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Morals or Prejudice?

Double standards against sex workers

Dishita Sharma

Lakshmi (name changed), a 44-year-old sex worker who has been living in Kamatipura for 21 years is required to hide her kids while she works in order to protect them from violence either from the clients or the police. She lives in uncertainty even in her own home. Even in 2024, sex workers continue to face discrimination in multiple arenas and the sole reason behind that is the stigma associated with the profession.

Reality of Discrimination

Sex workers have designated areas, such as Kamatipura, but now builders are eyeing these areas and want the women to move out because if a high-rise building is coming up, people do not want to see a 'red-light' area from their window. However, removing sex workers does not stop them from working as they shall continue the same in another location.

Sex work has a history that is embedded in violence. The women working in this field have constantly been exploited, a majority of the workers have been forced into the field by their family members. They are left with no other form of employment other than sex work due to their unfortunate past.

The Psychological Impact

"Constant discrimination leads to chronic effects, affecting the functioning and the attention span and can also cause PTSD. Constant physical and psychological trauma leads them to learned helplessness, an operant condition found by BF Skinner. They develop under confidence, fear of rejection and also internalised shame related to the occupation" said Manasee Sujit Joshi, psychologist.

Legal Barriers

The Supreme Court case of *Buhadev Karmaskar vs.*

the State of West Bengal and others, held that sex work is not decriminalised. Activities such as running a brothel, living off the earnings of sex workers, or facilitating sex work is criminalised. The intent behind criminalising these activities was the prevention

of trafficking and exploitation. However, it has now been questioned as it often targets sex workers rather than abusers or traffickers, stated Akriti Rana (name changed), a lawyer. "We can say it is a sort of grey area considering that the Central and State governments

are hesitant to make laws. Another situation can also be a scenario wherein laws are not made due to the fact that a lot of social stigma is attached to it; hence legalisation of sex work is going to have a detrimental impact on the vote bank of the politicians. This is also the reason why Supreme Court guidelines are the ground-norm when it comes to this issue as of now," Rana opined.

Ground Reality and Social Services

Addressing the deep rooted stigma in society around sex work numerous NGOs help in increasing awareness and reducing the stigma. Rajesh Srinivas, a member of the Sangama Foundation, that has been working on strengthening communities of gender, sexual minorities and sex workers said, "Who are we to make a judgment or question that right? If there are adults who consent to this, then who are we to make a judgment? Who are we to question that choice of occupation?" while talking

about the existing stigma in society. While talking about the media's effect on society, he also highlighted the media tends to be voyeuristic at times when it comes to the issues of sex workers.

Seema Sayyed, is a member of Aastha Parivaar, an organisation which works towards empowering sex workers and helps them become independent. Emphasising on the importance of education for sex worker's children, she said "We help them get their documents. We help them get admission in school and get educated. They never know what their mothers do. We counsel them in case they choose a wrong path such as drugs or alcohol."

Constant discrimination strips sex workers from basic human rights. To address this issue, it is essential to challenge societal norms and morality. What needs to be looked at is constitutional morality, because the constitution guarantees fundamental rights to every citizen of this country.

"Constant discrimination leads to chronic effects...and can also cause PTSD."



Kamatipura: Home of sex workers

Dishita S

The Esports Revolution

India's Journey Forward

Aadil Sirfan

After Saudi Arabia hosted the prestigious Esports World Cup in July and August 2024, the global stage lit up, prompting discussions over the future of competitive gaming. Yet, in India, esports remains an underestimated and often misunderstood career path. While the industry has seen considerable progress, Indian esports professionals still struggle for recognition. "Esports is just like any other sport. It's always been recognised as one in other countries," says Karthik Vijayakumar, known as Killua Gaming in the gaming sphere. Karthik, a seasoned player in the Indian esports arena, represented India

in Counter-Strike at a competition held in China in 2009 and PUBG at a tournament hosted in Japan in 2022. He claims it has been challenging for players to get noticed due to India's late arrival into the esports scene. "While 2024 was a year of rapid growth, we are still catching up to the global scene," he opined. Indian players lack funding, infrastructure, and training facilities. Karthik points out that career opportunities in esports are not limited to playing

alone, with coaching, management, and analytics being some of the other career options.

Misconceptions among parents and society

A career in esports faces significant scepticism from parents and society. Career paths like engineering or medicine have been traditional strongholds, and parents often disregard esports as a viable career path. Fuaad Jalaludheen, a concerned parent, said, "Unlike normal sports, there is no physical activity in esports. Our priority as parents is our kid's physical and mental well-being. Continuous gaming in front of a computer raises concerns about physical health."



Spectators at the 2024 championships, Saudi Arabia Reuters



The final cup of the esports championship, 2024

Reuters

"India's recent achievement of reaching the semifinals in FIFAe is a big milestone."

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Breaking barriers with sustainable fashion

Tiani Longkumer

The Northeast part of India is often overlooked and neglected when it comes to entrepreneurship because of its limited resources and lack of opportunities which makes local companies difficult to compete on the national level.

LittleBox, a sustainable fashion clothing brand from Assam, NorthEast India has broken barriers by becoming the first ever clothing brand from the Northeast to appear on the national television series 'Shark Tank India' paving the way for other aspiring entrepreneurs in the fashion industry from the region. The brand managed to get a successful groundbreaking deal on 'Shark Tank India', resulting in a rare offer from all the five sharks. LittleBox was started in the year 2022 by Rimjim Deka and co-founded by her husband Parttha Kakati.

Sustainability as a core philosophy:

Sustainability is the key focus of the clothing brand. This is achieved by using an on-demand production model, which helps them reduce waste by producing items only when ordered. Thus, reducing operational expenses as well. Their real-time retail model also helps them minimize excess inventory which is a significant waste source in the fashion industry. The impact of their sustainability efforts are measured through customer

feedback and engagement and metrics such as sales and website traffic. They also emphasize on reducing waste and overproduction.



Founders of LittleBox at Shark Tank Zeebiz

Importance of sustainable fashion:

The fashion industry is considered



Team behind LittleBox Zeebiz

to be one of the biggest polluters hence it is important to have an eco-friendly approach towards fashion. In sustainable fashion, the products are reused, repaired and recycled minimizing textile wastes thus lessening the impact it has on the environment.

"When clothes are produced more than the requirement, it leads to overconsumption and most of them end up in landfills which take decades to decompose" says Shwetaka, the Creative Head of LittleBox.

Challenges faced as a Northeast startup company:

As a company hailing from the Northeast, where resources are quite limited, Deka experienced her own struggles of starting her company. She

shares that establishing proof of their concept and product and finding the right resources was one of the major challenges. Another challenge was establishing a tech-enabled supply chain in the country, which required bringing various components under one umbrella. Despite these, perseverance and innovation helped them overcome those challenges, states Deka.

Lack of entrepreneurship in the Northeast:

According to Deka, lack of industrialisation is one of the main reasons why there are not many entrepreneurs coming up from the North East. "If there is no inspiration to start a business, people are likely to step back," says Deka. She also highlights the need to broaden one's horizon and not focus on a niche market and look beyond the traditional market in order to achieve greater success. "Unlike metro cities, Northeast lacks a proper ecosystem in terms of fashion industry like networking opportunities or supply of raw materials", says Shwetaka, the creative head of LittleBox.

Going national: 'Shark Tank India'

The moment when all the five sharks expressed their interest in investing in LittleBox in the show, 'Shark Tank', was a turning point for the brand. "When all five sharks expressed interest in investing, it was a validating and

energizing moment for LittleBox. is kind of support and belief in our brand from successful entrepreneurs boosted our confidence and motivation to excel further", says Deka, recalling her 'Shark Tank' experience. It gave us the hope that our brand has potential and could benefit from their expertise and resources. And the potential has indeed been fulfilled in the form of a large base of satisfied customers for this homegrown brand. When asked about the quality and shopping experience from LittleBox, Mickey, a customer, said, "The clothing looks great and feels comfortable at the same time". Rachel, another customer, expressed her fondness for the trendy and stylish collections from Little Box.

