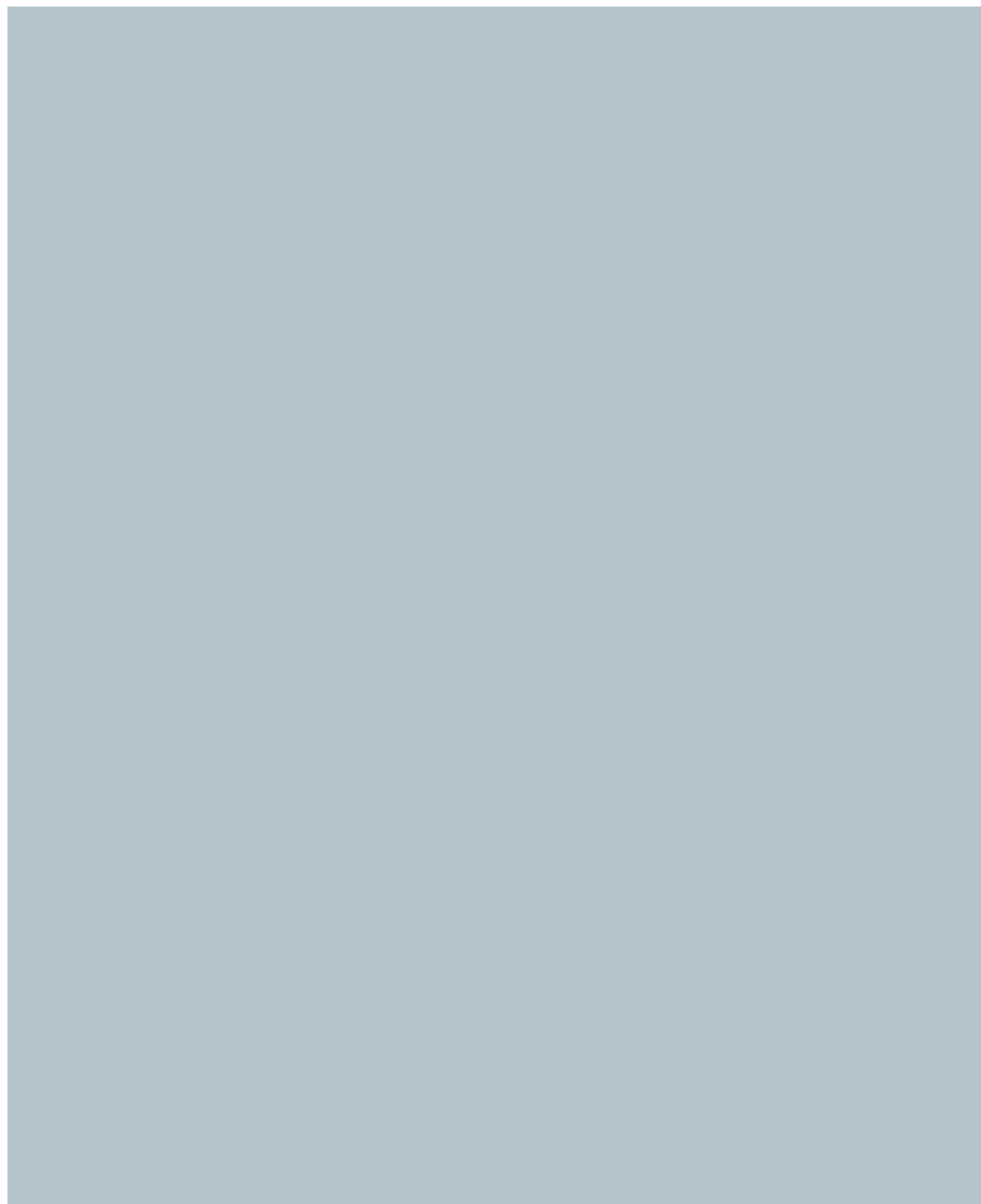


**OH ! CAN I REALLY
SEARCH ANYTHING HERE?**



**I AM REALLY
HAPPY TO
SEE MY
FAMILY
ENJOY
TOGETHER...**





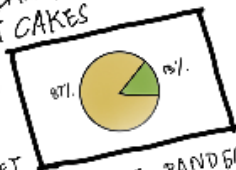
COVID TODAY

HOMES IN SUBURBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS
SELLING LIKE HOT CAKES

MORE AND MORE
INDIANS ARE

LOOKING TO SHIFT
THEIR HOMES

AROUND 87% OF THE SURVEYED PEOPLE
FAVOURED MOVING TO A SUBURBAN
NEIGHBOURHOOD. WHILE 13% WANT TO
RELOCATE TO ANOTHER CITY ALTOGETHER.



3. Changing Trends

Ahmedabad

11

Sanjay bhai owns a real estate firm as a developer with three partners. While in conversation with him about the impacts of the pandemic on the real estate market, he says that many of his commercial buildings are having a difficult time selling, as the demand for commercial and retail spaces has reduced. Many industries such as IT, corporate, et cetera have minimized their many expenses by reducing their floor space, and working from home. The Real Estate market is witnessing an increasing shift in well built homes aligning with an evolving, hybrid work structure.



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MY COMMERCIAL PROJECTS ARE ON HOLD FOR A BIT. LETS WAIT AND SEE HOW MUCH THE RESIDENTIAL MARKET RISES.



4. What does a home consist of?

Ahmedabad

13

Karan bhai is a 49-year-old industrialist who lives in Naroda near his factories. His present home was quite small, with a small balcony that had been converted to storage years ago. Being stuck in lock-down for a long period of time, it was getting claustrophobic for him and his family to be stuffed inside their home. Terraces were locked to avoid social gatherings.

The apartment building did not have space for leisurely activities. They had to shift to a friend's farmhouse in the outskirts of Ahmedabad. This made them realize that homes today are built for sleeping and eating, and with a lack of space and ventilation it can be really difficult to stay inside for a year. Given that our experiences within the spaces we occupy have become more personal, and more exaggerated – our relationships with them have altered.



NOW WE REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO BUILD HOMES WITH ACCESS TO OPEN SPACES AND NATURE!

14



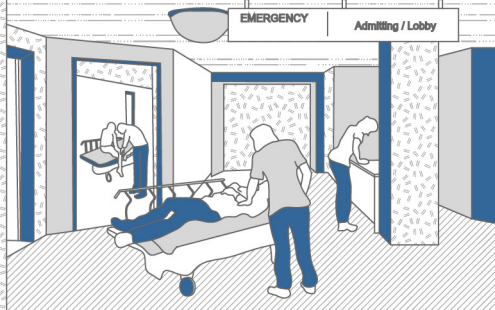
5. Lingerin after-effects of COVID

Jaipur

- 15 Ruchi spent a month in the hospital fighting COVID-19 during the first wave in 2020. She was alone in the ward away from her family, with significantly limited contact with them. There was nobody she could turn to for emotional support in these isolating moments. This left her with a lot of trauma of being in a hospital environment, and the loneliness that came with it. Before this, she did not struggle with mental health issues. The visions of the hospital still haunt her, giving her panic attacks and anxiety every now and again. She has had to go through psychological therapy to overcome this fear. She has realised the importance of co-dependency with your near and dear ones.

The sense of uncertainty and insecurity has manifested itself in avenues of our lives that one had not previously anticipated. This has been compounded by a sense of vulnerability, and a lack of guidance, and sense of direction.

**THE FIRST
WAVE OF COVID
WAS SO SCARY,
HAD TO BE IN
THE HOSPITAL
ALL ALONE,
WITH A NEW
DISEASE.**



**THE VISIONS OF THE
HOSPITAL AND THE BAD
NEWS OF SOMEBODY DYING
IS HAUNTING ME TILL DATE.
MY ANXIETY AND PTSD HAVE
WORSENERD IN THE PAST
YEAR.**

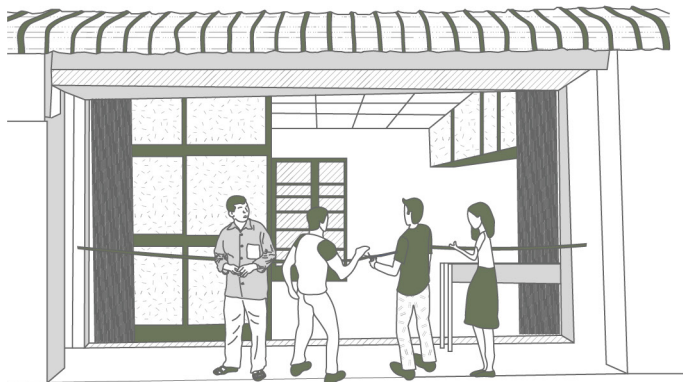


6. Small business v/s e-commerce giants

Ahmedabad

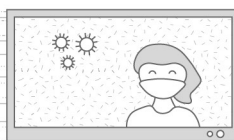
17

Mukesh bhai owns a stationary shop in Maninagar, Ahmedabad. His business was doing well when things were 'normal'. He had taken a loan to expand his stationary business. For about a year after the pandemic struck, there was an urgency to restart the business. However, what was unforeseen was that people's shopping patterns changed over time. They liked the convenience of online shopping, as it aligned with the idea of social distancing. Many small businesses adapted to online retail in association with other e-commerce sites. Since Mukesh bhai had to downsize his shop, he did not have inventory, space, or the money to pay a commission to the e-commerce websites.

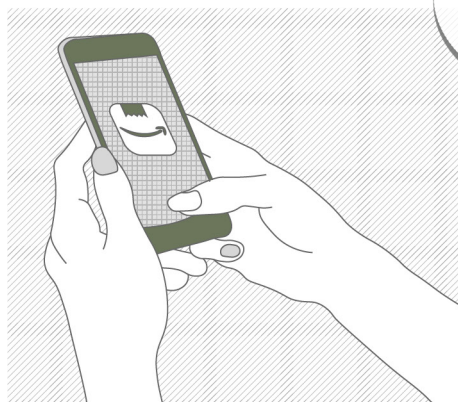


**CONGRATU-
LATIONS FOR
YOUR NEW
AND BIGGER
SHOP!**

**A PANDEMIC HAS
TAKEN OVER THE
WORLD, HOW
WILL WE COPE
UP?
I CAN'T MANAGE
AN ONLINE SHOP.**



What will I do
with a shop
when the world
is shifting to
online shopping?



7. Missed opportunity of a lifetime

Canada

19

Aayush had just completed his graduation from the University of Waterloo in Canada. Due to the pandemic, he had to come back to India and complete his last two years via online classes. He had spent most of his days in his room working. He says that the university life of students consists of many things, apart from academics. He missed out on all the opportunities that could have shaped his life – such as extra co-curricular activities, and campus events. No number of online events would compensate for those moments. He won't have stories to share and remember about him being a student; and he most certainly does not want to remember the lock-down. He will forever hate that the pandemic took away the most important years of his life, and altered the manner in which he was able to experience them.



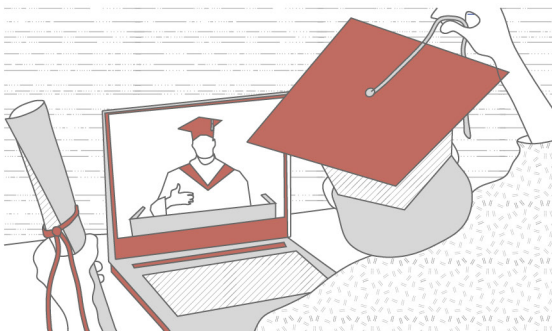
I HAVE TO GO BACK TO INDIA BECAUSE OF THE LOCK-DOWN. I HOPE EVERYTHING GETS OVER SOON, I DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON CAMPUS LIFE.

