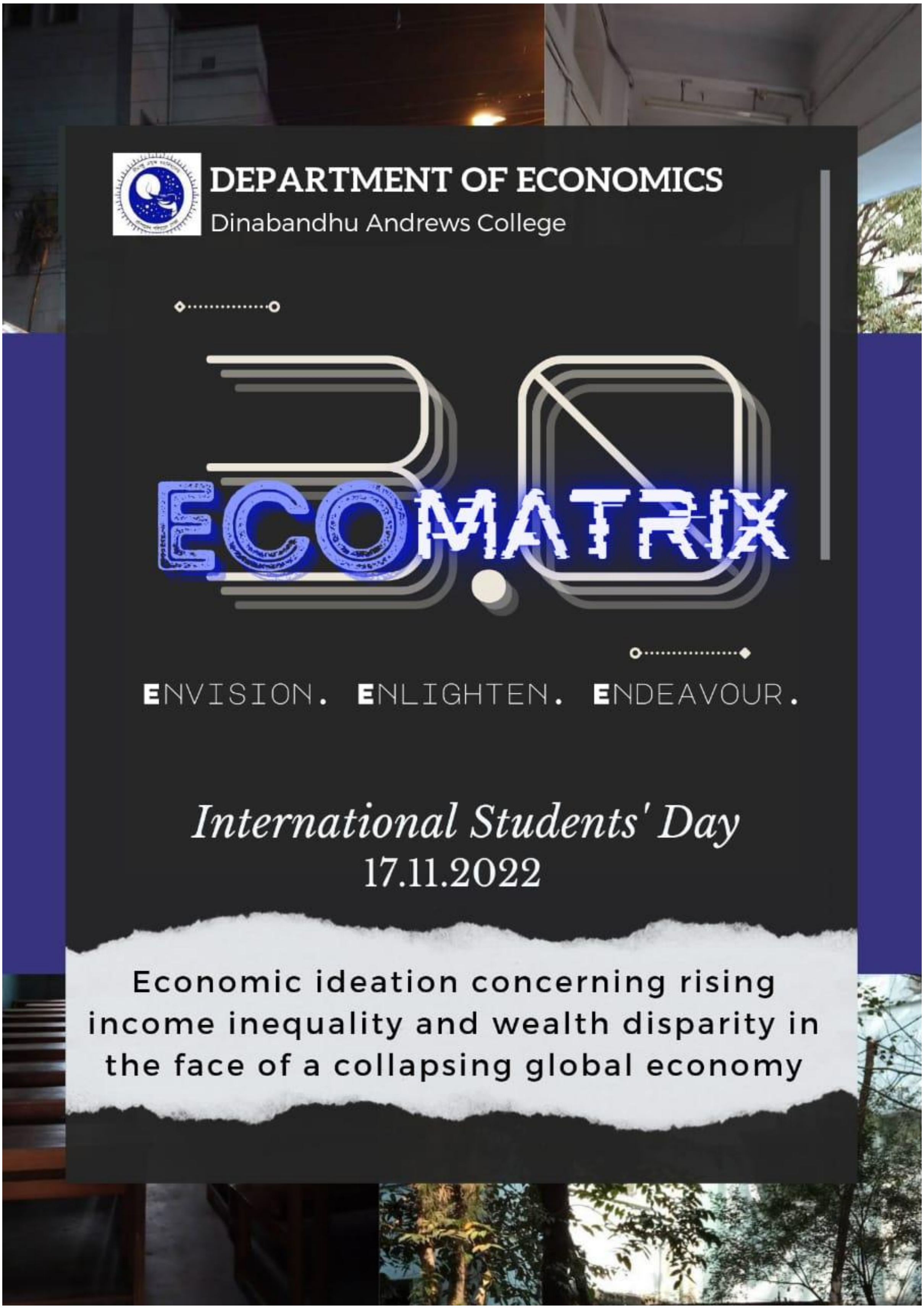
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
Dinabandhu Andrews College
ECOMATRIX 3.0
ENVISION. ENLIGHTEN. ENDEAVOUR.
International Students' Day
17.11.2022
Economic ideation concerning rising income inequality and wealth disparity in the face of a collapsing global economy

A report by the Department of Economics

An Inter-College Competition titled **ECOMATRIX 3.0** was organized by the students of the Department of Economics on 17th November 2022. It was organized for the third time by the department. Earlier, event of this kind was organized in 2016-17 and 2017-18. In this competition, students from different colleges participated in various events and showcased their talents. The theme of the competition was "Economic ideation concerning rising income inequality and wealth disparity in the face of a collapsing global economy". The honorable Principal of the college Dr. Somnath Mukhopadhyay, the West Bengal Government Nominee of the college Governing body Sri Tarakeswar Chakraborty, the IQAC Coordinator Dr. Joy Sarkar, faculty members and students of the different colleges were present on the occasion.