Advice for aspiring entrepreneurs

On advice for entrepreneurs, Shwetaka emphasizes on the importance of being persistent. "Even if you are failing or losing, you have to be persistent in order to achieve your goals", says Shwetaka. She also advises to embrace failures and learn from them. She also highlights the importance of being patient with oneself. "In this industry, you will get a lot of pressure, from vendors and also customers. You have to be patient with yourself", says Shwetaka. The story of LittleBox stands as a powerful message of the potential entrepreneurship in Northeast which is often overlooked on the national level.

India embraces blockchain for digital currency

Devika Vinodkumar

India has launched its own Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), the e-rupee. The introduction of the e-rupee marks India's entry into a new era of digital finance. Blockchain technology, a distributed ledger system, shapes the functioning of CBDCs. Upgrading security to reduce fraud, blockchain is a main factor in the development and execution of the e-rupee.

Why CBDC?

The Indian government introduced the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) with a vision of 'Digital India' reducing the country's cash dependency. IRS officer Sanjeev Nair said, "The CBDC started with the idea of India moving towards a digital economy with clear objectives of reducing cash dependency, increasing financial inclusion, and improving the efficiency of currency management." One of the goals of launching the e-rupee is to offer an efficient and secure digital transaction system, he added.

Blockchain as a Backbone of the e-Rupee

Blockchain records all transactions through a network of computers. Once the transactions are recorded, they cannot be altered or deleted. Anjana Priya, Assistant Manager at HDFC Bank said, "Blockchain is a ledger that records data and transactions in

real-time." Blockchain ensures every transaction is transparent and traceable. This enables the government to monitor the flow of digital money, ensuring it is not misused for illegal activities. The biggest concern with digital



Representational image AI generated

payments is security. Blockchain's encrypted structure makes sure that e-rupee transactions are not in danger from fraud or hacking. Each transaction is recorded in a block, and multiple validators across the network confirm its authenticity before it is added to the chain. Sanjeev Nair said, "Every transaction is recorded in real-time, creating a clear audit. This can reduce fraud and enhance trust in the digital currency system." Talking about the risks of counterfeit e-rupees, blockchain also has the capability to eliminate them. Each digital coin is unique and can be traced from the point of issue to the point of use.

Black Money and Transparency

CBDC has the potential to reduce

illegal transactions. Anjana Priya said, "e-rupee helps reduce black money and hawala transactions. Real-time transaction records are available, unlike when we transact with cash. This makes it difficult for people to hide illicit funds." All transactions are recorded on a ledger, making it easier to track the source and destination of funds. Sanjeev Nair added, "Blockchain ensures no single entity controls the entire system. Transparency helps authorities monitor suspicious activities, making it difficult for people to engage in tax evasion or money laundering." Blockchain provides security features like two-factor authentication, fingerprint recognition, and encryption. These measures ensure

that transactions are protected from fraud and that user data remains private.

Banks as Intermediaries

Banks play a major role in the distribution of the e-rupee. The involvement of multiple banks like SBI, HDFC, ICICI, Canara, and others in developing apps to release the e-rupee into digital wallets helps in a seamless and secure digital payment option. The money in your bank account can be converted into e-rupee through these apps, allowing users to store and transfer e-rupee directly from one person to another without needing a physical bank account. Anjana Priya said, "e-rupee helps banks reduce cash handling costs. Cash transportation,

storage, and management are expensive, but digital currency eliminates most of these costs." Blockchain also facilitates real-time tracking of transactions, providing banks and the RBI with data to manage liquidity and ensure that digital money remains in circulation efficiently.

CBDC: Cashless Society

Sinoj Thoppil, Head of the Forex Division at Unimoni India said physical cash might not disappear entirely but will be used less. "Coins may stop, as the cost of making coins is more than their utility," he added, "It is challenging to digitize completely, especially for older generations. Younger people will likely see everything becoming digital." People who are without access to digital tools may continue to use physical cash for some time.

Digital Money Concerns

With the use of digital payments, many people, especially from the Gen Z generation, have raised concerns about the security and privacy of their transactions. Atul Baiju, a Gen Z student from Bangalore, said that although digital payments are convenient, they bring challenges. "In the digital era, we are forced to use mobile apps like Google Pay and PhonePe, which makes it hard and easy to lose control over our finances." A balance between physical and digital money could help manage financing better.



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Indian spices, Emirati spaces: Shared love for flavour

Diya Daniel

In the UAE, a country often dubbed as the culinary capital of the Middle East, Indian cuisine is no longer confined to traditional eateries tucked into quiet corners of bustling neighbourhoods. Instead, it stands tall, reshaping the UAE's gastronomic identity. From small-scale cafeterias to Michelin-level fine dining, Indian food isn't just thriving—it's leading.

Habibi, come to Dubai!

The popularity of Indian cuisine in the UAE traces back to the influx of Indian expatriates during the mid 1960's, shortly after the discovery of oil in the country. These expats, who brought their culinary traditions, also had a passion for sharing them. Over time, Indian food has become more than just an indulgence for the Indian diaspora; it has turned into a mainstream favourite.

Reel or Real?: The media effect

In recent times, social media influencers have helped to amplify Indian cuisine's visibility in the UAE. Dubai-based actress and influencer Cerrena Ann Joseph (@cerrena.ann) highlighted that social media's spotlight on Indian cuisine has helped to reach audiences beyond its traditional fanbase.

"When a Malayali influencer creates content on a newly opened restaurant, it is not only viewed by Malayalis but rather by a wider audience that involves many nationalities. You no longer need to step into a restaurant to know what Indian cuisine feels like, a single reel can make viewers feel like they are a part of something exclusive," she added. Emirati influencer Sally Elazab (@theadventurousmum), recently

chosen for an India exploration tour by the Government of India, also highlighted the role of social media in affirming cultural gaps. She noted that her misconceptions about Indian food were overturned, emphasising that "food influencers aren't just showing food, rather they're showing a reflection of the region it's from."

From pan to plates

Indian restaurants in the UAE have become more than dining spaces; they're now cultural ambassadors. For restaurateurs like Rahul George Ninan, managing partner at Idukki Gold Restaurant, preserving the soul of Indian cuisine while catering to a diverse cosmopolitan palate is both a challenge and a passion.

"Bringing Kerala cuisine to Abu Dhabi was not just a business decision—it was personal," Ninan shared. "Around forty percent of the expat population in the UAE are Indians, and we want every dish to carry the authenticity of home while still being accessible to a global audience."

NH47's Executive Chef, Krishna Acharya, explained that the flavours of Indian dishes make them stand out globally, elevating the demand for Indian restaurants. "From pepper to cardamom, our country is often considered the land of spices. It is our identity," he expressed.

Table for two: Indian cuisine and fine dining culture

The heightened demand for Indian cuisine has now led to the rise of Indian fine dining restaurants in the UAE, such as NH47, pro-

moting an exotic appeal among its audiences. Siby Kadavil, PR manager at NH47 Restaurant attributes this growth to an increased demand for premium services, especially from locals. "Emiratis love Indian food. However, the only issue they have complaints about is the reduced dine-in capacity, as a result, we wanted to provide the ultimate dining experience for all our customers."

With a seating capacity of 360+ guests, NH47 stands amongst the most prominent fine-dining Indian restaurants in the UAE. Kadavil also highlighted that NH47 centers itself around eight different settings specialised within the restaurant, including immersive themes like 'Rainforest' and 'Elephant Caves,' each designed to offer a unique dining atmosphere.

Aiwah Habibi: The Emirati opinion

Today, the Indian diaspora is at the heart of this culinary renaissance in the Emirates. However, the popularity of Indian food extends beyond expatriates. Emiratis have embraced it enthusiastically, now making Indian food a staple in their dining culture.

Emirati entrepreneur Younes Al Ali, driven by his love for Indian cuisine, is all set to open an Indian restaurant in Morocco this year. "Here in the UAE, we often see Indian food as our national food rather than our local cuisine. My love for biryani and masala dosa is beyond measure, that I'm opening an Indian restaurant in my wife's home country," he said.