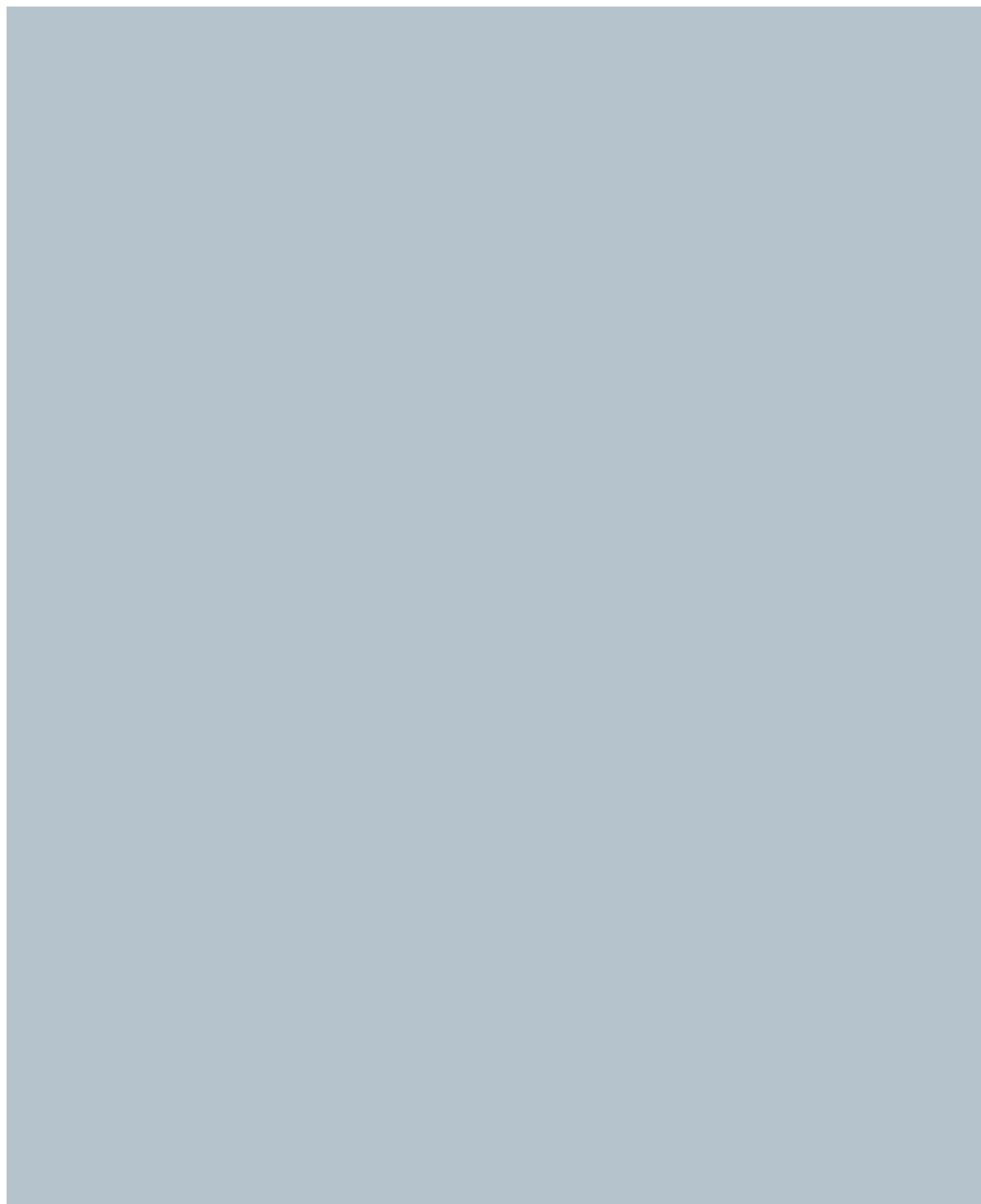
Never imagined it would be so long before I go back. Online classes are monotonous



I didn't get the chance to even attend my graduation.

I HAVE MISSED OUT ON EVENTS THAT MAY HAVE INFLUENCED ME OR MY LIFE. BUT. I WILL NEVER GET TO EXPERIENCE THOSE MOMENTS.





COVID TODAY

EDUCATION FOR ALL? OR FOR THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD.

THE EPIDEMIC HAS
DENIED ALMOST 32
CRORES STUDENTS
OF AN EDUCATION,

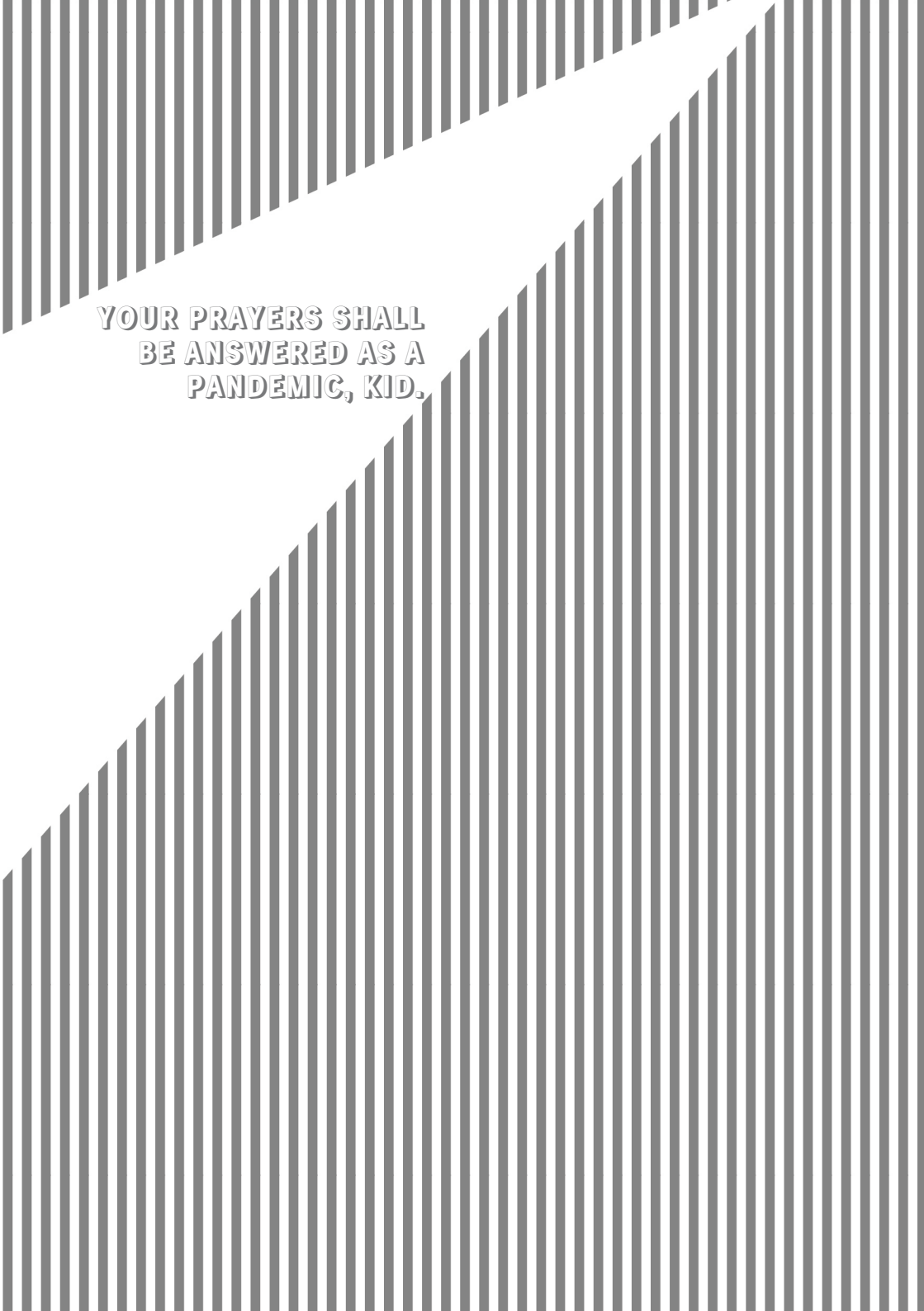
RESULTING INTO
INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT.

THE EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS DID NOT RELAX THE SCHOOL
FEES AMIDST THE PANDEMIC. THE STATE
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HAS ALLOWED 25% IN
FEE REDUCTION BUT INEVITABLY COURTS
IN INDIA SAW A SURGE IN LITIGATION OF
THE SAME.





Please God no
more School
today.



**YOUR PRAYERS SHALL
BE ANSWERED AS A
PANDEMIC, KID.**

8. Learning through experience

Ahmedabad

25

Rudraksha was a 10th grade student in the pandemic. He was supposed to prepare for his board exams. However, he spent all his time playing games, and watching Netflix shows. His parents were concerned about his education and explained to him the importance of studying throughout the year, thereby not experiencing pressure at the last moment. Even if he tried, Rudraksha was unable to study at home. To him, it was an environment that was meant for relaxation after coming from school or tuition classes. His brain was adapted to the idea of home as a place for rest. When the exams approached, he realised it was difficult to complete his course before exams. His parents' advice was indeed true, and now, he is willing to listen to them in the future.

And so, through the pandemic, our association with spaces – how they are used, and indeed how we experience them – has evolved, now requiring that we evaluate them, and our relationship with them.

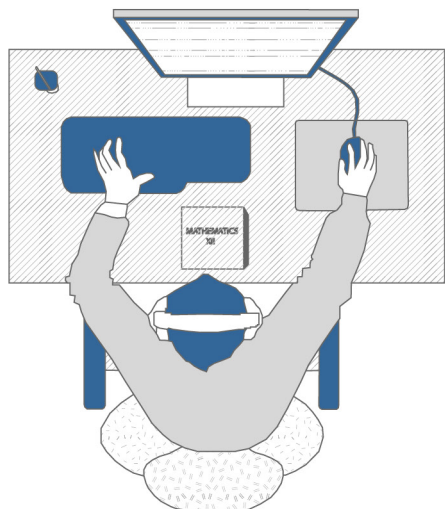


**RUDRAKSHA!
WHY DO
YOU KEEP
PLAYING
GAMES ALL
THE TIME!
WHEN WILL
YOU STUDY
FOR YOUR
EXAMS!?**

**OH NO! WHAT WILL I DO...
HOW WILL I FINISH ALL
THE CURRICULUM IN THIS
LITTLE TIME... PLEASE
GOD HELP ME!**



26



**THANK GOD THE EXAMS
ARE CANCELLED. I WILL
MAKE SURE THAT I
STUDY THROUGHOUT
THE YEAR.**

9. Reduced needs, Reduced manpower

Surat

27

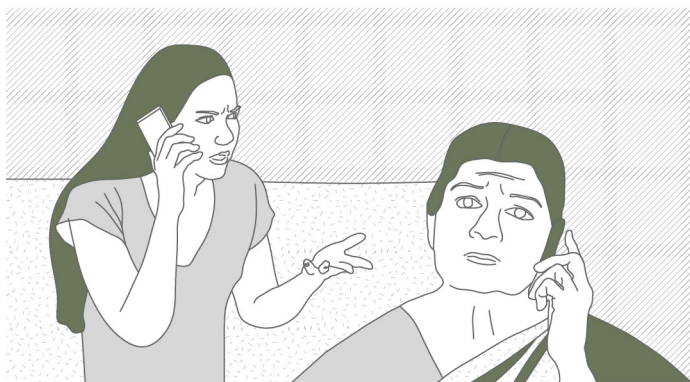
Monal runs a school in Ahmedabad that had to transition to online methods of teaching once the lock-down was announced. While they thought they were doing a good job functionally, making sure the teachers and students adjusted well, parents of the students were rebelling against regular school fees. Since learning was online, and the maintenance of the school was not needed as frequently, the non-teaching staff was not paid full salaries, and once the reduced fee was applied, the school had to lay off some of its staff since many of them had to be trained to do some other work at school which seemed like a huge effort.

A few months after the pandemic, many places of employment were forced to re-evaluate their definition for the term 'essential' leading to a restructuring of the work place – both in terms of Human resources and capability.

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING! MY EYES ARE BURNING... AND I AM UNABLE TO BE PRODUCTIVE..



WHAT IS THE EXTRA FEES FOR, THE SCHOOL DOESN'T EVEN NEED MAINTENANCE!



IT IS NOT EASY TO ADJUST TO THE PANDEMIC BUT I HOPE YOU FIND NEW WORK SOON!



