

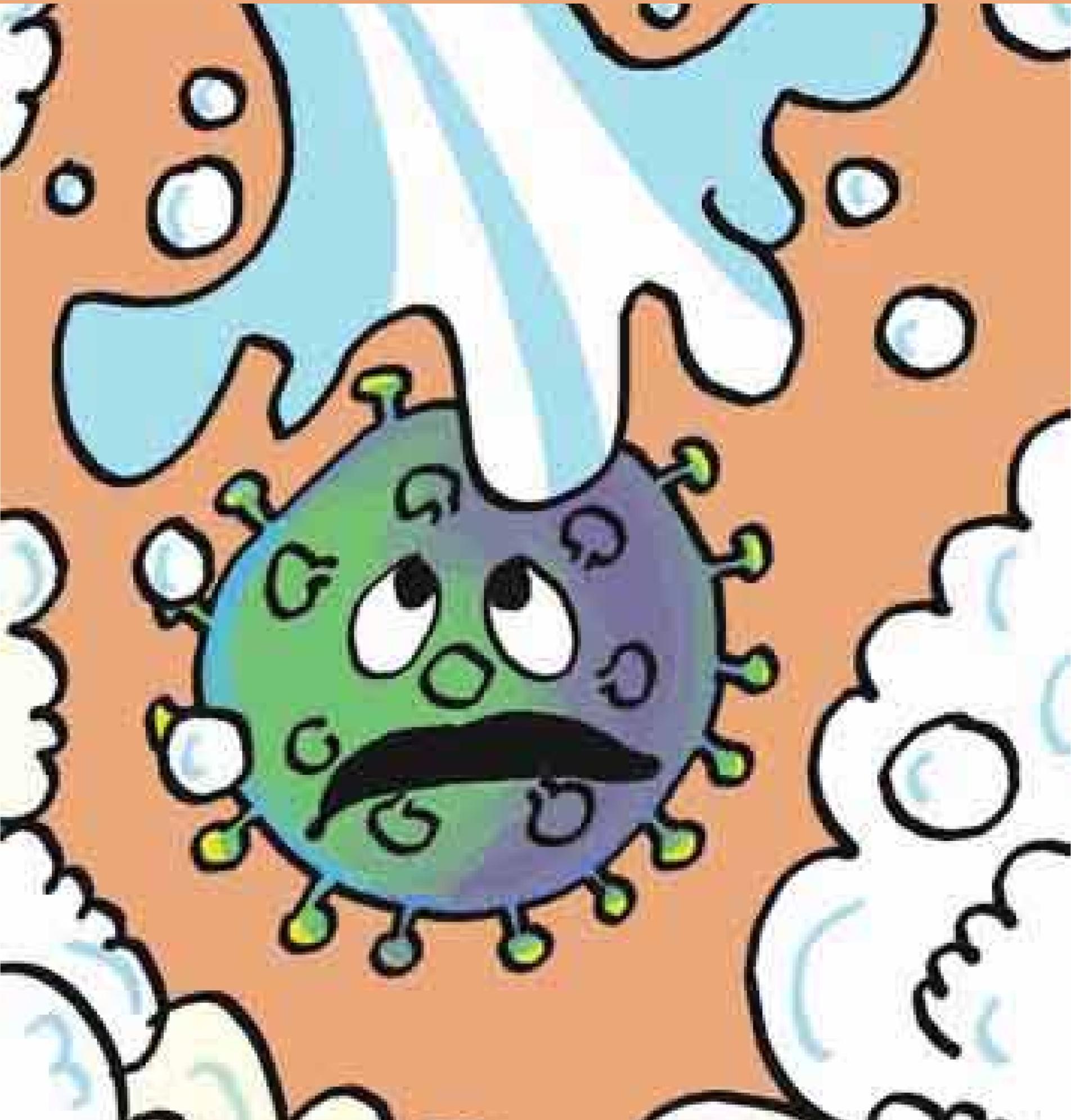
Cooking in times of Corona

by Indian Scientists Response to Covid