The program started at 10.30 AM with the welcome address by the honorable Principal and a speech delivered by the Head of the Department. The occasion was graced by two esteemed guests Prof. Saikat Sinha Roy of Jadavpur University and Prof. Debashis Mazumdar of Heritage College, Kolkata. The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Saikat Sinha Roy who spoke on “Inequality in the post-pandemic world”.

More than 10 colleges participated in the competition, which included Lady Brabourne College, Scottish Church College, Asustosh College, Heramba Chandra College, Maharaja Manindra Chandra College, Adamas University, The Bhawanipore Education Society, Dinabandhu Andrews College, etc. A total of six events, including debate, research paper presentation, quiz, creative writing, photography, and business pitching were conducted in ECOMATRIX 3.0. The events, creative writing, photography, and business pitching were unique because these were held on virtual platforms. All the events were judged by the two honorable guests, Prof. Anuradha Ghosh of the Department of English, and the IQAC Coordinator Prof. Joy Sarkar. The two competitions debate and research paper presentations were organized in parallel sessions in separate rooms and a quiz contest was conducted during the post-lunch session.

The winners were awarded trophies, medals, and certificates, and all the participants were awarded with participation certificates. Overall it was a good platform for the students to showcase their thoughts and presentation skills. It was a knowledge-enriching competition for the participants. The response received from various colleges was positive which is a great boost to the college. The program was concluded with a vote of thanks by the students of the Department of Economics.

The department of Economics expresses its gratitude and thanks to the Principal of Dinabandhu Andrews College Dr. Somnath Mukhopadhyay, and teaching and non-teaching staff for their support and encouragement extended for conducting Ecomatrix 3.0.

edugraph

আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা অনলাইন

ECOMATRIX 3.0: Dinabandhu Andrews College celebrates International Students' Day

Posted on 29 Nov 2022
15:35 PM

ECOMATRIX 3.0 ***Dinabandhu Andrews College***

The campus of Dinabandhu Andrews College, Kolkata revelled in the spirit of economics, finance, technology, and entrepreneurship on 17 November 2022. The Department of Economics celebrated International Students' Day with the third edition of their departmental fest, **ECOMATRIX 3.0**. It was a day-long event that started off with speeches from the Principal, Dr. Somnath Mukhopadhyay, and the Head of the Department (Economics), Dr. Jhumur Sengupta. The inauguration ceremony came to a close with the proficient Dr. Saikat Sinha Ray (HoD Economics, Jadavpur University) delivering an enlightening speech on the event's theme, "Economic ideation concerning rising income inequality and wealth disparity in the face of a collapsing global economy", followed by a loud ovation from students and professors alike.

Dr. Saikat Sinha Roy, HoD Economics, Jadavpur University delivering his speech at the inauguration ceremony *Dinabandhu Andrews College*

The events then proceeded as planned, with the Econotioned (debate) and the Ecodyssey (research paper presentation) events starting simultaneously. After a thrilling competition between colleges exhibiting prolific research & analytical, debating & speaking skills, the grand and final event for the day, "Quizzcon" (quiz) kicked off. It not only saw overwhelming participation from several colleges but also an enriching and exciting session.

The day came to a close with the prize distribution ceremony where winners of both online and offline events were awarded. Inkonomics (creative writing) saw

Ashutosh college grab the first place, followed by Heramba Chandra, and Scottish Church Colleges respectively, while Focal for Local (photography) saw Bhawanipur Education Society as the winner, followed by Adamas University and Maharaja Manindra Chandra college. In the business pitching event, "Pitch Perfect" a team from T.H.K. Jain College won first place, with Dinabandhu Andrews and Goenka College grabbing the second and third positions respectively.

Econotioned (judged by Saikat Sinha Ray) saw Ramakrishna Mission V.C. (Rahara), Heramba Chandra, and Dinabandhu Andrews College win the first, second, and third positions respectively. Jadavpur University, Lady Brabourne, and Dinabandhu Andrews College won the first, second, and third positions respectively at the Ecodyssey event (judged by Dr. Debashis Mazumdar, HoD Economics, Heritage College). Vivekananda College won Quizzcon, followed by Bhawanipur Education Society and Lady Brabourne in second and third positions respectively.

