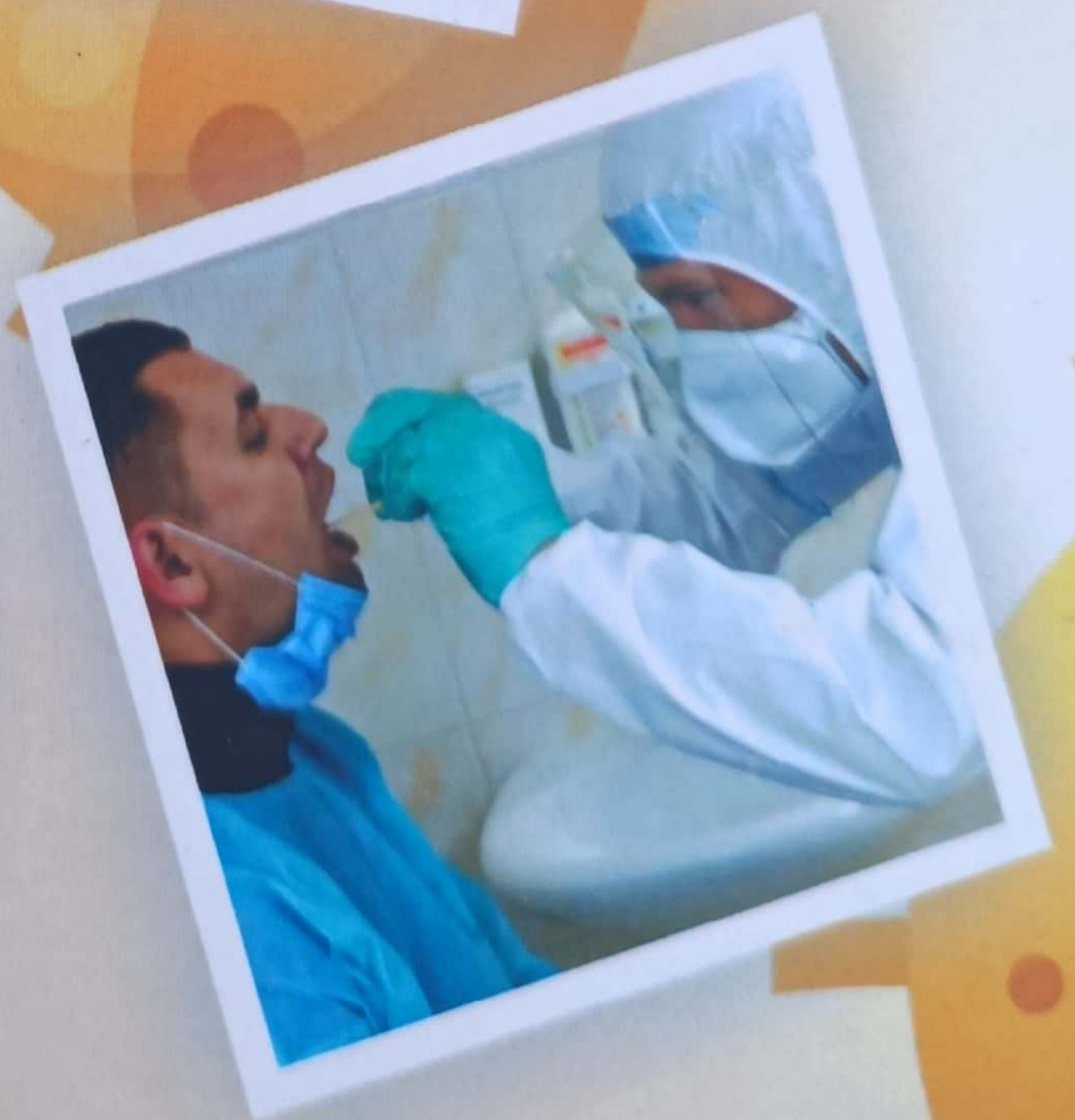


# COVID-19

AND THE INDIAN ECONOMY

Dr. Chandrashekhar Wani ■ Dr. Shivaji Patil



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**Academic**  
Book Publications

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## Publisher | Printer:

Academic Book Publications  
Dyandeep Apartment, Plot No.2, Chaitanya Nagar,  
Opp. Progressive English Medium School, Jalgaon..

