# COVID-19 Lockdown Nature's Healer

**Shemjaz Arakkal Maniyat**
Assistant Professor
Yenepoya Physiotherapy College
shemjaz@yenepoya.edu.in

The year 2020 will definitely go down in the history as the year that changed the lives of billions of human beings across countries. The COVID-19 pandemic was an eye opener of how vulnerable human beings can be to the forces of nature. The most intelligent and intellectually powerful human being had to bow down to the might of a minute life form. Besides exposing our vulnerability, this pandemic showed us the extent of damage we have been inflicting on our ecosystem.

The global lockdown that was enforced by governments of almost all the countries gave our ecosystems the healing touch that it so desperately required. Our Earth started healing during this pandemic. The reduction in the pollution caused by industries and road traffic helped to purify the air that we breathe. Yes, there is no denying that the industrialization of a country helps to increase the standard of living of its people, but when it is unregulated, with no regard to the impact on the environment, we pay a heavy toll for it. The air that we and our children breathe, turned hazardous for our health. The State of India's Environment report released by the Centre of Science and Environment in 2019 declared that:

- 12.5 % of deaths in India is due to air pollution
- Over 100,000 children below age 5, die because of the bad air quality
- 86 water bodies in the country are critically polluted
- There has been a significant increase (136%) in grossly polluting industries

So what happened when most human beings were locked up in their home? The air quality improved. The smog gave way to clear blue skies. The water bodies became clear again with increased activity of marine life. Remember the viral photos of dolphins being spotted in the Ganges River! The presence of the dolphins was a sign of a healthy river system according to Professor R.K. Sinha, also known as India's Dolphin Man. Not only was there significant decrease in the air and water pollution, but even noise pollution was controlled significantly.
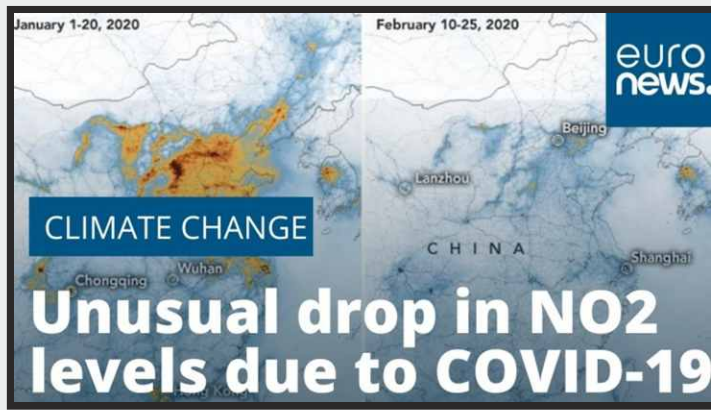
Impact of climate change



Clean water in healthy habitat (Source: Self)



Besides the environment, what else in our life has been positively changed? For those of us who were comfortably off, the lockdown bought us close as a family. The parents had more time with their children, families once again ate meals together, many people discovered new or rekindled old but forgotten talents such as art work, carpentry, and sewing and not to forget the home bakers!

Every experience we face in life teaches us a lesson. This COVID-19 pandemic taught us to not take life for granted. Do not take loved ones for granted. Do not take our nature for granted. We all are working hard to provide a bright future for our generations to come. If preserving the environment is not part of our plans for our children, then what are we actually leaving them with? While we build back our economy, let's remember to also protect our environment in such a way so that our children and the generations to come will remember the history of how the COVID-19 pandemic opened our eyes and helped heal the earth. Here's hoping that this history lesson will not be forgotten by the future, as "Those who forget their history are doomed to repeat it!"