

## **Seeking Panacea: Imagining the Post-Abnormal world with a solution-centred approach**

**Aadrita Roy**

***Research Scholar, Sister Nivedita University***

### **Abstract**

The world after a pandemic is much like a carcass of an animal after it has been preyed upon. If history is any indication of human pliability, it suggests that the world adapts- because and in spite- of adversities it faces. This paper focuses on the 'Post Abnormal' world that we will face, after this pandemic is over. A future is envisioned where there is a democratically elected global body that works like government for all countries, regulating and offering solutions to issues that humanity faces since aeons. A panacea is imagined, where global issues like wealth inequality and discrimination are exterminated. As for the role of communication, seemingly, digital media in the future, will eclipse most, if not all other forms of media, making it the single most powerful medium in human history.

**Keywords:** Post-Pandemic, Covid-19, Panacea

### **The Post Abnormal**

The world after a pandemic is much like a carcass of an animal after it has been preyed upon. If history is any indication of human pliability, it suggests that the world adapts- because and in spite- of adversities it faces. Diseases and wars have ravaged humans, yet, the stories of resilience of the human race know no bounds. The Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic has marked a new epoch in our collective history, leading to severe global economic and social disruption. It has also occasioned a re-surfacing of the dysfunctionalities of the old normal: unparalleled challenges to food security, employment and labour, shocking existential threats like climate change and most importantly, public health.

After considerable disruptions and massive transformations, there is still hope for the future, a *panacea*, where all our shared problems will be exterminated. However bleak the impending future may seem, from an optimistic solution-based sociological point of view, it is very much plausible to

imagine a society that has systematically, albeit slowly, defeated the evils of modern society. In a post-abnormal world, a genuine human rights-based approach will engender a new social system, whereby states will be compelled to re-focus attention on those at a greater risk of harm, disadvantage and discrimination. Especially women's health and children's education. A social system purely based on inclusive and participatory decision-making adhering to basic human needs can protect and empower the disadvantaged.

For a global society aiming for equal human rights, it first needs to ensure a multi-national body for it. United Nations can be assumed to be a forerunner of the future body which will regulate other countries. This new democratically elected global body can have its own set of guidelines, principles and laws, and a taxation system. This body can reward nations for adhering to global human rights guidelines and penalise authoritarians and those rejecting political plurality. The guidelines can be decided by voting from elected representatives of different nations and accordingly enforced on nations. Special attention must be paid to avoid discrimination due to the economic power of the nations, and all nations must be treated as equal to function as a just and uniform system.

The world can be seen as a breeding ground for new ideas and innovative implementations using technology. An elected global authority can also utilise digitisation to ensure more refined delivery of services and better modes of surveillance for nations digressing from guidelines. The Pandemic played a vital role in annihilating a significant roadblock for a digital future- the hesitation of humans. In a pre-pandemic world, some people would be unwilling to make digital payments, and some would even be reluctant to an online class or a doctor's appointment on video.

People were now obligated to use technology which hitherto was a choice. These barriers were crossed, albeit out of necessity, for not only people but for businesses too. They adapted digital modes of payments to newer models of online monetisation. The transition to a digitised life does not come as a shock but as an acceleration of existing trends. The move to global cashless society is not a provisional situation but a more permanent evolution.

A world can be envisioned where a model of healthcare-for-all is practised without overburdening hospitals and healthcare workers. This can be achieved by delivering quality healthcare services to the remotest parts of the world, free of cost and protecting them from the financial consequences of paying for healthcare through global taxation systems. Along with the healthcare-for-all, the world can be expected to shift to a telehealth model too. From doctor's appointments on the video to accessing mental health services online, it will be a welcome change to doctors and patients alike. The future looks bright for healthcare, a move to an accessible and affordable healthcare system without discrimination.

Nothing can inspire great minds more than an ongoing crisis, so this Pandemic will likely seep through great works of art and literature. In this peculiar time of isolation and solitude, a future can be envisioned where communication barriers break further, and a shared sense of togetherness can be fostered with conversations around shared trauma of the past.

### **Role of Communication**

When a global body is established, communication plays a huge role in both establishing authority and maintaining a free flow of information for economic and social order. A democratically elected multi-national body will necessitate a democratisation of media. The past few decades have seen, what can be dubbed 'Corporate Media', a dominant hold of media information and distribution by a few media conglomerates furthering their own agendas and political bias.

The post-abnormal media can be seen to democratise media through the development of rigorous reform movements, encouraging media narratives that recognise and promote progressive social change and address pertinent social issues. This process entails a global body to critique corporate media, whenever biased narratives are encouraged consistently. It also calls for the digital age to expand solution-focused journalism and full democratic utilisation of the internet and revitalisation of television, community radio, and newspapers.

For Print Media, especially Newspapers, the need for adapting to the digital issue has never been more apparent and logical. Various studies have emphasised that print is a dying medium. Even the dismal state of advertising revenue and circulation for newspapers tell the same story. However, all is not lost for the medium; a model can be fostered in the future, where one in-depth issue is printed on weekends and the rest of the week, readers can be furnished with a digital issue. Digitisation of the print industry is the only way to maintain readership and Ad revenue and provide a sustainable future by cutting down on paper.

As for Radio, the auditory medium, its evolution into the digital space speaks volumes for its adaptability. Although Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) differs from FM technology, unlike FM, which can broadcast multiple programs in one frequency, it is still being touted as the future of Radio. Furthermore, in the post-abnormal world, DAB is more than likely to replace Radio. As for radio listening is concerned, newer formats like podcasting, digital storytelling and live music events will be eclipsed into the medium.

The future of TV remains in smartphones and tablets as the need for more portable options emerge out of convenience. Even the advertising model seems to have changed, as digital platforms have their

own monetisation. Television in the post-pandemic world can look very much like a universal marketplace, where different streaming sites wrestle it out to be subscribed.

In the post-abnormal world, Digital Media will continue to dominate the total media consumption for both news and entertainment, and it is also expected to eclipse all other forms of media, making it the most powerful medium in human history. Another aspect expected to dominate media space is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in social media and otherwise. Digital media giants are already using AI to make recommendations, whether an advertisement or a show to watch. It will be further used to predict/ suggest personal changes for career growth, media consumption, and lifestyle changes.

The data-rich internet economy with its predictive signals will hinge on the dystopian future, where our data will aid advertisers, political groups to target their messaging with unparalleled specificity. We will be nudged for voting preferences, purchase decisions, and biometric surveillance that could infringe our privacy. Therefore the incidence of a global body in the future becomes absolutely essential in order to regulate technology companies and hold them accountable for their unprecedented control over human lives across nations.

A socially informed audience will seek out crucial information and engage in public conversations on issues of significance. So the global body needs to encourage media plurality and free flow of information, and penalise, any chance it gets, those nations and conglomerates that try to monopolise information, spread misinformation or further their own agendas to the public. In quite the opposite way, reward countries acclimatise their audience on social issues and encourage open, participatory dialogue.

## **Conclusion**

As the world moves on to a post-pandemic epoch, the hope for a better world remains entrenched in equitable distribution of wealth, women and children welfare policies, and free and accessible healthcare for all. As for communication, the only way to achieve a socially informed audience who can make their own choices is to democratise media across nations and channels. The future hinges on the complete digitisation of media, where it is expected to eclipse most, if not all, other forms of media.