

Students' Pledge

JUNE 2020



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**Central Organ of
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Students' Organisation
[AIDSO]**



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TRIBUTE TO KARTIK SOM

It is very sad to mention that we have lost Kartik Som, Jharkhand State Secretariat Member of AIDSO on 1 June 2020 at 2.00pm. He was also an applicant member of Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist), the genuine communist party in the Indian soil. He came in contact of our organisation AIDSO in 2010 when he took admission at Intermediate level in Ghatshila and remained an active member of AIDSO even when he continued his UG from the same college. He was a promising student of Jaamini Kant B.Ed. College, Ghatshila.

He continued to participate actively in students' movement conducted by our organisation and imbibing revolutionary ideology. Inspired by the Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought, he played an important role in uniting students against anti-educational policies.

It's noteworthy that he was hailed from a very poor family. In spite of economic crisis of his family, instead of pursuing career, he preferred to remain active in revolutionary students' movements. His simplicity and decency were the main characteristics which attracted students towards him. He had very fraternal feeling towards all AIDSO activists. He was very sincere in shouldering the responsibilities assigned to him.

His sudden demise is a huge loss for our organisation as well as for the students' movement. All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) pays tribute to him, remembering his struggle and drawing inspiration from it.

Long live Students' Movement! Inquilab Zindabad!
Comrade Kartik Som Red Salute!



COVID19 : STAND for HUMANITY THE CALL OF HOUR

COVID-19, the deadly pandemic has wreaked ubiquitous havoc worldwide including India. Falling prey to this, lakhs of people have lost their lives and lakhs are struggling with death. Is it that the gripping hold of corona pandemic is entirely unanticipated?

The reports from whistle-blowers, like Chinese physician Dr Li Wenliang, suggested that the first cases appeared as early as November 2019 in Wuhan, the industrial hub of China. It's noteworthy that although China is using a communist label, in reality, capitalism was established long back in that country through the counter-revolution and capitalist China has been engaged in a trade war with other superpowers, particularly with the US. So frightened of the loss, the Chinese authorities threatened Dr Wenliang of dire consequences and suppressed the report. But despite hundreds of attempts, China has not been able to hold back. Just after a few days, Dr Wenliang died of the COVID-19 while treating the other infected patients. Forced by the situation, Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, reported a cluster of cases of pneumonia

in Wuhan, Hubei Province. A novel coronavirus was eventually identified. On 5th January, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published its first Disease Outbreak News on the new virus. A week later, China publicly shared the genetic sequence of COVID-19. Officially, China declared about the Corona pandemic on 20 January 2020. Consequently, on 23rd January 2020, the central government of China imposed a lockdown in Wuhan and other cities in Hubei to quarantine the centre of an outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 but continued its trade with other countries. As a result of this felonious attitude, as per the WHO's situation report, by 30th January, there were 7818 total confirmed cases reported worldwide, with the majority in China, while 82 cases reported in 18 countries outside China. On 30th January 2020, the WHO declared a 'public health emergency of international concern', a designation reserved for extraordinary events that threaten to spread internationally and on 3rd February 2020 released the international community's 'Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan' to help



protect states with weaker healthcare systems.

Notably, the socialist countries like Cuba and North Korea could effectively fight the Corona disease. Even, Cuba sent its doctors to other countries to help them in fighting this pandemic. It once again reiterates the supremacy of the socialist system. Being working-class state they have built the health care system which is free and accessible to all. They have well-furnished hospitals and committed pro-people doctors, nurses and health workers. Despite of being an imperialist country China could effectively contain this disease because it has the advantage of a huge infrastructure & committed doctors created by the erstwhile socialist system. But highly inhuman capitalist countries aimed at grabbing maximum profit by the way of ruthless exploitation of the toiling masses have not only remained indifferent to the pandemic conditions but throughout ignored the warnings of the scientists. In the US, though the first case was identified on 21st January 2020, the Trump administration remained unconcerned. It continued its nefarious activities worldwide. Even the President attended a ceremonial business tour in India in the last week of February.

India also has not been an exception. While the situation was getting worsened worldwide and the first case of the COVID-19 pandemic in India was reported on 30 January 2020, the BJP govt. didn't take due precautionary

measures to contain the deadly virus. Initially, all the cases of COVID-19 came to our country from abroad. If flights were suspended and rigorous testing followed by institutional quarantine of the positive cases were done then there would have been no cases in India. Instead of getting prepared to fight the dreaded viral infection, the central government remained busy in crushing the people's resistance to implement the communal and divisive CAA-NRC-NPR. At that crucial moment, the government machinery was engaged in a campaign to turn an anti-people Union Budget to a pro-people one. It was followed by the assembly election in Delhi and the BJP employed all the ministers and leaders to capture power by fomenting a communal divide. Soon after, the entire government machinery went on an overdrive preparing for 'Namaste Trump' event, the US President Donald Trump's visit to India. Then the Sangh Parivar engineered a communal attack on the minorities to punish them for BJP's defeat in Delhi assembly election and the entire media house was engaged in helping to save the culprits. These series of events captured the attention of the entire country while the coronavirus was spreading. Even then the central government did not wake up. Just to have a cover-up, on 13th March 2020, while addressing to press, the central government officials said that the coronavirus is not a health emergency and that there is no need to panic. Only



the restrictions related to physical distancing was started and common people were advised to maintain personal hygiene including washing hands and cough etiquettes.

After 47 days of the detection of the first case, on 19th March 2020, the BJP-led central Government called for a 14-hour 'Janta Curfew' on 22nd March 2020. The Prime Minister in his address appealed to the citizens of the country to stand in the balconies or at the doors of their houses and clap or ring bells for five minutes as a show of appreciation to acknowledge and salute efforts of the people engaged in providing services. In between, unscientific minds bounced up in joy. BJP leaders organised Go-Mutra party and tried to portray the Go-Mutra and Gobar as an effective medicine for corona in its bid to establish the old aged unscientific beliefs and superstitions. As an inevitable fall-out of the given situation, many people couldn't realise the danger of COVID-19. So, the country witnessed the huge gatherings and rallies sounding gongs, bells or plates. The Government officials including District Magistrates and Superintendent of Police organised rallies. Even the Governor of Karnataka was seen trumpeting plates in a gathering. Thousands of people participated in these rallies and ignored physical distancing completely.

Still, what missed amidst this melodrama are the steps to increase the testing and detecting potential Coronavirus victims;

adequate infrastructure in the hospitals to treat the infected persons; adequate and qualitative Personal Protective Equipment for the Doctors, Nurses and Health workers; and adequate quarantine arrangement. What is reality? The number of testing centres is quite insufficient. As of 20th March 2020 6 PM, India had tested only 14,514 people in a country of 130 crore population. Moreover, the central government allowed the export of the materials needed to produce Personal Protective Equipment till 19th March 2020 and ventilators up to 24th March 2020. So, the doctors, nurses, health workers and such other personnel involved in providing health service are not provided with sufficient and qualitative PPE. Till the last of March, the COVID-19 was on the verge of community infection in India.

Then to put a check on community transmission, the entire country was put under lockdown from 25th March onwards but in a very ill-conceived manner. Even on 19 March itself, the Government could have announced lockdown providing at least 5 days for the people to get prepared. But the sudden lockdown has pushed myriads of people into a terrible condition. On one hand, the working people in the unorganised sector i.e. roadside vendors, small shop owners, rickshaw & auto pullers, contract workers, maid-servants, peasants, daily wage earners, unemployed labourers more particularly

the migrant labourers were subjected to starvation. Instead of taking appropriate measures to solve these problems, to utter surprise of the saner section of the society, the BJP employed all its strength to capture power in Madhya Pradesh and a precious time that could have been used to contain COVID-19 was lost to the power play. Common people became infuriated. In this condition, to divert the attention of the common people, on one hand, the ruling establishment tried to transform the physical distancing to communal distancing centring on an assembly of Tablighi Jamat, a transnational Muslim religious group and resorted to the symbolism on the other i.e. to light a diya, candle or hold a mobile torch with chanting a 'Sloka' on 5th April 2020 after switching off electric lights under the plea of exhibiting unity of people.

Despite knowing the heart-wrenching condition of the common people, the ruling dispensation still acted at a snail's pace. Increasing the days of lockdown has appeared as the only method of the policymakers to contain the pandemic. Due to the callousness of the government, the way in which the graph of COVID-19 is becoming steeper, it has become a nightmare and the whole country is experiencing a humanitarian crisis in every aspect of life. Till the date, infrastructure of the hospitals in our country is not up to the mark to treat the corona-infected patients. But the government has continued its symbolism

and IAF, Navy helicopters showered flower petals to honour COVID-19 warriors.

When the whole country is engaged in combating the Corona pandemic, people are shocked to see the central government is unilaterally declaring to implement one after the other draconian anti-people policies. While the price of crude oil in the international market is at its lowest, the government has hiked the price of the petrol-diesel and also transportation fare. When retrenchment and joblessness are haunting the minds of the common people, new recruitment is frozen in different states. The govt. has snatched the hard-earned right of the workers. It increased the working hours of the labourers from 8 hours to 12 hours a day. DA hike of government employees and pensioners put on hold till July 2021. In UP the government has declared that for the next 3 years all labour protection laws stand abolished.