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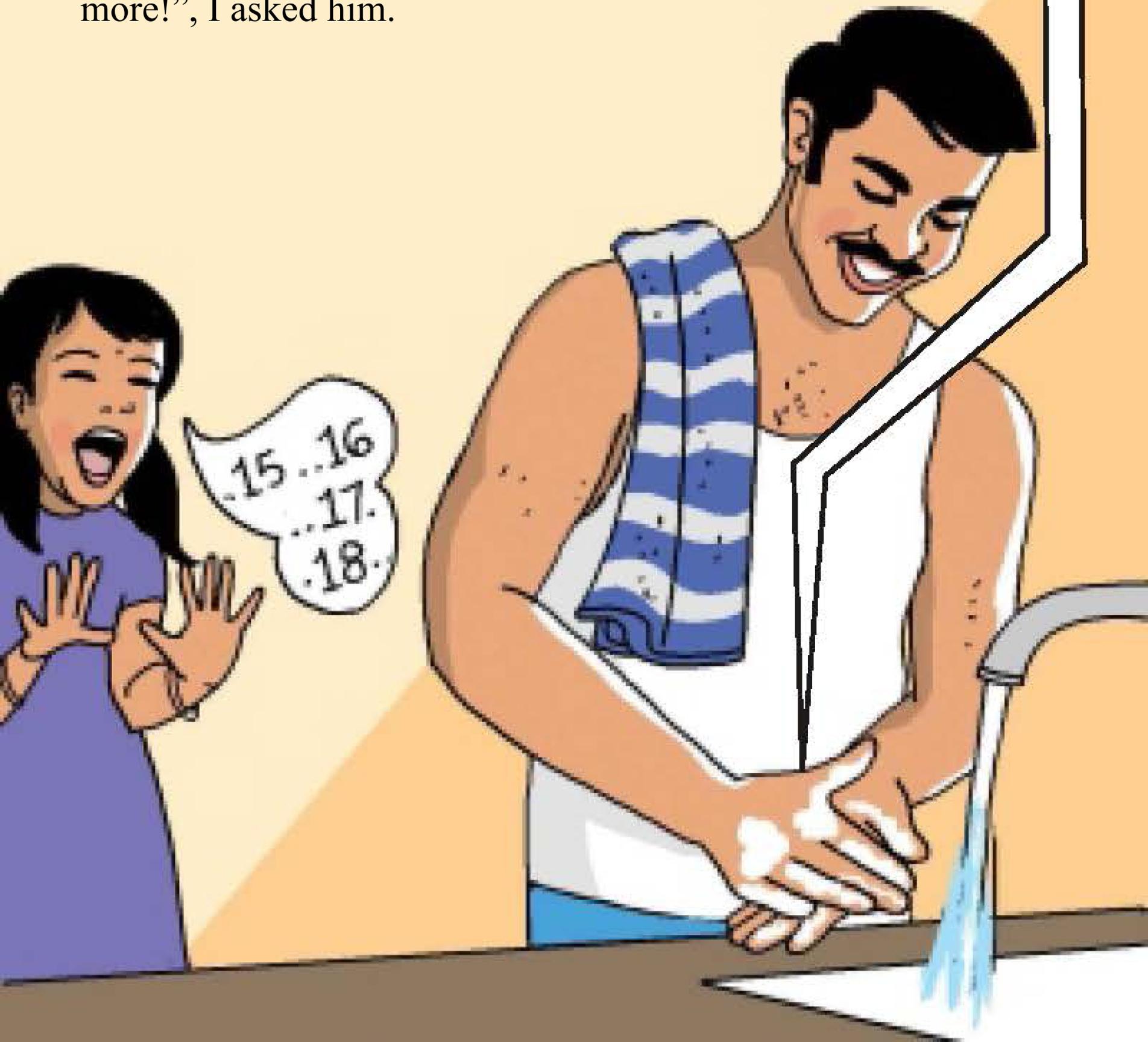
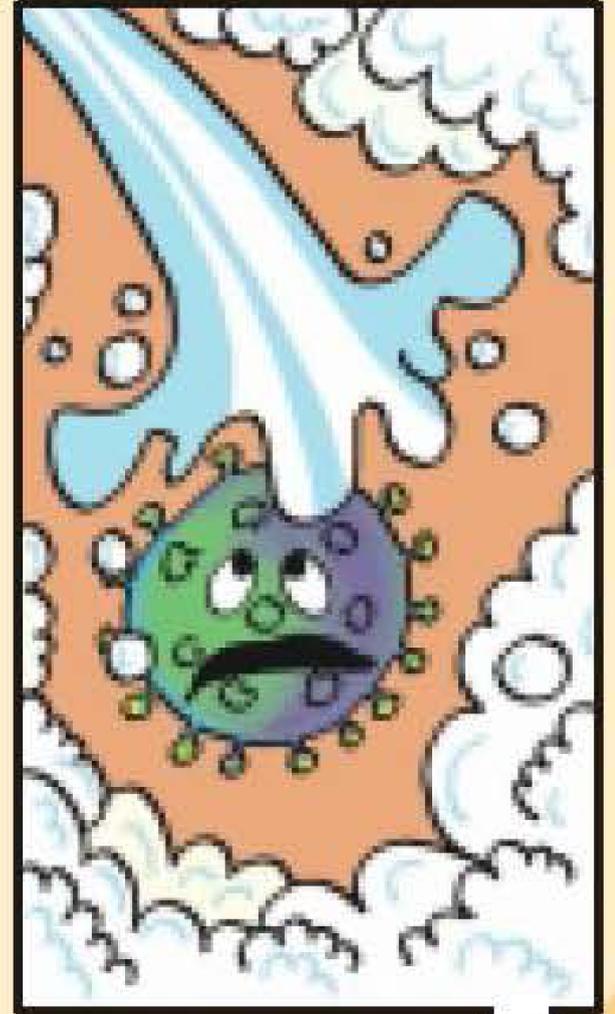


