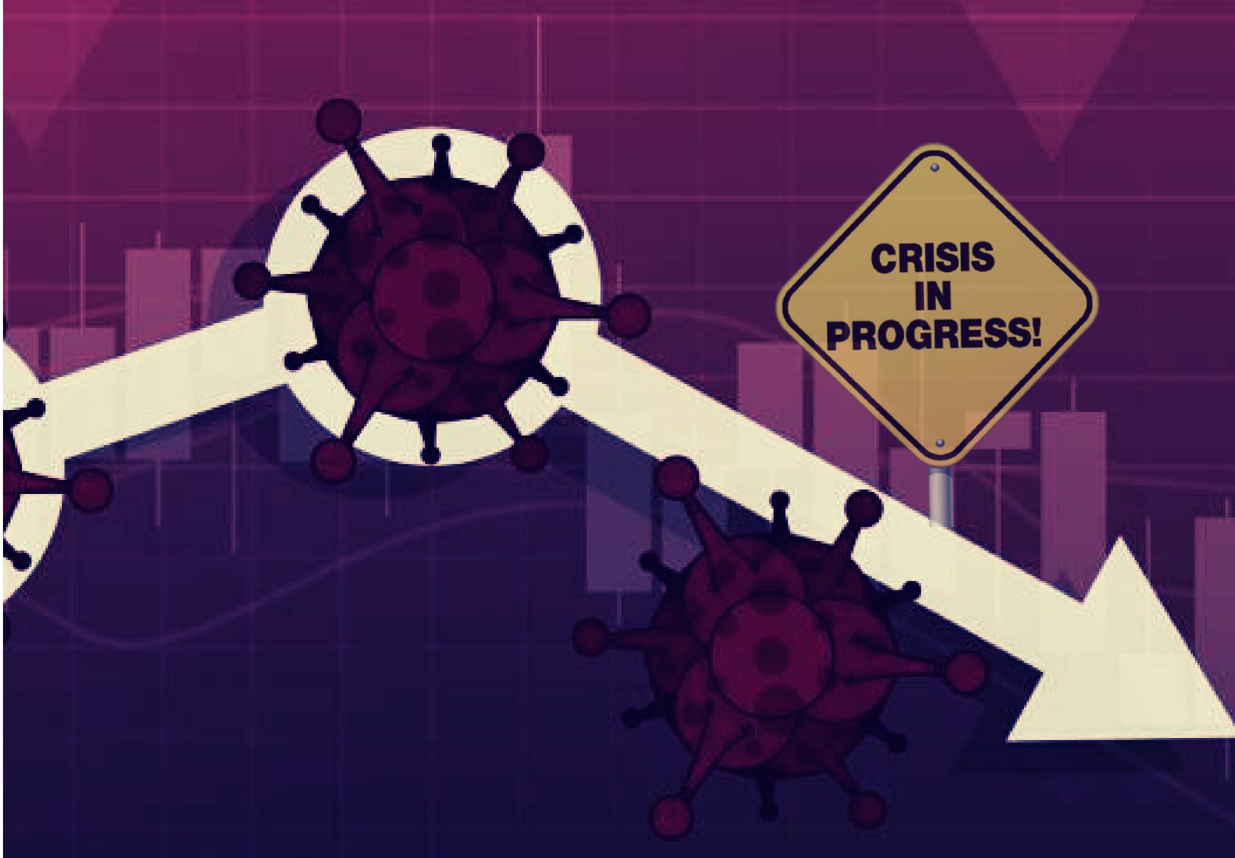
Xtravagate

Issue 34
Sept 2020

CRISIS WITHIN A CRISIS



DOMS SNIPPETS
THE INITIATION OF NEW BLOOD
LIVING THE MEMORIES OF FIRM GAMES 2020

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES
NIT TRICHY

EDITOR'S NOTE

Navya Kaul
2nd year MBA
(Editor in Chief)

Dear readers,

Schools have reopened, the working-class has adapted to work from home, MBA and Engineering colleges are contemplating ways of bringing students back to campus and the political parties are all set for the Bihar state elections. It's officially the new normal.

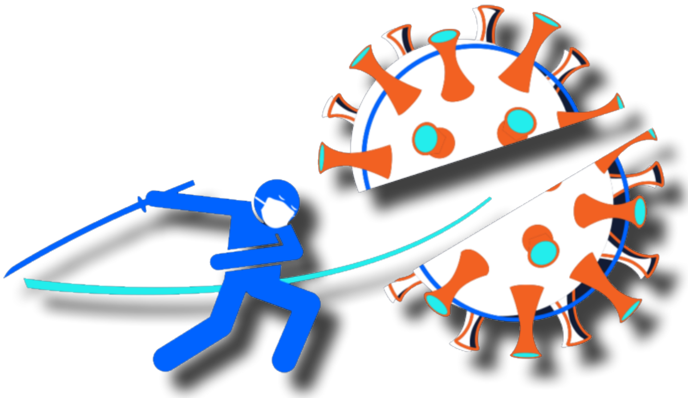
However, there is one domain that has kept our Editors much more engaged this month than the pandemic - the economy. While we started the month with some disturbing statistics on the GDP growth rates across the globe, we also saw some exciting patterns of price volatility of the 'yellow metal' and stocks of a few domestic firms. Hence, this month's theme, "Crisis Within a Crisis" is an attempt by our Editors to bring forth some of the most intriguing issues that the economy and the financial markets saw in the near history.

DoMS Snippets this month happens to be filled with only a shard of the level of excitement that the students experienced this month! The juniors are finally here and had an amazing orientation session, followed by a cut-throat battle at the FIRM Games 2020.

Stay tuned to our social media pages for exciting updates on Junior's inductions and the editions to come.

Issue 34
September 2020

CONTENTS



The Enigma of GDP

~ The social science behind the maths of falling economics of the country

Substantial. Deepening. Alarming. Troubling. An Inevitable collapse. These are some of the adjectives we have witnessed for the contraction of GDP number for the April-June quarter 2020. A quarter marred by the effect of a pandemic situation and Governments jostling with the challenges of Health infrastructure and public expenditure, we agree that the quantum of decline was on expected lines. The exceptional severity of the pandemic and economic collapse has raised eyebrows about the risk of 'hysteria' which can result in a negative outlook for investments, but also an elongated slowdown in the output growth. The foundation, which was built on the premise of global, liberal& privatised economy is under a threat of going back to the past while revealing the structural and cyclical flaws in the economy.

Numbers:

The facts speak the truth so let's look at some crucial numbers where GDP contracted 23.9%, in which construction, manufacturing, trades, hotels and transport being the worst hit as the contraction was as deep as 50.3% & 47%. The investment activity shrunk by 47%, which restricted the growth of the GDP. Even if we take some conservative estimates, the GDP will be registering degrowth of 7% for the financial year. The only shining light was agriculture which rose by 3.4% but had little effect on the Gross value-added.

