

Coronavirus Lockdown and Literary Experience

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Abstract - Lockdown is called as an emergency when you cannot get out of the house. It causes huge damage to the economy. Lockdown reduces the GDP, growth rate of the country. It has some positive and adverse effects on literary persons the main purpose of this research paper is to project how this lockdown helps us to develop literary mind and have better outlook. It changes the perception of people. This period encourages us to meditate on one thing 'how we were before lockdown and how we are in the lockdown'.

Index Terms - GDP, rehabilitation, renaissance, Spiritus Mundi, collective Consciousness etc.

In the history of the world, Lockdown is called as an emergency when you cannot get out of the house. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, announced lockdown on the 25th of the month of March 2020. It was a historic step taken by Prime Minister to save the country from the epidemic called Corona. In the year 2021 same situation occurred in the month February. It is mandatory for each person to remain at home and follow the instruction given by Government. This lockdown implemented on large scale and it took the form of curfew. The effects of lockdown are profound, as it staggers the economy of our country. Working people are the wheels of development of country but when all the country's factories are closed, all sit at home, the development of the country ceases. It causes huge damage to the economy. Lockdown reduces the GDP, growth rate of the country.

This lock down has some positive and adverse effects on literary persons. The main purpose of this research paper is to project how this lockdown helps us to develop literary mind and have better outlook. It changes the perception of people. This period encourages us to meditate on one thing 'how we were before lockdown and how we are in the lockdown'.

This lockdown started in the month of April. Different persons present different views about this month. T. S. Eliot and Chaucer used April in their poems. Both of

them found April is the cruelest month. Actually, April comes in the season of spring which gives heart a joy and rehabilitation. It surprises us how T. S. Eliot finds April as a cruelest month. T. S. Eliot, the poet of modern age, writes in 'Waste Land'-
"April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers." (33)

The opening lines are strange. They refer to the blooming of flowers and the coming of spring in gloomy tones. Meanwhile, winter is viewed nostalgically; with snow keeping us warm. This is in contrast to most people's stances on spring and winter, and the idea that winter keeps us warm is a paradox. Then why is April cruel? It is the season of beauty. In spite of all it, he says April is the cruelest month. Winter is the season of forgetfulness, so it wonders how the life was before lockdown. It was simple way we could not realize the prospect or how life would be. Winter is the season of spiritual barrenness. Our mind has so many new things. This lockdown gives us new potential. Life is not what we had before lockdown. Here we understand the real value of life in this period. We also mediate on daily busy life of before lockdown and relax life in lockdown.

Chaucer, the fore father of English essay, writes in his Prologue to Canterbury Tales:

"When April with its sweet-smelling showers,
Has pierced the drought of March to the root,
And bathed every vein (of the plants) in such liquid
By the power of which the flower is created;"(41)
It depicts the return of the spring and with it life, rebirth and reawakening of nature. This carries many positive references in it. It suggests the symbolic death of winter and rebirth through spring; people cleanse themselves so as to start anew. Here we find two

contrasting things. Actually, he has the experience of black death, black death swept all the life in that region. In spite of this bitter experience, he appreciates this April; he took it in positive way. So also, we should take the period in positive way doing some prolific work. These two poets encourage the people to take this period in positive way.

Lockdown period can also be compared with renaissance period. The Renaissance is commonly defined as a period of artistic, cultural, and philosophical rebirth of classical ideas and art forms, although the period also saw the development of new ideas, artistic conventions, and technologies. It is the renaissance to the literary mind. It encourages new awakening to learning and literary mind. It makes the people to realize the humanistic values. One person considers the feelings of another person. It prefers the people over religion. People are helping other people. In lockdown, our mind focuses towards the people who are helping to others.

Rabindranath Tagore's poem in Gitanjali focuses some thoughts which can be implicated to this situation,

“Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?

Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones.

He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust.

Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!”(57)

Tagore questions about God's existence. He illustrates that God is there where working people are serving for the sake of others. In Lockdown, we found that people are serving to each other instead of going to temple to search the God. Real situation arises only in lockdown. This period helps literary mind to develop and enjoy voracious reading. It helps us to access so many books. It reminds us the writer –John Milton who spent 6 years of devotion in Horton. Here he studied Greek, Latin, English, French, and Italian poets. He said, ‘A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.’ — Areopagitica

For Milton, a good book is like the blood that circulates to gives life to the human body; so, does a good book impart ideas to stimulate and inspire ‘a master spirit’. Milton describes the reader as ‘a master

spirit’ beyond the body, beyond the mind. He is referring to the highest element of a human being: the spirit that is never born and never dies. Everyman has a reasonable feature. He is the creation of God. Good book carries the spirit and essence of writer. Killing the book means killing the human because, you kill the book means you kill the God himself. So lockdown helps us to learn so many ideas through books. So many confusions are created by these writers and solved these confusions also.