The UAE's relationship with Indian cuisine is more than just a culinary affair - it is cultural diplomacy on a plate. Whether it's Chai or Qahwa, the dialect remains the same - one that speaks the universal language of love and flavour.



Indian food fest 2024 at the Indian Pavillion in Global Village, Dubai Visit GlobalVillage



Immersive rainforest setting at NH47 Restaurant, Abu Dhabi NH47

Nongkynrih: The remaining home of bows and arrows

Evaiabiang Mary Lyndem

Nestled in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya, of 'Jalyngteng' lies a village called 'Nongkynrih' which is the only village in the state that preserves the craft of making bows and arrows. It has become a symbol of cultural preservation in Meghalaya.

The villagers of 'Nongkynrih' belong to the original clans of Myllem, Nongkynrih, Rynjah, and Nongrum, deeply rooted in the culture and with a passion to preserve and keep their old traditions alive. They are the only artisans who still practice the art of making bows and arrows.

Datril Lyngdoh Mawphlang, an elderly of the village, said, "We learnt this craft right from the time of our forefathers, which is passed on to us from generation to generation. Everyone in the village knows how to make these. It is of great benefit to us in terms of livelihood. It also helps us to strengthen our own roots". Nongkynrih also hosts monthly archery

fetes, where skilled archers from the village showcase their talents. It not only provides a platform for young artisans to demonstrate their skills but also helps in sustaining the craft. Khlain Khmah, a skilled craftsman explains, "This has been a great source of income for us as it provides employment opportunities for people who do not have jobs, making it a vital part of our economy."

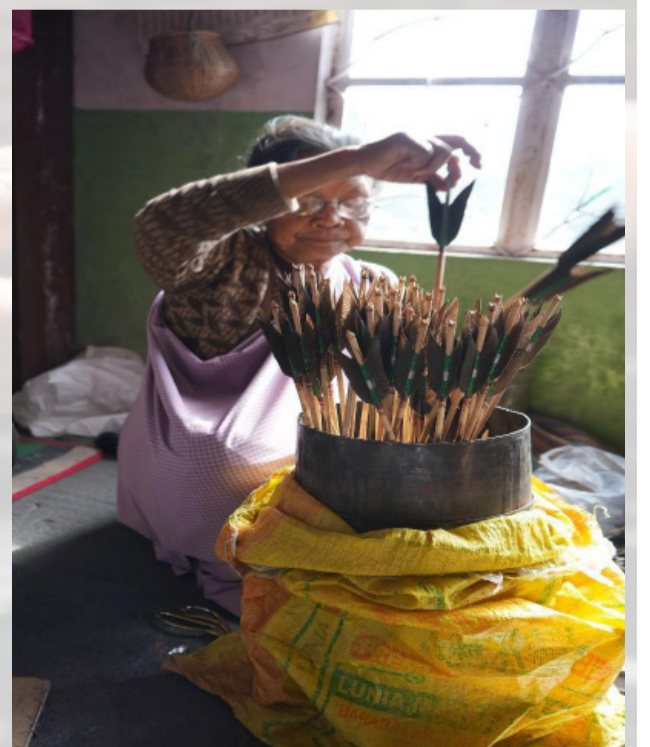
The importance of bows and arrows in the village extends beyond mere craftsmanship. It plays an important role during rituals and adheres to the traditions of the community. "When a child is born, three arrows are kept to signify whether it is a boy or a girl. When someone dies, arrows are used to mark their passing away," Khmah added further.

Beyond rituals and traditions, this artform also holds historic values during ceremonies and is used in various activities such as sports, education, hunting, and gambling competitions,

which serve as recreational tools. Some people assume that the bows and arrows are imported from outside the state, such as Nepal or Bhutan, because they are unaware of the fact that these items are made and produced within the village itself, states Datril Lyngdoh.

The demand for the craft has decreased in recent years, leading to financial constraints. "In the modern world, the need to preserve this craft has become one of the main reasons to engage youth. Educational and awareness programmes are introduced which highlights the importance of preserving cultural traditions as a tool in one's culture," says Datril.

Laskhem Nongrum, a craftsman, credits the hard work and determination of their forefathers for the title 'Village of Bows and Arrows'. He also emphasised the importance of not forgetting one's culture and traditions and on the need to carry forward this legacy and maintain and preserve it for future generations.



Artistic hands

Evaiabiang Mary

Bengaluru open mic scene: Fame, finance, and mic checks!

Sudheeksha Easwar

Bengaluru's music scene has a history of rock shows and music festivals. The city also offers sweet encouragement to amateur artists through open mics. This platform acts as a space for experimenting with art and builds a community of artists. Over the years, a boom of open mics like the Speaking Souls, Arali Katte, The Draft Page (TDP), The Bean Grill, and many more have given opportunities to budding artists.

Vishal, a frequent performer in all these open mics, mentioned that "there used to be social gatherings organised in clubs or pubs where people would showcase their talent and entertain the crowd." Now, open mics have dedicated spaces that help artists experiment and gain exposure to their art.

A platform shaping amateurs to A-level artists

Open mics are not limited to spaces of comfort and experimentation for artists; these spaces have also witnessed the growth of an artist from an amateur to a professional. Jyothi Raj, the curator of 'The Draft Page' open mic, also known as TDP, mentioned Akash Tripathi, who pursues music professionally and has also released singles. He started as a weekend performer at TDP and now sings professionally. He received the CLEF Music Award, a leading independent music award in India by Radioandmusic.com. "Akash has topped it right now. He is doing great in the music industry," she added. Ayesha, the curator of 'The Bean Grill' open mic, spoke about Jai Shar-

ma, an anchor and storyteller who has performed in 'The Draft Page' and 'The Bean Grill' open mics. She mentioned that when Jai was new to Bengaluru and struggling, he started performing in her open mics and now interviews cricket players and hosts podcasts with them.

Amlan, a poet who performs on 'The Draft Page', 'Kommune' and other open mics, spoke about how constructive criticism helps him. "Siddharth Shukla, who I refer to as Guruji, gives me a lot of insights into how poetry works across languages and how, as a writer, I should look at them from different perspectives, empathise with the character and write about it."

Finance - For curators and artists

Bengaluru is one of those cities where artists are charged to perform in certain open mics. These platforms hire photographers and videographers to shoot content, for which the platforms pay them. Factors like profit sharing, ticket costs, and the cost of advertising determine if the curators make a profit or loss or if they break even. The ticket prices for performers range between two hundred and six hundred rupees, and most performers are students. They book performers' tickets on sites like BookMyShow and SkillBox. Jyothi elaborated on the financial aspects at TDP, saying, "They consider two factors. First, they should not incur any loss. And second, the amount quoted for the tickets should not be a burden for the artists who perform in their open mics."

Eshwar Raj, the curator of Arali Katte, was also a part of the 'Speaking Souls' open mic and said the platform used to manually reach out to all the previous year's performers through Instagram, drafted messages and reached out to artists before shows. "Speaking Souls does not run Instagram ads these days; we go by organic reach, relying on WhatsApp groups through which we reach many performers," added Eshwar.

The Bengaluru open mic : Pre and Post-COVID 19

Eshwar Raj explained how, before the outbreak of COVID, cafes that hosted open mics allowed performers and audiences to watch and be a part of the show for free, provided they ordered some food and beverages. "Post COVID, we shifted to studio spaces where we could rent the space hourly, and the studio would provide all the equipment," he added.

Mic checks: What could make the open mics better?

As open mics are booming, the feedback from artists is also increasing. Sai Partho, a singer at open mics in the city, says that organisers of open mics should see to it that a singer gets at least ten minutes to perform a song and is organised in venues with amenities like good-quality speakers and mics. The recent boom of the open mic culture is helping budding artists gain confidence, improve their art, earn better gigs, publish their work, and do much more.



The voice of Vishal in action

Vishal



A poet's presence in the present

Eshwar Raj

Waiting: A universal human experience

Romil T N V

Waiting has been conceived in numerous ways around the world, comprising nuances that are altered by various factors such as emotions, culture, geography, and subjectivity of the situation one is in. The philosophical aspect of waiting brings up significant problems. Is waiting merely a passive waiting for the inevitable, or can it be viewed as an active activity where we influence how time passes? Whether one is waiting for a job opportunity, a change in circumstances, or even death, most people find it difficult to deal with the uncertainty that comes with waiting. Each of us playing our own Sisyphus, glancing over monotony.

