

what changed?

stories from the year gone by

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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15. 'Eligible bachelors' and right time

Rural Rajasthan

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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.

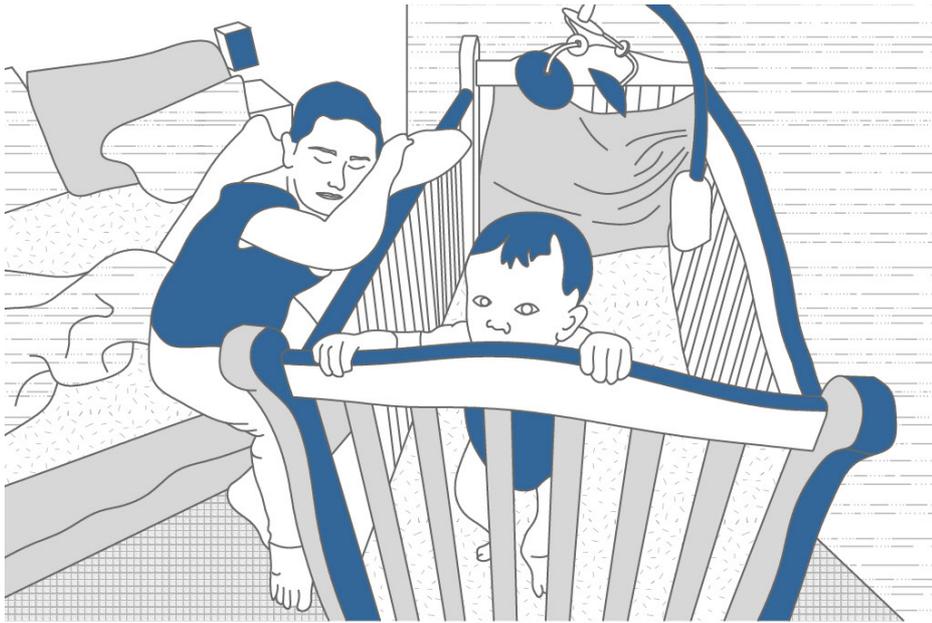


17. Distorted perception of time

Indore

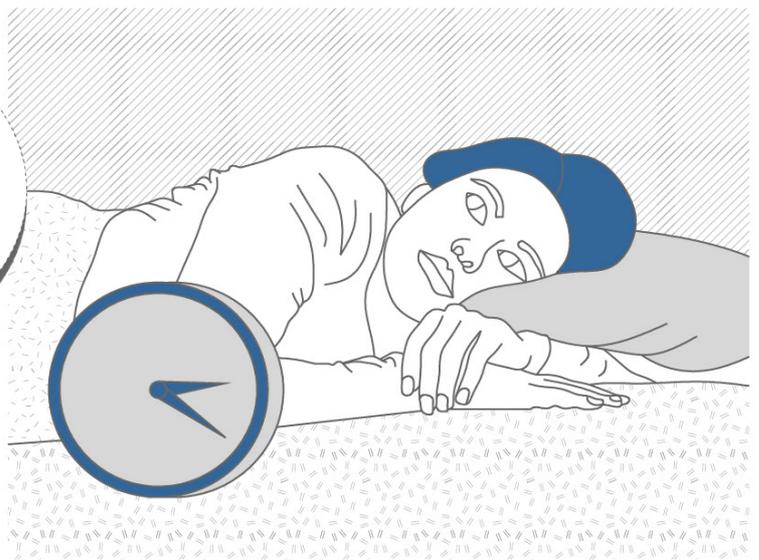
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Aarushi is a 25-year-old new mother. Her baby was born right in the middle of the pandemic, and she is now on maternity leave. Most of her time is spent taking care of the baby. Since her life is now limited to the four walls of her house, it lacks 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.



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.



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