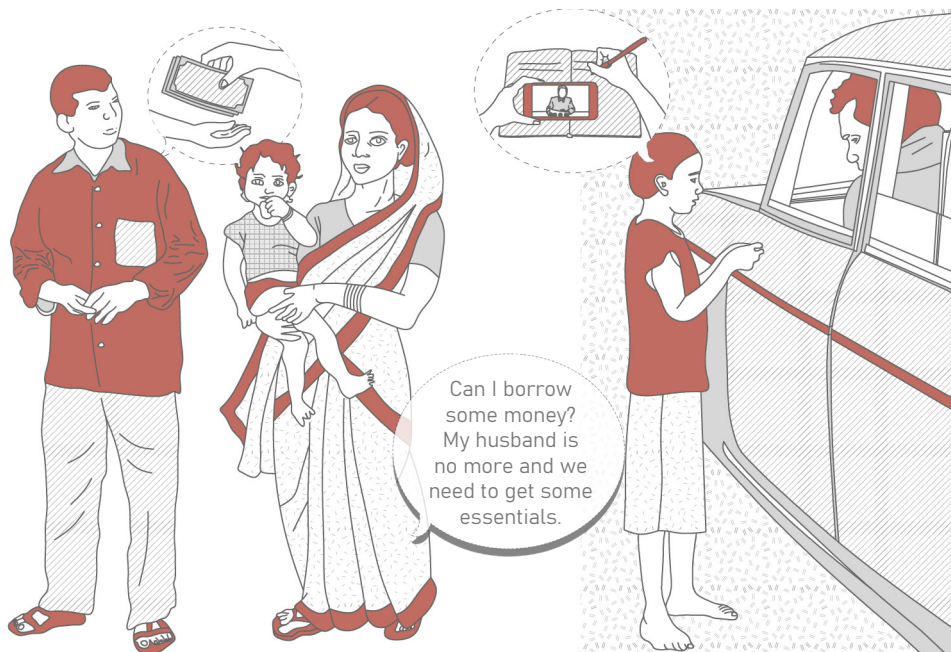
10. Re-evaluating 'Necessities'

Ahmedabad

29

Muhammed sells key chains, and tissue paper at University Road's traffic signals. After losing his father to COVID, his mother borrowed some money to get by. He had to quit school temporarily to help his mother, and save some money to buy a smart phone for his brother, and himself. One lucky day, he came across a man, to whom he was trying to sell his goods. He shared his story during a long traffic jam, and the man was moved by Muhammed's story. The man wondered to himself how the idea of luxury has changed, compared to when he was growing up. He didn't want the child to suffer, and so, the man came back the next day with a smart phone to help Muhammed study.

The education system has changed drastically due to the pandemic; what should be an inalienable right, has evolved to a sort of luxury, now inaccessible to many.



KID, STUDY WELL. YOU WANT TO CONTINUE STUDYING. HERE IS A SMALL HELP FOR YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR ONLINE CLASSES.



11. Easy to connect, difficult to maintain?

Surat

31

The pace of life and work had caught up to Anjali who had lost touch with many of her friends while keeping up with her hectic work schedule. As life stood still, hobbies and household chores seemed to exhaust, but the hours of her day did not. One day she received a call from her long lost friend Aparna from school. Small talk grew into late night conversations that lasted hours. She had rekindled an old friendship. After all these years, there was still a sense of familiarity, and they found solace in one another's company. Anjali realised how easy it was to stay connected through the phone and the internet these days. She realized it is equally important to keep in contact with people you value, and that sometimes relationships are the only things that we are left with.



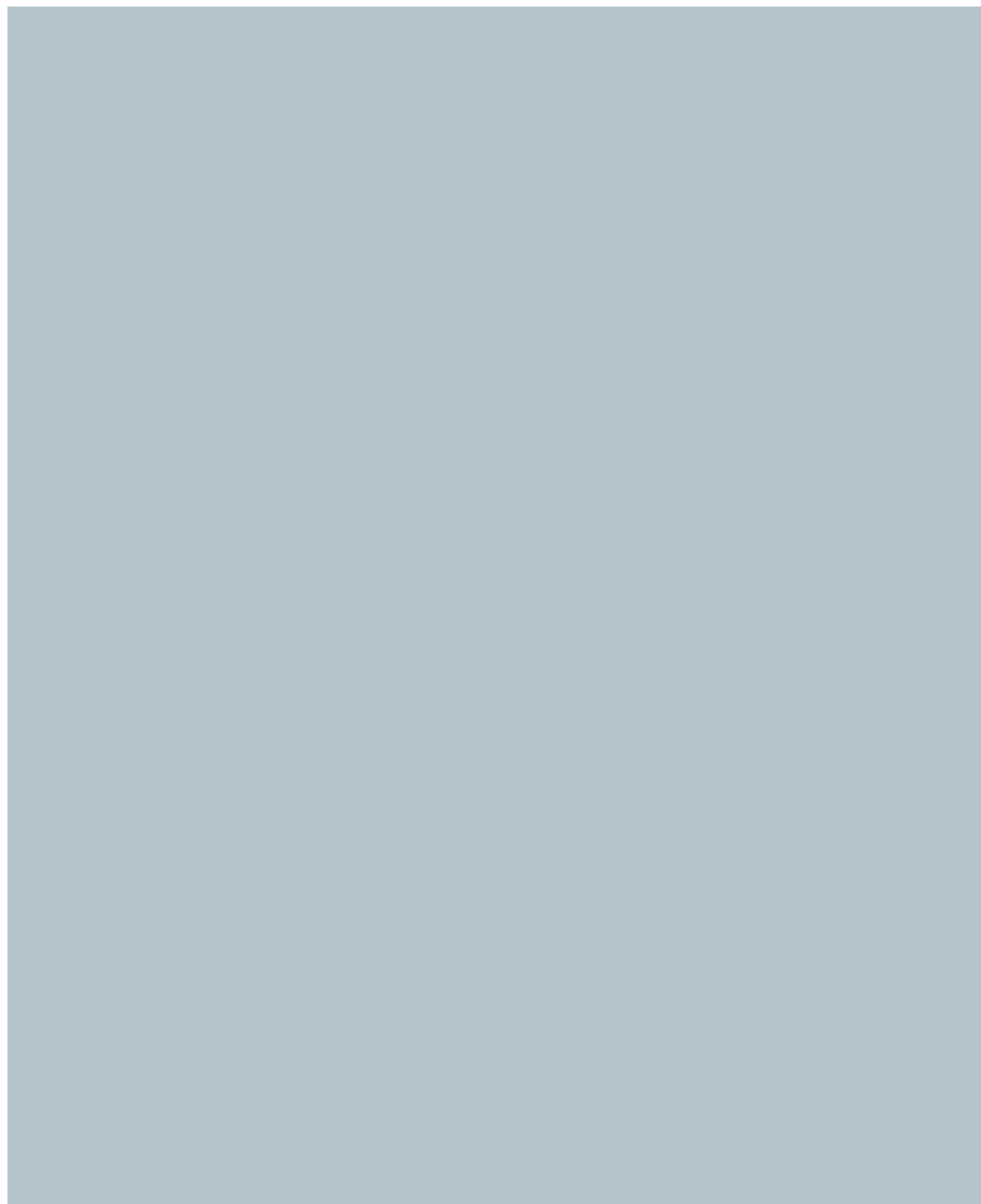
I have so much work. I just juggle between work at office, and work at home!



IT FEELS SO GOOD TO TALK WITH APARNA. I CAN SHARE MY TROUBLES WITH HER, AND FEEL LIKE A BURDEN IS LIFTED OFF MY SHOULDERS.

32





COVID TODAY

THERE WAS PANIC BUYING OBSERVED DURING THE ONSET OF THE PANDEMIC IN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. THIS RESULTED IN A SHORTAGE OF GROCERY ITEMS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL

| HOW MANY PEOPLE RELIED ON | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 35% FOOD BANKS | 30% PEOPLE'S MARKET | 15% H.A. MATERIALS |
| AT: PANTRY & LARDERS | | |

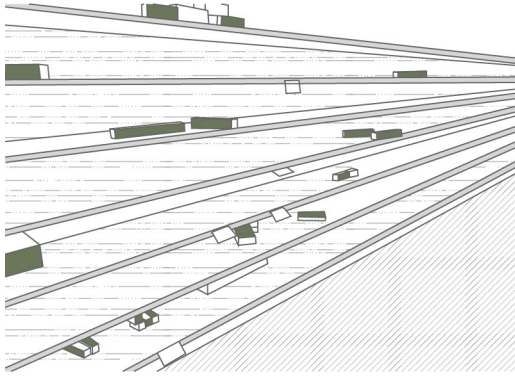
GOODS. MANY PEOPLE ARE AT RISK OF FALLING INTO POVERTY. CURRENTLY, 690 MILLION PEOPLE ARE CATEGORIZED AS UNDERNOURISHED, AND THE NUMBER COULD GO UP BY ANOTHER 132 MILLION BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

12. Vocal for Local

Mumbai

35

Ashish bhai lives in a township in Navi Mumbai with his family. When the lock-down was announced, he was busy wrapping things at work, and couldn't get the supplies needed. There were many larger chains of convenience stores in the township, but they were all cleared out. He tried looking for the essentials outside of the township in other local areas. Luckily, he found some small vendors in other parts of the city where he could get everything that he needed. Panic buying exposed the reality of the larger chains, that have their own distribution centres that can take some time to supply the goods. The local vendors turned out to be reliable in this hour of need; altering the idea of convenience and need almost overnight.



**PEOPLE CLEARED
ALL SECTIONS OF
THE CONVENIENCE
STORE. WHERE ARE
OTHERS SUPPOSED
TO GET THEIR
NECESSITIES?**

36

**THANK GOD,
WE FOUND A
LOCAL STORE
THAT CAN
STILL SUPPLY
US WITH
NECESSITIES
THROUGH
LOCAL
VENDORS.**



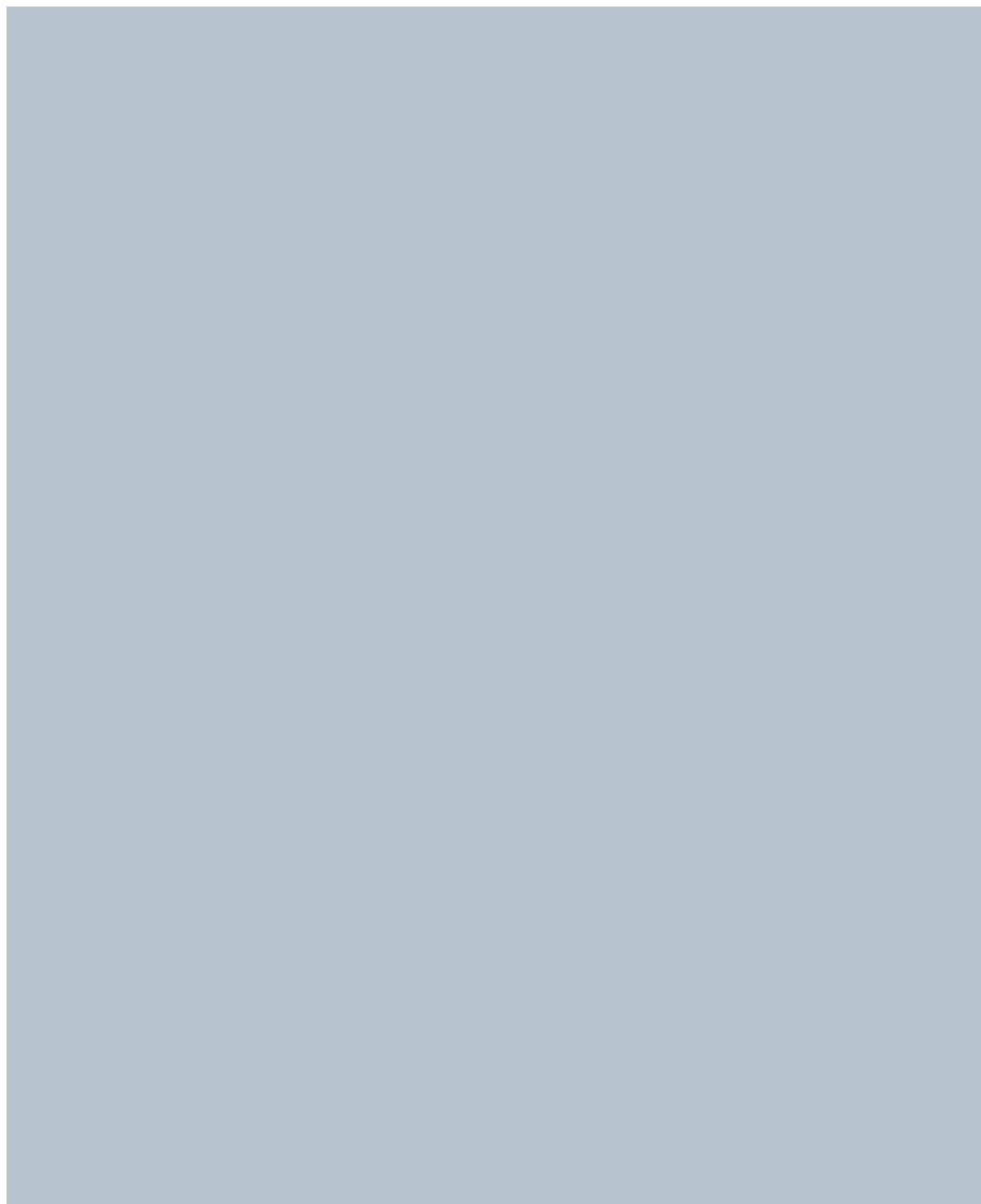
13. Optimism is what keeps you going?

