

From Place to Space:

Not all cupcakes and rainbows

Personal Scenario by:

Lipy Patel

Student, Department of design,

Nirma University, Ahmedabad

The minute I got the mail that due to COVID-19 classes were dismissed, I packed my bags and booked the first-morning ticket home. I put on a 3-layer mask, sat on a window seat, and began the journey with a cold morning breeze and so did my sister but from a different bus station. The first thing I did when I got home was to have a glass of water and went to the garden to have a peaceful sit of my favorite water (water tastes different everywhere and that is a fact!!). Then after a while, my sister came home and we started to unpack our bags while listening to Post Malone. Then I made two cakes in a mug and we sat in the garden with some coffee and cake. I needed this as both of my parents are working and my sister is perusing medicine. Coming home without a portfolio bag and preoccupied mind was something new.

COVID cases in my district were zero at that time and it remained zero for quite a long period but still, Janta curfew and other curfew were strictly followed by people. My parents took emergency patients and limited their practice hours. This means more family time which means more movies, recipes, and card games to explore. I learned how macramé can bring good aesthetics on plain objects and discovered some new software like Adobe premiere pro and Adobe after effects. Also, some exercise in the morning which was forced by my mother, who takes 12 continuous laps of 500 m long track at 5 in the morning with my sister (no idea why). After so much of sufferance, on some lucky days, I get to have pancakes or waffles in the morning (once a week only). I started planting new trees in my garden. Taking care of my own garden and plants made me happy and we also found a type of weed that had beautiful flowers so rather than plucking it, we started cultivating it.

But due to COVID, maids were on leave for three months as both of my parents are doctors. So, they have lot of work to do themselves. Therefore, some household chores were put on [us](#).

[It](#) was fun and easy until online classes began and then it got a little stressful as me and Didi had college work. But we made it through with cooperation and my sister's patience. Assignments and chores would fill the day up. Things that were fun became a burden and painful. But we made it through.

For lunchtime Didi would make Gujarati daal. I helped her in making rotis then we both had lunch. After some time, my parents come home and then they would have their lunch. Due to ant's issues we cannot afford to leave a grain on the countertops so we clean that too. We talk about work and other stuff then they go to sleep. We usually get up at 3 or 4 o'clock then we have some fruit. Then my mom goes to the local vendor to get some local produce for the family. Most of the evening is spent outdoors drawing something and just relaxing or teaching my mom and our neighbor's kid how to play catch. Someday Didi and me would spend the evening

making bubbles. I think I can pursue a Ph.D. in bubble-making. After some time, we get ready to prepare dinner. Turning on AC and cooking with ma and dad trying to eat food while its cooking brought back old memories.

After dinner my parents watch some news on TV and me and my sister do our work. Some days we watch some movies together or Band Baaja Bride. Someday we play cards in which me and dad would cheat. When we all go to sleep but mostly me and Didi binge watch some shows. But every morning I used to see worldometer.com and seeing that number rise, gives me anxiety but I assure myself with the fact that we have done lockdown at the right time, we will be safe. But as the number of COVID patients increased in my state, the uncertainty [increased](#). [My](#) parent's colleague got COVID 19 and many got severe. Receiving a new long paragraph on WhatsApp brought social anxiety.

In our extended family, one of the members has terminal cancer and his immune system is already compromised and Covid-19 just added more to stress. We had to travel 100 km to give them necessary supplies as they are from the United States and moved back to India only a few months ago. The feeling of losing someone close worries the whole family to this day.

Seeing a certain face became difficult because one doesn't know what will happen next. Seeing my mom checking the number made me realize that in this number game we are losing. This game made me anxious about the people I don't know, the ones I have never met, who are just a number to me. The mental stress begins to pile up. Watching the news became hard. It feels like the number piled up on me. So, I tried social media to occupy my brain as I was never an active social media user. Calling someone makes me feel like I am bugging someone. I felt like I was living in a bubble with two more bubbles outside it. Seeing people reconnecting with their old friends and still keeping in touch with new people made me feel little about myself. I felt that I had no real friends. So, I keep a distance from others. I tried to merge myself in other work but the feeling of loneliness never went away. Seeing people doing well in Online classes and learn to improve my own work could get my mind off those things. Well that's what I thought it would do but it just added stress and what add more stress is going outdoors to get stationary and finding out that most of the stationary shops were out of stock. Doing household chores and cleaning after the assignments of course is over, became laboursome .I hated the quality of my work and I wanted lockdown to be over with. I wanted to get back to normal.

Untidy bedroom with paper cutouts and ink spots on the floor were something new to my family; they had never seen such a mess in their lives but they found it funny. It was fun for just one hour or so then it went down in the drain. Nothing felt good enough and I started to lose my temper at small stuff. I got hell irritated with the people around me. The feeling of loneliness

came back again; I felt left out from my own life and all my insecurities crept in. Normal work became a task and more pain was added when we were informed that we have to put our cameras on. I always like to be on the other side of the lens, I was always camera shy. Seeing people do really good work and then looking at my quality made me realize that I need to gear up too but I didn't have sufficient time to work. I still tried my best. Looking at people's feed and seeing them use this time to the fullest made me more insecure about my work.

When the lockdown rules were relaxed, we had our helper back and the quantum of work dropped-down highly. Things felt much more workable but the mental exhaustion was still there knowing that the numbers shown by the government are far away from the truth and underprivileged ones were also highly affected by it. Things changed. During the 3d geometer my cousins came to my house to stay for some external work. We cooked, laughed and played a hell lot of games. It was good to be certain about my sources of happiness which is people around me and experiencing the present and not worrying about other stuff made me happy. They went after 2 days but the joy they brought stayed. Mornings are still hard seeing my parents go to work uncertain of what can happen. There is no denying that uncertainty is there but living peacefully with it is certain. Yup lockdown is going great. Quiet and peaceful period. That's sarcasm. My sense of humor went way down the hill just like my taste in music. Now I am listening to Desi hip-hop.