Last updated on 29 Nov 2022
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Dinabandhu Andrews College College campus news Campus Story Economics

আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা অনলাইন

INTRODUCTION

"Economics is extremely useful as a form of employment for economists."
~ John Kenneth Galbraith

The **Department of Economics** at **Dinabandhu Andrews College** has reignited the lamp of their revered departmental fest "Ecomatrix" with a grander than ever third edition. A celebration of economics on the occasion **of International Students' Day**, **Ecomatrix 3.0** is all set to be a stage for much needed economic discussions and ideation. With the future of the global economy at stake, today's generation, the students and flagbearers of the future who are about to take on the world and perishing national economies need to come together as one in the face of adversities. Guided by experts and great minds in the fields of economics, SDGs, finance, entrepreneurship, technology, and international trade, there is a lot to be learnt from the day's proceedings.

This year's edition envisages making sure that the theme, "**Economic ideation concerning rising income inequality and wealth disparity in the face of a collapsing global economy**" is explored in detail with all the areas being addressed. The young and beautiful minds were set free, and the stage was set for healthy debates, enriching research papers, intriguing quizzes, impactful creative writing and photography, and even the opportunity to present their business ideas to founders and leaders in the area of entrepreneurship.

The Department of Economics, DAC is proud to have every one of the bright minds contributing towards enriching the event and making it a memorable and enlightening one. We urge all our fellow economists, entrepreneurs, writers, photographers, researchers, and every young mind out there to continue to **envision, enlighten, endeavour**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Prof. JHUMUR SENGUPTA
[Head of the Department]
Prof. RANJINI LAHIRI
Prof. SAJAL JANA
Prof. SUMANA DUTTA
Prof. SOMNATH MUKHOPADHYAY
[Principal]

Event Judges

Prof. SAIKAT SINHA RAY
[Keynote Speaker]
Prof. DEBASHIS MAZUMDAR
UDIT SHARMA
Prof. JOY SARKAR
Prof. ANURADHA GHOSH

INKONOMICS

[CREATIVE WRITING]

Rising income inequality in a post-pandemic world of crashing economies and its remedies

INTRODUCTION

Labelled as a ' black swan ' event and likened to the wartime frugality of World War II, the outbreak of the novel Corona virus, i.e., Covid-19 has had a detrimental effect on global healthcare systems with a ripple effect on every aspect of mortal life as we know it. The severe impact of the pandemic is clearly visible in the horrifying numbers; over 620 million people all over the world fell prey to this deadly contagion in only a span of not more than three years, of which 6.5 million people lost their lives and more than 250 million people pushed into extreme poverty causing a massive global recession. With the rise of suffering and poverty, reports have proven an increase in another extreme: the wealth of billionaires.

The Alarming Issue: - With both extreme poverty and billionaires' wealth on the rise, the pandemic’s effect on income inequality is not difficult to understand. The costs of the pandemic, much like the costs of a war, are being borne disproportionately by the poorer and the neglected segments of the society. Low-income earning groups are most exposed to the health hazards and are more likely to witness loss of jobs and therefore declines in their positions of well being. These effects are indeed more concentrated in economically disadvantaged nonages. The pandemic is not only aggravated by the deprivations, hardships and vulnerabilities of those left behind by rising inequality, but its fallout is pushing inequality much, much higher.

In the post-pandemic world, income and wealth inequality has risen indeed in virtually all prime economies over the past few years. Statistics show that those with "middle-class" situations of income have been squeezed and a typical worker has seen largely stagnant real wages over the entire duration of the pandemic continuing till date. Intergenerational economic mobility too has lessened. According to an American economist, income distribution trends are found to be more mixed in developing economies but many of them have also experienced the situation of rising income inequality, including some major developing economies such as China and India.

Rising inequality after the pandemic and to some extent even before it, is a major fault line of the economies leading to disadvantageous economic, social, and political outcomes and even has weakened economic growth. It has added fuel to social discontent, political polarization, and socialist nationalism. As the pandemic revealed its true and unexpected colours, it has increased societal and economic frailty to shocks. Not only has it disturbed the stability of all the economies, but also has led to their crashing and severe devastation.

Measurement of this Inequality :- Like different measures of poverty, there also exists different measures of inequality—such as the Gini coefficient, the Theil Index, and the income share of the affluent in the society – are sensitive to the different corridors of distribution and can in principle, rank inequality after and before the pandemic differently. Clarity about the type of inequality being measured matters a great deal in assessing the unequal impact of the pandemic.