Ahmedabad

37

While many people became more empathetic towards people in need, some didn't have the luxury to do so. Raju bhai's landlord was not willing to reduce the rent for him and hence, he had to look for other alternatives. Raju Bhai has no regrets or disappointment due to these hardships. He says that currently he is only seeing 20% of his normal sales, but he has not lost hope. Instead of complaining of his poor fate, he decided to open another shop to increase his income. He believes that it's his survival instincts that are pushing him to try out different things; much like many other businesses and individuals. Rather than changing, the pandemic has amplified, and brought into sharp focus who we are - both, as a community, and individually. It has required a sense of optimism, and a renewed hope for the future - a life beyond the seeming void - to not only survive this complex time, but to strive through it.

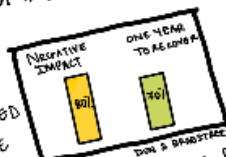




COVID TODAY

IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

THE PACE OF
DIGITIZATION
HAS ACCELERATED
BY 7 YEARS DUE
TO THE PANDEMIC



IT HAS REAPED BENEFITS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS LIKE COST REDUCTION AND INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY. THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS TO REVIVE THE BUSINESS POST PANDEMIC ARE - BETTER CREDIT FACILITY, BETTER MARKETING SUPPORT AND ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY.

-SURVEY DONE BY
DON & BANISTER

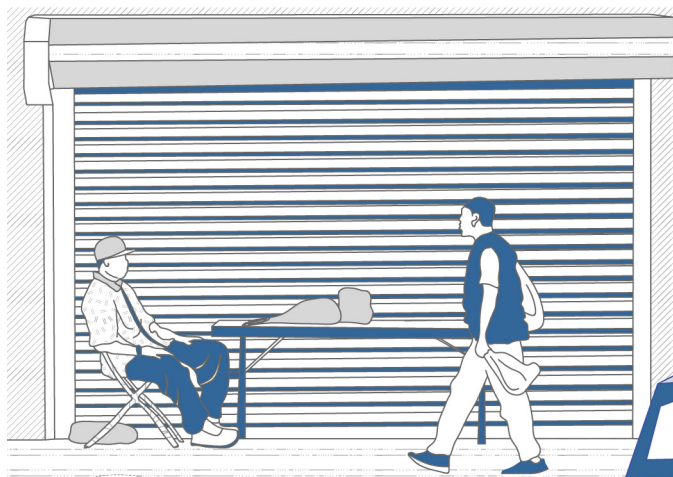
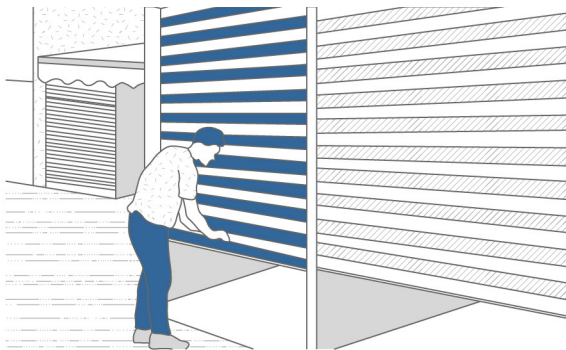
14. Lock-down tactics of small business

Ahmedabad

41

Chintan Bhai runs Bhole Pan Parlour at Jodhpur Cross Roads. During lock-down, much like everybody else, he was required to close his shop. He thought to himself, there had to be some way to earn a living, and serve his loyal customers. The social distancing rules in the nation were quite strict. To adapt to this new – and indeed evolving – system, he took the stock that was left in the shop to his home. He used to come to the shop, and loiter around for a few hours a day when his customers would come. This is how many businesses were still operating, says Chintan bhai. As long as the police didn't catch him in the act, it would work as a temporary solution.

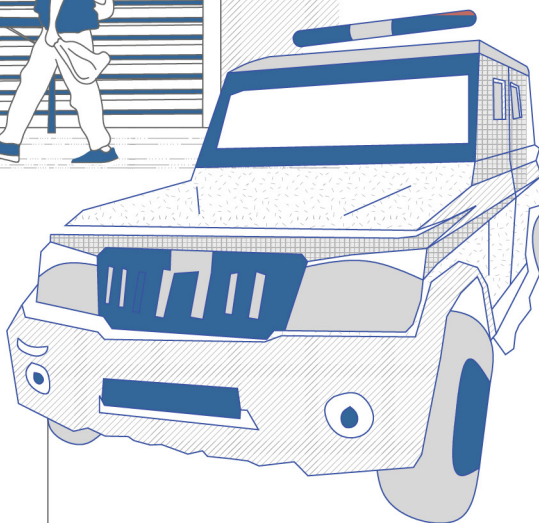
**BECAUSE OF LOCK
DOWN I WILL HAVE
TO TAKE ALL THE
LEFTOVER STOCK
HOME AND FIND A
WAY TO SELL IT!**



**MY
CUSTOMERS
SHOULD
BE HERE
SOON.**

42

I hope the police
doesn't catch me
or else I'll have
to permanently
shut my shop



15. 'Eligible bachelors' and right time

Rural Rajasthan

43

Meenakshi ben recalls her experience when she visited her village in rural Rajasthan. Suddenly, there was a huge increase in the number of marriages. Many young girls were anxious due to the uncertainty that their life held; and continues to hold. A lot of them had to stop their education and get married since it was a good opportunity for the village community to get their daughters married off. She explains that this phenomenon was due to 'eligible bachelors' returning to the village from the city. Some of these young girls are fearful of what the future will bring them, while others are happy to have found a companion.

Uncertainty has, in some cases, changed the process, and pace of decision-making; with people hoping, in one way or another, to regain control over various aspects of their life. The need for community has also expressed itself in a more forceful manner – with people now relying on the support of individuals and groups they otherwise might not have turned to.

**I THINK THE FUTURE
IS UNCERTAIN ...
OUR GIRLS NEED
TO START A FAMILY
SOON.**



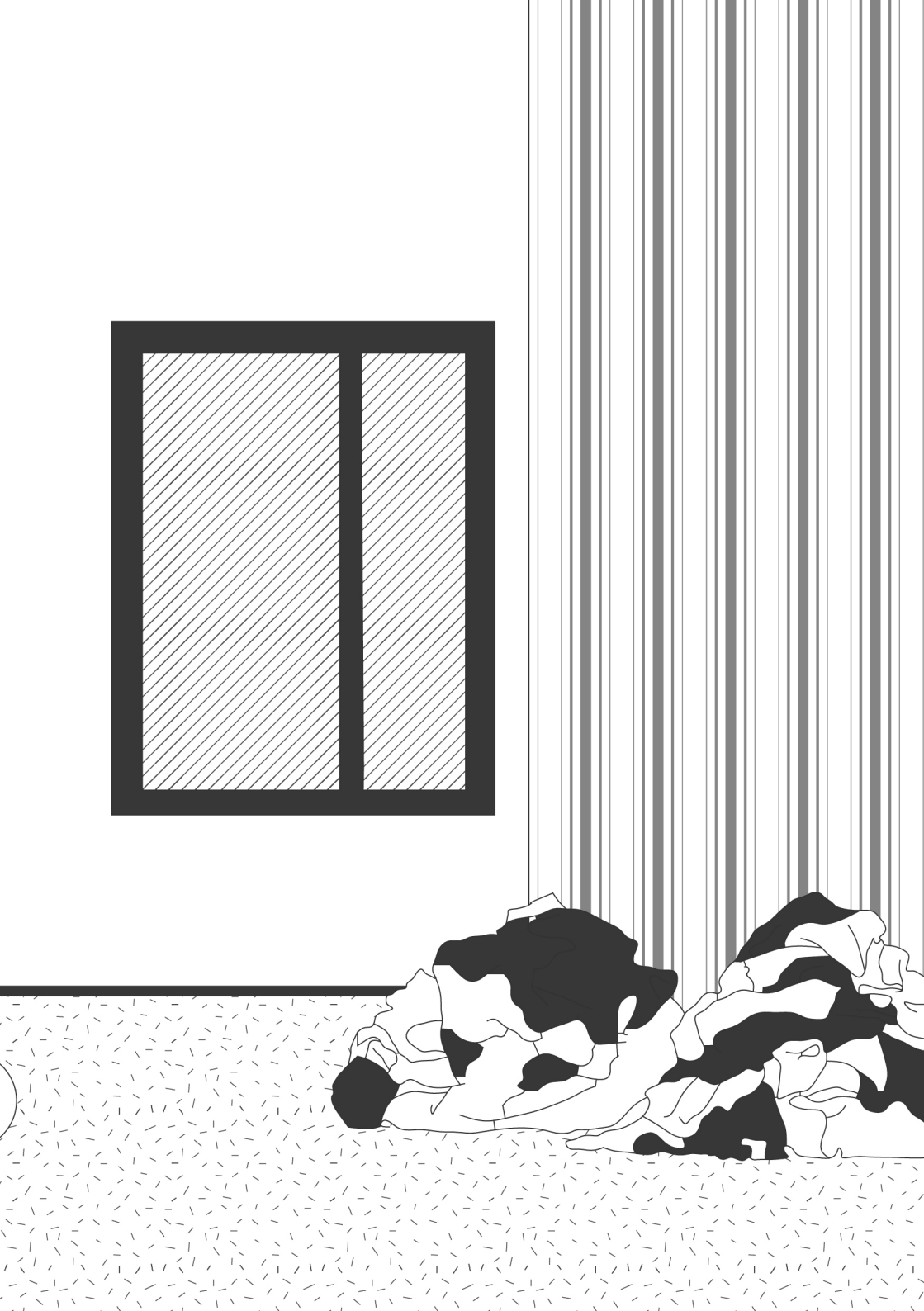
Why does everyone
want to get married
just because of the
pandemic?



**MANY GIRLS IN
THE VILLAGE
ARE GETTING
MARRIED OFF
AS ELIGIBLE
BACHELORS
ARE
RETURNING.**

**WE HAVE ALL BEEN THERE,
DONE THAT!
PAJAMAS TO OFFICE.**





16. Save the next one

Baroda

47

Manish is a 48 year old surgeon at a government hospital in Baroda. His days start at 6 AM, more often than not with a call, begging for a bed for a loved one, which he has to refuse due to the unavailability of one. He explains disappointedly that this shortage of beds and oxygen is unlike anything he has seen before. More than exhaustion, fear, and trauma, the pandemic has burdened his life with a sense of helplessness. Being in the profession he is in, he had always expected to face the challenges that would come with it – late night surgeries, some unsuccessful operations. But he was not prepared for this “constant tightness in his chest”, of the feeling that he isn’t able to do enough, no matter how much he tries. Not a day goes by without losing a patient, and all he can do is try to save the next one.



**ONLY IF
WE HAD
OXYGEN
SUPPLY
ON TIME,
WE WOULD
HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO
SAVE HIS
LIFE!**



48



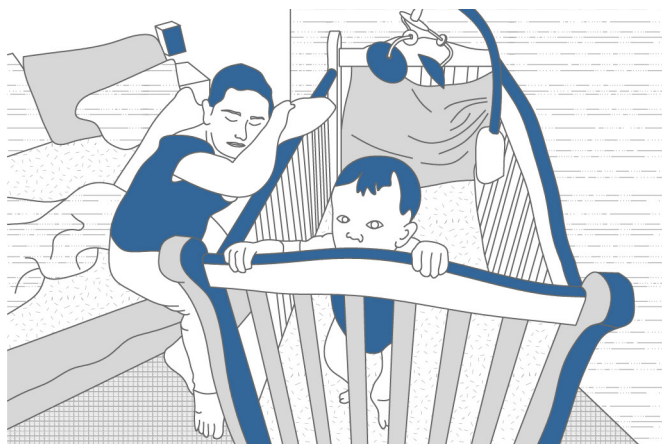
**HOW WOULD I DEAL
WITH UNSUCCESSFUL
OPERATIONS
EVERYDAY? I HAVE
NEVER FELT SO
HELPLESS IN MY LIFE.**

17. Distorted perception of time

Indore

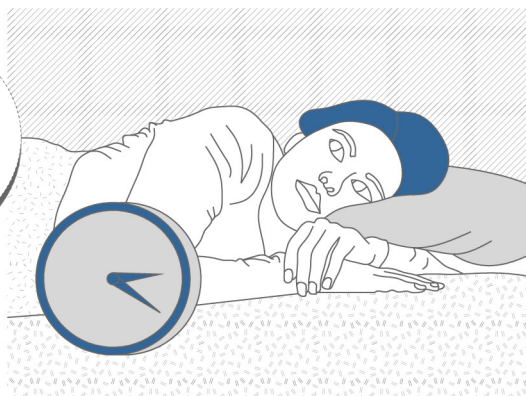
49

Aarushi is a 25-year-old new mother. Her baby was born right in the middle of the pandemic, and she is now on maternity leave. Most of her time is spent taking care of the baby. Since her life is now limited to the four walls of her house, it lacks an external anchor point that can concretise her perception of time. She sometimes wakes up in the middle of the night, thinking its day time and that she has missed many important events because she doesn't remember what day or date it is. Her perception of time is distorted due to a lack of externalities, order, and indeed a schedule; her life is guided by the baby.