Q1 GDP Contracts 23.9%: Sectoral Break-Up

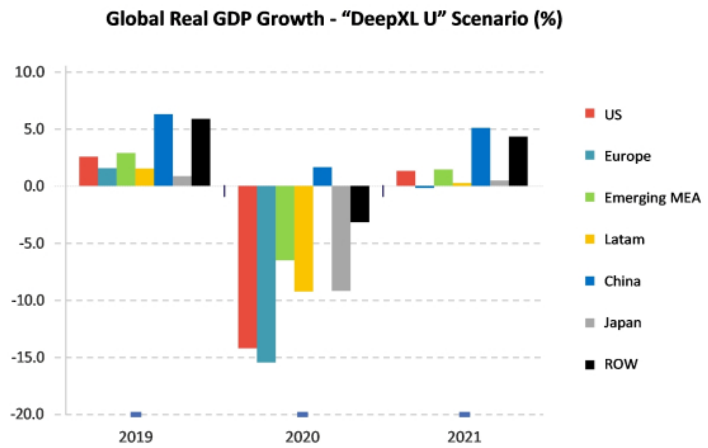
Year-On-Year % Change

	Q1 FY20	Q2 FY20	Q3 FY20	Q4 FY20	Q1 FY21
Agriculture	3.00	3.50	3.60	5.90	3.4
Manufacturing	3.00	-0.60	-0.80	-1.40	-39.3
Construction	5.20	2.60	0.00	-2.20	-50.3
Trade, Hotels	3.50	4.10	4.30	2.60	-47
Finance, Real Estate	6.00	6.00	3.30	2.40	-5.3

Source: MOSPI | Bloomberg | Quint

There were several thoughts behind the comparative data being given by several media platforms comparing major economies where doubts lingered behind the base used for comparison as year-on-year or quarter on quarter basis. Even if we leave that discussion, India had fared worse than most of the major economies, giving food for thought behind the strategies used by the government, to counter the pandemic was pragmatic on what levels.

In the preceding quarter, the growth was limited to 3.2% due to a recession engulf looming large on emerging economies like India & South Africa. By January end, we were made aware of a possible health emergency in which the possible measures could compromise the economic activities of the country. Since 2/3rd of the April-June quarter was a period in which complete lockdown was applied from 25th March, the economic activities came to a standstill, where Private consumption, Tax collection and Labour supply decreased, and Public expenditure increased simultaneously. We also need to view this contraction in light of a survey conducted by Oxford University releasing an Oxford Government Response Stringency Index in which India was among the top countries imposing the lockdown measure in the stringiest manner for a very long period. Several government measures which were worth mentioning includes direct tax relief, TDS reduced, deferred GST return filing, EMI moratorium, Direct cash benefits & grains provided through PM Garib Kalyan Yojana, medical insurance for health workers, indirect benefits like collateral-free loan debt to MSME, capital infusion in NBFC etc. There was substantial public spending on the health care infrastructure where COVID related safety equipment was procured or manufactured including N95 masks, PPE kits, COVID testing kits, ventilators, speciality bed facility etc.



Pragmatism:

The inherent weakness in the current economic state is from weak private& public consumption and uncertainty over employment status. The deepening banking crises with large NPA's providing a toxic banking sector, have not helped either. A lot lied in the hands of the government to give a fiscal push, to not only ease the financial conditions but also improve the purchasing power through direct cash benefits and supporting the worst-hit sectors like tourism, hospitality & manufacturing. The government expenditure has increased by 16.4%, which has reduced the impact a bit, but the fiscal deficit targets already breaching the floor and lesser revenue receipts have expanded the contraction.

Road ahead:

The period in which the lockdown was imposed, it was noticed that sharp falls in incomes occurred while consumption was cut to the extent of zero. Since these are voluntary decisions, the government cannot force people to spend and involve themselves in economic activities given many were having salary cuts and informal sector badly hit due to restrictions on movement. Similarly, the exports and imports were also limited, leaving no room for survival.

So, shall we go with the hysteria created that everything is going in an exponentially downward spiral and doomsday has reached? Well! Given the potential of the Indian economy to bear these shocks, I believe the hysteria is wrongly placed. The onus lies on the government to boost the sentiment by providing relaxations, increase public expenditure and relaxing imposed restrictions in the near future. The repeated fiscal and monetary stimulus provided by the government will be a necessary step to avoid this slide. Gradual easing the restrictions, boosting liquidity and dividend benefits to states will be the primary steps going ahead. Exacerbation of employment crisis as well as demand and business activity at peripherally low levels is leading to slow growth, but an expected recovery is on the cards. To achieve the target of the $5 Trillion economy we need to be Vocal about local as well as global while making "World-India reliant". Considering this pessimism and dystopic environment regarding the state of the economy, we hope that an optimistic approach of the government of the day will provide a sharp recovery of the economy and push growth towards the normalcy.

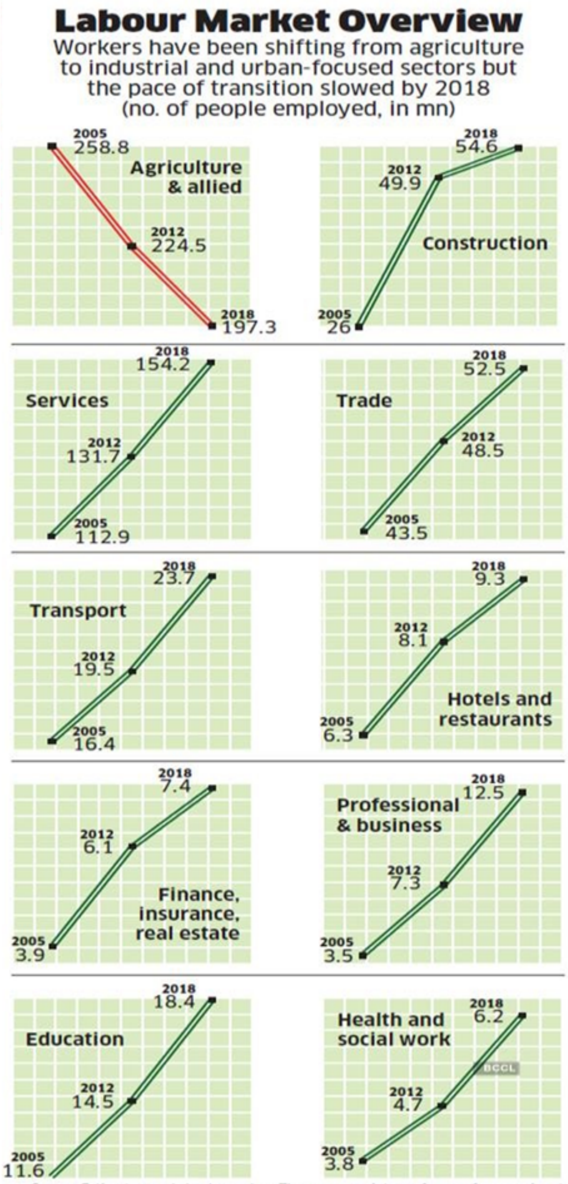
Rishabh Mohan Tripathi
(2nd year, MBA)

As Covid-19 started to spread across India in March, the Union Government imposed a pan India lockdown. It crippled the economy that was affected already with slow growth from the past seven quarters. This lockdown has worst affected the migrant laborers working in the urban areas, as many factories, mills, and transport sectors have shut down. It also affected the country as a whole, where for the past 40 years, people move from farms to factories.