Wealth & Health: - According to certain records, using the concept of years of life lost to the virus—estimated using ages at the time of death and the residual life expectancies at those ages, we derive that the burden of mortality of the pandemic is positively correlated with per capita national income, in spite of the superior healthcare systems in rich countries. It is found that richer countries have suffered losses of life years per capita greater than the poorer countries. Measurement error is possible as a number of poor countries were found to be clearly under-reporting deaths. Among other things, studies reflect that the elderly population has suffered more as Covid-19 causes illness whose lethality is highly age-selective. Higher life expectancies and greater urbanization also likely have played a role.

Pre-existing conditions: - The pandemic has also exacerbated pre-existing inequalities in the labour market, largely because the ability to work remotely is highly correlated with education, and hence with pre-pandemic earnings. Despite all the talk of "essential workers" and everyone being "in this together," the stark reality is that job and income losses are likely to have hit lower-skilled and uneducated workers the hardest. In developing economies, the same labour market forces are, if anything, turbocharged by informality: when lower skilled labour is predominantly informal, these workers have no access to furlough programs or unemployment insurance. During the pandemic rise, hundreds of millions of search workers faced very stark trade-offs, on a daily basis, between staying safely at home and facing the threat of infection to provide food for their families.

Analysing Income Inequality: - The Covid-19 pandemic actuated the most contemporaneous economic downturn in more than a century. Ninety percent of countries posted a decline in real per capita GDP in 2020, exceeding all other years since 1900—entailing two world wars and the economic depression of the 1930s. The health extremity pushed an estimated 250 million people in utmost poverty. For Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs) however, the issues in the development markers did not start with the pandemic. Covid-19 strengthened and accelerated a disquieting trend of economic backsliding that had appeared around half a decade before. The 21st century saw numerous positive trends in EMDEs: poverty reduction, narrowing of the gap between rich and poor nations, increased growth rates in per capita incomes, and a much lessened prevalence of economic crises. Equality within countries gained a stronger footing and numerous social pointers improved. In 2015, the largest descent in commodity prices since the early 1980s was followed by a surfacing reversal of these development gains, and the novel corona virus worsened these setbacks.

Income Inequality & Covid-19:- As the commons all around the world suffered due to the adversities of the pandemic, billionaires have actually seen their fortunes expand. According to Institutes for Policy Studies Analysis of Forbes data, the combined wealth of billionaires of the United States of America increased by $2.071 trillion (70.30%) between March 18, 2020 and October 15, 2021, from roughly $2.947 trillion to $5.019 trillion. The pandemic has fuelled the economy's soaring inequality. Oxfam reports that from around February 2018 to the beginning of 2021, global billionaire wealth increased by $3.8 trillion. By contrast, global workers' concerted earnings fell by $3.6 trillion, as per International Labour Organization, as millions of masses all over the globe lost their livelihoods.

Outcomes of the pandemic leading to collapsing and crashing economies in the post-pandemic world :- The major reasons which led to the collapsing and crashing of economies arising due to the global recession caused by Covid-

19 pandemic – liquidity induced market instability and global lockdowns limiting supply are listed below:-

- Sharp rise in unemployment levels.
- 2020 stock market crash.
- Crashing of the tourism industry.
- Crashing of the hospitality industry.
- Rise in the price of oil due to reduction of its availability.
- Downfall of small businesses.
- Destabilization and collapsing of the energy industry.
- Rise in government debt.
- Sharp rise in economic inequality between rich and poor.
- Major reduction in consumer activity.
- Market liquidity crisis.
- Protests, riots and civil unrest.
- Trade disruption & shortages.
- Increase in inflation.
- 2021-22 Global Energy Crisis.
- 2022 stock market decline.

The 2022 Russia-Ukraine War also caused a huge amount of downfall in the already worsened state of affairs of the world economies.

Remedies for Economic Recovery: - We are in the middle of an asymmetrical recovery. In some countries, COVID-19 infection rates have reduced significantly, while in others, the contagion remains difficult to control. But whether governments are assiduously managing outbreaks or returning to normality, economic recovery is central to their forward-looking agenda. For without a broad-grounded economic expansion, it is difficult to look into other challenges, such as education and healthcare.

After almost three years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy will go through a major post-recession recovery. But the rebound is anticipated to be uneven across different economies, as major developed countries' strong growth schedule is impossible for the developing and other backward countries to match with.

