

Lockdown in Covid-19 Pandemic: Measuring with the ladder of Knowledge

(A) Introduction: Crossing the Bumpers not buffers

Quoting bizarrely from hearsay

Every event, be it a pandemic or panoramic otherwise has its own reason to happen and that very social reason of the event has its specific scientific reason, which further goes backward to its political reason and then finally moves back to its philosophical root or source point. The circle however completes when that philosophical root is connected to our minds already living rather confined in lockdown for last three months and moreover a month of locked down to go. It is therefore quite difficult to traverse such a circle with so many social, scientific, political, and philosophical knowledge bumps that altogether create a labyrinthine condition and therefore inevitably make us unconscious to note all such progresses. So to understand many things happening around us we mostly notice the primary and then remain unconscious to the most.

For last three months all these four bumpers have thus created a real pandemoniac situation in all our lives which was unforeseen despite so many photographs posted in social media about what happened in 1918 or so. These photographs are supposed to justify the “social bumper” of how lives were affected that time, so as to get experienced rather mentally prepared for now, along with billions of contemporary animated creations on the impact of Corona virus, we share extensively that tries out to justify the scientific bumps. This is exactly how we similarly react watching the animated graphical stories about newer discoveries in outer universal space. The last two bumpers ‘political’ and ‘philosophical’ are seldom discussed for some obvious reasons because both are linked with the system and power. We however often forget that the first two bumpers are the byproduct of the last two bumps.

So, everything occurring around is basically dependent upon our understanding i.e. how we define that, note that, identify that, and term that. If it is so, some of us then are barons of understanding and billions of rests are followers.

Let us now rethink once what has really happened...

Gazing knowledge: Interplay of stories and information

Ancient Greek Philosopher Plato, almost 3000 years back, in his famous ladder of knowledge allotted the first step for understanding ‘images’ which we now have countless in number thanks to our social media to make anything believable or plausible. The next step of knowledge he allotted for the visible things, which no wonder we are in such a compulsion to believe in those visible things now available in so many animated graphics and videos that frame our ‘belief’. These visible things nowadays are looking so plausible, so real, so valuable, and so useful that

even sponsor or promote global news and political developments too. Now what happens with these two steps of knowledge is that global media conglomerates along with social media sites and apps manufacture and promote a massive tidal wave of such image-stories and visual story-texts in the name of freedom of information for common and mundane use.

This tidal wave of (not all information in true sense of the term) but chiefly manufactured stories is so big, so frequent and so huge in quantities that it becomes almost impossible for common people to firstly decipher the meaning, and then reuse that for its own social purpose. The real condition of *meaninglessness* thus pops up with an ambivalence of both ‘use’ and ‘no use’ of the tides of stories. We receive those to accommodate in our mobile or computer space and delete that after awhile for new one coming. Meanwhile we do a very sacred job of forwarding those as much as possible. This forwarding has become so hugely meaningless for the audience and so profitable for the source that we don’t even have time to read out before sending rather forwarding that one...two... to thousands.

In this Covid-19 pandemic situation the social and scientific bumpers have so been used panoramically in such an ambivalent mode between ‘use and no use’ that has already made us largely unconscious to the actuality. If this hurts our self(s), we then are caught in the interplay of political and philosophical points of understanding as both are being largely driven by the leaders and other opinion leaders being greatly advantageous to be decisively unlocked to manage the billions of locked-down(s). The situation has now gone so far that even WHO almost every alternate day has been changing its stand on many issues, be it the hydroxychloroquine issue or the origin of covid issue out of hundreds popped up and dealt with so loosely.

Coming however back to Plato’s understanding of knowledge, the third ascending step Plato allotted was mathematical or symbolic objects, which, as we believe, frequently make us *scientifically aware* of the *scientific developments* of the *scientific condition* of the situation that belongs to *scientific understanding* of the pandemic which is *scientific in nature* as understood by common educated people (Oops...it reminds me the famous Lalmohan Babu dialogue in Sonar Kella, “*one of the innumerable dacoits in this dacoit infested country*”). We are now surrounded by the symbolic objects right from buying Air India -1 to Covid-19 that appear as technical terms we are largely unconscious about to describe the Corona pandemic, e.g. virology, quarantine, sanitization (in this country with millions trudge half-fed), first generation infection, community spreading etc.

People caught in the interplay

If we consider our social, political and philosophical understanding, the interplay of stories and information catches us from the day one as mere an ‘audience’ of the Covid-19 spectacle. We the common people play the solitary role of ‘waiting’ the cooked-up stories from one table (mobile) to another. We don’t simply do that. Every time we wait, we pour our indulgence in to justify the story on behalf of that unknown story-teller or story-sender. By that time we read out glimpses of

ingredients in the story for canvassing. It resembles in oriental contexts with praising the ‘custard rice’ finding cashew in that. But that praise actually flourishes the image and profit-account of the host. We however continue to wait stories every moment. Who are the hosts? Mostly we find stories ‘as forwarded’ and if we give a closer look some very obscure website addresses will appear which we hardly verify and reproach for any fraudulent story. We therefore wait stories of mostly such hosts we have no idea about them. Moreover ‘being popular’ or ‘getting viral’ are two most obscure reagents, we use, to make our ‘forwarding titration’ practice justified. We are therefore caught in the first interplay of ‘what is truth’ and ‘what is useful’. This leads to the second degree of interplay, we are caught in between, of ‘use’ or ‘no use’ while forwarding that.