We all know about 20 Lakh Crore economy revival package. According to many economists and experts, the benefits of this package have not reached the bottom of the pyramid.

For instance, in the transport sector, which employs close to 20 Lakh people in Mumbai alone, has been on a standstill. This transport has a substantial fixed cost in terms of loan rents. The transport sector provides employment close to 1 crore people, and almost every job has been affected by one or the other way. The truck sector in India has also been spiraling down since the lockdown has started. Previous studies show that there 80 lakh running trucks before lockdown. But after lockdown, there is only 40 lakh running vehicles. So its grim situation in the truck sector in short.

Another group severely affected by the lockdown was security guards at malls, private bungalows, hotels, and corporate offices. Most of them belonged to rural India and were forced to move back because of salary non-payment. Some of them even had a salary due for the past 4-5 months.



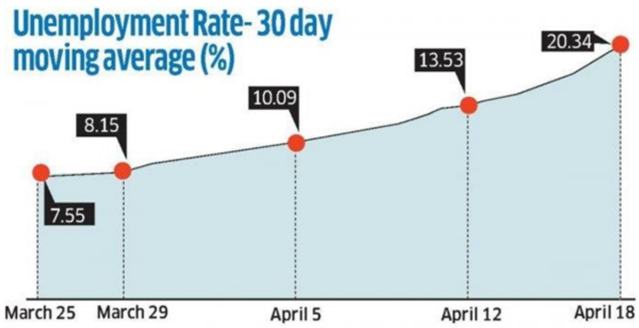
Source: Estimates made by Jayan Jose Thomas, associate professor of economics at IIT-Delhi, based on data from NSSO and Periodic Labour Force Survey 2017-18

March to July is supposed to be a good time for weavers, tailors, and the whole of the handicraft industry. However, according to the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), as Hindustan Times reported, the industry has run into Rs.8,000 crore losses. In rural areas of the Jharkand, the income of various folk artists and traditional painters who were dependent on tourism has hit.

One of the most profitable industries in the unorganized sector has been in the wedding industry. Much small business sprawling around weddings like flowers, marriage halls, music businesses involved in marriage has been affected badly.

Many small scale industries in Faridabad, Ghaziabad, and Dharavi have been shut for a while. Many of these had customers around the globe. Due to lockdown, they had to halt their production due to lack of funds, and some of them even went bankrupt. In the northern part of India, there are Labour Chowks where people search for contractual works. In recent times there has been a massive increase in people gathering at these Chowks.

The situation is so grim that workers stranded by SME and MSME are ready to pick up any sort of work just to pay their rent and have food.



Government is also not taking any appropriate steps to improve the situation in the unorganized sector. With the rising enrollment in the MNREGA scheme, it's evident that the unorganized sector is in turmoil.

In the recent GDP data, we can see that only agriculture has shown positive growth. But many economists have said that it's on a good thing; the main reason for the agricultural growth was the influx of thousands of people who traveled back to their villages after losing their jobs in the urban areas. It would be a humongous task for the government to restart many industries in the unorganized sector.

Utsav Chaudhary
(2nd year, MBA)

Ever since the beginning of this pandemic, there has been a surge in the price of the Yellow metal, which has risen nearly 50 % at its peak. The Yellow metal achieved its highest ever rate this year, crossing the Rs.50,000 mark in its history.

Despite the economic slowdown and closing down of businesses, one question in the minds of. Why is the Gold Price increasing? What made the surge in the Gold Price?

Before diving into the question, why; We will see the aspects and factors that decide the Gold Price. These include the Inflation and Exchange rate of the Indian Rupee, Customs Duty, and then the Gold Market.

Inflation and Exchange rate:

Inflation is a significant cause of the Gold Price surge in India. The value of the Indian Rupee shrinks due to Inflation in the economy, which stands 9.8% as of 2019. This Inflation then affects the Indian Rupee's Exchange rate, which again plays a vital role in the increase of Gold Price. For Example., On September 19, 2020, the price of 10g 24K Gold was Rs.53000 (approx.), while the same amount of Gold costs nearly Rs.46000 (approx.) in the United States when the USD is approximately converted to INR directly. A mere Currency Exchange rate caused a hike of around Rs.7000, which is bizarre.

Customs Duty:

The Import Duty induces the next big chunk of the price hike. Despite being the second-largest consumer of the Yellow metal, India produces less than 1% of the world's total gold production. Thus, the customs duty for exporting the Gold is Currently 12.5% coupled with GST of 3%, which makes it much more expensive.

Market:

India, which has the largest Jewellery Market, is prone to a price surge based on the demand and supply of Gold. We can witness the same during the festival season, such as Diwali, where demand for Gold increases, thereby increasing the price of Gold.

Now, getting to the heart of the matter regarding why there is a Price surge in this pandemic? It is the fact that Gold is regarded as a safe play by investors. Many investors hoped that the economy would recover once the lockdown was lifted. But the hopes of recovery of the economy is less in the present situation. This made the investors consider Gold as a Safe Haven.

GOLD: PRICES IN CRISES

Event	Date	Gold Price (₹/10g)#	Annual Increase
World Trade Centre Attack	11 Sep, 2001	4,766	13%
Stock Market Crash in US, China	27 Feb, 2007	10,546	28%
Lehman Bankruptcy	15 Sep, 2008	12,590	36%
Demonetization	09 Nov, 2016	30,046	-2%
After first Covid Case outside China*	**15 Jan, 2020**	**38,694**	**38%**

Source: World Gold Council, #Prices excluding taxes and levies; *Increase over a 6.5-month period against July 30

Although the government declared the economic stimulus packages to pump more liquidity in the market, they invested in Gold as a safe play as the Interest Rates were decreasing, and there is instability in the Stock Market.

This sudden liquidity infusion in the Yellow metal and the Decreased production of Gold, Increased Exchange rate, and Increased International Gold Price made the Yellow Metal even costlier.

Does this Safe play a Good choice? Is it the right decision to invest in Gold? What if the same situation persists with high liquidity, low-interest rate, and a slow economy, or what if the economy recovers and interest rates get higher and the stock market booms in the near future?!

Only Time will answer these questions!

Jerome Samuel S
(2nd year, MBA)

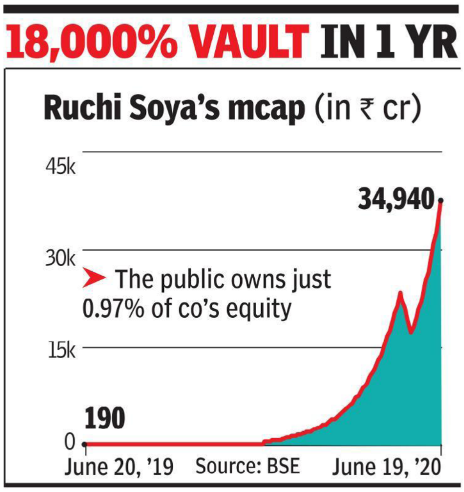
Dinesh Shahra started Ruchi soya Industries Ltd. in 1986, based out of Indore, Madhya Pradesh. They engaged mainly in the manufacture and sale of edible oils, Soya based products, and other agricultural commodities. Their portfolio consists of famous brands like Nutrela, Sunrich & Mahakosh.