The clock in our head

Clinically, the perception of time and waiting has been experimented with to break down the complexities of how human brains react to waiting. Jokic et al. (2018) looked at how students view time in a real-world waiting scenario. Unaware of the time, participants waited in a room for 30 minutes. The study investigated how time perception is impacted by impulsivity, emotional health, and time perspectives. The findings indicated that the students who felt agitated or aroused exaggerated the waiting time, and those who were calm and happy evaluated it to be shorter. People who were less at ease tended to overestimate the waiting time, which led them to be more impulsive and have particular present-orientated temporal perspectives.

What makes waiting so stressful? How does the stress of waiting differ from other types of stress? Dr. Harini Chandrashekar, in response, said, "Many patients struggle with waiting, often experiencing anxiety, stress, and frustration. This anticipation, sometimes called scanxiety, which can significantly affect their mental health and daily functioning, especially when awaiting test results, appointments, or other outcomes".

She also emphasised on the strategies to control one's anxiety. Cognitive Restructuring-Reframing negative thoughts. Mindfulness and relaxation-using Meditation and Breathing Exercises, Behavioural Strategies: Developing Coping mechanisms, Exposure Therapy-Gradually increasing tolerance to waiting.



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A business perspective

The economic nuance of waiting signifies the effect of the notion of satisfaction a consumer receives from a product or a service and or the wait time involved in making a decision for the company. Prabal Mazumdar, a product manager at NoBroker, said, "Maintaining a perfect balance between decision-making and deadlines

has become not only crucial in today's environment but also the only way to grow in this ecosystem." He also opined that there are times when the leadership analysed situations, ran through different perspectives, and then used them to make a balanced decision, hence using waiting time to the organisation's advantage.

Aksha Shaikh who works as an event coordinator at City Cruise said. "Waiting adds value. Consumers frequently wait not only for what they desire but also for what is in demand, such as a restaurant that is completely booked, where its appeal is heightened by exclusivity".

Furthermore, when clients believe that their time commitment does not correspond to the value individuals receive from a service or product when they are unhappy, they undervalue time; if a customer's wait time is longer than expected, they would consider it unimportant, which would help to rationalise the unpleasant experience, said Soman Dilip, in his research 'The mental account of sunk time costs.'

Literary waiting

Professor Abhimanyu said, "When contemporary literature is compared to old literature, it shows how waiting has evolved through characters and how they interact with the process of waiting. The first fragments of images that come to my mind when I hear the word 'waiting' are nothing but the stereotypical depictions I read in fairy tales as a kid".

In addition, he goes on to iterate how growing up shifts one's perspectives. From the prince who waited for a kiss to escape his frog form, we wait to be enlightened about the purpose of our existence; one can observe how the paradigm shift in communication is reflected there. Waiting indulges in various dynamics of the subjective realities, yet it places itself as an important virtue across every strata it indulges in.

Anonymous art, from the artists' heart

Kiran R Patil

We make a living to earn money, but we create art with a message for the soul, says a member of Suko, a Bengaluru-based graffiti artist group. Graffiti and street art culture has rapidly grown in India, especially Bengaluru, a cultural hub for many art forms, like dance, music and art.

Significance of the ripple effect

The understanding of graffiti has always dabbled around whether it is an art for people's expression or vandalism. However, graffiti has found itself in some of the most crucial locations, expressing the voice of the unheard. One significant example is when the war between Palestine and Israel escalated in the year 2023, the first pictures published by journalists, apart from the gruesome aftermath of the war, were images of graffiti all over Gaza saying, 'We shall be free from the mountain to the sea' and this was reposted over a million times on Instagram, showcasing the power that this art form has. Another example of street art promoting a strong message can be seen near Indiranagar, Bengaluru, where three IT professionals dedicated an entire wall spanning the length of about one hundred meters to the freedom fighters of our nation under their art project called 'Freedom Wall', an initiative, that aimed to bring to life the patriots via murals.

Expression

Commenting on the rationale behind art

on Instagram, W.A.S crew (an anonymous graffiti crew) said, "Art without expression of the artists would just be colours on a wall. Graffiti allows artists to express their emotions without interference from curators, managers or an authority." Looking at an example from overseas, Banksy, a renowned anonymous graffiti artist, spread awareness of critical issues when he painted 'Love Is in the Air' on Jerusalem's West Bank barrier in 2003 in favour of Palestinian rights. Keith Haring, an American graffiti artist, brought mass attention to the AIDS crisis and the struggles that the LG-BTQ+ community has to go through.

Public reaction

Bengaluru has been warming up to the ideology and purpose of graffiti over the years, especially when artworks such as the COVID warrior murals near the Swami Vivekananda metro station brought appreciation and remembrance of the first responders who risked their lives during the 2020 pandemic. Nikhil Prabhakar, a resident of Indiranagar and a 50-year-old IT professional, was asked his opinion about graffiti and whether it is an expression for societal good or an act of vandalism. "If we want to look at it in that manner, we have paintings all over, we have the politicians putting up flyers, banners and things like that. That is equivalent to this, right? So if you look at it, it's more of how we as people or the position that the people are in misuse their public property, right? Being

very thin on this, politicians misuse public property during election time and things like that. They vandalize the entire area." He explained how the real vandals are the politicians, who stick posters on house walls and all over the area during elections, but since they have political backing, no one says anything. Graffiti artists try to beautify the layout by spreading a message, which can be misinterpreted sometimes, but when done right, no one has a problem with these artists.

Motivation

Art has been more expressive than words, with the help of visual aids. These artists claim that through their art, they can be the voice of the voiceless because not everything ends up in the newspapers or on television. With the help of their murals and messages, they can shed light on various issues including gender bias. "I think it is always important to have a woman's voice. It is not that men cannot bring women's issues to the table, but it is important to know the experiences of what women go through. These are topics that need to be discussed," said a female member of the Suko group, who chose to be anonymous. She highlighted how she uses graffiti to empower women by sharing experiences and voicing their opinions on the political and cultural dimensions of their city, state, and country. Graffiti continues to be an important form of art that needs more liberty, at the same time ensuring that it is not misused.



Covid lions at Swami Vivekananda metro station Kiran Patil



A glimpse into the lives led by Indian Legends Kiran Patil

Live, loud, and legendary: The story of rock culture in Bengaluru

P V Ananth Mahadevan



The house of rock memorabilia

PV Ananth M



The iconic winding staircase at Pecos Rock Pub PV Ananth M

Sold-out concerts and beaming performances are no strangers to Bengaluru; as Bryan Adams took the stage for the sixth time and Extreme played its first show in the city, the passion for rock music in Bengaluru proved to be ever-growing. With loyalty to the known and space made for the new, the city thrives on the rock music culture sustained for over seven decades. While it is essential to recognise the current rock music scenario in town, it is also crucial to trace the history and commend those who helped rock culture to bloom.

The first beats of rock music in the city

The essence of Bengaluru's rock music culture can be traced back to the late 1950s, spanning to the 80s. While faint traces of its existence lingered earlier, it was only during this phase that the community expanded its culture. The massive rise of the new wave classical rock movement in the West left a significant mark on the quaint town, making it one of the first Indian cities to embrace rock music culture. Early venues like the Catholic Club, The Bangalore Club, Bowring Institute, and Gaylord hosted many bands and artists for entertainment and communal harmony during the yesteryears. Drawing inspiration from iconic bands such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, bands such as the Devil Beats, The Spartans, and Eddie and his Rhythm Stars performed regularly during amateur nights on Sundays. They usually participated in jam sessions at the Catholic Club. "We used to undertake gigs at venues to interact with other bands and

foster friendly ties and a healthy competition. Places for such activities were limited then," recalls Alicia Briggs, a member of The Devil Beats.

