

# MANAS

## *Speaks*

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‘Mental Health in an Unequal World’

#WorldMentalHealthDay

## MENTAL HEALTH

Childhood sacrificed pandemic

Growing up too fast: early menarche and mental illness

Adolescent mental health

Ghost of Surfing Social Media



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# MANAS *Speaks*

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Manas Speaks is a monthly magazine from Manas-The academy of psychology, to publish a wide range of conceptual articles relating to different perspectives on methodologies in psychological research and to support student communities to strengthen their knowledge.

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## Author Guidelines

We accept submissions through email. You may send us manuscripts for the following submission categories: Any submission related to psychology, short stories, book review, movie review, psychology concepts, case studies, cartoons, memes or a specific genre. Content should be related to psychology, your manuscript must be in one of the following file forms word, pdf and jpeg. please send content related pictures if you are interested. All manuscripts should be in 12 point type, with at least one-inch margins, and sequentially numbered pages. The author's name, address, telephone number, and email address should be typed at the top of the first page. Contributors are asked to include a brief biographical note with their submissions. Submissions may be sent to us at any time, year-round. Manas speaks is a non-profit magazine with the ambition of encouraging good literary work. We desire is to connect readers and writers, and we strongly encourage anyone interested in submitting work to read the magazine before submitting. You may read the magazine for free. If you enjoy reading it and wish to submit it, we hope that the reading is strengthening your mental muscles. we are strongly committed to publishing debut and emerging writers.

*Disclaimer: Information provided in this magazine is purely for research and education purpose only.*

# Childhood Sacrificed Pandemic



**AS** soon as Manu gets up, his first act is to either pick up his Dad's smartphone and start playing on it or switch on the computer to watch a video on YouTube and if either his Dad or I object, his immediate reaction is 'I hate you, you are always scolding me – no one in this family loves me' in a loud voice or breaking into tears and whining that no one cares for him. I just don't know what to do....it is common knowledge that too much screen time is not good", says Sunita, a college lecturer.

"My seven-year-old son is like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde – one minute sweet and smiling like an angel and the next moment is raging like a Tasmanian devil on being denied something or the other. I am a working woman unable to cope!" is the concern of a Software Engineer Raman.

"My ten-year-old daughter has become a leech and does not let go of me even for a while. She follows me with a woebegone face. Nothing seems to cheer her." ~ says Dr Shanta

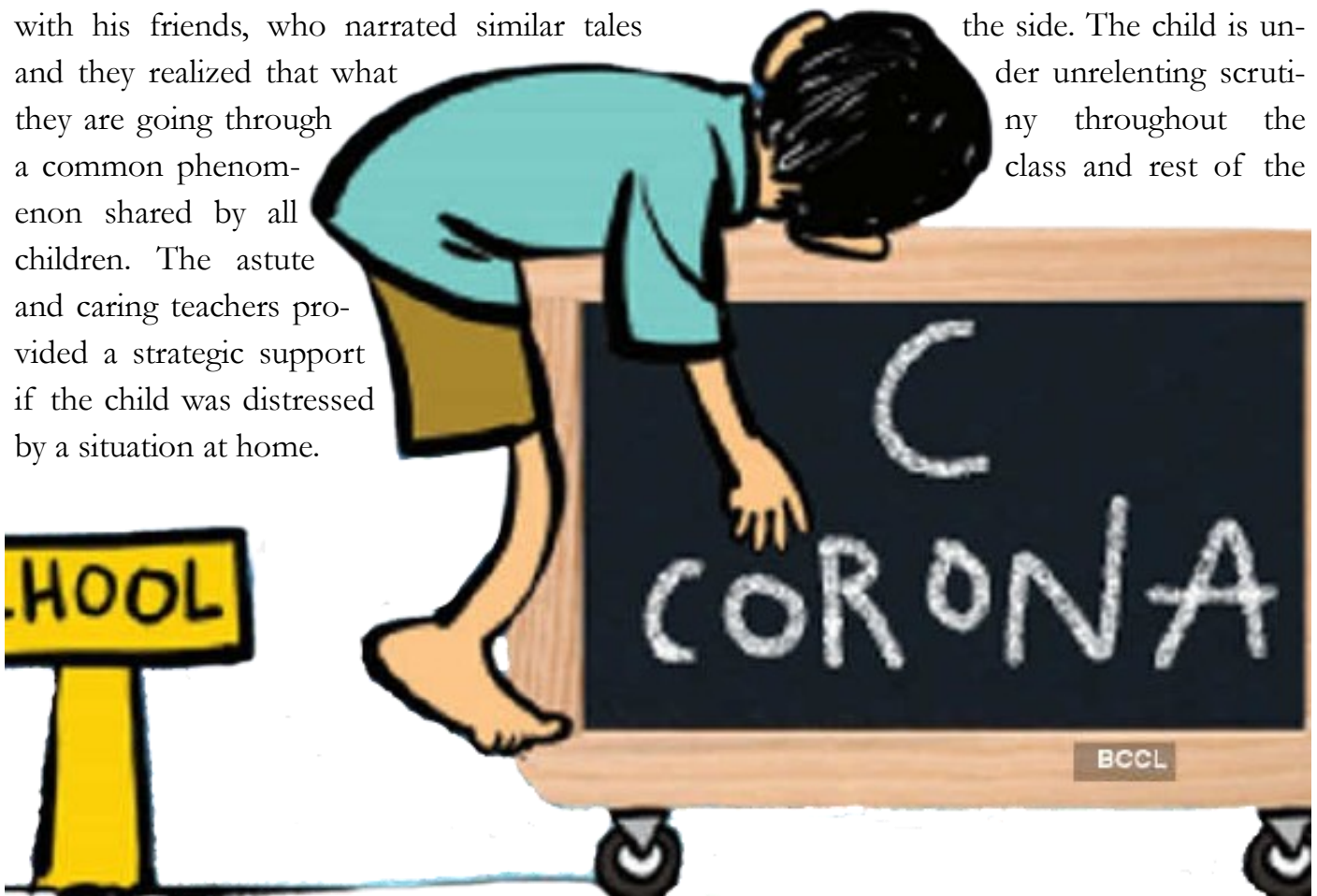
"Homework and studies – I hate these words. I wish you were dead, then I would not have to hear these two words," says 10-year-old Subhan before bursting into tears and apologizing to his father but the remorse is short-