Indian
Scientists'
Response to
COVID-19

It was evening, and I was already a bit hungry.

“Appa, can you make your special chicken curry please? Make it extra spicy!”, I said. Amma also readily agreed - ‘I am quite tired too, do cook your curry today!’.

“Okay, said Appa”, and went to the sink to wash his hands with soap. I started counting down from 20 to keep time for him and Amma joined in too! Appa liked to sit on the floor next to the radio to cut vegetables. Ramesh uncle had come in that morning to lend us his magazines to read and sat at the same place. I remember Appa had cleaned the entire surface with a sponge and soap soon after. He sat down and started cutting the chicken and then the green chillies. “Add some more!”, I asked him.



“Do you want to cut the onions for me?”

“Noooo .. they make me cry”, I answered. He then rinsed three onions and peeled them. Meanwhile, Sarala aunty from next door came to stand outside the front door and talk to Amma. She said “oh, do you know what my sister did? She washed the onions and tomatoes with soap because she was so worried. And then the entire family ate soapy food”. I burst out laughing, it was such a funny thing to imagine!

“The virus doesn’t grow on food, you know? And it is destroyed when cooking anyway. It is not like bacteria”, explained Amma. Of course, I knew that too. “But the onion was lying in the market and everyone there touched it, no?”, I asked her. “Yes kanna”, she said, smiling at me. “But that is why I rinsed all the vegetables really well when your brother brought them yesterday” “And then washed my hands for 20 seconds”, we both chanted in unison.



Sarala aunty then looked at what Appa was doing. “Oho, you are making your special chicken, I see. But, I read on whatsapp that the virus first came from animals, you know? Is it safe?” she asked. “Yes, it is” replied Appa vehemently, “the virus is transmitted only from humans to humans, and non-veg is perfectly safe! Doctors have said so too”, he said. Lucky me, I thought! Her daughter called out and aunty went back to her house to see what she wanted.

Just then Sekhar anna came back from the shop. Amma had sent him to buy some rice and toor dal, and also some cream biscuits for me. He stood at the front door, uncertain of what to do. “Don’t look so confused”, laughed Amma, “just wait there for a second, no?”. She went into the kitchen area and brought out the big dabbas where the rice and dal are kept, and another empty tin. She opened them and told Sekhar to cut open the plastic packets of rice and dal. “Now, don’t touch my dabbas, and pour the rice and dal into them directly”, she told him. “And don’t you dare spill any on the floor!”. I giggled and watched as he did as she told him, ever so carefully. He then opened the biscuit packet and emptied the biscuits into the tin too, without touching the tin either. “Yes!”, he shouted, celebrating his success. He is very silly like that sometimes, and we all laughed with him. I remembered that is how Amma had transferred the potato curry into our vessel too when Sarala Aunty had brought us some in the morning.