The late 1990s witnessed a more significant surge in rock culture enthusiasts, paving the way for dedicated venues that now stand as prominent landmarks. Legend of Rock (LoR), Bengaluru's first rock-focused pub, was soon followed by iconic spaces like The Humming Tree, Purple Haze, and Pecos. These venues connected the underground artists to the audiences and created a community. "Every Sunday, LoR would promote an upcoming band. The stage was free for them. Many bands had their debuts there," said Ashish Kothare, owner of LoR. He opined that the culture's consistent nature resulted from the friendly competition between different venues and the collective passion to promote rock.

Stages of change and iconic venues

Bengaluru's identity boasts its involvement in rock culture, with concerts such as Bandlands and Bangalore Open Air (BOA) promoting individual underground rock artists. By providing a stage at the highest platforms for new artists, venues have aided in recognising much talent. Promotion for budding artists by clubs and pubs such as Hardrock Café, Pecos, and Le Rock elevated the recognition of rock culture. Live music venues such as Fandom, The Humming Tree, and B-Flat gave artists the platform to perform consistently. "We have this platform called the Wacken

Metal Battle, which is a competition that happens worldwide. It's a platform where we encourage young bands to participate in the competition, and the winner gets to play at BOA," said Salman Syed, founder of Bangalore Open Air and head of global marketing for the Wacken Metal Battle at Wacken Open Air.

Diverse audiences

People from all age groups participate in the culture. The younger audience is attracted to later stages of rock, with heavy metal and guitar riffs. At the same time, the older generations stay true to classical rock with melodies and lyrics. The city's willingness to learn and explore new music, combined with its enthusiasm for rock culture is a massive factor in the culture's longevity. "Bangalore is home to us, and the people are so friendly and educated about rock culture, making it easy for us," said Ameeth Thomas, Frontman, Junkyard Groove.

Rocking forward

The future looks even brighter with highly anticipated concerts like Bandlands, which draws in audiences primarily through online marketing. The arrival of online ticket booking and other technological advances is elevating the culture to a new level. "Online booking platforms have expanded our reach exponentially, cutting down barriers for outsiders," remarked Aryaman Singh aka Sunflowertapemachine, a Chennai-based artist and producer. The appreciation for rock music in Bengaluru has only increased over the years, shaping the city's identity and bringing unity, one performance at a time.

Commentary, comedy, and critical conversations: why satire in news dissemination works

Anoskha Heri

In early December of 2024, The Onion, a satirical media organisation known for its witty take on current events, attempted to purchase Infowars, a right-wing conspiracy platform mired in controversy since its inception in 1999. A press release by The Onion stated that their motive was “To end Infowars’ relentless barrage of disinformation for the sake of selling supplements and replace it with The Onion’s relentless barrage of humour for good.” This situation raises the question about the role of satirical organisations, like The Onion, in advocating awareness through their carefully stitched critique of public policy and society with a slice of humour.

Laughing at the delivery, learning from the message

Amidst the plethora of news formats lies an emerging area that blends humour and news. Modern news satire thrives primarily on social media: short-form content, video skits, satirical headlines, etc. Although the content is lighthearted on the surface, those who approach the news with humour opine that a strong message lies beneath the nuanced jokes. Ankit Sagar, founder of Archive News (@thearchivenews), explained that his motive for starting a satirical media organisation was to make news more relatable. He believes humour can be an effective tool to draw audiences in whilst simultaneously shedding light on something significant. “Comedy is easily remembered; a good joke, you will remember it a lot more than just a random sentence,” he expressed. Shashank P (@satirical_citizen) reiterated that information and awareness of issues are essential in his

work beyond entertainment and humour. The audience retention data for his content with elements of comedy is around eighty to eighty-five percent. “When I deliver information monotonously, the retention falls to around sixty to sixty-five percent. I don’t get enough views,” he added.

The psychology behind humour: why it sticks

Satirical news content pages have gained significant viewership, making humour’s possible positive effects on individuals evident. “When you interact with something distressing, there are a lot of intense emotions that are difficult to sit with. When you reinterpret a situation, you make more space for other emotions to come in, like laughter and joy,” said Rohan Chandak, a practising psychologist, who stressed on the idea of humour aiding in cognitive reappraisal, the positive reinterpretation of events. However, the excessive use of humour could dilute the gravity of a tragic event and could easily backfire when the form of humour is aggressive. “I believe humour in journalism is like seasoning in food—just the right amount can make things better, but too much can ruin the dish,” Hajira P, a therapist mentioned.

Political cartoons: a test of media literacy and privilege

Ayisha Abraham, daughter of the late political cartoonist Abu Abraham, explained that political cartoons provide comedic relief, which allows one to humanise people in power and call out flaws.

For political cartoonists, factors such as media literacy and news awareness become central in the dissection of the message.

“A cartoon can succeed only when both the cartoonist and the reader are on the same page. If the reader misses a certain aspect of news, cartoons won’t be effective,” said Satish Acharya, a well-known political cartoonist. The opinions of those providing satirical content suggest that even today, interpreting such humour in cartoons requires knowledge and privilege. “Only when you’re privileged can you take a step back and then laugh at a matter,” Ankit Sagar expressed.

Navigating the hurdles of censorship and misinformation

Censorship and misinformation pose significant challenges to humour in news. The Archive and Satirical Citizen’s content goes through two rounds of editing, with information extracted from multiple sources. The description under their content contains the facts of the news events and authenticated sources to avoid spreading misinformation. Archive News has received multiple death threats for its use of humour in its news delivery. However, they believe their work is based on strong legal and ethical values. “There is no victimless comedy...you need to make fun of someone or something. It’s easier to do in countries where freedom of speech is imposed,” said Ankit Sagar, founder of Archive News. Despite the challenges that news satire faces, it continues to spark critical conversations while eliciting a chuckle from the audience. Although the future of this space seems uncertain, the calling out of societal flaws will remain louder than ever.



A cartoon by Abu that uses humour to expose underlying issues Ayisha



Archive News’ satirical take on journalistic responsibilities Ankit Sagar

Continued from Pg 1...

While parents acknowledge the evolving opportunities in esports, they remain wary of its impact not just on physical health but on long-term career stability, as well. “Choosing any career unwisely can have drawbacks,” Fuaad stated, emphasising the need for a balanced approach to pursuing esports as a profession.

The lives of streamers and champions

Karthik Vijayakumar discovered his love for gaming in 2006, fascinated by the setting at local gaming cafes. Now 35, he splits his time between coaching, creating content, and playing part-time, turning his hobby into a multifaceted career. “Educational institutions should start offering esports-related courses. Some schools in India have already introduced classes, but we are late to the field,” he said.

The role of sponsors, streaming platforms, and tournaments is immense. In fact, these agencies bring financial help and opportunities for youngsters to create their own personal brands. Streaming platforms like YouTube and Loco have transformed how gamers connect with audiences, offering additional revenue streams and exposure.

Changing perceptions and the road ahead

Dilin Dinesh, an Indian esports player and streamer known online as Eagle Gaming, highlights the significant role of Dota 2, a Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) game in the global esports picture. “Dota 2 offers the highest prize money in esports globally, making it one of the highest-paying games for competitive gamers. Its base event alone has a prize pool of Rs.13–14 crore,” he added.

He also points to India’s progress, stating, “India’s recent achievement of reaching the semifinals in FIFAE is a big milestone.” Dilin also believes that with growing recognition, esports is on its way to becoming part of the Olympics.

The perception of esports is gradually changing in India. The industry is gaining legitimacy with high-

profile tournaments, excellent media coverage, and corporate sponsorships. “Think of it like any other sport,” Karthik Vijayakumar says, addressing society’s stereotypical perceptions about esports. His comment highlights how esports share elements similar to traditional sports, such as strategy, teamwork, and skill.

Nevertheless, systemic changes are crucial. Integrating esports into the curriculum may lend credibility to the sport and prepare aspiring professionals for careers in the field. However, awareness among parents and society is essential for breaking stereotypes and helping talented youth pursue their dreams.

Esports in India is at a turning point. While the industry’s growth is promising, deep-rooted misconceptions and infrastructural gaps continue to hold it back. Champions like Karthik, who have dedicated their lives to the game stand as proof of its potential. With events such as the Esports World Cup putting the sport in the international limelight, India should look at this field as not only a form of entertainment but one that will also provide a feasible and respectable career path.