They made most of their money by supplying edible oils to other companies. The problems back in 2011 when Indonesia raised export duty on crude palm oil. Combined with drought in many parts of India and other unfavorable domestic market conditions, their finances started crumbling.

It all ended in 2017 when banks dragged the company to bankruptcy code, and Baba Ramdev led Patanjali had acquired 99% of Ruchi soya and paid back half of their debt by taking loans from the bank with Ruchi soya stock as collateral. The previous shareholding pattern crumbled.

Patanjali rebranded Ruchi soya and relisted it again on January 27, 2020. Shares were trading at Rs.17, which were worthless a year before. Then started the upheaval of the stocks, and it rose continuously for months and attained Rs.1519 on June 26. At that time, the company was valued at $6 billion, ahead of other competitors including Marico Industries Ltd. and Colgate-Palmolive.

Then, technically, only 1% of the shares were traded since the parent company holds the remaining shares. The 8,764 percent surge in the shares of the company became the talk of the town. Then there was a steep fall on the prices for the next 6 days, which triggered the lower circuit levels where trading activity in stock are suspended following a sharp fall in share prices. Ruchi soya Industries Ltd. Rose to a market capitalization of Rs.45,000 crore.



The rise in Ruchi Soya's stock price was mainly because of the low level of free float or the percentage of the shares with the public. This also adds greater volatility to the price movements.

All this ultimately led to talks of investigation as the extremely low float led to strange price movements. However, nothing concrete has come out of it till now.

But all these rise and fall in their stocks look shady, and it is the right time for SEBI to investigate these types of abysmal transactions. As of now, Patanjali led Ruchi soya is soaring high, and it's looking towards a bright future.

Visagan N
(2nd year, MBA)

"Many cooks spoil the broth."

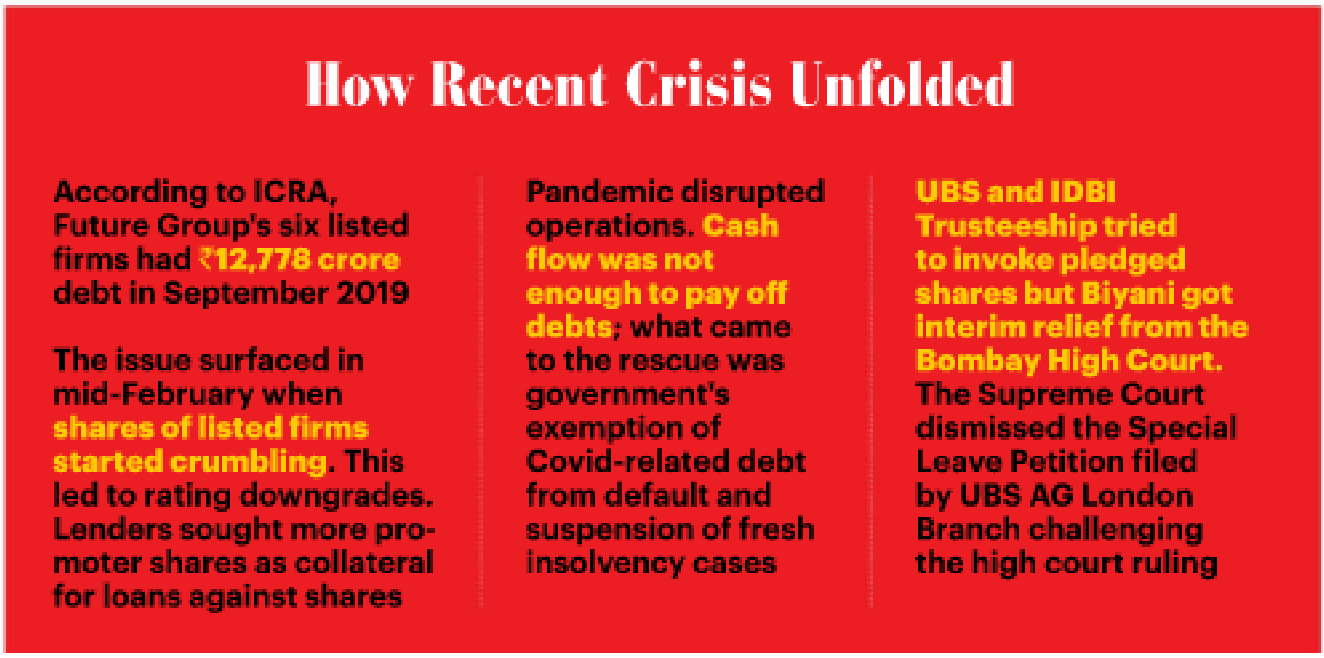
How it all started

After Manz fashion brand, starting with a chain of Pantaloons stores across the country, Kishore Biyani started his professional career in 1995 by going public. From there he took a volatile approach of stores expansion to a new city, he had a vision of establishing a business in organized supermarket format and later in 2001, he introduced a chain of supermarket under the brand name Big Bazaar in Kolkata. He conceptualized Big Bazaar, considering the bazaar format of the local Indian market. These were made chaotic to give the crowded bazaar feeling to the customers. With the success of Big Bazaar, his ambitions grew more prominent, and he took the path of holistic expansion. By 2009, despite when the whole world was struggling with recession, there were over 100 of these stores running successfully across the country, serving two million customers every week. Biyani ignored the modern business model the west and focussed on the concepts with which India was familiar. In 2013, he created a multi-brand company, Future Group, under which he was not just doing business in retail but also in financial services. There was plenty of chain running under the name Future Group. Apart from Big Bazaar and Pantaloons, these brands were Food Bazaar, Hypercity, eZone, Central, Brand Factory, FBB, Future Value Stores, and online services. Future Retail Limited and Future Lifestyle Fashions Limited were the two operating companies of the Future group.

The Future Fall

"Many cooks spoil the broth" – One of the industry executives pointed out that Biyani is damn good in the apparel business, but he has always found something to sell. Even now, FBB is a profitable business segment. Biyani's holistic expansions from apparel business to financial services & retail segments has brought the crisis upon Future Group; he admitted this recently on an interview.

Despite doing well during the 2008 slowdown, it had affected Pantaloon's business and strategies. The new market players like Aditya Birla Group, Shoppers Stop came into the picture which reduced the market share of the conglomerate. They borrowed short term loans to expand their business during this time. Meanwhile, the debt-equity ratio of Future Group reached 3:1. It affected the Future Group's portfolio, and the sales were dipping. Bankers started to call in their loans, and his sales fell 2/3 in the past six months. Future Group also established a joint venture with Italian insurance major Generali. Several businesses were hived off in the process, and stores were shuttered as the heady expansion took a toll on the company's finances. The Future group sold a 50.1% stake of Pantaloons Retails to Aditya Birla Group in 2012 to clear off its debt of Rs.7850 crores.



