

A Mom, Writer, and Small Business Owner

Farah Ejaz

BEFORE YOU READ: Note the labels that the writer uses to describe herself in the title. What are some of the labels you use to describe yourself?

I am the mother of five children, a housewife, a writer, an amateur poet, and a business owner, and this is my story of survival. It is a story that is still in process.

Mom Is the Mask Enforcer

You ask me how the pandemic is affecting my work life. Well, the answer is simple. It has been a nightmare. One of my jobs is to be a mom. During the lockdown, the kids had no social activities, and they could not play outside. Instead of going to school, they were doing virtual classes at home, which is not a good experience. It is not easy to keep an eye on your kids all the time during virtual classes.

My husband and I have a small restaurant in Ann Arbor called Once Upon A Grill. We had to close it for three months. My whole family was stuck in the house. At times, my house felt like a cage to me, where I was trapped with five kids,



a husband, and a mother-in-law. If we went out, then I had to enforce the mask rule! A mother already does so much to keep her children healthy and teach them to do the right thing. This task only grew during the pandemic! (Watch this [Dhar Mann video](#) of a patient mother persuading her daughter to wear a mask, all the while her daughter is getting pressure not to wear a mask. Who is the hero here?)

Needing Time to Write

The pandemic made life much harder for me, and I did not have time to write. Writing is important to me. It makes me feel positive and productive. When I don't have time to write, I feel anxious and frustrated.

Keeping the Business Going + More Mask Enforcing!

In addition, there are the frustrations of being a small business owner during the pandemic. We closed our restaurant during lunchtime because people were working from home. They were scared to go out to eat, and there was no delivery option for us because the cost of delivery is too high. The delivery companies charge 25-35% of the sale. We are staying open during limited hours to bring in enough money to manage overhead

and stay in business. We are not sure how we are going to deal with our financial setbacks.

Now that people are eating in restaurants again, we face another problem: scarcity of labor. People are making more money by staying unemployed. It's hard to find labor because the state and federal government are helping the unemployed people. Also, some workers are scared to come back to the restaurant because Covid is still dangerous.

Meanwhile, customers are not always happy to follow the rules. They don't keep social distance, they come in without masks, or they don't wear them properly. It is hard for us to manage

Please, everyone, if you read my article please follow the directions; masks protect you, as well as everyone else.

the customers who don't want to follow the guidelines. Please, everyone, if you read my article please follow the directions; masks protect you, as well as everyone else.

It is hard work being a mom, a writer, and a business owner. The pandemic made it even harder. In the end, I am thankful to God and to all those who worked to make our lives easier. I am thankful to those who gave their day and night in research to make vaccines to get rid of this monster. Because of their efforts, we are now able to fight this virus. I hope we will succeed against it and take back what this pandemic has seized from us.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. What are some of the challenges Farah has had to deal with? Compare and contrast them to the challenges you have faced recently.
2. Farah mentions a "scarcity of labor." Discuss what this means and why it is happening.

Farah Ejaz is an ESL student in the Dearborn Public Schools in Dearborn, MI. She is from Pakistan, and she is an Urdu writer. She enjoys reading and writing fiction. She loves to travel and to watch Dhar Mann videos and travel vlogs.



In this [Dhar Mann video](#), a mother teaches her daughter why it matters to wear a mask. What "work" is this mother doing here? Do you think it is work? Why does it matter to the rest of society for parents to do the work of raising children? How much should society support parents in this work?

Make a list of some of the additional tasks that parents have had to take on during the pandemic:

Look at the chart on p. 41 to see which countries offer paid time off to parents to take care of children.