The International Monetary Fund has recently raised its projection for economic growth in 2022. The upgraded outlook is based on the upcoming pandemic situation, the success of fiscal policies in minimising economic damage and improving global financial conditions. Although businesses are one of the most important elements of an economy, nevertheless, governments create the environment and structure where the businesses can thrive. How governments plan their economic recovery—and them overcoming difficult challenges they face in doing so—will depend on two major decisions they make about their approach that has been discussed later.

<u>Government actions that support economic recovery: -</u> Governments may opt for different courses of actions when prioritising between conservation of existing businesses and net new creation. Nevertheless, each is likely to assess and employ a combination of the following interventions to support economic recovery and ensure economic growth.

1. **Increasing Investment:-**
   - Ensuring direct capital injections through investments, loans and subventions.
   - Injecting capital into the banking system to stimulate investment.
   - Improving activity through public–private partnership structures.
   - Alluring incoming foreign direct investment (FDI) and restraining the loss of outgoing FDI.
2. **Increasing Revenue:-**
   - Amplifying direct government expenditure on public-use assets, such as heavy infrastructure, facilities and climate retrofitting.
   - Fostering domestic spending on domestically produced goods and services and thereby increases national income through tax-rebate checks, stimulus checks, low interest rates and/or increased tariffs on imports.
   - Stimulating spending from international markets through renegotiated or new trade agreements.
3. **Reducing Cost:-**
   - Diminishing taxes and levies on businesses and/or individuals.
   - Providing subsidies and concessions on government services (e.g., utilities).
4. **Encouraging & Promoting Innovation:-**
   - Serving as a mediator across different sectors and designing and developing various agencies.
   - Creation of an environment which is strong and enabling (e.g., intellectual property protections).
5. **Supporting workforce readiness:-**
   - Facilitating human upskilling programmes and promotion of human development (e.g., for creation of managerial skills and expertise in comparatively new industries, etc.).

<u>Two decisions that shape governments' approach to recovery: -</u> All governments need to diminish debt and spur growth, but few governments aside from those with the largest economies have the option to contemporaneously tackle their balance sheets and their economic recovery. Most will take actions that enable economic recovery by minimising spending or creating a positive return on investment, in ways that consider their global worldview, country context, legislative structure, political will and national ideology. Countries can make two decisions stated below in order to help them understand the approach best aligned with their needs.

<u>Decision 1 —</u>

What will best drive my country's immediate economic recovery—an approach that is more locally orientated or an approach that is more globally orientated?

Countries that are at fear for acute and systemic insolvency, that have high levels of domestic income and wealth inequality and/or disgruntled citizens, or whose supply chains for indispensable industries are at risk will presumably emphasize on local economic recovery. Whereas, countries that rely on global supply chains and fiscal flows, and believe global problems require global solutions, will presumably lead with a globally orientated recovery.

<u>Decision 2 —</u>

What is the best option for enhancing national economic growth—active involvement & oversight of issues or enablement of the private sector and local institutions?

This choice might be based on a government's political party affiliation or structure and running model. Other factors include how strongly a government feels it can trust in its businesses and citizens to drive such important decisions, how agile it feels public and private institutions are, and what core skill sets the government holds.

<u>CONCLUSION</u>

The Covid-19 pandemic took its toll on everyone especially on those who already had difficulties in making ends meet. Not only did it act as a fuel to the already existing inequality of income and wealth, but also damaged the economic stability of all countries. It gave rise to such an adverse situation that no economy was prepared to face. As we have already discussed, the pandemic led to the collapsing and crashing of economies all over the globe. It gave rise to such an economic downfall that hadn't been witnessed since decades. Millions of people lost their lives. Many became unemployed. But now, the economies are trying their best to overcome these backdrops and promote economic growth. The remedies that the economies can use to attain economic growth after such a standstill and promote equality of wealth and income has also been discussed. The effectiveness of these remedies will be reported in the years to come. Participation of the commons will also play a huge role in the success of the aforementioned policies. I hope that the glaring contrast of rags and riches existing in today's society will surely be reduced in the near future.