Representational image AI generated

Will reviving regenerative agriculture reduce agricultural emissions?

Tejaswini S

By passing measures to tax livestock to reduce methane emissions, Denmark becomes the world's first country to introduce a carbon tax on livestock farming. A measure passed in November 2024 to reduce Green House Gases (GHGs) and combat climate change. This move from the Denmark government draws attention to the agricultural emissions in India, which contributes to 14% of the total Greenhouse gas emissions of the country, as per the latest press release by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change posted on February 6, 2023. 'Enteric Fermentation' is one of the country's major contributors to agricultural emissions, i.e. 53.03% as revealed by The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog- the Government of India's public policy think tank) India Climate & Energy dashboard. Enteric Fermentation is a process where microbes in the digestive systems of ruminant animals (mammals, including cattle, sheep, etc) break down food and produce methane as a by-product.

Denmark's carbon tax on livestock is a 'bold move,' remarked Dr Chandrashekhar Biradar, an executive member of the Institution of Agroforestry Farmers & Technologists (IAFT), a non-profit organisation dedicated to advancing agroforestry practices. However, such taxes may not be directly feasible in India due to the socio-economic diversity and the

farming systems where livestock is directly involved in farming. "Here at IAFT, we are exploring alternatives such as incentivising the low emission livestock practices and developing regenerative agriculture models," opined Biradar.

Schemes/models that can combat agricultural emissions

1. The National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)

Devinder Sharma, a well-known food and trade policy analyst, pointed to the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) scheme, launched on 2024, November 25, as a significant step by the central government targeting to reach one crore farmers and initiate natural farming in 7.5 lakh hectare area. "It must begin with regaining the soil and ensuring that soil structures and fertility are maintained to the best," opined Sharma, responding to the need of the hour in combating agriculture emissions in our country.

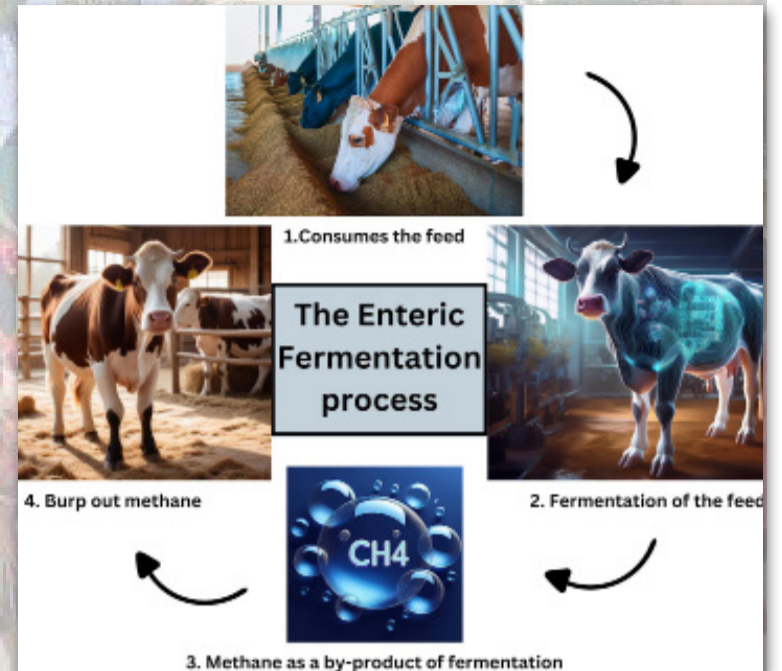
2. The Agroforestry model

The Agroforestry model by the IAFT executive is designed to have the right combination of crop diversity, multifunctional trees (trees deliberately grown and managed for more than one purpose), and livestock. "IAFT is committed to driving the policy framework that balances environmental

sustainability with farmers' welfare. We are actively engaging with the Government of Karnataka to integrate agroforestry into its policy framework and introduce biochar technology. This uses organic waste materials to create a stable carbon source for various applications," mentioned Chandrashekhar Biradar.

3. Nandi Krishi

'Nandi Yatre' (Rally with bulls), a campaign by Abhi Foundation, a cooperative society that organises public awareness programs and campaigns under the scheme 'Revival of Sage-Agricultural Culture', presents Nandi Koogu (Calling of bulls), which aims to bring scientific awareness to farmers about Nandi Krushi (Oxen farming- the practice of using cattle, to perform various tasks on a farm.) Soil, being a carbon sink, can bring down carbon emissions to a large extent when soil fertility is improved through sustainable practices like oxen agriculture, said Basavaraj Biradar, the visionary of the campaign and foundation. "We have sent a letter of appeal to 224 state legislators, requesting monthly incentives to oxen farmers to encourage sustainable agriculture. The Government of Karnataka has asked the Agriculture Department to check this proposal in detail, and we have received an intimation letter confirming the same. We are determined to



The enteric fermentation process AI generated create demand to initiate fast-paced action," added Biradar.

Regenerative AI for Green Economic Transition

The keynote speaker at GeneRative AI (GRAINS 2024), Chandrashekhar Biradar, shed light on leading big data platforms on Crop Growth Rate (CGR), which is a measure of how much dry matter a crop produces per unit of land area over a unit of time. CGR helps agriculture transition through technological advancement, computations, and open-access data. Regenerative AI has tremendous potential in optimising farm practices, from precision irrigation to predictive models for crop and livestock integration systems. "In India, it can be the game changer by enabling data-driven decisions, improving the research efficiency because of many farmers' access to smartphones, and data planning being one of the cheapest in the world in India," added Biradar. Improving livestock feed and soil carbon sequestration creates a win-win for farmers and the planet sum-up experts.

Threats, reconnection, and bridging generational culture

Kohsheen Raina

Ghar'e Wand'hai Ghar'e Saasa is a Kashmiri proverb that loosely translates to 'Home, I offer a thousand houses, and I'll never go out from you.' A beautiful account of the pride and love Kashmiris have for their language, but the number of speakers has seen a slow but notable decrease over the past decade. With rich cultural and historical roots, it has been integral to the region's identity.

Language and Cultural Origins of Kashmiri

Kashmiri has a history spanning over 5000 years, which is closely associated with the region's identity and its rich culture. It has many influences, including Persian, Urdu, and Sanskrit. Poets like Lal Dad and Sheikh-ul-Alam have contributed to Kashmiri literature over the centuries. Yet all these works of language are being slowly etched off of the land. Linguists have shown that while languages develop and adapt in response to social shifts, language loss can also be a sign of a community's identity eroding. Meraj Bhatta, a linguist, observes that Kashmiri has experienced "significant vocabulary loss, with many words becoming obsolete due to the influx of other languages". This change affects how people relate to their heritage and extends beyond simple changes in vocabulary or grammar.

Technology and Media

Language trends are heavily influenced by media and technology. The younger generation is being exposed to Hindi, English, and other popular languages more frequently as a result of the proliferation of Bollywood films and the increasing dominance of digital media. Kashmir University student Shahid Mir noted that the youth are no longer connected to their language because there is a dearth of Kashmiri-language content on social media. "We just listen to songs in the valley, and that's about it. We're just not taught it," says Shahid Mir. Without a significant presence in the digital media, Kashmiri remains disconnected from the global conversation.

Challenges and Policy Solutions

Shahid Mir says that "Today's youth is not as connected to Kashmiri, so they don't speak it much." He further adds that "There's never been a real connection with Kashmiri. How can we speak the language?"

However, policy solutions like the National Education Policy offer hope. Professor Mafruz Bhat highlights, "The NEP 2020 is a key factor, and if the policy is implemented in spirit, it can act as a booster for promotion and preservation." This includes recruiting language teachers and making Kashmiri a compulsory subject in schools. "The language's present status in Kashmir and beyond sways along ignorance. Kashmiri is recognized as a national language under India's Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. However, the state has selected Urdu as the official language, thereby preventing Kashmiri from developing any professional or functional sectors that would alter its status as predominantly a home language," says Baraj B. Kachru in his study 'The Dying Linguistic Heritage of the Kashmiris: Kashmiri Literary Culture and Language.'

