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**POETIC HOPE AND FAITH AGAINST PANDEMIC PANDEMONIUM****DR. UMESH G. TAYADE**Associate Professor  
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Chikhaldara, Dist. Amravati**ABSTRACT:**

*The article attempts to rediscover the forgotten words of faith and hope scattered in poetic world in abundance to comfort human hearts full of worries, agitation, panic and distress caused due to the great chaos created by COVID19 pandemic. 'This too shall pass' is the message the article tries to give to its readers, if we go and rest under the cool shade of poetic world.*

**Keywords:** Hope, Faith, Pandemic, Fear, Poetry

Struggle is an integral part of human life; continuous clash with surrounding forces has been man's destiny since his inception on this Planet, may it be floods, famines, earthquakes, storms, pandemics or any other natural or manmade calamities. Everything in the cosmos is in incessant motion, coming from nowhere and leading to unfathomable destinations. No living organism is an exception to this law; though all is not yet comprehensible to man. This ever going process causes a periodic commotion in varieties of forms, seen and unseen. Rather this struggle has caused such an enormous development in all spheres of human life and existence. But Nature has never ceased to test human metal and always poses new issues before mankind. Corona Virus outbreak in the form of COVID19 pandemic is a new challenge with no seeming solution before us. COVID19 outbreak has suddenly taken the whole world in its stride leaving people with full of fear, uncertainty and exposed to life threatening danger. Everything human seems to come to a stop; hindering human life and activity, while all the people are locked in homes. This has posed great danger to normal operation of human beings; business, commerce, education, transportation etc. have all been hampered. Throngs of jobless and homeless workers travelled afoot and on bicycles for hundreds and thousands kilometers to their villages. This is the drastic picture of COVID19 outbreak. But no tragedy occurs without the tragic flaw; human interference in the arrival and spread of the CORONA virus cannot be denied. There is no definite vaccine or medicine for COVID19 till date, isn't it awful? With an array of advanced technological tools to deal with every problem, man seems helpless before this CORONA virus. Even scientists are helpless, though they are trying their best to find any vaccine for the COVID19. The doctors, nurses,

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health workers, police, security personnel along with the government are taking utmost pains to save people's life.

The coin has two sides always. COVID19 pandemic has brighter side as well, if we are ready to accept it as a lesson and do accordingly, if we are willing to change. This pandemic has taught us new levels of sanitation and personal hygiene, where we Indians have always faltered; pollution has considerably lowered down relieving the ozone layer; global warming has come down to a happy digit; unheard melodies of rare birds can be heard even in cities; outside street food and junk food are replaced by homemade healthy food with nutrition, fruits and vegetables of all varieties are available and safe to eat that boost our immunity; Ayurveda is once again gaining ground and popularity; we have ample time to think, meditate and brood constructively, the Earth is breathing and living now. All this is reality today, only if we have a vision to see and feel. This definitely does not compensate for the loss of lives, trouble and pandemonium caused due to COVID19 insurgence. But the situation and conditions of the present scenario has left us option less; either we must change or suffer and die or live in perpetual fear. We have another option to face and fight the CORONA; we can change this pandemic into an opportunity. The change at psychic level is possible which demands robust acceptance of the fact and then do what is desirable. This virus attack is not new phenomena in the annals of human civilization; such outbreak of contagion has always been there, but the fact that the human race is still alive is an ample proof of human victory over such viruses from time to time. Rather human are a big virus themselves, who have always come victorious over other malicious viruses. But this has been possible due to our undoubting faith and courage, qualities beyond all physical worlds. We need to muster up our confidence and look inward to seek the divine potential.

Literature can be a medium for positively dealing with our negative emotions of fear, anger, frustration, disappointment and hopelessness in these tight hours. It can bring solace and comfort to weary human heart. It has effectively dealt with issues of infectious diseases, pandemics and contagion with a fine thread of relevance to past, present and future prophesies. Literature portrays what is prevalent in the then society. An endless list of poems, novels, short stories can be enumerated which have pandemics as their subjects worldwide. In India Tagor, Mahapatra, Munshi Premchand and Nirala have described these issues of human pain and suffering in their works. This issue of devastation impacted many authors from all corners of the world - down from Homer to the present day writers. Jayant Mahapatra in his *The Abandoned Cemetery at Balasore* creates an atmosphere of 'timeless ennui' that forecasts a looming epidemic over the humankind. The cholera for the poet is "a quiet power" as it "moves easily, swiftly" through "past and present" into "the growing young, into the final bone", threatening to wear down "all truth with ruin". The poem highlights the insignificant value of human life in comparison to the powerful and deadly contagious disease. In her poem, *A Plagued Journey* Maya Angelou describes the invasion of hope in an atmosphere of gloom and insecurity. The line 'Happy prints of an invisible time are illumined' elaborates that hope gives a person the feeling of a better and happy future, a place where the person will feel happy and loved, and hence the invisible time is illumined. The time is invisible because it is in the offing, and may come true if the person has an endless hope. The poet is

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surprised with the arrival of Hope. She tries to reject it but hope comes and enters through small cracks and crevices into the room and thereafter into her life. Again in her poem *Still I Rise*, she asserts and picks herself to strive and struggle even in the face of adversity.