SAMPAD BANERJEE
ASUTOSH COLLEGE, KOLKATA
[Winner, INKONOMICS]

INTRODUCTION

Income inequality: Income inequality refers to the crucial imbalance of income dispersal across the population. It is certainly a vital aspect of social class and power structure. Income equality is a biggest challenge for our global society and it has been faced by people over the last several decades. This income inequality accelerated at the time of pandemic when COVID-19 spread throughout the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic again shows us that there can be widespread negative economic effects of a global pandemic (1–3). At this stage, there are various papers on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected economic and financial indicators. For example, Bakas and Triantafyllou (4) observe that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased commodity price volatility. Chakrabarty and Roy (5) show the positive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on fiscal stimulus. Gupta et al. (6) state that the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down the world's macroeconomic activity. Wu (7) indicates that the pandemics-related uncertainty has negatively affected household consumption across the countries. The global economy is beginning to bounce back from the economic ravages of the corona virus pandemic, with growth of 5.6 percent expected for 2021. But this recovery is not being experienced equally. Poorer countries are contending with a deeper, longer-lasting crisis that has increased global poverty and is reversing recent trends of shrinking inequality. The result is that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is largest for the world’s poorest. In 2021, the average incomes of people in the bottom 40 percent of the global income distribution are 6.7 percent lower than pre-pandemic projections, while those of people in the top 40 percent are down 2.8 percent. The reason for this large difference: The poorest 40 percent have not started to recover their income losses, while the top 40 percent has recovered more than 45 percent of their initial income losses. Between 2019 and 2021, the average income of the bottom 40 percent fell by 2.2 percent, while the average income of the top 40 percent fell by 0.5 percent.

Extreme poverty in low-income countries has rapidly increased, setting back progress by eight to nine years, while progress in upper-middle-income countries has been set back by five to six years. Pre-COVID-19 projections estimated that the daily per capita incomes of households in the middle of the global income distribution would grow from $7.15 in 2019 to $7.44 in 2021. Income for these households is now projected to be $7.05 in 2021, down 5 percent from the pre-pandemic estimates. The diverging economic recovery means the COVID-19 crisis has directly offset declining inequality between countries. Now, between-country inequality is estimated to increase for the first time in a generation. Emerging evidence shows that within countries, inequality may also have worsened. The World Bank's phone surveys in developing economies showed that poorer households lost incomes and jobs at slightly higher rates than richer households, a trend that contributes to the worsening of global poverty and inequality. The ravages of COVID-19 will also affect inequality and social mobility in the long run. Those who lost income due to the pandemic have been almost twice as likely to spend down assets or savings, leaving them less able to cope with continued or recurrent income losses. They have also been 57 percent more likely to go a full day without eating, which carries serious long-term consequences for cognitive and physical development when experienced among children. It is also estimated that COVID-19 could lead to an aggregate loss of between 0.3 and 0.9 years of schooling, with poorer families the most impacted. Job losses among the most vulnerable workers, including women, youth, and those without college education, can affect their productivity and income growth even as economies revive. In addition, the severe impacts seen for small and micro enterprises can lead to the erosion of entrepreneurial capital and jobs that can be hard to reverse. Tackling increases in inequality and global poverty needs to start by accelerating the economic recovery in low- and lower-middle income countries. That means increasing the supply of COVID-19 vaccines to these countries, as their current low vaccination rates are an obstacle to growth. Additionally, increasing fiscal space, such as through the IDA20 replenishment and fair and efficient domestic resource mobilization will be needed to support investments required for inclusive growth. To ensure that the recovery is equitable and benefits all groups within countries, spending and policies that target women, low-skilled workers and urban informal sector workers are necessary. This includes providing equal access to financial services and technology and investing in safety nets and social insurance. In addition, children and parents need to be supported through policies as schools reopen. Making our societies resilient to future crises requires taking on structural changes as a way to build the future. In fact at the time of COVID-19 when a lot of people were jobless & did not have enough money to eat even once a day, while Mukesh Ambani was earning ₹90 cr every hour.

REMEDIES

Though income inequality is a social challenge and it take a class of people always in dark and class of people always in top with great future, this situation is not at all good for overall economy of a country, in the time of pandemic the situation was not control but now we can think about some measure which may remove this situation;

(i) Promoting labour intensive manufacture.

(ii) Increase tax rate on luxury items.

(iii) Government should give opportunities to the young generation by giving jobs and small business loans.

(iv) Citizens should give more attention to skill development.