Administrative and Educational Paradigms

The elimination of the Kashmiri language from the curriculum and governmental structures is one of the main causes of its decline. According to Meraj Bhatta, the introduction of languages such as English and Urdu in administrative and educational domains has led to a neglect of Kashmiri, leaving it behind in the race for modernity and global recognition. In the process, Kashmiri is being sidelined, which makes it difficult for younger generations to connect with their language.

"The shift in language policy in favor of English and Urdu, particularly in the educational system, has excluded Kashmiri from the curriculum, leaving it to be spoken only in informal contexts," says Miraj Bhatta. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the importance of mother tongue education, recognizing that languages like Kashmiri need to be preserved. However, many educational institutions still lack the resources and infrastructure necessary to teach the language, making its successful implementation a problem.

The Family and Community's Role

While the administrative and educational systems have played a major role in the decline of Kashmiri, communities also bear responsibility for the language's future. In many homes, the younger generation prefers speaking in Urdu or English, resulting in a breakdown in the transmission of the language across generations. Meraj Bhatta stresses, "Mothers are primary caregivers; they play an important role in teaching children the language; the children inculcate the language that is spoken around them."

The decline of Kashmiri represents loss of culture and identity. As Professor Mafruz Bhat says, "Our literature, culture, and customs are profoundly rooted in this language," and Shahid Mir tells us, "When you don't know your language, you feel away from all of the stories, lores, and culture that awaits your curiosity about your language."



Kashmiri pandit reading scripture The Kashmir Today

Global Chess and Indian Prodigies

Swaminathan Swamimalai

After Viswanathan Anand's loss to Magnus Carlsen in the 2013 World Chess Championship held in Chennai, the question arose, 'Is this the end of Indian chess?'. That doubt was spectacularly answered when Gukesh Dommaraju became the 'undisputed youngest world champion' in the history of chess.

The rise of India and the fall of giants

Gukesh's triumph was so unexpected that Andre Filatov, President of the Russian chess federation, appealed to the Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE, the international body that regulates chess) to investigate the championship matches as they suspected foul play between India and China.

Rajesh R, the international FIDE instructor, and Kerala State Chess Federation president stated that the accusations from Russia are nothing but words of desperation. The Russian team could not mark their presence in mainstream chess without the 'infamous' incidents they always cause on and off the board. The Russians lost their crown, not qualifying for the chess olympiad or appearing on the victory list. "As per history, the Russians had always dominated the championship and tournaments from 1948-2000, but the whole scenario changed as the championship came to India through Vishwanathan Anand (2000-2002) and here again in India through Gukesh as the youngest achiever," added Rajesh.

The young Indian prodigies

'The Gukesh wave' added new players from India to the chess world. As per the data from chess.com and chessable (the official partners of the world championship), India has surpassed the US as the most active country to play chess, hosting almost 17 million games online daily, which is the highest ever recorded.

Rajesh pointed out, saying, "India is going to be ruling the mainstream chess as the number of young prodigies who are steadily marking their steps in the world stage is outnumbering the other countries. We could even see that in the olympiad as the team with many youngsters bagging the gold medal when players like Magnus Carlsen, Hikaru Nakamura, and others became mere spectators. Even Judit Polgar, the previous Women Champion, said, 'It is time for India.'"

Why not a spectator sport?

Despite its growing popularity, chess is not part of the Olympics as the committee stated, "Chess is not a spectator sport." Sanjay S Pillai, a FIDE instructor and one of the Kerala state champions, pointed out that chess is not a physical sport or commercialised but rather a professional one. "It took almost 90 minutes for Ding Liren to make his move and almost 50 minutes for Gukesh to reply. This waiting time is not enjoyable for a normal viewer as they don't understand the beauty of the game," says Rajesh. The

types of tournaments are changing as the investors and sponsors want to profit from their inputs, added Rajesh. "Magnus Carlsen has started an application 'Take, Take, Take' that enables users to witness live matches with a live game evaluation. He has also been selected as the global ambassador of the Esports World Cup 2025 and Champion Chess Tour, which will be sponsored by ESPN channel," said Rajesh.

The present update of chess vs reality

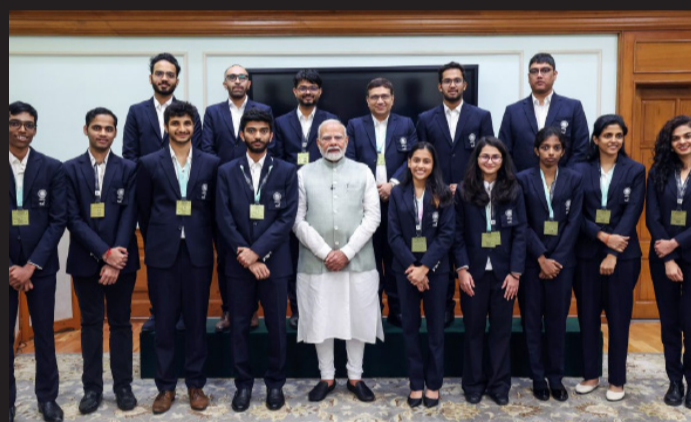
Tania Sachdev, an Indian chess player with numerous titles such as three-time Commonwealth Women's Chess Championship, pointed out her concern on X (formerly Twitter) tagging the Delhi government, that it is disheartening to see a lack of recognition or acknowledgement of chess despite the best performance from the Indian team in the past decade.

Sanjay added that in India, the number of players having an official rating under FIDE is less than the number of players who play tournaments around the year. Gukesh struggled without sponsors until Chessbase India, an organisation headed by Sagar Shah and Amruta Mokal, came to sponsor Gukesh and many other budding players, thus ultimately saving their careers. "There was no boom in cricket in India until it won the first world cup in 1983, likely for Indian chess, as the young generation of Indian talents have been proving in the world, slowly but surely, the doors of sponsorships and investments will open slowly. For example, Google was one of the main sponsors of this year's world championship. All of this shows signs that chess will slowly be a part of mainstream sports," added Rajesh.



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Voiceless victims: The plight of abandoned and abused pets

Sharon D

As Mahatma Gandhi once opined, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." This powerful statement is highlighted by two incidents in Bangalore, which reveal a concerning neglect of animal welfare. In a recent incident, a man in Kalyan Nagar was seen driving his car with three Shih Tzus perched on top, showing complete disregard for their safety. In another case, a family relocating to the USA abandoned their dog at the airport, leaving it tied up and vulnerable. The dog suffered from sunstroke and, despite efforts by Charlie's Animal Rescue Centre (CARE) to save the dog, it tragically passed away. These acts of neglect raise serious concerns about societal values, highlighting that the way we treat animals, who cannot defend themselves, reflects the ethical integrity of a nation.

People often purchase trendy dog breeds, driven by their charm, the desire to flaunt them as status symbols, or even because of the FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out). However, when the trend fades, these dogs are often abandoned as their popularity decreases. In response, breeders focus on producing dogs that are still in demand, selling them at inflated prices. For instance, if a particular breed gains popularity, breeders may continue to breed the same female dog repeatedly, prioritising profit over the dog's well-being. Once a dog surpasses the acceptable limit for breeding and the breed goes

out of trend, the dog is often abandoned without care. "Just like humans, animals react differently to abuse. When a dog is abused repeatedly, some become very quiet, while others may express their feelings in a more negative manner. There are no bad dogs, only bad owners. Owners with zero common sense are the real problem," said Mr. Keerthan Vignesh R.P, Animal Activist and Chief Manager at CARE.

Mr. Vignesh further emphasised that breeders can easily earn up to a lakh from each litter, which far exceeds the original cost of the dog. In their pursuit of profit, they breed dogs without considering the long-term effects on the animals' health. This causes physical and emotional harm, exposing the unethical nature of such breeding practices.