How Recent Crisis Unfolded

According to ICRA, Future Group's six listed firms had ₹12,778 crore debt in September 2019

The issue surfaced in mid-February when shares of listed firms started crumbling. This led to rating downgrades. Lenders sought more promoter shares as collateral for loans against shares

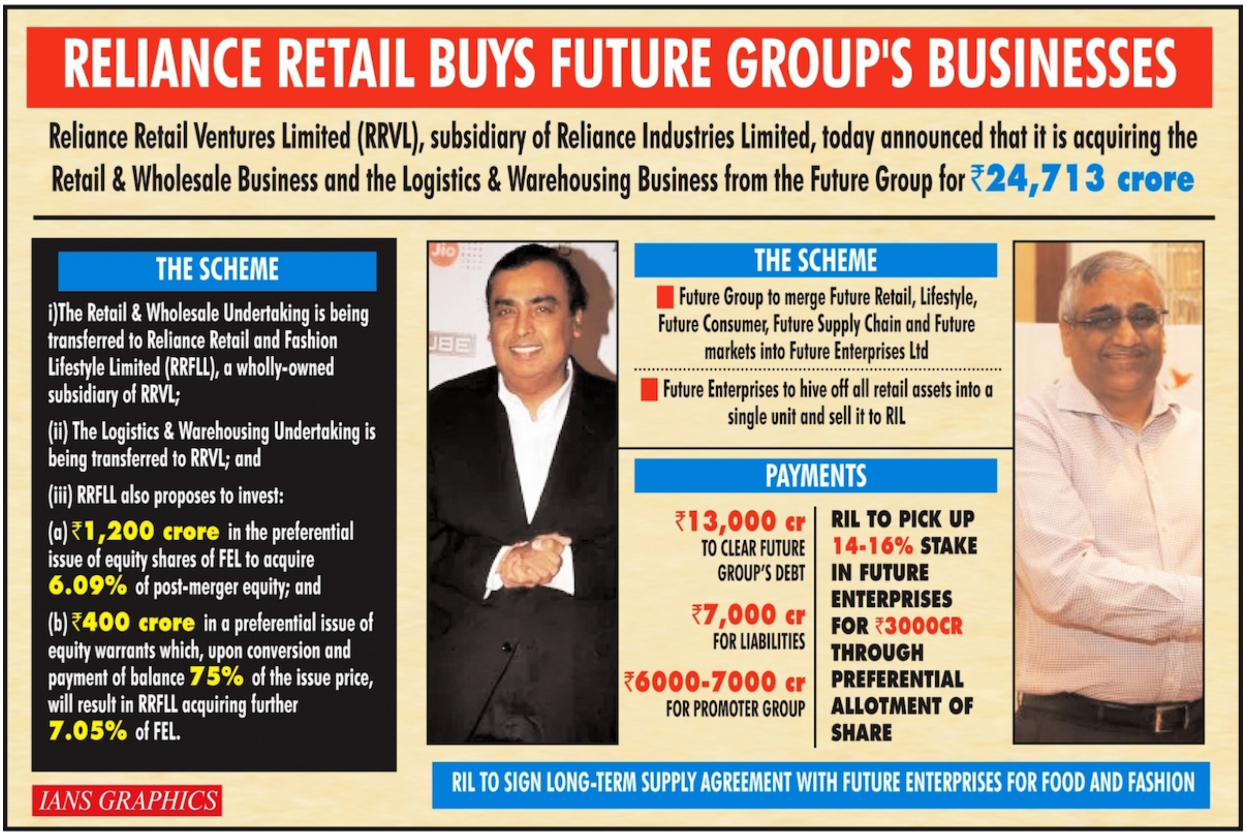
Pandemic disrupted operations. Cash flow was not enough to pay off debts; what came to the rescue was government's exemption of Covid-related debt from default and suspension of fresh insolvency cases

UBS and IDBI Trusteeship tried to invoke pledged shares but Biyani got interim relief from the Bombay High Court. The Supreme Court dismissed the Special Leave Petition filed by UBS AG London Branch challenging the high court ruling

Nevertheless, they did not learn from their mistakes, and they keep on expanding. In 2014, Future Group acquired south-based Nilgris chain of grocery stores for an estimated Rs.300 crore. After Pantaloons - Aditya Birla Group deal, Biyani sold several other businesses, including financial services, to Warburg Pincus, in 2012. Subsequently, a combination of Private equities, promoter pledging stakes and falling share prices of listed entities had put the Future Group in crisis. Rating agencies downgraded the Future Corporate Resources March due to its high debt and falling financial metrics. The Future group debt continued to rise, and it became Rs.11,970 crores in March 2019 (Source: Redd). The debt kept on increasing despite monetization efforts and the outbreak of COVID - 19, had worsened the situation for it as the non-essential segment of Future group got affected across the country.

Reliance – Future Deal

The debt of Rs.12,989 crores, piling up on Future Group as on July 2020 was the prominent reason, the stake sale RIL was the best option they had to clear the debts. After merging the key group companies Future Retail, Future Lifestyle Fashions, Future Consumer, Future Supply Chains and Future Market Networks into FEL, it announced to sell the retail and wholesale business to Reliance Retail for Rs.24,713 crores on 29th August 2020. The deal includes over 2000 Future retail stores, including Big Bazaar, FBB, Easyday, Central, Foodhall, Nilgiris spread over 420 cities across India.



Under the deal, Reliance Retail and Fashion Lifestyle (RRFLL) and Reliance Retail Ventures Limited (RRVL) will take over the certain borrowings and current liabilities. RRFL also proposes to invest Rs.1200 crore in the preferential issue of equity shares of FEL to keep 6.09 per cent of post-merger equity and Rs.400 crores in a preferential issue of equity warrants which will result acquiring further 7.05 per cent of FEL (Source: Economic Times). Biyani still owns Praxis Retail, a separate entity which runs 48 HomeTowns with revenue of Rs.702 Crore. Praxis Retail was not part of the deal. However, Biyani has signed a 15-year non-compete agreement with RIL, which restricts Biyani or his immediate family members to operate in the retail segment.

The Future

With the RIL taking over FEL, gives the upper hand to RIL and now RIL can focus on Retails and Telecom sector and keeping oil & energy as a legacy business (only 20% will contribute to the sum of the parts valuation). The private equity holders have taken a sigh of relief over debt concerns and welcomed the acquisition. RIL has become India's biggest Retail chain and the 2nd largest in the world in terms of retail area with massive 53 million square feet of retail space and 18 million square feet of warehousing space. It is more than Tesco's, who is the world's third-largest retailer. With the help of FEL, Reliance Retails outlets will be increased by 15 per cent; its grocery segment will experience a massive gain in the number of outlets to 2000. Other segments such as fashion and Reliance warehousing capacities will rise by 23 per cent and 80% to 18.2. The presence of 2000 stores in 420 and established supply chain will improve its offline presence and will help Reliance Retail's Jio Mart discounted strategy; it can expand freely in other cities and strengthen its market position. After this deal an American private equity firm Silver Lake has invested Rs.7,500 crores for 1.75% stake in Reliance Retail, in another deal, Global investment firm KKR has invested Rs.5,500 crores in Reliance Retail for 1.28% stake. With this deal, Reliance Retail's pre-equity value will increase to Rs.4.21 lac crore.

