



SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
COMMUNICATION

**AAETI**



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# The long journey & Lessons for the future

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# The biggest story

## Global situation

- 430,257,564 confirmed cases
- 5,922,047 deaths
- 62.8% of the population has received at least one dose
- Gross inequity
  - only 18% of the population in Africa has got at least one dose
  - only 12.6% people in low income countries have got at least one dose

## Indian situation

- 42,924,130 confirmed cases
- 513,843 deaths
- 72.4% population has received at least one dose



# Beyond data

## Stories about

- Might of the virus, variants
- Pain, suffering and death; empathy
- Efforts of health care and frontline workers
- Economic slowdown, loss of livelihoods, migration
- Working from home, closure of schools, mental health
- Leaps in tech development, increased manufacturing but no equity
- Global diplomacy but also insensitivity

2020, 2021...



February 2020: Before WHO declared it to be a pandemic; everyone was trying to understand this novel disease

April 2020: A story on the role of globalisation in the spread of the pandemic and on how lockdowns were changing the world



May 2020: The world found that it lacked the capacity to manufacture drugs, diagnostics, vaccines and even protective gear

# 2020, 2021, 2022...



May 2020: Investigating zoonotic diseases and their emergence; again and again

June 2020: Diagnostic kits became available but mere testing without access to care does not help

July 2020: The skies were blue in the most polluted of the cities. We got a glimpse of a world with a better transport system



August 2020: While COVID-19 got public attention, many mysterious diseases are regularly missed due to a poor surveillance system

2020, 2021...



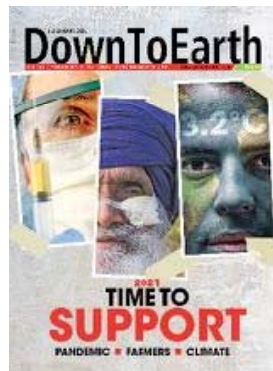
September 2020: MNREGA helped people who had to migrate back home



November 2020: We tried to understand the immune system and herd immunity. The virus itself needs to be understood



January 2021: Vaccines were available and the world begins the largest vaccination drive.



# 2020, 2021...



April 2021: India did not have enough vaccines despite being the vaccine hub for the world. Public sector vaccine manufactures in the country had been sidelined

May 2021: A story on the second wave which paralysed India



June 2021: the virus reached rural areas; there was no equity in the distribution of vaccines, COVAX failed



2020, 2021...



August 2021: Unclear treatment protocols and irrational use of steroids worsened health

October 2021: A resurgence of cases was seen even in countries where vaccination rates were high. In India, Kerala mimicked the global situation



December 2021: A new variant appeared

2022...



January 2022

- The third wave of the disease engulfed India
- Long COVID is as bad as COVID itself: 40 per cent of the COVID-19 survivors suffer from long term symptoms. 57 per cent for those who were hospitalised show long term issues
- Children are likely to face long term impact. Schooling, physical activity, social interactions have suffered. Immunisation rates are down and overall life expectancy has gone down by 2 years

# 2022...



March 2022

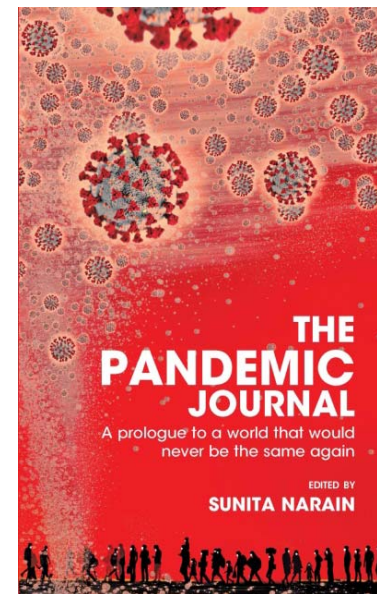
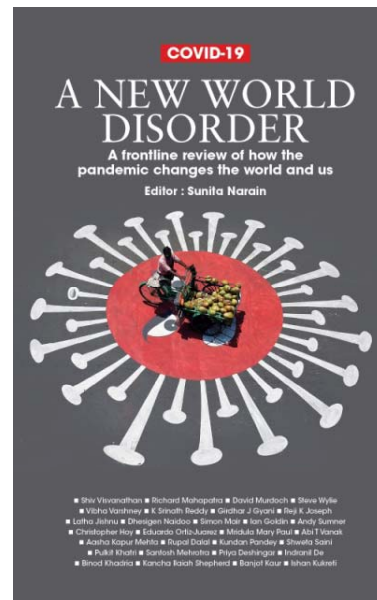
- The disease is now endemic
- We don't know how this virus will behave in an endemic state
- Endemicity does not mean end. Mutations will continue to emerge
- Health needs to be higher on the political agenda

# Lessons from pandemics

- Spanish flu: non-pharmaceutical interventions such as isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limitations of public gatherings
- Cholera: concept of epidemiology of a disease, sanitation, importance of safe water, oral rehydration therapy
- HIV/ AIDS: change in blood donation procedures, injection safety, stigma, messaging
- TB: air borne diseases, clean air, improved architecture for better ventilation (large windows, balconies, etc.)
- COVID-19: use of AI in health, telemedicine, use of home diagnostic technologies, vaccines based on new technologies...

# Back to basics

- Environmental management: zoonotic diseases
- Robust health system: oxygen, beds, doctors, nurses
- Equity: everyone is in this together
- Investment: new technologies like vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics
- Strong governance: measures to curtail a pandemic should not worsen the situation of the poor



Thank you