lived and rears its head very soon on hearing the trigger words.

In the pre-COVID era (the time lapse does feel long) children used to be out of their homes for nearly half of their waking hours from Monday to Friday and in some cases Saturday also. During the day, they had a variety of exposures to a variety of situations (from a squirrel darting across the road to the large lumbering lorry with a load) and interactions with a diverse group of people ranging from the support staff in the school to the Principal or Headmistress. All these provided them with diversions and entertainment. Each day was filled with marvelous wonders – chattering with peers during their commute to school; encounters with support staff of the school; greeting and interacting with juniors, peers and seniors; playing in the field either under or without supervision and most important the classroom experience with its academic ambience. The smiling Class teacher, who becomes friend, philosopher and guide though she/he may behave like Hitler at times. The exposure and experiences were pleasurable and exciting on most days. If on occasions it became difficult and distressing, they always had the comfort and security of home to return to!

If the day had been bad at school, the family members consoled the child. If he got a scolding or had a bad day at home, he shared with his friends, who narrated similar tales and they realized that what they are going through a common phenomenon shared by all children. The astute and caring teachers provided a strategic support if the child was distressed by a situation at home.

away with any sort of mischief but now there are two hawk eyes – the teacher through the camera and the parent/ caretaker sitting by the side. The child is under unrelenting scrutiny throughout the class and rest of the

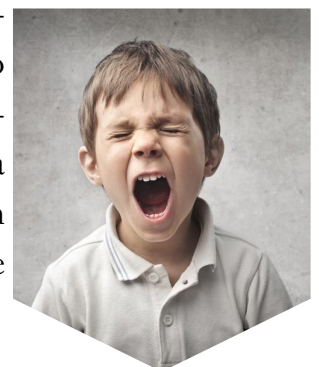


The family members have to assume both the roles – the tormentor as well as the tormented. From morning to evening, life is a monotonous routine of seeing the same faces and hearing the same admonitions. “Don’t play with the ball inside the house”, “Don’t shout, can’t you see I am in a meeting?”, “Don’t disturb the baby”, “Don’t argue with granny!”, Don’t do this, don’t do that - life becomes a litany of don’ts! The little entertainment provided during the Parents’ scarce leisure time is often not adequate to rejuvenate or refresh the young minds.

The online classes were fun to start with due to the novelty but as the days rolled by with not light at the end of the tunnel, it became monotonous. In the regular classroom, one could hide behind another student and get

day, unable to escape from their homes, which has become a golden cage.

This leads to what was called at one time Cabin Fever and the person suffering from it was called “Stir-crazy” characterized by symptoms of irritability, boredom, some hopelessness, restlessness and difficulty in concentrating. Add to this the screen addiction that has been induced by online schooling and the resultant withdrawal symptoms when denied screen time – you have a simmering volcano ready to erupt! Unacceptable behaviour manifested in a variety of ways from downright disobedience to defiance!





## How can we avoid or at least ameliorate the situation and help each other mutually?

- ◆ Modelling Ideal Behaviour – Attempt to present a peaceful, loving relationships for all family members especially children so they feel secure and loved.
- ◆ Using a Positive approach - “Please speak more quietly” will work better than “Stop shouting,” that is telling them what you want from them instead of what you don’t! Use praise lavishly to make them know they are valued.
- ◆ Listen to your kids and provide them the support only you can give. Children will always look to parents for support and reassurance... listen to them when they share their feelings. Do not be judgmental but give them comfort.... Go with them if necessary to bring them back to your track.
- ◆ Empathy - Be open and show children that you are listening to what they are saying and respond. Or say “I need some time to think about this, can you be patient?”.
- ◆ Involve everyone as far as possible to help in the household tasks so that there is a scheduled relaxation time for all stakeholders.
- ◆ Schedule fun things to do at least once a week inside the house even if it is just a mundane act like tickling each other and giggling.

It is well known that the COVID-19 Pandemic has created a variety of psychological issues both in adults as well as in children. Children are worse affected because they cannot understand what is happening to them. They do not have the resources and the coping strategies that adults have acquired through experience.



**Dr Suguna Kannan**

*They deserve our sympathy!*