**Lockdown diaries**

11 March 2020, a pandemic was declared by WHO. This pandemic was declared due to the spread of novel corona virus which began in Wuhan seafood market, China. Prime Minster Shree Narendra Modi therefore declared a nationwide lockdown immediately ten days after the deadly disease was declared a pandemic. The lockdown gave us a lot of opportunities to do various things since the schools had also been shut. So here I present my lockdown diaries in which I have written down all the activities that I have done in this lockdown, and what I have learnt from the lockdown.

The lockdown began on 22nd march 2020; it was announced by our Prime Minister on the television. This was the 1st time I had heard of the words like “lockdown” and “quarantine”. So the word lockdown meant that I was now locked up in my house. I also heard that this virus had the potential to spread by touching one another therefore now we started maintaining a social distance not only with the outside people but also within our own house. Since the incubation period of this virus was 14 days therefore 14-days lockdown was announced by our Prime Minister, this was the 1st phase of the lockdown. I initially saw a lot of movies and reconnected with my old friends. I also put on new hobbies like reading and I tried to improve my writing skills. The summer vacations of year 2020 had now started early and my final exams were also declared cancelled. As the 14 days lockdown was now getting over, my eagerness to go out of the house was also on its peak, but than seeing the rising number of cases in the country the Prime Minister declared another 14-days lockdown, I knew it was the best decision taken with respect to the number of rising cases in the country, but now I was beginning to miss my friends, school and the swimming that I would have otherwise done on a normal summer day. On the television which was now my only portal to the outside world I could see the cases surging and this convinced me that the lockdown was not going to end soon. Now I began to work on a timetable which would help me to maintain a healthy lifestyle, which was also the need of the time. I also helped my mother with the household work like watering the plants, dusting the house, etc. In this process I also learned some new things like making tea and making pizza, I spoke to my family members to check on their health and well being. There were lots of changes that were happening in this lockdown, the most important one being not stepping out of the house which also happened to be the longest I have stayed in the house. Other changes include not eating the outside junk food and learning the difference between essential and non-essential things since only the shops selling essentials goods were open two months ago. At the beginning of the lockdown everything was shut which led to the downfall of the country’s economy, with no job left to do even the migrant workers left big cities to go back to their hometowns, their struggle made me realize to value little things that I have. With the temporary closing of entertainment industry we now had nothing to watch nothing on the television and it was in these times that our favorite old shows like Ramayana and Mahabharata became one of the most watched shows worldwide, I personally enjoyed watching the shows after all “old is gold” and through these shows I learned a lot about my culture. Time kept on flying and the number of cases also kept on rising the lockdown which was initially for fourteen days extended to being a 30 days lockdown. I was honestly scared now to step out of the house with the spread of the virus but whenever I saw our frontline workers working my respect for them always increased, they were now the real heroes of our society. In order to uplift the spirit of our frontline workers and to spread positivity Prime Minister encouraged us to come to our balconies to light the diyas and bang utensils. The impact of this lockdown was directly seen on our environment, pollution decreased drastically and also now i could see the stars clearly in the summer sky which otherwise were not visible under the polluted air on a normal day before the lockdown. Whenever I looked out of the window there was no noise of traffic jam outside my house, the peace that this silence brought was one of the positive impact that this lockdown had on me. The lockdown changed my preferences of the channel I used to watch on the television, news channel were more frequently watched than the music channel that I used to watch previously. Through the news I learnt many new things and meaning of the words, I also saw how the rest of the world was dealing with this pandemic, it was nothing different after all we were in this together. Every day hundreds of people were losing their lives because of this corona virus and Mumbai was the worst affected city in India, this made me more of a health conscious now and in a day I washed my hands a lot of times even if I hadn’t done anything, sanitizer and mask also became an important part of my life now. The lockdown also helped me to spend more time with my family, I now became more close with my family members since I had began to understand them better. The lockdown also saw a switch from physical world to a virtual world even my class which started 3 month after the lockdown was now through an online mode. I was really glad that school had finally begun even though it was through an online classes but seeing my teachers