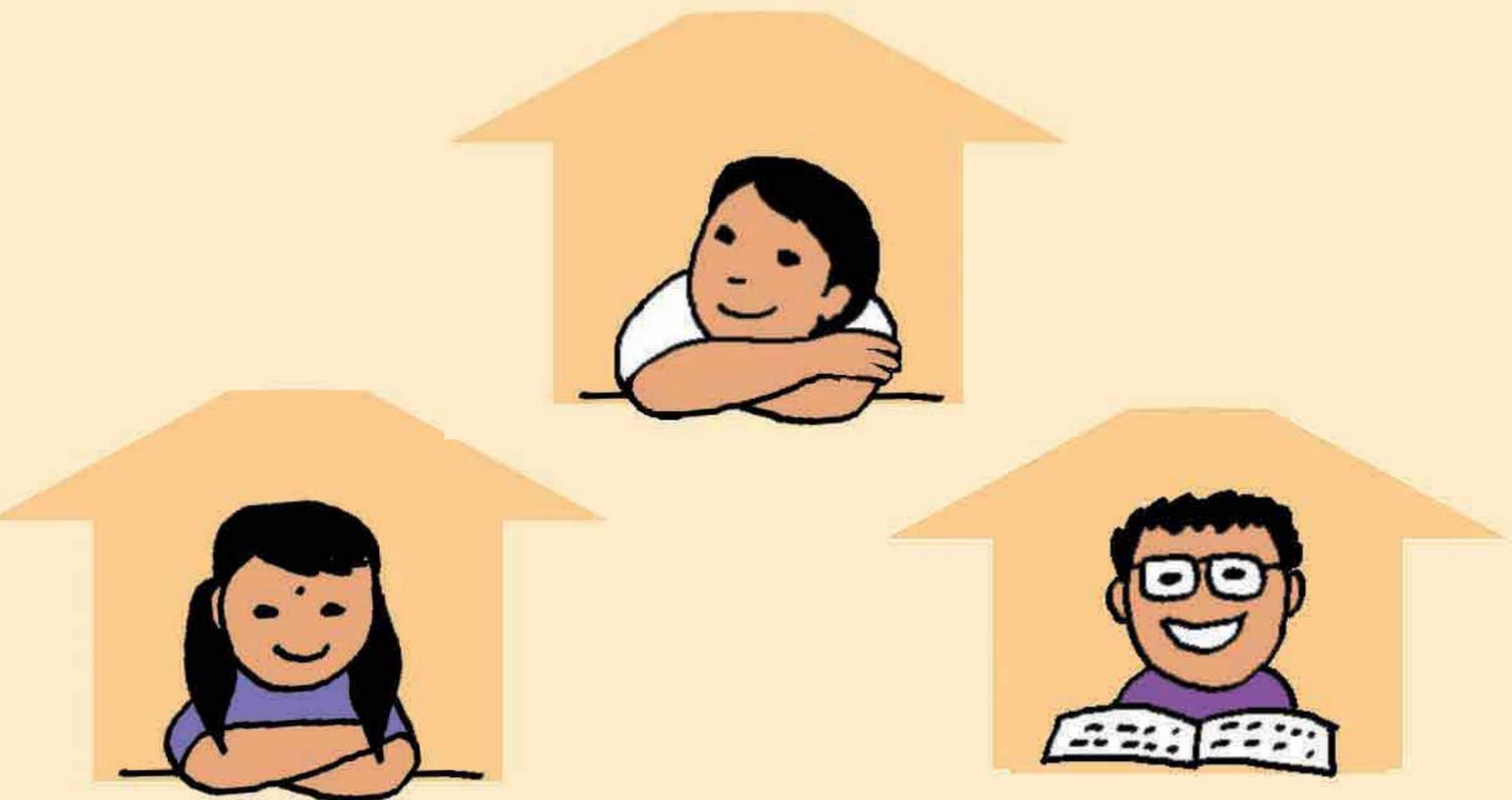


“What do I do with all this plastic and paper now?” Sekhar asked Amma. She told him to put them in the plastic bag in waste-paper basket kept outside. He then removed his slippers and came indoors. “Wash your hands for 20 seconds”, I chanted and went behind him to make sure he did. He then went inside to change his clothes.

By then, Appa had already gone into the kitchen area. He had washed all the vessels, spoon and even the stove with detergent and water earlier today anyway. Soon I could smell the frying curry leaves and hing powder all over the house. He added the chicken and while cooking them, asked Amma who was still in the living room watching her serial on television - “Did you hear about Jacob in the next building? He is down with a cold and cough and even had mild fever last week”.

“Oh no, that must be scary for his family. Should we go and visit them?” asked Sekhar. My mother shook her head and said “No, they would be in quarantine now”. I wondered how Jacob would eat with his family. I asked her if someone could make chicken curry for him too.

“Yes, why not?”, she answered. “They just have to be very careful, kanna. He should stay in his room and someone will bring him his food. And wash his plates well after he is done”. I hope Mohan gets better soon. He has promised to teach me how to fly a kite!



“Dinner is done!”, said Appa. He made all of us wash our hands with soap and bring our plates. He then put some rice and the curry on our plates. “Are you not joining us?” I asked. “Wait a minute”, he said, scratching his nose vigorously. “I have been wanting to do that for the last half an hour, but couldn’t since I was cooking and now I can!”, he shouted. While we all burst out laughing, he went to wash his hands. We all sat a distance apart from each other and had the best chicken curry in the entire world!

These are meant to portray typical scenarios and contextualise the information we provide. Necessarily this simplifies the content. Please make sure that you go through the accompanying documents on the website for scientific accuracy.