AYAN ROY
HERAMBA CHANDRA COLLEGE, KOLKATA
[First runner-up, INKONOMICS]

A PANDEMIC OF INEQUALITY

In 2020, the world saw one of its worst periods as a result of the pandemic Covid-19 brought on by the Corona virus. The Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), which started in Wuhan, China, was caused by a new corona virus known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Nationwide lockdowns were ordered in most of the countries all over the world. According to specialists in the health industry, this lockdown is crucial for halting the spread of sickness. However, it was never envisioned that the 21-days lockdown would stretch up to a year and continue until 2021. Everything around us has changed due to COVID-19. The epidemic caused a significant number of deaths around the world. Every region of the world was swamped with the cries of defenceless families. Standing in 2022, it is still obvious that the crisis' long-term effects will be profound. Unprecedented in recent memory, the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic has caused a human and economic disaster. The world economy is in its greatest recession, which has disrupted supply chains, tourism, and other industries. Governments have reacted with lockdowns and stimulus plans, although the scope of these controls has varied globally. The most vulnerable groups within nations have been disproportionately impacted by both the spread of the virus and employment losses.

Millions of people have become infected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has expanded at an alarming rate and almost halted economic activities as a result of governments' harsh travel restrictions designed to stop the virus' spread. The economic devastation is already clear and constitutes the worst economic shock the globe has seen in decades even as the health and human toll rises. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the world economic and financial markets in addition to becoming a public health emergency on a worldwide scale. The effects of the disease mitigation measures that have been put in place in many nations include significant income decreases, an increase in unemployment, and disruptions in the transportation, service, and manufacturing industries. Deep recessions brought on by the epidemic are anticipated to have long-term effects due to diminished investment, a loss of human capital due to missed opportunities for employment and education, and disintegration of international supply and trade networks. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on revenue due to early fatalities, decreased productivity, and workplace absenteeism. It has also generated a negative supply shock, with manufacturing activity slowing down as a result of supply chain disruptions throughout the world and factory closures. Consumers often modified their buying habits in addition to the effects on productive economic activities, mostly as a result of lower income and household finances as well as the fear and terror brought on by the outbreak. Due to the decline in travel, service sectors including tourism, hospitality, and transportation have seen major losses. Thus, many industrial, tourism, retail, and transport workers will suffer a significant reduction in work due to community restrictions and low demand for their goods and services. The COVID-19 pandemic will have an uneven economic impact across the country's income distribution in addition to pronounced health inequities, especially in nations lacking universal healthcare coverage.

An unprecedented worldwide macroeconomic catastrophe has been sparked by the COVID-19 shock. The subsequent policy actions and results were quite diverse, with the largest disparity between economies being characterised by access to financial resources, infrastructure, and strong health systems. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant influence on the world's production and continues to do so. The per capita GDP of the global economy shrank in more than 90% of countries in 2020. With a -3.2 percent production reduction in 2020, the most recent World Economic Outlook (WEO) report from the IMF estimates that the recession is the deepest since the conclusion of World War II. This is a -6.6 percent loss in comparison to the IMF's +3.4 percent growth prediction from October 2019. As per the World Bank's most recent Global Economic Prospects report the global economy is entering a marked slowdown after a strong recovery in 2021 due to new threats from COVID-19 variants as well as an increase in inflation, debt, and income inequality that could jeopardise the recovery in emerging and developing economies. It is predicted that global GDP would significantly slow from 5.5 percent in 2021 to 4.1 percent in 2022 and 3.2 percent in 2023 as pent up demand fades and global fiscal and monetary assistance is removed. The slowdown will occur when the gap between the growth rates of developed nations and emerging and developing economies widens. Advanced economies' growth is anticipated to slow from 5% in 2021 to 3.8% in 2022 and 2.3% in 2023, a rate that, while reducing, will be enough to return production and investment to these economies' pre-pandemic pattern. However, it is anticipated that growth in emerging and developing economies would slow from 6.3 percent in 2021 to 4.6 percent in 2022 and 4.4 percent in 2023. Although the output in emerging and developing economies will continue to be 4 percent behind its pre-pandemic level, all advanced economies will have fully recovered their output by

2023. The loss is considerably greater for many vulnerable economies: the production of small island nations and fragile and conflict-affected countries will be 8.5% and 7.5% respectively, below its pre-pandemic average. In the meanwhile, tightening monetary policy is caused by rising inflation, which is particularly harsh on low-income people. Inflation is at its highest levels since 2008 both globally and in industrialised nations. It has risen to its greatest level in developing and emerging market nations since 2011. Even before the recovery is fully underway, many emerging and developing economies are reducing policy assistance to reduce inflationary pressures. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's profound effects on global economic activity, economic inequality has increased.