George Herbert expresses the beauty of life in his two poems. In the poem ‘The Flower’ he describes the beauty of the season. During the winter season, like a flower, a person is shriveled up in the ground finding comfort where he can. When spring comes, and God's opinion of the world improves, he grows up towards heaven. This is his most important goal in life, to prove himself to God and earn a place in the garden of Paradise. Here he compares human life with flower. In the life of human being, ups and down are there. Spirituality reveals inner potential of man. In lockdown inner potential of man reveals new things. Here we mediate on many things regarding the problems and solution of those problems. In Pulley, he composes the same ideas,

“So strength first made a way;

Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honor, pleasure.

When almost all was out, God made a stay,

Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,

Rest in the bottom lay.”

These lines explain to the reader that when God created man, he gave the best of everything he had in his possession to him. God gives humankind knowledge, wisdom, beauty, and strength. These are important features of human existence that flowed easily from God to humankind. There is one blessing that God did not let out of his cup, rest. He chooses to withhold an innate ability to rest from humankind in order to keep his creation close to him. But in lockdown we find that we have all types of rest which we do not get day to day life. Human being enjoys this rest in full measure.

In the poem ‘The Vanity of Human Wishes’, Johnson justifies his point of vanity of human wishes, he brings forth many examples of political, financial, intellectual, and even sexual power, and finally proves that all the desires and wishes to be superior and powerful has nothing to do. All the things are futile and meaningless, and these things do not bring any

peace of mind. 'Vanity' in his dictionary suggests the range of meaning of his title, including 'emptiness', 'uncertainty', 'fruitless desire, fruitless efforts' 'empty pleasure, vain pursuit' 'idle show' 'unsubstantial enjoyment' 'petty object of pride' and arrogance. In lockdown we feel the meaninglessness of life. We are running after money and give the importance to meaningless things. In this period money is useless. Our Bank account becomes fridge. We cannot meet friends' only family members. This kind of agitation finds in literary mind. There are some ways to look towards life. We spend peaceful life.

Thomas Gray's Poem 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' is suggestive which tells the real meaning of life.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.

The paths of glory lead but to the grave." (32)

According to him, what is life? It is something more than achievement. Also, the poet says that the rich are not superior to the poor in death. Ultimately human life ends in death. The beauty, the wealth, the glory all leads to the unavoidable end. In this critical situation of lockdown, we realise this universal truth. Corona does not differentiate between rich and poor.

In lockdown, the tendency of the People regarding Eco-Consciousness develops. We realize that there is interdependence of human life with nature. Here speaking voice of nature is enjoyed by the people. Wordsworth also describes how human life is connected to nature. In 'Tintern Abbey', he describes that nature never did betray the heart that loved her. He presents childhood memories of communion with natural beauty, the ability to "look on nature" and hear "human music"; that is, to see nature with an eye toward its relationship to human life. Now we got chance to experience all these things. We can do regular communication with nature. In 'The world is too much with us' he starts as:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers; —
Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
Here Wordsworth describes humankind's relationship with the natural world in terms of loss. Because of an impact of industrialization on everyday life, humankind has lost the ability to appreciate, celebrate, and be soothed by nature. Notably, the poem does not

suggest a way to regain what is lost. But we now got opportunity to revive the relationship of human being with nature. In 'Daffodils' he tells that nature cures human melancholy and replaces worries with happiness. Nature is the source of eternal joy.

Literary person also remember Victorian compromise in this situation. It is a tendency that motivates the belief in parallelism between science and religion. In lockdown, we people have the same confusion whether we should go with science or religion. While handling this situation, some people choose science and other chooses religion. Confusion persists for some time. Tennyson's 'Ulysses' gives us new message, "To Strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." We should build strong will to resolve and to march forward. Lockdown changes our perceptions. The famous lines of W.B.Yeats 'The second Coming' describes a time of chaos which occurred all over the world:

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world," (158)

Really anarchy is loosed upon the world in this pandemic situation. The world is near a revelation; "Surely the Second Coming is at hand." In the end of the poem he refers 'Spiritus Mundi' it means collective consciousness of the people. History is a cyclic situation it helps us to form collective consciousness for betterment of life.

This Covid age can be referred as new age because it makes history in the world. It must be memorable one. People join hand together to drive away the virus so we should make some model for future generation by developing our outlook.

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