"Negligence from pet parents can cause dogs to develop aggression and poor social behaviour, significantly lowering their chances of adoption. Physically, they may suffer from malnutrition, making them weak and lean, or face obesity, which often leads to reproductive issues," said Dr. Bharath, MVSc, PhD. He also added that the dog's ability to overcome the impact of abuse depends on its mental health. With proper training, love, and affection, it usually takes a minimum of six months to one year to recover.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960,

categorises both abuse and abandonment of animals as punishable offences. Abuse includes acts like beating, torturing, or starving animals, while abandonment causes them to suffer from hunger, thirst, or disease. However, the penalties remain outdated, with fines as low as Rs. 50 for a first offence. This raises an important question: Is the life of an animal valued at such a meagre amount? Many animal activists and animal lovers have urged for the laws to be made much stricter to ensure the welfare and protection of animals

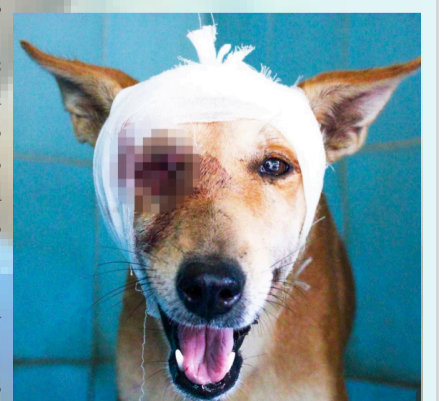
"The media can play a crucial role in advancing animal welfare. However, in recent times, media coverage often highlights negative incidents involving dogs, such as attacks on humans, while rarely covering positive actions that could shift public perceptions. The media should focus on educating the public to be more considerate toward those who feed community dogs, instead of creating conflict. It is also important to collaborate with rescue centres to share their insights and opinions, as this could raise awareness and ultimately bring about changes that support animal welfare," said Mr. Vignesh.

Animals rely on us for protection and care, and how we treat them reflects our character as a society. Stronger laws, better education, and ethical practices can ensure their safety and dignity. Creating a kinder world starts with fostering empathy and taking action.



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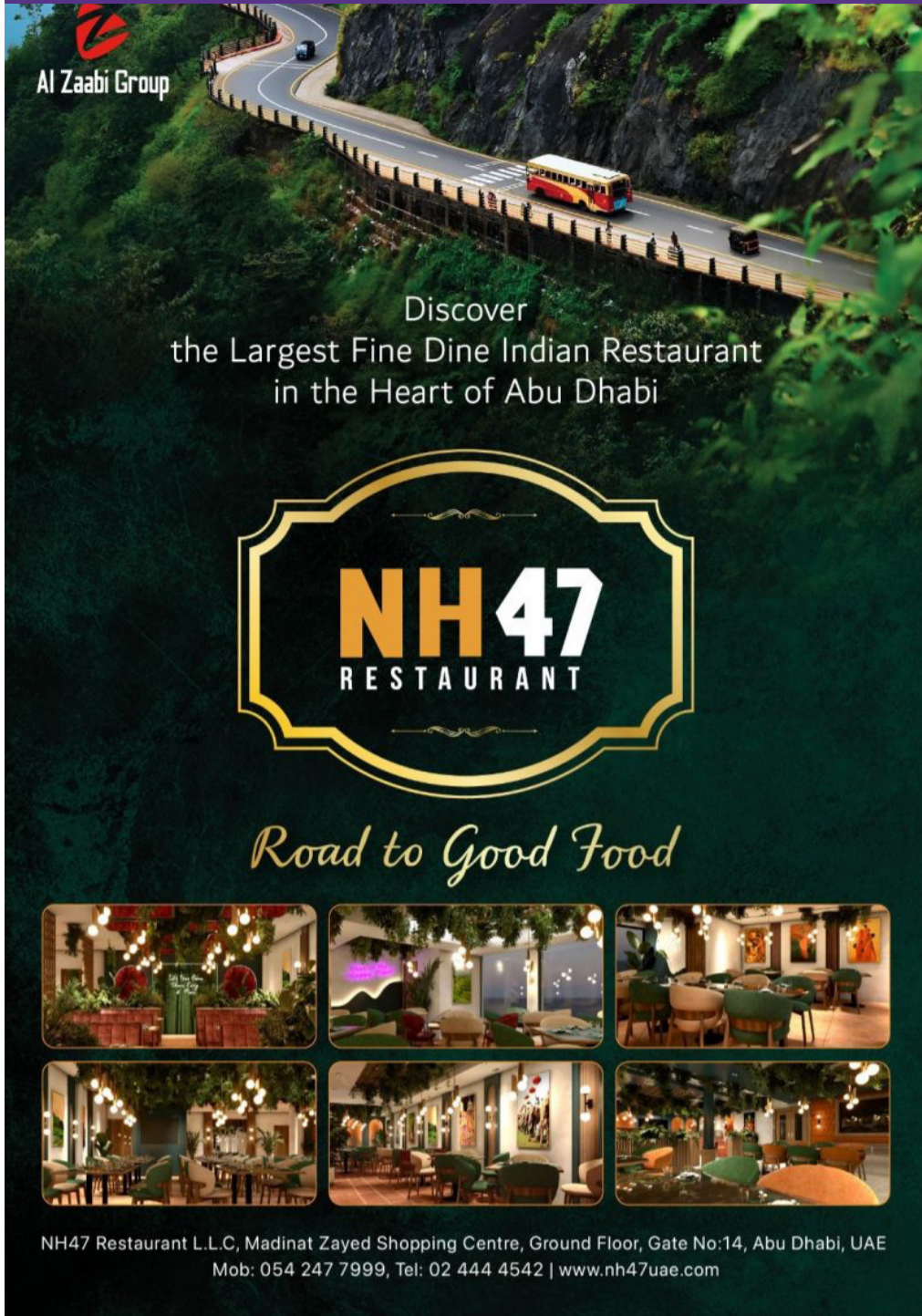
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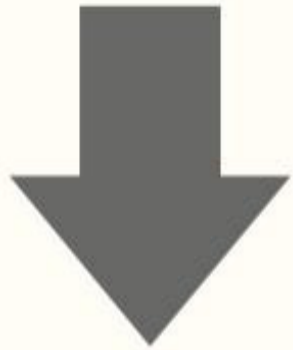


@_AUNTEA_




In the winter of 2002-03 I found myself in Kabini managing a farmhouse that was taking its first baby steps towards becoming a wildlife resort and if you had asked me a year earlier if that was where I saw myself a year hence, I would have laughed in your face. As the 1900s turned to the 2000s I was happily living on the Bhutan border, managing a tea estate and indulging in my love of photography and wildlife.

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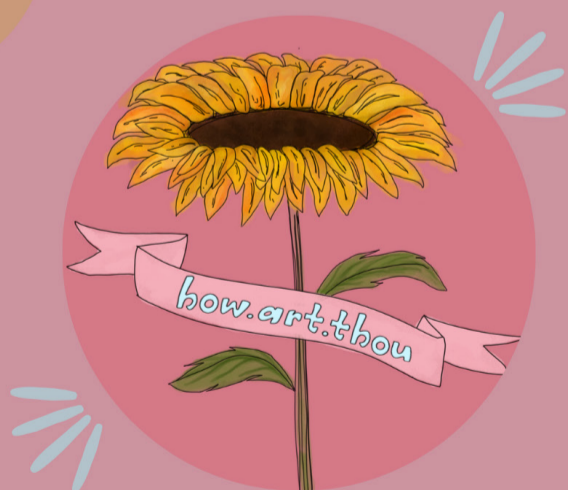
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Escape to the heart of Africa, where adventure meets purpose!

Immerse yourself in the breathtaking wilderness, home to Africa's legendary "**Big Five**"—lions, elephants, buffalos, leopards, and rhinos—alongside crocodiles, hyenas, giraffes, hippos, antelopes like gazelles and impalas. Witness the **Great Migration**, where millions of wildebeests and zebras brave the Mara River under the watchful eyes of crocodiles and lions.

Book your stay at Mara Duma Bush Camp today, and become part of a journey that connects you to the wild. We look forward to welcoming you to Mara Duma Bush Camp—your gateway to the wild. Karibu (Welcome) Kenya!!

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