**MY ENTIRE
DAY IS
SPENT
TAKING
CARE OF
THE BABY. I
DON'T EVEN
GET TIME
FOR MYSELF.**

It's just 2:30 A.M.... It
feels like day time!
My sleep schedule is
disturbed.



50



**MY DAY REVOLVES
AROUND THE BABY IN ONE
ROOM. I HAVE FORGOTTEN
WHAT DAY AND MONTH
IT IS. TIME FEELS SO
DISTORTED AND I HAVE
BECOME FORGETFUL.**

18. Innovation - need of the hour

Ahmedabad

51

Suresh bhai was a rickshaw driver before the lock-down. With movement restriction and social distancing, operating a rickshaw was not a viable option for livelihood. He had to find another source of income for sustenance. His family members were vegetable vendors, and he asked them for help to set up another stall alongside them. But in these uncertain times, whatever income one gets, one wants to save. He received opposition, as his family members saw him as competition. Nonetheless, Suresh bhai was not discouraged. Rather, he found an innovative way to start his business. He used his rickshaw and took orders from the elderly to buy them necessities from the kirana store, and groceries – delivering the same to their doorstep. This not only helped Suresh bhai to regain his financial stability, but also allowed him to innovate in a way that catered to older people in this time of need.



**I NEED TO FIND
A SOURCE OF
INCOME TO
SUSTAIN DURING
THE PANDEMIC.**

52

**OLD PEOPLE DON'T
HAVE AN OPTION
OF GOING OUT.
SO I SHOULD
HELP THEM BY
DELIVERING
GROCERIES AT
THEIR DOORSTEP.**

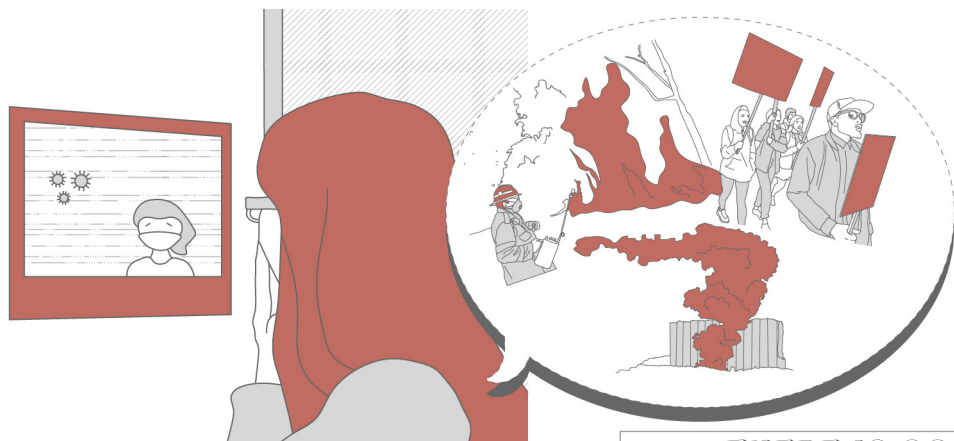


19. Too much at a time

Ahmedabad

53

The world had gone through a lot in a year and a half when COVID-19 struck. It seemed that the world was starting to crumble with the Australia wild fires in the East, to massive explosions occurring in Beirut. The world seemed to have entered a phase of depression, and so was the case for Saloni. During this period, she was suddenly faced with the death of her grandfather, with whom she was really close. Saloni was a sensitive person, and with so many events happening one after another, she was overwhelmed. The inability to say goodbye to her grandfather had affected her mentally, and as a result, she just went numb. She only cried once. The guilt of not being able to express her feelings has now changed her in a way that makes her feel like she is a living corpse, just trying to get by in a world that has shifted.



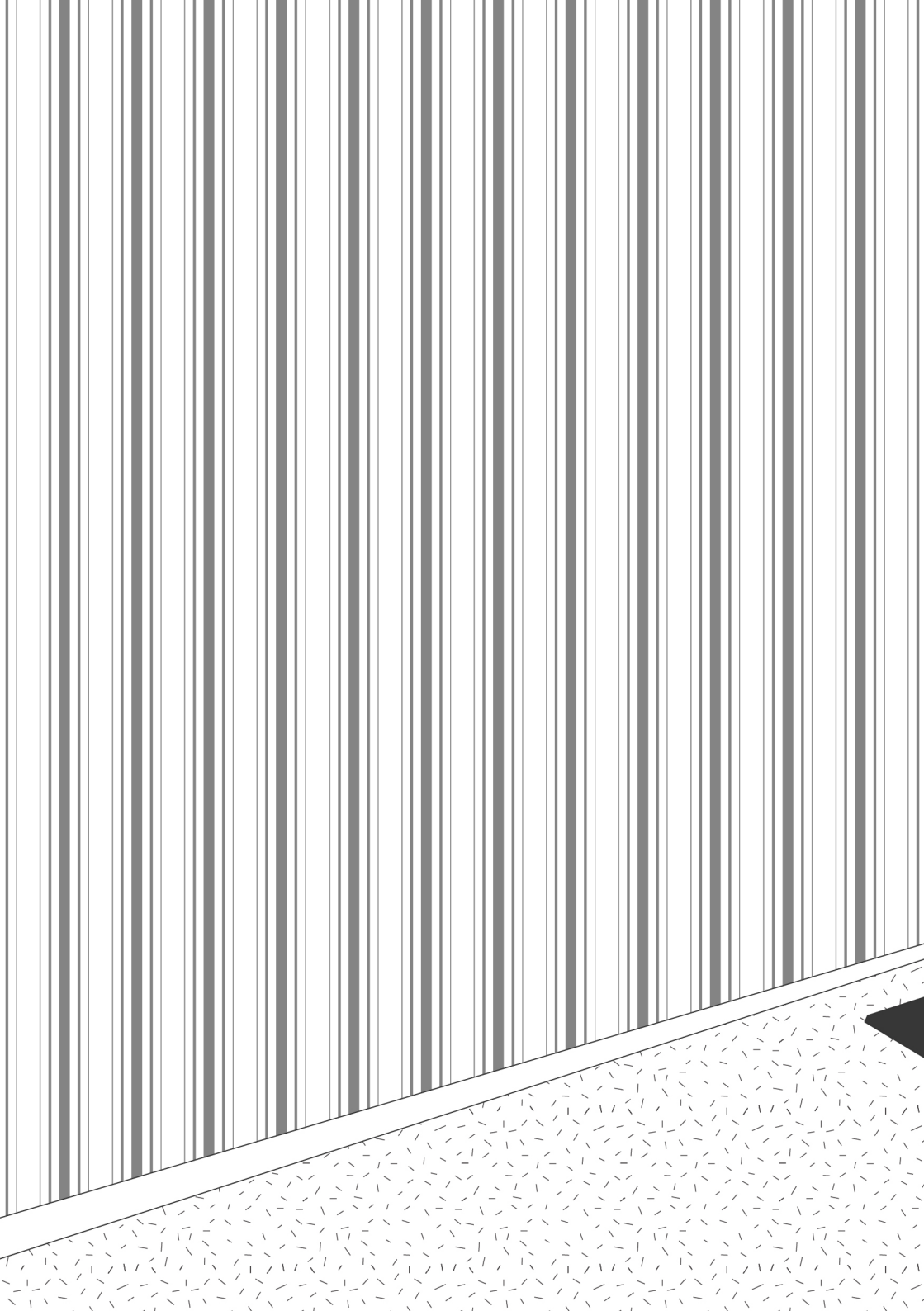
THERE IS SO MUCH GOING ON IN THE WORLD. NOW I LOST MY GRANDFATHER ALSO.

54

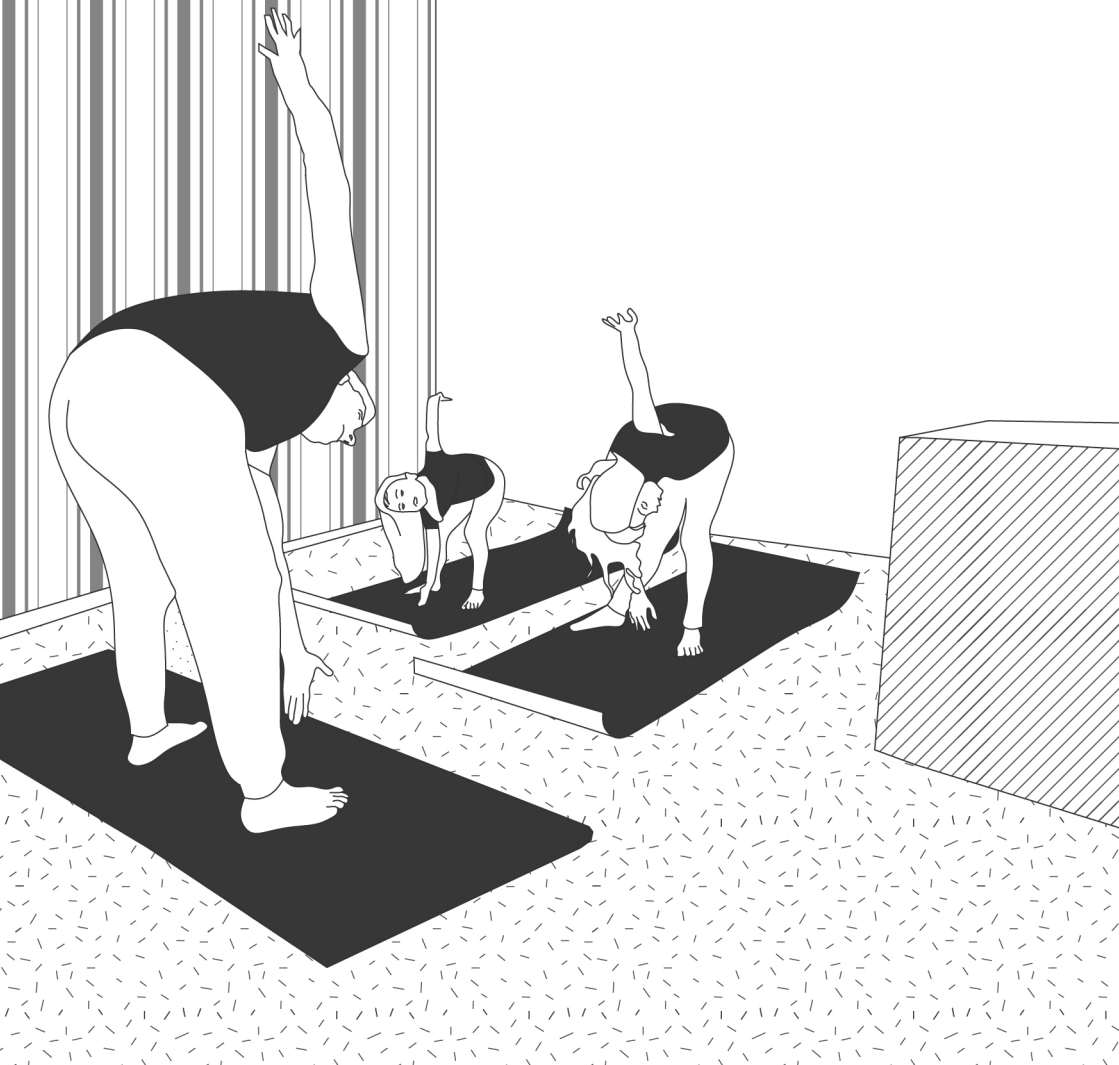


I DIDN'T EVEN GET A CHANCE TO MEET HIM. I AM SO OVERWHELMED WITH ALL THE THINGS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD THAT I HAVE STOPPED SHOWING MY FEELINGS.