It is also deplorable that the central government is also busy in preparing the National Curriculum Framework and the process of rewriting the school textbooks based on the controversial National Education Policy (NEP) at this critical juncture. When prominent educationists, scientists, teachers, students and several organisations including ours had raised serious objections to the NEP, it was the obligation of any democratic government to evolve for a broad consensus involving all of them. But this government which cares least for

democratic debate or discussion is out to impose this much-hated policy. As a part of this, the government has been trying to push online education using pandemic conditions as a Trojan horse. While business tycoons will harvest the billions promised by massive online courses, the majority of the students will be deprived of their right to get education. Online Education will create trouble for students to grasp things properly and teachers to teach holistically. Further, it will increase discrimination and hamper the infusion of social responsibility among the students and teachers. Needless to say, due to the semester system, the chain of academic events and the academic calendars will be jeopardised which will adversely affect the standard of education. However, different universities and boards have already cancelled the regular examinations and switched over to alternative examination and evaluation process. Through this process, it will not be possible to evaluate a student properly. Rather malpractice will be encouraged and honest students will be frustrated. Along with this, the scholarship of research scholars has also stopped during lockdown leading to the crisis in their activities.

It's interesting that at this critical situation too, the Modi government is working in the interest of the monopoly capital. It opened up the defence power and coal sector to the private operators to give them more scope to mint fabulous profit. Under the plea of unavailability of

the funds to fight against COVID-19, the central government sought loans amounting 6 billion dollars from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. But how the government is utilising the funds? It has written off the bank loan of wilful defaulters amounting Rs 68,607 crore. A sum of Rs. 20,000 crore has been allotted for central vista beautification near Parliament House and Rashtrapati Bhawan. For buying SPS fitted luxury aircraft for the Prime Minister and the President of India, Rs 8458 crore would be spent and so on.

But the same government couldn't spend a few crores of rupees to feed the poor migrant workers and virtually forced these people to return to their native places. The country had witnessed the lakhs of half-fed half-clad people walking in the streets in scorching heat to reach their native places. The heartless government in a populist stunt announced to provide some special trains to send these migrant labourers to their native places. It's noteworthy that while special flights were arranged to bring back those stranded abroad free of cost, these migrant workers were charged for travelling due to mishandling of the tickets. Furthermore, many people died on-board as trains were delayed due to ill-planned routes and no such arrangements were made for providing food and drinking water to the passengers on route. A heart-rending video showing a child trying to wake up his dead mother who died of hunger and

thirst by pulling the makeshift shroud at the railway platform depicts gravity of the conditions. So, while the government is shedding crocodile tears, in reality, it's not working in the interest of the common man. Even the announcement of packages is proved to be the hoax only. Along with this, the government has permitted to open the liquor shops on the plea of generating revenue, knowing well that the liquor menace in our country has resulted in consistently growing crimes on women and children and is contributing greatly in making young generation crippled. In this critical juncture, when governments were expected to take care of the basic needs of the common people, this decision will snatch even the last piece of bread from

the mouth of many of the poor families, especially women and children as many of the family heads, addicted of liquor and devoid of conscience will spend whatever money they have in purchasing liquor and helping our governments in 'generating revenue'. What a shame! Hence, facing all odds, we the students and youths have to stand by the toiling people whose life and livelihood is on the verge of utter ruination. Let's renew our pledge to carry forward our historic task as the vanguards of social progress with the slogan 'Stand for Humanity'. Let's engage ourselves in the propagation of scientific temper, stand by the needy and organise the protest to compel the government to take necessary measures to save precious lives.





Hunger havoc in India may surpass Corona casualties in future An Interview with Dr. Tarun Mandal

SP: What is the current status of COVID-19 pandemic worldwide? Why death tolls are rising daily?

Dr. Tarun Mandal: Corona pandemic is getting worse and cases of infection and death are on the rise throughout the world. Till today [31 May 2020] as per available report infected cases and number of death in the world are 6,156,428 & 370,918 and in India are 181,827 & 5,185 respectively. We have to keep in mind such hike is happening despite all possible preventive measures taken by over 210 countries.

Death toll is increasing because this novel corona virus (SARS-CoV2) is more infective than its previous variants and lot of infected people are over age group 60. And this age group of people are usually loaded with battery of serious other disease like Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart Disease, COPD or Chronic Lung Condition, Kidney disease, Cancer etc. (co-morbidities). This sort of co-morbid conditions reduce body immunity which in turn helps Corona virus to make inroads in the patient more aggressively leading to death. Death and infection in India are comparatively less due to huge youth population in India in comparison to European countries.

SP: Government declared lockdown more than one month back and it is now continuing. Is it adequate for containment of this epidemic? If not what should have been the correct steps of the centre and the state to contain the epidemic in India?

Dr Tarun Mandal: Neither lockdown nor taking recourse to unscientific stools (use of cow urine, religious rituals, lamp lighting and alike) is effective to contain the pandemic or Corona spread. It is proved worldwide that lockdown as a measure can help only lessen the speed and spread of infection but cannot eradicate the disease. And to get real benefit of lockdown side by side case detection and isolation and treatment and mass testing of people are very much necessary. It helps the country to turn down the 'peak' of the infection within a short time towards a 'plateau' for a longer period and thereby helping the country's administration giving breathing space to boost up health infrastructure to cope up with the surge of disease burden. Without revamping the poor health infrastructure, arranging for PPEs, ventilators, quarantine and isolation beds, ITU arrangements, medicines and trained manpower lockdown is meaningless and

its extension will affect heavily on economy.

Globally accepted containment measures for COVID19 are very clear. To stop international flights strictly from the beginning, to examine and test the travellers arriving in the country and to quarantine them for the fortnight, to isolate any patient with positive report and to trace all his/her contacts in the family and outer circle and bring them to quarantine, to treat Covid19 patients in good equipped centres. These are basic things Centre and States should follow which they did not and the consequences, the whole country is facing now. We should not forget though India got first positive case in Kerala on January 30, 2020 but Union government was busy then arranging reception of US President Donald Trump, trying to topple government at Madhya Pradesh through horse trading, allowing international flights in all airports and even giving permission to hold religious festivals in Punjab, UP, Tamil Nadu and Delhi and other places at their will.

SP: Vietnam is a small country, but the number of death due to COVID 19 is very less. Another small country, Cuba sent medical team in Italy where the situation is very grim. China is successful in containing the disease outside Wuhan province. But the condition of so called developed countries of Europe and America is very grim. What is the reason behind

it?

Dr Tarun Mandal: What tiny countries like Vietnam, South Korea, Singapore and obviously Cuba followed to contain Corona were normal scientific practices to contain a highly infective viral disease? Stopping international passengers to enter into the country was a priority. Quarantine, mass testing of maximum number of people to detect the disease early and to isolate and treat them were other regular measures for them. Mind it South Korea did not take recourse of lockdown but its mass testing was highest in the world and Singapore followed mainly that path. Physical distancing preferably of minimum 6 feet, hand washing and sanitisation and wearing of masks, to avoid touching of mouth-nose and eyes, not to spit publicly and coughing under elbow guard - such precautions were strictly implemented in those countries.

Cuba is in general far ahead above so many countries in the world including US in regard to providing health services to their people since last few decades. Naturally they strictly implemented all scientific steps to prevent Corona spread from the start and the citizens were confident enough to follow advisories of their doctors and health administrators which is not usually the case in most of the countries where health services are mainly private. It is the socialistic approach and attitude of Cuba since the period of their departed leader Fidel Castro to send medical teams in disasters

world over and this time also they sent teams not only to Italy but also to many other countries. In 2018 to contain dreaded Ebola epidemic they also sent doctors and medical team to affected countries.

China cut off Wuhan as soon as the first case was found there from the rest of the Hubei province and rest of China. They imposed absolute lockdown within Wuhan, an important world Trade centre, providing all facilities and necessities of life to each and every citizens there. By that time they treated, researched, and prepared papers with their ground level experiences how they could tackle the menace after so many casualties including that of health care providers.

But what they failed to do, they did not stop international flights from Wuhan and of China to avoid their business loss and thus the dreaded disease could spread to different corners of the world. The Government of China once socialist now a capitalist-imperialist country informed the world late about the arrival of the new fatal disease. Here their profit motive from world business prevailed over health interest of the people which also hold true for all other capitalist imperialist countries of the world in trade relation with China.

European countries and America took the challenge of Corona rather lightly and initiated preventive measures late in these two so called first World continents. Moreover there aged population are far more than other parts

of the world which gave them disease and death load more. Third important point is normally in flu seasons every year in US and Italy and many other European countries 'flu death' remain 30-40-50 thousands at an average. So this year's Covid19 death toll certainly covers many of the 'flu' deaths within. Fourth but not less significant is their health system mainly based on private services and on insurances (UK is exception). In case of US and particularly in New York it had come to light that the working class, unorganised and non-insured people are mainly dying and falling victim whose income are uncertain and mainly having poor nutrition. Which actually tears apart their hoax of sophisticated health care services and coverage. In Britain also reports came in that doctors are to buy their own PPEs and PPEs are being reused in their National Health Services NHS).

SP: Do you think our health infrastructure is adequate enough to combat this situation?

Dr Tarun Mandal: Not at all. We are lagging far behind of the country's need. Due to many reasons may be our infected cases and death toll are less in comparison to advanced countries. Tests conducted in India for its detection are much less than many other countries, so actual infection load may not be revealed. We have to keep in mind that 85% of corona infection is mild in nature, easily cured and 70% is asymptomatic.