## Phone | Web | Email:

0257-2235520, 2232800  
academicbooksjalgaon@gmail.com.

## Edition | ISBN | Price

August, 2020  
978-93-89493-13-9  
₹ 200

## Cover Design | Typesetting

Academic Publications

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# **'What's App' Literature during COVID19 Lockdown Period : A Survey**

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## **Abstract :**

*'What's App' is an application run over electronic device, especially on mobile. It is categorized under the social media. Since the last decade, What's App literature has become tremendously popular to share posts from every sphere of life. Nowadays, it is in vogue for sharing a variety of posts about COVID19, the disease caused by Corona-Virus erupted in China in December 2019. These posts went viral everywhere on the electronic media. These posts were about precautions, food, reverie, repository, fun, humour, time-pass, quarantine, anti-Chinese, online shopping, fake news, work-from-home, lockdown, creativity, government resolutions, examinations, educational institutions and offices. Many of them are useful. And some of them are only to kill the time. However, all of them had some kind of quality of literature. It could not be called literature, in the strict sense. But in this age of electronics, 'What's App' has been used as a platform for amateur writers to vent out their imagination, humour, feelings and opinions. And literature is what, but the reflection of humour, thoughts and feelings with a touch of imagination of the writer. Therefore, the present article undertook the analytical survey of some of the posts shared during the COVID19 lockdown period on What's App.*

**Key Words :** Social Media, What's App, Share, Post, Literature, Corona-Virus, COVID19, Lockdown.

## **Introduction :**

It was found that the use of What's App is increased by 40% during the lockdown period (<https://techcrunch.com/2020/03/26/report-whatsapp-has-seen-a-40-increase-in-usage-due-to-covid-19-pandemic/> Retrieved 29 March 2020). People were now locked down in their houses. They saved their time of commuting. Their works became less, limited to emergency services only. Some techno-addicts

and amateur writers found the app as a place to express their creative ideas. The effect of COVID19 was not found on a large scale in the small villages in India. So they had enough time to create and share posts related to the pandemic disease. In addition, the urban people who were working with the 'work from home' scheme, got time to create or at least forward posts from person to person or group to group. This caused the posts related to the virus and the disease to go viral on social media, especially on What's App. However, it created a wealth of amazing pieces of literature: puns, jokes, humours, reflections, practicality, instructions, poems, songs, imagination and morals.

### **Precautions :**

Majority of the COVID19 posts shared during the lockdown were about the precautions to be taken to save from the disease. Of course, some of them were incomplete and false. The most viral post of precaution was the five 'dos': (i) keep distance from others, (ii) cover mouth with handkerchief while sneezing or coughing, (iii) wash your hands regularly with sanitizer soap, (iv) stay at home and (v) seek doctor, if you are sick. Among the others were drinking hot water / tea, consuming food, having Vitamin C, taking enough sleep and so on.

### **Vegetarian Food :**

Some viral posts were about the importance of vegetarian food. It was posted on the application that the virus came to humans from the consumption of a nocturnal bird bat or a snake. So the supporters of vegetarian food came forward to advertise it. It was advocated through brief posts and songs. Some videos were viral while butchering and eating bats, caterpillars, dogs, snakes etc.

### **Reverie / Repository :**

Some posts were telling the importance of village life and the life before industrialism. Staying continuously at home had wearisome experience. So some people had posted pictures of indoor games like playing cards. Some people had posted pictures of happy family being together. Many of the people got time to be at home with their family. They remembered and wrote about the old days when they were together.

