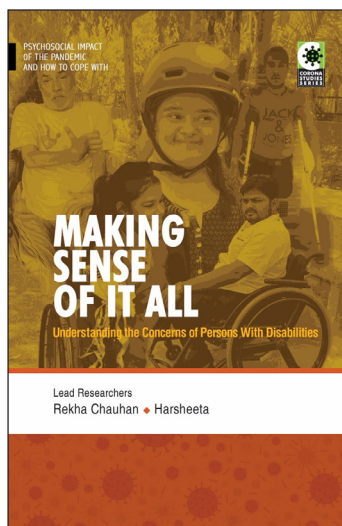


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PICK OF THE MONTH



**Making Sense of it All:
Understanding the Concerns of
Persons With Disabilities**
Rekha Chauhan & Harsheeta
978-81-237-9189-0; Rs. 160



Just Read

Managing Psychosocial Pressures During Pandemic



“Books are mirrors of the society, if one desires to know about the culture, tradition or development in the society, one needs to read books,” said Prof. Govind Prasad Sharma, Chairman, NBT at the online Round-Table Meet on ‘Managing Psychosocial Pressures During Pandemic’ held on 20 June 2020. He added that books are our friend, philosopher and guide.

Referring to the NBT books on corona pandemic, recently launched by Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’, Hon’ble Minister of Human Resource Development, Prof. Sharma hoped that the books would help society understand corona pandemic better and face the challenges associated with it. He added that NBT will continue to work in the field through books and discussions.

Talking about NBT’s Corona Studies series, Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director, NBT, said, “We undertook this study to create an awareness on the importance of mental health, particularly the uncertainty and anxiety posed by the pandemic. We are committed to make this a sustainable campaign and also continue to bring

out books on the topic. In fact, as a corollary to this study we have taken an in-principle decision with due approval of our respected Chairman that from now on all our new titles, especially those for children and young adults, will be vetted and evaluated by psychologists who may have some background in publishing as well, so that the kids get quality content because the very term ‘quality’ has now undergone a change in the pandemic times. We are moving to a situation where it will be imperative to include Mental Health Awareness Education in school curriculum.”



Speaking of the initiatives taken up by NBT during the current pandemic, Shri Yuvraj Malik said, “We have launched #StayHomeIndiaWithBooks! for free downloading of our books and have been motivating readers choose books through #MyBookMyFriend Campaign. He also said that NBT is coming up with first ever three-month Online Publishing Course to meet the growing needs of the industry for well-trained professionals.” He further added that NBT is planning to organise workshops on creative writing, illustrating

for books, editing among others for children in various schools and prepare them as future authors, illustrators, editors and create a better ambience of reading in the society and the values that are attached to it.

The panelists discussed about the various aspects of corona virus, especially it's psychosocial impact on various segments of the society.

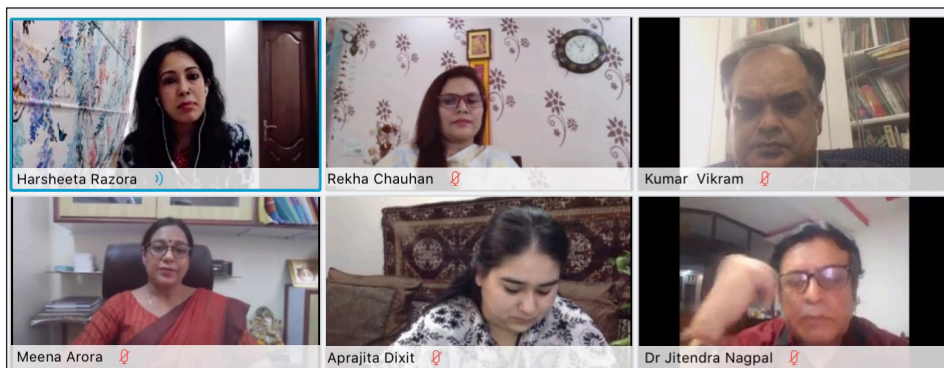
Speaking of the needs and role of elderly in the society during these times, Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Consultant Psychiatrist & Incharge, Institute of Mental Health & Life Skills Promotion, Moolchand Medcity said that the elderly are the harbingers of positivity and are first counsellors of the family. They need our undivided attention, and we need to give them the responsibility of providing us with sound advice, which will be beneficial in both ways.

Ms. Aprajita Dixit, Child and Adolescent Psychologist, Family Counsellor and Academic Coordinator focused on the impact of pandemic on the mental health of children, adolescents and youth. She said that we should let the children ask questions and encourage them to share their anxiety and they can be made to feel loved and wanted.