So who knows where we actually stand. Community spread, contrary to the government claim, has occurred beyond doubt in different states and areas. So what we are observing today may be 'tip of the iceberg' and the dangerous peak of the curve may appear later in India. So our preparation with PPEs, beds, ventilators, oxygen supply, HCQs, ITU beds and trained manpower with quarantine and isolation places/ wards are in dire necessity. Protection and security of health care providers are another best weapon of fighting Covid19 where India should put much emphasis to prevent major catastrophe.

SP: After coming out of this situation deep injury will remain in psychology of the people and in social atmosphere. What would be our planning in recovering this situation?

Dr Tarun Mandal: True, psychological effect of the bereaved families in particular and of the society in general will be huge after the crisis is over which is not seen in near vicinity. Corona is going to stay with us for a longer time may be with less virulence, according to

many experts of the world. We may have to live with corona, like many other epidemic diseases of the past. For the families directly affected by the disease and suffered fatality a good number of them may require long period psychological counselling. But actual load of psychological disbalance will occur due to huge economic loss, unemployment, hunger, job loss and allied problems which have begun to show its ugly head throughout the length and breadth of the country for the coming one two years. To tackle those will be the major challenge where role of the governments and social and political organisations of the land will be deciders. If the saner society fails to compel the governments of centre and states altogether to discharge their respective responsibilities to avert a famine like situation in near future we do not know how many times of corona casualty will be there due to hunger. Then the question of mere physical existence will be more vital and pertinent than psychological! Let us prepare ourselves for the harder time to come and face.

Dr. Mondal is An Eminent Leader of Health Movement and Former MP

Lakhs of Students across the Country Respond to the Clarion call of AIDS0 to 'Stand for Humanity' amidst COVID-19 Crisis!

As Corona pandemic engulfs the world, to restrict the spread of Covid-19,

least drinking water to survive! On the one hand, The BJP-led central government asked the people to light candles and clap their hands to show unity against Corona and gratitude to the labourers who are providing essential services risking their lives but made no attempt to take care of difficulties being faced by millions of people because of the ill-conceived lockdown. Hunger and starvation deaths have multiplied over the past few weeks as daily wage labourers stared in darkness in search of their next meal! A mother attempted to commit suicide after throwing her five children into the river as she failed to get them even a morsel of food! A man committed suicide as he failed to provide food to his



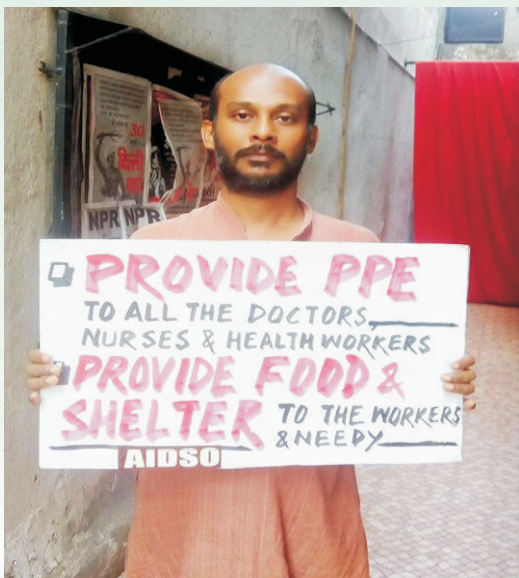
many countries have resorted to lockdowns of critical areas and in some countries including India, the entire country has been put under lockdown for more than one and a half month now. As soon as the lockdown was announced, the whole country witnessed an exodus of migrant workers as lakhs of them travelled hundreds of miles to return to their villages, wherein they would get at

wife and children. A young girl of 13, after travelling hundreds of miles on foot, died due to fatigue and empty stomach just an hour before reaching the village. These stories remained unmentioned in press conferences of central Government.

On the other hand, thousands of medical professionals who are battling the virus, keeping their own lives at stake, are

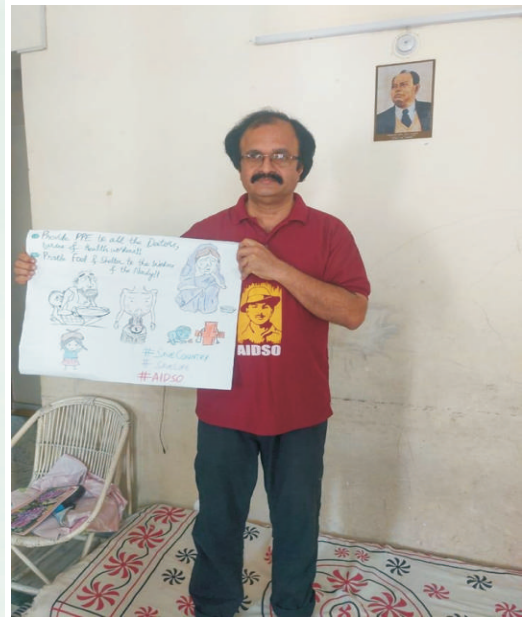
demanding time and again for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and medicines to help those in need. Ground-level workers like ASHAs, are made to travel within quarantined areas without any Protective gears. Some are even deprived of minimum wages citing lack of funds. Yet, they continue to work unselfishly across the country. Our organisation, All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) has been active in relief works providing food and other basic amenities to those in need across the country. In several states, AIDSO volunteers are actively involved in relief works for more than a month now.

In this background, AIDSO All India Committee gave a call to conduct a massive online campaign on 22nd April,



Sourav Ghosh, General Secretary, AIDSO

across the country asking students, supporters and people at large to hold a placard with following demands and post



V.N.Rajsekhar, President, AIDSO

the pictures on social media:

1. Provide PPE to Doctors, Nurses and Health workers;
2. Provide food and shelter to the poor and needy.

The clarion call to “Stand for Humanity” has received a tremendous response from students and common people. It was a historic movement! Since the beginning of the spread of Covid-19, the slogan of Government has been to maintain social distancing. But the response of people has proved that there is no social distancing in the hearts of people. There exists only physical distancing. From Uttarakhand to Kerala and from Gujarat to West Bengal, lakhs of students belonging to more than 25 states of the country participated in the campaign expressing their solidarity with the movement. Many students, who belong

to labourers' and peasants' families, who themselves are suffering from hunger held placards showing unity with all the fellow oppressed. Their parents too displayed their solidarity. In several states, just by seeing the poster on Facebook and Whatsapp, many students joined the campaign. In Madhya Pradesh and other states, several general supporters of BJP asked our volunteers if they could also stand in solidarity with the demands. In West Bengal, students even from remote villages and tribal areas participated very emotionally. Research scholars from countries like USA, Germany etc., too expressed their support. Professors and Doctors belonging to prominent institutions and hospitals also joined the event. Prof. Menoka Basu Roy, a retired professor who has crossed 80, also expressed her solidarity, a professor from Calcutta University expressed his solidarity and a doctor belonging to a prominent hospital in Karnataka was also holding placard under the aegis of AIDS0.

In present times, when the social system being ruled by the capitalist class in the interest of its class rule is making people more self-centred and creating division among the common masses, the response to this campaign only reiterates of their failure. This campaign has gone a long way in creating a great impact on this social movement and the student community. The students and youth of any country have always been at the forefront in shouldering the responsibility of creating a condition for

social change. It is the need of the hour for all progressive-minded people to get united to develop a sense of social responsibility and obligation among people and raise their consciousness level to organise the people against this wretched system!



CONGRATULATIONS

The struggling students
of the country.

FOR A HISTORIC SUCCESS OF
STAND FOR HUMANITY
ONLINE STUDENTS' PROTEST
AGAINST GOVERNMENTS'
IRRESPONSIBILITY.

Strengthen the ongoing movement
for sufficient PPE for
doctors-nurses-health workers
& food, shelter for the
workers and needy.

AIDS0

Relief Work by AIDSO During COVID-19



We all are spending our time in a very critical situation created by lockdown. The severe infection of corona virus prevented the natural motion of our civilization. Everyone is in a panic stricken condition. All types of earning processes have been stopped. People are witnessing the degradation of socio economic condition. Basically the situation of the poor people is getting miserable day by day. Their languish for survival has pronounced a tremendous

appeal to everyone. But, the super power government has not been taking any positive measures since the starting of this lock down period. Millions of migrant labourers are dying on their way back to the home. The struggle of a starving mother who has no ability to breastfeed to her baby on the National Highway exposes the cruelty of the civilization. Now they are fighting with the unpardonable death. In such a critical moment, we have tried our level best to serve the defenceless and to overcome the situation across the country.

AIDSO West Bengal State Committee has mobilised its entire strength and jumped in the relief work. Through online process, all the members, supporters of our organisation have been collecting funds. We have also appealed all the well-wishers, teachers, professors, lawyers, businessmen through a digital letter to stand for the poor and the general people. The hidden humanity inside our heart has connected us more. From different corners of our society, we are getting positive response. Spontaneously

people, irrespective of their religion, cast and creed, are contributing to us. Such a response from the common people is immensely inspiring us to win over the situation. Already, we have distributed food, groceries to run those poor families in many district of our state like Murshidabad, Tea gardens of Darjeeling, among the labourers of Jute Mills in North 24 Parganas etc. We will start to distribute necessary things and food soon among the slum area and poor colony of Calcutta and Midnapore. A lots of students of our state have engaged themselves in this war to protect the society. Common students from schools, colleges and universities stretched out their hand of company to us with a high spirit. Already in West Bengal, we have started the measures to appeal everyone

to **"Keep One Rupee or a Handful of Rice daily"** to support the unfed people in the name of humanity to continue our relief work.