**HOME WORK OUT
IS A NEW WAY
TO CONNECT TO
YOURSELF AND A
FUN WAY TO SPEND
TIME WITH YOUR
FAMILY.**



20. Rediscovering yourself

Ahmedabad

57

Mehek was in a relationship with her boyfriend of two years. She was unsure about what she wanted from life, and was going through an identity crisis. After the first lock-down, they decided to part ways. With a lot of free time on hand, she went through major revelations in life. Contemplating her life choices, she came to a critical realization – that she was bisexual. She finally learnt to happily accept herself. However, her parents did not. Upon finding out about their daughter, they levied physical and emotional abuse on her. After months of trying to converse with them, she decided to run away from home. She now plans to complete her Masters in Psychology, and make a life for herself from scratch with her new found family – the LGBTQ+ community. She is glad to have found her true self during the pandemic and as a result, has had to go through some very serious changes.

**I WAS NOT
HAPPY BEING
WITH SOMEBODY
I DIDN'T FEEL
RIGHT WITH. I
NEED TO END
THIS.**

We don't support
this. This is
against our
society. You can't
go out.



**LEAVING THE
HOUSE IS THE
ONLY OPTION
I HAVE. THANK
GOD I FOUND MY
IDENTITY.**

21. Why didn't we do that before?

California

59

Michael is a business analyst in California working for a tech company. For him, COVID gave him time to learn basic things for survival like cooking instead of eating out every night, and cleaning, and doing the dishes. The most fascinating thing he found after the pandemic was the use of QR codes everywhere. He questioned why people haven't done this before. There are codes for everything, for example while ordering food at a restaurant, instead of a paper menu or a chalk board menu, the code gives you information about the food including pictures, nutritional value, and real time updates about your food preparation. These QR codes existed for online payment, but now it goes beyond that, providing an experience that is impossible to have with a simple pen and paper. For better or worse, our phones are just an extension of ourselves.



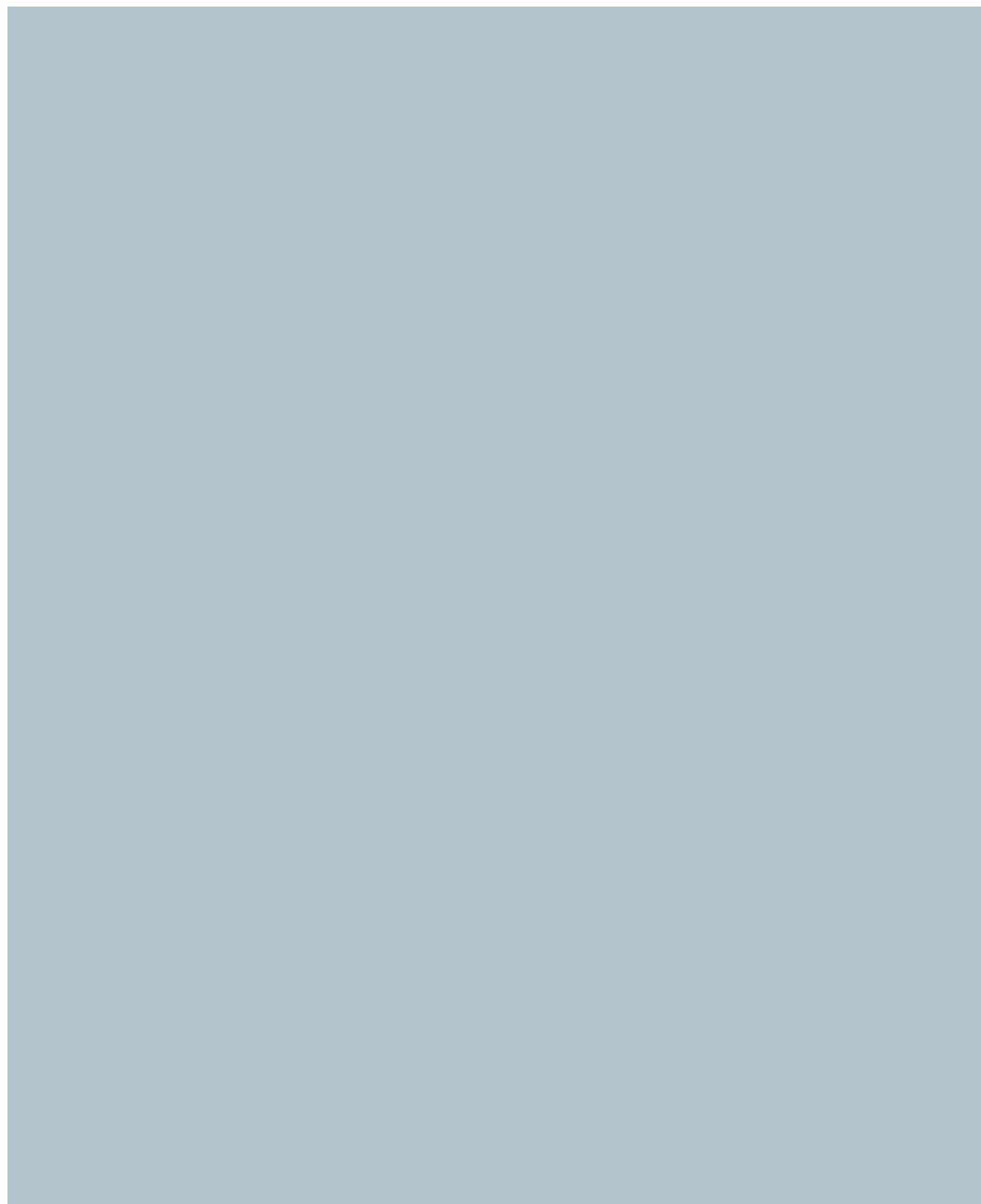
Wow! Look Sanjana, I can see all the details of the food even the calorie count! Very interesting.

HMM I WONDER WHY WE DIDN'T THINK OF THIS BEFORE!



QR CODES ARE SO CONVENIENT IN THIS DAY AND AGE.








COVID TODAY

ACCORDING TO THE CLUTCH 2017 SMALL BUSINESS SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY

52% OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS USE INSTAGRAM FOR PROMOTING THEIR BUSINESS.

| | |
|--|----------------|
|  | - 34-6 minutes |
|  | - 29-6 minutes |
|  | - 1-5 hours |

WITH THIS IN MIND, IF YOU'RE AMONG THE 48% SMALL BUSINESS NOT UTILIZING THE POPULAR IMAGE SHARING NETWORK, ONE COULD BE SERIOUSLY LAGGING BEHIND YOUR COMPETITORS IN MARKETING SALES. MANY ALSO RELIED ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NEWS ABOUT COVID.

22. Opportunities to pursue new skills

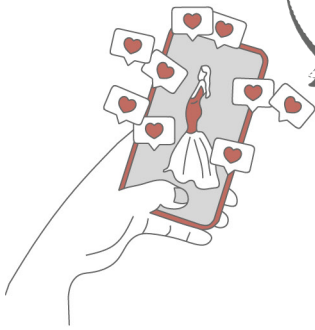
Ahmedabad

63

Rajvi is a graduate from the London School of Economics and was working with a tech company. During the lock down she came back to India, and began working from home. At the same time, she started modifying her clothes to suit her own style as a hobby. Gradually, over the year, she learnt many things through the internet and started her own social media page. It attracted many people, and they started appreciating the content. It wasn't too long before she began getting commissioned orders, and was able to realize a talent she didn't know she possessed. What started as a hobby turned into a casual business, and scaled up to the point that she is now reconsidering going back to the corporate world. The lock down gave her exposure and time to gain new skills and the convenience to start an online business from home.

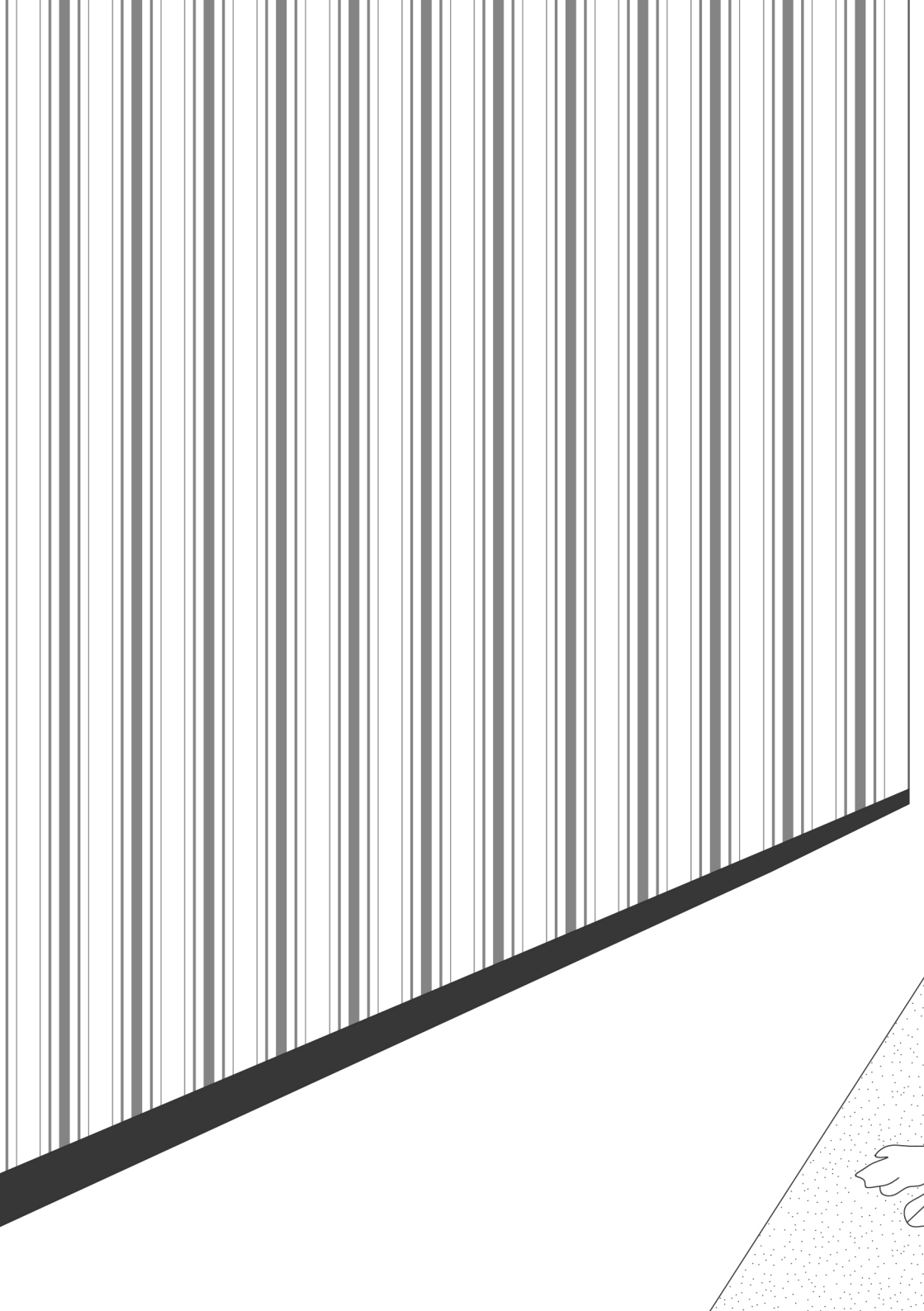


**I CAN'T WORK IN A
CORPORATE JOB. I
AM NOT ENJOYING MY
WORK.**

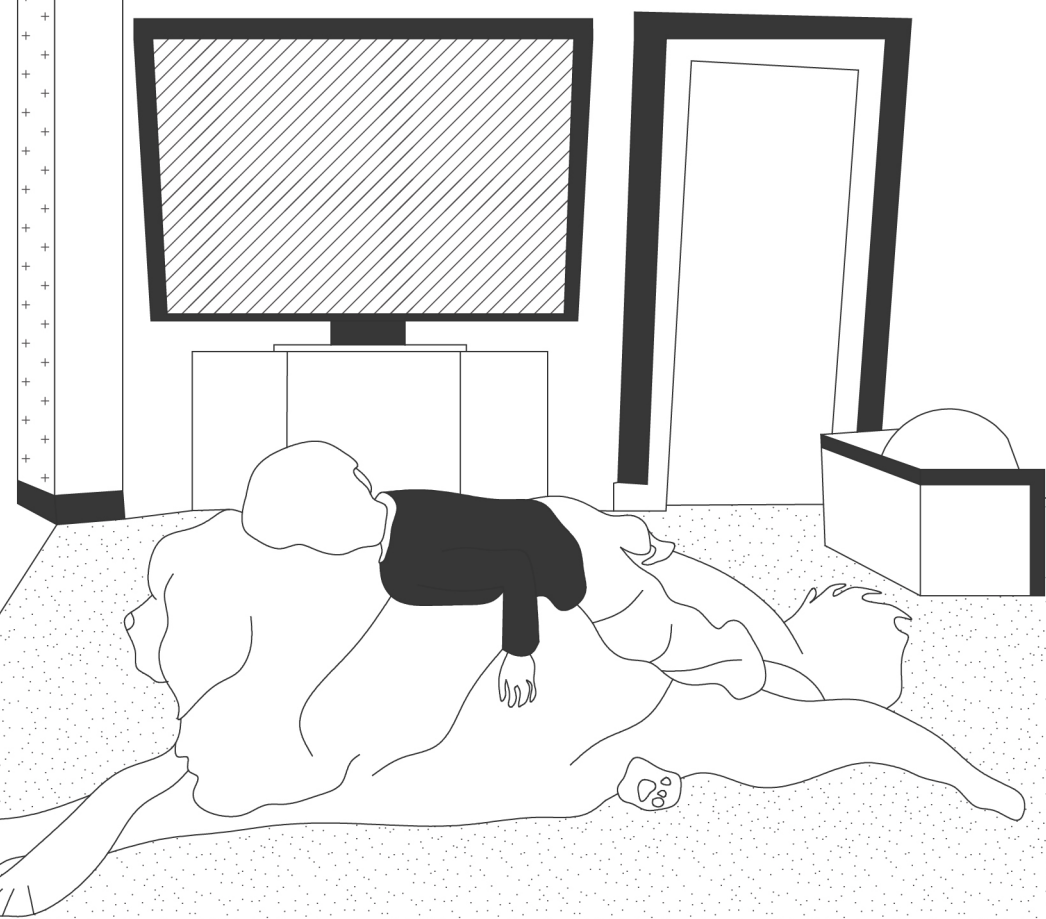


This lock-down
has given me time
to develop skills
I didn't have. I
am also getting
a good response
from people.