and friends now made my this new normal more acceptable, though I could not met my friends physically but seeing them in online classes still made me feel happy. Most of the people are now doing work from home but with the relaxation of the lockdown many of the shops are now open with limited number of people. This year I did not celebrate many festivals in fact holi which was before the lockdown began was also not celebrated because that was the time when some of the 1st cases were reported in our country. I also miss visiting temple as all the worship places have also been shut. The lockdown also had a bad impact on my sleeping pattern but as my school began my sleeping pattern also improved. Since we are attending classes from homes on our mobiles and laptops, I really appreciate the efforts my teachers are making to teach us online since this is something new to them as well. Since the lockdown has begun the burden of all the work of the house has now shifted on my Mother’s shoulder as the maids have stopped coming, this motivated me to help my mother and hence created a sense of responsibility in me. Because of the lockdown I have lost my freedom to roam outside whenever I want or wherever I want to go, the feel of fresh air and walking bare foot on the grasses are some of the things that I am really missing, even after the time that I am spending with my family, having a dinner with them in a restaurants and dressing up to go out with friends to watch movies in the theatre are also being missed. The lockdown has also taught me that together we can really fight out of this situation, Dharavi being an excellent example of this. At many places like Delhi, Mumbai and Pune the cases had become more critical and strict actions were taken in order to prevent people from leaving their house. This lockdown also made me realize the value of socializing. Even before the pandemic had began the scientist across the world are working very hard to find a medicine or vaccine against the virus, Indian scientist also have developed a vaccine which is currently undergoing its human trials as I am told, this not only gave me hope but also made me proud. The lockdown has had both a positive and a negative impact on my life, some of the plus side to being in lockdown is, I am getting sufficient sleep now since now I sleep not only at night but also the 2hrs extra sleep that I get in the afternoon sometimes, I don’t have to travel to school so I feel less exhausted than used to feel before, second is that now I only eat healthy home cooked food, third one is that I now have milk turmeric milk daily which is very good for immunity. And the very increase in the number of cases with no cure for this deadly disease itself was a negative impact on me. The past few weeks have seen corona virus dominating Indian newsrooms as the cases rise rapidly, presently India is third in the line of the worst affected countries in the world only after USA and Brazil, with over millions of people infected with the disease. The risk of getting infected by the virus is more among people above 65 and children below 10 therefore the possibility of schools opening sooner is also very little, I am trying hard to get used to this system of online classes but network issues and lack of physical presence makes it tough to concentrate. There were also disasters like minor earthquake and cyclones that hit the country this year, also the locust attacks which happened this year scared me but now the attacks are under control. The way corona virus has affected the society and global economy the world will next time be more prepared for a situation like this. The COVID-19 is considered the most important global health calamity of the century and the greatest challenge that the mankind has faces since the world war-2. Now I know the seriousness of the situation and just pray that as soon as possible the situation gets back to normal.

It has been nearly four and a half long months since the lockdown had been announced and there are lots of things that I have learned from the lockdown starting from the word “quarantine” to understanding the importance of our health. One of the most important lesson that I have learnt in this lockdown is to not take anything for granted, to help as many people as I can, to be brave in tough situations, to be prepared of any kind of uncertainties, also that nothing is impossible, not even to miss class when you are in the house. I don’t know if I have got used to this series of lockdowns but every time we come near the end of a lockdown, I have mixed feelings of starting everything again. The self care and the time that I have given myself is something that I have done after years and after things get back to normal I really am going to miss this as in the world which is constantly in race with time we hardly realize our own value and the value of me time. The lockdown has taught me the real happiness is in early morning walks in my balcony, flowers on my pot, chirping of birds, silence of the afternoon, just sitting quietly and that nothing is trivial. These are important tasks that keep us grounded. It took just one invisible being, a virus, just a lockdown to make me realize the value of small things, which really have a big impact on our lives. I hope the pandemic gets over as soon as possible but the lessons that we learnt in this lockdown stays with us lifelong.

## *One line mantra that I learnt during the lockdown times is: Stay safe, stay healthy.*