Leaders and activists of Hazaribag district of Jharlhandwith the help of local people have been distributing the food packets to the needy since 24 April 2020. In Durg district of Chhatisgarh, volunteers of AIDS0 distributed the food materials to the working people while in Dhamtari district activists of AIDS0 and AIDS0 prepared sanitised Face Mask and distributed among the locals.

Apart from these, AIDS0 volunteers involved in the relief work initiated by different fraternal organisations in their locality.







State level online protest day at Delhi against the arresting of CAA-NRC protestors



On 13th May 2020, under the auspices of AIDS0, AIMSS, AIDYO and AIUTUC, a state level online protest day was organized in Delhi against the arresting of CAA-NRC protestors. The daylong online campaign was responded by a large section of people from all sections including students. Students took their pictures holding posters with demands: Revoke UAPA; Release all CAA-NRC protestors immediately; Give exemplary punishment to the criminals involved in character assassination of women protestors. In the evening, an online protest meeting was also organized in the form of FB live on 'AIDS0 Delhi' Facebook page in Delhi state office of AIDS0. The meeting was addressed by Com. Dinesh

Mohanta, Treasurer, All India Committee of AIDS0 and Com. Prashant Kumar, President, Delhi State Committee and All India Secretariat Member of AIDS0. The meeting was conducted by Com. Soumya Samal, State Committee Member and All India Council Member of AIDS0.

Speakers raised several questions over these arrests and blamed the Central government to serve its petty political interest even within this difficult time of COVID-19. When the priority of the government should have been to provide food, shelter and other basic needs for all those who are in need particularly for the poor section of our country, to provide PPE to doctors, nursing staffs and other health workers, it has used this lockdown as an opportunity to attack the CAA protestors to put an end to the CAA movement which has been stopped for the time being only because of COVID-19. The attack on protestors does not end here. Women protestors are trolled with filthy comments. Shamefully, on social media, character assassination of Safoora Zargar is taking place. It is not very difficult to understand that the criminals who are involved in this character assassination carries which ideology! It not only shows the ideology

of RSS-BJP carrying the venom of anti women thought but it also shows the extent to which they can come down culturally in its bid for hate campaign against the dissenting voices, minority groups and anyone who is opposed to their politics. The Delhi Police is working as goonda force for BJP. All the hatemongers like Kapil Mishra, Ragini Thakur, Anuraag Thakur, Pravesh Verma, who incited people with communal sentiments resulting the communal violence in the month of February this year are roaming, no step has been taken to book the culprits who are involved in the character assassination of women protestors but without any clear evidence, CAA protestors have been arrested with false

charges.

The speakers warned the government to immediately release all the CAA protestors, revoke UAPA and to book all those who are involved in character assassination of women protestors. They demanded that government should focus primarily on saving lives of common people, many of whom are dying because of hunger, ill governance and anti poor attitude of the government. They also appealed to the common people in general and students-youth in particular and intellectuals to come forward, raise their voice and unleash a democratic mass movement against all such attacks on protestors and freedom of speech.

Online Protest Meeting

In Demand Of

- *Revoke UAPA*
- *Release all anti CAA-NRC protestors immediately.*
- *Give exemplary punishment to criminals involved in Character assassination of women protestors.*

#ShameOnDelhiPolice
#AIDSO_Delhi



AIDSO, Delhi State

All India Democratic Students' Organisation

13 May 2020

5 PM



LIVE

on

FB page : AIDSO Delhi

Link:
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/AIDSO-Delhi-111321243576723/>

Speakers:

Dinesh Mohanta

Treasurer, All India Committee, AIDSO

Prashant Kumar

All India Secretariat Member, AIDSO
& President Delhi State.



fb page: AIDSO Delhi



Artists Stand for Humanity

The coronavirus pandemic has added a new dimension of uncertainty and anxiety to our already fragile and insecure world. The chaos and panic that has been brought to the millions of toiling people is unthinkable. Lakhs of starving migrant labours, children and women are on the roads and railway tracks across the country. Due to lockdown they are on a life and death struggle covering thousands of kilometers coming to their native land for collecting a morsel of food. It is very painful and shocking that out of them hundreds of distressed people are dying on the roads without food and dying on the railway lines. The apathetic and criminal attitude of both central and state governments has crossed all limits.

In this backdrop of grave crisis, to express the deep sorrows of the toiling people, 'ChhatraChetana', the organ of AIDSO, Odisha State Committee has organised a day long cultural program with the hashtags "#Artist_Stand_for_Humanity" and "I_Am_For_Civilization" on May 13 in the memory of birth anniversary of

eminent poet PadmashreeSachiRoutray. Progressive songs based on the pains of toiling people, recitation of poems, paintings, mono actions, photography, playing of instruments were performed by the artists and shared on social media like facebook, whatsapp etc.

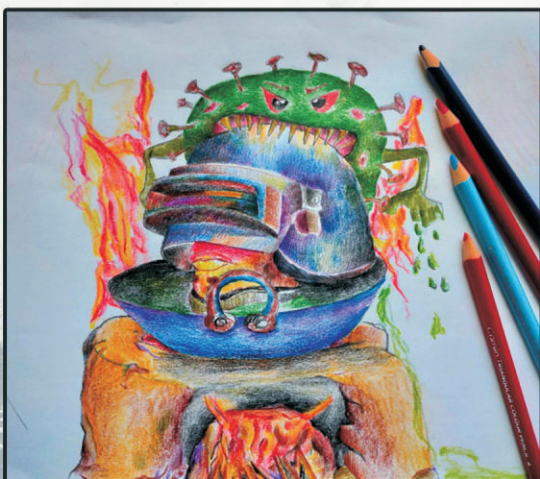
Earlier on 2nd May 2020, in West Bengal different little magazines and artists posted their poem, short story, painting, songs in the social media with hashtags #Stand_for_life#Art_for_Humanity.

Similarly, on 10 May 2020, at the call of AIDSO Jharkhand state Committee, artists posted their poem, short story, painting, songs in the social media with hashtags #Stand_for_Life#Art_for_Humanity. It's noteworthy that the organisers extended the time posting by 24 hours on the request of the participants.

More than six thousand artists including many senior artists participated in these programmes very enthusiastically and scores of well-meaning people across the country appreciated this initiative and it was really a very successful program.



Artist stands for
Humanity.
I am for Civilization





Movement against Fee Hike in Karnataka



The Karnataka State Committee of the All India Democratic Students' Organisation called for a statewide online protest day on May 2nd against the exorbitant fee hike for Post Graduate medical and dental seats. In private medical colleges-the fees of Government quota seats has been increased from Rs. 5.8 lakh to Rs. 7.13 lakh per annum; that of private seats has been increased from Rs. 8.7 lakh to Rs. 11.5 lakh! Whereas, the fees of Government seats in Govt. colleges had been hiked nearly 5 times in

2019 itself. Now it stands at Rs. 1.13 lakh!

Hundreds of medical and dental students across Karnataka participated in online protest by holding placards with demands to withdraw the exorbitant fee hike in Medical & Dental PG Courses; Increase number of PG seats in government medical colleges; and No to Management Quota.

The Online Petition initiated by AIDSO Karnataka says '...Many poor and meritorious

students are being denied higher education because of the policies which are aimed at commercialization and commodification of medical education and the health care sector. Further, this decision has been taken at a time when the entire country is reeling under severe economic recession and COVID-19 pandemic. When the grim financial situation has made the life miserable, this fee hike has come like a bolt from the blue. It once again reiterates the fact that state government is more interested to

serve the needs of the money-hungry private managements and it has least concern towards the plight of our people...'. The petition include the following demands to the state government:

- 1) Immediately withdraw the exorbitant fee hike in Medical & Dental PG Courses. Rollback the fees of PG Seats to affordable level.
2. Ensure adequate infrastructure facilities and Increase the number of PG seats in all Government Medical and Dental colleges.
3. Introduce a Central and State Legislation to ensure that in all private

professional colleges (a) all seats shall be brought under government quota to be distributed on the basis of merit and (b) the Fee Structure shall be within the reach of a common man.

This petition became viral in Social media with nearly 7000 Signatures. It was widely circulated by the medical students and doctors in their groups. Many appreciated our timely reaction. The demands raised by AIDSOS were widely discussed among Medical students, house surgeons and doctors. They all stood one with us in raising these demands and expressed that this fee hike is an attack on medical education.



Movement against Liquor Menace

The Kerala State Committee of AIDS O organised an online social media campaign demanding that all liquor outlets which were shut after the onset of COVID - 19 pandemic remain close.



This campaign was taken because of a unique situation that was created by the lockdown. AIDS O has been in a prolonged struggle against the government sponsored liquor menace that has plagued Kerala. The left and the right governments which rule the state alternately, see liquor as a money minting machine and promote its sale unashamedly. Also, the different governments are patronized by powerful liquor lobbies. This has created a

situation wherein the social fabric of Kerala has suffered greatly. The number of ghastly crimes, attacks against women and children, petty crimes, motor vehicle accidents and others which see a yearly increase, is more often than not directly linked to alcohol. Families are torn apart across the state and even young school going children have been found to be addicted to alcohol. Festival seasons are particularly infamous for the record consumption of liquor.