According to Ms. Rekha Chauhan, renowned Psychologist and Counsellor, people, especially Persons with Disabilities, are going through mixed emotions and therefore, their mental health needs more attention, and in these times, communication and expression become vital for a healthy well-being. It is necessary to have patience and remain connected with them. Also, the caregivers need to ensure that children eat healthy, express their feelings and feel loved.

Talking of the challenges being faced by corona warriors, Sqdr. Ldr. (Ex) Ms. Meena Arora, ICF Certified Behavioural Coach, said that we as a society and as family need to support our corona warriors who are themselves risking their lives for us and are at the most risk-prone state - on mental as well as physical health-wise. She proposed yoga and other therapies for them to keep their physical health upbeat in order for their mental well-being as well.

Ms. Sonie Sidhu, Counsellor,



Psychotherapist, Hypnotherapist & Life-Skills Coach, said that we all need to strengthen our inter-personal relations and be more cohesive. Talking about impact of pandemic on women, Ms Sidhu said that it is a fact that the pandemic has changed the manner in which a family used to run, hence it is important to have empathy towards each member of the family and change our perspective from negative to positive.

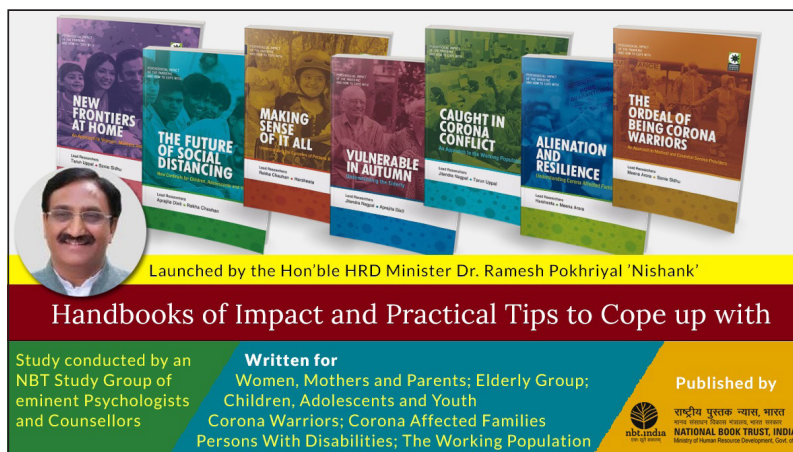
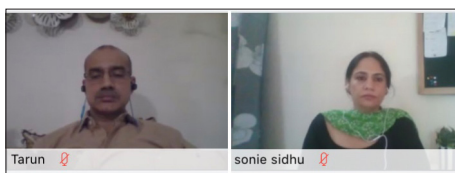
Referring to the needs of corona-affected families, Dr. Harsheeta, Scientist at Defence Institute of Psychological Research, said that family is the building block of our society and its importance has come back in our lives, where mental health and well-being are part of our development. She also talked about immunity-building, physical exercises as well as compassion and empathy from others for the mental well-being of affected people. She urged that society should avoid attaching stigma to it and stop

discrimination against corona affected families.

Lt. Col. Tarun Uppal, Cyber Security Trainer, Organisational Psychologist & Neuro-Lingustic Programme Trainer, underlined that instead of just concentrating on the negative effects it has had, we need to look at the positive side of the pandemic and reap positivity in times of difficulty. Speaking on the Working Population, he said, "We all are not in the same boat, but in the same storm," meaning that the pandemic has had different kind of impact on the working population in different ways. Even sectors and industries like tourism and start-ups have been hit badly. While some are facing salary cuts, others have completely lost their jobs, and yet others have switched to digital platforms which is the need of the hour.

The event concluded with a question-answer session from the participants.

Moderated by Shri Kumar Vikram, Editor and Project Coordinator of Corona Studies series and organised by National Book Trust India, the Round-Table was attended by over 100 participants including eminent psychologists, doctors, general readers, editors and scholars among others.



Excerpts

NBT has brought out a title *Alienation and Resilience: Understanding Corona Affected Families* by lead researchers Harsheeta & Meena Arora under Corona Studies Series. Herein we reproduce a chapter 'A Pragmatic Perspective' from the book.

- Editor

The Road Ahead

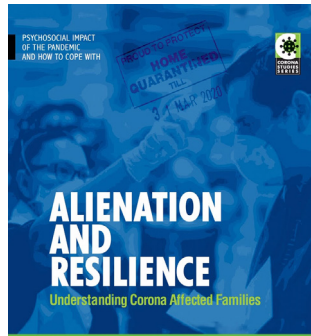
At this juncture, it is also pertinent to highlight some guidelines which have been promulgated by WHO (2020), for the individuals and families affected by COVID-19 pandemic and also for different groups of population with regard to how to deal with the pandemic. The different groups are general population, health professional, aged person, individuals with pre-existing medical condition and their caregivers, caregivers of children and those in isolation. However, here we are only focusing on the general population and those in isolation. The guidelines are as follows:

Messages for the general population

1. COVID-19 has and is likely to affect people from many countries, in many geographical locations. When referring to people who are affected, do not attach the disease to any particular ethnicity or nationality. Be empathetic to all those who are affected, in and from any country. People who are affected by COVID-19 have not done anything wrong, and they deserve our support, compassion and kindness.

