

The meaning of life in Corona season.

It had been my first time living in Delhi. The winter made way for spring with March having just begun and I was ecstatic to finally be able to visit a few places at the near end of my course at IIMC. However, the rain and the hailstorm the next day, a rare sight in March, stopped me from doing so.

A few days later, reports of Corona virus cases all over the world were published on the front page. I remembered the virus - it was the same virus I had dismissed mentally a few weeks prior. Who knew that this was just the tip of the ice-berg! Ten days later, we received an official notice from college. 'All students must evacuate the hostel in the next 24-48 hours.'

Students scuttled to their home-towns immediately, the sound of the trolley bags hammering against the stairs. I started packing too. There were locks on almost all the doors on my floor. Nobody said goodbye; there was no time. Everyone rushed like somebody was about to catch them with icy cold fingers if they didn't run. Within hours, a dark silence had cloaked the bright green campus of IIMC.

I came back home thinking - maybe the hailstorm was an ominous warning to something unprecedented that was about to come. With nearly three lakh cases worldwide and fourteen thousand deaths globally, the Corona virus is like Mother Nature's way of getting back to us for being careless and greedy.

In the last three weeks of this crazy pandemic that seems to keep growing everyday, never have I seen life at such stillness and restrain. The morning rush no longer exists; I no longer wake up with daily targets in my head or the assignments that I have to do - instead I wake up hoping that I and the loved ones in my house and across the world have woken up safely, without any symptoms.

With the whole country on a lockdown, there is calmness outside but a mad rush to do something because we as human beings have innately been wired to wake up and run. Where to? We don't know, but we just keep running - chasing milestone after milestone. Hence we keep ourselves busy to "use this time wisely". Thankfully, social media has connected us all and we feel at ease for a second that we aren't alone in this fight against the virus but for how long? At the end of the day, we go back to sleep hoping not to see a spike in the numbers and that this ends soon.

There has also been an increase in the feeling of gratitude for all the things and people we have taken for granted - be it the house-help or the newspaper guy, the boss at work, the professor in college, our daily food that we have to ration and measure before every meal so that stocks last and the truth that this tiny virus can take away the one thing we have taken for granted the most - ourselves, our lives.

In a pandemic crisis like this, I see the world standing alone, together, for each other. The beauty lies in the consciousness that everything has an expiry date, whether it is the food on our plates, the money we seek, the success we run after and all the good and bad times - including this lockdown period. Everything turns to dust eventually.

When we realise that the value of our lives is far greater than all the material goods we seek, our lives seek us and keep us alive, even when we are nearing its Winter. When the summer arrives, hopefully we can all run out in the open and feel its warmth with a renewed sense of meaning, gratitude and respect for each other.