It was in such a backdrop that the corona virus spread. Even then, the government was reluctant to shut down the liquor



outlets which continued to see huge

crowds. Only the worsening of the situation forced the government to close all outlets. It had steadfastly maintained a stance that closing of the outlets would lead to the increase in sale of illegal and spurious liquor. The government also tried making excuses that many addicts would be driven to suicide if all alcohol were stopped altogether. There were even moves to give directions to medical physicians to prescribe alcohol to patients! (The physicians refused to do so unanimously). Finally, even online sale of alcohol was contemplated.

But the lockdown was indeed a rebuttal to all the arguments of the government. As the days passed the number of people calling the different de addiction centres in the state increased. They were asking for a way out of the liquor menace that had taken over their



lives. Many lives and families have been mending. Not only was the government c l a i m s disproved, the argument that availability was t h e m a i n problem has been proved right. But even amidst this lockdown the government permitted the licence of six new bars. So it was important that our organization take up such a campaign.

We had called for the campaign named #Break_the_Bottle on April 22. Students were asked to creatively present the demands in different forms on various social media platforms. Our call received m a s s i v e response from not just students but from the whole society, including several e m i n e n t personalities. They prepared skits, short films, posters, songs, dances and other vastly different creations to become a part of the campaign. The campaign was indeed a huge success.



In this third phase of lockdown, liquor outlets have opened in many states. Kerala government has as of now not reopened them citing the reason of the pandemic. There is no doubt that the anti-liquor sentiment of the vast majority of the people has made the government cautious about reopening the outlets. The reopening of the outlets will indeed be a sad reversal of all the gains we have achieved during this lockdown. This requires us to be all the more vigilant and remain on the path of protest.

Delhi: on the 6th May 2020, the Delhi State Committee of the All India Democratic Students' Organization observed an online state level demand day against opening of liquor shops

during the lockdown. The demands which were highlighted are "Immediately ban liquor sale" and "Nation needs food not liquor". Many students from different schools, colleges and universities registered their voice of protest in the online protest. A memorandum has also been submitted to the CM of Delhi in this regard.

When the mankind is facing the deadly pandemic covid-19, the government, instead of fulfilling the basic needs of the people, opened the liquor shops. The workers are suffering from starvation and even committing suicide due to lack of food. Thousands of daily wage labourers and migrant workers started walking to their villages due to unavailability of transportation. Many of them died on the way. While the government is unable to provide food and other basic needs for different sections of poor people, it is catering liquor instead. On the other hand we know that the NCRB report 2014 says that 85% crimes against women were due to alcoholism. It has increased by 6% in 2017 compared to 2016. We know that the government kept mum about the crimes even before the lockdown, and now the lockdown has become an excuse for the government not to take any action against the crimes occurred during this period. The liquor sale will result into the increase in crime rates on women and children. The viral videos on social media showed that the people ignored all

the rules of lockdown to purchase liquor. Undoubtedly, this will risk the life of many people as it will enhance the chance of spread of the covid-19 on large scale.

In its appeal, the committee appealed to the student community in particular and common people in general to

raise their voice in protest against this opening of liquor shops and to demand to fulfill the immediate and essential needs for all those who are in crisis particularly for the daily wage earners, migrant labourers and all section of poor people. Reiterating the demand for measures to prevent violence against girls and girls, enforce complete alcoholism and ban pornography. All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO), All India Democratic Youth Organisation (AIDYO) and All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS) jointly organised an online campaign in Tamil Nadu on 21 May 2020.

On 25 may 2020, online protest was organised in Jharkhand demanding total ban on production and sell of liquor by AIDSO, AIDYO and AIMSS jointly.





Online Campaign in Odisha demanding Free Textbooks



AIDSO, Odisha State Committee organised a state level online protest in the demand of providing free text books to 9th & 10th students of Odisha in this corona pandemic situation on 20th April, 2020. It is to be mentioned here that the Board of Secondary Education, Odisha has changed the syllabus of 9th and 10th text books, which would be an overburden for poor students of Odisha in this critical economic situation as they can't purchase new books. More than 500 students and activists across the length and breadth of Odisha, took part in this protest. In continuation to this, a mass submission of memorandum through email to the CM, Mass Education Minister and board authorities in the demands of free text books and exemption of all fees of students, has been organised by all district and units of AIDSO, Odisha on 29th April. And also, a memorandum was submitted to the mass education minister at his residence on the same day.

Birth Anniversary of Pritilata Waddadar



110th birth anniversary of Shaheed Pritilata Waddadar was celebrated gloriously by AIDSO, AIDYO, AIMSS on 5th May 2020, across the whole state of Tripura. Along with that, it was observed in a befitting manner in state office, Agartala. Com. Shefali Debnath, State secretary of AIMSS, Com. Bhabatosh Dey, State President of AIDYO and Com. Mridul Kanti Sarkar, All India Executive Committee member of AIDSO and other leaders garlanded to the portrait of Shaheed Pritilata. A brief speech was also delivered by Com Mridul Kanti Sarkar emphasising on life and struggle of Pritilata.

Campaign against Opening of Liquor Shop in Siliguri

As per the directives of Central and State governments on opening of liquor shops across the country, AIDSO, AIMSS, AIDYO strongly resisted such an heinous act which will lead more corona cases and domestic violence in households. In Siliguri, activists of AIDSO, AIDYO, AIMSS of Darjeeling Districts made a peaceful demonstration demanding ban on liquor and protested against opening of liquor shops during this lockdown period near Siliguri Police Station. Police brutally heckled our comrades and arrested 7 activists including Sikha Nandi, District Secretary, AIMSS, Dhananjay Roy, District Incharge, AIDYO and Rina Mandal of AIDSO.

Shaheed Bhagat Singh at Every Home



On the occasion of 90th Martyrs' Day of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh, Sukhadev and Rajguru on 23 March, AIDS0 gave a call to the students to observe the Martyrs' Day in their home maintaining physical distance to contain COVID-19. Programmes involving different sections of people particularly school and college students and youths were organised across the country.

In Karnataka, response of students to the call was tremendous. All the district executive members, council members and activists across the state took the call 'Shaheed Bhagat Singh at Every Home' to their heart and observed the day with their parents, neighbours and siblings. They read out articles of Shaheed Bhagat Singh before their near and dears and explained it to them. They elucidated importance of observing martyrdom day of Shaheed Bhagat Singh to the children from their neighbourhood. They have observed the day as if it is a festival at their homes. Those who did not have photos, kept books published by AIDS0 on Shaheed Bhagat Singh, pictures from their textbooks, mobile phones and some even drew Bhagat Singh's image and literally worshipped the image. It was a stirring experience for each one of us.

Free Coaching Class in Delhi

In the recent past, North-East Delhi witnessed immense terror and panic as politically designed communal violence gripped the entire area. Innumerable houses have been incinerated, all documents and materials have been reduced to ashes, and families have lost their dear ones while many more lay injured. Communal frenzy wrecked so many families. Sisters lost their brothers, mothers lost their sons and children lost their fathers, while there are mothers who are still waiting to get the lifeless bodies of their sons to weep over. Sometimes we wonder, how cold-hearted and pitiless those people might be, who launched such barbaric attacks on the innocent people! A single house costs middle-class man years of hard work, toil and sweat. But these heartless monsters didn't even think twice before lighting everything down to mere heaps of black soot. The shops and restaurants (especially the Muslim shops and stores) lining the two sides of the road have nothing left in them...just a black silhouette of the bare skeleton, screaming the stories of the nightmares that they have just witnessed. One ought to see how a 3 months pregnant woman (she was a protestor at the Chand Bagh protest site) has been ruthlessly injured by the rioters; her head smashed with a cement block, legs and hands broken;

repeated lathi charges on her has turned



her skin black and blue. It was a matter of chance that the little life growing in her womb has not been affected. In all such brawl, the Delhi Police has played an exemplary role in working hand in hand with the rioters to spread terror amongst the common people. Amidst this violence, the children were the worst affected. Physical injuries will heal eventually, but the mental scars that this recent episode of savagery has inflicted on their minds can never be completely healed. The smokes from the riots will always smother them; the screams and spine-chilling cries of their neighbours will always echo in their ears. At such a tender age, these kids have witnessed terrors of the unimaginable extent... Fear and dismay have made an indelible mark in their minds. Their examinations are just round the corner, but they have neither books nor the requisite mindset to study in this situation. The mother of a 3

months old child recollects the horrors of the night when they had to escape from



the terraces, and in the feat of all such mayhem, her 3-month-old little girl had been injured by a stone that had probably been pelted by one of the miscreants. A young little boy of 4 years pointed to a black charred wall and said, “Patahaiappi, Ladai k baadna sab kuchkalahogaya.” (Do you know sister, everything has turned black after the fights!) For these tender hearts, black has now become synonymous with fear and riots.