2. Do not refer to people with the disease as "COVID-19 cases", "victims" "COVID-19 families" or "the diseased". They are "people who have COVID-19", "people who are being treated for COVID-19", or "people who are recovering from COVID-19", and after recovering from COVID-19 their life will go on with their jobs, families and loved ones. It is important to separate a person from having an identity defined by COVID-19, in order to reduce stigma.

3. Minimise watching, reading or listening to news about COVID-19 that causes you to feel anxious or distressed; seek information only from trusted sources and



Lead Researchers
Harsheeta & Meena Arora

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mainly so that you can take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and loved ones. Seek information updates at specific times during the day, once or twice. The sudden and near-constant stream of news reports about an outbreak can cause anyone to feel worried. Get the facts; not rumours and misinformation. Gather information at regular intervals from the WHO website and local health authority platforms in order to help you distinguish facts from rumours. Facts can help to minimise fears.

4. Protect yourself and be supportive of others. Assisting others in their time of need can benefit both the person receiving support and the helper. For example, telephone to neighbours or people in your community who may need some extra assistance. Working together as one community can help to create solidarity in addressing the crisis together.

5. Find opportunities to amplify positive and hopeful stories, and positive images of local people who have experienced COVID-19. For example, stories of people who have recovered or who have supported a loved one and are willing to share their experience. 57 A Pragmatic Perspective

6. Honour carers and healthcare workers supporting people affected

with COVID-19 in your community. Acknowledge the role they play in saving lives and keeping your loved ones safe.

Messages for People in Isolation

1. Stay connected and maintain your social networks. Try as much as possible to keep your personal daily routines or create new routines if circumstances change. If health authorities have recommended limiting your physical social contact to contain the outbreak, you can stay connected via telephone, e-mail, social media or video conference.

2. During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food. Keep things in perspective. Public health agencies and experts in all countries are working on the outbreak to ensure the availability of the best care to those affected.

3. A near-constant stream of news reports about an outbreak can cause anyone to feel anxious or distressed. Seek information updates and practical guidance at specific times during the day from health professionals and WHO website and avoid listening to or following rumours that make you feel uncomfortable.

Suggestions for Psychologists, Psychiatrists and Counsellors

As the pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge in front of all, it is a novel situation for the mental healthcare professionals too. Several countries have started help-line numbers where psychologists and counsellors are attending calls of individuals facing panic, fear, hopelessness, depression and the like. The enormous increase in the number of these calls is alarming across the world, as it is in India. This is also an indicator of the need to provide psychological assistance to people especially in complicated situation such as Lockdown and social-distancing. Lockdown, quarantine and isolation are new concepts for individuals to adapt to and these lead to several other forms of psychological and behavioural issues for many.

#MyBookMyFriend

Among the important initiatives that Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank,' Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development took, especially for children and the young during Lockdown is #MyBookMyFriend campaign.

As part of this campaign, we request young readers (Age groups: 6-8, 9-11, 12-14) to share with us the books they read during Lockdown. Select reviews of such books will be published in the columns of our NBT Newsletter. The reviews along with passport size photographs and the cover page of the book may be sent to Editor, NBT Newsletter at nbtnewsletter06@gmail.com or by post to Editor, NBT Newsletter, Nehru Bhawan, 5 Institutional Area, Phase II, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi – 110070.



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NBT Books for Covid Centres

As part of its initiative to promote habit of reading during Corona pandemic, NBT in association with District Administration, Ghaziabad gifted NBT books at corona quarantine centre, Ghaziabad. Besides, *Pustak Sanskriti*, quarterly Hindi magazine published by NBT was also distributed. Shri Yuvraj Malik, Director, NBT said that the people at the centre enjoyed reading books and it helped them to relieve stress. He further added that keeping in view the success of this initiative, NBT is looking forward to distribute its publications in other quarantine centres in Delhi as well. This initiative was appreciated by Shri Ajay Shankar Pandey, IAS, District Magistrate and Shri N K Gupta, Chief Medical Officer. They hoped that books would bring positivity among the patients and help them spend quality time. NBT has also gifted its publications for the library being set-up at Sardar Patel Quarantine Centre, Chhatarpur, Delhi, which is one of the largest quarantine centres in the world. To help patients spend their quality time, NBT has handed over around 1000 NBT books and 100 copies each of *Pustak Sanskriti* and *Readers Club Bulletin* to the Government of Delhi.

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