Indian retail market is expected to grow 8 per cent annually to $1.32 trillion by FY26 from $822 billion at present, and the organized retail has seen the growth of 17 per cent annually to $230 billion from $89 billion, the share of organized retail rose to 18 per cent from 11 per cent. With these figures, the deal has helped RIL to showcase their dominance in the organized retail industry. It will be interesting to see how Reliance Retail utilizes the newly acquired FEL's resources to strengthen its market position furthermore.

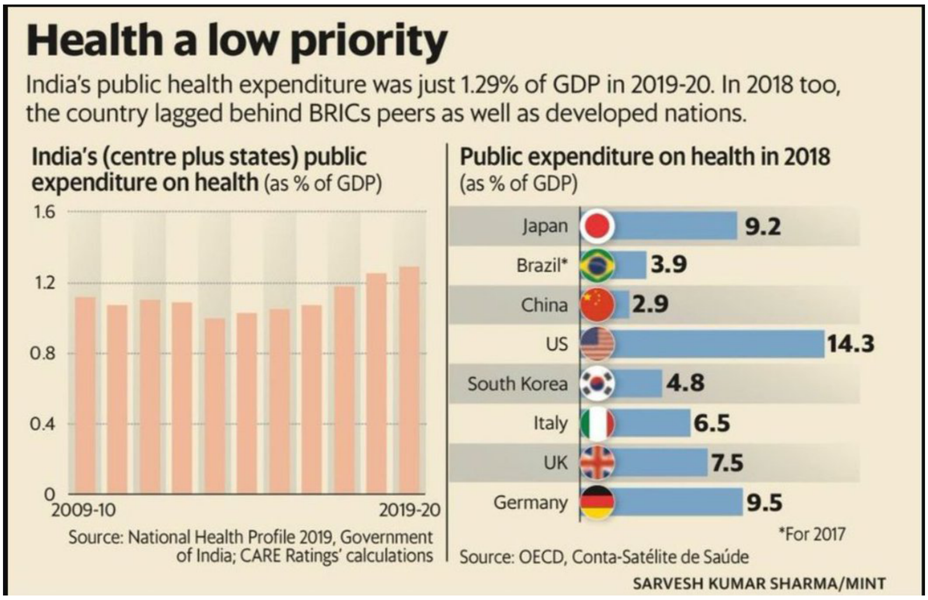
Utkarsh Pratap Yadav
(2nd year, MBA)

I believe that there is a vital purpose behind everything that happens in our lives. Coronavirus had hit us at a time when humans were so self-centered, neglected in their own families, and took the environment for granted. It came to remind us of a few things that we conveniently forgot during our busy schedule. The disease is a reminder that we all are equal regardless of our financial situation, culture, religion, language, etc. It reminds us that life is short, and the most critical aspect of life is to help each other. It is also a reminder of how materialistic our world has become and how we remember that it is the essentials that we need and not the luxury during days of distress. Mainly it reminded us of the importance of our family and home life and how much we have neglected them. Perhaps, this allowed us to attend to personal hygiene more vigorously, pray, avoid eating outside, and stay healthy.

But at the same time, don't you think it is nature's way of retaliating to the abuse it faced? We humans believe the earth is our property and consume all the resources such as water, oxygen, and everything else. In return, we gave back pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, etc. We are responsible for climate change, extinction of species, increased use of plastics, floods, massive forest fires, etc. Nature has given us everything, but in return, we have given it only misfortunes. People will now slow down and start doing things only when required, like traveling, deforestation, energy, and water. It is time for the environment to restore itself. At times nature puts things in order, and we need to obey it.

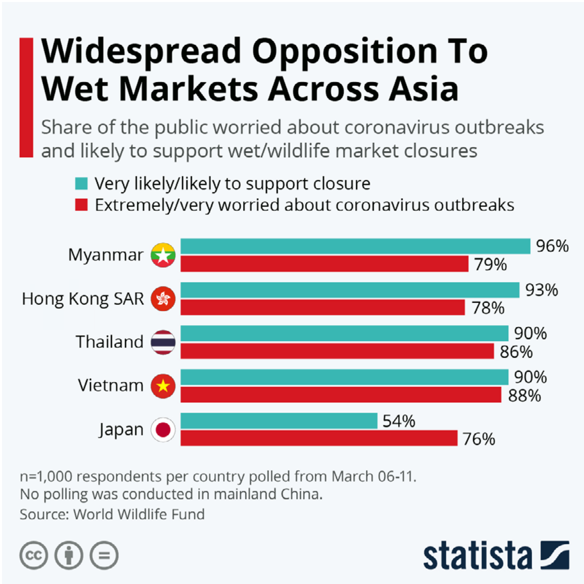
Technology is another aspect to be discussed. Technology has its importance in our lives. Without technological advancements, our life would not have been simpler and more comfortable. But all said and done; we have given too much importance for technical aspects, such as genetic modifications, cloning, chemical warfare, biological warfare, etc. While technology is essential for the human race's progress, we need to restrict what is right and not clearly. Any technology that helps humans and the co-dwellers of this planet, such as the entire flora and fauna, is always to be encouraged. On the contrary, technologies such as chemical warfare, biological warfare, etc. which is intended for the mass destruction of fellow human beings as well as destroying many other species on the earth are always despicable, and we must understand an overdose of this will backfire at some point in time, sooner or later.

Though we do not have substantial evidence to allege, there is a strong doubt on the various experiments conducted for developing biological weapons to have caused the pandemic. While experiments were conducted with the sole intention of one group trying to establish supremacy over the other or even worse, trying to erase one group from the face of the earth for very selfish gains, Mother Nature puts a blockade somewhere to set things to the normal. India has been going through a tragic moment and had not given much importance for healthcare, surveillance systems, and public health functions. It is estimated that nearly 2.5% of India's GDP (15.5% of the central budget) is allocated for the defense sector.



In contrast, healthcare is hovering over 1% of GDP (2.25% of the central budget) mark since the last decade. Somebody might defend by saying that it is more important to invest in defense as they provide security and protection against external threats, invaders, etc. But if we could stop creating acrimony with our neighbors with our irresponsible speeches aimed at short term local benefits, this expense can be reduced and, in turn, spent on healthcare and education. Currently, India lacks 6 lakh doctors and 2 million nurses, and according to WHO, the doctor to patient ratio must be 1:1000. But a doctor in India attends 11,082 people, which is ten times more than the norm. India has been chronically under-spending on health and has not given much importance to the healthcare sector. Approximately 80% of healthcare is with private players in our country, and COVID-19 has brought stark focus on its damage. Today, the private health care sector's participation in treating COVID patients is minimal, and at the same time, public health care institutions are stretched beyond permissible limits. This situation needs to be continuously checked, and it is essential to keep investing in healthcare.

The pandemic also triggered an alarm about the "wet market" believed to be the source of the COVID-19 widespread. It seems unhygienic, non-sanitized, and poorly maintained, serving as a source for Zoonotic diseases to mutate and evolve. Humans have gone overboard in slaughtering animals that seem unacceptable to nature in their greed to stay fit and wealthy.