Such violence (which was primarily a state-sponsored hooliganism) happened with the prime motive being to weaken the anti-NRC-CAA-NPR movement. AIDS0 has been a part of the movement since the very moment the bill was brought. The activists of AIDS0 have given their dedicated hours in the protest sites of ShaheenBagh, Chand Bagh, K h u r e j i K h a s , I n d e r l o k , JamiaMilliaIslamia and several other places. The protest sites had become their second homes and the people in the

movement were now their family. That's why, when the violence happened, the AIDS0 activists felt as if a blow has been struck on their family. As soon as the curfew was relaxed in the North-East Delhi, AIDS0 members went and stood by the affected families and victims of the attacks.

In such a situation, it is needless to say that how the government at the centre who designed this carnage and the Delhi government who let it all happened with silent support could

take up the task of providing relief seriously to the affected people at various levels! The negligent attitude of the governments was amply clear.

As has already been mentioned earlier, the kids were the worst affected, especially on the mental and emotional fronts. Hence, intending to help these little stars, AIDS0 Delhi State Committee took up an initiative to reach out to such students and help them with teaching assistance, stationery articles and most important, moral support to keep these gay lives afloat even amidst this deep ocean of darkness that they have landed into. AIDS0 had made a humble appeal to the students of various universities in Delhi to come forward and help them in this endeavour. They received a highly optimistic response, both from the students' fraternity as well as the residents of the riot-affected area. Despite many personal difficulties, several students, with deep emotion volunteered to stand with the cause.

People helped with stationery items and funds. With the help of all such good-willed people, the AIDSO started the free coaching classes and hope to go a long way ahead.

Along with the students and the kids, AIDSO volunteers have also struck a cordial relationship with the locals of the area. They visited the people and the parents of the kids every day and tried to extend emotional and moral support to the wailing hearts. Within a very short period of just a week, the people and the volunteers have shared an affectionate kinship that was above the measure of any petty scale. Mothers shared their worries with them, sometimes they would break into tears, children would come running the moment they saw their 'teachers' coming... it had gradually become a part of the schedule that each day, classes would end with some songs or poems or Shayaris. Even amidst this lockdowns,

when it is not being possible to meet physically, distances have not been able to weaken the bond- regular contacts with the kids and their families over phones has cemented the relationship



even stronger. The COVID pandemic might have put their distress hidden from the nation, but they are struggling on both fronts. AIDSO appeal to the students' community in particular and common peace-loving democratic-minded people, in general, to stand with the affected people, extend all possible help to them and unleash a broad-based united left and democratic students' movement to combat communalism and save secularism and humanity.

Martyrs' Day of Baikuntha Shukla Observed



Shaheed Baikuntha Shukla (1907 – 14 May 1934) was a revolutionary and one of the founders of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA). He was hanged for murdering Phanindra Nath Ghosh who had become a government approver which led to hanging of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru. His martyrs' day was observed jointly by AIDSO and AIDYO jointly in Muzaffarpur, Bihar on 14 May 2020. Com. Vijay Kumar, Secretary, AIDSO Bihar State Committee and other leaders garlanded to the portrait of the Shaheed Baikuntha Shukla. A short discussion on his life and struggle of Shaheed Baikuntha Shukla was held after garlanding.

AIDSO Submitted Memorandum to MHRD, UGC and all VCs



[On 22 May 2020, AIDSO All India Committee submitted memorandum to the Minister, HRD, Chairman, UGC and Vice-chancellors of all the Universities of the country regarding present educational problems and their resolution. Herewith we are publishing that memorandum. Editor, Students' Pledge]

To
Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'
Hon'ble Minister of HRD
Government of India
New Delhi

MEMORANDUM

Opinions and suggestions related to the present academic affairs especially in the background of the recent 'UGC Guidelines on Examinations and Academic Calendar for the Universities

In view of COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Lockdown'

Sir,

Presently, we are witnessing a situation which, probably, has not been confronted before by any of us. To take all precautionary measures to remain uninfected and save our lives have become the priority. Still, corona positive cases and death cases are increasing day by day. The ill-conceived sudden lockdown has created unimaginable problems particularly for the lower strata of our society. People are jobless, homeless and without food. Very disturbing news is coming of deaths from starvation, families committing suicide because of hunger, migrant labourers walking on foot for hundreds of kilometers to reach their native place with small children, pregnant ladies, old aged people and many are dying on their way because of dehydration, road and rail accidents. Unfortunately, what was expected from a

government, which boasts high about its pro-people governance, has failed miserably to serve common people in this hour of grave crisis.

The student community is not an exception. The COVID-19 has put many challenges before our academic fraternity starting from primary education up to the level of research & development. In its bid to address the challenges, particularly of higher education, UGC has come up with guidelines. The All India Democratic Students' Organisation has gone through these guidelines meticulously. We would like to express our opinions and suggestions on these guidelines as well as on the entire situation arises before student community because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the very outset, we would like to say that as per established democratic norms, academic matters should be decided by academics. Also, as the present crisis is entirely new for all of us, it was much necessary to discuss the challenges of teaching-learning, examinations, academic calendar, school education, research & development and other problems related to education arises because of COVID-19 pandemic, involving the teachers' associations, students' unions, students' organizations, parents' associations, educationists etc. including medical fraternity on an urgent basis in the aggregate interest of students, their health and their education. The words like 'joint responsibility' and 'quick appropriate decisions' used in the UGC guidelines have not been reflected in preparing it. This consultation was also important because as the condition is getting worse, we can't say that how long will it take the condition to become normal and so it was important to consider the apprehensions, opinions and suggestions of students, teachers, parents and educationists to devise guidelines which should have essentially '*maintain the sanctity of academic expectations*', as has been mentioned in the draft. Yet, as a concerned students' organization, AIDSOS feels its responsibility to express the views of common students through this memorandum to you.

These are our opinions and suggestions:

1) On Online Mode:

The complete guideline could be seen emphasising on online mode for everything, starting from teaching-learning, examinations, result declaration and research & development affairs. It has also stressed repeatedly on following the government guidelines of "social distancing" without any leniency.

It is noteworthy that UGC guidelines, itself mentions the difficulty of '*...accessibility of the internet to the students, especially in remote areas...*'. As a matter of fact, our country has only 36% internet penetration as per the IAMAI (Internet and Mobile Association of India) report 2019. Among 2500 students, who took part in a survey conducted in the University of Hyderabad within this lockdown period, when asked if they would be able to access the classes online if the University opted for them, about 37% of the students answered with an emphatic 'yes', while 45% said they would be able to do so 'infrequently' and 18% (about 450 students) said they can't access at all. Among the

concerns expressed by the students about accessing online classes, 'reliable connectivity' (40%) and 'cost of data connection' (30%) were the most significant. This is the condition in one of the most prestigious university of India. One can easily understand the difficulties for those students who belong from those colleges and universities which are undeveloped or underdeveloped and which accommodates majority of our student population. The condition will be gruesome for the students who belong from rural areas and Economically Weaker Section (EWS). Unavailability of sufficient electricity in many parts of the country, incapability to bear the cost of smart phones and data connection prove to be a disability for them for any online affairs. This problem has not been recognised in the guidelines.

Even those who are capable to avail the online teaching-learning have also to face a number of issues. Apart from the issue of connectivity, the absence of face to face interaction creates trouble for students to grasp things properly and for teachers to teach in a holistic manner. Most of the times, at the end of the class teachers feel that they have only supplied information. Even, some teachers are not well acquainted in online teaching method. The online exercise is of no meaning for those subjects which carry practical part especially subjects of science stream. The guidelines talk about more accountability of teachers but we know that it's the effort of the teachers which has contributed significantly in maintaining connection with students. Was it not required to talk about the infrastructural development and fixing the accountability of university administration through these guidelines?

It's true that the circumstances have compelled us to remain physically distant and so we can't expect a face to face teaching-learning or any other academic affair within the physical campuses. But, we want to say that online classes can be at best serve the purpose of engaging students within this lockdown but it can't be considered as an alternative for the teaching-learning, examinations and many other academic affairs.

2) On Examinations, Evaluation and Academic Schedule:

Talking about the alternative methods of examinations, the guidelines suggest including online open book examinations, MCQ/OMR based examinations, assignment/presentation based assessment etc. It has also suggested that in case the situation does not appear to be normal in view of COVID-19, in order to maintain “social distancing”, safety and health of the students, grading of the students could be composite of 50% marks on the basis of the pattern of internal evaluation adopted by the universities and the remaining 50% marks can be awarded on the basis of performance in previous semester only (if available).....In the situations where previous semester or previous year marks are not available, particularly in the first year of annual pattern of examinations, 100% evaluation may be done on the basis of internal evaluation.

Regarding this, we want to admit, that the evaluation pattern which has been suggested can never evaluate a student correctly. Though choice has been given to improve grade by appearing in special exams in the next semester, but it will be again unnecessary burden for many students.

We also want to bring into your notice about the concern of students of terminal semester/year about their admission in the next courses. They are apprehensive about losing their valuable complete academic year. Many of them are not in or around campus. They are either at their home or stranded somewhere. Because of the sudden lockdown many could not carry the required study materials for their preparation.

We would like to say that for any student having their terminal semester/year or intermediary semester/year, online test, can at best, be optional but should not be mandatory and cannot be considered as a substitute for pen-paper examinations. Not only because of being a very unreliable medium for most of the students but also because of the 'sanctity of academic expectation' as has been talked even in the guidelines.