### **Fake News :**

Fake posts about COVID19 were also common during the period. Some of them were enlisted here. A picture, dying many people in it

from a Hollywood movie, was shared claiming it was the real death scene in Italy. Other fake news was a popular network providing company giving 1000GB free Internet Data to stay at home. Fake news was that a doctor has already written a book on the disease and remedy over Corona-virus. Another claim was that the treatment of corona-virus was given in the book of 12th Standard. However, the book was old and it was about a different type of corona-virus, not the COVID19. The other fake news was about the vaccine over COVID19. But in fact, it was a testing kit of COVID19. (<https://www.indiatoday.in/fact-check/story/covid-19-testing-kit-fact-check-coronavirus-1658750-2020-03-23> Retrieved 29 March 2020)

### **Work from Home :**

During the lockdown period, the officers and employees were asked to continue their work from home. Some images of husband and wife were viral. In each of them the husband was doing some household work, when a friend called him! In each post the wife received the phone-call and on the request of her husband she told the friend that her husband was busy on his laptop doing some important office work. Surely, they were jokes. Pakistan was known for terrorist activities. When the Pakistani Government announced to work from home, a terrorist blasted a bomb in his own home! Definitely, it was a joke! Work from Home was disturbed due to the problems of Internet speed in both the rural and urban areas, as highlighted in the What's App literature.

### **Humour :**

The app was largely employed for time-pass. Therefore, humour was inevitable. It was more in quantity before the arrival of the disease in India. The quarrel-jokes of husband and wife were very common.

It was said that the virus would not affect animals. So in a post, dog advised his owner to stay home, when it was going out! The situation became reversed. Domestic animals were moving out and human beings were locked down in the houses.

Many viral posts were related to wine. The wine shops and bars were locked down in the first two lockdown periods. But Government provided a ration home to home. Therefore, the importance of making stocks of wine, not of ration, was highlighted. Sharing things, especially wine, were convinced through the posts!



In a post, a young boy was staring at the mobile in his hand, and saying that for the first time he got bored of mobile too!

### **Anti-Chinese :**

In the third and fourth stage of lockdown in India, the anti-Chinese messages were viral. Most of them declared that the Corona-Virus was an outbreak of a systematic biological weapon skilfully used by China against the whole world. The virus was given birth in a laboratory of China in Wuhan. It did it to go ahead of all the countries in the world including America, and to become the World's largest economy. The virus spread all the cities in the world, but it did not spread in the cities of China, except the only city, Wuhan! Boycott of the Chinese goods was also an agenda of these anti-Chinese posts.

### **Lockdown :**

In a post husband was taking a rest. His wife came with some used utensils and asked her husband to wash them. The husband refused to do so. Then the wife threatened him by calling the hospital number to take her husband to hospital, because he had been suffering from cough and fever! A post was 'Rest in home or "rest in peace", choice is yours'! The later rest implied the rest of the soul in peace after death. Some viral posts were of youngsters who were roaming in the city and so were beaten up by the police. A video was viral in which the police beat the barber and his customers who were gathered to cut their hair. In some videos, police were joining their hands to request the roaming persons not to come out of their houses. In an image all the domestic / wild animals and birds were moving on the roads freely and human beings were locked up in their hoses. The animals were made look like tourists who came to visit the zoo of humans.

### **Time Pass :**

Some word games went viral on the app. They included the identification of the names of villages from the given emojis and letters, the identification of the words from the deranged order of letters of a country or object and the words beginning or ending with the same letter.

### **Creativity :**

Many poems and songs were composed on the disease, the awareness of it and the cautions to be taken during the lockdown period. Some amateurs composed their creations and posted on the app.

### **Government and Educational GR :**

Government Resolutions and news were viral regarding the lockdown period, the work from home instructions, the timings of shops of essential things, the curfew, the food or grain distribution, the examinations and the facilities made available by the governments from time to time. Some resolutions of one department encroached the domain of another department. However, the app helped to remove the confusion by circulating revised resolutions.

### **Webinars :**

Webinars, online seminars or conferences or workshops, were organized in huge quantities during the lockdown period by different institutes and individuals. Many of them, in educational webinars, were about the creation of e-content development for education. Educational, technical, awareness spreading, crises in future etc were among the others. A post claimed that the revolution in education was brought by COVID19, and not by the University Grant Commission or universities!

### **Conclusion :**

In short, What's App played a great role in the lockdown period. It helped enrich the genres of literature. It made a platform available for the amateur writers to express their feelings and thoughts. However, the present paper had its own limitations to describe and comment upon the each and every post shared on What's App.

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