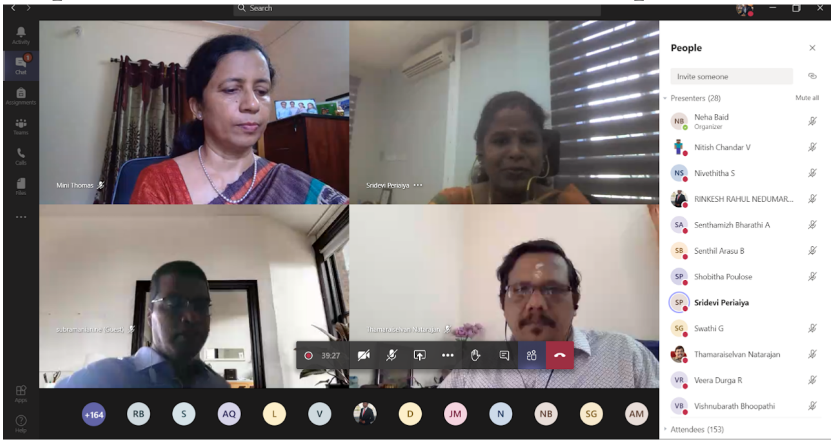
In short, it has caused a lot of turmoil and chaos among humans. The pandemic forced us to shut our doors and hearts on our neighbors, dear and near ones, as we are all under the "stay at home" curfew. Corona has started affecting daily wage workers' livelihood, rickshaw pullers, their dependent families, and the middle class drastically. But again, people and organisations and governments have come together irrespective of their cultural and religious differences to help these people during this hour of need. In this sense, we must be grateful to the pandemic for what it taught us about ourselves and the real purpose of life. COVID-19 may be a great disaster but isn't it better re-looking at it as a great corrector? It is sent to remind us of the essential lessons that we seem to have forgotten, and it is up to us to learn or allow history to repeat.

Nivedha Rachel Saju (1st year, MBA)
FIRM Games winner entry - Rudras

XTRAVAGATE

The Department of Management Studies saw an influx of 104 students this year, joining 1st year of MBA. The batch was initiated with a 3-Day Orientation Programme starting 25th August 2020, ending on 27th August 2020. The programme was conducted virtually through MS Teams.

The first day of Orientation commenced with a welcome address by Dr.P. Sridevi, Head of the Department, who welcomed the Director of NIT Trichy, the faculty, and the students who were at attendance on the virtual meet. The Director of NIT Trichy, Dr. Mini Shaji Thomas, delivered the presidential address. The keynote speakers Mr. Subramanian Natarajan Ezhil, Business Head, Saint Gobain Pvt Ltd, and Dr. Swaminathan Mani, Vice President, Tech Mahindra, the alumni of DoMS, NIT Trichy (Batch 1996-98), delivered the keynote addresses. They emphasized the current changes in the business world, also advising the students on the challenges they would face and ways to overcome them. Dr. Swaminathan Mani addressed the gathering on “Management in the New Normal.” The speakers also shared the experiences they had while they were at DoMS, NIT Trichy.



The afternoon session had two speakers, Mr. Ganesh Mahadevan, Director of Kanzen Institute the Asia Pacific, and Ms. Rajini Sriraman VP, Esskay Structure Inc... Mr. Ganesh Mahadevan delivered an introduction of Operations with relevance to the current business practices, Industry 4.0, the future and opportunities. Ms. Rajini Sriraman addressed the students on the topic “Curiosity, Innovations& transformation in the world,” where she shed light on the need for being innovative and curious to overcome obstacles, especially in more challenging times.

On the second day of the Orientation, Ms. Kiran Yanamala, Trainer and Facilitator, handled sessions on Emotional Intelligence, taking through the importance and understanding of Emotional intelligence, ways to improve it, which the students found insightful.

The third day of the programme had four lectures. Mr. Anjan Gupta, VP at Morgan Stanley, addressed the students on “Skillsets to be industry-ready in the new normal.” He shared his valuable experiences from his career with the students. Ms. Debjani Roy talked about ethics, integrity, and humaneness being the three key factors that are needed to become successful in the future. The students greatly appreciated her insights into interpersonal skills and personal development.

Mr. Harsh Vardhan Chauhan, VP of Marketing at Spencer’s Retail, shed light on marketing under the topic “Disruptive marketing and marketing strategies in the new normal.” The session was informative to the students in knowing the history, basics, the role of data, and the future with opportunities in the field of marketing. Ms. Mathangi Sri, Head of Data GoFood, an alumnus of batch 2002-2004, introduced the area of to the students, the importance of it in the current pandemic, as well as the prospects of the industry. The Orientation concluded with a vote of thanks from the Admission Committee.

Students of DoMS of NIT Trichy never fail to celebrate a festival with grandeur. The current COVID situation was a tiny obstacle in our books, and we made sure to celebrate the festival of Onam in style. The celebration was virtual, and the students actively participated in the events organized by the brethren from Kerala. The winners were awarded cash prizes, and the traditions were remembered in a modern way. The memories of the last year’s celebration were placed with a promise of a much grander celebration at a time when things will return to normal.

Edward Allan
(2nd year, MBA)

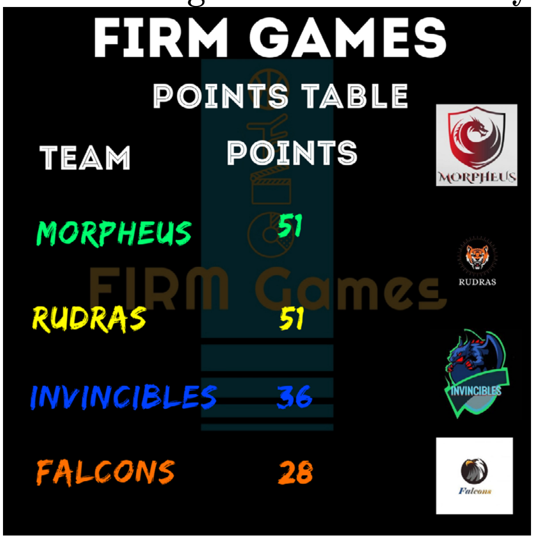
Living the Memories of FIRM Games 2020

Most of us may remember the legendry sorting hat from the Harry Potter Series and how Harry Potter got into House Gryffindor. But that's not how the first years are bifurcated into four teams "Rudras", "Morpheus", "Invincibles", and "Falcons" at DoMS NITT. Though I am sure, they would have felt similar anxiety while checking which faction they belonged to. Ad-Com PR committee acted as the sorting hat and ensured that demographics were uniform across all teams. Be it gender, geography, language, or academic backgrounds. Care was taken to create an equal opportunity for everyone to win.

FIRM Games is an annual event held at DoMS for the current first years. The event urges the participants to showcase talent, overcome hesitations, break the ice within and across the batch. Primarily headed by the seniors, juniors contest keeping the competitive spirits alive. FIRM games also act as a platform for enjoyment, making memories with new lifelong friends, and at the same readying the juniors for oncoming MBA life.

12th September marked the commencement of FIRM games with the inauguration ceremony by our HOD. It was informed that DoMS, doing its part in fighting the pandemic, would conduct the FIRM games online. Ad-Com ensured entertainment for all spectators by live-streaming the event.