Hence, we would like to suggest that as soon as the situation becomes normal enough to reopen universities and colleges, face to face teaching-learning should be conducted for an appropriate minimum period of time before going into examinations. Even declared holidays except Sundays may be cancelled for extra classes. Also, to meet out the challenge just after reopening of the institutions, requisite infrastructural changes should be done with at earliest. For this, filling up the vacant teaching posts should be on priority basis.

Immediately after restoration of normalcy in institutions, with a wider consultation on urgent basis, a synchronised academic schedule should be prepared throughout the country for new admissions and that too, keeping the heterogeneous development of universities in mind so that no terminal semester/year student lose its admission in the next course. This academic schedule should also ensure that the students who will be studying in next academic calendar should not be in excessive constraint of teaching-learning periods. After reopening of institutions, campuses, hostels and student lodges, these places must be sanitised at regular interval for a certain period of time. To ensure all such measures, the amount required should be released by the government.

3) On Offline Mode:

Though, very insignificantly, the offline mode of examinations has been proposed as a choice. But would it be enough to have only said this? In a situation where students and parents all are in fear because of COVID-19 pandemic, was it not required to talk about the logistics which university should ensure to its students to participate, if it opts for offline examinations?

Though, it may seem not link up with the context, but we want to bring into your notice that when governments and university administrations should have been taking the responsibility of students who are stuck away from their home because of the sudden lockdown, some universities like Jamia Millia Islamia has served a notice to its students to vacate hostels. Even girls have also been served the notice. Is it not violating the lockdown guidelines? Should your government not take any action against the varsity

administration? Though the draft is talking about '*ensuring health, safety and security of students, faculty and staffs...*', how a student will be able to give examinations if universities deny a safe place for them?

In such circumstances, we demand that, following the guidelines of social distancing, a safe arrangement should be provided for all the students along with migrant labourers who are stuck due to the sudden lockdown to go back to their native places, if possible at their doorstep.

Also, the guidelines suggest that for future, teachers should be trained with ICT (Information and Communication Technology) so that they would be able to complete at least 25% of the syllabus through online. Few days back, the hon'ble Prime Minister has also expressed emphatically on the development of online mode of education.

We would like to say that, we are not against the use of technology in education system but, we repeat that, online mode of education can never be a substitute for education within physical campuses. For many purposes technology can be used but then again keeping the heterogeneous composition of student population of our country, it should be ensured by the government that it does not become discriminatory. Any attempt to replace the face to face mode of education with the online mode will be detrimental to the universal access to education.

4) On CBCS and Semester System:

The problems associated with semester system and CBCS has been raised by all the well-meaning, rational minded education loving people, educationists, individuals and organisations since its wider introduction in recent past. It has been felt widely that the semester and CBCS has jeopardised our education system particularly teaching-learning process and the aim of acquiring comprehensive understanding of a subject. These systems have been brought only to fit with the demand of the 'global market'.

The complex syllabus pattern of CBCS and the lesser number of teaching-learning periods of semester as compare to the annual system are adverse enough to confront the kind of crisis which is before us today. The annual system is more 'shock absorbing' whenever such crises may arise. Would it not be easier to face the challenges ahead of COVID-19 if we could have been following annual mode? Many educationists, education loving people and concerned citizens are of opinion that if we mechanically stick to the semester system and try to evolve examination methods to this framework, it will be catastrophic and hence in the interest of upholding the standard and quality of education and the interest of students, it is better that all universities introduce annual examination scheme for this academic year.

This crisis has taught us that there is a necessity to review the CBCS and semester system and hence to switch over to annual mode again to face any such challenges more effectively in future.

5) On Research and Development:

Though, the UGC guidelines suggest extending tenure for 6 months for those, who had pre-submission and submission. But we would like to say that due to lockdown the research institutions suffered greatly. The main sufferers are PhD students, scholars, project heads and project assistants. Total period of fellowship is constrained to 5 years. There will be a stress to complete the work within the stipulated time.

Hence, because of the enforcing lockdown, it is necessary to increase the period of fellowship for at least 6 months for all the research fellows who are registered currently.

Also, the period of fellowship can't be extended unless the government takes the move to funding agencies. The fund can come through different sources like CSIR, DST, UGC, INSPIRE fellowship and from individual institutions. Now all these funding agencies cannot increase the period because of financial implications. Unless the central government does not increase fund for these institutions, the funding agencies cannot increase the research period.

Hence, the central government should give additional support to these funding agencies so that the period of fellowship can be increased for at least 6 months. Also, we demand that PPE must be provided to all medical and bio safety labs.

6) On Medical Education:

It has also came to our notice that government has proposed that all interns in dental colleges may not have the opportunity to complete their compulsory rotary one-year internship due to the prevailing health emergency conditions and all routine clinical activities of all specialities of dentistry including the internship training are deferred due to COVID-19 pandemic.

We are of the opinion that, if the training will remain incomplete, there will be irreparable damage in the training process. Hence, in the interest of acquiring knowledge and experience to produce good doctors in future, training period of any wing of medical education should not be compromised. We request you to find out the proper solution to fulfil the incomplete rotary duties after coming out from the present crisis.

7) Problems at School level:

We would like to say that the condition of accessibility of online education at school level presents a more gruesome picture. We have observed that some private schools could have managed to organise such classes but for the students of government schools, it is completely absent. These students have lost their valuable time which will never come back in their life. Online classes cannot be an option for them at all as most of them are with no smart phones, no internet connection and no electricity. And again, the online

classes can never be an alternative method of face to face interaction, not even for the students of private schools. The situation compels us to think that had been there a universal access to education in our country, no student would have been suffered in such situation. The family members could have been proved sufficient enough to teach their wards in their own home.

Hence, we would like to say that the demand of universal and quality education, a long cherished dream of our freedom fighters and renaissance personalities, which has never been realised by any government in independent India, should be the prime focus of the government and education policies should be devised to ensure this goal.

Also, we would like to say that because of the lockdown, many students could not take their examinations. So, as soon as schools get opened after the situation gets normal, an appropriate minimum time should be given for teaching-learning at school level before conducting examination. This should be applied even for the board examinees. As children are much susceptible to infection, utmost care should be taken to sanitise schools premises at regular interval.

8) On Fees:

We all know that due to lockdown, millions of families have lost their livelihood. Most of them belong from poor and lower middle class section of our society. In the absence of minimal source of income, it will become a challenging task for the students belonging from such families to pay fees. Condition is such that they may not be able to afford the cost of books, stationary items, dresses and other important things. Even, those who are not hand to mouth have suffered a lot because of this lockdown. They are also in financial crunch. They are struggling to survive anyhow. It is much likely to be possible that in such situation, many may have to leave their study.

Hence, we demand that the government should take necessary measures to waive off all types of fees in government and government aided schools, colleges, universities, research institutes and the fees should be brought within the reach of common people in private institutes. In this background the hiked medical PG fee should be withdrawn.

We also demand a special package from the government to help the students who will be unable to bear the cost of books, stationary items, dresses and other important materials.

9) The larger canvas of the problems:

We also understand that the over emphasis on online mode of teaching- learning and examinations is coming out as a part of the National Policy on Education, which is to promote privatisation and commercialisation of education. It is about shirking the responsibility of government to provide public funded quality education for all. It is not very difficult to understand the switching over to the online mode of education will undoubtedly bring down the expenditure on education, but, at the cost of quality and

accessibility. In this context, we would like to say that any effort to adopt Draft National Education Policy-2019, as has been again expressed by our hon'ble PM in the same deliberation, will be detrimental to the goal of universal education. In our submission to the MHRD, we have explained in detail about it and the present critical situation has helped us to realise more about the destructive effect of such policy when it comes to develop an inclusive and universal education system which can face the present critical situation more effectively.

Having said all this, expecting your kind consideration on our opinions and suggestions, we would like to reiterate, that in this crucial moment, organise a wider consultation with different section of masses related with the education system on urgent basis to come up with a viable solution of the challenges being faced by the students community and whole academic fraternity today, in the larger interest of society.

Thanking You

V.N Rajashekhar

President, AIDSO

Sourav Ghosh

General Secretary, AIDSO

Copy forwarded to

1. The Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC)
2. The Vice-chancellors of all the Universities of the country.

Facebook Live Lecture Series by Students' Pledge



During lockdown, Students' Pledge The central organ of All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) has initiated a Facebook Live Lecture Series - #RayofHope on its page [<https://www.facebook.com/STUDENTSPLEDGEQUARTERLY>]. In this series eminent persons from different walks of life has been discussing on different educational and social problems and on the life and struggle of great personalities.

On 9th May 2020, on the occasion of **75th Anti-fascist Victory day**, a discussion was held on **'Why Socialism is the Future'**. Mr Amitav Chatterjee, Member, Editorial Board of Proletarian Era, a English fortnightly discussed on the importance of the day and importance of socialism to put an end to the exploitation of man by man.



On 14 May 2020, a discussion on **'Condition of Farmers in our Country during Lockdown'** was held. Eminent peasant leader, National President of All India Kisan Khet Majdoor Sangathan [AIKKMS] and working group member of All India Kisan Struggle Coordination Committee [AIKSCC], a platform of more than 200 peasants' organisations Shri Satyawan deliberated on the plight of the farmers and how it is affecting the life of the students.



On 19 May 2020, a discussion was held on **'Condition and Future of Migrant Labours during Lockdown'**. Eminent Trade Union Leader and Vice-President of All India United Trade Union Centre [AIUTUC] Mr K Radhakrishna discussed on the conditions of migrant workers and the role of the students.