Joblessness: un-knowledge made us un-aware

Moreover millions of people are caught in the political interplay of such stories. Both ruling and oppositions of our country have had no idea, as officially evident in media bites, about how many people suddenly have lost their jobs/works in the interplay of pandemic and the announcement of lockdown. The interplay has been so bizarre and visually coded that the visuals of jobless workers walking along the national highways led the renaming of their identities “Migrant Workers” from just workers or labourers. The whole condition can be unveiled with Plato’s first two primary steps of knowledge i.e. image and visual texts that only made the educated class aware of the stories but largely un-aware of the actuality of the working class condition of our country we live in. Be it in the lockdown period or before people have thus become heavily dependent upon the primary level image and visual texts which in further are substantiated by the massive explosion of symbolic terms.

Images and visual texts thereafter are either substantiated or nullified by some specialized persons including ruling class people and opinion leaders to carry forward the discussion on the basis of those visual texts. Graphic images of all covid-19 related issues are being substantiated by experts like Doctors and other health-experts who in this three-month period have justified the need of any lockdown measure to stop community spreading irrespective of any idea about the present and future of the working class condition. The authorities on the other hand always quash any lapse in saving working class people, although the debates are still occupying prime spaces of both electronic and print media. In this interplay countless people for last few months are being observed as visual texts (stories) trudging thousands of miles down to their places. Many of them, we don’t even know caught untimely death in the midway. We have nevertheless found some health-specialists changing their tone observing such horrifying scene for last two months and discussions going in a paralogistic manner.

(B) Epilogue: Expecting a new form of life?

Individualistic and Amass: A New Interplay

Many of us in this lockdown period are therefore expecting a new form of life in the coming unlock period. What’s that? Being very prognostic about that, the prime imagining activities of a

big audience have commonly planned such big and transcendental concept that even have already surpassed the possibility potential of the so called 'unlock'. Considering such manufacturing process quite natural in common sense it appears mostly very unproductive toward imagining an individualistic world which does not even support the consumption activities of the contemporary industrial and commercially driven glocal systems. Although these systems want individual consumers to buy the commodities they however need amass of consumers to consume the bulk. So planning something locked-down-individualistic does not seem to be effective at all without institutional commercial interests of the market, which give our country a business amounting US\$43.93 billion in entertainment industry and US\$53.7 billion in fashion industry.

Both need us individualistic and amass as well. Sitting in front of Television or using smart phones are not at all sufficient to give them enough profit. So please, we don't need to think something like a spaceship oriented lives which is not going to come. They will drag if not snatch you out of your homebound life. If it does not happen, a new and greater debacle in country's economic affairs may therefore be expected. We were otherwise acting as individualist consumer for last several years before lockdown, and in this course remained amass in our consumption efforts that led to such a mammoth investment just in the above two industries. Grossly 4 Is are needed to run the economy or financial affairs of the country i.e. systems that lead to rule the social affairs – Industry – Investment – Infrastructure – Individual Consumers. So, the interplay of 'individualist approach' and being 'amass' is the only equation that drives all of us to inevitably become unconscious. For that new spaces have already been generated that gave us new way out to operate in this very lockdown period.

Two Spaces to accommodate individual and mass

We have therefore reached to reconsider or reconcile Plato's next higher step of knowledge which is the knowledge of '*Forms*'. The knowledge of form is not, according to Plato, for common people's mind to exercise. Plato considered 'forms' that live in the 'space of mind' of not a common man but only an intellectual mind can generate 'forms' for other people to earn meaning of lives. Plato on the other hand conceptualized the solitary space of an intellectual mind over the social spaces to produce forms. Here comes the biggest contribution of technology, precisely the communication technology the new 'production of space' over the existing duo of mental and social space.

For Plato, a very few spaces of intellectual mind can produce higher forms of knowledge. The production and understanding of forms therefore largely belong to the master's job or the job of excellence or belong to the work of art. Why? The reason is as old as known that such productive minds are not frequently available. It has been the ruling idea for several centuries until the last quarter of the 20th century. A new or probably the ultimate debate has therefore popped up that has been ruling us for nearly two decades and yet to be resolved when spaces have been produced for people to subscribe.

Now, please consider when the space is being commercially generated and made available to accommodate any mind, on a single condition “who can buy it” i.e. common minds to produce forms!!! This is what has happened exactly in these days. Nowadays the newly generated spaces in social media, which are no less than representing a space of mind, accommodate all possible forms that generate meanings. Altogether this is such a plurality that comprises all discrete forms only subscribed to some media conglomerates but not to the “Beautiful Minds”. Instead the nationwide power structures behind the media conglomerates are gradually becoming more and more powerful setting the power circle complete. In this way Plato’s knowledge of forms are getting subscribed to the transnational media conglomerates and a great tidal wave of forms or narratives with largely “empty code of knowledge” becomes proverbially existent in each social media post that is placed next to a hugely important one – e.g. a Chutkule of a clicktivist audience is equally placed with Jean Dreze or Amartya Sen’s message. I can tell you the clicktivist will get more likes and shares. So a perfect postmodern condition ruins the ladder steps of knowledge completely.

The final and the topmost step of knowledge, Plato derived, is “Good”. We have lost it in the dilution of the “term” in our lexicographic meaning hunting process long back. The loss is big –

অন্ধকারের উৎস হতে উৎসারিত আলো সেই তো তোমার আলো
সকল দ্বন্দ্ব-বিরোধ মাঝে জাগ্রত যে ভালো সেই তো তোমার ভালো□□

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