In Walt Whitman's *Song of the Open Road*, the poet describes a trip he is embarking on. He describes himself as being "healthy and free," and he feels that he is in complete control of his life and master of his own destiny. He does not need to pray for good fortune. He asserts that he, himself, is his own good fortune, and that is all he needs, and he lacks nothing. He will reach his destination on his own, and the earth will provide him with all that is necessary. This is not to say that the road he is taking is not paved with imperfections and burdens. But the speaker has gladly accepted these challenges and faces them on his own. *Instinct of Hope* by John Clare is a delightful poem that has the themes of strong optimism and positivity. It propagates the importance of hope in our lives and while it may disappoint us sometimes, poet John Clare believes, we should always possess the courage to hope again. Langston Hughes' *Life is Fine* is a simple yet meaningful poem that changes the way we look at life's suffering and human despair. Following the trials and tribulations of a man, discontent with his life, the poem begins on a melancholic note. However, towards the end, the man, initially contemplating on committing suicide, slowly begins to understand the joy of living and chooses life over death. Although Literature can hardly bring any physical solution to the problem of microbes and viruses, but it can certainly cheer up our low spirits as a result of being locked up in our homes due to COVID19 pandemic. It can provide us psychological support and sooth us. There is hope and faith, we can patiently wait and begin afresh. Tagore in his poem *Hard Times* has a lot to suggest alertness and patience during this lockdown:

*"From upper skies the stars with pointing fingers  
Intently watch your course and death's impatience  
Lashes at you from the deeps in swirling waves;  
And sad entreaties line the farthest shore  
With hands outstretched and crooning 'Come, O come!'  
Still, O bird, O sightless bird,  
Not yet, not yet the time to furl your wings."*

*"All that is past: your fears and loves and hopes;  
All that is lost: your words and lamentation;  
No longer yours a home nor a bed composed of flowers.  
For wings are all you have, and the sky's broadening countryard,  
And the dawn steeped in darkness, lacking all direction.  
Dear bird, my sightless bird,  
Not yet, not yet the time to furl your wings!"*

The Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdown have transformed our way of living, it has left us alone and secluded and susceptible to an uncanny sense of uncertainty. It has become necessary for us to rediscover our literary threads of hope, courage, faith and inner strength.

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In these adverse times Tagore's poems brings us a ray of hope and light. He inspires us to believe that through hope and through faith in ourselves we can face and overcome this global calamity.

Similarly, Keats' poem *To Hope* is all about faith and hope. When the poet faces despondency, disappointment and despair he calls upon hope to come and brighten his soul.

*“When by my solitary hearth I sit,  
And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom;  
When no fair dreams before my "mind's eye" flit,  
And the bare heath of life presents no bloom;  
Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.”  
“Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,  
Strive for her son to seize my careless heart;  
When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air,  
Preparing on his spell-bound prey to dart:  
Chace him away, sweet Hope, with visage bright,  
And fright him as the morning frightens night!”*

Another poem *Hope is the thing with feathers* by Emily Dickinson brings out Hope as a strong-willed bird that resides within the human soul and sings its song uncaring for what happens around. The poem reminds us of the power of hope and how little it requires of people. The speaker enumerates how hope has been helpful in times of difficulty and has never asked for anything in return.

*“Hope” is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all -*

*And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -  
And sore must be the storm -  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm -*

*I've heard it in the chillest land -  
And on the strangest Sea -  
Yet - never - in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb - of me.*

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To sum up, our Life is a gift we should cherish and love; it is a beautiful journey full of varied experiences and memories to store. Life itself consists of both joy and misery and both should be happily tasted and explored. In times of disappointment, despair and distress hope and faith keep us going and patience and perseverance promote us achieve our dreams and overcome our worries and fears. Poetic strain has a recreating effect which provides inner peace and solace. Poetry can heal the wounds of loneliness, grief and panic during the hard times. It can encourage and give inner strength to face the present challenges posed before us and help manage our future with an optimistic and cheerful attitude. These words of hope, faith and strength have magical effect born from the once deserted hearts who derived relief and comfort from the same literary source which we also can delve deep to our benefit.

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