We want to mention that a Facebook Live Lecture on **'During Lockdown, Problems of Education and way out'** by Prof. Soumitro Banerjee, IISER, Kolkata and an eminent figure of science movement was scheduled on 24 may 2020. But due to the impact of the cyclone 'AMPHAN', network problem occurred in Kolkata and we were compelled to postpone the programme.



On 29 May 2020, a discussion was organised on '**In the Name of Corona**'. Eminent figure in the mass movement and Secretary of Movement for Secular Democracy Mr Dwarikanath Rath analysed the conditions which help spread the COVID-19 and showed that how misappropriating the fear psychosis of the common people, ruling class is advancing with its fascistic agenda.

We will continue the live lectures on different social-educational problems and life and struggle of great personalities. **On 2nd June 2020**, Mr V Venugopal, Vice-president of Janakiya Pratirodha Samiti, (People's Resistance Committee) of Kerala will discuss on the **Life and struggle of Ayyankali**, a renaissance personality and social reformer who worked for the oppressed people, particularly 'untouchables' in the erstwhile princely state of Travancore.

#RayofHope

ON LIFE AND STRUGGLE OF **AYYANKALI** A RENAISSANCE PERSONALITY

SPEAKER

DR. V. VENUGOPAL

VICE-PRESIDENT
JANAKIYA PRATIRODHA SAMITI
(PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE COMMITTEE)

**JUNE
2
2020**

f LIVE 7 PM
STUDENTS' PLEDGE
FACEBOOK PAGE

English & Hindi Organ of AIDS
Students' Pledge
छात्र संकल्प

f STUDENTSPLEDGEQUARTERLY



Online Campaign against Anti-Educational Policies of Govt.



On 23 -25 May 2020, an online campaign was organised in Tamil Nadu against anti-educational policies of the central and state governments. Thousands of students joined in this online protest. AIDSO Tamil Nadu State Committee expressed its gratitude to the participants of the online campaign.

State-level demand day observed in Tripura maintaining required physical distancing on 23-25 May 2020 demanding a complete waive off of the fees of the students at all levels, conduction of regular written examination after bridging the gap created during the lockdown, and appointment of the adequate teaching staff etc.

All Karnataka Demand day was observed on 26 May 2020. Along with the online campaign, memorandums were submitted to the Vice-chancellors of universities and collectors of different districts. The AIDSO demanded that Examinations should not be conducted for degree and VTU students based on online classes; Examination framework be discussed with the educationists, teachers and students in a democratic manner; Schools and colleges used as quarantine centres should be sanitised first and then only used for the classes; Free bus pass be provided to all students across the state; scholarships be increased and ensured for all students.

On 26 May 2020, at the call of AIDSO, students of the West Bengal organised 'Chhatra Samaj Dabi Janao' [Students Community, Raise aloft your Demands] throughout the state. Demonstrations were held at different places followed by the submission of memorandums. AIDSO demanded that Instead of taking unilateral

decisions, Govt. should democratically consult with the stakeholders to resolve the educational problems occurred due to COVID-19; For the purpose, Co-ordination Committees of educationists, teachers and students be constituted immediately at different levels; Exclusion of students who don't have access to internet facilities be stopped immediately; All fees at different levels be waived off; Free bus pass be provided to all the students; Special economic package be provided to the students hailing from the poor families including migrant workers; Govt. should bear the responsibility of Food-Shelter-Health-Education of the victims of COVID-19 and Amphan cyclone.

All Odisha Demand Day was observed on 26 May 2020 demanding Waiving off the fees of all the students, Free textbooks for the class IX and X students, Face-to-face classroom teaching instead of exclusive and force-fed online education and Complete ban on the production and selling of liquor. Memorandums were submitted to the authorities at different levels in this connection across the state.

All Assam Demand Day' was observed by AIDS0 on 30 may 2020 demanding Economic package for the students, Refund of examination fees already paid by HS examinees, Regulation of the fees of private institutions and Free bus pass etc. More than 500 students from 17 districts participated in this online protest programme.



Cleanliness Campaign in Uttarakhand



Hygiene is important to combat COVID-19. Throughout the country AIDSO has been organizing awareness campaign from the beginning. As a part of it, AIDSO Srinagar-Garhwal Unit, Uttarakhand conducted a 15-days cleanliness campaign in Srinagar city. Many students volunteered to work. Impressed with the dedication of the volunteers, Municipal Council of Srinagar-Garhwal has provided a sanitizing machine to help clean the city.

Online Competition

ગુજરાત રાજ્ય સ્તરીય

ઓનલાઇન સ્પર્ધા

ચિત્ર, શોર્ટ વિડીયો, લેખન અને ફિલ્મ રીવ્યુ
લોકડાઉનના સમયમાં કંઈ સર્જનાત્મક કરીએ

ગ્રુપ ૧ ધો. ૮, ૯, અને ૧૦

- A) ચિત્ર: માનવતાના રસક : ડોક્ટર
B) સ્લોગન: સોશયલ ડિસ્ટન્સિંગ અને જાગૃતિ

ગ્રુપ ૨ ધો. ૧૧ અને ૧૨

A) ચિત્ર

1. લોકડાઉનમાં ગરીબોની હાલત

2. અમીર વિ. ગરીબ : લોકડાઉનના વિવિધ દ્રશ્યો

B) નિબંધ સ્પર્ધા (કોઇ પણ એક વિશે, ગુજરાતી, હિંદી કે અંગ્રેજી ભાષામાં, ૫૦૦ શબ્દોની મર્યાદામાં)

1. જીવિયાવાલા ભાગનો હત્યાકાંડ અને ભગતસિંહ

2. મારી માં - લોકડાઉનમાં એના જીવનમાં કોઇ ફરક પડ્યો છે ?

C) શોર્ટ વિડીયો (વધુમાં વધુ ૩ મીનિટ, ગુજરાતી, હિંદી કે અંગ્રેજી ભાષામાં)

-લોકડાઉનમાં લોકોની તકલીફો દૂર કરવા શું કરવું જોઈએ ?

ગ્રુપ ૩ કોલેજના વિદ્યાર્થીઓ માટે

A) ચિત્ર

1. લોકડાઉનમાં ગરીબોની હાલત

2. અમીર વિ. ગરીબ : લોકડાઉનના વિવિધ દ્રશ્યો

B) નિબંધ સ્પર્ધા (કોઇ પણ એક વિશે, ગુજરાતી, હિંદી કે અંગ્રેજી ભાષામાં, ૫૦૦ શબ્દોની મર્યાદામાં)

1. સ્વર્ણાતરિત કામદારોના પ્રશ્નો

2. કોરોના અને કોમવાદ

3. આરોગ્ય કટોકટીને પહોંચી વળવા આપણું આરોગ્ય બજેટ પૂરતું છે ?

C) શોર્ટ વિડીયો (વધુમાં વધુ ૩ મીનિટ, ગુજરાતી, હિંદી કે અંગ્રેજી ભાષામાં)

1. લોકડાઉનમાં લોકોને મદદરૂપ થવાના સૂચનો આપતો મારો પ્રધાનમંત્રીશ્રીને સંદેશ

2. કોરોના ધર્મ નથી જોતો ...

D) ફિલ્મ રીવ્યુ (કોઇ પણ એક, ગુજરાતી, હિંદી કે અંગ્રેજી ભાષામાં, ૫૦૦ શબ્દોની મર્યાદામાં)

1. નીલ બટે સમાટા 2. લિયકી 3. ચલ ચલે 4. પાઠશાલા 5. આઇ એમ કલામ

નિયમો માટે
બીજુ પાત્રુ જૂઓ,

AIDSO

During lockdown, state committees of AIDSO has organised various competitions to offer a chance for participants to gain substantial experience, showcase skills, analyze and evaluate outcomes and uncover personal aptitude. It also worked as an engagement and psychological treatment to the students.

Gujarat State Committee organised online Drawing and Slogan writing competition among the high school students [class 8 to 10]; online Drawing, Essay and Short Video competition among the intermediate students [class 11 and 12]; and online Drawing, Essay, Short Video and Film review competition among college students. Hundreds of students participated in the competition.

I Can't Breathe

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, an African-American man was brutally killed by the police in US. Then all sections of the oppressed toiling people irrespective of color and religion are unitedly started protesting against the fascist rule of Trump. This is an outburst like a volcanic eruption of the accumulated grievances of the people, not only against racial oppression but also against all anti-people policies and acts of the U.S. imperialist rulers, including widespread unemployment, retrenchment, starvation and criminal negligence to tackle COVID-19, resulting in the deaths of more than 100,000 people. This struggle inspires all exploited people of the world to fight against imperialist-capitalist exploitation. AIDS0 expresses its solidarity with the struggling people of the US.

**I CAN'T BREATHE
WE ALSO CAN'T BREATHE**



**Down with Suffocating
Imperialism
Capitalism**

**Solidarity with
Struggling American People**

AIDS0 ALL INDIA
DEMOCRATIC
STUDENTS'
ORGANIZATION

**Observe 200th birth anniversary of
Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar in
a befitting manner**



"I am not at all a slave of social custom. Whatever I think good for myself or the society I shall do and never retreat for fear of the criticism of the people or my relatives."

***Students'
Pledge***