**HUMANS AT HOME
ALL DAY, LIFE HASN'T
BEEN BETTER.**



23. Empathy still exists

Ahmedabad

67

Prateek and his family were going back to Orissa on foot due to the sudden lock-down implemented in the country. Thousands of migrant labourers like them had begun their journey back home. He met a small puppy where his family, and him were taking rest, and gathering resources to resume their journey. During the time he stayed there, he began to get attached to a puppy. Prateek shared whatever little food he had with the dog. He decided to take his new-found friend back home with him, since the puppy had nobody who could take care of him. Despite the hardships his family was facing, he couldn't leave the puppy behind.



LET'S GO BACK TO OUR VILLAGE... WE WOULD BE SAFER THERE WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY.

68



24. Never too late to start something

Ahmedabad

69

Sanket bhai worked as a travel agent for the last 15 years. During lock-down, as a result of indefinite travel restrictions, he lost his job. Staying at home was a luxury he couldn't afford. He utilised his time by learning how to cook – something he always enjoyed. With many online courses, and content available on social media he had the opportunity to learn things he wouldn't have otherwise. He started his own business with encouragement from his family, who loved his cooking. This gave him an opportunity to take up entrepreneurship, and re-evaluate his decisions. With many new avenues of learning available through the internet, his lifelong dream seemed possible.

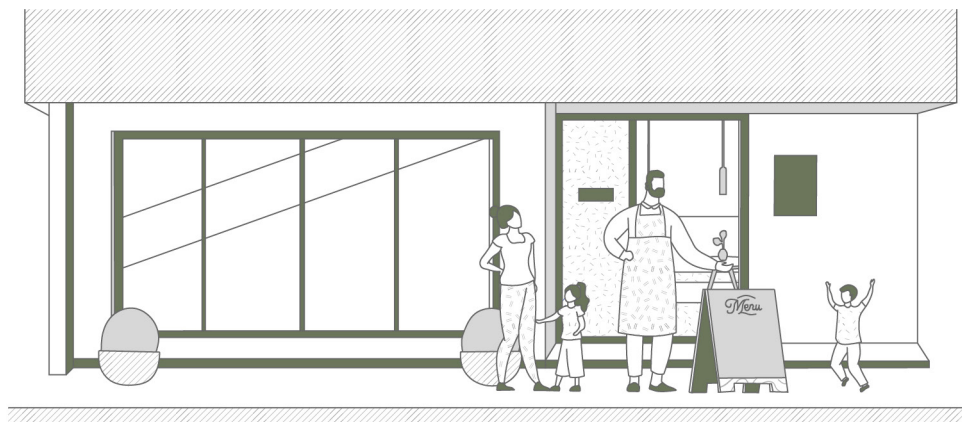
In the midst of everything, there have been points for pause and re-evaluation – with the response to these moments varying from person to person. Many have taken this time for what it is – a time for change, a time for alteration – a move towards simplifying life, and finding value in what matters.



NOW THAT I HAVE
THE ENTIRE DAY TO
MYSELF, I CAN LEARN
TO COOK ONLINE
WHICH HAS BEEN MY
DREAM FOR A VERY
LONG TIME.



70

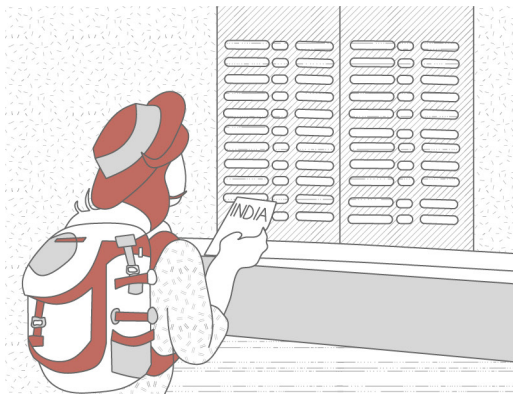


25. Falling into order

Goa

71

Sara had been travelling around the world as a photographer and videographer for her work. But all adventures were halted when travel restrictions were imposed. Her days at home were spent doing everyday chores, and were sometimes overshadowed by the loss of her sister-in-law. Spending this time with no work to distract her, and a wavering mind full of thoughts, she started to capture the impact of the pandemic and its events on her family and herself. She started taking a series of photographs and videos that were a reflection of their household, which was gradually adjusting to this imposed confinement. Her work resulted in revealing to her various layers of her family, their inter-relations, emotions and the rhythm that drives them to adjust to life – be it bustling and occupied, or stagnant and slow. She feels that the pandemic has led her to embrace this sense of life, stilled.



SPENDING THE WHOLE DAY DOING DAILY CHORES IS NOT HELPING ANYMORE.

72

CAPTURING THESE MOMENTS MADE ME REALISE THE LIVING PATTERNS I HADN'T NOTICED BEFORE..

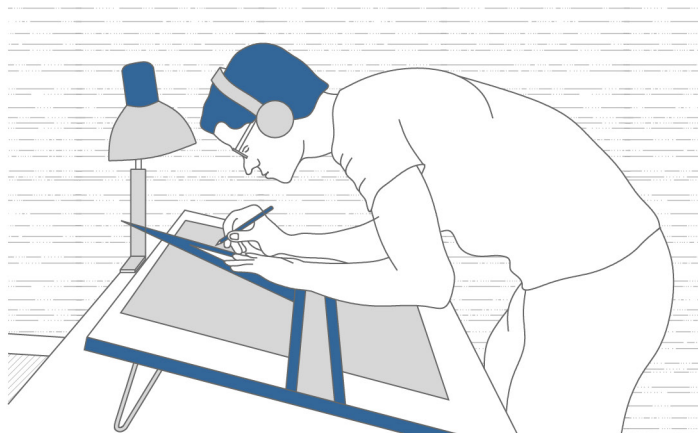


26. Elevator has slowed down

Ahmedabad

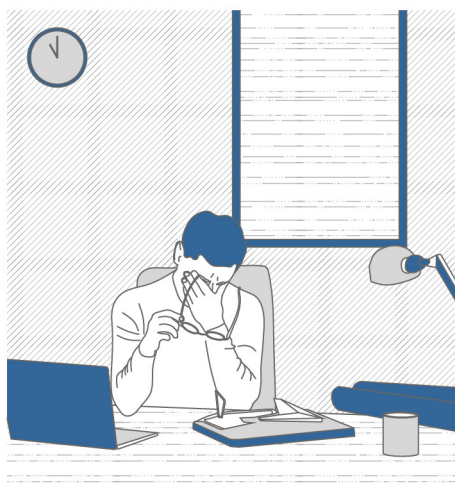
73

Ishaan is an Architect by profession, and has been practicing for almost 4 years now. He was fortunate enough to graduate well before the Pandemic had hit. While the world was slowly and steadily recovering from the loss due to COVID, Ishaan feels that the past year and a half of the pandemic has stagnated his career growth. Before the pandemic, he had witnessed more frequent opportunities to increase his responsibility, and climb the hierarchy. Since COVID many projects have had to pause the process of execution on site, and hence, he believes that he will be required to work much more to achieve the same. This, in turn, has impacted other checkpoints in life - like being financially independent, buying his own house, so on.



I hope my hard work pays off one day.

BEFORE THE PANDEMIC I HAD SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR MY CAREER AND LIFE... NOW EVERYTHING SEEMS TO HAVE COME TO A STAND STILL.

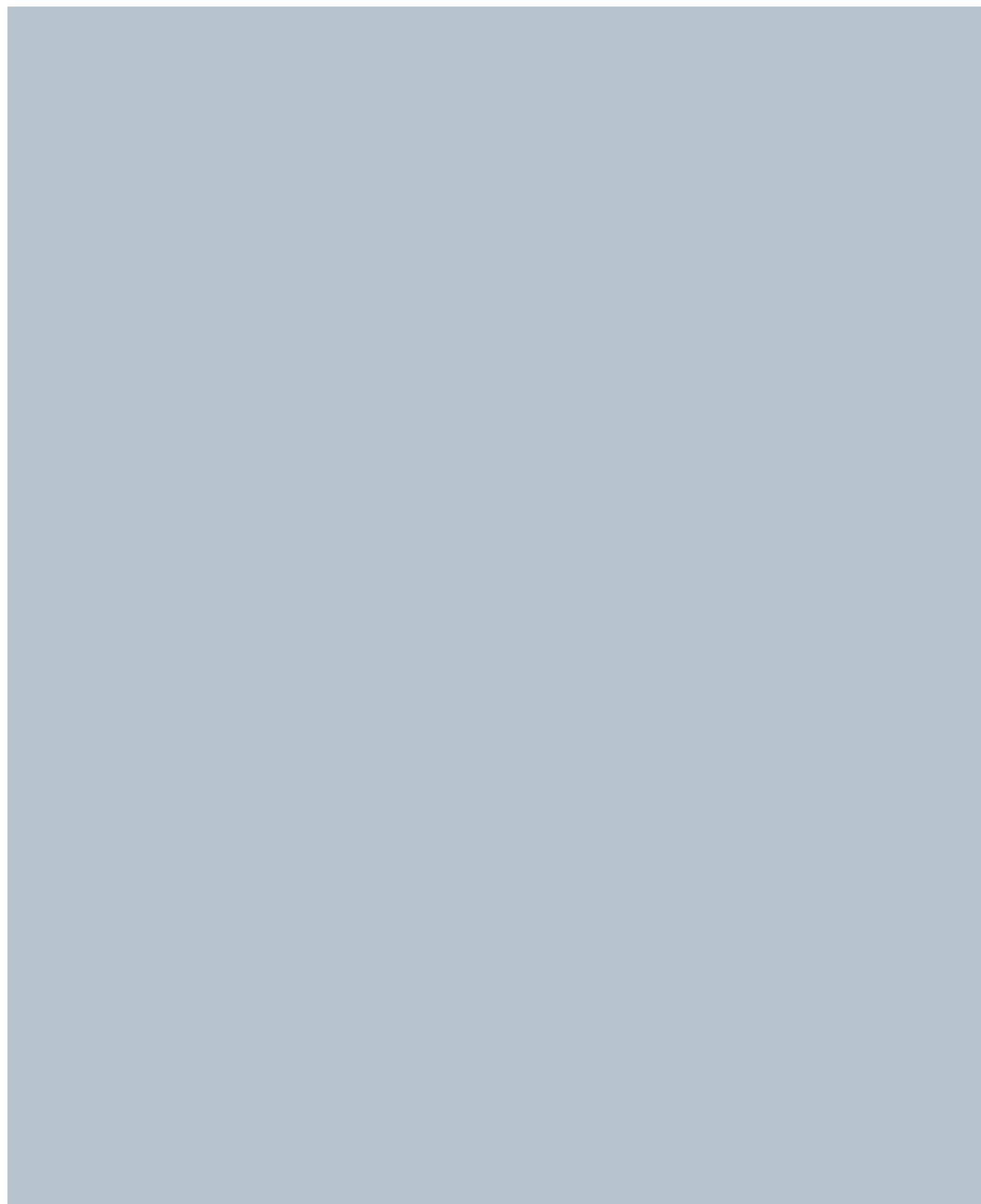


74



- ☐ House
- ☐ Car
- ☐ Wife
- ☐ Own Startup

EVEN AFTER WORKING FOR SO MANY HOURS I CAN'T ACHIEVE ALL I HAD WISHED FOR..