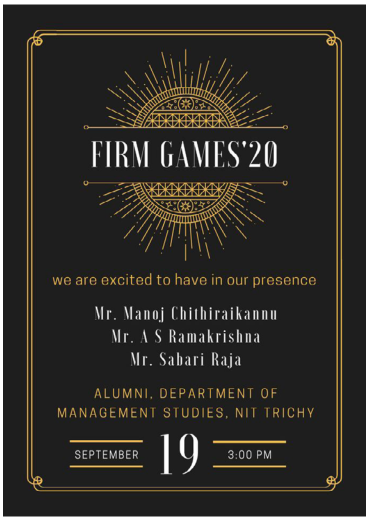
FIRM games revolved around two themes. One being formal containing JAM (Just a Minute), Adzap (advertisement), B-Quiz (business knowledge essential for any Manager), FLIP (Speaking for or against a topic when asked to flip), B-Plan, and a flagship event of Best Manager. Each event was crafted and curated to test grit, presence of mind, presentation skills, communication skills, innovation, and team spirit among participants. Assessing criteria and final results reflected the same.



Any event is incomplete without entertainment for the spectators and participants. The second theme was thus curated to maximize the participation of all. To keep the energy going with Real Cricket 2020, Call of Duty (First Person Shooting Game), Short film, Dance, Singing, Scavenger Hunt, Scribble, Photography, Essay Writing, ChitraLekha - Art and Drawing, Chess, and Bhitipatra - Poster Making Competition.

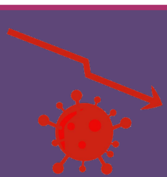
Yes, the list of events mentioned is long and called for competencies of many individuals and seamless teamwork. Participants prepared for all the events in close supervision of seniors. They received appropriate feedback for formal events and at the same time Co-ordination and guidance for informal events.

In my earlier employment, during appraisal times, vertical heads of our organization used to mention that the Manager of each team fought among themselves. They fought to get maximum benefits and rewards for their team. I used to be very sceptical of those remarks. But, I got the opportunity to work as one of the stakeholders besides our team captain. I saw how much energy, emotion, and time went in pulling each event and how they stood as strong pillars behind their teammates (the juniors) during each event. Being happy and joyful for each win and contemplating and strategizing for each loss. Yes, I guess this is one of the essential characteristics of a true leader, the ones who stand by their team and believe in them.



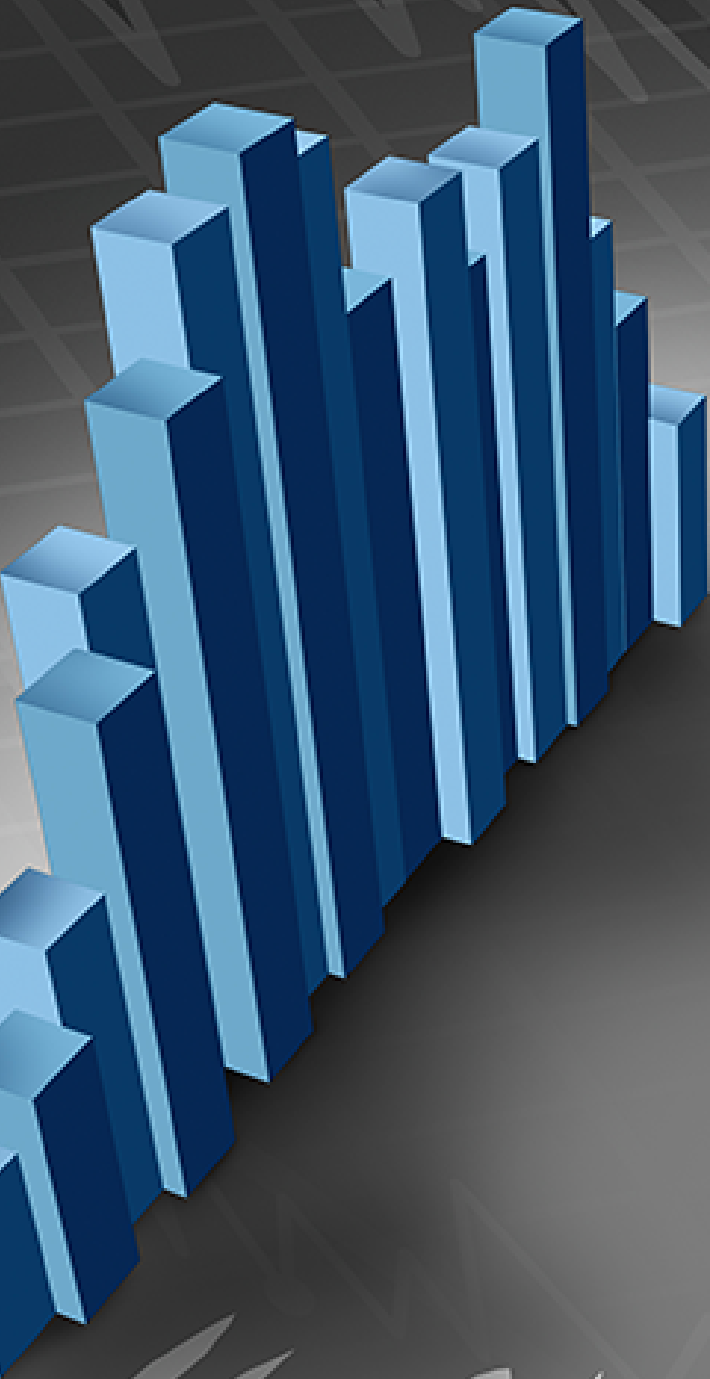
FIRM games obviously wouldn't have been a success without our Faculty members who supported in organizing the whole event and actively participated as Judges. Our Esteemed alumni who joined us on the eve of Finale as Judges for Best Manager. Fine Arts Society of NITT helped us in Deciding the winners for informal events that revolved around creativity like Singing, Dancing, Short-Film, Photography, etc.

Saturday, the evening of 19th September FIRM GAMES 2020 was formally closed, and results were declared. It might not be necessary to mention which team won the competition. But it can be said that The FIRM Games 2020 was a huge success and the event met its objective to create a sense of unity and inspiration among one another. After being part of DoMS for 14 months and participating in two FIRM Games, I can rightfully remark that the tradition of FIRM Games should be kept alive and will continue to inspire our upcoming batches.



Vivek Rai
(2nd year, MBA)

CREDITS



AUTHORS

Rishabh Mohan Tripathi (2nd year MBA)
Utsav Chaudhary (2nd year MBA)
Jerome Samuel S (2nd year MBA)
N.Visagan (2nd year MBA)
Utkarsh Pratap Yadav (2nd year MBA)
Nivedha Rachel Saju (1st year MBA)
Edward Allan (2nd year MBA)
Vivek Rai (2nd year MBA)

EDITORS

Navya Kaul (2nd year MBA)
Rishabh Mohan Tripathi (2nd year MBA)

TECH & DESIGN

E A Anphin (2nd year MBA)
Deepak Kumar C S (2nd year MBA)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Angkita Mahanta (2nd year MBA)
Snehil Kumar Bankey (2nd year MBA)

FOUNDERS

Pranav Kumar
Shriya Chandrababu
Pradeep Kumar Dontha
Monisha Ravi
(Alumni of DoMS)

Reach us at : xtravagatedoms@gmail.com

XTRAVAGATE