Economic disparity is the uneven distribution of wealth and opportunities among various social groupings. Almost all nations in the world are concerned about it, and many people are stuck in poverty with little opportunities to move up the social scale. There are several viewpoints on economic inequality, all of which are connected. The most used indicator is income inequality, which measures how evenly income is distributed among a population. Since the 1990s, global inequality has been rapidly decreasing. Global inequality drastically rose over the nineteenth and the majority of the twentieth century's, indicating growing gaps in per capita income between nations as rich economies boomed relative to the rest of the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic has made inequality already terrible. Over the past two to three decades, income and wealth inequality has increased in virtually all significant industrialised economies. A key issue of our day is growing inequality, which has negative effects on the economy, society, and politics. It has slowed productivity growth and dampened aggregate demand, which has slowed economic development. It has fuelled populist nationalism, political divisiveness, and social unrest. Additionally, as the pandemic has shown, it has made society and the economy more susceptible to shocks. Because of the substantial employment and income losses among lower-income population groups, it is also predicted that within-country income inequality in EMDEs (Emerging Market and Developing Economies) has expanded somewhat. As a result of interruptions to schooling brought on by the pandemic and the disproportionately negative impacts on low-income households, intergenerational mobility may deteriorate, the increase in intra-country inequality generated by the pandemic may become entrenched. The ability of nations to assist disadvantaged populations, promote recovery, and promote sustainable growth may be hampered by high inflation and soaring public debt levels. Significant employment and income losses among low-skilled employees, low-income households, informal workers, and women were contributing factors to the rise in intra-country inequality.

(i) Significant rise in between-country inequality - The COVID-19 epidemic threatens the reduction in global wealth disparity that has been made over the past

20 years. Contrary to the global financial crisis of 2008–10, the pandemic-induced severe recession and the advanced countries' slower economic recovery in EMDEs have increased income disparity across nations. According to several indicators, such as Gini and Theil indexes based on real GDP per capita, between-country inequality has returned to levels seen in the early 2010s.

(ii) Moderate rise in income disparity within countries for EMDEs - According to estimates, the pandemic increased income disparity among EMDEs, while the increase's overall size has been very minor. According to simulations for 34 EMDEs in the sample with enough data, income inequality as assessed by the Gini index increased in 2020 by 0.3 points, reversing the trend of declining inequality that has been seen in EMDEs since the 2000s. However, the increase's size is just marginally larger than the sample's prior two decades' yearly average drop in within-country inequality. Significant employment and income losses among low-skilled employees, low-income households, informal workers, and women were contributing factors to the rise in intra-country inequality.

While some inequality is unavoidable in a market-based economic system due to variations in skill, effort, and luck, excessive disparity might destroy social cohesion, cause political division, and eventually impede economic development. For these reasons, lowering income inequality is one of the primary worldwide issues in the post-pandemic age. In the years after the start of the global financial crisis, the IMF has further extended its work on inequality concerns. Government tax and spending policies, when properly crafted, may contribute to both better equality of outcomes and opportunities and higher growth. For instance, increasing access to fundamental health and education services and lowering obstacles to women entering the workforce can assist enhance development and achieve equitable goals. When creating budgetary consolidation packages, serious consideration should also be given to measures that are excellent for both equality and efficiency, such as an increase in recurrent property tax collection. Furthermore, meeting the Sustainable Development Goals depends on eliminating inequality and making sure no one is left behind. The goal of SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) is to lessen all forms of inequality globally. One way to address the problem of increasing income disparity is through achieving SDG 10.

To conclude, income inequality is inevitable but not permanent. Therefore, taking the right efforts to reduce economic disparity can have a positive effect. Vaccination, expansion in rural healthcare and cash transfers should be a part of the effort to boost demand and reduce income inequality. Further, along with a gap between the wealthy and the poor, income inequality also indicates a sizable difference between men and women. Looking at many data from the post-pandemic era, we can see that women and girls were most affected, thus addressing their conditions must be a top priority for the entire globe in order to eliminate wealth disparity and achieve sustainable development. Finally, because everything in an economy is related whether directly or indirectly, lowering economic inequality should be one of the main priorities for the post-pandemic age. This can be done if we concentrate on attaining gender equity globally, as it is the pillar for all other concerns.

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FOCAL FOR LOCAL [PHOTOGRAPHY]

TOPIC: GLARING CONTRAST OF RAGS AND RICHES IN THE SOCIETY

An angel resting amidst the polluting cars of the rich

Rishav Basak
The Bhawanipur Education Society
[Winner]

Hunger and impoverishment overshadowed by the bright lights of overindulgence

Archan Kundu
Adamas University
[First runner-up]

Life is like a 'comic' for the rich but 'tragic' for the poor

Akashdeep Saha
Maharaja Manindra Chandra College
[Second Runner-up]

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