COVID TODAY

60% OF ENTREPRENEURS PREDICT LONG
TERM POSITIVE IMPACT OF COVID-19.

THE RESEARCHERS
FOUND THAT WHILE
ALMOST HALF (49.5%)
OF ENTREPRENEURS
SAID THAT THE VERY

EXISTENCE OF THEIR BUSINESS WAS UNDER
THREAT - WITH DELAYS IN CUSTOMER PAYMENTS
AND DIFFICULTIES MEETING RUNNING COSTS
CITED - LESS THAN A THIRD HAD APPLIED FOR
GOVERNMENT SUPPORT.

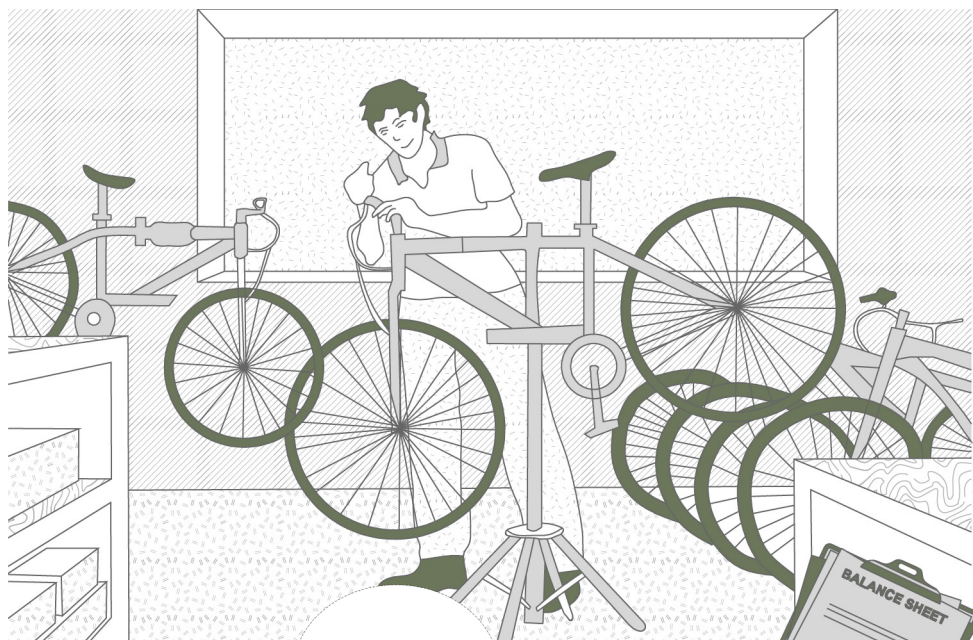


27. Keeping up with the trends

Ahmedabad

77

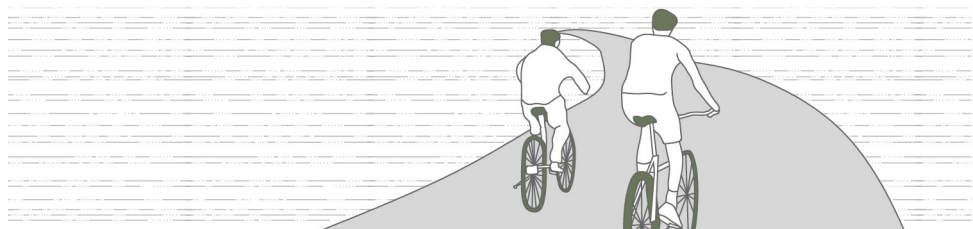
Rahul runs a bi-cycle store in Ahmedabad. He slyly says that his life has become increasingly busy during the pandemic. When the gyms and workout spaces were closed, people began looking for alternatives for activities that they could take up. It seemed that the world took on cycling as its new hobby since the only public spaces that were open were the streets. His business has boomed, and he explains that the world is facing a global cycling shortage, and the waiting time has increased from three months to six months. There is now an appreciation of open spaces in the city – along with a more nuanced dialogue on their integration into the urban fabric that we occupy.



Sorry sir! We are currently out of stock.



**IT IS ONLY BECAUSE OF
COVID THAT PEOPLE
HAVE STARTED FINDING
ALTERNATIVES TO INDOOR
WORKOUT! A NEW TREND!**



28. Social distancing is a must

Mumbai

79

Piya hadn't been able to meet her grandmother all through the lock-down. Before the lock-down, she used to go every day after school to play with her grandparents. She missed them a lot, and being a 5-year-old child, she could not understand why she had to stay away from them and practice social distancing. After the lock-down was lifted, she finally got a chance to revisit them. But the scare of COVID-19 still lingered amongst the more vulnerable population. To Piya's surprise, her grandmother pushed her away as if she were a stranger. She, understandably, was unable to comprehend what had led to this almost sudden shift in attitude. The loss of intimacy in a close relationship affected the child to the extent where even her parents couldn't console her.



**MY GRANDMA
IS MY BEST
FRIEND..
I LOVE
SPENDING
TIME WITH
HER...**

Please grandma...
at least talk to
me.. We haven't
seen each other in
a very long time..



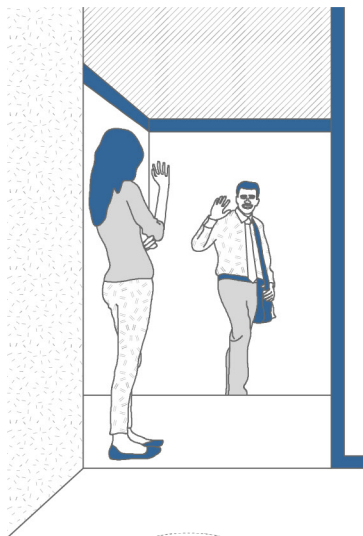
**BECAUSE OF COVID MY
GRANDMA DOESN'T LOVE ME
ANYMORE..**

29. Loss of 'me-time'

Ahmedabad

81

The role of women as home-makers is in itself a difficult one. Many things changed with the onset of the pandemic. It brought new challenges for Bhavika, who is a housewife. Before the lock-down, she had at least half of the day to herself, after taking care of her husband and her two children. She used to work out every day, and that gave her some much needed mental peace. She also socialized with her friends, and her sisters. With everyone at home all the time, she started feeling exhausted and emotionally frustrated with always having to care for everybody in her family but herself. She feels guilty at this thought, as she feels she was at more peace when her husband and her kids were out of the house by 11 and she could rest and have a peaceful afternoon. Even though her family helped her throughout the lock-down with household chores, it wasn't the same.



**NOW THAT THE HOUSE IS
EMPTY I CAN DO MY WORK
IN PEACE AND SPEND SOME
TIME FOR MYSELF.**

Uhhh.. when will
the pandemic get
over, and they can
go back to school!



82



**AT LEAST
THEY ARE
HELPING
ME OUT
IN HOUSE
WORK.
I CAN'T
MANAGE ALL
THIS ALONE.**

30. Lack of personal space

Mumbai

83

It was like a nightmare come true for Kriti to spend the entire lock-down at home with her parents. Her life felt normal when she moved out for college. Her home was small, and it was getting difficult for her to concentrate on her studies with her parents arguing the entire day. She didn't have any personal space where she could ignore them. She said that she isn't afraid of the virus as much as she is of imagining that she might have to be at home for more than a semester. It was also embarrassing for her when she had to keep the cameras on during classes, as there were times when her parents would be in the background, arguing with each other. This has made her determined to leave home as soon as she gets a chance, and she believes that her relationship with her parents has been irreversibly damaged.



**I CAN'T
CONCENTRATE
WITH THEM
ARGUING ALL
THE TIME!
THIS IS SO
EMBARRASSING**

**I WISH
I HAD
MY OWN
ROOM TO
STUDY!**

I think it is better
to leave the house.
It will be much
better to handle
things alone.



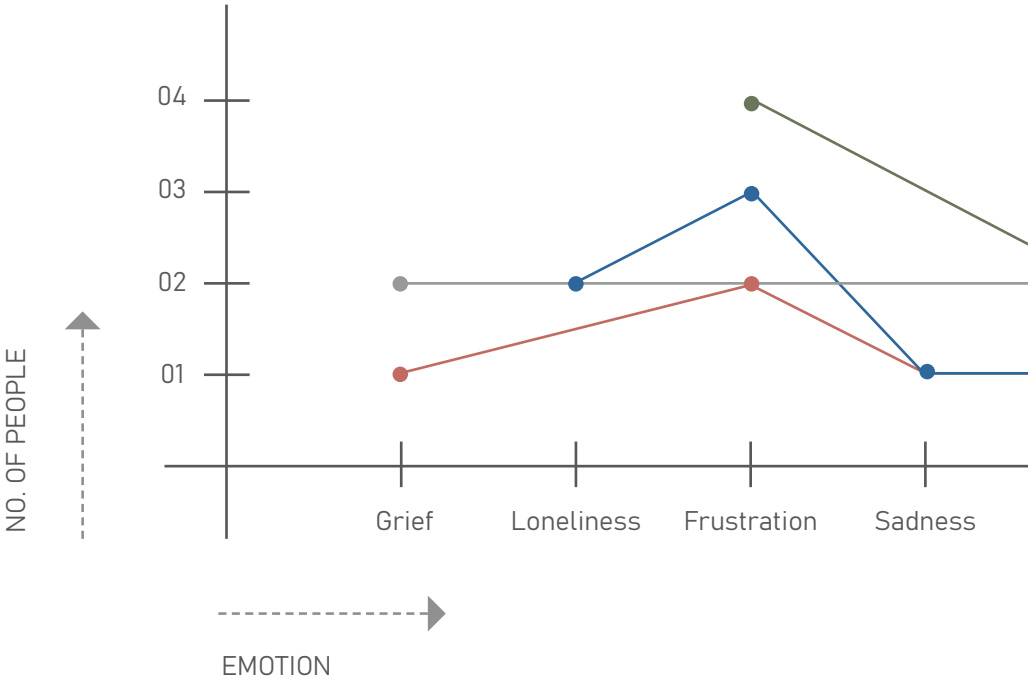
Emotion Mapping

HOW TO READ : The x-axis shows the various emotions observed through out the stories collected, while the y-axis represents the number of people experiencing these emotions. Each line exhibits the 4 categories that have been covered through the document.

LEGEND

- Livelihood
- Relationship
- Lifestyle / Event
- Mental Health

85



People experienced negative emotions and positive emotions in their relationships in life. However, feelings like loneliness, frustration and sadness were expressed more intensely than the happy emotions.

There was an equal number of positive and negative emotions regarding their means of Livelihood. While many felt frustrated, others were hopeful for a better future.

Due to lifestyle changes and change in many other aspects of life, the response of people was that of frustration, and sadness but also of hope with respect to their livelihood.

With so many emotions people experienced during the lock-down, there was a common-ality in the way people experienced the lock-down.



The last year and a half has been extensively discussed, and analysed from various facets. There have been attempts to understand the trend of COVID - 19; and then there have been attempts to understand how it has impacted health care, the economy, education, and other macro-level ideas. We have heard of the pandemic's impact on the GDP, on inflation, on job prospects, on the need to restructure the work-force.

There is no doubt that this macro-level data needs to be collected and understood; but perhaps it requires the benefit of personal context.

While significant time has been spent on projecting and planning for the future on the basis of the data that has thus been collected, there is one aspect that seems to have been forgotten in all the upheaval - one of the individual; of the personal. And we hope, that for the reader, this book has been the first step towards bridging this gap - making the impact of the pandemic immediate, personal, and comprehensible.

To us, this book has been about communicating that, beyond numbers, beyond figures - the impact of the pandemic has been on the everyday processes of living - and just that.

And so, this book is almost prognostic - in that it has the ability to extrapolate patterns based on the data that it represents; data that demonstrates how the Pandemic has diversely impacted different groups of individuals.

And then, perhaps, this process will allow for the development of a more personalised, community-driven way forward. This, only time will tell.

For now, it remains a collection of real stories that are demonstrative of the everyday changes that have been observed over the previous year and a half.

Aman Shridharani is a 5th year Bachelor's of Urban Design student at CEPT University. This study is a part of her 6 months practical training program at M/s Prabhakar B. Bhagwat, Ahmedabad. It was undertaken for a period of 4 weeks.
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